

ral parts, the variety of colours reflected from the costly materials of which it is composed, the workmanship of its ornaments, seem to shew that nature, power, and art, were combined to display every possible beauty: yet all without offending that gravity and solemnity essential to edifices designed for the reception of the dead. The eye here every where meets with resplendent jaspers and marbles intermixed with gold, while the cupola, supported by pilasters, with its various embellishments, all in character, diffuse an inconceivable air of grandeur thro' the whole fabric: and the niches, urns, images, shields, grotesque pieces, festoons, and fleurons, keep the contemplative mind fluctuating between astonishment and melancholy.

Among numberless other figures erected at the translation of the bodies of the kings of Spain to this chapel, there are two figures of bronze, (see the plate) which claim

the attention of every spectator. The first is an angel, standing on a globe supported by a square pedestal, holding on his breast a small desk, on which the books were laid when the sacred offices were performed at this august ceremony. The other figure represents the Imperial eagle, the emblem of Austria, from which family the kings of Spain are descended. The gridiron which he holds in his beak, and another placed on his back, allude to the martyrdom of St. Laurence, to whom the Escorial was dedicated by Philip the Second, in pursuance of a vow he had made, that if he should gain the battle against the French, which was fought at St. Quintin, he would build a magnificent temple in honour of that saint. To the assistance of St. Laurence he imputed the signal victory which he happened to gain; and discharged his vow, by building this magnificent structure.

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*The HISTORY of CAROLAN, the last Irish Bard.*

THERE can be perhaps no greater entertainment than to compare the rude Celtic simplicity with modern refinement. Books, however, seem incapable of furnishing the parallel; and to be acquainted with the ancient manners of our own ancestors, we should endeavour to look for their remains in those countries, which, being in some measure retired from an intercourse with other nations, are still untinged with foreign refinement, language, or breeding.

The Irish will satisfy curiosity in this respect preferably to all other nations I have seen. They, in se-

veral parts of that country, still adhere to their ancient language, dress, furniture, and superstitions; several customs among them that still speak their original; and, in some respect, Cæsar's description of the Ancient Britons is applicable to these.

Their bards, in particular, are still held in great veneration among them; those traditionary heralds are invited to every funeral, in order to fill up the intervals of the howl with their songs and harps. In these they rehearse the actions of the ancestors of the deceased, bewail the bondage of their country under the Eng-

English government, and generally conclude with advising the young men and maidens to make the best use of their time, for they will soon, for all their present bloom, be stretched under the table, like the dead body before them.

Of all the bards this country ever produced, the last and the greatest was Carolan the blind. He was at once a poet, a musician, a composer, and sung his own verses to his harp. The original natives never mention his name without rapture; both his poetry and music they have by heart; and even some of the English themselves who have been transplanted there, find his music extremely pleasing. A song beginning *O Rourke's noble fare will ne'er be forgot*, translated by Dean Swift, is of his composition; which though perhaps by this means the best known of his pieces, is yet by no means the most deserving. His songs, in general, may be compared to those of Pindar, as they have frequently the same flights of imagination, and are composed (I don't say written, for he could not write) merely to flatter some man of fortune upon some excellence of the same kind. In these one man is praised for the excellence of his stable, as in Pindar, another for his hospitality, a third for the beauty of his wife and children, and a fourth for the antiquity of his family. Whenever any of the original natives of distinction were assembled at feasting or revelling, Carolan was generally there, where he was always ready with his harp, to celebrate their praises. He seemed by nature formed for his profession; for as he was born blind, so also he was possessed of a most astonishing memo-

ry, and a facetious turn of thinking, which gave his entertainers infinite satisfaction. Being once at the house of an Irish nobleman, where there was a musician present, who was eminent in the profession, Carolan immediately challenged him to a trial of skill. To carry the jest forward, his lordship persuaded the musician to accept the challenge, and he accordingly played over on his fiddle the fifth concerto of Vivaldi. Carolan, immediately taking his harp, played over the whole piece after him, without missing a note, though he had never heard it before: which produced some surprise; but their astonishment increased, when he assured them he could make a concerto in the same taste himself, which he instantly composed, and that with such spirit and elegance, that it may compare (for we have it still) with the finest compositions of Italy.

His death was not more remarkable than his life. Homer was never more fond of a glass than he; he would drink whole pints of U squebaugh, and, as he used to think, without any ill consequence. His intemperance, however, in this respect, at length brought on an incurable disorder, and when just at the point of death, he called for a cup of his beloved liquor. Those who were standing round him, surprised at the demand, endeavoured to persuade him to the contrary; but he persisted, and when the bowl was brought him, attempted to drink but could not; wherefore, giving away the bowl, he observed with a smile, that it would be hard if two such friends as he and the cup should part at least without kissing; and then expired.