

JAMES BARBER

THE
OVERLAND
GUIDE-BOOK

James Barber

The Overland Guide-book

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James Barber

The Overland Guide-book / A complete vade-mecum for the overland traveller, to India viâ Egypt

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this little volume, which I have now the honour to submit to the public, is to combine, in a compact and convenient form, all the information necessary to the prosecution of the journey Overland to India and *vice versâ*.

Scarcely a day passes that I am not asked, either personally or by letter, to guide some intending traveller in his arrangements for the trip, and even to advise him as to the preferable routes, the expense, the manner of the voyage, &c. Ignorance on all these points induces inapposite and irrelevant questions; and it is not unusual to find, at the end of correspondence or a prolonged interview, that the querist is as far from the possession of the knowledge he desired to acquire as he was when he first preferred his application. No clear and satisfactory information can possibly be obtained by a desultory conversation or fragmentary epistles; hence the value of a systematic and comprehensive arrangement of all the facts and suggestions pertaining to the subject.

There is another reason why I should put forth this Guide, – it completes, in a measure – as far, at least, as the great Overland scheme is in itself complete – my humble labours in the mighty cause of steam-communication between England and India. For the past fourteen years, I have earnestly and ardently advocated the accomplishment of this great object; and, though treated as a vain and visionary enthusiast, when I have presumed to predict the establishment of a semi-monthly intercourse (which I did in 1836!), my endeavours never relaxed, nor did my hope in the least degree abate. I may be pardoned, therefore, some measure of exultation and self-approval, when, looking back upon the state of the steam question some years ago, and tracing its rise and progress through a thousand difficulties and obstructions, I venture to associate my own zeal and exertions with the triumphant consummation apparent in the scheme now adopted and carried out by the "Peninsular and Oriental Company," and the "East India Company," not only with the Presidencies of India, but also with our Chinese possessions.

I laboured long and strenuously; for I could not persuade myself that British enterprise and public spirit would suffer so obvious a means of extending commerce and civilisation, and of the approximation of our vast Indian empire to the seat of its supreme rule, to be neglected. The great cause *has* triumphed, – some of my wildest dreams have become sober realities, and, while I feel grateful for the past, I am hopeful for the future.

Those who take a prominent and active part in promoting great schemes of public utility, where doubt and timidity, and envy and selfish interests are to be combated, must expect to meet with rebuffs and misrepresentations. Of these evils I have had my share, but I have also, from time to time, been unexpectedly cheered on the way by receiving voluntary and public testimonials of unspeakable value, graciously transmitted through various channels. I may be excused for publishing the following letter from the present excellent and much esteemed Bishop of Calcutta, for it displays a truly Christian spirit, – it grapples comprehensively with the question, and corroborates the view taken by the late Lord William Bentinck, who expressed his opinion "that steam-communication with India would be cheaply bought at any price."

"BISHOPS PALACE, CALCUTTA, "22nd of October, 1838.

"Dear Sir,

"I should never forgive myself, if I conveyed to you the accompanying resolution without, at the same time, assuring you of the sincere gratitude I feel in the bottom of my heart to a gentleman who has laboured so assiduously, diligently and successfully in one of the greatest cause that ever interested humanity.

"I can truly say, that the consequences, immediate and remote, of steam-communication between India and Europe defy calculation. Such a wonderful adaptation of science is full of 'the seed of things,' as was said of Lord Bacon's philosophical writings and principles two centuries since.

"The invention of printing, and the discovery of the mariners' compass, did not more immediately bear upon the happiness of mankind. The human family is now indeed approximating, and, by inter-communication of knowledge, the times may be expected to draw on, when the illumination of the more prostrate nations will be borrowed from the most remote and exalted.

"Allow me, sir, to conclude with saying that, not only as a Chairman, but as a man and a Christian, I have sincere pleasure in transmitting to you the enclosed resolution, and am

"Your most obedient,"

D. CALCUTTA

"To Captain James Barber, "&c., &c., &c."

The journey to and from India, by way of Egypt, is now one of comparative ease and pleasure; and, as it is my intention to publish periodically a revised edition of "The Overland Guide Book," I shall feel grateful to those persons who, from time to time, will communicate with me on the subject, in order that the best and fullest information gained by experience may be made available to the traveller who prefers this route.

JAMES BARBER.

THE OVERLAND GUIDE-BOOK

The communication with India by means of steam-vessels, *viâ* the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, can no longer be viewed as an experimental project; the great increase that has taken place in the number of travellers by this route in a few brief years has distanced all calculation, and we, therefore, place before the public such facts, details and suggestions, connected with what is popularly called "*The Overland Route*," as shall facilitate the performance of the voyage, from the hour when the resolution to proceed to India or to Europe is taken, down to that which sees the traveller safely deposited at his destination.

The sea route round the Cape of Good Hope still has its partisans, in spite of the tedium, extra risk and absence of all objects of interest, which necessarily distinguish such a voyage. False notions of economy, groundless apprehensions, peculiar ideas of comfort and ancient prejudices, cannot be immediately dissipated, especially when so many encouragements to their continuance exist in the beautiful trading-vessels, which offer accommodation to the public, commanded by gentlemen, whose courtesy and *sçavoir vivre* are only equalled by their nautical experience.

Still in this – the comparative infancy of the steam route – nine-tenths of those whom fortune may carry to India will prefer the most expeditious manner of proceeding thither; and it, therefore, becomes in the highest degree important that they should be supplied with the fullest information, in furtherance of their purpose.

Under this impression, the following pages have been compiled; and, as we purpose to confine ourselves to useful and practical detail, the reader is left to seek, in the numberless volumes that have been published, a more elaborate account of those objects on his route which he may desire to mark with special attention.

The following division of our subject appears the most convenient for the object of this publication: —

**Instructions and Hints to Passengers to Aden,
Ceylon, Madras, Calcutta, the Straits and China**

To Bombay

Routes through France and Trieste

From India, *viâ* Syra, Malta, Marseilles, or direct to Southampton

Miscellaneous

THE PASSAGE TO ADEN, CEYLON, MADRAS, CALCUTTA, THE STRAITS AND CHINA

The "Peninsular and Oriental Company" having contracted with Her Majesty's government to carry a mail monthly to the above places, also secure to passengers accommodation along the whole route, at a specific charge, and, by the same opportunity, drop at Malta or Alexandria those persons who do not contemplate proceeding any farther.

The steamers remain at Gibraltar six, and at Malta twelve, hours.

The charge for a passage varies according to the accommodation occupied and the distance to be travelled. On reference to Appendix A, the reader will find the fullest information, with a list of the Company's ships and the lines on which they are at present stationed.

As berths in all these steamers vary in comfort as well as price, persons who have determined to proceed to India or the intermediate ports, at a particular date, cannot be too early in their application and choice. On these points every information is most readily and courteously given at the office of the "Peninsular and Oriental Company." But if the party going be, from his absence from town or inexperience in business, under the necessity of employing an intermediate agent to secure a passage for him, he would do well to select one thoroughly acquainted not only with the vessels themselves, but with all that appertains to them.

As a general rule, we may remark that these steamers are liberally provided with all that passengers can possibly desire. A good table is kept, and the cabins are comfortably and conveniently fitted, and sheets, pillow-cases and towels are supplied. It may, however, be as well to give some precise information as to the possible requirements of a passenger; for a simple statement of what the steamers *do* provide scarcely involves a specification of the articles *not* to be found on board. Let it be stated, then, that there is no sort of occasion for bed or table-linen, a sofa, wash-hand-stand, looking-glass, boot-hooks, jugs, tumblers, blacking and brushes, or those "overland bedsteads" which we see continually advertised; but it will be prudent to be provided with a large rug, an air pillow, and a counterpane or *resai* (wadded coverlet); for it is very probable that, on getting into a warm latitude, the traveller will prefer sleeping on deck, and the steamer's bedding is not allowed to be carried from its place for such purposes.

The steamers leave Southampton on the 20th of each month – provided the luggage be sent down in due time.¹ Passengers need not leave London till an early morning train on the day of embarkation. Those who intend sleeping at Southampton the previous night should bespeak beds. The vessels are moored alongside the quay in the docks, and the hire of a truck from the railway to the steamer is one shilling. Flies also are in constant attendance; in fine weather, however, the distance is an agreeable ten-minutes' walk or less.

Railway trains from the Waterloo Bridge station to Southampton, in the morning, at 7·15 o'clock, 10·30 o'clock (mail); afternoon, 1, 3·45, 5 o'clock (express); evening, 30 minutes past 8 o'clock. Mail Sunday trains, morning, at 9 o'clock; afternoon, 5 o'clock; evening, 30 minutes past 8 o'clock. Mail passengers should be at the station at least a quarter of an hour before the trains start.

Passengers should embark at Southampton not later than 12·30 P.M.

The trunks in which clothes for the voyage may be packed, should be regulated by the calling or capacity of the traveller. If he be a military or medical man, and, therefore, liable to much marching about in India, bullock-trunks, specially made at the outfitters, are preferable, as they are permanently useful. Passengers are strongly recommended to adopt trunks or portmanteaus of the

¹ Vide James Barber and Co.'s Circular.

following dimensions, *viz.*: – length, 2 feet 3 inches, breadth, 1 foot 2 inches, depth, 1 foot 2 inches, and to have *their names and the port of debarkation distinctly painted on each package*. No package or baggage should exceed 80 lbs. in weight, otherwise it may be delayed in Egypt. The portmanteaus should be of leather, or material not liable to injury or breakage in handling.²

The following are the leading points of the "Peninsular and Oriental Company's" regulations: —

Passengers not proceeding, after taking berths, will forfeit half the passage-money. In case, however, of a passenger being unavoidably prevented from availing himself of a passage at the period for which it is taken, a transfer of the passage can be effected to a subsequent steamer, on due notice being given, without forfeiture of any portion of the deposit paid, and accommodation will be allotted as similar as circumstances will permit.

On either side of the Isthmus, three cwt. of personal baggage is allowed to each first-class passenger; but 16s. per cwt. is charged by the "Egyptian Transit Company" for conveyance through Egypt on all baggage exceeding two cwt.

In the steamers, children, servants and second-class passengers are allowed one cwt. and a half each; 16s. per cwt. being charged by the "Egyptian Transit Company" on all beyond one cwt.

A passenger engaging a whole cabin for the entire voyage, is entitled to take in the steamer four and a half cwt. of luggage; but is subject to the charge in Egypt as above stated.

Excess of three cwt. of baggage in the steamer pays freight at the rate of £1 per cwt., in the Alexandria steamers, and £2 per cwt. in the India vessels.

Any luggage beyond that allowed *free* must be put on board and paid for three days previous to the vessel's departure. Carpet-bags and hat-boxes only will be received on the day of sailing. The Company give notice that, all luggage (save as aforesaid) that shall be shipped on the day of departure will be considered as extra, and charged for accordingly.

Passengers taking articles of merchandise in their baggage will incur the risk of seizure by the customs' authorities in Egypt.

The Company do not hold themselves responsible for detention, damage, or loss of baggage.

As the allowance of baggage is on a liberal scale, and the freight of parcels moderate, it is hoped that passengers will not convey parcels or packages belonging to other persons, to the prejudice of the Company's interests. A contrary course will involve risk, delay and difficulty at the Egyptian custom-house.

Passengers will be expected to comply strictly with the regulations established on board the Company's steamers for the general comfort.

In the first instance, a passenger booking from England to Alexandria only, but who *afterwards* proceeds from Suez to India in this Company's steamers, will be required to pay such an additional amount only as will make up the sum, supposing he had taken his passage right through from his embarkation in England.

Lights to be put out at half-past ten o'clock, after which, no wines, spirits, &c., will be supplied, except in cases of illness, when application is to be made to the purser through the surgeon.

No wines, spirits, or beer, are to be supplied elsewhere than in the saloons, except in case of illness.

² Ladies will find Messrs. Thresher and Glennys' air-tight cases very useful, even in India. This firm, as general outfitters for the Overland Route, deservedly stand high, and merit every encouragement.

It is to be understood, that a passenger occupying a cabin of two or more berths, on the departure of the vessel, is not (unless he shall have paid an additional sum for its exclusive occupation) to object to the vacant berth being filled up at the intermediate ports, if required.

If there be any negligence, inattention, or impropriety, on the part of any of the servants, or any other ground for dissatisfaction, passengers are particularly requested to give notice immediately to the commander, who has full authority to act under such circumstances; and the Company would also wish to receive intimation of the same by letter, addressed to the secretary.

Although there is positively no restriction as to the quantity of a passenger's luggage, the excess of that allowed being paid for, still it is obvious that when a hundred persons are travelling with the speed of a mail through Egypt, every extra-package becomes an incumbrance, if not a positive nuisance; for it renders the timely arrival of those *absolutely required* very doubtful. It is, therefore, advisable that passengers should confine themselves strictly to the quantity of luggage necessary for the trip, sending so much as they may wish to have in India by the long sea route a month or two previous to their departure. The adoption of this course will spare them much annoyance and expense on the journey.

As by the Company's regulation no trunks, boxes or portmanteaus are allowed in the cabins of their steamers, passengers should provide themselves with a good-sized leather or carpet-bag, in which should be packed all the clothes, &c., required for immediate use; and this bag may be kept in the cabin and replenished from time to time from the trunks, to which the passengers have access every other day. This bag should be taken on board with the passenger; but the trunks and other baggage should be put on board two or three days before sailing.

We have now fairly started with our passengers from Southampton. The steamer boils and bubbles on her course, and in five days runs to Gibraltar, sighting the Spanish and Portuguese coasts. The passengers soon conquer the annoyance of sea-sickness; new acquaintanceships are rapidly formed; employments and pastimes arranged, and, by the time "the rock" is reached, the real pleasures of the trip begin to be fairly appreciated.

Gibraltar. – From the title so often given to this pleasant little port and garrison – "the Rock of Gibraltar," – the traveller expects to find a barren, inoccupable mass, as inhospitable to its friendly visitors as it was unapproachable to our foes; instead of this, the eye, after entering the bay, is greeted with the sight of a luxuriant vegetation, distributed into gardens, groves and plantations. After the visit of the *pratique* officer, boats approach the newly-arrived vessel, to take on shore any passenger who may be disposed to land for a few hours. The club-house and Griffith's Hotel offer temporary accommodations, and to one or the other the traveller may betake himself. He soon, however, is tempted, by the brilliancy of the sky and the warmth of the temperature, to wander abroad, and inspect the new scene that presents itself. The Commercial Square, formerly the Grand Parade, offers the first object of attraction. The sales by auction carried on here all day, draw together a motley population, whose costumes and physiognomy alone are a study for the stranger. Greeks, Turks, Jews, Arabs, &c., mingle together in picturesque confusion. The streets of Gibraltar are narrow, the houses low, irregular and ill-fashioned; yet are there a few public buildings worthy of a passing notice. The Exchange, erected during the government of Sir George Don, the Catholic church of St. Mary, the court-house, the Moorish castle, within which are some remarkable excavations, the residence of the governor (which was formerly a convent), the Protestant church, the garrison and library, are the principal edifices.

Gibraltar being but five miles long, the whole place may be seen, on horseback or in carriages, easily obtainable, in a very brief space. Proceeding southward, the visitor stops for a moment at South Port, where, over the gate, he sees the arms of the Emperor Charles V. richly emblazoned, supported by those of Philip II. Not far from this, are the Alameda, public walks and grounds tastefully laid

out. In the centre of the gardens is a statue harpooning a fish, which was formerly the figure-head of a Spanish vessel taken at Trafalgar, and near this, a column bearing a bronze bust of the Duke of Wellington.

Leaving the walks, the next object of interest is San Michael's Cave, a great natural curiosity. The whole rock (Calpe) is hollowed out and perforated by caves. The fantastic forms assumed by the stalactites give these recesses the appearance of work done by ingenious human hands. Martin's Cave, not far from San Michael's, corresponds in character with, but is smaller in dimensions than, the latter. The wild monkeys that inhabit the place afford much entertainment by their freaks. Extending the ride to Windmill Hill, we reach the Governor's cottage, built by General Fox as a summer residence. It is pleasantly situated close to the sea. From this the ride may be extended to Europa Point, Rosia, in the vicinity of which is the Naval Hospital, capable of holding 400 patients. From Rosia along the whole range of the western side to Sand Port is a continuation of works, batteries and bastions.

As the period of the steamer's detention (six hours) will scarcely enable the visitor to see more than the above, we do not think it necessary to extend our description. We will merely add, as a guide to those who are inclined to make purchases on shore, that accounts are kept in dollars, reals, &c., but English weights and measures are in use.

After quitting Gibraltar, steaming along the coast of Algiers, you soon reach the famed island of Malta, where the outward-bound coming free from the imputations of plague, which cover the homeward passenger, are at liberty at once to go on shore and see the "lions" of the place.

If the period chosen by the traveller for his voyage should admit of his reaching Malta between November and April, he will be enabled to regale on oranges, for which fruit the island is much celebrated. Other fruits, such as strawberries, figs, pomegranates, grapes, apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums, melons and prickly pears, are likewise to be had then. The climate of Malta is agreeable enough to tempt the visitor to prolong his stay, and, indeed, in the instance of pulmonary and other complaints, the atmosphere has often been found most serviceable. Its salubrity may be judged of from the fact of the range of the thermometer being remarkably equable; seldom falling below 50° in the month of January, or rising above 88° during the summer months.

The most remarkable edifices in Malta are the churches and the Albergas; which latter are now converted into public offices or other establishments of a useful nature. Their exterior denotes the end of their construction and the various sections of Knights of St. John, under whose auspices and for whose purposes they were raised.

These Albergas are now appropriated to government offices; one is occupied by the Malta Union Club, two others as courts of law, a fourth as the Civil Arsenal and Government Printing Office. The Auberge (or Alberga) de Castile is occupied by the officers of the English garrison; the Commissary-General tenants the Auberge de France – and so on.

The church of St. John holds the first rank among the numerous churches and convents of Malta. The interior is of an oblong form; the uppermost part, which forms the choir, is ornamented with an admirable piece of sculpture in white marble, on a raised base, representing the baptism of Christ by St. John, in two figures as large as life. The semicircular roof which covers the nave is adorned with paintings illustrative of the life of the above-mentioned apostle. The pavement is composed of sepulchral slabs worked in mosaic with various-coloured marble; many of them contain jasper, agate, and other precious stones, the cost of which must have been very great. These cover chiefly the graves of the knights and other servants of the order. The grand altar, which stands at the uppermost part of the nave, is very sumptuous, and deserves notice, on account of the various-coloured marble and other valuable stones of which it is constructed. The chapels of the different languages of the order, which run parallel with the nave, form the two aisles, and are very splendidly decorated. The roofs are constructed in the shape of a dome in the interior, and are profusely carved with different ornaments in alto-relievo, as also are the walls. The whole was gilded during the reigns of Rafael and Nicolas Cotoner, as appears from an inscription over the entrance on the west side of the

building. The arches of these chapels correspond on both sides, and leave their interior quite exposed to view, as you pass down the nave. The second arch covers the chapel of the Portuguese knights. Over the altar is a drawing of St. James; and on the side-walls are two other paintings, representing some traditionary scenes in the life of that apostle.

Besides the church already mentioned, there are three others in the city, which belong to the Government: viz., the Church of the Jesuits in Strada Mercanti, Di Liesse on the Marina, and St. Rocco in Strada St. Ursola. The church of Di Liesse belonged to the Knights of France. The walls of this building are adorned with gifts devoted to the Virgin; the fulfilment of vows made in time of affliction, in order to obtain her commiseration. The boatmen hold this church in peculiar veneration.

The two parish churches of the city are those of St. Domenico and St. Paolo; the former is connected with a monastery of Dominican friars; the latter is a collegiate church, situated in the street of the same name. The other monkish orders are those of the Augustinians, Carmelites, Franciscans, and the *Minori Osservanti*, or Reformed Franciscans, all of which have churches connected with their respective convents. Besides these, there are two large nunneries, one of Ursoline and the other of Sta. Catarina nuns; but the rage for this species of seclusion has very much subsided in Valetta. The former establishment is nearly empty, and the latter is receiving but very few additions. Two other churches in the city, one dedicated to Sta. Lucia and the other called Delle Anime (of the Souls in Purgatory), belong to the public. The Greek Catholics have also a small chapel, dedicated to Sta. Maria, in Strada Vescovo. By far the finest specimen of modern architecture is the Protestant church, built at the charge of Queen Adelaide, who sojourned for a short time at Malta.

Next to the churches are the Military Hospital, the Monte di Pietá, the Government University, the public and garrison libraries (the building containing these being one of the finest specimens of architecture in the whole town), the Castellaria, the theatre and the Banco dei Guirati. There are several antiquities in the public library, together with periodicals and newspapers. The Indian files received at this library will enable the outward-bound passenger to obtain later information of the state of affairs abroad, than he might have had when leaving England.

The traveller who sojourns a few hours only in Malta, after walking in the streets of Valetta, or looking through the imposing defences which surround it on every side, over the apparently arid or sun-burnt undulations of the island, frequently abandons all further interest in the spot – singular by nature and art – and reposes quietly on the information of some writer possessing little more actual knowledge of the island, but who may have furnished his readers with some highly-coloured descriptions of its early history, or dilated on the chivalrous bearing of its late masters, the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Without wading through these literary labours to discover "a grain of millet in a bushel of chaff," we merely desire to introduce to the sojourner an agreeable mode of spending a few leisure hours in visiting other portions of the island. By reference to a map, he will find little difficulty in wending his way to any part of it; he may pass from one extremity to the other without a chance of molestation or interruption, other than the occasional application for alms; for Malta has professional and other beggars in abundance, the result of an overwhelming population in proportion to the size and resources of the island and the thoughtlessness of marriages, contracted frequently without a prospect of supporting a family.

Passing out at Porte Reale – the gateway at the top of the principal street of Valetta – and crossing the draw-bridge, the stupendous defences of the city become apparent – deep ditches – every approach enfiladed, or covered by bastions surmounted with bristling cannon. From this portion of the works the road opens on the front of the public garden;³ a narrow promenade, of considerable extent, confined between stone walls, on the esplanade between Valetta and the extensive suburb of

³ During the governorship of Sir Alex. Ball, public gardens for the accommodation or pleasure of the inhabitants of the various "casals" were formed, but fell into disuse, and remain a trifling memorial of a desire to inculcate good and friendly feelings in all classes, and has been responded to by these places being totally neglected for public use.

Floriana, around which are thrown the outer defences of the city, extended like the former, from the great harbour on the east to the quarantine harbour on the west. Holding on the main road, to the left of the garden gate, we pass through Floriana, the gate of St. Anna (the inner gate of this line of defence), and by *Porte des Bombes*, reach the glacis of the works, and here commences the country of the island of Malta.

Three main roads conduct to the different villages or casals, some twenty-three in number, besides the hamlets of Pietá, Sliema, San Guiliana and Casal Paola. The road to the right (leading to the western end of the island), keeping the foot of the glacis, opens on the Pietá, one of the most imposing spots in Malta, with a pretty extensive row of houses, generally good, extending for about a mile on the bank of the quarantine harbour. At about a mile farther on is the populous and large casal of Bircharcara, containing some five or six thousand inhabitants. From the immediate extremity of the Pietá (without proceeding on to Bircharcara), a road to the right, over a small stream, leads to Sliema and San Guiliana, the resort of those who pursue sea-bathing and seek a summer residence in the country, and containing many good houses. Passing through the last-mentioned hamlet, a road (inclining to the left) leads down to Casal Bircharcara, and a carriage may go over the whole ground safely. From the eastern or extreme end from the church of Bircharcara, there are two roads, that to the west, of some two miles extent, to Nasciar, and hence to the right to Casal Gargur, but a casal of no particular interest and road indifferent; after passing by the front of the church, or rather round the greater portion of it, a road to the left conducts to San Pauls Bay, where St. Paul is said to have been ship-wrecked. The view from the high ground, after passing Nasciar, and overlooking a line of defence against the approach of an enemy, on this otherwise apparently natural barrier, is, perhaps, one of the best and most striking in the island, embracing the western extremity even to the island of Gozo, with St. Paul's Bay and its tower quietly reposing in the valley. The distance to St. Paul's Bay from Valetta is about eight miles, and the road good even for carriages.⁴ About four miles farther on from St. Paul's Bay, and presenting more hill and dale than may be found in the general features of the island, you arrive at Melleha, where the devotees of both sexes resort. There is nothing particularly interesting in this spot, encircled by deep ravines and sterile rock; but, with some gardens in its vicinity, stands a small church (pretty liberally stored with votive offerings), with a court-yard, surrounded by small cells or chambers, to which the devout repair, and occupy, as choice, occasion or their vow may dictate. Beyond this point, some four miles leads to Mafra, the usual ferry to Gozo; but the only carriage that could undertake this portion of the road must be a calesse – deep sand from the Bay of Melleha and a road intersected by rock being the means of approach. Returning back to Nasciar, and coming in front of the church, a street leads on to the right to the casal of Musta, having nothing remarkable in it but a colossal church (encircling the old village church), which has been some years in the course of building, and, in respect to the progress had in its construction, may never be finished.⁵ Passing through this casal (but avoiding the turning to the right over a well-constructed bridge, crossing one of the numerous ravines in the island, for that would only lead to an uninteresting part of the island, that in olden times was designated on the maps "desert," and is now almost without population), along a narrow road or lane, of trifling extent, across a rivulet, and on a road leading directly to the western point of the Binzamma, the most elevated and conspicuous portion of the island, the road is again covered by a line of defence; beyond this, it winds round the Binzamma, and, taking the turn to the left, one of the natural curiosities of the island, as it is pointed

⁴ A calesse, the common carriage of Malta, a sort of Brobdingnag imitation of a Dutch toy, can travel anywhere; but those who wish to see the country must adopt some other conveyance. Fortunately, under the government of Lieut. – General Sir F. Bouverie, such attention was paid the roads in the island – a source of advantage to the population, in every point of view, and the public in general – that where, some twenty years ago or less, only two or three carriages on four wheels, the property of private individuals, could be found, they are now in pretty general use, and may be had on hire.

⁵ Casal Musta was singularly enough selected, by the commissioners of inquiry sent out to Malta in 1837, in reporting on the liberty of the press and the adoption of a newspaper – that it contained upwards of 5,000 inhabitants, of whom not more than 50 could read!

out, will be found in a nest of caves called "Ancient Tombs," now inhabited by some poor families employed in agriculture in the vicinity.⁶An indifferent road from this point leads to Citta Vecchia; but, as it possesses no interest, and can be traversed only by the equestrian, we turn back to Casal Musta; immediately, therefore, in front of the new church, is the street or road leading, on the left, to Casal Sia (San Antonio, with its gardens, of which we will speak hereafter), through this casal and Casal Bazan, between which the line of demarkation is scarcely apparent to the stranger, we come back to Bircharcara at the point where the road turned off to Nasciar, and, either by ascending to the main road, between Valetta and Citta Vecchia, diverging to the right, or passing through Bircharcara and the Pietá, we return to Valetta. On the other hand, leaving Musta, as before directed, and inclining to the right, a road leads to Citta Vecchia, the great point of attraction to the generality of travellers who visit Malta. But of that hereafter.

The centre and principal road in Malta, proceeding as before from Porte des Bombes, between Valetta and Citta Vecchia, is a spacious and well-kept road (like all others in the island), without turnpike trusts or imposts on the traveller. To the archway of the aqueduct, a distance of two miles, it may be considered the great suburb of a rich city. Here are various houses of noble aspect on the road, near the archway of the aqueduct-one called "the Lions" – from two effigies in stone of that sovereign of the forest, placed over the entrance; this the late governor, Sir F. Bouverie, selected as his country-house, in preference to the more imposing and regal residence of St. Antonio.

From the archway of the aqueduct (under which passes the main road to Citta Vecchia) the view now on either side, excepting only some casals in the distance, presents barren and uninteresting fields, so surrounded and intersected by stone walls, that it appears difficult to determine to what end these enclosures were erected, except before the opening of spring, when the lucerne with its dark green leaves and beautiful red flower over-topping the walls, convinces the passenger of the fertility of the soil. At about the fourth or fifth mile from Valetta, a road to the right leads to Santa Louisa and the gardens, unlike any other place in Malta. In the style and taste of the day, in which it was formed by the Grand Master, here are well-paved walks, terraces and flights of steps, with ponds or reservoirs, and water-works, on a small scale – art subduing nature, but apparently appropriately designed for its position. This has ever been accessible to strangers, either by a ticket of admission from the military secretary or aide-de-camp; and, under some governorships, even without that precaution. Leaving San Antonia and regaining the main road, you pass through Casal Attard, – a small casal with some good houses in it, but of gloomy appearance as compared with other casals.

From hence all is barren to the eye, until in the immediate neighbourhood of Citta Vecchia, where the fields appear more natural and to greater advantage. As you ascend the hill, you will find more guides from the idlers of the place, probably, than guests, who insist on giving their assistance where it is little required. Within the citadel is the cathedral, a very handsome church; without, is the suburb, properly *Rabbato*; you are shown the cave where St. Paul is said to have resided, a poor compliment to the hospitality of the inhabitants, for a more wretched place can scarcely be conceived.

⁶ This sketch is intended simply as a guide to the superficial observer, on a few hours' detention in the island, and in no way with a view to geological disquisition. However, without any speculative theories, regarding the origin and present state of Malta – whether it arose by some convulsive throe from the ocean which surrounds it, or that the Mediterranean Sea, from remote causes, has lost its former elevation, being now found considerably below the level of the Red Sea, it may be mentioned, without dread of refutation, that these caverns, like numerous others in the island, show the water line at the period of their formation, as those under the black rock and the southern face especially. A recent writer on the statistics, &c., of the island of Malta and its dependencies, who visited Valetta, and knew little of Malta, informs his readers, that Malta is furrowed with what he designates valleys from S.W. to N.E. – following out the assertions of another and former resident in Malta – that the course of the various ravines was from west to east, as if to render subservient to geological theories, the mode or order in which Malta must have been formed; yet the slightest observation (which neither had exercised) proves these ravines to embrace each of the cardinal, and, perhaps, not less the subsidiary, points of the compass. In like manner, this writer on the statistics states very boldly that the island of Gozo has villages but *no town*; Rubatto has its cathedral, numerous churches, religious establishments, with its imposing citadel for defence, occupying considerable extent of ground, and with a population exceeding 7,000 souls, and to which the late governor, Sir F. Bouverie, added an aqueduct, for a more certain supply of water. Mr. Martin never visited Gozo, and this, like other portions of his work, is merely gathered from report.

The church over this cave is like most of the churches of the island. Here also you are shown the catacombs, as these caverns are called; you descend by a flight of rude steps, but, were they well explored, an outlet on the level would, doubtless, be found, to determine their origin, like others of a similar character. Tradition offers many tales concerning them; but it may be left to conjecture, whether they were the habitation of saints, or the retreat of the peaceful inhabitants of the island, from the predatory visits of their Arab neighbours.

To the right of Citta Vecchia, an indifferent road of three or four miles leads to some gardens. Imtaklip is of no other particular interest than an occasional resort of parties from Valetta for a *pic-nic*. To the left, however, a good road, after passing a large convent, and still inclining to the left, is the Castle or Palace Verdali, of imposing appearance, but tenantless, and going to decay; below, in the valley, is the Boschetta, covered with pretty extensive groves of orange trees, the only truly agreeable retreat in the island, and almost daily resorted to by pleasure parties. There is a very small but uninteresting casal to the right of the road to the Boschetta.

The return to Valetta, in the most direct way, may be made by the same road; otherwise, after ascending the hill from the Boschetta, as far on the road as the Palace Verdali, a road branches off to the right, leading through the Casal Seggui; hence to Zettug, one of the largest and most populous in the island; and, descending the hill by a good road on the way to Casal Curmi, you have an extensive view of the surrounding country, embracing Valetta, the harbour, &c., in the distance. Casal Curmi, a large casal situated in the valley, has nothing particular to recommend it to the notice of the traveller; passing to the left through it, you ascend the hill to the arch of the aqueduct, and by the main road enter Valetta.

Starting as before from Porte des Bombes, at a short distance on the main road, a road branches off to the left, and winds round the head of the great harbour; hold the road to the right; after passing the fishermen's huts, the road leads through the Marsa – a tract, to the superficial observer, the most cultivated in Malta; *ascend the hill* and Casal Luca, and about a mile after passing through the casal, at a small chapel, two roads branch off, the one to the right to Casal Michabiba; hence to Casal Creude, in the immediate neighbourhood of which is to be seen Macluba, the landslip, or, in whatever other way it may be designated; and, ascending the hill from the chapel close by, and bearing away to the right, you arrive at some mile and a half distance, at the rude remains of a Phœnician temple, recently explored. Returning back to Creudi, and at about the middle of the casal, a road to the right leads to Casal Zurrico, standing out rather conspicuously, from its site and size (the road to the left from the small chapel, on the road from Casal Luca, mentioned before, is the direct road from Valetta to Casal Chercof, a small village, and Casal Zurrico); passing out of Casal Zurrico, close by the eastern side of the church (the road to the left, in front of the church, leads to Casal Luca, mentioned before), you arrive at Casal Gudia; at the end nearest Valetta is a substantial mansion, with well-walled grounds, a fanciful tower, &c. During the blockade, when the French were in possession of Valetta, this was the head-quarters of General Graham, afterwards Lord Lynedock, commanding the British Forces. A windmill at the corner of the mansion marks two roads; that to the right leading through Casal Ascheach to Casal Zeitun: the latter one of the best casals in the island. The procession of St. Gregorico, on Easter Wednesday, at which the greater portion of the population of the island attends, terminates at this casal: one other casal in this direction, Casal Zalbar, a short distance from the Cottonnera lines, which encircle or cover the three cities, is somewhat out of the line of march, and had better be visited in connection with the Government works on the opposite side of the great harbour, including the three cities, and the Cottonnera lines, from which this casal is a trifling distance. We, therefore, turn down the street immediately facing the grand entrance to the Church of Zeitun, containing numerous excellent houses, and, following a good road of brief extent, arrive at Casal Tarscien, from thence onwards to the hamlet of Casal Bala, denominated by the English the "Deserted Village;" turning to the left, at the end nearest Valetta, and passing by the *front*

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