

## C H A P. XVIII.

The *Quexigal*, San Saturnino, Nueftra Segnora del Parrazes, and Santo Tome del Puerto, farms belonging to the convent, together with a detail of the cost of this stupenduous fabric; the wilderneys, or common of *Quexigal*, converted by Philip II. into a beautiful vineyard, the grand house belonging to it, the presses and cellars for the wine and oil, and an account of the chapel, p. 289. The farm of San Saturnino, so called from an hermitage dedicated to the saint of that name; the miracles effected there; the farmhouse described, the presses and cellars, p. 290. A fertile spot of ground, belonging to the convent, on the banks of the river *Xarama*; great plenty of rabbits; the famous bulls of *Xarama*; the abbey of Parrazes, its antiquity, with an historical account of it, abstracted from father *Joséph de Siguença*, p. 291. The convent of Parrazes; the church and reliques, amongst which is one of the stones thrown at St. Stephen, of more value, it is said, than the largest diamond of the Indies; devout exercises of the religious; the soil naturally good, but for want of cultivation, &c. the harvests fall short; an account of the priory of St. Thomas, formerly an abbey, p. 292. The miracles performed by that saint, particularly the cure of persons bit by mad dogs; the abbey dissolved, and changed to a priory, and finally annexed to the royal convent; several places belonging to the convent described, p. 293; their situation in a lonely barren country, and the savageness of the inhabitants, *ibid.* The great cost of this amazing structure accurately computed, the amount of the sum total, p. 294. Other opinions concerning the cost, confuted by the author; the cost of the church, with its  
 several

C O N T E N T S. xxxvii

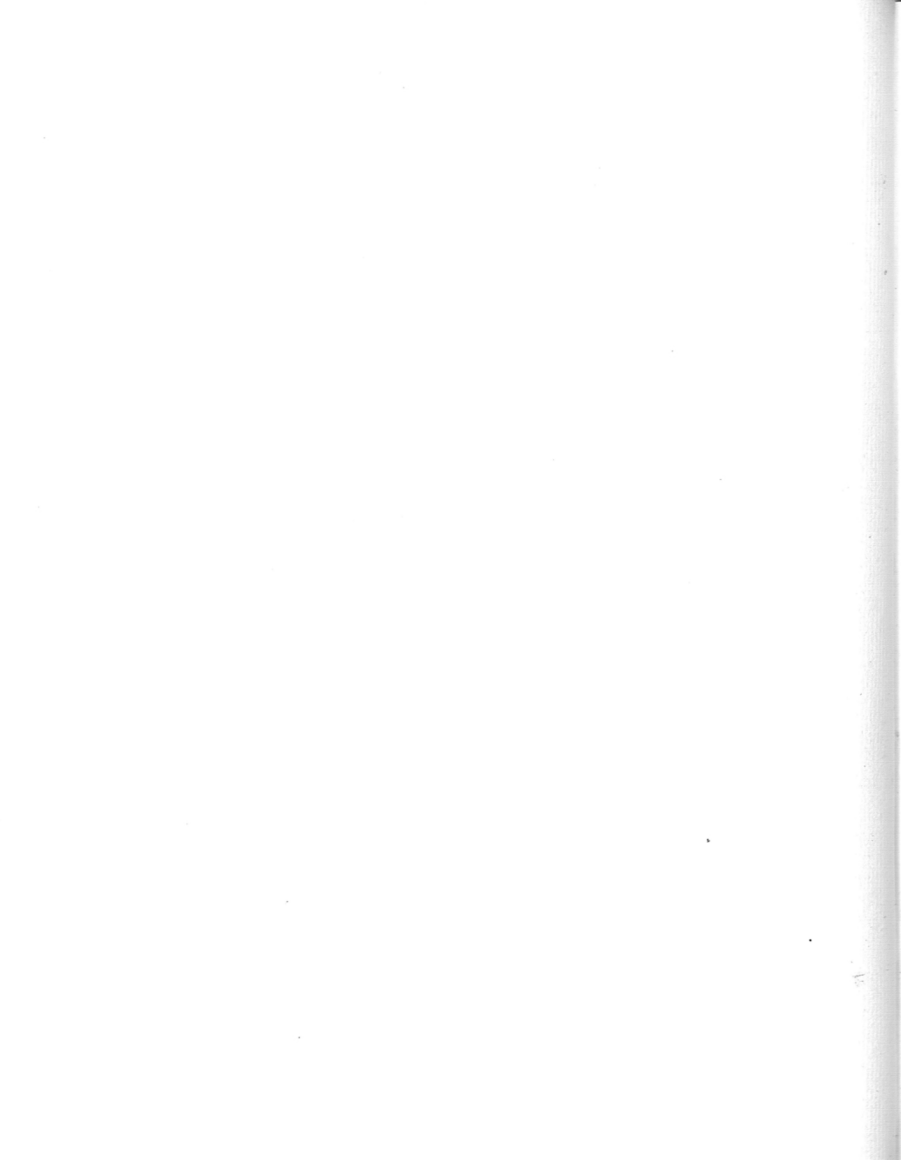
several decorations, of the furniture, utensils, and ornaments, of the sacristy, which strike the beholder with astonishment, p. 295. The expence of the paintings in the principal cloister, of the library painting, one of the finest things in the convent, together with the stands, desks, and books; the cost of the fine statues; the presents made to the king not included in the sum given, p. 296. The time Philip II. the glorious founder enjoyed this building; (inserted, by mistake, in the margin, "how long in "building.") the eulogium of that great prince, p. 297

C H A P. XIX.

The number of ornaments, and parts of this wonderful structure, p. 298. The time it took in building and adorning; the conclusion of the first book, p. 299

The END of the CONTENTS of the First Book.

T H E



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T H E

## I N T R O D U C T I O N .

GRAND motives stimulate heroic and generous minds to grand undertakings ; and majesty casts a shade on its splendor, when its actions are unequal to its impulse. A series of distinguished favors, an increase of happiness and glory, have always animated religious princes to give illustrious demonstrations of their gratitude ; and indeed they only merit the title of religious whose prodigious effects are equal to the importance of the cause.

THUS in an astonishing work, which comprehends whatever antiquity has celebrated, the most prudent monarch Philip II. offered to God, a heaven on earth ; to the illustrious Spanish martyr St. Laurence, a temple of divine magnificence ; to his ancestors, a Christian mausoleum ; to the Hieronymite recluses, an august habitation ; and to the world, a structure which it can never sufficiently admire ! Tho', if the greatness of the motives be considered, it was only by so stupendous a monument that his generous and royal heart could discharge itself with a proper dignity. His father, the invincible emperor Charles V. after having transferred to him, by a public act in Flanders, his hereditary dominions, and to his brother Ferdinand the empire of Germany, reti-

Retreat of  
Charles V.

red to the monastery of St. Jerome the Just. This action of the Emperor is well known, together with the cause of so singular a retreat, which will for ever remain a shining monument of catholic devotion, and be applauded by the latest ages. He divested himself of majesty, pomp, and power, prerogative, homage, respect, and all the attendance and parade of obsequious courtiers, in order to gain a victory over himself; a victory which alone was wanting to crown those distinguished successes in war, that had rendered his life so glorious. Never had the shout of victory in any army been heard against him; and this monarch, so truly catholic, so exemplarily devout, and whose sublime qualities rendered him an honor to mankind, that the common enemy should not exult his ostentatious voice among his people, and be the conqueror of his soul, he declared war against him; and, to ensure success, relinquished all his possessions, every particular he enjoyed; it being dangerous to leave any thing on which the enemy might seize. He had in the camp long concerted the measures proper to be taken in this sacred war; and the result of his deliberation was, to retreat to a religious solitude, and join the society of Hieronymite monks, who, in imitation of their mortified leader Maximus Hieronymus, walked steadily in the heavenly path leading to the rewards laid up for such who fight manfully. The Imperial eagle of Austria, in his lofty flight amidst the brightest, but dangerous, dignities of the world, darted from his height, and lighted in the obscure deserts below, remote from human disquietudes, to contemplate the glory of the true sun. The lion of Spain, tho' at the same time the terror of the world, withdrew into the wilderness under the auspices of St. Jerome; resembling

sembling in this another fierce lion, who, wounded with a thorn, sought a remedy in Belen, the first monastery of the order, and in that sacred retirement turned his roarings to hymns, and his ferocity into meekness. Thus the formidable lion of Spain, wounded by the pressures of empire, the earth producing, even among its most splendid enjoyments, only thorns and briars, and filled with veneration for a cardinal so transcendently pious, sought a remedy from his example and influence; and was certain of obtaining it from one, who, thoroughly alienated from an infectious world, was an illustrious instance of catholic retirement; hastening from Rome, when the universal voice proclaimed him worthy of the pontificate; exchanging a palace for a cell, the purple for the sackcloth.

THIS renunciation laid Philip under particular obligations to his father, both as a son and a king; as, without waiting for his succession to the crown, at the natural demise of his parent, Charles, by thus dying to the world, accelerated his exaltation, placed with his own hand the diadem on his brow, and conferred the possession on him long before the time when he would have been invested with it by justice, and the constitution of the state. He ascended the throne in the year 1556, and in the 29th year of his age; young indeed, but wise and prudent, brave and virtuous. His first care was the tranquility of the Christian world, at that time particularly necessary; and, like a true catholic prince, he zealously wished to establish universal concord; knowing that without it there can be no national happiness. In order to this he had recourse to every honorable method of bringing Henry king of

Battle of  
St. Quintin.

France to an accommodation; but finding, the following year, his good intentions abused, and that the war, originally unjust, was breaking out with redoubled fury, he took the field, and, with intrepid bravery, made his first essay in arms at the famous battle of St. Quintin, one of the greatest ever fought between the French and Spaniards. He laid siege to that city by way of diversion, to draw the enemy's troops from Flanders, where they committed terrible ravages. The French forces hastened to its relief; and as both armies were commanded by famous and experienced generals, and composed of brave and well-disciplined soldiers, the action was hot and obstinate; but at last victory declared for his catholic majesty. The French cavalry was first broke by the irresistible impetuosity of the Spanish troops, the disorder was communicated to the infantry, the rout became general, and the greatest part of the French were either killed or taken prisoners; particularly the nobility, and among them the constable Montmorency. They likewise lost all their artillery, standards, and colors, which, together with the prisoners, were placed at the feet of the victorious Philip. This important victory was gained, doubtless by divine appointment, on the 10th of August, being the festival of St. Laurence, the Spanish martyr, for whom the king entertained, from his infancy, a particular veneration; and, by a constant imitation of his firmness and zealous attachment to justice, secured to himself success and triumph. Persuaded that so glorious a beginning was a sure pledge of the protection of heaven, his generous breast conceived the design of erecting, to the honor of St. Laurence, a monument which should be a perpetual demonstration of his gratitude, in the sight of angels and men. He prosecuted his enter-

enterprize, and pushed the siege of St. Quintin so vigorously, that notwithstanding its strength, and numerous garrison and artillery, he took it by assault on the 26th of the same month of August. Here he found a large booty, and among his prisoners were the admiral of France, and many persons of distinction. This success, which he considered as an evident mark of his saint's favor, confirmed Philip in his munificent schemes. He had seen himself twice victorious; once in a pitched battle, and a second time in the assault of so important a fortress, with some of the most illustrious persons of France his prisoners.

FROM this auspicious æra his actions increased in lustre, his arms every where triumphed, till at length he put a final period to those bloody wars, which, ever since the establishment of the catholic monarchy, had raged between France and Spain, with little or no intermission.

Two years after the above victory, the Christian world was blessed with a peace, whose equal had not been seen for many ages; the parties included in it being, the Pope, the Emperor, the electors of Germany, the kings of Spain, France, Denmark, Portugal; the queen of Scotland, the republic of Venice, and other states of Italy, the dukes of Lorraine and Savoy, with other Christian princes. Such was the first motive which induced his catholic majesty Philip II. to erect this wonderful structure.



PENETRATED with a profound sense of such remarkable favors, he devoutly raised his eyes and attention to that supreme Sovereign, in whose almighty hands are the dominions and hearts of kings, their safety and victories; and perceiving that his were more owing to the divine goodness, than to the strength of his horses, and the courage of his horsemen; and that so general a peace, which had long been his ardent wish, flowed from the same source, through the intercession of St. Laurence, he determined to express, by a thanksgiving, the joy of his heart for so remarkable a confluence of felicity, and to commemorate it, not by Olympic, Isthmian, or Nemean games, in imitation of the Greeks, nor as the Romans solemnized their victories, particularly that over the Latins, when the patricians walked from the temple of Mars to that of Castor and Pollux, in great pomp, and with olive branches in their hands; or by carrying, as they did at other times, eagles, military engines, and trophies, in procession: but in conferring universal benefit, perpetuating the joyful occasion, by erecting the most ample, stately, and magnificent structure in the world; an astonishing temple, dedicated to his invincible patron, that the three branches of the laurels of Spain, the relics of his body, being employed in the praises of God to acknowledge such repeated favors, should be perpetuated by sacred festivals and celestial pomp; and the Austrian and Imperial eagles humble themselves before the Almighty, the Lord of those victories acquired by means of that laurel.

THE Bethulians expressed their gratitude to heaven for the success of their heroic Judith. The valiant Judas Maccabeus, his brethren and  
people,

people, joined in thanksgiving: the fame was done by king Jehoshaphat and his army, when they defeated the Ammonites in the valley of Engadi; and history informs us, that, in all the ages of the catholic church, religious princes and generals have, on obtaining a victory, been careful to perform the same duty. But Philip, reflecting on himself, and the person for whom he was employed, determined to surpass them all, thinking any thing less would be derogatory to his character and devotion.

THE greatest of emperors, Charles V. his father, died in the year 1558, at the monastery of St. Jerome the Just, leaving the world astonished at his retreat; a striking example to princes! The recluses, charmed at the sanctity of his life, rejoiced at his death, tho' not without regret for his departure, on account of the affability of his manners, and the pleasure of his conversation.

Death of  
Charles V.

IN a codicil annexed to his will, he entirely left his funeral, the place of his tomb, and the care of the empress Isabella his mother, together with the perpetual anniversaries of masses for their souls, to the discretion of his son: a motive which greatly conduced to the present august state of this fabric; for the melancholy tidings no sooner reached the ears of Philip, than, weighing the various obligations he was under to his father, he formed in his mind a plan that should comprehend the several intentions he had in view. The temple he intended to erect in honor of St. Laurence, was to be accompanied with a monastery of the order of St. Jerome, that distinguished father of the church; an order  
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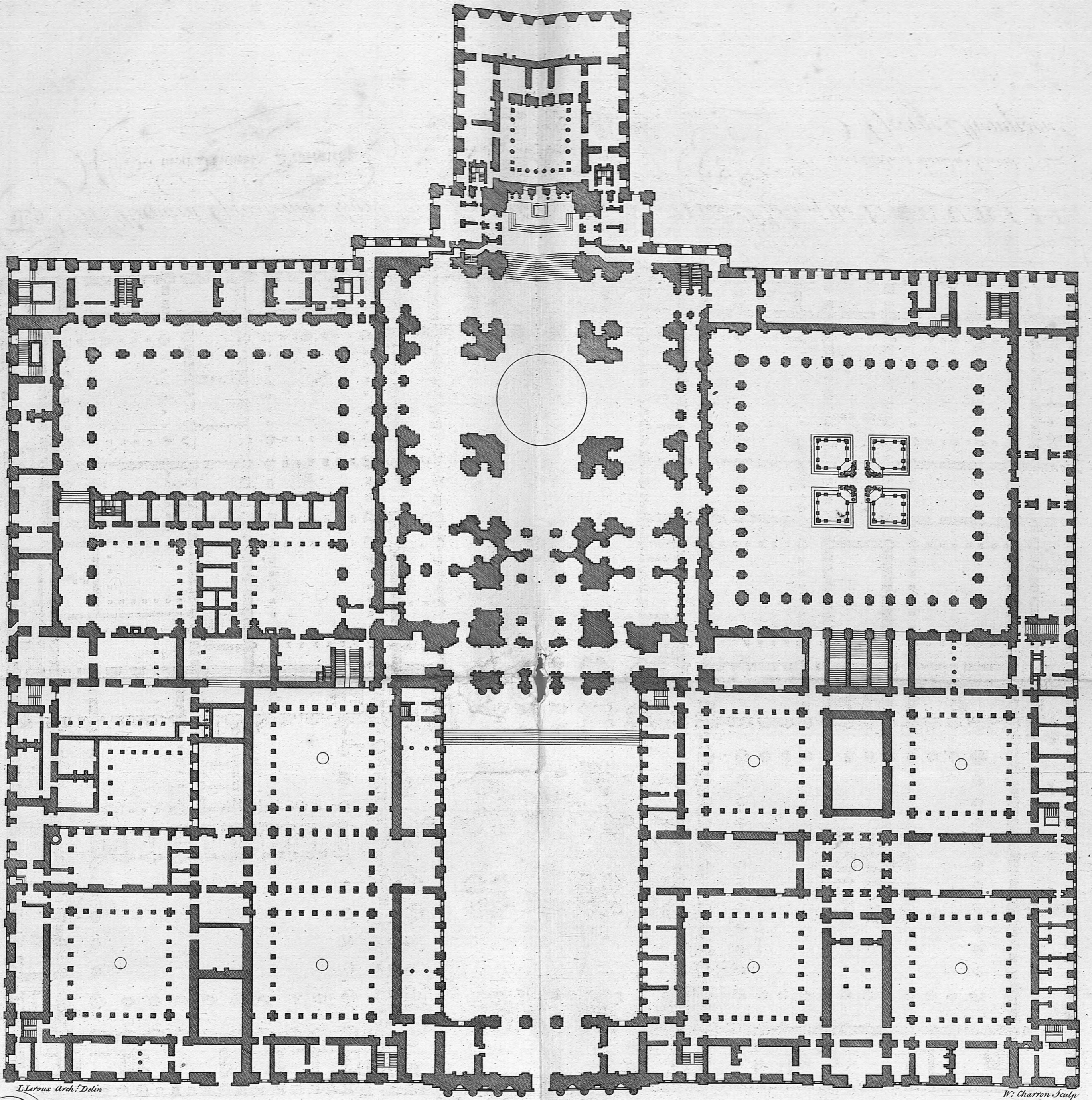
of Spanish institution always countenanced by the kings of Spain, and for which he had, from his earliest years, entertained a particular devotion : it was also that in which his father chose to spend the evening of his days, investing him, at the time of this retreat, with dominions of a prodigious extent. This induced him to make an addition of a funeral chapel, worthy to contain the bodies of the late emperor and his mother, his own and those of his successors, together with their beloved consorts and children. What was of great weight in determining him to execute this part of the plan, was, that he saw in this society, continually employed in heavenly exercises, every circumstance his pious intentions could desire ; supplications, doxologies, ascriptions of honor and thanksgivings for benefits received ; incessant masses, offices for the deceased, prayers for the preservation of the king and the states ; a strict observance of the true law, teaching, illustrating, and vindicating it ; with a thousand other things performed there, appertaining solely to the worship and glory of the Most High, and consequently all agreeable to the king's inflamed devotion. On his return to Spain, animated by filial duty and religion, he began the grand design with indefatigable zeal ; and had the glorious satisfaction of seeing the whole completed in a structure of such superlative magnitude, that the fabric of the heavens alone can be compared to it ; for, with regard to the church, it is the only one in the whole earth worthy to be called an habitation for the majesty of the Most High ; and of which it may be said, with Jacob, This is none other than the house of God ; this is the gate of heaven.

THE convent is the most superb in the whole world, and adorned with two beautiful colleges for literary exercises; and the palace itself is of a magnificence and grandeur truly royal: so that the whole is a perfect wonder. He dedicated it to St. Laurence, in acknowledgement of his many favors, and that all residing in it might be under the powerful protection of his intercession.

WHAT is related of the Trojans, that, in the midst of a sumptuous palace, they had an altar erected near an ancient olive-tree, under the shadow of which their deities were placed, is here seen in reality, without any of the prestiges or fallacies of blind paganism. This divine edifice was erected by the monarch justly surnamed the Wife, who, in the center of its vast fabric, placed the laurel of Spain, which had so often defended his heroic countrymen against the thunderbolts of their enemies, that the vice-deities the kings of the land, both dead and living, might rest under its shadow, and in a catholic hope seek glory and triumph, secure of obtaining both, thro' the assistance and supplications of the monks, whose incessant prayers appease the divine wrath, and calm that indignation which the sins of men have excited. Such were the motives, such the ends, for which the royal founder offered to God this stupendous church; to St. Laurence this illustrious Basilica; to his fathers, this glorious sepulchre; and to the disciples of St. Jerome, this splendid habitation, erected in a desert, but where the various beauties of the paradisaical landscape call on the contemplative to pour forth their praises to the Creator, in admiration of that condescending providence which makes use of things apparently of small importance, and overlooks no place for rendering the mind in love with the tranquillity of solitude.







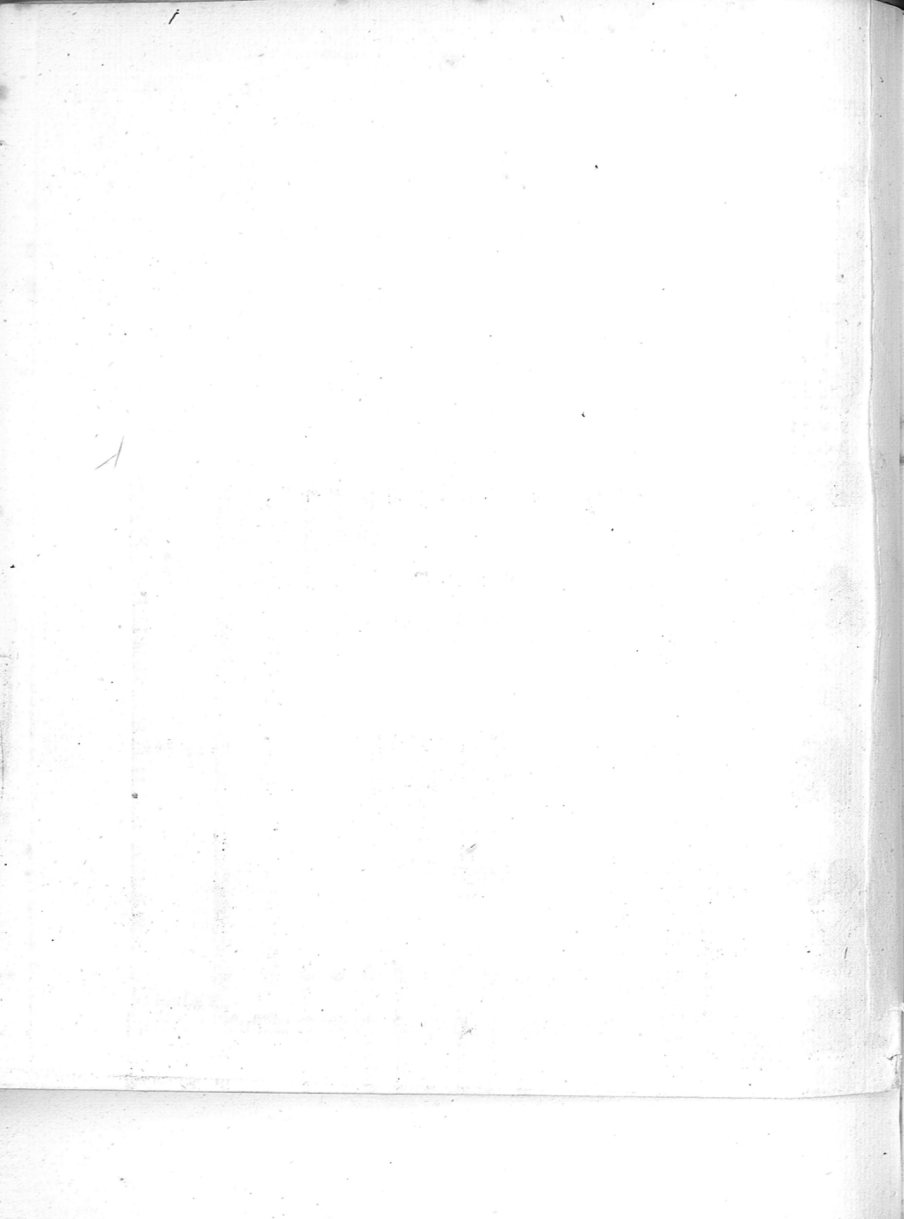
L. Leroux Arch. Delin

W. Charron Sculp

To Sir Richard Grosvenor Bart.  
Is most Humbly Dedicated;



This Plan of the *ESCURIAL*,  
By His most Obedient humble Servant,  
George Thompson.





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A

DESCRIPTION

OF THE

ESCURIAL.

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C H A P. I.

Of the Situation and Plan of the Royal Monastery of  
ST. LAURENCE.

IN the most illustrious kingdom of Toledo, the center of the monarchy of Spain, which is composed of so many large and opulent provinces; nine leagues west of Madrid, the court of its monarchs, and the metropolis of two worlds; near a small village, called Escorial, nine leagues south of Segovia, as many east of Avila, and fifteen north of Toledo; on the declivity of a mountain which forms part of the chain of Segovia, by some called the Carpentanean or Carpentane, and by others the Pyrenean mountains, from their being arms or branches of the latter, separating the two Castiles, and in the forty-first degree of north latitude; is situated this wonder of the world, in a

Neighbouring cities.

Mountains of Segovia.

## DESCRIPTION OF

southern exposure, the most eligible amidst the cold of these mountains. The height of its situation preserves it from the dense fogs and noxious vapors exhaled by the sun, and the mountains defend it from the northern blasts, by which the inhabitants would be greatly annoyed; while it is refreshed by the breezes of the west and south, which find a passage between the mountains; tho' even these in winter are often very severe.

## Springs.

IN the adjacent country are infinite number of springs of excellent water, some trickling from the lofty precipices with a gentle murmur, others precipitating their waters with loud noises on the rocks, which are composed of a beautiful white stone, veined with blue, abounding in these mountains, and of which the edifice is chiefly built.

Its environs offer to the sight a most enchanting variety of beautiful objects; and the parks, intermixed with pastures for cattle, and thickets for deer, cannot be too much admired. Among these is one called Herreria, bordering on the garden-wall, a league in circuit; and the whole country, for several leagues round, contains nothing more agreeable; whilst its extraordinary fertility in salubrious herbs and medicinal plants affords the greatest relief to the inhabitants of this solitude. It owes its name to the Herrerias or iron works, which were formerly here; and from thence, and a church dedicated with a beautiful baptismal font, it was called de la Herreria de Neuftra Senorade Fuente-Lamparas. The iron mines are still visible in the mountains, and the village near them still retains the name of Escorial (i. e. drofs or flagg), and which is often given to the monastery itself, on account of the drofs and cinders still remaining. But since the settlement of  
the

the Spanish laurel here, wonders have arose from the dross, and the iron has been transmuted into gold.

HALF a league to the eastward of the convent, is another enchanting valley, called la Fresneda; its natural beauties being heightened by gardens, fountains, lakes, and other embellishments of art; and of which we shall speak more particularly in the sequel. More to the northward are two others, the Capillo, and the Monasterio, having a feat in each, and a communication thro' a walk of stately elms: they are a league in length, and regularly planted with a great variety of trees, as oak, ash, pine, &c. and form a most delightful prospect. The mountains are also covered with yew and cypress trees, whose deep verdure defies the chilling blasts of winter. Tempted by the plenty of herbage, deer, chamois, and wild boars, visit these parks in troops, together with an infinite number of rabbits, all kind of wild fowl and singing birds: the former are admired for their largeness and delicacy, and the latter for the extraordinary sweetness of their notes. Even the royal eagle visits these parks; and if there be any thing ominous in these birds, this, of all others, is the place where they should reside, to denote that here the Austrian eagles were to fix their residence.

BESIDES the beauties of the situation, it also enjoys the inestimable advantage of health; so that fevers and other epidemical diseases of Spain are known here only by report: even that general pestilence which lately swept away such numbers, spared those parts; so that experience has shewn it to be one of the most healthy spots in Europe. The moderate degree of cold not a little contributes to its salubrity; for the natural heat being confined within the body by the circum-

Healthful  
situation.

bient

## DESCRIPTION OF

bient air, corrects and destroys the morbid humors, and invigorates the animal system: whilst in winter the weather is so mild, as not to require the expedients necessary in other climates. Thus the intense cold, the ice and snow of the Segovia mountains, serve only to shew the judgment of those who so happily determined the situation of this august fabric, which enjoys the presence of the sun from its rising to its setting during its whole annual course, as a preservative against the severity of the cold, but without any excessive heat. So that, considered in every respect, nothing can be better adapted to a devout pursuit of heaven: it is remote from the impediments of the world; and it abounds in the riches of nature, which raise the mind to a devout contemplation of the first universal cause.

Materials easily procured.

THE place is particularly adapted to the building such an edifice, as it contains most of the materials which compose its stupendous bulk. The mountains abound in stone, and many parts of the country are covered with forests of pine-trees, rivalling the loftiness and solidity of the celebrated cedars of Lebanon.

See Strab. Lib. xiv.

THE ancients boast loudly of the exuberance and advantages of the island of Cyprus; and, as a proof of it, Strabo tells us, that, without the assistance of any other country, it can build and fit out, with its own produce, a large ship of force, from the keel to the mast. But far greater encomiums belong to this happy spot, which has furnished all the materials for the construction of this sacred ship; in which, as in the ark of Noah, are saved the souls of men, who have sought refuge within it from the deluge of sin, with which the wretched world is overwhelmed.

HERE,

HERE, in a large plain, stands Philip's unparalleled wonder, in the form of a vast quadrangle, facing the south, but with a small inclination towards the east, that the rays of the sun may more early visit the southern front, in which are the chief habitations of the religious, together with the royal apartments. The length of the front from east to west is 580 feet; and at each extremity two superb ranges of buildings are extended directly north, and are again joined by another front equal to the first of 580 feet. So that this astonishing quadrangle consists of four fronts; but its length from east to west exceeds its breadth from north to south by 155 feet; and the whole circuit is 2010 feet, each foot being one-third of a Castile yard. There are also other parts which fill up this extensive area, placed at equal distances, and all of a symmetry, convenience and grandeur, admired by every lover of architecture.

Exposure of  
the structure.

Length of  
the front.

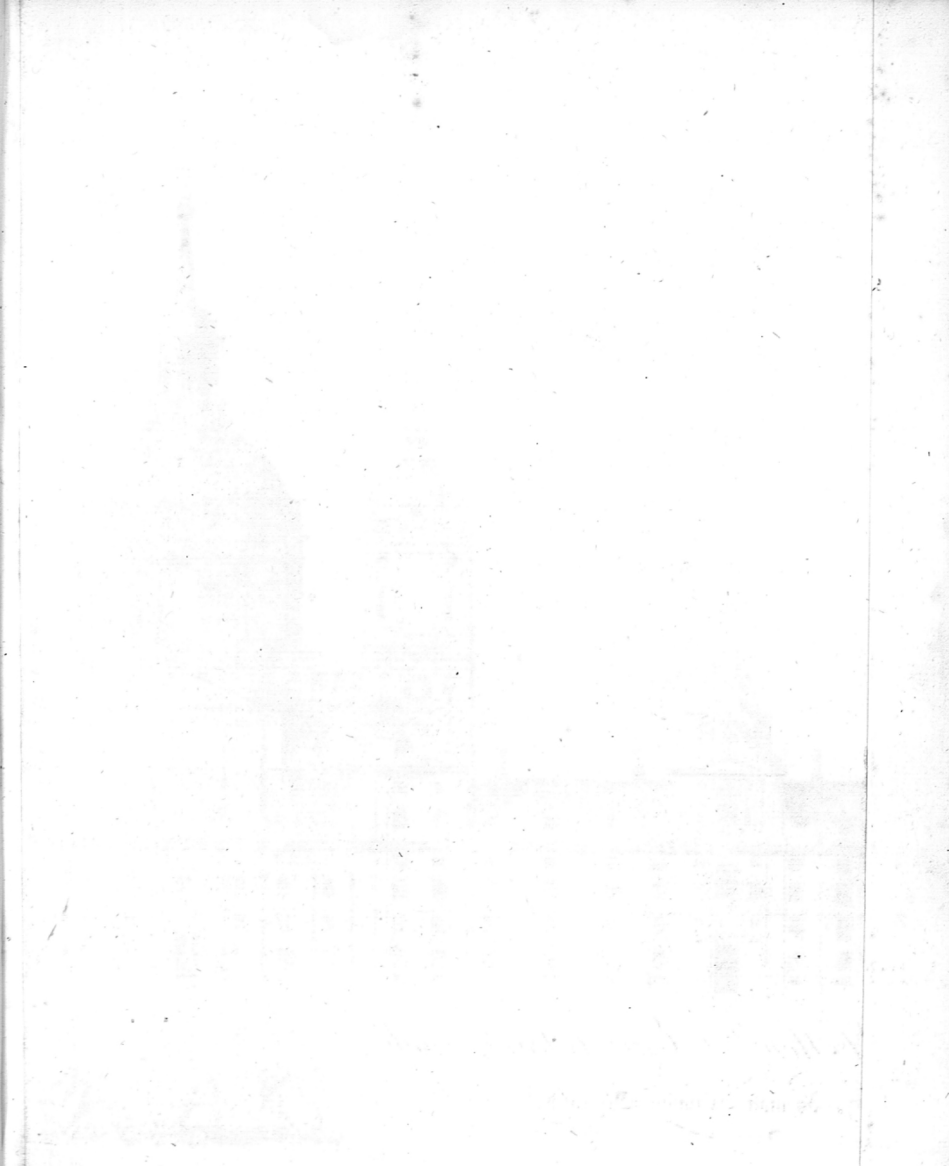
THE principal designer of this transcendent fabric, so worthy of its founder, was John Baptist de Toledo, in whom all the qualifications and sciences, which Vitruvius requires to form a compleat architect, centered. It must indeed be owned to have received several beautiful improvements from Antonio de Villacastro, an Hieronymite religious, first of Toledo, and afterwards of this convent, who signalised his incomparable genius as general surveyor of this structure. Juan de Herrera, a disciple of the former, also conducted a principal part of this august building. This ingenious person drew several pieces, still preserved here, representing the structure in its several views and dispositions, apartments, offices, and courts, with scales for measuring every particular part; and which, besides the delicacy of the performance, exhibit the proportions, members, and dimensions, of the several pieces.

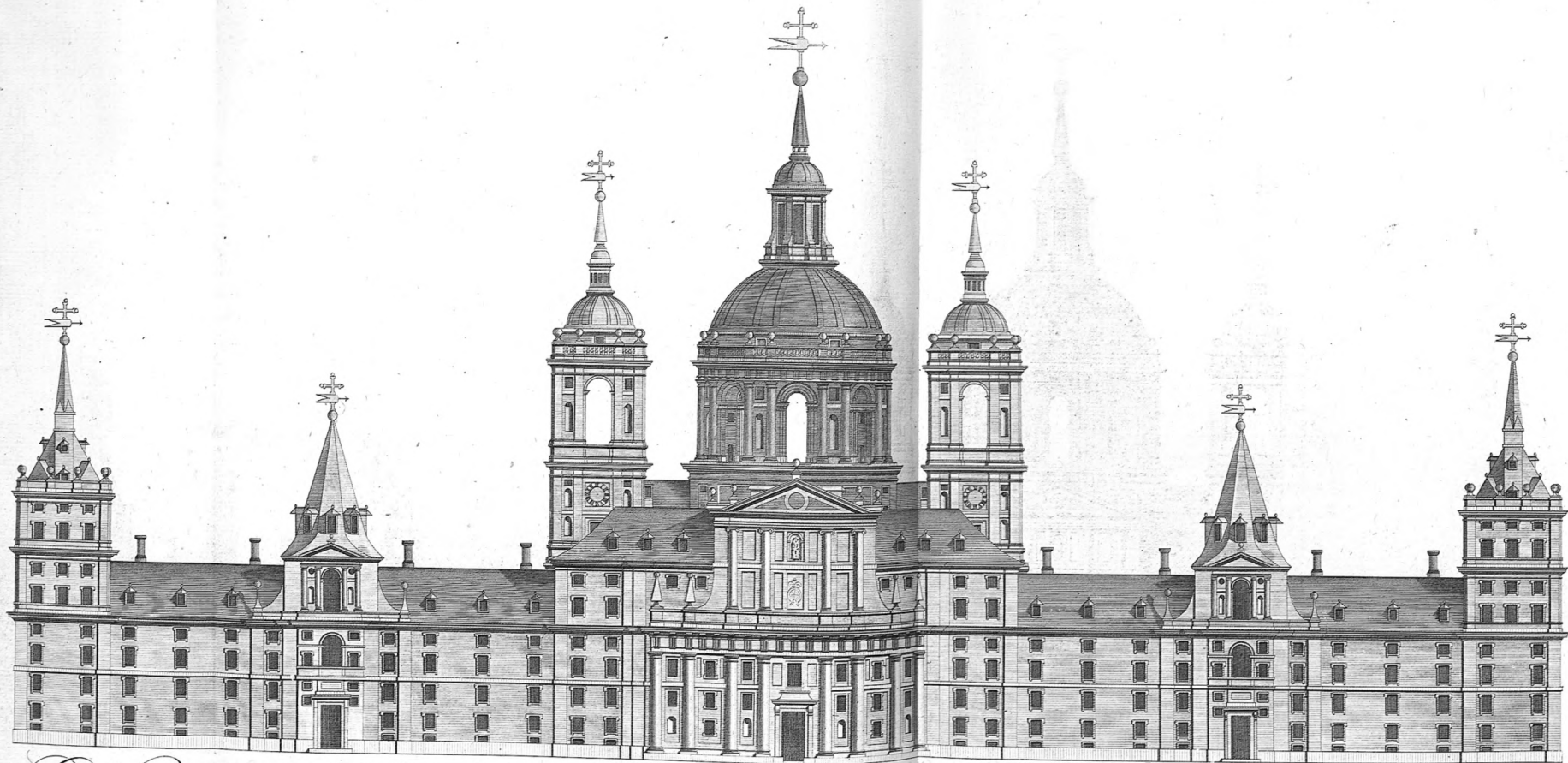
Principal ar-  
chitect.

## DESCRIPTION OF

Materials of  
this structure.

I SHALL here confine the present description of this incomparable quadrangle to its external part, which is composed of white stone, decorated with blue and brown veins, and whose fine polish and masterly disposition render it the most beautiful and august object of the kind in the known world. I shall afterwards describe its riches and ornaments; tho' perhaps it is impossible for the pen of man to convey an adequate idea of them, especially since that dreadful conflagration which happened on the 7th of June 1671. It first began from so small a cause as a chimney's taking fire; but the wind unfortunately carrying the sparks to some parts consisting chiefly of wood, the conflagration commenced, and continued fifteen days without intermission; during which many superb edifices, sacred and civil, together with four grand towers, fell under the rapid voracity of that destructive element. If the church, the royal apartments, the principal library, together with many paintings and pieces of furniture, were saved, it was owing to the intrepid activity of the inhabitants, who all, as it were, emulously contended with the devouring flames. The whole was rebuilt with superior magnificence by the devotion and munificence of Charles II. and we behold with pleasure and gratitude that infinite number of ornaments, and profusion of riches, which at once concur to form its unrivalled splendor, and place it above description.



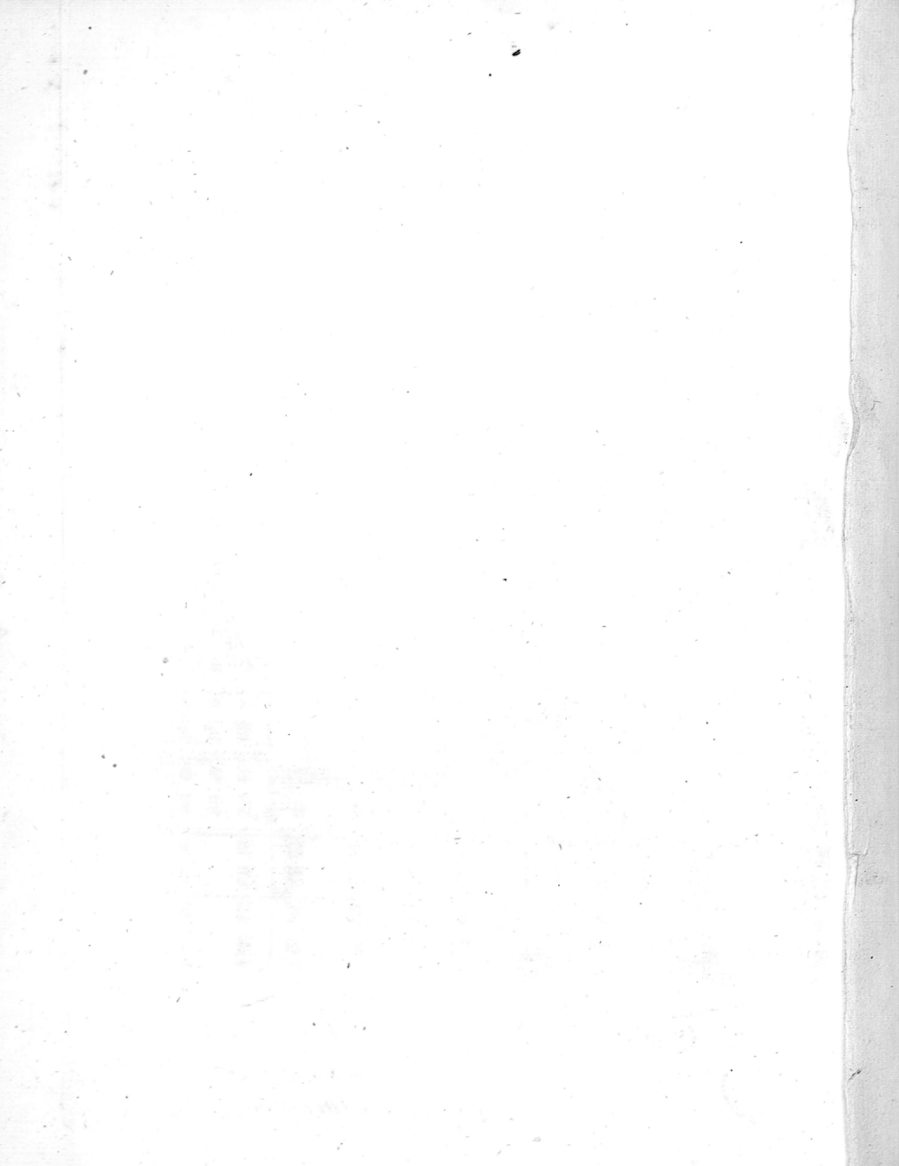


To the Right Hon.<sup>ble</sup> the Earl of Scarborough,  
Is most Humbly Dedicated,  
L. Loreux Arch. Delin



This ELEVATION,  
By  
His most obedient humble Servant,  
George Thompson  
F. Tasson Sculp.





## C H A P. II.

Of the external Parts of this Structure; and its four principal Fronts.

**T**HE prospect of this miracle of genius, skill, and architecture, discourages any attempt to describe it, as surpassing comprehension; the majestic grandeur of its appearance so confounds the mind, that it is lost in astonishment, and can only admire what it intends to delineate. Here silence, the rhetoric of admiration, is the best painting, agreeable to the example of Sallust, who, passing over into Africa, in order to exhibit a more striking picture of the celebrated Carthage, was so amazed at the sight of its august and extensive ruins, that he chose rather to pass it over in silence, than injure it by a pen, which he considered as unequal to its dignity. Who would not be at a loss for terms proper for describing this miracle of art? Who could find words proper to convey an adequate idea of its superb appearance? The symmetry, order, and beauty, which reign through the whole composition of this vast structure, elevates and fills the soul of the curious spectator with rapture. The regularity, loftiness, and workmanship of this unparalleled quadrangle; its splendid façades, and corresponding piazzas; its elevated towers, pinacles, cupolas, columns, pyramids, windows, doors, mouldings, globes, and crosses, are all objects of such inimitable grandeur, as impose silence on the observer: but, being commanded to speak, I must submit, though never was obedience more implicit; for, seconded only by my weak talents, it attempts the most arduous task. The perspective view on the plate annexed, was taken from the declivity of a Malagon mount, situated to the west of the palace, and from whence there is full prospect of the whole. But, before we enter this superb structure, let us take a tour round it, and survey its fine façades.

The rhetoric of silence.

## DESCRIPTION OF

THE principal façade, or front of the building, and in which is the most stately entrance, leading towards the church, fronts the west, and is delineated on the plate annexed. It is seven hundred and forty feet in length, and six hundred in height, to the cornice, decorated at each angle with two towers, above two-hundred feet high, innumerable windows, balconies, and battlements covered with slate, and terminating in gilt globes or crosses, all of remarkable beauty. The two other angles of this structure are decorated with the like number of towers, and of the same dimensions and workmanship. In this west front are three gates; of which that in the center is the principal, and of a grandeur that admits of no comparison. I shall however endeavour to give the reader some faint idea of it.

Grand portal. Its first member is a pedestal of a very fine speckled marble, projecting in a direct line from the wall, an hundred and twenty-eight feet in length, and three feet high. This pedestal supports a row of doric pillars of the same beautiful marble, four on each side; two of which join to each other, and placed in such a manner, as to form equal intervals; but, instead of entire, they are only semi-columns of great solidity, and artfully disposed, in order to support the prodigious weight of the architrave, frieze, cornice, with that difference of the triglyphs, entablature and modillions, peculiar to this order; and their altitude, above the plinth, on the pedestal, is fifty-six feet. The lower part of the intercolumnation is filled with spacious niches; over each of which are two windows four feet square, one above the other, reaching to the architrave. Over this row of doric pillars is another of the Ionic order, equally bold and elegant, of the same dimensions with the former, and appear like them, to be half within the wall, the other half projecting; but, in the last row, the four middle pillars only join to the façade,

façade, tympan, battlements and globes, which answer to the pillars, with all the precision of the exquisite art; and, on the two extreme pillars of the doric order, on both sides, are placed pyramids on pedestals of a similar construction. In the interval of the first Doric order, is the grand entrance, twelve feet wide, and twenty-four feet high. The side posts, lintel, and other parts of the portal, are entire pieces, hewn out of the same rock, and of such magnitude and weight, that they were brought singly from the quarry, in a very strong carriage, constructed on purpose, and drawn by no less than forty yoke of oxen. Above the portal, is a window of the same dimensions; on each side of which are several gridirons carved in the stone, alluding to the martyrdom of St. Laurence. Immediately over this window, in an area, precisely answering to the upper row, the royal arms are finely carved in the same stone in basso-relievo: and indicating to whom the prince owes all his honors and triumphs, and to point out the patron of this amazing structure, there is placed, in a spacious nich, in the center of the frontispiece, a beautiful statue in white marble, of the Spanish martyr St. Laurence, fifteen feet high, dressed in the habit of a deacon, with a book in his left hand, and a large gridiron of bronze in his right. This statue, which greatly augments the majesty of the whole structure, is the work of Juan Baptista Monegro, an eminent statuary, born at Toledo. The whole portal joins to the main wall of the structure, which extends from one tower to the other, and, in the center, rises thirty feet above the cornice, which extends all round, and supports the whole quadrangle. Its height, to the globes in the front, is an hundred and forty feet, and exhibits the most masterly assemblage of beauties.

Grand  
entrance.

King's arms.

Statue of St.  
Laurence.

The side  
gates.

BESESIDES this superb entrance, the vast extent of the front affords space sufficient for two others, one on each side, between that in the center and the towers, each an hundred feet high, and in an elegant taste. That on the right leads to the Hospederia, or place for the reception of strangers, and the infirmary; and the other to the college and seminary: on each side is a square pilaster, reaching to the cornice, where they both terminate in battlements, each crowned with a large globe; but the true form within two façades, extending along the whole building, the area between them being filled with a large window, its tympan, pinnacles, and other ornaments. The gates are ten feet broad, and twenty high, and over them are two arched windows in the Gothic taste; and, being placed one over the other, occupy the space of eighty feet, the height of the frontispieces, which are also embellished with niches and festoons. The three gates in this front of the structure, together with the towers at the angles, add a majesty to the whole, which does honor to the architect. Its beauty is also considerably augmented from its pedestal and cornice, with its curious modillions, and elegant fillet, which surrounds the whole, at the height of thirty feet, dividing the windows into three rows below, and two above, being of the most exact symmetry, and curiously wrought. The number of windows in this front, is two hundred and forty-seven; which, with the gates, niches, battlements, pinnacles, and towers, give it a splendid appearance, and are all accurately expressed in the plate.

The east side.

THE opposite side, which faces the east, is of the same length, one hundred and forty feet, and also extremely grand, and in every part worthy a royal founder. In the center are some projections, containing the royal apartments, with lodgings for the household; and also the great chapel of the church. These several buildings, by their  
number

number and magnitude, make such large additions to this front, that, including the projections, its length is above eleven hundred feet; and what causes it to appear still larger, are the multitude of apertures and windows; for, besides five small doors, one for the middle projection, which is the king's residence, two at the angular towers, one under the sacristy, and one answering to it in the other part, it has three hundred and sixty-six windows. But the frontispiece, at the back of the great chapel, which is seen above the royal apartments, though lofty, has no very pleasing effect, being quite simple, and entirely destitute of ornaments.

THE south front makes an elegant appearance, though it has neither pilasters, nor fillet, except that, which, at the height of thirty feet, surrounds the whole quadrangle, and is indeed the crown of this august structure; for here this building was originally begun, and here the first stone of the foundation was laid, on the twenty-third of April, being St. George's day, in the year 1563, having on the upper part of it this inscription, DEUS O. M. OPERI ASPICIAT; on one side, PHILIPPUS II. HISP. REX A FUNDAMENTIS EREXIT, M. D. LXIII. and on the other side, JOAN BAPTISTA ARCHITECTUS IX. CALEND. MAI. This stone may at present be seen under the prior's seat in the refectory. The length of this front, from tower to tower, is five hundred and seventy feet; and, to augment its beauty, the windows are disposed in five contiguous rows, without any large intermediate space. The first, which are of the Gothic kind, and extend in a row parallel to the foundation, from the tower facing the south and west, to that which faces the north and east, are adorned with an hundred and twenty-one bars, nine feet high, and five and a half broad. The other windows have iron bars, half their height; and, with the others

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in this façade, which are no less than three hundred and six, make a very splendid appearance. Here are also three small doors leading into the vaults and cellars. The roads from Madrid and Toledo have a prospect of the east and south fronts; and, when once seen, the eye is so delighted, that it can hardly be withdrawn from contemplating such magnificent objects.

The north front.

THE north front, as corresponding with that of the south, is also five hundred and seventy feet in length, from tower to tower. It has three principal gates, which add greatly to the beauty of its appearance; two lead into the palace, and the third into the college. They are all ten feet broad, twenty high; and the workmanship, in every part, of an exquisite taste, and finely executed. The windows in this front are disposed in regular ranges; but, on account of its northern exposure, has only an hundred and twenty. However, the stateliness of the pilasters, extending from the pedestals to the upper cornice, and other architectonic embellishments, render this front a masterly pattern of art and judgment.

SUCH is the external appearance of this stupendous quadrangle, which, in the beautiful symmetry of its vast façades, the decorations of its superb gates, its lofty towers, numerous windows, disposed in rows; and of which, those seen on the outside only, amount to seven hundred and ten, exhibits the most beautiful objects of art and grandeur; a variety always surveyed with rapture. The area in which this quadrangle stands, is two hundred feet wide at the principal entrance towards the west, and has a marble balustrade at the same distance, extending towards the north, with partitions, and gates secured with chains. The pavement is of the same species of stone, and divided into compartments,