

where the miles upon miles of parks and gardens would be most grateful to its parched citizens, as well as to the residents of Aranjuez itself, the government, though the present court never visits the place, is sufficiently careless of popularity to keep everything closely shut up; so that gardens, such as at Carlsruhe or Stutgard form the delight of the whole population, are here entirely unused except by the thrushes and nightingales.

The larger of the two palaces, a rambling French château, is little worth seeing, except for china-fanciers, who will be delighted with a wonderful room entirely walled and ceiled with beautiful Capo di Monte. This was one of the extravaganzas of Charles III., who did not scruple to waste £3,000 of gold by mixing it with the brass rails of a back staircase in his other Aranjuez palace. This, which is most inappropriately called the Casa del Labrador (the Workman's Cottage), is about a mile distant from the town. Its rooms, though low, are most gorgeously fitted up with exquisite silk embroidery and hangings. Both palaces are filled with reminiscences of curious court scandals and crimes, but especially those connected with Charles III., Maria Louisa, and her lover Godoy, the Prince of Peace, whose posi-

tion was so easily accepted by the dissolute court, that his being represented, with the king, in a fresco which still remains in one of the principal rooms, was no matter for offence. The extraordinary trio had a passion for clocks, and no less than forty-eight clocks adorn their small apartments in the Casa del Labrador, five or six in each room. All the royal residences of Spain are decorated in this way. The mania which Ferdinand VII. had for clocks is amply shown in the palace at Madrid, and even Charles V. made a collection of them, and remarked how absurd it was to try to make two men's heads think the same, when he could not make two of his clocks go alike.

Aranjuez is an oasis in the wilderness. The Tagus and Xarama, meeting almost beneath the palace walls, keep its island garden fresh and verdant, even through a burning Spanish summer. The fine old English oaks and elms were brought over by Philip II., and were, perhaps, the only good which accrued to his native land from his marriage with our Mary. They still attract as much notice in Spain as a wood of palms and prickly-pears would do at Hampton Court. The beauties of Aranjuez have been a constant theme with the poets of Castile: Calderon and Garcilasso

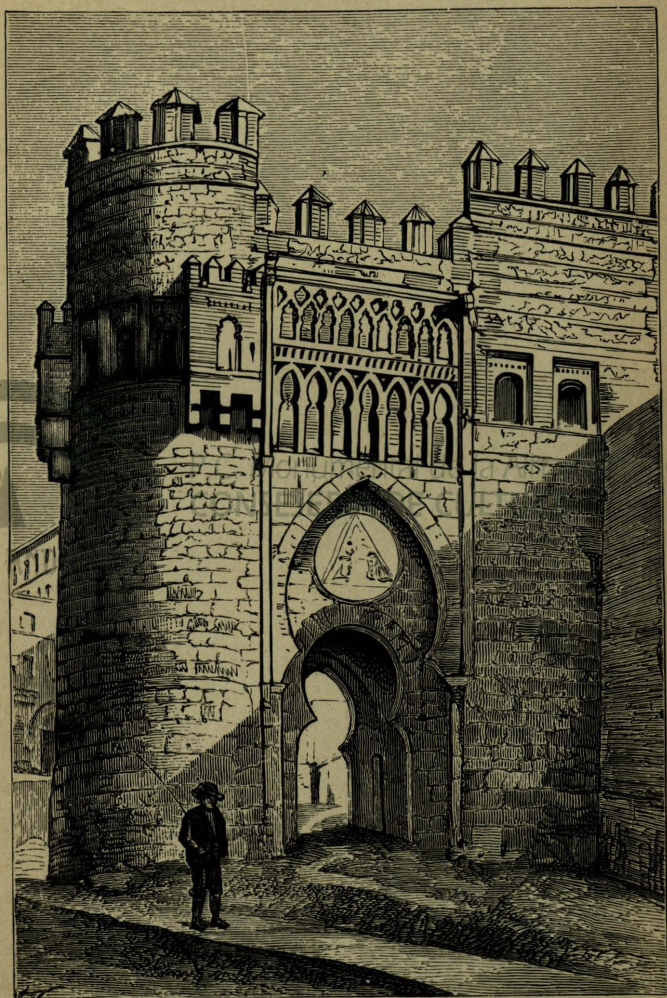
have written in their praise, and even Fray Juan de Tolosa, the Augustine prior of Zaragoza, when he published a religious treatise in 1589 for the benefit of the young knights of the period, called it "The Aranjuez of the Soul," in order the better to entice them to read it. The gardens remain as we see them portrayed in the faithful pictures of Velazquez in the Museo at Madrid, and as they are described by Lady Fanshaw, English ambassadress in Spain during the reign of Philip IV. Long shady avenues of elms and plane-trees lead through closely-planted woods, and have been the scene of countless intrigues, both of politics and love. Even down to the late revolution, all old customs of the place were kept up, even to the breed of camels, introduced here by Philip II., to perform the garden work, and their oriental forms, slowly parading through the shady groves, were a well-known characteristic of the place. Isabella II. never failed to spend the spring months at Aranjuez, but now it is the picture of desolation; fountains without water, beds without flowers, promenades without people: truly one may say with Schiller, "Die schönen Tage in Aranjuez sind nun zu ende."

A short journey by rail, and a long wait in the

wretched junction station of Castillejo—where the only accommodation is a miserable room, open at both ends, and a prey to beggars and dirt of every description—brought us to imperial Toledo. At a distance the town rises grandly, not distinguished by any one marked feature or building, except its great Alcazar, which is chiefly of the last century, but an irregular line of towers, battlemented walls, and ancient houses, crowning the black precipitous rocks, which rise abruptly from the yellow Tagus, and backed by rugged hills, scorched and parched into every shade of orange and brown by the tropical sunshine. The general views of Toledo have no beauty, but are solemn and affecting beyond those of all other places, so huge and historical does it stand, without any vegetation whatever, girdled in from the living world by the indescribable solitude of its utterly desolate hills.

Guarding the entrance of the town stands the ruined castle of Cervantes, on a projecting spur of the mountain. At its foot is the bridge of Alcantara, "the Bridge of the Bridge," closed at both ends by gate towers, and striding with high arches across the Tagus, as it rushes through the deep chasm in the rock upon which it is built.

Hence one ascends to the town by a terraced road, from which there is a glorious view over the Vega. The atmosphere is so clear that every fissure in the distant hills can be counted, and each building on the line of the horizon stands out against the transparent turquoise sky as if seen through a microscope. Where the terrace makes a zigzag to a higher level, is the grand Moorish gateway called *Puerta del Sol*, richly embossed with tracery, and of a splendid orange-red colour. Now we reach the *Zocodover*, a Moorish square overhung by many ranges of balconies, whence a tolerably wide street, the only one in Toledo, winds along the irregularities of the hill to the cathedral, which unfortunately stands so low that its fine spire can never become a conspicuous feature. Diving thus into the heart of the town, the quaintness of everything is increasingly striking. Here a beautiful Moorish or Gothic fragment breaking the line of white-washed walls, there balconies adorned with clustering vines and jessamine, hung with bird-cages, and with handsome dark-eyed women in lace mantillas, leaning over their railings. Near the cathedral, at 16, *Calle Santa Isabel*, is a house of this kind—the pleasant *Casa de Huespedes* (board-



PUERTA DEL SOL, TOLEDO.

P. 180.

BIBLIOTECA DE LA ALHAMBRA

ing-house) of the three excellent sisters Figuerroa—where we spent five days very comfortably. Our sitting-room had the pleasantest of balconies, filled with birds, and common but luxuriant flowers, and looked across a quiet little garden, with a tree—a valuable possession in Spain—to the cliffs on the other side of the river.

Of course our first visit was to the cathedral, and our first sensation was certainly one of disappointment, but perhaps partly because we had heard so much, and expected so much, and because the beggars are so tiresome, and their perpetual whine, with their mischievous, even malicious, tricks, such a constant irritant to the temper. Much also of the building has been whitewashed, and the fact is commemorated in a triumphant inscription on one of its walls!

Still, the beauties of the cathedral of Toledo are such as grow upon one at each sight of it, and surely no church interior was ever more entirely picturesque than this, where the coro, filled with wonderful carved stall-work, divided by jasper pillars, breaks, but does not block, the view of the five naves and their eighty-eight columns, through which the ancient glass sparkles with colours of sapphire, ruby, and emerald, and where the painted

and gilt retablo, toned but uninjured by age, rises from pavement to ceiling in an indescribable labyrinth of niches, statues, and sculptured tracery. Around the altar are glorious tombs of some of the earlier kings, Alonzo VII., Sancho del Deseado, Sancho el Bravo, and the Infante Don Pedro. Here also is buried Cardinal Mendoza (ob. 1495), who obtained the name of Tertius Rex, from the degree in which he shared the sovereignty with Ferdinand and Isabella.

Behind the high altar, in a large chapel of their own, are magnificent tombs of a knight and a lady. He is Alvaro de Luna, Master of Santiago, Constable of Castile, and Prime Minister of John II., whose mind and counsels he completely ruled for five-and-thirty years. He lived with royal state, and when he rode out was followed by thirty knights, and he held three thousand lances in his pay. His interference brought about a marriage between his king and Isabella of Portugal, who became his bitterest enemy, and whose ascendancy over her husband was the cause of his ruin. He was executed on an accusation of high treason in the square at Valladolid, his last words being, "And this is the reward of faithful devoted service to my king." In his lifetime he had prepared

beautiful bronze tombs for himself and his wife, but when he was disgraced his relentless master had them broken up, and they were made into the two pulpits which still stand at the entrance of the Capilla Mayor. The existing tombs, of alabaster, are due to the filial piety of his daughter Maria.

Close by is the entrance of the Capilla de los Reyes Nueves, built by order of Juan II., and containing a statue of its founder (buried at Miraflores), and the tombs of Henrique II. (1379), and his queen Juana (1380); their son Juan I. (1390), with his wife Leonora (1382); Henrique III. (1407), and his wife Catalina de Lancastre (1419), daughter of John of Gaunt.

The Sacristia Mayor, entered near this, is surrounded by beautiful pictures of Juan de Borgoña, in the style of Perugino. Below these hang a most interesting series of authentic portraits of the archbishops. They include Mendoza and Ximenes, by Borgoña; Carranza, the confessor of Charles V., who urged the dying emperor to faith in the Crucified as the only Saviour, and was consequently imprisoned—as “infected with Lutheran opinions”—for eleven years in the castle of St. Angelo, where he died in a dungeon; and

Sandoval (by Luiz Tristan), who urged Philip IV. to the expulsion of the Moors from Spain.

At the western end of the church is a Gothic tabernacle with a beautiful relief of San Ildefonso receiving a chasuble from the Virgin, who is supposed to have presented it in person as he was praying on this spot. An inscription formerly attested the miracle in these words:—

“Quando la Reina del cielo
Pusó los pies en el suelo
En esta piedra los pusó
De besarla tened uso
Para mas vuestro consuelo.”

The Virgin is also said to have attended mass in this cathedral, occupying the seat of San Ildefonso (never used since) who had written a treatise in defence of her perpetual virginity; and it is to this story of an honour paid to one of its archbishops that Toledo owes the primacy of Spain.

The image which now occupies the place of honour in the shrine, so delighted the Virgin when she came to inspect the likeness, that she declared it her very image, embraced it tenderly, and conferred upon it the gift of miracles. Yet, after all, this is not the most important idol in the place. “Maestra Señora de Toledo,” herself one of the

most hideous of all the black dolls poor St. Luke is held responsible for, resides in the Sacristy, and possesses a wardrobe and collection of jewels of unparalleled richness. When we saw her, she was dressed in silver tissue, entirely covered with small pearls; but her clothes are changed at each great feast-day.

No one should leave the cathedral without visiting the Mosarabic chapel, a large separate building entered near the great western door. Its history is this. At the Moorish invasion, the Toledans defended themselves gallantly, and, when they yielded, obtained the best conditions they could. Chief amongst the terms they insisted upon was that they should preserve five churches, in which there should be free liberty of worship for those who remained faithful to Christianity. Thus, through the four hundred years of the Moorish rule, the faith was kept alive in Toledo, and the faithful bore the name of Mos-Arabes—"mixed with the Arabs." In the reign of Alonzo VI., when Toledo returned to the Christian rule, the papal legate, Richard, desired that the Mosarabic should be laid aside for the Gregorian ritual, and his wishes were upheld by the king, and the queen Doña Costanza, who preferred the

rites of Rome. The Toledan clergy were furious, and the people became so excited, that a revolution was imminent. Alarmed at this turn of affairs, and fearing to push matters to an extremity, the king then proposed as a compromise, after the fashion of the day, that the dispute should be decided by a single combat, each party choosing a champion, and that so God should show which ritual was most acceptable to Him. The fight took place in the vega, and the Mosarabic champion, Don Ruiz de la Matanza, was the victor. The populace rent the air with their applause, and believed that all was settled. But the court was enraged, and some little time after, Alonzo, conveniently discovering that the means of proof chosen had been impious and cruel, proposed another trial. This time, after a general fast, and prayers in all the churches, copies of the Román and of the Toledan rituals were to be placed together in a lighted bonfire, and that which remained unscathed would be the one approved by God.

A pile of faggots was lighted in the Zocodover, in the presence of an immense concourse, and the two breviaries were placed upon it, each party praying fervently for the liturgy they preferred.

But it was a stormy day, and before the flames could reach it, the Roman prayer-book was taken up by the wind and blown intact and unsinged out of the fire, while the Mosarabic breviary remained unconsumed in the midst of the flames. Both parties shouted that the victory was theirs, but the Mosarabians carried the day, and their liturgy, described by Dr. Neale as "the connecting link of the eastern and western rites," was preserved in Toledo. When Ximenes became archbishop, it was beginning to fall into desuetude, and to preserve so interesting a relic of faith in troublous times, he instituted, in 1512, an order of priests especially charged with the performance of the Mosarabic office, and built the chapel which we see. Its walls are covered with frescoes by Juan de Borgoña, of victories over the infidels, and of the taking of Oran.

The splendid collection of church vestments is well worth examining. Nothing can describe their magnificence, or the degree of high-art to which they shew that needlework can be carried.

The grand time to visit the cathedral is the festival of Corpus, when the whole of its exterior is hung with glorious tapestries of the time of Ferdinand and Isabella.

The existing remains in Toledo are of three kinds, viz., first, the Moorish mosque, the Moorish houses, and the fragments of Moorish work embedded in the cathedral and churches; second, the Jewish synagogues; third, the Christian art.

The Moorish mosque, now called the church of El Christo de la Luz, is of intense interest. It stands behind the Puerta del Sol, and might easily be overlooked, as its walls, covered with beautiful Moorish arches, are enclosed in a courtyard. It was in existence when Alonzo VI. entered Toledo, May 25, 1083. Built into this and other Arabian buildings of Toledo are fragments of Gothic constructions, such as capitals and portions of columns, showing that they belonged to Christian edifices anterior to the Moorish conquest. The plan adopted by the Moors is almost analogous to that of the Christian basilicas, their mosques being divided into naves, and generally ending in an apse. The arches which support the roof of the naves are either round or horseshoe, and double arches are employed in the ornamentation of the walls. The shafts of the columns which sustain the arcades of these buildings are either of marble or of brick and mortar, but always thick and heavy. The octagonal form observed in some

of them is a feature of the period. The arabesques and carvings with which the Moors ornamented their work in Toledo are almost always coarse adaptations from the ornaments which they had seen in passing through places which had submitted to their yoke. Their capitals follow the Greek forms, more or less modified, according to the caprice of the builders, but Byzantine ornament is the kind which was most popular with them.

There is something especially striking in the low vaulted nave of El Christo de la Luz, which is like a miniature fragment from the mosque at Cordova. Over the altar hangs a ghastly crucifix with long real hair, which recalls a curious Spanish legend, telling that as the Cid rode by after the conquest at the head of his troops, his faithful steed Bavioca dropped upon its knees before this mosque. Bavioca needed no guidance and never did wrong, so when she knelt all knew that some holy relic must be concealed upon that spot. The wall was pulled down, and, as the stones fell, a stream of light poured forth, and a crucifix was disclosed, where it had been immured for safety before the invasion, the lamp which was then lighted still miraculously burning—El Christo de la Luz.

Near this church is the splendid hospital of

Santa Cruz, now a military school. Cardinal Mendoza left his fortune to Isabella to be employed for charitable purposes, and this is one of the noble foundations she raised in fulfilment of what she felt would be his wishes. Its patios and staircase are as beautiful in detail as in design.

Quite on the other side of the town are the two marvellous old Jewish synagogues, now called El Transito and Santa Maria Blanca. Both are of the greatest interest, as having been built by the Jews during the dominion of the Moors, under whose tolerant rule they enjoyed perfect freedom and liberty of conscience. Both buildings are almost like mosques, and it is supposed that Moorish workmen were employed in them. Santa Maria Blanca, which stands back in a little court, and is newly whitewashed, was indeed a Jewish sanctuary, being ceiled with cedar of Lebanon, and the ground on which it stood covered with the sacred dust of Palestine.

El Transito is much more magnificent. It was built by Samuel Levi, a Jew who was the treasurer and faithful servant of Pedro the Cruel, but whose master, coveting his wealth, tortured him and put him to death, and then confiscated all his possessions.

When the Christians recovered Toledo, the star of the Jews set, and each Jewish head was taxed at thirty pieces of silver—"the price of Him whom they of the children of Israel did value." But they were allowed to retain their synagogues through a curious plea. The Jews of Toledo affirmed that they had not consented to the death of the Saviour!. When Jesus Christ was brought to judgment, they said, the council of Jews, of which Caiaphas was the president, sent to take the votes of the tribes as to whether He should be released or put to death. One tribe voted for his acquittal, and from them the Jews of Toledo were descended. This tribe, then, was guiltless of the blood of Jesus, and did not merit the execrations poured upon their brethren. The original answer of the Toledan Jews, with a Latin translation of the Hebrew text, is preserved in the archives of the Vatican.

In 1389 the oppression of the Jews began by their being bereaved of their market, which was near the cathedral, by Archbishop Tenorio, who built the present cloister on its site. In 1454 Santa Maria Blanca was taken away from the Jews, on the instigation of San Vicente Ferrer. This saint was a great mixture. Cruel and

vindictive beyond words in his persecution of heretics, he was saint-like in the practice of his own life. He refused all Church dignities; daily he read and meditated upon the Scriptures, especially upon the Passion of our Lord. In his treatise on the "Spiritual Life," he exhorted men to turn to God constantly in prayer, for "study would drain the heart and intellect unless men constantly turned to place themselves at the foot of the cross of Christ, when the thought of his sacred wounds would give fresh power and new light to their souls."

In 1490, the Toledans, in order to have a plea for a further spoliation of the Jews, gave out that they had stolen Juan Passamonte, a boy of Guardia, and crucified him, putting his heart into a hostia, as a charm against the Inquisition. This story is commemorated in a fresco near the beautiful cloister gate called "El Niño Perdido," and is, like the similar story of St. Hugh of Lincoln, a favourite theme with poets and painters. In 1492 every unbaptized Jew was forced to quit Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, and 170,000 were cruelly expelled, preferring banishment and the loss of everything to abandoning their faith. The expulsion of the Jews was the ruin of Toledo. It is

strange how, throughout these persecutions, the teaching of St. Bernard was overlooked, who said, "Take heed what you do to the Jews, for whosoever touches them is like one who touches the apple of the eye of Jesus, for they are His flesh and blood."

Not far from the synagogues is the church of San Tomé, containing a picture by the rare artist El Greco (Domenico Theotocupuli—1577-1625). It represents the burial of the Conde de Orgaz, in 1392, by St. Stephen and St. Augustine, who are believed to have come in person to bury him, because he had spent all his wealth in adorning their churches. Near this, almost on the edge of the steep cliff which overhangs the Tagus, is the Franciscan convent of San Juan de los Reyes, with its beautiful church, built by Ferdinand and Isabella in memory of their victory at Toro. It will at once attract attention, not only from its Gothic architecture, but from its being hung all over with the links of the chains of Christian captives rescued at the conquest of the Moors. The entrance, built by Alonzo de Covarrubias for Philip II., is surmounted by an exquisitely-sculptured cross. The cloisters, though of late Gothic, are amongst the most beautiful in Europe. Latterly nature has added much to

their charm, and jessamine and honeysuckle form natural crowns around its saint-statues. Here Cardinal Ximenes entered upon his noviciate as a Franciscan monk, and hoped to flee from the world in which he was destined to play so conspicuous a part.

Close to the church are the Cyclopean ruins of the palace built by King Wamba in 674, and inhabited by Roderick. From its window he is said to have beheld the beautiful daughter of Count Julian, who had been intrusted to his care, while she was bathing in the river, and to have become possessed with the fatal passion which led to the invasion of the Moors, and the destruction of his kingdom.

In the hollow is the grand gate-defended bridge of San Martino, connected with which is a curious anecdote of wifely devotion. The architect of the original bridge on this site discovered too late that his work was not strong enough, and would give way when the scaffolds were removed. To his wife alone he communicated his misery; she set fire to the scaffolds, burnt down the whole work, and saved her husband's reputation.

Beyond the bridge the river leaves its rocky gorge and winds through the plain. Here is the

small ancient basilica called El Christo de la Vega, with its richly-decorated apse and solemn Rembrandt-like interior, in which the principal ray of light falls upon the figure on the crucifix which gives a name to the sanctuary. The figure, which is of life size, has its head bent, its hair falling over the shoulders, one hand only nailed to the cross, and the other extended as if in the act of taking an oath. Its story tells that a young country girl made her lover promise to marry her and sign a paper swearing that he would do so before this crucifix,—that afterwards the lover was faithless and denied his troth, when the maiden, deserted and weeping, betook herself to the chapel, and prayed, and laid the paper he had signed before the altar, imploring help from her Redeemer;—then, in the solemn stillness, the Crucified detached one hand from the cross, and stretching it out, exclaimed, “*Io soy testigo,*”—I am the witness!

A recent Spanish author, Gustavo Becquer, says truly: “Outside the place which guards their memory, far from the precincts which preserve their traces, and where it appears as if we still breathed the atmosphere of old tales told in the evening, traditions lose their poetic mystery, their

inexplicable hold upon the soul. Far off one questions, one analyses, one doubts; but here, faith, like a secret revelation, illuminates the spirit, and makes one believe."

Good walkers should ascend, to the left, beyond the bridge of St. Martino. Passing the rude stone cross on the edge of the hill, they will find themselves at once in one of the wildest scenes imaginable, and may follow a path which winds through a gorge, and then along declivities so arid that scarcely anything grows there except asphodel and cistus, flowers which are careless about water and love a dry sandy soil. Rosemary too flourishes in the clefts, a herb which Spanish peasants think it impossible to estimate too highly. Once, they say, it was a poor common plant of the field, but upon it the Virgin, on a washing-day, hung out to dry the baby-clothes of the infant Jesus, and thenceforth it became for ever green and fragrant and full of virtues. The fact is commemorated in one of the popular songs, which are so endless in themselves, and so endlessly in the mouths of the people as they work:—

"Lavando estaba la Virgen,
Y tendiendo en el romero;
Los parajitos cantaban;
Adoremus el misterio."

Since the death of the Saviour, too, it is believed that the rosemary has put forth fresh flowers every Friday, the day of his suffering, "as if to embalm his holy body."

As the path winds higher amongst the rocks, we come in sight of a hermitage and its little chapel of the Virgin. Hither, on the night of her great festival on the 1st of May, long processions toil up, chanting as they go, and all the little ways are lit up by blazing branches, making a winding path of fire in the darkness. Beyond the chapel is the ghastly and desolate gorge called the Degollada, from a woman who had her throat cut there, and truly it seems a fitting place for such a deed, which might easily be concealed here; and as the environs of Toledo are a stronghold of brigands, it requires something of an effort to mount the last and most desolate ascent which ends at the Castle of Cervantes. Yet no views give one such an idea of the solemn desolation of Toledo as these, whence the tawny river is seen winding for miles between jagged cliffs, crowned on the other side with buildings so weird, so uniformly old, and so hopelessly decayed, that it is impossible to believe that one is still walking in the nineteenth century. So, in spite of brigands, it is well to linger here till

sunset, when all the poor and pitiful detail is lost, and only the stupendous outline remains, engraven upon a flaming sky. "Then," to quote Becquer again, "the lofty and black needles of the towers of Toledo, between whose arched windows fall some last rays of light, stand out against the floating groups of golden clouds, like a legion of phantoms, who, from the height of their seven hills, look down upon the plain with their eyes of fire."

In the valley beyond the bridge of Alcantara is another ruin, called the "Palace of Galiana." This legendary princess is supposed to have been the daughter of King Golafré, who loved her passionately and built her a palace, compared with which all the glories of the Arabian Nights paled into insignificance. Hither endless lovers came courting, and annoyed the princess dreadfully, but the most hideous and wearisome was Bradamant, a gigantic Moorish chieftain, who made an underground passage from his stronghold at Guadalajara to Toledo, that he might visit her every day. At length Charlemagne the Great came hither to assist Golafré against Abderrhaman, the Sultan of Cordova, and being lodged in the palace and falling in love with Galiana, he slew Bradamant and presented her with his head.

The princess was so charmed with the gift that she became enamoured of the giver, accepted his hand, accompanied him to France, and was crowned triumphantly. Such is the legend. The palace, which never was a palace, and which certainly never was inhabited by Galiana, is reduced to a few crumbling walls. Near it, in strange contrast, runs the railway, and it is the last building seen on leaving Toledo.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

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

XI.

MADRID AND THE ESCORIAL.

IT is because Charles V. suffered so much from the gout, that Madrid was chosen as the capital of Spain. He found relief from its sharp air, and it was thenceforth adopted as the home of royalty. No situation can possibly be more odious to ordinary mortals. Though situated 2,400 feet above the sea, it has none of the advantages and all the disadvantages of a high position. The climate is burningly hot in summer and piercingly cold in winter.

“El aire de Madrid estan sotil
Que mata á un hombre, y no apaga á un candil.”*

All around, the country is utterly barren and hideous. Not a tree, not a drop of water, not a green plant,

* “The air of Madrid is so subtle. It kills a man, and does not put out a candle.”

not even a blade of grass, not a vestige of colour of any kind, but only roads deep in dust, and a district covered with brown sand, or dull grey rock. After the time of Philip II., the kings of Spain found out how great a mistake had led to the desertion of the old royal cities of Valladolid, Toledo, Seville, and Granada for this desert, and Philip III. wished to move back the capital to Valladolid, Charles III. to Seville, but it was then too late, partly because the building of the Escorial had added such a heavy link to the chain which bound the capital to Madrid—which is neither a “ciudad,” nor a cathedral-town, but “the largest village in Spain.”

“Quien te quiere, no te sabe ;

Quien te sabe, no te quiere,”*

is a very true proverb regarding the present royal city, yet the self-glorious Spaniards still call theirs “the only court,” and believe that the world is silent in awe before its splendour.

“Donde esta Madrid calle el mundo ?”

and another proverb says that it is but one step from Madrid to heaven :—

“Desde Madrid al cielo.”

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- * “He who wishes for you, does not know you ;
He who knows you, does not wish for you.”

There was a small town on this site before the time of Charles V., and its narrow streets are interesting and abound in historical recollections. The Plaza San Domingo marks the site of a conventual church where Pedro the Cruel was buried, and his tomb, removed when the church was pulled down, may be seen in the architectural museum. In the tower of the Casa de Lujanes and in the adjoining house which has a curious doorway, Francis I. was imprisoned. The house called Las Vistillas was that where Ferdinand and Isabella resided when at Madrid, and from its balcony Cardinal Ximenes answered the nobles who demanded by what authority he had assumed the regency, by shewing them his soldiers in the court beneath. The Plaza Mayor, still antiquated and picturesque, was the scene of many Autos da Fé. "Many Jews are burnt here," wrote Madame de Villars, ambassadress in the reign of Charles II., to Madame de Coulanges, "and there are other tortures for heretics and atheists, which are horrible to think of." The Court looked down upon these scenes from the windows of a house still remaining, and worth visiting on account of its fine staircase lined with rich blue azulejos. From these windows also Charles I. of England

saw a bull-fight, given in his honour by Philip IV., when he was courting the Infanta Maria. At that time there was no regular Plaza de Toros, and bull-fights were always given here, and were the cause of far greater loss of human life than those which exist at present, as the greater proportion of the bull-fighters were not professional, but young noblemen of the court, who hoped to make themselves more acceptable by exhibiting wild feats of rash daring under the eyes of their mistresses. Vivid descriptions of these bull-fights are given in the exceedingly rare but important letters of the Comtesse d'Aulnois, a French lady of rank, who visited the court of Spain during the reign of Philip IV. "The Plaza Mayor," says Madame d'Aulnois, "is larger, I think, than the Place Royale at Paris. It is rather long than wide, surrounded by porticoes, upon which the houses are built, and are always alike, five stories high, with a range of balconies in each, upon which you enter by large glass doors. The balcony of the king stands more forward than the others, is larger, and covered with gilding. It occupies the centre of one side, and is surmounted by a canopy. Opposite are the balconies of the ambassadors, the Councils of Castile and Arragon,

the Inquisition, Italy, Flanders, and the Indies. The offices of War, the Crusades, and Finance are to the right of the king; one may recognise them by the arms which are displayed on their crimson velvet hangings, embroidered with gold. Lastly, the town council, the judges, the *grands*, and other nobles, are placed according to their rank, and at the expense of the king, or of the town, who hire the balconies from different private persons who live there.

“There is given on behalf of the king, to all those I have mentioned, a collation in appropriate baskets, and with this collation, which consists of fruits, sweetmeats, and iced-waters,—gloves, ribbons, fans, pastils, silk stockings, and garters are offered to the ladies; so that these festivals always cost more than a hundred thousand crowns, an expense which is defrayed from the fines appropriated to the king or to the town. This is a fund which no one would venture to touch, even to save the kingdom from the greatest danger; if they did so, a sedition would be the result: so great is the delight which the people take in pleasures of this kind.

“I assure you, that the countless crowd of people (for every place is filled, the roofs of the

houses like the rest), the balconies with their gay hangings, the number of beautiful ladies, the magnificent Court, the guards, and in short, the whole square, present one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen.

* * * * *

“When there are in the town horses which have served and are skilful in a bull-fight, even without any knowledge of their owner, they are borrowed from him, equally if he does not wish to sell them, or if there are no means to buy them with, and they are never refused. If the horse is unfortunately killed, and a proposal is made to pay for it, it is not allowed, and it would be shewing a want of Spanish generosity to receive money in such a case. It is nevertheless sufficiently disagreeable to have a horse, which you may have taken great pains to bring up, and which any adventurer may kill in the most unconcerned way. This kind of combat is considered so perilous, that indulgences are open in many of the churches on those days, on account of the slaughter which takes place. Many Popes have wished entirely to do away with such barbarous spectacles, but the Spaniards have been so urgent with the court of Rome to leave them untouched, that it has

given in to their wishes, and up to this time they have been tolerated.

* * * * *

“The fêtes are beautiful, great, and magnificent; it is a very noble and costly spectacle; it is impossible to depict them fairly, and one cannot imagine them without seeing them. But I confess that all this gives me no pleasure, when I think that a man whose safety may be dear to you, has the rashness to expose himself to a furious bull, and that for love of you (for this is generally the motive), you may see him return bleeding and half-dead. Can one approve any of these customs? And suppose even that one has no special interest in them, can one wish to be present at these fêtes, which nearly always cost the lives of many persons? For my part I am astonished that in a kingdom, whose kings bear the name of Catholic, such a barbarous amusement should be allowed. I know it is of great antiquity, as it dates from the Moors, but it seems to me that it ought to be quite abolished, as well as many other customs derived from these Infidels.

* * * * *

“A cavalier of merit was in love with a fair young girl, who was only a jeweller's daughter;

but she was perfectly beautiful and a great heiress. This young nobleman having learnt that some of the fiercest bulls of the mountains had been taken, and thinking that he would derive great honour from their conquest, resolved to fight with them, and asked his mistress's permission. She, horrified at the very idea of such a proposition, fainted away, and forbade him, using the whole force of her influence over him to prevent his risking his life. In spite of this prohibition, he thought he could not give her a higher proof of his love, and secretly prepared everything which he required. But notwithstanding the care which he took to conceal his design from his mistress, she discovered it, and left no stone unturned to change his resolution. At last the day of the fête arrived, and he conjured her to be there; assuring her that her very presence would be sufficient to make him a conqueror, and to acquire for him a glory which would render him more worthy of her. 'Your love,' she said to him, 'is more ambitious than tender, and mine is more tender than ambitious. Go where glory calls you. You wish that I should be present, you wish to fight before me; yes, I will accede to your wish, and perhaps my presence will cause you more trouble than encouragement.'

"At last he quitted her, and went to the Plaza Mayor, where all the world was already assembled. But he had scarcely begun to defend himself against a fierce bull that had attacked him, when a young peasant threw a dart at the terrible beast, which pierced it, causing great agony. It instantly left the young nobleman who was engaged with it, and rushed bellowing against the person who had struck it. The young man aghast tried to escape, when the cap which covered his head fell off, and the most beautiful long hair in the world floated over his shoulders, and revealed that it was a girl of sixteen. So petrified was she with terror, that she was unable either to run or escape the bull, which gave her a terrible wound in the side, at the very moment when her lover, who was the *tocador*, and who recognised her, came to her assistance. O God! what was his anguish, at seeing his dear mistress in this terrible state! He became beside himself, life was valueless to him, and more frantic than the bull itself, he performed incredible feats. He was mortally wounded in several places . . . That was indeed a day when people considered the fête delightful."

The Plaza Mayor, now no longer used for bull-fights, is occupied by an open garden, through



STATUE OF PHILIP IV., MADRID.

P. 208.

which, in pleasant contrast to London squares, people are allowed to circulate freely. In its centre is the grand equestrian statue of Philip III., cast by John of Bologna from a drawing by Pantoja. A still grander statue is that of Philip IV., where the bronze mane and scarf literally float on the air, and which is historically interesting from the important persons employed in its design; Velazquez supplied the drawings, it was cast in Florence by Pedro Tacca, and Galileo shewed how the great weight of the horse could be sustained in its prancing position. This statue, moved from the gardens of the Buen Retiro, now ornaments the centre of the Plaza del Oriente, one side of which is occupied by the palace. This is certainly one of the most magnificent royal residences in the world, imposing in itself, and striking from its position at the end of the finest part of the town, on the edge of a steep bank. The nearer detail of the surroundings is wretched, rugged slopes and ragged shrubberies, walks and gardens alike hopelessly neglected, but, beyond these, it looks upon the snow-capped range of the icy Guadarrama. Below, in the hollow, dribbles the Manzanares, which can scarcely be called a river, and which has been compared by

Tirso de Molina to that dreariest of things, a university town during the long vacation.

“Como Alcalá y Salamanca,
Teneis y no sois Colegio,
Vacaciones en Verano
Y curso solo en Invierno.”

In the reign of Charles II., the Court used to amuse themselves by driving up and down in the dry bed of the river, and Madame de Villars gives Madame de Coulanges an amusing account of the scenes which took place there. She also mentions, apropos of the enormous bridge which there crosses nothing at all, that a wit of the time suggested to Philip IV., that he had better buy a river, or sell his bridge.

The royal family of Spain of the house of Austria, of which we read so much in memoirs of the period, which was such a strange chaos of beauty and ugliness both mental and physical, need not remain even personally strangers to any one. In the Royal Gallery, where many delightful and profitable mornings may be spent, Titian, Pantojo, Coello, and Velazquez, have handed down to us their living forms so vividly that we may still walk and live amongst them. The family procession begins with Charles V., first standing with his favourite

dog; again, as an old man, with a grizzled beard, upon his war-horse. Here also (hung too high) is the portrait of his beautiful queen Isabella of Portugal, which he carried with him to San Yuste; and near it is Titian's strange picture of the Apotheosis of Charles V. and Philip II., in which they, kings on earth, kneel as suppliants before the throne of the Redeemer. This was the last object which met the dying eyes of the Emperor; and, by his own desire, was long hung over his grave. In connection with his portraits we should look at those of his daughter, Juana of Austria, who, as widow of a Prince of Portugal, was Regent of Spain during the absence of Philip II. in England; of Catherine, Queen of Portugal, sister of the Emperor; and of Mary of Portugal, the unnatural daughter of his other sister, Queen Eleanor.

Philip II. is portrayed for us, in several distinct stages of his life; and it is most interesting to trace from youth to age the progress of the handsome features that never smiled except when he heard of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, when he laughed outright. Three of his four wives may be seen with him; Mary of Portugal, Mary of England, and Isabella of France, the daughter of Catherine de Medicis. The grand portrait of the ugly Mary

Tudor, by Antonio More, is especially valuable, as being that sent over to shew her bridegroom what she was like before their marriage, and it is wonderful that, after gazing upon her sour features, he should have decisively thrown over a charming princess of Portugal to marry her. Near the queen, is the portrait of Antonio Perez, the cruelly persecuted minister of Philip II. Then come his children, —Don Carlos, whose birth cost the first Mary her life, and whose own sad life is supposed to have been closed by his father's cruelty; and Clara Eugenia Isabella, the beautiful daughter of his third wife, whom her father spoke of as his "mirror" and "the light of his soul," and to whom he bequeathed the Netherlands. Then Philip III. and his wife Isabella ride by on their magnificent horses. Then begin the endless portraits of Philip IV., with those of his first wife Isabella, daughter of Henry IV. of France, and their little son Balthazar, who died before he was grown up, represented with a gun at six years old, and again riding splendidly on his little pony; of the minister Duke of Olivares; of Don Ferdinand of Austria, the king's handsome brother, with his beautiful dog; of the second Queen Mariana, who never could help laughing, in spite of the stiff solemnity of the Spanish court,

and who looks as if she must herself have provoked laughter by her extraordinary coiffure and costume as a bride; of her little daughter Maria Margherita, a charming child, in the most enormous of hooped petticoats, repeated again and again, at prayers, in full costume, and playing with "Las Meninas," her maids of honour, while her father and mother, looking in at the door, are reflected in the opposite mirror. Here also is Charles II., the last lineal descendant of Charles V., and his charming wife Marie Louise d'Orleans, of whom he was so enamoured, that he exclaimed on seeing her dance, "My queen, my queen, thou art the most perfect in all creation."

Upon the other treasures of the Madrid gallery it is impossible to dwell here. They cannot be studied enough, from the rich colouring of Raphael, Titian, and Pordenone, to the cold skies and almost too truth-telling figures of Velazquez. Never was there a more delightful collection, though there never was one worse arranged, or in which it is more difficult, almost impossible, to find what you want.

The interest in the royal portraits must be carried on to the Armeria at the other side of the town, where, in a great hall, stand, as if marshalled in

battle array, a grand troop of suits of armour, which include many of those in which the kings were painted. Perhaps the most interesting armour here is the suit worn by Isabella at the siege of Granada; the most interesting individual specimen, the weird Norse-like helmet of Jaime el Conquistador. Charles V. is again brought home to us in his camp bed, and his portantina, brought from San Yuste. In the suits of armour which belonged to him, the figure of the Virgin is always engraved upon the breast, that of St. Barbara, his patron saint, upon the back.

In the Academia are preserved three splendid Murillos taken from the Caridad at Seville by the French, and never sent back there when Waterloo restored them to Spain. The finest represents St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Santa Isabel in Spanish) caring for her lepers, the others tell the story of the fall of snow which led to the foundation of Sta. Maria Maggiore at Rome. Here also may be studied the extraordinary pictures of Goya (ob. 1828) king's painter to Charles IV., and justly called the Rabelais of painting; they are wonderful representations of Spanish life, or of wild dreams of witchcraft, effected by scratches, plunges, lunges of pen and pencil, with dabs, splashes, and blots of colour.

Modern Madrid has deserted the gardens of the Buen Retiro, in which the Austrian court so delighted, and goes to amuse itself on the promenade of El Prado, which is something like the Champs Elysées, though a bad imitation. Here, the dusty road between the avenues is rendered supportable by perfect volumes of water being squirted over it, and the trees are enabled to grow by having little ponds dug round their stems. It is quite worth while to go here late in the afternoon. The costumes of the nurses are really gorgeous, brilliant scarlet, orange, and purple, slashed with broad stripes of black velvet, and forming perfect rays of colour as they dart in and out after their children under the acacia trees. Here groups sit on the stone seats discussing the last pictures in *La Carcajada*, a capital newspaper of political caricatures; and young legislators of from eighteen to twenty, got up excessively smart, consider that they are the only power which has a right to direct the affairs of the world. At the gay little wooden stalls all varieties of cooling drinks—"Bebidas"—are sold, the prince of which is "Horchata de Chufas," a kind of snow-milk flavoured with the juice of a little nut which comes from Valencia. "Confituras" are also sold here—

a great favourite being that known as "Cabello de Angel," or "Angel's Hair." Picturesque groups of peasants gather around these stalls, not Mayos and Mayas here, but "Manolos" and "Manolas," a corruption from Manuel and Manuela. Up and down, between the passers-by, flit the water-carriers, and make the air resound with their sharp cry of "agua, agua, quien quiere agua; agua helado, fresquita como la nieve."

The upper end of the Prado is lined on one side by little gardens. This is the aristocratic part of the promenade, where society must always go *de rigueur* as far as a certain fountain, and where "the language of fans" is talked to an amazing extent. Descending the other way, one comes to Atocha, a monastery with a church, raised into a basilica by the present Pope to please Queen Isabella and Don Francesco d'Assis. These "Catholic sovereigns" always came once a week to worship a hideous idol-Madonna (another of poor St. Luke's); and on March 22, 1854, solemnly decorated it with the collar of the Golden Fleece. For centuries the image had been celebrated. In 1562, when the whole kingdom was in suspense during the alarming illness of Don Carlos, heir of Philip II., it was carried to his sick-room at

Alcala, and shares the honour of his cure with the dead body of the monk Fray Diego, which was dug up and laid upon his bed. Ferdinand VII. came hither especially to invoke the assistance of the Virgin of Atocha, when he conspired against his father; and, when he was carried off by the French, he transferred the ribbon of the Immaculate Conception to its breast from his own. To this church also came the Italian king Amadeo, straight from the station, to look upon the dead face of the murdered Prim.

The other churches of Madrid are all modern and little worth seeing. San Isidro Real, however, may be visited, as containing the relics of the ploughman's saint, invoked in wet weather by the peasant, in the popular couplet—

“San Isidro Labrador
Quita el agua y pon el sol.”

San Isidro was a common labourer who neglected his work to make meditations upon the virtues of San Isidoro, which is supposed to have been considered so meritorious above, that angels were sent down to do his work for him, and wolves were unable to devour his oxen. He died in 993, and was canonised because Philip III. was cured of

some trifling illness upon touching his body. When Queen Isabel came to pray by it, one of her maids of honour, pretending to kiss his toes, bit one of them off, feeling sure that her health would be benefited by swallowing so great a relic; but she instantly became dumb, and did not recover her speech till she was able to vomit forth the delicious morsel. The festa of San Isidro is greatly observed on May 25th, at Madrid, and the pilgrimage on that day to San Isidro del Campo is a very pretty sight. But, on the whole, saint-worship has been on the wane here for some years past, and Protestantism making great ground. Large shops full of Bibles are no uncommon sight now in the streets of Madrid, and have a great sale. It is interesting to remember that when the first Spanish translation of the Bible was made in Spain by Francisco de Enzinas in 1543, Charles V. did not oppose it, and even promised to accept its dedication to himself, if only the Church would approve it. The Church, however, was furious, and it was condemned to be burnt, and its author was cast into prison.

For the last few years "society," in the generally accepted sense, has almost ceased to exist at Madrid, having been so divided by political

estrangements. Don Carlos has many friends, the Prince of Asturias ten times as many, "the inoffensive Italian," as the aristocratic Spaniards contemptuously but pityingly call him, scarcely any; indeed, the Italian queen, Vittoria, has only found two ladies willing to take office in her court. Many rules of ancient etiquette are preserved which are curious. Everything in Madrid counts by nine days. For instance, after a death in a family, the Novenario must take place: the widow and daughters, or whoever the nearest surviving relations may be, are expected to hold the *Duêlo*, that is, to close their windows, and remain solemnly seated for nine days in their reception rooms to receive the condolence of all their friends, who visit them in mourning; and as it is the correct thing for all the friends to repeat their visit during every one of the nine days, though the first two or three times they are all very solemn and sad, it is impossible to keep up the strain, and the party naturally glide into a degree of gossip and chatter which is a desecration alike of the occasion and of the feelings of those who have to go through the ordeal. Widows, however, may be thankful to escape all they had to go through at Madrid in the last century, when they were

compelled to pass the whole first year of their mourning in a chamber entirely hung with black, where not a single ray of the sun could penetrate, seated on a little mattress with their legs always crossed. When this year was over, they retired to pass the second year in a chamber hung with grey. They could have neither pictures, nor mirrors, nor cabinets, nor any ornamental furniture, during the whole of their widowhood. They were never allowed to wear jewels, and still less, colours. However modest they might be, they must live so retired that "it seemed as if their souls were already in the other world;" and, according to a writer of the time, this great constraint was partly occasioned "because some ladies who were very rich and especially in beautiful furniture, were often induced to take another husband, in order to have the pleasure of using it again!"

In the Royal Gallery, poor Mariana, wife of Philip IV., the laughing queen, whom we have seen tricked out in all her bridal bravery, is introduced to us for a second time in her widow's dress. It consists of thick black stuff, with a tunic of fine muslin made like a surplice, descending below the knees and following all the lines of the figure. The head and throat are covered with a

coif of white muslin, concealing all the hair like the dress of a nun. Over all is a great mantle of black taffetas falling to the feet.

A visit to Madrid finds its natural close in the Escorial, where the kings and queens of whom we have seen so much, have found a ghastly sepulchre. It is so profoundly curious that it must of necessity be visited, though it is so utterly dreary and so hopelessly fatiguing a sight, that it requires the utmost Christian patience to endure it. Well may Théophile Gautier exclaim, that whatever the other ills and trials of life may be, one may console oneself by thinking that one might be at the Escorial, and that one is not.

The Escorial may be undergone upon the road northwards, or may form a separate excursion from Madrid. The station of the name lands you at the foot of the hill on which this colossus of granite is placed. It is generally described as standing in a mountain wilderness, but this is not quite true. You ascend through woods which are pleasant enough, and where Charles IV., wisely declining to inhabit the "architectural nightmare," built a pretty little toy palace of his own. But behind the Escorial all is a bleak solitude, blue black peaks, capped with snow, and furrowed by dry torrent-

beds, or sandy deserts sprinkled over with boulders of granite. There is no softening feature. The dismal streets of granite houses which surround the huge granite palace and church have the same lines of narrow prison-like windows, the same harsh angular forms everywhere. The main edifice was thirty-one years in building, and is three quarters of a mile round, but each wall is just like the other, they have no distinguishing features whatever. It has thirty-six courts, and eleven thousand windows, in compliment to the virgins of St. Ursula, but they are all the same size, and all exactly alike. The architect, Herrera, was tied down to the most hideous of plans, that of a grid-iron, because it was the emblem of St. Laurence, upon whose day, the 10th of August, the building was vowed after the successful siege of St. Quentin. The whole is justly looked upon as a stone image of the mind of its founder, Philip II. And the interest which encircles this cruel yet religious, this superstitious yet brave, character, lends a charm even to the Escorial. Except the extirpation of heretics, it was the one object of his earthly ambition. The seat is shewn—*Silla del Rey*—high among the grey boulders of the hillside, whence he used to watch the progress of the huge fantatics

plan, as court after court was added, each fresh wing forming another bar of the gridiron. When it was finished, he deserted his capital, and made it his principal residence, devoting himself to an eternal penance of fasting and flagellation, but at the same time boasting that he governed two worlds from the heights of his mountain solitude. Hither, when he felt the approach of death, during an absence at Madrid, he insisted upon being brought, borne for six days in a litter upon men's shoulders, and here, during his last hours, he was carried round all the halls, to take a final survey of the work of his life.

The main entrance is so featureless as almost to pass unnoticed. It leads into a vast gloomy courtyard, at the end of which are huge statues of the kings of Judah. These decorate the façade of the church. Its interior is bare and dismal, but the proportions are magnificent, and though the effect is cold and oppressive, it is not without a certain solemnity of its own. In high open chapels on either side of the altar, kneel two groups of figures in gilt robes. On the left are Charles V., his queen, his daughter, and his two sisters; on the right are Philip II., three of his wives (the unloved Mary of England being omitted), and Don

Carlos. Down a long flight of steps you are led by torchlight to the *Panteon* an octagonal chamber surrounded by twenty-six sepulchres of kings or mothers of kings, arranged one above another like berths in a ship. Charles V. occupies a place in the upper story. Brantôme declares that the Inquisition proposed that his body should be burnt for having given ear to heretical opinions. It remains, though curiosity, not heresy, has twice caused the coffin to be opened; the last time in 1871, during the visit of the Emperor of Brazil, when hundreds of people flocked forth from Madrid to look upon the awful face of the mighty dead, which was entire even to the hair and eyebrows, though perfectly black. Philip II. fills the niche below, lying in the coffin of gilt bronze which he ordered to be brought to him that he might inspect it in his last moments, and for which he ordered a white satin lining and a larger supply of gilt nails, with his last breath. Each of the Austrian kings seems to have loved to pass hours here in meditation over his future resting-place. Philip IV. used to sit in his niche in his lifetime to hear mass; Maria Louisa scratched her name upon her future urn with a pair of scissors. The last funeral here was that of Ferdinand VII., whose coffin was too big for the royal hearse, and

had to be brought hither in a common *coche de colleras*, its end projecting from the front windows, the attendant monks riding round it on mules, and the empty hearse following, for the sake of decency. His widow, Christina, though the mother of a sovereign, will never be buried here, even if the Bourbons return to power, as Spanish aristocratic feeling would not allow the honour to a queen who has formed a *mésalliance* in her second marriage. Isabella II. heard midnight mass in the Panteon whenever she visited the Escorial.

A separate chamber has the dreadful name of *El Pudridero*. Here lie sixty members of the royal family, including Don Carlos, Don John of Austria, and the many queens-consort who were not mothers of kings.

Through the bare cold passages of the convent one may reach the Coro, which contains a celebrated crucifix by Benvenuto Cellini. The stall is still shown which Philip II. occupied, and where he was kneeling when the messenger arrived breathless with eager haste from Don John of Austria to announce the victory of Lepanto, but could obtain no audience till the monarch had finished his devotions. From hence it is but a few steps to the low bare rooms which the bigot king occupied as a

dwelling. They are full of interest. The furniture is the same, the pictures, the table, the chairs, the high stool to support his gouty leg. At the bureau which still exists he was sitting writing when Don Christoval de Moura came in to announce the total destruction of the Spanish Armada, the scheme on which he had wasted a hundred million ducats and eighteen years of his life. Not a muscle of his face moved. He only said, "I thank God for having given me the means of bearing such a loss without embarrassment, and power to fit out another fleet of equal size. A stream can afford to waste some water, when its source is not dried up."

The inner room opens into the church by a shutter. At this opening the ghastly figure of the king was seen present at the public mass during his illness, following the prayers with an agonized fervour of devotion. Here also he sate on the morning of the 13th of September, 1598, and, having summoned his children, Philip and Clara Eugenia Isabella (so well known to us from their pictures) to embrace him, received extreme unction, and, even after the power of speech had departed, remained with his hands grasping the crucifix which his father Charles V. held when he was dying, and with his eyes fixed upon the

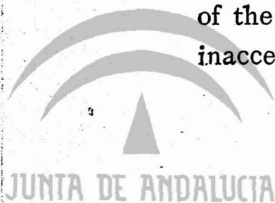
altar of the church, till those eyes were closed in death.

All the other sights of the Escorial are of little importance compared with those which are connected with Philip II. One set of apartments was prettily decorated with inlaid woodwork by Charles IV. The endless corridors were once filled with fine pictures, now removed to Madrid. Only three of any consequence remain. In the chapter-house is a Velazquez of Jacob receiving from his elder sons the coat of Joseph; in the Refectory is a grand Last Supper of Titian; and in the Ante-Sacristia is a fine historical scene by Coello, representing the half-witted Charles II., with his court, upon their knees before the miraculous wafer, which bled at Gorcum, when trampled upon by Zwinglian heretics. Every Spanish sovereign is expected to make some offering to St. Laurence and the Escorial; that of Isabella II. was a gorgeous golden shrine for this very wafer, preserved behind the picture. The library contains several interesting pictures of kings, and some fine illuminated manuscripts. All the books are arranged with their backs to the wall.

Upon the south and east sides of the building

are so-called gardens—broad terraces with trim box edges, but on the whole possessing more architecture than vegetation. Here, from the angle of the terrace wall, one may best examine one of the external curiosities of the building, a glittering plaque of gold an inch thick and a yard square, which Philip II. built into the wall when the building was nearly complete, as a bravado to the world which expected it to become his ruin. Fortunately for its preservation it is near the top of the pyramid above the dome, where it glitters inaccessible, and reflects all the rays of the sun.

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



XII.

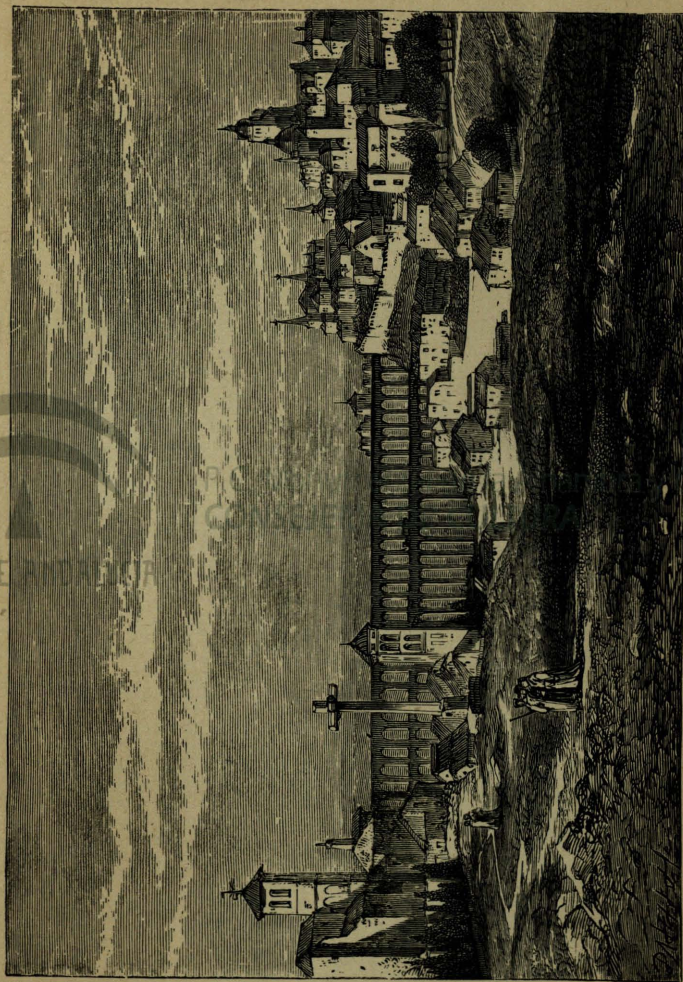
SEGOVIA AND AVILA.

AVILA, *May 4.*

I N a central situation in all the principal Spanish towns is an office ("Administracion") where you can not only take your railway ticket, but also tickets for a diligence to any town off the main line, from the station with which it is connected; and at the same time you can register your luggage through to your final destination. Here, in spite of many warnings from Madrid friends that we should be either blocked out by the snow, or carried off by the Carlists, we took our tickets for Segovia, and joined its diligence at the Vilalba station, an hour's journey from Madrid on the Northern Railway.

We had been quite unprepared for the magnificence of the Guadarrama mountains which we had to cross, and which are certainly more striking

than even the Sierra Nevada. The ascent begins soon after leaving Vilalba, and is truly alpine, the road soon passing from the region of pines into that of snow, through which it had been cut, but which rose on either side in high walls, far above the top of the diligence, and, near the summit, to a height of fifteen feet. The descent was somewhat perilous, especially when we had to meet some heavily laden timber waggons in the narrow passage; but we reached the plains in safety, and, after traversing many miles of dismal country, saw Segovia rising against a faint pink sky, crowning a hill steep in itself, but from a distance scarcely seeming to rise above the level of the high surrounding uplands, from which it is separated by deep ravines. It is an especially Spanish scene, as you look upon the crowded town with its churches, towers, and red-roofed houses, piled one upon another, from a foreground of desolate moorland, where foaming mountain brooks dance and sparkle, through the pale grey rocks and burnt grass. Some old Romanesque churches occupy a rising ground to the right, and, as you turn the corner below them, you see the huge Roman aqueduct of Trajan striding across the hollow, and uniting the town with a populous



suburb by its two tiers of arches. Beneath these you enter the main street of the city,—which winds up the hill beneath double gateways, and is full of interest from the beautiful ajimez windows which vary the surface of its mediæval houses,—into the principal square, all aflame with colour and costume, upon which the cathedral and the dark brown balconies of the wonderful old houses look grimly down.

If the reader will share our first walk in Segovia, he will descend with us to the aqueduct, which, like so many high bridges, the poor cheated Devil is said to have built in exchange for the soul of a fair Segoviana, who outwitted him by finding one stone missing in the work when she came to examine it. Turning to the left from hence, we are in the gorge, not bare, like that of Toledo, but bright with the fresh foliage of April. Here, nestling under the turfy slopes, are the Dominican convent and beautiful church of Santa Cruz, whose simple gothic nave is entered by a rich flamboyant portal well-deserving of attention; while the "Tanto-Monta" of Ferdinand and Isabella, with all their badges and devices, is formed into a graceful frieze under the roof.

Descending a steep path below the convent and

crossing a bridge, we enter a pretty alameda filled with willows and poplars, where the rushing river Eresma is perfectly lined by washerwomen, whose red and yellow dresses, gay as so many tulips, are reflected in its waters. While we are looking at them, one begins to sing, and the strain is taken up the whole way down the river bank, till the air rings with their choruses. It is now a verse from the Noche Buena, which tells how when the Virgin rested under an olive-tree during her flight into Egypt, the very leaves turned round to look at the newly-born one :—

“La Virgen quiso sentarse
A la sombra de un olivo.
Y las hojas se volvieron
A ver al recién nacido.”

Now a song more poetical in idea than in rhythm, which narrates how the Virgin laid aside her blue robe to wear mourning for her son :—

“La Virgen se subió al cielo
Y dejó su manto azul,
Que cambió por uno negro
Para el luto de Jesús.”

At the end of the Alameda rises the great Geronymite monastery of El Parral, built in 1494 by the Marquis de Villena, in commemoration of

a duel on its site, in which he overcame three antagonists at once. The building was gutted in the early Carlist wars, and has been closed since, but Don Ramón, the kindly old President of the Archæological Society, who spends much of his time there, invited us to pass the afternoon with him, and under his guidance we saw its numerous cloisters, its refectory with a richly wrought pulpit for the reader, its beautiful plateresque halls and staircase, its sacristia full of colour and picturesqueness, and, above all, its glorious church, abandoned and neglected, but still one of the most remarkable ecclesiastical buildings in Spain. It is entered from the west *under* the coro of 1494, which is like a wide gallery, with a beautiful Gothic rail of black marble. The carved stalls have been pulled down and carried off to San Francisco at Madrid, and many of the altars are removed, but the principal retablo remains, and is a grand work of Diego de Urbian in 1526. On either side of it stand the lofty plateresque monuments of the founder and his wife, and near the side door is the exquisite Gothic tomb of Doña Juana, daughter of King Ramiro of Leon. All this Don Ramón exhibited with the most kindly Spanish courtesy, illustrating

it with a picturesque detail of legendary lore. The only part we could not admire was the room opening out of the cloister, which he had fitted up as a Pantheon, removing to it all the monuments of great citizens of Segovia from their rightful resting-places in the parish churches.

From El Parral, Don Ramón took us by a charming field walk to the Vera Cruz, built in 1204, by Honorius II., in imitation of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, which he had seen at Jerusalem. Around it rose the little town of Miraflores, but now all the houses have disappeared, and the old brown octagonal church, with its threefold apse and tall tower, stands forlorn and desolate on the barren rocks. In the interior is a raised chapel, occupying the upper story of what seems like a huge central pillar, and is supposed to indicate the site of the sepulchre. Two varieties of crosses mark its walls, for from "*Messieurs les Templiers*," said Don Ramón, it passed to "*les Messieurs de S. Jean*." A beautiful reliquary remains, which once contained a fragment of the true Cross brought by the founder.

Deeper in the valley, beyond Vera Cruz, is the great convent which contains the tutelar of Segovia,

Nuestra Señora de Fuencisla. From the abrupt cliff above it, criminals were thrown down, and a chapel and cypress mark the spot whence Santa Maria del Salto, a converted Jewess, took the fatal leap uninjured, when pushed over by her former co-religionists. Close by, the Eresma is joined by the mountain-brook Clamores, and from the narrow path which overhangs the river is the most striking view of the Alcazar, the magnificent castle in which the great Isabella took refuge, and whence she went forth to be proclaimed Queen of Castile. Here, in a great cave in the rock, live many poor homeless old men and women, who club together for their miserable subsistence, and sleep like wild beasts in this open-mouthed den. The smallest charity draws forth a shower of blessings, such as "God will pay your worship," "May God keep you and all your brothers," "May the Blessed Virgin walk with you in all your ways," and, from a blind man, "May Santa Lucia" (the patroness of eyes—she plucked out her own to preserve her virginity) "watch over the eyes of your worship."

We may ascend the hill by the Alcazar, but, alas! it now no longer contains anything to visit, for it was turned into a military college, and the

students set fire to it and burnt it utterly in 1862, in the hope that they would thereby be moved to Madrid, and, what is worst of all, got off unpunished, being for the most part sons of high personages, and, in Spain, the poor only suffer the penalty of their misdeeds. It is now a mere shell of crumbling wall, but most picturesque. Constantly repeated in its decorations is the "Tanto Monta" of Ferdinand and Isabella, which is sometimes ascribed to the jealousy of Ferdinand, sometimes to their mutual affection. Not only the coin, but all their furniture and books were stamped with their devices, his being a yoke and hers a sheaf of arrows. It was common in married life, says Oviedo, for each party to take a device whose initial corresponded with that of the name of the other, as was the case with the "jùgo" and "flechas."

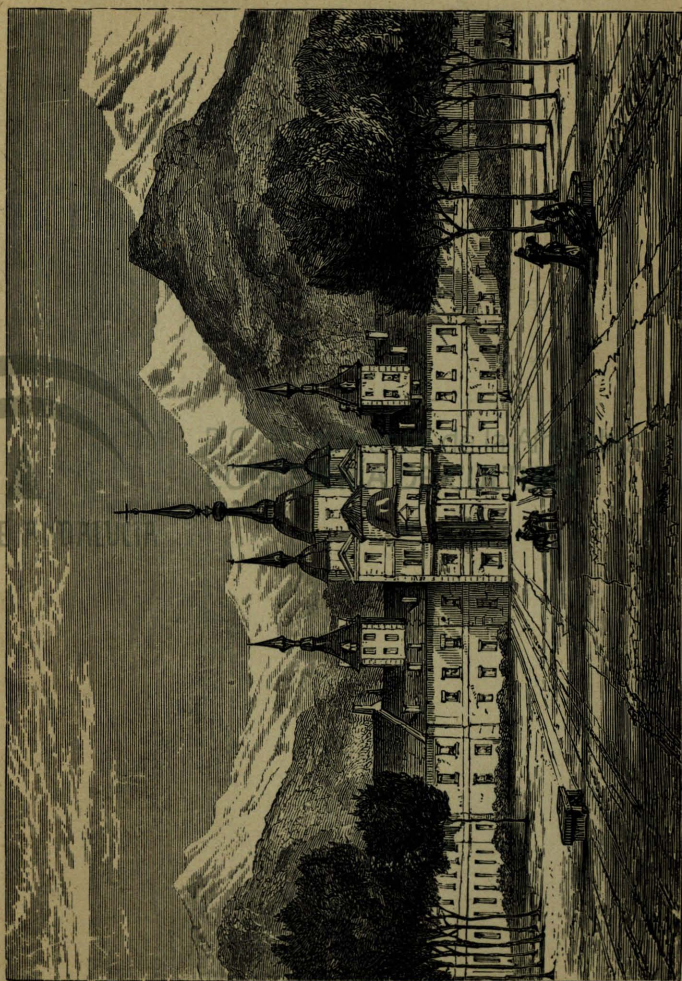
From the Alcazar, glancing at the noble tower of San Esteban, a few steps bring us to the cathedral, which, begun in 1525, is the last of the fine gothic cathedrals of Spain, and was built by the architects of Salamanca, of which it is partly a copy. In simplicity and general effect, the interior is perhaps unequalled in the Peninsula. Two cathedrals existed before this, and from the last of these, which stood close to the Alcazar, the

present cloisters, which are amazingly lofty, were moved stone for stone. It was before the altar of the cathedral of Segovia, that Isabella the Catholic (Dec. 13, 1474) prostrated herself, after she had been declared Queen of Castile, and returning thanks to the Almighty for the protection hitherto afforded her, implored Him to enlighten her future counsels, that she might discharge the high trust reposed in her with equity and wisdom.

The last day of our all too short week at Segovia, we drove out six miles to San Ildefonso, where Philip V., in the last century, was charmed with a mountain grange while hunting, and built the palace of La Granja at a height of 3,840 feet, just under the snowy Guadarrama. In spite of the abuse in Ford and other guide-books, it is a most truly charming place, and the Alpine freshness, which lasts throughout the summer, and an excellent inn ("Europeo") with a French cuisine (oh, the relief from the oil and garlic of Spain!), render it additionally attractive. Long avenues lead up to a grille like that of the Place du Carrousel, whence you look down between lines of buildings appropriated to the ministers, the canons, and the offices of the court, to the palace itself, which is an old French château, in the style of Rambouillet,

transported into the mountain-scenery of Spain. In the centre is the church where Philip V. and his queen are buried. Their apartments contain little of importance, but are hung with the beautiful silk embroidery which is to be seen in all the Spanish palaces, and are comfortable and attractive. Among the strange historical scenes which they have witnessed are the abdication of the founder in favour of his son Louis I., and his resumption of the crown, to which he was forced by his ambitious wife, on that son's death. Also they contain the little table at which Christina the Queen Regent was sitting when the three serjeants climbed in at the window, and forced her to sign her abdication.

There is an odd but picturesque contrast between the old château, with its pointed roofs and girouettes, standing in trim parterres of clipped yew and box, and the grand mountain-ranges behind, where the snow, perfectly pure and unbroken towards the summits, gradually meets and blends with the dark fir-woods. The intervening space is occupied by the so-called gardens, no cultivated flowers, but exquisite soft sylvan scenery, long avenues edged with holm-beech and shaded by tall oaks and elms, and endless little walks



winding through woods carpeted with violets and periwinkles—"Las Lagrimas de Jesu Christo," as the Spaniards poetically call them. In all the openings of the woods are statues, and fountains supplied by the fresh crystal streams which are seen in the distance falling in natural cascades from the high mountains, and, in front of the palace, is a great artificial waterfall, one sheet of silver, tumbling through the green woods, over a series of marble declivities, which perhaps will not bear detailed criticism, but whose general effect is one of great sylvan loveliness, of a mixture of art and nature which recalls the mythical ages of fauns and dryads, and the backgrounds of many old Italian pictures. Altogether, La Granja should on no account be unvisited, and the idler may be most happily idle there.

It is necessary to return to Vilalba to take tickets for Avila, which is a place far less known than it deserves, though it is on the central line of railway. As Spanish hotels go, the little inn of the "Dos de Mayo" is excellent, and is kept by an Englishman and his daughter. On all sides the town is surrounded by a tawny desert, over whose arid plains numbers of grey boulders are scattered,

like flocks of sheep. The circuit of the walls is complete, and so small, that most, even of the mediæval buildings, are outside it. These comprise a wonderful collection of churches of the greatest interest to the archæologist. San Vicente, founded 313, contains a thirteenth century shrine of that saint, who was not the famous deacon of Zaragoza, but another of the same name, also martyred under Dacian, because he stamped upon an altar of Jupiter and left the marks of his feet there. His body was guarded by a serpent, which attacked a rich Jew who came to mock at it, and made him vow to build this church if he escaped with his life. Like the Bocca della Verità at Rome, the hole out of which the snake came was long a spot for adjuration, he who took the oath putting his hand into it, so that the snake (which did attack Bishop Vilches under these circumstances in 1458) might bite him if he swore falsely.

Following the outside of the walls from hence, we reach a tiny Romanesque church on the river side, standing in a little weedy enclosure with three stone crosses. It is always closed now, and in spite of the disagreeable extortionate Cerberus who guards it, the keys must be obtained, for the sake of seeing the beautiful touching monument of

its patron, the bishop San Segundo. He is said to have pushed a Moor over the battlements of the neighbouring tower with his own hands, a deed of prowess which will always render him popular as a Spanish saint, but which does not seem consistent with the expression of his penitent kneeling figure rapt in an ecstasy of prayer.

Another glorious monument is that, in San Tomas, of Prince Juan, only son of Ferdinand and Isabella. The church in which he is buried was one of the favourite foundations of the Catholic sovereigns, who frequently resided in the palace-convent which is attached to it. It was in one of the rooms which may still be seen in this building, that Isabella was induced to give her written sanction to the proceedings of the Inquisition. Here also she devoted herself to the education of Prince Juan, heir of the united Spanish monarchies. Ten youths, selected from the sons of the chief nobles, were brought to reside with him in the palace, five of his own age and five older, that emulation might stimulate him to greater diligence in his studies; and a mimic council was formed to deliberate on matters of government and public policy, over which the prince presided, in order that he might be early initiated into his important