

some beautiful volutes at the sides, and in the middle square, is a picture of Christ bearing his cross. This piece came from the pencil of Sebastian del Piombo, an intimate friend and imitator of Bonarrotto, and, on account of its invaluable excellency, was fixt in this eminent place; though not without a silent intimation to the dignitaries, that the seat of superiority is so far from exempting them from laboring in the vineyard, that it enforces their duty, and shews them, that they ought to be devoutly diligent.

Number of
the seats.

THE whole number of stalls in the choir is one hundred and twenty-eight, and on both sides are four ascents of three marble steps, between the lower and upper row, yet sometimes not a few stalls are wanting for persons of rank, who come to join in the conventual devotions. On the right side, at the corner of the upper row, near a door opening to an apartment adjoining to the choir, is the stall of Philip the second, who frequently used to assist at the devotions of the monks; and here he received the news of the famous victory of Lepanto over the infidels, when his forces so gloriously distinguished themselves.

Philip II's
seat.

The desk.

THE chanting desk has few equals for largeness and magnificence. It stands in the intermediate space between the two last stalls, on a square pedestal of jasper, inlaid with white marble, and supported by four large brass pilasters, enamelled with gold. The leaf, on which the books lie, is also of enamelled brass, ten feet from angle to angle, or forty in circumference, and its whole height is sixteen feet. It is made of acana and caovo wood, with mouldings and fillets of the above metal gilt. Over the cornice are four globes, whose gilding makes

makes a fine appearance, and the globes themselves answer to the four pilasters. In the middle of the globes, on a pedestal of the same wood as the stalls, is a small temple, consisting of twelve columns, formed in portals, with an image of our Lady in the center, and terminating in a cupola, on the top of which is a gilt brass crucifix. The whole, in its design and decorations, is extremely beautiful, and very much heightens the magnificent appearance of this choir.

THE music books are of a piece with the desk; when opened, they are exactly square, being two yards in width, and the same in height. The leaves are of parchment, very white on both sides, the letters so large and uniform, that they may be seen from the prior's stall, and most exquisitely illuminated, being the work of father Andreas de Leon, who, in this elegant art, was a second don Julio, father Julian's disciple, and other masters. Here is also a capitulary for the principal festivals. This work is highly esteemed both for the largeness and beauty of the illuminations, neither Spain, nor Italy, having ever produced the like. The number of the books is no less than two hundred and fourteen, all similar in their binding and ornaments, which are of brass enamelled with gold.

THIS splendid collection of books, of which I know not whether Europe affords the like, stands in the two antecoros; and in another beautiful apartment, behind one of the side courts, are the cases of books, all of the same wood as the stalls of the choir, and decorated with square pilasters, bases and chapters of the doric order. Over the frieze and cornice are the titles of the books, for the more readily finding them. I must not omit a very remarkable

and well known particular, that, when the fire reached this place, neither the books nor some paintings in the library were damaged. The flames seemed ever to respect the choir, and to discontinue the progress of their devastations. The pavement of the choir, like that of the church, is of black and white marble, finely polished and variegated with knots, figures, and compartments, so that it appears like a garden.

Paintings on
the walls of
the choir.

ANOTHER superb decoration of the choir is the admirable history painting along the side walls, and of the front above the stalls. Over that of the prior's, and all the others in that range, within the intermediate spaces of three superb windows, are the two luminaries of the church, the particular patrons of this house and its order, St. Laurence, and St. Jerom. The latter is in the habit of a cardinal, with a lion at his side; the former in a deacon's dress, with a gridiron in one of his hands: both are master-pieces, something larger than life; and in them the artist has equally shewn the correctness of his judgment and the beauty of his pencil. They are both by Luqueto. St. Laurence is on the right hand, and all along the remainder of the choir, on the wall above the stalls, are two grand paintings, representing two passages in the life of the same martyr; one his imprisonment, in company with pope Sixtus; in the other, he is presenting a multitude of poor people to the tyrant: they are in fresco, and the works of Romulo Italiano, nor are they unworthy of so great a master.

ON the other wall of the choir, are likewise two pieces in the same taste; one represents St. Jerom, writing books for the edification

edification of the church, and over him an angel with expanded wings, founding a trumpet at his ears, to denote the continual impression on his mind of the day of judgment: at a distance, is seen the same saint in the wilderness, prostrate before a crucifix. In the other, he is preaching to his monks, and reading to them the holy scriptures: in the back ground is seen the same father expiring, and his disciples attending him; the figures here are something above the natural size, the pieces themselves very large and majestic, and with regard to their value, it is sufficient to say, they are also by Romulo.

BETWEEN both, and over the stalls in the two choirs, are two organ lofts, with balconies of brass gilt, standing on beautiful corbels, projecting from the cornice, to give sufficient room to the performers. These organs are twenty-six feet wide, and the galleries nearly of the same size. Each of them are decorated with four corinthian pillars, forming the apertures, or doors, within which are the pipes. The two side doors are quadrilateral, and the middle one forms a curvature, which breaks the architrave and cornice, as the pipes reach the whole height. The pillars, and the whole loft to the modillions of the front cornice, are finely inlaid with polished gold.

Organs of
the choir.

IN the middle of the body of the church, against the fronts of the principal nave, which crosses from south to north, and over the thirty feet passage, are two other admirable organs, fifty feet broad, and forty high, with six pedestals, for as many pillars of the corinthian order, forming five apertures: that in the middle breaks the architrave and the cornice, forming an arch, which takes in the whole plane
of

Church
organs.

of the frontispiece, the pipes being of a magnitude which requires all that space. These lofts also are large, and, besides other embellishments, have balustrades of brass.

OMITTING the various sounds produced by the combinations of these organs, with the instruments, as trumpets, clarions, hautboys, bassoons, flutes, &c. together with a great variety of harmonious voices, which are imitated by the infinite number of their pipes: it is sufficient to say, that to each of these large organs belong thirty-two stops, and demand both the feet and hands of an organist, having two rows of keys for the latter, and one for the former. If those of the choir have not such a number of stops and different modulations, yet they are truly admirable, and made by the same organ-builder, Mafegil, a Flemin, who in these instruments incomparably excels all his contemporaries, and, perhaps, future ages will never produce his equal. He also made three portable organs, whose sounds are most delightful. These are placed in three galleries of the church, so that, on high festivals, seven organs play at one time; besides another entirely of silver, the sweetness of whose sounds shew its inestimable value. It is therefore no wonder, that every musical mind is extremely elevated with these grand organs, which fill the whole extent of the church with melody. They take up the middle of the walls of both choirs; and in the angle over them, at the beginning of each wall, are two apertures, one on each side, adorned with paintings, in imitation of jasper and marble, together with balconies of gilt brass; one of which conveys the sound of the clock within it, and the other is the closet where the royal family assist at vespers, there being a passage to it from their apartments, without going into the convent.

ABOVE

ABOVE these apertures, and the two large arched doors, which are Paintings. the principal entrances into the choir, are painted, in niches, imitating gold, the eight virtues; three theological, together with religion, and four moral. They were done by Lugneto. The whole is decorated with knots and festoons: the lights, shades, and relieves in the marble and jaspers are so natural, that it is only by a very near approach they are discovered to be imitations. Such is the painting with which the choir is adorned up to the cornice; and on the ceiling, which is very spacious, is represented the celestial glory, wherein the painter's skill is agreeable to the highest conceptions possible for us to frame in this imperfect state.

ON a throne, environed by light of inexpressible refulgence, and Glory of the choir. spirits of the first order, with thrones, cherubs, and seraphs, is seen a representation of the Trinity, where painting seems to have executed the utmost efforts of its skill. There the Father, in the venerable figure of age, indicates eternity, without a beginning, and the origin of the whole Deity; the Son is placed even with him, to shew the equality of his essence, and is in that perfection of age, at which he laid down his life for the sons of men. The Holy Ghost, that pure and meek dove, is placed between them, as the band of their reciprocal love. Close by the Son is his virgin mother, invested with that super-eminent glory, which is her portion above all other creatures; her countenance is full of sweetness and dignity, looking with inexpressible complacency on the fruit of her womb. Next to this is the glorious company of the apostles, and amongst them, in a conspicuous place, is seen St. John the baptist. Lower down are nine other groupes, consisting of patriarchs, prophets, and teachers; martyrs, confessors, virgins, married

married persons, and widows, and amongst them angelic spirits, according to their ranks and hierarchies, with various musical instruments, expressing, by their countenances and attitudes, that they are chaunting the praises of the Almighty. The innocents, those tender flowers so early cut down by the scythe of the inhuman Herod, with innumerable troops of others, who took their flight to heaven from the font, are here represented in sweet security, and adorned with garlands and chaplets. In fine, all are known, either by their vestments, or attributes: Moses by the tables, David by the harp, the martyrs by the instruments of their martyrdom. Here also are seen popes, saints, founders of orders, emperors, kings, religious, and nobles of all degrees, some sitting, others standing; all larger than life, and of a most animated execution. In short, this is one of the noblest performances in painting throughout the whole structure, and though the multitude of saints and angels be so very great, Luquoet completed the work in fifteen months. It must, however, be owned, that the coloring and ornaments, betray some marks of precipitate haste. His own picture he placed at the entrance of the glory, a little behind that of father Antonio de Villacastin, the architect.

In the center of the choir hangs a chrystal branch of a prodigious magnitude, weighing thirty-five arrobas, and holding twenty-eight lights: it was made in Milan, and his majesty Charles the second, at sight of this brilliant object, determined to purchase it; and indeed, it is a gift worthy of the monarch, and the place it occupies. Above the cornice, in the frontispiece of the choir, are two masterly paintings, having the great window between them; one represents the angel Gabriel,

Gabriel, and the other our Lady at the annunciation. Such is the construction, and such the ornaments of the choir of this church, where, at all hours, the monks are cheerfully performing the duty of their capital founders. Eight hours of the day, divided by equal intervals, and commencing from the mattins, whose stated hour is always that of midnight, are constantly appropriated to public worship; and in the interval, during which the communities are not in the choir, two religious, with the appellation of watchers, relieving each other every two hours, are incessantly praying day and night, so that, in this sacred place, there is no discontinuance of prayer and praise during a great part of the year.

Exercises in
the choir.

LOWER down, behind the prior's stall, and all along the partition, a passage is contrived for the admission of light to the portico and lower stalls. In the middle is an altar, where mass is said, and may be heard in the very portico; it has a crucifix of white marble of the exact stature of our Saviour, according to a painting taken from the Savoy fudarium, which is in the reliquary here, having, as a piece of inestimable value, been presented to the founder by the great duke of Tuscany. The cross itself is of black marble, and, for the greater security, placed in another of wood. The artist was Benevento Zelino, a native of Florence, and who, in this finished piece, has shewn a delicate knowledge of the passions, and an exquisite skill in sculpture.

NEAR the above crucifix is a statue of St. Laurence, standing over the font of holy water, between the doors of the antecoro of the convent. The nich is of San-pablo marble and Tortosa jasper, in a good taste and well executed. The statue is of white marble,

Image of
St. Laurence
in the ante-
coro.

and dressed in the habit of a deacon, with a very beautiful countenance. It is of the natural bigness, and holds in its hand a gridiron of gilt brass, and a palm branch of the same metal.

THIS statue was found among the ruins of Rome, and has all the inimitable marks of those happy ages of antiquity, so justly famed for unrivaled superiority in the fine arts. It was sent to Philip the second by one of his ambassadors at that court, either the count d'Olivares, or the duke de Seffa.

ON the side, next the prior's seat, in the apartment, where, as we have already observed, the fire stopped, and in which were part of the music books; over the book-cases are several pictures, and among them some worthy of notice; especially a capital piece of the calling of St. Andrew and St. Peter to the apostleship, when they were fishing. Our Saviour is represented in a proper attitude, and his countenance of the most attractive mildness, standing on the shore: St. Andrew is kneeling at his feet, and St. Peter leaping out of the boat; the whole appears like real nature: the expanse of the sea, with the other distances, are inimitably expressed. In a word, it is a noble monument of the skill of its author Frederico Barroci, an Italian. Here is also a capital piece of the crucifixion, with our Lady and St. John standing by the cross. It is an original of Mudo, and was once the altar-piece of the sacristy. The other, which represents Christ's appearing in the garden to Mary Magdalen after his resurrection, is by Titian, and consequently a fine piece. It formerly stood in the vicar's apartment. Here are also some smaller copies from Basano, St. Antonio de Befco, and a portrait of St. Jerom.

THUS

Thus have we given some idea of the choir, the antecoros, and their ornaments: at seeing them, we are apt to imagine, that art and magnificence have exhausted all their stores; but when we come to view the great chapel, all is forgotten, and absorbed in the raptures and astonishment, excited by the inconceivable beauty and splendor of a multitude of various and costly objects, which we shall endeavour to describe in the following chapter.

CHAP. VI.

Of the great Chapel.

ALL the fathers of the church agree, that the high altar of churches, which resembles the prow of the nave, should be placed towards the east. In Moses's tabernacle, and Solomon's temple, the ark occupied the west side, and the entrance was on the east; there are many reasons for this difference, but too long for this place, and therefore are here omitted.

Great chapel. THE first division in this superb chapel is formed by an arch, issuing from a stately pilaster, answering to the principal of those in the center, whose breadth and elevation is equal to that of the others, which have also their pilasters, bases, and chapiters. The chapel, at its projecture towards the east, from the great quadrangle to the wall, behind the tabernacle, is sixty feet in length, and fifty-three in breadth, being the dimensions of the principal nave of the church. On both sides are two arcades of the same kind of stone, reaching to the front wall, and, within them, the oratories of the royal family.

Chapel steps. THE ascent, from the church to the chapel, is by twelve steps, reaching from pillar to pillar, all of large blocks of red jasper, finely polished; and fill so large a space, that they serve for seats to the members of the convent, college, and seminary, to hear the sermons preached in the church: nor are they crowded in the least. At the end of a pavement, fifteen feet long, and reaching from the oratories

on

on one side, to the wall of the other, are steps nearer the altar. The pavement consists of mosaic work of jaspers and marbles of various colors, arranged in the most beautiful compartments, and of such a lustre, that angels, or the ministers of heaven alone seem worthy to tread on it.

FROM this level, rise other five steps of the same form and materials as the former, but contracted on both sides, that the entrance to the oratories may not be obstructed. These lead up to the second plane, being also fifteen feet in length, to the doors of the sanctuary, in the midst of which is the altar: this plane is likewise of the same beautiful inlaid work as the preceding.

Two other steps, but of a circular form, lead to the great altar, on the plane of which the priest stands with his attendants.

THE altar is likewise of jasper and marble of various colors, Great altar. representing the most beautiful imagery: the table is one single piece of rich jasper, twelve feet in length, and above four broad, including a ledge, on which is placed the crucifix, and other valuable ornaments. Instead of being fastened to the wall, it is insulated for the more convenient taking away, or placing the sacred instruments. Three high masses are said every day at this altar; and the grandeur of the solemnity on high festivals is extremely affecting to those who are not lost to devotion and sensibility.

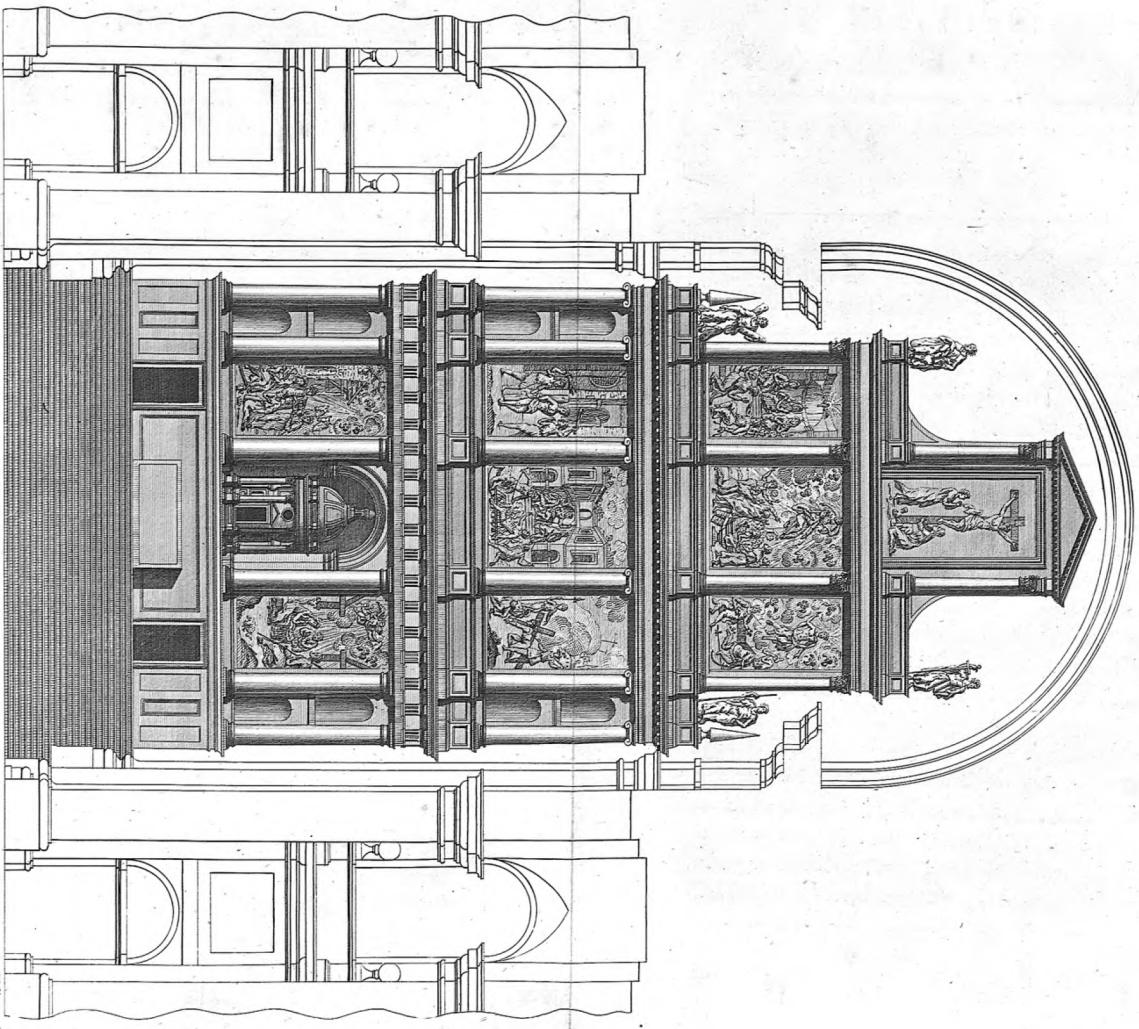
ON the sides are two closets of the same wood with the stalls in Closets. the choir, and equal to them in curious workmanship. In these are placed the chalices, corporals, pixes, books, fonts, surplices, pontifical vestments,

vestments, and other utensils for the administration of this divine banquet. On each side are two seats, one for the priest and his attendants, during the celebration, the other is reserved for prelates of the highest rank, as nuncios, cardinals, and others. This august altar receives no small addition of majesty from two galleries, with balustrades of gilt brass, joining to those seats, and also from the doors of the sanctuary, which are between the altar and closets; but in the altar-piece, the eye beholds the most glorious fabric that judgment and skill can produce; a work suitable to the munificence of Philip the second, and of which the whole world cannot shew a parallel.

Chief altar-piece.

THIS altar-piece is decorated with all the orders of regular architecture, the Tuscan excepted, and executed in the finest taste. It consists of the most beautiful jasper and enamelled brass. On a pedestal of red jasper, diversified with green compartments, and ten feet in height, traversing the whole altar, stand six stately doric columns, which begin the construction of this celebrated work. These form five compartments, the middle of which is eleven feet and a half in breadth at the lower shaft of the column. Here the tabernacle is placed, and over it, in the compartments of the other columns, are several paintings of sacred history. The side compartments are seven feet wide, and the two extreme ones, four and a half.

THEIR bases and chapters, together with those of all the columns of the other orders, and of the pilasters behind them, are of brass, enamelled with gold, displaying all the curious works in use among the ancients, without any defect in the style, or breach in the symmetry. The shafts are of jasper, beautifully polished and fluted, though in
different



W. C. Hayward, del.

To J. M^r's James Southey Esq^r Bar^r
 & Humble Devotee



Sh^r's SECTION with the GRAND STAIR
 By his most Obedient Servant,
 George Thompson

different forms; in some the triglyphs are gilded, and the mouldings of jasper beautifully veined. The diameter of the columns is two feet and a half; and the whole height, base and chapter included, seventeen and a half.

THE intercolumniations, forming niches at the two extremes, contain the statues of four doctors of the church, in gilt brass, dressed in pontifical robes, with mitres and croziers, together with St. Jerom, having on his head a cowl, a lion at his feet, and holding a crucifix in his hand. They are all as large as life, and finely executed. The gilding here has a most charming effect, the jasper of the niches being green. The two spaces, on the side of the tabernacle, in this range, are filled with two pieces of painting; one representing the nativity, the other the eastern magi, paying homage to the divine infant; both by Peregrino. We shall describe the tabernacle in the sequel, if language can furnish terms to convey an adequate idea of it.

THE second rank of columns is of the ionic order, having pedestals of the same stone, and inlaid with green in the compartments; that of the frieze is of an exceeding bright red, with dantelli of gilt brass: what a beautiful sight this contrast must form, the reader will easily conceive! In the extreme intercolumniations are likewise two niches of green jasper, containing statues of the four evangelists, of the same materials and beauty with those above described, though something larger in proportion to their distance. The principal picture in the middle part, directly over the tabernacle, represents the martyrdom of St. Laurence, by Peregrino, who has done justice to the noble subject; and well did it deserve to be selected for so august a situation, and to be placed among others done by Lucas Cangiolo, and

DESCRIPTION OF

and Frederico Zucaro. The heroic Spaniard is represented as lying on the gridiron, surrounded by pagans. The whole declares the exquisite judgment and elegant taste of the artist; but the beauties of the piece suffer from not being placed in a proper light.

IN the side compartments are some historical passages of our Saviour; one represents him bound to the pillar; in another he is seen staggering under the weight of the cross, all by Zucaro, and accounted the very best of his pieces.

THE third rank is of the Corinthian order, the most beautiful and exquisite of all, with the leaves and volutes peculiar to its chapter, heightened by the radiancy of the gold with which they are gilded. The history represented in the middle, is that of the assumption of the Virgin; those on the sides are the resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost; all by Frederico, and finely executed. This rank consists only of four pillars, the two which should answer to the extremes of the lower rank, are supplied by two pyramids of green jasper, resting on pedestals; and between these are two statues of brass, larger than the evangelists, being seven feet and a half in height: one represents St. James, the patron of Spain, the other St. Andrew; both very grand and animated.

THE last order is that called the composite, as being composed of the others; here are only two pillars which support the frontispiece. Their modillions are richly gilded. Here the altar-piece terminates in the principal arch of the chapel, joining to the key door of the tympanum; its buttresses are two plain cartouches of the same jasper, and extending to the pedestals of the extreme pillars. In the space,
formed

formed by these two columns, is a portal with jaumbs and lintels of the same stone: its compartment is of green jasper, and in it is placed a crucifix of gilt brass, with our Lady and St. John standing on the sides, equally admirable for their magnitude and workmanship. Two other statues, representing St. Peter and St. Paul, stand on the extreme pedestals; so that in this range are five statues, above nine feet in height, and the more remarkable for the extreme difficulty that attended the gilding them. All these statues were made by those two celebrated artists, Leon Leoni, and his son Pompeyo Leoni; and indeed, they are glorious monuments of their abilities.

WHEN this altar-piece is viewed from the nearest plane of the steps, the assemblage of pillars, cornices, statues, and chapters, in which all the beauties of the several orders are concentrated, strikes the beholder with veneration and astonishment; but at a greater distance, it loses all its beauty and grandeur, for want of a proper light. The whole height, from the pedestal, of the doric order, which is the first, to the center of the grand arch, is ninety-three feet, and its breadth, forty-nine.

LET us now proceed to the tabernacle, which certainly is the most beautiful of the kind ever beheld. Its splendor and value can be described only by the pen of an angel, for it seems rather the work of celestial hands, than the produce of sublunary riches, and human ingenuity. We have already observed, that it stands on a pedestal of jasper, between the two middle columns of the first range, within an arched portal, whose pilasters are of red and green jasper. The height of the portal is nine feet and a half, and the breadth, seventeen. Such is the place where this superb tabernacle is deposited.

Grand
tabernacle.

THE form is globular, in imitation of the heavens, and the order that of the Corinthian. The materials are all gems and brads enamelled with gold; the whole height is sixteen feet, and the diameter, seven and a half. The first pedestal is of jasper, exquisitely inlaid in compartments, and, besides other decorations, bordered with gilt fillets.

THIS supports eight very remarkable jasper columns of a deep red color veined with white, and as hard as porphyry itself, but far more beautiful. The proper name of this species is not certainly known, though some call it diasper. The whole was cut with diamonds, no other material making any impression on the pillars, and the polish is so remarkably fine, that it seems as if the diamonds had communicated their brilliancy to the jasper. The bases and chapters are of brads gilt, together with the modillions, festoons, and other decorations; the cornice, which furrounds this magnificent fabric, is remarkably splendid and elegant.

Statues of the
tabernacle.

IN the walls are several hollow square niches, and doors of curious workmanship. In the intercolumniations are four niches, containing the same number of statues of the apostles; and the variety of marbles, so curiously wrought and polished, in the architraves, cartouches, and other pieces, exhibit a most brilliant appearance. Over the cornice is another base with eight pedestals, supporting the same number of statues of the apostles, in gilt brads. It also sustains the cupola, which is divided into four compartments, all of them inlaid with the most beautiful jaspers, and answering to the pillars and pedestals. Above it is a small lantern, crowned with another proportional cupola; and over all is an image of our Saviour,
of

of the same metal with those of the apostles. All the mouldings, frontispieces, chapiters, and other ornaments, glitter with gold, while an infinite variety of polished marbles join their lustre; so that all persons of judgment and taste, who have viewed this august fabric, unanimously agree, that, for many ages, nothing equal to it, for richness and beauty, has been produced. In the lower part are two doors of rock chrystal, so clear and pellucid that they are not perceived at a small distance. One faces the congregation, and, by reflection, presents the spectator with another altar and tabernacle, which appear as if they were placed beyond it: the other opens into an interior apartment, from whence the host is taken out of the tabernacle, when it is to be carried to sick persons, or exposed on festivals.

THE two doors, above mentioned, are between the closets and the altar, on both sides, and lead to the sanctuary; they are three feet and a half in breadth, and, in beauty, excel every thing of the kind. The jaumbs and lintels are of a beautiful green jasper; the other parts consist of jasper of several colors, and polished brass; the latter constitutes the frames and ornaments. The jaspers, which are most beautifully veined, and exquisitely polished, form the pannels, whose backs are of caova wood, and, near them, on each side, is a stair-case of the same materials as those of the altar. After you advance two steps, is a landing-place, from whence ascending a flight of eight more, you reach the top below the cornice of the pedestal, which supports the tabernacle. On the top of the cupola, in a superb fleuron of gold, is a topaz of the bigness of a man's fist, a gem worthy of such a place. The designer of this tabernacle was Juan de Herara, but the workmanship was done by that excellent

Doors of the
sanctuary.

sculptor and lapidary, Jacobo Trizo, who surmounted the difficulty attending the extreme hardness of the stone, by instruments of the most curious invention, which enabled him to perform what was held impracticable. This fabric cost him above seven years labor; and in less ingenious hands, it would have required twenty. On the lower base, between the columns of the inward aperture, is this inscription, by doctor Arias Montano: *JESU CHRISTO SACERDOTI, AC VICTIMÆ PHILIPPUS II. REX, D. OPUS JACOBI TRECII, MEDIOLANENSIS TOTUM, HISPANO E LAPIDE.*

Lesser
tabernacle.

WITHIN this large tabernacle is another of smaller dimensions; but in richness and curious workmanship, equally admirable. It is of a quadrangular form, and stands on a pedestal of brass, gilt, and set with gems, forming compartments, and other decorations. In each front are four pilasters, and at the principal door, which faces the altar, is a kind of vestibule, consisting of four round pillars, not to be surpassed for the exquisiteness of the workmanship, and fineness of the marble. The architecture is of the doric order, which here is consecrated to the god of armies; the whole height of it, including the pedestal, is something less than three feet, and the breadth, about one and a half. The chapiters, and bases of the columns, are of gold and enamel; the triglyphs and metopas, of the finest emeralds. Over the cornice, which is of silver gilt, is another cupola like that of the great tabernacle, with its lanthorn, terminating in a gold fleurón, inclosing a round emerald, and in the center within it, is a most beautiful topaz, set in enamelled gold, but not so large as that in the great tabernacle. The pedestals, which support the cornice, are of a bright red color, the mouldings of its base, and the volutes, of gold. The pyramids, on the upper parts, are of the same marble, with

with ornaments of enamelled gold; as are likewise the globes on the top of the pyramids. The mouldings, volutes, and compartments, are also of the same costly materials. The two doors, answering to that of the tabernacle, are of rock chrysal, ornamented with gold. The other two sides are of the finest jaspers, with fillets of enamelled gold. The inside is of the same, but the compartments are rather still more beautiful.

IN short, on whatever side it is viewed, all is splendid, exquisite, and august.

WITHIN the tabernacle is a vase of agate, the handles and feet of which are of enamelled gold, the cover of the same, with a most beautiful sapphire on the top: and in this is another golden vase, destined to contain that inestimable jewel, the purchase of our redemption, and which was the chief end of the devout and wise prince, Philip II, in erecting this astonishing structure. On the day it was translated hither from the old church, he, together with his son, Philip III, and the lords of his bed-chamber, attended; when himself, with the prince, then a child, supported the canopy. This was on the ninth of August, in the year 1586, on the eve of the festival of St. Laurence.

Vessels in
which the
host is
contained.

ON the pedestal of the door of this second tabernacle, is the following inscription, by the same hand as the former:

HUMANÆ

HUMANÆ SALUTIS EFFICACI PIGNORI
 ASSERVANDO PHILIPPUS II. REX D. EX
 VARIA JASPIDIS HISPANIÆ, TRICII OPUS.

The fegretario. BESIDES the richness, beauty and splendor of this part of the fegretario, the fpectator is prefented with a great variety of coftly ornaments, which, with the ftyle of its architecture, are no fmall additions to the grandeur of the place. The walls, as far as the table adjoining to the tabernacle, are adorned with mofaic work of jafper and white marble; the breadth of the whole, meafured from the wall, is five feet, and a large arcade, at once, gives it both ftrength and beauty. Anfwering to the window of the altar, through which the tabernacle is feen, is another on the eaft fide, of chryftal, with gilt grates. The frame of this window is of red jafper, and in the infide, before the chryftal of the window, are placed curtains of feveral colors, according to the feftival to be celebrated. And as thefe curtains admit only rays of the fame color, the whole fanctuary is filled with this mutable light, which, by its radiant reverberations from the chryftal of the tabernacle, being feen in the church, the majefty of the appearance naturally excites reverence: when the curtain is of red filk, it appears like a glittering carbuncle, when white, like a diamond of inexpressible luftre, and filks of different colors represent other beautiful gems.

Paintings.

ON the fides of the window, and the correspondent parts, are four hiftorical pieces, adapted to the fupreme myftery deposited here. One represents the children of Ifrael, gathering manna in the wildernefs; in the front they are eating the pafcal-lamb, with bitter herbs, and ftaves in their hands. On the other fide is Abraham, offering the
 tythes

tythes of his spoils to Melchizedech, as priest of the Most High. Opposite to this is the angel, giving the prophet Elijah cakes of bread, which enabled him to continue his journey forty days, till he came to mount Horeb. On the concave of the roof is painted the rainbow in its several colors. This piece is a most admirable imitation of nature: and near it, among the clouds, are a multitude of angels, expressing, by their pleasing attitudes, and the joy that sparkles in their beautiful faces, that he, by whom man lives, is also their bread; and that the rainbow, the sign of peace, assures them of permanent happiness in a deluge of transcendent favors. This was the first piece painted by Peregrin de Peregrini, soon after his arrival here; and accordingly, he employed great care and attention in the performance.

SUCH are the admirable ornaments of this superb chapel, which every spectator, after viewing it, leaves with regret.

LET us now take a view of the remaining part of the great chapel, I mean the royal oratories, the architecture, statues, and other embellishments of which are answerable to the grandeur of the several parts before described.

WITHIN the arches, on the sides of the first landing-place of the marble steps, are three doors, on both sides, answering each other. Oratories of the royal family. Their cases are of green jasper, and the rest of red; all as finely polished as those of the altar-piece. These doors lead to three apartments, which shew that they belong to kings. In the first are the religious; that in the middle forms a kind of alcove, where the kings hear mass, in full view of the great altar, and every thing that passes

DESCRIPTION OF

passes in the church; and those, nearest the brass balustrades, on the sides of the great altar, have each an altar for saying the masses peculiar to kings. The pavements, walls, and ceilings, which are cupolas divided into compartments, are all of mosaic work, composed of the clearest jasper, and marble, and nothing can be imagined more beautiful than the compartments. The frames, with the other parts of the doors, are of jasper and bronze, the panes are of crystal, and, instead of nails, gilded screws, a variety of which produces a very pleasing effect.

Burial-place
of the kings.

BESIDES these ornaments, the oratories are so constructed, that, on the outside, they extend to the height of twelve feet, and reach the cornice, serving as pedestals to two stately pillars, and two pilasters answering to their sides. These support a chapel, or tribuna, containing the statues of those kings and queens who lie interred here. The jasper of the columns resembles that of the altar-piece. The pillars are seventeen feet in height, and of the doric order, with bases and chapiters of gilt brass. The tribunas are ten feet in breadth, from the wall which answers to the pillars, and diversified with pilasters of red jasper, inlaid with green; and the intercolumniations of black marble, denoting the seriousness and reverence becoming this awful place. The columns and pilasters, in each tribuna, form three equal spaces, which take up the whole breadth of this capacious arch.

Brass statues.

IN the middle tribuna, on the gospel side, are five statues, larger than life, of enamelled brass, and executed in a masterly manner. The first is that of the invincible emperor, Charles V, with his sword at his side, bare-headed, and dressed in the imperial mantle,
with

with the eagle on it, exquisitely cut in a piece of jasper resembling the color of that royal bird. He is placed on his knees, which is the attitude of them all, and before him is a stool covered with brocade, the imitation of which in a body of such hardness is astonishing. His consort, the empress Isabella, is placed near him on the inside; the empress Maria, his daughter, kneels behind her father, both with the imperial eagle on their mantles. Next to them are the queens of France and Hungary, sisters of the emperor; all placed in such a manner, that, without obstructing each other, they have a view of the altar; and all their faces may be discerned from thence. Near them is the following epitaph, on black marble, with letters of gilt brass:

D. O. M.

Epitaph.

CAROLO V. ROMAN. IMP. AUGUSTO HOR.
 REGNORUM UTR. SIC. ET HIERUSALEM REGI
 ARCHIDUCI AUST. OPTIMO PARENTI
 PHILIPPUS FILIUS
 JACENTI SIMUL ELISABETHA VXOR
 ET MARIA FILIA IMPERATRICES
 ET LEONORA ET MARIA SORORES
 ILLA FRANC. HÆC REGINÆ
 UNGARLÆ.

NEARER the altar, in a space capable of admitting other statues, is also this inscription:

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HUNC

DESCRIPTION OF

HUNC LOCUM SI QUIS POSTER. CAROLO V.
 HABITAM GLORIAM RERUM GESTARUM
 SPLENDORE SUPERAVERIS, IPSE SOLUS
 OCCUPATO CÆTERI REVERENTER ABSTINETE.

That is:

“ Thou, who among the descendants of Charles the fifth shalt
 “ surpass the glory of his actions, be this place thine, and only
 “ thine; ye others reverently keep your distance.”

ON the front near it is the following:

CAROLI V. ROM. IMPERATORIS STEMMATA
 GENTILICIA PATERNA; QUOT LOCUS COEPIT
 ANGSTIOR SUIS GRADIBUS DISTINCTA,
 ET SERIE.

That is:

“ Of all the arms and devices of the lineage and posterity of Charles
 “ the fifth, the Roman emperor, here are the few which could be
 “ contained in this narrow place, and distinguished according to their
 “ several degrees.”

BEHIND the emperor, in the intercolumniation, towards the church,
 is the following:

PROVIDA POSTERITATIS CURA, IN
 LIBERORUM, NEPOTUMQUE GRATIA ATQUE
 USUM, RELICTUS LOCUS POST LONGAM
 ANNORUM SERIEM CUM DEBITUM NATURÆ
 PERSOLVERINT OCCUPANDUS.

That

That is :

“ The provident care of posterity has left this place vacant for the benefit of the future imperial offspring, who, through a long series of years, shall pay their final debt to nature.”

IN the front of the back part, is an inscription, in substance the same with that near the altar-piece, it being proposed, to place in both the arms and achievements of the ancestors of the imperial family, those of the father's side in the front, and behind them those of the mother's; this, when finished, must form a very grand spectacle.

OVER this doric colonade, the triglyphs of which are gilt, and the spaces, in the friezes, of red and green jasper, is a frontispiece with two ionic columns, and a square compartment, incrusted with stones of a bright sanguine color, decorated with the imperial arms, and of the breadth of the space where the statues stand. An eagle of a remarkable size, holds at its breast the shield of the arms of Castile, and the other states of this monarchy, superbly adorned with helmets, crests, and plumes. The buttresses of the frontispiece join the battlements on the pilasters, which rest on the great arcade, and terminate in large semi-globes of enamelled brass; the whole height of this piece is fifty-three feet, and the breadth, twenty-eight. Royal arms.

ON the epistle side is king Philip the second, the founder of this amazing edifice, dressed in armor, and vested with a royal mantle, on which is the shield of the kings of Spain, most curiously blazoned with gems of different colors; and, in all respects, agreeing with that of Charles the fifth. He is bare-headed, his hands joined as in Statues in the other burial place.

DESCRIPTION OF

prayer, a stool before him, and kneeling on a cushion. At his side, and close to the same stool, is queen Anne, his last and fourth wife, mother to Philip the third, a daughter and grand-daughter of emperors. Behind the king is queen Isabella, his third wife; on his right side, queen Mary, princess of Portugal, his first wife, and mother to the famous don Carlos, who is placed behind them. All these statues were the work of Pompeyo Leoni, and are noble monuments of his abilities, both in sculpture and casting figures. This tribuna, like the others, has also its epitaph and inscriptions, placed in the same order. The epitaph is this :

D. O. M.

PHILIPPUS II. OMNIUM HISP. REGNOR. UTRIVSQUE
SICILIE, ET HIERUS. REX CATH. ARCHIDUX AUST. IN
HAC SACRA ÆDE QUAM A FUNDAM. EXTRUXIT
SIBI V. P.

QUIESCUNT SIMUL ANNA, ELISABETHA ET MARIA
UXSORES CUM CAROLO PRINC. FILIO PRIMOGEN.

IN an empty place are these words :

HIC LOCUS DIGNIORI INTER POSTEROS ILLO QUI
ULTRO AB EO ABSTINUIT VIRTUTI ERGO ASSINATUR,
ALTER IMMUNIS ESTO.

That is :

“ This void place is by him, who voluntarily declined it, reserved
“ for the most worthy of his progeny as the recompence of his virtue;
“ otherwise it will for ever remain empty.”

AN inscription, on the back part, runs thus :

SOLERTI LIBERORUM STUDIO POSTERIS POST DIUTINA
SPATIA AD USUM DESTINATUS LOCUS CLARIS
QUUM NATURÆ CONCESSERINT MONUMENTIS
DECORANDUS.

That is :

“ By a wife concern for children, this place has been reserved for
“ the superb monuments of the royal progeny, when they shall
“ submit to fate.”

THE inscription on the front, where the escutcheons are to be placed, are these words :

PHILIPPI REGIS CATHOLICI STEMMATA GENTILITIA
PATERNA QUOT LOCUS COEPIT ANGSTIOR SUIS
GRANDIBUS DISTINCTA ET SERIE.

Which has been explained in speaking of the emperor, father to this most illustrious monarch. Over these solemn pieces is another frontispiece, exactly similar to the former.

THE shield of the royal arms is a most resplendant work, composed King's arms. of gems of the finest lustre, and terminated with three magnificent crests of gilt brass; that in the middle is a crowned lion, holding a sword, and, on its side, are two serpents, all significant emblems. The lion, with the crown and sword, representing a just and brave prince, and the serpents, prudence; the three capital endowments of a sovereign.

HERE

HERE would certainly be the proper place for an account of the pantheon, or sepulchre, of the kings of Spain, as lying under the steps of the great altar, near the foundation of the church; but this being an extensive subject, and of all the parts of that wonderful edifice, the most highly finished, as the crown of its magnificence, I shall reserve it for the conclusion. Let it, at present, suffice to say, that it is called the pedestal of this transcendent chapel, where the mysterious object of our faith, has, by the devotion of those princes, been placed in such propriety and splendor, that, even in death, they lie prostrate at his feet; at the same time, like Solomon's lions, they support his throne, expecting from his goodness, the recompence of their virtues, in the state of happiness above.

Paintings on
the ceiling.

So august and magnificent is this great chapel, that the spectator leaves it with regret, being on all sides surrounded with the most charming objects; for, besides all the beauties of the steps, pavements, paintings, oratories, altar, tabernacle, and arcades, the ceiling is not without suitable embellishments. In the center is a most majestic piece of the coronation of the virgin Mary, and, on the sides of the windows, which are in the form of a crescent, stand the four greater prophets. On the windows are painted angels, of a more than human beauty, with other decorations, which have a noble effect as corresponding to those of the choir; both are by the celebrated Luqueto.

C H A P. VII.

The excellent Fresco Paintings in the great Chapel, and the other Arcades of the Church, done by Order of His Majesty CHARLES the Second.

THE lowest ceiling, which is that over the cross naves, is, like all the others of the church, painted by that Apelles of our age, Lucas Jordan, a Neapolitan, whose skill and judgment in painting the great stair-case, as we shall hereafter remark, pleased his majesty so greatly, that, as a mark of distinction, he appointed him to display the beauties of his pencil in this august place. Accordingly, in the middle of the great altar-piece, he painted the assumption of our Lady, and, on the ceiling over it, her coronation in heaven; and it was a very pretty thought of his, that, on the ceiling adjoining to it, should be represented her translation, that these mysteries might be connected.

ON one side, in the picturesque cornice, which extends the whole breadth of the arch, over the south window, the artist placed the bed in which the virgin Mary expired; and on the other side, answering to it, over the north window, the sepulchre, wherein her body was deposited. First painting.

TOWARDS the south, some of the apostles and disciples are represented, standing near this majestic bed, expressing that tenderness and sorrow which they naturally felt at such a deplorable misfortune; whilst angels are bringing through the air other disciples, who were preaching

DESCRIPTION OF

preaching the gospel in remote countries, that they might be present at this great event. The countenance of the virgin mother expresses the most anxious desire of delivering up her soul to her son, who had preserved it in spotless purity.

THE virgin's majestic bed is environed by angels and seraphs, mingled with apostles, whilst others, over them, with their wings support the pavillion; or descend from the empyreal heaven, attracted by the resplendent rays, issuing from the face of their sovereign.

IN the upper part are seen descending from above, seated on clouds of gold, the virgin's parents and her husband Joseph. On one side of the window is represented Jesse, with the blooming branch, shooting from his root; and on the other, the valley of Jehosaphat, whither the virgin's body was carried from Jerusalem, on the shoulders of the apostles, attended by an innumerable train of the inhabitants of heaven and earth; a new sepulchre having been prepared there by the filial care of her holy son. Over the window are Abraham and Isaac represented at the sacrifice.

ON the other side, facing the north, in a compartment of the like dimensions as that towards the south, is the holy sepulchre, and under it Jacob's vision of the ladder, reaching to heaven, with angels descending and ascending on it. On the sides of the window are those two pious princes, Josiah and Hezekiah, whose names, according to St. Jerom's explication, import fire and the strength of the Almighty. Accordingly, Josiah holds in one of his hands a flame, and in the other, the volume of the law, to denote his ardent zeal for, and remarkable observance of every part of the latter. Hezekiah,
with

with eyes lifted up to heaven, rests on a column, indicating his firmness in maintaining the service of the temple, and particularly that of the passover, which was an emblem of the capital subject of this admirable series of paintings, the translation of the blessed Mary.

ON the upper part are the apostles, standing round the sepulchre in proper attitudes, while celestial music was heard in the air during three days: when it ceased, they concluded, that she was risen, and ascended into heaven. Accordingly, they removed the stone that closed the sepulchre, and were all filled with a pleasing amazement at such an extraordinary translation, some looking into it, others towards heaven, with looks and gestures expressive of the pleasure and surprize which filled their minds. The valley is enamelled with flowers, and two angels hold a festoon at the foot of the sepulchre, while troops of seraphs, amidst beautiful clouds, with palm branches in their hands, point to the resplendent track along which the virgin passed to the empyreal heaven. Every part of this grand piece is executed with the most delicate skill and judgment, and being connected with the assumption in the altar-piece, and the coronation in the ceiling, the spectator is surprizingly affected by the combined representation of such mysteries.

IN the west part of the principal nave, joining to the ceiling of ^{Second} the choir, where Luqueto has painted a celebrated glory, is another ^{painting.} compartment, exactly corresponding to that of the east side; the extent of which takes in the two arches of the towers. Here the artist has exhibited that universal judgment, which, besides the particular relative to every individual, is to pass on all mankind;

DESCRIPTION OF

when the supreme Judge will manifest the rectitude of his proceedings, conferring eternal rewards on the good, and sentencing the wicked to everlasting punishments.

ACCORDINGLY he divided the ceiling into three parts, two at the opposite windows, and the other in the middle of the concave; and here, as the most conspicuous part, he erected the tribunal, being a congeries of protuberant clouds, rising in the form of a pyramid, and supported by a great number of angels. On the summit is seated the great Judge, the Son of man, most magnificently arrayed, with a crown of gold on his head, a scepter in his right hand, and in his left a sickle, stretched out as entering on the harvest of mankind, the time being come for separating the wheat from the tares. The divine person, executed to the height of human skill, is not to be viewed without reverence. On his right, the properest place for so exalted a person, is the holy virgin, adorned with an azure mantle over a white vest, her beautiful face, with a look of compassion and love, turned towards her son, and her arms extended as interceding for mankind. On each side of this mountain of clouds are seen the apostles fitting in judgment, as the reward for their constant attachment to their master, and their abandoning all things for his sake.

AT the same height with the Judge, and in his sight, stands the cross; for, at his coming, the cross shall be seen in heaven, as the distinguishing mark and banner of his government: and, by the admirable skill of the painter, though large, it seems to stand upright in the air without resting on any part of the arcade, and environed with a glorious effulgency. But the appearance of the other part of
the

the heaven expresse dejection and melancholy; the sun, moon, and stars, are darkened and eclipsed, according to the prodigies which are to usher in that tremendous day, the period of all sublunary things, and the extinction of even death itself. In the two lower parts of the division of the ceiling, four angels are seen in the air, two on one side, and two on the other, sounding to the four parts of the world the trumpets of the judge; whose powerful sounds shall echo through the tombs of all countries. Asia and Europe are on the sides of one window, and on those of the other, Africa and America, evidently distinguished by their attributes and devices. The first of these divisions, contains the graves opening, the dead rising, and skeletons beginning to be clothed with flesh; in which striking scene, the most signal operation of divine Omnipotence, the painter has displayed both his knowledge in anatomy, and a surprizing elevation of genius.

OVER the windows, in the second compartment, is the valley of Jehosaphat, crowded with human beings from all nations; some, by the ministry of angels, disposed on the right hand of the Judge, and others driven to the left, in order to hear that final sentence which fixes on them either eternal felicity or misery; and the immediate execution is seen by those on the right hand, who, with countenances full of rapture, are led by celestial spirits to the mansions of glory; while those, on the left, in all the agonies of despair, are lashed by infernal fiends, flying from St. Michael into the extended mouth of a horrible dragon, ejecting the flames of unquenchable fire.

THESE are the most remarkable objects in this concave ceiling; the expression is so delicate and spirited, and, at the same time, so much

in character, that the best Italian masters acknowledge it a most admirable performance.

IN fine, these and the other works, both of sculpture and painting in the great chapel, not only equal, but even surpass all the other parts of the church. Should a stranger suspect, that my description exceeds the structure, he will be convinced on viewing it, that I have fallen infinitely below it.

Third
painting.

THE next arcade is that on the right hand of the cross nave, where are represented the children of Israel, travelling through the wilderness to the land of promise, after their passage through the Red Sea. Nothing can be more entertaining than the variety in this piece; the multitude of families, men, women, and children, passing over the verdant mountains, and craggy rocks of the wilderness, where trees, shrubs, and flowers, are represented in a variety of beautiful colors! Some are carrying their furniture; and the women, on their heads, have the utensils borrowed from the Egyptians; others are mounted on beasts of burden: some are resting themselves; some marching. Moses is seen on an eminence, pointing to the Red Sea; part of which is still divided for their passage, and the other part tumultuously reuniting to complete the destruction of Pharaoh's host, as a punishment for his presumption. On the other side is Miriam, the sister of Aaron, and other women, celebrating that miraculous event, accompanying their voices with instruments. On the upper part of the concave, is a glimpse of heaven, and the Almighty, as it were, ordering the angels, to take the sword, and execute his wrath on the heathens; which is represented by dark and tempestuous clouds, darting thunderbolts and lightning on them, and so happily executed,