

Strafford had held despotic rule over the mind of the king, who loved him. For five-and-thirty years he had held in subjection the proud and lawless Castilian nobles, who feared him. When he went forth it was with royal state, followed by a train of knights, and with 3,000 lances in his pay. Absolute in power, strong in will, the haughty Constable bore down all before him, and even scrupled not to oppose the wishes of his royal master as to whom he should wed as his second queen. Isabella of Portugal was the princess chosen by the minister; the marriage took place, and proved the death warrant of Alvaro de Luna.

She on whom the minister's choice had fallen, and whose fair form, sculptured in alabaster, now lies by the side of her weak husband in the church of the Miraflores at Burgos, hated and feared the man who had raised her to the throne. All her newly-acquired influence over the feeble mind of the king was exerted to bring about the disgrace of the favorite.

By nature fearless and chivalrous, Alvaro suspected no treachery, and was betrayed into the hands of his enemies by the prince in whom he trusted. Condemned to die, he met his death with firmness and courage. Betrayed by his king, deserted by his followers, the once mighty Constable rode through the streets of Valladolid to the place of execution in this Plaza, meanly mounted, and wearing the coarse black dress of a criminal. Calmly he stood and looked upon the scaffold, saying, "This is the guerdon of loving and faithful service to my king;" and then, having knelt in prayer, gave himself up to the executioner.

As the axe fell, a long loud wail burst forth from the fickle crowd, struck to the heart by so brave a death, so tragical an end to so much greatness.

Valladolid was the faithful city to which Isabella la Catolica fled to avoid a marriage with the King of Portugal,* a marriage hateful to her, but favoured by her brother Henry IV. The Archbishop of Toledo, and a small body of his retainers, came to her aid, and

* Richard, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., was also a suitor for her hand.

enabled her to effect her escape to Valladolid, which opened its gates with enthusiasm to the fugitive princess.

Here she was met by Ferdinand of Aragon, to whom she was betrothed, and who, in order to meet his bride, had passed through the territory of his enemy disguised as a servant. At Valladolid their marriage took place, and the romance which attended the early history of Isabella still clings to her memory. The name of Isabella la Católica recalls to every Spaniard daring deeds of chivalry and great events, which make her reign renowned in Spanish history.

The Cathedral is unsightly in architecture, and uninteresting in all respects.

We passed on quickly, therefore, to the Church of St. Maria l'Antigua, with its tall steeple of many coloured tiles—a Church attractive in outward form and beautiful within. High Mass was being celebrated, and on entering we saw before us a long line of kneeling figures; the women, in black, with veiled heads; not a chair or seat to be seen, all kneeling on the paved ground with faces bent to the earth in a posture of humble confession; the effect was most striking; even startling in its contrast to our ideas of orthodox worship in England, which are somewhat closely connected with well-stuffed hassocks and cushioned seats, suited to repose.

Not far from Santa Maria l'Antigua is San Paolo, with a façade richly ornamented with heraldic devices, and coats of arms borne aloft by angels!

Sumptuous without, empty within, San Paolo is associated with the name of the cruel Dominican Torquemada, who, having been a monk of this convent, rebuilt the Church, and decorated it magnificently, on his accession to power as Prior of the Order of Dominicans, and head of the Inquisition in Spain. This man had been appointed confessor to Isabella la Católica, in her early youth, and his fierce bigotry cast a dark shade upon her character.

He had extorted from her a solemn promise that should she ever become queen, “she would devote herself to the extirpation of heresy for the glory of God, and exaltation of the Catholic faith.”

The Jews in the newly conquered kingdom of Granada were the first victims of Torquemada's zeal. He insisted on their being expelled from the soil.

The Queen was at first inclined to waver and relent, and on one occasion she and Ferdinand having given audience to one of this persecuted race, who offered 30,000 ducats to defray the cost of the Moorish war, if banishment were not inflicted on his people, Torquemada rushed into the royal audience chamber with a Crucifix in his hand. Holding up the image of the Saviour before the Queen, he exclaimed, in hoarse accents, "Judas Iscariot sold his Master for 30 pieces of silver, you would sell Him anew for 30,000. Here He is—take Him and barter Him away," and with these impious words the infuriated Dominican cast down the Crucifix before them and quitted the room.

Such was the man, empowered by Pope Sixtus IV. in 1483 to frame the laws of the Spanish Inquisition, and placed by him at the head of that dread tribunal. Valladolid was often given the spectacle of an *auto de fé* by this former monk of San Paolo, and the Plaza Mayor was selected as best suited for such a ceremony. Here, arrayed in short yellow blouses (called *San Benitos*), on which were painted fiery flames and figures of devils; their heads made to tower high above the crowd, with the sugar-loaf cap, called "*Coreza*," and wearing on their breasts a red cross; the victims of savage intolerance were led out in bitter mockery, two and two, having their accusation, written on white placards, fastened round their necks—a spectacle to men and angels! Round the Plaza, lined with ecclesiastics in robes of state, moved the dismal procession, whilst priests pressed them onwards to the stake with fiendish zeal. At this horrid spectacle Christian Kings and Queens at one time assisted, and Spanish grandees claimed the right of bearing the banner of the Holy Office, as their highest privilege.

From San Paolo we made our way to San Gregorio—once a college, now a barrack. It is of the same type as San Paolo, having a façade of heraldic character, and possessing a fine quadrangle.

The Museo at Valladolid has little to detain travellers.

The eye is painfully arrested by one of those wood carvings, wonderful as to execution, horrible as to subject in which Spanish artists excel—the “Martyrdom of San Lorenzo”—a subject ever present to the mind of Philip II.

In another room is the head of St. Paul after death, —equally wonderful and equally painful.

Sight seeing is very tiring in these Spanish towns, as there are no small carriages for hire in the streets and nothing less than an omnibus to be had at the hotels, so that after some hours spent in walking through unpaved streets, from one Church to another, our energy was considerably abated, and our mental condition best expressed in those dreary words, “*La journée est dure, mais—elle finira!*”

At length we returned to the “Fonda de Paris,” and sat down to dinner very weary, but were sumptuously regaled with partridges, asparagus, and strawberries.

Early rising is a necessity in Spain,—but in attainment very difficult. The morning train leaves Valladolid at 6.30, and unless you are at the station some three quarters of an hour before the train starts, you will probably have to leave your luggage behind you, for it is impossible to imagine any body of men so slow, or so deaf to all suggestions of haste as Spanish railway officials.

Then again, though early rising becomes thus a necessity, it is just during the early hours in the morning, and only these, that you can sleep undisturbed—for till the day dawns, the newspaper vendors cease not their cry under your windows; the watchman also, who has passed away in other lands, still calls the hours here; and when his voice is waning in the distance, you are aroused by the notes of the guitar, followed by a serenade. Such is a night's *rest* at Valladolid.

VALLADOLID TO AVILA.—The journey is only six hours by the morning train. A drizzling rain had set in when we left Valladolid, making still more lugubrious the woods of Stone Pine and Ilex through

which we passed. Then followed long weary miles of young wheat, till a strange wild country met our view—not a tree to be seen, nothing but huge unwieldy stones rising up over the face of the land, without a shrub to relieve the grey sand up to the Avila Station.

AVILA.—An excellent buffet, and an omnibus waiting to convey travellers to the town, distant half a mile. We caught sight now again of the snow-capped mountains, forming a fine back-ground to the grand old city.

Our Fonda was without the walls, a very simple unpretending little inn in all respects, but perfectly fresh and clean. Here, close to the ancient Church of San Vicente, with its beautiful open cloister and martyr's shrine,—within sight of the city, with a pleasant stream winding past its walls,—we spent our first Sunday in Spain.

Avila is a city of the middle ages, founded in 1088, and left for the most part undisturbed up to the present time. Its granite walls, its towers and gateways are wonderful in height and strength. The “Puerta de San Vicente” is formed by two circular towers upwards of sixty feet high, joined by an arch above, and the effect of this is most remarkable. The old city is completely surrounded by these huge walls, and the east end of the Cathedral itself forms part (not inaptly) of the fortification. At first sight, however, of this battlemented structure, Jehu's words “What hast thou to do with peace?” seem appropriate.

The April sun was shining hotly, and the transition from sunshine to shade, when we entered the Cathedral, was painful and sepulchral, owing to the scarcity of light and the immense thickness of the walls.

It may seem an unnecessary admonition; but having been eye-witness to what took place between the Sacristan of this Cathedral and a chance visitor of the nobler sex, I would remark, for the benefit of “Nonconformists,” that in this, as in all Spanish Churches, there *must* be at all times the sacrifice of an uncovered head. No skull-cap, handkerchief, or covering is tolerated. Bald-headed or aged must uncover their heads or go back. Sacrifice, not mercy, is the rule, and if any shrink from encountering these shocks to

the system, mental or physical, let them abstain from ecclesiastical researches in this country. The interior of the Cathedral is very impressive, as the whole of the light appears to be collected in one portion, leaving the rest of the building in dimness and shadow. Beautiful bits of sculpture are here: amongst them, the Flight into Egypt and the Tomb of Bishop Madrigal by Berreguete, a famous Spanish sculptor of the sixteenth century, and a pupil of Michael Angelo.

The great glory of Avila in the eyes of Roman Catholics, is that it was the birthplace of St. Teresa, the great Spanish saint of the sixteenth century. Whilst the Reformation was advancing with rapid strides throughout Germany, France, and England, the passionate ardour of two enthusiasts stayed its course in Spain. Ignatius Loyola, and St. Teresa by their fervour infused fresh life and vigour into a decayed system, revived the spirit of Catholicism, and reformed the discipline of their Church. The early home of St. Teresa is now converted into the Carmelite church and convent. Among her relics on the altar in the room where she was born (now a chapel) is a small representation in ivory of the Saviour scourged.

It consists of a single figure, admirable in execution, intense in feeling. This small relic, treasured up in Teresa's home, recalled to our minds a picture of the same subject by Velazquez;* but the painter has introduced a little child with clasped hands, looking with tearful awe and anguish at the Divine Form, whilst a ray of light from the Saviour falls upon the pitying child. Such a little child was the young Teresa, with a heart so touched by the Divine love, so fervent in desire to do Him service, that at the age of seven she set forth with her little brother, thinking that by "the mouth of babes" the Moors would be won to the true faith, and His praise perfected.

In her life she relates, with deep self-abasement, that her youthful piety was evanescent, and that at 16 she was absorbed by thoughts of the world and its vanities.

* In the possession of John Savile Lumley, Esq., H. B. M.'s Minister at Brussels.

Her father was a devout man, and strove to check this worldly tendency by placing her for a time in a convent. Whilst there, the aspirations of her childhood revived, and she determined to renounce the world and become a nun. At 20 she took the veil at the Carmelite convent at Avila. For the next twenty years she tells us that her life was one not of peace but of conflict. On one side she felt called as it were by God, on the other tempted by regrets for the pleasures offered by the world. At length, however, the peace of God filled her heart, and divine charity ruled her life.

Mystical and deluded in the eyes of Protestants, none can deny that she was energetic, unwearied, and self-denying in the task of conventual reform which she imposed upon herself. Her difficulties were great, but her energy was greater. She had at first but little ecclesiastical support, but she persevered courageously in her task, in spite of opposition, poverty, and bad health, and succeeded in establishing the reformation of her Order. It is related that when she arrived at Toledo for the purpose of founding a reformed Carmelite Convent, she had but four ducats in money wherewith to commence her work.

This excited a remonstrance, but her reply was characteristic: "Teresa, and this money are indeed *nothing*, but *God*, Teresa, and four ducats can accomplish anything." Such was the faith by which she overcame every obstacle in her path, and those who have read her life cannot fail to be struck, not only by her wonderful perseverance, but also by her gentle kindness and hatred of detraction, virtues for which she was as remarkable as for her energy. Love was the essence of religion in her eyes—that "pure and undefiled" love which annihilates selfishness. Being asked, on one occasion, what she believed was the punishment of the impenitent in another world, she replied: "Alas! they do not love." She died in 1582, humbly repeating the verse of the 51st Psalm, "A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." She was canonised in less than forty years after her death, and is now the second Patron Saint of Spain.

In the Dominican convent of San Tomás (without

the city walls), founded by Ferdinand and Isabella, we come upon a memorial of bitter sorrow in the life of the Queen. She—who had erected glorious monuments to the memory of her father, mother, and brother at the Miraflores,—had here (in 1497) to mark the burial place of her only son, Prince Juan, who died at the age of nineteen, six months after his marriage with the Princess Margaret of Austria (afterwards governess of the Netherlands). With him died Isabella's joy, and with him "the hope of all Spain was laid low."

His death was quickly followed by that of his sister Isabella, Queen of Portugal. It was thus that the succession fell to the lot of "Crazy Jane," Isabella's second daughter, married to the Archduke Philip of Austria, and the mother of Charles V.

AVILA to the ESCURIAL STATION.—The distance is little more than two hours by rail. The morning train leaves Avila at six. We had therefore to be called at half-past four, that we might secure places in the omnibus, which waits for no one. The railroad passes through a wild and mountainous country, intersected by numerous tunnels, and shaded by pine forests. At a few minutes after eight we reached the Escorial station, where an omnibus was waiting to convey us to the little village and "Fonda Miranda," which we found a good resting-place for the day.

Before entering the Escorial, the *chef d'œuvre* of Herrera, we made the circuit of its external walls—their severe character harmonising well with the rugged and even savage aspect of nature around. The circumference of the building is said to be three-quarters of a mile; thirty-one years were spent in its erection; and its cost, we are told, exceeded six millions of ducats. At length, we stood before the Grand Portal, the gates of which were formerly only thrown open on two occasions—a birth or a death in the royal family—when the newly born and the departed were carried to the Escorial. Above the gateway, with its massive columns of granite, is

the statue of St. Lawrence, the patron saint, and as escutcheons are two gridirons !

Spain glories in this early martyr, Aragonese by birth and deacon in the Christian Church of the third century, whose constancy under the most cruel torments, which a Roman prefect could devise, is too well known to need mention here. The 10th day of August is the day dedicated to St. Lawrence, and on the 10th of August, 1557 the vow was made, which led to the erection of the Escorial by Philip II.

At war with France, and destitute of his father's military genius, Philip wisely gave the command of his army to Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. The town of St. Quentin was selected for attack, but it was obstinately defended by the garrison under Coligny, the great Huguenot Admiral, afterwards massacred in Paris on the day of St. Bartholomew. The French army, under the command of the Duke of Montmorency, Constable of France, hastened to the relief of Coligny, and by a sudden attack created for awhile some confusion in the Spanish camp; but though the French general was thus successful at the onset, the fortune of the day changed, when the gallant Egmont, whose chivalrous daring made him the idol of the troops, gave the signal to advance, and by his brilliant charge at the head of the cavalry, forced the French to retire before him.*

The evening of that memorable 10th of August, saw Montmorency a prisoner in the Spanish camp, and his army totally routed.

As soon as tidings of the victory reached Philip at Cambray, he hastened to the camp, armed cap-à-pie, proud and exultant at the success of his arms, but obstinate in his refusal to follow up the victory, though the road to Paris lay open to his army.

* In less than eleven years from this date, the head of the gallant Egmont was severed from his body by order of Philip, and after being exposed for some hours on a pike, in the great square of Brussels, was packed in a box, with the head of Count Horn, and sent to Madrid for the inspection of the master to whom they had rendered such important services. Count Horn had also fought for Philip on this day.

The whole ambition of the King, was to return to Spain, and lay the foundation of a Church, a Monastery, and a Palace, in memory of the battle, and in honor of the Saint whose aid he had invoked—and the Escorial is all that Spain acquired by this great victory.

Sharp gusts of wind from the Guadarrama, made it imperative to pass on rapidly through the Portal, to the inner Quadrangle. Here, as externally, is a multitude of small windows, agreeing in number, it is said, with the 11,000 martyred virgins who accompanied Saint Ursula to Cologne.* Opposite the Grand Entrance is another Portal, over which are statues of those Jewish Kings who took part in the building of the Temple.

A dark gloomy passage has now to be traversed, and you enter with mysterious awe the great Church of the Escorial. Long is the pause made at the threshold; the vast size and grand simplicity of the Church startle you; no Coro impedes your view; and far away before you burns the ruby light, casting its red glow on the High Altar—that same Altar on which the eyes of the dying Philip rested, till his spirit had passed away. As you walk up the silent nave, the thought of the merciless and superstitious King occupies your mind; his spirit seems to haunt the stately Church of his creation; and when you approach the holy place, his kneeling figure rises to your view, still gazing in effigy on that same Altar where his last

* According to the legend, Saint Ursula was a Christian, and daughter of a King of Brittany, in the fifth century. Her wisdom and beauty were such that the King of Britain sent to ask her in marriage for his son. This son, Ethereus, was a heathen, so that the father of Ursula was sore perplexed, but Ursula exhorted him not to fear, but to give his consent, on condition that Ethereus should be baptised, and for three years instructed in the Christian faith. Moreover, she required that ten English virgins should be sent “to be her fellows,” and 11,000 more gathered from all lands to bear her company. They were to be permitted to set forth in eleven ships, sailing on the wide seas, for three years,—she instructing them in the knowledge of the true God. This was conceded; at the expiration of the three years all were converted; and Ursula repaired to Rome with her maidens, where she was met by Ethereus. From thence they proceeded together to Cologne, besieged at that time by the Huns, who slew all these Christian virgins with the sword, on the 12th November, 450.

conscious look was directed. Kneeling behind him are his three wives (Mary Tudor being omitted), and his unhappy son, Don Carlos.

On the opposite side kneels another group; Charles V., his Empress, their daughter, and the Emperor's two sisters (Eleanor, Queen Dowager of Portugal and France, and Mary, Queen Dowager of Hungary). Costly marbles, and paintings decorate the Retablo; above is the Cross; below is the Patron Saint, and lower still, beneath the Altar, is the Royal Tomb or Pantheon.

Daily for fourteen years, Philip, from his dark cell with its shutter opening into the church, had assisted at matins, and now in that darker narrower cell beneath, does he await the morning of the Resurrection.

To the Pantheon we now descended by torch-light. The form is octagon, and here in niches one above the other are arranged the bronze gilt coffins, containing the bodies of Spanish Kings and Queens. On the left repose the Kings; on the right the Queens. Beneath Charles V. is the coffin of Philip II. Often had he descended to this tomb-chamber, and looked on the place where his body would rest after death. Philip III., Philip IV., Charles II., all loved to visit this abode of gloom. As in their portraits from the Emperor, to the feeble Charles II., the same misshapen lower jaw is traced from father to son, becoming only more exaggerated in the last of the race—so in mental constitution, one same morbid characteristic prevails—that strange fascination with which they clung to things sepulchral—that craving, amounting to disease, with which they desired to behold what other men bury out of their sight. Philip IV., when gloomy, would come and listen to mass, sitting in the niche where his body would be laid after death, and here he caused the coffin of the Emperor to be opened before him. His son, the unhappy Charles II., came in state to this place that he might view once again the form of his 1st Queen, Marie Louise d'Orléans, granddaughter of our Charles I. When the lid was removed the weak mind of the King gave way, and unable to control his emotion, he threw himself sobbing on her coffin.

As you ascend the marble steps from the Pantheon a door is pointed out to you. It is the entrance to the "Pudridero," where lies in neglect and obscurity the body of the hero of Lepanto, Don John of Austria, the illegitimate son of the Emperor, whose splendid victory over the Turks was announced to the jealous Philip in this church. When the messenger from Don John arrived, breathless and elated, bearing with him the standard of the Prophet to lay before the King, he found him, cold and impassive in countenance, kneeling in his stall, and could obtain no audience till the prayers of the bigot King were ended.

In this same Pudridero, in the like oblivion, is the coffin of Philip's first-born son, Don Carlos, whose mysterious death gave rise to dark suspicions, the truth or falsehood of which are buried now in the same obscurity as the shell which covers his remains.

To this place was also carried the body of another Don John of Austria, natural son of Philip IV., who was famous during the minority of Charles II.

From the vault we proceeded to the cell, for you can call it by no other name, where were spent the last years of the life of Philip II. The shutter was opened for us, disclosing the high altar. From the alcove where his bed was placed he could see the elevation of the Host, and join in the services of the Church. No light enters this dismal cell, save through this shutter opening into the Church.

Philip had gone to Madrid for the court fêtes, when he was attacked by his last illness, and contrary to the advice of his physician, insisted on being removed to the Escorial. He was accordingly placed in a litter on men's shoulders, and after six days reached the huge pile which he considered "the eighth wonder of the world."

He arrived early in the summer of 1598. His malady now assumed a terrible form, and he could not be turned in his bed save by means of a sheet held by four of his attendants. In this dreadful state he lay for some weeks. At length his end visibly approached, and he desired that his son Philip, and the Infanta Clara Eugenia Isabella should approach his bedside, and receive his parting admonitions.