

nares, we proceed along a part of the fine road, planted with trees, which leads from the capital to Pardo, a royal mansion where the court resides from the 7th of January to the holy week. There is nothing remarkable in this edifice. The road runs for some time along the banks of the Manzanares, and on the opposite side we see an ancient country residence of the kings of Spain, around which the large trees cover, to a certain degree, the nakedness of the horizon. This is the *Casa del Campo*, which the last kings of the house of Austria very much frequented, but which has been neglected by those of the family of Bourbon.

The gate of St. Vincent, by which we enter, is new and tolerably elegant. We afterwards painfully ascend to the palace, which standing alone upon an eminence, without either terrace, park or garden, has rather the appearance of a citadel than that of a place of residence for one of the most powerful monarchs in

in the world. But this first impression is dissipated as we approach, and when we have entered the edifice. Its form is almost square, and there is a spacious court in the middle, around which are large piazzas. The apartments and offices of the principal persons of the court are upon the ground floor, which they wholly occupy. A fine marble stair-case, the ascent of which is perhaps too gentle, leads to the first story. The sides of the stair-case are decorated with the richest sculpture and architecture.

We afterwards pass on to the king's apartments, which are of the most magnificent dimensions. The hall, in which the throne is placed, and which is called *salon de los reynos*, may be admired even by those who have seen the gallery of Versailles. The different dresses of the vast Spanish monarchy are painted in fresco upon the ceiling by a Venetian named Tiepolo; a species of decoration which can only have place in the palace of the sovereigns of Spain. Fine  
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vases, little statues, and antique busts, are distributed upon all the tables. The rest of the ornaments are of Spanish production. The glasses, perhaps the largest in Europe, were manufactured at St. Ildefonso, as well as what is called the Bohemian glass, of the window. The tapestry of which the figures were copied from good paintings, was made in a manufactory near the gates of Madrid; and the inexhaustible and variegated quarries of the Peninsula furnished marble for the tables.

The apartments adjoining to the gallery are not less richly furnished. The nearest is that in which the king dines. The famous Mengs, who has painted the ceiling, the subject of which is the assembly of the gods and goddesses on Olympus, has displayed such rich and brilliant colouring, and such graceful forms, as prove him equal in execution to the greatest painters of Italy. During the summer, the portraits of Philip II. Philip III. and his queen, Philip IV. and

and the duke d'Olivarez, all on horseback, painted by Velasquez, and those of Philip V. and the queen Isabella Farnese his second wife, by Charles Vanloo, are substituted for the tapestry. It is not necessary to be a connoisseur to be struck with the astonishing superiority of the first of these. The fine form of the horse of Philip the Fourth, and the animation of his whole body, cannot be too much admired.

The next apartment is that where the king gives audience. The ceiling, which represents the apotheosis of Hercules, is also painted by Mengs. This charming painter, whose women and children are models of grace and delicacy, does not equally succeed in the portraits of men. To render them nervous, he somewhat exaggerates their form, and makes them appear rather heavy. His last painting, on which he was employed at Rome when the fine arts and his friends were deprived of him by death, is placed in the same apartment ;  
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it is an annunciation. The Virgin has an admirable expression of modesty and sweetness; neither Corregio nor Albano ever produced any thing more pleasing. Some of the angels about the celestial throne are equally finished. But it is to be wished the angel Gabriel had a countenance and attitude more suitable to his message. The Supreme Being has not that supernatural grandeur which Guido or Paul Veronese would have given him. However, there is in this apartment a large painting by the same master, which could not have been more highly finished by either of the two latter; this is an adoration of the shepherds, in which the men, women and children are equally beautiful and full of expression. His works compose the principal decoration of the king's bed-chamber; it seems as if the monarch wished to mark the distinguished protection he gave to this great painter, by surrounding himself by his productions. They have all undoubtedly some merit, but are eclipsed by a descent from

the cross, which, according to connoisseurs, is his greatest production. The eye is never tired with contemplating the deep and tender grief of St. John, whose eyes, wearied with weeping, seem to shew the source of tears to be exhausted; the sublime attitude of the Virgin, who expects no comfort for her sorrows, but from heaven; and the softer, but not more affecting affliction of the Magdalen, who preserves all her charms in the midst of the general grief she participates. I have frequently heard the colour of the dead body criticised. *This Christ, said they, seems to be of stone.* I was induced to think the same, until one day accompanying some foreigners who adopted the criticism, I heard one of them exclaim with transport in commendation of the truth of the colouring; surely, said he, in a low voice, *this painter must have seen many dead bodies, to have been able to imitate them so well.* The author of the reflection was an experienced surgeon, who, until that moment, had not opened his lips upon the subject.

The critics were silent, and we recollected the ancient proverb, *ne futor ultra credam.*

I shall not attempt to enumerate all the pictures in the palace of Madrid, an account of the principal ones alone would fill a volume; but I thought the works of Mengs, scarcely known except in Spain and at Rome, merited an exception. I shall only take notice of a cabinet entirely decorated with porcelain, a curiosity more singular than pleasing, which the *Cicerone* of Madrid wishes to have admired, but concerning which it is most prudent to be silent. We will pass on to other apartments, where admiration stands in no need of being excited.

The chamber, that from the apartment in which the throne is placed, leads to the residence of the prince and princess of Asturias, is too much filled with the admirable paintings crowded into it. Among the twelve capital pictures of



Titian, is a Venus blindfolding the eyes of Love; Venus, at her toilette, whose image is half reflected in the glass; a Sisyphus; a Prometheus; a painting of Adam and Eve, which has for its companion the copy which Rubens disdained not to make from it; and several heads all possessing that exactness of expression and colouring which Titian alone knew how to give. Two pictures by Paul Veronese, several by Bassan, and a Judith by Tintoret, are seen with pleasure in the same chamber. The next apartment contains a few by Luca Giordano, among which are a dying Seneca; three or four of the school of Rubens; and Isaac blessing Jacob, whom he takes for Esau, by Spagnoletto. The dining room of the prince of Asturias is in like manner hung with pictures; there are several by Murillo and Spagnoletto, a few by Titian, two by Teniers, and particularly two admirable pieces by Velasquez, one of which represents the forge of Vulcan, the other a Spanish general,



general, to whom the keys of a city are given up.

In the adjoining apartments, among a great number of paintings by the first masters, are an adoration by Rubens, and a carrying of the cross by Raphael, which alone are worth a collection. In the first Rubens has displayed all the magic of his pencil, his richness of drapery, and all the magnificence of composition. It is impossible not to be struck by the noble air and grandeur of one of the kings. His carriage, attitude, and retinue seem to announce him commissioned by the universe to congratulate its divine author upon an event of such importance to all mankind; he seems to command at once respect, admiration, and devotion.

The painting of Raphael inspires sentiments more affecting, though not less profound. The Saviour of the world sinking beneath the weight of his cross rather than that of his grief, and preserv-

ing in the midst of his persecutors, who force him along and ill treat him, a resignation and serenity which would disarm cruelty itself, appears less concerned for his own sufferings than earnest in endeavouring to console his afflicted mother, who strives to soften his persecutors, and the supplicating women who are overwhelmed with grief. This sublime conception penetrates the coldest hearts with the august truths of religion, and preaches them in a more eloquent manner than that in which they have ever been delivered from the mouths of sacred orators. The impression which results from these two great compositions, renders the mind almost insensible to the beauties of other paintings near them, in which Titian, Vandyck and Raphael himself have displayed less affecting ideas. A tribute of admiration must however be paid to two master-pieces of Corregio, one of which represents our Saviour in the garden of olives, and the other the Virgin dressing the child Jesus.

Paintings of a different kind in the apartments of the Infanta, daughter to the king, receive a different homage. In the first chamber, one by Giordano, in imitation of Rubens, presents the painter himself, working at the portrait of a princess; there are also several voluptuous paintings by this master of the Flemish school; a combat of gladiators, in which the vigour of Lanfranc's pencil is easily discovered; and a capital piece by Pouffin, the subject of which forms a singular contrast to the devotional paintings of which we have already spoken. This is a dance formed by a troop of nymphs about the statue of the god of gardens; the variety of their attitudes, all expressive and graceful, their easy shape and the beauty of their form, all breath the pleasures of youth and love; some crown with garlands the statue of the lascivious god, others—— But we will draw a veil over this part of the painting, which the modesty of the painter has purposely placed in the shade.

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The adjoining apartments are filled with paintings of lesser merit, if we except a grand composition by Paul Veronese, and a piece by Lanfranc, the figures of which, although a little tinctured with grimace, discover in them the vigorous and energetic touch of the painter. The dining-room of the Infanta is highly embellished by the indefatigable pencil of Luca Giordano, whose fertile imagination at first astonishes, but afterwards becomes fatiguing. In a cabinet adjoining to the dining-room are also some pieces by Rubens; for this painter, who was twice in Spain, left there, perhaps, more productions of his brilliant and easy pencil, than any where else. This cabinet contains likewise one of the best portraits Titian ever produced; that of Charles V. reaching to below the knees. An engraving was lately made from it by a young engraver of Madrid, named Selena, who promises to become an excellent artist.

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The apartments of the Infanta contain as great a number of admirable paintings as those already mentioned; some are by Murillo, and several by Rubens, which abound in fire and expression. With these I shall conclude my list, lest I should fatigue my readers with a barren catalogue which can only excite disgust; it is sufficient to remind them, that according to the opinion of those who have seen the different collections of the sovereigns of Europe, there is no one which is superior to that in the palace of Madrid, either with respect to choice or number.

It is true there are but few paintings of the French school, but the best productions of those of Italy, Flanders and Spain are found in abundance; those of the latter especially, less known than the two others, although of equal merit, are worthy of all the attention of connoisseurs; they perhaps may not excel in nobleness of form, or in grace, but whoever has seen the productions  
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of Spagnoletto, Velasquez and Murillo, both at Madrid and in the Escorial, cannot but admit that the Spanish school is not inferior to any other in correctness of design, the art of perspective, and especially in the vivid carnation of its colouring.

The chapel of the palace contains nothing remarkable of this kind, but its architectural proportions are exact and beautiful; and what more particularly contributes to its decoration, are sixteen columns of black marble, which extend to the frieze. It is to be regretted that in order to procure this number, the eight blocks which were whole, have been perpendicularly sawn. However, as by their position they were not to stand without support, they are placed against the wall, in which they seem to be half sunk.

The palace of Madrid is entirely new. That which Philip V. inhabited, having been burned, the monarch wished to have

have it rebuilt upon the same foundation. An architect, from Piedmont, laid before him a most magnificent plan, the model of which is preserved in a neighbouring building. Philip V. was deterred by the expence necessary to carry the plan into execution, and adopted one more simple. But it is to be regretted that the palace, in its present state, cost as much as that of the Italian architect would have done, and yet it is not finished. When I left Spain two wings were building to it, which will give to the whole a more majestic form, but must hide the principal front in such a manner as to render it inaccessible, except from a great square, that can never be made regular, without an enormous expence. At the end of the square is a large edifice, not sufficiently seen, which contains a curious collection of ancient and foreign arms, arranged with great order and carefully preserved.

This is called the *Armeria*, or arsenal. The most remarkable things here are neither

ther cimeters set with diamonds; nor complete sets of armour, not even that of St. Ferdinand; but those of ancient American warriors. A long enumeration of all these curiosities is carefully made to the traveller, when he is admitted into the arsenal, for which he must have an order from the grand equerry, and if he be a Frenchman, even the sword worn by Francis I. at the battle of Pavia, is not forgotten. Neither Philip V. nor Ferdinand VI. ever resided in the new palace of Madrid; Charles III. came not to it until some years after his arrival in Spain. These three monarchs had confined themselves to that inhabited by the Austrian family, in which Philip II. endeavoured to overturn the system of Europe, whence Philip VI. calmly saw his vast empire dismembered, where the weak Charles II. learned that the powers of Europe previously divided it as a vacant heritage, where the famous princesses des Ursins played off and repelled the intrigues to which she at length became a victim, and whence  
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Philip V. sent armies into Italy to conquer the Parmesan and the kingdom of Naples, and in which he died.—I mean the palace known to foreigners by the name of *Buen Retiro*.

This palace is situated upon an eminence, at the extremity of the city. Never had a royal mansion less the appearance of a palace. It is a very irregular building, and exhibits nothing majestic in any one point of view. It contains, however, a long suite of apartments, which, at a small expence, might be made habitable. The gardens into which they have a view are neglected. The want of water, and the nature of the soil render them little susceptible of embellishment. There are a few statues worthy of the attention of the curious; that of Charles V. trampling upon a monster, which is supposed to be the emblem of heresy; and an equestrian statue of Philip IV. by an able sculptor of Florence. The palace of Retiro contained also many valuable pictures;

tures; but the greatest part of them have been removed to the new palace. Some very valuable pieces however still remain; a few by Rubens, several by Giordano, and portraits of princes and princesses of the two last families. The most remarkable piece is that called the *Cason*, not on account of [the rich gilding with which it is overloaded, but because all the pannels of the inner balcony are painted in fresco by the fertile pencil of Luca Giordano. The ceiling is one of the noblest paintings of this artist. It represents allegorically the institution of the order of the golden-fleece.

I shall mention only two other paintings in this palace. One of Philip V. seated by the side of his wife Isabella of Farnese, and surrounded by all his family of both sexes. The monarch is forgotten; nothing appears but the good father of a family. It is extremely affecting to see, united in the same piece, so many princes and princesses, who have had an influence on the destiny of Europe,

rope, and who, laying aside the splendour of majesty, seem to be wholly employed in enjoying the happiness of seeing themselves assembled. Charles Vanloo perhaps, erred in displaying too much magnificence in the decoration of the hall. The figures he has painted have a paleness from the too brilliant colour of the furniture.

The other picture is less remarkable from the merit of its composition than from the scene it presents. This is a faithful representation of the solemn *Auto da fé*, which was celebrated in 1680, in the Plaza Mayor of Madrid in presence of the whole court of Charles II. It is equal to an exact description of this festival, the last of the kind which has been celebrated in Spain. The balconies appear full of spectators, excited equally by devotion and curiosity. The fatal tribunal is raised in the middle of the square. The judges there wait for their victims, who pale and disfigured, covered with melancholy emblems of the torments

ments prepared for them, go to hear their sentence. Some receive the last exhortation of the monks, others tremble, stagger and faint upon the steps of the tribunal, and all shew greater marks of terror than of repentance. How many reflections must naturally rush on the mind of the spectator; I pass them over in silence, because I have forbidden myself all declamation. But let us now turn our attention from these afflicting objects, and direct it to the temple of Thalia.

The theatre of Buen-Retiro is still in good preservation: the house is small but well contrived. The stage, which is spacious, opens at the bottom into the gardens of the palace, with which it is on a level, this was frequently favourable to theatrical magic, in extending the perspective and permitting the display of bodies of troops and sometimes a train of cavalry. All these illusions are vanished; the theatre is deserted, and its decorations are covered with dust. In the reign  
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of Ferdinand VI, it resounded with the most harmonious voices; it is now condemned to silence, which for twenty years has been but once interrupted. This was at the marriage of the princess of Asturias. Thus do courts change their appearance according to the taste of the sovereign. That of Ferdinand VI, brilliant and ostentatious, 'naturalized in Spain the fairy scenes of the Italian theatre under the direction of Farinelli the musician, who owed to his talents a distinguished favour, at which no person murmured, because no person suffered by it, and because that he modestly enjoyed without abusing his good fortune: Under Charles III. Euterpe and Terpsichore have lost their influence: the monarch, more simple in his manners, more uniform in his taste, and insensible to profane pleasures, has banished them from his residence, and confines himself to the protection of the silent arts, the sciences and virtue. His favour, still better placed than that of his

predecessor, can neither irritate the envious nor give offence to the weak.

The gardens of Buen-Retiro are at present a public walk. The monarch has established there a China manufactory, which hitherto strangers have not been permitted to examine. It is undoubtedly intended that experiments should be secretly made, and the manufacture brought to some perfection before it is exposed to the eyes of the curious. Its productions are to be seen nowhere except in the palace of the sovereign, or in some Italian courts, to which they have been sent as presents. Certain kinds of inlaid work not yet much known in Europe are wrought in the same edifice. I entered one day, under the protection of a foreigner of distinction, in whose favour the king had for a moment suspended the rigorous prohibition which excludes every one. I observed with what patience and address several small pieces of coloured marble were cut and joined

joined, to form pleasing and not a little complicated figures. This art, whilst it produces nearly the same effect as painting, has the advantage of having, by its everlasting colours, overcome the ravages of time, which spare not the finest productions of the pencil. The gardens of the Retiro are in other respects little ornamented, and almost abandoned. In recompence, however, Charles III, has richly embellished the environs.

This ancient palace commands a public walk, which has long been famous in Spanish comedy and romance: at first, indeed, these alone were what gave it celebrity. There was nothing remarkable in the place itself: its reputation rose from what passed in it. Measures were there concerted to deceive the vigilance of a mother or the jealousy of a husband. The courtiers, escaped from the presence of the monarch perhaps, came thither to watch a rival, prepare a plot, or disconcert an intrigue. The proximity of the palace, the obscurity

and inequality of the ground were all favourable to these purposes: the Prado was a rendezvous equally convenient to ambition and malignity, but more particularly so to love: those who appeared there had generally some sinister design or encountered some hazard: but Charles III. by levelling it, planting it with trees, admitting more light into the alleys, ornamenting it with statues and vases, and providing water to allay the dust, made it a most elegant walk which may be frequented in all seasons with safety and pleasure. It forms a part of the interior inclosure of the city, and is in length about the space of half a league. Several of the principal streets terminate here. That of Alcala, the widest in Europe, crosses it, runs by the side of the gardens of the Retiro, and terminates at the gate of the same name, which is one of the finest pieces of architecture in the capital, and built in the present reign, in 1778. The inhabitants from all quarters resort hither on foot or in carriages to meet and breathe beneath the shade of the long alleys, an  
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air freshened by waters spouted from the fountains, and embalmed by exhalations from the fragrant flowers. The concourse of people is frequently prodigious. I have sometimes seen four or five hundred carriages filing off in the greatest order, amid an innumerable crowd of spectators; a spectacle which at once is a proof of great opulence and population. But a better taste in the carriages might be wished for, and a greater diversity for the eye. Instead of that motley appearance of dresses, which in other public places of Europe afford a variety without which there would be no pleasure, there is nothing seen in the Prado but women uniformly dressed, covered with great black or white veils, which conceal a part of their features; and men enveloped in their great mantles, mostly of a dark colour; so that the Prado, with all its beauty, seems to be the theatre of Castilian gravity.

The botanical garden adds not a little to the embellishment of the Prado; it

was formerly upon the road which leads from Madrid to the castle of Prado ; but Charles III. a few years ago removed it to the side of the Prado with a low inclosure, by which it is ornamented without being hidden. This monarch is endeavouring to make it one of the most precious collections of the kind, by laying under contribution all the vegetable kingdom of his dominions, some part of which it has been long said, is perpetually warmed by the rays of the sun, and which in such different soils and climates must alone produce every kind of tree, shrub, and plant which grows on the bosom of the earth.

While viewing the Prado I have frequently given to this idea the greatest possible latitude ; I have even extended it to the animal kingdom ; I have allotted in imagination all the space which the botanical garden leaves vacant by the side of the walk to a destination certainly extraordinary in Europe, and which the monarch of Spain only could be capable of

of carrying into effect. I divided it into as many parts as this sovereign has principal colonies under his dominion; in these I settled, in supposition, a family of Peruvians, another of Mexicans, another from California, another from Louisiana, another from Paraguay, from Buenos Ayres, the coast of Caracas, from Porto Rico, from Cuba, from the Canaries and the Philippines. All to preserve their peculiar dress and manner of living, to erect a simple habitation upon the model of that they had quitted; to cultivate the plants brought from their own country; so that surrounded by these pleasing illusions they might still suppose themselves in their native soil. Here the Mexican would be seen beneath the shade of his fig-tree, shaking it and gathering the precious spoils which colour our European garments; there the inhabitant of Guatimala would cultivate his indigo; and he of Paraguay the herb which constitutes his principal riches; the native of Soconusco would attempt to naturalize his valuable cocoa-tree in

a foreign foil; the Peruvian, accompanied by the docile animal, which partakes of his labours, feeds and clothes him; would in concert with the Luconian endeavour to introduce the same cultivation they had been accustomed to at home. Thus the exulting inhabitant of the metropolis, without going from the capital, might pass in review, as if delineated on a map, all the colonies to which his sovereign gives laws. The transported colonist would become accustomed to an exile, which every thing would concur to render agreeable; and his fellow citizens, separated from him by immense seas, informed by him of the benevolence and magnificence of their common monarch, would form a higher idea of his power, pride themselves upon being his subjects, and become more attached to his government. Who knows but these first essays would make them form a more favourable opinion in general of the mother country? That in accustoming themselves to see in the Spaniards of the old world, their countrymen, instead

stead of their oppressors, they would not strive to approach them nearer? and that Spain formerly depopulated by her colonies would be re-peopled by them, or at least in this community, acquire new securities for their love and fidelity.

Such a project may be considered as romantic, yet the king of Spain has entered upon one of the same kind which proves his zeal for the advancement of the arts and sciences. In the street of the Alcala is a large building in which the king has established a cabinet of natural history, which was first committed to the direction of Don Pedro Davila, who died since I left Spain; he was succeeded by Don Eugenio Izquierdo whom we have seen at Paris. The institution over which he presides, cannot but prosper under his auspices; his indefatigable zeal and knowledge insure success. The cabinet already contains one of the completest collections in Europe in metals,

tals, minerals, marble, precious stones, corals, madrepores, and marine plants.

The classes of fishes, of birds, and especially of quadrupeds, are yet very incomplete; but the measures taken by government will in a little time make them equal to the others. The viceroys, governors, intendants, and other officers of the Spanish colonies received orders some years ago to enrich the cabinet with all the productions which should offer to their researches in the three kingdoms; and the intelligence and activity of the minister who presides over the department of the Indies, gives the most flattering hopes to the lovers of these sciences that the orders will be faithfully executed. The minister last year received an ample contribution from Peru: this was half the rich collection made during an eight years residence in that country by Mr. Dombey, an able naturalist, whom the court of France, with the consent of that of Spain had sent