

[91]

LETTER IX.

Pisa, November 7th, 1754.

DEAR SIR,

IN my last I told you, that we had thoughts of settling here. It is impossible. If either house, victuals, or even necessaries were to be had in *Pisa*, we should be glad to remain in this city; but in its present state, camelions only can inhabit it. Horses indeed may graze and fatten in the streets. Human creatures, unless they are *Italians*, cannot find lodgings or subsistence. It is the second town in *Tuscany*; it is an archbishopric, and an university. Pompous titles! but titles only. Under the house of *Medici*, *Pisa* may have been in vigour and prosperity; yet I remember, *Misson* mentions the circumstance I just now hinted,
of

of grass growing in the streets*. *Misson* wrote in the year 1688†, in the reign of *Cosmo III*, who almost constantly resided in this city during the depth of winter; yet its atrophy was then begun, and now, I own, it appears in the last stage of a consumption.

Pisa, divided like *Florence* by the *Arno*, is situated in a fine open country. A broad magnificent quay with houses on each side of the river, various statues, convents, and churches, the cathedral, the baptistery, the bridge, the town-house, and the hanging tower, are ornamental edifices, that, in defiance of poverty and desolation, give an air of grandeur to *Pisa*, and make it appear like a

* This circumstance is also mentioned by *Keyser*, who was at *Pisa* in 1730, and *Dr. Smollet*, who was there in 1765.

† *Mr. Misson* travelled with the earl of *Arran*, brother to the duke of *Ormond*. His travels were published (in *French*) in 3 vols. 12^mo. in 1691.

LETTER IX. 93

fair city, which some furious pestilence has lately depopulated*.

The pensile tower, built with so much exactness from the top to the base, as to appear a kind of miracle to the ignorant †, is of a round cylindrical form, com-

* In like manner Dr. Smollet : “ *Pisa* is a fine old city that strikes you with the same veneration you would feel at the sight of a temple which bears the marks of decay, without being absolutely in ruins.”

† *M. de la Condamine* found by measurement, that a plumb-line let down from the top, touches the ground at the distance of thirteen feet from the bottom of the tower. Most writers are of opinion, that this inclination is accidental, not designed, as the pedestals of the pillars, which are under ground, are in the same inclined position with those above, and even the scaffold-holes, which remain unfilled, are all sloping.

This tower was completed in the year 1174, by one *William*, a *German*, perhaps the same *William* who from 1175 to 1179 was employed in rebuilding the choir of *Canterbury*, where, it is observable, the capitals of the pillars are very similar to those of *Pisa*, approaching nearly to the *Corinthian*.

posed

posed of eight stones^{7c} of the whitest marble, an hundred and eighty feet high.

The cathedral is dark and gloomy, large and magnificent; a *Gothic* building; something singular, and not easily described, is disgustful to the eye upon the first entrance into it: I believe, from the confusion of orders; *Gothic* arches being mixed with *Corinthian* pillars*. The ceiling is gilt, and divided into compartments. A monument of an archbishop of *Pisa* is very fine, especially as supported by two statues of CHARITY and RELIGION. The pillars of the whole church are all of marble and granite: different in their colours, not beautiful

* These pillars, however, are not *Grecian*, but that light, neat, modern *Gothic*, (just mentioned) more properly stiled *Arabesque*, or *Saracenic*, from its being first introduced, in the tenth century, by the *Arabians*, or *Saracens*. See *Riou's Grecian Orders of Architecture*, p. 9. and *Bentham's History of Ely Cathedral*, p. 36. where the reader will find a more accurate account of *Gothic* architecture than any yet published.

in their arrangement. The pavement is *Mosaic*. The gates are of brass †, exquisitely wrought; they represent in small figures, the whole history of the bible.

On the outside of this cathedral, I took particular notice of a *sarcophagus*, stuck up awkwardly enough, against the wall. It represents in the true antique manner, the story of Venus, Adonis, and the boar. At a corner I observed a stone, accidentally thrust in by the workmen, not at the original building, but to supply some vacancy made either by time or accident, and so little conspicuous, that I had gone twice round the cathedral before I perceived it. Part of the inscription is broken off; the remainder is

LAELIO·HADRIANO·AN-
TONINO·AUG·PIO·PONT-
MAX·TRIB·POTEST
III PPNDUICEN·

† “ They are the work of *Bonano Pisano*, made
“ in the year 1180. See *Richardson's Travels*,
“ p. 44.”

I shall

I shall not trouble you with many more quotations of this sort. *Grævius*, *Gronovius*, *Gruter*, *Montfaucon*, and many other authors, being so amply filled with inscriptions, that scarce the minutest scrap can have escaped them. As yet, to my great surprize and disappointment, I have found few footsteps of ancient *Rome*; not a portico, not an arch, not a column, to be seen. The *Goths* and *Vandals*, the *Guelphs* and *Gibbelines**, the more modern, but continued wars in *Tuscany*, must have occasioned this great dearth of heathenish reliques, which, if they are not so sacred as the thumbs of saints, or the thigh-bones of martyrs, are at least, as satisfactory and much more instructive.

* The factions of the popes and the emperors: the first so called from *Guelph* duke of *Bavaria*, in the xith century; the other from a village in *Suabia* given as a watch word to the army of *Conrad III.* in the xiith century, by *Frederick* his brother, who had been educated there.

Yesterday,

LETTER IX. 97

Yesterday, we went to view a city of the greatest traffic in *Italy*, *Leghorn*, [*Livorno*]. It is a free port, belonging to the dukes of *Tuscany*, on the *Mediterranean*, which, however boisterous and passionate at some times, appeared to us placid, and smooth as glass. The streets of *Leghorn* are strait; the chief street is very broad, and proportionably long. The square is very spacious and handsome, not regular, but originally intended to have had buildings in every one of the four sides, exactly answerable to each other. The great church, which constitutes part of the square, is magnificent; the ceiling of it is finely painted. The houses were originally built low and regular. As the inhabitants have increased, they have added story upon story, and have entirely broken in upon the uniformity. Paintings in fresco have formerly decorated the outside of every house in the great street. Time, weather, and alterations have al-

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most quite defaced the paintings. *Leghorn*, before the rise of the house of *Medici*, belonged to the republic of *Genoa*, who exchanged it with *Cosmo*, the first great duke of *Tuscany*, for *Sarzana**. Both parties had their advantage in the exchange. *Sarzana* lay on the borders of *Genoa*, *Leghorn* on those of *Tuscany*; but *Cosmo*, and his two sons *Francis* and *Ferdinand*, who, in their turns, were his successors, judiciously foresaw the advantage that might be made of its situation. They built walls round the city. They

* The writers of the *Universal Modern History* (vol. x. 570. and xiii. 386.) say, that "*Leghorn* was sold to the *Florentines* for 120,000 ducats " by *Thomas Fregese*, doge of *Genoa*, in 1420," about a hundred years before *Cosmo*, the first great duke was born. Other writers affirm that *Charles VIII.* took *Leghorn* from the *Genoese*, and gave it to the *Florentines*, in 1495. *Keyser* agrees with our author, and even the *Modern Historians*, in a subsequent part of their work, (vol. xvi. p. 216.) say also, that "*Leghorn* was obtained in exchange " for *Sarzana*."

LETTER IX. 99

fenced those walls with forts. They cleared and drained the marshes, that had long rendered the place unwholesome and uninhabited*. They established the freedom of the port, and formed two most commodious harbours, the one for larger, the other for smaller vessels. They made the city an asylum against arrests for debt. You will allow

* In the reign of the grand-duke Ferdinand II. Sir Robert Dudley, son of the earl of Leicester, who assumed his grandfather's title of duke of Northumberland, and resided at Florence, became famous on account of that great project, which he formed, of draining a vast tract of morafs between Pisa and the sea, and raising Leghorn, which was then a mean and pitiful place, into a large and beautiful town, improving the haven by a mole, &c. and having engaged his serene highness to declare it a free port, he, by his influence and correspondences, drew many English merchants to settle and set up houses there. For these and other great services, the grand-duke settled on him a pension of 2000 sequins, [900 l. sterling] and gave him the castle of Corbello, &c. *Biographia Britannica*, vol. iii. p. 1812.

this to be a refinement upon the scheme of *Romulus*. Every point of policy, omitted or uncompleted by the first great- duke, and his eldest son, was supplied by the wisdom of *Ferdinand*, who confirmed and secured the wealth and trade of this new mercantile world. *Pisa* only suffered by the completion of so wise a scheme. She soon became a deserted city: her inhabitants left her. They hastened to meet that amazing concourse of merchants, who swarmed every day to *Leghorn*. Unhappy *Pisa*! once a powerful republic, afterwards enslaved by many masters, now, as I before remarked, *una città, università, et niente* *.

Neither the christian piety of *Cosmo*, nor of *Francis*, nor even of *Ferdinand*, who had been a cardinal, hindered them from establishing in *Leghorn*, those necessary instruments of trade, the *Jews*. The thriving sons of *Israel* have a particular quarter of the town assigned for

* "A city, an university, and nothing."

their

their abode. At present their number is fourteen thousand. All religions are exercised peaceably by the *Livornians*, who appear, as a modern author expresses himself, "like a hive of bees without one sting of devotion." The inhabitants of *Leghorn* ebb and flow, from three to five and forty thousand people, composed of every nation under the sun.

Let us return, through a very delightful forest, from *Leghorn* to *Pisa*, the distance only fourteen miles.

Antiquarians affirm, not without some degree of probability, that *Pisa* was originally built by a *Grecian* colony, who settling in *Etruria*, denominated their new town, the same as that which they had quitted in *Peloponnesus*. *Virgil* is brought as a witness to this assertion:

*Hos parere jubent Alpheæ ab origine Pisæ,
Urbs Etrusca solo* *.

* *Æneid. x. ver. 179.*

Pisa, a *Tuscan* town, supplies these hands,

Pisa, first founded by *Alphean* hands.

Wright.

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Virgil,



Virgil, throughout his *Aeneid*, has studiously taken care to celebrate the places of most notoriety in his own time. I cannot therefore avoid indulging myself in the thought, that I am now treading on Classic ground. The situation of the city, on a fine river, in a plain, fertile, champaign country, the approach on every side easy and delightful, the air as healthy and as warm as that of *Naples*, were circumstances adapted to *Grecian* luxury, and such as left no perceptible alteration in the exchange of *Peloponnesus* for *Etruria*.

I am just returned from viewing the great-duke's palace. It is rather an excellent house than a royal dwelling. It is situated on one of the quays, and commands a prospect of the *Arno*.

The burying-place [*Il campo santo*] is encompassed by a *Gothic* cloister, like that of *Westminster*, but in an oblong square*. Miracles attend every inch of
the

* Its inner area is filled with earth which was brought

the sacred ground. They are undoubtedly recorded by many legendary writers. I will not add to the number.

Around the walks of the cloister, are ranged many *sarcophagi*, some very fine, in *alto relievo*. They were found in different parts of *Europe*, and brought hither, as to a repository, by the purchase and command of the former great-dukes of *Tuscany*.

The aqueduct, which supplies the inhabitants with water, is a plain noble fabric. It is built on large brick arches four miles in length. I beheld with astonishment so expensive, and so beneficial a public work. Two large reservoirs receive the water, and supply two

brought from *Jerusalem*, in 1228, as ballast, in the galleys of the *Pisans* when they returned from warring with the *Turks*, and from thence takes its name: it was begun to be built in the year 1200, and was finished in 1278. It is the property, they say, of *Jerusalem-earth* to reduce a body to a skeleton in twenty-four hours. *Wright*.

perpetual fountains, that are at once an ornament, a refreshment, a convenience, and an advantage to the city. I blushed to think, that I had ever seen *Cheapside-conduit*, and that I shall probably see again, in various parts of *London*, the letters F. P. to notify water, and a *Fire-Plug*, somewhere or other to be found, if diligently sought for upon very emergent occasions. The grand-duke *Ferdinand*, has many statues, and many pompous inscriptions, throughout *Tuscany*, to his honour. His *AQUEDUCT* at *Pisa* records his praises with greater truth, and more justice, than all his other monuments,

If you are not tired, permit me to conduct you to the baths of *Pisa*, which are two miles distant from the town. They are large, handsome, and convenient, far more commodiously contrived than the baths in *Somersetshire*. Any person may occupy a single room, in which he will find a bath, a fire-place, and

and sufficient space for a bed*. The waters are as hot as those of the *Queen's bath*, and much of the same nature. The lodgings (part of the great-duke's revenue) are dear in respect of *Italy*, cheap in respect of *Tunbridge, Bath, and Bristol*. All provisions are brought in from the neighbouring common-wealth of *Lucca*. The city of *Pisa* cannot afford meat, or even greens or garden-fruits of any kind. The buildings are new. A rocky romantic hill rises close behind them, of which the greatest part is covered by a wood of shrubs consisting of juniper and myrtles. The buildings, the hill, the rocks, and the wood, afford a most pleasing prospect to the eye—

Nullus in orbe sinus Baiis præluet amœnis†.

In the season, which is the midst of summer, great numbers of people resort

* Dr. *Dominiceti's* baths, &c. at *Chelsea*, seem, in some measure, formed on this model.

† *Hor. Lib. 1. Epist. 1. ver. 83.*

No bay with pleasant *Baiæ* can compare.

to these baths, more for the benefit of bathing than of drinking the waters *. When the company is absent, I have seldom seen a place more suitably adapted to study and contemplation.

My next shall be from *Florence*; we are determined to winter there. I have been so long in my visit, that I must hasten to take leave. Adieu.

C O R K E.

* The hot springs of *Tuscany* were choaked up by the Barbarians. The famous countess *Matilda*, in 1113, repaired and made use of them; but the succeeding ages of barbarism again choaked them, till about the year 1743 they were discovered at the foot of mount *St. Giuliano* not far from *Pisa*, and being again rebuilt, they are at this time [1763] vastly frequented for their medicinal virtues. *Univ. Mod. Hist.* vol. xiii. p. 269.

In *Montfaucon's Antiquities* is an inner view of that part of the ancient Baths of *Pisa* called *Laconicum*, taken from a design of Cardinal *Noris*.

L E T T E R