

dance of rain secures both a plentiful harvest and a copious vintage. Wherever a spring breaks out, the king's people seize upon it, and allot to each landholder a proper hour for letting the water upon his grounds. It is of so much consequence, that the value of a guinea has been paid for an hour extraordinary.

The English factory imports all sorts of bale goods, corn, and Newfoundland cod. The articles of exportation are wine and barilla. This last grows in great quantities along the coast, especially near Carthagena: as I shall, in all probability, get better intelligence there about it, in its vegetable state, I shall defer entering into any detail at present on that head. The merchants here, as they employ agents to transact the business for them, are very little informed of the qualities or peculiarities of the several sorts of barilla they ship off. It is brought hither in boats, duty free; afterwards it is packed with rushmats, in lumps of about six hundred weight, which ought to be worth about three or four dollars per hund.; but, as this year has been favourable to the crops, it does not fetch above two and a half.

We have been all the morning in great uneasiness about Sir T. G.'s valet de chambre, who, till within this hour, was not to be found in any of the places he usually frequents. His appearance has quieted our apprehensions; and it seems he has been, from sun-rise till dinner-time, locked up in the sacristy of the great church, curling and frizzling

zing the flaxen perriwig of the statue of the Virgin, who is to-morrow to be carried in solemn procession through the city.

There is a sorry kind of an Italian opera here ; bad as it is, there is a something in Italian music, however ill executed, incomparably soft and grateful to ears like ours, so long fatigued with French squalling, and the drone of Spanish *seguidillas*. We were upon the point of being deprived of this amusement, by the wisdom of the clergy, who attributed the want of rain to the influence of that ungodly entertainment ; luckily for the poor strollers, and for us, there fell a smart shower just as the orders were ready to be issued out against any further performance, and as it continued to rain all next day, the church thought no more of the opera.

From Alicant is seen, at nine miles distance south, the island of S. Polo, where the Conde de Aranda settled a colony of Genoese and others, who formerly inhabited an island on the African coast. The regency of Tunis destroyed their settlement, and carried them all into slavery ; from which they were redeemed by Spain, and, with the allowance of a pistreen a day, sent to form a new town on this barren island. As it yields no productions of any kind, they are obliged to be supplied from the main land with every necessary of life ; so that should the administrators neglect to lay in a sufficient stock for their sustenance, in case of tempestuous weather they must inevi-

tably perish with hunger and thirst. Even as matters now stand, from their scanty allowance and perpetual confinement, I believe they think themselves no great gainers by being rescued from their slavery.

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## L E T T E R XVI.

Carthagenæ, December 15, 1775.

**T**O continue the journal of our peregrinations:—We left Alicant on the 12th, and brought away with us some bottles of choice Tent for you. We hope, on our return, to present you with a compleat collection of the best wines in Spain; travelling with such a waggon-load of things, a few bottles more or less are not felt; we are obliged to carry, not only our beds, but bread, wine, meat, oil, and salt, from one great town to another; for we seldom meet with any thing in the inns but the bare walls, and perhaps a few eggs, which they sell at an unconscionable price. If we chance to find a few unbroken chairs, we esteem ourselves uncommonly fortunate; yet it is astonishing how dear travelling is in this country. They ask as much for giving you house-room, and for the *ruydo de casa*, or the noise you make, as would purchase a good

a good supper and lodgings in the best inns, in most other parts of Europe. As our health is excellent, and consequently our spirits good, we are easily reconciled to these kinds of hardships. Indeed we no longer look upon them in that light; the mildness of the climate obviates all inconveniences that might accrue from a total want of glass, or even paper, in the windows; or of a door or shutter that can be fastened close enough to keep wind or rain out.

As soon as we arrive at one of these barns, called Ventas, our first care is to set up our beds. The kitchen is generally at one end; the mules stand in the back part, and our apartment is a partition run up against the wall to the street, with a hole or two for light, defended by three or four very useless iron bars, for a pigmy could not squeeze through the window.

Next, our cook takes his stand at the hearth, to warm our broth, which we carry, ready made, in a kettle behind our chaise; and if he can procure fuel and elbow-room, tosses up a hash, or some such campaign dish. Sometimes we are lucky enough to have an opportunity of setting our spit, or broiling a chop upon our gridiron; but these are luxuries we are not to expect above once or twice in the course of a week.

While our repast is preparing, we read, draw, or write, by the light of a long brass lamp. Our supper dispatched, and a bottle of wine placed between us, we enjoy

joy an hour's merry chat, to give the servants time to sup, and then we retire to bed, where we lie very snug till the dawn of day calls us up, to our usual task of four or five leagues before dinner, and about three in the afternoon. The continual tinkling of the bells of the mules was very irksome to us at first, but we are now so well accustomed to these chimes, that I believe we shall not be able to go to sleep without them, when we return to France.

We stopped at Elche, a large town belonging to the duke of Arcos, built on the skirts of a wood, or rather forest, of palm-trees, where the dates hanging on all sides in clusters of an orange colour, and the men swinging on bass ropes to gather them, formed a very curious and agreeable scene. The palms are old and lofty; their number is said to exceed two hundred thousand. Many of the trees have their branches bound up to a point, and covered with mats to prevent the sun and wind from getting to them. In process of time the branches become quite white, and are then cut off, and sent by ship-loads from Alicant to Genoa, and other parts of Italy, for the grand processions of Palm-Sunday; an uncommon species of traffic.

The country round this town is very chearful, and so are the environs of Orihuela. They are indebted for their fertility to the abundance and proper distribution of water. In dry years, every field that has not some  
spring

spring or aqueduct, to furnish it with repeated rigations, is sure to fail in its crop. There is a Spanish proverb in favour of the last-mentioned city; *Si llove, aytrigo en Oribuela, y si no llove aytrigo in Oribuela*: “If it rains, there is plenty of wheat in Orihuela, and if it does not rain, there is still plenty of wheat in Orihuela.” Indeed we found its bread excellent, and it has the reputation of producing the best corn in Spain. It is a bishop’s see, pretty large, and well enough built, at the foot of a ridge of bare rocks, near the head of a very fruitful *vega* or vale. Near it are avenues of Peric-pepper-tree, or *Schinus molle*, loaded with bunches of a handsome rose-coloured fruit; the people of the country call it *Tiravientos*, probably from some wind-expelling quality. From hence we proceeded along the skirts of the rocks, up into the celebrated vale of Murcia, far superior, in the variety and richness of its culture, to any plain we had hitherto travelled through. Although we were then in the heart of winter, its general appearance was a bright green, the colour of the young corn, flax, lucerne, pulse, and orange-groves. As this vale is not too extensive, but most agreeably bounded on both sides by mountains, the insipid sameness that cloy the eye in most flat countries, however well cultivated, is not perceptible here.

The city of Murcia is neither large nor handsome. The *Segura*, a muddy river, which divides it into two unequal parts, though it contributes nothing to the embellishment

bellishment of the town, claims the merit of creating, by means of its waters, the surprizing fertility of the plain. Hundreds of small drains convey them to the inclosures; and, in spite of the effects of the scorching rays of the sun, preserve the vegetable system fresh and succulent.

The walks about the place are trifling; the streets so full of black stagnated water, as to be almost unpassable. The only thing we found worth seeing was the cathedral, a large massive pile.

Round one part of it is a chain, cut in stone, with a great deal of truth and ease. The steeple, though unfinished, is lofty, and intended, I presume, to exhibit specimens of every one of the five orders of architecture. You may ride up to the top by a passage that goes gradually winding round the tower. From it we had a full view of the town and country; but at this season of the year, the landscape was not decked out in all its beauty, and the bare brown mountains appear too near to please. The names and banners of the Jews, that have been burnt in this town by the inquisition, are stuck up in the church like so many trophies won in the day of victory from some mighty foe.

From Murcia we struck directly across the vale, into the chain of mountains on the south side of the town, and the rugged bed of a torrent was all the road we found. You cannot conceive a more shocking one. The  
naked

naked clayey cliffs that hemmed us in on each side, were very unpleasant.

As soon as we emerged from this ditch, and surmounted a very greasy, marly height, we found before us a plain, almost without bounds, and absolutely without a tree. A ridge of mountains separates it from the sea-shore. Our muleteers pointed out to us the break in it, where the island of Escombrera closes in the harbour of Carthage. A cluster of islands to the left, appear as if they had been struck off the mountain by some furious earthquake, and tumbled headlong into the sea. Most of the plain is sown with barilla.

We dined at the door of a most pitiful *venta*, where we found only one man, sent out by the magistrates of Carthage to wait upon travellers, as the inn-keeper and all his family had been lately carried to prison, on account of a woman, who had been murdered and thrown into a pond behind his house, in which transaction they were suspected of being, at least, accessaries.

We arrived early at Carthage; for the story of the murder had operated powerfully on the minds of our muleteers, who drove very fast over the plain, to get in before night. We are lodged at the Golden Eagle, kept by a Frenchman, the best cook, in the best inn we have met with in Spain.

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LETTER



## L E T T E R   XVII.

Carthagena, December 17, 1775.

I AM in a very bad disposition for writing, for we are just returned from the arsenal, where every feeling of our humanity has been put to the torture. Heaven forbid I should communicate to you any part of the disagreeable sensations the sight of so many of my fellow-creatures in misery has excited in my soul! but I shall dwell upon the subject no longer than will be necessary to inform you of the plain matter of fact. A letter from Barcelona procured us an order from the governor for seeing the docks and magazines of this port, one of the most considerable of the Spanish dominions.

This arsenal is a spacious square, south-west of the town, under the mountains; forty pieces of cannon defend its approach from the sea; but on the land-side it is without defence. We only saw one seventy-gun ship on the stocks, and a rotten hulk heaved down to be repaired, which scarce seemed worth the time and expence bestowed upon it. Mr. Turner, an Englishman, is the head builder. The timber for ship-building lies in ponds, behind a long range of magazines for stores, opposite which the men of war are moored in a wet dock, each  
before

before the door of its own magazine. We were told that every one of these store-houses contained all things requisite for the compleat equipment of a ship of war; but, from the slight survey I took in walking through, I dare venture to affirm, that there is not at present, in the whole yard, a sufficient quantity of every article to fit out a frigate. The new ropery, and the forges where they put fresh touch-holes into old cannon, are established upon an extensive plan, but there is little activity in either.

The government of this yard is now in the hands of the officers of the navy, having been lately taken out of those of the civil intendants. Upon the whole, the making of these docks, and their actual management, have been, and still are, conducted after the most prodigal manner; and either from the vast demands of the late expedition, or from neglect in the administrators, there is now so inconsiderable an assortment of arms and stores, that, were it not for its celebrity, it would scarce deserve a minute's attention from a curious traveller. Yet the Spaniards are very jealous, and appear uneasy when strangers visit it; perhaps from a consciousness of there being nothing in it. There was no persuading them that we travelled merely for pleasure, with no sinister views.

The ships are heaved down in a dry dock, which, by reason of the back water, and the springs that ooze through the marshy soil, would never be clear of water,

were it not for several fire-engines continually going, and for the great pump, which is plied without intermission by Spanish criminals and Barbary slaves. Of the former, they have eight hundred; of the latter, six hundred: most of these wretches are kept at it sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, by four hours at a time; some work only twelve, and most of the Moors only eight hours. It is the hardest labour in the world: ten men are set to each pump, to the amount of about an hundred, in the room above ground, and as many in a kind of dungeon below. In summer-time, scarce a day passes without some of them dropping down dead at their work; and even at this cool season of the year, we have met every day some of them carrying to the hospital. The despair that seizes them is so outrageous, that if they can get within reach of a weapon, there are many instances of their having plunged it into their own breast, or that of some person near them, which answers the same purpose, a speedy deliverance from all their woes by death. As we were looking at them, a dirty little keeper struck a fine tall Moor over the head, for leaving his pump to beg of us. The Algerine darted a look of indignation at his tyrant, and resumed his task, without saying a word or shrinking from the blow.

On our leaving this house of sorrow, we met several strings of galley-slaves, going to relieve those at work, or to fetch their provisions. The Moors had an M on the  
sackcloth

sackcloth that covers them, and the whole gang were lively pictures of malady and despair. The king allows them a pistreen a day, but I am afraid they are defrauded of their allowance; for we saw them making their dinner upon black bread, and horse-beans boiled in salt-water. We are returned quite melancholy from this scene of woe. The only reflection that diminishes our compassion, is, the atrociousness of the crimes that have brought the Christians to the chain; none are here that have not deserved death in fifty shapes. One boy, of fifteen years old, is here for the murder of his father and mother; and either murder, sacrilege, or some such enormous and horrible offences, have been perpetrated by almost all those condemned for life to this punishment. The severity exercised over the Moorish captives, is not so easily reconciled to the principles of humanity, and the meek doctrine of Christianity. Retaliation does not seem a sufficient plea.

Since I wrote the foregoing part of my letter, we have been upon a more agreeable party, which has helped to dissipate the gloomy impressions of the morning. The governor gave us leave to take a boat and row round the harbour. Some gentlemen of our acquaintance were so obliging as to accompany us, and explain the situation and intent of each particular place and fortification.

The port of Carthagena is the compleatest I ever saw, formed by the hand of Nature in the figure of a heart.

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