

from the Monday after Easter week to the end of the month of June.

The road from Madrid to Aranjuez is one of the finest in Europe. It crosses the famous bridge of Toledo, built by Philip II. and, which it has been said, wanted only a river. The bridge has nothing remarkable except its length and breadth ; it is besides a massive structure, and the parapets are loaded with ill-chosen ornaments. When the Manzanares is very low, which is most commonly the case, this little river is fordable, and the bridge avoided, which cuts off a quarter of a league in crossing the fine part of the environs of Madrid called *las Delicias*, a walk consisting of two divergent alleys which terminate at the canal of Manzanares.

This canal was begun under the administration of M. de Grimaldi, and was to join the Manzanares at the Tagus. Scarcely were three leagues of it finished when a want of capital and industry

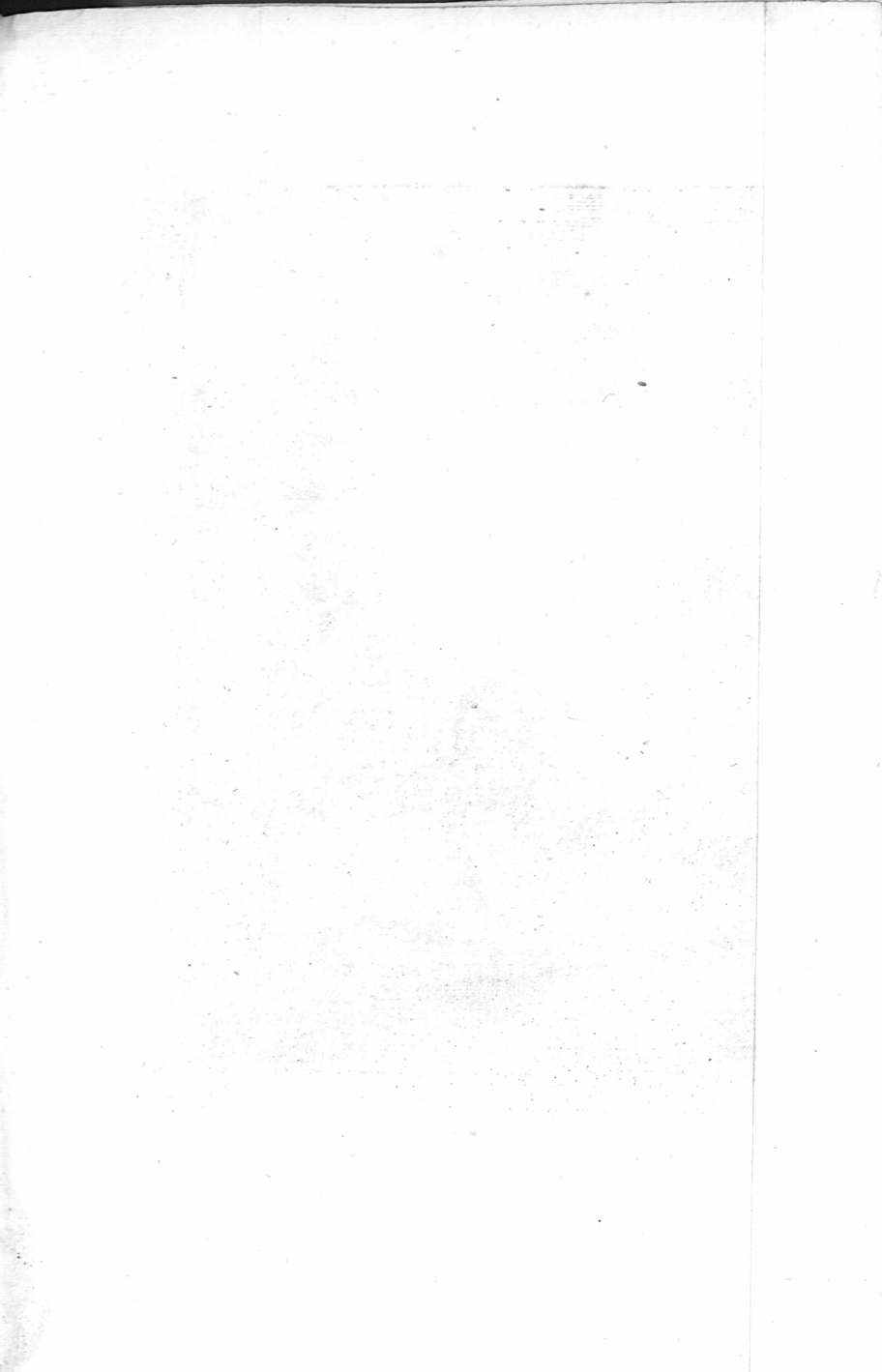
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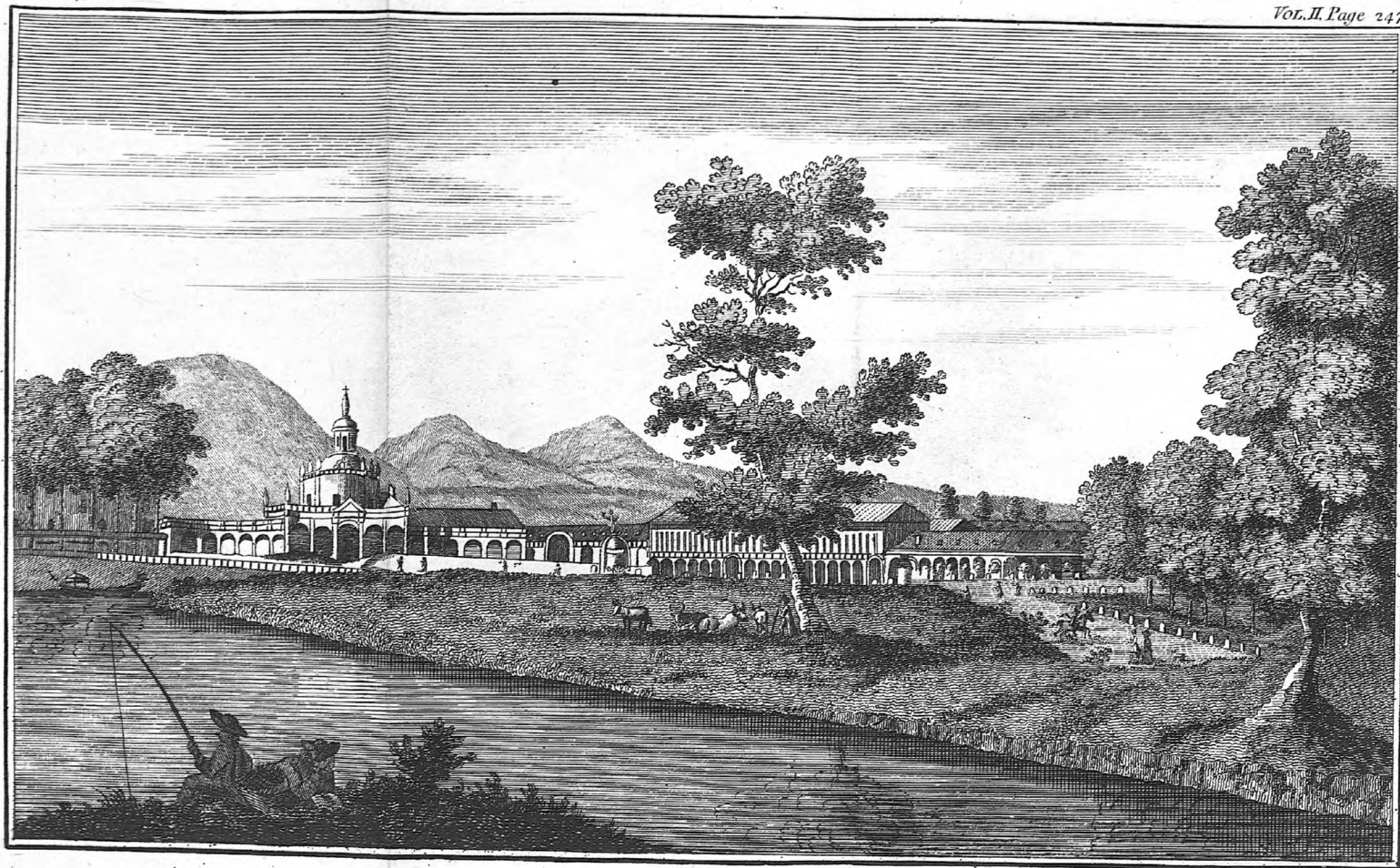
suspended the works. The only advantage derived from it is the produce of a few mills; and this is absorbed in the repair of bridges, sluices, and the salaries of the persons employed. For in Spain, as in other countries, scarcely is an establishment begun before the expences of supporting it are as considerable as if it were completed. But the activity given to all the branches of administration will soon have its effect upon the canal of Manzanares. The mills upon it are already useful to the undertakings of the bank, charged with victualling the army, and the canal itself will in a short time become a part of that which, as we have already observed, is to cross all the interior part of Spain. The Manzanares is fordable a little beyond the bridge of Toledo, and on the other side begins the fine road of Aranjuez, whence are seen some groups of olive trees which announce to the traveller that he approaches their native soil, la Mancha, the kingdom of Valencia, and Andalusia. After having jour-

neyed six leagues, on a narrow and even road, you descend by a spiral declivity to the charming valley of Aranjuez.

The Xarama, which you cross over a very fine stone bridge, runs at the foot of the hills, by which the river is formed, to the north. As soon as you arrive in this valley, the dry and naked plains of Castile disappear, and are succeeded by a richer soil, where you travel in the shade, serenaded by the noise of cascades and the murmur of rivulets. The meadows are enamelled with flowers, and the pastures display the most lively and variegated colours. Vegetation appears in all its richness, and proclaims a neighbouring river which, with its beneficent waters, fertilises and vivifies the landscape. The Tagus, which enters the valley at the east end, runs in meanders for two leagues, and, after having reflected the images of the most beautiful plantations, joins the Xarama.

The





VIEW OF ARANJUEZ.
from the Tagus .

The learned find in this junction the etymology of the name of Aranjuez. They tell us the ancients erected temples at the confluence of rivers; that there was one in honour of Jupiter at that of the Tagus and Xarama; and that thence is derived the name *Aram-Jovis*, whence *Aranjuez* by corruption. However ancient the name may be the embellishments of Aranjuez are modern.

The first Spanish monarch who resided there for a considerable length of time was Charles V. He began to build the palace his successors have inhabited, and to which Ferdinand VI. and Charles III. have each added a wing. In this new form, it is still less a royal mansion than a very agreeable country-house most delightfully situated, where art has done nothing more than make an advantageous use of the advances of nature. The Tagus which runs in a right line to the eastern front, glides by the parterre, and forms almost under the windows an artificial cascade.

A small arm of the river escapes from the cascade, and so closely washes the walls of the palace, that from the terrace the monarch may take the diversion of fishing. This arm afterwards rejoins the river, and thus forms a pleasant island, which is a vast garden of an irregular form, in which shade and fresh air are constantly found. In every season the warblings of birds, added to the murmurs of the waters of the Tagus, and of those which are spouted from the several fountains simply decorated, form a concert much less fatiguing to the mind than the languid and unvarying pleasures which magnificence leads in its train. While wandering amid the groves and thickets, or the labyrinth of the winding walks, and enjoying the luxury and calm of Nature, we imagine ourselves in the midst of rural solitude, and forget the vicinity of the court, the perplexity of intrigue, and the folicitudes of ambition. If we approach the palace, filled with the pleasing ideas inspired by the asylum we have
quitted,

quitted, we cannot but reflect on the vicissitude of human affairs. This, we exclaim, is the peaceful retreat of a monarch, whose laws are obeyed beyond the immense ocean to the extremities of the Andes, and the most distant islands of the Indian Archipelago. In this palace was it that Charles V. and Philip II. agitated Europe by their turbulent politics. Hence was the league which disputed the crown of France with the prince called to it by birth-right and the wishes of his people, supported by the court of Madrid. At present a descendant of Henry IV. reigns there in peace; he possesses a throne whence the most dangerous enemies of his house have disappeared. He enlarges and embellishes their abode. In fact, Charles V. and Philip II. would find some difficulty in recognizing Aranjuez, which by the attention and improvements of the two last kings has been rendered one of the most pleasing palaces in Europe.

The principal alleys, that especially of the *Calle de la Reyna*, which is the favourite walk of the court, were planted long before their time. The height of the trees, their enormous trunks and thick foliage, attest their antiquity and the fertility of the soil in which they have flourished for several centuries. But these are not the only ornaments of the valley of Aranjuez. Under Ferdinand VI. this palace consisted of little else than the castle. A few poor houses scattered over uneven and rugged ground at some distance from the royal habitation, served to lodge ambassadors and the nobles and gentry who followed the court. These huts have given place to regular, though not magnificent, buildings. The streets are straight and wide, perhaps too wide for the height of the houses and the heat of the climate. The plan, after which the new village of Aranjuez was built, was given by the marquis of Grimaldi, who, before he became first minister to his Catholic majesty, had resided at the Hague as his representative.

tative. He had there conceived the idea of forming in the centre of Castile a kind of Dutch village. His plan was accepted. The principal streets of Aranjuez are shaded by two double rows of trees, between which runs a river that keeps them continually fresh.

The village is separated from the castle by a large, but irregular square, decorated with a fountain. To cross the square in the hot season, a part of which the court passes at Aranjuez, was a painful task, from which the beneficent magnificence of the sovereign has exempted those by whom he is approached. From one of the streets of Aranjuez there runs a covered portico, which is continued to the buildings adjoining to the palace.

It would require too much time to conduct the reader through all the fine plantations of Aranjuez; I shall speak only of the principal. Arriving from Madrid we cross a circular space called

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Las doce calles, from twelve allies which there terminate. One of the allies leads to the entrance of *Las Huertas*, a large enclosure, in which we cannot but admire the astonishing fertility of the soil of Aranjuez. All kinds of fruit trees, flowers, and vegetables luxuriantly flourish beneath the shade of trees whose tops are sometimes lost in the clouds. If the traveller wishes to see more rich cultivation, and on a larger scale, he must take the road for Toledo and cross the *Campo Flamenco*, which undoubtedly takes its name from the resemblance it bears to the fine fields of Flanders. The *Cortijo* is also worthy of his particular attention. This is a large enclosure shut in on the side to the north by hills, and on the other by a latticed barrier, within which the soil, cultivated with particular care, repays with interest the labours of the husbandman, and the attention of the king, who has caused it to be planted with vine-suckers, brought from different parts of his kingdom.

Lastly,

Lastly, the *Huerta de Valentia* presents the traveller with various new and successful modes of cultivation, and, as it were, a foretaste of that kingdom. Besides fields of flax, vineyards, and artificial meadows, there are mulberry plantations, and a building consecrated to the produce of the precious insect which feeds upon their leaves. But the *Calle de la Reyna*, which, if I may so speak, forms the angle of the plantations of Aranjuez, is that which is most known and remarkable in them. Its direction, for about half a league, is from east to west, and its termination at the foot of a stone bridge lately built over the Tagus. It is renewed on the other side, continues to much the same distance, and again terminates by a bridge over the same river, the windings of which can only be discovered by the imagination, while it wanders through a valley shaded with groves of high trees, which at intervals conceal its course. Behind one of these thick curtains is a cascade heard at a great distance, the noise

noise of which is the only disturbance suffered by the tranquility of this solitary place. If with intention to discover this cascade we pass the second bridge of the Tagus, and follow the course of the river, it is impossible not to be delighted with the beauty of the prospects from the banks. In the happy confusion of the trees which line its borders, we recognize that Nature which art, taking for her model, imperfectly imitates in her feeble productions. Nature is no where more varied in her sportive caprices. Here the trees seem to have changed their element, and plunge their green tops into the waters of the Tagus. There knotted trunks, placed as in equilibrium on the banks, are ready to escape from the earth, and wait but for the northern blast to obstruct with their spreading branches the course of the river by which they are watered. As we advance, the stream reflects the tufts of waving shrubs which, according to the idea of the Abbé de Lille, receive
verdure

verdure in exchange for the decoration they afford.

If we retire from the banks, the same pleasing disorder reigns in the wood, which is sufficiently thick to afford a shade, without making it too difficult to find a passage through it. At length we approach the cascade which had awakened our curiosity. We arrive at it through thick bushes, and by zigzag paths; the object of it is to take from the Tagus a part of its waters. The arm turned from the bed of that river, runs in a deep ditch between artificial banks, and goes to water some of the plantations of Aranjuez, and to provide more at hand for the wants of the inhabitants. But shade and verdure instantly cease. Nothing is here seen but the naked hills which form the inclosure of the valley, and the spectator cannot but admire the art with which the picture is finished to recompence, as much as possible, the coarseness of its frame.

At the foot of these hills are stables of breeding mares, belonging to the king of Spain, and in which the breed of Spanish horses is still preserved in all its ancient beauty. The building has for inscription, *Vento gravidas ex prole putaris.* By their race or breed you would imagine them prolific by the winds: the swiftness of the horses bred here justifies the inscription; but they are exclusively reserved to the service of the king and his family. Leaving this building to the left, you enter large walks which terminate at the *Calle de la Reyna.*

The high trees, of which I have spoken, are not the only ornaments of this alley. It is edged on both sides with tufted copses which render its regularity more agreeable. Here the numerous herds of deer which furnish amusement for the royal family, and, as at St. Ildefonso, seem conscious they have obtained a security that Nature appeared to have denied them, bound and run.

They

They are seen peaceably feeding by the side of the great walk, and when they fly at the approach of any person, they seem less under the influence of their natural timidity than desirous to display their agility.

But the garden of the *Primavera*, or of the spring, is the greatest ornament of the *Calle de la Reyna*, at the same time that it delightfully perfumes the air during the season of which it bears the name. It extends, for the space of a mile, along one of the sides, and is separated from it by a low wall upon which is a lattice barrier. The fertility of the soil of the valley appears in all its richness in this garden. The greatest part of it is dedicated to useful cultivation. Pomona and Flora reign jointly, and mutually present each other their charms. Fruits and flowers flourish there in perfection. The groves oppose their hospitable shades to the noontide heat. Copses of odoriferous shrubs perfume the morning air, and the balmy vapours

VOL. II. S they

they exhale, fall at sun-set to add to the charms of the evening walk.

When I arrived in Spain, all the ground between the inclosure of the garden and the primitive banks of the Tagus, was uncultivated. The prince of Asturias, by his taste and attention, converted this into one of the most pleasing parts of the valley. He ordered some uselefs trees, which shaded this fertile soil, to be cut down; grass plats, shrubberies and parterres have succeeded them, and paths wind across this new treasure of vegetation. From one spring to another a vast garden was produced, infinitely varied in its form as well as productions, which bears the name of its projector.

A little dock-yard is contrived within its inclosure, and communicates by an easy descent with the Tagus. In this yard are carried on the works of a navy in miniature, which has its builders, sailors, and vessels. Farther on was a kind

kind of port, defended by a battery proportioned to the place. A few handsome gondolas are anchored under its protection, and serve for the recreations of the younger branches of the royal family. There are likewise little frigates, elegantly decorated, the guns of which reply to the artillery of the port. The noise of their cannon, the huzzas of the sailors, and the display of the flags and streamers, almost induce the spectators to believe they are contemplating the contests of Mars and Neptune. Happy would men be, did they but content themselves with representations only, and had not a thirst after fame and riches converted into means of destruction the properties of elements which Nature, perhaps, had designed but for their pleasures! Those of the court of Spain at Aranjuez are not confined to the amusements afforded by a river, the banks of which present the most enchanting landscapes, whilst the peaceful stream never deviates from its course but to

fertilize the adjacent soil*. The residence of Aranjuez favours all the innocent diversions of the country; walks are no where more varied; whether with a book in your hand you wander in the shrubberies, or pass through the long alleys on horseback or in a carriage, you may securely indulge in meditation and reverie.

The deer there forget their timidity, and even the wild boars are less ferocious. They run in the streets as familiarly as domestic animals. The first time I quitted the inn, after my arrival at Aranjuez, I was obliged to make my way with my cane through a herd of wild boars, who blocked up my passage. Some of them, still more familiar, enter the houses, and there dispute with the

* Since this work was finished, I have learned that the Tagus quitted its bed at Aranjuez, broke down the causeway which sheltered the new gardens of the prince from its overflowings, and almost destroyed the new cultivation which the author of the plan had already found correspond so well with his expectation.

dogs the spoils of the kitchen. At Pardo they carry their assurance still farther; at certain hours, to which they are very exact, they run from the neighbouring forest to receive food from the hands of the domestics of the palace.

The wild boars are not the only animals naturalized at Aranjuez. The buffalos, brought thither from Naples, have taken the place of the oxen, as working cattle. A part of their labours were performed by camels, which could not long resist the baneful influence of a foreign climate. At the same time two zebras grazed in a meadow near the high road, as also two guanacos, which seemed as perfectly at their ease as in their own country, whilst an elephant calmly moved his huge body without being in the least discomposed by the crowds of people, whom curiosity brought about him. It is, perhaps, in this manner that sovereigns should openly expose all the foreign animals which they crowd together in their menageries. These

magnificent prisons accuse man of tyranny without proving his power, and the beasts which there roar in their chains, would, perhaps, lay aside their ferocity on recovering their liberty. But man is every where too much inclined to abuse his power; and rather chuses to reign over furious slaves than govern happy subjects.

The animals which more especially contribute to the embellishment of Aranjuez are horses. They there peculiarly display all the beauty of their motions and their speed. The king sometimes brings thither his magnificent sets with which his studs furnish him, and his children enjoy, without danger, all the pleasure of horsemanship.

Formerly the *Calle de la Reyna* was the course where horses from Barbary displayed their swiftness, and each had his partisans among the courtiers, who interested themselves by wagers in his success.

A few

A few years since the prince of Asturias substituted to these races a more reasonable and useful amusement. It is called the *Parejas*, and takes place a few days before the departure of the court from Aranjuez; it has not been interrupted for twenty years, except by the war which took from the court a great part of those whom his majesty admitted to partake of it. These form, with the prince and his two brothers, a squadron of four in front and twelve deep. Each file is directed by one of the three princes, assisted by one of the principal persons of the court. The forty-eight cavaliers are all clothed and accoutred in the ancient Spanish manner, but in different colours according to the file they belong. The uniform gives to the whole a military and antique air, which carries back the actors to the age of their ancestors, and gives them that interesting appearance which the image of things past generally wears. They practice a considerable time for the exhibition, which is given imme-

diately before the court departs from Aranjuez, and by this means have frequent opportunities of exercising the docility and elegant paces of their horses, the finest the modern studs of Spain produce. When, at length, the cavaliers and their horses are well exercised in the parts they are to perform, the first day of representation is fixed *. The theatre is a large square court before the castle. The brilliant squadron arrives there in a column, to the sound of trumpets and kettle-drums, preceded by running footmen, and led horses richly caparisoned. They stop before the king's balcony and salute him. Afterwards pace round the square, and, arrived in the presence of his majesty, fall into a gallop and begin their evolutions. These are figures which cannot be better compared than to our *contre danses*. The four files, under the conduct of

* There are commonly three; the king is only seen at the first; but the princess of Asturia honours them all with her presence.

their directors, withdraw from and approach each other by turns; sometimes following the figure of the ground, at others crossing it diagonally, and describing circles and spirals with such time and precision as to delight both the eyes and ears of the spectators. However this spectacle, rather too unvaried, amuses not the mind; it is but a feeble representation of the ancient tournaments, and makes those festivals more regretted where under the eyes of sovereigns, and the beauties of the age, the knights, obeyed the double impulse of love and fame, and where the suffrages of those who reigned over their hearts were an inestimable recompense for their courage and address. Nothing less than the presence of the monarch, and contributing to his pleasures, could be sufficient to give satisfaction to the actors in this modern dance of centaurs. At the expiration of twenty minutes, the squadron forms a column, and retires from the square in the same order as it entered. After the exhibition there

is commonly another ball, with refreshments; and for those whose curiosity has been satisfied in preceding years, this accessory is well worth the principal. When the weather is fine the *Parejantes* (for so the *figurans* of the equestrian *contre danse* are called) walk in their dresses in the gardens of the palace, and join the spectators. The subjects of Charles V. and those of Charles III. seem then to be united; imagination approaches these two reigns, and compares with pleasure the age of splendour in Spain with that of its regeneration.

Art seems to have left to Nature the care of embellishing Aranjuez. The palace and other edifices are of a pleasing form, but without magnificence. The furniture of the apartments is less rich than elegant. The paintings are not so numerous as in other royal mansions. There are only a few portraits of the princes of the house of Bourbon and Braganza, and some Neapolitan paintings, in which Nature is imitated with more truth than
grace.

gracefulness. The new chapel of the castle is that part of it to which most attention has been paid in the construction and ornaments. Sculpture and gilding are therein distributed with taste, without profusion, and a few pieces by Mengs contribute not a little to its decoration.

Aranjuez contains three churches; in one of which the connoisseur views with pleasure a copy of Raphael's carrying of the cross, of which I have spoken in the account of the palace of Madrid. It has for companion a crucifixion, by a modern painter named Ferro, the author of the copy. The most recently built church is that of the convent of Franciscans, called Saint Paschal, and was founded by the confessor to the king. I remarked, in the vestibule of this convent, pious inscriptions in the form of stanzas, which appeared to me of a singular kind. I could not resist my inclination to copy and translate them. The reader will not, perhaps, be displeas-

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pleased at seeing the language of devotion in Spain when it means to speak that of poetry. A penitent soul confesses its sins to God, and comforts itself in its contrition by the following stanzas.

“ Oh ! leave me, my sins, in God’s name
 “ leave me ! I have used you so much
 “ that you are unable to support your-
 “ selves any longer ; neither you nor
 “ myself can go farther : I have so ex-
 “ hausted you, that to sin to-morrow,
 “ I want desire, as you want power to
 “ make me do it.

“ Who would believe that thou thy-
 “ self, my God, hadst retarded my con-
 “ version ? Thou hast wronged thyself
 “ by thy patience in waiting for me ;
 “ I could not persuade myself (this be-
 “ tween ourselves) that thou wert
 “ God ; thou appearedst to me too of-
 “ fended and too patient for a God.

“ Thanks to thy cares, Oh my God,
 “ I am now converted. I yield to lassitude

“ tude if not to repentance : I have fo
“ often followed the ways of vice, that
“ to adopt another manner of life, hav-
“ ing sinned as much as it is possible to
“ do, at length, I sin no longer.

“ I have offended thee to so great a
“ degree that I thought, being unable
“ to do any thing with me, thou wouldst
“ be forced to pardon me. Here only
“ is there still mercy, the most immu-
“ table law of thy eternal throne; for
“ such is my perversity, that thou must
“ either not execute justice on me, or
“ increase the pains of hell.”

This convent stands in the highest and most healthy situation of the valley; and hence the palace and plantations appear in the most agreeable point of prospect. Some of the views of Aranjuez were taken from this elevation. They form a pleasing collection, although but indifferently engraved. The king makes presents of the sets to such strangers of dif-



distinction as are desirous of having them.

Since this collection appeared, the count of Florida Blanca, who has the superintendency of the *sitios* or royal mansions, has added, by new plantations, to the embellishments of Aranjuez. He has not, like his predecessors, an exclusive predilection for one of the four royal houses at the expence of the others; his attention is equally divided among them all. It is, however, difficult to render that of Aranjuez healthy. As long as the temperature of the air is moderate, every thing about the palace charms the senses, and the happiness of existence is perfectly enjoyed. Foreigners, who have travelled in many countries, have assured me that they knew no place in Europe where they would rather chuse to pass the fine season of the year than at Aranjuez. But at the approach of the violent heats of summer, when the scorching air, shut in by the valley, is loaded with exhalations

tions from a slow and muddy river, and with nitrous vapours drawn by the sun from the hills between which the Tagus runs, this valley of Tempe becomes a pernicious abode, *sufficient to send troops of souls to Acheron in a single day.* The inhabitants withdraw from it, and seek, upon the neighbouring heights, particularly at Ocanna, a little city, two leagues from the valley, a more wholesome air. Aranjuez, which during the month of May and the beginning of June, contains about ten thousand inhabitants, and is the resort of those who wish either for health or pleasure, becomes a desert exclusively inhabited by wild boars and deer. Few persons remain there, except those who are attached to it either by profession or poverty.

Let us now leave this charming palace, which I could wish to have inspired my reader with a desire of seeing; and since we have advanced almost ten leagues towards the kingdom of Valencia,

cia, let us proceed to visit the terrestrial paradise of Spain.

I undertook a journey to it, with a friend, at the end of April 1783, consequently, in the most favourable season. We set out from Aranjuez, and after having followed the *Calle de la Reyna*, turned to the left, and bid adieu to the shade, verdure and beauties of the environs. During the first seven leagues we several times approached the Tagus, but its naked and uninhabited banks offered not a single pleasing prospect.

A hamlet by the side of the river, at the distance of a league from the village of Villa-Manrique, must however be excepted. The noise of an artificial cascade, which drives two mills, the appearance of some beautiful trees, and about a dozen houses covered by their foliage, inclines the mind of the traveller to a momentary musing. This pleasing retreat is inhabited for some weeks in the year by monks, who at
other