

(at least in the French sense of the term), anywhere between his house and Madrid, while his good-nature prompted him to serve us such a dinner (being his own chef), on the eve of our departure, as would fully acquit him of all complicity, in case we starved on the road.

On referring to my note-book, I find certain entries, which indicate a determination on our part, not to perish at any rate without a struggle. Among these, two hams (an article for which Bayonne is celebrated), a frying-pan, and a Rochefort cheese (this last comestible being a condescension to my national weakness, as a Welshman), form the most conspicuous items. I remember, besides, that a pound of tea, with more than one packet of flea-powder, were purchased at a very good chemist's shop in one of the back streets, while at the landlord's suggestion, several bottles of his best Bordeaux were added to our stores. All this preparation, not only occupied our time, but served to calm down the apprehensions, which the prospect of starvation had not unnaturally excited, and we now began to consider ourselves justified in looking forward, with some degree of hopefulness, to seeing home and friends once more.

Our acquaintance with Spanish being of the

most limited description, it became necessary to find some interpreting medium between the natives and ourselves, and as no courier happened to be available at the moment, in spite of every exertion on the part of Captain Graham, the British Consul at Bayonne, an amphibious being, named Pierre Cambour, whose ostensible means of subsistence oscillated between the river and the road, he being sometimes a fisherman, sometimes a sort of *quasi-courier*, was engaged in that capacity, having frequently made the journey to Madrid, in the service of our Queen's messengers.

Although our passport had been regularly signed at the Embassy in London, we found it must be viséd at Bayonne, before we should be allowed to enter the dominions of Queen Isabella, a requirement that was quite incomprehensible, until we had been to the office of the Spanish Consul. For in reply to Lord Portarlington's inquiry, how it came to pass, that a passport bearing the signature of an ambassador was not sufficient to admit us into the country represented by him, contrary to general practice on the Continent, that functionary retorted with some asperity, "Oh! but you must pay me three francs, nevertheless," a reply which seemed to

strike the key-note of our experiences of the national character, and confirmed with ludicrous exactness the great Duke's observation, "The first thing the Spaniards invariably want is money."

It threatened to be a more serious business than we had ever contemplated, to take the old Coquette over the frontier, the only method of avoiding the heavy duty levied on all carriages entering Spain, being either the deposit of a considerable sum, £30 or £40, at the Custom House, to be refunded on the return of the carriage, or an equivalent arrangement, which Captain Graham most kindly undertook for Lord Portarlington, by becoming himself responsible for the amount.

The weather being still excessively hot, and oppressive, it was such a refreshment, when all our preparations had been completed, to spend half an hour in the cathedral, which, internally is most interesting, and well worthy a more careful examination, than we were able to give it. We were not, then, aware that its cloisters are some of the finest in France, or we should certainly have contrived to catch a glimpse of them. In returning to the Hotel, we went to see our friend the Postmaster, who was highly gratified to find, that the carriage he had supplied

for our expedition to the Pyrenees had given every satisfaction, and, with his wonted animation and emphasis, accompanied by much smiting of his bosom, he assured us he was *un homme de confiance*, in whom no one would ever find cause for disappointment, an assurance which the event perfectly verified in our own case.

The landlord told us a touching story of a poor woman of Bayonne, who had died two years before. In one of the numerous engagements, that took place in the neighbourhood, during the Duke's advance across the French frontier, an English officer was dangerously wounded, and carried into the town, where, after the lapse of some months, he died. He had been nursed to the last by a young woman of the place, and from the time of his death in 1814 to 1857, when her own decease occurred, she never omitted going daily to his grave in the Cimitière Anglais, (a spot some little distance from the town, where the remains of many British soldiers are interred), to pray, according to the Roman Catholic practice, for the repose of his soul. For a considerable time she was afflicted with insanity, but that made no difference; the poor faithful creature still made her daily pilgrimage, and continued the loving custom down to the very end of her days.



#### CHAPTER IV.

OCTOBER 5th.—A very agreeable change of temperature took place during the night, and a fresh breeze from the Bay of Biscay breathed new life into our limbs, after the enervating heats of the last fortnight, when the thermometer had rarely stood below 85° in the shade. A few showers too, had fallen, laying the dust opportunely for our journey into one of the driest, and dustiest countries in Europe. When at length, after an infinity of contrivance, and stuffing, the Coquette had absorbed her miscellaneous cargo, the whole household turned out to see us off, and we parted from those kind-hearted people, with as many adieux and benedictions, as would have served for a voyage round the globe.

Bidart, St. Jean de Luz, Urugne, were quickly passed, and before noon we had crossed the Bidassoa, and entered Spain. The moment we

touched Queen Isabella's territory, a sentry stopped us, who, by the antique cut of his uniform, might have fought at Culloden; his nether man being encased in black overalls, of precisely the same pattern as those, in which our countrymen used to fight the French, in the days of General Ligonier, and the Marquis of Granby.

Below the bridge, in the middle of the river, lies the celebrated Isle des Faisans, the most deplorable-looking strip of mud ever honoured with so imaginative a title. Yet that insignificant patch of dirt, being neutral ground between France and Spain, has been the stage on which important events have been acted, leaving their "form and pressure" on the general history of Europe. Here it was, that in 1463, Louis XI. had an interview with Enrique IV. Here again, in 1615, the two kingdoms exchanged brides, Isabella, daughter of Henri Quatre, going into Spain, to be the wife of Philip IV., while his sister, Anne of Austria, found her husband in Louis XIII. Forty-five years later, the same spot witnessed another interview of high import, when Cardinal Mazarin, and the Spanish Minister, Don Louis de Haro, brought the long wars between France and Spain,

to a close by the treaty of the Bidassoa, and the marriage between Louis XIV. and his first cousin, Maria Theresa; an event which in time led to the occupation of the Spanish throne by the Bourbon Philip V.

A melancholy interest attaches to this last occasion, as it is supposed to have caused the death of Velasquez, who, in his capacity of Aposentador Mayor to Philip IV., had to fit up the royal pavilion, erected on the Isle des Faisans. His death, which took place on the 7th of August, 1660, only a few days after his return to Madrid, was caused, some say, by a fever, others, by excessive fatigue; his broken-hearted wife following him to the grave before the end of another week.

This slight *excursus* into the domain of Spanish history, having given time to the authorities to investigate the contents of our passport, that indispensable document is restored to us. We are once more in motion, and soon find ourselves drawn up on a hill-side, in front of the Custom House at Irun. As there happened to be no diligence, or any other carriage under examination at the moment, our business was speedily despatched, the officials being very civil and expeditious, exhibiting withal far more consideration for the interior arrangement of portmanteaux, and dressing-cases, than is common to

their class. With a fresh team, we were again on the road, skirting two sides of the harbour of Passages, a lake of salt water, more landlocked than even Lulworth cove, and opening to the sea by an outlet, which would hardly admit the *Great Eastern*. Crossing the Urumea, which more than once has been dyed with English blood, and passing under a drawbridge, we entered the Plaza of San Sebastian, a most uninviting, dirty-looking place, with a fishy population, addicted to contemplative, do-nothing habits.

The scenery now became highly picturesque, and we passed through a succession of pastoral valleys, green as emerald, in their bright autumnal herbage, and watered by such tempting trout-streams, that meandered between swelling hills, over which copse-wood of oak, chestnut, and hazel, spread their umbrageous mantle; while animated nature was abundantly represented by long files of magnificent mules (many of them being fully sixteen hands high), six to a cart, drivers with bright sashes, and swart unwashed visages, and many other accessories of the road. After the dusty highways of France, it was quite a pleasure to be travelling through a country, where rain had recently fallen, while the novelty of finding ourselves actually in Spain, clear of

frontier difficulties, and douaniers, imparted a peculiar enjoyment to this day's journey.

Our resting-place for the night was Tolosa, where we arrived in good time, about five, putting up at an inn near the bridge, Parador Nuevo, which, according to the Spanish fashion, had its entrance side by side with the stable, the latter occupying the ground-floor, while we had to mount to the third story, which contains the best rooms. This being our first experience of a Spanish inn, we were agreeably surprised to find matters more promising, than we could have anticipated, everything looking clean and comfortable, the stuffy closeness of the rooms being soon remedied by a general opening of windows.

Tolosa, in spite of its being the principal town of the province Giupuscoa, is a poky, dingy little town, dismally situated in a deep valley, frowned upon by two mountains, Ernio and Loaza, and the rain, which soon after our arrival poured down in torrents, did not improve its appearance. The neighbourhood seems well cultivated and fertile, the whole breadth of the market-place being studded with piles of enormous vegetables; among which, red-pepper-pods, gourds, melons, and black grapes, looked quite attractive.

We just glanced into the principal church,

a spacious classical building, lighted up by a single lamp, which gave it a solemn mysterious air in the deepening twilight. At the door lay the tiniest mendicant I ever saw, a pale-faced, sickly child, stretched out upon the cold flags of the porch, with a pair of diminutive crutches at his side, his countenance wearing a singularly touching expression, such as I have sometimes noticed in a corbel-head, or quaint old mask, in church and cloister.

To-day we had our first taste of Spanish cookery, and fared much better than we had anticipated; the various dishes, that composed our dinner, being perfectly free from garlic, oil, saffron, and other abominations, native to the Peninsula. The principal dish was, as usual, the puchero or stew, and its chief ingredients, bacon, beef, fowl, according to the state of the larder, which were cooked in one mess with chick-peas, cabbages, carrots, gourd, long-peppers, a sausage or two being thrown in by way of make-weight. Spanish soup bears a greater resemblance to what the Dorsetshire peasant calls tea-kettle broth (that is, boiling water poured upon slices of bread, and then flavoured with a lump of butter, and the usual seasoning), than any other compound I have ever eaten, the tureen being

nearly choked up by layers of bread, over which floats a very thin liquid, dotted here, and there with islets of grease. It possesses, however, the negative recommendation of being perfectly unobjectionable, and if it fails to excite your appetite, it fails equally to offend your taste, which is more than can be said for those dreadful chick-peas, *garbanzos*, the universal vegetable of the Peninsula. They are about the size of horse-beans, and quite as unappetizing to human beings, not "to the manner born," being about as hard, flavourless, and indigestible as bullets. It was after a meal composed chiefly of this esculent, that a Frenchman compared himself, while jolted along in the diligence, to a child's drum filled with peas, as his dinner rattled up and down his half-empty stomach.

All one's ideas of order and precedence are upset by the courses of a Spanish dinner, and when you have partaken of several kinds of meat, two or three dishes of fish suddenly make their appearance, which at an earlier moment would have received a hearty welcome.

Pork, in its various phases, bacon, ham, and sausage, is the meat *par excellence* of Spain, occupying the same elevated position in the department of gastronomy, as English beef, Welsh



mutton, and Irish potatoes. Judging from the Continent generally, an Englishman is apt to fancy that a rasher is a delicacy confined to the British Isles, but, before he has been long in Spain, he will discover the truth of Ford's statement, "The pork of Spain has always been unequalled in flavour. The bacon is fat and well-flavoured; the sausages delicious, and the hams transcendently superlative, to use the very expression of Diodorus Siculus, a man of great taste, learning, and judgment. Of all the things of Spain, no one need feel ashamed to plead guilty to a predilection and preference for the pig." For ourselves, I can only add, that this worthy animal, whose merits are never acknowledged, until he is dead, has laid us under the profoundest obligations; but for him, we should unquestionably have been starved, when we advanced further into the country, while riding through the aromatic solitudes of Estramadura, and the mountain valleys of romantic Andalusia.

The Spaniards are great people for sweets, *dulces*, and a pot of preserved green-gages, and other fruits in the north, and in the south, a mould of quince jelly seems to form an indispensable complement to the dinner-table.

We had excellent beds at Tolosa, perfectly

free from those little creatures that murder sleep; and this, though quite contrary to our expectations, and the ideas generally afloat respecting Spanish inns, was our almost universal experience in all parts of the country, from Bayonne to Gibraltar.

A railway is in course of construction between Madrid and Irun, portions of it in this neighbourhood being considerably advanced; and this morning, as I was dressing, the whole populace was in a state of excitement at the sight of a locomotive, which passed through the town drawn by a team of twenty-four oxen, and attended by all the idle boys and girls of the place, uttering cries of childish delight and astonishment.

The population of this neighbourhood has nothing Spanish in its physiognomy or expression; indeed, I could pick out of a Dorsetshire village many more effective representatives of the Don, than we saw anywhere from Irun to Vittoria. Guipuscoa is one of the three Basque provinces, and its inhabitants still exhibit that comparative fairness of complexion, which they have inherited from some sea-king, who once upon a time made a descent, and then a permanent settlement, upon these coasts. They do not exactly shine in costume, and their hats exceed

in general dilapidation any worn by the *boys* of Tipperary, whom they further resemble in the use of brogues made of skins, and tied with thongs, which, if they let in the mud and water of this rainy district, possess at any rate the compensating advantage of letting them out again.

The Basques appear to be the butts of the Peninsula, and many are the jokes made at their expense, on account of their pride, language, and pronunciation. As they are the descendants of the oldest occupiers of Spain, untainted by any intermixture of Moorish blood, every man, however poor, considers himself a gentleman. They are said to entertain a notion that Adam spoke Basque, which language, having been imported into Spain by Tubal-Cain (a theory, that satisfactorily accounts for the unrivalled excellence of Spanish metal-work), long before the confusion of tongues at Babel, has continued in use ever since; though how their chronology disposes of the Flood, an intervening event of some importance, is not stated. Its pronunciation seems to be more difficult than even the Welsh, and it is an oft-quoted Andalusian joke, that the Basques write Solomon, and pronounce it Nebuchadnezzar!

## CHAPTER V.

UP to this time Cambour, the *quasi-courrier* from Bayonne, had been of great use, not only in interpreting for us, and settling the postilions' accounts, but on every emergency he was ready to jump down from the pile of luggage behind, upon which he was usually perched, and at the end of each stage he unfastened the horses, and brought out the fresh set, with such marvellous activity, considering the country through which we were travelling, that we began to regard him as a most valuable acquisition.

There being nothing to detain us at Tolosa, we were off betimes for Vittoria. The country continued very pretty, and pastoral, with trout-streams in every dingle and glen, whose water-power was employed here and there to serve the base uses of a factory, many such establishments being scattered through these highland valleys,

to the certain detriment of their beauty, and probable demoralization of the inhabitants. A considerable amount of traffic seems to be carried on in this neighbourhood, and we were continually passing long files of mules drawing carts of the country, which presented the rudest specimens of the wheelwright's craft I ever fell in with. They consist merely of a bed (to speak in carpenters' phrase), enclosed at the sides, but open at each end, while the wheels are solid circles of wood without spokes, larger in circumference than the largest mill-stones, and being utterly unacquainted with grease, they make a creaking that can be heard a quarter of a mile off, setting one's teeth on edge for the rest of the day.

We were greatly struck, while passing through the different villages on our route, with the number of fine old houses, now, alas! in sadly-reduced circumstances. Built to be the family mansions, *casas solares*, of the noble and high-born, they now bear the stamp of abject poverty, and are tenanted by the mendicant and pauper, though still retaining the arms of their original possessors. These, sculptured out of freestone in a massive bold style, and enriched with most elaborate details, overhang the principal

entrance, reminding you that you are travelling among a people, who have elevated "the pomp of heraldry" to a higher position, than it ever attained in any other country, and within the range of its scanty literature no fewer than 1500 publications on that single subject may be enumerated. Mansions of this description are to be found, not here and there, but in all parts of the northern provinces, hardly a village being without several such memorials of bygone greatness. Wooden balconies are very general, many of them being highly ornamented with pretty carving, much after the fashion of the larger châteaux in the Simmenthal, and as we passed they looked bright and gay with pots of carnation in full bloom, that being, apparently, the favourite flower of the non-horticultural Spaniard, as we saw it, and no other, wherever we went, from the Bay of Biscay to the Straits of Gibraltar.

This would be a charming country for a fisherman to ramble through in early summer, abounding as it does with beautiful trout streams, one of the largest being the Deva, our Dee, a name which has probably been Latinized from the Celtic word *du*, black, many terms traceable to the same source existing on each side of the

Pyrenees, as the Adour, derived, like Douro, from *dufr*, water, and Gave, from *Avon*, a river.

Mondragon, where we changed horses soon after midday, seems a most interesting place, and we could have spent a couple of hours very agreeably in hunting out old houses, and other relics of antiquity. As it was, we had time to see nothing but the exterior of a church close to the posthouse, which, from a very hasty glance, I made out to be principally in the first pointed style. It has two very good doorways of great depth and massiveness, with such bold, well-cut mouldings, and highly-ornamented capitals, presenting a melancholy contrast to the general condition of the building in its untidiness, and disrepair. The old roof has been replaced by a modern affair, such as would suit a respectable cottage,—a transformation that entirely alters the appearance of the church, making the gargoyles, and other Gothic accessories, look quite out of character, as if they had no longer any business there. The bells hang everywhere in open turrets, exposed to the weather, and, as may easily be imagined, in so rainy and tempestuous a climate, it takes no long while to convert them into real bronze.



\* The day was everything we could desire, fresh and sunshiny, with occasional showers, producing brilliant bursts of light and shade, that imparted constant variety to this picturesque district. The posting, too, was excellent—at least in respect of its most essential quality, getting over the ground at a good pace—though the harness, which an English cart-horse would be ashamed to wear, and the drivers, carter-looking fellows, who would astound our postboys, did not quite realize one's national ideas of a neat turn-out. The various noises made by the postilions to get their animals along are highly amusing. Every team was composed, either wholly or in part, of mules, and as they appeared to entertain a conscientious objection to starting peaceably, we had a scene at every stage, when it required all the skill and patience of the driver, aided by the extensive experience of Cambour, and the united efforts of ostlers, helpers, and the other hangers-on of a posthouse, to persuade them to take the first step. For a few minutes our ears were assailed with a perfect tornado of shouts, and cries, imprecations and deprecations, which, beginning with "Anda!" (go!) "Anda! Anda!" invariably ended, when breath and patience were exhausted,

in an abbreviated form, "Da! Da! Da!" and then, after a good deal of kicking, starts across the road, or over heaps of stones, with an occasional leg over the pole, or traces, we used to get off at a tremendous pace, that, threatening at first to bring the old Coquette and her cargo to inevitable grief, gradually subsided into a more moderate speed, and carried us merrily to the end of the stage.

According to Ford, the zagal, or guard of the diligence, is sometimes obliged to pelt the team with stones, a store of which he lays up in his belt at every change. We, however, were never reduced to such an extremity as this, owing to our having a lighter load, and shorter stages, than the diligence; and the worst missiles ever hurled at the heads of our quadrupeds were the shocking oaths, and other scraps of bad language, to which the lower classes in Spain are so grievously addicted.

The road was often very hilly, and twice today we were obliged to have a reinforcement of oxen to pull us up a long ascent. At the last posthouse, Arrayabe, before entering Vittoria, we were a good deal struck with the figure of an old Jew, who had taken shelter from the pouring rain, with which the afternoon closed, under the

eaves of the stable. He was dressed in a black gabardine, a garment resembling a loose cassock without sleeves, having holes for the arms, and descending to the feet. His hat was just like a beef-eater's, and underneath there peered forth a pair of small, keen, prying eyes, full of distrust and suspiciousness. He looked the very picture of a modern Isaac of York, and though no longer exposed to the same oppression, and cruelty as his prototype, he seemed to feel that all the world was against him, and in every one he saw a probable enemy. The poor old man, however, was not devoid of good-nature; for, seeing the position struggling to get into an upper garment, he meekly lent his assistance, receiving no thanks, nor even a nod of acknowledgment in return,—treatment to which he was, evidently, perfectly accustomed. On looking back, I am glad we took such particular notice of him, for we never again saw any one that bore the least resemblance to him in costume, and general appearance.

Vittoria, the scene of the Duke's last great victory in Spain, where, as Southey says, "the French were beaten before the town, in the town, through the town, out of the town, behind the town, and all about the town," is a poor place, with a shabby modern air, that in this

old-fashioned country has quite a vulgar look. Being, however, on the great high road between Madrid and Bayonne, with others branching off to Pamplona and Bilbao, it possesses a superior inn, where at the *table d'hôte* we met several English, of whom we had hitherto fallen in with very few, Mr. Brassey, the eminent railway contractor, being of the party, having come out to superintend the construction of a railroad between Bilbao and Tudela.

Being obliged to move about the country a good deal, he had taken several horses and carriages from England, and on my going out next morning into the stableyard, I was soon accosted by his groom, who, after his enforced silence among the natives, seemed delighted to have a chat with me in his beloved mother-tongue. He gave a piteous account of what he, an English groom, had to go through in that outlandish country, where he could get neither hay, nor oats, and had to feed his horses with barley, "pigs' vittels" in fact,—a diet which he regarded as highly insulting to any respectable, well-bred nag, brought up from foalhood among the comforts of an English stable.

He had all the feelings of a thorough groom, and evidently thought much more of the discom-

fort to which "they poor dumb creatures" were exposed, than any privation of his own, though the Spanish kitchen would prove but a sorry substitute for the beef, and beer of a servants' hall at home. I was glad to perceive, that after he had unbosomed his grievances, and elicited my sympathy, and condolence, he seemed considerably relieved, and felt disposed to take a more cheerful view of things.

While taking my usual early stroll, seeing a good doorway to a church very similar to those at Mondragon, I went in, and found the interior was in the Renaissance style, highly ornamented with shields, and other heraldic devices, fruitage, flowers, &c., all of most elegant design, and admirable workmanship. Having long been desecrated, it now serves as a forage-store to some cavalry barracks, the whole area being filled with straw, which was piled up to the very roof of the apse, just where the high altar stood, while dirty troopers in undress were lying down, and lounging about.

## CHAPTER VI.

**O**UR destination to-day, October 7, was Burgos, a distance of about eighty miles, and the road, which lay through a succession of basin-shaped table-lands, was interesting chiefly from the exactness, with which it satisfied one's preconceived notions of Spain, taking us through desert-like plains, where tree, and hedge are unknown, dotted with sparse, shelterless villages, and swept from end to end by every wind of heaven.

It has often been remarked, that few countries, as delineated on the face of a map, are so destitute of lakes as Spain, none larger than a mere mountain-tarn being anywhere perceptible. This is a very remarkable feature, when the number, and extent of its mountains are considered. But, in passing through the country, you have no difficulty in accounting for that peculiarity. There are lakes in abundance, many of them covering a great extent of surface; but unfortunately, instead of adding to

the beauty of the landscape, they serve a contrary purpose, being utterly devoid of water, and have been in that condition for hundreds, if not thousands of years. So, to-day, those basin-shaped plains, that opened before us one after another in monotonous succession, most of the way to Burgos, are in fact nothing but the beds of dried-up lakes, several of them enclosing a considerable area. The one lying between Vittoria and La Puebla de Arganzon is about twelve miles long by ten broad, and intersected through its whole extent by the river Zadorra, which, passing through a defile in the Morillas hills, traverses in its downward course another such basin of smaller dimensions.

Great pains have been taken to grow avenues of poplars along the wayside, an undertaking of no small difficulty in this thirsty, parched-up land (for by this time we had quitted the pastoral scenery of the Basque provinces, and were approaching the plains of Castille), though a trench is carefully cut round each tree, to enable it to retain as much moisture as possible, whenever rain falls.

It had now become quite evident, from the number of beggars, male and female, adult and juvenile, with their tattered brown clothing,



and mahogany complexion, that we were at length in veritable Spain, and at every post-house we were surrounded by a circle of dusky beings, more inclined to demand, than to solicit our alms. The nuisance becoming at last intolerable, Lord Portarlington determined to try the effect of a specific prescribed by Ford, as an infallible means of getting rid of beggars; and having carefully committed to memory every word of the spell, he addressed the leader of the next group, that attacked us, in the following terms, and with the most praiseworthy gravity, and deliberation of manner, "Perdona me, ustè" (a contraction of "vuestra merced," your grace), "per Dios, hermano!" "Excuse me, your grace, my little brother, for God's sake!" The effect of this incantation was highly encouraging. When first uttered it produced a marked sensation in the assembly, and some of the more modest spirits retired. The second time cleared all but one, and even he decamped at the third reading, and left us in peace.

As a faithful chronicler, however, I am bound to add, that at Briviesca, some stages further on, the experiment was not attended with the same success. Whether this was owing to the fact, that the majority of the mendicants was composed

of women, who have more perseverance, and hopefulness of temperament, than the males, or that, Briviesca having once been the residence of the Spanish court, its inhabitants have inherited a courtier-like pertinacity in begging, or whether it was caused by the combined action of the two circumstances, I am not able to decide.

At Miranda, surnamed after the Ebro, which intersects the town, to distinguish it from fifteen other places of the same name, we finally quitted the Basque provinces, and entered Old Castille. The custom-house people were very civil, and, seeing we were in a hurry, let us off with the mildest examination possible. It was to this place that our Astronomer-Royal, and a large party of scientific people, went for the purpose of observing the eclipse of the sun on the 18th of July last, an expedition that deserved the success it achieved.

Many persons have found the country, through which we were now travelling highly uninteresting. Ford even goes so far as to recommend sleep, as the only expedient to make the journey bearable. We were more fortunate, owing probably to the season; for the frequent rainstorms had not only laid the dust, which in those plains of chalky clay must be intolerable during

hot weather, but they were continually producing a succession of such striking atmospheric effects, as would have made any scenery interesting. To me the views were perfectly novel, glorious in the extreme from their vast extent, richness of colour, and the magical alternations of light and shade, which gave an endless variety of expression to the landscape. Deepest hues of purple and violet, suffused occasionally with a golden glow, lay upon a range of mountains far away to the north-west, like a halo of unearthly splendour. Lord Portarlington was continually reminded of Egypt and Syria, and even I, whose oriental experiences have never extended beyond a shilling investment in Burford's Panorama of Nineveh, could not help feeling, that I was now indeed gazing at scenes which vividly realized the imaginings, and pictures created by descriptions of the East. Nor are we the only wayfarers that have discovered attractions in those wide sweeping plains. The Duc de St. Simon, a man by no means inclined to sentimentalism, when he made the journey a hundred and fifty years ago, at the same time of year, was greatly struck with the transparency of the atmosphere, "and the views and perspectives, which changed every moment."

At no great distance from Miranda comes Pancorvo, a mountain-pass in miniature, overhung with such picturesque castellated rocks, that reminded me of more than one spot on the way between Prüm and Trèves. In olden times this was a post of great importance, being on one side the natural portal and barrier of Castille, and one of the approaches to Madrid, and on the other, serving as a permanent obstacle to the Moorish advance on the northern provinces. Now it is quite dismantled, and has nothing else to do but to diversify the route, and fill a corner of the artist's sketch-book, wherein, that narrow cleft in the limestone rock, barely wide enough to allow passage for the river Oroncillo and the Queen's highway, combined with the quaint old houses of the little town, nestling under the shadow of ruinous towers, would form very effective objects.

When we passed through, the population was in a state of unusual excitement, and two or three bells were ringing furiously, in honour of the Archbishop of Burgos, who was making a confirmation-tour in this part of his diocese. His carriage, an antiquated green fly, drawn by a pair of mules, in which the most ardent Church-reformer could have detected no excess of pre-

latical pomp or luxury, stood at the Cura's door. We afterwards heard a very pleasing account of the Archbishop, while we stayed at Burgos, and having been brought up in England, he always shows attention and kindness to any of our countrymen, who come in his way.

Being anxious to reach Burgos betimes, we travelled on, all day, without stopping, except to change horses. About sunset, feeling the want of some refreshment, I went in search of a draught of milk, while halting at the post-house of Briviesca. I wandered up and down the street in vain inquiries, the natives staring as if they thought me demented. I was not then aware, that milk is about the last thing you should ask for in many parts of Spain, the mythical article ascribed by schoolboys, on the 1st of April, to the pigeon, being quite as easily procured, as the produce of the cow in certain seasons.

Briviesca is rather pretty, and, being surrounded by gardens and orchards, has nothing of that dried-up and parched appearance so noticeable in the towns of this province. It is said to have suggested the plan of Santa Fè, built by Ferdinand and Isabella during the siege of Granada, though certainly that place could never have derived its unequalled hideousness from Briviesca.

It would make a very good halting-place for those, who have sufficient leisure, and, judging from Ford's description, the old convent of Oña, on the Ebro, four leagues and a half off, must be in every respect worthy of a visit.

It was dark long before we reached Burgos, having enjoyed, soon after leaving Briviesca, the spectacle of a glorious sunset, which spread over the western sky some of the finest combinations of rich dark colouring I ever beheld, purple, violet, and crimson, being the predominating hues ; and in such an atmosphere, where every object stands out in mellow distinctness, it was quite a pleasure to watch each gradually disappear in the deepening gloom, until at last night had swallowed up every one, and left us nothing to look at.

## CHAPTER VII.

**B**URGOS being one of the most interesting towns in Spain, it was decided we should stay there from Friday night till Monday morning. I have forgotten the name of our inn, which stood just opposite a cavalry barrack, so that every morning at six we had the full benefit of the toot-a-toot-too, toot-a-toot-too, reveillé, with which Spain awakens her troopers. This was quite a superior hotel, having excellent rooms, handsomely furnished, and very tolerable cooking. Our only objection to the house lay in the swarms of enormous cats, that roamed to and fro through every apartment, with a free-and-easy air, indicative of a lengthened supremacy; while their horrible caterwaulings, which more resembled the nocturnal cries of wild beasts, than the utterances of any respectable domestic animal, "made night hideous." Everywhere, since crossing the frontier, we had remarked the



size and number of the cats; but at Burgos they reached their culminating point, and became a positive nuisance. Whichever way you turned, some hardened old Tom of almost Pre-adamite proportions came into view, goggling at you with his great green eyes, and evidently regarding your presence as an impertinent intrusion on his hereditary domain. Even Whittington would have been shocked at the general demeanour of the Burgos cats, so contrary to all English notions of feline propriety.

The Cathedral was, of course, our first "lion." Like most such buildings in Spain, it is so crowded with works of art—sculpture, wood-carving, alabaster tombs, retablos, ancient Church-plate,—among which a superb processional Cross was pre-eminent,—some choice paintings, and a most glorious array of metal-work,—such as altargates and railings (a *spécialité* of Spanish ecclesiastical art)—that days might well be devoted to their examination. Such cursory visits, as we were able to make, served more to exhaust mind and body, than to leave a clear, satisfactory impression of so multitudinous an assemblage of beautiful objects; and it was, no doubt, from some highly philanthropic motive, to spare future travellers any additional confusion of brain, that

the French smashed nearly the whole of the painted glass, which is said to have been some of the finest in Spain.

This being the first Cathedral we had seen since crossing the frontier, was naturally regarded by us with particular attention. Begun in 1221, it was not finished till 1567, so that the period of its erection extends over the three centuries and a half, during which Gothic architecture passed through its successive stages in what we Britons have been accustomed to call, Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular. Even the Sacristan allowed, that it was founded by an Englishman, and as none are so jealous of strangers, or so much inclined to pass over in silence any benefit conferred by a foreigner on their country, as Spaniards, such an admission may be considered conclusive.

The exterior is greatly admired for the variety, and richness of its outline, which embraces a perfect forest of pinnacles, spires, and towers; but unfortunately it is so hemmed in with houses, that it is not easy to find a point taking in the whole sweep of the building from one end to the other. I must say, however, that the appearance of the west end, which, in its original condition, Fergusson puts down as one of the

best façades in existence, is sadly marred in my eyes by the crockets, which stand out in so stiff and formal a manner along the whole length of the two spires, and, as there are eight angles in each spire, and every angle is covered with a row of these incrustations, the effect is far from pleasing.

On entering you are at once struck with an arrangement peculiar to Spanish cathedrals. Instead of having the portion to the east of the transepts large enough to contain a full-sized choir, with the Episcopal throne, stalls for the Clergy, &c., as is the case in the Cathedrals of other countries, the high altar, flanked by a space of two or three bays only, is entirely cut off from the rest of the Church by gates, and screen-work of iron, in front, and on each side, while the actual choir occupied by the general body of clergy during Divine Service stands on the western side of the transept, forming, in reality, a sort of second choir within the constructional nave. This western choir, which can be entered only at its eastern extremity, is connected with the other by low iron railings, about five feet high, extending across the transept, and these, as far as we had the opportunity of judging from the five Cathedrals visited by us, are never removed. Fergusson seems inclined

to derive this arrangement from the Basilicas of primitive times, instancing San Clemente at Rome in support of his opinion, and by way of illustration remarks, that if the western door of the choir of Westminster Abbey were closed up, its plan would exactly represent this peculiarity of a Spanish cathedral.

The obvious objection to this arrangement is, that instead of there being an open nave, allowing the eye to range uninterruptedly from the western extremity to the grand central point of the interior, an enormous mass meets the eye at every turn (the enclosure of the western choir being often a wall of marble, thirty feet high), blocking up the whole breadth of the nave between the aisles, dwarfing the proportions, and marring, to a fatal degree, the general effect of the building.

The most interesting portion of Burgos cathedral is the *Capilla del Condestable*, built at the east end to be the burial-place of the Velasco family, the hereditary Constables of Castille. For elevation and spaciousness of proportion, this chapel might vie with many a church, while its magnificent tombs, profusion of sculpture, and other decoration, combined with its general sumptuousness, render it worthy to be the sepul-

chre of kings. Opposite the entrance stands a stone altar-screen of great beauty, attributed to Juan de Borgoña. But the tombs of the founder and his wife, surmounted by their recumbent figures in alabaster, have a special antiquarian interest, preserving as they do, the exact costumes, personal ornaments, armour, and other characteristics of an age when the dress of the high-born and noble, had been elaborated into an art. There is something very stately and impressive in these tombs, lying apart in their sequestered chapel, under the softened light, that descends from its lofty windows; and were they in any other part of Spain, they would be regarded as prodigies of the sculptor's skill. But the eye, fresh from the exquisite delicacy and refinement of the royal tomb at Miraflores, which looks as if it had been wrought by no human hands, has become too fastidious and critical to bestow on the monument of Pedro Hernandez de Velasco, and his wife Mencia Lopez de Mendoza, all the admiration it deserves.

Burgos, like all the other Spanish cathedrals we visited, abounds in magnificent iron-work, a department of art which appears to have been cultivated with more care in this country than in the rest of Christendom. Almost every cha-

pel (and some Cathedrals contain no fewer than twenty) is fenced-in by grilles of most graceful design, and admirable workmanship; while the high altar is enclosed on two sides by railings, and in front by gates of the same material, each portion being usually a perfect marvel of the metal-worker's skill. Some of these gates stand thirty feet high, and when constructed of iron, as is almost always the case, are not only richly gilt, so as to have the effect of light and shade, but covered, in addition, with profuse ornamentation—groups of figures representing sacred subjects, which generally exhibit some type, or image of the Holy Eucharist—fruit—flowers—animals—filigree-work—and heraldic devices. The style of these *rejas*, as they are called, is almost invariably *cinque-cento*, which to me was their sole defect. Had they chanced to be formed of any other material than iron and brass, they would never have thus survived to testify to the cunning handiwork of Spanish Tubal-Cains.

There is another peculiarity in Spanish Cathedrals, which may be noticed in passing. At the intersection of the transepts with the nave, rises the *Cimborio*, a construction in the form of a dome, marked externally by a low tower, which

is often octagonal. As far as I can recollect, we have nothing like it in any of our pointed cathedrals, except the Octagon at Ely.

Nothing, however, at Burgos afforded us half the delight we enjoyed from a visit to the Carthusian Convent at Miraflores, about two miles from the town. Though a royal foundation, and still containing the remains of three royal personages, it has shared the downfall of other religious houses in Spain, and now shelters only five monks, who still cling to their old home. Its situation is dreary in the extreme, in the midst of an arid, hungry-looking plain, that reminded Lord Portarlington of the desert behind Cairo; and on entering the precincts, we found a melancholy-looking woman sitting listlessly in the outer cloister, typifying, unconsciously, the desolate condition of this once illustrious convent. Its style is Perpendicular of very simple, unadorned character, while the material, granite, gives it an air of severity and coldness, much more in keeping with its present condition, than with those palmy days, when it basked in the sunshine of royal favour.

The Church contains two of the most marvellous productions of art it was ever my good fortune to behold; a *Retablo*, or altar-screen, and an

alabaster tomb in front of the altar, both erected by Queen Isabella, with the first-fruits, it is said, of America's newly-discovered gold, the artist, El Maestro Gil, having completed this twin-triumph of his craft about the time that Columbus returned from his first voyage in 1493.

The Retablo, a species of altar-screen peculiar to Spain, runs to a height of about thirty feet by twenty-five, and is divided into compartments filled with a series of wood-carvings, characteristically coloured to represent the various events of our Lord's life, the Crucifixion being the grand central design, surrounded by "an innumerable company of angels." Nothing can exceed the beauty of this master-piece; the mere arrangement of such a multitudinous host of figures, exhibiting the utmost power of compression, without crowding or confusion, being itself a marvel of skill. Worthily to describe such a work would require the best powers of a Ruskin, and the barest outline is more than I could venture to attempt. It would take one hours to examine its various details, and I longed to have half a dozen pairs of eyes, and a memory of ten-fold capacity, to enable me to note down, and carry away, its myriad beauties.

The tomb erected by Isabella to her father,



Juan II., and mother, in front of the altar, is said to be the finest work of the kind in existence, an assertion I have no difficulty in believing after seeing that monument. Its material is alabaster, and the dimensions are noble, being about twenty-one feet by fifteen, while it rises five feet from the floor of the church. Its form is octagonal. Upon its horizontal surface lie the figures of Juan and his wife Isabella, arrayed in their royal apparel, and executed with such consummate skill, that one is tempted to fancy they had laid them down to rest, and were turned to stone during sleep, by the operation of some magic influence. The sides of the tomb are filled with subjects from our Lord's life, the four corners being occupied by figures of the Evangelists nearly two feet high, standing in the attitude of watchers over the royal pair. An air of deepest repose and peacefulness broods over the tomb, while its surpassing whiteness imparts a look of peculiar purity, as if it did not belong to earth. No description I could give can convey more than the faintest idea of the impression produced upon the mind by this miracle of Art, as you stand before it in the vain endeavour to master its details. The eye—challenged at the same moment by an infinite

variety of objects, rivalling each other in gracefulness of design, and consummate execution—knows not whither to turn, and glances in hopeless perplexity over the figures of Apostle, Evangelist, Martyr, and Saint, as they stand out adorned with superb costumes, and encircled by wreaths of flowers and fruitage, looking more like the creation of Angel-hands than the workmanship of any dweller in this lower world.

An iron railing which fences-in the tomb, though absolutely necessary to preserve its delicate details from injury, considerably mars the effect of the ornaments with which its sides are covered, by intercepting a clear view; and were the tomb ever photographed, or modelled, it would be necessary to remove this obstruction.

It was a heart-aching sight to look at that silent, deserted convent, with its spacious cloisters untrodden, and its garden overgrown with weeds, while the Brotherhood, once so much visited and honoured by the great ones of the earth, has now shrunk into a poor despised company of five, who can only wear the habit of their order by stealth, and at midnight. The very existence, too, of such marvels as the tomb and altar-screen, in a place on which the world now frowns, makes the contrast between past and present the more

keenly painful; and as we visited the spot on that stormy October day, all the accompaniments—sky, weather, and landscape—were in melancholy harmony with its fallen condition.

At Burgos we first noticed the horrible noise made by Spanish bell-ringers. An Englishman, with his recollections of the merry peals and sweet chimes of his own country, listens with astonishment and horror to the din of a Spanish belfry, where every ringer pulls on his own account, without the least regard to what his fellow-performers are doing, the grand object being to produce as much noise as possible. You listen in vain for anything like scientific ringing; and the mysteries of "Grandsire-bob," "Single bob-minor," "Grandsire-treble," "Triple bob-major," and all the other permutations of English Campanology, seem in Spain to be utterly unknown.

The dark-eyed little maid that waited on us, finding, I suppose, our manners did not come up to the standard of Spanish punctilio, which, in forms of address and salutation at least, elevates a fisherwoman into a duchess, and places an ostler on the level of a grandee, took every opportunity of giving us instruction in the correct phrases and modes of address, and, by way of

turning them to immediate account, made us use them on all occasions, so that we could get nothing we required from her until, like good children, we had asked for it "prettily." If we wanted bread, we were obliged to say, "Haga me, ustè, el favor de dar me del pan?" "Will your grace do me the favour to give me some bread?" and a similar formula was necessary whatever we asked for. Poor girl! She was very painstaking for our improvement, and I hope her good-natured endeavours to remedy the deficiencies of an English education were in some slight degree successful, though I fear, that in my own case, a course of instruction, extending over two days only, imparted but a very thin glaze of Spanish politeness to the unceremoniousness of manner native to most Englishmen.

The environs of Burgos contain several objects of interest, which every zealous sight-seer goes to see, though we saw them not. Among these are the cloisters of Huelgas, spoken of by Fergusson as "unrivalled for beauty both of design and detail, and unsurpassed perhaps by anything of their age in any part of Europe." Then again at San Pedro de Cardeña, within a ride of the town, there is the burial-place of that peerless hero of romance and song, Rodrigo Ruy Diaz,

commonly called the Cid, a spot which no traveller of bygone times, before the days of chivalry were gone, would ever have left unvisited. I feel now that the omission was a grave dereliction of duty. Of course we fully intended, before we reached Burgos, going there in due form, but after all did not; for in these degenerate days, the very best intentions do not render any one capable of doing more than *son possible*, and, to say nothing of the deplorable weather, continual sight-seeing, with all its delights and enjoyments, is certainly very exhausting occupation for a middle-aged body like myself.

We used to take refuge from the cold and damp, which seem to contend for supremacy over Burgos, at the fireplace of the *salle-à-manger*, which was as good as a private room, except during diligence hours, occurring generally about midnight, when we were otherwise engaged. Here we met an English gentleman from Leeds, well acquainted with Spain, and we spent the Sunday evening very pleasantly together, discussing ecclesiastical affairs in general, and the probable future of the Church of England in particular.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**M**ONDAY, *October 10.*—Packed up and breakfasted, hoping to be off immediately. Had some difficulty in getting the bill, which seemed to be purposely kept back to the very last moment. When at length it did appear, it proved to be a document of singular brevity and conciseness, indulging in none of the details characteristic of such compositions. Its sum-total, however, amounting to 1041 reals, made up for every other deficiency. It is the natural tendency of bills, in all parts of the world, to produce a startling effect on the recipients; but in Spain, this is infinitely aggravated by the national method of computation, all accounts being made up in *reals vellon*, each of which is worth twopence three-farthings, so that the amount claimed by our host at Burgos was no less than £11. 8s. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., a sum absurdly disproportioned to the accommodation and entertain-

ment supplied between Friday night and Monday morning. Particulars were asked for to enable us to discover where the imposition lay, but our Spanish, being very small and broken, had no power to elicit anything satisfactory. As Mr. Rider, the gentleman with whom we had made acquaintance yesterday, spoke Spanish fluently, and in such a manner as to produce an impression, we at once availed ourselves of his aid, and nothing could be more kind, patient, and business-like, than his method of settling the affair.

The landlord was sent for, and Mr. Rider cross-examined him on every point. With great difficulty, and considerable application of the screw, he made out a bill of 672 reals, inclusive of some gross overcharges. Beyond that point he could not advance, and when pressed to account for the difference between 1041, and 672, he turned sulky, and refused all further explanation. At last, finding he could not escape, he acknowledged that Lord Portarlington, being a great nobleman, and brother to the Queen of England, was charged the balance of 369 reals (in itself a tolerably large bill of £4. 4s. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.) for the various attentions and extra civilities he had received during his stay!! Naturally considering these were hardly worth so much, he declined

paying for them at so high a rate, and the upshot was, that, thanks to Mr. Rider's determination and good management, the bill was ultimately reduced to 760 reals, not, however, before he had been most grossly insulted by the landlady, who, meeting him on the stairs, attacked him like a bereaved tigress, and showered upon him a torrent of Spanish Billingsgate. As Mr. Rider was going to stay another day at the hotel, feeling very anxious he should not suffer on account of his good-natured assistance, we managed to patch up a sort of peace with the landlord, who, to do him justice, soon recovered his temper, and promised to behave properly to our countryman after our departure. This truce did not include his strong-minded help-mate, as we thought it the better part of valour not to meddle with her, while she stormed and raved, in the lower regions of the hotel, at the loss of her hoped-for spoil.

This altercation delayed us a good hour, and when at last I went down to see whether the luggage had been properly stowed away, I found Cambour, who since Tolosa had sadly declined from his first zeal and activity, having in fact become almost useless, looking more unpromising than ever, as, in a sort of muddled, sleepy way, he



professed to be helping Swainson. His face had become almost black, and every vein stood out on his forehead with fearful distinctness, while his general appearance led one to fear he had been spending his days and nights at Burgos in swilling the wine of the country, which has the colour and consistency of ink. He had, at any rate, made himself a most deplorable-looking object.

Having now been five days on the road, including our halt at Burgos, we began to feel rather ashamed of ourselves, and, as we were anxious to reach Madrid by Tuesday night, we determined, when once off, not to rest till we arrived at Castillejo, a village at the foot of the Somo-Sierra mountains.

The bad weather still continued, but between the showers we had magnificent bursts of sunshine, which, contrasting with the deep masses of storm-cloud through which they broke, gave infinite variety to the landscape. Extensive woods of ilex (a feature to which we afterwards became so much accustomed in Estremadura) appeared from time to time, dotted here and there with such picturesque groups of old pollards, while in many places the road was bordered by low scrubby vineyards, their fruit and foliage

being alike plastered with a chalky composition, which, having originally descended upon them in the form of summer dust, had been converted by the autumnal rains into a coating of mud, that would hardly improve the flavour of the approaching vintage. We passed several flocks of long-woolled sheep, on their way to winter-quarters among the sunny *dehesas* of Estremadura, attended by skin-clad shepherds, who looked the very picture of dreamy do-nothingness, and entire immunity from soap and water. Before entering Lerma we crossed the Arlanza, which, like many of the streams in this neighbourhood, abounds with trout. As we drove into the town in heavy rain, nothing could look more wretched—I do not even remember a single beggar making his appearance—and the ruins of a noble palace, built by the Duque de Lerma, in 1604, on a brow overhanging the town, which, after suffering pillage from the French, is now converted into a prison, served only to increase its wretchedness.

Hereabout the eternal brown *pañó pardo* of the Spanish peasantry began to be varied with brighter colours, and the women wore brilliant red stockings, and petticoats of blue or yellow, the latter being the most fashionable. One

soon remarks the extreme beauty of Spanish dyeing, and their scarlets, greens, and yellows are unrivalled for clearness, and distinctness of hue, so different from the dull muddy colours produced in England. The yellows are especially good, being more like a rich, warm canary, than what passes by that name among us.

At Aranda del Duero, we managed to walk on a couple of miles, in advance of the carriage, while they were changing horses, an operation of some time at a Spanish posting-house; and then on we travelled, stage after stage, for hours, until at last, near midnight, we drew up at the *posada* of Castillejo, in a decided state of mind. Having now been on the road more than thirteen hours, we were quite ready for bed, dinner being altogether out of the question, and finding the people of the inn were all asleep, we entered through the stable, which, as usual, occupied the ground floor; and going on a voyage of discovery upstairs, we soon met with the very things we were most in want of—a couple of very clean, comfortable bedrooms, without inhabitants, and forthwith we took possession.

Presently out came the mistress, and setting her arms a-kimbo (a very bad sign, I always

think, in the *beau sexe*), she overwhelmed us with a flood of Spanish, which, however unintelligible in sense, in sound conveyed an unmistakable declaration that our presence was by no means welcome. We had not, however, gone all that distance to budge for a little noise, and paying no heed to her ill-timed remarks, we began to exercise our rights of possession. After a while the daughter, hearing the disturbance, came out of her bedroom, and, so far from reinforcing her "respected parient," she proved a decided acquisition to our side, for, having been brought up at some provincial boarding-school, she could actually speak French! By her intervention we discovered that the hostess, having a conscientious objection to late hours, was perfectly scandalized at the idea of receiving travellers at midnight. Had we known in time of that prejudice, which, in the abstract, is highly commendable, we might have respected it. But here we were, at the foot of the Somo-Sierra, with a pass of considerable elevation to be crossed before we could reach any other inn, and so prejudice must needs give way to necessity.

Still the hostess would not give her consent to our remaining for the night in her house; at length Lord Portarlington brought matters

to an issue by asking the daughter, "Whether they were Catholics, or heathens?" and "If it was part of their religion to deny shelter to the stranger? Even the most uncivilized savages are accustomed to exercise hospitality towards any wayfarers that may stand in need of it; while here, in a Christian land, where the Catholic faith is universally professed, three travellers are denied admittance into a house of public entertainment, at an hour when it is impossible to obtain lodging elsewhere!" This appeal to the most accessible side of a Spaniard's disposition brought the woman to her senses, and without another word she meekly went for the sheets, &c., and glad enough were we to get into our well-earned beds.

Next morning we made our first acquaintance with one of the peculiarities of Spanish travel, which subsequent experience soon made familiar—we could not get a drop of milk, and the mere asking for some seemed to be regarded almost as a personal affront!

Castillejo stands at no great distance from the mountains dividing the two Castilles; and such a wind as came rushing down the ravines, lashing us right and left with whips and scorpions, I have never felt, except in some of the

most-exposed Alpine passes. As all the head-gear, except the hood, of the old Coquette had been removed before we started from Bayonne, we had little protection from those icy blasts, and had to fend off their assaults with cloaks and umbrellas. The road winds slowly to the summit of the pass through a bleak and treeless depression between the mountains, which, despite their height of some 5000 feet, are entirely devoid of interest, being mere rounded elevations of no more character than an ordinary sheep-walk; and we were not sorry to find ourselves descending the other side, at a pace that soon brought us into a more-sheltered district.

Between Buitrago and Lozoyuela, we passed through a very singular tract of country, which Wordsworth would doubtless have described as "a chaotic wild," though my prosaic mind could not help at the moment likening it to a vast natural stoneyard, out of which many and many a Stonehenge might be hewn, covering an extent of about three miles, where granite blocks of every size and shape were strewn about in strangest confusion, as if they had descended in a deluge from the tempest-shattered crags overhanging this wilderness of stone. The cold gray

of the granite, contrasted most effectively with the rich colouring of the distant landscape, which, opening out over boundless plains in the direction of Madrid, lay flooded by streams of slanting sunshine. Two great birds, eagles or vultures, sailing grandly over the serrated ridge to our right, were quite in harmony with the desolate grandeur of the spot.

Just as the day closed, we began to descend from the high ground, over which most of today's route lay, into the great plain surrounding Madrid; and though its usual appearance has no more attraction than is commonly presented by any boundless extent of arid corn-land, yet at that moment the approach of night, and the dark shades of indigo that shrouded the distant uplands, imparted a solemn, mysterious character to the scene, redeeming it from the commonplace aspect it generally wears. Cambour asserted, that Madrid itself was visible from this point; but that worthy's moral character having greatly declined in our estimation, we scarcely credited the assertion.

At the last stage before entering Madrid we had to wait some time for horses, and, having had nothing to eat except some fruit since breakfast, were very glad to employ this interval

in the consumption of what were called pigeons (though, for all we could tell, they might have been rooks cooked *à la colombe*), at a very dirty-looking *venta*, where a large party of natives were taking their supper. Another hour saw us driving into the *porte-cochère* of the Hotel Peninsulares, very thankful to have so prosperously concluded a journey generally described by travellers as the very essence of all that is tedious and uninteresting.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife  
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA



## CHAPTER IX.

**T**HE excellent situation of the Peninsulares gave us a very favourable first impression of Madrid, when we looked out next morning, curious to see what this least-visited of all European capitals was like. The Calle de Alcalá, in which the hotel stands, is spacious and handsome ; and as, adapting itself to the inequality of the ground, it gradually rises from the Puerta del Sol, and then, from its central point, descends on the other side in a gentle slope towards the Prado, it presents a very imposing appearance, and would be an ornament to any city in Europe. All the time, however, a sort of unconscious feeling lurks in the mind, that so thoroughly modern and western-looking an assemblage of shops and houses as meets the eye on every side, has no business to be the capital of so old-fashioned and semi-oriental a country as Spain. Nor does that feeling pass away

when you extend your observation into other quarters of the town. Go where you will, not a token of antiquity is to be seen; for even the churches, which in most towns stand like Patriarchs among public buildings, do not here claim an earlier date than two or three centuries. In fact, nothing at Madrid looks old, except the fountains, whose atmosphere (if I may use such a term) of moisture and damp, added to the incessant use made of them, has invested them, in a certain degree, with the appearance of age.

If we now turn another way, the front windows of the hotel command the Puerta del Sol, into which several principal streets, Calle de Montera, and Calle de las Carretas, besides the Calle de Alcalá, debouch, making it the most animated and crowded spot in all Madrid, though its unfinished state and low position deprive it of every claim to beauty or picturesque effect; while its architectural pretensions are exceedingly mean and shabby. It owes its high-sounding title, the "Gate of the Sun," which leads you to expect something transcendental, to the circumstance, that when Madrid covered less ground, the east gate used to stand here. But now, when new buildings extend so far

beyond it "towards the rising sun," the Puerta del Sol has become almost as central in situation as it is certainly in all social respects; and if you wish to see whatever stir and life Madrid contains, this is the place to go to, and at all hours, save and except when a bull-fight is proceeding, you are sure to find there something to catch the attention of a foreigner.

Our Burgos acquaintance, Mr. Rider, had recommended us to the Peninsulares, chiefly on account of its situation; and though its entrance and basement are filthy, in addition to some other considerable defects, yet altogether we were tolerably comfortable there, and nothing could exceed the civility and attention of the landlord, an English-speaking native of Gibraltar, who was always at his post, and, by doing his own duty, took care that all his people did theirs also.

There is another hotel, very superior in point of comfort and cleanliness, opposite the English Embassy; but it is so very far out of the way, and so dreadfully quiet for those who wish to see what is going on, that we became perfectly reconciled to the deficiencies of the Peninsulares, and felt no desire to change our quarters.

We see the Queen drive out most evenings.

about nightfall, just when the rest of the world is going home, and she seldom returns before it is quite dark. There are generally three or four carriages-and-six, uncommonly well appointed, with beautiful horses; coachmen, postilions, and footmen, being very well got-up, and the whole turn-out is worthy of Royalty. But what delights us most of all in the *cortège* is "the coach of respect," an empty carriage, with blinds down, drawn by four lovely cream-coloured horses, which brings up the rear of the procession, having very much the same office to perform in the Royal retinue, that empty carriages do with us at funerals. The idea is thoroughly Spanish, and is quite in keeping with the traditional notions of the most ceremonious people in Europe.

We used to remark, that when the King goes out like a private gentleman, and drives a light open carriage-and-pair, he hardly gets a bow, even when passing along the much-frequented Calle de Alcalá, as if his state-worshipping subjects did not think it worth while to give themselves the trouble of uncovering for so slender an equipage. But, at the approach of the grand procession, coaches-and-six, *coche de rispetto*, and smart escort of Lancers, off goes