

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FIESOLE.—*FÆSULÆ*.

Chi Fiesol hedificò conobbe el loco
Come già per gli cieli ben composto.—FACCIO DEGLI UBERTI.

Vires autem veteres earum urbium hodieque magnitudo ostentat mœnium.
VELL. PATERCULUS.

THE first acquaintance the traveller in Italy makes with Etruscan antiquities—the first time, it may be, that he is reminded of such a race—is generally at Fiesole. The close vicinity to Florence, and the report that some remains are to be seen there, far older than Roman days, attract the visitor to the spot. He there beholds walls of great massiveness, and a few other remains, but forms a very imperfect conception of the race that constructed them. He learns, it is true, from the skill displayed in these monuments, that the Etruscans could not have been a barbarous people; but the extent and character of their civilisation are still to him a mystery. It is not at Fiesole that this early people is to be comprehended.

Who, that has visited Florence, does not know Fiesole—the Hampstead or Highgate of the Tuscan capital—the Sunday resort of Florentine Cockneyism? Who does not know that it forms one of the most picturesque objects in the scenery around that most elegant of cities, crowning a height, three miles to the north, with its vine-shaded villas and cypress-girt convents, and rearing its tall Cathedral-tower between the two crests of the mount? Who has