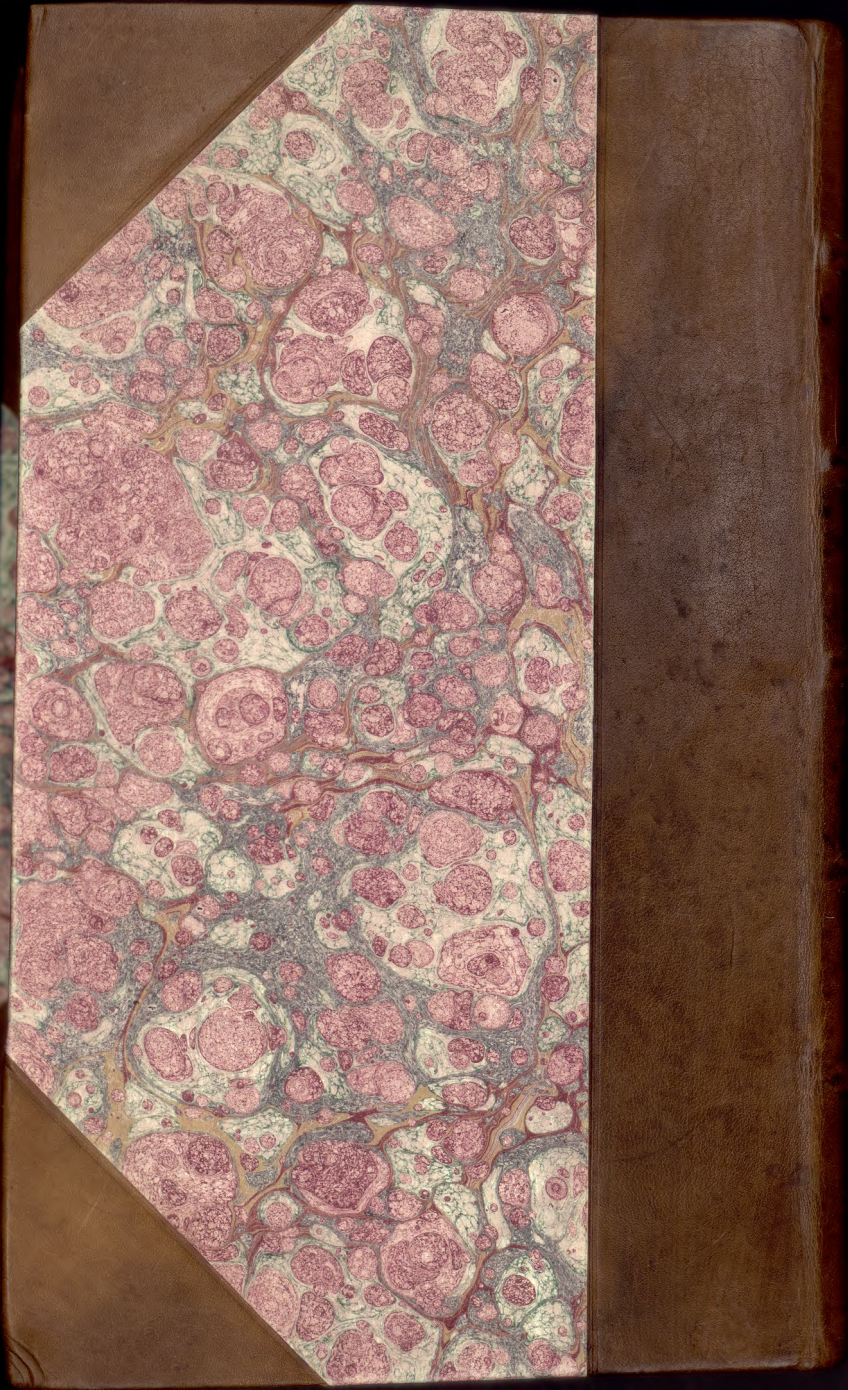




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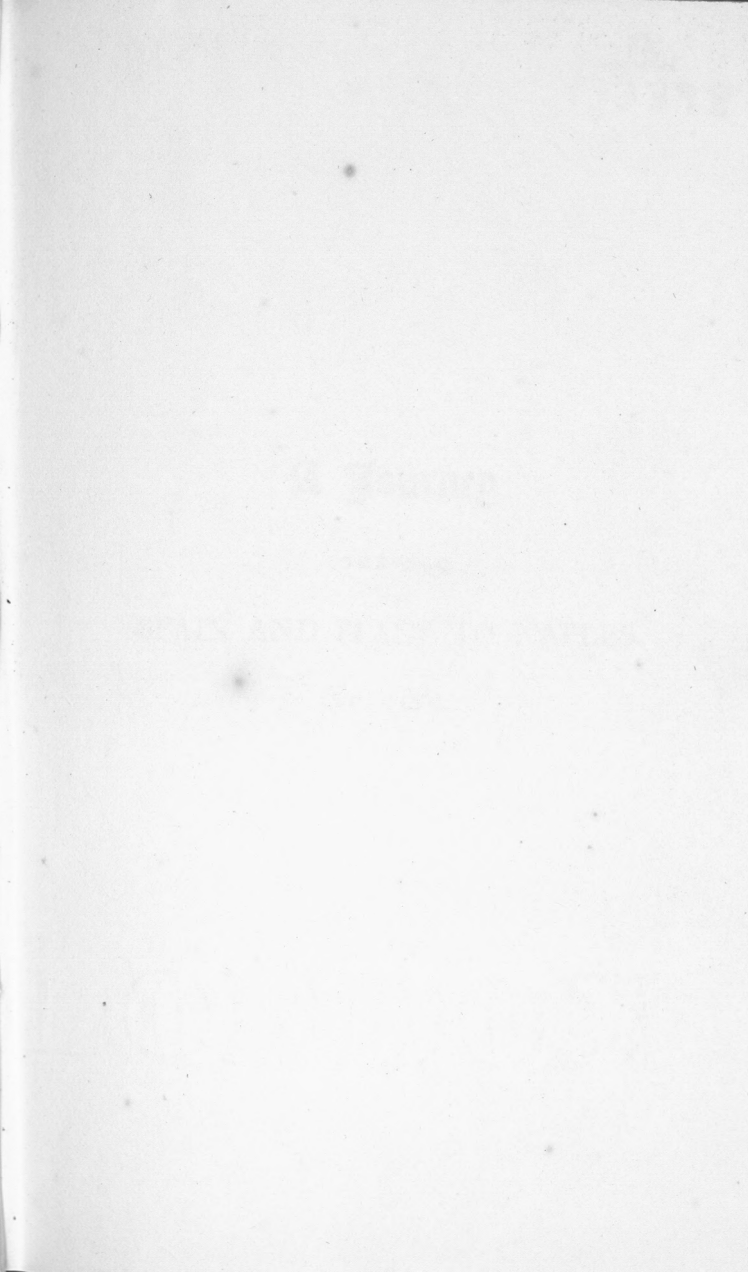
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THROUGH
SPAIN AND ITALY TO NAPLES.
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OBSERVATIONS ON
A Journey
THROUGH
SPAIN AND ITALY TO NAPLES;
AND THENCE TO
SMYRNA AND CONSTANTINOPLE:

*Comprising a Description of the Principal Places in
that Route,*

*And Remarks on the present Natural and Political state
of those Countries.*

VOL I.

BY ROBERT SEMPLE,
AUTHOR OF WALKS AND SKETCHES AT THE CAPE OF
GOOD HOPE; AND OF CHARLES ELLIS.

London:
PRINTED FOR C. AND R. BALDWIN, NEW-
BRIDGE-STREET.

1807.

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PREFACE.

IT has been well observed that the increase of criticism is the decay of genius. Men can publish severe remarks on a book which they have not sufficient talents to write; and in the present day an author must run the risk, not merely of a public reproof, but of being held up as an object of ridicule or contempt. An ignorant or malevolent hireling may falsely accuse him of vulgarity, childishness, and indecency, yet he remains without defence, since to reply would be at once unavailing and degrading. Under such circumstances, he is induced to weigh every expression with

a timid caution ; he is fearful of yielding to the warmth of the moment, lest that warmth should become the cruel sport of cooler minds ; and if after this he produce a work tolerably free from blemishes, but devoid of interest, he is told that the errors of genius may be forgiven, but that neither Men nor Gods can bear mediocrity.

Yet it is hoped that the strict laws of criticism may be modified in favour of travellers who venture to bring their observations before the public. In every other species of writing it is a mere insult to say that want of time, or of attention, prevented the author from rendering his production as perfect, or as interesting, as he otherwise might have done ; for even if he could have performed better, he should by no means let the world know of it. But those who visit foreign countries are

seldom writers by profession. The mariner, the soldier, or the merchant, impelled by duty or led by speculation, have visited spots worthy of description, where Science has perhaps never yet penetrated; or they may have seen others which are well known, under new and striking points of view. If, then, individuals from these classes cannot publish even their hasty remarks, without running the risk of being assailed by the most virulent censures, or of hearing the laws of Aristotle thundered in their ears, they will by degrees be induced to suppress them altogether. The traveller must be content to remain the hero of his own fire-side; and the public to receive descriptions of foreign countries only from those who are at once proficient in literature, and have no other occupations than to travel, and to write.

In this point of view, then, it is hoped that want of time, and the occupations of business, inadmissible as an excuse in all other cases, will form some apology for the defects of the following sheets. Until my arrival in Smyrna, I had not even formed the project of committing my casual remarks to the press, and it was there, being unemployed and stationary, that I sketched upon the spot the characters of the Turks and Greeks. The remainder was almost entirely written on my passage to England; during which, an accident tended to render my work still more defective. From the heat of the weather, and the extreme inconvenience below of the small vessel in which I was embarked, I endeavoured to write upon deck. On the first day of my making this attempt, a sudden gust of wind car-

ried all my notes overboard, and I had the mortification of seeing them in a moment strewed about upon the surface of the water. Were it not already too much lengthened, both in reality and in description, this might serve to add one more article to the catalogue of the miseries of human life.

My first idea upon this event was immediately to abandon the undertaking; but in a few days, urged by the tedious idleness of a life on ship-board, I determined to trust to memory, and again took up the task. Whether my time was badly or well employed, or this be admitted as a farther apology, will depend much on the particular sentiments of the reader. Be that as it may, I can at least look back to the hours thus employed without re-

gret, and forward to their probable consequences without apprehension.

It remains that I should say something of the character under which I traversed countries in inveterate hostility against Great Britain. Natural unwillingness to say any thing respecting my private history prevented me from touching upon this circumstance in the body of the work; but subsequent considerations have convinced me of the propriety, and, indeed, in some degree, of the necessity, of its being explained. Although educated in England, I am an American by birth, and having besides resided six years in that country, am justly entitled to the privileges of a citizen of it. It is true I love England, and would willingly shed my blood for her. It is true I do not regard

that American who does not also respect the parent of his own States, and the source of his liberties and laws. But I travelled under no fictitious character; and the dread of being supposed capable of doing so is the sole cause of the present apology.

ROBERT SEMPLE.

London, March 25, 1807.

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ROBERT SEAPLE

London, March 25, 1807.

JOURNEY TO LISBON, &c.

CHAP. I.

Lisbon.

I Left London on the 26th June 1805, with a design of repairing to Madrid as speedily as possible, on a business of some importance. Arrived at Falmouth, I found the packet for Lisbon on the point of sailing, and had scarcely time to move my baggage from the mail-coach on board, before the vessel got under way. It was on the evening of the 29th, with a fine breeze and moonlight, and I enjoyed as long as possible a dim view of the English coast. At day-break, on the morning of the 30th, we were out of sight of any land.

Nothing can be more uniform than a summer passage of eight days in the packet from Falmouth to Lisbon. We passed Cape Finisterre in the night, and saw no land till the 5th July, when we made the Burlings, a cluster of rocks on the west coast of Portugal, and the next morning were near Cape La Roque, a high land which forms the north side of the entrance of the Tagus. The pleasant village of Cintra is seen on the heights, and a convent, said to be built of cork, forms a conspicuous object near the summit of the mountains. In this convent every thing is made of cork, where it can possibly be employed. Even the plates are of that material. On approaching the shore, the Englishman begins to observe something of novelty. Heavy fishing-boats with large lateen sails plunge through a rough sea, and outstrip the packet. If they come near enough, his attention is drawn toward the mariners, whose dark complexions, meagre counte-

nances, and ragged dress, immediately announce a different race of men from those of the same occupation whom he has just left. We fire a gun, and one of them tacks toward us to put a pilot on board: As the sea is rough, this is a matter of some difficulty, and we are struck with the noise and vociferation of the people in the bark, who all, from the steersman down to the youngest boy, give directions how it is to be done. At length our pilot seizes a rope and drags himself upon deck. He is ragged and meagre, but not badly made; and in place of boots, he has two wisps of straw wrapped round his legs. He seems perfectly conscious however of the dignity of his character, and that he is a man of some weight in society. He gives his orders with precision, and to shew his consequence reprimands without cause the sailor at the helm, who in return, asks him where he bought his boots. The tide and wind both favoring us, however, we sail fastly up the gulph

of the Tagus, and after being visited by the health-boat, anchor the same evening off Lisbon.

This city can never cease to be a place of consequence whilst trade and commerce flourish in Europe. Had it not been for political events and considerations, it would probably have become the capital of Spain, there being no situation possessed of equal advantages in the whole Peninsula, as it may be called, of Europe, south of the Pyrenees. It is built upon several hills, the number of which it is not easy to ascertain amidst so many buildings; but which the natives say, amount to seven, like those of ancient Rome. It may rather be said to stand upon an arm of the sea, into which the Tagus falls, than upon the Tagus itself; that river not being navigable even for boats in all its long course, till within twelve or fourteen leagues of Lisbon, and the water before the town being salt, and frequently so rough, as to endanger the

ships at anchor there. The inhabitants of Lisbon, however, who are jealous of the honor of their river, affirm this to be a frivolous distinction, and that in the time of the rains, an immense body of fresh water is here brought down, so as often to cause more damage to the shipping than is ever occasioned by the wind and tide from the sea. However that may be, the situation is admirable, and the town, full of churches, palaces, domes, and spires, rising from the edge of the water up the ascents and over the tops of so many hills, presents from the bay one of the noblest views that can be imagined, and superior perhaps to that of any city in the world. In whatever situation we view it during our approach, it is imposing, but when we land the delusion vanishes. The streets are badly paved and full of filth; the houses, with here and there a latticed window, have a melancholy appearance, and the inhabitants, some in rags, and the remainder in dark coloured clothes, render

the whole still more gloomy. The powerful influence of climate already becomes perceptible. The Portuguese are generally dark complexioned and thin, with black hair, irascible and revengeful in their tempers, and eager in their gestures on trivial occasions. They are also said to be indolent, deceitful, and cowardly; but they are temperate in diet, and that may be classed at the head of their virtues, if indeed they have many more to add to it. They affect to talk of the Spaniards with great contempt, as being perhaps the next despicable nation to themselves with which they are acquainted. They have no public spirit, and consequently no national character. An Englishman or Frenchman may be distinguished in foreign countries by an air and manners peculiar to his nation, and which he would attempt in vain to disguise; but any meagre swarthy man may pass for a Portuguese.

The government has all the weakness of despotism in its old age. The prince

is the ignorant and superstitious chief of an ignorant and superstitious people. His navy depends on England for its best officers, and his army is in all respects despicable; but he heads a procession of monks better than any man in Europe, and if the French could be beaten with wax-tapers, the Portuguese might give peace to the world. Conformably to this disposition, the churches, convents, and monasteries are magnificent, and generally full of rich ornaments, fine marbles, mosaic work and paintings. No good man will laugh at any sincere attempt to pay a tribute of respect to the Supreme Being; but in Portugal he will observe with sorrow the numerous and miserable superstitions with which all such attempts are mingled. But let us wait a little, and not decide on the first impressions of comparison between this country and England; let us compare it with others. We are but beginning our journey, and before we get to the end of it may find other nations

within the pale of the Romish church, equally under its subjection. We may safely decide then that the Portuguese are grossly superstitious; but that they are more so than any other sect of Christians remains yet to be observed. For building their new churches, and religious houses, certain taxes are granted by government, and as these taxes are continued till the building be finished, it is astonishing how long a time it takes to complete them. The pious man, who has contributed, perhaps voluntarily, a certain annual sum toward building a church, feels loth that for want of one more year, and one more year's contribution, so good a work should fail. He therefore goes on contributing to the end of his life, and when he dies, makes sure of his soul by a donation in his will to the church of the Mother of God, or of the Heart of Jesus. Meanwhile the monks, who have the administration of all these sums, go on

thrivingly, and are indeed the only fat people in Portugal.

The part of Lisbon most deserving of attention is that which suffered so severely in the dreadful earthquake of 1755. It is not merely that all the flat at the foot of the amphitheatre of the surrounding hills is rebuilt in a regular manner, and excellently paved; but the ruins of great buildings still remaining on the tops of the heights in the heart of a populous city, have a singular and striking effect. Other nations erect monuments at a great expense, in commemoration of battles, earthquakes, and wide wasting fires. But nothing can speak so home to the heart as these awful remains which stand in perpetual memento to the inhabitants of Lisbon, of what has happened, and may again happen to the city.

But let what will happen, in spite of heretical prejudices, we must go to the opera to night, for it is Sunday, and Catalani sings. This charming singer could

not be supported by the receipts of the theatre, but the government allows her a pension of twelve thousand dollars annually, to ensure so valuable an acquisition to Portugal. The crowd goes in waves from the churches to the theatres, which are beyond comparison better filled on Sundays than on any other night in the week. There they talk together, but when Catalani sings, it is the fashion to be silent. As soon as she has finished, they break out again in commendation. Good Heavens what taste! what expression! what command of voice! She is really divine to night. It is indeed impossible to hear her without emotion, and whatever is the general emotion becomes an universal fashion. She truly charmed the ear.

In notes with many a winding bout,
Of linked sweetness long drawn out;
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running;
Untwisting all the chains that tie,
The secret soul of harmony.

The churches and the theatres will naturally first attract the stranger ; and the ruins cannot fail to awaken serious reflections. Should he be disposed to continue them he may ascend one of the hills, on the top of which, surrounded by a high wall, and planted thickly with trees, is the English burying ground. There is always to me something affecting in the sight of the grave of a fellow countryman in a foreign land ; how much more when they are crowded so thickly together. Among the many who came here for health and found a grave, lies Henry Fielding, an unrivalled delineator of human life and manners, and whose name will be remembered as long as true humour shall be relished in England. I could here fill up several pages with long inscriptions over the once illustrious dead ; but indeed, my good reader, you and I have a long journey before us, and shall therefore leave the drudgery to those who make books. Quitting the burying ground and keeping

the heights, we soon find ourselves on the outskirts of the town, which are composed of very mean houses, and inhabited by a race among whom cleanliness in all its branches appears wholly neglected, and where swine and miserable dogs are stretched out upon heaps of filth before every door. Fortunately this does not last long, and we presently come into the open fields on the north-west side of the town. The country, at this season, looks brown and parched up, and is wholly destitute of inclosures; a number of country seats, however, at a little distance, surrounded by trees and intermingled with vineyards, must, immediately after the rainy season, form a beautiful prospect. On the heights to the left is a range of windmills, which being, I suppose, similar to those used in Spain, tend to illustrate a passage in Don Quixote. Judging from those on the banks of the Thames, and throughout England, I had always hitherto considered the account of the battle with

the windmills, as too extravagant even for that extravagant knight : but those of this country being little, round, sturdy fellows, of about ten or twelve feet in height, might pass for the ghosts of giants, even to a sober English peasant, on a moonlight night. Passing onwards, we come to a deep and narrow valley, over which is thrown the noblest aqueduct which has been erected in Europe since the time of the Romans. It is, perhaps, the last also that will be erected for the sole end of carrying water for common purposes ; the discovery, that fluids when conveyed in pipes will rise to nearly their level, superseding the use of such stupendous structures. It consists of thirty-five arches, the centre one of immense height, but they are greatly too narrow in proportion, when viewed from a little distance. The inhabitants of Lisbon boast that they are the highest single arches in the world, which may be true ; but a double or triple row would have been equally useful and far more elegant. A noble

pathway, bordered by a wall of solid blocks of stone, leads across the summit, nearly on a level with the water, which makes a perpetual running sound on the inside. This sound is echoed along the arched stone roof of the aqueduct, and excites a pleasing sensation in the mind of the passenger, who turning to the other hand, and looking over the parapet, beholds beneath him; at a great depth, the stony bed of a considerable stream, under the center arch, and which in winter must run with all the fury of a mountain torrent. Over this stream a bridge is thrown, and a road leads through the valley; the travellers on which, when viewed from above, seem diminished in size to the circumference of their hats. Upon the whole, this aqueduct is justly a national boast among the Portuguese; and in a country where so few great undertakings, not connected with religion, are carried to perfection, it stands like a giant amidst pigmies and abortions. It is singular that the same

nation have erected in America the only great, perhaps the only, aqueduct which exists in all that continent. It is near the town of Rio Janeiro, and is thrown across a valley wider than that near Lisbon. I only saw this last at some little distance, yet I cannot help thinking that the two were constructed at no great distance of time from each other, and that whichever was the first, served as a model to the second.

It is not my intention to write long descriptions of all the cities through which I may pass, and Lisbon has been often described. It may be observed, however, that many little hamlets, once round it, are now absorbed in it, as in the case of London; and Belem, which is called a distinct village, lower down on the river, is in fact one of the suburbs of Lisbon, being connected with it all the way by buildings along the water, although seven miles distant from the heart of the city. Here is an excellent botanical garden and

a cabinet of natural history, worthy of being visited by all who come to Lisbon. Two very ancient military statues stand at the entrance of the garden, and I must confess I viewed them with much satisfaction. After being stunned, almost to satiety, with Greece and Rome, we catch with pleasure at the most trifling remains of those brave nations, which existed perhaps before either, but sunk under the arts more than the arms of the latter. These statues are interesting even to the artist, as illustrating the first efforts of sculpture amongst a people still rude in the arts, their shields and swords being embossed as it were, and not detached from the stone. They were dug up not very long ago at Montalegre, where they had lain for ages, and no doubt many such antiquarian riches lie buried beneath the surface of the earth, never again to be brought into day.

At Belem is a castle, and a battery running out into the water, the cannon of