

hundred feet high. The number of windows in the west front is two hundred; in the east front, three hundred and sixty-six. The orders employed are Doric and Ionic; but the outward appearance of this vast mass is extremely plain, and I am sorry to say, in my eyes, very ugly. With its narrow high towers, small windows, and steep sloping roof, it certainly exhibits an uncouth style of architecture; but the domes, and the immense extent of its fronts, render it a wonderful grand object from every point of view. The best side to see it from, for I tried them all, is about half a mile down the hill on the Madrid road, as you are then so much below it that the building hides the bleak mountain, which presses very close upon it behind; the green fields and woods behind it, and the place you stand in, make a good contrast, and set it off to the best advantage.

The church, which is in the center of all, is large, awful, and richly, but not affectedly ornamented. The cupola is bold and light. The high altar is composed of rich marbles, agates, and jaspers of great rarity, the produce of this kingdom. Two magnificent *Catafalques* fill up the side arcades of this sanctuary: on one the emperor Charles the fifth, his wife, daughter, and two sisters, are represented in bronze, larger than life, kneeling; opposite are the effigies of Philip the second, and of his three wives, of the same materials, and in the same devout attitude.

Underneath

Underneath is the burial-place of the royal family, called the Pantheon. Twenty-five steps lead down to this vault, over the door of which is a very classical inscription, denoting that

*Hic locus sacer mortalitatis exuviiis Catholicorum Regum, &c.*

was intended by Charles the emperor, resolved upon by Philip the second, begun by Philip the third, and completed by Philip the fourth. The mausoleum is circular, thirty-six feet diameter, incrusted with fine marbles in an elegant taste. The bodies of the kings and queens lie in tombs of marble, in niches, one above the other. There are twenty-six of these urns, but as yet only thirteen are filled; the two last kings, and all the queens that died without issue, being buried elsewhere. The plan of these sepulchres is grand, and executed with a princely magnificence; but I own I could not help finding them too gay, too light, and too delicately fitted up for the idea we are apt to form of a chapel destined for the reception of the dead. Accustomed to feel a kind of horror on our approach to any place that reminds us of the painful dissolution of our being, we naturally expect something serious and awful in the appearance of such a repository.

The princes and princesses of the royal family lie in two side-vaults near the entrance of the Pantheon.

The collection of pictures dispersed about various parts

parts of the church, sacristy, and convent, surpassed my expectations; and I think I may venture to pronounce it equal, if not superior to any gallery in Europe, except that of Dresden. Formed out of the spoils of Italy, and the wasted cabinet of that unfortunate dilettante Charles the first of England, it contains some of the most capital works of the greatest painters that have flourished since the revival of the art. It would be a very useless trouble for me, and no entertainment to you, were I to copy out a catalogue of them, as you may find it at full length in many books. I shall just note down some of the principal pictures in the order we saw them, under the guidance of one of the Hieronymite monks.

In the Aulill. A glory by Titian, in which he has introduced Charles the fifth and Philip the second, as suppliants, not as saints: there is a great and noble effect in this large composition. By the same hand, a burial of Christ, and a Saint Margaret, which they have spoilt by painting a cloth to cover her naked thigh, which the scrupulous thought an indecent and dangerous sight in a convent of the votaries of penance and chastity: these are high coloured and strongly painted. A very fine piece, by *El Mudo*, of some Christians coming by stealth in the night to carry off the body of Saint Laurence; the fears, caution, and silence, of

those employed, are admirably expressed; and the light given by a single torch is distributed with great judgment over the whole; the saint's body seems to be roasted to a turn.

In the Chapter-house. By Spagnolet, a Saint John playing with a lamb, and smiling with exquisite grace. An annunciation, a chef-d'œuvre of Baroccio. Christ giving his blessing, a fine half length, by Titian.

In the Vicar's Hall. Jacob's sons shewing him Joseph's bloody garment, esteemed the best picture of Velasquez: indeed the composition, expression, and intelligence, of Chiaro-scuro are wonderful; the agony and surprize of the father is life itself.

In the Prior's Hall. A dead Christ, by Rubens; the figure of Mary Magdalen, and the dead body are painted in his best manner. The Centurion kneeling to Christ, by Paul Veronese; the best picture of the Venetian school in the Escorial: the characters are noble, the architecture magnificent. The crowning of thorns by Vandyke, in which the tents, semitents, and transparency of colour, are more admired than the choice of his figures; the boy peeping through a grate, is incomparable, almost a deception. An holy family, by Rubens; which would strike one more were it not so near another on the same subject, by Raphael, which by its grace and beauty eclipses all the merit of the

Ultramontane

Ultramontane master. Another Madonna in glory, by Guido; one of the most precious pictures in the collection: the Virgin is full of soft majesty, the Christ supernaturally pensive. The ceilings of these rooms are executed with great airiness, taste, and beauty, after designs made in imitation of those of the Vatican.

In the Outward Sacrifice. The piece that pleased me most, is a Riposo, by Titian; in which the back-ground is one of the finest landscapes imaginable.

In the Sacrifice are so many capital pictures, I scarce know which to give the second place to, for the first is undoubtedly due to the *Madonna della Perla*, by the divine Raphael. This was part of the spoil of the English royal collection; the king of Spain was so much enchanted with it, when it was brought to him, that he gave it the name of *Perla mia*, by which it has been distinguished ever since. The Virgin Mary is presented, sitting with her right hand, holding the infant Jesus under the arms, who has one leg upon her knee, and the other resting upon some white linen thrown carelessly over a cradle. The Virgin's left hand reposes on the shoulder of Saint Anne, who kneels by her daughter's left side, and forms a most perfect groupe, with the figures and the cradle; the old saint leans upon her hand, which is supported on the knee of the Madonna. Saint John Baptist advances on the other

side to offer some fruit in a skin ; Jesus reaches out his hand to take it, but at the same time turns round to look at his mother, with all the joy and graceful simplicity natural to a beautiful child of that age. Behind is a small figure of Saint Joseph among ruins ; the fore-ground is rich in flowers, the back-ground in variegated landscape ; the characters of face divine ; the folds of the drapery large and flowing ; the colours harmonious ; the lights thrown in admirably ; and the figures and attitudes beyond all powers of description<sup>39</sup>. After this, I can with difficulty bring myself to remember or reflect on the other valuable pictures in the hall, such as a Madonna giving suck, by Guido ; an apparition of Christ to Mary Magdalen, by Correggio ; Christ and the Pharisee, by Titian ; another holy family, by Raphael ; another, by Andrea del Sarto (which for design, composition, and beauty of tints, may be ranked with his master-pieces) ; a visitation, by Raphael ; a washing of the feet, by Tintoret. I should never have done if I were to describe minutely the beauties of the above-mentioned pieces ; I must content myself with saying, that they are chef-d'œuvres of those divine masters ; and that any one of them would give a

<sup>39</sup> Raphael is thought by many to have painted the Madonna, and his Scholars the rest upon his designs.

name and relief to the best private collection. At the end of the Sacristy is an altar, called *La santa Forma*; this is a kind of Tabernacle or *Custioda*, of gems, marbles, woods, and other precious materials, inlaid in gilt bronze; in which, rather than in the excellence of the workmanship, or taste of the design, consists the merit of this rock of riches. Before it hangs a curtain, on which Coello has represented Charles the second, and all his court in procession, coming to place this *Forma*. This is undoubtedly one of the most curious collections of portraits in the world; for all the persons are drawn with the greatest strength of colour and truth of expression, and are said to be perfect resemblances not only of the monarch and grandees, but even of the monks, servants, and guards.

In the Old Church, so called, because divine service was performed in it while the other was painting; a martyrdom of Saint Laurence, and a Mater Dolorosa, by Titian, are capital. Here also hangs the celebrated *Madonna del Pesce* of Raphael, one of the most valuable pictures in the world. I do not know how Amiconi came to doubt of its originality; but his arguments are sufficiently refuted, and justice done to the picture, in a letter from Mr. Henry, published three years ago, in the *Viago de España*, by Ponz. The personages that compose the subject are the Virgin Mary seated, with her  
son

son in her arms; on her right, the angel Raphael introduces Tobit, who kneeling presents the fish, which gives name to the whole; on the other side, stands Saint Jerome, in the habit of a cardinal, kneeling near a lion. This picture was brought from Naples, by order of Philip the fourth. Mr. Henry rates it above all the rest of the collection. Some connoisseurs have preferred the *Perla*, but I believe without sufficient cause.

The statues, busts, and medallions of the Escorial, are not in any great number, nor very remarkable for their excellence. The statue of Saint Laurence in the church is good and simple. Many have taken it for an antique, but the only part likely to be so is the head, and that I suspect to have belonged to a Bacchus; were it the statue of Saint Denis, this would not surprize me, as in the many stops he made to rest himself, when he carried his head about, he might be supposed to have mislaid his own, and taken up another in its stead.

They shewed us some original writings of saints; among the rest a wretched scrawl of Saint Teresa, the mystical reformatrix of the Carmelite nuns.

The Library contains a most precious collection of manuscripts, many fine drawings, and other curiosities, which we had not leisure to peruse as much as we could have wished.

Notwithstanding



Notwithstanding the coldness of the exposition of this convent, the king, for the sake of hunting, passes here several months of the year. To make the place less inconvenient to his attendants and the nobility, he has built an entire new town adjoining to it; but in spite of all he can do, the Escorial will always remain a most uncomfortable habitation for winter residence.

From the Escorial we came along the south foot of the mountains that separate the two Castilles, crossed the great Burgos road, and took up our night's quarters at a venta in the heart of the rocks and mountains, among forests of aged nodding pines. Next morning, we travelled many hours over the woody heights of the *Puerto* or passage of *Fuenfrio*, where the snow was still very deep on the summits of the mountains. Some of the turns and views through the groves are charming; now and then such prospects over the plains of Old Castille, the town of Segovia, and the palace of Riofrio<sup>40</sup>, opened upon us, as astonished us by their beauty and novelty. We arrived for dinner at Saint Ildefonso, and found orders had been sent before for our immediate admission to the palace, water-works, and other curiosities of the place.

<sup>40</sup> Begun, but never finished, by Elizabeth Paruese, Queen Dowager of Spain.



This palace was much embellished and favoured by Philip the fifth, who spent much treasure in forcing Nature, and rendering it in some sort an imitation of what he remembered to have seen in the garden of Versailles. His son Ferdinand abandoned it to his mother in law. The court now comes here in the hot months of summer, as it is a remarkable cool spot, being fenced from the hot south winds by a ridge of very high snowy mountains, and situated in the bottom of a vale open to the north. But this situation exposes it to such sudden and frequent changes of temperature and seasons in the course of a few hours, that it is often necessary to shift from cloth to silk, and from silk to cloth, twice or thrice a day; and these transitions are sometimes productive of colics, and other serious disorders.

A romantic brook rolls over the rocks at no great distance from the town, through a large tract of thickets, and serves his majesty as a fishing-place. A walk is cut along the sides for a mile or two, and very much resembles modern English improvement. The quantity of fine water is one great recommendation to Saint Ildefonso. The palace is patch-work, and no part of the architecture agreeable. In the apartments is a very numerous collection of pictures; but that we had just left at the Escorial made us perhaps undervalue these.



these. I took notes of some that pleased me, but I will not pretend to say they are the only ones worthy of admiration. A small head of Portia, by Guido, a most pathetic countenance. Saint Anne teaching the Virgin Mary to read; a charming picture, by Murillo, mellow, true, and expressive. A Magdalen's head, by M. Angelo; S. Francis Xaverius, by Spagnolet; a Boy, by Murillo; a Roman Charity, by Spagnolet; Landscapes, by Claude Lorraine and Wouvermans; Animals, by Rosa di Tivoli.

In the Gallery below are many fine statues, busts, and bas-reliefs. The best are, a groupe of Castor and Pollux sacrificing; one of them has his left arm over the shoulder of his brother, and with his right pours something out of a patera on an altar, where the other twin is lighting a torch with his right, while he brandishes another with his left hand; this is a noble piece of antiquity. A Venus kneeling on a tortoise, and anointing her head with a phial of ointment. Seneca seated. Mercury with a boy. A bust of Alexander dying, and another of Antinous.

The gardens are in the formal French style; the trees are poor starved limes, for the soil is so shallow, and the rocks so compact and near the surface, that they can strike no root. To plant them, the old king had squares in the rock blown out with gunpowder, and worked with tools, then filled with earth. You

may easily imagine they have not thriven much, and indeed they are with difficulty kept alive by frequent renewals of soil and waterings.

The water-works surpass all those I ever saw, not excepting the finest at Versailles. Not having any memorandums of their different heights, I do not know but those in the French king's gardens may throw the water up higher; but I very well recollect, that the Seine-water, which they spout out, is of a muddy colour, falling down like a stinking thick fog. These jet-d'eaux of Saint Ildephonso, send forth a stream as clear as crystal, whereon the sun-beams play in the most beautiful prismatic tints; it falls around like the sweetest finest dew. The designs of the fountains are elegant, especially that of the Frogs; a central one, where sixteen spouts play in a regular combination; the great cascade; the basket, remarkable for its idea and symmetry; it delighted us much: but the fountain of Diana surprized us with the richness of its decoration, and the fulness of its stream; the lofty column of water issuing out of the trumpet of Fame, exceeded all our conceptions of the power of hydrostaticks; the gardener mentioned a height to us that I durst not commit to paper on his authority, but I confess the water went up to such an extraordinary elevation, that it was no longer in my power to guess at the number of feet. These fountains are supplied by two  
reservoirs