

of technical terms, to allow of the compilation of a standard vocabulary. His ambition will be more than satisfied, should his past, and perhaps future researches, succeed, in some degree, in pioneering the path for a more scientific pen.

Should this work fall into the hands of any reader, whose expectations of entertainment may have been encouraged by the announcement of another Spanish tour, but who may feel but moderate enthusiasm for the artistic and monumental glories of the Peninsula, an explanation is due to him, exonerative of the author from much of the responsibility attached to the matter-of-fact tone of his descriptions. It is no less his nature than it was his wish to paint what he saw as he saw it. Unfortunately his visits to Spain took place after the accomplishment of the revolution, the hardest blows of which were aimed at her church. The confiscation of the ecclesiastical revenues has necessarily stripped the processions and other ceremonies of their former splendour, and by suppressing what con-

stituted one of their chief attractions to the native population, transferred the interest of the lover of the picturesque from the bright colours of animated grouping, to the dead back-ground of stone and marble they have left.

In studying, however, to preserve this strict accuracy in all that related to the principal subject of his correspondence, his aim was to enliven it by the introduction of any incidents worthy of notice which came under his observation. In this object he hopes he may have succeeded.

One more remark is necessary. The letters from Seville, which form the second of the two parts into which the volume is divided, although placed last in order of succession, date in reality from an earlier period than the rest; and even from a different tour, as will appear from the description of the route. They were addressed to various individuals, whereas those forming the first part were all written to the same person. They are thus placed with a view to geographical order

and clearness, and to a sort of unity, which appeared advisable in the subject of a volume. The two excursions having been separated by an interval of three years, should alterations have taken place during that period in the places described, the above circumstance not being borne in mind might lead to an appearance of chronological inaccuracy in the descriptions, although there is not much probability of the existence of such changes.

LONDON. *December 1845.*

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# PICTURESQUE ANTIQUITIES

OF

## S P A I N.

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### LETTER I.

TO MRS. C——R.

Rue de Richelieu.

You perceived at a glance the satisfaction you caused me, when, on receiving my temporary adieus, you requested me to send you some account of my travels in Spain. Had it not been so, you had not been in possession, on that day, of your usual penetration. Indeed, you no doubt foresaw it; aware that, next to the pleasure of acquiring ocular information respecting the peculiar objects which interest an individual, there is no greater one than that of communicating to a spirit, animated by congenial tastes, the results of his explorations. You must have foreseen, that, with my recollections of the pleasure I had derived from our excursions in one of the most interesting regions of France, during which I was witness to the intelligence and rapidity of percep-



tion you displayed in the appreciation of the monuments of the Middle Ages, the opportunity of committing to paper the impressions I should receive in a country so rich in those treasures, with a view to your information, would give an additional interest to my tour, as well as encouragement in surmounting the obstacles to be met with among a people not yet broken in to the curiosity of tourists.

You professed also, with a modesty always becoming to talent and worth, a complete ignorance respecting Spain: adding, that you would be grateful for every sort of information; and that you were anxious to be enlightened on the subject not only of the monuments and fine arts, but also of the history of that country, of which you had never had an opportunity of informing yourself; summing up by the enumeration of the three names of the Cid, Charles the Fifth, and Roderic the Goth, the entire amount of your acquaintance with the leading characters of Spanish history.

Indeed, the ignorance you profess with some exaggeration, is more or less general in our country; nor is it surprising that such should be the case. Spain has been in modern times in the background of European progress. The thousand inconveniences of its routes and inns have deterred the most enterprising from making it a place of

resort; and while a hundred less interesting scenes of travel, such as Baden-Baden, Bohemia, sporting adventures in Norway, or winterings in St. Petersburg, have claimed your attention during the repose of quadrilles, and substantiated the conversation of several of your morning visitors, Spain has been unnoticed and unknown—laid on the shelf with the Arabian Nights—considered a sort of fabulous country, which it would be charming to know, but with which there would never be a chance of forming an acquaintance; and you have contented yourself with a sort of general information respecting it, derived from a few romances and poems. You are intimate with Boabdil and the wars of Granada, but to those events is limited your knowledge of its ancient history; and the reigns of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, with the addition of some confused visions, in which *autos-da-fé* and dungeons contrast in a rather gloomy back-ground with laughing majas, whirling their castagnettes to the soft cadences of guitars, fill up the remaining space allotted to Spain in your recollections.

It would be a task full of interest for me—possessed, as I shall probably be, of ample opportunities for its accomplishment—to draw up for your information a summary of the leading events of

Spanish history ; connecting them by the chain of reigns of the successive sovereigns ; and thus to press into a limited compass a sort of abstract of the annals of this extraordinary nation : but I am deterred by the certainty that such an attempt, by me, would fail of its intended object. The events, thus slurred over, would have the effect of whetting the appetite for knowledge, which they would not satisfy ; and the interminable lists of monarchs, of successions, usurpations, alliances and intermarriages, rendered doubly intricate by the continual recurrence of the same names, without sufficient details to particularise each—a chaos of outlines without the necessary shading to bring out the figures from the canvass—would not only set at defiance the clearest memory, but would be a trial which I would not for worlds impose upon your patience. No history is more attractive than that of Spain ; and those works which exist upon the subject, although all, more or less, sullied with inaccuracies, and most of them infected with prejudice, and immersed in superstitious delusion, are still well worth your perusal ; but it would lead me out of my depth, were I to undertake in my correspondence more than an occasional historical quotation, when required by the interest attached to any monument which it may fall to my lot to describe.

Were I not to transmit to you a conscientious and faithful account of all that I shall see, I should be guilty of cruelty; and that the more base, from the certain impunity that must attend it. I say this, from the impossibility of your ever undertaking the same journey, and consequently of your ever being able to compare my portraits with their originals. In fact, the incompatibility of your nature, and that of the Spanish climate, must ever be present to me, who, during the vivifying heats of the late very bearable *canicule*, in your French château—so constructed as to perform the functions of an atmospheric sieve, by separating the wind, which rushed through its doors and windows, judiciously placed in parallels for the purpose, from the warmer sunshine without—was witness, nevertheless, to your unaffected distress, when you protested against any lofty, oak-panelled room being sat or reclined in by more than one human being at a time, lest it should be over-heated; placing thus an obstacle in the way of conversation, in which to shine is your especial province, by rendering it necessary to converse through various open doors; while, were an additional testimony necessary to prove the sincerity of your sufferings, your favourite of favourites, Caliph, repulsed and uncaressed, hung his silken ears, as he solemnly retreated to coil

himself on a distant rug, and voted the dog-days a misnomer.

Nor were you contented with your atmosphere, until, the season of insects and *al-fresco* suppers being long left behind, and the autumnal equinox having peremptorily closed the doors and windows, fitted, alas! by a carpenter who flourished in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, so plentiful a supply of air was afforded by the handy-works of the said carpenter, that the Chinese screen had some difficulty in maintaining its post, and the flames of the well-furnished elm-fire ascended with a roar that would have shamed many a cataract of the rival element. Not but that I would willingly forego the opportunity of sending you erroneous information, in exchange for your presence in that country; and for your assistance in comprehending the nature of a people apparently composed of such contradictory ingredients. You might probably succeed in fathoming the hidden springs of character, which give birth to a crowd of anomalies difficult to explain. You would discover by what mystery of organization a people, subject to the influence of violent passions, combine an abject subjection to the forms of etiquette, carried to its extreme in every-day life, with occasional outbreaks of adventure and romance worthy of the days of Orlando and Rodo-

monte; and account for a nation exchanging a costume which combines utility with grace, for one inferior in both respects. Inventors of whatever is most fascinating in dances and music—you would discover the motive which induces them to abandon both, but principally the first, which they replace by the French *rigodon*, or dancing-made-easy, and adapted to youth, manhood, and all stages of paralysis; and, possessing the cathedrals of Leon, Burgos, and Seville, to denounce Gothic architecture as barbarous, and to brand it with the contemptuous denomination of “crested masonry.”

Should my mono- (—monument-) mania run riot, and over-describe, over-taxing even your passion for that branch of art, be assured—and to this promise you may always look back for consolation and encouragement—that I will not write you a history of the recent, or any previous Spanish revolution, *apropos* of the first sentry-box I meet with, even though its form be that of a Lilliputian brick castle. Nor shall my first glimpse of a matador occasion you a list of bull-fights, voluminous enough to line the circumference of the *barrera*. No Diligence shall be waylaid, nor in my presence shall any ladies' fingers be amputated, the quicker to secure her rings, if I can possibly avoid it; and, as far as depends on me, I shall arrive in a whole skin at each journey's end,

and without poisoning you or myself with garlick, unless the new Cortes pass a law for denying to the stranger all other sorts of aliment.

I have resolved, by a process of reasoning which I need not at present impart to you, and in virtue of a permission which I have little doubt of your granting, to publish my part of our correspondence. I think that neither of us will be a loser by this plan, however conceited I may appear to you for saying so. Yourself, in the first place, must be a gainer by the perusal of descriptions, on which, from their being prepared for the ordeal of a less indulgent eye, greater care will necessarily be expended: the public may benefit in obtaining information, which shall be at all events accurate, relative to subjects as yet inadequately appreciated by those they are the most likely to interest: while the chief gainer, in the event of these two ends being attained, will of course be your devoted and humble correspondent.