

that he seems to have lost his horns. The Conservative cause in truth is very weak in Sunday papers. But on the other side unless I shut one of my eyes like purblind Fraser, I see both the Examiner and Spectator conducted with great talent. The stile of the first is polished, neat, happy and concise, and abounding with wit and force of argument, while in its criticisms on new works it excites many a laugh at the expense of some of our mushrooms of literature. The second though with less moderation of tone, and of the 'suaviter in modo,' displays great ability, and in the Sunday Times we often find an article which reminds us of the strength and power of its namesake. As to the Court Journal, what can we say but that it is unobjectionable and well calculated for the object it professes? It serves up its incense to the world of fashion in honied language, and forms a harmless accompaniment of a lady's drawing-room table.

I hear people sometimes rail at the newspapers, but I think there are few of us but owe them a daily debt of gratitude. They are unquestionably the cheapest intellectual luxuries we enjoy.

By their means even in retirement, we mix in the busy world without being forced into the bustle and distraction of the scene, we learn the opinions of others and have an opportunity of communicating our own.

For the hostility against them, of those who either from ambition or vanity thrust themselves upon the notice of the world I can easily account. The occasional censure they incur is but the natural penalty they pay for the admiration they court. In conclusion, I trust the public journals will ever continue to discharge a duty incumbent upon them, that of hunting and running down, knaves, hypocrites and coxcombs, sham-patriots, pretended Saints, and those trading politicians who traffic in their principles, as Jew-boys in oranges and shoe-strings.

Believe me, &c.

P.S. Another discovery of Fraser's in his June Number,—Horace is no poet. It seems that a turn for Satire and the inspiration of Poetry are incompatible. Pope was essentially a satirist, and by the same reason no poet. Are

we to have the Bowles' controversy renewed? Dryden was somewhat of a satirist, and Cowper and Young and Byron and Juvenal and Aristophanes, &c. &c. Where shall we find a Poet? In truth most of these writers of verses are satirical dogs.

To Trelawney Tomkinson, Esq.
Land's End, Cornwall.

LETTER XIV.

MADRID—THE ESCORIAL—POLITICAL EVENTS OF THE
DAY.

Madrid, Oct. 2.

DEAR SIR,

SURELY this must be the most singularly situated capital in Europe. It stands on a bleak uninviting hill, exposed to the two extremes of intense heat in summer and piercing cold in winter, overlooking as naked and dreary a scene as can well be imagined. The only apology I have heard offered for its position is that it is central. Nevertheless Madrid stands distant from Cadiz four hundred miles—from Seville full three hundred—from Malaga four hundred—from Granada three hundred—from Barcelona three hundred and fifty—and from Zaragoza two hundred. And when you come further to consider the inconvenience and danger of travelling in this country, the mountainous nature of the roads, and that the public conveyances seldom

travel more than twice a week, and that if you travel post (one single instance of which I have alone as yet met with) you must have an escort at your heels, which in all probability will desert you the moment you require their services; why Madrid central though it is, may be considered a second Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat. A river, that indispensable accompaniment of a capital, it has none, except you dignify with such a name the scanty streamlet of the Manzanares, which just serves to supply its fountains with water.

But Madrid is not singular alone for its position; it is equally singular for the striking contrasts it affords, for that mixture of barbarism and politeness which are here so strongly at variance with one another. For instance the Prado is embellished with magnificent fountains of classical design, the Apollo, the Neptune, and the Three Seasons, bordered by a botanical garden, and the superb façade of its far-famed picture gallery. Pass through the gate Alcalà adjoining and you stumble against the Amphitheatre dedicated to bull-fights. The calle Alcalà considering its breadth and the imposing palaces

of the nobility, and public buildings which distinguish it, is one of the finest streets of Europe; but what a Bartholomew scene it now presents during the fair, which is held here from the 23rd of September to the 4th of October, lined with trumpery wooden booths, stocked with fruit, old books, crockery ware, children's toys and penny trumpets? As you walk about the streets, at one moment you are reminded of being in a capital, at another you may fancy yourself in a country village, such is the contrast of the moving scene. Here passes you an equipage in the stile of London or Paris—there some old crazy coach drawn by six mules with the postilion running by the heads of the leaders—here a file of laden mules or a drove of turkeys—then a troop of country peasants attired in sober brown, and presently after a party of ladies and officers dressed in the height of the fashion. Here is a water-carrier in his yellow embroidered jacket—there a Biscayan nurse in her national costume, here a Valencian clad in a sort of kilt. ‘*Nil fuit unquam sic impar sibi.*’ At the same time I mean not to deny but these contrasts are

very amusing to the traveller, or that there are many features of Madrid worthy of a capital, the Prado for the taste with which it is laid out (I may be singular, but I prefer it much above the Prater at Vienna) the fountains in such abundance on the grandest scale, with basins of water surrounding them full one hundred feet in circumference. I think I counted no less than eight on the Prado alone. Worthy of a metropolis also is the picture gallery, the botanical garden, those immense and magnificent piles of building, the Custom House, the quarters of the Royal Guard, the academy of natural history, that colossal hospital near the gate Atocha, and the palaces of the nobility with their façades of imposing size.

The gallery of Madrid is said to contain two thousand pictures. On entering within this noble building you find yourself in a lofty octagon hall, with entrance doors leading to three galleries, of which two are appropriated to the Spanish school, and the third, which is most superb, lighted from a vaulted roof above, to a very large collection of Italian pictures. Beyond this are

three more halls, containing the German, Dutch, and Flemish schools. I shall neither weary you or myself with a catalogue of pictures, but confine myself to a very few remarks. In the Spanish school Murillo stands distinguished not less by the brilliancy of his colouring, than by the airy lightness of his figures, his grace, elegance and expression. From the pictures of this glory of the Spanish school, which I had seen in Germany and England, I had fancied that his forte lay in that amusing fidelity to nature with which he illustrates the scenes of low life, but not one of his pictures on such a subject are to be found in the Madrid gallery. In place of these we have holy families, assumptions, monks in adoration, favoured with the sight of celestial visions and other such scriptural and legendary subjects. In both of these stiles so opposite, his genius is equally triumphant.

Among the specimens of this great master here exhibited was one of the infant Saviour caressing a lamb, which appeared to me to be carried to the utmost perfection of which the art of painting is capable. The expression of the infantine

countenance, was invested with a divine expression and solemnity that Raffael never surpassed, and the colouring was finished to the most perfect degree of harmony.

During my visits to the gallery, I had an opportunity of watching the progress of a modern artist, who sat at his easel, copying this chef d'œuvre by rule and measure. In about ten days he had completed his copy, and I afterwards saw it stuck up at the annual exhibition of modern art. But who could have traced the original, in the fat awkward bantling its copy, with a flush in its cheeks as though it had caught the scarlet fever, sitting by the side of its lamb, frowning and pouting like a spoiled child in a fit of the sulks? It was a most ludicrous caricature, and a pretty specimen of copying by rule and measure? *Heu quantum mutatus!*

Next to Murillo comes Velasquez, a painter resembling the Flemish school, great in portraits and historical subjects, with much natural expression and breadth of colouring. His portraits are as large as life and boldly sketched. He is famous for his portraits on horseback; for his ela-

borate detail of dress and costume ; and is to be considered rather as a matter of fact than a poetic artist ; and though great in his line, has seldom attempted what I conceive to be the highest walk of the art. His surrender of Breda and his troop of Bacchanalians are two of his best works.

Next comes Juannes, little known, I believe, out of Spain. His stile is so evidently formed on that of Raffael, that he can be hardly said to possess the originality of the two former artists. His figures are perfect in beauty, the heads especially. His Last Supper may stand by the side of one of Raffael's pictures in his third stile, for the skill and elegance of the grouping and the harmony and depth of the colouring. Such were the three painters who appeared to me to excel in the Spanish school, Murillo being pre-eminent over the rest.

I next come to the Italian gallery, and I think to those who have seen the chef-d'œuvres of Rome and Florence, the collection, though large, will not appear very select. There is among them, however, one large picture which must arrest the eye of the most indifferent observer, representing

our Saviour bearing his Cross to Mount Calvary. Its most striking feature is the various attitudes of pity and affliction in which the disciples are standing by and kneeling towards their beloved master. This picture, by the hand of Raffael, is stiled in the catalogue as the second picture in the world, but the interval is wide notwithstanding its excellence between that and his chef-d'œuvre the Transfiguration.

It is well known that Raffael, even in his second manner, retained something of the stiffness of outline and harshness of colouring of his master Perugia, and that not until he had attained his third and perfect stile did he succeed in shaking off altogether this mannerism. In this picture the traces of Perugia are too visible to entitle it to be ranked among the works of his third stile, and therefore with deference I submit that it is a bold assertion to pronounce this the second picture in the world.

Besides the grand gallery there is another collection of pictures on the first story of the cabinet of Natural History. Among these is a celebrated Murillo very much in Caravaggio's stile. The

subject, however, whatever be its merit is unpleasing, Saint Isabella attending the sick of a hospital, surrounded by a wretched group, and pourtrayed in the act of washing the sore head of a poor boy. In this same building likewise is the annual exhibition of modern artists. The pictures chiefly consist of copies, with a number of clumsy portraits, formidable likenesses, for which the very élite of the ugliness and vulgarity of Madrid seem to have sat, ambitious of transmitting their features to the admiration of posterity. Similar instances of indiscreet vanity will no doubt have sometimes astounded you at Somerset-house.

Chiefly as the pictures consist of copies, however, as I observed, I noted down one in my journal which was undoubtedly original, viz., a group of children administering a clyster to a sick dog, and I doubt whether such an original would have been exhibited in any other public gallery than that of the metropolis of Spain.

These galleries, except to strangers, as well as the other public sights at Madrid, are open only twice a week to the public, and are attended by

as motley a crowd of people as seems to have inconvenienced the gentility of Mrs. T—— at the Louvre. If it happens to rain they are all closed. The contrast between the fine specimens of the old Spanish painters and the trumpery of the modern artists, is more conspicuous than in any other country of Europe. In most respects, indeed, it appears the direction Spain is taking is very much down the hill, but such has been the observation for centuries.

The royal palace of Madrid has always been considered to be the finest in Europe. Napoleon observed to his brother Joseph, on appointing him King of Spain, “vous serez mieux logé que moi.” Its treasures however are not to be viewed it would seem by common eyes, for neither an English family here of some pretensions to rank, or myself who have none, could obtain a ticket of admission. I was forced, therefore, to prowl about the outside only, crying like Sterne’s starling, with the alteration of a word, “I can’t get in, I can’t get in.” The exterior, however, of this sumptuous and enormous pile of building, though one of its wings still remains unfinished,

is a sight to see. It stands retired in the outskirts of the city, with its western front placed on the edge of an abrupt hill, which is cut into a succession of terraces. Seated on this isolated eminence in solitary grandeur, it presents a most striking appearance as well from its stately magnificence as from the gloom and dreariness which lower over it. With neither trees or gardens to shelter or ornament it, and a wild prospect stretching before, it seems as if proud in its fortress-like strength and splendour it scorned association with all meaner things—a palace fit for the monarch who should aspire to universal sovereignty, and an image of his towering pride and solitary elevation above the rest of his species.

Compared to this another of the royal residences, the Buen Retiro, seems a mere plaything, and for this it must have been intended—a toy for a crowned head to play with. The gardens are full of all sorts of fanciful, and though of trifling, of rather expensive inventions I imagine. Here some water work suddenly springs up from beneath your feet; there you

enter a rustic cottage, and find an old woman spinning and rocking a cradle by means of concealed mechanism. In another room lays a sick man in bed, with phials of physic on the table, who suddenly raises himself at your approach to return his salutations to you for the honour of your visit. Then you are conducted to a Turkish tent fitted up with all the costliness of barbaric splendour. Those who are "pleased with a rattle, tickled by a straw," may be pleased and tickled by the ingenious trifles of these gardens, which do so much honour to Spanish royal taste. The Menagerie here, though small, is excellent, and as it is only open to the public once a week, the animals retain much of their natural wildness and ferocity. Besides the Buen Retiro, there is likewise the Casino, with its garden, temples and summer houses.

These three royal residences being within the walls of Madrid, perhaps it may not be uninteresting to you to learn how many there are without. Fourthly, then, there is the Escorial; 5thly, the palace of Aranjuez; 6thly, one at Zarzuela; 7thly, the royal hunting box of the Casa di

Campo ; 8thly, the palace of St. Ildefonso ; 9thly, the Pardo. This last royal residence is about six miles from Madrid, and here at present is residing the queen regent Christina in *guarded* retirement—guarded, I say, for a cordon of sentinels placed around prevent any approach within a league of her privacy.

It might not be quite decorous to particularize with whom and with what royal festivity she passes her time in this privacy, but as one of her exploits last week was related to me by a Spanish colonel with much approbation, I shall record it to her honour—that of shooting a wolf with her own queenly arm. Long live the *immortal* Reina Gobernadora, and her *innocent* daughter la reina Isabella !

Among the lions of Madrid is the royal armoury, which contains very beautiful specimens of ancient armour, all manufactured at Milan, formerly the great workshop of Europe for this fabric. The armour of the great heroes, Gonsalvez di Cordova, Pizarro and Cortez, are pointed out to you ;—but you will, perhaps, be more interested by my account of another hero.

I visited this Museum in company with an English family. We had of our party, who acted as Cicerone on the occasion, a hulking Scotch general in the Spanish service, a huge unwieldy man mountain, who kept talking the whole time of the exploits of his ancestors and his own, his progenitors, as well as himself, having, it seems, deserted the land of cakes for the land of garlic and oil. A prettier specimen of a Bobadil hero we all agreed could not be well imagined. And thus it usually happens, a man who deserts his own country for another, generally learns to engraft upon his own national foibles those of his adopted. I would advise this hybrid of the Scotch and Spaniard, when he next meets with any of his countrymen to sink the part of Copper Captain before them at least, however a favourite one it may be with the Spaniards.

Worth however I consider to be all that is to be seen in Madrid, the celebrated Escorial. In order to take a peep at this eighth wonder of the world, a friend and myself started in a carriage early one morning, and a cold ride we had of it (for a wet autumn has set in) of seven hours

over a wild, bleak, uncultivated plain, covered with heath and wild rosemary, and interspersed with granite rocks, with a sight at a distance of only three hamlets during this solitary journey of twenty-eight miles. About three miles before we reached the end of our journey, we entered a sort of inclosed park of stunted trees and brushwood, and at length, at the very foot of the naked chain of the Guadarrama mountains, rose to our view this amphibious monster of the desert, half monastery, half palace. Imagine a gigantic pile of building, built of granite, studded with windows (which are said to amount to the enormous number of ten thousand), the two extremities of the immense façade flanked with square towers, capped with conical roofs of slate, and a cupola of beautiful proportions rising from the centre.

The shape of this grey and solemn edifice at first sight appears to be that of an oblong square. It stands on an elevated terrace, commanding a prospect dreary as extensive, a vast naked plain undistinguished by a single feature, with a range of mountains bounding the horizon. Such was



the situation chosen by that gloomy bigot Philip II. for this monastery, which he vowed to dedicate to San Lorenzo, in memory of the victory of St. Quentin. It is said to be built in the shape of a gridiron, this having been intended, no doubt, as a handsome compliment to the memory of the Patron Saint, thus to perpetuate the remembrance of the torture of his martyrdom. There is a small village only attached to it, with a third part of the houses in ruins. Over the whole building reigns a grand simplicity, a severity of taste, and a solid magnificence, which, added to the singularity of its solitary situation, renders it striking and impressive beyond all modern edifices in Europe.

You enter first into the Court of Kings, so named from six colossal figures of the Kings of Israel, which stand over the portico with a very imposing effect, and on being admitted into the interior, are conducted by one of the brethren over a part of the building.

I shall first give you a sketch of the Chapel. It is of the Grecian stile, in the form of a Greek

cross and built of grey granite, which imparts to it an air both of solidity and solemnity well befitting the character of a church. The roof is painted in fresco by the first masters, the colours of which after the lapse of two centuries, appear to retain all their original freshness and brilliancy. The choir standing elevated in a gallery at the extremity of the church, there is nothing to interrupt the eye from ranging freely over the whole space of the interior and dwelling upon the beautiful proportions of the architecture, nor is it distracted by the exhibition of any false and misplaced finery. Every thing is simple, majestic, perfect in taste, and strictly in harmony with the character of a sacred edifice. One ornament, however, there is of most costly magnificence which fixes the eye, viz. the grand altar. It stands elevated on a flight of steps; on the altar-table stands a superb marble temple; the wall behind is covered with paintings divided by gold pannels; on each side placed in a gallery above bordered by a ballustrade, are seen two bronze statues kneeling in prayer, and kingly statues they are in every sense of the word, the one re-

presenting Philip II., the other Charles V. At the foot of the altar-steps stand two pulpits of oriental agate and alabaster, enriched with the most beautiful bronze carved work, forming two of the most exquisite things of the kind I ever beheld.

From this Chapel, the model of that beautiful simplicity which is the perfection of a correct and finished taste, you pass to the Sacristy and the Chapter-house. These are both of them very noble halls, with their cielings painted in Arabesques, and their walls covered with pictures of every school by the first masters. In fact the specimens of paintings in the Escorial seemed to me greatly to excel those of the Madrid Gallery in value. Of Raffael there are two finished specimens, an Annunciation, and a Virgin and Child—but by Murillo adjoining them, is a Virgin and Child, which in the opinion both of my friend and myself outrivalled them both. The divine expression of the child's countenance is a miracle of art, on which you may gaze for hours with increasing admiration. This picture is painted with a depth of colouring very unusual

with Murillo, and seems to unite in itself all his own excellence, with that of Raffael and Corregio.

A sleeping child with a mother watching over it by Lavinia Fontana, is another exquisite picture, greatly resembling the stile of Andrea del Sarto.

The two most celebrated pictures, however, of the Escorial Collection are in the ancient chapel, viz. the Madonna della Perla and the Madonna del pesce. These are two of Raffael's chef-d'œuvres, rivalling each other, nor have connoisseurs ventured to pronounce to which the palm belongs. I understand they were the objects of Wilkie's daily admiration, who paid the Escorial a visit the last year. The genius of him who described the Laocoon and the dying Gladiator, could alone do justice to works of art like these. "Non cuivis contingit adire Corinthum." I shall therefore discreetly be silent.

Leaving these halls, and the antient chapel which contain several hundreds of pictures of rare excellence, you ascend a noble stair-case towards the library, and from the landing place command a view of the court of Evangelists,

divided into parterres of flowers bordered by box hedges, with a beautiful marble temple in the centre, from which numerous fountains are spouting. I wish it were in my power to give you an idea of this glorious Patio.

The library contains twenty thousand volumes, a large collection of MSS., and one great curiosity an illuminated copy of the Alcoran. But I must here finish my brief sketch of the Escorial, omitting the royal Mausoleum encased with marbles and a variety of other objects. As the Guide books observe it would require a folio volume to enumerate and describe all the treasures contained in this building, of which we saw only the monastic portion, for a great part of it forms a palace.

It occupied thirty-three years in building, its architects were Juan Baptista Toledo, and Juan di Herrera. All Europe was ransacked for the artists of every description necessary, and during its building a town arose around it of workmen and artificers employed in its construction and decoration, and after all this labour and expense where stands this eighth wonder of the world, a

second Vatican for the arts? In a dreary desert twenty-eight miles from the metropolis of Spain, with a few monks only to ponder over its treasures. Had it stood at Madrid, that city would have ranked second alone to Rome as a school of the fine arts.

I shall now wind up with a few concluding remarks on the capital of Spain. I have before mentioned its high and bleak situation, and very feelingly have I been sensible of its natural consequences, in the effects of the chill and piercing blast which sweeps through every street, and yet cold as the weather has now prematurely become, every night I pass by some of the lower orders, stretched out on the pavement for a bed with nothing but a cloak wrapped round them to shelter them from its inclemency.

To a passing stranger like myself, Madrid offers few attractions. The Prado is indeed a lively scene for an hour before dusk, crowded with equipages and parties of well-dressed people, amongst whom the ladies of the capital are not to be passed by without admiration. If they