

306 WANDERINGS IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA

He owned three estates, — one at Como, one at Citta di Castello, one on the coast of Laurentum, which he describes with loving care in letter xvii of the second book. Archaeologists have transformed Pliny's den at Laurentum into an immense structure fit for an emperor or for a financial magnate. Canina, for instance, assigns to it a frontage of 250 feet, a depth of 156, and a total area, outbuildings included, of 550,000 square feet;¹ and yet Pliny himself speaks of his Laurentinum as being of no importance whatever.² "Hail," he says, "has ruined the crop in my farm at Tifernum Tiberinum [Citta di Castello]. From my tenants at Como I hear of better prospects, but of low market prices. My Laurentinum alone seems to be right, but what do I own there? A cottage and a garden surrounded by sands!"

I am, I believe, the only living archaeologist who can claim the privilege of having entered Pliny's house and walked over its floors and beheld its aspect, during the excavations made in 1906 to gather materials for the macadamizing of a new royal road. There cannot be any uncertainty about its site. Pliny himself points it out, with due precision, when he writes: "I can get the necessaries of life from the nearest village, from which I am separated by only one villa." The village, called the Vicus Augustanus Laurentum, was discovered by King Victor Emmanuel in 1874, and its Forum and its Curia are still traceable through the undergrowth. West of it, in the direction of Ostia, there are two villa-mounds, the nearer being the intermediate one mentioned in Pliny's letter, the farther his own. Its site is marked by a cluster of old ilexes, named the Palombara, because it was a favorite spot for shooting wild pigeons

¹ Luigi Canina, *Edifizii di Roma antica*, vol. vi, plate cxv.

² *Epistles*, book iv, n. 6.

(*palombacci*) whenever the Sacchetti or the Chigi were staying at Castel Fusano. Nothing was found in 1906 but bare walls, a fact which stands to reason if we consider that the mound had been searched thrice before, in 1713 by Marcello Sacchetti, in 1802 and 1819 by Agostino Chigi.¹ We must remember, besides, that not a brick nor a stone of the original structure may have been left *in situ*. From the time of Trajan, when Pliny dwelt at Laurentum, to the first barbarian invasions, who knows how often the property changed hands and underwent repairs or even reconstruction? The same thing must be said of the intermediate villa, considered by some to have belonged to Hortensius the orator. Varro describes a banquet to which he had been invited by the celebrated lawyer. "Within the walled inclosure of five hundred acres rises a sand hill, on the top of which the meal was served. To please his guests, Hortensius summoned the attendance of Orpheus [a hired musician], who appeared clad in a long robe, with a lyre in his hands; but instead of the lyre he sounded the huntsman's horn, and the appeal was answered by such a number of wild boars and deer that we thought to have been suddenly transferred to the Circus on the day of a hunting performance."

To reach his cottage from Rome, Pliny had the choice of four roads, — the Ostiensis, the Laurentina, the Lavinianis, and a cross lane through the Ager Solonius (Castel Porziano). These four were connected and made equally serviceable to him by the Via Severiana, which ran parallel with the shore. I have followed each of these lines of communication, by special permission of His Majesty the King, to whom the territory of Lauren-

¹ Particulars about these excavations are to be found in Pietro Marquez's *Delia villa di Plinio il giovane* and in Fea's *Viaggio ad Ostia*.



A view of the pine forest near Laurentum

turn belongs; and the results of my labors have been made known to students in a memoir published by the Reale Accademia dei Lincei in 1903,¹ amply illustrated with maps and diagrams.

The path from Ostia and Castel Fusano to Pliny's villa at La Palombara, and thence to the Vicus Augustanus and Laurentum (Torre Paterna), runs through the pine forest planted by the Sacchetti in the seventeenth century, the area of which has been trebled since it was joined to the royal shooting preserves in 1875. Many thousand pines are planted every year and great care is taken to keep the older ones in a healthy state. The pavement of the Via Severiana is seen at rare intervals, flanked on

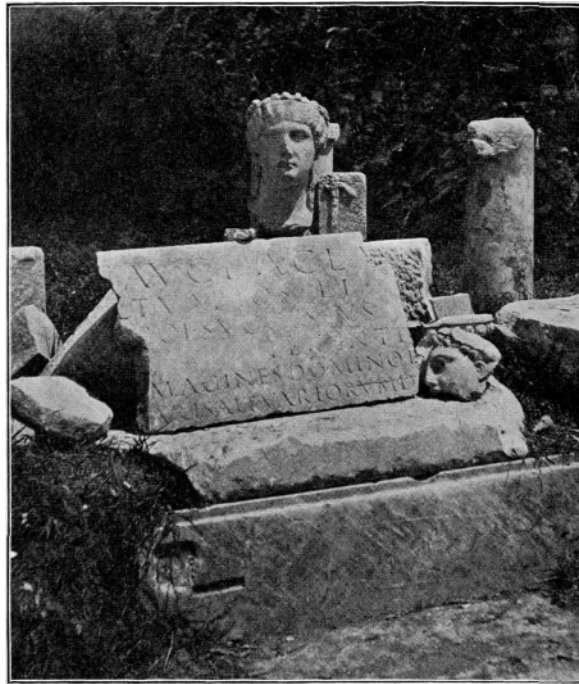
¹ "Le antichità del territorio Laurentino nella reale Tenuta di Castel Porziano," in *Monumenti antichi*, vol. xiii, 1903, pp. 134-198. A second paper on the same subject was published in vol. xvi, 1906, pp. 262-274. A third is now in press.

the side toward the sea by mounds representing villas, cottages, or bath-houses, the remains of which are buried in sand or concealed by the undergrowth. I have counted nine groups of ruins west of Laurentum; seventeen between Laurentum and Ardea; fourteen between Antium and Astura; and I speak only of those which can be noticed without difficulty either from the path or from the shore, — perhaps one fourth of the original number. The fascination of this green wilderness cannot be expressed in words. The forest, in which the "amans littora pinus" towers above all other sylvan giants, offers certain recesses so shady and mysterious that they charm the eye and gladden the soul. Sometimes their stillness is broken by the inrush of wild boars, or deer, or gazelles, which, after staring a moment in surprise at the intruder, disappear into their leafy haunts. Louis Petit-Radel, Canon of Conserans, who explored these forests in 1796, in quest of specimens for the botanical garden which he was arranging in the cloisters of San Pietro in Vinculis, mentions twenty species of underwood, among them myrtle, rosemary, juniper, laurel, terebinth, erica, viburnum, and two species of daphne. When all these are blossoming with the advent of spring, their mixed perfume, borne on the land breeze, reaches the coasting craft at a considerable distance from the shore.

There is no doubt that when Æneas first sailed along this coast its decoration of evergreens must have appeared the same. It was only in the Augustan age that a change of scene took place, owing to the transformation of the deserted Laurentum into an imperial hunting estate. It was already known, from the gravestone of a freedman of Claudius, — Speculator by name, head keeper of the crown domains in the Bay of

310 WANDERINGS IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA

Gaeta and *procurator Laurento ad elephantos*,¹ — that a section of the estate was set apart for the breeding of elephants; and from the "Liber Pontificalis" it was known that another section was given up to the breeding of peacocks. The knowledge, however, that the extensive forests of Castel Porziano and Castel Fusano were used in classic times for absolutely the same purpose as



Inscription of gamekeepers and other marbles discovered by Queen Elena in the excavations of the Vicus Augustanus Laurentum

at present, and that they were watched by a body of gamekeepers similar to the one which to-day wears the King's gray uniform, has been obtained only within the last few weeks, by means of an inscription discovered

¹ Compare *Corpus Inscr. Lat.*, vol. vi, Part II, n. 8583.

at the Vicus Augustanus by our Gracious Queen, — model sovereign, model mother, model wife, model sister of charity, whose name no Italian can mention without feelings of devotion and gratitude. It is an exquisite trait of the Royal Lady's character that she should seek diversion from the cares of her exalted station in the exploration of the ancient mounds in the land of Pliny the Younger. This exploration has not been taken up as a pastime, nor for the attraction that the chance of the unexpected offers to ordinary minds; it is carried on methodically, scientifically, with a given purpose, every object of interest being at once transferred to the Museo Nazionale alle Terme, to increase the collections of the Sala Laurentina. The inscription found at the Vicus Augustanus describes how a certain Aglaus, president of the guild of imperial gamekeepers (*collegium saltuariorum*), had offered to his fellow workers a set of portrait busts of their sovereigns (*imagines dominorum nostrorum*), to be set up either in the schola or meeting-room of the guild, or else in the local Augusteum, remains of which are still extant in the forum of the village.

Mention of these *saltuarii* occurs so seldom in Latin epigraphy that a certain amount of doubt was still entertained as to the exact meaning of the word, whether they were woodkeepers (*guardaboschi* or *saltari*, as they are still called in the Venetian provinces) or gamekeepers (*guardacaccie*). A mosaic picture discovered in 1878 in a bath-house erected by Pompeianus at the springs of Hammâm Grûs, two miles east of Oued Atmenia, on the road from Constantine (Cirta) to Setif (Sitifis), shows a body of *saltuarii* engaged in their professional business, a stag-hunt arranged by their patron Pompeianus for a few friends. The guests, mounted on Arab

hunters, seem to be driving three stags into the *septum venationis* with the help of two dogs, Castus and Fidelis, and of three gamekeepers, Daunus, Diaz, and Liber.¹ It seems that the free life of the forest must have made these men long lived, if we may judge from the ripe age of eighty-five reached by Eutyches, saltuarius of a preserve near Nuceria Alfaterna.²

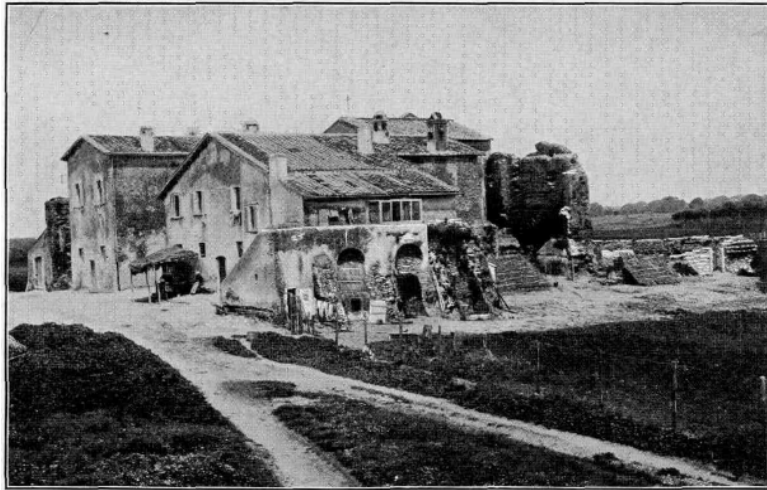
By comparing the former with the present state of Laurentum we can better appreciate the skill with which the ancients were endowed for turning waste lands into an "earthly paradise." Where we behold a lonesome house, the Torre Paterna, used for the royal kennels in the hunting season and left in desolation for six months of the year, — a house six miles distant from the nearest human habitation, — the Romans had created a Margate full of life and gayety, connected with the capital by four excellent roads, and with the neighboring resorts (Ostia, Vicus Augustanus, Lavinium, Ardea, Invic astrum, Antium) by the Via Severiana. The latter ran along the shore between villas and cottages on the side toward the sea and the edge of the forest on the land side; and where we now must quench our thirst with water from wells dug in the sand, an imperial aqueduct many miles long brought a substantial supply of water for public and private use.

There is more history condensed within the walls of this solitary house than within those of many a great city. We can trace it twenty-eight centuries back to the day when the Laurentines beheld a strange fleet sailing

1 Compare Poulle, *Annales de Constantine*, a. 1878, p. 431; id., *Les Bains de Pompeianns*, Constantine, 1879; *Corpus Inscr. Lat.*, vol. viii, Part II, n. 10889-10891.

2 *Corpus Inscr. Lat.*, vol. x, n. 1085.

westward along their beach in quest of a haven, and wondered whether it was manned by friends or foes. Rome had not yet come into existence, and the Laurentines could not foresee that its foundation would be the



The hamlet of Torre Paterna, once a hunting lodge of Roman emperors in the forest of Laurentum; later a watch-tower against the Algerian pirates; at present used for the royal kennels in connection with the preserves of Castel Porziano

result of the welcome they gave to the pilgrims led by Æneas.

The name of the village, Laurentum, has been connected with that of the mythical Acca Larentia, whereas it owes its origin to the laurel groves by which it was surrounded. For the same reason we find in Rome itself two aristocratic parishes of the Aventine named Lauretum Majus and Lauretum Minus. Whenever electricity was felt in the air the Emperor Vitellius sought shelter in the Laurentine forest, because the trees were considered to be non-conductors. At the outbreak of the fearful plague of 189 A.D. Commodus was isolated at

Laurentum by the court physicians, because the powerful and wholesome scent of the trees would keep the air free from contamination. The laurels disappeared long ago, but a reminder of these events has lasted to the present day in the name Pantan di Lauro given to a marsh¹ adjoining the Torre Paterna on the east side.

From its alliance with the new-comers and from the marriage of Lavinia, daughter of the King of Alba, with Æneas, Laurentum was given the name of "Second Troy," and became the cradle of the Roman people. But by the foundation of Lavinium — now Pratica di Mare — on a healthy hill, only five miles distant, and by the transfer thither of the sacred tokens of the Commonwealth, the Penates, which Æneas had carried away with him from the mother country, Laurentum lost supremacy, prestige, and population. Towards the end of the Republic the site of the deserted village was occupied by a farmhouse, which Augustus purchased and transformed into an imperial seaside residence; and we are told that the wife of the caretaker, having given birth to five children at one time, and having lost her life in the ordeal, was honored by Augustus with a beautiful memorial set up on the Via Laurentina. At the time of Constantine the property was transferred to the churches of the Saviour and of the Holy Cross.² What became of it in the middle ages is not known. The forest spread across the Via Severiana, over to the strip of land once occupied by gardens; the pines and ilexes thrust their roots into the pavement of the road and the fallen

1 This venerable landmark will be removed in the course of the coming winter and the water drained, in obedience to the laws for the sanitation of the Campagna, of which King Victor Emmanuel is the strictest upholder.

2 The Lateran and the Hierusalem, now called Sante Croce in Gerusalemme.

masonry of the villas; the sea receded; sand dunes rose where palaces had stood. Then came the inroads of the barbarians from Algiers, like the one of May 5, 1588, in which the whole population of Pratica di Mare was carried away in chains, — thirty-nine men, twenty-eight women, and thirty-five laborers from the Marche, whose names are recorded in the annals of the Compagnia del Gonfalone.

In consequence of these sudden inroads the coast of the Pope's states from Corneto to Terracina was lined with thirty-eight watch-towers, from the tops of which scouts could watch the sea by day and by night and give warning of the approach of any suspicious sail by firing a gun or tolling a bell or lighting a beacon. Some of the towers on this part of the coast are still in existence, like the Torre Vajanica and the Keep of Pratica di Mare; but the one built by Marcantonio Colonna¹ on the ruins of the Augustan villa at Laurentum, and named Torre Paterna in memory of his father Ascanio, was dismantled by the shots of a British sloop-of-war in the year 1812. British guns have sometimes bombarded queer places; but it seems hardly possible that they should have brought havoc and destruction upon this inoffensive and unobtrusive home of Æneas, which had won a prominent place in history eight or nine centuries before the crossing of the Channel by Julius Cæsar made known to the Romans the name and the existence of Londinium.

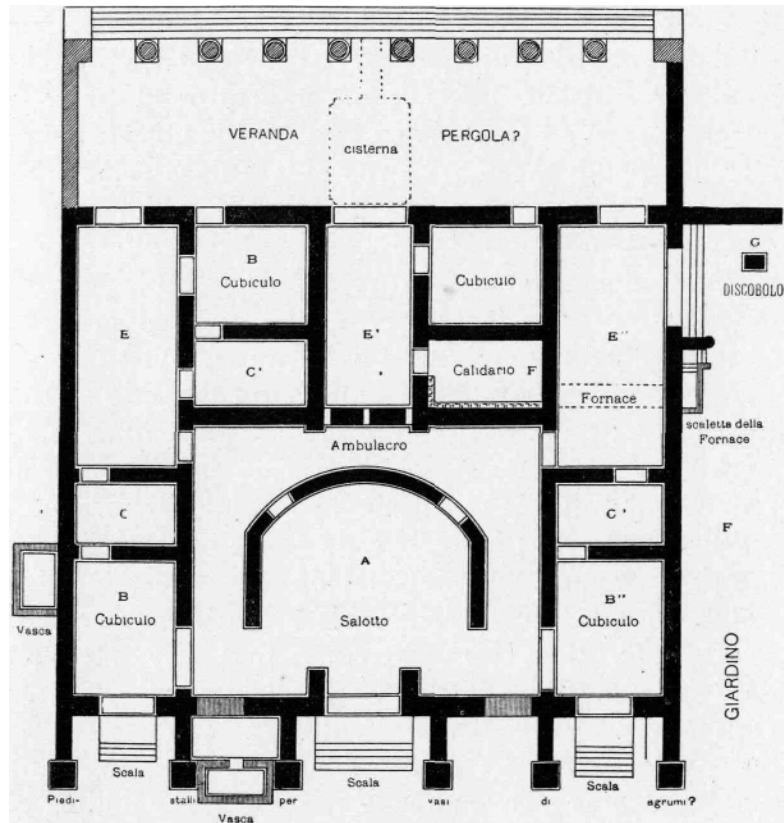
In the spring of 1906, while hunting at Castel Porziano, Queen Elena caused one of the mounds — the fourth to the east of Laurentum — to be explored under her

¹ Another tower built by the same Marcantonio near Antium was given the name of Torre Materna, in memory of his mother, Giovannad' Aragona.

personal care. The attempt was rewarded with the discovery, the first in my experience, of a cottage of modest size and fit for a family of modest means, such as are to be found by the hundred in the outskirts of our large cities and in our watering-places. Having followed almost day by day the progress of the excavations, I was enabled to reconstruct the past of this charming little house, and to gather from the reconstruction an idea of the life led by its classic owners, placed as they were between the sea where the mullus swam in shoals and the forest teeming with game.

The lodge had a frontage of 67 feet and a depth of 74 feet. It was entered from the Via Severiana by a porch supported by eight marble columns, and from the sea by three small flights of stairs leading to three French windows, the middle of which belonged to the sitting-room, the side ones to bedrooms connected with dressing-rooms. On either side of the French windows, on marble pedestals, stood vases for flowering shrubs, such as the oleander, pomegranate, and lemon. There were two more bedrooms within the cottage, a dining-room, a veranda, and a bath-room. In its compactness and its sense of comfort, as well as its proximity to Laurentum and to the sea, this "villino" may be taken as an illustration of the one owned by Pliny on the same road and on the same shore. Queen Elena's cottage — as it will henceforth be known in archaeological manuals — was rebuilt in the year 142 A. D. on the site of an older one, by a person of good taste and modest means, probably by an official of the court of Antoninus Pius, who was at that time the ruler of the Empire. Whoever this person was, he showed himself to be a clever builder and a clever landscape gardener, judging from the graceful pattern of the mosaic

LATO VERSO LA VIA SEVERIANA



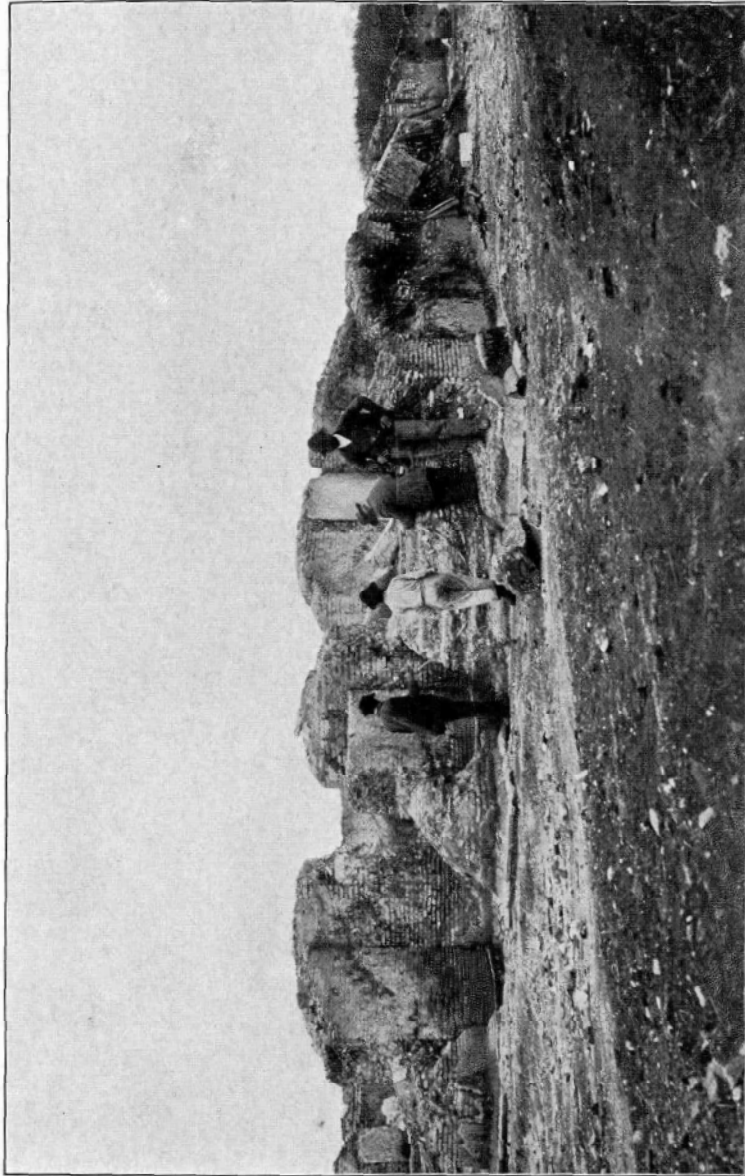
Plan of the Roman cottage discovered by Queen Elena on the coast of Laurentum.
The Discobolus was found near its pedestal at the place marked G

and marble floors, and from the picturesque arrangement of the three staircases descending to the garden and the sea. The lodge was fit to be inhabited at all seasons of the year, owing to the simple and efficient

precautions taken by its designer to have it thoroughly warmed and ventilated. The heating was done by means of a furnace, placed under the bath-room or calidarium, which a slave could light and keep going from the outside, through an underground passage which opened on the kitchen garden, the hot air being forced through the hypocausts of the apartment with the aid of flues opening on the roof. The house was one-storied, no traces of stairs having been noticed anywhere. Kitchen, pantry, larder, laundry, sleeping-rooms for servants and slaves, and other such appendages of a dwellinghouse, must have been in an outbuilding, traces of which have been noticed on the side of the highroad. I must mention, in the last place, that there were no folding doors to insure the privacy of the rooms, but only heavy curtains, kept rigid by means of tassels, the cores of which were made of pear-shaped lumps of baked clay. Several of these weights were found lying on the marble thresholds of the various apartments. It is clear, therefore, that they were not used for a weaver's loom, nor for fishermen's nets, as is generally the case with such objects.

I apologize to the reader for mentioning so many details, but, as I have already remarked, the finding of a Roman cottage in which we twentieth-century people could dwell in ease and comfort is such a novel thing that I consider it a duty to make it known outside professional circles, in the hope that some wealthy amateur may be persuaded to reproduce it in its integrity, so as to give young students and young architects an object lesson in rational cottage building.

The statue of the Discobolus here represented was discovered in the early morning of April 24, 1909,

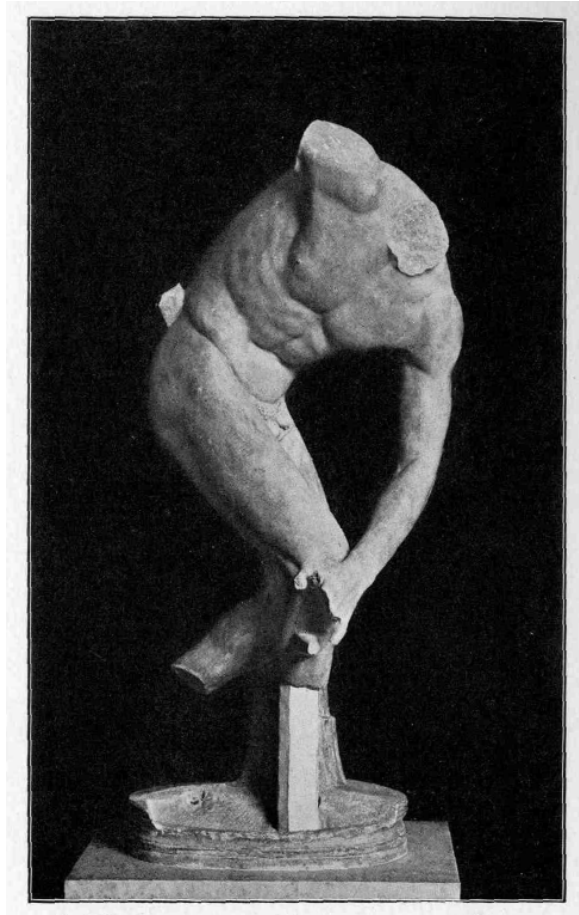


REMAINS OF THE ROMAN COTTAGE DISCOVERED BY QUEEN ELENA
AT LAURENTUM

lying in pieces near its own pedestal at the foot of the side garden stairs. When I arrived on the spot about the hour of noon, all hope of recovering the missing head had already been given up. Detached from the body at the moment of its fall, it must have shared the fate of so many other heads, which were rounded into the shape of balls to be used in the game of *boccie*, or else used as weights for scales, with the help of iron rings fixed in the top. As a rule seventy-five statues in a hundred are found headless, and likewise seventy-five heads are found without bodies.

The statue unearthed on April 24 is a copy, and a very excellent one, of the Disk-thrower of Myron, a subject in great favor with the Romans. Three other replicas were already known. The first is the celebrated "Discobolo Lancellotti," discovered in the Lamian gardens on the Esquiline by the Marchesa Barbara Massimi di Palombara on January 14, 1781, and now preserved in the Lancellotti palace under lock and key, so that no student has been able to examine it. Such an idiosyncrasy is the more surprising when we remember that kindness and generosity to others has always been characteristic of the Roman aristocracy. The second replica, now in the Sala della Biga, n. 618, was found by Count Giuseppe Fede in 1791 near the so-called Nymphæum of Hadrian's villa, stolen by Napoleon, and brought back to Rome after the peace of 1815. The third, a torso, belonged to the French sculptor, Etienne Monnot, in whose studio it was transformed into a Dying Warrior and then sold to the Capitoline Museum. Helbig considers Monnot's torso the most admirable of all and the one which comes nearest to the perfection of Myron's original. Ill luck seems to have followed these Discoboli; they all have met with unfair treatment. In

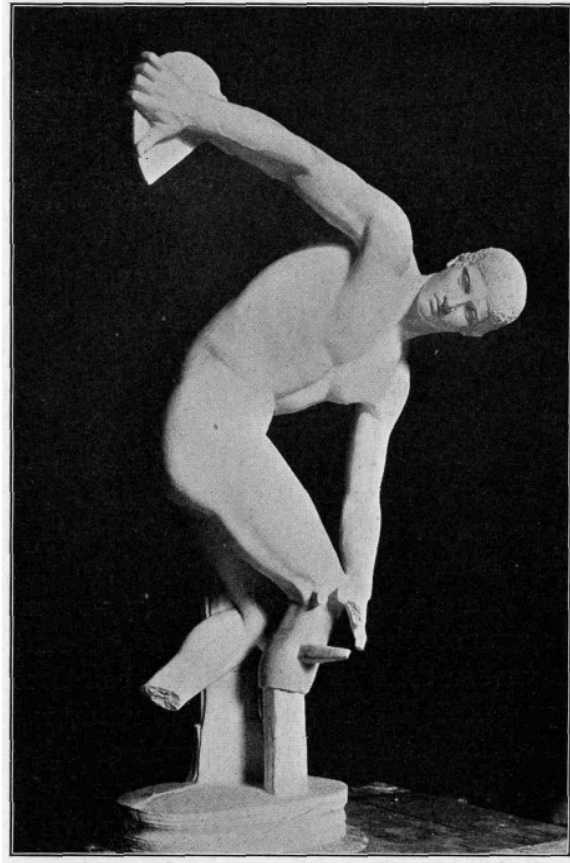
the restoration of the Fede replica made by Albacini the poise of the head is decidedly wrong. A fourth



The Discobolus found by Queen Elena at Laurentum in a fragmentary state

Discobolus, found by Gavin Hamilton in 1781, was restored as a Diomedes stealing the Palladium; and a fifth, of the Uffizi, was transformed first into an En-dymion, later into a son of Niobe. No such fate has

befallen the one discovered at Laurentum; no restoration of the original marble has been attempted; but side

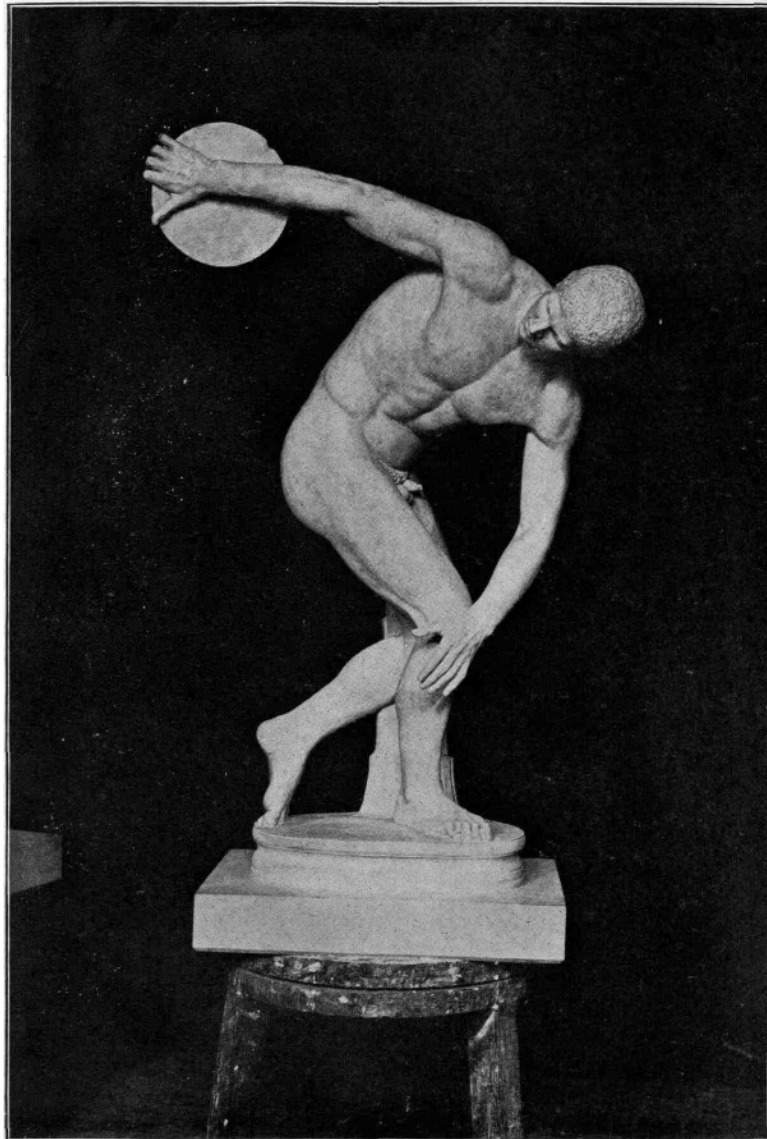


Plaster cast of Queen Elena's Discobolus, with the addition of the right arm now in the Buonarroti Museum at Florence and of the Lancellotti head, a cast of which has been found in Paris

by side with it a complete plaster cast has been placed, each of the missing limbs having been carefully chosen from other replicas, and adapted to the fractures or joints of the marble. The right arm, holding the disk,

was found in the Galleria Buonarroti in Florence, and it fits the torso of Laurentum so exactly as to give rise to the question whether it is not the original one found by the Del Nero, Lords of Castel Porziano, when they first excavated Queen Elena's cottage. The head was cast from a mould in the Louvre, the feet from the Discobolus of the British Museum. Professor G. E. Rizzo, the author of this remarkable reconstruction, has given an interesting account of it in "Bullettino d'Arte," vol. i, 1907.

A third campaign of exploration, made in the spring of the present year, disclosed a curious fact, — that the Romans objected to bathing in the open sea, or at least that they preferred to bathe in sea water warmed artificially in the piscina of an establishment, where more comfort could be found than on the unsheltered beach. This is the only explanation we can give of the fact that the whole coast from the Vicus Augustanus to Laurentum, and even beyond in the direction of Ardea, is lined with these bath-houses, a few of modest size and capable of accommodating only two or three dozen clients; others so vast in their plan, so rich in their decoration, that they appear like city structures, ready to receive great crowds of bathers. Pliny speaks of this curious state of affairs on the coast of Laurentum in his letter to Gallus. The description which he gives is so true, and is substantiated so clearly by the discoveries of the last three campaigns, that it is necessary to quote it *in extenso*. "Nothing is wanting to make the Laurentinum perfect but spring water, although one is always sure to find drinkable water a few inches below the level of the sands, fresh enough in spite of the proximity of the sea. The forests on the other side of the road supply me with fuel, and Ostia with all the necessaries



PLASTER CAST OF QUEEN ELENA'S DISCOBOLUS

**Completed by the addition of the arm from Florence, the head from the Louvre,
and the feet from the British Museum**

of life. However, for a man of simple habits the nearest village [the Vicus Augustanus] is equally useful; it contains among other commodities *three public baths*, of which I avail myself whenever I happen to reach the villa unexpected and I have no time to wait for the furnace to be lighted. The whole coast is lined with villas, some adjoining one another, some separated by gardens. Seen from the water it looks like a city many miles long."

The largest and best of the three baths of which Pliny was an occasional patron has just been excavated, and although it appears to have been repaired and slightly altered in the second and third centuries, its main halls and basins date from before the age of Pliny. Here we have, therefore, a building which has echoed with his voice and beheld his presence, pavements which have been trodden by his feet, marble benches on which he has sat, and basins and piscinæ in which he has bathed. Had Her Majesty the Queen been the first to enter this beautiful building, many more details could have been made clear, and many works of art could have been recovered from its richly decorated halls. Unfortunately these thermæ have given shelter to a mediæval colony of farmers or wood-cutters, and they must have burned into lime whatever pieces of marble fell into their hands. The illustrations on p. 329 represent some of the few bits of statuary which have escaped the kiln, and upon which the eye of Pliny may have rested while he was waiting for his bath.

The journey from Laurentum to Antium by Lavinium (Pratica di Mare), Ardea, Aphrodisium (Campo Jemini), Invic astrum (L'Incastro), and the sulphur springs (caldanæ) is equally delightful whether you per-

form it riding a half-wild Maremma pony along the Via Severiana, or hugging the shore in a boat. I have done it in both ways, more than once, while camping out at the Foce dell' Incastro with a sportsman friend. No pen of an enthusiast can describe in a befitting manner the beauty of the old kingdom of Turnus, especially that section of it now broken up into the farm lands of Fossignano, Buonriposo, and La Cogna. The valley of the Fosso della Moletta, which forms the highway between the station of Carroceto on the Anzio line and the coast, is as beautiful and well timbered and watered as an English park, stocked with untamed cattle; and it is archæologically interesting, as the track leads the wanderer past the sites of Longula, conquered by the consul Postumius Auruncus, B.C. 493, and the famous mediaeval castle of Veprosa (Castrum Nave), once owned by the monks of S. Alessio on the Aventine, and later by the Frangipane, the Annibaldi, and the Cesarini. I remember once leaving the hospitable hut of my friend at the break of day in company with the late Dr. Nevin, bent on a ride to Torre Caldana, where a boat was waiting to convey us to Anzio. Never had the breath of the wilderness felt more refreshing or its spirit seemed more inspiring than at that early hour of the morning when the first rays of sunshine filtering through the foliage, heavy with drops of dew, warmed the blood "like a draught of generous wine." The Via Severiana, the track of which we were following eastward through the woodlands of Torre San Lorenzo and Torre Sant'Anastasia, is too much overgrown by sylvan vegetation to offer archæological attraction, save where its pavement has been left undisturbed here and there by modern road-menders. It appears worn into deep ruts by the passage of vehicles, proof of the intensity of travel

and traffic which in times gone by enlivened this now silent coast. The grooves, as in the British Watling Street, are a little more than four feet six and a half inches apart. "The wheel marks in Pompeii are exactly this distance from one to another, and this is the gauge of English railways." This assertion of Dr. Bruce in his "Handbook of the Roman Wall" is not quite exact, for the standard gauge is four feet eight and one half



Fragments of statuary discovered in Pliny's Baths at the Vicus Augustanus

(From photographs by Gino Ferrari)

inches; but it comes near enough the mark to give weight to the conjecture that the gauge of English railways was determined by the mean width of the wheel tracks of the chariots and forage carts which frequented the camps of the Roman wall.

The forests which fringe the coast between Ostia and

Terracina, east of the mouth of the Tiber, and from Porto to Palo westward, until lately were considered as highly beneficial to Rome. Hence their name of "Boschi sacri del Lazio," and hence the vigilant care with which the government of the Popes watched over their welfare. This popular belief in the anti-malarious properties of the Boschi sacri is thus upheld by an English lover of the Campagna at the beginning of last century: "As most of the winds blow at no considerable height, and pass the woods of Ariano, La Fajola, Astura, Nettuno, Ostia, and Monterano, they leave on their passage a great portion of the noxious exhalations and malignant vapors and become much more pure before they arrive at Rome. . . . On this account, though, as is well known, the cypress, oak, chestnut, and some other trees exhale vapors which are not esteemed salubrious (!), there are many plants, shrubs, and trees, native of this soil, which contribute greatly by their effluvia to the purification of the atmosphere, and even those above mentioned intercept and absorb much of the mephitic air, on account of their high and thick foliage."¹ The same author thus speaks of the winds and breezes prevailing on this coast: "For a considerable part of the year the predominating winds are the Sirocco and the Tramontana; the first oppressive and relaxing, the other delicious to people of good health. Its elastic quality animates all nature and clears the sky from every cloud and vapor, and brings the minutest and farthest details of the landscape into clear relief; but in winter it is rather dangerous. Saliceti, the physician to Pope Pius VI, used to say, 'Scirocco e un amico noioso; tramontana e nemica micidiale.' The ponente or west wind, which rises about 10 or 11 a. m. in the late spring and summer months, and

¹ *Description of Latium*, p. 5.

dies away towards sunset, deserves the character it had amongst the ancient poets. Their Zephyrs and Favonian breezes have lost none of their charms, and it requires the pen of a Virgil or Tibullus to describe the beauty of the climate when it is predominant, wafting



Half wild buffaloes sporting in the waters of the river Numicius near Aphrodisium
(La Fossa)

as it does out of its dewy wings the scent of the sea and the perfumes of aromatic meadows."