

OBSERVATIONS on the MANNERS of the ITALIANS.

[Translated from the French of the Abbé Dupaty's Travels.]

*Rome---Description of the road from Leghorn to Florence, and from Florence to Rome.*

HOW different is the Road from Florence to Rome, from that of Leghorn to Florence!

After you leave Leghorn, whence Tuscany once embraced the whole world with the outstretched arms of commerce, you proceed along a magnificent road, through fields, woods, and vallies, and arrive at Pisa and the Arno.

You then follow the Arno through a vast plain, amid the richest cultivation, under a moderate temperature, which knows neither the rigour of winter, nor the heats of summer.

I was extremely delighted to meet, at every step, with fields enamelled with flowers, and women blooming with health, happiness, and innocence, scattered over the fields. They seem'd rather to be celebrating games and festivals, than occupied in rustic labours: they reminded me of those charming nymphs with which fable and the poets have peopled the rural shades.

But let us leave in their beauteous fields, these beauteous females, whom every painter should come in search of, and whom every traveller should fly. Let us enter with the Arno into Florence.

What a situation is that of Florence! The plain, in the middle of which it is seated, is covered with trees of every kind, and above all, with fruit trees. In the spring, Florence stands in the midst of a garden of flowers, and merits the name it bears.

But, in proportion as you remove from it, the ground becomes unequal, the culture unvaried, the land sterile, the men few, the women ugly, the stock meagre; all nature, in short, degenerates.

Advancing into Tuscany, I came to Sienna, which has nothing remarkable but the groupe of the *Three Graces*, placed in the middle of the sacristy of the cathedral, between a *dying Christ* and a *Resurrection*.

At their feet the priest prepares himself for mass; and they are quite naked!

On leaving Sienna, the country assumes a totally different aspect. We find no more cultivation, no flocks, no habitations, no men. The reign of Nature and Leopold seems here to terminate.

Gaining, after a journey of three hours march, from hill to hill, from rock to rock, the rugged summit of Redico-Fani,

I found myself in the midst of chaos, all around was a silent desert; it was then night; but the next day, on descending to Ronciglione, I found the dawn, the song of the nightingale, the first shoot of the hawthorn, vallies clothed with verdure, and the celebrated lake of Trasimene, and the city of Viterbo all in flower: and in an instant, by a new contrast, as if traversing the enchanted abodes of Armida, under the finest sky, all motion seems to cease, and you meet with neither life nor vegetation. At a distance, you have a view of Rome; the moment after every thing disappears.

On these roads, which in ancient times were thronged by kings and nations from every corner of the universe, over which rolled triumphal cars, in which the Roman armies raised clouds of dust, and where the traveller met Cæsar, Cicero, and Augustus; I met only with pilgrims and with beggars.

At length, by continually proceeding through this desert, through solitude and silence, I found myself amongst some houses. I could not refrain from dropping a tear: I was in Rome.

What! Is this Rome, Rome, that once spread her terrors to the extremities of Asia; and is it now this desert, announced only by the tomb of Nero!

No, this is not Rome; it is merely the dead body of that illustrious city, the country round is her tomb; and the wretched populace, that swarm within her walls, the worms that devour the carcass.

*The Author's arrival at Rome.*

I arrived yesterday evening very late. I could not close my eyes all night. The whole night the reflection continually occurred to my mind, *thou art at Rome*. Ages, emperors, nations, every thing great, interesting, and awful, which the great name of Rome must forever suggest, occupied my whole soul.

I was impatient till the first dawn of day should exhibit to my eyes the ancient capital of the world.

At length I behold Rome.

I behold that theatre where human nature has been all that ever it can be, has performed every thing that it ever can perform, has displayed all the virtues, exhibited all the vices, brought forth the sublimest heroes, and the most execrable monsters, has been elevated to a Brutus, degraded to a Nero, and re-ascended to a Marcus Aurelius.

The air in which I am now breathing, is that in which Cicero enchanted all ears with his eloquence; the Cæsars uttered to