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Account Of The Present King Of Spain.

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ACCOUNT OF THE
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PRESENT KING OF SPAIN. *)

This day I have seen the King; and I must say that a prominent nose, a piercing eye, and a serene countenance, make him look much better than his coin represents him. I have seen several portraits of him, even one by his favorite *Mengs*: but neither *Mengs*, nor any other painter, had given me a true idea of his face, which is pleasing, though made up of irregular features.

As to his person, it is of a good size, and his walk quite *Bourbonian*; that is, erect and steady. He appears to be robust; and I am told that he has a great deal of bodily strength. His complexion is quite sun-burnt, which is undoubtedly the consequence of his passion of the chase. In this respect he is a true *Meleager*. No degree of heat or cold can keep him from this exercise. You may possibly think it worth the while to read an account of the life he leads; and here it is, as I had it from people who have been daily witnesses of it for many years.

Every day in the year he gets up about six, and exactly at seven comes out of his bed-room in his night-gown. He finds waiting in the anti-chamber a *Gentil-hombre de Camera*, a *Mayordomo de Semana*, a physician, a surgeon, and several other attendants, with whom he interchanges words while dressing. The *Getilhombre*, kneeling on one knee, presents a dish of chocolate, which the King drinks almost cold. He then dismisses some of them with a nod, enters his private chapel, and hears a mass: then retires to a closet, to which no body is ever admitted, and there reads or writes, especially on those days that he does not intend to go a hunting in the morning.

About eleven he comes out of the closet to meet the whole royal family. They all kiss his hand, or offer to do it, lowering a knee. He embraces them all, kissing the Princes at the cheek, and the Princesses on the forehead.

The royal family withdraw after a little chit-chat, and he gives a momentary audience to his confessor: then speaks to those ministers of state, who have any business to communicate, or paper to sign. Then the
Family

*) Baretti's Journey from London to Genoa, through England, Portugal, Spain and France. London 1770. 8.

Family Ambassadors come in: that is, the French and the Neapolitan. With them the King interchanges words for a quarter of an hour; seldom more. Just against the time that he is going to dine, the other Ambassadors and foreign Ministers come in. Exactly at twelve he sits down to table, quite alone now as his queen is dead. The Ambassadors and foreign Ministers, his own Ministers of State, the great officers of his army, and several other great personages, pay their court while he falls to eating, and all those whom the guards have permitted to get in, croud round the table to see him dine. The Cardinal-patriarch of the Indies says grace, not as Cardinal or Patriarch, but as his chief Chaplain.

The ceremony of the table is this. The *Mayordomo Mayor* stands on the King's right hand, and a captain of his body-guards on his left. One of the weekly Mayordomos, two *Gentilhombres de Camera*, and a croud of pages and servants attend promiscuously. One of the two *Gentilhombres* carves, the other gives him drink. The dishes, all covered, are brought in one by one in an uninterrupted succession by pages, and each dish is put into the hands of the carving *Gentilhombre*, who takes it with one hand, uncovers it with the other, and presents it to the King. The King gives a nod of approbation or disapprobation at every dish. Those that are approved, the *Gentilhombre* places upon the Table: the rest are carried back. Many however are the dishes approved, which still are not touched, as the King eats only of the plainest, and always with a good appetite.

The *Gentilhombre* who gives him drink, pours first a few drops of wine and water in a silver-salver that has a beak, and drinks that himself; then kneels on one knee, and pours of both to the King, first the water, then the wine, which is always Burgundy.

When the King has drank his first glass, the Ambassadors and foreign Ministers, who stood the while and all in a row on the King's right hand, make their bows, and go to pay their respects to the rest of the royal family that are all at their dinners, each in his or her own apartment, the Prince of Asturias alone, Don Luis alone, the Infanta alone, and the two younger Infantes together. All these tables are sumptuous.

Near a hundred dishes are generally served to the King, of which about forty are laid upon the table.

When they are removed, an ample desert succeeds: but he seldom tastes of it; except sometimes a little bit of cheese and some fruit. The last thing that is presented is a glass of canary-wine with a sweet biscuit. He breaks the biscuit in two, steeps it in the wine and eats it, but never drinks the wine.

A moment before he rises from table, which lasts near an hour, the Ambassadors and foreign Ministers return, pass before him, and go into an adjoining room, where they wait for his coming. With them he converses about half an hour upon indifferent matters.

He then re-enters his private apartment to put on his huntingdress; that is a grey frock of coarse cloth, made at Segovia on purpose for him, and a leather waistcoat. The leather breeches he always puts on when he gets from bed, especially on those days that he intends to go a hunting. Light boots, a hat flapp'd before, and strong leather gloves complete his dress. While the boots are putting on, the *Somelier de Corps* (Duke of Lofada) gives him a dish of Coffee. Between one and two he steps into his coach drawn by six or eight mules, and away with his brother Don Luis the mules galloping *ventre à terre*. Half a dozen of his body-guards precede the coach on horse-back, and three footmen ride behind it.

No bad weather, as I said, is ever an obstacle to his going out on hunting-days, not even a storm of hail accompanied by thunder and lightning. Don Luis, who is his constant attendant in the coach, is the only person allowed to fire at the game on these daily huntings. But on solemn huntings some of the grandees who wait on him at the chace, are granted the same privilege. However of late the solemn huntings are become rare, because the expence of them was found too great.

A little after sun-set he generally comes back, carrying as much of the feather-game in his hands as he can hold. As to the quadrupeds he has killed, such as stags, deer, wild-boars, wolves, foxes &c. they are brought to the palace in carts. He surveys the whole, orders it to be weighed in his presence, and rejoices when there is much, most particularly when he has killed a wolf or two. It is but seldom that he takes the Prince of Asturias to hunt with him.

When the game is weighed and ordered to the kitchen, he goes to pay a short visit to the Queen-Mother; then
gives

gives a private audience to that Minister, whose day it happens to be, as each of them has his fixed day of private audience. The Minister brings his papers in a bag, and offers to his inspection those that are to the purpose of his errand. If the Minister's business leaves him any time, he plays at *Reversino* (a game at cards so called) with three of his courtiers, generally the Duke de *Lofada*, *Sommelier de Corps*, Duke d'Arcos *Capitan de la Compania Espannola*, and another Grandee whose name I have forgotten. He never plays for any thing, having recourse to this expedient merely to consume a quarter of an hour, or half an hour that he must wait for his supper. At nine he sits down to it, attended only by his courtiers: then goes to bed, to get up again next day to the same round of occupations, and with the same scrupulous nicety of method in the distribution of them, seldom or never to be altered, except on post-days; when, instead of going to hunt, he passes some more time, both morning and afternoon, in the private closet, writing to his son at Naples, to his brother at Parma, to his sisters in Turin and Lisbon, and very often likewise to Marquis Tanucci and to the Prince of Santo Nicandro, the first of whom he has made chief Minister, and the second *Ayo*, or governour, to his Sicilian Majesty.

If on post-days he has any time left, it is employed in his laboratory; that is, in the completest turner's shop that ever existed. He is a most expert turner, and works toys to perfection. The shop contains many turning engines of rare invention, some of which were presents from the King of France, and some contrived by Count Zazzola, one of the greatest mechanists of the age. By him his Majesty is attended when working in the laboratory.

As to his personal character, he was certainly a good husband when his Queen was alive. Never once did he swerve from conjugal fidelity, nor ever had any mistress public or private. His brothers were always his best friends and most familiar companions; and as to his children there is no need of saying that he always proved a kind father. He is rather an easy, than an affectionate master, never descending to great familiarity with his servants, yet always satisfy'd with what they do. They say that he never betrayed any great love to any body out of his own family, no more than hatred. It happened once, that he detected one of his most familiar



domestics in a Lye, and forbad him his presence, but still continued him his salary. His conversation is generally chearful, but always as chaste as his conduct. He reposes much confidence in his chief Ministers, especially Marquis Squillace, who has found the means of prepossessing him in favour of his own abilities; yet neither Squillace, nor any body else, was ever a favourite, when by a favourite we mean a man admitted by a Sovereign to the closest intimacy of friendship.

The King uses every body with a sort of condescension that may be called civility, which impresses his servants with a strong sense of real respect, independent of his Kingship, as the rigidity of his morals gives them no room for the least contempt. His method of spending time, so unalterably regular, may appear somewhat dull: but is certainly laudable, and it is quite necessary that a King should have his Ministers and his servants exactly apprised of the hours, and even the minutes, that they are to approach him for the dispatch of business in their respective stations and employments.

Every body here agrees, that his Majesty is far from wanting knowledge of men or things. He has read much, and never passes a day without looking into a book. Besides his native tongue, he speaks Italian and French with the greatest fluency and propriety, nor is he ignorant of the Latin. They say, that he knows his own as well as other Princes interest full as well as any of his Ministers, and does not spare any expence to be early informed of whatever passes in Europe and out of Europe that may affect him any way.

Since he came to this throne, he never would suffer any Italian opera to be performed either at Madrid or Aranjuez, as was practised in the former reign.

His Majesty, besides retrenching this absurd Article of expence, has lessened that of his stables, so that he has much reduced the vast debt with which he found himself encumbered, by which means, if not interrupted by war, I suppose the whole will be discharged in about 20 Years. He visits the Queen-Mother every day, and treats her with the profoundest respect.

On every gala-day his Majesty puts on a new suit, and as rich as art can make it: but all his fine cloaths are constantly made after the same fashion that was used in his younger years, and he always appears impatient to undress, being never easy, until he resumes his grey frock

frock and leather waistcoat. He was always an enemy to all sort of innovation, and so steady in uniformity, that he wore for above twenty years a silver watch. His Queen insisted often upon his changing it for a better, but to no purpose. Yet to get rid of her importunity and incessant jokes, resolved at last to have a gold-case to it, which he made himself on the lathe.

When he resolved to give the kingdom of Naples to his son, every body expected that he would send to Spain all the antique monuments that had been dug out of Herculaneum. But little did they know him that formed such conjectures, as on the same day that he crowned that son, he went to the place where those monuments were deposited, and there left a ring he had worn many years, which had been found in those ruins, saying, that he had no right to any thing that belonged to another Monarch.

The place where the King hunts is called the Pardo; the situation is very romantic, having an easy hill on one side, and an extensive forest all round; the trees are chiefly green oaks, and their sweet acorns afford plenty of food to the innumerable animals that live in it. When the King is there, the neighbouring peasants get up before day, at the ringing of their church bells, and men, women and children, run about the country, hooting and beating the bushes, in order to fright the game towards the Pardo, that the King may have plenty, for which each of them is paid two reals, about elevenpence sterling, a day. It is said that the King can hit the smallest bird on the wing with a single ball.

An authentic Narrative of the Death
of
MARK ANTHONY CALAS,
and
of the Trial and Execution of his Father,
JOHN CALAS,
for the supposed Murder of his Son.

John Calas was a merchant of the city of *Toulouse*; where he had been settled, and lived in good repute, forty years: He married an *English* woman of *French* extraction