

will serve to give an idea of the magnitude of the edifice. They are reported to us by Los Santos, a Jeronymite monk, who has left one of the best accounts of the Escorial.

The main building, or monastery, he estimates at seven hundred and forty Castilian feet in length by five hundred and eighty in breadth. Its greatest height, measured to the central cross above the dome of the great church, is three hundred and fifteen feet. The whole circumference of the Escorial, including the palace, he reckons at two thousand nine hundred and eighty feet, or near three-fifths of a mile. The patient inquirer tells us there were no less than twelve thousand doors and windows in the building; that the weight of the keys alone amounted to fifty *arrobas*, or twelve hundred and fifty pounds; and, finally, that there were sixty-eight fountains playing in the halls and courts of this enormous pile.³⁰

The cost of its construction and interior decoration, we are informed by Father Sigença, amounted to very near six millions of ducats.³¹ Sigença was prior of the monastery, and had access, of course, to the best sources of information. That he did not exaggerate, may be inferred from the fact that he was desirous to relieve the building from the imputation of any excessive expenditure incurred in its erection,—a common theme of complaint, it seems, and one that was urged with strong marks of discontent by contemporary writers. Probably no single edifice ever contained such an amount and variety of inestimable treasures as

³⁰ Los Santos, Descripción del Escorial, fol. 116.

³¹ Sigença, Hist. de la Orden de San Geronimo, tom. iii. p. 862.