

MAXIMS AND EXAMPLES OF THE SAINTS.

The following interesting extract is from the Preface of a little Work, entitled "Maxims of the Saints," translated from the Italian by Ambrose Lisle Philipps. We shall from time to time lay before our readers some of the excellent Maxims this Work contains:

The book which is here presented to the English reader, was first seen by the Translator at Naples, in the year 1829. It was under circumstances so interesting, that the recital of them seems to claim a place here. On one of those lovely mornings in the month of April, which can only be witnessed beneath the warm sun and the clear sky of Italy, I had ridden forth with some companions at the earliest dawn to climb to the summit of a high mountain, about four miles from Naples. Our object was, to visit the celebrated monastery of Camaldolese Hermits, which is situated on the top of that mount, crowning the vast forest of chesnuts which clothes its precipitous sides. After riding through some extent of gardens and vineyards, we at length reached the forest, which covers not only that mountain, but many others, stretching the whole way from Naples into the interior of the country. We proceeded through two narrow valleys, at the bottom of which roared a rapid torrent. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the scene: the trees were covered with the richest foliage, in all the fresh verdure of the early spring; a vast variety of flowers embalmed the atmosphere with the most delicious fragrance; the sun cast amid the trees the most beautiful shadows; and at every turn of the valley were displayed noble views of the surrounding mountains. Here and there were erected crucifixes and little chapels, so that at each step the pilgrim was reminded of the sufferings of our Redeemer, and of the other mysteries of the Christian faith; whilst he was led by these devout memorials to lift up his heart from the beauties of the material scene, to the ever-adorable Author of nature. At length we began to climb the mountain by a most rugged path, so that we felt inclined to distrust the safety of our horses; but the sure-footed beasts seemed better acquainted with the road than their riders, and rarely made a false step. After climbing for above an hour, we reached the summit of the mountain, and soon found ourselves at the convent gate. It is impossible here to describe the magnificent view which is seen from this spot—even the pencil of a Claude would fail to do justice to such a scene. The beholder finds himself placed on the highest point of a long range of mountains, forming a promontory, bounded by the Mediterranean; immediately around him he sees the great forest before described; beyond that, on one side, the city of Naples, with its innumerable domes and spires, its lovely bay

washing the foot of Vesuvius, which rises up in giant height, constantly emitting fire and smoke; and, in the farthest distance, the great range of the Eastern Appennines, with their summits covered with snow, reflecting the sun's rays in dazzling brightness. On the other side, a scene of less grandeur, but of no less interest, displays itself: the old extinct volcano of Astroni; the peaceful lake of Aniano, with its flowering meadows; and, in the distance beyond, the Promontory of Mycenæ, the Lake Avernus, the Alysian Fields, and all the classic ground immortalized by Virgil in the book of *Æneid*; still farther to the right, the rising grounds of Pozzuoli, the ancient Puteoli, so celebrated in the days of the Roman empire as the luxurious retreat of emperors and senators, the sides of whose hills are still covered with innumerable ruins of temples and villas. Beyond all this, as far as the eye can reach, stretches into the farthest horizon the blue Mediterranean, out of which rise, at a great distance, the beautiful islands of Capri and Ischia.

But let us turn awhile from this glorious prospect; let us forget the recollections of history with which it has inspired us. We are standing at the gate of a monastery, which now claims our attention, as it was the object of our toilsome climb to this height. The space enclosed within the walls of this venerable retreat is considerable; it is occupied by the great church of the monks, near to which little detached hermitages are built, each enclosed by a little garden, containing a small chapel. Near these there is one large garden, laid out with noble evergreen oaks, and a variety of other shrubs. At one end of this garden is a raised platform, surrounded with seats, from which the beautiful prospect that has just been described, is visible.

The monks were dressed in long white habits, and wore beards; many of them had attained a vast age, (a proof this, that the great austerities of their rule are not otherwise than conducive to health and longevity: they live an eremitical life, never taste flesh meat, or even fish, but live on bread, fruits, and herbs; hardly ever speak, nor ever meet together, excepting in their church, where they sing in common the Divine praises, and on certain great festivals. Most of them are priests, so that many times a day the holy sacrifice is offered up. Besides which, every morning a high mass is sung, with the organ, and their solemn chaunt. A great portion of their time is spent in the exercise of mental prayer and contemplation: all rise at midnight, and present themselves in the choir of the church to sing matins and lauds. The congregation which frequents their church is chiefly formed of the shepherds who frequent these lone mountains, and