

CHAPTER IV.

MALTA

Adieu to Malta—and adieu,
Triumphant sons of truest blue,
Whom every sea, and clime, and shore,
And fallen chiefs, and fleets no more,
And nightly smiles, and daily dinners,
Proclaim as war and woman's winners.

BYRON.

AFTER a couple of hours' coasting, we entered a watery ravine of battery-crowned cliffs, and came to anchor in the Grand Harbor.

La Valetta is a sort of Hybrid between a Spanish and an Eastern town; most of its streets are flights of steps, to which the verandahs are like gigantic banisters. Its terraced roofs restore to the cooped-up citizens nearly all the space which was lost by building upon; and there are probably not less than five hundred acres of promenadable roof in, or rather on the city. The church of San Giovanni is very gorgeous, with its vaulted roof of gilded arabesque, its crimson tapestries, finely carved pulpits, and its floor, which seems one vast escutcheon. It is a mosaic of knightly tombs, on which the coats of arms are finely copied in colored marble and precious stones. The chapel of the Madonna in the Eastern aisle is guarded by massive silver rails, which escaped French rapacity through the cunning of a priest, who painted them wood-color. Amidst all this wealth and splendor, the proudest and most chivalric ornament of the cathedral is a bunch of old rusty irons, suspended on the crimson tapestry. They are the keys of Rhodes, which the Order, overcome, but unconquered, carried away with them from their ancient seat, the bulwark of Christendom.

The hotels of the different nations (or Tongues, as they were