

ple of miles. The soil upon the heights is sandy, planted with pine-trees and vines, inclosed with hedges of various kinds of shrubs, among which there is a great quantity of yellow jasmine. Round the city is a great plain of corn-lands, pastures, and gardens; the Guadalquivir, which runs through it, is very subject to overflow its banks, and lay all the adjacent country under water; the lowlands by the river side are common, and two years cropped with corn, the third left to run up into grafs.

When we entered the city, our muleteers were obliged to ride as postillions on the foremost mules, to comply with the orders of the magistrates for preventing stoppages and accidents in the streets, which are uncommonly crooked and narrow.

## L E T T E R XXXI.

Seville, April 9, 1776.

**W**E arrived yesterday morning in this capital of Andalusia; and as soon as we had dined and drest ourselves, walked out with no particular object in view, but merely to stroll through the streets, by way of making ourselves acquainted with the city; chance led us into the court of the Alcazar, or royal palace, and the centry directed us to a gallery, which he said would bring us to the gardens. You have often heard me launch out in praise of some hanging-gardens in Italy, so refreshing and voluptuous in the summer evenings; this of the Alcazar is exactly such another; several parterres, surrounded by galleries and terraces, intersected by myrtle hedges and jasmine bowers, and perfumed by clumps of orange-trees, have also the advantage of abundance of water. A large party of sprightly damsels and young men that were walking here, were much indebted to us for making the water-works play, by means of a small bribe to the keeper. Nothing can be more delicious than these sprinklings in a hot day; all the flowers seemed to acquire new vigour,

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the odours, exhaled from the orange, citron, and lemon-trees, grew more poignant, more balsamic, and the company ten times more alive than they were; it was a true April shower. We fauntered near two hours in the groves, till we were quite in extasy with sweets. 'Tis a most heavenly residence in spring; and I should think the summer heats might be tempered and rendered supportable enough, by the profusion of water that they enjoy at Seville.

Philip the Fifth resided here many years, and passed his time in drawing with the smoke of a candle on deal boards, or angling for tench in a little reservoir.

On our first entrance into the palace, which is a *pasticcio* of Saracenic, Conventual, and Grecian architecture, I was much taken with the principal front of the inner-court; a piece of as good Morisco work as any I had yet seen. Having read that the Moors built one part of this palace, I concluded I was admiring something as old as the Mahometan kings of Seville; but upon closer examination was not a little surprized to find *lions, castles*, and other armorial ensigns of Castille and Leon, interwoven with the Arabesque foliages; and still more so, to see, in large Gothic characters, an inscription informing me, that these edifices were built in the fourteenth century, by the most mighty king of Castille and Leon, Don Pedro.

Within

Within this portico is a court ninety-three feet by sixty-nine: it is flagged with marble, and surrounded with a colonnade of white marble columns of the Corinthian order, elegantly proportioned, and well executed; the walls behind are covered with grotesque designs in the Moorish taste: Charles the Fifth has contrived to foist his eagle and his *plus oultre* into every corner. The great hall adjoining, called the *Media naranja*, or half-orange, from the form of its cupola, is richly gilt and stuccoed in the same manner. Here I own, my little knowledge of architecture was fairly nonplussed; I was convinced that the portion of the fabric, called by the travel-writers the *Moorish part*, was the work of Peter the Cruel, who might easily procure skilful artists from the kings of Granada, with whom he was connected most part of his reign; but there was no accounting for the Corinthian pillars, unless I supposed them to have belonged to some Roman edifice, destroyed for the sake of supplying materials for the palace, or to have been placed by the emperor under the old gallery, in lieu of others in a barbarous style or ruinous state. Next to the court of the lions in the Alhambra, this square is the most pleasing piece of Arabic building I have met with, though in delicacy of design and execution, the ornaments of the Sevillian are much inferior to those of the Granadine palace.

Near

Near the western entrance was formerly to be seen a stone seat, with its canopy supported by four pillars, all now destroyed. Here that severe judge, Don Pedro, sat to decide causes, and give sentence upon malefactors. His justice was so very inflexible, that in those days of feudal anarchy, it was looked upon in the light of wanton cruelty and tyranny; perhaps that unfortunate monarch owes to the hatred of those he meant to reduce to order, much of the obloquy which has been so plentifully bestowed upon him by historians, who have painted him to us as a tyrant so bloody, so wicked, as almost to exceed the bounds of probability. In Andalusia, where he fixed his residence, and seemed most to delight, his memory is not held in the same abhorrence. The Sevillian writers speak of him very differently; and instead of his usual appellation of *Pedro el cruel*, distinguish him by that of *El Justiciero*. It is certain that his bastard-brother and murderer, Henry of Trastamare, was guilty of crimes full as atrocious as any of those imputed to Don Pedro; but as he destroyed him, his family, and adherents, the friends of the new spurious race of monarchs were left at full liberty to blacken the characters of the adverse party, without fear of being called to an account for calumny, or even contradicted. Truth is now out of our reach; and for want of proper proofs to the contrary, we must sit down contented with  
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what history has left us, and allow Don Pedro to have been one of the most inhuman butchers that ever disgraced a throne.

We devoted this morning to an excursion in search of the ruins of Italica, where Trajan, Hadrian, and Theodosius the Great, are supposed to have been born; a search it may most properly be called, for we wandered a long league wide of the mark, but had no reason to be sorry for the mistake, whatever our Catalan running-footman might think of the matter. We took too much to the left, after crossing the river on the bridge of boats, and strayed along the walls of a convent, where the monks were felling the lemons of their gardens through a hole in the wall. The wind was rather brisk, and wafted such perfumes from the orange-groves, as almost lulled us to sleep; the meadows and corn-fields that we rode through were delightful, as rich and luxuriant as any I ever saw in Flanders. On our right hand a range of orange-gardens perfumed the breeze before it reached us; and on the left the Guadalquivir ran winding through the plain. Our soft reveries were disturbed by a full stop, that our runner Christoval made at a gully, where a brook falls into a river. It could only be passed on foot, as there was no bridge but a few yawning planks, on which our horses, however willing, could not pretend to find a footing; this obliged us to  
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dismount, and send our horses round half a league to join us at the ruins of Italica, which we thought appeared very conspicuous upon a hill before us. The sun was hot, but the spirit of antiquarianism gave us strength and courage to climb up to the platform of Saint John de Alfarache. After sitting awhile to take breath under some arborjudas in full flower, we proceeded to explore every corner of the crown of the hill; it is almost square, inclosed with the ruins of vast towers and bulwarks, built of cemented mud and pebbles. From the knowledge I had acquired of the different modes of building, since I came into the south of Spain, I ventured to pronounce, that if this was Italica, the Moors had built upon the site, and antiquaries were grossly mistaken when they talked of Roman edifices and amphitheatres; not but what I thought the situation such, as the judicious Romans might have preferred to that of Hispalis, the present Seville, both for beauty and strength. The view from it over that city, the course of the river, and the rich plain, are worth more than the labour it cost us to get so high: at this blooming season of the year, when every thing is in full vegetation, green and fresh, I don't remember to have seen a finer country.

An old peasant set my heart at ease (for I confess I was a little out of humour, as every disappointed

virtuoso would have been) by informing us that this was a Moorish castle, <sup>16</sup> and that Sevilla Vieja, or old Seville (the name they give to Italica) was a little beyond a great church of Hieronymites, a league to the north in the skirts of the plain. Our error once discovered, we trotted away through the flats to that convent, and there picked up a fellow without shirt or stockings, with a patched cloak, white hat, and long black beard; which gentleman undertook to shew us the antiquities.

Of the ancient colony of Italica, supposed to have been composed by Scipio of his veteran soldiers, scarce the least vestige remains. It is said the Moors destroyed it, not to have a rival so near Seville, where they intended to fix the seat of their empire; but I doubt this is the mere surmise of some modern historian. I could not positively ascertain it, but from a view of the ground, am apt to believe it was built in imitation of Rome, on seven hills, and that the river Bœtis ran at the foot of them. By accidental obstructions and banks of sand, accumulated in a long series of inundations, the river may have been driven from its ancient bed, and forced more into the heart of the plain, where it

<sup>16</sup> After the loss of Seville, the Moors are said to have remained some time at Alfarache, under the government of a kind of king.

now takes its course. Such an event as this would account for the ruin of so considerable a city as Italica; and without supposing that the Saracens were at the pains of demolishing it, would afford sufficient cause for giving the preference to Seville, which stands upon the Guadalquivir.

On the summit of the first hill are some ruinous brick walls, called *El Palacio*, not in the least remarkable. The peasants that were here at work in the olive-yards, told us, that underneath there had formerly been found columns of silver and brass; but as they were bewitched by some magician, nobody was ever able to draw them up; and now-a-days, not a soul has the courage even to dig for them, as they have all the reason in the world to believe, that the conjurer would twist their heads off for attempting it. This is a popular superstition, which I have found to be common to most countries, wherever any great remains of vaults and ancient edifices are to be seen.

On the most distant eminence are considerable ruins of an amphitheatre, built with pebbles, and brick arches; most probably the marble casing has been carried away, or destroyed by burning to lime. The form is a most perfect oval; the arena measures, as near as the corn would allow me to be exact, one hundred yards in its greatest length, and sixty in its greatest breadth;

some of the vomitoria, cells, and passages, are yet discernible, but scarce any traces of the seats; however I made out twenty rows, two feet six inches wide, and two feet high; each step of the stairs of communication is one foot high and one wide. This amphitheatre is now more like Stonehenge than a regular Roman edifice <sup>17</sup>.

Not far from it is a fine pool of water, in a large vault under the hill; which I take to be the remains of some aqueduct, as the water is too warm to be near the spring head.

Being very hot and hungry, we made the best of our way home through large plantations of orange-trees, which here grow to the size of moderate timber trees; the fruit is much more pleasing to the eye, if less so to the palate, than the oranges of Portugal, as the rich blood-colour is admirably contrasted with the bright tint of the leaves.

<sup>17</sup> The corporation of Seville, having occasion for stones to embank the river, which, by its frequent inundations, caused great damage to the city, ordered the amphitheatre of Italica to be knocked down. Many hands were employed to batter the walls, and to blow up with gunpowder such parts as resisted the pick-ax. By these means they procured sufficient materials for their embankment; but, as if the Guadalquivir meant to revenge the cause of taste upon these barbarians, the very first flood swept away the whole fabrick.

## L E T T E R    X X X I I .

Seville, April 11, 1776.

**S**EVILLE is supposed to have been founded by the Phenicians, who gave it the name of Hispalis: the Romans called it Julia; in after-ages the old name returned, and after a variety of corruptions, seems to have been revived in the modern appellation of Sebillá, or Sevilla, for the Spaniards use both indiscriminately.

Under the Roman government, it was embellished with many magnificent buildings, destined for purposes of public utility and amusement; but I believe the very ruins of those edifices have long ago disappeared.

The Gothic kings resided here before they removed their court to Toledo.

Musa, the Saracen viceroy, took Seville by storm, soon after the victory obtained at Xeres over king Rodrigo.

In the general confusion that ensued upon the downfall of the kingdom of Cordova, in 1027, Seville became an independent sovereignty, which was annihilated by the violence of the African prince Jusuf Almoravides, who came into Spain in 1097.

Ferdinand

Ferdinand the third, king of Castille, (who, in consideration of his great success against the Mahometans, as well as for his sanctity, was canonized after his death, and is still honoured as a saint of the first rank) took Cordova, and many other important places, from the enfeebled, disunited Mussulmen; drove them from post to post, till he reduced the bounds of their empire to a very confined corner of the peninsula; after a year's siege he forced Seville to open its gates to him, and acknowledge his sway. Three hundred thousand Moors are said to have left the city upon the capitulation, and to have carried their arms and industry to such countries, as were still obedient to the law of Mahomet. It is difficult to conceive how Seville could continue to be a great and populous town after such an emigration; yet we find it in a few years enlarged, adorned with new buildings, the chief of which was the cathedral, and long enjoying the rank of one of the most considerable cities in Spain.

Its most brilliant epocha was soon after the discovery of America, when all the new-found treasures were poured into Europe from the fleets that returned from the new hemisphere into the Guadalquivir, and made Seville the magazine of its invaluable productions. The sovereign frequently honoured this place with his presence; merchants from all parts flocked hither to open  
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