

## STONE FROM TURKEY IN EUROPE

*Marmor Molossium, Fior di Persico* <sup>1</sup>

‘NOWHERE outside of Molossia or Epirus does any man fell in the forest columns like these, so tall, so graceful, and bright with all the colours of a flower garden.’ <sup>2</sup>

Thus Paulus Silentiarius appropriately describes the colouring of this marble, which indeed has a flower-like appearance. The stains are of almost every shade of pink, lilac, purple and red confused together on a white ground-mass.

This stone, known to the Romans as Marmor Molossium, was also considerably employed in Constantinople; where, in the mosque of Saint Sophia, Silentiarius made his observation.

The quarries were situated in the district inhabited by the Molossians, that ancient tribe of Epirus famous for its shepherd-dogs. Here, near the source of the famous river Acheron, the Romans obtained this highly prized marble, used so frequently in the decoration of their city—two columns of which are to be seen to-day in the church of Sant’ Antonio de’ Portoghesi.

Mr. Brindley discovered a quarry of Fior di Persico on the island of Elba, and inferior kinds are found in other parts of Europe—but none of these can compare with the ancient. One variety is found in Maine-et-Loire, France, and known as Fleur de Pêcher; and another effective marble is quarried in the province of Massa e Carrara.

<sup>1</sup> Peach-blossom.

<sup>2</sup> P. Silentiarius, *op. cit.*