

after the death of his famous mistress, Maria de Padilla. Henry of Trastamare, after the defeat and murder of Pedro in the plains of Montiel, laid siege to Carmona, took it by capitulation, together with the children and treasures of the late king, and basely breaking his word of honour, caused Lopez to be beheaded for his obstinate resistance.

Like every place in this province, Carmona makes a figure in Roman history, and has many remains of their walls, inscriptions, &c. to shew as proofs of its ancient importance. The country about it is hilly and champaign, but far from unpleasant, as it is all green, and has some wood and water in different parts of the view.

We dined to-day at the solitary venta of Monclova, and rode on hither to get a sight of the town, but it proved farther off than we imagined, and it was dark before we got in. We were obliged to leave the carriage with our baggage at Carmona, to get the axletree mended, and hitherto we have had no tidings of it, so shall lie down in our cloaths on a few chairs.

The road from Seville hither, is better than any I have seen in Spain, some of the new road near Barcelona excepted; it is all gravel, which not being the soil of the country, must have been brought from a great distance, and has subsisted in all probability, unaltered and unrepaired since the Moors were driven out of

Andalufiá; it is raised above the level of the fields, and commonly runs in a direct line from west to east. As there are no visible remains of pavement, I rather attribute it to the Saracens than to the Romans, although both nations are known to have attended particularly to the highways of this province, and to have made several causeways and roads of communication between the great towns.

We passed through La Luifiana, a tract of land lately put into cultivation by a colony of Germans, who have their habitations not far from the side of the highway, placed at regular distances of two or three hundred yards, all built after one simple model, with an allotment of corn-land round the house: this is the most western of the new settlements.

Eccija seems prettily situated upon the river Xenil, and to have some pleasant walks, and an astonishing number of steeples.

Cordova, April 14th.

Yesterday we dined at La Carlotta, another plantation of Germans of great extent, made eight years ago, in a hilly forest. The houses are scattered about. The parish church, inn, director's house, some shops and dwelling houses for handicraft men, form a very neat village on an eminence: as they have left standing all
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the evergreen oaks of any tolerable size, the face of the country is very handsome, the green corn being chequered with groves, clump, and single trees. About twenty or thirty acres is an allotment for a family, under the obligation of remaining on the spot ten years; during which period, they are subject to no taxes of any kind. At the expiration of the term, if they choose to settle here, the land is made over to them in fee, and they commence payment of a small quit-rent. The king furnishes them with seed corn, but they are obliged to replace it in his granaries after harvest; except the walls of a house, and some trifling instruments of husbandry, this is all the encouragement they meet with; and as this is by no means a sufficient help, and much of the soil is poor and hungry, and falls off at every crop, there is great reason to apprehend, that this colony will prove one of those ephemeral productions that so often spring up in monarchical governments, and almost immediately after birth, sink into their original nothing. Some hundreds of the Germans have died since the establishment, through poverty, intemperance, bad food, and change of climate.

The country, as you approach Cordova, is all bare, hilly, and arable. The view of the river, city, and woods, on the opposite hills, is extremely agreeable and picturesque.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

Cordova, April 15th, 1776.

WE have ferreted out the few things in this city, that can be accounted worthy of any attention from a traveller; have ridden up and down the environs as often as the weather would permit, and have studied the mosque by day-light, and by torch-light; but still this temple is so intricate a labyrinth, and contains so many extraordinary things, that I shall take one or two farther surveys of it before I attempt to describe it. The abundance of subject-matter, and its celebrity, will entitle it to figure in a letter apart. This shall be dedicated to objects of less importance, and when I shall have informed you of the present state of the town, it will be proper to select for you, from the best author I have by me, some curious particulars relative to its ancient history.

The environs are delightful, and enjoy a rich variety of woods, hillocks, and culture, vivified by abundance of limpid water. The flat land produces olives and corn, and much of it is laid out in gardens, where the fruit-trees grow to a remarkable size, and seem perfectly

fectly clean and healthy. The upper-grounds are over-run with evergreen oaks and pines, which the farmers grub up in the good spots to plant olive and carob bean trees in their stead. The farm houses are built in the midst of inclosures and orchards of orange-trees. Corn-land is let for so many measures of corn, either a fixed number for each harvest, or an indefinite quantity according to the crops; the highlands are all let out at a certain rent in cash.

The Guadalquivir runs before the town, which it has worn into a perfect half moon. A bridge of sixteen arches, defended by a large Moorish tower, leads from the south into Cordova, and near the end of the bridge stands the mosque, now the cathedral. The walls of the town are in many places just as the Romans left them; the method they have followed here in laying the stones is rather different from what I have observed in other Roman edifices. Here each long square stone is terminated and flanked by two thin ones set up an end.

The streets are crooked and dirty; few of the public or private buildings conspicuous for their architecture; the new hospital for the education of orphans, has something bold and simply noble in its cupola and portico. The palaces of the inquisition and of the bishop are extensive, and well situated.

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We are just returned from a bullfeast, where no horsemen were allowed, as the animals were not of a breed sufficiently noble to try the lance upon. One poor bull that would not fight, was very dexterously run through the heart; two oxen were tormented a little, and then sent to the adjoining shambles; and a small cow, after behaving mighty well as to jumping and skipping, got a reprieve in consideration of her excessive leanness. It was too tiresome even to make us laugh, but we are in hopes of seeing this exhibition in greater perfection at Aranjuez. The motive of this paltry spectacle is extremely laudable. The Corregidor (i. e. the triennial governor of the town, always a native of a different part of Spain from that wherein he is appointed to superintend the police) gives these little shews to the people on Sundays and festivals; and out of the profits and hire of the seats, raises a sum sufficient to carry on the new walk he is laying out under the walls.

After the entertainment, the nobility paraded about in their coaches; and I was surprized to see such elegance as I little expected in an inland town in Spain; very handsome English and French carriages, smart liveries, and excellent horses. The nobility of this place live in a manner not to be met with any where else in the kingdom; if their union and mutual emulation in
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rendering society agreeable be such as they are represented to me, they deserve the highest encomiums from every lover of humanity: thirty families or more, meet every night at a house chosen by rotation, where the ladies do the honours of genteel refreshments, merry good-natured conversation, and some low card-playing. The general run of the women seems to be handsome; some we saw on the walks were extremely beautiful. We have been much pressed to frequent the assemblies; but as the weather is so uncertain, we keep ourselves ready in our boots and great coats, in order to seize every fair moment to get out and see the town and country.

Having thus marked out the little that modern Cordova has to shew, give me leave to carry you back to more remote times; to a period, when it figured to much greater advantage on the theatre of politics and commerce. This is not to be fixed at the time of its being a Roman colony²¹, though it boasts of having given birth to Seneca and Lucan; nor in the ages during which it acknowledged the dominion of the Goths. To the Saracen Caliphs of the Ommiad family, Cordova is indebted for its glory; as we hear but little of it be-

²¹ Strabo says, that Corduba was founded by Marcellus, and was the first Roman colony established in Spain. Its Latin appellation was *Patricia*.

fore the year 755, when Abdoulrahman, only heir-male of the Ommiad line, passed over from Africa, at the head of a few desperate followers, and found means to raise a rebellion in Spain. After a battle fought on the banks of the Guadalquivir, in which he overthrew the lieutenant of the Abassid Caliph of Damascus, Abdoulrahman became king of all the Moorish possessions in the south of Spain, and in 759 fixed his royal residence at Cordova.

Then began those flourishing ages of Arabian gallantry and magnificence, which rendered the Moors of Spain superior to all their contemporaries in arts and arms, and made Cordova one of the most splendid cities of the world. Agriculture and commerce prospered under the happy sway of this hero; and the face of the country was changed from a scene of desolation, which the long wars and harsh government of the viceroys had brought on, into a most populous flourishing state, exceeding in riches, number of inhabitants, activity, and industry, any prior or subsequent era of the Spanish history. He added new fortifications to the town, built himself a magnificent palace with delicious gardens, laid causeways through the marshes, made excellent roads to open a ready communication between the great towns, and in 786 began the great mosque, which he did not live to finish.

During

During the course of two centuries, this court continued to be the resort of all professors of the polite arts, and of such as valued themselves upon their military and knightly accomplishments; while the rest of Europe was buried in ignorance, debased by brutality of manners, or distracted by superstitious disputes. England, weakened by its Heptarchy, was too inconsiderable even to be mentioned in the political history of the times; France, though it had a gleam of reputation under Charlemagne, was still a barbarous unpolished nation; and Italy was in utter confusion, the frequent revolutions and change of masters rendering it impossible for learning, or any thing good, to acquire a permanent footing in so unstable a soil; Greece, though still in possession of the arts and luxury of ancient Rome, had lost all vigour, and seemed absorbed in the most futile of all pursuits; viz. that of scholastic argument, and religious subtilties.

The residence of the Ommiad Caliphs, was long conspicuous for its supreme magnificence, and the crowds of learned men, who were allured to it by the protection offered by its sovereigns, the beauty of the country, the wholesomeness of the climate, and the variety of pleasures that returned incessantly in one enchanting round.

Cordova became the center of politeness, industry,

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and genius. Tilts and tournaments, with other costly shews, were long the darling pastimes of a wealthy happy people; and this was the only kingdom in the west, where geometry, astronomy, and physics, were regularly studied and practised; music was no less honoured, for I find that in 844, a famous musician, called Ali Zeriab, came to settle at Cordova, and formed several pupils, who were supposed to equal the most celebrated performers that were ever known, even in the east. That architecture was greatly encouraged, we need no other proof than the great and expensive fabrics undertaken and completed by many of these Spanish monarchs: whatever faults may be justly condemned in their manner by the connoisseur, accustomed to the chaste noble graces of the Grecian proportions; certainly nobody can behold what remains of these Moorish edifices, without being strongly impressed with a high idea of the genius of the artists, as well as the grandeur of the prince who carried their plans into execution.

These Sultans not only gave the most distinguished protection to arts and sciences, and to the persons learned in any of them, but were themselves eminently versed in various branches of knowledge. Alchem the second, collected so immense a quantity of manuscripts, that before the end of his reign, the royal library contained

tained no less than six hundred thousand volumes, of which the very catalogue filled forty huge folios. The university of Cordova was founded by him, and under such favourable auspices, rose to the highest pitch of celebrity.

Abdoulrahman was succeeded by his son Hissem; whose passion for glory and architecture was not in the least inferior to that of his father. He put the finishing hand to the mosque, which the plunder of the southern provinces of France enabled him to complete in the course of a few years. Several historians have represented the terror of his name so great, that the inhabitants of the Narbonne, in order to purchase peace and liberty, agreed to transport from their city to Cordova, all materials necessary for the construction of the mosque. This story is hardly credible; Mariana supposes it to have been a sort of fine sand proper for mixing with lime, that the Narbonnese engaged to carry; but if there be any truth in the affair, I should imagine it to be more probable, that they furnished him with columns and other monuments of antiquity, which Narbonne abounded with, and which were undoubtedly employed in great quantities in the building of the mosque. The bridge over the Guadalquivir was a work of Hissem's, after his own plans.

Alkahem succeeded Hissem.

Abdoulrahman the second was also passionately fond

of building. He was the first that brought supplies of water to Cordova, by means of leaden pipes laid upon aqueducts of stone. The quantity was so considerable, that every part of the palace, the mosques, baths, squares, and public edifices, had all of them their fountains constantly playing. A great many of these works still subsist. He paved the whole city, and erected several mosques.

After him reigned Mahomet Almundar, Abdallah, and Abdoulrahman the third, who surpassed all his predecessors in splendour, riches, and expence. His subjects vied with each other in profusion and magnificence. I cannot give you a greater proof of the prodigious opulence and grandeur of the Arabians in the tenth century, than by enumerating the presents made to this prince by Aboumelik, named in 938 to the post of grand vizir. He caused to be brought before the throne, and laid at the feet of his master,

Four hundred pounds of virgin gold.

Lingots of silver to the value of 4,20,000 zequins.

Four hundred pound of lignum aloes, one piece weighing one hundred and forty pounds.

Five hundred ounces of ambergrease.

Three hundred ounces of camphire.

Thirty pieces of gold tissue, so rich that none but the Caliph could wear it.

Ten suits of Khorassan sables.

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