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Author: William Beckford

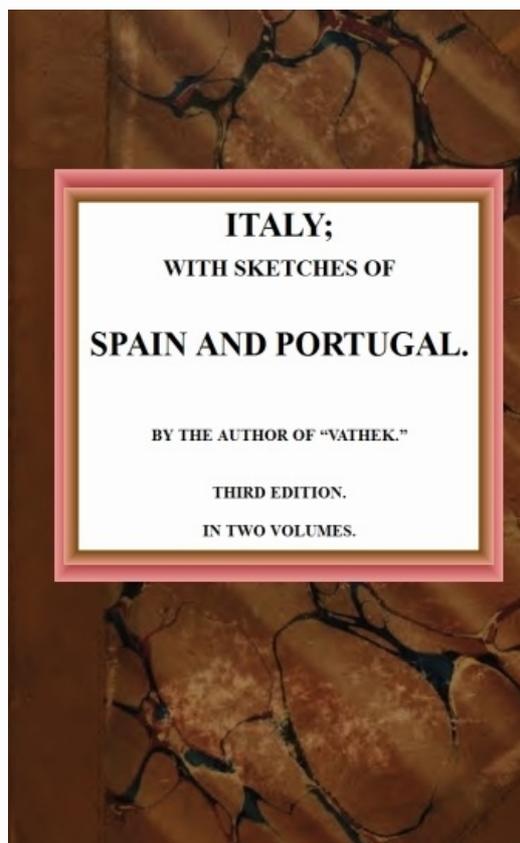
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ITALY; WITH SKETCHES OF SPAIN AND PORTUGAL ***

Transcriber's note: This etext, which includes the two volumes, attempts to replicate the printed book as closely as possible. Obvious errors in spelling and punctuation have been corrected. [A list follows the etext.](#)
The archaic spelling of words used by the author (chesnuts, befel, visiters, cotemporary, woful, etc.) has not been corrected or modernized by the etext transcriber. Footnotes have been moved to the end of the text body.



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ITALY;
WITH SKETCHES OF
SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "VATHEK."

THIRD EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to His Majesty.
1835.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME justly admired Authors having condescended to glean a few stray thoughts from these Letters, which have remained dormant a great many years; I have been at length emboldened to lay them before the public. Perhaps, as they happen to contain passages which persons of acknowledged taste have honoured with their notice, they may possibly be less unworthy of emerging from the shade into daylight than I imagined.

Most of these Letters were written in the bloom and heyday of youthful spirits and youthful confidence, at a period when the old order of things existed with all its picturesque pomps and absurdities; when Venice enjoyed her piombi and submarine dungeons; France her bastille; the Peninsula her holy Inquisition. To look back upon what is beginning to appear almost a fabulous era in the eyes of the modern children of light, is not unamusing or uninteresting; for, still better to appreciate the present, we should be led not unfrequently to recall the intellectual muzziness of the past.

But happily these pages are not crowded with such records: they are chiefly filled with delineations of landscape and those effects of natural phenomena which it is not in the power of revolutions or constitutions to alter or destroy.

A few moments snatched from the contemplation of political crimes, bloodshed, and treachery, are a few moments gained to all lovers of innocent illusion. Nor need the statesman or the scholar despise the occasional relaxation of light reading. When Jupiter and the great deities are represented by Homer as retiring from scenes of havoc and carnage to visit the blameless and quiet Ethiopians, who were the farthest removed of all nations, the Lord knows whither, at the very extremities of the ocean,—would they have given ear to manifestos or protocols? No, they would much rather have listened to the Tales of Mother Goose.

London, June 12th, 1834.

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THE LOW COUNTRIES

AND

GERMANY.

LETTER I.

Passage to Ostend.—The Capuchin church.—Ghent.—Quiet and Content, the presiding deities of Flanders.—Antwerp.—The Place de Meir.—Silence and solitude of the town, contrasted with the tumult and uproar of London.

Ostend, 21st June, 1780.

WE had a rough passage, and arrived at this imperial haven in a piteous condition. Notwithstanding its renown and importance, it is but a scurvy place—preposterous Flemish roofs disgust your eyes when cast upwards—swaggering Dutch skippers and mongrel smugglers are the principal objects they meet with below; and then the whole atmosphere is impregnated with the fumes of tobacco, burnt peat, and garlick. I should esteem myself in luck, were the nuisances of this seaport confined only to two senses; but, alas! the apartment above my head proves a squalling brattery, and the sounds which proceed from it are so loud and frequent, that a person might think himself in limbo, without any extravagance.

In hope of some relief, I went to the Capuchin church, a large solemn building, in search of silence and solitude; but here again was I disappointed. There happened to be an exposition of the holy wafer with ten thousand candles; and whilst half-a-dozen squeaking fiddles fugued and flourished away in the galleries, and as many paralytic monks gabbled before the altars, a whole posse of devotees, in long white hoods and flannels, were sweltering on either side.

This papal piety, in warm weather, was no very fragrant circumstance; so I sought the open air again as fast as I was able. The serenity of the evening—for the black huddle of clouds, which the late storms had accumulated, were all melted away—tempted me to the ramparts. There, at least, thought I to myself, I may range undisturbed, and talk with my old friends the breezes, and address my discourse to the waves, and be as romantic and fanciful as I please; but I had scarcely begun a poetic apostrophe, before out flaunted a whole rank of officers, with ladies and abbés and puppy dogs, singing, and flirting, and making such a hubbub, that I had not one peaceful moment to observe the bright tints of the western horizon, or enjoy those ideas of classic antiquity which a calm sunset never fails to bring before my imagination.

Finding, therefore, no quiet abroad, I returned to my inn, and should have gone immediately to bed, in hopes of relapsing into the bosom of dreams and delusions; but the limbo I mentioned before grew so very outrageous, that I was obliged to postpone my rest till sugarplums and nursery eloquence had hushed it to repose. At length peace was restored, and about eleven o'clock I fell into a slumber. My dreams anticipated the classic scenes of Italy, the proposed term of my excursion.

Next morning I arose refreshed with these agreeable impressions. No ideas, but such as Nemi and Albano suggested, haunted me whilst travelling to Ghent. I neither heard the coarse dialect which was talking around me, nor noticed the formal avenues and marshy country which we passed. When we stopped to change horses, I closed my eyes upon the dull prospect, and was transported immediately to those Grecian solitudes which Theocritus so enchantingly describes.

To one so far gone in the poetic lore of ancient days, Ghent is not the most likely place to recall his attention; and I know nothing more about it, than that it is a large, ill-paved, plethoric, pompous-looking city, with a decent proportion of convents and chapels, monuments, brazen gates, and gilded marbles. In the great church were several pictures by Rubens, so striking, so masterly, as to hold me broad awake; though, I must own, there are moments when I could contentedly fall asleep in a Flemish cathedral, for the mere chance of beholding in vision the temple of Olympian Jupiter.

But I think I hear, at this moment, some grave and respectable personage chiding my enthusiasm—"Really, sir, you had better stay at home, and dream in your great chair, than give yourself the trouble of going post through Europe, in search of places where to fall asleep. If Flanders and Holland are to be dreamed over at this rate, you had better take ship at once, and doze all the way to Italy." Upon my word, I should not have much objection to that scheme; and, if some enchanter would but transport me in an instant to the summit of Ætna, anybody might slop through the Low Countries that pleased.

Being, however, so far advanced, there is no retracting; and I am resolved to journey along with Quiet and Content for my companions. These two comfortable deities have, I believe, taken Flanders under their especial protection; every step one advances discovering some new proof of their influence. The neatness of the houses, and the universal cleanliness of the villages, show plainly that their inhabitants live in ease and good humour. All is still and peaceful in these fertile lowlands: the eye meets nothing but round unmeaning faces at every door, and harmless stupidity smiling at every window. The beasts, as placid as their masters, graze on without any disturbance; and I scarcely recollect to have heard one grunting swine or snarling mastiff during my whole progress. Before every

village is a wealthy dunghill, not at all offensive, because but seldom disturbed; and there sows and porkers bask in the sun, and wallow at their ease, till the hour of death and bacon arrives.

But it is high time to lead you towards Antwerp. More rich pastures, more ample fields of grain, more flourishing willows! A boundless plain lies before this city, dotted with cows, and speckled with flowers; a level whence its spires and quaint roofs are seen to advantage! The pale colours of the sky, and a few gleams of watery sunshine, gave a true Flemish cast to the scenery, and everything appeared so consistent, that I had not a shadow of pretence to think myself asleep.

After crossing a broad expanse of river, edged on one side by beds of osiers beautifully green, and on the other by gates and turrets preposterously ugly, we came through several streets of lofty houses to our inn. Its situation in the "Place de Meir," a vast open space surrounded by buildings above buildings, and roof above roof, has something striking and singular. A tall gilt crucifix of bronze, sculptured by Cortels of Malines,^[1] adds to its splendour; and the tops of some tufted trees, seen above a line of magnificent hotels, add greatly to the effect of the perspective.

It was almost dusk when we arrived; and as I am very partial to new objects discovered by this dubious, visionary light, I went immediately a rambling. Not a sound disturbed my meditations: there were no groups of squabbling children or talkative old women. The whole town seemed retired into their inmost chambers; and I kept winding and turning about, from street to street, and from alley to alley, without meeting a single inhabitant. Now and then, indeed, one or two women in long cloaks and mantles glided by at a distance; but their dress was so shroud-like, and their whole appearance so ghostly, that I should have been afraid to accost them. As night approached, the ranges of buildings grew more and more dim, and the silence which reigned amongst them more awful. The canals, which in some places intersect the streets, were likewise in perfect solitude, and there was just light sufficient for me to observe on the still waters the reflection of the structures above them. Except two or three tapers glimmering through the casements, no one circumstance indicated human existence. I might, without being thought very romantic, have imagined myself in the city of petrified people which Arabian fabulists are so fond of describing. Were any one to ask my advice upon the subject of retirement, I should tell him—By all means repair to Antwerp. No village amongst the Alps, or hermitage upon Mount Lebanon, is less disturbed: you may pass your days in this great city without being the least conscious of its sixty thousand inhabitants, unless you visit the churches. There, indeed, are to be heard a few devout whispers, and sometimes, to be sure, the bells make a little chiming; but, walk about, as I do, in the twilights of midsummer, and be assured your ears will be free from all molestation.

You can have no idea how many strange, amusing fancies played around me whilst I wandered along; nor how delighted I was with the novelty of my situation. But a few days ago, thought I within myself, I was in the midst of all the tumult and uproar of London: now, as if by some magic influence, I am transported to a city equally remarkable indeed for streets and edifices, but whose inhabitants seem cast into a profound repose. What a pity that we cannot borrow some small share of this soporific disposition! It would temper that restless spirit which throws us sometimes into such dreadful convulsions. However, let us not be too precipitate in desiring so dead a calm; the time may arrive when, like Antwerp, we may sink into the arms of forgetfulness; when a fine verdure may carpet our Exchange, and passengers traverse the Strand without any danger of being smothered in crowds or crushed by carriages.

Reflecting, in this manner, upon the silence of the place, contrasted with the important bustle which formerly rendered it so famous, I insensibly drew near to the cathedral, and found myself, before I was aware, under its stupendous tower. It is difficult to conceive an object more solemn or more imposing than this edifice at the hour I first beheld it. Dark shades hindered my examining the lower galleries; their elaborate carved work was invisible; nothing but huge masses of building met my sight, and the tower, shooting up four hundred and sixty-six feet in the air, received an additional importance from the gloom which prevailed below. The sky being perfectly clear, several stars twinkled through the mosaic of the pinnacles, and increased the charm of their effect.

Whilst I was indulging my reveries, a ponderous bell struck ten, and such a peal of chimes succeeded, as shook the whole edifice, notwithstanding its bulk, and drove me away in a hurry. I need not say, no mob obstructed my passage. I ran through a succession of streets, free and unmolested, as if I had been skimming along over the downs of Wiltshire. The voices of my servants conversing before the hotel were the only sounds which the great "Place de Meir" echoed.

This characteristic stillness was the more pleasing, when I looked back upon those scenes of outcry and horror which filled London but a week or two ago, when danger was not confined to night only, and to the environs of the capital, but haunted our streets at mid-day. Here, I could wander over an entire city; stray by the port, and venture through the most obscure alleys, without a single apprehension; without beholding a sky red and portentous with the light of houses on fire, or hearing the confusion of shouts and groans mingled with the reports of artillery. I can assure you, I think myself very fortunate to have escaped the possibility of another such week of desolation, and to be peaceably lulled at Antwerp.

LETTER II.

Visit to the cabinets of pictures in Antwerp.—Monsieur Van Lencren's collection.—The Canon Knyff's house and gallery of paintings.—The Canon himself.—His domestic felicity.—Revisit the cathedral.—Grand service in honour of St. John the Baptist.—Mynheer Van den Bosch, the organist's astonishing flashes of execution.—Evening service in the cathedral.—Magical effect of the music of Jomelli.—Blighted avenues.—Slow travelling.—Enter the United Provinces.—Level scenery.—Chinese prospects.—Reach Meerdyke.—Arrival at the Hague.

Antwerp, 23rd June, 1780.

AFTER breakfast this morning I began my pilgrimage to all the cabinets of pictures in Antwerp. First, I went to Monsieur Van Lencren's, who possesses a suite of apartments, lined, from the base to the cornice, with the rarest productions of the Flemish school. Heaven forbid I should enter into a detail of their niceties! I might as well count the dew-drops upon the most spangled of Van Huysum's flower-pieces, or the pimples on their possessor's countenance; a very good sort of man, indeed; but from whom I was not at all sorry to be delivered.

My joy was, however, of short duration, as a few minutes brought me into the court-yard of the Canon Knyff's habitation; a snug abode, well furnished with ample fauteuils and orthodox couches. After viewing the rooms on the

first floor, we mounted an easy staircase, and entered an ante-chamber, which they who delight in the imitations of art rather than of nature, in the likenesses of joint stools and the portraits of tankards, would esteem most capitally adorned: but it must be confessed, that amongst these uninteresting performances are dispersed a few striking Berghems and agreeable Polembergs. In the gallery adjoining, two or three Rosa de Tivolis merit observation; and a large Teniers, representing the Hermit St. Anthony surrounded by a malicious set of imps and leering devilleses, is well calculated to display the whimsical buffoonery of a Dutch imagination.

I was enjoying this strange medley, when the canon made his appearance; and a most prepossessing figure he has, according to Flemish ideas. In my humble opinion, his reverence looked a little muddled or so; and, to be sure, the description I afterwards heard of his style of living favours not a little my surmises. This worthy dignitary, what with his private fortune and the good things of the church, enjoys a spanking revenue, which he contrives to get rid of in the joys of the table and the encouragement of the pencil.

His servants, perhaps, assist not a little in the expenditure of so comfortable an income; the canon being upon a very social footing with them all. At four o'clock in the afternoon, a select party attend him in his coach to an ale-house about a league from the city; where a table, well spread with jugs of beer and handsome cheeses, waits their arrival. After enjoying this rural fare, the same equipage conducts them back again, by all accounts, much faster than they came; which may well be conceived, as the coachman is one of the brightest wits of the entertainment.

My compliments, alas! were not much appreciated, you may suppose, by this jovial personage. I said a few favourable words of Polemberg, and offered up a small tribute of praise to the memory of Berghem; but, as I could not prevail upon Mynheer Knyff to expand, I made one of my best bows, and left him to the enjoyment of his domestic felicity.

In my way home, I looked into another cabinet, the greatest ornament of which was a most sublime thistle by Snyders, of the heroic size, and so faithfully imitated that I dare say no Ass could see it unmoved. At length, it was lawful to return home; and as I positively refused visiting any more cabinets in the afternoon, I sent for a harpsichord of Rucker, and played myself quite out of the Netherlands.

It was late before I finished my musical excursion, and I took advantage of this dusky moment to revisit the cathedral. A flight of starlings had just pitched on one of the pinnacles of the tower, whose faint chirpings were the only sounds that broke the evening stillness. Not a human form appeared at any of the windows around; no footsteps were audible in the opening before the grand entrance; and during the half hour I spent in walking to and fro, one solitary Franciscan was the only creature that accosted me. From him I learned that a grand service was to be performed next day in honour of St. John the Baptist, and the best music in Flanders would be called forth on the occasion, so I determined to stay one day longer at Antwerp.

Having taken this resolution, I availed myself of a special invitation from Mynheer Van den Bosch, the first organist of the place, and sat next to him in his lofty perch during the celebration of high mass. The service ended, I strayed about the aisles, and examined the innumerable chapels which decorate them, whilst Mynheer Van den Bosch thundered and lightened away upon his huge organ with fifty stops.

When the first flashes of execution had a little subsided, I took an opportunity of surveying the celebrated Descent from the Cross. This has ever been esteemed the master-piece of Rubens, which, large as it is, they pretend here that Old Lewis Baboon^[2] offered to cover with gold. A swingeing St. Christopher, fording a brook with a child on his shoulders, cannot fail of attracting attention. This colossal personage is painted on the folding-doors which defend the grand effort of art just mentioned from vulgar eyes; and here Rubens has selected a very proper subject to display the gigantic boldness of his pencil.

After I had most dutifully surveyed all his productions in this church, I walked half over Antwerp in quest of St. John's relics, which were moving about in procession. If my eyes were not much regaled by the saint's magnificence, my ears were greatly affected in the evening by the music which sang forth his praises. The cathedral was crowded with devotees, and perfumed with incense. A motet, in the lofty style of Jomelli, performed with taste and feeling, transported me to Italian climates; and I grieved, when a cessation dissolved the charm, to think that I had still so many tramontane regions to pass before I could in effect reach that classic country. Finding it was in vain to expect preternatural interposition, and perceiving no conscious angel or Loretto-vehicle waiting in some dark consecrated corner to bear me away, I humbly returned to my hotel.

Monday, June 26th.—We were again upon the pavé, rattling and jumbling along between clipped hedges and blighted avenues. The plagues of Egypt have been renewed, one might almost imagine, in this country, by the appearance of the oak trees: not a leaf have the insects spared. After having had the displeasure of seeing no other objects for several hours but these blasted rows, the scene changed to vast tracts of level country, buried in sand and smothered with heath; the particular character of which I had but too good an opportunity of intimately knowing, as a tortoise might have kept pace with us without being once out of breath.

Towards evening, we entered the dominions of the United Provinces, and had all their glory of canals, treck-schuyts, and windmills, before us. The minute neatness of the villages, their red roofs, and the lively green of the willows which shade them, corresponded with the ideas I had formed of Chinese prospects; a resemblance which was not diminished upon viewing on every side the level scenery of enamelled meadows, with stripes of clear water across them, and innumerable barges gliding busily along. Nothing could be finer than the weather; it improved each moment, as if propitious to my exotic fancies; and, at sun-set, not one single cloud obscured the horizon. Several storks were parading by the water-side, amongst flags and osiers; and, as far as the eye could reach, large herds of beautifully spotted cattle were enjoying the plenty of their pastures. I was perfectly in the environs of Canton, or Ning Po, till we reached Meerdyke. You know fumigations are always the current recipe in romance to break an enchantment; as soon, therefore, as I left my carriage and entered my inn, the clouds of tobacco which filled every one of its apartments dispersed my Chinese imaginations, and reduced me in an instant to Holland.

Why should I enlarge upon my adventures at Meerdyke? To tell you that its inhabitants are the most uncouth bipeds in the universe would be nothing very new or entertaining; so let me at once pass over the village, leave Rotterdam, and even Delft, that great parent of pottery, and transport you with a wave of my pen to the Hague.

As the evening was rather warm, I immediately walked out to enjoy the shade of the long avenue which leads to Scheveling, and proceeded to the village on the sea coast, which terminates the perspective. Almost every cottage door being open to catch the air, I had an opportunity of looking into their neat apartments. Tables, shelves,

earthenware, all glisten with cleanliness; the country people were drinking tea, after the fatigues of the day, and talking over its bargains and contrivances.

I left them to walk on the beach, and was so charmed with the vast azure expanse of ocean, which opened suddenly upon me, that I remained there a full half hour. More than two hundred vessels of different sizes were in sight, the last sunbeam purpling their sails, and casting a path of innumerable brilliants athwart the waves. What would I not have given to follow this shining track! It might have conducted me straight to those fortunate western climates, those happy isles which you are so fond of painting, and I of dreaming about. But, unluckily, this passage was the only one my neighbours the Dutch were ignorant of. It is true they have islands rich in spices, and blessed with the sun's particular attention, but which their government, I am apt to imagine, renders by no means fortunate.

Abandoning therefore all hopes of this adventurous voyage, I returned towards the Hague, and looked into a country-house of the late Count Bentinck, with parterres and bosquets by no means resembling, one should conjecture, the gardens of the Hesperides. But, considering that the whole group of trees, terraces, and verdure were in a manner created out of hills of sand, the place may claim some portion of merit. The walks and alleys have all the stiffness and formality which our ancestors admired; but the intermediate spaces, being dotted with clumps and sprinkled with flowers, are imagined in Holland to be in the English style. An Englishman ought certainly to behold it with partial eyes, since every possible attempt has been made to twist it into the taste of his country.

I need not say how liberally I bestowed my encomiums on Count Bentinck's tasteful intentions; nor how happy I was, when I had duly serpentized over his garden, to find myself once more in the grand avenue. All the way home, I reflected upon the unyielding perseverance of the Dutch, who raise gardens from heaps of sand, and cities out of the bosom of the waters. I had, almost at the same moment, a whimsical proof of the thrifty turn of this people; for just entering the town I met an unwieldy fellow—not ill clad—airing his carcass in a one-dog chair. The poor animal puffed and panted, Mynheer smoked, and gaped around him with the most blessed indifference.

LETTER III.

The Prince of Orange's cabinet of paintings.—Temptation of St. Anthony, by Breughel.—Exquisite pictures by Berghem and Wouvermans.—Mean garrets stored with inestimable productions of the Indies.—Enamelled flasks of oriental essences.—Vision of the wardrobe of Hecuba.—Disenchantment.—Cabinet of natural history.—A day dream.—A delicious morsel.—Dinner at Sir Joseph Yorke's.—Two honourable boobies.—The Great Wood.—Parterres of the Greffier Fagel.—Air poisoned by the sluggish canals.—Fishy locality of Dutch banquetting rooms.—Derivation of the inhabitants of Holland.—Origin and use of enormous galligaskins.—Escape from damp alleys and lazy waters.

30th June, 1780.

I DEDICATED the morning to the Prince of Orange's cabinet of paintings and curiosities both natural and artificial. Amongst the pictures which amused me the most is a temptation of the holy hermit St. Anthony, by Hell-fire Breughel, who has shown himself right worthy of the title; for a more diabolical variety of imps never entered the human imagination. Breughel has made his saint take refuge in a ditch filled with harpies and creeping things innumerable, whose malice, one should think, would have lost Job himself the reputation of patience. Castles of steel and fiery turrets glare on every side, whence issue a band of junior devils. These seem highly entertained with pinking poor Anthony, and whispering, I warrant ye, filthy tales in his ear. Nothing can be more rueful than the patient's countenance; more forlorn than his beard; more piteous than his eye, forming a strong contrast to the pert winks and insidious glances of his persecutors; some of whom, I need not mention, are evidently of the female kind.

But really I am quite ashamed of having detained you in such bad company so long; and had I a moment to spare, you should be introduced to a better set in this gallery, where some of the most exquisite Berghems and Wouvermans I ever beheld would delight you for hours. I do not think you would look much at the Polembergs; there are but two, and one of them is very far from capital; in short, I am in a great hurry; so pardon me, Carlo Cignani! if I do not do justice to your merit; and forgive me, Potter! if I pass by your herds without leaving a tribute of admiration.

Mynheer Van Something was as eager to precipitate my step as I was to get out of the damps and perplexities of Sorgvliet yesterday evening; so, mounting a creaking staircase, he led me to a suite of garretlike apartments; which, considering the meanness of their exterior, I was rather surprised to find stored with some of the most valuable productions of the Indies. Gold cups enriched with gems, models of Chinese palaces in ivory, glittering armour of Hindostan, and Japan caskets, filled every corner of this awkward treasury. The most pleasing of all its baubles in my estimation was a large coffer of most elaborate workmanship, containing enamelled flasks of oriental essences, enough to perfume a zennana. If disagreeable fumes, as I mentioned before, dissolve enchantments, such aromatic oils have doubtless the power of raising them; for, whilst I scented their fragrancy, I could have persuaded myself, I was in the wardrobe of Hecuba,—

“Where treasured odours breathed a costly scent.”

I saw, or seemed to see, the arched apartments, the procession of matrons, the consecrated vestments: the very temple began to rise upon my sight, when a sweltering Dutch porpoise approaching to make me a low bow, his complaisance proved full as notorious as Satan's, when, according to Catholic legends, he took leave of Luther, that disputatious heresiarch. No spell can resist a fumigation of this nature; away fled palace, Hecuba, matrons, temple, &c. I looked up, and lo! I was in a garret. As poetry is but too often connected with this lofty situation, you will not wonder much at my flight. Being a little recovered from it, I tottered down the staircase, entered the cabinets of natural history, and was soon restored to my sober senses. A grave hippopotamus contributed a good deal to their re-establishment.

The butterflies, I must needs confess, were very near leading me another dance: I thought of their native hills and beloved flowers, on the summits of Haynang and Nan-Hoa;^[3] but the jargon which was gabbling all around me prevented the excursion, and I summoned a decent share of attention for that ample chamber which has been appropriated to bottled snakes and pickled fetuses.

After having enjoyed the same spectacle in the British Museum, no very new or singular objects can be selected

in this. One of the rarest articles it contains is the representation in wax of a human head, most dexterously flayed indeed! Rapturous encomiums have been bestowed by amateurs on this performance. A German professor could hardly believe it artificial; and, prompted by the love of truth, set his teeth in this delicious morsel to be convinced of its reality. My faith was less hazardously established; and I moved off, under the conviction that art had never produced anything more horribly natural.

It was one o'clock before I got through the mineral kingdom; and another hour passed before I could quit with decorum the regions of stuffed birds and marine productions. At length my departure was allowable; and I went to dine at Sir Joseph Yorke's, with all nations and languages. Amongst the company were two honourable boobies and their governor, all from Ireland. The youngest, after plying me with a succession of innocent questions, wished to be informed where I proposed spending the carnival. "At Tunis," was my answer. The questioner, not in the least surprised, then asked who was to sing there? To which I replied, "Farinelli."

This settled the business to our mutual satisfaction; so after coffee I strayed to the Great Wood, which, considering that it almost touches the town with its boughs, is wonderfully forest-like. Not a branch being ever permitted to be lopped, the oaks and beeches retain their natural luxuriance. In some places their straight boles rise sixty feet without a bough; in others, they are bent fantastically over the alleys, which turn and wind about just as a painter would desire. I followed them with eagerness and curiosity; sometimes deviating from my path amongst tufts of fern and herbage.

In these cool retreats I could not believe myself near canals and windmills; the Dutch formalities were all forgotten whilst contemplating the broad masses of foliage above, and the wild flowers and grasses below. Hares and rabbits scudded by me while I sat; and the birds were chirping their evening song. Their preservation does credit to the police of the country, which is so exact and well regulated as to suffer no outrage within the precincts of this extensive wood, the depth and thickness of which might otherwise seem calculated to favour half the sins of a capital.

Relying upon this comfortable security, I lingered unmolested amongst the beeches till late in the evening; then taking the nearest path, I suffered myself, though not without regret, to be conducted out of this fresh sylvan scene to the dusty, pompous parterres of the Greffier Fagel. Every flower that wealth can purchase diffuses its perfume on one side; whilst every stench a canal can exhale poisons the air on the other. These sluggish puddles defy all the power of the United Provinces, and retain the freedom of stinking in spite of any endeavour to conquer their filthiness.

But perhaps I am too bold in my assertion; for I have no authority to mention any attempts to purify these noxious pools. Who knows but their odour is congenial to a Dutch constitution? One should be inclined to this supposition by the numerous banquetting-rooms and pleasure-houses which hang directly above their surface, and seem calculated on purpose to enjoy them. If frogs were not excluded from the magistrature of their country (and I cannot but think it a little hard that they are), one should not wonder at this choice. Such burgomasters might erect their pavilions in such situations; but, after all, I am not greatly surprised at the fishiness of their site, since very slight authority would persuade me there was a period when Holland was all water, and the ancestors of the present inhabitants fish. A certain oysterishness of eye and flabbiness of complexion, are almost proofs sufficient of this aquatic descent: and pray tell me for what purpose are such galligaskins as the Dutch burthen themselves with contrived, but to tuck up a flouncing tail, and thus cloak the deformity of a dolphinlike termination?

Having done penance for some time in the damp alleys which line the borders of these lazy waters, I was led through corkscrew sand-walks to a vast flat, sparingly scattered over with vegetation. There was no temptation to puzzle myself in such a labyrinth; so taking advantage of the lateness of the hour, and muttering a few complimentary promises of returning at the first opportunity, I escaped the ennui of this endless scrubbery, and got home, with the determination of being wiser and less curious if ever my stars should bring me again to the Hague.

LETTER IV.

Leave the Hague.—Leyden.—Wood near Haerlem.—Waddling fishermen.—Enter the town.—The great fair.—Riot and uproar.
—Confusion of tongues.—Mine hostess.

Haerlem, July 1st, 1780.

THE sky was clear and blue when we left the Hague, and we travelled along a shady road for about an hour, when down sunk the carriage into a sand-bed, and we were dragged along so slowly that I fell into a profound repose. How long it lasted is not material; but when I awoke, we were rumbling through Leyden. There is no need to write a syllable in honour of this illustrious city: its praises have already been sung and said by fifty professors, who have declaimed in its university, and smoked in its gardens. Let us get out of it as fast as we can, and breathe the cool air of the wood near Haerlem.

Here we arrived just as day declined: hay was making in the fields, and perfumed the country far and wide with its reviving fragrance. I promised myself a sentimental saunter in the groves, took up Gesner, and began to have pretty pastoral ideas as I walked forward; but instead of nymphs dispersed over the meadows, I met a gang of waddling fishermen. Letting fall the garlands I had wreathed for the shepherdesses, I jumped into the carriage, and was driven off to the town. Every avenue to it swarmed with people, whose bustle and agitation seemed to announce that something extraordinary was going forward. Upon inquiry I found it was the great fair at Haerlem; and before we had advanced much farther, our carriage was surrounded by idlers and gingerbread-eaters of all denominations. Passing the gate, we came to a cluster of little illuminated booths beneath a grove, glittering with toys and looking-glasses. It was not without difficulty that we reached our inn, and then the plague was to procure chambers; at last we were accommodated, and the first moment I could call my own has been dedicated to you.

You will not be surprised at the nonsense I have written, since I tell you the scene of the riot and uproar from whence it bears date. At this very moment the confused murmur of voices and music stops all regular proceedings: old women and children tattling; apes, bears, and show-boxes under the windows; French rattling, English swearing, outrageous Italians, frisking minstrels; *tambours de basque* at every corner; myself distracted; a confounded

squabble of cooks and haranguing German couriers just arrived, their masters following open-mouthed, nothing to eat, the steam of ham and flesh-pots all the while provoking their appetite; squeaking chamber-maids in the galleries above, and mine hostess below, half inclined to receive the golden solicitations of certain beauties for admittance, but positively refusing them the moment some creditable personage appears; eleven o'clock strikes; half the lights in the fair are extinguished; scruples grow faint; and mammon gains the victory.

LETTER V.

Amsterdam.—The road to Utrecht.—Country-houses and gardens.—Neat enclosures.—Comfortable parties.—Ladies and Lapdogs.—Arrival at Utrecht.—Moravian establishment—The woods.—Shops.—Celestial love.—Musical Sempstresses.—Return to Utrecht.

Utrecht, 2d July, 1780.

WELL, thank Heaven! Amsterdam is behind us; how I got thither signifies not one farthing; it was all along a canal, as usual. The weather was hot enough to broil an inhabitant of Bengal; and the odours, exhaling from every quarter, sufficiently powerful to regale the nose of a Hottentot.

Under these pungent circumstances we entered the great city. The Stadt-huys being the only cool place it contained, I repaired thither as fast as the heat permitted, and walked in a lofty marble hall, magnificently coved, till the dinner was ready at the inn. That despatched, we set off for Utrecht. Both sides of the way are lined with the country-houses and gardens of opulent citizens, as fine as gilt statues and clipped hedges can make them. Their number is quite astonishing: from Amsterdam to Utrecht, full thirty miles, we beheld no other objects than endless avenues and stiff parterres scrawled and flourished in patterns like the embroidery of an old maid's work-bag. Notwithstanding this formal taste, I could not help admiring the neatness and arrangement of every inclosure, enlivened by a profusion of flowers, and decked with arbours, beneath which a vast number of consequential personages were solacing themselves after the heat of the day. Each lusthuys we passed contained some comfortable party dozing over their pipes, or angling in the muddy fish-ponds below. Scarce an avenue but swarmed with female josses; little squat pug-dogs waddling at their sides, the attributes, I suppose, of these fair divinities.

But let us leave them to loiter thus amiably in their Elysian groves, and arrive at Utrecht; which, as nothing very remarkable claimed my attention, I hastily quitted to visit a Moravian establishment at Ziest, in its neighbourhood. The chapel, a large house, late the habitation of Count Zinzendorf, and a range of apartments filled with the holy fraternity, are totally wrapped in dark groves, overgrown with weeds, amongst which some damsels were straggling, under the immediate protection of their pious brethren.

Traversing the woods, we found ourselves in a large court, built round with brick edifices, the grass-plats in a deplorable way, and one ragged goat, their only inhabitant, on a little expiatory scheme, perhaps, for the failings of the fraternity. I left this poor animal to ruminate in solitude, and followed my guide into a series of shops furnished with gew-gaws and trinkets said to be manufactured by the female part of the society. Much cannot be boasted of their handy-works: I expressed a wish to see some of these industrious fair ones; but, upon receiving no answer, found this was a subject of which there was no discourse.

Consoling myself as well as I was able, I put myself under the guidance of another slovenly disciple, who showed me the chapel, and harangued very pathetically upon celestial love. In my way thither, I caught a glimpse of some pretty sempstresses, warbling melodious hymns as they sat needling and thimbling at their windows above. I had a great inclination to approach this busy group, but the roll of a brother's eye corrected me.

Reflecting upon my unworthiness, I retired from the consecrated buildings, and was driven back to Utrecht, not a little amused with my expedition. If you are as well disposed to be pleased as I was, I shall esteem myself very lucky, and not repent sending you so hasty a narrative.

LETTER VI.

Arrival at Aix-la-Chapelle.—Glimpse of a dingy grove.—Melancholy saunterers.—Dusseldorf Gallery.—Nocturnal depredators.—Arrival at Cologne.—Shrine of the Three Wise Sovereigns.—Peregrinations of their beatified bones.—Road to Bonn.—Delights of Catholicism.—Azure mountains.—Visionary palaces.

We arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle about ten at night, and saw the mouldering turrets of that once illustrious capital by the help of a candle and lantern. An old woman at the gate asked our names (for not a single soldier appeared); and after traversing a number of superannuated streets without perceiving the least trace of Charlemagne or his Paladins, we procured comfortable though not magnificent apartments, and slept most unheroically sound, till it was time to set forward for Dusseldorf.

July 8th.—As we were driven out of the town, I caught a glimpse of a grove, hemmed in by dingy buildings, where a few water-drinkers were sauntering along to the sound of some rueful French horns; the wan greenish light admitted through the foliage made them look like unhappy souls condemned to an eternal lounge for having trifled away their existence. It was not with much regret that I left such a party behind; and, after experiencing the vicissitudes of good roads and rumbling pavements, crossed the Rhine and travelled on to Dusseldorf.

Nothing but the famous gallery of paintings could invite strangers to stay a moment within its walls; more crooked streets, more indifferent houses, one seldom meets with; except soldiers, not a living creature moving about them; and at night a complete regiment of bugs "marked me for their own." Thus I lay, at once the seat of war and the conquest of these detestable animals, till early in the morning (Sunday, July 9th), when Morpheus, compassionating my sufferings, opened the ivory gates of his empire, and freed his votary from the most unconscionable vermin ever engendered. In humble prose, I fell fast asleep; and remained quiet, in defiance of my adversaries, till it was time to survey the cabinet.

This collection is displayed in five large galleries, and contains some valuable productions of the Italian school;

but the room most boasted of is that which Rubens has filled with no less than three enormous representations of the last day, where an innumerable host of sinners are exhibited as striving in vain to avoid the tangles of the devil's tail. The woes of several fat luxurious souls are rendered in the highest gusto. Satan's dispute with some brawny concubines, whom he is lugging off in spite of all their resistance, cannot be too much admired by those who approve this class of subjects, and think such strange embroglios in the least calculated to raise a sublime or a religious idea.

For my own part, I turned from them with disgust, and hastened to contemplate a holy family by Camillo Procaccini, in another apartment. The brightest imagination can never conceive any figure more graceful than that of the young Jesus; and if ever I beheld an inspired countenance or celestial features, it was here: but to attempt conveying in words what the pencil alone can express, would be only reversing the absurdity of many a master in the gallery who aims to represent those ideas by the pencil which language alone is able to describe. Should you admit this opinion, you will not be surprised at my passing such a multitude of renowned pictures unnoticed; nor at my bringing you out of the cabinet without deluging ten pages with criticisms in the style of the ingenious Lady Miller.

As I had spent so much time in the gallery, the day was too far advanced to think of travelling to Cologne; I was therefore obliged to put myself once more under the dominion of the most inveterate bugs in the universe. This government, like many others, made but an indifferent use of its power, and the subject suffering accordingly was extremely rejoiced at flying from his persecutors to Cologne.

July 10th.—Clouds of dust hindered my making any remarks on the exterior of this celebrated city; but if its appearance be not more beautiful from without than within, I defy the most courteous compiler of geographical dictionaries to launch forth very warmly in its praise. But of what avail are stately palaces, broad streets, or airy markets, to a town which can boast of such a treasure as the bodies of those three wise sovereigns who were star-led to Bethlehem? Is not this circumstance enough to procure it every kind of respect? I really believe so, from the pious and dignified contentment of its inhabitants. They care not a hair of an ass's ear whether their houses be gloomy and ill-contrived, their pavements overgrown with weeds, and their shops half choked up with filthiness, provided the carcasses of Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar might be preserved with proper decorum. Nothing, to be sure, can be richer than the shrine which contains these precious relics. I paid my devotions before it the moment I arrived; this step was inevitable: had I omitted it, not a soul in Cologne but would have cursed me for a Pagan.

Do you not wonder at hearing of these venerable bodies so far from their native country? I thought them snug under some Arabian cupola ten feet deep in spice; but who can tell what is to become of one a few ages hence? Who knows but the Emperor of Morocco may be canonized some future day in Lapland? I asked, of course, how in the name of miracles they came hither? but found no story of a supernatural conveyance. It seems that great collectress of relics, the holy Empress Helena, first routed them out: then they were packed off to Rome. King Alaric, having no grace, bundled them down to Milan; where they remained till it pleased Heaven to inspire an ancient archbishop with the fervent wish of depositing them at Cologne; there these skeletons were taken into the most especial consideration, crowned with jewels and filigreed with gold. Never were skulls more elegantly mounted; and I doubt whether Odin's buffet could exhibit so fine an assortment. The chapel containing these beatified bones is placed in a dark extremity of the cathedral. Several golden lamps gleam along the polished marbles with which it is adorned, and afford just light enough to read the following monkish inscription:—

"CORPORA SANCTORUM RECUBANT HIC TERNA MAGORUM:
EX HIS SUBLATUM NIHIL EST ALIBIVE LOCATUM."

After I had satisfied my curiosity with respect to the peregrinations of the consecrated skeletons, I examined their shrine; and was rather surprised to find it not only enriched with barbaric gold and pearl, but covered with cameos and intaglios of the best antique sculpture. Many an impious emperor and gross Silenus, many a wanton nymph and frantic bacchanal, figure in the same range with the statues of saints and evangelists. How St. Helena could tolerate such a mixed assembly (for the shrine, they say, was formed under her auspices) surpasses my comprehension. Perhaps you will say, it is no great matter; and give me a hint to move out of the chapel, lest the three kings and their star should lead me quite out of my way. Very well; I think I had better stop in time, to tell you, without further excursion, that we set off after dinner for Bonn.

Our road-side was lined with beggarly children, high convent walls, and scarecrow crucifixes, lubberly monks, dejected peasants, and all the delights of Catholicism. Such scenery not engaging a share of my attention, I kept gazing at the azure irregular mountains which bounded our view, and in thought was already transported to their summits. Vast and wild were the prospects I surveyed from my imaginary exaltation, and innumerable the chimeras which trotted in my brain. Under their capricious influence my fancy built castles and capitols in the clouds with all the extravaganza of Piranesi. The magnificence and variety of my aerial structures hindered my thinking the way long. I was walking with a crowd of phantoms upon their terraces, when the carriage made a halt. Immediately descending the innumerable flights of steps which divide such lofty edifices from the lower world, I entered the inn at Bonn, and was shown into an apartment which commands the chief front of the Elector's residence. You may guess how contemptible it appeared to one just returned from palaces bedecked with all the pomp of visionary splendour. In other respects I saw it at a very favourable moment, for the twilight, shading the whole façade, concealed its plastered walls and painted columns.

LETTER VII.

Borders of the Rhine.—Richly picturesque road from Bonn to Andernach.—Scheme for a floating village.—Coblentz.—A winding valley.—The river Lahn.—Ems.—The planet.—A supposed Apparition.—A little sequestered Paradise.

July 11, 1780.

LET those who delight in picturesque country repair to the borders of the Rhine, and follow the road from Bonn to Coblentz. In some places it is suspended like a cornice above the waters; in others, it winds behind lofty steeps and broken acclivities, shaded by woods and clothed with an endless variety of plants and flowers. Several green paths lead amongst this vegetation to the summits of the rocks, which often serve as the foundation of abbeys and castles, whose lofty roofs and spires, rising above the cliffs, impress passengers with ideas of their grandeur, that might probably vanish upon a nearer approach. Not choosing to lose any prejudice in their favour, I kept a respectful

distance whenever I left my carriage, and walked on the banks of the river.

Just before we came to Andernach, an antiquated town with strange morisco-looking towers, I spied a raft, at least three hundred feet in length, on which ten or twelve cottages were erected, and a great many people employed in sawing wood. The women sat spinning at their doors, whilst their children played among the water-lilies that bloomed in abundance on the edge of the stream. A smoke, rising from one of these aquatic habitations, partially obscured the mountains beyond, and added not a little to their effect.

Altogether, the scene was so novel and amusing, that I sat half an hour contemplating it from an eminence under the shade of some leafy walnuts; and should like extremely to build a moveable village, people it with my friends, and so go floating about from island to island, and from one woody coast of the Rhine to another. Would you dislike such a party? I am much deceived, or you would be the first to explore the shady promontories beneath which we should be wafted along.

But I do not think you would find Coblenz, where we were obliged to take up our night's lodging, much to your taste. It is a mean, dirty assemblage of plastered houses, striped with paint, and set off with wooden galleries, in the delectable taste of old St. Giles's. Above, on a rock, stands the palace of the Elector, which seems to be remarkable for nothing except situation. I did not bestow many looks on this structure whilst ascending the mountain across which our road to Mayence conducted us.

July 12.—Having attained the summit, we discovered a vast, irregular range of country, and advancing, found ourselves amongst downs purpled with thyme and bounded by forests. This sort of prospect extending for several leagues, I walked on the turf, and inhaled with avidity the fresh gales that blew over its herbage, till I came to a steep slope overgrown with privet and a variety of luxuriant shrubs in blossom. A cloudless sky and bright sunshine made me rather loth to move on; but the charms of the landscape, increasing every instant, drew me forward.

I had not gone far, before a winding valley discovered itself, inclosed by rocks and mountains clothed to their very summits with the thickest woods. A broad river, flowing at the base of the cliffs, reflected the impending vegetation, and looked so calm and glassy that I was determined to be better acquainted with it. For this purpose we descended by a zigzag path into the vale, and making the best of our way on the banks of the Lahn (for so is the river called) came suddenly upon the town of Ems, famous in mineral story; where, finding very good lodgings, we took up our abode, and led an Indian life amongst the wilds and mountains.

After supper I walked on a smooth lawn by the river, to observe the moon journeying through a world of silver clouds that lay dispersed over the face of the heavens. It was a mild genial evening; every mountain cast its broad shadow on the surface of the stream; lights twinkled afar off on the hills; they burnt in silence. All were asleep, except a female figure in white, with glow-worms shining in her hair. She kept moving disconsolately about; sometimes I heard her sigh; and if apparitions sigh, this must have been an apparition.

July 13.—The pure air of the morning invited me abroad at an early hour. Hiring a skiff, I rowed about a mile down the stream, and landed on a sloping meadow, level with the waters, and newly mown. Heaps of hay still lay dispersed under the copses which hemmed in on every side this little sequestered paradise. What a spot for a tent! I could encamp here for months, and never be tired. Not a day would pass by without discovering some untrodden pasture, some unsuspected vale, where I might remain among woods and precipices lost and forgotten. I would give you, and two or three more, the clue of my labyrinth: nobody else should be conscious even of its entrance. Full of such agreeable dreams, I rambled about the meads, scarcely aware which way I was going; sometimes a spangled fly led me astray, and, oftener, my own strange fancies. Between both, I was perfectly bewildered, and should never have found my boat again, had not an old German naturalist, who was collecting fossils on the cliffs, directed me to it.

When I got home it was growing late, and I now began to perceive that I had taken no refreshment, except the perfume of the hay and a few wood strawberries; airy diet, you will observe, for one not yet received into the realms of Ginnistan.

LETTER VIII.

Inveterate Idlers.—The planet Orloff and his satellites.—A Storm—Scared women.—A dreary Forest.—Village of Wiesbaden.—Manheim.—Ulm.—The Danube—unlimited plains on its margin.—Augsburg.—Sketch of the Town.—Pomposities of the Town House.

Ems, July 14.

I HAVE just made a discovery, that this place is as full of idlers and water-drinkers as their Highnesses of Orange and Hesse Darmstadt can desire; for to them accrue all the profits of its salubrious fountains. I protest, I knew nothing of all this yesterday, so entirely was I taken up with the rocks and meadows; and conceived no chance of meeting either card or billiard players in their solitudes. Both however abound at Ems, unconscious of the bold scenery in their neighbourhood, and totally insensible to its charms. They had no notion, not they, of admiring barren crags and precipices, where even the Lord would lose his way, as a clumsy lubber decorated with stars and orders very ingeniously observed to me; nor could they form the least conception of any pleasure there was in climbing like a goat amongst the cliffs, and then diving into woods and recesses where the sun had never penetrated; where there were neither card-tables prepared nor sideboards garnished; no *jambon de Mayence* in waiting; no supply of pipes, nor any of the commonest delights, to be met with in the commonest taverns.

To all this I acquiesced with most perfect submission, but immediately left the orator to entertain a circle of antiquated dames and weather-beaten officers who were gathering around him. Scarcely had I turned my back upon this polite assembly, when *Monsieur l'Administrateur des bains*, a fine pompous fellow, who had been *maitre d'hôtel* in a great German family, came forward purposely to acquaint me, I suppose, that their baths had the honour of possessing Prince Orloff, "*avec sa crande maidresse, son shamperlan, et quelgues tames donneur*:" moreover, that his Highness came hither to refresh himself after his laborious employments at the Court of St. Petersburg, and expected (*grace aux eaux!*) to return to the domains his august sovereign had lately bestowed upon him, perfectly regenerated.

Wishing Monsieur d'Orloff all possible success, I should have left the company at a greater distance, had not a violent shower stopped my career, and obliged me to return to my apartment. The rain growing heavier, intercepted the prospect of the mountains, and spread such a gloom over the vale as sank my spirits fifty degrees; to which a close foggy atmosphere not a little contributed. Towards night the clouds assumed a more formidable aspect; thunder rolled along the distant cliffs, and torrents began to run down the steeps. At intervals a blue flash of lightning discovered the agitated surface of the stream, and two or three scared women rushing through the storm, and calling all the saints in Paradise to their assistance.

Things were in this state, when the orator who had harangued so brilliantly on the folly of ascending mountains, bounced into the room, and regaled my ears with a woeful narration of murders which had happened the other day on the precise road I was to follow the next morning.

"Sir," said he, "your route is, to be sure, very perilous: on the left you have a chasm, down which, should your horses take the smallest alarm, you are infallibly precipitated; to the right hangs an impervious wood, and there, sir, I can assure you, are wolves enough to devour a regiment; a little farther on, you cross a desolate tract of forest land, the roads so deep and broken, that if you go ten paces in as many minutes you may think yourself fortunate. There lurk the most savage banditti in Europe, lately irritated by the Prince of Orange's proscription; and so desperate, that if they make an attack, you can expect no mercy. Should you venture through this hazardous district to-morrow, you will, in all probability, meet a company of people who have just left the town to search for the mangled bodies of their relations; but, for Heaven's sake, sir, if you value your life, do not suffer an idle curiosity to lead you over such dangerous regions, however picturesque their appearance."

It was almost nine o'clock before my kind adviser ceased inspiring me with terrors; then, finding myself at liberty, I retired to bed, not under the most agreeable impressions.

Early in the morning we set forward; and proceeding along the edge of the precipices I had been forewarned of, journeyed through the forest which had so recently been the scene of murders and depredations. At length, after winding several hours amongst its dreary avenues, we emerged into open daylight. A few minutes more brought us safe to the village of Wiesbaden, where we slept in peace and tranquillity.

July 16.—Our apprehensions being entirely dispersed, we rose much refreshed; and passing through Mayence, Oppenheim, and Worms, travelled gaily over the plain in which Manheim is situated. The sun set before we arrived there.

Numbers of well-dressed people were amusing themselves with music and fireworks in the squares and open spaces; other groups appeared conversing in circles before their doors, and enjoying the serenity of the evening. Almost every window bloomed with carnations; and we could hardly cross a street without hearing the sound of music. A scene of such happiness and refinement formed a most agreeable contrast to the dismalities we had left behind. All around was security and contentment in their most engaging attire.

July 20.—After travelling a post or two, we came in sight of a green moor, of vast extent, with insulated woods and villages; here and there the Danube sweeping majestically along, and the city of Ulm rising upon its banks. The fields in the neighbourhood of the town were overspread with cloths bleaching in the sun, and waiting for barks, which convey them down the great river in twelve days to Vienna, and thence, through Hungary, into the midst of the Turkish empire.

You never saw a brighter sky nor more glowing clouds than those which gilded our horizon. For ten miles we beheld no other objects than smooth unlimited levels interspersed with thickets of oak, beyond which appeared a long series of mountains. Such were the very spots for youthful games and exercises, open spaces for the race, and spreading shades to screen the spectators.

Father Lafiteau tells us, there are many such vast and flowery Savannas in the interior of America, to which the roving tribes of Indians repair once or twice in a century to settle the rights of the chase, and lead their solemn dances; and so deep an impression do these assemblies leave on the minds of the savages, that the highest ideas they entertain of future felicity consist in the perpetual enjoyment of songs and dances upon the green boundless lawns of their elysium. In the midst of these visionary plains rises the abode of Ateantsic, encircled by choirs of departed chieftains leaping in cadence to the sound of spears as they ring on the shell of the tortoise. Their favourite attendants, long separated from them while on earth, are restored again in this ethereal region, and skim freely over the vast level space; now, hailing one group of beloved friends; and now, another. Mortals newly ushered by death into this world of pure blue sky and boundless meads, see the long-lost objects of their affection advancing to meet them, whilst flights of familiar birds, the purveyors of many an earthly chase, once more attend their progress, and the shades of their faithful dogs seem coursing each other below. The whole region is filled with low murmurs and tinkling sounds, which increase in melody as its new denizens proceed, who, at length, unable to resist the thrilling music, spring forward in ecstasies to join the eternal round.

A share of this celestial transport seemed communicated to me whilst my eyes wandered over the plains, which imagination widened and extended in proportion as the twilight prevailed, and so fully abandoned was I to the illusion of the moment, that I did not for several minutes perceive our arrival at Günzburg; whence we proceeded the next morning (July 21) to Augsburg, and rambled about this renowned city till evening. The colossal paintings on the walls of almost every considerable building gave it a strange air, which pleases upon the score of novelty.

Having passed a number of streets decorated in this exotic manner, we found ourselves suddenly before the public hall, by a noble statue of Augustus; which way soever we turned, our eyes met some remarkable edifice, or marble basin into which several groups of sculptured river-gods pour a profusion of waters. These stately fountains and bronze statues, the extraordinary size and loftiness of the buildings, the towers rising in perspective, and the Doric portal of the town-house, answered in some measure the idea Montfaucon gives us of the scene of an ancient tragedy. Whenever a pompous Flemish painter attempts a representation of Troy or Babylon, and displays in his back-ground those streets of palaces described in the Iliad, Augsburg, or some such city, may easily be traced. Frequently a corner of Antwerp discovers itself; and sometimes, above a Corinthian portico, rises a Gothic spire: just such a jumble may be viewed from the statue of Augustus, under which I remained till the concierge came, who was to open the gates of the town-house and show me its magnificent hall.

I wished for you exceedingly when ascending a flight of a hundred steps; I entered it through a portal, supported by tall pillars and crowned with a majestic pediment. Upon advancing, I discovered five more entrances equally grand, with golden figures of guardian genii leaning over the entablature; and saw, through a range of

windows, each above thirty feet high, and nearly level with the marble pavement, the whole city, with all its roofs and spires, beneath my feet. The pillars, cornices, and panels of this striking apartment are uniformly tinged with brown and gold; and the ceiling, enriched with emblematical paintings and innumerable canopies and pendants of carved work, casts a very magisterial shade. Upon the whole, I should not be surprised at a burgomaster assuming a formidable dignity in such a room.

I must confess it had a somewhat similar effect upon me; and I descended the flight of steps with as much pomposity as if on the point of giving audience to the Queen of Sheba. It happened to be a high festival, and half the inhabitants of Augsburg were gathered together in the opening before their hall; the greatest numbers, especially the women, still exhibiting the very dresses which Hollar engraved. My lofty gait imposed upon this primitive assembly, which receded to give me passage with as much silent respect as if I had really been the wise sovereign of Israel. When I got home, an execrable sourcroustish supper was served up to my majesty; I scolded in an unroyal style, and soon convinced myself I was no longer Solomon.

LETTER IX.

Extensive woods of fir in Bavaria.—Grand fair at Munich.—The Elector's country palace.—Court Ladies.—Fountains.—Costume.—Garden and tea-room.—Hoydening festivities there.—The Palace and Chapel.—Gorgeous riches of the latter.—St. Peter's thumb.—The Elector's collection of pictures.—The Churches.—Hubbub and confusion of the Fair.—Wild tract of country.—Village of Wolfrathshausen.—Perpetual forests.—A Tempest.—A night at a cottage.

July 22.

Joy to the Electors of Bavaria! for preserving such extensive woods of fir in their dominions as shade over the chief part of the road from Augsburg to Munich. Near the last-mentioned city, I cannot boast of the scenery changing to advantage. Instead of flourishing woods and verdure, we beheld a parched dreary flat, diversified by fields of withering barley, and stunted avenues drawn formally across them; now and then a stagnant pool, and sometimes a dunghill, by way of regale. However, the wild rocks of the Tyrol terminate the view, and to them imagination may fly, and ramble amidst springs and lilies of her own creation. I speak from authority, having had the delight of anticipating an evening in this romantic style.

Tuesday next is the grand fair at Munich, with horse-races and junketings: a piece of news I was but too soon acquainted with; for the moment we entered the town, good-natured creatures from all quarters advised us to get out of it; since traders and harlequins had filled every corner of the place, and there was not a lodging to be procured. The inns, to be sure, were hives of industrious animals sorting their merchandise, and preparing their goods for sale. Yet, in spite of difficulties, we got possession of a quiet apartment.

July 23.—We were driven in the evening to Nymphenburg, the Elector's country palace, the bosquets, jets-d'eaux, and parterres of which are the pride of the Bavarians. The principal platform is all of a glitter with gilded Cupids and shining serpents spouting at every pore. Beds of poppies, hollyhocks, scarlet lychnis, and other flame-coloured flowers, border the edge of the walks, which extend till the perspective appears to meet and swarm with ladies and gentlemen in party-coloured raiment. The queen of Golconda's gardens in a French opera are scarcely more gaudy and artificial. Unluckily too, the evening was fine, and the sun so powerful that we were half roasted before we could cross the great avenue and enter the thickets, which barely conceal a very splendid hermitage, where we joined Mr. and Mrs. Trevor, and a party of fashionable Bavarians.

Amongst the ladies was Madame la Comtesse, I forget who, a production of the venerable Haslang, with her daughter, Madame de Baumgarten, who has the honour of leading the Elector in her chains. These goddesses stepping into a car, vulgarly called a cariote, the mortals followed and explored alley after alley and pavilion after pavilion. Then, having viewed Pagodenburg, which is, as they told me, all Chinese; and Marienburg, which is most assuredly all tinsel; we paraded by a variety of fountains in full squirt, and though they certainly did their best (for many were set agoing on purpose) I cannot say I greatly admired them.

The ladies were very gaily attired, and the gentlemen, as smart as swords, bags, and pretty clothes could make them, looked exactly like the fine people one sees represented on Dresden porcelain. Thus we kept walking genteelly about the orangery, till the carriage drew up and conveyed us to Mr. Trevor's.

Immediately after supper, we drove once more out of town, to a garden and tea-room, where all degrees and ages dance jovially together till morning. Whilst one party wheel briskly away in the waltz, another amuse themselves in a corner with cold meat and rhenish. That despatched, out they whisk amongst the dancers, with an impetuosity and liveliness I little expected to have found in Bavaria. After turning round and round, with a rapidity that is quite astounding to an English dancer, the music changes to a slower movement, and then follows a succession of zig-zag minuets, performed by old and young, straight and crooked, noble and plebeian, all at once, from one end of the room to the other. Tallow candles snuffing and stinking, dishes changing at the risk of showering down upon you their savoury contents, heads scratching, and all sorts of performances going forward at the same moment; the flutes, oboes, and bassoons, snorting, grunting, and whining with peculiar emphasis; now fast, now slow, just as Variety commands, who seems to rule the ceremonial of this motley assembly, where every distinction of rank and privilege is totally forgotten. Once a week, on Sundays that is to say, the rooms are open, and Monday is generally far advanced before they are deserted. If good humour and coarse merriment are all that people desire, here they are to be found in perfection.

July 24.—Custom condemned us to visit the palace, which glares with looking-glass, gilding, and furbelowed flounces of cut velvet, most sumptuously fringed and spangled. The chapel, though small, is richer than anything Cræsus ever possessed, let them say what they will. Not a corner but shines with gold, diamonds, and scraps of martyrdom studded with jewels. I had the delight of treading amethysts and the richest gems under foot, which, if you recollect, Apuleius^[4] thinks such supreme felicity. Alas! I was quite unworthy of the honour, and had much rather have trodden the turf of the mountains. Mammon would never have taken his eyes off the pavement; mine soon left the contemplation of it and fixed on St. Peter's thumb, enshrined with a degree of elegance, and adorned by some malapert enthusiast with several of the most delicate antique cameos I ever beheld; the subjects, Ledas and sleeping Venuses, are a little too pagan, one should think, for an apostle's finger.

From this precious repository we were conducted through the public garden to a large hall, where part of the Elector's collection is piled up, till a gallery can be finished for its reception. It was matter of great favour to view, in this state, the pieces that compose it, a very imperfect one too, since some of the best were under operation. But I would not upon any account have missed the sight of Rubens's Massacre of the Innocents. Such expressive horrors were never yet transferred to canvass. Moloch himself might have gazed at them with pleasure.

After dinner we were led round the churches; and if you are as much tired with reading my voluminous descriptions, as I was with the continual repetition of altars and reliquaries, the Lord have mercy upon you! However, your delivery draws near. The post is going out, and to-morrow we shall begin to mount the cliffs of the Tyrol; but, do not be afraid of any long-winded epistles from their summits: I shall be too well employed in ascending them.

July 25.—The noise of the people thronging to the fair did not allow me to slumber very long in the morning. When I got up, every street was crowded with Jews and mountebanks, holding forth and driving their bargains in all the guttural hoarseness of the Bavarian dialect. Vast quantities of rich merchandise glittered in the shops as we passed to the gates. Heaps of fruit and sweetmeats set half the grandams and infants in the place cackling with felicity.

Mighty glad was I to make my escape; and in about an hour or two, we entered a wild tract of country, not unlike the skirts of a princely park. A little farther on stands a cluster of cottages, where we stopped to give our horses some refreshment, and were pestered with swarms of flies, most probably journeying to Munich fair, there to feast upon sugared tarts and honied gingerbread.

The next post brought us over hill and dale, grove and meadow, to a narrow plain, watered by rivulets and surrounded by cliffs, under which lies scattered the village of Wolfrathshausen, consisting of several remarkably large cottages, built entirely of fir, with strange galleries projecting from them. Nothing can be neater than the carpentry of these complicated edifices, nor more solid than their construction; many of them looked as if they had braved the torrents which fell from the mountains a century ago; and, if one may judge from the hoary appearance of the inhabitants, here are patriarchs coeval with their mansions. Orchards of cherry-trees cover the steeps above the village, which to our certain knowledge produce most admirable fruit.

Having refreshed ourselves with their cooling juice, we struck into a grove of pines, the tallest and most flourishing we had yet beheld. There seemed no end to these forests, except where little irregular spots of herbage, fed by cattle, intervened. Whenever we gained an eminence it was only to discover more ranges of dark wood, variegated with meadows and glittering streams. White clover and a profusion of sweet-scented flowers clothe their banks; above, waves the mountain-ash, glowing with scarlet berries: and beyond, rise hills, rocks and mountains, piled upon one another, and fringed with fir to their topmost acclivities. Perhaps the Norwegian forests alone, equal these in grandeur and extent. Those which cover the Swiss highlands rarely convey such vast ideas. There, the woods climb only half way up their ascents, which then are circumscribed by snows: here no boundaries are set to their progress, and the mountains, from base to summit, display rich unbroken masses of vegetation.

As we were surveying this prospect, a thick cloud, fraught with thunder, obscured the horizon, whilst flashes of lightning startled our horses, whose snorts and stampings resounded through the woods. The impending tempests gave additional gloom to the firs, and we travelled several miles almost in total darkness. One moment the clouds began to fleet, and a faint gleam promised serener intervals, but the next was all blackness and terror; presently a deluge of rain poured down upon the valley, and in a short time the torrents beginning to swell, raged with such violence as to be forded with difficulty. Twilight drew on, just as we had passed the most terrible; then ascending a mountain, whose pines and birches rustled with the storm, we saw a little lake below. A deep azure haze veiled its eastern shore, and lowering vapours concealed the cliffs to the south; but over its western extremities hung a few transparent clouds; the rays of a struggling sunset streamed on the surface of the waters, tingeing the brow of a green promontory with tender pink.

I could not help fixing myself on the banks of the lake for several minutes, till this apparition faded away. Looking round, I shuddered at a craggy mountain, clothed with forests and almost perpendicular, that was absolutely to be surmounted before we could arrive at Walchen-see. No house, not even a shed appearing, we were forced to ascend the peak, and penetrate these awful groves. At length, after some perils but no adventure, we saw lights gleam upon the shore of the Walchen lake, which served to direct us to a cottage, where we passed the night, and were soon lulled to sleep by the fall of distant waters.

LETTER X.

Mittenwald.—Mountain chapels.—Saint Anna's young and fair worshippers.—Road to Inspruck.—Maximilian's tomb.—Vast range of prospects.—A mountain torrent.—Schönberg.

July 26.

THE sun rose many hours before me, and when I got up was spangling the surface of the lake, which spreads itself between steeps of wood, crowned by lofty crags and pinnacles. We had an opportunity of contemplating this bold assemblage as we travelled on the banks of the lake, where it forms a bay sheltered by impending forests; the water, tinged by their reflection with a deep cerulean, calm and tranquil. Mountains of pine and beech rising above, close every outlet; and, no village or spire peeping out of the foliage, impress an idea of more than European solitude.

From the shore of Walchen-see, our road led us straight through arching groves, which the axe seems never to have violated, to the summit of a rock covered with daphnes of various species, and worn by the course of torrents into innumerable craggy forms. Beneath, lay extended a chaos of shattered cliffs, with tall pines springing from their crevices, and rapid streams hurrying between their intermingled trunks and branches. As yet, no hut appeared, no mill, no bridge, no trace of human existence.

After a few hours' journey through the wilderness, we began to discover a wreath of smoke; and presently the cottage from whence it arose, composed of planks, and reared on the very brink of a precipice. Piles of cloven fir

were dispersed before the entrance, on a little spot of verdure browsed by goats; near them sat an aged man with hoary whiskers, his white locks tucked under a fur cap. Two or three beautiful children with hair neatly braided, played around him; and a young woman dressed in a short robe and Polish-looking bonnet, peeped out of a wicket window.

I was so much struck with the appearance of this sequestered family, that, crossing a rivulet, I clambered up to their cottage and sought some refreshment. Immediately there was a contention amongst the children, who should be the first to oblige me. A little black-eyed girl succeeded, and brought me an earthen jug full of milk, with crumbled bread, and a platter of strawberries fresh picked from the bank. I reclined in the midst of my smiling hosts, and spread my repast on the turf: never could I be waited upon with more hospitable grace. The only thing I wanted was language to express my gratitude; and it was this deficiency which made me quit them so soon. The old man seemed visibly concerned at my departure; and his children followed me a long way down the rocks, talking in a dialect which passes all understanding, and waving their hands to bid me adieu.

I had hardly lost sight of them and regained my carriage before we entered a forest of pines, to all appearance without bounds, of every age and figure; some, feathered to the ground with flourishing branches; others, decayed into shapes like Lapland idols. Even at noonday, I thought we should never have found our way out.

At last, having descended a long avenue, endless perspectives opening on either side, we emerged into a valley bounded by hills, divided into irregular inclosures, where many herds were grazing. A rivulet flows along the pastures beneath; and after winding through the village of Walgau, loses itself in a narrow pass amongst the cliffs and precipices which rise above the cultivated slopes and frame in this happy pastoral region. All the plain was in sunshine, the sky blue, the heights illuminated, except one rugged peak with spires of rock, shaped not unlike the views I have seen of Sinai, and wrapped, like that sacred mount, in clouds and darkness. At the base of this tremendous mass lies the hamlet of Mittenwald, surrounded by thickets and banks of verdure, and watered by frequent springs, whose sight and murmurs were so reviving in the midst of a sultry day, that we could not think of leaving their vicinity, but remained at Mittenwald the whole evening.

Our inn had long airy galleries, with pleasant balconies fronting the mountain; in one of these we dined upon trout fresh from the rills, and cherries just culled from the orchards that cover the slopes above. The clouds were dispersing, and the topmost peak half visible, before we ended our repast, every moment discovering some inaccessible cliff or summit, shining through the mists, and tinted by the sun, with pale golden colours. These appearances filled me with such delight and with such a train of romantic associations, that I left the table and ran to an open field beyond the huts and gardens to gaze in solitude and catch the vision before it dissolved away. You, if any human being is able, may conceive true ideas of the glowing vapours sailing over the pointed rocks, and brightening them in their passage with amber light.

When all was faded and lost in the blue ether, I had time to look around me and notice the mead in which I was standing. Here, clover covered its surface; there, crops of grain; further on, beds of herbs and the sweetest flowers. An amphitheatre of hills and rocks, broken into a variety of glens and precipices, open a course for several clear rivulets, which, after gurgling amidst loose stones and fragments, fall down the steeps, and are concealed and quieted in the herbage of the vale.

A cottage or two peep out of the woods that hang over the waterfalls; and on the brow of the hills above, appears a series of eleven little chapels, uniformly built. I followed the narrow path that leads to them, on the edge of the eminences, and met a troop of beautiful peasants, all of the name of Anna (for it was St. Anna's day) going to pay their devotion, severally, at these neat white fanes. There were faces that Guercino would not have disdained copying, with braids of hair the softest and most luxuriant I ever beheld. Some had wreathed it simply with flowers, others with rolls of a thin linen (manufactured in the neighbourhood), and disposed it with a degree of elegance one should not have expected on the cliffs of the Tyrol.

Being arrived, they knelt all together at the first chapel, on the steps, a minute or two, whispered a short prayer, and then dispersed each to her fane. Every little building had now its fair worshipper, and you may well conceive how much such figures, scattered about the landscape, increased its charms. Notwithstanding the fervour of their adorations (for at intervals they sighed and beat their white bosoms with energy), several bewitching profane glances were cast at me as I passed by. Do not be surprised, then, if I became a convert to idolatry in so amiable a form, and worshipped Saint Anna on the score of her namesakes.

When got beyond the last chapel, I began to hear the roar of a cascade in a thick wood of beech and chestnut that clothes the steeps of a wide fissure in the rock. My ear soon guided me to its entrance, which was marked by a shed encompassed with mossy fragments and almost concealed by bushes of rhododendron in full red bloom—amongst these I struggled, till reaching a goat-track, it conducted me, on the brink of the foaming waters, to the very depths of the cliff, whence issues a stream which, dashing impetuously down, strikes against a ledge of rocks, and sprinkles the impending thicket with dew. Big drops hung on every spray, and glittered on the leaves partially gilt by the rays of the declining sun, whose mellow hues softened the rugged summits, and diffused a repose, a divine calm, over this deep retirement, which inclined me to imagine it the extremity of the earth—the portal of some other region of existence,—some happy world beyond the dark groves of pine, the caves and awful mountains, where the river takes its source! Impressed with this romantic idea, I hung eagerly over the gulph, and fancied I could distinguish a voice bubbling up with the waters; then looked into the abyss and strained my eyes to penetrate its gloom—but all was dark and unfathomable as futurity! Awakening from my reverie, I felt the damps of the water chill my forehead; and ran shivering out of the vale to avoid them. A warmer atmosphere, that reigned in the meads I had wandered across before, tempted me to remain a good while longer collecting dianthi freaked with beautifully varied colours, and a species of white thyme scented like myrrh. Whilst I was thus employed, a confused murmur struck my ear, and, on turning towards a cliff, backed by the woods from whence the sound seemed to proceed, forth issued a herd of goats, hundreds after hundreds, skipping down the steeps: then followed two shepherd boys, gamboling together as they drove their creatures along: soon after, the dog made his appearance, hunting a stray heifer which brought up the rear. I followed them with my eyes till lost in the windings of the valley, and heard the tinkling of their bells die gradually away. Now the last blush of crimson left the summit of *Sinai*, inferior mountains being long since cast in deep blue shade. The village was already hushed when I regained it, and in a few moments I followed its example.

July 27.—We pursued our journey to Inspruck, through the wildest scenes of wood and mountain, where the

rocks were now beginning to assume a loftier and more majestic appearance, and to glisten with snows. I had proposed passing a day or two at Inspruck, visiting the castle of Embras, and examining Count Eysenberg's cabinet, enriched with the rarest productions of the mineral kingdom, and a complete collection of the moths and flies peculiar to the Tyrol; but, upon my arrival, the azure of the skies and the brightness of the sunshine inspired me with an irresistible wish of hastening to Italy. I was now too near the object of my journey, to delay possession any longer than absolutely necessary, so, casting a transient look on Maximilian's tomb, and the bronze statues of Tyrolese Counts, and worthies, solemnly ranged in the church of the Franciscans, set off immediately.

We crossed a broad noble street, terminated by a triumphal arch, and were driven along the road to the foot of a mountain waving with fields of corn, and variegated with wood and vineyards, encircling lawns of the finest verdure, scattered over with white houses. Upon ascending the mount, and beholding a vast range of prospects of a similar character, I almost repented my impatience, and looked down with regret upon the cupolas and steeples we were leaving behind. But the rapid succession of lovely and romantic scenes soon effaced the former from my memory.

Our road, the smoothest in the world (though hewn in the bosom of rocks) by its sudden turns and windings, gave us, every instant, opportunities of discovering new villages, and forests rising beyond forests; green spots in the midst of wood, high above on the mountains, and cottages perched on the edge of promontories. Down, far below, in the chasm, amidst a confusion of pines and fragments of stone, rages the torrent Inn, which fills the country far and wide with a perpetual murmur. Sometimes we descended to its brink, and crossed over high bridges; sometimes mounted halfway up the cliffs, till its roar and agitation became, through distance, inconsiderable.

After a long ascent we reached Schönberg,^[5] a village well worthy of its appellation: and then, twilight drawing over us, began to descend. We could now but faintly discover the opposite mountains, veined with silver rills, when we came once more to the banks of the Inn. This turbulent stream accompanied us all the way to Steinach, and broke by its continual roar the stillness of the night, half spent, before we retired to rest.

LETTER XI.

Steinach.—Its torrent and gloomy strait.—Achievements of Industry.—A sleepy Region.—Beautiful country round Brixen.

July 28.

I ROSE early to enjoy the fragrance of the vegetation, bathed in a shower which had lately fallen, and looking around me, saw nothing but crags hanging over crags, and the rocky shores of the stream, still dark with the shade of the mountains. The small opening in which Steinach is situated, terminates in a gloomy strait, scarce leaving room for the road and the torrent, which does not understand being thwarted, and will force its way, let the pines grow ever so thick, or the rocks be ever so formidable.

Notwithstanding the forbidding air of this narrow dell, Industry has contrived to enliven its steeps with habitations, to raise water by means of a wheel, and to cover the surface of the rocks with soil. By this means large crops of oats and flax are produced, and most of the huts have gardens filled with poppies, which seem to thrive in this parched situation.

*"Urit enim lini campum seges, urit avenæ,
Urunt Lethæo perfusa papavera somno."*

The farther we advanced in the dell, the larger were the plantations which discovered themselves. For what specific purpose these gaudy flowers meet with such encouragement, I had neither time nor language to enquire; the mountaineers stuttering a gibberish unintelligible even to Germans. Probably opium is extracted from them; or, perhaps, if you love a conjecture, Morpheus has transferred his abode from the Cimmerians to a cavern somewhere or other in the recesses of these endless mountains. Poppies, you know, in poetic travels, always denote the skirts of his soporific reign, and I do not remember a region better calculated for undisturbed repose than the narrow clefts and gullies which run up amongst these rocks, lost in vapours impervious to the sun, and moistened by rills and showers, whose continual trickling inspire a drowsiness not easily to be resisted. Add to these circumstances the waving of the pines, and the hum of bees seeking their food in the crevices, and you will have as sleepy a region as that in which Spenser and Ariosto have placed the nodding deity.

But we may as well keep our eyes open for the present, and look at the beautiful country round Brixen, where I arrived in the cool of the evening, and breathed the freshness of a garden immediately beneath my window. The thrushes, which nest amongst its shades, saluted me the moment I awoke next morning.

ITALY.

LETTER I.

Bolsano.—Indications of approaching Italy.—Fire-flies.—Appearance of the Peasantry.—A forest Lake.—Arrive at Borgo di Volsugano.—Prospect of Hills in the Venetian State.—Gorgeous Flies.—Fortress of Covalo.—Leave the country of crags and precipices and enter the territory of the Bassanese.—Groves of olives and vines.—Classic appearance of Bassano.—Happy groups.—Pachierotti, the celebrated singer.—Anecdote of him.

July 29, 1780.

WE proceeded over fertile mountains to Bolsano. It was here first that I noticed the rocks cut into terraces, thick set with melons and Indian corn; fig-trees and pomegranates hanging over garden walls, clustered with fruit. In the evening we perceived several further indications of approaching Italy; and after sun-set the Adige, rolling its full tide between precipices, which looked terrific in the dusk. Myriads of fire-flies sparkled amongst the shrubs on the bank.

I traced the course of these exotic insects by their blue light, now rising to the summits of the trees, now sinking to the ground, and associating with vulgar glow-worms. We had opportunities enough to remark their progress, since we travelled all night; such being my impatience to reach the promised land!

Morning dawned just as we saw Trent dimly before us. I slept a few hours, then set out again (July 30th), after the heats were in some measure abated, and leaving Bergine, where the peasants were feasting before their doors, in their holiday dresses, with red pinks stuck in their ears instead of rings, and their necks surrounded with coral of the same colour, we came through a woody valley to the banks of a lake, filled with the purest and most transparent water, which loses itself in shady creeks, amongst hills entirely covered with shrubs and verdure.

The shores present one continual thicket, interspersed with knots of larches and slender almonds, starting from the underwood. A cornice of rock runs round the whole, except where the trees descend to the very brink, and dip their boughs in the water.

It was six o'clock when I caught the sight of this unsuspected lake, and the evening shadows stretched nearly across it. Gaining a very rapid ascent, we looked down upon its placid bosom, and saw several airy peaks rising above tufted foliage. I quitted the contemplation of them with regret, and, in a few hours, arrived at Borgo di Volsugano; the scene of the lake still present before the eye of my fancy.

July 31st.—My heart beat quick when I saw some hills, not very distant, which I was told lay in the Venetian State, and I thought an age, at least, had elapsed before we were passing their base. The road was never formed to delight an impatient traveller; loose pebbles and rolling stones render it, in the highest degree, tedious and jolting. I should not have spared my execrations, had it not traversed a picturesque valley, overgrown with juniper, and strewed with fragments of rock, precipitated, long since, from the surrounding eminences, blooming with cyclamens.

I clambered up several of these crags,

Fra gli odoriferi ginepri,^[6]

to gather the flowers I have just mentioned, and found them deliciously scented. Fratillarias, and the most gorgeous flies, many of which I here noticed for the first time, were fluttering about and expanding their wings to the sun. There is no describing the numbers I beheld, nor their gaily varied colouring. I could not find in my heart to destroy their felicity; to scatter their bright plumage and snatch them for ever from the realms of light and flowers. Had I been less compassionate, I should have gained credit with that respectable corps, the torturers of butterflies; and might, perhaps, have enriched their cabinets with some unknown captives. However, I left them imbibing the dews of heaven, in free possession of their native rights; and having changed horses at Tremolano, entered at length my long-desired Italy.

The pass is rocky and tremendous, guarded by the fortress of Covalo, in possession of the empress queen, and only fit, one should think, to be inhabited by her eagles. There is no attaining this exalted hold but by the means of a cord let down many fathoms by the soldiers, who live in dens and caverns, which serve also as arsenals, and magazines for powder; whose mysteries I declined prying into, their approach being a little too aerial for my earthly frame. A black vapour, tinging their entrance, completed the romance of the prospect, which I never shall forget.

For two or three leagues there was little variation in the scenery; cliffs, nearly perpendicular on both sides, and the Brenta foaming and thundering below. Beyond, the rocks began to be mantled with vines and gardens. Here and there a cottage shaded with mulberries, made its appearance, and we often discovered, on the banks of the river, ranges of white buildings, with courts and awnings, beneath which numbers of women and children were employed in manufacturing silk. As we advanced, the stream gradually widened, and the rocks receded; woods were more frequent and cottages thicker strown.

About five in the evening we left the country of crags and precipices, of mists and cataracts, and were entering the fertile territory of the Bassanese. It was now I beheld groves of olives, and vines clustering the summits of the tallest elms; pomegranates in every garden, and vases of citron and orange before almost every door. The softness and transparency of the air soon told me I was arrived in happier climates; and I felt sensations of joy and novelty run through my veins, upon beholding this smiling land of groves and verdure stretched out before me. A few hazy vapours, I can hardly call them clouds, rested upon the extremities of the landscape; and, through their medium, the sun cast an oblique and dewy ray. Peasants were returning home, singing as they went, and calling to each other over the hills; whilst the women were milking goats before the wickets of the cottage, and preparing their country fare.

I left them enjoying it, and soon beheld the ancient ramparts and cypresses of Bassano; whose classic appearance recalled the memory of former times, and answered exactly the ideas I had pictured to myself of Italian edifices. Though encompassed by walls and turrets, neither soldiers nor custom-house officers start out from their concealment, to question and molest a weary traveller, for such is the happiness of the Venetian state, at least of the terra firma provinces, that it does not contain, I believe, above four regiments. Istria, Dalmatia, and the maritime frontiers, are more formidably guarded, as they touch, you know, the whiskers of the Turkish empire.

Passing under a Doric gateway, we crossed the chief part of the town in the way to our locanda, pleasantly situated, and commanding a level green, where people walk and take ices by moonlight. On the right, the Franciscan church, and convent, half hid in the religious gloom of pine and cypress; to the left, a perspective of walls and towers rising from the turf, and marking it, when I arrived, with long shadows, in front; where the lawn terminates, meadow, wood, and garden run quite to the base of the mountains.

Twilight coming on, this beautiful spot swarmed with company, sitting in circles upon the grass, refreshing themselves with fruit and sherbets, or lounging upon the bank beneath the towers. They looked so free and happy that I longed to be acquainted with them; and, thanks to a warm-hearted old Venetian, (the Senator Querini,) was introduced to a group of the principal inhabitants. Our conversation ended in a promise to meet the next evening at the villa of La Contessa Roberti, about a league from Bassano, and then to return together and sing to the praise of Pachierotti, their idol, as well as mine.

You can have no idea what pleasure we mutually found in being of the same faith, and believing in one singer; nor can you imagine what effects that musical divinity produced at Padua, where he performed a few years ago, and threw his audience into such raptures, that it was some time before they recovered. One in particular, a lady of distinction, fainted away the instant she caught the pathetic accents of his voice, and was near dying a martyr to its

melody. La Contessa, who sings in the truest taste, gave me a detail of the whole affair. "Egli ha fatto veramente un fanatismo a Padua," was her expression. I assured her we were not without idolatry in England, upon his account; but that in this, as well as in other articles of belief, there were many abominable heretics.

LETTER II.

Villa of Mosolente—The route to Venice.—First view of that city.—Striking prospect from the Leon Bianco.—Morning scene on the grand canal.—Church of Santa Maria della Salute.—Interesting group of stately buildings.—Convent of St. Giorgio Maggiore.—The Redentore.—Island of the Carthusians.

August 1st, 1780.

THE whole morning not a soul stirred who could avoid it. Those who were so active and lively the night before, were now stretched languidly upon their couches. Being to the full as idly disposed, I sat down and wrote some of this dreaming epistle; then feasted upon figs and melons; then got under the shade of the cypress, and slumbered till evening, only waking to dine, and take some ice.

The sun declining apace, I hastened to my engagement at Mosolente (for so is the villa called) placed on a verdant hill encircled by others as lovely, and consisting of three light pavilions connected by porticos; just such as we admire in the fairy scenes of an opera. A vast flight of steps leads to the summit, where Signora Roberti and her friends received me with a grace and politeness that can never want a place in my memory. We rambled over all the apartments of this agreeable edifice, characterised by airiness and simplicity. The pavement encrusted with a composition as cool and polished as marble; the windows, doors, and balconies adorned with silver iron work, commanding scenes of meads and woodlands that extend to the shores of the Adriatic; slender towers and cypresses rising above the levels; and the hazy mountains beyond Padua, diversifying the expanse, form altogether a landscape which the elegant imagination of *Horizonti* never exceeded.

I gazed on this delightful view till it faded in the dusk; then returning to Bassano, repaired to an illuminated hall, and heard Signora Roberti sing the very air which had excited such transport at Padua. As soon as she had ended, a band of various instruments stationed in the open street began a lively symphony, which would have delighted me at any other time; but now, I wished them a thousand leagues away, so pleasingly melancholy an impression did the air I had been listening to leave on my mind.

At midnight I took leave of my obliging hosts, who were just setting out for Padua. They gave me a thousand kind invitations, and I hope some future day to accept them.

August 2.

OUR route to Venice lay winding about the variegated plains I had surveyed from Mosolente; and after dining at Treviso we came in two hours and a half to Mestre, between grand villas and gardens peopled with statues. Embarking our baggage at the last-mentioned place, we stepped into a gondola, whose even motion was very agreeable after the jolts of a chaise. We were soon out of the canal of Mestre, terminated by an isle which contains a cell dedicated to the Holy Virgin, peeping out of a thicket, whence spire up two tall cypresses. Its bells tingled as we passed along and dropped some paolis into a net tied at the end of a pole stretched out to us for that purpose.

As soon as we had doubled the cape of this diminutive island, an expanse of sea opened to our view, the domes and towers of Venice rising from its bosom. Now we began to distinguish Murano, St. Michele, St. Giorgio in Alga, and several other islands, detached from the grand cluster, which I hailed as old acquaintances; innumerable prints and drawings having long since made their shapes familiar. Still gliding forward, we every moment distinguished some new church or palace in the city, suffused with the rays of the setting sun, and reflected with all their glow of colouring from the surface of the waters.

The air was calm; the sky cloudless; a faint wind just breathing upon the deep, lightly bore its surface against the steps of a chapel in the island of San Secondo, and waved the veil before its portal, as we rowed by and coasted the walls of its garden overhung with fig-trees and surmounted by spreading pines. The convent discovers itself through their branches, built in a style somewhat morisco, and level with the sea, except where the garden intervenes.

We were now drawing very near the city, and a confused hum began to interrupt the evening stillness; gondolas were continually passing and repassing, and the entrance of the Canal Reggio, with all its stir and bustle, lay before us. Our gondoliers turned with much address through a crowd of boats and barges that blocked up the way, and rowed smoothly by the side of a broad pavement, covered with people in all dresses and of all nations.

Leaving the Palazzo Pesaro, a noble structure with two rows of arcades and a superb rustic, behind, we were soon landed before the Leon Bianco, which being situated in one of the broadest parts of the grand canal, commands a most striking assemblage of buildings. I have no terms to describe the variety of pillars, of pediments, of mouldings, and cornices, some Grecian, others Saracenic, that adorn these edifices, of which the pencil of Canaletti conveys so perfect an idea as to render all verbal description superfluous. At one end of this grand scene of perspective appears the Rialto; the sweep of the canal conceals the other.

The rooms of our hotel are spacious and cheerful; a lofty hall, or rather gallery, painted with grotesque in a very good style, perfectly clean, floored with a marbled stucco, divides the house, and admits a refreshing current of air. Several windows near the ceiling look into this vast apartment, which serves in lieu of a court, and is rendered perfectly luminous by a glazed arcade, thrown open to catch the breezes. Through it I passed to a balcony which impends over the canal, and is twined round with plants forming a green festoon springing from two large vases of orange trees placed at each end. Here I established myself to enjoy the cool, and observe, as well as the dusk would permit, the variety of figures shooting by in their gondolas.

As night approached, innumerable tapers glimmered through the awnings before the windows. Every boat had its lantern, and the gondolas moving rapidly along were followed by tracks of light, which gleamed and played upon the waters. I was gazing at these dancing fires when the sounds of music were wafted along the canals, and as they grew louder and louder, an illuminated barge, filled with musicians, issued from the Rialto, and stopping under one

of the palaces, began a serenade, which stilled every clamour and suspended all conversation in the galleries and porticos; till, rowing slowly away, it was heard no more. The gondoliers catching the air, imitated its cadences, and were answered by others at a distance, whose voices, echoed by the arch of the bridge, acquired a plaintive and interesting tone. I retired to rest, full of the sound; and long after I was asleep, the melody seemed to vibrate in my ear.

August 3.

It was not five o'clock before I was aroused by a loud din of voices and splashing of water under my balcony. Looking out, I beheld the grand canal so entirely covered with fruits and vegetables, on rafts and in barges, that I could scarcely distinguish a wave. Loads of grapes, peaches and melons arrived, and disappeared in an instant, for every vessel was in motion; and the crowds of purchasers hurrying from boat to boat, formed a very lively picture. Amongst the multitudes, I remarked a good many whose dress and carriage announced something above the common rank; and upon enquiry I found they were noble Venetians, just come from their casinos, and met to refresh themselves with fruit, before they retired to sleep for the day.

Whilst I was observing them, the sun began to colour the balustrades of the palaces, and the pure exhilarating air of the morning drawing me abroad, I procured a gondola, laid in my provision of bread and grapes, and was rowed under the Rialto, down the grand canal to the marble steps of S. Maria della Salute, erected by the Senate in performance of a vow to the Holy Virgin, who begged off a terrible pestilence in 1630. The great bronze portal opened whilst I was standing on the steps which lead to it, and discovered the interior of the dome, where I expatiated in solitude; no mortal appearing except an old priest who trimmed the lamps and muttered a prayer before the high altar, still wrapt in shadows. The sun-beams began to strike against the windows of the cupola, just as I left the church and was wafted across the waves to the spacious platform in front of St. Giorgio Maggiore, one of the most celebrated works of Palladio.

When my first transport was a little subsided, and I had examined the graceful design of each particular ornament, and united the just proportion and grand effect of the whole in my mind, I planted my umbrella on the margin of the sea, and viewed at my leisure the vast range of palaces, of porticos, of towers, opening on every side and extending out of sight. The Doge's palace and the tall columns at the entrance of the place of St. Mark, form, together with the arcades of the public library, the lofty Campanile and the cupolas of the ducal church, one of the most striking groups of buildings that art can boast of. To behold at one glance these stately fabrics, so illustrious in the records of former ages, before which, in the flourishing times of the republic, so many valiant chiefs and princes have landed, loaded with oriental spoils, was a spectacle I had long and ardently desired. I thought of the days of Frederic Barbarossa, when looking up the piazza of St. Mark, along which he marched in solemn procession, to cast himself at the feet of Alexander the Third, and pay a tardy homage to St. Peter's successor. Here were no longer those splendid fleets that attended his progress; one solitary galeass was all I beheld, anchored opposite the palace of the Doge and surrounded by crowds of gondolas, whose sable hues contrasted strongly with its vermilion oars and shining ornaments. A party-coloured multitude was continually shifting from one side of the piazza to the other; whilst senators and magistrates in long black robes were already arriving to fill their respective offices.

I contemplated the busy scene from my peaceful platform, where nothing stirred but aged devotees creeping to their devotions, and, whilst I remained thus calm and tranquil, heard the distant buzz of the town. Fortunately some length of waves rolled between me and its tumults; so that I ate my grapes, and read Metastasio, undisturbed by officiousness or curiosity. When the sun became too powerful, I entered the nave.

After I had admired the masterly structure of the roof and the lightness of its arches, my eyes naturally directed themselves to the pavement of white and ruddy marble, polished, and reflecting like a mirror the columns which rise from it. Over this I walked to a door that admitted me into the principal quadrangle of the convent, surrounded by a cloister supported on Ionic pillars, beautifully proportioned. A flight of stairs opens into the court, adorned with balustrades and pedestals, sculptured with elegance truly Grecian. This brought me to the refectory, where the chef-d'œuvre of Paul Veronese, representing the marriage of Cana in Galilee, was the first object that presented itself. I never beheld so gorgeous a group of wedding-garments before; there is every variety of fold and plait that can possibly be imagined. The attitudes and countenances are more uniform, and the guests appear a very genteel, decent sort of people, well used to the mode of their times and accustomed to miracles.

Having examined this fictitious repast, I cast a look on a long range of tables covered with very excellent realities, which the monks were coming to devour with energy, if one might judge from their appearance. These sons of penitence and mortification possess one of the most spacious islands of the whole cluster, a princely habitation, with gardens and open porticos, that engross every breath of air; and, what adds not a little to the charms of their abode, is the facility of making excursions from it, whenever they have a mind.

The republic, jealous of ecclesiastical influence, connives at these amusing rambles, and, by encouraging the liberty of monks and churchmen, prevents their appearing too sacred and important in the eyes of the people, who have frequent proofs of their being mere flesh and blood, and that of the frailest composition. Had the rest of Italy been of the same opinion, and profited as much by Fra Paolo's maxims, some of its fairest fields would not, at this moment, lie uncultivated, and its ancient spirit might have revived. However, I can scarcely think the moment far distant, when it will assert its natural prerogatives, and look back upon the tiara, with all its host of scaring phantoms, as the offspring of a feverish dream.

Full of prophecies and bodings, I moved slowly out of the cloisters; and, gaining my gondola, arrived, I know not how, at the flights of steps which lead to the Redentore, a structure so simple and elegant, that I thought myself entering an antique temple, and looked about for the statue of the God of Delphi, or some other graceful divinity. A huge crucifix of bronze soon brought me to times present.

The charm being thus dissolved, I began to perceive the shapes of rueful martyrs peeping out of the niches around, and the bushy beards of capuchin friars wagging before the altars. These good fathers had decorated the nave with orange and citron trees, placed between the pilasters of the arcades; and on grand festivals, it seems, they turn the whole church into a bower, strew the pavement with leaves, and festoon the dome with flowers.

I left them occupied with their plants and their devotions. It was mid-day, and I begged to be rowed to some woody island, where I might dine in shade and tranquillity. My gondoliers shot off in an instant; but, though they went at a very rapid rate, I wished to advance still faster, and getting into a bark with six oars, swept along the

waters, soon left the Zecca and San Marco behind; and, launching into the plains of shining sea, saw turret after turret, and isle after isle, fleeting before me. A pale greenish light ran along the shores of the distant continent, whose mountains seemed to catch the motion of my boat, and to fly with equal celerity.

I had not much time to contemplate the beautiful effects on the waters—the emerald and purple hues which gleamed along their surface. Our prow struck, foaming, against the walls of the Carthusian garden, before I recollected where I was, or could look attentively around me. Permission being obtained, I entered this cool retirement, and putting aside with my hands the boughs of figs and pomegranates, got under an ancient bay-tree on the summit of a little knoll, near which several tall pines lift themselves up to the breezes. I listened to the conversation they held, with a wind just flown from Greece, and charged, as well as I could understand this airy language, with many affectionate remembrances from their relations on Mount Ida.

I reposed amidst fragrant leaves, fanned by a constant air, till it pleased the fathers to send me some provisions, with a basket of fruit and wine. Two of them would wait upon me, and ask ten thousand questions about Lord George Gordon, and the American war. I, who was deeply engaged with the winds, and a thousand agreeable associations excited by my Grecian fancies, wished my interrogators in purgatory, and pleaded ignorance of the Italian language. This circumstance extricated me from my embarrassment, and procured me a long interval of repose.

LETTER III.

Church of St. Mark.—The Piazza.—Magnificent festivals formerly celebrated there.—Stately architecture of Sansovino.—The Campanile.—The Loggetta.—The Ducal Palace.—Colossal Statues.—Giants' Stairs.—Fit of enthusiasm.—Evening-scene in the great Square.—Venetian intrigue.—Confusion of languages.—Madame de Rosenberg.—Character of the Venetians.

The rustling of the pines had the same effect as the murmurs of other old story-tellers, and I dozed undisturbed till the people without, in the boat, (who wondered not a little, I dare say, what was become of me within,) began a sort of chorus in parts, full of such plaintive modulation, that I still thought myself under the influence of a dream, and, half in this world and half in the other, believed, like the heroes of Fingal, that I had caught the music of the spirits of the hill.

When I was thoroughly convinced of the reality of these sounds, I moved towards the shore whence they proceeded: a glassy sea lay before me; no gale ruffled the expanse; every breath had subsided, and I beheld the sun go down in all its sacred calm. You have experienced the sensations this moment inspires; imagine what they must have been in such a scene, and accompanied with a melody so simple and pathetic. I stepped into my boat, and now instead of encouraging the speed of the gondoliers, begged them to abate their ardour, and row me lazily home. They complied, and we were near an hour reaching the platform in front of the ducal palace, thronged as usual with a variety of nations. I mixed a moment with the crowd; then directed my steps to the great mosque, I ought to say the church of St. Mark; but really its cupolas, slender pinnacles, and semicircular arches, have so oriental an appearance, as to excuse this appellation. I looked a moment at the four stately coursers of bronze and gold that adorn the chief portal, and then took in, at one glance, the whole extent of the piazza, with its towers and standards. A more noble assemblage was never exhibited by architecture. I envied the good fortune of Petrarch, who describes, in one of his letters, a tournament held in this princely opening.

Many are the festivals which have been here celebrated. When Henry the Third left Poland to mount the throne of France, he passed through Venice, and found the Senate waiting to receive him in their famous square, which by means of an awning stretched from the balustrades of opposite palaces, was metamorphosed into a vast saloon, sparkling with artificial stars, and spread with the richest carpets of the East. What a magnificent idea! The ancient Romans, in the zenith of power and luxury, never conceived a greater. It is to them, however, the Venetians are indebted for the hint, since we read of the Coliseo and Pompey's theatre being sometimes covered with transparent canvas, to defend the spectators from the heat or sudden rain, and to tint the scene with soft agreeable colours.

Having enjoyed the general perspective of the piazza, I began to enter into particulars, and examine the bronze pedestals of the three standards before the great church, designed by Sansovino in the true spirit of the antique, and covered with relievos, at once bold and elegant. It is also to this celebrated architect we are indebted for the stately façade of the *Procuratie nuove*, which forms one side of the square, and presents an uninterrupted series of arcades and marble columns exquisitely wrought. Opposite this magnificent range appears another line of palaces, whose architecture, though far removed from the Grecian elegance of Sansovino, impresses veneration, and completes the pomp of the view.

There is something strange and singular in the Tower or Campanile, which rises distinct from the smooth pavement of the square, a little to the left as you stand before the chief entrance of St. Mark's. The design is barbarous, and terminates in uncouth and heavy pyramids; yet in spite of these defects it struck me with awe. A beautiful building called the Loggetta, and which serves as a guard-house during the convocation of the Grand Council, decorates its base. Nothing can be more enriched, more finished than this structure; which, though far from diminutive, is in a manner lost at the foot of the Campanile. This enormous fabric seems to promise a long duration, and will probably exhibit Saint Mark and his Lion to the latest posterity. Both appear in great state towards its summit, and have nothing superior, but an archangel perched on the topmost pinnacle, and pointing to the skies. The dusk prevented my remarking the various sculptures with which the Loggetta is crowded.

Crossing the ample space between this graceful edifice and the ducal palace, I passed through a labyrinth of pillars and entered the principal court, of which nothing but the great outline was visible at so late an hour. Two reservoirs of bronze richly sculptured diversify the area. In front a magnificent flight of steps presents itself, by which the senators ascend through vast and solemn corridors, which lead to the interior of the edifice. The colossal statues of Mars and Neptune guard the entrance, and have given the appellation of *scala dei giganti* to the steps below, which I mounted not without respect; and, leaning against the balustrades, formed like the rest of the building of the rarest marbles, contemplated the tutelary divinities.

My admiration was shortly interrupted by one of the sbirri, or officers of police, who take their stands after sunset before the avenues of the palace, and who told me the gates were upon the point of being closed. So, hurrying down the steps, I left a million of delicate sculptures unexplored; for every pilaster, every frieze, every entablature, is

encrusted with porphyry, verde antique, or some other precious marble, carved into as many grotesque wreaths of foliage as we admire in the loggie of Raphael. The various portals, the strange projections; in short, the striking irregularity of these stately piles, delighted me beyond idea; and I was sorry to be forced to abandon them so soon, especially as the twilight, which bats and owls love not better than I do, enlarged every portico, lengthened every colonnade, and increased the dimensions of the whole, just as imagination desired. This faculty would have had full scope had I but remained an hour longer. The moon would then have gleamed upon the gigantic forms of Mars and Neptune, and discovered the statues of ancient heroes emerging from the gloom of their niches.

Such an interesting combination of objects, such regal scenery, with the reflection that many of their ornaments once contributed to the decoration of Athens, transported me beyond myself. The sbirri thought me distracted. True enough, I was stalking proudly about like an actor in an ancient Grecian tragedy, lifting up his hands to the consecrated fanes and images around, expecting the reply of his attendant chorus, and declaiming the first verses of *Œdipus Tyrannus*.

This fit of enthusiasm was hardly subsided, when I passed the gates of the palace into the great square, which received a faint gleam from its casinos and palaces, just beginning to be lighted up, and to become the resort of pleasure and dissipation. Numbers were walking in parties upon the pavement; some sought the convenient gloom of the porticoes with their favourites; others were earnestly engaged in conversation, and filled the gay illuminated apartments, where they resorted to drink coffee and sorbet, with laughter and merriment. A thoughtless giddy transport prevailed; for, at this hour, anything like restraint seems perfectly out of the question; and however solemn a magistrate or senator may appear in the day, at night he lays up wig and robe and gravity to sleep together, runs intriguing about in his gondola, takes the reigning sultana under his arm, and so rambles half over the town, which grows gayer and gayer as the day declines.

Many of the noble Venetians have a little suite of apartments in some out-of-the-way corner, near the grand piazza, of which their families are totally ignorant. To these they skulk in the dusk, and revel undisturbed with the companions of their pleasures. Jealousy itself cannot discover the alleys, the winding passages, the unsuspected doors, by which these retreats are accessible. Many an unhappy lover, whose mistress disappears on a sudden with some fortunate rival, has searched for her haunts in vain. The gondoliers themselves, though the prime managers of intrigue, are often unacquainted with these interior cabinets. When a gallant has a mind to pursue his adventures with mystery, he rows to the piazza, orders his bark to wait, meets his goddess in the crowd, and vanishes from all beholders. Surely, Venice is the city in the universe best calculated for giving scope to the observations of a devil upon two sticks. What a variety of lurking-places would one stroke of his crutch uncover!

Whilst the higher ranks were solacing themselves in their casinos, the rabble were gathered in knots round the strollers and mountebanks, singing and scaramouching in the middle of the square. I observed a great number of Orientals amongst the crowd, and heard Turkish and Arabic muttering in every corner. Here the Sclavonian dialect predominated; there some Grecian jargon, almost unintelligible. Had Saint Mark's church been the wondrous tower, and its piazza the chief square, of the city of Babylon, there could scarcely have been a greater confusion of languages.

The novelty of the scene afforded me no small share of amusement, and I wandered about from group to group, and from one strange exotic to another, asking and being asked innumerable ridiculous questions, and settling the politics of London and Constantinople, almost in the same breath. This instant I found myself in a circle of grave Armenian priests and jewellers; the next amongst Greeks and Dalmatians, who accosted me with the smoothest compliments, and gave proof that their reputation for pliability and address was not ill-founded.

I was entering into a grand harum-scarum discourse with some Russian counts or princes, or whatever you please, just landed with dwarfs, and footmen, and governors, and staring like me, about them, when Madame de Rosenberg arrived, to whom I had the happiness of being recommended. She presented me to some of the most distinguished of the Venetian families at their great casino, which looks into the piazza, and consists of five or six rooms, fitted up in a gay flimsy taste, neither rich nor elegant, where were a great many lights, and a great many ladies negligently dressed, their hair falling very freely about them, and innumerable adventures written in their eyes. The gentlemen were lolling upon the sofas, or lounging about the apartments.

The whole assembly seemed upon the verge of gaping, till coffee was carried round. This magic beverage diffused a temporary animation; and, for a moment or two, conversation moved on with a degree of pleasing extravagance; but the flash was soon dissipated, and nothing remained save cards and stupidity.

In the intervals of shuffling and dealing, some talked over the affairs of the grand council with less reserve than I expected; and two or three of them asked some feeble questions about the late tumults in London. It was one o'clock before all the company were assembled, and I left them at three, still dreaming over their coffee and card-tables. *Trieze* is their favourite game: *uno, due, tre, quattro, cinque, fante, cavallo re*, are eternally repeated; the apartments echoed no other sound.

I wonder a lively people can endure such monotony, for I have been told the Venetians are remarkably spirited; and so eager in the pursuit of amusement as hardly to allow themselves any sleep. Some, for instance, after declaiming in the Senate, walking an hour in the square, and fidgeting about from one casino to another till morning dawns, will get into a gondola, row across the Lagunes, take the post to Mestre or Fusina, and jumble over craggy pavements to Treviso, breakfast in haste, and rattle back again as if the Devil were charioteer: by eleven the party is restored to Venice, resumes robe and periwig, and goes to council.

This may be very true, and yet I will never cite the Venetians as examples of vivacity. Their nerves unstrung by early debaucheries, allow no natural flow of lively spirits, and at best but a few moments of a false and feverish activity. The approaches of sleep, forced back by an immoderate use of coffee, render them weak and listless, and the facility of being wafted from place to place in a gondola, adds not a little to their indolence. In short, I can scarcely regard their Eastern neighbours in a more lazy light; who, thanks to their opium and their harems, pass their lives in one perpetual doze.

LETTER IV.

Excessive heat.—The Devil and Senegal.—A dreary shore.—Scene of the Doge's nuptials with the sea.—Return to the Place of St. Mark.—Swarm of Lawyers.—Receptacles for anonymous accusations.—The Council of Ten.—Terrible punishments of its victims.—Statue of Neptune.—Fatal Waters.—Bride of Sighs.—The Fondamenti Nuovi.—Conservatory of the Mendicanti.—An Oratorio.—Profound attention of the Audience.

August 4th, 1780.

THE heats were so excessive in the night, that I thought myself several times on the point of suffocation, tossed about like a wounded fish, and dreamt of the Devil and Senegal. Towards sunrise, a faint breeze restored me to life and reason. I slumbered till late in the day, and the moment I was fairly awake, ordered my gondolier to row out to the main ocean, that I might plunge into the waves, and hear and see nothing but waters around me.

We shot off, wound amongst a number of sheds, shops, churches, casinos, and palaces, growing immediately out of the canals, without any apparent foundation. No quay, no terrace, not even a slab is to be seen before the doors; one step brings you from the hall into the bark, and the vestibules of the stateliest structures lie open to the waters, and but just above their level. I observed several, as I glided along, supported by rows of well-proportioned columns, adorned with terms and vases, beyond which the eye generally discovers a grand court, and sometimes a garden.

In about half an hour, we had left the thickest cluster of isles behind, and, coasting the Place of St. Mark opposite to San Giorgio Maggiore, whose elegant frontispiece was distinctly reflected by the calm waters, launched into the blue expanse of sea, from which rise the Carthusian and two or three other woody islands. I hailed the spot where I had passed such a happy visionary evening, and nodded to my friends the pines.

A few minutes more brought me to a dreary, sun-burnt shore, stalked over by a few Slavonian soldiers, who inhabit a castle hard by, go regularly to an ugly unfinished church, and from thence, it is to be hoped, to paradise; as the air of their barracks is abominable, and kills them like blasted sheep.

Forlorn as this island appeared to me, I was told it was the scene of the Doge's pageantry at the feast of the Ascension; and the very spot to which he sails in the Bucentaur, previously to wedding the sea. You have heard enough, and if ever you looked into a show-box, seen full sufficient of this gaudy spectacle, without my enlarging upon the topic. I shall only say, that I was obliged to pursue, partly, the same road as the nuptial procession, in order to reach the beach, and was broiled and dazzled accordingly.

At last, after traversing some desert hillocks, all of a hop with toads and locusts (amongst which English heretics have the honour of being interred), I passed under an arch, and suddenly the boundless plains of ocean opened to my view. I ran to the smooth sands, extending on both sides out of sight, and dashed into the waves, which were coursing one another with a gentle motion, and breaking lightly on the shores. The tide rolled over me as I lay floating about, buoyed up by the water, and carried me wheresoever it listed. It might have borne me far out into the main before I had been aware, so totally was I abandoned to the illusion of the moment. My ears were filled with murmuring undecided sounds; my limbs, stretched languidly on the surge, rose or sunk just as it swelled or subsided. In this passive state I remained, till the sun cast a less intolerable light, and the fishing-vessels, lying out in the bay at a great distance, spread their sails and were coming home.

Hastening back over the desert of locusts, I threw myself into the gondola; and, no wind or wave opposing, was soon wafted across to those venerable columns, so conspicuous in the Place of St. Mark. Directing my course immediately to the ducal palace, I entered the grand court, ascending the giants' stairs, and examined at my leisure its bas-reliefs. Then, taking the first guide that presented himself, I was shown along several cloisters and corridors, sustained by innumerable pillars, into the state apartments, which Tintoret and Paolo Veronese have covered with the triumphs of their country.

A swarm of lawyers filled the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, and one of the first advocates in the republic was pleading with all his might, before a solemn row of senators. The eyes and ears of the assembly seemed equally affected. Clouds of powder, and volleys of execrations issuing every instant from the disputants, I got out of their way; and was led from hall to hall, and from picture to picture, with exemplary resignation. To be sure, I was heartily tired, but behaved with decency, having never once expressed how much I wished the chefs-d'œuvre I had been contemplating, less smoky and numerous.

At last, I reached once more the colonnades at the entrance, and caught the sea-breeze in the open porticoes which front San Giorgio Maggiore. The walls are covered in most places with grim visages sculptured in marble, whose mouths gape for accusations, and swallow every lie that malice and revenge can dictate. I wished for a few ears of the same kind, dispersed about the Doge's residence, to which one might apply one's own, and catch some account of the mysteries within; some little dialogue between the three Inquisitors, or debate in the Council of Ten.

This is the tribunal which holds the wealthy nobility in continual awe; before which they appear with trembling and terror; and whose summons they dare not disobey. Sometimes, by way of clemency, it condemns its victims to perpetual imprisonment, in close, stifling cells, between the leads and beams of the palace; or, unwilling to spill the blood of a fellow-citizen, generously sinks them into dungeons, deep under the canals which wash its foundations; so that, above and below, its majesty is contaminated by the abodes of punishment. What other sovereign could endure the idea of having his immediate residence polluted with tears? or revel in his halls, conscious that many of his species were consuming their hours in lamentations above his head, and that but a few beams separated him from the scene of their tortures? However gaily disposed, could one dance with pleasure on a pavement, beneath which lie damp and gloomy caverns, whose inhabitants waste away by painful degrees, and feel themselves whole years a-dying? Impressed by these terrible ideas, I could not regard the palace without horror, and wished for the strength of a thousand antediluvians, to level it with the sea, lay open the secret recesses of punishment, and admit free gales and sunshine into every den.

When I had thus vented my indignation, I repaired to the statue of Neptune, whom twenty ages ago I should have invoked to second my enterprise. Once upon a time no deity had a freer hand at razing cities. His execution was renowned throughout all antiquity, and the proudest monarchs deprecated the wrath of ΚΡΕΙΩΝ ΕΝΟΣΙΧΘΩΝ. But, like the other mighty ones of ancient days, his reign is past and his trident disregarded. Formerly any wild spirit found favour in the eyes of fortune, and was led along the career of glory to the deliverance of captives and the extirpation of monsters; but, in our degenerate times, this easy road to fame is no longer open, and the means of producing such signal events are perplexed and difficult.

Abandoning therefore the sad tenants of the Piombi to their fate, I left the courts, and stepping into my bark,

was rowed down a canal overshadowed by the lofty walls of the palace. Beneath these fatal waters the dungeons I have also been speaking of are situated. There the wretches lie marking the sound of the oars, and counting the free passage of every gondola. Above, a marble bridge, of bold majestic architecture, joins the highest part of the prisons to the secret galleries of the palace; from whence criminals are conducted over the arch to a cruel and mysterious death. I shuddered whilst passing below; and believe it is not without cause, this structure is named PONTE DEI SOSPIRI. Horrors and dismal prospects haunted my fancy upon my return. I could not dine in peace, so strongly was my imagination affected; but snatching my pencil, I drew chasms and subterraneous hollows, the domain of fear and torture, with chains, racks, wheels, and dreadful engines in the style of Piranesi. About sunset I went and refreshed myself with the cool air and cheerful scenery of the Fondamenti nuovi, a vast quay or terrace of white marble, which commands the whole series of isles, from San Michele to Torcello,

“That rise and glitter o’er the ambient tide.”

Nothing can be more picturesque than the groups of towers and cupolas which they present, mixed with flat roofs and low buildings, and now and then a pine or cypress. Afar off, a little woody isle, called Il Deserto, swells from the ocean and diversifies its expanse.

When I had spent a delightful half-hour in viewing the distant isles, M. de Benincasa accompanied me to the Mendicanti, one of the four conservatorios, which give the best musical education conceivable to near one hundred young women. You may imagine how admirably those of the Mendicanti in particular are taught, since their establishment is under the direction of Bertoni, who breathes around him the very soul of harmony. The chapel in which we sat to hear the oratorio was dark and solemn; a screen of lofty pillars, formed of black marble and highly polished, reflected the lamps which burn perpetually before the altar. Every tribune was thronged with people, whose profound silence showed them worthy auditors of this master’s music. Here were no cackling old women, or groaning Methodists, such as infest our English tabernacles, and scare one’s ears with hoarse coughs accompanied by the naso obligato. All were still and attentive, imbibing the plaintive notes of the voices with eagerness; and scarce a countenance but seemed deeply affected with David’s sorrows, the subject of the performance. I sat retired in a solitary tribune, and felt them as my own. Night came on before the last chorus was sung, and I still seem to hear its sacred melody.

LETTER V.

M. de Viloison and his attendant Laplander.—Drawings of ancient Venetian costume in one of the Gradanigo palaces.—Titian’s master-piece in the church of San Giovanni e Paolo.—The distant Euganean hills.

August 18, 1780.

IT rains; the air is refreshed and I have courage to resume my pen, which the sultry weather had forced to lie dormant so long. I like this odd town of Venice, and find every day some new amusement in rambling about its innumerable canals and alleys. Sometimes I pry about the great church of Saint Mark, and examine the variety of marbles and mazes of delicate sculpture with which it is covered. The cupola, glittering with gold, mosaic, and paintings of half the wonders in the Apocalypse, never fails to transport me to the period of the Eastern empire. I think myself in Constantinople, and expect Michael Paleologus with all his train. One circumstance alone prevents my observing half the treasures of the place, and holds down my fancy just springing into the air: I mean the vile stench which exhales from every recess and corner of the edifice, and which all the incense of the altars cannot subdue.

When no longer able to endure this noxious atmosphere, I run up the Campanile in the piazza, and seating myself amongst the pillars of the gallery, breathe the fresh gales which blow from the Adriatic; survey at my leisure all Venice beneath me, with its azure sea, white sails, and long tracks of islands shining in the sun. Having thus laid in a provision of wholesome breezes, I brave the vapours of the canals, and venture into the most curious and murky quarters of the city, in search of Turks and Infidels, that I may ask as many questions as I please about Cairo and Damascus.

Asiatics find Venice very much to their taste, and all those I conversed with allowed its customs and style of living had a good deal of conformity to their own. The eternal lounging in coffee-houses and sipping of sorbets agree perfectly well with the inhabitants of the Ottoman empire, who stalk about here in their proper dresses, and smoke their own exotic pipes, without being stared and wondered at as in most other European capitals. Some few of these Orientals are communicative and enlightened; but, generally speaking, they know nothing beyond the rule of three, and the commonest transactions of mercantile affairs.

The Greeks are by far a more lively generation, still retaining their propensity to works of genius and imagination. Metastasio has been lately translated into their modern language, and some obliging papa or other has had the patience to put the long-winded romance of Clelia into a Grecian dress. I saw two or three of these volumes exposed on a stall, under the grand arcades of the public library, as I went one day to admire the antiques in its vestibules.

Whilst I was intent upon my occupation, a little door, I never should have suspected, flew open, and out popped Monsieur de Viloison, from a place where nothing, I believe, but broomsticks and certain other utensils were ever before deposited. This gentleman, the most active investigator of Homer since the days of the good bishop of Thessalonica, bespatters you with more learning in a minute than others communicate in half a year; quotes Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, &c. with formidable fluency; and drove me from one end of the room to the other with a storm of erudition. Syllables fell thicker than hail, and in an instant I found myself so weighed down and covered, that I prayed, for mercy’s sake, to be introduced, by way of respite, to a Laplander whom he leads about as a curiosity; a poor harmless good sort of a soul, calm and indifferent, who has acquired the words of several Oriental languages to perfection: ideas he has in none.

We went all together to view a collection of medals in one of the Gradanigo palaces, and two or three inestimable volumes, filled with paintings that represent the dress of the ancient Venetians; so that I had an

opportunity of observing to perfection all the Lapland nothingness of my companion. What a perfect void! Cold and silent as the polar regions, not one passion ever throbb'd in his bosom; not one bright ray of fancy ever glittered in his mind; without love or anger, pleasure or pain, his days fleet smoothly along: all things considered, I must confess I envied such comfortable apathy.

After having passed an instructive hour in examining the medals and drawings, M. de Viloison proposed conducting me to the Armenian convent, but I begged to be excused, and went to San Giovanni e Paolo, a church to be held most holy in the annals of painting, since it contains that masterpiece of Titian, the martyrdom of the hermits St. Paul and St. Peter.

In the evening I rowed out as usual

“On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea,”

to observe the effect of sunset on the tufted gardens of the Giudeca, and to contemplate the distant Euganean hills, once the happiest region of Italy; where wandering nations enjoyed the simplicity of a pastoral life, long before the arrival of Antenor. In these primeval days deep forests and extensive pastures covered the shores of the Adriatic, and innumerable flocks hung on the brow of the mountains. This golden period ended upon the incursion of the Trojans and Heneti; who, led by Antenor, drove away the unfortunate savages, and possessed themselves of their habitations.

LETTER VI.

Isles of Burano, Torcello, and Mazonbo.—The once populous city of Altina.—An excursion.—Effects of our music on the inhabitants of the Islands.—Solitary fields infested by serpents.—Remains of ancient sculpture.—Antique and fantastic ornaments of the Cathedral of Torcello.—San Lorenzo's chair.—Dine in a Convent.—The Nuns.—Oratorio of Sisera.—Remarks on the music.—Singing of the Marchetti.—A female orchestra.

I am just returned from visiting the isles of Burano, Torcello, and Mazonbo, distant about five miles from Venice. To these amphibious spots the Romans, inhabitants of eastern Lombardy, fled from the rapine of Attila; and, if we may believe Cassiodorus, there was a time when they presented a beautiful appearance. Beyond them, on the coast of the Lagoon, rose the once populous city of Altina, with its six stately gates, which Dandolo mentions. Its neighbourhood was scattered with innumerable villas and temples, composing altogether a prospect which Martial compares to Baiae:

“Æmula Baianis Altini littora villis.”

But this agreeable scene, like so many others, is passed entirely away, and has left nothing, except heaps of stones and mis-shapen fragments, to vouch for its former magnificence. Two of the islands, Costanziaco and Amiano, that are imagined to have contained the bowers and gardens of the Altinians, have sunk beneath the waters; those which remain are scarcely worthy to rise above their surface.

Though I was persuaded little was left to be seen above ground, I could not deny myself the imaginary pleasure of treading a corner of the earth once so adorned and cultivated; and of walking over the roofs, perhaps, of undiscovered palaces. M. de R. to whom I communicated my ideas, entered at once into the scheme; hiring therefore a *peiotte*, we took some provisions and music (to us equally necessaries of life) and launched into the canal, between Saint Michael and Murano. Our instruments played several delightful airs, that called forth the inhabitants of every island, and held them in silence, as if spell-bound, on the edge of their quays and terraces, till we were out of hearing.

Leaving Murano far behind, Venice and its world of turrets began to sink on the horizon, and the low desert isles beyond Mazonbo to lie stretched out before us. Now we beheld vast wastes of purple flowers, and could distinguish the low hum of the insects which hover above them; such was the stillness of the place. Coasting these solitary fields, we wound amongst several serpentine canals, bordered by gardens of figs and pomegranates, with neat Indian-looking inclosures of cane and reed: an aromatic plant, which the people justly dignify with the title of marine incense, clothes the margin of the waters. It proved very serviceable in subduing a musky odour, which attacked us the moment we landed, and which proceeds from serpents that lurk in the hedges. These animals, say the gondoliers, defend immense treasures which lie buried under the ruins. Woe to those who attempt to invade them, or to pry too cautiously about!

Not choosing to be devoured, we left many a mound of fragments unnoticed, and made the best of our way to a little green, bounded on one side by a miserable shed, decorated with the name of the Podesta's residence, and on the other by a circular church. Some remains of tolerable antique sculpture are enchased in the walls; and the dome, supported by pillars of a smooth Grecian marble, though uncouth and ill-proportioned, impresses a sort of veneration, and transports the fancy to the twilight glimmering period when it was raised.

Having surveyed what little was visible, and given as much career to our imaginations as the scene inspired, we walked over a soil composed of crumbling bricks and cement to the cathedral; whose arches, in the ancient Roman style, convinced us that it dates at least as high as the sixth or seventh century.

Nothing can well be more fantastic than the ornaments of this structure, formed from the ruins of the Pagan temples of Altina, and encrusted with a gilt mosaic, like that which covers our Edward the Confessor's tomb. The pavement, composed of various precious marbles, is richer and more beautiful than one could have expected, in a place where every other object savours of the grossest barbarism. At the farther end, beyond the altar, appears a semicircular niche, with seats like the gradines of a diminutive amphitheatre; above rise the quaint forms of the apostles, in red, blue, green, and black mosaic, and in the midst of the group a sort of marble chair, cool and penitential enough, where Saint Lorenzo Giustiniani sat to hold a provincial council, the Lord knows how long ago! The fount for holy water stands by the principal entrance, fronting this curious recess, and seems to have belonged to some place of Gentile worship. The figures of horned imps clinging round its sides, more devilish, more Egyptian, than any I ever beheld. The dragons on old china are not more whimsical; filled with bats' blood it would have been an admirable present to the sabbath of witches, and have cut a capital figure in their orgies. The sculpture is not the

most delicate, but I cannot say a great deal about it, as very little light reaches the spot where it is fixed: indeed, the whole church is far from luminous, its windows being narrow and near the roof, with shutters composed of blocks of marble, which nothing but the whirlwinds of the last day, one should think, would move from their hinges.

By the time we had examined every nook and corner of this singular edifice, and tried to catch some small portion of sanctity by sitting in San Lorenzo's chair, dinner was prepared in a neighbouring convent, and the nuns, allured by the sound of our flutes and oboes, peeped out of their cells and showed themselves by dozens at the grate. Some few agreeable faces and interesting eyes enlivened the dark sisterhood; all seemed to catch a gleam of pleasure from the music; two or three of them, probably the last immured, let fall a tear, and suffered the recollection of the world and its profane joys to interrupt for a moment their sacred tranquillity.

We stayed till the sun was low, on purpose that they might listen as long as possible to a harmony which seemed to issue, as the old abbess expressed herself, from the gates of paradise ajar. A thousand benedictions consecrated our departure; twilight came on just as we entered the bark and rowed out upon the waves, agitated by a fresh gale, but fearing nothing under the protection of Santa Margherita, whose good wishes our music had secured.

In two hours we were safely landed at the Fondamenti nuovi, and went immediately to the Mendicanti, where they were performing the oratorio of Sisera. The composer, a young man, had displayed great fire and originality in this performance; and a knowledge of character seldom found in the most celebrated masters. The supplication of the thirsty chieftain, and Jael's insinuating arts and pious treachery, are admirably expressed; but the agitation and boding slumbers which precede his death, are imagined in the highest strain of genius. The terror and agony of his dreams made me start, more than once, from my seat; and all the horrors of his assassination seemed full before me.

Too much applause cannot be given to the Marchetti, who sang the part of Sisera, and seconded the composer's ideas by the most feeling and spirited execution. There are few things I shall regret more on leaving Venice, than this conservatorio. Whenever I am musically given, I fly to it, and hear the most striking finales in Paesiello's and Anfossi's operas, as long and often as I please.

The sight of the orchestra still makes me smile. You know, I suppose, it is entirely of the feminine gender, and that nothing is more common than to see a delicate white hand journeying across an enormous double bass, or a pair of roseate cheeks puffing, with all their efforts, at a French horn. Some that are grown old and Amazonian, who have abandoned their fiddles and their lovers, take vigorously to the kettle-drum; and one poor limping lady, who had been crossed in love, now makes an admirable figure on the bassoon.

Good night! I am quite exhausted with composing a chorus for this angelic choir. The poetry I send you. The music takes up too much room to travel at present. One day or other, perhaps, we may hear it in some dark grove, when the moon is eclipsed and nature in alarm.

This is not the last letter you would receive from Venice, were I not hurrying to Lucca, where Pacchierotti sings next week, in Bertoni's opera of Quinto Fabio.

LETTER VII.

Coast of Fusina.—The Brenta.—A Village of Palaces.—Fiesso.—Exquisite singing of the Galuzzi.—Marietta Cornaro.—Scenes of enchantment and fascination.

I was sorry to leave Venice, and regretted my peaceful excursions upon the Adriatic. No bright rays illuminated my departure, the sun was concealed in clouds; but the coolness and perfume of the air made ample amends for his absence.

About an hour's rowing from the isle of Saint Giorgio in Alga, brought us to the coast of Fusina, right opposite the opening where the Brenta mixes with the sea. This river flows calmly between banks of verdure, crowned by poplars, with vines twining round every stalk, and depending from tree to tree in beautiful festoons. Beds of mint and iris clothe the brink of the stream, except where interrupted by a tall growth of reeds and osiers. The morning continued to lower as we advanced; scarce a wind ventured to breathe: all was still and placid as the surface of the river. No sound struck my ears except the bargemen hallooing to open the sluices, and deepen the water.

As yet I had not perceived an habitation, nor any other objects than green inclosures and fields of Turkish corn, shaded with vines and poplars. It grew late before we glided along by the Mira, a village of palaces, whose courts and gardens, as magnificent as statues, terraces, and vases can make them, are far from composing a rural prospect.

Such artificial scenery not engaging much of my attention, we stayed no longer than our dinner required, and reached the Dolo an hour before sunset. Passing the great sluices, whose gates opened with a thundering noise, we continued our course along the peaceful Brenta, winding its broad full stream through impenetrable copses. Day was about to close when we reached Fiesso; and it being a misty evening, I could scarcely distinguish the pompous façade of the Pisani palace. That of Cornaro, where we were engaged to sup, looks upon a broad mass of foliage which I contemplated with pleasure as it sank in the dusk.

We walked a long while under a pavilion stretched before the entrance, breathing the freshness of the wood after a shower which had lately fallen. The Galuzzi sang some of her father Ferandini's compositions with surprising energy; her cheek was flushed, her eyes glistened; the whole tone of her countenance was that of a person rapt and inspired. I forgot both time and place while she was singing. The night stole imperceptibly away, before I awoke from my trance.

I do not recollect ever to have passed an evening, which every circumstance conspired to render so full of charm. In general, my musical pleasures suffer terrible abatements from the phlegm and stupidity of my neighbourhood; but here, every one seemed to catch the flame, and to listen with reciprocal delight. Marietta Cornaro, whose lively talents are the boast of the Venetians, threw quick around her the glancing fires of genius.

What with the song of the Galuzzi, and those intellectual meteors, I scarcely knew to what element I was transported, and doubted for several moments, whether I was not fallen into a celestial dream: to wake was painful, and it was not without much lingering reluctance I left these scenes of enchantment and fascination, repeating with melancholy earnestness that pathetic sonnet of Petrarch's—

O giorno, o ora, o ultimo momento,
O stelle congiurate a' impoverirme!
O fido sguardo, or che volei tu dirme,
Partend' io, per non esser mai contento?

LETTER VIII.

Reveries.—Walls of Padua.—Confused Pile dedicated to Saint Anthony.—Devotion at his Shrine.—Penitential Worshippers.—Magnificent Altar.—Sculpture of Sansovino.—Colossal Chamber like Noah's Ark.

The splendour of the rising sun, for once in my life, drew little of my attention. I was too deeply plunged in my reveries, to notice the landscape which lay before me; and the walls of Padua presented themselves some time ere I was aware. At any other moment, how sensibly should I have been affected with their appearance! How many ideas of Antenor and his Trojans, would have thronged into my memory! but now I regarded the scene with indifference, and passed many a palace, and many a woody garden, with my eyes riveted to the ground. The first object that appeared upon lifting them up, was a confused pile of spires and cupolas, dedicated to blessed Saint Anthony, one of whose most eloquent sermons the great Addison has translated *con amore*, and in his very best manner.

You are too well apprised of the veneration I have always entertained for this inspired preacher, to doubt that I immediately repaired to his shrine. Mine was a disturbed spirit, and required all the balm of Saint Anthony's kindness to appease it. Perhaps you will say I had better have gone to bed, and applied myself to my sleepy friend, the pagan divinity. It is probable that you are in the right; but I could not retire to rest without first venting some portion of effervescence in sighs and supplications. The nave was filled with decrepit women and feeble children, kneeling by baskets of vegetables and other provisions; which, by good Anthony's interposition, they hoped to sell advantageously in the course of the day. Beyond these, nearer the choir, and in a gloomier part of the edifice, knelt a row of rueful penitents, smiting their breasts, and lifting their eyes to heaven. Further on, in front of the dark recess, where the sacred relics are deposited, a few desperate, melancholy sinners lay prostrate.

To these I joined myself. The sunbeams had not yet penetrated into this religious quarter; and the only light it received proceeded from the golden lamps, which hang in clusters round the sanctuary. A lofty altar, decked with the most lavish magnificence, supports the shrine. Those who are profoundly touched with its sanctity, may approach, and walking round, look through the crevices of the tomb, which, it is observed, exude a balsamic odour. But supposing a traveller ever so heretical, I would advise him by no means to neglect this pilgrimage; since every part of the recess he visits is decorated with exquisite sculptures. Sansovino and other renowned artists have vied with each other in carving the alto relievos of the arcade, which, for design and execution, would do honour to the sculptors of antiquity.

Having observed these objects with less exactness than they merited, I hastened to the inn, luckily hard by, and one of the best I am acquainted with. Here I soon fell asleep in defiance of sunshine. It is true my slumbers were not a little agitated. The saint had been deaf to my prayer, and I still found myself a frail, infatuated mortal.

At five I got up; we dined, and afterwards scarcely knowing, nor much caring, what became of us, we strolled to the great hall of the town; an enormous edifice, larger considerably than that of Westminster, but free from stalls, or shops, or nests of litigation. The roof, one spacious vault of brown timber, casts a solemn gloom, which was still increased by the lateness of the hour, and not diminished by the wan light, admitted through the windows of pale blue glass. The size and shape of this colossal chamber, the arching of the roof, with enormous rafters stretching across it, and, above all, the watery gleams that glanced through the dull casements, possessed my fancy with ideas of Noah's ark, and almost persuaded me I beheld that extraordinary vessel. The representation one sees of it in many an old Dutch Bible, seems to be formed upon this very model, and for several moments I indulged the chimera of imagining myself confined within its precincts. Could I but choose my companions, I should have no great objection to encounter a deluge, and to float away a few months upon the waves!

We remained till night walking to and fro in the ark; it was then full time to retire, as the guardian of the place was by no means formed to divine our diluvian ideas.

LETTER IX.

Church of St. Justina.—Tombs of remote antiquity.—Ridiculous attitudes of rheumatic devotees.—Turini's music.—Another excursion to Fiesso.—Journey to the Euganean hills.—Newly discovered ruins.—High Mass in the great Church of Saint Anthony.—A thunder-storm.—Palladio's Theatre at Vicenza.—Verona.—An aerial chamber.—Striking prospect from it.—The Amphitheatre.—Its interior.—Leave Verona.—Country between that town and Mantua.—German soldiers.—Remains of the palace of the Gonzagas.—Paintings of Julio Romano.—A ruined garden.—Subterranean apartments.

Immediately after breakfast we went to St. Justina's. Both extremities of the cross aisles are terminated by altar-tombs of very remote antiquity, adorned with uncouth sculptures of the evangelists, supported by wreathed columns of alabaster, round which, to my no small astonishment, four or five gawky fellows were waddling on their knees, persuaded, it seems, that this strange devotion would cure the rheumatism, or any other aches with which they were afflicted. You can have no conception of the ridiculous attitudes into which they threw themselves; nor the difficulty with which they squeezed along, between the middle column of the tomb and those which surround it. No criminal in the pillory ever exhibited a more rueful appearance, no swine ever scrubbed itself more fervently than these infatuated lubbers.

I left them hard at work, taking more exercise than had been their lot for many a day; and, mounting into the organ gallery, listened to Turini's^[7] music with infinite satisfaction. The loud harmonious tones of the instrument filled the whole edifice; and, being repeated by the echoes of its lofty domes and arches, produced a wonderful effect. Turini, aware of this circumstance, adapts his compositions with great intelligence to the place. Nothing can be more original than his style. Deprived of sight by an unhappy accident, in the flower of his days, he gave up his

entire soul to music, and can scarcely be said to exist, but from its mediums.

When we came out of St. Justina's, the azure of the sky and the softness of the air inclined us to think of some excursion. Where could I wish to go, but to the place in which I had been so delighted? Besides, it was proper to make the Cornaro another visit, and proper to see the Pisani palace, which happily I had before neglected. All these proprieties considered, Madame de R. accompanied me to Fiesso.

The sun was just sunk when we arrived. The whole ether in a glow, and the fragrance of the arched citron alleys delightful. Beneath them I walked in the cool, till the Galuzzi began once more her enchanting melody. She sang till the fineness of the weather tempted us to quit the palace for the banks of the Brenta. A profound calm reigned upon the woods and the waters, and moonlight added serenity to a scene naturally peaceful.

We supped late: before the Galuzzi had repeated the airs which had most affected me, morning began to dawn.

September 8th.

THE want of sound repose, after my return home, had thrown me into a feverish and impatient mood. I had scarcely snatched some slight refreshment, before I flew to the great organ at St. Justina's; but tried this time to compose myself, in vain.

Madame de Rosenberg, finding my endeavours unsuccessful, proposed, by way of diverting my attention, that we should set out immediately for one of the Euganean hills, about six or seven miles from Padua, at the foot of which some antique baths had been very lately discovered. I consented without hesitation, little concerned whither I went, or what happened to me, provided the scene was often shifted. The lanes and inclosures we passed, in our road to the hills, appeared in all the gaiety that verdure, flowers, and sunshine could give them. But my pleasures were overcast, and I beheld every object, however cheerful, through a dusky medium.

Deeply engaged in conversation, distance made no impression, and I found myself entering the meadow, over which the ruins are scattered, whilst I imagined myself several miles distant. No scene could be more smiling than this which here presented itself, or answer, in a fuller degree, the ideas I had always formed of Italy.

Leaving our carriage at the entrance of the meadow, we traversed its surface, and shortly perceived among the grass, an oblong basin, incrustated with pure white marble. Most of the slabs are large and perfect, apparently brought from Greece, and still retaining their polished smoothness. The pipes to convey the waters are still perfectly discernible; in short, the whole ground-plan may be easily traced. Near the principal bath, we remarked the platforms of several circular apartments, paved with mosaic, in a neat simple taste, far from inelegant. Weeds have not yet sprung up amongst the crevices; and the freshness of the ruin everywhere shows that it has not long been exposed.

Theodoric is the prince to whom these structures are attributed; and Cassiodorus, the prime chronicler of the country, is quoted to maintain the supposition. My spirit was too much engaged to make any learned parade, or to dispute upon a subject, which I abandon, with all its importance, to calmer and less impatient minds.

Having taken a cursory view of the ruins, we ascended the hill just above them, and surveyed a prospect of the same nature, though in a more lovely and expanded style than that which I beheld from Mosolente. Padua crowns the landscape, with its towers and cupolas rising from a continued grove; and, from the drawings I have seen, I should conjecture that Damascus presents somewhat of a similar appearance.

Taking our eyes off this extensive prospect, we brought them home to the fragments beneath our feet. The walls exhibit the *opus reticulatum*, so common in the environs of Naples. A sort of terrace, with the remaining bases of columns which encircle the hill, leads me to imagine here were formerly arcades and porticos, constructed for enjoying the view; for on the summit I could trace no vestiges of any considerable edifice, and am therefore inclined to conclude, that nothing more than a colonnade surrounded the hill, leading perhaps to some slight fane, or pavilion, for the recreation of the bathers below.

A profusion of aromatic flowers covered the slopes, and exhaled additional perfumes, as the sun declined, and the still hour approached, which was wont to spread over my mind a divine composure, and to restore the tranquillity I might have lost in the day. But now it diffused its reviving coolness in vain, and I remained, if possible, more sad and restless than before.

September 9th.

You may imagine how I felt when the hour of leaving Padua drew near. It happened to be a festival, and high mass was celebrated at the great church of Saint Anthony in all its splendour. The ceremony was about half over when such a peal of thunder reverberated through the vaults and cupolas, as I expected would have shaken them to their foundations. The principal dome appeared invested with a sheet of fire; and the effect of terror produced upon the majority of the congregation, by this sudden lighting up of the most gloomy recesses of the edifice, was so violent that they rushed out in the wildest confusion. Had my faith been less lively, I should have followed their example; but, absorbed in the thought of a separation from those to whom I felt fondly attached, I remained till the ceremony ended; then took leave of Madame de R. with heartfelt regret, and was driven away to Vicenza.

September 10th.

THE morning being overcast, I went to Palladio's theatre. It is impossible to conceive a structure more truly classical, or to point out a single ornament which has not the best antique authority. I am not in the least surprised that the citizens of Vicenza enthusiastically gave in to this great architect's plan, and sacrificed large sums to erect so beautiful a model. When finished, they procured, at a vast expense, the representation of a Grecian tragedy, with its chorus and majestic decorations.

After I had mused a long while in the most retired recess of the edifice, fancying I had penetrated into a real and perfect monument of antiquity, which till this moment had remained undiscovered, we set out for Verona. The situation is striking and picturesque. A long line of battlemented walls, flanked by venerable towers, mounts the hill in a grand irregular sweep, and incloses the city with many a woody garden, and grove of slender cypress. Beyond rises a group of mountains; opposite to which a plain presents itself, decked with all the variety of meads and thickets, olive-grounds and vineyards.

Amongst these our road kept winding till we entered the city gate, and passed (the post knows how many

streets and alleys in the way!) to the inn, a lofty handsome-looking building; but so full that we were obliged to take up with an apartment on its very summit, open to all the winds, like the magic chamber Apuleius mentions, and commanding the roofs of half Verona. Here and there a pine shot up amongst them, and the shady hills, terminating the perspective of walls and turrets, formed a romantic scene.

Placing our table in a balcony, to enjoy the prospect with greater freedom, we feasted upon fish from the Lago di Guarda, and the delicious fruits of the country. Thus did I remain, solacing myself, breathing the cool air, and remarking the tints of the mountains. Neither paintings nor antiques could tempt me from my aerial situation; I refused hunting out the famous works of Paul Veronese scattered over the town, and sat like the owl in the Georgics,

Solis et occasum servans de culmine summo.

Twilight drawing on, I left my haunt, and stealing down stairs, enquired for a guide to conduct me to the amphitheatre, perhaps the most entire monument of Roman days. The people of the house, instead of bringing me a quiet peasant, officiously delivered me up to a professed antiquary, one of those precise plausible young men, to whom, God help me! I have so capital an aversion. This sweet spark displayed all his little erudition, and flourished away upon cloacas and vomitoriums with eternal fluency. He was very profound in the doctrine of conduits, and knew to admiration how the filthiness of all the amphitheatre was disposed of.

But perceiving my inattention, and having just grace enough to remark that I chose one side of the street when he preferred the other, and sometimes trotted through despair in the kennel, he made me a pretty bow, I threw him half-a-crown, and seeing the ruins before me, traversed a gloomy arcade and emerged alone into the arena. A smooth turf covers its surface, from which a spacious sweep of gradines rises to a majestic elevation. Four arches, with their simple Doric ornament, alone remain of the grand circular arcade which once crowned the highest seats of the amphitheatre; and, had it not been for Gothic violence, this part of the structure would have equally resisted the ravages of time. Nothing can be more exact than the preservation of the gradines; not a block has sunk from its place, and whatever trifling injuries they may have received have been carefully repaired. The two chief entrances are rebuilt with solidity and closed by portals, no passage being permitted through the amphitheatre except at public shows and representations, sometimes still given in the arena.

When I paced slowly across it, silence reigned undisturbed, and nothing moved, except the weeds and grasses which skirt the walls and tremble with the faintest breeze. Throwing myself upon the grass in the middle of the arena, I enjoyed the freedom of my situation, its profound stillness and solitude. How long I remained shut in by endless gradines on every side, wrapped as it were in the recollections of perished ages, is not worth noting down; but when I passed from the amphitheatre to the opening before it, night was drawing on, and the grand outline of a terrific feudal fortress, once inhabited by the Scaligeri, alone dimly visible.

September 11th.

TRAVERSING ONCE more the grand piazza, and casting a last glance upon the amphitheatre, we passed under a lofty arch which terminates the perspective, and left Verona by a wide, irregular, picturesque street, commanding, whenever you look back, a striking scene of towers, cypress, and mountains.

The country, between this beautiful town and Mantua, presents one continued grove of dwarfish mulberries, with here and there a knot of poplars, and sometimes a miserable shed. Mantua itself rises out of a morass formed by the Mincio, whose course, in most places, is so choked up with reeds as to be scarcely discernible. It requires a creative imagination to discover any charms in such a prospect, and a strong prepossession not to be disgusted with the scene where Virgil was born.

The beating of drums, and sight of German whiskers, finished what croaking frogs and stagnant ditches had begun. Every classic idea being scared by such sounds and such objects, I dined in dudgeon, and refused stirring out till late in the evening.

A few paces from the town stand the remains of the palace where the Gonzagas formerly resided. This I could not resist looking at, and was amply rewarded. Several of the apartments, adorned by the bold pencil of Julio Romano, merit the most exact attention; and the arabesques, with which the stucco ceilings are covered, equal those of the Vatican. Being painted in fresco upon damp neglected walls, each year diminishes their number, and every winter moulders some beautiful figure away.

The subjects, mostly from antique fables, are treated with all the purity and gracefulness of Raphael; the story of Polypheme is very conspicuous. Acis appears, reclined with his beloved Galatea, on the shore of the ocean, whilst their gigantic enemy, seated above on the brow of Ætna, seems by the paleness and horrors of his countenance to meditate some terrible revenge.

When it was too late to examine the paintings any longer, I walked into a sort of court, or rather garden, which had been decorated with fountains and antique statues. Their fragments still remain amongst weeds and beds of flowers, for every corner of the place is smothered with vegetation. Here nettles grow thick and rampant; there, tuberoses and jessamine spring from mounds of ruins, which during the elegant reign of the Gonzagas led to grottoes and subterranean apartments, concealed from vulgar eyes, and sacred to the most refined enjoyments.

LETTER X.

Cross the Po.—A woody country.—The Vintage.—Reggio.—Ridge of the Apennines.—Romantic ideas connected with those mountains.—Arrive at Modena.—Road to Bologna.—Magnificent Convent of Madonna del Monte.—Natural and political commotions in Bologna.—Proceed towards the mountains.—Dreary prospects.—The scenery improves.—Herds of goats.—A run with them.—Return to the carriage.—Wretched hamlet.—Miserable repast.

September 12th, 1780.

A SHOWER, having fallen, the air was refreshed, and the drops still glittered upon the vines, through which our road conducted us. Three or four miles from Mantua the scene changed to extensive grounds of rice, and meads of the tenderest verdure watered by springs, whose frequent meanders gave to the whole prospect the appearance of a

vast green carpet shot with silver. Further on we crossed the Po, and passing Guastalla, entered a woody country full of inclosures and villages; herds feeding in the meadows, and poultry parading before every wicket.

The peasants were busied in winnowing their corn; or, mounted upon the elms and poplars, gathering the rich clusters from the vines that hang streaming in braids from one branch to another. I was surprised to find myself already in the midst of the vintage, and to see every road crowded with carts and baskets bringing it along; you cannot imagine a pleasanter scene.

Round Reggio it grew still more lively, and on the other side of that sketch-inviting little city, I remarked many a cottage that Tityrus might have inhabited, with its garden and willow hedge in flower, swarming with bees. Our road, the smoothest conceivable, enabled us to pass too rapidly through so cheerful a landscape. I caught glimpses of fields and copses as we were driven along, that could have afforded me amusement for hours, and orchards on gentle acclivities, beneath which I could have walked till evening. The trees literally bent under their loads of fruit, and innumerable ruddy apples lay scattered upon the ground.

Beyond these rich masses of foliage, to which the sun lent additional splendour, at the utmost extremity of the pastures, rose the irregular ridge of the Apennines, whose deep blue presented a striking contrast to the glowing colours of the foreground. I fixed my eyes on the chain of distant mountains, and indulged a thousand romantic conjectures of what was passing in their recesses—hermits absorbed in prayer—beautiful Contadine fetching water from springs, and banditti conveying their victims, perhaps at this very moment, to caves and fastnesses.

Such were the dreams that filled my fancy, and kept it incessantly employed till it was dusk, and the moon began to show herself; the same moon which but a few nights ago had seen me so happy at Fiesso. I left the carriage, and running into the dim haze, abandoned myself to the recollections it excited....

At length, having wandered where chance or the wildness of my fancy led, till the lateness of the evening alarmed me, I regained the chaise as fast as I could, and arrived between twelve and one at Modena, the place of my destination.

September 13th.

WE traversed a champagne country in our way to Bologna, whose richness and fertility increased in proportion as we drew near that celebrated mart of lap-dogs and sausages. A chain of hills commands the city, variegated with green inclosures and villas innumerable. On the highest acclivity of this range appears the magnificent convent of Madonna del Monte, embosomed in wood and joined to the town by a corridor a league in length. This vast portico ascending the steeps and winding amongst the thickets, sometimes concealed and sometimes visible, produces an effect wonderfully grand and singular. I longed to have mounted the height by so extraordinary a passage; and hope on some future day to be better acquainted with Santa Maria del Monte.

At present I have very little indeed to say about Bologna (where I passed only two hours) except that it is sadly out of humour, an earthquake and Cardinal Buoncompagni having disarranged both land and people. For half-a-year the ground continued trembling; and for these last six months, the legate and senators have grumbled and scratched incessantly; so that, between natural and political commotions, the Bolognese must have passed an agreeable summer.

Such a report of the situation of things, you may suppose, was not likely to retard my journey. I put off delivering my letters to another opportunity, and proceeded immediately after dinner towards the mountains. We were soon in the midst of crags and stony channels, that stream with ten thousand rills in the winter season, but during the summer months reflect every sunbeam, and harbour half the scorpions in the country.

For many a toilsome league our prospect consisted of nothing but dreary hillocks and intervening wastes, more barren and mournful than those to which Mary Magdalene retired. Sometimes a crucifix or chapel peeped out of the parched fern and grasses, with which these desolate fields are clothed; and now and then we met a goggle-eyed pilgrim trudging along, and staring about him as if he waited only for night and opportunity to have additional reasons for hurrying to Loretto.

During three or four hours that we continued ascending, the scene increased in sterility and desolation; but, at the end of our second post, the landscape began to alter for the better: little green valleys at the base of tremendous steeps, discovered themselves, scattered over with oaks, and freshened with running waters, which the nakedness of the impending rocks set off to advantage. The sides of the cliffs in general consist of rude misshapen masses; but their summits are smooth and verdant, and continually browsed by herds of white goats, which were gambolling on the edge of the precipices as we passed beneath.

I joined one of these frisking assemblies, whose shadows were stretched by the setting sun along the level herbage. There I sat a few minutes whilst they shook their beards at me, and tried to scare me with all their horns. Being tired with skipping and butting at me in vain, the whole herd trotted away, and I after them. They led me a dance from crag to crag and from thicket to thicket.

It was growing dusky apace, and wreaths of smoke began to ascend from the mysterious depths of the valleys. I was ignorant what monster inhabited such retirements, so gave over my pursuit lest some Polypheme or other might make me repent it. I looked around, the carriage was out of sight; but hearing the neighing of horses at a distance, I soon came up with them, and mounted another rapid ascent, from whence an extensive tract of cliff and forest land was discernible.

A chill wind blew from the highest peak of the Apennines, and made a dismal rustle amongst the woods of chesnut that hung on the mountain's side, through which we were forced to pass. Walking out of the sound of the carriage, I began interpreting the language of the leaves, not greatly to my own advantage or that of any being in the universe. I was no prophet of good, and had I but commanded an oracle, as ancient visionaries were wont, I should have flung mischief about me.

How long I continued in this strange temper I cannot pretend to say, but believe it was midnight before we emerged from the oracular forest, and saw faintly before us an assemblage of miserable huts, where we were to sleep. This wretched hamlet is suspended on the brow of a bleak mountain, and every gust that stirs, shakes the whole village to its foundations. At our approach two hags stalked forth with lanterns and invited us with a grin, which I shall always remember, to a dish of mustard and crows' gizzards, a dish I was more than half afraid of tasting, lest it should change me to some bird of darkness, condemned to mope eternally on the black rafters of the

cottage.

After repeated supplications we procured a few eggs, and some faggots to make a fire. Pitching my bed in a warm corner I soon fell asleep, and forgot all my cares and inquietudes.

LETTER XI.

A sterile region.—Our descent into a milder landscape.—Distant view of Florence.—Moonlight effect.—Visit the Gallery.—Relics of ancient credulity.—Paintings.—A Medusa's head by Leonardo da Vinci.—Curious picture by Polemberg.—The Venus de Medicis.—Exquisitely sculptured figure of Morpheus.—Vast Cathedral.—Garden of Boboli.—Views from different parts of it.—Its resemblance to an antique Roman garden.

September 14th, 1780.

THE sun had not been long above the horizon, before we set forward upon a craggy pavement hewn out of rough cliffs and precipices. Scarcely a tree was visible, and the few that presented themselves began already to shed their leaves. The raw nipping air of this desert with difficulty spares a blade of vegetation; and in the whole range of these extensive eminences I could not discover a single corn-field or pasture. Inhabitants, you may guess, there were none. I would defy even a Scotch highlander to find means of subsistence in so rude a soil.

Towards mid-day, we had surmounted the dreariest part of our journey, and began to perceive a milder landscape. The climate improved as well as the prospect, and after a continual descent of several hours, we saw groves and villages in the dips of the hills, and met a string of mules and horses laden with fruit. I purchased some figs and peaches from this little caravan, and spread my repast upon a bank, in the midst of lavender bushes in full bloom.

Continuing our route, we bade adieu to the realms of poverty and barrenness, and entered a cultivated vale, shaded by woody acclivities. Amongst these we wound along, between groves of poplar and cypress, till late in the evening. Upon winding a hill we discovered Florence at a distance surrounded with gardens and terraces rising one above another; the full moon seemed to shine with a peculiar charm upon this favoured region. Her serene light on the pale grey of the olive, gave a visionary and Elysian appearance to the landscape, and I was sorry when I found myself excluded from it by the gates of Florence.

I slept as well as my impatience would allow, till it was time next morning (Sept. 15,) to visit the gallery, and worship the Venus de Medicis. I felt, upon entering this world of refinement, as if I could have taken up my abode in it for ever, but, confused with the multitude of objects, I knew not on which first to bend my attention, and ran childishly by the ample ranks of sculptures, like a butterfly in a parterre, that skims before it fixes, over ten thousand flowers.

Having taken my course down one side of the gallery, I turned the angle and discovered another long perspective, equally stored with master-pieces of bronze and marble. A minute brought me to the extremity of this range, vast as it was; then, flying down a third, adorned in the same delightful manner, I paused under the bust of Jupiter Olympius; and began to reflect a little more maturely upon the company in which I found myself. Opposite, appeared the majestic features of Minerva, breathing divinity: and Cybele, the mother of the gods.

Having regarded these powers with due veneration, I next cast my eyes upon a black figure, whose attitude seemed to announce the deity of sleep. You know my fondness for this drowsy personage, and that it is not the first time I have quitted the most splendid society for him. I found him at present, of touchstone, with the countenance of a towardly brat, sleeping ill through indigestion. The artist had not conceived very poetical ideas of the god, or else he never would have represented him with so little grace and dignity.

Displeased at finding my favourite subject profaned, I perceived the transports of enthusiasm beginning to subside, and felt myself calm enough to follow the herd of guides and spectators from chamber to chamber, cabinet to cabinet, without falling into errors of rapture and admiration. We were led slowly and moderately through the large rooms, containing the portraits of painters, good, bad, and indifferent, from Raphael to Liotard; then into a museum of bronzes, which would afford both amusement and instruction for years.

When I had rather alarmed than satisfied my curiosity by rapidly running over a multitude of candelabums, urns, and sacred utensils, we entered a small luminous apartment, surrounded with cases richly decorated, and filled with the most exquisite models of workmanship in bronze and various metals, classed in exact order. Here are crowds of diminutive deities and tutelary lars, to whom the superstition of former days attributed those midnight murmurs which were believed to presage the misfortunes of a family. Amongst these now neglected images are preserved a vast number of talismans, cabalistic amulets, and other grotesque relics of ancient credulity.

In the centre of the room I remarked a table, beautifully formed of polished gems, and, near it, the statue of a genius with his familiar serpent, and all his attributes; the guardian of the treasured antiquities. From this chamber we were conducted into another, which opens to that part of the gallery where the busts of Adrian and Antinous are placed. Two pilasters, delicately carved in trophies and clusters of ancient armour, stand on each side of the entrance; within are several perfumed cabinets of miniatures, and a single column of oriental alabaster about ten feet in height,

Lucido e terso, e bianco, più che latte.

I put my guide's patience to the proof, by lingering to admire the column and cabinets. At last, the musk with which they are impregnated, obliged me to desist, and I moved on to a suite of saloons, with low arched roofs, glittering with arabesque, in azure and gold. Several medallions appear amongst the wreaths of foliage, tolerably well painted, with representations of splendid feasts and tournaments for which Florence was once so famous.

A vast collection of small pictures, most of them Flemish, covers the walls of these apartments. But nothing struck me more than a Medusa's head by Leonardo da Vinci. It appears just severed from the body and cast on the damp pavement of a cavern: a deadly paleness covers the countenance, and the mouth exhales a pestilential vapour; the snakes, which fill almost the whole picture, beginning to untwist their folds; one or two seemed already crept away, and crawling up the rock in company with toads and other venomous reptiles.

Here are a great many Polembergs: one in particular, the strangest I ever beheld. Instead of those soft scenes of woods and waterfalls he is in general so fond of representing, he has chosen for his subject Virgil ushering Dante into the regions of eternal punishment, amidst the ruins of flaming edifices that glare across the infernal waters. These mournful towers harbour innumerable shapes, all busy in preying upon the damned. One capital devil, in the form of an enormous lobster, seems very strenuously employed in mumbling a miserable mortal, who sprawls, though in vain, to escape from his claws. This performance, whimsical as it is, retains all that softness of tint and delicacy of pencil for which Polemberg is so renowned.

Had not the subject so palpably contradicted the painter's choice, I should have passed over this picture, like a thousand more, and have brought you immediately to the tribune. Need I say I was spell-bound the moment I set my feet within it, and saw full before me the Venus de Medicis? The warm ivory hue of the original marble is a beauty no copy has ever imitated, and the softness of the limbs exceeded the liveliest idea I had formed to myself of their perfection.

When I had taken my eyes reluctantly away from this beautiful object, I cast them upon a Morpheus of white marble, which lies slumbering at the feet of the goddess in the form of a graceful child. A dormant lion serves him for a pillow; two ample wings, carved with the utmost delicacy, are gathered under him; two others, budding from his temples, half-concealed by a flow of lovely ringlets. His languid hands scarcely hold a bunch of poppies: near him creeps a lizard, just yielding to his influence. Nothing can be more just than the expression of sleep in the countenance of the little divinity. His lion too is perfectly lulled, and rests his muzzle upon his fore paws as quiet as a domestic spaniel. My ill-humour at seeing this deity so grossly sculptured in the gallery, was dissipated by the gracefulness of his appearance in the tribune. I was now contented, for the artist had realized my ideas; and, if I may venture my opinion, sculpture never arrived to higher perfection, and, at the same time, kept more justly within its province. Sleeping figures with me always produce the finest illusion; but when I see an archer in the very act of discharging his arrow, a dancer with one foot in the air, or a gladiator extending his fist to all eternity, I grow tired, and view such wearisome attitudes with infinitely more admiration than pleasure.

The morning was gone before I could snatch myself from the tribune. In my way home, I looked into the cathedral, an enormous fabric, inlaid with the richest marbles, and covered with stars and chequered work, like an old-fashioned cabinet. The architect seems to have turned his building inside out; nothing in art being more ornamented than the exterior, and few churches so simple within. The nave is vast and solemn, the dome amazingly spacious, with the high altar in its centre, inclosed by a circular arcade near two hundred feet in diameter. There is something imposing in this decoration, as it suggests the idea of a sanctuary, into which none but the holy ought to penetrate. However profane I might feel myself, I took the liberty of entering, and sat down in a niche. Not a ray of light reaches this sacred inclosure, but through the medium of narrow windows, high in the dome, and richly painted. A sort of yellow tint predominates, which gives additional solemnity to the altar, and paleness to the votary before it. I was sensible of the effect, and obtained at least the colour of sanctity.

Having remained some time in this pious hue, I returned home and feasted upon grapes and ortolans with great edification; then walked to one of the bridges across the Arno, and from thence to the garden of Boboli, which lies behind the Grand Duke's palace, stretched out on the side of a mountain. I ascended terrace after terrace, robed by a thick underwood of bay and myrtle, above which rise several nodding towers, and a long sweep of venerable wall, almost entirely concealed by ivy. You would have been enraptured with the broad masses of shade and dusky alleys that opened as I advanced, with white statues of fauns and sylvans glimmering amongst them; some of which pour water into sarcophagi of the purest marble, covered with antique relievos. The capitals of columns and ancient friezes are scattered about as seats.

On these I reposed myself, and looked up to the cypress groves which spring above the thickets; then, plunging into their retirements, I followed a winding path, which led me by a series of steep ascents to a green platform overlooking the whole extent of wood, with Florence deep beneath, and the tops of the hills which encircle it jagged with pines; here and there a convent, or villa, whitening in the sun. This scene extends as far as the eye can reach.

Still ascending I attained the brow of the eminence, and had nothing but the fortress of Belvedere, and two or three open porticos above me. On this elevated situation, I found several walks of trellis-work, clothed with luxuriant vines. A colossal statue of Ceres, her hands extended in the act of scattering fertility over the country, crowns the summit.

Descending alley after alley, and bank after bank, I came to the orangery in front of the palace, disposed in a grand amphitheatre, with marble niches relieved by dark foliage, out of which spring cedars and tall aerial cypresses. This spot brought the scenery of an antique Roman garden so vividly into my mind, that, lost in the train of recollections this idea excited, I expected every instant to be called to the table of Lucullus hard by, in one of the porticos, and to stretch myself on his purple triclinias; but waiting in vain for a summons till the approach of night, I returned delighted with a ramble that had led my imagination so far into antiquity.

Friday, Sept. 16.—My impatience to hear Pacchierotti called me up with the sun. I blessed a day which was to give me the greatest of musical pleasures, and travelled gaily towards Lucca, along a fertile plain, bounded by rocky hills, and scattered over with towns and villages. We passed Pistoia in haste, and about three in the afternoon entered the Lucchese territory, by a clean paved road, which runs through chestnut copses bordered with broom in blossom, and an immense variety of heaths; a red soil peeping forth from the vegetation, adds to the richness of the landscape, which swells all the way into gentle acclivities: and at about seven or eight miles from the city spreads all round into mountains, green to their very summits, and diversified with gardens and palaces. More pleasing scenery can with difficulty be imagined: I was quite charmed with beholding it, as I knew very well that the opera would keep me a long while chained down in its neighbourhood.

Happy for me that the environs of Lucca were so beautiful; since I defy almost any city to contain more ugliness within its walls. Narrow streets and dismal alleys; wide gutters and cracked pavements; everybody in black, according with the gloom of their habitations, which however are large and lofty enough of conscience; but having all grated windows, they convey none but dark and dungeon-like ideas. My spirits fell many degrees upon entering this sable capital; and when I found Friday was meagre day, in every sense of the word, with its inhabitants, and no opera to be performed, I grew wofully out of humour. Instead of a delightful symphony, I heard nothing for some time but the clatter of plates and the swearing of waiters.

Amongst the number of my tormentors was a whole Genoese family of distinction; very fat and sleek, and

terribly addicted to the violin. Overhearing my sad complaint for want of music, they most generously determined I should have my fill of it, and, getting together a few scrapers, began such an academia as drove me to the further end of a very spacious apartment, whilst they possessed the other. The hopes and heir of the family—a chubby dolt of between eighteen and nineteen, his uncle, a thickset smiling personage, and a brace of innocent-looking younger brothers, plied their fiddles with a hearty good will, wagged their double chins, and played out of tune with the most happy unconsciousness, as amateurs are apt to do ninety-nine times in a hundred.

Pacchierotti, whom they all worshipped in their heavy way, sat silent the while in a corner; the second soprano warbled, not absolutely ill, at the harpsichord; whilst the old lady, young lady, and attendant females, kept ogling him with great perseverance. Those who could not get in, squinted through the crevices of the door. Abbates and greyhounds were fidgetting continually without. In short, I was so persecuted with questions, criticisms, and concertos, that, pleading headache and indisposition, I escaped about ten o'clock, and shook myself when I got safe to my apartment like a worried spaniel.

LETTER XII.

Rambles among the hills.—Excursions with Pacchierotti.—He catches cold in the mountains.—The whole Republic is in commotion, and send a deputation to remonstrate with the Singer on his imprudence.—The Conte Nobili.—Hill scenery.—Princely Castle and Gardens of the Garzoni Family.—Colossal Statue of Fame.—Grove of Ilex.—Endless bowers of Vines.—Delightful Wood of the Marchese Mansi.—Return to Lucca.

Lucca, Sept. 25, 1780.

You ask me how I pass my time. Generally upon the hills, in wild spots where the arbutus flourishes; from whence I may catch a glimpse of the distant sea; my horse tied to a cypress, and myself cast upon the grass, like Palmerin of Oliva, with a tablet and pencil in my hand, a basket of grapes by my side, and a crooked stick to shake down the chestnuts. I have bidden adieu, several days ago, to the visits, dinners, conversazioni, and glories of the town, and only go thither in an evening, just time enough for the grand march which precedes Pacchierotti in Quinto Fabio. Sometimes he accompanies me in my excursions, to the utter discontent of the Lucchese, who swear I shall ruin their Opera, by leading him such extravagant rambles amongst the mountains, and exposing him to the inclemency of winds and showers. One day they made a vehement remonstrance, but in vain; for the next, away we trotted over hill and dale, and stayed so late in the evening, that a cold and hoarseness were the consequence.

The whole republic was thrown into commotion, and some of its prime ministers were deputed to harangue Pacchierotti upon the rides he had committed. Had the safety of their mighty state depended upon this imprudent excursion, they could not have vociferated with greater violence. You know I am rather energetic, and, to say truth, I had very nearly got into a scrape of importance, and drawn down the execrations of the Gonfalonier and all his council upon my head by openly declaring our intention of taking, next morning, another ride over the rocks, and absolutely losing ourselves in the clouds which veil their acclivities. These terrible threats were put into execution, and yesterday we made a tour of about thirty miles upon the high lands, and visited a variety of castles and palaces.

The Conte Nobili, a noble Lucchese, born in Flanders and educated at Paris, was our conductor. He possesses great elegance of imagination, and a degree of sensibility rarely met with. The way did not appear tedious in such company. The sun was tempered by light clouds, and a soft autumnal haze rested upon the hills, covered with shrubs and olives. The distant plains and forests appeared tinted with so deep a blue, that I began to think the azure so prevalent in Velvet Breughel's landscapes is hardly exaggerated.

After riding for six or seven miles along the cultivated levels, we began to ascend a rough slope, overgrown with chestnuts; a great many loose fragments and stumps of ancient pomegranates perplexed our route, which continued, turning and winding through this wilderness, till it opened on a sudden to the side of a lofty mountain, covered with tufted groves, amongst which hangs the princely castle of the Garzoni, on the very side of a precipice.

Alcina could not have chosen a more romantic situation. The garden lies extended beneath, gay with flowers, and glittering with compartments of spar, which, though in no great purity of taste, strikes for the first time with the effect of enchantment. Two large marble basins, with jets-d'eau, seventy feet in height, divide the parterres; from the extremity of which rises a rude cliff, shaded with cedar and ilex, and cut into terraces.

Leaving our horses at the great gate of this magic enclosure, we passed through the spray of the fountains, and mounting an endless flight of steps, entered an alley of oranges, and gathered ripe fruit from the trees. Whilst we were thus employed, the sun broke from the clouds, and lighted up the green of the vegetation; at the same time spangling the waters, which pour copiously down a succession of rocky terraces, and sprinkle the impending citron-trees with perpetual dew. These streams issue from a chasm in the cliff, surrounded by cypresses, which conceal by their thick branches a pavilion with baths. Above arises a colossal statue of Fame, boldly carved, and in the very act of starting from the precipices. A narrow path leads up to the feet of the goddess, on which I reclined; whilst a vast column of water arching over my head, fell, without even wetting me with its spray, into the depths below.

I could hardly prevail upon myself to abandon this cool recess; which the fragrance of bay and orange, maintained by constant showers, rendered uncommonly luxurious. At last I consented to move on, through a dark wall of ilex, which, to the credit of Signor Garzoni be it spoken, is suffered to grow as wild as it pleases. This grove is suspended on the mountain side, whose summit is clothed with a boundless wood of olives, and forms, by its willowy colour, a striking contrast with the deep verdure of its base.

After resting a few moments in the shade, we proceeded to a long avenue, bordered by aloes in bloom, forming majestic pyramids of flowers thirty feet high. This led us to the palace, which was soon run over. Then, mounting our horses, we wound amongst sunny vales, and inclosures with myrtle hedges, till we came to a rapid steep. We felt the heat most powerfully in ascending it, and were glad to take refuge under a continued bower of vines, which runs for miles along its summit. These arbours afforded us both shade and refreshment; I fell upon the clusters which formed our ceiling, like a native of the north, unused to such luxuriance: one of those Goths, Gray so poetically describes, who

Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,

And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.

I wish you had journeyed with us under this fruitful canopy, and observed the partial sunshine through its transparent leaves, and the glimpses of the blue sky it every now and then admitted. I say only every now and then, for in most places a sort of verdant gloom prevailed, exquisitely agreeable in so hot a day.

But such luxury did not last, you may suppose, for ever. We were soon forced from our covert, and obliged to traverse a mountain exposed to the sun, which had dispersed every cloud, and shone with intolerable brightness. On the other side of this extensive eminence lies a pastoral hillock, surrounded by others, woody and irregular. Wide vineyards and fields of Indian corn lay between, across which the Conte Nobili conducted us to his house, where we found prepared a very comfortable dinner. We drank the growth of the spot, and defied the richest wines of Constantia to exceed it.

Afterwards, retiring into a wood of the Marchese Mansi, with neat pebble walks and trickling rivulets, we took coffee and loitered till sunset. It was then time to return, as the mists were beginning to rise from the valleys. The calm and silence of evening threw us into our reveries. We went pacing along heedlessly, just as our horses pleased, without hearing any sound but their steps.

Between nine and ten we entered the gates of Lucca. Pacchierotti coughed, and half its inhabitants wished us at the devil.

LETTER XIII.

Set out for Pisa.—The Duomo.—Interior of the Cathedral.—The Campo Santo.—Solitude of the streets at midday.—Proceed to Leghorn.—Beauty of the road.—Tower of the Fanale.

Leghorn, October 2nd, 1780.

THIS morning we set out for Pisa. No sooner had we passed the highly cultivated garden-grounds about Lucca than we found ourselves in narrow roads, shut in by vines and grassy banks of canes and osiers, rising high above our carriage and waving their leaves in the air. Through the openings which sometimes intervened we discovered a variety of hillocks clothed with shrubs, ruined towers looking out of the bushes, not one without a romantic tale attending it.

This sort of scenery lasted till, passing the baths, we beheld Pisa rising from an extensive plain, the most open we had as yet seen in Italy, crossed by an aqueduct. We were set down immediately before the Duomo, which stands insulated in a vast green area, and is perhaps the most curious edifice my eyes ever viewed. Do not ask of what shape or architecture; it is almost impossible to tell, so great is the confusion of ornaments. The dome gives the mass an oriental appearance, which helped to bewilder me; in short, I have dreamed of such buildings, but little thought they existed. On one side you survey the famous tower, as perfectly awry as I expected; on the other the baptistery, a circular edifice distinct from the church and right opposite its principal entrance, crowded with sculptures and topped by the strangest of cupolas.

Having indulged our curiosity with this singular prospect for some moments, we entered the cathedral and admired the stately columns of porphyry and of the rarest marbles, supporting a roof which, like the rest of the building, shines with gold. A pavement of the brightest mosaic completes its magnificence: all around are sculptures by Michael Angelo Buonarotti, and paintings by the most distinguished artists. We examined them with due attention, and then walked down the nave and remarked the striking effect of the baptistery, seen in perspective through the bronze portals, which you know, I suppose, are covered with relievos of the finest workmanship. These noble valves were thrown wide open, and we passed between them to the baptistery, where stands an alabaster font, constructed after the primitive ritual and exquisitely wrought.

Our next object was the Campo Santo, which forms one side of the area in which the cathedral is situated. The walls, and Gothic tabernacle above the entrance, rising from the level turf and preserving a neat straw colour, appear as fresh as if built within the present century. Our guide unlocking the gates, we entered a spacious cloister, forming an oblong quadrangle, which encloses the sacred earth of Jerusalem, conveyed hither about the period of the crusades, the days of Pisanese prosperity. The holy mould produces a rampant crop of weeds, but none are permitted to spring from the pavement, which is entirely composed of tombs with slabs, smoothly laid and covered with monumental inscriptions. Ranges of slender pillars, formed of the whitest marble and glistening in the sun, support the arcade of the cloister, which is carved with innumerable stars and roses, partly Gothic and partly Saracenic. Strange paintings of hell and the devil, mostly taken from Dante's rhapsodies, cover the walls of these fantastic galleries, attributed to the venerable Giotto and Bufalmacco, whom Boccaccio mentions in his Decamerone.

Beneath, along the base of the columns, are placed, to my no small surprise, rows of pagan sarcophagi; I could not have supposed the Pisanese sufficiently tolerant to admit profane sculptures within such consecrated precincts. However, there they are, as well as fifty other contradictory ornaments.

I was quite seized by the strangeness of the place, and paced fifty times round and round the cloisters, discovering at every time some odd novelty. When tired, I seated myself on a fair slab of *giallo antico*, that looked a little cleaner than its neighbours (which I only mention to identify the precise point of view), and looking through the filigreed tracery of the arches observed the domes of the cathedral, cupola of the baptistery, and roof of the leaning tower rising above the leads, and forming the strangest assemblage of pinnacles perhaps in Europe. The place is neither sad nor solemn; the arches are airy, the pillars light, and there is so much caprice, such an exotic look in the whole scene, that without any violent effort of fancy one might imagine one's self in fairy land. Every object is new, every ornament original; the mixture of antique sarcophagi with Gothic sepulchres, completes the vagaries of the prospect, to which, one day or other, I think of returning, to hear visionary music and commune with sprites, for I shall never find in the whole universe besides so whimsical a theatre.

The heat was so powerful that all the inhabitants of Pisa showed their wisdom by keeping within doors. Not an animal appeared in the streets, except five camels laden with water, stalking along a range of garden walls and pompous mansions, with an awning before every door. We were obliged to follow their steps, at least a quarter of a mile, before we reached our inn. Ice was the first thing I sought after, and when I had swallowed an unreasonable

portion, I began not to think quite so much of the deserts of Africa, as the heat and the camels had induced me to do a moment ago.

Early in the afternoon, we proceeded to Leghorn through a wild tract of forest, somewhat in the style of our English parks. The trees in some places formed such shady arbours, that we could not resist the desire of walking beneath them, and were well rewarded; for after struggling through a rough thicket, we entered a lawn hemmed in by oaks and chesnuts, which extends several leagues along the coast and conceals the prospect of the ocean; but we heard its murmurs.

Nothing could be smoother or more verdant than the herbage, which was sprinkled with daisies and purple crocuses as in the month of May. I felt all the genial sensations of Spring steal into my bosom, and was greatly delighted upon discovering vast bushes of myrtle in the fullest and most luxuriant bloom. The softness of the air, the sound of the distant surges, the evening gleams, and repose of the landscape, quieted the tumult of my spirits, and I experienced the calm of my infant hours. I lay down in the open turf-walks between the shrubberies, and during a few moments had forgotten every care; but when I began to enquire into my happiness, I found it vanish. I felt myself without those I love most, in situations they would have warmly admired, and without them these pleasant lawns and woodlands looked pleasant in vain.

We had not left this woody region far behind, when the Fanale began to lift itself above the horizon—the very tower you have so often mentioned; the sky and ocean glowing with amber light, and the ships out at sea appearing in a golden haze, of which we have no conception in our northern climates. Such a prospect, together with the fresh gales from the Mediterranean, charmed me; I hurried immediately to the port and sat on a reef of rocks, listening to the waves that broke amongst them.

LETTER XIV.

The Mole at Leghorn.—Coast scattered over with Watch-towers.—Branches of rare Coral unexpectedly acquired.

October 3rd, 1780.

I WENT, as you would have done, to walk on the mole as soon as the sun began to shine upon it. Its construction you are no stranger to; therefore I think I may spare myself the trouble of saying anything about it, except that the port which it embraces is no longer crowded. Instead of ten ranks of vessels there are only three, and those consist chiefly of Corsican galleys, that look as poor and tattered as their masters. Not much attention did I bestow upon such objects, but, taking my seat at the extremity of the quay, surveyed the smooth plains of ocean, the coast scattered over with watchtowers, and the rocky isle of Gorgona, emerging from the morning mists, which still lingered upon the horizon.

Whilst I was musing upon the scene, and calling up all that train of ideas before my imagination, which pleased your own upon beholding it, an ancient figure, with a beard that would have suited a sea-god, stepped out of a boat, and tottering up the steps of the quay, presented himself before me with a basket in his hand. He stayed dripping a few moments before he pronounced a syllable, and when he began his discourse, I was in doubt whether I should not have moved off in a hurry, there was something so wan and singular in his countenance. Except this being, no other was visible for a quarter of a mile at least. I knew not what strange adventure I might be upon the point of commencing, or what message I was to expect from the submarine divinities. However, after all my conjectures, the figure turned out to be no other than an old fisherman, who having picked up a few branches of the rarest species of coral, offered them to sale. I eagerly made the purchase, and thought myself a favourite of Neptune, since he allowed me to acquire, with such facility, some of his most beautiful ornaments.

My bargain thus expeditiously concluded, I ran along the quay with my basket of coral, and, taking boat, was rowed back to the gate of the port. The carriage waited there; I shut myself up in the grateful shade of green blinds, and was driven away at a rate that favoured my impatience. We bowled smoothly over the lawns described in my last letter, amongst myrtles in flower, that would have done honour to the island of Juan Fernandez.

Arrived at Pisa, I scarcely allowed myself a moment to revisit the Campo Santo, but hurried on to Lucca, and threw the whole idle town into a stare by my speedy return.

LETTER XV.

Florence again.—Palazzo Vecchio.—View on the Arno.—Sculptures by Cellini and John of Bologna.—Contempt shown by the Austrians to the memory of the House of Medici.—Evening visit to the Garden of Boboli.—The Opera.—Miserable singing.—A Neapolitan Duchess.

Florence, October 5th, 1780.

IT was not without regret that I forced myself from Lucca. We had all the same road to go over again, that brought us to this important republic, but we broke down by way of variety. The wind was chill, the atmosphere damp and clogged with unwholesome vapours, through which we were forced to walk for a league, whilst our chaise lagged after us.

Taking shelter in a miserable cottage, we remained shivering and shaking till the carriage was in some sort of order, and then proceeded so slowly that we did not arrive at Florence till late in the evening, and took possession of an apartment over the Arno, which being swollen with rains roared like a mountain torrent. Throwing open my windows, I viewed its agitated course by the light of the moon, half concealed in stormy clouds, which hung above the fortress of the Belvedere. I sat contemplating the effect of the shadows on the bridge, on the heights of Boboli, and the mountain covered with pale olive groves, amongst which a convent is situated, till the moon sank into the darkest quarter of the sky, and a bell began to toll. Its mournful sound filled me with gloomy recollections. I closed the casements, and read till midnight some dismal memoir of conspiracies and assassinations, Guelphs and Ghibelines, the black story of ancient Florence.

October 6th.

EVERY cloud was dispersed when I arose, and the purity and transparence of the æther added new charms to the picturesque eminences around. I felt quite revived by this exhilarating prospect, and walked in the splendour of sunshine to the porticos beneath the famous gallery, then to an antient castle, raised in the days of the Republic, which fronts the grand piazza. Colossal statues and trophies badly carved in the true spirit of the antique, are placed before it. On one side a fountain, clung round with antick figures of bronze, by John of Bologna. On the other, three lofty pointed arches, and under one of them the Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini.

Having examined some groups of sculptures by Baccio Bandinelli and other mighty artists, I entered the court of the castle, dark and deep, as if hewn out of a rock, surrounded by a vaulted arcade covered with arabesque ornaments and supported by pillars almost as uncouthly designed as those of Persepolis. In the midst appears a marble fount with an image of bronze, that looks quite strange and cabalistic. I leaned against it to look up to the summits of the walls, which rise to a vast height, from whence springs a slender tower. Above, in the apartments of the castle, are still preserved numbers of curious cabinets, tables of inlaid gems, and a thousand rarities, collected by the house of Medici, and not yet entirely frittered away and disposed of by public sale.

It was not without indignation that I learnt this new mark of contempt which the Austrians bestow on the memory of those illustrious patrons of the Arts; whom, being unwilling to imitate, they affect to despise as a race of merchants whose example it would be abasing their dignity to follow.

I could have stayed much longer to enjoy the novelty and strangeness of the place; but it was right to pay some compliments of form. That duty over, I dined in peace and solitude, and repaired, as evening drew on, to the thickets of Boboli.

What a serene sky! what mellowness in the tints of the mountains! A purple haze concealed the bases, whilst their summits were invested with saffron light, discovering every white cot and every copse that clothed their declivities. The prospect widened as I ascended the terraces of the garden.

After traversing many long dusky alleys, I reached the opening on the brow of the hill, and seating myself under the statue of Ceres, took a sketch of the huge mountainous cupola of the Duomo, the adjoining lovely tower and one more massive in its neighbourhood, built not improbably in the style of ancient Etruria. Beyond this historic group of buildings a plain stretches itself far and wide, most richly studded with villas and gardens, and groves of pine and olive, quite to the feet of the mountains.

Having marked the sun's going down and all the soothing effects cast by his declining rays on every object, I went through a plat of vines to a favourite haunt of mine:—a little garden of the most fragrant roses, with a spring under a rustic arch of grotto-work fringed with ivy. Thousands of fish inhabit here, of that beautiful glittering species which comes from China. This golden nation were leaping after insects as I stood gazing upon the deep clear water, listening to the drops that trickle from the cove. Opposite to which, at the end of a green alley, you discover an oval basin, and in the midst of it an antique statue full of that graceful languor so peculiarly Grecian.

Whilst I was musing on the margin of the spring (for I returned to it after casting a look upon the sculpture), the moon rose above the tufted foliage of the terraces, which I descended by several flights of steps, with marble balustrades crowned by vases of aloes.

It was now seven o'clock, and all the world were going to my Lord T——'s, who lives in a fine house all over blue and silver, with stuffed birds, alabaster cupids, and a thousand prettinesses more; but to say truth, neither he nor his abode are worth mentioning. I found a deal of slopping and sipping of tea going forward, and many dawdlers assembled.

As I can say little good of the party, I had better shut the door, and conduct you to the Opera, which is really a striking spectacle. The first soprano put my patience to severe proof, during the few minutes I attended. You never beheld such a porpoise. If these animals were to sing, I should conjecture it would be in his style. You may suppose how often I invoked Pacchierotti, and regretted the lofty melody of Quinto Fabio. Everybody seemed as well contented as if there were no such thing as good singing in the world, except a Neapolitan duchess who delighted me by her vivacity. We took our fill of maledictions, and went home equally pleased with each other for having mutually execrated both singers and audience.

LETTER XVI.

Detained at Florence by reports of the Malaria at Rome.—Ascend one of the hills celebrated by Dante.—View from its brow.—Chapel designed by Michael Angelo.—Birth of a Princess.—The christening.—Another evening visit in the woods of Boboli.

October 22nd, 1780.

THEY say the air is worse this year at Rome than ever, and that it would be madness to go thither during its malign influence. This was very bad news indeed to one heartily tired of Florence, at least of its society. Merciful powers! what a set harbour within its walls! * * * You may imagine I do not take vehement delight in this company, though very ingenious, praiseworthy, &c. The woods of the Cascini shelter me every morning; and there grows an old crooked ilex at their entrance, twisting round a pine, upon whose branches I sit for hours.

In the afternoon I am irresistibly attracted to the thickets of Boboli. The other evening, however, I varied my walks, and ascended one of those pleasant hills celebrated by Dante, which rise in the vicinity of the city, and command a variegated scene of towers, villas, cottages, and gardens. On the right, as you stand upon the brow, appears Fiesole with its turrets and white houses, covering a rocky mount to the left, the Val d'Arno lost in the haze of the horizon. A Franciscan convent stands on the summit of the eminence, wrapped up in antient cypresses, which hinder its holy inhabitants from seeing too much of so gay a view. The paved ascent leading up to their abode receives also a shade from the cypresses which border it. Beneath this venerable avenue, crosses with inscriptions are placed at certain distances, to mark the various moments of Christ's passion; as when fainting under his burden he halted to repose himself, or when he met his afflicted mother.

Above, at the end of the perspective, rises a chapel designed by M. A. Buonarrotti; further on, an antient church, encrusted with white marble, porphyry, and verd antique. The interior presents a crowded assemblage of ornaments,

elaborate mosaic pavements and inlaid work without end. The high altar is placed in a semicircular recess, which, like the apsis of the church at Torcello, glitters with barbaric paintings on a gold ground, and receives a fervid glow of light from five windows, filled up with transparent marble clouded like tortoiseshell. A smooth polished staircase leads to this mysterious place: another brought me to a subterraneous chapel, supported by confused groups of variegated pillars, just visible by the glimmer of lamps.

Passing on not unawed, I followed some flights of steps, which terminate in the neat cloisters of the convent, in perfect preservation, but totally deserted. Ranges of citron and aloes fill up the quadrangle, whose walls are hung with superstitious pictures most singularly fancied. The Jesuits were the last tenants of this retirement, and seem to have had great reason for their choice. Its peace and stillness delighted me.

Next day I was engaged by a very opposite scene, though much against my will. Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess having produced a princess in the night, everybody put on grand gala in the morning, and I was carried, along with the glittering tide of courtiers, ministers, and ladies, to see the christening. After the Grand Duke had talked politics for some time, the doors of a temporary chapel were thrown open. Trumpets flourished, processions marched, and the archbishop began the ceremony at an altar of massive gold, placed under a yellow silk pavilion, with pyramids of lights before it. Wax tapers, though it was noon-day, shone in every corner of the apartments. Two rows of pages, gorgeously accoutred, and holding enormous torches, stood on each side his Royal Highness, and made him the prettiest courtesies imaginable, to the sound of an indifferent band of music, though led by Nardini. The poor old archbishop, who looked very piteous and saint-like, led the *Te Deum* with a quavering voice, and the rest followed him with thoughtless expedition.

The ceremony being despatched, (for his Royal Highness was in a mighty fidget to shrink back into his beloved obscurity,) the crowd dispersed, and I went, with a few others, to dine at my Lord T——'s.

Evening drawing on, I ran to throw myself once more into the woods of Boboli, and remained till it was night in their recesses. Really this garden is enough to bewilder an enthusiastic spirit; there is something so solemn in its shades, its avenues, and spires of cypresses. When I had mused for many an interesting hour amongst them, I emerged into the orangery before the palace, which overlooks the largest district of the town, and beheld, as I slowly descended the road which leads up to it, certain bright lights glancing about the cupola of the *Duomo* and the points of the highest towers. At first I thought them meteors, or those illusive fires which often dance before the eye of my imagination; but soon I was convinced of their reality; for in a few minutes the lantern of the cathedral was lighted up by agents really invisible; whilst a stream of torches ran along the battlements of the old castle which I mentioned in a former letter.

I enjoyed this prospect at a distance: when near, my pleasure was greatly diminished, for half the fish in the town were frying to rejoice the hearts of his Royal Highness's loyal subjects, and bonfires blazing in every street and alley. Hubbubs and stinks of every denomination drove me quickly to the theatre; but that was all glitter and glare. No taste, no arrangement, paltry looking-glasses, and rat's-tail candles.

LETTER XVII.

Pilgrimage to Valombrosa.—Rocky Steeps.—Groves of Pine.—Vast Amphitheatre of Lawns and Meadows.—Reception at the Convent.—Wild Glens where the Hermit Gualbertus had his Cell.—Conversation with the holy Fathers.—Legendary Tales.—The consecrated Cleft.—The Romitorio.—Extensive View of the Val d'Arno.—Return to Florence.

October 23rd, 1780.

Do you recollect our evening rambles last year, in the valley at F——, under the hill of pines? I remember we often fancied the scene like Valombrosa; and vowed, if ever an occasion offered, to visit its deep retirements. I had put off the execution of this pilgrimage from day to day till the warm weather was gone; and the Florentines declared I should be frozen if I attempted it. Everybody stared last night at the Opera when I told them I was going to bury myself in fallen leaves, and hear no music but their rustlings.

Mr. —— was just as eager as myself to escape the chit-chat and nothingness of Florence; so we finally determined upon our expedition, and mounting our horses, set out this morning, happily without any company but the spirit which led us along. We had need of inspiration, since nothing else, I think, would have tempted us over such dreary, uninteresting hillocks as rise from the banks of the Arno. The hoary olive is their principal vegetation; so that Nature, in this part of the country, seems in a withering decrepit state, and may not unaptly be compared to "an old woman clothed in grey." However, we did not suffer the prospect to damp our enthusiasm, which was the better preserved for Valombrosa.

About half way, our palfreys thought proper to look out for some oats, and I to creep into a sort of granary in the midst of a barren waste, scattered over with white rocks, that reflected more heat than I cared for, although I had been told snow and ice were to be my portion. Seating myself on the floor between heaps of corn, I reached down a few purple clusters of Muscadine grapes, which hung to dry in the ceiling, and amused myself very pleasantly with them till the horses had finished their meal and it was lawful to set forwards. We met with nothing but rocky steeps shattered into fragments, and such roads as half inclined us to repent our undertaking; but cold was not yet amongst the number of our evils.

At last, after ascending a tedious while, we began to feel the wind blow sharply from the peaks of the mountains, and to hear the murmur of groves of pine. A paved path leads across them, quite darkened by boughs, which meeting over our heads cast a gloom and a chillness below that would have stopped the proceedings of reasonable mortals, and sent them to bask in the plain; but, being not so easily discomfited, we threw ourselves boldly into the forest. It presented that boundless confusion of tall straight stems I am so fond of, and exhaled a fresh aromatic odour that revived my spirits.

The cold to be sure was piercing; but setting that at defiance, we galloped on, and entered a vast amphitheatre of lawns and meadows surrounded by thick woods beautifully green. The steep cliffs and mountains which guard this retired valley are clothed with beech to their very summits; and on their slopes, whose smoothness and verdure equal our English pastures, were dispersed large flocks of sheep. The herbage, moistened by streams which fall from

the eminences, has never been known to fade; thus, whilst the chief part of Tuscany is parched by the heats of summer, these upland meadows retain the freshness of spring. I regretted not having visited them sooner, as autumn had already made great havock amongst the foliage. Showers of leaves blew full in our faces as we rode towards the convent, placed at an extremity of the vale and sheltered by firs and chesnuts towering one above another.

Whilst we were alighting before the entrance, two fathers came out and received us into the peace of their retirement. We found a blazing fire, and tables spread very comfortably before it, round which five or six overgrown friars were lounging, who seemed by the sleekness and rosy hue of their countenances not totally to have despised this mortal existence.

My letters of recommendation soon brought the heads of the order about me, fair round figures, such as a Chinese would have placed in his pagoda. I could willingly have dispensed with their attention; yet to avoid this was scarcely within the circle of possibility. All dinner, therefore, we endured an infinity of nonsensical questions; but as soon as that was over, I lost no time in repairing to the lawns and forests. The fathers made a shift to waddle after, as fast and as complaisantly as they were able, but were soon distanced.

Now I found myself at liberty, and pursued a narrow path overhung by rock, with bushy chesnuts starting from the crevices. This led me into wild glens of beech trees, mostly decayed and covered with moss: several were fallen. It was amongst these the holy hermit Gualbertus had his cell. I rested a moment upon one of their huge branches, listening to the roar of a waterfall which the wood concealed. The dry leaves chased each other down the steeps on the edge of the torrents with hollow rustlings, whilst the solemn wave of the forests above most perfectly answered the idea I had formed of Valombrosa,

—where the Etrurian shades
High overarch'd embower.

The scene was beginning to take effect, and the genius of Milton to move across his favourite valley, when the fathers arrived puffing and blowing, by an easier ascent than I knew of.

"You have missed the way," cried the youngest; "the hermitage, with the fine picture by Andrèa del Sarto, which all the English admire, is on the opposite side of the wood: there! don't you see it on the point of the cliff?"

"Yes, yes," said I a little peevishly; "I wonder the devil has not pushed it down long ago; it seems to invite his kick."

"Satan," answered the old Pagod very dryly, "is full of malice; but whoever drinks of a spring which the Lord causeth to flow near the hermitage is freed from his illusions."

"Are they so?" replied I with a sanctified accent, "then I pray thee conduct me thither, for I have great need of such salutary waters."

The youngest father shook his head, as much as to say, "This is nothing more than a heretic's whim."

The senior set forwards with greater piety, and began some legendary tales of the kind which my soul loveth. He pointed to a chasm in the cliff, round which we were winding by a spiral path, where Gualbertus used to sleep, and, turning himself towards the west, see a long succession of saints and martyrs sweeping athwart the sky, and gilding the clouds with far brighter splendours than the setting sun. Here he rested till his last hour, when the bells of the convent beneath (which till that moment would have made dogs howl had there been any within its precincts) struck out such harmonious jingling that all the country around was ravished, and began lifting up their eyes with singular devotion, when, behold! light dawned, cherubim appeared, and birds chirped although it was midnight. "Alas! alas! what would I not give to witness such a spectacle, and read my prayer-book by the effulgence of opening heaven!"

However, willing to see something at least, I crept into the consecrated cleft and extended myself on its rugged surface. A very penitential couch! but commanding glorious prospects of the world below, which lay this evening in deep blue shade; the sun looking red and angry through misty vapours, which prevented our discovering the Tuscan sea.

Finding the rock as damp as might be expected, I soon shifted my quarters, and followed the youngest father up to the Romitorio, a snug little hermitage, with a neat chapel, and altar-piece by Andrèa del Sarto, which I should have examined more minutely had not the wild and mountainous forest scenery possessed my whole attention. I just stayed to taste the holy fountain; and then, escaping from my conductors, ran eagerly down the path, leaping over the springs that crossed it, and entered a lawn of the smoothest turf grazed by sheep. Beyond this opening rises a second, hemmed in with thickets; and still higher, a third, whence a forest of young pines spires up into a lofty theatre terminated by peaks, half concealed by a thick mantle of beech tinged with ruddy brown. Pausing in the midst of the lawns, and looking upward to the sweeps of wood which surrounded me, I addressed my orisons to the genius of the place, and prayed that I might once more return into its bosom, and be permitted to bring you along with me, for surely such meads, such groves, were formed for our enjoyment!

This little rite performed, I walked on quite to the extremity of the pastures, traversed a thicket, and found myself on the edge of precipices, beneath whose base the whole Val d'Arno lies expanded. I listened to distant murmurings in the plain, saw wreaths of smoke rising from the cottages, and viewed a vast tract of grey barren country, which evening rendered still more desolate, bounded by the black mountain of Radicofani. Then, turning round, I beheld the whole extent of rock and forest, the groves of beech, and wilds above the convent, glowing with fiery red, for the sun, making a last effort to pierce the vapours, produced this effect; which was the more striking, as the sky was gloomy, and the rest of the prospect of a melancholy blue.

Returning slowly homeward, I marked the warm glow deserting the eminences, and heard the sullen toll of a bell. The young boys of the seminary were moving in a body to their dark enclosure, all dressed in black. Many of them looked pale and wan. I wished to ask them whether the solitude of Valombrosa suited their age and vivacity; but a tall spectre of a priest drove them along like a herd, and presently, the gates opening, I saw them no more.

The night was growing chill, the winds boisterous, and in the intervals of the gusts I had the addition of a lamentable screech owl to depress my spirits. Upon the whole, I was not at all concerned to meet the fathers, who came out to show me to my room, and entertain me with various gossipings, both sacred and profane, till supper appeared.

Next morning, the Padre Decano gave us chocolate in his apartment; and afterwards led us round the convent, insisting most unmercifully upon our viewing every cell and every dormitory. However, I was determined to make a

full stop at the organ, one of the most harmonious I ever played upon; but placed in a deep recess, feebly lighted by lamps, not calculated to inspire triumphant voluntaries. The monks, who had all crowded into the loft in expectation of brisk jigs and lively overtures, soon retired upon hearing a strain ten times more sorrowful than that to which they were accustomed. I did not lament their departure, but played on till our horses came to the gate. We mounted, wound back through the grove of pines which protect Valombrosa from intrusion, descended the steeps, and, gaining the plains, galloped in a few hours to Florence.

LETTER XVIII.

Cathedral at Sienna.—A vaulted Chamber.—Leave Sienna.—Mountains round Radicofani.—Hunting Palace of the Grand Dukes.—A grim fraternity of Cats.—Dreary Apartment.

Sienna, October 27th, 1780.

HERE my duty of course was to see the cathedral, and I got up much earlier than I wished, in order to perform it. I wonder that our holy ancestors did not choose a mountain at once, scrape it into tabernacles, and chisel it into scripture stories. It would have cost them almost as little trouble as the building in question, which, by many of the Italian devotees to a purer style of architecture, is esteemed a masterpiece of ridiculous taste and elaborate absurdity. The front, encrusted with alabaster, is worked into a million of fretted arches and puzzling ornaments. There are statues without number, and relievos without end or meaning.

The church within is all of black and white marble alternately; the roof blue and gold, with a profusion of silken banners hanging from it; and a cornice running above the principal arcade, composed entirely of bustos representing the whole series of sovereign pontiffs, from the first Bishop of Rome to Adrian the Fourth. Pope Joan they say figured amongst them, between Leo the Fourth and Benedict the Third, till the year 1600, when some authors have asserted she was turned out, at the instance of Clement the Eighth, to make room for Zacharias the First.

I hardly knew which was the nave, or which the cross aisle, of this singular edifice, so perfect is the confusion of its parts. The pavement demands attention, being inlaid so curiously as to represent variety of histories taken from Holy Writ, and designed somewhat in the style of that hobgoblin tapestry which used to bestare the walls of our ancestors. Near the high altar stands the strangest of pulpits, supported by polished pillars of granite, rising from lions' backs, which serve as pedestals. In every corner of the place some glittering chapel or other offends or astonishes you. That, however, of the Chigi family, it must be allowed, has infinite merit with respect to design and execution; but it wants effect, as seeming out of place in this chaos of caprice and finery.

From the church I entered a vaulted chamber, erected by the Piccoliminis, filled with missals most exquisitely illuminated. The paintings in fresco on the walls are rather barbarous, though executed after the designs of the mighty Raphael; but then we must remember, he had but just escaped from Pietro Perugino.

Not staying long in the Duomo, we left Sienna in good time; and, after being shaken and tumbled in the worst roads that ever pretended to be made use of, found ourselves beneath the rough mountains round Radicofani, about seven o'clock on a cold and dismal evening. Up we toiled a steep craggy ascent, and reached at length the inn upon its summit. My heart sank when I entered a vast range of apartments, with high black rafted roofs, once intended for a hunting palace of the Grand Dukes, but now desolate and forlorn. The wind having risen, every door began to shake, and every board substituted for a window to clatter, as if the severe power who dwells on the topmost peak of Radicofani, according to its village mythologists, was about to visit his abode.

My only spell to keep him at a distance was kindling an enormous fire, whose charitable gleams cheered my spirits, and gave them a quicker flow. Yet, for some minutes, I never ceased looking, now to the right, now to the left, up at the dark beams, and down the long passages, where the pavement, broken up in several places, and earth newly strewn about, seemed to indicate that something horrid was concealed below.

A grim fraternity of cats kept whisking backwards and forwards in these dreary avenues, which I am apt to imagine is the very identical scene of a sabbath of witches at certain periods. Not venturing to explore them, I fastened my door, pitched my bed opposite the hearth which glowed with embers, and crept under the coverlids, hardly venturing to go to sleep lest I should be suddenly roused from it by I know not what terrible initiation into the mysteries of the place.

Scarce was I settled, before two or three of the brotherhood just mentioned stalked in at a little opening under the door. I insisted upon their moving off faster than they had entered, and was surprised, when midnight came, to hear nothing more than their doleful mewings echoed by the hollow walls and arches.

LETTER XIX.

Leave the gloomy precincts of Radicofani and enter the Papal territory.—Country near Aquapendente.—Shores of the Lake of Bolsena.—Forest of Oaks.—Ascend Monte Fiascone.—Inhabited Caverns.—Viterbo.—Anticipations of Rome.

Radicofani, October 28th, 1780.

I BEGIN to despair of magical adventures, since none happened at Radicofani, which Nature seems wholly to have abandoned. Not a tree, not an acre of soil, has she bestowed upon its inhabitants, who would have more excuse for practising the gloomy art than the rest of mankind. I was very glad to leave their black hills and stony wilderness behind, and, entering the Papal territory, to see some shrubs and cornfields at a distance.

Near Aquapendente, which is situated on a ledge of cliffs mantled with chesnut copses and tufted ilex, the country grew varied and picturesque. St. Lorenzo, the next post, built upon a hill, overlooks the lake of Bolsena, whose woody shores conceal many ruined buildings. We passed some of them in a retired vale, with arches from rock to rock, and grottos beneath half lost in thickets, from which rise craggy pinnacles crowned by mouldering towers; just such scenery as Polemberg and Bamboche introduce in their paintings.

Beyond these truly Italian prospects, which a mellow evening tint rendered still more interesting, a forest of oaks presents itself upon the brows of hills, which extends almost the whole way to Monte Fiascone. It was late before we ascended it. The whole country seems full of inhabited caverns, that began as night drew on to shine with fires. We saw many dark shapes glancing before them, and perhaps a subterraneous people like the Cimmerians lurk in their recesses. As we drew near Viterbo, the lights in the fields grew less and less frequent; and when we entered the town, all was total darkness.

To-morrow I hope to pay my vows before the high altar of St. Peter, and tread the Vatican. Why are you not here to usher me into the imperial city: to watch my first glance of the Coliseo: and lead me up the stairs of the Capitol? I shall rise before the sun, that I may see him set from Monte Cavallo.

LETTER XX.

Set out in the dark.—The Lago di Vico.—View of the spacious plains where the Romans reared their seat of empire.—Ancient splendour.—Present silence and desolation.—Shepherds' huts.—Wretched policy of the Papal Government.—Distant view of Rome.—Sensations on entering the City.—The Pope returning from Vespers.—St Peter's Colonnade.—Interior of the Church.—Reveries.—A visionary scheme.—The Pantheon.

Rome, October 29th, 1780.

WE set out in the dark. Morning dawned over the Lago di Vico; its waters of a deep ultramarine blue, and its surrounding forests catching the rays of the rising sun. It was in vain I looked for the cupola of St. Peter's upon descending the mountains beyond Viterbo. Nothing but a sea of vapours was visible.

At length they rolled away, and the spacious plains began to show themselves, in which the most warlike of nations reared their seat of empire. On the left, afar off, rises the rugged chain of Apennines, and on the other side, a shining expanse of ocean terminates the view. It was upon this vast surface so many illustrious actions were performed, and I know not where a mighty people could have chosen a grander theatre. Here was space for the march of armies, and verge enough for encampments: levels for martial games, and room for that variety of roads and causeways that led from the capital to Ostia. How many triumphant legions have trodden these pavements! how many captive kings! What throngs of cars and chariots once glittered on their surface! savage animals dragged from the interior of Africa; and the ambassadors of Indian princes, followed by their exotic train, hastening to implore the favour of the senate!

During many ages, this eminence commanded almost every day such illustrious scenes; but all are vanished: the splendid tumult is passed away: silence and desolation remain. Dreary flats thinly scattered over with ilex, and barren hillocks crowned by solitary towers, were the only objects we perceived for several miles. Now and then we passed a few black ill-favoured sheep straggling by the way's side, near a ruined sepulchre, just such animals as an ancient would have sacrificed to the Manes. Sometimes we crossed a brook, whose ripples were the only sounds which broke the general stillness, and observed the shepherds' huts on its banks, propped up with broken pedestals and marble friezes. I entered one of them, whose owner was abroad tending his herds, and began writing upon the sand and murmuring a melancholy song. Perhaps the dead listened to me from their narrow cells. The living I can answer for: they were far enough removed.

You will not be surprised at the dark tone of my musings in so sad a scene, especially as the weather lowered; and you are well acquainted how greatly I depend upon skies and sunshine. To-day I had no blue firmament to revive my spirits; no genial gales, no aromatic plants to irritate my nerves and lend at least a momentary animation. Heath and a greyish kind of moss are the sole vegetation which covers this endless wilderness. Every slope is strewn with the relics of a happier period; trunks of trees, shattered columns, cedar beams, helmets of bronze, skulls and coins, are frequently dug up together.

I cannot boast of having made any discoveries, nor of sending you any novel intelligence. You knew before how perfectly the environs of Rome were desolate, and how completely the Papal government contrives to make its subjects miserable. But who knows that they were not just as wretched in those boasted times we are so fond of celebrating? All is doubt and conjecture in this frail existence; and I might as well attempt proving to whom belonged the mouldering bones which lay dispersed around me, as venture to affirm that one age is more fortunate than another. Very likely the poor cottager, under whose roof I reposed, is happier than the luxurious Roman upon the remains of whose palace, perhaps, his shed is raised: and yet that Roman flourished in the purple days of the empire, when all was wealth and splendour, triumph and exultation.

I could have spent the whole day by the rivulet, lost in dreams and meditations; but recollecting my vow, I ran back to the carriage and drove on. The road not having been mended, I believe, since the days of the Cæsars, would not allow our motions to be very precipitate. "When you gain the summit of yonder hill, you will discover Rome," said one of the postilions: up we dragged; no city appeared. "From the next," cried out a second; and so on from height to height did they amuse my expectations. I thought Rome fled before us, such was my impatience, till at last we perceived a cluster of hills with green pastures on their summits, inclosed by thickets and shaded by flourishing ilex. Here and there a white house, built in the antique style, with open porticos, that received a faint gleam of the evening sun, just emerged from the clouds and tinting the meads below. Now domes and towers began to discover themselves in the valley, and St. Peter's to rise above the magnificent roofs of the Vatican. Every step we advanced the scene extended, till, winding suddenly round the hill, all Rome opened to our view.

Shall I ever forget the sensations I experienced upon slowly descending the hills, and crossing the bridge over the Tiber; when I entered an avenue between terraces and ornamented gates of villas, which leads to the Porto del Popolo, and beheld the square, the domes, the obelisk, the long perspective of streets and palaces opening beyond, all glowing with the vivid red of sunset? You can imagine how I enjoyed my beloved tint, my favourite hour, surrounded by such objects. You can fancy me ascending Monte Cavallo, leaning against the pedestal which supports Bucephalus; then, spite of time and distance, hurrying to St. Peter's in performance of my vow.

I met the Holy Father in all his pomp returning from vespers. Trumpets flourishing, and a troop of guards drawn out upon Ponte St. Angelo. Casting a respectful glance upon the Moles Adriani, I moved on till the full sweep of St. Peter's colonnade opened upon me. The edifice appears to have been raised within the year, such is its freshness and

preservation. I could hardly take my eyes from off the beautiful symmetry of its front, contrasted with the magnificent, though irregular courts of the Vatican towering over the colonnade, till, the sun sinking behind the dome, I ran up the steps and entered the grand portal, which was on the very point of being closed.

I knew not where I was, or to what scene transported. A sacred twilight concealing the extremities of the structure, I could not distinguish any particular ornament, but enjoyed the effect of the whole. No damp air or foetid exhalation offended me. The perfume of incense was not yet entirely dissipated. No human being stirred. I heard a door close with the sound of thunder, and thought I distinguished some faint whisperings, but an ignorant whence they came. Several hundred lamps twinkled round the high altar, quite lost in the immensity of the pile. No other light disturbed my reveries but the dying glow still visible through the western windows. Imagine how I felt upon finding myself alone in this vast temple at so late an hour. Do you think I quitted it without some revelation?

It was almost eight o'clock before I issued forth, and, pausing a few minutes under the porticos, listened to the rush of the fountains: then traversing half the town, I believe, in my way to the Villa Medici, under which I am lodged, fell into a profound repose, which my zeal and exercise may be allowed, I think, to have merited.

October 30th.

IMMEDIATELY after breakfast I repaired again to St. Peter's, which even exceeded the height of my expectations. I could hardly quit it. I wish his Holiness would allow me to erect a little tabernacle within this glorious temple. I should desire no other prospect during the winter; no other sky than the vast arches glowing with golden ornaments, so lofty as to lose all glitter or gaudiness. But I cannot say I should be perfectly contented, unless I could obtain another tabernacle for you. Thus established, we would take our evening walks on the field of marble; for is not the pavement vast enough for the extravagance of the appellation? Sometimes, instead of climbing a mountain, we should ascend the cupola, and look down on our little encampment below. At night I should wish for a constellation of lamps dispersed about in clusters, and so contrived as to diffuse a mild and equal light. Music should not be wanting: at one time to breathe in the subterraneous chapels, at another to echo through the dome.

The doors should be closed, and not a mortal admitted. No priests, no cardinals: God forbid! We would have all the space to ourselves, and to beings of our own visionary persuasion.

I was so absorbed in my imaginary palace, and exhausted with contriving plans for its embellishment, as scarcely to have spirits left for the Pantheon, which I visited late in the evening, and entered with a reverence approaching to superstition. The whiteness of the dome offended me, for, alas! this venerable temple has been whitewashed. I slunk into one of the recesses, closed my eyes, transported myself into antiquity; then opened them again, tried to persuade myself the Pagan gods were in their niches, and the saints out of the question; was vexed at coming to my senses, and finding them all there, St. Andrew with his cross, and St. Agnes with her lamb, &c. Then I paced disconsolately into the portico, which shows the name of Agrippa on its pediment. Fixed for a few minutes against a Corinthian column, I lamented that no pontiff arrived with victims and aruspices, of whom I might enquire, what, in the name of birds and garbage, put me so terribly out of humour! for you must know I was very near being disappointed, and began to think Piranesi and Paolo Panini had been a great deal too colossal in their representations of this venerable structure. I left the column, walked to the centre of the temple, and there remained motionless as a statue. Some architects have celebrated the effect of light from the opening above, and pretended it to be distributed in such a manner as to give those, who walk beneath, the appearance of mystic beings streaming with radiance. If that were the case! I appeared, to be sure, a luminous figure, and never stood I more in need of something to enliven me.

My spirits were not mended upon returning home. I had expected a heap of Venetian letters, but could not discover one. I had received no intelligence from England for many a tedious day; and for aught I can tell to the contrary, you may have been dead these three weeks. I think I shall wander soon in the Catacombs, which I try lustily to persuade myself communicate with the lower world; and perhaps I may find some letter there from you lying upon a broken sarcophagus, dated from the realms of Night, and giving an account of your descent into her bosom. Yet, I pray continually, notwithstanding my curiosity to learn what passes in the dark regions beyond the tomb, that you will remain a few years longer on our planet; for what would become of me should I lose sight of you for ever? Stay, therefore, as long as you can, and let us have the delight of dozing a little more of this poor existence away together, and steeping ourselves in pleasant dreams.

LETTER XXI.

Leave Rome for Naples.—Scenery in the vicinity of Rome.—Albano.—Malaria.—Veletri.—Classical associations.—The Circean Promontory.—Terracina.—Ruined Palace.—Mountain Groves.—Rock of Circe.—The Appian Way.—Arrive at Mola di Gaieta.—Beautiful prospect.—A Deluge.—Enter Naples by night, during a fearful Storm.—Clear Morning.—View from my window.—Courtly Mob at the Palace.—The Presence Chamber.—The King and his Courtiers.—Party at the House of Sir W. H.—Grand Illumination at the Theatre of St. Carlo.—Marchesi.

November 1st, 1780.

THOUGH you find I am not yet snatched away from the earth, according to my last night's bodings, I was far too restless and dispirited to deliver my recommendatory letters. St. Carlos, a mighty day of gala at Naples, was an excellent excuse for leaving Rome, and indulging my roving disposition. After spending my morning at St. Peter's, we set off about four o'clock, and drove by the Coliseo and a Capuchin convent, whose monks were all busied in preparing the skeletons of their order, to figure by torch-light in the evening. St. John's of Lateran astonished me. I could not help walking several times round the obelisk, and admiring the noble space in which the palace is erected, and the extensive scene of towers and aqueducts discovered from the platform in front.

We went out at the Porta Appia, and began to perceive the plains which surround the city opening on every side. Long reaches of walls and arches, seldom interrupted, stretch across them. Sometimes, indeed, a withered pine, lifting itself up to the mercy of every blast that sweeps the champagne, breaks their uniformity. Between the aqueducts to the left, nothing but wastes of fern, or tracts of ploughed lands, dark and desolate, are visible, the corn not being yet sprung up. On the right, several groups of ruined fanes and sepulchres diversify the levels, with here

and there a garden or woody enclosure. Such objects are scattered over the landscape, which towards the horizon bulges into gentle ascents, and, rising by degrees, swells at length into a chain of mountains, which received the pale gleams of the sun setting in watery clouds.

By this uncertain light we discovered the white buildings of Albano, sprinkled about the steeps. We had not many moments to contemplate them, for it was night when we passed the Torre di mezza via, and began breathing a close pestilential vapour. Half suffocated, and recollecting a variety of terrifying tales about the malaria, we advanced, not without fear, to Veletri, and hardly ventured to fall asleep when arrived there.

November 2nd.

I AROSE at day-break, and, forgetting fevers and mortalities, ran into a level meadow without the town, whilst the horses were putting to the carriage. Why should I calumniate the pearly transparent air? it seemed at least purer than any I had before inhaled. Being perfectly alone, and not discovering any trace of the neighbouring city, I fancied myself existing in the ancient days of Hesperia, and hoped to meet Picus in his woods before the evening. But, instead of those shrill clamours which used to echo through the thickets when Pan joined with mortals in the chase, I heard the rumbling of our carriage, and the cursing of postilions. Mounting a horse I flew before them, and seemed to catch inspiration from the breezes. Now I turned my eyes to the ridge of precipices, in whose grotts and caverns Saturn and his people passed their life; then to the distant ocean. Afar off rose the cliff, so famous for Circe's incantations, and the whole line of coasts, which was once covered with her forests.

Whilst I was advancing with full speed, the sun-beams began to shoot athwart the mountains, the plains to light up by degrees, and their shrubberies of myrtle to glisten with dew-drops. The sea brightened, and the Circean promontory soon glowed with purple. All day we kept winding through this enchanted country. Towards evening Terracina appeared before us, in a bold romantic scite; house above house, and turret looking over turret, on the steeps of a mountain, enclosed with mouldering walls, and crowned by the ruined terraces of a palace; one of those, perhaps, which the luxurious Romans inhabited during the summer, when so free and lofty an exposition (the sea below, with its gales and murmurs) must have been delightful. Groves of orange and citron hang on the declivity, rough with the Indian fig, whose bright red flowers, illuminated by the sun, had a magic splendour. A palm-tree, growing on the highest crag, adds not a little to its singular appearance. Being the largest I had yet seen, and clustered with fruit, I climbed up the rocks to take a sketch of it; and looking down upon the beach and glassy plains of ocean, exclaimed with Martial:

O nemus! O fontes! solidumque madentis arenæ
Littus, et æquoreis splendidus Anxur aquis!

Glancing my eyes athwart the sea, I fixed them on the rock of Circe, which lies right opposite to Terracina, joined to the continent by a very narrow strip of land, and appearing like an island. The roar of the waves lashing the base of the precipices, might still be thought the howl of savage monsters; but where are those woods which shaded the dome of the goddess? Scarce a tree appears. A few thickets, and but a few, are the sole remains of this once impenetrable vegetation; yet even these I longed to visit, such was my predilection for the spot.

Descending the cliff, and pursuing our route to Mola along the shore, by a grand road formed on the ruins of the Appian Way, we drove under an enormous perpendicular rock, standing detached, like a watch tower, and cut into arsenals and magazines. Day closed just as we got beyond it, and a new moon gleamed faintly on the waters. We saw fires afar off in the bay; some twinkling on the coast, others upon the waves, and heard the murmur of voices; for the night was still and solemn, like that of Cajetas's funeral. I looked anxiously on a sea, where the heroes of the Odyssey and Æneid had sailed to fulfil their mystic destinies.

Nine struck when we arrived at Mola di Gaeta. The boats were just coming in (whose lights we had seen out upon the main), and brought such fish as Neptune, I dare say, would have grudged Æneas and Ulysses.

November 3rd.

THE morning was soft, but hazy. I walked in a grove of orange trees, white with blossoms, and at the same time glowing with fruit. The spot sloped pleasantly toward the sea, and here I loitered till the horses were ready, then set off on the Appian, between hedges of myrtle and aloes. We observed a variety of towns, with battlemented walls and ancient turrets, crowning the pinnacles of rocky steeps, surrounded by wilds, and rude uncultivated mountains. The Liris, now Garigliano, winds its peaceful course through wide extensive meadows, scattered over with the remains of aqueducts, and waters the base of the rocks I have just mentioned. Such a prospect could not fail of bringing Virgil's panegyric of Italy into my mind:

Tot congesta manu præruptis oppida saxis
Fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros.

As soon as we arrived in sight of Capua, the sky darkened, clouds covered the horizon, and presently poured down such deluges of rain as floated the whole country. The gloom was general; Vesuvius disappeared just after we had discovered it. At four o'clock darkness universally prevailed, except when a livid glare of lightning presented momentary glimpses of the bay and mountains. We lighted torches, and forded several torrents almost at the hazard of our lives. The plains of Aversa were filled with herds, lowing most piteously, and yet not half so much scared as their masters, who ran about raving and ranting like Indians during the eclipse of the moon. I knew Vesuvius had often put their courage to proof, but little thought of an inundation occasioning such commotions.

For three hours the storm increased in violence, and instead of entering Naples on a calm evening, and viewing its delightful shores by moonlight—instead of finding the squares and terraces thronged with people and animated by music, we advanced with fear and terror through dark streets totally deserted, every creature being shut up in their houses, and we heard nothing but driving rain, rushing torrents, and the fall of fragments beaten down by their violence. Our inn, like every other habitation, was in great disorder, and we waited a long while before we could settle in our apartments with any comfort. All night the waves roared round the rocky foundations of a fortress beneath my windows, and the lightning played clear in my eyes.

November 4th.

PEACE was restored to nature in the morning, but every mouth was full of the dreadful accidents which had happened in the night. The sky was cloudless when I awoke, and such was the transparence of the atmosphere that I could clearly discern the rocks, and even some white buildings on the island of Caprea, though at the distance of thirty miles. A large window fronts my bed, and its casements being thrown open, gives me a vast prospect of ocean uninterrupted, except by the peaks of Caprea and the Cape of Sorrento. I lay half an hour gazing on the smooth level waters, and listening to the confused voices of the fishermen, passing and repassing in light skiffs, which came and disappeared in an instant.

Running to the balcony the moment my eyes were fairly open (for till then I saw objects, I know not how, as one does in dreams,) I leaned over its rails and viewed Vesuvius rising distinct into the blue æther, with all that world of gardens and casinos which are scattered about its base; then looked down into the street, deep below, thronged with people in holiday garments, and carriages, and soldiers in full parade. The shrubby, variegated shore of Posilipo drew my attention to the opposite side of the bay. It was on those very rocks, under those tall pines, Sannazaro was wont to sit by moonlight, or at peep of dawn, composing his marine eclogues. It is there he still sleeps; and I wished to have gone immediately and strewed coral over his tomb, but I was obliged to check my impatience and hurry to the palace in form and gala.

A courtly mob had got thither upon the same errand, daubed over with lace and most notably be-periwigged. Nothing but bows and salutations were going forward on the staircase, one of the largest I ever beheld, and which a multitude of prelates and friars were ascending with awkward pomposity. I jostled along to the presence chamber, where his Majesty was dining alone in a circular enclosure of fine clothes and smirking faces. The moment he had finished, twenty long necks were poked forth, and it was a glorious struggle amongst some of the most decorated who first should kiss his hand, the great business of the day. Everybody pressed forward to the best of their abilities. His Majesty seemed to eye nothing but the end of his nose, which is doubtless a capital object.

Though people have imagined him a weak monarch, I beg leave to differ in opinion, since he has the boldness to prolong his childhood and be happy, in spite of years and conviction. Give him a boar to stab, and a pigeon to shoot at, a battledore or an angling rod, and he is better contented than Solomon in all his glory, and will never discover, like that sapient sovereign, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

His courtiers in general have rather a barbaric appearance, and differ little in the character of their physiognomies from the most savage nations. I should have taken them for Calmucks or Samoieds, had it not been for their dresses and European finery.

You may suppose I was not sorry, after my presentation was over, to return to Sir W. H.'s, where an interesting group of lovely women, literati, and artists, were assembled—Gagliani and Cyrillo, Aprile, Milico, and Deamicis—the determined Santo Marco, and the more nymph-like modest-looking, though not less dangerous, Belmonte. Gagliani happened to be in full story, and vied with his countryman Polichinello, not only in gesticulation and loquacity, but in the excessive licentiousness of his narrations. He was proceeding beyond all bounds of decency and decorum, at least according to English notions, when Lady H.^[8] sat down to the pianoforte. Her plaintive modulations breathed a far different language. No performer that ever I heard produced such soothing effects; they seemed the emanations of a pure, uncontaminated mind, at peace with itself and benevolently desirous of diffusing that happy tranquillity around it; these were modes a Grecian legislature would have encouraged to further the triumph over vice of the most amiable virtue.

The evening was passing swiftly away, and I had almost forgotten there was a grand illumination at the theatre of St. Carlo. After traversing a number of dark streets, we suddenly entered this enormous edifice, whose seven rows of boxes one above the other blazed with tapers. I never beheld such lofty walls of light, nor so pompous a decoration as covered the stage. Marchesi was singing in the midst of all these splendours some of the poorest music imaginable, with the clearest and most triumphant voice, perhaps, in the universe.

It was some time before I could look to any purpose around me, or discover what animals inhabited this glittering world: such was its size and glare. At last I perceived vast numbers of swarthy ill-favoured beings, in gold and silver raiment, peeping out of their boxes. The court being present, a tolerable silence was maintained, but the moment his Majesty withdrew (which great event took place at the beginning of the second act) every tongue broke loose, and nothing but buzz and hubbub filled up the rest of the entertainment.

LETTER XXII.

View of the coast of Posilipo.—Virgil's tomb.—Superstition of the Neapolitans with respect to Virgil.—Aërial situation.—A grand scene.

November 6th, 1780.

TILL to-day we have had nothing but rains; the sea covered with mists, and Caprea invisible. Would you believe it? I have not yet been able to mount to St. Elmo and the Capo di Monte, in order to take a general view of the town.

At length a bright gleam of sunshine summoned me to the broad terrace of Chiaja, which commands the whole coast of Posilipo. Insensibly I drew towards it, and (you know the pace I run when out upon discoveries) soon reached the entrance of the grotto, which lay in dark shades, whilst the crags that lower over it were brightly illumined. Shrubs and vines grow luxuriantly in the crevices of the rock; and its fresh yellow colours, variegated with ivy, have a beautiful effect. To the right, a grove of pines spring from the highest pinnacles: on the left, bay and chesnut conceal the tomb of Virgil placed on the summit of a cliff which impends over the opening of the grotto, and is fringed with vegetation. Beneath are several wide apertures hollowed in the solid stone, which lead to caverns sixty or seventy feet in depth, where a number of peasants, who were employed in quarrying, made a strange but not absolutely unharmonious din with their tools and their voices.

Walking out of the sunshine, I seated myself on a loose stone immediately beneath the first gloomy arch of the grotto, and looking down the long and solemn perspective terminated by a speck of gray uncertain light, venerated a work which some old chroniclers have imagined as ancient as the Trojan war. It was here the mysterious race of the Cimmerians performed their infernal rites, and it was this excavation perhaps which led to their abode.

The Neapolitans attribute a more modern, though full as problematical an origin to their famous cavern, and most piously believe it to have been formed by the enchantments of Virgil, who, as Addison very justly observes, is better known at Naples in his magical character than as the author of the *Æneid*. This strange infatuation most probably arose from the vicinity of the tomb in which his ashes are supposed to have been deposited; and which, according to popular tradition, was guarded by those very spirits who assisted in constructing the cave. But whatever may have given rise to these ideas, certain it is they were not confined to the lower ranks alone. King Robert,^[9] a wise though far from poetical monarch, conducted his friend Petrarch with great solemnity to the spot; and, pointing to the entrance of the grotto, very gravely asked him, whether he did not adopt the general belief, and conclude this stupendous passage derived its origin from Virgil's powerful incantations? The answer, I think, may easily be conjectured.

When I had sat for some time, contemplating this dusky avenue, and trying to persuade myself that it was hewn by the Cimmerians, I retreated without proceeding any farther, and followed a narrow path which led me, after some windings and turnings, along the brink of the precipice, across a vineyard, to that retired nook of the rocks which shelters Virgil's tomb, most venerably mossed over and more than half concealed by bushes and vegetation. The clown who conducted me remained aloof at awful distance, whilst I sat commercing with the manes of my beloved poet, or straggled about the shrubbery which hangs directly above the mouth of the grot.

Advancing to the edge of the rock, I saw crowds of people and carriages, diminished by distance, issuing from the bosom of the mountain and disappearing almost as soon as discovered in the windings of its road. Clambering high above the cavern, I hazarded my neck on the top of one of the pines, and looked contemptuously down on the race of pigmies that were so busily moving to and fro. The sun was fiercer than I could have wished, but the sea-breezes fanned me in my aerial situation, which commanded the grand sweep of the bay, varied by convents, palaces, and gardens mixed with huge masses of rock and crowned by the stately buildings of the Carthusians and fortress of St. Elmo. Add a glittering blue sea to this perspective, with Caprea rising from its bosom and Vesuvius breathing forth a white column of smoke into the æther, and you will then have a scene upon which I gazed with delight, for more than an hour, almost forgetting that I was perched upon the head of a pine with nothing but a frail branch to uphold me. However, I descended alive, as Virgil's genii, I am resolved to believe, were my protectors.

LETTER XXIII.

A ramble on the shore of Baii.—Local traditions.—Cross the bay.—Fragments of a temple dedicated to Hercules.—Wondrous reservoir constructed for the fleet of Nero.—The Dead Lake.—Wild scene.—Beautiful meadow. Uncouth rocks.—An unfathomable gulph.—Sadness induced by the wild appearance of the place.—Conversation with a recluse.—Her fearful narration.—Melancholy evening.

November 8th, 1780.

THIS morning I awoke in the glow of sunshine—the air blew fresh and fragrant—never did I feel more elastic and enlivened. A brisker flow of spirits than I had for many a day experienced, animated me with a desire of rambling about the shore of Baii, and creeping into caverns and subterraneous chambers. Off I set along the Chiaja, and up strange paths which impend over the grotto of Posilipo, amongst the thickets mentioned a letter or two ago; for in my present buoyant humour I disdained ordinary roads, and would take paths and ways of my own. A society of kids did not understand what I meant by intruding upon their precipices; and scrambling away, scattered sand and fragments upon the good people that were trudging along the pavement below.

I went on from pine to pine and thicket to thicket, upon the brink of rapid declivities. My conductor, a shrewd savage, whom Sir William had recommended to me, cheered our route with stories that had passed in the neighbourhood, and traditions about the grot over which we were travelling. I wish you had been of the party, and sat down by us on little smooth spots of sward, where I reclined, scarcely knowing which way caprice had led me. My mind was full of the tales of the place, and glowed with a vehement desire of exploring the world beyond the grot. I longed to ascend the promontory of Misenus, and follow the same dusky route down which the Sibyl conducted *Æneas*.

With these dispositions I proceeded; and soon the cliffs and copses opened to views of the Baian sea with the little isles of Niscita and Lazaretto, lifting themselves out of the waters. Procita and Ischia appeared at a distance invested with that purple bloom so inexpressibly beautiful, and peculiar to this fortunate climate. I hailed the prospect, and blessed the transparent air that gave me life and vigour to run down the rocks, and hie as fast as my savage across the plain to Pozzuoli. There we took bark and rowed out into the blue ocean, by the remains of a sturdy mole: many such, I imagine, adorned the bay in Roman ages, crowned by vast lengths of slender pillars; pavilions at their extremities and taper cypresses spiring above their balustrades: this character of villa occurs very frequently in the paintings of Herculaneum.

We had soon crossed the bay, and landing on a bushy coast near some fragments of a temple which they say was raised to Hercules, advanced into the country by narrow tracks covered with moss and strewed with shining pebbles; to the right and left, broad masses of luxuriant foliage, chesnut, bay and ilex, that shelter the ruins of sepulchral chambers. No parties of smart Englishmen and connoisseurs were about. I had all the land to myself, and mounted its steeps and penetrated into its recesses, with the importance of a discoverer. What a variety of narrow paths, between banks and shades, did I wildly follow! my savage laughing loud at my odd gestures and useless activity. He wondered I did not scrape the ground for medals, and pocket little bits of plaster, like other inquisitive young travellers that had gone before me.

After ascending some time, I followed him into the wondrous^[10] reservoir which Nero constructed to supply his fleet, when anchored in the neighbouring bay. A noise of trickling waters prevailed throughout this grand labyrinth of solid vaults and arches, that had almost lulled me to sleep as I rested myself on the celandine which carpets the floor; but curiosity urging me forward, I gained the upper air; walked amongst woods a few minutes, and then into grots and dismal excavations (prisons they call them) which began to weary me.

After having gone up and down in this manner for some time, we at last reached an eminence that commanded

the Mare Morto, and Elysian fields trembling with reeds and poplars. The Dead Lake, a faithful emblem of eternal tranquillity, looked deep and solemn. A few peasants seemed fixed on its margin, their shadows reflected on the water. Turning from the lake I espied a rock at about a league distant, whose summit was clad with verdure, and finding this to be the promontory of Misenus, I immediately set my face to that quarter.

We passed several dirty villages, inhabited by an ill-favoured generation, infamous for depredations and murders. Their gardens, however, discover some marks of industry; the fields are separated by neat hedges of cane, and a variety of herbs and pulses and Indian corn seemed to flourish in the inclosures. Insensibly we began to leave the cultivated lands behind us, and to lose ourselves in shady wilds, which, to all appearance, no mortal had ever trodden. Here were no paths, no inclosures; a primeval rudeness characterized the whole scene.

After forcing our way about a mile, through glades of shrubs and briars, we entered a lawn-like opening at the base of the cliff which takes its name from Misenus. The poets of the Augustan age would have celebrated such a meadow with the warmest raptures, and peopled its green expanse with all the sylvan demi-gods of their beautiful mythology. Here were springs issuing from rocks of pumice, and grassy hillocks partially concealed by thickets of bay.

Et circum irriguo surgebant lilia prato
Candida purpureis mista papaveribus.

But as it is not the lot of human animals to be contented, instead of reposing in the vale, I scaled the rock, and was three parts dissolved in attaining its summit. The sun darted upon my head, I wished to avoid its immediate influence; no tree was near; the pleasant valley lay below at a considerable depth, and it was a long way to descend to it. Looking round and round, I spied something like a hut, under a crag on the edge of a dark fissure. Might I avail myself of its covert? My conductor answered in the affirmative, and added that it was inhabited by a good old woman, who never refused a cup of milk, or slice of bread, to refresh a weary traveller.

Thirst and fatigue urged me speedily down an intervening slope of stunted myrtle. Though oppressed with heat, I could not help deviating a few steps from the direct path to notice the uncouth rocks which rose frowning on every quarter. Above the hut, their appearance was truly formidable, bristled over with sharp-spined dwarf aloes, such as Lucifer himself might be supposed to have sown. Indeed I knew not whether I was not approaching some gate that leads to his abode, as I drew near a gulph (the fissure lately mentioned) and heard the deep hollow murmurs of the gusts which were imprisoned below. The savage, my guide, shuddered as he passed by to apprise the old woman of my coming. I felt strangely, and stared around me, and but half liked my situation.

In the midst of my doubts, forth tottered the old woman. "You are welcome," said she, in a feeble voice, but a better dialect than I had heard in the neighbourhood. Her look was more humane, and she seemed of a superior race to the inhabitants of the surrounding valleys. My savage treated her with peculiar deference. She had just given him some bread, with which he retired to a respectful distance bowing to the earth. I caught the mode, and was very obsequious, thinking myself on the point of experiencing a witch's influence, and gaining, perhaps, some insight into the volume of futurity. She smiled at my agitation and kept beckoning me into the cottage.

"Now," thought I to myself, "I am upon the verge of an adventure." I saw nothing, however, but clay walls, a straw bed, some glazed earthen bowls, and a wooden crucifix. My shoes were loaded with sand: this my hostess perceived, and immediately kindling a fire in an inner part of the hovel, brought out some warm water to refresh my feet, and set some milk and chesnuts before me. This patriarchal attention was by no means indifferent after my tiresome ramble. I sat down opposite to the door which fronted the unfathomable gulph; beyond appeared the sea, of a deep cerulean, foaming with waves. The sky also was darkening apace with storms. Sadness came over me like a cloud, and I looked up to the old woman for consolation.

"And you too are sorrowful, young stranger," said she, "that come from the gay world! how must I feel, who pass year after year in these lonely mountains?" I answered that the weather affected me, and my spirits were exhausted by the walk.

All the while I spoke she looked at me with such a melancholy earnestness that I asked the cause, and began again to imagine myself in some fatal habitation,

Where more is meant than meets the ear.

"Your features," said she, "are wonderfully like those of an unfortunate young person, who, in this retirement..." The tears began to fall as she pronounced these words; my curiosity was fired. "Tell me," continued I, "what you mean; who was this youth for whom you are so interested? and why did he seclude himself in this wild region? Your kindness to him might no doubt have alleviated, in some measure, the horrors of the place; but may God defend me from passing the night near such a gulph! I would not trust myself in a despairing moment."

"It is," said she, "a place of horrors. I tremble to relate what has happened on this very spot; but your manner interests me, and though I am little given to narrations, for once I will unlock my lips concerning the secrets of yonder fatal chasm.

"I was born in a distant part of Italy, and have known better days. In my youth fortune smiled upon my family, but in a few years they withered away; no matter by what accident. I am not going to talk much of myself. Have patience a few moments! A series of unfortunate events reduced me to indigence, and drove me to this desert, where, from rearing goats and making their milk into cheese, by a different method than is common in the Neapolitan state, I have, for about thirty years, prolonged a sorrowful existence. My silent grief and constant retirement had made me appear to some a saint, and to others a sorceress. The slight knowledge I have of plants has been exaggerated, and, some years back, the hours I gave up to prayer, and the recollection of former friends, lost to me for ever! were cruelly intruded upon by the idle and the ignorant. But soon I sank into obscurity: my little recipes were disregarded, and you are the first stranger who, for these twelve months past, has visited my abode. Ah, would to God its solitude had ever remained inviolate!

"It is now three-and-twenty years," and she looked upon some characters cut on the planks of the cottage, "since I was sitting by moonlight, under that cliff you view to the right, my eyes fixed on the ocean, my mind lost in the memory of my misfortunes, when I heard a step, and starting up, a figure stood before me. It was a young man, in a rich habit, with streaming hair, and looks that bespoke the utmost terror. I knew not what to think of this sudden

apparition. 'Mother,' said he with faltering accents, 'let me rest under your roof; and deliver me not up to those who thirst after my blood. Take this gold; take all, all!'

"Surprise held me speechless; the purse fell to the ground; the youth stared wildly on every side: I heard many voices beyond the rocks; the wind bore them distinctly, but presently they died away. I took courage, and assured the youth my cot should shelter him. 'Oh! thank you, thank you!' answered he, and pressed my hand. He shared my scanty provision.

"Overcome with toil (for I had worked hard in the day) sleep closed my eyes for a short interval. When I awoke the moon was set, but I heard my unhappy guest sobbing in darkness. I disturbed him not. Morning dawned, and he was fallen into a slumber. The tears bubbled out of his closed eyelids, and coursed one another down his wan cheeks. I had been too wretched myself not to respect the sorrows of another: neglecting therefore my accustomed occupations, I drove away the flies that buzzed around his temples. His breast heaved high with sighs, and he cried loudly in his sleep for mercy.

"The beams of the sun dispelling his dream, he started up like one that had heard the voice of an avenging angel, and hid his face with his hands. I poured some milk down his parched throat. 'Oh, mother!' he exclaimed, 'I am a wretch unworthy of compassion; the cause of innumerable sufferings; a murderer! a parricide!' My blood curdled to hear a stripling utter such dreadful words, and behold such agonising sighs swell in so young a bosom; for I marked the sting of conscience urging him to disclose what I am going to relate.

"It seems he was of high extraction, nursed in the pomps and luxuries of Naples, the pride and darling of his parents, adorned with a thousand lively talents, which the keenest sensibility conspired to improve. Unable to fix any bounds to whatever became the object of his desires, he passed his first years in roving from one extravagance to another, but as yet there was no crime in his caprices.

"At length it pleased Heaven to visit his family, and make their idol the slave of an unbridled passion. He had a friend, who from his birth had been devoted to his interest, and placed all his confidence in him. This friend loved to distraction a young creature, the most graceful of her sex (as I can witness), and she returned his affection. In the exultation of his heart he showed her to the wretch whose tale I am about to tell. He sickened at her sight. She too caught fire at his glances. They languished—they consumed away—they conversed, and his persuasive language finished what his guilty glances had begun.

"Their flame was soon discovered, for he disdained to conceal a thought, however dishonourable. The parents warned the youth in the tenderest manner; but advice and prudent counsels were to him so loathsome, that unable to contain his rage, and infatuated with love, he menaced the life of his friend as the obstacle of his enjoyment. Coolness and moderation were opposed to violence and frenzy, and he found himself treated with a contemptuous gentleness. Stricken to the heart, he wandered about for some time like one entranced. Meanwhile the nuptials were preparing, and the lovely girl he had perverted found ways to let him know she was about to be torn from his embraces.

"He raved like a demoniac, and rousing his dire spirit, applied to a malignant wretch who sold the most inveterate poisons. These he infused into a cup of pure iced water and presented to his friend, and to his own too fond confiding father, who soon after they had drunk the fatal potion began evidently to pine away. He marked the progress of their dissolution with a horrid firmness, he let the moment pass beyond which all antidotes were vain. His friend expired; and the young criminal, though he beheld the dews of death hang on his parent's forehead, yet stretched not forth his hand. In a short space the miserable father breathed his last, whilst his son was sitting aloof in the same chamber.

"The sight overcame him. He felt, for the first time, the pangs of remorse. His agitations passed not unnoticed. He was watched: suspicions beginning to unfold he took alarm, and one evening escaped; but not without previously informing the partner of his crimes which way he intended to flee. Several pursued; but the inscrutable will of Providence blinded their search, and I was doomed to behold the effects of celestial vengeance.

"Such are the chief circumstances of the tale I gathered from the youth. I swooned whilst he related it, and could take no sustenance. One whole day afterwards did I pray the Lord, that I might die rather than be near an incarnate demon. With what indignation did I now survey that slender form and those flowing tresses, which had interested me before so much in his behalf!

"No sooner did he perceive the change in my countenance, than sullenly retiring to yonder rock he sat careless of the sun and scorching winds; for it was now the summer solstice. He was equally heedless of the unwholesome dews. When midnight came my horrors were augmented; and I meditated several times to abandon my hovel and fly to the next village; but a power more than human chained me to the spot and fortified my mind.

"I slept, and it was late next morning when some one called at the wicket of the little fold, where my goats are penned. I arose, and saw a peasant of my acquaintance leading a female strangely muffled up, and casting her eyes on the ground. My heart misgave me. I thought this was the very maid who had been the cause of such atrocious wickedness. Nor were my conjectures ill-founded. Regardless of the clown who stood by in stupid astonishment, she fell to the earth and bathed my hand with tears. Her trembling lips with difficulty enquired after the youth; and, as she spoke, a glow of conscious guilt lightened up her pale countenance.

"The full recollection of her lover's crimes shot through my memory. I was incensed, and would have spurned her away; but, she clung to my garments and seemed to implore my pity with a look so full of misery, that, relenting, I led her in silence to the extremity of the cliff where the youth was seated, his feet dangling above the sea. His eye was rolling wildly around, but it soon fixed upon the object for whose sake he had doomed himself to perdition.

"Far be it from me to describe their ecstasies, or the eagerness with which they sought each other's embraces. I indignantly turned my head away; and, driving my goats to a recess amongst the rocks, sat revolving in my mind these strange events. I neglected procuring any provision for my unwelcome guests; and about midnight returned homewards by the light of the moon which shone serenely in the heavens. Almost the first object her beams discovered was the guilty maid sustaining the head of her lover, who had fainted through weakness and want of nourishment. I fetched some dry bread, and dipping it in milk laid it before them. Having performed this duty I set open the door of my hut, and retiring to a neighbouring cavity, there stretched myself on a heap of leaves and offered my prayers to Heaven.

"A thousand fears, till this moment unknown, thronged into my fancy. The shadow of leaves that chequered the

entrance to the grot, seemed to assume in my distempered imagination the form of ugly reptiles, and I repeatedly shook my garments. The flow of the distant surges was deepened by my apprehensions into distant groans: in a word, I could not rest; but issuing from the cavern as hastily as my trembling knees would allow, paced along the edge of the precipice. An unaccountable impulse would have hurried my steps, yet such was my terror and shivering, that unable to advance to my hut or retreat to the cavern, I was about to shield myself from the night in a sandy crevice, when a loud shriek pierced my ear. My fears had confused me; I was in fact near my hovel and scarcely three paces from the brink of the cavern: it was thence the cries proceeded.

“Advancing in a cold shudder to its edge, part of which was newly crumbled in, I discovered the form of the young man suspended by one foot to a branch of juniper that grew several feet down: thus dreadfully did he hang over the gulph from the branch bending with his weight. His features were distorted, his eye-balls glared with agony, and his screams became so shrill and terrible that I lost all power of affording assistance. Fixed, I stood with my eyes riveted upon the criminal, who incessantly cried out, ‘O God! O Father! save me if there be yet mercy! save me, or I sink into the abyss!’

“I am convinced he did not see me; for not once did he implore my help. His voice grew faint, and as I gazed intent upon him, the loose thong of leather, which had entangled itself in the branches by which he hung suspended, gave way, and he fell into utter darkness. I sank to the earth in a trance; during which a sound like the rush of pennons assaulted my ear: methought the evil spirit was bearing off his soul; but when I lifted up my eyes nothing stirred; the stillness that prevailed was awful.

“The moon hanging low over the waves afforded a sickly light, by which I perceived some one coming down that white cliff you see before you; and I soon heard the voice of the young woman calling aloud on her guilty lover. She stopped. She repeated again and again her exclamation; but there was no reply. Alarmed and frantic she hurried along the path, and now I saw her on the promontory, and now by yonder pine, devouring with her glances every crevice in the rock. At length perceiving me, she flew to where I stood, by the fatal precipice, and having noticed the fragments fresh crumbled in, pored importunately on my countenance. I continued pointing to the chasm; she trembled not; her tears could not flow; but she divined the meaning. ‘He is lost!’ said she; ‘the earth has swallowed him! but, as I have shared with him the highest joy, so will I partake his torments. I will follow: dare not to hinder me.’

“Like the phantoms I have seen in dreams, she glanced beside me; and, clasping her hands above her head, lifted a steadfast look on the hemisphere, and viewed the moon with an anxiousness that told me she was bidding it farewell for ever. Observing a silken handkerchief on the ground, with which she had but an hour ago bound her lover’s temples, she snatched it up, and imprinting it with burning kisses, thrust it into her bosom. Once more, expanding her arms in the last act of despair and miserable passion, she threw herself, with a furious leap, into the gulph.

“To its margin I crawled on my knees, and there did I remain in the most dreadful darkness; for now the moon was sunk, the sky obscured with storms, and a tempestuous blast ranging the ocean. Showers poured thick upon me, and the lightning, in clear and frequent flashes, gave me terrifying glimpses of yonder accursed chasm.

“Stranger, dost thou believe in our Redeemer? in his most holy mother? in the tenets of our faith?” I answered with reverence, but said her faith and mine were different. “Then,” continued the aged woman, “I will not declare before a heretic what were the visions of that night of vengeance!” She paused; I was silent.

After a short interval, with deep and frequent sighs, she resumed her narrative. “Daylight began to dawn as if with difficulty, and it was late before its radiance had tinged the watery and tempestuous clouds. I was still kneeling by the gulph in prayer when the cliffs began to brighten, and the beams of the morning sun to strike against me. Then did I rejoice. Then no longer did I think myself of all human beings the most abject and miserable. How different did I feel myself from those, fresh plunged into the abodes of torment, and driven for ever from the morning!

“Three days elapsed in total solitude: on the fourth, some grave and ancient persons arrived from Naples, who questioned me, repeatedly, about the wretched lovers, and to whom I related their fate with every dreadful particular. Soon after I learned that all discourse concerning them was expressly stopped, and that no prayers were offered up for their souls.”

With these words, as well as I recollect, the old woman ended her singular narration. My blood thrilled as I walked by the gulph to call my guide, who stood aloof under the cliffs. He seemed to think, from the paleness of my countenance, that I had heard some gloomy prediction, and shook his head, when I turned round to bid my old hostess adieu! It was a melancholy evening, and I could not refrain from tears, whilst, winding through the defiles of the rocks, the sad scenes which had passed amongst them recurred to my memory.

Traversing a wild thicket, we soon regained the shore, where I rambled a few minutes whilst the peasant went for the boatmen. The last streaks of light were quivering on the waters when I stepped into the bark, and wrapping myself up in an awning, slept till we reached Puzzoli, some of whose inhabitants came forth with torches to light us home.

LETTER XXIV.

The Tyrol Mountains.—Intense cold.—Delight on beholding human habitations.

Augsburg, 20th January, 1781.

FOR these ten days past have I been traversing Lapland: winds whistling in my ears, and cones showering down upon my head from the wilds of pine through which our route conducted us. We were often obliged to travel by moonlight, and I leave you to imagine the awful aspect of the Tyrol mountains buried in snow.

I scarcely ventured to utter an exclamation of surprise, though prompted by some of the most striking scenes in nature, lest I should interrupt the sacred silence that prevails, during winter, in these boundless solitudes. The streams are frozen, and mankind petrified, for aught I know to the contrary, since whole days have we journeyed on without perceiving the slightest hint of their existence.

I never before felt so much pleasure by discovering a smoke rising from a cottage, or hearing a heifer lowing in its stall; and could not have supposed there was so much satisfaction in perceiving two or three fur caps, with faces under them, peeping out of their concealments. I wish you had been with me, exploring this savage region: wrapped up in our bear-skins, we should have followed its secret avenues, and penetrated, perhaps, into some enchanted cave lined with sables, where, like the heroes of northern romances, we should have been waited upon by dwarfs, and sung drowsily to repose. I think it no bad scheme to sleep away five or six years to come, since every hour affairs are growing more and more turbulent. Well, let them! provided we may enjoy, in security, the shades of our thickets.

SECOND VISIT TO ITALY.

THE following letters, written during a second excursion, are added, on account of their affinity to some of the preceding.

LETTER I.

First day of Summer.—A dismal Plain.—Gloomy entrance to Cologne.—Labyrinth of hideous edifices.—Hotel of Der Heilige Geist.

Cologne, 28th May, 1782.

THIS is the first day of summer; the oak leaves expand, the roses blow, butterflies are on the wing, and I have spirits enough to write to you. We have had clouded skies this fortnight past, and roads like the slough of Despond. Last Wednesday we were benighted on a dismal plain, apparently boundless. The moon cast a sickly gleam, and now and then a blue meteor glided along the morass which lay before us.

After much difficulty we gained an avenue, and in an hour's time discovered something like a gateway, shaded by crooked elms and crowned by a cluster of turrets. Here we paused and knocked; no one answered. We repeated our knocks; the gate returned a hollow sound; the horses coughed, their riders blew their horns. At length the bars fell, and we entered—by what means I am ignorant, for no human being appeared.

A labyrinth of narrow winding streets, dark as the vaults of a cathedral, opened to our view. We kept wandering along, at least twenty minutes, between lofty mansions with grated windows and strange galleries projecting one over another, from which depended innumerable uncouth figures and crosses, in iron-work, swinging to and fro with the wind. At the end of this gloomy maze we found a long street, not fifteen feet wide, I am certain; the houses still loftier than those just mentioned, the windows thicker barred, and the gibbets (for I know not what else to call them) more frequent. Here and there we saw lights glimmering in the highest stories, and arches on the right and left, which seemed to lead into retired courts and deeper darkness.

Along one of these recesses we were jumbled, over such pavement as I hope you may never tread upon; and, after parading round it, went out at the same arch through which we had entered. This procession seemed at first very mystical, but it was too soon accounted for by our postilions, who confessed they had lost their way. A council was held amongst them in form, and then we struck into another labyrinth of hideous edifices, habitations I will not venture to call them, as not a creature stirred; though the rumbling of our carriages was echoed by all the vaults and arches.

Towards midnight we rested a few minutes, and a head poking out of a casement directed us to the hotel of Der Heilige Geist, where an apartment, thirty feet square, was prepared for our reception.

LETTER II.

Enter the Tyrol.—Picturesque scenery.—Village of Nasseriet.—World of boughs.—Forest huts.—Floral abundance.

Inspruck, June 4, 1782.

No sooner had we passed Fuessen than we entered the Tyrol, a country of picturesque wonders. Those lofty peaks, those steeps of wood I delight in, lay before us. Innumerable clear springs gushed out on every side, overhung by luxuriant shrubs in blossom. The day was mild, though overcast, and a soft blue vapour rested upon the hills, above which rise mountains that bear plains of snow into the clouds.

At night we lay at Nasseriet, a village buried amongst savage promontories. The next morning we advanced, in bright sunshine, into smooth lawns on the slopes of mountains, scattered over with larches, whose delicate foliage formed a light green veil to the azure sky. Flights of birds were merrily travelling from spray to spray. I ran delighted into this world of boughs, whilst Cozens sat down to draw the huts which are scattered about for the shelter of herds, and discover themselves amongst the groves in the most picturesque manner.

These little edifices are uncommonly neat, and excite those ideas of pastoral life to which I am so fondly attached. The turf from whence they rise is enamelled, in the strict sense of the word, with flowers. Gentians predominated, brighter than ultramarine; here and there auriculas looked out of the moss, and I often reposed upon tufts of ranunculus. Bushes of phillyrea were very frequent, the sun shining full on their glossy leaves. An hour passed away swiftly in these pleasant groves, where I lay supine under a lofty fir, a tower of leaves and branches.

LETTER III.

Rapidity of our drive along the causeways of the Brenta.—Shore of Fusina.—A stormy sky.—Draw near to Venice.—Its

Padua, June 14th, 1782.

ONCE more, said I to myself, I shall have the delight of beholding Venice; so got into an open chaise, the strangest curricule that ever man was jolted in, and drove furiously along the causeways by the Brenta, into whose deep waters it is a mercy, methinks, I was not precipitated. Fiesso, the Dolo, the Mira, with all their gardens, statues, and palaces, seemed flying after each other, so rapid was our motion.

After a few hours' confinement between close steepes, the scene opened to the wide shore of Fusina. I looked up (for I had scarcely time to look before) and beheld a troubled sky, shot with vivid red, the Lagunes tinted like the opal, and the islands of a glowing flame-colour. The mountains of the distant continent appeared of a deep melancholy grey, and innumerable gondolas were passing to and fro in all their blackness. The sun, after a long struggle, was swallowed up in the tempestuous clouds.

In an hour we drew near to Venice, and saw its world of domes rising out of the waters. A fresh breeze bore the toll of innumerable bells to my ear. Sadness came over me as I entered the great canal, and recognised those solemn palaces, with their lofty arcades and gloomy arches, beneath which I had so often sat, the scene of many a strange adventure.

The Venetians being mostly at their villas on the Brenta, the town appeared deserted. I visited, however, all my old haunts in the Place of St. Mark, ran up the Campanile, and rowed backwards and forwards, opposite the Ducal Palace, by moon-light. They are building a spacious quay, near the street of the Slavonians, fronting the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, where I remained alone at least an hour, following the wanderings of the moon amongst mountainous clouds, and listening to the waters dashing against marble steps.

I closed my evening at my friend Madame de Rosenberg's, where I met Cesarotti, who read to us some of the most affecting passages in his *Fingal*, with all the intensity of a poet, thoroughly persuaded that into his own bosom the very soul of Ossian had been transfused.

Next morning the wind was uncommonly violent for the mild season of June, and the canals much ruffled; but I was determined to visit the Lido once more, and bathe on my accustomed beach. The pines in the garden of the Carthusians were nodding as I passed by in my gondola, which was very poetically buffeted by the waves.

Traversing the desert of locusts,^[11] I hailed the Adriatic, and plunged into its agitated waters. The sea, delightfully cool, refreshed me to such a degree, that, upon my return to Venice, I found myself able to thread its labyrinths of streets, canals, and alleys, in search of amber and oriental curiosities. The variety of exotic merchandise, the perfume of coffee, the shade of awnings, and the sight of Greeks and Asiatics sitting cross-legged under them, made me think myself in the bazaars of Constantinople.

It is certain my beloved town of Venice ever recalls a series of eastern ideas and adventures. I cannot help thinking St. Mark's a mosque, and the neighbouring palace some vast seraglio, full of arabesque saloons, embroidered sofas, and voluptuous Circassians.

LETTER IV.

Excursion to Mirabello.—Beauty of the road thither.—Madame de R.'s wild-looking niece.—A comfortable Monk's nest.

Padua, June 19th, 1782.

THE morning was delightful, and St. Anthony's bells in full chime. A shower which had fallen in the night rendered the air so cool and grateful, that Madame de R. and myself determined to seize the opportunity and go to Mirabello, a country house, which Algarotti had inhabited, situate amongst the Euganean hills, eight or nine miles from Padua.

Our road lay between poplar alleys and fields of yellow corn, overhung by garlands of vine, most beautifully green. I soon found myself in the midst of my favourite hills, upon slopes covered with clover, and shaded by cherry-trees. Bending down their boughs I gathered the fruit, and grew cooler and happier every instant.

We dined very comfortably in a strange hall, where my friend's little wild-looking niece pitched her pianoforte, and sang the voluptuous airs of Bertoni's *Armida*. That enchantress might have raised her palace in this situation; and, had I been Rinaldo, I certainly should not very soon have abandoned it.

After dinner we drank coffee under some branching lemons, which sprang from a terrace, commanding a boundless scene of towers and villas; tall cypresses and shrubby hillocks rising, like islands, out of a sea of corn and vine.

Evening drawing on, and the breeze blowing fresh from the distant Adriatic, I reclined on a slope, and turned my eyes anxiously towards Venice; then upon some little fields hemmed in by chesnuts, where the peasants were making their hay, and, from thence, to a mountain, crowned by a circular grove of fir and cypress.

In the centre of these shades some monks have a comfortable nest; perennial springs, a garden of delicious vegetables, and, I dare say, a thousand luxuries besides, which the poor mortals below never dream of.

Had it not been late, I should certainly have climbed up to the grove, and asked admittance into its recesses; but having no mind to pass the night in this eyrie, I contented myself with the distant prospect.

LETTER V.

Rome.—Stroll to the Coliseo and the Palatine Mount.—A grand Rinfresco.—The Egyptian Lionesses.—Illuminations.

Rome, 29th June 1782.

IT is needless for me to say I wish you with me: you know I do; you know how delightfully we should ramble

about Rome together. This evening, instead of parading the Corso with the puppets in blue and silver coats, and green and gold coaches, instead of bowing to Cardinal this, and dotting my head to Abbè t'other, I strolled to the Coliseo and scrambled amongst its arches. Then bending my course to the Palatine Mount, I passed under the Arch of Titus, and gained the Capitol, which was quite deserted, the world, thank Heaven, being all slip-slopping in coffee-houses, or staring at a few painted boards, patched up before the Colonna palace, where, by the by, to-night is a grand *rinfrasco* for all the dolls and doll-fanciers of Rome. I heard their buzz at a distance; that was enough for me!

Soothed by the rippling of waters, I descended the Capitoline stairs, and leaned several minutes against one of the Egyptian lionesses. This animal has no knack at oracles, or else it would have murmured out to me the situation of that secret cave, where the wolf suckled Romulus and his brother.

About nine, I returned home, and am now writing to you like a prophet on the housetop. Behind me rustle the thickets of the Villa Medici; before, lies roof beyond roof, and dome beyond dome: these are dimly discovered; but do not you see the great cupola of cupolas, twinkling with illuminations? The town is real, I am certain; but, surely, that structure of fire must be visionary.

LETTER VI.

The Negroni Garden.—Its solitary and antique appearance.—Stately Porticos of the Lateran.—Dreary Scene.

Rome, 30th June 1782.

As soon as the sun declined I strolled into the Villa Medici; but finding it haunted by pompous people, nay, even by the Spanish Ambassador, and several red-legged Cardinals, I moved off to the Negroni garden. There I found what my soul desired, thickets of jasmine, and wild spots overgrown with bay; long alleys of cypress totally neglected, and almost impassable through the luxuriance of the vegetation; on every side antique fragments, vases, sarcophagi, and altars sacred to the Manes, in deep, shady recesses, which I am certain the Manes must love. The air was filled with the murmurs of water, trickling down basins of porphyry, and losing itself amongst overgrown weeds and grasses.

Above the wood and between its boughs appeared several domes, and a strange lofty tower. I will not say they belong to St. Maria Maggiore; no, they are fanes and porticos dedicated to Cybele, who delights in sylvan situations. The forlorn air of this garden, with its high and reverend shades, make me imagine it as old as the baths of Dioclesian, which peep over one of its walls.

At the close of day, I repaired to the platform before the stately porticos of the Lateran. There I sat, folded up in myself. Some priests jarred the iron gates behind me. I looked over my shoulder through the portals, into the portico. Night began to fill it with darkness. Upon turning round, the melancholy waste of the Campagna met my eyes, and I wished to go home, but had scarcely the power. A pressure, like that I have felt in horrid dreams, seemed to fix me to the pavement.

I was thus in a manner forced to dwell upon the dreary scene, the long line of aqueducts and lonesome towers. Perhaps the unwholesome vapours, rising like blue mists from the plains, had affected me. I know not how it was; but I never experienced such strange, such chilling terrors. About ten o'clock, thank God, the spell dissolved, I found my limbs at liberty, and returned home.

LETTER VII.

Naples.—Portici.—The King's Pagliaro and Garden.—Description of that pleasant spot.

Naples, July 8th, 1782.

THE sea-breezes restore me to life. I set the heat of mid-day at defiance, and do not believe in the horrors of the sirocco. I passed yesterday at Portici, with Lady H. The morning, refreshing and pleasant, invited us at an early hour into the open air. We drove, in an uncovered chaise, to the royal Boschetto: no other unroyal carriage except Sir W.'s being allowed to enter its alleys, we breathed a fresh air, untainted by dust or garlick. Every now and then, amidst wild bushes of ilex and myrtle, one finds a graceful antique statue, sometimes a fountain, and often a rude knoll, where the rabbits sit undisturbed, contemplating the blue glittering bay.

The walls of this shady inclosure are lined with Peruvian aloes, whose white blossoms, scented like those of the magnolia, form the most magnificent clusters. They are plants to salute respectfully as one passes by; such is their size and dignity. In the midst of the thickets stands the King's Pagliaro, in a small garden, with hedges of luxuriant jasmine, whose branches are suffered to flaunt as much as nature pleases.

The morning sun darted his first rays on their flowers just as I entered this pleasant spot. The hut looks as if erected in the days of fairy pastoral life; its neatness is quite delightful. Bright tiles compose the floor; straw, nicely platted, covers the walls. In the middle of the room you see a table spread with a beautiful Persian carpet; at one end, four niches with mattresses of silk, where the King and his favourites repose after dinner; at the other, a white marble basin. Mount a little staircase, and you find yourself in another apartment, formed by the roof, which being entirely composed of glistening straw, casts that comfortable yellow glow I admire. From the windows you look into the garden, not flourished over with parterres, but divided into plats of fragrant herbs and flowers, with here and there a little marble table, or basin of the purest water.

These sequestered inclosures are cultivated with the greatest care, and so frequently watered, that I observed lettuces, and a variety of other vegetables, as fresh as in our green England.

GRANDE CHARTREUSE.

LETTER I.

Determination to visit the Grande Chartreuse.—Reach the Village of Les Echelles.—Gloomy region.—The Torrent.—Entrance of the Desert.—Portal of the consecrated Enclosure.—Dark Woods and Caverns.—Crosses.—Inscriptions.

Gray's sublime Ode on the Grande Chartreuse had sunk so deeply into my spirit that I could not rest in peace on the banks of the Lemane Lake till I had visited the scene from whence he caught inspiration. I longed to penetrate these sacred precincts, to hear the language of their falling waters, and throw myself into the gloom of their forests: no object of a worldly nature did I allow to divert my thoughts, neither the baths of Aix, nor the habitation of the too indulgent Madame de Warens (held so holy by Rousseau's worshippers), nor the magnificent road cut by Charles Emanuel of Savoy through the heart of a rocky mountain. All these points of attraction, so interesting to general travellers, were lost upon me, so totally was I absorbed in the anticipation of the pilgrimage I had undertaken.

Mr. Lettice, who shared all my sentiments of admiration for Gray, and eagerness to explore the region he had described in his short and masterly letters with such energy, felt the same indifference as myself to commonplace scenery.

The twilight was beginning to prevail when we reached Les Echelles, a miserable village, with but few of its chimneys smoking, situated at the base of a mountain, round which had gathered a concourse of red and greyish clouds. I was heartily glad to leave these forlorn and wretched quarters at the first dawn of the next day. We were now obliged to abandon our coach; and taking horse, proceeded towards the mountains, which, with the valleys between them, form what is called the Desert of the Carthusians.

In an hour's time we were drawing near, and could discern the opening of a narrow valley overhung by shaggy precipices, above which rose lofty peaks, covered to their very summits with wood. We could now distinguish the roar of torrents, and a confusion of strange sounds, issuing from dark forests of pine. I confess at this moment I was somewhat startled. I experienced some disagreeable sensations, and it was not without a degree of unwillingness that I left the gay pastures and enlivening sunshine, to throw myself into this gloomy and disturbed region. How dreadful, thought I, must be the despair of those, who enter it, never to return!

But after the first impression was worn away all my curiosity redoubled; and desiring our guide to put forward with greater speed, we made such good haste, that the meadows and cottages of the plain were soon left far behind, and we found ourselves on the banks of the torrent, whose agitation answered the ideas which its sounds had inspired. Into the midst of these troubled waters we were obliged to plunge with our horses, and, when landed on the opposite shore, were by no means displeased to have passed them.

We had now closed with the forests, over which the impending rocks diffused an additional gloom. The day grew obscured by clouds, and the sun no longer enlightened the distant plains, when we began to ascend towards the entrance of the desert, marked by two pinnacles of rock far above us, beyond which a melancholy twilight prevailed. Every moment we approached nearer and nearer to the sounds which had alarmed us; and, suddenly emerging from the woods, we discovered several mills and forges, with many complicated machines of iron, hanging over the torrent, that threw itself headlong from a cleft in the precipices; on one side of which I perceived our road winding along, till it was stopped by a venerable gateway. A rock above one of the forges was hollowed into the shape of a round tower, of no great size, but resembling very much an altar in figure; and, what added greatly to the grandeur of the object, was a livid flame continually palpitating upon it, which the gloom of the valley rendered perfectly discernible.

The road, at a small distance from this remarkable scene, was become so narrow, that, had my horse started, I should have been but too well acquainted with the torrent that raged beneath; dismounting, therefore, I walked towards the edge of the great fell, and there, leaning on a fragment of cliff, looked down into the foaming gulph, where the waters were hurled along over broken pines, pointed rocks, and stakes of iron. Then, lifting up my eyes, I took in the vast extent of the forests, frowning on the brows of the mountains.

It was here first I felt myself seized by the genius of the place, and penetrated with veneration of its religious gloom; and, I believe, uttered many extravagant exclamations; but, such was the dashing of the wheels, and the rushing of the waters at the bottom of the forges, that what I said was luckily undistinguishable.

I was not yet, however, within the consecrated enclosure, and therefore not perfectly contented; so, leaving my fragment, I paced in silence up the path, which led to the great portal. When we arrived before it, I rested a moment, and looking against the stout oaken gate, which closed up the entrance to this unknown region, felt at my heart a certain awe, that brought to my mind the sacred terror of those, in ancient days going to be admitted into the Eleusinian mysteries.

My guide gave two knocks; after a solemn pause, the gate was slowly opened, and all our horses having passed through it, was again carefully closed.

I now found myself in a narrow dell, surrounded on every side by peaks of the mountains, rising almost beyond my sight, and shelving downwards till their bases were hidden by the foam and spray of the water, over which hung a thousand withered and distorted trees. The rocks seemed crowding upon me, and, by their particular situation, threatened to obstruct every ray of light; but, notwithstanding the menacing appearance of the prospect, I still kept following my guide, up a craggy ascent, partly hewn through a rock, and bordered by the trunks of ancient fir-trees, which formed a fantastic barrier, till we came to a dreary and exposed promontory, impending directly over the dell.

The woods are here clouded with darkness, and the torrents rushing with additional violence are lost in the gloom of the caverns below; every object, as I looked downwards from my path, that hung midway between the base and the summit of the cliff, was horrid and woeful. The channel of the torrent sunk deep amidst frightful crags, and the pale willows and wreathed roots spreading over it, answered my ideas of those dismal abodes, where, according to the druidical mythology, the ghosts of conquered warriors were bound. I shivered whilst I was regarding these regions of desolation, and, quickly lifting up my eyes to vary the scene, I perceived a range of whitish cliffs glistening with the light of the sun, to emerge from these melancholy forests.

On a fragment that projected over the chasm, and concealed for a moment its terrors, I saw a cross, on which was written *VIA COELI*. The cliffs being the heaven to which I now aspired, we deserted the edge of the precipice, and ascending, came to a retired nook of the rocks, in which several copious rills had worn irregular grottoes. Here we reposed an instant, and were enlivened with a few sunbeams, piercing the thickets and gilding the waters that

bubbled from the rock, over which hung another cross, inscribed with this short sentence, which the situation rendered wonderfully pathetic, O SPES UNICA! the fervent exclamation of some wretch disgusted with the world whose only consolation was found in this retirement.

LETTER II.

Thick forest of beech trees.—Fearful glimpses of the torrent.—Throne of Moses.—Lofty bridge.—Distant view of the Convent.—Profound calm.—Enter the convent gate.—Arched aisle.—Welcomed by the father Coadjutor.—The Secretary and Procurator.—Conversation with them.—A walk amongst the cloisters and galleries.—Pictures of different Convents of the order.—Grand Hall adorned with historical paintings of St. Bruno's life.

We quitted this solitary cross to enter a thick forest of beech trees, that screened in some measure the precipices on which they grew, catching however every instant terrifying glimpses of the torrent below. Streams gushed from every crevice in the cliffs, and falling over the mossy roots and branches of the beech, hastened to join the great torrent, athwart which I every now and then remarked certain tottering bridges, and sometimes could distinguish a Carthusian crossing over to his hermitage, that just peeped above the woody labyrinths on the opposite shore.

Whilst I was proceeding amongst the innumerable trunks of the beech trees, my guide pointed out to me a peak, rising above the others, which he called the Throne of Moses. If that prophet had received his revelations in this desert, no voice need have declared it holy ground, for every part of it is stamped with such a sublimity of character as would alone be sufficient to impress the idea.

Having left these woods behind, and crossing a bridge of many lofty arches, I shuddered once more at the impetuosity of the torrent; and, mounting still higher, came at length to a kind of platform before two cliffs, joined by an arch of rock, under which we were to pursue our road. Below we beheld again innumerable streams, turbulently precipitating themselves from the woods and lashing the base of the mountains, mossed over with a dark sea green.

In this deep hollow such mists and vapours prevailed as hindered my prying into its recesses; besides, such was the dampness of the air, that I hastened gladly from its neighbourhood, and passing under the second portal beheld with pleasure the sunbeams gilding the throne of Moses.

It was now about ten o'clock, and my guide assured me I should soon discover the convent. Upon this information I took new courage, and continued my route on the edge of the rocks, till we struck into another gloomy grove. After turning about it for some time, we entered again into the glare of daylight, and saw a green valley skirted by ridges of cliffs and sweeps of wood before us. Towards the farther end of this inclosure, on a gentle acclivity, rose the revered turrets of the Carthusians, which extend in a long line on the brow of the hill; beyond them a woody amphitheatre majestically presents itself, terminated by spires of rock and promontories lost amongst the clouds.

The roar of the torrent was now but faintly distinguishable, and all the scenes of horror and confusion I had passed were succeeded by a sacred and profound calm. I traversed the valley with a thousand sensations I despair of describing, and stood before the gate of the convent with as much awe as some novice or candidate newly arrived to solicit the holy retirement of the order.

As admittance is more readily granted to the English than to almost any other nation, it was not long before the gates opened, and whilst the porter ordered our horses to the stable, we entered a court watered by two fountains and built round with lofty edifices, characterized by a noble simplicity.

The interior portal opening discovered an arched aisle, extending till the perspective nearly met, along which windows, but scantily distributed between the pilasters, admitted a pale solemn light, just sufficient to distinguish the objects with a picturesque uncertainty. We had scarcely set our feet on the pavement when the monks began to issue from an arch, about half way down, and passing in a long succession from their chapel, bowed reverently with much humility and meekness, and dispersed in silence, leaving one of their body alone in the aisle.

The father Coadjutor (for he only remained) advanced towards us with great courtesy, and welcomed us in a manner which gave me far more pleasure than all the frivolous salutations and affected greetings so common in the world beneath. After asking us a few indifferent questions, he called one of the lay brothers, who live in the convent under less severe restrictions than the fathers, whom they serve, and ordering him to prepare our apartment, conducted us to a large square hall with casement windows, and, what was more comfortable, an enormous chimney, whose hospitable hearth blazed with a fire of dry aromatic fir, on each side of which were two doors that communicated with the neat little cells destined for our bed-chambers.

Whilst he was placing us round the fire, a ceremony by no means unimportant in the cold climate of these upper regions, a bell rang which summoned him to prayers. After charging the lay brother to set before us the best fare their desert afforded, he retired, and left us at full liberty to examine our chambers.

The weather lowered, and the casements permitted very little light to enter the apartment: but on the other side it was amply enlivened by the gleams of the fire, that spread all over a certain comfortable air, which even sunshine but rarely diffuses. Whilst the showers descended with great violence, the lay brother and another of his companions were placing an oval table, very neatly carved and covered with the finest linen, in the middle of the hall; and, before we had examined a number of portraits which were hung in all the panels of the wainscot, they called us to a dinner widely different from what might have been expected in so dreary a situation. Our attendant friar was helping us to some Burgundy, of the happiest growth and vintage, when the coadjutor returned, accompanied by two other fathers, the secretary and procurator, whom he presented to us. You would have been both charmed and surprised with the cheerful resignation that appeared in their countenances, and with the easy turn of their conversation.

The coadjutor, though equally kind, was as yet more reserved: his countenance, however, spoke for him without the aid of words, and there was in his manner a mixture of dignity and humility, which could not fail to interest. There were moments when the recollection of some past event seemed to shade his countenance with a melancholy that rendered it still more affecting. I should suspect he formerly possessed a great share of natural vivacity (something of it being still, indeed, apparent in his more unguarded moments); but this spirit is almost entirely

subdued by the penitence and mortification of the order.

The secretary displayed a very considerable share of knowledge in the political state of Europe, furnished probably by the extensive correspondence these fathers preserve with the three hundred and sixty subordinate convents, dispersed throughout all those countries where the court of Rome still maintains its influence.

In the course of our conversation they asked me innumerable questions about England, where formerly, they said, many monasteries had belonged to their order; and principally that of Witham, which they had learnt to be now in my possession.

The secretary, almost with tears in his eyes, beseeched me to revere these consecrated edifices, and to preserve their remains, for the sake of St. Hugo, their canonized prior. I replied greatly to his satisfaction, and then declaimed so much in favour of St. Bruno, and the holy prior of Witham, that the good fathers grew exceedingly delighted with the conversation, and made me promise to remain some days with them. I readily complied with their request, and, continuing in the same strain, that had so agreeably affected their ears, was soon presented with the works of St. Bruno, whom I so zealously admired.

After we had sat extolling them, and talking upon much the same sort of subjects for about an hour, the coadjutor proposed a walk amongst the cloisters and galleries, as the weather would not admit of any longer excursion. He leading the way, we ascended a flight of steps, which brought us to a gallery, on each side of which a vast number of pictures, representing the dependent convents, were ranged; for I was now in the capital of the order, where the general resides, and from whence he issues forth his commands to his numerous subjects; who depute the superiors of their respective convents, whether situated in the wilds of Calabria, the forests of Poland, or in the remotest districts of Portugal and Spain, to assist at the grand chapter, held annually under him, a week or two after Easter.

This reverend father died about ten days before our arrival: a week ago they elected the prior of the Carthusian convent at Paris in his room, and two fathers were now on their route to apprise him of their choice, and to salute him General of the Carthusians. During this interregnum the coadjutor holds the first rank in the temporal, and the grand vicaire in the spiritual affairs of the order; both of which are very extensive.

If I may judge from the representation of the different convents, which adorn this gallery, there are many highly worthy of notice, for the singularity of their situations, and the wild beauties of the landscapes which surround them. The Venetian Chartreuse, placed in a woody island; and that of Rome, rising from amongst groups of majestic ruins, struck me as peculiarly pleasing. Views of the English monasteries hung formerly in such a gallery, but had been destroyed by fire, together with the old convent. The list only remains, with but a very few written particulars concerning them.

Having amused myself for some time with the pictures, and the descriptions the coadjutor gave me of them, we quitted the gallery and entered a kind of chapel, in which were two altars with lamps burning before them, on each side of a lofty portal. This opened into a grand coved hall, adorned with historical paintings of St. Bruno's life, and the portraits of the generals of the order, since the year of the great founder's death (1085) to the present time. Under these portraits are the stalls for the superiors, who assist at the grand convocation. In front, appears the general's throne; above, hangs a representation of the canonized Bruno, crowned with stars.

LETTER III.

Cloisters of extraordinary dimensions.—Cells of the Monks.—Severity of the order.—Death-like calm.—The great Chapel.—Its interior.—Marvellous events relating to St. Bruno.—Retire to my cell.—Strange writings of St. Bruno.—Sketch of his Life.—Appalling occurrence.—Vision of the Bishop of Grenoble.—First institution of the Carthusian order.—Death of St. Bruno.—His translation.

The coadjutor seemed charmed with the respect with which I looked round on these holy objects; and if the hour of vespers had not been drawing near, we should have spent more time in the contemplation of Bruno's miracles, pourtrayed on the lower panels of the hall. We left that room to enter a winding passage (lighted by windows in the roof) that brought us to a cloister six hundred feet in length, from which branched off two others, joining a fourth of the same most extraordinary dimensions. Vast ranges of slender pillars extend round the different courts of the edifice, many of which are thrown into gardens belonging to particular cells.

We entered one of them: its inhabitant received us with much civility, walked before us through a little corridor that looked on his garden, showed us his narrow dwelling, and, having obtained leave of the coadjutor to speak, gave us his benediction, and beheld us depart with concern. Nature has given this poor monk very considerable talents for painting. He has drawn the portrait of the late General, in a manner that discovers great facility of execution; but he is not allowed to exercise his pencil on any other subject, lest he should be amused; and amusement in this severe order is a crime. He had so subdued, so mortified an appearance, that I was not sorry to hear the bell, which summoned the coadjutor to prayers, and prevented my entering any more of the cells. We continued straying from cloister to cloister, and wandering along the winding passages and intricate galleries of this immense edifice, whilst the coadjutor was assisting at vespers.

In every part of the structure reigned the most death-like calm: no sound reached my ears but the "minute drops from off the eaves." I sat down in a niche of the cloister, and fell into a profound reverie, from which I was recalled by the return of our conductor; who, I believe, was almost tempted to imagine, from the cast of my countenance, that I was deliberating whether I should not remain with them for ever.

But I soon roused myself, and testified some impatience to see the great chapel, at which we at length arrived after traversing another labyrinth of cloisters. The gallery immediately before its entrance appeared quite gay, in comparison with the others I had passed, and owes its cheerfulness to a large window (ornamented with slabs of polished marble) that admits the view of a lovely wood, and allows a full blaze of light to dart on the chapel door; which is also adorned with marble, in a plain but noble style of architecture.

The father sacristan stood ready on the steps of the portal to grant us admittance; and, throwing open the valves, we entered the chapel and were struck by the justness of its proportions, the simple majesty of the arched

roof, and the mild solemn light equally diffused over every part of the edifice. No tawdry ornaments, no glaring pictures disgraced the sanctity of the place. The high altar, standing distinct from the walls, which were hung with a rich velvet, was the only object on which many ornaments were lavished; and, it being a high festival, was clustered with statues of gold, shrines, and candelabra of the stateliest shape and most delicate execution. Four of the latter, of a gigantic size, were placed on the steps; which, together with part of the inlaid floor within the choir, were spread with beautiful carpets.

The illumination of so many tapers striking on the shrines, censers, and pillars of polished jasper, sustaining the canopy of the altar, produced a wonderful effect; and, as the rest of the chapel was visible only by the faint external light admitted from above, the splendour and dignity of the altar was enhanced by contrast. I retired a moment from it, and seating myself in one of the furthest stalls of the choir, looked towards it, and fancied the whole structure had risen by "subtle magic," like an exhalation.

Here I remained several minutes breathing nothing but incense, and should not have quitted my station soon, had I not been apprehensive of disturbing the devotions of two aged fathers who had just entered, and were prostrating themselves before the steps of the altar. These venerable figures added greatly to the solemnity of the scene; which as the day declined increased every moment in splendour; for the sparkling of several lamps of chased silver that hung from the roofs, and the gleaming of nine huge tapers which I had not before noticed, began to be visible just as I left the chapel.

Passing through the sacristy, where lay several piles of rich embroidered vestments, purposely displayed for our inspection, we regained the cloister which led to our apartment, where the supper was ready prepared. We had scarcely finished it, when the coadjutor, and the fathers who had accompanied us before, returned, and ranging themselves round the fire, resumed the conversation about St. Bruno.

Finding me disposed by the wonders I had seen in the day to listen to things of a miraculous nature, they began to relate the inspirations they had received from him, and his mysterious apparitions. I was all attention, respect, and credulity. The old secretary worked himself up to such a pitch of enthusiasm, that I am very much inclined to imagine he believed in these moments all the marvellous events he related. The coadjutor being less violent in his pretensions to St. Bruno's modern miracles, contented himself with enumerating the noble works he had done in the days of his fathers, and in the old time before them.

It grew rather late before my kind hosts had finished their narrations, and I was not sorry, after all the exercise I had taken, to return to my cell, where everything invited to repose. I was charmed with the neatness and oddity of my little apartment; its cabin-like bed, oratory, and ebony crucifix; in short, every thing it contained; not forgetting the aromatic odour of the pine, with which it was roofed, floored, and wainscoted. The night was luckily dark. Had the moon appeared, I could not have prevailed upon myself to have quitted her till very late; but, as it happened, I crept into my cabin, and was by "whispering winds soon lulled asleep."

Eight o'clock struck next morning before I awoke; when, to my great sorrow, I found the peaks, which rose above the convent, veiled in vapours, and the rain descending with violence.

After we had breakfasted by the light of our fire (for the casements admitted but a very feeble gleam), I sat down to the works of St. Bruno; of all medleys one of the strangest. Allegories without end; a theologico-natural history of birds, beasts, and fishes; several chapters on paradise; the delights of solitude; the glory of Solomon's temple; the new Jerusalem; and numberless other wonderful subjects, full of the loftiest enthusiasm. The revered author of this strangely abstruse and mystic volume was certainly a being of no common order, nor do we find in the wide circle of legendary traditions an event recorded, better calculated to inspire the utmost degree of religious terror than that which determined him to the monastic state.

St. Bruno was of noble descent, and possessed considerable wealth. Not less remarkable for the qualities of his mind, their assiduous cultivation obtained for him the chair of master of the great sciences in the University of Rheims, where he contracted an intimate friendship with Odo, afterwards Pope Urban II. Though it appears that a very cheering degree of public approbation, and all the blandishments of a society highly polished for the period, contributed, not unprofitably one should think, to fill up his time, always singular, always visionary, he began early in life to loathe the world, and sigh after retirement.

But a most appalling occurrence converted these sighs into the deepest groans. A man, who had borne the highest character for the exercise of every virtue, died, and was being carried to the grave. The procession, of which Bruno formed a part, was moving slowly on, when a low, mournful sound issued from the bier. The corpse was distinctly seen to lift up its ghastly countenance, and as distinctly heard to articulate these words—"I am summoned to trial." After an agonizing pause, the same terrific voice declared—"I stand before the tribunal." Some further moments of amazement and horror having elapsed, the dead body lifted itself up a third time, and moving its livid lips uttered forth this dreadful sentence—"I am condemned by the just judgment of God." "Alas! alas!" exclaimed Bruno—"of how little avail are apparent good works, or the favourable opinion of mankind!

Ubi fugiam nisi ad te?—

Thy mercies alone can save, and it is not in the frivolous and seductive intercourse of a worldly life those mercies can be obtained."

Stricken to the heart by these reflections, he hurried in a fever of terror and alarm (the sepulchral voice still ringing in his ears) to Grenoble, of which see one of his dearest friends, the venerable Hugo, had lately been appointed bishop.

This saintly prelate soothed the dreadful agitation of his spirits by relating to him a revelation he had just received in a dream.

"As I slept," said Hugo, "methought the desert mountains beyond Grenoble became suddenly visible in the dead of night by the streaming of seven lucid stars which hung directly over them. Whilst I remained absorbed in the contemplation of this wonder, an awful voice seemed to break the nocturnal silence, declaring their dreary solitudes thy future abode, O Bruno!—by thee to be consecrated as a retirement for holy men desirous of holding converse with their God. No shepherd's pipe shall be heard within these precincts; no huntsman's profane feet ever invade their fastnesses; nor shall woman ascend this mountain, or violate by her allurements the sacred repose of its inhabitants."

Such were the first institutions of the order as the inspired Bishop of Grenoble delivered them to Bruno, who selecting a few persons that, like himself, contemned the splendours of the world and the charms of society, repaired with them to this spot; and, in the darkest parts of the forests which shade the most gloomy recesses of the mountains, founded the first convent of Carthusians, long since destroyed.

Several years passed away, whilst Bruno was employed in actions of the most exalted piety; and, the fame of his exemplary conduct reaching Rome, (where his friend had been lately invested with the papal tiara,) the whole conclave was desirous of seeing him, and entreated Urban to invite him to Rome. The request of Christ's vicegerent was not to be refused; and Bruno quitted his beloved solitude, leaving some of his disciples behind, who propagated his doctrines, and tended zealously the infant order.

The pomp of the Roman court soon disgusted the rigid Bruno, who had weaned himself entirely from worldly affections.

Being wholly intent on futurity, the bustle and tumults of a busy metropolis became so irksome that he supplicated Urban for leave to retire; and, having obtained it, left Rome, and immediately seeking the wilds of Calabria, there sequestered himself in a lonely hermitage, calmly expecting his last moments.

In his death there was no bitterness. A celestial radiance shone around him even before he closed his eyes upon this frail existence, and many a venerable witness has testified that the voices of angelic beings were heard calling him to come and receive his reward; but as the different accounts of his translation are not essentially varied, it would be tedious to recite them.

LETTER IV.

Mystic discourse.—A mountain ramble.—A benevolent Hermit.—Red light in the northern sky.—Lose my way in the solitary hills.—Approach of night.

I had scarcely finished taking extracts from the writings of this holy and highly-gifted personage when the dinner appeared, consisting of everything most delicate which a strict adherence to the rules of meagre could allow. The good fathers returned as usual before our repast was half over, and resumed as usual their mystic discourse, looking all the time rather earnestly into my countenance to observe the sort of effect their most marvellous narrations produced upon it.

Our conversation, which was beginning to take a gloomy and serious turn, was interrupted, I thought very agreeably, by the sudden intrusion of the sun, which, escaping from the clouds, shone in full splendour above the highest peak of the mountains, and the vapours fleeting by degrees discovered the woods in all the freshness of their verdure. The pleasure I received from seeing this new creation rising to view was very lively, and, as the fathers assured me the humidity of their walks did not often continue longer than the showers, I left my hall.

Crossing the court, I hastened out of the gates, and running swiftly along a winding path on the side of the meadow, bordered by the forests, enjoyed the charms of the prospect inhaled the perfume of the woodlands, and now turning towards the summits of the precipices that encircled this sacred inclosure, admired the glowing colours they borrowed from the sun, contrasted by the dark hues of the forest. Now, casting my eyes below, I suffered them to roam from valley to valley, and from one stream (beset with tall pines and tufted beech trees) to another. The purity of the air in these exalted regions, and the lightness of my own spirits, almost seized me with the idea of treading in that element.

Not content with the distant beauties of the hanging rocks and falling waters, I still kept running wildly along, with an eagerness and rapidity that, to a sober spectator, would have given me the appearance of one possessed, and with reason, for I was affected with the scene to a degree I despair of expressing.

Whilst I was continuing my course, pursued by a thousand strange ideas, a father, who was returning from some distant hermitage, stopped my career, and made signs for me to repose myself on a bench erected under a neighbouring shed; and, perceiving my agitation and disordered looks, fancied, I believe, that one of the bears that lurk near the snows of the mountains had alarmed me by his sudden appearance.

The good old man, expressing by his gestures that he wished me to recover myself in quiet on the bench, hastened, with as much alacrity as his age permitted, to a cottage adjoining the shed, and returning in a few moments, presented me some water in a wooden bowl, into which he let fall several drops of an elixir composed of innumerable herbs, and having performed this deed of charity, signified to me by a look, in which benevolence, compassion, and perhaps some little remains of curiosity were strongly painted, how sorry he was to be restrained by his vow of silence from enquiring into the cause of my agitation, and giving me farther assistance. I answered also by signs, on purpose to carry on the adventure, and suffered him to depart with all his conjectures unsatisfied.

No sooner had I lost sight of the benevolent hermit than I started up, and pursued my path with my former agility, till I came to the edge of a woody dell, that divided the meadow on which I was running from the opposite promontory. Here I paused, and looking up at the cliffs, now but faintly illumined by the sun, which had been some time sinking on our narrow horizon, reflected that it would be madness to bewilder myself, at so late an hour, in the mazes of the forest. Being thus determined, I abandoned with regret the idea of penetrating into the lovely region before me, and contented myself for some moments with marking the pale tints of the evening gradually overspreading the cliffs, so lately flushed with the gleams of the setting sun.

But my eyes were soon diverted from contemplating these objects by a red light streaming over the northern sky, which attracted my notice as I sat on the brow of a sloping hill, looking down what appeared to be a fathomless ravine blackened by the shade of impervious forests, above which rose majestically the varied peaks and promontories of the mountains.

The upland lawns, which hang at immense heights above the vale, next caught my attention. I was gazing alternately at them and the valley, when a long succession of light misty clouds, of strange fantastic shapes, issuing from a narrow gully between the rocks, passed on, like a solemn procession, over the hollow dale, midway between the stream that watered it below, and the summits of the cliffs on high.

The tranquillity of the region, the verdure of the lawn, environed by girdles of flourishing wood, and the lowing

of the distant herds, filled me with the most pleasing sensations. But when I lifted up my eyes to the towering cliffs, and beheld the northern sky streaming with ruddy light, and the long succession of misty forms hovering over the space beneath, they became sublime and awful. The dews which began to descend, and the vapours which were rising from every dell, reminded me of the lateness of the hour; and it was with great reluctance that I turned from the scene which had so long engaged my contemplation, and traversed slowly and silently the solitary meadows, over which I had hurried with such eagerness an hour ago.

Hill appeared after hill, and hillock succeeded hillock, which I had passed unnoticed before. Sometimes I imagined myself following a different path from that which had brought me to the edge of the deep valley. Another moment, descending into the hollows between the hillocks that concealed the distant prospects from my sight, I fancied I had entirely mistaken my route, and expected every moment to be lost amongst the rude brakes and tangled thickets that skirted the eminences around.

As the darkness increased, my situation became still more and more forlorn. I had almost abandoned the idea of reaching the convent; and whenever I gained any swelling ground, looked above, below, and on every side of me, in hopes of discovering some glimmering lamp which might indicate a hermitage, whose charitable possessor, I flattered myself, would direct me to the monastery.

At length, after a tedious wandering along the hills, I found myself, unexpectedly, under the convent walls; and, as I was looking for the gate, the attendant lay-brothers came out with lights, in order to search for me; scarcely had I joined them, when the Coadjutor and the Secretary came forward, with the kindest anxiety expressed their uneasiness at my long absence, and conducted me to my apartment, where Mr. Lettice was waiting, with no small degree of impatience; but I found not a word had been mentioned of my adventure with the hermit; so that, I believe, he strictly kept his vow till the day when the Carthusians are allowed to speak, and which happened after my departure.

LETTER V.

Pastoral Scenery of Valombré.—Ascent of the highest Peak in the Desert.—Grand amphitheatre of Mountains.—Farewell benediction of the Fathers.

We had hardly supped before the gates of the convent were shut, a circumstance which disconcerted me not a little, as the full moon gleamed through the casements, and the stars sparkling above the forests of pines, invited me to leave my apartment again, and to give myself up entirely to the spectacle they offered.

The coadjutor, perceiving that I was often looking earnestly through the windows, guessed my wishes, and calling a lay-brother, ordered him to open the gates, and wait at them till my return. It was not long before I took advantage of this permission, and escaping from the courts and cloisters of the monastery, all hushed in death-like stillness, ascended a green knoll, which several ancient pines strongly marked with their shadows: there, leaning against one of their trunks, I lifted up my eyes to the awful barrier of surrounding mountains, discovered by the trembling silver light of the moon shooting directly on the woods which fringed their acclivities.

The lawns, the vast woods, the steep descents, the precipices, the torrents, lay all extended beneath, softened by a pale blueish haze, that alleviated, in some measure, the stern prospect of the rocky promontories above, wrapped in dark shadows. The sky was of the deepest azure, innumerable stars were distinguished with unusual clearness from this elevation, many of which twinkled behind the fir-trees edging the promontories. White, grey, and darkish clouds came marching towards the moon, that shone full against a range of cliffs, which lift themselves far above the others. The hoarse murmur of the torrent, throwing itself from the distant wildernesses into the gloomy vales, was mingled with the blast that blew from the mountains.

It increased. The forests began to wave, black clouds rose from the north, and, as they fled along, approached the moon, whose light they shortly extinguished. A moment of darkness succeeded; the gust was chill and melancholy; it swept along the desert, and then subsiding, the vapours began to pass away, and the moon returned; the grandeur of the scene was renewed, and its imposing solemnity was increased by her presence. Inspiration was in every wind.

I followed some impulse which drove me to the summit of the mountains before me; and there, casting a look on the whole extent of wild woods and romantic precipices, thought of the days of St. Bruno. I eagerly contemplated every rock that formerly might have met his eyes; drank of the spring which tradition says he was wont to drink of; and ran to every pine, whose withered appearance bespoke the most remote antiquity, and beneath which, perhaps, the saint had reposed himself, when worn with vigils, or possessed with the sacred spirit of his institutions. It was midnight before I returned to the convent and retired to my quiet chamber, but my imagination was too much disturbed, and my spirits far too active, to allow me any rest for some time.

I had scarcely fallen asleep, when I was suddenly awakened by a furious blast, which drove open my casement, for it was a troubled and tempestuous night, and let in the roar of the tempest. In the intervals of the storm, in those moments when the winds seemed to pause, the faint sounds of the choir stole upon my ear; but were swallowed up the next instant by the redoubled fury of the gust, which was still increased by the roar of the waters.

I started from my bed, closed the casement, and composed myself as well as I was able; but no sooner had the sunbeams entered my window, than I arose, and gladly leaving my cell, hastened to the same knoll, where I had stood the night before. The storm was dissipated, and the pure morning air delightfully refreshing: every tree, every shrub, glistened with dew. A gentle wind breathed upon the woods, and waved the fir-trees on the cliffs, which, free from clouds, rose distinctly into the clear blue sky. I strayed from the knoll into the valley between the steeps of wood and the turrets of the convent, and passed the different buildings, destined for the manufacture of the articles necessary to the fathers; for nothing is worn or used within this inclosure, which comes from the profane world.

Traversing the meadows and a succession of little dells, where I was so lately bewildered, I came to a bridge thrown over the torrent, which I crossed; and here followed a slight path that brought me to an eminence, covered with a hanging wood of beech-trees feathered to the ground, from whence I looked down the narrow pass towards Grenoble. Perceiving a smoke to arise from the groves which nodded over the eminence, I climbed up a rocky steep,

and, after struggling through a thicket of shrubs, entered a smooth, sloping lawn, framed in by woody precipices; at one extremity of which I discovered the cottage, whose smoke had directed me to this sequestered spot; and, at the other, a numerous group of cattle, lying under the shade of some beech-trees, whilst several friars, with long beards and russet garments, were employed in milking them.

The luxuriant foliage of the woods, clinging round the steeps that skirted the lawn; its gay, sunny exposition; the groups of sleek, dappled cows, and the odd employment of the friars, so little consonant with their venerable beards, formed a picturesque and certainly very singular spectacle. I, who had been accustomed to behold "milk-maids singing blithe," and tripping lightly along with their pails, was not a little surprised at the silent gravity with which these figures shifted their trivets from cow to cow; and it was curious to see with what adroitness they performed their functions, managing their long beards with a facility and cleanliness equally admirable.

I watched all their movements for some time, concealed by the trees, before I made myself visible; but no sooner did I appear on the lawn, than one of the friars quitted his trivet, very methodically set down his pail, and coming towards me with an open, smiling countenance, desired me to refresh myself with some bread and milk. A second, observing what was going forward, was resolved not to be exceeded in an hospitable act, and, quitting his pail too, hastened into the woods, from whence he returned in a few minutes with some strawberries, very neatly enveloped in fresh leaves. These hospitable, milking fathers, next invited me to the cottage, whither I declined going, as I preferred the shade of the beeches; so, throwing myself on the dry aromatic herbage, I enjoyed the pastoral character of the scene with all possible glee.

Not a cloud darkened the heavens; every object smiled; innumerable gaudy flies glanced in the sunbeams that played in a clear spring by the cottage; I saw with pleasure the sultry glow of the distant cliffs and forests, whilst indolently reclined in the shade, listening to the summer hum; one hour passed after another neglected away, during my repose in this most delightful of valleys.

When I returned unwillingly to the convent, the only topic on which I could converse was the charms of Valombré, for so is this beautifully wooded region most appropriately called. Notwithstanding the indifference with which I now regarded the prospects that surrounded the monastery, I could not disdain an offer made by one of the friars, of conducting me to the summit of the highest peak in the desert.

Pretty late in the afternoon I set out with my guide, and, following his steps through many forests of pine, and wild apertures among them, strewed with fragments, arrived at a chapel, built on a mossy rock, and dedicated to St. Bruno.

Having once more drunk of the spring that issues from the rock on which this edifice is raised, I moved forward, keeping my eyes fixed on a lofty green mountain, from whence rises a vast cliff, spiring up to a surprising elevation; and which (owing to the sun's reflection on a transparent mist hovering around it) was tinged with a pale visionary light. This object was the goal to which I aspired; and redoubling my activity, I made the best of my way over rude ledges of rocks, and crumbled fragments of the mountain interspersed with firs, till I came to the green steeps I had surveyed at a distance.

These I ascended with some difficulty, and, leaving a few scattered beech-trees behind, in full leaf, shortly bade adieu to summer, and entered the regions of spring; for, as I approached that part of the mountain next the summit, the trees, which I found there rooted in the crevices, were but just beginning to unfold their leaves, and every spot of the greensward was covered with cowslips and violets.

After taking a few moments' repose, my guide prepared to clamber amongst the rocks, and I followed him with as much alertness as I was able, till laying hold of the trunk of a withered pine, we sprang upon a small level space, where I seated myself, and beheld far beneath me the vast desert and dreary solitudes, amongst which appeared, thinly scattered, the green meadows and hanging lawns. The eye next overlooking the barrier of mountains, ranged through immense tracts of distant countries; the plains where Lyons is situated; the woodlands and lakes of Savoy; amongst which that of Bourget was near enough to discover its beauties, all glowing with the warm haze of the setting sun.

My situation was too dizzy to allow a long survey, so turning my eyes from the terrific precipice, I gladly beheld an opening in the rocks, through which we passed into a little irregular glen of the smoothest greensward, closed in on one side by the great peak, and on the others by a ridge of sharp pinnacles, which crown the range of white cliffs I had so much admired the night before, when brightened by the moon.

The singular situation of this romantic spot invited me to remain in it till the sun was about to sink on the horizon: during which time I visited every little cave delved in the ridges of rock, and gathered large sprigs of the mezereon and rhododendron in full bloom, which with a surprising variety of other plants carpeted this lovely glen. A luxuriant vegetation,

That on the green turf suck'd the honey'd showers,
And purpled all the ground with vernal flowers.

My guide, perceiving I was ready to mount still higher, told me it would be in vain, as the beds of snow that lie eternally in some fissures of the mountain, must necessarily impede my progress; but, finding I was very unwilling to abandon the enterprise, he showed me a few notches in the peak, by which we might ascend, though not without danger. This prospect rather abated my courage, and the wind rising, drove several thick clouds round the bottom of the peak, which increasing every minute, shortly skreened the green mountain and all the forest from our sight. A sea of vapours soon undulated beneath my feet, and lightning began to flash from a dark angry cloud that hung over the valleys and deluged them with storms, whilst I was securely standing under the clear expanse of æther.

But the hour did not admit of my remaining long in this proud station; so descending, I was soon obliged to pass through the vapours, and, carefully following my guide (for a false step might have caused my destruction) wound amongst the declivities, till we left the peak behind, and just as we reached the green mountain which was moistened with the late storm, the clouds fled and the evening recovered its serenity.

Leaving the chapel of St. Bruno on the right, we entered the woods, and soon emerged from them into a large pasture, under the grand amphitheatre of mountains, having a gentle ascent before us, beyond which appeared the neat blue roofs and glittering spires of the convent, where we arrived as the moon was beginning to assume her empire.

I need not say I rested well after the interesting fatigues of the day. The next morning early, I quitted my kind hosts with great reluctance. The coadjutor and two other fathers accompanied me to the outward gate, and there within the solemn circle of the desert bestowed on me their benediction.

It seemed indeed to come from their hearts, nor would they leave me till I was an hundred paces from the convent; and then, laying their hands on their breasts, declared that if ever I was disgusted with the world, here was an asylum.

I was in a melancholy mood when I traced back all the windings of my road, and when I found myself beyond the last gate in the midst of the wide world again, it increased.

We returned to Les Echelles; from thence to Chambéry, and, instead of going through Aix, passed by Annecy; but nothing in all the route engaged my attention, nor had I any pleasing sensations till I beheld the glassy lake of Geneva, and its lovely environs.

I rejoiced then because I knew of a retirement on its banks where I could sit and think of Valombré.

SALEVE.

LETTER I.

Revisit the trees on the summit of Saleve.—Pas d'Echelle.—Moneti.—Bird's-eye prospects.—Alpine flowers.—Extensive view from the summit of Saleve.—Youthful enthusiasm.—Sad realities.

I had long wished to revisit the holt of trees so conspicuous on the summit of Saleve, and set forth this morning to accomplish that purpose. Brandoin an artist, once the delight of our travelling lords and ladies, accompanied me. We rode pleasantly and sketchingly along through Carouge to the base of the mountain, taking views every now and then of picturesque stumps and cottages.

At length, after a good deal of lackadaisical loitering on the banks of the Arve, we reached a sort of goats' path, leading to some steps cut in the rock, and justly called the Pas d'Echelle. I need not say we were obliged to dismount and toil up this ladder, beyond which rise steeps of verdure shaded by walnuts.

These brought us to Moneti, a rude straggling village, with its church tower embosomed in gigantic limes. We availed ourselves of their deep cool shade to dine as comfortably as a whole posse of withered hags, who seemed to have been just alighted from their broomsticks, would allow us.

About half past three, a sledge drawn by four oxen was got ready to drag us up to the holt of trees, the goal to which we were tending: stretching ourselves on the straw spread over our vehicle, we set off along a rugged path, conducted aslant the steep slope of the mountain, vast prospects opening as we ascended; to our right the crags of the little Saleve—the variegated plains of Gex and Chablais, separated by the lake; below, Moneti, almost concealed in wood; behind, the mole, lifting up its pyramidal summit amidst the wild amphitheatre of glaciers, which lay this evening in dismal shadow, the sun being overcast, the Jura half lost in rainy mists, and a heavy storm darkening the Fort de l'Ecluse. Except a sickly gleam cast on the snows of the Buet, not a ray of sunshine enlivened our landscape.

This sorrowful colouring agreed but too well with the dejection of my spirits. I suffered melancholy recollections to take full possession of me, and glancing my eyes over the vast map below, sought out those spots where I had lived so happy with my lovely Margaret. On them did I eagerly gaze—absorbed in the consciousness of a fatal, irreparable loss, I little noticed the transports expressed by my companion at the grand effects of light and shade, which obeyed the movements of the clouds; nor was I more attentive to the route of our oxen, which, perfectly familiarized with precipices, preferred their edge to the bank on the other side, and by this choice gave us an opportunity of looking down more than a thousand feet perpendicularly on the wild shrubberies and shattered rocks deep below, at the base of the mountain. In general I shrink back from such bird's-eye prospects with my head in a whirl, and yet, by a most unaccountable fascination, feel a feverish impulse to throw myself into the very gulph I abhor; but to-day I lay in passive indifference, listlessly extended on our moving bed.

Its progress being extremely deliberate, we had leisure to observe, as we crept along, a profusion of Alpine flowers; but none of those gorgeous insects mentioned by Saussure as abounding on Saleve were fluttering about them. This was no favourable day for butterfly excursions; the flowers laden with heavy drops, the forerunners of still heavier rain, hung down their heads. We passed several chalets, formed of mud and stone, instead of the neat timber, with which those on the Swiss mountains are constructed. Meagre peasants, whose sallow countenances looked quite of a piece with the sandy hue of their habitations, kept staring at us from crevices and hollow places: the fresh roses of a garden are not more different from the rank weeds of an unhealthy swamp, than these wretched objects from the ruddy inhabitants of Switzerland.

My heart sank as we were driven alongside of one of these squalid groups, huddled together under a blasted beech in expectation of a storm. The wind drove the smoke and sparks of a fire just kindled at the root of the tree, full in the face of an infant, whose mother had abandoned it to implore our charity with outstretched withered hands. The poor helpless being filled the air with waitings, and being tightly swaddled lip in yellow rags, according to Savoyarde custom, exhibited an appearance in form and colour not unlike that of an overgrown pumpkin thrown on the ground out of the way. How should I have enjoyed setting its limbs at liberty, and transporting it to the swelling bosom of a Bernese peasant! such as I have seen in untaxed garments, red, blue and green, with hair falling in braids mixed with flowers and silver trinkets, hurrying along to some wake or wedding, with that firm step and smiling hilarity which the consciousness of freedom inspires.

A few minutes dragging beyond the tree just mentioned, we reached the bold verdant slopes of delicate short herbage which crown the crags of the mountain. We now moved smoothly along the turf, brushing it with our hands to extract its aromatic fragrance, and having no longer rough stones to encounter, our conveyance became so agreeable that we regretted our arrival before a chalet, under a clump of weather-beaten beach. These are the identical trees, so far and widely discovered, on the summit of Saleve, and the point to which we had been tending.

Seating ourselves on the very edge of a rocky cornice, we surveyed the busy crowded territory of Geneva, the vast reach of the lake, its coast, thickset with castles, towns, and villages, and the long line of the Jura protecting these richly cultivated possessions. Turning round, we traced the course of the Arve up to its awful sanctuary, the Alps of Savoy, above which rose the Mont-Blanc in deadly paleness, backed by a gloomy sky; nothing could form a stronger contrast to the populous and fertile plains in front of the mountain than this chaos of snowy peaks and melancholy deserts, the loftiest in the old world, held up in the air, and beaten, in spite of summer, with wintry storms.

I know not how long we should have remained examining the prospect had the weather been favourable, and had we enjoyed one of those serene evenings to be expected in the month of July. Many such have I passed in my careless childish days, stretched out on the brow of this very mountain, contemplating the heavenly azure of the lake, the innumerable windows of the villas below blazing in the setting sun, and the glaciers suffused by its last ray with a blushing pink. How often, giving way to youthful enthusiasm, have I peopled these singularly varied peaks with gnomes and fairies, the distributors of gold and crystal to those who adventurously scaled their lofty abode.

This evening my fancy was led to no such gay aerial excursions; sad realities chained it to the earth, and to the scene before my eyes, which, in lowering, sombre hue, corresponded with my interior gloom. A rude blast driving us off the margin of the precipices, we returned to the shelter of the beech. There we found some disappointed butterfly catchers, probably of the watch-making tribe, and a silly boy gaping after them with a lank net and empty boxes. This being Monday, I thought the Saleve had been delivered from such intruders; but it seems that the rage for natural history has so victoriously pervaded all ranks of people in the republic, that almost every day in the week sends forth some of its journeymen to ransack the neighbouring cliffs, and transfix unhappy butterflies.

Silversmiths and toymen, possessed by the spirit of De Luc and De Saussure's lucubrations, throw away the light implements of their trade, and sally forth with hammer and pickaxe to pound pebbles and knock at the door of every mountain for information. Instead of furbishing up teaspoons and sorting watch-chains, they talk of nothing but quartz and feldspath. One flourishes away on the durability of granite, whilst another treats calcareous rocks with contempt; but as human pleasures are seldom perfect and permanent, acrimonious disputes too frequently interrupt the calm of the philosophic excursion. Squabbles arise about the genus of a coralite, or concerning that element which has borne the greatest part in the convulsion of nature. The advocate of water too often sneaks home to his wife with a tattered collar, whilst the partisan of fire and volcanoes lies vanquished in a puddle, or winding up the clue of his argument in a solitary ditch. I cannot help thinking so diffused a taste for fossils and petrifications of no very particular benefit to the artisans of Geneva, and that watches would go as well, though their makers were less enlightened.

LETTER II.

Chalet under the Beech-trees.—A mountain Bridge.—Solemnity of the Night.—The Comedie.—Relaxation of Genevese Morality.

It began to rain just as we entered the chalet under the beech-trees, and one of the dirtiest I ever crept into—it would have been uncharitable not to have regretted the absence of swine, for here was mud and filth enough to have insured their felicity. A woman, whose teeth of a shining whiteness were the only clean objects I could discover, brought us foaming bowls of cream and milk, with which we regaled ourselves, and then got into our vehicle. We but too soon left the smooth herbage behind, and passed about an hour in rambling down the mountain pelted by the showers, from which we took shelter under the limes at Moneti.

Here we should have drunk our tea in peace and quietness, had it not been for the incursion of a gang of bandy-legged watchmakers, smoking their pipes, and scraping their fiddles, and snapping their fingers, with all that insolent vulgarity so characteristic of the Rue-basse portion of the Genevese community. We got out of their way, you may easily imagine, as fast as we were able, and descending a rough road, most abominably strewn with rolling pebbles, arrived at the bridge d'Etrombieres just as it fell dark. The mouldering planks with which the bridge is awkwardly put together, sounded suspiciously hollow under the feet of our horses, and had it not been for the friendly light of a pine torch which a peasant brought forth, we might have been tumbled into the Arve.

It was a mild summer night, the rainy clouds were dissolving away with a murmur of distant thunder so faint as to be scarcely heard. From time to time a flash of summer lightning discovered the lonely tower of Moneti on the edge of the lesser Saleve. The ghostly tales, which the old curé of the mountains had told me at a period when I hungered and thirsted after supernatural narrations, recurred to my memory, in all their variety of horrors, and kept it fully employed till I found myself under the walls of Geneva. The gates were shut, but I knew they were to be opened again at ten o'clock for the convenience of those returning from the *Comedie*.

The *Comedie* is become of wonderful importance; but a few years ago the very name of a play was held in such abhorrence by the spiritual consistory of Geneva and its obsequious servants, which then included the best part of the republic, that the partakers and abettors of such diversions were esteemed on the high road to eternal perdition. Though, God knows, I am unconscious of any extreme partiality for Calvin, I cannot help thinking his severe discipline wisely adapted to the moral constitution of this starch bit of a republic which he took to his grim embraces. But these days of rigidity and plainness are completely gone by; the soft spirit of toleration, so eloquently insinuated by Voltaire, has removed all thorny fences, familiarized his numerous admirers with every innovation, and laughed scruples of every nature to scorn. Voltaire, indeed, may justly be styled the architect of that gay well-ornamented bridge, by which freethinking and immorality have been smuggled into the republic under the mask of philosophy and liberality and sentiment. These monsters, like the Sin and Death of Milton, have made speedy and irreparable havoc. To facilitate their operations, rose the genius of "Rentes Viagères" at his bidding, tawdry villas with their little pert groves of poplar and horse-chesnut start up—his power enables Madame C. D. the bookseller's lady to amuse the D. of G. with assemblies, sets Parisian cabriolets and English phaetons rolling from one faro table to another, and launches innumerable pleasure parties with banners and popguns on the lake, drumming and trumpeting away their time from morn till evening. I recollect, not many years past, how seldom the echoes of the mountains were profaned by such noises, and how rarely the drones of Geneva, if any there were in that once

industrious city, had opportunities of displaying their idleness; but now Dissipation reigns triumphant, and to pay the tribute she exacts, every fool runs headlong to throw his scrapings into the voracious whirlpool of annuities; little caring, provided he feeds high and lolls in his carriage, what becomes of his posterity. I had ample time to make these reflections, as the *Comedie* lasted longer than usual.

Luckily the night improved, the storms had rolled away, and the moon rising from behind the crags of the lesser Saleve cast a pleasant gleam on the smooth turf of plain-palais, where we walked to and fro above half an hour. We had this extensive level almost entirely to ourselves, no light glimmered in any window, no sound broke the general stillness, except a low murmur proceeding from a group of chesnut trees. There, snug under a garden wall on a sequestered bench, sat two or three Genevois of the old stamp, chewing the cud of sober sermons—men who receive not more than seven or eight per cent. for their money; there sat they waiting for their young ones, who had been seduced to the theatre.

A loud hubbub and glare of flambeaus proclaiming the end of the play, we left these good folks to their rumination, and regaining our carriage rattled furiously through the streets of Geneva, once so quiet, so silent at these hours, to the no small terror and annoyance of those whom Rentes Viagères had not yet provided with a speedier conveyance than their own legs, or a brighter satellite than an old cook-maid with a candle and lantern.

It was eleven o'clock before we reached home, and near two before I retired to rest, having sat down immediately to write this letter whilst the impressions of the day were fresh in my memory.

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PORTUGAL.

PREFACE

TO

PORTUGUESE LETTERS.

Portugal attracting much attention in her present
convulsed and declining state, it might not perhaps be
uninteresting to the public to cast back a glance by way of
contrast to the happier times when she enjoyed, under the
mild and beneficent reign of Donna Maria the First, a
great share of courtly and commercial prosperity.

March 1, 1834.

PORTUGAL.

LETTER I.

Detained at Falmouth.—Navigation at a stop.—An evening ramble.

Falmouth, March 6, 1787.

THE glass is sinking; the west wind gently breathing upon the water, the smoke softly descending into the room, and sailors yawning dismally at the door of every ale-house.

Navigation seems at a full stop. The captains lounging about with their hands in their pockets, and passengers idling at billiards. Dr. V— has scraped acquaintance with a quaker, and went last night to one of their assemblies, where he kept jingling his fine Genevan watch-chains to their sober and silent dismay.

In the intervals of the mild showers with which we are blessed, I ramble about some fields already springing with fresh herbage, which slope down to the harbour: the immediate environs of Falmouth are not unpleasant upon better acquaintance. Just out of the town, in a sheltered recess of the bay, lies a grove of tall elms, forming several avenues carpeted with turf. In the central point rises a stone pyramid about thirty feet high, well designed and constructed, but quite plain without any inscription; between the stems of the trees one discovers a low white house, built in and out in a very capricious manner, with oriel windows and porches, shaded by bushes of prosperous bay. Several rose-coloured cabbages, with leaves as crisped and curled as those of the acanthus, decorate a little grass-plat, neatly swept, before the door. Over the roof of this snug habitation I spied the skeleton of a gothic mansion, so completely robed with thick ivy, as to appear like one of those castles of clipped box I have often seen in a Dutch garden.

Yesterday evening, the winds being still, and the sun gleaming warm for a moment or two, I visited this spot to examine the ruin, hear birds chirp, and scent wall-flowers.

Two young girls, beautifully shaped, and dressed with a sort of romantic provincial elegance, were walking up and down the grove by the pyramid. There was something so love-lorn in their gestures, that I have no doubt they were sighing out their souls to each other. As a decided amateur of this sort of *confidential promenade*, I would have given my ears to have heard their *confessions*.

LETTER II.

Mines in the parish of Gwynnap.—Piety and gin.—Rapid progress of Methodism.—Freaks of fortune.—Pernicious extravagance.—Minerals.—Mr. Beauchamp's mansion.—Beautiful lake.—The wind still contrary.

Falmouth, March 7, 1787.

SCOTT came this morning and took me to see the consolidated mines in the parish of Gwynnap; they are situated in a bleak desert, rendered still more doleful by the unhealthy appearance of its inhabitants. At every step one stumbles upon ladders that lead into utter darkness, or funnels that exhale warm copperous vapours. All around these openings the ore is piled up in heaps waiting for purchasers. I saw it drawn reeking out of the mine by the help of a machine called a whim, put in motion by mules, which in their turn are stimulated by impish children hanging over the poor brutes, and flogging them round without respite. This dismal scene of *whims*, suffering mules, and hillocks of cinders, extends for miles. Huge iron engines creaking and groaning, invented by Watt, and tall chimneys smoking and flaming, that seem to belong to old Nicholas's abode, diversify the prospect.

Two strange-looking Cornish beings, dressed in ghostly white, conducted me about, and very kindly proposed a descent into the bowels of the earth, but I declined initiation. These mystagogues occupy a tolerable house, with fair sash windows, where the inspectors of the mine hold their meetings, and regale upon beef, pudding, and brandy.

While I was standing at the door of this habitation, several woful figures in tattered garments, with pickaxes on their shoulders, crawled out of a dark fissure and repaired to a hovel, which I learnt was a gin-shop. There they pass the few hours allotted them above ground, and drink, it is to be hoped, an oblivion of their subterraneous existence. Piety as well as gin helps to fill up their leisure moments, and I was told that Wesley, who came apostolising into Cornwall a few years ago, preached on this very spot to above seven thousand followers.

Since this period Methodism has made a very rapid progress, and has been of no trifling service in diverting the attention of these sons of darkness from their present condition to the glories of the life to come. However, some people inform me their actual state is not so much to be lamented, and that, notwithstanding their pale looks and tattered raiment, they are far from being poor or unhealthy. Fortune often throws a considerable sum into their laps when they least expect it, and many a common miner has been known to gain a hundred pounds in the space of a month or two. Like sailors in the first effusion of prize-money, they have no notion of turning their good-luck to advantage; but squander the fruits of their toil in the silliest species of extravagance. Their wives are dressed out in tawdry silks, and flaunt away in ale-houses between rows of obedient fiddlers. The money spent, down they sink again into damps and darkness.

Having passed about an hour in collecting minerals, stopping engines with my finger, and performing all the functions of a diligent young man desirous of information, I turned my back on smokes, flames, and coal-holes, with great pleasure.

Not above a mile-and-a-half from this black bustling scene, in a sheltered valley, lies the mansion of Mr. Beauchamp, wrapped up in shrubberies of laurel and laurustine. Copses of hazel and holly terminate the prospect on almost every side, and in the midst of the glen a broad clear stream reflects the impending vegetation. This transparent water, after performing the part of a mirror before the house, forms a succession of waterfalls which glitter between slopes of the smoothest turf, sprinkled with daffodils: numerous flights of widgeon and Muscovy ducks, were sprucing themselves on the edge of the stream, and two grave swans seemed highly to approve of its

woody retired banks for the education of their progeny.

Very glad was I to disport on its "margent green," after crushing cinders at every step all the morning; had not the sun hid himself, and the air grown chill, I might have fooled away three or four hours with the swans and the widgeons, and lost my dinner. Upon my return home, I found the wind as contrary as ever, and all thoughts of sailing abandoned.

LETTER III.

A lovely morning.—Antiquated mansion.—Its lady.—Ancestral effigies.—Collection of animals.—Serene evening.—Owls.—Expected dreams.

Falmouth, March 8, 1787.

WHAT a lovely morning! how glassy the sea, how busy the fishing-boats, and how fast aslew the wind in its old quarter! Towards evening, however, it freshened, and I took a toss in a boat with Mr. Trefusis, whose territories extend half round the bay. His green hanging downs spotted with sheep, and intersected by rocky gullies, shaded by tall straight oaks and ashes, form a romantic prospect, very much in the style of Mount Edgcumbe.

We drank tea at the capital of these dominions, an antiquated mansion, which is placed in a hollow on the summit of a lofty hill, and contains many ruinous halls and never-ending passages: they cannot, however, be said to lead to nothing, like those celebrated by Gray in his Long Story, for Mrs. Trefusis terminated the perspective. She is a native of Lausanne, and was quite happy to see her countryman Verdeil.

We should have very much enjoyed her conversation, but the moment tea was over, the squire could not resist leading us round his improvements in kennel, stable, and oxstall: though it was pitch-dark, and we were obliged to be escorted by grooms and groomlings with candles and lanterns; a very necessary precaution, as the winds blew not more violently without the house than within.

In the course of our peregrination through halls, pantries, and antechambers, we passed a staircase with heavy walnut-railing, lined from top to bottom with effigies of ancestors that looked quite formidable by the horny glow of our lanterns; which illumination, dull as it was, occasioned much alarm amongst a collection of animals, both furred and feathered, the delight of Mr. Trefusis's existence.

Every corner of his house contains some strange and stinking inhabitant; one can hardly move without stumbling over a basket of puppies, or rolling along a mealy tub, with ferrets in the bottom of it; rap went my head against a wire cage, and behold a squirrel twirled out of its sleep in sad confusion: a little further on, I was very near being the destruction of some new-born dormice—their feeble squeak haunts my ears at this moment!

Beyond this nursery, a door opened and admitted us into a large saloon, in the days of Mr. Trefusis's father very splendidly decorated, but at present exhibiting nothing, save damp plastered walls, mouldering floors, and cracked windows. A well-known perfume issuing from this apartment, proclaimed the neighbourhood of those fragrant animals, which you perfectly recollect were the joy of my infancy, and presently three or four couple of spanking yellow rabbits made their appearance. A racoon poked his head out of a coop, whilst an owl lifted up the gloom of his countenance, and gave us his malediction.

My nose having lost all relish for *rabbitish* odours, took refuge in my handkerchief; there did I keep it snug till it pleased our conductors to light us through two or three closets, all of a flutter with Virginia nightingales, goldfinches, and canary-birds, into the stable. Several game-cocks fell a crowing with most triumphant shrillness upon our approach; and a monkey—the image of poor Brandoin—expanded his jaws in so woful a manner, that I grew melancholy, and paid the hunters not half the attention they merited.

At length we got into the open air again, made our bows and departed. The evening was become serene and pleasant, the moon beamed brilliantly on the sea; but the owls, who are never to be pleased, hooted most ruefully.

Good night: I expect to dream of *closed-up doors*,^[12] and haunted passages; rats, puppies, racoons, game-cocks, rabbits, and dormice.

LETTER IV.

A blustering night.—Tedium of the language of the compass.—Another excursion to Trefusis.

Falmouth, March 10, 1787.

I THOUGHT last night our thin pasteboard habitation would have been blown into the sea, for never in my life did I hear such dreadful blusterings. Perhaps the winds are celebrating the approach of the equinox, or some high festival in Æolus's calendar, with which we poor mortals are unacquainted. How tired I am of the language of the compass, of wind shifting to this point and veering to the other; of gales springing up, and breezes freshening; of rough seas, clear berths, ships driving, and anchors lifting. Oh! that I was rooted like a tree, in some sheltered corner of an inland valley, where I might never hear more of saltwater or sailing.

You cannot wonder at my becoming impatient, after eleven days' captivity, nor at my wishing myself anywhere but where I am: I should almost prefer a quarantine party at the new elegant Lazaretto off Marseilles, to this smoky residence; at least, I might there learn some curious particulars of the Levant, enjoy bright sunshine, and perfect myself in Arabic. But what can a being of my turn do at Falmouth? I have little taste for the explanation of fire-engines, Mr. Scott; the pursuit of hares under the auspices of young Trefusis; or the gliding of billiard-balls in the society of Barbadoes Creoles and packet-boat captains. The Lord have mercy upon me! now, indeed, do I perform penance.

Our dinner yesterday went off tolerably well. We had *on* the table a savoury pig, right worthy of Otaheite, and some of the finest poultry I ever tasted; and *round* the table two or three brace of odd Cornish gentlefolks, not deficient in humour and originality.

About eight in the evening, six game-cocks were ushered into the eating-room by two limber lads in scarlet jackets; and, after a flourish of crowing, the noble birds set-to with surprising keenness. Tufts of brilliant feathers soon flew about the apartment; but the carpet was not stained with the blood of the combatants: for, to do Trefusis justice, he has a generous heart, and takes no pleasure in cruelty. The cocks were unarmed, had their spurs cut short, and may live to fight fifty such harmless battles.

LETTER V.

Regrets produced by Contrasts.

Falmouth, March 11, 1787.

WHAT a fool was I to leave my beloved retirement at Evian! Instead of viewing innumerable transparent rills falling over the amber-coloured rocks of Melierie, I am chained down to contemplate an oozy beach, deserted by the sea, and becrawled with worms tracking their way in the slime that harbours them. Instead of the cheerful crackling of a wood-fire in the old baron's great hall, I hear the bellowing of winds in narrow chimneys. You must allow the aromatic fragrance of fir-cones, such heaps of which I used to burn in Savoy, is greatly preferable to the exhalations of Welsh coal, and that to a person wrapped up in musical devotion, high mass must be a good deal superior to the hummings and hawings of a Quaker assembly. Colett swears he had rather be boarded at the Inquisition than remain at the mercy of the confounded keeper of this hotel, the worst and the dearest in Christendom. We are all tired to death, and know not what to do with ourselves.

As I look upon ennui to be very catching, I shall break off before I give you a share of it.

LETTER VI.

Still no prospect of embarkation.—Pen-dennis Castle.—Luxuriant vegetation.—A serene day.—Anticipations of the voyage.

Falmouth, March 13, 1787.

No prospect of launching this day upon the ocean. Every breeze is subsided, and a profound calm established. I walk up and down the path which leads to Pen-dennis Castle with folded arms, in a most listless desponding mood. Vast brakes of furze, much stouter and loftier than any with which I am acquainted, scent the air with the perfume of apricots. Primroses, violets, and fresh herbs innumerable expand on every bank. Larks, poised in the soft blue sky, warble delightfully. The sea, far and wide, is covered with fishing-boats; and such a stillness prevails, that I hear the voices of the fishermen.

You will be rambling in sheltered alleys, whilst winds and currents drive me furiously along craggy shores, under the scowl of a tempestuous sky. You will be angling for perch, whilst sharks are whetting their teeth at me. Methinks I hear the voracious gluttons disputing the first snap, and pointing upwards their cold slimy noses. Out upon them! I have no desire to invade their element, or (using poetical language) to plough those plains of waves which brings them rich harvests of carcasses, and had much rather cling fast to the green banks of Pen-dennis. I even prefer mining to sailing; and of the two, had rather be swallowed up by the earth than the ocean.

I wish some "swart fairy of the mine" would snatch me to her concealments. Rather than pass a month in the qualms of sea-sickness, I would consent to live three by candlelight, in the deepest den you could discover, stuck close to a foul midnight hag as mouldy as a rotten apple.

This, you will tell me, is being very energetic in my aversions, that I allow; but such, you know, is my trim, and I cannot help it.

LETTER VII.

Portugal.—Excursion to Pagliavam.—The villa.—Dismal labyrinths in the Dutch style.—Roses.—Anglo-Portuguese Master of the Horse.—Interior of the Palace.—Furniture in petticoats.—Force of education.—Royalty without power.—Return from the Palace.

30th May, 1787.

HORNE persuaded me much against my will to accompany him in his Portuguese chaise to Pagliavam, the residence of John the Fifth's bastards, instead of following my usual track along the sea-shore. The roads to this stately garden are abominable, and more infested by beggars, dogs, flies, and musquitoes, than any I am acquainted with. The villa itself, which belongs to the Marquis of Lourical, is placed in a hollow, and the tufted groves which surround it admit not a breath of air; so I was half suffocated the moment I entered their shade.

A great flat space before the garden-front of the villa is laid out in dismal labyrinths of clipped myrtle, with lofty pyramids rising from them, in the style of that vile Dutch maze planted by King William at Kensington, and rooted up some years ago by King George the Third. Beyond this puzzling ground are several long alleys of stiff dark verdure, called *ruas*, *i. e.* literally streets, with great propriety, being more close, more formal, and not less dusty than High-Holborn. I deviated from them into plats of well-watered vegetables and aromatic herbs, enclosed by neat fences of cane, covered with an embroidery of the freshest and most perfect roses, quite free from insects and cankers, worthy to have strewn the couches and graced the bosom of Lais, Aspasia, or Lady— You know how warmly every mortal of taste delights in these lovely flowers; how frequently, and in what harmonious numbers, Ariosto has celebrated them. Has not Lady — a whole apartment painted over with roses? Does she not fill her bath with their leaves, and deck her idols with garlands of no other flowers? and is she not quite in the right of it?

Whilst I was poetically engaged with the roses, Horne entered into conversation with a sort of Anglo-Portuguese

Master of the Horse to their bastard highnesses. He had a snug well-powdered wig, a bright silver-hilted sword, a crimson full-dress suit, and a gently bulging paunch. With one hand in his bosom and the other in the act of taking snuff, he harangued emphatically upon the holiness, temperance, and chastity of his august masters, who live sequestered from the world in dingy silent state, abhor profane company, and never cast a look upon females.

Being curious to see the abode of these semi-royal sober personages, I entered the palace. Not an insect stirred, not a whisper was audible. The principal apartments consist in a suite of lofty-coved saloons, nobly proportioned, and uniformly hung with damask of the deepest crimson. The upper end of each room is doubly shaded by a ponderous canopy of cut velvet. To the right and left appear rows of huge elbow-chairs of the same materials. No glasses, no pictures, no gilding, no decoration, but heavy drapery; even the tables are concealed by cut velvet flouncings, in the style of those with which our dowagers used formerly to array their toilets. The very sight of such close tables is enough to make one perspire; and I cannot imagine what demon prompted the Portuguese to invent such a fusty fashion.

This taste for putting commodes and tables into petticoats is pretty general here, at least in royal apartments. At Queluz, not a card or dining-table has escaped; and many an old court-dress, I should suspect, has been cut up to furnish these accoutrements, which are of all colours, plain and flowered, pastorally sprigged or gorgeously embroidered. Not so at Pagliavam. Crimson alone prevails, and casts its royal gloom unrivalled on every object. Stuck fast to the wall, between two of the aforementioned tables, are two fauteuils for their highnesses; and opposite, a rank of chairs for those reverend fathers in God who from time to time are honoured with admittance.

How mighty is the force of Education!—What pains it must require on the part of nurses, equerries, and chamberlains, to stifle every lively and generous sensation in the princelings they educate,—to break a human being into the habits of impotent royalty! Dignity without command is one of the heaviest of burthens. A sovereign may employ himself; he has the choice of good or evil; but princes, like those of Pagliavam, without power or influence, who have nothing to feed on but imaginary greatness, must yawn their souls out, and become in process of time as formal and inanimate as the pyramids of stunted myrtle in their gardens. Happier were those babies King John did not think proper to recognize, and they are not few in number, for that pious monarch,

“Wide as his command,
“Scattered his Maker’s image through the land.”

They, perhaps, whilst their brothers are gaping under rusty canopies, tinkle their guitars in careless moonlight rambles, wriggle in gay fandangos, or enjoy sound sleep, rural fare, and merriment, in the character of jolly village curates.

I was glad to get out of the palace; its stillness and gloom depressed my spirits, and a confined atmosphere, impregnated with the smell of burnt lavender, almost overcame me. I am just returned gasping for air. No wonder; one might as well be in bed with a warming-pan as in a Portuguese cariole with the portly Horne, who carries a noble protuberance, set off in this season with a satin waistcoat richly spangled.

I must go to Cintra, or I shall expire!

LETTER VIII.

Glare of the climate in Portugal.—Apish luxury.—Botanic Gardens.—Açafatas.—Description of the Gardens and Terraces.

May 31, 1787.

It is in vain I call upon clouds to cover me and fogs to wrap me up. You can form no adequate idea of the continual glare of this renowned climate. Lisbon is the place in the world best calculated to make one cry out

“Hide me from day’s garish eye;”

but where to hide is not so easy. Here are no thickets of pine as in the classic Italian villas, none of those quivering poplars and leafy chestnuts which cover the plains of Lombardy. The groves in the immediate environs of this capital are composed of—with, alas! but few exceptions—dwarfish orange-trees and cinder-coloured olives. Under their branches repose neither shepherds nor shepherdesses, but whitening bones, scraps of leather, broken pantiles, and passengers not unfrequently attended by monkeys, who, I have been told, are let out for the purpose of picking up a livelihood. Those who cannot afford this apish luxury, have their bushy poles untenanted by affectionate relations, for yesterday just under my window I saw two blessed babies rendering this good office to their aged parent.

I had determined not to have stirred beyond the shade of my awning; however, towards eve, the extreme fervour of the sun being a little abated, old Horne (who has yet a colt’s-tooth) prevailed upon me to walk in the Botanic Gardens, where not unfrequently are to be found certain youthful animals of the female gender called Açafatas, in Portuguese; a species between a bedchamber woman and a maid of honour. The Queen has kindly taken the ugliest with her to the Caldas: those who remain have large black eyes sparkling with the true spirit of adventure, an exuberant flow of dark hair, and pouting lips of the colour and size of full-blown roses.

All this, you will tell me, does not compose a perfect beauty. I never meant to convey such a notion: I only wish you to understand that the nymphs we have just quitted are the flowers of the Queen’s flock, and that she has, at least, four or five dozen more in attendance upon her sacred person, with larger mouths, smaller eyes, and swarthier complexions.

Not being in sufficient spirits to flourish away in Portuguese, my conversation was chiefly addressed to a lovely blue-eyed Irish girl of fifteen or sixteen, lately married to an officer of her Majesty’s customs. Spouse goes a pilgrimaging to Nossa Senhora do Cabo—little madam whisks about the Botanic Garden with the ladies of the palace and a troop of sopranos, who teach her to warble and speak Italian. She is well worth teaching everything in their power. Her hair of the loveliest auburn, her straight Grecian eyebrows and fair complexion, form a striking contrast to the gipsy-coloured skins and jetty tresses of her companions. She looked like a visionary being skimming along the alleys, and leaving the pot-bellied sopranos and dowdy Açafatas far behind, wondering at her agility.

The garden is pleasant enough, situated upon an eminence, planted with light flowering trees clustered with blossoms. Above their topmost branches rises a broad majestic terrace, with marble balustrades of shining whiteness and strange Oriental pattern. They design indifferently in this country, but execute with great neatness and precision. I never saw balustrades better hewn or chiseled than those bordering the steps which lead up to the grand terrace. Its ample surface is laid out in oblong compartments of marble, containing no very great variety of heliotropes, aloe, geraniums, china-roses, and the commonest plants of our green-houses. Such ponderous divisions have a dismal effect; they reminded me of a place of interment, and it struck me as if the deceased inhabitants of the adjoining palace were sprouting up in the shape of prickly-pears, Indian-figs, gaudy holly-oaks, and peppery capsicums.

The terrace is about fifteen hundred paces in length. Three copious fountains give it an air of coolness, much increased by the waving of tall acacias, exposed by their lofty situation to every breeze which blows from the entrance of the Tagus, whose lovely azure appears to great advantage between the quivering foliage.

The Irish girl and your faithful correspondent coursed each other like children along the terrace, and when tired reposed under a group of gigantic Brazilian aloes by one of the fountains. The swarthy party detached its principal guardian, a gawky young priest, to observe all the wanderings and riposos of us white people.

It was late, and the sun had set several minutes before I took my departure. Black eyes and blue eyes seem horridly jealous of each other. I fear my youthful and lively companion will suffer for having more alertness than the Açafatas: she will be pinched, if I am not mistaken, as the party return through the dark and intricate passages which join the palace of the Ajuda to the gardens. Sad thought, the leaving such a fair little being in the hands of fiery, despotic females, so greatly her inferiors in complexion and delicacy.

They will take especial care, I warrant them, to fill the husband's head with suspicions less charitable than those inspired by Nossa Senhora do Cabo.

LETTER IX.

Consecration of the Bishop of Algarve.—Pathetic Music.—Valley of Alcantara.—Enormous Aqueduct.—Visit to the Marialva Palace.—Its much revered Masters.—Collection of Rarities.—The Viceroy of Algarve.—Polyglottery.—A Night-scene.—Modinhas.—Extraordinary Procession.—Blessings of Patriarchal Government.

3 June, 1787.

WE went by special invitation to the royal Convent of the Necessidades, belonging to the Oratorians, to see the ceremony of consecrating a father of that order Bishop of Algarve, and were placed fronting the altar in a gallery crowded with important personages in shining raiment, the relations of the new prelate. The floor being spread with rich Persian carpets and velvet cushions, it was pretty good kneeling; but, notwithstanding this comfortable accommodation, I thought the ceremony would never finish. There was a mighty glitter of crosses, censers, mitres, and crosiers, continually in motion, as several bishops assisted in all their pomp.

The music, which was extremely simple and pathetic, appeared to affect the grandees in my neighbourhood very profoundly, for they put on woful contrite countenances, thumped their breasts, and seemed to think themselves, as most of them are, miserable sinners. Feeling oppressed by the heat and the sermon, I made my retreat slyly and silently from the splendid gallery, and passed through some narrow corridors, as warm as flues, into the garden.

But this was only exchanging one scene of formality and closeness for another. I panted after air, and to obtain that blessing escaped through a little narrow door into the wild free valley of Alcantara. Here all was solitude and humming of bees, and fresh gales blowing from the entrance of the Tagus over the tufted tops of orange gardens. The refreshing sound of water-wheels seemed to give me new life.

I set the sun at defiance, and advanced towards that part of the valley across which stretches the enormous aqueduct you have heard so often mentioned as the most colossal edifice of its kind in Europe. It has only one row of pointed openings, and the principal arch, which crosses a rapid brook, measures above two hundred and fifty feet in height. The Pont de Garde and Caserta have several rows of arches one above the other, which, by dividing the attention, take off from the size of the whole. There is a vastness in this single range that strikes with astonishment. I sat down on a fragment of rock, under the great arch, and looked up to the vaulted stone-work so high above me with a sensation of awe not unallied to fear; as if the building I gazed upon was the performance of some immeasurable being endued with gigantic strength, who might perhaps take a fancy to saunter about his works this morning, and, in mere awkwardness, crush me to atoms.

Hard by the spot where I sat are several inclosures filled with canes, eleven or twelve feet high: their fresh green leaves, agitated by the feeblest wind, form a perpetual murmur. I am fond of this rustling, and suffered myself to be lulled by it into a state of very necessary repose after the fatigues of scrambling over crags and precipices.

As soon as I returned from my walk, Horne took me to dine with him, and afterwards to the Marialva Palace to pay the Grand Prior a visit. The court-yard, filled with shabby two-wheeled chaises, put me in mind of the entrance of a French post-house; a recollection not weakened by the sight of several ample heaps of manure, between which we made the best of our way up the great staircase, and had near tumbled over a swingeing sow and her numerous progeny, which escaped from under our legs with bitter squeakings.

This hubbub announced our arrival, so out came the Grand Prior, his nephew, the old Abade, and a troop of domestics. All great Portuguese families are infested with herds of these, in general, ill-favoured dependants; and none more than the Marialvas, who dole out every day three hundred portions, at least, of rice and other eatables to as many greedy devourers.

The Grand Prior had shed his pontifical garments and did the honours of the house, and conducted us with much agility all over the apartments, and through the *manège*, where the old Marquis, his brother, though at a very advanced age, displays feats of the most consummate horsemanship. He seems to have a decided taste for clocks, compasses, and time-keepers. I counted no less than ten in his bedchamber; four or five in full swing, making a loud hissing: they were chiming and striking away (for it was exactly six) when I followed my conductor up and down half-a-dozen staircases into a saloon hung with rusty damask.

A table in the centre of this antiquated apartment was covered with rarities brought forth for our inspection; curious shell-work, ivory crucifixes, models of ships, housings embroidered with feathers, and the Lord knows what besides, stinking of camphor enough to knock one down.

Whilst we were staring with all our eyes and holding our handkerchiefs to our noses, the Count of V——, Viceroy of Algarve, made his appearance, in grand pea-green and pink and silver gala, straddling and making wry faces as if some disagreeable accident had befallen him. He was, however, in a most gracious mood, and received our eulogiums upon his relation, the new bishop, with much complacency. Our conversation was limpingly carried on in a great variety of broken languages. Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, French, and English, had each their turn in rapid succession. The subject of all this polyglottery was the glories and piety of John the Fifth, regret for the extinction of the Jesuits, and the reverse for the death of Pombal, whose memory he holds in something not distantly removed from execration. This flow of eloquence was accompanied by the strangest, most buffoonical grimaces and slobberings I ever beheld, for the Viceroy having a perennial moistness of mouth, drivels at every syllable.

One must not, however, decide too hastily upon outward appearances. This slobbering, canting personage, is a distinguished statesman and good officer, pre-eminent amongst the few who have seen service and given proofs of prowess and capacity.

To escape the long-winded narrations which were pouring warm into my ear, I took refuge near a harpsichord, where Policarpio, one of the first tenors in the Queen's chapel, was singing and accompanying himself. The curtains of the door of an adjoining dark apartment being half drawn, gave me a transient glimpse of Donna Henriquetta de L ——, Don Pedro's sister, advancing one moment and retiring the next, eager to approach and examine us exotic beings, but not venturing to enter the saloon during her mother's absence. She appeared to me a most interesting girl, with eyes full of bewitching languor;—but of what do I talk? I only saw her pale and evanescent, as one fancies one sees objects in a dream. A group of lovely children (her sisters, I believe) sat at her feet upon the ground, resembling genii partially concealed by folds of drapery in some grand allegorical picture by Rubens or Paul Veronese.

Night approaching, lights glimmered on the turrets, terraces, and every part of the strange huddle of buildings of which this morisco-looking palace is composed; half the family were engaged in reciting the litanies of saints, the other in freaks and frolics, perhaps of no very edifying nature: the monotonous staccato of the guitar, accompanied by the low soothing murmur of female voices singing modinhas, formed altogether a strange though not unpleasant combination of sounds.

I was listening to them with avidity, when a glare of flambeaus, and the noise of a splashing and dashing of water, called us out upon the verandas, in time to witness a procession scarcely equalled since the days of Noah. I doubt whether his ark contained a more heterogeneous collection of animals than issued from a scalera with fifty oars, which had just landed the old Marquis of M. and his son Don José, attended by a swarm of musicians, poets, bullfighters, grooms, monks, dwarfs, and children of both sexes, fantastically dressed.

The whole party, it seems, were returned from a pilgrimage to some saint's nest or other on the opposite shore of the Tagus. First jumped out a hump-backed dwarf, blowing a little squeaking trumpet three or four inches long; then a pair of led captains, apparently commanded by a strange, old, swaggering fellow in a showy uniform, who, I was told, had acted the part of a sort of brigadier-general in some sort of an island. Had it been Barataria, Sancho would soon have sent him about his business, for, if we believe the scandalous chronicle of Lisbon, a more impudent buffoon, parasite, and pilferer seldom existed.

Close at his heels stalked a savage-looking monk, as tall as Samson, and two Capuchin friars, heavily laden, but with what sort of provision I am ignorant; next came a very slim and sallow-faced apothecary, in deep sables, completely answering in gait and costume the figure one fancies to one's self of Senhor Apuntador, in Gil Blas, followed by a half-crazed improvisatore, spouting verses at us as he passed under the balustrades against which we were leaning.

He was hardly out of hearing before a confused rabble of watermen and servants with bird-cages, lanterns, baskets of fruit, and chaplets of flowers, came gamboling along to the great delight of a bevy of children; who, to look more like the inhabitants of Heaven than even Nature designed, had light fluttering wings attached to their rose-coloured shoulders. Some of these little theatrical angels were extremely beautiful, and had their hair most coquettishly arranged in ringlets.

The old Marquis is doatingly fond of them; night and day they remain with him, imparting all the advantages that can possibly be derived from fresh and innocent breath to a declining constitution. The patriarch of the Marialvas has followed this regimen many years, and also some others which are scarcely credible. Having a more than Roman facility of swallowing an immense profusion of dainties, and making room continually for a fresh supply, he dines alone every day between two silver canteens of extraordinary magnitude. Nobody in England would believe me if I detailed the enormous repast I saw spread out for him; but let your imagination loose upon all that was ever conceived in the way of gormandizing, and it will not in this case exceed the reality.

As soon as the contents, animal and vegetable, of the principal scalera, and three or four other barges in its train, had been deposited in their respective holes, corners, and roosting-places, I received an invitation from the old Marquis to partake of a collation in his apartment. Not less, I am certain, than fifty servants were in waiting, and exclusive of half-a-dozen wax-torches, which were borne in state before us, above a hundred tapers of different sizes were lighted up in the range of rooms, intermingled with silver braziers and cassolettes diffusing a very pleasant perfume. I found the master of all this magnificence most courteous, affable, and engaging. There is an urbanity and good-humour in his looks, gestures, and tone of voice, that prepossesses instantaneously in his favour, and justifies the universal popularity he enjoys, and the affectionate name of Father, by which the Queen and Royal Family often address him. All the favours of the crown have been heaped upon him by the present and preceding sovereigns, a tide of prosperity uninterrupted even during the grand vizariat of Pombal. "Act as you judge wisest with the rest of my nobility," used to say the King Don Joseph to this redoubted minister; "but beware how you interfere with the Marquis of Marialva."

In consequence of this decided predilection, the Marialva Palace became in many cases a sort of rallying point, an asylum for the oppressed; and its master, in more than one instance, a shield against the thunderbolts of a too powerful minister. The recollections of these times seem still to be kept alive; for the heart-felt respect, the filial adoration, I saw paid the old Marquis, was indeed most remarkable; his slightest glances were obeyed, and the

person on whom they fell seemed gratified and animated; his sons, the Marquis of Tancos and Don José de Meneses, never approached to offer him anything without bending the knee; and the Conde de Villaverde, the heir of the great house of Anjeja, as well as the Viceroy of Algarve, stood in the circle which was formed around him, receiving a kind or gracious word with the same thankful earnestness as courtiers who hang upon the smiles and favour of their sovereign. I shall long remember the grateful sensations with which this scene of reciprocal kindness filled me; it appeared an interchange of amiable sentiments; beneficence diffused without guile or affectation, and protection received without sullen or abject servility.

How preferable is patriarchal government of this nature to the cold theories pedantic sophists would establish, and which, should success attend their selfish atheistical ravings, bid fair to undermine the best and surest props of society! When parents cease to be honoured by their children, and the feelings of grateful subordination in those of helpless age or condition are unknown, kings will soon cease to reign, and republics to be governed by the councils of experience; anarchy, rapine, and massacre will walk the earth, and the abode of dæmons be transferred from hell to our unfortunate planet.

LETTER X.

Festival of the Corpo de Deos.—Striking decoration of the streets.—The Patriarchal Cathedral.—Coming forth of the Sacrament in awful state.—Gorgeous Procession.—Bewildering confusion of sounds.

7th June.

A MOST sonorous peal of bells, an alarming rattle of drums, and a piercing flourish of trumpets, roused me at daybreak. You are too piously disposed to be ignorant that this day is the festival of the Corpo de Deos. I had half a mind to have stayed at home, turning over a curious collection of Portuguese chronicles the Prior of Avis has just sent to me; but I was told such wonders of the expected procession that I could not refuse giving myself a little trouble in order to witness them.

Everybody was gone before I set out, and the streets of the suburb I inhabit, as well as those in the city through which I passed in my way to the patriarchal cathedral, were entirely deserted. A pestilence seemed to have swept the Great Square and the busy environs of the Exchange and India House; for even vagrants, scavengers, and beggars, in the last state of decrepitude, had all hobbled away to the scene of action. A few miserable curs sniffing at offals alone remained in the deserted streets, and I saw no human being at any of the windows, except half-a-dozen scabby children blubbering at being kept at home.

The murmur of the crowds, assembled round the *patriarchale*, reached us a long while before we got into the midst of them, for we advanced with difficulty between rows of soldiers drawn up in battle array. Upon turning a dark angle, overshadowed by the high buildings of the seminary adjoining the patriarchale, we discovered houses, shops, and palaces, all metamorphosed into tents, and hung from top to bottom with red damask, tapestry, satin coverlids, and fringed counterpanes glittering with gold. I thought myself in the midst of the Mogul's encampment, so pompously described by Bernier.

The front of the Great Church in particular was most magnificently curtained; it rises from a vast flight of steps, which were covered to-day with the yeomen of the Queen's guard in their rich party-coloured velvet dresses, and a multitude of priests bearing a gorgeous variety of painted and silken banners; flocks of fallow monks, white, brown, and black, kept pouring in continually, like turkeys driving to market.

This part of the holy display lasting a tiresome while, I grew weary, and left the balcony, where we were placed most advantageously, and got into the church. High mass was performing with awful pomp, incense ascending in clouds, and the light of innumerable tapers blazing on the diamonds of the ostensory, just elevated by the patriarch with trembling devout hands to receive the mysterious wafer.

Before the close of the ceremony, I regained my window, to have a full view of the coming forth of the Sacrament. All was expectation and silence in the people. The guards had ranged them on each side of the steps before the entrance of the church. At length a shower of aromatic herbs and flowers announced the approach of the patriarch, bearing the host under a regal canopy, surrounded by grandees, and preceded by a long train of mitred figures, their hands joined in prayer, their scarlet and purple vestments sweeping the ground, their attendants bearing croziers, crosses, and other insignia of pontifical grandeur.

The procession slowly descending the flights of stairs to the sound of choirs and the distant thunder of artillery, lost itself in a winding street decorated with embroidered hangings, and left me with my senses in a whirl, and my eyes dazzled, as if awakened from a vision of celestial splendour.... My head swims at this moment, and my ears tingle with a confusion of sounds, bells, voices, and the echoes of cannon, prolonged by mountains and wafted over waters.

LETTER XI.

Dinner at the country-house of Mr. S——.—His Brazilian wife.—Magnificent repast.—A tragic damsel.

11th June, 1787.

TO-DAY we were engaged to dine in the country at a villa belonging to a gentleman, whose volley of names, when pronounced with the true Portuguese twang, sounds like an expectoration—José Street-Arriaga-Brum da Silveira. Our hospitable host is of Irish extraction, boasts a stature of six feet, proportionable breadth, a ruddy countenance, herculean legs, and all the exterior attributes, at least, of that enterprising race, who often have the luck of marrying great fortunes. About a year or two ago he bore off a wealthy Brazilian heiress, and is now master of a large estate and a fubsical, squat wife, with a head not unlike that of Holofernes in old tapestry, and shoulders that act the part of a platter with rather too much exactitude. Poor soul! to be sure, she is neither a Venus nor a Hebe, has a rough lip, and a manly voice, and I fear is somewhat inclined to be dropsical; but her smiles are frequent and fondling, and she

cleaves to her husband with great perseverance.

He is an odd character, will accept of no employment, civil or military, and affects a bullying frankness, that I should think must displease very much in this country, where independence either in fortune or sentiment is a crime seldom if ever tolerated.

Mr. S— likes a display, and the repast he gave us was magnificent; sixty dishes at least, eight smoking roasts, and every ragout, French, English, and Portuguese, that could be thought of. The dessert appeared like the model of a fortification. The principal cake-tower measured, I dare say, three feet perpendicular in height. The company was not equal either in number or consequence to the splendour of the entertainment.

Had not Miss Sill and Bezerra been luckily in my neighbourhood, I should have perished with *ennui*. One stately damsel, with portentous eyebrows, and looks that reproached the male part of the assembly with inattention, was the only lady of the palace Mr. S— had invited.

I expected to have met the whole troop of my Botanic Garden acquaintance, and to have escorted them about the vineyards and citron-orchards which surround this villa; but, alas! I was not destined to any such amusing excursion. The tragic damsel, who I am told has been unhappy in her tender attachments, took my arm, and never quitted it during a long walk through Mr. S—'s ample possessions. We conversed in Italian, and paid the birds that were singing, and the rills that were murmuring, many fine compliments in a sort of prose run mad, borrowed from operas and serenatas, the *Aminto* of Tasso, and the *Adone* of Marini.

The sun was just diffusing his last rays over the distant rocks of Cintra, the air balsamic, and the paths amongst the vines springing with fresh herbage and a thousand flowers revived by last night's rain. Giving up the narrow tract which leads through these rural regions to the signora, I stalked by her side in a furrow well garnished with nettles, acanthus, and dwarf aloes, stinging and scratching myself at every step. This penance, and the disappointment I was feeling most acutely, put me not a little out of humour; I regretted so delicious an evening should pass away in such forlorn company, and lacerating my legs to so little purpose. How should I have enjoyed rambling with the young Irish girl about these pleasant clover paths, between festoons of luxuriant leaves and tendrils, not fastened to stiff poles and stumpy stakes as in France and Switzerland, but climbing up light canes eight or ten feet in height!

Pinioned as I was, you may imagine I felt no inclination to prolong a walk which already had been prolonged unconscionably. I escaped tea and playing at *voltarete*, made a solemn bow to the solemn damsel, and got home before it was quite dark.

LETTER XII.

Pass the day at Belem.—Visit the neighbouring Monastery.—Habitation of King Emanuel.—A gold Custodium of exquisite workmanship.—The Church.—Bonfires on the edge of the Tagus.—Fire-works.—Images of the Holy One of Lisbon.

June 12th, 1787.

WE passed the day quite *en famille* at Belem with a whole legion of Marialvas. Some reverend fathers, of I know not what community, had sent them immense messes of soup, very thick, slab, and oily; a portion which, it seems, the faithful are accustomed to swallow on the eve of St. Anthony's festival.

As soon as I decently could, after a collation which was served under an awning stretched over one of the terraces, I stole out of the circle of lords, ladies, dwarfs, monks, buffoons, bullies, and almoners, to visit the neighbouring monastery. I ascended the great stairs, constructed at the expense of the Infanta Catherine, King Charles the Second's dowager, and after walking in the cloisters of Emanuel, looked into the library, which is far from being in the cleanest or best ordered condition. The spacious and lofty cloisters present a striking spread of arches, which, though not in the purest style, attract the eye by their delicately-carved arabesque ornament, and the warm reddish hue of the marble. The corridor, into which open an almost endless range of cells, is full five hundred feet in length. Each window has a commodious resting-place, where the monks loll at their ease and enjoy the view of the river.

In a little dark treasury communicating by winding-stairs with that part of the edifice tradition points out as the habitation of King Emanuel, when at certain holy seasons he retired within these precincts, I was shown by candlelight some extremely curious plate, particularly a custodium, made in the year 1506, of the pure gold of Quiloa. Nothing can be more beautiful as a specimen of elaborate gothic sculpture, than this complicated enamelled mass of flying buttresses and fretted pinnacles, with the twelve Apostles in their niches, under canopies formed of ten thousand wreaths and ramifications.

From this gloomy recess, I was conducted to the church, one of the largest in Portugal, vast, solemn, and fantastic, like the interior of the Temple of Jerusalem, as I have seen it figured in some old German Bibles. There was little, however, in the altars or monuments worth any very minute investigation.

It fell dark before I went out at the great porch, and found the wide space before it beginning to catch a vivid gleam from a line of bonfires on the edge of the Tagus. I could hardly reach my carriage without being singed by squibs and crackers, and wished myself out the moment I got into it, a rocket having shot up just under the noses of my mules and scared them terribly.

Unless St. Anthony lulls me asleep by a miracle, I must expect no rest to-night, there is such a whizzing of fireworks, blazing of bonfires and flourishing of French horns in honour of to-morrow, the five hundred and fifty-fifth anniversary of that memorable day, when the Holy One of Lisbon passed by a soft transition to the joys of Paradise. I saw his image at the door of almost every house and even hovel of this populous capital, placed on an altar, and decked with a profusion of wax-lights and flowers.

LETTER XIII.

June 13th, 1787.

I SLEPT better than I expected: the Saint was propitious, and during the night cooled the ardour of his votaries and the flames of their bonfires by a vernal shower, which pattered agreeably this morning amongst the vineleaves of my garden. The clouds dispersed about eight o'clock, and at nine, just as I ascended the steps of the new church built over the identical house where St. Anthony was born, the sun shone out in all its splendour.

I cannot say this edifice recalled to my mind the magnificent sanctuary of Padua, which five years ago on this very day impressed my imagination so forcibly. Here are no constellations of golden lamps depending by glittering chains from a mysterious vaulted ceiling, no arcades of alabaster, no sculptured marbles. The church is supported by two rows of pillars neatly carved in stone, but wretchedly proportioned. Over the high altar, where stands the revered image in the midst of a bright illumination, was stretched a canopy of flowered velvet. This drapery, richly fringed and tasseled, marks out the spot formerly occupied by the chamber of the saint, and receives an amber-light from a row of tall casement windows, the woodwork gleaming with burnished gold.

A great many broad English faces burst forth from amongst the crowd of profane vulgar at the portal of the church, and all their eyes were directed to their enthusiastic countryman, but he was not to be stared out of a decent countenance.

The ceremony was extremely pompous. A prelate of the first rank, with a considerable detachment of priests from the royal chapel, officiated to the sounds of lively jigs and ranting minuets, better calculated to set a parcel of water-drinkers a dancing in a pump-room, than to direct the movements of a pontiff and his assistants.

After much indifferent music, vocal and instrumental, performed full gallop in the most rapid allegro, Frè Joaõ Jacinto, a famous preacher, mounted the pulpit, lifted up hands and eyes, and poured forth a torrent of sounding phrases in honour of St. Anthony. What would I not give for such a voice?—it would almost have reached from Dan unto Beersheba!

The Father has undoubtedly great powers of elocution, and none of that canting, nasal whine so common in the delivery of monkish sermons. He treated kings, tetrarchs, and conquerors, the heroes and sages of antiquity, with ineffable contempt; reduced their palaces and fortifications to dust, their armies to pismires, their imperial vestments to cobwebs, and impressed all his audience, except the heretical squinters at the door, with the most thorough conviction of St. Anthony's superiority over these objects of an erring and impious admiration.

"Happy," exclaimed the preacher, "were those gothic ages, falsely called ages of barbarism and ignorance, when the hearts of men, uncorrupted by the delusive beverage of philosophy, were open to the words of truth falling like honey from the mouths of saints and confessors, such words as distilled from the lips of Anthony, yet a suckling hanging at the breast in this very spot. It was here the spirit of the Most High descended upon him, here that he conceived the sublime intention of penetrating into the most turbulent parts of Europe, setting the inclemency of seasons and the malice of men at defiance, and sprinkling amongst lawless nations the seeds of grace and repentance. There, my brethren, is the door out of which he issued. Do you not see him in the habit of a Menino de Coro, smiling with all the graces of innocence, and dispensing with his infant hands to a group of squalid children the portion of nourishment he has just received from his mother?"

"But Anthony, from the first dawn of his existence, lived for others, and not for himself: he forewent even the luxury of meditation, and instead of retiring into a peaceful cell, rushed into the world, helpless and unprotected, lifting high the banner of the Cross amidst perils and uproar, appeasing wars, settling differences both public and domestic, exhorting at the risk of his life ruffians and plunderers to make restitution, and armed misers, guarding their coffers with bloody swords, to open their hearts and their hands to the distresses of the widow and the fatherless.

"Anthony ever sighed after the crown of martyrdom, and had long entertained an ardent desire of passing over into Morocco, and exposing himself to the fury of its bigoted and cruel sovereign; but the commands of his superior retain him on the point of embarkation; he makes a sacrifice of even this most laudable and glorious ambition; he traverses Spain, repairs to Assisi, embraces the rigid order of the great St. Francis, and continues to his last hour administering consolation to the dejected, fortifying their hopes of heaven, and confirming the faith of such as were wavering or deluded by a succession of prodigies. The dead are raised, the sick are healed, the sea is calmed by a glance of St. Anthony; even the lowest ranks of the creation are attracted by eloquence more than human, and give marks of sensibility. Fish swim in shoals to hear the word of the Lord; and to convince the obdurate and those accursed whose hearts the false reasoning of the world had hardened, mules and animals the most perversely obstinate humble themselves to the earth when Anthony holds forth the Sacrament, and acknowledge the presence of the Divinity."

The sermon ended, fiddling began anew with redoubled vigour, and I, disgusted with such unseasonable levity, retired home in dudgeon. This little cloud of peevishness was soon dissipated by the cheering presence of the good Prior of Avis, than whom there exists not, perhaps, in this world a more benign, evangelical character; one who gives glory to God with less ostentation, or bears a more unaffected goodwill towards men. This excellent prelate had been passing his morning, not in attending pompous ceremonies, but in consoling the sick and relieving the indigent; climbing up to their miserable chambers to afford assistance in the name of the saint whose festival was celebrating, and whose fame, for every charitable beneficent act, had been handed down by the inhabitants of Lisbon from father to child, through a long series of generations.

Our discourse was not of a nature to incline me to relish pomps and vanities. I waved seeing the procession which was expected to pass through the principal streets of the city, and, accompanied by my reverend friend, enjoyed the serenity of the evening on the shore of Belem. We stopped as we passed by the Marialva palace, and took up Don Pedro and his nursing father, the old Abade, who proposed a visit to the Carthusian convent of Cachiez.

In about half an hour we were set down before the church, which fronts the royal gardens, and were ushered into a solemn, silent quadrangle. Several spectres of the order were gliding about the cloisters, which branch off from this court. In the middle is a marble fountain, shaded by pyramids of clipped box; around are seven or eight small chapels; one of which contains a coloured image of the Saviour in the last dreadful agonies of his passion,

covered with livid bruises and corrupted gore.

Whilst we were examining this too faithful effigy, some of the monks, by leave of their superior, gathered around us; one of them, a tall interesting figure, attracted my attention by the deep melancholy which sat upon his features. Upon inquiry, I learned he was only two-and-twenty years of age, of illustrious parentage, and lively talents; but the immediate cause of his having sought these mansions of stillness and mortification, the Grand Prior seemed loth to communicate.

I could not help observing, as this young victim stood before me, and I contemplated the evening light thrown on the arcades of the quadrangle, how many setting suns he was likely to behold wasting their gleams upon these walls, and what a wearisome succession of years he had in all probability devoted himself to consume within their precincts. The eyes of the good prior filled with tears, Verdeil shuddered, and the Abade, forgetting the superstitious part he generally acts in religious places, exclaimed loudly against the toleration of human sacrifices, and the folly of permitting those to renounce the world, whose youth incapacitates them from making a due estimate of its sorrows or advantages. As for Don Pedro, his serious disposition received additional gloom from the objects with which we were environed.

The chill gust that blew from an arched hall where the fathers are interred, and whose pavement returned a hollow sound as we walked over it, struck him with horror. It was the first time of his entering a Carthusian convent, and, to my surprise, he appeared ignorant of the severities of the order.

The sun set before we regained our carriage, and our conversation the whole way home partook of the impression which the scenery we had been contemplating inspired.

LETTER XIV.

Curious succession of visitors.—A Seraphic Doctor.—Monsenhor Aguilar.—Mob of old hags, children, and ragamuffins.—Visit to the Theatre in the Rua d'os Condes.—The Archbishop Confessor.—Brazilian Modinhas.—Bewitching nature of that music.—Nocturnal processions.—Enthusiasm of the young Conde de Villanova.—No accounting for fancies.

14th June, 1787.

IT was my lot this afternoon to receive a curious succession of visitors. First came Pombal, who looked worn down with gay living and late hours; but there is an ease and fashion in his address not common in this country. Though he possesses one of the largest landed estates in the kingdom, (about one hundred and twenty thousand crowns a-year,) he wished me to understand that his dread father, the scourge and terror of the noblest houses in Portugal, the sole dispenser during so many years of the royal treasure, died, notwithstanding, in distressed circumstances, loaded with debts contracted in supporting the dignity of his post.

The next who did me the honour of a visit was the Judge Conservator of the English factory, Joaô Telles, a relation, legitimate or illegitimate (I know not exactly which), of the Penalvas. This man, who has risen to one of the highest posts of the law by the sole strength of his abilities, has a nervous, original style of expression, which put me in mind of Lord Thurlow; but to all this vigour of character and diction, he joins the pliability and subtleness of a serpent; and those he cannot take by storm, he is sure of overcoming by every soothing art of flattery and insinuation.

As soon as he was departed, entered a pair of monks with a basket of sweetmeats in cut paper, from a good lady abbess, beseeching me to portion out two sweet virgins as God's spouses in some neighbouring monastery.

They were scarcely dismissed, before Father Theodore d'Almeida and another of his brethren were ushered in. The whites of their eyes alone were visible, nor could Whitfield himself, the original Doctor Squintum of Foote, have squinted more scientifically.

I was all attention to Father Theodore's seraphic discourse; so excellent an opportunity of hearing a first-rate specimen of hypocritical cant was not to be neglected. No sooner had the fathers been conducted to the stairshead with due ceremony, than Monsenhor Aguilar, one of the prelates of the Patriarchal Cathedral, was announced. He confirmed me in the opinion I entertained of Father Theodore. No person can accuse Aguilar of being a hypocrite. He lays himself but too much open, and treats the church from which he derives a handsome maintenance, not as a patroness, but as an humble companion; the constant butt and object of his sarcasms. In Portugal, even in the year 1787, such conduct is madness, and I fear will expose him one day or other to severe persecution.

We were roused from a peaceful dish of tea by a loud hubbub in the street, and running to the balcony, found a beastly mob of old hags, children, and ragamuffins assembled, headed by half-a-dozen drummers, and as many negroes in scarlet jackets, blowing French-horns with unusual vehemence, and pointing them directly at the house. I was wondering at this Jericho fashion of besieging one's door, and drawing back to avoid being singed by a rocket which whizzed along within an inch of my nose, when one of the servants entered with a crucifix on a silver salver, and a mighty kind message from the nuns of the Convent of the Sacrament, who had sent their musicians with trimbrels and fireworks, to invite us to some grand doings at their convent, in honour of the Festival of the Heart of Jesus. Really, these church parties begin to lose in my eyes great part of the charm which novelty gave them. I have had pretty nearly my fill of motets, and Kyrie eleisons, and incense, and sweetmeats, and sermons.

That heretic Verdeil, who would almost as soon be in hell at once as in such a cloying heaven, would not let me rest till I went with him to the theatre in the Rua d'os Condes, in order to dissipate by a little profane air the fumes of so much holiness. The play afforded me more disgust than amusement; the theatre is low and narrow, and the actors, for there are no actresses, below criticism. Her Majesty's absolute commands having swept females off the stage, their parts are acted by calvish young fellows. Judge what a pleasing effect this metamorphosis must produce, especially in the dancers, where one sees a stout shepherdess in virgin white, with a soft blue beard, and a prominent collar-bone, clenching a nosegay in a fist that would almost have knocked down Goliath, and a train of milk-maids attending her enormous foot-steps, tossing their petticoats over their heads at every step. Such sprawling, jerking, and ogling I never saw before, and hope never to see again.

We were heartily sick of the performance before it was half finished, and the night being serene and pleasant, were tempted to take a ramble in the Great Square, which received a faint gleam from the lights in the apartments of

the palace, every window being thrown open to catch the breeze. The Archbishop Confessor displayed his goodly person at one of the balconies; from a clown, this now most important personage became a common soldier, from a common soldier a corporal, from a corporal a monk, in which station he gave so many proofs of toleration and good-humour, that Pombal, who happened to stumble upon him by one of those chances which set all calculation at defiance, judged him sufficiently shrewd, jovial, and ignorant, to make a very harmless and comfortable confessor to her Majesty, then Princess of Brazil: since her accession to the throne, he is become Archbishop, *in partibus*, Grand Inquisitor, and the first spring in the present Government of Portugal. I never saw a sturdier fellow. He seems to anoint himself with the oil of gladness, to laugh and grow fat in spite of the critical situation of affairs in this kingdom, and the just fears all its true patriots entertain of seeing it once more relapse into a Spanish province.

At a window immediately over his right reverence's shining forehead, we spied out the Lacerdas, two handsome sisters, maids of honour to the Queen, waving their hands to us very invitingly. This was encouragement enough for us to run up a vast many flights of stairs to their apartment, which was crowded with nephews and nieces and cousins clustering round two very elegant young women, who, accompanied by their singing-master, a little square friar, with greenish eyes, were warbling Brazilian modinhas.

Those who have never heard this original sort of music, must and will remain ignorant of the most bewitching melodies that ever existed since the days of the Sybarites. They consist of languid interrupted measures, as if the breath was gone with excess of rapture, and the soul panting to meet the kindred soul of some beloved object. With a childish carelessness they steal into the heart, before it has time to arm itself against their enervating influence; you fancy you are swallowing milk, and are admitting the poison of voluptuousness into the closest recesses of your existence. At least, such beings as feel the power of harmonious sounds are doing so; I won't answer for hard-eared, phlegmatic northern animals.

An hour or two passed away almost imperceptibly in the pleasing delirium these syren notes inspired, and it was not without regret I saw the company disperse and the spell dissolve. The ladies of the apartment having received a summons to attend her Majesty's supper, curtsied us off very gracefully, and vanished.

In our way home we met the Sacrament, enveloped in a glare of light, marching in state to pay some sick person a farewell visit; and that hopeful young nobleman, the Conde de Villa Nova,^[13] preceding the canopy in a scarlet mantle, and tinkling a silver bell. He is always in close attendance upon the Host, and passes the flower of his days in this singular species of danglement. No lover was ever more jealous of his mistress than this ingenuous youth of his bell. He cannot endure any other person should give it vibration. The parish officers of the extensive and populous district in which his palace is situated, from respect to his birth and opulence, indulge him in this caprice, and indeed a more perseverant bell-bearer they could not have chosen. At all hours and in all weathers he is ready to perform this holy office. In the dead of the night, or in the most intense heat of the day, out he issues and down he dives, or up he climbs, to any dungeon or garret where spiritual assistance of this nature is demanded.

It has been again and again observed, that there is no accounting for fancies. Every person has his own, which he follows to the best of his means and abilities. The old Marialva's delights are centered between his two silver recipiendaries; the Marquis his son in dancing attendance with the Queen; and Villa Nova, in announcing with his bell to all true believers the approach of celestial majesty. The present rage of the scribbler of all these extravagances is modinhas, and under its prevalence he feels half-tempted to set sail for the Brazils, the native land of these enchanting compositions, to live in tents, such as the Chevalier de Parny describes in his agreeable little voyage, and swing in hammocks, or glide over smooth mats surrounded by bands of youthful minstrels, diffusing at every step the perfume of jasmine and roses.

LETTER XV.

Excessive sultriness of Lisbon.—Night sounds of the city.—Public gala in the garden of the Conde de Villa Nova.—Visit to the Anjeja Palace.—The heir of the family.—Marvellous narrations of a young priest.—Convent of Savoyard nuns.—Father Theodore's chickens.—Sequestered group of beauties.—Singing of the Scarlati.

29th June, 1787.

THE bright sunshine which has lately been our portion, glorious as it is, begins to tire me. Twenty times a day I cannot help wishing myself extended at full-length upon the fresh herbage of some shady English valley, where fairies gambol in the twilights of Midsummer, whispering in the ears of their sleeping favourites the good or evil fortunes which await them. It is too hot for these oracular little elvish beings in Portugal, one must not here expect their inspirations; but would to Heaven some revelation of this or any other nature had warned me off in time, from the blinding dust and excessive sultriness of Lisbon and its neighbourhood. How silly, when one is well and cool, to gad abroad, in the vain hope of making what is really best, better. Depend upon it, there is more vernal delight and joy in our green hills and copses, than in all these stunted olive fields and sun-burnt promontories.

We have a homely saying, that what is poison to one man is meat to another, and true enough; for these days and nights of glowing temperature, which oppress me beyond endurance, are the delight and boast of the inhabitants of this capital. The heat seems not only to have new venom'd the stings of the fleas and the mosquitoes, but to have drawn out, the whole night long, all the human ephemera of Lisbon. They frisk, and dance, and tinkle their guitars from sunset to sunrise. The dogs, too, keep yelping and howling without intermission; and what with the bellowing of litanies by parochial processions, the whizzing of fireworks, which devotees are perpetually letting off in honour of some member or other of the celestial hierarchy, and the squabbles of bullying rake-hells, who scour the streets in search of adventures, there is no getting a wink of sleep, even if the heat would allow it.

As to those quiet nocturnal parties, where ingenuous youths rest their heads, not on the lap of earth, but on that of their mistresses, who are soothingly employed in delivering the jetty locks of their lovers from too abundant a population, I have nothing to say against them, nor am I much disturbed by the dashing sound of a few downfalls^[14] from the windows; but these dog-howlings exceed every annoyance of the kind I ever endured, and give no slight foretaste of the infernal regions.

Nothing but amusement and racket being thought of here at this season (when to celebrate St. Peter's festival

with all the noise and extravagance in your power, is not more a profane inclination than a pious duty,) that simpleton, the Conde de Villa Nova, opened his garden last night to the nob and mob-ility of Lisbon. There was a dull illumination of paper lanterns, and a sort of pavilion awkwardly constructed for dancing, beneath which the prettiest French and English mantua-makers, milliners, and abigails of the metropolis, figured away in cotillons with the Duke of Cadaval and some other young men of the first distinction, who, like many as hopeful in our own capital, are never at their ease but in low company. Two or three of my servants accompanied my tailor to the fête, and returned enraptured with the affable pleasing manners of the foreign milliners and native nobility.

I should have been most happy to remain at home, in the shade of my green blinds, giving ear, through mere laziness, to any nonsense that anybody chose to say to me; but we had been long engaged to dine with Don Diego de Noronha, at the Anjeja Palace.

When we arrived at our destination, we found the heir of the family surrounded by priests and tutors, learning to look out at the window, the chief employment of Portuguese fidalgo life. Oh what a precious collection of stories did I hear at this attic banquet! There happened to be amongst the company a young oaf of a priest, from I forget what university (I hope not Coimbra), who kept on during the whole dinner favouring us with marvellous narrations, such as the late Queen's pounding a pearl of inestimable value, to swallow in medical potions; and that one of the nuns of the Convent of the Sacrament, having intrigued with old Beelzebul *in propria persona*, had been sent to the Inquisition, and the window through which his infernal majesty had entered upon this gallant exploit, walled up and painted over with red crosses. The same precautionary decoration, continued he, has been bestowed upon every opening in the façade, so that no demon, however sharp-set, can get in again. He would fain also have made us believe, that a woman very fair and plump to the eye, with an overflowing breast of milk, who took in sucklings to nurse cheaper than anybody else, regularly made away with them, and was now in the dungeons of the holy office, accused of having minced up above a score of innocents!

Heaven forbid I should detail any further particulars of our table-talk; if I did, you would be finely surfeited.

After dinner the company dispersed, some to their couches, some to hear a sonata on the dulcimer, accompanied on the jew's harp by a couple of dwarfs; the heir-apparent to his beloved window; and Verdeil and I to a convent of Savoyard nuns, at Belem, the coolest, cleanest retirement in the whole neighbourhood, and blessed into the bargain by the especial patronage and inspection of Father Theodore d'Almeida. His reverence, it seems, had been the principal instrument, under Providence, of transplanting these blessed sprouts of holiness from the Convent of the Visitation at Annecy to the glowing climate of Portugal.

As I had just received a sugary epistle from this paragon of piety, recommending his favourite establishment in several pages of ardent panegyric, he could do no less than come forth from his interior nest, and bid us welcome with a countenance arrayed in the sweetest smiles, though I dare say he wished us at old scratch for our intrusion.

"Poor things," said he, speaking of the chickens under education in this coop, "we do all we can to improve their tender minds and their guileless tongues in foreign languages. Sister Theresa has an admirable knack for teaching arithmetic; our venerable mother is remarkably well-bottomed in grammar, and Sister Francisca Salesia, whom I had the happiness to bring over from Lyons, is not only a most pure and persuasive moralist, but is acknowledged to be one of the first needles in Christendom, so we do tolerably well in embroidery. In music we are no great proficient. We allow of no modinhas, no opera airs; a plain hymn is all you must expect here; in short, we are ill-fitted to receive such distinguished visitors, and have nothing the world would call interesting to recommend us; but then, I, their unworthy confessor, must allow that such sweet, clean consciences as I meet with in this asylum are treasures beyond all that the Indies can furnish."

Both Verdeil and myself, conscious of our own extreme unworthiness, were quite abashed by this sublime declamation, poured forth with hands crossed on the bosom, and eyes turned up to the ceiling, like some images one has seen of St. Ignatius or St. Francis Xavier.

It was a minute at least before his reverence relaxed from this attitude, and, drawing a curtain, condescended to admit us into a spacious parlour, delightfully cool, perfumed with jasmine, and filled with little Brazilian doves, parrots, and canary birds. Such a cooing and chirping was never heard in greater perfection, except in Mahomet's Paradise; nor were the houries wanting, for in a deep recess, behind a tolerably wide lattice, sat a row of the loveliest young creatures I ever beheld. A daughter of my friend Don José de Brito was amongst the number, and her eyes, of the most bewitching softness, seemed to acquire new fascination in this mysterious sort of twilight, beaming from behind a double grating of iron.

Every now and then the birds, not in the least intimidated by the predatory glances of Father Theodore, violated the sanctuary, and pitched upon ivory necks, and were received with ten thousand endearments by the angels of this little sequestered heaven, which looked so refreshing, and formed by its sacred calm so inviting a contrast to the turbulent world without, and its glaring atmosphere, that I could not resist exclaiming, "O that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly through those bars and be at rest!"

I need not tell you we passed half-an-hour most delightfully in talking of music, gardens, roses, and devotion, with the meninas, and had almost forgotten we were engaged to hear the Scarlati sing. Her father, an old captain of horse, of Italian extraction, lives not far from the Convent of the Visitation, so we had not much time during our transit to experience the woful difference between the cool parlour of the nuns and the suffocating exterior air.

A numerous group of the young ladies' kindred stood ready at the street-door, with all that hospitable courtesy for which the Portuguese are so remarkably distinguished, to usher the strangers up-stairs into a gallery hung with arras and sconces, not unlike the great room of an Italian inn, once the palace of a nobleman. To keep up these post-house ideas, we scented a strong effluvia of the stable, and heard certain stampings and neighings, as if a party of hounnyms had arrived to partake of the concert.

Many strange, aboriginal figures of both sexes were assembled, an uncouth collection enough, I am apt to conjecture; however, I soon ceased giving them any notice. The young lady of the house charmed me at first sight by her graceful, modest manner; but when she sang some airs, composed by the famous Perez, I was not less delighted than surprised. Her voice modulates with unaffected carelessness into the most pathetic tones.^[15] Though she has adopted the masterly and scientific style of Ferracuti, one of the first singers in the Queen's service, she gives a simplicity of expression to the most difficult passages, that makes them appear the effusions of a young romantic girl warbling to herself in the secret recesses of a forest.

I sat in a dark corner, unconscious of every thing that passed in the apartment, of the singular figures that entered, or those that went away; the starings, whisperings, and fan-flirtings of the assembly were lost upon me: I could not utter a syllable, and was vexed when an arbitrary old aunt insisted upon no more singing, and proposed a faro-table and a dance.

Most eagerly did I wish all the kindred and their friends petrified for the time being by some obliging necromancer, and would have done any thing, short of engaging my own dear self to the devil, to have obtained an uninterrupted audience of the syren till morning.

LETTER XVI.

Ups-and-downs of Lisbon.—Negro Beldames.—Quinta of Marvilla.—Moonlight view of Lisbon.—Illuminated windows of the Palace.—The old Marquis of Penalva.—Padre Duarte, a famous Jesuit.—Conversation between him and a conceited Physician.—Their ludicrous blunders.—Toad-eaters.—Sonatas.—Portuguese minuets.

30th June, 1787.

...WE sallied out after dinner to pay visits. Never did I behold such cursed ups-and-downs, such shelving descents and sudden rises, as occur at every step one takes in going about Lisbon. I thought myself fifty times on the point of being overturned into the Tagus, or tumbled into sandy ditches, among rotten shoes, dead cats, and negro beldames, who retire into such dens and burrows for the purpose of telling fortunes and selling charms for the ague.

The Inquisition too often lays hold of these wretched sibyls, and works them confoundedly. I saw one dragging into light as I passed by the ruins of a palace thrown down by the earthquake. Whether a familiar of the Inquisition was griping her in his clutches, or whether she was being taken to account by some disappointed votary, I will not pretend to answer. Be that as it may, I was happy to be driven out of sight of this hideous object, whose contortions and howlings were truly horrible.

The more one is acquainted with Lisbon, the less it answers the expectations raised by its magnificent appearance from the river. Could a traveller be suddenly transported without preparation or prejudice to many parts of this city, he would reasonably conclude himself traversing a succession of villages awkwardly tacked together, and overpowered by massive convents. The churches in general are in a woful taste of architecture, the taste of Borromini, with crinkled pediments, furbelowed cornices and turrets, somewhat in the style of old-fashioned French clock-cases, such as Boucher designed with many a scrawl and flourish to adorn the apartments of Madame de Pompadour.

We traversed the city this evening in all its extent in our way to the Duke d'Alafoens's villa, and gave vast numbers of her most faithful Majesty's subjects an opportunity of staring at the height of the coach-box, the short jacket of the postilion, and other Anglicisms of the equipage. The Duke had been summoned to a council of state; but we found the Marquis of Marialva, who went with us round the apartments of the villa, which have nothing remarkable except one or two large saloons of excellent and striking proportions.

He afterwards proposed accompanying us about half-a-mile farther to the quinta of Marvilla, which belongs to his father. This spot has great picturesque beauties. The trees are old and fantastic, bending over ruined fountains and mutilated statues of heroes in armour, variegated by the lapse of years with innumerable tints of purple, green, and yellow. In the centre of almost impenetrable thickets of bay and myrtle, rise strange pyramids of rock-work surrounded by marble lions, that have a magic, symbolical appearance. M—— has feeling enough to respect these uncouth monuments of an age when his ancestors performed so many heroic achievements, and readily promised me never to sacrifice them and the venerable shades in which they are embowered, to the pert, gaudy taste of modern Portuguese gardening.

We walked part of the way home by the serene light of the full moon rising from behind the mountains on the opposite shore of the Tagus, at this extremity of the metropolis above nine miles broad. Lisbon, which appeared to me so uninteresting a few hours ago, assumed a very different aspect by these soft gleams. The flights of steps, terraces, chapels, and porticos of several convents and palaces on the brink of the river, shone forth like edifices of white marble, whilst the rough cliffs and miserable sheds rising above them were lost in dark shadows. The great square through which we passed was filled with idlers of all sorts and sexes, staring up at the illuminated windows of the palace in hopes of catching a glimpse of her Majesty, the Prince, the Infantas, the Confessor, or Maids of Honour, whisking about from one apartment to the other, and giving ample scope to amusing conjectures. I am told the Confessor, though somewhat advanced in his career, is far from being insensible to the allurements of beauty, and pursues the young nymphs of the palace from window to window with juvenile alacrity.

It was nine before we got home, and I had not been long reposing myself after my walk, and arranging some plants I had gathered in the thickets of Marvilla, before three distinct ringings of the bell at my door announced the arrival of some distinguished personage; nor was I disappointed, for in came the old Marquis of Penalva and his son, who till a year ago, when the Queen granted him the same title as his father, was called Conde de Tarouca.

You must have heard frequently of that name. A grandfather of the old Marquis rendered it very illustrious by several important and successful embassies: the splendid entertainments he gave at the Congress of Utrecht, are amply described in Madame du Noyers and several other books of memoirs.

The Penalvas brought this evening in their suite a famous Jesuit, Padre Duarte, whom Pombal thought of sufficient consequence to be imprisoned for eighteen years, and a tall, knock-kneed, rhubarb-faced physician, in a gorgeous suit of glistening satin, one of the most ungain, conceited professors of the art of murdering I ever met with. Between the Jesuit and the doctor I had enough to do to keep my temper or countenance. They prated incessantly, pretended to have the most implicit admiration for everything that came from England, either in the way of furniture or poetry, and confounding dates, names, and subjects in one strange jumble, asked whether Sir Peter Lely was not the actual President of our Royal Academy, and launched forth into a warm encomium of my countryman Hans Holbein. I begged leave to assure these complaisant sages, that the last-mentioned artist was born at Basle, and that Sir Peter Lely had been dead a century. They stared a little at this information, but continued, nevertheless, in full song, playing off a sounding peal of compliments upon our national proficiency in painting,

watch-making, the stocking-manufactory, &c. when General Forbes came in and made a diversion in my favour. We had some conversation upon the present state of Portugal, and the risks it runs of being swallowed up by the negotiations, not by the arms of Spain, ere many years are elapsed....

Our discourse was interrupted by the arrival of a fiddler, a priest, and an Italian musician, humble servants and toad-eaters to my illustrious guests. They fell a thumping my poor piano-forte, and playing sonatas whether I would or not. You are aware I am no great friend to sonatas, and that certain chromatic, squeaking tones of a fiddle, when the performer turns up the whites of his eyes, waggles a greasy chin, and affects ecstasies, set my teeth on edge. The gripping countenance of the doctor was enough to produce that effect already, without the assistance of his fellow parasites, the priest and musician. Padre Duarte seemed to like them no better than myself; General Forbes had wisely withdrawn; and the old Marquis, inspired by a pathetic adagio, glided suddenly across the room in a step which I took for the beginning of a ballet heroique, but which turned out a minuet in the Portuguese style, with all its kicks and flourishes, in which Miss S—, who had come in to tea, was persuaded to join much against her inclination. It was no sooner ended, than the doctor displayed his rueful length of person in such a twitching angular minuet, as I want words to describe; so, between the sister-arts of music and dancing, I passed a delectable evening. This set shan't catch me at home again in a hurry.

LETTER XVII.

Dog-howlings.—Visit to the Convent of San José di Ribamar.—Breakfast at the Marquis of Penalvas.—Magnificent and hospitable reception.—Whispering in the shade of mysterious chambers.—The Bishop of Algarve.—Evening scene in the garden of Marvilla.

July 2nd, 1787.

I WAS awakened in the night by a horrid cry of dogs; not that infernal pack which Dryden tells us in his divine tale of Theodore and Honoria went regularly a ghost-hunting every Friday, howled half so dreadfully: Lisbon is more infested than any other capital I ever inhabited by herds of these half-famished animals, making themselves of use and importance by ridding the streets of some part, at least, of their unsavoury incumbrances.

Verdeil, who could not sleep any more than myself, on account of a furious and long protracted battle between two parties of these hell-hounds, persuaded me to rise with the sun, and proceed on horseback along the shore of Belem, which appeared in all its morning glory; the sky diversified by streaming clouds of purple edged with gold, and the sea by innumerable vessels of different sizes shooting along in various directions, whilst the waves at the entrance of the harbour were in violent agitation, all froth and foam.

To vary our excursion a little, we struck out of the common track, and visited the convent of San José di Ribamar. The building is irregular and picturesque, rising from a craggy eminence, and backed by a thicket of elm, bay, and arbor judæ. We were shown by simple, smiling friars, into a small court with cloisters, supported by low Tuscan columns. A fountain playing in the middle and sprinkling a profusion of flowers, gave an oriental air to this little court that pleased me exceedingly. The monks seem sensible of its merits, for they keep it tolerably clean, which is more than I will say for their garden. Bindweed and dwarf-aloes almost prevented our crossing it in our way to the thicket; a delicious retreat, the refuge and comfort of half the birds in the country. Thanks to monkish laziness, the underwood remains unclipped, and intrudes wherever it pleases upon the alleys, which hang over the sea, in a bold romantic manner.

The fathers would show me their flower-garden, and a very pleasant terrace it is; neatly paved with chequered tiles, and interspersed with knots of carnations, in a style as ancient, I should conjecture, as the dominion of the Moors in Portugal. Espaliers of citron and orange cover the walls, and have almost gotten the better of some glaring shell-work, with which a reverend father encrusted them ten or twelve years ago. Shining beads, china plates and saucers turned inside out, compose the chief ornaments of this decoration; I observed the same propensity to shell-work and broken china in a Mr. de Visme, whose quinta at Bemfica eclipses our Clapham and Islington villas in all the attractions of leaden statues, Chinese temples, serpentine rivers, and dusty hermitages.

We returned home before the heat grew quite intolerable, and just in time to go to a breakfast at the Marquis of Penalva's, to which we had been invited the day before yesterday. When once a Portuguese of the first class determines to admit a stranger into the penetralia of his family, he spares no pains to set off all he possesses to the most striking advantage, and offer it to his guest with the most liberal hospitality; you appear to command him, and he everything. Our reception, therefore, was most sumptuous and most cordial.

If we had wished for a concert, the best musicians of the royal chapel were in waiting to perform it; if to examine early editions of the classics or scarce Portuguese authors, the library was open, and the librarian ready to hand and explain to us any article that happened to attract our attention; if to see pictures, the walls of several apartments displayed an interesting collection, both of the Italian and Flemish schools; if conversation, almost every person of literary note in this capital, academicians and artists, were assembled. Supposing the rarest botanical specimens and flowers had been our peculiar taste, some of the most perfect I ever beheld were presented to us; and that nothing in any line might be wanting, the rich grated folding-doors of a chapel were expanded, and an altar splendidly lighted up, seemed to invite those who felt spiritual calls, to indulge themselves.

For my part, the sea breezes having sharpened my temporal appetite, I sat down with great alacrity to breakfast. It was magnificent and well served. I could not help noticing the extreme fineness of the linen, curiously embroidered with arms and flowers, red on a white ground. Superb embossed gilt salvers supported plates of iced fruit, particularly scarlet strawberries, which are uncommon in Portugal, and filled the apartment with fragrance; the more grateful, as it excited, by the strong power of associated ideas, recollections of home and of England.

Much whispering and giggling was going forward in the cool shade of several mysterious chambers, which opened into the saloon where we were at table. These sounds proceeded from the ladies of the family, who, had they been natives of Bagdad or Constantinople, could hardly have remained in a more Asiatic state of seclusion. I was allowed, however, to make my bow to them in their harem itself, which, I was given to understand, I ought to look upon as a most flattering mark of distinction. Who should I find in the midst of the group of senhoras, and seated like them upon the ground *à la façon de Barbarie*, but the newly-consecrated, and very young-looking Bishop of Algarve,

whose small, black, sleek, schoolboyish head and sallow countenance, was overshadowed by an enormous pair of green spectacles. Truth obliges me to confess that the expression which beamed from the eyes under these formidable glasses, did not absolutely partake of the most decent, mild, or apostolic character. In process of time, perhaps, he may acquire that varnish, without which the least holy intentions often miss their aim, the varnish of hypocrisy. I wonder he has not already attained a more conspicuous degree of perfection in this style, having studied under a complete *tartuffe* and Jansenistical bigot as ever existed, one of the cock-birds of a nest of imaginary philosophers, who are working hard to undo what little good has been done in this country, and laying a mine of ten thousand intrigues to blow up, if they can but contrive it, all genuine sentiments of religion and morality.

The old Marquis of Penalva pressed us to stay dinner, which was set out in high order, in a pleasant, shady apartment. Verdeil could not resist the temptation; but I was fatigued with the howlings of the night, and the sultriness and bustle of the day, and went home to a quieter party with the Grand Prior and Don Pedro.

In the evening we drove to Marvilla, the neglected garden I have before mentioned, and which commands the broadest expanse of the Tagus, a prospect which recalled to my mind the lake of Geneva, and all that befel me on its banks. You may imagine, then, it tended much more to depress than exhilarate my spirits. I consented, however, to accompany the Grand Prior about the alleys and terraces of this romantic enclosure, the scene of his childhood, and of which he is peculiarly fond. The palace, courts, and fountains are almost in ruins, the parterres of myrtle have shot up into wild bushes covered with blossoms, and the statues are half concealed by jasmine.

Here is a small theatre for operas, and a chapel, not unlike a mosque in shape, and arabesque ornaments, darkly shadowed by Spanish banners, the trophies of the battle of Elvas, gained by an ancestor of the Marialvas.

A long bower of vines, supported by marble pillars, leads from the palace to the chapel. There is something majestic in this verdant gallery, and the glow of sun-set piercing its foliage, lighted up the wan features of several superannuated servants of the family, who crawled out of their decayed chambers and threw themselves on their knees before the Grand Prior and Don Pedro.

We wandered about this forlorn, abandoned garden, whose stillness equalled that of a Carthusian convent, till dusk, when a refreshing wind having risen, waved the cypresses and scattered the white jasmine flowers over the parterres of myrtle in clouds like snow. Don Pedro filled the carriage with flowery sprays pulled from mutilated statues, and we were all half intoxicated before we reached my habitation with the delicious but overcoming perfume.

LETTER XVIII.

Excursion to Cintra.—Villa of Ramalhaô.—The Garden.—Collares.—Pavilion designed by Pillement.—A convulsive gallop.—Cold weather in July.

July 9th, 1787.

I WAS at the Marialva Palace by nine, and set off from thence with the Marquis for Cintra. Having the command of the Queen's stables, in which are four thousand mules and two thousand horses, he orders as many relays as he pleases, and we changed mules four times in the space of an hour.

A few minutes after ten we were landed at Ramalhaô, a villa, under the pyramidal rocks of Cintra, Signor S. Arriaga was so kind as to lend me a month or two ago, and which I have not had time to visit till to-day. The suite of apartments are spacious and airy, and the views they command of sea and arid country boundless; but unless the heat becomes more violent, I shall be cooler than I wish in them, as they contain not a chimney except in the kitchen.

I found the garden in excellent order, and flourishing crops of vegetables springing up between rows of orange and citron. Such is the power of the climate, that the gardenias and Cape plants I brought with me from England, mere stumps, are covered with beautiful blossoms. The curled mallows, and some varieties of Indian-corn, sown by my English gardener, have shot up to a strange elevation, and begin already to form shady avenues and fairy forests, where children might play in perfection at landscape-gardening.

After I had passed half-an-hour in looking about me, the Marquis and I got into our chair and drove to his own villa; a new creation, which has cost him a great many thousand pounds sterling. Five years ago it was a wild hill bestrewn with flints and rocky fragments. At present you find a gay pavilion designed by Pillement, and elegantly decorated; a parterre with statues and fountains, thick alleys of laurel, bay, and laurustine, cascades, arbours, clipped box-trees, and every ornament the Portuguese taste in gardening renders desirable.

We dined at a clean snug inn, situated towards the middle of the village of Cintra. The Queen has lately bestowed this house and a large tract of ground adjoining it, upon the Marquis. From its windows and loggias you look down deep ravines and bold slopes of woods and copses, variegated with mossy stones and ancient decayed chesnuts.

As soon as the sun grew low we went to Collares, and walked on a terrace belonging to M. la Roche, a French merchant, who has shown some glimmering of taste in the laying out of his villa. The groves of pine and chesnut starting from the crevices of rock, and rising one above another to a considerable elevation, give Collares the air of an Alpine village. Innumerable rills, overhung by cork-trees and branching lemons, burst out of ruined walls by the wayside, and dash into marble basins. A favourite attendant of the late king's, who has a very large property in these environs, invited us with much civility and obsequiousness into his garden. I thought myself entering the orchards of Alcinous. The boughs literally bent under loads of fruit; the slightest shake strewed the ground with plums, oranges, and apricots.

This villa boasts a grand artificial cascade, with tritons and dolphins vomiting torrents of water; but I paid it not half the attention its proprietor expected, and retiring under the shade of the fruit-trees, feasted on the golden apples and purple plums that were rolling about me in such profusion. The Marquis, who shares with most of the Portuguese a remarkable predilection for flowers, filled his carriage with carnations and jasmine. I never saw plants more conspicuous for size and vigour than those which have the luck of being sown in this fortunate soil. The exposition likewise is singularly happy; skreened by sloping hills, and defended from the sea-air by several miles of thickets and orchards. I felt unwilling to quit a spot so favoured by nature, and M—— flatters himself I shall be

tempted to purchase it.

The wind became troublesome as we ascended the hill, crowned by the Marialva villa. The sky was clear and the sun set fiery. The distant convent of Mafra, glowing with ruddy light, looked like the enchanted palace of a giant, and the surrounding country bleak and barren as if the monster had eaten it desolate. To repose ourselves a little after our rapid excursion we entered the pavilion I told you just now Pillement had designed. It represents a bower of fantastic Indian trees mingling their branches, and discovering between them peeps of a summer sky. From the mouth of a flying dragon depends a magnificent lustre for fifty lights, hung with festoons of brilliant glass, that twinkle like strings of diamonds.

We loitered in this saloon till it was pitch-dark. The pages riding full speed before us with flaming torches, and the wind driving back sparks and smoke full in our faces, I was stunned and bewildered, and experienced, perhaps, the sensations of a novice in sorcery, mounted for the first time behind a witch on a broomstick. In less than an hour we had rattled over twelve miles of rough, disjoined pavement, going up and down the steepest hills in a convulsive gallop, so that I expected every instant to be thrown flat on my nose; but, happily, the mules were picked from perhaps a hundred, and never stumbled. I found the air on the heights above the Ajueda very keen and piercing.

It sounds strange to be complaining of cold at Lisbon on the ninth of July.

LETTER XIX.

Sympathy between Toads and Old Women.—Palace of Cintra.—Reservoir of Gold and Silver Fish.—Parterre on the summit of a lofty terrace.—Place of confinement of Alphonso the Sixth.—The Chapel.—Barbaric profusion of Gold.—Altar at which Don Sebastian knelt when he received a supernatural warning.—Rooms in preparation for the Queen and the Infantas.—Return to Ramalhão.

July 24th, 1787.

THERE exists, I am convinced, a decided sympathy between toads and witch-like old women. Mother Morgan^[16] descended this morning, not into the infernal regions, but into the cellar, and immediately five or six spanking reptiles of this mysterious species waddled around her. She rewarded the confidence the poor things placed in her rather scurvily, and laid three of the fattest sprawling. I saw them lying breathless in the court as I got on horseback; the largest measured seven inches in diameter. Portuguese toads may be more distinguished for size, but are not half so amiably speckled as those we have the happiness to harbour in England.

I was some time hesitating which way I should turn my horse's steps, whether to the Pedra d'os Ovos, or on the other side of the rock to the Peninha, a cell belonging to the Hieronimites, and dependent upon their principal eery, Nossa Senhora da Penha. Marialva, whom I met with all his train of equerries and picadors coming forth from his villa, decided me not to take a clambering ride, but to accompany him to the palace, the interior of which I had not yet visited.

The Alhambra itself is scarcely more morisco in point of architecture than this confused pile, which seems to grow out of the summit of a rocky eminence, and is broken into a variety of picturesque recesses and projections. It is a thousand pities that they have whitened its venerable walls, stopped up a range of bold arcades, and sliced out one end of the great hall into two or three mean apartments like the dressing-rooms of a theatre. From the windows, which are all in a fantastic oriental style, crinkled and crinkled, and supported by twisted pillars of smooth marble, striking, romantic views of the cliffs and village of Cintra are commanded. Several irregular courts and loggias, formed by the angles of square towers, are enlivened by fountains of marble and gilt bronze, continually pouring forth abundant streams of the purest water.

A sort of reservoir, almost long enough to be styled a canal, is continued the whole length of the great hall, and serves as a paradise for shoals of the largest and most brilliant gold and silver fish I ever set eyes upon. The murmur of the jets-d'eau which rise from this canal, the ripple of the water undulating against steps and slabs of polished marble, the glancing and gleaming of the fish, and the striking contrast of light and shade produced by the intricate labyrinth of arches and columns, combine altogether to form a scene of enchantment such as we sometimes dream of, but hardly suppose is ever realized. There is a sobriety in the hues of the marble, a mysteriousness in the dark recesses seen in perspective, and a solemnity in the deep colour, approaching to blackness, of the water in that part of the reservoir which is overshadowed by lofty buildings, I cannot help thinking superior to all the flutter and glitter of the most famous Moorish edifices at Granada or Seville.

The flat summit of one of the loftiest terraces, not less than one hundred and fifty feet from the ground, is laid out as a neat parterre, which is spread like an embroidered carpet before the entrance of a huge square tower, almost entirely occupied by a hall encrusted with glistening tiles, and crowned by a most singularly-shaped dome. Amidst the scrolls of arabesque foliage which adorn it, appear the arms of the principal Portuguese nobility. The achievement of the unfortunate house of Tavora is blotted out, and the panel it occupied left bare.

We had climbed up to this terrace and tower by one of those steep, cork-screw staircases, of which there are numbers in the palace, and which connect with vaulted passages in a secret and suspicious manner. The Marquis pointed out to me the mosaic pavement of a small chamber, fretted and worn away in several places by the steps of Alphonso the Sixth, who was confined to this narrow space a long series of years.

Descending from it, we looked into the chapel, not less singular in form and construction than the rest of the edifice. The low flat cupola, as well as the intersections of the arches, are much in the style of a mosque; but the barbaric profusion of gold, and still more barbaric paintings with which every soffite and panel are covered, might almost be supposed the work of Cingalese or Hindostanee artists, and reminded me of those subterraneous pagodas where his Satanic Majesty receives homage under the form of Gumputy or of Boodh.

The original glare of all this strange scenery is greatly subdued by the smoke of lamps, which have been burning for ages before the altar: a mysterious pile of carved work and imagery, in perfect consonance, as to gloom and uncouthness, with every other object in the place. It was whilst kneeling before this very altar that the young, the ardent, the chivalrous Don Sebastian is said to have received a supernatural warning to renounce that fatal African expedition which cost him his crown and his life, and what an heroic mind holds in far higher estimation, that

immortal fame which follows successful achievements.

A something I can hardly describe, an oppressive gloom, seemed to hang over this chapel, which remains very nearly, I should imagine, in the same style it was left by the ill-fated Sebastian. The want of a free circulation of air, and a heavy cloud of incense, affected the nerves of my head so disagreeably that I was glad to move on, and follow the Marquis into the rooms preparing for the Queen and the Infantas. These are airy and well ventilated; but instead of hanging them with rich arras, representing the adventures of knights and worthies, her Majesty's upholsterers are hard at work covering the stout walls with bright silks and satins of the palest and most delicate colours. I saw no furniture worth notice, not a picture or a cabinet: our stay, therefore, as we had nothing to see, was not protracted.

As soon as the Marquis had given some orders, with which his royal mistress had charged him, we returned to Ramalhaô, where Horne and Guildermeester, the Dutch Consul, were waiting our arrival, and squabbling about insurances, percentages, commissions, and other commercial speculations.

I have been persuading the Marquis to accompany me to-morrow to Guildermeester's: it is the old man's birthday, and he opens his new house with dancing and suppering. We shall have a pretty sample of the factory misses, clerks, and apprentices, some underlings of the *corps diplomatique*, and God knows how many thousand pound weight of Dutch and Hambro merchants.

LETTER XX.

Grand gala at Court.—Festival in honour of the birthday of Guildermeester.—Mad freaks of a Frenchman.—Unwelcome lights of Truth.—Invective against the English.

July 25th, 1787.

GRAND gala at Court, and the Marquis gone to attend it; for this blessed day not only gave birth to Guildermeester, but to the Princess of Brazil. We went to dine with the Marchioness. A band of regimental music, on their march to Guildermeester, began playing in the court, and drew forth one of those curious swarms of all sexes, ages, and colours, which this beneficent family are so fond of harbouring. Donna Henriquetta was seated on the steps, which lead up to the great pavilion, whispering to some of her favourite attendants, who, like the chorus in an ancient Greek tragedy, were continually giving their opinion of whatever was going forward.

Just as Don Pedro and I were preparing to set off together for the ball at the old consul's, we were agreeably surprised by the arrival of the Marquis, who had escaped from the palace much earlier than he expected. I carried him in my chaise to Horne's, where we drank tea on his terrace, which commands the most romantic view in Cintra; vast sweeps of varied foliage, banks with twisted roots, and trunks of enormous chesnuts, mingled with weeping-willows of the freshest verdure, and citrons clustered with fruit. Above this sylvan scene tower three shattered pinnacles of rock, the middle one diversified by the turrets and walls of Nossa Senhora da Penha, a convent of Jeronimites, frequently concealed in clouds. I leaned against a cork-tree, which spreads its branches almost entirely over the veranda, enjoying the view, and staring idly at the grotesque figures, Dutch, English, and Portuguese, passing along to Guildermeester's; a series sufficiently diversified to have amused me for some time, had not M— grown impatient and uneasy. His brother-in-law, S— V—, to whom he has a mortal aversion, having made his appearance, the powers of light and darkness, if personified, could not exhibit a stronger contrast than these two personages; M— looking all benignity, and S— V— all malevolence. Indeed, if one half of the atrocities^[17] public report attributes to this notorious nobleman be true, I should not wonder at the blackness of revenge and tyranny being so deeply marked in every line of his countenance.

Moving off the first opportunity, we passed through dark and gloomy lanes, admirably calculated for such exploits as I have just alluded to, and were near being jerked into a ditch as we drove to the old consul's door. The space before this new building is in sad disorder. The house has little more than bare walls, and was not very splendidly lighted up.

As for the company, they turned out just what I expected. Madame G—, who is a woman of spirit and discernment, did the honours with the greatest ease, and paid her principal guests the most marked attentions. There is a something pointedly original in all her observations, which pleased me very much. She is not, however, of the merciful tribe, and joined forces with Verdeil (no foe to a little slashing conversation) in cutting up the factory. M— handed her in to supper. This part of the entertainment was magnificent. There was a bright illumination, an immense profusion of plate, a striking breadth of table, every delicacy that could be procured, and a dessert-frame, fifty or sixty feet in length, gleaming with burnished figures and vases of silver flowers. I felt no inclination to dance after supper; the music was not inspiring, and the company thrown into the utmost confusion by the mad freaks of a Frenchman, upon whom one of the principal ladies present is supposed for two or three years past to have placed her affections. A *coup de soleil* and a quarrel with his ambassador, Monsieur de Bombelles, it seems had turned the poor fellow's brain: there was no preventing his rushing from room to room with the sputter and eccentricity of a fire-work, now abusing one person, now another, confessing publicly the universal kindness he had received from the lady above hinted at, and the many marks of tender affection a certain Miss W— had bestowed on him. "Why," said he to the two heroines, who I am told are not upon the best terms imaginable, "should you squabble and scratch? You are both equally indulgent, and have both rendered me in your turns the happiest mortal in the universe."

Whilst the light of truth was shining upon the bystanders in this very singular manner, I leave you to imagine the awkward surprise of the worthy old husband, and the angry blushes of his spouse and her fair associate. I never beheld a more capital scene. In some of our pantomimes, if I recollect rightly, harlequin applies a touchstone to his adversaries, and by its magic influence draws truth from their mouths in spite of propriety or interest. The lawyer confesses having fingered a bribe, the soldier his flight in the day of battle, and the whining methodistical dowager her frequent recourse to the bottle of inspiration. This wondrous effect seems to have been here realized, and some malicious demon to have possessed the talkative Frenchman, and to have compelled him to disclose the mysteries to which he owes his subsistence. Amongst the harsh truths poured out by this flow of sincerity was a vehement apostrophe to the English canaille, as he styled them, upon their rank intolerance of all customs except their own, and their ten thousand starch uncharitable prejudices. Mrs.—, become dauntless through despair, took up the

cudgels in this cause most vigorously, compared the chief part of the company to a swarm of venomous insects, unworthy to crawl upon the hem of her really pure, though calumniated garments, and fit to be shaken off with a vengeance the first opportunity.

The Marquis, Don Pedro, and I enjoyed the scene so much, that we stayed later than we intended.

LETTER XXI.

The Queen of Portugal's Chapel.—The Orchestra.—Rehearsal of a Council.—Proposal to visit Mafra.

Ramalhaô, near Cintra, 26th August, 1787.

THE Queen of Portugal's chapel is still the first in Europe; in point of vocal and instrumental excellence, no other establishment of the kind, the papal not excepted, can boast such an assemblage of admirable musicians. Wherever her Majesty moves they follow; when she goes a hawking to Salvaterra, or a health-hunting to the baths of the Caldas. Even in the midst of these wild rocks and mountains, she is surrounded by a bevy of delicate warblers, as plump as quails, and as gurgling and melodious as nightingales. The violins and violoncellos at her Majesty's beck are all of the first order, and in oboe and flute-players her musical menagerie is unrivalled.

The Marquis of M——, as first Lord of the Bedchamber, Master of the Horse, and, as it were, hereditary prime favourite, enjoys a decided influence over this empire of sweet sounds; and having been so friendly as to impart a share of these musical blessings to me, I have been permitted to avail myself, whenever I please, of a selection from this wonderful band of performers. This very morning, to my shame be it recorded, I remained hour after hour in my newly-arranged pavilion, without reading a word, writing a line, or entering into any conversation. All my faculties were absorbed by the harmony of the wind instruments, stationed at a distance in a thicket of orange and bay trees. It was to no purpose that I tried several times to retire out of the sound—I was as often drawn back as I attempted to snatch myself away. Did I consult the health of my mind, I should dismiss these musicians; their plaintive affecting tones are sure to awaken in my bosom a long train of mournful recollections, and by the force of associated ideas to plunge me into a state of languor and gloom.

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My excellent friend, the Prior of Aviz, performed a real act of friendship, by breaking in almost by force upon my seclusion, and rousing me from my reveries. He insisted upon my accompanying him to the Archbishop's, where the rehearsal of a council to be held in the Queen's presence was going forward, and all the ministers with their assistant under-secretaries assembled. Such congregations are new to the good old Confessor, who has been just pressed into the supreme direction, I might say control, of the Cabinet, much against his will. He knows too well the value of ease and tranquillity not to regret so violent an inroad upon his usual habits of life. We found him, therefore, as might be expected, in a state of turmoil and irritation, flushed up to the very forehead with a ruddy tint, which was highly contrasted by his flowing white flannel garments. These garments he frequently shook and crumpled, and more than once did he strike with vehemence against his portly paunch, which, though he declared it had waited an hour longer than customary for its wonted replenishment, sounded by no means so hollow as an empty tub. The old saying, that "*fat paunches make lean pates*," could not, however, be applied to him; he was so gracious and confidential as to give me a summary of what had been represented to him from the different departments of state, with great perspicuity and acuteness.

Notwithstanding the interest this singular communication ought to have excited, I paid it not half the attention it deserved. The impression I had received in the morning, from the music of Haydn and Jomelli, still lingered about me. The Grand Prior, finding politics could not shake them off, consulted with his nephew, who happened to be just by in the Queen's apartment, and returned with a proposal, that as I had long expressed a wish to see Mafra, we should put this scheme in execution to-morrow. It was settled, therefore, that to-morrow we should set off.

LETTER XXII.

Road to Mafra.—Distant view of the Convent.—Its vast fronts.—General magnificence of the Edifice.—The Church.—The High Altar.—Eve of the Festival of St. Augustine.—The collateral Chapels.—The Sacristy.—The Abbot of the Convent.—The Library.—View from the Convent-roof.—Chime of Bells.—House of the Capitan Mor.—Dinner.—Vespers.—Awful sound of the Organs.—The Palace.—Return to the Convent.—Inquisitive crowd.—The Garden.—Matins.—A Procession.—The Hall de Profundis.—Solemn Repast.—Supper at the Capitan Mor's.

August 27th, 1787.

WE got into the carriage at nine, in spite of the wind, which blew full in our faces. The distance from the villa I inhabit to this stupendous convent is about fourteen English miles, and the road, which by good-luck has been lately mended, conducted across a parched, open country, thinly scattered with windmills and villages. The retrospect on the woody slopes and pointed rocks of Cintra is pleasant enough; but when you look forward, nothing can be more bleak or barren than the prospect. Thanks to relays of mules, we advanced, full speed, and in less than an hour and a quarter found ourselves under a strong wall which winds boldly across the hills, and incloses the park of Mafra.

We now caught a glimpse of the marble towers and dome of the convent, relieved by an azure expanse of ocean, rising above the brow of heathy eminences, diversified here and there by the bushy heads of Italian pines and the tall spires of cypress. The roofs of the edifice were not yet visible, and we continued some time winding about the undulating acclivities in the park before they were discovered. A detachment of lay-brothers were waiting to open the gates of the royal inclosure, sadly blackened by a fire, which about a month ago consumed a great part of its wood and verdure. Our approach spread a terrible alarm among the herds of deer, which were peacefully browsing on a slope rather greener than those in its neighbourhood. Off they scudded and took refuge in a thicket of half-burnt pines.

After coasting the wall of the great garden, we turned suddenly the corner, and discovered one of the vast fronts

of the convent, appearing like a street of palaces. I cannot pretend that the style of the building is such as a lover of pure Grecian architecture would approve; the windows and doors are many of them fantastically shaped, but at least well proportioned.

I was admiring their ample range as we drove rapidly along, when, upon wheeling round the lofty square pavilion which flanks the edifice, the grand façade, extending above eight hundred feet, opened to my view. The centre is formed by the porticos of the church richly adorned with columns, niches, and bass-reliefs of marble. On each side two towers, somewhat resembling those of St. Paul's in London, rise to the height of near two hundred feet, and, joining on to the enormous *corps de logis*, the palace terminates to the right and left by its stately pavilions. These towers are light, airy, and clustered with pillars, remarkably beautiful; but their form in general borders too much on a sort of pagoda-ish style, and wants solemnity. They contain many bells of the largest dimensions, and a famous chime which cost several hundred thousand crusadoes, and which was set playing the moment our arrival was notified. The platform and flight of steps before the columned entrance of the church is strikingly grand; and the dome, which lifts itself up so proudly above the pediment of the portico, merits praise for its lightness and elegance.

My eyes ranged along the vast extent of palace on each side till they were tired, and I was glad to turn them from the glare of marble and confusion of sculptured ornaments to the blue expanse of the distant ocean. Before the front of this colossal structure a wide level of space extends itself, at the extremity of which several white houses lie dispersed. Though these buildings are by no means inconsiderable, they appear, when contrasted with the immense pile in the neighbourhood, like the booths of workmen, for such I took them upon my first survey, and upon a nearer approach was quite surprised at their real dimensions.

Few objects render the prospect from the platform of Mafra, interesting. You look over the roofs of an indifferent village and the summits of sandy acclivities, backed by a boundless stretch of sea. On the left, your view is terminated by the craggy mountains of Cintra; to the right, a forest of pines in the Viscount of Ponte de Lima's extensive garden, affords the eye some small refreshment.

To skreen ourselves from the sun, which darted powerfully on our heads, we entered the church, passing through its magnificent portico, which reminded me not a little of the entrance of St. Peter's; and is crowded with the statues of saints and martyrs, carved with infinite delicacy.

The first *coup-d'œil* of the church is very imposing. The high altar, adorned with two majestic columns of reddish variegated marble, each, a single block, above thirty feet in height, immediately fixes the eye. Trevisani has painted the altar-piece in a masterly manner. It represents St. Anthony in the ecstasy of beholding the infant Jesus descending into his cell amidst an effulgence of glory.

To-morrow being the festival of St. Augustine, whose followers are the actual possessors of this monastery, all the golden candelabra were displayed, and tapers lighted. After pausing a few minutes in the midst of this bright illumination, we visited the collateral chapels, each enriched with highly finished bassi-relievi and stately portals of black and yellow marble, richly veined, and so highly polished as to reflect objects like a mirror. Never did I behold such an assemblage of beautiful marble as gleamed above, below, and around us. The pavement, the vaulted ceiling, the dome, and even the topmost lantern, is encrusted with the same costly and durable materials. Roses of white marble and wreaths of palm-branches, most exquisitely sculptured, enrich every part of the edifice. I never saw Corinthian capitals better modelled, or executed with more precision and sharpness, than those of the columns which support the nave.

Having satisfied our curiosity by examining the various ornaments of the altars, we followed our conductor through a long coved gallery into the sacristy, a magnificent vaulted hall, panelled with some beautiful varieties of alabaster and porphyry, and carpeted, as well as a chapel adjoining it, in a style of the utmost magnificence. We traversed several more halls and chapels, adorned with equal splendour, till we were fatigued and bewildered like errant knights in the mazes of an enchanted palace.

I began to think there was no end to these spacious apartments. The monk who preceded us, a good-natured, slobbering greybeard, taking for granted that I could not understand a syllable of his language, attempted to explain the objects which presented themselves by signs, and would hardly believe his ears, when I asked him in good Portuguese when we should have done with chapels and sacristies. The old fellow seemed vastly delighted with the *Meninos*, as he called Don Pedro and me; and to give our young legs an opportunity of stretching themselves, trotted along with such expedition that the Marquis and Verdeil wished him in purgatory. To be sure, we advanced at a most rapid rate, striding from one end to the other of a dormitory, six hundred feet in length, in a minute or two. These vast corridors, and the cells with which they communicate, three hundred in number, are all arched in the most sumptuous and solid manner. Every cell, or rather chamber, for they are sufficiently spacious, lofty, and well lighted, to merit that appellation, is furnished with tables and cabinets of Brazil-wood.

Just as we entered the library, the Abbot of the convent, dressed in his ceremonial habit, advanced to bid us welcome, and invite us to dine with him to-morrow, St. Augustine's day, in the refectory; which it seems is a mighty compliment. We thought proper, however, to decline the honour, being aware that, to enjoy it, we must sacrifice at least two hours of our time, and be half parboiled by the steam of huge roasted calves, turkeys, and gruntlings, which had long been fattening, no doubt, for this solemn occasion.

The library is of a prodigious length, not less than three hundred feet; the arched roof of a pleasing form, beautifully stuccoed, and the pavement of red and white marble. Much cannot be said in praise of the cases in which the books are to be arranged. They are clumsily designed, coarsely executed, and darkened by a gallery which projects into the room in a very awkward manner. The collection, which consists of above sixty thousand volumes, is locked up at present in a suite of apartments which opens into the library. Several well preserved and richly illuminated first editions of the Greek and Roman classics were handed to me by the father librarian; but my nimble conductor would not allow me much time to examine them. He set off full speed, and, ascending a winding staircase, led us out upon the roof of the convent and palace, which form a broad, smooth terrace, bounded by a magnificent balustrade, unincumbered by chimneys, and commanding a bird's-eye view of the courts and garden.

From this elevation the whole plan of the edifice may be comprehended at a glance. In the centre rises the dome, like a beautiful temple from the spacious walks of a royal garden. It is infinitely superior, in point of design, to the rest of the edifice, and may certainly be reckoned among the lightest and best proportioned in Europe. Don Pedro and Monsieur Verdeil proposed scaling a ladder which leads up to the lantern, but I begged to be excused

accompanying them, and amused myself during their absence with ranging about the extensive loggias, now and then venturing a look down on the courts and parterres so far below; but oftener enjoying the prospect of the towers shining bright in the sunbeams, and the azure bloom of the distant sea. A fresh balsamic air wafted from the orchards of citron and orange, fanned me as I rested on the steps of the dome, and tempered the warmth of the glowing æther.

But I was soon driven from this cloudless, peaceful situation, by a confounded jingle of all the bells; then followed a most complicated sonata, banged off on the chimes by a great proficient. The Marquis, who had climbed up on purpose to enjoy this cataract of what some persons call melodious sounds at its fountainhead, would have me approach to examine the mechanism, and I was half stunned. I know very little indeed about chimes and clocks, and am quite at a loss for amusement in a belfry. My friend, who inherits a mechanical turn from his father, the renowned patron of clocks and time-pieces, investigated every wheel with minute attention.

His survey finished, we descended innumerable stairs, and retired to the Capitan Mor's, whose jurisdiction extends over the park and district of Mafra. He has seven or eight thousand crusadoes a year, and his habitation wears every appearance of comfort and opulence. The floors are covered with mats of the finest texture, the doors hung with red damask curtains, and our beds, quite new for the occasion, spread with satin coverlids richly embroidered and fringed. We had a most luxurious repast, and a better dessert than even the monks could have given us—the Capitan Mor taking the dishes from his long train of servants, and placing them himself on the table, quite in the feudal style.

After coffee we hurried to vespers in the great church of the convent, and advancing between the range of illuminated chapels, took our places in the royal tribune. We were no sooner seated than the monks entered in procession, preceding their abbot, who ascended his throne, having a row of sacristans at his feet and canons on his right hand, in their cloth of gold embroidered vestments. The service was chaunted with the most imposing solemnity to the awful sound of organs, for there are no fewer than six in the church, all of an enormous size.

When it was ended, being once more laid hold of by the nimble lay-brother, we were conducted up a magnificent staircase into the palace. The suite extends seven or eight hundred feet, and the almost endless succession of lofty doors seen in perspective, strikes with astonishment; but we were soon weary of being merely astonished, and agreed to pronounce the apartments the dullest and most comfortless we had ever beheld; there is no variety in their shape, and little in their dimensions. The furniture being all locked up at Lisbon, a naked sameness universally prevails; not a niche, not a cornice, not a curved moulding breaks the tedious uniformity of dead white walls.

I was glad to return to the convent and refresh my eyes with the sight of marble pillars, and my feet by treading on Persian carpets. We were followed wherever we moved, into every cell, chapel, hall, passage, or sacristy, by a strange medley of inquisitive monks, sacristans, lay-brothers, corregidores, village-curates, and country beaux with long rapiers and pigtails. If I happened to ask a question, half-a-dozen all at once poked their necks out to answer it, like turkey-polts when addressed in their native hobble-gobble dialect. The Marquis was quite sick of being trotted after in this tumultuous manner, and tried several times to leave the crowd behind him, by taking sudden turns; but sticking close to our heels, it baffled all his endeavours, and increased to such a degree, that we seemed to have swept the whole convent and village of their inhabitants, and to draw them after us by one of those supernatural attractions we read of in tales and romances.

At length, perceiving a large door open into the garden, we bolted out, and striking into a labyrinth of myrtles and laurels, got rid of our pursuers. The garden, which is about a mile and a half in circumference, contains, besides wild thickets of pine and bay-trees, several orchards of lemon and orange, and two or three parterres more filled with weeds than flowers. I was much disgusted at finding this beautiful inclosure so wretchedly neglected, and its luxuriant plants withering away for want of being properly watered.

You may suppose, that after adding a walk in the principal alleys of the garden to our other peregrinations, we began to find ourselves somewhat fatigued, and were not sorry to repose ourselves in the Abbot's apartment till we were summoned once more to our tribune to hear matins performed. It was growing dark, and the innumerable tapers burning before the altars and in every part of the church, began to diffuse a mysterious light. The organs joined again in full accord, the long series of monks and novices entered with slow and solemn steps, and the Abbot resumed his throne with the same pomp as at vespers. The Marquis began muttering his orisons, the Grand Prior to recite his breviary, and I to fall into a profound reverie, which lasted as long as the service, that is to say above two hours. Verdeil, ready to expire with ennui, could not help leaving the tribune and the cloud of incense which filled the choir, to breathe a freer air in the body of the church and its adjoining chapels.

It was almost nine when the monks, after chaunting a most solemn and sonorous hymn in praise of their venerable father, Saint Augustine, quitted the choir. We followed their procession through lofty chapels and arched cloisters, which by a glimmering light appeared to have neither roof nor termination, till it entered an octagon forty feet in diameter, with fountains in the four principal angles. The monks, after dispersing to wash their hands at the several fountains, again resumed their order, and passed two-and-two under a portal thirty feet high into a vast hall, communicating with their refectory by another portal of the same lofty dimensions. Here the procession made a pause, for this chamber is consecrated to the remembrance of the departed, and styled the Hall de Profundis. Before every repast, the monks standing round it in solemn ranks, silently revolve in their minds the precariousness of our frail existence, and offer up prayers for the salvation of their predecessors. I could not help being struck with awe when I beheld by the glow of flaming lamps, so many venerable figures in their black and white habits bending their eyes on the pavement, and absorbed in the most interesting and gloomy of meditations.

The moment allotted to this solemn supplication being passed, every one took his place at the long tables in the refectory, which are made of Brazil-wood, and covered with the whitest linen. Each monk had his glass caraffe of water and wine, his plate of apples and salad set before him; neither fish nor flesh were served up, the vigil of St. Augustine's day being observed as a fast with the utmost strictness.

To enjoy at a glance this singular and majestic spectacle, we retreated to a vestibule preceding the octagon, and from thence looked through all the portals down the long row of lamps into the refectory, which, owing to its vast length of full two hundred feet, seemed ending in a point. After remaining a few minutes to enjoy this perspective, four monks advanced with torches to light us out of the convent, and bid us good-night with many bows and genuflections.

Our supper at the Capitan Mor's was very cheerful. We sat up late, notwithstanding our fatigue, talking over the

variety of objects that had passed before our eyes in so short a space of time, the crowd of grotesque figures which had stuck to our heels so long and so closely, and the awkward vivacity of the lay-brother.

LETTER XXIII.

High mass.—Garden of the Viscount Ponte de Lima.—Leave Mafra.—An accident.—Return to Cintra.—My saloon.—Beautiful view from it.

August 28th, 1787.

I WAS half asleep, half awake, when the sonorous bells of the convent struck my ears. The Marquis and Don Pedro's voices in earnest conversation with the Capitan Mor in the adjoining chamber, completely roused me. We swallowed our coffee in haste; the Grand Prior reluctantly left his pillow, and accompanied us to high mass. The monks once more exerted their efforts to prevail on us to dine with them; but we remained inflexible, and to avoid their importunities hastened away, as soon as mass was ended, to the Viscount Ponte de Lima's gardens, where the deep shade of the bay and ilex skreened us from the excessive heat of the sun.

The Marquis, seating himself by me near one of those clear and copious fountains with which this magnificent Italian-looking garden is refreshed and enlivened, entered into a most serious and semi-official discourse about my stay in Portugal, and the means which were projecting in a very high quarter to render it not only pleasant to myself, but of some importance to many others.

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I felt relieved when the appearance of Don Pedro and his uncle, who had been walking to the end of an immensely long avenue of pines, warded off a conversation that began to press hard upon me. We returned altogether to the Capitan Mor's, and found dinner ready.

Both Don Pedro and myself were sorry to leave Mafra, and should have had no objection to another race along the cloisters and dormitories with the lay-brother. The evening was bright and clear, and the azure tints of the distant sea inexpressibly lovely. We drove with a tumultuous rapidity over the rough-paved roads, that the Marquis and I could hardly hear a word we said to each other. Don Pedro had mounted his horse. Verdeil, who preceded us in the carinho, seemed to outstrip the winds. His mule, one of the most fiery and gigantic of her species, excited by repeated floggings and the shout of a hulking Portuguese postilion, perched up behind the carriage, galloped at an ungovernable rate; and at about a league from the rocks of Cintra, thought proper to jerk out its drivers into the midst of some bushes at the foot of a lofty bank, nearly perpendicular, where they still remained sprawling when we passed by.

Verdeil hobbled up to us, and pointed to the carinho in the ditch below. Except a slight contusion in the knee, he had received no hurt. I exclaimed immediately, that his escape was miraculous, and that, doubtless, St. Anthony had some hand in it. My friend, who has always the horrors of heresy before his eyes, whispered me that the devil had saved him this time, but might not be so favourably disposed another.

It was not half-past five, when we reached Cintra. The Marchioness, the Abade, and the children, were waiting our arrival.

Feeling my head in a whirl, and my ideas as much jolted and jumbled as my body, I returned home just before it fell dark, to enjoy a few hours of uninterrupted calm. The scenery of my ample saloon, its air of seclusion, its silence, seemed to breathe a momentary tranquillity over my spirits. The mat smoothly laid down, and formed of the finest and most glossy straw, assumed by candlelight a delightful, soft, and harmonious colour. It looked so cool and glistening that I stretched myself upon it. There did I lie supine, contemplating the serene summer-sky, and the moon rising slowly from behind the brow of a shrubby hill. A faint breeze blowing aside the curtains, discovered the summit of the woods in the garden, and beyond, a wide expanse of country, terminated by plains of sea and hazy promontories.

LETTER XXIV.

A saloon in the highest style of oriental decoration.—Amusing stories of King John the Fifth and his recluses.—Cheerful funeral.—Refreshing ramble to the heights of Penha Verde.

August 29th, 1787.

IT was furiously hot, and I trifled away the whole morning in my pavilion, surrounded by fidalgos in flowered bed-gowns, and musicians in violet-coloured accoutrements, with broad straw-hats, like bonzes or talapoins, looking as sunburnt, vacant, and listless, as the inhabitants of Ormus or Bengal; so that my company as well as my apartment wore the most decided oriental appearance: the divan raised a few inches above the floor, the gilt trellis-work of the windows, and the pellucid streams of water rising from a tank immediately beneath them, supplied in endless succession by springs from the native rock.

An agreeable variety prevails in my Asiatic saloon; half its curtains admit no light, and display the richest folds; the other half are transparent, and cast a mild glow on the mat and sofas. Large clear mirrors multiply this profusion of drapery, and several of my guests seemed never tired of running from corner to corner, to view the different groups of objects reflected on all sides in the most unexpected directions, as if they fancied themselves admitted by enchantment to peep into a labyrinth of magic chambers.

One of the party, a very shrewd old Italian priest, who had left his native land before the too-famous earthquake shook more than the half of Lisbon to its foundations, told me he remembered an apartment a good deal in this style, that is to say, bedecked with mirrors and curtains, in a sort of fairy palace communicating with the Nunnery of Odivellas, so famous for the pious retirement of that paragon of splendour and holiness, King John the Fifth. These were delightful days for the monarch and the fair companions of his devotions.

"Oh!" said the old priest very judiciously, "of what avail is the finest cage without birds to enliven it? Had you but heard the celestial harmony of King John's recluses, you would never have sat down contented in your fine tent with the squalling of sopranos and the grumbling of bass-voles. The silver, virgin tones I allude to, proceeding from the holy recess into which no other male mortal except the monarch was ever allowed to penetrate, had an effect I still remember with ecstasy, though at the distance of so many years. Four of our finest singers, two from Venice and two from Naples, attracted by a truly regal munificence, added all that the most consummate taste and science could give to the best voices in Portugal; the result was perfection."

Aguilar, who came to dine with us, and whose mother, when in the bloom of youth and beauty, had been not unfrequently invited to act the part of perhaps more than audience at these edifying parties, confirmed all the wonders the old Italian narrated, and added not a few of the same gold and ruby colour in a strain so extravagantly enthusiastic, that were I to repeat even half the glittering anecdotes he favoured me with, upon the subject of Don John the Fifth's unbounded fervour and magnificence, your imagination would be completely dazzled.

Just as we had removed from the dinner to the dessert-table, which was spread out upon a terrace fronting the principal alley of the gardens, entered the abade Xavier, in full cry, with a rapturous story of the conversion of an old consumptive Englishwoman, who, it seems, finding herself upon the eve of departure, had called for a priest, to whom she might confess, and abjure her errors of every description. Happening to lodge at the Cintra inn, kept by a most flaming Irish Catholic, her commendable desires were speedily complied with, and Mascarenhas and Acciaoli, and two or three other priests and monsignors, summoned to further the good work.

"Great," said the abade, "are our rejoicings upon the occasion. This very evening the aged innocent is to be buried in triumph: Marialva, San Lorenzo, Asseca, and several more of the principal nobility are already assembled to grace the festival; suppose you were to come with me and join the procession?"

"With all my heart," did I reply; "although I have no great taste for funerals, so gay a one as this you talk of may form an exception."

Off we set, driving as fast as most excellent mules could carry us, lest we should come too late for the entertainment. A great mob was assembled before the door. At one of the windows stood the grand prior, looking as if he wished himself a thousand leagues away, and reciting his breviary. I went up-stairs, and was immediately surrounded by the old Conde de San Lorenzo and other believers, overflowing with congratulations. Mascarenhas, one of the soundest limbs of the patriarchal establishment, a capital devotee and seraphic doctor, was introduced to me. Acciaoli, whom I was before acquainted with, skipped about the room, rubbing his hands for joy, with a cunning leer on his jovial countenance, and snapping his fingers at Satan, as much as to say, "I don't care a d— n for you. We have got one at least safe out of your clutches, and clear at this very moment of the smoke of your cauldron."

There was such a bustle in the interior apartment where the wretched corpse was deposited, such a chaunting and praying, for not a tongue was idle, that my head swam round, and I took refuge by the grand prior. He by no means relished the party, and kept shrugging up his shoulders, and saying that it was very edifying—very edifying indeed, and that Acciaoli had been extremely alert, extremely active, and deserved great commendation, but that so much fuss might as well have been spared.

By some hints that dropped, I won't say from whom, I discovered the innocent now on the high road to eternal felicity by no means to have suffered the cup of joy to pass by untasted in this existence, and to have lived many years on a very easy footing, not only with a stout English bachelor, but with several others, married and unmarried, of his particular acquaintance. However, she had taken a sudden tack upon finding herself driven apace down the tide of a rapid consumption, and had been fairly towed into port by the joint efforts of the Irish hostess and the monsignori Mascarenhas and Acciaoli.

"Thrice happy Englishwoman," exclaimed M—a, "what luck is thine! In the next world immediate admission to paradise, and in this thy body will have the proud distinction of being borne to the grave by men of the highest rank.—Was there ever such felicity?"

The arrival of a band of priests and sacristans, with tapers lighted and cross erected, called us to the scene of action. The procession being marshalled, the corpse, dressed in virgin-white, lying snug in a sort of rose-coloured bandbox with six silvered handles, was brought forth. M—, who abhors the sight of a dead body, reddened up to his ears, and would have given a good sum to make an honourable retreat; but no retreat could now have been made consistent with piety: he was obliged to conquer his disgust and take a handle of the bier. Another was placed in the murderous gripe of the notorious San Vicente; another fell to the poor old snuffling Conde de San Lorenzo; a fourth to the Viscount d'Asseca, a mighty simple-looking young gentleman; the fifth and sixth were allotted to the Capitaô Mor of Cintra, and to the judge, a gaunt fellow with a hang-dog countenance.

No sooner did the grand prior catch sight of the ghastly visage of the dead body as it was being conveyed down-stairs in the manner I have recited, than he made an attempt to move on, and precede instead of following the procession; but Acciaoli, who acted as master of the ceremonies, would not let him off so easily: he allotted him the post of honour immediately at the head of the corpse, and placed himself at his left hand, giving the right to Mascarenhas. All the bells of Cintra struck up a cheerful peal, and to their merry jinglings we hurried along through a dense cloud of dust, a rabble of children frolicking on either side, and their grandmothers hobbling after, telling their beads, and grinning from ear to ear at this triumph over the prince of darkness.

Happily the way to the church was not long, or the dust would have choked us. The grand prior kept his mouth close not to admit a particle of it, but Acciaoli and his colleague were too full of their fortunate exploit not to chatter incessantly. Poor old San Lorenzo, who is fat, squat, and pursy, gasping for breath, stopped several times to rest on his journey. Marialva, whom disgust rendered heartily fatigued with his burthen, was very glad likewise to make a pause or two.

We found all the altars in the church blazing with lights, the grave gaping for its immaculate inhabitant, and a numerous detachment of priests and choristers waiting to receive the procession. The moment it entered, the same hymn which is sung at the interment of babes and sucklings burst forth from a hundred youthful voices, incense arose in clouds, and joy and gladness shone in the eyes of the whole congregation.

A murmur of applause and congratulation went round anew, those whom it most concerned receiving with great affability and meekness the compliments of the occasion. Old San Lorenzo, waddling up to the grand prior, hugged him in his arms, and strewing him all over with snuff, set him violently a-sneezing. San Vicente, as soon as the

innocent was safely deposited, retired in a sort of dudgeon, being never rightly at ease in the presence of his brother-in-law Marialva. As for the latter warm-hearted nobleman, exultation and triumph carried him beyond all bounds of decorum. He scoffed bitterly at heretics, represented in their true colours the actual happiness of the convert, and just as we left the church, cried out loud enough for all those who were near to have heard him, "*Elle se f—iche de nous tous à présent.*"

Their pious toil being ended, Mascarenhas and Acciaoli accompanied us to the heights of Penha Verde, to breathe a fresh air under the odoriferous pines: then, returning in our company to Ramalhaô, partook of a nice collation of iced fruit and sweetmeats, and concluded the evening with much gratifying discourse about the lively scene we had just witnessed.

LETTER XXV.

Anecdotes of the Conde de San Lorenzo.—Visit to Mrs. Guildermeester.—Toads active, and toads passive.—The old Consul and his tray of jewels.

The principal personages who had so piously distinguished themselves yesterday dined with me this blessed afternoon. Old San Lorenzo has a prodigious memory and a warm imagination, rendered still more glowing by a slight touch of madness. He appears perfectly well acquainted with the general politics of Europe, and though never beyond the limits of Portugal, gave so circumstantial and plausible a detail of what occurred, and of the part he himself acted at the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, that I was completely his dupe, and believed, until I was let into the secret, that he had actually witnessed what he only dreamt of. Notwithstanding the high favour he enjoyed with the infante Don Pedro, Pombal cast him into a dungeon with the other victims of the Aveiro conspiracy, and for eighteen most melancholy years was his active mind reduced to prey upon itself for sustenance.

Upon the present queen's accession he was released, and found his intimate friend the Infante sharing the throne; but thinking himself somewhat coolly received and shabbily neglected, he threw the key of chamberlain which was sent him into a place of less dignity than convenience, and retired to the convent of the Necessidades. No means, I have been assured, were left untried by the king to soothe and flatter him; but they all proved fruitless. Since this period, though he quitted the convent, he has never appeared at court, and has refused all employment. Devotion now absorbs his entire soul. Except when the chord of imprisonment and Pombal is touched upon, he is calm and reasonable. I found him extremely so to-day, and full of the most instructive and amusing anecdote.

Coffee over, my company having stretched themselves out at full-length most comfortably, some on the mat, and some on the sofas, to recruit their spirits I suppose, after the pious toils and enthusiastic procession of the day before, I prevailed upon Marialva to escort me to Mrs. Guildermeester's, whom we found in a vast but dingy saloon, her toads squatting around her. She gave us some excellent tea, and a plain sensible loaf of brown bread, accompanied by delicious butter, just fresh from a genuine Dutch dairy, conducted upon the most immaculate Dutch principles. Donna Genuefa, the toad-passive in waiting, is a little jossish old woman, with a head as round as a humming-top, and a large placid lip, very smiling and good-natured. Miss Coster, the toad-active, has been rather pretty a few years ago, makes tea with decorum, shuts doors and opens windows with judgment, and has a good deal to say for herself when allowed to sit still on her chair.

We had scarcely begun complimenting the mistress of the house upon the complete success of her cow-establishment, when the old consul her spouse entered, with many bows and salutations, bearing a huge japan tray, upon which was spread out in glittering profusion an ample treasure, both of rough and well-lapidated brilliants, the fruits of his famous and most lucrative contract in the days of Pombal. Some of the largest diamonds, in superb though heavy Dutch or German settings, he eagerly desired Marialva would recommend to the attention of the queen, and whispered in my ear that he hoped I also would speak a good word for him. I remained as deaf as an adder, and the Marquis as blind as a beetle, to the splendour of the display; so he returned once more to his interior cabinet, with all his hopes out of blossom, and we moved off.

Evening was drawing on, and a drizzling mist overspreading the crags of Cintra. It did not, however, prevent us from going to Mr. Horne's. We passed under arching elms and chesnuts, whose moistened foliage exhaled a fresh woody odour. High above the vapours, which were rolling away just as we emerged from the shady avenue, appeared the turret of the convent of the Penha, faintly tinted by the last rays of the sun, and looking down, like the ark on Mount Ararat, on a sea of undulating clouds.

At Horne's, Aguilar, Bezerra, and the usual set were assembled. The Marquis, as soon as he had made his condescending bows to the right and left, retired to his villa, and I took Horne in my chaise to Mrs. Staits, a little slender-waisted, wild-eyed woman, by no means unpleasing or flinty-hearted. It was her birthday, and she had congregated most of the English at Cintra, in a damp garden about seventy feet long by thirty-two, illuminated by thirty or forty lanterns. Mrs. Guildermeester was there, covered with diamonds, and sparkling like a star in the midst of this murky atmosphere. We had a cold funereal supper, under a low tent in imitation of a grotto.

Mrs. Staits' well-disposed, easy-tempered husband placed me next Mrs. Guildermeester, who amused herself tolerably well at the expense of the entertainment. The dingy, subterraneous appearance of the booth, the wan light of the lanterns sparingly scattered along it, and the fragrance of a dish of rather mature prawns placed under my nose, seized me with the idea of being dead and buried. "Alas!" said I to my fair neighbour, "it is all over with us now, and this our first banquet in the infernal regions; we are all equal and jumbled together. There sits the pious presbyterian Mrs. Fussock, with that bridling miss her daughter, and close to them those adulterous doves, Mr. — and his sultana. Here am I, miserable sinner, right opposite your righteous and much enduring spouse; a little lower our kind host, that pattern of conjugal meekness and resignation. Hark! don't you hear a lumbering noise? They are letting down a cargo of heavy bodies into a neighbouring tomb."

In this strain did we continue till the subject was exhausted, and it was time to take our departure.

LETTER XXVI.

Sept. 10th, 1787.

ADIEU to the tranquillity of Cintra, we shall soon have nothing but hubbub and confusion. The queen is on the point of arriving with all her maids of honour, secretaries of state, dwarfs, negresses and horses, white, black, and pie-bald. Half the quintas around will be dried up, military possession having been taken of the aqueducts, and their waters diverted into new channels for the use of an encampment.

I was walking in a long arched bower of citron-trees, when M—— appeared at the end of the avenue, accompanied by the duke d'Alafoins. This is the identical personage well-known in every part of Europe by the appellation of Duke of Braganza. He has no right however, to wear that illustrious title, which is merged in the crown. Were he called Duchess Dowager, of anything you please, I think nobody would dispute the propriety of his style, he being so like an old lady of the bed-chamber, so fiddle-faddle and so coquettish. He had put on rouge and patches, and though he has seen seventy winters, contrived to turn on his heel and glide about with juvenile agility.

I was much surprised at the ease of his motions, having been told that he was a martyr to the gout. After lisping French with a most refined accent, complaining of the sun, and the roads, and the state of architecture, he departed, (thank heaven!) to mark out a spot for the encampment of the cavalry, which are to guard the queen's sacred person during her residence in these mountains. M—— was in duty bound to accompany him; but left his son and his nephews, the heirs of the House of Tancos, to dine with me.

In the evening, Verdeil, tired with sauntering about the verandas, proposed a ride to a neighbouring village, where there was a fair. He and Don Pedro mounted their horses, and preceded the young Tancos and me in a garden-chair, drawn by a most resolute mule. The roads are abominable, and lay partly along the sloping base of the Cintra mountains, which in the spring, no doubt, are clothed with a tolerable verdure, but at this season every blade of grass is parched and withered. Our carriage-wheels, as we drove sideling along these slippery declivities, pressed forth the odour of innumerable aromatic herbs, half pulverized. Thicknesse perhaps would have said, in his original quaint style, that nature was treating us with a pinch of her best cephalic. No snuff, indeed, ever threw me into a more violent fit of sneezing.

I could hardly keep up my head when we arrived at the fair, which is held on a pleasant lawn, bounded on one side by the picturesque buildings of a convent of Hieronimites, and on the other by rocky hills, shattered into a variety of uncouth romantic forms; one cliff in particular, called the Pedra d'os Ovos, terminated by a cross, crowns the assemblage, and exhibits a very grotesque appearance. Behind the convent a thick shrubbery of olives, ilex, and citron, fills up a small valley refreshed by fountains, whose clear waters are conducted through several cloisters and gardens, surrounded by low marble columns, supporting fretted arches in the morisco style.

The peasants assembled at the fair were scattered over the lawn; some conversing with the monks, others half intoxicated, sliding off their donkeys and sprawling upon the ground; others bargaining for silk-nets and spangled rings, to bestow on their mistresses. The monks, who were busily employed in administering all sorts of consolations, spiritual and temporal, according to their respective ages and vocations, happily paid us no kind of attention, so we escaped being stuffed with sweetmeats, and worried with compliments.

At sunset we returned to Ramalhaô, and drank tea in its lantern-like saloon, in which are no less than eleven glazed doors and windows of large dimensions. The winds were still; the air balsamic; and the sky of so soft an azure that we could not remain with patience under any other canopy, but stept once more into our curricles and drove as far as the Dutch consul's new building, by the mingled light of innumerable stars.

It was after ten when we got back to the Marialva villa, and long before we reached it, we heard the plaintive tones of voices and wind instruments issuing from the thickets. On the margin of the principal basin sat the marchioness and Donna Henriquetta, and a numerous group of their female attendants, many of them most graceful figures, and listening with all their hearts and souls to the rehearsal of some very delightful music with which her majesty is to be serenaded a few evenings hence.

It was one of those serene and genial nights when music acquires a double charm, and opens the heart to tender, though melancholy impressions. Not a leaf rustled, not a breath of wind disturbed the clear flame of the lights which had been placed near the fountains, and which just served to make them visible. The waters, flowing in rills round the roots of the lemon-trees, formed a rippling murmur; and in the pauses of the concert, no other sound except some very faint whisperings was to be distinguished, so that the enchantment of climate, music, and mystery, all contributed to throw my mind into a sort of trance from which I was not roused again without a degree of painful reluctance.

LETTER XXVII.

Curious scene in the interior of the palace of Cintra.—Singular invitation.—Dinner with the Archbishop Confessor.—Hilarity and shrewd remarks of that extraordinary personage.

September 12th, 1787.

I WAS hardly up before the grand prior and Mr. Street were announced: the latter abusing kings, queens, and princes, with all his might, and roaring after liberty and independence; the former complaining of fogs and damp.

As soon as the advocate for republicanism had taken his departure, we went by appointment to the archbishop confessor's, and were immediately admitted into his *sanctum sanctorum*, a snug apartment communicating by a winding staircase with that of the queen, and hung with bright, lively tapestry. A lay-brother, fat, round, buffoonical, and to the full as coarse and vulgar as any carter or muleteer in christendom, entertained us with some very amusing, though not the most decent, palace stories, till his patron came forth.

Those who expect to see the Grand Inquisitor of Portugal, a doleful, meagre figure, with eyes of reproof and malediction, would be disappointed. A pleasanter or more honest countenance than that kind heaven has blessed him with, one has seldom the comfort of looking upon. He received me in the most open, cordial manner, and I have

reason to think I am in mighty favour.

We talked about archbishops in England being married. "Pray," said the prelate, "are not your archbishops strange fellows? consecrated in ale-houses, and good bottle companions? I have been told that mad-cap Lord Tyrawley was an archbishop at home." You may imagine how much I laughed at this inconceivable nonsense; and though I cannot say, speaking of his right reverence, that "truths divine came mended from his tongue," it may be allowed, that nonsense itself became more conspicuously nonsensical, flowing from so revered a source.

Whilst we sat in the windows of the saloon, listening to a band of regimental music, we saw Joaô Antonio de Castro, the ingenious mechanic, who invented the present method of lighting Lisbon, two or three solemn dominicans, and a famous court fool^[18] in a tawdry gala-suit, bedizened with mock orders, coming up the steps which lead to the great audience-chamber, all together. "Ay, ay," said the lay-brother, who is a shrewd, comical fellow, "behold a true picture of our customers. Three sorts of persons find their way most readily into this palace; men of superior abilities, buffoons, and saints; the first soon lose what cleverness they possessed, the saints become martyrs, and the buffoons alone prosper."

To all this the Archbishop gave his hearty assent by a very significant nod of the head; and being, as I have already told you, in a most gracious, communicative disposition, would not permit me to go away, when I rose up to take leave of him.

"No, no," said he, "don't think of quitting me yet awhile. Let us repair to the hall of Swans, where all the court are waiting for me, and pray tell me then what you think of our great *fidalgos*."

Taking me by the tip of the fingers he led me along through a number of shady rooms and dark passages to a private door, which opened from the queen's presence-chamber, into a vast saloon, crowded, I really believe, by half the dignitaries of the kingdom; here were bishops, heads of orders, secretaries of state, generals, lords of the bedchamber, and courtiers of all denominations, as fine and as conspicuous as embroidered uniforms, stars, crosses, and gold keys could make them.

The astonishment of this group at our sudden apparition was truly laughable, and indeed, no wonder; we must have appeared on the point of beginning a minuet—the portly archbishop in his monastic, flowing white drapery, spreading himself out like a turkey in full pride, and myself bowing and advancing in a sort of *pas-grave*, blinking all the while like an owl in sunshine, thanks to my rapid transition from darkness to the most glaring daylight.

Down went half the party upon their knees, some with petitions and some with memorials; those begging for places and promotions, and these for benedictions, of which my revered conductor was by no means prodigal. He seemed to treat all these eager demonstrations of fawning servility with the most contemptuous composure, and pushing through the crowd which divided respectfully to give us passage, beckoned the Viscount Ponte de Lima, the Marquis of Lavradio, the Count d'Obidos, and two or three of the lords in waiting, into a mean little room, not above twenty by fourteen.

After a deal of adulatory complimentation in a most subdued tone from the circle of courtiers, for which they had got nothing in return but rebuffs and grunting, the Archbishop drew his chair close to mine, and said with a very distinct and audible pronunciation, "My dear Englishman, these are all a parcel of flattering scoundrels, do not believe one word they say to you. Though they glitter like gold, mud is not meaner—I know them well. Here," continued he, holding up the flap of my coat, "is a proof of English prudence, this little button to secure the pocket is a precious contrivance, especially in grand company, do not leave it off, do not adopt any of our fashions, or you will repent it."

This sally of wit was received with the most resigned complacency by those who had inspired it, and, staring with all my eyes, and listening with all my ears, I could hardly credit either upon seeing the most complaisant gesticulations, and hearing the most abject protestations of devoted attachment to his right reverence's sacred person from all the company.

There is no saying how long this tide of adulation would have continued pouring on, if it had not been interrupted by a message from the queen, commanding the confessor's immediate attendance. Giving his garments a hearty shake, he trudged off bawling out to me over his shoulder, "I shall be back in half-an-hour, and you must dine with me."—"Dine with him!" exclaimed the company in chorus: "such an honour never befel any one of us; how fortunate! how distinguished you are!"

Now, I must confess, I was by no means enchanted with this most peculiar invitation; I had a much pleasanter engagement at Penha-Verde, one of the coolest and most romantic spots in all this poetic district, and felt no vocation to be cooped up in a close bandboxical apartment, smelling of paint and varnish enough to give the headache; however, there was no getting off. I was told that I must obey, for everybody in these regions, high or low, the royal family themselves not excepted, obeyed the archbishop, and that I ought to esteem myself too happy in so agreeable an opportunity.

It would be only repeating what is known to every one, who knows any thing of courts and courtiers, were I to add the flowery speeches, the warm encomiums, I received from the finest feathered birds of this covey upon my own transcendent perfections, and those of my host that was to be. The half-hour, which, by-the-by, was more than three-quarters, scarcely sufficed for half those very people had to say in my commendation, who, a few days ago, were all reserve and indifference, if I happened to approach them. My summons to this envied repast was conveyed to me by no less a personage than the Marquis of M—, who, with gladsome surprise in all his gestures, whispered me, "I am to be of the party too, the first time in my life I can assure you; not a creature besides is to be admitted; for my uncle is gone home tired of waiting for you."

We knocked at the private door, which was immediately opened, and following the same passages through which I had been before conducted, emerged into an ante-chamber looking into a very neat little kitchen, where the lay-brother, with his sleeves tucked up to his shoulders, was making hospitable preparation. A table with three covers was prepared in the tapestry-room, and upon a sofa, in the corner of it, sat the omnipotent prelate wrapped up in an old snuff-coloured great coat, sadly patched and tattered.

"Come," said he, clapping his hands after the oriental fashion, "serve up and let us be merry—oh, these women, these women, above stairs, what a plague it is to settle their differences! Who knows better than you, Marquis, what enigmas they are to unriddle? I dare say the Englishman's archbishops have not half such puzzles to get over as I have: well, let us see what we have got for you."

Entered the lay-brother with three roasting-pigs, on a huge tray of massive silver, and an enormous pillau, as admirable in quality as in size; and so it had need to have been, for in these two dishes consisted our whole dinner. I am told the fare at the Archbishop's table never varies, and roasting-pigs succeed roasting-pigs, and pillaus pillaus, throughout all the vicissitudes of the seasons, except on certain peculiar fast-days of supreme meagre.

The simplicity of this part of our entertainment was made up by the profusion and splendour of our dessert, which exceeded in variety of fruits and sweetmeats any one of which I had ever partaken. As to the wines, they were admirable, the tribute of every part of the Portuguese dominions offered up at this holy shrine. The Port Company, who are just soliciting the renewal of their charter, had contributed the choicest produce of their happiest vintages, and as I happened to commend its peculiar excellence, my hospitable entertainer, whose good-humour seemed to acquire every instant a livelier glow, insisted upon my accepting several pipes of it, which were punctually sent me the next morning. The Archbishop became quite jovial, and supposing I was not more insensible to the joys of convivial potations than many of my countrymen, plied me as often and as waggishly as if I had been one of his imaginary archbishops, or Lord Tyrawley himself, returned from those cold precincts where no dinners are given or bottle circulated.

The lay-brother was such a fountain of anecdote, the Archbishop in such glee, and Marialva in such jubilation at being admitted to this confidential party, that it is impossible to say how long it would have lasted, had not the hour of her Majesty's evening excursion approached, and the Archbishop been called to accompany her. As Master of the Horse, the Marquis could not dispense with his attendance, so I was left under the guidance of the lay-brother, who, leading me through another labyrinth of passages, opened a kind of wicket door, and let me out with as little ceremony as he would have turned a goose adrift on a common.

LETTER XXVIII.

Explore the Cintra Mountains.—Convent of Nossa Senhora da Penha.—Moorish Ruins.—The Cork Convent.—The Rock of Lisbon.—Marine Scenery.—Susceptible imagination of the Ancients exemplified.

Sept. 19th, 1787.

NEVER did I behold so fine a day, or a sky of such lovely azure. The M— were with me by half-past six, and we rode over wild hills, which command a great extent of apparently desert country; for the villages, if there are any, are concealed in ravines and hollows.

Intending to explore the Cintra mountains from one extremity to the other of the range, we placed relays at different stations. Our first object was the Convent of Nossa Senhora da Penha, the little romantic pile of white buildings I had seen glittering from afar when I first sailed by the coast of Lisbon. From this pyramidal elevation the view is boundless: you look immediately down upon an immense expanse of sea, the vast, unlimited Atlantic. A long series of detached clouds of a dazzling whiteness, suspended low over the waves, had a magic effect, and in pagan times might have appeared, without any great stretch of fancy, the cars of marine divinities just risen from the bosom of their element.

There was nothing very interesting in the objects immediately around us. The Moorish remains in the neighbourhood of the convent are scarcely worth notice, and indeed seem never to have made part of any considerable edifice. They were probably built up with the dilapidations of a Roman temple, whose constructors had perhaps in their turn availed themselves of the fragments of a Punic or Tyrian fane raised on this high place, and blackened with the smoke of some horrible sacrifice.

Amidst the crevices of the mouldering walls, and particularly in the vault of a cistern, which seems to have served both as a reservoir and a bath, I noticed some capillaries and polypodiums of infinite delicacy; and on a little flat space before the convent a numerous tribe of pinks, gentians, and other alpine plants, fanned and invigorated by the pure mountain air. These refreshing breezes, impregnated with the perfume of innumerable aromatic herbs and flowers, seemed to infuse new life into my veins, and, with it, an almost irresistible impulse to fall down and worship in this vast temple of Nature the source and cause of existence.

As we had a very extensive ride in contemplation, I could not remain half so long as I wished on this aerial and secluded summit. Descending by a tolerably easy road, which wound amongst the rocks in many an irregular curve, we followed for several miles a narrow tract over the brow of savage and desolate eminences, to the Cork convent, which answered exactly, at the first glance we caught of it, the picture one represents to one's self of the settlement of Robinson Crusoe. Before the entrance, formed of two ledges of ponderous rock, extends a smooth level of greensward, browsed by cattle, whose tinkling bells filled me with recollections of early days passed amongst wild and alpine scenery. The Hermitage, its cells, chapel, and refectory, are all scooped out of the native marble, and lined with the bark of the cork-tree. Several of the passages about it are not only roofed, but floored with the same material, extremely soft and pleasant to the feet. The shrubberies and garden plats, dispersed amongst the mossy rocks which lie about in the wildest confusion, are delightful, and I took great pleasure in exploring their nooks and corners, following the course of a transparent, gurgling rill, which is conducted through a rustic water-shoot, between bushes of lavender and rosemary of the tenderest green.

The Prior of this romantic retirement is appointed by the Marialvas, and this very day his installation takes place, so we were pressed to dine with him upon the occasion, and could not refuse; but as it was still very early, we galloped on, intending to visit a famous cliff, the Pedra d'Alvidrar, which composes one of the most striking features of that renowned promontory the Rock of Lisbon.

Our road led us through the skirts of the woods which surround the delightful village of Collares, to another range of barren eminences extending along the sea-shore. I advanced to the very margin of the cliff, which is of great height, and nearly perpendicular. A rabble of boys followed at the heels of our horses, and five stout lads, detached from this posse, descended with the most perfect unconcern the dreadful precipice. One in particular walked down with his arms expanded, like a being of a superior order. The coast is truly picturesque, and consists of bold projections, intermixed with pyramidal rocks succeeding each other in theatrical perspective, the most distant crowned by a lofty tower, which serves as a lighthouse.

No words can convey an adequate idea of the bloom of the atmosphere, and the silvery light reflected from the sea. From the edge of the abyss, where I had remained several minutes like one spell-bound, we descended a winding path, about half a mile, to the beach. Here we found ourselves nearly shut in by shattered cliffs and grottos, a fantastic amphitheatre, the best calculated that can possibly be imagined to invite the sports of sea nymphs. Such coves, such deep and broken recesses, such a play of outline I never beheld, nor did I ever hear so powerful a roar of rushing waters upon any other coast. No wonder the warm and susceptible imagination of the ancients, inflamed by the scenery of the place, led them to believe they distinguished the conchs of tritons sounding in these retired caverns; nay, some grave Lusitanians positively declared they had not only heard, but seen them, and despatched a messenger to the Emperor Tiberius to announce the event, and congratulate him upon so evident and auspicious a manifestation of divinity.

The tide was beginning to ebb, and allowed us, not without some risk however, to pass into a cavern of surprising loftiness, the sides of which were incrustated with beautiful limpets, and a variety of small shells grouped together. Against some rude and porous fragments, not far from the aperture through which we had crept, the waves swell with violence, rush into the air, form instantaneous canopies of foam, then fall down in a thousand trickling rills of silver. The flickering gleams of light thrown upon irregular arches admitting into darker and more retired grottos, the mysterious, watery gloom, the echoing murmurs and almost musical sounds, occasioned by the conflict of winds and waters, the strong odour of an atmosphere composed of saline particles, produced altogether such a bewildering effect upon the senses, that I can easily conceive a mind, poetically given, might be thrown into that kind of tone which inclines to the belief of supernatural appearances. I am not surprised, therefore, at the credulity of the ancients, and only wonder my own imagination did not deceive me in a similar manner.

If solitude could have induced the Nereids to have vouchsafed me an apparition, it was not wanting, for all my company had separated upon different pursuits, and had left me entirely to myself. During the full half-hour I remained shut out from the breathing world, one solitary corvo marino was the only living creature I caught sight of, perched upon an insulated rock, about fifty paces from the opening of the cavern.

I was so stunned with the complicated sounds and murmurs which filled my ears, that it was some moments before I could distinguish the voices of Verdeil and Don Pedro, who were just returned from a hunt after seaweeds and madrapores, calling me loudly to mount on horseback, and make the best of our way to rejoin the Marquis and his attendants, all gone to mass at the Cork convent. Happily, the little detached clouds we had seen from the high point of Nossa Senhora da Penha, instead of melting into the blue sky, had been gathering together, and skreened us from the sun. We had therefore a delightful ride, and upon alighting from our palfreys found the old abade just arrived with Luis de Miranda, the colonel of the Cascais regiment, surrounded by a whole synod of monks, as picturesque as bald pates and venerable beards could make them.

As soon as the Marquis came forth from his devotions, dinner was served up exactly in the style one might have expected at Mequinez or Morocco—pillaus of different kinds, delicious quails, and pyramids of rice tinged with saffron. Our dessert, in point of fruits and sweetmeats, was most luxurious, nor would Pomona herself have been ashamed of carrying in her lap such peaches and nectarines as rolled in profusion about the table.

The abade seemed animated after dinner by the spirit of contradiction, and would not allow the Marquis or Luis de Miranda to know more about the court of John the Fifth, than of that of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

To avoid being stunned by the clamours of the dispute, in which two or three monks with stentorian voices began to take part most vehemently, Don Pedro, Verdeil, and I climbed up amongst the hanging shrubberies of arbutus, bay, and myrtle, to a little platform carpeted with delicate herbage, exhaling a fresh, aromatic perfume upon the slightest pressure. There we sat, lulled by the murmur of distant waves, breaking over the craggy shore we had visited in the morning. The clouds came slowly sailing over the hills. My companions pounded the cones of the pines, and gave me the kernels, which have an agreeable almond taste.

The evening was far advanced before we abandoned our peaceful, sequestered situation, and joined the Marquis, who had not been yet able to appease the abade. The vociferous old man made so many appeals to the father-guardian of the convent in defence of his opinions, that I thought we never should have got away. At length we departed, and after wandering about in clouds and darkness for two hours, reached Cintra exactly at ten. The Marchioness and the children had been much alarmed at our long absence, and rated the abade severely for having occasioned it.

LETTER XXIX.

Excursion to Penha Verde.—Resemblance of that Villa to the edifices in Gaspar Poussin's landscapes.—The ancient pine-trees, said to have been planted by Don John de Castro.—The old forests displaced by gaudy terraces.—Influx of Visitors.—A celebrated Prior's erudition and strange anachronisms.—The Beast in the Apocalypse.—Ecolampadius.—Bevy of Palace damsels.—Fête at the Marialva Villa.—The Queen and the Royal Family.—A favourite dwarf Negress.—Dignified manner of the Queen.—Profound respect inspired by her presence.—Rigorous etiquette.—Grand display of Fireworks.—The young Countess of Lumiares.—Affecting resemblance.

September 22nd, 1787.

WHEN I got up, the mists were stealing off the hills, and the distant sea discovering itself in all its azure bloom. Though I had been led to expect many visitors of importance from Lisbon, the morning was so inviting that I could not resist riding out after breakfast, even at the risk of not being present at their arrival.

I took the road to Collares, and found the air delightfully soft and fragrant. Some rain which had lately fallen, had refreshed the whole face of the country, and tinged the steeps beyond Penha Verde with purple and green; for the numerous tribe of heaths had started into blossom, and the little irregular lawns, overhung by crooked cork-trees, which occur so frequently by the way-side, are now covered with large white lilies streaked with pink.

Penha Verde itself is a lovely spot. The villa, with its low, flat roofs, and a loggia projecting at one end, exactly resembles the edifices in Gaspar Poussin's landscapes. Before one of the fronts is a square parterre with a fountain in the middle, and niches in the walls with antique busts. Above these walls a variety of trees and shrubs rise to a great elevation, and compose a mass of the richest foliage. The pines, which, by their bright-green colour, have given

the epithet of verdant to this rocky point (Penha Verde), are as picturesque as those I used to admire so warmly in the Negroni garden at Rome, and full as ancient, perhaps more so: tradition assures us they were planted by the far-famed Don John de Castro, whose heart reposes in a small marble chapel beneath their shade.

How often must that heroic heart, whilst it still beat in one of the best and most magnanimous of human bosoms, have yearned after this calm retirement! Here, at least, did it promise itself that rest so cruelly denied him by the blind perversities of his ungrateful countrymen: for his had been an arduous contest, a long and agonizing struggle, not only in the field under a burning sun, and in the face of peril and death, but in sustaining the glory and good fame of Portugal against court intrigues, and the vile cabals of envious, domestic enemies.

These scenes, though still enchanting, have most probably undergone great changes since his days. The deep forests we read of have disappeared, and with them many a spring they fostered. Architectural fountains, gaudy terraces, and regular stripes of orange-gardens, have usurped the place of those wild orchards and gushing rivulets he may be supposed to have often visited in his dreams, when removed some thousand leagues from his native country. All these are changed; but mankind are the same as in his time, equally insensible to the warning voice of genuine patriotism, equally disposed to crouch under the rod of corrupt tyranny. And thus, by the neglect of wise and virtuous men, and a mean subserviency to knavish fools, eras which might become of gold, are transmuted by an accursed alchymy into iron rusted with blood.

Impressed with all the recollections this most interesting spot could not fail to inspire, I could hardly tear myself away from it. Again and again did I follow the mossy steps, which wind up amongst shady rocks to the little platform, terminated by the sepulchral chapel—

“—densis quam pinus opacat
Frondebis et nulla lucos agitante procella
Stridula coniferis modulatur carmina ramis.”

You must not wonder then, that I was haunted the whole way home by these mysterious whisperings, nor that, in such a tone of mind, I saw with no great pleasure a procession of two-wheeled chaises, the lord knows how many out-riders, and a caravan of bouras, marching up to the gate of my villa. I had, indeed, been prepared to expect a very considerable influx of visitors; but this was a deluge.

Do not let me send you a catalogue of the company, lest you should be as much annoyed with the detail, as I was with such a formidable arrival *en masse*. Let it suffice to name two of the principal characters, the old pious Conde de San Lorenzo, and the prior of San Juliaô, one of the archbishop's prime favourites, and a person of great worship. Mortier's Dutch bible happening to lie upon the table, they began tumbling over the leaves in an egregiously awkward manner. I, who abhor seeing books thumbed, and prints demonstrated by the close application of a greasy fore-finger, snapped at the old Conde, and cast an evil look at the prior, who was leaning his whole priestly weight on the volume, and creasing its corners.

My musicians were in full song, and Pedro Grua, a capital violoncello, exerted his abilities in his best style; but San Lorenzo was too pathetically engaged in deploring the massacre of the Innocents to pay him any attention, and his reverend companion had entered into a long-winded dissertation upon parables, miracles, and martyrdom, from which I prayed in vain the Lord to deliver me. Verdeil, scenting from afar the saintly flavour of the discourse, stole off.

I cannot say much in praise of the prior's erudition, even in holy matters, for he positively affirmed that it was Henry the Eighth himself, who knocked St. Thomas à Becket's brains out, and that by the beast in the Apocalypse, Luther was positively indicated. I hate wrangles, and had it not been for the soiling of my prints, should never have contradicted his reverence; but as I was a little out of humour, I lowered him somewhat in the Conde's opinion, by stating the real period of St. Thomas's murder, and by tolerably specious arguments, shoving the beast's horns off Luther, and clapping them tight upon—whom do you think?—Æcolampadius! So grand a name, which very probably they had never heard pronounced in their lives, carried all before it, (adding another instance of the triumph of sound over sense,) and settled our bickerings.

We sat down, I believe, full thirty to dinner, and had hardly got through the dessert, when Berti came in to tell me that Madame Ariaga, and a bevy of the palace damsels, were prancing about the quinta on palfreys and bouras. I hastened to join them. There was Donna Maria do Carmo, and Donna Maria da Penha, with her hair flowing about her shoulders, and her large beautiful eyes looking as wild and roving as those of an antelope. I called for my horse, and galloped through alleys and citron bushes, brushing off leaves, fruit, and blossoms. Every breeze wafted to us the sound of French horns and oboes. The ladies seemed to enjoy the freedom and novelty of this scamper prodigiously, and to regret the short time it was doomed to last; for at seven they are obliged to return to strict attendance on the Queen, and had some strange fairy-tale metamorphosis into a pumpkin or a cucumber been the penalty of disobedience, they could not have shown more alarm or anxiety when the fatal hour of seven drew near. Luckily, they had not far to go, for her Majesty and the Royal Family were all assembled at the Marialva villa, to partake of a splendid merenda and see fireworks.

As soon as it fell dark Verdeil and I set forth to catch a glimpse of the royal party. The Grand Prior and Don Pedro conducted us mysteriously into a snug boudoir which looks into the great pavilion, whose gay, fantastic scenery appeared to infinite advantage by the light of innumerable tapers reflected on all sides from lustres of glittering crystal. The little Infanta Donna Carlotta was perched on a sofa in conversation with the Marchioness and Donna Henriquetta, who, in the true oriental fashion, had placed themselves cross-legged on the floor. A troop of maids of honour, commanded by the Countess of Lumieres, sat in the same posture at a little distance. Donna Rosa, the favourite dwarf negress, dressed out in a flaming scarlet riding-habit, not so frolicsome as the last time I had the pleasure of seeing her in this fairy bower, was more sentimental, and leaned against the door, ogling and flirting with a handsome Moor belonging to the Marquis.

Presently the Queen, followed by her sister and daughter-in-law, the Princess of Brazil, came forth from her merenda, and seated herself in front of the latticed-window, behind which I was placed. Her manner struck me as being peculiarly dignified and conciliating. She looks born to command; but at the same time to make that high authority as much beloved as respected. Justice and clemency, the motto so glaringly misapplied on the banner of the abhorred Inquisition, might be transferred with the strictest truth to this good princess. During the fatal contest betwixt England and its colonies, the wise neutrality she persevered in maintaining was of the most vital benefit to

her dominions, and hitherto, the native commerce of Portugal has attained under her mild auspices an unprecedented degree of prosperity.

Nothing could exceed the profound respect, the courtly decorum her presence appeared to inspire. The Conde de Sampayo and the Viscount Ponte de Lima knelt by the august personages with not much less veneration, I should be tempted to imagine, than Moslems before the tomb of their prophet, or Tartars in the presence of the Dalai Lama. Marialva alone, who took his station opposite her Majesty, seemed to preserve his ease and cheerfulness. The Prince of Brazil and Don Joaô looked not a little ennuied; for they kept stalking about with their hands in their pockets, their mouths in a perpetual yawn, and their eyes wandering from object to object, with a stare of royal vacancy.

A most rigorous etiquette confining the Infants of Portugal within their palaces, they are seldom known to mix even incognito with the crowd; so that their flattering smiles or confidential yawns are not lavished upon common observers. This sort of embalming princes alive, after all, is no bad policy; it keeps them sacred; it concentrates their royal essence, too apt, alas! to evaporate by exposure. What is so liberally paid for by the willing tribute of the people as a rarity of exquisite relish, should not be suffered to turn mundungus. However the individual may dislike this severe regimen, state pageants might have the goodness to recollect for what purpose they are bedecked and beworshipped.

The Conde de Sampayo, lord in waiting, handed the tea to the Queen, and fell down on both knees to present it. This ceremony over, for every thing is ceremony at this stately court, the fireworks were announced, and the royal sufferers, followed by their sufferees, adjourned to a neighbouring apartment. The Marchioness, her daughters, and the Countess of Lumieres, mounted up to the boudoir where I was sitting, and took possession of the windows. Seven or eight wheels, and as many tourbillons began whirling and whizzing, whilst a profusion of admirable line-rockets darted along in various directions, to the infinite delight of the Countess of Lumieres, who, though hardly sixteen, has been married four years. Her youthful cheerfulness, light hair, and fair complexion, put me so much in mind of my Margaret, that I could not help looking at her with a melancholy tenderness: her being with child increased the resemblance, and as she sat in the recess of the window, discovered at intervals by the blue light of rockets bursting high in the air, I felt my blood thrill as if I beheld a phantom, and my eyes were filled with tears.

The last firework being played off, the Queen and the Infantas departed. The Marchioness and the other ladies descended into the pavilion, where we partook of a magnificent and truly royal collation. Donna Maria and her little sister, animated by the dazzling illumination, tripped about in their light muslin dresses, with all the sportiveness of fairy beings, such as might be supposed to have dropped down from the floating clouds, which Pillement has so well represented on the ceiling.

LETTER XXX.

Cathedral of Lisbon.—Trace of St. Anthony's fingers.—The Holy Crows.—Party formed to visit them.—A Portuguese poet.—Comfortable establishment of the Holy Crows.—Singular tradition connected with them.—Illuminations in honour of the Infanta's accouchement.—Public harangues.—Policarpio's singing, and anecdotes of the *haute noblesse*.

November 8th, 1787.

VERDEIL and I rattled over cracked pavements this morning in my rough travelling-coach, for the sake of exercise. The pretext for our excursion was to see a remarkable chapel, inlaid with jasper and lapis-lazuli, in the church of St. Roch; but when we arrived, three or four masses were celebrating, and not a creature sufficiently disengaged to draw the curtain which veils the altar, so we went out as wise as we came in.

Not having yet seen the cathedral, or See-church, as it is called at Lisbon, we directed our course to that quarter. It is a building of no striking dimensions, narrow and gloomy, without being awful. The earthquake crumbled its glories to dust, if ever it had any, and so dreadfully shattered the chapels, with which it is clustered, that very slight traces of their having made part of a mosque are discernible.

Though I had not been led to expect great things, even from descriptions in travels and topographical works, which, like peerage-books and pedigrees, are tenderly inclined to make something of what is next to nothing at all: I hunted away, as became a diligent traveller, after altar-pieces and tombs, but can boast of no discoveries. To be sure, we had not much time to look about us: the priests and sacristans, who fastened upon us, insisted upon our revisiting the corner of a bye staircase, where are to be kissed and worshipped the traces of St. Anthony's fingers. The saint, it seems, being closely pursued by the father of lies and parent of evil, alias Old Scratch, (I really could not clearly learn upon what occasion,) indented the sign of the cross into a wall of the hardest marble, and stopped his proceedings. A very pleasing little picture hangs up near the miraculous cross, and records the tradition.

All this was admirable; but nothing in comparison with some stories about certain holy crows. "The very birds are in being," said a sacristan. "What!" answered I, "the individual^[19] crows who attended St. Vincent?"—"Not exactly," was the reply, (in a whisper, intended for my private ear); "but their immediate descendants."—"Mighty well; this very evening, please God, I will pay my respects to them, and in good company, so adieu for the present."

Our next point was the Theatine convent. We looked into the library, which lies in the same confusion in which it was left by the earthquake; half the books out of their shelves, tumbled one over the other in dusty heaps. A shrewd, active monk, who, I am told, has written a history of the House of Braganza, not yet printed, guided our steps through this chaos of literature; and after searching half-an-hour for some curious voyages he wished to display to us, led us into his cell, and pressed our attention to a cabinet of medals he had been at some pains and expense in collecting.

Not feeling any particular vocation for numismatic researches, I left Verdeil with the monk, puzzling out some very questionable inscriptions, and went to beat up for recruits to accompany me in the evening to the holy crows. First, I found the Abade Xavier, and secondly, the famous missionary preacher from Boa Morte, and then the Grand Prior, and lastly, the Marquis of Marialva; Don Pedro begged not to be left out, so we formed a coach full, and I drove my whole cargo home to dinner. Verdeil was already returned with his reverend medallist, and had also collected the governor of Goa, Don Frederic de Sousa Cagliariariz, his constant attendant a bullying Savoyard, or Piedmontese Count, by name Lucatelli; and a pale, limber, odd-looking young man, Senhor Manuel Maria, the

queerest, but, perhaps, the most original of God's poetical creatures. He happened to be in one of those eccentric, lively moods, which, like sunshine in the depth of winter, come on when least expected. A thousand quaint conceits, a thousand flashes of wild merriment, a thousand satirical darts shot from him, and we were all convulsed with laughter; but when he began reciting some of his compositions, in which great depth of thought is blended with the most pathetic touches, I felt myself thrilled and agitated. Indeed, this strange and versatile character may be said to possess the true wand of enchantment, which, at the will of its master, either animates or petrifies.

Perceiving how much I was attracted towards him, he said to me, "I did not expect an Englishman would have condescended to pay a young, obscure, modern versifier, any attention. You think we have no bard but Camoens, and that Camoens has written nothing worth notice, but the *Lusiad*. Here is a sonnet worth half the *Lusiad*."

CXCII.

'A fermosura desta fresca serra,
E a sombra dos verdes castanheiros,
O manso caminhar destes ribeiros,
Donde toda a tristeza se desterra;
O rouco som do mar, a estranha terra,
O esconder do Sol pellos outeiros,
O recolher dos gados derradeiros,
Das nuvens pello ar a branda guerra:
Em fim tudo o que a rara natureza
Com tanta variedade nos oferece,
Me està (se não te vejo) magoando:
Sem ti tudo me enoja, e me aborrece,
Sem ti perpetuamente estou passando
Nas môres alegrias, môr tristeza!'

Not an image of rural beauty has escaped our divine poet; and how feelingly are they applied from the landscape to the heart! What a fascinating languor, like the last beams of an evening sun, is thrown over the whole composition! If I am any thing, this sonnet has made me what I am; but what am I, compared to Monteiro? Judge," continued he, putting into my hand some manuscript verses of this author, to whom the Portuguese are vehemently partial. Though they were striking and sonorous, I must confess the sonnet of Camoens, and many of Senhor Manuel Maria's own verses, pleased me infinitely more; but in fact, I was not sufficiently initiated into the force and idiom of the Portuguese language to be a competent judge; and it was only in fancying me one, that this powerful genius discovered any want of penetration.

Our dinner was lively and convivial. At the dessert the Abadè produced an immense tray of dried fruits and sweetmeats, which one of his hundred and fifty *protégés* had sent him from, I forget what exotic region. These good things he kept handing to us, and almost cramming down our throats, as if we had been turkeys and he a poulterer, whose livelihood depended upon our fattening. "There," said he, "did you ever behold such admirable productions? Our Queen has thousands and thousands of miles with fruit-groves over your head, and rocks of gold and diamonds beneath your feet. The riches and fertility of her possessions have no bounds, but the sea, and the sea itself might belong to us if we pleased; for we have such means of ship-building, masts two hundred feet high, incorruptible timbers, courageous seamen. Don Frederic can tell you what some of our heroes achieved not long ago against the gentiles at Goa. Your Joaô Bulles are not half so smart, half so valorous."

Thus he went on, bouncing and roaring us deaf. For patriotic rodomontades and flourishes, no nation excels the Portuguese, and no Portuguese the Abadè!

At length, however, all this tasting and praising having been gone through with, we set forth on the wings of holiness, to pay our devoirs to the holy crows. A certain sum having been allotted time immemorial for the maintenance of two birds of this species, we found them very comfortably established in a recess of a cloister adjoining the cathedral, well fed and certainly most devoutly venerated.

The origin of this singular custom dates as high as the days of St. Vincent, who was martyred near the Cape, which bears his name, and whose mangled body was conveyed to Lisbon in a boat, attended by crows. These disinterested birds, after seeing it decently interred, pursued his murderers with dreadful screams and tore their eyes out. The boat and the crows are painted or sculptured in every corner of the cathedral, and upon several tablets appear emblazoned an endless record of their penetration in the discovery of criminals.

It was growing late when we arrived, and their feathered sanctities were gone quietly to roost; but the sacristans in waiting, the moment they saw us approach, officiously roused them. O, how plump and sleek, and glossy they are! My admiration of their size, their plumage, and their deep-toned croakings carried me, I fear, beyond the bounds of saintly decorum. I was just stretching out my hand to stroke their feathers, when the missionary checked me with a solemn forbidding look. The rest of the company, aware of the proper ceremonial, kept a respectful distance, whilst the sacristan and a toothless priest, almost bent double with age, communicated a long string of miraculous anecdotes concerning the present holy crows, their immediate predecessors, and other holy crows in the old time before them.

To all these super-marvellous narrations, the missionary appeared to listen with implicit faith, and never opened his lips during the time we remained in the cloister, except to enforce our veneration, and exclaim with pious composure, "*honrado corvo*." I really believe we should have stayed till midnight, had not a page arrived from her Majesty to summon the Marquis of M— and his almoner away.

My curiosity being fully satisfied upon the subject of the holy crows, I was easily persuaded by the Grand Prior to move off, and drive through the principal streets to see the illuminations in honour of the Infanta, consort to Don Gabriel of Spain, who had produced a prince. A great many idlers being abroad upon the same errand, we proceeded with difficulty, and were very near having the wheels of our carriage dislocated in attempting to pass an old-fashioned, preposterous coach, belonging to one of the dignitaries of the patriarchal cathedral. I cannot launch forth in praise of the illuminations; but some rockets which were let off in the Terreiro do Paco, surprised me by the vast height to which they rose, and the unusual number of clear blue stars into which they burst. The Portuguese excel in fireworks; the late poor, drivelling, saintly king having expended large sums in bringing this art to perfection.

From the Terreiro do Paco we drove to the great square, in which the palace of the Inquisition is situated. There we found a vast mob, to whom three or four Capuchin preachers were holding forth upon the glories and illuminations of a better world. I should have listened not uninterested to their harangues, which appeared, from the specimen I caught of them, to be full of fire and frenzy, had not the Grand Prior, in perpetual awe of the rheumatism, complained of the night, so we drove home. Every apartment of the house was filled with the thick vapour of wax-torches, which had been set most loyally a blazing. I fumed and fretted and threw open the windows. Away went the Grand Prior, and in came Policarpio, the famous tenor singer, who entertained us with several bravura airs of glib and surprising volubility, before supper and during it, in a style equally professional, with many private anecdotes of the *haute noblesse*, his principal employers, not infinitely to their advantage.

I longed, in return, to have enlarged a little upon the adventures of the holy crows, but prudently repressed my inclination. It would ill-become a person so well treated as I had been by the crow-fanciers, to handle such subjects with any degree of levity.

LETTER XXXI.

Rambles in the Valley of Collares.—Elysian scenery. Song of a young female peasant.—Rustic hospitality.—Interview with the Prince of Brazil^[20] in the plains of Cascais.—Conversation with His Royal Highness.—Return to Ramalhãô.

Oct. 19th, 1787.

My health improves every day. The clear exhilarating weather we now enjoy calls forth the liveliest sense of existence. I ride, walk, and climb, as long as I please, without fatiguing myself. The valley of Collares affords me a source of perpetual amusement. I have discovered a variety of paths which lead through chesnut copses and orchards to irregular green spots, where self-sown bays and citron-bushes hang wild over the rocky margin of a little river, and drop their fruit and blossoms into the stream. You may ride for miles along the bank of this delightful water, catching endless perspectives of flowery thickets, between the stems of poplar and walnut. The scenery is truly elysian, and exactly such as poets assign for the resort of happy spirits.

The mossy fragments of rock, grotesque pollards, and rustic bridges you meet with at every step, recall Savoy and Switzerland to the imagination; but the exotic cast of the vegetation, the vivid green of the citron, the golden fruitage of the orange, the blossoming myrtle, and the rich fragrance of a turf, embroidered with the brightest-coloured and most aromatic flowers, allow me without a violent stretch of fancy to believe myself in the garden of the Hesperides, and to expect the dragon under every tree. I by no means like the thoughts of abandoning these smiling regions, and have been twenty times on the point this very day of revoking the orders I have given for my journey. Whatever objections I may have had to Portugal seem to vanish, since I have determined to leave it; for such is the perversity of human nature, that objects appear the most estimable precisely at the moment when we are going to lose them.

There was this morning a mild radiance in the sunbeams, and a balsamic serenity in the air, which infused that voluptuous listlessness, that desire of remaining imparadised in one delightful spot, which, in classical fictions, was supposed to render those who had tasted the lotos forgetful of country, of friends, and of every tie. My feelings were not dissimilar, I loathed the idea of moving away.

Though I had entered these beautiful orchards soon after sunrise, the clocks of some distant conventual churches had chimed hour after hour before I could prevail upon myself to quit the spreading odoriferous bay-trees under which I had been lying. If shades so cool and fragrant invited to repose, I must observe that never were paths better calculated to tempt the laziest of beings to a walk, than those which opened on all sides, and are formed of a smooth dry sand, bound firmly together, composing a surface as hard as gravel.

These level paths wind about amongst a labyrinth of light and elegant fruit-trees; almond, plum, and cherry, something like the groves of Tonga-taboo, as represented in Cook's voyages; and to increase the resemblance, neat cane fences and low open sheds, thatched with reeds, appear at intervals, breaking the horizontal lines of the perspective.

I had now lingered and loitered away pretty nearly the whole morning, and though, as far as scenery could authorize and climate inspire, I might fancy myself an inhabitant of elysium, I could not pretend to be sufficiently ethereal to exist without nourishment. In plain English, I was extremely hungry. The pears, quinces, and oranges which dangled above my head, although fair to the eye, were neither so juicy nor gratifying to the palate, as might have been expected from their promising appearance.

Being considerably

More than a mile immersed within the wood,^[21]

and not recollecting by which clue of a path I could get out of it, I remained at least half-an-hour deliberating which way to turn myself. The sheds and enclosures I have mentioned were put together with care and even nicety, it is true, but seemed to have no other inhabitants than flocks of bantams, strutting about and destroying the eggs and hopes of many an insect family. These glistening fowls, like their brethren described in Anson's voyages, as animating the profound solitudes of the island of Tinian, appeared to have no master.

At length, just as I was beginning to wish myself very heartily in a less romantic region, I heard the loud, though not unmusical, tones of a powerful female voice, echoing through the arched green avenues; presently, a stout ruddy young peasant, very picturesquely attired in brown and scarlet, came hoydening along, driving a mule before her, laden with two enormous panniers of grapes. To ask for a share of this luxuriant load, and to compliment the fair driver, was instantaneous on my part, but to no purpose. I was answered by a sly wink, "We all belong to Senhor José Dias, whose corral, or farm-yard, is half a league distant. There, Senhor, if you follow that road, and don't puzzle yourself by straying to the right or left, you will soon reach it, and the bailiff, I dare say, will be proud to give you as many grapes as you please. Good morning, happy days to you! I must mind my business."

Seating herself between the tantalizing panniers, she was gone in an instant, and I had the good luck to arrive straight at the wicket of a rude, dry wall, winding up and down several bushy slopes in a wild irregular manner. If

the outside of this enclosure was rough and unpromising, the interior presented a most cheering scene of rural opulence. Drove of cows and goats milking; ovens, out of which huge cakes of savoury bread had just been taken; ranges of beehives, and long pillared sheds, entirely tapestried with purple and yellow muscadine grapes, half candied, which were hung up to dry. A very good-natured, classical-look-magister pecorum, followed by two well-disciplined, though savage-eyed dogs, whom the least glance of their master prevented from barking, gave me a hearty welcome, and with genuine hospitality not only allowed me the free range of his domain, but set whatever it produced in the greatest perfection before me. A contest took place between two or three curly-haired, chubby-faced children, who should be first to bring me walnuts fresh from the shell, bowls of milk, and cream-cheeses, made after the best of fashions, that of the province of Alemtejo.

I found myself so abstracted from the world in this retirement, so perfectly transported back some centuries into primitive patriarchal times, that I don't recollect having ever enjoyed a few hours of more delightful calm. "Here," did I say to myself, "am I out of the way of courts and ceremonies, and commonplace visitations, or salutations, or gossip." But, alas! how vain is all one thinks or says to one's self nineteen times out of twenty.

Whilst I was blessing my stars for this truce to the irksome bustle of the life I had led ever since her Majesty's arrival at Cintra, a loud hallooing, the cracking of whips, and the tramping of horses, made me start up from the snug corner in which I had established myself, and dispelled all my soothing visions. Luis de Miranda, the colonel of the Cascais regiment, an intimate confidant and favourite of the Prince of Brazil, broke in upon me with a thousand (as he thought) obliging reproaches, for having deserted Ramalhão the very morning he had come on purpose to dine with me, and to propose a ride after dinner to a particular point of the Cintra mountains, which commands, he assured me, such a prospect as I had not yet been blessed with in Portugal. "It is not even now," said he, "too late. I have brought your horses along with me, whom I found fretting and stamping under a great tree at the entrance of these foolish lanes. Come, get into your stirrups for God's sake, and I will answer for your thinking yourself well repaid by the scene I shall disclose to you."

As I was doomed to be disturbed and talked out of the elysium in which I had been lapped for these last seven or eight hours, it was no matter in what position, whether on foot or on horseback; I therefore complied, and away we galloped. The horses were remarkably sure-footed, or else, I think, we must have rolled down the precipices; for our road,

"If road it could be call'd where road was none,"

led us by zigzags and short cuts over steeps and acclivities about three or four leagues, till reaching a heathy desert, where a solitary cross staring out of a few weather-beaten bushes, marked the highest point of this wild eminence, one of the most expansive prospects of sea, and plain, and distant mountains, I ever beheld, burst suddenly upon me, rendered still more vast, aërial, and indefinite, by the visionary, magic vapour of the evening sun.

After enjoying a moment or two the general effect, I began tracing out the principal objects in the view, as far, that is to say, as they could be traced, through the medium of the intense glowing haze. I followed the course of the Tagus, from its entrance till it was lost in the low estuaries beyond Lisbon. Cascais appeared with its long reaches of wall and bomb-proof casemates like a Moorish town, and by the help of a glass I distinguished a tall palm lifting itself above a cluster of white buildings.

"Well," said I, to my conductor, "this prospect has certainly charms worth seeing; but not sufficient to make me forget that it is high time to get home and refresh ourselves." "Not so fast," was the answer, "we have still a great deal more to see."

Having acquired, I can hardly tell why or wherefore, a sheep-like habit of following wherever he led, I spurred after him down a rough declivity, thick strewn with rolling stones and pebbles. At the bottom of this descent, a dreary sun-burnt plain extended itself far and wide. Whilst we dismounted and halted a few minutes to give our horses breath, I could not help observing, that the view we were now contemplating but ill-rewarded the risk of breaking our necks in riding down such rapid declivities. He smiled, and asked me whether I saw nothing at all interesting in the prospect. "Yes," said I, "a sort of caravan I perceive, about a quarter of a mile off, is by no means uninteresting; that confused group of people in scarlet, with gleaming arms and sumpter-mules, and those striped awnings stretched from ruined walls, present exactly that kind of scenery I should expect to meet with in the neighbourhood of Grand Cairo." "Come then," said he, "it is time to clear up this mystery, and tell you for what purpose we have taken such a long and fatiguing ride. The caravan which strikes you as being so very picturesque, is composed of the attendants of the Prince of Brazil, who has been passing the whole day upon a shooting-party, and is just at this moment taking a little repose beneath yonder awnings. It was by his desire I brought you here, for I have his commands to express his wishes of having half-an-hour's conversation with you, unobserved, and in perfect incognito. Walk on as if you were collecting plants or taking sketches, I will apprise his royal highness, and you will meet as it were by chance, and without any form. No one shall be near enough to hear a word you say to each other, for I will take my station at the distance of at least one hundred paces, and keep off all spies and intruders."

I did as I was directed. A little door in the ruined wall, against which an awning was fixed, opened, and there appeared a young man of rather a prepossessing figure, fairer and ruddier than most of his countrymen, who advanced towards me with a very pleasant engaging countenance, moved his hat in a dignified graceful manner, and after insisting upon my being covered, began addressing himself to me with great precipitation, in a most fluent lingua-franca, half Italian and half Portuguese. This jargon is very prevalent at the Ajuda^[22] palace, where Italian singers are in much higher request and fashion than persons of deeper tone and intellect.

The first question his royal highness honoured me with was, whether I had visited his cabinet of instruments. Upon my answering in the affirmative, and that the apparatus appeared to me extremely perfect, and in admirable order, he observed, "The arrangement is certainly good, for one of my particular friends, a very learned man, has made it; but notwithstanding the high price I have paid, your Ramdens and Dollonds have treated themselves more generously than me. I believe," continued his royal highness, "according to what the Duke d'Alafoens has repeatedly assured me, I am conversing with a person who has no weak, blind prejudices, in favour of his country, and who sees things as they are, not as they have been, or as they ought to be. That commercial greediness the English display in every transaction has cost us dear in more than one particular."

He then ran over the ground Pombal had so often trodden bare, both in his state papers and in various

publications which had been promulgated during his administration, and I soon perceived of what school his royal highness was a disciple.

"We deserve all this," continued he, "and worse, for our tame acquiescence in every measure your cabinet dictates; but no wonder, oppressed and debased as we are, by ponderous, useless institutions. When there are so many drones in a hive, it is in vain to look for honey. Were you not surprised, were you not shocked, at finding us so many centuries behind the rest of Europe?"

I bowed, and smiled. This spark of approbation induced, I believe, his royal highness to blaze forth into a flaming encomium upon certain reforms and purifications which were carrying on in Brabant, under the auspices of his most sacred apostolic Majesty Joseph the Second. "I have the happiness," continued the Prince, "to correspond not unfrequently with this enlightened sovereign. The Duke d'Alafoens, who has likewise the advantage of communicating with him, never fails to give me the detail of these salutary proceedings. When shall we have sufficient manliness to imitate them!"

Though I bowed and smiled again, I could not resist taking the liberty of observing that such very rapid and vigorous measures as those his imperial Majesty had resorted to, were more to be admired than imitated; that people who had been so long in darkness, if too suddenly broken in upon by a stream of effulgence, were more likely to be blinded than enlightened; and that blows given at random by persons whose eyes were closed were dangerous, and might fall heaviest perhaps in directions very opposite to those for which they were intended. This was rather bold, and did not seem to please the novice in boldness.

After a short pause, which allowed him, at least, an opportunity of taking breath, he looked steadily at me, and perceiving my countenance arrayed in the best expression of admiration I could throw into it, resumed the thread of his philosophical discourse, and even condescended to detail some very singular and, as they struck me, most perilous projects. Continuing to talk on with an increased impetus (like those whose steps are accelerated by running down hill) he dropped some vague hints of measures that filled me not only with surprise, but with a sensation approaching to horror. I bowed, but I could not smile. My imagination, which had caught the alarm at the extraordinary nature of the topics he was discoursing upon, conjured up a train of appalling images, and I asked myself more than once whether I was not under the influence of a distempered dream.

Being too much engaged in listening to himself to notice my confusion, he worked as hard as a pioneer in clearing away the rubbish of ages, entered minutely and not unlearnedly into the ancient jurisprudence and maxims of his country, its relations with foreign powers, and the rank from whence it had fallen in modern times, to be attributed in a great measure, he observed, to a blind and mistaken reliance upon the selfish politics of our predominant island. Although he did not spare my country, he certainly appeared not over partial to his own. He painted its military defects and priest-ridden policy in vivid colours. In short, this part of our discourse was a "*deploratio Lusitanicæ Gentis*," full as vehement as that which the celebrated Damien a Goes, to show his fine Latin and fine humanity, poured forth some centuries ago over the poor wretched Laplanders.

Not approving in any degree the tendency of all this display, I most heartily prayed it might end. Above an hour had passed since it began, and flattered as I was by the protraction of so condescending a conference, I could not help thinking that these fountains of honour are fountains of talk and not of mercy; they flow over, if once set a going, without pity or moderation. Persons in supreme stations, whom no one ventures to contradict, run on at a furious rate. You frequently flatter yourself they are exhausted; but you flatter yourself in vain. Sometimes indeed, by way of variety, they contradict themselves, and then the debate is carried on between self and self, to the desperation of their subject auditors, who, without being guilty of a word in reply, are involved in the same penalty as the most captious disputant. This was my case. I scarcely uttered a syllable after my first unsuccessful essay; but thousands of words were nevertheless lavished upon me, and innumerable questions proposed and answered by the questioner with equal rapidity.

In return for the honour of being admitted to this monological dialogue, I kept bowing and nodding; and towards the close of the conference, contrived to smile again pretty decently. His royal highness, I learned afterwards, was satisfied with my looks and gestures, and even bestowed a brevet upon me of a great deal more erudition than I possessed or pretended to.

The sun set, the dews fell, the Prince retired, Louis de Miranda followed him, and I remounted my horse with an indigestion of sounding phrases, and the most confirmed belief that "*the church was in danger*."

Tired and exhausted, I threw myself on my sofa the moment I reached Ramalhaô; but the agitation of my spirits would not allow me any repose. I swallowed some tea with avidity, and driving to the palace, evoked the archbishop confessor, who had been locked up above half-an-hour in his interior cabinet. To him I related all that had passed at this unsought, unexpected interview. The consequences in time developed themselves.

LETTER XXXII.

Convent of Boa Morte.—Emaciated priests.—Austerity of the Order.—Contrite personages.—A *nouveau riche*.—His house.—Walk on the veranda of the palace at Belem.—Train of attendants at dinner.—Portuguese gluttony.—Black dose of legendary superstition.—Terrible denunciations.—A dreary evening.

Nov. 9th, 1787.

M— and his principal almoner, a renowned missionary, and one of the most eloquent preachers in her Majesty's dominions, were at my door by ten, waiting to take me with them to the convent of Boa Morte. This is a true Golgotha, a place of many skulls, for its inhabitants, though they live, move, and have a sort of being, are little better than skeletons. The priest who officiated appeared so emaciated and cadaverous, that I could hardly have supposed he would have had strength sufficient to elevate the chalice. It did not, however, fall from his hands, and having finished his mass, a second phantom tottered forth and began another. From the pictures and images of more than ordinary ghastliness which cover the chapels and cloisters, and from the deep contrition apparent in the tears, gestures, and ejaculations of the faithful who resort to them, I fancy no convent in Lisbon can be compared with this for austerity and devotion.

M—— shook all over with piety, and so did his companion, whose knees are become horny with frequent kneelings, and who, if one is to believe Verdeil, will end his days in a hermitage, or go mad, or perhaps both. He pretends, too, that it is this grey-beard that has added new fuel to the flame of M——'s devotion, and that by mutually encouraging each other, they will soon produce fruits worthy of Bedlam, if not of Paradise. To be sure, this father may boast a conspicuously devout turn, and a most resolute manner of thumping himself; but he must not be too vain. In Lisbon there are at least fifty or sixty thousand good souls, who, without having travelled so far, thump full as sonorously as he. This morning, at Boa Morte, one shrivelled sinner remained the whole time the masses lasted with outstretched arms, in the shape and with all the inflexible stiffness of an old-fashioned branched candlestick. Another contrite personage was so affected at the moment of consecration, that he flattened his nose on the pavement, and licked the dirt and dust with which it was thickly encrusted.

I must confess that, notwithstanding this very superior display of sanctity, I was not sorry to escape from the dingy cloisters of the convent, and breathe the pure air, and look up at the blue exhilarating sky. The weather being delightful, we drove to several distant parts of the town, to which I was yet a stranger. Returning back by the Bairro Alto, we looked into a new house, just finished building at an enormous expense, by Joaô Ferreira, who, from an humble retailer of leather, has risen, by the archbishop's favour, to the possession of some of the most lucrative contracts in Portugal. Uglier-shaped apartments than those the poor shoe-man had contrived for himself I never beheld. The hangings are of satin of the deepest blue, and the fiercest and most sulphureous yellow. Every ceiling is daubed over with allegorical paintings, most indifferently executed, and loaded with gilt ornaments, in the style of those splendid sign-posts which some years past were the glory of High-Holborn and St. Giles's.

We were soon tired of all this finery, and as it was growing late, made the best of our way to Belem. Whilst M—— was writing letters, I walked out with Don Pedro on the verandas of the palace, which are washed by the Tagus, and flanked with turrets. The views are enchanting, and the day being warm and serene, I enjoyed them in all their beauty. Several large vessels passed by as we were leaning over the balustrades, and almost touched us with their streamers. Even frigates and ships of the first rate approach within a quarter of a mile of the palace.

There was a greater crowd of attendants than usual round our table at dinner to-day, and the huge massy dishes were brought up by a long train of gentlemen and chaplains, several of them decorated with the orders of Avis and Christ. This attendance had quite a feudal air, and transported the imagination to the days of chivalry, when great chieftains were waited upon like kings, by noble vassals.

The Portuguese had need have the stomachs of ostriches to digest the loads of savoury viands with which they cram themselves. Their vegetables, their rice, their poultry, are all stewed in the essence of ham, and so strongly seasoned with pepper and spices, that a spoonful of peas, or a quarter of an onion, is sufficient to set one's mouth in a flame. With such a diet, and the continual swallowing of sweetmeats, I am not surprised at their complaining so often of head-aches and vapours.

Several of the old Marquis of M——'s confidants and buffoons crept forth to have a peep at the stranger, and hear the famous missionary descant upon martyrdom and miracles. The scenery of Boa Morte being fresh in his thoughts, his descriptions were gloomy and appalling: Don Pedro, his sisters, and his cousin, the young Conde d'Atalaya,^[23] gathered round him with all the trembling eagerness of children who hunger and thirst after hobgoblin stories. You may be sure he sent them not empty away. A blacker dose of legendary superstition was never administered. The Marchioness seemed to swallow these terrific narrations with nearly as much avidity as her children, and the old Abade, dropping his chin in a woful manner, produced an enormous rosary, and kept thumbing his beads and mumbling orisons.

M—— had luckily been summoned to the palace by a special mandate from his royal mistress. Had he been of the party, I fear Verdeil's prophecy would have been accomplished, for never did mortal hold forth with so much scaring energy as this enthusiastic preacher. The most terrible denunciations of divine wrath which ever were thundered forth by ancient or modern writers of sermons and homilies recurred to his memory, and he dealt them about him with a vengeance. The last half hour of the discourse we were all in total darkness,—nobody had thought of calling for lights: the children were huddled together, scarce venturing to move or breathe. It was a most singular scene.

Full of the ghastly images the good father had conjured up in my imagination, I returned home alone in my carriage, shivering and shuddering. My friends were out, and nothing could be more dreary than the appearance of my fireless apartments.

LETTER XXXIII.

Rehearsal of Seguidillas.—Evening scene.—Crowds of beggars.—Royal charity misplaced.—Mendicant flattery.—Frightful countenances.—Performance at the Salitri theatre.—Countess of Pombeiro and her dwarf negresses.—A strange ballet.—Return to the Palace.—Supper at the Camareira Mor's.—Filial affection.—Last interview with the Archbishop.—Fatal tide of events.—Heart-felt regret on leaving Portugal.

Sunday, November 25th, 1787.

WHAT a morning for the 25th of November! The sun shining most brilliantly, insects fluttering about, and flowers expanding—the late rains having called forth a second spring, and tinted the hills round Almada, on the opposite shore of the Tagus, with a lively green.

I breakfasted alone, Verdeil being gone to St. Roch's, to see the ceremony of publishing the bull of the Crusade, which allows good Christians to eat eggs and butter during Lent, upon paying his holiness a few shillings. I stayed at home, hearing a rehearsal of Seguidillas, in preparation for a new intermez at the Salitri theatre, till the hour of mass was over, then getting into the Portuguese chaise, drove headlong to the palace in the Placa do Commercio, and hastened to the Marquis of M——'s apartments. All his family were assembled to dine with him.

Had it not been for the thoughts of my approaching departure, I should have felt more comfort and happiness than has fallen to my lot for a long interval. M——, whose attendance on the Queen may be too justly termed a state of downright slavery, had hardly taken his place at table, before he was called away. The Marchioness, Donna

Henriquetta, and her little sister, soon retreated to the Camareira-Mor's apartments, and I was left alone with Pedro and Duarte. They seized fast hold, each of a hand, and running like greyhounds through long corridors, took me to a balcony which commands one of the greatest thoroughfares in Lisbon.

The evening was delightful, and vast crowds of people moving about, of all degrees and nations, old and young, active and crippled, monks and officers. Shoals of beggars kept pouring in from every quarter to take their stands at the gates of the palace and watch the Queen's going out; for her Majesty is a most indulgent mother to these sturdy sons of idleness, and scarcely ever steps into her carriage without distributing considerable alms amongst them. By this misplaced charity, hundreds of stout fellows are taught the management of a crutch instead of a musket, and the art of manufacturing sores, ulcers, and scabby pates, in the most loathsome perfection. Duarte, who is all life and gaiety, vaulted upon the railing of the balcony, and hung for a moment or two suspended in a manner that would have frightened mothers and nurses into convulsions. The beggars, who had nothing to do till her Majesty should be forthcoming, seemed to be vastly entertained with these feats of agility.

They soon spied me out, and two brawny lubbers, whom an unfortunate combination of smallpox and king's-evil had deprived of eye-sight, informed, no doubt, by their comrades of what was going forward, began a curious dialogue with voices still deeper and harsher than those of the holy crows:—"Heaven prosper their noble excellencies, Don Duarte Manoel and Don Pedro, and all the Marialvas—sweet dear youths, long may they be blessed with the use of their eyes and of all their limbs! Is that the charitable Englishman in their sweet company?"—"Yes, my comrade," answered the second blind.—"What!" said the first, "that generous favourite of the most glorious Lord St. Anthony? (O gloriosissimo Senhor Sant-Antonio!)"—"Yes, my comrade."—"O that I had but my precious eyes, that I might enjoy the sight of his countenance!" exclaimed both together.

By the time the duet was thus far advanced, the halt, the maimed, and the scabby, having tied some greasy nightcaps to the end of long poles, poked them up through the very railing, bawling and roaring out charity, "charity for the sake of the holy one of Lisbon." Never was I looked up to by a more distorted or frightful collection of countenances. I made haste to throw down a plentiful shower of small copper money, or else Duarte would have twitched away both poles and nightcaps, a frolic by no means to be encouraged, as it might have marred our fame for the readiest and most polite attention to every demand in the name of St. Anthony.

Just as the orators were receiving their portion of pence and farthings, a cry of "There's the Queen, there's the Princess!" carried the whole hideous crowd away to another scene of action, and left me at full liberty to be amused in my turn with the squirrel-like gambols of my lively companion; he is really a fine enterprising boy, bold, alert, and sprightly; quite different from most of his illustrious young relations.

Don Pedro by no means approved my English partiality to such active feats, and after scolding his cousin for skipping about in so hazardous a style, entreated me to take them to the Salitri theatre, where a box had been prepared for us by his father's orders. Upon the whole, I was better entertained than I expected, though the performance lasted above four hours and a half, from seven to near twelve. It consisted of a ranting prose tragedy, in three acts, called Sesostris, two ballets, a pastoral, and a farce. The decorations were not amiss, and the dresses showy. A shambling, blear-eyed boy, bundled out in weeds of the deepest sable, squeaked and bellowed alternately the part of a widowed princess. Another hob-e-di-hoy, tottering on high-heeled shoes, represented her Egyptian majesty, and warbled two airs with all the nauseous sweetness of a fluted falsetto. Though I could have boxed his ears for surfeiting mine so filthily, the audience were of a very different opinion, and were quite enthusiastic in their applause.

In the stage-box I observed the mincing Countess of Pombeiro, whose light hair and waxen complexion was finely contrasted by the ebon hue of two little negro attendants perched on each side of her. It is the high tone at present in this court to be surrounded by African implings, the more hideous, the more prized, and to bedizen them in the most expensive manner. The Queen has set the example, and the royal family vie with each other in spoiling and caressing Donna Rosa, her Majesty's black-skinned, blubber-lipped, flat-nosed favourite.

One of the ballets was admirably got up; upon the rising of the curtain, a strange cabalistic apartment is discovered, where an astrologer appears very busy at a table covered with spheres and astrolabes, arranging certain mysterious images, and pinking their eyes with a gigantic pair of black compasses. A sort of Pierrot announces some inquisitive travellers, who enter with many bows and scrapings. One of them, the chief of the party, an old dapper beau in pink and silver, reminded me very much of the Duke d'Alafoens, and sidled along and tossed his cane about, and seemed to ask questions without waiting for answers, with as good a grace as that janty general. The astrologer, after explaining the wonders of his apartment with many pantomimical contortions, invites his company to follow him, and the scene changes to a long gallery, illuminated with a profusion of lights in gilt branches. The perspective ends in a flight of steps, upon each of which stands a row of figures, pantaloons, harlequins, sultans, sultanas, Indian chiefs, devils, and savages, to all appearance motionless. Pierrot brings in a machine like a hand-organ, and his master begins to grind, the music accompanying. At the first chord, down drop the arms of all the figures; at the second, each rank descends a step, and so on, till gaining the level of the stage, and the astrologer grinding faster and faster, the supposed clock-work-assembly begin a general dance.

Their ballet ended, the same accords are repeated, and all hop up in the same stiff manner they hopped down. The travellers, highly pleased with the show, depart; Pierrot, who longs to be grinding, persuades his master to take a walk, and leave him in possession of the gallery. He consents; but enjoins the gaping oaf upon no account to meddle with the machine, or set the figures in motion. Vain are his directions! no sooner has he turned his back than Pierrot goes to work with all his strength; the figures fall a shaking as if on the point of disjoining themselves; creak, crack, grinds the machine with horrid harshness; legs, arms, and noddles are thrown into convulsions, three steps are jumped at once. Pierrot, frightened out of his senses at the goggle-eyed crowd advancing upon him, clings close to the machine and gives the handle no respite. The music, too, degenerates into the most jarring, screaming sounds, and the figures knocking against each other, and whirling round and round in utter confusion, fall flat upon the stage. Pierrot runs from group to group in rueful despair, tries in vain to reanimate them, and at length losing all patience, throws one over the other, and heaps sultanas upon savages, and shepherds upon devilkins. Most of these personages being represented by boys of twelve or thirteen were easily wielded. After Pierrot has finished tossing and tumbling, he drops down exhausted and lies as dead as his neighbours, hoping to escape unnoticed amongst them. But this subterfuge avails him not; in comes the astrologer armed with his compasses; back he starts at sight of the confounded jumble. Pierrot pays for it all, is soon drawn forth from his lurking-place, and the astrologer

grinding in a moderate and scientific manner, the figures lift themselves up, and returning all in *status quo*, the ballet finishes.

Shall I confess that this nonsense amused me pretty nearly as much as it did my companions, whose raptures were only exceeded by those of madame de Pombeiro's implings. They, sweet, sooty innocents, kept gibbering and pointing at the man with the black compasses in a manner so completely African and ludicrous, that I thought their contortions the best part of the entertainment.

The play ended, we hastened back to the palace, and traversing a number of dark vestibules and guard-chambers, (all of a snore with jaded equerries,) were almost blinded with a blaze of light from the room in which supper was served up. There we found in addition to all the Marialvas, the old marquis only excepted, the Camareira-mor, and five or six other hags of supreme quality, feeding like cormorants upon a variety of high-coloured and high-seasoned dishes. I suppose the keen air from the Tagus, which blows right into the palace-windows, operates as a powerful whet, for I never beheld eaters or eateresses, no not even our old acquaintance madame la Présidente at Paris, lay about them with greater intrepidity. To be sure, it was a splendid repast, quite a banquet. We had manjar branco and manjar real, and among other good things a certain preparation of rice and chicken, which suited me exactly, and no wonder, for this excellent mess had been just tossed up by Donna Isabel de Castro with her own illustrious hands, in a nice little kitchen adjoining the queen's apartment, in which all the utensils are of solid silver.

The number of lights upon the table, and of attendants and pages in rich uniforms around it, was prodigious; but what interested me far more than all this parade, was the sportive good-humour and frankness of the company. How it happened that the presence of a stranger failed to inspire any reserve, is one of those odd circumstances I can hardly account for; especially as the higher orders of the Portuguese are the farthest removed of all persons from admitting any but their nearest relations to these family parties; but so it was, and I felt both flattered and gratified at being permitted to witness the ease and hilarity which prevailed.

The dutiful, affectionate attention of the younger part of the company to their parents was truly amiable; nor do I believe that, at this day in any other realm in Europe, the sacred precept of honouring your father and your mother is so cordially observed as in Portugal. Happy if, in our intercourse with that nation, we had profited in that respect by their example; the peace of so many of our noblest families would not have been disturbed by the lowest connexions, nor their best blood contaminated by matches of the most immoral, degrading tendency. We should not have seen one year a performer acting the part of lady this or lady t'other upon the stage, and the next in the drawing-room; nor, upon entering some of our principal houses, have been tempted to cry out—"Bless me! that lovely countenance is the same I recollect adoring by moonlight on the fine broad flagstones of Bond Street or Portland Place!"^[24]

It was now after two in the morning, and I must own, notwithstanding the good cheer of which I had participated, and the kind entertainment I had received, I began to feel a little tired. The children were in such spirits, so full of frolic, and her sublimity, the Camareira-mor, so unusually tolerant and condescending, that there was no knowing when the party would break up. Taking, therefore, my leave in due form, I made my retreat escorted by half-a-dozen torch-bearers.

Just as I had gotten about half-way on my journey through what appeared to me interminable passages, I was arrested in my progress by a pair of dominicans, father Rocha, and his scarecrow satellite frè José do Rosario. A person less accustomed than I had lately been to such apparitions would have been startled; especially, too, if he had found himself like me between the most formidable living pillars of the holy inquisition.

"What are you doing here so very late," I could not help exclaiming, "my reverend fathers? What's the matter?"

"The matter is," answered Rocha, with a voice of terrific hoarseness, "that we have caught cold waiting for you in these confounded corridors. The archbishop, above half-an-hour ago, commanded us to bring you to him dead or alive; but a rascally jackanapes in waiting upon her excellency the Camareira-mor would not let us in to deliver our message, so we have been airing ourselves hitherto to no purpose."

"Do you know," said Rocha, taking me into a little room where a lamp was still burning, "that affairs do not go on so smoothly as they ought? The archbishop seems to have lost both time and temper since he has been pressed into the cabinet; and, as for the Prince of Brazil and his consort, God forgive me for wishing their advisers and all their intrigues in the lowest abyss of perdition. How can you be scheming a journey to Madrid at this season? The floods are out, and the robbers also, and I tell you what, as the archbishop says twenty times a day, if you do go you deserve to be drowned and murdered."

"The die is cast," I replied, "and I must take my chance; but really I wish you would have the goodness to bid the archbishop a very good night in my name, and let me put off asking his benediction till to-morrow, for I am quite jaded."

"Jaded or not," answered the monk, "you must come with me; the wind is up in the archbishop's brain just at this moment, and by the least contradiction more would become a hurricane."

Finding resistance vain, I suffered myself to be conducted through two or three open courts, very refreshing at this hour you may suppose, and up a little staircase into the archbishop's interior cabinet. All was still as death—no lay-brother bustling about—no sound audible but a low breathing, which now and then swelled into a half suppressed groan, from the agitated prelate, whom we found knee-deep in papers, immersed in thought.

"So," said he, "there you are at last. What have you been doing all this while? Who but a brute of an Englishman would have kept me waiting. Ay, ay, you told me how it would be, and you are right. They plague my soul out. We have twenty rascals pulling as many ways. Your people too are not what they used to be, though Mello would make us believe to the contrary. One thing I know for certain, some infernal mischief is afloat, and unless God's grace is speedily manifested, I see no end to confusion, and wish myself anywhere but where I am. These smooth-tongued, Frenchified, Italian, Voltaireists and encyclopedians have poisoned all sound doctrine. Ay," continued he, rising up, with an expression of indignation and anger I never saw before on his countenance, "somebody's ears^[25] are poisoned whom I could name.... But where is the use of talking to you? You are determined to leave us, be it so. God's providence is above all. He knows what is best for you, and for me, and for these kingdoms. There is your passport, countersigned by your friend Mello; and here is a letter for Lorenzana, and another for his catholic majesty's confessor, in which I tell him what an amazing fool you are, and unless you continue one without any remission, we shall soon have you back again. Tell Marialva," he added, addressing himself to Rocha (for the other

father had not been admitted), "tell Marialva and all his friends that I have dried up my tongue almost more times than one, in attempting to argue a thousand silly whimsies and crotchets out of his harum-scarum English brain; but come," said he, extending his arms, "I bear no malice, I pity, I do not condemn. Let me give you an embrace, and pray God it may not be the last you will receive from me."

It was, alas! the last I ever received from him, poor, honest-hearted, kind old man! A sort of melancholy foreboding which seemed to pervade all he said in this interview was too soon realized. The fatal tide of events flowing on as it were with redoubled, tremendous velocity, swept away in the course of a few short months from this period the Prince of Brazil, the lovely and amiable infanta his sister, her husband Don Gabriel of Spain, and the good old King Charles the Third. Not long after, the archbishop-confessor himself was called from the plenitude of power and the enjoyment of unrivalled influence to the presence of that Being in whose sight "no man living shall be justified;" but as in many trying and peculiar instances he had shown the tenderest mercy, it may tremblingly be hoped that mercy has been shown to him. Notwithstanding the bluntness of his manner, the kindness of his heart, so apparent in his good-humoured, benevolent eye, found its way, almost imperceptibly to himself, to the hearts of others, and tempered the despotic roughness he sometimes assumed both in voice and gesture.

I still seem to behold the last, earnest, solemn look he gave me when, the door closing, he retired to the cares of state, and I with my escort of torch-bearers and dominicans hastened forth to breathe the open air, of which I stood greatly in need. Many things I had heard, and many others I conjectured, above all, the reluctance I felt at the bottom of my heart to leave a country in which I had received such uncommon marks of friendship, bore heavily upon me. When I got home, scarcely two hours before daybreak, and tried to compose myself to sleep, I was neither refreshed nor recruited, but experienced the agitation of feverish and broken slumbers.

LETTER XXXIV.

Dead mass at the church of Martyrs.—Awful music by Perez and Jomelli.—Marialva's affecting address.—My sorrow and anxiety.

26th Nov. 1787.

I WENT to the church of the Martyrs to hear the matins of Perez and the dead mass of Jomelli performed by all the principal musicians of the royal chapel for the repose of the souls of their deceased predecessors. Such august, such affecting music I never heard, and perhaps may never hear again; for the flame of devout enthusiasm burns dim in almost every part of Europe, and threatens total extinction in a very few years. As yet it glows at Lisbon, and produced this day the most striking musical effect.

Every individual present seemed penetrated with the spirit of those awful words which Perez and Jomelli have set with tremendous sublimity. Not only the music, but the serious demeanour of the performers, of the officiating priests, and indeed of the whole congregation, was calculated to impress a solemn, pious terror of the world beyond the grave. The splendid decoration of the church was changed into mourning, the tribunes hung with black, and a veil of gold and purple thrown over the high altar. In the midst of the choir stood a catafalque surrounded with tapers in lofty candelabra, a row of priests motionless on each side. There was an awful silence for several minutes, and then began the solemn service of the dead. The singers turned pale as they sang, "Timor mortis me conturbat."

After the requiem, the high mass of Jomelli, in commemoration of the deceased, was performed; that famous composition which begins with a movement imitative of the tolling of bells,

"Swinging slow with sullen roar."

These deep, majestic sounds, mingled with others like the cries for mercy of unhappy beings, around whom the shadows of death and the pains of hell were gathering, shook every nerve in my frame, and called up in my recollection so many affecting images, that I could not refrain from tears.

I scarcely knew how I was conveyed to the palace, where Marialva expected my coming with the utmost impatience. Our conversation took a most serious turn. He entreated me not to forget Portugal, to meditate upon the awful service I had been hearing, and to remember he should not die in peace unless I was present to close his eyes.

In the actual tone of my mind I was doubly touched by this melancholy, affectionate address. It seemed to cut through my soul, and I execrated Verdeil and all those who had been instrumental in persuading me to abandon such a friend. The grand prior wept bitterly at seeing my agitation. Marialva went to the queen, and the grand prior home with me. We dined alone; my heart was full of heaviness, and I could not eat. At night we returned to the palace, and there all my sorrow and anxiety was renewed.

SPAIN.

LETTER I.

Embark on the Tagus.—Aldea Gallega.—A poetical postmaster.—The church.—Leave Aldea Gallega.—Scenery on the road.—Palace built by John the Fifth.—Ruins at Montemor.—Reach Arroyolos.

Wednesday, Nov. 28th, 1787.

THE winds are reposing themselves, and the surface of the Tagus has all the smoothness of a mirror. The clouds are dispersing, for it rained heavily in the night, and the sun tinging the distant mountains of Palmella. Charming weather for crossing to Aldea Gallega, that self-same village in whose praises Baretti launches out with so much luxuriance. Horne and his nephew accompanied me to the stairs of Pampulha, where the old marquis's scalera was waiting for me, with eight-and-twenty rowers in their bright scarlet accoutrements.

Beggars innumerable, blind, dumb, and scabby, followed me almost into the water. No beggars equal those of Portugal for strength of lungs, luxuriance of sores, profusion of vermin, variety and arrangement of tatters, and dauntless perseverance. Several clocks were striking one when we pushed off from the shore, and in a few minutes less than two hours we found ourselves at Aldea Gallega, four leagues from Lisbon. Vast numbers of boats and skiffs passed us in the course of our navigation, which I should have thought highly agreeable in other circumstances; but I felt oppressed and melancholy; the thoughts of my separation from the Marialvas bearing heavily on my mind. Nor could the grand prospects of the river, and its shores, crowded with convents, towers, and palaces, remove this dead cold weight a single instant.

The sun having sunk into watery clouds, the expanse of the Tagus wore a dismal, leaden-coloured aspect. Lisbon was cast into shade, and the huge mass of the convent of San Vicente, crowning an eminence, looked dark and solemn. The low shores of Aldea Gallega are pleasant and woody; many varieties of the tulip, the iris, and other bulbous roots, already springing up under the protection of spreading pines.

Instead of going to a swinish, stinking estellagem, my courier, Martinho de mello's prime favourite, and the one he employs upon the most confidential negociations, conducted me to the postmaster's; a neat, snug habitation, where I found very tolerable accommodations, and dined in the midst of a vapour of burnt lavender, that was near depriving us of all appetite.

Before I sat down to table, I wrote to M—, and sent my letter by the return of the scalera. It was not without difficulty I wrote then, or write at present, for my kind host, the postmaster, has not only the same age, but equal glibness of tongue as the abade. They were cotemporary at Coimbra, and their tongues have kept pace with each other these eighty years. The postmaster is blessed with a most tenacious memory, and having been a mighty reader of operas, serenatas, sonnets, and romances, seemed to sweat verses at every pore. For three hours he gave neither himself nor us any respite, but spouted whole volleys of Metastasio, till he was black in the face. Having washed down the heroic sentiments of Megacle, Artaserse, and Demetrio with a dish of tea, he fell to quoting Spanish and Latin authors, Ovid, Seneca, Lopez de Vega, Calderon, with the same volubility.

As millers sleep sound to the click of their mill, so I, at the end of the two hours' gabbling, was perfectly well-seasoned, and let him run on with the most resigned composure, writing and reading as unconcernedly as if in a convent of Carthusians.

Thursday, November 29th.

THERE WAS a continual racket in the house and about the street-door all night. At four o'clock the baggage-carts set forth, with a tremendous jingling of bells. The morning was so soft and vernal, that we drank our chocolate on the veranda, which commands a wild rural view of shrubby fields and scattered pines, terminated by a long range of blue hills, most picturesquely varied in form, if not in colour.

After breakfast I went to the church, which Colmenar pretends is magnificently gilt and ornamented; but which, in fact, can boast no other decoration than a few shabby altars, displaying the images of Nossa Senhora, and the patron saint, in tinselled garments of faded taffeta. I knelt on a mouldy pavement, and felt a chill wind issuing from between the crevices of loose grave-stones, that returned a hollow sound when I rose up and walked over them. A priest, who was saying mass, officiated with uncommon slowness and solemnity. It was hardly light in the recesses of the chapels.

Soon after eight o'clock we left Aldea Gallega, and ploughed through deep furrows of sand at the sober rate of two miles and a half in an hour. On both sides of the heavy road the eye ranges uninterrupted, except by the stems of starveling pines, through a boundless extent of barren country, overgrown with stunted ilex and gum-cistus. The same scenery lasted without any variation full five leagues, to the venta de Pegoens, where I am now writing, in a long dismal room, with plastered walls, a damp brick-floor, and cracked window-shutters. A pack of half-famished dogs are leaping around me, their eyes ready to start out of their sockets and their ribs out of their skin.

After dining upon the provisions we brought with us, of which the yelping generation enjoyed no inconsiderable share, we proceeded through sandy wilds diversified alone by pines. Not a single habitation occurred, till by a glimmering dubious starlight, for it was now half-past seven, we discovered the extensive front of a palace, built in the year 1729, by John the fifth, for the accommodation of the infanta of Spain, who married his son, the late king D. José. Here we were to lodge, and I was rather surprised, upon entering a long suite of well-proportioned apartments, to find doors and windows still capable of being shut and opened, large chimneys guiltless of smoking out of their right channel, and painted ceilings without cracks or crevices.

A young priest, neither deficient in manners nor erudition, the keeper of this solitary palace, did his utmost to make our stay in it agreeable. By his attention, we had some chairs and tables placed by a blazing fire, which I worshipped with all the fervour of an ancient Persian. I had need of this consolation, being much disordered by the tiresome dragging of our heavy coach through heaps of sand, and depressed with feverish shiverings.

Friday, November 30th.

IT WAS a long while last night before I composed myself to sleep, and being called at the first dawn, I rose, if possible, more indisposed than when I lay down; I could scarcely swallow any refreshment, and kept walking disconsolately through the vast range of naked apartments, till the rays of the rising sun entered the windows. The horizon glowed with ruddy clouds. The vast desert levels, discovered from the balconies of the palace, gleamed with dewy verdure. I hastened out to breathe the fresh morning air, impregnated with the perfume of a thousand aromatic shrubs and opening flowers. I could not believe it was the last day of November, but fancied I had slept away the winter, and was just awakened in the month of May.

To enjoy these fragrant breezes in full liberty, I left our carriage to drag along as slowly as the mules pleased, and the muleteers to smoke their cigarros as deliberately as they thought proper; and mounting my horse, rode the best part of the way to Montemor; which is built on the acclivity of a mountain, and surrounded on every side by groves of olives. The whole face of the country is covered by the same vegetation, and, of course, presents no very cheerful appearance.

About a mile from Montemor we crossed a clear river, whose banks are thick-set with poplars, and a light, airy species of broom, intermixed with indian-fig, and laurustine in full blossom. The bees were swarming amongst the

flowers, and filling the air with their hum.

Whilst our dinner was preparing we climbed up the green slopes of a lofty hill, to some ruins on its summit; and passing under a narrow arch discovered a broad flight of steps, which lead to a very ancient church of gothic uncouth architecture: the pavement almost entirely composed of sepulchral slabs and brasses. As we walked on a platform before the entrance, the sun shone so fiercely that we were glad to descend the eminence on its shadiest side, and take refuge in a cavern-like apartment of the estallagem, very damp and dingy; but in which, however, an excellent dinner awaited our arrival.

We set out at two in a blaze of sunshine, so cheerful and reviving, that I got once more on horseback, and never dismounted till I reached Arroyolos. Just as we came in sight of this ugly old town, which, like Montemor, crowns the summit of a rocky eminence, it fell totally dark; but the postmaster coming forth with torches, lighted us through several winding alleys to his house. I found some pleasant apartments amply furnished, and richly carpeted, and had the comfort of settling myself by a crackling fire, writing to the whole circle of the Marialvas, and drinking tea without being attacked by quotations of Virgil and Metastasio.

LETTER II.

A wild tract of forest-land.—Arrival at Estremoz.—A fair.—An outrageous sermon.—Boundless wastes of gum-cistus.—Elvas.—Our reception there.—My visitors.

Saturday, December 1st, 1787.

HITHERTO I have had no reason to complain of my accommodations in travelling through Portugal. A mandate from the governor procured me milk this morning for my breakfast, much against the will of the proprietor, who had a great inclination to keep all to himself. The idea of its being squeezed out by force, persuaded me that it had a very sour taste, and I hardly touched it.

I laid in a stock of carpets for my journey, of strange grotesque patterns and glaring colours, the produce of a manufactory in this town, which employs about three hundred persons. Methinks I begin to write as dully as Major W. Dalrymple, whose dry journal of travels through a part of Spain I had the misfortune of reading in the coach this morning, as we jogged and jolted along the dreary road between Arroyolos and Venta do Duque.

We passed a wild tract of forest-land, and saw numerous herds of swine luxuriously scratching themselves against the rugged bark of cork-trees, and routing up the moss at their roots in search of acorns. Venta do Duque is a sty right worthy of being the capital of hoggish dominions. It can boast, however, of a chimney, which, giving us the opportunity of making a fire, rendered our stay in it less intolerable.

The evening turned out cloudy and cold. Before we arrived at Estremoz, another city on a hill, better and farther seen than it merits, it began to rain with a vengeance. I hear it splashing and driving this moment in the puddles which lie in the vast, forlorn market-place, at one end of which our posada is situated. For Portugal, this posada is by no means indifferent; the walls and ceilings have been neatly whitewashed, and here are chairs and tables. My carpets are of essential service in protecting my feet from the damp brick-floors. I have spread them all round my bed, and they make a flaming exotic appearance.

Sunday, December 2nd.

WHEN I opened my eyes about seven in the morning, the sky was still dismal and lowering; and a crowd of human figures, enveloped in dark capotes, were just issuing from several dens and lurking-places on each side the entrance of the posada. A fair, which was held to-day, had drawn them together, and they were lamenting in chorus the rainy weather, which prevented the display of their rural finery. Most of these good people had passed the night in the stables of the posada. As I came down stairs, I saw several of their companions of both sexes lying about like the killed and wounded on a field of battle; or, to use a less fatal comparison, like the dead-drunk during a contested election in England.

From the windows of the posada I looked down on a vast opening a thousand feet in breadth, surrounded by irregular buildings; amongst which I could not discover any of those handsome edifices adorned with marble columns, some travelling scribblers mention in terms of the highest commendation. The marble tower, too, they describe, built by Don Deniz, has totally lost its polish, if true it is it ever had any.

Hard by the posada is a little chapel, to which I repaired as soon as I had breakfasted, and heard an outrageous sermon preached by a grey-headed, fiery-eyed capuchin, to a troop of blubbering females.

As it did not positively rain, but only drizzled, after the fashion of my own dear native country, I rode part of the way to Elvas, and traversed boundless wastes of gum-cistus, whose dark-green casts a melancholy shade over the face of the country. A mile or two from Elvas, the scene changes to a forest of olives, with fountains by the wayside, and avenues of poplars, which were not yet deprived of their foliage. Above their summits tower the arches of an aqueduct, supported by strong buttresses, and presenting, when seen in perspective, an appearance, in some points of view, not unlike that of a ruined gothic cathedral. The ramparts of Elvas are laid out and planted much in the style of our English gardens, and form very delightful walks.

Upon entering the town, which seems populous and thriving, we were conducted to a very clean neat house, prepared for our reception by order of the governor, Monsieur de Vallarè. A dignified sort of a page, or groom of the chambers, in a blue coat richly laced, and the order of St. Jago dangling at his buttonhole, stood ready at the door to show us up stairs, and, according to the Portuguese system of politeness, never quitted our elbows a single moment.

I had hardly reconnoitred my new apartments, before Monsieur de Vallarè was announced. He brought with him the Abade Correa, one of the luminaries of modern Portuguese literature, whose conversation afforded me great amusement. We sallied out together to visit the fortifications, the stables for the cavalry, and barracks for the soldiers, which are all in admirable order; thanks to the governor, who is indefatigable in his exertions, and retains at a very experienced age the agility of five-and-twenty. I was delighted with his cheerful, military frankness, and unaffected attentions. He told me, he had stood the fire of our formidable column at Fontenoy, and never enjoyed himself so much in his life, as in the smoke and havoc of that furious engagement.

From one of the bastions to which he conducted us, we had a distinct view of the fort de la Lippe, erected at an enormous expense on the summit of a woody mountain. Had the weather been fine, it might have tempted me to climb up to it; but showers beginning to descend, I preferred taking shelter in a snug apartment of the maréchal, enlivened by a blazing pile of aromatic woods, raised up on a grate in a christian-like manner. The abade and I drawing close to this hospitable hearth, talked over Lisbon and its inhabitants; whilst Verdeil amused himself with scrutinizing some minerals the maréchal had collected, and which lay scattered about his room.

In these occupations the time passed till supper. We had pork delicately flavoured, exquisite quails, and salads, prepared in different manners, the most delicious I ever tasted. Our conversation was lively and unrestrained; Correa has an originality of genius and freedom of sentiment, which the terrors of the inquisition have not yet extinguished.

LETTER III.

Pass the rivulet which separates Spain and Portugal.—A muleteer's enthusiasm.—Badajoz.—The cathedral.—Journey resumed.—A vast plain.—Village of Lubaon.—Withered hags.—Names and characters of our mules.—Posada at Merida.

Monday, Dec. 3rd, 1787.

THE maréchal and the abade breakfasted with me, but the rain prevented my taking another walk about the fortifications, and seeing the troops go through their exercise. At ten we set off, well escorted, traversed a dismal plain, and passed a rivulet which separates the two kingdoms. No sooner had one of our muleteers passed this boundary, than cutting a cross in the turf with his knife, he fell prostrate and kissed the ground with a transport of devotion.

Upon ascending the bank of the rivulet we came in sight of Badajoz and its long narrow bridge over the Guadiana. The custom-house was all mildness and moderation. Its harpies have neither flown away with my books, as Bezerra predicted, nor set their talons in my coffers. At sight of my passport, such a one, I believe, as is not very frequently granted, all difficulties gave way, and I was permitted to enter the lonely, melancholy streets of Badajoz, without being stopped an instant, or having my baggage ransacked.

This circumstance, no wonder, gave me greater satisfaction than the aspect of the town and its inhabitants, which is decidedly gloomy. Every house almost has grated-windows, and the few human creatures that stared at us from them, were muffled up to their noses in heavy mantles of the darkest colours.

We continued winding half an hour in slow and solemn procession through narrow streets and alleys, whose gutters were full to the brim, before we reached the large dingy mansion their excellencies, the governor and intendant, had been so gracious as to allot for my reception. Both these personages were, providentially, laid up with agues, or else, it seems, I should have been honoured with their company the whole evening.

A mob of eyes and mantles, for neither mouths, arms, nor scarcely legs were discernible, assembled round the carriages the moment they halted, and had the patience to remain in the street, silently smoking their cigarros, the whole time I was at dinner.

It was night before I rose from table, crept down stairs, and, though it continued raining at frequent intervals, waded to the cathedral, through much mire, and between several societies of hogs, which lay sweetly sleeping to the murmur of dropping eaves, in the midst of gutters and kennels.

The cathedral is formed by three aisles of equal breadth, supported by pillars and arches, in a tolerably good pointed style. Several lofty chapels open into them, with solemn gates of iron. In the centre of the middle aisle some bungling architect has awkwardly stuck the choir, not many paces from the principal entrance, and by so doing has shut out the view of the high altar: no great loss, however, the high altar looking little better than a huge mass of rock-work, gilt and burnished. Under the choir is a staircase leading down to the grated entrance of a vault. Lamps were burning before many of the altars, and they distributed a faint light throughout the whole edifice.

I paced silently to and fro in the aisles, whilst the canons were chaunting vespers. The choristers still retain the same dress in which St. Anthony is represented, in the picture which hung by the miraculous cross he indented when flying the persecutions of Satan. There was a solemnity in the glimmer of the lamps, the gloomy, indefinite depth of the chapels, and the darkness of the vault beneath the choir, that affected me. I passed a very uncomfortable evening, and a worse night.

Tuesday, Dec. 4.

NOT a wink of sleep did the musquitos allow me. I was glad to call for lights at four, and was still happier to step into the coach at five; from that hour to half-past-eight I contrived to slumber in a feverish, agitated manner, that did me little good.

When I opened my eyes, I found myself traversing a vast plain as level as the ocean. In summer, this waste must convey none but ideas of sterility and desolation; at present, a fresh verdure, browsed by numerous flocks, rendered its appearance tolerable. The sheep, which are large and thriving, have fleeces as long and as silky as the hair of a barbet, combed every day by the hands of its mistress. I observed numbers of lambs of the most shining whiteness, with black ears and noses; just such neat little animals as those I remember to have seen in the era of Dresden china, at the feet of smirking shepherdesses.

We dined at a village of mud cottages, called Lubaon, situated on some rising ground, about eighteen miles from Badajoz, whose inhabitants seem to have attained the last stage of poverty and wretchedness. Two or three withered hags, that even in the prophet Habakkuk's resurrection of dry bones, would have attracted attention, laid hold of me the moment I got out of the carriage. I thought the cold hand of the weird sisters was giving me a gripe; and trembled lest, whether I would or not, I might hear some fatal prediction. To get out of their way I flew to the church, an old gothic building, placed on the edge of a steep, which shelves almost perpendicularly down to the banks of the Guadiana, and took sanctuary in its porch. There I remained till summoned to dinner, listening to the murmur of the distant river flowing round sandy islands.

I won the hearts of my muleteers by caressing their mules, and inquiring with a respectful earnestness their

names and characters. Capitana may be depended upon in cases of labour and difficulty; Valerosa is skittish and enterprising; Pelerina rather sluggish and cowardly; but la Commissaria unites every mulish perfection; is tractable, steady, and sure-footed, and at the same time (to use the identical expression of my calasero) the greatest driver of dirt before her in the universe. She is certainly an animal of uncommon resolution; and when tired to death by the slow paces of her companions, how often have I wished myself abandoned to her guidance in a light two-wheeled chaise.

We left Lubaon at half-past two, and, as I had the happiness of sleeping almost the whole way to Merida, can give little account of the country.

I was hardly awake, when we entered the posada at Merida, and started back, dazzled with an illumination of wax-lights, solemnly stuck in sconces all round a lofty room, with glaring white walls, as if I had been expected to lie in state. In the middle of the apartment stood a large brasier, full of glowing embers, exhaling so strong a perfume of rosemary and lavender, that my head swam, and I reeled like a drunkard. But as soon as this vile machine was removed, I sat down to write in peace and comfort.

LETTER IV.

Arrival at Miaxadas.—Monotonous singing.—Dismal country.—Truxillo.—A rainy morning.—Resume our journey.—Immense wood of cork-trees.—Almaraz.—Reception by the *escrivano*.—A terrific volume.—Village of Laval de Moral.—Range of lofty mountains.—Calzada.

Wednesday, Dec. 5th, 1787.

ABOUT five leagues from Merida we stopped at a hovel too wretched to afford shelter even to our mules. The situation, amidst green hills scattered over with picturesque ilex, is not unpleasant; and such was the mildness of the day, that we spread our table on a knoll, and dined in the open air, surrounded by geese and asses, to whom I distributed ample slices of water-melons. From this spot three short leagues brought us to Miaxadas, where we arrived at night. Its inhabitants were gathered in clusters at their doors, each holding a lamp, and crying, "Biva! Biva!"

Instead of entering a dirty posada, my courier ushered me into a sort of gallery, with a handsome arched roof, matted all over, and set round with gilt chairs. The *donna de la casa* made very low obeisances, not without great primness, and her maids sang tirannas with a wailful monotony that wore my very soul out.

Thursday, Dec. 6th.

SOAKING rain and dismal country, thick strewn with fragments of rock. Mountains wrapped in mists,—here and there a few green spots studded with mushrooms. We went seven leagues without stopping, and reached Truxillo by four. It was this gloomy city, situated on a black eminence, that gave birth to the ruthless Pizarro, the scourge of the Peruvians, and the murderer of Atabaliba. We were lodged in a very tolerable posada, unmolested by speech-makers, and heard no noise but the trickling of showers.

Friday, Dec. 7th.

I WAS awakened at five: the gutters were pouring, and all the water-spouts of Truxillo streaming with rain. An hour and a half did I pass in a ghostly twilight, my candles being packed up, and all the oil of the house expended. It required great exertion on the part of my vigilant courier to prevail on our hulky muleteers to expose themselves to the bad weather.

At length, with much ado, we rumbled out of Truxillo, and after traversing for the space of two leagues the nakedest and most dreary region I ever beheld, a faint gleam of sunshine melted the deadly white of the thick clouds which hung over us, and the horizon brightening up, we discovered a wood of cork-trees interspersed with lawns extending as far as the eye could stretch itself. These green spots continued to occur our whole way to Saraseços. There we halted, dined in haste at not half so wretched a posada as I had been taught to expect, and continuing our route, the sky clearing, ascended a mountain, from whose brow we looked down on a valley variegated with patches of ploughed land, wild shrubberies, and wandering rivulets.

We had not much time to feast our eyes with this pastoral prospect; the clouds soon rolled over it, and we found ourselves in a damp fog. The rest of our journey to Almaraz was a total blank; we saw nothing and heard nothing, and arrived at the place of our destination in perfect health and stupidity.

The *escrivano*, who is the judge and jury of the village, was so kind as to accommodate us with his house, and so polite as not to incommode us with his presence. He is a holy man, and a strenuous advocate for the immaculate conception, no less than three large folios upon that mysterious subject lying about in his apartment.

Saturday, Dec. 8th.

WHILST the muleteers were harnessing their beasts together with rotten cords, I took up a little old book of my pious host's, full of the most dismal superstitions, entitled *Espeio de Cristal fino, y Antorcha que aviva el alma*, and read in it till I was benumbed with horror. Many pages are engrossed with a description of the state into which the author imagines we are plunged immediately after death. The body he supposes conscious of all that befalls it in the grave, of exchanging its warm, comfortable habitation for the cold, pestilential soil of a churchyard, conscious that its friends have abandoned it for ever, and of its inability to call them back; to be sensible of the approaches and progress of the most loathsome corruption, and to hear the voice of an accusing angel, recapitulating its offences, and summoning it to the judgment of God. The book ends with a vehement exhortation to repent while there is yet time, and to procure by fervent prayer, and ample donations to religious communities, the intercession of the host of martyrs and of Nuestra Señora. I can easily conceive these scarecrow publications of infinite use in frightening three parts of mankind out of their senses, prolonging the reign, and swelling the coffers of the clergy.

The horrid images I had seen in this (*Espeio*) mirror haunted my fancy for several hours. To dissipate them I mounted my horse, and eagerly inhaled the fresh breezes that blew over springing herbage, and wastes of lavender.

The birds were singing, the clouds dividing, and discovering long tracts of soft blue sky. I galloped gaily along a level country, interspersed with woods of ilex, to the village of Laval de Moral, where the inhabitants were most devoutly employed in their churches conciliating the favour of the madonna by keeping holy the festival of the immaculate conception. There the coach coming up with me, I got in; and the mules dragging it along at a rate which in the days of my fire and fury would have made me thump out its bottom with impatience, I fell into a resigned slumber, and am ignorant of every object between Laval de Moral and Calzada, in sight of which town I awoke near five in the evening.

The sun was setting in a sea of molten gold, and tinging the snows of a range of lofty mountains, which I discovered for the first time bounding our horizon. I might have seen them before most probably, had they not remained till this evening wrapped up in rainy vapours.

It is at their base the Escorial is situated. I had the consolation of stepping out of the coach at Calzada into a house with cheerful, neat apartments, with an open gallery, where I walked contemplating the red streams of light, and brilliant skirted clouds of the western sky, till dinner came upon table. Though the doors and windows were all wide open, I suffered no inconvenience worth mentioning from cold. The master of the house, a portly, pompous barber-surgeon, most firm in his belief of the supremacy of Spain over every country in the universe, confessed, however, the weather was uncommonly warm, and that so mild a month of December was rather extraordinary.

LETTER V.

Sierra de los Gregos.—Mass.—Oropeza.—Talavera—Drawing tirannas.—Talavera de la Reyna.—Reception at Santa Olaya.—
The lady of the house, and her dogs and dancers.

Sunday, December 9th, 1787.

THE mountains I saw yesterday are called the Sierra de los Gregos, and the winds that blow over their summits begin to chill the atmosphere; but the sun is shining gloriously, and not a cloud obscures his effulgence. The stars were still twinkling in the firmament, when I was attracted to mass in the large gloomy church of a nunnery, by the voices of the Lord's spouses issuing from a sepulchral grate bristled with spikes of iron. These tremulous, plaintive sounds filled me with such sadness, and so many recollections of interesting hours departed never to return, that I felt relieved when I found myself out of sight of the convent, on a cheerful road thronged with passengers.

We passed Oropeza, a picturesque, Italian-looking town, on the brow of a mountain; dined at a venda, in the midst of a savage tract of forest-land, infamous till within this year or two for robberies and assassinations; and reached Talavera de la Reyna by sunset.

More, I believe, has been said in praise of this town than it deserves. Its appearance is far from cheerful or elegant; and the heavy brick-fronts of the convents and churches as ill designed as executed. The streets, however, are crowded with people, who seem to be moving about with rather more activity than falls to the lot of Spaniards in general. I am told the silk-manufactories at Talavera are in a flourishing state, and have taken a good many hands out of the folds of their mantles.

Colmenar is perpetually leading me into errors, and causing me disappointments. He pretends that the inhabitants of this place are nearly as skilful as those of Pekin and Macao in the manufacturing of lacquered wares, and that their pottery is unrivalled; but, upon inquiry, I found the Talaverans no particular proficient in varnish, and that they had neither a cup nor basin to produce in the least preferable to those of other villages.

In one art they are indefatigable, I can answer to my sorrow; that is, singing drawing tirannas to the monotonous accompaniment of a sort of hum-strum or hurdy-gurdy, or the devil knows best what sort of instruments, for such as I hear at this moment under my windows are only fit to be played in his dominions. I am quite at the mercy of these untoward minstrels; if they cease not, I must defer sleeping to another opportunity. Am I then come into Spain to hear hum-strums and hurdy-gurdies? Where are the rapturous seguidillas, of which I have been told such wonders? Do they exist, or, like the japanned wares of the Talaverans, are they only to be found in books of travels and geographical dictionaries?

Monday, December 10th.

I BEG Talavera de la Reyna a thousand pardons; it is not quite so frightful as it appeared in the twilight of yesterday evening. Many of the houses have a palace-like appearance, and the interior of the old gothic cathedral, though not remarkably spacious, has an air of magnificence; the stalls of the choir are elaborately carved, and on each side the high altar, curtains of the richest crimson damask fall from the roof in ample folds, and cast a ruddy glow on the pavement.

If Talavera has nothing within its walls to be much boasted of, there are many objects in its environs that merit praise. No sooner had we left its dark crooked streets behind us, than we discovered a thick wood of elms skirting an extensive lawn, beautifully green and level, from which rises the convent of Nuestra Señora del Prayo, crowned by an octangular cupola. This edifice is built of brick encrusted with stone ornaments, and choked up by ranges of arcades and heavy galleries. I have seen several structures which resembled it in the neighbourhood of Antwerp and Brussels; but whether the Spaniards carried this clumsy style of architecture into the Low Countries, or borrowed from thence, is scarcely worth while to determine.

Not far from Nuestra Señora del Prayo we crossed the Tagus, and continued dragging through heavy sands for five tedious hours, without perceiving a habitation, or meeting any animal, biped or quadruped, except herds of swine, in which, I believe, consist the principal riches of this part of the Spanish dominions. I doubt whether the royal sty of Ithaca was half so well garnished, as many private ones in New Castile and Estremadura.

Having nothing to look at except a dreary plain bounded by barren, uninteresting mountains, I was reduced to tumble over the trashy collection of books, with which I happen in this journey to be provided; poor fiddle-faddle Derrick's Letters from Cork, Chester, and Tunbridge; John Buncler, Esquire's, life, holy rhapsodies, and peregrinations; Shenstone's, Mr. Whistler's, and the good Duchess of Somerset's Correspondence; Bray's tour, right worthy of an ass; Heley's fulsome description of the Leasowes and Hagley; Clarke's ponderous account of Spain; and

Major Dalrymple's dry, tiresome, and splenetic excursion. There's a set, equal it if you can. I hope to get a better at Madrid, and throw my old stock into the Mançanares.

We dined at a village called Brabo, not in the least worth mentioning, and arrived in due tiresome course, about six in the evening, at Santa Olaya, where my courier had procured us an admirable lodging in the house of a veteran colonel. The principal apartment, in which I pitched my bed, was a lofty gallery, with large folding glazed doors, gilt and varnished, its white walls almost covered with saintly pictures and small mirrors, stuck near the ceiling, beyond the reach of mortal sight, as if their proprietor was afraid they would wear out by being looked into. On low tables, to the right and left of the door, stood glass-cases, filled with relics and artificial flowers. Stools covered with velvet, and raised not above a foot from the floor, were stationed all round the room. On one of these I squatted like an oriental, warming my hands over a brasier of coals.

The old lady of the house, followed by a train of curtsying handmaids and sniffling lapdogs, favoured me with her company the best part of the evening. Her spouse, the colonel, being indisposed, did not make his appearance. Whilst she was entertaining me with a most flourishing detail of the excellent qualities and wonderful acquisitions of the infant Don Louis, who died about two years ago at his villa in this neighbourhood, some very grotesque figures entered the antechamber, and tinkling their guitars, struck up a seguidilla, that in a minute or two set all the feet in the house in motion. Amongst the dancers, two young girls, whose jetty locks were braided with some degree of elegance, shone forth in a fandango, beating the ground and snapping their fingers with rapturous agility.

This sport lasted a full hour, before they showed the least sign of being tired; then succeeded some languorous tirannas, by no means so delightful as I expected. I was not sorry when the ball ceased, and my kind hostess, moving off with all her dogs and dancers, left me to sup and sleep in tranquillity.

LETTER VI.

Dismal plains.—Santa Cruz.—Val de Carneiro.—A most determined musical amateur.—The Alcayde Mayor.—Approach to Madrid.—Aspect of the city.—The Calle d'Alcala.—The Prado.—The Ave-Maria bell.

Tuesday, Dec. 11th, 1787.

DISMAL plains and still more dismal mountains; no indication as yet of the approach to a capital; dined at Santa Cruz; thought we should have been flayed alive by its greedy inhabitants; arrived in the dark at Val de Carneiro; lodged in the house of a certain Don Bernardo, passionately fond of music. The apartment allotted to me contained no less than two harpsichords: one of them, in a fine gilt case, very pompous and sullen, I could scarcely prevail upon the keys to move; next it stood a very sweet-toned modest little spinet, that responded to my touch right willingly, and as I happened to play some Brazilian ditties Don Bernardo never heard before, he was so good as to be in raptures.

These were becoming every minute more enthusiastic, when the arrival of the alcaide mayor, followed by a priest or two with enormous spectacles on their thin snipish noses, interrupted our harmonious proceedings. This personage came expressly to pay me a visit, and to ask questions about England and her unnatural offspring, the revolted provinces of North America; a country which he had heard was colder and darker than the grave, and spread all over with animals, whether biped or quadruped he could not tell, called *koakeres*, living like beavers, in strange huts or tabernacles of their own construction.

Wednesday, Dec. 12th.

DON BERNARDO showed me his cellars, in which are several casks capable of holding thirty or forty hogsheads, and ranges of jars in the shape of the antique amphoræ, ten feet high, and not less than six in diameter. For the first time in my life I tasted the genuine Spanish chocolate, spiced and cinnamoned beyond all endurance. It has put my mouth in a flame, and I do nothing but spit and sputter.

The weather was so damp and foggy that we could hardly see ten yards before us: I cannot, therefore, in conscience abuse the approach to Madrid so much, I believe, as it deserves. About one o'clock, the vapours beginning to dissipate, a huge mass of building, and a confused jumble of steeples, domes, and towers, started on a sudden from the mist. The large building I soon recognized to be the new palace. It is a good deal in the style of Caserta, but being raised on a considerable eminence, produces a more striking effect. At its base flows the pitiful river Mançanares, whose banks were all of a flutter with linen hanging out to dry.

We passed through this rag-fair, between crowds of mahogany-coloured hags, who left off thumping their linen to stare at us, and, crossing a broad bridge over a narrow streamlet, entered Madrid by a gateway of very indifferent architecture. The neat pavement of the streets, the loftiness of the houses, and the cheerful showy appearance of many of the shops, far surpassed my expectation.

Upon entering the Calle d'Alcala, a noble street, much wider than any in London, I was still more surprised. Several magnificent palaces and convents adorn it on both sides. At one extremity, you perceive the trees and fountains of the Prado, and, at the other, the lofty domes of a series of churches. We have got apartments at the Cruz de Malta, which, though very indifferently furnished, have at least the advantage of commanding this prospect. I passed half-an-hour after dinner in one of the balconies, gazing upon the variety of equipages which were rattling along. The street sloping gradually down, and being paved with remarkable smoothness, they drove at a furious rate, the high fashion at Madrid; where to hurry along at the risk of laming your mules, and cracking their skulls, is to follow the example of his Majesty, than whom no monarch drives with greater vehemence.

I strolled to the Prado, and was much struck by the spaciousness of the principal walk, the length of the avenues, and the stateliness of the fountains. Though the evening was damp and gloomy, a great many people were rambling about, and a long line of carriages parading. The dress of the ladies, the cut of their servants' liveries, the bags of the coachmen, and the painting of the coaches, were so perfectly Parisian, that I fancied myself on the Boulevards, and looked in vain for those ponderous equipages, surrounded by pages and escudeiros, one reads of in Spanish romances. A total change has taken place, and the original national customs are almost obliterated.

Devotion, however, is not yet banished from the Prado; at the ringing of the Ave-Maria bell, the coaches

stopped, the servants took off their hats, the ladies crossed themselves, and the foot passengers stood motionless, muttering their orisons. There is both opera and play to-night, I believe, but I am in no mood to go to either.

LETTER VII.

The Duchess of Berwick in all her nonchalance.—Her apartment described.—Her passion for music.—Her señoras de honor.

Thursday, Dec. 13th, 1787.

It was a heavy damp morning, and I could hardly prevail upon myself to quit my fireside and deliver the archbishop's most confidential despatches to the Portuguese ambassador Don Diogo de Noronha.

The ambassador being gone to the palace, I drove to the Duchess of Berwick's, my old acquaintance, with whom I passed so much of my time at Paris eight years ago. Her dear spouse, so well known at Spa, Brussels, Aix-la-Chapelle, and all the gaming-places of Europe, by the name, style, and title of marquis of Jamaica, has been departed these five or six months; and she is now mistress of the most splendid palace in Madrid, of one of the first fortunes, and of the affairs of her only son, the present Duke of Berwick, to whom she is guardian.

The façade of the palace, and the spacious court before it, pleased me extremely. It is in the best style of modern Parisian architecture, simple and graceful. I was conducted up a majestic staircase, adorned with corinthian columns, and through a long suite of apartments, at the extremity of which, in a saloon hung with embroidered India satin, sat reclined madame la duchesse, in all her accustomed nonchalance. She seemed never to have moved from her sofa since I last had the pleasure of seeing her, and is exactly the same good-natured, indolent being, free from malice or uncharitableness; I wish the world was fuller of this harmless, quiet species.

The morning passed most rapidly away in talking over rose-coloured times; I returned home to dine, and as soon as it was dark went back again to madame de Berwick's, who was waiting tea for me. I like her apartment very much, the angles are taken off by low semicircular sofas, and the space between them and the hangings filled up with slabs of Granadian marble, on which are placed most beautiful porcelain vases with mignonette and rose-trees in full bloom. The fire burnt cheerfully, the table was drawn close to it; the duchess's little girl, Donna Ferdinanda, sat playing and smiling upon a dog, which she held in her lap, and had swaddled up like an infant.

Soon after tea, the young duke of Berwick and a French abbé, his preceptor, came in and stayed with us the remainder of the evening. The duke is only fourteen and some months, but he is taller than I am, and as plump as the plumpest of partridges. His manners are French, and his address as prematurely formed as his figure. Few, if any, fortunes in Europe equal that which he enjoys, and of which he has expectations; being heir to the house of Alba, seventy thousand a-year at least, and in possession of the Veragua and Liria estates. These immense properties are of course underlet, and wretchedly cultivated. If able exertions were made in their management, his income might be doubled.

Madame de Berwick has not lost her passion for music; operas and sonatas lie scattered all over her apartment; not only singing-books were lying on the carpet, but singers themselves; three of her musical attendants, a page, and two pretty little señoras de honor, having cast themselves carelessly at her feet in the true Spanish, or rather morisco, fashion, ready to warble forth the moment she gave the signal, which was not long delayed, and never did I hear more soothing voices. The inspiration they gave rise to drove me to the piano-forte, where I played and sang those airs Madame de Berwick was so fond of in the dawn of our acquaintance; when, thanks to her cherished indolence, she had the resignation to listen day after day, and hour after hour, to my romantic rhapsodies. How fervid and ecstatic was I in those days; the toy of every impulse, the willing dupe of every gay illusion. The duchess tells me, she thinks from the tone of our conversation in the morning, that I am now a little sobered, and may possibly get through this thorny world without losing my wits on its briars.

LETTER VIII.

The Chevalier de Roxas.—Excursion to the palace and gardens of the Buen Retiro.—The Turkish Ambassador and his numerous train.—Farinelli's apartments.

Dec. 14th, 1785.

ONE of the best informed and pleasantest of Spaniards, the Chevalier de Roxas, who had been very intimate both with Verdeil and me at Lausanne, came in a violent hurry this morning to give us a cordial embrace. He seems to have set his heart upon showing us about Madrid, and rendering our stay here as lively as he could make it. Fifty schemes did he propose in half a minute, of visiting museums, churches, and public buildings; of goings to balls, theatres, and tertullias.

I took alarm at this busy prospect, drew back into my shell, and began wishing myself in the most perfect incognito; but, alas! to no purpose, it was all in vain.

Roxas, most eager to enter upon his office of cicerone, fidgeted to the window, observed we had still an hour or two of daylight, and proposed an excursion to the palace and gardens of the Buen Retiro. Upon entering the court of the palace, which is surrounded by low buildings, with plastered fronts, sadly battered by wind and weather, I espied some venerable figures in caftans and turbans, leaning against a doorway.

My sparks of orientalism instantly burst into a flame at such a sight: "Who are those picturesque animals?" said I to our conductor. "Is it lawful to approach them?" "As often as you please," answered Roxas. "They belong to the Turkish ambassador, who is lodged, with all his train, at the Buen Retiro, in the identical apartments once occupied by Farinelli; where he held his state levees and opera rehearsals; drilling ministers one day, and tenors and soprani the other: if you have a mind, we will go up-stairs and examine the whole menagerie."

No sooner said, no sooner done. I cleared four steps at a leap, to the great delight of his sublime excellency's pages and attendants, and entered a saloon spread with the most sumptuous carpets, and perfumed with the

fragrance of the wood of aloes. In a corner of this magnificent chamber sat the ambassador, Achmet Vassif Effendi, wrapped up in a pelisse of the most precious sables, playing with a light cane he had in his hand, and every now and then passing it under the noses of some tall, handsome slaves, who were standing in a row before him. These figures, fixed as statues, and to all appearance equally insensible, neither moved hand nor eye. As I advanced to make my salam to the grand seignor's representative, who received me with a most gracious nod of the head; his interpreter announced to what nation I belonged, and my own individual warm partiality for the Sublime Porte.

As soon as I had taken my seat in a ponderous fauteuil of figured velvet, coffee was carried round in cups of most delicate china, with gold enamelled saucers. Notwithstanding my predilection for the east and its customs, I could hardly get this beverage down, it was so thick and bitter; whilst I was making a few wry faces in consequence, a low murmuring sound, like that of flutes and dulcimers, accompanied by a sort of tabor, issued from behind a curtain which separated us from another apartment. There was a melancholy wildness in the melody, and a continual repetition of the same plaintive cadences, that soothed and affected me.

The ambassador kept poring upon my countenance, and appeared much delighted with the effect his music seemed to produce upon it. He is a man of considerable talent, deeply skilled in Turkish literature; a native of Bagdad; rich, munificent, and nobly born, being descended from the house of Barmek; gracious in his address, smooth and plausible in his elocution; but not without something like a spark of despotism in a corner of his eye. Now and then I fancied that the recollection of having recommended the bow-string, and certain doubts whether he might not one day or other be complimented with it in his turn, passed across his venerable and interesting physiognomy.

My eager questions about Bagdad, the tomb of Zobeida, the vestiges of the Dhar al Khalifat, or palace of the Abbassides, seemed to excite a thousand remembrances which gave him pleasure; and when I added a few quotations from some of his favourite authors, particularly Mesihi, he became so flowingly communicative, that a shrewd dapper Greek, called Timoni, who acted as his most confidential interpreter, could hardly keep pace with him.

Had not the hour of prayer arrived, our conversation might have lasted till midnight. Rising up with much stateliness, he extended his arms to bid me a good evening, and was assisted along by two good-looking Georgian pages, to an adjoining chamber, where his secretaries, dragoman, and attendants, were all assembled to perform their devotions, each on his little carpet, as if in a mosque; and it was not unedifying to witness the solemnity and abstractedness with which these devotions were performed.

LETTER IX.

The Museum and Academy of Arts.—Scene on the Prado.—The Portuguese Ambassador and his comforters.—The Theatre.—A highly popular dancer.—Seguidillas in all their glory.

Sunday, Dec. 16th, 1787.

THE kind, indefatigable Roxas came to conduct us to the Museum and Academy of Arts. It consists of seven or eight apartments, with cases all around them, in a plain, good style; the objects clearly arranged, and exposed to view in a very intelligible manner. There is a vast collection of minerals, corals, madrepores, and stalactites, from all the grottoes in the universe; and curious specimens of virgin-gold and silver. Amongst the latter, a lump weighing seventy pounds, which was shivered off an enormous mass by a master miner, who, after dining on it, with twelve or thirteen persons, hacked it to pieces, and distributed the fragments amongst his guests.

What pleased me most was a collection of Peruvian vases; a polished stone, which served the Incas for a mirror; and a linen mantle, which formerly adorned their copper-coloured shoulders, as finely woven as a shawl, and flowered in very nearly a similar manner, the colours as fresh and vivid as if new.

In the apartments of the academy is a most valuable collection of casts after the serene and graceful antique, and several fierce, obtrusive daubings by modern Spanish artists.

I found our acute, intelligent *chargé-d'affaires*^[26] card lying on my table when I got home, and a great many more, of equal whiteness; such a sight chills me like a fall of snow, for I think of the cold idleness of going about day after day dropping little bits of pasteboard in return. Verdeil and I dined tête-à-tête, planning schemes how to escape formal fussifications. No easy matter, I suspect, if I may judge from appearances.

Our repast and our council over, we hurried to the Prado, where a brilliant string of equipages was moving along in two files. In the middle paraded the state coaches of the royal family, containing their own precious selves, and their wonted accompaniment of bedchamber lords and ladies, duly bedizened. It was a gay spectacle; the music of the Swiss guards playing, and the evening sun shining bright on their showy uniforms. The botanic garden is separated from the walk by magnificent railings and pilasters, placed at regular distances, crowned with vases of aloes and yuccas. The verdure and fountains of this vast enclosure, terminated by a range of columned conservatories, with an entrance of very majestic architecture, has a delightful and striking effect.

From the Prado I drove to the Portuguese ambassador's, who is laid up with a sore toe. Three diplomatic animals, two males and one female, were nursing and comforting him. He is most supremely dull, and so are his comforters. One of them in particular, who shall be nameless, quite asinine.

The little sympathy I feel for creatures of this genus, made me shorten my visit as much as I decently could, and return home to take up Roxas, who was waiting to accompany us to the Spanish theatre. They were acting the Barber of Seville, with Paesiello's music, and singing better than at the opera. The entertainment ended with a sort of intermez, very characteristic of Spanish manners in low life; in which were introduced seguidillas. One of the dancers, a young fellow, smartly dressed as a maxo, so enraptured the audience, that they made him repeat his dance four times over; a French dancing-master would have absolutely shuddered at the manner in which he turned in his knees. The women sit by themselves in a gallery as dingy as limbo, wrapped up in their white mantillas, and looking like spectres. I never heard anything like the vociferation with which the pit called out for the seguidillas, nor the frantic, deafening applause they bestowed on their favourite dancer.

The play ended at eight, and we came back to tea by our fireside.

LETTER X.

Visit to the Escorial.—Imposing site of that regal convent.—Reception by the Mystagogue of the place.—Magnificence of the choir.—Charles the Fifth's organ.—Crucifix by Cellini.—Gorgeous ceiling painted by Luca Giordano.—Extent and intricacy of the stupendous edifice.

Thursday, Dec. 19th, 1787.

I HATE being roused out of bed by candlelight on a sharp wintry morning; but as I had fixed to-day for visiting the Escorial, and had stationed three relays on the road, in order to perform the journey expeditiously, I thought myself obliged to carry my plan into execution.

The weather was cold and threatening, the sky red and deeply coloured. Roxas was to be of our party, so we drove to his brother, the Marquis of Villanueva's, to take him up. He is one of the best-natured and most friendly of human beings, and I would not have gone without him upon any account; though in general I abhor turning and twisting about a town in search of any body, let its soul be never so transcendent.

It was past eight before we issued out of the gates of Madrid, and rattled along an avenue on the banks of the Mançanares full gallop, which brought us to the Casa del Campo, one of the king's palaces, wrapped up in groves and thickets. We continued a mile or two by the wall of this enclosure, and leaving La Sarsuela, another royal villa, surrounded by shrubby hillocks, on the right, traversed three or four leagues of a wild, naked country, and, after ascending several considerable eminences, the sun broke out, the clouds partially rolled away, and we discovered the white buildings of this far-famed monastery, with its dome and towers detaching themselves from the bold background of a lofty, irregular mountain.

We were now about a league off: the country wore a better aspect than near Madrid. To the right and left of the road, which is of a noble width, and perfectly well made, lie extensive parks of greensward, scattered over with fragments of rock and stumps of oak and ash-trees. Numerous herds of deer were standing stock-still, quietly lifting up their innocent noses, and looking us full in the face with their beautiful eyes, secure of remaining unmolested, for the King never permits a gun to be discharged in these enclosures.

The Escorial, though overhung by melancholy mountains, is placed itself on a very considerable eminence, up which we were full half an hour toiling, the late rains having washed this part of the road into utter confusion. There is something most severely impressive in the façade of this regal convent, which, like the palace of Persepolis, is overshadowed by the adjoining mountain; nor did I pass through a vaulted cloister into the court before the church, solid as if hewn out of a rock, without experiencing a sort of shudder, to which no doubt the vivid recollection of the black and blood-stained days of our gloomy queen Mary's husband not slightly contributed. The sun being again overcast, the porches of the church, surmounted by grim statues, appeared so dark and cavern-like, that I thought myself about to enter a subterraneous temple set apart for the service of some mysterious and terrible religion. And when I saw the high altar, in all its pomp of jasper-steps, ranks of columns one above the other, and paintings filling up every interstice, full before me, I felt completely awed.

The sides of the recess, in which this imposing pile is placed, are formed by lofty chapels, almost entirely occupied by catafalques of gilt enamelled bronze. Here, with their crowns and sceptres humbly prostrate at their feet, bare-headed and unhelmed, kneel the figures, large as life, of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and his imperious son, the second Philip, accompanied by those of their unhappy consorts and ill-fated children. My sensations of dread and dreariness were not diminished upon finding myself alone in such company; for Roxas had left me to deliver some letters to his right reverence the prior, which were to open to us all the arcana of this terrific edifice, at once a temple, a palace, a convent, and a tomb.

Presently my amiable friend returned, and with him a tall old monk, with an ash-coloured forbidding countenance, and staring eyes, the expression of which was the farthest removed possible from anything like cordiality. This was the mystagogue of the place—the prior *in propria persona*, the representative of St. Jerome, as far as this monastery and its domain was concerned, and a disciplinarian of celebrated rigidity. He began examining me from head to foot, and, after what I thought rather a strange scrutiny, asked me in broad Spanish what I wished particularly to see. Then turning to Roxas, said loud enough for me to hear him, "He is very young; does he understand what I say to him? But, as I am peremptorily commanded to show him about, I suppose I must comply, though I am quite unused to the office of explaining our curiosities. However, if it must be, it must; so let us begin, and not dally. I have no time to spare, you well know, and have quite enough to do in the choir and the convent."

After this not very gracious exordium, we set forth on our tour. First we visited some apartments with vaulted roofs, painted in arabesque, in the finest style of the sixteenth century; and then a vast hall, which had been used for the celebration of mass, whilst the great church was building, where I saw the Perla in all its purity, the most delicately-finished work of Raphael, the Pesce, with its divine angel, graceful infant; and devout young Tobit, breathing the very soul of pious, unaffected simplicity. My attention was next attracted by that most profoundly pathetic of pictures, Jacob weeping over the bloody garment of his son; the loftiest proof in existence of the extraordinary powers of Velasquez in the noblest work of art.

These three pictures so absorbed my admiration, that I had little left for a host of glorious performances by Titian and the highest masters, which cover the plain, massive walls of these conventual rooms with a paradise of glowing colours; so I passed along almost as rapidly as my grumbling cicerone could desire, and followed him up several flights of stairs, and through many and many an arched passage and vestibule, all of the sternest doric, into the choir, which is placed over the grand western entrance, right opposite, at the distance of more than two hundred feet, to the high altar and its solemn accompaniments. No regal chamber I ever beheld can be compared, in point of sober harmonious majesty, to this apartment, which looks more as if it belonged to a palace than to a church. The series of stalls, designed in a severer taste than was common in the sixteenth century, are carved out of the most precious woods the Indies could furnish. At the extremity of this striking perspective of onyx-coloured seats, columns, and canopies, appears suspended upon a black velvet pall that revered image of the crucified Saviour, formed of the purest ivory, which Cellini seems to have sculptured in moments of devout rapture and inspiration. It is by far his finest work; his Perseus, at Florence, is tame and laboured in comparison.

In a long narrow corridor which runs behind the stalls, panelled all over like an inlaid cabinet, I was shown a

beautiful little organ, in a richly chased silver case, which accompanied Charles the Fifth in his African expedition, and must often have gently beguiled the cares of empire, for he played on it, tradition says, almost every evening. That it is worth playing upon even now I can safely vouch, for I never touched any instrument with a tone of more delicious sweetness; and touch it I did, though my austere conductor, the sour-visaged prior, looked doubly forbidding on the occasion.

The stalls I have just mentioned are much less ornamented than those I have seen in Pavia, and many other monasteries; the ceiling of this noblest of choirs, displays the utmost exuberance of decoration—the richest and most gorgeous of spectacles, the heavens and all the powers therein. Imagination can scarcely conceive the pomp and prodigality of pencil with which Luca Giordano has treated this subject, and filled every corner of the vast space it covers with well-rounded forms, that seem actually starting from the glowing clouds with which they are environed.

“Is not this fine?” said the monk; “you can have nothing like it in your country. And now be pleased to move forward, for the day is wasting, and you will have little time left to examine our inestimable relics, and the jewelled shrines in which they are deposited.”

We went down from the choir, I can scarcely tell whither, such is the extent and intricacy of this stupendous edifice. We passed, I believe, through some of the lateral chapels at the great church, into several quadrangles, one in particular, with a fountain under a cupola in the centre, surrounded by doric arcades, equal in justness of proportion and architectural terseness to Palladio’s court in the convent of S. Giorgio Maggiore.

LETTER XI.

Mysterious cabinets.—Relics of Martyrs.—A feather from the Archangel Gabriel’s wing.—Labyrinth of gloomy cloisters.—Sepulchral cave.—River of death.—The regal sarcophagi.

My lord the prior, not favouring a prolonged survey, I reluctantly left this beautiful court, and was led into a low gallery, roofed and wainscoted with cedar, lined on both sides by ranges of small doors of different-coloured Brazil-wood, looking in appearance, at least, as solid as marble. Four sacristans, and as many lay-brothers, with large lighted flambeaux of yellow wax in their hands, and who, by the by, never quitted us more the remainder of our peregrinations, stood silent as death, ready to unlock those mysterious entrances.

The first they opened exhibited a buffet, or *credence*, three stories high, set out with many a row of grinning skulls, looking as pretty as gold and diamonds could make them; the second, every possible and impossible variety of odds and ends, culled from the carcasses of martyrs; the third, enormous ebony presses, the secrets of which I begged for pity’s sake might not be intruded upon for my recreation, as I began to be heartily wearied of sightseeing; but when my conductors opened the fourth mysterious door, I absolutely shrank back, almost sickened by a perfume of musk and ambergris.

A spacious vault was now disclosed to me—one noble arch, richly panelled: had the pavement of this strange-looking chamber been strewn with saffron, I should have thought myself transported to the enchanted courser’s forbidden stable we read of in the tale of the Three Calenders.

The prior, who is not easily pleased, seemed to have suspicions that the seriousness of my demeanour was not entirely orthodox; I overheard him saying to Roxas, “Shall I show him the Angel’s feather? you know we do not display this our most-valued, incomparable relic to everybody, nor unless upon special occasions.”—“The occasion is sufficiently special,” answered my partial friend; “the letters I brought to you are your warrant, and I beseech your reverence to let us look at this gift of heaven, which I am extremely anxious myself to adore and venerate.”

Forth stalked the prior, and drawing out from a remarkably large cabinet an equally capacious sliding shelf—the source, I conjecture, of the potent odour I complained of—displayed lying stretched out upon a quilted silken mattress, the most glorious specimen of plumage ever beheld in terrestrial regions—a feather from the wing of the Archangel Gabriel, full three feet long, and of a blushing hue more soft and delicate than that of the loveliest rose. I longed to ask at what precise moment this treasure beyond price had been dropped—whether from the air—on the open ground, or within the walls of the humble tenement at Nazareth; but I repressed all questions of an indiscreet tendency—the why and wherefore, the when and how, for what and to whom such a palpable manifestation of archangelic beauty and wingedness had been vouchsafed.

We all knelt in silence, and when we rose up after the holy feather had been again deposited in its perfumed lurking-place, I fancied the prior looked doubly suspicious, and uttered a sort of *humph* very doggedly; nor did his ill-humour evaporate upon my desiring to be conducted to the library. “It is too late for you to see the precious books and miniatures by daylight,” replied the crusty old monk, “and you would not surely have me run the risk of dropping wax upon them. No, no, another time, another time, when you come earlier. For the present, let us visit the tomb of the catholic kings; there, our flambeaux will be of service without doing injury.”

He led the way through a labyrinth of cloisters, gloomy as the grave; till ordering a grated door to be thrown open, the light of our flambeaux fell upon a flight of most beautiful marble steps, polished as a mirror, leading down between walls of the rarest jaspers to a portal of no great size, but enriched with balusters of rich bronze, sculptured architraves, and tablets of inscriptions, in a style of the greatest magnificence.

As I descended the steps, a gurgling sound, like that of a rivulet, caught my ear. “What means this?” said I. “It means,” answered the monk, “that the sepulchral cave on the left of the stairs, where repose the bodies of many of our queens and infantas, is properly ventilated, running water being excellent for that purpose.” I went on, not lulled by these rippling murmurs, but chilled when I reflected through what precincts flows this river of death.

Arrived at the bottom of the stairs, we passed through the portal just mentioned, and entered a circular saloon, not more than five-and-thirty feet in diameter, characterized by extreme elegance, not stern solemnity. The regal sarcophagi, rich in golden ornaments, ranged one above the other, forming panels of the most decorative kind; the lustre of exquisitely sculptured bronze, the pavement of mottled alabaster; in short, this graceful dome, covered with scrolls of the most delicate foliage, appeared to the eye of my imagination more like a subterranean boudoir, prepared by some gallant young magician for the reception of an enchanted and enchanting princess, than a temple consecrated to the king of terrors.

My conductor's visage growing longer and longer every minute, and looking pretty nearly as grim as that of the last-mentioned sovereign, I whispered Roxas it was full time to take our leave; which we did immediately after my intimating that express desire, to the no small satisfaction, I am perfectly convinced, of my lord the prior.

Cold and hungry, for we had not been offered a morsel of refreshment, we repaired to a warm opulent-looking habitation belonging to one of my kind companion's most particular friends, a much favoured attendant of his catholic Majesty's; here we were received with open arms and generous hospitality; and it grew pitch dark before we quitted this comfortable shelter from the piercing winds, which blow almost perpetually over the Escorial, and returned to Madrid.

LETTER XII.

A concert and ball at Senhor Pacheco's.—Curious assemblage in his long pompous gallery.—Deplorable ditty by an eastern dilettante.—A bolero in the most rapturous style.—Boccharini in despair.—Solecisms in dancing.

The mules galloped back at so rapid a rate, and their conductors bawled and screamed so lustily to encourage their exertions, that half my recollections of the Escorial were whirled out of my head before I reached my old quarters at the Cruz de Malta. I had quite forgotten, amongst other things, that I had actually accepted a most pressing invitation to a concert and ball at Pacheco's this very evening.

Pacheco is an old Portuguese, immensely rich, and who had been immensely favoured in the days of his youth by his august countrywoman, Queen Barbara, the consort of Ferdinand the sixth, and the patroness of Farinelli. He is uncle to madame Arriaga, her most Faithful Majesty's most faithful and favourite attendant, and a person of such worship, that courtiers, ministers, and prelates, are too happy to congregate at his house, whenever he takes it into his head to allow them an opportunity.

Though I had been half petrified by my cold ramble through the Escorial, under the prior's still more chilling auspices, I had quite life enough left to obey Pacheco's summons with alacrity; and as I expected to dance a great deal, I put on my dancing-dress, that of a maxo, with ties and tags, and trimmings and buttons, redecilla and all.

I must confess, however, that I felt rather abashed and disappointed, upon entering Pacheco's long pompous gallery, to find myself in the midst of diplomatic and ministerial personages, assembled in stiff gala to do honour to Achmet Vassif, whose musicians were seated on the carpet howling forth a deplorable ditty, composed, as the Armenian interpreter informed me, by one of the most impassioned and lovesick dilettantes of the east; no strain I ever heard was half so lugubrious, not even that of a dog baying the moon, or owls making their complaints to it.

I could not help telling the ambassador, without the smallest circumlocution, that his tabor and pipe people I heard the other day accompanying a dulcimer, were far more worthy of praise than his vocal attendants; but this truth, like most others, did not exactly please; and I fear my reputation for musical connoisseurship was completely forfeited in his excellency's estimation, for he looked a little glum upon the occasion. What surprised me most, after all, was the patience with which the whole assembly listened for full three-quarters of an hour to these languorous wailings.

Amongst the audience, none bore the severe infliction with a greater degree of evangelical resignation than the grand inquisitor and the archbishop of Toledo; both these prelates have not only the look, but the character of beneficence, which promises a truce to the faggot and pitch-barrel; the expression of the archbishop's countenance in particular is most engagingly mild and pleasing. He came up to me without the least reserve or formality, and taking me by the hand, said with a cheerful smile, "I see you are equipped for a dance, and have adopted our fashion; we all long to judge whether an Englishman can enter (as I hear you can) into the extravagant spirit of our national dances. I will speak to Pacheco, and desire him to form a diversion in your favour, by calling off these doleful minstrels to the rinfresco prepared for them." And so he did, and there was an end of the concert, to my infinite joy, and the no less delight of the villa mayors and sabbatinis, with whom, without a moment's farther delay, I sprang forth in a bolero.

Down came all the Spanish musicians from their formal orchestra, too happy to escape its trammels; away went the foreign regulars, taking vehement pinches of snuff, with the most unequivocal expressions of anger and indignation. A circle was soon formed, a host of guitars put in immediate requisition, and never did I hear such wild, extravagant, passionate modulations.

Boccharini, who led and presided over the Duchess of Ossuna's concerts, and who had been lent to Pacheco as a special favour, witnessed these most original deviations from all established musical rule with the utmost contempt and dismay. He said to me in a loud whisper, "If *you* dance and *they* play in this ridiculous manner, I shall never be able to introduce a decent style into our musical world here, which I flattered myself I was on the very point of doing. What possesses you? Is it the devil? Who could suppose that a reasonable being, an Englishman of all others, would have encouraged these inveterate barbarians in such absurdities. There's a chromatic scream! there's a passage! We have heard of robbing time; this is murdering it. What! again! Why, this is worse than a convulsive hiccup, or the last rattle in the throat of a dying malefactor. Give me the Turkish howlings in preference; they are not so obtrusive and impudent."

So saying, he moved off with a semi-seria stride, and we danced on with redoubled delight and joy. The quicker we moved, the more intrepidly we stamped with our feet, the more sonorously we snapped our fingers, the better reconciled the sublime Effendi appeared to be with me. He forgot my critiques upon his vocal performers: he rose up from his snug cushion, and nodded his turbaned head, and expressed his delight, not only by word and gesture, but in a most comfortable orientalish sort of chuckling. As to the rest of the company, the Spanish part at least, they were so much animated, that not less than twenty voices accompanied the bolero with its appropriate words in full chorus, and with a glow of enthusiasm that inspired my lovely partners and myself with such energy, that we outdid all our former outdancings.

"Is it possible," exclaimed an old fandango-fancier of great notoriety—"is it possible, that a son of the cold north can have learnt all our rapturous flings and stampings?"—"The French never *could*, or rather never *would*," observed a Monsieur Gaudin, one of the Duke de la V——'s secretaries, who was standing by perfectly astounded.

Who persecute like renegades? who are so virulent against their former sect as fresh converts to another? This was partly my case; though my dancing and musical education had been strictly orthodox, according to the precepts of Mozart and Sacchini, of Vestris and Gardel, I declared loudly there was no music but Spanish, no dancing but Spanish, no salvation in either art out of the Spanish pale, and that, compared with such rapturous melodies, such inspired movements, the rest of Europe afforded only examples of dullness and insipidity. I would not allow my former instructors a spark of merit; and at the very moment I was committing solecisms in good dancing at every step, and stamping and piaffing like a courser but half-broken in at a manège, I felt and looked as firmly persuaded of the truth of my impudent assertions as the greatest bigot of his nonsense in some untried new-fangled superstition. Success, founded or unfounded, is everything in this world. We too well know the sad fate of merit. I am more than apt to conjecture we were but very slightly entitled to any applause; yet the transports we called forth were as fervid as those the famous Le Pique excited at Naples in the zenith of his popularity.

The British and American ministers, who were standing by the whole time, enjoyed this amusing proof of Spanish fanaticism, in its profane mood, with all the zest of intelligent and shrewd observers. Pisani, the Venetian ambassador, inclined decidedly to the southern side of the question. He was bound, heart and soul, by a variety of silken ties to the Spanish interest, and had almost forgotten the fascinations of Venice in those of Andalusia. Consequently I had his vote in my favour. Not so that of the Duchess of Ossuna, Boccharini's patroness. She said to me in the plainest language, "You are making the greatest fool of yourself I ever beheld; and as to those riotous self-taught hoydens, your partners, I tell you what, they are scarcely worthy to figure in the third rank at a second-rate theatre. Come along with me, and I will present you to my mother, the Countess of Benevente, who gives a very different sort of education to the charming young women she admits to her court."

I had heard of this court and its delectabilities, and at the same time been informed that its throne was a far-table, to which the initiated were imperatively expected to become tributaries. The sovereign, old Benevente, is the most determined hag of her rout-giving, card-playing species in Europe, of the highest birth, the highest consequence, and the principal disposer, by long habit and old cortejo-ship, of Florida Blanca's good graces.

Notwithstanding the severe regulations against gambling societies, most severely enforced at Madrid; notwithstanding the prime minister's morality, and the still higher morality of his royal master, this great lady's aberrations of every kind are most complaisantly winked at; she is allowed not only to set up under her own princely roof a refuge for the desolate, in the most delicate style of Spanish refinement, for the kind purpose of enchanting all persons sufficiently favoured by fortune to merit admission to her parties, by every blandishment and languishment the most seductive eyes of Seville and Cadiz she had collected together could throw around them; but so sure as the hour of midnight arrived, and Florida Blanca (who never fails paying his devoirs to the countess every evening) had made his retiring bow, so sure a confidential party of illuminati, of unsleeping partners in the gambling-line, made their appearance, heavily laden with well-stored caskets.

Now came the tug of play, and hope, and fear in all their thrilling and throbbing alternations; but, to say truth, I was so completely jaded and worn-out that I partook of neither, and was too happy, after losing almost unconsciously a few *dobras*, to be allowed to retire; old Benevente calling out to me, with the croak of a vulture scenting its prey from afar, *Cavallero Inglez, a mañana a la misma hora*.

LETTER XIII.

Palace of Madrid.—Masterly productions of the great Italian, Spanish, and Flemish painters.—The King's sleeping apartment.—Musical clocks.—Feathered favourites.—Picture of the Madonna del Spasimo.—Interview with Don Gabriel and the Infanta.—Her Royal Highness's affecting recollections of home.—Head-quarters of Masserano.—Exhibition of national manners there.

Monday, 24th Dec. 1787.

I SHALL have the megrims for want of exercise, like my friend Achmet Vassif, if I don't alter my way of life. This morning I only took a listless saunter in the Prado, and returned early to dinner, with a very slight provision of fresh air in my lungs. Roxas was with me, hurrying me out of all appetite that I might see the palace by daylight; and so to the palace we went, and it was luckily a bright ruddy afternoon, the sun gilding a grand confusion of mountainous clouds, and chequering the wild extent of country between Madrid and the Escorial with powerful effects of light and shade.

I cannot praise the front of the palace very warmly. In the centre of the edifice starts up a whimsical sort of turret, with gilt bells, the vilest ornament that could possibly have been imagined. The interior court is of pure and classic architecture, and the great staircase so spacious and well-contrived that you arrive almost imperceptibly at the portal of the guard-chamber. Every door-case and window recess of this magnificent edifice gleams with the richest polished marbles: the immense and fortress-like thickness of the walls, and double panes of the strongest glass, exclude the keen blasts which range almost uninterrupted over the wide plains of Castile, and preserve an admirable temperature throughout the whole extent of these royal rooms, the grandeur, and at the same time comfort, of which cannot possibly be exceeded.

The king, the prince of Asturias, and the chief part of their attendants, were all absent hunting in the park of the Escorial; but the reposteros, or curtain-drawers of the palace, having received particular orders for my admittance, I enjoyed the entire liberty of wandering about unrestrained and unmolested. Roxas having left me to join a gay party of the royal body-guard in Masserano's apartments, I remained in total solitude, surrounded by the pure unsullied works of the great Italian, Spanish, and Flemish painters, fresh as the flowers of a parterre in early morning, and many of them as beautiful in point of hues.

Not a door being closed, I penetrated through the chamber of the throne even into the old king's sleeping-apartment, which, unlike the dormitory of most of his subjects, is remarkable for extreme neatness. A book of pious orisons, with engravings by Spanish artists, and containing, amongst other prayers in different languages, one adapted to the exclusive use of majesty, *Regi solo proprius*, was lying on his praying-desk; and at the head of the richly-canopied, but uncurtained bed, I noticed with much delight an enamelled tablet by Mengs, representing the infant Saviour appearing to Saint Anthony of Padua.

In this room, as in all the others I passed through, without any exception, stood cages of gilded wire, of different forms and sizes, and in every cage a curious exotic bird, in full song, each trying to out-sing his neighbour. Mingled with these warblings was heard at certain intervals the low chime of musical clocks, stealing upon the ear like the tones of harmonic glasses. No other sound broke in any degree the general stillness, except, indeed, the almost inaudible footsteps of several aged domestics, in court-dresses of the cut and fashion prevalent in the days of the king's mother, Elizabeth Farnese, gliding along quietly and cautiously to open the cages, and offer their inmates such dainties as highly-educated birds are taught to relish. Much fluttering and cowering down ensued in consequence of these attentions, and much rubbing of bills and scratching of poles on my part, as well as on that of the smiling old gentlemen.

As soon as the ceremony of pampering these feathered favourites had been most affectionately performed, I availed myself of the light reflected from a clear sun-set to examine the pictures, chiefly of a religious cast, with which these stately apartments are tapestried; particularly the Madonna del Spasimo, that vivid representation of the blessed Virgin's maternal agony, when her divine son, fainting under the burthen of the cross, approached to ascend the mount of torture, and complete the awful mystery of redemption. Raphael never attained in any other of his works such solemn depth of colour, such majesty of character, as in this triumph of his art. "Never was sorrow like unto the sorrow" he has depicted in the Virgin's countenance and attitude; never was the expression of a sublime and God-like calm in the midst of acute suffering conveyed more closely home to the human heart than in the face of Christ.

I stood fixed in the contemplation of this holy vision—for such I almost fancied it to be—till the approaching shadows of night had overspread every recess of these vast apartments: still I kept intensely gazing upon the picture. I knew it was time to retire,—still I gazed on. I was aware that Roxas had been long expecting me in Masserano's apartments,—still I could not snatch myself away; the Virgin mother with her outstretched arms still haunted me. The song of the birds had ceased, as well as the soft diapason of the self-playing organs;—all was hushed, all tranquil. I departed at length with the languid unwillingness of an enthusiast exhausted by the intensity of his feelings and loth to arouse himself from the bosom of grateful illusions.

Just as I reached the portal of the great stairs, whom should I meet but Noronha advancing towards me with a hurried step. "Where are you going so fast?" said he to me, "and where have you been staying so long? I have been sending repeatedly after you to no purpose; you must come with me immediately to the Infanta and Don Gabriel, they want to ask you a thousand questions about the Ajuda: the letters you brought them from Marialva, and the archbishop in particular, have, I suppose, inspired that wish; and as royal wishes, you know, cannot be too speedily gratified, you must kiss their hands this very evening. I am to be your introducer."—"What!" said I, "in this unceremonious dress?"—"Yes," said the ambassador, "I have heard that you are not a pattern of correctness in these matters." I wished to have been one in this instance. At this particular moment I was in no trim exteriorly or interiorly for courtly introductions. I thought of nothing but birds and pictures, and had much rather have been presented to a cockatoo than to the greatest monarch in Christendom.

However, I put on the best face I was able, and we proceeded together very placidly to that part of the palace assigned to Don Gabriel and his blooming bride. The doors of a coved ante-chamber flew open, and after passing through an enfilade of saloons peopled with ladies-in-waiting and pages, (some mere children,) we entered a lofty chamber hung with white satin, formed into compartments by a rich embroidery of gold and colours, and illuminated by a lustre of rock crystal.

At the farther extremity of the apartment, stood the Infant Don Gabriel, leaning against a table covered with velvet, on which I observed a case of large golden antique medals he was in the very act of contemplating: the Infanta was seated near. She rose up most graciously to hold out a beautiful hand, which I kissed with unfeigned fervour: her countenance is most prepossessing; the same florid complexion, handsome features, and open exhilarating smile which distinguishes her brother the Prince of Brazil.

"Ah," said her royal highness with great earnestness, "you have then lately seen my dear mother, and walked perhaps in the little garden I was so fond of; did you notice the fine flowers that grow there? particularly the blue carnation; we have not such flowers at Madrid; this climate is not like that of Portugal, nor are our views so pleasant; I miss the azure Tagus, and your ships continually sailing up it; but when you write to your friend Marialva and the archbishop, tell them, I possess what no other prospect upon earth can equal, the smiles of an adored husband."

The Infant now approached towards me with a look of courteous benignity that reminded me strongly of the Bourbons, nor could I trace in his frank kindly manner the least leaven of Austrian hauteur or Spanish starchness. After inquiring somewhat facetiously how the Duke d'Alafoens and the Portuguese academicians proceeded on their road to the temple of fame, he asked me whether our universities continued to be the favoured abode of classical attainments, and if the books they printed were as correct and as handsome now as in the days of the Stuarts; adding that his private collection contained some copies which had formerly belonged to the celebrated Count of Oxford. This was far too good an opportunity of putting in a word to the praise and glory of his own famous translation of Sallust, to be neglected; so I expressed everything he could have wished to hear upon the subject.

"You are very good," observed his royal highness; "but to tell you the truth, it was hard work for me. I began it, and so I went on, and lost many a day's wholesome exercise in our parks and forests: however, such as it is, I performed my task without any assistance, though you may perhaps have heard the contrary."

It was now Noronha's turn to begin complimenting, which he did with all the high court melliflence of an accredited family ambassador: whether, indeed, the Infant received as gospel all the fine things that were said to him I won't answer, but he looked even kinder and more gracious than at our first entrance. The Infanta recurred again and again to the subject of the Ajuda, and appeared so visibly affected that she awakened all my sympathies; for I, too, had left those behind me on the banks of the Tagus for whom I felt a fond and indelible regard. As we were making our retiring bows, I saw tears gathering in her eyes, whilst she kept gracefully waving her hand to bid us a happy night.

The impressions I received from this interview were not of a nature to allow my enjoying with much vivaciousness the next scene to which I was transported—the head-quarters of Masserano, whom I found in unusually high spirits surrounded by a train of gay young officers, rapping out the rankest Castilian oaths, quaffing their flowing cups of champagne and val de peñas, and playing off upon each other, not exactly the most decorous specimens of practical wit.

Roxas looked rather abashed at so unrefined an exhibition of national manners: Noronha had taken good care to keep aloof, and I regretted not having followed his example.

LETTER XIV.

A German Visionary.—Remarkable conversation with him.—History of a Ghost-seer.

It is not at every corner of life that we stumble upon an intrinsically singular character: to-day however, at Noronha's, I fell in with a Saxon count,^[27] who justly answers to that description. This man is not only thoroughly imbued with the theoretical mysticism of the German school, but has most firmly persuaded himself, and hundreds besides, that he holds converse with the souls of the departed. Though most impressive and even extravagant upon this subject, when started, he proves himself a man of singular judgment upon most others, is a good geometrician, an able chymist, a mineralogist of no ordinary proficiency, and has made discoveries in the art of smelting metals, which have been turned already to useful purpose. Yet nothing can beat out of this cool reflective head, that magical operations may be performed to evident effect, and the devil most positively evocated.

I thought, at first sight, there was a something uncouth and ghostly in his appearance, that promised strange communications; he has a careworn look, a countenance often convulsed with apparently painful twitches, and a lofty skull, set off with bristling hair, powdered as white as Caucasus.

Notwithstanding I by no means courted his acquaintance, he was resolved to make up to me, and dissipate by the smoothest address he could assume, any prejudices his uncommon cast of features might have inspired. Drawing his chair close to mine, whilst Noronha and his party were busily engaged at voltarete, he tried to allure my attention by throwing out hints of the wonders within reach of a person born under the smile of certain constellations: that I was the person he meant to insinuate, I have little doubt. Having heard that fortune had conferred upon me some few of her golden gifts, he thought, perhaps, that I might be *fused* to advantage, like any other lump of the precious metals. Be his motives what they may, he certainly took as many pains to wind himself into my good opinion as if I had actually been the prime favourite of a planet, or a distant cousin by some diabolical intermarriage, in the style of one of the Plantagenet matches, of old Beelzebub himself.

After a good deal of conversation upon different subjects, chiefly of a sombrous nature, happening to ask him if he had known Schröffer, the most renowned ghost-seer in all Germany,—“Intimately well,” was his reply; “a bold young man, not so free, alas! from sensual taint as the awful career he had engaged in demanded,—he rushed upon danger unprepared, at an unhallowed moment—his fate was terrible. I passed a week with him not six months before he disappeared in the frightful manner you have heard of; it was a week of mental toil and suffering, of fasts and privations of various natures, and of sights sufficiently appalling to drive back the whole current of the blood from the heart. It was at this period that, returning one dark and stormy night from trying experiments upon living animals, more excruciating than any the keenest anatomist ever perpetrated, I found lying upon my chair, coiled up in a circle like the symbol of eternity, an enormous snake of a deadly lead colour; it neither hissed nor moved for several minutes: during this pause, whilst I remained aghast looking full upon it, a voice more like the whisper of trees than any sound of human utterance, articulated certain words, which I have retained, and used to powerful effect in moments of peril and extreme urgency.”

I shall not easily forget the strange inquisitive look he gave me whilst making this still stranger communication; he saw my curiosity was excited, and flattered himself he had made upon me the impression he meditated; but when I asked, with the tone of careless levity, what became of the snake on the cushion, after the voice had ceased, he shook his white locks somewhat angrily, and croaked forth with a formidable German accent, “Ask no more—ask no more—you are not in a disposition at present sufficiently pure and serious to comprehend what I *might* disclose. Ask no more.”—For this time at least I most implicitly obeyed him.

Promising to call upon me and continue our conversation any day or hour I might choose to appoint, he glided off so imperceptibly, that had I been a little more persuaded of the possibility of supernatural occurrences, I might have believed he had actually vanished. “A good riddance,” said Noronha; “I don't half like that man, nor can I make out why Florida Blanca is so gracious to him.”—“I rather suspect he is a spy upon us all,” observed the Sardinian ambassadress, who made one of the voltarete party; “and though he guessed right about the winning card last night at the Countess of Benevente's, I am determined not to invite him to dinner again in a hurry.”

LETTER XV.

Madame Bendicho.—Unsuccessful search on the Prado.—Kauffman, an infidel in the German style.—Mass in the chapel of the Virgin.—The Duchess of Alba's villa.—Destruction by a young French artist of the paintings of Rubens.—French ambassador's ball.—Heir-apparent of the house of Medina Celi.

Sunday, Jan. 13th.

KAUFFMAN^[28] accompanied me to the Prado this morning, where we met Madame Bendicho and her faithful Expilly, (a famous tactician in war or peace,) who told me that somebody I thought particularly interesting was not far off. This intelligence imparted to me such animation, that Kauffman was obliged to take long strides to equal my pace. I traversed the whole Prado without meeting the object of my pursuit, and found myself almost unconsciously in the court before the ugly front of the church of Atocha. A tide of devotees carried us into the chapel of the Virgin, which is hung round with trophies, and ex-voto's, legs, arms, and fingers, in wax and plaster.

Kauffman is three parts an infidel in the German style, but I advised him to kneel with something like Castilian solemnity, and hear out a mass which was none of the shortest, the priest being old, and much given to the wiping and adjusting of spectacles, a pair of which, uncommonly large and lustrous, I thought he would never have succeeded in fitting to his nose.

We happened to kneel under the shade of some banners which the British lion was simple enough to let slip out

of his paws during the last war. The colours of fort St. Philip dangled immediately above my head. Amongst the crowd of Our Lady's worshippers I espied one of the gayest of my ball-room acquaintances, the young Duke of Arion, looking like a strayed sheep, and smiting his breast most piteously.

A tiresome *salve regina* being ended, I measured back my steps to the Prado, and at length discovered the person of all others I wished most to see, strictly guarded by *mamma*. I accompanied them to their door, and returned loiteringly and lingeringly home, where I found *Infantado*, who had been waiting for me above half an hour. With him I rode out on the Toledo road to see a pompous bridge, or rather viaduct; for the river it spans, even in this season, is scarcely copious enough to turn the model of a mill-wheel, much less the reality.

From this spot we went to a villa lately purchased by the Duchess of Alba, and which, I was told, Rubens had once inhabited. True enough, we found a conceited young French artist in the arabesque and cupid line, busily employed in pouncing out the last memorials in this spot of that great painter; reminiscences of favourite pictures he had thrown off in fresco, upon what appeared a rich crimson damask ground. Yes, I witnessed this vandalish operation, and saw large flakes of stucco imprinted with the touches of Rubens fall upon the floor, and heard the wretch who was perpetrating the irreparable act sing, "*Veillons mes sœurs, veillons encorre,*" with a strong Parisian accent, all the while he was slashing away.

My sweet temper was so much ruffled by this spectacle, that I begged to be excused any further excursion, and returned home to dress and compose myself, while *Infantado* went back to his palace. I soon joined him, having been invited to dine with his right virtuous and estimable papa. Thank heaven the rage for Frenchified decoration has not yet reached this plain but princely abode, which remains in noble Castilian simplicity, with all its famed pictures untouched and uncontaminated.

As soon as the old duke had retired to his evening's devotions, we hurried to the French ambassador's ball, where I met fewer saints than sinners, and saw nothing particularly edifying, except the semi-royal race of the *Medina Celis* dancing "high and disposedly." *Cogolhudo*, the heir-apparent of this great house, is a good-natured, busy personage, but his illustrious consort, who has been recently appointed to the important office of *Camerara mayor*, or mistress of the robes to the image of Our Lady of La Soledad, is a great deal less kindly and affable.^[29]

LETTER XVI.

Visit from the Turkish Ambassador.—Stroll to the gardens of the Buen Retiro.—Troop of ostriches.—Madame d'Aranda.—State of *Cortejo*-ism.—Powers of drapery.—Madame d'Aranda's toilet.—Assembly at the house of Madame Badaan.—*Cortejos* off duty.—Blaze of beauty.—A curious group.—A dance.

Sunday, 23rd.

EVERY morning I have the pleasure of supplying the Grand Signior's representative with rolls and brioche, baked at home for my breakfast; and this very day he came himself in one of the king's lumbering state coaches, with some of his special favourites, to thank me for these piping hot attentions. We had a great deal of conversation about the marvels of London, though he seemed stoutly convinced that in every respect *Islembul* exceeded it ten times over.

As soon as he moved off, I strolled to the gardens of the Buen Retiro, which contains neither statues nor fountains worth describing. They cover a vast extent of sandy ground, in which there is no prevailing upon anything vegetable or animal to thrive, except ostriches, a troop of which were striding about in high spirits, apparently as much at home as in their own native parched-up deserts.

Roxas dined with us, and we went together in the evening to the French ambassador's, the Duke de la V****. His daughter, a fine young woman of eighteen or nineteen, is married to the Prince de L****, a smart stripling, who has scarcely entered his fifteenth year; the ambassador is no trifling proficient in political intrigue, no common-place twister and turner in the paths of diplomacy, looks about him with calm and polished indifference, though full of hazardous schemes and projects; ever in secret ferment, and a Jesuit to the heart's core. I could not help noticing his quiet, observing eye—the still eye of a serpent lying perdue in a cave. In his address and manners he is quite a model of high-bred ease, without the slightest tincture of pedantry or affectation.

Madame la Duchesse is a great deal fonder of fine phrases, which she does not always reserve for grand occasions. Their son, the Prince de C***, amused me beyond bounds with his lightning-like flashes of wit and merriment, at the expense of Madrid and its *tertullias*. Upon the whole, I like this family very much, and ardently wish they may like me.

I could not stay with them so long as I desired, Roxas having promised to present me to Madame d'Aranda, whose devoted friend and *cortejo* he has the consummate pleasure to be. Happy the man who has the good fortune of being attached by such delicious, though not quite strictly sacred ties, to so charming a little creature; but in general the state of *cortejo*-ism is far from enviable. You are the sworn victim of all the lady's caprices, and can never move out of the rustle of her black silk petticoats, or beyond the wave of her fan, without especial permission, less frequently granted with complacency than refused with asperity. I imagine she has very good-naturedly given him leave of absence to show me about this royal village, or else I should think he would hardly venture to spare me so much of his company.

We found her sitting *en famille* with her sister, and two young boys her brothers, over a silver brazier in a snug interior apartment hung with a bright valencia satin. She showed me the most pleasing marks of civility and attention, and ordered her own apartments to be lighted up, that I might see its magnificent furniture to advantage. The bed, of the richest blue velvet trimmed with point lace, is beautifully shaped, and placed in a spacious and deep recess hung round with an immense profusion of ample curtains.

I wonder architects and fitters up of apartments do not avail themselves more frequently of the powers of drapery. Nothing produces so grand and at the same time so comfortable an effect. The moment I have an opportunity I will set about constructing a tabernacle, larger than the one I arranged at Ramalhaô, and indulge myself in every variety of plait and fold that can possibly be invented.

Madame d'Aranda's toilet, designed by Moite the sculptor and executed by Auguste, is by far the most exquisite *chef-d'œuvre* of the kind I ever saw. Poor thing! she has every exterior delight the pomps and vanities of the world

can give; but she is married to a man old enough to be her grandfather, and looks as pale and drooping as a narcissus or lily of the valley would appear if stuck in Abraham's bosom, and continually breathed upon by that venerable patriarch.

After passing a delightful hour in what appeared to me an ethereal sort of fairy-land, we went to a far more earthly abode, that of a Madame Badaan, who is so obliging as to give immense assemblies once or twice a week, in rather confined apartments. This small, but convenient habitation, is no idle or unimportant resort for cortejos off duty, or in search of novel adventures. Several of these disbanded worthies were lounging about in the mean time, quite lackadaisically. There was a blaze of beauty in every corner of the room, sufficient to enchant those the least given to being enchanted; and there frisked the two little Sabatinis, half Spanish, half Italian, sporting their neatly turned ankles; and there sat Madame de Villamayor in all her pride, and her daughters so full of promise; and the Marchioness of Santa Cruz, with her dark hair and blue eyes, in all her loveliness. How delighted my friend, the Effendi, must have been upon entering such a paradise, which he soon did after we arrived there, followed by his Armenian interpreter, whom I like better than the Greek, Timoni, with his prying, squirrelish look, and malicious propensities.

The ambassador found me out almost immediately, and taking me to an angle of the apartment, where a well-cushioned divan had been prepared for his lollification, made me sit down by him whether I would or not. We were just settled, when a bevy of young tits dressed out in a fantastic, blowzy style, with sparkling eyes and streaming ribbons, drew their chairs round us, and began talking a strange lingua-franca, composed of three or four different languages. We must have formed a curious group; I was declaiming and gesticulating with all my might, reciting scraps of Hafiz and Mesihi, whilst the ladies, none of the tallest, who were seated on low chairs, kept perking up their pretty little inquisitive faces in the very beard of the stately Moslem, whose solemn demeanour formed an amusing contrast to their giddy vivacity.

Madame Badaan and her spouse, the very best people in the world, and the readiest to afford their company all possible varieties of accommodation, sent for the most famous band of musicians Madrid could boast of, and proposed a dance for the entertainment of his bearded excellency. Accordingly, thirteen or fourteen couples started, and boleroed and fandangoed away upon a thick carpet for an hour or two, without intermission. There are scarcely any boarded floors in Madrid, so the custom of dancing upon rugs is universally established.

LETTER XVII.

Valley of Aranjuez.—The island garden.—The palace.—Strange medley of pictures.—Oratories of the King and the Queen.—Destruction of a grand apartment painted in fresco by Mengs.—Boundless freedom of conduct in the present reign.—Decoration of the Duchess of Ossuna's house.—Apathy pervading the whole Iberian peninsula.

Tuesday, December 1st, 1795.

IT was on a clear bright morning (scarce any frost) that we left a wretched place called Villatoba, falling into ruins like almost all the towns and villages I have seen in Spain. The sky was so transparent, so pearly, and the sunbeams so fresh and reviving, that the country appeared pleasant in spite of its flatness and aridity. Every tree has been cut down, and all chance of their being replaced precluded by the wandering flocks of sheep, goats and swine, which rout, and grout, and nibble uncontrolled and unmolested.

At length, after a tedious drive through vast tracts of desolate country, scarce a house, scarce a shrub, scarce a human being to meet with, we descended a rapid declivity, and I once more found myself in the valley of Aranjuez. The avenues of poplar and plane have shot up to a striking elevation since I saw them last. The planes on the banks of the Tagus incline most respectfully towards its waters; they are vigorously luxuriant, although planted only seven years ago, as the gardener informed me.

Charles the Fifth's elms in the island-garden close to the palace are decaying apace. I visited the nine venerable stumps close to a hideous brick-ruin; the largest measures forty or fifty feet in girth; the roots are picturesquely fantastic. The fountains, like the shades in which they are embowered, are rapidly going to decay: the bronze Venus, at the fountain which takes its name from Don John of Austria, has lost her arm.

Notwithstanding the dreariness of the season with all its accompaniment of dry leaves and faded herbage, this historic garden had still charms; the air was mild, and the sunbeams played on the Tagus, and many a bird flitted from spray to spray. Several long alleys of the loftiest elms, their huge rough trunks mantled with ivy, and their grotesque roots advancing and receding like grotto-work into the walk, struck me as singularly pleasing.

The palace has not been long completed; the additions made by Charles the Third agree not ill with the original edifice. It is a comfortable, though not a magnificent abode; walls thick, windows cheerfully glazed in two panels, neat low chimney-pieces in many of the apartments; few traces of the days of the Philips; scarce any furniture that bespeak an ancient family. A flimsy modern style, half Italian, half French, prevails. Even the pictures are, in point of subjects, preservation, originality, and masters, as strangely jumbled together as in the dominions of an auctioneer. This may be accounted for by their being collected indiscriminately by the present King, whilst prince of Asturias. Amongst innumerable trash, I noticed a Crucifixion by Mengs; not overburdened with expression, but finely coloured; the back-ground and sky most gloomily portentous, and producing a grand effect of light and shade. The interior of a gothic church, by Peter Neef, so fine, so clear, so silvery in point of tint, as to reconcile me, (for the moment, at least,) to this harsh, stiff master; the figures exquisite, the preservation perfect; no varnish, no retouches.

A set of twelve small cabinet pictures, touched with admirable spirit by Teniers, the subjects taken from the Gierusalemme Liberata, treated as familiarly as if the boozy painter had been still copying his pot-companions. Armida's palace is a little round summer-house; she herself, habited like a burgher's frouw in her holiday garments, holds a Nuremberg-shaped looking-glass up to the broad vulgar face of a boorish Rinaldo. The fair Naiads, comfortably fat, and most invitingly smirky, are naked to be sure, but a pile of furbelowed garments and farthingales is ostentatiously displayed on the bank of the water; close by a small table covered with a neat white tablecloth, and garnished with silver tankards, cold pie, and salvers of custard and jellies. All these vulgar accessories are finished with scrupulous delicacy.

Several oratories open into the royal apartments. One set apart for the Queen is adorned with a very costly, and at the same time beautiful altar, rich, simple, and majestic; not an ornament is lavished in vain. Two Corinthian columns of a most beautiful purple and white marble, sustain a pediment, as highly polished and as richly mottled as any agate I ever beheld; the capitals are bronze splendidly gilt, so is the foliage of the consoles supporting the slab which forms the altar. The design, the materials, the workmanship, are all Spanish, and do the nation credit.

The king's oratory is much larger, and not ill-designed; the proportion is good, about twenty-six by twenty-two, and twenty-four high, besides a solemn recess for the altar. The walls entirely covered with fresco-painting; saints, prophets, clouds, and angels, in grand confusion. The sides of the arch, and all the frame of the altar-piece, are profusely and solidly gilt. A plinth of jasper, and a skirting about three feet high, of a light-grey marble, streaked with black, not unlike the capricious ramifications on mocho-stones, and polished as a mirror, is continued round the room, so that nothing meets the eye but the rich gleam of gold, painting, and marble, all blended together in one glowing tint. The pavement, too, of different Spanish marbles, is a *chef-d'œuvre* of workmanship. I particularly admired the soft ivory-hue of the white marble, but my conductor allowed it little merit when compared with that of Italy: I think him mistaken in this remark, and heartily wish him so in many others.

This conductor, an old snuffling domestic of the late king, was rather forward in making his remarks upon times present. A sort of Piedmontese in my train, I believe the master of the fonda where I lodge, pointing to a *manege* now building, asked for whom it was designed, the King or the Duke d'Alcudia? "For both, no doubt," was the answer; "what serves one serves the other." In the royal tribune, I was informed, with a woful shrug, that the King, thank God! continued to be exact and fervent in his devotions; never missing mass a single day, and frequently spending considerable time in mental prayer; but that the Queen was scandalously remiss, and seldom appeared in the chapels, except when some slender remains of etiquette render her presence indispensable.

The chapel, repaired after designs of Sabbatini, an old Italian architect, much in favour with Charles the Third, has merit, and is remarkable for the just distribution of light, which produces a solemn religious effect. The three altars are noble, and their paintings good. One in particular, on the right, dedicated to St. Anthony, immediately attracted my attention by the effulgence of glory amidst which the infant Jesus is descending to caress the kneeling saint, whose attitude, and youthful, enthusiastic countenance, have great expression. The colouring is warm and harmonious; Maella is the painter.

I inquired after a remarkable room in this palace, called in the plan *Salon de los Funciones*, and vulgarly *el Coliseo*. The ceiling was painted by Mengs, and esteemed one of his capital works: here Ferdinand and Barbara, the most musical of sovereigns, used to melt in ecstasies at the soft warblings of Farinelli and Egiziello—but, alas! the scene of their amusements, like themselves and their warblers, is no more. Not later than last summer, this grand theatrical apartment was divided into a suite of shabby, bandboxical rooms for the accommodation of the Infant of Parma. No mercy was shown to the beautiful roof. In some places, legs and folds of drapery are still visible; but the workmen are hammering and plastering at a great rate, and in a few days whitewash will cover all.

Coming out of the palace, and observing how deserted and melancholy the walks, garden, and avenues appeared, I was told, that in a few weeks a total change would take place, for the court was expected on the 6th of January, to remain six months, and that every pleasure followed in its train. Shoals of gamblers, and ladies of easy virtue of all ranks, ages, and descriptions. Every barrier which Charles the Third, of chaste and pious memory, attempted to oppose to the wanton inclinations of his subjects, has been broken down in the present reign; boundless freedom of conduct prevails, and the most disgusting debauchery riots in these lovely groves, which deserve to be set apart for elegant and rural pleasures.

In my walks I passed a huge edifice lately built for the favourite Alcudia. Common report accuses it of being more magnificently furnished than the royal residence; but as I did not enter it, I shall content myself with noting down, that it boasts nineteen windows in front, and a plain Tuscan portal with handsome granite pillars. Adjoining is a house belonging to the Duchess of Ossuna, full of workmen, painters, and stuccadors: a goggle-eyed Milanese, most fiercely conceited, is daubing the walls with all his might and main. He is an architect too, at least I have his word for it, and claims the merit, a great one as he believes, of having designed a sort of ball-room, with many a festoon and Bohemian glass-chandelier and coarse arabesque. The floor is bricked, upon which thick mats or carpets are spread when dancing is going forward.

I was in hopes this tiresome custom of thumping mats and rugs with the feet, to the brisk airs of boleros and fandangos, was exploded. No music is more inspiring than the Spanish; what a pity they refuse themselves the joy of rising a foot or two into the air at every step, by the help of elastic boards.

Next to this sort of a ball-room is a sort of an oval boudoir, and then a sort of an octagon; all bad sorts of their kind. This confounded painter is covering the oval with landscapes, not half so harmonious or spirited as those which figure on Birmingham snuff-boxes or tea-boards. He has a terrible partiality to blues and greens of the crudest tints. Such colours affect my eyes as disagreeably as certain sounds my teeth, when set on edge. I pity the Duchess of Ossuna, whose liberal desire of encouraging the arts deserves better artists. In music she has been more fortunate: Boccharini directed her band when I was last at Madrid; and I remember with what transport she heard and applauded the Galli, to whom she sent one morning a present of the most expensive trinkets, carelessly heaped up upon a magnificent salver of massive silver, two or three feet in diameter.

The day closed as I was wandering about the Duchess's mansion, surprised at the slovenly neglect of the furniture, not an article of which has been moved out of the reach of dust, scaffoldings, the exhalations of paint, and the still more pestilential exhalation of garlick-eating workmen. Universal apathy and indifference to everything seems to pervade the whole Iberian peninsula. If not caring what you eat or what you drink is a virtue, so far the evangelical precept is obeyed. So it is in Portugal, and so it is in Spain, and so it looks likely to be world without end: to which, let the rest of Europe say amen; for were these countries to open their long-closed eyes, cast off their trammels, and rouse themselves to industry, they would soon surpass their neighbours in wealth and population.

LETTER XVIII.

Explore the extremities of the Calle de la Reyna.—Destructive rage for improvement.—Loveliness of the valley of Aranjuez.—Undisturbed happiness of the animals there.—Degeneration of the race of grandees.—A royal cook.

It was near eleven before a thick fog, which had arisen from the groves and waters of Aranjuez, dispersed. I took advantage of a bright sunshine to issue forth on horseback, and explore the extremities of the Calle de la Reyna. Most of the ancient elms which compose this noble avenue, are dead-topped, many have lost their flourishing heads since I was last here, but on every side innumerable plantations of oak, elm, poplar, and plane, are springing up in all the vigour and luxuriance of youth. I was sorry to see many, very many acres of unmeaning shrubbery, serpentine walks, and clumps of paltry flowers, encroaching upon the wild thickets upon the banks of the Tagus.

The King, the Queen, the favourite, are bitten by the rage of what they fancy to be improvement, and are levelling ground, and smoothing banks, and building rock-work, with pagodas and Chinese-railing. The laburnums, weeping-willows, and flowering shrubs, which I admired so much seven years ago in all their native luxuriance, are beginning to be trimmed and tortured into what the gardener calls genteel shapes. Even the course of the Tagus has been thwarted, and part of its waters diverted into a broad ditch in order to form an island; flat, swampy, and dotted over with exotic shrubs, to make room for which many a venerable arbele and poplar has been laid low.

Hard by stands a large brick mansion, just erected, in the dullest and commonest Spanish taste, very improperly called Casa del Labrador. It has nothing rural about it, not even a hen-roost or a hog-sty; but the kitchen is snug and commodious, and to this his Catholic Majesty often resorts, and cooks with his own royal hands, and for his own royal self, creadillas, (alias lamb's fry,) garlick-omelets, and other savoury messes, in the national style.

Nothing delights the good-natured monarch so much as a pretence for descending into low life, and creeping out of the sight of his court, his council, and his people; therefore Madrid is almost totally abandoned by him, and many capricious buildings are starting up in every secluded corner of the royal parks and gardens. This last is the ugliest and most unmeaning of all. I recollect being pleased with the casinos he built whilst Prince of Asturias, at the Escorial and the Pardo. His present advisers, in matters of taste, are inferior even to those who direct his political movements; and the workmen, who obey the first, still more unskilful and bungling than the generals, admirals, and engineers, who carry the plans of the latter into execution.

If they would but let Aranjuez alone, I should not care. Nature has lavished her charms most bountifully on this valley; the wild hills which close it in, though barren, are picturesquely-shaped; the Tagus here winds along in the boldest manner, overhung by crooked willows and lofty arbeles; now losing itself in almost impervious thickets, now under-mining steep banks, laying rocks bare, and forming irregular coves and recesses; now flowing smoothly through vast tracts of low shrubs, aspens, and tamarisks; in one spot edged by the most delicate greensward, in another by beds of mint and a thousand other fragrant herbs. I saw numerous herds of deer bounding along in full enjoyment of pasture and liberty; droves of horses, many of a soft cream-colour, were frisking about under some gigantic alders; and I counted one hundred and eighty cows, of a most remarkable size, in a green meadow, ruminating in peace and plenty.

The animal creation at Aranjuez seem, undoubtedly, to enjoy all the blessings of an excellent government. The breed is peculiarly attended to, and no pains or expense spared, to procure the finest bulls from every quarter. Cows more beautifully dappled, more comfortably sleek, I never beheld.

If the race of grandees could, by judicious crossing, be sustained as successfully, Spain would not have to lament her present scurvy, ill-favoured generation of nobility. Should they be suffered to dwindle much longer, and accumulate estates and diseases by eternal intermarriages in the same family, I expect to see them on all-fours before the next century is much advanced in its course. These little men, however, are not without some sparks of a lofty, resolute spirit; very few, indeed, have bowed the knee to the Baal of the present hour, to the image which the King has set up. A train of eager, hungry dependants, picked out of inferior and foreign classes, form the company of the Duke of Alcludia. Notwithstanding his lofty titles, unbounded wealth, solid power, and dazzling magnificence, he is treated by the first class with silent contempt and passive indifference. They read the tale of his illustrious descent with the same sneering incredulity, as the patents and decrees which enumerate the services he has done the state. Few instances, perhaps, are upon record, of a more steady, persevering contempt of an object in actual power, stamped with every ornament royal favour can devise to give it credit, value, and currency.

A thousand interesting reflections arising from this subject crowded my mind as I rode home through the stately and now deserted alleys of Aranjuez. The weather was growing chill, and the withered leaves began to rustle. I was glad to take refuge by a blazing fire. Money, which procures almost everything, had not failed to seduce the best salads and apples from the royal gardens, admirable butter and good game; so I feasted royally, though I dare say I should have done more so, in the most extensive sense of the word, could some supernatural power or Frenchified revolution have procured me the royal cook. His Majesty, I am assured, by those I am far from suspecting of flattery, has real talents for this most useful profession.

The comfortable listlessness which had crept over me was too pleasant to be shaken off, and I remained snug by my fireside the whole evening.

THE END.

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Typographical errors corrected by the etext transcriber:

headach and indisposition=> headache and indisposition {pg v1 185}

so wan and singugular=> so wan and singular {pg v1 201}

into some inchanted cave=> into some enchanted cave {pg v1 231}

suprising variety of other plants=> surprising variety of other plants {pg v1 351}

The shubberies and garden=> The shrubberies and garden {pg v2 182}

ton at present in this court=> tone at present in this court {pg v2 240}

statu quo=> status quo {pg v2 243}

Nuestra **Senora**=> Nuestra Señora {pg v2 286}

FOOTNOTES:

[1] This crucifix was made of the bronze which had formed the statue of the terrible Duke of Alva, swept in its first form from the citadel where it was proudly stationed, in a moment of popular fury.

[2] The History of John Bull explains this ridiculous appellation.

[3] Hills in the neighbourhood of Canton.

[4] Apuleius Met: Lib. 5.

Vehementer iterum ac sæpius beatos illos qui
Super gemmas et monilia calcant!

[5] Schönberg, beautiful mountain.

[6] Ariosto Orlando Furioso.—*Canto 7, stanza 32.*

[7] A nephew of Bertoni, the celebrated composer.

[8] This excellent and highly cultivated woman died at Naples in August 1782. Had she lived to a later period her example and influence might probably have gone great lengths towards arresting that tide of corruption and profligacy which swept off this ill-fated court to Sicily, and threatened its total destruction.

[9] Mem. pour la Vie de Petrarque, vol. i. p. 439.

[10] The Piscina mirabilis.

[11] See Letter VII.

[12] See Miss Williams's poems.

[13] Since Marquis of Abrantes.

[14] Writers of travels are sadly given to exaggeration. The author of the Tableau du Lisbonne writes, "Il est dix heures, une foule de P. de Ch. s'avance," &c. From such an account one would suppose the whole line of houses in motion. No such thing. At intervals, to be sure, some accidents of this sort, more or less, silyly occur; but by no means in so general and evident a manner.

[15] These affecting tones seem to have made a lasting impression indeed upon the heart of a young man, one of the principal clerks in the Secretary of State's office; he was all admiration, all ardour, his divinity all indifference. After a long period of unavailing courtship, the poor lover, driven to absolute despair, made a donation of all he was worth in the world to the object of his adoration, and threw himself into the Tagus. Providentially he was fished out and brought home, pale and almost inanimate. Such a spectacle, accompanied by so vivid a proof of unlimited passion, had its effect. The lady relented, they were united, and are as happy at this day, I believe, as the recollection of so narrow an escape, and its cause, can make them.

[16] An old English housekeeper.

[17] For no light specimen of these atrocities, see Southey's Letters from Spain and Portugal.

[18] Don João da Valperra.

[19] At the time I wrote this, half Lisbon believed in the individuality of the holy crows, and the other half prudently concealed their scepticism.

[20] Don Josè, elder brother of the late king, John VI.

[21] Dryden.

[22] The royal chapel of the Ajuda, though somewhat fallen from the unequalled splendour it boasted during the sing-song days of the late king, Don Joseph, still displayed some of the finest specimens of vocal manufacture which Italy could furnish. It possessed, at the same time, Carlo Reina, Ferracuti, Totti, Fedelino, Ripa, Gelati, Venanzio, Biagino, and Marini—all these *virtuosi*, with names ending in vowels, were either *contraltos* of the softest note, or *sopranos* of the highest squeakery.

[23] Now Marquis of Tancos.

[24] About the period of the present king's accession, several ladies of this description had bounced into the peerage; but as they did not walk at the coronation, somebody observed, it was odd enough that the peeresses best accustomed to a free use of their limbs, declined stirring a step upon this occasion. Horace Walpole mentions this bon mot in some of his letters; I forget to whom he attributes it.

[25] The personage in question paid dearly for having listened to evil counsellors and exciting the suspicions of the church. In about a twelvemonth after this conversation, the small pox, not attended to so skilfully as it might have been, was suffered to carry him off, and reduced his imperious widow to a mere cipher in the politics of a court she had begun very successfully to agitate. To this period the cruel distress of the queen's mind may be traced. The conflict between maternal tenderness and what she thought political duty, may be supposed with much greater probability to have produced her fatal derangement, than all the scruples respecting the Aveiro and Tavoura confiscations which the fanatical, interested priest, who succeeded my excellent friend, excited.

[26] A well-known wily diplomatist, afterwards ambassador at Constantinople.

[27] He resided afterwards at Paris in a diplomatic character, and is supposed to have been implicated in some of the least amiable events of the revolution. A mysterious passage in the first volume of Soulavie's Memoirs is said to refer to him. He was particularly intimate with citizen Egalité.

[28] A nephew of the famous Angelica, and no indifferent painter himself.

[29] I have seen a beautiful portrait, engraved by Selma, of this image, and dedicated in due form to its first lady of the dressing-room, Marchioness of Cogolhudo, Duchess of San Estévan, &c.

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