

and wishes to take us two-days journey round. The only bye-way however must be by the paths among the mountains that the smugglers use, where the carriage would probably be broken. Of the two evils embargoing is the least, and we must take our chance.

Sunday, 17th.

Soon after quitting Venta Nueva, we ascended the mountain of Miraveti, an ascent as Clerk says, long, and winding, and difficult, but now no longer dangerous. On the other side lay a wooded wild, and we then entered upon a new kind of road: it lay through a wilderness of broom and heath, and gum cistus, that gave a rich balsamic scent in the heat of the sun. The stage to Jarayzejo is three leagues, something more than four hours journey. The hostess here told us that the expences of the King's retinue at her house, amounted to above a thousand reales, of which she had not received one. The poor woman cried as she told us. His Majesty and his retinue have burnt the trees, cut up the roads, dirted the linen, and devoured the provision. If there had been any

game laws in Spain we must have been starved ; but luckily game is plenty, and as his Majesty could not destroy this at an hour's notice, we are in no want. They sold us at this place two rabbits, a hare, and four partridges for a dollar. The violets are in blossom now, and the sun so hot that we met a man riding without coat or waistcoat, his shirt open, and his sleeves tucked up, a cool undress for January.

The Altar of the Sacrament (*Ara de Santissimo Sacramento*) valued at sixty reales, is to be let by auction here. Jarayzejo is a very small town, and its appearance very singular. You enter the main street which will barely permit a carriage to pass. There are the ruins of a large mansion-house, from which the capital of a pillar varying from Ionic is used as a seat in the posada kitchen. Truxillo is visible on an eminence five leagues distant, from the hill behind the town.

We set off before two, and soon reached what in Clarke's time was a very dangerous pass of

a mountain : now the descent is made less and perfectly safe. Hence we beheld the opposite hill very well wooded, and a river running between. The bridge we crossed is a very singular one of nine arches ; three first and then a buttress sloping so gradually as to be left open to the bridge, and form a road to a little island in the stream. In the forest is a palace belonging to the Marquis de Conquista, and we saw a species of bird very numerous which we had never seen before : it is about the size of a blackbird, the head black, the breast buff, and the other parts grey, with a long tail.

“ We see the things we aim at, as travellers do towns in hilly countries ; we judge them near, at the eye’s end, because we see not the valleys and the brooks that interpose.” The circuitous approach to Truxillo reminded me of Owen Feltham’s simile. We reached the town about seven, it must have been once a place of considerable strength : Julius Cæsar is said to have built the castle ; and Francisco Pizarro was

born here. Few towns have been polluted by the presence of two such eminent and execrable villains.

Our fathers have left us a rich inheritance, they have left us their experience; it has been accumulating from the creation of the world, and every day adds to the mass of knowledge. The voice of Reason speaks to us from the sepulchre of Ages, and bids us make their errors our wisdom. But the book of history is placed on the shelf of the student, and he is left to make those inferences in his study which should be forced upon the eyes of the public. Every spot that has been consecrated by a good action, or rendered notorious by being the scene of villainy should be marked out, that the traveller reflecting on the past, might learn a lesson for the future. Not a church in England has been white-washed, in which the Churchwarden of the year has not inscribed his name; not an old woman has left twenty shillings for a sermon, and half a crown for the clerk, without being registered among the

parish benefactors: yet there is no column in Smithfield where so many good men endured martyrdom for their religion, and where the King and the Subject might alike be instructed by the life and the murder of Wat Tyler.

The birth-place of Pizarro suggested these thoughts, and though the Spaniards have erected no monument to render the memory of this villain useful, you who follow me there shall see what I would wish to have engraved on marble.

INSCRIPTION FOR A COLUMN

AT

TRUXILLO.

Pizarro here was born: a greater name
 The list of Glory boasts not. Toil and Want,
 And Danger, never from his course deterred
 This daring soldier: many a fight he won,
 He slaughtered thousands, he subdued a rich
 And ample realm; such were PIZARRO'S deeds,
 And Wealth, and Power, and Fame were his rewards
 Among mankind. There is another World.
 Oh Reader! if you earn your daily bread
 By daily labour, if your lot be low,
 And hard and wretched, thank the gracious GOD
 Who made you, that you are not such as he!

This part of the country is very much infested by banditti. A friend of Ponz counted twenty-eight monumental crosses within a sling's throw, on the Puerto de Serrana, between Plasencia and Truxillo. It was on this road that they carried off some treasure of the King last year, some of this party, however, were taken, and now the soldiery keep the roads clear.

Plasencia, which lies not far to our right, was the memorable retreat where Charles V. after living like a rogue, retired to die like a fool.*

* Cesar Oudin has preserved a curious epitaph on this Emperor :

Hic jacet intus

Carolus Quintus ;

Vos qui transitis per ibi

Orate pro sibi,

Et si estis mille

Orate pro ille,

Et dicite bis aut ter

Ave Maria & Pater-noster.

Among the Poems of the Conde de Villamediana, Juan de Tarsis is the following Sonnet on the retirement of Charles.

The inhabitants say that the fertility of the country round Plasencia has been greatly dimi-

Cæsar, despues que a la Francesa gente
 Quebranto la cerviz nunca domada,
 Y de la gran Germania rebelada
 Vitorioso triunfo gloriosamente,
 Y despues que las armas del Oriente
 Deshizo como el Sol niebla cerrada,
 El sacro cetro, y la invencible espada
 Entrego al hijo con serena frente,
 Y como el fuerte Alcides, estando
 Purgado el mundo de mil monstruos fieros
 Y del fuego qual fenix se alzo a buelo;
 Tal el animo heroico despreciando
 Reinos brevos por reynos verdaderos,
 Vencedor de si mismo, bolo al cielo.

When the great Charles had quelled the Gallic pride,
 That never conqueror knew till he arose,
 And in the German fields, then blood-bedied,
 Victorious triumphed o'er his rebel foes,
 When he the eastern force had scattered wide,
 Like morning mists before the rising Lord
 Of day; he gave contented to his son
 The sacred sceptre and resistless sword;
 And with calm courage, and so self-subdued
 As when Alcides, all his labours done
 And Earth delivered from her monster brood,
 Lay phoenix-like amid the flames, he view'd
 Earth's fleeting powers and crowns with just disdain,
 And left the world for Heaven's eternal reign.

nished since the great earthquake in 1755. Ponz relates a curious tale of one of the inhabitants, which I will give you with his own introduction.

“ Father Luis de la Cerda, in the sixth book of his commentaries on Virgil, adds the following account to his note upon “ *Ausus se credere Cælo.*” “ A certain Spaniard had fled to the church asylum at Plasencia, as usual, for fear of the secular power. When he wished to depart, he fitted wings to his shoulders, and from the topmost tower trusting himself to the air, fled over the whole city, and fell far from the walls, wearied with the agitation of his frame. The place of his fall is now shown, and the eyes of all the Plasencians who beheld the man are witnesses of the fact.”

“ This account was printed and published in 1610, and it is related as a well known fact, which could not have happened long ago, for the Author appeals to ocular testimony. It is not probable that the penetrating judgment of

Father Luis de la Cerda could have been deceived by a fable, and the tradition is still common in Plasencia, although with some little difference in the mode of relating it.

“ An old man of sufficient authority, who had collected many ancient papers, told me that this Plasencian Dedalus, in order to make his escape, determined on two things. To eat little that he might grow light, and that all his food should be birds, which he had brought to him with their feathers on : he then weighed the body of the bird without its plumes, and afterwards the feathers, and comparing the weight of the hen, the partridge, &c. with that of the feathers, he calculated that four ounces of feathers were necessary to support two pounds of flesh : from this calculation he discovered what weight of feathers were sufficient to support him in the air, and fixing them with a certain cement to his feet, his head, his arms, and all the extremities of his body, he took two wings in his hands as it were to row with : thus fledged he committed himself to the air, and after passing

over the city, fell headlong and was dashed to pieces.

“ They who recorded this tale do not relate in what year it happened, what this new bird was called, or in what nest he was hatched.”

The* country round about Plasencia is described by the Spanish poets, and by their poetical historians, as the Elysian fields of the ancients; and certain it is that this spot, like almost all other spots in similar situations, is remarkable for its fertility, its varied ground, and its romantic and beautiful scenery. Mountains, covered with snow during the greatest part of the year, rise to the North and North-West of it, and shelter it from the coldest and most tempestuous winds that prevail in this climate. They give it the aspect the most favourable for vegetation, and

* For the remaining part of this letter I am obliged to a friend, of whose knowledge of these countries I wish I could more frequently have availed myself.

at the same time furnish it with an abundance of water, and a continual supply of fresh soil : circumstances these which render this favoured little district so infinitely beyond the extensive plains of Castile and Leon in point of fertility. For those plains, though consisting in many parts of a soil naturally very rich, are scarcely capable of cultivation, being from continued rains a perfect slough in winter, and from a want of springs entirely parched up in summer. Travellers in general attribute to the indolence of the Spaniards and Portugueze that neglect of cultivation apparent throughout their respective countries, which is probably the effect of this natural cause. In every place situated like the district of Plasencia, the land is as highly improved as perhaps in any other part of Europe; witness the luxuriant state of Valencia in Spain, Colares, Cintra, and the environs of Setuval in Portugal.

A few leagues above Plasencia, near the highest part of that immense chain of mountains which run through Portugal, and precisely where they

send off the branch which divides the two Castiles, is a valley three or four miles in length, tremendously deep, and so narrow that it is not wider, a very few parts of it excepted, than the stream which runs through it, and gives it the name of Batuecas. The sun scarcely visits it in winter, and the only place by which it is accessible is where the stream has worked its way out; in every other part it is closed in by rocks. Where the rains and winter torrents have worn their course from the sides to the bottom of this glen or valley, frequent chasms are seen, not unlike those which are said to be so fatal to the Chamois hunters in Switzerland. Caves and caverns are in every part formed either by the detached fragments of the mountain, or by the rains washing away the earth from beneath, and leaving the rocks in their original position; and these are found placed in such a variety, and frequently in such regularity of forms, that they appear at a distance the works of art. They are in general rectangular, as perpendicular as the walls of a house, and sometimes so abruptly broken on the summit

as to resemble buildings in ruins. One in particular has its towers, its turrets, its buttresses, its arches, its portal, and every circumstance that can impose on you the idea of a Castle, which from its inaccessible situation you must conclude to have been erected there by enchantment. It bears the name of the Sepulchre of Don Sebastian.

Immediately below this castle in the air, and opposite to it, is situated a convent of Carmelite friars, the sole inhabitants of the place. When this convent was founded, the valley, or as it is called, the Desart of Batuecas, was said to be possessed by a people who were heathens, magicians, and spoke a language which none but themselves could understand. The fact is, this secluded spot afforded such a secure retreat for birds and beasts of prey, and all kind of venomous reptiles, and was so infested by them, that the cattle, sheep and goats, of the neighbouring villages were sure to become a prey to some or other of them, whenever by the carelessness of their keepers they were suffered to stray near it.



These fellows to screen themselves, invented these stories, which were no sooner made known than generally received and believed. When the public attention was directed to this part of Spain by the retreat of Charles V. and these stories came to be circulated beyond the district where they were invented, the Carmelites, judging it would impress the world with a high idea of the sanctity of their order if they purged this detested spot, ventured to establish themselves in it,* and to attack the magicians in these their strong holds. As it was their interest however, and as political reasons afterwards made it necessary, that the stories of devils, witches, apparitions and enchantments should still be believed, they were never called in question till a hundred years † afterwards. And indeed they were notwithstanding so far credited, that Feyjoo, to whom the Ladies are so much obliged, was induced even in the present century to take up his pen and ridicule the absurdity of them.

* In 1599.

† By P. Thomas Gonzales Manuel of Alberca. 1693.

I think I have discovered in this dismal spot, the place where the unfortunate Sebastian was confined and finished his days.

The name given to the rock in front of the Convent, the stories calculated to deter people from visiting the place, invented in Philip II's reign, and not contradicted till a hundred years afterwards, the time* of founding the convent, the appearance of D. Sebastian† at Venice, and his consequent imprisonment in Spain, all tend to prove it.

The only circumstance which tends to destroy this hypothesis is, the improbability that the Spaniards should chuse to confine him so near his own kingdom. But this perhaps may be obviated by the difficulty of access, and consequently the difficulty of escape. The entrance, or pass of the desert, was easily guarded, and the approach to the convent is to this day secured

* 1599.

† 1598.

by the river, inclosures, gates, every thing that still gives it the air of a prison ; add to this that the frontier towns of Portugal, not only in the neighbourhood, but throughout the kingdom, were more strictly watched and better guarded than any other.

Should this conjecture be true, it will appear not a little extraordinary that two such personages as Charles V. and D. Sebastian should have inhabited places so near to each other, and almost at the same period of time, which few people, either before or since, have ever thought it worth their while to visit.

Could I fully persuade myself that D. Sebastian lived here, that secluded from the world for a number of years, and those solely spent in acts of devotion, he might have become so far reconciled to his fate, as to give up every idea of reclaiming his rights, partly from the impossibility of succeeding in the attempt, and partly from principles of religion and humanity. I could easily believe an anecdote given by a

very grave historian, on the authority of John IV. to be strictly and literally true. At least the circumstances I have mentioned, and the vicinity of Villa-Viçosa and Batuecas conspire to render it extremely probable.

John IV. told his favourite the Duke of Cadaval, that when he was a lad, (he was born in 1604) his father, D. Theodosius 2d. Duke of Braganza, had a custom frequently of shutting himself up in a private apartment of his palace at Villa Viçosa, and giving strict orders not to be disturbed by any person, or on any pretence whatever. That once he had the curiosity to peep through the key-hole or crevice of the door, in order to discover what his father upon those occasions could be doing, and to his great surprise, he observed him kneeling, whilst a venerable looking old man was sitting before him. "If," says the historian, "the unfortunate Sebastian escaped from battle, which is not very improbable, this must have been he, conferring with the Duke about the recovery of Portugal; if he did not, this must have been

some saint, that by divine permission, was suffered to visit him." Which alternative is the most credible?

This fact related by John IV. the Duke of Cadaval communicated to Caet. de Sousa, and it was published by him in his Hist. Geneal. da Caza Real. Vol. 6, p. 554. It happened when Sebastian, if he were alive, must have been about seventy years of age, and consequently in figure and appearance, must have very much resembled the person here described.