

Towards the middle of the twelfth century, the floodwaters of the Po were retained on their left or northern side by dikes near the small city of *Ficarolo*, which is about 19,000 *metres*\* to the north-west of Ferrara, spreading themselves southwards over the northern part of the territory of Ferrara and the *Polesine* of Rovigo, and flowed through the two formerly mentioned canals of *Mazzorno* and *Toi*. It seems perfectly ascertained, that this change in the direction of the waters of the Po had been produced by the effects of human labours; and the historians who have recorded this remarkable fact only differ from each other in some of the more minute details. The tendency of the river to flow in the new channels, which had been opened for the more ready discharge of its waters when in flood, continually increased; owing to which the two ancient chief branches, the *Volano* and *Primaro*, rapidly decreased, and were reduced in less than a century to their present comparatively insignificant size; while the main direction of the river was established between the mouth of the Adige to the north, and what is now called *Porto di Goro*, on the south. The two before-mentioned canals of *Mazzorno* and *Toi* becoming insufficient for the discharge, others were dug; and the principal mouth, called *Bocco Tramontana*, or the northern mouth, having approached the mouth of the Adige, the Venetians became alarmed in 1604; when they excavated a new canal of discharge, named *Taglio de Porto Viro*, or *Po delle Fornaci*, by which means the *Bocco Maestra* was diverted from the Adige towards the south.

---

\* Or 20,778 yards 1 foot 10 inches.—*Transl.*