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The END of the CONTENTS of the Second Book.

A DESCRIPTION

A
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
ROYAL CHAPEL OF THE PANTHEON,
OR,
Burial Place of the Kings of Spain.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

Motives for building the Pantheon.

THE glory and crown of this superb structure is the pantheon chapel, the sepulchre of the monarchs of Spain, and may indeed be termed the ne plus ultra of human power and art; for, neither the antients, nor moderns, have produced a monument equal to it, though some have been placed among the wonders of the world; particularly the mausoleum of Artemisia in Caria, and the pyramids of Egypt, but both erected on the sandy basis of a wild and barbarous ostentation; whereas the foundation of this majestic repository of the kings of Spain, was catholic piety: accordingly the duration is permanent, and the lustre of their glory will shine to the latest

posterity. The honor of the Almighty, and the respect to their progenitors, were the sole views of the illustrious founders.

THE hope of a resurrection has animated men, in all ages, to cause burial places to be made for themselves, and their descendants, either in fields, in orchards, in towns, in villages, in houses, in churchyards, or in churches themselves, where the remains of those, who once swayed the sceptres of the earth, being deposited in superb chapels and tombs, are a document to the living; for such is the very import of the word, monument, “*quasi monens mentem.*” Here their obsequies are celebrated; and here their virtues and achievements are commemorated to the glory of the Almighty, from whom all virtue and ability is originally derived, and that others, being excited to an imitation of those christian heroes, may be revered with the like honors. Such was the original intention of monuments, and the external appearance of them was adapted to the dignity and deserts of the deceased; accordingly an august monument filled the mind with ideas of veneration and respect for the person to whose memory it was erected, while the meaner sepulchres were beheld with indifference.

THE pagans were so exact in their memorials, or statues, that those of ordinary men were not suffered to exceed the common stature; whereas those of heroes, or demi-gods, such as Achilles, Æneas, Ajax, Turnus, and others, a third bigger; thus rising in proportion to the greatness of the person, till they arrived to those prodigious Colosses, which represented their supreme deities. And as the merits of catholic heroes are so much superior, and the dignity of a catholic king so greatly exalted above all the pagan monarchs, being a vicegerent

vicegerent of God himself, a defender of the faith, and the soul of the state; it is certainly proper, that stately monuments of the greatest magnitude should be erected to those in whom dignity, religion, and eminent endowments were concentrated.

NEITHER the place, nor form of the sepulchre of the catholic ^{Founders of} kings of Spain had been settled, till the emperor Charles V. a prince ^{the pantheon.} equally great in peace and war, declared his pleasure on this head; and it was in conformity to his orders, that Philip II. his son and successor, made choice of this structure, as the only one worthy of having such a venerable repository annexed to it: the plan was his, but the glory of beginning the work was reserved for Philip III. and Philip IV. had the satisfaction of completing this capacious, beautiful, and majestic chapel, which is never beheld without astonishment. Here he placed the bodies of his illustrious ancestors, and the translation was performed with a solemnity, pomp, and devotion, worthy of immortal honor, rendering this sepulchre famous above all the wonders of antiquity. In this book I shall endeavour to gratify the curious reader with a description of the pantheon, that he may see how justly it is termed, the crown of this majestic edifice.

THE principal, which induced Philip II. to build the monastery of St. Laurence, was the last command of his royal father, Charles V. who, in a codicil signed at the convent of St. Jerom de Juste, left to him every particular relating to his burial, and that of the empress Isabella his consort, only desiring, that a receptacle might be made for himself, his empress, and all his successors. Philip accordingly formed the scheme of the Escorial, the glory of Spain, and wonder

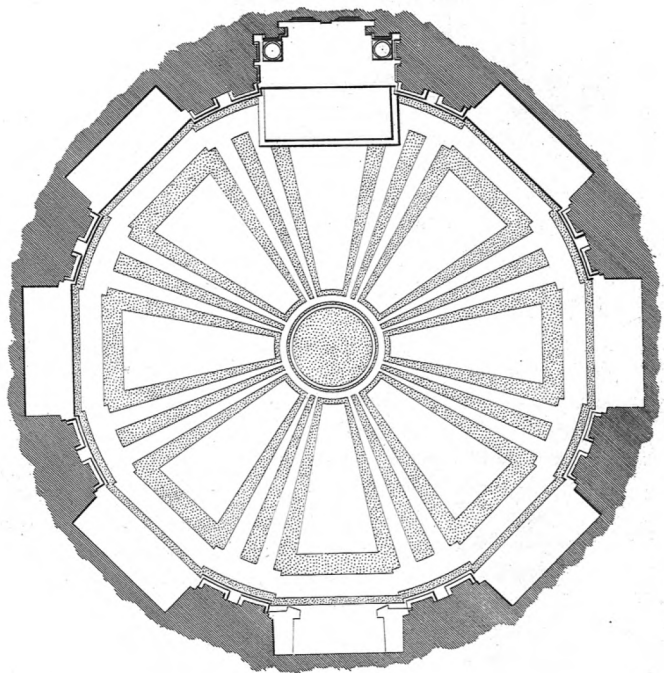
DESCRIPTION OF

of the world; and certainly, a more signal proof of filial obedience was never seen. With the duty of a son, he blended the magnificence of a king; and as he had gained the appellation of the second Solomon, by a thousand acts of wisdom and munificence, and more especially, by the splendid church, or temple, he had erected; it was in his royal intention likewise to imitate the Jewish monarch in building an august sepulchre to his father, but was prevented by public difficulties.

IN the year 1570, he caused the body of Charles V. to be removed to this royal monastery from St. Jerom de Juste, together with that of the empress Isabella from Granada, long before it was finished; such was his impatience to see them deposited in a place something answerable to that exalted station they had filled while living. The like regard he shewed to others of the imperial house of Austria, who had been buried in divers cities of Spain; and till they could be finally deposited in the sepulchre preparing for them, he ordered them to be placed in the old church, where divine service was performed till the great church was finished with such incomparable splendor, that could earthly objects affect spirits in the heavenly mansions, the noble martyr St. Laurence might boast, that the most august church ever beheld by mortals, bears his name.

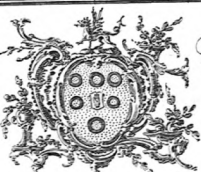
Plan of
Philip II.

IT was his majesty's intention to form a cemetery after the manner of the antients, where the royal bodies being interred, dirges, masses, and vigils should be performed for them, as was done in the primitive church for martyrs; where prayers were offered to them, their anniversaries celebrated, and where the Christians, in times of persecution,



To *S^r Will^m Lowther Bar^t*

Is Humbly Dedicated.



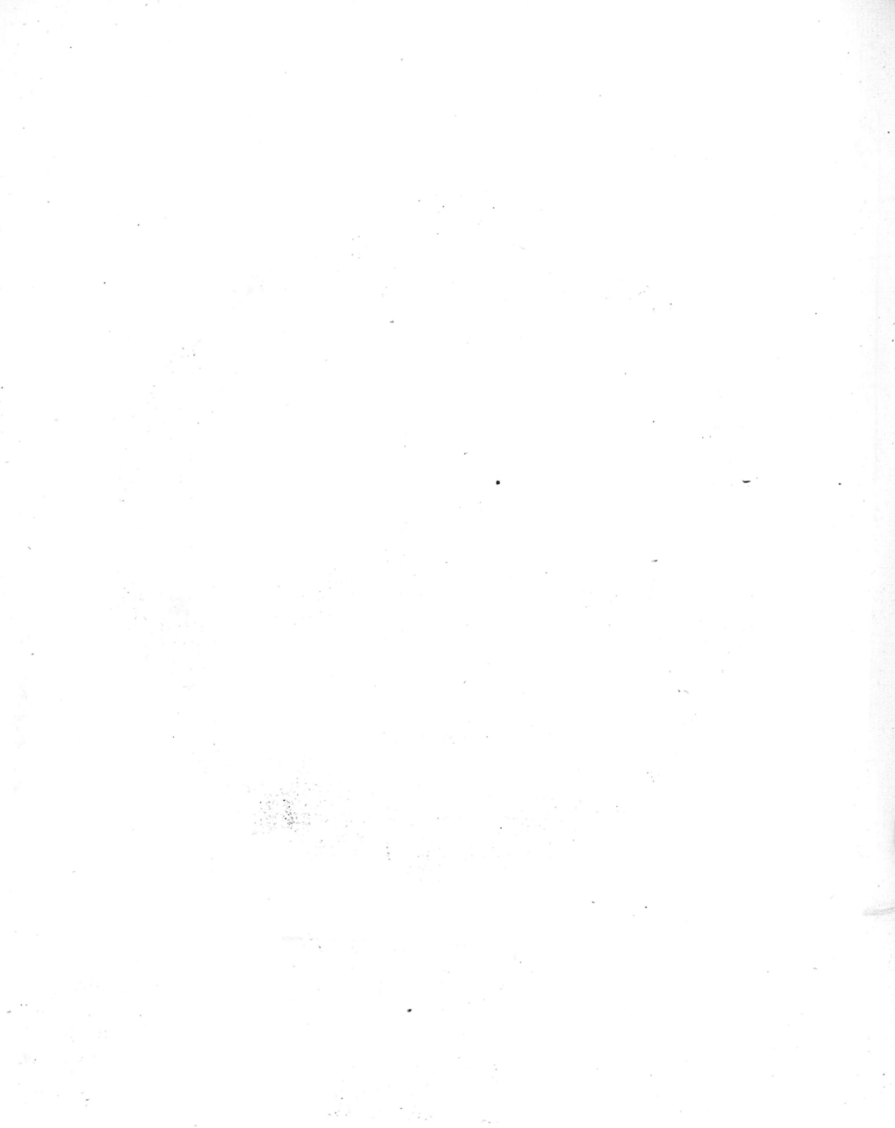
This Plan of the Mausoleum.

82

His most obedient Servant

George Thompson.

E. Roeker sculp.



perfection, held their assemblies for religious worship, or mutual consolation. Accordingly his pious scheme was fulfilled, both with regard to the church and the sepulchre.

AT the very bottom of the foundation, under the great altar, was constructed a spacious church of a circular form, with a proportionate cupola, altar, and a tribune facing it, for performing the offices; and in the sides, cavities for receiving the coffins. The descent to it, from the great chapel, was by two back stairs, and as many elegant marble stair-cases, one leading from the convent and sacristy, and the other from the palace; but it afterwards occurring to the founder's mind, that this was too distant, dark, and difficult of access, he gave orders for building a vault between this chapel, and the principal church, directly under the high altar.

THIS was accordingly executed, and consisted of three ranges, containing the whole space of the plane from the first steps of the altar, and this was the repository, whither the royal corpses were to be removed; but, doubtless, something more was intended, as this, besides being too small, did not in the least correspond with the exalted ideas of that monarch, who certainly intended it for nothing more than a temporary receptacle, till the objections against the lower chapel were removed, so as to make it both light and convenient. However, to this middle vault, which was the second plan, the royal bodies were removed in the year 1586, and the first vault remained under its former obscurity and melancholy circumstances, which that wise monarch judged little agreeable to the burial place of catholic monarchs, whose heroic virtues diffused gladness

Ancient form
of the
pantheon.

Ancient
repository of
the royal
bodies.

DESCRIPTION OF

gladness through the earth, and light through the darkness; a light and gladness of which their very sepulchre should be an emblem; as beyond the gates of death is the region where such heroes receive their final recompense. Sorrow only suits the burials of princes, dying without hope; but never had a prince more lively and better founded expectations than Philip: accordingly he proposed to remove every defect, and finish the pantheon in a manner answerable to the perfection of all the other parts of the structure, which were now nearly finished.

His attention was, however, at first employed on the buildings more immediately relative to God and his saints, as by giving him the preference so justly due, a blessing might attend the remainder, being sensible, that all his riches were derived from the Almighty. Accordingly he particularly ordered, that no cost should be spared in furnishing and adorning this church, which may well be stiled the beauty of holiness, the glory of religion; and to complete the sacred awe and majesty of the place, he filled the reliquaries with a treasure of remains, the value of which it would be profane to fix, or even to form an estimate. And so absorbed was he in these and the like pious cares, that all the nation concluded, he had given over any further thoughts of erecting a repository for the remains of his ancestors, or care of providing a sepulchre for himself. They judged, that the splendor of the former had been sufficiently consulted in the anniversaries, masses, and other offices, appointed for their souls; of which the number is so remarkable here, that the incense of prayer is continually ascending.

BUT,

BUT, to obviate a remark which a fight of this place naturally suggested, he used to say, " I have built an habitation for the " Almighty, and my son, if he pleases, may build another for his " remains, and those of his fore-fathers." A saying so pregnant with religion was sufficient to silence all reply, and abundantly proves, that, if he did not perform that injunction, it was neither through want of thought, or neglect, but from his being wholly ingrossed by a zeal for erecting a temple to the God of his fathers; and, with regard to a suitable receptacle of their remains, and those of his successors, he pointed out a place for it, beneath the foot of the altar, and left the execution to the filial obedience of his son, who, he concluded, would soon remove those illustrious bodies to a more spacious and magnificent repository. In this manner did the glorious Philip II. spend his time, and on the fourteenth of September, 1538, exchanged, in this royal monastery, his earthly for a heavenly crown; and Philip III. ascended the throne of the most extensive monarchy the sun ever beheld.

THE fame of this astonishing structure, the vastness of its dimensions, the grandeur of its architecture, and the splendor of its decorations, drew an infinite number of persons of taste and distinction from all parts of Europe, who, amidst their raptures of applause, could not conceal their astonishment, at the meanness of the sepulchre, which contained such glorious monarchs, that they who had so enlarged the bounds of the christian world, should be confined in so narrow, so mean a repository. This was a very affecting remark, and raised pity in the breasts of many: they were shocked to behold the bones of those, who had been the bulwarks of the catholic faith, placed in so unworthy a sepulchre; they thought, that the bodies of those spirits,
which

DESCRIPTION OF

which had ranged the infinite expanse of heaven, merited some honourable place for their interment. As the world had rejoiced in seeing them placed on the throne of majesty, it was indecent to take only the common care of their remains. These remarks of foreigners, together with the injunctions of his father and grand-father, determined Philip III. to undertake the pantheon; and he accordingly declared in public, that, immediately after he had finished some other works recommended to him in his father's last codicil, it should be commenced and conducted with all the dispatch consistent with its intended magnificence.

Artists
employed on
the pantheon.

ACCORDINGLY, artists, eminent for their talents in architecture, were invited from several parts; but the principal was John Baptist Crecencio, brother to cardinal Crecencio, a person of great judgment, and well acquainted with all the antient and modern structures in Rome, being a native of that city.

THE other was Pedro Lizargarate, a native of Biscay, under whose direction all the sculptures and bronzes were performed; and it being his majesty's pleasure, that the pantheon should be in the lowest chapel, according to his father's choice, it was agreed to sink the floor five feet and a half, in order to procure a proper height; and the execution was begun in the year 1617.

VAST quantities of jasper were brought from the quarries of Toledo, and those of Tortosa were drained of their marble. Such was the multitude of laborers, workmen, overseers, and other officers; that the work went on with incredible expedition, and within a few years,

years, that pious prince, had not an untimely death prevented him, would have seen the accomplishment of his noble design, as within little more than three years, it was entirely paved, encrustated, and embellished with the most exquisite work in marble, jasper, and gilt brass, though still short of its ultimate perfection.

THE cupola remaining to be covered; the arms and stair-cases were not finished; many of the bronzes were not cast, and few gilded; and, what was still worse, the former inconveniencies, a want of light, and difficulty of access, still continued. It was indeed a misfortune, that, by the death of the king, its conclusion little agreed with its magnificent beginning; the usual fate of superb edifices, which generally remain as they were at the death of him who gave them existence.

C H A P. II.

Continuation of the Work of the Pantheon : several Difficulties overcome, and the Work finished.

THE illustrious monarch of two worlds, Philip IV. inherited, together with the throne, all the virtues and endowments of his father, and being equally attentive to the will of his ancestors, concerning the royal chapel, could not suffer it to continue in this state of imperfection ; and, at length, having removed every difficulty, augmented and dignified this miracle of art, by adding to it another wonder, so long wanting and so earnestly desired by the whole nation.

FOR some time this venerable structure remained without any thing further being done to it ; except closing the cupola, and adding a marble balustrade, three feet high : not that Philip was less attentive to this mansion of the dead, which rather seemed to be the predominant object ; the delay was owing to some intervening difficulties, which, at first, seemed to be absolutely unfurmountable.

ONE was a spring of water, which, oozing through the joints of the jaspers, greatly damaged the work ; and, notwithstanding the most diligent search, its origin remained several years undiscovered, and a sea of water was forming in that place, which since has been made an ocean of riches, and deserving the appellation of the glorious sepulchre, a name given by the inhabitants of the East-Indies to the Ganges,

Ganges, into which, when menaced with the infirmities of old age, they used to throw themselves with gestures of exultation. Another was the absence of the directors of the work; the consequence of which was such negligence and remissness in the subordinate officers and workmen, that, after a prodigious expence, the remedy against the inundation became more and more difficult.

ANOTHER great discouragement was that already mentioned, the want of light, and the apparent impossibility of removing this great inconveniency without pulling down the fine works of jasper and marble; nor must we forget the difficulty of contriving a suitable, easy, and splendid avenue to this cemetery.

DISTINGUISHED as the artist was for his skill in all the branches of architecture, he was so perplexed with these difficulties, that he advised his majesty, to take the work to pieces, and rebuild it in a more convenient position. With regard to the water, the capital detriment, some proposed digging trenches in those parts of the gardens, which were contiguous to the pantheon, in order to divert the current; not considering the great depth necessary to be given to these trenches before the source could be reached: a scheme, which would have been of vast expence, and produced no manner of utility, the disease lying too deep for the proposed remedy. The same diversity of sentiments subsisted with regard to the other difficulties.

BUT, father Nicolas, at that time vicar of the monastery, a person of extraordinary perspicuity, and universal knowledge, was more

successful

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successful in his investigation. He traced the source, and, conveying the stream into the general conduits, delivered the pantheon from an evil, till then thought impossible to be removed. In the autumn of the same year, his majesty honoring the Escorial with his presence, was informed, that the same able person, who had checked the intrusion of the water, had a scheme for admitting light into the pantheon, without disfiguring the church; the king examined the particulars, and gave his royal sanction to the plan.

Window of
the pantheon.

ACCORDINGLY a few months labor removed from this beautiful place the tenebrous veil of darkness, under which it had hitherto been concealed. A considerable part of the church-wall, opposite to the windows, through which the light entered the pantheon, was removed, to make room for a window of a very extraordinary amplitude; and though the expence was very considerable, both the scheme and its execution were applauded, as it neither disfigured nor damaged the jasper works, and, at the same time, caused the whole chapel to be illuminated immediately after the rising of the sun.

Perpetual
light.

THE ancients so far consulted the light of their sepulchres, that they supplied the absence of the sun by an artificial light of such a composition, that it lasted many ages; instances of which were seen in the sepulchre of Diomedes in Apulia; that of a Roman in the island of Nefida near Naples, and a thousand others, where the sepulchres, though not opened till many centuries after, were found illuminated with burning lamps, which the admission of fresh air immediately extinguished.

BUT

BUT Philip IV. imparted to this sepulchre the light of the sun, which, besides its suitableness to the magnitude of the building, has this analogy with the state of death, that it sets to rise again with renewed lustre, and therefore a proper emblem of the royal dead, who here set, after diffusing happiness and spiritual light over different countries.

THE only difficulty, now remaining, was to form a decent Avenue to the pantheon. Avenue to the pantheon. and entrance; and this likewise was by many considered as impracticable, though in fact it only served as a fresh motive to display the vicar's superior genius. Accordingly, on the king's return to this palace, he laid before his majesty the plan for an ample and majestic avenue, and the execution of it met with universal applause, except from those splenetic mortals, who had represented the thing as impossible. A door was made by pulling down an arcade in the wall of the principal church, adjoining to the ante-facrity, and the stones, on account of their largeness and beauty, made use of in the work; the correspondence, harmony, and symmetry of which gave it all the appearance of an original plan, and not a subsequent alteration, especially as it naturally joined to the former stair-case.

THESE difficulties being surmounted, the water diverted, the proper light admitted, and a commodious avenue opened, with a stately entrance, his majesty no longer doubted of finishing the work in a manner becoming so essential a part of this amazing structure; and wisely appointed a director of approved abilities, living on the spot, that he might continually have an eye to the conduct of the work. The vicar was chosen, who shewed himself equally qualified
for

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for practice and theory; for in less than nine years, he finished the whole pantheon, together with all its various embellishments, and added such a multitude of beautiful ornaments, that it might almost be considered as a new structure.

Zeal of
Philip IV.

THE work, indeed, was not a little forwarded by the king's sollicitude for its dispatch, and even his frequent inspection. He never hunted in the neighbourhood, without spending an hour or two in viewing the progress of the pantheon, being mindful of death amidst the diversions of life. He also writ several long letters to the director, expressing a strong desire, that the bodies of his illustrious ancestors might be translated to the new dormitory built for their reception.

Alterations
in the work.

THE cupola, that it might correspond with the other parts, was, by his majesty's approbation, enlarged and decorated with grotesque work of gilt brass. These improvements, with many others, were performed in the most exquisite manner, under the auspices of two religious of the royal monastery. The new altar and altar-piece, in the materials, fashion, and workmanship, distinguished themselves among the noblest ornaments; the old stair-case was replaced by another, with an august portal at the first step. The former pavement was also entirely removed, to make room for another, which certainly exceeds every thing of this kind, in the variety of colors, and arrangement of the marbles and gems. The bronzes, besides a great addition to their number, were all fresh gilt, and a silver branch of a most beautiful construction, made, by his majesty's order, at Genoa, was hung up in the center.

WITHOUT

WITHOUT the pantheon, a vault was contrived for other persons, particularly the great personages of the house of Austria, and, facing it, a sacristy; both with elegant doors, opening under the stair-case. Philip now saw the final accomplishment of his ardent wishes, and the execution answerable both to the dignity of its destination, and the magnificence of his plan. Thus he provided for the royal trophies of death, the most splendid repository that human intelligence could conceive, or human skill perform. In a word, as the Almighty has not, in this sublunary world, a place more worthy of his ineffable majesty than this amazing church; so no monarchs of the earth have a mausoleum comparable to that of the house of Austria; which, to the glory of Spain, was designed by Charles V. appointed by Philip II. begun by Philip III. and finished by Philip IV.

CHAPTER III.

Entrance and Portal of the Pantheon.

ON the right hand, going from the court of the sacrifice into the principal church, and near the angle formed by the south and east fronts, is the entrance to the pantheon, which is formed by a spacious marble arcade, six feet and a half broad, and thirteen high, adorned with two pilasters. The doors are of ebony, and other curious woods of black, pale, and melancholy colors; so that the very appearance of the entrance indicates it to be a mansion of the dead.

First stair-
case.

IMMEDIATELY beyond the arcade is a stair-case, nearly of the same breadth, and curiously decorated with marble ornaments. It consists of twelve steps of the same stone, forming an easy descent to the first landing place, and receives light from the windows facing the east. On the left is another flight of thirteen steps, resembling in every particular the former; and on the second landing place, which is of the finest Toledo marble, decorated with exquisite marquetry, an august portal of astonishing magnificence presents itself to the eye; and here the grand stair-case begins.

Portal of the
pantheon.

THIS portal is one of the finest pieces in the composite order in the world; for, though by the nature of the place it is very much confined, yet the artist has given it such an air of grandeur, and such accurate proportion to its several parts, that the want of a more extensive area is concealed. It is divided into two parts, of which
the

the principal members are of black marble from the quarries of Toledo, so regularly veined and spotted with white, that nature seems to have followed the rules of art. In the lesser parts, gems, gold, silver, and bronze, unite their lustre, and are disposed in so elegant a taste, that the spectator is charmed with the assemblage, while he is astonished with the magnificence. Its height is sixteen feet and a half, but its breadth little more than six, the want of room not admitting the rules of art to be exactly observed.

ON the sides are two pillars in relievo, with their bases and capitals; besides the jambs and lintel, which, with several beautiful additaments, are formed out of one block of marble, and comprehended in the architrave, resting on the cymatium of the cornice. Over this is the frieze, and the figures supporting the crown, together with the other members of the first part, all of different kinds of marble, inlaid with various species of metal.

THE pedestals of the columns, the capitals, and many other parts, are of brass enamelled with gold. The beauty of the jambs, lintels, and marble mouldings, which surround the whole, is heightened by flower-pieces, and other devices in bronze, arranged in the most striking manner. The height of the whole is ten feet.

THE door is four feet wide, and seven and a half in height; before it is a balustrade of gilt brass, and unparalleled workmanship; nor can the opposite elegance of the design be sufficiently admired. Above it the spectator beholds with rapture, gold, gems, and marble, blended in the architrave, fillets, the incomparable modillions in the

plane of the frieze, and the ten rich figures supporting the crown. But, however splendid these embellishments of the first body may be, our admiration is increased at viewing the second, though its height is only six feet and a half.

Epitaph.

THE first object, which attracts the eye, is a plane of black Italian marble, four feet in breadth, and three in height, containing an inscription in gold letters, importing, that this repository is consecrated to the venerable remains of the Spanish monarchs, who, even in death, agreeable to that devotion which ever distinguished the house of Austria, lie prostrate in a state of humiliation, at the feet of the great altar of the sacramental restorer of life, in a confident expectation of a blessed resurrection, through his all-sufficient merits. It further informs the reader, that this august mansion of the dead owes its rise to the greatest of emperors, Charles V. who recommended the building of it to the wisest of kings, Philip II. who appointed the place; that it was begun by his truly dutiful son, Philip III. and finished in 1654 by Philip IV. for his clemency, magnanimity, and devotion, justly surnamed the Great. The whole runs thus :

THE PANTHEON.

19

D. O. M.

LOCUS SACER MORTALITATIS EXUVIIS,
CATHOLICORUM REGUM
A RESTAURATORE VITÆ, CUIUS ARÆ MAX.
AUSTRIACA AD HUC PIETATE SUBIACENT,
OPTATAM DIEM EXPECTANTIUM,
QUAM POSTUMAM SEDEM SIBI, ET SUIS
CAROLUS CÆSARUM MAX. IN VOTIS HABUIT
PHILIPPUS II. REGUM PRUDENTISS. ELEGIT.
PHILIPPUS III. VERE PIUS INCOAVIT.

PHILIPPUS IIII.

CLEMENTIA, CONSTANTIA, RELIGIONE MAGNUS
AUXIT, ORNAVIT, ABSOLVIT,
ANNO DOM. M. DC. LIV.

It was composed by a set of eminent scholars named by his majesty, who were ordered to inspect the epitaphs and inscriptions on personages throughout the kingdom, in order to concenter their several beauties in one piece, as many bodies of the great were to be brought together into one repository.

ROUND it are several marble and bronze embellishments, as images, ^{Ornaments.} modillions, laurel wreaths, and festoons; and over them is seen the cornice with marble fillets and dentils, variegated with others of gilt bronze. These not only dignify the place of the epitaph, but serve as supporters to an open frontispiece wholly of bronze.

ON each side of this frontispiece are two female statues in a ^{Statues of the portal.} reclining attitude, finely executed. That on the right represents

DESCRIPTION OF

human nature, as sinking under the agonies of death, with a crown dropping from her head, and a sceptre from her left hand; which still holds a tablet, with this inscription: *NATURA OCCIDIT*. In the right she holds an axe, with which she destroys the flowers of a cornucopia; intimating, that life, even in monarchs, is only a flower which soon fades, and that sovereignty cannot exempt them from the universal stroke of death. The other holds, in her right hand, a tablet, with these words: *EXULTAT SPES*; in her left is a flaming urn, signifying, that in the ashes of those who fought manfully for the faith, hope still flames, aspiring to a better life; a life, where crowns are eternal. The expression in the countenance, attitude, and gestures of both, is such, that the bronze seems animated, and if on viewing nature we are filled with terror at the sight of its catastrophe, the liveliness of hope disperses the gloom, and irradiates the mind with the most brilliant ideas.

King's arms. BETWEEN these statues, as the center of this admirable frontispiece, is the royal shield, one foot and three quarters in length, and one foot and a half in breadth; the whole consisting of gems and the finest metals, collected at a vast expence. The several fields are blazoned in their proper colors, according to the diversity of the kingdoms: the red being inlaid with jasper; the white with the finest silver; the blue with lapis lazuli; and the pales and fesses are bronze gilt; the castles of the same metal, with the windows and gates of lapis lazuli. The lions and eagles, in very spirited postures, are of gold, enamelled with various colors, some red, others dun, others quite black. The pome-granate is also of gold, enamelled with red and green, the flower de luces and bars being of polished gold. It is surrounded with the color appropriated to the order of
the

the golden fleece, adorned with flames of gold, enamelled with red, and surmounted with an imperial crown, exhibiting all the magnificence becoming that ensign of majesty. Over the whole is a globe and a cross, terminating this superb portal.

ON the side are two pilasters, one foot and a half broad, and-Door-case. thirteen high, and behind them two other pilasters of the same height, forming an arch; the capital is two feet and a quarter in breadth, and the materials being of marble adorned with mouldings of brass gilt, form a very beautiful door-case to the portal.

CHAPTER IV.

The great Stair-Cafe of the Pantheon.

FROM this portal we descend a stair-cafe of a proper length and breadth, and which, whether we consider the matter or construction, is entirely answerable to it; all the beauties, so much admired in the stair-cafes, a difficult part of architecture, in several ancient castles of Spain, are here blended, and the whole executed in a manner worthy the descent to the mansions of the royal dead.

Materials of
the stair-cafe.

IT is entirely composed of the finest Tortosa jaspers, and Toledo marbles, beautifully variegated, exquisitely polished, and joined so masterly, as to be perceivable only by the change of colors; it is indeed polished to the greatest perfection, neither the touch, nor the eye discerning the least inequality, so that the whole, consisting of so many parts, appears to be only one single piece.

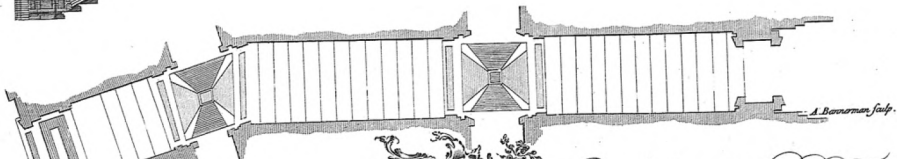
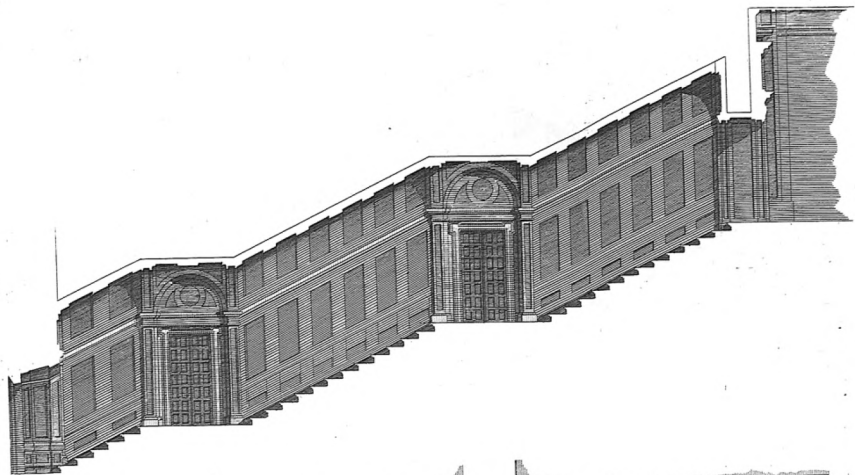
Its length.

THE length of it is sixty-four feet, and consists of thirty-four steps, divided into three flights, by three landing places.

Breadth and
form.

THE breadth, from side to side, is six feet, and that of the steps one foot and a half, but the height only five eights of a foot. The balustrades are of beautiful jasper marquetry, decorated with marble mouldings, terminating in a fascia, half a foot broad, and which, as an elegant distinction, projects in the manner of a fillet. Over the balustrade, on one side, are panes of jasper, two feet broad, and five and a half high, with marble mouldings; and let it here be observed

once



To Richard Thompson Esq.
It is Humbly Dedicated



This Section of the STAIR-CASE
BY His most Obedient Servant
George Thompson.

once for all, that every piece is executed in the most elaborate manner, the design remarkably delicate, and the disposition very judicious. On the other side are impostes forming equidistant arcades, and these are likewise of jasper. Let this suffice for its breadth and construction; let us now take a view of its superb landing places.

THE first, which is at the end of thirteen steps, from the portal, is an oblong square, decorated with very beautiful marquetry; four marble pilasters, inlaid with Tortosa jasper, form two arches, where strength and beauty are surprisngly united. In the center of the arches is a fleuron of gilt bronze; whence depends a lustre of the same metal, with six lamps, in the form of cornucopias. ^{First landing place.}

THIRTEEN steps lower is the second landing place, equal in beauty, and of a construction exactly similar to the first; except that the plane of this forms a trapezium, and the arrangement of the marble and jasper corresponds with the irregularity of the figure. Here are two doors, one of caova, opening into the sacristy, and the other of ebony, as leading to a vault, in which are deposited many of the royal corpses mentioned in the sequel. ^{Second landing place.}

IN the middle hangs a gilt lustre with six cornucopias, which, as a piece of exquisite workmanship, and suitable to this melancholy place, his majesty Philip IV. ordered to be taken down from one of the saloons of his palace, and in imitation of this, the former was made. When these twelve lamps are lighted, they may be said instantaneously to produce innumerable others in the jaspers, the polish of which is of such a delicacy, that they reflect the rays like so many mirrors, or pier-glasses; so that here the chrystal sepulchre, built by Ptolomy ^{Bronze lustre.}

Alexander's
tomb.

Ptolomy for his deceased sovereign, Alexander the Great, may be said to be surpassed; obdurate opaque bodies being rendered by art equal in transparency to the most pellucid crystals, so that all who pass along behold their entire images finely delineated on the surface of the jasper, and may receive from the speedy evanescence of these reflected figures a useful memento of the celerity of this fleeting life.

Door of the
pantheon.

SEVEN steps lower bring us to the third landing place, on which is the pantheon door. It is five feet in breadth, decorated with four pilasters, the two first of jasper, and the other two of bronze, together with a beautiful lintel, and a balustrade resembling in its materials, fashion, and dimensions, that above described; except, that here the pedestals are inlaid with marble. The pavement between the pilasters is an assemblage of polished jaspers, and other curious stones. The ceiling, perhaps the finest piece ever performed by human hands, being contiguous to the stair-case, reminds us of Jacob's ladder, the end of which reached to heaven. It is here indeed reverted, Jacob's being an ascent to life, and this a descent to the grave; but, as the great Messiah, more illustrious than Jacob, by descending the steps of humiliation even to the sleep of death, rose to his supereminent exaltation in heaven, the church knows no other way to a glorious ascension, than a resigned descent into the subterraneous regions of death and corruption.

CHAP. V.

Of the Royal Chapel of the Pantheon.

THROUGH this splendid portal, we enter that venerable place, to which all the other magnificent works are only outward appurtenances; the august cemetery of the kings of Spain, the proper repository of their royal bodies; the majestic pantheon: an edifice truly sacred and august, erected and thus magnificently embellished, by dutiful children in honor of their progenitors; a royal chapel, dedicated to the Almighty, whose worship was ever the predominant delight of those christian heroes, who here, in prostrate devotion, offer up, or rather, with the elders in the Apocalypse, resign their crowns before his throne, acknowledging the univerfality of his omnipotence, and that it is he only, who ruleth over all the kingdoms of the earth; that princes, in all the extent of their apparent dominions, can call nothing their own but the little spot assigned for their sepulchre, the natural inheritance of all the human race. “*Exivit spiritus ejus & revertetur in terram suam.*”

THE fymmetry of its feveral parts, the variety of colors reflected from fuch costly materials, the workmanfhip of its ornaments, fnew, at firft fight, that nature, power and art, were combined to difplay every poffible beauty: nature, in producing the gems and metals; power, in collecting them to unite piety and grandeur in this inviolable repository; and art, in giving them that perfection, in which they here fhine; and all without offending that gravity and folemnity effential to edifices defigned for the reception of the dead.

First view of
the pantheon.

DESCRIPTION OF

Materials.

THE eye every where meets with resplendent jaspers and marbles, with gold profusely shining on the several bronzes, on magnificent pilasters, which support the structure, on the mouldings, the friezes, and cornices; while the cupola, with its various embellishments, all in character, diffuse an inconceivable air of grandeur through the whole fabric; and the niches, urns, images, shields, grotesque pieces, festoons, and fleurons, keep the contemplative mind fluctuating between astonishment and melancholy.

Order of the architecture.

THE order of its architecture is the composite, so called as compounded of all the others; an invention owing to the Romans, but never executed with more justness, symmetry, and grandeur, than in this chapel, where it forms, without the least dissonance or incongruity in any of its parts, the most regular, the best contrived, and the completest structure that ever adorned any part of the earth.

Agrippa's pantheon.

IN the same taste, and with the several excellencies already mentioned, was the famous pantheon built at Rome by Marcus Agrippa, for the worship of pagan idols. It is still subsisting, though happily converted into a christian church; and from it this derives both its plan and appellation. The latter is of Greek etymology, Pan-theon: Summum Deorum, aut omne Deorum; so called as the chief mansion of all the deities. Accordingly the form of it, in imitation of the skies, was circular, or round, which is implied in the modern, and much more honorable name of Santa Maria de la Rotunda.

Why this was called pantheon.

BUT this structure had the name, pantheon, given it, as being the principal mansion of the true God, and the cemetery of kings, his representatives,

representatives, his vicegerents, and eminently partaking of all his communicable perfections; and, at the same time, formed in analogy to the sky, which it resembles in the concavity of its figure, and infinite variety of glittering ornaments.

ITS circumference, measured every where at an equal distance from its center, is one hundred and thirteen feet. The wall, which rests on the foundation of the great church, is of a considerable thickness, so as to admit of eight spacious oval cavities, in which are the urns, the door, and the altar with its striking embellishments. The diameter, from wall to wall, is something above thirty-six feet, which is nearly the third part of the circumference, according to the rule of Archimedes, who makes the proportion, between the diameter and circumference, to be as seven to twenty-two, which however is not precisely true. The height, from the pavement to the central stone, is thirty-eight feet, twenty-two to the cornice, and sixteen above it. And here we cannot help admiring the circumspection of the artist, in order to render its figure perfectly globular; for the height, length, and breadth, must be equal, and here the disparity is very small: nor was it possible, either to augment the breadth, or height, the center of the cupola nearly touching the foot of the great altar of the church above it; and a more sublime geometry teaches us, that, if it reach to God, no greater height can be attained.

THE pavement is an ample and perfect circle, representing the figure of a resplendent star in rays, issuing from the center, formed of innumerable gems, jaspers, and marbles. In the center is a fleur-de-lis, the largest ever seen, and the design equally beautiful; the glittering gems, of which it is composed, being inserted with such

Pavement of
the pantheon.

DESCRIPTION OF

art, as not to cause the least inequality in this splendid superficies, which is indeed a glorious instance of skill and magnificence. If, what is trodden under foot, be thus costly, what must the other parts be? And certainly, from the aspect of this star, we may, without being adepts in astrology, infer the perfection of the constellation, to which it belongs. And possibly the treading on stars in this superb pantheon, or pre-eminent abode of the Most High, is an allusive document, that he, who would walk among the stars of heaven, must place the felicity of his star in a preparation for death, and the remembrance of his sepulchre.

His majesty's
taste in
architecture,

OTHER pavements had been designed, but, when executed, were found defective, either in the compartments, or as little corresponding with the intention of the fabric, and therefore were successively removed, till his majesty, from his known acquaintance with the beauties of architecture, honored this with his approbation. Let us now proceed to the other parts, which in the disposition, figure, materials, and proportions, absolutely answer to Vitruvius's Eurythimia, and afford a sight equally delightful and instructive.

