

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Sacrify of this Church, its contents, and decorations.

HAVING treated of the temple, the choir, great chapel, and reliquaries, we now proceed to what may be called the royal wardrobe of this house of God; for, its architecture, ornaments, and riches, are such as certainly render it worthy of so high an appellation. The door is at the angle formed by the east and south naves, near the stair-case, leading to a walk, which, at the height of thirty feet, goes round the whole church.

WE first enter the anti-sacrify, whose many beauties will necessarily detain us some time; an effect it has on all whom curiosity draws hither.

Anti-sacrify. IT is about twenty-five feet square, the walls, up to the cornice, of curious stucco work, and the ceiling is finely painted in grotesque. In the east wall is a fountain of black marble, on fluted columns of the same, wherein the priests wash themselves preparatively to their holy functions. The basin is six feet in length, and two and a half in breadth, all of one piece, and finely polished. Over it is a façade of several sorts of marble and jaspers, with five niches, separated by pilasters of the doric order; and under the niches, a like number of brass gilt pipes, with angels heads at their extremities, through which the water issues. Above the cornice, this fountain terminates in a relievo pedestal, on which are some globes of the finest jasper, so that the whole makes a very grand appearance. On the sides are two doors,

doors, between seven and eight feet wide, and the jams, lintels, and bases, are of the same marble. Clean napkins are always at hand for the priests, and those who officiate at the altar, to dry themselves after their washings, which, besides decency, have also a symbolical meaning.

ON the other three sides are three large doors, about sixteen feet high, with their jams and lintels of the same piece: one opens into the church, and a second, opposite to it, into the sacristy; the other part of these sides is adorned with stalls of walnut-tree, remarkable for the neatest workmanship, and which, at the same time, serve for closets to contain the surplices of the acolythists. The pavement is entirely of marble of different colors, elegantly disposed in compartments.

IN the central part of the arched ceiling, the painter has judiciously represented the heavens, opening amidst lucid clouds, and an angel descending with a pitcher, and a napkin, as it were, to furnish the priests with water for washing themselves; indicating the angelic purity required in the ministers of reconciliation, and the affection and care, with which angels attend on those respectable persons.

ON the walls, besides the stucco ornaments, are several excellent pictures, the gift of his majesty Philip IV. who selected them from the magnificent collection in his palace at Madrid, and, by this self-denial, in divesting his usual residence of such splendid ornaments, gave a fresh and singular testimony of his veneration for this sacred place. He had, with his natural discernment, observed, that some parts of the structure, particularly this and the sacristy, were bare of paintings;

paintings; and his royal mind, from a principle of devotion and munificence, so far consulted the embellishment of this stupendous fabric, that there is not a part, which does not display some noble objects, owing to his zeal and liberality. We shall describe the most remarkable of these, and also the others originally placed here.

Paintings.

ON the four walls of the anti-facrify, are nine capital pictures. Over the front you see the flight into Egypt, amidst a most fertile and delightful country. The blessed virgin is sitting, with the holy infant in her arms, looking at St. John, who is bringing it some cherries, gathered by an angel. On the other side is St. Joseph, leaning against a tree, with one arm on his staff, and smiling at the child. On a branch hangs a large piece of red cloth, serving as a canopy to the holy Mary; if it may not rather be termed, that banner, under which all lift, who fly from the world, and make Christ their refuge, their enjoyment, their opulence, their honor. Among the bushes, near them, is the ass feeding, and, at a distance, many other animals, particularly rabbits, whose burrows seem to be real earth: beyond those is a lake, or pond, with ducks, sporting on it. This piece came from the admired pencil of Titian, and is executed in a manner beautifully astonishing; but the figures are less than life. The height of the piece is five feet, and the length, twelve and a half, which is also that of the bason.

OVER two of the other doors are two pictures: one representing the adoration of the magi, and the other, a crucifixion; both by Paul Veronese, exactly answering the breadth of the doors, which is four feet and a half. The figures are of a middling size, the design very agreeable, and the painting masterly. Over the napkins,

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is the burial of Christ, by Tintoret; and over the door of the sacristy, another of our Lady, with the heavenly babe in her arms, and Mary Magdalene, with two other faints, worshipping him: this was performed by the celebrated Van Dyke.

ON the left is the famous piece of the purification of our Lady, and the presentation of her son in the temple, by Paul Veronese. The figures are of the middle size, but as near life as painting can make them. In the center is old Simeon, dressed in the ornaments and ensigns of the high-priest, moving towards the altar, and supported by two inferior priests, properly expressing the debility and slowness of his advanced age. At his feet is the virgin on her knees, holding out her infant; which is admirably painted, and, at the same time, a most beautiful resemblance of nature. Near the virgin is St. Joseph with a veil in his hand, and, behind the table, a woman with two doves in a cage; the indulgent law requiring no more of those whose substance did not enable them to shew their gratitude by more costly victims. The whole is performed with that spirit and dignity peculiar to this artist; particularly the face of the blessed virgin, which displays so much beauty that it cannot be viewed without astonishment: there is something divine in it; at least the most elegant face yet seen, falls short of it. Another figure, very much admired, is a woman covering the table with a linen cloth. She is dressed in a yellow striped gown, and holds a book in her hand. This picture is nearly five feet square, and may be considered as a complete master-piece.

FACING this, on the side of the door leading to the church, is the journey to Emmaus, by Reubens; and, near that which opens

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towards the college, is St. John preaching in the wilderness, by Paul Veronese, exactly of the same dimensions with that representing the flight into Egypt, to which it is opposite. The power of the spirit, that animated him with such zeal for the kingdom of the Messiah, and the salvation of mankind, shines in his countenance; while the multitudes, who went out to hear him, are absorbed in attention and raptures; some standing, others sitting under branchy trees, or on sunny rocks, with which the landscape is agreeably diversified. This piece is famous among the connoisseurs. On one side of it is a painting of St. Peter and St. Paul, by Joseph de Ribera. The frames are all beautifully carved, and magnificently gilt. In fine, every part of this sacred apartment declares it the work of pious and munificent monarchs.

Indulgencies. UNDER the pictures before mentioned, along the sides of the anti-facristy, are eleven tables, enumerating the indulgencies, which, at the request of their catholic majesties, several popes have been pleased to grant to this church, and some of them are very important; nor are these very tables, with their beautiful frames, any inconsiderable decoration.

The sacristy. BUT, on entering the sacristy, our admiration is suddenly transported, as it were, with the variety of divine objects. The largeness, and elegance of the place itself, with the disposition and lustre of its ornaments, fill the stranger with a pleasing amazement, and abundantly prove, that, though it is not the most splendid part of this unparalleled edifice, yet it is not the least worthy of notice.

ITS length, from the door to the front-altar, is one hundred and eight feet, and the breadth, thirty. It receives the eastern light through eighteen windows, disposed in two rows, some below, and others above the beautiful stone cornice, which is carried round the whole. In the frontispiece, on each side of the altar, are two small doors, answering to two others adjoining to the grand portal. On the right is a range of closets, all along the side facing the windows. Nothing can exceed the whiteness of the walls, which besides are every where hung with paintings, well deserving the attention of the monarchs of Spain, being the works of masters, who did honor to the age, in which they flourished: and as the subjects are taken from scripture, the enraptured soul fluctuates between amazement and devotion. In our account of them, we shall begin with the altar-piece, by Raphael Urbino, which, if there can be any competition between such masterly performances, deserves the preference.

WE ascend to the altar by two marble steps; the anti-pedum The altar. is of brass, enamelled with gold, and several scriptural histories in curious relievo. Over it is a work of admirable delicacy and magnificence, shining with a profusion of gold, and so lofty as to break through the cornice, terminating in a shield, and, if possible, surpasses the other parts of this august altar-piece. In it is a niche with a brass crucifix, beautifully gilt, and nearly as big as life; whose workmanship can never be sufficiently admired. It was for some time in the pantheon; but another, more suitable to the dimensions, and better adapted to the chapel of that royal fabric, determined his majesty to place it here, and, in honor of it, augmented the embellishments to that astonishing lustre we now behold.

Paintings.

At the feet of this crucifix is the abovementioned picture, by Raphael, representing our Lady with the holy infant, St. Isabel and St. John, with St. Joseph at a distance. The whole appears masterly, both with regard to the design and coloring; but the face and attitude of the virgin, the beauty of the holy infant and St. John, surpass imagination. Jesus is standing on a pillow, within a cradle of wicker work, which, with the cloths in it, are also a very happy imitation of nature. The figures are something less than life, the picture being only five feet high, and between four and five in breadth. As it is delicately inserted in the altar-piece, so the disposition is equally judicious, exhibiting the cradle and the cross, the beginning and period of life, with those who devote themselves to holy exercises.

In the second, which is not at all inferior to the former, is Christ washing his disciples feet, on the evening of the last supper. Besides its magnitude, extending from the closets, in the middle of the wall, up to the cornice, Tintoret may be said to have surpassed himself in the beauty and propriety of invention, the delicacy and spirit of the execution, the justness of the tints, and the disposition of the perspective. It is therefore no wonder, the spectator can hardly persuade himself, that it is only representation; the room appearing as if he might enter it, and walk on its marble pavement, consisting of different colors; and the gradual diminution of the quadrangular pieces makes the painting appear to be of a very great extent. The disciples are every where preparing for the ceremony; but, at the same time, astonished at this instance of unparalleled humility in their Master, who, with a countenance full of sollicitude and benignity, is kneeling at Peter's feet, looking at him, and, as it were, saying, *SI NON LAVERO TE, NON HABEBIS PARTEM MECUM*; "If I wash thee

“ thee not, thou hast no part with me.” The incomparable ease and airiness of the whole, damp the spirit of emulation in the most confident and expert artists. The table in the middle, with the seats, and a dog on the floor, are rather nature and life than painting. In short, all the pieces, that have, at different times, been placed near this, manifestly appear to be mere paintings, and this always obtained the palm for resembling nature, and reality.

THIS painting, and another of the last supper, were done by Tintoret for St. Mark's church at Venice, and was privately conveyed from thence, and its place supplied by a copy, but of such admirable imitation, that he must be a very great connoisseur who can point out the least difference in any single part. It is seven feet and a half in height, nineteen in length, and the figures as big as life.

ON the right hand of this is a piece by Andrea del Sarto, representing our Lady, sitting on a flight of steps, holding her child with one hand, and her mantle with the other. The child, who is standing naked, looks steadfastly at an angel, clothed in a green robe, which is reckoned an inimitable piece of drapery. He holds an open book in his hand, and views the child with an affection which heightens the beauty of his countenance; whilst the divine infant stretches out his arms, as if desirous of embracing the celestial inhabitant. On the same side is a figure, very probably St. John the evangelist, though without his distinguishing attribute, unless the open book in the hand of the angel, alludes to that mentioned in the mysterious visions of his Apocalypse, which he saw, opened by the Lamb. On the left of the steps is a small female figure, with a child in her arms,

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arms, and the perspective is a landscape most beautifully diversified. This and the altar-piece, by Raphael, together with that of the lavatory, above mentioned, the marriage of Cana, placed in the chapter-house, and others of equal value, were purchased at the sale of Charles I. king of England.

THAT unhappy prince, whose misfortunes and zeal brought upon himself those terrible disasters, which attended the latter years of his life, had formed the noble design of adorning his palace, and enriching his kingdom, with the most valuable curiosities that could be collected in foreign countries. Accordingly he sent into different parts, at a great expence, persons of a polite address and delicate taste, in order to purchase the most extraordinary productions of art, particularly paintings; by which means many pieces, which had been the admiration of all nations, and immortalized the names of their respective authors, were imported into England: but, on the horrid death of that monarch, the care and labor of many years sunk in one day; the usurper, who had seized the supreme power, being destitute of the least taste for arts, and, execrating every remain of majesty, made a public sale of his murdered sovereign's furniture and curiosities. All the princes of Europe sent their agents; but, by the address, or superior offers of don Lewis Mendez de Haro, count-duke of San Lucar, then ambassador at London, the most valuable pieces were procured for Spain, especially the above paintings. And the prince, who then filled the Spanish throne, an excellent judge of pictures, immediately conceived the design of adorning this superb palace with such noble productions of art.

BEYOND this masterly work of Andrea del Sarto, is the scourging of Christ at a pillar, extremely well done by Luqueto, six feet and a half high, and five broad. The last, on this side, is an ECCE HOMO, by Paul Veronese, of the same size. This was also a present of the same illustrious person to his majesty.

ON the left side of the lavatory is our Lady, as big as life, with a countenance of such majestic beauty as impresses the beholder with awe and veneration. In her arms is the divine infant, a figure of such inimitable beauty, that, if a child of the like age be placed near it, the sprightliness of the looks, and the plumpness of the flesh, will hardly appear to greater advantage. This has also a perspective of a delightful country. In a word, it came from the pencil of Titian, and the most diffuse encomium can amount to nothing more.

ANOTHER piece, which cannot be sufficiently valued, is our Lady visiting Elizabeth; an original of Raphael. The scene is a most charming country, or valley, between two hills, whither Elizabeth came to meet the virgin, and the expression of joy, in their countenances, is inexpressible. The virgin has all the modesty and beauty becoming the blooming age of fourteen or fifteen, when she conceived a Saviour by the over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost; and her garment indicates her happy pregnancy. Elizabeth, though in a more advanced age, and after a long state of barrenness, has also the same marks of the divine favor, taking away her reproach: the drapery is extremely beautiful; and they are both in a travelling dress, their mantles are fastened at the shoulder, and come across the breasts. This piece is never beheld without pleasure. At a distance is seen the river Jordan, and St. John baptizing the Messiah; but the figures

figures are very small, in proportion to the perspective. On one of the hills is part of a town, and the whole judiciously diversified, containing a great number of pleasing objects, without any crowd or confusion. The height of this piece is six feet and a half, and the breadth five.

NEAR it is Christ praying in the garden, by Titian. The night is represented as extremely dark, for, though it was then full moon, the night, as it were, rejected that light, and wrapped itself up in clouds, in detestation of the horrid deed, then so near its perpetration. The light, diffused from the angel, and darting on Christ, though at a great distance, diffuses a lustre, which, amidst the awful gloom, gives a distinct view of the several figures.

THE apostles lie confusedly asleep, but are easily distinguished. Judas is nearest, and known by his lanthorn, which he carries as a guide, the light of which, and its reverberation in the brook Cedron, is very much admired. It is indeed, in all respects, an inestimable piece, and its dimensions are the same with those of the former. These seven pictures fill the whole intermediate space, between the closets and the cornice. Over it are the following; in the accounts of which we shall use the same method, beginning with that in the center.

OVER the above mentioned picture of the lavatory, facing a window on the other side, is a celebrated Mary Magdalene, by Titian; and possibly few pictures have been so frequently copied. On the right side is a St. Margaret, restoring life to a boy, whom an old man, assisted by other two persons, is supporting. Their countenances

countenances express the most earnest sollicitude, enlivened by a gleam of hope. The figures are of the natural size, but only at half length. From the style, and delicacy of the piece, it has been attributed to Michael Angelo Ameriggi Caravaggio. The height of it is four feet and a quarter, and the breadth, three and a half, being the dimensions of that representing Mary Magdalene. This, with many other exquisite pieces, were presented to his majesty by don Juan Alonso Henriquez de Caprera, admiral of Castile, at his return from an expedition to Italy.

THE next is another by Titian, representing the pharisees, crowding about Christ with their insidious question, whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar. The figures are all masterly, but the head and face of Christ is accounted the best representation of that divine person that ever human art exhibited. The next is an assumption of our blessed Lady, whom hosts of exulting angels attend in her ascension to heaven, whilst the apostles standing round her sepulchre, look up to her with joy and amazement. This is a very celebrated piece, and was performed by Annibal Caracci, though the tints and other particulars resemble those of Tintoret. The last, on this side, is the sacrifice of Abraham, by Paul Veronese.

ON the left side of the above mentioned Mary Magdalene, is Christ bearing his cross, by father Sebastian del Piombo. Our Saviour is in a light purple robe; the head is particularly admired, while the countenance, and the whole figure, express the painful weight of the cross, which he bore for our salvation. Close by his side is an executioner, and behind him another, whose rancorous looks shew the malice of their hearts. This is the original, of which there are

many copies, and, in this palace, two by the artist himself. Next to this is a picture of St. Joseph, with the divine infant in his arms; one of the finest pieces of Guido Rheni.

JOINING to this, is Christ in the garden, just risen from his sepulchre, while Mary Magdalene, the beauty of whose face cannot be exceeded, is kneeling at his feet, and the country, as unveiled by the dawn, fills the beholder's mind with a thousand soft and pleasing ideas. This, together with the flight into Egypt, the purification of our Lady in the anti-sacrifice, and others equally valuable, his majesty was graciously pleased to accept from the duke of Medina de las Torres, who had collected them in Italy, merely with a view of disposing of them in a manner which does him so much honor. The last represents our Lady, with the infant Jesus at her breast, by Guido Rheni. All these nine pictures, which form a row over the cornice, are of the same dimensions, five feet in height, and three feet three quarters in breadth.

OVER one of the two doors of the principal front, on each side of the altar, are our Lady, St. Catharine, and St. George, in one piece; but the connoisseurs are divided about the artist; some affirming him to be Giorgione da Castel Franco, while others observe several touches in it, which are the characteristics of Titian. Over the other door is a most admirable piece of Pilate shewing Christ to the people; universally allowed to have been done by Titian. The figures in both are nearly of the natural proportions.

IN the lower front, over the doors, on each side of the principal entrance, are two pictures, answering to those above mentioned; one

is our Lady, sitting in a delightful country, with the divine infant in her lap, and St. Catharine, on her knees, fondling it, whilst St. John the baptist, also a child, is bringing fruit to the virgin, who stretches out her hand to receive it. This is also by Titian, and highly esteemed. The other is by Paris Bordon, and represents our Lady sitting on a stool, with the child standing on her knees; on her right hand is St. Anthony of Padua, and on her left, St. Roche. The figures are less than life, but finely executed. These four pictures are also of equal dimensions, a little above five feet in length, and three and a quarter in height.

OVER the principal door is a capital piece of inestimable value; the subject is the woman taken in adultery. The figures are something bigger than life; that of our Saviour is of a most benign aspect, but the attitude awful. The woman's hands are tied, a crimson blush covers her face, which, with her eyes cast on the ground, strongly expresses shame for the crime she had committed; whilst the spirited looks of her accusers evidently shew, that they are declaiming against the turpitude of it, in the most bitter invectives. Indeed, every particular is executed in the most natural manner; and even the drapery is highly admired. The tints strongly resemble those of Titian, whom the artist, the celebrated Van Dyke, particularly chose for his model.

ON the side of the windows, facing the closets, are ten pictures below the cornice, which well deserve to be placed near the former, both with regard to the subject and value.

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THE first, beginning from the upper part, is a portrait of St. Margaret, above half length, attended by her dragon; this is a celebrated piece by Titian, and hangs against the first pillar between the windows. The second is also by the same artist, and represents St. Sebastian, as big as life, standing in a niche entirely naked, his hands bound behind him, and his body pierced with two arrows; whilst, at the same time, he looks up to heaven, with inexpressible desire and joy. He stands in a beautiful attitude, and the coloring is so masterly, that he seems alive. The third represents Christ, the Lord of the living and dead, descended into the limbus patrum, in order to deliver the souls of the holy fathers, and other eminent persons of his elect. This is a noble production of father Piombo's pencil, which he solemnly consecrated to piety. It is of the same size with that of St. Sebastian, which is eight feet high, and four broad. The fourth is a piece by Tintoret, representing a penitent Mary Magdalene, divested of all her ornaments and jewels, and seeking, in prayer and devout austerities, those graces which alone could qualify her to be a bride of the spotless Lamb.

THE fifth, which is placed on one side of the middle window, represents St. Jerom, in a state of penitence, by Van Dyke; and as an emblem of the strength, loftiness, and sanctity of his works, an angel holds his pen. Its height, as likewise that of Mary Magdalene in her humiliation, is near six feet, and the breadth five. On the sixth pillar is a piece of the crucifixion, the sight of which fills the reflective mind with an abhorrence of sin, as the primary cause of that event, which the very angels beheld with astonishment and horror. The seventh is St. John, preaching in the wilderness, and the figures as big as life. These two are by Titian, and consequently unexceptionable.

unexceptionable. The eighth and last picture is Mary Magdalene, at the time of her repentance, throwing aside her gay dress, and ornaments, those badges of pride, and snares of prostituted beauty. This is also by Titian; the height is four feet and a half, and the breadth, four: that of St. Margaret is of the same dimensions.

BENEATH these two, thus answering to each other, on the first and last pillar, are two splendid pier-glasses, and on each side of the middle window, under St. Jerom and the former Magdalene, are two pictures very nearly of the same size, answering to the pier-glasses. The first represents the nativity, and was done by Andrea Chavon; the other, our blessed Lady, the holy infant, and St. John: it is a most admirable piece, and from the pencil of Raphael Urbino. The height of both is three feet and a quarter, and the breadth, two and a half.

THESE, with all the others before mentioned, are, in regard to their great value, in frames of the finest sculpture and gilding, as are also the pier-glasses; and consequently pieces of furniture suitable to this astonishing edifice; and, at the same time, shew the judgment, devotion, and magnificence of the great monarch, who assigned them this station, and enriched them with such splendid embellishments. These, with the other decorations and curiosities of this splendid apartment, were saved from the fire, by the activity and courage of the religious, when the flames were on the point of breaking into the sacristy.

THE upper part of the ceiling, above the cornice, is painted in the same kind of grotesque as the anti-sacristy; the divisions, which
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separate the compartments, appear as if covered with gems of different colors; and the relievo of the festoons is a most admirable deception of the sight. The compartments are filled with figures of men, animals, and flowers; so that the novelty of the work pleases equally with the execution.

THE pavement is of marble of several colors, disposed with so much taste and delicacy, that perhaps it would be no exaggeration to say, that all Europe does not afford its equal. I shall now proceed to the furniture of this sacred place; but must previously declare, that the following account is only cursory with regard to the many curious objects, with which it is filled.

Closets.

ON the right hand of the entrance are closets, which, as we have already observed, fill the whole side, and resemble the stalls in the choir. They are of the finest wood, as caova, acana, ebony, cedar, box, and walnut; nor can the workmanship be exceeded. These form seven divisions, separated by elegant pilasters, and in each are four chests. The floor is of cedar, because of its remarkable duration, and breeding no moths. Each of the above chests has four drawers, the fronts of which, together with their gildings, mouldings, and marquetry work, exhibit a very beautiful appearance.

NEAR these is a spacious table, whereon are laid the vestments, and which are changed every festival. With regard to the habits used on common days, the number of them is so great, that from economy, they are changed every day. Above this table is another range of closets, the doors of which represent a stately façade of fluted

fluted corinthian pillars, with architraves and modillions. These also are of the finest wood, and the architecture of them imports an air of grandeur to the whole place, being carried up so high as just to leave room for the paintings, which are placed between them and the cornice. Here are kept the girdles worn by the priests, which are of prodigious richness, and in such number as to fill all the upper drawers. In the larger, below, are kept their robes, hoods, pulpit and desk cloths, albes, and other sacred ornaments of great value, of which the quantity is also astonishing. In the center is a looking-glass, with a chrystal frame, and of a workmanship which cannot be sufficiently admired. It was a gift of the queen regent, Mary Anne of Austria, for the use of the priests, and those who wait on the altar, when they put on their sacred robes, that, even in their external appearance, every particular might be decent and regular.

ON the east side, between the first row, consisting of nine windows, are four repositories of the same beautiful materials, but different in figure; representing, from the table downwards to the floor, nests of drawers, and, above it, buffets elegantly decorated. In these are laid up the chalices, corporals, amices, with other sacred vestments and utensils, all numbered and placed separately, the very missals not excepted; these are all changed every festival.

WE now come to the splendid contents of many other closets and repositories in this sacred wardrobe, the account of which shall be divided according to the colors used by the church in the celebration of her festivals, as expressive of their subject; as white, red, green, purple, violet, and black, with a mixture of yellow in each. Thus we shall see the analogy between the ornaments of this church
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and the colors; but I fear, that, with all my intended brevity, I shall not escape the imputation of tediousness.

Ornaments. THE great altar, and the other two in the reliquaries, have no less than fifty changes of vestments and furniture for each; among these may also be reckoned, twenty-seven crucifix-cases of fine silk. The white ornaments, embellished with yellow, which are appropriated to the festivals of our Lord, his magnanimous confessors, and to such female saints, who were neither virgins nor martyrs, consist of twelve sets of vestments, four of gold and silver tissue fringed; and one with the history of our Saviour's life, so curiously embroidered, that the needle and silk rival the pencil and colors. It exhibits near a hundred passages; so that the prodigious richness of this vestment is less admired than the delicacy of the work. Another is in relieve with filligreen work, and an infinite number of pearls; it was the first piece of this kind of embroidery, nor can any thing be imagined more splendid. This is used on the festivals of St. John the baptist, and St. Jerom. The other two of these four are also very magnificent: the same may be said of the embroidery and fringes of the remaining eight, besides the extraordinary color, and fineness of the linen, silk and brocades.

White. OF those which are absolutely white, without mixture of any other color, there are eight assortments; besides one of cloth, with flounces of enamelled gold, and the several passages of the infancy of Christ embroidered on it. These are not inferior to the former, nor to be paralleled in any church, or palace, in the whole world. There is also another of cloth of gold and silver; others of the finest white damask, with flowers, fringes, laces, and embroidery. In these the priests officiate on the festivals of the infancy of our Lord, who was
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all purity, and the plenitude of heavenly riches: likewise on the festivals of his mother, and her immaculate ladies and virgins, who follow the Lamb among the lillies; also on the festivals of the angels, and on the consecration and dedication of this and other churches.

OF the second, which is the red, there are likewise twelve assortments Red. of amazing beauty and richness; one is of crimson velvet, embroidered and fringed with gold and silver, and adorned with a multitude of gems, especially turquoises, of inestimable value. This is indeed a most splendid vestment, and seldom seen, being used only on Whit Sunday. Another, which, if viewed separately, would be thought above comparison, is of crimson and gold brocade, fringed with gold and silver, intermixed with knots, and spangles of the same metals, finely enamelled. This is dedicated to the commemoration of St. Laurence. The others, which are used on the festivals of the most eminent apostles and martyrs, are very different, some being of gold and crimson brocade, some of crimson velvet, plain, or embroidered; others, of damask of the same color; all of different fringes, some brocades, others enriched with curious needle-work. And as many holy virgins and martyrs mixed their blood with their purity, so there are two other vestments, where this double excellency is denoted by the blending of those respective colors.

THE green is appropriated to Sundays, and those festivals, which Green. tend to confirm and animate our hopes of eternal rest and felicity, and of celebrating the perpetual festival in heaven, typified by the sabbatical relaxation from worldly affairs. The vestments of this color are five in number; one, which is the principal, consists of a most curious brocade, with gold flowers, and scriptural histories

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represented in embroidery, equal to any of the preceding; but the chapes and anti-pendiums of this color are not equal in number to the others. This habit is used at the finging of many new masses on Sundays. Among the rest, two are of velvet, flounced with cloth, of gold, and the remainder, either of damask or sattin of the same color.

Purple.

OF the purple, or violet color, are six assortments; these the church uses in Advent, Lent, the ember-weeks, and vigils. One of these is of cloth of gold, flowered with purple velvet, and flounced with the same velvet and gold fringes; this is peculiar to Palm-Sunday. Some are of purple velvet, flounced with the same, or with gold and silver embroidery; others of different stuffs and flounces.

Black.

OF black, the very opposite to light, the emblem of life, there are eight or nine assortments; these, it will naturally be concluded, are for the mortuary offices, as obits, dirges, burials, anniversaries of the dead, and the mournful solemnity of Good Friday. The principal is of cloth of gold, with large borders of black velvet, the flounces are also of gold, embroidered with above seventy passages of the patience and devotion of Job, that shining example of faith in the resurrection of the dead; this is used on All-souls day, and the anniversary obsequies of Charles V. his illustrious son Philip II. founder of this astonishing edifice, and his royal successors. Another is of silver tissue, bordered with black velvet; the flounces are much admired, being curiously decorated with silver; this is assigned for the queens who lie in the pantheon; and the others of gold, or silver and black, all very rich, are used on the anniversaries of the queens, and royal persons of the Austrian line. Another of black velvet, with crimson flowers,

flowers, fringed, is used at the burials of the monks. Thus the high altar, and the two in the reliquaries, have no less than fifty-two assortments.

BESIDES these, here are forty other altars, all with ornaments of the same colors, with the three before mentioned; and the assortments are twenty-four in number, some of brocade, some of velvet, some of damask, some of tabby, and the meanest of fatten. The casullas, appertaining to these altars, are suitable to the other ornaments, which amount to above twelve hundred: the brocade hoods, and other silks and stuffs of the several colors, amount to twelve hundred and thirteen; to which must be added the linen vestments and furniture, which exceed in number the brocades, silks, and stuffs, and are equally beautiful and costly. Some are of holland, not inferior in fineness to the celebrated byffus of Egypt; others, of lawn, muslin, callico, and cambrick. Here is also an amazing number of corporals, chalices, cloths, napkins for covering the host, and large palls, curiously embroidered with gold, silver, and silk; besides many other sorts of silk habits used in the celebration of the holy offices, all richly embroidered, laced, and fringed; so that whatever any stranger may have seen in any other part of the world, when he comes to view the immense treasure here consecrated to heaven, he will, unless blinded by the most stupid prejudice, acknowledge, that nothing equals the magnificence of this sacred repository.

HERE I must not omit a singular instance of the attention of his majesty Philip IV. in order to support the splendor of divine worship; namely his having settled a yearly revenue of six hundred ducats, for keeping

keeping this sacred furniture in proper order; nor can this money be diverted from such uses on any account or exigency whatever.

It is only one thing that the founder can be said to have failed in, the complete richness and magnificence of this place, and that regards the silver and gold utensils, which are too few in number. But this is the effect of prudent design, and a thorough knowledge of human nature. He well knew, that such objects are strong temptations, and are frequently known to change their place; so that, instead of being employed in the service of the Almighty, they are embezzled, melted down, and lavished away, to gratify the wicked passions of sensual men. On this account, he left only as many utensils of this kind as were necessary; but these are entirely answerable to the richness and grandeur of the other particulars, as will appear from the following account of them.

Utensils of
gold.

A gold chalice, enamelled and finely wrought; this is used only by the prior, and on the chief festivals: a tabernacle, which he carries in his hands on Corpus Christi day, and other solemn processions. Two corporal-caskets, different in form, but both extremely rich, and remarkable for the number of fine emeralds. A breast-plate of gold, which the prior wears on solemn days, enriched with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and pearls of immense value: one of the pearls being as large as a pigeon's egg, and cost forty thousand ducats, but is thought to be worth fifty thousand. These are the only gold utensils in the sacristy.

Silver
utensils.

WITH regard to those of silver, their number is sufficient, though not superfluous. The chalices amount to eighty, which are all of elegant

elegant workmanship, and of a proper size. These likewise increase every year, the successors of the founder giving to this chapel the three chalices, in which they offer, on the feast of the Epiphany, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

HERE are also forty plain silver candlesticks; but are used only Candlesticks. three days in a year, viz. on the processions of Corpus Christi, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday, when they are carried by forty children of the seminaries. Besides these, there are four of silver gilt, appropriated to the festivals, in which the prior and vicar officiate; four of ebony, two embellished with gilt brass, and the others with silver, for the anniversary of the kings and queens.

SIX silver lamps are suspended in the naves of the church, besides Lamps. that before the great altar, which is very much admired for its fashion and workmanship.

FOR the service of the forty altars, there are two sets of branches and crosses, one of silver, and the other of gilt brass. The high altar, and the two in the reliquaries, have indeed, besides three large gilt crucifixes of exquisite workmanship, and six candlesticks of equal magnitude, likewise four of silver gilt, and finely wrought, which are placed on the two reliquary altars on solemn days. Branches and crosses.

THE holy tables, near the altar, have four large silver cisterns, Silver cisterns and other utensils. several ewers, pails, and stands, of the same metal, belonging to them. The cisterns and pails are adorned with enamelled figures of insects, very naturally represented; these are appropriated to the anniversaries of kings. They have also ebony candlesticks and crosses, decorated

DESCRIPTION OF

decorated with brass, enamelled with gold, and even the pails and stands are of the same.

THE assortment for the anniversary of queens consists of a like number; but the ebony is decorated with silver.

THUS rich and various are the vestments and utensils, deposited in this wardrobe of the house of God, for maintaining the dignity of his worship. And, indeed, the collection of such a number of curious pieces seem the labour of an age; but it should be remembered, that the wise founder of this superb edifice was assisted in this arduous task by ministers of unwearied industry, the most comprehensive judgment, and whose greatest delight was to exert their utmost abilities to forward all his designs and injunctions. It is therefore no wonder, that, by their services and his own taste and liberality, a few years were sufficient to complete what would otherwise have required a whole century.

HAVING gone through the first of three parts, into which we have divided the whole, viz. the principal entrance, the portico, and church; let us now proceed to the other.

C H A P.

CHAP. X.

Of the second Part of the Edifice, with the lesser Cloisters of the Convent, and their remarkable Particulars.

ON the outside, as shewn in the plate, which should be often consulted, are five cloisters, making the second of the three parts, into which we have divided the general plan of this edifice. The first, the habitation of the Most High, the beginning and end of our thoughts and views, we have already cursorily described; and shall now proceed to the second, in which we shall endeavour to shew the conformity of its magnificence and grandeur to what we have before related; and that the house of God, the most splendid, as becomes the ineffable majesty of him who dwells therein, is the center of a suitable circumference; I mean the convent, composed of five beautiful cloisters, adorned with paintings and sculptures of remarkable elegance, which cannot be surpassed.

THE principal entrance communicates with that of the church, by the portico of the right hand, as we mentioned before, and in which are all the doors of this vast edifice.

AFTER passing through a lobby under the belfrey, you enter a large room, which serves as a kind of anti-chamber, above sixty feet in length, and thirty-five in breadth, embellished with fillets, pilasters, and an elegant cornice all round it. Where the ceiling begins to form a curve, the windows are shaped like a crescent; and on the floor are a great number of walnut chairs for strangers to rest themselves, while

while notice of their arrival is carried to those whom they come to visit.

Altar and paintings.

THIS anti-chamber, or parlour, is ornamented with nineteen pieces of painting, most of which are very valuable. On the side, facing the door, is an altar in a chapel, answering exactly in height and breadth to the door, and the altar-piece, both with regard to size and beauty, would alone be a sufficient decoration to this room: the subject is Abraham receiving the three angels at the door of his tent. The author of this admirable piece was Juan Fernandez Mudo, a native of Spain. The patriarch is in a worshipping attitude, under a stately tree, whose spreading branches extend themselves over this illustrious company. Nothing can be imagined more beautiful than the countenance of the angels, whose complacency is blended with an air of dignity suitable to beings of so exalted a nature. Sarah, who conceals herself, retains a loveliness in her features, amidst the injuries of age, and, conformably to the scripture, is smiling. Every figure is a document, how strangers are to be treated, and what dispositions they should bring with them to invite a courteous reception.

ON each side of the altar are two capital pieces, one of Abraham's sacrifice, and the other of the flight into Egypt. The latter is the work of the great Antonio Acorezo, who has not only shewn the delicacy of his pencil, but likewise a most pleasing fertility of imagination. Above the altar is a frontispiece, in the middle of which is the image of our Saviour, and, on the sides, two high-priests.

EVERY side of this anti-chamber is hung with pictures, all adapted to inspire devotion. The first, on the right hand of the altar, is
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the crowning Jesus with thorns; an excellent copy from Titian. Answering to this, over the door, on the other side, is a dead Christ, with our Lady and Nicodemus, viewing him with such looks as force the beholder to sympathize with their sorrow. This is an original of Masaccio, of whom Michael Angelo was a disciple. Here is also another original of Mudo's, Christ appearing to his mother after his resurrection, and though this piece be not finished, it plainly shews the skilful hand from which it came. Opposite to this, over a large door, leading to the principal cloister, is an excellent piece, representing the baptism of Christ in the river Jordan, by Jacoba de Parma. Facing this, over a small door, on the other side, is the story of the devil, attacking St. Anthony with various temptations, but baffled in all. It is a curious original of Geronimo Bosco. On the wall, facing the altar, and on each side of the door, are two other pictures; one of the blessed virgin with the divine infant in her arms, and several women presenting their children to him; the other is a very elegant piece, and an original of Carlo Veronese, representing Mary Magdalene and Martha at Christ's feet, lamenting the death of their brother Lazarus. All these pictures are very nearly of the same size. Over the cornice, round the anti-chamber, are many others, smaller indeed, but not unworthy of the place; so that a stranger, from the decorations of this anti-chamber, forms some idea of the more retired parts of the cloister; he naturally says within himself, if the entrance be thus curiously adorned, what must the more sacred and domestic places be? Besides the great door, this anti-chamber has three others; one of which is eight feet broad, and sixteen high, with jambs and lintels, all of one piece, and opens into the principal cloister. The two others, which are much smaller, lead to the four lesser cloisters, called, DE LA PORTERIA, joining to the refectory for strangers, the

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infirmary,

infirmary, and burial place, and are the first to be considered, reserving the great cloister for the conclusion.

The lesser cloisters.

THE length of each side of all these cloisters is a hundred feet, and the breadth of the walk, from the pillars to the inward wall, thirteen and a half; the squares are exceeding beautiful and grand, consisting of three rows of arches, in a vertical direction, and terminating in a cornice of a frieze relieve, at the height of forty-five feet. Each side has seven arches and nine columns, which, with their bases and chapters, are nine feet high, and the arches, fifteen; both conformable to the just rules of architecture, gradually diminishing in the second and third rank. The pillars are square, ornamented with fillets half a foot broad, with a proportional relieve, and the arches adorned with very elegant workmanship. The fillets of the pedestals are connected and carried quite round; so that the building, though plain and simple, has the appearance of great art and strength, and is a proof, that the grandeur of architecture does not consist in this, or that order, either the doric, ionic, or any other, but in the proportion of the whole, and the propriety and arrangement of the several parts.

OVER the three ranges of arches, is a sloping roof for the better admission of light, having two rows of windows, amounting to twenty-eight in each cloister, and all of a handsome construction; so that the most remote cells, and the highest garrets are not without a sufficient light.

Walks.

THESE cloisters, in the ground-floor, which is fifteen feet high, make a very grand appearance; the several walks and passages, crossing each

each other every way, the length of two hundred and thirty-eight feet, form a labyrinth, which, for its architecture, may be compared to that of Dedalus, the most celebrated ever seen either by the antients or moderns, and was, according to Pliny, the model of that of Egypt, built entirely of marble; that of Heliopolis, or the city of the sun, and that of Italy, built by Porfenna, king of Hetruria.

At the angles, and on the walls, are a great number of paintings, all tending to awaken devotion in the beholder; and that their impression might be the stronger, they were executed by the most excellent hands. Thus, every where, a stranger meets with some attracting object of equal entertainment and utility.

In each of these cloisters, and at the angles, as the most convenient places for passing from one to the other, is a stair-case, and, at every ten steps, a landing place. They are all very light, an article which in these parts of a building is particularly to be consulted. The arches are of brick and fine plaister work, with chapters and statues placed on them. In the higher arches, the roofs are of wood, with corbels at the angles, and the inward wall diversified with pilasters. Since the fire, vaults have been made, for its greater security.

The arches, on the ground-floor, are without rails, but flowered with a beautiful stone, and in each is a fountain of black marble, within which, on a pedestal in the center of a cistern, twenty-nine feet in circumference, adorned with pilasters, compartments, and mouldings, is a curious balustrade, and, within it, a bason of the same marble, with a small pedestal, and a globe, whence four little angels pour water into the bason; while four others forward it to the

Fountains in
the court.

DESCRIPTION OF

font, which is of gilt brass; an ornament at once pleasing to the sight by its elegancy, and to the ear by the gentle murmurs of the water, which, at the same time, mitigates the excessive sultriness of the summer's heat.

The refectory tower.

IN the midst of these four cloisters, at the intervals, which divide them transversely from east to west, and from north to south, each thirty-eight feet in length, is a square cymborium, or tower, that very gracefully rises above the whole fabric, till the cupola terminates in an octangular slate pyramid, crowned with the globe and cross: its breadth is the same with that of the intervals, but its height, up to the cornice, is eighty-five feet; wherein is a series of windows, being those of the passages from one cloister to another, that meet here in six rows on each side, and amount to eighty with those of the cupola, which, as admitting the greatest light, is called the lantern. These towers, which are a very noble ornament, have twelve doors, three on each side, six feet and a half in breadth, and thirteen in height, all of walnut-tree finely wrought, with the jambs and lintels of one piece.

Fountain.

IN the middle is a fountain of red jasper, inlaid with white marble, consisting of two basons, placed on square pedestals, and terminating in a globe, whence the water is ejected into the basons through eight grotesque heads of gilt brass.

Refectory.

HERE we enter the refectory by the three doors, in the south wall. It is a very light, neat, and chearful room, and, though one hundred and twenty feet in length, and thirty-five in breadth, is rather too small for the religious; for their original number has since been augmented:

augmented: but the refectory would not admit of any enlargement. It is indeed something too low; but this was a point of necessity: for had it been raised above twenty-eight feet, the height would have been unequal, and there is no need of observing, how unfitly it would then have appeared. The ceiling is full of elegant decorations, and to each department is a stone desk of curious workmanship, at which, during the repasts, a monk reads, that, while the body is receiving its nourishment, the soul likewise may acquire that strength and delight derived from an attention to the holy scriptures. Besides the three doors at the entrance, it has two others of the same bigness, and, in the south wall, five stately windows, which render it remarkably light; and thus dispose the mind to that sober cheerfulness, so becoming, when we are enjoying the gifts of divine liberality.

BETWEEN the two lower windows, is that last supper of Titian's, so highly and so justly praised by painters: for certainly, nothing hitherto seen, surpasses, I had almost said, equals, the relieve and vivacity of the figures, which are something bigger than life. The countenance of Christ displays a beauty more than human, blended with a proper seriousness. The apostles seem alive, and talking on a subject which greatly affects them. The perspective, beyond the chamber, is equally admirable. In short, if ever there was a prodigy of art, this is one; and, accordingly, his majesty Charles II. ordered a most superb frame to be made for it.

EVERY particular, relating to the œconomy of the tables, the cleanliness and furniture of the whole refectory, and of the offices belonging to it, is a very pleasing sight, and perfectly suitable to the neatness

DESCRIPTION OF

neatness and elegance, which peculiarly distinguish the disciples of the illustrious St. Jerom.

FACING the refectory, to the north, is another room of the like construction, which, in the proper signification of the word, may be called the vestry, being the place where the vestments and habits of the monks are deposited. It is adorned with some devotional paintings; and the windows answer to those of the refectory, though, by facing the north, they give the less light. Near these apartments is the lantern tower, containing the kitchen at one of its extremities; where, among other conveniencies, are several fountains and cisterns, so that neither cold or hot water is ever wanting. At the other, is a scullery, which is viewed with pleasure by all who love domestic order and cleanliness.

BUT, let us return to the more important points of a religious building. In the first cloister, joining to the portico, are the refectory for strangers, the steward's office, with the several rooms and apartments, requisite in such places, and which, though very numerous, are not sufficient to entertain the great concourse of strangers.

Infirmary and
laboratory.

IN the other side, which joins the south and west towers, are the infirmary and the refectory of the convent, with part of the laboratory, which is one of the most convenient and best furnished in all Spain. It consists of above twenty different rooms, exclusive of cellars and garrets; together with an entire cloister, being that seen beyond the square of the house: but it would require a volume to describe the fountains, alembics, retorts, furnaces, and the processes performed

performed with them. I shall therefore only observe, that, if they, to whom such details would be acceptable, were to come hither and see the particulars themselves, their curiosity would be abundantly satisfied.

IN the other, nearer to the church, and called LA PORTERIA, that is, the porter's lodge, is the embroidering room, where the church-ornaments are made, and, over it, the shaving room, with other apartments and offices.

IN that cloister, which more directly faces the south, and is commonly known by the appellation of LOS DIFUNTOS, or, the burying place of the religious, though some lie in that of LA PORTERIA, is a chapel, which formerly served for the church, till the completion of the present magnificent structure.

THE area of this chapel is one hundred and five feet in length, and thirty-five in breadth, forming three compartments, or different chapels, and, instead of a cornice, is surrounded by a quadrangular fillet. The snow hardly exceeds the whiteness of the walls, which, as an additional beauty, is also glossy; the pavement is composed of black and white marble. It has two doors, one leading into the cloister DE LOS DIFUNTOS, and the other to the principal cloister; and being opposite to each other, divide the great chapel from the body of the church. The choir is in the lowest part, decorated with two rows of stalls on each side, of most beautiful wood and curious workmanship; and in the front are others, still more superb; but that of the prior's stall would become majesty itself, though the artist is censured for placing it in the middle window, as the
 addition

addition of its light, would not have been any fault, there being only five other large windows; and the stall, if placed in the choir, would have been a fine addition to its grandeur: the chapel notwithstanding is far from wanting light, most of the windows facing the south.

Altars.

It has three altars, which, before the conflagration, and in the reign of Philip IV. were beautified to very great advantage. The ascent to the high altar consists of six jasper steps, with a balustrade of the same, at the head of which is a spacious area, where the altar is placed, with stately seats for the clergy on each side. The altar makes a very grand appearance, being of grey marble, and the antependium of jasper, bordered with brass curiously enamelled. The collateral altars are exactly proportional to this magnificent piece. They are both surrounded with jasper pilasters, curiously inlaid with variegated reliefs of marble: its crown and frontispiece are of the same stone, and executed with all the correctness and delicacy that can be derived from art. The two collateral are on the side joining to the wall at the lowest step; and the five paintings over them are entirely worthy the place, being all productions of the rich fancy and inimitable pencil of the immortal Titian.

Paintings.

OVER the great altar is the martyrdom of the invincible Spanish martyr St. Laurence, the whole so admirable a resemblance of nature, and, at the same time, so judicious in the design, that we seem present at that horrid scene of pagan cruelty. This is a very large piece, and the whole light of it seems to emanate from some torches, fixed on the pedestal before an idol, and the flames rising from under the gridiron; for this transaction being executed in the night, the ingenious artist regarded that circumstance, and has thus given a remarkable

remarkable instance both of his skill and judgment. The saint, amidst such cruel torments, with a countenance of joy, extends his arms to receive a laurel wreath, brought him by angels descending from on high. The nearest figures of his tormentors, some of whom are turning him on the gridiron, others stirring and blowing the fire, are something larger than life; and, though very numerous, there is not one of which a considerable part is not seen. The piece, over the collateral altar, on the gospel side, is the adoration of the eastern magi; a most beautiful piece, in which the tints, figures, and drapery, admit of no improvement. On the epistle side is a burial of Christ, not to be viewed without the tenderest emotions. The figures of these two pictures are about half as big as life. Above them are two other small pictures, the gift of Philip IV. one, an ECCE HOMO, the other, our Lady of the same size, beholding him with a look of sorrow and affliction. They are all by Titian, and finely executed.

THE chapel, and the remaining body of the church, though very spacious, are every where adorned with paintings, the very arrangement of which gives no small pleasure to those who are judges of order and propriety.

Paintings in
the body of
the church,
and chapel.

In the chapel of the altars are no less than ten; two on the sides of the great altar, one being St. Catharine, and attributed to Titian; the other, of our blessed Saviour dragging his cross, known to be an original of Piombo. Over the collateral altar, on the gospel side, are three, which fill up the whole arch over the cornice; that in the middle is our Lady with the divine infant, together with Elizabeth, St. John, and St. Joseph; it is a copy from Raphael, though some

DESCRIPTION OF

affirm it to be an original. On the right side is St. Jerom, whose countenance speaks a soul habituated to heavenly contemplation; and on the other, St. Cecilia, a most beautiful figure, playing on a spinet, accompanied with the voices of enraptured angels. This is an original of Michael Cufin, the successful imitator of Andrea del Sarto. On the epistle side, over the altar, and above the cornice, are three others; that in the middle is an original of Lavinia Fontana, the daughter of Prospero Fontano, a famous painter of Bologna. The subject is our Lady, with the holy infant sleeping in her lap, together with St. Joseph, and St. John, pointing at him with a smile. It is a piece of remarkable softness, and the colors vivid. This lady's works are very much esteemed in Italy, chiefly indeed as coming from a female pencil. On the sides of it is David cutting off Goliath's head, an original of Michael Cufin; and the flagellation of Christ at the pillar. Lower down, before the collateral altars, over the stalls, which are of walnut finely inlaid, are two excellent portraits, one of the heroic Charles V. and the other, of his son Philip II. with frames of enamelled brass, and extraordinary magnificence. These are the paintings within the chapel, from the two doors, which form the partition between it and the other parts.

To these answer five others, on the wall of the window side, and all worthy to stand in the same place as the former. In the middle, facing the prior's stall, is a St. Jerom, done in mosaic work; a piece of infinite time and patience, the drapery, the face, the hair, and every other part being composed of very minute sparks of gems of different colors, and all successively inserted. On the sides of it, are two pictures, and originals of Frederic Zucaro, one a nativity, the other the adoration of the magi, and they pass for some of the best productions