

apprehensive of robbers. The last post but one in this day's journey, is at the little town of Spirito Santo, a kind of sea-port on the Mediterranean. The roads are indifferent, and the accommodation is execrable. I was glad to find myself housed in a very good inn at Pisa, where I promised myself a good night's rest, and was not disappointed. I heartily wish you the same pleasure, and am very sincerely

Yours.



L E T T E R XXVII.

Nice, January 28. 1765.

DEAR SIR,

PISA is a fine old city, that strikes you with the same veneration you would feel at sight of an ancient temple, which bears the marks of decay, without being absolutely dilapidated. The houses are well built, the streets open, straight, and well paved; the shops well furnished; and the markets well supplied: there are some elegant palaces, particularly that of the grand-duke, with a marble statue of Ferdinand III. before it. The churches are built with taste, and tolerably ornamented. There is a beautiful wharf of free-stone on each side of the river Arno, which runs through the city, and three bridges thrown over it, of which

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which that in the middle is of marble, a pretty piece of architecture: but the number of the inhabitants is very inconsiderable; and this very circumstance gives it an air of majestic solitude, which is far from being unpleasant to a man of a contemplative turn of mind. For my part, I cannot bear the tumult of a populous commercial city; and the solitude that reigns in Pisa would be a strong motive to chuse it as a place of residence. Not that this would be the only inducement for living at Pisa. Here is some good company, and even a few men of taste and learning. The people in general are counted sociable and polite; and there is great plenty of provisions, at a very reasonable rate. At some distance from the more frequented parts of the city, a man may hire a large house for thirty crowns a year: but near the center, you cannot have good lodgings, ready furnished, for less than a *scudo* (about five shillings) a day. The air in summer is reckoned unwholesome, by the exhalations arising from stagnant water in the neighbourhood of the city, which stands in the midst of a fertile plain, low and marshy: yet these marshes have been considerably drained by the new canal extending from hence to Leghorn. As for the Arno, it is no longer navigable for vessels of any burden. The university of Pisa is very much decayed: and except the little business occasioned by the Emperor's galleys, which are built in this town, I know of no commerce it carries on. Perhaps the inhabitants live on the produce of the country.

country, which consists of corn, wine, and cattle. They are supplied with excellent water for drinking, by an aqueduct consisting of above five thousand arches, begun by Cosmo, and finished by Ferdinand I. grand-dukes of Tuscany; it conveys the water from the mountains at the distance of five miles. This noble city, formerly the capital of a flourishing and powerful republic, which contained above one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants within its walls, is now so desolate that grass grows in the open streets; and the number of its people do not exceed sixteen thousand.

You need not doubt but I visited the Campanile, or hanging tower, which is a beautiful cylinder of eight stories, each adorned with a round of columns, rising one above another. It stands by the cathedral, and inclines so far on one side from the perpendicular, that in dropping a plummet from the top, which is one hundred and eighty-eight feet high, it falls sixteen feet from the base. For my part, I should never have dreamed that this inclination proceeded from any other cause, than an accidental subsidence of the foundation on this side, if some connoisseurs had not taken great pains to prove it was done on purpose by the architect. Any person who has eyes may see that the pillars on that side are considerably sunk; and this is the case with the very threshold of the door by which you enter. I think it would have been a very preposterous ambition in the architects, to shew how

how far they could deviate from the perpendicular in this construction; because in that particular any common mason could have rivalled them; and if they really intended it as a specimen of their art, they should have shortened the pilasters on that side, so as to exhibit them intire, without the appearance of sinking. These leaning towers are not unfrequent in Italy; there is one at Bologna, another at Venice, a third betwixt Venice and Ferrara, and a fourth at Ravenna; and the inclination in all of them has been supposed owing to the foundations giving way on one side only.

In the cathedral, which is a large Gothic pile, there is a great number of massy pillars of porphyry, granite, jasper, and verde-antico, together with some good pictures and statues: but the greatest curiosity is that of the brass-gates, designed and executed by John of Bologna, representing, embossed in different compartments, the history of the Old and New Testament. I was so charmed with this work, that I could have stood a whole day to examine and admire it. In the Baptisterium, which stands opposite to this front, there are some beautiful marbles, particularly the font, and a pulpit, supported by the statues of different animals.

Between the cathedral and this building, about one hundred paces on one side, is the famous burying ground called *Campo Santo*, from its being covered with earth brought from Jerusalem. It is an oblong square, surrounded by a very high wall, and

and always kept shut. Within-side there is a spacious corridore round the whole space, which is a noble walk for a contemplative philosopher. It is paved chiefly with flat grave-stones: the walls are painted in fresco by Ghiotto, Giotto, Stefano, Bennoti, Bufulmaco, and some others of his contemporaries and disciples, who flourished immediately after the restoration of painting. The subjects are taken from the Bible. Though the manner is dry, the drawing incorrect, the design generally lame, and the colouring unnatural; yet there is merit in the expression: and the whole remains as a curious monument of the efforts made by this noble art immediately after her revival. Here are some deceptions in perspective equally ingenious and pleasing; particularly the figures of certain animals, which exhibit exactly the same appearance, from whatever different points of view they are seen. One division of the burying-ground consists of a particular compost, which in nine days consumes the dead bodies to the bones: in all probability it is no other than common earth mixed with quick-lime. At one corner of the corridore, there are the pictures of three bodies represented in the three different stages of putrefaction which they undergo when laid in this composition. At the end of the three first days, the body is bloated and swelled, and the features are enlarged and distorted to such a degree as fills the spectator with horror. At the sixth day, the swelling is subsided, and all the muscular flesh

flesh hangs loosened from the bones : at the ninth; nothing but the skeleton remains. There is a small neat chapel at one end of the *Campo Santo*, with some tombs, on one of which is a beautiful bust by Buona Roti. At the other end of the corridor, there is a range of antient Roman stone-coffins, representing on the sides and covers some excellent pieces in basso-relievo. The hunting of Meleager has been greatly admired : but what struck me most, was the figure of a woman lying dead on a tomb-stone, covered with a piece of thin drapery, so delicately cut as to shew all the flexures of the attitude, and even all the swellings and sinuosities of the muscles. Instead of stone, it looks like a sheet of wet linc.

For four zechines I hired a return-coach and four from Pisa to Florence. This road, which lies along the Arno, is very good ; and the country is delightful, variegated with hill and vale, wood and water, meadows and corn-fields, planted and inclosed like the counties of Middlesex and Hampshire ; with this difference, however, that all the trees in this tract were covered with vines, and the ripe clusters black and white, hung down from every bough in the most luxuriant and romantic abundance. The vines in this country are not planted in rows, and propped with sticks, as in France, and the county of Nice, but twine around the hedge-row trees, which they almost quite cover with their foliage and fruit. The branches of the