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# Description

OF

## MALTA AND GOZO,

BY

GEORGE PERCY BADGER.

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Καὶ διασωθέντες, τότε ἐπέγνωσαν ὅτι Μελίτη ἡ νῆσος καλεῖται.

Πράξ. κεφ. κη'. 1.

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MALTA,

PRINTING AND LITHOGRAPHY BY M. WEISS.

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## PREFACE.



*Fior del Mondo* is the ardent language of the love of our country, and though Malta, which has received this superlative appellation from its devoted children, is but a rock, yet "*a rock is a rock*" all the world through; while the glory of the sky which overlooks Malta, the noble port which indents its rugged margin, as also the peculiarity of its position with regard to neighbouring tracts of the earth, render it altogether a rock singularly interesting, and of vast intrinsic importance.

The sky, and air, and country of Malta is African; but its life and civilization is European. And here, whilst we have all the fervid glow of a cloudless boundless atmosphere,—here, where the orange-grove yields its golden treasures, and the rosy grape in all its luscious freshness tempts the gazing eye,—we have also, in

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delightful combination, all the arts, science and purities of glorious Europe, which stretches her enlightened sceptre over all lands.

Formerly the bulwark of Christendom against the bloody banner of Islamism and infidelity,<sup>f</sup> and exerting a salutary influence o'er the desolations of Africa, giving also decisive checks to the infamous piracies of the Barbary coast, Malta, now also, in our own times, exerts a still nobler, because a moral influence, upon the shores of the Mediterranean, and occupies, under the benign and all-powerful flag of Great Britain, a prouder attitude than even during the most renowned days of her chivalrous story, under the sovereignty of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

A writer, then, who attempts some illustration of the past and present history of so remarkable a country as Malta, together with the peculiar features of its social and political state, however humble his efforts, or contracted his plan, may venture, without the slightest charge of arrogance, to anticipate the good wishes and the support of the public.

The chief design has been, in the following pages, to afford to the numerous English travellers, who are continually going to and coming from the Levant, now on pleasure, now on business, and in their route making a

## PREFACE.

shorter or longer stay at Malta, some assistance in the knowledge or investigation of these islands. The late facilities offered by steam-navigation to all the curious and the learned, to make researches in the Mediterranean seas, have greatly increased the number of strangers in Malta;—as also, the facilities and conveniences, which the generosity of the truly paternal government of Malta has granted to foreign shipping, have equally augmented the concourse of travellers and strangers in this famed port.

Here travellers may repose after a long voyage at sea, and even attempt the restoration of their health in the case of unlooked-for indisposition; and during their hours of quiet and solitude, they may perhaps be agreeably occupied with a cursory examination of the things which this brief history points out.

The author has confined himself to objects of utility in general, but has not entirely passed over those of elegance, of science, and of antiquities. And whatever credit he may receive for his labours, he doubts not, that his intentions will be fairly and indulgently construed. At any rate, this being the first book in the English language ever attempted, on so limited and portable a scale, in illustration of Malta, he trusts, that if he does not entirely succeed in his object, he will have the gratification

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of having pointed out the way to others, who shall follow him in that path which is always noble and philanthropic, — that of making one part of humanity acquainted with another, and of adding to the general stock of the knowledge of the world, by investigating mankind as it exists in its geographical situation, political and social state, and all the peculiarities of its mind and feelings.



PART I.

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BRIEF SKETCH

OF THE -

HISTORY OF MALTA.





# HISTORY OF MALTA,

FROM ITS EARLY SETTLEMENT DOWN TO THE  
PRESENT TIME.



*Preliminary Observations — Settlement of the Phœnicians — Greeks — Carthaginians — Romans — Goths — Emperors of Constantinople — Arabs — Defeat of Emperor's Expedition — Count Roger — Rebellion of the Arabs — Emperors of Germany — Kings of Arragon and Castile — Charles V. of Germany — Arrival of the Knights of St. John — Their first acts — Malta besieged by the Turks — Confiscation of several of the Commanderies — Arrival of the French — Siege of Malta — Dreadful state of the town — Appearance of the British fleet — The French capitulate — Malta ceded to the British Crown.*

**T**HE early history of almost every nation is involved in obscurity, and it would be quite foreign to our purpose, to enter into an investigation of the several opinions, which have been advanced by different authors, as to the primitive inhabitants of this island, the origin of its name, its early form and government, and the various natural

causes which have operated to reduce it to its present size and shape. We shall content ourselves, by giving the reader a short sketch of what seems to be the most probable, and least fabulous account, of the various settlements formed here by different nations, until it fell into the hands of its present possessors.

An ancient author writes concerning this island: "Malta is furnished with many and very good harbours, and the inhabitants are very rich, for it is full of all sorts of artificers, among whom there are excellent weavers of fine linen. Their houses are very stately and beautiful, adorned with graceful caves, and pargetted with white plaster. The inhabitants are a colony of Phœnicians, who, trading as merchants, as far as the western coast, resorted to this place on account of its commodious ports, and convenient situation for maritime commerce; and by the advantages of this place, the inhabitants frequently became famous both for their wealth and their merchandisc."\* From this quotation, it appears, that the Phœnicians were very early, if not the first settlers of this island; and the learned Bochart considers them the same with the Phœicians, mentioned by Homer, generally taken for the aborigines of Malta.

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\* Diod. Sic. Lib. V. c. 1.



Several other quotations from Cicero, and particularly from Homer, who mentions the island under the name of Ogygia, together with the proceeding, if not decisive proof, go far to establish the early settlement of the Phœnicians in Malta. The argument adduced by some to confirm this, from the vernacular language of the country, is as altogether unnecessary, as it is uncertain. The several words which have been brought forward as Punic, may all be traced back to an Arabic original; and in fact, the very small knowledge which we have of this ancient language, hinders us from drawing any satisfactory conclusions from such a comparison. The Rev. Mr. Schlienz, in his late treatise on the "Use of the Maltese language for the purposes of Education and Literature," p. 3—8, very clearly shows, that we have no certain criterion to guide us in ascertaining the Phœnician character of the Maltese language.

In the hall of the Public Library are still preserved three medals with Phœnician inscriptions, as well as two other monuments of the same language. If I may be permitted to advance the opinion, I should say, that the sepulchral grots in the mountains of Bingiemma, are also remains of the work of this ancient people. Any person who has visited the region of Tyre and Sidon, the

early seat of the Phœnician kingdom, and seen those which still exist there in abundance, will be struck at once with the analogy between them, both as to the manner in which they are excavated, and the position in which they lie.

From the various medals and other monuments which have been found in this island, as well as from the accounts of ancient history, it appears, that the Greeks held possession of it for some time after their expulsion of the Phœnicians. According to Thucydides and Sycophoron,\* the arrival of the Greeks in Malta ought to be dated after the siege of Troy, in the first year of the Second Olympiad, 755 years B. C. After that famous expedition, which has immortalized the muse of Homer, part of the confederated Greeks returned to their native country, while the remainder sailed for that part of Italy which is called Calabria, where they founded the cities of Croton and Tarento, and many other colonies. From this, they sailed to Sicily, where they built Syracuse and Agrigenti, and then scattered themselves over the islands of the Mediterranean. They chased the Phœnicians from Malta, which at that period was called Ogygia, changed the name into Melitas, and established here their own form of government.

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\* See Thucyd. lib. viii. Sycoph. Cassand. lin. 1627.

Cicero (*contra Verres*, lib. iv.) speaks of the Temple of Juno, belonging to the Greeks at Malta, as being very splendid, and situated not far from the Great harbour. The worship of this goddess, most probably existed here in the time of the Phœnicians, as may be inferred from a medal in the Public Library, by whom she was worshipped under the title of Iside. The learned Abela in his *Malta Illustrata*, Lib. ii. Not. v. accumulates evidence to prove the domination of the Greeks in this island, and the flourishing state of commerce during their government.

In the year of the world 3620, the Carthaginians, who had settled themselves along the northern coast of Africa, and had seized upon several islands in the Mediterranean, attacked Malta and Sicily under the conduct of Hannibal, and made themselves masters of it. It was, however, not without much effort and bloodshed that they succeeded, as the Greeks were continually sending reinforcements from Sicily to the assistance of the island. The conquerors treated the inhabitants with great lenity, accorded to them the free practice of their own religion and laws, and in a short time, rendered their circumstances more flourishing than ever.

From several inscriptions, which have been found here, the fact may be established beyond

dispute, that this ancient people flourished here at a very early period. A square stone, with an inscription in Punic characters, discovered in a sepulchral cave near the place called Ben Ghisa, on which Sir W. Drummond has written a learned essay, is supposed to mark the burial-place of the famous Carthaginian general Hannibal. This is a curious piece, and one of the largest remains of the Punic language now in existence; and as it helps to ascertain the ancient inhabitants of this island, I think it not improper to insert the translation.

*“The inner chamber of the sanctuary of the sepulchre  
of Hannibal,  
Illustrious in the consummation of calamity,  
He was beloved;  
The people lament, when arrayed  
in order of battle,  
Hannibal the son of Bar-Melec.”*

To such a thriving condition did Malta arrive during the government of the Carthaginians, that it became an object for the ambitious cupidity of the Roman power, after the termination of the first Punic war. Twice was the island pillaged; the first time by the Consul Attilius Regulus, and afterwards by Caius Cornelius. Finally, it fell into the hands of the Romans, together with the

island of Sicily, under the Consul Titus Sempronius, at the commencement of the second Punic war.

By order of the senate, Malta was declared a Roman municipality; a prefect was appointed over it, who was subject to the pretor of Sicily, and Marcus Marcellus was ordered to fortify this port, so important for the defence of Sicily and the whole of Italy. The Romans neglected nothing in order to conciliate the inhabitants, who were strongly attached to the Carthaginians, by a common origin and language. They respected their laws, encouraged the manufactories which they found established, and particularly that of cotton, which was so-renowned, that Cicero informs us, it was regarded as a luxury even at Rome. Besides all this, the Maltese people were permitted to coin money in their own name, to govern themselves by their own laws, to administer justice, to enjoy the right of suffrage in the Roman councils, were eligible to any office in the Republic, and permitted to present offerings to Jupiter Capitolinus, a privilege the Romans only granted to their nearest allies.

The temple of Hercules and Juno, which existed in this island, and which were objects of veneration to all the people of the East, were very much embellished by the Romans. They also

raised a magnificent temple to Apollo, and another to Proserpine, and a theatre, of which some scattered remains of chapiters and pillars are to be seen about the Città Notabile, where they stood.

Many Roman medals and coins have been found in the island, and several inscriptions, which prove the privileges enjoyed by the Maltese under that domination. The curious will find lengthened details on this subject in Ciantar's *Malta Illus.* Lib. ii. Not. 6.

The Goths who had overrun and made themselves masters of Italy and Sicily, and had pillaged and sacked Carthage, arrived at Malta about the year 506; and after occupying it for thirty-seven years, they were expelled by the army of Justinian, under the command of Belisarius. In the Public Library, is still to be seen a monument of the time of the Goths; and several other inscriptions have occasionally been met with in the Città Notabile.

The island of Malta now remained under the dominion of the Emperors of Constantinople, until the latter part of the ninth century; but not enjoying the same privileges it had done in the time of the Romans, the inhabitants did not attain to their former glory.

About the year 879, during the reign of the



Emperor Basil, the Arabs, who had already overrun all the East, and conquered Spain, Portugal, Italy and part of France, made a descent upon the island of Gozo, which they soon took, and massacred all the Greeks whom they found in it. From Gozo they crossed over to Malta, which nobly resisted for a length of time, but was at last obliged to yield to superior force. The fact is, the Greeks who followed Belisarius, had rendered themselves obnoxious to the inhabitants by their oppressions, who were consequently easily brought over to give assistance to the enemy; hoping that by changing masters, they might free themselves from their servitude.

The Arabs, upon taking possession of the island, exterminated all the Greeks, and made slaves of their wives and children. They, however, treated the Maltese with every mark of respect, and allowed them the free exercise of their own religion. The Arabs soon found the importance and the advantages which the safe ports of the island afforded to their piratical expeditions, and in order to defend the entrance into the great harbour, erected a fort on the present site of St. Angelo, to secure their vessels from danger of attack. They also added new fortifications around the Città Notabile, by them called Mdina, and

diminished the extent of the walls, in order to facilitate its defence.

During the reigns of the Emperors Nicephorus Phocas and Michael Paphlagonien, an expedition was fitted out in order to expel the Arabs from the island of Malta; on account of their continual piratical excursions upon Italy, and the whole Eastern empire, which had become quite an annoyance. The admirals Nicetas and Manianes were appointed to command this enterprise. All their measures, however, were disconcerted; for, being incapable of resisting the courage of their enemies, they were obliged to betake themselves to a disgraceful flight.

The most extensive relic preserved in Malta of the domination of the Arabs, is their language. Ciantar gives a very plausible reason why this tongue got such an ascendancy in the island. He says: "As soon as the news was made known that the Saracens had passed over to Sicily with a great military armament, the most opulent and powerful men of our island fled to Constantinople, under which government they were." Only the poorer class remaining behind, they found it almost indispensable to accommodate themselves to the language of their masters, which became their own in the course of the two centuries they were governed by them. As a dialect



of the Arabic, the present Maltese spoken at Gozo, and in the casals of Malta, is nearly as good as that of any other Arabic country; and it is sad to observe how little it is appreciated by the people. With a little cultivation, the Maltese might possess a *written* language, which would yield to none in the beauty of its phrases, or the extent of its vocabulary. The advantages which would accrue to the island from a cultivation of the classical Arabic, is ably demonstrated in the late work of the Rev. Mr. Schlienz, already alluded to.

After the Arabs had remained in quiet possession of the island for 220 years, Count Roger, son of the celebrated Tancrede de Hauteville, in company with his brother William, expelled them from Malta, as also from Sicily and Naples, and the neighbouring country. This event took place about the year 1090. The inhabitants of these islands regarded Roger as their deliverer, and as a testimonial of their gratitude, proposed to name him their sovereign. Roger accepted of the offer, and was accordingly crowned King of Sicily and Malta, in spite of the opposition of the Pope, and the claims of the Emperor of Constantinople. Michael Comnenus, however, determined to reinstate his power in the islands of the Mediterranean, fitted out two formidable fleets, and committed them to the command of Alexis Comnenus,

and Constantine Angelo; but their expedition failed of success, for both were taken prisoners by Roger, who, in order to revenge the outrage, carried his arms into the Emperor's dominions, and returned laden with the spoils of Thebes and Corinth, after having obliged Michael to acknowledge his independence, and the legitimacy of his rights.

Roger, following the spirit of the age, founded and enriched many churches at Malta, and made some efforts towards the conversion of the Arabs to the Christian faith. To these, whom he had permitted to remain in his kingdom, he acted with the greatest generosity, and only levied from them a trifling yearly tribute as a sign of their subjection. So far did his toleration extend, that he permitted them to stamp a small gold coin, with the Arabic epigraph, '*there is only one God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God,*' on one side, and on the reverse, '*King Roger.*' Some of these coins are still preserved in the private museum of Cardinal Borgia at Velletri.

Notwithstanding, however, the mildness with which Roger treated the Arabs who chose to remain in the island, they occasionally revolted against his authority. In 1120, such of them as occupied the district called Kalaat-el-Babria, attempted to massacre the principal inhabitants of the island; which obliged the king to send his

son to Malta, in order to chastise the rebels as traitors of the government.

After the death of Roger II, Constance his only daughter, who had espoused the Emperor Henry VI. ceded the islands of Malta and Sicily to the domination of the Emperors of Germany, of the house of Swabia, notwithstanding the opposition of Tancrede, the natural son of her father, who had seized upon the throne. The death of Tancrede, however, and that of his unfortunate son, restored peace to the kingdom, and brought back to the party of Constance those of the barons whose dislike for a foreign prince had hitherto caused them to take sides against her.

Under the government of Henry VI. and of his son Frederic II. the Maltese greatly signalized themselves by their valour at sea. Under one of their own admirals, they attacked and destroyed a squadron of the Republic of Pisa, which had come to lay siege to Syracuse; and took the island of Candia from the Venetians, after having shattered their fleet, and taken prisoner their admiral Andrea Dandolo.

After this island had remained for seventy-two years under the German Emperors, Manfred, the natural son of Frederic II. formed the horrible design of poisoning his father, and making himself master of his dominions. The cruel oppressions

and tyrannical proceedings of this usurper, excited a rebellion of the Maltese and Sicilians against his government, and finally caused Pope Urban IV. to solve all his subjects from their allegiance to him. To save the consequences of such powerful opposition, he offered his daughter Constance in marriage to Peter, son of James, King of Arragon. This alliance, however, had no other effect upon Urban than of completing his enmity towards Manfred; and without any right, except that presumptuously assumed by his predecessors, he invested Charles of Anjou, King of France, with the possession of Sicily and Naples, and their dependant states. This proceeding was as unjustly confirmed by his successor Clement IV. who reserved to himself the duchies of Benevento and Ponte-Corvo, in the kingdom of Naples, and a yearly tribute of forty thousand crowns, which Charles obliged himself to pay to the Papal See on St. Peter's day.

A battle which took place between the forces of Charles and Manfred, on the plains of Benevento, on the 26th. February, 1266, decided the fate of the kingdom in favour of the former. Manfred met the just punishment of his parricide and his other crimes, by being slain on the field, and his wife and children taken prisoners by the conqueror.

In the mean time, Corradin, the legitimate son of Fred. II. and rightful heir to the crown, who was at this period sixteen years old, in company with the Duke of Austria, prepared to rescue his father's dominions from the hands of Charles. After various successes, they penetrated as far as the town of Aquila in the Abruzzi, where a battle was fought on the plain of Lis, close by the lake of Celano, in the year 1268. The troops of Corradin, being chiefly recruits composed of different nations, and fatigued by long marches, could not resist the impetuosity of the French soldiery, and so were obliged to yield. The Duke of Austria, together with Corradin, were beheaded in the market-place at Naples, and with the latter the ancient house of Swabia became extinct.

The daughter of Manfred, whose husband was now king of Arragon, with the title of Peter III. used all her influence, to inspire him to assert his claims to the kingdom of Sicily and Malta. The tyranny of Charles had already rendered him obnoxious to the people over whom he governed, and it was not long before a desperate attempt was formed by a private Sicilian gentleman, who was secretly attached to Peter, to massacre all the French in the kingdom at a given signal. This famous conspiracy, known by the name of the *Sicilian Vespers*, was carried into effect on

Easter day of the year 1282, during which the King of Arragon was proclaimed sovereign of Sicily, and publicly crowned in the cathedral of Palermo.

Charles was in Tuscany when the news of this tragical event reached him. He immediately set about making endeavours to regain his lost authority; but his fleet, commanded by his son, was discomfited by Admiral Roger, who commanded the vessels of the Arragonese. After this, Roger steered towards Malta, which at that time was governed for the French by William Corner, who had a squadron under his command lying in the harbour. After a bloody engagement, with much loss on both sides, the French commander was obliged to capitulate, and thus the island came under the dominion of the Arragonese.

The island of Malta, after having suffered so much from the dissensions of its successive masters, was now destined to undergo even worse treatment, from the individuals to whom it was successively given as a fief by the Kings of Arragon and Castile. Notwithstanding the solemn promises made by King Louis, son of Peter II. at the just and urgent representations of the Maltese, that the island should in future be considered as unalienable from the crown of Sicily, it was twice



afterwards mortgaged by King Martin: first, to Don Antonio Cordova, and subsequently to Don Gonsolvo Monroi, for the sum of 30,000 florins.

Oppressed out of measure with the grievous yoke which they had to endure under these circumstances, and wearied of making useless complaints, the Maltese resolved to pay to Martin the sum for which the island had been pledged. This generous offer was accepted, and in the year 1350, by a public act of the king, it was decreed that the islands of Malta and Gozo should henceforth never be separated from the kingdom of Sicily; and that their inhabitants should enjoy equal privileges, with those of Palermo, Messina, and Catania.

In 1516, this entire kingdom passed into the hands of Charles V. of Germany, the heir of all the Spanish dominions. Notwithstanding his confirmation of the previous declaration of his predecessors, concerning the perpetual junction of Malta with Sicily, this emperor, for political reasons, resolved to cede up the island to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the remains of which were at that time at Viterba, in the Papal States. The act of the donation is dated at Castel Franco, near Boulogne, March 23, 1530; and the document of the acceptance of the gift, by the council of the

Order, April 25th. of the same year. The substance of the act was as follows: That the Emperor Charles V. King of Sicily, gave to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, in his name, and in that of his successors, the islands of Malta, Gozo, Comino, and Tripoli in Africa, as a free and noble fief, with all the privileges of the sovereignty, under these conditions:

1. That every year the Order should present a falcon to the king, or viceroy of Sicily.

2. That the bishoprick of Malta should always be nominated by the king.

3. That the chief admiral of the fleet should always be an Italian.

4. That they should preserve to the Maltese all their rights and privileges.

The Grandmaster having accepted these conditions, embarked to take possession of the island, where he arrived on the 26th. of October 1530, accompanied by a great many knights and principal officers of the Order. The Maltese, at first, were by no means pleased at the change, which they considered as an infringement upon their engagement with the King of Sicily; but, being assured by the Emperor, that their privileges would be religiously preserved to them by the new government, they quietly submitted.

The first care of the knights, after having



settled their authority through the two islands, was to provide some better accommodation for the present, and to choose a proper place to fix their habitation. But, as the island had no other defence than the old castle of St. Angelo, and was so much exposed on all sides, that it would have required greater sums than their exhausted treasury could spare, to put it in a proper state to resist an attack, the Grandmaster was obliged to content himself with surrounding the above mentioned castle, (wherein he had ordered new buildings to be reared for the present habitation of his knights) with a stout wall, to prevent its being surprised by the Turkish and Barbary corsairs.

The Turks made several attempts to gain a footing on the island; but were always repulsed with loss. In 1546, the famous corsair Dragut effected a landing, and sacked the village of Tarshien; but being attacked by the English commander Upton, at the head of the Maltese, he was obliged to betake himself to a disgraceful flight. In 1551, another attempt was made, which proved equally unsuccessful to the Turks; but in which the Order lost the Cavalier Repton, the Grand Prior of England. D' Omedes, who was Grandmaster at this time, added a great many fortifications to the island. L' Isle de la Sengle, his successor, carried on these means of defence, especially the walls

around the peninsula, which is now called after his name, La Sengle, or Senglea.

During the reign of John de La Valette who succeeded La Sengle, Malta was destined to undergo its severest attack from the hands of the Turks. A short sketch of the siege and the capture of the castle of St. Elmo will be given under the description of that fort, which was the only place the enemy succeeded in taking. After two successive attempts, the united forces under Mustapha and Dragut were obliged to set sail from the island, after suffering great loss, and giving the Knights of Malta an opportunity of testing their renowned bravery and signal courage.

One of the first cares of the Grandmaster, after repairing the fort, which had greatly suffered during the siege, was to enlarge the castle of St. Elmo, as this was the chief key of the two ports. But his great design was that of building a new city on the peninsula where it stood, and of fortifying it in such a manner, as might render it a more secure retreat for the Order than that of Borgo, which is commanded by rocks and eminences. As soon as he had secured sufficient assistance, he immediately set about procuring the best engineers for the enterprise; workmen and materials were brought from Sicily, and he was enabled to lay the first stone of the new

city, on the 28th. day of March 1566. In 1571, three years after the death of La Valette, the city was completed by the Grandmaster Peter de Monte, and from that time became the seat of the government.

The successive Grandmasters of the Order augmented the fortifications which had been begun under La Valette, raised numerous forts in the interior, and along the coast of the island, and established various institutions, which shall be described in the sequel of this work. A predatory warfare, by sea and land, was continually kept up between the Knights of Malta and the Turks, in which the former generally displayed more valour than true christian charity. They were in general successful, and at length became quite a terror to the Ottoman power.

During the Grandmastership of Emmanuel de Pinto, the King of Sicily made some pretensions on the island of Malta, declaring that it had only been yielded up to the Order, on condition that the supreme sovereignty should continue to be vested in the hands of the Kings of Sicily; that consequently he intended to send a Court to the island, called *Monarchia*, which should have the jurisdiction over all public affairs. This message was considered an infringement upon the rights of the existing government, and treated

with that indignity which so false an assertion merited. Still the king persisted in his attempt, and went so far, as to send the threatened court, in a splendid barge, handsomely damasked on the inside, to establish themselves in the island. Hearing of the arrival of so extraordinary an embassy, the Grandmaster sent forthwith to demand their errand; and not less astonished than enraged, when he understood that it was the *Monarchia*, he immediately ordered them to leave the harbour, and declaring that in case they disobeyed, he would honour them with a salute of shot. Not expecting such a reception, the disappointed court weighed anchor, and returned home. When the king heard of the failure of his scheme, he ordered the ports of Sicily to be closed against all Maltese vessels, and cut off the communication between this island and his dominions. This was a terrible blow to Malta, as all her supplies were derived from Sicily; and, being at continual war with the Turks, she could procure nothing from Africa. At this crisis, the Grandmaster entered into a truce with the Infidels, in order that the Ottoman ports might be opened to the Maltese. The Turks gladly accepted the proposal, as it gave them a short reprieve from the uninterrupted annoyance which their commerce received from the gallies of the Knights. During this time, the

Turks continually brought supplies of every kind to the island; and were so assiduous in their attentions, that they even imported snow during summer, which is so much used here in making refreshments. Acting now as they did in conjunction with the Order, in carrying on an offensive warfare against the King of Sicily, they soon made him feel, that he had raised up against himself a formidable enemy, which he was not able to repress. After loosing many of his vessels, which had been seized by one or other of his enemies, he sought for a renewal of the peace, relinquished his unjust claims, and made every possible reparation to the Grandmaster, for the war he had occasioned.

The Bailiff Emmanuel de Rohan, of the language of France, succeeded Ximenes, the successor of Pinto, in the year 1775. One of his first acts after his elevation was to strengthen the executive government, by the formation of a regular battalion of infantry, composed promiscuously of Maltese and foreigners; but officered exclusively by knights. This step was thought decidedly necessary, if the knights wished to preserve their authority; and the plan was strenuously recommended by several friendly powers. This corps was intrusted with the keeping of La Valette, and the other important forts;

while a considerable force was also enrolled to guard the open coast. Several other efforts were made by the Grandmaster, to revive the ancient discipline of the Order; judicious alterations were carried into effect in the courts of judicature, and additional facilities given to public education. Nor, while thus busied in improving the internal administration, did the Grandmaster neglect the foreign policy of the Order. In Poland he obtained the restitution of some ancient possessions, and had new commanderies formed in Russia and Germany; which latter were endowed with the confiscated property of the Jesuits, to the extent of £15,000.

This, however, was only the sunshine of prosperity, which was destined to be darkened by the clouds of adversity. Towards the latter part of Emmanuel de Rohan's reign, the Order suffered serious losses, by the extinction of many of its commanderies, and the taxes imposed upon others by their several governments. By an edict of France, dated 19th. of September 1792, the Order of Malta was declared to be extinct within the French territories, and its possessions were annexed to the national domains. To shew the delapidated state of the revenue, it need only be mentioned, that the receipts, which were in 1788 upwards of three million of livres,



were in 1797 reduced to one million. Not only were the possessions of the three French languages confiscated, but the German and Arragonian commanderies, situated in Alsace, Rousillon and French Navarre, fell also a prey to republican rapacity. Even in Spain, Sicily, Portugal and Naples, a similar system of spoliation had taken place. In this extremity, the Grand-master Hompesch, who had succeeded Rohan, found it necessary to melt and coin the plate of the galleys, and part of that used for the service of the hospitals; and to make use of the jewels, which were deposited in the palace, and in several of the churches.

The French government, which had for some time manifested a spirit of hostility to the Order, now came forward to display it openly. The first division of the French fleet arrived before the port of Malta, on the 6th. of June 1798. On the 9th, General Bonaparte, with the remainder of the squadron, stood off the island, and through his consul Carson demanded free admission for the whole fleet. This not being complied with, on the same day, towards evening, the French began to disembark at the bay of Sta. Maddalena, and carried the small fort of St. George, without the loss of a single life. On the following day, fresh bodies of troops were thrown ashore, without meeting

with any resistance; who immediately began to lay waste the island with their usual license. Towards the evening, the French army had secured almost all the important posts in the country, and had advanced beneath the walls of the city, where the greatest uproar now prevailed among the people, on account of the treachery which had been discovered among several knights of the Order.

On the 17th. a council was called, and it was resolved to yield up the city into the hands of the besiegers. No sooner did the French find themselves the uncontrolled masters of the island, than they enjoined all the knights to quit it within three days. About ten pounds sterling were advanced to each, for the expenses of his journey; but he was not permitted to depart, until he had torn the cross from his breast, and mounted the tricoloured cockade. By the articles of capitulation, the French engaged to pay the Grandmaster an annual pension of 300,000 livres, and to each French knight resident in Malta, a yearly allowance of 700 livres, with 300 livres additional, to such as exceeded sixty years of age. Hompesch, accompanied by twelve knights, embarked on the night of the 17th. of June, on board a merchant ship bound for Trieste, accompanied by a French frigate. This weak man died at



Montpelier in 1804, in the sixty-second year of his age. The knights who followed the most prosperous course, at the general dispersion, were those who took refuge in the Russian dominions, under the wing of their Imperial protector. The Emperor Paul was solemnly inaugurated, as the seventieth Grandmaster of the Order, in the year 1798; a nominal dignity, after which he had anxiously longed. At the same time, the standard of St. John was hoisted on the bastions of the Admiralty at St. Petersburg, where it continues unfurled unto this day.

Paul made several attempts to reorganize the Order; and to this end invited the nobility of Christendom to enlist themselves as knights in its service. A sudden change of policy, however, put an end to his project; for the army which he had raised to act in junction with the English for the reconquest of Malta, was sent to act against the British possessions in the East.

The French expedition, with General Bonaparte, weighed anchor from Malta, on the 19th. of June, leaving General Vaubois with 4,000 men for the defence of the island. The rarities found in the public treasury, and in the churches of the Order, together with their standards and trophies, were all carried away by the spoilers, but never reached the country for which they

were destined: part of them perished in the *Orient*, which was blown up in the battle of Aboukir, and the rest were captured by the English in the *Sensible* frigate, which afterwards fell into their hands.

In the meanwhile, the Maltese began to feel that they had exchanged a feeble despotism for a yoke of extreme rigour. The French soldiery committed all sorts of depredations throughout the city; all faith was violated, every species of injustice was committed, the pensions suspended, and even the charitable benefactions to the indigent, which the knights had daily continued to the hour of their surrender, were withheld. These acts of oppression created an invincible antipathy in the Maltese for the government of their conquerors, and at length produced a sudden burst of popular vengeance. An attempt was made to despoil the church of the Città Notabile, in order that its decorations might be sold for the public service; whereupon the inhabitants, rendered furious by a proceeding so sacrilegious, congregated in a body to prevent the sale. The French commandant Mosson succeeded in partly quelling the tumult; but he soon found it necessary to apply for fresh troops from Valetta. Before these could arrive, the population was reinforced by the villagers of Casal Zebbug, who

massacred the entire French detachment, with their commander, amounting to sixty men. From this moment, all communication ceased between the city and the interior, and Valetta assumed the aspect of a place reduced to a state of blockade.

Matters were in this state when the English fleet appeared off the island, and in conjunction with a Portuguese squadron held a parley; in which it was demanded, that the island should be immediately evacuated. The answer returned was one of defiance; and a rigorous blockade was forthwith commenced. The Portuguese admiral was left alone to maintain the blockade during the temporary absence of the English squadron; on the return of which, a fresh summons was sent for the place to surrender. Early in December the same was repeated, which was firmly and laconically answered. Hitherto the city had only been partially cannonaded by a few guns; but on the night succeeding the last refusal, several new batteries were unmasked, and some balls happening to fall within the walls, the inhabitants feared that the threatened bombardment was about being put into execution. Famine now began to stare them in the face; and the greatest misery raged among the citizens and soldiery. In these circumstances, the inhabitants of the interior

planned an enterprize against the garrison, in conjunction with a strong body of the town people, who were involved in the plot, and who were ready to rise in arms, as soon as they should hear the clangour of arms on the battlements. Two hundred Maltese, favoured by the night, crept into the ditches, and along the sea shore, close under the city walls in the Marsamuscetto harbour; but while laying in ambush, they were unfortunately discovered, and the alarm was given to the garrison. On this occasion, forty-four of the conspirators were apprehended, and shot by the French authorities.

The blockade had now lasted for six months, and the city exhibited a scene of frightful privation. The besiegers would not permit any to leave the town, knowing that their doing so would relieve the garrison. Disease added its ravages to the general suffering, and soldiers and citizens became alike its victims. Month after month passed heavily over, and in August 1800, the citizens being totally beggared, the army was put on half pay. Four months afterwards it was entirely stopped, and their rations greatly lessened. Still they bore all with astonishing fortitude, being supported with the hope of speedy deliverance. At length, however, the news of the interception of the supplies, and their capture

by the English, disheartened many, though it did not at once decide them to capitulate. The condition of the town was dreadful beyond description. Fresh pork brought seven shillings and two pence a pound; rats sold at an exorbitant price; dogs and cats were generally eaten, and horses, asses and mules were similarly converted into articles of food. On the 8th. of September 1800, a parley was held with the besiegers, when the terms of capitulation were arranged and ratified by Major General Pigot and Commodore Martin on behalf of the English. On the afternoon of the same day, two English frigates and some small craft entered the port; while the British troops took possession of the Forts Tigné, Ricasoli, and Floriana. The following morning, the French garrison sailed away, after having endured an obstinate blockade of two years.

In the year 1814, agreeable to the resolution of the Congress of Vienna, the islands of Malta, Comino and Gozo were confirmed to the English crown; and they have ever since been considered, by all the powers of Europe, as a British dependency.

By way of comparison, we shall just give a succinct account of the state of financial affairs during the last years of the reign of the Knights

of Malta, in order to shew that the island has lost nothing in point of wealth or prosperity, in having ceased to be the conventual residence of that government, and in having come under the rule of the British Crown.

Reverting to the *public* expenditure of the Order, it may be satisfactory to compare it with the disbursement made here in present times out of funds voted by the British parliament.

In the time of the Order the *general* treasury, which may be said to answer to our *military chest*, provided for the military and naval charge, so far corresponding with the supplies now made by Her Majesty's treasury for carrying on similar services on this station.

The money laid out within the place by the general treasury from the foreign resources of the Order, on an average of ten years ending in 1788, did not exceed, if it even amounted to £82,525.

From the *First Report of the Commissioners of Colonial Inquiry*, 8th. December 1830, it is collected that the disbursement from the revenues of the United Kingdom made within these islands for the service of the land-force alone, including the commissariat and ordnance departments, but leaving out the Maltese regiment (the expense



of which is refunded from the local treasury,) amounted in round numbers to £101,000.\*

Of this sum, it may be inferred from the same Report, that about £7,000 were expended in England; which will leave £94,000 for the local expense, being in round numbers £11,000 more than were laid out in the place from the treasury of the Order for all its services.

To this excess of £11,000 must be added the expenses of the naval department in works of masonry, in the repairs and supplies of ships of war, and in payments on account of seamen's wages, all of which have been very considerable of late years, though varying according to circumstances; and it will probably result that, for the lowest year, the expenditure of the United Kingdom in these islands has exceeded by about fifty per cent the corresponding public expense of the Order.

By the same document it is seen that the works and repairs of the ordnance and barrack departments amounted in 1829 to no less a sum than

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\* According to the parliamentary return of the military expenses lately laid upon the table of the House of Commons, it appears that the expense of this island to the Military Chest of Great Britain was, for the year ending 31st. March 1837, £167,671; only exceeded by the extensive colonies of Jamaica, the West Indies, Canada, New South Wales, and the Cape of Good Hope.

£6,390; and, if the extensive works of the naval department be added, it must be evident that the Order cannot approach a comparison with the British government on the score of employment given to the industrious inhabitants, whose interests are no longer, as they were then, opposed by the forced labour of slaves.

Besides the expenditure out of the public treasury of the Order, it is assumed, on a generous calculation, that the sum of £185,000 was annually put into circulation in the island out of the private incomes of the knights and other members. Against these disbursements are to be set the whole personal expenditure of naval officers,\* the portion of expense arising from the private incomes of military officers, and the excess of money spent beyond what may have been the case formerly, in consequence of the greater affluence of strangers to the place, under the extended connexions and superior protection now enjoyed through British power and influence.

The last assumption may indeed admit of dispute; but in whatever light it may be viewed, it will remain with the reader to form his own conclusion in regard to the extent to

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\* That of the seamen, originating from the military chest, comes into the comparison of *public* expenditure.



which the island may have obtained compensation, since it has been annexed to the British empire, for loss of the benefit which it derived from the incomes of the resident knights.

It is well known, however, that of late years British squadrons have continued at anchor in this port during many successive months. The money laid out in the place by the officers and seamen, and expended in the supply of fresh provisions, is likely to amount, at such times, for each ship of the line, to between £1000 and £2000 a month, exclusive of the charge for repairs and the supply of stores.

But, whatever may have been the effect, to contest the superior protection enjoyed under the present ruling power, can scarcely enter the imagination of one accustomed to judge from the evidence of his senses. Let him refer to a map of the island, and he will perceive the population huddled together within from half to two-thirds of its surface, and (where not bounded by precipitous heights or rugged shores) shut in by lines or works of defence, such as those at Marsasci-rocco, St. Julian's, Nasciar and elsewhere,—works now become useless, although they still continue to bound the generally inhabited part of the island, through the force of habit and the situation of the parish churches. This concentration was

caused by the insecurity of the people. In the days of the Order, no inhabitant trusted himself to sleep on the coast unsecured by walls of defence, as the solitary mansions of Spinola and Selmoon, built in those times strong enough to repel a sudden attack of corsairs, fully attest; but, under British protection, the marine villages of St. Julian and Sliema have sprung up, where the inhabitants enjoy the sea-breeze without dread of being dragged from their beds into slavery.

The truth is, that, without the protection of a great maritime power, Malta must be constantly exposed to aggressions, which can only cease or become mitigated in proportion as they reduce her to poverty, and leave her an object of no temptation. The island is not naturally fertile but by the exertions of an industrious population aided by a genial climate it has been rendered highly productive, through the adequate protection enjoyed during the last three centuries. That it was flourishing under the Phœnicians, Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans, the monumental remains would prove, if the fact were not evident from the maritime power of those nations combined with its favourable position; but during the middle ages, under the precarious sway of the Arabs, Normans and Sicilians, the island fell to decay, and had not recovered in 1530, when it was given over by

Charles V. to the knights, who found the place in a state of great destitution. This fact appears from the report of the commissioners who on that occasion were deputed by the knights to visit Malta. Among other remarks they observed: "The island is continually exposed to the rapacity and devastation of infidel corsairs, who, without any dread of the castle, freely enter both ports, and very often reduce to slavery a great number of poor Maltese." The population has been estimated\* to have consisted at this time of about 25,000 souls in both islands, and to have increased to about 100,000 during the following 268 years of occupation by the Order. This advancement in population, and consequently in wealth, could not have proceeded, had it not been guarded by the maritime power of the knights, furnished as it was by the papal, and respected by the protestant states of Europe. Previously to their sway, the two principal harbours seem, by the extract just given, to have facilitated invasions rather than afforded defence, and an inner cove was selected for the sea-port; but the knights transferred their main position to the neglected site on which Valetta now stands between the two harbours, which in time became no longer

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\* Ransijat, *Journal du Siège et Blocus de Malte*, p. 294.

disproportioned to the extent of her commerce and public establishments.

Nevertheless, the protection of the Order, superior as it was to any thing previously enjoyed by the Maltese, was not of a nature, through its continued course of warfare with piratical states, to advance them far as a maritime people. Notwithstanding the advantageous position of the island, in the channel dividing the eastern from the western portion of the Mediterranean, insecurity against depredators at sea originally forced the Maltese to become a rustic rather than a maritime people. It is remarkable, even at the present day, how much the rural prevails over the maritime in the features of the place; and equally so that the Maltese should not compete, with the success that might be expected, with others engaged in the carrying trade of the Mediterranean, while they enjoy a protection more efficient both at sea and on shore than history records. Under the knights, the people felt secure, considered as a single body, like a garrison confidently sustaining a siege, whose killed, wounded and captured are not of sufficient number to effect a marked impression upon the general features of the place; but under the superior maritime power of Great Britain, that security is felt by each individual in his own person.

That there is still much room for improvement in the condition of the lower classes here, and great distress prevailing among them, is too evident; but whatever may now be the extent of misery, it may be confidently affirmed to be less than it was in the time of the knights, if we merely consider the greater proportion of wheaten bread at present consumed within both islands. During the last years of the Order, the annual consumption of foreign wheat was about 43,000 salms or quarters by 100,000 inhabitants: at present it averages about 57,000 among 115,000 souls; giving for each individual 3.96 bushels now, against 3.44 formerly, exclusive of the consumption from the native harvest, which cannot be less at the present day. As regards their future welfare, let us hope that, as the Maltese are an industrious people, who for their honesty, sobriety and other excellent qualities will bear a comparison with any nation upon earth, means may be devised for mitigating the distress which many of them continue to suffer through poverty. The charitable disposition of the wealthier classes of Maltese is too well known to require being pointed out; but it may be remarked that an extensive field still remains open to their benevolent exertion, by their uniting for the formation of some well concerted plan, adapted to improve

permanently the condition of the lower orders of their fellow countrymen.

According to a statement extracted from the documents of the Land-Revenue Office, it is seen that between September 1800 and December 1829 the civil services of these islands were supplied out of the revenues of the United Kingdom with no less an aid than the net amount of £668,666 7s. 2d. sterling.\*

These remarks conclude the comparison between the expenditure of the Order and that of the United Kingdom, as defrayed in Malta. The civil finances of the island under the British Government for the last two years is as follows: in 1836 the revenue was £95,392 8 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ , the expenditure £89,224 10 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ; and in 1837 the income was £103,142 1 4, and the total expenditure £97,497 1 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ . The chief part of the revenue is derived from maritime and judicial duties and dues, and the proceeds of landed rents belonging to the English crown; the interior taxes on the island last year amounted only to £2,858 16 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ . The surplus revenue is paid over into the Military chest towards defraying the expenses of the Malta Fencible Regiment.

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\* For the foregoing account of the finances of Malta under the Government of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem I am indebted to W. Thornton, Esq. by whose kindness I am permitted to extract several paragraphs



Since Malta has been under the dominion of England, the inhabitants have enjoyed all the rights and privileges of British subjects. Until very recently, the direction of all public affairs was vested in the hands of the governor, who is appointed to the office by the Home Government, and usually holds the rank of General in the army. In 1835, His late Majesty, William IV. was graciously pleased to appoint a Council within these his possessions, to advise and assist in the administration of the government thereof; which Council at present consists of six persons,\* exclusive of the Governor, three of whom must at all times be persons holding offices within this island or its dependencies, and the remaining Members persons not holding offices. The Senior Officer in command of Her Majesty's land forces in Malta, the Honourable Chief Justice, and the Chief Secretary to Government are the three official Members as aforesaid. The three unofficial Members are elected by His Excellency the

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from his valuable work on the subject, printed at the Government Press 1836, to which I refer the reader for the calculation of those statements, which for the sake of brevity I have assumed.

\* It was intended originally that this Council should consist of seven persons beside the Governor, including the Romish Archbishop of the island; but this prelate, not being permitted by the Pope to take the required oath, has resigned his seat.

Governor, two from out of the chief landed proprietors and merchants of the island, being Her Majesty's native-born subjects, and the third from out of the principal merchants being British-born subjects, who must have been actually resident for a period of not less than two years.

The Members of this Her Majesty's Council enjoy the freedom of debate and vote, in all affairs of public concern that may be brought under their consideration in Council; and, whilst Members, are authorized to assume the adjunctive title of *Honourable*.

This court must be considered, in every respect, as a gracious concession on the part of the British government, which accords to all her possessions the benefits of her free and liberal constitution. It, however, does not come up with the wishes of the people. They desire to have a National Parliament, or *Consiglio Popolare*, elected by themselves, which shall have entire direction of the public affairs; and to obtain which they have made all possible exertions. To say nothing of the inconsistency which there would be in the establishment of such an assembly with our present constitution, and the universal mode in which England has treated her colonies, the smallness of the territory, and the general unfitness of the inhabitants, at present, to govern



themselves, which they have never done, would be a sufficient reason for their request to be denied.

Within the last two years, a Commission of Special Inquiry was appointed by parliament to examine into the affairs of the island, consisting of two eminent gentlemen, who resided here for about eighteen months; during which time a few alterations were made in the local administration. So far, the best result of their efforts may be seen in the plans which are now about being brought into execution, for the wider spread of education among the people. To the Normal schools, which were established in Valetta and Senglea, several others have been added in the country, in which a great number of children have commenced a course of instruction; and some improvements are contemplated in the University. The prohibition against private presses has been abolished; though all publications must still undergo a censorship from government. In consequence of this, several printing offices have been opened, and no less than five papers\* are at present published, and circulated in the island.

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\* The *Harlequin*, published twice a week in English; the *Portafoglio* and *Mediterraneo*, two weekly papers, the former in Italian, the latter in Italian and English; the *Spettatore Imparziale* and the *Ape Melitense*, two monthly publications written entirely in Italian.

Besides the above, the *Malta Government Gazette* still continues to be issued every Wednesday.

The entire freedom of the press has been anxiously expected by the people, for some months past; and we understand that the delay is occasioned in drawing up the laws and regulations by which it is to be governed. We sincerely hope, that these circumstances will lead to the welfare and advancement of the people, in moral as well as intellectual cultivation.

Several other alterations of minor importance have been made, which do not merit a place in this brief account of the principal changes which have taken place in this island, under the various governments to which it has been subject. In the progress of this work, remarks will be made upon the condition of the people, the administration of justice, and the various institutions at present existing, which will throw light upon the whole state of public affairs as they now stand.

PART II.

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GENERAL

DESCRIPTION OF MALTA.

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## DESCRIPTION OF MALTA,

TOGETHER WITH A BRIEF OUTLINE OF ITS PRODUCTIONS, CLIMATE, LANGUAGE, &c.



### *Geographical situation and features of the island.*

Malta, in respect to its situation, is farther distant from the mainland than any other island in the Mediterranean. It lies in  $35^{\circ} 50'$  of north latitude, and  $14^{\circ} 12'$  east longitude from Greenwich. It is 60 miles distant from the nearest point of Sicily, which bounds it on its north between Capo Passero and Camarano; 190 miles from Cape Spartivento, the nearest point of the mainland of Italy, and 200 from Calipia, the nearest point of Africa; so that by its position, it may claim to be an island appertaining to

Europe. It is about 60 miles in circumference; its greatest width is twelve, and length twenty. Its longest day is 14 hours, 52½ minutes.

The two chief ports of the island are divided by the oblong peninsula on which the town of Valetta is built. The Grand Harbour, which is to the east, is about a mile and a half in length, and less than three quarters of a mile in width at the mouth. This again contains several convenient creeks or small bays, where even large vessels of war may ride safely at anchor. The entrance into this harbour is defended by the forts St. Elmo, Ricasoli, and the castle St. Angelo, so that a forcible landing from this quarter would be next to impossible, if the above fortresses were properly supplied with men and ammunition. The harbour to the west, called *Marsa muscetto*,\* is destined for vessels arriving from places not in free pratique. Here they are obliged to perform their quarantine, and hence called also the Quarantine Harbour. This latter is also defended by Fort St. Elmo on the one side, and Fort Tigné on the other. The Fort Manoel, which is built on a small island within the harbour, is also intended to act upon its entrance in case of attack.

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\* *Marsa*, is an Arabic word signifying a place for anchorage, a harbour.

Besides the harbours above mentioned, there are several others in different parts of the island. The principal of these are Marsa Scala, Marsa Scirocco, and St. Thomas's bay on the south-east, and the Bay of St. Paul, St. Julian and Melleha on the north west. Each of these is defended by a small fort, garrisoned at present by a detachment of the Malta Fencibles. Besides these forts, there are several others built round the coast, in order to prevent smuggling, and to give the alarm in case of the appearance of an enemy off the island.

Most of the southern coast of the island is by nature inaccessible. The rocks, which rise up perpendicularly from the sea to the height of three hundred feet, form a natural fortification it would be impossible to destroy. From the general broken and rugged appearance of many parts of the shore, especially in this quarter, it is very probable that at some distant period the island underwent several extraordinary convulsions of nature; but the occasion of such an event is probably beyond the reach of history or tradition. The other divisions of the coast are low and rocky, and present a very barren appearance.

## FERTILITY AND PRODUCTIONS.

*Soil—Cultivation—Industry of the inhabitants—Corn—Cotton—Clover—Fruits—Figs—Singular process in cultivation of—Supply of water—Cattle—Fowl—Birds—Fish.*

Notwithstanding the stony soil of Malta the culture which is bestowed upon it renders it very fertile. The mould is not remarkably rich nor very deep in any part of the island. On many of the hills and rising grounds the fields are enclosed with stone walls, built up so as to form terraces, in order to prevent the heavy rains of winter from washing away the soil, and preventing the cattle from entering them. These walls, which are formed of the broken stones from the quarries of the island, give the country a very monotonous appearance; while their bright colour reflects back the rays of the sun in summer, and renders the heat much more powerful.

The chief productions of the island are corn and cotton. In some parts the land yields 40 and even 60 to one of the former, while in others not more than from 12 to 25. This fertility must be attributed as well to the industry of the Maltese farmers, as to the natural richness of the



soil. Indeed, the industry of the country people in cultivating their little island is surprising. The land is never permitted to rest, but is laboured and sown year after year without intermission. Wheat is sown every alternate year with barley and clover about the month of November; the harvest commences in June. The barley is gathered about the month of May. After this crop, the fields are sown with cotton, melons, cummin, sesam, and other seeds. By this process, the land is not exhausted, and should it appear to be getting poor, instead of barley, peas, beans, Indian-corn and other leguminous plants are substituted.

The cotton of Malta is of a very fine quality, and forms the chief article of export. It is of two kinds, distinguished by their colours, one being white, and the other of a dark nankeen colour. This plant is sown about the end of May, and gathered in the early part of September when the rains begin. In the year 1801, the value of raw cotton produced in these islands amounted to about half a million sterling. From various causes, however, especially the new discoveries of machinery for preparing this article, and the abundant supplies from Egypt, from whence it can be procured at a cheaper rate, the value of late years has diminished one half. The seed of

this plant is used by the inhabitants for fattening their cattle, and I remarked that the same custom prevailed in the east, it being the chief food which the Arabs of Syria and Palestine give to their camels.

A fine species of clover, called by Linnæus *hedysarum coronarium* with a red flower, is very abundantly produced in this island during the rainy season. The appearance of the fields when this plant is in blossom is really delightful. It grows to the height of from four to five feet, and forms green forage for horses, mules, &c. in winter, and what remains is put up and dried to be used as hay in summer. The other provender given to cattle is barley and carobs; both which are raised in the island, but not in sufficient quantity for the consumption. The carob or locust abounds here, and is one of the few trees which are green all the year round. It is found scattered about the country, and grows in the most stony and rocky soil. Many of the poorer classes use this fruit as an article of food, and when baked in the oven possesses by no means a disagreeable flavour. It is quite common in the country for the traveller to be annoyed by children who hold out their hands begging for *Habba Harroob*, a grain to buy locust with.

Besides the above, Malta affords a great abundance of vegetables and fruits. In fact, it would be a surprising sight for a stranger to stand without the gates of Port des Bombes, before sun-rise during the fruit season, and see the numerous carts laden with rich supplies of the above articles waiting for admittance into the city.

The market, at this time, is well stocked with strawberries, figs, pomegranates, grapes, apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums, melons and prickly-pears, which are sold at very low prices, and upon which many of the poorer classes, who are unable to purchase other food, chiefly subsist. The oranges of Malta are justly prized for their excellent quality; and the great quantities which are exported to England and other countries shews the esteem in which they are held abroad. The season continues for upwards of five months, from November to April, during which time these beautiful trees are covered with abundance of fruit. The *egg* and *blood* oranges are considered the most superior. The latter has been produced, according to some, by ingrafting the common orange-bud on a pomegranate stock; but this opinion is quite unnatural, and requires evidence to sustain it. The grapes also are excellent, but the island does not produce more than sufficient for its own consumption. The

first fig, which is called *baitra ta San Juan*, or St. John's fig, because it is generally ripe about the anniversary of the feast of that apostle, is of a large size, much larger than I ever met with in any part of the East. About the latter end of July, three other kinds appear, of a smaller size, but of a more delicious flavour; one of these is white, and the other two are of a black or dark purple colour called by the natives *farketsân* and *parsott*. A little later, a second crop from the tree of the first large fig is ripe; but this is of an inferior quality, and not held in much esteem.

A peculiar process in the treatment of this fruit is worthy of remark; and the necessity of its adoption in some countries, to the exclusion of others, is a question which the curious may find it interesting to determine. When the figs are advancing towards maturity, in order to prevent their falling off, and to hasten the ripening, a cluster of male figs is suspended upon the branches of the female tree, by means of a plant (*Ammi majus*) called on this account *Dakra*, which effectually secures them from the danger, and soon effects the desired end. The male tree is called by the natives *dokkâra*; and as many small winged insects are generally found in the fruit upon opening, it is the firm belief of the country people that the tree generates them. 1

have heard several opinions advanced on the subject, but the most rational way of accounting for it, is that these small flies, which abound about all kinds of fruit trees, entering into the male fig, get clothed with the pollen with which the stamina on the inside are covered, and, carrying it with them into the female fig, produce that natural coalition which is necessary for the effectual generation of fruit.

Attempts were made during the government of Sir Fred. Cayendish Ponsonby to cultivate the cochineal in these islands; but the attempt failed, as the climate was not found to be favourable. More recently, also, much has been done in regard to the rearing of silk-worms, for which numerous trees were planted during the government of the late Marquis of Hastings; but, although the silk produced was of an excellent quality, it was found that the trade would not turn to profit, as the worms did not thrive, and has therefore lately been abandoned.

The land is supplied with water by the various wells and springs which are found on the island. Of the latter there are a great many, besides numerous cisterns in almost every field throughout the country. These together with the light dews which fall during the spring and summer months are sufficient to render the ground fertile and

abundant, because the soil, being very shallow, is soon moistened through; and as the rock below is of a soft porous nature, it retains what is over and thus keeps the roots perpetually moist. Were this not the case, there would be no crops at all in summer, the heat of the sun being so exceedingly violent.

In regard to cattle, the greater part for the consumption of the island is brought over from the Barbary States. Oxen, especially, are imported from that quarter, and after being fed here for a short time yield very excellent beef. The mutton is less valued, as it is much poorer on account of the little pasture there is for cattle in the country. The sheep, however, are very prolific, often bringing forth four lambs, and scarcely ever less than two. The goats are of a superior quality, very large, and yielding abundance of milk. It is the custom for the milk-man to lead about his goats in the morning and evening through the streets, in order to serve any who may call for him; he then kneels down at the door, and milks the animal before the customer. The milk of the sheep is used particularly for making curd; and in Gozo, a very pleasant kind of fresh cheese, with which it supplies our island, is produced from the same.

The asses and mules of Malta and Gozo are



very remarkable for their extraordinary size and the symmetry of their shape. These animals form the chief vehicles for carrying burdens and for draught, and not unfrequently are seen yoked with oxen engaged in treading out corn. The Maltese are in general very careful of their beasts, and take care to supply them with a sufficiency of food.

The race of Maltese dogs, so much renowned in Europe, and called *bichons* by Buffon in his Natural History, is now nearly extinct. They are very small, with long glistening hair reaching down to the feet, a face covered with the same, and a turned-up nose. I acknowledge that I can see but very little beauty in these dwarfish creatures, and am led to think it is only their rarity which fixes their value at so high a price; they are sometimes sold for forty dollars.

Fowls, turkies, ducks, geese, rabbits, and other domestic birds and animals are always found in the market, though by no means of a superior quality. Game is less plentiful, except in the months of September and April, when there are generally a great many quails, which light upon the island in their flight, and are not unfrequently caught by the hand. Wild duck, snipe, fig-peckers, woodcocks, plovers and doves form the chief game for sportsmen.



The harbour and the surrounding sea yield abundance of fish, of which there is seldom any want. Mullet, whittings, tunny, sword fish, eels and various others of the crustaceous genus, such as lobsters, crabs and shrimps are the principal supply of the market. Of the testaceous kind, oysters are found in great plenty, as also several species of the *cardium* or cockle, the *venus*, the *tellina*, and the *patella*, of which the natives are very fond. The *phola dactylus*, or sea-date, is also another species very much esteemed by the inhabitants. It is found in soft lime-stones taken out of the sea, and in such quantities, that I have seen fifty extracted from a stone not more than a foot square. It is of two kinds, one with a brown and the other with a white shell; the latter is very phosphoric. Signor Trapani, a Maltese gentleman, has lately published a very interesting catalogue in five languages of the fish to be met with at Malta. He numbers about 150 different species.

The *argonauta argo*, or Paper Nautilus, is sometimes found here, but I have never seen it together with the animal. The shell is of the *broad keel* species.



## BOTANY.\*

The indigenous plants of Malta, or such as grow spontaneously on these islands, are perhaps more numerous than might be expected, from the dry nature of the soil, and the small extent of uncultivated ground existing. Dr. Zerafa, in his 'Floræ Melitensis Thesaurus,' enumerates 644 species of plants. Deducting from this number those which are cultivated, and adding the omissions, the whole number of indigenous plants may not perhaps be very far from 700. A great portion of them, as the situation will naturally lead to expect, are maritime plants, common to the coasts of the Mediterranean in general. Such, however, as require a sandy beach, are comparatively few: as *Polygonum maritimum*, in St. George's bay; *Cakile Ægyptiacum*, in the bay of Mellieha; *Euphorbia Peplis*, *E. Paralias*, *E. terracina*, and *Eryngium maritimum*, at Mellieha and Gozo; *Pancratium illyricum*, Gozo. One of the most common maritime plants of Malta, not mentioned by Dr. Zerafa,

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\* For this interesting article on the Botanical productions and rarities of Malta, I am indebted to my much esteemed friend Mr. P. Brenner, who has bestowed much attention to this branch of science, particularly as connected with this island. I believe, that were he to publish all the information which he has collected on this delightful subject, it would be considered as a valuable acquisition by amateurs.

is the lowly *Crucianella maritima*, which blossoms in May and June; the strong aromatic perfume of the flowers of this plant after sunset, betrays it at a distance. On the rocks, especially of the southern coast, are particularly to be noticed, *Hypericum Ægyptiacum*, and *Anthyllis Hermannia*.

Malta is remarkable for its richness in plants belonging to the natural order *Papilionaceæ*, the *Diadelphia Decandria* of Linnæus. Of this, the genus *Trifolium* counts the greatest number of species, among which the most interesting ones are *T. subterraneum* and *T. suffocatum*; both not mentioned by Dr. Zerafa. Then the genres *Medicago*, *Melilotus*, *Lotus* and *Ononis*. The genus *Euphorbia* contains likewise a considerable number of species. Many different kinds of thistles are met with in Malta, of which the most formidable in appearance is the wild artichoke, *Cynara Cardunculus*. Remarkable for its venomous quality is the stalkless *Atractylis gummifera*; and the *Carlina lanata* for its fine purple-coloured flowers. Among the family of the grasses, of which Malta contains a great variety, one of the rarest and most curious is *Lygeum spartum*, found at St. Paul's bay, Mtahleb, Fauuara, &c. With regard both to abundance and elegance, the *Stipa tortilis*, by Dr. Zerafa erroneously called *Stipa pinnata*, is conspicuous. Aromatical plants of


the natural class *Labiatifloræ*, or *Didynamia gymnospermia* of Linnæus, are but few here, as *Mentha Pulegium*, *Melissa marifolia*, *Thymbra hirsuta*. The flowers of the latter are said to give the Malta honey its peculiar flavour. The plants are gathered and brought into town in large bundles for fuel.

Owing to the mildness of the climate, there is no intermission of vegetation all the year round, and consequently every month produces its peculiar flowers. The beginning of the vegetable year may justly be counted from the end of October, when the first rains have begun to restore to the soil the verdure of winter and spring. The first and most prominent flower which then makes its appearance is the *Ranunculus bullatus*, whose broad leaves and fragrant yellow flowers adorn all the uncultivated ground during November and December. This is immediately succeeded by the *Bellis annua*, the white little flowers of which are so abundant in December and January as to make the hills and way-sides appear as if covered with snow. Also its much taller sister *Bellis sylvestris* is not unfrequently met with at that season. The chief ornament of spring, however, is the pretty purple flowered *Silene ciliata*, which in March intersperses the white groups of the *Bellis*, and gives the ground a most delightful vivacity.

March and April are the months in which vegetation is in its most luxuriant state. Various species of the natural classes *Ensatae* and *Liliaceae*, or the class *Hexandria* of Linnæus bedeck, the fields and hills at this season; as *Asphodelus ramosus*, *Gladiolus communis*, *Iris sisyrinchium*, *Narcissus Tazetta*, *Hyacinthus comosus*, *Ornithogalum Narbonense*, and *O. Arabicum*; and in May several species of the interesting class *Orchideae*. The plants which blossom during the summer belong for the most part to the natural class *Compositae* or *Syngenesia superflua* Linnæi, with yellow flowers, and are almost exclusively maritime plants. For instance, in June and July: *Cineraria maritima*, *Centaurea Melitensis*, *Verbascum undulatum*, (cl. *Labiatifloræ*,) *Capparis sativa* (cl. *Rhœadeæ*) attiring with its large fragrant flowers the walls and rocks of the fortifications of Valetta. In July and August: *Inula crithmoides*, *Crithmum maritimum*, (cl. *Umbellifloræ*.) In August and September: *Inula foetida*, *Ambrosia maritima*, *Scilla maritima* (cl. *Liliaceæ*) whose leaves appear in November and die away in May. In September and October: *Inula viscosa*, and *Erigeron graveolens*. A plant very common in Malta, but rare in Europe, is the mean looking *Evax Pygmea*, which blossoms in April.

The following plants are confined to particular

spots, or are otherwise rare in Malta: *Putoria calabrica*, on a rock in the Uied el Asel; *Convolvulus Cneorum*, near Casal Dingli; *Convolvulus Cantabrica*, near Mtahleb; *Cheiranthus tricuspis*, near Marsa Scirocco; *Teucrium Scordioides*, *Helianthemum Fumana*, near Gezzuma; *Hyacinthus romanus*, at Fauuara, Mtahleb, and Mosta; *Carthamus coernleus*, at Mtahleb. On the rocks overhanging the Fauuara a plant grows plenteously which Dr. Zerafa called *Centaurea spathulata*, and about which some remarks may be found in the Malta Government Gazette of Feb. 20, 1833. On closer examination, however, it appears that it is no *Centaurea*. Several German Professors of botany who examined dried specimens did not recognise the plant. It may perhaps finally be made out to be a new genus. In Gozo, the so called General's or Fungus rock, is peculiarly remarkable for various plants not found in other parts of Malta and Gozo. Besides the well known *Cynamorium coccineum*, commonly called Fungus Melitensis, which blossoms in April and May, there is the *Cheiranthus sinuatus*, *Daucus gummi-ferus*, *Gnaphalium ambiguum*, and several others. A great variety of sea-weeds are also to be found along the rocky shore.





## CLIMATE.

*State of Thermometer—Sudden changes of temperature  
—Summer heat—South wind—Scirocco—Beauty  
of evening sky—Winter—Thunder.*

The climate of Malta has been variously described by persons, who perhaps were influenced by the particular effects it produced on their individual constitutions. This, though very natural, is an unfair way of deciding the general nature of the climate of any country. The freedom of the island from any endemic disease, the ordinary good health enjoyed by the natives, by the English, as also by foreigners resident here, and the actual state of the weather throughout the year, go very far towards establishing the salubrious nature of the atmosphere.

During the summer months the thermometer generally shifts from 80° to 88° of Fahrenheit, and towards the end of October sinks to 70°. From this time it gradually decreases until January, when it varies from 55° to 50°, below which it seldom falls, and again rises about the end of February to 60°. From March to May it generally ascends to 70°, and continues advancing until the latter end of June when the summer sets



iii. This range continues from one year to another without any important variation.

The time, however, in which one is most affected by the heat or cold, is not that which marks their extremes on the thermometer. That there is an almost continual contrast between our sensations and the instruments which measure the true temperature of the air, between sensible and real heat and cold, any person who has resided in Malta for a few years will have discovered. The heat is sometimes very oppressive when the thermometer is comparatively low; and the same remark holds good in regard to the cold in winter, when it is comparatively high. This may be attributed to the direction of the winds, their sudden changes producing a less or greater degree of heat or cold according to the quarter from whence they blow, and their violence modifying the sensations which they cause us to feel. The wind from the north and north-west always brings freshness, while that which blows from the south produces an increase in the heat.

Rain has been known to fall in summer, but is of very rare occurrence. The heat, however, is generally tempered by the north and north-westerly winds, which prevail during the hot months, and which render the evenings delightfully

pleasant. Though there are sometimes heavy falls of dew during this season, the natives do not find it injurious to sleep out in the open air, which is quite customary with many of the poorer classes, without any bed or covering. When the south wind prevails in summer, the heat is very oppressive; the atmosphere assumes a hazy appearance, the air has sometimes a disagreeable odour, and its effects on furniture and book-covers, which it cracks and warps, are very destructive. After this wind has lasted for a day or two, the air becomes quite still and confined, and the sensation felt is exceedingly uncomfortable. It is well that this state never continues for more than three or four successive days, and that it is not of frequent occurrence. This wind, which passes over the arid plains of Africa, is not purified from the corrupt miasma which it contains by crossing the sea, as the straits are so narrow between this island and that continent.

The wind, which has procured a bad name for Malta by foreigners, is the south-east, usually called the Scirocco. It is most prevalent in September, yet unfortunately is not confined to this month alone, but occurs occasionally throughout the year. Persons with diseased lungs suffer more or less from its consequences; and hence Malta is by no means a healthy place

for such as are inclined to consumption. Strangers, in general, are affected during the prevalence of the Sirocco with great lassitude and debility, which indisposes the system, and renders it liable to suffer from dyspepsia. The natives, however, seldom complain of its bad effects on their constitutions, but more of the inconveniences which it brings to workmen and mechanics. Any thing painted when this wind blows will never set well, glue loses much of its adhesive property, bright metals become tarnished, and from the dampness of the atmosphere the pavement of the streets is sometimes quite wet. Though this wind has occasionally held out for a week together, it seldom lasts more than three days successively.

The delightful appearance of the evening sky during summer is a phenomenon in the climate of Malta which deserves mentioning. A little before sun-set, and during the interval which elapses between that and dark, the whole western horizon exhibits a beautiful yellow, tinged with a variety of hues, which is truly grand. It is not uncommon for light clouds to intermingle in the scene, and occasionally rapid flashes of lightning to continue for several hours together, which, shining beneath the clouds, whose dark edges become more plain from the bright glare imparted to them, add an increasing grandeur to the prospect.

Perhaps this sight is not exceeded in magnificence by any appearance in the atmosphere, except the Aurora Borealis of the North.

The winter of Malta is very temperate, though the cold is sometimes exceedingly penetrating. This proceeds from the north wind, which is very prevalent during this season, and by the continued motion which it communicates to the air, incessantly renews the volume of it by which we are surrounded, and causes a sensation of cold which is very acute. That this is the case is proved from the fact, that upon removing from its action, the effects are immediately diminished. The north-east wind, known by the name of *Gregale*, which blows directly into the mouth of the harbour, has occasionally been sufficiently strong to drive a first rate man-of-war from her moorings. These gales sometimes come on so suddenly, that time is not given to make any provision against them; and consequently it is not an uncommon occurrence for vessels lying at anchor to be injured by the violence of the storm, although the harbour is one of the safest in the Mediterranean.

Rain falls very plenteously here in winter, and occasionally hail, but snow never. Very rarely does the rain continue for several days in succession, and it is quite common to enjoy delightful clear weather in the coldest season. Storms are

not frequent, and then not very violent, although there is in general much thunder during the winter. In cases when the claps are of long duration, and are known by their sound to be in the vicinity of the island, all the bells of the churches are made to ring. This, however, is generally delayed until the clouds containing the electrical fluid are in the zenith, from which, as it is natural to expect, they soon pass away and with them the lightning and its consequences. This natural phenomenon is attributed by many of the superstitious natives to the holy character of the bells, which on account of being baptized, they imagine that their noise must certainly have some prevalence with Him who "rides upon the wings of the wind, and holds the lightnings in his fists."

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#### POPULATION.

*Number of—Impoverished state of—Causes of the foregoing: Improvidence of the people—Want of education—Bad system of teaching Mechanics—Absence of a spirit of enterprise in the gentry.—Character of the people by a Spanish author.*

The island of Malta for its size contains a denser population than any other part of the habitable globe. Allowing 30,000 for Valetta, and Floriana,

it is calculated that the whole number of inhabitants amounts to 120,000 not including Gozo, which is reckoned at 18,000 more. According to this statement, it appears, that upon a given space of ground where England contains 152 souls, Malta contains nearly eight times the number. The assurance of an easy subsistence is in general considered the most natural cause for the increase of the population of any country; but, in the present case, I do not think the axiom will hold good. Notwithstanding what has been said concerning the fertility of this island, it is after all only a rock, and incapable from its size to afford adequate means of support to so crowded a population. In these two facts, the disproportionate number of inhabitants to the extent of soil possessed, we must look for the cause of the present impoverished state of the island. It is true that the lack of the produce of a country may be compensated by manufactures and commerce; but of the former Malta has no resources, and her commerce, spite of every attempt to increase it, remains stationary, and has certainly very materially failed during the last twenty or thirty years. In this respect, however, it is not alone; a general torpor has seized the trading world in this quarter for some time back, the several



causes of which I do not intend, as I am unable to explain.

In the report of the late Commissioners sent out to inquire into the grievances of the Maltese, they state the cause of the impoverished condition of the island to arise from "the improvidence of the people in multiplying their numbers beyond the demand for their labour." Nothing can be more true than this fact; no sooner does a lad arrive at the state of puberty, than he begins to think of marriage before he has made any provision at all for maintaining a family. The present system of endowing females is the cause of the most distressing consequences, as in numerous cases it is the only attraction which a young woman has for an individual who seeks her as his wife. However small the sum may be, very few are chosen but such as have something. This, when once in the hands of an idler, is soon spent in some hazardous project or speculation, if not in vice; and when he finds he can procure no more, either from his wife or her relations, he leaves her to her fate, either to be again received under her parents' roof, or to seek a living for herself and family in the best way she can. This is not an exaggerated picture of very many cases in Malta; and besides this, if the computation were made of the number of females at present on the island,



whose husbands have left them for a foreign land, I believe it would not fail to astonish.

To the above, however, we may add the want of education, as another cause of the poverty of the island. The overplus population which finds an asylum in the Barbary States, in Egypt, Syria, and in Turkey, are chiefly of one class, consisting almost exclusively of labourers who have already more than satisfied the demand for their work, and are, consequently, many of them, even in a worse state than their poor countrymen at home. Were the case different, were those who emigrated from the island capable of undertaking different branches of labour, both of a scientific as well as of a mechanical nature, there would be an increasing request for their services, as there would be more numerous situations which they would be able to fill.

Here perhaps it will not be out of place to mention the very bad system of training up tradesmen and artisans which exists at Malta; as this also, in connection with education, must have a very important bearing upon the interests of a nation. Here, a lad is put into a mechanic's shop by his parents, without any kind of agreement how long he is to continue at his business, or without any particular requisition from the master he is about to serve. It is commonly understood,

that the boy is to learn the trade in the best way he can. There being no law on the subject, the apprentice is at liberty to leave his master just when he pleases, which often happens before he half knows his business, and then endeavours to set up for himself. Every one will see that such a plan is attended with many disadvantages, and calculated to repress improvement in the important branch of labour, the mechanics. Such tradesmen, also, emigrating from the island, cannot be expected to meet with that good fortune which they would do were they perfectly trained in their different branches of labour. It is to be regretted that something like our apprentice system has not yet been adopted in Malta; it is certainly much needed, and could not fail to be productive of good.

Another cause for the poverty of the island lies in the entire want of a spirit of enterprise, so relevant of the interests of the lower orders of society. Very few of those who possess property think of laying it out in some way so as to benefit their country; but choose rather to suffer it to lie by at a sordid interest, or to rust in their coffers. Like the dog in the manger, they will not enjoy it themselves, nor suffer others to partake of it.

It is worthy of remark, that the number of males in Malta is near equal to that of the females.

This destroys the false idea, generally received, that in warm climates more girls are born than boys; as it is also opposed to the state of the population in many of the northern and western countries of Europe. This would doubtless be the case universally, according to the analogy of nature, if various causes did not operate to destroy its course. The comparative little emigration which takes place in Malta, and the temperance of the male inhabitants contribute to maintain this regular law of our world.

“The Maltese are in general of an ordinary stature, strong, robust, and of a brown complexion; one may easily recognise in their character the influence of the climate, and that mobility of sensation, gesture and features which characterize many people in the equinoxial regions of Africa. They are full of fire, and endowed with a penetrating imagination; they possess very lively passions, and are tenacious in their opinions, in their love and their hate. The action of a hot climate, beneath an almost continually serene sky, renders their physical and moral character very expressive; they do not know how to conceal their real sentiments with the mask of convenience; insomuch that there can be no where found men less disguised, and whose character can

be more easily guessed by their physiognomy." D'Avalos Tom. i. p. 60, 61.

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION.

*Maltese language not derived from Phœnician— Attempts to reduce the Maltese to writing— Present system of National Education— Inconsistency of— Backwardness of the general mass of the people.*

Notwithstanding the many attempts which have been made to refer the present Maltese dialect back to a Phœnician original, by producing a few words and phrases which are corresponding in signification in both languages, the basis upon which the hypothesis is formed is too weak to sustain it against the abundant proof to the contrary. We shall not dwell upon the almost necessary impossibility which there exists against our coming to any solid conclusion on the subject, from our inadequate knowledge of the Punic tongue, but shall draw our inferences from the language itself as it exists at the present day, which in its forms, phrases, construction and idiom proves it to be a dialect of the Arabic. We conceive, that if there are a few words which cannot now be referred back to this source, this fact does not destroy the abundant evidence

which may be brought forth in the whole body of the language. That there are such words, we admit; but that these have not become corrupted in their etymology and pronunciation, cannot be proved any more than they can be shown to be a part or parts of the ancient Phœnician. The vernacular Maltese comprehends the complete Arabic alphabet, with the exception of some of the dentals; and the distinctive sound of the gutturals has been preserved pure in many villages of the country, and in Gozo. In Valletta this is not the case; several of the gutturals have been dropped, and the whole dialect is more corrupt, being mixed up with a greater portion of foreign words, especially Italian.

Several attempts have been successively made by different persons, within the last thirty years, to reduce the Maltese dialect to writing; but these efforts having been chiefly the effect of private exertion, without any support or countenance from the government or the people, have all failed, whatever may have been the comparative excellence of each plan adopted. This unsettled state of things, in regard to language, has operated very much to the prejudice of education among the people. All instruction being communicated in the Italian, the Maltese child cannot begin his studies on a par with the children

of other countries, because he must first learn a language entirely different from its own, as a means of acquiring the knowledge he seeks after. Under these discouraging circumstances, it is no small proof of the natural abilities of the Maltese, that many of them have by their talents and acquirements raised themselves to a distinguished rank in literature and science. While this state of things exists, however, there can be little hopes of the mass of the people making any very considerable progress in respect of education. The mother tongue is so implanted into their nature, that centuries must elapse, or some great change take place in the common order of things, before any attempt to eradicate the language of the people can be successful.

Some small efforts are now making to introduce the Arabic as the chief medium of communicating instruction in the government schools; and if the ultimate object of this plan should be energetically followed up, in a different manner there can be no doubt of its success. To say nothing of the advantages which would accrue to the Maltese should they be put into possession of so extensive and useful a language as the Arabic, it is the mother language of their own, and consequently must be much easier for their acquirement than any of the western



languages, which are entirely different in their whole construction. The present plan brought into use is briefly this: a new alphabet has been formed for the Maltese dialect, consisting of Roman and several Arabic letters, in which the children are to be instructed so as to be capable of reading; this then is to serve as a medium of studying the Italian, the English, and the Arabic! This is not all, the language used is such a compound of distorted Arabic and Maltese terms and phrases, that it forms quite a new dialect, which without considerable instruction no Maltese can understand!! Who will not at once see, that every attempt to instruct the generality of children, in so many different and opposite tongues, must be rendered futile. It is preposterous, to think of establishing any system for public education in which the instruction is to be communicated in no less than four languages. The time generally allowed for a child to remain at school will not even suffice to acquire a tolerable acquaintance with these; and when is he to make any progress in that useful knowledge which will make him a respectable and valuable member of society? If the Italian has obtained a partial footing in the town, it is an entire stranger in the country, and ought to be banished from the national system of education if it tends to increase the difficulties



and inconveniences which exist without its addition. If by the present plan the Arabic is proposed to be the general language of the people, why are they to be encumbered with another, which will be of little use in such a case? And why teach the Maltese language? The dialect is already corrupt, and every effort to systematize it must be calculated to fix it more deeply in the minds of the children, when on the contrary, endeavours ought to be made at the outset for improving and bringing it up to the standard of that language which is to be made the general language of the country. To do this in Malta would not be attended with much more difficulty than in Syria, Egypt or Barbary, where the written language is the classical Arabic, but the colloquial dialect, in many respects, not better than the Maltese. It is to be hoped that the present plan will be reformed before being carried to any considerable extent.

The above circumstances have had their influence in restraining the progress of education among the people, which, generally speaking, is at a low ebb. In many of the country villages, all the learning which exists is confined to the clergy, very few besides being able to read or write. In the town, besides the University there is a Normal school for boys and girls, containing

upwards of 500 children, and several others kept by private individuals. Very lately, also, by the zealous and praiseworthy efforts of Mrs. Austin, the lady of one of Her Majesty's Commissioners for Special Enquiry, four district schools have been formed in the country, which is to be hoped will be continued and be successful. Considering the scanty means which the people enjoy of obtaining an education, we cannot wonder at their backward state, though we by no means intend to apply this remark universally; for, as we have said before, there are not a few among the Maltese who distinguish themselves by their literary attainments.



MUSIC, POETRY, AND SINGING.

*Native musical instruments — Poetical compositions —  
Songs — Maltese Proverbs, &c.*

The Maltese are not very rich in native musical instruments; and in their choice seem to have preferred such as are more noisy with the inhabitants of Arabia, than such as are more soft with the Arabs of northern Africa. Even these, however, are getting into disuse, and their place is being supplied by companies of blind fiddlers who are found almost in every village, and whose



ST. U. ADA  
FORNI



*1774*

performances, if exhibited within the hearing of a man acquainted with the science, would certainly put him into a position to serve as an exact counterpart of Hogarth's *Enraged Musician*. The tambarine, a species of bag pipe, the kettle-drum, a hollow tube about half a foot in diameter with a distended skin over one surface, and a round stick tied to the centre of it which is rubbed up and down with the hand, causing a most monotonous sound, \* and several different shaped lyres, with from two to four strings,—form the native band of the Maltese country people. Of the above, the bagpipe or *zaqq*, as it is called, merits the most attention, as it is the most esteemed. This instrument is formed of an inflated dog skin, which is held under the left arm with the legs directed upwards, and having a mouth-piece by which the skin is filled and a flute or pipe played with both hands affixed to it. This instrument is generally accompanied by the tambarine and a dancing company, who move their bodies in graceful evolutions or ridiculous gestures to the sound of the duet. The accompanying sketch may convey some better idea of this rustic amusement.

The Maltese have the peculiar talent for poetry

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\* This instrument is called by the natives *rabbâba* or *zuvzáva*.

which is natural to all those nations who speak the Arabic language. The taste for this kind of composition has very much degenerated in the cities, but in the country it is met with in its original purity of style and expression. I have often stood and listened to individuals seated upon two opposite trees, or engaged in some kind of labour, singing answers to each other in rhyme, without any previous meditation. This the natives call *taqbeel*. The subjects vary according to circumstances, sometimes partaking of the nature of epic poetry, and sometimes of satire upon the faults or character of each. The tunes set to these are in general somewhat wild, as is the music of the Maltese in general, but a wildness which is not without its romantic beauty and harmony. In this respect, few will fail to admire the singing of the natives as they join in small companies, each taking a part, which they maintain throughout the whole performance.

I here subjoin two songs for the amusement of the reader, with a rough English translation, in order that he may judge somewhat of the native ideas in the composition of such amorous effusions.





Andante

Jen ha-ni-na seyr in-siefer Ja has-ra ma nich doksh

mi gli. lilek Al-la ja ti is-sabar; u izom-mok fl' in-hab-ba tighi.

*Crece*  
lilek Al-la ja ti is-sabar; u izom-mok fl' in-hab-ba tighi.





## SONG.

Hanina seyr insiefer,  
 Ja hasra ma niehdoksh migm,  
 Lilek, Alla yatik es-sabar,  
 U izommok fl'imhabba tighi.

Izommok fl'imhabba tighi,  
 Biesh deyyem tiftakar fiyya,  
 Iftakar li yien habbeitek,  
 Mindu kont chkeiken tarbiyya.

Mindu kont chkeiken tarbiyya,  
 Kalbi kolha ingibdet leik;—  
 Bl'ebda daul ma nista nimshi,  
 Ghair bid-daul ta sbieh ghaineik ;

Bid-daul ta sbieh ghaineik,  
 Yien meshsheit il passi tighi;—  
 Hanina seyr nsiefer,  
 Ja hasra ma niehdoksh mighi.

Meta niftakar li yiena seyver,  
 Dad-dulur sh' yigini kbir;  
 K' Alla irid, O hanina!  
 Ghâd tgaudini u ingaudik.

*Translation.*

Beloved, I'm about to leave you,  
I sigh that I take you not with me,  
May God give you now resignation,  
And preserve you secure in my love.—

And preserve you secure in my love,  
That you may ever remember me;—  
Remember, I always have loved you,  
Since the time I was but an infant.—

Since the time I was but an infant,  
My heart has always been drawn after you;  
And I can walk in no other light,  
But the light of your beautiful eyes.—

In the light of your beautiful eyes,  
I have always directed my steps;—  
Beloved I'm going to leave you,  
I sigh that I take you not with me.—

How sore does the pain come upon me,  
When I think I must soon depart;  
But if Heaven be propitious, my dear,  
We shall yet enjoy one another.

The following verses, which were furnished me by a Maltese lady, I insert chiefly for the sake of giving the reader an idea of the manner in which matrimonial alliances are entered into by a portion of the town people. The four persons introduced in the song are, the young man, the *hottâba*, the mother of the young woman, and the young woman herself. In order to render the piece intelligible, it will be necessary to premise, that it is not customary for a young man unacquainted with the lady with whom he has fallen in love, to declare his passion in person, neither would he be allowed to enter into her parents' house; but he employs a third, generally an old woman, who takes upon herself the office of endeavouring to bring about the match. This character is called a *hottâba*, and is always possessed with an exquisite gift for flattery; a specimen of which will be readily noticed in the song. I give a literal translation, in order better to preserve the native idiom and phraseology.

## SONG.

Tridu tâfu shbeiba sh' taghmel,  
 Min fil ghodu sa fil ghashia,  
 Taghmel il bokli f' râsha,  
 U tokghodlok fil gallaria.



Tokghodlok fil gallaria,  
 Tibda taghmel in-namoor,  
 Meta târa l' ommha geyya,  
 Tibda tkoffu il maktoor.

Il giuvni yibda tiela u niezel,  
 Halli yâra hem shi shieha,  
 Yibda tiela min fuk s' isfel,  
 Ghash mairidsh yibka bir-rieħa.

Intaka ma nanna shieħa,  
 Kallħa; Mara tridsh takdini,  
 Flusi ma nibzâsh għalihom,  
 Basta tagħraf is-servini?

Sinyura, donni nâfek,  
 Kont chkeikuna tokghod hdeyya,  
 Kem erfajteħ, kem habbeiteħ,  
 Kem ghazzizteħ geu ideyya.

Sinyura, donni nâfek,  
 Yidirli għandek ish-shbeibiet,  
 Għash kont għaddeyya min hâra,  
 Yidhirli raitha hdei il bieħ.

Sinyura għeidli sh' għandek,  
 Kem narak malinconâta.  
 Ara sh' kâlu fuk binti,  
 Illi già binti namorâta.



Iskot, Sinyura, iskot,  
 IIsna ta nies tghid wisk shorti;  
 Dika bintek tifla taiba,  
 Min yihodha ikollu shorti.

Inzel, binti, inzel,  
 Hauna nanna trid tarâk,  
 Tinsâb mara antica,  
 Li b' kliemha tik-konsolâk.

Risposta yiena gibtlek,  
 Ohra fees yiena irrid,  
 Baghatni il mahbub ta kalbek,  
 Li bil piena yinsâb marid.

Risposta inti gibtli,  
 Ohra fees ma natiksh;  
 Dâna il giuvni omni tâfu,  
 B' zeugi niehdu ma tridnish.

*Translation.*

*Intr.* Would you know what a maiden does.  
 From morning until evening? —  
 She adorns her head with curls,  
 And seats herself in the balcony.

She seats herself in the balcony,  
 And sets about making love;  
 When she sees her mother coming  
 She begins hemming her handkerchief.

The young man walks up and down,  
 To see if the old woman is there,  
 He traverses (the street) from one end to the other,  
 As he does not wish to remain with the smell.\*

He meets with an old grandmother,  
 And says; "woman will you help me,  
 I care nothing about money,  
 So as that you are able to serve me?"

*(The bargain is struck, and the brokeress goes to the house  
 of the young woman, and meets with the mother.)*

*Hott.* Madam, I think I know you,  
 When quite little you lived near me,  
 How oft I bore you, how much I lov'd you,  
 How oft I fondled you in my arms.

Madam, I think I know you,  
 I think you have several maidens,  
 For as I was passing through the street,  
 I saw one standing at the door.

Madam, tell me what ails you,  
 For you appear very melancholy?

*Moth.* Do you know what they say of my daughter,  
 That she is already in love.

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\* A Maltese idiom for expressing failure in an undertaking.

*Hott.* Be easy, Madam, be easy,  
People's tongues say many things;  
Your daughter is a good girl,  
Whoever takes her will gain a fortune.

*Moth.* Come down, my daughter, come down,  
Here's a grandmother desires to see you,  
She is a very old woman,  
And with her words she will console you.

*(The daughter descends, and the old woman addresses her.)*

*Hott.* A message I have brought you,  
And wish one hastily in return,  
For the beloved of your heart has sent me,  
Who with pain is now quite ill.

*Daugt.* A message you have brought me,  
A hasty answer I will not give,  
For my mother knows this young man,  
And will not have him for my husband.

Besides the above, the Maltese have also a large number of proverbs, or adages in rhyme, many of which preserve their strict Arabic original. These are still often used in conversation, but without any new additions, as the taste for such compositions has greatly degenerated since the introduction of the Italian language. The late Sig. Vassalli published a collection of these

proverbs, some years ago, with an Italian translation and explanatory notes, which, in the purity of their style and morals, their figurative and enigmatical forms, contain much of that good sense possessed by the forefathers of the Maltese. "The whole of these adages, maxims, sentences, aphorisms and phrases, which the natives have preserved from time immemorable, by uninterrupted tradition, form a species of national code, sanctioned from time to time with the seal and authority of the events or experiences of this or that proverb, the truth of which is acknowledged as soon as uttered."



## COSTUME.

*Dress of the Males — Dress of the females of the city —  
Neatness of — Costume of the country-women.*

In regard to the male population, the Maltese have in general adopted the Frank costume; but the native dress, which is still worn to some extent by the lower class of people in the town, is somewhat dissimilar, though not very peculiar. The chief difference is in the cap, which resembles a long bag made of wool, hanging down behind, and dyed with various colours. This article often forms a receptacle for small articles which the wearer wishes to carry about with him, and





*Country man*



sometimes serves all the purposes of a purse. I observed the same kind of cap used among the Maronites of Mount Lebanon.

The girdle round the loins is still in use among the Maltese of the lower order; that made of cotton is called a *terha*, that of silk a *bushakka*. With this the pantaloons are confined round the waist, and is generally three or four yards in length. There can be no doubt that this is a relic of the oriental costume, introduced into Malta by the Arabs.

It is not common to see any in this dress with a jacket, its place being supplied by a *sedria*, or vest, which, in many cases, is ornamented down the front with several rows of round silver buttons, as large as birds' eggs. At other times, instead of these, the buttons consist of large pieces of money, especially quarter-dollar pieces, and sometimes shillings with long shanks fastened on to them. A Maltese cuts a very fine figure when he is thus set off, or is *in gala*, as they express it, with a long curl hanging down each side of the face, and having his fingers covered with many massy rings, of which they are particularly fond.

At the present day, the sandals are not used except by the country people; but there can be no doubt that they formed a part of the ancient

native dress. These consist of two oblong pieces of untanned bull's hide, drawn round the foot with two strings of the same material, and are called *kork*. Some years ago, an old man used to sit by the gate of Porta Reale, and it was worth while seeing the dexterity with which he shod the country people who applied to him. The whole was done in a few minutes; for the customer first laid his foot on the extended hide, and after taking the dimensions by just marking the circumference, the old man cut it off, and making four holes in each piece for ears, gave him a pair of strings, and all was over.

Many of the working classes in the country, especially masons, wear over their shoulder what they call a *khury*, in which they take their provisions to town for the day, and carry it home laden with supplies for their family, in the evening when their labour is over. It is about three yards long and two feet wide, open in the middle, so as to form a bag at each end. The accompanying sketch will illustrate the above description of the native dress of the Maltese males.

As to the costume of the ladies of the towns, I fully accord with the observation of a Jesuit, who passed through Malta in the latter end of the last century. He says, "leur démarche et leur habillement sont si modestes, qu'on les





*a Lady in walking dress*

prendroit pour des religieuses." \* I believe many, on their first arrival at the island, have had the same impression, that most of the females in Malta were nuns. It is rather to be regretted that so many have of late adopted the English costume, which is certainly far from being as simple, and by no means as modest and becoming. The bonnet, especially, as well as the gentleman's hat, are quite unnatural appendages; the one is satirically called an umbrella, and the other a kettle by many of the orientals. †

The outer dress consists of a black silk petticoat, bound round the waist over a *body* of some other kind of silk or print; this is called a *half onnella*. The upper part is called the *onnella*, and is made of the same material with the former, drawn up into neat gathers for the length of a foot about the centre of one of the outer seams. In the seam of one of the remaining divisions is enclosed a thin piece of whalebone, which is drawn over the head, and forms an elegant arch, leaving the face and neck perfectly open. The

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\* Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses, Tom. I. p. 315.

† As soon as the Frank costume was permitted to be worn in Damascus, the natives were quite surprised at the black hats; and so much were they shocked, at their unseemly shape and size, that they have ever since denominated an European as *Aboo Tunjara*, the father of a pot.

left arm is covered with one part of this habit, and the right is used for keeping down the angle of the other. The whole is extremely neat; but it requires a peculiar grace in walking to shew it off to advantage. In this respect the Maltese ladies are not deficient, and here I beg to differ from Signor D' Avalos, who writes, "elles n'ont ni les grâces des femmes Françaises, ni le maintien noble et simple des Anglaises;"\* unless he had written it concerning some of those who have adopted the English costume, to which they have not yet become much accustomed.

The dress of the country women does not essentially differ in shape, but the material is generally striped or barred native cotton, of a very substantial quality. The head dress is called a *tsholkâna* instead of an *onnella*. The *doublett* is in shape the same with the *half onnella*, but on particular occasions, such as a marriage or a christening, they put on the *gezwira*, which is a kind of petticoat of blue cotton striped with white, drawn up in very thick creases round the waist, and open on the right side, where it is tied at different distances with bows of ribbon. The undermost habit differs somewhat from that worn by the ladies of the city, and is called a *deil*.

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\* Tableau Historique de Malte, vol. I. p. 77.





*Country woman*



This reaches no farther down than the loins, upon which another garment is tied round the waist, answering something to an under petticoat.

It is not very customary for the poor females in the country to wear shoes, though, if able, they in general endeavour to possess a pair. These, however, are reserved for very particular occasions, such as a visit to the city, the village feast, a wedding, or the day of confirmation, and then they make use of them as little as possible. It is quite common to meet with several in the morning upon their arrival at the gate of Porta Reale, performing their toilet beneath the arches, by putting on their best *doublett* and their shoes. A Maltese informed me the other day, that not long ago he heard a country woman asking a companion, while engaged in preparing to enter the city, how long she had had her shoes; the answer was, "Since the time of the plague." (1813) "Oh!" replied the other, "mine are much older than yours, for I have had them since the blockade of the French." I cannot vouch for the truth of this anecdote, but it certainly goes to shew the economy of the Maltese country women in the article of shoe leather.

I have little doubt that the origin of the *onnella* must be sought for in the oriental veil. Laying aside the great probability that the latter was

used in this island during the domination of the Arabs, I have been very much struck with the similarity which there exists between both, when the onnella is made of some thin cloth, and suffered to hang down carelessly behind the back. Modern civilization and fashion, has, in my opinion, made this once barbarous appendage, one of the neatest head-dresses among the costumes of Europe.

The accompanying sketches will serve to illustrate the above description.



#### AMUSEMENTS.

*Processions: Good Friday — Easter Sunday — Festival of St. Gregory — Curious article in marriage contracts — Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul — Races — Carnival — Parata — Origin of — Giostra or Slippery pole — Boat race.*

The principal recreations of the Maltese have, in general, some connection with their religious ceremonies. The numerous processions, which however of late have been very much diminished, afford opportunities to the stranger of seeing every rank and class of the people, in their best attire, congregated together in crowds to witness the scene. The two chief occasions when these walk are of opposite natures; one being that of

Good Friday, intended to celebrate the death and passion of our Saviour, and the other the procession of St. Gregory, which is continued unto the present day in commemoration of some signal public deliverance. The former takes place in the town on Holy Thursday, and is attended by the greater part of the clergy of the island with the distinctive banners of their order, and their own particular dress. The train leaves the church of *ta Gesu* a little before sunset, the priests and friars walking in file on each side of the street, with huge lighted wax tapers in their hands, and chanting as they follow the statues, which are carried before them at equal distances in the procession. These images are in general of a large size, and represent the various sufferings of the Saviour until he is laid in the sepulchre; which last is a splendid canopy, with rich curtains tassellated with gold, having a figure as large as life stretched beneath them. The rear is generally brought up by a number of persons entirely covered in white or black garments, with eye-holes to see through, and dragging at their feet chains of different lengths and dimensions. This is a penance which the poor creatures inflict upon themselves for the commission of some offence, or the fulfilment of a vow they have made in the time of affliction. It is not unfrequent to see the ancles

of some of these individuals very much bruised, and even bleeding with the weight of the chains they drag behind them; and in this state, some will not even allow the children to assist in moving them, so as to render the task a little easier. After traversing several of the streets, the procession reenters the church from which it came out.

Very early on Easter Sunday, before day-light, a great crowd with lamps in their hands assemble around the door of the Greek Catholic church, from whence they take a large image, representing the resurrection of our Lord, with a Maltese flag in his hand. With this they proceed through Strada Reale, amidst the joyful acclamations of the people who follow it, and upon their arrival at the small church of the Vittoria, a gun is fired from the cavalier, which is a signal for a general run as far as the walls of the city. After traversing several other streets, they deposit the image in the same church from which they took it. I would observe, that this procession is unattended by any of the clergy.

The feast of St. Gregory consists of a procession composed of the *fratelli*\* of all the churches,

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\* In order that the reader may understand what is meant by this term, I would just observe, that connected with almost every church is a fraternity consisting of laymen, who join themselves together by contributing



the clergy of the different parishes of the towns and villages, the canons of the the cathedrals, and the Bishop, who assemble together at the village called Casal Nuovo, and walk as far as Zeitun, the whole company joining in the responses of the Great Litany, which is pronounced by the chief priest of each order. On their arrival at Zeitun, they all visit the old church of St. Gregory, where at a particular part of the ceremony, the whole crowd exclaim aloud three times, "Misericordia;" and afterwards spend the remaining part of the day in eating and drinking, and various kinds of amusements. The origin of this feast is involved in obscurity; but it is commonly supposed to be founded upon a general vow of the inhabitants, on their deliverance from a great plague; some say, a large swarm of locusts which once devastated the island.

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a certain sum yearly into a common fund, which is generally laid out upon the church, or otherwise disposed of by them for religious purposes. Each fraternity has a president, and meets once a week in order to talk over the affairs connected with their body, which generally turns upon decorating the church, or their own particular altar, the ordering of illuminations, processions, &c. Each fraternity wears a particular uniform corresponding with their banner, which is generally borne before them when they walk in procession.

The fratelli of the convent of St. Domenico, under the patronage of the *Madonna del Rosario*, consists entirely of persons who have some relation with the law faculty, such as advocates, notaries, &c.

It is a common occurrence for country females to stipulate with their intended husbands, that they shall take them once a year to see the principal feasts of the island. St. Gregorio is one of the above; and the bridegroom makes it a point, if possible, to become the standard-bearer in the procession of the lay brethren of his village. This is considered a great honor, and consequently the privilege is held out to the highest bidder. The individual who succeeds in obtaining the prize, agrees with his bride, that he will meet her at the village where the procession terminates. On their arrival, to show his gallantry in the sight of his fair one, he seizes the staff of the standard, waves it about several times through the air, and then joins her for the remaining part of the day.

Among the many ludicrous songs and compositions used on the days of carnival, the following is not uncommon, and as it alludes to the custom I have just mentioned, I shall transcribe it with an English translation.

*L' aghrayyes yaghmlu il pattiyiet.*

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Fl' iscritta matrimoniâli  
 Yaghmlu il pattiyiet conjugâli,  
 Li yihoda fil festi principâli.



regale themselves with the refreshments they bring with them, while many of the country people amuse themselves in dancing, and singing, and many other rural gratifications. Just below the city, on this day, there is also a race of horses, mules and asses, which are entirely unharnessed, and the riders without any means of maintaining their position except their legs, which they fix under the animal's belly, while with a thong in each hand they belabour the poor beasts until they reach the goal. Another race of this kind, on the feast of St. Rocco, is held at the Pietà, outside the gates of Port des Bombes, which had its origin in the yearly inspection of the native cavalry of the Order of St. John. The prizes at these races consist of large flags of various coloured silk, which the winners generally carry about the streets the next day, together with their animals covered with garlands of flowers and ribbons.

The Carnival is another source of popular amusement; this begins on the Sunday preceding Lent, and lasts for three days. The afternoon is the principal time of the feast, during which numerous persons in masks are seen walking about the streets, endeavouring to amuse themselves, and to be a source of amusement to others. The variety of dresses used on these occasions is beyond description. Not a few pride themselves

in playing all kinds of antics in a black habit, with long red horns, and a huge tail of the same colour. Caresses filled with ladies follow in a train through the principal streets, who readily engage in pelting confits and peas with any of the by-standers who will enter the lists with them. The number of respectable persons, however, who mask in the public streets has greatly diminished within the last few years, and it is to be hoped, that their good example will soon be followed by an entire relinquishment of so absurd and foolish a diversion. The day after the carnival, most of those persons who have masked repair to a small church in Casal Zabbar, called *Della Grazia*, by way of penance for their follies.

On saturday preceding the first day of the feast the *Parata* is celebrated. This consists of several companies of men, dressed up in gay ribbons, and armed with wooden staves and shields, who meet together under the houses of the wealthy, and perform several evolutions, striking their shields and dancing at the sound of music. This is concluded by raising up a little girl, splendidly arrayed, and girded with a small dagger, which she is taught to wave, while the band plays the national anthem, "God save the King." In the time of the Order, they proceeded to the palace to receive permission for the celebration of the

Carnival. Their request was signified to the Grand master by one of the knights, and upon the boon being granted, they immediately performed a dance in front of the palace, and afterwards before the door of any other person, whom they thought would pay them for their trouble.

The origin of this amusement must be sought for in the annals of pagan rites, which christianity has not succeeded in abolishing in several countries of Europe. In a work on Malta "Par un voyageur François," the author ranks it with a popular feast very ancient in Thessaly, the *Salzea* of the Babylonians, The *Chronia* of the Athenians, and the *Saturnalia* of Rome, which many of the early christians continued, notwithstanding the zealous efforts which were made by the church to abolish them.

Another very famous diversion of the Maltese is the *Giostra*, which takes place on the anniversary of the victory gained over the Turks, when they made their attack upon the island, in the reign of La Valette. This sport is accompanied with races of boats which run part of the length of the harbour, the prizes being awarded by the Government. The *Giostra* is a large barge, anchored in an open place in the centre of the port, having a long tapering pole placed horizontally from the head, with a small flag fixed on at the



end, and made very slippery with grease, soap and several other ingredients. At a given signal, a number of naked boys are ready mounted on the barge, who immediately begin the task of endeavouring to seize the flag. One after another they continue tumbling into the water, and rising again to renew the attempt. Gradually the greasy matter begins to diminish, and they are able to advance farther; but an hour generally elapses before the prize is seized, and very seldom before some accident has happened among the competitors, many of whom strike their limbs on the poles in their fall into the water. This amusement generally attracts a numerous quantity of boats round the barge, filled with hundreds of spectators both male and female.



## ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

*Origin of the present Maltese codes—Confusion of—Enumeration of the courts—Suppression of the Bishop's Tribunal—Trial by Jury introduced—Commissions to draw up new codes—Result of their labours—Language in which the Maltese codes ought to be written.*

The Order of St. John of Jerusalem made over to the Maltese a deposit of written and consuetudinary laws, copied from the ancient Roman

and Roman Ecclesiastical legislations. At that period, Sicily followed the same course; for, since that island had come under the dominion of the Spaniards, it was obliged, in spite of the feelings of the people, to be subject to the power of the Vatican, which thought itself capable of regulating the morals of whole nations, with the confusion of laws one thousand two hundred years old, — a confusion increasingly aggravated by the *Bullarium*, the mass of the Pope's Decretals, and those of the *Stravaganti*. It appears, therefore, that the legislation of Malta was the same with that of Sicily. In later times, it is true, this island enjoyed several laws of her own, such as those of Manoel de Vilhena, Rohan, and other Grandmasters, who from time to time issued proclamations or provisional regulations for particular cases; yet, both the Municipal Constitutions, as well as the above Proclamations, were, for the most part, very badly disposed, far behind the the times and the people which they governed, and coined, without exception, upon the impress of the above mentioned constitutions.

As to the Judiciary Proceedings of the country, they were based upon the *Rito Siculo*; and the organization of the courts conformed to the same.

It cannot fail to surprise, that the same disorders

and even greater than those which existed in the legislation, during the rule of the Order, should continue unto the present day in actual force in the island. Half a century ago, this confusion of laws was not very sensibly felt by an enduring and docile people like the Maltese. The subjects of a theocracy, they found a remedy for their real evils in the religious fanaticism which supported them; and, which, while it stupified their minds, lessened their wants and even their desires. The case, however, is now different; and if not from direct cooperation on the part of the local government, at least from the reflection of the light of European civilization, which shines upon them in the centre of the Mediterranean, under the auspices of Great Britain, — the Maltese people, although the same in many respects, have still become capable of valuing their own true state, as also the state of their legislation.

The code of the Grandmaster Rohan is in full force up to the present moment. Very few of the salutary laws, however, therein contained (such, for example, as those which have reference to fathers of families and vagabonds,) are followed out; while a multitude of such as are incoherent, or written *ad terrorem*, or incompatible with the judiciary order newly introduced, or repugnant with the newly established rule of commercial

jurisprudence, (which requires laws corresponding more or less between the countries which have commercial intercourse with each other) are in actual vigour.

Where provision is not made in this code, (which very frequently happens) the indigested farrago of the *Corpus Juris* of Justinian is brought in to supply the want. This monstrous collection of the monuments of the knowledge, barbarity, and imbecility of various Roman legislators, (as it is called by Filangieri) is much less adapted for Malta, than for any other country, subject as it is to the dominion of England. A country like Malta, which draws its chief resources from commerce, and under the rule of the most commercial people in the world, should not be governed by the code of a people anti-commercial by nature, and by political disposition. The formulæ, the solemnities, and the actions of law are so many insupportable shackles to commerce and good faith, and the expedition necessary in all commercial transactions.

The infinite number of writers on the Roman Law, Dissertationists, Commentators, Casuists, Deciders, the Italian *Rote*, and more especially the *Rota Romana*, all come in to the aid of the already mentioned compilations, whenever doubts, anomalies, contradictions, either in the

letter or spirit of the laws occur, which is almost always the case. But it scarcely ever happens that, in recurring to this host of writers, one ever succeeds in arriving at a clearer understanding of the case; for they are even more confused and contradictory among themselves than the law itself. Notwithstanding all this, the authority of each is admitted in our tribunals, without any distinction; so that writers for other countries, for other times, under governments entirely different from that under which this island at present exists, are very often the legal criterion by which the magistrate pronounces his decision.

To the above mentioned sources of the Native Legislation, there must be added the immense mass of Proclamations and Notifications which the Governors of the island have incessantly published; very often contradictory to each other, and almost continually revoking or amending the preceding. These at present form seven folio volumes.

In 1814 Sir Thomas Maitland made an attempt to reform the procedures, and to organize the Courts of Justice on a new plan. To this end he published a general constitution for all the courts, and a statute for each one in particular, which are undoubtedly to be commended for

their simplicity and perspicuity; nevertheless we cannot refrain stating, from practical observation on this partial reform, that the principal design of the legislator was only to burden the public with a tax, whenever they had a case to bring before the court, or had occasion to claim their own property. Even at present, the weight of the expenses of the several courts, differing from that of the Registrars through every Hall, is indescribable; and this, besides what is necessary for the pay of advocates, legal procurators, &c. In fact, in many cases, it is only left in the power of the rich to obtain justice in the tribunals of Malta. Again, the number of these halls is such as to create continual inconvenience, and to augment the arbitrariness of appeals without any real advantage to justice. The following is a list of the tribunals:

First Hall of the Civil Court.

Second Hall of ditto.

Third Hall of ditto.

Commercial Court.

First and Second Halls of Appeal.

Supreme Council of Justice, as a regular Court of Appeal, and as a Court of Reprieve.

Commission for Bankruptcies.

Criminal Court, composed of one, two or three judges.



Court of Special Commission for certain criminal cases.

Commission for Piracy.

Criminal Court of the Police Magistrates.

Civil Court of ditto.

Criminal Court of the Marine Police.

Civil Court of ditto.

Magistrate's Court for the Markets.

Court of the Lieutenant Deputies.

Court of the Monthly Sessions.

Deputation for Marriage legacies.

All these without mentioning the appeal to London, or enumerating the different courts in the island of Gozo.

Besides that these judiciary authorities must necessarily, from their number, be very burdensome to the population, by whom they are supported, they are also rendered inefficacious of securing the design for which they exist, on account of the confusion and disorder which result from them. The modes of trial, introduced into every court, are different; and the registers or offices appertaining to each follow diverse systems in the conduct of its affairs. The judges themselves have sometimes been confused on their benches, and seen asking of the official Registrar the practices to be followed in particular cases.

The suppression of the Bishop's Court, which took place in 1828, cannot be mentioned but with praise; its jurisdiction is at present confined to cases entirely spiritual. The abuses of this tribunal had become insupportable, and the appeals made therefrom to the Court of Rome were not only attended with heavy expenses, but were also interminable.

Trial by Jury in certain determinate criminal cases, where condemnation for life to the public works, or sentence of death is the penalty to be inflicted, was introduced by virtue of a Proclamation issued in the year 1829. So far, however, experience shows, that this procedure, in the manner in which it has been conducted here, has not only been useless, and no improvement upon the old system; but, moreover, that it is tedious, and formulary. It is undeniable the great benefit which this mode of trial has been in England, regarding it both in a purely judiciary point of view, as well as morally and politically in its relations with the British Constitution, and with the actual state of the civilization of the people. In France it is evidently much less advantageous than in England. Of what practical benefit can it be for Malta? Is it a legislative measure fit for a country only sixty miles in circumference? What state of popular education ought to accompany

it? It appears that the legislator little thought of the solution of these important questions before he daubed out the law which he has introduced,— which law, to speak plainly, must have been but very little pondered, if we may judge from the manner in which it is written, and from its actual effects since it has been in force. We cannot withhold mentioning one of the most considerable errors in this system, which is continually threatening its ruin, (and it is quite a miracle that it has hitherto resisted its force,) it is the absolute incompatibility which there exists between the above law, and the humour of the code enacted during the reign of the Grandmaster Rohan, under the government of the Order; to which this law, by the manner in which it is drawn up, must necessarily refer in its application. Cases of piracy are prosecuted nearly in accordance with the English mode of trial by jury.

All the inconveniences above referred to in the general system of the legislation of Malta, in the organization of the Courts, and in the judiciary order, have induced the inhabitants several times within the last few years, to demand a remedy from Great Britain. Their reasonable request was at length attended to, and a Commission was formed in order to draw up a new code of laws, after the model of those most

recently enacted in Europe. For the accomplishment of this purpose, the persons first elected were Sir J. Stoddart, Chief Justice of the island, J. Kirkpatrick, Esq., Robert Langslow, Esq., Attorney General at Malta, with Dr. V. C. Bonnici, and Dr. J. G. Bonavita, two of Her Majesty's native judges.

Several months after the emanation of the above commission the question arose, "Whether the English or the Italian was to be the text in which the new laws for Malta ought to be written." The English members, with the exception of John Kirkpatrick, Esq., held out for the English language, and the Maltese for the Italian. The arguments on both sides were examined by the Colonial Department, and the Italian was approved. The matter finally terminated in the revocation of the commission, and the appointment of another in the persons of five Maltese members. Up to the year 1835, the result of their labours was the *Penal Code*, and the *Laws of Procedure and Penal Organization*, which have not yet been put into practice. To these we must refer, rather than to any other source in order to decide upon the fitness or unfitness of the persons deputed for the accomplishment of the desired end. The chief basis of the design, as is believed, was laid by Dr. J. G. Bonavita, the

principal advocate for the Italian language to be used in writing out the Maltese legislation.

Are these codes, however, perfect? But, we would ask, what codes hitherto published to the world can be said to approach perfection, those of Austria, Prussia, and France not excepted? Those destined for Malta appear to possess some of the necessary qualities of a good body of law, viz. integrity, method, and perspicuity, although no attempt was made to improve the Neapolitan Code upon which they are based. The Maltese public, however, did not give them a welcome reception from the moment of their publication; yet, notwithstanding the clamours which were raised against them, especially by the legal faculty, the general invitation which was given for any observations or suggestions to be made concerning them, within a fixed period, passed away without any such criticism having been presented. The late Commissioners of Inquiry, also, although deputed to examine into the state of legislation in general, left without taking any notice of them, or making any enquiries in regard to the judiciary organization of the island. And can it be imagined that the judgment passed upon these codes, by that portion of the Maltese people who read and write, can be entirely exempted from the suspicion of prejudice in many,

and of offended self love in a few? For, whilst we admit that *free concourse* is the most recommendable plan in order to the formation of a good code of laws, such an end could not have been better attained in Malta, at the present time, than has been by the above mentioned Commission. If they have failed, the bad success of their labours must be sought for elsewhere. The Commission consisted of five persons, chosen by the local government, against which the worst feelings were entertained by a great proportion of the people; and this just at a time when the Commissioners of Inquiry were expected to redeem them from the real or supposed evils which they were suffering from the said government. Besides this, before proceeding to the formation of such codes, the political code of power should have been better organized. At present the magistracies do not know their proper limits; they are always safe whenever they are guilty of abuse or injustice. A proclamation was publicly issued which declared that Her Majesty's Attorney General would not be held responsible for any delinquency or abuse of power, of which he might be guilty in his office of public functionary. The legislative power frequently trespasses on the judiciary, and both, but more especially the former, rule at their own caprice the executive.



The labours of the above mentioned Commission for preparing new codes of laws are at present suspended. It is said that a rough sketch of the Civil Code is already drawn out. What the reform will be in regard to this subject, if any reform is to be made, it is difficult to foresee; the necessity of such a change is felt more and more.\*

In regard to the language in which the laws for Malta ought to be written, it appears rather strange that our Home Government should have decided for the Italian. It is certainly an exception to the general plan of proceeding, as carried into effect in her other colonies; and if the same policy is continued, it must not only be detrimental to her own interests, but also to the interests of the Maltese people. Yet, perhaps, considering the *present* state of language at Malta, and the very limited number of such persons as can read and write, (and *written* laws can only be serviceable to such) who have any acquaintance with the English, the decision may be justified on the ground of their paternal wishes for the present welfare and advancement of the people. But to establish the Italian here as the language of the

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\* For the foregoing part of this article I am indebted to the kindness of a friend of mine, an advocate of the Maltese bar, himself a Maltese.

laws, without some decided and definite plan to effect a change at some fixed period, will be to give it a firmer footing; and, so far as we may judge from the analogy of the past, will only serve to keep the island much longer in its present unsettled and lamentable state in respect of language. There will always exist the same conflict which exists now between the English, the Italian, and the Maltese; the former may make a little more progress, but can never be expected to become the general language of the mass of the people, who do not see it their direct interest to acquire it; the Italian must necessarily be cultivated by the most enlightened portion of the inhabitants, and yet cannot become general under an English Government; and the Maltese, which has maintained its footing for upwards of nine centuries, will not be driven away while the two former are left to dispute between themselves which shall have the preeminence.

The supposition that the English tongue will gradually gain the ascendancy in the island, without any direct endeavour to effect such an end, has no analogous example to support it. I know of no country in which such a change has taken place, even where there has been only one language to overcome; but in Malta, the Italian creates a greater and more powerful obstacle


than the mother tongue of the natives, because the former is written and studied to some extent, while the latter is not.

The Maltese language gained its ascendancy within the limits of two hundred years, and although centuries have elapsed, it still continues, eminently, the language of the people. In the country scarcely any thing else is spoken, and in the town it is in general use by all classes of society. It does not appear that the then existing Arab government pursued any definite plan to effect a change in the language of the people; but the case was different. Whatever may have been the state of education among the very limited number, it is not probable that any other tongue then prevalent was used in writing to that extent which the Italian is at present; consequently the English cannot be expected to gain the same ascendancy even after the lapse of centuries.

If a fixed time should be determined by the Government for the existence of the laws in Italian, this alone would act as the most powerful stimulus to the rising generation to endeavour to obtain a competent knowledge of the English. After twenty or thirty years the present functionaries would be ready to resign their places, and others might be prepared to fill them, during this period, having a sufficient acquaintance with

the English to discharge all their duties in that language, with as much ease as their predecessors did in the Italian. If after the termination of the same time, no persons should be preferred to situations except such as possess a competent knowledge of the English, and all the business of the Government should be conducted in this language, a rapid change would soon take place in the state of things at Malta. By such measures, this island would soon assume a different character, both morally and politically, and in a short period the inhabitants would become so blended with English spirit, manners, and literature, as to be deserving of the name of Britons.

To effect this desirable end, however, and to justify any measure which at first sight may appear harsh and despotic, it will be the duty of the Government to facilitate the study of English literature, and to provide adequate means for the education of the mass of the people. The plan hitherto pursued in this respect must be materially changed, both in the quality as well as the number of English teachers employed in the Government establishments.



PART III.



ITINERARY

OF THE

ISLAND OF MALTA.







## DIVISION OF THE ISLAND.



The island of Malta may be said to contain two principal cities, three towns, and twenty-two *casals* or villages scattered over a part of the country. Many of the latter, from their size, population and building might be termed towns; and a few have been dignified with that title by several of the Grandmasters. As, for instance, Casal Zebbug is sometimes called Città Rohan; Casal Curmi, Città Pinto; and Casal Zabbar, Città Hompesh.

The two principal cities are Valetta and Città Notabile, called also Città Vecchia, and in Maltese Mdina, situate about the centre of the island. Borgo, Senglea and Burmulo, the three chief towns, occupy the two promontories on the opposite side of the harbour, towards the east of Valetta.

In order to render the different descriptions as clear as possible, I shall class those objects which are most interesting and deserving of notice under separate heads, though by so doing, I may

sometimes be found guilty of repetition. Valetta being the capital, I shall commence with it, including its suburbs and fortifications.

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DETAILS OF THE CITY OF VALETTA.

*Foundation of the city—Its situation—Streets—Houses—Mole—Warehouses on—Health Office—Exterior Fortifications—Gates.*

Valetta is situated on the east side of the island, in Long. 14° 30' 25" E. Lat. 35° 53' 4" N. It is built upon a promontory of land anciently called Shaab-er-Ras, *the jutting out of the cape*. Before the arrival of the Order, the capital of the island was the Città Notabile; and the present site of Valetta was occupied by a few huts, and defended by the fort of St. Elmo, which at that time was very insignificant compared with its present size and strength. The first stone of the new city was laid by the Grandmaster La Valette, on the 28th. of March 1566; and the whole was completed by his successor Pietro de Monte, on the 15th. of May 1571.

The situation of Valetta is very convenient for commerce; the appearance of the town from the sea is delightful, nor does the interior produce the disappointment so common in towns of the



Entrance of the Great Harbour

See p. 100 of the



south of Europe. The streets are regular and generally well paved; but from the declivity on which some part of the city is built, many of them are steep, with side-walks composed of stairs, which the author of the piece entitled *Farewell to Malta*, erroneously attributed to Lord Byron, recollected with no very pleasant associations, if we may judge from the line, 'Adieu ye cursed streets of stairs.' The town is kept remarkably clean, being swept every morning by the convicts of the state prison. It is rather to be regretted, that it is so badly lighted by night; a small lamp affixed to the corner of every alternate street is all that is provided, and one is often in danger of falling over a heap of stones or rubbish piled up before some houses undergoing repairs; or, unless well acquainted with his way, liable to take a false step, and stumble down one of the sloping staircases.

The houses are all built of stone, and very generally comprise three stories. Besides the windows opening into the street and yard, each dwelling has one or two balconies jutting out several feet from the wall, and varying from six to twenty in length. These awkward protuberances are sometimes open, and sometimes covered on the top; and are supplied with glass windows which can be opened or shut at pleasure. How-

ever much these serve to destroy the beauty of the external appearances of the buildings, they are very comfortable retreats for the inmates, both in summer and winter, as from them they can espy all that transpires in the street without being exposed to the effects of either.

The houses have all flat-roofed terraces, which serve the double purpose of being an agreeable resort for a walk, and a receptacle for the rain which falls during the winter; from whence it runs into the cistern, with which almost every dwelling is provided. In case rain should fail, water can be let into the cisterns through underground canals which communicate with the aqueduct. Such houses as do not possess this convenience are supplied by the public fountains, of which there are several in different parts of the city.

The range of buildings situated on the mole of the Great Harbour, under the walls of the town, are chiefly warehouses of two stories high. Those which extend as far up as the Custom-house were built by the Grandmaster Raymond Perellos in the year 1712, for the accommodation of merchants; and are very convenient for this purpose, from their nearness to the sea. By the same was erected the building at the commencement of these magazines, which contains the lodge of the



Marine Police, where the passports of all passengers on their arrival are first taken, and their names registered in the books; they are afterwards deposited in the office of the Inspector General of Police, from whence they may be reclaimed after the persons have been guaranteed by some respectable British subject. This rule applies only to foreigners.

The small chapel which stands at no great distance from the bottom of the stairs called *Nix Mangiare* was built by the same individual who founded the warehouses, and was intended for the use of persons on board of vessels in quarantine; from whence they might be spectators of the celebration of the mass by the officiating priest. The elevation of the host was signified by the ringing of a small bell; at which signal the audience all knelt down to worship. The style of its building, on a raised base, and with a very exposed front, was designed in order that the service might be more conveniently seen. It is dedicated to the *Santissimo Salvatore*.

Proceeding a little further, on a somewhat raised platform, is a circular fountain, in the centre of which is a fine bronze statue of Neptune, holding the trident in one hand, and the escutcheon of the Grandmaster Alofio Wignacourt, by whom it was raised, in the other. This piece

of art is the work of Giovanni Bologna, a pupil of Michaelangelo. The semi-circular row of rooms situate round this fountain was built by the Grandmaster Raymond Despuig, and intended as a fish-market; for which purpose it is at present used.

The long excavated passage, leading from this division of the mole to that beyond the custom-house, was cut by the Grandmaster John P. Lascaris, and called after his name Lascaris Gate. The picturesque house above it, with the garden which stretches beneath the Marina Gate, was also built by him, and was resorted to by his knights for pleasure and diversion during the evening. The parterre which leads into the dwelling, formed by the terraces of the storehouses beneath, is very spacious, and forms a delightful walk with a good view of the harbour.

The long range of warehouses beyond the custom-house, as far as the Calcara Gate, was also the work of Lascaris. Those just below the Calcara Gate were erected by the Grandmaster Zondadari. Farther up still are nineteen other magazines, each two stories high, and very spacious. These were built by Emmanuel Pinto, and intended for an arsenal. In the centre of the range is a bronze bust of the founder with a Latin inscription. At present these are used as Ordnance

stores. The mole was begun by Zondadari, and completed during the reign of Manoel de Vilhena A. D. 1726.

The fortifications which surround the town are very high, and many of them formed partly of the native rock; the walls measure about fifteen feet wide, and are composed chiefly of the common limestone of the country. Their whole circumference is two miles and a half. The ditch which crosses the peninsula from the Quarantine to the Great harbour, cutting off all communication with the city, is about 1000 feet in length, 120 feet deep, and as many wide; this is crossed by five bridges: one before the principal gate, called *Porta Reale*, and the others connected with the covered ways leading from *St. James's* and *St. John's* cavaliers. These two fortresses flank the chief entrance into the town, and command the whole country before, and the city in the rear. One is at present unoccupied; *St. James's* to the left contains a detachment of the British garrison, and a part of the *Malta Fencible* regiment. Each is capable of quartering five hundred men.

Beyond the counterscarp are many outworks and glacis built in the same massy style, and well supplied with cannon, rendering the city one of the best defensible in the world. One would

imagine that all these fortifications must require a great force to man them properly; yet, it was calculated by the Cavalier Foulard, that 12,000 troops would suffice for the defence of the port, and the security of the walls. During the existence of the Order, the knights of each Language had a particular post assigned to them in case of an attack. The division was as follows: to the Knights of

Provence,	The rampart of St. John, with its cavalier.
Auvergne,	..... St. Michael.
France,	..... St. James, with its cavalier.
Italy,	..... St. Peter and Paul.
Arragon,	..... St. Andrew.
England,	Platform of St. Lazarus.
Germany,	Rampart of St. Sebastian.
Castile,	.... Sta. Barbara.

The city is closed by three gates: *Porta Reale*, which is the chief entrance from the country; *Porta Marsamuscetto* from the Quarantine harbour, and the *Marina Gate* from the Great harbour. Besides the above, there are two sally-ports: one leading from the outer walls of fort St. Elmo, and the other before the rampart of

St. Lazarus, which is at present open for the convenience of those who live on the opposite side of the Quarantine harbour. Here they can take boats and cross over as far as Sliema or Fort Tigné until sunset, when it is closed for the night. This passage is called the Jews' Sally-port.

The principal street of the city is Strada Reale, which extends from the gate of the same name, as far as the castle of St. Elmo; a distance of three quarters of a mile. The chief streets which run parallel with this are:

Strada Forni.	Strada Stretta.
... Mercanti.	... Zecca.
... St. Paolo.	... Sta. Ursola.

The principal cross-streets are :

Strada Mezzodì.	Strada Vescovo.
... Brittanica.	... San Cristoforo.
... St. Giovanni.	... San Domenico.
... Sta. Lucia.	... Teatro.

Strada San Nicola.

We shall commence our details by describing

#### THE CASTLE OF ST. ELMO.

This fortress is built on the extremity of the peninsula of land which separates the two chief harbours of the island. The present site of St. Elmo was anciently called *Della Guardia*; as

here a watch was constantly kept to notice the entrance of all vessels into both harbours. Here also was a small chapel dedicated to St. Erasmus or St. Elmo, the tutelar saint of seamen; from which the fort derives its name. The fort was first erected by order of the viceroy of Sicily, on the occasion of an attack of the Turks in 1488. When the knights of Rhodes took possession of Malta, they soon saw the importance of having this point well fortified, and after an invasion of the Turks, when it was first projected to build a new city on Mount Shaab-er-Ras, by order of the Grandmaster Jean D' Omedes, in the year 1552, this fortress was much enlarged, and destined to form the citadel of the town. The work was carried on and completed under the direction of the Grand Prior of Capua; masons and other workmen were brought over from Sicily for the purpose.

In 1565, the eighth year of the reign of La Valette, Solyman, enraged at the seizure of a Turkish gallion belonging to the chief black eunuch of his seraglio, vowed the destruction of Malta; and for that purpose, destined a formidable armament under Dragut, the admiral of the Algerine fleet, which appeared off the island in the month of May. The first point of attack determined on by Solyman's general was St. Elmo,



which was usually garrisoned by sixty men, under the command of one knight; but such was the importance of the place, that it was thought expedient to add a reinforcement. Accordingly, sixty knights and a company of Spanish infantry were sent to support it.

On the 25th. of the same month the Turkish artillery began to batter the fort both from the sea and land. In a few days a breach was effected, and a most bloody contest ensued, which must soon have ended in the entire destruction of so small a garrison, had not fresh supplies of troops continually arrived during the night, from Borgo, in boats, which took back the wounded from the fort. The ravelin was next stormed by the besiegers, and fell into their hands after a loss on their part of about 3000 men; but insensible to this loss, they continued the attack with unexampled ardour. In the mean time the courage of the garrison was unabated; but seeing that the ravelin was taken, the fort exposed, the greater part of the artillery dismounted, the ramparts in ruins, with but very few soldiers to defend them, they deputed a knight to wait upon the Grandmaster to request that they might evacuate the fort. La Valette, though secretly deploring the fate of so many brave men who had fallen, yet, knowing the importance of the

place, would not consent to its abandonment on the most urgent entreaties from many of the Order. By a stratagem which he formed, he raised the emulation and jealousy of the petitioners, who were now determined to die rather than yield up their posts. On the 16th. of June, a general assault was made by the enemy, and the walls were laid even with the rock on which they were built. The Turks now entered the ditch, where a fierce engagement took place; for, while a continual fire was kept up from both sides, the parties grappled with each other, after they had broken their pikes in the contest. The assault continued for six hours, when the enemy began to give way, and scouted a retreat after having lost 3000 men. Seventeen knights perished in the breach, and 300 soldiers were either killed or wounded.

A reinforcement of 150 men from Borgo, who voluntarily offered themselves for the service, was now sent over to the fort; but this was the last time such assistance could be afforded. The Turkish commander managed to land a force on the opposite side, at the Renella creek, which hindered any boat from crossing over to the help of the besieged. On the 21st. three assaults were made, and were as often repulsed, until night put a stop to the contest.

On the following day the assault was renewed by day-break, and after defending the breach for four hours, only sixty men remained to man it. At 11 o'clock, the Janissaries made themselves masters of the cavalier, and the Turkish commander entered the fort. Not one knight was left alive, and the few remaining soldiers perished in the breach. The loss of the enemy is estimated at 8000, while the Order lost 300 knights and about 1300 soldiers.

The inhuman Turk, wishing to revenge the death of his troops, ordered a search to be made among the dead and wounded for the knights, whose hearts he had ripped out, and after cutting their breasts in the shape of a cross, commanded them to be set afloat on boards, designing that the tide should carry them over to St. Angelo towards Borgo. By way of reprisal, La Valette ordered all the prisoners to be put to death, and loading his cannon with their still bleeding heads, fired them into the enemy's camp.

In the following year, after the reimbarkment and defeat of the Turkish expedition, when the first stone of the city of Valetta was laid, the Fort of St. Elmo was repaired and fortified, and built in a more regular form than it was before. In the year 1687, under the Grandmaster Carafa, the fortress was almost rebuilt, and in the

commencement of the eighteenth century, the surrounding bastions were added by the Grand-master Raimondo de Perellos e Roccaful. These bastions, as also the fort, are built of a very hard limestone, called by the natives *zoncor*, and are well supplied with bombs and cannon, and other pieces of artillery. On the angles of the ramparts which command the entrance into both harbours are two turrets, formerly intended for the purpose of watching the vessels which entered and left the harbour. At present, the entrances to these are closed up with two marble slabs, one bearing an inscription to the memory of Admiral Sir A. Ball, once governor of Malta, below which are interred his remains surrounded by an iron railing; and the other in memory of Sir Ralph Abercrombie, whose embalmed body is enclosed in a barrel within the turret, just as it was brought from Aboukir. From this circumstance, the ramparts to the west are called after the name of the former, *Ball's bastions*, and those to the East, *Abercrombie's bastions*.

From the watch-tower surmounting the fort vessels may be seen at a great distance; the quality of the sail in sight is marked by different signals, and the points from which they are coming may be known by the position in which these signs are placed, on a stand prepared for the

purpose. This custom existed in the time of the Order, and is continued to the present day. Men-of-war are signified by two balls suspended on a small pole, a packet by one, and a merchant vessel by a small square white flag.

The treble row of magazines, nineteen on each story, now forming a barrack for two regiments of the line, was erected, under the auspices of the Grandmaster Emmanuel Pinto, and intended for store-houses of ammunition for the Order, and a safe asylum for females in case of a siege. These magazines are bomb proof, and are built within the walls, under the western wing of the Fort, from a design by the Cavalier Tigné. The terrace of this building is well paved, and forms a delightful walk, enjoying an extensive view of the sea. In the square, in front of the barracks, is a fine fountain, surmounted by four large stone shells, from which the water was formerly made to spring. Over the two gates which open the descent to the square, were placed the arms of the Grandmaster Pinto, surrounded with warlike trophies and other ornaments. Those on the north-western side have been thrown down; but those opposite, towards the town, are still to be seen, though somewhat destroyed by the hand of time.

The fort of St. Elmo is at present garrisoned

by English Artillery, and a small detachment of infantry. The quarters which they occupy are very healthy; those on the walls are open to the air, and those below are built with spacious corridors along the ranges of rooms. There was a small chapel in the fort, which is now used for a different purpose. The light-house, which rises from one of the angles, has lately been improved by the English Government.

Since the year 1565, when St. Elmo unhappily fell into the hands of the Turks, but was afterwards retaken by the knights, the fort was siezed upon by a mob of priests and malcontents amounting to between three and four hundred persons. This event took place during the short reign of the Grandmaster Francis Ximenes de Taxada; but the conspirators were soon obliged to abandon their position. On being seized by the Bailiff de Rohan, who had the charge of the attack, some were executed, whilst others were either banished or imprisoned.

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The next object of interest to which I would direct the attention of the traveller is the

#### PALACE.

It was the original intention to erect a residence for the Grandmaster of the Order on the



site now occupied by the Auberge de Castile; but P. de Monte preferred the present spot, situated on the most level part of the town, with a spacious square in the front, called Piazza St. Giorgio. The ensemble of the exterior presents nothing striking, the whole forming a pile of unadorned architecture, about three hundred feet square, surrounded on every side by four of the principal streets, and almost enclosed on three with a line of open and covered balconies. It has two principal entrances on the front, each opening into an open court, and one in the centre of the three remaining sides. That on the back is never opened, on account of the stalls of the market, which are fixed up the whole length of the wall, and which not only give the building a very mean appearance, but destroy a great part of the street, with the nuisance necessarily attending such a place of public resort. It is to be regretted, that another spot has not yet been selected for a market, and its present locality put to some other and cleaner purpose.

The interior of the Palace was very much improved by the Grandmaster Emmanuel de Pinto. It consists of a lower and upper story, each containing a range of apartments running round the building, and another transversely, which divides the space within into two almost equal divisions.

The court to the left is by far the most spacious, and is surrounded by a portico formed with arches, covering a fountain opposite the entrance, surmounted with a statue of Neptune fixed in the wall behind. In the other yard, which communicates with the former, is also a fountain, and a racket-court, erected by the late governor for the amusement of the officers of the garrison.

The upper story consists of numerous elegant apartments and spacious halls, embellished with views commemorative of the battles of the Order, executed by Matteo da Lecce. Some of the paintings are of a superior workmanship, and will well repay a more than cursory examination. Among the several masters whose genius adorns these walls are, Caravaggio, Giuseppe d' Arpino, and Cavalier Favray. In the Waiting Room, at the end of the hall as you ascend the chief stairs, are to be seen productions of Busuttil and Caruana, two Maltese artists. Their principal pieces represent St. George and the Dragon, St. Michael, St. Peter, Mary Magdalen, and Æneas. Most of the very ancient paintings in the palace were placed here by the Grandmaster Zondadari, and are chiefly scriptural illustrations.

In the corridor leading to the Armoury is the entrance to a room hung with tapestry of very superior workmanship. The drawings on these

hangings represent scenes in India and Africa, and a great collection of natural history. This article was brought from France about 135 years since, yet the colours still look fresh and new.

The most interesting sight in this building, and one well worthy the attention of the stranger, is the Armoury. This occupies a large saloon, extending the whole length of the building, containing the armour, and a great many warlike weapons belonging to the Knights of Malta, with numerous trophies of their splendid victories. The principal musketry was manufactured at the Tower of London, and placed here by the English Government, when that of the Order was removed. The number of regular arms at present in this place is as follows:

19,555 Muskets and bayonets.

1,000 Pistols.

30,000 Boarding pikes.

90 Complete coats of armour for mounted knights.

450 Cuirasses, casques, and gauntlets for infantry.

The last mentioned armour is arranged along the upper part of the room in regular order, with their respective shields, on which is portrayed the white cross of the Order on a red field. The armour for the mounted cavaliers and men-

at-arms is of different kinds, some burnished, and other painted black and varnished. The complete suits are placed upright on stands, and posted up along the rows of muskets, at certain distances from each other, looking like so many sentinels, and giving a very sombre appearance to the whole room. A trial was once made of the force of resistance of one of these suits, and several musket-balls were discharged against it at sixty yards distance, which only produced a very shallow concavity. This piece of armour is still preserved with the rest.

At one end of the room is a complete coat of black armour standing about seven feet high, and three and half wide. It is not very probable that this has been often used; the helmet alone-weighs thirty-seven pounds.

Close by the above is an open case, in which may be seen many curious specimens of musketry, pistols, swords, daggers, &c. chiefly trophies taken by the knights in their engagements with the Turks. The sword of the famous Algerine general Dragut is preserved among these spoils.

Before this case is a cannon made of tarred rope, bound round a thin lining of copper, and covered on the outside with a coat of plaster painted black. This is a curious specimen of ancient warfare, and was taken from the Turks

during one of their attacks upon the city of Rhodes. It is about five feet long, and three inches in the caliber.

At the other extremity of the room is the complete armour of the Grandmaster Alofio Wignacourt, beautifully enchased with gold; above which is a drawing of the same, armed cap-a-pie, a copy from a master-piece of the famous Caravaggio which is in the Dining-room.

Several parts of the walls are covered with many curious specimens of ancient warlike implements. Here one may see cross-bows, maces, coats of mail, javelins, battle-axes, and various other instruments of bloodshed and death, which were wielded in days of yore by those who long since have finished their warfare, and now sleep silently in the grave.

The man of reflection cannot fail to be affected with the vanity of ambition, as he examines these relics of the prowess of by-gone years. Is this all that remains of so much anxiety and love of power? "How mean are these ostentatious methods of bribing the vote of fame, and purchasing a little posthumous renown!" "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" Of the one it may be said:

"A heap of dust alone remains of thee,  
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be;" —

while the other serves for the decoration of a palace, and the momentary entertainment of a passing stranger.

On the most elevated part of the Palace is the Torretta; a small quadrangular tower, from whence vessels of war are signalized. In the lower part of this building were formerly preserved the treasures of the Order; among which was the sword, shield, and golden belt of Philip II. King of Spain, sent by him as a present to the Grandmaster La Valette. At present this forms the quarters of the Governor's Aide-de-champ.

I must not take leave of the Palace without leading the stranger to the Government chapel; but in order to do this, he must follow me from the highest to the lowest part of the building, in a secluded spot, to the left of the chief entrance. It is a long room capable of accommodating about three hundred persons, and fitted up with pews, the greater part of which belong to persons employed by the Government, and the remainder let out to hire. The only part of the chapel where a stranger may find a sitting, without intruding upon the premises of another, is the end of the room, where hearing is almost impossible. It is certainly a disgrace to the British Government to have occupied this island for thirty-eight years, and to have made no better



provision for the public worship of her subjects; whilst in Italy, and in several parts of the east, under a foreign power, there have been edifices erected for this purpose. It is not perhaps generally known, that the British Government owns the church of St. John, and that of the Jesuits, besides several other chapels in different parts of Valetta, which are at present in the hands of the Maltese, the local administration continuing to pay for the expenses and repairs connected with them.\* Now, while we admit that justice demands an equality of privileges to servants of every denomination under Government, we confess that we can see no justice in thus ceding up to one party, what without dispute appertains as justly to the other. Under these circumstances, the stigma upon the British nation is greater, that they have not a convenient place in which their Protestant subjects may attend public worship after their own form.

After having examined all that is interesting in the Governor's Palace, we shall next notice the

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\* According to the account published in the Malta Government Gazette, the amount of "Repairs in St. John's Cathedral, and several chapels belonging to Government," was in the year 1836, £113. 3s. 7d; and in 1837, £170. 9s. 1d.

## AUBERGES OF THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA.

There was a palace or inn for each language of the Order where all the members, whether knights, serving brothers, professed or novices, equally eat. The Commanders seldom went thither; indeed those who were possessed of a commandery worth two thousand Maltese dollars could not be admitted; neither could the servants-at-arms, if they had a commandery worth one thousand crowns. The chief of each inn was called the *Pillier*, and he received either a sum of money, or the equivalent in grain from the public treasury, for the provision of the members of his inn. The rest of the expenses were paid by himself, for which he was indemnified by the first vacant dignity in his language.

In these edifices the knights of each nation not only eat, but assembled together for the purposes of consultation, and the transaction of business. Such as preferred residing in their respective inns to having private houses of their own were permitted to do so; the same privilege was enjoyed by the brother chaplains, and the brother pages, in the service of the Order.

The superior of every language was dignified with a distinctive title, to which were annexed

certain functions, which we shall notice in our description of each inn.

*Auberge de Provence.*

The superior of this auberge was denominated the Grand Commander; who, by virtue of his office was perpetual president of the common treasury, comptroller of the accounts, superintendant of stores, governor of the arsenal, and master of the ordnance. He had the nomination (subject to the approbation of the Grandmaster and council) of all officers from the different languages; and to this he added the power of appointing persons to the various places of trust in the church of St. John, and in the Infirmary.

The Auberge de Provence is situated in Strada Reale; it is a fine building, with a plain but imposing façade. The lower apartments are at present appropriated for the sale of goods by auction, the office of one of the public auctioneers, &c; the upper rooms are let to the Malta Union Club.

Besides the chapel which this language owned in the cathedral of St. John, it possessed another separate church, as did also several of the other languages. That of Santa Barbara belonged to the Knights of Provence; it is situated a little higher up than the auberge, in the same street,

on the opposite side. This chapel is at present made use of by the inhabitants.

The next in order is the

*Auberge d' Auvergne.*

The head of this inn was called the Grand Marshal; he had the military command over all the Order, excepting the grand crosses or their lieutenants, the chaplains, and other persons of the Grandmaster's household. He entrusted the standard of the Order to that knight whom he judged most worthy such distinction. He had the right of appointing the principal equerry; and when at sea, not only commanded the general of the gallies, but the grand admiral himself.

This auberge is even more simple in its structure than the former; and occupies a site opposite the side square of St. John's church, in Strada Reale. It is at present appropriated for the civil courts, and the tribunals of appeal and commerce.

*Auberge of Italy.*

The superior of this language was styled the Admiral. In the Grand Marshal's absence, he had the command of the soldiery equally with the seamen; he also appointed the comptroller and

secretary of the arsenal, and when he demanded to be named to the generalship of the gallies, the Grandmaster was obliged to propose him to the council, which was at liberty to appoint or to reject him at pleasure.

This auberge is situated in Strada Mercanti, opposite to the Auberge de Castile. Over the entrance is a bronze bust of the Grandmaster Carafa, with his coat of arms, and many trophies and ornaments of white marble, said to have been cut from a large pillar which once stood in the temple of Proserpine in the Città Notabile. Below the bust is the following inscription:

*Gregorio Carafæ Principi Optimo,  
belli pacisque artibus maximo  
post Ottomanicam classem ductu suo  
bis ad Hellespontum profligatam,  
relatasque XI. quinquerenium manubias  
ad summum Hierosolymitani Ordinis  
regimen evecto  
Itala equestris natio  
Magistrali munere sæculo  
amplius viduata  
augustam hanc effigiem  
reparatæ majestatem indicem D. D.  
A. D. MDCLXXXIII.*

To this language belonged the small church of Santa Catarina which adjoins it, having a small

platform in front, enclosed with an iron railing. The principal painting in this church is that representing Sta. Catarina; a good original by the Cav. Calabrese.

The Auberge of Italy is at present occupied by the Civil Arsenal and the Government Printing-office. Opposite to this building is the

*Auberge de Castile.*

The chief of this inn was dignified with the title of Grand Chancellor. It belonged to his office always to present the Vice-chancellor to the council; and his presence was likewise necessary whenever any *bulls* were stamped with the great seal. Those who assumed this dignity were obliged to know how to read and write.

This is the largest auberge in the city, and occupies a very delightful situation close under the walls of the ditch, commanding an extensive view of the country beyond. It has three entrances; that to the front is ascended by a grand semicircular pyramidal staircase, and is surmounted with a great display of ornamental sculpture, consisting chiefly of warlike trophies, arms, musical instruments, &c. In the centre is a marble bust of the Grandmaster Pinto, with the following inscription carved on the base:





boulevard de Casule

L. van Bruckhoff fecit



*Em. ac Seren. Princ.*  
*F. D. Emmanuel Pinto*  
*De Fonseca,*  
*Magisteri sui*  
*anno IV.*

To the knights of this language appertained the Church of St. James in Strada Mercanti; a very neat specimen of architecture, ornamented in a very chaste and simple style. This church, though but seldom used by them, is also in the hands of the Maltese.

The Auberge de Castile is at present occupied by officers of the English Garrison.

*Auberge de France.*

The superior of this inn, during the existence of the Order, was called the Grand Hospitaller. He had the direction of the hospital, and appointed the Overseer and Prior to the infirmary, and also ten writers to the council. The officers who filled these employments were changed every two years.

The Auberge de France is situated in Strada Mezzodì, and is a plain, but commodious building. It is at present the residence of the Commissary General.

*Auberge of Arragon.*

The title of the superior of this inn was the Draper, or the Grand Conservator. He was charged with every thing relative to the Conservatory, to the clothing, and to the purchase of all necessary articles, not only for the troops, but also for the hospitals.

This building occupies a small square, with the front opening into Strada Vescovo. It is now the private residence of the chief Secretary to Government.

*Auberge of England,*  
and  
*Anglo-Bavarián.*

The head of this establishment was dignified with the title of the Turcopolier; he had the command over the cavalry, and the guards stationed on the coast.

While the Language of England existed, their inn was the building which fronts the square before the small church of *Sta. Catarina of the Italians* on the one side, and Strada Reale on the other; the greatest part of it is now occupied by a large private bakery. After the Reformation, when all the English commanderies were

confiscated by order of Henry VIII. this language ceded up its rights, and was succeeded by the Anglo-Bavarian, whose inn stands on the platform of St. Lazarus, facing the entrance into the Quarantine harbour. This building is very plain in its structure; and is at present occupied by officers of the British garrison.

*Auberge of Germany.*

The Grand Bailiff of the Order was the title given to the superior of this inn. His jurisdiction comprised all the fortifications of the Old City, and the command of the Castle of Gozo.

This lodge is situated in Strada Ponente, and forms at present the private residence of the Chief Justice of the island.

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Having noticed all the Inns of the Order, we shall next direct the attention of the stranger to

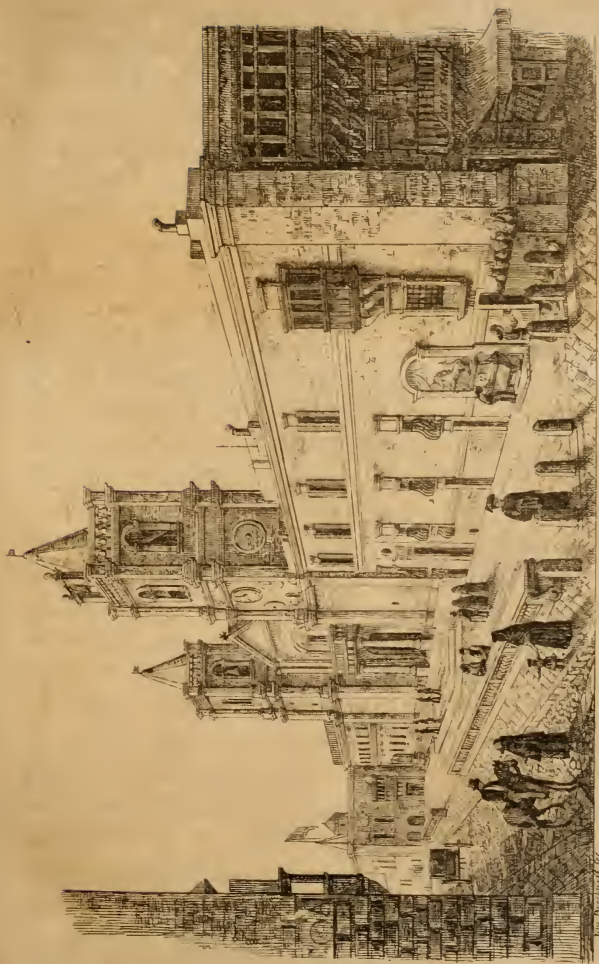
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.

This edifice holds the first rank among the numerous churches and convents of Malta. It was built during the reign of the Grandmaster La Cassiera, about the year 1576, and was subsequently enriched by the donations of the Grandmasters who succeeded him; especially by

Nicholas Cotoner and Emmanuel Pinto, and likewise by several of the sovereigns of Europe. The church was consecrated by D. Ludovico Torres, Archbishop of Monreal; and at the first general chapter held at Malta, a separate chapel was assigned to the knights of each language. The façade is very clumsy, and the ensemble quite monotonous. The building which adjoins the church on the right was formerly the residence of the Prior of the Order; that to the left was tenanted by others of the clergy belonging to the establishment, and includes several apartments, in which were preserved the treasures of the church. These were mostly all seized by the French during their short occupation of the island.

The interior is of an oblong form; the uppermost part, which forms the choir, is ornamented with an admirable piece of sculpture in white marble, on a raised base, representing the baptism of Christ by St. John, in two figures as large as life. The above was from a design by the famous Maltese artist Melchior Caffà, and completed after his death by Bernini. The semicircular roof which covers the nave is adorned with paintings illustrative of the life of the above mentioned apostle, by the Cavalier Mathias Preti, surnamed the Calabrese, by whom most of the paintings of the church were executed.





St. John's Church

Wm. B. Woodcock sculp.



At present they are much defaced, and are fast losing their primitive beauty. This distinguished artist is buried before the entrance into the vestry. He died in January 1699.

The pavement is composed of sepulchral slabs worked in mosaic with various coloured marble; many of them contain jasper, agate, and other precious stones, the cost of which must have been very great. These cover chiefly the graves of the knights, and other servants of the Order, and bear each an appropriate epitaph, or rather a panegyric on the virtues of the deceased.

The grand altar which stands at the uppermost part of the nave is very sumptuous, and deserves notice on account of the various coloured marble, and other valuable stones of which it is constructed. Before it, on either side, on a raised pavement, stands a chair covered with a rich canopy of crimson velvet: that to the right is occupied by the bishop, and the one on the left is destined for the sovereign of the island, over which is placed the escutcheon of Great Britain. Close by the latter is a seat prepared for the Governor of the island.

The chapels of the different languages of the Order, which run parallel with the nave, form the two aisles, and are very splendidly decorated. The roofs are constructed in the shape of a dome

in the interior, and are very profusely carved with different ornaments in alto-relievo, as also are the walls. The whole was gilded during the reigns of Rafael and Nicolas Cotoner, as appears from an inscription over the entrance on the west side of the building. The arches of these chapels correspond on both sides, and leave their interior quite exposed to view as you pass down the nave.

The first arch, on the right hand as you enter the church, forms a passage into the Oratory, or Chapel of the Crucifixion. This was set apart for the worship of the clergy, during the existence of the Order; and is now used for the same purpose. There are several fine paintings in this chapel, especially one behind the altar of the Beheading of John, the work of Michael-Angelo Caravaggio. The roof is remarkably chaste, and is not so profuse in gilded ornament as many other parts of the building. From this chapel a flight of stairs leads down to a subterraneous apartment, where there is a room in which stands a rustic altar. The floor covers several vaults, which were destined for the interment of Commanders of the Order.

The second arch covers the chapel of the Portuguese Knights. Over the altar is a drawing of St. James; and on the side walls are two other paintings representing some traditionary scenes



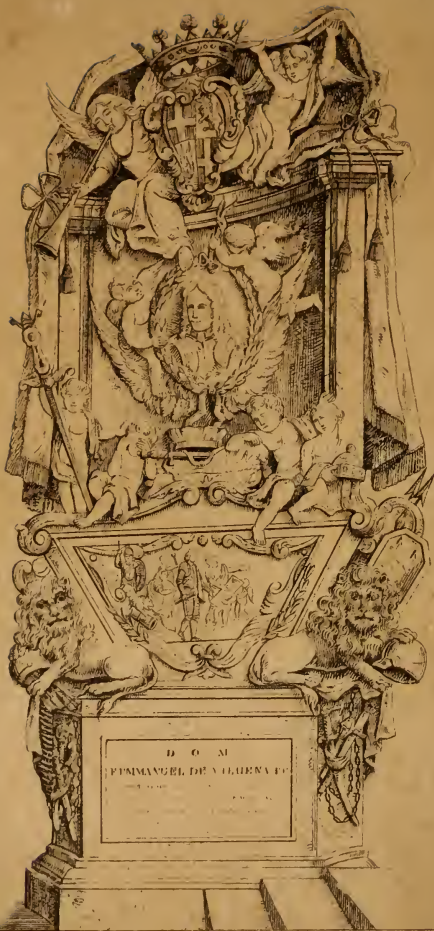
L. Brockelhoff sc.

NICOLA COTONER









L. Brechtel sc.

EMANUEL DE VILHENA

in the life of that apostle. In this chapel are two mausoleums: one of Emmanuel Pinto, surmounted with his portrait in mosaic, and a large marble representation of Fame; the other, of Manoel de Vilhena, is by far the most costly. The whole of the latter is of bronze, sustained by two lions of the same material. On a tablet beneath his bust is an alto-relievo group, representing the Grand-master giving directions concerning the construction of Fort Manoel, the plan of which is spread out before him by one of the knights. The accompanying sketches will give some idea of these monuments.

The third arch forms the entrance into the church from the eastern side, and contains no altar. The roof and walls, however, are carved and gilded in the same manner with the rest.

The fourth arch leads into the chapel of the Spanish Knights. Over the altar is a painting of St. George; those on the side walls represent the trial and martyrdom of St. Lawrence. In this chapel are the mausoleums of four Grand-masters: Martin de Redin, Raphael Cotoner, Perillos e Roccaful, and Nicolas Cotoner. The two last mentioned are very grand. That of Roccaful is surmounted by a fine copper bust, with a figure on each side as large as life, one representing Justice, and the other Charity. The whole

is adorned with warlike weapons and armour cut in white marble, and exhibiting a very imposing appearance. That of Nicolas Cotoner is equally grand; the monument is sustained by two slaves in a bending posture, one representing a Turk and the other an African; a very graphic delineation of the false views of Gospel liberty which formed the basis of all the crusades.

The fifth arch leads into the chapel of the Language of Provence. The paintings over the altar represent the crucifixion of St. Sebastian; and the side drawings are also illustrations of some parts of the same history. The mausoleum of the Grandmaster Gersan is very simple, consisting of a black marble inscription surmounted with an alabaster bust.

The sixth and uppermost arch leads into the small chapel of the Virgin. This, however, is not open to the nave, being covered with the benches which form the choir. The altar in this chapel is surrounded with a balustrade of massy silver posts, placed along a row of low marble pillars which extend the whole breadth of the room. Enclosed within this, on the side walls, are three silver plates containing the following inscriptions, with a bundle of keys suspended to each. These as may be seen from the writing, were taken as trophies from the Turks by the Knights of Malta.





RAYMONDO DE PERELLOS ET ROCAFULI. MM



## 1.

*Deiparæ Virgini ac Divo  
Baptistæ tutelari*

*Castri Passava in Peloponoso a militibus Hierosonis vi-  
capto sub F. Ia. Dublot viverio  
triremium præfecto anno*

*salu. humæ. MDCI. die XVIII. Aug. men-  
sis F. Alofius Vignacurtius M.*

*Magister tunc primum sui  
regiminis annum agens has oppidi  
claves ac signa Turcica memoriæ  
ac pietatis ergo consecravit.*

## 2.

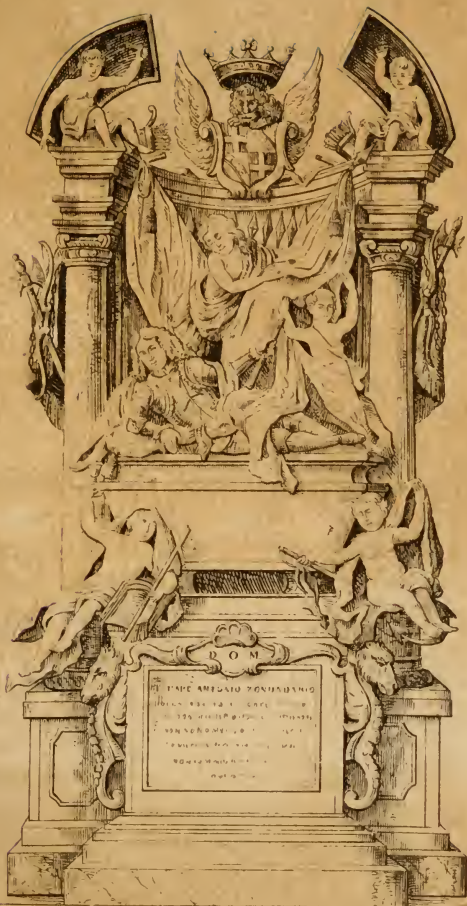
*Anno post captum Passava  
ejusdem viverii ejusdemq'.  
mensis Aug. felicitate idib'.  
orto jam sole excisis portis ac  
magno militum impetu muris per  
scalas superatis capto etiam  
Hadrymeto urbes in Africa vulgo  
Hamameta idem Mag. Alofius eid.  
Em. Virgini Matri ac D. Baptistæ  
quorum auspiciis hæc gesta  
sunt pro gratiarum actione  
hoc monumentum posuit.*

## 3.

*Duo Castra ad custodiam  
 Corinthiaci sinus in ejus  
 facib'. a barbaris ultimo  
 constructa idem Alofius  
 quo matris tractu sociali bello ad-  
 versus Selimum Milesolim pugnave-  
 rat, nunc M. Mag. an. sui principat.' III.  
 et Fascanio Cambriano classis prefec-  
 to a suis capta diripuit. Ingentib' ad  
 LXX tormentis inter alia huc inde ad-  
 vectis tantæ igitur victoriæ monumen-  
 ta S. Victori cui auspiciis die illi sacro eam  
 acceptam referat ac Deiparæ dedicavit.*

To the left hand, on entering the church, is a splendid copper mausoleum of the Grand-master Zondadari. The whole is supported by a marble base, and flanked with two fine pillars of the same material. The metal statue of the knight, as large as life, in a reclining posture, and the various ornaments which surround it, are very grand, and may be regarded as a first rate production of art.

Walking down the left aisle, the first arch leads into the vestry, in which are several paintings; among them are the portraits in length of the



*L. Brockhoff fecit*

MARC AN<sup>no</sup> ZONDADARIO



Grandmaster Pinto, La Cassiera, Perillos and Nicolas Cotoner.

The second chapel is that of the Knights of Austria. The-altar piece represents the Adoration of the Wise Men; the pieces on the side walls illustrate the Murder of the Innocents, and the Birth of our Saviour.

The third arch forms the western entry into the church. The walls of this recess are covered with small and neat sculpture.

The fourth chapel is that of the Italian Knights; the walls are ornamented much in the same manner as the former. There are in this chapel two fine drawings of St. Jerom and Mary Magdalen, said to be the work of the famous Caravaggio. The painting over the altar represents the espousals of the infant Jesus with St. Catherine! The only mausoleum here is that of the Grandmaster Carafa, which is partly of marble and partly of copper. On the wall behind the bust is a prospective view in alto-relievo of the entry of several gallies into the harbour of Malta.

The next chapel is that of the Language of the Knights of France. The conversion of St. Paul over the altar is a fine piece. The drawings on the side walls represent the shipwreck of St. Paul, and St. John in the desert. In this chapel are


the monuments of two Grandmasters, and one of the Prince Ludovico Philip D'Orleans, who was interred here in the year 1808.

The sixth and last chapel is that of the Knights of Bavaria. Over the altar is a drawing of St. Michael and the Dragon, and on one side of the wall another of his miraculous appearance. The other side forms a small chapel in a recess, enclosed with a brass balustrade, dedicated to St. Carlo di Boromeo. This was used by the English Knights of the Order.

From this chapel a staircase leads down to an underground apartment, in which are the tombs of several Grandmasters. Here is interred L' Isle Adam, the first commander of the Order in Malta. The remainder are those of La Valette, Wignacourt, La Cassiera, Cardinal Verdala, Ludovico Mendes de Vasconcelos, Pietro de Monte, and Martin de Garzes. The remains of these are chiefly deposited in sarcophagi of Malta stone, with marble covers, on some of which are carved full-length images of the deceased. On the pavement are three marble slabs with inscriptions to the memory of Claudius de la Sengle, Petrino a Ponte, and Ioan. de Homedes; who, together with several of the above mentioned, were removed to this cemetery after the building of the church.



On particular days the interior of the building is covered with a rich tapestry, which gives it a very splendid appearance. This article was presented as a gift to the church by the Grand-master Perellos.



#### CHURCHES OF VALETTA.

Besides the church already mentioned, there are three others in the city which belong to the Government: viz. the Church of the Jesuits in Strada Mercanti, Di Liesse on the Marina, and St. Rocco in Strada St. Ursola. The former of these we may have occasion to mention in our remarks on the Jesuits' college, now the Government University. The church of Di Liesse belonged to the Knights of France. The walls of this building are adorned with gifts devoted to the Virgin, the fulfillment of vows made in time of affliction, in order to obtain her commiseration. The boatmen hold this church in peculiar veneration.

The two parish churches of the city are those of St. Domenico and St. Paolo; the former is connected with a monastery of Domenican friars; the latter is a collegiate church, situated in the street of the same name. The other monkish orders are those of the Augustinians, Carmelites,

Franciscans, and the *Minori Osservanti*, or Reformed Franciscans; all of which have churches connected with their respective convents. Besides these, there are two large nunneries, one of Ursoline and the other of Sta. Catarina nuns; but the rage for this species of seclusion has very much subsided in Valetta. The former establishment is nearly empty, and the latter is receiving but very few additions. Two other churches in the city, one dedicated to Sta. Lucia, and the other called Delle Anime (of the Souls in Purgatory) belong to the public. The Greek Catholics have also a small chapel, dedicated to Sta. Maria, in Strada Vescovo.

Several of these churches are ornamented with fine paintings, and decorated with images representing things which are in heaven above, on the earth beneath, in the waters under the earth, and in the lower regions. To describe these, would be an almost endless task, and would yield but little interest to the general reader.

It is calculated that the number of ordained priests and friars in the islands of Malta and Gozo exceeds one thousand; these are supported from the revenues of their respective churches and convents, the contributions of the people, and the money paid in masses for the living and the dead. Beside the above there are about three thousand

*Abbati* preparing for ordination, who are considered a part of the papal ecclesiastical establishment of the island.

In the month of February, in the year 1823, a very mournful event took place in one of the convents of Malta, no less dreadful in its effects than that of that of the Black-hole of Calcutta. The circumstance was as follows:

It was usual in this island, on the last days of the Carnival, to collect together, from Valetta and from the three cities on the other side of the harbour, as many boys of the lower classes, of from 8 to 15 years of age, as chose to attend,—to form them into a procession, and to take them out to Floriana or elsewhere, where, after attending service in the church, a collation of bread and fruit (provided from funds partly given by Government and partly by beneficent individuals) was distributed to them,—and this with the view of keeping them out of the riot and confusion of the Carnival in the streets of the cities. The arrangement of this procession was under the control of the Ecclesiastical Directors of the Institution for teaching the Catechism.

It appears that this procession had taken place on the 10th. of Feb. that the children went to Floriana, and from thence returned to the church of the *Minori Osservanti* in Valetta, and that the

bread was on that day distributed in the Convent of that Order without any accident or confusion

On the 11th, the procession was formed as usual, proceeded to Floriana, and returned to the church of the *Minori Osservanti*, and the bread was to be distributed, as on the preceding day, in the same convent. Unfortunately, however, the ceremony had been protracted to a later hour than usual, and it appears (the Carnival being over,) that a multitude of boys and full grown people, passing by the church and knowing that bread was to be distributed, mixed with the children in the church with the view of sharing it with them.

The boys were to enter the corridor of the convent from the door of the vestry of the church, and were to be let out through the opposite door of the convent in Strada St. Ursola, where the bread was to be distributed; and it had been customary, when they were collected in the corridor, to lock the door of the vestry, for the purpose of preventing those boys who had received the share of the bread from entering the second time into the corridor.

On the door of the vestry, however, being thrown open on the present occasion, which took place about sun-set, after the entrance of the boys, who originally attended the procession, and who

could not have exceeded one hundred, the whole multitude of men and boys, who had subsequently entered the church, forced themselves into the corridor to an unknown extent, and pressed upon the foremost, pushing them gradually to the other end of the corridor, where the door was only half open, with the view of letting out one at a time.

As soon as the people had all entered the corridor, the vestry door was as usual locked, and, though there was one lamp lighted in the corridor, it appears, by some accident, to have been early put out—thus leaving this immense crowd entirely in the dark;— and there being unfortunately a flight of eight steps within the half closed door, at the opposite end of the corridor, the crowd behind, who pressed upon the foremost, forced the boys down the steps, who fell one upon the other, thus unfortunately choking up the half-shut door at the bottom (which opened inwards,) and adding to the distress.

The shrieks of the children were soon heard by the persons employed in the distribution of the bread which they had commenced issuing, and by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood,—and it appears that every aid was immediately given. Some persons, after endeavouring in vain to get the boys out of the half closed door, rushed into the church and got the keys of the vestry door,

which was then opened;—while others entered the corridor from the vestry, passed through the crowd to the other end, and broke down the door at the bottom of the steps;—but unfortunately their exertions were not in time to save the unhappy sufferers.

Many, however, were taken out fainting and soon recovered; others apparently lifeless were afterwards brought to their senses; but, sad to relate, one hundred and ten boys of from 8 to 15 years of age perished on this occasion from suffocation, by being pressed together in so small a space, or trampled upon.

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#### HOSPITALS.

The present Military Hospital, situated at the lower extremity of Strada Mercanti, was formerly the public building used for the reception of the sick by the Knights of Malta. It is a very commodious edifice, containing many ranges of rooms, disposed in excellent order for the free circulation of air, with a spacious court, in the centre of which is a good fountain. During the existence of the Order, this establishment was open to strangers as well as to the citizens, for whom suitable accommodations were provided.



The sick were regularly attended by the knights in person, provided with medicines and medical assistance free of expense, and their food served up to them in vessels of silver. Here also was a provision made for foundlings.

The direction of this institution, after the Grandmaster, was committed to the chief Hospitaller, which dignity appertained to the French knights. To him belonged the election of the Overseer of the Infirmary, the Prior, and other ministers. The Overseer generally resided in the Hospital; to the Prior was committed the charge of the spiritual concerns of the patients, and the other ecclesiastical servants helped in assisting the sick, and in celebrating the sacrament in the different wards. To the right hand, on entering the chief gate of the Hospital, was the Pharmacy of the establishment, well supplied with all kind of drugs and medicines. This is used for the same purpose at the present day.

On the arrival of the French, they seized upon all the plate which was to be found in the establishment, and converted the building into a Military Hospital. The inhabitants being obliged to demand another, the Nunnery of Sta. Maddalena was given them, the nuns promptly yielding up their residence for the purpose, some of whom

retired in to the Monastery of Sta. Catarina, and others went to their homes.

Close by was the cemetery for all persons who died in the Hospital, and adjoins a small church called the *Church of the Cemetery*, founded by the Commendatore Fra Giorgio Nibbia, who is himself buried there. Upon a part of the locality which formed the burial-ground is now built a semicircular building, set apart for dissection, and practical lessons in anatomy, to the students who attend the Government University. By the side of this is a very extensive charnel-house, containing many thousand skulls and human bones, which have been dug up from time to time out of the cemetery.

Close to the above is the public Female Hospital, founded in the year 1646 by the Lady Catarina Scoppi Senese, who bequeathed the building to the public, and endowed it with all her wealth. This institution was likewise under the direction of two knights of the Order, who were called Commissioners. At present it serves the same purpose as formerly, and the sick are attended to with every possible care.

Opposite this building is the public Male Hospital, which in the time of the Order, as I have mentioned above, was a Nunnery of *The Penitents*, dedicated to Sta. Maria Maddalena. Whilst

this establishment existed, by order of the Pope, it was partly supported by the fifth portion of the inheritance of prostitutes. The church which adjoined it is now made use of as a ward for the wounded, and such as have broken limbs. Both Hospitals are at present under the direction of the local government, who employ all the funds which were left to their support for the purpose of rendering a very possible assistance to the poor who apply for admittance. Twice a week the relations and friends of the sick are permitted to visit any whom they may have in the Hospital, but are obliged to undergo the strictest search lest they carry in something concealed about their persons, which might be injurious to those under medical treatment.

Opposite the Military Hospital is another large building, which is at present occupied by private families. The part to the right was formerly called *La Camarata*, where a number of the more pious knights were accustomed to reside, and where they assembled together at stated hours for devotion. The left division, called *La Lingerie*, was set apart as a magazine for the linen and other articles required for the service of the Hospital. Here also the bedding and clothing of the patients were washed. This building was

erected in the year 1593 under the Grandmaster Cardinal Verdala, and subsequently repaired during the reign of the Grandmaster Lascaris.

## MONTE DI PIETA`,

or

## PUBLIC PAWN-BROKERY.

This institution occupies a large building in Strada Mercanti, opposite the house called *Il Banco dei Giurati*. It was originally established in the year 1597, and like all institutions of the sort in other parts of Europe, particularly at Rome, with the object of affording pecuniary relief to the distressed at reasonable interest, thereby preventing them from having recourse to usurious contracts. Any sum of money, however small, is advanced to applicants on the security of property given in pawn, such as gold, silver, and other precious articles, or wearing apparel, whether worn or new. The period of the loan is for three years on pawns of the first description, and never more than two on those of the latter, renewable at the option of the parties, who are also at liberty to redeem their pawns at

any time within the period on payment of interest in proportion. The rate of interest now charged is 6 per cent per annum. The unclaimed pawns, at the expiration of the period, are sold by public auction, and the residue of the proceeds, after deducting the sum due to the institution, is payable to the person producing the respective tickets. Of the accommodation thus afforded by the Monte not unfrequently persons in better circumstances have availed for any momentary exigency; and in this way considerable sums have been advanced. Till the year 1787 the operations of this institution were conducted by means of money borrowed at a moderate interest, and by funds acquired by donations, &c. But the Grandmaster Rohan authorized the consolidation of the funds of the Monte di Pietà with those of the Monte di Redenzione, another institution, equally national, founded in the year 1607 by private donations and bequests, for the philanthropic object of rescuing from slavery any of the natives who might fall into the hands of the Mohammedans not having means of ransom. As this institution had larger funds (mostly in landed property) than it actually required to meet all demands, the act of consolidation proved of the greatest advantage to the Monte di Pietà. Thus united the two institutions, with the new

title of Monte di Pietà e Redenzione, conducted their separate duties under the superintendence of a board consisting of a President and eight Commissaries, till the expulsion of the Order of St. John from Malta, which happened in the year 1798. The French Republicans by whom the island was then occupied stripped the Monte of every article whether in money or pawns, and the loss sustained by the institution on that unfortunate occasion amounted nearly to £35,000 sterling, including the share of the proprietors of pawns, in as much as the advance they received on that security never exceeded one half or two-thirds of the value of the articles pawned. It is needless to state that not a shilling of this sum was repaid by the French Government after the occupation of the island by the English.

When the British forces took possession of La Valette in September 1800, it was one of the first cares of the head of the Government to see this useful institution resume its operations; accordingly a new board was elected, and about four thousand pounds advanced to them (without interest) from the local treasury. A loan was opened to which individuals did not hesitate to contribute when they were assured that the institution considered itself bound to pay the old loan though forming part of the amount carried



away by the French, and that in the mean time interest would be paid on it. The Monte possessing landed property to a much greater amount could never refuse such an act of justice. Happily the cessation of slavery having put an end to the old charge for ransoms enabled the institution to devote its revenues to the payment of interest on the old loan to the extinction of part of the capital to the improvement of its property, and, for the last fourteen years, to assign a subsidy in aid of the expense of the House of Industry.

The Administration of the Monte di Pietà e Redenzione was by a Minute of the Governor dated the 27th. December 1837, vested, from the 1st. January 1838, in the Committee of the Government Charitable Institutions; instead of the former board consisting of a President and six Commissaries.



## GOVERNMENT UNIVERSITY

formerly

THE JESUITS' COLLEGE.

It was during a very tumultuous and seditious time in the era of the Knights of Malta, that the Jesuits were called in by Bishop Gargallo, to support him against the power of the Order. This learned and artful body of men soon gained the same ascendancy in Malta as in every other place where they have ever been established. In order to provide them with a permanent settlement in the island, the above prelate erected for them the present church and college, the foundation of which was laid on the 12th. of November 1592, during the reign of the Grandmaster Verdala.

The Jesuits, however, did not long enjoy their power in Malta. Forty-seven years after their introduction, an affair took place which terminated in their expulsion. Some young knights, who had just ceased acting as pages, disguised themselves as Jesuits during the Carnival. This so offended the holy fathers, that they made their complaints to Lascaris the Grandmaster, who immediately gave orders that some of the youth

should be apprehended. This act enraged their companions, who proceeded first to the prison, the gates of which they forced, and after liberating their companions from their confinement, proceeded in a body to the college, threw the furniture out of the windows, and compelled the Grandmaster to send the Jesuits out of the island. Eleven of them were accordingly embarked; but four contrived to secrete themselves in the city where they remained. This event occurred in the year 1639; their total expulsion did not take place until the year 1769, after which the institution became subject to the Order, and from them was transferred over to the direction of the British Government.

The university and church occupy an extensive site surrounded by four principal streets. The latter is a very regular and neatly ornamented building, containing several paintings by the Cavalier Calabrese. To the left of the southern entrance, over which is the inscription, "*In nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur,*" is the Oratory, where the Jesuits held their secret council. In 1803, the Governor Sir A. Ball instituted the Merchants' Bank in one angle of this edifice, which was considered as a great piece of injustice by the Maltese, who perhaps did not esteem the proceeding so much a desecration of the locality,

as delude themselves that it was an infringement on their rights. The decision of the existing government carried through the design. The Merchants' Bank and Commercial Rooms now occupy a part of the building.

In giving the reader a short sketch of the present state of the University we cannot do better than make some extracts from one of the numbers of the *Mediterraneo*, which usually devotes a liberal space in its columns to the important article of the education of the people.

“At the head of the University there is a Rector, who is a clergyman, and who governs it by an old statute, which, not being at all adapted to the changes which have taken place, and to the actual state of things, offers thousand occasions of arbitrary deviations.

A council composed of eleven members, nominated by the Governor, of which he is himself the head, presides over its affairs. The Rector is, *ex officio*, a member of this council.

The Professors are sworn in annually by the Bishop, according to the doctrine of the Council of Trent.

The University has a Confessor for the youth; and the duty of confession is made a consideration in the examinations.

The funds of the University having passed into

the hands of Government, they are charged with its support; the stipend of the Professors is *3l. 2s. 6d.* per month. The Masters of the Lyceum receive *2l. 1s. 8d.* Some Masters on account of particular duties have *4l. 3s. 8d.* and the Master of the English language *5l.* The Teachers of Calligraphy and Arithmetic have *16s. 8d.* each. The monthly salary of the Rector is *6l. 13s. 4d.* that of the Confessor *1l. 10d.* of the Prefect *1l. 5s.* of the Procurator *2l. 1s. 8d.* the Beadle *1l. 13s. 4d.* and of the Door-keeper *1l. 5s.* Doctorships and diplomas, &c. of foreign countries, and even of England, are not admitted. Five pounds are paid for taking a Doctor's degree, and one pound for the Government license.

The youth of the Lyceum pay one shilling a month each; those of the University two shillings and sixpence each. As the course of the study for the attainment of the degrees cannot be shorter than twelve years, it costs every student for the obtaining of his degrees £5, in monthly payments £18, for the Government license £1, which together amounts to £24; a greater sum than is paid for similar degrees at the first University of Italy.

The number of students at the Lyceum does not now surpass that of from 90 to 100;—that of the University from 80 to 85. It has been

remarked that the number in students of the Lyceum has been always diminishing.

According to the present establishment, the preparatory school to the Philosophical Faculty consists of eleven Masterships; viz. Elementary school of the Latin language, Humanity, Rhetoric, Italian, English, Greek and Arabic languages, Navigation and Elements of Mathematics, Arithmetic and Caligraphy, Ornamental Design and the Principles of Architecture. The course of instruction in the Philosophy of Science consists of four Professorships; this instruction is preparatory to the faculties, and the course occupies three years. The Faculty of Theology includes four Professorships; that of the Holy Scriptures is nothing more than a class of the Hebrew language, and even this, a disgrace to the nation, but more especially to the ecclesiastics, is to be abolished by the new reorganization of the University. The Faculty of Law also numbers four Professorships, and the Faculty of Medicine five.

The many abuses existing in this institution was a chief article in the petition which the Maltese lately laid before the House of Commons. The Commissioners sent out to examine into this, as well as into other grievances of the people, saw the necessity of a reform, and through



their representations some changes are to take place, which will come into operation on the 1st. of January 1839. According to the outline of the new organization, as published in the Government Gazette, the University will consist of Professors in the four Faculties of Arts, Theology, Law and Medicine. The Faculties of Theology and Law will be reduced to two Professorships; and several changes are to take place in the Masterships of the Lyceum.

The existing council is to be abolished, and a special one formed for each of the four faculties of the University, composed of the Rector, the Professors of the Faculty, and two non-professional Members chosen by the Governor. Besides which there will be a General Council composed of the Rector, and a Committee chosen from the Special Councils, proportionally to their respective Members, the Members of which Committee will be chosen by the Governor, or by lot.

The Government Library will be deemed the Library of the University, and will be placed under the controul of the Rector, who is still to have the principal administration of the University and Lyceum.

## PUBLIC AND GARRISON LIBRARIES.

The building which encloses the above two establishments adjoins the Governor's Palace, and is one of the finest specimens of architecture in the town. The style of the whole edifice is grand and regular; and the arcade which extends along its whole length forms a delightful portico, and gives the façade a very imposing appearance. This structure was erected during the reign of the Grandmaster Rohan, but was not made use of as a library until the year 1811, when Sir H. Oakes, the British Governor, had all the books transported from their former in-commodious lodging, near the Public Treasury, to their present situation.

The Public Library had its origin in the Bailiff Ludovico Guerin de Tencin, who endowed it with a great number of his own books, and procured for it vast legacies of literature from other sources. Not being able to make a sufficient provision for its maintenance at his death, it was made over to the Order, and afterwards enriched by the private libraries of the Knights, who at their decease were obliged to bequeath all their books to this institution. The number of volumes now existing is about 39,000.

In such a collection, as one might expect from

the manner in which it was brought together, there are many books of very little worth; however, any person desirous of examining the records of antiquity, or of traversing the extensive fields of the scientific research of by-gone days, or of deriving amusement from the peregrinations and voyages of the ancients, or of studying long treatises on military tactics and enginery,—all the intermediate tastes from the most zealous disciple of Euclid, to the most pitiable novel reader,—may here find ample provision to satisfy his most enlarged desires. In fact, one may find almost any thing but *new* books.

The works in this Library are written principally in Latin, French and Italian; however, there is a small collection of English literature, and a few books in other European languages.

In the same room with the Library is also kept a small collection of antiquities and curiosities, found at various times in this island and at Gozo, together with a few birds, a wolf, a wild cat and a snake, all stuffed. The principal antiquities are the following:

Several Phœnician and other coins or medals which are not generally exposed, but kept under the care of the Librarian.

Several earthen jugs and lachrymatories, upon one of which certain Phœnician letters are perceivable although illegible.

A statue of Hercules of Parian marble in very good condition. The god is crowned with a garland of poplar, reclining on his club, and exhibiting a very calm and placid countenance.

A square altar dedicated to Proserpine, on one of the sides of which two men are represented as offering a fish to the goddess; and on another is the emblem by which the Syracusans designed Sicily. It consists of a head from which issue three legs, so disposed as to form the three extremities of a triangle.

A Phœnician inscription on two pieces of marble, which has been differently translated by the several persons who have made the attempt; an undeniable proof that very little is known in our days of the ancient Punic. These monuments contain also a Greek inscription; but the genuineness of both has been much questioned.

A small brass figure, found at Gozo, representing a young beggar seated in a basket, which is covered with large letters, as also is the tippet which is thrown over his shoulders. These letters appear to be a compound of Greek and Gothic characters, and are very difficult to decipher. An ingenuous writer thought he discovered on it the figure of the cross, preceded by the word ΘΥΠΕΙ for ΕΤΥΠΗ, which together he renders *Le Seigneur fut frappé*.

A small marble figure found at Gozo representing the wolf suckling Romulus and Remus.

A marble slab containing two basso-relievo figures representing Tullia and Claudia, the former the daughter of Cicero, the latter the wife of Cecilius Metellus, who both lived at the same time. The inscriptions on this monument are very plain: one is TVLIOLA \*M \*TVLLII \*F \* and the other CLAVDIA \*METELLI.

Another square marble stone containing a bust in basso-relievo of Zenobia, wife of Odenat, King of Palmyra. The inscription which surrounds this figure is in good preservation; it reads, ZENOBIA \*ORIENTI \*DOMINA; and bears the date AN \*DNI \*CCLXXVI.

Besides the above there are several other Greek and Latin inscriptions, not very perfect, and of little import.

This library is open to the public five hours every day, Saturday and the principal feast-days excepted. Any person wishing to read here makes known to the librarian what book he desires, and is then at liberty to sit until the hour appointed for closing the room. Subscribers paying the sum of 10s. yearly are permitted to take any books home, the time allowed for their retention being regulated according to the size of the work.

The Garrison Library which occupies a small room in the same building consists at present of about 5000 volumes of English literature. There are also a few works in French and Italian. Any person wishing to subscribe is to write his name in a book kept by the Secretary, which is submitted to the Committee for approval. The entrance money of all officers and gentlemen holding civil appointments is respectively to be a sum equivalent to two days' pay, as well civil as military; the annual subscription of such is 30s. sterling. No entrance money is required from private persons who may wish to subscribe. Temporary subscribers are obliged to pay the sum of 5s. monthly.

The great convenience in this institution are the newspapers and periodicals, of which it provides a good supply. These must remain on the Library table eight days before being put into circulation, during which time they are free to any subscriber who may wish to read them. For this purpose a Reading-room is provided, which is open nine hours a day in winter, and twelve in summer.

#### PUBLIC THEATRE.

This building is situated in the street named after it *Strada Teatro*. It was erected by the



Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena in the year 1731, but presents nothing remarkable in its exterior or interior construction. Government grants the use of the Theatre gratis, and it is supplied almost all the year round with Italian operas. Occasionally the Naval and the Military officers of the garrison exhibit themselves as actors on the stage for the amusement of the public.

It will be allowed by all, that the intention of most players in acting is to procure money, and of the company in attending the theatre is to seek amusement. Hence it will be found here, as every where else, that the plays performed generally correspond with the taste of the audience; and there is no doubt that the performance of Cinderella and the Glass Slipper would find more votaries among the inhabitants of Malta, than one of Shakespeare's dramas, or even a tragedy of Alfieri.

#### CASTELLANIA.

In this public edifice is held the Criminal Court, the Courts of the Magistrates of Judicial Police, and also the Office of the Magistrate of Executive Police. It is situated in Strada Mercanti, and was rebuilt by the Grandmaster Emmanuel Pinto in the year 1758, as appears from an inscription over the entrance. In

the same street, opposite the Monte di Pietà, is the

#### BANCO DEI GIURATI.

In the time of the Order, the office of the Magistracy for supplying the inhabitants with corn and other articles of food, and for fixing the market-prices was held in this building. This court consisted of four native Magistrates elected by the Grandmaster, and was presided over by a Bailiff Seneschal. Until the late abolition of the corn monopoly under the British government, the office of the Grain Department was held here. At present it only contains the archives of all the public and official writings belonging to deceased Notaries.

#### QUARANTINE HARBOUR AND LAZARETTO.

The gate called Marsamuscetto leads down a long flight of stairs, and over a drawbridge, to the shore of the Quarantine Harbour. Here is a large building, the upper part of which is occupied by the Health Office, and that of the Captain of the Port; and the lower floor is divided into separate open apartments, where the captains of vessels in quarantine generally come with their boats in order to transact business with the people of the town. This is called the *Parlatorio*

and each room is provided with two wooden rails in order to prevent the parties from coming in contact with each other.

Taking a boat we may cross over to visit the Lazaretto, accompanied by a *guardiano*, whose business it is to see that we do not infringe any of the sanitary laws. Before landing, this person must demand permission at the Quarantine Office, and if there is no objection, we are at liberty to proceed and call upon any friend whom we may have undergoing his imprisonment in this establishment. Each division of the building is provided with a small room close to the shore, where persons are permitted to converse with each other, under the same restrictions as mentioned in the Parlatorio. The fixed regulation in regard to the payment of boats in this harbour frees the stranger from the annoyance he usually meets with from the boatmen in the other. The price is 6*d.* for each half hour.

On arriving in a vessel from a suspected port, the traveller is invited by one of the officers of the establishment to land and visit the apartment where he is destined to pass his quarantine. In case he wishes to hire furniture over and above that provided by the Government, consisting of a table, two chairs, and two bed-boards and trestles, he may do so from a person privileged for

the purpose, who, at a pretty high rate, will supply him with any thing he may require. In regard to food, should the person not possess the means of ordering a breakfast and dinner at the high rate charged by the *Trattoria* connected with the Lazaretto, he stands a good chance of suffering from hunger, unless he has friends in the town who will undertake to supply him; because the only plan by which he may otherwise procure it, through caterers, is so badly regulated, as frequently to occasion the greatest inconvenience to travellers. As the *guardiano* placed over you is not allowed to serve in any way, (though you are obliged to pay him a salary, besides supplying him with food) one must almost necessarily hire a servant, who may charge as much as 2s. 3d. per day. In the latter case, however, the sum to be awarded is according to agreement; but as it regards the *guardiano*, the price is fixed by the Government.

The day on which the passenger lands begins to count as the first of his term; but should he neglect to open his trunks, &c. in order to air his baggage on this day, he runs the risk of being detained a day longer. The morning of the termination of his quarantine goes into the account as one day, and he is permitted at an early hour to leave for the city.

The chief part of the magazines and other buildings of the Lazaretto were built by the Grandmaster Lascaris, but have been lately much improved by the British Government. They occupy a site on a small island which is joined to the mainland on the western side by a stone bridge. On the same island stands a strong bulwark called

#### FORT MANOEL.

This fortress was erected by the Grandmaster Ant. Manoel de Vilhena, in the year 1726, as appears from an inscription over the entrance, surmounted by a copper bust of the founder. The walls of this fort are very strong, enclosing a spacious yard, in which are three ranges of buildings, each containing two rows of apartments, capable of lodging a garrison five hundred strong. Adjoining one of the above buildings is a small church, dedicated to St. Anthony of Padova, at present only used occasionally by some clergyman who may happen to be in quarantine.

In the centre of the court stands a bronze statue of the Grandmaster Vilhena, on a high square base, containing an elaborate eulogy, on its four sides, of the virtues and mighty deeds of the founder. The observation of Sig. D' Avalos in regard to this monument is worthy of notice.

He suggests that it should be transplanted over to some conspicuous place in Valetta, in order to embellish the city; as, where it now stands, it is almost buried, and can neither be seen nor admired by the public.

On account of the increasing concourse of strangers to the island, this fort was recently appropriated to the service of a Lazaretto, for which purpose it is at present used. These quarters are much to be preferred to those already described, as they possess all the conveniences of the other, together with good air and a spacious square to walk in.

The Quarantine regulations of Malta are very strict, so that although persons and vessels affected with the plague have several times been entertained in the establishment, such have been the precautions taken, that no accident has ever been known to occur through improvidence or neglect.

To the north-east of Fort Manoel, on the point called Cape Dragut, in memory of that famous corsair who was slain here during the great siege of Malta, stands another called

#### FORT TIGNE'.

This fortress was erected in the year 1796, under the direction of the Commander Toucard, and



named after the Cavalier Tigné, the engineer who planned the design of the barracks of St. Elmo. This fort was built in order to act in junction with the castle of St. Elmo for the defence of the entrance into the quarantine harbour. Though small, it is very strongly fortified, and is extensively mined. The mines are cut out of the solid rock, and have two outlets: one by the side of the stair-case which leads up to the fort, and the other, at some distance from it, near the beach on the north. On the top of the fort are four entrances leading down to the mines underneath, which separate in four directions according to the points of the compass. These passages are again separated into smaller divisions, containing apartments for the deposit of the powder destined to blow up the fort in case of its seizure by an enemy. It is at present garrisoned by a small body of artillery, and a company of the line.

#### TOUR ROUND THE WALLS OF VALETTA.

Before taking leave of the city I would invite the stranger to a walk round the walls, especially those which overlook the ditch, where are several monuments raised to the memory of various deceased governors of the island, and

other illustrious persons. Under the bastions of St. Michael lie the remains of Capt. Spencer, R. N. to whose memory a pillar was also erected on the heights of Coradino, in the Great Harbour. Below this is another monument, projected by the Maltese, to the memory of the late governor Sir F. C. Ponsonby. The expenses of this work were defrayed by public subscription.

Under the cavalier St. John, within a small grove of trees, is the tomb which encloses part of the remains of the Marquis of Hastings, who governed this island previous to the appointment of Sir F. C. Ponsonby. Beyond this is the New Baracca, a kind of parterre, where several other monuments are erected to the memory of noble personages, and where the ashes of the late Governor Sir Thomas Maitland repose in a secluded part.

The view from this place is very extensive and beautiful, and as it overlooks the Great Harbour and its several creeks, with the sight of vessels of every size anchored therein,—the three towns which are directly opposite, the castles which defend the port, the Marina, the Floriana suburbs, and a great part of the country,—it forms one of the most pleasant and agreeable places of resort which the city affords.

On the walls of the town which defend the entrance of the Great Harbour is the Old Baracca, in which is planted a grove of trees surrounding a massy monument, raised to perpetuate the memory of Sir J. Ball, late Governor of the island. This also is a place of public concourse, enjoying a very pleasant view of the sea and of the harbour.

Having finished the tour of the most interesting localities in the city, we invite the stranger to a walk without the city gates, in the direction of the suburbs called

#### FLORIANA.

This place is surrounded with strong fortifications planned and superintended by the engineer Col. P. P. Floriani, sent from Rome by the Pope, at the urgent request of the Grandmaster, in the year 1635. It is provided with four gates: one leading up from the beach called *Della Marina*; two others opening in the direction of the country, one called *Dei Cani* or *St. Ann's Gate*, and the other *Delle Pera* or *Notre Dame Gate*, after the emblem on the escutcheon of the Grandmaster Perellos, which consisted of three pears;

and a fourth enclosing the advanced works called *Des Bombes*. On the outer front of the latter are to be seen the impress of several balls, which were fired by the Maltese when they blockaded the town against the French.

The open unoccupied space within these fortifications is divided by a long narrow enclosure, dignified with the title of the Botanical Garden. This is a scene of public resort, and serves more as a pleasant walk than a place for the study of botany. There are, however, a number of flowers collected here, and even a little green spot in Malta may be likened to an oasis in the desert.

Near the above is another garden, called D'Argotti, situate within the precincts of the walls, which owes its improvements to the late General Villette. Though not quite so abundant in flowers as the former, it is much more extensive, contains more wood, and combines some of the beauties of native rural scenery with the embellishments of art. There is a convenient villa adjoining this garden, which is occasionally occupied by persons holding high offices in the island.

Not far from the latter is another garden, connected with the Government University. This, though much smaller than the two former, contains a larger variety of rare and valuable botanical productions.

## HOUSE OF INDUSTRY.

This building, erected by the Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena, was originally intended as a Conservatory for poor girls, where they were taught to do a little work, and in other respects to perform all the offices of nuns. In 1825 this establishment underwent an entire reform, and until very lately was in a very thriving condition as regards the occupation of its inmates. A great diversity of labour was done here, such as weaving, knitting, making lace, sewing, washing, shoe-making, straw-plaiting, segar-making, and many other very useful branches of female manufacture. The girls, however, were never allowed to go out, unless under the conduct of the Lady Superior, and in this respect the establishment differed little from a nunnery. In case any application should be made for a servant, it was left to the option of some one chosen for the purpose, whether she would accept the situation. But the training which these girls received here was not at all calculated to fit them to be useful in household work. Another means by which they might be liberated was by marriage. A respectable young man desiring a wife, and holding acquaintance with any young woman in this establishment,

might request her in marriage, and she was quite at liberty to leave, if she chose, for this purpose.

Since the breaking out of the cholera, which took place last year, and which necessitated the temporary dispersion of the inmates, this institution has not assumed its former system. A great number of the best workwomen have left, and those who remain are only occupied in making clothes for themselves, and other labour connected directly with the establishment. One hour daily is set apart for teaching them to read and write.

The lower part of the back side of this building forms a barrack for a regiment of the British garrison.

#### ASYLUM FOR THE AGED.

Descending a long staircase close by the barracks, the traveller passes through a gate called *La Polverista*, which leads him to this establishment. It was erected by the same Grandmaster who founded the above mentioned institution, in the year 1734, and is now under the direction of the local government. Here are collected a great number of old and infirm persons, who are furnished with all the necessaries of life, and provided for as long as they live. Each one is supplied with a bed, a trunk for his clothing, and a stool.



The ringing of a bell calls them together for their meals; and it is a most interesting sight to see a long table lined with hoary heads sitting down to eat, apparently happy and comfortable in the last stage of their earthly existence. The aged females are kept separate from the males. Adjoining this institution is another, destined for the reception of lunatics and maniacs.

The open space before this building has lately been planted with trees and flowers, which makes it a very pleasant and agreeable walk. Following the pathway which leads from the Asylum, the traveller reaches the house and garden called

#### SA MAISON.

This is a delightful spot, possessing a most charming view of the Quarantine harbour, the Pietà, and the country beyond. The garden, though small, is laid out with exquisite taste, and is well supplied with flowers and fruits. The battlement which encloses it on one side is almost covered with ivy, giving it at a distance a most beautiful appearance. This house belongs to government, and is generally hired as a country-seat by some of the gentry of the island.

Beneath the bastion, which extends along the Poor Asylum to this villa, is a very massy arch,

leading down to the shore of the Quarantine Harbour. The architecture of this piece of workmanship is very much admired by connoisseurs; the curve is of a tortuous and oblique form, and extends over a space about thirty feet in width. It was thrown by the Maltese engineer Barbara, who assisted Colonel Floriani in the erection of the fortifications which surround these suburbs.

#### PROTESTANT BURIAL GROUND.

A gate which bounds the precincts of the Poor Asylum leads down to this repose of the dead. Two extensive enclosures have already been filled up with the mortality of English residents, and a third, opened about ten years ago, is rapidly occupying its space with the bones of our countrymen. This latter is planted with flowers and trees, and contains many sumptuous monuments, the only seniority which the noble can now boast over the base, or the rich over the poor. Here repose many who sought in a foreign country a more genial climate for diseased nature, but whose destiny it was to be borne by strangers to their long home. Here they rest as quiet as in the sepulchre of their fathers, and will sleep on, blended with other dust, until the resurrection morn.

Let not the passer by neglect to receive the lesson which this place affords, and which is very simply inculcated on one of the tombs, in the following stanza:

Stop, traveller, stop; ere you go by,  
As you are now, so once was I;  
As I am now, so you must be;  
Prepare yourself to follow me.

The delapidated tombs, the crumbling urns, and weather-worn inscriptions, in the more ancient burial-grounds, prove what faithless remembrancers these are of recording to posterity our real excellencies;—what a poor substitute for a set of memorable actions is polished alabaster or the mimicry of sculptured marble. The only way of immortalizing our characters, a way equally open to the meanest and most exalted fortune, is so to live as not to fear to die. Even the tongues of those, whose happiness we have endeavoured to promote, must soon be silent in the grave; but this virtue shall be inscribed indelibly on that book, from which the revolution of eternal ages shall never efface it.

Close by the English burial-grounds is one owned by the Greek church.

## CAPUCHIN CONVENT.

This building, erected under the auspices of the Grandmaster Verdala, in the year 1584, is situated on a very interesting locality, commanding an extensive view of the Great harbour and of the country. The lower part of the edifice is occupied by the church of the convent, and a spacious court. The upper story is traversed by several narrow corridors lined with the cells of the monks, of which there are about sixty. The walls of the passages are covered with pictures, representing the astounding miracles performed by friars of this order. Over each cell is a small Latin inscription taken from the Holy Scriptures.

This convent is very much frequented on holidays, when a great number come here to while away an hour in traversing the corridors, examining the pictures which decorate the walls, reading the accounts of the mighty deeds of this brotherhood, chatting with some of the fraternity, or enjoying the fine air and beautiful prospect which surrounds the place.

The church contains nothing remarkable, but the good supply of confessionals which line its sides. The holy fathers of this body are in better repute than any other, and consequently have many more applicants for shriving. Below the

church is an extensive vault called the *Carneria*, or Charnel-house, which is one of the most horrifying and disgusting spectacles I ever beheld. Here, those monks who die in the convent, after being disembowelled and well dried, are dressed in their clericals, and fixed up in niches until they fall to decay. The bones of such are taken and nailed upon the walls, in regular order, so as to form a kind of decoration; and the skulls are likewise arranged in rows along the ceiling, standing like so many grim spectators of the mockery and indignity offered to their remains. In one of the sides of this vault are two enclosed coffins, containing the bodies of two friars, whom my guide endeavoured to persuade me performed miracles.

This Golgotha was formerly open to the public on the second day of November, the anniversary of the festival called All Souls' Day; but that custom has lately been abandoned. With the permission of the Superior, however, any person is allowed to visit it. As this particular day is still very devoutly observed by the Church of Rome, I shall just give the occasion of it. "A monk, having visited Jerusalem, and passing through Sicily, as he returned home, had the curiosity to see Mount Etna, which is continually belching out fire and smoke; and for that reason

is imagined by some to be the mouth of hell. Being there, he heard the devils within complaining, that many departed souls were taken out of their hands by the prayers of the *Cluniac* monks. This idle story he related soon after, as actual fact, on his return to Odilo his Abbot, who thereupon appointed this day to be annually observed in his monastery, and prayers without ceasing to be made for departed souls. Soon after the monks procured this day to be solemnized as a general holiday by the appointment of the Pope."

#### CASA DELLA MADONNA DI MANRESA.

This building is situated opposite the House of Industry, and was erected in the year 1751 at the expense of D. Pietro Infante, Grand Prior of Crato in Portugal. It contains a small church of an oval form, which is one of the neatest houses of worship I have seen in Malta. The whole establishment is remarkable for the plainness and simplicity of its architecture; and at the same time, for its clean and decent appearance. It consists of several passages or corridors, on the walls of which are hung a vast variety of old paintings, arranged in symmetrical order, and lined on both sides with small rooms, each containing the most necessary articles of household



furniture. In one angle of the building is a spacious yard, very tastefully laid out with flowers.

This institution was originally intended as a place of retreat for such persons as wished to perform the *Exercises of St. Ignatius*, consisting of meditations for ten successive days, during which time they secluded themselves from the rest of the world, and gave up all their temporal cares. At present it is used for the same purpose, by a portion of the clergy, during eight days in the month of October, and in December by such as are about to present themselves for ordination. The three days of Carnival is another season when this establishment is sometimes crowded with the more religiously disposed from among the respectable classes of the people, who pass the time here in seeing masses, in hearing sermons, confessing, meditation, and other devout duties. Twice a year, also, three days are appointed for such of the country-people who desire to avail themselves of the quiet retirement and religious privileges which this place affords. The establishment provides nothing but soup and lodging for any of the above; so that all persons wishing to enjoy better fare must bring it along with them.

A spacious apartment in the building is set apart as the public refectory. This is supplied

with chairs and tables for the convenience of the inmates, who during their stay generally dine together.

Among the edifying spectacles, exhibited in this place during the seasons of seclusion, was a figure representing a soul suffering the tortures of hell, so constructed, as that by the motion of a wheel it was enveloped in flames, which moved in rapid succession round the victim, together with hideous snakes writhing themselves about his body, and adding increased tortures to his sufferings. Whatever may have been the real effect of such a sight, it has lately been suppressed.

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Besides the above, there are two other churches in Floriana, one dedicated to St. Publius, and the other called *Dell' Immacolata Concezione di Maria*; which latter appertains to the Government. It is generally known by the name of *Sarria*, so called after the Cavalier F. Martino de Sarria, who founded it in the year 1585. In consequence of a vow made during the time of the plague, it was repaired and enlarged by the Order in 1676, but contains nothing worth noticing. On the walls are hung many small pictures, placed there as the fulfillment of vows, representing the persons in their distress, and the real or imaginary cause of their deliverance.

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Having terminated the circuit of Floriana, I shall now pass over to observe what is most remarkable on the opposite side of the Great Harbour, including the three towns of Borgo, Burmola, and Senglea.

This division of the island contains several small bays or creeks, formed by narrow peninsulas of land jutting out into the Great Harbour. On the two principal of these stand the cities of Borgo and Senglea, separated by a piece of water which runs inland as far as the centre of Burmola, and called formerly the Port of the Gallies. As the former of the above mentioned cities was the first residence of the Order, we shall give it the precedence in the following description.



## BORGO

OR

## CITTA VITTORIOSA.

On the arrival of the Knights of St. John at Malta in 1530, this spot, which at that time was only occupied by a few huts, was selected as the place of their residence, and from that circumstance took the name of the *Burgh* or *Borgo*. After the victory gained over the Turks in 1565, (a short sketch of which I shall give at the end

of the description of the three cities) it was dignified with the title of the *Città Vittoriosa*, or the *Victorious city*; in commemoration of which defeat, a statue of Victory was erected by the Grandmaster in the square of St. Lawrence, which exists to the present day. This city continued to be the seat of government until the year 1571, when the whole body of the knights moved over to Valetta, which from that time became the conventual residence of the Order.

The site on which the small town of Borgo stands is very uneven, the streets are unpaved, narrow and irregular, and consequently not remarkably clean. In general the houses are built much in the same manner with those of Valetta, but come far behind the latter in the neatness of their exterior, and the finish of their interior. Though there are several wealthy persons resident in the city, it is chiefly inhabited by the second and third classes of the people, many of whom are engaged in the sea-faring line.

The inner side of the peninsula is not walled in with fortifications, these being rendered unnecessary by the castle of St. Angelo, and the forts of the Point and St. Michael, on the opposite town of Senglea. The outer side, however, towards the bay called *Calcara*, is defended by a strong wall which reaches the whole length of

the city, and encloses it by forming an angle at the termination of the above mentioned bay, and continues the line until it joins with the Harbour of the Gallies. That part of the bulwark which crosses the peninsula is defended by a deep ditch, which is traversed by a bridge leading into the city, and by the cavaliers of St. John and St. James which overlook the entrance. The chief defence of the city, as also of the Great Harbour, is the Castle of St. Angelo, which on account of its importance merits a more particular description.

#### CASTLE OF ST. ANGELO.

The first notice which we have of the occupation of this site for a place of defence is in the year 870, when the Arabs, after dispossessing the Greeks, erected here a small fort for the purpose of guarding their marauding vessels which anchored in the Great Harbour. On the arrival of the Knights of St. John it was made the chief bulwark of the town, and consequently was very much enlarged. In 1686 new fortifications were added to it under the auspices of the Grandmaster Gregorio Carafa, and finally it assumed its present state in the year 1690, under the reign of Adrian de Wignacourt, as may be seen from an inscription over the outer gate.

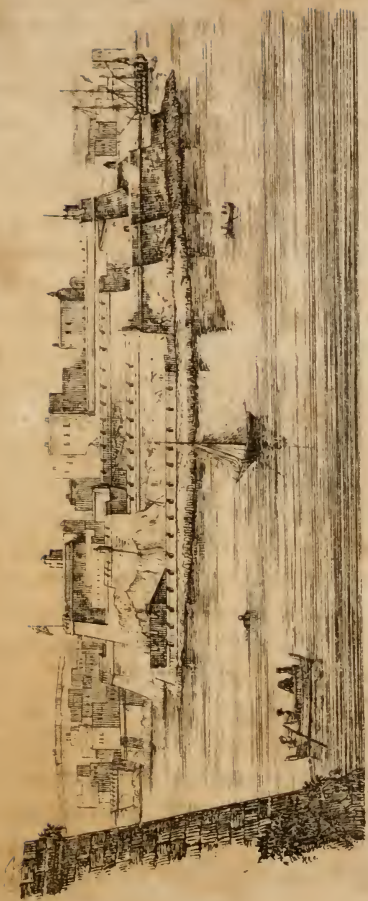
Towards the mouth of the Great Harbour this fortress presents an imposing front, consisting of four batteries, built one above another in the style of an amphitheatre, mounting fifty-one guns beside those which are posted on the cavalier and the walls connected with it. The fort is separated from the town of Borgo by a ditch, into which the sea runs from the two harbours which flank it at both extremities. This ditch is about twenty-five yards in width, and according to tradition occupies the ancient site of the temple of the goddess Juno.

St. Angelo is at present garrisoned by a detachment of British artillery, under the command of a captain who occupies the building formerly tenanted by the Grandmaster. The only object of interest to be noticed within the walls is an extensive powder magazine, and a small Gothic chapel built on a level with the uppermost battery, and containing two sienite pillars which were probably brought by the Knights from the island of Rhodes.

#### VICTUALLING YARD.

A large extent of the inner wharf of Borgo is occupied by a range of magazines, with a covered portico, furnished with every thing necessary for the supply of the British fleet. This place is





L. Bracciolelli del.

FORT ST ANGELO



called the Victualling Yard. A little higher up are three long arched entrances, where the gallies of the knights were drawn up to undergo repairs.

The row of buildings which line the mole above the magazines are at present occupied by the office and the officers belonging to this naval establishment; they were formerly the residence of the Captain and Lieutenant General of the fleet of the Order, and of the Commanders of the gallies.

#### INQUISITOR'S PALACE.

This is an extensive building, situated in the street called *Strada della Porta Maggiore*, and at present forms the mess-house for the officers of the British garrison stationed at the barracks of Fort St. Michael in Senglea. There is nothing particular to be noticed in the upper part of the edifice, and the passages which lead down to the cells underground, and which formed the prison-house of the poor wretches who unfortunately fell into the hands of this diabolical tribunal, have long since been walled up. About ten years ago, whilst digging to form a wine-cellar, a rack was discovered in one of the subterraneous apartments.

The office of the Inquisition was introduced into

the island of Malta by Pope Gregory XIII. in the year 1574, during the reign of John de la Cassiera. This circumstance took place on account of an action brought against the bishop of Malta by the Grandmaster, for interfering with the religious concerns of the Knights, which had ever been ruled and directed by a council of the Order. In order to decide to what lengths the bishop's jurisdiction should extend, Gregory agreed to send an Inquisitor to Malta, whose intervention, however, was not accepted until the Council of the Order had exacted a promise from the sovereign pontiff, that the officer sent from the court of Rome should never act but in conjunction with the Grandmaster, the Bishop, the Prior of the church of St. John, and the Vice Chancellor of the Order; by which means this new tribunal was divided between the Inquisition and the principal officers of the state. But this prudent arrangement lasted a very short time. The Inquisitors, from a spirit of emulation so common among themselves, and on pretence of maintaining the authority of the Holy See, contrived to get fresh assessors; and, in order to become absolute in their tribunal, endeavoured to establish a degree of dominion in the island, and frequently struggled hard to make it supersede the legitimate one. To effect this purpose, they pursued the following

method: any Maltese who was desirous of throwing off the authority of the Order might address himself to the Office of the Inquisition, which immediately presented him with a brief of independence, to which was given the name of *patent*. Those who took out this patent were called the *Patentees of the Inquisition*; which implied, that in consequence of the said patent, they and all their family were under the immediate protection of the Holy See; so that in all causes, either civil or criminal, the patentee was first tried in Malta by the tribunal of the Inquisition, and, if the condemned party thought proper to make a last appeal to the Court of Rome, he was there tried a second time by a tribunal called *La Rotta*. Whilst the trial lasted their persons were secure, and the government of the Order could neither commit them to prison, nor punish them in any manner whatsoever.

During the reign of La Cassiera the Inquisition had carried its evil designs to such a pitch, that three of the holy brotherhood were seized for forming a plan, in conjunction with some Spanish knights, to murder the Grandmaster. In 1657, fourteen years after the establishment of the tribunal, the Grand Inquisitor Odi raised disturbances by his interference in the election of a Grandmaster; and in 1711 one named Delci

carried his pretensions to the highest degree of arrogance. He began by insolently demanding that the carriage of the Grandmaster should stop on meeting his; and afterwards insisted that the Infirmary belonging to the Order should for the future be under his jurisdiction.

This hospital, which had ever been regarded as the most privileged spot on the island, and into which even the Marshal of the Order could not enter without leaving his truncheon at the door, was entrusted to the care of some French Knights, who were particularly zealous for their liberties, and who acknowledged no superior authority, but that of the Grand Hospitaller, who alone was permitted free entrance without leaving behind him the ensigns of his dignity; yet even here the officers of the inquisition had the audacity to enter by surprise, and to begin their visits of examination. But the moment the Overseer of the Infirmary was informed of their conduct, he obliged them to depart immediately, and declared null and void all their proceedings. The Inquisitor Delci did not stop here; but, without the smallest attention to the rights of the sovereign, and to prove his own superiority, distributed a great number of patents, such as we have already mentioned, declaring in the most absolute terms, that every Maltese to whom they were



granted became from that moment exempt from all obedience to the legitimate sovereign.\*

This tribunal continued its iniquitous proceedings until the arrival of the French, who expelled them from the island, and confiscated all their property.



#### CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES OF BORGIO.

##### *St. Dominic's Convent.*

Opposite the Inquisitor's Palace is a convent dedicated to St. Dominic, the founder of the Holy Tribunal, which is at present occupied by a few friars of the same order. The upper division of the building consists of several passages, containing the cells of the monks; but the whole is in a very delapidated condition, and unless repaired will soon fall to ruin. The church connected with the convent might once have made some pretence to elegance, but at present it has the appearance of being the worse for wear. Over the altar of the Inquisition, which is on the right side of the wall on entering, is a large picture, representing an Inquisitor, with a rod in one hand, belabouring some poor individual who is crouched

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\* See Boisgelin, Vol. II. p. 140, 195, 220; and Ver-  
tot, Tom. IV p. 225 et seq.

at his feet, and pointing with the other to a tablet containing these words, *Credo in Deum*:— a very exemplary method of teaching the precepts of the Gospel.

*Church of St. Lawrence.*

This is the parish-church of the Città Vittoriosa, and, during the residence of the Order in this city, was made use of by them as their place of public worship. It contains several commodious chapels, and is rather richly ornamented. On one side stands an image of St. Lawrence, holding a large silver gridiron in his hand. This article was presented to the church by a Maltese, on the last anniversary of the feast of the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made by him during the prevalence of the Cholera. The gridiron is about one yard and a half long, and three quarters wide. The cost was 800 scudies, or 66*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*

*Santa Maria dei Greci.*

This was formerly one of the chapels which belonged to the Greeks who followed the Knights of St. John from Rhodes. The number of this persuasion having greatly diminished, this chapel was sold to the *Fratelli* \* of St. Joseph, who have

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\* For the signification of this term see note on p. 100 and 101.

it in their possession at the present day. The only object of interest worth noticing here is the sword and hat, which the Grandmaster La Valette wore, on the day in which he drove the Turks from the island. They are preserved in a glass case, with the following inscription engraved on a marble slab underneath:

*Emmanuel Rohanus*  
*Magnus Ordinis. Hieros. Magister*  
*Sacellum Deiparæ. Virgini*  
*Consumatrîce sacrum*  
*Vetustate conlapsum*  
*cum omni cultu*  
*Restituit. anno MDCCFXXIX*  
*Idemque providentia sua cavit*  
*ut injuria superiorum temporum neglecta*  
*decentiore loco servarentur*  
*Ensis et Galerus*  
*quæ Ioannis Valetta*  
*ejusdem ordinis Supremus Magister*  
*anno MDVV*  
*Turca devicti*  
*Melitæ obsidione soluta*  
*Republica bene grata servataque*  
*lubens et lætus*  
*Heis sospitæ Dei genetrici*  
*suspenderat*

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*Convent of Sta. Scolastica.*

During the time of the Bishop Gargallo, the nuns composing this sisterhood were transported from the Città Notabile, their original residence, to the present convent, which had formerly belonged to the Ursoline nuns of the Order of St. John. This was considered so great an innovation by the citizens of the Notabile, that the Commander Lascaris, afterwards Grandmaster, was sent to escort them in safety, lest they should be seized by the fury of the people.

The convent is large, and has a very neat church connected with it. On either side the altar is a grated window, where the nuns are permitted to come, in order to hear mass. In one of these there is a small opening, from which they communicate of the consecrated host.

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**BIRMULA OR CITTA COSPICUA.**

This city lies inland between Borgo and Sen-  
glea, and is surrounded with a strong bulwark,  
which commences at the counterscrap of the for-  
mer, and joins on with the walls of the latter, where  
they overlook the inner harbour, called the Port  
of the French. This fortification was commenced  
in the year 1638, during the reign of the Grand-

master Lascaris, under the superintendence of the engineer Vincenzo Maculano, a Dominican friar, sent over by the Pope for the purpose. The design of the defence was much enlarged under the Grandmaster Perillos, and was finally completed by Manoel de Vilhena in 1730.

On the hill, called Sta. Margarita, which is situated just without the chief entrance of the Città Vittoriosa, is a nunnery dedicated to that saint, and also a conservatory for girls, under the direction of the Bishop of Malta. At the foot of the hill is a monastery of Carmelite monks, dedicated to Sta. Teresa. The parish church called *Della Concezione* is a spacious building, but contains little worthy the attention of the traveller.

The chief part of the town of Birmula is situated on a low site, and is very thickly populated. The streets are generally narrow and irregular, and a great proportion of the houses, especially those situated near the walls, are nothing better than hovels. In this quarter, the city presents a very miserable appearance, not only from the mean aspect of the dwellings, but from the great accumulation of stones and rubbish which crowd the fortifications. One side of the wharf of the small harbour of Birmula is occupied by the Dockyard and Naval arsenal, provided with every thing requisite for the supply of the British fleet in the

Mediterranean. Part of the opposite shore is also taken up with magazines, destined for the same purpose.

The extreme southern point of the Birmula fortifications is defended by the Fort San Francesco di Paola, garrisoned at present by a detachment of English infantry.

Following the road leading north from the abovementioned fort, we arrive at the outskirts of the city of

#### SENGLEA OR ISOLA.

This city is situated upon the peninsula opposite Borgo, having the Harbour of the Gallies on one side, and that of the French on the other. Towards the former it is not walled in, but a strong bastion extends the whole length of the town towards the latter, and then crosses the peninsula at the entrance of the principal gate, forming an exact counterpart to the fortifications on the opposite side: so that a line run across the extremities of the Galley Port would connect the walls of both cities. The chief defence of Senglea is the strong fortress of St. Michael, which commands the entrance into the town, as well as the two harbours by which it is flanked. This fort was erected in the year 1552 by the



Grandmaster John d' Omedes; the walls and other fortifications were raised in the subsequent reign by Claude de la Sengle, from whom the city took its name. Previous to this, it was called *Chersoneso*, and after the siege of 1565, was known by the name of *Isola* or the *Città Invitta*.

On the mole of the inner harbour is the *Merchant's Yard*, where all Maltese vessels and boats are built; on the outer, towards the end, is a large building, formerly appropriated to the Captains of the galleys, but now occupied by several officers of the British garrison quartered in the barracks of Fort St. Michael. This wharf is known by the name of *La Sirena*, (the Syren) from the circumstance that a figure of this creature formerly stood over the entrance into a small cave, at the commencement of the mole, to which the natives were accustomed anciently to resort as a place of amusement.

Senglea is in every respect superior to Borgo and Birmula. It contains many well-built houses, and the streets are in general tolerably good, though none of them are paved. It includes one large church and a monastery: the former dedicated to the *Nativity of the Virgin Mary*, and the latter to St. Philip. On the wall just inside the entrance of the church is a marble slab, containing an inscription, put up to record the fidelity

of the inhabitants during the siege, and their obstinate refusal to accept the offered bribes from the Turks in order that they should desert the Order; for which gallant action they were freed from the annual tribute, which they previously paid to the knights. The writing is as follows.

*D. O. M.*

*Ampliss. Hier. Ordini,*

*Principi Munificentissimo,*

*Fidei, et Bellicæ virtutis remuneratori*

*ob liberatum populum ab onere census*

*decreto sacri concilii status*

*edito, Magisterio vacante,*

*IX. Februarii MDC. ab Incarnato Christo*

*Senglea Civitas Invicta*

*Grati animi monumentum p.*

On the wharf of the Sirena is a small establishment, founded in the year 1794 by Nicola Dingly and Maria Cornelia, two wealthy Maltese, for the reception of female convalescents belonging to this city and the village Siggiewi, who are received and lodged here for eight days after they leave the Public Hospital. There is a small chapel connected with this institution.

## COTTONERA FORTIFICATIONS.

This vast bulwark, extending for several miles from the city Vittoriosa round the whole of Birmula with the *Firenzuola* fortifications, and joining the bastions of Senglea, was built in the year 1670 by the Grandmaster Nicholas Cotoner, and originally intended as a safe retreat for the whole population of the country in case of a siege. The fort of St. Salvador, erected by the Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena, occupies an elevated position on the Cottonera lines, about a mile to the east of Vittoriosa, and completely commands that city. In case of attack, this situation would be very dangerous in the hands of an enemy.

## CAPUCHIN CONVENT.

Without the gate of St. Salvador, situated in a very pleasant and elevated spot, stands the above convent, built under the auspices of the Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena. The only object worth noticing in the church is a small chapel, built after the model of the *House of Loretto*. In a small recess opposite this chapel is a painting, representing the ass of St. Anthony bowing down to the consecrated host. The moral which

some design that this traditionary tale should convey, is, that because the ass knelt on the occasion, *ergo*, man must follow his example.

#### NAVAL HOSPITAL.

The hill upon which this building is erected is known by the name of *Bighi*, so called after a Prior of the same name, who built a residence for himself on the present site of the Hospital. It is situated on a small piece of land, jutting out between the bay called *Renella* and that of *Calcara*. Until within the last five years, when the Naval Hospital was removed to this spot, it occupied a building within the walls of *Vittoriosa*. The present establishment is well worth the traveller's attention. The edifice is neat and extensive, and every thing requisite for the comfort of the patients is amply provided. A wide space of ground is walled in round the building, and is planted with shrubs and trees, forming a delightful walk for such as are convalescent.

#### FORT RICASOLI.

This fort was founded in the year 1670 by the Cavalier Gianfrancesco Ricasoli, who contributed the sum of £3000 towards defraying the expenses

of the building, and endowed it with a large portion of his income. The Grandmaster Cottoner publicly acknowledged his gratitude to the knight for so generous an action, and ordered that it should be called after his name, Ricasoli.

This fortress is built on the extreme point of an angular projection, and corresponds with St. Elmo on the opposite shore. The two forts together command the entrance into the Great Harbour. In itself it is a place of considerable strength, and is additionally guarded by the bulwarks which extend and ramify towards the Cottonera lines. From the sea, this fort, if tolerably garrisoned, would be quite impregnable. From the land side it could only be reached by surmounting a long succession of strongly defended posts, at each of which the assailants would be subject to imminent, almost insuperable danger.

On the 3rd. of April 1807, this fort was the scene of an event, which as it is but little known, may be worth recording. During the progress of the war, when the necessity of large military supplies was hardly satisfied by the resources of our country, the expedient was adopted by our Government of entering into a commercial contract with different speculators, who engaged, for a certain remuneration, to levy troops, according to the emergency, from the peasantry of different

countries, to be rendered disposable for foreign service, when that service did not seem to require more trustworthy or veteran troops. A French noble proposed to raise for the Mediterranean service a regiment, composed entirely of Greeks. The bargain being struck, he proceeded to gather together from the Levant, Archipelago and the Continent, a horde of various men, Greeks, Albanians, Slavonians, and what not, who were to be enrolled under the English banners, with the title of *Froberg's Regiment*. In a short time they were equipped, transported to Malta, and appointed to occupy this fort. The officers who had been placed over them were chiefly Germans; and in order to perfect them more, an English drill-serjeant or two, with an officer, were appointed to the same duty, and some artillerymen as usual remained in the garrison to superintend the guns. The severity exercised over the Frobergs by their commanders was increasingly aggravated, when they found that all the specious promises of professional dignity, with which they had been lured into the service, were vain and delusive. A frequent use of bodily punishment, often inflicted by caprice, ripened these soldiers for rebellion, and the occasion of an officer striking a drummer on the face with a cane was the signal for open revolt. Several officers were killed



by the rebels, and finally they closed the gates against the garrison of Valetta and declared themselves independant.

In their stronghold, these rebels bid defiance to the numerous troops that were at that time stationed in the garrison, and the dubious measures of the military governor Villetes, then second in command, so far assisted them, as to leave nothing to be dreaded but the consequence of blockade, which was established forthwith. An English artillery-officer and several of his men, who were still imprisoned within the fort, were obliged to assist in pointing the guns, and firing over shot into the city.

The scarcity of provisions, and the absence of all subordination among the revolters, soon produced intestine quarrels, which, as might be expected in such a company, soon terminated in bloodshed. This state of things did not continue long; a large section burst open the gates, threw themselves in the midst of the English troops, leaving behind about one hundred and fifty of their companions in possession of the fort.

These resolute fellows still continued to man the walls, and to keep up their former hostile proceedings. Their affairs, however, were soon rendered desperate. An English Naval officer, named Capt. Collins, offered to take upon himself

the capture of the fort; and accordingly succeeded in storming it by night, and in securing all the men, with the exception of six, who took possession of the powder-magazine, and there defied the courage of the assailants, by protesting that they would blow it up in case they persevered in their endeavours to seize them.

Of the number taken, ten were hung and fifteen musketted, on the plain of Floriana. Their execution, however, was carried on in the most inhuman and barbarous manner. Pinioned and handcuffed, they were made to kneel upon their coffins without being blindfolded, and after the first volley fired at them, several, still clinging to life, rose up and ran about the plain pursued by the soldiers like so many hares. One in particular made great efforts to escape; after stumbling close by a well into which he had attempted to throw himself, he managed to reach the bastions, from which he cast himself headlong the height of one hundred and fifty feet. The soldiers in pursuit followed him to the place of his fall, where, finding that he still lived, they soon put an end to his miserable existence.

But to return to the six rebels, who continued in possession of the powder magazine. Confident of making advantageous terms with the

Governor, they persisted in their obstinate resistance, and made no advances towards a surrender. From time to time some one presented himself in order to negotiate with the besiegers, but to no avail; nothing but an unconditional surrender would be listened to by the Commandant. Five days passed away in this manner, during which time all their urgent entreaties for provision were obstinately refused, and the unfortunate wretches were reduced to a most pitiable condition. On the sixth these entreaties were pressed with additional importunities, and seconded with the threat, that in case of a refusal, or the non-assurance of pardon, they would blow up the fort as soon as the first vesper-bell tolled from St. John's cathedral. No notice was taken of this desperate menace, nor any thought entertained that these six men valued life so little as to join together in so horrible a design for their own destruction. All was still until the appointed hour, when the fatal crash was heard, the stones of the magazine were seen rising in the air, and the whole building, with a part of the fortification, was reduced to ruins. The loss sustained by the besiegers from this explosion was considerable.

Some time had already elapsed, and the affair of the rebels had ceased to be talked of, when a priest

returning home on a donkey, from a rather solitary quarter in the direction of the fort, was assailed by a man dressed in the Froberg uniform, who pointed his musket at him over a wall, and apparently intended to make him the receptacle of its contents. The affrighted father immediately took to his heels, and upon his arrival at home made known the circumstance to the police. An armed body was forthwith sent in pursuit of the bandit, which succeeded in discovering the retreat of the six poor wretches, whom it was imagined had been blown up with the magazine. Pale and emaciated they were secured with ease, and led into the town, and soon afterwards received the full reward of their inhuman deeds by a public execution.

From their own account of their escape, it appears, that during the siege they had continued to carry out one of the mines to the precincts of the fortifications, leaving but a slender wall to obstruct their retreat, which they might throw down in a moment, during the night, without any noise, when they wished to escape. Until this work was completed, they continued to make every appearance of holding out, but when all was ready, a train of powder was laid at a sufficient distance to secure them from the effects of the explosion, and which they kindled at the precise time of their

threat. It seems to have been the hope of the rebels, that in getting free from the fort, they might fall in with some vessel on the coast, and thus make their escape from the island. It afterwards appeared, that they had actually attempted to seize a small boat, upon which occasion they narrowly escaped being apprehended.

#### SIEGE OF BORGO AND SENGLEA.

As I have had occasion during the foregoing description to revert several times to the siege of 1565, in which the above two cities were invested for upwards of two months, I shall proceed to give a short account of that event, in order that by the associations of history, an increased interest may be felt in examining the localities with which they are connected.

After the capture of St. Elmo by the Turks, which I have already noticed in my description of that fort, a christian slave was sent from the Turkish camp to St. Angelo, in order to propose a negotiation; but being sent back with an answer of defiance, the entire peninsulas of the Bourg and La Sangle were invested without delay. The latter town, and its principal defence, Fort St. Michael, were the points against which the besiegers directed their fire. Several batteries,

planted on Mount Sceberras and the hill of Corradin, completely commanded these posts, and as they were esteemed the weakest, the flower of the Order undertook their defence. The Harbour of the French alone remained open, and here the Ottoman leader determined to make his principal assault; but as it was impossible for a flotilla to pass under the batteries of St. Angelo without certain destruction, he determined to adopt the expedient of transporting a number of boats from Marsamuscetto into the Great Harbour, across the isthmus which joins Mt. Sceberras to the mainland. The desertion of a Greek officer from his service, however, put the knights in timely possession of this project, and occasioned it to be materially altered.

Thus forewarned, the Grandmaster prepared to defeat the contemplated assault. The seaward walls of La Sangle were heightened by his orders, and the cannon on them brought to command the inner port at every point; while a vast stockade, extending from Mount Coradino to the point of Senglea was formed, by driving huge piles into the shallow water, and then fixing a chain on the top of them by means of iron rings. In order to remove this barrier, Mustapha dispatched a band of expert swimmers under the cloud of night, with axes in their girdles, to open



a passage through the booms and palisades; but the noise of these adventurers alarmed the garrison, and the guns on the walls immediately commenced a fierce cannonade. Being too elevated, they threw their shot over the heads of the Turks, and therefore proved ineffective; but at the suggestion of Admiral de Monte, a party of Maltese swimmers were dispatched against them, and, after a sanguinary water combat, completely routed the Turks. A subsequent attempt was made to destroy the booms and stakes, by means of cables worked on the shore by ship capstans; but this also was baffled by the intrepidity of the marines, who swam out again and cut the ropes.

Enraged at being thus circumvented in a favourite project, the Pasha, on the 5th. of July, ordered his guns to open simultaneously on the two towns. Accordingly, the vast batteries which had been raised on the hill of Sta. Margaritha and the rock of Coradino commenced a furious cannonade against Fort St. Michael, and the bulwark of Senglea, while those on Mount Sceberras and the hill of Salvador played on Borgo and the castle of St. Angelo. The cannonade did not cease until considerable breaches were made in the advanced works of both towns, and the Pasha was only delayed from making

an attempt to storm the latter, from a desire that the Viceroy of Algiers would soon arrive with a reinforcement to share in the assault.

Hassan, the leader of the Algerine troops, soon came, accompanied by two thousand five hundred chosen soldiers. He was the son of the famous Barbarossa, and the son-in-law of the scarcely less famous Dragut, who lost his life on the cape on which Fort Tigné stands. To this young warrior was committed, at his own request, the land attack on Fort St. Michael, and to Candelissa his lieutenant, the maritime part of the enterprise. Under his superintendence, and in accordance with the Pasha's original project, a number of boats were dragged overland from Marsamuscetto, and launched in the Great Harbour, where they were manned with four thousand Algerine and Turkish soldiers. Under a galling fire of round shot and musketry, the enemy sprang bravely upon the stockade, which obstructed the entrance of his fleet into the French Harbour, and with hammers and hatchets endeavoured to demolish it. After several attempts they succeeded in forming a passage to an uncovered part of the beach, at the extremity of Senglea. This headland was defended by a battery of six guns, playing level with the water, and by a strong intrenchment, within which were posted a number

of expert harquebusiers. Several discharges of shot among the assailants greatly diminished their numbers; but, rendered desperate by the perils which surrounded them, after a combat of five hours, they forced the defenders to retire, and planted seven Turkish ensigns on the summit of the intrenchment.

The sight of the Moslem standard floating triumphantly on this outwork, filled the knights with shame and indignation, and a fresh body of them, headed by Admiral De Monte, renewed the battle. After a severe conflict, the Turkish pennons were torn down, and their defenders driven headlong from the rampart. All those who failed to reach the boats were sacrificed, many were shot while swimming after their boats, and of the boats themselves many were sunk by the fire of the batteries.

The landward attack, headed by the Algerine Viceroy in person, was not more successful. At the sound of a signal-gun, his troops rushed gallantly towards the breaches on the side of the Birmula Gate and the castle of St. Michael, and in a short space, a small corps of Algerines displayed their ensigns in several points of the parapet. A murderous discharge, however, from the cannon of the fort poured death into the heart of the enemy, and drove them back again with

great slaughter. Unable to stand the steady and destructive fire of the knights, the Viceroy at length sounded a retreat, leaving the flower of his troops lifeless at the foot of the rampart.

The Turkish general did not fail to follow up this bloody effort with a fresh attack, but was again as violently repulsed by the bravery of the knights. Undismayed, however, by these successive repulses, he ordered a kind of bridge to be constructed, by means of which he anticipated his troops would be able to enter the works. The Grandmaster, who regarded this contrivance with apprehension, made two attempts to burn it by night; but the sleepless vigilance of the enemy rendered them futile. He at length determined to make a final attempt to destroy it by day, and his nephew, Henry de La Valette, was intrusted with the perilous duty. At the head of a body of picked men, and in the teeth of a heavy fire from the Turks, he sallied out, accompanied by a brother knight, with the intention of fastening a number of strong ropes to the principal posts and beams of the bridge, so as to enable them to drag it by main force from its position. The design, however, was baffled by the fierce fire of the harquebusiers, and the followers of young La Valette bore back the lifeless remains of their leader into the fortress,

The Grandmaster, though secretly mourning the fate of his nephew, did not allow himself to be deterred for a moment from effecting his purpose. By his orders, an entrance was opened in the wall, immediately facing the bridge, through which a piece of artillery was brought to play on the whole structure. A few discharges shattered it in such a manner as to render it unserviceable; and, on the following night, it was set on fire and consumed to ashes.

Disconcerted by this event, the Pasha again ordered the Turkish batteries to open upon the two towns with redoubled activity, and the contest waxed daily more bloody and desperate. For four successive days the Christians were engaged in incessant skirmishes on the walls of La Sengle; and at length, on the 2nd. of August, the Turkish horns sounded a scalade. The Turks fought with extraordinary obstinacy; but at the end of six hours their ardour abated, and they retired from the breaches leaving them choked with their dead. Five days afterwards, simultaneous attacks were made on Fort St. Michael and the bastion of Castile. The Janissaries, who led the van of the battle, advanced against the former fortress with warlike shouts, and though the ground over which they crossed was strewn with mutilated bodies, they fought their way to the

top of the breach, and for four hours maintained their position. At this crisis, not only the knights, but the citizens, men, women and children, hovered on the skirts of the combat and supplied their protectors with refreshments, or flung missiles and fire-works into the Ottoman ranks. Wearied and oppressed with fatigue the Christians prepared for the worst, when suddenly, to their astonishment and joy, they heard a recall sounded along the Turkish line. This seasonable relief was occasioned by a diversion on the part of the Governor of the Città Notabile, who, observing from his post the cloud of smoke which enveloped Fort St. Michael, hastily ordered a few squadrons of cavalry to make an attack on the nearest point of the Turkish position. The knights who commanded this detachment led it down to the Marsa, and massacred all the sick and wounded which were found in the hospital of the enemy. The fugitives who had escaped carried the news, that the Sicilian succours had arrived, which caused Mustapha, at the moment of victory, to relinquish the breach, and to march against this new foe. His indignation knew no bounds when he discovered the true state of the case; and had it not been for the harassed condition of his soldiers and the entreaties of his officers, he would have immediately marched back to the field.



More than a fortnight elapsed before a new attempt was made. On the 18th. of August, the patience of the Turkish leaders became quite exhausted; and they once more made an attack on the castle of St. Michael, with the resolution of continuing it day and night until the towns were taken. A previous cannonade had almost rased a part of the walls of St. Michael; but it was in vain that the enemy endeavoured to break through the barriers which the besieged formed with their bodies. The assault was suspended for some time, and was again renewed after sun-set; but the assailants, disheartened by their frequent repulses soon gave up the attempt for the night.

August the 19th. the assault was renewed with undiminished resolution, and continued on the 20th, but with little success on the part of the enemy, though at a great expense of life on the side of the besieged. The garrison had by this time become greatly diminished, the walls were mined in every direction, many of the outworks were in the hands of the Turks, and the Knights advised the Grandmaster to blow them up and to retire into the fortress of St. Angelo. But La Vallette sternly rejected this counsel, and determined to keep his ground to the last.

No fresh assault was made until the 1st. of September, when the Janissaries endeavoured

again to take possession of the breach; but their attempts were frustrated by the courage of their adversaries, and after a dreadful carnage they were obliged to retire from the conflict. At this crisis, when the battle was almost won by the valour of the knights, the long expected succours arrived from Sicily. The forces assembled were two hundred knights, and about eight thousand veteran troops, who disembarked on the morning of the 7th. of September, in the bay of Mellieha, together with their arms and military stores. As soon as this expedition was landed, the Viceroy set sail and returned back to Sicily.

Though warned of the arrival of this reinforcement, the Turks imagined that nothing more would be tried than to force the entrance of the Great Harbour. Under this impression, they blocked the entrance with stakes and booms, and held themselves in readiness to defend the barrier. Their consternation, consequently, was extreme, when their scouts announced that a Christian army had actually landed, and was in full march against their camp. Rumour magnified the Sicilian troops into an overwhelming force, and without waiting to ascertain their real force, the Turkish general instantly drew his garrison out of Fort St. Elmo, abandoned all his heavy ordnance, and hurried on board his fleet. Scarcely,

however, had he accomplished this sudden movement, than he obtained authentic information as to the number of his new enemies, and filled with shame, he ordered his army to be relanded. But in a few hours the labour of months had been rendered futile. The Maltese had already levelled his lines and intrenchments, and the standard of St. John once more waved over the cavalier of St. Elmo. A few skirmishes took place in the interior between the two parties; but the last efforts of the Turkish leaders to retrieve a long series of reverses were ineffectual. On the same day the whole army embarked, and immediately weighed anchor for Constantinople.

Thus ended this memorable siege, in which 25,000 Turkish soldiers perished. On the other side, the loss was also great, amounting to between seven and eight thousand citizens, besides two hundred and sixty knights. The 8th. of September, the anniversary of the raising of the siege, is still continued to be celebrated as a general festival throughout the island.\*

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\* The chief part of the above sketch has been compiled from Vol. ii. of the *Knights of Malta*, in Constable's Miscellany.

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## INTERIOR OF THE ISLAND.

Having visited all the interesting places in the city of Valetta and its suburbs, I shall proceed to point out what is most deserving of notice in the remaining part of the island. But as it is not my intention to describe every village in the country, which would only be tedious to the general reader, I shall herewith subjoin a list of them with their population, according to the census taken in the year 1835.

<i>Casals.</i>	<i>Popul.</i>	<i>Casals.</i>	<i>Popul.</i>
Zeitun	6066	Gargur	1198
Birchircara	5649	Ashiak	1179
Zebbug	4545	Tarshien	1074
Curmi	4458	Gudia	998
Siggiewi	3774	Attard	942
Mosta	3737	Micabba	927
Zabbar	3687	Crendi	917
Zurricco	3266	Balzan	633
Nasshar	3131	Dingli	540
Luca	1517	Chircop	380
Lia	1276	Safi	237

The most remarkable objects of interest in these villages are the parish churches, which are in general well built, commodious, and plentifully ornamented with images and paintings. The

Maltese are very liberal in this respect, and seem to vie with one another which shall possess the most splendid house of worship.

In every village there is stationed a *Deputy Luogotenente*, or sheriff, who has a certain number of police under his command for the preservation of the peace. This officer is abilitated to act as magistrate, and may decide any civil cause, within the limits of his jurisdiction, not including a value of more than 2*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.* An appeal may be made from this court to the Session of the Districts, which is authorized to decide on any cause not including a higher interest than 4*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* The district of the Città Notabile comprehends Casal Mosta, Dingli, Zebbug and Siggiewi; that of Attard, Casal Birchircara, Lia, Balsan, Gargur and Nasshiar; that of Curmi, Casal Zurrico, Chircop, Crendi, Micabba and Safi; and that of Zejtun, Casal Zabbar, Gudia, Ashiak, Tarscien and Luca. This court is held once a month, in the district village, and is presided over by a magistrate from the city, and the *Lord Luogotenente* of the district. Appeals from the sentence of this Court must be made to the Second Hall of Justice in Valetta. None of the above tribunals have any jurisdiction over criminal cases, these are all tried at the courts of the capital.

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The common vehicle used for travelling in Malta is called a *calesse*: a kind of carriage with two wheels, drawn by one horse or mule. Some of these conveyances are intended for two persons only, others carry four. The driver is obliged to walk or run at the side, and with a small piece of wood, called a *niggieza*, in which two short nails are fixed, pricks the animal in order to urge him onward. The roads in the country, especially those leading to the principal villages, are in general sufficiently good for the run of these vehicles; but in the uninhabited part, they are rugged, and in some cases travelling on horseback would be dangerous. The hire of a good horse for a day is about five shillings, the same price is generally paid for a calesse.

Having made these preliminary observations, I shall imagine the traveller leaving Port des Bombes, and taking the principal road, called St. Giuseppe, towards the Old City. After proceeding for about two miles, he will reach a long succession of arches which form part of

#### THE ACQUEDUCT.

This stupendous work was begun in the year 1610, during the reign of the Grandmaster Alofio Wignacourt, and was completed in the space of five years. Previous to its erection, in case of



scarcity of water in summer, owing to little rain having fell during winter, the inhabitants of the town were obliged to transport water from a spring at the end of the Great Harbour, called *Ain Filep*, which made it very expensive and inconvenient. In order to provide a sufficient supply, several springs were united together by subterraneous conduits, and their waters made to flow into one channel. The chief spring rises at a place called *Diar Chandul*, about two miles west of *Città Vecchia*. As far as *Casal Attard* the aqueduct is underground, it afterwards alternately rises and falls with the unevenness of the ground, until it reaches the city. The whole length of its course is about nine and a half English miles.

About five miles from *Valetta*, a little to the right of the *San Giuseppe* road, are the

#### GARDENS AND PALACE OF ST. ANTONIO,

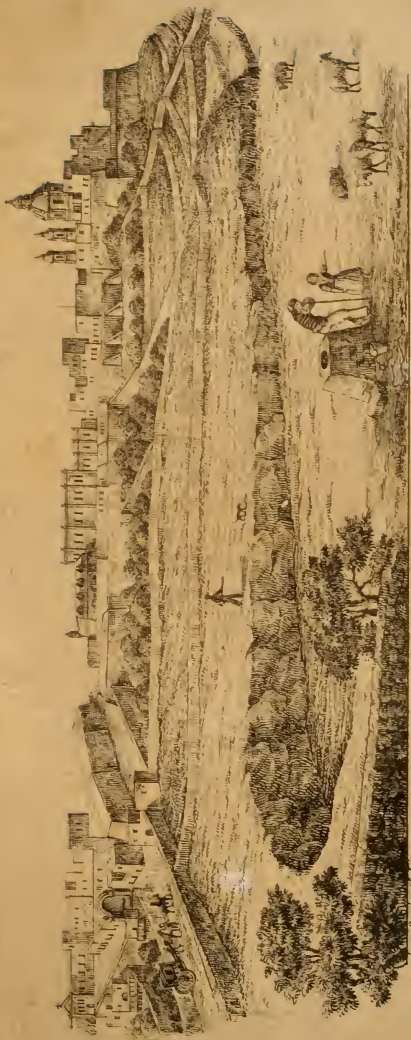
built by the Grandmaster *De Paula*, and afterwards appropriated as a country-seat by his successors. The Palace is spacious and commodious, and the situation exceedingly pleasant. The garden is extensive and contains a great abundance of fruit-trees, laid out in a very neat and regular order. The numerous ponds and fountains which are met with in the paved walks, and which may

be made to scatter out water in different directions, add considerably to the interest of the place. Though not open to the public, any person may obtain permission to visit these gardens by application for a ticket at the Military Secretary's Office.

CITTA VECCHIA, OF LA NOTABILE.

Leaving St. Antonio, and passing through Casal Attard, where there is a fine church, half an hour's ride will bring the traveller to the Old City, situated on one of the most elevated parts of the island, and nearly in its centre. It is surrounded with walls, and defended with bastions and other modern fortifications, which render it exceedingly strong. Before the arrival of the Arabs, a much more extensive space was enclosed within the walls, but it was diminished by them in order to render its defence more easy and practicable.

In early times this city bore the same name with the island, and was called Melita, according to a quotation from Ptolemy the Geographer, lib. iv. c. 3. "*Insulæ in alto Mari Pelagiæ hæ sunt, Melite insula, in qua civitas Melite, et Chersonesus, et Junonis templum, et Herculis templum.*" Upon the authority of Cicero and Diodorus Siculus we learn that the capital of Malta contained many stately buildings, and was very rich in the



Luigi Brecheff. del.

Caltanissetta



style of its architecture. This evidence is substantiated by several remains, which are still seen scattered about the city, and by the vestiges of ancient baths, and temples which have occasionally been found whilst excavating, both within the walls and about the suburbs.

During the domination of the Order of St. John, this city was governed by a *Hakem* or Ruler, chosen yearly by the Grandmaster, from among the principal Maltese citizens. He was ordinarily called the *Captain of the Rod*, and the jurisdiction of his court extended over the civil and criminal cases of all the villages on the island. The Magistracy of the city consisted of three officers, called *Giurati*, who were also chosen annually by the sovereign. The civil Court was formed of a tribunal of three Judges, one of whom judged all regular lawsuits, while the remaining two, called *Idioti*, were only permitted to decide upon certain causes of small moment.

On the election of a new Grandmaster, the ceremony of inauguration was performed in this city. Early in the morning, the sovereign left Valetta, accompanied by his court, and escorted by a body guard with bands of music. On his arrival near the city, he was saluted by the musketry and by the principal *Giurato*, who presented him with a bunch of artificial flowers, with an

appropriate speech, and afterwards kissed his hand. The procession then proceeded, until it joined the Bishop and the clergy, who come out to meet them. The Grandmaster was afterwards placed under a canopy bore on four poles by the *Giurati*, and continued walking until he arrived at the gates of the city, where a place was prepared for him to kneel upon, before which a cross was erected. After the gates were shut, the first *Giurato* stepped forward, bearing in his hand a silver dish, with two keys laid upon it of the same metal, and making a very low bow, addressed the sovereign in the following words: "Most Serene Lord, the Divine Majesty has been pleased to favour us and this city, by placing over us so great a prince as lord and master; and the high honor is conferred upon me of presenting to Your Serene Majesty the keys of this city, in order that you may take possession thereof. Therefore, my colleagues and myself, in all humility, beg of Your Most Serene Highness to deign to swear upon the habit of the Grand Cross, that you will observe all the privileges, and franchises, and usages of this city, and of the island of Malta, which were conceded to them by the Most Serene Sovereigns of Arragon and Sicily, and by the magnanimous Grandmasters of this sacred Order, the predecessors of Your Most



Serene Highness, and command that the same be observed." The Grandmaster then laid his hand upon the cross on his breast, and said, "I am bound to do so; I swear." After the keys were delivered into his hand, the procession proceeded to the cathedral, where a solemn *Te Deum* was sung, and after the celebration of mass, the pageant terminated.

The ceremony of consecrating the bishops of Malta is also performed in the cathedral of this city.

The Cathedral and the ancient Magisterial Palace are the chief objects worthy of notice within the walls of the city. The site of the former building, according to tradition, was formerly occupied by the residence of Publius, who was governor of the island, at the time of St. Paul's shipwreck. The edifice is built in the Corinthian style, and contains an altar composed of several kinds of very rich marble. In the upper part of the building there is a small library, and a few antiques which have been found from time to time in excavations made about the city. The extensive view of the island from the terrace of the Cathedral is exceedingly fine, as it almost takes in the whole country.

The ancient Magisterial Palace is a commodious building, and is used at present for the

monthly sessions of the District Court of Notabile. Besides the cathedral there are two convents in the city, one a monastery of Benedictine nuns, annexed to which is a small but neat church.

The Bishop's Palace and Theological Seminary are situated close by the cathedral, and are worthy of notice. Adjoining the latter building is the supposed site of the ancient temple of Apollo.

The suburbs of the city, called *Rabbato*, contain several large buildings, among which are four monasteries, and two hospitals, one called *Della Saura*, and the other dedicated to *Santo Spirito*. The former was founded by several legacies left by pious individuals, and the latter appears to have been a public establishment instituted at a very early period. It is at present under the direction of the local government.

#### ST. PAUL'S CAVE.

One of the most interesting objects in the suburbs of *Città Vecchia* is the Grotto of St. Paul, situate underneath a church dedicated to the same saint. According to tradition, St. Paul, accompanied by Luke the Apostle, and Trofimus, resided in this cave for the space of three months, the time of his stay upon the island. In order to give the tale some appearance of consistency

a famous writer on Malta assigns Paul's "modesty and humility" as the reason of his choosing such a habitation; for it cannot be supposed, argues the same writer, that the barbarous inhabitants, who manifested their kindness in so signal a manner to the apostle, or that the most noble and courteous Publius, who was so greatly indebted to him, would have willingly suffered Paul to occupy so mean a dwelling. Nor can it be imagined that the apostle was here kept prisoner, after the centurion had forbid the soldiers to kill any of the criminals, whom he had brought with him, in order to save Paul's life!

The veneration for this cave very much increased about the beginning of the seventeenth century, when a citizen of Cordova, named Fra Giovanni, left his native country, and came to Malta in order to tenant it. This anchorite had a chapel erected over the grotto of St. Paul, dedicated to St. Publius, which was afterwards very much enlarged by the Grandmaster Lascaris, and enriched with donations of a vast number of relics by the reigning Pontiffs of Rome. Among these Ciantar enumerates a piece of the true cross on which Christ was crucified, a little of the Virgin Mary's milk, some remains of not less than six of the apostles, and of about fifty other saints!!!

The descent to the grotto is by a convenient staircase, leading down from the chapel. The grotto itself is of a concave and circular form, not more than twelve yards in diameter, and about eight feet high in the centre. A fine marble statue of St. Paul, with a latin inscription, occupies the middle of the cave, before which several lights are kept continually burning. The material of which the grotto is formed is a soft magnesian lime-stone, and reckoned very efficacious as a febrifuge!

On the right of the entrance is the following inscription, placed there by the Grandmaster Emmanuel Pinto.

D. O. M.

*Hac dextrum divi Pauli cryptæ latus,  
terram asportantibus nunquam clausum,  
et nunquam deficiens, semper excisum, et  
nunquam decrescens, ut in majorem  
cresceret venerationem, eminentissimus*

*H. O. M. M. et Princeps seren. Fr. D. Emman.  
Pinto nobiliori auxit ornatu MDCCXLVIII.*

The opinion is quite common among the natives, that the stone of which this cave is composed is continually regenerating, and that although a sufficient quantity has been taken away to load several vessels, the dimensions of

the cave remain precisely the same. It would be useless to adduce here any proofs to shew the glaring absurdity and inconsistency of this opinion; such tales passed current during the ignorance of the dark ages, but the common sense of the present day will treat them as fables. A miraculous agency is assigned for the above phenomenon, as this at once removes every objection which may be brought against it from any natural cause. The antiquity of the above grotto, as well as the false notion of the miraculous growth of the stone, have been ably confuted by papal writers.

#### CATACOMBS.

The Catacombs of St. Paul are situated about five minutes walk from the church, whither the sacristan generally accompanies all travellers with a supply of tapers, which he lights before entering. The descent to the entrance is about nine feet deep, by a staircase three feet wide, leading to a kind of gallery dug under ground, with a great number of others branching off from the principal, and also from the secondaries. The sides of these passages contain many niches to receive the body, cut in the walls without any regular order: some are entirely uncovered,

while others are arranged with more order, in two stories, and partly closed with a layer of mortar raised up in a circular form. These sepulchres are of different sizes, some proportionably formed for infants, which generally occupy the sides, whilst in many of the larger ones, it may be seen from a couple of circular holes sufficiently large to receive the head, that they were intended for two full-grown persons.

There are several halls among these galleries; the roof of one is supported by a group of rough fluted columns, and on the floor of the same are two circular blocks, about four feet in diameter, flat on the top, with a low edge round the circumference. Some are of opinion that the latter were used for washing the bodies before burial.

The area of these subterraneous excavations cannot now be determined, as many of the passages have been walled up, lest the curious visitant should lose himself in such a labyrinth, which according to tradition has several times happened. The stone of which these catacombs are formed is very soft and porous, and consumes away very fast by the dampness which prevails so low underground.

Besides the above there are other similar excavations in the Città Notabile, many of which have been closed up. One of them, however,



called by the natives *Abbatia*, in the district of *Bir Riebu*, about a quarter of a mile outside the suburbs, still remains open. The descent to the principal part of these catacombs is from a well, at a few paces distant from one of the subterraneous apartments. About fifteen feet below the surface of the earth is a regular door way, in which there has been a wooden door. After passing the threshold, there is a chamber about 19 feet long by 14 wide, excavated in the rock which is rather soft, the roof being supported by an arch and two pillars formed in excavating. The chamber contains several sepulchres, and a round block similar to that which I have mentioned in the catacombs of St Paul.

Upon the arch over the farthest sepulchre, there is an inscription, of which the following is all that can be deciphered:

NOT	
N	i T O
BI XITINPAC	
PACEMANIST	ACV
ATI O	P•SITAE
INH.CΛOCO	RECOR

From the tenor of what can be gathered from the above, it may be concluded, that it was the work of Christians.

There is generally much extravagance in the opinions entertained concerning the original design of these, as well as other subterraneous sepulchral excavations. Many will have that they were formed by the primitive christians, who, during times of persecution, lived and buried the bodies of their confessors and martyrs in them. This opinion prevails at Rome, and consequently a number of labourers are kept constantly at work at the catacombs, and as soon as they discover a repository with any of the marks of its being that of a saint, what is found within is immediately taken care of. The principal mark of its sanctity is a small projection in the side of the gallery, a little below the repository, which sometimes contains pieces of phials, tinctured with various colours, in which it is pretended that the blood of the martyrs was preserved, in order to distinguish them from others. This imposition has no foundation to support it, and I would just remark, that the same custom prevails unto the present day in some places of Asia Minor. While at Castro Rosso, on the coast of Caramania, I observed several small mud-hillocks, piled up above the graves, in which were fixed small pieces of broken glass and earthenware of various colours.

Against the above opinion, concerning the design of these catacombs, it may be justly argued, that at a time when Christians were openly persecuted, it was not at all probable, that such vast undertakings could have been carried on without the knowledge of the persecutors, nor that any inimical government would have permitted the work to be prosecuted in opposition to their own proceedings. If, again, these were completed during seasons of peace, they must have been public, and being found in such exposed situations, just without the city, would never have been useful for a place of refuge.

It is my opinion, that the catacombs of Malta were originally the work of the Phœnicians, or the Romans, whose general manner it was to bury in caves; nor was the custom of interring as we do now, in the open air, or in churches, ever made use of before christianity introduced it. The Romans probably derived the custom of burying their dead in such subterraneous cemeteries from the Phœnicians; for, that the same was prevalent with them, is very evident from the numerous catacombs to be found in Rome. At length, however, they derived from the Greeks the manner of burning their dead bodies, and as this came gradually into general use, the catacombs fell into total neglect. In this state, we may

suppose that the Christians took possession of them in times of persecution, where they concealed themselves, because it was not so likely that they would be searched after in such abandoned places. When the empire became christian, they again fell into that state of disuse in which they are found at present.

#### ANCIENT TOMBS OF BINGEMMA.

About one hour's walk to the west of Città Vecchia is a hill called *Ta Bingemma*, in which are cut a number of sepulchral grotts, of different sizes, and varying in their internal formation. At present, many of them are choked up with rubbish, and others serve as sheep-cotes and stables for cattle. Some appear to have been originally intended for one person only, whilst others were designed for two or three, as may be seen from the circular inlets made to receive the heads. A little above the tombs are cut small niches in the wall, apparently destined as stands for lamps. The caves occupy one side of the mountain, and are placed one above another in three tiers or rows. Several large caves contain no tombs whatever, and were probably designed for a different purpose.

Some have supposed that this place formed the

cemetery of the Essenes, a sect among the Jews, whose principal residence was the west side of the Lake Asphaltites, and whose manner of life was very retired and recluse. Leaving aside the want of all historical evidence to establish the fact, that any number of this sect ever existed on the island, the Arabic name, which the hill has retained, goes somewhat to nullify this supposition. Besides, there is another place not far from Città Vecchia, close by the hill called *Emtarfa*, which has preserved, until the present day, the name of Kboorel-Yehood, the *Graves of the Jews*: hence it is not likely that this people possessed two burial-places so close to each other, or that they ever existed here in such numbers as to render this necessary.\*

As to the style of the above tombs, very little can be argued therefrom, since different nations of antiquity buried their dead in the same manner. The small village of Siloah, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, consists of huts formed from a number of Jewish sepulchres, cut in the rock at the foot of Mount Olivet, and which bear much resemblance to those of Bingemma. The Sepulchres of the Kings and of the Judges, about a mile to

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\* If in the above sentence I have confounded a particular body of the Jews with the Jews in general, I have done no more than is customary among the Arabs, who, in general, draw no distinction between the different sects of that people.

the north of Jerusalem, differ very little in their construction from the catacombs of St. Paul in Città Vecchia. In Persia and Egypt the same custom prevailed, as may be seen from many excavations of the same kind which exist unto the present day.

I have already stated my opinion, in a former part of this work, that these grots are vestiges of the Phœnicians, who held possession of the island for eight centuries. This manner of interring the dead was quite common to this people, as may be seen from the extensive cemeteries outside the the city of Sidon, one of their ancient principal towns. The formation of the interior apartments of the tombs exactly correspond in both places, and the site chosen for the purpose, in the side of a mountain, and not far distant from the city, is equally analogous.

Another coincidence between the tombs of the Phœnicians in Syria, and those of Bingemma, ought not to be overlooked,—a coincidence which does not exist between the latter and any Jewish burial-places in the Holy Land: I allude to the larger caves which are found among the tombs, apparently destined for some other purpose than that of interment. I imagine that these were temples, as at a very early period the custom prevailed for men to repair to the summit of hills, or else to caverns in rocks, in order to worship,



the gods, whom they imagined held their residence in such places. This mode of worship existed among the Greeks, as may be known from the cavern which was dedicated to Aphrodite in Phocis, and the situation of Delphi and Parnassus, of which latter Strabo writes: (lib. ix. p. 638) "The mountain of Parnassus is a place of great reverence, having *many caverns*, and other detached spots highly honoured and sanctified." Among the Persians most of their temples were caverns in rocks, either formed by nature, or artificially produced. Porphyry assures us, that the Deity had always a rock or cavern for his temple; and that these existed amongst tombs may be argued from the testimony of Thevenot (Part 2nd. p. 144, 146.) who found several stone coffins among the excavated temples of the ancient Persians. From these data it may be argued that the same custom existed amongst the Phœnicians, and that the similarity of the tombs of Bingemma, in every respect corresponding with those which undoubtedly belonged to this ancient people, establishes them as the remains of their work in the island of Malta.

## EMTAHLEB.

This place is situated not far distant from the shore, about three miles to the west of Città Vec-

chia, and is much resorted to in the summer season by parties of pleasure. The little variety of hill and dale which this spot presents, and the comparative fertility of the vallies, watered by a copious spring, together with a delightful prospect of the sea, form the attractions which draw visitors occasionally to spend a day here. There are only a few houses at this place, but a tolerably spacious cave, through which a spring of limpid water runs, serves as a very agreeable retreat from the heat of the sun, and as a commodious dining room in which to spread out a rural repast.

#### BOSCHETTO.

The above name is given to a public garden, situated in a delightful valley, about two miles to the south of Città Vecchia. This place is well worth visiting. The garden is watered by numerous canals, which are supplied from the principal aqueduct. Here is likewise a commodious artificial grotto, with a fine fountain at one end, and provided with a stone table and benches, forming a pleasant and cool resting-place for a pick-nick party during the heat of summer.

On a hill which overlooks the garden, called Monte Verdala, is a large square edifice, built by

the Grandmaster of the same name, in the year 1586. This building was used as a country-seat by his successors, until the Palace and Gardens of St. Antonio were substituted for that purpose by the Grandmaster De Paula. It is in a rather ruinous condition at present, and until very lately was used for the rearing of silk worms.

On the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, the religious ceremonies of which are celebrated at the Old City, the Gardens of Boschetto present a very joyous appearance. Numerous companies of people from the towns and the surrounding villages meet here, and pass the day in various kinds of rural pastimes and amusements.

#### THE INQUISITOR'S PALACE

Stands a little to the south of the Boschetto, in a very delightful situation, commanding a view of one of the richest vales in Malta. This building was formerly the country-seat of the Inquisitor, but is now the property of the British Government. It is occasionally occupied by some of the gentry of the town, but when tenantless, travellers and persons visiting the place for recreation or pleasure are permitted to use it. The edifice is neat and commodious, and had formerly a small chapel connected with it, which is at present used as a common room.

In the valley below is a large spring, called *Ain il Kbira*, by which name the region around the Palace is known. The fruit produced in this place is very fine. A little to the east is the district called *Gorgenti*, which is likewise very fertile in fruits and other productions. This is also watered by several springs, one of which issues from beneath an ancient building called *Ta Durrensi*. A little below the ruin, the water runs through a spacious cave, the area of which has lately been filled up by the falling in of the roof. There are several other old buildings in the neighbourhood, one called by the natives *Torre tal Fulia*. Besides these vestiges of antiquity, several hewn stones of uncommon size are to be seen in an old wall above the group of caves, situate in the eastern avenue leading to the Inquisitor's Palace; and supposed to have been formerly the residence of a company of gypsies.

#### FAUARA.

This name is given to a spot on the southern coast which overlooks the sea, and is much frequented by the inhabitants as a place of recreation and pleasure. The direct road to it lies through Casal Zebbug and Casal Siggiewi; but by crawling down a steep rock it can be reached from the

Inquisitor's Palace, from which it is about two miles distant. The soil hereabouts is remarkably fertile, and is symmetrically piled up in terraces on the side of the ascent, which rises gradually from a precipice overlooking the sea about two hundred feet high.

Beneath the small church of this place is a spring, which runs through an artificial cave, and thence flows into a large pond, from whence it is let out in different directions to water the land. In this cave is a stone table and benches, for the accommodation of visitors, who come here to spend a day of recreation.

From Fauuara the traveller may have a good view of the small island of Filfla, about five miles distant from the coast. This island is only inhabited by rabbits, of which there are a great number. It is occasionally visited by fishing-boats, which go thither in order to gather the patella, and other shell-fish, which abound on the shores of the rock.

#### TAL MAKLUBA.

The road to this place lies through Casal Luca, Micabba and Crendi, from which last it is about ten minutes' walk, and in all about seven miles from Valetta. The name is given to an oval hollow in the earth, sunk to the distance of 130

feet, at the bottom of which is a very pleasant garden consisting of various kinds of fruit trees. The length of the aperture is 330 feet, and the width 200. The descent to the area below is by a narrow and very rugged staircase, cut into the circumference. The appearance of the inner sides is very craggy; the rocks around are broken and scattered about in every direction, and the whole face of the land around this quarter bears evident signs that it once underwent some violent concussion. The country in the vicinity begins to decline irregularly for the distance of two or three miles before it centres in this spot, which very abruptly sinks into a deep hollow. It is difficult to determine, what may have been the natural causes productive of these phenomena; but the most probable opinion is, that they were occasioned by the destruction of a subterraneous cave in the event of an earthquake, or some other violent convulsion of nature. The word Makluba signifies *Overtured*, and the common tradition is, that this hollow was the site of an ancient village, the inhabitants of which, like those of Sodom and Gomorrah, vexed the Almighty until he took signal vengeance upon them by destroying their village, as he did the tents of Dathan and Abiram, by causing the earth to open and swallow it up. According to Ciantar, some bitumen was formerly



found here in the remains of a cistern, none of which, however, appears at present. During winter, the water in the cavity sometimes covers the trees, but it soon finds an outlet through the fissures of the rock. Close by the cave is a small chapel dedicated to St. Matthew.

The appearance of the rocks above the sea coast, a little beyond Makluba, confirms the idea that it was produced by some violent natural commotion. The stone is of a dark hue, and is very rough and craggy. There are also large ravines formed in the rock, which open in the direction of the sea, and run very narrow towards the bottom.

#### GHAR HASAN.

This Cave is situated on the southern coast of the island, and is well worth visiting, on account of its interesting locality, and the peculiar style of its formation. The chief entrance stands upon a perpendicular rock, about two hundred feet above the level of the sea, the descent to which is rather dangerous. The interior is divided into several natural recesses, stretching out in various directions, and extending inwards for a considerable distance. A narrow passage across the cave leads round to another

opening overlooking the sea, which cannot be reached in any other manner. There still exists a tradition among the natives, that this place took its name from a Saracen who resided in it for some time after the expulsion of his countrymen from Malta. It is rather a singular coincidence, that the same name is mentioned in the Cufic inscription found on the island some time back, of which Ciantar gives a copy in his *Malta Illus.* Plate xvii. A very ingenious translation of the above, by Cavalier D' Itlalinsky, Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Emperor of Russia, may be seen in the *Mines de l' Orient. Tom. I. p. 395.*

#### HERMITAGE OF ST. PAUL.

About a mile to the left of the road, after leaving Casal Nasshar, there is an extensive ravine, called by the natives *Uied-el-Asel*, in the sides of which are several natural caves of tolerable dimensions. On a ledge of the rock, rather high up in the ravine, is a small chapel dedicated to St. Paul, built upon the spot where he is said to have resided. Were it not for the natural grandeur of the scene around, this tale could communicate but little interest to the locality in question; as a proof of which I shall relate the following

anecdote. It is now about two months since I visited the Hermitage, in company with a friend of mine, and while resting on the little square before the chapel, I asked a countryman, who had brought us a few grapes to purchase, whether he thought St. Paul ever lived there. He very quaintly replied: "Sir, I do not know; there are so many places on the island where people say that the apostle resided, that I am inclined to think, that these spots were only honoured by a visit from him. And then again, to imagine that some one followed him to mark these spots, during his short residence in Malta, is rather too much for me to believe." This I regard as a specimen of native common sense.

Within the chapel of the Hermitage there is a cistern, filled with the water which trickles down from the adjacent rock. Several of the Grandmasters of the Order were accustomed to have their tables supplied from this spring.

After crossing over the extensive and fertile plain of Nasshar, the next place of interest in this direction is

#### ST. PAUL'S BAY.

According to a tradition of the natives, this is the place where the great Apostle of the Gentiles

was shipwrecked, while on his voyage from Syria to Rome. The bay is about three miles in length, and two in width at the entrance, gradually decreasing towards the extremity. At this point the beach is sandy, and differs from the general appearance of the coast round the harbour, which is rugged and rocky. To the north-west of the entrance is a small oblong island, called *Selmone*, or *Selmoon*, separated from the mainland by a narrow straight. A tower and other fortifications in the vicinity serve to defend the bay, and were raised for that purpose by the Knights of Malta.

The only object of interest worth noticing in this place is a small chapel, built upon the supposed site where the barbarians lighted a fire to warm the shipwrecked crew. It contains several old drawings, illustrative of the events connected with the landing of St. Paul in this quarter.

As it has been disputed by several writers, whether Malta, or Meleda in the Adriatic sea, was the island where St. Paul was cast away, both which were then called Melita, I do not judge it out of place, to bring forward under this head the arguments which have been adduced in favour of Meleda, and at the same time to subjoin my own reasons for maintaining the contrary. In a note at the bottom of the page I give the

scriptural narrative of the event, in order that the reader may refer to it with greater convenience.\*

The following quotation is extracted chiefly

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\* Acts xxvii. 1. And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. 2. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. 3. And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. 4. And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 5. And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. 6. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. 7. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; 8. And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called the Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. 9. Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, 10. And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. 11. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul. 12. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by

from a *Dissertation of the Voyage of St. Paul*, written by Dr. Falconer of Bath, containing the most plausible objections to the common received opinion on the subject, which I have ever met with.

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any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west and north-west. 13. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete. 14. But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. 5. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. 16. And running under a certain island which is called Clauda we had much work to come by the boat: 17. Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. 18. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; 19. And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. 20. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. 21. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. 22. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. 23. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,



“That this island was *Meleda*, near the Illyrian coast, not *Malta*, on the southern coast of Sicily, may appear from the following considerations.

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24. Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. 26. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. 27. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; 28. And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. 29. Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. 30. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, 31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. 32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. 33. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. 34. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. 35. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to

1. "It lies confessedly in the *Adriatic* sea, but *Malta* a considerable distance from it.

2. "It lies nearer the mouth of the *Adriatic*

eat. 36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. 37. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. 38. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. 39. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. 40. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. 41. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. 42. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape. 43. But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: 44. And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

Acts xxviii. 1. And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. 2. And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. 3. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on

than any other island of that sea; and would, of course, be more likely to receive the wreck of any vessel driven by tempests towards that quarter. And it lies N. W. by N. of the south-west

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fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. 5. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. 6. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god. 7. In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. 8. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. 9. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: 10. Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary. 11. And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. 12. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. 13. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14. Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

promontory of Crete; and came nearly in the direction of a storm from the south-east quarter.

3. "An obscure island called *Melita*, whose inhabitants were "barbarous," was not applicable to the celebrity of *Malta* at that time, which *Cicero* represents as abounding in curiosities and riches, and possessing a remarkable manufacture of the finest linen. Orat. in *Verrem*, iv. § 18, 46. See more fully on this subject, the citation from *Diodorus Siculus* on p. 4.

4. The circumstance of the viper, or venomous snake, which fastened on *St. Paul's* hand, agrees with the damp and woody island of *Meleda*, affording shelter and proper nourishment for such; but not with the dry and rocky island of *Malta*, in which there are no serpents now, and none in the time of *Pliny*.

5. "The disease with which the father of *Publius* was affected, (verse 8.) *Dysentery* combined with *fever*, (probably intermittent) might well suit a country woody and damp, and probably, for want of draining, exposed to the putrid effluvia of confined moisture; but was not likely to affect a dry, rocky, and remarkably healthy island like *Malta*.

Ver. 12. "After a stay of three months, they departed, probably about the beginning of

March, in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered also in the isle, and perhaps from similar stress of weather, and came from thence to *Syracuse*, where they spent three days, and thence proceeded to *Rhegium*, on the straits of *Messina*, and after a day's stay there reached *Puteoli*, in two days, which was the usual port at which the corn ships from Egypt landed their cargoes. Here, also, *Josephus* and his shipwrecked companions landed, after they were taken up by a *Cyrenian* vessel, the year after St. Paul's voyage." (See Hale's Analysis, Vol. I. p. 468, 469.)

The argument contained in the first objection is based chiefly upon the word *Adria*, mentioned in the 27th. verse; but Bochart, Beza, Grotius and others, have shewn, that at the time in question, was comprehended under that name the whole of the sea between Greece, Italy and Africa; so that it comprised the Ionian, Cretan, and Sicilian seas. So Hesychius, "*Ionium mare quod nunc Adria.*" And again, Procop. lib. I. *Insulæ Gaulus (Gozo) et Melita Adriaticum et Tuscum pelagus disternant.*

The first clause of the second objection is entirely hypothetical, and would only serve to increase the testimony in favour of Meleda in the Adriatic, after it has been once proved to be the landing-place of St. Paul by superior argument.

The second clause, however, takes too much for granted. It assumes that the *Euroclydon* is the south-east wind, and then draws an inference accordingly. This word, which occurs only in the passage before us, has exercised the learning and acumen of many generations of critics. Numerous conjectures have been raised concerning it, and several changes proposed; but before conjecture be resorted to, we ought to see what account can be given of the common term. The nearest approach to it is *Euricydon*, given in a citation of Baisson from *Const. Manass. Chron.* 104, which seems to mean *violently tempestuous*. Several other writers have shewn that the *Euroclydon* was not a *point wind*, but rather a kind of hurricane or whirlwind, often shifting its quarter, and tossing them backwards and forwards. This exactly agrees with what the Italian sailors call a *tuffone*, and the English a *Levanter*, which blows from the N. E. and E. and is the most tempestuous wind in the Mediterranean, especially during the autumnal equinox, the time when Paul was at sea.

The above receives additional weight from the 13th. verse, where it is said, "But not long after there arose against *it*." It is difficult to determine to what noun the particle *it* should here be referred: the nearest is the word 'Crete,' in the



preceding verse; but this would be harsh and unnatural. My idea is, that the word *ship* is understood; and if so, Euroclydon could not have been the south-east wind, for that instead of being '*against* them,' would have been in their favour.

The narrative proceeds: "And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive." &c. And v. 27. "When the *fourteenth night* was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about *midnight* the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country." It appears from this account that during fourteen days they were driven by a tempestuous wind, without discovering any land. If, however, they had been driven in a direction to arrive at Meleda, they would have passed close by the Morea, the Ionian islands, and through the strait between Italy and Greece; and this, not in a direct line, but with some windings; and it is highly improbable, not to say impossible, that they should not have discovered any where the vicinity of land, as well as they discovered the vicinity of the island where they landed, even "about midnight." Further, "although neither sun nor stars in many days appeared," yet they certainly could find out the quarter in which the sun rose and set, and from this could discover in which direction the wind drove them. Finding that it was blowing

from the south-east, they would of course have looked for some anchorage in Greece, and the Ionian islands, where they would have arrived in a few days. Besides, we know that the south-east wind in the Mediterranean never continues so long in winter, and is seldom so tempestuous, as the east wind. Supposing then that it was the east wind, it would in fourteen days have carried them in a strait direction to Malta, without seeing and even without expecting to see any land.

The third argument adduced by the objector is not valid, inasmuch as it is a well known fact that the pride of the Greeks, and afterwards of the Romans, accounted men of all other nations barbarians. The apostle Paul makes use of the same expression in 1 Cor. xiv. 11: "If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a *barbarian*, and he that speaketh shall be a *barbarian* unto me." Herodotus also, lib. ii. 158 says, "The Egyptians call all those *barbarians*, who have not the same language with themselves." And again Ovid, "*Barbarus* hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ulli." *In Trist.* ver. 10. These remarks, however, will not apply to Melita, which was situated in a well known part, and most probably inhabited by people who spoke the Greek language.

The fourth argument respects the viper which

fastened on St. Paul's hand, the existence of which the objector judges to agree more with the damp and woody island of Meleda, than with the dry soil of Malta. All this I am ready to allow, as also the testimony of Pliny, that there were no *venemous* serpents on this island in his time; but that there never were nor are *any* serpents in Malta is false. I myself have often seen snakes six feet long, and I know positively, that the same animals, of a smaller dimension, are very common in the country. They are very harmless, but show some tokens of rage when irritated. It is my opinion, that one of these creatures is meant in the text, and that the very uncommon manner in which it laid hold of the hand of the apostle, (a fact the inhabitants had never before witnessed) was the cause of their evil surmisings, and of their anticipations of the consequence. How far there may have been a divine interposition in causing the animal to act as it did, I cannot say; very likely it was only the novel effect of the fire.

The fifth objection contains but little plausibility; for, it is not necessary that a disease should be endemick in order to the existence of *one* case, which, however, we are almost obliged to infer from the argument of the objector. But, moreover, it is a well known fact, that the very disease

with which Publius was afflicted is by no means uncommon in this island during autumn.

The last paragraph is not brought forward as an argument, and it is well that it is not. The narrative of St. Luke says, that they first went to Syracuse, then to Rhegium, now Reggio on the southern point of Calabria, and next to Puteoli near the present Naples. This is the natural course in going from Malta to Rome; but coming from the Adriatic sea it is not at all probable, that they should first have gone down to Syracuse, and then have turned back again to Reggio.

Another incidental proof against the opinion I am endeavouring to confute is the fact, that at the island where the apostle was shipwrecked, there was another vessel, which had put in on her way to Rome, in order there to winter. Now, it is certainly more probable, that the Melita here spoken of is our Malta, and not the Meleda in the Archipelago, the former being quite in the way, while the latter lies several miles out of the regular course to that city.\*

The description given of the shore by the sacred historian gives little satisfaction to the enquirer; yet it proves nothing against its being Malta.

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\* To assist the reader in following out the preceding arguments, a map is affixed pointing out the two courses.

“And when it was day, they knew not the land but they discovered a certain creek with a shore,” is all that St. Luke writes.

But the 41st. verse is not so easy to be understood: the word in the original, (*διθάλασσος*) rendered ‘two seas,’ is sometimes applied to an isthmus which divides two seas, just as the Latin *bimaris*; sometimes to long peninsulas jutting out into the sea, and also to spits of sand under water. The latter seems to be the most probable idea, for we are told, that ‘the forepart of the vessel stuck fast and remained immovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.’ This took place in consequence of their intention ‘to thrust in the ship,’ when they unfortunately lighted upon a sand bank, where the sea is generally rough and surfy. Some critics understand the passage as conveying the idea of a surf or eddy, which beat upon the stern of the vessel, while the head remained fast aground. And others again have imagined, that the *two seas* refer to the channels, which run on each side the small island of Salmone, and which meet in the harbour of St. Paul.

To the above proofs in favour of Malta being the island where the Great Apostle was cast away, we may mention the tradition which has

existed amongst the natives from time immemorial; an item of considerable weight when combined with other concurrent testimony.

#### MELLIEHA AND CALYPSO'S GROTTA.

About an hour's ride from St. Paul's bay brings the traveller to the Church of Mellieha, a place very much frequented by the devout among the Maltese, and by no means displeasing as to its situation. It is partly cut out of the solid rock, and contains a great number of presents to the Virgin, to whom the building is dedicated, such as silver and waxen limbs, pieces of old cable, iron chains and fetters, pictures representing the deliverance of the distressed, &c. Over the small altar is a drawing of St. Mary, underneath which it is pretended that there is an original portrait of the same, executed by St. Luke the *Physician*. Several authors take it for granted, that this apostle, who accompanied Paul in some of his travels, came with him also to Malta; the grounds of such an opinion I have never had the good fortune to see established by historical evidence.

Round a spacious square in front of the church is a row of rooms, prepared for the reception of devout visitors, and occasionally serve also for the accommodation of the parties of pleasure







which often resort to this place. Just below the church is a small cave, called the *Grotta della Madonna*, in which there is a spring of water, surmounted by a large stone statue of the Virgin. It is firmly believed by many of the people, that this image has been several times taken up and offered a more respectable place in the church; but that during the night, she has again chosen to return down forty stairs to her own old position. In this cave there are a few other headless statues, which may possibly have been heathen gods and goddesses. According to the testimony of the sacristan, they owe their decapitation to the infidel rage of the French, during their short occupation of the island.

On the opposite side of the dale, which lies between the Church of Mellicha and a range of high rugged rocks, are many caves, some formed naturally, and others cut by art. On examining a few of these, I found evident signs that they had once been inhabited: the floors of several are well smoothed, small niches for lamps are seen in the walls, and apparent divisions in the larger excavations for the construction of chambers. A little previous to my last visit to this spot, a countryman discovered a small lachrymatory and lamp, while digging in one of these grottoes. Both are made of red clay, resembling

those in the Public Library, and apparently of Phœnician origin, if I may judge from their shape. The lachrymatory is in the possession of the priest of Mellieha, the lamp I obtained myself from the countryman.

About half a mile to the west of the church of Mellieha is the supposed Grotto of Calypso, the spot so enchantingly sung by Homer, and dilated upon by Fenelon in his 'Aventures de Telemaque.' It is situated at the foot of a hill, in which are many other grotts of different dimensions, the greater part of which are still occupied by the peasants of the neighbourhood. A spring of clear water runs through the cave of the goddess, and from thence flows forth into a large basin, from which it is let out to fertilize the delightful garden just below. Of this spot Homer writes in his Fifth Book:

Large was the grot in which the nymph he found,  
 (The fair-hair'd nymph with every beauty crown'd)  
 She sat and sung; the rocks resound her lays:  
 The cave was brighten'd with a rising blaze:  
 Cedar and frankincense, an odorous pile,  
 Flam'd on the hearth, and wide perfum'd the isle;  
 While she with work and song the time divides,  
 And through the loom the golden shuttle guides.  
 Without the grot, a various silvan scene  
 Appear'd around, and groves of living green;  
 Poplars and alders ever quivering play'd,  
 And nodding cypress form'd a fragrant shade;

On whose high branches, waving with the storm,  
 The birds of broadest wing their mansion form,  
 The chough, the sea-mew, the loquacious crow,  
 And scream aloft, and skim the deeps below.  
 Depending vines the shelving cavern screen,  
 With purple clusters blushing through the green.  
 Four limpid fountains from the clefts distil,  
 And every fountain pours a sev'ral rill,  
 In mazy windings wandering down the hill:  
 Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were crowned,  
 And glowing violets threw odours round.  
 A scene, where, if a god should cast his sight,  
 A god might gaze, and wonder with delight!

Embellished and decorated by the masterly pen of the poet, a miserable cave is converted into a fit residence for a fabulous goddess. However, any admirer of natural scenery will be delighted with the prospect which stretches before the sight from the summit of this hill. The green spot beneath, washed at its base by the Bay of Mellieha, the islands of Gozo and Comino in the distance, and the rugged heights around, form a *coup d' œil* not every where to be enjoyed in the island of Malta.

About one hour's ride, over a rather rough road, brings you to the place called

#### MARFA.

This is the termination of the island on the north-west, and from this spot it is usual for those

to embark, who wish to visit Gozo, and who prefer a shorter sea voyage than going in a boat direct from Malta. At Marfa there is a small country-house, which has been occasionally occupied by the Governors of the island.

Midway in the channel which separates Malta from Gozo, called the *Straits of Fregi*, is the small

#### ISLAND OF COMINO,

formerly called *Hephæstia* or *Phæstia*, as appears from the writings of several ancient authors, who mention it under these names. The island is about five miles in circumference, and is partially cultivated. It is defended by a fort, built in the year 1618 under the Grandmaster Wignacourt, which, with the exception of a commodious house belonging to government, is the only building on the island. There are also a few huts, in which the peasants reside who labour on the soil.





GENERAL DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
ISLAND OF GOZO.

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*Ancient name of — History of — Geographical description of — Fertility and Productions — Population — Language — Customs.*

The island of Gozo was called *Gaulos* by the Greeks, and *Gaulum* by the Romans. Diodorus Siculus writes concerning it, in his sixth book, "*Melitam altera insula est, quæ Gaulus vocatur in alto pelago, et ipsa portuumque commoditate præstans Phænicum colonia.*" Pliny also makes mention of it, in his lib. ii. c. 8. "*In Siculo freto insulæ in Africam versæ, Gaulos, Melita, Cosyra.*" And in lib. v. c. 7. "*Gaulos & Galata, cujus terra scorpionem, dirum animal Africæ necat.*" The Arabs corrupted the word *Gaulos* into *Ghaudesh*, under which name the island is mentioned in their writings, and which it has preserved amongst the inhabitants unto the present day.

According to several ancient Latin inscriptions, found at various times in this island, it appears,

that it enjoyed the privileges of a municipality, under the government of the Romans. Many of these inscriptions are preserved in Ciantar's *Malta Illustrata*, Vol. I. Not. vi. lib. 2. As might be expected, from its near relation to Malta, this island has generally shared the fate of the former, and has always been subject to the same masters. In 1551, after an unsuccessful attempt had been made by the Turks on the island of Malta, Sinam Pasha, the General of the Ottoman army, made a descent upon Gozo, which he cruelly ravaged. Gelatian de Sessa, the Governor, made some feeble attempts to defend the castle, but he soon abandoned his post, and left the natives to fence the breach, which the enemy's cannon had effected. The inhabitants, seeing the dastardly conduct of their commander, would have deserted their post, had not an English knight taken the command, and with his own hand fired off the cannon which defended the breach. A ball from the Turkish batteries speedily terminated the career of this good soldier, and no one being found to supply his place, the Governor dispatched a messenger to the Turkish General with an offer of capitulation; but as he demanded the most honourable conditions, Sinam Pasha contemptuously rejected it, and demanded that the place should be immediately surrendered

at discretion. As soon as the Turks had taken possession of the castle, they immediately commenced plundering the inhabitants, and committed every species of cruelty among the people. De Sessa himself was taken captive, together with six thousand other Christians, who were hurried into slavery on this occasion. Two other unsuccessful attacks were made on the island in the years 1613 and 1709.

In the time of the Order of St. John, the government of Gozo was committed to one knight and four *Giurati*, or Magistrates, elected by the Grandmaster. At present it is included within the jurisdiction of the Governor of Malta, and the administration of its local affairs, as well civil as judicial, is carried on by persons appointed by him.

The island is situated five miles to the north-west of Malta; its circumference is reckoned at twenty-four miles, its length twelve, and its greatest width six and a half. On the whole southern coast, and towards the west, it is guarded by inaccessible cliffs, sometimes rising to the height of 300 feet above the level of the sea. In this division are the two bays of *Shlendi* and *Duejra*, where a landing might easily be effected; but these are secured by forts built for that purpose. The remaining part of the coast is low,

though in some places very rugged, and contains several bays or inlets, which are in general protected in the same manner as the former. Before the construction of these forts, the continual attacks of the Barbary corsairs rendered it unsafe for the inhabitants to remain in the open country after sunset, and on this account they were accustomed to retire into the castle to spend the night. Under the secure and happy rule of Great Britain, these marauding expeditions are only known and heard of in the tales of some old Gozzitân, who perhaps may himself have witnessed their dreadful consequences, but who has long since been accustomed to sit and to sleep under the shade of his own vine and of his own fig-tree, without having any thing to make him afraid.

The face of the country of Gozo exhibits a greater variety of rural scenery than Malta, and is much more fertile. The surface of the island is studded with hills, which are in general covered to their very summit with neat terrace-work, and occasionally lined at their base with a delightful grove of trees. Some of these hills are of a conical shape, and have been supposed by some to be extinct volcanos. This supposition, however, I believe to be without any foundation, as none of those which I examined bore any signs of combustion, though I ascended the summits of

the greater part of them. The names of the principal hills are as follows: *ta Cogliat, id-Dab-rani, ta Giordan, el Harrasc, ta Ammar, id-Di-begi* and *Colla Safra*.

The soil of the country is rich and remarkably well cultivated; the wheat, barley, and cotton which it produces, are of an excellent quality: of the former it yields a sufficiency for its own consumption, and the two latter articles form its chief export. Much of the cotton, however, is manufactured in the island.

Although the cultivation of the above staple commodities engages the particular attention of the inhabitants, still they pay some regard to the rearing of fruits, legumes and vegetables, which the island produces in plenty, and with which it supplies Malta to a considerable extent. The grapes of Gozo are reckoned of a superior quality, and the apples, though somewhat inferior, grow very exuberantly in the environs of Casal Nadur.

The good pasturage for cattle, which the island affords, renders it abundant in sheep, and goats, and other animals. The milk of the sheep is made into a kind of cream-cheese, which is very palatable, and forms quite an article of trade. The honey of this place is also held in much esteem for its richness. The market of Malta is furnished with a great proportion of its poultry

from this island, where they thrive remarkably well. The mules and asses of Gozo are of an extraordinary size, and even surpass those of Malta in their strength and beauty.

The inhabitants of Gozo are, in general, very laborious; this may partly account for their robust constitution, which distinguishes them in no uncommon measure from their neighbours, the Maltese. The men are well built, of an ordinary stature, with full features, and flowing hair. In their costume, the people of the two islands agree, except that the Gozzitans do not appear to have that predilection for the long cap, which is so much worn by the lower class of the Maltese; a small straw hat generally supplies its place.

The dialect spoken at Gozo is much purer than that used at Malta, and has a greater affinity to the literal Arabic. It is not only in a great measure free from the foreign admixtures which destroy the beauty and elegance of the Maltese language, but the Arabic guttural sounds have all retained with this people their original utterance, the distinction of which is entirely lost in Malta. It is to be regretted, that when so many facilities exist naturally in these two islands, but in Gozo more particularly, for the easy spread of the Arabic language, and for making it in a short period the established language



of the people, in which they might at once begin their studies, that little or nothing has been done to profit by this circumstance. To think of introducing the Italian or the English into this island, and of making it the language of the people through the medium of schools, is a chimera, which has no foundation in the history of past ages.

It is worth mentioning, that at *Casal Gharbo* a peculiar jargon is spoken, which is not understood by the inhabitants of any of the other villages. After hearing of the circumstance, I used my utmost endeavours to get two peasants to converse together in this gibberish, which they call *Braik*,\* but was unsuccessful for a long time. The villagers appear very shy in using it before strangers; and it was not until I chanced to meet a father and son alone in a field, that my curiosity was gratified. They themselves were perfectly unaware how the jargon was formed, and could give me no clue by which I could discover its origin; but, upon close examination, I found that it was, in general, a simple transposition of syllables in words, and sometimes of letters in syllables. On another occasion, I proposed several sentences to one of the villagers, and requested him to give

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\* It is rather remarkable, that this is the common term by which the Maltese designate the Hebrew tongue.

me a verbal translation in *Braik*, which he did. As these sentences may be interesting to some readers, I transcribe them.

*Maltese*, Immurru yien u inti?

*Braik*, Rumu nayi u linki.

*Malt.* Fein tokghod inti?

*Br.* Neif ghodtok linki?

*Malt.* Inti ghandek mara?

*Br.* Rama dennek linki?

Even in the above few words, there will be observed some departures from the general rule for the formation of the jargon, which I cannot account for. I have given the sentences as near as possible as they were articulated, and shall be glad to see the subject further investigated by some amateur of language. A countryman named *Wenzo ta Shmoon*, who resides in the small hamlet of St. Lorenzo, near Casal Gharbo, was pointed out to me as the village Regius Professor of *Braik*.

Some parts of the ancient ceremony of burying the dead are still preserved in the island of Gozo; though not in universal use among the people. On the death of an individual, when the old custom is observed, his nearest relatives and friends, both male and female, repair to the house of the deceased, and, upon entering, begin singing in

a low and dismal voice some moral sentences. Gradually they grow more affected, and commence weeping and howling in the most doleful manner. The women smite their breasts, tear their hair, and endeavour to exhibit all the signs of despair. These mourners are called *newwieha*; but they are not hired for the purpose, as is the case with the Arabs, among whom the same custom universally prevails. After this scene has been kept up for some time, preparations are made for conveying the body to church. The corpse is borne before, followed by the male mourners, each habited in a Greek *capot*, with the hood drawn close over the head, and uttering occasionally, in a low and sorrowful tone, such expressions as these: Alas, my brother! Where are you now, sister! He was lovely; but he is gone! Will you not think of us hereafter! Remember us to those who have gone before! How virtuous she was; but, alas! she has abandoned us! Why, oh why! did you leave all those who loved you!

The male survivors of a deceased relative generally suffer their hair to grow for several months after his death without cutting; this custom is still occasionally observed by some of the Maltese peasantry. In former times, the burial of the dead was attended with many other ceremonies, such as destroying a few of the ornaments which were

found in the house, overturning the furniture, breaking off vine-branches and strewing them through the rooms, and daubing the doors and walls with soot. These, and other extravagances, however, have long since become obsolete.

The chief town of the island of Gozo is called *Rabat* or *Rabbato*, besides which there are six casals or villages scattered over the country.

The following is a list of the population in the town and in the casals, according to the census taken in 1835.

	<i>souls</i>		<i>souls</i>
Città Rabbato	5596	Casal Sheukia	1578
Casal Nadur	3804	— Sannat	1079
— Shiaara	1996	— Zebbug	846
— Gharb	1631	Total.	16,530

The dwellings of this island, in general, but especially those of the villages, will bear no comparison with the well-built houses of Malta. In this respect the Gozzitans are behind their neighbours, the Maltese, after every allowance is made for the greater difficulty they have in procuring the materials. The stone of Gozo is much softer than that of Malta, and is not so abundant.

In every village of the island there is a commodious church, besides five others in the city of Rabbato.

## BAY OF MIGIARRO.

This bay is situated on the south-east extremity of the island, and is the principal harbour for those boats which ply between it and Malta. The bay is shallow, only affording anchorage to small craft, and is quite exposed towards the north-east. In 1605, a small fort was built here by the Grandmaster Garzes, in order to command the bay, and to act in conjunction with the fort erected on the island of Comino, for the defence of the strait. This fortress is at present abandoned, as its use was subsequently superseded by another, called

## FORT CHAMBRAY.

The building of this fortress was commenced in the year 1749 by the Bailiff Jacobo Francesco de Chambray, a Norman Knight, who expended a large portion of his property in its erection; but, dying before the work was brought to a termination, he bequeathed the fifth part of his estate for carrying through the design. This not being sufficient, the council of the Order made up the deficiency, and called the fort after the name of its original founder Fort Chambray.

The fort is situated about ten minutes' walk from the shore, on a high eminence called *Ras-et-Taffal*. The walls are about a mile in extent,

and are defended on the west by a good ditch, and strengthened by several outworks. Towards the south it is fortified by the native rock, which rises up almost perpendicularly from the sea to the height of one hundred and fifty feet. Within the fort is a commodious barrack, capable of quartering a sufficient force for its defence.

The ascent of the hill of Migiarro towards this fort, as also the land about the beach, is well cultivated.

#### TOWN OF RABBATO.

The distance from Chambray to Rabbato is three miles and half, over a good road, leading through a fine and level part of the country, in the highest state of cultivation. The citadel stands upon an eminence, nearly in the centre of the island, and is a little more than half a mile in circumference. It is ascended by a steep stair-case, and is surrounded by a ditch, where the walls are not raised upon the perpendicular rock on which the castle is built. These fortifications are at present in a very ruinous condition, and it is not probable that they will ever be restored, as the citadel itself is commanded by several hills in the vicinity, which render its situation by no means secure. With the exception of the Court-house, very little is to be seen within the walls but



miserable dwellinghouses. The principal building is the church, dedicated to the *Assumption of the Virgin*, which is also in a delapidated condition, although some vestiges are still left of its former grandeur. In the belfry of this church I observed a bell with this inscription, "*Expello demones tempestatesq. sereno.*" I believe the same virtue is attributed to most of the church-bells among the Papists,—a privilege which they receive at their baptism! From the terrace of this church there is a very extensive and delightful view of the whole country.

In the suburbs of the citadel is the parish-church, dedicated to St. George, and two convents, one of friars belonging to the *Minori Conventuali* of St. Francis, and the other of Augustinian *Eremitani*. Close by the latter is an extensive cemetery, in one angle of which is the following inscription:

*Galli hanc Gausos Insulam imperantes  
anno Dom. CIÖCCLXX., ne sacra ossa  
præsulum, ac virorum illustrium,  
qui cum S. Ludovico  
Francorum Rege, profecti,  
ac ab Africa post bellum sacrum  
huc translata, oblivioni darent;  
hoc sacrum coemeterium erexere,  
in quo singulis lapides sepulcrales*

*anaglyphis distinctos  
 propriis insigniis decoratos posuere.*  
*Ill. ac Rev. D. Paulus Alpheran de Bussan,*  
*Melitæ Episcopus,*  
*qui hunc dormitionis locum visitavit*  
*anno MDCCLV. M. Sept. die XVI.,*  
*ut reliquæ ex maximo numero*  
*lapides vetustiores,*  
*insignioresq. inventæ omnibus pateant,*  
*et conserventur,*  
*heic ære proprio apponi jussit.*

I presume that the sepulchral stones referred to in the above are those which stand in the wall close by the inscription. They are twenty-eight in number, each bearing some symbolical figure roughly cut on its surface in alto-relievo. The principal figures are crosses differently shaped, and other ecclesiastical trophies, such as chalices, crosiers, &c. The assertion contained in the inscription, concerning the original design of these stones, does not appear to rest upon any substantial evidence. Ciantar himself is very dubious on the subject. It is the current tradition among the inhabitants that they were put up in remembrance of so many African bishops, who died here on their way to one of the general councils. This is certainly extravagant enough.

Besides the above mentioned convents, there is another of Capuchin friars, occupying a very pleasant site a little to the north-east of the suburbs of Rabbato.

At a short distance from the cemetery of the Augustinian convent is the garden called *Dell'Annunciata*, situated in a picturesque and fertile valley, well watered by a copious spring. This garden is resorted to by the natives as a place of amusement, especially on the feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary.

Adjoining the Franciscan Convent is the public Male Hospital, and a short distance from the former is a similar establishment for females.

In coming to a place like Gozo the traveller will be anxious to know where he is to find a lodging. In this respect, he will not anticipate the accomodation of a first-rate hotel; however, in case of a family wishing to spend a short time here, they can hire a well-furnished house in the citadel, belonging to Mr. Griffitt, who himself generally resides at Chambray. If it is particularly requested, the person in charge of this house sometimes undertakes to provide a table for the lodgers. Besides the above, there is a Maltese inn, kept by Signor Filippo, a good-natured man on the whole, and deserving a better house if he would promise to keep it clean. But, laying all

joking aside, I would never wish to be more comfortably fed or lodged for a few days than I was at the house of Signor Lippo.

#### BAY OF SHLENDI.

Though there is nothing particular to be noticed at this place, I mention it as affording an agreeable walk or ride, about three miles distant from Rabbato. The road is very picturesque, lying through several gardens, well watered by a copious spring, which flows in a small stream through a ravine extending inland about one mile from the beach. The numerous caves in the perpendicular cliffs, which enclose the bay, are well worth visiting.

#### BAY OF MARS-EL-FORN.

The above may form another agreeable trip to such as intend to spend more than a day or two at Gozo. The road is remarkably good, and lies through a level and highly cultivated part of the island. During summer this place is resorted to by several of the more respectable part of the inhabitants, who have small country-seats built on the shore of the bay. The safe anchorage which this harbour affords, and the convenience of a good supply of water, had once almost determined the council of the Order to remove the city

to this spot. Its not being a central situation was the only cause why the design was not carried into execution.

#### HAGRA TAL GIRNAL, OR GENERAL'S ROCK.

At the entrance of the small bay of Duejra, situate at the western extremity of the island, is an isolated rock, known by the above name, on which grows the famous *Fungus Melitensis*. This rock is about one hundred and fifty feet distant from the shore, and is reached by means of a box, with a pulley fixed on to each angle, and made to run on two stout cables, well secured on both sides. After the box is loosed from its position, one of the men in charge takes with him a rope which he ties on to one end of the box, and, entering into it, impels it on by laying hold of the ropes and jerking it forward, until he reaches the rock. He then seizes the small rope, which he had previously fixed to the side of the box, and suffers his companion to drag it over towards him by means of another, which he holds in his hand for that purpose. As soon as the passenger enters, the man on this side slackens his rope, and the box glides easily down the cables till about midway, where they bend; his companion on the opposite side then pulls it by main force, until it is

sufficiently close to allow of landing without danger. Very lately the cables gave way, and have not yet been replaced.

The fruit for which this rock is particularly famous, called by Linnæus *Cynomorium coccineum*, is not known to grow in any other part of the country. It springs up from the crevices of the rock, and, if suffered to come to maturity, generally reaches the height of five inches. The plant blossoms in April and May, and, when fresh, is of a dark red colour and rather soft; but when dried, it is nearly black and becomes hard and solid. Formerly this plant was very much used by many physicians of Europe, and was considered very efficacious in cases of dysentery, hemorrhages, and several cutaneous diseases; but it has long since lost its high repute, and is at present very little called for.

#### GROTTO OF CALYPSO.

I have already described a spot which bears the same name with the above, but as so famous a writer as Calimachus has maintained that Gozo is the island of the loving goddess, I have thought it not amiss to point out the spot which is here supposed to have been her residence. It is situated in a rock overhanging the Bay of Ramla, and in my opinion would be a very safe retreat



for a company of foxes. The entrance is extremely narrow, and in no one part of the cave was I able to stand upright. The only object of interest worth mentioning about this place is the number of stalactites, which hang down from the interior of the ceiling. A great part of the cave has lately fallen in.

## CASAL NADUR.

In the numerous gardens which surround this village grow most of the apples with which both islands are supplied. A pleasant grove of trees, called *Boschetto*, at no great distance, and another called *Gnien esh-Shibla*, at the foot of the hill on which the village stands, are worth visiting.

## TORRE TAL GIGANT, OF GIANTS' TOWER.

This is one of the most interesting remains on the island, and merits a particular description. It is situated on an eminence, not far from Casal Shaara, and consists of a large enclosure, formed by a wall of enormous masses of rock, piled up one upon another, without any mortar or cement. The enclosure is of a circular form, and measures twenty-five paces in diameter. It is entered by two massy doorways, constructed of four stones, eighteen feet high and five wide. These lead into separate ranges of rooms, each

range laid out in the same order, and only differing in extent. At the extremity of the building, opposite the entrance, is a semicircular area, the floor of which rises higher than that of any other part, and is paved at the threshold with large hewn stones, on the surface of which some rude attempts have been made at ornamenting. Besides this, there are two oblong chambers in each range, which cross the area at right angles, and which are separated by a thick wall, except along the nave, which is left open and forms a second entrance into the inner room. The area of the apartments being somewhat crowded with huge blocks which have fallen from the walls, it is difficult to describe accurately the several objects of interest which lie partly buried beneath them. To the left of the first apartment are the remains of an oven, the hearth of which is formed of red clay. The floor of the side opposite is partly laid with large hewn stones, which exhibit some marks of rough chiselling, apparently intended as a kind of decoration. In this part I observed a conic stone, about two feet and a half high, and one foot in diameter, which I have no doubt was one of the deities of the temple. To the right of the second apartment is a shallow circular concavity, imbedded in the floor, with a raised rim, resembling those which are met with in the Catacombs of

Città Vecchia. Close by this is a large stone, fixed in the wall, with a square aperture cut in its centre, seemingly designed as the front of an oven. Near the aperture is a small round ledge, which appears to have been intended for the stand of a lamp. On the opposite side of this chamber are several shelves, composed of large slabs, rudely piled up one upon another, without any regard to symmetry or taste.

In the doorways there are several large holes, corresponding on both sides, and most probably destined for bolts in order to secure the entrance. In the same are cut several loops, which I imagine to have been intended as fastenings for the ropes, with which the victims were bound when brought here for sacrifice.

This ruin is undoubtedly of very great antiquity, and it is evident from the mode of its erection, that it was the work of the primitive people who inhabited this island. The style of its architecture does not correspond with any remains of Grecian design, and much less with any that have ever been attributed to the Romans. The purpose for which this building was intended, is, in my opinion, sufficiently clear. It is manifestly a *Puratheion*, one of those open edifices, called by the Greeks Ἰπαίθρα (*Ipaithra*), in which the rites of fire were celebrated. This element was

the symbol under which the sun was once almost universally worshipped: it originated in Egypt, from whence it was carried by the several nations which came out from that country. Among these were the Phœnicians, sometimes styled Phœcians, who were probably the first settlers in this island, and the Cyclopes, whose chief residence was near Mt. Etna in Sicily. According to the learned Bryant,\* the latter people belonged to the same family as the former, and have been represented by the poets as persons of an enormous stature, rude and savage in their demeanour, and differing from the rest of mankind by having one large eye in the centre of the forehead. This and many other extravagant tales, recorded in poetical history, concerning these people, were founded on original truths; and though they are so confused, that one will often find it very difficult to draw a correct line between the truth and fable which they include, some general ideas can commonly be formed from them, without much danger of being led astray. In the present case, it is very plain, that the Cyclopes were persons of extraordinary strength, and were famous for their skill in architecture, which they introduced

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\* See his 'Analysis of Ancient Mythology,' Vol. 1. Art. *Cyclopes*.

into Greece, according to Herodotus, who alludes to them under the name of Cadmians, in his Lib. v. c. 6. So much esteemed were the Cyclopes for their skill, that every thing great and noble was looked upon as Cyclopean.\* In fact, there can be little doubt, that the extravagant opinions which were entertained, concerning the form and stature of this people, were borrowed from the height and wonderful structure of those edifices which they built.

It is not my intention here to enter into an investigation of the question, whether the Phœnicians were or were not of one origin with the Cyclopes; the reader will find the subject very much elucidated in the foregoing reference which I have made to Bryant. It is evident that the Phœnicians of Syria were also famous for their skill in architecture, as well as in other arts, from several remains which exist in that country, and which can be attributed to no other people. Among these I would mention the enclosure around the two temples at Baalbec, in which are stones of an immense size, measuring sixty feet in length and fourteen in width. These are not, it is true, composed of unhewn stones, similar to

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\* "Quicquid magnitudine suâ nobile est Cyclopum manu dicitur fabricatum." Lutatius Placidus in Statii Thebaid. lib. i. p. 26.

to those in the Giants' Tower; but then some casualty alone may have occasioned this difference, whilst we know, moreover, that rough and unhewn stones were considered to be more pure than those that were hewn, in the very earliest times. Moses directed (Ex. xx. 25.) an altar to be raised to the Lord of rough stones, not of hewn ones, which he declared to be polluted. (See also Deut. xxvii. 5. Josh. viii. 31, 32. Ezra v. 8. 1 Mac. iv. 46, 47.)

It may then be very plausibly concluded from the above, that the Giants' Tower is a monument of the ingenuity, skill, and mechanical powers of the Phœnicians, of whom we have other indubitable testimony that they lived on this island, if they were not also its original inhabitants.

But the purpose for which such an extraordinary structure was designed is another interesting inquiry, which deserves a more critical examination than the limits of this work afford. I have already premised my opinion, that it was destined as a place of worship, and that in it the rites of fire were celebrated. This I think may be clearly argued from the fact that it has not, nor ever appears to have had, a roof, and from the manner in which the chambers are disposed. Its situation also, on an elevated position, is another item not to be overlooked in determining



the original design of this structure. Such places were generally chosen for religious services, as hereby people imagined that they obtained a nearer communication with the Deity. Hence we read as far back as the days of the Jewish Lawgiver, concerning the kings of Canaan, that they "made their offerings in high places." (Num. xxii. 41. Lev. xxvi. 30). Strabo records that the Persians always performed their religious services upon hills;\* and at the present day most of the temples of the Japanese are constructed upon eminences, and it is their opinion that the gods are peculiarly delighted with such high places.

But there is another circumstance which assists in determining the character of this edifice, and which I have omitted mentioning in my description: I allude to the figure of a serpent, roughly carved on a stone, close by the entrance of the second apartment of the smaller temple. Under this symbol many of the earliest nations, and among them the Phœnicians, worshipped the sun. The Egyptians sometimes represented their gods with the bodies of serpents; and they paid an

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\* Πέρσαι τοίνυν ἀγάλματα καὶ βούμους οὐχ ἰδρύονται  
 θουοῦσι δὲ ἐν ὑψηλῷ τόπῳ, τὸν οὐρανὸν ἠγούμενοι Δία.  
 Lib. xv. p. 1064.

idolatrous worship to those odious and dangerous creatures, which they call their good geniuses. They regarded them as symbols of medicine, of the sun, of Apollo. They were committed to the charge of Ceres and Proserpine; and Herodotus says, that in his time, near Thebes, were to be seen tame serpents, consecrated to Jupiter. Upon the basis of tradition, it appears that this animal was first regarded as the symbol of the malignant being; secondly, that it was talismanic; and after having gone through these preparatory stages of apotheosis, was finally venerated as divine.

That the Cyclopes were originally *Ophitæ*, or worshippers of the symbolical serpent, there is sufficient evidence to prove; and that the Phœnicians followed their example in this respect, there can be little doubt. Both these people emanated from Egypt, where this animal was universally adored; and it was partly through their instrumentality, that the same system became almost general in Greece, and in many of the islands of the Peloponnesus, as well as in the Mediterranean.

Another item, which is worthy of notice in this brief sketch, is the conical pillar which I have mentioned as standing in the first apartment of the large temple. The like figure was common

among the Egyptians, and was called *Ob-El*, the same name which was given to the sun, of which they intended it should be the symbol; hence among the Greeks, who copied from the Egyptians, every thing gradually tapering to a point, was styled *Obelos* and *Obelicus*. In the first volume of Bryant's *Mythology*, the author gives a plate of the *Ophis Thermuthis*, or *Ob Basiliscus Ægyptiacus*, with a priest kneeling down before it, holding in one hand the figure of a cone.

The foregoing remarks will be useful, I hope, in conveying some ideas, which may lead to a more thorough and critical investigation into this ancient building.

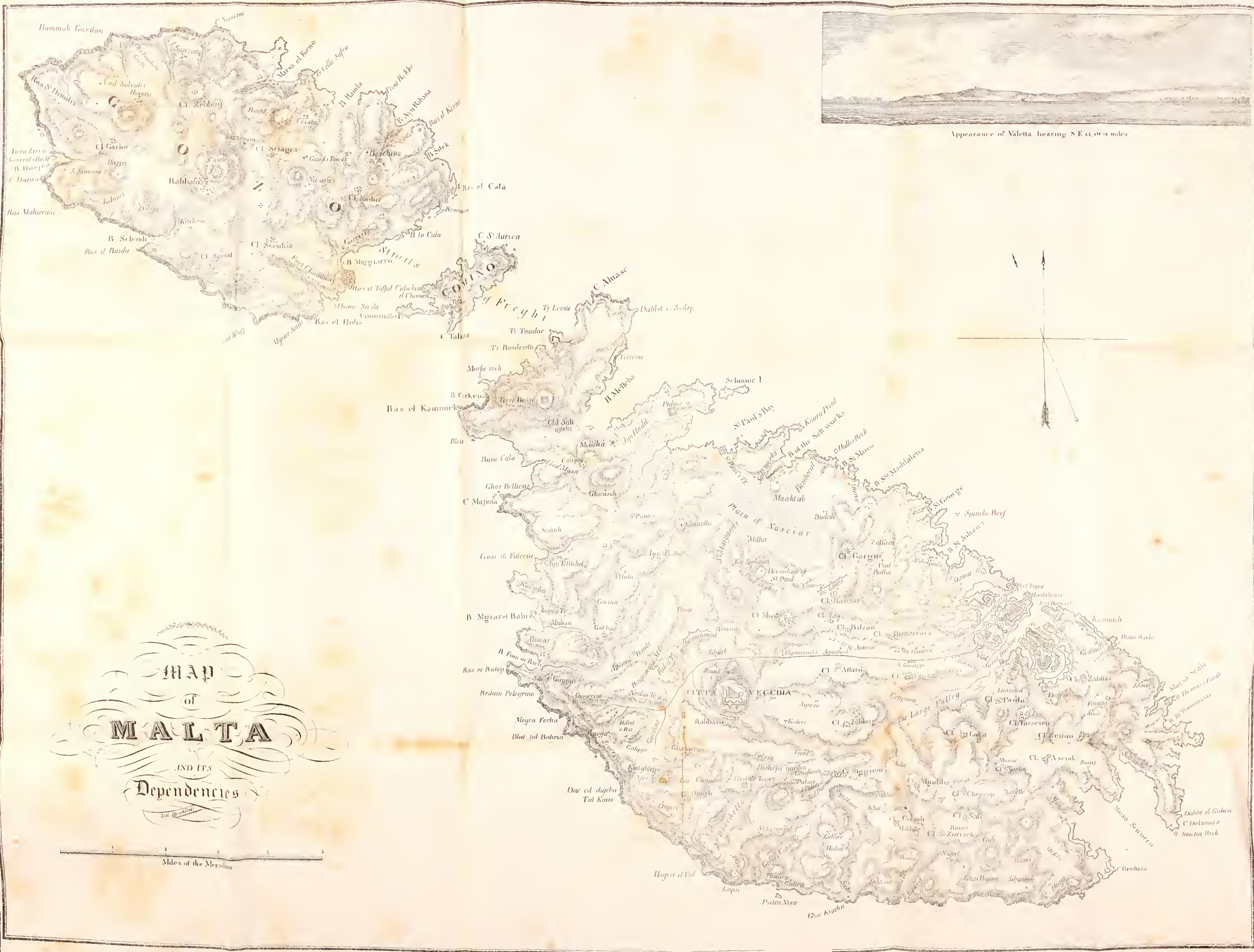


*“Ego quoque in his faciam finem sermonis. Et si quidem benè, et ut historia competit, hoc et ipse velim: sin autem minùs dignè, concedendum est mihi. Sicut enim vinum semper bibere, aut semper aquam contrarium est: alternis autem uti, delectabile: ita legentibus, si semper exactus sit sermo, non erit gratus. Hic ergo erit consummatus.”*







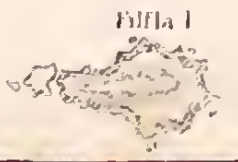


Appearance of Valetta bearing S.E. 4. 0.14 miles



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