

where there was nothing before but forests, the retreats of banditti, extends at least three leagues in length, and, I believe, very little less in breadth. They talk of ten thousand families being already settled here; but I do not see how it is possible there can be any thing like that number.

La Carolina, the capital of all the colonies, stands on a fine hill that towers over the whole settlement, and indeed over most part of the provinces of Granada and Cordova. For the sake of thus overlooking the rest of the plantations, they have placed it in a spot deficient in wood and water; and reduced themselves to the necessity of digging an incredible number of wells for the purposes of drinking, and watering their gardens. The whole town is new from the foundations, for there was not a cottage there eight years ago, the streets are wide, and drawn in straight lines, but the ground is not sufficiently levelled; the houses are upon an uniform plan, without the least decoration: the church fronts the principal south road; and a tower placed at each angle marks the extent of the town, which is to be an exact square: the market place and another square, are very spacious and shewy. All the flat on the crown of the hill before the town is laid out in kitchen gardens, and planted with avenues of elms, which are to serve hereafter for public walks.

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I never saw a scene more pleasing to the eye, or more satisfactory to the mind of every person that feels himself interested in the welfare of his fellow-creatures: his humanity must exult at the probability of their lot being so much ameliorated: for my part, I enjoyed the most agreeable sensations at the sight of this absolute creation, this new world risen out of the very heart of desolation and solitude; every thing seems so alive, so green, neat and thriving; in a word, so unlike the rest of this unactive kingdom. About a year ago, the department or district of the town of La Carolina, contained near eight thousand souls, but I was not able to obtain any exact information of the extent comprized under that denomination; three hundred Catalan manufacturers came to settle here in the course of last year: cloth and other manufactures seem to go on briskly; but I fear there is an inconstancy, a languor in the pursuit of projects, inherent in the very essence of the Spanish government, that will greatly retard the further progress of this colony; in the beginning, they spare neither pains nor expence to carry on a scheme, as may be seen here, where it is astonishing to behold how much has been done in a very short space of time. Our master muleteer, who had never been here since the Miquelets were sent to scour the country, and destroy the gang of robbers, that harboured hereabouts, could

could scarce believe his eyes, and did nothing but raise his hands to heaven and cross himself, as if he had got into a land of witches. It was no small enhancement of the merit of the place, to find an excellent inn and good dinner, and to regale ourselves upon excellent cow's milk and butter, to which we had been long strangers; for though they have cows in many parts of Spain, they seldom milk them, but keep them for breeding, and fattening in their old days for slaughter.

Now I have shewn you the fair side of La Carolina, I cannot, as a just and impartial correspondent, avoid informing you of the vices of its constitution, the defects in its establishment and direction, with the reasons I have for suspecting it will fall off every year, 'till it dwindles away to a petty Spanish town, just kept alive by the monies spent at the inns by muleteers and passengers.

The foreigners complain, with what justice I know not, of not having been treated with the indulgence and tenderness an infant colony requires; if any of them expressed discontent, or seemed desirous of returning to his native country, he was instantly secured, and chastised by a long and severe imprisonment. Many families were two or three years before their allotments were made out, during which time they were

obliged to work gratis for the other settlers ; unmarried people were allowed no share of land, but employed as servants to the rest ; when the poor Alfacians or Savoyards had the good fortune to be placed upon a rich patch of soil, and had brought it into tolerable condition, they were frequently ousted by the governor, their habitation transferred to a Spanish family, and themselves sent to improve a more bleak and barren part of the hills. The king gives all new-comers one year's seed corn, two cows, ten goats, some implements of husbandry, and some household stuff, which is generally infinitely worse than his majesty intends it should be : he pays them a stipend for their maintenance for the first three years. Some few foreigners, having numerous families grown up, thrive and improve in their circumstances, but the rest will in all probability leave the country as soon as the time of their contract expires, provided they be allowed to remove. The Spaniards have gradually got possession of the best plantations, and the town of Carolina has scarce any other inhabitants. The worst of all is, that there seems to be no outlet from this settlement, in case their manufactures should arrive at any degree of perfection, for it is on every side extremely remote from the sea, and many days journey by land from the great cities of Spain, where the consumption of their commodities  
might

might be expected to turn to any considerable account.

A little north of Carolina, we passed through a new village called Las Navas de Tolosa, from the old name of the defile in the neighbouring mountains; where, in 1212, Alfonso the ninth, king of Castille, Peter the second, of Aragon, and Sancho the seventh, of Navarre, with their joint forces, attacked and cut to pieces the army of Mahomet, king of Morocco. Historians gravely tell us, that there fell no less than two hundred thousand Moors, more than half their army, with the loss of only twenty-five Christians. In a letter said to have been written by Alfonso to the Pope, this list of the slain is given. I always thought it a most extraordinary story, but now that I have seen the field of battle, I look upon it to be full as wonderful how three hundred and fifty thousand Moors, without reckoning the Spanish forces, could contrive to squeeze themselves into such a heap of mountains jumbled together, where you could not find twenty yards of level ground for some miles round the spot.

The evening was very fine, and the hills steep, which induced us to walk most part of the way. Having got a good distance before the carriages, among some woody dells, we began to be in great hopes and constant expectation of some *Cardenio* or *Dorothea* bolting out

upon us. While we were amusing ourselves with such Quixotic reveries, the sound of a guitar suddenly struck our ears. At a turn of the road, close by the side of a sweet murmuring brook, we met with about a dozen well dressed men, and as many smart, handsome damsels, dancing upon a platform of large level stones. The females that were not busy dancing, were seated under fine hanging woods, on a natural amphitheatre of rocks. The principal men came very politely up to us, and invited us to partake of their sport, while a very pretty girl presented us with sweetmeats and sugar-plumbs. A jolly friar seemed to do the honours of this *fête champêtre*, and to have the privilege of throwing his handkerchief at which of the sultanas he pleased; for they all courted his smiles and careffes. We stayed some time with this merry crew, who danced several seguidillas, and sang several songs at our request. They pressed us much to go back up the hill, and pass the night with them at the house they belonged to, where they intended to be very frolicsome: but as it began to rain, we declined the kind offer, and parted with our new friends, whose music and jovial shouts we had the pleasure to hear re-echoed by the rocks, almost during our whole walk up to our inn at Miranda.

This morning, the heaviest of our trunks being put  
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upon mules, to lighten the chaifes, we crossed the Sierra Morena, at the pass called *El Puerto del Rey*. The road is far from bad, though steep; but the mountain is as dreary and disagreeable as any thing can well be. The heavy rain did not render us more indulgent to its ill-favoured aspect. In Cervantes's days, there were perhaps noble woods to cover all this nakedness, as here and there some venerable pines and chestnut-trees remain, sad monuments of ancient forests.

All the Mancha before us seems to be a bare country, ugly and tedious beyond expression. For my part, unless it be to look out at a venta, or peep about for an adventure at the meeting of the cross-roads, I intend sleeping all the way to Madrid.

## L E T T E R XXXVII.

Madrid, April 27, 1776.

**W**E perceived a very severe alteration in the climate as soon as we descended the Sierra Morena, and entered the Mancha: from the beginning of summer we were in a manner thrown back to the last months

months of winter. In Andalufía, the vines were all in leaf, and their fruit fet; the flowers of the shrubs falling off to make way for the seed. On the northern side of the mountains scarce a fresh leaf was to be seen, or a bud in the vineyards; the poor starved bushes, with just a flower or two blown; the weather cold and raw: in a word, it is difficult to conceive so sudden and so thorough a change of seasons as that which we experienced in this journey.

The Mancha is an immense plain, intersected by different ridges of low hills and rocks: not an inclosure of any kind, except mud-walls about the villages: and really I can almost say, there is not a tree to be seen from the Sierra Morena to Toledo, nor from the banks of the Tagus to Madrid: a few dwarfish evergreen oaks, huddled together in nooks of hills, and some stumpy olive-plants, scarce deserve the name of trees. All this vast tract of open country is cultivated in corn or vines: there cannot be an uglier. The villages are large; few or no single houses; and not a *venta* that I could fix upon for the scene of any action in Don Quixote. We lay at Puertolapiche, a small village mentioned by Cervantes; but I think he omits telling us what adventure was achieved there. In short, with all the helps of imagination, and reading the book all the way, the country did not raise one agreeable idea, nor tempt me to take  
a single



a single sketch of any part of it. The houses are built with mud and gravel. The women cover their heads with coloured handkerchiefs, and their necks with laced palatines.

Val de Peñas produces a very pleasant red wine, the most drinkable, for common use, of any in Spain. The provision of wine for the king is kept in hogsheds; the remainder of the vintage in skins. The best wine sells at the rate of twenty reals the arroba.

The badness of the weather hindered us from riding a few miles out of the road to visit *Los Ojos dela Guadiana*, where that river, after running eight leagues under ground, rises up to day, and thence takes its course towards Estremadura. We passed over the subterraneous river at the Venta de Quesada, where the well in the yard communicates with it. Straw, or any kind of light stuff, dropped into the well, is hurried away with such rapidity by the stream, that you will not bring up a single straw, though you let down the bucket almost instantaneously. The incurious Spaniards have made so few experiments upon this phenomenon, that we could procure no further intelligence on this head. The Manchegos have a pretty song about these eyes of the Guadiana, which, however, they declare to be much less wonderful than those of their mistresses. At Consuegra, a most beautiful gipsy girl, with the sweetest eyes in  
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the world, sung it to us, and danced seguidillas to the tune with admirable agility and expression. She was quite *Preciosa the little gipsy*, with her soft voice and affected lisp. It is a pity her beauty was much impaired by her mode of dressing, which gave her a most prominent belly, a defect few Spanish women are free from, and a flat low breast, which they esteem a great perfection in a lady's shape.

Toledo is the strangest city you can imagine in point of situation; something like Durham, or Richmond in Yorkshire, but not equal to either in beauty, as it is totally bare of wood.

The Tagus, after winding at large through a fine plain, which a little more wood would render very agreeable to the eye, comes at last to be wedged in between two ramparts of high steep rocks: the passage is very narrow, and before the river gets out again into a broad bed and open ground, it almost returns to the place where it entered the defile. On this rocky peninsula stands the city, exceedingly ill built, poor, and ugly. The streets are so steep, that no stranger in his sober senses would venture up or down them in a carriage.

The Alcazar, or ancient palace, which was burnt down by the allied army in the beginning of the century, is placed on the highest point of all. It is a  
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noble extensive building, and has just undergone a thorough repair, at the expence of the archbishop, who has fortunately taken a turn towards employing some portion of his great revenues in works of public utility, such as this palace, a new road to Aranjuez, and a street in the town<sup>29</sup>. It is supposed that the Alcazar will be converted into an hospital or orphan-house. The architecture is chaste and unaffected; the inner court is very grand; its colonnade of granite columns, of the Corinthian order, makes a noble appearance; the chapel is lofty and narrow, which renders it convenient to attend divine service, as there is a balcony in each story of the house that leads into it. The stables are under the kitchens and offices, and are large enough to contain a very considerable number of horses. The garret story is one open gallery for playing in, above

<sup>29</sup> The see of Toledo is said to be worth four hundred thousand ducats a year; but there are large deductions to be made. Besides the proportion the infant Don Lewis receives, and pensions to different people, it pays annually fifteen thousand ducats to the monks of the Escorial, notwithstanding Philip the second granted to them no less than thirty villages in their neighbourhood. The Spanish court finds many ways of lessening the revenues of the church, by pensions, donations to hospitals, charitable foundations, and premiums to the societies of agriculture. There is not a bishopric in the kingdom but has somebody or other quartered upon it; and I believe the second-rate benefices are in the same predicament. Out of the rich canonries and prebends are taken the pensions of the new order of knights of Carlos tercero.

eighty yards in length. In the middle stories are several large halls, the most spacious of which measures about one hundred and sixty feet by thirty-six.

The cathedral has nothing particularly beautiful on the outside above the common run of Gothic churches: it is not to be compared with many we have in England. The steeple is in the ugly style of the Flemish and German spires, a heap of blue turrets piled one upon another. The inside is well lighted and chearful, neither heavy, nor confused with too many ornaments: the decorations added of late years are not in the best of tastes, but in richness of gilding without a competitor. The wealth of the archbishop and chapter displays itself in the profusion of gold lavished on the walls; they have gilded the iron rails, the Gothic arches, and even drawn lines of gold to mark the joints of the stones with which the pillars of the choir are built.

The group of angels, called *El transparente*, which is fixed behind the choir, and esteemed by the Tolodans the glory of their church, is at best but a clumsy, ill-designed monument, remarkable for nothing but the fineness of the marble and other materials.

One of the greatest vexations a curious person experiences in travelling through Spain, is the scarcity, the non-existence of tolerable *Ciceroni*; those you meet with are generally cobblers, who throw a brown cloak

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