

minarets, and where now the Christian bells summon the faithful to their devotions. The matchless Giralda ! the wonder of Seville, the "maravilla" of which she is so justly proud ! Commenced by the Moor, it was completed by the Christian, and, for a wonder, the addition enhanced instead of detracting from its elegance. It was built in 1196 by one of the rulers of the Almohades, and dearly was it prized by the Moors. When the city was besieged by the Christians, its inhabitants petitioned, as one of the conditions of surrender, that they should be allowed to destroy both the Mosque and its tower ; but the Infante, afterwards Alfonso el Sabio, declared that if they touched one brick he would put them all to the sword—a menace which has preserved to posterity one of the most exquisite towers in the world.

The Moorish erection is square, about 240 feet in height, its sides ornamented with the interlacing arches so general on all Moorish towers, both here and at Toledo. The summit is reached by a succession of inclined planes, which turn five-and-thirty times, and form a very easy ascent. Light is admitted through Moorish windows pierced through the thickness of the walls, forming recesses of considerable size. One of these is fitted up as a shrine to the Virgin, and a dark-eyed maiden, the niece of the old keeper of the tower, is its attendant guardian. Seated in the opposite recess, or leaning on the open balcony, you may daily see the daughter of the Giralda embroidering robes to deck the sacred image, or preparing her own for her evening occupation—for "la Campanera" is a dancer at the Opera.

In 1568 the present tower was raised another 100 feet, and the whole surmounted by a gigantic bronze figure of Faith, standing on a globe, holding in her

hand a banner which causes the figure to veer round with the wind. Numbers of bells are placed here, all named after some saint, according to the usual custom. The view from this tower, although it does not offer the grandeur of mountain scenery, is very charming. It presents a bright and sunny picture, and includes many objects of great interest. Underneath, and attached to the very walls of the Giralda, is the Cathedral with its flying buttresses and decorated pinnacles, and around is a chaos of tiled roofs intermingled with terraces. Here and there an open space may be discerned, indicating a square, but not a street is to be seen, as from their extreme narrowness nothing but a small division is perceptible between the houses. The town stands in an extensive plain, on the left bank of the river, which flows in numerous windings through its olive-clothed banks. The opposite suburb, Triana, is connected with Seville by an iron bridge only lately completed. Beyond Triana rises a low ridge of well-cultivated hills, crowned by snow-white villages. San Juan de Alfarache, with its ruined convent, overhanging the river; Castilleja de la Cuesta, where Hernan Cortes breathed his last; Santi Ponce, with its dilapidated monastery, where repose the ashes of Guzman el Bueno; Italica, the birthplace of Trajan and of Adrian, with its amphitheatre, which is all that remains to tell of its Roman founders; beyond, the distant plains bounded by the faint outline of the Sierra Morena. The eye sweeps round the plain, which is encircled by rising ground, where stand the white houses of Carmona; nearer, the towers of the old Moorish castle of Alcalá de Guadaira crown the heights; in the distance the jagged outline of the Ronda-chain; and, far far away, in the blue horizon to the west, where earth and sky seem to blend together, the river loses

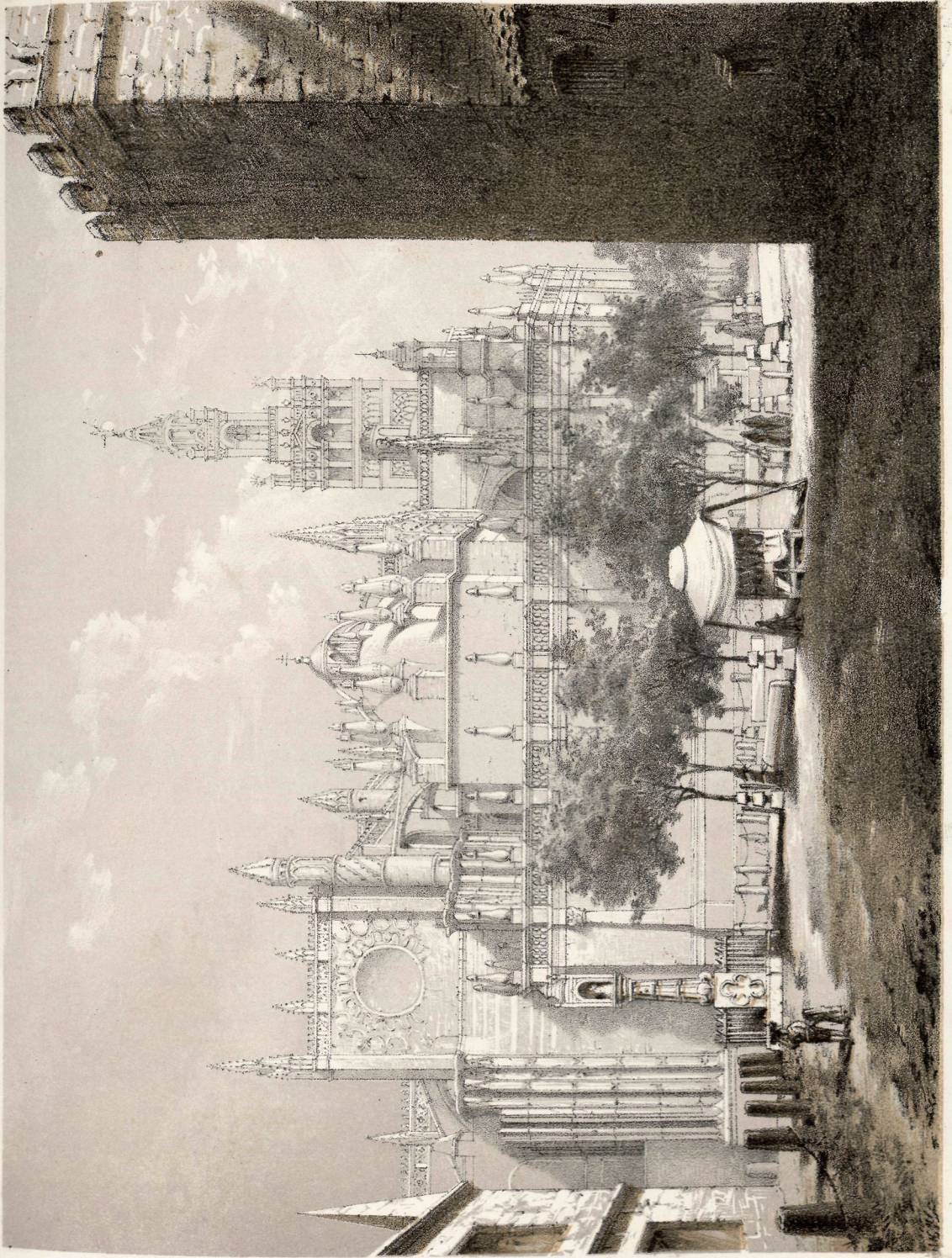
itself in the flat plains which stretch to the sea-coast. The country all around is covered with olive and orange-groves to the very walls of Seville. Just outside lies an open space—the Campo Santo, now crowded in spring with the gay multitudes who assemble for the fair; little dreaming over the scenes enacted in former days, and careless of the fact that there the Inquisition held its Autos de Fé.

Such is the pleasant prospect which greets the traveller as he gazes on the scene around from the famed Giralda. From this height a miniature view can be obtained of the distant bull ring. It is a convenient post for those whose susceptibility or principle forbids their being present at such a spectacle as a bull-fight, and yet whose curiosity would fain be gratified. From here they can view it, divested of its horrors; and I have known more than one traveller, and reverend divines among the number, who, considering it wrong to attend such an amusement on a Sunday, yet mounted up to have a peep at it from this lofty tower. Here, on the summit of the Giralda, the mind goes back to meditate on the past history of this far-famed city, where each succeeding race has left some impress of its sway, and as the eye wanders over the panorama and rests upon the various objects around, the mind reads a tale in the different edifices within view, and sees all the various changes in these living pages of history.

Seville was a Roman town, made into a capital by Julius Cæsar, who is said to have raised its walls, and who gave it the name of Romula. When the Gothic sway existed in the Peninsula it was a favourite residence of the sovereigns. But they passed away, and were succeeded by the Moslem, who has stamped his seal on the buildings around. The tower of the

Giralda itself, and many others rising above the closely packed roofs of the town, speak of their rule ; they too have vanished, but they have left ample traces of their passage. Cordoba was their capital, but after the fall of the Omeyah dynasty, Seville became the centre of one of those independent sovereignties which sprang up when dissensions became rife amongst them. As the eye looks down from the Giralda, it rests upon Moorish tracery and horse-shoe arches, while above it beholds the portion added by the Christians, surmounted by a statue of Faith. This edifice, commenced by the followers of Mohammed, crowned and completed by the servants of Christ, recalls the time when the great St. Ferdinand sat down with all his host before the walls of Seville. It was in 1247 that the sovereign of Castile, elated with the conquest of Cordoba and other towns, laid siege to Seville, and after many a deed of prowess had been performed, it surrendered on the 23rd Nov., 1248.

There, on the very spot where the Mosque once stood, rises now the temple dedicated to the faith of the conqueror, the grandest edifice that man has raised for the worship of his Maker. There they are, side by side—the triumph of the Christian and the Moor. The most striking view of the exterior of the Cathedral is seen from the gate of the Alcazar, which is close by, and whose eastern architecture speaks again of the domination of both races in this city ; its Moorish patios and Alhambra-like tracteries still attracting the admiration of the traveller. Another large square building rises close behind the Cathedral, marking another epoch in Spanish history—the Lonja or Exchange, a master-piece of Herrera's, raised in the reign of Philip II., when the daily increasing commerce of the New World compelled her merchants



CATHEDRAL, SEVILLE.



to provide themselves with some place of meeting. It was then that Seville prospered ; but from that period her splendour has decreased ; and the tasteless edifice of San Telmo, with its leaden roofs rising above the trees of the great promenade, tells of the decline of taste in the eighteenth century. What monument will rise in the nineteenth ? Alas, for poetry and romance ! a railway station will probably stamp it with its iron hand, and the tall chimneys of some gas or chemical works spring up to rival the Giralda—at least in altitude.

Sadly matter-of-fact is this our age ; and who can tell which were the wiser in their generation, the races past or present ; those who devoted their fortunes and their lives to the erection of religious edifices and matchless churches, or those who, caring for nothing but money-making, sacrifice all at the feet of Mammon ? Everything has its extremes, and may not we be going too much into the latter ? “ People loved God more in those days than they do now,” said an old Castilian peasant to me one day, as I was admiring the superb façade of a now dilapidated convent. There was more meaning in that simple speech than he dreamt of. However, Spain must go on, for now she is in a transition state ; she has neither the piety of past ages, nor the practical enterprise of the present. Nothing could tend more to improve the country than the establishment of great main lines of railway, and the formation of good roads in parts which are now almost unattainable, from the want of communication. She has immense wealth in the countless ores of her Sierras, and the rich produce of her land, teeming with grain and oil ; but she wants—to use a common-place of the day—some means of developing her resources, under the guidance of a wise and honest government. This

peep at past ages from the top of the Giralda has led to a very matter-of-fact reflection on the present ; and the dissertation, which began with the works of Julius Cæsar, has ended with those of Stephenson. The latter have not, however, yet been raised on the ruins of the former ; and while the Spaniards are talking of all the roads that are to bind the extremities of the Peninsula in a network of iron, we may as well satisfy ourselves with taking a glance at Seville as it is, without speculating on what she might, or hereafter may be.

The whole square pile of buildings, comprising the Cathedral, Giralda, Sagrario or parish church and chapels, is raised on a sort of platform, round which runs a broad pavement ascended by steps. An old Moorish doorway, called the Puerta del Perdon, washed, not white but yellow, and decorated with Christian saints, leads into the orange court which formerly graced the entrance to the Mosque. The fountain used by the Moors still exists, and on one side is a pulpit, where San Vicente de Ferrer, the great Valencian saint, used to preach. A side-door under a covered gallery opens into the Cathedral. On first entering, from the bright light outside, it seems hardly possible to pierce the darkness which pervades this wondrous pile ; but a few moments suffice to render it more distinct, and then it gradually discloses itself in all its vast sublimity.

At length the eye, attuned to the scene, begins to pierce the dimly lighted aisles ; the massive pillars that support its vaulted roof come forth from the gloom which shrouded them ; the gilded rejas of the altar and the choir, the chequered marble pavement, the side-chapels beneath the lofty arches, stand revealed ; and the mind, disturbed by no meretricious ornaments or frivolous details, seizes on the whole.



Awed and wonderstruck by the solemn grandeur of this unmatched Cathedral, you stand and watch the lights which play across the aisles, as the rays of the sun pour through the rich windows of painted glass, illuminating with rainbow hues the portions on which they fall. Cold indeed must be the heart, which does not feel that here he may worship God in a temple worthy of his faith. The massive proportions of the edifice, the dark colour of the stone, the absence of all ornament or detail, the mysterious light which pervades the whole, all combine to produce an impression which must for ever be stamped in indelible characters on the memory.

The forms of Gothic architecture, which bear the mind soaring heavenwards, always appear more in harmony with the Christian faith than any other ; and a temple like this impresses the mind with feelings which are never experienced even beneath the stately dome of St. Peter's. The towering piers, the pointed arches losing themselves in the groined vaults above, are doubly felt amid the gloom which reigns in Seville Cathedral, rendering every object so undefined, and leaving full scope to the imagination to dwell on all the fancied significations of its design ; spiritualising each aspiring line, and discovering a thousand meanings of which the architect himself but little dreamed.

And who raised this edifice ? History has not preserved his name. The architect who designed the plans remains unknown, although several are mentioned as having superintended the works during their progress. In 1401 the Dean and Chapter, and other dignitaries of the cathedral of Seville, met to decide on the erection of a new church, the one they had, the ancient Mosque, threatening to fall. After due deliberation, they decided on building a cathedral so fair

and beautiful that it should be without an equal ; and should the rents not suffice for its construction, they would give all that was required, and thus devote their fortunes to the service of their God. Above one hundred years were occupied in its erection, and it was not until 1519 that the edifice was completed.

The nave rises to the height of 146 feet. There are six side aisles ; four are of equal height, although not so lofty as the nave ; and this circumstance adds peculiarly to the grandeur of the Cathedral. The two lateral aisles are railed off, and divided into chapels. It is not built in the shape of a cross, but a simple parallelogram, the form of the Mosque on whose site it was erected. It is not finished with a cupola, as such edifices generally are, but the groining of the vaulted roof between the high altar and the choir, which here rises to the height of 170 feet, is elaborately ornamented with rich Gothic tracery, the remainder being quite plain. As usual, the length and breadth is sadly broken by the choir, which being in the centre of the nave, intercepts the view, and renders it impossible for the eye to embrace the whole. The high altar is enclosed by a gorgeous screen of iron-work, richly gilt ; it was completed in 1533, and is the work of a Fray Francisco de Salamanca. The public are not permitted to enter within its precincts ; but on great occasions, when the members of the Ayuntamiento attend, they have seats within the rails : this was the place formerly occupied by the Tribunal of the Inquisition. The Infanta, when she attends any service at the Cathedral, has a throne erected for her on the right of the altar, likewise within the *reja*. Behind the high altar rises one of the most splendid *retablos* in Spain. It is carved in *alerce*, a wood which used to abound, although it has now entirely disappeared from the face

of the country. It is of Gothic architecture, divided into thirty-six niches, each filled with scenes in the life of Our Saviour; the figures are nearly of the size of life, and are most exquisitely sculptured. It is a triumph of art, but unfortunately the gloom which pervades the building prevents its being seen to advantage.

There is something unutterably grand in this temple; no tawdry images—no tinsel ornaments detract from its simplicity. At all times, and at all hours of the day, it discloses some fresh beauty—at early morning, when the rising sun casts his beams through the painted glass, gilding here and there some giant pillar, and a few early worshippers are scattered through its aisles, attending to the mass celebrated in the different chapels:—at mid-day, when the doors are closed, and it rises in all its grand proportions, without a living being to disturb the tranquil grandeur of the scene:—and, at eve, when the varied tints of the setting sun, shining upon the windows, make them glow with the jewelled light of emeralds and rubies, and the building itself becomes obscured in the growing darkness.

On such festivals as Easter Sunday, when the church displays all her pomp and ceremonial, the scene during high mass is unequalled. Then the thrilling tones of the organ fall upon the ear, in deep devotional sounds, re-echoing through its lofty aisles; the sun, streaming in, lights up the crucifix above the retablo, while clouds of incense ascend to the vaulted roof, and the dense throng around kneel in mute and silent worship at the elevation of the consecrated host. And again, when the host is manifested, and the altar is decked with its costly statues and splendid frontal of solid silver, illumined by countless tapers and crowned by its jewelled remonstrance, the effect is