

arose amongst the Moors, Valencia had often her own kings, until the Cid, Ruy Diaz de Vibar, conquered the city in 1094, after a siege of twenty months, nominally for the King of Castile, but he reigned there despotically until his death in 1099, when the renowned Ximena, his widow, following the last advice of her husband, abandoned the place to the Almoravides, under the King of Cordova. In 1144, the Moors of Valencia availed themselves of the divisions in Andalusia, and again formed a separate kingdom, until subdued by Don Jaime the Conqueror, King of Arragon.

Don Jaime was trained to arms when quite an infant in the camp of Simon de Montfort, the leader of the crusade against the Albigenses, and his life was spent in a series of battles against his turbulent nobles, who refused to be governed by a child, and in continual crusades against the Moors, which gained him the title of "The Conqueror." French and even English joined his standard. In 1236, the kingdom of Valencia, the strong capital, and its delicious Huerta, the paradise of the Moors, were conquered by the invincible Don Jaime, and as Condé says, "The Moslems left that beautiful city in five days, and passed the Xucar, not considering themselves safe among the Christians; and thus ended the empire of the Moors in Valencia."\*

\* Condé, vol. iv, p. 23.

After gaining thirty victories over the Moors, the Conqueror died at the age of seventy-four, beloved and respected by his subjects, as a just and merciful, as well as valiant prince, and liberal promoter of science and learning.

When Ferdinand married Isabella, Valencia became a portion of the Spanish kingdom, and must have declined greatly when the Moors were driven from the kingdom. Having acknowledged Philip V., and subsequently rebelling against him, they were obliged after the battle of Almanza, to throw themselves on his mercy, and all their privileges were abolished, the states suppressed, and the laws and customs of Castile substituted for their own. The inhabitants are said to have wept, but

“ Mas eran lacrymas de rabia que de dolor.”

In 1808, the Valencians massacred the French residents, and Suchet revenged their deaths.

Valencia was called by the Arabs *Medinatu-ttarab*, the city of mirth; and one of its Arab kings said of it, “ I may compare Valencia to a beautiful maiden, dressed in a green robe of delicate texture. If I approach her she conceals under her green garments, her white and transparent bosom.”\*

The Tower del Miguelete should be ascended to

\* Gayangos' Mohammedan Dynasties, vol. I, p. 64.



acquire a general knowledge of the localities ; and it is only there that the City of the Cid can be duly appreciated. There are two hundred and eight steps to the summit, the height being one hundred and sixty-two feet ; and richly will the traveller be compensated for the fatigue of the ascent, which is not great, as the staircase is good, and generally well lighted. It was truly a splendid view. The blue Mediterranean, bounded by the horizon, was sprinkled with vessels ploughing their way to distant lands, and the large Lake of Albúfera stretches in the distance along the coast apparently placid and without a ripple on its waters, her angry mood having calmed down more rapidly than her neighbour, the still ruffled sea.

The magnificent Huerta, which surrounds the city, is bounded almost on all sides, except towards the sea, by picturesque ranges of mountains, and studded with villages with their churches and towers ; such a number of farms and thatched cottages, white and glittering in the sun, that the whole plain seems one vast village planted with carob-trees, poplars, mulberries, prickly pears, olives, and some few palm-trees. Sometimes more imposing edifices are distinguishable, such as Il Convento de los Reyes ; but generally the buildings are cottages, myriads of little white specks in a field of verdure, as countless in number as the stars which in these cloudless skies are visible at night.

The foreground to this splendid view is the City of the Cid, glittering with its numerous towers, as picturesque as the Italian campaniles, domes of various coloured tiles, and the magnificent Moorish looking gates, the splendid building now the tobacco manufactory, the immense faubourgs of the city, and houses, which from the extreme narrowness of the streets, seem to be one mighty conglomerated mass of habitations. The towers appear to be generally of the same style of architecture, square or octagonal, with flat balconies on the summits surrounded by balustrades; beneath the latter are arched windows, lighting the chambers where the bells are suspended, and on the flat balconies there are generally lanterns.

The domes of the Escuela Pia, and of the Governor's house, formerly a convent, with its gay roof, are very conspicuous. The two splendid lofty towers, Puerta de Cuale, and the Puerta de Serrano, with their battlements, appear to be Moorish.

The lantern of the tower of the church of San Nicolas rests on arches erected on the balcony, and is very elegant, and the tower of St. Louis is also good. The unfinished centre tower of the cathedral is best seen from here. The whole of the exterior is decorated with pointed arches, filled with tracery. The houses with their flat roofs, the Flora and the agriculture, and still more the swarthy



peasants of Valencia, with their Oriental costumes, reminded us continually of the dominion of the Moors, the most fascinating period of Spanish history.

The scene before us was one immense hive of industry; the roads and fields were crowded with labourers, carts and oxen. The hydraulic art of the East is the useful legacy which the Moors left to the Valencians, and this mighty plain is covered with a net-work of canals and aqueducts. The Arab shadoof is there; and my old friends, the Egyptian sakeeas, creak on the plain as the oxen drag round the stiff wheels which raise the strings of water-jars from the wells. It is unfortunate that the peasants do not rely on their own resources, sink wells and erect more of these wheels, rather than depend on their nets of conduits when there is no fish to catch. The Guadalaviar, spanned with noble bridges, which may be presumed to be no longer and stronger than at times may be required, now scarcely contains sufficient water to supply the washerwomen busy at their work.

It is bold to attempt to draw the outline of this beautiful and interesting view, but impossible to colour such a picture, and do justice to the splendid gleams of light on the surface of the sea and on the distant hills, the gorgeous tints of the immense plains, exhibiting all the hues of the richest carpet,

and then, such a lapis-lazuli heaven above, as in Italy or in Eastern lands could alone be equalled.

Valencia is as interesting to the mere utilitarian as Barcelona, for this city has also her manufactures, her agriculture, and an industry scarcely inferior; but Valencia had also her literary and scientific men, a noble school of painters, and no wonder they were splendid colourists. Mr. Sterling and Sir Francis Head have published admirable works on the Spanish artists, and these pages will often exhibit the use I made of their volumes. I formed, indeed, a little dictionary, more convenient for the pocket than that of Bermudez, which is not to be bought in London.

As even the names of Spanish painters are little known in England, a short notice of the principal Valencian artists is requisite before commencing the tour of the cathedral, churches, museums and private galleries, where I shall briefly notice their principal works, as no catalogues exist, and since Mr. Ford's visit many changes have been made.

The first great painter Valencia produced, was Vicente Joanes, who was born at Fuente de la Higuera, in 1523, and died in 1579, and was justly called the Spanish Raphael. Bermudez says there is no doubt that he studied in Italy, and it is not surprising that the magnificent works of Raphael should have induced him to select that great painter



for his model. Joanes's earliest paintings are often extremely Raphaelesque; rich and warm in colouring, and graceful in their composition; but less elaborately finished than his later productions, in which he seems to imitate the minuteness of Leonardo da Vinci, without combining that great master's exquisite softness. In many of his works, distinguished for richness of colouring and deep feeling, excellent drawing and fine composition, there is a hardness resembling Bellini's, and an elaborate finishing rivalling Denners. Bermudez says truly, that he was distinguished "for the delicacy of the hair and beard of his figures, and the sweet expression of his Christs." Like Fra Angelico, he never undertook any sacred subject without confessing and praying for assistance; and certainly his paintings of our Saviour seem almost the results of inspiration—more divine representations of love and holiness, and at the same time dignity, cannot be conceived.

Fra Nicholas Borrás, the son of a tailor, was born at Cocentayna, in this kingdom, in the year 1530. He became a monk, and though not much younger than Joanes, was supposed to have been his pupil. His paintings are often distinguished for their fine expression, and are well drawn and elaborately finished, though sometimes hard, and generally very inferior to his master's.

Francisco de Ribalta, one of the finest painters of the Valencian school, was born at Castellon de la Plana, in 1551. Love aided his natural genius, and supplied a stimulus, which, in this warm climate, must often be requisite to strive against idleness. Enamoured of his master's daughter, and refused as unworthy of her, he induced her to engage herself to him for three or four years, while he visited Italy and studied the best painters, "especially," says Bermudez, "Raphael, the Carraccis, and Sebastiano del Piombo." On his return, he entered his master's study, and finding a painting on an easel, finished it so admirably, that his master, delighted with the performance, said to his daughter, "This is the man I would marry you to, and not to that bungler, Ribalta." This artist seems to have gained perfection by being an elaborate copier of those great Italian masters. Sebastiano del Piombo seems, however, to have been his favourite. Ribalta's colouring, though dark, is very fine, and his drawing is generally correct and full of dignity. His paintings are almost always distinguished by a grand expression, and often, indeed, the deepest feeling.

Juan de Ribalta, his son, was born in 1597, and died in 1628. The work he accomplished at the early age of eighteen is quite extraordinary, and will be noticed in the account of the museum. Two of the



best judges of paintings at Valencia, who were with me in the Carmen, could not agree as to whether some paintings were by the father or the son, so similar are their styles, and, according to Bermudez, the professors in his day were equally puzzled. The son's paintings appeared to me more vividly coloured than his father's, and more poetical in their composition, which is not surprising, as Bermudez says he was a poet.

Josef de Ribera, called Spagnoletto, was born at Xativa, in 1558, and died at Naples, in 1656. He went to Rome at an early age, and there, oppressed with poverty, availed himself of the liberality of a cardinal, and lived in his house. Finding that his genius required the spur of necessity, he left his patron, and soon earned fame and wealth. At Naples, basking in the sunshine of Court favour, he gave way to a mean and brutal jealousy of Italian artists, among others, Guido and Domenichino, causing the death of the latter, which has left a deep stain on his memory. His own death is supposed to have been caused by his distress at the seduction of his daughter by Don Juan of Austria. Ribera is better known in England than any other Spanish painter, except perhaps Murillo. Having lived so long in Italy, many of his paintings have found their way to England, and in Italy they are still numerous. All admire his admirable effects

of light and shadow, and his splendid colouring, though too dark ; but few like his style. The subjects of his paintings are seldom pleasing, and often painful in the extreme. I have seen, however, some of his works which are really charming, without losing that grandeur for which they are generally distinguished.

Esteban March was born in Valencia at the end of the 16th century, and died there in 1660. He was a pupil of Orrente, the Spanish Bassano, and is famous for his battle-scenes, which always exhibit great spirit, though they are occasionally incorrect in drawing. It is said he used to excite his imagination to the proper pitch by beating a drum or blowing a trumpet, and then, like Don Quixote, fighting the walls with his sword. Some of his domestic subjects are very beautiful, and sometimes he painted very noble works, resembling the best style of Ribera.

Jacinto Geronimo de Espinosa was born in Valencia, in 1600, and died there in 1680, and has left an immense number of works. He is called the Spanish Michael Angelo, and his drawing is bold and powerful, much more so than Ribalta's. His colouring, though good, is not equal to that artist's, and his paintings appeared to me sometimes deficient in feeling, though Bermudez praises the graceful expression and attitudes of his figures. Their



correct drawing and noble composition certainly entitle him to a high rank amongst the Valencian painters.

There are other artists of considerable merit belonging to this school, but these are the principal masters whose works are now to be seen in Valencia. It will be sufficient to notice the others when their names occur.

The cathedral is said to stand on the site of a Roman temple. It has twice been converted into a mosque by the conquering Moors, and twice changed into a Christian temple, and in every important part (except the interior of the tower) is of the Italian style of architecture, all the arches circular, and the columns Corinthian. The *façade* is in the extraordinary form of a receding semicircle, frightful to look at, and decorated without the least taste. Though externally there is little to admire in this cathedral, with its concave *façade*, and (except, perhaps, the tower) the exterior is altogether unworthy of Valencia ; one of the entrances, with its circular arch, is handsome, and the interior is rather fine. About a century ago, considerable repairs being requisite, the style of the architecture was changed, having previously been Gothic, and not the best. The interior is divided into three aisles, and except for the incongruity of the centre tower being richly ornamented in the Gothic style, which, however, is

not seen until beneath it, the effect is imposing. The choir is decorated, with beautiful carving of walnut-tree consisting of figures and decorations; and two fine organs, opposite to each other. The elaborate alabaster west end of the choir, with the indifferent sculpture and twisted marble columns, with white Corinthian capitals, is less deserving attention than the beautiful paintings which adorn the lofty door panels behind the grand altar. There are six on each side, in three rows of two each, and when the door is opened, fresher and more beautiful paintings are seen. The Presentation at the Temple is admirable—the boys in the foreground charmingly painted—the large figure is good, and the composition, and the colouring excellent. The painting above this is very fine, representing four women sitting round a brazier of fire, such as is now used in Spain. One of them, the Madonna with her Child; in the background, St. Ann reclining on a couch. The painting above is the meeting of St. Elizabeth. On the opposite side is the Flight into Egypt. The Madonna is a little in Luini's style, but these paintings are not by Leonardo da Vinci, probably by his pupils, Pablo de Aregio and Francisco Neapoli, but as they are so little in the style of Leonardo, Villanueva may be right in attributing them to Felipe Paolo of St. Leucadia, a Burgundian artist. A great painter the artist



certainly was who did them, whoever he may have been.

The painting above the Flight into Egypt, represents the Presentation of our Saviour to St. Simeon: the female figure with a basket on her head is very graceful. Of the six on the other side, the Nativity, and the Death of the Virgin, are the most beautiful, especially the latter, which exhibits wonderful strength of colouring. The drawing and composition of all these paintings are admirable, and Philip II. might well say, that if the altar was of silver, they were of gold.

On a gay shield close adjoining, are exhibited the spurs and boots of St. Jaime the Conqueror. The ceiling is richly and heavily gilt, but altogether the effect is imposing. In the first room of the sacristy, is a good painting of Christ bearing the Cross, copied by Ribalta, from a painting now in the Madrid Gallery, by Sebastiano del Piombo. A large painting, a Deposition from the Cross, is called of the school of Murillo. The expression of the Virgin is fine, and Christ and the Angels well drawn. In the second room, an *Ecce Homo*, said to be by Joanes, rather stiff and hard, but the expression is fine, and the mantle well coloured. Our Saviour, with a Lamb behind his head, and its feet on each shoulder, by Joanes. The upper part of this little painting is full of expression, the head ini-

mitable in every respect ; the lower part not equal, and not done by the same master, or probably injured by restoring. The large painting representing Abraham sacrificing Isaac, by Espinosa, might have been painted by Michael Angelo, the drawing is so bold and powerful. The expression of Isaac is all submission, but there is not that deep feeling in Abraham's face the subject requires, nor has the Angel arresting Abraham's hand aught of celestial beauty. There is a small crucifix of ivory in this room, which is fine, but it exhibits too great a knowledge of anatomy.

The third room contains a Holy Family, said to be by Joanes, but except the St. Ann, the other figures, though well drawn, are not pleasing, and anything but Raphaelesque, and I do not think it is painted by that master. There is also a Last Supper, by Joanes, exquisitely finished ; but with a recollection of Leonardo's, there seems to be a want of dignity and grandeur in this painting, though undoubtedly great beauty in the expression of our Saviour, and the colouring is good. In the same room are two single figures by Joanes, and underneath the Last Supper, a Deposition from the Cross, very well painted in a stiff style, much resembling Bellini's. Opposite to these is a small painting, representing the Conversion of St. Paul, by Joanes, a great gem,



the colouring admirable; the horse beautifully drawn, and certainly the painting I coveted most in the cathedral. On each side of it are two fine portraits of St. Thomas de Villanueva, and il Beato Ribera, two noble specimens of the power of the great Valencian portrait painters; the former is by Joanes, the latter by Ribalta. St. John and the Lamb is a good painting, with a fine sky, by Antolinez, who was born at Seville in 1639; and near it is an excellent St. Francis, by the same master.

In the Relicario there is now little left; a tooth of San Cristobal, a hand of St. Luke, and one of the Innocents murdered by Herod, will perhaps be sufficient to satisfy the credulous. There is literally nothing remaining of the beautiful silver-work which formerly enriched this cathedral. There is however, a very rich pulpit-covering, and the three altar-coverings, purchased in London by two Valencian merchants at Henry VIII.'s sale of the Romish decorations of St. Paul's. They are exquisitely worked in gold and silver, representing various subjects of the life of Christ, especially the Crucifixion, which is the best. Among the subjects are turrets, which may easily be recognised as taken from the Tower of London.

There are also there three paintings, I think by

Pontons, but not well done. There are other interesting works of art in the cathedral. An angel defending St. Barbara from the devil, by Joanes; the St. Barbara well painted. An Adoration of the Magi, by Lopez, of considerable merit, though a copy of Meng's, for the fine effect of light and the beauty of the Virgin and Child. A Virgin and Child, by Ribera. In the old sacristy is a finely carved Crucifixion, by Alonso Cano, the expression of our Saviour admirable. It is larger than life, and the wood it is carved on is attached to a painting on panel, by Joanes, representing the Madonna and other figures gazing at our Saviour on the Cross. The drawing and colouring are very Raphaelesque, but there is no beauty in the expression of the figures.

In the chapel of San Miguel is a beautiful small head of the Madonna, by Sasso Ferrato, done in his soft style and usual attitude. In the chapel of San Pedro there is a fine head of our Saviour, by Joanes, in his best manner, quite Raphaelesque, and exquisitely finished. In the chapel of the Borgia family, distinguished for their crimes and power, there is a painting, which is considered one of the best of Francisco Goya, who was born in the kingdom of Arragon, in 1746, and died in 1828. This picture represents the departure of one of the Borgias, his taking leave of his relations, and



is very well painted; but though I admire this artist, who has a great reputation in Valencia, I think his style is very inferior to the old masters.

The tombs in the cathedral are some of them curious, and also the retablos; but I noticed no sculpture worthy of particular notice. The traveller must trust to his own knowledge for finding out the paintings. The person who shows them is about as ignorant as the *valets-de-place*, except that the latter do not pretend to know anything about them, and like the sacristan, call them all Joanes or Ribalta.

Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados is close adjoining the cathedral, and the interior, which is oval in form, is rather good. The roof is painted by Palomino, and looks very gay; but the figures, though somewhat graceful, are wanting in force. The yellow background has a light and pleasant effect. Don Antonio Palomino was born at Bujalance, in 1653, and was a pupil of Juan Valdés Leal, and died at Madrid in 1726. He has left many large works, but no great ones. Some of his smaller compositions are sometimes graceful, though Spanish art is more indebted to his prosy pen than to his weak pencil.

The church of San Andres consists of one nave, and is decorated with stucco ornaments and gilding,

but not in the best taste. In a chapel, to the left on entering, is a most charming painting, by Joanes, of the Madonna giving the breast to the Infant Jesus, with a Saint on each side. The St. John with the Lamb is a fine Raphaellesque figure, and the Madonna and the Child are beautifully drawn, the expression admirable; and certainly this is one of the most beautiful works of the great Valencian painter. On the opposite side is an *Ecce Homo*, by Vergara, which resembles and seems a copy of the *Ecce Homo* by Joanes, in the cathedral. In the next chapel to it is a Deposition from the Cross, by Joanes; the Saviour and the Angels supporting him well drawn, and the expression of the latter good.

Close to this church is the Academia, which was richly endowed by Charles III., and contains some good paintings. St. Teresa and the Doves, badly restored; but the head of the Saint is fine, and the hands are also well painted. A small copy of the Transfiguration, by Ribalta, is very good, though the colours are darker than the original. There is a magnificent Ribera, representing the drawing the arrows from St. Sebastian. I never saw a finer painting by this master. The light on the body of the Saint is truly admirable, but it is a pity that the other figures in the painting are not equally fine. There are three Espinosas together: that of Pedro Pasqual is the best. The figure of the boy



in this painting is beautifully painted. There are two Battles, by Esteban March ; the heads of the horses are quite out of proportion to the rest of their bodies, but there is considerable spirit in the composition.

Nos. 73 and 74, by Padro Borrás. The Death of St. Jerome is very fine. The monks weeping around the body, and the angels hovering above are extremely beautiful. The other painting represents two angels flogging the Saint, who looks up to a figure of our Saviour for divine support. 19 and 56. Two fine seated figures of St. Jerome and St. Paul in the desert by March, very much resembling Ribera in style. A fine painting representing the Sacrifice of Isaac, by Ribalta, but unfortunately much injured in the restoration. Christ as a boy sleeping on a cushion. Some of the heads are good, particularly the female to the left ; but this, like most in this collection, is injured in restoring.

The room containing these pictures is nicely fitted up with chandeliers and arm-chairs for the members of the Academy, and at the end of it is a painting of the Queen, a copy of one by Lopez. In another room we saw nothing but paintings of flowers, all modern, except two by Espinosa, one a bunch of exquisite flowers in an elegant vase, very good. We afterwards went into a room where there were a great number of boys copying studies of different parts of the body. They say there are three hundred

pupils, who are allowed to study gratis, but they did not appear any of them to be copying from good subjects. We then went into a room where there were a quantity of busts and statues in plaster; casts from well-known antiques, but the collection did not appear to be very rich. There were a number of seats with candles to each, for the students who draw there regularly every day. There was another room, where I observed two good drawings by Mengs, and a student copying a copy of a head by the same painter, whose popularity, so great in the time of his royal patron, Charles III., seems to have survived to this day.

I entered into conversation with the artist, and could not help advising him to copy the great Valencian masters; but, admitting that they were great painters, he contended that their schools were bad, and that Mengs was one of the best of painters and perfection itself. He seemed astonished, and incredulous when I told him how little he was esteemed in every other country. There was another room for studying perspective, and there again I observed the subjects were very bad.

I could only glance into the large room appropriated to architecture, as the Professor was lecturing. It is very creditable to Valencia that there should be such a liberal and praiseworthy institution as this, but I fear little is to be expected from an academy where Mengs is made the tutelary



divinity, where the great Valencian masters are neglected, and the best students occupied in copying a poor copy of the work of such a painter as Mengs. The building is large and spacious, affording ample accommodation for paintings and students.

In the little Church of the Virgin del Milagro, the retablo of the grand altar is beautifully carved and richly gilt. There is a good painting of a Head of a Madonna, by Lopez, almost like Carlo Maratta in style and composition.

## CHAPTER V.

MUSEUM—SAN MARTIN—SANTA CATALINA—SAN JUAN—SAN  
NICOLAS—COLEGIO DE CORPUS—FINE RIBALTAS—SAN SAL-  
VADOR—SAN THOMAS—THE CARMEN—PRIVATE GALLERIES.

THE Museum el Carmen, formerly a convent, is a large building with handsome courts, and contains spacious rooms filled with about eight hundred paintings, all of them of the Valencian school, and some really splendid ; but by far the greatest proportion are bad copies and daubs. Not to weary the reader with an account of the paintings most deserving of notice in this gallery, I will describe them in Appendix A. As no catalogue exists, a short notice of them may, I trust, be of some use to future travelers. Those, indeed, who have already had enough of paintings, had better pass on to the next chapter.

In the Church of San Martin there is a fine Dead



Christ, by Ribalta ; the figure of the weeping Mary exquisite, the drapery on her head very beautifully painted. Over the entrance of this church, is a bronze group of the Saint on horseback, giving his cloak to the beggar. The figures are better done than the horse, which is detestable.

In the Church of Santa Catalina is a painting of the Coronation of the Virgin by Ribalta ; the faces are large, the effect grand of the *chiaro-scuro*, but no great beauty in the figures ; the figure of St. Joseph in the corner is, however, good.

The Church of San Juan has a plateresque interior ; but the effect is not bad of the old statues which adorn the centre aisle and the altar with its statues and rich gilding. The roof is painted by Palomino, and perhaps his best work, as it is certainly much superior to his fresco in the Chapel de la Virgen de los Desamparados. The light is very bad, but sufficient to distinguish several female heads, painted with considerable grace, though not with much force ; the background of the fresco is a pale yellow, which throws a pleasing light on the different groups. In the chapel of the communion of this church, is the Purissima Concepcion, considered the most exquisite painting in Valencia, which Joanes produced after previously preparing himself by a course of religious exercises. The Virgin is colossal, in a white dress, with a blue cloak extending to her feet ; her