

mountain behind the old towers of Arpinum, we see the grove of oaks on the margin of the Fibrenus, and the island now called *Isola di Carnello*, which is formed by the division of the stream, and whither Cicero retired, in order, as he said, to "give himself up to meditation, reading, and writing." Arpinum, situated on the Volscian Hills, was the birth-place of the great statesman, and its noble scenery no doubt exercised an influence on his character in boyhood. Unconsciously to himself, the external aspect of the surrounding scenery impresses itself upon the soul of man with an intensity corresponding to the greater or less degree of his natural susceptibility, and becomes closely interwoven with the deep original tendencies and the free natural disposition of his mental powers.

In the midst of the eventful storms of the year 708 (from the foundation of Rome), Cicero found consolation in his villas, alternately at Tusculum, Arpinum, Cumæa, and Antium. "Nothing can be more delightful," he writes to Atticus,* "than this solitude—nothing more charming than this country place, the neighboring shore, and the view of the sea. In the lonely island of Astura, at the mouth of the river of the same name, on the shore of the Tyrrhenian Sea, no human being disturbs me; and when, early in the morning, I retire to the leafy recesses of some thick and wild wood, I do not leave it till the evening. Next to my Atticus, nothing is so dear to me as solitude, in which I hold communion with philosophy, although often interrupted by my tears. I struggle as much as I am able against such emotions, but as yet I am not equal to the contest." It has frequently been remarked, that in these letters, and in those of the younger Pliny, passages are met with which manifest the greatest harmony with the expressions in use among modern sentimental writers; for my own part, I can only find in them the echoes of the same deep-toned sadness which in every age and in every race bursts forth from the recesses of the heavily-oppressed bosom.

Amid the general diffusion of Roman literature, an acquaintance with the great poetic works of Virgil, Horace, and Tibullus is so common, that it would be superfluous to dwell on individual examples of the tender and ever wakeful sensibility to nature, by which some of these works are animated. In Virgil's great epic, the nature of the poem tends to make descriptions of scenery appear merely as accessories,

* Cic., *Ep. ad Atticum*, xii., 9 and 15.