

or alcove, with folding-doors to shelter it from the severity of the winter, as in this elevated situation even peach and apricot trees cannot exist without such protection.

Looking westward, you perceive near the base of the mountain, at a distance of more than a mile from the palace, the *Silla del Rey*, or "King's Seat," where Philip used to sit and watch the progress of the Escorial. Out of the same mountain, all the stone required for the building was quarried, and transported to the site along a platform of wood, which bridged over the intervening space. This fabric, a remarkable work for that age, was constructed with a gentle slope towards the Escorial, so as to lessen the draught; and such was its size, that when its purpose had been served by the completion of the palace, it was removed with very great difficulty.

Having enjoyed the tranquillity and sunshine of the terrace for a good hour, I set out on my return to the inn. Wishing to see the other side of the Escorial, I descended into an orchard lying under the terrace, where some peasants were digging potatoes, and made for the high wall by which it is bounded, hoping to find some friendly outlet in that direction. In the

midst of the orchard I was attacked by a dog belonging to one of the potato-diggers, and having no stick (which, by the way, is always a desirable companion for a country walk in Spain, where dogs abound), I was obliged to have recourse to Dr. Parr's expedient, and *inflicted* my eye on the foe, so as to keep him from a breach of the peace, until his master called him off, which he did with provoking deliberation.

I looked in vain for gate or door, by which to make my exit, and, as the wall was about twelve feet high, I gladly availed myself of a young tree, which grew *convanient*, as an Irishman would say, and soon clambered up to the top, only to find myself, however, confronted by a species of *chevaux de frise*, consisting of a thick stratum of dry brambles, with an upper crust of large stones to keep it firm, placed there, evidently with no small trouble, by the owner, for the safe-keeping of his apples and pears.

It required no great foresight to perceive that a yard or two of this coping would inevitably fall on my unlucky pate, were I to drop down to the other side from the spot where I then stood, and the peasants showed they anticipated some such result, by the eagerness with which

they drew near to see the sport. Having, however, in my school-boy days, acquired, among other useful accomplishments, the knack of walking on a black-thorn hedge without coming to grief like the immortal King of Sicily, I surmised their benevolent anticipations were not quite certain to be realized; and proceeding with as much caution as a man treading among eggs, I cleared in due time the forty or fifty yards of wall, over which the brambles and stones extended, and having made my bow to the select audience before whom I had to exhibit, in acknowledgment of their polite attentions, I dropped down comfortably on the other side, without bringing destruction on my own head; though I almost felt as if I owed an apology to the expectant potato-diggers, for so ruthlessly disappointing them of their hoped-for entertainment.

Breakfast became a pleasant episode between my morning ramble and our exploration of the Escorial, a very formidable undertaking, containing as it does, according to the guide-books, a palace, a convent, two colleges, for regulars and seculars respectively, three chapter-houses, and three libraries, with more halls, dormitories, refectories, and infirmaries, than I care to in-

troduce into my pages. There are no fewer than eighty staircases, and some one gifted with a turn for statistics, has calculated, that to visit every individual room, and to go up and down each staircase and corridor, would occupy four entire days, and carry the unhappy wight (should any such zealot for sight-seeing ever be discovered) over a distance of about a hundred and twenty English miles.

We meekly surrendered ourselves to the disposal of our guide, and he took us up and down so many staircases, along such a maze of corridors, and cloisters, and through such an endless succession of courts, and quadrangles, that ere long we subsided into the condition of machines, with the sensations of a vertiginous mill-horse, and the wayworn leg-weariness of the wandering Jew.

We began with the Church. In spite of Ford's eulogy, it gave me little pleasure, from its pagan, classical style, and the depressing, joyless influences brooding over its cold interior, which has more the air of a vast crypt, dedicated to the dark mysteries of some heathen superstition, than of a temple consecrated to the worship of Him, "Who brought life, and

immortality to light by the Gospel." At the same time it certainly possesses the merit of massive simplicity, and the noble flight of steps, in polished marble, ascending to the high altar, produces a very striking effect.

Before the French invasion, the Church teemed with treasures of Art—sacred vessels of gold and silver—multitudes of shrines—reliquaries—and a tabernacle of such exquisite workmanship, that it used to be spoken of as worthy to be one of the ornaments of the celestial altar.

All these were destroyed by La Houssaye's troopers, when they occupied the Escorial in 1808, by way of giving vent to their national feeling respecting the battle of St. Quentin, where the Spaniards, with the aid of some 8000 English, in addition to other foreigners, managed to defeat the French, on the Feast of St. Laurence, August 10th, 1557, the interval of two centuries and a half, which one might have supposed capable of serving as a sort of Statute of Limitation, not being a sufficient lapse of time (apparently), to erase the defeat out of the memories of Frenchmen, who are always sorer under a beating,

than any other nation, and cling to its recollection with a tenacity, that will neither forget nor forgive.

The Escorial sustained a still greater loss in 1837, during the Carlist war, when about a hundred of the choicest paintings were removed for safety's sake to the Museo at Madrid, where, being accessible to all comers daily, to be studied at leisure, they now afford a thousand-fold more gratification to lovers of pictures, and proportionate increase of benefit to Art, than they ever produced while lying entombed in the remote Escorial.

It is hardly necessary to mention here, that the building was erected by Philip II., in accomplishment of a vow addressed to Saint Lawrence, (the Spanish San Lorenzo,) during the battle of St. Quentin, and that the form of a gridiron, in commemoration of the Saint's martyrdom on an instrument of that description, was adopted for its ground-plan, in order to do him further honour.

We descended into the royal vault, called the Panteon, an octagon of polished marble, standing exactly under the high altar, and dark as Erebus. St. Simon says, "it frightened him by a sort of horror and majesty," and it has

far more the appearance of a tomb intended for them "that have no hope," than "a gate of death" leading to a joyful resurrection. It is the very place to have inspired those lines of Gray, which, though professedly written amid the comparatively cheerful associations of a sunshiny English churchyard, are fraught with the influences that hover around this royal charnel-house.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour—

* * * * *

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?"

The vault contains twenty-six niches, most of them being tenanted by the dust and ashes of kings, and such of their queens, as had sons to ascend the throne, none others being admissible into this last stronghold of Spanish etiquette, where even in death the proprieties are strictly observed by the separation of the sexes, the males lying on one side, and the females on the other. The first niche is allotted to Charles V., the earliest occupant of this grim abode, his remains having been brought here

from Yuste. His son is the next to find a tomb within the walls of his own foundation, and then, in historical order, follows the long succession of Austrian and Bourbon nonentities, elevated by Spanish ceremonial almost to the rank of demigods, only to come at last to the common end of all men.

St. Simon gives a curious account of two other sepulchral chambers, which we did not see. "In a separate place near, but not on the same floor, and resembling a library, the bodies of children, and queens, who have had no posterity, are ranged. A third place, a sort of antechamber to the last named, is called 'a rotting-room.' In this third room nothing is to be seen except four bare walls, with a table in the middle. The walls being very thick, openings are made in them, where the bodies are placed; each body has an opening to itself, which is afterwards walled up. When it is thought the corpse has been walled up sufficiently long to be free from odour, the wall is opened, the body taken out, and put in a coffin, which allows a portion of it to be seen towards the feet. This coffin is then covered with a rich stuff, and carried into the adjoining room."

All that is usually shown of the Escorial we saw, the greater part, however, I must confess, with very little interest. What pleased us most were the royal apartments, very pleasant sunny rooms, of moderate, habitable size, simply furnished in general, with here and there some article, a cabinet, or piece of marqueterie, of regal costliness. Some of the rooms contained a few good pictures, while many were hung with the finest tapestry I ever saw, chiefly of Spanish manufacture, and representing for the most part hunting and shooting subjects, full of animation, and admirably coloured.

I was particularly interested in the Sala des Batallas, "the Gallery of Battles," a long corridor opening upon one of the patios, so called because its walls are covered with battle-pieces, in fresco, the most conspicuous being the engagement of La Higuera, where the Spaniards, under Alvaro de Luna, defeated the Moors, in June, 1431. It is curious to observe, that in this painting both Christians and Infidels are represented as fighting under the crescent, that having been the "canting" crest of De Luna, borne by him on account of his family name, for Luna signifies "the moon" in Spanish as well as in Latin.

This fresco, copied, it is said, from an older one found in the Alcazar at Segovia, is well worth studying, on account of its costumes, armour, and other details. The battles of Pavia, St. Quentin, and Lepanto, with many famous sieges in the Netherlands, are delineated on a large scale, and had not the inexorable necessity of going the entire round of sight-seeing prevented me, I would gladly have spent some time in becoming fully acquainted with these most interesting illustrations of history.

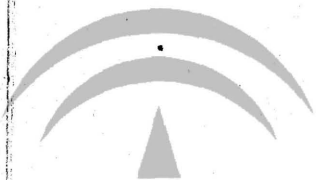
By way of refreshment after lionizing that huge building, we longed to turn out upon the terraces, where the sun was shining most attractively, but this was not allowed.

We were much struck with the parterres of box-wood, in geometrical patterns, into which the terraces are laid out. The box having attained a height of two or three feet is kept carefully trimmed on the top, and at the sides, and with its evergreen foliage glistening in the sunshine, an excellent effect is produced, making one insensible to the absence of flowers.

Altogether the exterior of the Escorial, with its gardens and surrounding scenery, pleased us much more than any portion of its interior; during a fine autumn it would be a very pleasant

place to stay at, and there are many excursions to be made in the neighbouring mountains, which I longed to explore.

Both our time, and powers of endurance, were now exhausted, and after a hasty luncheon we set off for Madrid, where we arrived early enough to dine, and spend a very pleasant evening, with Mr. Augustus Lumley, the Secretary to the Embassy.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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

CHAPTER XV.

OCTOBER 22nd. In spite of all the kindness and hospitality received from our countrymen at Madrid, we were not at last altogether sorry to leave, as the weather had broken up, the streets were deluged with daily torrents of rain, and chilling blasts from the Guadarrama mountains assailed us at every turn. In going south we hoped for sunnier skies, and looked forward with great delight to our ride through "the untrodden ways," of wild Estremadura. Provision for the journey had been laid in from the stores of the Café l'Hardy, and a pair of formidable-looking panniers were filled to the brim, with a miscellaneous cargo of tea, coffee, sugar, salt, pepper, mustard, wine, cannisters of preserved meat, and soup, patés and hams, with a supplement of tea and coffee pots, tin jugs, knives, forks, and spoons. To our inexperienced eyes

these preparations seemed altogether extravagant, and the high prices, which make Madrid the most expensive capital in Europe, swelled the bill to an amount not pleasant to contemplate. A week's travel, however, convinced us that if any error had been committed in the commissariat department, it was certainly not on the side of excess; and many a time and oft, while wending our way through *dehesas* and *despoblados*, where edibles are unknown, did we wish some beneficent fairy would transport us for a couple of hours to the well-replenished café of the Calle de San Geronimo, that we might turn to account our newly-acquired experience, by doubling our original supplies, and by adding a few items, which seldom find a place in carpet-bag or portmanteau of a tourist, though by no means superfluous to travellers in the Peninsula.

The rail conveyed us to Toledo, where we proposed taking to the saddle, and riding by Yuste, Placentia, and Merida, to Seville. Spanish railways do not excel in speed, and we were more than three hours in doing about forty miles. The country is a mere lifeless expanse of arid plain, till you come to the royal domain of Aranjuez, on the banks of the Tagus, which

is pretty and well wooded. Here the court spends part of the spring.

Toledo is very strikingly situated on a cluster of granite hills (of course since Rome set the fashion they are called seven), through whose bosom the Tagus has cloven a deep ravine-like channel surrounding three sides of the town. It was now a brimming turbid stream, after the late rains. I never saw any large town which gave me more the idea of compression than Toledo, as if, after its completion, some unheard-of power had forced it into half its original compass. Its streets never run straight ahead, but turn and twist in all directions, after the fashion of eastern towns, and have more the appearance of slits and crevices between the houses, than of open thoroughfares. On the land-side it is still encircled by Moorish walls, and as on our way into the town we passed under a tower with gate and portcullis yet entire, and pierced by a most graceful horseshoe arch, we seemed to be at once carried back to the days of old, when the Moor was master there. It was not at all what I had expected to see, exhibiting few characteristics of a peaceful cathedral town, the see of a Primate, and the centre of ecclesiastical affairs to a great kingdom. The houses

have almost the look of fortified dwellings, and the streets are far better contrived for keeping out an enemy, than for giving peaceable citizens a free passage to and fro on their lawful avocations. In fact had we not known it was Toledo, it would have been easy to imagine we were entering some frontier town among the mountains, whose gates were for ever hearing "the din of battle bray." It is a most uncomfortable place to go about; if you walk, your feet are tortured by vile pavement; if you venture to take a carriage, a rare sight at Toledo, your nervous system is shaken to pieces. The only vehicle we saw was the omnibus, that conveyed us from the station, and its course through the streets, as it dashed madly round corners, and darted up steep slopes of pavement, more nearly resembled the jerks and hops of a cracker, than the sedate movements common to omnibuses in other parts of the world.

The town is crowded with objects of interest to the ecclesiologist, antiquarian, student of history, architect, and artist; out of which ordinary visitors find a difficulty in making a selection. We were, however, happily spared this perplexity, in having Mr. Sykes for our companion, who has not only quite the gift

of finding out what is best worth seeing, combined with a thorough love of Art, but having spent a day there the week before, he consequently knew how to employ our limited time to the best advantage. Few places can boast such an interesting array of religious buildings, Jewish, Moorish, and Christian; and, as we visited one after another, we could only long for more leisure, and a larger share of that inexhaustible energy and zeal, so indispensable for conscientious sight-seeing.

Our first visit was to the well-known synagogues. Judging from the general character of these buildings, the Toledan Jews must have been a very prosperous community, and it is a singular circumstance in the history of a people, who in most countries have been politically so uninfluential, that upon two occasions they were the means of changing the ownership of the city—in April, 712, when they opened the gates to the Moors under Tarik Ibn Zeyyad; and again, May 25, 1085, when they admitted Alonzo VI. One of these synagogues, now called Santa Maria La Blanca, dates, it is said, from the ninth century, and, being the work of a Moorish architect, is built in his native style. It consists of a nave

and double aisles on each side, formed by rows of horse-shoe arches, rising from short massive columns with arabesque capitals. Above the keystone of each central row of arches, a blank unpierced arcade runs the whole length of the nave; the east end contains a recess, which used to be the Holy of Holies. What interested me most of all was the wooden roof, not only as being composed of cedars of Lebanon, but from being the first of the kind I ever remember to have seen on the Continent, where, as every one knows, vaulted roofs are well-nigh universal, wooden ones being almost confined to England. Fergusson remarks that the Spanish Arabs never seem to have paid attention to vaulting in stone and similar material, but usually constructed their roofs of wood, painted and carved, or of stucco. The other synagogue, called El Transito, is simply an oblong room of considerable dimensions, which, in its artesonado roof and cornices, retains traces of gorgeous ornamentation, with latticed galleries for women let into the side-wall, about half-way between the floor and the ceiling. This was built "at the sole expense" of a Jewish millionaire, Samuel Levi, treasurer to Pedro the Cruel.

We now varied the routine of sight-seeing,

and walked to the top of the highest hill within the walls, which is crowned with the shell of a fine palace in the Renaissance style, built chiefly by Charles V., and completed by his son. It is called the Alcazar, having been erected on the site of the old Moorish palace, of which, as far as we could discover, no remains exist. The situation is truly regal. Throned on a platform of rock, far above every surrounding object, it commands Toledo, "the crown of Spain, and the light of the whole world," as old chronicles style the city, and overlooks the broad stream of the Tagus, as it sweeps downward towards the plain. The proportions of the palace are magnificent, and the grand staircase, on which it is said no fewer than three architects were employed at different times, has "ample room and verge enough" to admit a coach and six. The façade is enriched with medallions, containing heads, figures, and other ornaments of the cinque-cento style. On the side next the Tagus are some of the finest machicolations I ever saw, projecting from the surface of the wall with a depth and boldness, that produced admirable effects of light and shade; these are probably the remains of some building erected after the capture of the place

in 1085. The view across the stern-looking hills, that hem in the river, forcibly reminded both Lord Portarlington and Mr. Sykes of the neighbourhood of Jerusalem; indeed their recollections of eastern travel are constantly awakened by the scenes through which we are now passing.

On descending the hill, we went to the splendid Franciscan convent, San Juan de los Reyes, founded by Ferdinand and Isabella, to commemorate their victory at Toro over Alonzo of Portugal, in 1476. Fergusson calls this building the gem of that age, assigning to it the same position in Spanish pointed architecture, that Henry VII.'s chapel occupies in English, with even greater richness of detail. The portal was erected by Philip II. On the outside of the church, at the east end, hang hundreds of iron chains, taken from the limbs of the Christian captives found in Granada, when it was surrendered by Boabdil in 1492, and in their present position they may well be regarded both as thank-offerings to God, and as emblems of conquest. The whole building suffered fearfully during the French occupation, and wears now a most dismal air of desolation and neglect. Indeed, I must confess, no part gave

me so much pleasure as the cloisters, which, in their former glory, must have been an enchanting retreat; even now they are invested with a peculiar attractiveness, and we spent a most pleasant hour within their precincts, while reposing from the fatigues of sight-seeing, and eating fruit under the shade of vine and fig-tree.

But, after all, the pride of Toledo is the Cathedral, which is indeed "glorious within," not merely from the beauty of its architecture, but from what in the present day is much more rare, the profuse magnificence of its decorations and furniture, in retablos, painted glass, sculpture, wood-carving, plate, and ornamental iron-work.

The wood-carving of the choir alone would occupy days to examine it worthily; every stall is a study, and we turned from panel and moulding, and miserere, with a feeling of utter helplessness at our inability to master the myriad marvels that surrounded us on every side. Then there were "glorious tomes, bound in half-inch oak, or chestnut, armed and knobbed, and studded with wrought brass or silver, scaled tortoise-fashion with metallic lappets, and bound together by the hogskin back, relics of boars that had fattened themselves plentifully

in great forests of ilex and cork-tree; volumes that have initials of marvellous splendour, with flowers and fruitage curling down the side of the page, or symbolizing in their very pattern the meaning of the Epistle, or Gospel, which they prelude."

The Retablo, a species of Reredos in wood, carved and richly ornamented with gilding and colour, which seems peculiar to Spain, is here a perfect concentration of beauty: though unfortunately from the great height to which it runs, and the "dim religious light" that pervades the whole interior of the Cathedral, some portions of the five compartments into which it is divided were almost invisible. These run from base to summit, and each contains three subjects from the principal events in our Lord's life. Executed in 1500, it is a masterpiece of art, and I longed first of all to illuminate it with a flood of light sufficiently powerful to reveal its minutest details, and then to have it photographed for the benefit of dear friends at home.

At the back of the choir runs a series of most elaborate Gothic screens three tiers high, extending (no doubt) all round originally; behind the altar, however, they have been cut

away to make room for a trumpery modern monument. There are besides some exquisite bits of the best pointed period, particularly an arcade running along the transepts, which would be an ornament to any building, and a triforium round the choir, with a sculptured figure under each arch, which Fergusson notices as an instance of a very natural tendency in Spanish architects, to introduce Moorish features into their designs.

The Cathedral consists, as usual in Spain, of a double choir, with transepts, nave, and double aisles on each side, to which are attached several chapels of most sumptuous description.

None of them, however, exceed in interest the Mozarabic chapel, built and endowed by Cardinal Ximenes, in 1512, for the daily use of the Mozarabic Liturgy, the original communion-service of Spain. It is said to take its name from Must-Arab, being used by persons, who mixed with, and tried to imitate the Arab, that is, the Spanish Christians, who under Moorish rule enjoyed full toleration of their religion, having as many as six Churches in Toledo alone. This Liturgy, which Palmer derives from the ancient Gallican, is written in Latin, and is copious enough to fill two folios.

Its construction is very peculiar, differing widely from most of the Western Liturgies, especially from the Roman and Ambrosian, being highly poetical, full of antithesis, which sometimes becomes almost rhetorical, and with whole passages that read very much like portions of sermons introduced where prayers might be looked for; it abounds moreover with adaptations from Scripture, especially from the Psalter.

Ford says it was re-established by Ximenes, "to give the Vatican a hint, that Spain had not forgotten her former spiritual independence." This is extremely probable, and one cannot imagine a more legitimate mode of protesting, against Roman usurpation, than the restoration of this ancient ritual, which is still used every day in the Mozarabic Chapel at Toledo, in compliance with the terms of the Cardinal's endowment. But it seems to me, that another motive of a more private nature may have exercised additional influence upon the Cardinal's mind, in his restoration of that ritual, and as the whole subject of Liturgies is beginning to attract attention, I may be permitted to notice the point more at length.

The religious services of the Spanish Chris-

tians, received, as we have seen, no material interruption from their Moorish conquerors; and in modern phrase, they were still allowed to worship God according to their own conscience. But the Roman See, having succeeded during Charlemagne's reign in substituting the Roman Liturgy for the Gallican, attempted to introduce it into Spain also, in place of the native Mozarabic ritual, which is known to have existed as early as the sixth century. This attempt succeeded in Aragon about 1060; but in Castile and Leon not till 1074, when, through the influence of Gregory the Seventh, Alphonso the Sixth decreed the abolition of the Mozarabic Liturgy, very much against the wishes of both clergy and people; in fact he did not effect the introduction of the Roman Liturgy, till he had threatened its opponents with confiscation and death. It would appear that Roderic Ximenes was then Archbishop of Toledo, and in his history he relates how, while everyone lamented and wept over the loss of their ancient ritual, which even the Infidels had spared, it passed into a proverb, *Quo Volunt Reges, Vadunt Leges*, which may be paraphrased, "What the King willeth, that the law filleth."

Now, from utter ignorance of Spanish genealogy, I cannot say that both these Archbishops, though bearing the same name, belonged to the great family of Cisneros; if they did, as I will venture to surmise until better informed, do we not here discover an additional motive for the pains taken by the great Cardinal to ensure the perpetual preservation of the ancient national Liturgy?

The Cathedral contains painted glass of exquisite beauty, filling every window, if my memory does not deceive me, and we saw it precisely at the moment for setting off its effect to the highest advantage. It was late on a Sunday afternoon, and darkness was gradually stealing over the whole interior, so that you could hardly discern the dusky forms that passed silently to and fro over the marble floor. The windows alone stood out bright and glorious, in luminous contrast to the general gloom; and as the beams of the westering sun came streaming through, lighting up the forms of Apostle and Martyr, Bishop and King, while the sweet sounds of the Vesper chant floated around us, we seemed to be gazing on some heavenly vision.

The principal inn at Toledo having a repu-

tation for dirt, we lodged at the house of Donna Ramona, a grocer's wife, who occasionally receives strangers, that are recommended to her. She was most kind and attentive, doing her utmost to make us comfortable in her clean and nicely-furnished house. Her cooking, however, did not suit us at all. She gave us so much saffron and other national condiments, abominable to an English taste, that we really had great difficulty in eating what otherwise would have been unexceptionable. Beside this, which affected the whole party, she took an unfortunate fancy to my night-dress, and with utter disregard for my feelings and prejudices, converted the skirt into a duster, and to judge by its subsequent appearance, applied it to articles that had not been dusted for a long time. This I did not consider a meritorious action, nor from my ignorance of Spanish had I the satisfaction of remonstrating with her afterwards, and so relieving my wounded feelings. Altogether, we did not find a private house answer, and decided for the future never to have recourse to one, except in case of absolute necessity, which curiously enough, as it eventually turned out, was perpetually recurring. But at that time we were mere novices in the

art of making the best of things, and had we chanced to take up our abode under Donna Ramona's roof a week or two later, we should no doubt have felt perfectly content with all we found there.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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

CHAPTER XVI.

AT Toledo we were to commence our riding-tour, as the wild regions of Estremadura, into which we were going to penetrate, are inaccessible except to the horseman and muleteer. Here and there, it is true, the province is intersected by the great roads along which the *correo*, or mail, and the diligence run; but our object was to avoid these routes as much as possible, which exhibit, all the world over, very much the same characteristics; and to traverse those vast solitudes and far-reaching wastes, which give so peculiar a charm to Spanish tours. For this purpose Lord Portarlington and Mr. Sykes had bought horses at Madrid, while I preferred taking my chance, and trusting to what could be hired on the road. Donna Ramona's goodman, a modest being, whose position lay somewhat in the background of the family picture, recommended one of his neigh-

hours, Marcos Rabosos, as muleteer to our party; and he, for the sum of six *pesetas*, about five shillings in English money, a day per beast, agreed to provide one horse, three mules, and six donkeys, to carry myself, Swainson, Elfick, and Purkiss, together with all and sundry our goods, chattels, and appurtenances, from Toledo to Talavera, a journey of two days, back-money, and all their provender on the road, included. As, however, Marcos could not supply all these quadrupeds from his own stable, he engaged Tomas —, a fellow-townsman with an unpronounceable name, to provide the remaining beasts, and to act generally as second in command during the expedition. We were to start on Monday morning, Oct. 24.

Monday came, bringing with it a cold wind, and bright sunshine, which made us anxious to be off. But this was no easy matter. To pack six donkeys in a narrow Toledan alley, encumbered with packages of all sorts and sizes, was by no means a simple undertaking. Everybody was coming into collision. The horses would not stand still, and the mules whiled away the time in biting and kicking each other. Packing ropes were either too long or too short, or broke just where they should have been strong-

est. The heaviest articles fell to the lot of the weakest donkeys, and the burden was by no means suited to the back that bore it. The confusion was truly Crimean, and everything went wrong, to the great amusement of Donna Ramona's neighbours. At length, after much expenditure of breath in hasty exclamations, and entire loss of patience both in man and beast, the word was given to start. Of course, every donkey set off at once, jamming his load into his neighbour's ribs, and the narrow street was in a moment choked up with a struggling mass, that could neither advance nor recede. Then one of the mules happening to stand in a more open space, would do nothing but turn round in a way it made one quite giddy to look at; while one of the horses would persist, in spite of whip and spur, in going backwards, and very nearly carried himself and his master in that direction down a flight of cellar steps. In fact there was such an utter absence of discipline and organization, as argued ominously against the prosperity of our expedition. At last, the donkey which carried the panniers containing the stores, by a vigorous effort disengaged himself from the throng, and, with a bang against the corner house, violent enough to

place the precious contents in extreme danger, gallantly led the way through the streets.

After clearing the outskirts of the town, and producing a sensation of rare occurrence amid the stagnation of Toledan life, we soon entered upon scenery thoroughly characteristic of the Peninsula. Our road lay sometimes along the bed of dried-up torrents, which a day's rain would render impassable; but more generally through sandy wastes where hedge and tree are unknown, and in that free and open landscape, we felt we had indeed fairly entered upon those scenes, which, however devoid of natural beauty, have long been placed among the remarkable regions of the earth by the genius of Cervantes.

It was in this mood we journeyed on for leagues over a vast undulating plain, cultivated only in patches, and stretching on all sides to the horizon, with here and there a village chequering the waste. Every sight was a novelty that day, and the commonest farming operation reminded us we were really in the most old-world country in Europe, where many things are done to the present hour exactly as of yore in the days of the Patriarchs and Prophets. Once we came upon a party of peasants ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, calling to mind

Elisha's employment, when summoned to follow Elijah.

A keen north wind was blowing in our faces, and when we stopped to lunch at a Posada close to the bridge that crosses the Guadarrama, a confluent of the Tagus, we were glad enough to shelter ourselves within the broad porch, where sunshine and food cheered us for a fresh start. At these mid-day halts, which became our rule, whenever it was practicable, we always fed the horses; while the poor mules and donkeys had no refreshment whatever, and were condemned to a lengthened fast, often of twelve hours, being muzzled during the halt to prevent their eating each other's tails, as mules are very apt to do. The usual provender is barley and chopped straw, a very powerful, but heating diet, which renders horses especially liable to sudden attacks of inflammation.

In spite of the undeniable monotony of our route, we still found it most interesting, completely realizing as it did all our previous conceptions of a Spanish landscape. Our late start caused us to be benighted, and for about three hours we rode on in darkness over a wild heath, where the path was rough and uncertain, and where in by-gone times, robberies were frequent.

Such things, however, are seldom heard of nowadays, thanks to the exertions of the Guardia Civil, and the only anxiety we felt was to reach St. Olalla, where we proposed sleeping, and as the night was pitch-dark, with nothing to diversify our monotonous journeying but stumbles and collisions, we were not sorry to find ourselves at last in the court-yard of a Posada.

As we are now for several weeks to have so much to do with Inns, it will be well to mention, that in Spain they are of three classes. The Fonda, which is seldom found except in the largest and most-frequented cities, corresponds to the Hotel of other parts of Europe. The Posada, which is universal in town and country, stands upon a level with a way-side inn, or bettermost public-house, while the Venta is about as good or bad, as the English beer-shop, being frequented by only the very lowest classes. In towns you may occasionally meet with decent accommodation at a *Casa de pupillos*, a sort of boarding-house.

Of all these, we had most to do with the Posada, and it is only fair to state, that we generally found them far more comfortable than we had expected. The Posada professes to supply nothing but lodging, the beds being

almost invariably clean and comfortable, with now and then a separate sitting-room, containing a table, some chairs, and adorned with a few religious prints. The only comestible you can reckon upon is bread; while eggs, wine of the neighbourhood, and milk of ewe or goat, generally belong to the category of luxuries, and cannot be had for love or money in many places.

The Posada at St. Olalla, like most others we met with, is entered through a large barn-like room, open to the roof, and traversed by all the winds of heaven. On one side, the fire-place withdrawn into a recess formed a most picturesque chimney-corner, welcoming us with a cheerful blaze that lighted up the whole apartment, while around sat a group of muleteers singing to the guitar. *Vis-a-vis* was a long room containing no fire-place, and only one small window unglazed, and this, with two side-chambers, supplied us accommodation for the night. Opposite the entrance, which is a regular gateway, and has almost a fortified character, is the stable, a most important feature in all Spanish inns.

A brazier, brimful of aromatic embers, soon filled our sitting-room, which at first looked

dismal and chilly, with warmth, and sweet odours; and though there was nothing but eggs to be had in the house, yet these, with slices of broiled ham, made us an excellent supper. At least we thought so at the moment; but our ideas on the commissariat developed so largely afterwards, when from time to time we were regaled with kid, hare, partridges, fresh pork, and other delicacies, that we came to regard our dinner at St. Olalla as the rude essay of novices in the art of providing for themselves.

I relate all these things, which in themselves are very trivial, not only because they were to us matters of daily concern, but as being so many illustrations of travel in this singular land. Before quitting the culinary department I must add, that we are looking forward with peculiar interest to the first of November, because on that day, pork-killing becomes legal, and in many districts we shall have to depend entirely upon the flesh of the unclean beast for animal food. Between Easter and All Saints' no pig in Spain dies according to law, and as mutton and beef are rarities, even in towns of considerable size (such as Placentia for instance, where with a population of 12,000, only one

ox is killed during the whole twelve months), the late autumn, when excellent pork is plentiful, is one of the best seasons for travelling in Spain for those who are not strong enough to dispense with the usual diet of Englishmen.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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

CHAPTER XVII.

WE had hardly started next morning, (Tuesday, October 25,) before it began to rain, and a walk of about four miles an hour being our usual pace, it was not quite enjoying "the sunny south" to go on toiling hour after hour, cloaked and umbrella-ed, along a muddy road, with nothing to look at but an endless sweep of saturated cornfields. We toiled on, however, through the successive showers, hoping for great things at Talavera, and a name so familiar to English ears seemed to promise more than a common welcome. We found (alas! for the vanity of human wishes) a very different reception. The principal Posada was filled with a troupe of French circus-people on their way to Lisbon, and it was only after we had wandered more than once up and down the town, and even then chiefly by the aid of one of the equestrians, a

most good-natured lad, that we found any place to put our heads in. Our new-made acquaintance rendered us another material service, by initiating Purkiss into the mysteries of Talavera shopping, the result of which appeared in due time under the shape of a substantial supper.

The only objects of interest we saw at Talavera were some very fine Roman remains, and several specimens of the porcelain which takes its name from the town, most of these being let in, like panels, into the fronts of houses and churches. The Tagus too is a feature, but in other respects it is one of the most deplorable-looking towns we saw anywhere in Spain; so that we were not at all sorry next morning to take our departure, setting off for Oropesas, in the pleasant sunshine, the mere change of weather making to-day's ride delightful, by contrast with yesterday's downpour.

Our road lay still through the same great plain; but we had now on our left, wide-spreading prospects, and purple distances to give it interest, while to the right, dense masses of fog and cloud reminded us of the recent rain. Presently up sprang a fresh breeze from the west, the clouds and fog gradually lifted, revealing, to our surprise and delight, the towering form of

the Sierra de Gredosa, a range of mountains more than 10,000 ft. high, powdered half-way down by newly-fallen snow. These mountains continued in sight the whole day, adding an unexpected charm to the broad valley of the Tagus, as we were not at all aware till then, that so elevated a chain exists in this part of Spain.

While we were at Madrid, Sir Andrew Buchanan had kindly procured for Lord Portarlington an order from the Home Minister addressed to the Guardia Civil, a body of police stationed along all the great roads, and as good of their kind, as the far-famed Irish constabulary. This was a great advantage, enabling us in certain localities to have an escort, if required. One of their stations lies between Talavera and Oropesas, and the sergeant in charge informed us, that orders had been sent down the line directing them to render us every assistance.

We saw men belonging to this force in different parts of the country, and always found them particularly civil and intelligent. From everything we heard and observed, no greater benefit has been conferred on Spain during the present century, than the formation by Narvaez of this police, which has annihilated the organized

brigandage, which twenty years ago was an all-pervading nuisance. At that moment, the sergeant and his party were in quest of an enterprising individual, who, according to O'Connell's phrase, "had registered a vow" (though, I fear, not exactly in the same registry as the Irish demagogue used to have recourse to), that he would rob the first mail, or diligence that came in his way. Whether he succeeded in fulfilling his vow unscathed, or whether he fell into the hands of the police, we never heard.

As we began to approach the confines of Estremadura, our route, which had hitherto lain through the province of Toledo, now skirted forests of ilex, and other kinds of ever-green oak, with which extensive districts in this neighbourhood are covered. There we made our first acquaintance with the Estremadian pigs, a race of porkers held in high estimation all through the Peninsula, and equalling, both in symmetry and fatness, any I have ever seen in England. At this season they are driven daily into the forests from the surrounding villages, to feed themselves fat on the acorns of oak, ilex, and cork tree, and for the moment with their attendant swineherds they impart to those solitary glades an amount of

animation, never observed there during the rest of the year. These herds are excessively shy, disappearing instantly at the approach of a stranger. If, however, any one desires a closer inspection, he has only to beat the fruit-laden trees for a few minutes, and he will soon be surrounded by a swinish multitude attracted from all quarters by the welcome sound of crashing boughs, and the downfall of acorns, which they know will follow. I became quite an adept at the work, and the swineherds used to regard me with a friendly eye, though evidently wondering why I should give myself so much trouble for other people's pigs.

Every now and then we fell in with a party of muleteers, going in the same direction, and our combined forces presented quite an imposing appearance. Some of these parties, as I cannot help recollecting, showed an anxiety to keep company with us, such as we never observed on any other occasion. They had no doubt heard of the brigands' presence in that neighbourhood, and fancying probably that we carried fire-arms, which, however, was not the case, were not sorry to avail themselves of our escort; their own numbers, though considerable, affording no reliable protection against

the *mala gente*, a single brigand having been known to rob eighteen or twenty natives at once, without meeting with the slightest resistance.

At Oropesas, where we arrived some time before sunset, we found the most primitive posada imaginable. Not a single pane of glass in the whole establishment, the windows being mere latticed casements, that offered us the alternative of total darkness, or an incursion of keen wintry air, fresh from the snow-clad heights of the neighbouring mountains. The people of the house were most civil, doing their best to make us comfortable, and giving up their own beds to increase our accommodation. Everything was perfectly clean, and though, by way of precaution, I blew a cloud of flea-powder over my bed, I quite believe from the experiences of the rest, it was a needless ceremony. Before night-fall we visited the castle, a very fine medieval building, though of no great extent. It is in tolerable condition, and the battlements command an unbroken view over plain and mountain, which, as we saw them suffused with the glories of sunset, formed a panorama of rare beauty.

Purkiss to-day served us a feast of pork and

hashed hare, so that with our store of wine we fared sumptuously, and as we now began to understand better what we were about, and to discover more resources both in ourselves and in the country, we went to bed in excellent spirits, hoping to reach Cuacos to-morrow.

Just as I was turning in, having by a lucky accident secured the door, I heard a loud hammering at its massive panels, and on opening it found myself face to face with the landlord, who was intent upon making his way to his accustomed night-quarters, at that time in my occupation, while his daughter, behind him, was doing all she could to frustrate his intentions. As he was a puny little body, and she a sturdy dame with a stalwart arm and determined will, the struggle soon terminated, and she carried him off with many words, which having a most vituperative sound, were interpreted to us afterwards as expressing a decided resolution to break the head of her "respected Parient." It turned out that the little man had been taking so much wine as to render him utterly oblivious of his duties as a landlord. To such a pitch of independence had his potations elevated him, that he actually conceived he had a prior claim to his own proper bed! and it was under the influ-

ence of this delusion that he began to batter the door leading thither. Poor man! he looked next morning smaller than ever, and it was in a tone of annihilating sarcasm that his daughter remarked to us, as he sat cowering in the chimney corner, "He was somebody yesterday, to-day he is nobody!"

We always make a bargain beforehand at every inn we enter, finding it absolutely necessary to take this precaution. Until we adopted this plan, the most absurd demands were made for the most ordinary accommodation, and we observed it to be an invariable rule, that the less we had, the higher the charge. At St. Olalla, for instance, where we had nothing but bread, eggs, and milk, with lodging for ourselves and the servants, and provender for three horses (the muleteers paying for the rest of the beasts), the landlord had the effrontery to ask ten dollars, about £2 5s., which Lord Portarlington refused to pay, giving them seven, and even that was far too much.

Bargaining beforehand economizes time, temper, and money, and enables the traveller to part from his host in a friendly mood. Indeed, since we adopted this plan, nothing can be more affec-

tionate than our adieux, and after having paid about half the sums previously demanded, we set out on our day's march amid the tenderest demonstrations of respect and affection from host, hostess, and the whole family circle.



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

CHAPTER XVIII.

IT is quite surprising what extreme difficulty we find in getting accurate information respecting distances, roads, inns, and other matters affecting the convenience of travellers. Purkiss speaks Spanish fluently, and from his long residence in the country is intimately acquainted with the ways of the people; yet with all these advantages, he is seldom successful in obtaining reliable information, even in the immediate neighbourhood of a locality for which we happen to be making. When we stood on the battlements of the Duque de Frias' fine castle at Oropesas, gazing at the Vera below us, as it glowed in the sunset, the old man, who accompanied us, pointed out the direction of Yuste, and spoke of the distance as a moderate day's journey. We found it, however, a very different affair. Ford directs those riding from Madrid to Yuste, to turn off at Navalmoral to

the right, to Zazahuete six leagues; thence to El Barco del Rio Xerte, one league; then three leagues and a half through aromatic wastes to Cuacos, and the Convent.

We took a somewhat different route. Descending from Oropesas soon after 8 A.M. on the 27th, October, we regained the Camino Real, which we had followed the two previous days, and at the first post-house struck off to the right along a bye-road running in a northerly direction through open cornfields, which ere long we gladly exchanged for a picturesque tract of woodland, where groups of ilex and cork-tree interspersed with thicket, and brake of low shrub and wild vine, assured us we had now escaped from the monotony of the high-road, and were beginning to penetrate those remoter depths of Spanish scenery, to which we had hitherto been strangers. Every now and then we crossed the bed of some dried-up winter-brook. Better riding-ground we could not have than the firm sand, on which the hoof of horse and mule fell noiselessly, as vista, and glade opened, luring us onward through a succession of forest landscapes, that suggested any amount of romantic adventure, even in this work-a-day nineteenth century.

Our destination was San Benito, where we hoped to get further information, as well as something to eat, that ever-present necessity which "sits behind the rider" in Spain, wherever he goes. The distance was, of course, much greater than we had been led to expect, such being almost always the case in this "land of the unforeseen;" and a traveller at all inclined to practical philosophy will soon make a resolution never to think of his arrival at any place, until he is actually there. This decision will save an infinity of inquiries, loss of time and patience, to say nothing of those hopes deferred, which make the heart sick.

At length we reached San Benito, a farm in the very depths of the forest, belonging to the Marques de Mirabel, a nobleman of historical name, who owns quite a large district in the neighbourhood. It consists of two houses, one very smart with paint and glass windows (features in Spanish domestic architecture we have learnt to look upon with much respect, as the *ne plus ultra* of civilization and comfort), where the proprietor rusticates occasionally for shooting; while the other, a rambling farm-house, is occupied by the steward and his family. A small church completes the group of buildings. It is

a singular-looking spot, reminding one, in many respects, of the description of some great Australian sheep-farm, minus the smart house and the church.

Here we alighted, fully intending after a brief halt to proceed on our journey, in the hope of reaching Cuacos the same evening. The steward was from home, and his representatives showed such extreme caution, and reserve in doing the honours, that in England they would be set down as decidedly uncivil, and as they would not ask us to walk in, we were obliged to dispense with the ceremony, and entered the farm-house uninvited.

We now discovered, that Cuacos was still distant a long day's ride of very bad road, with a considerable river to cross, nor was there any posada midway where we might find accommodation for the night, nor any house for miles round. So we found ourselves obliged to request lodging, with something of the peremptoriness of a highwayman asking for a traveller's money, though prepared of course to pay for all we received. The mistress being a dutiful wife, would promise us nothing, till her good-man came home; so we made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances permitted, fully

resolved to abide by his permission, if granted, but to ignore a refusal altogether, as a breach of the law of nations. This determination answered perfectly, and when he came home to supper, our occupation of his house, and premises was a *fait accompli* of too settled a character to be overthrown.

On awaking next morning, in hope of an early start, we found it had been raining most of the night, with every prospect of continuance; and the brook which yesterday babbled by, a tiny rill, had now overflowed its banks, suggesting the obvious reflection, that many a watercourse in the forest, which on our way to San Benito might have been crossed dryshod, must now be swollen to the dimensions of an unfordable torrent.

It was the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude, and the Cura, who served the church, had come a considerable distance through the rain, to celebrate Mass at 7 A.M. An Englishman's traditionary idea of a Spanish priest is compounded of Rosalind's lack-Latin ecclesiastic, "with whom time ambles," and Jacques' country justice "of fair round belly with good capon lined;" and when this clergyman at San Benito politely called on us, I dare say, we uncon-

sciously expected to see in him the realization of our national idea.

Poor man! the reality proved to be much more after the fashion of R6meo's starveling apothecary, and it quite grieved us to see one of his order bearing about him such unmistakable signs of poverty. The pittance he receives for serving the church at San Benito is paid by the Marques de Mirabel, and if good wishes on our part could have any potency, his stipend would soon be augmented.

The Cura, and I, tried to converse together in Latin, but the English accent and pronunciation in speaking that language, are unfortunately so very different from those of every other nation, that we could hardly understand each other, and soon gave up the attempt. The hospitality of the steward and his family remained *in statu quo*. Cold as ice yesterday, to-day it was still unthawed, and its effect was very visible in the scantiness of our accommodations. Spanish households of every class, that came under our observation, abound with stores of linen. But at San Benito even towels were unattainable luxuries, and we had in consequence to make use of our own wearing-linen instead. I felt a strong inclination to

apply one of my sheets to that purpose, but the state of the weather suggested the extreme probability of our staying there another night, and the comfort of so ample a towel would have been dearly purchased by the discomfort of a damp bed.

It is astonishing, however, how well we managed to get on, despite our destitution of appliances, which at home are as necessary as daily food; and every day, by retrenching the range of comforts hitherto indispensable, taught us more and more the truth of the line, "Man wants but little here below." Were any of the "Gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease," to see my linen as it comes back from the wash, yellow and full of wrinkles as the visage of some old crone, he would be filled with horror. No one ever beheld such "getting-up," and I am beginning to regard such shirts, as one daily wears at home, with a feeling of positive reverence, as things pertaining to a higher state of existence.

It was a great resource to us that wet day, which ended, as it began, with rain, to write letters, and to bring up our journals to the current era, though not under the most favourable circumstances for refinement of composi-

tion; and if this record prove tedious, I must console myself with the recollection of the service it rendered me at San Benito, in the employment of hours, which otherwise would have hung heavily.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

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

CHAPTER XIX.

NEXT morning, October 29th, Fortune smiled on us, and the sun came forth at intervals through the mist with every indication of better weather. Glad indeed were we all to be off, as soon as we had made a scanty breakfast, and settled accounts with our host, the fresh air of "incense-breathing morn" making mere motion a pleasure, while the rain had left upon every leaf and blade of grass a verdure, that is rarely seen in a Spanish landscape.

The forest, through which our road still lay, displayed timber of larger growth, and greater variety, than any we had yet met with. Many of the cork-trees had been recently stripped, exhibiting the inner bark, which when first laid bare is a vivid crimson, bright as fresh paint, as if Nature had lately been trying her hand at artificial decoration, in emulation of the painter's skill. The wild vine with

graceful festoons depending from the topmost branches of some ancient oak, here put forth its most brilliant hues, lighting up the whole scene, and outvying even the ruby of the Virginian creeper. There were pigs too in the forest eating the acorns, which yesterday's rain had brought down in profusion from ilex and cork tree, while the prettiest jays I ever saw, neat as Quakeresses, with black caps, and lavender bodies, flitted from bough to bough.

As we advanced, we had to ford several brooks, which yesterday must have been altogether impassable, and it was quite a picture to look back at the long train of mules and horses filing through the water. I never was in any spot, which so thoroughly realized the poetry of a forest, with its variety of timber, fern, heath, and low shrubs, its brooks and long-drawn glades leading we knew not whither. A dreamy stillness reigned around, carrying the mind far back into the past, until we were quite prepared to meet Jacques or Touchstone, or even Robin Hood and his men, so vividly were the days of old spent "under the greenwood tree" recalled to the imagination by surrounding objects. Nature had indeed amply done her part in preparing the stage,

but no actors in keeping with its scenes came forth to people it, or to satisfy our romantic aspirations by reproducing the past. A few muleteers, and swine-herds were the only figures, that gave animation to the landscape, and they neither moralized, jested, nor demanded our money.

One of them was excessively surprised to meet so large a cavalcade in that lonely spot, without a guide, the lad who accompanied us from San Benito to show us the way, having by this time turned homewards.

We were making for the Tiedar, a tributary of the Tagus, and in due time reached its banks. It was flowing with a broad, rapid stream about forty yards wide, a considerable belt of sand on its left bank indicating, that occasionally it expands into three times that volume.

Here we found a ferry-boat of most primitive construction, large enough to carry our whole party, beasts and all, in two trips, and while the dilatory boatmen were making up their minds to the exertion of paddling us over, we had time for a hasty lunch. Hereabout the province of Toledo terminates, and the wild regions of Estremadura, to which we were look-

ing forward with so much hope and interest, commence.

It amused us greatly to see an old mastiff, belonging to the steward at San Benito, in anxious haste to cross by the first boat. He had accompanied us thus far, as we fondly imagined, in polite acknowledgment of various little civilities rendered him by the members of our party, while we stayed under his master's roof. Now, however, we discovered he had ulterior views in joining himself to our company. In fact, he had a very hard life at San Benito, in the shape of short-commons coupled with a superabundance of kicks and blows. Our arrival, and all the choice morsels of Bayonne ham, and chicken bones, that descended upon him in consequence, had evidently inspired the poor drudge with ideas of a pleasanter world than he had ever moved in, and he was now taking advantage of our departure to go and seek his fortune. We really could not find heart to send him back, and when once he had landed on the right bank of the Tiedar, we felt the Rubicon of his career was crossed, and adopted him into all the privileges of our community, the two muleteers having already expressed serious intentions of offering him a

home with them at Toledo, when our wanderings are over. But alas! that I should have to finish the story. Next morning the muleteers having "slept on it," discovered they were undertaking too heavy a responsibility; the poor old dog was sent back by some chance opportunity to his rightful master at San Benito; and all his bright visions of plenty, and good treatment, vanished into thin air

The passage of the river having been safely accomplished, we now entered upon a very different country. Extensive tracts of low oak-scrub, where scattered groups of grey old boulders overtopping the underwood, enclosed here and there, amid spaces of greensward, cosy little nooks of extreme beauty, which fairies would delight in, had modern civilization left us any representatives of "the Fair Family." Now-a-days it would be considered the very spot for a pic-nic. The road was perpetually traversed by cross-paths, making it most intricate, and so detestably bad, that none but Spanish horses could have scrambled over such a succession of roots, rocks, and ruts. Soon after crossing the ferry we met a poor man, whose pony, laden with tiles, had broken its thigh from a fall, and though we would gladly have

helped him in his trouble, nothing could be done to relieve his poor beast. Sometimes we had a rapid descent of perhaps half a mile over pavement of almost Cyclopean character, inlaid with stones of such size and roughness, that even a good walker would find it difficult to pick his way in safety. By-and-by we entered upon a miry lane, where the mud was so deep and tenacious, that even the horses could hardly get on, while the poor donkeys seemed on the point of sticking fast at every step. In fact, the roads hereabout are so very bad, that at Madrid we had been expressly cautioned not to attempt them on horseback, a warning we never remembered, until it was too late.

The scenery, however, was so exquisitely beautiful, and so full of novelty, that we thought of little else, and we were now approaching the chain of mountains under which Yuste stands. An artist would have filled whole portfolios with the scenes revealed at every turn. One spot in particular seemed to challenge a painter's best powers.

A bridge of rough mountain stone, mossy and grey, with an arch of high pitch, spanned a stream, which combined the rush and foam of a torrent, with the pellucid brightness of

some lowland brook, meandering through fair meadows. Above, its course divided a range of fern-clad mountains, which descended in gentle slopes of brown to its very brink, while below it found a quiet bed among patches of newly-sown wheat, and strips of pasture, fringed with stately poplars in all the glory of their autumn tints, a picturesque old mill, that was in itself a study, throwing out the brighter portions of the picture by the modest tone of its colouring. Far as we had still to travel that day, we could not but pause a moment here.

We passed through several villages, and the natives stared as if they had never seen such an array of strangers, wondering no doubt what could be our inducement to penetrate these wild and unfrequented regions.

At nightfall I had an opportunity of testing the steadiness and good temper of the horse Lord Portarlington purchased at Madrid, which I rode to-day. We had just descended the worst piece of paved road we had yet met with, and seeing through the twilight, that a little further on a torrent of some depth, flanked by a precipice, crossed the road with no bridge but a few planks, I thought it best to dismount, not knowing how my horse would behave. I