

from the camp of St. Roch, and there appeared as actors. They perhaps would have wished for a less easy victory over the timid inhabitants of the woods, which they are accustomed to chase, and not coolly to massacre; but the forests of Compiègne and Fontainebleau had never offered them those legions of fleet herds, filing off by thousands before them, and this sight, perhaps, the only one of the kind in Europe, seemed highly to gratify their curiosity.

There is another place to which, during the visit to St. Ildefonso, the catholic king goes once to carry thither the noise and terror which accompany the chase. I mean the environs of Paular, a monastery of Carthusians, at the foot and on the other side of the enormous mountains which command the castle. During the rest of the year it is the asylum of peace and silence. The Paular, one of the richest convents of the Carthusians in Spain, is situated in a charming valley, watered by a considerable

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able rivulet, which runs gently through the groves and meadows. This stream drives a paper-mill, the noise of which is the only sound repeated by the foliary echoes of the neighbourhood. A Frenchman, for in what country is not a Frenchman to be found, manages this manufacture on the account of the monks, and seems in this corner of the world to have forgotten both his country and language. We one day recognized each other by that species of instinct by which two natives of the same country are reciprocally attracted, who first explain themselves by a smile, of which their common language soon becomes the interpreter. I had been to visit the monastery of Paular, and had forgotten to provide myself with letters of recommendation to the prior. Excluded from this pious asylum, I expiated my negligence by wandering, without knowing whether I went, and without provisions, about the monastery. My guardian angel, or the genius of the country, conducted me towards the paper-

per-mill; I took the lucky path, and the director of this little manufactory conjecturing I was a Frenchman, accosted me and offered his service. His intercession opened to me the doors of the convent, and procured me proofs of the hospitable generosity of its silent inhabitants.

There is nothing remarkable in the monastery of Paular, except the great cloister in which Vincent Carducho has painted the principal events of the life of Saint-Bruno.

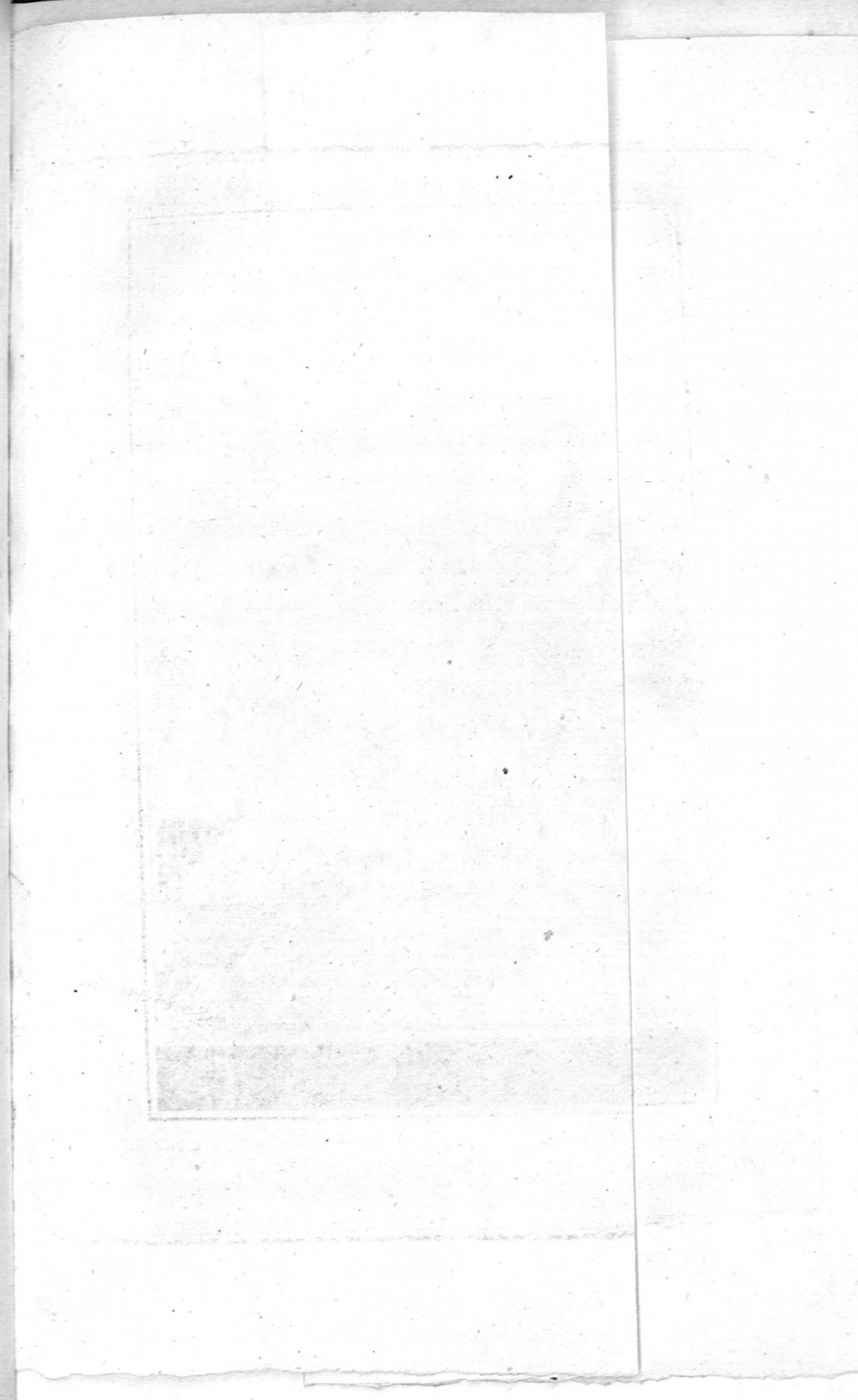
I shall now accompany the reader to the castle of *Rio Frio* three leagues from St. Ildefonso. Herds of deer wander in the woods by which it is surrounded. These animals, which in general are so timid, appear to live here in a security that excites surprize in the traveller, and which is disturbed but once a year, when the king makes them pass gently in review, and chuses at leisure those he means to kill. The castle of *Rio Frio*  
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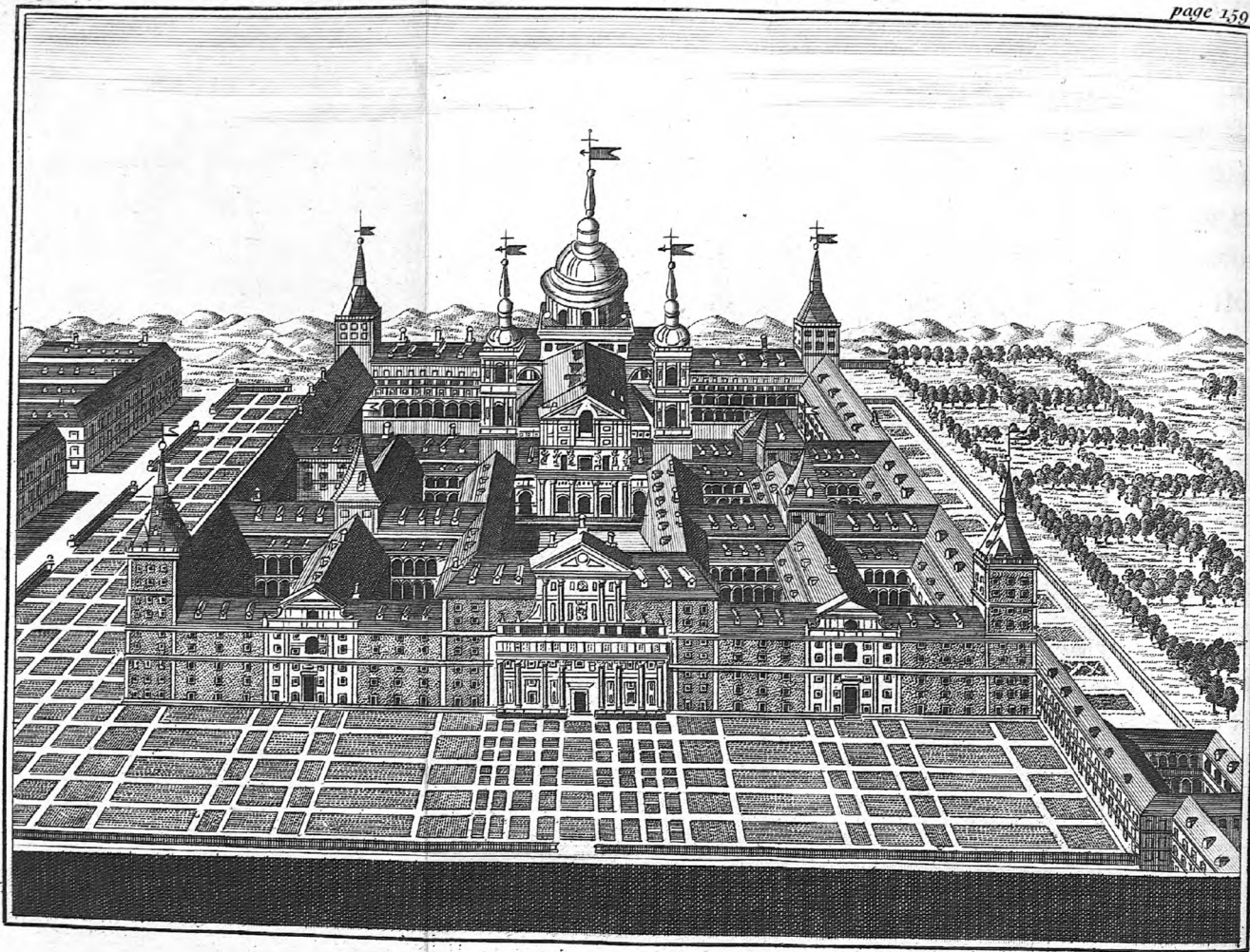
is situated in an extremely sandy soil. It was built by queen Isabella of Farnese, who after the death of Philip V, retired to St. Ildefonso during the whole reign of Ferdinand VI, son of that monarch, but by another wife; and determined to make the castle of Rio Frio her last abode. That it might recall to her memory the new palace of Madrid, which neither she nor her husband had the good fortune to reside in even a single day, she ordered it to be built after the same plan, but of less dimensions. Her own son Charles III, being called to the throne of Spain by the death of Ferdinand VI, her project of retreat vanished, and the castle of Rio Frio was abandoned even before it was finished.

We will now leave St. Ildefonso and take the road to the Escorial. At about three quarters of a league from the castle we pass the Eresma over a bridge, and arrive at Balsain, a village situated in a hollow shaded by thick woods. The  
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kings of Spain had formerly a hunting seat here, to which Philip V, sometimes went, and where he conceived the project of building St. Ildefonso, in this wild country, which promised to gratify at once his taste for solitude and for the chase. The French ambassador, before the king built his palace at St. Ildefonso, resided at this old castle. As soon as we have passed it, we climb for two leagues the tops of the high mountains which separate the two Castiles. The road is shaded by high pines, the tops of which are frequently lost in the fogs which rise from the bosoms of deep valleys. The air becomes insensibly colder as we approach the summits of the mountains; and when we have arrived at the seven points of rocks which, from St. Ildefonso, have the appearance of an immense parapet wall, a new object presents itself to the admiring eye. Before us we view the vast plains of new Castile, and perceive Madrid considerably within the bounds of the horizon over which the sight wanders to an immense distance.

We





VIEW OF THE ESCURIAL.

We are here in another country, and find another sky and a different temperature. The traveller frequently leaves behind him clouds above clouds, to which the mountains seem to serve as boundaries, and instantly passes into the most serene air. The rays of the sun lost in the thick fogs he had just passed through, add colouring and embellishment to the prospect around him. He soon precipitates himself rather than descends from the top of this magnificent belvedere, and at the end of two leagues arrives at the town of Guadarrama, through which passes the great road from Paris to Madrid. He crosses this road to follow that which leads to the Escorial, at which the court resides six weeks after leaving St. Ildefonso.

This famous monastery is situated at the midway of the ascent of the chain of mountains which terminate old Castile. The choice which Philip V, made of this steep situation indicates the savage and melancholy character which history



history gives to that prince. We will not here, however, repeat their censures. The Spaniards, even at this distance of time, have not yet abandoned him to the censure of posterity as we have our Louis XI, whom he resembled in more points than one. His memory, besides, seems to command respect, at the approach of this royal convent, where we perpetually hear him called *our holy founder*, where his ashes are deposited, and where his image every where meets the eye. This foundation, as is well known, was in consequence of a vow made on the day of the battle of St. Quentin, at which, however, Philip was not present. It is known also that he dedicated it to St. Lawrence, of whom that day was the feast. In Spain it is called by the name of this saint (*San Lorenzo*) and every thing in the Escorial reminds us of the instrument of his martyrdom. It is not only seen upon the doors, windows, altars, rituals and sacerdotal habits, but the edifice itself bears its form. It is a quadrangular building

building with the principal front to the west, behind which is a mountain; the opposite side, which faces Madrid, takes the form of the shortened handle of a gridiron reversed; and the four feet are represented by the spires of four little square towers which rise above the four angles. I will not undertake with the Abbé de Vayrac and Colmenar, to give the number, no doubt exaggerated by them, of all the doors, windows, courts, &c. of this famous convent. In the whole, it certainly has something awful, but it does not perfectly correspond to the idea formed of it according to the accounts we have received. Its form did not permit the architect to make the most of its vast extent; and it is not till we have passed the numerous dormitories, and wandered among the courts, stair-cases and galleries that the imagination completes what a first view had only sketched. There is nothing magnificent in the architecture. It has rather that serious simplicity more proper for a convent than the splendid elegance

which announces the residence of a great monarch. The front to the west alone has a fine portail formed by large columns of the doric order, half sunk in the wall, and on each side two great doors of noble dimensions. By this portail we pass to an elegant square court, at the bottom of which is a church. This principal entrance is never open for the kings of Spain and the princes of the blood, except on two solemn occasions. When they come for the first time to the Escorial, and when their remains are deposited there in the vault which awaits them. I could not but imagine I perceived the emblem of the gates of life, and those of eternity, which, for the children of kings, as well as for the meanest of mortals, open but once and immediately shut again for ever.

On this side, the door of the church is announced by a fine peristyle; over the front of which are colossal statues of six kings of Israel, which appear as in equilibrium upon their slight pedestals.

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These six kings had some share in the founding or rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, as we are informed by the inscriptions upon the base of their statues. The two in the middle are David and Solomon, to whom the sculptor has endeavoured to give the likenesses of Charles V, and Philip II, his son; so ingenious has flattery ever been in seeking new channels to convey its homage, and turning to its use even what seems least adapted to its purpose.

The front to the south is entirely destitute of ornament; but in four stories there are nearly three hundred windows. The two great doors of entrance are on the opposite front. The whole edifice is built with hewn stone of a species of bastard granite, which by its colour, become brown with time, adds to the austerity of the building. The quarry where it was dug is in the neighbourhood of the Escorial, and it is said that this was one motive for the choice of the situation of the Escorial. It furnished blocks

of such considerable dimensions, that three stones were sufficient to form the chambranle of the greatest door-ways, and each step of the principal stair-case is composed but of one.

When the court is not at the Escorial, it is but a vast convent inhabited by two hundred monks, under the inspection of a prior. At the arrival of the court the convent is transformed into a palace. The monks are banished to the apartments in the south and west sides, and the principal cells become the habitations of the royal family, and the nobility and gentry of both sexes, by whom it is accompanied. The king himself has his in the narrow space which forms the handle of the gridiron. Philip II, seems to have wished to make this a retreat, where sovereign greatness might retire to hide itself beneath the shade of altars, and become familiarized to its tomb; and his successors, faithful to this vow of humility, still content themselves with the same modest

deft habitation. It communicates, by a stair-case, with the church and vestry, in which the arts united have displayed all their magnificence.

The church is in the form of a Grecian cross, above which is a dome. The whole building rests upon pillars, perhaps rather too massy, in the interstices of which are several altars. The architecture is simple but majestic. Several subjects from holy writ, and some sacred allegories are painted in fresco in the dome, by the magical pencil of Luca Giordano. The great altar, which is ascended by twenty steps, contains three different orders of architecture, one above the other, in the form of a mutilated pyramid: no expence has been spared in decoration. Richness and elegance are united in the tabernacle. The columns are of the most precious marble; the interstices are filled up with paintings by Lucas Cambiaso and Pellegrino Tibaldi. Yet the whole has something parsimonious in its appearance, which forms a strik-

ing contrast with the majesty of the edifice. It is too lofty for its breadth, and appears to be crammed by force into the narrow space it occupies, as if it had not been erected for the church to which it belongs. But the two monuments which accompany it are really beautiful; these perfectly accord with the first of the three orders of which it is composed, that is doric with fluted columns. The tombs are those of Charles V, and Philip II. These two sovereigns are on their knees, and seem to bow their majesty before the King of Kings. They occupy the forepart of a kind of open chamber lined with black marble, by the side of the altar. There is something at once solemn and grand in the two monuments. The spectator, while contemplating them, cannot but profoundly reflect on the vain insignificance of human greatness, and the abyss in which it is sooner or later swallowed up. The tranquillity that reigns around them seems to be that of death, against which the lords of the earth vainly arm themselves

selves with sepulchral pride. These reflections become still more serious when applied to two sovereigns, who, during their lives, disturbed the world with their ambition, and are now condemned to eternal silence by the only law which they could not escape,

The two nearest altars to the high altar, are those of the Annunciation and St. Jerome, which have beauties for devotees and goldsmiths. Two great doors, upon which are two indifferent paintings by Lucas Cambiaso, open and leave the eye dazzled with innumerable relics in vases, and cases of silver and silver gilt, enriched with precious stones. There is also a large St. Lawrence of solid silver, upon the breast of which are some spoils of this Martyr which his disciples saved from the flames. The church contains also some good paintings by artists of the second order, among which are several apostles by Navarette, known by the appellation of the dumb, the fall of the angels, and the martyrdom of



St. Ursula, by Pellegrino Tibaldi. In the two vestries particularly, master-pieces of painting are scattered with such profusion as is capable of fatiguing the admiration even of connoisseurs. In the first, in which the light is not good, there are three by Paul Veronese, one by Titian, two by Tintoret, one by Rubens, and one by Spagnoletto. The principal vestry contains a still greater number, and would alone be sufficient to justify the fame of the Escorial.

I shall only mention the paintings most striking to eyes least accustomed to judge of the productions of the arts. That which has the greatest effect is the altar piece, by Claude Coello, a Portuguese, otherwise little known. It retraces a scene, of which the vestry was the theatre. Charles II. accompanied by the nobility of his retinue, is represented on his knees before the holy sacrament, held by the prior of the monastery; the monarch went thither publicly to supplicate pardon for the profanation

fanation of a host, lacerated by impious hands, and revenged by a miracle. The holy meditation of the monarch, the appearance of compunction in his features, the attitude of the prior, and those of the monks, by whom he is surrounded, and the manner in which so many figures are grouped without confusion, give to the whole of this painting the most sensible effect; and although it be far from the best piece, there is none which leaves a greater impression upon the generality of spectators. Real connoisseurs, and those who are dazzled by great names, prefer a fine holy Virgin by Guido; two paintings by Vandyck, one the woman taken in adultery, the other St. Jerome naked to the middle, and writing as he is dictated to by an angel, whose freshness of complexion produces the most agreeable contrast with the fallow skin of the aged saint. A large picture by Tintoret, in which this painter has indulged all the caprice of his imagination, in giving a representation of the Lord's supper.

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An assumption by Annibal Carracci; several pieces by Titian, and two, very admirable for the colouring, one a St. Sebastian of the natural size, and the other our Saviour disputing with a doctor of the law; three by Raphael; one called *the pearl*, on account of its superior excellence, is a holy family, in which the infant Jesus has a grace, a justness of expression, and an exactness of drawing which belongs only to this great master; and another the visitation, in which the modesty of the Virgin, and her embarrassment on appearing before Elizabeth with the unexpected and already apparent signs of her pregnancy cannot be too much admired.

Less celebrated artists have also contributed to the decoration of the vestry. I shall mention but two; the chevaliers Maxime and Romanelli. The first has exhibited the beauty of Guido's forms in the painting where Christ disputes in the temple with the doctors; and the graces and sweetness of the pencil of

Albano

Albano appear in that of the latter, the Virgin seated careffed by her holy infant. I cannot leave the veftry without mentioning a kind of obelisk in filigreen, ornamented with precious ftones, concealed behind the fine painting of Claude Coello, and which is never expofed except at the celebration of the miracle it represents. It may be imagined, without my faying it, that this veftry contains, in large drawers, the moft rich facerdotal ornaments, chandeliers, facred vafes and the like, which are greater proofs of the magnificence of the kings of Spain than of their piety.

The fame obfervation may be made on the pantheon their fepulchre, to which a door in the paffage from the church to the veftry opens. The ftair-cafe is entirely covered with marble, as is alfo the inside of the pantheon. This is divided into feveral chambers, each of which has its particular diftinction. One of them is what is called the *podri-dero*, or the *rotting place*. Here the bodies

dies of the kings and the royal family are deliverd up to the first ravages of corruption. The bodies of the princes and princeffes of Spain, who have not reigned, are deposited in another. It is in this august and dismal assembly that the duke of Vendôme is placed, like M. de Turenne at St. Denis, among the remains of our kings. Many people are still of opinion, that the first of these generals was interred in a village in the kingdom of Valencia, where he died. I examined the register of the monastery, and found an account of his remains being brought thither, and I afterwards learned, that they arrived at the Escurial the 9th of September 1712, and were received by my lord Cotron, captain of the guards of Philip V. and the count de Las Torres; that they were first deposited in the old pantheon, whence they were transferred to that of the princes. The real pantheon serves as the last asylum only for the kings and queens of Spain. It seems as if they wished to be revenged of death, which  
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levels all ranks, by making this pre-eminence survive them.

It is impossible not to feel a kind of religious awe when we descend into this vault, in which deceased grandeur seems to struggle against annihilation? A few rays of half extinguished light with difficulty penetrate this cold abode. To supply the defect, a superb lustre, pendant from the cupola, is lighted up on extraordinary occasions; but except in these cases the curious are conducted by a flambeau into the middle of the motionless and silent assembly of sovereigns of both sexes. By the unsteady light of the flambeau we discover, opposite the door by which we enter, an altar and a crucifix of black marble upon a pedestal of porphyry. The rest corresponds to this melancholy magnificence. The cases which contain the bodies of the kings and queens are placed on each side the altar, in three stories, and in different compartments, formed by fine fluted pilasters of marble;

ble; the cafes are of bronze, simple, yet noble in their form. The pantheon is not yet full, but the empty cafes are ready to open to receive their deposits. A salutary yet terrible lesson, which kings have not refused to receive from the bold designs of an able architect.

Philip II. repofes in the moft elevated tomb of the firft divifion. He it was who laid the foundation of the pantheon; but it was not finished till the reign of Philip IV. as we are informed by the infcription over the inner door of the ftair-cafe. It has yet been opened but to two fovereigns of the houfe of Bourbon, the young king Louis I. who afcended the throne in 1721, and died the fame year, and queen Amelia, wife to the prefent monarch; as if the afhes of two royal houfes, fo long divided by political intereft, were ftill averfe to uniting even in the tomb. Philip V. and his queen are interred at St. Ildefonfo; Ferdinand VI. and queen Barbara

Barbara his wife, at Madrid, in a convent which they had founded.

The following well-known line cannot be applied to this temple of death;

*Le temps qui détruit tout en affermit les murs\*.*

The ravages of time, seconded by the damps, has not spared even the marble. Here we are at once led to reflect on the frailty of man, whatever may be his rank, and the perishable nature of his works, which in his pride he dares consecrate to immortality.

The choir of the monks of the Escorial is above the great door of the church, and opposite the high altar. The walls are decorated with paintings in fresco, the subjects of which have relation to S. Jerome and St. Lawrence. The pulpit, notwithstanding its enormous size, turns upon a pivot with

\* Time, which destroys all things, has given strength to the walls.



surprising facility. Behind the choir is a master-piece of sculpture; a Christ in marble, of the natural size; it was executed by Benvenuto-Cellini, by whom the constable de Bourbon was killed upon the walls of Rome.

From the sides of the choir begins a gallery which runs along the two fronts of the church, and communicates by four doors to the first story of the monastery; it is intersected by several spaces between the joints and pillars which contain a part of the congregation during the time of divine service. Thither I frequently went, that I might be penetrated with the profound sentiments which enter the minds of persons, the least devout, at the awful aspect of a temple. That of the Escorial disposes more than any other to such meditations. Its mass, the solidity of which has already survived its founder, who sleeps within its walls, almost two centuries, and will survive him for twenty more; the memory of this imperious

monarch, which for a long time past has there received no other tribute than funeral prayers, and whose shade is supposed to wander in this melancholy monument of his fear and his piety; the sound of a hundred voices which make the roofs re-echo with the praises of the eternal being; all dispose the mind to serious reflection, with which it is a thousand times more satisfied than with vain and giddy dissipation. Ye who look with envy upon transient grandeur, and who wish to vanquish that restless ambition which embitters your days and may render them culpable, visit this temple and resign yourselves to meditation; you will find your heart softened and your reason fortified; your eyes will be filled with tears, and you will return more resigned to your fate, more humane and more happy.

On leaving the gallery to go to the royal apartments, we pass a long corridor, remarkable for the paintings in fresco on the walls. It is called the

hall of battles, because the paintings represent several of those of the ancient kings of Spain against the Moors, The perspective is badly observed, but the attitudes, dresses and the lively colouring excite the admiration of all connoisseurs.

I shall not describe a small chapel adjoining to the choir, in which is a large painting of St. Ferdinand, the master-piece of Luca Giordano, and a few other middling performances, nor several other places in which paintings are to be found. The art of fatiguing is that of saying every thing.

I cannot, however, avoid mentioning the two great cloisters: one above, the other below: paved with marble, and of vast dimensions. The paintings in fresco of the lower cloister are, perhaps, more extolled than they deserve. If the connoisseur seeks the effects of perspective, and brilliant colouring, he will be deceived in his expectations; but if he admires

admires heads full of expression, and the great and vigorous forms of the school of Michael Angelo, he will return more than once to examine the principal events of the life of our Saviour, painted in almost colossal figures by Pellegrino Tibaldi, round the cloister.

Both the cloisters are entered by narrow and obscure corridors. The chief defect in the architecture of the Escorial, is that, in general, the principal objects are not so placed as to have the best effect. The portal is seen but by accident; nothing announces the great stair-case, you arrive at the foot of it before you suppose it to be near. There is a fine inner court, ornamented with two rows of porticos, of noble architecture; the center is occupied by a small circular temple, with four doors, of which the inner columns correspond to four stone basons, each as it were under the protection of an angel. This is perhaps the most regular piece of architecture in the Escorial: but it seems

to be wilfully concealed from the eyes of the curious; it is seen but from the windows of the two great cloisters, to which it serves as a center; and even then you are in doubt whether it be a court or a garden, for it is divided into four parts, laid out and planted like a parterre.

The great cloister below, which has a view into the court, has four principal doors; two of which communicate with the church and vestry. By a third you enter the capitulary hall, which contains several paintings by Titian, and one by Velasquez, representing the sons of Jacob bringing him the bloody garment of their brother Joseph. The effect of the perspective, and the correctness of the drawing, in this piece, are admirable; but more nobleness of design might be wished. A Virgin by Raphael, a St. Jerom by Guerchino, a crowning with thorns by Vandyck, three pieces by Rubens, and three by Spagnoletto are also found here. But the pieces  
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