

## 88 WHAT ROME WAS BUILT WITH

According to Spratt, the Proconnesian quarries are as extensive as those of Pentelicus in Attica, while the marble in some parts is quite as white, pure and crystalline as that of Paros, but generally resembles more closely the Cipollino of Carystus.<sup>1</sup>

Proconnesian marble was not used to any great extent by the Romans, but it was frequently employed in Ravenna where, in the Basilica of St. Ursula, and in the church of St. Apollonius, there are a number of columns of it to be seen.<sup>2</sup>

### *Marmor Scyrium, Sette Basi*<sup>3</sup>

‘There are quarries of variegated marble called Scyrian; in appearance it resembles that marble which is described as variegated Lydian,<sup>4</sup> a variegated stone.’ (Eustatius to Dionisius Periegetes.)<sup>5</sup>

Statius calls the island of Skyros ‘lapidosa’, and Strabo says: ‘There may be seen at Rome columns consisting of a single stone, and large slabs of variegated marble (from Skyros) with which the city is embellished, both at the public charge and at the expense of individuals.’<sup>6</sup> Strabo adds that on account of this introduction of coloured marble the price of white marble had fallen.

This stone, known in Rome as Sette Basi, for the reason that it was first found in the ruins of the Villa of Septimius Bassus, and the breccia called Semesanto<sup>7</sup> came from the quarries on the island of Skyros.

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly Journal, Geol. Soc. of London*, vol. xiv, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> Ravestein Catalogue.

<sup>3</sup> Septimius Bassus.

<sup>4</sup> See page 98.

<sup>5</sup> Bruzza, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Strabo, *op. cit.*, Book ix, chap. v. 16.

<sup>7</sup> From resemblance of its fragments to semesanto—coloured sugar plums containing physics, and given to children. Pullen