





H. S. del. Grav. 1775.

F. Giomagnani sc.

*ENTRANCE of the TORRE de las dos HERMANAS in the ALHAMBRA.*

dinand, or at least the beginning of that of Charles, which I take to be no very difficult matter to make out, I should have much greater respect for the authority of Giles Peres than many think him entitled to. It can scarce be supposed that the events of the reign of Abou-abdoulah could be so totally forgotten so soon after, that a painter should dare to invent a trial and combat, at which many still living in Granada might have assisted as spectators.

Opposite to the *Sala de los Abencerrages* is the entrance into the *Torre de las dos hermanas*, or the tower of the two sisters, so named from two very beautiful pieces of marble laid as flags in the pavement. This gate exceeds all the rest in profusion of ornaments and in beauty of prospect, which it affords through a range of apartments, where a multitude of arches terminate in a large window open to the country. In a gleam of sunshine, the variety of tints and lights thrown upon this enfilade are uncommonly rich. I employed much time in making an exact drawing of it from the fountain; and hope it will help you to comprehend what I am labouring to explain by my narrative. The first hall is the concert-room, where the women sat; the musicians played above in four balconies. In the middle is a jet d'eau. The marble pavement I take to be equal to the finest existing, for the size of the flags, and evenness of the colour. The two sisters, which give name to the  
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room, are slabs that measure fifteen feet by seven and a half, without flaw or stain. The walls, up to a certain height, are mosaic, and above are divided into very neat compartments of stucco, all of one design, which is also followed in many of the adjacent halls and galleries. The ceiling is a fretted cove. To preserve this vaulted roof, as well as some of the other principal cupolas, the outward walls of the towers are raised ten feet above the top of the dome, and support another roof over all, by which means no damage can ever be caused by wet weather, or excessive heat and cold. From this hall you pass round the little myrtle-garden of Lindaraxa, into an additional building made to the east end by Charles V. The rooms are small and low: his dear motto, *Plus outre*, appears on every beam. This leads to a little tower, projecting from the line of the north wall, called *El tocador*, or the dressing-room of the sultana. It is a small square cabinet, in the middle of an open gallery, from which it receives light by a door and three windows. The look-out charming. In one corner is a large marble flag, drilled full of holes, through which the smoke of perfumes ascended from furnaces below; and here, it is presumed, the Moorish queen was wont to sit to fumigate and sweeten her person. The emperor caused this little pretty room to be painted with representations of his wars, and a great variety of grotesques, which appear to be copies, or at least imitations, of those in  
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the loggie of the Vatican. They have been shamefully abused by idle scribblers; what remains shews them to be the work of able artists. From hence you go through a long passage to the hall of ambassadors, which is magnificently decorated with innumerable varieties of mosaics, and the mottos of all the kings of Granada. This long narrow antichamber opens into the *communa* on the left hand, and on the right into the great audience-hall in the tower of *Comares*, a noble apartment, thirty-six feet square, thirty-six high up to the cornice, and eighteen from thence to the center of the cupola. The walls on three sides are fifteen feet thick, on the other nine; the lower range of windows thirteen feet high. The whole hall is inlaid with mosaic of many colours, disposed in intricate knots, stars, and other figures. In every part are repeated certain Arabic sentences, the principal of which are the following:

“The counsel of God and a speedy increase, and give joy to true believers.”

“Praise to God, and to his vicegerent Nazar, who gave this empire, and to our king Abouabdoulah, to whom be peace, elevation, and glory.”

N. B. Nazar is an appellation of eminence, and supposed to mean the famous Emirmoumelin Jacob Almanzar.

“There is no God but God.”

“Valour, success, and duration to our king Abul-

“ haghagh, king of the Moors ; God guide his state and  
 “ elevate his power !”

“ Praise be to God, for I enliven this dwelling of  
 “ princes with my beauty, and with my crown. I strike  
 “ firm root ; I have fountains of purest water, and hand-  
 “ some apartments ; my inhabitants are lords of mighty  
 “ puissance. May God, who guides his people, protect  
 “ me, for I attend to the sayings of the holy ! I am thus  
 “ adorned by the hand and liberality of Abulhaghagh,  
 “ who is a bright moon that casts forth his light over  
 “ the face of heaven.”

These inscriptions, and many others dispersed over the palace, prove that there is very little of it remaining that is not the work of Abulhaghagh, or of Abouabdoulah.

Having thus completed the tour of the upper apartments, which are upon a level with the offices of the new palace, you descend to the lower floor, which consisted of bedchambers and summer-rooms: the backstairs and passages, that facilitated the intercourse between them, are without number. The most remarkable room below is the king's bedchamber, which communicated, by means of a gallery, with the upper story. The beds were placed in two alcoves, upon a raised pavement of blue and white tiles ; but as it has been repaired by Philip V. who passed some time here, I cannot say how it may have been in former times. A fountain played in the middle, to refresh the apartment in hot weather.

weather. Behind the alcoves are small doors, that conduct you to the royal baths. These consist in one small closet with marble cisterns for washing children, two rooms for grown-up persons, and vaults for boilers and furnaces, that supplied the baths with water, and the stoves with vapours. The troughs are formed of large slabs of white marble; the walls are beautified with party-coloured earthen ware; light is admitted by holes in the coved cieling.

Hard by is a whispering-gallery, and a kind of labyrinth, said to have been made for the diversion of the women and children.

One of the passages of communication is fenced off with a strong iron grate, and called the prison of the sultana; but it seems more probable that it was put up to prevent any body from climbing up into the women's quarter.

Under the council-room is a long slip, called the king's study; and adjoining to it are several vaults, said to be the place of burial of the royal family. In the year 1574, four sepulchres were opened, but, as they contained nothing but bones and ashes, were immediately closed again.

I shall finish this description of the Alhambra, by observing how admirably every thing was planned and calculated for rendering this palace the most voluptuous of all retirements; what plentiful supplies of water were

brought to refresh it in the hot months of summer; what a free circulation of air was contrived, by the judicious disposition of doors and windows; what shady gardens of aromatic trees; what noble views over the beautiful hills and fertile plains! No wonder the Moors regretted Granada; no wonder they still offer up prayers to God every Friday for the recovery of this city, which they esteem a terrestrial paradise.

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## L E T T E R XXIV.

Granada, December 30, 1775.

**A**FTER the Alhambra, I am afraid the rest of the city will go down but poorly: indeed there is little worth seeing here.

The Alameda, along the banks of the Xenil, is as pleasant a walk as any in Spain, but the river has seldom water enough to enliven the prospect with a reflected landscape. The hill rises boldly, to back the avenue, with orange-groves, cypress-alleys, and clusters of houses, grouped upon the waving line of its sides and summit. This, and another drive beyond the river, are the chief places of resort for people on foot or in coaches; and the  
beauty



beauty of Granada is no where more striking than from these points of view. The more distant parts of the hill are rather bare, and hollowed out into caverns, inhabited by a tawny, ill-favoured tribe, who have either excavated the mountain, or found it ready scooped out to their hands by the ancient possessors of the country. In winter, these grottos are so warm, that they sleep in them without cloaths or covering to the bed; and in summer they are so cool as to be dangerous for such persons as come suddenly out of the heat of the external atmosphere.

The environs of the town are charming even now. Every body tells us, that in summer Granada is a delicious abode, never too cold nor too hot, refreshed by numberless streams, and perfumed by all the sweets wafted by the breeze from the gardens that lie scattered over the declivities of the neighbouring hills. Nothing can be more agreeable, in the mild sunshiny afternoons which we enjoy here, though at Christmas, than the walks along the heights of the Alhambra. There is always a great concourse of people sitting on the grass, basking in the sun, and diverting themselves, as if it were a fair. Venders of cakes, toys, and liquors, call their wares through the crowd. The women come to shew themselves in their holiday finery, drest out in black silk petticoats and veils. In that habit every woman has something uncommonly alluring. Here indeed the sex is really

really handsome in any dress; their complexions are fairer, their skins clearer, and their cheeks glow with a brighter tinge than any faces we have met with in our journey down the coast. The distance of Granada from the sea-ports has probably preserved it from that general infection of the odious disease, which rages with such virulence in all the trading towns. The surprizing purity of its air must also greatly contribute towards the freshness of their looks. In many houses, a current of water passes in an uncovered channel through bedchambers where people sleep, winter and summer, without its having the least bad effect upon their health. Fruit and butchers meat remain in the Alhambra an unusual length of time without taint or putrefaction.

The walls and gates of the town, very few parts excepted, are demolished or built up, and the city is open on all sides. Most of the streets are narrow and dirty. To the lanes and alleys the common people retire to perform the most filthy of nature's functions; but they do it with much decency, having by long practice acquired great expertness in casting their cloak like a net, so as to fall exactly round at a proper distance from the body. Though it is common enough to find them squatted down in the streets, you never see any body make water publicly, for when pressed, they always retire behind a door, into an entry, or to some secret corner.

The Rambla is a very broad, long street, leading to  
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