

informer repeated what he had heard the Marquis say, and the officer immediately called the Marquis a liar, a scoundrel, and a coward, and beat him. The house was immediately in an uproar; the doors were fastened, and the servants came up with their knives. The Swiss, however, placed his back to the wall, drew his sword, and compelled them to open the doors. The news soon got abroad, and the Marquis has been put under arrest, by order of the Court, to prevent any serious consequences.

We dined the same day at the Ambassador's, in company with the Swiss, and went to the opera afterwards. My Uncle, who is very well acquainted with the manners of these countries, observed three men dogging us from the house. They followed us a long way, but left us at last after looking very earnestly at us. They might have made a disagreeable mistake on the occasion. The officer remained in Madrid three days, and appeared every where in public; he then very prudently decamped.

The King set off on Monday last ; his retinue on this journey consists of seven thousand persons ! and so vain is his Most Catholic Majesty of this parade, that he has actually had a list of his attendants printed on a paper larger than any map or chart you ever saw, and given to all the Grandees in favour. We were in hopes of securing a carriage through the Marquis Yrandas's interest. This nobleman during the war was in disgrace, but when pacific principles gained the ascendancy at Court, he was recalled from a kind of banishment at his country seat, and sent to negotiate the peace, which was afterwards concluded by Yriarte, a brother of the poet, since dead. The intelligence he gives us is very unfavourable to men who are in haste. The Court will not be less than fifteen days on the road with us ; no interest can secure us a carriage ; and if we can get one to set out, it will probably be taken from us on the way by some of their retinue ; and there is no accommodation at the posados, for, independant of the common attendants, six hundred people of rank were obliged to lie in the open air the first night ;

nor can we go a different road without doubling the distance ; for were we to attempt to enter Portugal by Ciudad Rodrigo, and the province of Tras os Montes, if the rains which are daily expected should overtake us, the mountain torrents would be impassable.

His Majesty's title to the crown of Corsica has been virtually acknowledged here in a singular manner. A Corsican, in some trifling quarrel concerning a plate at dinner, stabbed a man on Sunday last, and took shelter in the house of the English Ambassador. These things are common here : I never passed through a village without seeing three or four monumental crosses in it ; and as it can hardly be supposed that a banditti would attack in an inhabited place, it is fair to conclude that these monuments are for men who have been stabbed in some private quarrel. Their long knives are very convenient. Detection is easily avoided in this country and conscience soon quieted by the lullaby of absolution !

The old palace of Buen Retiro is converted into a royal porcelain manufactory ; the prices are extravagantly high, but they have arrived to great excellence in the manufacture. The false taste of the people is displayed in all the vases I saw there, which, though made from Roman models, are all terminated by porcelain flowers ! In the gardens of his Majesty, who is a great sportsman, and occasionally shoots, high scaffolds are erected in different parts for his markers to stand upon : here also he amuses himself with a royal recreation similar to what boys call Bandy in England ; he is said to play very well, but as this August Personage is ambitious of fame, he is apt to be very angry if he is beaten. Did you ever see two boys try which could bring the other on his knees by bending his fingers back ? The King of Spain is very fond of this amusement, for he is remarkably strong : a little time ago there was a Frenchman in great favour with him, because he had strength enough to equal his Majesty in all these sports, and sense enough to yield to him. One day when they were thus employing them-

selves, the King fancied his antagonist did not exert all his force : and as his pride was hurt, insisted upon it in such a manner that the Frenchman was obliged to be in earnest, and brought him to the ground. The King immediately struck him in the face.

Mambrino's account of the cat-eating is confirmed : I was playing with one last night, and the lady told me she was obliged to confine her in the house lest the neighbours should steal and eat it.

LETTER X.

MADRID, Jan. 10.

A Duke of Medina Celi formerly murdered a man, and as the Court would not or could not execute so powerful a noble, they obliged the family to dress their pages in black stockings, and always to have a gallows standing before their palace door. The late King permitted them to remove the gallows, but the black stockings still remain, a singular badge of ignominy.

The noble collection of pictures at the palace here, gave me high delight. Poetry and Painting are closely allied, but I am heterodox as to the Trinity of the arts, and reject the co-equality of Music.

While we were at the palace, the King sent home a cart load of horns to ornament it. A

singular ornament, when the shameless conduct of his wife is the topic of general censure. Malespini, the Circumnavigator, (whose honorable boast is that he has done no evil on his voyage) has been imprisoned about six weeks on suspicion of being concerned in a French book exposing the private life of the Queen. What must that woman be who is detested for her depravity in a metropolis where the Cortejo system is so universal? About two years ago the washerwomen of Madrid were possessed with a spirit of sedition, and they insulted her Majesty in the streets.—“ You are wasting your money upon your finery and your gallants —while we are in want of bread !”

“ Bold is the task when subjects grown too wise,

“ Instruct a monarch where his error lies.”

The ringleaders were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The Queen however has never entered Madrid since, and the inhabitants are very apprehensive that upon this journey they may fix their Court elsewhere. When it is said that this metropolis is in the centre of the peninsula, all its advantages are enumerated :

except when swollen by the mountain snows, the Manzanares is so shallow that if a cockle should attempt to navigate it, he must inevitably run aground. In summer the heat is intolerable, in winter the cold is very severe; for the soil round the city produces nitre in great abundance, and the Guadarama mountains are covered with snow; so that you have the agreeable alternative of being starved for want of a fire, or suffocated by the fumes of charcoal.

The floors here are all covered with matting, and the matting is prodigiously populous in fleas.

We had but a bad specimen of the Spanish Academicians. On our visit to one we found him in bed about twelve o'clock, and he told us he always lay in bed to transact business! I contented myself with listening to the conversation, and attempted not to join in it: he observed that I could not speak Spanish, and, that I might understand him, *attempted* to repeat

it in Latin—non possit—*parlare*. In the evening he accompanied us to the Museum, and displayed as much knowledge in sculpture and mineralogy as he had exhibited in Latin; he even pointed out a large mass of gold as being in its native state, that had the King's stamp upon it.

The Museum is wretchedly managed. Collections of natural history ought certainly to be open to all, who can make any use of them; but here, on certain days every week, the doors are thrown open, and it becomes a raree-show for all the mob of Madrid! This renders it very unpleasant to the decent part of the company; for we were fearful of leaving something behind us, and still more fearful of taking something away.

In this Museum is the skeleton of a non-descript animal, which appears larger than the elephant.* The bones are of an extraordinary

* I find that a description of this skeleton, with an annexed plate, is in the Monthly Magazine for September, 1796.

thickness, even disproportionate to its size; it was dug up a few years back at Buenos Ayres.

Monday, 11th.

Last night I was at a Fiesta de Novillos, a Bullock fight, at which about fifteen thousand persons were assembled, many of them women, and indeed more women of apparent rank than I had seen either at the theatre or the opera. In this very rational recreation, the bullocks are only teased, and as their horns are tipped, the men only get bruised. A bullock was led into the area, and the Heroes amused themselves by provoking him, then running away and leaping over the boundary. But the two principal heroes were each of them in a basket which came up to his shoulders, this he could lift up from the ground, and move along in it towards the bull, then he sticks a dart in the bull, and pops down in the basket which the beast knocks down, to the infinite delight of fifteen thousand spectators! Once he tossed the man in the basket, and once he put his horns in at one end and drove him out at

the other. When one bull was done with, some tame cattle were driven in, and he followed them out. Four were thus successively teased, but a more barbarous sport followed. A wild boar was turned in to be baited. Most of the dogs were afraid to attack so formidable an enemy, and the few who had courage or folly enough were dreadfully mangled by his tusks. His boarship remained unhurt, and after maiming every dog who attacked him, was suffered to go to his den. The remainder of the entertainment consisted in turning in bullocks one at a time among the mob. They provoked the beast, and the beast bruised them; and I was glad to see that the advantage lay on the side of the most respectable brute.

What hope is there of a nation where such are the fashionable and popular amusements?

The national theatres are always crowded, but the Italian opera is very thinly attended. It is a disgrace to Europe that this absurd and abominable amusement should so generally be

encouraged; the existence of it depends upon a horrible mutilation of the human species, and whoever frequents an opera-house encourages the crime.

All the children here have their hair tied. The waistcoats are generally laced before instead of being fastened with buttons. In many parts of the country the sleeves of the coat lace on, and there are two openings left, one at the elbow and one at the bend of the arm within. We have frequently seen undressed skins used as sandals. In Leon the soles of the shoes are wood, and the *upper leathers* made of *bemp*.

Literature is reviving in Spain; the translation of Sallust, by the King's brother, made it fashionable. New editions have been published of their best poets, and the false taste that succeeded to that æra is now generally decried. I saw at Coruña a translation of Adam Smith on the Wealth of Nations. What mutilations it may have undergone I know not, but surely no mutilation can prevent such a work from

producing good in Spain. A translation of Miss Lee's Recess is advertised. Works of this nature generate a taste for reading, and till this taste becomes general, it is in vain to expect any beneficial effects from literature.

The Spaniards are most obstinately attached to their old customs. I heard of two men who left a manufactory at Guadalaxara because the Proprietor of it chose to introduce wheelbarrows. "No," they said, "they were Spaniards, and it was only fit for beasts to draw carriages!" Nor can the most evident improvements prevail upon them to deviate from their usual method. In most of the rooms here the lower half of the wall is paved with tiles like the English fire-places. An Englishman had some of these which formed a picture, but required to be ground at the edges; this the Spanish workmen would not do, "No," they said, it was "*muy impertinente*," very impertinent!

I met with an Englishman yesterday who has

been travelling in the mercantile line through Navarre and Biscay. He told me that he had found it prudent to pass as a Frenchman in those provinces: under that character he received every kindness of hospitality, whereas in his own he would have been insulted, and perhaps personally injured. The case is widely different in Galicia and Leon; but as my informer appeared to know nothing more of French principles than the common topics of abuse, I could not suspect him of having hastily adopted an opinion which he might wish to be true.*

* On my return to England I had an American for a fellow passenger, who was in Bilboa, when the French took possession of it. Before that event happened, the shops were shut, and provisions very scarce; within six hours after the tricolor flag was hoisted, the shops were all opened, and the markets overflowing. The French soldiers were in general very young; they were compleatly angry with the Spaniards for continually running away—"Curse the fellows," they cried, "we have been hunting them these six weeks, and can never get sight of them." They behaved with great regularity. The gentleman who gave me this information lost some spoons in the first confusion; this was casually mentioned, and in a few hours the spoons were brought back.

If Carlos III. and his successor have neither of them possessed much of the wisdom of Solomon, they have shewn something like his magnificence in their public buildings. The greatest parts of the gates and fountains of this city, which are numerous and very handsome, bear their names. Why is not the elemental costume attended to in fountains? River-Gods and Tritons are in character, and even a Dolphin, ugly as it is, appropriate: but when you see a stream running out of a bear's mouth, what idea can it possibly convey but that the poor beast is labouring under the perpetual operation of Ipecacuanha? A very superb Museum is building in the Prado, and the King has sent an Englishman to South America to gather fossils for it, and specimens of minerology.

In the cloisters of the new Franciscan Convent is a very fine series of pictures, that represent the whole history of St. Francis, from his cradle to his tomb. A draftsman was employed in copying them while we were there; they deserve to be engraved, both for the real merit of the

pieces, and the nature of their subjects. It was somewhat curious to see human genius employed in perpetuating human absurdity.

To-morrow morning we leave Madrid; the Court has now preceded us ten days; they have eat every thing before them, and we ought to wait for a new generation of fowls and turkies. A journey in Spain is never an agreeable undertaking to look on to; but however we begin to know the value of bad beds and bad provisions, when we are in danger of getting none. His Majesty travels fast: three of his guards have been killed, and four seriously hurt, by galloping before his coach. They suffered less during the war.

I must not forget to give you a curious proof of Spanish ingenuity. There is a fire-place in one of the apartments of the English Ambassador: he had ordered the chimney to be swept, and coming into the room found three masons, with pick-axes, &c. preparing to make a hole in the wall!

Manuel goes on with us to Lisbon. He was taken upon trial by a barber, and kept for three days to hard shaving; at the end of which the man told him he might do very well for Oviedo, but he did not shave in the Madrid fashion! and sent him away without giving him a single maravedi for his labour!

I must not forget to give you a curious proof of Spanish ingenuity. There is a fire-place in one of the apartments of the English Ambassader: he had ordered the chimney to be swept, and coming into the room found three masons with pick-axes, &c. preparing to make a hole in the wall in front of the chimney.

LETTER XI.

Wednesday, Jan. 13.

At eight o'clock yesterday morning we made our escape from Madrid, and repassed the bridge of Segovia. We travel in a calessa with two mules; a carriage of the same kind, though more elegant in name and less so in appearance than an English buggie. Our larder consists of a large undressed loin of pork, two hams, and a quieso de puerco, or pork cheese, which is tolerable brawn. As we follow the Royal Family so close, we were in expectation of excellent roads, but though the roads were smoothed for them, the multitudes of their retinue have made them infinitely worse than they were before. Two leagues and a half from Madrid is Mostoles. Here we took a cold dinner, and I visited the church, which Dutens speaks of as remarkably elegant. It well repaid my visit; but the most remarkable

things there were four mirrors, each with a figure of some heathen deity ground on it. I thought Diana and Mercury odd personages to be pictured in a Catholic chapel.

We crossed a little stream called the Guadarama, by a wooden bridge which had no *Garde-fou* till they erected one when his Majesty was expected to pass that way. We past through the town of Naval-carnero, and then turning out of the main road to avoid the returning retinue, concluded our day's journey of seven leagues and a half at the little village of Valmojado. The country is very uninteresting, and though well cultivated, thinly peopled. By Naval-carnero is the first olive-yard I have yet seen. The fruit is still on the trees. My nose, though of considerable valour, and now disciplined by a month's residence in Spain, is yet unable to endure the approximation of Joze Serrano, our calassero, who exhales essence of garlic hot from every pore.

The house at Valmojado is very miserable; they