

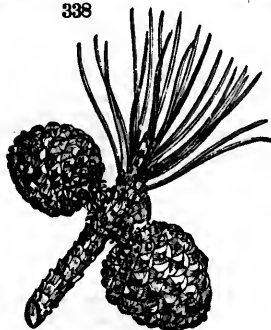
coasts. The Dates of the environs of Girgenti, situated on the southern coast, are said by Mirbel to be excellent; not so in the vicinity of Palermo, where the Date Palm is unknown except in gardens.

Of all the mountains of Sicily, Etna, whose enormous volcanic mass rises to the height of 10,870 feet, is the most celebrated. Its base, whose circuit exceeds 80 miles, exhibits all the fruit trees peculiar to the transition zone: higher up is the forest region. It is said that two or three centuries ago this region ascended to the very summit: however this may have been, it now ceases at a considerable distance from it. The most remarkable trees there are the Oak (*Quercus Robur*), the Beech, the Ash, Horse-chestnuts in the greatest abundance, and Plum-trees: higher up are woods of Birch. These last, which form the upper zone, are scanty on the southern side, and very numerous on that exposure of the mountain which looks towards the north. Beyond this region every thing green disappears, and the only shrub is *Spartium etnense Bivona*. Mount Etna has no perpetual snow, unless we so consider those masses which lodge in shaded crevices, and there resist the heat of summer, at an elevation of nearly 9000 feet.

It is well ascertained by geological facts, that Sicily and Italy once composed but a single continent, and that the mountains which cover so large a portion of the former, are but a continuation of the southern chain of the Apennines, which, interrupted by the Straits of Messina, re-appears in Calabria, and lifts its loftiest summits in the kingdom of Naples. Though some of these rise to 8000 feet, the snow nowhere remains permanently upon them. It is only in the southern part of Italy that the Apennines can boast of a rich vegetation; everywhere else, this chain is of an arid and sterile character.

The temperature of Calabria has much affinity with that of Sicily: its summers are intolerably hot, and frost is scarcely known during the winter. The numerous rivers and brooks which gush from the hills, abundant dews, and an astonishingly fertile soil, maintain, during almost all the year, in these favoured countries, a fresh and brilliant verdure. The plains, the slopes, and eminences, produce Olives, Tamarisk, Arbutus, Myrtle, Jujube, Pistachios of both kinds, and Oleander (only in dry beds of torrents), the Sweet Bay, and Carob, the Palmetto, Rhamnus, and Phillyrea; the *Pinus Pinea* or Stone Pine (*fig. 338.*)—the tree, whose picturesque outline and dark hue have recommended it so much to the artist, that it

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Stone Pine.

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Mulberry.

forms a striking feature in almost all Claude Lorraine's and Gaspar Poussin's celebrated Italian landscapes; Manna Ash, Chestnut, Mulberry (*fig. 339.*), Plane, Willow, Poplars, &c. In the warmer spots, there are large groves of Orange and Lemon trees; those of the vicinity of Reggio being most esteemed. In the fifteenth century, the cultivation of the Sugar-cane was carried on with spirit in Calabria, and even on the coasts of Samnium: now the red and white mulberry, which are grown for the silkworms. The barren rocks are covered with Agave, Cactus, and Capers.

The portion of the Apennines which intersects Calabria is clothed from the base to the very summit with umbrageous forests of Oaks and Coniferous trees; especially consisting of the Common Oak, the Cork tree, the *Quercus Cerris*, Horse-chestnut, and Yew, the Larch and Wild Scotch Fir, with the Pinaster, &c.

Most of the vegetable productions of Calabria follow the line of the coast, and adorn the shores of the bays of Naples and of Gaëta. The Orange and Lemon reach the Gulf of Genoa, but the climate refuses to perfect the Sugar-cane. The French tried in vain to naturalise it, during the period of their sway in Italy. Snow rarely falls in Naples; still, instances of its having been seen for a few days are not unknown. Judging by the state of