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The Isle of Caprea.

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Enrag'd, his wide-extended jaws expire,
 In angry whirl-winds, blasphemies and fire,
 Threat'ning, if loosen'd from his dire abodes,
 Again to challenge *Jove*, and fight the Gods.
 On mount *Vesuvio* next he fixt his eyes,
 And saw the smoaking tops confus'dly rise;
 (A hideous ruin!) that with earthquakes rent
 A second *Ætna* to the view present.
Miseno's cape and *Bauli* last he view'd,
 That on the sea's extreamest borders stood.

Silius Italicus here takes notice, that the poisonous vapours which arose from the lake *Averno* in *Hannibal's* time, were quite dispersed at the time when he wrote his Poem; because *Agrippa*, who lived between *Hannibal* and *Silius*, had cut down the woods that enclosed the lake, and hindered these noxious steams from dissipating, which were immediately scattered as soon as the winds and fresh air were let in among them.

The ISLE of CAPREA.

HAVING staid longer at *Naples* than I at first designed, I could not dispense with my self from making a little voyage to the Isle of *Caprea*, as being very desirous to see a place which had been the retirement of *Augustus* for some time, and the residence of *Tiberius* for several years. The Island lyes four miles in length from east to west, and about one in breadth. The western part, for about two miles in length, is a continued rock vastly high, and inaccessible on the sea-side. It has however the greatest town in the Island, that goes under the name of *Ano-Caprea*, and is in several places covered with a very fruitful soil. The eastern end of the Isle rises up in Precipices very near as high, though not quite so long, as the western. Between these eastern and western mountains lyes a slip of lower ground, which runs across the Island, and is one of the pleasantest spots I have seen. It is hid with Vines, Figs, Oranges,

ranges, Almonds, Olives, Myrtles, and fields of Corn, which look extremely fresh and beautiful, and make up the most delightful little Land-skip imaginable, when they are surveyed from the tops of the neighbouring mountains. Here stands the town of *Caprea*, the Bishop's Palace, and two or three Convents. In the midst of this fruitful tract of land rises a hill, that was probably covered with buildings in *Tiberius's* time. There are still several ruins on the sides of it, and about the top are found two or three dark galleries, low built, and covered with mason's work, though at present they appear over-grown with grass. I entered one of them that is a hundred paces in length. I observed, as some of the countrymen were digging into the sides of this mountain, that what I took for solid earth, was only heaps of brick, stone, and other rubbish, skinned over with a covering of vegetables. But the most considerable ruine is that which stands on the very extremity of the eastern promontory, where are still some apartments left, very high and arched at top: I have not indeed seen the remains of any ancient *Roman* buildings, that have not been roofed with either vaults or arches. The Rooms I am mentioning stand deep in the earth, and have nothing like windows or chimnies, which makes me think they were formerly either bathing places or reservoirs of water. An old Hermit lives at present among the ruins of this Palace, who lost his companion a few years ago by a fall from the precipice. He told me they had often found Medals and Pipes of lead, as they dug among the rubbish, and that not many years ago they discovered a paved road running under ground, from the top of the mountain to the sea-side, which was afterwards confirmed to me by a Gentleman of the Island. There is a very noble prospect from this place. On the one side lyes a vast extent of seas, that runs abroad further than the eye can reach. Just opposite stands the green promontory of *Surrentum*, and on the other side the whole circuit of the bay of *Naples*. This prospect, according to *Tacitus*, was more agreeable before the burning of *Vesuvio*; that mountain probably, which after the first eruption looked like a great pile of ashes, was in *Tiberius's* time shaded with woods and vineyards; for I think *Martial's* Epigram may here serve as a comment to *Tacitus*.

Hic est pampineis viridis Vesuvius umbris,

Presserat hic madidos nobilis uva lacus.

Hæc juga quàm Nisæ colles plus Bacchus amavit:

Hoc nuper Satyri monte dedere choros.

Hæc

*Hæc Veneris sedes, Lacedæmone gratior illi;
 Hic locus Herculeo nomine clarus erat.
 Cuncta jacent flammis et tristi mersa favillâ:
 Nec superi vellent hoc licuisse sibi.* L. 2. Ep. 105.

Vesuvio, cover'd with the fruitful vine,
 Here flourish'd once, and ran with floods of wine,
 Here *Bacchus* oft to the cool shades retir'd,
 And his own native *Nisa* less admir'd;
 Oft to the mountain's airy tops advanc'd,
 The frisking Satyrs on the summets danc'd;
Alcides here, here *Venus* grac'd the shore,
 Nor lov'd her fav'rite *Lacedæmon* more:
 Now piles of ashes, spreading all around,
 In undistinguish'd heaps deform the ground,
 The Gods themselves the ruin'd seats bemoan,
 And blame the mischiefs that themselves have done.

This view must still have been more pleasant, when the whole bay was encompassed with so long a range of buildings, that it appeared to those, who looked on it at a distance, but as one continued city. On both the shores of that fruitful bottom, which I have before mentioned, are still to be seen the marks of ancient edifices; particularly on that which looks towards the south there is a little kind of Mole, which seems to have been the foundation of a Palace; unless we may suppose that the *Pharos* of *Caprea* stood there, which *Statius* takes notice of in his Poem that invites his wife to *Naples*, and is, I think, the most natural among the *Silva*.

*Nec desunt variæ circum oblectamina vitæ,
 Sive vaporiferas, blandissima littora, Bajas,
 Enthea fatidicæ seu visere tectâ Sibyllæ,
 Dulce sit, Iliacoque jugum memorabile remo:
 Seu tibi Bacchei vineta madentia Gauri,
 Teleboumque domos, trepidis ubi dulcia nautis
 Lumina noctivagæ tollit Pharus æmula luna,
 Caraque non molli jugâ Surrentina Lyæo.* L. 3.

The blissful seats with endless pleasures flow,
 Whether to *Baja's* sunny shores you go,

And view the sulphur to the baths convey'd,
 Or the dark Grotte of the prophetick maid,
 Or steep *Miseno* from the *Trojan* nam'd,
 Or *Gaurus* for its flowing vintage fam'd,
 Or *Caprea*, where the lanthorn fix'd on high
 Shines like a moon through the benighted sky,
 While by its beams the wary failor steers:
 Or where *Surrentum*, clad in vines, appears.

They found in *Ano-Caprea*, some years ago, a statue and a rich pavement under ground, as they had occasion to turn up the earth that lay upon them. One still sees, on the bendings of these mountains, the marks of several ancient scales of stairs, by which they used to ascend them. The whole Island is so unequal that there were but few diversions to be found in it without doors, but what recommended it most to *Tiberius* was its wholesome air, which is warm in winter and cool in summer, and its inaccessible coasts, which are generally so very steep, that a handful of men might defend them against a powerful army.

We need not doubt but *Tiberius* had his different residences, according as the seasons of the year, and his different sets of pleasure required. *Suetonius* says, *Duodecim Villas totidem nominibus ornavit*. The whole Island was probably cut into several easie ascents, planted with variety of palaces, and adorned with as great a multitude of groves and gardens as the situation of the place would suffer. The works under ground were however more extraordinary than those above it; for the rocks were all undermined with high-ways, grotto's, galleries, bagnio's, and several subterraneous retirements, that suited with the brutal pleasures of the Emperor. One would indeed very much wonder to see such small appearances of the many works of art, that were formerly to be met with in this Island, were we not told that the *Romans*, after the death of *Tiberius*, sent hither an army of Pioneers on purpose to demolish the buildings, and deface the beauties of the Island.

In sailing round *Caprea* we were entertained with many rude prospects of rocks and precipices, that rise in several places half a mile high in perpendicular. At the bottom of them are caves and grotto's, formed by the continual breaking of the waves upon them. I entered one which the inhabitants call *Grotto Oscuro*, and after the light of the sun was a little worn off my Eyes, could see all the parts of it distinctly, by a glimmering reflection that played upon them from the surface of the water.

The

The mouth is low and narrow, but, after having entered pretty far in, the Grotto opens it self on both sides in an oval figure of an hundred yards from one extremity to the other, as we were told, for it would not have been safe measuring of it. The roof is vaulted, and distils fresh water from every part of it, which fell upon us as fast as the first droppings of a shower. The Inhabitants and *Neapolitans* who have heard of *Tiberius's* Grotto's, will have this to be one of them, but there are several reasons that show it to be natural. For besides the little use we can conceive of such a dark cavern of salt waters, there are no where any marks of the chissel; the sides are of a soft mouldering stone, and one sees many of the like hollow spaces worn in the bottoms of the rocks, as they are more or less able to resist the impressions of the water that beats against them.

Not far from this Grotto lye the *Sirenum Scopuli*, which *Virgil* and *Ovid* mention in *Aeneas's* voyage; they are two or three sharp rocks that stand about a stone's throw from the south-side of the Island, and are generally beaten by waves and tempests, which are much more violent on the south than on the north of *Caprea*.

*Famque adeo scopulos Sirenum advecta subibat
Difficiles quondam, multorumque ossibus albos,
Tum rauca assiduò longè saepe saxa sonabant.* ÆN.

Glides by the Syren's cliffs, a shelly coast,
Long infamous for ships and sailors lost,
And white with bones: Th'impetuous ocean roars,
And rocks rebellow from the sounding shores. Dryden.

I have before said that they often find Medals in this Island. Many of those they call the *Spintria*, which *Aretin* has copyed, have been dug up here. I know none of the Antiquaries that have written on this subject, and find nothing satisfactory of it where I thought it most likely to be met with, in *Patin's* edition of *Suetonius* illustrated by Medals. Those I have conversed with about it, are of opinion they were made to ridicule the brutality of *Tiberius*, though I cannot but believe they were stamped by his order. They are unquestionably antique, and no bigger than Medals of the third magnitude. They bear on one side some lewd invention of that hellish society which *Suetonius* calls *Monstrous concubitus repertores*, and on the other the number of the Medal. I have seen of them as high as to twenty. I cannot think they were made as a jest on

the Emperor, because Raillery on coins is of a modern date. I know but two in the Upper Empire, besides the *Spintria*, that lye under any suspicion of it. The first is one of *Marcus Aurelius*, where, in compliment to the Emperor and Empress, they have stamped on the reverse the figure of *Venus* caressing *Mars*, and endeavouring to detain him from the wars.



— Quoniam belli fera manera Mavors
Armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tuum se
Rejicit, aeterno devinctus vulnere amoris.

Lucr. L. 1.

The *Venus* has *Faustina's* face, her lover is a naked figure with a helmet on his head, and a shield on his arm.

Tu scabie frueris mali quod in aggere rodit,
Qui tegitur, parmâ et galeâ—

Juv. Sat. 5.

This unluckily brings to mind *Faustina's* fondness for the Gladiator, and is therefore interpreted by many as a hidden piece of Satyr. But besides, that such a thought was inconsistent with the gravity of a Senate, how can one imagine that the Fathers would have dared affront the Wife of *Aurelius*, and the Mother of *Commodus*, or that they could think of giving offence to an Empress whom they afterwards Deified, and to an Emperor that was the darling of the army and people?

The other Medal is a golden one of *Gallienus* preserved in the French King's cabinet; it is inscribed *Gallienæ Augustæ, Pax Ubique*, and was stamped at a time when the Emperor's Father was in bondage, and the Empire torn in pieces by several pretenders to it. Yet, if one considers the strange stupidity of this Emperor, with the senseless security which appears in several of his sayings that are still left on record, one may

may very well believe this coin was of his own invention. We may be sure, if raillery had once entered the old *Roman* coins, we should have been over-stocked with Medals of this nature; if we consider there were often rival Emperors proclaimed at the same time, who endeavoured at the lessening of each others character, and that most of them were succeeded by such as were enemies to their predecessor. These Medals of *Tiberius* were never current mony, but rather of the nature of Medallions, which seem to have been made on purpose to perpetuate the discoveries of that infamous society. *Suetonius* tells us, that their monstrous inventions were registered several ways, and preserved in the Emperor's private apartments. *Cubicula plurifariam disposita tabellis ac sigillis lascivissimarum picturarum et figurarum adornavit, librisque Elephantidis instruxit: ne cui in Operâ edendâ exemplar impetratâ Schemæ deesset.* The *Elephantis* here mentioned is probably the same *Martial* takes notice of for her book of postures.

In Sabellum.

Facundos mihi de libidinosis

Legisti nimium Sabelle versus,

Quales nec Didymi sciunt puellæ,

Nec molles Elephantidos libelli.

Sunt illic Veneris novæ figuræ:

Quales, &c.

Lib. 12. Ep. 43.

Ovid mentions the same kind of pictures that found a place even in *Augustus's* cabinet.

Scilicet in domibus vestris, ut prisca virorum

Artifici fulgent corpora picta manu;

Sic quæ concubitus varios Venerisque figuras

Exprimat, est aliquo parva tabella loco.

De Trist. Lib. 2.

There are several of the *Sigilla*, or Seals, *Suetonius* speaks of, to be met with in collections of ancient *Intaglio's*.

But, I think, what puts it beyond all doubt that these Coins were rather made by the Emperor's order, than as a Satyr on him, is because they are now found in the very place that was the scene of these his unnatural lusts.

—Quem

Quem rupes Caprearum tetra latebit
Incesto possessa seni? —

Cl. de 4to Conf. Hon.

Who has not heard of *Caprea's* guilty shore,
Polluted by the rank old Emperor?

From *NAPLES* to *ROME*, by Sea.

I Took a Felucca at *Naples* to carry me to *Rome*, that I might not be forced to run over the same fights a second time, and might have an opportunity of seeing many things in a road which our voyages-writers have not so particularly described. As in my journey from *Rome* to *Naples* I had *Horace* for my guide, so I had the pleasure of seeing my voyage, from *Naples* to *Rome*, described by *Virgil*. It is indeed much easier to trace out the way *Aeneas* took, than that of *Horace*, because *Virgil* has marked it out by Capes, Islands, and other parts of nature, which are not so subject to change or decay as are towns, cities, and the works of art. Mount *Pausilypo* makes a beautiful prospect to those who pass by it: At a small distance from it lyes the little Island of *Nisida*, adorned with a great variety of plantations, rising one above another in so beautiful an order, that the whole Island looks like a large Terrace-Garden. It has two little Ports, and is not at present troubled with any of those noxious steams that *Lucan* mentions.

— Tali spiramine Nefis

Emittit Stygium nebulosis aëra saxis.

Lib. 6.

Nefis's high rocks such *Stygian* air produce,
And the blue breathing pestilence diffuse.

From *Nisida* we rowed to cape *Miseno*. The extremity of this cape has a long cleft in it, which was enlarged and cut into shape by *Agrippa*, who made this the great port for the *Roman* fleet that served in the Mediterranean; as that of *Ravenna* held the ships designed for the *Adriatic*