GREAT COURT OF THE ALCAZAR, SEVILLE.
stucco, the effect of which suffers from a series of
small arches, running round the upper part of the
room, having been deprived of their tracery to make
room for the painted heads (more or less resem­
bling) of the kings of Spain, Goths and their suc­
cessors, excepting the Arabs and Moors. This de­
gradation is, however, forgotten from the moment
the eye is directed to the ceiling.

In the Arab architecture, the ornament usually
becomes more choice, as it occupies a higher eleva­
tion; and the richest and most exquisite labours of
the artist are lavished on the ceilings. The designs
are complicated geometrical problems, by means of
which the decorators of that nation of mathema­
ticians and artists attained to a perfection of orna­
ment unapproached by any other style. From the
cornice of this room rise clusters of diminutive gilded
semi-cupolas, commencing by a single one, upon
which two are supported, and multiplying so rapidly
as they rise, some advancing, others retreating, and
each resting on a shoulder of one below, that, by
the time they reach the edge of the great cupola,
they appear to be countless. The ornament of this
dome consists of innumerable gilt projecting bands,
of about two inches in width; these intersect each
other in an infinite profusion of curves, as they
stretch over the hemispherical space. The artist,
who would make a pencil sketch of this ceiling, should be as deep a geometrician as the architect who designed it.

On quitting the Hall of Ambassadors, we arrive at the best part of the building. Passing through the arcade at the right-hand side, a long narrow apartment is crossed, which opens on a small court called the Court of Dolls (Patio de los Muecenas). No description, no painting can do justice to this exquisite little enclosure. You stand still, gazing round until your delight changes into astonishment at such an effect being produced by immovable walls and a few columns. A space, of about twenty feet by thirty,—in which ten small pillars, placed at corresponding but unequal distances, enclose a smaller quadrangle, and support, over a series of different sized arches, the upper walls,—has furnished materials to the artist for the attainment of one of the most successful results in architecture. The Alhambra has nothing equal to it. Its two large courts surpass, no doubt, in beauty the principal court of this palace; but, as a whole, this residence, principally from its being in better preservation and containing more, is superior to that of Granada, always excepting the advantage derived from the picturesque site of the latter. The Court of Dolls, at all events, is unrivalled.
The architect made here a highly judicious use of some of the best gleanings from Italica, consisting of a few antique capitals, which, being separated from their shafts, have been provided with others, neither made for them, nor even fitted to them.

* Feeling his powers as a draughtsman inadequate to do justice to this court, the author has inserted the above sketch merely to show the general architectural design.
The pillars are small, and long for their diameter, with the exception of the four which occupy the angles, which are thicker and all white. The rest are of different coloured marbles, and all are about six feet in height. The capitals are of still smaller proportions; so that at the junction they do not cover the entire top of the shaft. This defect, from what cause it is difficult to explain, appears to add to their beauty.

The capitals are exquisitely beautiful. One in particular, apparently Greek, tinged by antiquity with a slight approach to rose colour, is shaped, as if carelessly, at the will of the sculptor; and derives from its irregularly rounded volutes and uneven leaves, an inconceivable grace. The arches are of various shapes, that is, of three different shapes and dimensions, and whether more care, or better materials were employed in the tracery of the walls in this court, or for whatever other reason, it is in better preservation than the other parts of the palace. It has the appearance of having been newly executed in hard white stone.

Through the Court of Dolls you pass into an inner apartment, to which it is a worthy introduction. This room has been selected in modern times, as being the best in the palace, for the experiment of restoring the ceiling. The operation has been
judiciously executed, and produces an admirable effect. The design of this ceiling is the most tasteful of the whole collection. Six or seven stars placed at equal distances from each other, form centres, from which, following the direction of the sides of their acute angles, depart as many lines; that is, two from each point; or, supposing the star to have twelve points—twenty-four from each star: but these lines soon change their directions, and intersecting each other repeatedly, form innumerable small inclosures of an hexagonal shape. The lines are gilt. Each hexagonal compartment rises in relief of about an inch and a half from the surface, and is ornamented with a flower, painted in brilliant colours on a dark ground.

The room is twenty-four feet in height by only sixteen wide, and between sixty and seventy in length. At the two ends, square spaces are separated from the centre portion by a wall, advancing about two feet from each side, and supporting an arch, extending across the entire width. These arches were probably furnished with curtains, which separated at will the two ends from the principal apartment, and converted them into sleeping retreats. Their ornaments are still more choice than those of the centre. With the exception of this room, all the principal apartments, and the two courts, are
decorated from the ground upwards to a height of about five feet, with the azulejos, or mosaic of porcelain tiles, the colours of which never lose their brilliancy.

The first floor is probably an addition made entirely subsequently to the time of the Moors. It contains several suites of plain white-washed rooms, and only two ornamental apartments, probably of Don Pedro's time. These are equal to those on the ground floor with respect to the tracery of the walls, unfortunately almost filled with white-wash; but their ceilings are plainer. There is a gallery over the Court of Dolls, of a different sort from the rest, but scarcely inferior in beauty to any part of the edifice. The pillars, balustrades, and ceilings, are of wood.

One of the last mentioned apartments has an advantage over all the rest of the palace, derived from its position. It opens on a terrace looking over the antique gardens,—a view the most charming and original that can be imagined. This room must be supposed to have been the boudoir of Maria Padilla,—the object of the earliest and most durable of Pedro's attachments; whose power over him outlived the influence of all his future liaisons. It is indeed probable that the taste for this residence, and the creation of a large portion
of its beauties, are to be attributed to the mistress, rather than to a gloomy and bloodthirsty king, as Pedro is represented to have been, and whose existence was totally unsuited to such a residence. In the Court of Dolls the portion of pavement is pointed out on which his brother Don Fadrique fell, slaughtered, as some say, by Pedro's own hand,—at all events in his presence, and by his order.

This monarch, were his palace not sufficient to immortalize him, would have a claim to immortality, as having ordered more executions than all the other monarchs who ever ruled in Spain, added together. It appears to have been a daily necessity for him; but he derived more than ordinary satisfaction when an opportunity could be obtained of ordering an archbishop to the block. The see of Toledo became under him the most perilous post in the kingdom, next to that of his own relatives: but he occasionally extended the privilege to other archbishopricks. It is a relief to meet with a case of almost merited murder in so sanguinary a list. Such may be termed the adventure of an innocent man, who, seeing before him a noose which closes upon everything which approaches it, carefully inserts his neck within the circumference.

This was the case of a monk, who, hearing that Pedro, during one of his campaigns, was encamped
in a neighbouring village, proceeded thither, and demanded an audience. His request being immediately granted, no doubt in the expectation of some valuable information respecting the enemy's movements, the holy man commenced an edifying discourse, in which he informed Don Pedro, that the venerabilissimo San Somebody (the saint of his village) had passed a considerable time with him in his dream of the previous night: that his object in thus miraculously waiting upon him was, to request he would go to his Majesty, and tell him, that, owing to the unpardonable disorders of his life, it was determined he should lose the approaching battle. It was the unhappy friar's last sermon; for in less than five minutes he had ceased to exist.

It stands to reason, that, owing to the retired habits of this friar, a certain anecdote had never reached his ear relative to another member of a religious fraternity. At a period that had not long preceded the event just related, the misconduct of this sovereign had drawn down upon him the displeasure of the head of the church.* The thunderbolt was already forged beneath the arches of

* He had put to death the "Master of St. Bernard," a title of those days possessed by the chief of that order appointed by the Pope. It was Urbano V, who, on the occasion of this act, resented at the same time various other offences.
the Vatican; but a serious difficulty presented itself. The culprit was likely to turn upon the hand employed in inflicting the chastisement. At length a young monk, known to a member of the holy synod as a genius of promise, energetic and fertile in resources, was made choice of, who unhesitatingly undertook the mission. He repaired to Seville, and after a few days' delay, employed in combining his plan of operation, he got into a boat, furnished with two stout rowers, and allowing the current to waft him down the Guadalquivir, until he arrived opposite a portion of the bank known to be the daily resort of the King, the approached the shore, and waited his opportunity.

At the accustomed hour the royal cavalcade was seen to approach; when, standing up in the boat, which was not allowed to touch the shore, he made signs that he would speak to the party. The monkish costume commanded respect even from royalty, and Don Pedro reined in his horse. The monk then inquired whether it would gratify his Majesty to listen to the news of certain remarkable occurrences that had taken place in the East, from which part of the world he had just arrived. The King approached, and ordered him to tell his story: upon which he unrolled the fatal document, and
with all possible rapidity of enunciation read it from beginning to end.

Before it was concluded, the King had drawn his sword, and spurred his horse to the brink of the water; but at his first movement the boat had pushed off,—the reader still continuing his task,—so that by the time Pedro found himself completely excommunicated, his rage passing all bounds, he had dashed into the water, directing a sabre cut, which only reached the boat's stern. He still, however, spurred furiously on, and compelled his horse to swim a considerable distance; until, the animal becoming exhausted, he only regained the shore after being in serious danger of drowning. It may easily be imagined that the papal messenger, satisfied with his success, avoided the contact of terra firma, until he found himself clear of Pedro's dominions.

Quitting the room—that of Maria Padilla (according to my conjecture) by the door which leads to the terrace, you look down on a square portion of ground, partitioned off from the rest by walls, against which orange-trees are trained like our wall-fruit trees, only so thickly that no part of the masonry is visible. All the walls in the garden are thus masked by a depth of about eight inches of leaves evenly clipped. In the fruit season the effect
is admirable. The small square portions next to the palace thus partitioned off are laid out in flower-beds, separated by walks of mixed brick and porcelain, all of which communicate with fountains in the centres. The fountains, simple and destitute of the usual classical menagerie of marine zoology and gods and goddesses, whose cooperation is so indispensable in most European gardens to the propulsion of each curling thread or gushing mass of the cold element,—derive all their charm from the purity and taste displayed in their design. One of the most beautiful of them consists merely of a raised step, covered with azulejos, enclosing a space of an hexagonal form, in the centre of which the water rises from a small block of corresponding form and materials. The mosaic is continued outside the step, but covers only a narrow space.

The terrace stretches away to the left as far as the
extremity of the buildings, the façade of which is hollowed out into a series of semicircular alcoves; there being no doors nor windows, with the exception of the door of the room through which we issued. The alcoves are surrounded with seats, and form so many little apartments, untenable during the summer, as they look to the south, but forming excellent winter habitations. Arrived at the extremity of the palace front, the promenade may be continued at the same elevation down another whole side of the gardens, along a terrace of two stories, which follows the outer enclosure. This terrace is very ornamental. From the ground up to a third of its height, its front is clothed with the orange-tree, in the same manner as the walls already described. Immediately above runs a rustic story of large projecting stones, which serves as a basement for the covered gallery, or lower of the two walks. This gallery is closed on the outside, which is part of the town wall. The front or garden side is composed of a series of rustic arches, alternately larger and smaller, formed of rugged stones, such as are used for grottoes, and of a dark brown colour—partly natural, partly painted.

The arches are supported by marble columns, or rather fragments of columns,—all the mutilated antique trunks rummaged out of Italica. For a shaft
of insufficient length a piece is found of the dimensions required to make up the deficiency, and placed on its top without mortar or cement. Some of the capitals are extremely curious. Among them almost every style may be traced, from the Hindoo to the Composite: but no one is entire, nor matched with any part of the column it was originally destined to adorn. Over this gallery is the open terrace, which continues that of the palace side on the same level. The view extends in all directions, including the gardens and the surrounding country; for we are here at the extremity of the town. At the furthest end the edifice widens, and forms an open saloon, surrounded with seats, glittering with the bright hues of the azulejos.

From these terraces you look down on the portion of the garden in which the royal arms are represented, formed with myrtle-hedges. Eagles, lions, castellated towers,—all are accurately delineated. Myrtle-hedges are also used in all parts of the gardens as borders to the walks. It is a charming evening’s occupation to wander through the different enclosures of these gardens, which, although not very extensive, are characterised by so much that is uncommon in their plan and ornaments, that the lounger is never weary of them. Nor is the visible portion of their attractions more curious than the hidden sources of
amusement and—ablution, by means of which an uninitiated wanderer over these china-paved walks, may be unexpectedly, and more than necessarily refreshed. By means of a handle, concealed—here in the lungs of some bathing Diana in the recesses of her grotto—here in the hollow of a harmless looking stone—an entire line of walk is instantaneously converted into a stage of hydraulics—displaying to the spectator a long line of embroidery, composed of thousands of silver threads sparkling in the sunshine, as issuing from unseen apertures in the pavement they cross each other at a height of a few feet from the ground, forming an endless variety of graceful curves. Almost all the walks are sown with these burladores, as they are termed.

A large portion of the grounds consists of an orange-grove, varied with sweet lemon-trees. The trees are sufficiently near to each other to afford universal shade, without being so thickly planted as to interfere with the good-keeping of the grass, nor with the movement of promenading parties. In the centre of this grove is a beautiful edifice,—a square pavilion entirely faced, within and without, with the azulejos, with the exception only of the roof. Around it is a colonnade of white marble, enclosing a space raised two feet above the ground, and surrounded by a seat of the same mosaic. The
interior is occupied by a table, surrounded with seats.

The subterranean baths, called the baths of Maria Padilla, are entered from the palace end of the garden. They extend to a considerable distance under the palace, and must during the summer heats, have been a delightfully cool retreat.

This alcazar is probably the best specimen of a Moorish residence remaining in Europe. The Alhambra would, no doubt, have surpassed it, but for the preference accorded by the Emperor, Charles the Fifth, to its situation over that of Seville: owing to which he contented himself with building a gallery over the principal court at the latter; while at Granada, he destroyed a large portion of the old buildings, which he replaced by an entire Italian palace. At present the ornamented apartments of the Seville palace are more numerous, and in better preservation than those of the Alhambra.

Both, however, would have been thrown into the shade, had any proportionate traces existed of the palace of Abderrahman the Third, in the environs of Cordova. Unfortunately nothing of this remains but the description. It is among the few Arab manuscripts which escaped the colossal auto-da-fé of Ferdinand and Isabella, and would appear too extravagant to merit belief, but for the known
minuteness and accuracy of the Arab writers, proved by their descriptions of the palaces and other edifices which remain to afford the test of comparison.

The immense wealth lavished by these princes, must also be taken into consideration, and especially by the Caliphs of Cordova, who possessed a far more extended sway than belonged to the subsequent dynasties of Seville and Granada. According to a custom prevalent at their court, rich presents were offered to the sovereign on various occasions. Among others, governors of provinces, on their nomination, seldom neglected this practical demonstration of gratitude. This practice is to this day observed at the court of the Turkish Sultan, and serves to swell the treasury in no small degree. Abderrahman the Third, having granted a government to the brother of his favourite, Ahmed ben Sayd, the two brothers joined purses, and offered a present made up of the following articles—accompanied by delicate and ingenious compliments in verse, for the composition of which they employed the most popular poet of the day:—Four hundred pounds weight of pure gold; forty thousand sequins in ingots of silver; four hundred pounds of aloes; five hundred ounces of amber; three hundred ounces of camphor; thirty pieces of tissue of gold
and silk; a hundred and ten fine furs of Khorasan; forty-eight caparisons of gold and silk, woven at Bagdad; four thousand pounds of silk in balls thirty Persian carpets; eight hundred suits of armour; a thousand shields; a hundred thousand arrows; fifteen Arabian, and a hundred Spanish horses, with their trappings and equipments; sixty young slaves—forty male, and twenty female.

The palace near Cordova, erected by this sovereign, was called Azarah (the Flower) after the name of his favourite mistress. Its materials consisted entirely of marble and cedar wood; and it contained four thousand three hundred columns. It was sufficiently spacious to lodge the whole court, besides a guard of cavalry. The gardens, as was usual with the Arabs, formed the part of the residence on which were lavished the greatest treasures of wealth, and the choicest inventions of taste. The fountains were endless in number and variety. On one of the most picturesque spots was situated an edifice called the Caliph's Pavilion. It consisted of a circular gallery of white marble columns with gilded capitals; in the centre rose a fountain of quicksilver, imitating all the movements of water, and glittering in the sun with a brightness too dazzling for the eye to support. Several of the saloons of this palace were ornamented with fountains. In one, which
bore the name of the Caliph's Saloon, a fountain of jasper contained in the centre a golden swan of beautiful workmanship—and over it hung from the ceiling a pearl, which had been sent from Constantinople as a present from the Greek Emperor to Abderahman. The mosque of this palace surpassed in riches, although not in size, the Aljama of Cordova.

These were monuments worthy to have kings and caliphs for architects, for such they had. There is no doubt that the palace of Azahrah was planned and designed by the Caliph himself; and the founder of that dynasty, Abderahman the First, not only designed the magnificent mosque of Cordova, but presided daily over the progress of its erection. Possessed, as these sovereigns were, as well as all the well-born portion of their nation, of a highly cultivated education, the intervals of leisure, left them by war, were rarely thrown away in idleness. Abderahman the First was a poet, besides being a mathematician, an architect, and the first soldier of his time. Some of his writings have been preserved, and are among the Arab works collected and translated by Condé into Spanish. The following stanzas, addressed to a palm-tree, must be, as is always the case, still more beautiful in the original, although charming in the Spanish. The monarch of the
Western Empire, after having vanquished his enemies, and pacified his dominions,—beloved by his subjects and by all who approached him, and possessed of the resources of science to occupy his mind, was nevertheless unhappy. He preferred his home in Asia to the splendours of an imperial throne in such a land as Andalucia. He caused a young palm-tree to be brought from Syria, and planted in a garden formed by him in the environs of Cordova; and it was his delight to sit in a tower constructed in the garden, and gaze at his tree.

It was to this tree he addressed the lines thus translated:—

Tu tambien, insignie palma,
Eres aqui forastera,
De Algarbe las dulces auras
Tu pompa halagan y besan.
En fecundo suelo arraigas,
Y al cielo tu cima elevas,
Tristes lagrimas lloraras,
Si qual io sentir pudieras.

Tu no sientes contratiempos
Como io de suerte aviesa:
A mi de pena y dolor
Continuas lluvias me annegan.
Con mis lagrimas regue
Las palmas que el Forat riega,
Pero las palmas y el rio
Se olvidan de mis penas.
When my unhappy fate,
And Abl. Abar's fierce
Forced me to leave
Of my beloved homeland;
None remembers you;
But I, sad, cannot
Stop crying for her.

It is probable that on the occasion of the surrender of Cordova to Ferdinand the Third, the Moors destroyed their palace of Azarah, since they were desirous of acting in a similar manner at Seville, with regard to Geber's Tower. Perhaps from disgust at the idea that a monument, the beauty and grandeur of which had inspired them with a sort of affection, would be, being gazed at, trodden, and possibly disfigured, (as it turned out) by those whom they looked upon as barbarians, and who would not appreciate its perfection, they attempted to introduce a clause into the conditions of the surrender of Seville, stipulating the destruction of the tower.

By way of testifying to the accuracy of the opinion they had formed of their adversaries, Saint Ferdinand was on the point of agreeing to the clause: when his son, afterwards his successor, Alonso el Sabio, perhaps the only Christian present, who felt sufficient interest in a square mass of masonry, to care how the question was decided,
energetically interfered, affirming that a single brick displaced, should be paid with the lives of the whole population.

This most perfect scientific monument left by the Arabs, for the possession of which, after the architect, Europe is indebted to Alonso the Tenth, we will presently examine, together with the cathedral, which was afterwards erected, so as to include it in his plan.
LETTER XIX

CATHEDRAL OF SEVILLE.

We have visited the most beautiful edifice in Seville; we are now approaching the most magnificent. The native writers, participating somewhat in the character attributed to the inhabitants of their province, sometimes called the Gascony of Spain, declare this cathedral to be the grandest in the world. This is going too far; setting aside St. Peter's, and the Santa Maria del Fiore, the style of which renders the comparison more difficult, the Duomo of Milan, of which this building appears to be an imitation, must be allowed to be superior to it, externally at least, if not internally. Had they ranked it as the finest church out of Italy, they would not have been much in error, for such it probably is.

No one in approaching, excepting from the west, would imagine it to be a Gothic edifice. You perceive an immense quadrangular enclosure, filled apparently
with cupolas, towers, pinnacles of all sorts and styles, but less of the Gothic than any other. These belong to the numerous accessory buildings, subsequently annexed to the church; such as sacristies, chapels, chapter-hall, each subsequent erection having been designed in a different style. The cathedral is inaccessible on the south side, that which we first reach in coming from the Alcazar. It is enclosed here within a long Italian façade of about thirty to forty feet elevation, ornamented by a row of Ionic pilasters, supporting an elegant frieze and balustrade. We therefore ascend the raised pavement, which, bounded by a series of antique shafts of columns, surrounds the whole enclosure; and having passed down the greater part of the east end, find a small portal close to the Giralda, which admits to the church through the court of orange-trees. Before we enter, we will look round on this view, which possesses more of the Moorish character, than that which awaits us in the interior. Some idea of the general plan of these buildings will be necessary, in order that you may perfectly understand our present point of view.

I mentioned above, that the general enclosure formed a square. This square, the sides of which face the four points of the compass, is divided by a straight line into two unequal parts, one being about
a third wider than the other. The direction of the line is east and west; to the south of it is the cathedral, to the north, the Moorish court of orange-trees. The Arab Tower, now called the Giralda, stands in the north-east angle of the cathedral, and the small door, through which we have just entered, in the south-eastern angle of the court, is close by it.

The court is surrounded by buildings; for besides the church on its south side, a chapel called the Sagrario, runs down the entire western end. The east side and half the north are occupied by arcades, which support the library, the gift of the son of Columbus to the cathedral; and the remaining half side by a sacristy. The buildings of the east and north sides lean against the old embattled wall on the outside. The chapel of the Sagrario to the west is in the Italian style. Avenues of orangetrees, and a marble fountain of a simple but choice design, are the only objects which occupy the open space. Throughout it reigns an eternal gloom, maintained by the frowning buttresses and pinnacles of the cathedral, which overhang it from the south.

A small doorway, near to that by which we entered the court, gives access to the cathedral at all hours. On entering an almost more than twilight
INTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL, SEVILLE.
would confuse the surrounding objects, did it immediately succeed the sunshine of Andalucia; and were not the transition rendered gradual to the eye by the deep shades of the orange court. As you advance towards the centre nave, this darkness aids in producing the effect of immensity, which is the next idea that presents itself. In fact the enormous elevation and width of the edifice is such as at first to overpower the imagination, and to deprive you of the faculty of appreciating its dimensions. It produces a novel species of giddiness arising from looking upwards.

To arrive at the intersection of the principal nave and transept, you traverse two side naves, both about eighty-five feet in height, and spacious in proportion. The centre nave is a hundred and thirty-two feet, but rises at the quadrangle, forming its intersection with the transept about twenty feet higher. The ceiling here, and over the four surrounding intercolumniations, is ornamented with a groining of admirable richness. That of the centre quadrangle is here and there tinged with crimson and orange tints, proceeding from some diminutive windows placed between the lower and upper ceilings.

After having sufficiently examined the upper view, the eye wanders over the immense vacuum of the
transept, and rests at length on the bronze railings which, on the east, separate you from the high-altar, and on the west from the choir. These are superb.

That of the Capilla Mayor rises to an elevation of sixty feet, and is throughout of the most elaborate workmanship. It is the work of a Dominican monk, who also executed the two pulpits. The choir forms, as usual, a sort of saloon, which occupies the centre of the church, that is, in this instance, two of the five intercolumniations which reach from the transept to the western portal. Passing round it, in the direction of the western doors, where the view is more open, the plan and style of the building are more easily distinguished. They are remarkably simple. The area is a quadrangle of three hundred and ninety-eight feet by two hundred and ninety-one, and is divided into five naves by four rows of pillars, all of about sixty feet elevation. The width of the centre nave and transept is fifty-nine feet, and the whole is surrounded by chapels. The distance between the pillars, of which there are only eight in each row, has the effect of generalizing the view of the whole edifice, and imparting to it a grandeur which is not obtained in the cathedral of Toledo, of almost equal dimensions; while the smaller and less gaudily coloured windows shed a more religious ray, and are preferable to those of
CATHEDRAL OF SEVILLE.

Toledo, which, magnificent in themselves, attract an undue share of the observation, instead of blending into one perfect composition of architectural harmony.

Immediately above the arches of the principal nave and transept, at a height of about ninety feet, runs a balustrade, the design of which consists of a series of pointed arches. Above it are the windows, reaching nearly to the ceiling. They are painted in rather dark tints, and afford no more than a sort of demi-jour, which at the east end decreases to twilight. Rather more light is admitted towards the western extremity, from some windows of plain glass, in the lateral chapels, without which the pictures they contain could not be viewed; but from this end the high-altar is scarcely discernible. The simple grandeur of this view loses nothing by the absence of all ornamental detail: the portion most ornamented is the pavement, composed of a mosaic of the richest marbles. About half-way between the portals and the choir, are inserted two or three large slabs, bearing inscriptions; one of them is to the memory of Christopher Columbus; another to his son. There are no other details to draw the attention until we visit the chapels, in which all the treasures of art are dispersed. A few pictures are scattered here and there around
the eastern part of the building; all of them are good. A large one of Zurbaran, in the north transept, is a master-piece. It represents St. Jerome, surrounded by an assembly of monks.

At the west end of the northernmost nave, the first door opens to a vast church, called the chapel of the Sagrario, already alluded to as forming the western boundary of the orange-court. It is nearly two hundred feet in length; in the Italian style; the orders Doric and Ionic, but loaded with heavy sculpture in the worst taste. After this a series of chapels, of a style analogous to the body of the edifice, succeed each other, commencing with that of San Antonio, and continuing all round the church. Several of them contain beautiful details of ornament, and handsome tombs. That of the Kings should be mentioned as an exception, with regard to the architecture, since its style is the plateresco. It contains the tombs of Alonzo the Tenth, and his Queen Beatrix, with several others. The most beautiful of these chapels is that of Nuestra Señora la Antigua, situated on the south side, below the transept. It forms a square of about thirty feet, and rises to an elevation of upwards of eighty. The walls are divided into stories and compartments, and covered, as is also the ceiling, with admirable frescos by Martinez and Rovera.
CATHEDRAL OF SEVILLE.

At a side door leading to the sacristy, are two beautiful columns of verde antico. The high-altar is composed of jasper, from quarries which existed at the distance of a few leagues from Seville. The statues are by Pedro Cornejo; and there are handsome tombs let into the lower part of the walls. Four antique chandeliers, one in each corner, are designed with uncommon grace and originality. From the summit of a short column rises a silver stem, from different parts of which spring flat rods of the same metal, so slight as to bend with the smallest weight: they are of various lengths, and at the extremity of each waves an elegantly formed lamp. Each of these clusters assumes a pyramidal form, and produces a charming effect when lighted up on days of ceremony,—from their harmonizing with the rest of the decorations of the chapel, no less than from the elegance of their form.

Some of the chapels of this side, and east of the transept, communicate with other buildings, erected subsequently to the principal edifice, and consequently not comprised in its plan, nor analogous to its style. Thus, after passing through the chapel called Del Mariscal, situated at the south-east of the apse, you enter an anteroom, which leads to the chapter-hall. The anteroom is an apartment
of handsome proportions, covered, in the intervals of a row of Ionic pilasters, with a series of pieces of sculpture in white marble. The hall itself is magnificent. It is an oval of fifty-seven feet in length, entirely hung with crimson velvet enriched with gold embroidery. Another of the side chapels leads to the smaller sacristy. I call it smaller because it is not so large as that which adjoins the orange-court; but it is the principal of the two. It is a superb saloon, upwards of seventy feet in length by about sixty wide, ornamented with a profusion of rich sculpture. The architect was Juan de Herrera.

From the floor to a height of about four feet, a spacious wardrobe, composed of large mahogany drawers, runs down the two longer sides of the room. These contain probably the richest collection that exists of gold and silver embroidered velvets and silks,—brocades—lace—scarfs and mantles ornamented with precious stones: all these are the ornaments belonging to altars and pulpits; robes, trains, and vestures of different sorts, worn on occasions of ceremony by the principal dignitaries. The cathedral of Seville is said to surpass all others in these ornaments.

In this sacristy are contained likewise the treasure of gold and silver vessels, and basins; innumerable
crosses, reliquaries, chalices, boxes, and candlesticks; and, in an upright mahogany case of about twenty feet elevation, lined with white silk, the front of which opens like a door, stands the Custodia—a silver ornament about sixteen feet high, including its base. On the day of the Corpus Christi, the Host is placed in this Custodia, and carried in procession through Seville. The silver of which it is composed weighs seven hundred weight. But it must not be supposed from this circumstance that the ornament has a heavy appearance. It is a tapering edifice containing four stories, ornamented by as many orders of architecture. The general form is circular, diminishing up to the summit, which supports a single statue. Each story rests on twenty-four columns, most of which are fluted, and all, together with their capitals, remarkable for their delicacy of finish. Among these are numerous statues of saints, in whose costumes precious stones are introduced. In that of the statue of Faith, which stands in the centre of the lower story, are some of immense value. This ornament was the work of Juan de Arfe, the Cellini of Spain.

But the pictures are the richest treasure of this apartment. It is an epitome of the Cathedral, which may be called a gallery—one of the richest that exists—of the paintings of Spanish schools: conse-
quently, according to the opinion of many—one of the best of all galleries. The pictures are not in great numbers, but they are well adapted to their situation, being the largest in dimension, and among the most prominent in value and merit, that have been produced by their respective painters.

By the greater portion of spectators, the Spanish artists, of what may be called the golden age of painting, will always be preferred to the Italian; because their manner of treating their subject, appeals rather to the passions than to the understanding. It is the same quality which renders the Venetian school more popular than the other schools of Italy; and the Italian music more attractive than the German—Rossini than Spohr or Beethoven. I do not mean that the preference will be the result of choice, in an individual who appreciates the two styles perfectly; but that the difference I allude to renders the works of the greatest masters of Italy less easily understood.

With all the intelligence and taste necessary for the appreciation of a picture of Raffaelle, many will have had a hundred opportunities of studying such a picture, and will nevertheless have passed it by, scarcely noticed; merely, because on the first occasion of seeing it, they have not immediately caught the idea of the artist, nor entered
sufficiently into his feelings to trace the sparks of his inspiration scattered over the canvass. How many are there too careless to return to the charge, and thus to acquire the cultivation necessary to enable them to judge of such works, who the moment a Murillo, or a Zurbaran meets their view, will gaze on it with delight, for the simple reason, that it is calculated to strike the intelligence the least cultivated.

The Spanish artists usually endeavoured to produce an exact imitation of material nature; while the Italians aimed at, and attained higher results. The object of the Spaniards being less difficult of attainment, the perfection with which they imitated nature passes conception. To that they devoted all the energies of their genius; while you may search in vain in the best productions of Italy, not excepting the school of Venice, the one that most resembles the Spanish,—for anything approaching their success in that respect. By way of an example, in the Spasimo of Raffaelle, we trace the operations of the mind, as they pierce through every feature of every countenance, and the attitude of every limb throughout the grouping of that great master-piece of expression; from the brutal impatience of the one, and the involuntary compassion of the other executioner, up to the intensity of
maternal suffering in the Virgin, and the indescribable combination of heaven and earth, which beams through the unequalled head of the Christ; but there is no deception to the eye. No one would mistake any of the figures for reality; nor exclaim that it steps from the canvass; nor does any one wish for such an effect, or perceive any such deficiency.

What, on the contrary, was the exclamation of Murillo before Campana's Descent from the Cross? This master-piece of Pedro de Campana is seen at the head of the sacristy of the cathedral. It was so favourite a picture with Murillo, that he used to pass much of his time every day, seated before it. On one occasion, his presence being required on an affair of importance, which he had forgotten, his friends found him at his usual post before the Descent; when, pointing to the figure of the Christ, he replied to their remonstrances, "I am only waiting until they have taken him down."

Although Murillo admired this perfect representation of material nature, his own works are exceptions, in fact almost the only exceptions, to this peculiarity of the Spanish masters. He partakes, indeed, of the qualities of both schools in an eminent degree. In intellectual expression and delineation of the operations of the mind, he is superior to
all his countrymen, but inferior to the first Italian painters. In the material imitation of nature, he is superior to the greater number of the Italians, but inferior to the other principal Spanish artists. There is, at Madrid, a Christ on the Cross, of his, in which he has attempted this effect—an effort he ought rather to have despised. The picture contains no other object than the figure, and the cross of admirably imitated wood, on a simple black, or rather dark brown background, representing complete darkness. After sitting a short time before it, you certainly feel a sort of uncomfortable sensation, caused by the growing reality of the pale and tormented carcass; but it is not to be compared to the Descent of Campana. There the whole group is to the life, and no darkness called in to aid the effect. The drooping body is exposed to a powerful light, and hangs its leaden weight on the arms of those who support it, with a reality perfectly startling.

This picture is placed in the centre of the upper end of the sacristy, as being considered the best of those therein contained: but it is not without rivals. The few paintings placed here are first rate; particularly the portraits of the two archbishops of Seville, San Leandro, and San Isidoro—two of Murillo's most exquisite productions. Some of the greatest compositions of this painter are contained
in the chapels we have passed in review, where they serve for altar-pieces, each filling an entire side of a chapel. Of these large pictures, I think the best on the side we are visiting is the Saint Francis. The Saint is represented kneeling to a vision of the Virgin. It may certainly be ranked among Murillo's best efforts in the style he employed, when treating these celestial subjects, and which has been called his vaporous manner. To speak correctly, two of his three manners are employed in this picture, since the Saint is an instance of that called his warm manner.

On the opposite or north side of the cathedral, in the first chapel after passing the door of the Sagrario, is the San Antonio. This is probably the greatest work of Murillo in the two styles just mentioned, and certainly the most magnificent picture contained in the cathedral. On the lower foreground is the Saint, in adoration before the Christ, who appears in the centre, surrounded by the Heavenly Host.

No one but Murillo could ever have thus embodied his conception of a supernatural vision. On sitting down before this canvass, from which, as it extends across the whole chapel, no other object can draw off the attention, you speedily yield to the irresistible power of abstraction, and are lost
in an ecstasy, nearly resembling that which the artist has sought to represent in the countenance and attitude of his Saint. The eye wanders in a sort of trance through the glorious assemblage of Heaven. The whole scene looks real; but it is only on taking time to study the details that you discover the prodigies of talent displayed in the drawing and finishing of this picture. An angel, suspended in front of the lower portion of the group, more especially attracts the attention. One leg is extended towards the spectator, the foreshortening of which is a marvel of execution.

Over the San Antonio, as it does not reach to the ceiling, there is a smaller picture, representing the Baptism of Christ, also by Murillo. In a chapel at the south-west angle of the church, there are several fine paintings by Luis de Vargas, one of the founders of the school of Seville.

In the choir, the collection of books for the chanting services is worth seeing. Of these immense folios, enclosed in massive covers, bound with a profusion of wrought metal mostly silver—may be counted upwards of a hundred. They are filled with paintings, infinite in minuteness and beauty. For the performances of the daily services and all duties, ordinary and extraordinary, within this edifice, more than eight hundred persons are
employed. Five hundred masses are recited each
day at the different altars: all of which taking place
during the early part of the day, an idea may be
formed of the business which goes on. Of the six
or seven organs, I have heard three playing at the
same time in different parts of the church; but so
widely separated, as by no means to interfere
with each other's harmony. One of them was one
of the two great organs which face each other
over the choir. These two play a duet once a year,
on the day of the Corpus. The effect they pro-
duce is not so powerful as that produced at Tole-
do, but far more beautiful. At Toledo the two
which correspond to these, are assisted on that oc-
casion by a third, as powerful as both the others
united, placed over the portal of the south transept,
at an elevation of about seventy feet from the
ground.

Among the ceremonies of the cathedral of Seville
is one sufficiently unique to be deserving of notice.
El baile de los seis (dance of the six), is performed
by eight youths — probably by six originally —
every evening during the feast of the Conception.
It takes place in front of the high-altar, on which
her statue is placed on that occasion. The ser-
vice is one of especial solemnity; and, as such,
accompanied, unfortunately as on all such occa-
The singing commences at four o'clock in the afternoon, in the choir, and continues until half-past six, when all move in procession through the great railing, across the transept, and ascend the flight of steps which lead to the Capilla Mayor. Here they take their seats according to rank, on benches placed in rows from east to west, fronting a space which is left open down the centre, in front of the altar. The orchestra occupies a corner near the railing; and on the two front benches are seated—four facing four—the eight youths, dressed in the ancient Spanish costume, all sky-blue silk and white muslin, and holding each his hat, also light blue, with a flowing white feather.

The chorus now recommences, but speedily drops; when the orchestra sounds a beautiful air in the waltz measure. This is played once by the instruments alone, and joined the second time by the voices of the eight boys, or youths of the age of sixteen to eighteen; who, after having accompanied a short time, start to their legs, and continue in the same strain. At the next reprise they all, as if by word of command, place their hats on their heads, and one or two minutes after, the chant still continuing, advance, and meet in the centre, then return
each to his place; advance a second time, and turn round each other, using the waltz step.

After singing and dancing for about a quarter of an hour, the voices are exchanged for the sounds of castagnettes, which they have held all this time in their hands, and the measure becomes more animated; and thus they terminate the performance. The same ceremony is repeated each night of the seven; only varying the air of the waltz, of which they have two.

This ceremony, now belonging exclusively to the cathedral of Seville, was originally performed in some other cathedrals; but has been gradually laid aside in all the others, having been found to occasion irreverent behaviour among a portion of the spectators. It was originally introduced among the observances in honour of the anniversary of the Conception, as a natural manifestation of joy; and such a genuine Spanish bolero would have been: but the slow time of the music, and the measured movements, adopted for the purpose of suiting the performance to the solemnity of the place, have changed the nature of the dance, and deprived it of everything approaching to cheeefulness.
LETTER XX.

SPANISH BEGGARS. HAIRDRESSING. THE GIRALDA. CASA DE PILATOS. MONASTERIES. ITALICA.

Seville.

Mendicity is one of the Curiosities—and not the least picturesque one—of this antique country. There should be a Mendicity Society for its preservation, together with other legacies of the middle ages. An entertaining book might be filled with its annals and anecdotes.

Nowhere, I should think, can beggary be a more lucrative calling. The convents having been the inexhaustible providence of these tribes, on their suppression the well-born and bred Spaniards consider the charge to have devolved upon them, in the absence of all possible legislation on the subject: and few, especially of the fair sex, turn a deaf ear to the mute eloquence of the open hand. Even a stranger, if possessed of an ear, resists with difficulty the graceful appeal of the well trained
proficient: Noble caballero, un ochavito por Dios.—A blind girl made no request; but exclaimed—“Oh that the Virgin of Carmen may preserve your sight!”

The mendicants are classified, and assume every form of external humanity. Being in the coach-office near the Plaza del Duque, a tall well-dressed man, dangling a dark kid glove, entered, and, walking up to the book-keeper, after having carefully closed the door, made some communication to him in a low voice. The other replied in a similar tone, and they parted with mutual bows. I was puzzled on the man’s turning to me and observing that the beggars were very annoying in Seville; but still certain my conjecture could not but be erroneous, I said “you don’t mean to say that your acquaintance”—“Oh, no acquaintance; I never saw him before: he only came to beg.”

This species of cavallero pauper should by no means be encouraged; he is not of the picturesque sort. Nowhere do the wretches look their character better than at Seville; as all admirers of Murillo can testify, without consulting any other nature than his canvass. But these consider they confer a sort of obligation on the individual they condescend to apply to. Nothing can exceed their astonishment and indignation when refused. Their
great highway is the superb polished mosaic marble of the Cathedral; where they divide the authority with the embroidered dignitaries of the choir. It is useless to hope for an instant's leisure for the contemplation of this unique temple, until you have disposed of its entire population of ragged despots.

A sort of chivalrous etiquette is observed, in virtue of which a female chorus is the first to form your escort from pillar to pillar. These dismissed, you are delivered over to the barefooted Murillos. There are two modes of escape. The rich man should go in with his two hands filled with coin, and distribute to all, even to many who will return for a second contribution before he has done. But if economical, you may attain the same end, and more permanently, by sacrificing four or five days to walking up and down the nave, without looking at anything, but simply undergoing the persecution of the mob. After the fourth visit you will be left in peace.

These counsels I am competent to give you from dreadful experience; more dreadful from my having pursued a middle course. To one barefooted and rotten-scalped embryo brigand I only gave a two-quarto piece (halfpenny) about equal in real consequence to twopence in England. If you have
ever seen, in the era of mail coaches, the look of quiet surprise on the countenance of the well-fed charioteer, who, having, after the sixth or seventh stage, opened the door, and muttered from behind his cache-nez the usual "coachman, gen’lemen" received a long-searched-for deprecatory sixpence from some careful knight with a false shirt-collar—you have noticed the self-same look, which was leisurely transferred by the urchin from the piece of copper in the open palm to my face, and back to the piece of copper.

Instead, however, of restoring it to me, his indignation seemed to inspire him with a sudden resolution. He rushed to a kneeling Señorita a few paces distant, and interrupting her devotions by a pull at the side of her mantilla, he showed the coin in the open hand, while with the other he pointed to the culprit. If he meditated revenge, he should have made another choice, instead of deranging a garment, from the folds of which a real Andalucian mouth and pair of eyes, turning full on me, aimed a smile which, I need not inform you, was not dear at two quartos.

Could such a smile have been natural, and the expression of mere curiosity, or was it intended for a death-wound, dealt for another's vengeance? and did the velvet language of those eyes signify a
horrible "Pallas te hoc vulnera," in favour of the ragamuffin I had offended? At all events, the incident lost him a more munificent remuneration, by driving me from the spot, and expelling from my head, a project previously formed, of inviting him to my fonda to be sketched.

With regard to the oft and still recurring subject of Spanish beauty, you are hereby warned against giving ear to what may be said by tourists, who, by way of taking a new view of an old subject, simply give the lie to their predecessors. It is true, that in the central provinces, the genuine characteristic Moro-Iberian beauty is rare, and that there is little of any other sort to replace it; but this is not the case with Andalucia, where you may arrive fresh from the perusal of the warm effusions of the most smitten of poets, and find the Houris of real flesh and blood, by no means overrated.

One of their peculiar perfections extends to all parts of the Peninsula. This is the hair; everywhere your eye lights upon some passing specimen of these unrivalled masses of braided jet; at which not unfrequently natives of the same sex turn with an exclamation—Que pelo tan hermoso!

I surprised the other day a village matron, whose toilette, it being a holiday afternoon, was in progress in no more secluded a tocador than the middle of
the road. The rustic lady's-maid (whether the practice be more or less fashionable I know not) had placed on a stool, within reach of her right hand as she stood behind her seated mistress, a jug fresh water. This did she lift, just as I approached, up to her mouth, into which she received as large a portion of its contents as could be there accommodated; while with her left hand she grasped the extremity of a mass of silken hair, black as the raven's wing, and an ell in length. Both hands now, stroking down the mass, spread it out so as to present a horizontal surface of as large an extent as possible, when, suddenly, from the inflated cheeks of the abigail, re-issued with a loud sound the now tepid liquid, and bathed the entire surface, which it seemed to render, if possible, still more glossy than before. The rest of the duty of the hands appeared to consist in repeatedly separating and replacing the handfuls, until the same proceeding was reacted.

The entrance to the Giralda is outside the cathedral. Before we make the ascent, we will walk to the extremity of the Moorish enclosure of the orange-court, along the raised pavement which surrounds the whole. At the angle there is an antique shaft of granite, higher than the rest of those placed at equal distances along the edge of
the pavement. From that point the proportions of the tower are seen to advantage, while you are at the same time sufficiently near to observe the details of the carving, and of the windows, with their delicately formed columns of rare marbles; and to lose in a great measure the effect of the subsequent additions, which surmount and disfigure the work of Geber.

The Arabian part of the building is a square of about forty-five feet, and measures in elevation four times its width. The ornaments are not exactly alike on all the four sides. On the north side (our present view) the tracery commences at a height of eighty feet, up to which point the wall of brick is perfectly plain and smooth, with only the interruption of two windows, placed one above the other in the centre. The ornament, from its commencement to the summit, is divided into two lofty stories, surmounted by a third, of half the height of one of the others. The two first are divided vertically into three parts by narrow stripes of the plain wall. The centre portions contain two windows in each story, one over the other, making, with the two in the lower portion, six altogether, which are at equal distances from each other. The form of these windows is varied, and in all uncommonly elegant; some are double,
with a marble column supporting their two arches, and all are ornamented round the arches with beautiful tracery, and furnished with marble balconies. At one of the balconies, the Muezzin, in Mahometan times was accustomed to present himself at each of the hours appointed for prayer, and to pronounce the sentences ordained by that religion for calling the people. The half-story at the summit is ornamented with a row of arches, supported by pilasters.

On the top of the tower were seen originally, four gilded balls of different sizes, one over the other, diminishing upwards; the iron bar on which they were fixed, was struck by lightning, and gave way, leaving the balls to roll over; since which period they were never restored to their place.

The additional buildings were not erected until the seventeenth century. They are not in themselves inelegant, with the exception of the portion immediately rising from the old tower, and containing the bells. This portion is of the same width as the tower, and appears to weigh it down with its heavy effect; on the summit of the whole, at about three hundred feet from the ground, is a colossal statue of bronze, representing Faith, holding in one hand a shield, and in the other an olive-branch. By means of the shield, the statue obeys the movements of the wind, and thus gives the name of Giralda (weather-cock) to the tower.