

**SICILY;
PP. 13-142**

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Sicily; pp. 13-142 by Augustus J. C. Hare & St. Clair Baddeley

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AUGUSTUS J. C. HARE & ST. CLAIR BADDELEY

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[L'Espresso]

**CAPPELLA PALATINA
PALERMO**

SICILY

BY

THE LATE AUGUSTUS J. C. HARE

AND

ST. CLAIR BADDELEY

AUTHOR OF

KING ROBERT THE WISE, AND HIS HEIRS

Δίπλα μέτρον ἐμὸ πολυτέλειαι Δίπλα

WITH MAP, PLANS

AND

THIRTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK

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1905

tion of his friends, and the refusal of the Bolognese to set at liberty his beloved natural son Enzo, whom they had made prisoner in 1249.

Frederick II. was first married (by Innocent III.) to Constance of Aragon, who was ten years his senior, and was widow of Emmerich, King of Hungary. By her he was the father of a son Henry, who died in 1235. Secondly, he married, 1227, Iolanthe de Lusignan, daughter of King John De Brienne of Jerusalem, and rightful heiress of that nebulous kingdom through her mother, from whom the kings of Naples afterwards claimed that title. The Empress Iolanthe died in 1235 in her seventeenth year, ten days after giving birth to her only child, afterwards Conrad IV. Thirdly, Frederick married Isabella, daughter of Henry III. of England, by whom he was the father of a second Prince Henry, and who died in childbirth in 1241. Fourthly, Frederick II. was married upon his death-bed to his mistress, Bianca Lancia, by whom he had been the father of Manfred.¹

Manfred, son of Frederick II. and Bianca Lancia (having been first regent in consequence of the absence of the rightful heir **Conrad IV.**, who died in 1254, and of the infancy of his successor **Conradin**), was crowned King of Sicily and Calabria in 1258. He inherited the qualities of his father as warrior, poet, and sage. He founded Manfredonia and had his chief residence at Barletta. But bitter hostility to the Norman sovereigns had been aroused in the popes by the opposition of Frederick II. to their worldly claims, and Urban IV., after excommunicating Manfred as a usurper, offered the crown of Sicily first to the King of England, who declined it, and then to *Charles of Anjou*, who accepted it and at his command invaded the south of Italy. The papal fury had been roused most of all by the foundation of Saracenic Nocera—'Tell the Sultan of Nocera,' said Charles, when Manfred sent to ask the conditions of peace, 'that he shall either send me to paradise, or I will send him to hell.' The armies met at Beneventum, where, owing to the valour of the Normans, the battle was going well for Manfred, when the barons of Apulia deserted him with their forces. Then, rushing into the thick of the combat, and performing prodigies of heroism, King Manfred fell as became the last of the Normans, and, being denied Christian burial by the popes and a monument by his enemies, he was immortalised in the verses of Dante. The massacre

¹ The other (bastard) sons of Frederick II. were King Enzo, Frederick of Anjou b, and Richard, Vicar General of Romagna. His daughters were Selvaggia, Iolanthe, Catherine, the Countesses of Acerra and Caretto, and Blancheffeur, who died a nun at Montargis in 1278.

known as the Sicilian Vespers released the Sicilians, in 1282, from their twenty-four years of oppression by the hated Angevin sovereigns, and after the slaughter of about 4000 Frenchmen, they called in as their ruler **Peter of Aragon** (who had married Constance, the daughter of Manfred), to whom the young **Conradin**, grandson of Frederick II., murdered by Charles at Naples in 1268, had bequeathed his rights upon the scaffold. As Charles of Anjou retained the continental territories, the usage began at this time of calling the island Sicily 'ultra pharum,' and the kingdom on the mainland Sicily 'citra pharum.'

The Aragonese dynasty was destined to last above 430 years. Sicily became a dependency of the Spanish crown in 1479, through the accession of Ferdinand II. ('the Catholic'), son of John of Aragon, to the throne of Spain. During this long period the affairs of the island were chiefly administered by **Viceroy**s, to whose taste and care the chief towns owe much of their embellishment, but by whom the judicial system was deteriorated, the country neglected, and its resources wasted.

By the Peace of Utrecht, Sicily was given to Vittorio Amadeo of Savoy, who held it for four years, after which it was exchanged for Sardinia, and united to Naples under the Emperor Charles V. In 1734 it was conquered by Don Carlos, son of Philip V. of Spain, who, as Charles III., King of the Two Sicilies, proved a wise and able sovereign, reforming the abuses which had sprung up under the viceroys and been fostered by years of warfare. Henceforward the island followed the fortunes of the kingdom on the mainland, to which it was united. Its official appellation being 'Domini al di là del Faro,' as that of the part of the kingdom on the mainland was 'Domini al di quà del Faro.' In 1860 the criminal misgovernment of the later Bourbons gave a substantial excuse for the invasion of the island by Garibaldi, whose successes were followed by the expulsion of King Francis II. in 1861, and the seizure of his dominions by his maternal uncle, Victor Emmanuel II., afterwards King of United Italy.

The want of roads, which is still so remarkable in the island, long left it far behind Italy in civilisation and commerce; but now railways have opened out its resources, and its trade in sulphur, corn, oil, wine (especially Marsala), and other products, is steadily increasing. Besides the vines, olives, and oranges of Sicily, the liquorice, carouba, manna, almond, and sumach trees are of value. The flowers are indescribably beautiful, and there are twenty-five plants whose specific name, *Siculus*, is taken from Sicily.

There are three *archbishoprics*—Palermo, Monreale, and Messina; and eleven *bishoprics*—Syracuse, Mazzara, Cefalù,

Patti, Nicosia, Piazza, Gerace, Girgenti, Caltagirone, Catania, and Lipari. But the extreme ignorance of the people has made them even more superstitious than the Italians of the mainland, and till recently the horrible ceremonies connected with the car of the Madonna at Messina, and of S. Rosalia at Palermo, were rather worthy of the worship of Juggernaut than of Christianity. Travellers will still be struck by 'Viva la Divina Provvidenza'—Long life to the Divine Providence—as a frequent sign of public-houses near Palermo; but on the whole, since the Sardinian occupation and the abolition of convents, religion and superstition have been alike tending to extinction. The new laws relating to the division of property have also brought many of the old palaces and their owners to equal ruin; and the aristocratic Bagaria now presents a melancholy picture of fallen splendour.

There is not a little merit to be found in the modern literature of the island, including of course the poems of Giovanni Meli (1815), which are descriptive of Sicilian scenery and manners, and in the learned archaeological works of the Duke of Serradifalco and the Prince of Torremuzza; but those anxious to gain intimate knowledge of Sicilian History should read Michele Amari's noble *War of the Sicilian Vespers*, the various works of E. A. Freeman (Fisher Unwin & Co.), and, above all, *Usi e Costume, Credenze e Pregiudizi* and *La Vita in Palermo cento e più anni fa*, both by Giuseppe Pitrè (A. Reber, Palermo), a delightful writer.

Travellers on the island will do well to study the *Idylls of Theocritus*, a series of exquisite word-pictures, the result of life amid Sicilian scenery. They may also read the famous elegy of Moschus over Bion (which so filled and stimulated the *Adonais* of Shelley), a poet of Syracuse in the third century B.C.

"Théocrite est le peintre en miniature de la Sicile. Ses idylles se composent d'une foule de petits tableaux champêtres peints d'après nature. Dans cette poésie insulaire, on aperçoit sans cesse la mer à l'horizon. Tantôt c'est un berger qui, appuyé contre un pin, joue de la flûte, tandis que les balles vagues à peine murmurantes réfléchissent l'image mobile de son chien qui court en jappant sur le rivage, tantôt ce sont de vieux pêcheurs conversant la nuit sur une couche d'algues, pendant que la mer vient battre mollement leur cabane de feuillée."—*J. J. Ampère.*

"Child of the mountains, among shepherds reared,
I learned to dream of Sicily; and lo!
A pleasant promise, wafted from her shores,
Comes o'er my heart: in fancy I behold
Her seas yet smiling, her once happy vales;
Nor can my tongue give utterance to a name
Of note belonging to that honoured isle,
That doth not yield a solace to my grief."

—*Wordsworth.*

In his enthusiasm, almost as if referring to its being a fragment of the Apennine range, **Goethe** wrote to his friends, 'Without Sicily, Italy is incomplete.' And yet under former Governments, the wretchedness of the inns, the difficulty of locomotion, and the chronic insecurity of the roads made thousands of would-be foreign visitors forego the satisfaction of their curiosity. Nowadays, however, and especially since the organisation of Egyptian travel and the increased general prosperity of Italy, this loveliest island of the Mediterranean is intersected by railways, and the hotels in all the large towns vie with those in capital cities, and there are larger towns on the mainland than **Palermo**, which yet have much to learn from it. At the same time it is necessary to warn the traveller not to take the same liberties in the suburbs that he may take with impunity at Florence or Rome: though, for that matter, the lonely or the rash visitor may find himself victimised unpleasantly in those of any large town. Messina, Palermo, Cefalù, Trapani, Girgenti, Syracuse, Catania, and Taormina may be each enjoyed with reasonable safety and great comfort. By arrangement with local agents such as *Messrs. Thomas Cook, Solinus, Segeste, and Selinunto, and Castrogiovanni* (Henna), and **Etna** may all be visited with perfect security; though even all of these will not exhaust the over-abundant beauty spots of this second Greece.

The more usual route to Sicily is by sea from **Naples** to Palermo, though many travellers prefer the ten-hours railway to Reggio, thence the crossing to Messina is made in half-an-hour, occasionally a very wet one. The latter, however, is preferable for those who intend to make exclusive or predominant stay at **Taormina**, which is reached thence by train in an hour and a half. But travellers suffer much at the hands of railway officials, who by night thrust emigrants into first and second class carriages. The steamers from Naples are comfortable, and usually accomplish their journey by night in fifteen hours. They profess to do it in twelve. They usually leave the dock at 8 P.M. punctually, and reach Palermo Harbour at 10.30 A.M. The principal steamers are the *Galileo, Elettrica, and Marco Polo*. Luggage is briefly examined at the *Dogana*, and omnibuses and carriages meet the passengers. Carriages to the town cost 1 lira 50 cent. and pour-boire. Electric tramways circulate freely in and out of the town. **H. Igia**, originally a thermal speculation, has been converted into a suburban grand hotel, with excellent cuisine, and every luxury except good walks. The other hotels are *H. Trinacria* on the Marina between Porta Felice and the Villa Giulia; *H. de France* (Piazza Marina), near San Domenico; *H. des Palmes*, with