

decorated from the ground upwards to a height of about five feet, with the *azulejos*, or mosaic of porcelain tiles, the colours of which never lose their brilliancy.

The first floor is probably an addition made entirely subsequently to the time of the Moors. It contains several suites of plain white-washed rooms, and only two ornamental apartments, probably of Don Pedro's time. These are equal to those on the ground floor with respect to the tracery of the walls, unfortunately almost filled with white-wash; but their ceilings are plainer. There is a gallery over the Court of Dolls, of a different sort from the rest, but scarcely inferior in beauty to any part of the edifice. The pillars, balustrades, and ceilings, are of wood.

One of the last mentioned apartments has an advantage over all the rest of the palace, derived from its position. It opens on a terrace looking over the antique gardens, — a view the most charming and original that can be imagined. This room must be supposed to have been the boudoir of Maria Padilla, — the object of the earliest and most durable of Pedro's attachments; whose power over him outlived the influence of all his future liaisons. It is indeed probable that the taste for this residence, and the creation of a large portion



of its beauties, are to be attributed to the mistress, rather than to a gloomy and bloodthirsty king, as Pedro is represented to have been, and whose existence was totally unsuited to such a residence. In the Court of Dolls the portion of pavement is pointed out on which his brother Don Fadrique fell, slaughtered, as some say, by Pedro's own hand,—at all events in his presence, and by his order.

This monarch, were his palace not sufficient to immortalize him, would have a claim to immortality, as having ordered more executions than all the other monarchs who ever ruled in Spain, added together. It appears to have been a daily necessity for him; but he derived more than ordinary satisfaction when an opportunity could be obtained of ordering an archbishop to the block. The see of Toledo became under him the most perilous post in the kingdom, next to that of his own relatives: but he occasionally extended the privilege to other archbishops. It is a relief to meet with a case of almost merited murder in so sanguinary a list. Such may be termed the adventure of an innocent man, who, seeing before him a noose which closes upon everything which approaches it, carefully inserts his neck within the circumference.

This was the case of a monk, who, hearing that Pedro, during one of his campaigns, was encamped



in a neighbouring village, proceeded thither, and demanded an audience. His request being immediately granted, no doubt in the expectation of some valuable information respecting the enemy's movements, the holy man commenced an edifying discourse, in which he informed Don Pedro, that the venerabilissimo San Somebody (the saint of his village) had passed a considerable time with him in his dream of the previous night: that his object in thus miraculously waiting upon him was, to request he would go to his Majesty, and tell him, that, owing to the unpardonable disorders of his life, it was determined he should lose the approaching battle. It was the unhappy friar's last sermon; for in less than five minutes he had ceased to exist.

It stands to reason, that, owing to the retired habits of this friar, a certain anecdote had never reached his ear relative to another member of a religious fraternity. At a period that had not long preceded the event just related, the misconduct of this sovereign had drawn down upon him the displeasure of the head of the church.\* The thunderbolt was already forged beneath the arches of

\* He had put to death the "Master of St. Bernard," a title of those days possessed by the chief of that order appointed by the Pope. It was Urbano V, who, on the occasion of this act, resented at the same time various other offences.



the Vatican ; but a serious difficulty presented itself. The culprit was likely to turn upon the hand employed in inflicting the chastisement. At length a young monk, known to a member of the holy synod as a genius of promise, energetic and fertile in resources, was made choice of, who unhesitatingly undertook the mission. He repaired to Seville, and after a few days' delay, employed in combining his plan of operation, he got into a boat, furnished with two stout rowers, and allowing the current to waft him down the Guadalquivir, until he arrived opposite a portion of the bank known to be the daily resort of the King, he approached the shore, and waited his opportunity.

At the accustomed hour the royal cavalcade was seen to approach ; when, standing up in the boat, which was not allowed to touch the shore, he made signs that he would speak to the party. The monkish costume commanded respect even from royalty, and Don Pedro reined in his horse. The monk then inquired whether it would gratify his Majesty to listen to the news of certain remarkable occurrences that had taken place in the East, from which part of the world he had just arrived. The King approached, and ordered him to tell his story : upon which he unrolled the fatal document, and



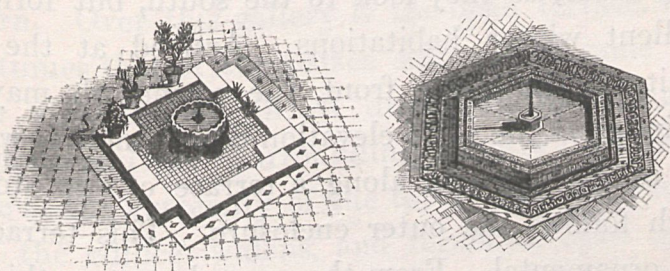
with all possible rapidity of enunciation read it from beginning to end.

Before it was concluded, the King had drawn his sword, and spurred his horse to the brink of the water; but at his first movement the boat had pushed off,—the reader still continuing his task,—so that by the time Pedro found himself completely excommunicated, his rage passing all bounds, he had dashed into the water, directing a sabre cut, which only reached the boat's stern. He still, however, spurred furiously on, and compelled his horse to swim a considerable distance; until, the animal becoming exhausted, he only regained the shore after being in serious danger of drowning. It may easily be imagined that the papal messenger, satisfied with his success, avoided the contact of terra firma, until he found himself clear of Pedro's dominions.

Quitting the room—that of Maria Padilla (according to my conjecture) by the door which leads to the terrace, you look down on a square portion of ground, partitioned off from the rest by walls, against which orange-trees are trained like our wall-fruit trees, only so thickly that no part of the masonry is visible. All the walls in the garden are thus masked by a depth of about eight inches of leaves evenly clipped. In the fruit season the effect



is admirable. The small square portions next to the palace thus partitioned off are laid out in flower-beds, separated by walks of mixed brick and porcelain, all of which communicate with fountains in the centres. The fountains, simple and destitute of the usual classical menagerie of marine zoology



FOUNTAINS AT THE ALCAZAR.

and gods and goddesses, whose coöperation is so indispensable in most European gardens to the propulsion of each curling thread or gushing mass of the cold element,—derive all their charm from the purity and taste displayed in their design. One of the most beautiful of them consists merely of a raised step, covered with *azulejos*, enclosing a space of an hexagonal form, in the centre of which the water rises from a small block of corresponding form and materials. The mosaic is continued outside the step, but covers only a narrow space.

The terrace stretches away to the left as far as the



extremity of the buildings, the façade of which is hollowed out into a series of semicircular alcoves; there being no doors nor windows, with the exception of the door of the room through which we issued. The alcoves are surrounded with seats, and form so many little apartments, untenable during the summer, as they look to the south, but forming excellent winter habitations. Arrived at the extremity of the palace front, the promenade may be continued at the same elevation down another whole side of the gardens, along a terrace of two stories, which follows the outer enclosure. This terrace is very ornamental. From the ground up to a third of its height, its front is clothed with the orange-tree, in the same manner as the walls already described. Immediately above runs a rustic story of large projecting stones, which serves as a basement for the covered gallery, or lower of the two walks. This gallery is closed on the outside, which is part of the town wall. The front or garden side is composed of a series of rustic arches, alternately larger and smaller, formed of rugged stones, such as are used for grottoes, and of a dark brown colour—partly natural, partly painted.

The arches are supported by marble columns, or rather fragments of columns,—all the mutilated antique trunks rummaged out of Italica. For a shaft



of insufficient length a piece is found of the dimensions required to make up the deficiency, and placed on its top without mortar or cement. Some of the capitals are extremely curious. Among them almost every style may be traced, from the Hindoo to the Composite: but no one is entire, nor matched with any part of the column it was originally destined to adorn. Over this gallery is the open terrace, which continues that of the palace side on the same level. The view extends in all directions, including the gardens and the surrounding country; for we are here at the extremity of the town. At the furthest end the edifice widens, and forms an open saloon, surrounded with seats, glittering with the bright hues of the *azulejos*.

From these terraces you look down on the portion of the garden in which the royal arms are represented, formed with myrtle-hedges. Eagles, lions, castellated towers,—all are accurately delineated. Myrtle-hedges are also used in all parts of the gardens as borders to the walks. It is a charming evening's occupation to wander through the different enclosures of these gardens, which, although not very extensive, are characterised by so much that is uncommon in their plan and ornaments, that the lounge is never weary of them. Nor is the visible portion of their attractions more curious than the hidden sources of



amusement and—ablution, by means of which an uninitiated wanderer over these china-paved walks, may be unexpectedly, and more than necessarily refreshed. By means of a handle, concealed—here in the lungs of some bathing Diana in the recesses of her grotto—here in the hollow of a harmless looking stone—an entire line of walk is instantaneously converted into a stage of hydraulics—displaying to the spectator a long line of embroidery, composed of thousands of silver threads sparkling in the sunshine, as issuing from unseen apertures in the pavement they cross each other at a height of a few feet from the ground, forming an endless variety of graceful curves. Almost all the walks are sown with these *burladores*, as they are termed.

A large portion of the grounds consists of an orange-grove, varied with sweet lemon-trees. The trees are sufficiently near to each other to afford universal shade, without being so thickly planted as to interfere with the good-keeping of the grass, nor with the movement of promenading parties. In the centre of this grove is a beautiful edifice,—a square pavilion entirely faced, within and without, with the *azulejos*, with the exception only of the roof. Around it is a colonnade of white marble, enclosing a space raised two feet above the ground, and surrounded by a seat of the same mosaic. The



interior is occupied by a table, surrounded with seats.

The subterranean baths, called the baths of Maria Padilla, are entered from the palace end of the garden. They extend to a considerable distance under the palace, and must during the summer heats, have been a delightfully cool retreat.

This *alcazar* is probably the best specimen of a Moorish residence remaining in Europe. The Alhambra would, no doubt, have surpassed it, but for the preference accorded by the Emperor, Charles the Fifth, to its situation over that of Seville: owing to which he contented himself with building a gallery over the principal court at the latter; while at Granada, he destroyed a large portion of the old buildings, which he replaced by an entire Italian palace. At present the ornamented apartments of the Seville palace are more numerous, and in better preservation than those of the Alhambra.

Both, however, would have been thrown into the shade, had any proportionate traces existed of the palace of Abderahman the Third, in the environs of Cordova. Unfortunately nothing of this remains but the description. It is among the few Arab manuscripts which escaped the colossal *auto-da-fé* of Ferdinand and Isabella, and would appear too extravagant to merit belief, but for the known



minuteness and accuracy of the Arab writers, proved by their descriptions of the palaces and other edifices which remain to afford the test of comparison.

The immense wealth lavished by these princes, must also be taken into consideration, and especially by the Caliphs of Cordova, who possessed a far more extended sway than belonged to the subsequent dynasties of Seville and Granada. According to a custom prevalent at their court, rich presents were offered to the sovereign on various occasions. Among others, governors of provinces, on their nomination, seldom neglected this practical demonstration of gratitude. This practice is to this day observed at the court of the Turkish Sultan, and serves to swell the treasury in no small degree. Abderahman the Third, having granted a government to the brother of his favourite, Ahmed ben Sayd, the two brothers joined purses, and offered a present made up of the following articles—accompanied by delicate and ingenious compliments in verse, for the composition of which they employed the most popular poet of the day:—Four hundred pounds weight of pure gold; forty thousand sequins in ingots of silver; four hundred pounds of aloes; five hundred ounces of amber; three hundred ounces of camphor; thirty pieces of tissue of gold



and silk; a hundred and ten fine furs of Khorasan; forty-eight caparisons of gold and silk, woven at Bagdad; four thousand pounds of silk in balls thirty Persian carpets; eight hundred suits of armour; a thousand shields; a hundred thousand arrows; fifteen Arabian, and a hundred Spanish horses, with their trappings and equipments; sixty young slaves — forty male, and twenty female.

The palace near Cordova, erected by this sovereign, was called Azarah (the Flower) after the name of his favourite mistress. Its materials consisted entirely of marble and cedar wood; and it contained four thousand three hundred columns. It was sufficiently spacious to lodge the whole court, besides a guard of cavalry. The gardens, as was usual with the Arabs, formed the part of the residence on which were lavished the greatest treasures of wealth, and the choicest inventions of taste. The fountains were endless in number and variety. On one of the most picturesque spots was situated an edifice called the Caliph's Pavilion. It consisted of a circular gallery of white marble columns with gilded capitals; in the centre rose a fountain of quicksilver, imitating all the movements of water, and glittering in the sun with a brightness too dazzling for the eye to support. Several of the saloons of this palace were ornamented with fountains. In one, which



bore the name of the Caliph's Saloon, a fountain of jasper contained in the centre a golden swan of beautiful workmanship—and over it hung from the ceiling a pearl, which had been sent from Constantinople as a present from the Greek Emperor to Abderahman. The mosque of this palace surpassed in riches, although not in size, the Aljama of Cordova.

These were monuments worthy to have kings and caliphs for architects, for such they had. There is no doubt that the palace of Azahrah was planned and designed by the Caliph himself; and the founder of that dynasty, Abderahman the First, not only designed the magnificent mosque of Cordova, but presided daily over the progress of its erection. Possessed, as these sovereigns were, as well as all the well-born portion of their nation, of a highly cultivated education, the intervals of leisure, left them by war, were rarely thrown away in idleness. Abderahman the First was a poet, besides being a mathematician, an architect, and the first soldier of his time. Some of his writings have been preserved, and are among the Arab works collected and translated by Condé into Spanish. The following stanzas, addressed to a palm-tree, must be, as is always the case, still more beautiful in the original, although charming in the Spanish. The monarch of the



Western Empire, after having vanquished his enemies, and pacified his dominions,—beloved by his subjects and by all who approached him, and possessed of the resources of science to occupy his mind, was nevertheless unhappy. He preferred his home in Asia to the splendours of an imperial throne in such a land as Andalucia. He caused a young palm-tree to be brought from Syria, and planted in a garden formed by him in the environs of Cordova; and it was his delight to sit in a tower constructed in the garden, and gaze at his tree.

It was to this tree he addressed the lines thus translated :—

Tu tambien, insigne palma,  
 Eres aqui forastera.  
 De Algarbe las dulces auras  
 Tu pompa halagan y besan.  
 En fecundo suelo arraigas,  
 Y al cielo tu cima elevas,  
 Tristes lagrimas lloraras,  
 Si qual io sentir pudieras.

Tu no sientes contratiempos  
 Como io de suerte aviesa :  
 A mi de pena y dolor  
 Continuas lluvias me anegnan.  
 Con mis lagrimas regue  
 Las palmas que el Forat riega,  
 Pero las palmas y el rio  
 Se olvidan de mis penas.