

royal founder used to sit and attend the services, so arranged that he might see the clergy officiating at the altar, and listen to the solemn peals of the swelling organ; and here he breathed his last: with a crucifix in one hand, and the veil of our Lady of Montserrat in the other, he closed his strange life of fanaticism and tyranny. The motives which actuated that cold gloomy mind, none could penetrate, but he worked much evil for his country, and silently paved the way for the destruction of the liberties of his people.

Over the oratories are placed bronze statues, richly gilt, of some of the Imperial family. On the gospel side of the high altar, opposite to where his son expired, is the figure of Charles V.; at his right the Empress Isabel, his daughter Mary, and his two sisters, the Queens of France and Hungary. By the side is the proud inscription, engraved in letters of bronze:

“If any one of the descendants of Charles V. shall exceed his ancestor in the glory of his achievements, let him occupy this place—let the rest abstain.”

Opposite is a group in the same style, composed of Philip II., three of his wives, and his son, Don Carlos—the unhappy Prince who by some unaccountable caprice has ever been the favourite hero of dramatists and poets. Alas! that the glowing pages of Schiller should be nothing but a fable, and history compelled to own that Don Carlos was only a mad and wayward youth, whose person it was well to guard, both for his father's safety and his own.

In the aisles are the reliquaries, which contained much curious working in gold and silver before the French invasion; then their contents were scattered, and it was found rather difficult to identify them again after they had been so irreverently displaced. The lover of relics will, however, still find ample field for curiosity, for,

according to the statements made, there are upwards of seven thousand still enshrined in this temple; and among the list are mentioned seven bodies, one hundred and forty-four heads, and three hundred and six arms and legs, all in a high state of preservation. The walls of the sacristy are covered with marble, a few splendid vestments are still preserved, which escaped the general destruction, and more exquisite specimens of needlework it would be difficult to find. The borders are all copies of paintings, representing various events in the life of our Saviour.

A door leads by a splendid staircase down to the Pantheon, where are deposited, in a subterranean temple of jasper and of agate, the remains of the Spanish monarchs. There lie in black marble sarcophagi the remains of those who have ruled over this empire, from the days that Charles V. left the crown of two worlds to the care of his successor, to the time when Ferdinand VII. bequeathed a disputed crown and a ruined kingdom to his young and helpless daughter. We were not allowed to enter this royal tomb-house, for the little Prince of the Asturias, reposes in the centre, and until his coffin be removed strangers are are not allowed to enter.

Leaving the mausoleum, which is placed immediately under the high altar of the church, the blind guide leads the traveller over the remainder of this enormous building, through the vast cloisters, and up the magnificent staircase, adorned with bright-coloured frescoes from the hand of Lucas Giordano. In these corridors hung many of the peerless paintings which have since been transferred to Madrid. From the cloisters you enter the choir, which, as before mentioned, is placed over the entrance to the church; it is in keeping with the majesty of the whole; the stalls are plain and simple, and in the right-hand corner, is the seat once occupied

by Philip II. It was here that one day during vespers he received the news of the battle of Lepanto, where his brother, Don John of Austria, laid low the power of the Crescent. Apparently unmoved by the glad intelligence, his countenance betrayed no symptoms of emotion, nor did he take any notice of the arrival of the messenger until after the conclusion of the service, when he ordered the Prior to sing a solemn *Te Deum* in token of thanks. The standard which had been taken from the Turks was deposited in the library, as well as a copy of the Koran, which formed a part of the spoils.

In 1588 the prayers of the inmates of the Escorial were offered up to implore victory for the Spanish Armada, which had been sent forth to crush the power of England. Night and day services were performed in the church, and as a Spanish author relates, they abounded so much that their enemies might well declare, "their prayers had been so numerous and so efficacious that the invincible Armada had gone straight to heaven."

There are some magnificently illuminated choral books preserved here; and in a small chapel behind the Prior's chair stands the beautiful crucifix which I have before noticed, and which was presented to Philip by Cosmo de Medici. The space is too small to do justice to this glorious work of art; the figure is very fine, the head falls on one side in all the agony of death, and the whole breathes a spirit well in keeping with the subject. Many are the rooms through which you pass where once the fairest creations of the painter glowed in living canvas on the walls. In a lonely chapel hangs the Last Supper of Titian, that painting which the monarch got cut to fit its allotted place, so impatient was he to see it hung up. El Mudo, indignant

at such an insult offered to one of Titian's paintings, promised to do a reduced copy within six months, but to no purpose; the despotic Sovereign would brook no delay, and Titian's work was sacrificed. Strange in Philip, who not only patronised art, but thoroughly understood and appreciated it, and was one of its greatest patrons.

The library is rich in treasures; some choice specimens are shown to visitors, and great numbers of valuable Arabic manuscripts are collected on its shelves. After all the sombre grandeur of the convent, the smaller portion allotted to the palace is uninteresting. Here a party of sight-seeing Spaniards joined us, and lingered in a state of ecstasy, pausing before every staring piece of modern tapestry, and going off into perfect rapture at the sight of every ormolu clock, and all the furniture of a modern palace. This was to them the most enchanting portion of the whole. Those who love such things have every reason to be delighted with two or three of the rooms, on which immense sums have been expended; I never saw such exquisite specimens of marqueterie. The walls, floors, and every corner are all inlaid with wood of different colours, arranged in most tasteful forms and patterns.

In a hall, called La Sala de las Batallas, are some curious frescoes representing the great battle, in which John II. and Alvaro de Luna defeated the Moors, and likewise of the battle of San Quentin. We ascended to the roof through galleries, which appeared hewn out of the solid granite walls, whence we could distinguish the outline of the entire building.

Travellers may establish themselves very comfortably in the village of the Escorial, and warm themselves after feeling the cold blasts of the Sierra by sitting round the

large fire, with its crackling logs, which gives a most cheerful appearance to the sitting-room of the "posada." Mine host, too, is an amusing little man, very civil and obliging, and ready to contribute to the amusement of his guests by getting up music or dancing for them in the evening after sight-seeing is concluded. We had a capital concert of twelve guitars which all went wonderfully together, enlivened now and then by the singing of some light "seguidilla." The servants at the inn, the mayoral of the diligence, and several others, joined the circle, and they ended by dancing very merrily; some of our own party, overcome by their early rising, and long day's work, stealthily left the room to retire for the night, while a young Frenchman, who had joined our circle, sat moodily in the chimney-corner, trying to digest a certain red book which his countrymen, when they travel in Spain, generally carry with them, although they do not find in its pages a too flattering picture of themselves.



LAVANDERAS.

CHAPTER XVI.

Scarcely any rank or profession escaped the infection of the prevailing immorality; but those persons who made politics their business were perhaps the most corrupt part of the corrupt society. For they were exposed not only to the noxious influences which affected the nation generally, but also to a taint of a peculiar and of a most malignant kind.—MACAULAY'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

LA GRANJA—SEGOVIA—THE AQUEDUCT—SAN JUSTO—CONVENT OF PARRAL—CHURCH OF THE
 TEMPLARS—CATHEDRAL—ALCAZAR—WINTRY WEATHER—RETURN TO MADRID—POLITICAL
 CRISIS—ASSEMBLING AND DISSOLUTION OF THE CORTES—THEIR CONSTITUTION—CHAMBER
 OF DEPUTIES—MINISTERIAL MEASURES—THE DECREE—CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS—FALL
 OF THE MINISTRY—REFLECTIONS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF SPAIN.

A FINE mountain road leads from the Escorial, passing Guadarrama, over the Puerto Navacerrada, amid splendid mountain scenery, to the summer retreat, which the Bourbon King preferred to the gloomy pile of his Austrian predecessors. All has a French air at La Granja, or San

Ildefonso, as it is sometimes called; the fountains in the grounds are said to rival those of Versailles in beauty. It was too late in the season to do justice to this elevated summer residence, and we passed its gates to continue our journey to Segovia. The snow was already thick upon the slopes of the Guadarrama, and the dark pines rising out of the white mass, looked truly alpine; but mild and beautiful as the mountains appeared, there was no enjoyment in the parterres buried beneath such a shroud, and we hastened on to the most picturesque of Castilian cities. The shades of evening were just closing in, when we reached Segovia, and in the gloomy darkness we conjured up visions of a Roman amphitheatre, and much we wondered, that no handbook had ever alluded to the splendid ruins, which we passed on entering the town.

Alas, for the morning! on making diligent inquiries, we discovered that our magnificent amphitheatre was nothing more than an unfinished bull ring! So much for the disenchantment to which travellers are subject. Segovia is a charmingly situated town; the walls and houses cresting the heights with the splendid aqueduct spanning the ravine. To the student and admirer of early church architecture, it offers many objects of interest from the number of buildings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which abound, all presenting some peculiar feature. The aqueduct must, however, remain the most remarkable object in Segovia, both from its antiquity and its stupendous size, which makes all the pigmy creations of modern days sink into insignificance. Here the Segovians are spared the trouble of descending their steep streets to the river's banks, and the trade of "aguador" is not so flourishing as in Toledo, and other places. The pure water from the source of Rio Frio is brought to their very doors.

The low arches of the aqueduct, gradually rising as the

ground descends, form two tiers, throwing their gigantic chain across the ravine, and carrying the water into the very heart of the town. Massive granite blocks piled one above the other, without cement or any artificial means to bind them together, remain as monuments of that colossal empire, whose works are the amazement of posterity. It is not strange that the lower orders, ignorant of the existence of such an empire as that of Rome, should look with wonder upon works, which bear so different a stamp to any they see executed in their own days, and that the usual popular legend should exist, that it was the work of an unholy hand—in short, it is ascribed to his Satanic majesty, and to him is attributed all the honour and glory of this huge structure. Cunning of hand he must have been, if he were the architect; and yet tradition tells us, that he was foiled in attaining the reward of all this labour by the superior cunning of a worthy priest.

It seems that the reverend father, according to established usage, had a housekeeper; but she was young and pretty, which, strictly speaking, was quite contrary to rule, for the age of forty is that which is considered the proper standard for those respectable people. However, although the canon law must be kept, there may be many ways of keeping it; and rumour will have it, that many of the padres obeyed the Church by getting their house-keeping done by two, whose united ages amounted to forty, which was just the same thing; and so we must suppose that the good curate of Segovia acted on this principle.

One fine day, this fair damsel, tired of descending to the river, was musing how she could supply her master with his "olla" without so much toil; and vowing there was nothing she would not give to be saved the trouble, when suddenly she was accosted by a knight in shining

armour, who expressed his readiness to realize her wishes to her perfect contentment, provided she would grant him one gift in return. This dashing knight, as may be readily guessed, was the arch-fiend himself, and the reward he sought was the maiden's soul. Frightened and perplexed at so strange an interview, as well she might, the poor girl at length accepted the offer, and hastened home in a state of mind, that sorely puzzled her master to account for. After many questionings, she at last confided to him her sorrows; but who can picture the dismay and horror of the priest, when he learned the sort of company she had been in and the fatal pledge she had made.

The son of the Church, however, was not to be outdone, nor allow his handmaiden to be thus carried off, as it were, before his very eyes, and that too by a rival with whom it was his special duty to struggle. When, therefore, the Evil One returned, to have the contract finally sealed, he was met by the old priest himself, armed with a goodly supply of holy water to keep the enemy in check, and maintain a wholesome distance between them. It is needless to detail the long and subtle discussion which took place upon the binding nature of compacts in general; suffice it to say, that while the priest admitted that a bargain is a bargain, even though one of the parties be a very objectionable person to deal with, still, he insisted, that the consideration should be carried out to the fullest extent; and that not only his own house should be supplied with water, but the whole town of Segovia, for all ages to come; and, moreover, that the work should be executed before daybreak on the following morning.

All this was readily acceded to; and as the sun was to rise at half-past four, the devil made his calculations by the curate's clock, little dreaming, clever as he was, that his wily opponent had previously put it back. He dis-

appeared, and on the following morning the inhabitants of Segovia beheld with astonishment a noble aqueduct conveying the purest water to their very doors, and its stupendous arches towering high above the roofs of their tiny houses. One stone, however, was wanting, and is wanting there still. The priest had triumphed, and saved his servant's soul; for much to the devil's surprise, the sun had risen, while yet the work was unfinished—misled by the curate's time-piece, he was caught by the morning beams, with the last stone in his hand, when he instantly vanished; thereby affording another instance, that in Spain nothing is ever destined to be completed.

The gigantic work, which, according to the idle legend, had been gained for the good people of Segovia by the sagacity of one priest, appears to have been, in truth, secured to them by the talent and energy of another. The original founder is not really known; it is, however, certain, that the aqueduct was much injured by the invading Moors, when they took Segovia, and a great portion of it remained in ruins, until the time of Isabella, when one of the monks of the Parral offered to restore it; and so well did he do his work, that the five-and-thirty arches which he rebuilt, can barely be distinguished from the original structure. Thus has this stupendous work been preserved to the present day: and here in this retired corner it still continues, after the lapse of so many centuries, to perform the office for which it was destined, while the mighty aqueducts, which covered the Campagna of Rome, are fast decaying; and the ruins of the Pont du Gard attract the traveller, as he passes on to the amphitheatre of Nismes. Over the centre arches, on one side, is a niche with the statue of the Virgin, and on the other the remains of a figure, but such a grim skeleton-looking thing, that the inhabitants are fairly convinced, it was meant for their favourite architect.





SAN JUSTO, SEGOVIA.

Dickinson Bros lith.