

LOCARNO AND ITS VALLEYS.

BY J. HARDMEYER.



MARKET-PLACE, LOCARNO.

LAKE MAGGIORE! Whose heart does not quicken at a name suggesting so much that is beautiful? Lofty mountains rising from the very brink of the waters, a cloudless sky of deepest azure, gardens adorned with noble shrubs and starred with myriads of blossoms, quiet villages breaking the monotony of the shores and mountain-slopes, picturesque churches and chapels, and verdant islands floating on the bosom of its pellucid waters! Thou glorious lake, not without cause is the world full of thy renown, for even as we choose the fairest flowers of the garden and bind them together in one posy the better to admire their beauty, so Nature seems to have taken from a boundless store the choicest of her manifold treasures and to have showered them for our delight and gratification over these southern slopes of the ever sublime and glorious Alps.

The district I am about to describe lies to the north of Lake Maggiore. Its valleys extend almost up to the St. Gothard. The traveller approaching Locarno from the north experiences a singular surprise on his entry into "the Nice of Switzerland," which he has heard described as adorned with all the charms of a southern vegetation. The cliffs rising so abruptly from the lake are dotted with pretty villas, surrounded by gardens which at almost every season of the year are resplendent with the glossy