

and presently afterwards observed the horsemen and pedestrians, laden carts, mules, asses, &c. becoming every moment more frequent, showing we were drawing near a place of some importance. About noon our lazy vehicle passed under the gates, and we found ourselves, with no small pleasure, in the capital of Old Castile.

Like some of the older cities of Spain, Burgos—once the residence of kings—wears the aspect of an ancient, dilapidated strong-hold, bearing ample evidence of the fierce career of the spoiler—War, and of the desperate efforts made for its possession by the Spaniard and the Moor. Alternately lost or won, the fortunes it experienced, and the events it witnessed, long employed the genius of the elder chroniclers and romancers of those stirring times; and the striking old ballads and the historic songs of the Cid are, perhaps, the only effusions of a chivalrous muse which have not suffered by the keen-pointed shafts of the prince of all humorous novelists.

## CHAPTER IV.

### BURGOS.

Ancient Glory of Spain—Government—Birth-place of the Cid—Rivalry of Burgos and Toledo—the Cathedral—Young Spanish Artist—Beautiful Façade—Poetry of Architecture—View in the Interior—Style and Effect of the Sculpture—Pictures and Relics—Chest and Legend of the Cid—Comparison of the Cathedral with York Minster—View from the great central Tower—Scarcity of Timber—Convent of Miraflores—Carmelite Convent—San Pedro—Tomb of the Cid—Beauty of Spanish Women—Costume.

It is something for the Spaniards that, though the present offers few examples of heroic virtue, or honour, or patriotism, they can yet point to the past, when there was glory in Spain, though connected with a system of things in itself undesirable; for, when chivalry was proudest, their courage most undoubted, and their manners the best recognisable in their history, there still existed unhappy causes of dissension, which cast their poisonous shadow, like the fabulous Upas, upon every thing imagined or executed. And this circumstance, in my case at least, stifled much of the enthusiasm I should otherwise have experienced at beholding the scene, or in perusing the chronicles of her heroes, who, however adventurous or brave, were still but the representatives of an exclusive and

oppressive class of men. Such was the feeling, damped and alloyed, with which I looked upon the birth-place of the Cid, celebrated by romancers until his character in history almost appears doubtful.\*

His native town, however, whatever faith we may put in his legend, is a place of considerable antiquity, and was once the capital of a kingdom, when the narrow domains of a petty chief were dignified with such an appellation. By some writers its origin has been traced back to classic times, and confounded with that of the Bravum of Ptolemy; while others, of whom Laborde is one, consider it more probable that it stands on the site of Aura, another ancient city, and built somewhere in the ninth or tenth century. Which-ever conjecture is right, it flourished long, and only began to fall into decay when Charles V. removed the seat of empire to Madrid. It is still a fine city, the first, perhaps, in the Castiles, though Toledo refuses to admit the superiority; and, if I could, I would not decide a dispute carried on with so much wisdom and advantage to both parties during two centuries,—

“Arcades ambo,”—

and why should they not dispute? The progress of events has left the more peaceful citizens little else to amuse them, and employ their spare energies, unless they choose to engage in civil war.

The first thing about which a stranger makes inquiries at Burgos is of course the cathedral, a building

\* According to several chroniclers, he was born at Bivar, a village two leagues distant.

that owes its first erection to the architectural genius of the thirteenth century. Three hundred years afterwards the chancel was found to require some repairs; and the grand altar was constructed at a period when true taste began to be revived in the country.

As our stay in Burgos was somewhat protracted, we paid several visits to this noble building, but shall here describe only the first; introducing, however, remarks made subsequently at leisure. We were accompanied by a young Spanish artist, who, having travelled, was in a great measure delivered from those ignorant prejudices which too generally infest the minds of his countrymen, and, after the first effervescence is over, render their gasconading vivacity intolerable. He was not, indeed, professionally an architect, but had yet bestowed upon the *Res Edificaria* sufficient attention to entitle his decisions to respect.

The façade of this edifice, erected in a pure gothic style, presents all those features which characterise the order of buildings to which it belongs, and immediately produce upon the mind the desired impression. Perhaps the architects who reared these fanes, entered but little into metaphysical investigations concerning the best means of awing the approaching Christian into a frame of mind suited to the religious observances to be witnessed within,—philosophy being in those days but little understood, except when required to furnish matter for dispute; but most unquestionably a profound conviction and veneration for the truths they taught stepped in to guide their practice, and enable

them to accomplish their aim. On issuing forth from a crowd of secular structures, the abode of little cares, hopes, and speculations, into the open space before the cathedral, a striking change in the state of our feelings is experienced as its beautiful front and heaven-pointing spires meet the eye. Something, no doubt, is to be traced to early associations; but even a savage would be struck by it. A flood of holy aspirations pours in upon the soul. Our every-day worldly habits fall away from about us; a pure fervour, or an exquisite calm, springs up; we appear to be verging towards a spot which communicates with heaven,—a spot over which some visible shekinah hovers,—where, to be found with heart unrenewed and desires unsanctified, would be a palpable profanation.

To analyze the causes which concur in producing this effect, would scarcely be compatible with the popular character of this work; for they lie deep amid the very foundations of art, surrounded by a light barely sufficient to enable the practised eye to contemplate them. Let us enter the cathedral, which is of so vast an extent that divine service may there be performed in eight chapels at once, without occasioning the slightest embarrassment or confusion. It was not now the hour of mass. The rays of the early sun, streaming inward through richly wrought windows and between the tall clustered columns, fell in purple, crimson, and orange masses upon the floor, or lighted up the form of some passing devotee. Far in the interior we observed a group of ladies, with dark veils partly concealing their snowy shoulders, clustering

round an image, some standing, some upon their knees. Others were congregated near the staircase, whose massive stone balustrades are surmounted by dragon-shaped monsters couched like sphinxes. These were practising singing; and near them a young priest, engaged in reading to his superior, was casting clandestine glances at the fair ones. The artist has happily reproduced this group, in his view of the staircase leading to the great organ; and his representation will, better than any language, convey an idea of the magnificent style in which the cathedral in every part is decorated with ornaments:—pictures, statues, tracery, scrolls, mullions, altar-formed cippi, pillars, fantastic abaci, cornices, entablatures, friezes, the whole harmonizing wonderfully together in the soft light shed from vast windows far above.

The design and execution of the statues, bassi relievi, and other ornaments crowded into the choir, have by some travellers been criticised with severity; perhaps from their not reflecting how much more stress is, in the gothic, laid upon the general result, than on particular decorations. None of these statues, for example, will abide the test which might with safety be applied to a piece of Hellenic sculpture, where individual perfection was aimed at; but viewed where they stand peopling the choir and awakening, every one of them, a feeling of religion which few imaginations can now connect with the form of a heathen divinity, they concur in accomplishing the grand design of the original architect, impressing us with solemn feelings, the natural prelude to true devo-

tion. In the places of worship of those severer sects of Protestants, who condemn all representations of every thing in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, as incentives to idolatry, a sensation of holy awe is engendered by the very bareness of the walls. You appear to feel the presence of God, of that first beautiful, and first good, that may well supply the place of all other ornament. He seems to be the more present to your mind, because no attempt is made to clothe his incomprehensible nature with form, or to distract the thoughts from him by representations of inferior beings. But I would not, therefore, condemn such other means of exciting solemn reflections, or a devout exaltation of sentiment, as may among nations less civilized and spiritual be found necessary. With these, material symbols and visible mementoes may avail, when all suggestions conveyed by circumstances less obvious would be found ineffectual.

But even as works of art, the carvings of the choir in many cases possess considerable merit, particularly two series of bassi relievi, arranged in tiers one above the other, representing scriptural subjects, those above being taken from the New Testament, and those beneath from the Old. The artists who executed them are not, perhaps, known with certainty; but may probably have been Roderigo and Martin del Aja, two men of singular ability, who sculptured the bassi relievi which adorn the great altar. To them also may be attributed the pagan group on the back of the episcopal stall, representing the rape of Europa. Among the beautiful monuments and other relics of

art contained in the several chapels, we particularly remarked those raised to the memory of the famous constable of Castile, Pedro Hernandez de Velasco, and his wife Mencia Lopez de Mendoza.

It would, in general, be useless to attempt a catalogue of the pictures we meet with in the Spanish cathedrals, though they are far less rich than those of Italy; but in the metropolitan church of Burgos there are some few pieces that deserve to be commemorated, whether they are the works of the artists to whom they are attributed or not. The most remarkable is a Mary Magdalen, in the sacristy of the constable's chapel, which, whether it be by Raffaello or Leonardo da Vinci, is an incarnation of female loveliness. Next to this, is a full-sized picture of the Virgin, said to be by Michael Angelo, who, when he chose, could soften his terrible pencil, as in the case of the Cleopatra, and call into existence forms as gentle as those of nature herself. The Crucifixion, by Matteo Cerezo, a native of Burgos, has also much merit; it occupies a place in the chapel De los Remedios.

Of the various relics we took no account, though the good people imagine some of them to be endowed with the power of working miracles. But the "Chest of the Cid," connected with a story carefully repeated to all travellers, is an object of considerable curiosity, from the legend attached to it. This legend, like many other things, may be taken by two handles, and converted either into an excuse for reprehending, or a theme for praise in the character of the Cid. On the eve of setting forth on his military career, find-



ing himself in the position, not uncommon even at this day among Spanish nobles, of a penniless man, he had recourse to the effect of his former good character, and by the help of a well-meant lie,—but still a lie,—contrived to furnish his coffers, and supply his followers with necessaries. He invited two ancestors of Baron Rothschild to dine with him, and having entertained them handsomely, opened the business of the day, and offered to leave them *two chests of plate* in pledge for what money he wanted. His former honesty enabled him to be dishonest now. Instead of plate, of which, it is to be presumed, he had none, *two boxes of sand* were left with the Jews, who, trusting to his honour, omitted to open them. This is not a bad example of the “stern virtues” of the middle ages. If the fortune of war had gone against him, the Jews, who had relied upon his honour, must have contented themselves with their boxes of sand, and such reflections as they would necessarily have made on the word of “that noble mirror of chivalry.” Fortunately, however, for them, El Cid Campeador was enabled to redeem his boxes, in which he is represented as saying that the “gold of his truth” lay hidden! Alas, for the truth which could delude men into the belief that sand was plate! Yet persons have not been wanting to laud this knightly feat, and to talk of “sentiments so noble” being natural to the Spaniards; but why they should be denominated “noble,” or why heroes should be complimented on such grounds as these, it would be difficult to explain.

In speaking of the cathedral of Burgos, I should not omit to mention its resemblance in form to York minster, which, when entire, was by an excellent critic regarded as the standard by which gothic sacred architecture ought to be judged. Its steeples, terminating in spires, and vast square tower with eight pinnacles, correspond exactly with those of the English church; and, to complete the likeness, we have a lower octagonal building at the east end with eight pyramidal turrets, terminating in needles, piercing an open star-like ornament, which the reader will at once recognise as the counterpart of the chapter-house at York. Here however, as elsewhere, the integrity and harmony of the view are destroyed by the clustering of mean dwelling-houses about the base; and a secular, not to say a barbarous and ridiculous air, is communicated to its appearance, when beheld near, by a couple of heraldic monsters, one on either side of a window, defending with their hideous ugliness the arms of Castile. But as the eye travels upward over those clustering pillars which climb along the turrets with the slenderness and delicacy of reeds, and finds itself among that forest of decorations, statues, fretwork, foliage, filagree, and tapering turrets that crown the summit of this exquisite octagon, we feel ourselves in presence of one of the triumphs of art, and are absorbed in the depths of admiration.

But these pleasures are to a great degree exclusive, belonging only to a certain class of minds, formed by nature and trained by education to discover beauty in harmonious combinations of solidity and grace. The

natives, born under the shadow of the cathedral, regard the whole with an undistinguishing eye. They have looked upon it till they know not what it means. You may, any day in the week, find lounging groupes of men or women bending over greasy cards on the steps of a door, or sunning their lazy limbs at the very foot of the chapter-house, unconscious of its beauties, like the Genevese, who would gladly level the environs of his lake to convert them into a turnip field. Nor is this matter of surprise, or, indeed, of blame. They have not been taught to derive gratification from the contemplation of any thing higher than a purse of reals, and accordingly confine their admiration to "what will make the pot boil," as one of their homely proverbs expresses it.

From the summit of the great central tower, where you may breathe the cool breeze after the toil of the ascent, we enjoyed a magnificent prospect over the whole city and its environs. Burgos stands on the slope of an almost precipitous hill, which is commanded by a castle of antique structure, formerly the residence of the counts, and afterwards of the kings of Castile. The river Arlanzon, flowing at the foot of the declivity, divides the suburbs from the city, and continuing its visible course down the vale, is every where accompanied by signs of population and fertility. As far as the eye can reach, the country is well wooded; and many rivulets, bringing their tributary waters to the Arlanzon, enrich, each in its turn, some miniature vale, beautified with rural hamlets encircled with foliage. Among the remarkable build-

ings from hence distinguishable was the Carthusian convent of Miraflores, standing beautifully on a round hill, which I afterwards visited, and the abbey De las Huelgas, on the road to Valladolid, once inhabited by a bevy of noble nuns, whose abbess, in riches and prerogatives, almost rivalled a sovereign princess. While we sat aloft in this artificial eyry, enjoying the contemplation of the picturesque, our ears were pierced by sounds peculiar, perhaps, to Spain. A string of carts from Aragon, laden with bull-spears and iron, was just then winding through the narrow streets below, and the grinding of their ungreased wheels, musical as ten thousand files, made us sigh for the comparative Arcadian stillness of Merthyr Tydvil iron-works.

I have above remarked that the environs of Burgos are well wooded, but this requires explanation; for, though a sufficiency of trees exists to adorn the landscape, and refresh the eye with the aspect of verdure, there is a lamentable scarcity of fuel, which began to be felt as far back at least as 1753, when it was deemed of importance enough to command the attention of government. It may, however, by the way, be observed, that all over the continent the forests are fast disappearing, and fuel every year becoming more and more scanty; so that in France, where the comforts and conveniences of the people are still very little consulted, the government has at length been constrained to improve its forest laws, hitherto lamentably deficient. On the royal domains, since the accession of Louis Philippe, the larger game have

been destroyed, their preservation having been found inconsistent with the raising of young timber, whose tender shoots they cropped in the spring, and thus caused to perish. The Spanish government adopted a different plan. By an ordonnance of the Council of Castile, every inhabitant of the country was enjoined to plant five trees. But the execution of this order having been confided to ignorant and inefficient persons, the object of the government was in a great measure defeated; in some places through malignity, in others, more particularly in Old Castile, through prejudice, the peasants having imbibed the notion that the trees brought together birds, and other vermin inimical to the wealth of the husbandman. Attempts, injudicious in their nature, were made to enforce obedience, but without success. The plantations, in some districts, were cut down by passers by, wantonly, or for saplings; elsewhere they were made ignorantly, and perished from not being adapted to the soil; while in other places, perhaps, the same hands that fixed them in the earth, for various reasons uprooted them. Recourse was at last had to the only argument really calculated to prevail: those in power, king and grandees, set the example by making plantations in their several grounds; the bishops and curates followed in their footsteps; and thus some advances were made towards hiding with leaves the nakedness of Spain.

The effects of this patriotic resolution are still visible, as I have said, in the environs of Burgos, particularly upon the banks of the Arlanzon, along which

lies the road to the convent of Miraflores, situated about half a league south-east of the city. The cloisters are spacious, lofty, and constructed with much taste; but it is the church attached to the convent that constitutes the object of the traveller's admiration. It was erected during the fifteenth century, under the direction of three successive architects, Ferdinand Mutienzo, John of Cologne, and Simeon his son. Other architects have contributed to enrich the interior. In the chancel are two superb tombs, the one on the right, the other on the left-hand side of the altar, containing the mortal remains of John II. and his son. That of the king consists of an octagonal base supporting a couch, whereon recline the statues of King John, with the vain insignia of royalty, and of his queen, crowned also, but holding, instead of a sceptre, a book in her hand. Thirteen smaller figures, among which are those of the four evangelists, are grouped round the royal couch. The other tomb is surmounted by the statue of a child, in the attitude of prayer. The execution of these works, upon the whole, is chaste and elegant, but the plan somewhat more complicated than good taste will approve. More praise is, perhaps, due to the artist who conceived the design of the principal altar, which is in the gothic style, crowded with bassi relievi and statues executed in a very superior manner. Figures of the Virgin and St. John, introduced near a crucifix, occupy the central compartment; and on the sides are placed two pictures by Pedro Antanasio, the one representing the dream of St. Joseph, the other his death. In the sacristy is a



*Drawn by David López*

*Engraved by J. Carter*

**RUINS OF THE CONVENT OF THE CARMELITES, AT BURGOS.**

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Printed by S. Lloyd.

piece of great merit by Diego de Leyva—the Virgin bestowing a chaplet on St. Bruno; and the chapter-room contains a series of fourteen pictures by the same artist, distinguished for the harmony and beauty of the colouring, in which are represented the principal events in the life of St. Bruno. Other pictures, remarkable for their antiquity or their merit, are found in this church; but we cannot now pause to enumerate or describe them.

Our next pilgrimage was to the ruins of the Carmelite convent, where vegetation is fast springing over fallen fragments, and creeping upward over the shattered walls to clothe them with fresh beauty, and, interspersed with sculpture and tracery, to present that singular grouping of natural and artificial objects which renders decay lovely. Nothing can be richer, or, at the same time, more whimsical or grotesque, than the style of the doorway, which in some of its decorations resembles what we find in Mamalook buildings. Others are peculiar to the gothic; for example, the statues of saints, introduced into a voluted compartment between too highly projecting beads, and each with his tabernacle over his head, bending round to suit the curvature of the arch, and butting pates at each other above. But in the midst of this grotesqueness there is surpassing beauty. What can be finer than the draped figure of Our Lady on the right? Standing on a pillar in a deep niche, with a most tasteful and yet highly ornate tabernacle overhead, she gathers together her robes with one hand, presses the other on her bosom, and leans slightly forward, like a Hellenic statue, as if in



the act of blessing her worshippers. The apostles, angels, and other figures, more or less perfect, which adorn the face of this extraordinary ruin are all distinguished for the appropriate movement of their attitude; and the art with which they are grouped, the decorations interspersed, and the position assigned to each,—every thing combines to render this fragment the admiration of connoisseurs.

Fortunately for us, too,—and it is a piece of good fortune that seldom any where falls to the lot of a traveller,—there were neither guides nor beggars about the spot to interrupt the current of our feelings. Earth and sky appeared to be wrapped in sunshine and stillness. The breeze, rustling among the branches, wafted a mild fragrance about us, which seemed redolent of health and buoyant spirits. A few autumnal birds got up a pleasant song in the trees, and the sparrows, which doubtless abound wherever man has fixed his abode, were busily hopping from niche to niche, now perching on St. Peter's nose, and now nestling in the bosom of the Virgin. I protest against being understood, by what is here said, to intimate any hostility to beggars; on the contrary, so lax are my economico-political notions that I seldom, when the thing is convenient, miss an occasion of dropping my mite into their capacious reservoirs; but this does not prevent my being an enemy to their practice of besetting the avenues to every beautiful spot or object in France, Spain, and Italy, and by their appearance, and the lugubrious howls they find it necessary to make in order to force

their way to the purses of the wealthy, dissipating in a very great degree the pleasure to be derived from beholding whatever is most excellent in nature or art.

Though by no means deeply versed in the ballad literature, or strongly imbued with admiration for the Gothic heroes of Spain, we would not quit Burgos without paying a visit to the convent of San Pedro, where the mortal remains of the Cid and his wife Ximena repose. On this expedition we were not alone. An honest guide, who seemed capable, should his real stock fail him, of inventing an extempore legend or two for the amusement of good-natured travellers, accompanied us thither; and, that we might not accuse him of being chary of his lungs or of his knowledge, his tongue never ceased pouring forth such authentic particulars as he had gleaned from the chronicles, or his own more fertile imagination. He assured us we were going to see, in the effigies of the hero on his tomb, an exact likeness of a man who, had he now been living, would easily, by his own prowess, have driven Don Carlos out of the Free Provinces, (as the Basque districts are somewhat singularly denominated,) and secure a constitution to Spain. He had already beaten Charlemagne and Napoleon, (he did not trouble himself about chronology,) when death, ever envious of Castilian glory, carried off both him and his wife, and left our times nothing but unromantic peseteros, who are obliged to eat before they can fight; a sad falling off,—for the great men of former days, when the sheep of Castile were nearly as large as buffaloes, knights of prowess and conduct

made no account whatever of creature comforts. And this persuasion, in strict conformity with our best knowledge of human nature, was seriously entertained by those sage authorities alluded to by Butler, where, having spoken of some of their renowned deeds, he says,—

“ For when, afar, through deserts vast,  
Or regions desolate they passed,  
Unless they grazed, there's not one word  
Of their provisions on record ;  
Which made some confidently write  
They had no stomachs but to fight.”

Which, though by the example of King Arthur this ingenious author is afterwards led to contradict, we are convinced is a far more philosophical view of the practice of knights-errant than that other theory, which supposes them to have eaten and drank like other people.

However this may be, we proceeded merrily along upon our mules, until having reached the brow of an inconsiderable eminence, Don Guzman (for our guide was of gentle blood, as might be guessed by his regard for truth) pointed out to us the convent, lying in all its loneliness at the bottom of a quiet hollow, surrounded by a circle of low hills. In judging of such matters, much depends on the humour of the traveller at the moment. Accordingly, I find that persons exceedingly lavish of praise on other occasions, have become suddenly critical on beholding the towers of San Pedro, and disparaged its huge quadrangle and warlike battlements, which have only the single defect of reminding one of a London Penitentiary. But



*Drawn by David Roberts.*

*Engraved by E. Chalkie.*

WEST-FRONT OF THE CATHEDRAL AT BURGOS.

Printed by R. Lloyd.

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this is not an insurmountable objection, particularly as the resemblance ceases when you contemplate the solitary aspect of the scene, the snowy mountains hanging like a cloud over the eastern extremity of the landscape, and the intense blue of the sky encircling the whole like a frame of turquoise.

On drawing near the sculptured portal of the convent, we were reminded by a multitudinous group in semialto relieve, of the exploits of the Arab hero Antar; but were informed, that it represented the Cid himself mounted on his fabulous steed, driving, with brand in hand, over the falling or prostrate Moors. We have here an example of how barbarism leads, in various ages and countries, without imitation, to the same result; for this group, like the Egyptian sculptures, is painted and gilded precisely as the master-pieces of Grecian art were disfigured, apparently with public approbation, by Nero. There is considerable vigour, nevertheless, in the sculpture: the hero is represented in a good attitude, and the horse is full of fire; but by a mistake, not uncommon among artists, who are seldom over-gifted with philosophy, the enemy are embodied in forms over which it would require but little heroism to triumph.

The object of our visit—the Cid's tomb—is found in a small side chapel on the right hand, in proceeding up the church towards the altar. There is a religion about the grave which all must feel, even in common cemeteries; but the mind is necessarily more powerfully affected when we draw near the spot where a man of distinguished merit and reputation is gathered

to his fathers. And such, doubtless, was the Cid, notwithstanding the little affair of the sand-boxes, of which we have spoken rather jocularly a few pages back. The ashes of the hero's wife, Ximena, are mingled with his in the tomb; and their effigies, side by side, like those of Eloisa and Abelard, recline in marble above, an image of that beautiful repose thus silently brought to mind, which spirits enjoy beyond the grave. Near the parental dust lies that of his two daughters, Elvira and Maria, queens of Aragon and Navarre, through whose offspring many a royal house still existing may claim to be descended from the Cid; though few of them, perhaps, have inherited any of his virtues.

Some travellers have animadverted with unnecessary severity upon the French, who, during their occupation of Spain, removed the remains of the Cid from this convent to the public promenade of Burgos. I also disapprove of their taste, but applaud, in this instance at least, their conduct, which unquestionably was based on a profound respect for the virtues and valour of the hero. They imagined, falsely no doubt, that the sight of an illustrious tomb would inspire their less heroic contemporaries with an emulous desire of greatness like that which had immortalized their ancestor, and therefore dragged the bones from their quiet resting-place to bring them immediately under the public eye. But few converts, perhaps, are thus made to patriotism or magnanimity: No trace, I believe, exists of any lady of modern Paris having been rendered more spiritual or more constant in love



*Drawn by David Roberts.*

*Engraved by E. Chubb.*

STAIR-CASE IN THE NORTH TRANCEPT, CATHEDRAL OF BURGOS.

London, Published, Oct. 28. 1836. by Robert Jennings & Co. 62. Chespeide.

Printed by R. Clay.

by the advent in Père la Chaise of the tomb from the Paraclete; though no human being, whose heart is rightly placed, could ever pass that antique gothic tabernacle without experiencing an accelerated motion in the pulse, and a sense of pride at belonging to the same race as she whose image still breathes around her sepulchre all the sanctity of ennobling affection. It were better, however, I admit,—far better,—to leave the dead in the spot where they chose to be laid, or the love of kindred survivors placed them; particularly when, as in the case of the Cid, it happens to be protected from habitual profanation by the influence of the national creed, and with religious reverence unites the scarcely less powerful sentiment inspired by scenes remote and solitary. To the superstitious, by nature or by religion, the legendary relations of quaint and garrulous chroniclers may supply additional motives for respect. Upon myself they produce a different effect, suggesting degrading ideas of fanaticism and intolerance; as, where they celebrate, in barbarous phrase, the sectarian feuds of the Papists, Jews, and Moors, of a period when all were shrouded from the light of the pure Gospel by one common circumfused cloud of ignorance.

It has become fashionable among travellers in Spain, particularly in these portions of it, to grow eloquent in praise of the beauty of the women. Much, among those whose admiration is genuine, depends upon accidental circumstances. They have, perhaps, had the good fortune to fall in with a favourable specimen, both in character and appearance, and very



naturally transfer the flattering ideas, by these means acquired, to the whole race. It is, in fact, exceedingly difficult to speak correctly and rationally on the subject. Not to dwell on the differences of taste,—which after all, perhaps, are nothing more than the difference between knowledge and ignorance,—men's judgments are warped by so great a variety of considerations, that on this, or any other point with which passion is accustomed to interfere, it would be unreasonable to expect uniformity in their decisions. But among persons, not only constituted alike, but educated amid the same ethical and philosophical influences, we have a right to look for some resemblance in their ideas of loveliness, particularly in the conformation of their own species. However, we frequently look for it in vain. One man, for example, will find, in traversing this part of Castile, that the women in the neighbourhood of Burgos are gifted with remarkable beauty; while another pronounces them to be as ugly as sin. Both, possibly, desire to speak truth, but above all things abhor being common-place; and hence, partly, the discrepancy in their descriptions, each seizing upon the opposite extreme of what they saw, and generalizing unphilosophically. It is by no means easy to be eloquent or striking in correcting errors, and introducing moderation into a discussion; but I must risk the charge of being common-place, for the sake of keeping within the limits of truth. The Spanish women, like all others of southern race, have remarkably fine large eyes, not indeed intelligent, or expressive of any thing beyond



*Drawn by David Roberts.*

*Engraved by W. Wallis.*

TOWER OF THE CHAPTER-HOUSE, CATHEDRAL OF BURGOS.

Printed by R. Lloyd.

mere passion; but bright and sparkling, and full of animal fire. Their complexion, moreover, is often good, though dark, and their carriage possessed of all the grace and charm arising from ease and intense self-possession. Otherwise they appear to me far from beautiful. There is nothing of that classic lightness and sunniness of aspect discoverable in women of Hellenic blood,—nothing verging upwards towards the region of the ideal, or which wears the semblance of “commercing with the skies.” They are all earth’s mixture,—of corporeal mould. This character is given to the countenance by a flatness and squareness of visage, such as the ancient sculptor seized upon when they would represent the merry wood-gods and their train, and of which they found the type among the surrounding barbarians, or half-castes at home. But such a style of features is well enough calculated, we know, to please persons of a peculiar temperament. They seek not for those creatures of poetic mould, in whom the rays of passion are so intimately blended with those of intellect, in whom imagination, fancy, and whatever is least terrestrial in human nature, are so wedded to ardour of feeling and depth of emotion, that the result is the most perfect harmony of soul and sentiment; but, instead of this, are content with warmth and vivacity, grafted on youth and health, and accordingly find what they admire in Spain.

This will be intelligible to any person, without traversing the Pyrenees, who will be at the pains to study the pictures of Murillo, Velasquez, or any other Spanish artist; and compare them with the poetical

beauties of Raffaele, or of a Greek sculptor. Here we find the poetry of womanhood as it exists, not as it may be imagined,—for most ignorant or unhappy is he who supposes there is any possible beauty in humanity which does not exist in womankind; while the Spanish artist, embodying what he saw and understood, fell short of that ideal loveliness reserved by nature for a more highly favoured race. Unquestionably, in traversing the Peninsula, the eye may now and then distinguish among the crowd of forms pressing around it, some more exquisitely fashioned, and instinct with a nobler soul, than others. What I mean is, that such specimens of beauty are rarer in Spain than in some other countries,—than in England for example, or Greece; and when they occur, still, in most cases, are wanting in certain traits and touches which elevate the human figure towards the perfection attributed by the nations of old to their divinities. These exceptions are found chiefly, perhaps, in the north. In fact, a very judicious traveller, not addicted to exaggeration, has given a testimony in favour of the charms of the fair Biscayans, which it may be but justice to add: “The women (he says) are beautiful as angels, tall, light, and merry; their garb is neat and pastoral; their hair falls in long plaits down their backs, and a veil or handkerchief, twisted round in a coquetish manner, serves them for a very becoming head-dress.”

## CHAPTER V.

### FROM BURGOS TO VALLADOLID AND SEGOVIA.

Quit Burgos—Valley of the Arlanzon—Storks' Nests—Torquemada—Naked Plain—the Pisuerga—Poverty of the Inhabitants—Worship of Despotism—Vineyards of Dueñas—Wines of Cabezon—Gil Blas—Valladolid—Cookery—Romantic Reminiscences—the Giant—Promenades and Churches—Drilling Conscripts—Desertion—Departure—Simancas—Hornillos—Valley of the Eresma—Olmedo—Cow's Tail—Approach to Segovia—Arrival.

QUITTING Burgos by the gate of Valladolid, our road for some time lay through the valley of the Arlanzon, and was flanked on either hand with trees. We enjoyed a delightful view of the celebrated convent before mentioned, standing in bold relief from its eminence, and the picturesque-looking abbey, which we passed by with no little regret at not having leisure to stop and visit them. The sun, rising behind our backs, lighted up the landscape, which for some time continued to exhibit considerable beauty. Ranges of hills, or rather mountains, rose on either side of the road, and being in many parts well wooded, at least towards the foot, exhibited, as they alternated with narrow highly cultivated valleys, varied and pleasing features.

The villages on this part of the road are very numerous; and we observed, on almost every steeple, an

old stork's nest, these birds being held in great veneration throughout Spain, as they are in Holland and the East. The Arlanzon, as if loath to part company with us, kept constantly within view until we reached Villadrigo, a village built to show how dexterously they can in Spain mar the effects of a good situation; for, though it stands most agreeably on the right bank of the stream, its poverty and wretchedness wholly overpower the advantages of position. The country now sinks into a vast plain, interspersed with a few half-starved looking vineyards, bespeaking most eloquently how much the *dolce far niente* is here thought to surpass all other pleasures.

Having weathered a couple of tolerably steep ascents, where our mules seemed strongly disposed to take a nap as they moved along,—if they really did move,—we reached the further brow of an eminence commanding a prospect of the Pisuerga, with its fertile but timberless valley. At no great distance lay the town of Quintana de la Puente, or “of the Bridge,”—so called from a fine stone bridge of eighteen arches there thrown over the Pisuerga. The road and the river proceed upon a very coquettish plan throughout the whole extent of this broad valley, now tending towards each other, meeting with outstretched arms, snatching a hasty salute, and then running off pouting at a tangent, as if each in high dudgeon had vowed by St. Jago they would never be neighbours again; yet once more slyly approaching towards the same point, and again separating, until circumstances finally produce a lasting divorce.

At Torquemada, we again traverse the stream, over a bridge of twenty-six arches. The houses, in this part of the country, are built like the Egyptian villages and the ancient cities of Mesopotamia, with sun-dried bricks; but, as their baking is extremely imperfect, not being effected by an Egyptian sun, it is surprising the first heavy shower does not once more reduce them to their original mud. However, the church of Torquemada, as is generally the case, affords a striking contrast to the poverty of the private dwellings, being erected in a handsome style of gothic architecture.

The country at length opens into a vast naked plain, arid, shrivelled, and sun-burned, where the eye seeks in vain for bush or tree. Here the Spanish farmer must enjoy the satisfaction of taking the birds at complete disadvantage, as there is not a leaf to cover them; and if his corn is thin, it cannot be laid to the charge of the forests, which are elsewhere said to harbour sparrows, &c., but must be attributed to his own indolence and slovenliness, or the natural poverty of the soil. From the road we discover, across the bare flat, such as we have above described it, the village of Magaz, not far from which is the confluence of the rivers Arlanzon and Arlanza, whose united stream afterwards falls into the Pisuerga. The river formed by the junction of these and other tributaries, pursues, under the name of Pisuerga, an almost direct course from north to south, and falls into the Duero at Simancas, a little to the west of its confluence with the Eresma.

The poverty of the country is abundantly visible in the interior of the posadas, where every thing bespeaks the existence of wretchedness. Every where, as you approach nearer and nearer, you perceive how fatally industry has been paralysed; but if the people ever become civilized, their apathy and indolence will be shaken off with detestation. It is impossible to enter their dwellings without disgust, not altogether unmingled with contempt. Poor and miserable they now are. Their fuel consists of a few withered plants, often of an aromatic kind, dried branches of the vine, and a little straw, which are thrust into the stove, that, flueless and chimneyless, occupies the centre of the room, smoking, like red herrings, the ragged royalists who huddle round it in cold weather.

Here and there, as we advance, a few clumps of trees are discovered on the banks of the Pisurga, contributing in some small degree to break up the monotony of the landscape, which, after all, looks as hungry as the impoverished peasants themselves. As the road approached the eminence on which Dueñas is situated, we discovered on the left one of those religious foundations which the Christinos, whether to their credit or no, have begun to disturb; I mean the convent of San Isidro, where a brotherhood of Benedictines used to reside.

It is no distinction to a Spanish village to say that it is gloomy and abounds in filth,—for there are very few which do not; but Dueñas, notwithstanding its pretensions to be considered the Eldana of Ptolemy, bears, in this respect, the bell from all the towns and



hamlets on the route. According to some of the older travellers it could once, however, boast of a good inn ; but this was so much out of the ordinary course of things, that it could not be suffered to continue, and therefore matters soon lapsed into the old channel.

Nevertheless, the vine takes kindly to the hill-sides in this neighbourhood, and produces a pleasant wine, which is kept in rocky cellars excavated beneath the hill. They have, at first sight, the appearance of grottoes formed by nature ; but are, in reality, altogether artificial. Close to the margins of the streams, discoverable from the heights of Dueñas, are several pretty strips of meadow, which enliven the view with their cheerful green.

On descending from the village, we entered upon a plain of very unpromising aspect, thickly strewed with loose flints, and with scarcely a tree to hide its nakedness ; but having proceeded about ten or twelve miles, kept in good humour by the elastic buoyancy of the air, which is generally light on barren soils, we arrived at Cabezon, where, according to report, for our experience was far too limited to enable us to decide, the very best wine in all this part of Spain is produced. It is of a red colour, and extremely light. This is doubtless to be attributed to the predominance of sand amid the clay and marl of which the hills are composed ; for, wherever the soil has these qualities, it is adapted to the cultivation of the vine, which, on the other hand, always suffers where clay predominates.

Here the road again traverses the Pisuerga, over a large and fine stone bridge ; and, on regaining the

general level of the great undulating plain, the elevated spires of Valladolid came in sight, glittering and apparently almost transparent in the sunshine. A considerable body of cavalry, destined for the seat of war in the north-east, was approaching in a cloud of dust. It was only at times, however, that we could tell whether they were troops, or a large herd of cattle, when the breeze had sufficient strength to blow aside the aspiring particles of silex, and bare their flashing casques and cuirasses to the sun. They passed us at a brisk trot. Both man and beast appeared to be in tolerably good condition; but many who then looked proudly around from their prancing Andalusians, and stroked their well-smoked mustachios as they moved along, have by this time, no doubt, become food for crows among the mountains of Biscay.

The approach to Valladolid, by a shady avenue half a league in length, is sufficiently striking; but much of the interest I experienced as we drew near the gates, arose from a source wholly independent of external objects. It is celebrated in the pages of Gil Blas; and the shade of that lively vagabond, surrounded by sundry of his companions of the same kidney, stood among the well-dressed men and women on the promenade outside the walls, and welcomed me to the scene of his merry exploits. The persons assembled on the paseo constituted, of course, a motley multitude, made up of exquisites, military and unmilitary, priests, friars, and ladies of fashion with basquiña, mantilla, and fan. My eye, wandering over their countenances in search of beauty, was disap-

pointed; but they were light and graceful in make, and tripped along the earth as if scarcely formed to tread on it.

Our hunger, however, was more than a match for our taste. So, instead of pausing to admire the ladies, which a gallant traveller would, at least, have pretended he had done, we urged Diego to push on to the *Parador de las Diligencias*, where we anticipated becoming acquainted with Valladolidian cookery.—Appetite, whetted by abstinence and fatigue, is generally a lenient judge; else I would say something in praise of our dinner, including the wine, which sparkled and seemed most excellent. At all events, we were not a little pleased with our fare; and this, in all conscience, is enough. In other respects our hostelry was less to our liking. All the women of the establishment appeared to possess patent tongues, warranted never to wear out; and with these, put in motion by stentorian lungs, they maintained a clamour so incessant, that no ears, save those of a Spaniard, could long endure it. Besides the influx of people from the north, who looked very like soldiers in disguise, and of noisy cockneys from Madrid, with their insolent metropolitan tone, quite discomposed my equanimity, and made me sigh for the quiet sheep-walks about Segovia:—

“ O, qui me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi  
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra !”

But as no demon, good or bad, appeared inclined to undertake this exploit upon the spur of the moment, I

was fain to await the slower proceedings of Diego's mules, and, in the meantime, to smoke my cigarillo, comfort my imagination with reminiscences of Gil Blas and Dr. Sangrado, and trot about the city under the guidance of one of those hedge antiquarians, ycleped ciceroni,—I presume from their being supposed, from the fluency with which they romance, to be descended by a female branch from the great Roman orator.

At a place, like Valladolid, where there is nothing very extraordinary, the question always is, what must we see first? The best way, if one has no particular predilection, is to leave the matter entirely to the guide; who, if he be lazy, will take you to the nearest wonder, and if he be vain, to that whereon he can most eloquently descant. The most remarkable thing to be seen any where in the vicinity our guide assured us was the giant, dug up in excavating the canal near the village of Sigales; but, as two or three travellers, all credible persons, had already been at the pains of riding two good Spanish leagues to behold this Castilian of old times, who had so far outgrown the ordinary standard,—being, at least, twenty feet high,—and found nothing but a few odd-shaped stones, which a learned and patriotic apothecary had metamorphosed, for the advantage of his village, into shin-bones and skull, we declined this excursion, and confined our curiosity to humbler objects.

The next best things,—if we declined the giant,—were the public promenades, and the churches. Of the former, which are three in number, two without

the walls and one within, no great deal need be said. They are carried along the banks of the Pisuerga and Esgueva, and furnished with seats and, in part, with trees, under which the men may enjoy their cigars, and the women such gossip as a country town can supply.

There is, of course, no lack of churches, in some of which are found productions of art of great merit, chiefly by native artists. In the church of Las Augustias, which has an elegant façade adorned with Corinthian columns, we found a statue of the Virgin de las Peñas, executed in a very spirited style by Hernandez; and a group, representing the Virgin, supporting the dead body of our Saviour, and close at hand the two thieves. This piece, notwithstanding the unity of the design, is by two sculptors, the thieves being by Juni, and the other figures by Hernandez. The cloister of San Benito, a spacious and tasteful edifice, contains an altar, which it is surprising should have escaped the French: it is constructed in a fantastic taste, but of precious materials, surmounted by a tabernacle of silver, and approached by gilded steps.

No one can have passed through Valladolid, since the commencement of the present war, without being struck, and indeed somewhat amused, by the awkward embryo soldiers got up here for the purpose of quelling the Carlists; this being one of the great military focuses of the liberal party. Any day in the week you may behold a small host of newly caught peasants, who, under the hands of drill-sergeants, are undergoing the process of being converted into heroes on the new promenade, where they are cuffed and pummelled into

a respect for the perpendicular by men to whom the power of inflicting blows evidently affords considerable satisfaction, and to the infinite edification of sundry white-toothed urchins, collected there by the uncouth sound of the constitutional drum.

We were amused by the appearance of the place, no less than of the recruits. It exhibits signs of the rise of a feeling, new in Spain,—a tendency towards improvement,—and much pains has been bestowed upon the promenade in order to render it agreeable to the people, by planting trees, erecting statues and fountains, and placing seats whereon they may smoke, or talk. The ultimate boundary of the enclosure consists of convents, in which a large proportion of the peasants' earnings used to find its way in other times. No doubt it gives the incipient soldier some satisfaction in the midst of his drilling to reflect, that the government for which he is about to hazard his life, promises to protect him from the old contributions levied by monks, whose dwellings he sees around, and to recognise his right to be treated henceforward as a citizen and a man.

The conscripts themselves very strongly resembled Falstaff's ragged regiment, with which, had he not got out of the habit, he would have blushed to march through Coventry. Of all countries in Europe one finds here, perhaps, the most scarecrow population. Sleeves, skirts, and bodies, of all colours, appeared to have jumped together from opposite ends of the kingdom. No man there had been measured for any part of the coat he wore. The children of Abraham

had collected them, partly, I believe, from gibbets; and, after issuing from their bags, they had undergone a palingenesia, which gave them the aspect of cast adder-skins in spring. The men, disguised by this species of masquerade dress, wanted nothing but the ethical and metaphysical elements of good soldiers. Bodies of a very respectable make they possessed; and this being the case, it has seemed wonderful to many writers that they should prove so inefficient on the field of battle; though, in reality, the military character is far more the fruit of education and political institutions than any moral quality observable in society. Give the Spaniard something worth contending for, and he will fight as he ought. Till then his valour will be fitful and uncertain, the courage of a mere animal, impelled by coarse conventional instincts; to-day powerful and vehement, to-morrow panic-stricken, feeble, the sport of accident.

The correctness of these views is proved by the frequency of desertion, and the facility with which the priests pervert the minds of men at first well intentioned towards the constitution; for it appears to be a fact acknowledged, that numbers of conscripts collected by the government, and transported at considerable expense to the neighbourhood of the seat of war, constantly go over to the other side.

Having exhausted the sights of Valladolid, many of which the reader will gladly excuse me for not inflicting on him, we took the road to Segovia. The country immediately visible on leaving the city, makes no pretensions whatever to be akin to the picturesque.

It is almost as flat as the Milanese, and would remind the traveller of that rich rice and pasture land, but for the laziness and ignorance of the inhabitants, which effectually prevent all comparison. Looking across the plain, our view was bounded by a chain of white hills, close to one of the angles of which stands the town of Simancas, near the junction of the Pisuerga with the Duero. Here, in 938, was gained that great victory over the Moors, which, according to tradition, gave rise to the Voto de Santiago. Philip the Second deposited the archives of the kingdom in the castle of Simancas, and there they remain to this time, daily open to the public till two o'clock in the afternoon. Not designing however to write the history of Spain, we did not interrupt our journey to examine them.

After traversing a hill of no great elevation, from which, looking back, we could command a good view over the plain of Valladolid, the road descended into an extremely sandy tract of forest land, where our movements were painfully slow. Our quarters, this night, were at Hornillos, a place unknown, I believe, to history and romance, but prettily situated on the river Aldaya, whose banks are dotted picturesquely with small detached woods, between which, while moving along, the eye caught glimpses of many sweet pastoral scenes.

Continuing our journey up the valley of the Eresma, through a country of agreeable aspect, we traversed the skirts of several pine forests, in one of which is a grand monastery of Bernardines. This whole district,



with exception of the woods, is rich in corn and pasturage, in vast flocks of black sheep and droves of brood mares, and the banks of the river display a beautiful canopy of verdure.

Olmedo, the town we next arrived at, is situated on an eminence, and commands an extensive view over the circumjacent plains. This place, which possesses seven parish churches, and was formerly surrounded by walls, now in ruins, has been rendered celebrated by being mentioned in Gil Blas. Its principal church contains, we were told,—for we did not stop to look at them,—several good pictures. Perhaps, however, they may owe their reputation to the indolence of travellers, who, like ourselves, have wanted courage to devote an hour to their examination. The only branch of industry that still flourishes at Olmedo is brick-making, which, however, is not sufficient to prevent the population from rapidly diminishing.

We had still, according to Diego, eleven leagues of road to get over before we could reach Segovia; and the country to be traversed he would, though highly patriotic, acknowledge a man had better pass over asleep than awake. There was nothing to see, nothing to admire, and, peradventure, nothing to eat. But this, after all, was nothing new in Spain; and we preferred keeping awake, as long as the dreamy motion of his mules would permit, to see what sort of country a Spaniard would confess to be bad in his native land. For our part, we found it much better than many other tracts that bear a superior character; and learned, on entering New Castile, to look back even

upon this part of our journey as picturesque and interesting, compared with the threadbare deserts by which we were there surrounded.

No doubt the country is extremely sandy and open, but from time to time, more particularly in the vicinity of the rivers, the road lay through unextensive pine forests, which, at least, kept up the appearance of verdure. Signs too of much greater fertility than is to be found in New Castile on every side meet the eye, in the more dense population, and frequent villages filled with rude plenty. In other respects, there certainly was very little on this road that could be termed remarkable. We observed, however, at Villa de Santa Cruz; that the celebrated cow's tail, in which the hostess of the posada stuck her combs,—a fact noticed by former travellers,—had not yet yielded to the march of intellect. There it still was, primitive as in the days of Sancho Panza, when, as a humorous traveller has observed, it was of such service in furnishing the barber with a false beard.

In spite, however, of the cow's tail, and the delectable reminiscences it awakened, it must be confessed that the road to Segovia did really seem tedious. It was in vain that we invoked the shade of Sancho, and of that other inimitable companion, Gil Blas; all we could do sufficed not to put to flight the ennui caused by the monotony of nature. At length, when our patience was nearly at the last gasp, Diego exclaimed that he could discover Segovia in the distance; and looking in the direction in which he pointed, we saw the towers of the castle and the spires of the cathedral.

This was enough to refresh our imagination. We forgot the fatigues of the way, the slowness of the perverse mules, the treeless, dull, unvivified landscape, as in fancy we listened to the prisoner in the tower who amused himself in his solitude with scraps of verse:—"Alas! a year of pleasure passes like a fleeting breeze; but a moment of misfortune seems an age of pain!"

Ay de mi! un año felice  
 Parece un soplo ligero;  
 Però sin dicha un instante  
 Es un siglo de tormento.

But the approach to Segovia was no doubt intended, by those good old road-makers who contrived it, to serve as a substitute for purgatory. From the clearness of the view you obtain of the church-spires, &c., you imagine your journey completed, and your mustachios within reach of stews and garlic. But you are mistaken. The labyrinth of Dædalus is before you. One minute the old castle, frowning on the crest of a rugged precipice, appears on the left; anon it is in front, then on the right; and, presently, whisk round goes the road, and you seem trudging sullenly back towards Olmedo. Nature, however, has put on an agreeable aspect; for, in steering onward, you plunge into a sweet valley, which a crooked brook runs sportively through, and clothes with verdure. Here, if landscapes have any power to soothe the pangs of hunger, the traveller may meet with something to admire; but, for our part, we will candidly allow that the apparition of a good omelette, or stew, or mine

host's roasted cat,\* would have proved more than a match for any scene in Christendom. In this humour, sulky and savage as Scotchmen before breakfast, we at length found our way into Segovia, and appeased our appetite with a ragout, which we pronounced the most delicious we had ever eaten.

Indeed it was not till we had dined, taken our siesta, and rambled a little way from the town, that we noticed the broken, uneven summit we had ascended on which it is built,—such had been the one absorbing topic of our morning's fast. It now scarcely wore so wild and gloomy a look as on our approach; but we found the streets narrow, crooked, and dirty, lined with miserable wooden houses, which do not appear to have improved by their vicinity to a great cloth manufactory,—itself by no means flourishing. But the people claim the merit of being the best feeders of sheep, and shearers of the finest wool,—a claim not easy to establish; for as the flocks, as we shall show, are wholly beyond the operation of the vagrant act, wandering by ancient prescription, and not bred in *their* domain, it is difficult to see on what ground the Segovians should boast pre-eminence in this respect.

\* Alluding to a passage in the history of Lazarillo de Tormes, written by Mendoza, from whom the identical cat was stolen by Le Sage, who makes his host present it in lieu of game to that prince of pleasant vagabonds—the renowned Gil Blas.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SEGOVIA.

Antiquities of Segovia — Hercules — Form of the City — the Eresma and the Clamores — the Roman Aqueduct — Scenery about Segovia — Urban Groupes — Romans and Spaniards — A Digression on Morals — Anecdote — Defence of auricular Confession — the Alcazar — the Prisoner in Gil Blas — Effigies of Kings — Musulman Prisoners — the Mint — Merino Sheep — Effect of Climate on Wool — Migratory Flocks — Shawl Goats — Wandering Shepherds — the Mesta — Origin and Regulations — Pastoral Life — Real and Poetical — Bucolics of Spain.

SPANISH antiquarians love to lose themselves in the darkness of remote ages in search of the founder of a city; and those who have undertaken in this way to render Segovia illustrious, are satisfied with nothing less than Hercules. Others, imagining themselves possessed of more precise information, contradict this opinion; but without giving us another founder half so good as Hercules, who may, in fact, have pitched his tent—if he possessed such a convenience—somewhere near this spot, when he was beating up Geryon's quarters. However,

“ Non nostra est tantas componere lites !”

So we leave the question to Don Galeano, who, when he shall have pacified Spain, and shown how much

better a queen is than a republic, may amuse himself with shivering a steel pen for or against the son of Alcmena.

Strabo, who is at least as fanciful as he is philosophical, compares the whole Peninsula to an ox-hide,—*ἔοικε γὰρ βύρση κατὰ μὲν μῆκος ἀπὸ τῆς ἐσπέρας ἐπὶ τὴν ἑω*,—and they who pursue the same thread of resemblances have discovered that Segovia is very much like a ship. There is some foundation for the idea. Perched like an ancient galley upon a vast rock, with its stern eastward and its prow pointing towards the west, it occupies a low ridge between two hollows, and seems to be only waiting for sufficient water to right itself, and float down the valley. In each of the deep ravines that flank the city there is a stream; in one the Eresma, in the other the Clamores, which have their confluence a little to the north of Segovia. The former river, which is spanned by five handsome bridges, and has its banks clothed with wood, formerly bore the name of Arava, whence the inhabitants of these valleys were of old denominated Arevaci.

There is some excuse for one's ideas running, at Segovia, into an antiquarian channel, its chief claim to be noticed by a traveller consisting in that rare relic of the old world, which enables its citizens to enjoy their coffee and lemonade, without every morning performing a pilgrimage to the Eresma or Clamores for wherewith to make it:—I mean the aqueduct. It commences in the hills near the road from St. Ildefonso, and runs nearly parallel with it a considerable way through the suburbs. At first the arches are, of

  
JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA



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Drawn by David Roberts.

course, low ; but, as it proceeds farther and farther from the spring, they assume gradually a loftier span, until, in the Plaza del Azogueio, at the foot of the walls, they tower to above a hundred feet in height. Here, indeed, the architect's admirable taste suggested the propriety of a double tier of arches one above the other, to obviate even the appearance of weakness which the work might otherwise have put on. And how beautiful it now appears, more particularly from the old cross near the bridge at the northern entrance to the city, while the shadows of morning from the old tower and cypress-crested hill on the east wrap the bases of the piers in shadow, and give them the look of springing up out of water, or the mists of a mirage. Just peeping above its summit, we discover the spires of the churches, while, excepting one cluster of dwellings near the reservoir, the whole city lies overspanned and commanded by its proud line of arches, extending to the length of two thousand four hundred feet.

The country visible above the aqueduct, over which, as we gazed, the wind was wafting slight volumes of smoke from the warm and comfortable kitchen of some Segovian alderman, would have defied Claude to make a landscape out of it. Nothing short of poetry could cast the mantle of romance over its weather-beaten, brown, unsightly, visage ; lofty without grandeur, sufficiently undulating to lose the character of a table-land, too wide, sprawling, unambitious to be a mountain. A thunder-storm, with a sufficiency of forked lightning, and masses of black clouds piled up

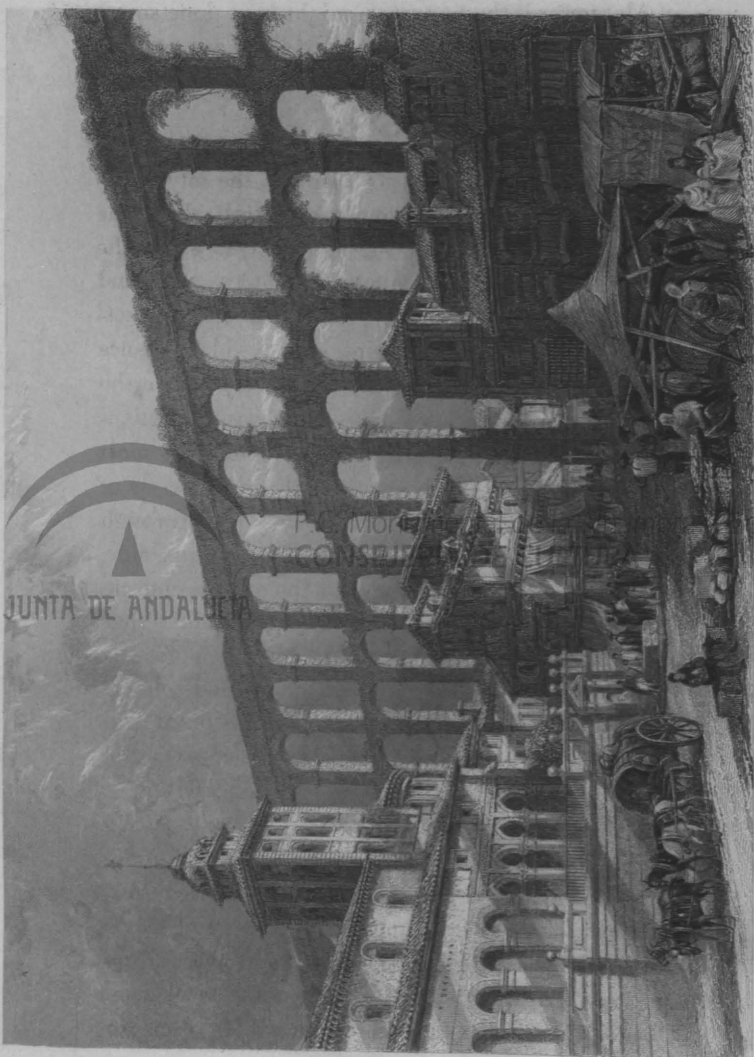


in Alps towards the empyrean, might have done something to banish its insipidity; but there was nothing but placid sunshine, and one cannot enjoy all kinds of good things at once.

If we would have pictures, they must be domestic ones, and we must search for them in the city. We therefore descended from our rocky stroll along the hill-sides to the foot of the aqueduct, to study the characteristic groupes composed of mules, sleek and wanton, ragged Spaniards, chattering old market-women, boys, and nondescript idlers, which chance congregates in that part of the town every day in the year. One point in this long sweep of beauty particularly struck us, and the artist has represented its most striking phasis. It is where one of the great streets of Segovia, running from south to north, passes through two arches under the aqueduct, and has on one side, a cluster of private dwellings, on the other a church, where in a short piazza supported on horse-shoe arches, we see manifest traces of the Moor.

It is easy to perceive in the modern and ancient structures the difference between the Spaniard and the Roman. The works of the former, frail, uncouth, fantastic as his own character, appear designed but to house for a brief space the dwarf-minded subjects of a tottering monarchy; those of the latter, erected under a prince who appeared but the chief of the republic, seem formed, in their simple and severe grandeur, to wrestle for ever with the elements. And should the aqueduct perish, and the city along with it for lack of water, the municipal government will be alone to

ROBERT TAYLOR & CO.



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GREAT ROMAN AQUEDUCT AT SEGOVIA.

Drawn by David Roberts.


  
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blame. Creeping plants, climbing about its arches, twisting themselves about the piers, and drooping beautifully from the moist parapet above, improve, no doubt, the picturesque features of this remnant of the taste of republican Rome, but they injure while they adorn. For the roots, insinuating themselves between the stones, whither they will be followed by air and moisture, introduce the first principles of decay, and, if not in time removed, will end by bringing this splendid monument to the ground.

Meanwhile, however, the Segovian sips the cool water it conveys to him, and cares not a farthing for posterity, upon the good old consideration that posterity has never cared for him. He might, no doubt, add, "and never will care!" For posterity, whatever may be the flattering unction which we lay to our souls, will just remember and bless those, and those only, who, during their lives, have been careful to leave behind them something to promote the comfort, amusement, or instruction of said posterity.

But Spain is the worst place in the world to moralize in,—except upon the principle of *lucus a non lucendo*; for it has no morality, or so very little as not to be worth mentioning. They do not govern themselves here by the laws of ethics, but by custom, or according to the rules they can suck out of the pith of old proverbs, mostly antediluvian, and just suited to the world as it existed before the flood. The great get their morality from court, and the people get their morality from the great; from which a tolerably good idea may be formed of the progress of the virtues

in Spain. A late facetious and very profound traveller, seems to be of opinion that a sound practical code of ethics is disseminated from the confessional; in proof of which he tells a single anecdote, which admitting it to be true; proves nothing beyond this,—that the curate in question happened to be an honest man.

The story is somewhat long, but as it is connected with an important subject, we will beg leave to listen, with the reader, while the good-natured traveller repeats it again,—for it must be a standard anecdote in his common-place book. “At the same moment that the city (Valladolid) broke full upon our view, we came in sight of a very remarkable object, placed at the junction of the high road to Madrid with that by which we were approaching. It was the right arm of a man nailed to the extremity of a tall post, which had been removed from the body a little above the shoulder, bringing away part of it. It was shrivelled by exposure to the weather, so as to lose something of its original size, and the colour had become livid and sallow. The hand, the skin of which resembled a glove, grasped the hilt of a dagger, the arm being raised and contracted, as if to deal a death-blow. This in some measure set forth the cause of this horrid exposure, which was farther explained to me by a shepherd, who happened to pass with his flock, and whose peaceful occupation gave him a right to express becoming horror at the crimes which the owner of that hand had committed. He had been a robber, and had murdered many of his fellow-men; but that

would not have been enough to entitle him to such a distinction, or indeed, to death at all. He had raised the sacrilegious hand, now exposed to detestation, against a minister of God. The robber had gone to confess himself to the curate of a village in the neighbourhood of Valladolid, who, being shocked at the recital of so many and such atrocious crimes, refused absolution entirely, or proposed such conditions of penance as the sinner was unwilling to fulfil. In a fit of rage he stabbed the uncomplying curate to the heart.

“Such an offence excited universal horror; the murderer was pursued, taken, convicted, and condemned, and the full rigour of the law adjudged to him. He was therefore quartered, and his limbs distributed to be thus exhibited in the most exposed situation, as an example of terror to such as might hereafter be tempted to raise an impious hand against a priest. Pepe told me that he had seen the limb thus exposed, at each successive visit he had made to Valladolid during the last five months. The friar, who seemed to be highly delighted with the way the robber’s crime had been requited to him, remarked, that the limbs must all be taken down and collected for Christian burial before Palm Sunday, as no exhibition of that sort could continue during the Holy Week.

“The conscientious denial of absolution on the part of the murdered curate, may serve as an answer of no little force to such fanatical revilers of the Catholic church, as denounce confession as a fosterer of crime.”

Now, if the reader considers this an answer to such

as regard auricular confession unfavourable to morality, all that can be said is, that we most vehemently differ from him. In our opinion it is no answer to any thing. On the contrary, it would appear that the murderer, well acquainted with the practice of his church, and the general leniency of ministers, fully expected absolution, and, up till then, had probably met with no one who refused it to him. At finding a curate of impracticable conscience—such as he had probably never met before,—he was therefore doubly enraged, and consummated the guilt which brought him to tardy punishment.—But this is running a long way from Segovia and the aqueduct.

This great public work, though neglected and disfigured, continues to effect the purpose for which it was erected, and, after a lapse of about eighteen hundred years, is said to leak in no part of its extent. It is built of rough freestone. The piers, or pillars, on which the water-course rests, are six feet eleven inches wide in front, and nine feet four inches deep. They have also,—and this is the worst part of the design,—something like a cornice projecting at various heights from the shaft. The effect would have been nobler had they sprung from a low pedestal up to the turn of the arch, apparently in one unbroken piece. There is a sort of deep torus above, where the casing seems slightly to project over the perpendicular. No cement has been used in its erection.

But there are in Segovia other things besides the aqueduct which merit attention from the traveller; and among these the principal, undoubtedly, is the Alcazar,



*Drawn by David Roberts.*

*Engraved by J. Redway.*

ALCAZAR AT SEGOVIA.

Printed by A. Day.

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or Castle, which is situated in one of the finest possible positions, on a rock commanding an extensive view of the open country. This, in fact, is the prospect of which Don Andrea de Tordesillas gives Gil Blas so flattering an account on the first day of his imprisonment. "You will see from your window," says he, "the flowery banks of the Eresma, and the delightful valley which extends from the feet of the mountains that separate the two Castiles as far as Coca. I know that at first you will not be very sensible of such a fine prospect; but when the violence of your grief shall be mellowed by time into a soft melancholy, you will take pleasure in making an excursion with your eyes over such agreeable objects." Honest Gil, indeed, formed a different opinion of the landscape; but this, probably, was because, as he himself conjectures, he had not arrived at that sweet melancholy which dresses up objects in its own way. "I got up to air my room," says he, "by opening the window, and surveyed the country of which I remembered Mr. Keeper had given such a fine description. But I could find nothing to justify what he said; the Eresma, which I imagined was at least equal to the Tagus, appeared to be no more than a rivulet, its flowery banks were bedecked with the nettle and thistle only, and the pretended delightful valley presented nothing, to my view, but lands for the most part barren and uncultivated."

But this was turning round the tapestry, to look at the wrong side; for, in fact, the Eresma, which washes the foot of the precipice, is a very pretty stream, and the whole city, extended on either hand along the



brow of the hill, appears magnificent, as viewed from hence. The declivity, too, is woody, and the whole sweep of the river's banks presents a fine succession of pastoral landscapes, while the background is composed of the snowy mountains and vast gloomy forests of St. Ildefonso. Before the great outward tower, towards the town, there is a spacious court celebrated by Le Sage, who has rendered the Alcazar a classic building throughout Europe. The remainder of the edifice forms an antique palace, seldom inhabited but by state-prisoners since the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, who thought far more favourably of the prospect than Gil Blas, and spent much of their time here. We still find several superb halls in the castle, adorned in a half barbarous taste with a profusion of gilding. Ranged along the cornice of the great saloon are the effigies of all the kings of Spain, seated in state; which must doubtless be likenesses, as no artist's imagination could have given birth to such a series of ill-looking elfs.

Formerly, when Spain had a navy on the Mediterranean which could cope with the Barbary pirates, or make a show of doing so, and bring home a few Musulman prisoners to gratify the orthodox hatred of the people against all nations of a different creed, one court of this ancient palace was appropriated as a prison to a number of Algerine *reis*, or ship-captains, whose crews were kept hard at work in the arsenal of Carthagená. These captives constituted a chief part of the attraction of the Alcazar, and are so associated with the idea of it, that, though they are no longer to

be seen, we must beg the reader's permission to describe, in the words of a former traveller, what manner of men they were.

“ These Turks,” says a graphic and vigorous writer, “ are very handsome, portly figures, with clean looks and well-combed beards : they are well treated and left to themselves. Most of their time is spent in conversation, walking up and down a long gallery, smoking, and playing at chess, except when they go down at stated hours to fetch water for their own use. Confinement apart, their lives pass in ease and tranquillity. As soon as they saw us walking about the court, they immediately knew us to be Englishmen, most of them having been several times at Gibraltar, and being well acquainted with the British character of face: it being the hour for fetching water, and the door open, they flocked about us with great demonstrations of joy, and tears of pleasure starting into every eye. They kissed our hands, and called us ‘ Ingles, bueno bueno amigos,’ over and over again, with difficulty prevailing upon themselves to leave us to go about their work at the well. My man, by our orders, followed one of the principal men among them, and in *linguá Franca*, which indeed is the common jumble of tongues he made use of at all times, gave him an account of the Spanish defeat before Algiers. They had heard of the preparations for the expedition, and had been much cast down with the thoughts of it, but had begun to obtain some hopes of a miscarriage, as many months had elapsed since they knew of the departure of the fleet, and not

a syllable concerning its success had dropped from any of their guards. The venerable old Musulman raised his hands to heaven, and seemed to look upon the pains and irksomeness of slavery to be more than repaid by the exquisite sensations he enjoyed in this happy moment. When his informant added that the Algerines had lost a great number of camels, the Turk turned upon him with a 'What talk ye to me of camels? Had they killed thousands of them, there would still remain enough, and the beasts themselves must be proud of dying to save their country.' After shaking them by the hand, and leaving a present to buy tobacco, we took our leave of our *allies*, who followed us down the portico with longing eyes and a thousand benedictions; which, if their prophet has any jurisdiction over the roads, will preserve us from over-turns and broken limbs."

Immediately below the Alcazar is the mint, a spacious building, erected in the fifteenth century by Henry the Fourth, and in great part rebuilt by Philip the Second. At this most ancient place of coinage in the kingdom, the mint formerly produced gold and silver; but of late years copper only—brought hither from the mine of Rio Tinto near Seville—has been coined here. At present, I believe, the works are seldom put in requisition, though the hydraulic engines, by means of which the operations of the mint were carried on, still exist. They are supplied with water from the Eresma; and strangers may see them by making application to the proper authorities.

An opinion has long prevailed, though called in

question by some writers, that the country round Segovia is the best adapted of any in the kingdom for the feeding of the celebrated merino sheep. Not having examined all the down and undulating open districts in Spain, I am not prepared to support or contradict this opinion; but of this I am well convinced, that these high, bare, and little fertile lands, not unlike the great downs of Sussex between Brighton and Steyning, are admirably well calculated for sheep-feeding. The grass in this, and similar districts, is peculiarly fine, and free from weeds and all admixture of coarse rank plants, which sheep abhor. It is short, also, and interspersed with several kinds of diminutive aromatics, among which I particularly noticed the wild thyme, whose fragrance, when trodden upon, fills the atmosphere.\* According to the most authentic accounts, the shawl goats of Tibet thrive in their own country upon downs exactly like these; where they might probably be more advantageously introduced than on the French *landes*, or any other district in Europe. In the rich pastures of northern India and Affghanistan,—or at least in Kashmér,—their hair becomes coarse and long, and the animal itself degenerates, as it has already, I

\* Swinburne, generally a judicious and well-informed traveller, considers the prejudice in favour of the Segovian downs to be altogether unfounded; since, according to him, the sheep owe whatever superiority they possess to their migratory habits. But he had not been careful, while at Segovia, to inform himself correctly on this point; for the flocks in this part of the country, as well as in several districts of Aragon and Estremadura, have always been stationary.

believe, in France. But though the sun of Segovia, and even its general climate, might prove less genial than those of Tibet, the shawl goat would undoubtedly, I think, naturalize more rapidly here than any where else west of the Indus, with the exception, perhaps, of the mountains of the Druzes in Lebanon.

To return, however, to the Spanish sheep. In Biscay, and the Asturias, the breed is exceedingly diminutive, and its condition generally so bad that, during our wars in the Peninsula, the common soldiers often refused to take a whole sheep as an equivalent for nine pounds of mutton. These are the animals which the black eagle of the Pyrenees so frequently pounces upon, and bears off to his young. He would find a sheep of the ordinary breed, or even of the merino, somewhat too weighty.

It is a fact well known to gourmands, that the flesh of wild animals is much sweeter than that of tame ones of the same species, which arises from two causes: the superior exercise, and the greater variety of food within the reach of the former. Now, whatever improves the flavour of the flesh, must at the same time improve the health, and with it the coating of the animal; a truth which possibly may have been early discovered by the shepherds or great sheep-owners of Spain, where the production of fine wool has been from very remote times an object of great solicitude to those connected with rural economy.—Hence the institution of the *mesta*,\* which Laborde

\* Laborde, however, attributes it to accident, which is often indeed the mother of useful inventions.

has explained with the greatest correctness to mean, in its general acceptation, a mixture of two or more sorts of grain, equivalent to the English word *maslin*, and by extension, the uniting of numerous flocks belonging to different proprietors into one collective body, which does not remain stationary in any particular district, but migrates with the seasons to several parts of the kingdom.

By these means the sheep enjoy something like the freedom of the wild state, together with that constant change in their food and air, which, when not too violent, is beneficial to all animals. Something also is attributed to their being kept constantly in the open air; but Laborde, generally a sensible and cautious writer, seems strongly inclined, on the strength of a few imperfect experiments, to call the truth of this opinion in question. He doubtless had not sufficiently reflected on the peculiarities of soil and climate in those cantons, where the wool of the stationary sheep is equal to that of the migratory ones; or he would have been convinced that, although the herbage of some small districts, such for example as that of *Benasqua* and of the *Partido d'Albarrazin*, may nourish the finest wool, all the merinos in Spain could not be fed in them, and would certainly degenerate if made stationary elsewhere. Change only, and that constant and properly regulated, can ever keep up the fineness of the wool; and it is therefore to be hoped that, with certain limitations imperatively called for, the mesta will be still continued in Spain.

The society, or association, to which the travelling

flocks belong, consists of the nobles, ecclesiastics, and other rich proprietors, whose united sheep are called *merinos*, or *tras humantes*. By some, the origin of the custom has been referred to that age in which the great plague ravaged Spain, and carried off two-thirds of its population; upon which, the few persons who survived took possession of the unowned lands, but not being able to bring them into cultivation, converted the greater portion into pasturage. What was then the effect of a national calamity, in the end became itself the cause of much greater evil, perpetuating, long after the necessity for it had ceased, the pastoral life in a large portion of the country, where the sheep may literally be said to have eaten up the peasantry and the poor. This is particularly the case in Estremadura, and the kingdom of Leon, where people possess immense grazing estates without any title to them; a practice which calls loudly for an agrarian law, to regulate the amount to which persons shall be allowed to plunder the community.

The term *mesta*, as I have already observed, signifies an united flock belonging to many proprietors, which in general consists of about ten thousand sheep, though sometimes the number is far greater. Over each of the small separate flocks, the union of which constitutes the *mesta*, is placed an officer called a *mayoral*, who not only keeps watch over the shepherds and directs their movements, but is also required to be possessed of considerable experience in the management of sheep, as with him rests the choice of pasturage, and the treatment of such diseases as

these animals are liable to. His salary is considerable, and he is allowed a horse to ride on, with fifty subordinate shepherds, divided into four classes, to each man of whom, in addition to their wages, which vary from one pound eleven shillings to eight shillings per month, a daily ration of two pounds of bread is regularly allowed. A small sum, under the name of travelling expenses, is presented to each shepherd on the departure and return of the mesta, besides the privilege of keeping a few goats and sheep, which he may call his own, but can make no use of, since the wool and hair belong to the sheep-owners, and he can neither sell nor remove them. All the advantage he derives from them appears to be the milk.

The number of persons employed in attending these migratory flocks is supposed to amount, in the whole kingdom, to upwards of fifty thousand; but since the number of the flocks has very greatly varied at different times, the same, no doubt, must be said of the shepherds. In the sixteenth century the migratory sheep are said to have amounted to seven millions; but, about the beginning of the next century, in the reign of Philip the Third, they had decreased to about two millions and a half. From some cause or another, the number was again greatly augmented towards the close of that century, when they amounted to four millions. One hundred years later they were estimated at five millions; and at present perhaps, out of the nineteen millions of sheep existing in Spain, something less than a third may be migratory.

Having passed the winter in the plains of Estrema-



dura, Leon, Old and New Castile, and Andalusia, the flocks are put in motion about the end of April or the beginning of May, taking their route towards the mountains, and in general moving as far north as Aragon, Navarre, and Biscay. Many large flocks are pastured in the mountains about Segovia, Soria, and Buytrago, where it is supposed that the migratory sheep could not endure the cold of winter, though the native breeds stand it extremely well. During their sojourn in the mountains, the sheep have a quantity of salt frequently administered to them, as medicine, to counteract the effects of the herbage they there meet with. The salt being distributed over large flat stones, the sheep are driven thither, and suffered to eat what quantity they please; but on these days care is taken that they do not graze on calcareous soils, but on argillaceous, where they appear to feed with the eagerness of a Madrid gourmand. Towards the close of July, the ewes and rams, hitherto kept apart, are allowed to be together. In the course of September the backs and loins of the sheep are rubbed with ruddle dissolved in water, a practice for which different reasons have been assigned, none perhaps at all approaching the true one; some imagining that the ochre, blending with the oily matter of the fleece, performs the same office as the oil distributed by birds over their feathers at the approach of rain, turning off and protecting them from the wet; while others conceive the earth designed to absorb the superabundant perspiration, and thus prevent the wool from becoming coarse and harsh.

Towards the close of September, the temperature of the mountains being now considered too cool and inclement, the flocks are once more put in motion, and turning their faces southward, descend into the low country, and spread themselves over the warm plains of Estramadura, Andalusia, and Leon. A similar practice prevailed in old Greece, where much greater care was taken to protect the fine-fleeced sheep from the weather, from thorns, dirt, &c.

In most cases, the migratory flocks are conducted to the same pastures where they had grazed the preceding winter, and where the greater number of them had been yeaned. The vast flocks of Central Asia, and the Arabian Peninsula are, of course, migratory, like their owners; and, unless the conjecture of the native writers, given above, can be supported on better authority than has hitherto been adduced, I should certainly be inclined to attribute the migratory habits of the Spanish shepherds to ideas and habits introduced by the Arabs.

In the month of May, during their journey towards the mountains, the operation of sheep-shearing takes place. This, in Spain, is a business of immense importance, from the large scale on which it is conducted, and the ceremonies which precede and attend it. Among them it holds the same rank as the harvest or vintage in other countries; and the shepherds, of course, have an interest in religiously preserving the ancient customs, in other respects so congenial with the season of the year. The shearing is carried on in spacious buildings, called *esquileos*, capable of con-

taining flocks of from fifty to sixty thousand. Feasts, songs, and a kind of Saturnalian revels, in which both proprietors and shepherds join, accompany the proceedings; and none seem serious excepting the sheep, that from the noise around them appear to entertain strong apprehensions of being eaten, as Spaniards seldom grow obstreporous but when they are going to dinner, or to dispatch an enemy.

The workmen engaged in this pastoral occupation, which is very offensive though it tells very well in poetry, are divided into a number of classes, each of which vindicates to itself some particular branch of the business. One thousand ewes afford employment to about one hundred and twenty-five persons; while the same number of wethers having, to use the shepherd's own phrase, "more of the devil in them," require to be kept in order by at least two hundred men. Each animal yields three, or, according to some reports, four kinds of wool, more or less fine, the difference depending on the part of the body from which it is taken. The females, as among mankind, are most finely clad; and their clothing, moreover, is most scanty, the fleeces of three wethers being equal in weight to those of five ewes, whose whole coat does not exceed five pounds.

The sheep having been properly robbed of their warm jackets, the wool is collected in bales, and either conveyed to the several sea-ports for exporting, or, especially if designed for native use, to certain places in Castile called washing-stations. Of these, one of the most considerable in the kingdom is in

the neighbourhood of this city; but our visit having been made in autumn, the account I give rests on the authority of others. The wool is transported hither in flocks or clotted tufts, just as severed from the sheep, in which state it is delivered to the *apartadores*, who immediately make a separation of the wools of different qualities. Practice has conferred upon these men so quick a perception, that they will at first sight decide from what part of the body any flock of wool has been cut. When the division has been made, the several kinds are spread upon hurdles to dry, and previous to their being washed they are again exposed, in a scattered state, to the sun and air, and also well beaten, to dislodge all such foreign particles as may adhere to them. When thoroughly washed and cleansed from all impurity, a separation again takes place; and that which is clotted with dirt, and judged unfit to be retained among the wools of better quality, is carefully set aside, and having been sold, the produce is appropriated to the very pious purpose of having masses chaunted for the souls of the dead. The motive is commendable, but the proceeds might doubtless be better employed, were it only in buying a few changes of clean linen for some of her Catholic majesty's shirtless subjects. That some change in the system is required no one can doubt; but how far the regulations of the *mesta* may yet be modified and improved, remains to be seen.

Whatever is carried on during a number of successive centuries, must of necessity be regulated by certain rules and customs. This is the case with the migra-

tions of the mesta ; and the reader will perceive, from the spirit of those ordinances, how completely the interests of the many are sacrificed to those of the few. These aristocratic sheep, on the way to their villas on the mountains, or in returning back to winter quarters, have the right to pass unmolested over the pastures and commons belonging to the villages situated on their road ; and, like a cloud of locusts, too frequently make bare the landscape as far as their ravages extend. They are not, indeed, allowed to roam at large, like so many bulls of Siva, over the cultivated lands ; nevertheless, the proprietors of all such estates as lie in their way are constrained to leave for them a path of about eighty or ninety yards in breadth. As might be supposed, the rate of their movements varies according to circumstances. In traversing such pastures as they are permitted to denude entirely, they rarely perform more than five or six miles per day ; but in the intermediate spaces, where they must generally march fasting, they are said sometimes to walk full seventeen miles in that time. The whole extent of their journey, which they complete in about five weeks, may be estimated at between five and six hundred miles.

It is not of course to be supposed that in the rich plains, where these vagrant flocks pass the winter, they are allowed to feed gratis, as on the steppes of Tartary, or oases of the Arabian deserts. But, though some price is paid, the landed proprietors have no voice in fixing it, as the sheep, in general, belong to the nobles, clergy, and their connexions, in whom this oppressive

custom is still recognised. Some absurd enactments, called the "Laws of the Mesta," have from time to time been passed, as circumstances have stuck their spurs into the flanks of Spain's legislative genius; but it is questionable whether Lucretius's god, Chance, would not have regulated matters more wisely. For those "laws" were originally enacted by the persons most interested in perpetuating abuses,—that is, the proprietors of the flocks; notwithstanding which they received the sanction of many kings of Spain, having been first approved and confirmed by Charles in 1544.

To administer these "laws," which do great credit to the high and chivalrous character of Spain, a particular tribunal, called the "Honourable Council of the Mesta," has been established. This court, over which a member of the great council of Castile presides, consists of four judges, denominated *alcaldes mayores entregadores*, each of whom has an *exchequer*, with an *alguasil mayor*, or escheator. All the privileges and rights of the mesta are under the jurisdiction of this court, which levies upon the shepherds and their flocks parcentage, pontage, and other tolls; settle such Arcadian disputes and quarrels as may arise among the shepherds; regulate the route which the flocks are to take in their journey to and from the mountains; determine whatever occurs on the passage; in short, manage despotically the whole concerns of the mesta. But as they are not always within reach, a power of commitment has been entrusted to the flock-proprietors, and even to the shepherds themselves; a power which it was easy to foresee they

would certainly abuse. For, not only do they decide in what concerns the members of their own body, which might perhaps be considered quite sufficient, they have the pleasant privilege of citing before the mesta persons of all ranks and conditions, under pretence that, directly or indirectly, they are connected with the craft and mystery of sheep-feeding.

Dull and unintellectual as the Spanish nation is, there still exists throughout the country a feeling, which, being expressed, may be *called* public opinion, decidedly hostile to this impolitic institution, as it at present exists, which not only inflicts severe injuries on private individuals, but literally retards the progress of the whole country in the career of agricultural improvement. In the first place it withdraws from the rural population at least fifty thousand men; a number which, in a retrograding population like that of Spain, where even the principle of life is comparatively inactive, must be seriously felt. A large portion of the best land in the kingdom is converted into pasture ground, to the utter impoverishment of several provinces, where large numbers of the inhabitants are cut off from the employments which agriculture would furnish, and from those necessities of life which it would supply. Incalculable damage, moreover, is done to all those lands which are situated in the vicinity of the routes taken by the mesta; for, to say nothing of the sheep themselves, is it probable that fifty thousand sturdy vagabonds, such as are the shepherds, should pass through a country without committing all kinds of iniquities.

particularly when they are well aware they may do so with impunity? The persons suffering from these abuses have repeatedly presented their complaints and addresses "at the foot of the throne;" but without any favourable result.

From the above account one inference may be drawn, which, if the reader be of our way of thinking, will be regarded almost as important as a statement of the price of wool: viz. it will be evident that Spanish authors have it in their power to paint pastoral manners from the life, if they can only prevail upon themselves to escape from their day-dreams in the salons of Madrid, and spend a month or two among the wandering shepherds of the mesta. In general, it must be confessed, pastorals, whether in verse or prose, are the dullest of all earthly compositions. A plodding unimaginative author sets two or three characters, insipid as himself, about describing their slavish employments, or mawkish passions. A few mythological allusions to the more obvious fables of antiquity,—for a slight sprinkling of heathenisms is deemed essential to pastoral; a happy swain boasting of the favours of his mistress; or a lack-a-daisical fop dying because Phyllis "gives the preference" to some other shepherd: such are his materials, and the handling is generally worthy of them. But in Spain, the pastoral poet, as we have observed, has no excuse for falling into errors of this kind. It is easy for him to become an eye-witness of the scheme of life generally prevalent among shepherds; and long and extensive may be his experience before he discovers any



thing resembling the Arcadian simplicity, innocence, constancy, sentimentality, &c. &c. which look so enchanting in the pages of Florian, and other imaginary sheep-feeders.

Theocritus, it is well known, is the only pastoral poet who does not set one to sleep. And the reason is plain. He describes a shepherd's life,—or a herdsman's or goatherd's life,—just as he found it, and as it every where is to this day, free from the great disturbing passions,—from all, at least, except one,—but still sufficiently ruffled by the usual feelings of our nature, and not of such milk-white purity as, for the credit of the sheep who set them so praiseworthy an example, we might perhaps expect to find it. He enters with admirable tact into their feelings and amusements, exhibits in their true colours the hopes and fears, the vexations, petty jealousies, sorrows, vicissitudes, defeats, that disturb their obscure career, and at the same time reveals, in all their quiet beauty, the natural pleasures which fortune casts in the balance against their misadventures. Painted in this way, a country life, like a rustic landscape, may be invested with singular charms, more particularly for those, who, in the depths of their heart, sigh for the serenity of solitude, but by circumstances are perpetually confined within the dusty circle of business. Hence, in a great measure, the charms of Wordsworth's verse. He looks at the lakes and mountains for us, and translates into poetry the feelings we should all more or less experience, though we might be much less able to express them.

Cervantes, with something of the modern leaning towards sentimentality, exhibits much of the vigour and truth to nature of Theocritus in his account of Don Quixote's brief sojourn among the goatherds. But in this picture there is a beauty which every reader of course feels, without perhaps perceiving from what combination it arises. The knight, whose mind is stored with poetical and classical associations, beholds in the rude hinds around him mementoes of the golden age; of that time when there was neither *mesta* nor courtier in Spain, nor inclosures, nor friar, nor inquisition. His fancy colours every thing he sees with romantic and poetical hues. He walks on the clouds. For him, whatever the poets have feigned is realized to the letter. The goatherds, rough and ignorant, but hospitable, comprehend nothing of all this; and the gross and sensual Sancho, who is an exact representative of a good sort of man, understands still less than the goatherds. From these contrasts arises a picture inimitable in its kind, of what however is yet only the bright side of Spanish pastoral life; for the wrangling, cheating, insolent, thievish servants of the *mesta*, would make but a poor figure by the side of the Don's primitive entertainers.

But the reader who has already made himself familiar with the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, will not pardon me if I content myself with merely alluding to this exquisite picture. He would be glad to look at it once more; for, like morning or sunset, the truly beautiful will bear to be contemplated every day, and

seem perpetually to improve upon acquaintance. And if there be any one to whom it is new, I am in no apprehension of his censure for making him acquainted with it; so, without further ceremony, let us take up the Don just as he is entering upon this peaceful adventure:—

“He received a hearty welcome from the goatherds; and Sancho having, as well as he could, accommodated Rosinante and his ass, was attracted by the odour that issued from some pieces of goat’s flesh that were boiling in a kettle; but though he longed very much at that instant to see if it was time to transfer them from the kettle to the belly, he checked his curiosity, because the landlord took them from the fire, and spreading some sheep-skins upon the ground, set out their rustic table without loss of time, inviting their two guests to a share of their mess, with many expressions of good-will and hospitality. Then those who belonged to the cot, being six in number, seated themselves round the skins, having first, with their boorish ceremony, desired Don Quixote to sit down on a trough, which they had overturned for that purpose.

“The knight accepted their offer, and Sancho remained standing, to administer the cup, which was made of horn; but his master perceiving him in this attitude, ‘That thou mayst see, Sancho,’ said he, ‘the benefit which is concentrated in knight-errantry, and how near all those who exercise themselves in any sort of ministry belonging to it, are to preferment and esteem of the world, I desire thee to sit

down here by my side, in company with these worthy people; and that thou mayst be on an equal footing with me, thy natural lord and master, eating in the same dish, and drinking out of the same cup that I use; for what is said of love may be observed of knight-errantry, that it puts all things upon a level.'

"'I give you a thousand thanks,' said Sancho; 'but I must tell your worship that, provided I have plenty, I can eat as much, nay more to my satisfaction, standing on my legs, and in my own company, than if I was to sit by the side of an emperor; and if all the truth must be told, I had much rather dine by myself in a corner, though it should be upon a bit of bread and an onion, without all your niceties and ceremonies, than eat turkey-cocks at another man's table, where I am obliged to chew softly, to drink sparingly, to wipe my mouth every minute, to abstain from sneezing or coughing, though I should be never so much inclined to either, and from a great many other things, which I can freely do when alone; therefore, sir master of mine, I hope these honours, which your worship would put upon me as being the servant and abettor of knight-errantry, which to be sure I am while I remain in quality of your squire, may be converted into other things of more ease and advantage to me, than those which, though I hold them as received in full, I renounce from henceforth for ever, amen.'—'Thou must nevertheless sit down,' said his master, 'for him that is humble, God will exalt;' and, seizing him by the arm, he pulled him down to the seat on which he himself sat.

“The goat-herds, who understood not a word of all this jargon of squire and knights-errant, did nothing but eat in silence, and gaze upon their guests; who, with keen appetite and infinite relish, solaced their stomachs by swallowing pieces as large as their fists. This service of meat being finished, they spread upon their skins great quantities of acorns, and half a cheese, harder than plaster of Paris. All this time the horn was not idle, but went round so fast, sometimes full, sometimes empty, like the buckets of a well, that they soon voided one of the two skins of wine that hung in view.”

Cervantes, who entertained but little respect for the notions that happened to be in fashion among his contemporaries, or which were transmitted down to them from their ancestors, has clearly, throughout this whole scene among the goatherds, his eye upon Garcilaso de la Vega, Mendoza, and others of that class, whose ideas of pastoral life were not a whit more sane than Don Quixote's. In the speech which follows, on the Golden Age, the satire glances in different directions, sometimes attacking those who could discover no excellence in their own times, sometimes the supporters of a contrary opinion. We would gladly transport Cid Hamet Benengeli entire into these pages, or at least the whole of this speech; but we must, after all, leave ourselves room for an observation or two upon authors less known, who have likewise played upon the oaten pipe.

Among these, a distinguished place belongs to Garcilaso de la Vega, who appears, however, to have

imbibed his taste for this species of composition in Italy, where the example of Virgil has enticed many writers of distinguished abilities into this method of babbling o' green fields; for the first, it seems, of his three famous Eclogues was written at Naples, where he is supposed to have imbibed the passion of bucolic-making from Sannazaro. His shepherds, as will presently be manifest, are not copies of our friends who accompany the migratory flocks of Spain. Neither do they bear any resemblance to the *poimenes* of Theocritus. They are such shepherds as one sees in bag-wigs and tight silk stockings, "sighing like furnace," or reclining lack-a-daisically in sweet arbours in the landscapes of Watteau. Love, of course, in some phasis or other a pastoral must exhibit, for without it this species of poem would be like beer without malt; but it is whining, whimpering, despairing love, subsisting upon conceits, which would infallibly die the moment it should obtain its object. If a shepherd's love were returned, he would be happy, and there would be an end of it. No poet would celebrate his joys; for happiness is supposed to be untranslateable. But, if his passion be kindled by a scornful, unsteady, jilting abigail, whose cruelty, to borrow a word from the pastoral vocabulary, drives him to despair, he immediately becomes a fit subject for the bucolic muse, and we are entertained with the intolerable sorrows which kept him from growing fat.

Garcilaso possesses sufficient art to conceal the ridicule inherent in his subject. One of his shep-

herds is afflicted by genuine grief. The object of his love has been elevated to the rank of a pure spirit by death, and solemn associations from the grave breathe through the verse, and check effectually all disposition to be critical even where affectation is not wholly kept out of sight. The other, however, having bestowed his affections on one whom he should rather have viewed with indifference, sees his mistress call another man lord, and on this account considers himself authorized to be at least as unhappy as his companion. This poem, with the other works of Garcilaso, has been translated into English by the late Mr. Wiffen, and I borrow from his version the following fragments, which will enable the reader to decide for himself whether he would like to form a more intimate acquaintance with the bucolics of Spain.

## SALICIO.

“ Through thee the silence of the shaded glen,  
 Through thee the horror of the lonely mountain  
 Pleased me no less than the resort of men ;  
 The breeze, the summer wood, and lucid fountain,  
 The purple rose, white lily of the lake,  
     Were sweet for thy sweet sake ;  
 For thee the fragrant primrose, dropt with dew,  
     Was wished, when first it blew.  
 Oh, how completely was I in all this  
 Myself deceiving! Oh, the different part  
 That thou wert acting, covering, with a kiss  
 Of seeming love, the traitor in thy heart !  
 This my severe misfortune long ago  
 Did the soothsaying raven, sailing by  
 On the black storm, with hoarse sinister cry  
 Clearly presage : in gentleness of woe,  
 Flow forth, my tears, 'tis meet that ye should flow !

How oft when slumbering in the forest brown,  
 (Deeming it fancy's mystical deceit,)  
 Have I beheld my fate in dreams foreshown.  
 One day methought that from the noontide heat,  
 I drove my flocks to drink of Tagus' flood,  
 And, under curtain of its bordering wood,  
 Take my cool siesta ; but arrived, the stream,  
 I know not by what magic, changed its track,  
 And in new channels, by an unused way,

    Rolled its warped waters back :  
 Whilst I, scorch'd, melting with the heat extreme,  
 Went, ever following in their flight, astray,  
 The wizard waves : in gentleness of woe,  
 Flow forth, my tears, 'tis meet that ye should flow!

\* \* \* \* \*

But though thou wilt not come for my sad sake,  
 Leave not the landscape thou hast held so dear ;  
 Thou mayst come freely now without the fear  
 Of meeting me ; for, though my heart should break,  
 When late forsaken, I will now forsake.

Come, then, if this alone detains thee ; here  
 Are meadows full of verdure, myrtles, bays,  
 Woodlands, and lawns, and running waters clear,  
 Belov'd in other days ;

To which, bedew'd with many a bitter tear,  
 I sing my last of lays.  
 These scenes, perhaps, when I am far remov'd,  
 At ease thou wilt frequent  
 With him who rifled me of all I lov'd.

    Enough ! my strength is spent ;  
 And leaving thee in his desir'd embrace,  
 It is not much to leave him this sweet place.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### NEMOROSO.

As at the set of sun the shades extend,  
 And when its circle sinks, that dark obscure  
 Rises to shroud the world, on which attend  
 The images that set our hair on end,