

WELLS

NATHANIEL

ARMSTRONG

THE PICTURESQUE

ANTIQUITIES OF SPAIN

Nathaniel Wells

The Picturesque Antiquities of Spain

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Nathaniel Armstrong Wells
The Picturesque Antiquities of Spain /
Described in a series of letters, with illustrations
representing Moorish palaces, cathedrals,
and other monuments of art, contained in the
cities of Burgos, Valladolid, Toledo, and Seville



PREFACE

The author of the following letters is aware that his publication would have possessed greater utility, had the architectural descriptions been more minute. He ventures to hope, however, that this imperfection may be in some measure balanced by the more extended sphere opened to whatever information it may contain.

The absence of many technical expressions, especially those which enter into a detailed description of almost all Gothic buildings, and the employment of which was forbidden by the occasion, may tend to facilitate the satisfaction of popular curiosity respecting Spanish art: the more so from the circumstance that the most intelligent in such subjects are scarcely sufficiently agreed on the application of technical terms, to allow of the compilation of a standard vocabulary. His ambition will be more than satisfied, should his past, and perhaps future researches, succeed, in some degree, in pioneering the path for a more scientific pen.

Should this work fall into the hands of any reader, whose expectations of entertainment may have been encouraged by the announcement of another Spanish tour, but who may feel but moderate enthusiasm for the artistic and monumental glories of the Peninsula, an explanation is due to him, exonerative of the author from much of the responsibility attached to the matter-of-fact tone of his descriptions. It is no less his nature than it was his wish to paint what he saw as he saw it. Unfortunately his visits to Spain took place after the accomplishment of the revolution, the hardest blows of which were aimed at her church. The confiscation of the ecclesiastical revenues has necessarily stripped the processions and other ceremonies of their former splendour, and by suppressing what constituted one of their chief attractions to the native population, transferred the interest of the lover of the picturesque from the bright colours of animated grouping, to the dead background of stone and marble they have left.

In studying, however, to preserve this strict accuracy in all that related to the principal subject of his correspondence, his aim was to enliven it by the introduction of any incidents worthy of notice which came under his observation. In this object he hopes he may have succeeded.

One more remark is necessary. The letters from Seville, which form the second of the two parts into which the volume is divided, although placed last in order of succession, date in reality from an earlier period than the rest; and even from a different tour, as will appear from the description of the route. They were addressed to various individuals, whereas those forming the first part were all written to the same person. They are thus placed with a view to geographical order and clearness, and to a sort of unity, which appeared advisable in the subject of a volume. The two excursions having been separated by an interval of three years, should alterations have taken place during that period in the places described, the above circumstance not being borne in mind might lead to an appearance of chronological inaccuracy in the descriptions, although there is not much probability of the existence of such changes.

London. *December 1845.*

PART I

LETTER I. TO MRS. C—R

Rue de Richelieu.

You perceived at a glance the satisfaction you caused me, when, on receiving my temporary adieus, you requested me to send you some account of my travels in Spain. Had it not been so, you had not been in possession, on that day, of your usual penetration. Indeed, you no doubt foresaw it; aware that, next to the pleasure of acquiring ocular information respecting the peculiar objects which interest an individual, there is no greater one than that of communicating to a spirit, animated by congenial tastes, the results of his explorations. You must have foreseen, that, with my recollections of the pleasure I had derived from our excursions in one of the most interesting regions of France, during which I was witness to the intelligence and rapidity of perception you displayed in the appreciation of the monuments of the Middle Ages, the opportunity of committing to paper the impressions I should receive in a country so rich in those treasures, with a view to your information, would give an additional interest to my tour, as well as encouragement in surmounting the obstacles to be met with among a people not yet broken in to the curiosity of tourists.

You professed also, with a modesty always becoming to talent and worth, a complete ignorance respecting Spain: adding, that you would be grateful for every sort of information; and that you were anxious to be enlightened on the subject not only of the monuments and fine arts, but also of the history of that country, of which you had never had an opportunity of informing yourself; summing up by the enumeration of the three names of the Cid, Charles the Fifth, and Roderic the Goth, the entire amount of your acquaintance with the leading characters of Spanish history.

Indeed, the ignorance you profess with some exaggeration, is more or less general in our country; nor is it surprising that such should be the case. Spain has been in modern times in the background of European progress. The thousand inconveniences of its routes and inns have deterred the most enterprising from making it a place of resort; and while a hundred less interesting scenes of travel, such as Baden-Baden, Bohemia, sporting adventures in Norway, or winterings in St. Petersburg, have claimed your attention during the reposes of quadrilles, and substantiated the conversation of several of your morning visitors, Spain has been unnoticed and unknown—laid on the shelf with the Arabian Nights—considered a sort of fabulous country, which it would be charming to know, but with which there would never be a chance of forming an acquaintance; and you have contented yourself with a sort of general information respecting it, derived from a few romances and poems. You are intimate with Boabdil and the wars of Granada, but to those events is limited your knowledge of its ancient history; and the reigns of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, with the addition of some confused visions, in which *autos-da-fé* and dungeons contrast in a rather gloomy background with laughing majas, whirling their castagnettes to the soft cadences of guitars, fill up the remaining space allotted to Spain in your recollections.

It would be a task full of interest for me—possessed, as I shall probably be, of ample opportunities for its accomplishment—to draw up for your information a summary of the leading events of Spanish history; connecting them by the chain of reigns of the successive sovereigns; and thus to press into a limited compass a sort of abstract of the annals of this extraordinary nation: but I am deterred by the certainty that such an attempt, by me, would fail of its intended object. The events, thus slurred over, would have the effect of whetting the appetite for knowledge, which they would not satisfy; and the interminable lists of monarchs, of successions, usurpations, alliances and

intermarriages, rendered doubly intricate by the continual recurrence of the same names, without sufficient details to particularise each—a chaos of outlines without the necessary shading to bring out the figures from the canvass—would not only set at defiance the clearest memory, but would be a trial which I would not for worlds impose upon your patience. No history is more attractive than that of Spain; and those works which exist upon the subject, although all, more or less, sullied with inaccuracies, and most of them infected with prejudice, and immersed in superstitious delusion, are still well worth your perusal; but it would lead me out of my depth, were I to undertake in my correspondence more than an occasional historical quotation, when required by the interest attached to any monument which it may fall to my lot to describe.

Were I not to transmit to you a conscientious and faithful account of all that I shall see, I should be guilty of cruelty; and that the more base, from the certain impunity that must attend it. I say this, from the impossibility of your ever undertaking the same journey, and consequently of your ever being able to compare my portraits with their originals. In fact, the incompatibility of your nature, and that of the Spanish climate, must ever be present to me, who, during the vivifying heats of the late very bearable *canicule*, in your French château—so constructed as to perform the functions of an atmospheric sieve, by separating the wind, which rushed through its doors and windows, judiciously placed in parallels for the purpose, from the warmer sunshine without—was witness, nevertheless, to your unaffected distress, when you protested against any lofty, oak-panelled room being sat or reclined in by more than one human being at a time, lest it should be over-heated; placing thus an obstacle in the way of conversation, in which to shine is your especial province, by rendering it necessary to converse through various open doors; while, were an additional testimony necessary to prove the sincerity of your sufferings, your favourite of favourites, Caliph, repulsed and uncaressed, hung his silken ears, as he solemnly retreated to coil himself on a distant rug, and voted the dog-days a misnomer.

Nor were you contented with your atmosphere, until, the season of insects and *al-fresco* suppers being long left behind, and the autumnal equinox having peremptorily closed the doors and windows, fitted, alas! by a carpenter who flourished in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, so plentiful a supply of air was afforded by the handy-works of the said carpenter, that the Chinese screen had some difficulty in maintaining its post, and the flames of the well-furnished elm-fire ascended with a roar that would have shamed many a cataract of the rival element. Not but that I would willingly forego the opportunity of sending you erroneous information, in exchange for your presence in that country; and for your assistance in comprehending the nature of a people apparently composed of such contradictory ingredients. You might probably succeed in fathoming the hidden springs of character, which give birth to a crowd of anomalies difficult to explain. You would discover by what mystery of organization a people, subject to the influence of violent passions, combine an abject subjection to the forms of etiquette, carried to its extreme in every-day life, with occasional outbreaks of adventure and romance worthy of the days of Orlando and Rodomonte; and account for a nation exchanging a costume which combines utility with grace, for one inferior in both respects. Inventors of whatever is most fascinating in dances and music—you would discover the motive which induces them to abandon both, but principally the first, which they replace by the French *rigodon*, or dancing-made-easy, and adapted to youth, manhood, and all stages of paralysis; and, possessing the cathedrals of Leon, Burgos, and Seville, to denounce Gothic architecture as barbarous, and to brand it with the contemptuous denomination of "crested masonry."

Should my mono-(—monument-) mania run riot, and over-describe, over-taxing even your passion for that branch of art, be assured—and to this promise you may always look back for consolation and encouragement—that I will not write you a history of the recent, or any previous Spanish revolution, *apropos* of the first sentry-box I meet with, even though its form be that of a Lilliputian brick castle. Nor shall my first glimpse of a matador occasion you a list of bull-fights, voluminous enough to line the circumference of the *barrera*. No Diligence shall be waylaid, nor in

my presence shall any ladies' fingers be amputated, the quicker to secure her rings, if I can possibly avoid it; and, as far as depends on me, I shall arrive in a whole skin at each journey's end, and without poisoning you or myself with garlick, unless the new Cortes pass a law for denying to the stranger all other sorts of aliment.

I have resolved, by a process of reasoning which I need not at present impart to you, and in virtue of a permission which I have little doubt of your granting, to publish my part of our correspondence. I think that neither of us will be a loser by this plan, however conceited I may appear to you for saying so. Yourself, in the first place, must be a gainer by the perusal of descriptions, on which, from their being prepared for the ordeal of a less indulgent eye, greater care will necessarily be expended: the public may benefit in obtaining information, which shall be at all events accurate, relative to subjects as yet inadequately appreciated by those they are the most likely to interest: while the chief gainer, in the event of these two ends being attained, will of course be your devoted and humble correspondent.

LETTER II. ROUTE TO SPAIN THROUGH FRANCE

Bayonne.

The position of Burgos on the principal line of communication by which Madrid is approached from the north of Europe; the fact of its being the first city met with, after crossing the Pyrenees, in which monuments are found remaining of the former genius and grandeur of the country; and the name of which calls up the more stirring and eventful epochs of Spanish history,—render it, notwithstanding its actual distance from the frontier, a sort of introduction or gateway to Spain—the Spain of the tourist.

The most agreeable and least troublesome way of visiting the best parts of Spain excludes, it is true, this route; for the provinces of the Peninsula which combine the greater number of requisites for the enjoyment of life with the most attractive specimens of the picturesque, whether natural or artificial, are those nearest to the coast, and they are approached more conveniently by sea. Those, however, who can devote sufficient time, will be repaid, by a tour in the interior of the country, for the increase of trouble it may occasion them; and this tour should precede the visit to the maritime provinces, as it will render their superior comforts and climate the more acceptable from the contrast. The scenery of the Pyrenees, and the passing acquaintance formed with the original and picturesque population of the Basque provinces, secure the traveller against any danger of ennui throughout the land-journey between the frontier and the city of Burgos.

There does not exist the same security throughout the extent of route which it is necessary to travel in order to reach this frontier. The approach to Spain across the south-western provinces of France offers few objects worthy of detaining us on our way to the Peninsula. It is one of the least interesting of French routes. From Paris you pass through Orleans and Tours. At Chatellerault—between the latter city and Poitiers—the inn-door is besieged by women offering knives for sale. It is everywhere known that cutlery is not one of the departments of French manufactures which have attained the greatest degree of superiority. A glance at the specimens offered for our choice while changing horses at Chatellerault, showed them to be very bad, even for France.

This did not, however, prevent a multitude of travellers from purchasing each his knife, nor one of them from laying in a plentiful stock, stating that he destined a knife for each member of his family—evidently one of the most numerous in France. I inquired of a native the explanation of this scene, and whether these knives were considered superior to those met with in other towns. "Oh no," was the reply; "but it is usual to buy knives here." I ventured to say I thought them very bad. "That is of no consequence; because, whenever you have passed through Chatellerault, every one asks you for a knife made on the spot." These victims of custom had paid enormous prices for their acquisitions.

Poitiers is a crazy old town, but contains one of the most admirable specimens of the architecture immediately preceding the pointed, or ogivale, and which the French savans call "the Romane." I allude to the church called "the Notre Dame de Poitiers." The west front is highly ornamented, and unites all the peculiar richness with the quaintness and simplicity of design which characterize that fine old style. I must not omit the forest of Chatellerault, passed through on leaving that town. It is famous as the scene of the picnic given to the ladies of the neighbouring city by the officers of a Polish regiment quartered there, immediately before the breaking out of the Peninsular war. It is related that Polish gallantry overstepped etiquette to such a degree,—and *that* by premeditation,—as to urge these cavaliers, by force of bayonet, and sentries, to separate all the husbands, and other male relatives, from the fairer portion of the guests. The consequences of such a termination of the festivities may easily be imagined; Bonaparte, a rigid judge with regard to all divorces except his own, on receiving the complaint of the insulted town, condemned the officers *en*

masse to be decimated, and the survivors degraded from their rank. He relented, however, afterwards, on an understanding that they were to regain their sullied laurels in the Peninsula; where, in fact, in consequence of his orders, such opportunities were afforded them, that scarcely a man in the regiment survived the earliest campaigns.

The inhabitants of Chatellerault are said to take great offence on being asked their age, suspecting the inquirer of a malicious calculation.

The new quarter of Bordeaux is handsome, spacious, and airy. In the promenade called "La Quinconce," on the bank of the river, a large insulated edifice, the most monumental in view, is discovered by the inscription on its front to be an establishment for warm baths. At one extremity of the principal façade is seen, in sculptured letters, "Bains des dames;" at the other, "Bains des hommes." At this latter entrance a handsome staircase leads to the corridor of general communication, on the unsullied white wall of which the code of discipline of the establishment, traced in large sable characters, forces itself on the notice of the visitor. It consists of the following single and rather singular statute: "Il est expressement défendu aux garçons de permettre à deux hommes de se servir de la même baignoire." After some reflection I concluded it to be a measure of precaution with regard to cleanliness, carried, no doubt, to an extreme at Bordeaux. This town is well deserving of a few days' halt, should the traveller's object be amusement, or the pleasures of the table, for which it enjoys a well-merited reputation. It is a large and handsome city, the second in France in beauty, and vies with the capital in the elegance of its shops and principal streets. The theatre is, externally, the finest in France; and there is, besides the cathedral, and surpassing it in interest and antiquity, a remarkable Gothic church.

Of the sixty leagues which separate this town from Bayonne, forty afford the most perfect example of monotony. One sighs for the Steppes of Russia. These are the well-known Landes, consisting of uncultivated sands and morass; now covered league after league with the unvarying gloom of the pine and cork forests,—now dreary and bare,—but ever presenting to the wearied eye a wide interminable waste, replete with melancholy and desolation. It is true, that a day of pouring rain was not calculated to set off to advantage the qualities of such a region, and should in strict justice be admitted in evidence before passing condemnation on the Landes.

LETTER III. THE BASQUE PROVINCES

Burgos.

It never causes me surprise when I see the efforts made by persons of limited means to obtain the situation of Consul in a continental town.

In spite of one's being, as it were, tied to one's residence,—and that not one's home,—there are advantages which counterbalance the evil. The place carries with it a certain degree of consequence. One feels oneself suddenly a man of influence, and a respectable public character. I have heard one, certainly far from being high on the list of these functionaries, termed by a humbler inhabitant of his "residence," the "Premier Consul."

The income, too, is, it is true, limited; but then one is usually in a cheap place. In fact, I always envied these favoured individuals. No calling, however, is without its *déboires*. It seems as if Providence had decreed that an income cannot be fairly, if agreeably, earned. Thus, the set-off against the bliss of the consul, is the necessity he is under of holding out his hand for his fee. I make these remarks, to introduce to your notice an ingenious method, put in practice—probably invented—by our consul at Bayonne, for getting over the irksomeness of this duty. I found him in his *bureau*, pen in hand, and a large sheet of official-shaped paper before him, half written over. On my passport being presented for his *visa*, his countenance assumed a painful expression, in which regret was blended with a sort of tendency to compassion, and which at first occasioned me a sensation of alarm, conjuring up in my imagination all the consequences of an irregular passport—tedious routes to be retraced, time lost, expense incurred, and suspicion, and even incarceration—infection—death!

Meanwhile he pointed to the letter he was writing, and, drawing forward with the other hand a chair, said that he was at that moment memorializing the Foreign Office on the subject of these visas; that his pain was extreme at seeing travellers compelled to send or come to his office, and to lose thus much valuable time; he was likewise concerned at their having to pay three francs each for so useless a ceremony as his visa; but he wished it to be remarked, that it was at present a ceremony quite indispensable; since, only four days back, a gentleman had been compelled to return from the Spanish frontier (a distance of seven leagues) in the middle of the night, in consequence of his having neglected this, as yet, necessary observance.¹

Leaving Bayonne by Diligence, although still at some distance from the frontier, you are already in a Spanish vehicle. The only difference consists in its being drawn by horses as far as Irun, a few hundred yards in Spain, at which place they are replaced by a team of mules; but the *mayoral* is Spanish from the commencement, as also usually the greater number of the travellers. From the first view of Spanish ground, the monotony of the landscape ceases, and gives place to picturesque scenery. This effect is as sudden as if produced by the whistle of a scene-shifter. From the brow of a hill the valley of the Bidassoa opens on the view, the bay on the right, two or three towns in the centre, and beyond them, stretching to the left, the chain of the Pyrenees. This opening scene is very satisfactory to the newly arrived traveller, whose expectations have been rising towards fever-heat as he gradually neared the object of his dreams—the "renowned romantic land;" the more so, as he is well prepared, by the Landes of France, to enjoy to the utmost the variety of scene afforded by the two days of mountain and valley which separate the frontier from the town of Vitoria.

The Diligence comes to a halt every afternoon; the day's journey having commenced at three in the morning. There are three of these days between Bayonne and Burgos. At Tolosa and Vitoria—the intermediate places of rest—the system is as follows: Arriving at about four in the afternoon, an

¹ The very polite individual alluded to no longer fills the post of Consul at Bayonne.

interval is allowed of about two hours, which in a long journey can always be profitably employed, until the meal, called supper. This is Homericly plentiful, and varied sufficiently to suit the tastes of all such as are accustomed to the vicissitudes of travelling. The repast over, all gradually retire to their sleeping apartments, where they are undisturbed until two o'clock in the morning.

At this hour each passenger is furnished with a candle, and requested to get up; and at a quarter to three the *muchacha* (chambermaid) reappears, bearing in her hand a plate, on which, after rubbing his eyes, the traveller may discover, if it be allowed so to speak, an imperceptible cup, a *xicara*,—since, having the thing, they have a name for it, which is of course untranslatable,—of excellent chocolate, an *azucarillo* (almost transparent sugar prepared for instantaneous melting), a glass of water, and a piece of bread. After partaking of this agreeable refreshment, you have just time left to pay your bill, fold up your passport, which during the night has remained in the hands of the police, and to take your seat in the Diligence.

The towns of the Basque provinces appear not to have been much maltreated during the Carlist war; not so the villages, most of which present a melancholy aspect of ruin and desolation. The churches, built so as to appear more like keeps of castles, have mostly withstood the shock. The destruction was oftener the result of burning than of artillery. The lover of the picturesque offers his silent gratitude to the combatants on both sides, for sparing, although unintentionally, some of the most charming objects of all Spain.

Among the most striking of these is Hernani. It is composed of one street, of the exact required width for the passage of an ordinary vehicle. This street is a perfect specimen of picturesque originality. The old façades are mostly emblazoned with the bearings of their ancient proprietors, sculptured in high relief. On entering the place, the effect is that of a deep twilight after the broad blaze of the sunny mountains. This is caused by the almost flat roofs, which advance considerably beyond the fronts of the houses, and nearly meet in the centre of the street: the roof of each house is either higher or lower, or more or less projecting, than its neighbour; and all are supported by carved woodwork, black from age. The street terminates on the brow of a hill, and widens at the end, so as to form a small square, one retreating side of which is occupied by the front of a church covered with old sculpture; and the diligence, preceded by its long team of tinkling mules, disappears through the arched gateway of a Gothic castle.

In this part of Spain one does not hear the sounds of the guitar; these commence further on. On Sundays and holydays, the fair of Tolosa, and of the other Basque towns, flourish their castagnettes to the less romantic whinings of the violin; but, in traversing the country, the ear is continually met by a sound less musical, although no less national, than that of the guitar—a sort of piercing and loud complaint, comparable to nothing but the screams of those who have "relinquished hope" at Dante's grim gateway.

These unearthly accents assail the ear of the traveller long before he can perceive the object whence they proceed; but, becoming louder and louder, there will issue from a narrow road, or rather ravine, a diminutive cart, shut in between two small round tables for wheels. Their voice proceeds from their junction with the axle, by a contrivance, the nature of which I did not examine closely enough to describe. A French tourist expresses much disgust at this custom, which he attributes to the barbarous state of his neighbours, and their ignorance of mechanical art; it is, however, much more probable that the explanation given by the native population is the correct one. According to this, the wheels are so constructed for the useful purpose of forewarning all other drivers of the approach of a cart. The utility of some such invention is evident. The mountain roads are cut to a depth often of several yards, sometimes scores of yards, (being probably dried-up beds of streams,) and frequently for a distance of some furlongs admit of the passage of no more than one of these carts at a time, notwithstanding their being extremely narrow. The driver, forewarned at a considerable distance by a sound he cannot mistake, seeks a wide spot, and there awaits the meeting.

You need not be told that human experience analysed resolves itself into a series of disappointments. I beg you to ask yourself, or any of your acquaintances, whether any person, thing, or event ever turned out to be exactly, or nearly, such as was expected he, she, or it would be. According to the disposition of each individual, these component parts of experience become the bane or the charm of his life.

This truth may be made, by powerful resolve, the permanent companion of your reflections, so as to render the expectation of disappointment stronger than any other expectation. What then? If you know the expected result will undergo a metamorphosis before it becomes experience, you will not be disappointed. Only try. For instance,—every one knows the Spanish character by heart; it is the burden of all literary productions, which, from the commencement of time, have treated of that country. A Carlist officer, therefore,—the hopeless martyr in the Apostolic, aristocratic cause of divine right; the high-souled being, rushing into the daily, deadly struggle, supported, instead of pay and solid rations, by his fidelity to his persecuted king;—such a character is easily figured. The theory of disappointments must here be at fault. He is a true Spaniard; grave, reserved, dignified. His lofty presence must impress every assembly with a certain degree of respectful awe.—I mounted the *coupé*, or *berlina*, of the Diligence, to leave Tolosa, with a good-looking, fair, well-fed native, with a long falling auburn moustache. We commenced by bandying civilities as to which should hold the door while the other ascended. No sooner were we seated than my companion inquired whether I was military; adding, that he was a Carlist captain of cavalry returning from a six months' emigration.

Notwithstanding the complete polish of his manners in addressing me, it was evident he enjoyed an uncommon exuberance of spirits, even more than the occasion could call for from the most ardent lover of his country; and I at first concluded he must have taken the earliest opportunity (it being four o'clock in the morning) of renewing his long-interrupted acquaintance with the flask of *aguardiente*: but that this was not the case was evident afterwards, from the duration of his tremendous happiness. During the first three or four hours, his tongue gave itself not an instant's repose. Every incident was a subject of merriment, and, when tired of talking to me, he would open the front-window and address the *mayoral*; then roar to the postilion, ten mules ahead; then swear at the *zagal* running along the road, or toss his cigar-stump at the head of some wayfaring peasant-girl.

Sometimes, all his vocabulary being exhausted, he contented himself with a loud laugh, long continued; then he would suddenly fall asleep, and, after bobbing his head for five or six minutes, awake in a convulsion of laughter, as though his dream was too merry for sleep. Whatever he said was invariably preceded by two or three oaths, and terminated in the same manner. The Spanish (perhaps, in this respect, the richest European language) hardly sufficed for his supply. He therefore selected some of the more picturesque specimens for more frequent repetition. These, in default of topics of conversation, sometimes served instead of a fit of laughter or a nap: and once or twice he hastily lowered the window, and gave vent to a string of about twenty oaths at the highest pitch of his lungs; then shut it deliberately, and remained silent for a minute. During dinner he cut a whole cheese into lumps, with which he stuffed an unlucky lap-dog, heedless of the entreaties of two fair fellow-travellers, proprietors of the condemned quadruped. This was a Carlist warrior!

The inhabitants of the Basque provinces are a fine race, and taller than the rest of the Spaniards. The men possess the hardy and robust appearance common to mountaineers, and the symmetry of form which is almost universal in Spain, although the difference of race is easily perceptible. The women are decidedly handsome, although they also are anything but Spanish-looking; and their beauty is often enhanced by an erect and dignified air, not usually belonging to peasants, (for I am only speaking of the lower orders,) and attributable principally to a very unpeasant-like planting of the head on the neck and shoulders. I saw several village girls whom nothing but their dress would prevent from being mistaken for German or English ladies of rank, being moreover universally blondes. On quitting Vitoria, you leave behind you the mountains and the pretty faces.

For us, however, the latter were not entirely lost. There were two in the Diligence, belonging to the daughters of a Grandee of the first class, Count de P. These youthful señoritas had taken the opportunity, rendered particularly well-timed by the revolutions and disorders of their country, of passing three years in Paris, which they employed in completing their education, and seeing the wonders of that town, *soi-disant* the most civilized in the world; which probably it would have been, had the old *régime* not been overthrown. They were now returning to Madrid, furnished with all the new ideas, and the various useful and useless accomplishments they had acquired.

Every one whose lot it may have been to undertake a journey of several days in a Diligence,—that is, in one and the same,—and who consequently recollects that trembling and anxious moment during which he has passed in review the various members of the society of which he is to be, *nolens volens*, a member; and the feverish interest which directed his glance of rapid scrutiny towards those in particular of the said members with whom he was to be exposed to more immediate contact, and at the mercy of whose birth and education, habits, opinions, prejudices, qualities, and propensities, his happiness and comfort were to be placed during so large and uninterrupted a period of his existence, —will comprehend my gratitude to these fair *émigrées*, whose lively conversation shortened the length of each day, adding to the charms of the magnificent scenery by the opportunity they afforded of a congenial interchange of impressions. Although we did not occupy the same compartment of the carriage, their party requiring the entire interior and *rotonde*, we always renewed acquaintance when a prolonged ascent afforded an opportunity of liberating our limbs from their confinement.

The two daily repasts also would have offered no charm, save that of the Basque *cuisine*,—which, although cleanly and solid, is not perfectly *cordón bleu*,—but for the entertaining conversation of my fair fellow-travellers, who had treasured up in their memory the best sayings and doings of Arnal, and the other Listons and Yateses of the French capital, which, seasoned with a slight Spanish accent, were indescribably *piquants* and original. My regret was sincere on our respective routes diverging at Burgos; for they proceeded by the direct line over the Somo sierra to Madrid, while I take the longer road by the Guadarramas, in order to visit Valladolid. I shall not consequently make acquaintance with the northern approach to Madrid, unless I return thither a second time; as to that of my fellow-travellers, I should be too fortunate were it to be renewed during my short stay in their capital.

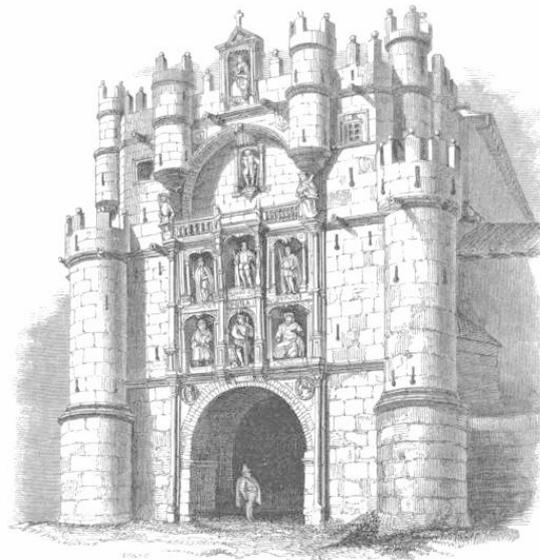
LETTER IV. ARRIVAL AT BURGOS. CATHEDRAL

Burgos.

The chain of the Lower Pyrenees, after the ascent from the French side, and a two days' journey of alternate mountain and valley, terminates on the Spanish side at almost its highest level. A gentle descent leads to the plain of Vitoria; and, after leaving behind the fresh-looking, well-farmed environs of that town, there remains a rather monotonous day's journey across the bare plains of Castile, only varied by the passage through a gorge of about a mile in extent, called the Pass of Pancorbo, throughout which the road is flanked on either side by a perpendicular rock of from six to eight hundred feet elevation. The ancient capital of Castile is visible from a considerable distance, when approached in this direction; being easily recognised by the spires of its cathedral, and by the citadel placed on an eminence, which forms a link of a chain of hills crossing the route at this spot.

The extent of Burgos bears a very inadequate proportion to the idea formed of it by strangers, derived from its former importance and renown. It is composed of five or six narrow streets, winding round the back of an irregularly shaped colonnaded plaza. The whole occupies a narrow space, comprised between the river Arlançon, and the almost circular hill of scarcely a mile in circumference, (on which stands the citadel) and covers altogether about double the extent of Windsor Castle.

The city has received a sort of modern facing, consisting of a row of regularly built white houses, which turn their backs to the Plaza, and front the river; uniting at one extremity with an ancient gateway, which, facing the principal bridge, must originally have stood slightly in advance of the town, to which it formed a very characteristic entrance. It is a quadrangular edifice, pierced with a low semicircular arch. The arch is flanked on the river front by small circular turrets, and surmounted by seven niches, containing statues of magistrates, kings, and heroes; while over these, in a centre niche, stands a semicolossal statue of the Virgin, from which the monument derives its title of "Arco de Santa Maria." Another arch, but totally simple, situated at the other extremity of the new buildings, faces another bridge; and this, with that of Santa Maria, and a third, placed halfway between them, leading to the Plaza, form the three entrances to the city on the river side.



ARCO DE SANTA MARIA.

The dimensions of this, and many other Spanish towns, must not be adopted as a base for estimating their amount of population. Irun, at the frontier of France, stands on a little hill, the surface of which would scarcely suffice for a country-house, with its surrounding offices and gardens: it contains, nevertheless, four or five thousand inhabitants, and comprises a good-sized market-place and handsome town-hall, besides several streets. Nor does this close packing render the Spanish towns less healthy than our straggling cities, planned with a view to circulation and purity of atmosphere, although the difference of climate would seem to recommend to each of the two countries the system pursued by the other. The humidity of the atmosphere in England would be the principal obstacle to cleanliness and salubrity, had the towns a more compact mode of construction; whilst in Spain, on the contrary, this system is advantageous as a protection against the excessive power of the summer sun, which would render our wide streets—bordered by houses too low to afford complete shade—not only almost impassable, but uninhabitable.

The Plaza of Burgos (entitled "de la Constitucion," or "de Isabel II.," or "del Duque de la Victoria," or otherwise, according to the government of the day,) has always been the resort of commerce. The projecting first-floors being supported by square pillars, a sort of bazaar is formed under them, which includes all the shop population of the city, and forms an agreeable lounge during wet or too sunny weather. Throughout the remainder of the town, with the exception of the modern row of buildings above mentioned, almost all the houses are entered through Gothic doorways, surmounted by armorial bearings sculptured in stone, which, together with their ornamental inner courts and staircases, testify to their having sheltered the chivalry of Old Castile. The Cathedral, although by no means large, appears to fill half the town; and considering that, in addition to its conspicuous and inviting aspect, it is the principal remaining monument of the ancient wealth and grandeur of the province, and one of the most beautiful edifices in Europe, I will lose no time in giving you a description of it.

This edifice, or at least the greater portion of it, dates from the thirteenth century. The first stone was laid by Saint Ferdinand, on the 20th of July 1221. Ferdinand had just been proclaimed king by his mother Doña Berenguela, who had invested him with his sword at the royal convent of the Huelgas, about a mile distant from Burgos. Don Mauricio, Bishop of Burgos, blessed the armour as the youthful king girded it, and, three days subsequently to the ceremony, he united him to the Princess Beatrice, in the church of the same convent. This bishop assisted in laying the first stone of the cathedral, and presided over the construction of the entire body of the building, including half of the two principal towers.



INTERIOR OF THE CHOIR.

His tomb may be seen at the back of the Choir. From the date of the building its style may at once be recognised, allowing for a difference which existed between England and the Continent, the latter being somewhat in advance. The original edifice must have been a very perfect and admirable specimen of the pointed architecture of its time in all its purity. As it is, unfortunately, (as the antiquary would say, and, I should add, the mere man of taste, were it not that tastes are various, and that the proverb says they are all in nature,) the centre of the building, forming the intersection of the transept and nave, owing to some defect in the original construction, fell in just at the period during which regular architecture began to waver, and the style called in France the "Renaissance" was making its appearance. An architect of talent, Felipe de Borgoña, hurried from Toledo, where he was employed in carving the stalls of the choir, to furnish a plan for the centre tower. He, however, only carried the work to half the height of the four cylindrical piers which support it. He was followed by several others before the termination of the work; and Juan de Herrera, the architect of the Escorial, is said to have completed it. In this design are displayed infinite talent and imagination; but the artist could not alter the taste of the age. It is more than probable that he would have kept to the pure style of his model, but for the prevailing fashion of his time. Taken by itself, the tower is, both externally and internally, admirable, from the elegance of its form, and the richness of its details; but it jars with the rest of the building.

Placing this tower in the background, we will now repair to the west front. Here nothing is required to be added, or taken away, to afford the eye a feast as perfect as grace, symmetry, grandeur, and lightness, all combined, are capable of producing. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this front taken as a whole. You have probably seen an excellent view of it in one of Roberts's annuals. The artists of Burgos complain of an alteration, made some fifty years back by the local ecclesiastical authorities, nobody knows for what reason. They caused a magnificent portal to be removed, to make way for a very simple one, totally destitute of the usual sculptured depth of arch within arch, and of the profusion of statuary, which are said to have adorned the original entrance. This, however, has not produced a bad result in the view of the whole front. Commencing by solidity and simplicity at its base, the pile only becomes ornamental at the first story, where rows of small trefoil arches are carved round the buttresses; while in the intermediate spaces are an oriel window in an ornamental arch, and two narrow double arches. The third compartment, where the towers first rise above the body of the church, offers a still richer display of ornament. The two towers are here connected by a screen, which masks the roof, raising the apparent body of the façade an additional story. This

screen is very beautiful, being composed of two ogival windows in the richest style, with eight statues occupying the intervals of their lower mullions. A fourth story, equally rich, terminates the towers, on the summits of which are placed the two spires.

These are all that can be wished for the completion of such a whole. They are, I imagine, not only unmatched, but unapproached by any others, in symmetry, lightness, and beauty of design. The spire of Strasburg is the only one I am acquainted with that may be allowed to enter into the comparison. It is much larger, placed at nearly double the elevation, and looks as light as one of these; but the symmetry of its outline is defective, being uneven, and producing the effect of steps. And then it is alone, and the absence of a companion gives the façade an unfinished appearance. For these reasons I prefer the spires of Burgos. Their form is hexagonal; they are entirely hollow, and unsupported internally. The six sides are carved *à jour*, the design forming nine horizontal divisions, each division presenting a different ornament on each of its six sides. At the termination of these divisions, each pyramid is surrounded near the summit by a projecting gallery with balustrades. These appear to bind and keep together each airy fabric, which, everywhere transparent, looks as though it required some such restraint, to prevent its being instantaneously scattered by the winds.

On examining the interior of one of these spires, it is a subject of surprise that they could have been so constructed as to be durable. Instead of walls, you are surrounded by a succession of little balustrades, one over the other, converging towards the summit. The space enclosed is exposed to all the winds, and the thickness of the stones so slight as to have required their being bound together with iron cramps. At a distance of a mile these spires appear as transparent as nets.

On entering the church by the western doors, the view is interrupted, as is usual in Spain, by a screen, which, crossing the principal nave at the third or fourth pillar, forms the western limit of the choir; the eastern boundary being the west side of the transept, where there is an iron railing. The space between the opposite side of the transept and the apse is the *capilla mayor* (chief chapel), in which is placed the high altar. There are two lower lateral naves, from east to west, and beyond them a series of chapels. The transept has no lateral naves. Some of the chapels are richly ornamented. The first or westernmost, on the north side, in particular, would be in itself a magnificent church. It is called the "Chapel of Santa Tecla." Its dimensions are ninety-six feet in length, by sixty-three in width, and sixty high. The ceiling, and different altars, are covered with a dazzling profusion of gilded sculpture. The ceiling, in particular, is entirely hidden beneath the innumerable figures and ornaments of every sort of form, although of questionable taste, which the ravings of the extravagant style, called in Spain "Churriguesco" (after the architect who brought it into fashion), could invent.

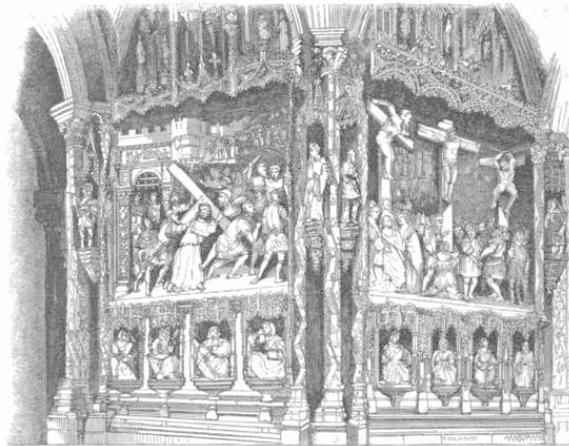
The next chapel—that of Santa Ana—is not so large, but designed in far better taste. It is Gothic, and dates from the fifteenth century. Here are some beautiful tombs, particularly that of the founder of the chapel. But the most attractive object is a picture, placed at an elevation which renders difficult the appreciation of its merits without the aid of a glass,—a Holy Family, by Andrea del Sarto. It is an admirable picture; possessing all the grace and simplicity, combined with the fineness of execution, of that artist. The chapel immediately opposite (on the south side) contains some handsome tombs, and another picture, representing the Virgin, attributed by the cicerone of the place to Michael Angelo. We next arrive at the newer part, or centre of the building, where four cylindrical piers of about twelve feet diameter, with octagonal bases, form a quadrangle, and support the centre tower, designed by Felipe de Borgoña. These pillars are connected with each other by magnificent wrought brass railings, which give entrance respectively, westward to the choir,—on the east to the sanctuary, or *capilla mayor*,—and north and south to the two ends of the transept. Above is seen the interior of the tower, covered with a profusion of ornament, but discordant with every other object within view.



TRANSEPT OF THE CATHEDRAL, BURGOS.

The high altar at the back of the great chapel is also the work of Herrera. It is composed of a series of rows of saints and apostles, superposed one over the other, until they reach the roof. All are placed in niches adorned with gilding, of which only partial traces remain. The material of the whole is wood. Returning to either side-nave, a few smaller chapels on the outside, and opposite them the railings of the sanctuary, conduct us to the back of the high altar, opposite which is the eastern chapel, called "of the Duke de Frias," or "Capilla del Condestable."

All this part of the edifice—I mean, from the transept eastward—is admirable, both with regard to detail and to general effect. The pillars are carved all round into niches, containing statues or groups; and the intervals between the six last, turning round the apse, are occupied by excellent designs, sculptured in a hard white stone. The subjects are, the Agony in the Garden, Jesus bearing the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. The centre piece, representing the Crucifixion, is the most striking. The upper part contains the three sufferers in front; and in the background a variety of buildings, trees, and other smaller objects, supposed to be at a great distance. In the foreground of the lower part are seen the officers and soldiers employed in the execution; a group of females, with St. John supporting the Virgin, and a few spectators. The costumes, the expression, the symmetry of the figures, all contribute to the excellence of this piece of sculpture. It would be difficult to surpass the exquisite grace displayed in the attitudes, and flow of the drapery, of the female group; and the Herculean limbs of the right-hand robber, as he writhes in his torments, and seems ready to snap the cords which retain his feet and arms,—the figure projecting in its entire contour from the surface of the background,—present an admirable model of corporeal expression and anatomical detail.



SCULPTURE IN THE APSE.

In clearing the space to make room for these sculptures, the artist had to remove the tomb of a bishop, whose career, if the ancient *chronique* is to be depended on, must have been rather singular. The information, it must be owned, bears the appearance of having been transmitted by some contemporary annalist, whose impartiality may have perhaps been biassed by some of the numerous incitements which operate upon courtiers.

Don Pedro Fernandez de Frias, Cardinal of Spain, Bishop of Osma and Cuenca, was, it is affirmed, of low parentage, of base and licentious habits of life, and of a covetous and niggardly disposition. These defects, however, by no means diminished the high favour he enjoyed at the successive courts of Henry the Third and Juan the Second. The Bishop of Segovia, Don Juan de Tordesillas, happened by an unlucky coincidence to visit Burgos during his residence there. The characters of the two prelates were not of a nature to harmonise in the smallest degree, and, being thrown necessarily much in each other's way, they gave loose occasionally to expressions more than bordering on the irreverent. It was on one of these occasions, that, the eloquence of the Cardinal Bishop here interred being at default, a lacquey of his followers came to his assistance, and being provided with a *palo*, or staff, inflicted on the rival dignitary certain arguments *ad humeros*—in fact, gave the Bishop of Segovia a severe drubbing. The Cardinal was on this occasion compelled to retire to Italy.

Turning our backs to the centre piece of sculpture last described, we enter the Capilla del Condestable through a superb bronze railing. In these railings the Cathedral of Burgos rivals that of Seville, compensating by number for the superior size and height of those contained in the latter church. That of the chapel we are now entering entirely fills the entrance arch, a height of about forty feet; the helmet of a mounted knight in full armour, intended to represent St. Andrew, which crowns its summit, nearly touching the keystone of the arch. This chapel must be noticed in detail. Occupying at the extremity of the church a position answering to that of Henry the Seventh's Chapel at Westminster Abbey, it forms a tower of itself, which on the outside harmonises with peculiar felicity with the three others, and contributes to the apparent grandeur and real beauty of the exterior view. The interior is magnificent, although its plan and style, being entirely different from those of Henry the Seventh's Chapel, prevent the comparison from going further. Its form is octagonal, measuring about fifty feet in diameter, by rather more than a hundred in height. Its style florid Gothic of the fourteenth century. The effect of its first view is enhanced by its being filled, unlike the rest of the church, with a blaze of light introduced through two rows of windows in the upper part.

Two of the sides are furnished with recesses, which form lesser chapels, and in one of which there is a fine organ. Between the centre of the pavement and the principal altar, a large square block of mixed marble covers the remains of the founders of the chapel, and bears on its surface

their recumbent figures executed in great perfection.² This is the finest tomb in the cathedral. The embroidery of the cushions, the ornaments on the count's armour, the gloves of the countess, are among the details which merit particular notice amidst the beautiful execution of the whole. The high altar of this chapel does not accord with the general effect, being designed in the style of the *renacimiento*. In the centre of it is nevertheless fixed a treasure that would compensate for worse defects. A small circular medallion represents the Virgin and Child, in an attitude very similar to that of the Madonna della Seggiola, executed on porphyry. This delicious little work, of about nine inches in diameter, forms the centre of attraction, and is the most precious ornament of the chapel. On the right hand, near the altar, a small doorway admits to the sacristy.

This contains several relics of the founders. A small portable altar of ivory, forming the base of a crucifix of about eighteen inches in height, is an exquisite model of delicate workmanship. Here also has been treasured up a picture, behind a glass, and in a sort of wooden case; a bequest likewise of the founders. Unfortunately they neglected to impart the name of its author. The nebulous sort of uncertainty thus made to surround this relic has magnified its merits, which might otherwise perhaps not have claimed particular notice, to the most colossal dimensions. They scarcely at last know what to say of it. At the period of my first visit to Burgos, it was a Leonardo da Vinci; but, after a lapse of two years, the same sacristan informed me that it was uncertain whether the painting was executed by Raffaele or Leonardo, although it was generally supposed to be by Raffaele; and a notice, published since, gives the authority of an anonymous connoisseur, who asserts it to be far superior to Raffaele's "Perle." It is now consequently decided that it cannot be a Leonardo, and is scarcely bad enough for a Raffaele.

Without venturing *tantas componere lites*, I may be allowed to give my impression, on an inspection as complete as the studied darkness of the apartment, added to the glass and wooden case, would permit. It is a half-figure of the Magdalene. The execution is very elaborate and highly finished, but there are evident defects in the drawing. In colouring and manner it certainly reminds you of da Vinci—of one of whose works it may probably be a copy; but, whatever it is, it is easy to discover that it is *not* a Raffaele.

This chapel does not occupy the precise centre of the apse. A line drawn from the middle of the western door through the nave would divide it into two unequal parts, passing at a distance of nearly two yards from its centre. An examination of the ground externally gives no clue to the cause of this irregularity, by which the external symmetry of the edifice is rendered imperfect, although in an almost imperceptible degree; it must therefore be accounted for by the situation of the adjoining parochial chapel, of more ancient construction, with which it was not allowable to interfere, and by the unwillingness of the founder to diminish the scale on which his chapel was planned.

Before we leave the Chapel del Condestable, one of its ceremonies deserves particular mention. I allude to the *missa de los carneros* (sheep-mass). At early mass on All Souls day, a feast celebrated in this chapel with extraordinary pomp, six sheep are introduced, and made to stand on a large block of unpolished marble, which has been left lying close to the tombs, almost in the centre of the chapel; near the six sheep are placed as many inflated skins of pigs, resembling those usually filled with the wine of the country; to these is added the quantity of bread produced from four bushels of wheat; and all remain in view during the performance of high mass. At the conclusion of the final response, the sheep are removed from their pedestal, and make for the chapel-gates, through which they issue; and urged by the voice of their driver, the peculiar shrill whistle of Spanish shepherds, and by the

² The following inscriptions are placed at the feet of the respective statues: "Aqui yace el muy Ilustre Señor Don Pedro Hernandez de Velasco, Condestable de Castilla, Señor del estado, y gran casa de Velasco, hijo de Don Pedro Hernandez de Velasco, y de Doña Beatriz Manrique, Condes de Haro. Murio de setenta y siete años, anno de mil quatro cientos y noventa y dos, siendo solo Virey de estos reynos por los Reyes Catolicos." "Aqui yace la muy Ilustre Señora Doña Mencia de Mendoza, Condesa de Haro, muger del Condestable Don Pedro Hernandez de Velasco, hija de Don Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, y de Doña Catalina de Figueroa, Marqueses de Santillana. Murio de setenta y nueve annos, anno de mil y quiniento."

more material argument of the staff, proceed down the entire length of the cathedral to the music of the aforesaid whistle, accompanied by their own bleatings and bells, until they vanish through the great western portal.

Returning to the transepts, we find two objects worthy of notice. The cathedral having been erected on uneven ground, rising rapidly from south to north, the entrance to the north transept opens at an elevation of nearly thirty feet from the pavement. To reach this door there is an ornamental staircase, of a sort of white stone, richly carved in the *renaissance* style. This door is never open, a circumstance which causes no inconvenience; the steps being so steep as to render them less useful than ornamental, as long as any other exit exists.

A beautifully carved old door, of a wood become perfectly black, although not so originally, gives access to the cloister from the east side of the south transept. The interior of the arch which surmounts it is filled with sculpture. A plain moulding runs round the top, at the left-hand commencement of which is carved a head of the natural size, clothed in a cowl.



HEAD OF SAINT FRANCIS. ³

The attention is instantly rivetted by this head: it is not merely a masterpiece of execution. Added to the exquisite beauty and delicate moulding of the upper part of the face, the artist has succeeded in giving to the mouth an almost superhuman expression. This feature, in spite of a profusion of hair which almost covers it, lives and speaks. A smile, in which a barely perceptible but irresistible and, as it were, innate bitterness of satire and disdain modifies a wish of benevolence, unites with the piercing expression of the eyes in lighting up the stone with a degree of intellect which I had thought beyond the reach of sculpture until I saw this head. Tradition asserts it to be a portrait of Saint Francis, who was at Burgos at the period of the completion of the cathedral; and who, being in the habit of examining the progress of the works, afforded unconsciously a study to the sculptor.

The two sacristies are entered from the cloister: one of them contains the portraits of all the bishops and archbishops of Burgos. Communicating with this last is a room destined for the reception of useless lumber and broken ornaments. Here the cicerone directs your attention to an old half-rotten oaken chest, fixed against the wall at a considerable height. This relic is the famous Coffre del Cid, the self-same piece of furniture immortalised in the anecdote related of the hero respecting the

³ The above woodcut may, it is hoped, serve as a guide to future travellers in their search for this head, of which it has no pretension to give an adequate idea.

loan of money obtained on security of the supposed treasure it enclosed. The lender of the money, satisfied by the weight of the trunk, and the chivalrous honour of its proprietor, never saw its contents until shown them by the latter on the repayment of the loan: they were then discovered to consist of stones and fragments of old iron.

One is disappointed on finding in this cathedral no more durable *souvenir* of the Cid than his rat-corroded wardrobe. His remains are preserved in the chapel of the Ayuntamiento; thither we will consequently bend our steps, not forgetting to enjoy, as we leave the church, a long gaze at its elegant and symmetrical proportions. It may be called an unique model of beauty of its particular sort, especially when contemplated without being drawn into comparison with other edifices of a different class. Catalani is said, on hearing Sontag's performance, to have remarked that she was "la première de son genre, mais que son genre n'était pas le premier." Could the cathedral of Seville see that of Burgos, it would probably pronounce a similar judgment on its smaller rival.

The profusion of ornament, the perfection of symmetry, the completeness of finish, produce an instantaneous impression that nothing is wanting in this charming edifice; but any one who should happen to have previously seen that of Seville cannot, after the first moments of enthusiasm, escape the comparison which forces itself on him, and which is not in favour of this cathedral. It is elegant, but deficient in grandeur; beautiful, but wanting in majesty. The stern and grand simplicity of the one, thrown into the scales against the light, airy, and diminutive, though graceful beauty of the other, recalls the contrast drawn by Milton between our first parents; a contrast which, applied to these churches, must be considered favourable to the more majestic, however the balance of preference may turn in the poem.

LETTER V. TOMB OF THE CID. CITADEL

Burgos.

The Ayuntamiento, or Town-hall, presents one façade to the river, and the other to the Plaza Mayor, being built over the archway which forms the already mentioned entrance to the central portion of the city. The building, like other town-halls, possesses an airy staircase, a large public room, and a few other apartments, used for the various details of administration; but nothing remarkable until you arrive at a handsomely ornamented saloon, furnished with a canopied seat fronting a row of arm-chairs. This is the room in which the municipal body hold their juntas. It contains several portraits: two or three of kings, suspended opposite to an equal number of queens; the two likenesses of the celebrated judges Nuño Rasura and Lain Calvo, near which are seen the simple square oaken chairs from within the angular and hard embrace of which they administered the laws and government of Castile; a full-length of Fernan Gonzalez; and lastly, one of the Cid.

Owing to the singularity of this last portrait, it is the first to attract attention. The hero is represented in the most extraordinary of attitudes: the head is thrown back, and the face turned towards one side; the legs in a sort of studied posture; a drawn sword is in the right hand, the point somewhat raised. The general expression is that of a comic actor attempting an attitude of mock-heroic impertinence; and is probably the result of an unattained object in the mind of the artist, of producing that of fearless independence.

Beyond this apartment is the Chapel, a plain, not large room, containing but two objects besides its very simple altar, with its, almost black, silver candlesticks. Over the altar is a Conception, by Murillo; and, in the centre of the chapel, a highly polished and neatly ornamented funereal urn, composed of walnut-wood, contains the remains of the Cid: the urn stands on a pedestal. On its two ends in letters of gold, are inscriptions, stating its contents, and the date of its application to its present purpose. I was told that the bones were contained in a leaden box, but that a glass one was being prepared, which, on opening the lid of the urn, would afford a view of the actual dust of the warrior.

The remains of the Cid have only recently been conveyed to Burgos from the monastery of San Pedro de Cardenas, about four miles distant. They had been preserved there ever since his funeral, which took place in the presence of King Alonzo the Sixth, and the two Kings, sons-in-law of the hero, as soon as the body arrived from Valencia.

This monastic retreat, if dependence may be placed on the testimony of the Cerberus of the Alcalde,—the cicerone (when duly propitiated) of the municipal edifice,—did not turn out to be altogether a place of repose to the warrior. According to this worthy, an amusing interpreter of the popular local traditions, the exploits performed subsequently to the hero's interment were such as almost to throw a shadow over those he enacted during his mortal existence. One specimen will suffice. Some twenty thousand individuals, including the monks of all the neighbouring monasteries, were assembled in the church of San Pedro, and were listening to a sermon on the occasion of the annual festival in honour of the patron saint. Guided by curiosity, a Moor entered the church and mingled with the crowd. After remaining during a short time motionless, he approached a pillar, against which was suspended a portrait of the Cid, for the purpose of examining the picture. Suddenly the figure was seen by all present, whose testimony subsequently established the fact, to grasp with the right hand the hilt of its sword, and to uncover a few inches of the naked blade. The Moor instantly fell flat on the pavement, and was found to be lifeless.

You would be surprised at the difficulty of forming even here, in the midst of the scenes of his exploits, a definite idea of this Hercules of the Middle Ages. For those who are satisfied with the orthodox histories of the monks, he is without defects—a simple unsophisticated demi-god. But

there have been Mahometan historians of Spain. These are universally acknowledged to have treated of all that concerned themselves with complete accuracy and impartiality; and, when this happens, it should seem to be the best criterion, in the absence of other proof, of their faithful delineation of others' portraits.

However that may be, here is an instance which will give you an idea of the various readings of the Cid's history.

Mariana relates, that an Arab expedition, headed by five kings (as he terms them) of the adjoining states, being signalized as having passed the mountains of Oca, and being occupied in committing depredations on the Christian territory, Rodrigo suddenly took the field, recovered all the booty, and made all five kings prisoners. All this being done by himself and his own retainers. The kings he released after signing a treaty, according to which they agreed to pay him an annual tribute. It happened, that on the occasion of the first payment of this, Rodrigo was at Zamora, whither he had accompanied the King of Castile; and he took an opportunity of receiving the Arab messengers in presence of the court. This was at least uncommon. The messengers addressed him by the appellation of Syd (sir) as they handed over the money. Ferdinand, delighted with the prowess of his courtier, expressed on this occasion the desire that he should retain the title of Syd.

This anecdote undergoes, in the hands of the Arab writers, a curious metamorphosis. According to them, the expression Syd was employed, not by tributary kings, but by certain chiefs of that creed whose pay the Catholic hero was receiving in return for aid lent against the Christians of Aragon.

They attribute, moreover, to this mirror of chivalry, on the surrender of Valencia, a conduct by no means heroic—not to say worthy a highwayman. He accepted, as they relate, the pay of the Emyr of Valencia to protect the city against the Almoravides, who at that period were extending their conquests all over Moorish Spain. The Cid was repulsed, and the town taken. After this defeat he shut himself up in a castle, since called the Peña del Cid (Rock of the Cid), and there waited his opportunity. On the departure of the conquerors from the city, in which they left an insufficient garrison, he hastened down at the head of his campeadores, and speedily retook Valencia.

The Cadi, Ahmed ben Djahhaf, left in command of the place, had, however, only surrendered on faith of a capitulation couched in the most favourable terms. It was even stipulated that he should retain his post of governor; but no sooner was the Cid master of the place than he caused the old man to be arrested and put to the torture, in order to discover from him the situation of a treasure supposed to be concealed in the Alcazar; after which, finding he would not speak, or had nothing to reveal, he had him burned on the public place.

The Citadel of Burgos, at present an insignificant fortress, was formerly a place of considerable importance, and commanded the surrounding country; especially on the side on which the town—placed at the foot of the eminence—lay beneath its immediate protection, and could listen unscathed to the whizzing of the deadly missiles of war as they passed over its roofs. During the various wars of which Castile has been the theatre at different periods, this citadel has, from its important position, occupied the main attention of contending armies; and, from forming a constant *point-de-mire* to attacking troops, has finally been almost annihilated. The principal portion of the present buildings is of a modern date, but, although garrisoned, the fortress cannot be said to be restored.

The extent of the town was greater than at present, and included a portion of the declivity which exists between the present houses and the walls of the fortress. At the two extremities of the town-side of the hill, immediately above the level of the highest-placed houses now existing, two Arab gateways give access through the ancient town-walls, which ascended the hill from the bottom. Between these there exists a sort of flat natural terrace, above the town, and running along its whole length, on to which some of the streets open. On this narrow level stood formerly a part, probably the best part, of the city, which has shared the fate of its protecting fortress; but, not being rebuilt, it is now an empty space,—or would be so, but for the recent erection of a cemetery, placed at about half the distance between the two extremities.

Before, however, the lapse of years had worn away the last surviving recollections of these localities, some worshipper of by-gone glory succeeded in discovering, on the now grass-grown space, the situations once occupied by the respective abodes of the Cid and of Fernan Gonzalez. On these spots monuments have been erected. That of Gonzalez is a handsome arch, the piers supporting which are each faced with two pillars of the Doric order on either side; above the cornice there is a balustrade, over which four small obelisks correspond with the respective pillars. The arch is surmounted by a sort of pedestal, on which is carved an inscription, stating the object of the monument. There is nothing on the top of the pedestal, which appears to have been intended for the reception of a statue.

The monument in memory of the Cid is more simple. It consists of three small pyramids in a row, supported on low bases or pedestals; that in the centre higher than the other two, but not exceeding (inclusive of the base) twenty feet from the ground. On the lower part of the centre stone is carved an appropriate inscription, abounding in ellipsis, after the manner usually adopted in Spain.

It is not surprising that these monuments, together with the memory of the events brought about by the men in whose honour they have been erected, should be fast hastening to a level with the desolation immediately surrounding them. The present political circumstances of Spain are not calculated to favour the retrospection of by-gone glories. Scarcely is time allowed—so rapidly are executed the transmutations of the modern political diorama—for examining the events, or even for recovery from the shock, of each succeeding revolution; nor force remaining to the exhausted organs of admiration or of horror, to be exercised on almost forgotten acts, since those performed before the eyes of the living generation have equalled or surpassed them in violence and energy. The arch of Fernan Gonzalez, if not speedily restored, (which is not to be expected,) runs the risk, from its elevation and want of solidity, of being the first of the two monuments to crumble to dust; a circumstance which, although not destitute of an appearance of justice,—from the fact of the hero it records having figured on an earlier page of Castilian annals,—would nevertheless occasion regret to those who prefer history to romance, and who estimate essential services rendered to the state, as superior to mere individual *éclat*, however brilliant.

You will not probably object to the remainder of this letter being monopolized by this founder of the independence of Castile; the less so, from the circumstance of the near connection existing between his parentage and that of the city we are visiting, and which owes to him so much of its celebrity. Should you not be in a humour to be lectured on history, you are at all events forewarned, and may wait for the next despatch.

Unlike many of the principal towns of the Peninsula, which content themselves with no more modern descent than from Nebuchadnezzar or Hercules, Burgos modestly accepts a paternity within the domain of probability. A German, Nuño Belchides, married, in the reign of Alonzo the Great, King of Oviedo, a daughter of the second Count of Castile, Don Diego Porcellos. This noble prevailed on his father-in-law to assemble the inhabitants of the numerous villages dispersed over the central part of the province, and to found a city, to which he gave the German name of "city" with a Spanish termination. It was Don Fruela III., King of Leon, whose acts of injustice and cruelty caused so violent an exasperation, that the nobles of Castile, of whom there existed several of a rank little inferior to that of the titular Count of the province, threw up their allegiance, and selected two of their own body, Nuño Rasura and Lain Calvo, to whom they intrusted the supreme authority, investing them with the modest title of Judges, by way of a check, lest at any future time they should be tempted, upon the strength of a higher distinction, to make encroachments on the common liberties.

The first of the two judges, Nuño Rasura, was the son of the above-mentioned Nuño Belchides and his wife, Sulla Bella (daughter of Diego Porcellos), and grandfather of Fernan Gonzalez. His son Gonzalo Nuño, Fernan's father, succeeded on his death to the dignity of Judge of Castile, and became extremely popular, owing to his affability, and winning urbanity of deportment in his public character. He established an academy in his palace for the education of the sons of the nobles, who were instructed under his own superintendence in all the accomplishments which could render them

distinguished in peace or in war. The maternal grandfather of Fernan Gonzalez was Nuño Fernandez, one of the Counts of Castile who were treacherously seized and put to death by Don Ordoño, King of Leon. The young Count of Castile is described as having been a model of elegance. To singular personal beauty he added an unmatched proficiency in all the exercises then in vogue, principally in arms and equitation. These accomplishments, being added to much affability and good-nature, won him the affections of the young nobles, who strove to imitate his perfections, while they enjoyed the festivities of his palace.

It appears that, notwithstanding the rebellion, and appointment of Judges, Castile had subsequently professed allegiance to the Kings of Leon; for a second revolt was organized in the reign of Don Ramiro, at the head of which we find Fernan Gonzalez. On this occasion, feeling themselves too feeble to resist the royal troops, the rebels had recourse to a Moorish chief, Aecipha. The King, however, speedily drove the Moors across the frontier, and succeeded in capturing the principal revolters. After a short period these were released, on the sole condition of taking the oath of allegiance; and the peace was subsequently sealed by the marriage of a daughter of Gonzalez with Don Ordoño, eldest son of Ramiro, and heir to the kingdom.

The Count of Castile was, however, too powerful a vassal to continue long on peaceable terms with a sovereign, an alliance with whose family had more than ever smoothed the progressive ascent of his pretensions. Soon after the accession of his son-in-law Don Ordoño, he entered into an alliance against him with the King of Navarre. This declaration of hostility was followed by the divorce of Fernan's daughter by the King, who immediately entered into a second wedlock. The successor of this monarch, Don Sancho, surnamed the Fat, was indebted for a large portion of his misfortunes and vicissitudes to the hostility of the Count of Castile. Don Ordoño, the pretender to his throne, son of Alonzo surnamed the Monk, with the aid of Gonzalez, whose daughter Urraca, the repudiated widow of the former sovereign, he married, took easy possession of the kingdom, driving Don Sancho for shelter to the court of his uncle the then King of Navarre. It is worth mentioning, that King Sancho took the opportunity of his temporary expulsion from his states, to visit the court of Abderahman at Cordova, and consult the Arab physicians, whose reputation for skill in the removal of obesity had extended over all Spain. History relates that the treatment they employed was successful, and that Don Sancho, on reascending his throne, had undergone so complete a reduction as to be destitute of all claims to his previously acquired *sobriquet*.

All these events, and the intervals which separated them, fill a considerable space of time; and the establishment of the exact dates would be a very difficult, if not an impossible, undertaking. Various wars were carried on during this time by Gonzalez, and alliances formed and dissolved. Several more or less successful campaigns are recorded against the Moors of Saragoza, and of other neighbouring states. The alliance with Navarre had not been durable. In 959 Don Garcia, King of that country, fought a battle with Fernan Gonzalez, by whom he was taken prisoner, and detained in Burgos thirteen months. The conquest of the independence of Castile is related in the following manner.

In the year 958, the Cortes of the kingdom were assembled at Leon, whence the King forwarded a special invitation to the Count of Castile, requiring his attendance, and that of the Grandees of the province, for "deliberation on affairs of high importance to the state." Gonzalez, although suspicious of the intentions of the sovereign, unable to devise a suitable pretext for absenting himself, repaired to Leon, attended by a considerable *cortége* of nobles. The King went forth to receive him; and it is related, that refusing to accept a present, offered by Gonzalez, of a horse and a falcon, both of great value, a price was agreed on; with the condition that, in case the King should not pay the money on the day named in the agreement, for each successive day that should intervene until the payment, the sum should be doubled. Nothing extraordinary took place during the remainder of the visit; and the Count, on his return to Burgos, married Doña Sancha, sister of the King of Navarre.

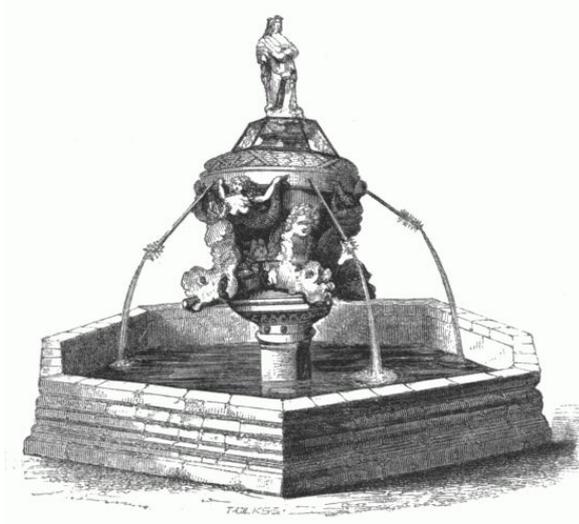
It is probable that some treachery had been intended against Gonzalez, similar to that put in execution on a like occasion previous to his birth, when the Counts of Castile were seized and put to death in their prison; for, not long after, a second invitation was accepted by the Count, who was now received in a very different manner. On his kneeling to kiss the King's hand, Don Sancho burst forth with a volley of reproaches, and, repulsing him with fury, gave orders for his immediate imprisonment. It is doubtful what fate was reserved for him by the hatred of the Queen-mother, who had instigated the King to the act of treachery, in liquidation of an ancient personal debt of vengeance of her own, had not the Countess of Castile, Doña Sancha, undertaken his liberation.

Upon receiving the news of her husband's imprisonment, she allowed a short period to elapse, in order to mature her plan, and at the same time lull suspicion of her intentions. She then repaired to Leon, on pretext of a pilgrimage to Santiago, on the route to which place Leon is situated. She was received by King Sancho with distinguished honours, and obtained permission to visit her husband, and to pass a night in his prison. The following morning, Gonzalez, taking advantage of early twilight, passed the prison-doors in disguise of the Countess, and, mounting a horse which was in readiness, escaped to Castile.

This exploit of Doña Sancha does not belong to the days of romance and chivalry alone: it reminds us of the still more difficult task, accomplished by the beautiful Winifred, Countess of Nithisdale, who, eight centuries later, effected the escape of the rebel Earl, her husband, from the Tower, in a precisely similar manner; thus rescuing him from the tragic fate of his friends and fellow-prisoners, the Lords Derwentwater and Kenmure.

Doña Sancha obtained her liberty without difficulty, being even complimented by the King on her heroism, and provided with a brilliant escort on her return to Castile. Gonzalez contented himself with claiming the price agreed upon for the horse and falcon; and—the King not seeming inclined to liquidate the debt, which, owing to the long delay, amounted already to an enormous sum, or looking upon it as a pretext for hostility, the absence of which would not prevent the Count of Castile, in his then state of exasperation, from having recourse to arms—passed the frontier of Leon at the head of an army, and, laying waste the country, approached gradually nearer to the capital. At length Don Sancho sent his treasurer to clear up the account, but it was found that the debt exceeded the whole amount of the royal treasure; upon which Gonzalez claimed and obtained, on condition of the withdrawal of his troops, a formal definitive grant of Castile, without reservation, to himself and his descendants.

Before we quit Burgos for its environs, one more edifice requires our notice. It is a fountain, occupying the centre of the space which faces the principal front of the cathedral. This little antique monument charms, by the quaint symmetry of its design and proportions, and perhaps even by the terribly mutilated state of the four fragments of Cupids, which, riding on the necks of the same number of animals so maltreated as to render impossible the discovery of their race, form projecting angles, and support the basin on their shoulders. Four mermaids, holding up their tails, so as not to interfere with the operations of the Cupids, ornament the sides of the basin, which are provided with small apertures for the escape of the water; the top being covered by a flat circular stone, carved around its edge. This stone,—a small, elegantly shaped pedestal, which surmounts it,—and the other portions already described, are nearly black, probably from antiquity; but on the pedestal stands a little marble virgin, as white as snow. This antique figure harmonises by its mutilation with the rest, although injured in a smaller degree; and at the same time adds to the charm of the whole, by the contrast of its dazzling whiteness with the dark mass on which it is supported. The whole is balanced on the capital of a pillar, of a most original form, which appears immediately above the surface of a sheet of water enclosed in a large octagonal basin.



FOUNTAIN OF SANTA MARIA.

LETTER VI.

CARTUJA DE MIRAFLORES. CONVENT OF LAS HUELGAS

Burgos.

The Chartreuse of Miraflores, situated to the east of the city, half-way in the direction of the above-mentioned monastery of San Pedro de Cardeñas, crowns the brow of an eminence, which, clothed with woods towards its base, slopes gradually until it reaches the river. This spot is the most picturesque to be found in the environs of Burgos,—a region little favoured in that respect. The view, extending right and left, follows the course of the river, until it is bounded on the west by the town, and on the east by a chain of mountains, a branch of the Sierra of Oca. Henry the Third, grandfather of Isabel the Catholic, made choice of this position for the erection of a palace; the only remnant of it now existing is the church, which has since become the inheritance of the Carthusian monks, the successors of its royal founder.

The late revolution, after sparing the throne of Spain, displayed a certain degree of logic, if not in all its acts, at least in sparing, likewise, two or three of the religious establishments, under the protection of which the principal royal mausoleums found shelter and preservation. The great Chartreuse of Xeres contained probably no such palladium, for it was among the first of the condemned: its lands and buildings were confiscated; and its treasures of art, and all portable riches, dispersed, as likewise its inhabitants, in the direction of all the winds.

In England the name of Xeres is only generally known in connection with one of the principal objects of necessity, which furnish the table of the *gastronome*; but in Andalucia the name of Xeres de la Frontera calls up ideas of a different sort. It is dear to the wanderer in Spain, whose recollections love to repose on its picturesque position, its sunny skies, its delicious fruits, its amiable and lively population, and lastly on its once magnificent monastery, and the treasures of art it contained. The Prior of that monastery has been removed to the Cartuja of Burgos, where he presides over a community, reduced to four monks, who subsist almost entirely on charity. This amiable and gentleman-like individual, in whom the monk has in no degree injured the man of the world,—although a large estate, abandoned for the cloister, proved sufficiently the sincerity of his religious professions,—had well deserved a better fate than to be torn in his old age from his warm Andalusian retreat, and transplanted to the rudest spot in the whole Peninsula, placed at an elevation of more than four thousand feet above the level of the Atlantic, and visited up to the middle of June by snow-storms. At the moment I am writing, this innocent victim of reform is extended on a bed of sickness, having only recently escaped with his life from an attack, during which he was given over.

This Cartuja possesses more than the historical reminiscences with which it is connected, to attract the passing tourist. It owes its prolonged existence to the possession of an admirable work of art,—the tomb of Juan the Second and his Queen Isabel, which stands immediately in front of the high altar of the church. This living mass of alabaster, the work of Gil de Siloë, son of the celebrated Diego, presents in its general plan the form of a star. It turns one of its points to the altar. Its mass, or thickness from the ground to the surface, measures about six feet; and this is consequently the height at which are laid the two recumbent figures.



N. A. Wells. deb. W. I. Starling, "84"

INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF MIRAFLORES, NEAR BURGOS.

It is impossible to conceive a work more elaborate than the details of the costumes of the King and Queen. The imitation of lace and embroidery, the exquisite delicacy of the hands and features, the infinitely minute carving of the pillows, the architectural railing by which the two statues are separated, the groups of sporting lions and dogs placed against the foot-boards, and the statues of the four Evangelists, seated at the four points of the star which face the cardinal points of the compass,—all these attract first the attention as they occupy the surface; but they are nothing to the profusion of ornament lavished on the sides. The chisel of the artist has followed each retreating and advancing angle of the star, filling the innermost recesses with life and movement. It would be endless to enter into a detailed enumeration of all this. It is composed of lions and lionesses, panthers, dogs, —crouching, lying, sitting, rampant, and standing; of saints, male and female, and personifications of the cardinal virtues. These figures are represented in every variety of posture,—some standing on pedestals, and others seated on beautifully wrought arm-chairs, but all enclosed respectively in the richest Gothic tracery, and under cover of their respective niches. Were there no other object of interest at Burgos, this tomb would well repay the traveller for a halt of a few days, and a country walk.

At the opposite side of the town may be seen the royal convent of Las Huelgas; but as the nuns reserve to themselves the greater part of the church, including the royal tombs, which are said to be very numerous, no one can penetrate to satisfy his curiosity. It is, however, so celebrated an establishment, and of such easy access from the town, that a sight of what portions of the buildings are accessible deserves the effort of the two hundred yards' walk which separates it from the river promenade. This Cistercian convent was founded towards the end of the twelfth century by Alonzo the Eighth,—the same who won the famous battle of the Navas de Tolosa. It occupies the site of the pleasure-grounds of a royal retreat, as is indicated by the name itself. In its origin it was destined for the reception, exclusively, of princesses of the blood royal. It was consequently designed on a scale of peculiar splendour. Of the original buildings, however, only sufficient traces remain to confirm the records of history, but not to convey an adequate idea of their magnificence. What with the depredations of time, the vicissitudes of a situation in the midst of provinces so given to contention, and repeated alterations, it has evidently, as far as regards the portions to a view of which admission can be obtained, yielded almost all claims to identity with its ancient self.

The entire church, with the exception of a small portion partitioned off at the extremity, and containing the high altar, is appropriated to the nuns, and fitted up as a choir. It is very large; the

length, of which an estimate may be formed externally, appearing to measure nearly three hundred feet. It is said this edifice contains the tomb of the founder, surrounded by forty others of princesses. The entrance to the public portion consists of a narrow vestibule, in which are several antique tombs. They are of stone, covered with Gothic sculpture, and appear, from the richness of their ornaments, to have belonged also to royalty. They are stowed away, and half built into the wall, as if there had not been room for their reception. The convent is said to contain handsome cloisters, courts, chapter-hall, and other state apartments, all of a construction long subsequent to its foundation. The whole is surrounded by a complete circle of houses, occupied by its various dependants and pensioners. These are enclosed from without by a lofty wall, and face the centre edifice, from which they are separated by a series of large open areas. Their appearance is that of a small town, surrounding a cathedral and palace.

The convent of the Huelgas takes precedence of all others in Spain. The abbess and her successors were invested by the sovereigns of Leon and Castile with especial prerogatives, and with a sort of authority over all convents within those kingdoms. Her possessions were immense, and she enjoyed the sovereign sway over an extensive district, including several convents, thirteen towns, and about fifty villages. In many respects her jurisdiction resembles that of a bishop. The following is the formula which heads her official acts:

"We, Doña ..., by the grace of God and of the Holy Apostolic See, Abbess of the royal monastery of Las Huelgas near to the city of Burgos, order of the Cister, habit of our father San Bernardo, Mistress, Superior, Prelate, Mother, and lawful spiritual and temporal Administrator of the said royal monastery, and its hospital called 'the King's Hospital,' and of the convents, churches, and hermitages of its filiation, towns and villages of its jurisdiction, lordship, and vassalage, in virtue of Apostolic bulls and concessions, with all sorts of jurisdiction, proper, almost episcopal, *nullius diocesis*, and with royal privileges, since we exercise both jurisdictions, as is public and notorious," &c.

The hospital alluded to gives its name to a village, about a quarter of a mile distant, called "Hospital del Rey." This village is still in a sort of feudal dependance on the abbess, and is the only remaining source of revenue to the convent, having been recently restored by a decree of Queen Isabella; for the royal blood flowing in the veins of the present abbess had not exempted her convent from the common confiscation decreed by the revolution. The hospital, situated in the centre of the village, is a handsome edifice. The whole place is surrounded by a wall, similar to that which encloses the convent and its immediate dependances, and the entrance presents a specimen of much architectural beauty. It forms a small quadrangle, ornamented with an elegant arcade, and balustrades of an original design.

LETTER VII. ROUTE TO MADRID. MUSEO

Toledo.

The route from Burgos to Madrid presents few objects of interest. The country is dreary and little cultivated; indeed, much of it is incapable of culture. For those who are unaccustomed to Spanish routes, there may, indeed, be derived some amusement from the inns, of which some very characteristic specimens lie in their way. The Diligence halts for the night at the Venta de Juanilla, a solitary edifice situated at the foot of the last or highest *étage* of the Somo Sierra, in order to leave the principal ascent for the cool of early dawn. The building is seen from a considerable distance, and looks large; but is found, on nearer approach, to be a straggling edifice of one story only.

It is a modern inn, and differs in some essential points from the ancient Spanish *posada*,—perfect specimens of which are met with at Briviesca and Burgos. In these the vestibule is at the same time a cow-shed, sheepfold, stable, pigsty,—in fact, a spacious Noah's Ark, in which are found specimens of all living animals, that is, of all sizes, down to the most minute; but for the purification of which it would be requisite that the entire flood should pass within, instead of on its outside. The original ark, moreover, possessed the advantage of windows, the absence of which causes no small embarrassment to those who have to thread so promiscuous a congregation, in order to reach the staircase; once at the summit of which, it must be allowed, one meets with cleanliness, and a certain degree of comfort.

The Venta de Juanilla, on the Somo Sierra, is a newish, clean-looking habitation, especially the interior, where one meets with an excellent supper, and may feast the eyes on the sight of a printed card, hanging on the wall of the dining-room, announcing that luxury of exotic gastronomy—Champagne—at three crowns a bottle: none were bold enough that evening to ask for a specimen.

There is less of the exotic in the bed-room arrangements; in fact, the building appears to have been constructed by the Diligence proprietors to meet the immediate necessity of the occasion. The Madrid road being served by two Diligences, one, leaving the capital, meets at this point, on its first night, the other, which approaches in the contrary direction. In consequence of this arrangement, the edifice is provided with exactly four dormitories,—two male, and two female.

Nor is this the result of an intention to diminish the numbers quartered in each male or female apartment; on the contrary, two rooms would have answered the purpose better than four, but for the inconvenience and confusion which would have arisen from the denizens of the Diligence destined to start at a later hour being aroused from their slumbers, and perhaps induced to depart by mistake, at the signal for calling the travellers belonging to the earlier conveyance,—the one starting at two o'clock in the morning, and the other at three.

On the occasion of my *bivouaque* in this curious establishment, an English couple, recently married, happened to be among the number of my fellow-sufferers; and the lady's report of the adventures of the female dormitory of our Diligence afforded us sufficient amusement to enliven the breakfast on the other side of the mountain. It appeared, that, during the hustling of the males into their enclosure, a fond mother, moved by Heaven knows what anxious apprehensions, had succeeded in abstracting from the herd her son, a tender youth of fourteen. Whether or not she expected to smuggle, without detection, this contraband article into the female pen we could not determine. If she did, she reckoned somewhat independently of her host; for on a fellow-traveller entering in the dark, and groping about for a considerable time in search of an unoccupied nest, a sudden exclamation aroused the fatigued sleepers, followed by loud complaints against those who had admitted an interloper to this holy of holies of feminine promiscuousness, to the exclusion of one of its lawful occupants. The dispute ran high; but it must be added to the already numerous proofs of

the superior energy proceeding from aroused maternal feelings, that the intruder was maintained in his usurped resting-place by his determined parent, notwithstanding the discontent naturally caused by such a proceeding.

We have now reached the centre of these provinces, the destinies of which have offered to Europe so singular an example of political vicissitude. It is an attractive occupation, in studying the history of this country, to watch the progress of the state, the ancient capital of which we have just visited,—a province which, from being probably the rudest and poorest of the whole Peninsula, became the most influential, the wealthiest, the focus of power, as it is geographically the centre of Spain,—and to witness its constantly progressive advance, as it gradually drew within the range of its influence all the surrounding states; exemplifying the dogged perseverance of the Spanish character, which, notwithstanding repeated defeat, undermined the Arab power by imperceptible advances, and eventually ridded the Peninsula of its long-established lords. It is interesting to thread the intricate narrative of intermarriages, treaties, wars, alliances, and successions, interspersed with deeds of heroic chivalry and of blackest treachery, composing the annals of the different northern states of Spain; until at length, the Christian domination having been borne onward by successive advantages nearly to the extreme southern shores of the Peninsula, a marriage unites the two principal kingdoms, and leads to the subjection of all Spain, as at present, under one monarch.

It is still more attractive to repair subsequently to the country itself; and from this central, pyramidal summit—elevated by the hand of Nature to a higher level than the rest of the Peninsula; its bare and rugged surface exposed to all the less genial influences of the elements, and crowned by its modern capital, looking down in all directions, like a feudal castle on the fairer and more fertile regions subject to its dominion, and for the protection of which it is there proudly situated,—to take a survey of this extraordinary country, view the localities immortalized by the eventful passages of its history, and muse on its still varying destinies.

Madrid has in fact already experienced threatening symptoms of the insecurity of this feudal tenure, as it were, in virtue of which it enjoys the supreme rank. Having no claim to superiority derived from its commerce, the fertility of its territory, the facility of its means of communication and intercourse with the other parts of the kingdom or with foreign states,—nothing, in fact, but its commanding and central position, and the comparatively recent choice made of it by the sovereigns for a residence; it has seen itself rivalled, and at length surpassed in wealth and enterprize, by Barcelona, and its right to be continued as the seat of government questioned and attacked. Its fall is probably imminent, should some remedy not be applied before the intermittent revolutionary fever, which has taken possession of the country, makes further advances, or puts on chronic symptoms; but its fate will be shared by the power to which it owes its creation. No residence in Europe bears a prouder and more monarchical aspect than Madrid, nor is better suited for the abode of the feudal pomp and etiquette of the most magnificent—in its day—of European courts: but riding and country sports have crossed the Channel, and are endeavouring to take root in France; fresco-painting has invaded England; in Sicily marble porticoes have been painted to imitate red bricks; and a Constitutional monarchy is being erected in Spain. Spaniards are not imitators, and cannot change their nature, although red bricks should become the materials of Italian *palazzi*, Frenchmen ride after fox-hounds, and Englishmen be metamorphosed to Michael Angelos. The Alcazar of Madrid, commanding from its windows thirty miles of royal domains, including the Escorial and several other royal residences, is not destined to become the abode of a monarch paid to receive directions from a loquacious and corrupt house of deputies,—the utmost result to be obtained from forcing on states a form of government unsuited to their character. If the Spanish reigning family, after having settled their quarrel with regard to the succession, (if ever they do so,) are compelled to accept a (so-called) Constitutional form of government, with their knowledge of the impossibility of its successful operation, they will probably endeavour, in imitation of the highly gifted sovereign of their neighbours, to stifle it, and to administrate in spite of it; until, either wanting the talent and energy

necessary for the maintenance of this false position, or their subjects, as may be expected, getting impatient at finding themselves mystified, a total overthrow will terminate the experiment.

I am aware of the criticism to which this opinion would be exposed in many quarters; I already hear the contemptuous upbraidings, similar to those with which the "exquisite," exulting in an unexceptionable wardrobe, lashes the culprit whose shoulders are guilty of a coat of the previous year's fashion. We are told that the tendency of minds, the progress of intellect, the spirit of the age,—all which, translated into plain language, mean (if they mean anything) the fashion,—require that nations should provide themselves each with a new Liberal government; claiming, in consideration of the fashionable vogue and the expensive nature of the article, its introduction (unlike other British manufactures) duty-free. But it ought first to be established, whether these larger interests of humanity are amenable to the sceptre of so capricious a ruler as the fashion. It appears to me, that nations should be allowed to adapt their government to their respective characters, dispositions, habits of life, and traditions. All these are more dependant than is supposed by those who possess not the habit of reflection, on the race, the position, the soil and climate each has received from nature, which, by the influence they have exercised on their habits and dispositions, have fitted them each for a form of constitution equally appropriate to no other people; since no two nations are similarly circumstanced, not only in all these respects, but even in any one of them.

What could be more Liberal than the monarchy of Spain up to the accession of the Bourbon dynasty? the kings never reigning but by the consent of their subjects, and on the condition of unvarying respect for their privileges; but never, when once seated on the throne, checked and embarrassed in carrying through the measures necessary for the administration of the state. The monarch was a responsible but a free monarch until these days, when an attempt is being made to deprive him both of freedom of action and responsibility—almost of utility, and to render him a tool in the hands of a constantly varying succession of needy advocates or military *parvenus*, whom the chances of civil war or the gift of declamation have placed in the way of disputing the ministerial salaries, without having been able to furnish either their hearts with the patriotism, or their heads with the capacity, requisite for the useful and upright administration of the empire. In Spain, the advocates of continual change, in most cases in which personal interest is not their moving spring, hope to arrive ultimately at a republic. Now, no one more than myself admires the theories of Constitutional governments, of universal political power and of republicanism: the last system would be the best of all, were it only for the equality it is to establish. But how are men to be equalised by the manufacturers of a government? How are the ignorant and uneducated to be furnished with legislative capacity, or the poor or unprincipled armed against the seductions of bribery? It is not, unfortunately, in any one's power to accomplish these requisite preliminary operations; without the performance of which, these plausible theories will ever lose their credit when brought to the test of experiment. How is a republic to be durable without the previous solution of the problem of the equalisation of human capacities? In some countries it may be almost attained for a time; in others, never put in motion for an instant. No one more than myself abhors tyranny and despotism; but, after hearing and reading all the charges laid at the door of Absolutism during the last quarter of a century, I am at a loss to account for the still greater evils and defects, existing in Constitutional states, having been overlooked in the comparison. The subject is far less free in France than in the absolute states of Germany: and other appropriate comparisons might be made which would bring us still nearer home. I would ask the advocates for putting in practice a republican form of government, and by way of comparing the two extremes, whether all the harm the Emperors of Russia have ever done, or are likely to do until the end of the world,—according to whatever sect the date of that event be calculated,—will not knock under to one week of the exploits of the French republicans of the last century? And if we carry on the observation to the consequences of that revolution, until we arrive at the decimation of that fine country under the military despotism which was necessarily its offspring, we shall not find my argument weakened.

I entreat your pardon for this political digression, which I am as happy to terminate as yourself. I will only add, that, should the period be arrived for the Spanish empire to undergo the lot of all human things—decline and dissolution, it has no right to complain, having had its day; but, should that moment be still distant, let us hope to see that country, so highly favoured by Nature, once more prosperous under the institutions which raised her to the highest level of power and prosperity.

Meanwhile, the elements of discord still exist in a simmering state close to the brim of the cauldron, and a mere spark will suffice at any moment to make them bubble over. The inhabitants of Madrid are in hourly expectation of this spark; and not without reason, if the *on-dits* which circulate there, and reach to the neighbouring towns, are deserving of credit. Queen Christina, on her road from Paris to resume virtually, if not nominally, the government, conceived the imprudent idea of taking Rome in her way. It is said that she confessed to the Pope, who, in the solemn exercise of his authority as representative of the Deity, declared to her that Spain would never regain tranquillity until the possessions of the clergy should be restored to them.

Whatever else may have passed during the interview is not stated; but a deep impression was produced on the conscience of the Queen, to which is attributed the change in her appearance evident to those who may happen to have seen her a few months since in Paris. This short space of time has produced on her features the effect of years. She has lost her *embonpoint*, and acquired in its place paleness and wrinkles. She is firmly resolved to carry out the views of the Pope. Here, therefore, is the difficulty. The leading members of her party are among those who have profited largely by the change of proprietorship which these vast possessions have undergone: being the framers or abettors of the decree, they were placed among the nearest for the scramble. In the emptiness of the national treasury, they consider these acquisitions their sole reward for the trouble of conducting the revolution, and are prepared to defend them like tigers.

When, therefore, Queen Christina proposed her plan⁴ to Narvaez, she met with a flat refusal. He replied, that such a decree would deluge the country with blood. The following day he was advised to give in his resignation. This he refused to do, and another interview took place. The Queen-mother insisted on his acceptance of the embassy to France. He replied, that he certainly would obey her Majesty's commands; but that, in that case, she would not be surprised if he published the act of her marriage with Muños, which was in his power.⁵ This would compel Christina to refund all the income she has received as widow of Ferdinand the Seventh. The interview ended angrily; and, doubtless, recalled to Christina's recollection the still higher presumption of the man, who owed to her the exalted situation from which, on a former occasion, he levelled his attack on her authority. I am not answerable for the authenticity of these generally received reports; but they prove the unsettled state of things, when the determined disposition of the two opposite parties, and the nearly equal balance of their force, are taken into consideration.

I was scarcely housed at Madrid, having only quitted the hotel the previous day, when the news reached me of the death of one of the fair and accomplished young Countesses—the companions of my journey from Bayonne to Burgos. You would scarcely believe possible the regret this intelligence occasioned me,—more particularly from the peculiar circumstances of the occurrence. Her father had recently arrived from France, and the house was filled for the celebration of her birthday; but she herself was forbidden to join the dinner-party, being scarcely recovered from a severe attack of small-pox. The father's weakness could not deny her admission at dessert, and an ice. The following day she was dead.

Acquaintances made on the high road advance far more rapidly than those formed in the usual formal intercourse of society. I can account in no other way for the tinge of melancholy thrown over

⁴ It will be seen that this letter was written shortly after the Queen's return to Spain, and previous to the publication of her marriage.

⁵ It is probable that this threat, supposing it real, may have assisted in determining the Queen's resolution, since executed, of publishing the marriage.

the commencement of my sojourn at Madrid by this event,—befalling a person whose society I had only enjoyed during three days, and whom I scarcely expected to see again.

The modern capital of Spain is an elegant and brilliant city, and a very agreeable residence; but for the admirer of the picturesque, or the tourist in search of historical *souvenirs*, it contains few objects of attraction. The picture-gallery is, however, a splendid exception; and, being the best in the world, compensates, as you may easily suppose, for the deficiency peculiar to Madrid in monuments of architectural interest.

To put an end to the surprise you will experience at the enumeration of such a profusion of *chefs d'œuvre* of the great masters as is here found, it is necessary to lose sight of the present political situation of Spain, and to transport ourselves to the age of painting. At that time Spain was the most powerful, and especially the most opulent empire in Europe. Almost all Italy belonged to her; a large portion actually owning allegiance to her sceptre, and the remainder being subject to her paramount influence. The familiarity which existed between Charles the Fifth and Titian is well known; as is likewise the anecdote of the pencil, picked up and presented by the Emperor to the artist, who had dropped it.

The same taste for, and patronage of, painting, continued through the successive reigns, until the period when painting itself died a natural death; and anecdotes similar to that of Charles the Fifth are related of Philip the Fourth and Velasquez. All the works of art thus collected, and distributed through the different palaces, have been recently brought together, and placed in an edifice, some time since commenced, and as yet not entirely completed. Titian was the most favoured of all the Italian painters, not only with respect to his familiar intercourse with the Emperor, but also in a professional point of view. The Museo contains no less than forty of his best productions. Nor is it surprising that the taste of the monarch, being formed by his masterpieces, should extend its preference to the rest of the Venetian school in a greater degree than to the remaining Italian schools. There are, however, ten pictures by Raffaele, including the Spasimo, considered by many to be his greatest work.

A cause similar to that above named enables us to account for the riches assembled in the Dutch and Flemish rooms, among which may be counted more than two hundred pictures of Teniers alone. I should observe, that I am not answerable for this last calculation; being indebted for my information to the director, and distinguished artist, Don Jose Madrazo. There is no catalogue yet drawn up. Rubens has a suite of rooms almost entirely to himself, besides his just portion of the walls of the gallery. The Vandykes and Rembrandts are in great profusion. With regard to the Spanish schools, it may be taken for granted that they are as well represented as those of the foreign, although partially subject, nations. The works of Velasquez are the most numerous; which is accounted for by his situation of painter to the Court, under Philip the Fourth. There are sixty of his paintings.



ITALIAN GALLERY AT THE MUSEO, MADRID.

The Murillos are almost as numerous, and in his best style: but Seville has retained the cream of the genius of her most talented offspring; and even at Madrid, in the collection of the Academy, there is a Murillo—the Saint Elizabeth—superior to any of those in the great gallery. It is much to be wished that some artist, gifted with the pen of a Joshua Reynolds, or even of a Mengs (author of a notice on a small portion of these paintings), could be found, who would undertake a complete critical review of this superb gallery. All I presume to say on the subject is, were the journey ten times longer and more difficult, the view of the Madrid Museo would not be too dearly purchased.

Before I left Madrid, I went to the palace, to see the traces of the conspiracy of the 7th October, remaining on the doors of the Queen's apartments. You will recollect that the revolt of October 1842 was that in favour of Christina, when the three officers, Concha, Leon, and Pezuela, with a battalion, attacked the palace in the night, for the purpose of carrying off the Queen and her sister. On the failure of the attempt, owing to its having been prematurely put in execution, the Brigadier Leon was shot, and the two others escaped.

It appears that the execution of this officer, unlike the greater number of these occurrences, caused a strong sensation in Madrid, owing to the sympathy excited by his popular character, and the impression that he was the victim of jealousy in the mind of the Regent. The fine speech, however, attributed to him by some of the newspapers, was not pronounced by him. His words were very few, and he uttered them in a loud and clear tone, before giving the word of command to his executioners. This, and his receiving the fire without turning his back, were the only incidents worthy of remark.

One of the two sentries stationed at the door of the Queen's anteroom when I arrived, happened to have played a conspicuous part on the eventful night. The Queen was defended by the guard of halberdiers, which always mounts guard in the interior of the palace. This sentinel informed me that he was on guard that night, on the top step of the staircase, when Leon, followed by a few officers, was seen to come up. Beyond him and his fellow-sentry there were only two more, who were posted at the door of the Queen's anteroom, adjoining her sleeping apartment. This door faces the whole length of the corridor, with which, at a distance of about twenty yards, the top of the staircase communicates. In order to shield himself from the fire of the two sentinels at the Queen's door, Leon grasped my informant by the ribs right and left, and, raising him from the ground, carried him, like a mummy, to the corridor; and there, turning sharp to the left, up to the two sentries, whom he summoned to give him admittance in the name of the absent Christina.

On the soldiers' refusal, he gave orders to his battalion to advance, and a pitched battle took place, which was not ultimately decided until daybreak—seven hours after. The terror of the little princesses, during this night, may be imagined. Two bullets penetrated into the bed-room; and the holes made by about twenty more in the doors of some of the state apartments communicating with the corridor, are still preserved as souvenirs of the event. The palace contains some well-painted ceilings by Mengs, and is worthy of its reputation of one of the finest residences in Europe. The staircase is superb. It was here that Napoleon, entering the palace on the occasion of his visit to Madrid, to install Joseph Buonaparte in his kingdom, stopped on the first landing; and, placing his hand on one of the white marble lions which crouch on the balustrades, turned to Joseph, and exclaimed, "Mon frère, vous serez mieux logé que moi."

There is no road from Madrid to Toledo. On the occasions of religious festivities, which are attended by the court, the journey is performed by way of Aranjuez, from which place a sort of road conducts to the ancient capital of Spain. There is, however, for those who object to add so much to the actual distance, a track, known, in all its sinuosities, throughout its depths and its shallows, around its bays, promontories, islands, and peninsulas—to the driver of the diligence, and to the mounted bearer of the mail; both of whom travel on the same days of the week, in order to furnish reciprocal aid, in case of damage to either. A twenty-four hours' fall of rain renders this track impassable by the usual conveyance; a very unusual sort of carriage is consequently kept in reserve for these occasions, and, as the period of my journey happened to coincide with an uncommonly aqueous disposition of

the Castilian skies, I was fortunately enabled to witness the less every day, and more eventful transit, to which this arrangement gave rise.

Accordingly at four o'clock on an April morning—an hour later than is the custom on the road from France to Madrid—I ascended the steps of a carriage, selected for its lightness, which to those who know anything of Continental coach-building, conveys a sufficient idea of its probable solidity. There was not yet sufficient daylight to take a view of this fabric; but I saw, by the aid of a lantern, my luggage lifted into a sort of loose net, composed of straw-ropes, and suspended between the hind wheels in precisely such juxtaposition, as to make the portmanteaus, bags, &c. bear the same topographic relation to the vehicle, as the truffles do to a turkey, or the stuffing to a duck. There was much grumbling about the quantity of my luggage, and some hints thrown out, relative to the additional perils, suspended over our heads, or rather, under our seats, in consequence of the coincidence of the unusual weight, with the bad state of the *road*, as they termed it, and the acknowledged caducity of the carriage. I really was, in fact, the only one to blame; for I could not discover, besides my things, more than two small valises belonging to all the other six passengers together.

At length we set off, and at a distance of four miles from Madrid, as day began to break, we broke down.

The break-down was neither violent nor dangerous, and was occasioned by the crash of a hind wheel, while our pace did not exceed a walk: but it was productive of some amusement, owing to the position, near the corner of the vehicle which took the greatest fancy to *terra firma*, of a not over heroic limb of the Castilian law, who had endeavoured to be facetious ever since our departure, and whose countenance now exhibited the most grotesque symptoms of real terror. Never, I am convinced, will those moments be forgotten by that individual, whose vivacity deserted him for the remainder of the journey; and whose attitude and expression, as his extended arms failed to recover his centre of gravity exchanged for the supine, folded-up posture, unavoidable by the occupant at the lowest corner of a broken-down vehicle,—while his thoughts wandered to his absent offspring, whose fond smiles awaited him in Toledo, but to whom perhaps he was not allowed to bid an eternal adieu—will live likewise in the memory of his fellow-travellers.

This *dénouement* of the adventures of the first carriage rendered a long halt necessary; during which, the postilion returned to Madrid on a mule, and brought us out a second. This proceeding occupied four hours, during which some entered a neighbouring *venta*, others remained on the road, seated on heaps of stones, and all breakfasted on what provisions they had brought with them, or could procure at the said *venta*. The sight of the vehicle that now approached, would have been cheaply bought at the price of twenty up-sets. Don Quixote would have charged it, had such an apparition suddenly presented itself to his view. It was called a phaeton, but bore no sort of resemblance to the open carriage known in England by that name. Its form was remarkable by its length being out of all proportion to its width,—so much so as to require three widely-separated windows on each side. These were irregularly placed, instead of being alike on the two sides, for the door appeared to have been forgotten until after the completion of the fabric, and to have taken subsequently the place of a window; which window—pursuant to a praiseworthy sense of justice—was provided for at the expense of a portion of deal board, and some uniformity.

The machine possessed, nevertheless, allowing for its rather exaggerated length, somewhat of the form of an ancient landau; but the roof describing a semicircle, gave it the appearance of having been placed upside down by mistake, in lowering it on to the wheels. Then, with regard to these wheels, they certainly had nothing very extraordinary about their appearance, when motionless; but, on being subjected to a forward or backward impulse, they assumed, respectively, and independently of each other, such a zigzag movement, as would belong to a rotatory, locomotive pendulum, should the progress of mechanics ever attain to so complicated a discovery. Indeed, the machine, in general, appeared desirous of avoiding the monotony attendant on a straight-forward movement; the body

of the monster, from the groans, sighs, screams, and other various sounds which accompanied its heaving, pitching, and rolling exertions, appearing to belong to some unwieldy and agonised mammoth and to move by its own laborious efforts, instead of being indebted for its progress to the half-dozen quadrupeds hooked to its front projections.

The track along which this interesting production of mechanical art now conveyed us, bore much resemblance to a river, in the accidents of its course. Thus we were reminded at frequent intervals, by the suddenly increased speed of our progress, that we were descending a rapid: at other times the motion was so vertical, as to announce the passage down a cataract. These incidents were not objectionable to me, as they interrupted the monotony of the walking pace, to which we were condemned; although one or two passengers of rather burly proportions, seemed not much to enjoy their repetition. However this might be, assuredly we were none of us sorry to find ourselves at eight o'clock that evening safely housed at Toledo.

LETTER VIII.

PICTURESQUE POSITION OF TOLEDO. FLORINDA

Toledo.

Every traveller—I don't mean every one who habitually assists in wearing out roads, whether of stone or iron—nor who travels for business, nor who seeks to escape from himself—meaning from ennui, (a vain attempt, by the way, if Horace is to be depended on; since, even should he travel on horseback, the most exhilarating sort of locomotion, ennui will contrive to mount and ride pillion)—but every one who deserves the name of traveller, who travels for travelling sake, for the pleasure of travelling, knows the intensity of the feeling which impels his right hand, as he proceeds to open the window-shutter of his bed-room, on the morning subsequent to his nocturnal arrival in a new town.

The windows of the Posada del Miradero at Toledo are so placed as by no means to diminish the interest of this operation. The shutter being opened, I found myself looking from a perpendicular elevation of several hundred feet, on one of the prettiest views you can imagine. The town was at my back, and the road by which we had arrived, was cut in the side of the precipice beneath me. In following that direction, the first object at all prominent was the gate leading to Madrid—a cluster of half Arab embattled towers and walls, standing somewhat to the left at the bottom of the descent. These gave issue to the track mentioned in my journey, and which could now be traced straight in front, to a considerable distance.

The ground rises slightly beyond the gates of the town, and preserves a moderate elevation all across the view, retreating right and left, so as to offer the convex side of the arc of an immense circle. This formation gives to the view a valley, extending on either side, shut in on the left by mountains at a distance of four miles; while to the east it extends as far as the eye can reach,—some mountains, scarcely perceptible, crossing it at the horizon. The Tagus advances down the eastern valley from Aranjuez; which château is in view at the distance of twenty-eight miles, and approaching with innumerable zigzags to the foot of the town, suddenly forms a curve, and, dashing into the rocks, passes round the back of the city, issues again into the western valley, and, after another sharp turn to the left, resumes the same direction as before. All this tract of country owes to the waters of the Tagus a richness of vegetation, and a bright freshness nowhere surpassed. So much for the distant view.

To judge of the nearer appearance of the town, I crossed the bridge of Alcantara, placed at the entrance of the eastern valley, and leading to Aranjuez. The situation may be described in a few words. Toledo stands on an eminence nearly circular in its general form. It is a mass of jagged rock, almost perpendicular on all its sides. The river flows rather more than half round it, descending from the east, and passing round its southern side. The left or south bank is of the same precipitous formation; but, instead of presenting that peculiarity during only a short distance, it continues so both above and below the town; while on the opposite side the only high ground is the solitary mass of rock selected, whether with a view to defence or to inconvenience, for the position of this ancient city. The Tagus is crossed by two bridges, one at each extremity of the semi-circle described by it round the half of the town. These bridges are both highly picturesque, from their form no less than their situation. They are raised upon arches of a height so disproportionate to their width, as to appear like aqueducts; and are provided at each extremity with towers, all, with one exception, Moorish in their style. The lower bridge (lower by position, for it is the higher of the two in actual elevation) bears the name of San Martin, and is traversed by the road to Estremadura; the other leads to Aranjuez, and is the puente de Alcantara. We are now standing on this last, having passed under the Arab archway of its tower.

Its width is just sufficient for the passage of two vehicles abreast, and it is covered with flag-paving. The river flows sixty feet below. At the back of the tower which faces you, at the opposite end of the bridge, rises a rock, almost isolated from the rest of the cliff, and on its top the half-

ruined towers and walls of a Moorish castle. On the left hand extends the valley, through which the river approaches in a broad mass. The road to Aranjuez follows the same direction, after having first disappeared round the base of the rock just mentioned, and is bordered with rose-trees, and occasional groups of limes, which separate it from the portions set apart for pedestrians. On the right hand the river (still looking from the bridge) is suddenly pressed in between precipices, becomes narrow, and at the distance of a few hundred yards, forms a noisy cascade.



VIEW OF TOLEDO

Still looking in that direction, the left bank—a rocky precipice, as I mentioned before—curves round and soon hurries it out of sight. The lower part of the opposite or town bank is ornamented, close to the cascade, with a picturesque ruin, on which you look down from your position. This consists of three stories of arches, standing partly in the water. Above and behind them rise a few larger buildings, almost perpendicularly over each other, and the summit is crowned with the colossal quadrangular mass of the Alcazar.

The ruinous arches just mentioned, are the remains of a building erected by a speculator, who had conceived a plan for raising water to the Alcazar by means of wheels, furnished with jars, according to the custom of this part of Spain. The arrangement is simple; the jars, being attached round a perpendicular wheel, successively fill with water, as each arrives at the bottom, and empty themselves, on reaching the summit, into any receptacle placed so as to receive their contents. The speculator, having to operate on a colossal scale, intended probably to super-pose wheel over wheel, and to establish reservoirs at different elevations, as it would scarcely be possible to work a wheel of such dimensions as to carry jars to the height required (more than three hundred feet), even though furnished with ropes, which are made to turn round the wheel and descend below it.

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