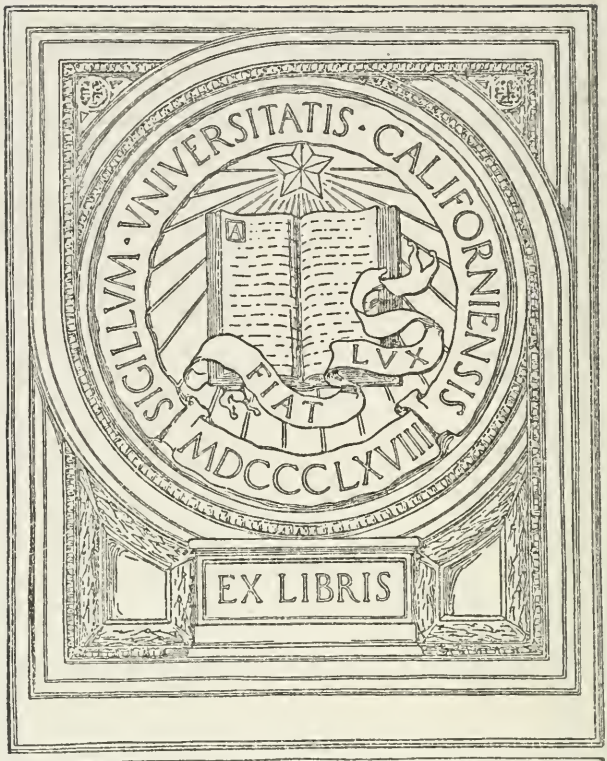

SICILY

A PILGRIMAGE

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PUBLISHER'S ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages are re-printed from the London edition. The work originally appeared in this country twelve years since, being one of the author's earliest productions. The new interest which the Revolution of 1848 excited in regard to the condition and history of Sicily, and the fact that no work on the subject is at present in the market, not less than the general favor with which the present volume was originally received, have induced the publisher, with the author's consent, to include it in the Semi-monthly Library.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The celebrated remark of Dr. Johnson respecting the Hebrides is singularly applicable to Sicily. The antiquities of the island are eminently worthy of observation; but the inconveniences attending a visit to them are such as to suggest, even in the mind of the enthusiastic traveller, frequent doubts whether the gratification thus afforded is not more than counterbalanced by the discomfort consequently incurred. The scenery, too, is peculiar, and often unsurpassed for beauty and picturesque effect; yet it is only at certain periods that the weather is such as to do justice to its characteristic charms. The long and rigid quarantines to which the voyager is liable, the want of commodious inns, and the absence of carriage-roads to some of the most interesting localities, are also essential drawbacks to the pleasure of the tourist, espe-

cially if he be fresh from the superior facilities of the continent. To one who sympathizes warmly with his race, there are, in addition, many painful associations constantly awakened by the existent poverty and degradation of the Sicilians, but ill-calculated to cheer his sojourn. If these considerations, however, are sufficient to deter the unadventurous from exploring this remarkable island, they afford no inconsiderable motive to one whom circumstances have lured within its fertile precincts, to attempt to convey an idea to others of what there has interested his own mind. It is with such a view that the following pages were written. The form in which these descriptions and thoughts, suggested by a tour in Sicily, are presented, was adopted for the purpose of avoiding that egotistical tone from which it is almost impossible to escape in a formal journal, as well as to obviate the necessity of dwelling upon those unimportant details and circumstances which are common to every tour in Europe, and therefore too familiar to be interesting.

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The Pilgrims.

> Yet to the relics of thy splendor past
> Shall pilgrims pensive, but unwearied, throng.
>
> CHILDE HAROLD.

THERE is, perhaps, no approach to the Old World more impressive to the transatlantic voyager than the Straits of Gibraltar. The remarkable promontory which rises abruptly before him is calculated to interest his mind, wearied with the monotony of sea-life, not less as an object of great natural curiosity than from the historical circumstances with which it is associated. Anciently deemed the boundary of the world, it was fabled, that at this point Europe and Africa were united, until riven asunder by Hercules. Forming the south-western extremity of Andalusia, and long occupied as a Moorish fortress, it awakens the many romantic impressions which embalm the history of Spain; constituting, as it were, the gate of the Mediterranean, the comer from the New World cannot pass its lofty and venerable form without feeling that he has left the ocean whose waters lave his native shore, and entered a sea hallowed by the annals of antiquity, and renowned for scenes of southern luxuriance and beauty.

It was on a fine autumn night, that an American ship, propelled by a regular but gentle breeze, glided through this

celebrated channel. The newly-risen moon seemed to hang just above the horizon, with that magnified and brilliant aspect which the clearness of the atmosphere in these climates occasions. Her soothing light illuminated the Spanish coast, glittered on the low crests of the waves, and fell at intervals upon the prominent points of the majestic rock. So quiet was the night, that the ripple of the water, as if parted before the prow of the vessel, sounded hoarsely, and the occasional orders of the captain, although uttered in an ordinary tone, came with a startling distinctness to the ear. Upon the quarter-deck stood two spectators of the scene, apparently absorbed in regarding its novel features, or yielding to the thoughts it had suggested. The elder was a man somewhat beyond the prime of life, with one of those countenances equally indicative of shrewdness and benevolence, so frequently encountered in America, and, without boasting any very striking lineament, convey the idea of intelligence, but not necessarily of genius, and good feeling without ardor. Beside him, her arm within his, and her eyes turned in the same direction, stood a girl of graceful figure and medium height. Her face was not strictly beautiful, if such a term is only applicable to great regularity of profile; but to those, who, abjuring this conventional ordeal of female loveliness, regard beauty as chiefly dependent on expression, her countenance alone would excite immediate interest. She was one of those beings who vindicate the attractiveness of her sex beyond the most perfect models of beauty; whose eye, smile, and manner are so instantly and perfectly inspired by the spirit within them, that criticism is disarmed, standards of the beautiful annihilated, and we are only sensible of being interested, without precisely knowing how or why. Perhaps the secret lies in the very depths of character. Ingenuousness and enthusiasm were the active elements of her nature,

and through their influence it was that a spirit of beauty lived in her glance, voice, and manner, more winning than the finest outline or the richest tint. It was the beauty of expression, combined with the graces of youth and rare natural gifts—of candid, free, and earnest expression, and, therefore, not to be described any more than any other charm, which, like music, addresses at once both soul and sense.

The father of Isabel Otley began life with a sensitiveness of temperament and depth of feeling which ill fitted him for the constant contact of worldly influences which scenes of traffic unavoidably engender. Yet at the period when it became necessary for him to fix upon an occupation, the only interest his friends were able to exert in his behalf lay in the channels of trade, and soon after arriving at manhood, he found himself fairly embarked in mercantile pursuits, in the commercial emporium of the New World. His attention and probity won him universal respect and confidence, but the effect of uncongenial occupation was to give to his manner a reserve utterly foreign to his nature, which unhappily prevented his associates from discerning many of the most estimable qualities of his character. A twelve month's residence in the south of Europe during his youth had, in no small degree, confirmed his natural aversion to the path of life in which circumstances had placed him; but soon after he had entered upon it, too far to retreat with convenience, a happier agency mingled with and neutralized the unpromising hues of his destiny. In the course of business it became necessary for him to visit Virginia. While there, making one of those brief but pleasant sojourns at the house of a wealthy planter which the frank hospitality of the south renders so delightful to the stranger, he was attacked by a fever. A protracted convalescence ensued, during which the amplest opportunity was afforded him of realizing the sympathy of taste and feel-

ing existing between his host's only daughter and himself. Who can wonder that his heart sprang to meet the boon of love with all its long-repressed energy? Frederick Otley left the mansion of his friend in a mood altogether new and delightful. An affection had been born in his bosom which gave new interest to existence and constant impulse to action. In a few months life had assumed a far happier aspect; for there were hours in every passing day, and whole weeks in every summer, when he was at liberty to enjoy nature, books, and society, with a being whose sympathies were all his own. Laboring with renewed assiduity, he was enabled, in the course of a few years, to effect the object for which he had long toiled, and retire with his wife and daughter from the cares of business, and the bustle of the metropolis, to her paternal home, made solitary long before by the death of its venerable proprietor. In this beautiful retreat were passed the three happiest years of his life—too tranquil and blessed, it would seem, to continue, for its peaceful and happy tenor was suddenly and awfully interrupted by the death of her who was at once its hope and inspiration. For a short time the broken spirit of the mourner appeared to derive consolation from the scenes once familiar with her presence, but in the end they seemed to agonize rather than soothe. The old elms about the church-yard, as they waved in the twilight, no longer whispered to his saddened fancy that her spirit was near and conscious of his devoted grief, but moaned a melancholy echo to his own despairing thoughts. The favorite walk, instead of reminding him that she had been, awakened only the gloomy conviction that she was not. It was then that he determined to follow the oft-repeated advice of his kindred, and go abroad. Leaving his daughter in the care of her aunt, he departed on his lonely travels, not to forget his bereavement in the pursuit of pleasure, or veil it in the

excitement of novelty, but to interest, if possible, his mind, now torpid from inaction and shadowed by woe. The letters of Otley, dated from different parts of the continent, constituted, for several years, one of the chief pleasures of the retired family. Through them his daughter learned to estimate the mind and principles of her father, and, combined with her childish recollections of him, they served to cherish in her breast a sentiment of filial love, as profound as it was fervent. Often in these epistles had he spoken of returning, but the intention was always contravened by some new plan or unexpected circumstance. Indeed, the attraction of European life is generally enhanced by a return to it, after an interval spent in other scenes. It is on revisiting southern Europe especially that an American is best prepared justly to estimate and duly to feel all that is peculiar in the two hemispheres. The scene before him no longer excites by its novelty. He is no longer a bewildered stranger. With a more chastened but deeper interest, he regards the objects around him. With a calmer and more intelligent patriotism, he recalls the characteristics of his native land. The foreign insignia which meets his view has something of a well-known aspect; and the eager gaze of curiosity is exchanged for the quiet glance of recognition. Annoyances which he once strongly deprecated now provoke a smile, for old acquaintance has softened them; and happy influences wake a thrill of delight, for they are symbols of past pleasure, as well as pledges of future enjoyment. The landscape is arrayed in new charms, the church breathes a dearer solemnity, the picture glows with a brighter expressiveness, for often, since he saw them last, has memory brooded over their quiet spells, amid the noisy activity of his distant country. The favorite *aria* rises with a richer cadence, the chime of the *campanile* steals upon the night-breeze with a holier music, and the soft

accents of the south seem thrice beautiful; for, since last heard, they have again and again been borne, on the wings of fancy, across the trackless deep to his delighted ear. Absence has endeared what taste holds sacred in the Old World, while a return to the bracing air of a young republic has retaught the inestimable value of the principles which have fled thither for nurture, from the clogged and heavy atmosphere of the old monarchies. In truth, no ideas can be more false than many of those which it requires at least one sojourn of an American in Europe to correct. There is a vague notion prevalent among the untravelled, that abroad there are many and peculiar means of enjoyment. In one sense this is true; but is it enough borne in mind, that the only worthy pleasures peculiar to Europe are those of taste, and that to enjoy these a certain preparedness is requisite? The truth is, the legitimate gratifications of southern Europe are eminently meditative. They are alike incompatible with a spirit of restless ambition or gainful passion. They address themselves to the imaginative and enthusiastic, to the contemplative and intellectual; to those who believe there is a greater good than worldly success, a richer boon than the distinctions of office; to those who believe that the process of improvement does not consist wholly in action; to those who do not measure individual advancement merely by the direct results of intellect; to those who have faith in the refining influences of art and nature, and a life of "meek self-content," passed in the free and independent exercise of thought, imagination, and love; and who, while they acknowledge fealty to the demands of active duty, recognize the truth, that the mind, like the earth, is enriched by lying fallow, and that a tranquil life, if permitted by an individual's destiny, may be rendered more truly profitable than one passed in the most successful and renowned course of active usefulness. In such

considerations lay the spell which prolonged the exile of Otley.

In the meantime Isabel had reaped the advantages of a faithful private education and occasional visits to the principal cities of her country, and found herself, on her eighteenth birthday, happily domesticated in the home of her childhood, with the relatives who had fulfilled towards her the duties of parents. At this time she unfolded to her uncle the long-cherished design of seeking and surprising her father in Europe. He heard the proposal with surprise, but could not long withhold his consent, and as Otley's last letter expressed an intention of making the tour of Sicily, it was soon determined that they should take advantage of an excellent opportunity which presented itself, and sail directly for that island. In assenting to the wishes of Isabel, to whom he was strongly attached, her uncle, who had travelled extensively in early life, was influenced rather by a conviction that the tour would benefit her mind and health than from any deep sympathy in her views. Clifford Frazier was a great admirer of the institutions and manners of his country, and a thorough utilitarian. Isabel Otley was an ardent and gifted idealist. In her character were combined earnest and affectionate feeling, with singular strength and independence of mind. "There are natures which seem, by virtue of some innate principle, to preserve, almost miraculously, their original beauty and freshness." Thus was it with her. She possessed that depth of sentiment, that earnest sympathy with what is deep in the experience of the heart, and what is exalted in the aspirations of the soul, which gives to the gifts and graces of female character an angelic semblance. She had not learned to repose upon a mere conventional philosophy. The blighting breath of artificial life had not crept like a frost over the fair and flowery domain of her truthful spirit. Powers of no or-

dinary strength and captivation were enshrined in an inner and holy light, which chastened and rendered starlike the native brilliancy of her mind, and subdued to a deeper flow the earnest current of her feelings.

The Quarantine.

> The doing evil to avoid an evil
> Cannot be good. WALLENSTEIN.

ON a lovely afternoon they approached the harbor of Messina. The scene was surpassingly beautiful as the sun descended. On the one side rose the high hills of Calabria, and on the other the noble range of the Sicilian mountains. The broadly undulating shapes of the latter were clothed with the vivid verdure of the lemon and orange trees, and the darker evergreen of the olive. On their tops, at intervals, volumes of pearly mist reposed, and elsewhere the edge of their summits was marked with the distinctness of a chiselled line upon the clear back-ground of the horizon. The blue smoke of the coal-pits above wreathed itself peacefully along the green slopes, and up into the bright sky. Clusters of white habitations were planted here and there in the midst of the verdant shrubbery, some of them seeming to hang from an impending cliff. At a short distance from these groups of habitations rose the square white towers of the churches, pointing from the greensward to the serene heaven above, their ancient hue contrasting finely with the freshness of the beautiful temple of nature amid which they were

reared. Nearer the shore, broad lines of sandy earth indicated the track of some mountain-torrent, and the many and rich tints of the withered vineyards reflected, in brilliant masses, the lateral rays of the setting sun. To give life to the view, the figure of a passing pedestrian occasionally flitted across the beach, and a knot of fishermen appeared near the line of blue water, watching the progress of the vessel. The clear chime of the *Avé Maria* stole softly from the valleys. All was peaceful, rich, and lovely as the land of promise; and when the sound of the vesper-bell thus floated over the sea, it seemed to Isabel as if Nature was whispering a call to her children from one of the fairest of her sanctuaries, to lure them to join in her evening prayer.

Before midnight the ship was safely moored on that side of the port of Messina appropriated to vessels in quarantine, and the morning light revealed yet another prospect of singular beauty. At the foot of the picturesque range of mountains, a part of which they had so attentively viewed the previous evening, appeared the city, the lofty dome of its cathedral, and the finely-wrought towers of the church of St. Gregorio rising conspicuously among the dwellings. Halfway up the hills, behind the town, stand two old forts, one of which rises from a grassy esplanade in admirable keeping with its massive gray walls, and between these fortifications is reared the venerable monastery, with its dark rugged tower, in which Richard Cœur de Lion took refuge on his way to the Holy Land. At the water's edge appears the Marina, lined with spacious buildings; and here and there, half hidden by the shipping at the quay, groups might be seen scattered along this wide promenade, and vehicles moving to and fro in rapid succession. Yet, delightful as was the landscape, Isabel and her uncle would gladly have abandoned their favorable position, and joined those who constituted the

moving figures of the panorama—for before their mental vision was the less cheering prospect of a Sicilian quarantine. Not without grateful emotions, however, did Isabel turn to the lovely picture, which, during many days of anxiety and weariness, was thus spread out before them. O Nature! how like a kind mother thou art! when thy wayward children are so ingenious in devising methods of mutual torment, with what a quiet and constant tenderness dost thou minister to their pleasure! How often did Isabel forget the ennui of confinement, and lose, in bright imaginings, all sense of her restricted condition in perusing the landscape before her. She beheld it in every variety of aspect; at sunrise, and in the mellow light of evening, when clouds rested over it as a canopy, and when lit up into cheerfulness by the noonday glare. She saw it when rendered still more enchanting by the moonbeams, and watched the shadows of night as they stole over it, till naught but the dark forms of the mountains and the flickering lamps of the town were visible. She beheld it shrouded in the gloom of the storm and spanned by the glowing rainbow.

"Of life's annoyances," said Frazier, "few are more severe than a Sicilian quarantine. A man of sense can always derive consolation, when suffering from the regulations of government, if he is able to perceive the utility of their enforcement. It is gratifying, when our convenience is invaded by the operation of law, to feel there is *reason* for our discomfort, that we are making an appropriate sacrifice to the general good. Such a consideration is sufficient to still the voice of complaint in every reflecting bosom. It is the irrational and indiscriminate course pursued here which renders the quarantine so vexatious. The slightest rumor, the most unauthenticated report, or the veriest whim, is deemed sufficient ground for sending away ships of every nation, or con-

signing them to an indefinite suspension of intercourse. It is now doubtful whether the time assigned will behold us at liberty; and the healthiness of the place of our embarkation, and the unquestionable validity of our bill of health, and the excellent condition of all on board, will not weigh a feather in the scale. The low damp chambers of the *lazzaretto* are quite calculated to induce sickness, while the fastidious are in no degree likely to be cheered by the prospect of being buried, 'unknelled and uncoffined,' in a hastily-dug pit, and covered with quick-lime."

Surrounded by vessels of every name and nation, they eagerly looked for the arrival of Christmas, the period designated for their landing. Sometimes, attended by a guard, they perambulated the yard of the *lazzaretto*, or conversed with acquaintances through a high railing. On these occasions it was sometimes their fortune to behold the letters they had carefully prepared for distant friends, cut unceremoniously, bathed in vinegar and smoked in sulphur, till all their decent aspect was destroyed, and half their contents obliterated. Another time they heard vague reports that their durance would be prolonged, and returned to the narrow precincts of the vessel in a state of the most unenviable suspense. Sometimes they amused themselves in watching the fish and sea-nettles in the clear tide around, and at others in tracing, with a spy-glass, some distant line of the prospect, or endeavoring to discern the signal of an approaching ship. At night the monotonous cheering of the guards, as they vociferously passed the watch-word from vessel to vessel, or the twang of an antiquated violin, with which some neighbor beguiled the hours, disturbed their slumbers.

The festive day drew nigh, on the eve of which the Italians feast upon eels, and the morning of which the strangers fondly hoped would shine upon their landing. Ere then they

received notice, that, until farther orders, they could not be admitted to *pratique*. Such is a quarantine in Sicily. Bribing will evade almost any of the legal penalties of the country, but the sanitary laws are enforced with a rigidness worthy of more important objects connected with the general welfare. The joyous anniversary arrived. Isabel pictured its celebration across the wide waters in the circle of her friends. She saw, in fancy, the glad meeting about the fireside; she heard well-known voices interchange the gratulations of the season; she beheld dear forms moving up the aisle her infant feet had trod; she felt the glow of devotion stirred by the preacher's earnest description of His meekness and self-sacrifice, who centuries past, was born in Bethlehem. She saw her kindred gather around the festive board, and caught the tone of loved voices breathing fond hopes for her welfare. She cared not to trace the picture farther, for she had taken the blessed thought to her heart, that she was remembered.

For two days the wind had been free and strong, and on this night it increased to a gale. The moon alternately shone clearly forth, and illuminated the edges of an intervening cloud, sending down a pale and melancholy light. In an hour it blew a hurricane; one of those sudden storms, peculiar to the Mediterranean, whose desolate howlings and sudden gusts drown all other sounds. Suddenly, as they stood upon the quarter-deck, a noise like the snapping of metal-bars was audible, and one of the many craft around shot from among the vessels, and dashed forth steadily and with a startling rapidity, as if under a press of canvass. Her masts and dark tracery were relieved against the half-clear, half-sullen atmosphere. All was hushed, save the deep solemn roar of the gale. She seemed not a thing subject to human government, and as she silently passed onward, and was lost

to sight in the gloom, the legends she had read of spectre ships came forcibly to the mind of Isabel. A few moments passed, and the whole fleet beside them broke their moorings. Then, as the vessels were thrown together, and spars and cordage intermingled, the crash of yards, the bursting of ropes, the grating of chains, the voices of command, and the exclamations of fear, uttered in Italian, German, and English, mingled with the unceasing roar of the tempest. Now and then it lulled, only to be renewed with greater violence. The iron rings imbedded in the old wall of the *lazzaretto*, which held the flotilla, had burst asunder, and thus caused the accident. It was startling to see the fleet which had surrounded them with a forest of masts, as it were by magic, in the space of a few moments, all at once depart. It was thrilling to look over the bulwarks, and behold the broad bay covered with foam, and perfectly solitary! Most of the vessels were thrown on a strip of land not far distant, and all of them, in some degree, damaged. Those which had nearly performed the required quarantine, being brought in contact with the non-admitted vessels, were declared *sfratto* (expelled). There was enough of destruction around to enable Isabel to realize the sufferings of those exposed to the unmitigated fury of the storm. At every new onset of the invisible but resistless power, she seemed to see the surges whelming some hapless bark, and feel the shudder which follows the first deep crash of the careening fabric. In the pauses of the storm, she thought her ear caught the quickly whispered prayer, and on its rising whirl, the last agonizing cry seemed to come. The next day brought them accounts of the disasters of the night. "If all this damage," observed Frazier, "had been incurred in an Atlantic port, it would be instantly repaired by government or individuals. All the losses are attributable to the insecurity of the fastenings. A

Sicilian quarantine exposes a man to the combined evils of an abridgment of liberty, discomfort, suspense, and loss." During this and many other of her uncle's complaining moments, Isabel was quietly regarding the scene around her, now clothed with renewed beauty, and meditating upon the prospect of that re-union, the hope of which had brought her thither. When an important object is ever present to the mind, lesser evils vanish; and so much of uncertainty hung over the enterprise of the fair pilgrim, that she scarcely knew what circumstances were best adapted to promote it, and therefore was more resigned to the course of events. Her uncle, buoyed by no such faith or expectancy, felt more keenly the inconveniences of the pilgrimage.

There are few situations, however, of unalleviated discomfort, and accordingly it was not long before an agreeable circumstance enlivened the monotony of their durance. On board the adjoining vessel they had frequently observed a young man, of graceful mien, and handsome, intelligent features, apparently the only passenger; and, on one occasion, when they were visited by some friends from shore, he was introduced to their acquaintance. Thenceforth their intercourse was constant and interesting. Count Vittorio was a native of Sicily, and had just returned from a visit to one of the Italian cities. To the engaging manners and enthusiasm of the South, he united talents of rare native power, greatly improved by study and travel. His society proved invaluable to the strangers, and he was no less delighted to hold communion with two such pleasing representatives of a country in whose institutions he felt deeply interested. Frazier was happy to find so attentive an auditor, and never became weary of expatiating on the political advantages and moral pre-eminence of his native land; while Isabel found still greater pleasure in the vivid descriptions the count eloquently

furnished of the arts, literature, and antiquities of the classic region with which he was so familiar. In such conversations, many hours of the tedious day were beguiled of their weariness. The acquaintance thus formed, soon ripened into mutual confidence; and it was arranged that they should proceed in company through the island. Their hopes were soon unexpectedly gratified by receiving, on a delightful evening, permission to land. How eagerly did they spring from the boat's prow upon the beach, and hasten to the yard of the Health-office! A few moments of ceremony sufficed; the little iron gate was thrown open, and they gladly hurried through, like emancipated prisoners.

Journey to Catania.

Travel in the younger sort is the part of education; in the elder, the part of experience.—Lord Bacon.

IT was noon before the travellers left Messina. On emerging from the suburbs into the open country, while the cheerful sunlight was around them, showers were visible in the distance. There is something exhilarating, in the highest degree, in the propitious commencement of a journey. Never till this moment did it seem to Isabel that her pilgrimage had actually begun; and as she cast her eyes over the blue waters to the pretty town upon the Calabrian coast, —that Rhegium whither St. Paul repaired after his shipwreck, now enveloped in a transparent mist, and glanced at the bright leaves of the orange-trees near by, a pleasing confidence took possession of her mind, which seemed the happy assurance of success. The road displayed at every turn the most delightful scenery. On the one side stretched the sea; on the other rose the mountains. Etna, covered with a snowy drapery, reared itself above them; and olive plantations lay immediately beneath their gaze. Sometimes they crossed a *fiumare*—the broad bed of a mountain torrent covered with stones, and extending from the midst of the hills down to

the shore. These long and stony tracks, shooting through the trees and herbage, with their barren and stern aspect, are no ordinary emblems of destruction. The water, collected in some natural basin in the mountains, rushes impetuously down, sweeping everything before it, and leaving a long line of rocks and earth to mark its devastating course. It is but a few years since this carriage road was completed, and the part of it which our party were now traversing gives ample evidence of the labor it cost. In many places lofty hills have been excavated, and massive ranges of rock cut through. The rough sides thus presented to view display the various oxydes which constitute the soil. Some of these cliffs, when moistened by a recent rain, indicate, in bright tints, the different strata of which they are composed, and as one hurries by them, afford a striking evidence of the geological richness of the island.

Night fell before they reached the village destined for their quarters. It consisted of two long rows of stone houses, separated by a muddy street, so narrow as scarcely to permit the passage of a carriage. As they entered, its appearance struck Isabel, whose fancy contrasted it with the thriving and cheerful villages of her own country, as the most dreary assemblage of human dwellings she had ever seen. Here and there a light glimmered from one of the low doors, or an old crone, in ragged habiliments, raised a torch above her head, and peered curiously at the rumbling vehicle. The dogs of the place, lank, wretched curs, rushed forth and barked at the horses. All else was still and gloomy. Isabel drew her cloak about her and descended at the *locanda*, in a mood quite the reverse of that which had marked the early part of her ride. Woe to the fastidious traveller who has been only accustomed to the delightful accommodations of an English inn, when first he enters a Sicilian *locanda !* All the visions

of comfort which have lightened the weariness of his evening's travel are dissipated in a moment. He ascends a long and steep flight of stone steps, and enters a cold chamber, in which are a few chairs and an old table. At one end of the room are two or three alcoves, containing iron bedsteads, and divided from the apartment by dingy curtains. A few time-stained pictures hang about the wall. The hostess appears, bearing a brazier filled with ignited charcoal, which she places under the table. By the light of a lamp of ancient form she spreads the meagre repast; after which you are at liberty to retire, and dream, if you can, of a blazing fire, a corpulent host, and excellent cheer. The novelty of the scene was amusing to Isabel, and sweet slumbers soon made her forget its forbidding features.

Early the next morning their journey was resumed. The country now presented an appearance of still greater fertility. Plains, covered with fields of flax and lupens, extensive vineyards, now denuded of their foliage, but planted in a soil of the finest loam, and mulberry-trees, of the most fantastic shapes, diversified the face of the country. As the dawn advanced, every object acquired a fresher tint, and at the instance of Isabel they all left the carriage to enjoy the scene more freely.

"I have heard much of the deceptiveness of apparent distances," said Isabel, "but this strikes me as the most remarkable I ever knew. Are you quite sure, uncle, that we are eight miles from yonder snow?" pointing to the summit of Etna, which was seemingly but a short distance on their right.

"It is at least as far off as that," he replied, "although we feel so keenly the cold air it engenders. And mark, Isabel, what a contrast is before us. In this field the laborers are mowing a fine crop of green barley, which looks as well as the grass of our meadows in June; while beside us, the

sides of the mountain are deeply covered with snow. We seem literally walking between summer and winter."

At this moment the dark cloud which hung along the eastern horizon became fringed with hues of gold; the vegetation around assumed more vivid tints; the villages scattered over the broad sides of Etna, seemed to smile in the growing light, and directly above the cold, hoary summit of the volcano, a single star gleamed forth from the pale, azure sky.

"How glorious!" exclaimed Isabel; "what sacrifices is not a scene like this worth!"

"It reminds me," said the count, "of that noble production of Coleridge—the hymn in the vale of Chamouni:—

> 'Hast thou a charm to stay the morning star
> In his swift course? so long he seems to pause
> On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!'

And then the invocation which the view inspires, how true and expressive!—

> 'Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
> Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
> Mute thanks, and secret ecstasy! Awake,
> Voice of sweet song! awake, my heart, awake!
> Green vales and icy cliffs—all join my hymn.'"

Subdued, and at the same time exalted by the presence of Nature in a new form, Isabel yielded her spirit to the influences of the quiet hour and impressive scene, and wandered in silent delight, till her uncle's voice calling her to re-enter the carriage, awakened her from her day-dream.

In an hour they drew up before the public house of Giarra. As they entered this town, the first of its rank which Isabel had seen, she noted the objects around with curiosity. Here were piles of cauliflowers exposed for sale,

there long strings of maccaroni suspended upon cane-poles to dry; here were a group of villagers from the mountain feeding their mules, and on the sunny side of the street a knot of women plying the distaff. It was soon determined to improve the fine weather, and make an excursion upon the side of Etna, which rose so invitingly before them. Mules were procured, and they commenced ascending a very rugged ravine, choked up with black lava-stones. After nearly two hours of very fatiguing ascent, they stopped at a cottage to rest. It was built of lava, and fronted by a little yard, in which its mistress was sitting in the sun, spinning flax. She was nearly a hundred years of age. Her face was strongly marked, and brought forcibly to Frazier's mind some of the Dutch portraits he had seen in the collections of Italy, where the painter's aim seems to have been to copy nature with a fidelity which betrayed all the painful lineaments of age. Deep furrows indented her dark visage, and a tuft of white hair protruded from beneath the hood that enveloped her head. A large black pig, and several fowls, were straying about the yard, and constituted the chief of the old woman's substance. She invited them to enter her cottage. One room answered all the purposes of the family. Here were two beds, an old loom, a wax figure of the virgin and child, and, in one corner, a huge butt of sour wine.

"You see how these people live," said the count; "this hut, built of the fatal material which has destroyed so many human beings, has been inhabited for more than fifty years by this poor creature. To visit the nearest village, and bend at the altar of the old church, to bask in the sun in winter, and sit in the shade in summer, to eat her small allowance of roasted chestnuts, and drink her daily pitcher of thin wine —this is her life; she knows no other, and perhaps can conceive of no better."

The old woman's daughter now made her appearance, robed in black, with a white mantilla thrown over her head, and a crucifix and beads suspended from her neck. She was what is called in Sicily, a nun of the house, that is, a woman who has taken vows of celibacy, and to perform certain acts of ceremony and penance, but is not obliged to immure herself in a religious asylum. The nun busied herself in preparing the food which Vittorio had ordered from one of the little villages through which they had passed, occasionally glancing, with deep interest, at the fair stranger and her companions. After their repast, the son, a bright and active stripling, guided them on their way. They soon arrived at a clump of fine old chestnut trees, whose gnarled and far-spreading branches betokened sylvan antiquities of no ordinary worth. Five of these trees surrounding a wide space, according to tradition, are but the dissevered trunk of one huge tree, and therefore called the tree of the hundred horses, because it is said that that number of steeds could make the circuit of the hollow trunk. Another and more probable reason for the appellation is, that the tree, in its flourishing days, could shelter a hundred mounted horsemen. Frazier was a connoisseur in forest trees, and, while he did not implicitly credit this marvellous tale, yet dwelt with strong interest upon the rough features of these woodland patriarchs. The agile peasant ran up into the branches of the old chestnuts, like a monkey, ever and anon thrusting his head from some hollow, and smiling upon the travellers. He wore a long cap of white cotton, and an old velvet jerkin, and as he thus appeared, peering from some hole in the massive branches, Isabel wished there had been time to sketch the curious picture which the contrast produced. But the sun was fast descending, and they turned their faces towards the town below. Then burst upon their sight one of the richest

and most variegated landscapes it had ever been the lot of either to witness. The broad plains of Mascali were spread out like a map beneath them. Fields covered with dry canes of a light yellow hue, patches of green grain and dark masses —the site of vineyards or arable land—combined to form a parterre, which, as the setting sun fell richly over it, had all the effect of an extensive garden. Beyond was the Mediterranean, flecked with a few snow-white sails; far away to the left, Taormina, hanging, as it were, on a bold promontory, on the summit of which are the remains of an extensive amphitheatre, and nearer around the slopes and valleys, the lava-beds and trees of the venerable mountain. If the morning's prospect inspired something of awe, that of the evening only excited gladsome sensations. It spoke of plenty, of fertility, of a bounteous and beautiful country.

"How unutterably sad," said Vittorio, as they were slowly descending, "that so fair a heritage should be so unhappily peopled—that superstition and ignorance should overshadow so rich a domain, and that where we rejoice so highly in the exuberance and fine array of nature, we must mourn most deeply for the poverty and wretched condition of humanity."

"One would think," replied Isabel, "that to live amid such influences as these—to have sweet harmony breathed upon the soul from such aspects of creation, day by day, and year by year, would impart a blessedness which even the degrading agencies at work upon these poor people could not supersede."

"Government is more of a reality to most men than nature," drily observed her uncle.

"Happily, however," she replied, "nature operates silently, and may produce effects upon character of which the casual spectator dreams not."

"Yes," added the count, "and it is a happy thought, that

many a noble aspiration or grateful sentiment may have been aroused in the breast of the poor villager, as he descended this path, with no companion but his mule, and looked forth, as we now do, upon the luxuriant earth and the glad sea. There is a lesson for the wisest, and a balm for the most stricken, in this landscape."

For some moments they continued the descent in silence, till an exclamation from one of the party caused them to look back. From the white and lofty cone of Etna, a dense column of smoke was rising majestically. To the height of several yards, it ascended in a perpendicular line, and then gracefully turning, floated in a wide and saffron-colored streak along the face of the sky.

"This is all you wanted to complete your day's good fortune," said the guide; "it is not for every stranger that the mountain will smoke." They continued to watch this interesting phenomenon long after their return to Giarra; and when night had overshadowed the scene, a few flashes of flame from the awakened crater, and an almost constant effusion of sparks, amply repaid them for their vigil.

The next day proved as fine as the preceding, and to obtain a more pleasing succession of prospects, it was determined to prosecute the remainder of their journey by the mule-path. As the distance was but about twenty-seven miles, it was not deemed desirable to depart before early noon. Isabel devoted the intervening time to repose; Vittorio went to make the necessary arrangements; and Frazier repaired to the adjoining village to visit a wine-merchant, with whom he had been acquainted many years before in England. When the party again came together and resumed their journey, they found themselves for some time upon the carriage-road, and in view of scenery not differing essentially from that of the preceding day. Occasionally they passed

large flocks of goats, driven by boys, who carried the young kids slung upon their shoulders, or a company of peasants, each with his donkey, bearing, in long, narrow barrels, hung like panniers, wine from the hills into the neighboring town.

"My friend told me," said Frazier, "that the chief employment of these people is to transport the wine in this manner. It is taken from large butts, such as we saw at the cottage yesterday. Each of those little casks contains about eighteen gallons of the most ordinary wine the country produces. It is chiefly used for distillation, yielding about one part in seven of pure spirit. The compensation these carriers obtain would not be considered in America as equivalent for an hour's work. But in time of vintage their pay is increased, and after all, in this country, it requires little to support life."

"No," said Vittorio; "give a Sicilian peasant a little fennel or roasted pulse, a small dish of maccaroni, or a few pounds of bread with a mug of common wine, and he fares like a lord."

"But seldom acquires the strength of a man," replied Frazier; "for notwithstanding their broad chests and muscular limbs, they cannot be called strong, at least in proportion to appearances."

"You have told us nothing, uncle," said Isabel, "of your visit to Riposto. How did you find your old friend?"

"I found him sitting on an old sofa, in a bare-looking room, stirring the coals in a brazier with the key of his magazine. I rallied him upon his taste in preferring so dreary a life on the coast of Sicily to the comforts of old England. But he declared himself well satisfied with his lot. There he was, surrounded with coopers, stills, freighting boats, jackasses, a few chemical books, and a set of half-civilized Sicilians—all the paraphernalia of a wine-merchant on the coast;

as busy and happy in his exile as many who had never been away from the light of their own firesides. Such is the force of habit. In practical application, in forwarding, however humbly, the economy of life, almost any man may enjoy a contented existence."

"A contented, granted, uncle," said Isabel, "but not necessarily a happy or an improving one."

"Riposto," continued Frazier, "fifty years since, was a meagre collection of cane-huts. Now there are many substantial dwellings, but like every other house in this region, miserably planned, cold, dark, and comfortless. The beach is covered with barrels. Coasting vessels are continually launched, loaded with wine, and the little town looks quite bustling. Were it situated, with all its local advantages, in New England, they would connect it forthwith with the capital by a rail-road, speculate in the land for miles around, and prophesy a city charter for it in less than a twelvemonth."

The mule-path into which they now entered was through a lava soil. At one point the old lava, lying in masses half covered with vegetation, indicates the scene of that eruption which stayed the progress of the Roman army on its way to quell an insurrection in Syracuse, and obliged them to turn and make the circuit of the island in another direction. Passing through the broad clear street of Aci Reale, Isabel looked up to the decayed palaces, and on the groups of well-cloaked loiterers in the piazza, and forcibly felt the impoverished condition of even the finest localities. Sometimes she amused herself with noting the defaced escutcheon upon an ancient gateway, sometimes in watching the thin, white line of smoke hanging over Etna, and at others, in seeking, amid the surrounding trees, for the oak and the fir, the pleasant emblems of her native land, which, at intervals, varied the scene. The increase of the lava-beds, and the greater prevalence of the

olive-tree, at length evidenced that they were near their destination. And soon after they paused at a little elevation, and, with new delights, Isabel beheld upon a verdant plain near the sea, the Saracenic domes and wide-spreading dwellings of Catania.

Biscari.

I have learned
To look on Nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still sad music of humanity. WORDSWORTH.

THE late Prince of Biscari was the Roscoe of Catania Affluent, as well as nobly born, instead of leading the selfish and dissipated life too common among the Sicilian nobility, he assiduously devoted his wealth and influence to the cause of liberal taste. Many works of public utility, entirely the result of his enterprise and philanthropy, are to be seen both within and without his native city. His house was the resort of strangers, to whom he extended the greatest hospitality. The beautiful granite columns attached to the cathedral of St. Agatha, by Roger, the traces of baths in the vaults beneath, a few arches of an aqueduct in the *campagna*, and the subterranean remains of an amphitheatre near one of the gates, would be the chief antiquities of which the Catanese could boast had it not been for the exertions of Biscari. At his expense nearly the whole of a Greek theatre has been excavated, and many valuable relics collected and arranged in a museum, which bears his name. These labors would doubtless have proceeded much further, and been productive

of the most pleasing fruits, had the life of the generous nobleman been spared. Enough, however, was accomplished to render his name illustrious as a public benefactor, and to exemplify how widely useful wealth may become in the hands of one with liberality freely to bestow it, and judgment wisely to direct its disbursement.

As Isabel, Vittorio, and Frazier, were on their way to visit these vestiges of antiquity, they were struck with the unusual number of devotees surrounding a shrine under a long archway. The object of their reverence was a celebrated madonna, exquisitely painted upon a slab of lava. Though quite ancient, the colors wore a fresh appearance, and the face was in that peculiar style of meek and pensive beauty which distinguishes these products of the pencil. Around the picture were hung human limbs moulded in wax, and the figures of infants, upon which were colored the tokens of disease. "These," said Vittorio, "are the emblems of miraculous cures, and are placed there as grateful offerings by the sufferers, whose prayers this virgin is supposed to have answered. This is a common method of acknowledging the favors of saints in Sicily."

Near the principal ruin stands the frame-work of a lesser theatre, wherein the musicians rehearsed. Beneath the dingy hues of time, and the marks of violation, it is still possible to descry a few architectural indications of what the edifice formly was. But the travellers were principally struck with the contrast between the original purpose and present appropriation of the building. It is, and has been for years, the dwelling-place of a score of poor families, whom long usage, more than right of property, has left in undisputed possession.

"Here is a change indeed!" said the count—"the temple of harmony converted into a poor-house; the spot consecrated to the study of an elevating science, where Grecian professors

were wont to vie with each other in melodious strains, become the last refuge of the sons of want! Where rich cadences echoed, half-starved children cry; where the dark, clear eye of the enthusiastic musician kindled, are the haggard faces of beggars. Sounds of complaint and emblems of squalid misery fill the walls where a luxurious art was cultivated, and the victims of indigence throng the once gay resort of the votaries of Euterpe!"

They passed on and entered the area of the theatre. Several rows of stone seats are here discoverable, overgrown with weeds, and at their base flows a limpid spring. To Isabel the scene was altogether new. She traced the passages along which the spectators passed, the places assigned to the distinguished among the audience, and endeavored to picture the whole fabric, of which the portion now discernible was evidently but a small part. She fancied the brilliancy of the scene, when the cold stones around her were hidden by the assembled multitude; when ranges of human faces were turned in myriads toward the *scena;* when the profound stillness of attention, the deep murmur of approval, and the loud acclamations of delight alternately stirred the now still air. She thought of the eyes that once glistened with emotion in that place, now rayless—of the human hearts which responded, in tumultuous beatings, to the voice of song or the appeal of eloquence, now pulseless forever. She thought of the efforts of thought, the thrills of feeling, and the beamings of inspiration, which this deserted scene might have witnessed; and as she musingly gazed upon the marble, half covered with lava, corroded by time, and clad in the rank herbage which shrouds the neglected works of man, a new and solemn sense of the revolutions of time stole over her, like the slowly-gathering shadows of an autumn evening, chastening each passion for earthly meeds, and bringing home

to the heart the truth, that that alone in man is eternal which allies him to his Maker. With torches they explored the damp and lonely corridors. Vittorio plucked a rose from a little bush which had taken root in one of the interstices of the seats, and gave it to Isabel as a memento of their visit. "Thus," said he, "nature flourishes amid the decay of art, as the mind's flowers bloom over and survive the destruction of its tenement. It has been asserted, and with some reason, that Alcibiades once delivered an oration in this theatre. There can be no doubt that it has beheld some master efforts of Grecian genius. And what though solitude and ruin mark the spot? What though the voice whose accents roused every heart is hushed? What though the people that once congregated here are extinct? Their essence lives, their poetry and philosophy—their history is deathless. What was false in their principles has been superseded; what is true has been propelled into the eternal tide of humanity, and is immortal."

In the little chamber of the museum devoted to bronzes, Isabel noted with curiosity the implements of domestic economy, and the symbols of a period and a people long since passed away. To Vittorio, who was familiar with the Vatican and the Museo Borbonico, the collection, though interesting, was not so impressive as to the less experienced mind of his fair companion. She handled the curiously-wrought lamps which once illuminated the dwelling of a Grecian family, and inspected the little images which had constituted its household gods, with mingled interest and incredulity. It had not been difficult for her to realize the ancient origin of the temple whose decayed magnificence speaks eloquently of the past, but to feel that she was surrounded by the domestic utensils, the objects anciently familiar to that people whom she had been wont to regard with such reverence, seemed scarcely possible.

"The more I view the emblems of antiquity," she remarked, "the more vividly I feel the truth of that trite saying—that ours is a common nature; that the same passions have swayed and the same general constitution characterized man from the earliest ages. I know not how it is, but I have never been able to feel till now that the ancients were men, such men as now people the earth, only differing in mode of life and method of development. But when I look upon these things, I feel that their wants were like ours—that the same burden of necessity was laid upon them; but that, in the earnest culture of the intellectual and ideal, they beautified, as it were, the rough pathway of destiny, and warmed the weary atmosphere of being with the heavenly glow of enthusiasm."

"What more striking evidence of the universal love of distinction which distinguishes the world can we have than this?" inquired Vittorio, pointing to some bronze toys. "These were the playthings of the patrician children: opposite are the same devices, wrought in the more humble material of *terra cotta*, for the diversion of the poorer class. The higher ranks then had *penates* and lamps of metal, the lower of earth. Now, in these streets, the duke wears a cloak of fine cloth, the laborer a garment of cotton. Such are the poor badges of earthly distinction!"

They turned to look for Frazier. He was standing, with folded arms, attentively regarding a birchen canoe—an American trophy. Isabel, too, paused before the same object, and for some moments her mind wandered from the Grecian era to her father-land. Visions of blue lakes and green forests rose to view. She thought of her pleasant home, and mused upon the object of her pilgrimage, and her eye grew dim as she remembered how doubtful it still was whether she should ever retrace those scenes as the companion of her

father. Vittorio was meanwhile admiring the splendid Torso which adorns the collection, and is a masterpiece of Grecian sculpture.

"You talk of the Greeks," said Frazier to his niece; "but who shall say that the rude people whom this canoe represents understood not as much of the philosophy of life? You smile; but remember, Isabel, that the ancients were a luxurious race. They often cultivated the ornamental at the expense of the useful. They environed themselves with arrangements expensive and enervating. Their baths and theatres, their statues and paintings, were agents of improvement, it is true, but how often did they become the means of voluptuous ease and selfish indulgence! The sons of the forest, on the other hand, cherished an active, free, and noble life. Their bodies expanded as the Creator intended they should; and habits of graceful activity and stern endurance marked them for men."

"Yes," said Isabel, smiling at his warmth, "and for symbols of the beautiful they had no need. Architecture they beheld in the vaulted sky, in the erect shaft of the forest tree, in the green and gloomy aisles of the woodland. Statuary was finely illustrated in their own persons, and for the most magnificent landscapes, they had but to gaze upon the western horizon, or into the clear mirror of the placid lakes. Thus furnished, their minds were nurtured, perhaps, but unfortunately for your theory, never progressed."

"I pray you," said Vittorio, "mark well these two busts, for they represent personages who are intimately associated with Sicily. That large head, garlanded with ears of corn, is Ceres. Would you have thought the goddess of so masculine and rustic a mien? There is the bust of one of the most distinguished generals of that nation, whose incursions have so often ravaged the fair face of this island. Note the

stern and heavy features, the bald head, and that deep scar: they proclaim Scipio Africanus."

Polished lava, Sicilian marbles, and a few little cabinets in the several departments of natural history, served for a while longer to entertain the visitors. The figures of a dead maiden and laughing boy illustrated the devotion to nature, which, more than any other characteristic, is evinced in the specimens of Greek sculpture. A few pretty examples of the chisel of Cali, the most celebrated modern Catanese sculptor, also drew their attention. After viewing the Etruscan vases, one or two of which are of a rare order, and lingering among the fine old columnar fragments in the court, they left the quiet precincts of the museum.

Vincenzo Bellini.

Point not these mysteries to an art,
Lodged above the starry pole ;
Pure modulations flowing from the heart
Of divine Love, where wisdom, beauty, truth,
With order dwell in endless youth ? WORDSWORTH.

IN the narrow street of St. Christofero, in Catania, and near the little church of the same order, now superseded by a larger edifice, was born the most beautiful composer of our times. To the imaginative mind of Isabel his name and memory were sacredly endeared. It has been said, that no after maturity of judgment can dissolve the spell by which the first poet we ever understood and enjoyed is hallowed in our estimation. On the same principle, the composer whose works are the means of awakening in our hearts a new sense of the wonder and power of his art, whose compositions sway our spirits as no others have done, and address our associations with an eloquence, compared with which all similar language is unimpressive, holds a place in our estimation and affections second to that of no intellectual benefactor. He has opened to us a new world. He has brought a hitherto untried influence to stir the ocean of feeling. He has created yet another joy in the dim circle of our experience, and woven

a fresh and perennial flower into the withered garland of life. With the thought of Bellini, embalmed in such a sentiment of gratitude, Isabel, accompanied by the count, who had arranged the visit for her gratification, went forth to view the memorials of the departed that were in the possession of his family.

"The young Vincenzo," said Vittorio, "from his earliest infancy, gave evidence of the genius of his nature. His susceptibility to musical sounds was remarkable. He could be moved, at any time, to tears or laughter, to sadness or ecstacy, by the voice of harmony. While a mere child, after hearing on public occasions a new air, he would, on returning home, from memory transcribe it. At eight years old his little hands ran over the keys of the organ, at the Benedictine convent, with surprising facility. His first compositions were occasional pieces of sacred music. It was early discovered that he was a proper object of patronage, and, soon after arriving at manhood, he was sent, at the expense of government, to study at Naples and Rome. The result of an acquaintance with what had been effected in his art was to make more clearly perceptible to his mind the necessity of a new school. The history of genius in every department is almost always a record of conflicts—of struggles against what is dominant. Thus the early efforts of Bellini were frequently unappreciated and misunderstood. Still he persevered in consulting the oracle of his own gifts, and in developing the peculiar and now universally admired style which marks his compositions. The first of his successful operas was the Pirata, then the Straniera, then the Somnambula, and then Norma.* In each successive work we can trace a

* L'Adelson e Salvini, represented before the Institution at Naples, was the first open experiment of Bellini's genius, followed, in 1826, by Bianca e Fernando, at the St. Carlo Theatre. Il Pirata and La Stra-

decided progression. The first is pretty, often beautiful; the last is throughout beautiful, and frequently sublime. It is a delightful thought, that in a country where literary talent is repelled by the restrictions on the press, musical genius is untrammelled, and human sentiment may, through this medium, find free and glorious development."

"I have always regarded music," said Isabel, "as the perfection of language."

"Undoubtedly it should be so considered, and although the censors jealously guard the actual verbal expressions attached to operas, to a true imagination and just sensibility, the mere notes of masterpieces are perfectly distinguishable, as expressive of the thousand sentiments which sway the heart. Bellini, it is believed, was one of that secret society which has for some time existed, under the title of "Young Italy," whose aim is the restoration of these regions to independence; and we can read, or rather feel, the depth and fervor of his liberal sentiments, breathing in the glowing strains of his last opera—the Puritani."

Thus conversing, they arrived at the residence of his family, where, with emotions of melancholy interest, they viewed the tokens of his brief but brilliant career. There were little remembrancers whose workmanship testified that they were wrought by fair hands; the order of the legion of honor; a rich carpet, worked by the ladies of Milan, with the names of his operas tastefully interwoven, and many fantasies and fragments written by his own hand. There was something indescribably touching in the sight of these trophies. Isabel felt, as she gazed upon them, how empty and unavailing are

niera, successively produced at the Scala in Milan, completely established his reputation. The Montecchi e Capuleti was brought out soon after at Venice. The Somnambula and Norma at Milan, and the Puritani in Paris.

the tributes men pay to living genius compared with that heritage of fame which is its after-recompense. What were these glittering orders to the breast they once adorned—now mouldering in the grave? And these indications of woman's regard, which, perhaps, more than any other, pleased the heart of the young Catanese? How like the deckings of vanity did they seem now, when he for whom they were playfully wrought was enshrined among the sons of fame! How sad, too, to behold the slight characters and unconnected notes—the recorded inspiration of him who alone could rightly combine and truly set forth their meaning! How affecting to look upon these characters—the pencillings of genius, and remember that the hand which inscribed them was cold in the tomb! But Isabel dwelt longest and most intently upon a miniature of Bellini, taken at the age of twenty-three, after the representation of the Pirata. It portrayed the youthful composer with a pale intellectual countenance, an expansive and noble brow, and hair of the lightest auburn. There was a striking union of gentleness and intelligence, of lofty capacity and kindly feeling, in the portrait.

"How unlike the generality of his countrymen!" exclaimed Isabel, who had looked for the dark eye and hair of the nation.

"Nature, in every respect," replied Vittorio, "marked him for a peculiar being. Yet the softness and quiet repose of the countenance is like his harmony. The mildness of the eye and the delicacy of the complexion speak of refinement. The whole physiognomy is indicative of taste and sentiment, a susceptibility and grace almost womanly, and, at the same time, a thoughtfulness and calm beauty, which speak of intellectual labor and suffering. The face of Bellini here depicted, is like his music, moving, expressive, and

graceful. I have seen portraits taken at a later age with less of youth, and perhaps, for that reason, less of interest in their expression. During his lifetime all he received for his works, not absolutely requisite for his support, was immediately sent to his family. And now his aged father may be said, in a double sense, to live on the fame of his son, since, in consideration of that son's arduous labors in the cause of music, which in southern Europe may be considered perhaps the only truly national object of common interest, the old man receives a pension from government, quite adequate to his maintenance."

"I think," said Isabel, as the party were seated in the opera-house the same evening, "that the great characteristic of Bellini is what may be called his metaphysical accuracy. There is an intimate correspondence between the idea of the drama and the notes of the music. What a perfect tone of disappointed affection lurks in the strain 'Ah! perche non posso odiarti?'—the favorite air in the Somnambula; and who that should unpreparedly hear the last duet of the Norma, would not instantly feel that it is the mingled expression of despair and fondness? How warlike and rousing are the Druidical choruses, and what peace breathes in the Hymn to the Moon! It is this delicate and earnest adaptation of the music to the sentiment, this typifying of emotion in melody, that seems to me to render Bellini's strains so heart-stirring."

"In other words," said Vittorio, "he affects us powerfully, for the same reason that Shakspeare, or any other universally acknowledged genius, excites our sympathy. His music is *true*. He has been called the Petrarch of harmony, that poet being deemed by the Italians the most perfect portrayer of love."

"And would that his fate had been more like that bard's!" exclaimed Isabel. "How melancholy that he should have

died so young, in the very moment, as it were, of success and honor! I shall never forget the sorrow I felt when his death was announced to me. I was in a ball-room. The scene was gay and festive. The band had performed in succession the most admired quadrilles from his operas. I was standing in a circle which surrounded a party of waltzers, and expressed the delight I had received from the airs we had just heard. My companion responded, and sighing, calmly said, 'What a pity he will compose no more!' When I thus learned the fact of his death, and afterwards the particulars, a gloom came over my spirits, which, during the evening, had been uncommonly buoyant. I retired to the most solitary part of the room, and indulged the reflections thus suddenly awakened. 'How few,' thought I, 'of this gay throng, as they dance to the enlivening measures of Bellini, will breathe a sigh for his untimely end, or give a grateful thought to his memory.' Some of the company passed me on their way to the music-room. I joined them. A distinguished amateur, with a fine bass voice, had taken his seat at the instrument. For a moment he turned over the book listlessly, and then, as if inspired by a pleasing recollection, burst forth in that mournfully-beautiful cavatina, '*Vi ravisso luoghi ameni.*' He sang it with much feeling. There was silent and profound attention. The tears rose to my eyes. To my excited imagination we seemed to be listening to the dirge of Bellini; and, as the last lengthened note died on the lips of the vocalist—thus, thought I, he expired. Little did I then think I should ever see the native city of the composer, or sit in the opera-house which he doubtless frequented."

"It but this moment occurred to me," replied Vittorio, "that, perhaps, in this very place Bellini first learned to appreciate the science he afterwards so signally advanced; to realize the expressiveness of the agency he afterwards so ef

fectually wielded; to feel the power of the art to whose advancement he afterwards so nobly contributed. Perhaps here first dawned on his young ambition the thought of being a composer. Perhaps, as the breathings of love, grief, fear, and triumph here stirred his youthful breast, the bright hope of embodying them in thrilling music, and thus living in his 'land's language,' rose, like the star of destiny, before his awakened fancy."

There is a narrow but sequestered road leading from Catania to Cifali, just without the Porta D' Aci. A low plaster wall separates it on both sides from extensive gardens, the site of an ancient burial-place, where memorials of the dead have been frequently disinterred. Over the top of these boundaries the orange and almond trees, in the season of spring, refresh the pedestrian with their blossoms and perfume. In the early mornings of summer, or at the close of the day, this road is often sought by the meditative, being less frequented than most of the other highways leading from the city. There one can stroll along and interest himself with the thought of the now extinct people near whose ruined sepulchres he is treading, or gaze upon the broad face and swelling cone of Etna which rises before him. At an agreeable distance from the commencement of this path is an old monastery of Franciscans. The floor of the venerable church is covered with the deeply-carved tablets, beneath which are the remains of the Catanese nobility, their arms elaborately sculptured upon the cold slabs. Strangers sometimes visit a chapel adjacent to see a well-executed bust, which displays the features of the nobleman who lies beneath, and is thought to be the *capo d'opera* of a Roman sculptor. The adjoining chapel is assigned as the last resting-place of Vincenzo Bellini, whose monument will soon exhibit its fresh-chiselled aspect amid the time-worn emblems around. Thither, one

morning, Isabel and the count wandered, and, after leaving the church, sat upon a stone bench which overlooked the scene, and to her inquiries as to the funeral honors paid, in his native island, to the memory of the composer, he replied—

"You should have witnessed in order to realize the universal grief of the Catanese. Business was suspended. Every voice faltered as it repeated the tidings; every eye was moistened as it marked the badges of mourning. In the capital the same spirit prevailed. There, but a few months previous, the king entered the city, and no voice hailed him, because the professions made at the outset of his reign were unfulfilled. The gifted composer came, and acclamations welcomed him. Every testimony of private regard and public honor was displayed. His sojourn was a festival—so the news of his death created universal grief. Here, in the spirit of antiquity, an oration was pronounced in the theatre, his favorite airs performed, and actors, in the old Sicilian costume, represented the effect of his death by an appropriate piece, with mournful music. In the streets were processions, in the churches masses, and in the heart of every citizen profound regret."

"And this," said Isabel, glancing over the scene, "is a fit place for his repose. He will sleep at the foot of Etna, amid the nobles of his native city. The ladies of this villa, as they wander through the garden in the still summer evenings, will sing his most soothing strains. The peasant, as he rides by on his mule, at the cool hour of dawn, will play upon his reeds the gladdest notes, the choir in the church will chant the anthems, and the blind violinist, as he rests by the road-side, cheer himself with the pleasant music of the departed composer."

They rose to depart. As Isabel looked back, and began to lose sight of the ancient convent, she observed a lofty cy-

press at the corner of the road. As its dense foliage waved solemnly, and its spire-like cone pointed heavenward, it appeared to her saddened fancy like a mournful sentinel, standing to guard from sacrilege, and point out for homage, the last resting-place of Bellini.

A Walk in Catania.

Gentle or rude,
No scene of life but has contributed
Much to remember. ROGERS.

"WHAT wise book so engages your attention?" asked Isabel of her uncle, who had been for some time intent upon a little parchment-bound volume.

"It is a literary curiosity, given me by our host to amuse myself with till we go out, being nothing more nor less than his album, wherein his merits are set forth in all languages, and in every variety of terms. One praises him as a *cicerone* in ascending the mountain, one as a caterer, and another as a nurse. There is an essay on the instability of fame, and a warning to beware of the moroseness of declining years. An Italian merchant reiterates again and again, that what *he* says in the landlord's praise is true, as if he realized the slight tenure of his nation's reputation for integrity; and an Englishman begs leave to recommend the inn to his countrymen, as if no other individuals in the wide world were worthy of the honor. There are sonnets and aphorisms, quotations and parodies, and I cannot tell whether the volume owes it variety to the quaint mood of the travellers or the peculiar quality of our host's wine."

"Not less than half the inhabitants of this town," said the count, as they went forth on their proposed walk, "derive their subsistence from the silk manufacture. Half the houses are provided with looms; and the raw material, purchased at fairs of the country people, is woven by the poorer class of citizens, and sold to the fabricant, who, in his turn, executes the orders of the merchant."

"Pride, if not policy," said Frazier, as they passed the immense skeleton of a palace, "would lead an American or an Englishman to finish such an edifice when so far completed."

"Economy is a more powerful motive here," replied Vittorio; "the noble proprietor, after proceeding to this extent in erecting his dwelling, found that the opposite wing was sufficient for his purposes, and therefore took possession of it, leaving, without a particle of compunction, this unsightly wall to deform the street."

A number of young men, wearing cocked hats, and another group in flowing gowns of red bombazine, passed by and attracted the notice of Isabel.

"Here you see," said the count, "a good illustration of the efforts constantly made in this part of the world to divide the ranks of society. That first knot of youths are the sons of noblemen, and members of a college founded by a princely family—the other charity students. The *café* at that corner is frequented only by the nobility—the one at this by the citizens."

The lofty court-yard of the college, the massive front or commanding position of a convent, or the extensive structures appropriated as hospitals, by turns excited the inquiries of the strangers. They strolled along the small but pleasant marina, and marked the mole, formed by the lava, as it was arrested after invading the sea, and the narrow bed of the river filled with women busily washing. They paused in the

principal piazza to observe the old statue of the elephant, bearing a small Egyptian obelisk, and stood for some time in the sacristy of the cathedral, before a rough fresco painting, representing the eruption of 1669. As they were walking up the Strada Etnea, and admiring the fine vista, an old gateway at one end, and the mountain at the other, they perceived a crowd entering a church. Joining the throng, they found themselves suddenly removed from the noise and bustle of a public street into the solemn precincts of a religious temple, and in view of an affecting ceremony. It was the funeral of a nun. Behind a temporary partition, covered with black cloth, and marked with the effigies of death, a band of musicians were performing. At several of the altars priests were celebrating mass. Far above, through gilt gratings, appeared the sisterhood, their heads concealed in white folds, and their dark eyes bent through the apertures down upon the crowd. The marble floor was quite covered with kneeling figures, some in dark silk hoods and mantles, some with light shawls thrown slightly over their shoulders, and others in bonnets and cloaks. Behind the railing, near one of the altars, extended upon an open bier, and shrouded in black, was seen the corpse. A bunch of artificial flowers nodded over the head, a crucifix lay upon the breast, and fresh rose leaves were scattered over the shroud. Prayer after prayer was said, response after response uttered, and strain after strain of sacred music performed, till the body was borne away for interment, and the crowd dispersed.

When Isabel again joined the passing multitude it was with a mind solemnized by this unexpected scene. Vittorio had met an acquaintance in the church, and learned something of the nun's history.

"The poor girl," said he, "was not twenty years old on the day of her death. Her father was a wealthy tradesman,

and was very willing his daughter should take the vows, as the cost of an entertainment consequent upon her profession would not by any means equal the dowry which might reasonably be demanded in case of her marriage. The one cost a few hundreds: the other would have required thousands. She was therefore unhesitatingly consigned to the convent; and every one praised the munificence of her father when they beheld the fire-works and tasted the comfits provided at his expense, on the evening of her initiation. It was but seven months since, and now she is in her grave. To such intensity of selfishness will avarice and superstition sometimes bring a father; to such a melancholy end will mistaken piety lead a woman."

"Perhaps," said Isabel, "she was unhappy in her home. Perhaps she pined for a love not there vouchsafed her. Perhaps her young heart was wasted and worn with unavailing yearning; her best feelings checked by repeated disappointments; her warm affections chilled and blighted by neglect. Then it was but natural that she should turn from her home and seek such an asylum as she would a living death. I fancied I could read the lines of care as well as the ravages of disease upon her dead face."

"At all events," said Vittorio, "her course was the reverse of woman's lot as Heaven ordained it. No more certain is it that the flower was made to waft perfume than that woman's destiny is a ministry of love, a life of the affections. And she who voluntarily abandons the world, resigns the part assigned her by the Creator in the elevation of society, in refining, soothing, and making happy the human heart. She abandons the sick couch, whose weariness none else can assuage; she leaves the world's denizen, whose worldliness she could best have tempered; she quits the despondent, whom she might have cheered, and the young being whose delicate

impulses she is bost fitted to guide to virtue. Her duty, toilsome and self-sacrificing as it often is, is yet noble, and may be made angelic."

"Did you remark," inquired Isabel, "that people of every description were continually entering the church during the funeral? Idle young men, roughly-attired country-people, servants on their way from market, and children returning from school—all went in, breathed a prayer for the dead, and then hastened away on their several errands. I could not but think, with all my protestant prejudices, how salutary might sometimes be the effect of such ceremonies, encountered as they are in every state of mind and without warning."

No brighter hour had smiled upon their pilgrimage than when they reached the beautiful convent of the Benedictines. Passing through the magnificent entrance, and up the lofty staircase, they threaded the spacious corridors lined with the chambers of the fraternity, over the doors of which are full-length pictures of saints, and entered the superb garden of the monastery. Isabel wandered away from her companions, and paced the neatly-paved walks in silent delight. The deep and compact verdure of the cypress and myrtles, trimmed in the English style into fine artificial forms, refreshed the eye on every side. Roses flaunted their rich tints in the morning breeze; geraniums perfumed the air; and the yellow blossoms of the cassia-tree waved in rich contrast with its soft green leaves. Little white monuments, planted at intervals among the shrubs, basins of gold-fish, and neatly decorated terraces, combined to form a scene more like the sweet pictures of Eastern climes than a present reality. From the extremities of the walks, far round the massive enclosure, was visible, in crude and heavy piles, the lava of 1669, which stayed its fatal course only at the walls of the convent; its rough, black aspect relieved by the only vegetation which

seems congenial to so unkindly a soil—the thick and heavy branches of the prickly pear. Above towered Etna; around spread the olive hills. Never had Isabel beheld so delightful a garden. Seated upon one of the stone benches, or slowly walking to and fro in the cheerful alleys, she long lingered in the pleasant domain, while her uncle sought, in the museum of the monastery, entertainment more accordant with his taste. One of the old gardeners gathered her a bouquet, and another proffered a large cluster of blood-oranges plucked from an over-laden tree.

"And this is winter!" she exclaimed to the count. "It is surely no great merit to prefer so lovely a retreat to the rude highway of the world. In reading and communing with Nature, methinks life might pass here in quiet but enviable enjoyment, did I not know that local circumstances, however auspicious, could not satisfy the wants of the soul; that the fairest flowers of earth could not atone for neglected affections, nor the most delightful scenery brighten into beauty the desert of inaction."

"You speak most truly. Yet of the many monastic retreats which I have visited, no one seems half so inviting as this. There is a peculiar gloom in most of the convents on the continent, and a stern look about the fraternities. Here, on the contrary, you perceive a light and elegant air pervading the whole institution. The members of this convent are all nobly born Sicilians; no others are admitted Their library is excellent, and the situation and arrangement of their abode, as you see, most charming. But I have ever thought that solitary and barren prospects were more in unison with the spirit and aim of monachism. If it is for human good to be altogether absorbed in self-contemplation, then let not Nature and Art be invoked for their treasures. Let there be no symbol of beauty to call off the spirit from meditation, and

no hue of freshness to divert the ever-present thought of death. In this very clinging to the fair emblems of nature and humanity, which we see in the monks, I find an evidence of the fallacy of their theory,"

"What an irrational investment of an income of more than twenty thousand dollars!" said Frazier, who now joined them, "to feed and clothe a body of men, who have ignobly turned aside from the warfare of life. Were I king, or rather president of Sicily, I would, in my first message to congress, recommend that these sleek gentlemen should be punished for such a selfish appropriation of their patrimonies, by being obliged to transfer them to the public treasury for a charity fund."

"This picture," said Vittorio, as they entered the church, "represents St. Benedict receiving into the convent two princes, presented to him by their father. What a benignant expression glows in the old man's face! It is one of the finest pictures in Catania. Most of the other paintings are of secondary merit, and illustrate tales of the greatest superstition. Do you see those gaily-pictured Turks, and that flying figure drawing up the boy through the ceiling? That child, they say, was stolen from Catania by the infidels, and employed as a house-servant. One day, as he waited on them at dinner, he was observed to weep: 'Why do you grieve?' asked his master. 'Because,' said the child, 'to-day is a great festival in my country—the feast of St. Nicholas, and I was thinking of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters—how happy they are, and I in a foreign land and a slave!' Upon this the Turks abused him, and ridiculed his faith to such a degree, that St. Nicholas, feeling his dignity insulted, came through the wall and bore the child away by the hair of his head, before the eyes of the astonished infidels, as you see there depicted."

Before his auditors could comment upon this characteristic miracle, their attention was more pleasingly arrested. The thrilling notes of the splendid organ, one of the most celebrated in Europe, resounded through the church. Now breathing in soft, flute-like cadences, now ringing like a fine harp-string, and anon pealing forth the sound of a trumpet, it vibrated upon the ear, and entranced the heart of Isabel. The spirit of devotion awoke as she listened. She silently commended herself to heaven. The music ceased, as they stood within the richly-carved choir, and directly over the tablet behind the altar, beneath which the brotherhood are ouried. Impressed with the morning's experience, they turned to leave the spacious temple; Frazier lamenting its inutility. Vittorio regretting the distasteful lightness which mars its just effect, and Isabel rejoicing in its holy influences.

Syracuse.

Where the gray stones and unmolested grass,
Ages, but not oblivion, feebly brave,
While strangers only not regardless pass.

Childe Harold.

UPON the eastern coast of Sicily, at the distance of about twelve leagues from Catania, a broad neck of land stretches into the Mediterranean, which divides it by a very narrow channel from the shore, thus justifying its claim to the appellation of an island. This spot is covered with the compact buildings of an ancient town, and being surrounded by a double wall, and several lines of neat though low ramparts, presents to the approaching traveller a secure and interesting appearance. This is the site of one of the five cities, which together constituted the greatest metropolis of the island, and one of the most renowned of the ancient world. The adjacent plain contains numerous, though comparatively insignificant remains of the other sections of that illustrious region. Above and around them the tall grain and scarlet poppy wave in the sea-breeze, and countless fig-trees and low vines spread their broad leaves to the sun, through the whole extent of eighteen miles, once covered with magnificent dwellings, temples, and streets, and so often alive with the tumult

of warfare. A long, bright day had passed with our pilgrims as they traced the relics and revived the associations of Syracuse; and at its close they sat by the open window of the hotel, watching the sun's last glow as it fell over the tranquil waters of the great harbor—that beautiful and capacious bay upon which the fleets of Athenians, Carthaginians, and Romans had so often manœuvred, and which is now so admirably adapted to secure to the city at whose base it rolls the palm of commercial prosperity, yet is scarcely stirred, save by the oars of the fisherman, or the shallow keel of a Maltese *speronare*. The same stagnation which has calmed its clear blue surface, broods over the old city, and as the strangers gazed from their retired position, in the soothing light of eventide, no sound of human enterprise came up from the narrow streets, and they dwelt upon the past without being conscious of the present. It is one of the true delights of travelling, that when the day's fatigues are over, we can recall its experience, denuded of the weariness and untoward circumstances which may have marred its just impressiveness. We can revoke the interesting, and forget the disagreeable. We can combine into pleasant forms the light and shade, the relievo and the back-ground of the actual picture, and transform it to fairy-beauty in the magic glass of imagination. It is delightful to converse and reflect upon the associations of a memorable place when the locality is fresh in the memory—when we are standing on the hallowed ground, and breathing the inspiring air of a scene whose history is written among Time's earliest chronicles. Within the few preceding hours the little party had traced the boundaries of Acradina, Tyche, Neapolis, and Epipolæ. They were already within Ortygia. They had ascended the narrow mouth of the Anapus, and seen the ancient papyrus growing on its banks. Frazier had measured the two remaining columns of the temples of

Olympic Jove; Isabel had gathered from the walls of the celebrated prison of the Syracusan tyrant, a bunch of that delicate green weed, called by the Italians the hair of Venus, which hangs in such graceful festoons from the damp stones of ruins; and Vittorio had lifted up there his finely modulated voice, and called forth that marvellous echo, which so often carried to the ears of the listening tyrant the secret converse of his prisoners. They had traced the wheel-marks in the ancient streets, and stood amid broken tombs, whose very ashes the breath of ages has long since scattered. They had seen the moss-grown seats of the amphitheatre, and the crumbling arches of the aqueducts. They had leaned over the triangular parapet, and gazed down upon a clear, shallow stream, gurgling over stones, and filled with sun-burnt and bare-legged washerwomen, and tried to realize that it was the fountain of Arethusa. They had roamed over the field where the Roman army were so long encamped, and they had looked upon Mount Hybla. However disappointment might have cooled, as it ever will, the zeal of the imaginative, when they compare the actual with the ideal, there was enough in the mere outline of the day's observation to furnish subjects for musing and discussion.

"We have seen to-day," said Isabel, "the miserable relics of a once splendid city. Let us now speak of those whose names are identified with its history, and the remembrance of whom constitutes, after all, the true romance of this spot. Come, count, I call upon you for the classical retrospect. For notwithstanding my limited acquaintance with such subjects,

> "I love the high mysterious dreams,
> Born 'mid the olive woods by Grecian streams.'"

"The prettiest fable," replied he, "that I remember connected with Syracuse is that of Arethusa. You know she

was one of Diana's attendant nymphs, and returning from hunting, sat near the Alpheus, and bathed in its waters. The river-god was enamored of her, and pursued her till ready to sink with fatigue; she implored the aid of her mistress, who changed her into a fountain. The unfortunate lover immediately mingled his waters with hers. Diana opened a passage for her under the sea, and she rose near Syracuse. The Alpheus pursued, and appeared near Ortygia, so that it was said that whatever is thrown into the Alpheus at Elis, rises in the Arethusa at Syracuse. There are facts and real personages enough, however, in Syracusian history, to obviate the necessity of resorting to fable. And first, this place is indissolubly associated with the memory of the most famous tyrant of antiquity. It may be that his early banishment from his native city awakened a spirit of revenge and domination which was the germ of that tyrannical spirit he afterwards so licentiously indulged. When by successful policy he succeeded in obtaining a command in the war then waging against the Carthaginians, his first step was to intrigue against his colleagues, and flatter those below him, until, step by step, he succeeded in placing himself in a position where he could establish that military organization which is the legitimate enginery of despotism. Once having assumed power, and triumphed over the confidence of his countrymen, he established the quarries and prison, the remains of which we have visited, and confirmed the authority he had gained by policy through the blighting agency of fear. His fierce wars with the Carthaginians prove his courage and talent as a soldier. Yet we know that he feared death, and was the victim of suspicion to a degree the most weak and cowardly. He would allow no one but his daughter to shave him, had his bed surrounded by a trench and drawbridge, and did not permit even his son or brother to approach him unsearched.

Such is the awful penalty which men pay who violate the sacred rights of humanity. With all his power and wealth, he trembled at a shadow. He felt himself cut off from human confidence. Perhaps he feared the perpetuity of his title, and anticipated that future ages would know him as the tyrant of Syracuse. It may have been this feeling which awoke literary ambition in his breast, and led him, year after year, to send poems to the Olympic games, and rejoice so greatly when his tragedy gained the prize. Perhaps he hoped to vindicate his right to a better fame, and obliterate the memory of his thousand acts of capricious and cruel domination; or when he had tried to its full extent the value of mere physical authority, and proved its worthlessness, perhaps a higher ambition inspired him, and he longed to obtain a conquest over men's minds, and establish a heritage in the immortal kingdom of letters. If such thoughts sprang up in his guilty heart, they came too late, or were too feebly cherished. His ambition was a gross passion for dominion. Had it but aimed at a nobler object, how different would be his remembrance! Had its gratification been sought in the empire of the heart, and its end been human good instead of destruction, the traveller, instead of turning with pity from these sad trophies of cruelty, would associate the name of Dionysius with those of Gelon and Hiero—the beneficent rulers of this realm."

"There are brighter pictures," said Frazier, "in the annals of Syracuse. You remember the ruins of a tomb by the road-side, which we stopped to regard just before entering the town. It is said to be the sepulchre of Archimedes, who overcame a whole Roman army with his machines, and was the scientific genius of his age—the Franklin of his day. These are the characters I like to contemplate—men who have given a mighty impulse to science, discovered an avail-

able truth, promulgated an universal law, and thus practically proved themselves benefactors, compared with whom the greatest generals are not worthy of a thought, unless, indeed, they have exhibited the noble feeling which swelled the heart of Marcellus, when he wept on this very spot, at the thought of the suffering his army were about to inflict upon the Syracusans. In that age, such a feeling indicates that he, too, with the opportunity, might have been a philanthropist."

"And do you not remember," said Isabel, "that this is the scene of that beautiful illustration of human friendship which has been reverently handed down from remote antiquity? I first read it as a school-girl, with that genuine glow of the heart which the story of true magnanimity awakens. And shortly after the impression deepened, by seeing it performed on the stage, in what, to my then untutored judgment, seemed a style of superlative excellence. I can now scarcely believe I am amid the scenes of that noble story. Yet we can well imagine, that on the site of one of the villas we passed rose the mansion of Damon, whence he tore himself from the embraces of his wife to meet an undeserved and ignominious fate, and that in one of the dismal prisons—perhaps in the renowned Ear of Dionysius itself—his trusting friend confidently awaited the return of him whose hostage he had voluntarily become. Over yonder hill, perhaps, as the light of day was fading from the horizon, as at this hour, furiously rushed the steed which bore the father and the patriot to destruction, and over this calm bay, it may be, echoed the shout of the multitude, when, worn, haggard, and covered with dust, the noble victim of tyranny sprang from his horse at the foot of the scaffold, prepared to redeem his pledge. How anxiously did the eyes of the devoted friends watch, on that evening, the sun's decline! How did

their very breath quiver with his dying rays! What a world of emotions must have lived in the bosoms of both during those few hours of separation! What a thrill of gladness must each have known, when the tyrant himself, overcome by so rare an example of generosity, reprieved his victim!"

"And," said the count, "how little did he think that this one act of virtue would be the brightest spot in his heritage of fame, or that this glorious example of friendship in two citizens would outlive, in the admiration of men, the renown of all his military achievements and deep-laid policy! How little did he think that the future explorer of the ruins of Syracuse would turn with contempt from the thought of Dionysius, at the pinnacle of his power, and delightedly conjure up the picture of Damon upon the fatal platform, hearing him in fancy exclaim—

'I am here upon the scaffold; look at me:
I am standing on my throne, as proud a one
As yon illumined mountain, where the sun
Makes his last stand. Let him look on me too;
He never did behold a spectacle
More full of natural glory.
All Syracuse starts up upon her hills,
And lifts her hundred thousand hands.
She shouts—hark how she shouts!
Shout again! until the mountains echo you,
And the great sea joins in that mighty voice,
And old Enceladus, the son of earth,
Stirs in his mighty caverns.'"*

When, on the ensuing morning, they came upon the carriage-road, which extends only to the distance of a few miles from the walls, the quiet and solitude which prevailed so near a well-peopled city excited their observation. Reining their horses, they paused upon a little eminence, and gave a fare-

* Shiel's Damon and Pythias.

well gaze to Syracuse. Its capacious and finely protected bay, its thick gray bastions, and the trees which covered the surrounding country, were all defined in the morning light, with that *relievo* and vividness which every object in the landscape assumes in the peculiarly clear atmosphere of these regions.

"Few cities of antiquity," observed Frazier, "were more visited by illustrious men than this in the day of its glory. Cicero was long pro-consul here, and often alludes in his writings, with no ordinary interest, to his residence."

"Yes," said the count, "and a still more illustrious personage no less than thrice dwelt here. He, about whose infant mouth the bees of Hymettus clustered, and of whom Socrates dreamed that a cygnet, rising from an altar dedicated to Cupid, took refuge in his bosom, and then soared towards heaven, singing richly as he rose—presages of gifts and graces which after age amply fulfilled; he who taught that our highest emotions are but the beamings which memory imparts of an existence antecedent to our birth; he who had faith in the beautiful idea of an original, native affinity between souls in which consisted love; he who bade all men who would be true to themselves reverence the dreams of their youth; who unenlightened by revelation, felt that the soul was immortal, and with a capacity of thought beyond his age, and a love of the spiritual which the mass of beings around him could not appreciate, combined with a spirit of divine philosophy, the truthful feeling and winning simplicity of childhood. Yes, the favorite pupil of Plato was Dion—a Syracusan."

"There was too," said Isabel, "in a later age, another noble being, who, for three days, we are told, abode in Syracuse. One who cast aside the allurements which superior education and social advantages offered, and became the advocate of a

despised religion; one whose strength of mind and natural gifts of intellect were only equalled by the fervor of his feelings and the decision and dignity of his character; one who was enthusiastic without extravagance and zealous without passion; whose tones were so deep, calm, and earnest, that the potentate before whom he was arraigned exclaimed that he too was 'almost persuaded to be a Christian;' and then Paul, in what always seemed to me the most thrilling passage of his history, standing in the midst of an inimical assembly, and in the presence of regal authority, surrounded by guards, and on trial for his life, raised his calm countenance to the enthroned judge, and lifting those arms which had so often moved in the graceful gestures of scholastic eloquence, but on which fetters now rankled, in firm, impassioned, and clear accents, replied—'I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, *except these bonds.*' He walked where Plato had before trod, and taught to the Syracusans that new religion which is now the faith of Christendom."

"It is not a little curious," observed Frazier, "to note the results of that ceaseless spirit of change, which, in this age, if never before, is so wizard-like, that wonder itself is well nigh exhausted. As an instance, consider the fact, that the only event which for many years has given a temporary activity to the aspect and energies of Syracuse, was the wintering of the American fleet there a few years since. It is thought of and reverted to with a frequency and emphasis which indicates how much it was considered."

"Thus," said the count, "a few of the ships, of a people unknown to the ancient world, lying in that fine harbor, was a memorable circumstance in the annals of a city once containing twelve hundred thousand inhabitants—the object of

innumerable wars, the seat of arts, and the mart of wealth; now reduced to an inconsiderable and impoverished town, sought rather by the curious traveller than the votary of commerce, and its pavements more familiar with the slow tread of the mendicant than the rapid roll of luxurious equipages; and beneath this sky, where once rose the hum of martial preparation, the shout of triumph, the breath of song, the music of eloquence, and the joyous laugh of prosperity, may be heard the rustling of the bearded grain in its summer fulness, or the wild moan of the ocean wind, like the requiem breathed by Nature over the desolate remains of human grandeur."

Journey to Palermo.

He was fresh and vigorous with rest; he was animated with hope; he was incited by desire; he walked swiftly forward over the valleys, and saw the hills gradually rising before him. RASSELAS.

THROUGH fields of lava, in which the broad, dense leaves of the Indian fig flourished in rank luxuriance, the travellers, having once more left Catania, proceeded on their way, and were soon on the mountain-road. Nothing could exceed the abject wretchedness of the towns through which they passed, choked up with filth, and seemingly populated by beggars; and the heart of Isabel was alternately sickened by the insignia of misery, or chilled by the scenes of discomfort which met her view. To an American, who has been almost wholly unused to the palpable evidences of poverty, it is inconceivably trying to be forced to witness the haggard visage, the impotent limb, or the miserable covering of the beggar; to hear his supplicating tones ever sounding in the ear, to see his eager and woe-begone eye regarding him enviously through the window of the *café*, and his attenuated form following him like a shadow at every turn. How depressing, then, were such objects to the mind of Isabel, thronging as they did every village in the route. Aged men with

white beards and hollow temples, women prematurely palsied, children half naked, and already taught to attune their half-articulating voices to the language of importunity; and these beings not scattered here and there among the multitude, but crowding every square and murmuring beneath every hill-side; creatures whom civilization, if not humanity, has elsewhere consigned to hospitals; victims of disease, for whom, in almost every land, asylums are provided; the maimed, the blind, the paralyzed, the bowed down with age, and the stricken with famine, all urging every feeble nerve, and straining every lingering art, to prolong a wretched existence. Let no one fancy he has witnessed the lowest degree of human destiny until he has seen the mendicants of Sicily.

"What a relief," said Isabel, after leaving behind them one of these villages, "to be again in the open country. What though the mountains are wild and dreary? The sheep on yonder slope browse contentedly, and the sparrows chirp as they pick the scattered berries. There is nothing that speaks of human suffering, nothing to remind us of wants we can alleviate, and degradation apparently irretrievable."

"There," observed Frazier, pointing to a finely situated convent, "behold the cause of what you lament. It is a violation of the law of the social universe that any part of the human family should withdraw themselves from their allotted share in the toil and responsibility of life. The very money that supports the priests of Sicily in idleness would more than maintain her paupers; the hands of the idle priesthood, if judiciously employed, would double, in a short time, the productiveness of the island, and the day that witnessed the annihilation of priestcraft, would give the death-blow to beggary."

During their day's ride the most interesting objects pre-

sented were three old castles, built at the period of the Norman conquest, and affording very good specimens of the gloomy architecture of the middle ages. At one of their evening stopping-places, after they had finished the meal, composed chiefly of the viands with which their Catania friends had loaded the carriage, Frazier, whose principle it was to improve every opportunity, however unpromising, to acquire information, began, by the help of Vittorio, to enter into conversation with the women of the *locanda*. These two crones were old and remarkably ugly. As Isabel looked upon their distorted features and rude attire, she could recall no figures resembling them except one or two she had seen in America personate the witches in Macbeth. Her uncle's attempt to extract a grain or two of knowledge about the crops proved vain, as there was but one topic upon which they seemed inclined to enlarge, and this was the miracles of the patron saint of their village. Frazier had not the patience to listen to their stories; but Isabel, to whom every chapter in the volume of human experience was interesting, was pleased to avail herself of their kind interpreter, and hear the hostess's account of St. Vito.

"His father was a Turk, *excellenza*, and, angry at his conversation, threatened to boil him in oil if he did not retract. Though only thirteen years old, the boy maintained his faith, and when put into the cauldron received not the least injury. He became a saint at once, and is ever working miracles. A neighbor of mine had a sick mule. He carried him into the church; he knelt before St. Vito, and was immediately cured. A woman of the next village was bitten by a mad dog, and came to pray to the saint; but the people would not admit her, for fear of being infected by the madness: they, however, brought a piece of holy wafer from the saint's shrine to the gate, and gave it to her. No sooner

had she eaten it, than five very small dogs jumped from her mouth and fell dead in the street. O, signora, he is a beautiful saint; and if you will go to the church to-morrow, and make the sign of the cross before him, you will go to our country, our most happy country—paradise."

"But," said Isabel, amused with the old woman's ardor, "I think I have some guardian angel, for I came over the wide sea in safety."

"That," replied the crone, "was only the grace of God, for in your country you have no saint."

"Yes, we have."

"What do you call him?"

"It is a woman of noble countenance and majestic mien, called Santa Liberta."

"Ah!" exclaimed both the old women in rapture, grinning horribly and dancing with delight; "then *you* are a Christian."

"I hope so," quietly replied Isabel, smiling at their joy.

"Then we'll bring you a Saint Vito to kiss, and you can have a crucifix and some holy water in your room."

"There's time enough to-morrow," replied she, beginning to be alarmed at the penances they might inflict. "It is time to retire."

"Good night," said the count; "I commend you to the care of your true patron, St. Isabel."

And in thus canonizing her name, he had a deeper meaning than is often contained in the language of compliment. He referred to that self-dependence, that trust in individual mind and energy, that confidence in the native and personal power of the soul, characteristic of northern nations, and than which there is no greater mystery of character to a southern European.

When the traveller's route lies through a region of no

peculiar interest or beauty, the prevalence of mountains, while it augments the toil, greatly lessens the *ennui* of his journey. The wild, sweeping curves of the hills bring him continually in view of new prospects. Now he ascends a steep elevation, and thence beholds, far and wide, others of various forms and altitude rising above him; now an abrupt and curiously-shaped cliff meets his eye, and, anon, a fine green valley suddenly breaks upon his sight. Here is a natural amphitheatre, there a rocky precipice; and this changing scenery is ever arrayed in the light and shade, the mists and clearness, which vary the aspect of the mountains. Our little party realized this, perhaps unconsciously, as they advanced on their course. The motion of a carriage amid the hills induces a meditative mood which is unfavorable to conversation; and as the coach wound up and down the dreary ranges, beneath a gloomy sky, they yielded to this influence, and were quite lost in their individual reflections. Sometimes for miles the solitude was uninterrupted save by the little carts of the country passing with blocks of sulphur from the mines, or the picturesque appearance of a shepherd lying on some broad hill-side, with his flock scattered before and his dog crouched beside him.

"May I know your thoughts, Isabel?" said Frazier, after one of their reveries had continued for an unwonted space.

"I was thinking," she replied, "how melancholy must be companionless travel here, at such a season, for one inclined to sad fancies. Where nature looks so lonely and man so cheerless, the solitary traveller must have a gay spirit to go singing on his way."

"And I was thinking," said her uncle, "of the scene at the little church at the last village where we stopped. I strolled in there while the horses were feeding. The damp floor was covered with a wretched-looking set of kneeling

women, and behind the altar three or four fat and well-clad priests were carelessly chanting. I was thinking how powerful is superstition, since a carved railing and a few words of Latin can thus cheat human beings into the surrender of their highest rights."

"And I was thinking," said Vittorio, pointing to several large crows that were cleaving the air above them, "how times change, but principles live. Centuries ago, perhaps on this very spot, the flight of these birds was watched as the intimation of destiny. Now they soar unregarded, save by the jealous husbandman, while the same feeling of our nature which then caused them to be regarded as ominous, is still abused by the professors of a purer faith for like purposes of selfish aggrandizement."

Nearly all the towns on the way appeared crowning some lofty height, and presenting very interesting objects viewed from a distance. One of the best of these the count pointed out to Isabel, at an early stage of their journey, as the birthplace of Diodorus Siculus, the historian; and on a mild afternoon he called her attention to the fields they were crossing.

"These plains," said he, "constitute the country, which, according to the ancient writers, was under the peculiar care of Ceres. Here Agriculture was born; and even now you see these fields are covered with newly-sprouted grain. You remember the classic legend. Proserpine, it seems, like many maidens, had a strange fancy for solitary rambling, and while culling a nosegay here was surprised by Pluto, who came up through a lake, and carried off to the infernal dominions the lovely daughter of Ceres. Her poor mother found her girdle on a fountain, and, disconsolate, sought her everywhere. Arethusa at length informed her of the abiding place of Proserpine. She appealed to Jupiter for her release, and the father of the gods promised her return provided she had not

eaten. But unhappily the unfortunate damsel had devoured seven seeds of a pomegranate in the Elysian fields. As usual in the case of clandestine affairs, a compromise was effected. She was to remain one half of the year with Pluto, and the other with her mother. She presided over death, and it was fabled that no one could die if she or her ministers did not sever a lock of hair from the head of the expiring mortal. Glance over this landscape, for it is

> 'That fair field
> Of Enna, where Proserpine, gathering flowers
> Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Lis
> Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain
> To seek her through the world.'*

In summer the untilled land around us is enamelled with floral beauty. Castro Giovanni, which rises so nobly on the hill to the left, was the ancient Enna, and the favorite abode of Ceres. It is said to stand in the very centre of the island."

Many an hour of their weary ride was beguiled by such allusions to ancient times which the various places on the road suggested. Everywhere the tokens of Roger's dominion were visible. The lofty sites of the towns were strikingly indicative of the period of their foundation—an era when the secure fortification of cities was indispensably necessary, especially in an island continually exposed to the invasion of the Corsairs. It was not difficult at times to imagine that, in the marked features of the people, starting, as it were, from the shaggy hoods of their brown cloaks, was discernible something of the acuteness and fire of their Greek progenitors. Some portions of the highway, composed of argillaceous earth, were passed with difficulty, from the inundation of recent rains; and one evening, when near the end of their journey, it was found necessary to stop for the night at a

* Paradise Regained.

locanda in the *campagna*. On entering the house, Isabel, fatigued as she was, paused to observe a pictorial effect worthy of the pencil of Murillo. Leaning against the doorway of the inner room stood a girl, of apparently fifteen, shading the lamp with her hand in order to obtain a better view of the strangers. Its rays were thus cast up upon a face more bright and expressive than any which she had seen in Sicily. But what chiefly rivetted her gaze were the eyes of the damsel—so black, clear, and expressive, as almost to fascinate while they surprised the beholder.

"Did you remark the face of that young girl?" inquired Isabel of her uncle when they were seated at supper.

"Yes," he replied, "and could not but think what a treasure to a city belle would be her magnificent eyes and snowy teeth."

"By nature," observed the count, "that maiden is endowed with an intelligent mind; you can read it in those flashing orbs. By nature she is gifted with an amiable disposition; you can perceive it in her good-humored smile. What an ornament to society might not education make her! And yet, such is the seeming waywardness of fate, this being, thus capable of exerting an extensive and happy influence, will live and die more like a vegetable than a human creature, her powers cramped by ignorance and overshadowed by superstition. The exalted distinction of your country is, that there is a fair field for the gifted; whether peasants or citizens, they can freely exert their prerogatives, for the light of knowledge and the atmosphere of freedom is around them all. This poor girl has no more opportunity to do justice to herself, than the pearl in the ocean depths to display its richness, or the diamond in its rocky bed to exhibit its brilliancy."

"Yet it is from such truths," replied Isabel, "that many delight to draw the inference of a future and less-bounded

being. The endowments of a human soul, though latent throughout life, become not in consequence extinct. The pearl or the diamond may repose for ages in obscurity, or be dissolved into their pristine elements, but spiritual attributes, if once created, live on forever, and in some epoch of their existence must, I would fain believe, shine forth in the glory ordained them."

On the following day they crossed the narrow but swollen river which anciently formed the boundary between the Greeks and Carthaginians; on the next passed the celebrated battle-ground of Rugiero, and soon after came in sight of the sea. Isabel's heart expanded at the view of that element which connected her with her country. It was dearly familiar to her eye. The carriage turned an angle of the road, and directly before them rose the abrupt promontory of Monte Pelegrino, the telegraph rising distinctly from its summit, while on the plain below appeared the city of Palermo, environed by olive-groves on the one side, and the Mediterranean on the other.

Whether the metropolis which greets the eye of the traveller be an inland city, or reared on the borders of the deep, let him mark well its distant aspect. Whether Genoa rise like an amphitheatre of palaces and orange groves to his sea-worn eye, or Florence repose amid its olive-clad hills beneath his entranced gaze; whether it be the swelling dome of St. Peter's, or the oriental cupola of St. Mark's, which crowns the prospect, let him mark well its distant aspect; let him patiently trace every line of the landscape; let him watch the sunlight and shade as they alternately play upon the edifices and the verdure, the heavy wall and the light-springing tower; let him earnestly ponder the scene, even as he dwelt upon the last-fading landscape of his native land; let him hoard up the associations of the novel spectacle, and feel,

from a distant position, the inspiration of the renowned locality—for when he has once plunged into the narrow thoroughfares, and mingled with the motley crowds within the circle of the fairy scene, how much of the romance it awakens will be rudely dispelled! how many of its bright suggestions will be coldly overshadowed! But Isabel gazed upon Palermo not only with the curiosity of a traveller and the interest of an enthusiast; she looked long and earnestly upon its dense buildings and numerous domes, as if she would ask the fair capital if within its wide walls was the father she sought.

The Capital.

To see the wonders of the world abroad.
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

THE Cassaro of Palermo presents the usual scene of mingled pomp and poverty observable in the main street of every European city. To one whose eye has been familiar with the red bricks and slated roofs, the green blinds and cheerful portals of the American dwellings, such thoroughfares are rife with novelty. He has been accustomed to the click of the mason's trowel, and the hasty greetings of hurrying pedestrians, eager to reach the scene of traffic or the sanctuary of home. All around him has worn an aspect of freshness; everything has been symbolical of newness and growth. How different the view now presented! The high stone walls of the edifices throw a gloomy shade over the broad flags. There is the gay uniform of the soldier and the dark robe of the priest. At his side the mendicant urges his petition. Near yonder shrine a kneeling peasant prays. In the centre of the street a richly-dressed cavalier displays his exquisite horsemanship. Against the adjacent palace wall a poorly-clad old man urges his donkey, whose slender proportions are almost hidden beneath a towering load of vegetables.

In the *café* opposite, groups are composedly discussing the merits of the new *prima donna;* and near the door a knot of porters are vociferously disputing about the division of a penny. This dazzling equipage is the carriage of the archbishop; that stripling, with sheepskin hose, is driving his goats into a yard to milk them, for the table of some English resident who can afford the luxury. These half-naked boys are gambling away, on the sunny curb-stone, the few grains which some passer-by has thrown them in charity: the other cluster of untidy women are ridding each other's heads of vermin—an incessant and conspicuous employment. From the overhanging balconies flaunts the wet linen hung out to dry, and the venders, with baskets of fish, pulse, and herbs, dexterously wend their way through the vehicles and loungers, and announce their commodities above the hum and shouts of the crowd. A file of soldiers, awkwardly shrouded in loose gray coats, sternly conduct a band of miserable prisoners chained together: and a Capuchin friar, with bare head, long beard, and enormous sack, morosely glides by, in search of alms for the expectant poor.

Through this heterogeneous assemblage, as Frazier's carriage was one day passing, Vittorio asked them to observe a building of unusual extent.

"This is one of the two remaining establishments," said he, "formerly possessed in Palermo by that once wealthy and powerful community—the Jesuits. The broad airy court of the college is surrounded by spacious corridors, conducting to chambers where instruction is gratuitously given in the various branches of literature and science. This society is one of the few truly useful fraternities of priests existing in Sicily. They are the ministers of education, and engage in their mission with a zeal and an interest worthy of the cause."

"It is remarkable," said Frazier, "how that intriguing

association, whose influence was once so widely felt, has dwindled into insignificance. Who would imagine, that in those quiet-looking young men promenading in the yard, we see members of that sect whom we read of as the secret devotees of ambition in the courts of princes."

"An incident occurred at their institution not long since," said Vittorio, "which would indicate that they are still not deficient in cunning. One of their number, who acted as treasurer, embezzled a sum of money, and gave it as a dowry to his sister on her marriage. As he had entered the society quite poor, when the rumor of this generous donation reached the ears of the brethren, they held a council, and having no doubt of the fraud, ordered him into their presence, with the determination to banish him from the college. Upon being asked if he had presented his sister with the specified sum, he replied affirmatively, and when questioned as to the source of this sudden wealth, answered, quite unabashed, that he had taken it from the common fund. 'For,' he added, 'is not our creed that we are all bound together by the tie of Christian fellowship, and are obligated, in weal and woe, to afford mutual aid? I took the gold, and appropriated it as a dowry for *our* sister in the faith, in accordance with those principles of charity and love which we profess.' The sincerity of the delinquent's manner, with the force of his arguments, sealed the lips of the council, and he was acquitted."

At no great distance are Quartro Cantoni, where the two principal streets of the metropolis intersect each other at right angles, and whence one can gaze through the long and crowded vistas to the four gates. Upon the huge dark corners of the adjacent palaces are hung the theatre advertisements, and below several fountains fall into old marble basins. No one can pause at this spot without feeling that he is in the very centre of a populous city. Beyond, and separated from the

street by a spacious square, is the cathedral. Its interior is wanting in effect from the lightness which distinguishes and deforms the churches of the island. After regarding the cluster of sarcophagi which contains the ashes of the Sicilian sovereigns, the travellers passed on, and entered a chaste little chapel on the right of the main altar.

"These basso-relievos," said the count, "are the work of Gaggini. The finest represents the angel of the Lord driving away War, Famine, and Pestilence—the enemies of mankind —from Palermo, at the intercession of St. Rosalia, whom you see kneeling at the feet of Jesus, and smiling at the success of her petition. That circular portrait over the altar is a representation of the fair saint, and beneath are preserved, in a box of silver, studded with jewels, her mortal remains. The tradition is, that ages ago, Rosalia, the daughter of a wealthy and noble house, turned aside from the allurements of pleasure and youth, and retired to the bleak summit of Mount Pelegrino, to give her life to prayer. Centuries of change rolled away, and the story of the lovely anchorite was lost in obscurity; when the plague visited Palermo. At the very height of its ravages, a poor man of the city dreamed that an angel appeared to him in the form of St. Rosalia, directing him to tell the archbishop to seek on the mountain, beneath her ancient retreat, for her bones, and bear them in solemn procession through the streets, when he was assured the pestilence would instantly cease. This was done amid much pomp and solemnity, and the promised miracle wrought. The senate immediately declared St. Rosalia the protectress of Palermo, and ever since she has been worshipped as their patron saint. For five days in July a feast is held in celebration of this event, exceeding in magnificence every similar festival. Fireworks, social gayety, triumphal processions, illuminations, and music, are the uninterrupted announcements

of these greatest of Palermitan holidays; and the flower-decked car of the saint, drawn by fifty oxen covered with garlands, moves gayly along the thronged Toledo."

At a short distance from the cathedral is the royal palace, where an ancient chapel, and one of the finest observatories in Europe, interested the strangers. Returning, Vittorio bade them note the building now devoted to the tribunals in the Piazza Marina. It is a Saracenic structure, formerly the seat of the inquisition, and bears interesting evidences of the date of its erection. The best monument, however, of this period of Sicilian history, an epoch involved in great obscurity, is a large fabric at Olivuza, near the city, called the ziza, and supposed to have been an emir's residence.

The contrasts, however, between the Old and New World are not confined to the results of Art. Around the congregated dwellings of both hemispheres is spread the varied scenery of Nature; and the sojourner, if he be not an inveterate worldling, has been wont to repair thither for solace and refreshment. Yet how different are the emblems of her benignant presence from those to which he has been accustomed! At home, he gazed upon the flowing stream, whose greatest charm is its bright hue and crystal clearness; in this distant region he roams beside a turbid river, only attractive from the events of which it has been the scene, or the classic legend which arrays it in fictitious glory. At home, his eye rested upon cottages of wood, with orchards beside them, vegetable gardens in the rear, and hard-by the long well-pole poised in the air; now he beholds the peasant's cottage of stone, and the olive, aloe, Indian fig, or grape-vine, constitute the verdure around it. There the little belfry of the village school rose conspicuous; here the open shrine of some local saint. There the forest outspread in wild majesty; here the *campagna* stretches in peaceful undulations. There the

chirp of the cricket announced the close of day; here the tinkling bell of the returning mules, and Avé Maria stealing on the breeze usher in the evening. There many an uninvaded haunt repays the wanderer with romantic dreams; here the spell of some ruined temple entrances his fancy with hours of retrospective musing. Still Nature's votary feels that the same gentle companionship is with him, and recognizes the invisible spirit of the universe endeared by communion in another land; for there is a well-known voice with which she greets her children in every clime.

One of the most pleasing characteristics of the Sicilian capital is the beauty of its environs. It is a curious fact, that one of the most conspicuous of the mountains which environ the city is strikingly similar to Vesuvius; while Mount Pelegrino, from one point of view, presents the same form and general aspect as the rock of Gibraltar. Many happy hours, when the state of elements was auspicious, were passed by Frazier, his niece, and their friend, in rides and walks amid the quiet and fertile country about Palermo. Sometimes on horseback they ascended to Monreale, a picturesque town about four miles from the city, where the Norman kings are buried. The old church here situated was built by William I., and is lined with mosaics, which serve admirably to awaken the associations of that primitive era after the establishment of Christianity, when the zeal of her advocates was expended upon gorgeous temples and elaborate ornaments. Still higher, a rich convent of Benedictines affords another fine point of view. When the visitor had satisfied his curiosity in noting the marble and alabaster, the literary rareties and antique relics which enrich this establishment, tenanted, like the one at Catania, exclusively by noblemen; when his gaze is weary with regarding the paintings of Monrealese—the best of Sicilian artists—which decorate its walls; he can survey the

broad and verdant plain, the distant city, and its sea-bright boundary, spread out in rich contrast below. A still more favorite observatory, nearer the metropolis, is the site of an old asylum of the followers of St. Francis—the monastery of Maria di Gesù, on the side of the opposite mountain. From the path constructed along the cliff, one can look forth upon this picture, pausing at will to mark its varying features as he ascends the umbrageous hill-side. Indeed the public and private edifices which command views of this unrivalled scene, are numerous enough to satisfy the taste of the most fastidious admirer of the picturesque; and no more delightful excursion can be imagined than the circuit of the entire plain on a fine day. It is adorned by the villas of many noble families, which are surrounded with enclosures well stocked with every description of tree, shrub, and flower. The beautiful effect of these gardens is enhanced by statues, whose white hue is relieved by the evergreen around their pedestals, and many ingenious devices to amuse and surprise the visitor. One of these domains, erected by the late king, is arranged in the Chinese style.

How peace-inspiring seemed that valley to the eye of Isabel, reposing with its grain fields and olive orchards, many of them planted by the Saracens, its orange clusters and cypresses, its villas and almond-trees, with the mountains encircling, like majestic sentinels, its fertile precincts, the domes and roofs of Palermo rising time-hallowed from amid its green beauty, and beyond all, the wide and sparkling sea! In early spring, all there is perfume and song, and not even when the snow lies in heavy masses upon the hill-tops, does it cease to cheer the sight with its evergreen garniture.

"Let us pause," said Vittorio, one day, when they had arrived at a solitary and elevated part of the rocky environment. They stood still and looked forth upon the vale.

"The first impression, I think," continued he, "is that of abundance. We do not merely see, we feel, as it were, the luxuriance of the earth. A new sense of nature's productiveness is borne to the mind, as it contemplates such verdure and plenty. But while we gaze, another and higher feeling possesses us. The tranquillity of the landscape soothes every common passion into quietness, and lures all care-born restlessness to sleep. Something of the calm happiness of primeval existence seems to breathe from so Eden-like a prospect; and from the lulled waters of the spirit, as the ancients fabled of the birth of beauty, emerges the brightest creation of thought, the fairest offspring of emotion;—a sentiment of confidence in our origin and destiny, a speechless gratitude, an undefined hope, a self-content, alike inexplicable and blessed. Is it that we imbibe the language of the universe, or are exhilarated by her music? Is it that we momentarily lose the weight of life's burden, or forget in so cheering a presence, that the earth is not a garden?"

"It is, perhaps," replied Isabel, "that we realize anew the goodness of the Creator, and thus renew our faith in his paternity. The world often seconds the chill and dark creed of the skeptic, while Nature ever encourages the hopes of the heart. We see the beauty lavished upon the physical universe, and comes there not thence an assurance that if the domain of matter is thus cared for and enriched, the quenchless, living spirit is destined to renewal, progression, and happiness?"

From the upper end of the Marina, if the equestrian inclines to the right, he comes out upon a broad, level space, called the plain of Erasmus. A group of bare-legged fishermen, with their nets spread out for repair upon the greensward, two or three cord-weavers, or a knot of the country guards lounging in the noon-tide sun, appeared scattered over

this field; after crossing which, one passes a pretty little church, where the victims of the law are buried, and soon arrives at the old Saracenic bridge that spans the Oreto. This river, now shrunk to the dimensions of a mere brook, constituted the scene of a noted galley combat which is said to have occurred near Monreale. Its wide bed and high embankments are still easily traced. The aspect of this vicinity is rendered picturesque by masses of broken wall, half-covered with vegetation, and several tall, square water pillars wreathed with thick hanging weeds.

It was a mild and autumn-like day, and already long past noon, when the travellers, returning from a sequestered road, along which their horses had been slowly pacing for a considerable time, found themselves again in this somewhat familiar spot. There was a freshness as well as solemnity in the appearance of a cypress grove which rose before them; and they readily turned into the almost deserted way, left their steeds at the gate, and entered the Campo Santo. As they did so, two men, bearing a black sedan-chair—the bier of the lower orders—appeared, proceeding slowly up the grassy pathway. No other moving object disturbed the profound repose of the burial-place, save the swaying tops of the gloomy trees, and the nodding of some spire of herbage which had shot up higher than its fellows. Rows of square flag-stones intersected the ground at equal distances, denoting the huge pits into which the naked corpses are promiscuously thrown, with as little ceremony, and less feeling, perhaps, than the fish-packers of the neighboring coast manifest in arranging their prey. A low, rude cross, placed near one of the reservoirs, indicated that it was unsealed for the day's interments, if so rude a disposition of the dead merits the name. The strangers involuntarily paused. They had been inhaling the balmy and living breath of nature; the hum of a populous

city had scarcely died away upon their ears; their conversation had been lively and hopeful, for few can resist the exhilarating influence of a ride on horseback beneath a lovely sky, and in sight of evergreen foliage and blue-waving hills; and now they were in the silent precincts of a grave-yard, surrounded by the emblems of death. An old and miserably clad friar emerged from the building which bounds the opposite side of the cemetery, and approaching the group, offered to display the wonders of the establishment, with as much complacency as the *cicerone* of a gallery of art or continental museum would have manifested. To one who travels not so much to acquire miscellaneous information as to realize truth; not with a view to court novelty, but to awaken thought; not merely to be amused, but enjoy associations and feast imagination; to one, in a word, who seeks in foreign scenes congenial mental excitement, there is nothing more vexatious than the officiousness, intrusion, and affected jargon of those who act as guides and showmen about the interesting localities of Europe. Isabel shuddered as she beheld this veteran dweller among the dead, and marked the indifference to scenes of mortality which familiarity had induced. Frazier followed the monk, while Isabel and the count walked to and fro in an area of the sunny enclosure.

"This," said he, "is the burial-place of the poorer classes. Their ideas of doing honor to the dead are quite peculiar. Those who have the means engage the old friar and his assistants to preserve the embalmed bodies or skeletons of their friends, which are placed in hideous array, some of them dressed out in the gayest dresses, in the lower chambers of that edifice. The poor relatives of the deceased yearly renew the vesture and ornaments of the withered bodies, deeming this a testimony of their remembrance. What a dismal manner of manifesting the sentiment! Yet how affecting is

this clinging to the mere casket of life! How does it proclaim the earnestness with which the most unenlightened repel the thought of annihilation! But does not such attachment to the mortal remains evince how dimly the idea of immortality has dawned upon the minds of these ignorant people? Is it not another proof of the unspiritual tendency of their religion, as popularly believed? Intelligent men often ridicule what they call the visionary tenets of some of the more refined sects—but what can obviate the appalling impression that death and decay awaken, but a faith, not merely general, but elaborately constructed from our inmost experience, and vivified by revelation—a faith that recognizes an existence perfectly independent of physical life—a faith that *habitually* regards the tides of thought and love as already merged in the ocean of eternity, though now connected by a narrow and ever evaporating stream with the river of Time?"

"Still," said Isabel, "it is not every one who can best keep alive the glorious truth of an after-existence, by thus maintaining a sense of the distinctness of our two lives. With many they are too much interwoven; and with all the inner and the outer world, more or less commingle. Therefore it is, I think, that the cemetery should be hallowed by nature, and rendered eloquent by art. It seems to me that many of the customs of Europe, in regard to the dead, evidence anything but Christian civilization, and I turn with pleasure and gratitude from this horrid receptacle, to the picture my memory affords of the beautiful cemetery at New Haven, and the quiet and soothing precinct of Mount Auburn, where naught meets the eye but chaste marble memorials, the refreshing hue of the greenwood, and the flowers which enamel the graves."

"That is happy," said the count. "Such scenes should

not remind us of the earthly remains, but of the enfranchised spirit. Who would linger over the clay, when the friend it impersonated has vanished? An accustomed walk or a favorite book is more emblematical of the departed than his senseless frame; for the first ministered to his deathless self —with the last his connection has utterly ceased. To preserve and cherish so wretched a memorial, so earth-born and material a symbol, is as soulless as for the prisoner to fix his eye upon the dim walls of his dungeon, when a star beams radiantly through his cold grate, as if to call his gaze heavenward"

The Novitiate.

> But when it happens that of two sure evils
> One must be taken, where the heart not wholly
> Brings itself back from out the strife of duties,
> Then 'tis a blessing to have no election. WALLENSTEIN.

THE prevalence of monastic institutions is one of the most striking features of Sicily. Originated during the dominion of the Spaniards, like ill weeds they have taken deep root, and quite overrun the verdant island. In the country they occupy the most desirable sites, and in almost every street of the capital the high gratings of the nunneries appear protruding from their lofty walls. Thousands of the fairest daughters of the land are immured within these spacious asylums. Among such a multitude, some doubtless are devoted to that religious meditation which is the professed object of their seclusion; but the majority manifest as lively an interest in the world they have renounced as the busiest of its denizens. By means of their friends they are constantly informed of the events of the day, and manage to maintain a surprising acquaintance with the intrigues and doings of the metropolis. Indeed, a half-hour's chat with one of these fair recluses, is said to subserve the purposes of the gossip better than a gazette, of which there is quite a dearth. And in re-

turn for the sweet scandal the wicked world provides them, they are constantly distributing presents of comfits. By this demi-intercourse with their fellow-beings, and in attending to their share of the duty and ceremonial of the house, their hours glide by, and every year adds to their number. Isabel availed herself of an occasion which offered to witness the rite by which a novitiate was entered upon. The daughter of a merchant with whom Frazier was acquainted being about to perform these vows, he invited the strangers to attend the function.

It was the last day of the month. As the carriage rolled over the flat pavements through the crowded Toledo, lights gleaming from the *cafés* and shops, fell on groups of mechanics toiling by the wide thresholds, shelves of confectionery thrust forth to tempt the passengers, and now and then revealed a set of grotesquely clad buffoons—the light-hearted celebrators of the carnival, surrounded by a laughing mob. Now they passed an elegant equipage, with its complement of dashing footmen; and now the white robes of a Dominican friar fluttered by. One moment Isabel admired the dexterity of the coachmen as they drove furiously on, the wheels of their vehicles almost in contact; another gazed upon a fountain, murmuring amid its old sculptured ornaments and weed-grown inscriptions; and the next instant they turned into another street—dark and silent but for the clear echo of their horses' feet as they struck the flag-stones. Riding rapidly through the streets of an European city produces in the stranger's mind a novel excitement. One thought predominated in the mind of Isabel. She remembered that the insignia of life, of active and cheerful existence, whose inspiration she then felt, was about to be abandoned by her whose vows she was soon to hear. She endeavored to imagine her own feelings if such were her lot.

"It is not love of what is called the world"—(thus she mused)—"that would make such an hour dismal to me. I am not indissolubly wedded to the pursuit of pleasure. Long since I have realized the vanity of the petty triumphs sought in artificial society. I should mourn to quit life because it is the arena of experience, the sphere of duty, the lot of my race. I would not, if I could, escape the common destiny of a human being. I would share in the toil, anxiety, and suffering—I would take part in the higher enjoyments—I would have my inheritance in the kingdom of thought and affection, because it is human. A mightier will than mine placed me here; a holier agency than that of accident creates the circumstances of life. Let the afflictions, the temptations, the cares of being be endured; let me be free to commune with nature and society; let me courageously fulfil my destiny; and for the *truth* that shall guide and protect me, let me trust to the paternity of God."

The strain of her meditations was abruptly broken by their arrival at the convent. They entered the *parlatorio*, or conversation-room. It was already half filled with company, who, to judge by their gay dresses, and the occasional laughter and lively discourse with which they were beguiling the time, one would suppose had assembled for some purpose of glad festivity. At the head of the room, surrounded by the ladies of her family, and the companions of her youth, sat the maiden on whose account they had assembled. She was tall, and of that form which, at a glance, we are apt to denominate genteel. A dress of white satin, richly decorated with lace, showed to the best advantage her fine, intelligent face, dark eyes shaded with long black lashes, and head of hair, amid the ebon masses of which clusters of diamonds glittered beneath a knot of snow-white ostrich feathers that nodded above, and gave to the *tout ensemble* a queen-like

aspect. This impression was enhanced by the air and manner of the lady. Occasionally turning to a party of nuns who clustered about the open door which formed the limits of their asylum, she replied to their words of encouragement with an affable dignity. Sometimes addressing her mother, who sat beside her, she seemed to perform the same kind office of consolation to her. At the entrance of one of the friends whose society had enlivened, with girlish playfulness, many an hour of her young life, she rose, and gracefully, often even joyously, saluted her, as if she were receiving the gratulations of a bride. Sometimes she caressed her little brother, a pretty boy of five or six, apparently delighted at the brilliant costume of his lovely sister: at others, although but momentarily, she would sit silently looking around her, as if called for the first time to play the part of an entertainer, and as yet unskilled in disguising the weariness which too often renders that character one of the most onerous in the whole range of social requisitions. A blithe tone, pleasant, talkative mood, and happy smile, distinguished her from the other young ladies upon whose faces seriousness would oftener rest, and glances of thoughtful regret not unfrequently be cast towards their smiling friend. Isabel watched the scene, and recalled the beautiful simile which compares an unconscious sufferer to the sacrificial victim that wears proudly and playfully nibbles the flowery garlands, that to all else are emblems of its approaching fate. Ices and sweetmeats were distributed. The buzz of conversation rose and fell. There were pleasant jests and calm discussions among the party, and as little apparent commiseration as the ancient assemblies at the gladiatorial combats were wont to show for the beings whose death was to be barbarously consummated for their amusement. Isabel was separated from her friends, and found herself near some acquaintances with whom she

had little sympathy; and after the ordinary greetings were interchanged, was at liberty to entertain herself with her own thoughts. These were soon entirely engrossed in attempting to conjecture the motives and present feelings of the novitiate. She was speeeily convinced that there was a deep sentiment veiled by the blitheness of her manner; an eye and a contour so speakingly intelligent, she was convinced, appertained to a mind that could pierce the shadows of gross superstition, and a heart with a capacity of feeling which had, or would ere long, occasion its possessor intense suffering. Thus her sympathy was earnestly excited; nor could she relieve the longing she felt to interfere with the proposed vows, till she was assured that after a year's trial the novice would be at liberty to leave the convent. This consideration, however, would not have greatly solaced Isabel had she been aware of the means assiduously used to rivet the chain of motives which first allure the young to make trial of conventual life. From the *parlatorio* the company adjourned to the church, which was brilliantly lighted for the ceremony. Isabel, as a stranger, was provided with a place near the grate, about which a dense crowd soon collected. The priest at the main altar commenced a mass. An orchestra, stationed in a high gallery, began a sacred strain, and turning to the chapel she saw a procession of the sisterhood approaching, bearing lighted tapers, and in the midst walked the novice. They encircled a little platform, placed just within the lattice, on which sat the abbess and her assistants, and at the feet of the former kneeled the devoted maiden. She was still apparelled in her ball-room attire, but a crown of flowers was substituted for the jewels and plumes, and in her right hand she bore a wand of palm. At Isabel's side, in a high chair, covered with crimson velvet, sat the officiating priest. The aged mother of the institution threw back her silken cowl,

drew forth and assumed her tortoise-shell spectacles, and opened the ritual. Isabel noted the picture as the soft radiance of the numerous lights fell on the upturned face of the novice and the time-withered lineaments of the abbess. In the one she read youth and innocence—the harmony of a confiding and undimmed nature; in the other, the traces of experience, the expression of command, the quiet and fixed features of that epoch in life when Hope's visions have melted away, and the listless content of subdued feeling, like the calm surface of a summer sea, reflects what is around, but stirs not in the exhausted breeze of fresh emotion. She observed the bright eye of the maiden glance kindly at the younger nuns; and, as the monotonous recitative of the priest succeeded that of the women, on her fresh lips stole such a smile, as she caught the eye of the old lady, as would have provoked a responsive look from one more sensible to such an appeal or less disciplined in self-control. A lock of the dark hair was severed, and the silken curtain drawn. In a few moments it was again thrown back, and, arrayed in the black robe and white cape of a nun, appeared the inducted novice. The dress was singularly becoming—more so than that it had displaced. Again she kneeled, and the preacher commenced his exhortation. Fervently did he congratulate the fair girl on her choice. Eloquently did he picture the evils she had escaped and the blessings she had secured. There was sincerity in his tones; but Isabel remembered the silver sweetness of voice which the novice's responses had betrayed, and the spell of the speaker's was lost. She turned to the mother, and saw the tears roll down upon the lace 'kerchief which covered the breast whereon this lovely creature had so often reposed. The little brother of the novitiate, whether offended by her new array, or touched with the solemnity of the scene, became very restless, and after many

vain attempts to attract his mother's attention, began to cry piteously, as if in remonstrance to the vows with which they were severing from him, perhaps forever, an indulgent and fond sister. His wailing was not suffered to interrupt the orator, who continued his discourse. The child was hurried from the crowd. Isabel observed, that throughout the ceremony the novice ventured not a glance towards her kindred and friends gathered about the tressil partition; but she saw her breast heave beneath the folds of her sacred habit, and fancied that not one of her mother's sighs escaped her ear. When the address was brought to a close, the nuns pressed forward and embraced the new member of their society. The company in the church slowly withdrew. Isabel followed the ladies to the *parlatorio*, and entered just as the mother and daughter were embracing. A throng of congratulating friends encircled the novitiate. Isabel wished, for her sake, that all was over. But soon the maiden eagerly inquired for her father. He was in a distant corner of the apartment. When he approached, his beautiful daughter, clad, as it seemed to the strangers, in the habiliments of a living grave, kissed him affectionately. Isabel saw him whisper to the abbess, and doubted not it was a request to treat his child kindly. She thought of her own parent, and asked herself whether he could thus leave her to linger out a sad existence in the cloister. The idea chilled her very soul; and, seizing the proffered arm of her uncle, they hurried from the place.

The Marina of Palermo is one of the most admirable promenades in Europe. By many continental travellers it is deemed unsurpassed. The broad, blue expanse of the bay rolls to the very base of the long and smoothly-paved walk; a spacious and level road for carriages lies between this and the range of palaces and gardens which bound it on the opposite side; while at both extremities the noble promon-

tories, which rear themselves protectingly, and enclose the harbor, shield the beautiful resort and gratify the eye of the visitor. Thus the imposing vicinity of the finest edifices, the verdure and perfume of a public garden, and the cool bright sea, are concentrated, as it were, around this magnificent Marina. Those who dislike the vicinity of vehicles and horsemen can repair to the terrace which rises above the road, and extends to half the length of the drive. The continuance of this upper walk is all that is wanting to complete the splendid promenade. On gala days nothing can exceed the cheerful and elegant aspect of this scene. Equipages, of every degree of richness, pass in long lines to and fro through the centre, and the walks appear thronged with the various costumes of southern Europe. And daily, at all seasons, about two hours after mid-day, the stranger may find it more or less fashionably occupied. But it is in the summer evenings that the Marina of Palermo appears to the greatest advantage, and is most generally and consciously enjoyed. Half the population repair thither to enjoy the sea-breeze. The distant mountains are robed in a greener hue; the adjacent groves are clothed in the richest tints; the ocean coolly murmurs, and stretches, like a crystal plain, before the eye wearied with the scorching heat of these southern skies. The burning sun is slowly sinking in the west. Then the nobility seek, in their open carriages, the refreshing breeze from the ocean. The fat priest seats himself on one of the marble benches; the soldier leans upon his musket, and raises his heavy cap, to catch the delicious air; the freed child gambols along the terrace walk; the languid beauty readily accepts the ice which her gallant proffers at the side of her landau; and to stir the serenity of the scene with a congenial excitement, music, from a band stationed about the centre of the drive, in a temporary theatre, steals forth to cheer and to

charm the gay multitude. Such is the Marina on a summer night. But when Frazier and the count, obeying the suggestion of Isabel, left the carriage at one of the gates, and came out upon the promenade, it was almost entirely solitary. In the distance, the figure of a single individual might be seen hurrying along; and at one or two points a knot of fishermen were arranging their nets. High, dark, and towering rose the mountains, and the foliage seemed blent in one heavy mass. But over the face of the sea, and on the palace roofs, the beams of the full moon glittered; and the foam-streaks shone in the mild light, as they ran, with a plaintive and hollow murmur, along the stones. As Isabel and her companions gained the walk, and felt the soothing effect of a promenade by the sea at so quiet an hour, they wondered that so few had improved the privileged time. But her mind was intent upon the scene she had left. The light demeanor of the young novitiate, the interesting expression of her face, the solemnity of the rite, remained vividly impressed upon her mind; and she was eager in her inquiries of Vittorio as to the views of the parent and the feelings of the child.

"You must have observed me," he replied, "conversing with a young man in the *parlatorio*, who was seated near your uncle. That youth, more than two years since, became enamored of the novice. He had a small income—not, however, sufficient to warrant his marriage unassisted by additional means. His affection was reciprocated. The father of the young lady is a man of wealth. At the commencement of the suit he objected to its consummation on several trivial grounds. These difficulties were at length obviated; but the father at last peremptorily refused to advance his daughter the sum requisite for her establishment. There is no doubt that he could have done this without any actual sacrifice; but he is a man who has gained his property slowly,

and, in its acquisition, has acquired that base love of wealth for its own sake, which too often shows itself stronger than those affections which are the deepest, and should be the most inviolate sentiments of the heart. The daughter, wearied with the disappointment and suspense of her situation, and despairing of any favorable change, resolved to quit the world."

"This accounts," said Isabel, "for the smiling manner in which she went through the ceremony. It was the levity of hopelessness, the mock playfulness of despair."

"And wonder not," resumed Vittorio, "that she should find little to interest in this world, after her prospects were thus blighted. She has seen only, or chiefly, the worst side of human nature. She has reason to believe in the universal reign of selfishness; for this, society and her own kindred have taught her. Her passion was not a violent one. She sought in the cloister, not so much a refuge from disappointed affection as an asylum adapted to one who is indifferent to the world because she has nothing to hope from it."

"The more shame to the land of her birth!" exclaimed Frazier, "since there was, in the circle of her experience, no human being whose example inspired her with an ambition to be useful—no one of her sex whose character and domestic influence suggested the idea of living for the improvement of others—no instance of female devotion in the path of single life. In America, thank Heaven! there is scarcely a family where there is not a genuine sister of charity, in the shape of what is vulgarly called an old maid."

Isabel smiled, and said, when they were again seated in the carriage, "There is, to my mind, something awful in the idea of so young and gifted a woman thus incarcerating herself without even the supporting motive of devotional enthusiasm. Her blithe manner when kneeling in that cloistral

garb was more touching to me than would have been her tears. It spoke of a light estimation of life and its blessings, a want of perception of human responsibility, an utter insensibility to that spiritual destiny which can throw over the most objectless existence an infinite interest, and a superhuman dignity. Of this not a thought seems to have dawned upon that maiden's mind."

"No," said the count, "she has gone in all her loveliness and innocence from the home of her childhood. She has left the circle her presence should have gladdened—the kindred whose happiness should have been hers. Talents of untried power, love of unfathomable intensity, will be palsied by a round of mechanical rites and trivial occupations. Yet, negative and blighting as I feel such a fate to be, consider how I am obliged to reproach my country, when I say that, in all probability, her life as a Catholic nun will be infinitely happier than that of a Sicilian wife."

Vittoria.

The spirit culls
Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays
Through the old garden-ground of boyish days. KEATS.

THE site of the Villa Giulia, or public garden of Palermo, with the exception of its low and therefore somewhat humid position, is singularly felicitous. It is separated, in its whole length, from the sea, only by the Marina, and as there are no intervening buildings, the whole extent of the bay is open to the eye of the wanderer through its verdant precincts. And however warm may be the season, one can scarcely fail, before noon, or at sunset, to discover some shady recess which is freely visited by the breeze from the water. Adjoining this favorite retreat is the Botanical Garden, whose lofty palm-trees rise picturesquely to the eye, giving an aspect of oriental beauty to that portion of the prospect. It was through this enclosure that, during the late siege, the troops from Naples effected their approach to the walls, and the rich exotics which adorned the establishment were crushed beneath the ruthless feet of the soldiery. The more public grounds of the adjacent garden once witnessed a still more sacrilegious scene. During the sway of the Inquisition, a

priest and nun were burnt alive on this spot, in the presence of an immense assemblage, for having declared themselves favored by miraculous visions. There is nothing now to remind the visitor of these or similar events. The noble entrance of the Botanical institution conducts him into a circular apartment, classically adorned, whence a fine vista of foreign trees, and several admirably constructed *stuffos*, are discoverable; and the utmost neatness, order, and beauty gratify the eye. The villa is somewhat more extensive, and is tastefully laid out into alleys, shaded with the interwoven branches of the orange-trees, and diversified with parterres of flowers, statues, and fountains, forming one of those quiet and delightful resorts which are planted, with such beautiful wisdom, amid the dense buildings and confined thoroughfares of European cities. For several hours during Sunday, in the spring and summer, a band, stationed about the centre of the garden, enliven the throng with a variety of airs; and the scene, at such periods, is one of the most pleasant imaginable, as all classes of citizens are seen strolling in parties through the paths, clustered listlessly about the fountains, or conversing in groups in some retired nook of the extensive grounds.

It was during one of their promenades in this favorite spot, on a clear, bright morning, that Count Vittorio was induced, at the earnest wish of his companions, to speak of his former life. The garden was almost solitary. The season and the spot awakened the early associations of the count; and the sight of a rosy little child, setting at defiance the entreaties and threats of his nurse as he shouted and gambolled along the walks, carried him back to the well-remembered days when he had sported in that very garden under similar surveillance. Yielding to the impulse of awakened memory, he imparted to his attentive and deeply interested friends a

sketch of his experience, in that spirit of confidence and freedom which the breath of Nature and the spell of congenial companionship naturally awakens:—

"The memory of my earliest years confirms the general idea that the first epoch in life, however distinguished by exuberance of feeling and earnest curiosity, is not necessarily the period when the leading traits of character are manifested, or its highest principles formed. I remember my early boyhood as a period of intense pleasure, and frequent though not lasting disappointment. Every object and agency which appealed to natural sentiment found an instant response in my heart. For several years my daily pastime consisted in gazing from the balcony of our palace, which overlooked the principal street. The narrow bounds of this little gallery constituted the sanctum of my childhood. I ran to and fro over its tiled floor, and peeped through the iron-wrought balustrade, while my mother sat at her embroidery frame near the open window, watching my sports. Here dawned upon my young mind its first notions of the world. Hour by hour I gazed down upon the passing crowd, and to the silent observation of those childish days I can trace many of the opinions and prejudices of after-years. I saw a moving panorama of human life, and deeply sank its lessons into my mind. There were two classes of men, who, even at that hour, were the objects of my dislike, and against whom there grew up in my breast an inveterate antipathy, which after-experience, unhappily, has not tended to remove. These were soldiers and priests. The former I detested partly, perhaps, on account of their stern manner, but chiefly because I saw them conducting the prisoners, whose fettered limbs and miserable appearance excited my pity. The latter awakened my abhorrence from the moment that I was the witness of the overbearing demeanor of one of their fraternity who visited our

house, and with a cold pertinacity which roused my impotent anger, persisted in being informed of every detail of our domestic affairs. I was especially annoyed at the number of these two classes which mingled in the passing crowd; and when any priestly procession or regiment of soldiers entered the Toledo, instead of remaining at my post, I would run to the very extremity of the saloon, and shut my ears against the sound of the approaching drum or the rising chant. This conduct surprised my mother, and she endeavored, but without effect, to correct these prejudices, particularly that against the priests; for being herself a strict Catholic, she considered the feeling I manifested toward the professed ministers of the faith as fraught with danger. Her apprehensions, however, were much lessened by the pleasure I evinced in attending the functions on feast days at St. Giuseppe. She knew not that it was the grand strain of the organ and the solemn architecture which charmed me, and that often as I was kneeling beside her on the marble floor, my imagination, awakened by these incentives, was wandering in wild dreams and vague speculations, while my lips mechanically repeated the words of the mass. My other great source of pleasure was listening to the singing of the daughter of one of our neighbors. This lady, like most of the Sicilians, had large eyes of the most brilliant jet. Her voice was of great compass, and she sang with much *naïveté* and pathos. She was very partial to me, and as often as I could obtain permission to visit her house, she would sing my favorite airs, and bend her dark eyes in kindness upon me, as I sat, lost in delight, upon a stool at her feet. These amusements, with occasional pic-nic excursions in the summer, made up the history of my childhood. Simple as the circle of this experience seems, it was not altogether inadequate to the nature to which it ministered. My affections—those eternal fountains, in whose freshness,

purity, and freedom the happiness of humanity is most deeply involved—were gratified and cherished. My mind—that intelligent power, in the expansion and culture of which so much of human progress and energy consists—feasted on the glory of nature and the variety of the human world. Curiosity was not then satiated; the sense of wonder had not become palsied—feeling was vivid, responsive, and earnest, glowing with the intensity of its celestial origin. When first I began to reason, it seemed to me men were prone to exaggerate the happiness of childhood. I thought it so glorious a thing to inquire, to unroll the scroll of knowledge, and to see everything in the light of science. The illusion was temporary. I soon learned that the less of the spontaneous there is in character, the less also is there of interest; that technicality can petrify truth, and that the sooner the rosy glow of life's morning fades from the spirit's domain, the faster gathers over it the chill shadow of the world and the dim atmosphere of Time.

"But long before childhood was merged in youth I was called to trial. My mother died. Every circumstance of this event remains impressed upon my mind, but it was not until years after its occurrence that I realized its consequences. The greatest misfortune that can happen to a young man is such a bereavement. Naught can recompense him for the loss of a mother. A father's affection is generally more worldly. It is too often graduated by the degree of success with which his son may meet in the pursuit of wealth or fame. A mother's love is more of an inborn and self-nourished sentiment. I know we have recorded signal instances of parental ambition in woman; but it has far oftener been my lot to witness the manifestations of an attachment infinitely purer. To a man of true and deep sentiment there is no greater consolation, in the whole range of his affections

than the consciousness that there is one being who loves him for his own sake; whose devotion the changes of his fortune will not influence, and to whose eye the fairest laurels cannot make him dearer; who loves him individually, and regards the circumstances, the wealth, the honors that environ him, only as temporary means of his enjoyment—a graceful drapery, which, if the rude blast of misfortune throws it off, will but make her clasp him closer to her heart, and more tenderly cherish him in her love. But it was only by slow degrees that the extent of this early loss came home to my mind; and its memory proved one of the most subduing and chastening thoughts which visited my impetuous youth. Another of its good effects was its influence upon my social life. I cultivated, from a mere boy, such female society as was calculated to elevate my mind and call forth my best feelings. My heart has never been suffered to indurate from the absence of that gentler companionship, without the influence of which, all that is most refined in man would be superseded. There has ever been within the scope of my acquaintance, some fair being who has found the time and the feeling, amid more binding relations, to evince a soul-soothing interest which cheered my orphanage. I have never been wholly motherless.

"My father's mind was now entirely devoted to political schemes. He was an ardent republican, and for many years had been secretly engaged in a confederacy to secure the independence of Sicily. And when the dearest of his domestic ties was severed, all the energy of his nature was concentrated upon this darling purpose. Although I was but a child, yet, from my reflective turn, my father reposed a confidence in me which I have since recalled with wonder. I was his sole companion at home; and, after returning from the conclave, he would sit in the hall, now bereft of the presence which

hallowed it to his view, and, drawing me to his side, half soliloquize over his past happiness and present objects, while I looked my sympathy, and caught, perhaps, more of the spirit of his designs than he could have imagined. How vivid is the retrospect of those hours! I can see before me now the long and lofty apartment, its ranges of sofas, and gilded cornices; the brightly-painted frescos on the ceiling, the table covered with little memorials (the delight of my childhood) of my mother's tasteful handiwork, the alabaster vase daily filled with flowers; and, in the shade of the curtains, the figure of my father in his sable dress, his pale features shaded by a cap of black velvet, and his eye resting musingly and mournfully on me, as he unconsciously poured forth the feelings which overcharged his breast. To the solemnizing effect of these seasons I attribute much of the thoughtfulness which distinguished my youth. I felt myself marked out and signalized by being thus made the *confidant* of my father. The sense of character soon dawned upon me. The idea of responsibility was precociously developed. I began early to think. Though mute on the great subject of my parent's thought, though inadequate to comprehend the extent of his aim and the importance of his object, yet I understood distinctly, I felt deeply, that my country was depressed, subject to an exterior domination, and that her enfranchisement was in contemplation. I cannot tell you how the grandeur of this design delighted my young fancy. It was the subject of each day's musing and each night's dreams. The very vagueness of my conceptions increased their power. Often have I left the servant who attended me, at the church of St. Rosalia, and climbed to the telegraph on the summit of Mount Pelegrino, and gazing thence over the lovely valley of Palermo, and seaward to the Eolian isles, thought of the new glory which would illumine the scene beneath the smile

of Liberty. True, I knew not clearly the nature of the blessing; but I had learned to think that in its train all others came, and I understood it to be especially inimical to soldiers and priests—the objects of my boyish detestation. I knew something, too, of the history of my native island, and images of ancient glory, ill-defined, but glowing, fed the flame of my enthusiasm. It was June. The luxuriance of summer, without its scorching heat, breathed, like a conscious presence, around the dense confines of the city. To my young being the time was full of inspiration; and one breezy evening, as I sat on a granite bench upon yonder terrace, looking on the gay groups below, and feeling the exhilarating breath of the sea, I followed a poetical vein which I had often indulged, and wrote upon my tablets an invocation to my country. These verses, some years afterwards, when I was learning your language, I translated, and repeat them, because they will give you a good idea of the wild wishes of that hour.

'Gaze around o'er your country, Sicilians! and start
From the impotent sleep of degenerate slaves;
Like the eagle, long poised, now triumphantly dart
On the minions that trample your ancestors' graves.

'Gaze around o'er your country!—the crystal-blue deep
With pearl-flashing foam wreaths encircles the land,
And the sentinel hills in wild majesty sweep
From western horizon to orient strand.

'The orange groves gleam mid the dark olive bowers,
Like gold drops which wood-nymphs have sportively thrown;
Where the broad thorny cactus and aloe strew flowers,
And the emerald shafts of the cypresses moan.

'Gaze around o'er your country!—in many a dale
Some beautiful temple, with ivy leaves wreathed,
Like a voice from Time's dark and mysterious vale,
Proclaims where the spirit of liberty breathed.

'Gaze around o'er your country!—old Etna unfurls
Her wide saffron banner along the clear sky;
Or from her white summit indignantly hurls
The blaze of her beacon-flame lurid and high.

'And often the streams in stern solitude gush
From thy mountain-clouds into some lofty ravine,
And then, like an army, in fierce triumph rush
Through rugged defiles and o'er valleys serene.

'O where are the men who for Sicily fought
With warrior zeal in the van of each war?
And the maidens who proudly their dark tresses wrought
Into bow-strings to drive the invaders afar?*

'Forth, scions of pride!—your high titles retrieve;
Forth, sons of the deep! leave your nets on the shore;
Forth, children of Ceres! your corn cease to weave—
To the altars, ye women! for freedom implore.

'From ancient Charybdis, where swift eddies play,
From Passaro's beach, where the green waters smile,
To the proud cliff that looms o'er Palermo's bright bay,
Strike, strike for Sicilia, your foe-stricken isle!

'What Nature's fresh glory has robed to allure,
Let Valor redeem and let Virtue endear;
Rise, Sicily, rise! and no longer endure
The base hireling's scoff or the patriot's tear.'

"The secret party of which my father was so devoted a member were doomed to disappointment, from a cause which has often occasioned the failure of popular movements—premature action on the part of those least fitted to assume the responsibility. Among the many ancient traditions relative to this island is that which asserts that it once formed part of the mainland. If there is any truth in this, it might ap-

* It is an historical fact, that at the siege of Messina the women braided their hair into bow-strings, for the use of the archers.

pear that with the convulsion of Nature which divided it from the continent, sprang up a similar line of demarkation between the inhabitants of the two territories ; for the present cordial hatred existing between the Sicilians and Neapolitans is an antipathy inherited from the earliest time, and at no period have the inhabitants of Sicily been reconciled to the idea of forming a constituent part of the kingdom of Naples. If any other motive had been requisite to render their independence more obviously desirable, it was furnished by the experience they had of the English constitution during the brief continuance of the British domination. In the summer of 1820, the popular feeling on this subject reached its acme. At the feast of St. Rosalia, while mass was celebrating at the cathedral, the first indication of an approaching tumult was given by some person in the crowd suddenly and repeatedly exclaiming, 'Liberty and the Constitution!' In the evening three soldiers passed through the streets wearing the badge of the *Carbonari*. The commanding officer went in person to arrest them, but was surrounded by the people, and narrowly escaped with his life. The next day the populace forced from the authorities an order of admittance into the arsenal, and there supplied themselves with arms. This success emboldened them beyond measure. A Franciscan friar, whom intoxication had infuriated, appeared in their midst, urging them on to sanguinary effort Their latent superstition was awakened. They looked upon the long beard and sacred habit of their monkish leader, and with one voice declared him to be Moses, commissioned by Heaven to secure their independence. The prison was thrown open, and the city echoed with the noise of conflict. For several days anarchy reigned in Palermo. The rabble, intoxicated with their temporary triumphs, gave themselves up to indiscriminate rapine and butchery. The horrid scenes then enacted,

the license and brutality which prevailed, indicated the utter unfitness of the people for the dignity and blessings of political freedom. Slowly but surely this impression gained upon the reluctant mind of my father. Still he exerted himself to wrest the newly-acquired power from the mob, and restore order and peace. After some time this was effected. A provincial government was established, and for a few months the capital of Sicily was nominally independent. But small was the satisfaction which this long-desired condition brought to the minds of the intelligent patriots. They could effect no unity of sentiment or action between the different parts of the island. Messina, mindful of her long rivalry with the metropolis, refused to take part in the cause. The Neapolitan troops stationed themselves near the walls, and after repeated repulses were finally admitted within the gates. A year afterwards the inhabitants were prohibited from holding arms without a license, the usual enginery of despotism was re-established, and the leaders of the struggle and known advocates of liberal principles were executed or banished. The latter was my father's fate; and as the mountains of our native island faded from our view, the last hope of patriotic success vanished drearily from his mind, and the first bright and absorbing dream of boyhood melted like a mist from my sanguine heart.

"We soon repaired to England. There, when habit had somewhat reconciled me to the reserve of northern manners, and practice had given me the command of your native tongue, I was conscious of a new and important era of mental experience. I became deeply interested in the study of English literature. I communed with the master spirits of that noble lore, enriching my mind with philosophical truth, and my imagination with poetic beauty of a deeper and more elevating character than the prevailing literature of the South

had afforded me. But from these studies I gained general ideas rather than fixed principles. This was the more to be regretted, as I soon arrived at one of those gloomy epochs of life, more or less known to us all, where 'of necessity the soul must be its own support.' My father, wearied with disappointment, and rendered restless by the changes which had followed in such rapid succession upon his declining years, sunk under the effects of a fever, and grief and anxiety would have soon laid me beside him, had I not yielded to the urgency of friends, and changed the scene and climate. I selected Malta for the place of my destination, chiefly because of its contiguity to my native island. I little thought, in the dejected mood in which I embarked, of the consolation there awaiting me. So happy is the retrospect of my visit, notwithstanding it occurred at one of the saddest periods of my life, that I dwell upon every circumstance attending it with unabated pleasure. The day of my arrival and those immediately succeeding it, are thus brightly present to my memory, because they are associated with one of the most blessed occasions of my youth. It was then that I gained one of the greatest of human acquisitions, a sense of important truths, in the light of which the darkness and doubt which overshadowed my spirit were suddenly dissipated.

"The sun shone clearly as we neared Malta. The warmth of the atmosphere, the deep blue tint of the water, and the tones in which we were greeted, made me realize that I had once more entered the precincts of Southern Europe. In the distance, more like a pictorial than a real scene, rose the ancient city. Its peculiar hue, the long line of massive battlements, and the darkly-wrought domes, chained our attention. In a few moments we were at anchor in the quarantine harbor, between two forts. A clump of verdure relieved the eye as it rested on the heavy walls, all wearing the same dim

yellow or grayish shade; and the picturesque figures of the Highland regiment gave animation to the scene. The view was beautiful after the moon rose. The shadow of the dark wall on the calm tide, the soothing reflection of the light, the perfect repose, was all in striking contrast to the scenes of bloodshed, and the sounds of death, with which my memory was busy. On the evening of the next day we received permission to go round the grand harbor. As, towed by fifteen boats, we slowly proceeded, at sunset, from every new point the city spread out before us—the long bastions dotted with moss, at whose wave-washed faundations the restless tide now moaned; above them dark ranges of buildings, and around, various craft plying. We entered the harbor between the memorable castles of St. Elmo and St. Angelo, and were soon moored by the quay, along which were swarming the motley crowd ever to be seen at night-fall in such a place. It was not until the succeeding evening that we obtained *pratique*. As I walked up the Nix-Mangare stairs, the supplicating voices of the beggars, the silent sternness of the soldiery, the clanking fetters of the convicts sweeping the streets, and here and there a shrine, carried me at once back to my home and the days of childhood. The intervening space of time seemed annihilated. Nor was this feeling lessened on entering our hotel, which had been a knight's palace. The stone floors, painted walls, and lofty ceilings were strangely familiar. A new sense of my loneliness, of all that I had lost and suffered, came over me. I felt more keenly than ever that I was an orphan and an exile.

"My companions, without understanding the nature of my melancholy, strove to divert it, and dragged me that very evening to a ball given by the officers of the regiments then quartered in the island. The display was very brilliant. At the entrance of the hall were four suits of ancient armor,

arranged at the corners of a kind of military tent; and at the head of the ball-room was a fine staff of colors surrounding the British escutcheon. The scarlet uniform of the military, and the neat blue of the naval officers, the calm faces and light ringlets of the English damsels, contrasting with the dark hair and eyes of the Maltese, the national banners and fresh garlands on the walls, rendered the pageant quite dazzling. This insignia of joy into which I had suffered myself to be drawn, instead of alleviating, served to deepen the gloom which oppressed me. Gladness was upon every face, and I asked myself whether there was one amid the multitude who was an outcast like myself. As the idea presented itself, my eye fell upon a countenance which seemed almost to answer the unuttered inquiry. It was that of a man beyond the prime of life, whose expression would have denoted no common familiarity with sorrow, were it not for a certain tranquil dignity and benign spirit which softened and elevated its aspect. As the gaze of the stranger met my own, I felt that instinctive consciousness of sympathy which is so impressive yet inexplicable. I watched his movements; I followed his eye, and endeavored to image his thoughts, till a call to the supper-room interrupted my sight for a few moments, after which I discovered that he had left the assembly. My pillow was haunted by that thoughtful and kindly face. Its remembrance comforted me as if I had read there a message of love. I could not account for these vagaries; and on the following morning stole away from my companions, and went forth to make the circuit of the ramparts, to see what effect a solitary walk would have in dispelling my gloomy mood. Upon one of the saluting batteries are several monuments tastefully adorned with trees. Here is a pleasant promenade. Below, various vessels are moored; far away to the left is the wide sea, and immediately beneath,

the dingy houses and narrow streets of the town. Altogether the prospect was impressive and pleasing. The adjacent memorials of the dead, the refreshing hue of the shrubbery, and the hum of busy life, with the ocean stretching illimitably, and shadowed only by a passing cloud or the wing of a sea-bird, combined to form one of those happily-blended landscapes which embody, in mingled and striking symbols, the idea of nature and art, of ancient times and modern characteristics, of man and his Creator. I leaned over the parapet, and endeavored to catch something of its calm and pleasantness. But it came not; and I applied earnestly to myself the words of the poet:

'Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within, nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found.'

"As if to bless me with the last boon, I saw ascending to the bastion the gentleman whose appearance had so interested me at the ball. We exchanged salutations, and then spoke of the prospects before us. The voice and manner of the stranger were singularly winning. By degrees our acquaintance advanced, and in a week there was knit between us a bond of sympathy which time cannot sever. I imparted to my friend what you have so patiently heard. He repaid me by unfolding the theory of his faith, which has been my consolation from that hour. Yet his history, his very name, is unknown to me Our interviews took place during our daily promenades, and just as he was about to fulfil his promise, and confide his own experience to me, the vessel in which he had taken passage for the East was suddenly ordered to sail, and I had not even an opportunity of bidding him farewell. The following day, receiving official permission to return to

Sicily, I immediately embarked, and arrived here an altered being; for those characteristics and views which you have so often wondered should appertain to a native of these regions, are but the result of my communion with that stranger-friend."

Discussion.

The only true liberal subjects of conversation are thoughts and actions of universal interest. De Staël.

IT was the custom of the little party whose journeyings we have followed, to pass the evenings not devoted to some engagement, in conversing upon the experience of the day. Not unfrequently the ladies of Isabel's acquaintance insisted upon her society in a morning's ride or a day's excursion, and the gentlemen were left to seek amusement by themselves. They atoned, however, for these occasional interruptions to their mutual intercourse, by relating, on meeting, all that had interested them, or was likely to divert their gifted companion from the sad musings into which, when unexcited by attractive conversation, she would almost invariably fall. One evening, however, both her uncle and Vittorio were unusually silent. They seemed quite thoughtful and abstracted, and Isabel herself began to wonder at the spiritless mood which had overtaken them all; and eagerly inquired what had occupied her companions since breakfast.

"We have been," replied her uncle, "in scenes well calculated to awaken thought; we have been contemplating the states to which all human beings are liable; we have been among the insane and the dead."

"I am, perhaps, to blame," said the count, "for having taken your uncle to two such places in one day, but it was quite accidental. We first went to the Capuchin Convent, and descended into the catacombs. An old brother, of Portuguese origin, who speaks a little English, was our guide. He seemed pleased with the opportunity thus afforded for exercising his almost forgotten acquisition, and continually, as we threaded these sepulchral chambers, repeated verse after verse, from that impressive chapter of Ecclesiastes descriptive of the vanity of life. As he preceded us, with his coarse brown robe and gray beard descending over his breast, ever and anon reciting in a hollow tone these memorable passages, so appropriate to the scene, I could not but think the guide was singularly adapted to his vocation. The long wide galleries of this extraordinary sepulchre are crowded with niches, in which stand the frames of men, dressed in their professional garbs—the priest with his cassock, the friar with his hood; their fleshless eye-sockets and set teeth glaring, as it were, upon the intruder into their subterranean halls. The floor is covered with coffins; the sides walled with skeletons; everything betokens the abode of the dead, and the light of day, and echo of a living footstep, seem startlingly unnatural. A tinsel crown clasps the bare skull of the king of Tunis; and there is one long room in which the female bodies appear in glass cases, like those in which the Parisian shopkeeper displays his valuables, decked out in gay silks and tawdry ornaments, in horrible contrast with the mouldering bones. Altogether the spectacle is one of the most singular and revolting imaginable."

"The scene at the Insane Asylum," said Frazier, "was more satisfactory, though not less dispiriting. The evidences of care and kindness bestowed upon beings who in less civilized times were treated as outcasts, is truly delightful. The Baron

Pisani, who originated and now superintends the establishment, attends to his duty with an intelligence and philanthropy which merits imitation. There are gardens and grottos, and even a little amphitheatre to amuse the inmates. Frescos on every side please the eye; fountains murmur to soothe the ear. Work is provided to distract the attention of the insane from the single corroding idea in which their malady so often consists; and firmness and affection seem to be the ever-present principles by which the wayward creatures are ruled and guided."

"It is the boast of many of these deranged people," continued the count, "that they have constructed the embellishments of their asylum. There is a little song in vogue among them, declaring that it is not they that are mad, but the unhappy toilers for this world's aims who are, without the walls of their retreat. Indeed everything is done to banish from their minds all consciousness of their desolate state, and they cherish an affectionate respect for the baron, the manifestations of which are truly beautiful. Still, no arrangements, however excellent, can obviate the painful impression of such a scene. In our walk round the institution, we beheld every degree and variety of this terrible form of human suffering. The cries of the frantic echoed from their gloomy cells; here sat a miserable hypochondriac, to whose eyes God's sunlight brings no gladness, swaying to and fro his attenuated frame, bowed down with unutterable dejection; there walked, in restless misery, a priest, upon whose pale brow brooded the most abject despair. Upon a bench, in a lonely corner, crouched an old man who had once excelled in science, and is now lingering out existence in speechless woe. There was a Greek woman, with a fine open countenance, and pleasant eye, singing to herself. She believes that a superior intelligence is enamored of her charms, and the idea, instead of

flattering her vanity, plays upon her mind as a most undesirable and inauspicious circumstance. An old artillery captain, with a guitar, was reciting with much gusto some passage from Meli, whose especial panegyrist he considers himself. A painter, whom disappointment in his art rendered mad, has now nearly recovered the tone of his mind, and the walls of the house and corridors testify to his industry and skill. As one wanders amid these stricken beings, how valueless seem the objects, idolatry to which are such prolific causes of madness—gain and ambition! Yet before these perishable shrines, men prostrate their noblest endowments, and lose in the whirlwind of passion their most distinguishing and god-like attributes. Some, indeed, have become insane from more touching causes—blighted affection, wounded honor, bereaved friendship. What cause for gratitude have we, while we can think rationally, while the light of reason burns clear, and the soul possesses herself in peace; while the harmony of creation steals with an unbroken cadence upon the spirit, and the rays of truth fall full and brightly over the heart; while the blessings of existence descend gratefully upon the path of life, and the darker passes of experience throw over it only a solemnizing shadow, and not an impenetrable gloom!"

The sound of bells ringing the Avé Maria now rose to the ears of the *coterie.*

"That chime," said Frazier, "rung not so peacefully over Palermo some centuries back, when it ushered in a night of the most horrible massacre recorded in history. There is a tradition, current I believe among the islanders, that this exterminating plot, known under the name of the Sicilian Vespers, was brought about by a poor fellow who had suffered greatly from the tyranny of the French, and who, pretending to be deaf, made the tour of Sicily on foot, whispering in every Sicilian ear, that on the thirtieth of March, at this hour, all

residents were to be put to death who could not pronounce the word *ciceri* (vetches), a test that would infallibly betray a Frenchman, however well versed in the dialect of the country."

"Whatever foundation this story may have in truth," said the count, "the better informed are more fond of priding themselves upon the address of Giovanni di Procida in bringing about that sanguinary event. He went to Constantinople, and informed the emperor that it was the intention of Charles of Anjou to attack that city, and recommended him to furnish funds to the Sicilians to aid their proposed revolution, which would divert the arms of Charles from himself. The assistance being promised, he returned to Sicily, and engaged a confederacy of noblemen to relinquish the island to the King of Arragon. With the contract in his bosom, he then repaired to Rome, and obtained the written sanction of the pope. Then visiting Peter of Arragon, he easily persuaded him to proceed with a fleet to the Mediterranean, and await the rising of the Sicilians, to seize upon the island. Giovanni then returned here, and completed the arrangement, which terminated in the Sicilian Vespers. This master-stroke of policy, by which the several powers were so artfully deceived, and the cruel Charles overthrown, has ever been highly appreciated—for cunning is a weapon of the value of which the Sicilians entertain a deep sense. The exploit of this diplomatist has formed the subject of several tragedies, the best of which was written by Niccolini of Florence."

"But have you no talented authors?" inquired Isabel.

"Sicilian literature is at present in a very low state. The strict censorship exercised over the press is alone sufficient to damp the ambition of those best fitted to do honor to their country through its medium. Our national poet is Meli.

His poems are of a pastoral character, descriptive of the beauties of the country, and filled with the most accurate pictures of peasant life. To one who understands the Sicilian dialect, his writings abound in graphic beauty. He paints altogether from nature, and has fulfilled to the scenery and manners of Sicily the same office of poetical, yet true interpretation, which Burns has to those of Scotland. Many of his idyls are in circulation orally among the common people, and all classes glory in his fame. There are many mediocre writers, but the generality who have a taste for intellectual pursuits turn their attention to antiquarian researches or scientific studies. Some have contributed, as magazine writers and historians, minor pieces of some merit to the meagre stock of Sicilian literature. These are written in Italian. But it is useless to expect great literary results among a people so situated and educated. It is only where a sphere is open, and education general, that the foundation may be laid and the motive afforded for literary development. Men are then interested in the mental cultivation of their children's minds; a nation of readers springs up, and there will be writers to meet their wants."

"And it is not only thus with literature," said Frazier; "the low estimation in which integrity—that key-stone of the social arch—is held, may be traced to want of reverence for those primary ties which form the basis of every community. In a country where wine and oil, fruits, grain, and minerals, are so abundantly produced—where crops, by judicious cultivation, might be trebled—where there are such excellent facilities for commerce and fisheries, the want of prosperity cannot be ascribed to the absence of natural advantages."

"No," replied the count, "the existing poverty of this beautiful island, which Cicero called the granary of Rome, is chiefly attributed to inherited evils of government, and habits

of idleness, and vice, a disproportionate nobility, a pampered priesthood, and an utterly unenlightened lower order. One of the immediate causes of the reduced circumstances of the higher rank of Sicilians is the change made about twenty years since in the law of primogeniture. The property which then enabled the eldest son to live in splendor is now distributed among all the children, and being still farther subdivided by marriages, reduces the fortunes of the barons to a score of slender patrimonies. The immense tax upon landed property is another drain upon their resources. The earnings of the common people are half consumed by gambling. The royal lottery is constructed on such a scale as to allow the hazard of the smallest sums, with a proportionate prize in prospect. They generally select numbers from the intimation of dreams."

"I fancied a half-hour's walk the other morning," rejoined Frazier, "afforded me a tolerable idea of the state of things. A delicate-looking child begged a bioch; I was passing on, when my servant urged me to regard the petitioner; 'for, eccellenza,' said he, 'it is the son of a marquis, who has lost his all in lawsuits.' A moment after we encountered a pale, bright-eyed boy, going to school. 'What do you study?' I asked. 'The life of St. Luigi, signor.'

"We passed through a market-place. I saw people of respectable appearance buying everything for the day's use, even to the charcoal for cooking and the oil for the night's burning. I never knew what living from hand to mouth meant before."

They were interrupted by one of those visits to which every traveller is exposed. An agate merchant asked leave to display his rare specimen. A Franciscan monk tendered some fine olives, the produce of his convent-garden, and begged an eleemosynary remembrance; while a picture-dealer

brought a long roll of certificates, to prove that the Madonna he offered for sale was a genuine Monrealease. At length the several claims of these personages were considered, and they bowed themselves out of the room, after bestowing more titles upon the kind-hearted republican than in his whole life he had been honored with before.

"If these people had more to do," said he, "they would not be so prodigal of their compliments."

"Nay, uncle," said Isabel, "there is certainly a kindliness in their greetings which might well be adopted by our more laconic people. I know that the blessing they invoke when one sneezes, their wishes for a good appetite and pleasant slumber, their *excellenzas*, and exaggerated epithets of welcome and reverence, are often subjects of ridicule, but in a broad view are they not gratifying?"

"Yes," replied the count; "may we not exclaim, with Sterne, 'Hail, ye small, sweet courtesies of life, for sweet do you make the road of it?' I think we may justly consider one of the redeeming traits of the Sicilian character—a spontaneous regard, a sentiment of attachment, and an interest in others, the very semblance of which is cheering to the heart. An American, in judging of European character, should bear in mind the circumstances of his own country. The restless energies of a young nation have been unfolding around him. He has been encircled by the machinery of an advancing civilization. He has been witnessing the phenomena of national growth. He has lived amid the excitement of constant experiments. He has been listening to the warfare of unshackled opinion. The spirit of society around him has been nicely regulated and duly restrained; social intercourse checked by mutual reserve; and the expression of feeling restricted by custom, graduated by rule, and chilled by the influence of a northern clime, as well as a calmer national

temperament. Here he is environed by a people wedded to the customs of past ages, unfamiliar with many of the improvements of the day, and, in some of the arrangements of life, far behind the age in which they live; where time is still reckoned by the primitive method, where the lottery courier outstrips the post, and the balcony takes the place of the fireside;" a people who display emotion with the freedom of children, who observe much and reflect little, who enter with childlike eagerness into gaiety, and, at every age, court the pleasures of companionship with the ardor of youth. And who shall say to what extent these diversities are attributable in the one nation to freedom and prosperity, and in the other to political depression, and that hopeless and anti-progressive state into which the prospects of individuals are thrown by a long series of despotic influences? Men are generally thoughtful as they have responsibilities, and energetic in proportion to their hopes. If the quickness of apprehension and general talents of the Sicilians were balanced by reflection, and cultivated by education, they would become a distinguished people. You may now witness an aptitude for intrigue displayed in compassing some trivial end, which, if properly directed, might form admirable scientific professors, or diplomatic characters. They understand a foreigner with remarkable readiness; they converse with their eyes and expressive gestures with astonishing tact. They are sanguinary under the influence of passion, but kind when in the least encouraged. In such a character there are elements of untried force and progress."

An Episode.

> The low, the deep, the pleading tone
> With which he told another's love,
> Interpreted his own. GENEVIEVE.

COMMEND me to travel as the occasion of love. The crowded assembly and the fashionable promenade are alike inimical to that free expression of thought and natural flow of feeling, through which alone the points of sympathy are discoverable. It is true, that in these scenes the first impression is often made which eventuates in attachment; but amid them the best gifts of intellect, and the finest traits of sentiment, are too frequently veiled by an artificial manner, or concealed beneath the many external graces which it is the office of fashion to call forth. When, however, we feel ourselves separated for a while from the restraints of general society, and exposed to the free influence of nature and the incitement of variety, we resume our original, native spirit, and think, act, and feel with renewed energy and truth. Few situations, therefore, are more conducive to the mutual development of character than that of two companions travelling together through scenes of interest and beauty. Mingling their admiration in view of each novel object, suffering the

same inconveniences, exposed to the same dangers, and for days dependent upon each other's society for solace and amusement—if even a spark of congeniality exist, such auspicious circumstances will fan it to a flame. The recorded conversations of Isabel and the count have been of a general character. Yet, in the course of these interviews, glances and tones had been exchanged, which a more imaginative observer than Frazier could not have failed to interpret into indications of a regard, somewhat deeper and more permanent than mere intellectual sympathy. Still no direct or positive expression had been given to the sentiment which had insensibly usurped the place of friendship. Happy in the daily interchange of mind which her present circumstances permitted, Isabel thought of the future only with reference to her father, while she was unconsciously cherishing, or rather allowing to flourish in her breast, another affection calculated to ennoble or embitter her whole future life. But the count, whose consciousness was not dazzled by an anticipation such as filled the mental vision of his fair companion, had long since confessed to himself that she had inspired an interest too earnest to be easily overcome, and too delightful not to be indulged; and, although he had determined to postpone, until the conclusion of their pilgrimage, any declaration of his feelings, they were ere long incidentally elicited. On a warm but delightful evening, the little party were present at a *conversazioné*, at one of the most beautiful villas in the vicinity of Palermo. Its somewhat elevated position rendered the view from the balconies extensive and various, while the neighborhood of the mountains and sea exposed it to every breeze which might stir the quiet atmosphere of summer. The house was situated at some distance from the road, and behind it a spacious garden was tastefully laid out. After passing several hours in the crowded rooms, Isabel

gladly accepted the count's invitation to repair to the garden, where many of the guests were promenading. They followed a path shaded by the embowering branches of the orange-trees, through which the moonlight fell in chequered lines upon the walk. At its extremity, near a small fountain, were several marble benches. As they approached, Isabel ardently expressed her delight at the picturesque charms of the retreat; and, when they were seated, the count related the following anecdote:

THE SECOND COURTSHIP.

"The former proprietor of this villa was a most elegant and interesting man. In his youth he had passed several years in Great Britain, and returned to his native city at the period when the English had possession of the island. As he spoke their language perfectly, and was an intelligent and agreeable companion, there was no Sicilian more frequently to be found in their circles, or one who was more deservedly popular among them. At that time there was residing in Palermo, the ward of an English officer, committed to his care by her father, an old friend, who died many years previous in England. Caroline Walter was not only beautiful, but so fascinating in her manners, that she was the object of universal admiration. To the extreme mortification of many of her countrymen, she received, without displeasure, the marked attentions of Palma, the inheritor of this beautiful domain. They were, in truth, admirably fitted for each other. His chief fault was an impetuosity of feeling, which sometimes urged him into acts of foolish precipitancy; but in mind and principle he was infinitely superior to the generality of his countrymen, and it was the virtues of Caroline Walter, not less than her personal graces, which had won his

heart. You are aware of the inveterate prejudice which the English entertain towards foreigners; and you must have perceived how strongly it is cherished in the case of the Sicilians. There are, indeed, discrepancies of temperament and character between the two people to account for, if not to justify, some degree of such a feeling; and the want of education, and the moral degradation too prevalent among the inhabitants of this island, is sufficient to explain the little favor they find in the eyes of one of the most enlightened nations of the earth. But this, like all other prejudices, is too indiscriminate, and therefore unworthy of being entertained by any liberal or philosophical mind. The known virtues of Palma did not weigh with the friends of Caroline Walter. She was assailed on every side and in every manner, to induce her to renounce her lover, because he was a Sicilian, but in vain. She could not appreciate the argument; and having found him honorable, gifted, and especially possessed of tastes and sentiments accordant with her own, she hesitated not to reciprocate his ardent and disinterested attachment. After their marriage they were for a short time absent upon the continent, and then returned hither, and established themselves at this villa. The sight of their domestic enjoyment re-awakened disappointment in the breasts of some of the young English officers—and there were two of them especially, who resolved, if possible, to disturb the happiness which they had not the magnanimity to rejoice in. How to sow the seeds of discord where harmony was so complete, was a question they could not easily solve. To attempt to impair the confidence of the wife they knew would be vain, and, moreover, there was a dignity and independent superiority in her character which awed them into silent respect. Unfortunately, they were aware of the weakness of Palma, and upon this they determined to play.

Industriously circulating reports that his wife repented of her connection, they took measures that not a day should pass but some insinuation reached his ears, calculated to excite that jealousy which belongs to the Sicilian temperament. For a long time these rumors affected him not. He knew the propensity of his countrymen for scandal; and if for a moment a doubt had darkened his mind, one glimpse at the ingenuous and noble countenance of his lovely wife, or a single tone of her sweet welcome, dispelled it in a moment. One day, however, when several English officers, and among them the two hypocrites, were dining here, one of them, after the repast, took Palma aside, and after extorting many promises of secresy, and making innumerable professions of friendship, like a second Iago, advised him to watch narrowly, lest his domestic peace was invaded. This ambiguous warning, conveyed thus solemnly, alarmed Palma. He returned thoughtfully towards the house. Caroline's joyous laugh reached his ear. For the first time there was something unmusical in it. He raised his eyes to yonder terrace, and saw her promenading, and apparently in the pleasantest conversation, with the accomplice of him who had just poisoned his ear, and who no sooner caught a glimpse of his host than he threw into his manner as great an air of confidence and familiarity as possible. This little incident, though of no importance in itself, served to irritate Palma into a fit of jealous musing. Surmises, as baseless as air, were brooded over till they grew into positive doubts beneath the fructifying influence of a southern imagination. And when the visitors had departed, in a moment of passion he appeared before his astonished wife, and charging her with having deceived and lost all affection for him, if, indeed, she ever had any, rushed from her presence, drove rapidly to town, and embarked that very evening in a steam-packet for Malta Mount Pelegrino had not

faded from his sight before he regretted the step he had taken. His self-reproaches were increased to agony, when an acquaintance, one of his fellow-passengers, after warmly eulogizing his wife, began to praise his forbearance towards those who endeavored to mar his happiness in order to gratify their spleen. All at once he saw his error, and mourned over his precipitancy. In three days he returned to Palermo, and sought this retreat, where his injured wife was secluded. He longed to throw himself at her feet and demand forgiveness; but so great was his mortification, and so unpardonable, in his own eyes, seemed his conduct, that he had not the courage to approach her. He remembered the sad look of silent yet eloquent reproach with which she had gazed upon him as he left her presence. He recalled the pride of her character, and dreaded the effect of his weak and violent behavior. He knew not but her esteem for him had gone forever. In this state of indecision and perplexity he remained for several days in the neighborhood. One afternoon, towards dusk, he approached the house, and saw Caroline seated near the window, but as he drew near she abruptly left the spot. He believed she had recognized, and thus purposely avoided him. The next evening he again approached. She was in the same place, and half rose as he drew near, but perceiving him pass the door, she remained, and formally returned his proffered recognition. His impression then was that she thought him insane. In short, I cannot tell you by what gradual steps he progressed towards a reconciliation. No lover, for the first time delicately shaping his way to the heart of his mistress, could have acted more timidly, or been more tremblingly alive to every faint indication of success. It was, in truth, a second courtship. At last, one lovely evening, such as this, he threw off the cloak which had hitherto concealed him from observation, and entering that grove just

opposite his wife's balcony, began to sing several of her favorite airs in a feigned voice. There lived in the neighborhood an old blind man, who had frequently amused them in this manner, and he knew she would come to the terrace to throw him the customary gratuity. After a short time, he heard the window open, and saw her step forth into the moonlight. It was the first time he had seen her distinctly since their separation. She was paler than usual, and a sad expression mellowed into pensive beauty the spirited loveliness of her countenance. She leaned over the rail, and seemed about to call the unseen vocalist, when he, anticipating her purpose, slightly softening his voice, commenced an Italian air which they had often sang together. The half-uttered word died on her lips, she stood still and listened, and presently, as if overcome by the associations thus awakened, the tears fell thick and fast from her eyes. The repentant husband saw that the favorable moment had arrived. He suddenly paused, and struck at once, with his natural voice, into a little English song of his own composition, with which he had serenaded her on the night when they first exchanged vows of eternal fidelity. At the first tone of that well-known voice she started, and turned towards the open window; but as the feeling notes rolled on, she paused, as if entranced, and, as the last stanza was concluded, he sprang from his concealment, and was on the terrace and at her feet in a moment. He was forgiven; and the stream of affection, thus temporarily divided, re-united with new force and a more gladsome murmur, and flows on in rich and fertilizing beauty to this hour."

When the count had related this story, Isabel begged to hear the song which had been the occasion of so happy a reunion. The scattered guests had left the walks to attend a summons to the refreshment room. The music from the

saloon stole with a softened cadence through the trees; and occasionally the laugh of some light-hearted being near one of the windows reached their ears; but otherwise the garden was so quiet, that the silvery dripping of the fountain sounded clearly in the pauses of their conversation. Isabel, in her white dress, and with her luxuriant hair arranged with beautiful simplicity, and her expressive features radiating the quiet happiness which the scene inspired, had never appeared more lovely in the eyes of Vittorio; and he threw into his voice an expression of earnestness, eloquently indicative of the secret emotions he cherished.

THE SONG OF THE FOREIGN LOVER.

"Yes, 'tis true thine eyes are azure,
And thy brow is pale and high;
And 'tis true thy golden tresses
Bespeak a northern sky.
I know thy kindred live afar,
Where the ancestral tree
Waves greenly o'er their dwelling,
Beyond the sparkling sea.

"Yet if a darker orb replies
Most earnestly to thine,
And ebon locks bow truthfully
Before thy beauty's shrine;
And if the accents of the South
Breathe love's sincerest tone,
Why wilt thou still remember
This land is not thy own?

"Are not the kindred of the heart
More blest than ties of birth?
And the spot affection brightens
Dearer than native earth?
Love, lady, hallows every clime
To which his children roam,
And with him for a household god,
ALL PLACES WILL BE HOME."

Shelley has somewhere compared the effect of an impassioned sentiment to "the voice of one beloved singing to you alone." He understood the poetry of the heart. The scene and its associations entirely overcame the previous resolutions of Vittorio, and when Isabel quietly thanked him, and rose to return to the house, he gave earnest expression to his attachment. That hour was like an age in the history of her feelings. But she replied by calmly alluding to the object of her pilgrimage, and declared, that until that was accomplished, she could not listen to a word on the subject. Yet her manner, her look, was enough to satisfy Vittorio, and when he rejoined the *conversazione*, it was with the delightful conviction of possessing her affections.

The Past and Present.

It is the past
Contending with the present; and, by turns,
Each has the mastery. ROGERS.

FEW evidences of decay are more striking than those which mark the estates and arrangements of an impoverished nobility. A ruin that speaks of a bygone people, however it may awaken reflection, calls for little exertion or sympathy. Those to whose pride or comfort it originally ministered have long since departed. There is no lone member of the race to sigh over the ashes of past magnificence The material fabric has survived its founder, and, in its ivy-buried ruins, serves but to remind us of antiquity. It is otherwise with the memorials of less ancient times. We cannot see the descendant of a once wealthy nobility, lingering about the time-worn and poverty-stricken home of his fathers, without a keen sense of the vanity of human grandeur. We cannot witness the vain struggles of a penniless nobleman to preserve the appearance of ancient splendor, without realizing the changeful moods of fortune. And when something of high and chivalrous sentiment ennobles the unfortunate inheritor of a title, without the means of supporting its dignity,

our compassion is instinctively awakened. We feel something of that pity which the tale of young Ravenswood's bitter reveries in the deserted mansion of his ancestors excites in the breast. There is a strong appeal to our feelings in the sight of one, who, with the ambition, has outlived the glory of his house. Although the aggravation of elevated feelings may not often increase the mortification of the poor nobility of the island, yet many evidences of their fallen lot are observable in Sicily. As the stranger threads the crowded thoroughfares of Palermo, he continually sees the high fronts of palaces, blackened by age. Iron-wrought balconies protrude from the spacious windows, and tufts of weed or lines of mould indicate the ravages of neglect. Some of these extensive buildings are tenanted by a score of families, who occupy the different ranges of apartments, while others are still inhabited by the descendants of the original proprietors; but very few are able to preserve a style of living corresponding with the grandeur of their dwellings. More frequently, upon entering these palaces, the visitor will pass through long suits of lofty rooms, with richly-painted walls and brightly-tiled floors—cold, bare, and deserted. In some distant chamber, perchance, he will find the occupant seated in a massive old chair, a deer-skin beneath his feet, and his snuff-box in hand, pondering upon the changes of some proposed game at hazard, or the best manner of once more evading some long-deferred obligation. It would rouse the very hearts of the old nobility to catch a glimpse of some of their proud abodes, and see halls adorned with the richest frescos and marbles, tenanted by the most plebeian citizens, converted into magazines for foreign merchants, or consigned to the destructive hand of abandonment and decay.

Not only within the city did these objects afford occasion to Frazier for grave reflections on the utility of republicanism,

and incite Isabel's fancy to picture the past. Bagaria, in the environs, was a favorite resort of the wealthy Palermitans, in the season when the country is most inviting. The road thither lies along the sea, over a fertile plain thickly studded with olive and cypress trees, amid which the pleasant seats are finely located. Some of the rich worthies who were wont to retire to this delightful spot, must have been endowed with whimsical taste, if we may judge by the ornaments of their estates. One especially amused Isabel, and provoked the anger of Frazier at what he pleased to term the ridiculous extravagance of the proprietor. Around the roofs of the offices, and wherever an opportunity occurs on the main building, are figures carved in stone, of every imaginable form—monsters, deformed beasts, and grotesque men. Within the palace is a room, the walls of which are wrought, in glass of different hues, into various devices, while the ceiling is composed of mirrors. Although much of this fantastic work is dimmed and mutilated, the effect, when the apartment is illuminated, must be curious and brilliant. An adjoining and more spacious saloon, walled and floored with the finest marble, is, however, more worthy of admiration. The clear, fresh hues of this princely material, from which, at intervals, start forth the statues and basso-relievos which vary its surface, and the brightly-polished floors, combine to convey an impression of strength, richness, and splendor much more pleasing than the gaudy and peculiar chamber adjacent. The furniture of many of the rooms in these decayed palaces remains very much as the more prosperous occupant left it; and, wearied with their wanderings through the cold halls, the visitors were glad to rest in the antiquely-embroidered chairs.

"Look around upon these ancient portraits," said Vittorio. "How little thought the proud noble who had his paternal

walls thus decorated, that they would, in a few short years, become the gaze of strangers. This fine-looking old gentleman, and that lady in the dress of olden time, have doubtless often breakfasted in this very apartment, perhaps at that little tortoise-shell table. I delight to invoke the past, and the quiet and venerable air around us is favorable to such a pastime. Let us imagine this stately couple in the days of their pride. Hither they came on the first summer after their bridal. Nature wore an aspect of unwonted beauty, for she was beheld in the light of young love. Here, perhaps, the cheerful morning smiled upon their sweet councils, as the day's pic-nic, or the evening's *conversazione*, was laughingly planned. From this window they gazed into the deepening twilight, and silently imbibed the spell of that hour in gladness of spirit. Yonder hall, perhaps, witnessed the early triumphs of the young bride in the circles of society. There sped the dance and coursed the jest till early dawn. Years rolled away, and the saloon which had beheld the rich content of affection echoed to the restless tread of ambition. A new epoch of life had arrived. The love of companionship and pleasure had become merged in a thirst for power. He sought it in political schemes; she, in the petty rivalries of her courtly acquaintance. Time passed on; and at length, at the accustomed season, *one* only came hither, and in mourning weeds, and soon returned no more. The paths of the once neatly-kept garden are grass-grown. The throng of liveried servants have dwindled to a few ill-clad menials. The chorus of the banquet-song has long since died away. The ornamental devices, upon which so much pains were lavished, serve only to amuse the curious traveller; and their proud originator is forgotten. Such is human history!"

There is a summer-house attached to one of the villas at Bagaria, fitted up in imitation of a convent. The figures, dis-

posed in different cells, are not ill-executed in wax. Age, however, has diminished their life-like hues. The order represented is that of La Trappe, and the whole is intended to memorialize the story of Adelaide and Commegio, the cloister lovers. The fondness for amusement which, at an earlier period, dictated these fantasies, still lives in the hearts of the Palermitans, although the means for its gratification have so much diminished; and, on the evening of the day that our travellers had visited this scene of former grandeur, they found themselves in the midst of one of the festive diversions, still occasionally indulged in by the restricted nobles. In observance of the last day of Carnival, one of the extensive rooms of the Royal Theatre was illuminated, and crowded with the gay attendants on a Festa di Ballo. Minor apartments were arranged for conversation and refreshments; and, after the opera, the theatre itself was thrown open to the dancers, while the boxes were appropriated to those who preferred being spectators: and here entertainments were richly served to select parties of friends. One can scarcely fancy a more gay sight than the wide area of an European theatre converted into a ball-room, while the tiers of dress-boxes present the lively appearance of so many little banquet-rooms. The most novel feature of the scene, however, to Isabel, was the fancy costumes. To the sound of martial music, the personators of various characters marched in procession from an adjoining chamber into the saloon. Then, as they divided and mingled with the crowd, the rich colors of their foreign garbs were displayed in dazzling relief; and as Isabel, in her wanderings, suddenly encountered the habiliments of some personages dear to memory, she caught momentarily that romantic impression which these amusements, when successfully managed, are well calculated to convey. But the illusion was too often dispelled by the

ludicrous grouping of the characters, or some remark of Vittorio, whose eye pierced the velvet doublet and the embroidered vest, and read much more of actual character than was visible to the strangers.

"That tall and graceful figure, in the splendid attire of Queen Elizabeth's courtiers, is intended for the Earl of Leicester. But look at his boyish face and eye, never lighted by any fire but that of earth-born passion, and picture, if you can, such an expression upon the lips and brow of the gallant earl. And who would suppose the mincing young lady hanging upon his arm could have the assurance to represent Amy Robsart?"

"There, however," said Isabel, "is a face and form in keeping with the costume. Those masses of light hair so gracefully arranged, that pale and quiet, though lovely face, the sad gentleness of the expression, the subdued movement, all betoken Parasina."

They joined the spectators, surrounding a large party of waltzers. The combinations were not a little amusing. Here the Sultan Seyd, with his wide turban and dazzling arms, was whirling round a Swiss peasant girl. There a fat Tartar, with enormous mustachios, tripped away with the Bride of Abydos. A young Greek girl was the partner of a Spanish cavalier, with black hat and ebon plume; and a Turk, flashing with jewels and brightly-dyed merino, gravely twirled round the circle a smiling maiden in deep mourning.

To minds utterly unlearned in the experience of the deeper and more refined sentiments, there is a strangeness altogether inexplicable in the impressions of an idealist. They cannot comprehend any but the most superficial suggestions of the natural or human world. In their view, there is a degree of singularity, approaching to mental disease, in the idea of a young person finding congenial pleasure in observing

such a scene as was now displayed to Isabel in the mere light of fancy and reflection. Yet thus did it present itself to her eye. She thought of the various fortunes of the seemingly joyous multitude, of the hidden passions, the concealed cares, the petty emulation, and the secret hopes, lying beneath the sparkling tide of festivity, which mortals so love to gather over their individual conditions, and merge, as it were, in one brilliant illusion, though but for a single night, the corroding memories and present troubles which darken their lot. There is rich material for imagination to weave into golden tissues, and philosophy to color with the light and shade of her impressive pencil, in the variety, the loveliness, the mannerism of a festival. What is the throb of pleasure which fills the pulses of the most eager partaker in the hilarity, to the calm delight of the musing spectator of the pastime? Lightly glides the fairy form through the mazes of the dance; brilliantly sparkles the jewel in the waving hair; but more swiftly speeds the thoughts of the visionary, and brighter gleams his fancy's glance, as, excited by the symbols of human joy, it roams amid the labyrinths of destiny. O, there are rare gleanings for the speculative in a ball-room, barren as of all places it is deemed by the stoic and the misanthrope! Poets have spoken of a peculiar inspiration which breathes from the Spring-awakened life of Nature, of an intoxicating pleasure caught from the hum of new-born insects and opening vegetation. So, to him who sympathizes fervently with his race, there is an excitement in the sight of a gala, a social expression of enjoyment beyond mere sympathy in the gaiety of which it is the type, beyond and independent of it. And if a stranger be thus surrounded by a festive multitude, his thoughts, thrown back upon himself, do but engender a more sad, but perhaps a deeper reverie. He recalls the spontaneous delight of childhood. He pictures the contrast between

present appearances and actual realities. He reads in the glowing faces around, in the interchange of looks, in the language of manner, many a tale of love, hope, and disappointment. And in this there is poetry, not always fanciful and bright, yet still poetry; and Isabel felt it.

"Comer from the new world!" said the count to Frazier (playfully yet with earnestness), "where the enervating civilization of Europe has not yet triumphed, stand with me in the embrasure of this window, and I will read you a ball-room homily. Fifty years since, the female portion of the nobility of which these are scions, were almost entirely uneducated in aught save what are called accomplishments. Many could neither read nor write. Now in some respects there is an improvement; in others a decline. Scarcely one of these lovely hypocrites pretends to respect her marriage vows. That queenly form in white is the Duchess of A——; the young man vivaciously performing a lover's part beside her is the Marquis ——, who a twelvemonth since married that pale dark-eyed lady who is coquetting with the Duke of A——. The two are not estranged, for they never had a feeling in common, except the desire to combine their incomes by marriage, that they might more freely follow their respective pleasures. Saw you ever such a magnificent set of diamonds as those in the hair of the Countess of ——? They are taken out of pawn for the occasion, at an enormous expense. There is not a more gorgeous costume in the room than that Prince —— is now displaying. Its purchase will cost him a year's support, and swell the long list of his debts. I see your eye wanders to that thoughtful-looking youth, standing near the grave officer. They are father and son. The father derives his support solely from his commission. The latter, at the university of Pisa, where he was educated, contracted a strong friendship with some young Brazilians

overflowing with the love of liberty. Their views were enthusiastically adopted by their Sicilian friend. He returned an ardent republican, and his poor father is in continual dread, lest, by some unguarded expression, he should incur the displeasure of government, and lose the old gentleman his office and his family their only resource. His son himself fears it, and petitions to go to England, where he may enjoy his liberal principles in peace. But glance over the whole room. Of all these young men, some of whom wear so spirited a bearing, scarcely one knows any higher ambition than the temporary distinctions which an occasion like this can gratify. Among the whole circle of these women, you can with difficulty find one deserving of the office, or capable of the duties of a mother. And what better can you expect in a country where the legitimate objects of reverence—parents and priests—set an undisguised example of libertinism? Is not the unavoidable consequence among the higher ranks, practical atheism? Comer from the new world! look through the finery around you; pierce the artificial gloss; read the evidences of exhausted resources, unprincipled lives, and frivolous pursuits, which make up the true history of society here, and thank heaven your lot was cast in a young republic."

There was a bitterness in the count's tones, which mellowed into sadness as he concluded, that touched the heart of Frazier. If there is any spectacle at once noble and affecting, it is that of a young man whose moral sensibility is wounded by his country's decline, who stands aloof from the general corruption of manners, and mourns over it as he would at a brother's dereliction; and whose love of truth and allegiance to virtue is more earnest than his national vanity. Frazier felt a new and sincere respect for Vittorio. He replied only by pressing his hand, and then stood lost in a reverie which the conversation had awakened. When he roused

himself and turned to seek his friend, he was no longer beside him. A few moments passed in threading the dense crowd, brought him again in view. He was sitting on an ottoman in the adjoining apartment, every expression of painful thought banished from his fine countenance, eagerly listening to the words of Isabel. What a consoler is woman! No charm but her presence can so win man from his sorrow, make placid the knit brow, and wreathe the stern lip into a smile. The soldier becomes a lightsome boy at her feet; the anxious statesman smiles himself back to free-hearted youth beside her; and the still and shaded countenance of care brightens beneath her influence, as the closed flower blooms in the sunshine.

Segesta and Selinuntium.

Thy fanes, thy temples, to thy surface bow,
Commingling slowly with heroic earth,
Broke by the share of every rustic plough;
So perish monuments of mortal birth,
So perish all in turn, save well-recorded worth.

CHILDE HAROLD.

THE rainy season, after several fallacious intermissions, at last terminated. Its long days of chilly winds and heavy showers, gloomy skies and damp atmosphere, more oppressive to the absentee than the clear and exhilarating, though intensely cold air of more northern winters, gave way, all at once, to the genial breezes and burning sun of a Sicilian spring. Anxiously had Isabel awaited these indications of settled and auspicious weather, and no sooner did they appear than she urged upon her companions the expediency of immediately starting on an excursion into the interior, which they had previously planned. Not without difficulty had she persuaded her uncle to allow her to be the companion of his visit to the celebrated antiquities in the adjoining provinces. He knew that most of the journey was only to be performed on horseback, and that much discomfort must be endured in order to reach the desirable objects in view. But Isabel

urged the short period requisite for the expedition, her great desire to behold these trophies of antiquity, and that unconquerable spirit of enterprise and endurance which she had inherited from her father. These arguments were not without their influence upon Frazier's mind, but another consideration tended still more to win from him a reluctant consent. He saw that Isabel needed the excitement of change. He remarked, during the many weeks of rain which had followed the first bright month of their sojourn in Palermo, that her thoughts, thrown inward by the outer gloom, which often made her an unwilling prisoner at home, dwelt more earnestly, and with less of hope, upon the idea that had drawn her abroad. Her cheek had paled; her eye was less cheerful; and the tones of her gentle voice, never trained to aught but the ingenuous responses of the spirit, broke forth in a less buoyant and heart-stirring music than was their wont. He knew that a few days of free communion with Nature, a short interval of novel observation, and even the brief courting of fatigue and inconvenience, would do much to divert and relieve her melancholy. Provided, therefore, with means and appliances almost equal to those with which caravans enter the precincts of some desert region, they prepared for a short visit to the interior of Sicily. To Isabel the change of scene was delightful. O, thou enlivener of our faculties stupefied by the monotonous circuit of still life—thou reviver of slumbering feelings—thou awakener of thought—thou restless spirit of travel! how much dost thou lead us voluntarily to suffer, how many pleasant blessings to sacrifice, how many penances to inflict freely upon ourselves! Urged by thee, we dare the perils of the sea, and go from the serene safety of home to the hazardous highway of the world. We abjure the families, the well-tried, and the well-known, the attached friends, the accustomed scenes, and the cherishing

kindred, and we go forth to begin life, as it were, anew, to make ourselves homes abroad, to commune with foreign lands and customs, to take upon ourselves the cheerless name, and the lonely lot of the stranger. Yet art thou a consolation and a noble teacher, restless spirit as thou art. Guided and impelled by thee, how much do we learn! How do our minds expand with liberality that can see good in all things and with love that can find brotherhood in every human being; how do we draw principles from the mingled teachings of nature and society, as their united voices variously and eloquently cry to us on our pilgrim path! We study the great volume of the world and of creation, not according to some narrow and local interpretation, but as cosmopolites, as humanitarians, as *men*. We weave ties of fellowship and love, beautiful because so wholly our own work—the result of the contact of our own natures with what is congenial in spirit, though in habit and circumstance utterly foreign. We thus realize the compass of our minds, the power of our affections, and the illimitable capacity of our sympathies. Alas! that the sweet bonds with which the solitary sojourner binds himself to the warm-hearted and the fair of other lands, to the beings who, in each abiding-place, cheer him with kindness, and solace him with affection, should be so transient; that just as a home-feeling steals over him, he must renew his pilgrimage; that at the moment his heart has made unto itself glad fellowship, he must become again a wayfarer! This, to the true-hearted and the grateful, is the greatest sacrifice which travel demands of its votaries, the most severe tribute which he lays upon her altar; for all of comfort and safety that he has foregone fades quickly from memory, but the obligations of the mind and heart are never forgotten.

Thus felt Isabel as she looked back from Monreale upon the valley, sea, and city, amid which she had so long tarried.

And the painful sense which ever accompanies the idea of parting, faded not from her mind, until after a long ride among the hills, whose aspect was rather wild and rocky, they emerged from between two rugged cliffs, and came suddenly in view of the green valley of Partinico, spreading from the sea in the same fertility of aspect and level expanse which distinguish the plain around the capital. The remainder of the carriage-road winds through a country resembling, in every essential feature, that which they had passed in previous journeyings. Still the olive-trees rose thickly in the fields, their ancient and gnarled stumps bearing in sturdy pride the thick and dim mass of foliage, nourished most mysteriously, it would sometimes seem, through the narrowest possible remnant of the decayed trunk. Still the hills stretched in dreary ranges, and exhibited masses of oxydated rock; and still the way was skirted with the bluish and spear-like leaves of the aloe, upon whose thorny edges hung many a crystal dew-drop.

It was but dawn when they left the village which formed the boundary of the carriage-road, and guided their horses into the path which leads to the site of the ancient Ægesta. The way lay along the edge of a deep glen. The ranges of mountains opposite are rock-ribbed, and dotted with cultivated lots, and the path itself is thickly bordered with overhanging bushes, clusters of wormwood, and innumerable wild flowers. From the more elevated parts of this rugged and narrow path, when the wide slopes on the right, the green defile beneath, and the clear horizon beyond, were all visible, the scene was remarkably picturesque. As they wound slowly along, gradually coming in sight of its different features, the morning light stole softly, and in gentle gradations, over the landscape, now falling goldenly upon some high mound, now giving a silvery glow to the polished leaves of a

distant and lofty tree, and radiating more and more broadly a clear light along the eastern sky. Isabel's gaze was directed to the hills on her left, as the sun thus silently dispersed from their tops the mist of night, when, at a break in their line, unexpectedly as a vision, appeared the beautiful temple, standing in solitary prominence upon a broad, high hill-top. The early gleam of the sun fell upon its simple columns, between which glimmered from afar the lucid horizon. The lonely position of this chaste edifice gives a singular and striking effect to its first appearance, rising thus to the eye unawares. No trees interrupt the view. No adjacent objects distract the attention. Though by no means lofty or commanding in its proportions, it is placed so high, that, when seen from below, and thus distantly, there is a majesty in its aspect which is deeply impressive. The time-worn hue, the graceful pillars, the airy architecture, the elevated position, induce an immediate and most pleasing impression. The beholder at once feels that there is before him a Grecian temple—one of those few specimens which embalm and illustrate a principle of art, and memorialize an exploded but poetical religion. The perfect repose of an hour, the extensive and varied scenery, the lonely position of this fair vestige, and its tranquil beauty, were scarcely realized by the travellers, ere, like a scenic image, it was lost to view as suddenly as it had appeared. The next bend of the mountains veiled it from their gaze, and left them at liberty to speculate upon its appearance. This momentary glimpse, however, sufficed to strike and arouse Isabel's imagination more effectually, perhaps, than a nearer and longer inspection. She pondered long upon the devotion to Nature which the site selected for its erection indicated, upon the love of the simple so insignificantly displayed in its architecture, upon the delightful union of the beauty of art with the glory of the universe,

which the Greeks understood so well how to combine into one noble influence, to arouse human feeling and address the sense of the ideal. No one, she thought, possessing one spark of the soul's ethereal fire could encounter such a temple, encircled by the green hills, and canopied by the vaulted sky—at the solemn hour of morning, without thinking of a superior intelligence, and yielding to the inspiration of that devotional sentiment which prompts the human heart to seek that which is above and eternal; in wretched ignorance too often it may be, with a most dim and inadequate sense of its object perhaps; but still there would be the feeling, the idea of devotion—the struggling of the spirit to mount—the tending of the soul heavenward—the uplooking, the inclination to the spiritual, which is man's highest attribute. In such a feeling there is blessedness. How much might art and society and experience encourage and call it forth, were men more inclined to lessen the machinery and cherish the poetry of life! After winding round the base of the hills, they came out upon the almost barren scene which once teemed with the dwellings of an ancient city. On the summit of a mountain—itself the centre of an amphitheatre of hills, are the remains of the amphitheatre of Segeste; and as one sits upon the highest range of stone seats, the eye glances over a mountainous and wild region, embracing a prospect of remarkable extent. Below, upon a lesser elevation, and in the centre of a dale, appears the temple—the only other distinct relic of the ruined city. Its thirty-six columns are much indented and shattered, and have been partially restored. As the strangers stood upon the weedy ground, beneath the roofless architrave, the wind sighed through the open pillars as it swept from the hills. A flock of goats were ruminating upon the slope which declined from the front of the building, and

scores of birds, distributed by the intrusion, fluttered and wailed above their heads.

"This Doric structure," said Vittorio, "is supposed to have been dedicated to Ceres, and is no unworthy token of the city it has survived, whose foundations were laid soon after the Trojan war, and the destruction of which is attributed to Agathocles. This tyrant's anger was provoked by the Ægestans having asked aid from the Carthaginians to resist his usurpations. How beautiful appears such an architectural relic, standing alone in the midst of these wild sweeping hills—a lone memorial of departed ages—invoking the traveller to remember that here once flourished the arts of life, and swelled the tide of humanity in grandeur and prosperity, where all is now solitude and dreariness! No sound but the tinkling bells of that browsing herd, and the wild hymn of the free wind, meets our ears. No human figures enliven the scene, save that group of herdsmen leaning on their reeds. All is lone and silent. Yet as we look upon these columns, which violence has mutilated, and time stamped with decay, and trace the lines of human workmanship; as we at one view contemplate the regular position of the pillars, the cornice, the pediment, the broad steps, the simple majesty of the design, and mark the evidences of human thought—how clearly does this isolated object bring home to the spectator the thought of those who once gathered about this portal in familiar conclave, and to whose eyes this temple was as well known as the landscape of our native place to us! For ages the morning has gilded these columns as at this moment; for ages they have been bedewed with the tears of the solemn night. Centuries of revolution, and of nature's annual decline and renovation, have passed on, and still it stands, venerable and alone—a mute chronicle, unshadowed by one of the many edifices

that rose around it—the recordless monument of the city it adorned."

After leaving this interesting spot, the way became more void of the signs of life and cultivation. Now and then they passed a *lettiga*, with its complement of passengers and attendants. This is the national carriage of Sicily. It consists of a kind of box, like the body of a carriage, rudely painted with the effigies of saints and martyrs, and secured to two poles, which are supported in front and behind upon the backs of two mules. The constant tinkling of the bells, and the uneasy motion of these animals, combined with the narrow dimensions of the vehicle, render it a comfortless conveyance. The extensive hill-sides and plains in this region afford pasturage to numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and occasionally patches of more productive soil were covered with the blue blossom of the flax, or green with the newly-sprung grain. There was a forbidding aspect, however, in most of the scenery, especially when a cloud veiled from its wide surface the cheerful sunlight. Our travellers were not the less sensible of this lack of pleasing features in the landscape, that they were fresh from the companionship and living language of the metropolis. Who has not felt, after a long abode in town, when he has found himself alone in a thinly-populated country, a certain strangeness of position, arising from the unwonted absence of the sights and sounds of multitudinous life?

"It seems sometimes well," said Isabel, "to quit thus the circle of busy life, to leave behind us the symbols of social refinement, and to come forth into the loneliness of nature. We return to these enjoyments with a new delight."

"I doubt," replied Vittorio, "if any but travellers can thoroughly appreciate the blessings of civilization, the amenities of cultivated society, and what Lamb calls 'the sweet se-

curity of streets.' It is by contrast that we realize their charms. And I know no change more delightful than that from days of wandering in a scantily habited country, to our accustomed round of friendly visits, and social pleasures, where are congregated the dwellings of our kind, environed with the graces, the courtesies, and the refinements of social existence."

Frazier, who had dismounted, and rambled to a little distance, returned with his hand full of herbs.

"Look," he exclaimed, "while you have been idly speculating, I have botanized to some advantage; for in this little walk I have discovered several wild plants, which, in their cultivated state, garnish our tables. It proves how fertile in useful productions, are even the barrenest parts of the island. Here, for instance, is a bunch of wild asparagus, almost as good in appearance as is sold in the markets of America."

"You would find it rather bitter though," said the count, laughing; "but we are approaching a finer illustration of the richness of the Sicilian soil."

As he spoke they came in view of another of these rich plains, which occur, at intervals, along the coast, and afford the greatest contrast to the desolate chains of mountain scenery which extend back for miles from their borders.

There is an ancient quarry at the distance of a few miles from the now impoverished town of Castel-Vetrano, at which travellers repose on the route we are describing, if haply they are provided with the appurtenances to secure comfortable slumber, and bid defiance to the attacks of the insects which infest the country-houses of the island. The ride thither is dreary, and the first object worthy of note which meets the eye is Pantelleria, looming up from the sea at a considerable distance, its two mounds, if the day be fine, clearly defined

against the horizon. This island is the wretched abode of most of the state prisoners of the kingdom of Naples. The old quarry is situated in the midst of a cultivated field. There is a large mass of granite, bearing the most obvious marks of having been anciently cut for architectural purposes. Two or three circular blocks, of about nine feet in diameter, remain standing, and were evidently intended as parts of enormous columns. It is curious to remark, that the manner of working this quarry was evidently to cut the blocks for use directly from the mass, instead of first excavating fragments, and then shaping them, as is the modern custom. Vittorio bade Isabel notice this, as a proof of the economy of ancient labor. The difficulty there must have been in transporting these huge segments was another subject of wonderment.

"If it were not for these rank weeds, and this thick coat of moss," said Frazier, "one would think the work was abandoned but yesterday. How plainly you can trace the lines of the chisel! Yet this scene of action was thus suddenly deserted many ages ago, and has apparently been undisturbed since, save by the traveller's footstep."

On quitting the place to visit the site of Selinuntium, which city was evidently indebted for its most lasting material to this very quarry, they found the path far different from that which they had threaded since morning. It was a lane, thickly bordered with myrtles and flowery shrubs, which perfumed the air beneath a sunlight so vivid, that they were glad to guide their horses beneath the trees which overhung the way. There was a mingled wildness and garden-like beauty in this sequestered road which charmed Isabel, and she was delighted to find, in many of the floral emblems, that seemed to smile upon her from their waving stalks, or meekly court a glance from below, many of the flowers which at

home were deemed worthy of assiduous culture. Through the openings in the hedge, here and there, were visible the thatched and hive-like tents of *carbonari* and the cheese-makers. Near the former a wreath of blue smoke curled gracefully upward; and about the latter the cattle lay in groups, with their stag-like heads motionless, giving a rural and picturesque air to the otherwise deserted scene. From this shady and soothing way they came out upon a sandy beach, upon which broke, in gentle murmurings, the blue waters of the sea, and, ascending a high cliff, were at the foot of the lesser pile of ruins which indicate where stood the ancient Selinus. Between this spot and the opposite elevation was the port of the city, now choked up with sand; and the plain above the farther promontory is covered, for a considerable space around, with the massive remains of the temples of Selinuntium. These fragments, with the exception of two or three columns which still rise in stern pride, seem to have been thrown down by some violent convulsion of the earth. They are all in a style of severe simplicity, and the vestiges of the largest edifice indicate its size to have been grand beyond conception. There is something unique, even to one very familiar with the trophies of antiquity, in the appearance of this mass of ruins. Broken columns, capitals, wall-stones, and architraves, huddled promiscuously together, and bearing few traces of time's corrosive torch, but rather wearing a hue of freshness and undiminished strength. Their position, however, and the herbage and wild flowers which grow luxuriantly amid and around them, sufficiently vindicate their claim to the title of ruins. The sea-breeze stirred the flowing hair of Isabel as she sat upon one of these huge fragments between her uncle and Vittorio, while their purveyor arranged their collation upon the wide slab of a fallen pillar. She looked seaward, round over the verdant plains, and then

upon these noble and prostrate remains, and the glad harmony of nature seemed to blend with the solemn music of antiquity, and move in one deep, rich, and softened cadence over her heart.

"If toil and enduring material could secure the perpetuity of human temples," said the count, "one would think that these would have remained unharmed, and stood now in solid grandeur as at the hour of their completion. Yet one earthquake, perhaps of momentary duration, long since, laid their proud columns in the dust. How triumphant are the energies of nature! How transient the mightiest efforts of art! See what a vine has spread its tendrils over this capital, and note that brightly-painted lizard glide fearlessly over this splendid segment of a majestic column."

"Yet, after all," said Frazier, "why moralize over a few blocks of granite, which were quarried, carved, and reared into a gigantic structure, and, having served their destined purpose, were hurled down to crumble on the earth? Rather look upon these fertile fields, and that line of fishing-boats, and rejoice that the resources of the earth are ever renewed, so that, with due labor and care, men, age after age, are provided with the necessities of life and the bounties of Providence."

"It is, I believe," said Isabel, "because the count has faith in other wants than such as these that he speaks mournfully of these ruins. He sees an evidence of devotion to something beyond and above physical life. They are mementos of sentiment, taste, and mind. They bespeak a love of the grand and the beautiful, and therefore it is saddening to think of their downfall and behold their decay. Yet methinks it were more consoling to remember the eternity of the principle that gave them birth; to think that art's divinest product is but faintly typical of human capacity—to think that the

more completely vain seem the embodiments of genius and feeling now, the more conscious is the spirit of a nobler sphere and an immortal destiny."

Isabel's eye and cheek glowed, and her voice was firm in its sweetness as she spoke. Her travelling hat was thrown back, that the refreshing air might visit her brow more freely; and as she thus uttered her young but warm conviction, even her uncle's smile changed to a gaze of admiring affection, and the earnest eyes of Vittorio were thoughtfully fixed upon her face. She seemed to him like the lovely genius of the scene—the inspired prophetess, heaven-appointed, to interpret its teachings.

Sciacca.

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbor-stained steel,
Will they not hear?—what ho! you men, you beasts—
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage,
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE path, beyond the remarkable vestiges of Selinuntium, intersects a cork wood of some extent. The trees which compose it are not, however, of that immense size which renders these forests so grand and gloomy in more northern districts of Europe. They are triennially barked, and, at different times, have proved highly profitable to the proprietors. A broad heath, interspersed with masses of tangled brushwood, opens from the extremity of this grove, and its barrenness is relieved by the yellow blossoms of a species of broom which abounds here, of a bell-like form, and pleasant perfume. A rough and precipitous descent conducts the traveller down to the sea-shore, upon which stands the town of Sciacca. There are few among the many picturesque localities of Sicily which strike the beholder as better adapted for the scenes of romance than this. The country, for many

miles round, is wild and hilly, and a long ridge of lonely beach offers the most accessible road during a considerable space. Several abrupt mountains are grouped commandingly at a short distance from the sea, from one of which a constant stream of sulphur vapor exhudes, and at their base are several warm springs mentioned in ancient history. Beneath these hills, upon a promontory jutting into the ocean, appears Sciacca. The peculiar hue of age which distinguishes its compact buildings and wave-washed ramparts, is in admirable keeping with the wild adjacent scenery and bleak position of the ancient town. The ascent to its walls is very steep and broken; and as our travellers were slowly winding up the rude mule-path, Isabel declared there must be some fearful legend or historic interest attached to the spot, and turned to the count for a confirmation of her surmises. He could not but credit her sagacity; and when the party were refreshed, as far as the miserable accommodations of the place permitted, they beguiled the evening with a glimpse of the history of that now decayed and impoverished country.

"The ruins of the two castles back of the town, and an old palace within its walls, are the only existent memorials of the most distinguished among its ancient families. Nobility and wealth combined to give the ascendency in Sciacca to the houses of Luna and Perollo. Between these rival barons, and their descendants, there existed a feud as inveterate and deadly, though boasting no such affecting catastrophe, as that which has immortalized the names of Capulet and Montague. Its origin, like that of many similar quarrels, is attributed to disappointed love. Arrale Luna and John Perollo were suitors for the hand of Margaret Peralta, an accomplished and beautiful heiress. At that moment the balance of worldly advantages preponderated in favor of Luna, who was a great favorite at court; and he was ac-

cepted, although it is believed the lady greatly preferred his rival. If she did thus sacrifice her affections to ambition, the usual fatal consequences of such perversity soon followed; for in a very short time after his marriage, Count Arrale, having taken a bath at the foot of younder mountain, under the church of St. Barnabas, suddenly died, in June, 1412. It was currently reported that the bath was poisoned by the unsuccessful lover. However ill-established the story was, a mere suspicion of this nature, in that sanguinary age, was sufficient to excite in the minds of Luna's immediate descendants a desire and purpose of revenge. This was increased by a litigation between the houses respecting the barony of St. Bartolomy, then in possession of Perollo. The case was decided in favor of Luna, and thus a new occasion for mutual animosity presented itself. Deprived of his estate by his enemy, and mindful of his ancestor's wrong, Perollo determined to inflict summary vengeance upon his rival, whose very presence, environed as it was with all the insignia of successful ambition and superior wealth, was a source of constant annoyance to the haughty baron. The manner in which he undertook to obtain satisfaction for his baffled hopes, and satisfy his long-cherished hatred, is a remarkable evidence of the daring and ferocious spirit of those times. Towards evening, on the sixth of April, 1455, as Luna was walking in procession with the priests of the Holy Thorn, near the palace of Perollo, his enemy, taking advantage of his defenceless position, rushed forth, and stabbed him till he fell. Then, leaving him weltering in his gore, he hastened with a party of adherents to the palace of his fallen foe, and, setting it on fire, abandoned it to destruction. Luna's wound was not, however, mortal, and he gradually recovered from its effects. This flagrant crime was the means of extending the knowledge of the inveterate feud which had so long disturbed the

peace, not only of the rival families, but of their whole native city, and in order, if possible, to arrest its progress, King Alphonso banished both of the fierce barons. In the course of the year 1462, John of Arragon recalled them, and, whether cooled by absence, or rendered reasonable by advancing years, on returning to Sciacca they mutually avoided all occasions of discord, and passed their remaining days in friendship.

"Nearly seventy years had elapsed, and Charles occupied the throne of Spain and Sicily. It was one of the most agitated and eventful epochs in the history of the island. The two leading houses of Sciacca had continued to advance in riches and power, and at this time they occupied relatively the same antagonist positions. They still were rivals in wealth and ambition, superior in rank and influence to all around them, and sufficiently balanced in the number of their respective friends, the pride of birth, and the means of acquiring power, to keep alive a constant and active spirit of rivalry. In accordance, too, with the notions of the age, it was deemed chivalrous to remember that their ancestors were enemies, and keep the slumbering embers of past feuds from being utterly extinguished. The demon of quarrel, however, for a considerable time, only manifested itself among the dependents and friends of the two nobles, occasionally breaking out in petty disputes or bloody encounters. Thus, even without the immediate agency of the principal personages, the order, security, and quiet of Sciacca were perpetually invaded by this long-nurtured feud. The narrow confines of a single city were insufficient to sustain the conflicting pride of two such haughty chiefs; and the spirit of faction, that enemy of social tranquillity, raged with unrestrained ferocity and seemingly deathless energy amid the inhabitants of Sciacca. An incident soon occurred which roused the leaders to renewed hostilities. Sericano Bassa, a famous Moorish corsair, who

had carried off many of the inhabitants from the coast of Sicily, and consigned them to slavery, succeeded, in the summer of 1529, in surprising the Baron of Solanto, while that noble and his friends were hunting. Proud of such a prize, the bold pirate appeared off the shore of Sciacca, and displayed signals for a ransom. Luna presented himself, and made large offers to retrieve the captives, but his exertions were quite unsuccessful. Perollo, equally anxious to effect the same object, not only tendered rich presents, but endeavored to gain the good-will of the corsair by his attentions and talents. In a short time those efforts were so effectual, that the dreaded pirate not only gave up his noble prisoner, but solemnly pledged himself to Perollo never henceforth to cruise near the shore of Sciacca. Thus the baron not only conferred a lasting obligation upon one whose friendship was eminently desirable, but rendered an important service, and one which could not but be deeply felt, upon his native city. This triumph of his rival's excited the most rancorous envy in the breast of Luna; and so open was he in his threats of injury, having retired to Castabellata, and consulted with his friends as to the best means of exterminating his enemy, that Perollo and his partisans began to consider how they could best anticipate his machinations. Luna and his counsellors deliberately determined upon the death of his rival, and accordingly sallied forth at night, at the head of a hundred soldiers, who, to avoid suspicion, were dispersed through the city. Their intended victim, having received timely warning, was shut up in his palace under the plea of illness. The *bravi* of Luna succeeded in taking two well-known friends of Perollo, whom they instantly despatched, and bore their heads, affixed to poles, through the streets of the town. An excellent and illustrious citizen, heart-sick at this horrible proceeding, attempted to establish a reconciliation, and ap-

peared before both barons, bearing an olive branch, and counselling peace; but the good old man was seized by some members of one of the factions, who affected to consider him a spy, and basely murdered. When Perollo heard of this new crime, he appealed to the viceroy for assistance. Baron Statella, from Catania, was commissioned, in conjunction with the fiscal counsellors, and three officers of Sciacca, with full power. He ordered Luna to disband his troops and return to Castabellata, executed the leading ruffians, and took every measure to quell the tumult. But the riotous citizens rose upon him, and Luna, after dissembling a short time, returned with an increased force, and declared himself resolved to prosecute his purposes. In this emergency, Perollo sent his eldest son to solicit succor at Messina, with a strong attendant guard. Luna took immediate advantage of the diminution of the forces sent to guard his rival, and, having barricaded the streets, surrounded the palace where Statella resided, who was killed, and his body thrown from the battlements. Perollo's castle was also besieged, and, after a prolonged and desperate assault, was on the point of being taken, when the friends of its unhappy proprietor once more endeavored to win Luna to peace. The haughty baron refused all overtures, unless his enemy should kneel to him, ask forgiveness, and kiss his feet. The bearer of this humiliating proposal having been severely beaten, Luna was so exasperated, that on the following morning he renewed his attacks vehemently, and, having made a breach, penetrated to the interior of the castle, and spread ruin and death around him. Perollo fled by the southern postern; the victor respected the persons of the fugitive's family, but turned a deaf ear to their tearful prayers for peace. Perollo took refuge in a house near the sea, but was betrayed to Luna by one of his own faction. He was slain by the daggers of his

rival's partisans, and his body dragged through the streets, attached to the tail of Luna's horse. Frederick Perollo returned at the head of a powerful force, and revenged his father's death by the massacre of Luna and his adherents. This last sanguinary scene closed the long and tragic feud of the rival houses—a feud unparalleled for its inveteracy, and affording a sad illustration of the spirit of those times—a feud which for many generations divided and harassed the people, and signally marred the prosperity of Sciacca."

Agrigentum.

What is gray with age becomes religion. WALLENSTEIN.

THE dreariness of the ride from Sciacca to Girgenti is interrupted only by the occasional appearance of one of the many torrents which rush from the mountains to the sea, and the sight of some old tower crowning a bluff upon the shore. These relics of ancient fortresses are pleasant objects in the lonely prospects, since they carry back the mind to one of the most romantic, though least known, of the eras of Sicilian history. Another striking object which draws the attention of the wanderer through this solitary region is the singular aspect of a little village on a hill-top, which, on account of its bleak position, about fifty years since, was deserted by its inhabitants, who erected their cottages in the sheltered vale below, leaving their former dwellings to decay. The compact, low walls of this group of gray cottages are conspicuous in their desertion, and when first seen, present, in conjunction with the country around them, a melancholy though not displeasing picture. It is somewhat startling to the unprepared equestrian, after crossing the line of beach which completes his dreary ride, to find himself upon the Mole of Girgenti, which, although of inconsiderable ex-

tent, often presents a scene of bustle and activity. Lines of galley-slaves may be seen repairing the mound, the clank of their fetters blending with the roar of the waves, vessels of no ordinary burden lying off the shore to receive their cargoes, boats plying, and, higher up, crowds of porters transporting the sulphur-cake, the great article of export here, or arranging it in long piles to be weighed. As he leaves this little mart, a more cheerful country at once presents itself, and a level and well-travelled road echoes cheerily to the steps of his steed. Small droves of donkeys, with their panniers filled with the firmly moulded product of the mine, wind along the highway, and far above appears the Girgenti, on the summit of a mountain. Although this, like most of the Sicilian towns when viewed from afar, presents a strong, ancient, and really picturesque appearance, when more intimately known it is found to consist of narrow and filthy streets, where beggary vaunts its wretchedness, and comfort is almost unknown ; where a splendid church, a few palaces, or some beautifully located convents, are in saddening contrast with the general and too often disgusting tokens of neglect and misery. It was perfectly refreshing to the spirits of the strangers to find themselves, on a balmy and bright morning, free from the air of the modern town, which rose commandingly above them, and traversing the fertile and noble plain upon which stand the antiquities they sought. The day, indeed, was an uncommon one, even for that region. The warm, enervating breath of a mild *sirocco* wind was tempered by the sea-breeze. The light, fleecy clouds of a summer sky had floated down to the very edge of the horizon, and the broad, clear canopy of heaven was one boundless expanse of azure ; while the sun, as yet devoid of the intense heat of the approaching season, shone in all the glory, without the fervid heat, of a southern spring. It was one of those splendid days

which bring, to such as are blessed with health, an unaccountable exhilaration—which fill up the measure of content, and charm the senses while they animate the soul. The field through which our little party were proceeding was vividly green with early grain, as if the goddess once worshipped in this plain still delighted to clothe it with the emblems of her favor. Over this thickly-woven garniture fell, far and wide, the shadows of innumerable almond and olive-trees, which studded, for a great distance, the plentiful domain, the dark and light tints of their foliage intermingling in rich variety. Here stood the second ancient city of Sicily. The remains of a temple, consecrated to Ceres and Proserpine, have shared the fate of many architectural relics of past ages, in being transformed into constituent parts of a church. One column of what is called Vulcan's Temple is embedded in a peasant's cottage, and the only other remaining one rises at the corner of his garden wall. Two columnar fragments, and the staircase of the temple of Esculapius, are in a like situation. But with these exceptions, the ruins of Agrigentum exist inviolate to an extraordinary degree, and are less invaded by modern and irrelevant circumstances than is often the case with the antiquities of Europe. The first in tolerable preservation is the temple of Juno Lucina. Its position is beautiful and commanding; and the foundation of the internal wall, thirteen perfect and many broken colums of the Doric order, are still standing. The altar-base is also discoverable, and one can follow the corridors in their whole extent. From the little esplanade in front, a view of vastness and beauty expands to the vision. This space was evidently left for effect; and a few ancient benches of stone, at a sufficient distance to command a view of the whole edifice, suggest how much judgment was exercised in the location and arrangement of the edifice. This spot must have been a favorite retreat for

the contemplative. The sea spreads itself illimitably on the one side, and all the space around is one luxuriant valley, bounded by a fine ridge of mountains, upon one of which the modern town of Girgenti now stands, while directly before the spectator rose, with a simple majesty accordant with the spirit of the scene, the noble fabric whose vestiges still awaken admiration.

"One disposed to be fanciful," said Vittorio, as they stood enjoying the prospect, "might almost imagine that he heard the flutter of a philosopher's robe in this early and invigorating breeze, so well adapted seems the spot to the dignity of thought. And may we not reasonably suppose, that this level space, before so beautiful an edifice, has often been paced by the slow feet of sages, as they sought, according to the delightful custom of antiquity, mutually to impart wisdom, with nature's restoring breath playing around, and art's noblest trophies rising beside them? It was within the walls of this temple that the precious painting of Zeuxis, in which were concentrated the charms of the five most lovely women of Agrigentum, was preserved."

"It is a fine idea, is it not," said Isabel, "that of weaving into one perfect whole the beauties which nature has scattered? There is poetry in the thought. So may we gather the volatile light of pleasure by keeping our spirits clear and open, that, like a lens, they may gather the scattered rays, and make them radiate one warm beam of joy upon the heart."

"And there is philosophy in the thought, also," said Vittorio. "Thus, too, comes to us wisdom and truth. Men err most essentially by seeking them from partial sources; one from a single science, another from nature alone, and a third from an abstract theory. Like the Grecian painter, we should be more universal; and combine into a luminous

whole the light that beams from the wide domain of creation, and the broad universe of humanity. We should roam, like the blessed founder of a pure religion, seeking emblems of the good and the true in the lily and the grass—in the humble action of the despised, and the ostentatious effort of the wealthy—in the aspect of childhood and the events of time. Gleaning thus from society and the universe the garland we should weave on the by-way of time, like the painting of Zeuxis, would blend the various glories which men too often seek singly, and therefore find inadequate."

Passing on by scattered masses of the ancient walls, in which are discoverable the niches for the deposit of funeral urns, the next temple is that of Concord, the most perfect of the antiquities, being complete, with the exception of the roof. It is situated a little lower than that of Juno, but is still sufficiently elevated to command from its top the same extent and variety of scenery. At the distance of a few rods, a line of low wall-stones, and a group of columnar and other fragments, evidence the former magnificence of the temple of Hercules; and farther on, two or three enormous capitals, and the foundation layers of the outer wall of the temple of Jupiter Olympicus, prove it to have been one of the largest of the ancient edifices of Sicily. As the visitor wanders amid the huge mass of ruins, he discovers in the midst a group of stone-work, in which a little attention will enable him to decipher the lineaments and frame of a stupendous giant. Several other remnants of this kind are noticeable among the massive blocks, and it is conjectured that these monsters were carved to form a secondary row of pillars in this grand structure. In a pleasant dale below this heap of remains stand three chaste columns and a cornice, all that exist entire of the temple of Castor and Pollux. A square massive tower, of unquestionable antiquity, in the vicinity, is known

as the tomb of Theron, although by some it is supposed to be the monument of a horse, many of which are known to have been erected by the Agrigentines.

After many delightful hours spent in viewing these various objects, Vittorio suggested that they should repair to the convent of St. Nicolo, which stands upon the brow of a mountain above the valley. This monastery has, for many years, been deserted by the Franciscan fraternity, to whose patrimony it belongs; but it is still visited occasionally by travellers, on account of the fine view obtainable from its roof. When they reached this point of observation, the panorama, canopied by a brilliant sky, appeared to them unparalleled. The surface of the distant sea was unbroken by a single sail, but the line of foam evidenced that its wide bosom was stirred far out by the free wind. The dark tint of the innumerable ancient olives relieved the light green of the almond-trees, which shared with them the extensive plain. On a gradually declining strip of upland, between the convent and the sea, at a sufficient distance apart to give due effect to each, appeared the remains of the city—Juno's line of pillars, the graceful temple of Concord, prominent in its completeness, the dim masses of Jupiter and Hercules, and, in meek beauty, lightly springing from below, the three columns of Castor and Pollux. The stone of which these temples are composed is not of a firm texture, and the marine atoms discernible in its composition prove it to be of alluvial formation. It is of a brownish, or clay color, which contrasts finely with the verdure around, and, with the added advantage of the lucid atmosphere peculiar to these regions, gives to the several structures an exquisite relief in the landscape. The notes of birds, or the clear chime of the bells from the town above, were the only sounds which disturbed the reflec-

tions of the strangers as they gazed from the lofty convent upon the scene of their ramble.

"Enterprise," observed Frazier, "well directed, in the excavation of this valley, would doubtless bring to light many valuable relics of antiquity. No one can inspect the meagre collection which has rewarded the comparatively trifling labor bestowed here in seeking for vases, without being convinced that there are innumerable unearthed treasures lying beneath these grain fields."

"It were certainly desirable," said Vittorio, "not only here, but at Pompeii and Rome, where the sight of such slow and childish attempts at discovery, in a sphere in which one feels there is so much to seek, is certainly provoking. But how admirably are these antiquities situated to convey an impression! No piles of wooden building environ them. The noise and filth of a populous town obliges not the traveller to seek them by moonlight, as is the case in the Eternal City. They are alone with nature. As we look upon them thus, there is no difficulty in realizing their authenticity. Through this plain whirled the ivory chariots of the Agrigentines, drawn by horses of unrivalled swiftness and beauty. Here the tyrant Phalaris practised his cruelties. From that line of tombs hurried the fear-stricken soldiers of Hannibal, when the sudden thunder-storm frightened them from their sacrilegious purpose. A little more than four centuries before the Christian era a population of eight hundred thousand souls inhabited this rich valley, now rendered picturesque by a few remnants of the majestic temples of their gods. Over all else obscurity has drawn a veil. And long may these beautiful relics lift their time-worn shapes from this verdant plain, to solemnize the fresh exuberance of nature with the emblems of departed time, and awaken the thoughtful yet

pleasing emotions with which we contemplate the mystery of the past!"

The return route from Girgenti to the capital by the most direct way, affords a good opportunity to judge of the interior features of the island. Perhaps there are few countries, of similar extent, where a greater contrast is observable than that between the coast and interior of Sicily. Along the sea, and about Etna, the aspect is fertile and delightful, and the stranger who should circumnavigate the island during fine weather, would receive an impression of the richness and beauty of the country which might realize his most romantic dreams of the luxurious south. Yet farther back, bare hills and wild torrents constitute the predominant scenery, sometimes brightened and diversified by patches of wild flowers. The course which our pilgrims pursued to expedite their return led them through long tracks of bleak pasturage, and they crossed more than thirty times the same circuitous *fiumare*, then shrunk to comparatively narrow dimensions; but when at all swollen by the winter's rains, presenting a complete barrier to the traveller's progress. Yet, amidst these unproductive parts of the island, there are still presented striking evidences of its natural resources. The low mounds and light smoke of the sulphur mines, of which there are several of apparently inexhaustible material in Sicily, are seen at intervals, giving signs of life to some lonely ridge of hills. Still it is a relief to emerge, after a long day's travel, from this almost deserted domain, and strike upon the fine road which runs through the island. The occasional appearance of the country guards, who generally move abroad in pairs, well mounted, give an assurance of the neighborhood of more civilized provinces. These *campieri*, as they are called, are selected from the inhabitants of each village, and their commander is responsible for all robberies

on the highway during the day, an arrangement which has proved very effectual in preserving the rights of travellers. In the neighborhood of Palermo, a broad valley, covered with rocks and olive-trees, indicates the scene of a noted brigand fight, in which seven of these desperadoes succeeded in keeping at bay a large number of troops and nearly a hundred peasants for several hours, and at length five effected their escape. Another scene of interest in the vicinity is a village, founded by a Greek colony, where one of the dialects of that language is still spoken, and on feast days the costume of the nation worn. It is one of the customs peculiar to this spot, and a similar and more distant settlement, that the priests are allowed to marry. In the light of a fine afternoon the vale of Palermo was once again revealed to the longing eyes of Isabel, and she could not but compare the mere curiosity with which she first greeted the distant city, with the homefelt emotions which now filled her heart, as at the presence of a cherished friend.

The Reunion.

O welcome guest, though unexpected here! COWPER.

TO acquire true impressions, the traveller should revisit scenes of natural interest and beauty, and behold them in different moods of mind and at different seasons of the year. If this is true generally, it is particularly so in regard to many parts of Southern Europe, and especially of the island of Sicily. A gloomy sky or chilly wind often dispels all charm from her fairest prospect; and although the perennial verdure of the fertile regions gives them at all times a cheerful aspect, yet it is wonderful how the feelings of the stranger, who stands beneath the cloudless sky, and in the clear sunlight of spring or autumn, contrasts with those which he experiences when the scene is veiled by the winter rain, or parched by the heat of mid-summer. Our pilgrims were conscious of this, when, for the second time, they approached that part of the island which, in the view of the scientific, presents the greatest amount of interest. One of those beautiful English yachts which may occasionally be seen cruising on the Mediterranean coast, had borne them, in a few hours, from Palermo to Catania. Before reaching their destination, they surveyed from the sea those remarkable

masses of basaltic rock which rise near the shore, and were obviously the offspring of Etna. To ascend this mountain was the object of their visit, and, on landing, Isabel noted with delight the rapidity with which vegetation unfolded, and the universal hue of spring which had robed the whole adjacent country. At such a period, the singular prevalence of the lava is more striking. Indeed, nothing but familiarity with this wonderful material prevents its appearance in such abundance from exciting surprise. The entire domain, for many leagues around the volcano, bears witness to the frequency and extent of its eruptions. The lava here lies heaped in rocky masses; there, reduced to powder, it constitutes the road; decomposed by time, it forms the soil in which every variety of tree and vegetable flourish; shaped by the chisel, it appears in the form of doorways and pillars, while its rough and unhewn fragments serve for the walls of plantations.

The road to Nicolosi, which constitutes the first stage of the ascent, is bordered with vineyards, intersected with streams of lava, of later origin than those which compose the soil. With the exception of these dark ridges, and the fine black dust which flies around the traveller, there is little to impress him with the idea that he is passing over a country once devastated by a volcanic inundation. Yet, directly before his eye rise two seemingly low mounds, with separate peaks, but joined at their bases, of a dull red color, half covered with shrubbery. This is Monte Rossi, whence issued the fatal streams of 1669. After several hours' repose, our travellers found themselves beyond the village, and moving slowly towards the desired summit. It was night. The sky was clear and the air calm. No sound but the heavy tread of the mules, through the sand-like path, disturbed the deep stillness of the hour. The light of a lantern, carried by a

boy in advance of the guide, glimmered upon the huge blocks of lava, which were widely scattered around, like the waves of the mighty sea, petrified in some moment of convulsion, and dyed with the ebon blackness of a storm-cloud. Occasionally a meteor flashed athwart the star-gemmed sky, or a breeze from above swept fitfully by. There was something indescribably solemn in thus seeking the summit of one of earth's most venerable mountains in the solitude and shadow of night, and for some time they continued to progress silently, till the count observed to Frazier, "We have seen many antiquities, but none of them can vie in age with this mountain. It was sought by the wise men of old, not less than by the inquirers of our own age. It is celebrated by the earliest poets. Pindar sang its wonders, and the mythology of a later epoch accounted for its mysterious movements by the theory of the Cyclops, who, it was fabled, were forging the armor of Vulcan beneath yonder cone."

"And to us it remains almost as much of a mystery," said Frazier, "in many essential respects. As to its history, it seems to me we can best read it in the various strata of lava around us, some the production of remote ages, some not yet cooled by the upper air. Who can survey its enormous base, and note the springs generated in its bosom, the many colored minerals encrusted on its surface, the sulphureous masses embedded in its sides, the fantastic ridges clinging around it, the masses it has hurled into the sea, the snow upon its heights, the blaze from its crater, and the infinite variety of trees and plants serenely growing over its wide breast, without acknowledging it to be one of the greatest wonders of this wonderful creation?"

Having crossed the woody region, an extensive tract thinly covered with large ilexes, with few branches, and almost destitute of foliage, they passed a space of more difficult pas-

sage, from the broken fragments of lava and tortuous channels between them, and came to a broad snow plain, whose hard and slippery surface afforded an uncertain foothold, and where the cold, keen wind, and extreme rarification of the air, warned them that the trials attendant upon the expedition had not been wholly exaggerated. This sloping area reaches to the base of the cone. As they moved towards it, the smoke burst in heavy volumes from its centre, the dense column ever and anon reddening with a deep crimson flash, which rose with a kind of supernatural glare, throwing a dazzling light over the snow, and looming through the clear atmosphere with a momentary but startling brilliancy. The young moon appeared, like a large golden crescent, hanging on the horizon, when they left the last refuge, called the *Casa Inglese*, and commenced climbing toward the crater over heaps of crumbling lava. As they were seated away from the immediate influence of the suffocating exhalation upon the edge of the boiling abyss, dawn began to glimmer along the sky, and far beneath them, at the horizon's edge, the sun, appearing like an enormous globe of fire, seemed to start from the mountains of Calabria, scattering over the small fleecy clouds every variety of gorgeous tint, and bathing the sea and hill-tops in light. Then felt the lonely spectators on the summit of Etna, the sublimity of their position. Volcanic mounds rose to their gaze, like ant-hills, over the whole mountain. Sicily was spread beneath them—its mountains, cities, and islands, dwindled to the dimensions of minutely pictured objects. Syracuse was visible on the shore; Castro Giovanni among the hills. They descried Malta, and even the distant Adriatic, and the shadow of the cone of Etna falling like a mighty pyramid over the southern side of the island. Who can describe the emotions excited by such a landscape? They are part of that poetry of life

which whispers in mystic but thrilling tones of a spirit in the human breast, above the destiny of earth, and immortal as the stars—a spirit which

> "Has power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal silence."

"I am fond of analogies," said Isabel, as they descended the last lava plain—"especially between man and nature. Is not the volcanic soil of this region like the temperament of the people? These rocks are formed by a sudden convulsion at once, and momently; so the feelings of the children of the South mould themselves into action immediately; quick, fervent, and impetuous, they rush forth to results. In northern countries, the slow processes of years form the granite ribs of the hills, and the sons of those climes are contented with regular, reflective, and gradually matured feeling."

"And remember," said the count, "the crystals found in the quickly smouldered furnace are often as clear and beautiful as the stalactite created by the slow-dropping water through countless years."

The warm season had now commenced; and our travellers found the change from the still brooding heat and scorching *sirocco* of the capital, to the breezy confines of Messina, delightfully refreshing. There is a certain melancholy, though not displeasing influence, in the advent of a Southern summer. The long days, when the heat forbids active exercise abroad, and enjoins quiet at home, following each other in bright yet monotonous succession, induce a physical languor which begets a dreamy mood. The very brilliancy of the weather, unbroken for weeks by a single change, chastens the buoyancy which the variety of other seasons awakens, and the many hours that are passed in the airy soli-

tude of lofty apartments, are rather calculated to subdue than excite. The *siesta* and the bath take the place of the opera and the promenade. Repose becomes a luxury; and, thrown back upon itself, the mind is prone to quiet musing, and the imagination to soothing flights. Never had this season dawned so richly upon Isabel, and yet its music was the saddest strain which renewed nature had ever breathed upon her spirit. She found herself at the point whence her journeyings had commenced, and yet she was apparently no nearer their object. From the window of their apartment on the Marina, she watched for hours the varying tints which played upon the opposite mountains of Calabria; or, tracing the dwarfed line of contiguous buildings, called to mind the earthquakes which had transformed that peaceful landscape into a scene of terror and destruction, the effects of which are still so palpable. But disappointment shadowed her most tranquil moments. In vain the count planned the most pleasant excursions. They charmed but momentarily. They had often followed, in the calm light of eventide, the long, curving beach, formed, according to classic fable, by the cycle of Saturn, from the town to the Faro, and thence viewed the massive square rock on the opposite coast, and the gurgling currents near—the once dreaded dangers of the deep—the Scylla and Charybdis of antiquity; or from some favorable point watched the twilight gather slowly over the beautiful hills which closely environ the town; or noted the splendid *chiaro* of the atmosphere, which is nowhere more strikingly obvious than in this part of the island. These peaceful evenings, however, solaced Isabel, and she often returned from such excursions re-animated by the exercise; and as they sat in the stone balcony, inhaling the invigorating breeze as it swept through the Faro, and watching the lights of the fishermen's boats as their red glare flashed over the calm

tide of the harbor, the cheering words of her uncle, and the tender assiduities of her lover, failed not to renew her hopes and renovate her spirits.

On one occasion they started on their afternoon expedition in an unusually cheerful mood. Vittorio was in high glee, because he had received intelligence that a party of travellers had landed some weeks since at Syracuse, and having explored most of the island, arrived at Palermo, and were on the point of visiting Messina; and among them he hoped was the father of Isabel. Frazier was elated from anticipating the arrival of an American frigate, the commander of which was his intimate friend; while Isabel, having instinctively caught something of the blitheness of her companions, reciprocated all their words of encouragement, and smiled at every ebullition of their kindly wit. Their object on this occasion was to visit one of the highest hills, where stands the telegraph, commanding the finest prospect in the vicinity. After following for several hours a winding road, overlooking precipitous and umbrageous glens, and bounded by yet more lofty hills, thickly covered with fern, they reached the desired spot, and beheld a scene of transcendent beauty. On the one side were the Lipari islands, rising at intervals from the sea, the cone-like mound of Stromboli conspicuous amid the group; opposite was the long range of Calabrian hills, and below the Faro, town, and bay, constituting a rich and finely-varied view, every feature of which was vividly distinct at that clear and tranquil hour. They had but rapidly taken cognizance of the several phases of the picture, when it acquired a new and unexpected interest. Around the point of the Faro appeared the American frigate, her majestic form slowly moving before the wind, and her well-known flag gaily flaunting in the breeze; and a moment

after a steam-packet shot rapidly through, her smoke streaming far along the horizon.

Isabel, after returning from this excursion, was scarcely seated in her favorite balcony ere Vittorio entered, with a look of delight which instantly awakened the expectancy of his companion.

"I have," said he, "at length once more encountered my Malta friend, and with your permission will bring him here to pass the evening with us."

Isabel checked the expression of disappointment which rose to her lips, and signified her assent.

An hour elapsed before the count's return. Frazier was so occupied in examining, through his glass, the equipments of the frigate, which was anchored opposite the window, and Isabel was so lost in her own thoughts, that they did not notice his entrance, or that he was accompanied by his friend. They approached the balcony and paused. Isabel listlessly turned her head, and her eye instantly met that of the stranger. There was a quick, short cry of recognition, and the next moment she was in the arms of her father.

A few days subsequent the dawn broke with more than ordinary beauty over the landscape which greeted the eyes of the pilgrims on their first arrival. The morning was serene and cool. The blue waters of the harbor were scarcely rippled. Far away, upon the undulating hills, sunlight and shade played fantastically; and the hum of re-awakened life rose with a scarcely audible murmur. Suddenly volumes of smoke rolled from the dark sides of the frigate, a sheet of flame shot momently through the vapor, and then, deep, loud,

and solemn, echoed the thunder of the report. Cloud after cloud wound gracefully upward, and conjoined above her masts, and the attentive eye could occasionally trace a perfect circle of smoke, till it floated into the depths of the sky. This parting salute was not immediately followed by those rapid manœuvres requisite to put the vessel in motion. It was evident, from the arrangements visible, that some ceremony was to be performed before her canvas was spread to the breeze. Shaded by a broad canopy, the officers were composedly grouped upon the polished quarter-deck, and near by were the now united pilgrims, while below them the men presented gallant lines, standing uncovered, and in such silent array, that the flutter of the national banner might be distinctly heard. Beneath that emblem of her far distant country the marriage vows of Isabel were uttered, and, at the conclusion of the rite, the noble vessel stretched proudly away for the neighboring shores of Italy. It is only when we leave the scene of a pilgrimage that we perfectly realize its interesting and characteristic features. As Isabel watched the diminishing headlands of the island, the experience of her sojourn was renewed in the retrospective glance of memory. She recalled the peculiar and lovely scenery which had so often cheered her sight. She reverted to the numberless beings who were content to drudge on in the monotonous circuit of a few dim thoughts, and the dark requisition of a narrow creed, and the countless victims of ignorance and poverty that grope abjectly amid such ennobling scenes of picturesqueness and beauty. She thought of the noble relics of the past that still sanctify the soil, and the acts of kindness and words of sympathy which had solaced her exile. The mingled remembrances grew more vivid as the real picture became dim; and, with her farewell glance, she breathed an aspiration, spontaneously inspired in every susceptible

mind, in taking leave of Sicily, that the time may come when the rich resources and beautiful garniture with which nature has blessed the ancient island may be hallowed by a worthier heritage of human freedom, intelligence, and virtue.

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