

of the Pope interfering. The town is, if possible, more offensively filthy than any we have yet seen. The mire in the streets is green with age. They build here with unburnt bricks.

We are now three leagues from Medina del Campo, at Artequines, a little village with a good posada, three days journey from Madrid.

Thursday, Dec. 31.

On the road this morning I saw a horse's tail tied up with red ribbands; the tails of the mules and asses are often whimsically decorated. I have seen them generally sheared close the greater part of their length, with a tuft left at the end, and the hair on their rumps cut into stars, flowers, or whatever shape best pleased the owner. I have heard of one lady who died her lap-dog pink, but know not whether pink dogs were the fashion, or if it was only her

account for the œconomy of bees, upon Pereria's principles. *Je me convainquis, que si quelquefois les savans ont moins de prejugsés que les autres hommes, ils tienent, en revanche, encore plus fortement a ceux qu'ils ont.*—J. J. Rousseau.

own peculiar taste. We passed through Arebalo, a pleasantly situated town, where there are royal granaries, and proceeded to Espinosa, where we dined at one of the worst houses on the road. Here the Host abused his wife for only asking three and a half reales each for pigeons!

To acquire a barren knowledge and gratify a vain curiosity, should neither be the object of travellers, or of those who read their accounts; we should observe foreign customs that we may improve our own;* so says Father Lafitau: and if my acquirements are to be the comment on this serious text, I must frankly own that the only possible practical knowledge I have yet learnt, is to confirm P.'s theory of the *eatability* of cats, by the custom of this country. In the kitchen at Espinosa, M. remarked to me in

* Ce n'est pas en effet une vaine curiosite et une connoissance sterile que doivent se proposer les Voyageurs qui donnent des relations au Public, & ceux qui aiment a lire. On ne doit etudier les mœurs que pour former les mœurs." *P. Lafitau sur Mœurs Sauvages.*

Spanish, that the cat was a very large one, and Mambrino immediately inquired if we eat cats in England. As you may suppose, an exclamation of surprise was the answer; why, said Mambrino, the night you were at Villa Franca we had one for supper that weighed seven pounds.

We entered upon the new road before we reached the village of Labajos. Here we have received the pleasant intelligence that the Royal Family are going to Seville, and that the Portuguese Court are to meet them on the frontiers.

You will wonder what difference their movements can possibly make to us, for in England, if his Majesty passes you on the road, you say, "There goes the King," and there's an end of it; but here, when the Court think proper to move, all carriages, carts, mules, horses and asses are immediately *embargoed*. Thank God, in an Englishman's Dictionary you can find no explanation of that word.

Know then, that during this *embargo*, all conveyances may be seized for the King's use, at a fixed price, which price is below the common charge; and if any of the King's Court, or the King's cooks, or the King's scullions, want a carriage, and were to find us upon the road, they might take our's, and leave us with our baggage in the high way; at a time when we could procure no vehicle, no beast, no house room, and even no food; for the multitudes that follow the King fill all the houses, and devour all the provisions.

Friday, Jan. 1, 1796.

After travelling four leagues in a fog, we once more behold the Sun! the mists could not have hidden from us a more uninteresting country than the plains of Castile that we have past; the prospect is now comparatively beautiful; evergreen oaks thickly scattered over the rising ground, bounded by the Guadarama mountains. We proceeded through the little town of Villa Castin, five leagues to the Funda San Rafael, a royal hotel: I do not disgrace the word by

applying it to this house ; it is situated where the road from Madrid divides on the right to San Ildefonso, Segovia and Valladolid, on the left to Coruña. As this house is so near the Escorial, and on the road to San Ildefonso, it is of course frequented by the first people, and I do not imagine that they can find their own palaces more comfortable. We even saw an English grate in one of the rooms. Here we had an excellent bottle of Peralta, of which wine I shall always think it my duty to make honourable mention. The bottle cost twelve reales ; we called for another, but were told that there was only one more bottle in the house, which the Landlord kept for his own drinking, as it was very good.

The hills were now well wooded with pines, and we beheld the clouds sweeping below us. On the summit is a monument : I got upon the pedestal to read the inscription, which was somewhat defaced, when two men on mules came up, the one of whom pulled me down, and turning round his mule attempted to seize

me. I was talking to them in my Spanish, and making my meaning more intelligible by the posture of my walking stick, when the carriage appeared at the winding of the road, my Uncle and M. came up, and the fellows immediately rode off. All I could understand from them was, that the one called himself an Overseer of the Roads, and wanted to know what I got upon the pedestal for; but had this been true, he would not have attempted to seize me, nor would they have departed when my companions approached.

We now peaceably made out the inscription.

FERDINANDVS VI PATER PATRIÆ
 SVPERATIS MONTIBVS
 VIAM VTRIQVE CASTELLÆ FECIT
 ANNO SAL: 1749.
 REGNI SVI. IV.

The clouds which were passing over us hid the metropolis, which would otherwise have been visible at the distance of eight leagues. As we descended we saw two caravans, who had pitched their waggons for the night on the side of the mountain, and were like Scythians seated

round their fire. From the Funda San Rafael to the village of Guadarama, is two leagues. Here we sent Mambrino to look for provisions, and he informed us that as it was a fast day he could not buy rabbits openly; but he would bring them home under his cloak! they are very dear, ten reales the couple.

Saturday.

The landlord at Guadarama attempted to impose upon us, and charge five reales for each bed; but on my Uncle's insisting that he should put his name to the bill, he took the usual price. We departed very early. The country is well wooded with the prickly oak, and stoney like Galicia, though the stones are in general smaller and less grotesquely piled. The Escorial was on the right; we met several carriages of the ugliest shapes going there, and among them many sulkies drawn by three mules abreast. As we advanced the country grew less beautiful; the Guadarama lost its inequalities in distance, and we saw the towers of Madrid. The posadas on the road were occupied, so we

turned a little out of it, and dined at Aribaca : here they took us for Frenchmen from our trowsers ; said they were common in Madrid, and added that the French made the whole world conform to them.

At Aribaca I saw the laws to which all innkeepers are subject. By one they are obliged to give a daily account to some magistrate of what persons have been in their posada, their names, their conduct, and their conversation. By another, if any man of suspicious appearance walks by the posada, they must inform a magistrate of it, on pain of being made answerable for any mischief he may do !

Here is a print of the crucifixion, as vilely executed as the common alehouse ornaments in England. But the subject is the nailing Christ to the cross, and I do not know that that moment has ever been chosen for a picture ; surely it is a subject worthy of the most sublime abilities.

We were now only five miles from the great city. The approach to Madrid is very beautiful. The number of towers, the bridge of Segovia, and the palace, give it an appearance of grandeur, which there are no suburbs to destroy, and a fine poplar-planted walk by the river, adds an agreeable variety to the scene. A few scattered and miserable hovels, about a mile or mile and half from the walls, lie immediately in view of the palace, so wretched that some of them are only covered with old blankets and old mats. His Majesty might have more pleasant objects in view, but I know of none that can convey to him such useful meditations.

The most singular and novel appearance to me was that of innumerable women kneeling side by side to wash in the Manzanares, the banks of which for about two miles were covered with linen. It seemed as though all the inhabitants of Madrid had, like us, just concluded a long journey, and that there had been a general foul-clothes-bag delivery.

We are at the Cruz de Malta, a perfect Paradise, after travelling seventeen days in Spain. To be sure, four planks laid across two iron trustles, are not quite so elegant as an English four-post bedstead, but they are easily kept clean, and to that consideration every other should be sacrificed. At tea they brought us the milk boiling in a tea-pot.

My Uncle has offered to take Manuel on to Lisbon as a servant; but Manuel is ambitious of being a barber, and wishes to try his fortune in the shaving line at Madrid. His professional pride was not a little gratified when one of the fraternity took us in at St. Miguel de las Duenas; and as he left the house he asked me with an air of triumph, if we had any such Barbers as that Senor in England!

LETTER IX.*Madrid, Jan. 6, 1796.*

On Monday we were at the Spanish Comedy. There is a stationary table fixed where the door is on the English stage, and (what is a stranger peculiarity) no money is paid going in, but a man comes round and collects it between the acts. Between every act is a kind of operatical farce, a piece of low and gross buffoonery, which constantly gives the lie to their motto—"representing a variety of actions we recommend virtue to the people:" it is a large and inelegant theatre, presenting to the eye only a mass of tarnished gilding. So badly was it lighted that to see the company was impossible. One of the actresses, whose hair was long and curling, wore it combed naturally, without any kind of bandage, and I have seldom seen any head dress so becoming. The representation began at half past four, and was over at eight.

I have heard a curious specimen of wit from a Spanish comedy. During the absence of a physician, his servants prescribe. A patient has been eating too much *bare*; and they order him to take *greyhound broth*.

Concerning the City and its buildings, the manners of the people, their Tertullas and their Cortejo system, you will find enough in twenty different authors. What pleases me most is to see the city entirely without suburbs: it is surrounded by a wall, and the moment you get without the gates, the prospect before presents nothing that can possibly remind you of the vicinity of a metropolis. The walking is very unpleasant, as the streets are not paved: the general fault of the streets is their narrowness. In one of them it was with difficulty I kept myself so near the wall as to escape being crushed by a carriage; a friend of M. had a button on his breast torn off by a carriage in the same place: accidents must have been frequent here, for it is called, The narrow Street of Dangers. *La Calle angusta de los periglos.*

This very unpleasant defect is observable in all the towns we have passed through. It is easily accounted for. All these towns were originally fortified, and houses were crowded together for security within the walls. As the houses are generally high, this likewise keeps them cool, by excluding the sun; and a Spaniard will not think this convenience overbalanced by the preventing a free circulation of air. The senses of a foreigner are immediately offended by dirt and darkness; but the Spaniard does not dislike the one, and he connects the idea of coolness with the other. From the charge of dirt, however, Madrid must now be acquitted, and the grand street, the Calle de Alcalá, is one of the finest in Europe. The Prado (the public walk) crosses it at the bottom, and it is terminated by an avenue of trees, with one of the city gates at the end.

Of Spanish beauty I have heard much, and say little. There is indeed a liquid lustre in the full black eye, that most powerfully expresses languid tenderness. But it is in this

expression only that very dark eyes are beautiful: you do not distinguish the pupil from the surrounding part, and of course lose all the beauty of its dilation and contraction. The dress both of men and women is altogether inelegant. The old Spanish dress was more convenient and very graceful. They wrap the great cloaks that are now in fashion in such a manner as to cover the lower half of the face; it was on this account that the law was enacted that interdicts round hats; for as their great hats would hide the other half, every person would walk the streets as in a mask.

We are now in private lodgings, for which we pay twenty-four reales a day. The rooms are painted in the theatrical taste of the country, and would be cheerful if we had but a fire-place. You will hardly believe that, though this place is very cold in winter, the Spanish landlords will not suffer a chimney to be built in their houses! They have a proverb to express the calmness and keenness of the air.—
 “The wind will not blow out a candle, but it

will kill a man." I have heard that persons who incautiously exposed themselves to the wind before they were completely dressed, have been deprived of the use of their limbs.

This is an unpleasant town ; the necessaries of life are extravagantly dear ; and the comforts are not to be procured. I hear from one who must be well acquainted with the people, that " there is neither friendship, affection, or virtue among them !" A woman of rank, during the absence of her husband, has been living at the hotel with another man ! and yet she is received into every company. I ought to add she is not a Spaniard, but in England adultery meets the infamy it deserves.

All our early impressions tend to prejudice us in favour of Spain. The first novels that we read fill us with high ideas of the grandeur and the dignity of the national character, and in perusing their actions in the new world, we almost fancy them a different race from the rest of mankind, as well from the splendor of their

exploits, as from the cruelties that sullied them. A little observation soon destroys this favourable prepossession; a great and total alteration in their existing establishments must take place before the dignity of the Spanish character can be restored.

In the middle ages the superiority of the Nobles was not merely titular and external. Learning was known only in the cloister; but in all accomplishments, in all courtesies, and in all feats of arms, from habit and fashion the Aristocracy possessed a real advantage. The pride of ancestry was productive of good: want of opportunity might prevent the heir of an illustrious house from displaying the same heroism that his ancestors had displayed in the cause of their country, but it was disgraceful to degenerate in magnificent hospitality, and in the encouragement of whatever arts existed.*

* The history of Spain affords one remarkable proof that a long genealogy may be good for something, if the fact may be credited. When the Moorish king was asked why he raised the siege of Xeres (1285) so precipitately, for

The ancient Nobility of Spain were placed in circumstances peculiarly adapted to form an elevation and haughtiness of character ; like the gallant Welsh, they had been driven among their mountains by the invaders, but their efforts were more fortunate, and they recovered their country. They who have struggled without success in the cause of independance deserve the applause of Posterity, and, to the honour of human nature, Posterity has always bestowed it ; but the self applause of the successful is not very remote from arrogance, and this arrogance,

fear of King Sancho, he replied, I was the first who enthroned the family and race of Barrameda, and honoured it with the royal title and dignity : my enemy derives his descent from more than forty kings, whose memory has great force, and in the combat would place fear and dread in me, but to him would supply confidence and strength, if we should come to battle. “ Yo fui el primero que entronicè y honrè la familia y linage de Barrameda con titulo y magestad real; mi enemigo trae descendencia de mas de quarenta Reyes, cuya memoria tiene gran fuerza, y en el combate a mi pusiera temor y espanto, à el diera atrevimiento y esfuerzo si llegamos a las manos.”

Mariana.

uniting with the natural reserve of the Spaniards, produced the characteristic haughtiness of their grandees.

This characteristic exists no longer, and you may form some idea of what the Grandees now are by a circumstance which happened only this week. A Swiss officer in the English service has been for some time resident at Madrid. It was told him that the Marquis of S***, at whose house he was a frequent visitor, had said of him in public, that he was a spy of the English ministry, and that no person ought to associate with him. The officer in company with the friend who had informed him, called upon the Marquis, who received him with his usual civility, and expressed his joy at seeing him. The Swiss charged him with what he had said. He denied it, and substituted other expressions.—It is true, said he, I may have said that as you were in the English service, you must of course be in the English interest. “Were those the expressions the Marquis made use of,” said the officer to his informer. The