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978-1-108-05475-1 - Travels on the Continent: Written for the Use and Particular
Information of Travellers

Mariana Starke

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This collection of narratives contains vivid accounts of the varied landscapes, built environment and customs encountered by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers in the British Isles and Europe. Some were wealthy individuals on the Grand Tour, while others were travelling on business, for pleasure, in pursuit of better health, or simply to escape trouble at home.

Travels on the Continent

Mariana Starke (1762–1838) was an ideal travel guide: she lived and travelled in Italy for much of the 1790s and had a truly practical mind, predicting perfectly what a traveller might need to know about both the journey and the destination. *Travels on the Continent*, first published in 1820, was partly based on her earlier bestseller *Travels in Italy* (also reissued in this series) but featured completely updated information based on extensive research during the late 1810s. Noting the latest improvements in transport and accommodation, which had both become more comfortable in Europe during the previous thirty years, the guide covers most of mainland Europe. For each popular route Starke offers itineraries and journey times, as well as recommendations for sightseeing and the best inns. In particular, she offers advice to the many travellers of the time who sought to improve their health through a change of climate.

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MARIANA STARKE



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T R A V E L S

ON

T H E C O N T I N E N T :

WRITTEN FOR THE

USE AND PARTICULAR INFORMATION

OF

T R A V E L L E R S .

BY MARIANA STARKE.

LONDON :
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1820.

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AS some of the public prints have announced, subsequent to the peace of 1814, a circumstance very alarming to Travellers, namely, that disbanded soldiers, converted into banditti, infest the post-roads of the south of France, the Alps, Apennine, and countries bordering on those mountains; especially the confines of the Roman and Neapolitan territories situated between Terracina and Mola-di-Gaëta; it may not, perhaps, be superfluous to mention, that all the above-named countries, except the tract between Terracina and Mola, are now, and have long been, exempt from so serious an evil. Highway robberies, indeed, are quite as uncommon on the Continent at present, as they were formerly: and with respect to the banditti who have recently infested the confines of the Roman and Neapo-

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litan territories between Terracina and Mola, they are not merely a troop of robbers who plunder, because they have no other means of subsisting, but a whole nation, the people of Abruzzo; who, when at variance with the Pope and the King of Naples, raise contributions upon Roman and Neapolitan Travellers *going post*: but with *voiturins* these freebooters appear to be in perfect amity; as persons who travel *en voiturier* are never attacked: and English Travellers, even when going *post*, have rarely been robbed; unless owing to imprudence on their own part, or on that of their attendants.

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INTRODUCTION.

HAVING been called upon to publish a fourth Edition of that part of my “Letters from Italy” which was intended as *a Guide for Travellers*, and at the same time feeling how impossible it is to give an accurate and circumstantial account of any country, without residing in it, I determined to revisit the Continent; and become an Eye Witness of the alterations made there, by the events of the last twenty years: events which have so completely changed the order of things, with respect to roads, accommodations, and works of art, that new Guides for Travellers are extremely wanted in almost every large city of southern Europe. I, therefore, resolved, instead of publishing a fourth Edition of my “Letters from Italy,” to write A NEW WORK: and being ambitious to prove myself a faithful historian, I spent two years, namely, from May, 1817, to June, 1819, in the countries it has been my endeavour to describe; that I might write from the spot, and trust nothing to memory. I have also taken

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especial pains, so far as my limited knowledge would allow, to point out to Travellers every thing most likely to contribute to comfort; and every thing best worth notice respecting works of art: for general outlines may sometimes give just ideas, even though not shaded by a master's hand.

I have likewise mentioned, in my Appendix, a few particulars relative to expenses at the present moment on the Continent; that Families induced by prudential motives to reside in foreign countries may neither have the mortification of finding their plans defeated by the extravagance of a courier, nor by the impositions frequently practised upon Strangers.

Accommodations for Travellers, during the last twenty years, have been materially augmented in France, Switzerland, and Italy; by the increase and improvement of inns, by the erection of fine bridges, which are almost universally substituted for inconvenient and sometimes dangerous ferry-boats, by the expense bestowed to make roads smooth and level, which were formerly rough and mountainous; and by the consummate skill exerted to render those Alps which heretofore were only practicable by means of mules, *traineaux*, and *chaises-à-porteur*, so easy of ascent that post-horses, attached even to a heavy berlin, now traverse them speedily and safely. With

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such judgment, indeed, have the sinuosities of the Alpine roads been managed, that crane-neck carriages, once absolutely requisite in passing the Alps, are at present needless.

I cannot dismiss this subject without adding, as a further proof of the great improvements which have lately taken place, respecting roads on the continent, that during a journey of fifteen hundred miles, through France, Switzerland, and Italy, I never found it needful, except while ascending the Alps and Apennine, to put more than three horses to my own carriage, an English landaulet, nor to carriages of the same description, belonging to the friends by whom I was accompanied.

Other circumstances which contribute to the comfort of travelling at the present moment on the Continent are, the increase of ready furnished lodgings in large cities; owing, in some measure, to the poverty of the nobles; who often let their palaces to foreigners; the improvement in mechanics, and consequently in furniture, throughout Italy; the introduction of lamps, by which the streets of every large town are tolerably well lighted; and the stop put, by this circumstance, among others, to the dreadful practice of assassination.

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But although the comfort of travelling has been thus considerably augmented, the expense of residing on the Continent has been augmented likewise; owing to taxes which, in capital cities, are oppressive; and still more owing to the great influx of British Travellers: nevertheless, as the necessaries of life are not materially enhanced in price, it is still possible, nay easy, for persons who understand and practise economy, to live with comfort either in the French or Italian territories, without incurring a much larger expense than would have been needful twenty years ago.

With respect to modes of travelling to Italy, I would advise consumptive persons either to go by sea, in a vessel bound for Leghorn, thence proceeding up the Canal of Pisa to that city; or by sea to Bordeaux, and thence proceeding, by the royal Canal of Languedoc, to Marseilles; where vessels bound for Leghorn may be heard of daily.

Persons in health, who wish to travel economically, might find their purpose answered by going with the Voituriers belonging either to Dejean, or Emery; whose carriages set out, almost every week, from London, to various parts of the Continent; or by travelling in a public Diligence; preferring that called the *Coche d'eau*, whenever attainable: but persons blessed with health and

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affluence should travel in their own carriage; going post through France; and, generally speaking, *en voiturier* in Switzerland and the Italian States.

The most frequented post-road from Paris to southern Italy is through Lyons, and over the Mont Cenis to Turin, Bologna, and Florence: but the most interesting route is that to northern Italy, by Dijon, the Jura Alps, Geneva, and the Simplon*.

Those persons, however, who wish to trace the revival of the Arts, from the period when Gothic, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, arabesque architecture was brought by the Crusaders from the Holy Land, and fostered at Pisa, should first visit that city; proceeding afterward to Florence and Rome: and in order to accomplish this purpose, the best route from Paris is through Lyons, Avignon, Aix, Nice, and Genoa.

Pisa may with truth be called the cradle of the arts: for Buschetto, a Grecian, so early as the eleventh century, erected the Cathedral which still adorns this city; Diotisalvi, during the twelfth century, erected the Baptistery; and Guglielmo,

* The road from Paris by the Simplon, and through Milan, to Florence, is ninety miles shorter than that by the Mont Cenis to Florence.

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a German, aided by Bonnano, Pisano, began the Campanile about the year 1174.

Niccolo, Pisano, Giovanni, his son, and Andrea, Pisano, revived the art of Sculpture in the thirteenth century; and not only embellished the buildings already raised, but likewise added another, still more beautiful, the celebrated Campo-Santo. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, also, Giunto, Pisano, revived the art of Painting; and was succeeded by Giotto, and Cimabue.

Those persons, therefore, who contemplate the productions of the Greco-Pisano school as the earliest efforts of the reviving arts, cannot fail to be highly gratified; especially if they afterward proceed to Florence and Rome; and trace the gradual progress of these arts to that state of maturity which the parental care of the Medicean Princes at length enabled them to attain.

As considerable changes have lately taken place in large continental cities relative to the arrangement of works of art, I have endeavoured, in the following pages, to furnish Travellers with correct lists of the objects best worth notice in the respective galleries of sculpture and painting; at the same time marking, with one or more exclamation points (according to their merit), those works which are deemed peculiarly excellent.

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I will now close this preface by saying, that in the hope of being serviceable to those of my Compatriots who, in consequence of pulmonary complaints, are compelled to exchange their native climate for the renovating sun of Italy, I have ventured to make a few observations, relative to health, the result of nine years' experience; during the greater part of which period my time and thoughts were chiefly occupied by endeavours to mitigate the sufferings of those most dear to me: and highly gratified should I feel if the little knowledge I have been able to collect could so far inform Travellers, as to guard them against those serious inconveniences which too generally retard, and not unfrequently prevent, the recovery of consumptive persons.

London, October, 1819.