

sure sufficient for providing brooms and sweepers for its pavement,—will, in perhaps not much more than another year, if the predictions of the inhabitants be verified, be finally closed to public worship.

The same interest, therefore, which surrounded the Arab monuments three centuries since, and the Roman edifices of Spain in the fifth century, attaches itself now to the Christian temples; which, at this crisis, offer themselves to the tourist in the sad but attractive gloom of approaching death; since depriving them of the pomp and observances which filled their tall arcades with animation, is equivalent to separating a soul from a body. He will explore them and examine their ceremonies with all the eagerness and perseverance of a last opportunity,—he will wander untired through the mysterious twilight of their arched recesses, and muse on the riches lavished around him to so little purpose, and on the hopes of those who entrusted their memories to the guardianship of so frail and transient a depository. The tones of their giant though melodious voices, as, sent from a thousand brazen throats, they roll through the vaulted space the dirge of their approaching fate, will fill him with sadness; and the ray that streams upon him from each crimson and blue *rosace* will fix itself on his memory, kind-

ling around it an inextinguishable warmth, as though he had witnessed the smile of a departing saint.

I had read of Toledo being in possession of the finest church in Spain,—and *that* in the book of a tourist, whose visit to this town follows immediately that to Seville. Begging pardon of the clever and entertaining writer to whom I allude, the Cathedral of Toledo strikes me as far from being the finest in Spain; nor would it be the finest in France, nor in England, nor in other countries that might be enumerated, could it be transported to either. It is large; but in this respect it yields to that of Seville. What its other claims to pre-eminence may be, it is difficult to discover. It is true that its interior presents a specimen of the simple and grand pointed style of its period. This being put in execution on a large scale, would render it an imposing and a beautiful edifice, but for a subsequent addition, which, to render justice to the architect, he certainly never could have contemplated. The noble pillars, towering to a height of sixty feet, have been clothed, together with their capitals, in a magnificent coat of whitewash! Without having witnessed such a desecration in this or some similar edifice, it is impossible to conceive the deadening effect it produces on the feeling of admiration such a building ought to excite. An inscription in dis-

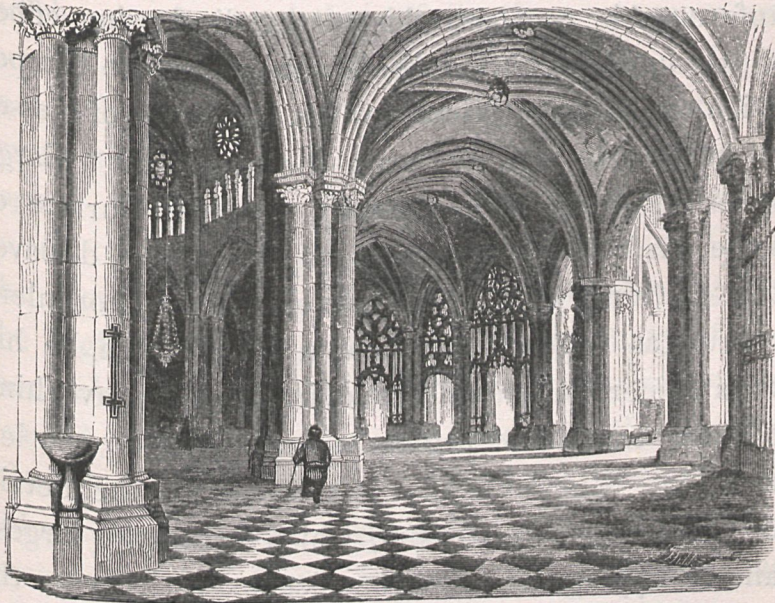
inct and large characters, over the southernmost of the three western doors, after recording the conquest of Granada by the Catholic Kings, as Ferdinand and Isabella are here termed, the expulsion of the Jews, and the completion of the Cathedral, brands with this act of barbarism one Don Francisco Fernandez de Cuença, *obrero mayor* (almost a Dean) of the Cathedral in the year 1493.

There is, however, a moment of each day when the tall arcades vindicate their outraged majesty. "La nuit tous les chats sont gris," says the proverb. I therefore proceeded at the approach of twilight (all access at a later hour being prohibited) to see whether its application would extend to this church. This is, in fact, the hour, just before the closing of the doors, at which it should be visited. Darkness has assumed his empire within these walls long before the stirring labyrinth without has had warning of his approach. No colours nor gildings (the latter being rather injudiciously distributed) are visible—nothing but a superb range of beautifully painted windows; and the columns only trace their dim outline a little less black against the deep gloom of the rest of the building. At this hour, could it last, it would be impossible to tire of wandering through this forest of magnificent stems, of which the branches are only seen to spring, and imme-

diately lose themselves beneath the glories of the coloured transparencies rendered doubly brilliant by their contrast with the gloom of all below them. The principal merit, in fact, of this edifice, consists in its windows. That of the purity of its general style deserves also to be allowed; but with some reserve in the appreciation of the accessory points of the design. It depended, for instance, on the judgment of the architect, to diminish or to increase the number of columns which separate the different naves, and by their unnecessary abundance he has impaired the grandeur of the general effect.

The interior dimensions are as follows:—Length, including a moderately sized chapel at the eastern extremity, three hundred and fifty English feet; width, throughout, one hundred and seventy-four feet; height of the principal nave and transept, about one hundred and twenty feet. The width is divided into five naves; those at the outside rising to about two-thirds of the height of the two next adjoining; and these to about half that of the centre nave. An entire side of a chapel opening out of the southernmost nave, is ornamented in the Arab style—having been executed by a Moorish artist at the same period as the rest; and not (as might be conjectured) having belonged to the mosque, which

occupied the same site previously to the erection of the present cathedral. This small chapel would be a beautiful specimen of the Arab ornament in stucco, but for several coats of whitewash it has received. An arched recess occupies the centre, and is called the Tomb of the Alguazil. A handsome doorway in the same style is seen in the ante-room of the Chapter-saloon.



APSE OF THE CATHEDRAL, TOLEDO.

Facing the entrance to the centre or extreme eastern chapel, that of San Ildefonso, the back of the high altar, or, as it is vulgarly called, the Tras-

coro, is—not adorned, would it were possible not to say disfigured, by an immense mass of sculpture called the Transparente. It is not easy to imagine the reason of this altarpiece having received its name, for it is not more transparent than any other mountain—never was witnessed so lamentable a misapplication of riches and labour! Some of the marble was brought from Carrara; the rest is not of a very good white, and being thus exposed to an unfavourable contrast, adds to the displeasing effect of the unwieldy forms which enter into the composition of this huge blunder of art—this pile of masses on masses of ugliness. At the sight of a large spherical form rising abruptly from the surface of some shaft of a pillar, you step back, and discover that it forms part of the posteriors of a corpulent cherub, as large as the column itself, which he has thus unmercifully annihilated, in order to save himself the trouble of passing a few inches to the left or right. But it is needless to notice the details of this piece of sculpture, which being the largest, and occupying the most conspicuous position in the whole church, forcibly attracts the attention which, but for that circumstance, one would rather bestow in another direction.

It is a relief to take one's station on the shining mahogany benches adjoining the wall of the op-

posite chapel of San Ildefonso; and to contemplate its chaste style and graceful proportions, and the handsome tombs which occupy its octagonally divided walls. The piece of sculpture in marble, placed over the principal altar, is undeserving of its conspicuous situation. It represents the Vision of San Ildefonso, to which we shall shortly have occasion to direct our attention.

The adjoining chapel, as we proceed towards the northernmost nave, that of Santiago, or more generally called after its founder, Don Alvaro de Luna, is still finer. It is larger and loftier, and of a more ornamental design. It presents five sides of an octagon: the three remaining sides turning inwards to suit the form of the apse. This Alvaro de Luna, the Lord Essex of Juan the Second, having by the high favour he enjoyed in the intimacy of the monarch, given umbrage to the courtiers, was put to death by the King, who gave credit to the charges falsely brought against him. Don Juan, however, who did not long survive his friend, had justice done to his remains. Being found innocent by a posthumous trial at Valladolid, his body was conveyed with great pomp to Toledo, and placed in the centre of his chapel. The tomb of his Countess stands close to his own; and in the niches of the surrounding walls, those of his most distinguished relatives, one of whom,

on the right of the altar, is represented in complete armour, with a turban on his head. The treasures bestowed on this favourite, flowed plentifully into the Cathedral of Toledo. Besides his chapel, the finest of all—the elaborately executed enclosure of the sanctuary, is one of his gifts: his arms are there recognised, frequently recurring among the various designs of the external tracery.

A narrow passage, leading from the apse between the chapel of Don Alvaro, and the entrance to the sacristy, communicates with the chapel of the kings. After passing through a simply designed anteroom of more recent date, the eye reposes with pleasure on a small interior in the pointed style of the latest period—of proportions, perhaps, not the less graceful from their being rather narrow for the length. Two richly ornamented arches, stretching across the interior, divide it into three parts, in the first of which is seen a gallery containing an elaborately wrought gilded confessional. The walls of the two other divisions are divided into six parts; the chapel having been constructed and endowed by Juan the First, for the reception of six monuments: those of himself and his Queen Isabella; those of his father Henry the Second, (natural son of Alonzo the Eleventh, and who dethroned and killed with his own hand his half-brother, Pedro the cruel,) and

Doña Juana his wife; and those of Henry the Third, and Doña Catalina his wife.

Returning to the interior of the apse, and continuing in the direction of the north side, another small passage and anteroom lead to the principal sacristy, which communicates with the next chapel, called the Sagrario, and composed of three apartments. The great sacristy contains some good paintings, particularly the ceiling by Giordano—a modern tomb of the late archbishop, Cardinal de Bourbon, and a series of narrow doors, within which are recesses. The first of these contains the crown and bracelets of the Virgin of the Sagrario: in four others are preserved magnificent ornaments of silver, representing emblematically the four quarters of the globe. Each quarter is personified by a figure invested with the attributes which characterize the region she represents, seated on a large silver globe, on the front of which is traced the quarter represented. The globe is supported by figures of animals. In the last of these recesses is seen the sword of Alonzo the Sixth, who won Toledo from the Moors. It is small, and unornamented, except by a hilt of embossed silver, on which the arms are repeated four times. In the smaller sacristy within are several good pictures, but not so remarkable as to prevent their being eclipsed by the splendid robe

of the Virgin of the neighbouring Sagrario, here exhibited, extended flat on a semicircular board, such being the form of the garment.

No one knows the value of this treasure. During the Peninsular War, the archbishop, in order to spare the French Generals too great a temptation, conveyed it, together with whatever else deserved the precaution, to Cadiz. It is embroidered almost entirely with pearls on a tissue of silver; but none of the silver is visible without separating the pearls, diamonds, &c, with the fingers. Most of the larger pearls possess the irregular sort of beaten shape often observed in the best specimens. Some are enormous. Numbers of diamonds, rubies, and other stones are admitted in the upper part, to vary and enliven the effect of the different designs of the embroidery. In another case is extended the front-piece, worn together with the robe, which is open in front. The robe sits nearly in the fashion of a lady's cloak, but perfectly stiff, and widening as it descends, so much as to make the figure assume the appearance of a triangle, of which the base is longer than the two other sides. The opening in front corresponds with the outline of the two sides, being wider below than above, although not in as great a degree. This opening is occupied by the front piece, which is much smaller than the robe, but

still more valuable, being principally worked in brilliants. It contains also every variety of precious stones, introduced as their colours may happen to accord with the design.

In addition to these is shown the dress of the Bambino, similar in materials to the two others; but the pearls and diamonds more equally distributed.

But the marvel of this costume is the crown. This ornament adds to the splendour of its materials, the most exquisite and elaborate workmanship. It would require hours to appreciate the labour and taste displayed in all its details. Marshal Soult, could he but see it, would order masses for the soul of the prelate who spared him such a temptation. The diamonds, especially those which compose a cross surmounting the centre, are of the purest water, and of immense size. But in the midst of the dazzling and harmonious intricacy of this gem of all colours, there is a centre of attraction, which took my fancy more than the rest. Immediately under the centre ball, an immense spherical emerald, which supports the diamond cross), is a small bird suspended on a hook within the crown. All the parts of this bird are composed of white enamel, except the body, around which the wings, legs, neck, and head, are attached, and which consists of a pearl of an oval form, about the size of a sparrow's egg. The move-

ment of the statue during a procession, keeps the bird (hanging from its hook) in constant agitation, and produces the effect of a living bird enclosed in a cage of precious stones.*

A pair of bracelets, possessing no less magnificence than the crown, but rather too heavy and bulky to be graceful, are suspended in the same recess, and worn on the same occasions.

It should not be forgotten, as a proof of the judgment shown in the choice of ornaments, which, as far as regards the front, consist principally of diamonds, that the complexion of the Virgin of the Sagrario, is more than dark—in fact, quite black.† The innermost of the three apartments forming the chapel of the Sagrario is called the Ochavo, and is the deposit of a collection of relics of all kinds. It is an octagon, surmounted at an elevation of more than double its diameter by a dome ornamented with excellent painting. The walls are faced with the best Spanish marbles. Each of the eight sides contains an open recess reaching to the first cornice—an elevation of about twenty-five feet; and in these recesses are contained all the valuable relics belonging

* The crown was valued in Cadiz at a hundred and sixty thousand pounds, of which the emerald, which supports the cross, represents forty thousand.

† She is of a wood, whether artificially or naturally, of a tint between the darkest mahogany and ebony.

to the cathedral;—a rich display of silver statues, reliquaries, coffins, chests, and crosses of gold and silver, some containing jewels of great value. A silver statue of Saint Ferdinand wearing a golden crown is among the objects most worthy of remark; also a cross containing a portion of the true cross, presented to the cathedral by St. Louis. This and several other relics, such as a phial containing the Virgin's milk, a portion of our Saviour's purple garment, &c., were presented to the cathedral by St. Louis on his return from the east, and are here preserved, together with the letter in his own handwriting, which accompanied them.

The Virgin of the Sagrario receives by far the greatest share of devotion brought to the numerous shrines of this vast temple, even greater than that offered at the high altar. More masses are performed at her altar than at all the others added together. The aisles facing her antechapel are constantly filled with a crowd of kneeling votaries. She stands in the second enclosure, turning her back to the Ochavo. An iron railing separates her apartment from the first chapel, which is usually open to the aisles. She stands consequently in full view, magnificently robed in a *fac simile* imitation of her pearl dress, the original being only worn on one or two occasions during the year.