GAUTIER THÉOPHILE

WANDERINGS IN SPAIN

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Содержание

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CHAPTER I
FROM PARIS TO BORDEAUX

Departure from Paris – Subterranean Dwellings – Château-Regnault – Tours – Châtellerault – Angoulême – The *Landes*– Cubzac – Bordeaux – The Theatre – The Cathedral – St. Michael's Tower – Mummified Corpses – the Museum.

A few weeks ago (April, 1840), I happened, in an off-hand manner, to give utterance to the following phrase: – "I should like to go to Spain." Five or six days afterwards, my friends had suppressed the prudent "I should like," with which I had qualified my wish, and had told every one who chose to listen that I was about to undertake a trip to Spain. This positive formula was soon followed by the interrogation, "When do you set out?" while I, without thinking of the obligation under which I was placing myself, replied, "In a week." At the end of the week people began to manifest some astonishment at seeing me still in Paris. "I thought you were at Madrid," said one. "What! come back?" asked another. I saw at once that I owed my friends an absence

of several months, and that I must pay the debt with the least possible delay, unless I wished to be mercilessly pursued, without a moment's respite, by my obliging creditors. The lobbies of the theatres, the various asphaltic and bituminous pavements of the Boulevards, were to me forbidden luxuries for the time being. All I could obtain was the grace of three or four days, and on the 5th of May I commenced relieving my native land of my importunate presence, by scrambling into the Bordeaux diligence.

I shall pass very rapidly over the first few posts, which possess nothing worthy of observation. Right and left stretch all kinds of crops, streaked like tiger or zebra skins, and bearing a most satisfactory resemblance to a tailor's book, in which are pasted his various specimens of trowsers and waistcoat patterns. Although these kinds of views are productive of great delight to farmers, landlords, and other worthies of a similar stamp, they afford but meagre entertainment to the enthusiastic and graphic traveller, who, spy-glass in hand, sets out to note the peculiarities of the universe in the same manner as a police agent does those of an individual. Having left Paris in the evening, my first impressions, after passing Versailles, are but so many feeble sketches *stumped in* by the hand of Night. I regret that I passed through Chartres without being able to see its cathedral.

Between Vendôme and Château-Regnault, which is pronounced *Chtrnô* in the language of the postilions, so well imitated by Henri Monnier in his sketch of the "Diligence," there rise a number of well-wooded hills, where the inhabitants dig

their houses out of the living rock, and live under ground, after the fashion of the ancient Troglodytes. The stone obtained from these excavations they sell, so that each house thus scooped out produces another *en relief*, like a plaster figure taken out of a mould, or a tower dragged out of a well. The chimney, which is a long passage hammered through the rock, ends at the surface, so that the smoke ascends from the ground itself in bluish spirals, and without any visible cause, exactly as if it proceeded from a sulphur mine, or from some volcano. A facetious traveller would not experience the slightest difficulty in throwing stones into the omelets of this cryptic population, and the rabbits, if they are ever absent or short-sighted, must certainly fall, very often, all alive, into the saucepans. By constructing houses on this principle, the trouble of going down into the cellar to fetch your wine is entirely avoided.

Château-Regnault is a small town built upon a number of serpentine and rapid declivities, bordered by ill-pitched and tottering houses, which appear to lean against one another to keep themselves upright. A large round tower, situated upon the talus of some old fortifications, enveloped here and there in green patches of ivy, redeems, to a certain extent, the appearance of the town. From Château-Regnault to Tours there is nothing remarkable. Earth in the middle, and trees on each side, forming those long yellow bands, which lose themselves in the distance, and which, in the language of the wagoners, are termed *rubans de queue*, are all that is to be seen: then, on a sudden, the road

dives down a couple of pretty steep hills, and in a few minutes you perceive the town of Tours, rendered famous by its prunes, Rabelais, and de Balzac.

The Bridge of Tours is very celebrated, and possesses in itself nothing exceedingly remarkable; but the appearance of the town is lovely. On my arrival, the sky, with a few flakes of snow floating negligently over its surface, was tinged with the sweetest blue; a white line, similar to that traced by a diamond upon glass, cut the limpid surface of the Loire, and was formed by a tiny cascade proceeding from one of the sand-banks so frequent in the bed of this river. In the clear air, Saint Gatien reared its brown profile and Gothic spires, ornamented with balls and roundings similar to those of the steeples of the Kremlin, giving to the city a most romantically Muscovite air; a few other towers and spires, belonging to churches the names of which I do not know, completed the picture; while numerous vessels, with their white sails, floated, like so many sleeping swans, upon the azure bosom of the stream. I should have liked to have paid a visit to the house of Tristan l'Ermite, the terrible gossip of Louis XI., which is still in a marvellous state of preservation, with its horribly significant ornaments, composed of coils of rope, entwined with other instruments of torture; but I had not time; I was obliged to content myself with the *Grande Rue*, which must be the pride of the inhabitants of Tours, and which aspires to the rank of another *Rue de Rivoli*.

Châtellerault, which enjoys a high reputation for the article

of cutlery, possesses nothing particular except a bridge, ornamented at each extremity with old towers, which present a most charmingly feudal and romantic appearance. As for its manufactory of arms, it is a large white mass, with a multitude of windows. Of Poitiers, having passed through it in a beating rain, and a night as dark as pitch, I can say nothing, except that it is paved in the most execrable manner possible.

At break of day, the coach was traversing a country wooded with trees of an apple green planted in a soil of the brightest red, and producing a very singular effect. The houses were covered with tiles ridged after the Italian fashion; these tiles, too, were staring red, a colour which appears very strange to eyes accustomed to the brown and sooty roofs of the houses of Paris. From a piece of eccentricity, of which I forget the motive, the builders of those parts commence at the roofs of the houses; the walls and foundations follow. They place the framework upon four strong beams, and the tilers perform their portion of the work before the masons.

It is about this spot that the long orgy of stone commences, which ends only at Bordeaux. The smallest hut, without doors or windows, is of stone; the walls of the gardens are formed of large blocks placed one above the other without mortar; along the road, by the side of the doors, you perceive enormous heaps of superb stone, with which it would be easy, at a trifling expense, to build new *Chenonceaux* and Alhambras. The inhabitants, however, are contented with piling them in squares, and surmounting the

whole with a cover of red or yellow tiles, the different forms of which compose a festoon of a tolerably graceful effect.

The town of Angoulême, queerly perched on an extremely steep hill, at the foot of which the Charente turns two or three babbling mills, is built in the same manner. It has a kind of second-hand Italian look, which is increased still more by the thick masses of trees which crown its rugged eminences, and a tall parasol-shaped pine, like those of the Roman villas. An old tower, which, if my memory does not deceive me, is surmounted by a telegraph (many old towers have been saved by a telegraph), imparts a tone of severity to the general aspect of the town, and renders it a tolerably imposing object on the edge of the horizon. While toiling up the ascent, I remarked a house daubed externally with rude frescoes representing something like Bacchus, Neptune, or perhaps Napoleon. As the artist forgot to paint the name underneath, every supposition is admissible and capable of being defended.

As yet, I confess that an excursion to Romainville or Pantin would have been quite as picturesque. Nothing can be more flat, more inane, more insipid, than these interminable strips of ground, similar to the little bands with which lithographers enclose all the Boulevards of Paris in one sheet of paper. Hedges of hawthorn and consumptive-looking elms, consumptive-looking elms and hedges of hawthorn, with, a little further on, a row of poplars, resembling a number of green feathers stuck in a flat soil, or perhaps a solitary willow, with its deformed trunk

and powdered wig, compose the landscape; while, for figures, you have that of some *pionnier*, or *cantonnier*, as sunburnt as a Moor, leaning upon the handle of his long hammer as he looks at you pass by, or else some poor soldier rejoining his regiment, and sweating and staggering under his harness. Beyond Angoulême, however, the physiognomy of the soil changes, and you begin to feel that you are at a certain distance from the suburbs of the Capital.

It is on leaving the Department of the Charente that the traveller meets with the first of the *Landes*, those monster patches of grey, violet, and bluish land, diversified with undulations of various depths. A kind of short and scanty moss, red-tinged heather, and some dwarf broom compose all the vegetation. The desolation is that of the Egyptian Thebaid, and every minute you expect to see a file of dromedaries and camels; it seems as if the spot had never been pressed by the foot of man.

After traversing the *Landes*, you enter a tolerably picturesque region. Here and there along the road are groups of houses, concealed like birds' nests in the thickets. These houses remind one of the pictures of Hobbema, with their large roofs, their walls over-run with wild vine, their well-grown wondering-eyed oxen and their poultry foraging on the dung-hills. All the houses, by the way, as well as the garden walls, are built of stone. On every side are to be seen the beginning of buildings afterwards abandoned out of pure caprice, and recommenced a few paces further on. The inhabitants almost resemble children when they

get a birthday present of a "box of bricks," with which, by the aid of a certain number of square-cut pieces of wood, all sorts of edifices may be constructed. They unroof their houses, remove the stones, and with the very same ones build another edifice of a totally different character. On the road-side are blooming gardens, surrounded by fine trees with beautifully fresh foliage, and variegated with peas in blossom, daisies, and roses; the eye at the same time roaming over meadows, where the cows are almost hidden by the grass which reaches to their breasts. A cross path all redolent of hawthorn and eglantine, a group of trees, beneath which is seen an empty wagon, a country-girl or two, with their spreading caps like the turban of the Turkish Ulemas, and with their narrow yellow skirts, offer a thousand little unexpected details which charm the eye and diversify the route. By slightly glazing the scarlet tint of the roofs with a little bitumen, you might think yourself in Normandy. Flers and Cabat would here find pictures ready made to their hand. It is about this latitude that the "*berets*" begin to show themselves. They are all blue, and the elegance of their form is greatly superior to that of the hat.

Hereabouts, too, the first vehicles drawn by oxen are to be met with. These wagons have rather a Homeric and primitive appearance. The oxen are harnessed by the head to a common yoke covered with a small head-piece of sheepskin. They have a mild, grave, and resigned look, which is pre-eminently sculptural, and worthy of the Elginetic bas-reliefs.

Most of them wear a covering of white cloth, which serves as a protection against the flies and other insects. Nothing is more singular than to see these oxen, dressed *en chemises*, raise towards you their humid and lustrous muzzles and their large deep blue eyes, which the Greeks, who were certainly judges of beauty, thought sufficiently remarkable to furnish the sacramental epithet of Juno —*Boopis Ere*.

A marriage, which happened to be in course of celebration at an inn, afforded me an opportunity of seeing some of the natives of these parts assembled together; for in a distance of more than a hundred leagues I had not perceived ten persons. These said natives are excessively ugly, especially the women: there is no difference between the old and the young ones; a countrywoman of five and twenty is as haggard and wrinkled as one of sixty. The little girls wear caps quite as developed as those of their grandmothers, which makes them look like the Turkish boys in Decamp's sketches, with their enormous heads and slender bodies. In the stable of the inn I saw a huge black he-goat, with immense twisted horns and glaring yellow eyes. He had a hyper-diabolic appearance, and would, in the middle ages, have made a most worthy president at a witches' sabbath.

Evening was beginning to set in when we arrived at Cubzac. Formerly the Dordogne used to be traversed in a ferry-boat, but the breadth and rapidity of the stream rendered the passage dangerous, and the boat is, at present, replaced by a suspension bridge of the most daring construction. It is well known that I

am no very great admirer of modern innovations, but this bridge is really a work worthy of Egypt or of Rome for its colossal dimensions and the grandeur of its appearance. Piers formed by a succession of arches, which gradually increase in height, lead to the suspended platform, beneath which vessels can pass in full sail, as they did between the legs of the Colossus of Rhodes. Tower-shaped buildings of cast iron, with openings to render them lighter, serve as supports to the iron chains, which are crossed with a most skilfully calculated symmetry of resistance, and which stand out against the background of the sky with the fineness and delicacy of a spider's web, thereby adding still more to the wonderful effect of the whole. Two obelisks of cast iron are placed at each end, as if before the peristyle of some Theban monument, and form a kind of ornament not at all out of place; for the gigantic architectural genius of the Pharaohs would not be ashamed to own the Bridge of Cubzac. It requires thirteen minutes, watch in hand, to cross it.

Two or three hours afterwards, the lamps of the Bridge of Bordeaux, another, although less striking wonder, were gleaming at a distance which my appetite could have wished considerably shorter, for speed in travelling is always bought at the expense of the stomach. After having exhausted all our sticks of chocolate, biscuits, and the other ordinary provisions for a journey, we began to entertain slightly cannibal ideas. My companions looked on me with famishing eyes, and if we had had another stage, we should have renewed the horrors of the raft of the Medusa,

and eaten our braces, the soles of our boots, and our Gibus hats, besides all the other articles in request among shipwrecked individuals, who digest this kind of food in the most satisfactory fashion.

On leaving the diligence, you are assailed by a crowd of porters, who take possession of your luggage at the rate of twenty to each pair of boots. This is usual enough, but the most ridiculous part of the business is the kind of gaolers stationed by the hotel proprietors, as vedettes, to seize upon the traveller as he goes along. All these wretches cry themselves hoarse and create a confusion equal to that of the Tower of Babel, by their long litanies of praise and abuse. One catches hold of your arm, another of your leg, a third of the tail of your coat, a fourth of the button of your paletôt. "Come to the Hotel of Nantes, sir; you will find everything very comfortable there." "Don't go there, sir; its real name is the Hotel of Bugs," immediately replies the representative of a rival establishment. "Hôtel de France," "Hôtel de Rouen," holla the crew, pursuing you with their vociferations. "They never clean their saucepans, sir; they cook all their dishes with lard. The rain comes through into their rooms; you will be robbed, plundered, assassinated." Each one endeavours to disgust you with every place but his own, and the band never leaves you until you enter, definitively, one particular hotel. They then quarrel among themselves, exchange blows, call each other thieves, robbers, and other epithets of the like description, and finish by hastening away in pursuit of fresh prey.

Bordeaux resembles very closely Versailles in the style of its buildings. The same idea of surpassing Paris in magnificence is very manifest. The streets are broader, the houses larger, the rooms higher. The dimensions of the theatre are enormous. It looks like the Odéon melted down into the Bourse. But it is in vain that the inhabitants endeavour to fill their city. They exert themselves to the utmost to appear numerous, but all their meridional turbulence is not sufficient to people their disproportioned structures. The lofty windows have rarely any curtains, and the melancholy grass grows in the immense courtyards. The *grisettes* and the women of the lower orders, who are really very pretty, lend animation to the place. Almost all have a Grecian nose, flat cheek bones, and large black eyes placed in a pale oval face of the most pleasing kind. Their headdress is very original, being composed of a bright coloured silk handkerchief, worn after the Creole fashion, very far back, and confining their hair, which falls rather low down upon their neck. The remainder of their costume consists of a large straight shawl descending to their heels, and a print gown with long folds. These women are quick and lively in their movements, and possess a supple, well-formed, and naturally delicate figure. They carry upon their heads their baskets, parcels, and water-jugs, which, I may mention by way of parenthesis, are of the most elegant form. With their *amphora* on their head, and the long folds of their dress, they might be taken for Greek girls, or the princess Nausicaa going to the fountain.

The Cathedral, built by the English, is rather fine; the portal contains statues of bishops as large as life, executed in a much more natural and careful style than the ordinary Gothic statues, which are handled like *arabesques*, and completely sacrificed to the exigencies of the architect. On visiting the church, I saw, placed against the wall, the magnificent copy of Christ Scourged, by Riesener, after Titian: it is waiting for a frame.

From the Cathedral, my companion and myself proceeded to the Tower of St. Michael, where there is a vault which possesses the power of mummifying the bodies placed there. The lowest story of the tower is inhabited by the keeper and his family, who cook their victuals at the entrance of the cavern, and live on a footing of the most intimate familiarity with their frightful neighbours. The man took a lantern, and we descended by the worn steps of a winding staircase into the funeral vault. The corpses, about forty in number, are placed around the vault, with their backs against the wall. This upright position, so different from the general horizontal posture of the dead, gives them a horribly phantom-like appearance of life, especially in the yellow and flickering light of the lantern, which oscillates in the hand of the guide, and causes the shadows to change their place every instant. The imagination of poets and painters has never produced a more horrible nightmare; the most monstrous caprices of Goya, the raving productions of Louis Boulanger, the diabolical creations of Callot and of Teniers, are nothing in comparison, and all the most fantastic writers of ballads are here

surpassed. Never did more abominable spectres rise from out the night of a German mind. They are worthy of figuring at the midnight orgies of the Brocken with the witches of Faust. Their faces are distorted and grinning; their skulls have half the flesh peeled off; their sides gape open, exposing, through the grating of their ribs, their lungs, dried and shrivelled up like sponge. In one instance the flesh has crumbled into dust, and the bones protrude; in another, the parchment skin, no longer sustained by the fibres of the cellular tissue, floats round the corpse like a second windingsheet. Not one of the heads possesses that impassible calmness which death imparts, as a last seal, to those whom it touches. Their mouths gape frightfully, as if drawn asunder by the immeasurable weariness of eternity, or grin with the sardonic grin of Nothingness which laughs life to scorn. Their jaws are dislocated, and the muscles of the neck swollen. Their fists are furiously clenched, and their spines writhe in the contortions of despair. They appear enraged at being moved from their tombs, and troubled in their sleep by the curiosity of the profane.

The keeper pointed out to us a general killed in a duel; the wound, like a large blue lipped mouth laughing in his side, is distinctly visible; – a porter who expired suddenly while lifting an enormous burden; – a negress, who is not much blacker than her white sisters near her; – a woman with all her teeth, and with her tongue almost fresh; – a family poisoned with mushrooms; – and, as a crowning horror, a little boy who, to all appearance, must have been interred alive. This figure is sublime with pain

and despair; never was the expression of human suffering carried to a greater extent. The nails are buried in the palms of the hands; the nerves are stretched like the strings of a violin over the bridge; the knees form convulsive angles; and the head is violently thrown back. The poor child, by an extraordinary effort, must have turned round in his coffin.

The place where these corpses are assembled is a low-roofed vault. The soil, which is of suspicious elasticity, is composed of human detritus, fifteen feet deep. In the middle is raised a pyramid of remains in a tolerable state of preservation. These mummies emit a faint and earthy smell, more disagreeable than the acrid perfumes of bitumen and Egyptian natron. Some of the bodies have been in their present abode two or three hundred years, while others have been placed there sixty years only: the cloth of their shrouds or winding-sheets is yet in a tolerably perfect condition.

On leaving the cavern, we proceeded to view the belfry, composed of two towers, united at the summit by a balcony of a most original and picturesque design. We afterwards went to the Church of Sainte-Croix, next to the *Hospice des Vieillards*.

The portal is enriched with a multitude of groups, which rather boldly carry out the command: *Crescite et multiplicamini*. Fortunately the flowery and tufted arabesques soften whatever degree of eccentricity this method of rendering the text of Holy Writ might otherwise possess.

The Museum, which is situated in the magnificent Mansion-

house, contains a fine collection of plaster casts and a great number of remarkable pictures; among others, two small canvasses of Bega, which are two pearls of inestimable value: they unite the warmth and freedom of Adrien Brauwer with the delicacy and the peculiarity of Teniers. There are also some extremely delicate specimens of Ostade, some of the most quaint and fantastic creations of Tiepolo, some Jordaens, some Van Dycks, and a Gothic painting, which must be by Ghirlandajo or Fiesole. The Museum at Paris possesses nothing in the way of Middle Age art which is worth it; it is impossible, however, for the pictures to be hung with less taste and discrimination; the best places are occupied by enormous daubs of the modern school, contemporary with Guérin and Lethiers.

The port is crowded with vessels of all nations and every burden. In the haze of twilight, they might be taken for a multitude of floating cathedrals – for nothing more resembles a church than a ship, with its spire-like masts, and the tangled tracery of its rigging. To finish the day, we went to the *Grand Théâtre*. Our conscience obliges us to say that it was full, although they were playing *La Dame Blanche*, which is anything but a novelty. The interior is nearly as large as that of the Grand Opera at Paris, but with much less ornament about it. The actors sang as much out of tune as at the real *Opéra Comique*.

At Bordeaux, the influence of Spanish customs begins to be felt. Almost all the sign-boards are in the two languages, and the book-sellers have quite as many Spanish as French publications.

A great number of persons can *hablar* in the idiom of Don Quixote and Guzman of Alfarache. This influence increases as you approach the frontier; and, in fact, the Spanish portion, in this half-tint of demarcation, carries off the victory from the French – the *patois* spoken by the inhabitants having much more resemblance to Spanish than to the language of the mother country.

CHAPTER II
FROM BORDEAUX TO VERGARA

The *Landes*– Arrival at Bayonne – Information for Travellers – Urrugne – Saint Jean de Luz – Human Smuggling – Bridge over the Bidassoa – Irun – Travelling with Mules – Primitive Carts – Beggar Children – Spanish Bridges – Oyarzun – Astigarraga – A Spanish Supper – Puchero – Arrival at Vergara.

On leaving Bordeaux, the *Landes* recommence, if possible more sad, more desolate, and more gloomy than before. Heather, broom, and *pinadas* (pine forests), with here and there a shepherd squatted down, tending his flocks of black sheep, or a miserable hut in the style of the Indian wigwams, offer a very lugubrious and by no means diverting spectacle. No tree is seen but the pine, with the gash in it from which the resin trickles down. This large salmon-coloured wound forming a strong contrast with the grey tones of the bark, gives the most miserable look in the world to these sickly trees, deprived of the greatest portion of their sap. They have the appearance of a forest unjustly assassinated, raising its arms to Heaven for justice.

We passed through Dax at midnight, and traversed the Adour during the most wretched weather, with a beating rain and a wind strong enough to blow the horns off an ox. The nearer we

approached a warmer climate, the sharper and more penetrating became the cold; and had not our cloaks been at hand, we should have had our noses and feet frost-bitten, like the soldiers of the *Grande Armée* in the Russian campaign.

When day broke we were still in the *Landes*, but the pines were mingled with cork-trees, which I had hitherto pictured to my mind only under the form of corks, but which are really enormous trees, partaking simultaneously of the nature of the oak and of the carob-tree in the eccentricity of their shape and the deformity and ruggedness of their branches. A number of blackish pools of a leaden colour, stretched on each side of the road; gusts of saltish air greeted our nostrils, and a sort of vague rumbling noise resounded on the horizon. A bluish outline next stood out upon the pale background of the heavens. It was the chain of the Pyrenees. A few instants afterwards an almost invisible line of azure, the sign of the ocean, told us that we had arrived. It was not long ere Bayonne rose up before us, in the form of a mass of tiles crushed by an awkward and squat-looking spire; but I will not abuse Bayonne, since any town viewed under the disadvantage of rainy weather is always wretched. The port was not very full. A few decked boats floated in a negligent and admirably idle manner alongside the quays. The trees which form the public promenade are very fine, and somewhat soften the austerity of the numerous right lines produced by the fortifications and parapets. As to the church, it is plastered over with yellow, varied with a dirty fawn; it possesses

nothing remarkable save a kind of baldaquin of red damask, and a few paintings of Lépicié and others, in the style of Vanloo.

The town of Bayonne is almost Spanish in its language and customs; the hotel where we put up was called the *Fonda San Estaban*. As it was known that we were about making a long trip in the Peninsula, we were pursued with all sorts of recommendations. "Buy some red belts to sustain your body; arm yourselves with blunderbusses, combs, and bottles of water to kill the insects; take some biscuits and other provisions; the Spaniards breakfast on a spoonful of chocolate, dine on a piece of garlic washed down with a little water, and sup on a paper cigar; you ought also to take a mattress and a saucepan to serve as your bed and make your soup." The French and Spanish Dialogues, too, for the use of travellers, were not very encouraging. Under the head of "A Traveller at an Inn," we read the following frightful conversation – "I should like to take something." "Take a chair," replies the landlord. "With pleasure; but I should prefer something more nutritious." "What have you brought?" replies the master of the *posada*. "Nothing," says the traveller, sadly. "Then how can you suppose I can give you anything to eat? The butcher lives yonder, the baker a little further on. Go and get some meat and bread, and my wife, who is something of a cook, will prepare your provisions." The traveller, in a fury, begins creating a most frightful disturbance, and the host calmly puts into his bill – "Disturbance, 6 reals."

The Madrid coach sets out from Bayonne. The conductor

is a *mayoral*, with a peaked hat adorned with velvet and silk tufts, a brown waistcoat embroidered with coloured ornaments, leather gaiters, and a red sash; these impart a nice little amount of local colouring. Beyond Bayonne, the country is exceedingly picturesque; the chain of the Pyrenees becomes more distinct, and beautifully undulating lines of mountains vary the aspect of the horizon, while the sea appears frequently to the right of the road. At each turn, between two mountains, its sombre mild and deep blue suddenly starts into sight, traversed, here and there, by volutes of foam whiter than snow, which no painter has, as yet, succeeded in re-producing. I here beg to apologise to the sea, never having seen it before but at Ostend, where it is nothing more than the Scheldt, transformed into a canal, as my dear friend Fritz used so wittily to express it.

We passed through the church of Urrugne, the dial of which has the following mournful inscription, in black letters, on it – "*Vulnerant omnes, ultima necat.*" Yes, melancholy dial, you are right. Each hour wounds us with the sharp point of your hands, and each turn of your wheel hurries us towards the Unknown!

The houses of Urrugne, and of Saint Jean de Luz, which is not far distant, possess a sanguinary and barbarous physiognomy, owing to the strange custom of painting red or blood-colour the doors and the beams which sustain the compartments of the masonry. Beyond Saint Jean de Luz is Behobie, the last French village. On the frontier, the inhabitants practise two kinds of trade to which the war has given rise – first, that of the balls

found in the fields, and, secondly, that of human smuggling. A Carlist is passed just like a bale of goods. There is a certain tariff, so much for a colonel, so much for an inferior officer. As soon as the bargain is struck, the contrabandist makes his appearance, carries off his man, passes him over the frontier, and smuggles him to his destination, as he would a dozen handkerchiefs or a hundred cigars. On the other side of the Bidassoa, Irun, the first Spanish village, is visible: one-half of the bridge belongs to France, the other to Spain. Close to this bridge is the famous Isle of Pheasants, where the marriage of Louis XIV. was celebrated by deputy. It would be difficult to celebrate anything there at present, for it is not larger than a moderately-sized fried sole.

A few more revolutions of the wheel, and I shall perhaps lose one of my illusions, and behold the Spain of my dreams, the Spain of the *Romancero*, of the ballads of Victor Hugo, of the tales of Merimée, and the stories of Alfred de Musset, fade before me. On passing the line of demarcation, I remembered what the good and witty Henri Heine once said to me at Liszt's concert, with his German accent, full of humour and sarcasm, "How will you manage to speak of Spain when you have been there?"

One half of the bridge over the Bidassoa belongs to France, and the other half to Spain, so that you may have, at the same time, a foot in each kingdom, which is a great achievement. On one side you perceive the gendarme, grave, respectable, and serious; the gendarme red as a peony at having been restored

to his social position by Edward Ourliac, in Curmer's "Français Peints par Eux-Memes;"[1] while, on the other, is beheld the Spanish soldier, clad in green, and enjoying on the sward the voluptuous pleasure of repose with happy nonchalance. At the extremity of the bridge, you enter at once into Spanish life, with all its local colouring. Irun does not possess a single feature in common with a French town. The roofs of the houses jut out beyond the walls, while the tiles, alternately round and hollow, give the houses a most strange and Moorish battlemented appearance. The ironwork of the balconies, which project over the street, is of the most elaborate description, very surprising in an out-of-the-way village like Irun, and indicating a great degree of opulence now passed away. The women spend their lives upon these balconies, which are shaded with an awning with coloured stripes, and which are like so many aërian chambers attached to the body of the edifice. The two sides remain open, and allow a passage to fresh breezes and burning glances; but you must not look, however, for those dull and *culotté*[2] tints (I beg pardon for the expression), those shades of bistre and old pipes that a painter might hope to see; everything is whitewashed, according to the Arabian fashion, but the contrast of this chalky tone against the deep brown of the beams, roofs, and balconies, is not without a fine effect.

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[1] This work corresponds to "The Heads of the People," published, some time since, in London. – Translator.

[2] *Culotté* is the term applied by smokers to a pipe coloured by long use. – Translator.

The horses left us at Irun; and ten mules, shaved as far as the middle of their body – half skin, half hair – like those costumes of the middle-ages, which look as if they were two-halves of different suits sown together by chance, were then harnessed to the vehicle. These animals thus shaved present a strange sight, and appear most horribly thin; for this denudation enables you to see their whole anatomy, bones, muscles, and even the smallest veins. With their peeled tails and their pointed ears, they resemble so many enormous mice. Besides the ten mules, our band was increased by a *zagal* and two *escopeteros*, furnished with their *trabuco* (blunderbuss). The *zagal* is a kind of *under-mayoral*, who puts the drag on whenever there is a dangerous descent, looks after the harness and the springs, hurries the relays, and plays about the coach the part of the fly in the fable, only with a great deal more effect. The costume of the zagal is charming, being most elegant and light. He wears a peaked hat, ornamented with silk tufts; a chestnut-coloured or brown jacket, surmounted by a collar composed of different coloured pieces, generally blue, white, and red; a large arabesque, which blossoms out upon the middle of his back, knee-breeches studded with filigree buttons, and for shoes, *alpargatas*, or sandals tied with thin cord. Add to all this a red sash and a variegated neck-tie, and you will have a most characteristic costume. The escopeteros are guards, or *miquelets*, whose office it is to escort the coach and frighten the *rateros*, as the petty robbers are termed, who would not resist the temptation of plundering a solitary traveller,

but whom the edifying sight of the *trabuco* is sufficient to awe, and who pass on their way with the sacramental salutation of —*Vaya Usted con Dios*: "Pursue your road with God." The dress of the escopeteros is nearly the same as that of the zagal, but less coquettish and ornamented. They take up their position on the seat at the back of the coach, and thus command the country around. In this description of our caravan, I have forgotten to mention a little postilion, mounted on horseback at the head of the convoy, who leads off the whole line.

Before leaving, we had to get our passports, already pretty well covered with signatures, *viséd*. While this important operation was in course of performance, we had leisure to cast a glance at the population of Irun, which offers nothing very particular, unless it be that the women wear their hair, which is remarkably long, united in one plait hanging down to the middle of their back; shoes are a rarity, and stockings a still greater one.

A strange, inexplicable, hoarse, frightful, and laughable noise had astonished my ears for some time; it sounded like that of a number of jays being plucked alive, of children being whipped, of cats making love, of saws scraping their teeth against a hard stone, of tin-kettles scraped by some harsh instrument, or of the rusty hinges of a prison door turning round and obliged to release its prisoner; I imagined that it was, at the least, some princess being assassinated by a savage necromancer. It was nothing but a cart, drawn by oxen, ascending the street of Irun, and the wheels creaking and groaning piteously for want of being

greased, the driver preferring, doubtless, to put the grease in his soup. This cart was, certainly, exceedingly primitive. The wheels were of one piece, and turned with the axle, as is the case with those wagons which children manufacture out of the rind of a pumpkin. The noise can be heard at the distance of half a league, and is not displeasing to the aborigines of these parts. In this fashion they hear a musical instrument which costs nothing, and plays of its own accord as long as the wheel lasts. The noise is to them as harmonious as the feats of a violinist upon the fourth string are to us. A peasant would not give a "thank you" for a cart which did not play. This kind of vehicle must date from the deluge.

On an old palace, now transformed into an official residence, we beheld for the first time the placard of white plaster which disgraces many other old buildings, with the inscription —*Plaza de la Constitucion*. It must certainly be a fact, that whatever is concealed in anything comes out somehow or other; a better symbol of the actual state of the country could not have been selected. A constitution forced upon Spain is a handful of plaster upon granite.

As the ascent was toilsome, I walked as far as the gates of the town, and, turning round, cast a last look of farewell upon France. It was truly a magnificent sight. The chain of the Pyrenees sloped away in harmonious undulations towards the blue surface of the sea, crossed here and there by bars of silver; while, thanks to the excessive clearness of the air, in the far, far distance was

seen a faint line of pale salmon-colour, which advanced in the immeasurable azure, and formed an immense indentation in the side of the coast. Bayonne and its advanced guard, Biarritz, occupied the extremity of this point, and the Bay of Biscay was mapped out as sharply as on a geographical chart. After this, we shall see the sea no more until we are in Andalusia. Good night, honest Ocean!

The coach ascended and descended at full gallop the most rapid declivities: a kind of exercise, without a balancing-pole, upon the tight rope, which can only owe its success to the prodigious dexterity of the drivers, and the extraordinary sure-footedness of the mules. Despite this velocity, however, there would, from time to time, fall in our laps a branch of laurel, a little nosegay of wild flowers, or a wreath of mountain strawberries – ruddy pearls strung upon a blade of grass. These nosegays were flung in by little beggars, boys and girls, who kept running after the coach with their bare feet upon the sharp stones. This manner of asking alms, by first making a present themselves, has something noble and poetic about it.

The landscape, though rather Swiss perhaps, was charming, and exceedingly varied. Mountain ridges, the interstices of which permitted the eye to dwell upon others more elevated still, rose up on each side of the road; their sides goffered with different crops and wooded with green oaks, stood out vigorously against the distant and vapoury peaks. Villages, with their roofs of red tiles, bloomed amid thickets at the mountains' feet, and every

moment I expected to see Ketly or Getly walk out of these new châlets. Fortunately, Spain does not push its Opéra Comique so far.

Torrents, as capricious as a woman, come and go, form little cascades, divide, meet each other again, after traversing rocks and flint stones, in the most amusing fashion, and serve as an excuse for a number of the most picturesque bridges in the world. These bridges, thus indefinitely multiplied, have a singular characteristic: the arches are hollowed out almost up to the very railing, so that the road over which the coach passes does not appear to be more than six inches thick. A kind of triangular pile, shaped like a bastion, generally occupies the middle. The business of a Spanish bridge is not a very fatiguing one; there was never a more perfect sinecure; three quarters of the year you can walk under it. There it stands, with an imperturbable calmness and patience worthy of a better lot, waiting for a river, a rill of water, or even a little moisture, for it feels that its arches are merely arcades, and that their title of "bridge" is pure flattery. The torrents I have just mentioned have at most but four or five inches of water in them, but they are sufficient to make a great deal of noise, and serve to give life to the solitudes which they traverse. At long intervals they turn some mill or other machinery, by means of sluices, built in a manner that would enchant a landscape-painter. The houses, which are scattered over the country in little groups, are of a strange colour. They are neither black, nor white, nor yellow, but of the colour of

a roasted turkey. This definition is of the most striking truth, although it is trivial and culinary. Tufts of trees, and patches of green oaks, impart a happy effect to the large outlines and the misty and severe tints of the mountains. I dwell particularly upon these trees, because nothing is more rare in all Spain, and henceforth I shall hardly have occasion to describe any.

We changed mules at Oyarzun, and at nightfall reached Astigarraga, where we were to sleep. We had not yet had a taste of a Spanish inn. The *picaresque* and "lively" descriptions of Don Quixote and *Lazarille de Tormes* occurred to our memory, and our whole bodies shuddered at the very thought. We made up our minds to omelettes adorned with Merovingian hairs and mixed up with feathers and birds' feet, to gammons of rancid bacon with all the bristles, equally adapted for making soup or brushing boots, to wine in goat-skins, like those which the good knight de la Mancha cut so furiously into, and we even made up our minds to nothing at all, which is much worse, and trembled lest all we should get would be the fresh evening breeze, supposing we were not obliged to sup, like the valorous Don Sancho, off the dry air of a mandoline.

Taking advantage of the little daylight that remained, we went to look at the church, which, to speak truth, was more like a fortress than a temple; the smallness of the windows, formed like loopholes, together with the solidity of the buttresses, gave it a robust and massive appearance, more warlike than pensive. This form occurs in every church in Spain. All around stretched a sort

of open cloister, in which was hung a bell of immense size, which is rung by moving the clapper with a rope, instead of putting in motion the vast metal capsule itself.

On being shown to our rooms, we were dazzled with the whiteness of the beds and windows, the Dutch cleanliness of the floors, and the scrupulous care shown in every particular. Fine handsome, strapping girls, exceedingly well dressed, and with their magnificent tresses falling upon their shoulders, not bearing the slightest resemblance to the *Maritornes* we had been led to expect, bustled about with an activity that augured well for the supper, which did not keep us long waiting: it was excellent, and very well dished up. I will run the risk of appearing too minute, and describe it; for the difference between one people and another consists in the thousand little details which travellers neglect for those profound poetical and political considerations which anyone may very well write without ever having been in the country itself. First of all comes a meat soup, which differs from ours from the fact of its having a reddish tinge, due to the saffron with which it is flavoured. Red soup! I hope this is a pretty good commencement of local colouring. The bread is very white, of exceedingly close texture, with a smooth crust, slightly glazed over with yolk of egg; it is salted in a manner very apparent to Parisian palates. The handles of the forks are turned the wrong way, and the points are flat and shaped like the teeth of a comb. The spoons, too, have a spatula-kind of appearance not possessed by our plate. The table linen is a sort of coarse

damask. As for the wine, I must confess that it was of the most beautiful violet, and thick enough to be cut with a knife, and the decanters which held it did not tend to increase its transparency.

After the soup, we had the *puchero*, an eminently Spanish dish, or rather the only Spanish dish – for they eat it every day from Irun to Cadiz, and reciprocally. A comfortable *puchero* is compounded of a quarter of veal, a piece of mutton, a fowl, some pieces of a sausage stuffed full of pepper, and called *chorizo*, with allspice and other spices, slices of bacon and ham, and, to crown all, a violent tomato and saffron sauce. So much for the animal portion. The vegetable part, called *verdura*, varies with the season; but cabbages and *garbanzos* always play a principal part. The *garbanzo* is not much known at Paris, and I cannot define it better than "as a pea which aspires to be considered as a haricot-bean, and succeeds but too well." All this is served up in different dishes, and the ingredients then mixed up on your plate, so as to produce a *Mayonnaise* of a complicated description and excellent flavour. This mixture will appear rather barbarous to those connoisseurs who read Carême, Brillat-Savarin, Grimat de la Reynière, and Mons. de Cussy; it has, however, its charm, and cannot fail to please the Eclectics and Pantheists. Next come fowls cooked in oil, for butter is an article unknown in Spain; trout or salt cod, roasted lamb, asparagus, and salad; and, for dessert, little macaroons, almonds browned in a frying-pan, and of a most delicious taste, with goats'-milk cheese, *queso de Burgos*, which enjoys a high reputation, that it sometimes

deserves. As a finish, they bring you a set of bottles with Malaga, sherry, brandy, *aguardiente*, resembling French aniseed, and a little cup (*fuego*) filled with live cinders to light the cigarettes. Such, with a few trifling variations, is the invariable meal in all Spain.

We left Astigarraga in the middle of the night. As there was no moon, there is naturally a gap in our account. We passed through the small town of Ernani, the name of which conjures up the most romantic recollections; but we did not perceive aught save a heap of huts and rubbish vaguely sketched on the obscurity. We traversed Tolosa without stopping. We saw some houses decorated with frescoes, and gigantic blazons sculptured in stone. It was market-day, and the market-place was covered with asses, mules, picturesquely harnessed, and peasants of singular and wild appearance.

By dint of ascending and descending, of passing over torrents on bridges of uncemented stone, we at last reached Vergara, where we were to dine. We experienced a decided degree of satisfaction on our arrival, for we had almost forgotten the *jicara de chocolate*, which we had gulped down, half asleep, in the inn at Astigarraga.

CHAPTER III
FROM VERGARA TO BURGOS

Vergara – Vittoria; the Baile National and the French Hercules – The Passage of Pancorbo – The Asses and the Greyhounds – Burgos – A Spanish Fonda – Galley Slaves in Cloaks – The Cathedral – The Coffer of the Cid.

At Vergara, which is the place where the treaty between Espartero and Maroto was concluded, I saw, for the first time, a Spanish priest. His appearance struck me as rather grotesque, although, thank heaven, I entertain no Voltairean ideas with regard to the clergy; but the caricature of Beaumarchais' Basile involuntarily suggested itself to my recollection. Just fancy a black cassock, with a cloak of the same colour, and to crown the whole, an immense, prodigious, phenomenal, hyperbolical, and Titanic hat, of which no epithet, however inflated and gigantic, can give any idea at all approaching the reality. This hat is, at least, three feet long; the brim is turned up, and forms, before and behind the hat, a kind of horizontal roof. It would be difficult to invent a more uncouth and fantastic shape; this, however, did not prevent the worthy priest from presenting a very respectable appearance, and walking about with the air of a man whose conscience is perfectly tranquil about the form of his head-dress; instead of bands, he wore a little collar (*alzacuello*), blue and

white, like the priests in Belgium.

Beyond Mondragon, which is the last small market-town, the last *pueblo* of the province of Guipuzcoa, we entered the province of Alava, and were not long before we found ourselves at the foot of the hill of Salinas. The *Montagnes Russes*[3] are nothing compared to this, and, at first sight, the idea of a carriage passing over it appears as preposterous as that of your walking head downwards on the ceiling like a fly. This prodigy was however effected, thanks to six oxen which were harnessed on before the mules. Never in my whole life did I hear so horrible a disturbance; the mayoral, the zagal, the escopeteros, the postilion, and the oxen-drivers, tried which could excel each other in hooting, swearing, using their whips, and exercising their goads; they thrust forward the wheels, held up the body of the coach behind, and pulled on the mules by their halters and the oxen by their horns, with a most incredible amount of fury and vehemence. The coach thus placed at the end of this long string of animals and men, produced a most astonishing effect. There were, at least, fifty paces between the first and last beast in the team. I must not forget to mention, *en passant*, the steeple of Salinas, which has a very pleasing Saracenic form. From the top of the hill the traveller beholds on looking back, the Pyrenees rising one above the other until lost in the distance; they resemble immense pieces of rich velvet drapery, thrown together

[3] The well-known popular source of amusement to the Parisian pleasure-seeker of days now past.

by chance and rumpled by the whim of a Titan. At Royane, which is a little further on, I observed a magical effect in optics. A snowy mountain-top (*Sierra Nevada*), that the proximity of the other mountains had till then veiled from our sight, suddenly appeared standing out from the sky, which was of a blue so dark as to be almost black. Soon afterwards, at all the edges of the table-land we were traversing, more mountains raised, in a most curious manner, their summits loaded with snow and bathed in clouds. This snow was not compact, but divided into thin veins like sides of gauze worked with silver; it appeared still whiter from the contrast it formed with the azure and lilac tints of the precipices. The cold was tolerably severe, and became more intense in proportion as we advanced. The wind had not warmed itself by caressing the pale cheeks of these beautiful and chilly virgins, and came to us as icy as if it had arrived direct from the North or South Pole. We wrapped ourselves up as hermetically as we could in our cloaks, for it is extremely scandalous to have your nose frost-bitten in a torrid clime; I should not have cared had we been merely fried.

The sun was setting when we entered Vittoria; after threading all sorts of streets, of but middling architectural style and very bad taste, the coach stopped at the *parador vejo*, where our luggage was scrupulously examined. Our Daguerreotype especially alarmed the worthy custom-house officers a good deal; they approached it with the greatest precautions, like people who are afraid of being blown up; I think they imagined it to be an

electrifying machine, and I took care not to undeceive them.

As soon as our things had been searched and our passports stamped, we had the right to scatter ourselves over the pavement of the town. We immediately took advantage of this, and, crossing a fine square surrounded by arcades, proceeded straightway to the church. The shades of night already filled the nave, and lowered with a mysterious and threatening look in obscure corners, where phantom-like forms might now and then be seen. A few small lamps, yellow and smoky, trembled ominously like stars in a fog. A sort of sepulchral chill came over me, and it was not without a slight feeling of dread that I heard a mournful voice murmur, just at my elbow, the stereotyped formula "*Caballero, una limosina por l'amor de Dios.*" It was a poor wretch of a soldier who had been wounded, and who was asking an alms of us. In this country the soldiers beg; this is excusable on account of their miserable state of destitution, for they are paid very irregularly. In the church at Vittoria I became acquainted with those frightful sculptures in coloured wood, the use of which the Spaniards carry to such excess.

After a supper (*cena*) which caused us to regret that at Antigarraga, we suddenly thought of going to the play. We had been allured, as we passed along, by a pompous poster announcing the extraordinary performances of two French Herculeses, which were to terminate with a certain *baile nacional* (national dance), which we pictured to ourselves big with cachuchas, boleros, fandangos, and other diabolical dances.

The theatres in Spain have generally no façade, and are only distinguished from the houses around by two or three smoky lamps stuck before the door. We took two orchestra-stalls, surnamed *places de lunette* (*asientos de luneta*), and bravely precipitated ourselves into a corridor, where the floor was neither planked nor paved, but was nothing more or less than the bare earth. The frequenters of the place are not very particular about the uses to which they turn the walls of the corridor, but, by hermetically sealing our noses, we reached our places not more than half suffocated. When I add that smoking is perpetually practised between the acts, the reader will not have a very fragrant idea of a Spanish theatre.

The interior of the house is, however, more comfortable than the approaches to it promise; the boxes are tolerably arranged, and although the decorations are simple, they are fresh and clean. The *asientos de luneta* are armchairs placed in rows and numbered; there is no checktaker at the door to take your tickets, but a little boy comes round for them before the end of the performance; at the outer door you are merely asked for the card that admits you within the theatre.

We had hoped to find the true type of the Spanish woman, of which we had as yet seen but few specimens; but the ladies who filled the boxes and galleries had nothing Spanish about them save the mantilla and the fan: this was a good deal, it is true, but not sufficient. The audience was mostly composed of the military, which is the case in all garrison towns. In the pit,

the spectators stand as in the most primitive theatres. There was, in truth, but a row of candles and a candle-snuffer wanting to give the place the appearance of the Hôtel de Bourgogne; the lamps, however, were enclosed by thin plates of glass, disposed in the shape of a melon, and united at the top by a circle of tin: this was certainly no great sign of an advanced state of the industrial arts. The orchestra, which consisted of one row of musicians, almost all of whom played brass instruments, blew most valiantly on their cornets-à-piston an air which was always the same, and recalled to one's recollection the flourishes of the band at Franconi's.

Our Herculean compatriots raised immense weights, and bent a considerable number of iron bars, to the great delight of the assembly; while the lighter of the two made an ascent upon the tight rope, and performed a variety of other feats, rather stale in Paris, but new, probably, to the population of Vittoria. During this time we were dying with impatience in our stalls, and I was cleaning the glass of my *lorgnette* with a furious degree of activity, in order not to lose anything of the *baile nacional*. At last, the supports of the tight-rope were loosened, and the stage-carpenters, dressed as Turks, cleared away the weights and all the other paraphernalia of the Hercules*es*. Think, dear reader, of the frightful anxiety of two enthusiastic and romantic young Frenchmen about to behold, for the first time, a Spanish dance … in Spain!

At last the curtain rose upon a scene which seemed to entertain

a feeble desire, which was certainly not gratified, of being enchanting and fairy-like. The cornets-à-piston played, with more fury than ever, the strain already described, and the *baile nacional* advanced in the form of a *danseur* and *danseuse*, armed with a pair of castagnettes each. Never have I seen anything more sad and lamentable than these two miserable ruins *qui ne se consolaient pas entre eux*: a penny theatre never bore upon its worm-eaten boards a couple more used-up, more worn-out, more toothless, more blear-eyed, more bald, and more dilapidated. The wretched woman, who had besmeared herself with bad Spanish white, had a sky-blue complexion, which recalled to your mind the Anacreontic pictures of a person who had died of cholera, or been drowned some time; the two dabs of rouge that she had placed upon her prominent cheek-bones, to add a little brilliancy to her fishy eyes that seemed as if they had been boiled, contrasted strangely with the aforesaid blue. With her veiny and emaciated hands she shook a pair of cracked castagnettes, which chattered like the teeth of a man who has got a fever, or like the wires of a skeleton in motion. From time to time, she stretched, with a desperate effort, the relaxed fibres of her calves, and managed to raise her poor old baluster-looking leg, so as to produce a nervous little capriole, like a dead frog submitted to the operation of the voltaic battery, and, for a second, to cause the copper spangles of the doubtful rags which served her for a robe, to sparkle and glisten. As for the man, he kept fluttering about most horribly in his own corner; he rose and fell flatly,

like a bat crawling along upon its stumps; he looked like a grave-digger burying himself. His forehead, wrinkled like a boot, and his goat-like cheeks, gave him a most fantastic air: if, instead of castagnettes, he had only had a Gothic rebec in his hands, he might have set up to lead the Dance of Death at Basle.

During all the time the dance lasted, they did not once raise their eyes on one another; it struck you that they were frightened of their reciprocal ugliness, and feared lest they should burst into tears at seeing themselves so old, so decrepit, and so mournful. The man, especially, avoided his companion as if she had been a spider, and appeared to shiver in his old parchment skin every time the figure of the dance forced him to approach her. This lively bolero lasted five or six minutes, after which the fall of the curtain put an end to the torture of these two wretched beings, … and to ours.

Such was the specimen of the bolero which greeted our poor eyes, so enamoured of "local colouring." Spanish dancers exist only at Paris, like the shells which are only found at the curiosity-shops, and never on the sea shore. O Fanny Elssler, who art now in America, among the savages! even before going to Spain, we always had an idea that it was thou who inventedst the cachucha!

We went to bed rather disappointed. In the middle of the night we were woke up to resume our journey. The cold was still intense, to a Siberian extent; this is accounted for by the height of the table-land we were crossing, and the snow by which we were surrounded. At Miranda, our trunks were once more examined,

and then we entered Old Castile (*Castilla la Vieja*), the kingdom of Castile and Leon, symbolically represented by a lion holding a shield studded with castles. These lions, which are repeated until you are sick of them, are generally of a greyish granite, and have rather an imposing heraldic appearance.

Between Ameyugo and Cubo, small insignificant towns, where we changed mules, the landscape is extremely picturesque; the mountains contract and draw near one another, while immense perpendicular rocks, as steep as cliffs, rise up at the road-side. On the left, a torrent, crossed by a bridge with a truncated ogive arch, whirls round and round at the bottom of a ravine, turns a mill, and covers with spray the stones that stop its course. That nothing may be wanting to complete the effect, a gothic church, falling to ruin, with its roof staved in, and its walls covered with parasite plants, rises in the midst of the rocks; in the background is seen the vague and bluish outline of the Sierra. The view is certainly very fine, but the passage of *Pancorbo* carries off the palm for singularity and grandeur. There the rocks leave only just room enough for the road, and there is one point where two immense granite masses, leaning towards one another, give you the idea of a gigantic bridge, which has been cut in the middle, to stop the march of an army of Titans. A second, but smaller, arch, pierced through the thickness of the rock, adds still more to the illusion. Never did a scene-painter imagine a more picturesque and more admirably-contrived scene. When you are accustomed to the flat views of plains, the astonishing effects

met with at every step, in the mountains, appear impossible and fabulous.

The posada where we stopped to dine had a stable for a vestibule. This architectural arrangement is invariably repeated in all Spanish posadas, and to reach your room you are obliged to pass behind the cruppers of the mules. The wine, which was blacker than usual, had a certain taste of goat-skin sufficiently local. The maidservants of the inn wore their hair hanging down to the middle of their backs, but, with this exception, their dress was the same as that of French women of the lower classes. The national costumes are, in general, seldom preserved, save in Andalusia, and, at present, there are very few ancient costumes in Castile. The men wore the pointed hat, edged with velvet and silk tufts, or a wolf-skin cap of rather ferocious shape, and the inevitable tobacco or dirty-coloured mantle. Their faces, however, had nothing characteristic about them.

Between Pancorbo and Burgos we fell in with three or four little villages, such as Briviesca, Castil de Peones, and Quintanapalla, half in ruins, as dry as pumice-stone, and of the colour of a toast. I doubt whether Decamps ever found in the heart of Asia Minor, any walls more roasted, more reddened, more tawny, more seedy, more crusty, and more scratched over, than these. Along these said walls wandered carelessly certain asses, who are decidedly well worth the Turkish ones, and which I would advise him to go and study. The Turkish ass is a fatalist, and, as is evident from his humble air, resigned to the

blows which Fate has in store for him, and which he endures without a murmur. The Castilian ass has a more philosophical and deliberate look; he is aware that people cannot do without him; he makes one of the family; he has read Don Quixote, and he flatters himself that he is descended in a straight line from the celebrated donkey of Sancho Panza. Side by side with these asses were also dogs of the purest blood and most superb breed, with splendid claws, broad backs, and beautiful ears, and among the rest some large greyhounds, in the style of Paul Veronese and Velasquez, of most magnificent size and beauty, not to speak of some dozen *muchachos*, or boys, whose eyes glistened in the midst of their rags, like so many black diamonds.

Old Castile is, doubtless, so called, on account of the great number of old women you meet there; and what old women! The witches in "Macbeth" crossing the heath of Dunsinane, to prepare their diabolical cookery, are charming young girls in comparison: the abominable hags in the capricious productions of Goya, which I had till then looked upon as monstrous nightmares and chimeras, are but portraits frightfully like; most of these old women have a beard like mouldy cheese, and moustaches like French grenadiers; and then, their dress! You might take a piece of cloth, and work hard ten years to dirty, to rub, to tear, to patch, and to make it lose all traces of its original colour, and you would not even then attain the same sublimity of raggedness! These charms are increased by a haggard and savage look, very different from the humble and piteous mien of the

poor wretches in France.

A little before reaching Burgos, a large edifice, situated upon a hill, was, in the distance, pointed out to us. It was the *Cartuja de Miraflores* (Carthusian convent), of which I shall have occasion, later, to speak more at length. Soon afterwards the spires of the Cathedral displayed their embrasures more and more distinctly against the sky, and in another half-hour we were entering the ancient capital of Old Castile.

The public place of Burgos, in the midst of which stands a very middling bronze statue of Charles III., is large, and not without some character. Red houses, supported by pillars of bluish granite, inclose it on all sides. Under the arcades and on the place, are stationed all sorts of petty dealers, besides an infinite number of asses, mules, and picturesque peasants who promenade up and down. The rags of Castile are seen there in all their splendour. The poorest beggar is nobly draped in his cloak, like a Roman emperor in his purple. I know nothing better with which to compare these cloaks, for colour and substance, than large pieces of tinder jagged at the edges. Don Cæsar de Bazan's cloak, in the drama of "Ruy Blas," does not come near these proud and haughty rags. They are all so threadbare, so dry, and so inflammable, that it strikes you the wearers are very imprudent to smoke or strike a light. The little children, also, six or eight years old, have their cloaks, which they wear with the most ineffable gravity. I cannot help laughing at the recollection of a poor little wretch, who had nothing left but a collar which hardly

covered his shoulder, and who draped himself in the absent folds with an air so comically piteous, that he would have unwrinkled the countenance of the Spleen in person. The men condemned to the *presidio* (convicts) sweep the town and clear away the filth, without quitting the rags in which they are swathed. These convicts in cloaks are the most astonishing blackguards it is possible to behold. After each stroke of their broom, they go and sit down, or else recline upon the door-steps. Nothing would be easier for them than to escape; and on my hinting this, I was informed that they did not do so on account of the natural goodness of their disposition.

The fonda where we alighted was a true Spanish fonda, where no one spoke a word of French; we were fairly obliged to exert our Castilian, and to tear our throats with uttering the abominable *jota*– a guttural and Arabian sound which does not exist in our language. I must confess that, thanks to the extreme intelligence which distinguishes the people, we made ourselves understood pretty well. They sometimes, it is true, brought us candles when we asked for water, or chocolate when we desired ink; but, with the exception of these little mistakes, which were very pardonable, everything went on beautifully. We were waited on by a population of masculine and dishevelled females, with the finest names in the world; as, for instance, Casilda, Matilda, and Balbina. Spanish names are always charming. Lola, Bibiana, Pepa, Hilaria, Carmen, Cipriana, serve to designate some of the most unpoetical beings it is possible to imagine. One of

the creatures who waited on us had hair of the most fiery red. Light haired, and especially red haired persons abound in Spain, contrary to the generally-received idea.

We did not find any holy box-wood in the rooms, but branches of trees, in the shape of palms, plaited, woven, and twisted with great elegance and care. The beds possess no bolsters, but have two flat pillows placed one on the other. They are generally extremely hard, although the wool of which they are composed is good; but the Spanish are not accustomed to card their mattresses, merely turning the wool with the aid of two sticks. Opposite our windows hung a strange kind of sign-board. It belonged to a surgical practitioner, who had caused himself to be represented in the act of sawing off the arm of a poor devil seated in a chair; we also perceived the shop of a barber, who, I can assure my readers, did not bear the least resemblance to Figaro. Through the panes of his shop-front we could see a large and rather highly-polished brazen shaving-dish, which Don Quixote, had he still been of this world, might easily have mistaken for Mambrino's helmet. It is true that the Spanish barbers have lost their ancient costume, but they still retain their former skill, and shave with great dexterity.

Although Burgos was long the first city of Castile, there is nothing peculiarly Gothic in its general appearance. With the exception of one street, in which there are a few windows and door-ways of the time of the Renaissance, and ornamented with coats of arms and their supporters, the houses do not date further

back than the commencement of the seventeenth century, and merely strike the observer by their very commonplace look; they are old, but they are not ancient. Burgos, however, can boast of its Cathedral, which is one of the finest in the world; but, unfortunately, like all Gothic cathedrals, it is hemmed in by a number of ignoble structures, which prevent the eye from appreciating the general disposition of the building and seizing the whole mass at one glance. The principal entrance looks out upon a large square, in the middle of which is a handsome fountain, surmounted by a delicious statue of Our Saviour in white marble. This fountain serves as a target to all the idle vagabonds of the town who can find no more amusing occupation than to throw stones at it. The entrance, which I have just mentioned is magnificent, being worked and covered with a thousand different patterns like a piece of lace. Unfortunately it has been rubbed and scraped down to the outer frieze by some Italian prelates or other, who were great admirers of architectural simplicity, of plain walls and ornaments in "good taste," and wished to arrange the cathedral in the Roman style, pitying very much the poor, barbarous architects, for not employing the Corinthian order, and not appearing to have been alive to Attic beauty and the charm of triangular frontons.

There are still many people of this way of thinking in Spain, where the so-called *Messidor* style flourishes in all its purity. These persons prefer to the richest and most profusely carved specimens of Gothic architecture, all sorts of abominable

edifices riddled with windows, and *ornamented* with Pæstumian columns, exactly as was the case in France before the disciples of the Romantic School had caused the public to appreciate once more the style of the Middle Ages, and understand the meaning and the beauty of their cathedrals. Two pointed spires, carved in zigzag, and pierced as if with a punch, festooned, embroidered, and sculptured with most delicate minuteness, like the bezel of a ring, spring upwards towards Heaven with all the ardour and impetuosity of unshakable conviction. It is very certain that the campaniles of our incredulous times would never dare to rise thus into the air with nothing to support them, save so much stone lacework and nerves as thin as a spider's web. Another tower, which is also adorned with an unheard-of profusion of sculpture, but which is not so high, marks the spot where the arms of the cross join, and completes the magnificence of the outline. A countless number of statues, representing saints, archangels, kings, and monks, ornament the whole; and this population of stone is so numerous, so crowded, so multitudinous, that it must most certainly exceed the population in flesh and blood that inhabit the town.

Thanks to the charming politeness of the political chief, Don Enrico de Vedia, we were enabled to visit the cathedral most minutely. An octavo volume of description, a folio of two thousand plates, and twenty rooms filled with plaster casts would not be sufficient to convey a complete idea of this prodigious production of Gothic art with its immense mass of sculptures,

more thick and more complicated than a virgin forest in Brazil. Such being the case, we shall, perhaps, be pardoned for some few slight omissions and instances of seeming negligence, having been obliged to scribble these lines hastily and from recollection, on the table of a posada.

The moment the visitor enters the church, he is forcibly arrested by a *chef-d'œuvre* of incomparable beauty, namely, the carved wooden door leading to the cloisters. Among the other bas-reliefs upon it, there is one representing our Saviour's entry into Jerusalem: the jambs and crosspieces are covered with delicious little figures, so elegant in their form, and of such extreme delicacy, that it is difficult to understand how so heavy and solid a substance as wood could ever be made to lend itself to so capricious and ethereal a production of the imagination. It is certainly the most beautiful door in the whole world, if we except that executed by Ghiberti, at Florence, and which Michael Angelo, who understood something about these matters, pronounced worthy of being the door of Paradise. There certainly ought to be a bronze copy taken of this admirable work of art, so that it might at least live as long as the work of men's hands can live.

The choir, in which are the stalls, called in Spanish *silleria*, is enclosed by gates of wrought iron of the most wonderful workmanship; the pavement, as is the custom in Spain, is covered with immense mats made of spartum, besides which, each stall has its own little carpet of dry grass or reeds. On looking up,

you perceive a kind of dome formed by the interior of the tower to which I have before alluded. It is one mass of sculptures, arabesques, statues, columns, nerves, and pendentives, sufficient to make your brain turn giddy. Were a person to gaze for two years, he still would not be able to see everything in it. The various objects are as densely crowded together as the leaves of a cabbage; there is as much open work as in a fish-slice; it is as gigantic as a pyramid, and as delicate as a woman's earring. How such a piece of filigree work can have remained erect during two centuries surpasses human comprehension! What kind of men could those have been who raised these marvellous buildings, which not even a fairy palace could ever surpass in profuse magnificence? Is the race extinct? Are not we, who are always boasting of our high state of civilization, but decrepit barbarians in comparison? I am always oppressed with a profound sentiment of melancholy whenever I visit any of these prodigious edifices of the past; my heart is overwhelmed by a feeling of utter discouragement, and the only wish I have is to withdraw to some retired spot, to place a stone upon my head, and, in the immovability of contemplation, to await death, which is immovability itself. Why should I work? Why should I exert myself? The most mighty effort of which man is capable will never produce anything more magnificent than what I have just described; and yet we do not even know the name of the divine artists to whom we owe it; and, if we wish to obtain the slightest information concerning them, we are obliged to seek it in the

dusty leaves of the monastical archives. When I think that I have spent the best part of my life in making ten or twelve thousand verses, in writing six or seven wretched octavo volumes, and three or four hundred bad articles for the newspapers, and that I feel fatigued with my exertions, I am ashamed of myself and of the times in which I live, when so much exertion is required in order to produce so little. What is a thin sheet of paper compared to a mountain of granite?

If the reader will take a turn with me in this immense madrepore, constructed by the prodigious human polypi of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we will commence by visiting the little sacristy, which, notwithstanding its name, is a very good-sized room, and contains an "Ecce Homo" and a "Christ on the Cross" by Murillo, as well as a "Nativity" by Jordäens. It is lined with the most beautifully carved woodwork. In the middle is placed a large brazero, which serves to light the censers, and perhaps the cigarettes also, for many of the Spanish priests smoke, a practice that does not strike me as being more unbecoming than that of taking snuff, in which the French clergy indulge, without the slightest scruple. The brazero is a large copper vessel, placed upon a tripod, and filled with burning embers, or little fruitstones covered with fine cinders, which produce a gentle heat. In Spain, the brazeros are used instead of fireplaces, which are very rare.

In the great sacristy, which is next to the little one, the visitor remarks a "Christ on the Cross" by Domenico Theotocopuli,

surnamed *El Greco*, an extravagant and singular painter, whose pictures might be mistaken for sketches by Titian, if there were not a certain affectation of sharp and hastily-painted forms about them, which causes them to be immediately recognised. In order that his works may appear to have been painted with great boldness, he throws in, here and there, touches of the most inconceivable petulance and brutality, and thin sharp lights which traverse the portions of the picture which are in shadow, like so many sword-blades. All this, however, does not prevent El Greco from being a fine painter. The good specimens of his second style greatly resemble the romantic pictures of Eugène Delacroix.

The reader has seen, no doubt, in the Spanish Gallery at Paris, the portrait of El Greco's daughter; a magnificent head that no master would disown. It enables us to form an opinion as to what an admirable painter Domenico Theotocopuli must have been when he was in his right senses. It appears that his constant wish to avoid any resemblance to Titian, whose scholar he is said to have been, troubled his understanding, and led him to adopt an extravagance and capriciousness of style, that allowed the magnificent faculties with which nature had endowed him to gleam forth only at rare intervals. Besides being a painter, El Greco was also an architect and a sculptor, – a sublime union, a triangle of light, which is often met with in the highest region of art.

The walls of this apartment are covered with panelled wainscoting, with florid and festooned columns of the greatest

richness. Above the wainscoting there is a row of Venice mirrors; for what purpose they are placed there, unless it is simply for ornament, I am at a loss to say, as they are hung too high for any one to see himself in them. Above the mirrors are ranged, in chronological order, – the most ancient touching the ceiling, – the portraits of all the bishops of Burgos, down from the very first, to the prelate who now occupies the see. These portraits, although in oil-colours, look like crayon drawings, or sketches in distemper. This is occasioned by the practice they have in Spain of never varnishing their pictures, a want of precaution which has been the cause of a great number of very valuable masterpieces having been destroyed by the damp. Although most of these portraits present a tolerably imposing appearance, they are not first-rate paintings; besides, they are hung too high for any one to form a just opinion of the merit of the execution. The middle of the room is occupied by an immense side-board and enormous baskets, made of spartum, in which the church ornaments and sacred vessels are kept. Under two glass cases are preserved, as curiosities, two coral trees, whose branches, however, are far less complicated than the smallest arabesque in the cathedral. The door is ornamented with the arms of Burgos in relief, sprinkled with small crosses, gules.

Juan Cuchiller's room, which we traverse after the one I have just described, offers nothing remarkable in the way of architecture, and we were hastening to leave it as soon as possible, when our guide requested us to raise our eyes and look

at an object of the greatest curiosity. This object was a large chest, firmly attached to the wall by iron cramps: it would be difficult to conceive anything more patched, more worm-eaten, or more rotten. It is decidedly the oldest chest in the world; but the following inscription, in black letters, *Cofre del Cid*, instantly imparted, as the reader may imagine, an immense degree of importance to its four planks of mouldering wood. This chest, if we can believe the old chronicle, is the very same that the famous Ruy Diaz de Bivar, more generally known under the name of the Cid Campeador, – being once, hero though he was, pressed for money, exactly as a mere author might be, – caused to be filled with sand and stones, and left in pledge at the house of an honest Jewish usurer, who made advances on this kind of security. The Cid forbad him, however, to open the mysterious deposit until he, the Cid Campeador, had paid back the sum borrowed. This proves that the usurers of that period were of a much more confiding disposition than those of the present time. We should now-a-days find but few Jews, and I believe but few Christians either, so innocent and obliging as to accept a pledge of this description. Monsieur Casimir Delavigne has used this legend in his piece entitled "La Fille du Cid;" but, for the enormous chest, he has substituted an almost imperceptible coffer, which, in sober truth, could only contain *the gold of the Cid's word*; and there is no Jew, and there never was one, not even in those heroic times, who would have lent anything upon such a toy. The historical chest is high, broad, massive, deep, and garnished with

all sorts of locks and padlocks. When full of sand, it must have required at least six horses to move it; so that the worthy Israelite might have supposed it to be crammed with apparel, jewellery, or plate, and thus have been more easily induced to humour the Cid's caprice, which is one that, like many other heroical freaks, is duly provided for by the criminal law. The real chest being such as I have described, I feel myself necessitated, without wishing to hurt the feelings of Mons. Antenoz Joly, to pronounce the *mise en scène* at the Théâtre de la Renaissance to be inexact.

CHAPTER IV
BURGOS —*continued*

The Cloisters; Paintings and Sculptures – The Cid's House; the Casa del Cordon; the Puerta de Santa Maria – The Theatre and the Actors – La Cartuja de Miraflores – General Thibaut and the Cid's bones.

On leaving the room of Juan Cuchiller, you enter another which is decorated in a very picturesque manner. The walls are wainscoted with oak and hung with red tapestry, while the ceiling is *artesonado*, and produces a most pleasing effect. There is a "Nativity" by Murillo, a "Conception," and a figure of "Our Saviour" in flowing robes, all exceedingly well painted.

The cloisters are filled with tombs, most of which are enclosed by strong iron railings placed very close together. These tombs, all of them belonging to various illustrious personages, are placed in recesses hollowed out in the thickness of the wall; they are covered with armorial bearings and decorated with sculpture. On one of them I observed an excessively beautiful group of the Virgin Mary and Our Saviour holding a book in his hand, as well as a most strange and surprising production of the imagination, representing a fanciful monster, half animal, half arabesque. On all these tombs are stretched statues the size of life, of knights in armour, or bishops in full episcopal costume; so truthful are the

attitudes in which they are lying, and so minute are the details, that any one looking at them through the iron railings might almost mistake these statues for the persons they represent.

On the jamb of a door, I remarked as I passed along, a charming little statue of the Virgin, executed in the most delicious manner and conceived with extraordinary boldness. Instead of the contrite and modest air that is generally given to the statues and paintings of the Blessed Virgin, the sculptor has represented her with a mixed expression of voluptuousness and ecstasy, and intoxicated with all the pleasure of a woman in the act of conceiving a God. She is standing up with her head thrown backwards, and seems to be inhaling with her whole soul and body, and also with the most original union of passion and purity, the ray of flame which is breathed upon her by the symbolical dove. It was a difficult task to produce any novelty in the treatment of a subject that had been so often used, but for genius nothing is too common.

A detailed description of these cloisters would require a whole chapter to itself; but, on account of my limited space and the short time that was at my disposal, the reader will excuse me for merely mentioning them in this cursory manner, and re-entering the church, where we will take at hazard, without choice or preference, the first *chefs-d'œuvre* we may happen to see on our right and left; for they are all beautiful and all admirable, and those which we do not mention are at the least quite as valuable as the rest.

We will first stop before this "Passion of our Lord," carved in stone by Philip of Burgundy, who, unfortunately, was not a French artist, as his name or rather his nickname might lead us to suppose. This bas-relief is one of the largest in the world. According to the usual custom in Gothic art, it is divided into several compartments, – namely, the Mount of Olives, the Bearing of the Cross, and the Crucifixion of the Saviour between the two Thieves; an immense composition which, for the fineness of the heads, and the minute accuracy of the details, is equal to the most delicate and lovely things that Albert Dürer, Hemlinck, or Holbein ever produced with their miniature-painters' pencils. This stone epic is terminated by a magnificent "Descent to the Tomb." The groups of sleeping apostles which occupy the lower compartments of the Garden of Olives possess almost the same beauty and purity of style as the prophets and saints of Fra Bartholomew; the heads of the women at the foot of the cross are remarkable for that pathetic and mournful look which Gothic art alone could convey, and which in this instance is united to an uncommon beauty of outline. The soldiers attract attention by the singularity and savage style of their apparel, which is that usually employed during the middle ages in all representations of the Ancients, the Orientals, or the Jews, whose true costume was then not known; the various postures in which they are placed are stamped with a bold swaggering air, which contrasts most happily with the ideality and melancholy of the other figures. The whole is surrounded by carving as delicate as the finest jewellery,

and of the most incredible good taste and lightness. This splendid production of the sculptor's art was finished in 1536.

Since we are on the subject of sculpture, we may as well seize the opportunity to speak of the stalls in the choir, which, as a piece of admirable joinery, have not, perhaps, their equals in the world. The stalls are so many marvels. They represent subjects in bas-relief from the Old Testament, and are separated from each other by monsters and fantastic animals shaped like the arms of a chair. The flat portions are covered with incrustations, the effect of which is heightened by black hatching, like inlaid enamel-work on metal. It is impossible for arabesques or caprice to be carried to a greater length. These stalls contain an inexhaustible mine, an unheard-of abundance, a never-ending novelty, both of ideas and forms: they are a new world, a creation of themselves, marvellously rich and complete; a world in which the plants live, the men bud forth, a branch ends in a hand, and a leg terminates in foliage; a world in which the cunning-eyed monster spreads out his taloned wings, and the monstrous dolphin spouts the water through its nostrils. They form one inextricable entwining of buds and boughs, acanthuses, water-lilies, flowers, with chalices ornamented with tufts and tendrils, of serrated and twisted foliage, fabulous birds, impossible fish, and extravagant sirens and dragons, of which no tongue could ever give an idea. The wildest fancy reigns unrestrained in all these incrustations, whose yellow tone causes them to stand out from the sombre background of the wood, and gives them the

appearance of the paintings on Etruscan vases; an appearance which is fully justified by the boldness and primitive accent of their lines. These designs, from which the pagan spirit of the Renaissance peeps out, have nothing in common with the destination of the stalls themselves; in fact, the subject selected very frequently shows an entire forgetfulness of the sacred character of the place. They represent either children playing with masks, women dancing, gladiators wrestling, peasants engaged in the vintage, young girls teasing or caressing some fanciful monster, animals playing the harp, or even little boys, in the basin of a fountain imitating the famous statue at Brussels. Were they but a little more slender in their proportions, these figures would be equal to the purest productions of Etruscan art. Unity in the general appearance, and infinite variety in the details, was the difficult problem which the artists of the Middle Ages generally succeeded in solving. Five or six paces farther on, this mass of woodwork, so remarkable for the wildness of its execution, becomes grave, solemn, architectural, brown in its tones, and altogether worthy of serving as a frame to the pale and austere faces of the canons.

The Chapel of the Constable (*Capilla del Condestable*) forms of itself a complete church. The tomb of Don Pedro Fernandez Velasco, Constable of Castile, and that of his wife, occupy the middle of the building, and are far from being its least attractive feature: they are of white marble, magnificently sculptured. The constable is lying in his war armour, enriched with the chastest

arabesques, from which the sacristans take *papier-maché* casts, to sell to visitors. The constable's wife has her little dog by her side, while her gloves, and the brocaded flowers on her gown, are rendered with the utmost delicacy. Both their heads repose upon marble cushions, ornamented with their coronets and armorial bearings. The walls of the chapel are covered with gigantic coats of arms, while figures placed upon the entablature hold stone staves for supporting banners and standards. The *retablo* (which is the name given to the architectural *façade* before the altar) is sculptured, painted, gilt, and covered with a profusion of arabesques, varied by columns; it represents the Circumcision of our Saviour, with figures the size of life. To the right, on the same side as the portrait of Doña Mencia de Mendoza, Countess of Haro, is a small Gothic altar, coloured, gilt, carved, and embellished with an infinity of little figures, so light in appearance, and so graceful in form, that any one might mistake them for the work of Antonin Moine. On this altar there is a Christ, carved in jet. The high altar is ornamented with silver rays and crystal suns, which produce a singularly brilliant flickering effect. Carved on the roof is a rose of incredible delicacy.

Enclosed in the wainscoting of the sacristy, near the chapel, is a Magdalen, said to be by Leonardo da Vinci. The mildness of the brown half-tints, merging into the light by imperceptible gradations, the lightness of touch remarkable in the hair, and the perfect rounding of the arms, render this supposition extremely probable. In this chapel, also, is preserved the ivory diptych that

the constable used to take with him to the army, and before which he was accustomed to recite his prayers. The *Capilla del Condestable* belongs to the Duke de Frias. Cast a glance, as you pass, on that statue of Saint Bruno, in coloured wood, – it is by Pereida, a Portuguese sculptor, – and on that epitaph, which is that of Villegas, the translator of Dante.

A magnificent and most finely-built staircase, with splendidly-sculptured monsters, kept us for some minutes riveted with admiration. I am ignorant whither it leads, or into what room the small door at its extremity opens, but it is worthy of the most splendid palace. The high altar in the chapel of the Duke d'Abrantes is one of the most singular productions of the imagination which it is possible to behold. It represents the genealogical tree of Jesus Christ. This strange idea is carried out in the following manner: – The patriarch Abraham is lying at the bottom of the composition, and in his fertile breast are placed the spreading roots of an immense tree, each branch of which bears an ancestor of Jesus, and is subdivided into as many branches as that ancestor had descendants. The summit is occupied by the Virgin Mary on a throne of clouds, while the sun, the moon, and a multitude of gold and silver stars, shine through the foliage. It is impossible to think without a shudder at the immense amount of patience which must have been required to cut out all these leaves, chisel all these folds, and make all these personages stand out so prominently. This *retablo*, carved in the manner we have described, is as high as the *façade* of a house,

that is to say, at least thirty feet, if we include the three stories, the second of which represents the crowning of the Virgin, and the third the Crucifixion, with St. John and the Virgin. The sculptor is Rodrigo del Haya, who lived in the middle of the sixteenth century.

The Chapel of Santa Tecla is the strangest structure imaginable. The object both of architect and sculptor seems to have been to crowd as many ornaments as possible into the least space, and they have completely succeeded; for I defy the greatest advocate of ornament to find space enough in the whole chapel for a single rose or a single flower more. It is the most wonderful and most charming specimen of the richest description of bad taste. It is one mass of twisted spiral columns, surrounded by vine-shoots, of endless volutes, of cherubim's heads and shoulders with a pair of wings sticking out like the ends of a neck-tie, of large masses of clouds, of flames rising from censers and blown about by the wind, of rays spread out in the shape of a fan, and of endive-plants in full bloom and most luxuriant growth, all gilt and painted in natural colours with the pencil of a miniature-painter. The flower-work of the drapery is imitated thread for thread, and point for point, with frightful accuracy. Santa Tecla, who is tied to the stake with the flames rising around her on all sides, and a number of Saracens in extravagant costumes exciting them, is represented as raising towards Heaven her beautiful enamel eyes, and holding in her flesh-coloured hand a large holly-branch, twisted after the usual

Spanish fashion. The roof is ornamented in the same style. The rest of the chapel is occupied by other altars, which, although smaller, are quite as elaborate as that which we have described. But the whole fabric is deficient in the peculiar delicacy of Gothic art, as well as in the charming characteristics of the period of the Renaissance; richness is substituted for purity of outline; it is still very beautiful, however, like everything carried to excess, but yet complete in its own peculiar style.

The organs, which are of a formidable size, have rows of pipes laid transversely, like so many cannon with their muzzles pointed at you; they look very menacing and warlike. The private chapels have each an organ, only of a smaller size. In the *retablo* of one of these chapels we beheld a painting of such exceeding beauty, that I am even now at a loss to what master to ascribe it, unless it be to Michael Angelo. This magnificent work of art possesses, most undeniably, all the characteristic marks of the Florentine school, when in its most flourishing state, and would form the principal attraction in any gallery however rich. Michael Angelo, however, hardly ever painted in oil colours, and his pictures are fabulously scarce; I am inclined to think that it was painted by Sebastian del Piombo, after a cartoon, and on a drawing of this sublime artist. It is well known that Michael Angelo was jealous of Raphael's success, and that he sometimes employed Sebastian del Piombo, in order to unite colouring to drawing, and thus beat his young rival. However this may be, it is very certain that the picture is admirable. The Virgin Mary is represented seated,

with her drapery disposed in majestic folds; she is covering with a transparent scarf the divine form of the infant Jesus, who is standing up by her side. From out the ultramarine of the sky two angels are contemplating her in silence, while in the background is seen a severe landscape, with some rocks and fragments of walls. The head of the Virgin possesses an amount of majesty, serenity, and force, of which it is utterly impossible to convey an adequate idea by mere words. The lines which join the neck to the shoulders are so pure, so chaste, and so noble, the face breathes such an expression of sweet maternal satisfaction, the hands are so divinely treated, and the feet are so remarkable for their elegance and grand style, that I found it almost impossible to tear myself away. Add to this marvellous design, simple, solid, well-sustained colouring, without any claptrap devices, or little tricks of chiaroscuro, but a certain look of fresco which harmonizes perfectly with the tone of the architecture around, and you have a *chef-d'œuvre* such as is to be found only in the Florentine or Roman school.

There is also in the cathedral at Burgos a "Holy Family," without the painter's name. I strongly suspect it to be the production of Andrea del Sarto. There are likewise some Gothic paintings on wood, by Cornelis van Eyck; the fellows to them are in the gallery at Dresden. The works of the German school are not uncommon in Spain and some of them are exceedingly fine. We will seize the present opportunity to mention some pictures by Fra Diego de Leyva, who became a Carthusian friar in the

Cartuja of Miraflores when he had already reached his fifty-fourth year. Among his other compositions we may notice the Martyrdom of Santa Casilda. The executioner has cut off both her breasts, and the blood is gushing forth from the two large red places which mark the spot whence the flesh has been removed; the two breasts are lying at the Saint's side, while she herself is looking with an expression of feverish and convulsive ecstasy at a tall angel, with a thoughtful, melancholy face, who has brought her a palm-branch. These frightful pictures of martyrdom are very frequently to be met with in Spain, where the love of the real and the true in art is carried to the greatest lengths. The artist will not spare you one single drop of blood; you must see the severed nerves shrinking back, you must see the quivering of the living flesh, whose dark purple hue contrasts strongly with the bluish, bloodless whiteness of the skin, you must be shown the vertebræ cut through by the executioner's blade, and the gaping wounds that vomit forth water and blood from their livid mouths; every detail is rendered with horrible truthfulness. Ribera has painted some things in this style, sufficient to make El Verdugo[4] himself start back with affright. In sober truth, we require all the dreadful beauty and diabolical energy which characterize this great master, to enable us to support this flaying and slaughtering school of painting, which seems to have been invented by some hangman's assistant for the amusement of cannibals. We actually lose all desire to suffer martyrdom; and the angel, with his palm-

[4] The hangman.

branch, strikes us as a very poor compensation for such atrocious torments. But sometimes Ribera denies even this consolation to his victims, and allows them to writhe about in agony, like so many serpents, in the dull, menacing shade, that is not illuminated by a single ray from heaven.

The craving for the true, however revolting, is a characteristic feature of Spanish art. Idealism and conventionality are foreign to the genius of this people, who are altogether deficient in everything like æsthetic feeling. For them sculpture is not sufficient; they require their statues to be coloured, and their Virgins to be painted and clothed in real clothes. To please them, the material illusion can never be carried too far; and their unbridled passion for the real causes them sometimes to overstep the line which separates the sculptor's studio from the boiling-room of the wax-work exhibitor.

The celebrated "Christ of Burgos," which is held in such veneration, and which must not be shown until the tapers are lighted, is a striking example of this strange taste. It is not formed of coloured stone or wood, but actually consists of a human skin (at least, so they say), stuffed in the most artistic manner. The hair is real hair; the eyes are furnished with eye-lashes, the crown of thorns is really composed of thorns, and, in a word, not one detail is omitted. Nothing can be more lugubrious, or more disagreeable to behold than this crucified phantom, with its ghastly life-like look and its death-like stillness. The skin, of a brownish, rusty tinge, is streaked with long lines of blood,

which are so well imitated that you might almost think they were actually trickling down. It requires no very great effort of the imagination to believe the legend which affirms that this miraculous figure bleeds every Friday.

Instead of flying drapery twisted round the body, the Burgalise Christ has got on a white tunic, embroidered with gold, and descending from the waist to the knees. This style of dress produces a strange effect, especially upon us who are not used to it. There are three ostrich-eggs encased in the foot of the cross as a sort of symbolical ornament, the meaning of which I have forgotten, however, unless they are intended to convey an allusion to the Trinity, which is the principle and germ of all things.

On leaving the cathedral we felt dazzled and crushed with *chefs-d'œuvre*: we were intoxicated with them; we could not admire any longer: it was only by the greatest effort that we were enabled to cast a careless glance on the arch erected to Fernan Gonzalez: it is an experiment made in the classical style, at the commencement of the Renaissance period, by Philip of Burgundy. We were also shown the Cid's house; when I say the Cid's house, I express myself badly; I mean the place where his house may have been, and which is a square place enclosed by posts. There is not the least vestige left which can authorize the general belief; but then, on the other hand, nothing absolutely proves the contrary; and, such being the case, there is no harm in our trusting the tradition. The *Casa del Cordon*, so called from the rope which winds round the doors, borders the windows, and

serpentines through the various ornaments, is worth examining. It is the residence of the political chief of the province, and we met there sundry alcades of the environs, with features that would have struck us as rather suspicious had we happened to come across them in some lonely spot, and who would have done well to ask themselves for their papers before allowing themselves to proceed without molestation on their road.

The *Puerta de Santa Maria*, erected in honour of Charles V., is a remarkable piece of architecture. Although the statues placed in the niches are short and squat, they have an appearance of force and vigour which amply compensates for any defect in gracefulness of form. It is a great pity that this superb triumphal arch should be obstructed and disfigured by a number of plaster walls, which are placed there under the pretence of their being fortifications; they should immediately be pulled down. Near this gate is the public promenade on the banks of the Arlanzon, a very respectable river at least two feet deep, which is a great depth for Spain. The promenade is ornamented with four very tolerable statues, representing four kings or counts of Castile – namely, Don Fernan Gonzalez, Don Alonzo, Don Enrique II., and Don Fernando I. I have now mentioned almost everything worth seeing at Burgos. The theatre is even more primitive than the one at Vittoria. The evening I was there, the performance consisted of a piece in verse, entitled "El Zapatero y el Rey" (the Cobbler and the King), by Zorilla, a young and very talented author, who is very popular in Madrid, and who has already

published seven volumes of poetry much extolled for its harmony and style. All the places, however, had been taken beforehand, so that we were obliged to renounce the pleasure we had promised ourselves, and wait until the next night for the "Three Sultanas," which, we were informed, was a piece interspersed with singing and Turkish dances of the most transcendent comicality. The actors did not know a word of their parts, and the prompter spoke so loudly that he completely drowned their voices. I may mention that the prompter is protected by a sort of tin shell, arched like the roof of an oven, to shield him against the *patatas*, *manzanas*, and *cascaras de naranja*– potatoes, apples, and orange-peel – with which the Spanish public, as impatient a public as ever existed, never fails to bombard those actors who displease them. Each person brings his store of projectiles in his pocket: if the actors play well, the various vegetables return to the saucepan and serve to augment the *puchero*.

For one moment, we thought we had at length discovered the true type of a Spanish beauty in one of the three sultanas – large, arched, black eyebrows, sharp nose, a long oval face, and red lips; but an obliging neighbour informed us that she was a young French girl.

Before leaving Burgos, we paid a visit to the Cartuja de Miraflores, situated at half a league from the town. A few poor old decrepit monks have been allowed to await their death there. Spain has lost a great deal of its romantic character by the suppression of the monks, and I do not see that it has gained

much in other respects. A number of magnificent edifices, which can never be replaced, and which were formerly preserved in all their integrity, will fall into a state of dilapidation, and crumble to the ground, adding their ruins to those which are already so common in this unhappy country; and thus unheard-of treasures in the way of statues, pictures, and objects of art of all kinds, will be lost, without any one deriving the least advantage. It strikes me that our Revolution might be imitated in other things than its stupid Vandalism. Murder each other if you will, for the ideas you imagine that you possess; fatten with your bodies the meagre plains ravaged by war – that is all very well; but the stone, the marble and the bronze touched by genius, are sacred – at least spare them. In two thousand years your civil dissensions will all be forgotten, and the future will only know that you were once a great people by some marvellous fragments dug from out a heap of ruins.

The Cartuja is situated upon a hill. Its exterior is austere and simple, consisting of grey stones and a tile roof, that says nothing to the eyes, but everything to the imagination. In the interior are long, cool, silent cloisters, with whitewashed walls, and a number of doors leading to the various cells, and windows with leaden casements, containing different religious subjects on stained glass, especially a remarkable composition representing the Ascension. The body of our Saviour has already disappeared; there is nothing left but his feet, the marks of which are seen on a rock which is surrounded by pious personages lost in admiration.

The prior's garden is situated within a little courtyard, in the midst of which is a fountain, from which the water, clear as crystal, runs out drop by drop. A few stray sprigs of the vine somewhat enliven the melancholy aspect of the walls, while a few tufts of flowers and clusters of plants are seen springing up here and there, in picturesque disorder, pretty much as they were sown by the hand of Chance. The prior, an old man, with a noble, venerable face, and dressed in a garment resembling as much as possible a gown (for monks are not allowed to preserve their costume), received us very politely, and, as it was not very warm, made us sit around the brazero, and offered us cigarettes and *azucarillos*, with cool spring water. An open book was lying on the table: I took the liberty to glance into it. It was the "Bibliotheca Cartuxiana," a collection of all the passages of the various authors who have written in praise of the order and lives of the Carthusian monks. The margin was covered with annotations, written in that stiff, formal, priest-like hand, rather large, which appeals so strongly to the imagination, but says nothing to the hasty and offhand man of the world. This poor old monk, left thus, out of pity, in a deserted convent, the vaults of which will soon fall over his unknown grave, was still dreaming of the glory of his order, and inscribing with a trembling hand, in the blank spaces of the book, some passage or other that had either been forgotten, or recently been found.

The cemetery is shaded by two or three large yew-trees, like those in the Turkish cemeteries. It contains four hundred and

nineteen monks, who have died since the foundation of the convent. The ground is covered by thick luxuriant grass, and neither tomb, cross, nor inscription, is to be seen. There do the good monks all lie together, as humble in death as they were in life. This cemetery, without a single name, has something calm and silent about it that is refreshing to the soul. A fountain situated in the midst of it sheds a stream of limpid tears, as bright as silver, for these poor creatures, all dead and forgotten. I took a draught of the water, filtered through the ashes of so many holy persons; it was pure, and icy as death.

But though the dwelling of man is poor, that of God is rich. In the middle of the nave are placed the tombs of Don Juan II. and Queen Isabella, his wife. The spectator is lost in astonishment at the fact of human patience ever having completed such a work. Sixteen lions, two at each angle, support eight shields with the royal arms, and serve as base to the structure. Add to these a proportionate number of virtues, allegorical figures, apostles, and evangelists, imagine a countless number of branches, birds, animals, scrolls of arabesque and foliage, twisting and twining in every direction, and you will yet have but a feeble notion of this prodigious masterpiece. The crowned statues of the king and queen are lying at full length on the top of the tomb. The king is holding his sceptre in his hand, and is enveloped in a long robe, guilloched and figured with the most incredible delicacy.

The tomb of the Infante Alonzo is on the left-hand side of the altar. The Infante is represented kneeling before a fall-stool. A

vine, with open spaces, in which little children gathering grapes are suspended, creeps, in festoons of the most capricious and endless variety around the Gothic arch that serves as a framework to the composition, half buried in the thickness of the wall. These marvellous monuments are in alabaster, and are due to the chisel of Gil de Siloe, who also executed the sculptures for the high altar. To the right and left of the latter, which is a most beautiful work of art, are two open doors, through which you perceive two Carthusian friars in the white robe of their order, standing motionless before you. At first sight you are inclined to take these two figures, which are probably by Diego de Leyva, for living beings. The general decoration of the building is completed by stalls in the Berruguete style, and it is a matter of astonishment for the visitor to find all these wonders in so deserted a spot.

From the top of the hill we were shown, in the distance, San Pedro de Cardeña, which contains the tomb of the Cid and of his wife, Doña Ximena. By the way, in connexion with this tomb there is a strange anecdote told, which I will here relate, without, however, answering for the truth of it.

During the French invasion, General Thibaut conceived the idea of having the Cid's bones removed from San Pedro de Cardeña to Burgos. His intention was to place them in a sarcophagus on the public promenade, in order that the presence of these illustrious remains might inspire the people with sentiments of heroism and chivalry. It is added, that the gallant general, in a fit of warlike enthusiasm, placed the hero's bones

in his own bed, in order that he might elevate his courage by this glorious proximity, a precaution of which he had no need. The project was not put into execution, and the Cid returned to Doña Ximena's side, at San Pedro de Cardeña, where he has since remained; but one of his teeth, which had fallen out, and which had been put away in a drawer, had disappeared, without any one being able to find out what had become of it. The only thing that was wanting to complete the Cid's glory, was that he should be canonized, which he would have been, had he not, before his death, expressed the Arabo-heretical and suspicious wish that his famous steed, Barbieca, should be buried with him. This caused his orthodoxy to be doubted. Talking of the Cid, I must remark to Monsieur Casimir Delavigne that the name of the hero's sword is Tizona, and not Tizonade, which rhymes rather too closely with lemonade. I say this, however, without any desire of damaging the Cid's fame, who, to his merit as a hero, added that of inspiring so poetically the unknown author of the Romancero, as well as Guilhen de Castro, Diamante, and Pierre Corneille.

CHAPTER V
FROM BURGOS TO MADRID

El Correo Real; the Galeras – Valladolid – San Pablo – A Representation of Hernani – Santa Maria – Madrid.

El Correo Real in which we quitted Burgos merits a particular description. Just fancy an antediluvian vehicle, of which I should say that the model, long since discarded, could at present only be found in the fossil remains of Spain; immense bell-shaped wheels, with very thin spokes, placed considerably behind the frame, which had been painted red, somewhere about the time of Isabella the Catholic; an extravagant body, full of all sorts of crooked windows, and lined in the inside with small satin cushions, which may, at some remote period, have been rose-coloured; and the whole interior quilted and decorated with a kind of silk that was once, probably, of various colours. This respectable conveyance was suspended by the aid of ropes, and bound together in several suspicious-looking places with thin cords made of spartum. To this precious machine was added a team of mules of a reasonable length, with an assortment of postilions, and a *mayoral* clad in an Astracan lambs-wool waistcoat, and a pair of sheepskin trousers which looked tremendously Muscovitish. When all our preparations were completed, we set off in the midst of a whirlwind of cries

and oaths, accompanied by a due proportion of whipping. We went at a most terrific pace, and literally flew over the ground, the vague outlines of the objects to our right and left flitting past us with phantasmagorical rapidity. I never saw mules more fiery, more restive, and more wild; every time we stopped, a whole army of *muchachos* was requisite to harness one to the coach. The diabolical animals came out of their stables on their hind legs; and it was only by the instrumentality of a bunch of postilions hanging on the halter of each one, that we succeeded in again reducing them to the state of quadrupeds. I think that it was the idea of the food that awaited them at the next *venta*– for they were frightfully thin – which filled them with this fiendlike impetuosity. On leaving one small village, they commenced kicking and capering about in such a fashion that their legs got entangled in the traces; whereupon they were belaboured with a shower of blows and kicks which must be seen to be believed. The whole team fell down, and an unfortunate postilion, who was mounted on a horse which in all probability had never before been in harness, was dragged from beneath this heap of animals, almost as flat as a pancake and bleeding from the nose. His sweetheart, who had come to see him off, began shrieking enough to break any person's heart; I should never have thought that such shrieks could proceed from a human breast. The ropes were at last disentangled, and the mules set upon their feet again. Another postilion took the place of the wounded man, and we set off with a velocity which I should say could not be surpassed.

The country through which we passed had a strange, savage look; it consisted of immense arid plains without a single tree to break their uniformity, and terminated by mountains and hills of a yellow-ochreish hue, which with difficulty assumed an azure tint even at a distance. From time to time we passed a dusty mud-built village, mostly in ruins. As it was Sunday, we saw, all along the yellowish walls illuminated by a sickly sun, whole ranks of haughty Castilians as motionless as mummies, and enveloped in their tinder-like rags, who had placed themselves there to *tomar el sol*, a species of amusement which would cause the most phlegmatic German to die of *ennui* at the expiration of an hour. This peculiarly Spanish amusement was, however, on the day in question, very excusable, for the weather was atrociously cold, while a furious wind swept the plain with the noise of thunder and of an infinity of war-chariots filled with armour rattling over a succession of brazen vaults. I do not believe that anything more barbarous and more primitive can be met with in the kraals of the Hottentots and the encampments of the Calmucks. I took advantage of a halt to enter one of these huts. It was a wretched hovel, without any windows. It had a fireplace of unhewn stones in the centre, and a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape. The walls were of a dark brown colour, worthy of Rembrandt.

We dined at Torrequemada, a village situated on a small river which is choked up by the ruins of some old fortifications. Torrequemada is remarkable for the total absence of glass; the only window-panes to be seen there are in the *parador*, which,

in spite of this unheard-of luxury, is nothing more nor less than a kitchen with a hole in the ceiling. After having swallowed a few *garbanzos*, which rattled in our stomachs like shots in a tambourine, we re-entered our box, and the steeple-chase recommenced. The coach at the back of the mules was like a saucepan tied to the tail of a tiger, and the noise it made only served to render them still more excited than they were before. A straw fire that was lighted in the middle of the road nearly caused them to set off with the bit between their teeth. They were so shy, that it was necessary for the postilions to catch hold of them by the bridle, and cover their eyes with their hands whenever another carriage was approaching them from the opposite direction. It may be taken as a general rule, that when two carriages drawn by mules meet, one of them is destined to capsize. At last, what was to happen, did happen. I was engaged in turning over in my brain the end of some hemi-stich or other, as I am accustomed to do on my travels, when I saw my companion, who was seated opposite to me, describe a rapid parabola in my direction. This strange action was followed by a severe shock and a general cracking. "Are you killed?" said my friend, finishing his curve. "Quite the contrary," I replied; "and you?" "Very slightly," was his answer. We made our way out as speedily as possible through the shattered roof of the unfortunate coach, which was shivered into a thousand pieces. It was with an infinite degree of satisfaction that, at about fifteen paces off, we beheld in a field the box of our daguerreotype, as perfect and unharmed as if it had still been

in Susse's shop, engaged in producing views of the Colonnade of the Bourse. As for the mules, they had disappeared, carrying off with them, Heaven knows whither, the front part of the carriage, and the two small wheels. Our own loss was limited to a button, which flew off with the violence of the concussion, and which we were unable to find. In sober truth, it would be impossible for any one to capsize more admirably.

I never in my life saw anything so ridiculous as the mayoral lamenting over the ruins of his coach. He put the pieces together just like a child who has broken a tumbler; finding, however, that the damage was irreparable, he began swearing most awfully; he beat himself, he rolled upon the ground, and imitated all the excess of grief as represented by the ancients; the next moment he softened down, and gave free course to the most touching elegies. What grieved him most was the rose-coloured cushions, scattered in all directions, torn and covered with dirt; these cushions were evidently the most magnificent things that he, as a mayoral, could conceive, and his heart bled to see that so much splendour had for ever vanished.

After all, our situation was not over pleasant, although we were seized with a most violent fit of laughter, which was certainly rather ill-timed. Our mules had disappeared like smoke, and all that we had left was a dismantled carriage without wheels. Luckily, the *venta* was not far off. Some one went and procured two *galeras*, which came for us and our luggage. The *galera* (galley) most undoubtedly justifies those who gave it the name

it bears. It is a cart on two or four wheels, with neither top nor bottom. A number of cords made of reeds form, in the lower portion of it, a sort of net, in which the packages and trunks are stowed. Over these is spread a mattress – a real Spanish mattress – which in no way prevents you from feeling the sharp angles of the baggage, thrown in any how beneath. The victims arrange themselves, as well as they can, on this novel instrument of torture, compared to which the gridirons of Saint Lawrence and Guatimozin are beds of roses; for on them, at least, it was possible to turn round. What would the philanthropists, who give galley-slaves post-chaises to ride in, say, if they saw the *galeras* to which the most innocent people in the world are condemned, when they visit Spain?

In this agreeable vehicle, completely innocent of anything like springs, we went along at the rate of four Spanish leagues, which are equal to five French leagues, an hour; just one mile an hour more than the rate attained by our best horsed mails on our best roads. Had we desired to have gone faster we must have procured English racers or hunters. Our route was diversified by a succession of steep ascents and rapid descents, down which we always rattled at a most furious gallop. All the assurance and skill for which Spanish postilions and conductors are famous was requisite to prevent our being shivered into a thousand pieces at the bottom of the various precipices; instead of capsizing merely once, we ought to have been capsizing without intermission. We were thrown from one side to the other like mice, when a person

shakes them about for the purpose of stunning and killing them against the sides of the trap. Nothing but the severe beauty of the landscape could have prevented us from becoming melancholy and crooked in the back; but the lovely hills, with their austere outline, and their sober, calm tints, imparted such a distinctive character to the horizon, which was changing every moment, that they more than compensated for the jolting we got in the *galera*. A village, or some old convent, built like a fortress, varied the oriental simplicity of the view, which reminded us strongly of the background of Decamps's picture of "Joseph sold by his Brethren."

Dueñas, which is situated upon a hill, looks like a Turkish cemetery. The caverns, scooped out of the living rock, are supplied with air by little bell-shaped towers, which at first sight bear a singular resemblance to minarets. A Moorish-looking church completes the illusion. To our left, in the plain, we caught occasional glimpses of the canal of Castile; it is not yet completed.

At Venta de Trigueros, a most singularly beautiful *rose-coloured* horse was harnessed to the *galera*. We had given up mules. This horse fully justified the one which has been so much criticised in the "Triumph of Trajan," by Eugene Delacroix. Genius is always right. Whatever it invents, exists; and Nature imitates it in almost its most fantastic eccentricities. After crossing a road skirted by mounds and jutting buttresses, which presented a tolerably monumental appearance, we at last entered

Valladolid, slightly bruised, but with our noses undamaged, and our arms still hanging to our bodies without the assistance of black pins, like the arms of a new doll. I cannot say much for our legs, in which we seemed to feel all the pins and needles that were ever manufactured in England, as well as the feet of a hundred thousand invisible ants. We alighted in a superb and scrupulously clean *parador*, where we were ushered into two splendid rooms, with balconies looking out upon a square, coloured matting, and walls painted in distemper, yellow and russet-green. As yet we had met with nothing which could justify the charge of uncleanliness and poverty, which travellers make against Spanish inns; we had not found any scorpions in our beds, and the promised insects had not made their appearance.

Valladolid is a large city that is almost entirely depopulated. It is capable of containing two hundred thousand souls, and the number of its inhabitants scarcely amounts to twenty thousand. It is a clean, quiet, elegant town, possessing many peculiar features that tell us we are approaching the east. The façade of San Pablo is covered with marvellous sculptures, of the commencement of the Renaissance period. Before the entrance, and arranged like posts, are granite pillars, surmounted by heraldic lions, holding in every possible position a shield with the arms of Castile upon it. Opposite this edifice is a palace of the time of Charles V., with a courtyard surrounded with extremely elegant arcades and most beautifully sculptured medallions. In this architectural gem, the government sells its ignoble salt and detestable tobacco. By

a lucky chance, the façade of San Pablo is situated in a square, so that a daguerreotype view can be taken of it, which there is generally a great difficulty in doing in the case of edifices of the Middle Ages, almost always hemmed in by a heap of houses and abominable sheds; but the rain, which did not cease for a moment during our stay in Valladolid, prevented our profiting by this circumstance. Twenty minutes of sunshine, piercing the streams of rain at Burgos, had enabled us to take very clear and distinct views of the two spires of the Cathedral and a large portion of the portal; but, at Valladolid, we did not have even twenty minutes, a circumstance which we regretted all the more from the fact of the town abounding in charming specimens of architecture. The building which contains the library, and which they wish to turn into a museum, is built in the most pure and delicious style; and although certain ingenious restorers, who prefer bare boards to bas-reliefs, have scraped away the admirable arabesques in a shameful manner, there is still enough left to render the edifice a masterpiece of elegance. We would particularly direct the attention of draughtsmen to an internal balcony, which cuts the angle of a palace situated on this same Plaza de san Pablo, and forms a *mirador* of the most original description. The outline of the small column uniting the two arches, is peculiarly happy. According to the tradition, it was in this house that the terrible Philip II. was born. We may also mention the colossal fragment of an unfinished cathedral, of granite, by Herrara, in the style of St. Peter's at Rome. This edifice was abandoned for the

Escurial, that lugubrious and fantastic production of Charles V.'s melancholy son.

In a church that was closed, we were shown a collection of pictures that had been made at the time the convents were suppressed, and taken to Valladolid in obedience to an order of the superior authorities. This collection proves those who pillaged the convents and churches to be excellent artists and admirable connoisseurs, for they left none but the most horrible daubs, the best of which would not fetch fifteen francs in a broker's shop. The Museum contains a few tolerable specimens, but nothing at all first-rate; to make up for this defect, there is a great quantity of wood carving, and a large number of ivory figures of our Saviour, but they are more remarkable for their size and antiquity than for the actual beauty of the execution. Persons who go to Spain for the sake of purchasing curiosities will be greatly disappointed; they will not find a single valuable weapon, a rare book or a manuscript. Such objects are never to be met with.

The *Plaza de la Constitucion* at Valladolid is very handsome and very large. It is surrounded by houses, which are supported by columns of bluish granite formed of a single block. These columns produce a fine effect. The Palace *de la Constitucion* is painted russet-green, and ornamented with an inscription in honour of the *innocente Isabella*, as the little queen is called here; it also possesses a clock which is illuminated at night, like that of the Hôtel de Ville at Paris, an innovation whereat the inhabitants

seem greatly to rejoice. Under the pillars are established swarms of tailors, hatters, and shoemakers, whose callings are the three most flourishing ones in Spain. Here, too, are the principal coffee-houses, and the whole life of the population seems to be centered in this one spot. In the other parts of the town you will only meet at rare intervals some straggling individual or other, a *criada* going to fetch water, or a countryman driving an ass before him. This appearance of solitude is augmented still more by the large extent of ground occupied by the town, in which the squares are more numerous than the streets. The *Campo Grande*, near the principal gate, is surrounded by fifteen convents and could make room for a great many more.

On the evening of our arrival, the performance at the theatre consisted of a piece by Don Breton de los Herreros, a dramatic author who is greatly esteemed in Spain. This piece bore the strange title of *El Pelo de la Desa*, which signifies when literally translated, *The Hair of the Pasturage*, a proverbial expression which it is rather difficult to explain, but which answers to the French saying, "La caque sent toujours le hareng" (what is bred in the bone will never come out of the flesh). The plot of the piece turns upon the fact of an Aragonese peasant being about to marry a young girl of noble birth, but having the good sense to feel that he can never be fitted for polite society. The comicality consists in the perfect imitation of the Aragonese dialect and accent, a kind of merit that is not easily perceived by foreigners. The *baile nacional*, without resembling the "Dance of Death"

quite as much as that at Vittoria, was but a poor affair. The next day they played Victor Hugo's *Hernani, ou l'Honneur Castillan*, translated by Don Eugenio de Ochoa. We took care not to neglect so fine an opportunity. The piece is rendered verse for verse with scrupulous exactitude, save some few passages and scenes which were necessarily omitted to suit the public taste. The Scene of the Portraits is reduced to nothing, because Spaniards consider it insulting, and imagine that they are indirectly ridiculed in it. There are also some passages omitted in the fifth act. In general, Spaniards feel affronted when they are spoken of in a poetical manner; they assert that they are calumniated by Victor Hugo, Mérimée, and most of the authors who have written on Spain; yes – calumniated by being represented nobler than they are. They most strenuously disavow the Spain of the Romancero and the Orientals; they almost invariably assert that they are neither poetical nor picturesque, and their assertion is, alas! but too well founded. The drama was well played. The Ruy Gomez of Valladolid was most certainly equal to that of the Rue de Richelieu, which is not saying a little. As for the Hernani, that *rebelle empoisonné*, he would have been highly satisfactory, had he not had the bad taste to dress himself up like the troubadour on a clock. The Doña Sol was almost as *young* as Mademoiselle Mars, without her talent.

The Theatre at Valladolid is of a very pleasing shape, and although the interior is only decorated with a coat of white paint, ornamented with cameos on a grey ground, it produces

a pretty effect. The decorator has hit upon the strange fancy of painting the partitions of the stage-boxes, so as to resemble windows with spotted muslin curtains, exceedingly well imitated. These windows have a very singular appearance. The balcony and the front of the boxes are formed of open-work, which enables the spectator to see whether the women have small feet and well-made shoes; indeed, it also enables him to see whether they possess a neat ankle and well-fitting stocking. This, however, cannot be at all disagreeable to Spanish women, who are nearly always irreproachable in this respect. I perceived by a charming *feuilleton* written by my literary substitute (for the *Presse* penetrates even into these barbarous regions), that the boxes of the new Opéra Comique are constructed on the same plan.

Beyond Valladolid the character of the country changes, and the vast heaths recommence. They possess, however, the advantage over those of Bordeaux of being dotted with clusters of green dwarf oaks, and fir-trees that spread out more at the top, and somewhat resemble a parasol in shape. But they are marked by the same aridity, the same solitude, the same look of desolation. Here and there are scattered heaps of rubbish, pompously called villages, which have been burnt and devastated by the various contending factions; and wandering about among their ruins are seen some few inhabitants, looking tattered and miserable. The only picturesque objects are a few petticoats, of a very bright canary colour, enlivened with embroidery of various

hues, representing birds and flowers.

Olmedo, where the coach stops for the passengers to dine, is completely in ruins. Whole streets are deserted, and others choked up by fallen houses, while grass grows in the squares. Like the doomed cities mentioned in Holy Writ, Olmedo will soon contain no inhabitants save the flat-headed viper, the blear-eyed owl, and the dragon of the desert, who will drag the scales of his belly over the stones of the altars. A girdle of old dismantled fortifications surrounds the place, and the charitable ivy throws its cloak of verdure over the nudity of the gutted and yawning towers. Nature endeavours to repair as well as she can the ravages committed by Time and War. The depopulation of Spain is frightful: in the time of the Moors she possessed thirty-two millions of inhabitants, and, at present, the numbers, at most, ten or eleven millions. Unless some very fortunate change takes place – a thing that is not excessively probable – or the marriages are blessed with supernatural fecundity, many towns that were once flourishing will be abandoned altogether, and their ruins of brick and clay insensibly become amalgamated with the soil which swallows up all things – cities as well as men.

In the room where we dined, a tall woman, built like a Cybele, kept walking up and down, carrying under her arm an oblong basket, covered with a piece of stuff. From this basket there issued little plaintive cries, rather like those of a very young child. I was somewhat puzzled at this, because the basket was so small that if it had contained a child the latter must have been of the

most microscopic and phenomenal proportions – a Lilliputian that ought to be exhibited at fairs. It was not long before the enigma was explained. The nurse – for such she was – drew out from the basket a coffee-coloured puppy, and sitting down, very gravely suckled this new description of baby. She was a *pasiega* going to Madrid to take a situation, and was afraid that her supply of milk might dry up.

On leaving Olmedo, the country does not offer any great variety of scenery; the only thing worth notice that I remarked, before we reached our quarters for the night, was an admirable effect of sunset. The rays of light illuminated one side of a chain of very distant mountains, all the details of which stood out with the greatest clearness, but the portions that were plunged in shadow were almost invisible; and the sky bore a most saturnine appearance. Were a painter to transfer this effect exactly to canvas, he would be accused of exaggeration and inexactitude. On this occasion the posada was much more Spanish than any we had hitherto seen. It consisted of an immense stable surrounded by chambers with whitewashed walls, containing four or five beds each. The whole place was miserable and naked, but not dirty; the characteristic and proverbial filth did not yet make its appearance. In fact, the dining-room contained an incredible example of sumptuousness in the way of furniture, – namely, a set of engravings representing the Adventures of Telemachus, not the charming vignettes with which Célestin Nanteuil and his friend Baron, have illustrated the history of the wearisome son

of Ulysses, but those horrible coloured daubs with which the Rue Saint Jacques inundates the whole world. We set off again at two in the morning, and, as soon as the first streaks of day enabled me to distinguish the different objects, I beheld a sight that I shall never forget as long as I live. We had just changed horses at a village called, I think, Santa Maria de las Nieves, and were toiling up the first ridges of the chain of mountains we had to traverse. I almost imagined I was passing through some city built by the Cyclops. Immense blocks of sandstone, that assumed all sorts of architectural shapes, rose up on all sides, their outlines standing out upon the background of the sky like so many fantastic Towers of Babel. In one place, a flat stone that had fallen across two other rocks bore a most astonishing resemblance to the *peulven* or *dolmen* of the Druids; further on, a series of lofty fragments, shaped like the shafts of columns, represented porticoes and propylæa; in another place, you saw nothing but a chaos – an ocean of sandstone suddenly frozen when in a state of the utmost fury. The bluish-grey of these rocks augmented still more the singularity of the view, while, at every moment, from out the interstices of the stone there gushed forth, in the shape of drizzling vapour, or trickled down like tears of crystal, numerous mountain springs. But what particularly enchanted me was the snow which had melted and run into the hollows, forming little lakes, bordered with emerald-coloured grass, or framed in a circle of silver, composed of snow which had resisted the action of the sun. Pillars raised at

certain distances, and serving to direct the traveller when the snow throws its perfidious mantle over the right road and the precipices, gave the scene a sort of monumental appearance. The torrents foam and roar in every direction; the road passes over them by means of the bridges of uncemented stone so frequent in Spain, and which you meet at every step you take.

The mountains continued to tower higher and higher, and when we had ascended one, another, which we had not before seen, rose up before us. The mules were no longer equal to their task, and we were under the necessity of procuring a team of oxen, which gave us an opportunity of alighting, and performing the rest of the ascent on foot. I was actually intoxicated with the pure bracing air; I felt so light, so joyous, so full of enthusiasm, that I cried out and capered about like a young goat. I experienced a desire to throw myself down all the charming precipices, that looked so azure, so vapoury, and so velvet-like. I wished to be carried away by the cascades, to dip my feet in all the springs, to pluck a leaf from every fir, to roll myself in the glittering snow, to be mixed up with all the objects around, and melt like an atom in the immensity before me.

The lofty mountain crests glistened and sparkled in the sun, like the skirt of a dancing-girl's robe under its shower of silver spangles; others, again, had their peaks surrounded by clouds, and merged imperceptibly into the sky, for nothing resembles a mountain so much as a cloud. The whole view was composed of one succession of precipices and undulations. It is beyond the

power of art, whether of the pen or the pencil, to convey an adequate idea of their different colours and forms. Mountains realize all that the imagination can picture of them, and this is no small praise. The only difference between the reality and the idea we form of it, arises from the fact of our fancying mountains look larger than they do. We are only aware of their enormous size by comparison. On gazing attentively, you perceive that what, at a distance, you took for a blade of grass, is a fir-tree sixty feet high.

At the turn of a bridge, admirably adapted for an ambuscade of brigands, we beheld a small column surmounted by a cross. It was erected to the memory of a poor devil who had ended his days in this narrow pass, in consequence of his having fallen a victim to *manoairada* (violent death). From time to time we met travelling *maragatos*, in their costume of the sixteenth century, which consists of a tight-fitting leathern doublet, fastened with a buckle, wide breeches, and a broad-brimmed hat. We also met several *Valencianos*, with their white linen drawers, like the robes of the Klephts, their handkerchief twisted about their head, their white gaiters bordered with blue, and without feet, after the fashion of the antique *Knemis*, and their long piece of cloth (*capa de muestra*), crossed diagonally by bright-coloured stripes, and draped over their shoulders in a very elegant manner. All that we could perceive of their flesh was as tawny as Florentine bronze. Then, again, we saw strings of mules, caparisoned in the most charming fashion, with bells and party-coloured fringe and housings, while their *arrieros* were armed with carbines. We

were enchanted, for we had found an abundant supply of the picturesque of which we were in search.

The higher we ascended, the thicker and broader became the strips of snow; but a single sunbeam made the mountains stream with water, like a woman laughing in the midst of her tears; on every side little brooks, scattered about like the dishevelled tresses of some Naïad, and clearer than crystal, forced their way downwards. By dint of climbing, we reached the summit of the range, and seated ourselves on the plinth of a large granite lion, which is situated on the further side of the mountain, and marks the boundary of Old Castile; beyond this lion the province of New Castile commences.

We took a fancy to cull a delicious red flower, whose botanical name I do not know, and which was growing in the fissures of the mountain. This necessitated our clambering up on a rock, which is said to be the place where Philip II. used to sit to see how the works of the Escurial were advancing. Either the tradition is apocryphal, or Philip II. must have possessed most astoundingly good eyes.

The coach, which had been toiling up the precipitous steeps, at last rejoined us once more. The oxen were unyoked, and we descended the declivity in a gallop. We stopped to dine at Guadarrama, a little village crouched at the foot of the mountain. The only ornament of which it can boast is a granite fountain, erected by Philip II. At this place, by a strange reversion of the natural order of dinners, goats' milk soup was served up as

dessert.

Madrid, like Rome, is surrounded by a desert; it is impossible to convey an idea of its aridity and desolation. There is not a tree, a drop of water, a green plant, or the least appearance of humidity; nothing but yellow sand and iron-grey rocks; and when you leave the mountain, you do not find even rocks, but large stones. From time to time you perceive a dusty *venta*, a cork-coloured spire, just showing its nose on the horizon, large melancholy-looking oxen dragging along one of the cars we have already described; a countryman on horseback, or on a mule, with a fierce expression of face, a carbine at his saddle-bow, and a sombrero slouched over his eyes, or long strings of whity-brown asses, carrying chopped straw, which is corded up with a network of small ropes, and that is all. The ass which walks first, the *coronel*, has always a small feather or rosette, indicating his superiority in the hierarchy of the long-eared tribe.

At the expiration of a few hours, which our impatience to reach our destination caused to appear still longer than they really were, we at last perceived Madrid with tolerable distinctness. A few minutes afterwards we entered the Spanish capital by the *Puerta de Hierro*, and drove along an avenue planted with dwarf pollards and bordered by small brick towers which serve to raise water. Talking of water, although the transition is not very well timed, I forgot to mention that we crossed the Manzanares by means of a bridge that was worthy of a river of a more serious description; we then passed by the Queen's Palace, one of those

edifices which people are pleased to designate as tasty. The immense terraces on which it is raised give it rather a grand appearance.

After having undergone the visit of the custom-house officials, we proceeded to take up our quarters in the immediate vicinity of the *Calle d'Alcala* and of the *Prado*; the name of our street was the *Calle del Caballero de Gracia*, and our hotel was called *La Fonda de la Amistad*, where Madame Espartero, Duchess de la Vittoria, happened at that time to be staying. The first thing we did was to despatch Manuel, our temporary servant, a most ardent *aficionado* and tauromachist, to procure us tickets for the next bull-fight.

CHAPTER VI
MADRID

Bull-fights – The Arena – Calesins – Espadas, Chulos, Banderilleros, and Picadores Sevilla the Picador – La Estocada a Vuela Pies

We were obliged to wait two days. Never did two days appear so long to me, and in order to overcome my impatience, I read over more than ten times the bills posted up at the corners of the principal streets. These bills promised wonders; they announced eight bulls from the most famous pasturages; the *picadores*, Sevilla and Antonio Rodriguez; and the *espadas*, Juan Pastor, also called *El Barbero*, and Guillen; they wound up by prohibiting the public from throwing into the arena orange-peel or any other projectile capable of injuring the combatants.

The word *matador* is scarcely ever employed in Spain to designate the person who kills the bull; he is entitled *espada* (sword), which is more noble and more characteristic. Neither is the word *toreador* used, but *torero*. I just mention this as a piece of useful information for those authors who are accustomed to introduce a little local colouring into their ballads and comic operas. The fight is called *media corrida*, half-course or fight,

because formerly there used to be two every Monday, one in the morning and one at five in the afternoon, the two together making up the day's amusement. At present only the fight in the afternoon is preserved.

It has been asserted and reasserted on all sides, that the Spaniards are losing their taste for bull-fights, and that civilization will soon cause the amusement to be discontinued altogether. If civilization does effect this, all I can say is that it will be all the worse for civilization, as a bull-fight is one of the grandest sights that the imagination of man can conceive; but, at any rate, the time for their abolition has not yet arrived, and those sensitive writers who affirm the contrary have only to transport themselves some Monday, between the hours of four and five, to the Puerta d'Alcala, in order to be convinced that the taste for this *ferocious* pastime is, as yet, very far from extinct.

Monday, which is the bull-day, *dia de toros*, is a holiday. No one does any work, and the whole town is in commotion. Those persons who have not previously bought their tickets, hasten off towards the *Calle de Carretas*, where the ticket-office is situated, in the hope of finding some place still vacant, for the enormous amphitheatre is all numbered and portioned into stalls, a plan which cannot be praised too highly, and which might be imitated with advantage in the French theatres. The *Calle d'Alcala*, the artery into which all the populous streets of the city flow, is filled with foot-passengers, horse-men, and vehicles. To grace this solemnity, the most strange and extravagant *calesins* and cars

emerge from their dusty retreats, while the most fantastic horses, and the most phenomenal mules come forth into the light of day. The *calesins* reminded me of the Neapolitan corricoli. They have large red wheels and no springs, the body being decorated with paintings more or less allegorical, and lined with old damask silk or faded serge with long silk fringe. Altogether, they produce a most absurd *rococo* effect. The driver sits upon the shaft; this enables him to harangue and belabour his mule just as he thinks fit, and also makes one place more for his customers. The mule is tricked out with as many feathers, rosettes, tufts, bells, and as much fringe as it is possible to fasten to the harness of any quadruped in existence. A *calesin* generally contains a *manola*, and a female friend as well as her *manolo*, not to mention a bunch of *muchachos* hanging on behind. All this flies along with the speed of lightning in the midst of a whirlwind of cries and dust. There are also carriages with four or five mules. Nothing equal to them can be found now-a-days, anywhere save in the pictures of Van der Meulen, which represent the conquests and hunting exploits of Louis XIV.

Every vehicle in the town is laid under contribution, for it is accounted the height of fashion by the *manolas*, who are the grisettes of Madrid, to proceed in a *calesin* to the *Plaza de Toros*: they pawn even their mattresses to obtain money on the day of a bull-fight, and without being exactly virtuous the rest of the week, they are most decidedly much less so on Sunday and Monday. You also see country people who have come to

town on horseback, with their carbine suspended at the bow of their saddle; others, again, either alone or with their wives, are mounted on asses. Besides all these persons, there are the carriages of the fashionable world, and a whole host of honest citizens and señoras in mantles on foot, who quicken their pace on perceiving the mounted National Guard, headed by their trumpeters, advancing to clear the arena. For nothing in the world would any one miss seeing the clearing of the arena, and the precipitate flight of the alguazil after he has thrown to the helper the key of the *toril*, where the horned gladiators are confined. The *toril* is situated opposite the *matadero*, in which place they flay the animals that have been killed. The bulls are driven, the night before the fight, to a meadow called *el arroyo*, near Madrid. This meadow is a favourite walk with the *aficionados*; but it is one, by the way, not wholly free from danger, for the bulls are at liberty, and their drivers find it rather a difficult task to keep them in order. Lastly, the bulls are conducted into the *encierro* (stable attached to the circus) by the aid of old bulls used to the office, and scattered among the herd of their wild brethren.

The *Plaza de Toros* is situated on the left-hand side of the road, beyond the Puerta d'Alcala (which, I may mention in a parenthesis, is a fine structure, resembling a triumphal arch, with trophies and other heroic ornaments); it is an enormous circus, with whitewashed walls, presenting no remarkable feature on the outside. As all the tickets are taken beforehand, the audience enter without the least confusion, and every one clambers to his

place, and sits down according to the particular number of his ticket.

The interior is arranged in the following manner: – Around the arena, which is of truly Roman grandeur, runs a circular barrier of planks, six feet high, painted a bright red, and furnished on each side, at about two feet from the ground, with a wooden ledge, on which the *chulos* and *banderilleros* put one foot, in order to jump over to the other side when they are followed too closely by the bull. This barrier is called *las tablas*. It has four doors, for the entrance of the officials and the bulls, as well as for carrying off the bodies, &c. Beyond this barrier there is another, rather higher. The space between the two forms a kind of corridor, where the *chulos* rest themselves when they are fatigued; it is likewise the station of the picador *sobresaliente* (substitute), whose duty it is always to hold himself in readiness, fully dressed and equipped, in case the chief *picador* should be killed or wounded; and also of the *cachetero* and a few *aficionados*, who, by dint of perseverance, succeed, despite the rules, in smuggling themselves into this blest place, admittance into which is as much sought after in Spain as is the privilege of going behind the scenes of the opera at Paris.

As it frequently happens that the bull, when exasperated, clears the first barrier, the second is surmounted by a network of ropes to prevent his leaping further; and a number of carpenters with axes and hammers are always at hand to repair any damage done to the enclosure, so that accidents are almost impossible.

However, bulls *de muchas piernas* (of much legs), as they are technically called, have been known to clear the second barrier. We have an instance of this in an engraving of the *Tauromaquia* of Goya, the celebrated author of the "Caprices," representing the death of the alcade of Torrezon, who was miserably gored by one of these leaping gentry.

The seats destined for the use of the public are situated immediately beyond the second barrier. Those near the ropes are called *plazas de barrera*, those in the middle *tendidos*, while those next to the first tier of the *grada cubierta* are distinguished by the appellation of *tabloncillos*. All these rows, which remind you of the seats in the Roman amphitheatres, are composed of bluish granite, and have no covering but the canopy of heaven. Immediately behind them are the covered places, *gradas cubiertas*, which are divided into *delantera*, first seats; *centro*, middle seats; and *tabloncillo*, seats with backs. Above these are the boxes, called *palcos* and *palcos por asientos*. They are a hundred and twenty in number, very spacious, and capable of containing twenty persons each. The difference between the *palco por asientos* and the simple *palco* is, that in the former you can take a single place as you can a balcony-stall at the opera. The boxes of the *Reina Gobernadora y de la Innocente Isabel* are decorated with silk hangings and closed by curtains. Next to them is the box of the *ayuntamiento* (municipal authorities), who preside over the sports, and whose duty it is to settle any dispute that may arise.

The circus, thus arranged, contains twelve thousand spectators, all seated at their ease, and enjoying a clear view of everything going forward, – a most indispensable condition in an amusement that is purely ocular. The immense building is always full; and those who are unable to procure *plazas de sombra* (places in the shade) prefer being broiled alive in the uncovered seats, to missing one fight. It is considered as indispensable by those persons who pride themselves on their gentility to have a box at the bull-fights in Madrid, as it is by Parisians of fashion to possess one at the Italian Opera.

On issuing from the outward corridor to proceed to my place, I was seized with a sort of sudden giddiness. The circus was bathed in torrents of light, for the sun is a chandelier of a very superior description, which possesses the advantage of not spilling the oil upon those beneath, and which not even gas will supersede for some time to come. An immense humming floated like a fog of noise over the arena. On the sunny side of the building palpitated and glistened thousands of fans and little round parasols with handles made of reed. They looked like flocks of birds, of ever-varying hues attempting to fly. There was not one place empty. I can assure the reader that it is in itself a grand sight to see twelve thousand people assembled in a theatre of such a size, that heaven alone is capable of painting the ceiling with the blue which it procures from the palette of eternity.

A detachment of the cavalry of the National Guard, exceedingly well mounted and equipped, now rode round the

arena, preceded by two alguazils in their costume, which consists of a large broad-brimmed hat and feather, in the style of Henri IV., black doublet and cloak, and large boots. Their duty was to drive away some few obstinate *aficionados* and certain dogs that were still loitering in the ring. As soon as this was effected, the alguazils went and fetched the *toreros*, under which term are included the *picadores*, *chulos*, *banderilleros*, and the *espada*, who is the principal performer in the drama. These personages made their entry to a flourish of trumpets. The *picadores* were mounted on horses with their eyes hooded, as the sight of the bull might frighten them and cause them to shy, thereby endangering the safety of their riders. The costume of the *picadores* is highly picturesque. It is composed of a short vest, which does not button, of orange, carnation, green or blue velvet, loaded with gold or silver embroidery and spangles, fringe, filigree buttons and ornaments of all kinds, especially on the shoulders, where the stuff is completely hidden beneath a glittering and phosphorescent mass of twisted arabesque-work. Under this is a waistcoat in the same style, a frilled shirt, a variegated neck-handkerchief tied carelessly round the neck, and a silk sash round the waist. Their pantaloons are of fawn-coloured buff, stuffed inside and lined with thin metal plates, like the boots of the French postilions, in order to protect the wearers' legs from being gored by the bull. A grey, low-crowned hat (*sombrero*), with an immense brim, and ornamented with an enormous tuft of favours, and a large mesh or net of black ribbons, which is called,

I believe, a *moño*, and holds the hair gathered up in a pigtail at the back of the head, complete the dress. The *picador* is armed with a lance, at the end of which is an iron spike two or three inches long. This spike cannot wound the bull dangerously, but is enough to irritate or keep him at bay. A piece of leather fitted to the *picador's* hand, prevents the lance from slipping. The saddle rises very high, both behind and before, and resembles those strengthened with iron plates, in which the knights of the Middle Ages used to be buried in the tournaments. The stirrups are made of wood, and form a kind of shoe, like the Turkish stirrups. A long, iron spur, as sharp as a dagger, is fixed in the rider's heel. An ordinary spur would not be sufficient to govern the horses, who are often half dead.

The *chulos* present a very nimble and natty appearance with their breeches of green, blue, or rose-coloured satin, their jacket ornamented with various patterns and flowers, their tight girdle, and their little *montera* cocked knowingly on one ear. On their arm they carry a piece of cloth (*capa*), which they unroll and agitate before the bull's eyes for the purpose of exciting, dazzling, and deceiving him. They are all young men, well built, spare and slim, differing in this respect from the *picadores*, who are, in general, remarkable for their height and athletic proportions; the *picadores* require strength, and the *chulos* agility.

The *banderilleros* wear the same costume as the *chulos*. It is their especial duty to plant a kind of dart, tipped with an iron barb and ornamented with pieces of paper, in the bull's shoulder.

These darts are called *banderillas*, and are employed to revive the animal's fury and lash him up to the pitch of exasperation necessary to make him present a fair aim to the sword of the *matador*. The *banderillero* has to plant two *banderillas* at a time; in order to do this, he must pass his two arms between the bull's horns, a delicate kind of operation, in performing which it might, perhaps, be rather dangerous for a person to be thinking of anything else.

The *espada* differs from the *banderilleros* only by the fact of his having a richer and more highly ornamented costume, which is sometimes of purple silk, a colour particularly offensive to the bull. His weapons consist of a long sword, with a handle in the shape of a cross, and a piece of scarlet cloth stretched on a long stick; the technical term for this kind of waving shield, is *muleta*. The reader is, at present, acquainted with the theatre and the actors. I will now show the latter enacting their various parts.

The *picadores*, escorted by the *chulos*, first go up and bow to the box of the *ayuntamiento*, whence the keys of the *toril* are thrown out to them. These are picked up and delivered to the alguazil, who gives them to the groom of the ring, and then gallops off as hard as he can, pursued by the shouts and cries of the crowd; for the alguazils, as well as all the other representatives of justice, are not much more popular in Spain than the gendarmes and sergents-de-ville are in France. Meanwhile, the two *picadores* take up their position to the left of the door of the *toril*, which is situated directly opposite the royal

box, because the bull's entry is one of the most interesting parts of the fight. The *picadores* are stationed at a very little distance from each other, with their backs to the *tablas*, firmly seated in their saddles, holding their lances couched, and valiantly prepared to receive the beast. The *chulos* and *banderilleros* station themselves at some distance off, or disperse themselves over the arena.

All these preparations, which appear longer in description than they are in reality, excite the curiosity of the public to the highest pitch. Every person looks anxiously at the fatal door, and out of the twelve thousand spectators present, not one takes his eyes off it. At this moment, the loveliest woman in the world might beg in vain for a single glance.

For my own part, I frankly confess that I felt as oppressed as if my heart had been clutched by some invisible hand. I experienced a strange buzzing in my ears, and the perspiration, alternately hot and cold, ran down my back. I never felt more excited in my life.

A shrill flourish of trumpets was now heard; the red folding-doors were thrown wide open with a loud noise, and the bull rushed into the arena, in the midst of an immense hurrah.

He was a superb animal, with a glossy coat, almost black, an enormous dewlap, a square muzzle, sharp, polished, curving horns, clean-made legs, and a tail that was always in motion. Between his shoulders he had a bunch of ribbons, fastened by a large pin, and representing the colours of his *ganaderia*. Dazzled

by the light of day, and astonished at the tumult, he stopped short for a second, and snuffed the air twice or thrice; then, perceiving the nearest *picador*, he made a furious bound, and tore towards him at full gallop.

The *picador* who was thus singled out was Sevilla. I cannot refrain from taking this opportunity to describe this famous Sevilla, who is really the beau-ideal of his class. Imagine a man of about thirty years of age, of a noble expression and demeanour; as robust as Hercules, as bronzed as a mulatto, with superb eyes, and a physiognomy like that of one of Titian's Cæsars. The expression of jovial, contemptuous serenity in his features and bearing, had really something heroic about it. On this occasion he was dressed in an orange-coloured jacket, embroidered and laced with silver; the remembrance of this jacket has ever since remained, even in its minutest details indelibly fixed on my mind. He lowered his lance, and, couching it, sustained the shock of the bull so victoriously, that the savage animal staggered and passed by him, bearing away with him a wound which, ere long, streaked his black coat with red. He stopped, as if uncertain what to do, for a few seconds, and then, with redoubled fury, rushed at the second *picador*, who was stationed at a little distance further on.

Antonio Rodriguez gave him a tremendous thrust with his lance, and inflicted a second wound just beside the first, for it is only allowable to hit the bull in the shoulder. But he again rushed towards Rodriguez with his head near the ground, and plunged his horn right into the horse's belly. The *chulos* ran up, waving

their pieces of cloth, and the stupid animal, attracted and diverted by this fresh object, turned round and pursued them at full speed; but the *chulos*, placing one foot on the ledge we have already described, leaped lightly over the barrier, leaving him very much astonished at no longer seeing any one.

The horn had completely ripped up the horse's belly, so that his entrails came through, and almost touched the ground. I thought that the *picador* would retire and procure another steed; this was, however, far from being the case; he touched his ear, to see whether or not the wound was mortal. The horse was only unseamed; although his wound was most horrible to behold, it could be healed. The entrails are replaced in his belly, a needle and thread are passed through the skin, and the poor creature is still capable of being used again. Rodriguez gave him the spur, and cantered up to take another position at a little distance off.

It now seemed to strike the bull that all he should get from the *picadores* were hard thrusts, and he began to feel a desire to return to his pasture. Instead of *entering* again without hesitation, after making a few bounds, he returned, with the most dogged resolution, to his *querencia*; the *querencia* is the technical term for some corner or other that the bull chooses for a resting-place, and to which he always retires after having made the *cogida*. This word is employed to designate the attack of the bull, while *la suerte* is used in speaking of the *torrero*, who is likewise named *diestro*.

A swarm of *chulos* ran up and waved their bright-coloured

capas before the bull's eyes; one of them was even insolent enough to wrap his cloak, that was rolled up, round the animal's head, making him look exactly like the sign of the *Bœuf à la mode*, which most people have seen at Paris. The bull was furious, and got rid, in the best way he could, of this ill-timed ornament, throwing the innocent piece of stuff into the air, and trampling on it with great rage when it fell on the ground. Taking advantage of this new access of fury, a *chulo* began irritating him, and drew him towards the *picadores*. On finding himself face to face with his foes, the bull hesitated, and then, making up his mind, rushed at Sevilla with such force that the horse fell with his four feet in the air, for Sevilla's arm is a buttress that nothing can bend. Sevilla fell under the horse, which is the best manner of falling, because the rider is then protected from the bull's horns, the body of his steed serving him as a shield. The *chulos* came up, and the horse got off with only a gash in his thigh. They raised Sevilla, who clambered into his saddle again with the greatest coolness imaginable. The horse of Antonio Rodriguez, the other *picador*, was less fortunate; he received so severe a thrust in the breast that the bull's horn entered up to the root, and disappeared entirely in the wound. While the bull was endeavouring to free his head from the body of the horse, Antonio clung to the edge of the *tablas*, which he cleared, thanks to the *chulos*, for when a picador is thrown, he is so weighed down by the iron lining of his boots that he finds it as difficult to move as did the knights of old when encased in their armour.

The poor horse, left to himself, crossed the arena, staggering as if he had been drunk, and entangling his feet in his entrails. A flood of black blood gushed impetuously from his wound, marking the sand with intermittent zigzag lines, which attested the unequalness of his course. At length he fell near the *tablas*. Two or three times he raised his head and rolled his blue eyes, that were already glazed, drawing back his lips, white with foam, and exposing his fleshless teeth. He struck the ground feebly with his tail, while his hind legs moved convulsively and kicked out for the last time, as if he wished to break the thick skull of Death with his hard hoof. He was hardly dead when the *muchachos* on service, seeing that the bull was engaged somewhere else, ran up and took off his saddle and bridle. He remained thus, lying on his flank, like some dark outline upon the sand. He was so slight, so flat, that he might have been mistaken for a profile cut out of black paper. I had already remarked, at Montfaucon, what strangely fantastic forms horses assume after death. Of all animals there are certainly none whose dead bodies are so melancholy to look at as that of a horse. His head, that is so noble and pure in form, is so modelled and flattened by the terrible hand of Nothingness that it seems as if it had been inhabited by a human mind; while his dishevelled mane and streaming tail have something picturesque and poetical about them. A dead horse is a corpse; every other animal that has once ceased to live is nothing more nor less than carrion.

I dwell thus upon the death of this horse, because it excited

in me a more distressing feeling than anything else I ever saw at a bull-fight. But this horse was not the only victim that day. Fourteen others were stretched dead in the arena, one bull alone killing five.

The *picador* returned on a fresh horse, and a number of attacks, more or less successful, then ensued. But the bull was beginning to be tired, and his fury to abate, whereupon the *banderilleros* advanced with their darts, furnished with little pieces of paper, and in a short time the bull's neck was ornamented with a collar of pennons, which all his efforts to shake off only fixed more firmly. A little *banderillero* of the name of *Majaron* was particularly bold and successful in discharging his darts, and sometimes he would even cut an *entrechat* before retiring: as a natural consequence, he was greatly applauded. When the bull had seven or eight *banderillas* fluttering about him, and felt his skin pierced by their darts, and heard the rustling of their paper pennons in his ears, he began to run about in all directions, and bellow in the most horrible manner. His black muzzle became white with foam, and, in his blind fury, he butted so violently against one of the doors, that he broke it off its hinges. The carpenters, who were closely watching his movements, immediately replaced it, while a *chulo* enticed him in another direction; but was pursued so closely, that he had scarcely time to clear the barrier. The bull, exasperated and lashed to the highest pitch of fury, made one prodigious effort and followed him over the *tablas*. All the persons in the

intermediate space jumped with marvellous rapidity into the arena, while the bull, receiving on his passage a shower of blows from the sticks and hats of the first row of spectators, re-entered by another door.

The *picadores* now retired, leaving a free field to the *espada*, Juan Pastor, who proceeded to salute the box of the ayuntamiento, and requested permission to kill the bull. As soon as this was granted, he threw his *montera* into the air, as much as to say that he was about to stake everything upon a single cast, and then walked up to the bull with a deliberate step, concealing his sword under the red folds of his *muleta*.

The *espada* now waved his piece of scarlet cloth several times, and the bull rushed blindly at it. By a mere movement of his body, the *espada* avoided the animal's attack. The latter soon returned, however, butting furiously at the light cloth, which he pushed on one side, without being able to pierce it. The favourable instant was come: the *espada* placed himself exactly opposite the bull, waving his *muleta* with his left hand, and holding his sword horizontally, with the point on a level with the animal's horns. It is difficult to convey by words an idea of the fearful curiosity, the frantic attention produced by this situation, which is worth all the plays Shakspeare ever wrote. A few seconds more, and one of the two actors will be killed! Which will it be, the man or the bull? There they stand, face to face; the man has no defensive weapon of any kind, he is dressed as if he were going to a ball, in pumps and silk stockings. A woman's pin would pierce through his satin

jacket; a mere rag and a slight sword are all that he has to save his life. In this fight all the material advantages belong to the bull, who possesses two terrible horns as sharp as daggers, immense force, and that animal fury which is not conscious of danger. But then, on the other hand, the man has his sword and his courage; the eyes of twelve thousand spectators are fixed upon him, and in a few moments, young and beautiful women will applaud him with their delicate white hands.

The *muleta* was suddenly thrown on one side, leaving the *matador's* body exposed to view; the bull's horns were not an inch from his breast; I thought he was lost. A silvery flash passed with the rapidity of lightning between the two crescents, and the bull fell upon his knees with a roar of pain. He had got the hilt of the sword between his shoulders, just as the stag of Saint Hubert is represented in Albert Dürer's marvellous engraving, bearing a crucifix in the midst of his branching antlers.

Thunders of applause burst forth from all parts of the amphitheatre; the *palcos* of the nobility, the *gradas cubiertas* of the middle classes, the *tendidos* of the *manolos* and *manolas* cried and shouted with all the ardour and petulance which distinguish the natives of southern climes, "*Bueno! Bueno! Viva el Barbero! Viva!!!*"

The blow which the *espada* had just given is held in high estimation, and called *la estocada a vuela pies*; the bull dies without losing one drop of blood, which is accounted the height of elegance, and by falling on his knees, seems to acknowledge

his adversary's superiority. The *aficionados* (dilettanti) say that the inventor of this blow was Joaquin Rodriguez, a celebrated *torrero* of the last century.

When the bull does not die immediately, a mysterious little being, dressed in black, and who has hitherto taken no part in the proceedings, is seen to jump over the barrier. This is the *cachetero*. He advances with a stealthy step, looks at the bull in his death-struggle, to see whether he is capable of getting up again, which is sometimes the case, and, coming behind him, traitorously plunges a cylindrical dagger, shaped at its extremity like a lancet, into his neck; this cuts the spinal marrow, and produces instantaneous death. The best spot is behind the head, some inches from an imaginary straight line drawn from horn to horn.

The military band proclaimed the bull's death, one of the doors was thrown open, and four mules, magnificently caparisoned with feathers, bells, woollen tufts, and little flags, yellow and red, the Spanish national colours, entered the arena. These mules bear off the dead bodies, which are attached to a rope, furnished at the end with a large hook. The horses were taken away first, and then the bull. These four splendid and spirited animals, who dragged along the sand, with frantic velocity, all the dead bodies which, but a short time before, were themselves so active, had a strange, savage look, which made you forget, in some degree, the mournful duty they had to perform. When they had left, a groom came with a basketful of earth,

which he spread over the pools of blood, which might otherwise cause the *torreros* to slip. The *picadores* resumed their places near the door, the orchestra sounded a flourish, and another bull rushed into the arena, for no time is allowed to elapse between the acts of this drama; nothing stops it, not even the death of a *torrero*. As we have already mentioned, the *doubles* are waiting, ready dressed and armed, in case of accidents. It is not our intention to give a separate account of the deaths of eight different bulls who were sacrificed that day; we will merely mention certain variations and remarkable incidents.

The bulls are not always very savage; some are even very gentle, and would only be too happy to lie down quietly in the shade. It is easy to perceive, by their good-natured honest look, that they prefer their pastures to the circus. They turn their backs on the *picadores*, and, in the most phlegmatic manner, allow the *chulos* to wave their many-coloured cloaks under their very nose. Not even the *banderillas* can rouse them from their apathetic condition. In cases like these, it is necessary to have recourse to more violent expedients; such, for example, as the *banderillas de fuego*. These are slight sticks, with fireworks attached, which go off some minutes after they are planted in the shoulders of the *toro cobarde* (coward) and explode with a shower of sparks and detonations. By this ingenious contrivance, the bull is goaded, burnt, and stunned simultaneously; were he the most *aplomado* (leaden) of bulls, he cannot possibly avoid becoming furious. He indulges in a succession of extravagant capers, of which no

one would ever suppose so heavy an animal capable; he bellows, foams, and twists himself about in every direction, to escape from the disagreeable proximity of the fireworks, which are burning his ears and scorching his hide.

The *banderillas de fuego*, however, are never used but at the last extremity; the fight is considered, as it were, disgraced when it is necessary to have recourse to them; but if the alcade is too long before waving his handkerchief as a sign that he allows them to be employed, the public create such a horrible disturbance that he is obliged to yield. The most extraordinary vociferations, howling, shouting, and stamping of feet, break out on all sides. Some holla "*Banderillas de fuego!*" while others exclaim, "*Perros! perros!*" (The dogs!) The bull is overwhelmed with abuse; he is called a scoundrel, an assassin, a thief; the spectators offer him a place in the shade, and indulge in all sorts of pleasantry, which is frequently very witty. In a short time a chorus of sticks is added to the vociferations, if the latter do not produce the desired effect. The flooring of the *palcos* creaks and gapes, and the painting on the ceilings falls in small whitish pellicles, like so much snow mixed with dust. The public becomes exasperated to the highest pitch. "*Fuego al alcade! perros el alcade!*" (Burn the alcade! to the dogs with him!) shout the incensed multitude, shaking their fists at the box of the *ayuntamiento*. At last, the much desired permission is granted, and everything becomes quiet again. During these kinds of *jawing-matches*– excuse the term, but I cannot find a better –

you often hear some very humorous remarks. I will instance one that is very concise and very cutting. A *picador*, magnificently dressed in a completely new suit, was showing off on his horse without taking any part in the proceedings, and remaining in a part of the circus where there was no danger. "*Pintura! pintura!*" hollaed the spectators to him, clearly perceiving the motives of his conduct.

Very frequently the bull is so cowardly that even the *banderillas de fuego* are insufficient. He returns to his *querenzia*, and will not *enter*. The cries of "*Perros! perros!*" then recommence. On a sign from the alcade, the canine gentlemen are introduced. They are admirable animals, of the purest breed and most extraordinary beauty. They go straight up to the bull. The latter tosses about half-a-dozen in the air, but that does not prevent one or two of the strongest and most courageous from at length succeeding in catching hold of his ear. When they have once fastened on it they are like leeches; they might be turned inside out before they would let go. The bull shakes his head – dashes them against the barrier – but it is of no avail. When this has lasted for some time, the *espada*, or the *cachetero*, plunges a sword into the side of the victim, who bends his knees and falls on the ground, where he is despatched. Sometimes they employ a kind of instrument called a *media-luna*, (half-moon), with which they hamstring him, and render him incapable of offering any resistance: in this case it is no longer a combat, but a disgusting butchery. It frequently happens that a *matador* fails;

his sword meets with a bone and springs back, or else it enters the throat and causes the bull to vomit blood in large quantities; this is a serious fault according to the laws of *Tauromaquia*. If the animal is not despatched at the second blow, the *espada* is overwhelmed with hisses and abuse; for the Spanish public is impartial: it applauds both bull and man in exact proportion to their respective merits. If the bull rips up a horse and over-throws the rider, it shouts "*Bravo, toro!*" if the man wounds the bull, "*Bravo, torrero!*" but it will not suffer cowardice either in man or beast. A poor devil who was afraid to go and fix his *banderillas* in an extremely ferocious bull, occasioned such a tumult, that the alcade, in order to restore order, promised to have him sent to prison.

During this very fight, Sevilla, who is an admirable horseman, was greatly applauded for the following feat: – An extraordinarily strong bull caught his horse under the belly, and, tossing up its head, lifted it completely off the ground. In this perilous situation, Sevilla did not so much as move in his saddle, but kept both stirrups, and held his horse so well in hand that it came down again upon its four feet.

The day's entertainment had been good. Eight bulls and fourteen horses killed, and a *chulo* slightly wounded: what could any one desire more? Each bull-fight must bring in about twenty or twenty-five thousand francs,[5] which are given by the queen to the principal hospital, where the wounded *torreros* are treated

[5] £800 or £1000.

with every possible attention. A priest and a surgeon are always waiting in a room at the *Plaza de Toros*, ready to administer spiritual or corporal assistance as the case may be. Formerly, and I believe it is the case at present as well, a mass used to be said for the combatants during the fight. You see that nothing is neglected, and that the impressarios take every precaution. As soon as the last bull is killed, every one leaps into the arena, and discusses on the way home the merit of the different *suertes* or *cogidas* which have struck him as most worthy of notice. And what, you will ask, are the women like? for that is the first question put to a traveller. I own, frankly, that I have not the slightest idea. I have a vague notion that there were some very pretty ones near me, but I will not positively assert the fact.

Let us proceed to the Prado, in order to clear up this important point.

CHAPTER VII
MADRID —*continued*

The Prado – The Mantilla and Fan – The Spanish Type – Water-Merchants; Coffee-houses of Madrid – Newspapers – The Politicians of the Puerta del Sol – Post-Office – The Houses of Madrid – Tertullias; Spanish Society – The Teatro del Principe – The Queen's Palace; the Palace of the Cortes, and the Monument of the Dos de Mayo – The Armeria and El Buen Retiro.

Whenever Madrid is mentioned, the first objects that the word suggests to our minds are the Prado and La Puerta del Sol. Since then our inclination leads us to do so, let us now proceed to the Prado, as it is the hour of the evening promenade. The Prado consists of a number of alleys and cross-alleys, with a road in the middle for carriages. It is shaded by stunted pollards, whose roots are in connexion with a little basin lined with brick, into which the water is conveyed by small canals at the hours appointed for watering; without this precaution the trees would soon be devoured by the dust, and shrivelled up by the sun. The promenade commences at the Convent d'Atocha, passing by the gate of that name, as well as by the Puerta d'Alcala, and terminating at the gate of the Franciscan Friars. The fashionable world, however, frequents only the space

bounded by the fountain of Cybele and the fountain of Neptune, from the Puerta d'Alcala to the Carrera de San Jeronimo. Within this space there is a large plot of ground called the *saloon*, surrounded by chairs, like the principal walk in the gardens of the Tuileries. Near the *saloon* there is a cross-walk which bears the name of *Paris*. It is the Boulevard de Gand of Madrid, and the rendezvous of the fashionable world. The fashionable world, however, is not, as a general rule, particularly distinguished by a taste for the picturesque, and in this instance it has selected the most dusty, the least shady, and the least convenient part of the whole promenade. The crowd is so great in this narrow space, confined between the *saloon* and the carriage-way, that you frequently find it a difficult task to put your hand into your pocket and take out your handkerchief. You must "lock up" and follow the stream as you would in the *tail* at the doors of a theatre (that is to say, as you would have done when there were *tails* at the doors of a theatre). The only possible reason there could have been for choosing this spot, is that you can see and salute the persons who are passing in their carriages (it always looks well for a foot-passenger to salute a carriage). The equipages are not very brilliant. Most of them are drawn by mules, whose long, blackish coat, large belly, and pointed ears, produce a most ungraceful effect; they resemble the mourning coaches which follow a hearse. The carriage of the queen herself has but a very simple and tradesman-like appearance. Any Englishman, with the slightest pretensions to being considered a millionaire,

would most certainly look down upon it with contempt; there are, doubtless, some exceptions, but they are rare. The splendid Andalusian horses, however, on which the young fashionables of Madrid prance about, are charming. It is impossible to behold anything more elegant, more noble, and more graceful than an Andalusian stallion, with its plaited mane, long, thick tail reaching to the ground, trappings ornamented with red tufts, stately head, sparkling eye, and neck swelling out like a pigeon's breast. I saw one ridden by a lady, of the colour of a Bengal rose (the horse and not the lady), frosted over with silver, and of the most marvellous beauty. What a difference there is between these noble beasts who have preserved all their splendid primitive form, and those locomotive machines made of muscles and bones, called English racers, which have nothing of the horse left about them, save four legs and a backbone on which to place a jockey!

The Prado most certainly offers one of the most animated sights it is possible to behold. The promenade is one of the finest in the world; not for the place itself, which is of the most ordinary description, in spite of all the efforts made by Charles III. to supply its natural defects, but on account of the astonishing concourse of persons that are collected there every evening, from seven o'clock until half-past ten. There are very few bonnets to be seen on the Prado. With the exception of some few bright yellow affairs resembling coal-scuttles, which may have been used to decorate the head of some learned ass, you meet with

mantillas only. The Spanish mantilla is therefore a fact. I had previously believed that it existed no longer, save in the ballads of Monsieur Crevel de Charlemagne. It is made of black or white lace, but generally black, and is worn at the back of the head, on the top of the comb; a few flowers placed on each side of the forehead complete the head-dress, which produces the most charming effect imaginable. When a woman wears a mantilla, she must be as ugly as the three theological virtues not to appear pretty; unfortunately, it is the only part of the Spanish costume which has been preserved, all the rest is *à la Française*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.