

and acquired more enlarged notions with respect to foreigners, than usually fall to the share of the Spaniards.

Don Gregorio Mayans y Siscar, of Valencia, formerly librarian at Madrid, and now an honorary *Alcalde de corte*, is likewise a scholar of great knowledge and liberal sentiments. He has published several editions of classic authors, grammars, dissertations, tracts and commentaries on the civil law, a life of Cervantes, of Dean Marti, and others.

Don Miguel Casiri's *Bibliotheca Hisp. Escorial*, certainly entitles him to some merit in the knowledge of Oriental literature. He is of a Syromaronite family, from mount Libanon, but born at Tripoly, and educated in the Maronite college at Rome.

Don Pedro Rodriguez Campomanés, fiscal of the council of Castille, is likewise a man of letters. He has published something on most subjects in and out of his profession, from *Guias de postas y caminos*, to translations of Arabic and Greek. He assisted the Conde de Aranda in expelling the Jesuits, and seems well inclined to reform the other religious societies. This has made him many ecclesiastical enemies; ³⁶ and it is said,

³⁶ Freedom of speech on religious matters had risen to such an height in the coffee-houses of Madrid, that at last it reached the ears of the king, who sent for the inquisitor general, whom he reproached with his supine-

he has been admonished by the inquisition, which to the great astonishment of all the world, has lately acquired fresh strength, when most people were tempted to think it had lost its sting. Perhaps it is but a last effort before its final dissolution. The fiscal is of an active enterprising genius; he has lately published five or six volumes of ill-digested materials for the improvement of his country. Many of his schemes are good, but he lashes away at every thing in a bold loose manner. The origin of these books was a small tract, called *Industria popular*, which has brought forth four others, each three times as big as its parent, under the denomination of *appendixes, education, and second appendixes*. He is perhaps the ablest and most disinterested lawyer

ness in a concern of so important a nature. The bishop answered, that he looked upon his office as next to a sinecure; not having any expectation of support from government, should he attempt to exert his authority. The king gave him such assurances of being seconded by the secular arm, that the holy office seized upon an advocate, tried him for speaking against purgatory, and condemned him to eight years imprisonment in a convent. They might as well have hanged him; for the infamy that follows every accusation before that tribunal, even when the accused is declared innocent, is so great in the eyes of all persons whatever, that a man of any spirit had better be dead than thus lost in the esteem of the public. In order to make a display of their revived power, the inquisition summoned many great officers and others, suspected of free-thinking, to attend the trial, and be witnesses of the impartiality and candid behaviour of the court, and at the same time, of its resolution to enforce its authority by chastisement.

in Spain, a country where every civil and criminal process is determined by weight of metal and interest, which they term *Empeños*. When a servant of Lord G's was wantonly murdered by an invalid soldier, the secretary of state told his lordship, that if he chose to have the offender hanged, there would be no difficulty, as a poor soldier could have no friends to apply or make *empeños* for him. In cases like these, justice may sometimes take its course, if they are not too lazy to execute it.

Don Antonio Ponz is publishing a tour through Spain, in which he enters into very prolix details; but as he writes for the instruction of his countrymen, whom the objects he treats of ought principally to interest, his minuteness cannot be imputed to him as a fault. His observations have already produced some good effects in correcting abuses, suggesting useful works, and reforming the vicious taste of the Spaniards in many points of architecture.

Don Antonio Ulloa, who in company with the late Don George Juan, travelled into Peru to assist the French academicians in ascertaining the figure of the globe, published an account of their tour; he has also given a treatise upon the native Indians of South America; in which he has degraded their capacities and sentiments almost to a level with the instinct of the brute species.

Mr.

Mr. Bowles, though not a Spaniard, is certainly to be ranked among the Spanish writers; his natural history of Spain, though rather an introduction, and an assemblage of dissertations, than a complete work, has opened the career, and I hope will excite other persons learned in the secrets of Nature, to impart to the public their discoveries in the same study. Spain is so rich in all articles of natural history, that it alone affords as much matter for such a work as many other kingdoms put together.

I do not know whether I ought to mention Medina Conti, though a very learned man. He began his excavations in 1734, and all the inscriptions he published, except a few Roman ones, are arrant forgeries. Bayer, and the French Benedictine monks of Saint Maur, helped to detect him. I do not find he had any other object in view, than hopes of preferment; to secure the king and his confessor, he forged the sentiments of the ancient council, which establishes the doctrine of an immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. He was also concerned for the clergy in the famous law-suit of the Voto de Santiago, of which the following is a succinct account. In the year 938 Abdoulrahman, the third king of Cordova, made an irruption into Castille, and by the rapidity of his progress, and the multitude of his troops, threatened the Christians with
utter

utter destruction. In this emergency Ramiro the second, king of Leon, implored the succour of Saint James the apostle, and visited his tomb at Compostilla, in solemn penitential procession. The clergy have, by *all manner* of ways, endeavoured to prove, that in thankful remembrance of Santiago's kind assistance, by means of which he obtained a complete victory over the Moors, Ramiro the second obliged all his subjects to pay a portion of the produce of all their lands to the church of Compostilla, or, as it is worded in Spanish, *A la paga de custa medida de pan, vino y de mas semillas por cada junta que tubieren de labranza*. All this is flatly denied by the adverse or lay party, on the strength of the negative argument, that there is no proof; nay more, they call in question the very existence of the battle. The demand of the church is pretty large, for they pretend that not only what Ramiro then possessed, but also all that his successors have acquired since, becomes subject to the tax. On the other hand it is contended, that allowing all the ecclesiastical assertions to be true, the possessors of land of those times only would be liable to such a tribute, as it would be absurd to suppose Ramiro could have a right to give away what did not belong to him. The proceedings are already swelled to the size of a folio volume, and probably will increase, for it is not likely there should be an end put to the litigation,

gation, as long as the first place in the council of Castille is filled by a canon of Santiago.

It is not in my power to extend the list of writers. The common education of an English gentleman would constitute a man of learning here; and should he understand Greek, he would be quite a phenomenon³⁷.

As

³⁷ Though I make no doubt but the nation is much improved since 1722, yet I don't think it will be improper to transcribe some of the Dean of Alicant's strictures upon his countrymen at that period, as a Spaniard is very good authority, when he finds fault with Spaniards. These are his words in a letter to Count Scipio Maffei of Verona: "No country, except Italy, abounds more with ancient monuments than Spain: in every province you meet with remnants of bridges, aqueducts, temples, theatres, circusses, amphitheatres, and other public edifices; most of which have been reduced to their present deplorable condition by the outrages of the inhabitants, rather than by the injuries of time. Such is the nature and spirit of the Spaniards, that to overthrow the monuments of the Pagans or Romans, is accounted among them one of the most meritorious acts of piety, and most efficacious in drawing down upon them the blessing of the Almighty. Alas! such preposterous devotion! But how can it be otherwise in a kingdom which is ruled by the stupid idle monkish tribe; where it is thought a crime to deviate an inch from the rules laid down by the hooded blockheads. Whatever they sputter out, is revered as oracles of old, issuing from the Delphic tripod. The sluggards, puffed up with this nauseous adoration, thunder out the pains of hell against all such as so much as look with attention on an ancient statue. When any thing of the kind is dug up, their barbarous hands seize, break, deface it; and, lest the pure light of the sun should be defiled by the sight of such an abomination, it is burnt to lime, or buried again in the ground. If the bust of an emperor, a philosopher, or an orator, should happen to be discovered, they cry out, "'tis an idol! away with it! destroy it!" and instantly it undergoes the fate

As to the nobility I wonder how they ever learned to read or write; or having once attained so much, how they contrive not to forget it. It is difficult to say what they pass their time in; or what means, besides inattention to business, they employ in running through their immense incomes. In the great houses one custom may contribute to extravagance; a servant once established is never discharged, unless for some very enormous offence; he and his family remain pensioners as long as they live: the Duke of J. pays near ten thousand pounds sterling a year in wages and annuities to servants. The Grandees, one or two excepted, are diminished by a series of distempered progenitors to a race of pigmies, which dwindles away for lack of heirs, and tends gradually to an union of all the titles and estates upon the heads of one or two families. I think

fate of Dagon. The vulgar demolish all inscriptions, as they believe their characters are designed to confine some unclean spirits as guardians over hidden treasures. Immense are the quantities of inscriptions that have been defaced, or thrown back into the holes where they had lain hidden for so many ages. Superstition and ignorance combine to demolish every thing of the kind. Many were sent to France; and during the late war of the Succession, two English travellers freighted two ships with ancient monumental and historical inscriptions, which they had collected near Terragona."

Since the time of Dean Marti, Don John Celaya, rector of the university of Valencia, directed a number of Roman inscriptions to be buried in the foundations of the bridge of Serranos; and a much later instance of barbarism of the same kind, was exhibited by the Franciscan friars of S. Maria de pina, at Oliva.

the Conde de Altamira has no less than nineteen Grandeeships centered in his person. Though they all style themselves *de primera classe*, as it were, by way of distinctive pre-eminence over others of a lower degree; yet I believe no second or third class exists, and it would be a very gross insult to suppose any of them were of an inferior rank to the rest of the *corps*: some difference may perhaps be made in the degrees of popular respect paid to the descendants of the heroes that make a figure in the Spanish annals, and such Grandees as have been honoured with the dignity in later times. A Grandee can marry none but his equal. They all *thou* each other; and affect to appear backward in mixing in other company.

The Spanish women are in general little and thin; few are strikingly beautiful, but almost all have sparkling black eyes, full of expression. It is not the fashion here, as in France, to heighten their *eclat* with paint. They are endowed by nature with a great deal of wit and lively repartee, but for want of the polish and succours of education, their wit remains obscured by the rudest ignorance, and the most ridiculous prejudices. Their tempers having never been fashioned by polite intercourse, nor softened by necessary contradiction, are extremely pettish and violent. They are continually pouting for something or other, and put out of humour by the merest trifles. Most of the ladies about
court

court are the reverse of handsome, and do not seem to have any ambition of passing for clever or accomplished; not one talent do they possess; nor do they ever work, read, write, or touch any musical instrument; their *Cortejo*, or gallant, seems their only play-thing. I believe no country exhibits more bare-faced amours, and such an appearance of indelicate debauchery as this. The account given me of their manner of living in their family way, as soon as they come out of the convent, and before they have fixed upon a lover to fill up their time more agreeably, is as follows: they rise late, and loiter away the remains of the morning among their attendants, or wear it out at church in a long bead-roll of habitual unmeaning prayers; they dine sparingly, sleep, and then dress to saunter for a couple of hours on the Prado. They are never without some sort of sugar-plumb or high-spiced comfit in their mouths. As soon as it is dark, they run to the house of some elderly female relation, where they all huddle together over a pan of coals, and would not for the world approach the company that may occasionally drop in; it would throw them into the greatest confusion, were they to be requested to join in the conversation. The hour of the assembly passed, they hurry home to their maids, and with their help set about dressing their own suppers by way of amusement.

L E T T E R XLIII.

Segovia, June 10, 1776.

PREVIOUS to our departure from Madrid, we received from the ministers, by the particular order of his majesty, every permit and passport that could conduce to the comfort of our journey to the frontiers of France. We have leave to take out with us what specie we please, and the mules and horses we have purchased in the kingdom; our baggage is to pass unsearched. I think it my duty to acknowledge, with a grateful sense of the distinction, that during our stay near the court, the king shewed a very flattering anxiety that we should meet with no difficulties of any kind; and more than once enquired whether we had been shewn such and such things, and whether we were pleased with our reception, or in want of any thing to render the place agreeable. We are not a little proud of the honour; and I hope you will think our vanity too excusable to be any impeachment of the soundness of our understanding.

On the sixth we left Madrid. As we passed through the streets, we found great preparations made for the procession

procession of Corpus Christi; among the rest, sets of girls dressed out in ribbons, dancing round may-poles.

We travelled through the park of the Casa del Campo, and over a bare corn country, leaving the forests of *El Pardo* and *La Sarsuela*, two royal hunting seats, on the right hand. The last miles of the road to the Escorial, which is exceedingly good, is also uncommonly pleasant, being carried through a very noble wood, where the deer are continually crossing and recrossing before you.

The aspect of this celebrated convent, situated in a corner of a lofty ridge of mountains, struck us with awe and pleasure. As we could not see the inside that evening, we enjoyed ourselves in walking round the gardens and fields. The landscape is very grand, for at a single view you command one of the largest edifices in the world, a boundless extent of woodlands, and a clear prospect of Madrid; and beyond all a vast tract of country that loses itself gradually in the horizon.

There are many minute descriptions of the ³⁸ Escorial.

³⁸ Etymology of the word Escorial as explained by Casiri in his *Bib. Hisp. Esc.* "This is an Arabick word, meaning a place full of rocks, and the nature of the country agrees perfectly with it. It is to be written with an U and not an O, as the common way is. Those that derive it from the Scoria of iron forges, have no authority for supposing that there ever were any such iron works in that neighbourhood. Sarmiento very strangely interprets it, a Beech-grove, *Esculetum*."

extant in all languages ; let it therefore suffice to give you a general idea of this stupendous fabric and its treasures.

You have read that it was built by Philip the second, in consequence of a vow he made to Saint Laurence before the battle of Saint Quintin, which was fought on the tenth of August 1557. Though this story of the vow seems a little apocryphal, it may be supposed that Philip, in memory of so signal a victory gained by his troops over the French, might choose to dedicate to Saint Laurence, the patron of that day, the mausoleum he intended to erect in consequence of his father's dying request, therein to deposit the bones of that emperor, and of the empress Isabella. It was begun in 1562, and consists of several courts and quadrangles, which altogether are disposed in the shape of a gridiron, the instrument of the martyrdom of Saint Laurence: the apartment where the king resides forms the handle. The building is a long square of six hundred and forty feet by five hundred and eighty; so that allowing besides four hundred and sixty for the projection of the chapel and king's quarter, the whole circumference comes to two thousand nine hundred Spanish feet. The height up to the roof is all round sixty feet, except on the garden side, where the ground is more taken away. At each angle is a square tower two hundred