

becomes no easy matter to discover what there is worthy of perusal.

The manual of Madrid contains a goodly list of academies, universities, and scientific and literary institutions, where the rising talent of the country may be led into such channels. In compliance with the spirit of centralization which now pervades all departments, the great university was removed from Alcalá de Henares in 1836, and the old college of the Jesuits, in the Calle Ancha de San Bernardo, has been devoted to the new institution; and the old halls in Alcalá, where the great Cardinal Ximenez founded the university in 1508, have been allowed to go to ruin. The wisdom of the measure, so far as the students are concerned, has been questioned, and their fondness for sharing in small pronunciamientos has made the Government regret having removed it from the old town where it had so long existed. The distance, too, was not so very great as to make it inconvenient, it being sufficiently near to Madrid for all purposes. A similar desire to that which has so long prevailed in Paris, of concentrating everything in the capital, is now being carried out here; the result, however, is not the same, for Spaniards never will be brought to look upon Madrid in the manner their neighbours consider Paris: on the contrary, the capital of their own province is their own favourite city, and they only turn to Madrid to see what they can gain in place or pension by frequenting it for a time.

Alcalá de Henares is only five leagues distant; and we went there on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Ximenez. Diligences and omnibuses go backwards and forwards twice a day; and the green trees of the Duke of Osuna's country place form some little variety in the monotonous neighbourhood of the capital. Alcalá itself is a picturesque old town with its conical Flemish roofs and tall

spires, surrounded by crumbling walls; a ridge of sandy hills rises behind, presenting no change in colour, but offering some variety in form to relieve the eye from the dull, flat aspect of the country. The streets all lined by low wooden arcades, have a quaint look. We put up at a most primitive posada on the Plaza, and forthwith proceeded to deliver a letter of introduction we had brought to a resident, and who, we were assured, knew everything that was to be seen. Our friend was not at home, but we were shown into the reception-room to await his return; and wonderful to relate there were a few books on a shelf, and we rejoiced in the prospect of finding something wherewith to while away the time; but these pleasant visions were of short duration, for the medical tone of the volumes did not promise much amusement to people who were hunting after local antiquities.

At last the worthy little gentleman arrived, and nothing could be more courteous than his manner; but he assured us that he could not be the person meant in the letter, for though he should feel much pleasure in showing us everything, he really did not know what there was to see. We suggested the University, "it was all in ruins;" we asked for the chapel of Ximenez, it was "muy feo" (very ugly); an assertion which when made by a Spaniard, is a convincing proof that the object thus designated is most especially worthy of the traveller's attention. We inquired when we could see these ugly things; he told us on the following day; and on our assuring him that we intended to return to Madrid on the morrow, the poor man seemed to think us most unreasonable. Why should we be in so desperate a hurry, when there was plenty of time to stay and see everything; he evidently did not understand, and doubtlessly came to the conclusion that those mad foreigners never can do anything leisurely.

At length, with a shrug of the shoulders which would have been accompanied by an exclamation of "God is great," had he been a Moslem instead of a Christian, he told us if we were determined to do Alcalá that same day, why then he would accompany us.

I felt for him, and duly appreciated his good nature in escorting us to see things that were so "muy feo." The vandalism of the present century has ignorantly, if not wantonly, destroyed this beautiful work of past ages. What would be the feelings of Ximenez, could he rise from his grave, and see the present state of the fair university, on which he spent so much care and wealth! Here he lived during his declining years, and here he used his best endeavours to promote the encouragement of learning and the success of his favoured university in the town where he himself had been educated. He also erected a lovely chapel, in which his remains were interred before the high altar; but his burial-place was not respected more than the sepulchres of other Spanish heroes in general, and a mass of crumbling ruins is all that remains of this once elegant temple.

When the university was removed to Madrid, the deserted buildings were disposed of, and many were turned into barracks: Alcalá being now a great cavalry station. The principal college of San Ildefonso was sold to a private individual of the name of Quinto, who commenced pulling it down; and when the work of destruction was considerably advanced, the worthy inhabitants began to think they might as well avert the impending ruin of the whole, and preserve some memento of their past history. Accordingly they repurchased it; but too late to save the chapel of the illustrious founder. His beautiful tomb was removed to the cathedral; and sad was the picture of ruin presented to us on entering this chapel. The pavement had been torn up, the altar

removed, all the rich stucco work pulled off from the walls, here and there an atom remaining to testify how rich were the decorations ; the magnificent artesonado ceiling, with large cracks across it, now ready to fall—and all this not the effect of time, but of wanton downright destruction ! The retablo and the reja have disappeared, and the naked walls bear testimony to the ruthless hand that has thus unsparingly despoiled them.

From the chapel we passed into the College of San Ildefonso. The deserted patio looks sad and lonely, and bears evident marks of the ill-usage it received after it was sold. The hall where formerly degrees were conferred has a fine ceiling, and the decorations of the galleries running round are very rich. The inhabitants of Alcalá, much to their credit, have had the good taste to place the sepulchre of Ximenez in the chancel of the cathedral, an old Gothic building. It is a beautiful marble tomb, the work of Dominico el Fiorentino, and is surrounded by a handsome iron railing. Beneath, a vault has been made for the reception of the Cardinal's remains, which are now in a leaden sarcophagus, deposited in one of the side chapels, awaiting the time when the Archbishop of Toledo shall come to preside in person over their transfer to the new abode prepared for them.

And there lies all that remained of the great Cardinal, one of the most remarkable men of his age. Stern and inflexible in character, he was great not only as a prelate, but as a statesman and a soldier ; he was an unyielding despot, but guided by the highest and most unerring principles ; his honesty and uprightness made him beloved and respected by all. His princely fortune was expended in doing good to those around him ; and the University of Alcalá is the offspring of his magnificent encouragement of learning. It was in 1500, that he laid the foundation stone of the first college, and for eight years his unceasing

efforts were devoted to its progress. Established on the most liberal scale as far as the course of education was concerned, it soon became a favourite resort; and so great was the number of students within twenty years after its opening, that seven thousand came out to receive Francis I., when he visited Alcalá. Here it was that Ximenez welcomed his sovereign Ferdinand of Aragon, and showed him with pride the result of his labours during his retirement.

Another great and noble work occupied his leisure hours, the preparation of the celebrated Complutensian Bible, so called from having been printed here—Complutum being the ancient name of Alcalá. It was a princely undertaking; no expense was spared in the collection of the manuscripts, which were entrusted to the care of the most learned scholars for arrangement. Thus did Ximenes obtain the merit of being the first to compile a polyglot version of the Bible; but what would he have said, could he have foreseen how those valuable manuscripts would be treated by the heads of the very University he had founded with so much trouble, and at so much expense? Towards the end of the last century, when a German critic came to Alcalá to consult the original manuscripts, they were not to be found; the persevering German, however, was not to be so easily repulsed, and after pursuing his indefatigable research with a diligence which deserved a better reward, he discovered, to his bitter disappointment, that they had been sold, many years previously, by the librarian to a maker of fireworks.

On leaving this chapel, our little friend took us to see what was far dearer to his heart than the ruins of the University, a tablet in the Church of Santa Maria, placed over the baptismal font, recording that there Cervantes was baptized on the 9th of October, 1547. This brightest ornament of Spanish literature was born in

Alcalá de Henares, and its inhabitants have been lately endeavouring to preserve the mementos of the great writer. We went likewise to see the house in which he was born. The following inscription has been placed over the doorway :

AQUÍ NACIÓ
MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA
AUTOR DEL DON QUIJOTE:
POR SU NOMBRE Y POR SU INGENIO
PERTENECE AL MUNDO CIVILIZADO
POR SU CUNA

A
ALCALA DE HENARES.

With honest pride, indeed, may the inhabitants of Alcalá claim Cervantes as their own, and well is it to preserve a souvenir of such a man. The house in which he died in Madrid, in the Calle Francos, was pulled down some years ago ; but over the new one, erected on the same spot, is an inscription, recording that it was once the site of his abode, and that he died there in 1616. He was buried in the convent of the Trinitarias Descalzas, which occupied a different building originally to that where it now stands ; and when the nuns were transferred to their new habitation, it is supposed his remains were likewise removed, but nothing is known of them. Such seems to be the fate of all great men in this country. The house where Lope de Vega lived and died, is in the same street ; and although his remains were carried to the Church of San Sebastian, amid great funeral pomp, no monument was ever raised to his memory, and his ashes have mingled with those of the multitude. In a neighbouring street lived Quevedo, who died in poverty. Calderon de la Barca is the one who has been most honoured in death ; he was buried in the Church of

San Salvador, and a small monument erected to his memory, beside which was placed a portrait of him painted during life. In 1841, this church was pulled down, and the remains of Calderon were transported to the new cemetery, outside the gate of Atocha. There is no Poet's Corner in a Spanish Cathedral, where the ashes of those who have shed lustre on her literature may rest in honour.

We went to the Primate's palace, where the Archbishops of Toledo used formerly to reside four months in the year; its square towers, with their leaden spires, imparting a peculiar character to its exterior; the inner patio is quite lovely, a most exquisite specimen of that style commonly known in Spain by the name of "plataresque," where stone is chiselled into forms whose delicacy and richness rival the elaborate chasing of the silversmith. It was introduced about the commencement of the sixteenth century, when the glorious fretwork of Gothic architecture was enriched, and added to by Saracenic workmen. The "cinque cento," or "renaissance" style then crept in, and its plain classic outlines were wreathed with foliage and covered with an ornamentation, the detail of which seemed almost impossible to be executed in stone. But the effect of it is exquisite, as the many filigree façades which adorn the old buildings of Castile still attest; and in the days of Philip II. the classic style of Herrera introduced a new taste in architecture, and grand massive outlines usurped the place of the fairy tracing of the Berruguete school. But another architect arose towards the end of the seventeenth century, named Churriguera, who has contrived to leave a name identical with the most depraved taste; his overloaded decorations disfigured the interiors of churches, and spoiled the elevations of buildings; and to hear an edifice called Churrigueresque, is sufficient to stamp it as being in the worst style of art.

Later still, architecture relapsed into a plainness where





THE PALACE, MADRID.

Dickinson, Bewell lith.

the absence of ornament has been taken for simplicity, but where true grandeur and dignity are absolutely wanting. Unfortunately, Madrid contains too many edifices in this style, and thus, while every other city abounds in matchless specimens of architectural taste, the capital taking its rise during the seventeenth century, is not enriched with any monument that can reflect credit on the fine arts of the Peninsula. After examining all that was of interest, we bade farewell to our worthy cicerone, without whose kind assistance we should not have found our way about so well, and retraced our steps to Madrid where we had still much to lionize.

The palace is a noble building of white stone, occupying a commanding situation, and looks very imposing from a distance; it was commenced by Philip V. the ancient Alcazar having been burned down. It rises above the valley of the Manzanares, whose paltry stream does not present a very lively aspect from the windows. Bleak and arid is the view over that cheerless land of Castile, but in winter the snow-crowned summits of the Guadarramas present a grand boundary to the horizon. There are no gardens belonging to the palace; art has not endeavoured to conceal the deficiencies of nature; a small attempt is now being made to lay out something approaching to pleasure-grounds in the slopes just below, but the want of water renders such an undertaking very difficult of accomplishment. The great square called the Plaza de Oriente is fine, and contains a noble work of art in the centre—the equestrian statue of Philip IV., considered one of the finest bronze figures in the world, and in truth no pains were spared to render it so. It was cast at Florence by Tacca, after a design of Velasquez and a model by Montañes. The opera-house is opposite to the palace; and on one side is the national library, containing a most valuable collection of upwards of one

hundred and fifty thousand volumes : the coins too which are deposited here are magnificent.

But perhaps the sight of most general interest in the neighbourhood of the royal palace is the armoury. It was first arranged by Philip II., who caused the arms to be removed from Valladolid for the purpose. It is worthy of all the great names whose weapons are here preserved. A long line of equestrian figures, all in full suits of armour, occupy the centre, where they are displayed to the best advantage ; while around, trophies are placed against the wall, and banners wave from the ceiling, overshadowing this most interesting record of the past history of Spanish chivalry. And what recollections are awakened, what thoughts of the past rush to one's mind, as the eye glances over the catalogue, a carefully compiled volume, and illustrated with short sketches of those who are mentioned in its pages.

The large number of suits of armour, marked as belonging to Charles V., call forth astonishment, all more or less beautifully chased and elaborately ornamented. This monarch took especial interest in finely-wrought armour, and this may account for the variety he seems to have collected. His son Philip II. also contributes largely ; and the suits around belonged to heroes, whose actions are immortalized in the days of chivalry. One of the most costly and the most elegant is the panoply of Don John of Austria, who died at the early age of thirty-three, when he was commanding in the Netherlands, not without suspicions, as some historians have hinted, of foul play on the part of his brother Philip II.

The armour of the Duke of Alba, of Hernan Cortes, and Christopher Columbus, may here be seen. A beautiful suit belonged to Garcilaso de la Vega. The gentle and knightly poet, whose early death, caused by a wound