

and the king received me graciously. I explained to him the motives which led me to undertake a voyage to the new world and the Philippine Islands, and I presented a memoir on the subject to the secretary of state. Señor de Urquijo supported my demand, and overcame every obstacle. I obtained two passports, one from the first secretary of state, the other from the council of the Indies. Never had so extensive a permission been granted to any traveller, and never had any foreigner been honoured with more confidence on the part of the Spanish government.

Many considerations might have induced us to prolong our abode in Spain. The abbé Cavanilles, no less remarkable for the variety of his attainments than his acute intelligence; M. Née, who, together with M. Hænke, had, as botanist, made part of the expedition of Malaspina, and who had formed one of the greatest herbals ever seen in Europe; Don Casimir Ortega, the abbé Pourret, and the learned authors of the Flora of Peru, Messrs. Ruiz and Pavon, all opened to us without reserve their rich collections. We examined part of the plants of Mexico, discovered by Messrs. Sesse, Mocino, and Cervantes, whose drawings had been sent to the Museum of Natural History of Madrid. This great establishment, the direction of which was confided to Señor Clavijo, author of an elegant translation of the works of Buffon, offered us, it is true, no geological representation of the Cordilleras, but M. Proust, so well known by the great accuracy of his chemical labours, and a distinguished mineralogist, M. Hergen, gave us curious details on several mineral substances of America. It would have been useful to us to have employed a longer time in studying the productions of the countries which were to be the objects of our research, but our impatience to take advantage of the permission given us by the court was too great to suffer us to delay our departure. For a year past, I had experienced so many disappointments, that I could scarcely persuade myself that my most ardent wishes would be at length fulfilled.

We left Madrid about the middle of May, crossed a part of Old Castile, the kingdoms of Leon and Galicia, and reached Corunna, whence we were to embark for Cuba. The winter having been protracted and severe, we enjoyed