

# TRAVELS, &c.

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## CHAP. I.

PORTUGAL: RESIDENCE IN THE ARMY HOSPITALS. — GIBRALTAR. — SARDINIA.  
 — SICILY. — THE LIPARI ISLES. — ETNA. — VOYAGE TO THE IONIAN ISLES.  
 — ZANTE: DESCRIPTION OF THIS ISLAND: THE CITY OF ZANTE: NATURAL  
 HISTORY AND COMMERCE OF THE ISLE: POPULATION AND HABITS OF  
 SOCIETY.

I QUITTED England early in the spring of 1812, having the general design of visiting the Mediterranean; but with the previous object of passing a few months in the military hospitals of our army in the Peninsula. With this plan I disembarked at Lisbon; and after a short tour along those wonderful lines of fortification, within which, it might be said, that the germ of European liberty was at one time enclosed; I proceeded up the Tagus to Santarem, at this period of the war one of our principal hospital establishments in Portugal: the fine situation of the town, its numerous convents, and the facilities of communication by the Tagus, were among the chief circumstances which led to the selection of this station. The capture of Badajos had recently taken place; and when I arrived here, the hospitals were crowded with the wounded and sick lately sent down from the army. At one period of my residence in Santarem, the number amounted to nearly two thousand; who were distributed among five large convents, in the higher part of the city. Many of these men, however, were already invalided, and waiting only for conveyance to England.

To detail the medical observations I made during my stay here, would be foreign to the subject of this volume; and the less needful, as we may expect from some of the medical men, who have long served in the Peninsula, an ample account of their extensive and various practice. I cannot refrain, however, from noticing, what must interest every reader; the singular excellence which the hospital system of the army had at this time attained. I have visited many hospitals in England, Ireland, and Scotland; but have seen few that might compare in convenience, propriety, and good management, with those I attended while at Santarem; none, certainly, which procured more positive comfort to the sick, or were more successful in the medical practice they afforded. It is true that the convents of this city were admirably adapted to this purpose; but the regulation of the establishments depended on the zeal of the medical officers; and the excellence of this regulation, was as creditable to them, as it was beneficial to the army and the country. \*

All that can lessen the afflictions of war must be grateful to the mind; and it is among the noblest features in the character of the General to whom England and Europe are so deeply indebted, that his career of victory was one also of humanity; and that the life of the soldier was not wantonly thrown away, either in battle or by succeeding neglect. That this is not an empty tribute of praise, will be felt by all who knew the active superintendance which the Duke of Wellington exercised in every department of his army; and in particular the attention he gave to its hospital establishments. He was ably seconded in this by the Inspector-general, Dr. Macgregor, who maintained a system of minute regularity, doubtless contributing much to the welfare of this branch of the service.

From Santarem I made an excursion to Caldas, the most celebrated watering-place in Portugal. The great spring here is a

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\* At this time Dr. Buchan was at the head of the hospital establishment at Santarem.

## PORTUGAL.

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sulphureous, saline chalybeate; and thermal also, having a temperature of 93° or 94°, where it issues from the ground\*. I visited the Portuguese hospital at this place; but found it on a small scale, and at this time very indifferently conducted.

Leaving Santarem, I proceeded further up the country to Abrantes, another of the chief hospital stations of the army; where I resided some time with similar views. The number of cases of fever, and acute diseases, I found to be much greater here than at Santarem; and the medical practice was proportionally more interesting and instructive. The effects of the climate, and of particular localities, in producing and modifying the progress of disease, were among the more remarkable circumstances which occurred to my notice in this as well as in the former place. The principal hospital at Abrantes was not actually in the city, but formed a large and picturesque encampment on the southern bank of the Tagus, shaded behind by the extensive olive-groves which border on the river. The internal regulation, amidst this assemblage of tents, was not inferior to that in the great convent at Santarem. †

I subsequently visited, but in a more cursory way, two or three smaller hospitals at Niza, and other places on the frontier of Spain. Having fulfilled at length the medical purposes I had in view, I returned down the country to Lisbon, to prosecute my voyage thence towards the Mediterranean.

A stormy passage of a week brought me to Gibraltar. Two days of this time our vessel was in the Bay of Cadiz, and each

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\* The analysis of this water, which was made by Dr. Withering, gives three-fourths of a grain of silica in 128 ounces; in this respect affording an analogy to the Bath springs, as well as to those of Carlsbad and Brighton: the same quantity of water yields  $6\frac{1}{4}$  oz. measures of sulphureted hydrogen,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  grains of iron, 148 grains of muriate of soda, and other salts in smaller quantity.

† The hospitals I afterwards saw at Vittoria and Bilbao, on my return to England through Spain, though established in the midst of a rapid campaign, yet bore testimony to the same active spirit of order and good regulation.

morning and evening I listened to the heavy sound of the shells, which the French mortars were throwing into the city, from a distance of more than three miles. It was their last effort as a besieging army; information of the battle of Salamanca had just reached them, and but a few days elapsed before they made their final retreat from the south of Spain.

The scenery of the straits of Gibraltar has scarcely had sufficient justice done it in description. Europe and Africa vie with each other, in the magnificence of the boundary they give to this extraordinary passage from an ocean to inland seas. The effect of natural grandeur is aided by various impressions, which accompany the voyager in his progress between their shores. They are viewed as the entrance to the scene of antient empire, and as a barrier at the same time, which stopped the progress of ancient power. The changes of men and nations are suggested in rapid succession to the mind, as vessels are seen urging their way through this channel, which come from the people of a new world; from islands and continents scarcely known even to the imagination of antiquity. Every point on the surrounding shores gives the note of some event, which is consecrated to history; and the names of St. Vincent, Trafalgar, Tariffa, Algeziras, and Gibraltar, are among those which our own annals will convey to succeeding times.

At Gibraltar I remained but long enough to survey that marvellous machinery of fortification, which, together with the natural features of the spot, renders it one of the most remarkable places in the world. I again embarked thence in a vessel bound to Sicily; landed for a short time amidst the lofty mountains which form the coast of Murcia\*; touched at Majorca, and passed two days at Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia. It had been my design, when leaving England, to spend some time in this island, hitherto almost

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\* Many of the mountains here are composed of chlorite slate, with a very contorted stratification. The circumference of the Peninsula is almost every where mountainous, supporting that great tract of table land, which forms the central provinces of Spain, with an elevation of from 1600 to 2000 feet above the sea.

## SARDINIA.

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a *terra incognita* to the rest of Europe; but I was prevented from executing this plan by various circumstances, which it would be needless to detail. To the mineralogist Sardinia offers many objects of much interest; many also to the lovers of nature, in the great mountain scenery which is spread over its surface. It is a fact not generally known, that the southern portion of the island is in part a volcanic region, and that obsidian, pumice, and compact lavas exist in great abundance in the district of the Capo de Sassari. The specimens in the Museum at Cagliari sufficiently attest this fact; and further shew the existence of much primitive country in the island, of various metallic ores, and of a formation of coal. In the subjoined note\* are a few details, as well on this subject, as in

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\* Sardinia is divided into three provinces: the Capo de Sassari in the north; the Lugo d'Oro traversing the middle of the island; and the Capo de Cagliari forming its southern portion. The first of these is mountainous throughout the greater part of its extent; and Ginargentino, though not yet measured, is considered one of the highest points in the island. The volcanic country is chiefly at the north-west angle of Sardinia; and Orsino, and other villages near Sassari, are said to be entirely built of pumice rock. The Chevalier Prunner, of the Museum at Cagliari, has written a memoir on the extinct volcanoes of the island, and speaks of seventy-two craters; but whether he is accurate in distinguishing them, I am unable to say. The general fact, however, is interesting, as it extends the great volcanic area of the south of Europe, which comprizes in its circuit, Etna, Vesuvius, Sardinia, Pentelaria, and the never-ceasing fires of the Lipari Isles.

The Lugo d'Oro is also very mountainous: silver and lead ores have been found here, it is said, in considerable quantity. I saw an analysis of one silver ore, which gave 70 per cent. of the metal; but this was probably a select specimen. The King of Sardinia was lately led to believe, partly perhaps from the name of this district, that he had gold mines in his island territory; but analysis has put a dead blank opposite the word, in the specimens brought for examination. The Cavaliere St. Reale, who conducted these analyses, is a man of much science and observation.

The Capo de Cagliari, though for the most part very mountainous, yet contains extensive plains, stretching between Cagliari and Oristano. A considerable part of this district appears to be of primitive formation. The mountain of Argentu, about forty miles to the north of Cagliari, is perhaps the loftiest in the island; and, as it is said to have snow upon it all the year, may be from 6 to 7000 feet in height.

The pitch coal, of which I saw specimens, is said to occur in the centre of the isle, but not in large quantity. Among the other Sardinian specimens in the Museum (the collec-

relation to the internal state of the country. Sardinia has been secluded, not only from the observation, but in great part from the progressive improvement of the rest of Europe; and the traveller will find in its peasantry a wildness of garb, manner, and custom, which can scarcely be classed with the usages of civilized life. The miniature court of the King, which was then resident in Cagliari, had not sufficient power to collect all the revenues of the country, still less to change or ameliorate the condition of the people. The recent political events have done nothing for Sardinia; and an island, equal to Sicily in extent, still remains a solitary spot on the face of Europe; its most frequent visitors the pirates of the Barbary coast.

I landed in Sicily at Trapani, the antient Drepanum; a spot that has been consecrated to posterity by the genius of Virgil. Thence I travelled to Palermo, the splendid and luxurious capital of the island; a city almost unequalled in the beauty of its situation, but peopled by a nobility degraded in morals, and by inferior classes

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tion of which, however, was extremely defective), I found varieties of granite, sienite, primitive slate, marble, limestone with shells, bituminous wood, lead, copper, and silver ores, arsenical pyrites; with very fine amethysts, opals, schorls, &c.

The present population of Sardinia is about 450,000: in 1750 it did not exceed 360,000: but it is still capable of great increase. The island was once spoken of as one of the granaries of Rome (Cic. pro. leg. Manil.): now the *Sardinia ferax* can scarcely provide subsistence for its own population. Cagliari, the capital, splendid in its situation, ill built, and comfortless within, contains 25,000 people. The University is frequented by about 500 students, and has a library of 18,000 volumes. Sassari, the second city of the island, has a population of 15,000.

It is worthy of remark that more than half the land in Sardinia belongs to Spanish proprietors; having been continued to them under the treaty by which Spain resigned the island. The country contains about 9,000 square miles, of which 5,200 are thus appropriated, with a population of 220,000 souls. The Marquis of Benevente alone is said to possess a district of more than 1600 square miles.

A voluminous work, entitled “Rifiorimento de Sardegna,” was published in 1776 by F. Gemelli, a professor in the College of Sassari: it contains much information respecting the interior state of the island.

who participate in the corruption, and exhibit all the vices of an oppressed and servile nation. The accounts given by modern travellers of the present state of Sicily are not greatly exaggerated. Nowhere is the contrast between nature and man so strongly marked: nowhere is the picture more striking of the effects of a bad provincial government upon the condition and habits of the people. At this time the ministry, of which the Prince Belmonte was a principal member, were making endeavours to give to the country a new constitution, framed on the English model. The attempt for a time gained upon the popular feeling, but obstacles crowded around on every side to obstruct its progress. The pernicious influence still exerted by the Queen; the vicious intrigues of the aristocracy; the conjoint resolution of the nobles and clergy not to suffer encroachment on their privileges; and the feebleness of the Chamber of Commons; — all conspired to impede reform, and perpetuate abuse. Melancholy as is the fact, yet it must be allowed, that there were not in Sicily, at this time, a sufficient number of incorrupt men to fill the offices under the new constitution; nor was the state of education such as to hold out more than a remote prospect of improvement. Talents and quickness are far from wanting to the Sicilians; but these have hitherto been nurtured only under slavery, and rarely devoted but to the purposes of corruption. I am willing to believe, however, that this agitation of reform may eventually hasten its progress, whatever be the future political fortune of this island.

From Palermo, I proceeded along the northern coast of Sicily to Milazzo, and thence passed over to the Lipari Isles. The survey of these very extraordinary volcanic phenomena occupied several days, and afforded me the more satisfaction, from their analogy to many facts I had before observed in the great volcanic region of Iceland. Independently, however, of such sources of comparison, the Isles of Lipari must be interesting to every naturalist; and they afford a scenery at once singular and sublime, in the perpetual fires which issue from the lofty cave of Stromboli, in the vast crater of Volcano,

inferior only to that of Etna in magnitude; and in the mountains of pumice, the streams of obsidian, and the selenitic rocks, which occur in the island, properly called by the name of Lipari. A few of the observations made in these isles, I have briefly stated in the note below\*. After reading Mr. Tennant's paper in the Geological

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\* Lipari, the largest of these isles, though not now the scene of active volcanic phenomena, yet is more interesting in its products than either Stromboli or Volcano. An enumeration of these would include different varieties of compact lava, obsidian, pumice, volcanic tuffa, sulphur ashes, or scoriæ; and several, which may be called secondary, as selenite, sulphate of alumine, sulphuret of iron, &c. The tuffa forms several of the hills, in the interior of the isle, the height of which has been greatly exaggerated by Dolomieu and Spallanzani. The lavas, which chiefly appear on the coast, are remarkable for their general tendency to the vitreous character, and are often penetrated by veins of obsidian or pumice, as may be well seen in the great mass of rock on which stands the castle of Lipari. — Whatever it may be in Hungary, or at Andernach, obsidian is certainly a volcanic product in Lipari, occurring with other parts of the volcanic formation, in beds, veins, streams, and fragments, and exhibiting every stage of transition both into compact lava and pumice. These facts are very strikingly seen in a great stream of this substance, which terminates in a cliff upon the shore, to the south of the pumice mountain of Campo Bianco; some parts of which exhibit the perfect black, conchoidal obsidian; others, different degrees of vitrification, passing into pumice and unvitrified lava. — The tuffa of Lipari contains much obsidian, mixed with scoriæ, and other volcanic fragments.

The pumice of Lipari is a singular feature in the mineralogy of the island: it occurs everywhere in the tuffa, and appears also in the vitrified lavas; but its principal accumulation is in the northern part of the isle, where it appears to form entire hills, of great height and extent, and in quantity sufficient for the perpetual supply of the world. The Campo Bianco, which is upwards of 600 feet in height, is the most extraordinary of these hills, exhibiting a series of alternate ridges and hollows, some hundred in number, formed by the deep fissures in the pumice, which are extremely regular, inclined at an angle of about 40°, and varying from 10 to 40 or 50 feet in depth. There can be little question that this pumice is a volcanic product, and connected with the origin of the obsidian, which is so abundant in the same vicinity; but it may be more doubtful whether its beds have successively flowed from a crater, as is supposed by Dolomieu.

The temperature of the hot springs, which form the baths of Lipari, I found to be 138°.

The Isle of Volcano is chiefly interesting from its great crater, which forms an inverted cone, about a mile in circumference, and nearly 500 feet in depth; — from a stream of obsidian and semi-vitrified lava, which descends from near the lips of the crater to the sea; — from the columnar appearances in some compact lavas, which form an escarpment on the



Transactions, on the native boracic acid, found in connection with some specimens from Lipari, it was very interesting to me to find this substance in large quantity within the crater of Volcano; forming a white feathery covering to the sulphur, which is deposited from sublimation in various parts of this great cavity.

Returning to Milazzo, I pursued my route to Messina, and thence along the magnificent coast formed by the primitive Neptunian mountains, and by the volcanic region of Etna, to Catania, a place eminent among the cities of Sicily for extent and beauty, and yet more so, from the comparative excellence of its institutions and society; interesting too from its relation to the history of that vast volcano, which rises from its wide base on these shores, with a majesty and singleness of form and outline, which render it almost unique among the mountains of the world. Though the year was now far advanced, I was fortunate in my ascent of Etna, and accomplished all I could desire in the survey of its wonders of landscape, and of those volcanic phenomena which bear with them the record of nearly thirty centuries, and of no fewer than sixty eruptions. While refraining from all description, I cannot omit to notice the impression I derived from the singular contrast between the smiling and luxuriant surface of the lower region of Etna, and the picture I still had in my mind of the broken, wild, and desolate aspect of the volcanic country in Iceland. Nor can I refrain from mentioning the monument which the English have left of their residence in Sicily, in a small house built for the accommodation of travellers, just below the upper cone of Etna, and at the height of

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coast; — and especially from the production of boracic acid, together with the sulphur, which every-where lines the interior of the crater. I descended, though with much difficulty, to the very bottom of this vast hollow, and procured thence some fine specimens of the different productions of the volcano.

I found the peninsula of Milazzo, just opposite the Lipari Isles, to be composed of gneiss, with some marbles, and appearances of granite veins. The tract of the Neptunian mountains, between Milazzo and Messina, exhibits also primitive slate rocks, with some local deposits of a shell limestone.

nearly 9,000 feet above the level of the sea. The building in itself is not magnificent, but in its situation and design it is worthy of a great and cultivated people; and the name of the *Casa Inglesa* may long be matter of national pride to future travellers in this country.\*

Leaving Catania, I visited Augusta, and the venerable remains of the ancient Syracuse, and from this point returned to Messina; proposing to myself to visit at a future time the temples of Girgenti, and the great sulphur mines of the Val di Noto. Between Catania and Messina, I stopped two or three days at Tauromina, a city unparalleled perhaps in the magnificence of its situation, and boasting a noble monument of antiquity in the ruins of the great theatre which crown its heights.

At Messina were made the final arrangements for the voyage to Greece, which forms the subject of the succeeding narrative.— My original plan was much less extensive than that which I finally accomplished; comprizing little more than a journey through the Morea into Attica and Beotia. But schemes of travel usually grow as they proceed, and various circumstances which will afterwards be related, contributed to lengthen out this voyage to a period of nearly seven months. I was very fortunate in meeting at Messina a gentleman, who had the same general object as myself in visiting Greece, and with whom I could satisfactorily concert all the plans for this expedition †. We entered upon the voyage together, and I was happy in having his society during four months of the time which it eventually occupied.

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\* The design of this edifice was suggested about three years ago, when our army was stationed on the coast, opposite Calabria; and it was executed by the voluntary contribution of officers and travellers in the island: it contains three apartments, and a stable; and though at the time I was there, some internal accommodation was still wanting, this has probably since been added by the same spirit which suggested the erection. Over the door is the following inscription: — “*Ætnam perlustrantibus hæc ædes Britanni in Sicilia anno Salutis 1811.*”

† J. Ramsay, Esq., of Messina.