ſtones with inſcriptions of the ſame kind, mentioning the ſeveral bodies of troops, and the quantity of work performed by each of them, originally inserted in the face of this wall, yet none of them are now to be found. There have indeed been discovered, in or near the ruins of this wall, a great number of ſmall ſquare ſtones, with very ſhort, and generally imperfect, inſcriptions upon them ; mentioning particular legions, co­horts, and centuries ; but without directly aſſerting that they had built any part of the wall, or naming any number of paces. Of theſe inſcriptions, the reader may ſee no fewer than twenty-nine among the Nor­thumberland and Cumberland inſcriptions in Mr Horsley’s Britannia Romana. As the ſtones on which theſe inſeriptions are cut are of the ſame ſhape and ſize with the other facing-ſtones of this wall, it is almoſt certain that they have been originally placed in the face of it. It is equally certain, from the uniformity of theſe inſcriptions, that they were all intended to intimate ſome one thing, and nothing ſo probable as that the adjacent wall was built by the troops mentioned in them. This was, perhaps, ſo well underſtood, that it was not thought neceſſary to be expreſſed ; and the diſtance of theſe inſcriptions from one another ſhowed the quantity of work perlormed. If this was really the cafe, we know in ge­neral, that this great work was executed by the ſecond and ſixth legions, theſe being the only legions mention­ed in theſe inſeriptions. Now, if this prodigious wall, with all its appendages of ditches, ſtations, caſtles, tur­rets, and military ways, was executed in the ſpace of two years by two legions only, which, when moſt com­plete, made no more than 12,000 men, how greatly muſt we admire the ſkill, the induſtry, and excellent diſcipline of the Roman ſoldiers, who were not only the valiant guardians of the empire in times of war, but its moſt active and uſeful members in times of peace ?

This wall of Severus, and its fortreſſes, proved an impenetrable barrier to the Roman territories for near *200* years. But about the beginning of the 5th cen­tury, the Roman empire being aſſaulted on all ſides, and the bulk of their forces withdrawn from Britain, the Mæatæ and Caledonians, now called *Scots* and *Pies,* became more daring ; and ſome of them break­ing through the wall, and others ſailing round the ends of it, they carried their ravages into the very heart of Provincial Britain. Theſe invaders were indeed ſeveral times repulſed after this by the Roman legions ſent to the relief of the Britons. The laſt of theſe legions, under the command of Gallio of Ravenna, having, with the aſſiſtance of the Britons, thoroughly repaired the breaches of Severus’s wall and its fortreſſes, and exhort­ed the Britons to make a brave defence, took their final farewell of Britain. It ſoon appeared, that the ſtrongest walls and ramparts are no ſecurity to an undiſciplined and daſtardly rabble, as the unhappy Britons then were. The Scots and Picts met with little reſiſtance in breaking through the wall, while the towns and caſtles were tamely abandoned to their deſtructive rage. In many places they levelled it with the ground, that it might prove no obſtruction to their future inroads.— From this time no attempts were ever made to repair this noble work. Its beauty and grandeur procured it no reſpect in the dark and taſteleſs ages which ſucceeded. It became the common quarry for more than thouſand years, out of which all the towns and vil­lages around were built ; and is now ſo entirely ruined, that the penetrating eyes of the moſt poring and pa­tient antiquarian, can hardly trace its vaniſhing founda­tions.

SEVIGNE (Marie de Rabutin, Marquisse de), a French lady, was born in 1626. When only a year old ſhe lost her father, who was killed in the deſcent of the Engliſh on the iſle of Rhe, where he commanded a company of volunteers. In 1644 ſhe married the Mar­quis of Sevigne, who was ſlain in a duel by the Cheva­lier d’Albret, in 1651. She had by him a son and a daughter, to the education of whom ſhe afterwards religiouſly devoted herſelf. Her daughter was married in 1669 to the Count of Grignan, who conducted her to Provence. Madame de Sevigné consoled herſelf by writing frequent letters to her daughter. She fell at laſt the victim to her maternal tenderness. In one of her viſits to Grignan, ſhe fatigued herſelf ſo much du­ring the ſickneſs of her daughter, that ſhe was ſeized with a fever, which carried her off on the 14th of Ja­nuary 1696. We have two portraits of Madame de Sevigné ; the one by the Compte de Buſſi, the other by Madame de la Fayette. The firſt exhibits her defects ;the ſecond her excellencies. Buſſi deſcribes her as a lively gay coquette, a lover of flattery, fond of titles, ho­nour, and diſtinction : M. de la Fayette as a woman of wit and good ſenſe, as poſſeſſed of a noble foul, form­ed for diſpenſing benefits, incapable of debaſing herſelf by avarice, and bleſſed with a generous, obliging, and faithful heart. Both theſe portraits are in ſome meaſure juſt. That ſhe was vain-glorious, appears evident from her own letters, which, on the other hand, ex­hibit undoubted proofs of her virtue and goodneſs of heart.

This illuſtrious lady was acquainted with all the wits of her age. It is ſaid that ſhe decided the famous dis­pute between Perrault and Boileau concerning the pre­ference of the ancients to the moderns, thus, “ The an­cients are the fineſt, and we are the prettieſt.” She left behind her a moſt valuable collection of letters, the best edition of which is that of 1775, in 8 vols 1 2mo. “ @@Theſe letters (says Voltaire) are filled with anec­dotes, written with freedom, and in a natural and anima­ted ſtyle ; are an excellent crſticiſm upon ſtudied letters of wit, and ſtill more upon thoſe fictitious letters which aim at the epiſtolary ſtyle, by a recital of falſe ſentiments and feigned adventures to an imaginary correspondent.” It were to be wiſhed that a proper ſelection had been made of theſe letters. It is difficult to read eight volumes of letters, which, though inimitably written, preſent frequent repetitions, and are often filled with trifles. What makes them in general per­haps ſo intereſting is, that they are in part hiſtorical. They may be looked upon as a relation of the manners, the ton, the genius, the faſhions, the eti­quette, which reigned in the court of Louis XIV. They contain many curious anecdotes nowhere else to be found : But theſe excellencies would be ſtill more ſtriking, were they ſometimes ſtripped of that multi­tude of domeſtic affairs and minute incidents which ought naturally to have died with the mother and the daughter. A volume entitled *Sevigniana* was publiſhed at Paris in 1756, which is nothing more than a collection of the fine ſentiments, literary and hiſtorical anecdotes, and moral apothegms, ſcattered throughout theſe letters.

@@@[mu] Siede de Louis XIV. tom, ii.