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CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

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ANTIQUITIES
OF
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N. A. Wells del.

W. F. Scaring sc.

CHAPEL OF SAN ISIDRO,
IN THE CHURCH OF SAN ANDRES, MADRID.

R. 227

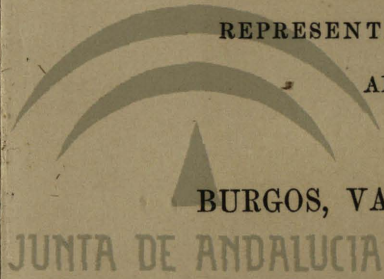
THE
PICTURESQUE ANTIQUITIES
OF
SPAIN;

DESCRIBED IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS,

REPRESENTING MOORISH PALACES, CATHEDRALS,
AND OTHER MONUMENTS OF ART,

CONTAINED IN THE CITIES OF

BURGOS, VALLADOLID, TOLEDO, AND SEVILLE.



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

BY

NATHANIEL ARMSTRONG WELLS.

Donativo del Sr. Conde de
Romanos a la Biblioteca
de la Alhambra. 1900

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

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P R E F A C E.

THE author of the following letters is aware that his publication would have possessed greater utility, had the architectural descriptions been more minute. He ventures to hope, however, that this imperfection may be in some measure balanced by the more extended sphere opened to whatever information it may contain.

The absence of many technical expressions, especially those which enter into a detailed description of almost all Gothic buildings, and the employment of which was forbidden by the occasion, may tend to facilitate the satisfaction of popular curiosity respecting Spanish art: the more so from the circumstance that the most intelligent in such subjects are scarcely sufficiently agreed on the application

of technical terms, to allow of the compilation of a standard vocabulary. His ambition will be more than satisfied, should his past, and perhaps future researches, succeed, in some degree, in pioneering the path for a more scientific pen.

Should this work fall into the hands of any reader, whose expectations of entertainment may have been encouraged by the announcement of another Spanish tour, but who may feel but moderate enthusiasm for the artistic and monumental glories of the Peninsula, an explanation is due to him, exonerative of the author from much of the responsibility attached to the matter-of-fact tone of his descriptions. It is no less his nature than it was his wish to paint what he saw as he saw it. Unfortunately his visits to Spain took place after the accomplishment of the revolution, the hardest blows of which were aimed at her church. The confiscation of the ecclesiastical revenues has necessarily stripped the processions and other ceremonies of their former splendour, and by suppressing what con-

stituted one of their chief attractions to the native population, transferred the interest of the lover of the picturesque from the bright colours of animated grouping, to the dead back-ground of stone and marble they have left.

In studying, however, to preserve this strict accuracy in all that related to the principal subject of his correspondence, his aim was to enliven it by the introduction of any incidents worthy of notice which came under his observation. In this object he hopes he may have succeeded.

One more remark is necessary. The letters from Seville, which form the second of the two parts into which the volume is divided, although placed last in order of succession, date in reality from an earlier period than the rest; and even from a different tour, as will appear from the description of the route. They were addressed to various individuals, whereas those forming the first part were all written to the same person. They are thus placed with a view to geographical order

and clearness, and to a sort of unity, which appeared advisable in the subject of a volume. The two excursions having been separated by an interval of three years, should alterations have taken place during that period in the places described, the above circumstance not being borne in mind might lead to an appearance of chronological inaccuracy in the descriptions, although there is not much probability of the existence of such changes.

LONDON. *December 1845.*

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
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JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

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PICTURESQUE ANTIQUITIES

OF

S P A I N.

LETTER I.

TO MRS. C—R.

Rue de Richelieu.

You perceived at a glance the satisfaction you caused me, when, on receiving my temporary adieus, you requested me to send you some account of my travels in Spain. Had it not been so, you had not been in possession, on that day, of your usual penetration. Indeed, you no doubt foresaw it; aware that, next to the pleasure of acquiring ocular information respecting the peculiar objects which interest an individual, there is no greater one than that of communicating to a spirit, animated by congenial tastes, the results of his explorations. You must have foreseen, that, with my recollections of the pleasure I had derived from our excursions in one of the most interesting regions of France, during which I was witness to the intelligence and rapidity of percep-

tion you displayed in the appreciation of the monuments of the Middle Ages, the opportunity of committing to paper the impressions I should receive in a country so rich in those treasures, with a view to your information, would give an additional interest to my tour, as well as encouragement in surmounting the obstacles to be met with among a people not yet broken in to the curiosity of tourists.

You professed also, with a modesty always becoming to talent and worth, a complete ignorance respecting Spain: adding, that you would be grateful for every sort of information; and that you were anxious to be enlightened on the subject not only of the monuments and fine arts, but also of the history of that country, of which you had never had an opportunity of informing yourself; summing up by the enumeration of the three names of the Cid, Charles the Fifth, and Roderic the Goth, the entire amount of your acquaintance with the leading characters of Spanish history.

Indeed, the ignorance you profess with some exaggeration, is more or less general in our country; nor is it surprising that such should be the case. Spain has been in modern times in the background of European progress. The thousand inconveniences of its routes and inns have deterred the most enterprising from making it a place of

resort; and while a hundred less interesting scenes of travel, such as Baden-Baden, Bohemia, sporting adventures in Norway, or winterings in St. Petersburg, have claimed your attention during the repose of quadrilles, and substantiated the conversation of several of your morning visitors, Spain has been unnoticed and unknown—laid on the shelf with the Arabian Nights—considered a sort of fabulous country, which it would be charming to know, but with which there would never be a chance of forming an acquaintance; and you have contented yourself with a sort of general information respecting it, derived from a few romances and poems. You are intimate with Boabdil and the wars of Granada, but to those events is limited your knowledge of its ancient history; and the reigns of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, with the addition of some confused visions, in which *autos-da-fé* and dungeons contrast in a rather gloomy back-ground with laughing majas, whirling their castagnettes to the soft cadences of guitars, fill up the remaining space allotted to Spain in your recollections.

It would be a task full of interest for me—possessed, as I shall probably be, of ample opportunities for its accomplishment—to draw up for your information a summary of the leading events of

Spanish history ; connecting them by the chain of reigns of the successive sovereigns ; and thus to press into a limited compass a sort of abstract of the annals of this extraordinary nation : but I am deterred by the certainty that such an attempt, by me, would fail of its intended object. The events, thus slurred over, would have the effect of whetting the appetite for knowledge, which they would not satisfy ; and the interminable lists of monarchs, of successions, usurpations, alliances and intermarriages, rendered doubly intricate by the continual recurrence of the same names, without sufficient details to particularise each—a chaos of outlines without the necessary shading to bring out the figures from the canvass—would not only set at defiance the clearest memory, but would be a trial which I would not for worlds impose upon your patience. No history is more attractive than that of Spain ; and those works which exist upon the subject, although all, more or less, sullied with inaccuracies, and most of them infected with prejudice, and immersed in superstitious delusion, are still well worth your perusal ; but it would lead me out of my depth, were I to undertake in my correspondence more than an occasional historical quotation, when required by the interest attached to any monument which it may fall to my lot to describe.

Were I not to transmit to you a conscientious and faithful account of all that I shall see, I should be guilty of cruelty; and that the more base, from the certain impunity that must attend it. I say this, from the impossibility of your ever undertaking the same journey, and consequently of your ever being able to compare my portraits with their originals. In fact, the incompatibility of your nature, and that of the Spanish climate, must ever be present to me, who, during the vivifying heats of the late very bearable *canicule*, in your French château—so constructed as to perform the functions of an atmospheric sieve, by separating the wind, which rushed through its doors and windows, judiciously placed in parallels for the purpose, from the warmer sunshine without—was witness, nevertheless, to your unaffected distress, when you protested against any lofty, oak-panelled room being sat or reclined in by more than one human being at a time, lest it should be over-heated; placing thus an obstacle in the way of conversation, in which to shine is your especial province, by rendering it necessary to converse through various open doors; while, were an additional testimony necessary to prove the sincerity of your sufferings, your favourite of favourites, Caliph, repulsed and uncaressed, hung his silken ears, as he solemnly retreated to coil

himself on a distant rug, and voted the dog-days a misnomer.

Nor were you contented with your atmosphere, until, the season of insects and *al-fresco* suppers being long left behind, and the autumnal equinox having peremptorily closed the doors and windows, fitted, alas! by a carpenter who flourished in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, so plentiful a supply of air was afforded by the handy-works of the said carpenter, that the Chinese screen had some difficulty in maintaining its post, and the flames of the well-furnished elm-fire ascended with a roar that would have shamed many a cataract of the rival element. Not but that I would willingly forego the opportunity of sending you erroneous information, in exchange for your presence in that country; and for your assistance in comprehending the nature of a people apparently composed of such contradictory ingredients. You might probably succeed in fathoming the hidden springs of character, which give birth to a crowd of anomalies difficult to explain. You would discover by what mystery of organization a people, subject to the influence of violent passions, combine an abject subjection to the forms of etiquette, carried to its extreme in every-day life, with occasional outbreaks of adventure and romance worthy of the days of Orlando and Rodo-

monte; and account for a nation exchanging a costume which combines utility with grace, for one inferior in both respects. Inventors of whatever is most fascinating in dances and music—you would discover the motive which induces them to abandon both, but principally the first, which they replace by the French *rigodon*, or dancing-made-easy, and adapted to youth, manhood, and all stages of paralysis; and, possessing the cathedrals of Leon, Burgos, and Seville, to denounce Gothic architecture as barbarous, and to brand it with the contemptuous denomination of “crested masonry.”

Should my mono- (—monument-) mania run riot, and over-describe, over-taxing even your passion for that branch of art, be assured—and to this promise you may always look back for consolation and encouragement—that I will not write you a history of the recent, or any previous Spanish revolution, *apropos* of the first sentry-box I meet with, even though its form be that of a Lilliputian brick castle. Nor shall my first glimpse of a matador occasion you a list of bull-fights, voluminous enough to line the circumference of the *barrera*. No Diligence shall be waylaid, nor in my presence shall any ladies' fingers be amputated, the quicker to secure her rings, if I can possibly avoid it; and, as far as depends on me, I shall arrive in a whole skin at each journey's end,

and without poisoning you or myself with garlick, unless the new Cortes pass a law for denying to the stranger all other sorts of aliment.

I have resolved, by a process of reasoning which I need not at present impart to you, and in virtue of a permission which I have little doubt of your granting, to publish my part of our correspondence. I think that neither of us will be a loser by this plan, however conceited I may appear to you for saying so. Yourself, in the first place, must be a gainer by the perusal of descriptions, on which, from their being prepared for the ordeal of a less indulgent eye, greater care will necessarily be expended: the public may benefit in obtaining information, which shall be at all events accurate, relative to subjects as yet inadequately appreciated by those they are the most likely to interest: while the chief gainer, in the event of these two ends being attained, will of course be your devoted and humble correspondent.

LETTER II.

ROUTE TO SPAIN THROUGH FRANCE.

Bayonne.

THE position of Burgos on the principal line of communication by which Madrid is approached from the north of Europe; the fact of its being the first city met with, after crossing the Pyrenees, in which monuments are found remaining of the former genius and grandeur of the country; and the name of which calls up the more stirring and eventful epochs of Spanish history,—render it, notwithstanding its actual distance from the frontier, a sort of introduction or gateway to Spain—the Spain of the tourist.

The most agreeable and least troublesome way of visiting the best parts of Spain excludes, it is true, this route; for the provinces of the Peninsula which combine the greater number of requisites for the enjoyment of life with the most attractive specimens of the picturesque, whether natural or artificial, are those nearest to the coast, and they are approached more conveniently by sea. Those, however, who can

devote sufficient time, will be repaid, by a tour in the interior of the country, for the increase of trouble it may occasion them; and this tour should precede the visit to the maritime provinces, as it will render their superior comforts and climate the more acceptable from the contrast. The scenery of the Pyrenees, and the passing acquaintance formed with the original and picturesque population of the Basque provinces, secure the traveller against any danger of ennui throughout the land-journey between the frontier and the city of Burgos.

There does not exist the same security throughout the extent of route which it is necessary to travel in order to reach this frontier. The approach to Spain across the south-western provinces of France offers few objects worthy of detaining us on our way to the Peninsula. It is one of the least interesting of French routes. From Paris you pass through Orleans and Tours. At Châtellerault—between the latter city and Poitiers—the inn-door is besieged by women offering knives for sale. It is everywhere known that cutlery is not one of the departments of French manufactures which have attained the greatest degree of superiority. A glance at the specimens offered for our choice while changing horses at Châtellerault, showed them to be very bad, even for France.

This did not, however, prevent a multitude of travellers from purchasing each his knife, nor one of them from laying in a plentiful stock, stating that he destined a knife for each member of his family—evidently one of the most numerous in France. I inquired of a native the explanation of this scene, and whether these knives were considered superior to those met with in other towns. “Oh no,” was the reply; “but it is usual to buy knives here.” I ventured to say I thought them very bad. “That is of no consequence; because, whenever you have passed through Chatellerault, every one asks you for a knife made on the spot.” These victims of custom had paid enormous prices for their acquisitions.

Poitiers is a crazy old town, but contains one of the most admirable specimens of the architecture immediately preceding the pointed, or ogivale, and which the French savans call “the Romane.” I allude to the church called “the Notre Dame de Poitiers.” The west front is highly ornamented, and unites all the peculiar richness with the quaintness and simplicity of design which characterize that fine old style. I must not omit the forest of Chatellerault, passed through on leaving that town. It is famous as the scene of the picnic given to the ladies of the neighbouring city by the officers of a Polish regiment quartered there, immediately before the breaking out

of the Peninsular war. It is related that Polish gallantry overstepped etiquette to such a degree,—and *that* by premeditation,—as to urge these cavaliers, by force of bayonet, and sentries, to separate all the husbands, and other male relatives, from the fairer portion of the guests. The consequences of such a termination of the festivities may easily be imagined; Bonaparte, a rigid judge with regard to all divorces except his own, on receiving the complaint of the insulted town, condemned the officers *en masse* to be decimated, and the survivors degraded from their rank. He relented, however, afterwards, on an understanding that they were to regain their sullied laurels in the Peninsula; where, in fact, in consequence of his orders, such opportunities were afforded them, that scarcely a man in the regiment survived the earliest campaigns.

The inhabitants of Chatellerault are said to take great offence on being asked their age, suspecting the inquirer of a malicious calculation.

The new quarter of Bordeaux is handsome, spacious, and airy. In the promenade called “La Quinconce,” on the bank of the river, a large insulated edifice, the most monumental in view, is discovered by the inscription on its front to be an establishment for warm baths. At one extremity of the principal façade is seen, in sculptured letters, “Bains des

dames ;” at the other, “Bains des hommes.” At this latter entrance a handsome staircase leads to the corridor of general communication, on the unsullied white wall of which the code of discipline of the establishment, traced in large sable characters, forces itself on the notice of the visitor. It consists of the following single and rather singular statute : “ Il est expressement défendu aux garçons de permettre à deux hommes de se servir de la même baignoire.” After some reflection I concluded it to be a measure of precaution with regard to cleanliness, carried, no doubt, to an extreme at Bordeaux. This town is well deserving of a few days’ halt, should the traveller’s object be amusement, or the pleasures of the table, for which it enjoys a well-merited reputation. It is a large and handsome city, the second in France in beauty, and vies with the capital in the elegance of its shops and principal streets. The theatre is, externally, the finest in France ; and there is, besides the cathedral, and surpassing it in interest and antiquity, a remarkable Gothic church.

Of the sixty leagues which separate this town from Bayonne, forty afford the most perfect example of monotony. One sighs for the Steppes of Russia. These are the well-known Landes, consisting of uncultivated sands and morass ; now covered league after league with the unvarying gloom of the pine

and cork forests,—now dreary and bare,—but ever presenting to the wearied eye a wide interminable waste, replete with melancholy and desolation. It is true, that a day of pouring rain was not calculated to set off to advantage the qualities of such a region, and should in strict justice be admitted in evidence before passing condemnation on the Landes.



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

LETTER III.

THE BASQUE PROVINCES.

Burgos.

It never causes me surprise when I see the efforts made by persons of limited means to obtain the situation of Consul in a continental town.

In spite of one's being, as it were, tied to one's residence,—and that not one's home,—there are advantages which counterbalance the evil. The place carries with it a certain degree of consequence. One feels oneself suddenly a man of influence, and a respectable public character. I have heard one, certainly far from being high on the list of these functionaries, termed by a humbler inhabitant of his "residence," the "Premier Consul."

The income, too, is, it is true, limited; but then one is usually in a cheap place. In fact, I always envied these favoured individuals. No calling, however, is without its *déboires*. It seems as if Providence had decreed that an income cannot be fairly,

if agreeably, earned. Thus, the set-off against the bliss of the consul, is the necessity he is under of holding out his hand for his fee. I make these remarks, to introduce to your notice an ingenious method, put in practice—probably invented—by our consul at Bayonne, for getting over the irksomeness of this duty. I found him in his *bureau*, pen in hand, and a large sheet of official-shaped paper before him, half written over. On my passport being presented for his *visa*, his countenance assumed a painful expression, in which regret was blended with a sort of tendency to compassion, and which at first occasioned me a sensation of alarm, conjuring up in my imagination all the consequences of an irregular passport—tedious routes to be retraced, time lost, expense incurred, and suspicion, and even incarceration—infection—death!

Meanwhile he pointed to the letter he was writing, and, drawing forward with the other hand a chair, said that he was at that moment memorializing the Foreign Office on the subject of these visas; that his pain was extreme at seeing travellers compelled to send or come to his office, and to lose thus much valuable time; he was likewise concerned at their having to pay three francs each for so useless a ceremony as his *visa*; but he wished it to be remarked, that it was at present a ceremony quite indispensable;

since, only four days back, a gentleman had been compelled to return from the Spanish frontier (a distance of seven leagues) in the middle of the night, in consequence of his having neglected this, as yet, necessary observance.*

Leaving Bayonne by Diligence, although still at some distance from the frontier, you are already in a Spanish vehicle. The only difference consists in its being drawn by horses as far as Irun, a few hundred yards in Spain, at which place they are replaced by a team of mules; but the *mayoral* is Spanish from the commencement, as also usually the greater number of the travellers. From the first view of Spanish ground, the monotony of the landscape ceases, and gives place to picturesque scenery. This effect is as sudden as if produced by the whistle of a scene-shifter. From the brow of a hill the valley of the Bidassoa opens on the view, the bay on the right, two or three towns in the centre, and beyond them, stretching to the left, the chain of the Pyrenees. This opening scene is very satisfactory to the newly arrived traveller, whose expectations have been rising towards fever-heat as he gradually neared the object of his dreams—the “renowned romantic land;” the more so, as he is well prepared,

* The very polite individual alluded to no longer fills the post of Consul at Bayonne.

by the Landes of France, to enjoy to the utmost the variety of scene afforded by the two days of mountain and valley which separate the frontier from the town of Vitoria.

The Diligence comes to a halt every afternoon; the day's journey having commenced at three in the morning. There are three of these days between Bayonne and Burgos. At Tolosa and Vitoria—the intermediate places of rest—the system is as follows: Arriving at about four in the afternoon, an interval is allowed of about two hours, which in a long journey can always be profitably employed, until the meal, called supper. This is Homericly plentiful, and varied sufficiently to suit the tastes of all such as are accustomed to the vicissitudes of travelling. The repast over, all gradually retire to their sleeping apartments, where they are undisturbed until two o'clock in the morning.

At this hour each passenger is furnished with a candle, and requested to get up; and at a quarter to three the *muchacha* (chambermaid) reappears, bearing in her hand a plate, on which, after rubbing his eyes, the traveller may discover, if it be allowed so to speak, an imperceptible cup, a *xicara*,—since, having the thing, they have a name for it, which is of course untranslatable,—of excellent chocolate, an *azucarillo* (almost transparent sugar prepared for

instantaneous melting), a glass of water, and a piece of bread. After partaking of this agreeable refreshment, you have just time left to pay your bill, fold up your passport, which during the night has remained in the hands of the police, and to take your seat in the Diligence.

The towns of the Basque provinces appear not to have been much maltreated during the Carlist war; not so the villages, most of which present a melancholy aspect of ruin and desolation. The churches, built so as to appear more like keeps of castles, have mostly withstood the shock. The destruction was oftener the result of burning than of artillery. The lover of the picturesque offers his silent gratitude to the combatants on both sides, for sparing, although unintentionally, some of the most charming objects of all Spain.

Among the most striking of these is Hernani. It is composed of one street, of the exact required width for the passage of an ordinary vehicle. This street is a perfect specimen of picturesque originality. The old façades are mostly emblazoned with the bearings of their ancient proprietors, sculptured in high relief. On entering the place, the effect is that of a deep twilight after the broad blaze of the sunny mountains. This is caused by the almost flat roofs, which advance considerably beyond the

fronts of the houses, and nearly meet in the centre of the street: the roof of each house is either higher or lower, or more or less projecting, than its neighbour; and all are supported by carved wood-work, black from age. The street terminates on the brow of a hill, and widens at the end, so as to form a small square, one retreating side of which is occupied by the front of a church covered with old sculpture; and the diligence, preceded by its long team of tinkling mules, disappears through the arched gateway of a Gothic castle.

In this part of Spain one does not hear the sounds of the guitar; these commence further on. On Sundays and holydays, the fair of Tolosa, and of the other Basque towns, flourish their castagnettes to the less romantic whinings of the violin; but, in traversing the country, the ear is continually met by a sound less musical, although no less national, than that of the guitar—a sort of piercing and loud complaint, comparable to nothing but the screams of those who have “relinquished hope” at Dante’s grim gateway.

These unearthly accents assail the ear of the traveller long before he can perceive the object whence they proceed; but, becoming louder and louder, there will issue from a narrow road, or rather ravine, a diminutive cart, shut in between

two small round tables for wheels. Their voice proceeds from their junction with the axle, by a contrivance, the nature of which I did not examine closely enough to describe. A French tourist expresses much disgust at this custom, which he attributes to the barbarous state of his neighbours, and their ignorance of mechanical art; it is, however, much more probable that the explanation given by the native population is the correct one. According to this, the wheels are so constructed for the useful purpose of forewarning all other drivers of the approach of a cart. The utility of some such invention is evident. The mountain roads are cut to a depth often of several yards, sometimes scores of yards, (being probably dried-up beds of streams,) and frequently for a distance of some furlongs admit of the passage of no more than one of these carts at a time, notwithstanding their being extremely narrow. The driver, forewarned at a considerable distance by a sound he cannot mistake, seeks a wide spot, and there awaits the meeting.

You need not be told that human experience analysed resolves itself into a series of disappointments. I beg you to ask yourself, or any of your acquaintances, whether any person, thing, or event ever turned out to be exactly, or nearly, such as

was expected he, she, or it would be. According to the disposition of each individual, these component parts of experience become the bane or the charm of his life.

This truth may be made, by powerful resolve, the permanent companion of your reflections, so as to render the expectation of disappointment stronger than any other expectation. What then? If you know the expected result will undergo a metamorphosis before it becomes experience, you will not be disappointed. Only try. For instance,—every one knows the Spanish character by heart; it is the burden of all literary productions, which, from the commencement of time, have treated of that country. A Carlist officer, therefore,—the hopeless martyr in the Apostolic, aristocratic cause of divine right; the high-souled being, rushing into the daily, deadly struggle, supported, instead of pay and solid rations, by his fidelity to his persecuted king;—such a character is easily figured. The theory of disappointments must here be at fault. He is a true Spaniard; grave, reserved, dignified. His lofty presence must impress every assembly with a certain degree of respectful awe.—I mounted the *coupé*, or *berlina*, of the Diligence, to leave Tolosa, with a good-looking, fair, well-fed native, with a long falling auburn moustache. We commenced by ban-

dying civilities as to which should hold the door while the other ascended. No sooner were we seated than my companion inquired whether I was military; adding, that he was a Carlist captain of cavalry returning from a six months' emigration.

Notwithstanding the complete polish of his manners in addressing me, it was evident he enjoyed an uncommon exuberance of spirits, even more than the occasion could call for from the most ardent lover of his country; and I at first concluded he must have taken the earliest opportunity (it being four o'clock in the morning) of renewing his long-interrupted acquaintance with the flask of *aguardiente*: but that this was not the case was evident afterwards, from the duration of his tremendous happiness. During the first three or four hours, his tongue gave itself not an instant's repose. Every incident was a subject of merriment, and, when tired of talking to me, he would open the front-window and address the *mayoral*; then roar to the postilion, ten mules ahead; then swear at the *zagal* running along the road, or toss his cigar-stump at the head of some wayfaring peasant-girl.

Sometimes, all his vocabulary being exhausted, he contented himself with a loud laugh, long continued; then he would suddenly fall asleep, and,

after bobbing his head for five or six minutes, awake in a convulsion of laughter, as though his dream was too merry for sleep. Whatever he said was invariably preceded by two or three oaths, and terminated in the same manner. The Spanish (perhaps, in this respect, the richest European language) hardly sufficed for his supply. He therefore selected some of the more picturesque specimens for more frequent repetition. These, in default of topics of conversation, sometimes served instead of a fit of laughter or a nap: and once or twice he hastily lowered the window, and gave vent to a string of about twenty oaths at the highest pitch of his lungs; then shut it deliberately, and remained silent for a minute. During dinner he cut a whole cheese into lumps, with which he stuffed an unlucky lap-dog, heedless of the entreaties of two fair fellow-travellers, proprietors of the condemned quadruped. This was a Carlist warrior!

The inhabitants of the Basque provinces are a fine race, and taller than the rest of the Spaniards. The men possess the hardy and robust appearance common to mountaineers, and the symmetry of form which is almost universal in Spain, although the difference of race is easily perceptible. The women are decidedly handsome, although they also are anything but Spanish-looking; and their beauty is

often enhanced by an erect and dignified air, not usually belonging to peasants, (for I am only speaking of the lower orders,) and attributable principally to a very unpeasant-like planting of the head on the neck and shoulders. I saw several village-girls whom nothing but their dress would prevent from being mistaken for German or English ladies of rank, being moreover universally blondes. On quitting Vitoria, you leave behind you the mountains and the pretty faces.

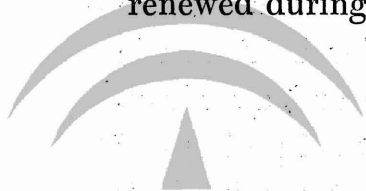
For us, however, the latter were not entirely lost. There were two in the Diligence, belonging to the daughters of a Grandee of the first class, Count de P. These youthful señoritas had taken the opportunity, rendered particularly well-timed by the revolutions and disorders of their country, of passing three years in Paris, which they employed in completing their education, and seeing the wonders of that town, *soi-disant* the most civilized in the world; which probably it would have been, had the old *régime* not been overthrown. They were now returning to Madrid, furnished with all the new ideas, and the various useful and useless accomplishments they had acquired.

Every one whose lot it may have been to undertake a journey of several days in a Diligence,—that is, in one and the same,—and who consequently recol-

lects that trembling and anxious moment during which he has passed in review the various members of the society of which he is to be, *nolens volens*, a member ; and the feverish interest which directed his glance of rapid scrutiny towards those in particular of the said members with whom he was to be exposed to more immediate contact, and at the mercy of whose birth and education, habits, opinions, prejudices, qualities, and propensities, his happiness and comfort were to be placed during so large and uninterrupted a period of his existence,—will comprehend my gratitude to these fair *émigrées*, whose lively conversation shortened the length of each day, adding to the charms of the magnificent scenery by the opportunity they afforded of a congenial interchange of impressions. Although we did not occupy the same compartment of the carriage, their party requiring the entire interior and *rotonde*, we always renewed acquaintance when a prolonged ascent afforded an opportunity of liberating our limbs from their confinement.

The two daily repasts also would have offered no charm, save that of the Basque *cuisine*,—which, although cleanly and solid, is not perfectly *cordon bleu*,—but for the entertaining conversation of my fair fellow-travellers, who had treasured up in their memory the best sayings and doings of Arnal, and the other

Listons and Yateses of the French capital, which, seasoned with a slight Spanish accent, were indescribably *piquants* and original. My regret was sincere on our respective routes diverging at Burgos; for they proceeded by the direct line over the Somo sierra to Madrid, while I take the longer road by the Guadarramas, in order to visit Valladolid. I shall not consequently make acquaintance with the northern approach to Madrid, unless I return thither a second time; as to that of my fellow-travellers, I should be too fortunate were it to be renewed during my short stay in their capital.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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

LETTER IV.

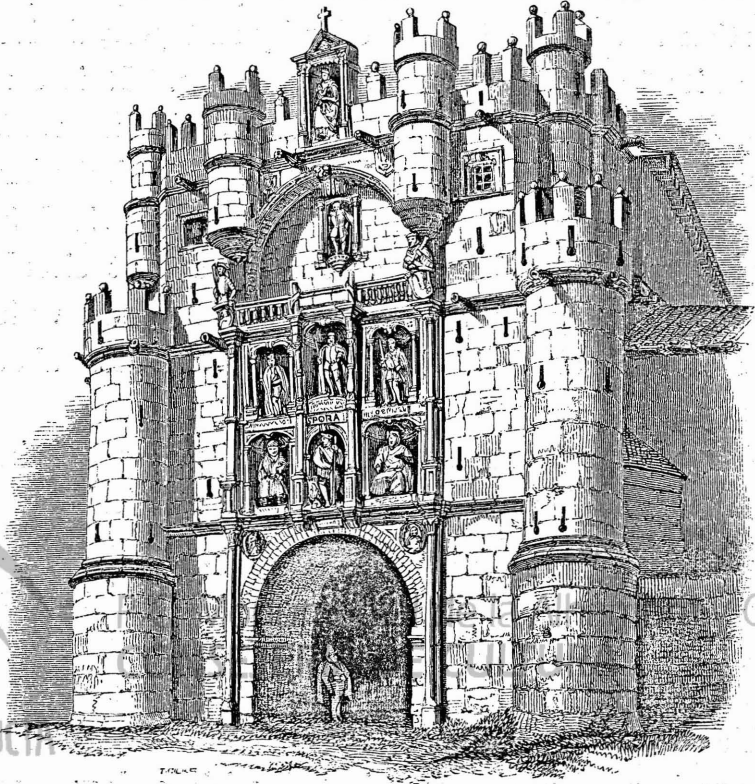
ARRIVAL AT BURGOS. CATHEDRAL.

Burgos.

THE chain of the Lower Pyrenees, after the ascent from the French side, and a two days' journey of alternate mountain and valley, terminates on the Spanish side at almost its highest level. A gentle descent leads to the plain of Vitoria; and, after leaving behind the fresh-looking, well-farmed environs of that town, there remains a rather monotonous day's journey across the bare plains of Castile, only varied by the passage through a gorge of about a mile in extent, called the Pass of Pancorbo, throughout which the road is flanked on either side by a perpendicular rock of from six to eight hundred feet elevation. The ancient capital of Castile is visible from a considerable distance, when approached in this direction; being easily recognised by the spires of its cathedral, and by the citadel placed on an eminence, which forms a link of a chain of hills crossing the route at this spot.

The extent of Burgos bears a very inadequate proportion to the idea formed of it by strangers, derived from its former importance and renown. It is composed of five or six narrow streets, winding round the back of an irregularly shaped colonnaded plaza. The whole occupies a narrow space, comprised between the river Arlançon, and the almost circular hill of scarcely a mile in circumference, (on which stands the citadel) and covers altogether about double the extent of Windsor Castle.

The city has received a sort of modern facing, consisting of a row of regularly built white houses, which turn their backs to the Plaza, and front the river; uniting at one extremity with an ancient gateway, which, facing the principal bridge, must originally have stood slightly in advance of the town, to which it formed a very characteristic entrance. It is a quadrangular edifice, pierced with a low semi-circular arch. The arch is flanked on the river front by small circular turrets, and surmounted by seven niches, containing statues of magistrates, kings, and heroes; while over these, in a centre niche, stands a semicolossal statue of the Virgin, from which the monument derives its title of "Arco de Santa Maria." Another arch, but totally simple, situated at the other extremity of the new buildings, faces another bridge; and this, with that of Santa Maria, and a



ARCO DE SANTA MARIA.

third, placed halfway between them, leading to the Plaza, form the three entrances to the city on the river side.

The dimensions of this, and many other Spanish towns, must not be adopted as a base for estimating their amount of population. Irun, at the frontier of France, stands on a little hill, the surface of which would scarcely suffice for a country-house, with its

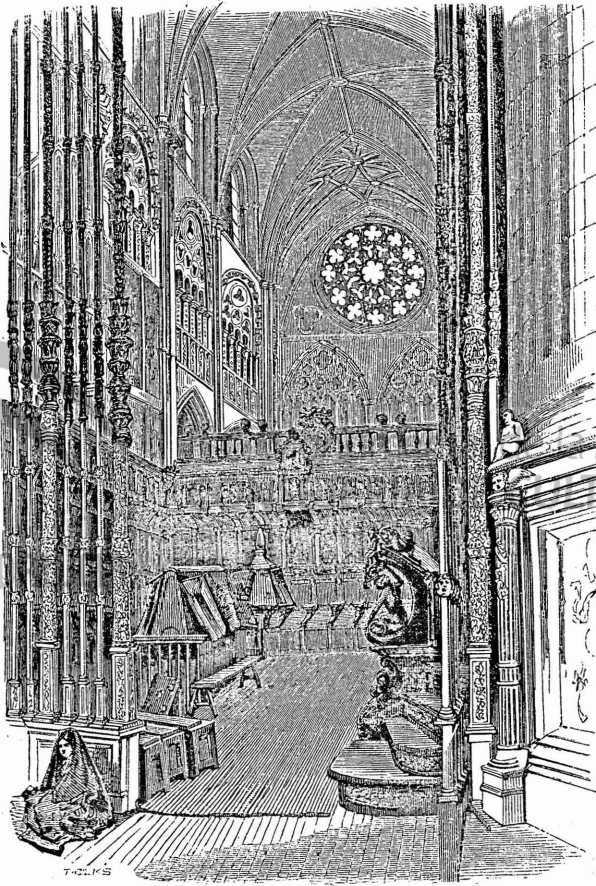
surrounding offices and gardens: it contains, nevertheless, four or five thousand inhabitants, and comprises a good-sized market-place and handsome town-hall, besides several streets. Nor does this close packing render the Spanish towns less healthy than our straggling cities, planned with a view to circulation and purity of atmosphere, although the difference of climate would seem to recommend to each of the two countries the system pursued by the other. The humidity of the atmosphere in England would be the principal obstacle to cleanliness and salubrity, had the towns a more compact mode of construction; whilst in Spain, on the contrary, this system is advantageous as a protection against the excessive power of the summer sun, which would render our wide streets—bordered by houses too low to afford complete shade—not only almost impassable, but uninhabitable.

The Plaza of Burgos (entitled “de la Constitución,” or “de Isabel II.,” or “del Duque de la Victoria,” or otherwise, according to the government of the day,) has always been the resort of commerce. The projecting first-floors being supported by square pillars, a sort of bazaar is formed under them, which includes all the shop population of the city, and forms an agreeable lounge during wet or too sunny weather. Throughout the remainder of the town,

with the exception of the modern row of buildings above mentioned, almost all the houses are entered through Gothic doorways, surmounted by armorial bearings sculptured in stone, which, together with their ornamental inner courts and staircases, testify to their having sheltered the chivalry of Old Castile. The Cathedral, although by no means large, appears to fill half the town; and considering that, in addition to its conspicuous and inviting aspect, it is the principal remaining monument of the ancient wealth and grandeur of the province, and one of the most beautiful edifices in Europe, I will lose no time in giving you a description of it.

This edifice, or at least the greater portion of it, dates from the thirteenth century. The first stone was laid by Saint Ferdinand, on the 20th of July 1221. Ferdinand had just been proclaimed king by his mother Doña Berenguela, who had invested him with his sword at the royal convent of the Huelgas, about a mile distant from Burgos. Don Mauricio, Bishop of Burgos, blessed the armour as the youthful king girded it, and, three days subsequently to the ceremony, he united him to the Princess Beatrice, in the church of the same convent. This bishop assisted in laying the first stone of the cathedral, and presided over the construction of the entire body of the building, including half of the two principal towers.

His tomb may be seen at the back of the Choir. From the date of the building its style may at once be recognised, allowing for a difference which existed



INTERIOR OF THE CHOIR.

between England and the Continent, the latter being somewhat in advance. The original edifice must have

been a very perfect and admirable specimen of the pointed architecture of its time in all its purity. As it is, unfortunately, (as the antiquary would say, and, I should add, the mere man of taste, were it not that tastes are various, and that the proverb says they are all in nature,) the centre of the building, forming the intersection of the transept and nave, owing to some defect in the original construction, fell in just at the period during which regular architecture began to waver, and the style called in France the "Renaissance" was making its appearance. An architect of talent, Felipe de Borgoña, hurried from Toledo, where he was employed in carving the stalls of the choir, to furnish a plan for the centre tower. He, however, only carried the work to half the height of the four cylindrical piers which support it. He was followed by several others before the termination of the work; and Juan de Herrera, the architect of the Escorial, is said to have completed it. In this design are displayed infinite talent and imagination; but the artist could not alter the taste of the age. It is more than probable that he would have kept to the pure style of his model, but for the prevailing fashion of his time. Taken by itself, the tower is, both externally and internally, admirable, from the elegance of its form, and the richness of its details; but it jars with the rest of the building.

Placing this tower in the background, we will now repair to the west front. Here nothing is required to be added, or taken away, to afford the eye a feast as perfect as grace, symmetry, grandeur, and lightness, all combined, are capable of producing. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this front taken as a whole. You have probably seen an excellent view of it in one of Roberts's annuals. The artists of Burgos complain of an alteration, made some fifty years back by the local ecclesiastical authorities, nobody knows for what reason. They caused a magnificent portal to be removed, to make way for a very simple one, totally destitute of the usual sculptured depth of arch within arch, and of the profusion of statuary, which are said to have adorned the original entrance. This, however, has not produced a bad result in the view of the whole front. Commencing by solidity and simplicity at its base, the pile only becomes ornamental at the first story, where rows of small trefoil arches are carved round the buttresses; while in the intermediate spaces are an oriel window in an ornamental arch, and two narrow double arches. The third compartment, where the towers first rise above the body of the church, offers a still richer display of ornament. The two towers are here connected by a screen, which masks the roof, raising the apparent body of the façade an additional story.