long on his peculiarities of style and peculiar excellences. Still, Murillo cannot be fitly studied or fully understood from those pictures only which have reached foreign collections. Without the independence and originality of his great countryman, his genius led him to select a style and mode of treatment which are varied, charming, and always pleasing; and those works emphatically his own will always be acknowledged as among the most interesting to the mass of spectators that have ever been produced. Unlike Velasquez, however, he was impressible, and changed his manner more than once, so that it requires a little consideration before one can feel perfectly satisfied how far the subjects he painted are really his own.

Till lately, Murillo was chiefly known in England as a painter of picturesque groups of Spanish boys eating fruit. His remarkable altar-pieces and other sacred subjects, of which the number is very large, and the variety extremely great, are now indeed rather more widely distributed, but are still hardly appreciated, and it requires, as I have said, that he also should be studied in Spain, if his true merits and demerits are to be felt and understood.

The great fault in almost all the works of this great master is want of dignity, so that in his sacred subjects, his infant Christs are but little children, and his Virgins beautiful girls. The beauties are, however, so numerous and so considerable, that they deserve careful notice. His colouring has a charm rarely attained by any artist, both flesh and drapery being boldly, firmly, and most successfully treated, and the result showing itself in a class of pictures, which are, perhaps more than any others, pleasing. Several of the pictures in the Madrid Gallery are remarkable instances of his success in this way. One, la Purísima Concepcion (the Conception of the Virgin*), is perfectly marvellous for the exquisite purity, sweetness and delicacy of the principal figure, the harmonious and yet brilliant colouring of the drapery, the thin, clear, warm atmosphere of the heavens, and the sweet figures of the angels and cherubs that are floating at the feet of Mary, -though she herself also floats in the air, without its being

^{*} The number of repetitions of this subject by Murillo is very remarkable, but although generally treated in the same style and with very similar feeling, they are in no sense copies of one another. The fine picture here alluded to is one of several (No. 229 of the Catalogue) in this collection.

possible to find fault with the incongruity. Many other pictures of this style are here, and they are all worthy of examination.

Another class of subjects by Murillo is more severe, partaking in some respects of the manner of Velasquez, and consisting of figures of saints. The portrait of St. James (No. 189) is a good example of this style. This fine picture is somewhat gloomy for Murillo, but is noble and even pleasing notwithstanding. There is more dignity than is often seen in his works, and it has even been said that the treatment is coarse, but it is on the whole a wonderful picture, and highly interesting as illustrating the powers of the artist. Many of the Murillos in the Madrid Gallery are already well known by engravings, but, I believe, the St. James is little if at all known in England.

While the masters of the Spanish school are thus nobly represented, the Madrid Gallery has also been enriched by the possession of some of the priceless gems of Italian art;—I say, it has been so enriched, but, alas! although the names remain in many cases, the realities are now lost for ever. Two of Raphael's best pictures, the Madonna del Pesce and the Perla, or Pearl, were amongst those removed to Paris, and being there were exposed to the most exaggerated form of that process called cleaning and renovating, by which, and by some subsequent treatment, it is not too much to say that these magnificent works have been totally and hopelessly spoilt. They are now bright, glaring, and hard; the aërial perspective and chiaro oscuro in many places absolutely destroyed, probably by repainting, and the first effect to the eye is that of hard wiry copies. On looking into them, the hand of the divine master is recognizable, but the charm of the picture is gone. One hardly knows whether to be more grieved at the irreparable loss, or indignant at the atrocious folly which could risk the destruction of such treasures for the chance of making the colouring brighter, and restoring that freshness which can hardly re-appear to advantage on a painting that has once lost it.

Next to Raphael, the works of Titian are the finest of the Italian school in the Madrid Gallery, and many of them are of the very highest order, admirably illustrating the wonderful power which this great painter possessed of delineating human flesh. There are no less than forty-three pictures by Titian in the museum. Some exceedingly fine pictures by Rubens, Vandyke,

and other Flemish masters are also in the collection, and few are second-rate; but I must not dwell on their excellences, as far more able critics have already so frequently expressed their opinions, and most of the artists have admirable illustrations in our own country. I feel, indeed, that some apology is due for venturing to say so much as I have done in the preceding pages, and can only plead a desire to induce others to pursue the same course, and obtain a personal knowledge of these marvels of pictorial art to be seen only in a city and country too seldom visited by British travellers. For the same reason I do not attempt to describe other collections of pictures in Madrid, of which there are several in no way remarkable in any national sense, although perhaps not unworthy of special description for the foreign works they contain.

The arrangement of the pictures in the gallery, and the light, especially in the newer part of the building, are extremely good. At one extremity of this room are brought together many of the finest pictures of various masters, native and foreign, and probably nowhere can a more grand or interesting group be seen. Here we may judge of and compare the merits and demerits of the Spanish and Italian schools, and observe their mutual influence and the extent to which the genius of the earlier has modified the works of the later masters.

I could not be at Madrid without being anxious to see a bull-fight, and thus judge for myself of the real nature and extent of the excitement produced by this last and singular remains of the amusements of a former time, when education and civilization had not softened the national character of the rest of Europe, and when bull-fights were well represented amongst our ancestors, by cock-fights, bear-baiting, dog-fights, and other similar exhibitions, at least equal in barbarity and barbarism to the peculiar glory of Spain—its tauro-machia.

It happened that on the very day of my first entrance to the capital, a solemnity of this kind was about to take place. I procured a ticket for a good place in the shade, and at the proper time (four P.M., when the intense heat of the sun was abating) proceeded to take my seat. The whole of the noble street leading to the principal gate, outside which is the amphitheatre, was crowded with people of all classes, anxiously bending their steps to the one great centre of attraction. Omnibuses, crowded

inside and out, and drawn along at full gallop by six horses—carriages of all kinds, from the britschska of the nobleman to the shabbiest of shabby cabs—and foot-passengers innumerable, completely filled the broad pathway. All the lower classes were in full costume, some of them being mounted on horses, whose scarlet housings were really magnificent: and the general effect of this part of the population, with a large sprinkling of water-sellers, fan-dealers (for everybody, male as well as female, takes a fan to the battle-field), cigar-lighters, and numerous others, following in their wake, and screaming their occupations at the top of their voices, produced a scene quite as exciting as any ordinary public amusement could be.

The appearance within the amphitheatre was extremely fine. The building itself measures about 600 feet in diameter, and holds when crowded at least 8000 people. When I entered, it was nearly full. Near the ground the mass of people were already seated, in all varieties of Spanish costume, both male and female, but the waving of fans almost obscured the details. Higher up, and in the boxes, the dresses were more gay and rich, but less picturesque. The central area, open to the day, was occupied by boys and stragglers, who, at a signal, were soon dispersed; and a procession, consisting of about twenty men-atarms on horseback, and headed by two men in full Castilian costume, paraded round the course. These were followed by a number of others, in the gayest spangled dresses, in regular order, whose business it is to excite and tease the bull, by holding out cloaks of the brightest colours, and then running away, inducing the bull to follow. These are called capeas, and escape when pursued by jumping over a strong barricade into a recess, where it is very rarely that the bull can follow them. Then came five men on horseback, in full black dress; afterwards six picadors, each armed with a spear, and padded so as to be safe from ordinary accidents; then a number of led horses, harnessed in threes, whose business it is to carry off the dead animals; next, ten men in a blue dress; and last of all, a number of men leading bull-dogs, the last resource when a bull refuses to show fight, and is not thought worthy of being killed by the sword.

All these at first merely pass in review and then leave, except two of the picadors and a number of the capeas, dressed in bright colours, with their cloaks on their arms; and the door is immediately opened for the bull to rush out.

It may well be imagined that very great difference will exist in the mode in which these animals behave when thus admitted into an open space, perplexed by a multitude of enemies close at hand, surrounded by a vast concourse of people shouting at the utmost pitch of their voices, and with a military band playing martial airs close to them. To watch this first impression was both interesting and exciting. The first bull on the present occasion, bred near Madrid, was bold as well as fierce. He charged the picador, who met him bravely with the lance, but the horns of the animal tore open the horse's belly; and although he again and several times withstood a similar charge, the man was at last thrown and the poor horse killed. Meanwhile the capeas were not idle, but worried and teased their victim till he was nearly exhausted.

A new set of tormentors, the bandarillos, then entered with darts covered with paper flounces, each dart having a sharp barbed point; and these were very cleverly stuck into the animal's neck, and infuriated him once more. The espada, or swordsman, at length appeared—his hair curiously knotted behind like that of a woman, and his whole appearance rather effeminate; standing in front of the bull, he dared him to the charge—exciting him with a scarlet cloth. While being rushed at, however, the espada steps adroitly aside, and plunges his long sword into the neck of the animal towards the heart. When the bull is dead, the horses that have been killed are first carried out by the team already described, and then the carcase of the bull is conveyed off in the same way at full gallop, the band playing a triumphant air in honour of the victory.

Such, with certain exceptions, is the march of events in those cases in which the bull is staunch, and the men well-experienced. If, however, the bull is not sufficiently courageous, and will not charge the mounted picador, dogs ("los perros") are loudly called for by the spectators, and are soon brought in, and

allowed to worry the animal.

The breed of bull-dogs used for this purpose did not seem to me particularly fine, but they soon succeeded in their object, although, in one case, not without some mischief being effected, and one poor dog killed.

Of the eight bulls brought out on the occasion in which I was a spectator, only one was really powerful, fierce, and determined; and the combat in his case had much that was grand and even terrible. He was bred in Seville—a black and white animal, with large spreading horns and a noble head. He fought with every enemy that presented himself, never refusing to attack. He killed four horses and mortally wounded two others, being himself killed at length by two stabs, fighting to the last, and rushing at the espada, after he had received one sword-thrust to the hilt, with almost as much vigour as if the battle had only just commenced.

One other, a black bull, also from Seville, showed much fight, and killed three horses, but was not so determined as the last. The rest were far inferior, one of them refusing even to attack the unarmed men, and being easily killed by three dogs.

Certainly there must be an element of savage nature in the heart of most men, to enjoy a scene like that I have just narrated; and, although I do not believe I am more bloody-minded than my neighbours, I must confess to a feeling of excitement, not unmingled with pleasure, while the scene was being enacted. The attitudes of the bull are, many of them, extremely fine, especially when in the act of preparing to attack; while the calm resolution of the picador or espada, with his eye fixed upon the animal, ready to receive him and prepared for any emergency the cool daring with which he steps aside to avoid a danger he cannot meet, and is again prepared, if necessary, for another attack—the rapid movements of the capeas, with their cloaks playing about in the air—all these, combined with the intensity of interest felt by all around, marked occasionally by the unanimous rise of a whole side of the amphitheatre to obtain a better view of some passing event, communicate even to the most unimpassioned some glow of excitement, however opposed to his better judgment.

But the effect of all this must be bad. To see a gentle-looking creature, all delicacy and kindness at another time, calmly look on on an occasion of this kind, and even laugh, instead of shudder, as some unfortunate horse is actually disemboweled by a sharp stroke from the horn of the maddened bull—to see the same woman (can we use the term?) wave a handkerchief, and become wildly excited when the death-blow is given, and

the blood pours forth in dark streams upon the ground, regarding the whole with the cheek flushed and the eye fixed as if she herself would willingly be the butcher—these are scenes which one had rather not witness, but which seem the natural results of this national sport. I would not judge harshly in a case like this, but it is difficult to persuade oneself that other than evil can arise from such an education.

And the effect on the Spanish nation is apparently what might be expected. Accustomed to the sight of blood in their amusements, they think little of shedding it in reality. It makes them cruel rather than brave, and more apt to commit murder than to fight. That this is the case, all their history has shown: and. however for the moment the condition of the people may seem improved, and tending towards progress in the arts of civilization, those who know most of the Spaniards are least hopeful in regard to any permanent alteration in those manners and peculiarities which stand in the way of real advance. I am far, indeed, from suggesting that bull-fights are the cause of this; they are amongst the remains of an age rapidly passing away, and rather proofs of the existence of the feelings of an earlier period, than the causes of such feelings at present. They are, however, so necessary to a Spaniard's existence, that the race itself must probably be in some measure remodeled, in order that the gradual abolition of the national amusement may arise from altered sentiments among the people themselves.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE CENTRAL PLATEAU AND NATURAL PASSES OF SPAIN.
A VISIT TO GRANADA AND THE ALHAMBRA.

From Madrid, as a starting-point, it will be instructive to consider the aspect of the interior of Spain, first in its northern extension across the granite and limestone ridges separating the lofty central plateau of table-land from the Pyrenees, and afterwards across the somewhat similar line of broken country forming towards the south another intermediate ridge, terminated by the lofty mountains of the Sierra Nevada and several sierras of less elevation separating the table-land from the Mediterranean. There is a considerable amount of resemblance in the general features in these two great barriers of Spain. Both are naturally almost impregnable; both are double, and both are terminated by very lofty mountains. They differ indeed greatly in details; but as the one separates old Spain from France, and the other from Andalusia, we find that the national character is changed in a somewhat similar manner on the northern and southern sides of the passes, and that the central plains are thus terminated in each direction by natural landmarks that affect the human race as well as inanimate nature.

The high plateau of central Spain is everywhere nearly the same, except where broken by mountain chains. Towards the west, however, and also towards the north-east from Madrid, considerable elevations containing much mineral wealth are known to occur, while towards the south-east the edge of the table-land is comparatively little elevated. Without further preface I now proceed to a short description of the physical features of the country between Madrid and the Pyrenean chain, including an account of the pass on the western side of that chain, which may be compared with the description already given in a former chapter of the eastern pass by Figueiras.

Once out of the mud walls which enclose the town, and both Madrid and its population cease to exist. A very few miles are enough to detach us entirely from the busy scene, and place us in what is almost a desert. This lasts, however, only for a few miles, and the traveller on the high road towards France soon meets with objects of deep interest. Immediately around the capital there are, it is true, few objects of interest of any kind, but very soon the serrated ridge of a picturesque and noble mountain-chain—the Somo-sierra—rises up like a wall before us, and on a nearer approach an almost vertical mass of granite is seen stretching out, barring the way northwards and frowning defiance to the approaching traveller. The whole forms a narrow but broken ridge of decomposing rock, vast masses being thrown about in every direction, huge flat blocks and smaller boulders covering the adjacent plains, rounded piles heaped together in confusion, and the surface of the whole neighbouring district entirely derived from this one source. Seen from whatever point, the view of this fine Sierra is grand and striking, while occasionally, where the decomposition of the granite is most complete, a rich vegetation of trees may be observed, especially where from any accident water is retained near the surface.

When past this range the face of the country changes considerably, and a broad tract intervenes, chiefly of undulating ground, occupying the space between the granitic Sierra and another range at some distance, which forms the southern boundary of the valley of the Douro. Everywhere across this tract the scenery is marked and grand. It is not indeed highly cultivated, rich, or in the ordinary sense "pretty" scenery, but it is much more than this, and I cannot but pity the traveller who can pass over such a district and speak of it as "a hideous country," undeserving of another word. It appeared to me to be a magnificent mountain-track, excelled by few in its own peculiar style of grandeur, and characteristic in the highest degree of the remarkable physical geography of the Iberian Peninsula. Let no one, therefore, be deterred from visiting Spain by the dread of the long journey back from the capital of the country to the frontier of France. The journey is not only a fit and instructive introduction to the district, but it abounds in objects of interest to the lover of nature and fine scenery, and nowhere more so than in that so-called hideous portion between the Somo-sierra and the Douro *.

^{*} Like many other kinds of scenery, the effect is much dependent on the order in which it is taken. The journey from Madrid to Bayonne is

The descent into and view of the valley of the Douro is very beautiful and rural. Considerable masses of gravel, often of very great thickness and forming hills of a marked character, here intervene, and show a comparatively recent elevation of the whole of this part of the Peninsula, while the effects of water in removing large portions of similar accumulations once existing are no less strongly indicated.

The country between Aranda, on the Douro, and Burgos we passed in the night, and it did not appear to be so interesting as the earlier part of the route. Burgos itself is a fine venerablelooking Gothic city, with a cathedral whose exterior is of the richest and most florid character. It is indeed considered to be one of the finest cathedrals in Spain, and the exquisite finish of the open stonework, as well as the general composition of the grand or west front, fully justify that reputation. The interior, however, with the exception of a noble octagon tower rising 180 feet from circular buttresses, between the choir, nave and transepts, is of rather too mixed a style, and too much loaded with decoration to be altogether pleasing. There is too, unfortunately, a vast deal of modern work overlaying the fine Gothic, and injuring the effect. Still, it is rarely that one sees so grand a specimen of human labour, and the picturesque unevenness of the ground on all sides greatly adds to the effect. The cloisters are fine, and also on irregular ground.

Towering above the cathedral and town is the fine old castle of Burgos, celebrated in ancient Spanish history, and memorable also amongst the localities that have shed such glory on our own great hero of the Peninsula. Large portions of the old walls of the town still remain on the river front, but on other sides these are now destroyed.

From Burgos the road proceeds across a second principal range separating the waters of the Douro from those of the Ebro, and is interesting from the contrast of forms and resulting structure of the country when compared with the granite ridge of the Somo-sierra. Here the rock is limestone and is cleft in

far more interesting than that from Bayonne to Madrid, arising partly from the gradual increase of interest felt in the former case in approaching instead of receding from the chief mountain-chain, and the higher style of cultivation, and partly from the fact that the various points of interest really look best when seen and approached from the south.

various ways, but chiefly so as to leave one narrow defile through which the road is made to pass, and which is rarely equalled for boldness, natural strength, and picturesque beauty. The jagged forms here shown are far more square than those of the granite, which are serrated like the teeth of a comb; the clefts are far deeper, and the pass is singularly direct and level. Up to the moment of entering it there seems no possible way of advancing, so steep and abruptly do the rocks rise. When we have traversed it also the character of the scenery is completely changed, and a smiling beautiful country succeeds to the somewhat rough and gloomy scenery on the southern side. This pass of Pancormo forms another of those strongholds which the Spaniards possess, and of which they seem to have made so little use in the war when the French first took possession of the Peninsula under Bonaparte. In former times, however, it served as a permanent defence against the Moors, who never advanced beyond it.

The upper valley of the Ebro is entered when this defile is passed, and the distant Pyrenees are now seen rising nobly before us. Passing through the town of Vittoria, so memorable for the utter defeat of the French on the 21st of June, 1813, when they were finally driven out of the Peninsula, the road soon enters a hilly country, prettily covered with houses and villages, and for the most part well-cultivated, forming a part of the Basque provinces, remarkable as containing a peculiar population, quite distinct from any other, either of France or Spain. The villages become more numerous, cleaner, and larger; the people are a finer and better developed race; the farms are better cultivated, and a general air of neatness prevails quite unknown in the two Castilles. The aspect of the people and country reminded me of some parts of Cornwall and Wales, and the peculiar dress of the people—the women wearing a round hat as in Wales—assisted, no doubt, in this resemblance. Before long the country becomes more bold, and the first flanking range of the Pyrenees is crossed. We then immediately enter the mountains, and after rising for a time descend suddenly a magnificent mountain gorge clothed with the richest verdure, both of wooded and cultivated land, while several villages and detached farms contribute to render the scene more picturesque. I have seldom met with anything either in Switzerland or the Tyrol more pleasing than this

mountain-road, and seen as it was in a half-light near sunset, with the darkness of advancing night keeping some parts in the deepest shadow, while the tints of the setting sun brightened and enlivened other portions, it presented a rich contrast, occasionally heightened by the lights in the villages far below our feet, the whole being in the highest degree picturesque, and a fit introduction to that mountain-chain which we now entered in earnest, and which forms so important a physical boundary between lands geographically adjacent. The rest of the Pyrenean chain traversed between this first entrance and the gates of San Sebastian we passed by night, and with a somewhat thick mist covering the ground. I believe however it is not, on the whole, so fine as the first portion on the Spanish side *.

We reached San Sebastian about 5 A.M., just before sunrise, and there remained some time. This most beautifully-placed town, crowned by its fortress, appears to rise out of the sea, and as it really forms an island at low water, the appearance is hardly deceptive. Most of the streets are new, and the town altogether is neat and regular; but the chief charm is in the surrounding country and the port, which are singularly pleasing and cheerful. The hills are wooded quite to the water's edge; the deep indentations, partially occupied by fresh water, but affected by tidal influence, are fringed by pretty villages, and the whole country is well-wooded. The road out of San Sebastian is extremely pleasing, and the same style of scenery continues as far as the town of Irun, and the banks of the small stream, the Bidassoa, which separates Spain from France. In spite of the terrible account given of the frontier Spanish towns in Mr. Ford's Handbook, whose authority it is dangerous to contest, I must venture to record my opinion that Irun is a clean-looking, interesting town, full of cheerful, pleasant people, and that the Spanish officials on this frontier are like those I have seen elsewhere, perfectly well-behaved, and not at all troublesome, even when they are not propitiated by that bribe which is so strongly recommended.

The frontier between Spain and France is passed on crossing a bridge over the Bidassoa, near a point celebrated at the close

^{*} This part of the road, which I have since crossed by daylight, does not in fact afford much that is worthy of notice, though certainly pleasing and picturesque.



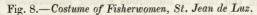


of the Peninsular War, as the scene of a brilliant and successful passage by the troops under the command of the Duke of Wellington, in the face of numerous strong fortifications carefully prepared by the French, and in spite of an army stationed in great force to oppose them. The view of the two countries, France and Spain, as seen from the bridge, is very beautiful, and includes a considerable extent of hilly picturesque land-scape; but the Spanish side is the more varied, broken and interesting, on account of the greater extent of cliff and hill in sight, and the number of houses and villages dotted about. The view from Irun, indeed, includes Fontarabia and the open sea, while that from the bridge takes in only one reach of the river, terminating at Irun; but the latter is also extremely interesting and pleasing.

On entering France, although we still continue in the Basque country, which is so peculiar both in the language and appearance of its inhabitants, there is yet a very marked difference to be observed. Even in the first small village of Behobia, a French appearance may be traced, and as we get on, the towns become neater, the people more business-like and active, the cultivation more decided, and trees begin to show themselves as the result of planting as well as by accident. The little town of St. Jean de Luz is a good instance of the change. It is of considerable antiquity, but the houses are white and the streets straight. The costumes of the people are here very peculiar, and the fisherwomen are especially worthy of notice. A group of them is shown in the accompanying woodcut (fig. 8). These dresses are quite distinct from any costumes of the North of Spain, and the character of the people is not less so.

As we rise from the river and advance towards Bidart, the country is highly picturesque, some hills at the time of our visit being covered with the most beautiful heaths in full blossom, mixed with numerous aromatic herbs scenting the air to a great distance, while others were cultivated; vines, maize-fields, and other produce giving a rich appearance to the landscape, without introducing formality. Hence to Bayonne the road is less hilly, but always varied and pleasing, and before the town is entered a number of good houses are passed in the outskirts,—a feature sufficiently marking the change of country, as in Spain it is very rare, except on the east coast, to find even a

single habitation outside the magic ceinture, often hardly even a mud wall, which encloses the town.





Such is an account of the country connecting the great tableland of Spain with the range of mountains which separates it from the much lower plains of Languedoc and Gascony. It should, however, be observed that this statement was drawn up immediately after my first visit to the country, when the very fact of the absence of all ordinary elements of the beautiful becomes of itself a sort of beauty, if only from novelty. It must also be borne in mind that the journey from Madrid northwards, starting from a dreary desert, and gradually entering mountain defiles and crossing a great mountain-chain, possesses an interest very different from, and much greater than, that experienced in advancing southwards from the French frontier, and entering upon scenery which becomes every mile more and more dreary and desolate. On a second voyage to Spain, proceeding in the wrong direction, although familiar with the country, I found the road uninteresting enough, but this does not induce me to doubt the correctness of my first impressions recorded above.