

LETTER XXVI.

SPANISH MEN OF WAR—NAVAL OFFICERS—ADMIRAL ALAVA—ALVIAR—NAVAL ARSENAL — SKILL OF THE SPANIARDS IN MANAGING BOATS— BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR.

CADIZ, NOV. 1809.

HAVING partaken of the hospitality of Admiral Purvis on board the Atlas, and having since visited the Santa Ana, the flag ship of Admiral Alava, I have been much gratified with the contrast; the one affording an example of order, cleanliness, and subordination, the other of confusion, filth, and want of discipline. The Spanish men of war are in appearance very fine, but they should not be too nearly approached, and especially should not be visited. The men are bad, but the officers are worse, not only in personal appearance, but also in the knowledge of their profession, and in their utter inability to command.

It is generally supposed that the officers of the Spanish navy are not very sincere patriots; that they would serve Spain if it continued independent; but that, in the event of its being subjugated by Buonaparte, they would prefer his service to that of a fugitive government under the protection of England. It is not altogether surprising that they should entertain such sentiments, as they