A SCAMPER THROUGH SPAIN AND TANGIER

MARGARET THOMAS

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A Moorish Girl.

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BY

MARGARET THOMAS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

"Quien dice España, dice todo."

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TO

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE COMPANION OF THESE WANDERINGS,

This Book

IS MOST FITLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

BY WAY OF PREFACE.

On the score of my friendship and regard for the author of this *Scamper through Spain and Tangier*, I have been asked to contribute that unnecessary exordium to a book known as an Introduction. As in ordinary social intercourse there are some pleasant and charming persons who need no "introduction," so it is in the field of letters and art; and I, for one, feel that Miss Margaret Thomas, with her fresh and unpretentious notes and sketches made on her recent wanderings among Moors and Spaniards, needs no word of recommendation from anybody. These speak for themselves as plainly as pen and pencil can. But perhaps a few words concerning Miss Thomas's career and personality may be

acceptable to those who, about to read this volume, would like to know somewhat of its author.

In many of the English, Australian, and Canadian journals of late, articles have appeared dealing with the singular Anglo-Saxon "colony" of art students now in Paris. Many of these ardent young men and women were born and bred in Australia or in Canada, and it would really appear as though Paris were now joyfully recognised by our Colonial kinsmen as the art centre of the world. These clever young Cornstalks and Bluenoses are as contemptuous about "English Art" (whose very existence, indeed, they question) as is Mr. Charles Whibley, or his idol, Mr. Whistler. To them Paris is the soul and centre of their world—the veritable metropolis of art—and London nothing but a huge over-crowded agglomeration of provincialities.

No one familiar with this Colonial art movement can for a moment gainsay the truth of

this statement. Should it jar on the patriotic Briton, or even on the non-artistic Australian or Canadian (who is likewise a patriotic Briton), let him visit the Quartier Latin and inquire as to the nationality of the pupils in the studios of Signor Colarossi or of M. Julien ; this will, I imagine, remove all doubt from his mind as to the Australian and Canadian view of French and English art. Should the sceptic not feel inclined to cross the storm-tossed Channel, or care to study personally the *vie bohème* of Paris (so amusingly hit off by Mr. Morley Roberts in a recent book of short and amusing stories), then may he turn with profit to Miss Margaret Thomas's own account of the subject in her excellent article on "Paris Art Schools and Australian Students," to be found in *Literary Opinion* for August, 1891.

With this new Colonial art movement Miss Thomas, herself an Australian, is in entire accord. After winning whatever distinction was

possible in those days as a student in the National Art Gallery of Melbourne, under her old master, the late Charles Summers, she boldly came to Europe, and studied in London, Paris, and Rome. I have heard her speak with *respect* of the training she received in the Royal Academy, London, but always with *enthusiasm* of Paris.

During her now long residence in Europe, Miss Thomas, as sculptor, has executed work of no little interest to the man of letters as well as to the lover of art. Such a work is her memorial Bust of Henry Fielding, at Taunton, which has been eulogised by no less authorities than Russell Lowell and Austin Dobson. Such, too, is her Bust of Richard Jefferies, unveiled at Salisbury Cathedral by the excellent Bishop Wordsworth (with the assistance of the accomplished and cultured Dean) in the present month.

But it is not my purpose to furnish a catalogue of Miss Margaret Thomas's various

achievements in paint or marble. I merely wish to tell in outline what manner of person it is who in this book will "personally conduct" the reader through these romantic — if at times uncomfortable—Lands of Old Romance. It is characteristic that Miss Thomas should find much in the natural aspect of Spain to remind her of her own sunburnt Austral plains. Doubtless much of the interior of Australia is very similar to the arid wastes of the Peninsula; but one can hardly wonder that an artist, even though Australian-bred, should prefer the country of Velasquez to the colony of Victoria. What though our "brand-new" go-ahead English-speaking provinces be full of all modern improvements and *fin-de-siècle* notions — excellent trams and fast trains (infinitely ahead of anything in poor old Spain, to say nothing of Tangier), and huge modern hotels and elevators, and the electric light— they boast no Burgos Cathedral, no quaint headdress and peasant garb, no out-worn but

venerable superstition, no sense of all-pervading gloom and mystery.

It strikes me that many persons who have not even a bowing acquaintance with Art will glance at these sketches and peruse this unconventional but not uninstructive book of travel with pleasure. Even the most prosaic have builded "castles in Spain"; and though it be our sorry lot to live on from year to year in some dull suburb of a prosaic Anglo-Saxon city —be it London or Liverpool, New York or Melbourne — we yet have, somewhere deep down in our nature, a touch, a feeling of romance, a "hidden fount" of poetry. And there will surely be moments when such a book as this *Scamper through Spain and Tangier* will awake us out of our dull wretched mechanical existence, and set us once more a-singing, "Over the Hills and Far Away."

ARTHUR PATCHETT MARTIN.

REFORM CLUB,
March, 1892.

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SPAIN.

A SCAMPER THROUGH SPAIN AND TANGIER.

CHAPTER I.

ST. JEAN DE LUZ.

BEING artists, we considered it would be advantageous to study the paintings of the immortal Velasquez, and, for the same reason, had to do it as economically as possible. In common with many others, we had heard dreadful accounts of Spain, of the badness and dearness of the food there, of the brigands and of the cholera, and of the difficulties of all kinds attending travellers—reports which have prevented many otherwise adventurous persons unprovided with a full purse from penetrating there; but we, two lady artists,

decided to risk all this, and try with our moderate means to accomplish what the rich only usually undertake.

How we did it and how we fared may be of interest to the many situated like ourselves, viz., those with purses not too full, who desire to see what has been done by the great geniuses of that country, to enlarge their minds with the experience travelling alone can give, and lay up for themselves a fund of reminiscences which may cause them pleasure during the failing days of age; I may add, to obtain that culture in their profession which students of every calling can acquire only by the study of the masterpieces of their art, and the undoubted masterpieces of Gothic architecture and of painting are to be seen in that little-travelled and difficult country of access, Spain. To such persons I hope these chapters will prove a kind of inconsequential guide-book. The plutocrat travels from hotel to hotel, and meets only his kind; we will go

from *casa de huespedes* to *casa de huespedes** and study the Spanish people.

We went from Paris to Bordeaux, as we had been for some time resident in that artistic capital, but in starting from England it would be cheaper to go to Bordeaux by steamer. The railway journey is long and tedious. The train de luxe, "Sud Express," costing one hundred and forty-nine francs each from Paris to St. Jean de Luz, we considered too expensive—besides, it takes thirteen hours to perform the journey—and went by the omnibus train, which occupies seven hours more and costs fifty-five francs only. Perhaps I ought to explain that it is the classes which make the difference in price, the express only carrying first-class passengers, and the omnibus train three classes.

Here we decided to rest awhile, and get into a thoroughly strong state of health before advancing to the regions of rancid oil and spare food, and we could not have chosen a

* Boarding-house.

more suitable spot. The rough waves of the Bay of Biscay, of evil memory to our Indian and Australian travellers, wash its stormy little haven, and the cool winds from the Pyrenees breathe down its roof-o'ershadowed streets, and agitate the many-coloured shutters of which the Basques appear so fond. St. Jean de Luz is not Spain, but it is the antechamber, a prelude, as it were, of which the theme is the lovely Andalusian airs. The women are beautiful and quite classical in feature, and this idea of classicality is emphasized by the absence of the fringe of hair which is so preposterously universal in England. They have that grand undulation of carriage which is only attained by the practice of carrying heavy weights on the head, and wearing very slight or no shoes.

I think if I had a school for English girls, I would make carrying weights on the head one of the principal exercises in deportment. The men look as if Antinous, Mercury,

Apollo, *et hoc genus omne*, had stepped down from their pedestals to drive donkeys, catch fish, carry water, and perform other ordinary acts of humanity.

In September, during which month we were there, every kind of fruit seemed in season, from strawberries to peaches and melons; but the *carne de vacca* (cow-beef) and perpetual old veal leave something to be desired in the way of meat.

Across the entrance to the little harbour a massive breakwater is built, and when the tide is coming in and the wind is at all fresh, a mass of snowy water, twenty and thirty feet in height, rises on the further side and falls in whitest foam over the stones on this. Speaking of the sea reminds me to add that the bathing here is very good.

The church is well worthy of attention; it dates from the thirteenth century, and has a fine massive tower. The whole of the east end is raised from the floor, ornamented with

statues, and elaborately gilt; the back of this is called the *retablo.* Round the other three sides run three rows of narrow dark oak galleries, occupied during the services by men only, and at the west end the organ projects into the body of the building. A little figure of the Virgin, dressed in a lace dress, with a black velvet cloak, a nun's hood, a silver crown, and holding an elaborate lace handkerchief elegantly in her disproportionately small hands, is an object of great veneration.

"The Basques are said to be the descendants of the earliest inhabitants of the Peninsula, and to this day they have preserved intact the character, customs, and language of their forefathers. With all justice they can lay claim to the title of the oldest race in Spain. Physically they are a very superior race, tall, muscular, well proportioned, wiry, and swift-footed. The women are very handsome, fair complexioned, and with magnificent hair.

They cover their heads in the cold and rainy months, or when they go to church, with the cloth hood worn in Navarre, the Pyrenees French and Spanish, the South of France, and Bruges in Belgium." Thus the trustworthy O'Shea; but I will add that, when it is *not* cold and rainy, and when they do *not* go to church, the women wear handkerchiefs on their heads so beautifully arranged as to make them resemble antique statues. The long black cloaks and veils worn by them at funerals are most mysterious and romantic-looking.

Traffic is carried on in St. Jean de Luz by bullock waggons—two bullocks to each waggon. These creatures are small and of a light colour, shod like those in Italy, and capable of great endurance. The yoke is extremely heavy, as much as a strong man can lift; the pole passes through the centre, and the horns of the animals are immovably bound to it on either side with interminable thongs of hide. Their heads are covered with sheep-

skins to keep off the sun, and their eyes with boughs, ferns, or tassels, to drive away the flies, which are here extremely troublesome; they are also covered with linen cloths for the same reason. I regret to have to add that they are driven by a goad with an iron point, which if cruelly used must be a very dreadful implement. Let us hope the natural good-nature of the Basque peasant prevents the animals from ever feeling its full force.

When Louis XIV. was married to Maria Theresa the royal couple lodged in a large house here, called "Casa de la Infante," which is still preserved. But "'ware guide-book!" It is more useful to mention that the Hôtel de France is all one can desire in the way of a hotel, and that for those who wish to make a lengthened stay, or, like ourselves, study economy, apartments (very good) and attendance can be had for six francs a day.

The present Russian craze has reached even here; it is a pity to see a free and noble

nation like the French throwing itself at the feet of the northern despot. However, the St. Jean de Luz people play the glorious Russian hymn magnificently.

We were fortunately here one Sunday, and so attended the grand Mass, a splendid function, where Basque music, which is extremely forcible and original, can be heard to perfection. A sermon was also preached in the Basque language. Properly to enjoy foreign travel, the voyager should endeavour to free his mind from every prejudice and preconception he has ever been taught or has acquired, and thus leave it open for the reception of new ideas, which, nine times out of ten, will be better than the insular ones already imbibed.

I return again to express my admiration of the arrangement of drapery on the women's heads: Sir Frederic Leighton himself could not add or take away a fold that would improve it. I wonder sculptors do not come

here for subjects. Beauty is the rule, not the exception, and beauty of the most classical type; the colourless cheeks, perfect features, and draping would lend themselves most readily to reproduction in marble.

It was no use—they could not help it: the moment the music commenced on the *place* on Sunday and Thursday evenings, the very children's limbs began to twitch and move about in their anxiety to dance. The music was not good, and a common waltz tune did not lend itself happily to the refined measures of the *fandango;* still, they did their best. At ten o'clock, however, the band struck up the appropriate air, and in a few seconds the whole of the tree-lined *place* seemed alive with dancers; men and women, boys and girls mingled in the whirl of this most graceful dance; everyone knew it and everyone loved it, so they danced *con amore.* Not one inappropriate gesture, not one rude action or word—all was good temper and gaiety, till, when the

Street in St. Jean-de-Luz

music ceased, they regretfully betook themselves home.

There is a point of land here whence Fuentarabia, in Spain, and Biarritz can be seen; also the magnificent range of the Pyrenees rising from the sea, culminating in the huge spire of La Rhune, and the fantastic peaks of Les Trois Couronnes.

Perhaps they laugh at us a good deal on the Continent, but I think, notwithstanding, there is a feeling of profound respect for, and trust in, the "silent English" at the bottom of every Frenchman's heart. The two nations are so essentially different that when one recognises in the French the same or even greater love of wife, children, and home which we congratulate ourselves on alone possessing, one feels there is at least a bond of union there.

I have written so much about St. Jean de Luz, because writing filled up the hot days there when to go out in the raging sun seemed

impossible, and the "baked cicala" even must have had a bad time of it.

From here an excursion can easily be made to Biarritz, railway in three-quarters of an hour, and omnibus to the town. It is a very flourishing, fashionable place, much patronised by French, Russians, and Spaniards at this season, and by the English a few weeks later, but to be avoided by economical artists. There are three beaches, each excellent for walking and bathing, shops which resemble those of Paris, and every amusement conceivable. It is foreign-looking but much less picturesque than this little town.

CHAPTER II.

BURGOS CATHEDRAL.

THE journey from St. Jean de Luz to Burgos occupies twelve hours, and is not without interest. Fare, fifteen francs; sixty pounds of luggage—quite enough for the economical tourist—allowed free everywhere in Spain.

In passing through the Pyrenees one can observe the marvellous blue colour, changing from cobalt to deepest purple, which they assume at a short distance from the eye, colours which are repeated in the mountains all over Spain, and which are exactly represented in the landscapes of Velasquez. Some people seem to require wonderfully little luggage when they travel; a Spanish lady performed this journey on an equipment of a bottle of wine, a fan, and three peaches; and a youth on a bottle of

wine, one pocketful of cigars and another of nuts, and a pair of slippers. *O si sic omnes!*

At Hendaye, the French frontier town, numerous pilgrims, returning from Lourdes, joined us, wearing huge rosaries round their necks—even the most reverend seniors had a great row of beads thrown proudly over their coats; but, —it *was* rather hard—at Irun, the dreaded Spanish custom-house, these poor creatures were made to pay six francs a kilo duty on their pious wares, the officials being anxious, I suppose, for the suppression in Spain of all piety that was not Spanish.

But the examination of our baggage was conducted with the utmost liberality and courtesy: *gentlemen* just thrust their gloved hands lightly into our boxes, chalked a mark on the outside, and all was over. Rather different from the account I lately read in a French book as to how a lady threw handfuls of gold to guitar-playing officials to bribe them to let her luggage pass! One must not put absolute trust in *all*

travellers' tales evidently. Then we passed for hours over barren, wind-swept plains, with here and there a village coloured like the earth from which it sprang; at last the spires of Burgos Cathedral rose upon the horizon like two shafts of interrupted light.

I have headed this chapter "Burgos Cathedral," because when one reads of Burgos one naturally thinks first of the cathedral in connection with it, as when one reads of Anthony one immediately adds mentally Cleopatra, or of Hannibal the Alps come directly into the mind, or of Wellington one thinks of Waterloo.

But this cathedral—it is simply indescribable. Imagine a number of shrubs, flowers, fruit, birds, animals, children, men, and women, heaved up into the bluest air ever dreamed of, and turned into stone, there to remain concrete for ever; or, all the frost you ever saw upon your window panes hung up in the same changeless firmament, and magnified millions of times; or, lace fit for giants hung to dry across the

massive pillars which support the fabric—and you may have a faint glimmering idea of it, and if you haven't after this, I can give you none. The guide-books tell you the measurements, but they are of no avail in forming a mental impression of the whole, because the *rejas*,* which in Spanish cathedrals divide the altar and choir from the rest of the building, and fence in every separate chapel, prevent one from ever getting a good general view. The interior of the lantern is wonderfully carved; no one who has seen it can describe it, and those who have not seen it cannot form an idea of it from any description, so it seems useless to say much about it. It dates from 1567, and is a work unique of its kind.

One cannot help regretting that, amid the majesty of the Gothic architecture, some Corinthian columns have been used in the screen—as if a ballet dancer were to walk in a procession of nuns. The carving of the

* Railings.

choir stalls is magnificent, rivalling that of the stone itself, which seems to have become plastic in the hands of those old sculptors.

The chapel of the Condestable is the largest and most beautiful. His effigy and that of his wife, sculptured in Italy in 1540, are in a perfect state of preservation. They are of the purest marble, the details of the dresses are elaborately wrought, the hands, gloves, little dog, and complex details of the armour are marvellously finished, but, like all sculpture in Spain, the figures are short and heads large, defects common to the otherwise lovely women I have seen here. In the sacristy is a painting of the Virgin, by Leonardo da Vinci, which I firmly believe to be an original work, and a really fine representation of the Crucifixion by Matteo Cerezo. There is also a crucifix draped in an embroidered crimson velvet petticoat.

The traveller should make a point of hearing Mass in this, one of the noblest fanes in which God is worshipped. The full tones of the organ

stealing, now softly now loudly, through the aisles and arches, richly-garbed priests, light streaming through stained glass on many a monument of the dead and great, and veiled women "blotties" on the pavement in the veriest dejection of piety, make up a most impressive effect.

The interior arrangement of the magnificent Spanish cathedrals differs from that of those of Italy, France, or England. The high altar is placed under the tower, or *media naranja*, and completely divided from the rest of the church by a rich screen, often the most elaborate part of the building. It is closed in front by a huge *reja*, the workmanship of nearly all of which deserves minute inspection. Behind the high altar rises the *retablo*, magnificently carved and gilt, and before it a space for the two pulpits. In the middle of the nave, facing the altar, is the *coro*, or choir, with its *reja;* the *trascoro* (back) is profusely decorated, as are also the *respaldos del coro*, or sides.

It is a customary English saying, which, like many others, we repeat from year to year without ever troubling to examine the truth of, that none but a Spanish woman can put on a mantilla properly: I will also add that none but a Basque woman can put a handkerchief on her head classically.

The secret of both is this. The Spanish and the Basque women dress their hair after the fashion of the ancient Greeks, in a knot behind, about the middle of the head; if they have not enough hair of their own, they buy some. Over this, both mantilla and handkerchief—draped with a little artistic taste, of course—set well; and if you will imagine for yourself drapery over this shaped form, and over a round head without the knot, you will at once see what I mean, and be able to drape a mantilla for yourself if you are in the least artistic.

An excursion from Burgos which ought not to be omitted is that to La Cartuja, a Carthusian

convent a couple of miles distant. Almost deserted now by the fast disappearing monks, it should be visited for the sake of the Gothic tombs of Juan II. and Queen Isabella of Portugal. These exceed in elaboration of detail, intricacy of ornament, and in delicacy of carving all that can be imagined of the kind, and may be ranked among the finest mausoleums in the world. I cannot help thinking that good plaster casts of these marvellous works would be of great use to our sculptors and decorators. The statues are in a recumbent attitude, and like those of the Condestable and his wife in the cathedral, short and thick. This monastery also has a fine statue of St. Bruno.

At the entrance to the church was a pilgrim on his knees, praying most fervently. He was dressed in the long brown gown of the Franciscan monks, his cape decorated with crosses and scallop-shells, and his neck hung with numberless medals, rosaries and relics. He carried a staff, with a crucifix and little water-

bottle at the end, and seemed to have stepped for a few minutes out of one of Ribera's pictures, to give us an idea of how such things were done three centuries ago, when pilgrim-

At the Cartuja.

ages in a comfortable railway-train had yet to be evolved out of the coming ages.

Truly when we pass into Spain we travel backwards a hundred years or more, into an

artist's paradise, whence the whistles of engines have not yet frightened away the spirit of the picturesque.

There is another excursion, to a convent and church known as "Las Huelgas," interesting on account of the strict *clausura* of the nuns—who must be wealthy and of noble birth—and as being the place where aspirants to knightly honours used to keep the vigil ("*velar las armas*"). The confessional is a niche in the wall, in which the priest sits; the nun comes to the other side and whispers her transgressions through a very slightly perforated brass grating. I caught a glimpse of one of them, wearing their extraordinary headdress, a tall black velvet pointed cap over her white one, such as may be seen in pictures of the time of Henry II.

That hero of countless romances, the Cid, was born in Burgos in 1026, and his bones are still carefully preserved in a chest in the *ayuntamiento* or town-hall. In the cathedral

is his trunk—"la doyenne des malles du monde," says a French writer—and it is supposed to be one of two which he left, filled with sand, as security for a loan from some Jews, assuring them that they contained all his jewels and gold, but that they were not to open them till his return. There is no proof the loan was ever repaid, an example which is not wholly without imitators in our own day.

There are some fine old houses here, which stand like deposed monarchs amid the scene of their former glories.

We soon left the bleak deserted city of the Cid, with its sombre wind-scathed plain, and started in brightest moonlight for Madrid. For hundreds of miles we traversed a treeless, lifeless, barren, hopeless-looking desert, cursed, it would seem, for the wickedness and pride of the past centuries. There is no agriculture, no water, no cattle—in fact, no life, nothing but a desert wherein thousands of armies might manœuvre and not one be within hearing of

the cannon roar of the others; and this kind of scenery continued, with little or no exception, beyond the city of Valladolid, and till we reached Madrid, a journey of thirteen hours. The fare was sixteen *pesetas* or francs.

So far I have not heard a guitar, and, contrary to all I have been told, have been struck with the gentleness, politeness, even kindness of the people. They will share their meagre food with you, go out of their way to give you information, and behave more like ladies and gentlemen than peasants. Only their curiosity is somewhat great; they seem to find much satisfaction in knowing whether you are married or not, how many sisters and brothers you have, and whether your sisters and brothers are married or not. Neither are they here so dark as we are led to believe. We get our notions of Spaniards chiefly from operas, I think, and the type is about as correct as the shepherds and shepherdesses, soldiers and sailors of the lyric stage.

CHAPTER III.

MADRID AND VELASQUEZ.

THE impression produced by the treeless, arid, sombre plains over which we travelled for such long hours could not be erased for many days. The thought of those cheerless hovels, which grow up as it were from the parched earth like fungus; of the hard, unsheltering sky and pitiless scorching sun; and of the semi-savage peasants, living chiefly on bread and water, who sparsely inhabit the plains—is most depressing. All the centuries that have passed have done little but grind them down: will the coming twentieth bring them a little freedom and hope? One trusts so for the sake of the women who are beautiful, affectionate, and gentle, though when aroused

(which is not difficult), a tiger could not match them for fury.

I have coupled the grand name of Velasquez with Madrid because, without his unrivalled works, there would be little worth seeing there; with them, no pilgrimage is too far, no fatigue too great to endure in coming. In the Museo Real are many most important works by the greatest masters; it is sufficient to mention that there are forty-six Murillos, forty-three Titians, fifty-eight Rubens, fifty-three Teniers, ten Raphaels, twenty-two Vandykes, thirty-four Tintorettos, and twenty-five Veroneses.

The paintings here of any one of these artists would in themselves make a splendid gallery; but when I add that the student is spared the miles of inferior pictures which make up the major part of other collections, it will be easy to estimate the importance of this, and it does the Spaniards infinite credit that, through all their poverty and struggles, they have managed

to keep the masterpieces of their great artists in their own land.

Of the truth, brilliance, and force of Velasquez' painting no words can give an idea except, perhaps, to those who have studied his grand portrait of Admiral Pareja in the National Gallery; but what chiefly impressed me about his work was its tremendous breadth and simplicity. The Venuses of Titian are sublime, and the Madonnas of Raphael pure and divine, but the personages of Velasquez are life itself. It is difficult to particularise any one picture, but after "Los Borrachos," by Velasquez, his "Surrender of Breda" comes next, as the two greatest pictures the world has ever seen. I place "Los Borrachos" first simply because the figures, being life size, have a grander look than the smaller ones in the other picture; otherwise there is nothing to choose between them. Perhaps, too, the harmony of colouring, the rich tones of yellow and brown in the former work, are more

pleasing than the sombre scheme in "The Surrender."

It may interest the student in art to know that in the picture of "Las Meninas," called by Giordano "la teologia de la pintura," Velasquez has introduced his own portrait, from which several hints as to his method of painting may be gathered. The great artist *stands* at his easel, not *sits*, uses a mahlstick, and has five large brushes in his hand. The palette is set with the following few and simple colours in the order mentioned, beginning near the thumb-hole:—vermilion, white, light red, yellow ochre, lake, burnt sienna, umber, black or blue. The studio is lighted by a large side-light.

It is related of this picture that, when finished, the artist showed it to Philip IV., his great patron, and inquired if nothing was wanting? "One thing only," said the king, and, taking the palette, he painted on the breast of the portrait of the artist in the

picture, the cross of the Order of Santiago, one of the most distinguished in Spain. The stiff little cross, so evidently the work of an amateur, still attests the truth of this story.

Others of Velasquez' great works are the "Forge of Vulcan," in which "the beauty of the human forms makes up for the want of divinity in the gods;" and "Las Hilanderas," or "The Spinners," a triumph of art, colour, and expression. It is needless to say anything about his portraits, second to none in the world, but it may not be so generally known that he was an excellent landscape painter, to which branch of art he appears to have given some study, judging from the fine sketches made in Rome, which are in this *museo.*

Murillo takes almost equal rank among the painters of Spain, or indeed, of rhe world. there are two "Assumptions" here, which are nearly as good as the celebrated picture of that subject in the Louvre, but not quite, though I think the French picture is deterior-

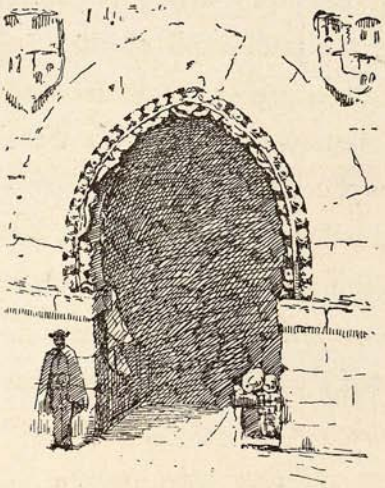
ated by cleaning and varnishing. No painter's work suffers so much from over-cleaning as Murillo's; it seems to rub some of his subtle atmosphere off, like the bloom off a plum.

One of the great charms of the pictures in Madrid is that they are fresh and but little touched by the fatal hand of the restorer; the dry climate has preserved them, and they are even now nearly as they were when they left the easel of the painter.

Let us now leave the gallery, or *museo* as it is called (only to return as soon as possible), and look at Madrid, the casket, as it were, which contains these inestimable artistic treasures.

The best or most fashionable parts of it greatly resemble Paris; the buildings are fine, of beautiful stone, and all look as if they were just finished, the extreme dryness of the atmosphere preserving rather than blackening and injuring the material. The older portions are much more characteristic. Here are the

markets, where cartloads of water-melons, peaches, and vegetables of all sorts lie in the streets waiting for purchasers, and great quantities of red and green capsicums, brilliant as jewels, are always to be seen.



La Latina.

The Calle de Toledo is the best in which to see the people, and very nice and well behaved we found them. We visited two of the churches. The cathedral church of San Isidro is in the usual gaudy Spanish style,

with much gilding, exaggeration of ecclesiastical horrors, and other things which appeal to the imagination of the ignorant—I cannot say vulgar, for no Spaniard ever appears so. I think there are some paintings here of great merit, and well worth removing, though in the sombre light it is difficult to judge.

The finest church in Madrid is supposed to be San Francisco; it is built in the classical style, and not badly ornamented, with paintings and colossal statues of the Apostles. The carving of the doors is remarkably good. One cannot help remarking the wonderful little figures of the Virgin in these churches, dressed in gilded raiment, holding bouquets of artificial flowers, and wearing wigs of real hair; and the women in black veils literally lying on the floor before them, absorbed in prayer.

In San Isidro are images life size, painted the colour of nature, representing the Descent from the Cross. Of these things I can say no more; I can only be thankful for a religion by

which so many regulate their lives decently, and in whose dogmas they implicitly believe.

As to the houses, they are large, and, as the Spaniard loves all things, grandiose in appearance; the rooms are built round a *patio*, or courtyard, in which are shrubs and fountains; I have not seen a single room which contained a fireplace. Much is said about the Spaniards smoking continually; it is true they smoke a great deal, and even light their cigarettes at table during dinner, but the tobacco they use is so mild that I, at least, have never found it objectionable.

The next celebrated thing about which we have all heard is the fan, and this is the inseparable companion of every Spanish woman outdoors and in, young and old, high and low, from the child of four years old to the tottering match-seller of seventy, from the queen to the washer-woman.

The fans are small, and their chief characteristic appears to be the ease with which they

will open and shut, with a kind of jerk. They seem to keep time to their conversations with it, like the accompaniment of a piano, and fill up the pauses (if any!) with their rhythmical flutterings. The streets are cool and shady, and no shelter is required for the eyes, but the unmitigated sun pours his burning rays into the wide *plaza;* here the women open their fans to shade their faces, and they appear indispensable to their existence.

In Madrid the men strike me as being ugly and commonplace; the women are handsome enough, and their eyes and hair deserve all that can be said in praise of their beauty, but in those velvety shadowy orbits, I can perceive no glance of intellect or self-repression.

In Burgos we saw a wretched troop of boy-soldiers, whose shoes were cut away on the outside—for coolness, I suppose. It was pitiful to see them, but we looked in vain for the grand Castilian air of which we have read from our youth up. The muleteer still exists,

and his mules wear the most complicated head-gear with numerous pleasant-sounding bells; but, alas for sentiment! the muleteer himself greatly resembles an English mechanic, while the players on the "light guitar" have a general family likeness to the beggars who haunt our areas in the streets of London. But we have not yet seen the South. Perhaps all these dreams of poetry and romance may yet be realised there.

The north Spanish accent is very remarkable; each speech is a kind of song or poem; the stress is always the same, on the first of every two syllables, the second being very short; this is repeated without variation for seven syllables, and there is a slight pause or drop on the eighth; the cadence then begins again, and another drop in the tone is heard when the sentence finishes. Thus: —⏑—⏑— ⏑— —,—⏑—⏑—⏑—. The very newspaper vendors and fruit-sellers in the streets offer their wares in this kind of recitative, the

unendurable beggars at every corner demand a copper in the same way, every one in speaking seems to be reciting a poem. It is very pretty at first, especially in the mouths of the women, but I can imagine one would get tired of it after a time.

But the beggars! every kind of deformity is to be seen in the streets, every form of importunity is gone through, all kinds of blessings are invoked on the head of the giver of a *cuarto*, all kinds of curses on him who withholds his hand. Everywhere in the *plaza* there is chatting, flirting, bargaining—men lying asleep in the shade amid piles of water-melons and other fruit, women, in gay-coloured handkerchiefs, drawing water from the grey old fountains, changing light and shade, sleepy mules, heavy-hatted men with brilliant draperies over one shoulder —a scene which it would be difficult to realise in paint.

The Academia di San Fernando contains the finest specimens of Murillo I have yet

seen, and he equals, if not surpasses Velasquez in glory of colour, while his pictures possess more atmosphere than those of any other painter. His colour is radiant, his shadows transparent, his figures advance and retire into the canvas as they would do in air. The two semicircular paintings here—representing the Roman patrician who, in consequence of a dream, founded the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, in Rome—are in my humble opinion superior to the more celebrated but harder picture of "Saint Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, healing the Lepers." No words can convey an idea of the splendour of these paintings. There are several other good pictures, among a great deal of rubbish, in this collection.

In a street called the "Rastro" a most remarkable market or fair is held once a week, which I should advise no stranger to miss seeing. For the length of about half a mile the street is crowded with booths, amid which people in the most brilliant colours, donkeys

laden with melons, and gaily-caparisoned mules force their way. Every imaginable article is sold there, from guns, pistols, swords, furniture, tapestry, and books, to pots, pans, combs, ribbons, and cold water. It is noticeable that no Spaniard ever tries to persuade you to buy, yet always asks twice the price he intends to take for any of his wares you may wish to purchase. The life and animation, colour and variety of this scene are wonderful. We were the only foreigners there, and were taken for Frenchwomen; to be English in France is to be looked down upon—here we were only curiosities. Many curios are to be picked up in the Rastro still, if one only has time and patience to search.

The heat in the sun during the month of September is tremendous, and the shops are shut during the middle of the day, but in the shade it is cool and pleasant. I have written all these particulars because we had such great difficulty in finding out any of

these minor facts about Spain before we came, and they guide one greatly as to what kind of wardrobe to bring. One of the favourite "*on dits*" in England is that the use of the mantilla is dying out. I can only say that scarcely a bonnet or hat is to be seen in the streets of Madrid at the present time. Our hats attract considerable attention, but no rudeness or remarks.

We made an excursion to the Museo every Sunday, because it was free; on all other days half a *peseta* each is charged for admission. The pictures by Rubens are very numerous and fine. His great works here are "The Brazen Serpent," and "The Garden of Love." The first stands second only to his "Descent from the Cross," in Antwerp Cathedral. The look of illness and hopelessness on the face of the sick woman whom a man is holding up to gaze at the brazen image, is inexpressibly pathetic. Rubens has many faults, notably his tortured and twisted forms and red shadows,

but he is a great master after all. Vandyke comes out nobly here; some of his portraits run Velasquez very hard, especially that of Eckaert the painter.

Titian is grand and sublime. As usual, his portraits appear to represent noblemen only, while his Venuses and Danaes remind one of nothing so much as the Venus of Milo, or her namesake of the Capitol; the same grand style, the same broad modelling which the ancient Greeks admired and reproduced, characterise him also. His equestrian portrait of Charles V. is a grand historical work, very noble and broad. Ribera has some most powerful heads here, and that truly Spanish painter, Juan de Juanes, is well worth study: he recalls Giorgione in the richness of his colouring.

The world-renowned "Spasimo" of Raphael excels in expression, but alas, for the flesh tints! they are more like the tints of mahogany than anything else. "La Perla"

suffers from the same defect, but "The Virgin of the Fish" is in another and better manner.

There is a fine Rembrandt here, in his early and most finished style—"Queen Artemisia about to swallow the Ashes of her Husband," signed and dated "1634, Rembrandt, F." "Christ in Hades," by Sebastiano del Piombo, is a powerful and magnificent picture.

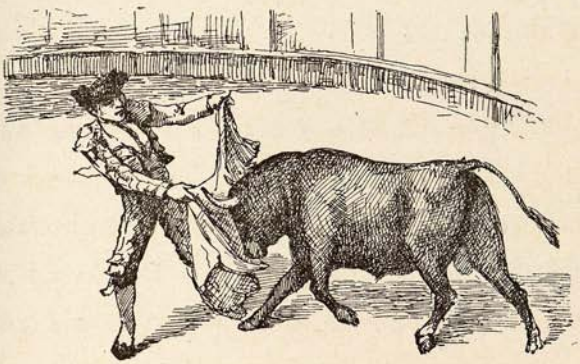
Of the fifty-three Teniers what can I say?—they are all more or less good, very Dutch of course, and excellent in colour. I must repeat emphatically that the pictures in the Museo at Madrid have suffered less at the hands of the restorer than those of any other gallery in Europe.

The shocking inundations at Consuegra occurred while we were here. Nothing else was talked about, but, on the whole, the Madrileños took the misfortune very quietly. The flood came down in the middle of the night, and the poor creatures who survived were for a long

time without clothes, food or shelter. Between fifteen hundred and two thousand human lives were lost, and countless horses, cattle, and sheep. The greatest trouble was to get rid of the dead bodies; however, they burnt them at last. Charity was not wanting, but the chief need was a head—someone to organise and direct.

I relate with disgust that I went to a bull-fight, in the Plaza de Toros. Everyone said, "To know Spain thoroughly, you must go to a bull-fight." Having seen one, I emphatically say, "Don't." In England we avoid the butcher's shambles; when we go to this scene we seek it. The affair is held in an amphi-theatre, like the Colosseum in Rome, exposed to the open air; for the seats you pay as to whether there is *sol*, *sol y sombra*, or *sombra*, the latter being most expensive. Our guide first took us to see the *dramatis personæ*—horses, matadors or espadas, toreadors or toreros, banderilleros, and picadors. The horses

(I mention them first as being the noblest animals) are used-up cab horses, blindfolded. The picadors are on horseback; it is their business to spear the bull. The toreadors and matadors are on foot, most gorgeously equipped in garments heavy with gold and silver em-



Bull-fight.

broidery; the former have the red cloaks with which to irritate the animal, and the latter kill him; while it is the duty of the banderilleros to stick barbed darts, laden with fireworks, into the neck, to infuriate him whenever he gets sluggish. A priest and surgeon are in waiting, lest

their services should be required. The programme announced that six bulls were to be sacrificed this day.

The amphitheatre, holding about 15,000 persons, was crowded, but I am glad to say very few women were present. To the sound of trumpets, the police, magnificently attired in old-fashioned Spanish costumes of black velvet, came in, and rode round the course to see that all was in order; then followed a procession of matadors, toreadors, &c., and the gaily-caparisoned mules which drag off the dead bull. The men all saluted the president profoundly, and asked for the key of the *toril*, or place where the bulls are kept. This was thrown down to them, and the sport commenced in earnest.

A bull wildly entered the arena, and the two men, mounted on those miserable blinded hacks, proceeded to drive their spears into him. He, of course, repaid the wounds given by the lances to the horses, tossing them over and

causing their riders many a nasty fall. The horses were absolutely disembowelled, and the brutes of men remounted these poor beasts and continued to ride them with their bowels hanging half a yard out, and one with a huge gash in its thigh. The blinded horses were actually put in the way of the enraged bull in order to gratify the people's craving for excitement and blood. At the sound of a trumpet the poor animals were withdrawn, I hoped to be killed, but I have since heard they are sewn up to serve for another day's *sport.* Then the toreros began to tease the bull by throwing red cloaks over him; when he attempted to chase them, they ran nimbly behind a shelter, or jumped over the barricade. Their attire was most gorgeous, and they were, without exception, young and well-made men, but I think I could detect great traces of pallor in their cheeks. The banderilleros then advanced, and they certainly ran great risk in trying to stick their barbs, laden with fireworks, into the animal's

neck, the rules of the art of Tauromachia requiring that they should stand in front of him; however, they succeeded at last, and the fireworks exploded, but the bull was not so frightened as one would expect. He retired to the edge of the arena so as to have no enemy behind him, and the matador advanced, trying to put his Toledan blade into the spinal marrow.

This is the real danger, as science prescribes certain formulæ according to which it must be done; on this occasion it took half an hour and many stabs before the deed was done; once the human brute left his sword sticking in the animal's neck without much effect. At last he lay down, and the performer stuck a dagger in his neck and released him from his torture. The mules then dragged the carcass from the scene.

The second bull was immediately let out, but the audience did not think him worthy of the arena, because he fled from the picador

when he advanced to spear him; the hissing, screaming, shouting, waving of handkerchiefs, some on the ends of sticks, and throwing up of

Banderillero.

hats, made a scene of excitement altogether indescribable. Again the same hideous performance, the same disembowelling of the horses,

the same teasing the doomed animal, the same delay in giving him the *coup de grâce.* We could bear no more, and left the disgraceful scene.

I advise anyone who goes to Spain, not to repeat my experience. The scene is not fit for English eyes, and if it were not superstitious I would say, No wonder the curse of God is on these cruel people. I can see but little bravery or courage in it; the men in fine clothes certainly risk their lives slightly, and during the performance a collection is made for their possible widows; still the animal never has a chance—the whole thing is cowardly and unsportsman-like. If the performers were not so gorgeously apparelled, I doubt if any one would go to see a bull-fight. Certainly they are good-looking after a fashion, have agile figures, and are clothed in wonderfully rich costumes, and rich costumes, even on the Virgen Santissima, tell greatly with the Spaniards.

One can judge by the terrible excitement of the crowded Plaza de Toros that the people

insist on having these shows; the only way to eradicate their cruel taste would be to substitute some less revolting but equally exciting exhibition. I could find nothing in the affair to justify its being called a "fight;" it is simply a massacre of bulls and horses, with a bad chance for the men. In our short experience we saw four horses destroyed, two bulls killed, and a man wounded. It is said that each *corrida* costs upwards of £400, and that the number of bulls killed annually in this manner in Spain is nearly three thousand.*

The Buen Retiro is a crowded promenade, where the stunted trees are kept alive by continual irrigation; it reminds one of Paris. The royal palace is an imposing square build-

* "It is intensely difficult, even when one tries to look at the matter from a Spanish point of view, divesting oneself of all insular prejudice and sentiment, to see what valid defence of bull-fighting can be set up. The brutal horrors of some portions of the scene defy description, while the degrading immorality of the whole is patent throughout, and there is withal little that is brave or even clever."—Lomas's *Sketches in Spain.*

ing, to which we could not obtain admittance; but we visited the stables, where are kept three hundred horses and some very splendid carriages, and saw the usual pageantry of horse-trappings, which are said to be Moorish in style.

We also went through the Campo del Jardin del Moro to the river Mazanares, which after some trouble we discovered, it being, after the fashion of Spanish rivers, more sand than water. However, we recognised it by a bridge passing over it, the number of women washing in the muddy little stream, and the acres of clothes hanging out to dry, for the washer-women of the Mazanares are celebrated.

The most interesting part of Madrid to me is the street scenes; in the lower quarters the life and movement are wonderful. Mules with the gayest and most elaborate trappings, which, like our own fine adornments, seem more a burden than a satisfaction; women in bright garments, riding on donkeys laden with yellow paniers

full of fruit; men in short jackets, with yards of stuff round their waist which they use as a pocket in front; girls with fans held up to shade their eyes from the sun; policemen with swords and pistols; black-eyed *señoras* wearing mantillas, walking gravely to the numerous functions in the churches; houses gaily painted every imaginable colour, dry dusty crowded streets, and little squares with a few stunted trees in them, which, by perpetual watering, they strive to keep alive—such is Madrid. The soldiers wear sandals on their naked feet, and the military music is decidedly Moorish.

The outskirts of Madrid remind me of nothing so much as the parched plains and thick, dusty roads of Australia, to which country much of Castile bears a striking resemblance. There is but little rain here, and when it comes, the museums, places of amusement, &c., are closed!

The abstinence of the people is remarkable; the workman goes to his work taking with

him a jar of water as an accompaniment to the bread and melon which constitute his mid-day meal; glasses of cold water are sold in the street, and even the excitement of the bull-fight has no other palliative than the natural element, which is here so delicious. Beside the trains at the station the only refreshment sold is water, and under the trees in the Prado it is the staple drink.

As to food, they appear to eat everything: I have seen octopus, melon-seeds, pine-seeds, and even hips and haws among the edibles for sale. The poverty of the Spaniards is conspicuous on every side—it almost excites compassion; yet they seem happy—happier than we are in our wealthy island.

CHAPTER IV.

EL ESCORIAL.

ONE bright day when the stainless sky hung blue overhead like a measureless sapphire, we started for the Escorial, that wondrous mass of architecture which Philip II. seems to have hewn out of the solid rock. It is said very few persons ever return. They either die of consumption in two or three days, or, if they are Englishmen, blow out their brains. The first adventure was that the booking-clerk at the railway station could not give change for a twenty-five *peseta** note, the second that the porter could not read on the ticket the class we were travelling! At last the train started, and we traversed once more those dreary, arid

* A *peseta* is nearly equal in value to a franc.

plains, whose waterless gullies, brown hills, strangely-shaped granite boulders, and weird, grey-coloured trees remind one so strongly of the far Australian bush, and in two hours had accomplished the thirty-one miles which lead to the village of El Escorial. We lunched capitally at "La Miranda," and then visited the huge pile, which looks more like a fortress than anything else. Of course, it is built of the splendid granite which lies in huge, ungainly masses all around; in the background are the blue and ever-bluer heights of the Guadarramas.

Everyone knows, I suppose, that the Escorial is a church, palace, monastery, mausoleum, and museum all in one; it covers 500,000 feet, has 1,200 doors, 86 staircases, 2,673 windows (I did not count them), and everything about it is colossal. The church is an example of Doric architecture in perfection; solid granite piers support a solid granite roof, the steps of the high altar are of

jasper; there are some very appropriate but not particularly fine frescoes, some good pictures by Navarete, whose masterpieces they are, a choir elevated far above the altar, containing the seat where Philip usually sat, having near a secret door where entered the messengers who told him the news—which he heard unmoved—of the defeat of the Armada, and victory of Navarino; splendid old books, a yard across, of the same date as the church; the tomb of the late Queen Mercédes lighted by a single lamp; these are the chief impressions I bore away.

The library contains some rare examples of illuminated missals, and copies of the Korán in its elegant Arabian caligraphy. The cloisters are sombre and gloomy; the palace contains fine specimens of Flemish, French, and Spanish tapestry, elegant and in good taste. The rooms where Philip himself lived are plain in the extreme; his bedroom, like many in Spain, has not a single window,

and the little room in which he died, opens on to the high altar of the church, so that he might hear Mass as he expired.

In the choir is the celebrated life-sized figure of the Crucifixion by Benvenuto Cellini; wonderful in execution like most works by that master, it is too ornamental to express any serious religious feeling. Cellini himself admired this work of his exceedingly, but as he was in the habit of liking all his own productions amazingly, and did not hesitate to say so, it counts for nothing.

The Pantheon, designed evidently in imitation of the Medici tombs in San Lorenzo, Florence, is magnificent in marbles. The sarcophagi of the kings on the right hand, and the mothers of kings on the left, are of gray marble, ornamented with gilt bronze, each packed away on its separate shelf, six in a row; among them is the late King Alfonso XII. The tombs of the Infantes, called sometimes "El Pudridero," are of white marble elaborately

carved; there are more receptacles prepared than there ever will be Spanish kings and queens to fill, I think. Some of the children are packed away in huge, white marble constructions, something like exaggerated wedding-cakes.

There are two recumbent statues which I admired: chiefly, one of a Duchess de Montpensier reading, by Aimé Millet, the great French sculptor; it is exquisitely modelled and finished. I also liked the heralds in marble, standing at the doors, bearing the escutcheons of the buried monarchs. Of course, we saw Philip's chair, inkstand, and missal. It is said there are about two hundred monks here still of the Order of the Jeronimites.

Some of the rooms in the palace are hung with needlework on satin, done by hand, and in each there were numerous clocks which one of the kings had a fancy for collecting. What strikes one is the extremely *new* appearance of

all these objects; the Escorial is more than three hundred years old, yet everything in it looks as if it were finished yesterday; in this light, dry atmosphere even the gold and steel locks remain untarnished. Before the high altar of the church is a bier, surmounted by a crown and covered with a pall; this represents Philip II.'s bier, and Mass is daily said before it still for the repose of his soul.

> "Draw the curtain down,
> And let us hence to meditation."

Coming back to Madrid there were two armed gendarmes in the train to protect the passengers. I have seen them in every train I have travelled in, and at all the principal stations two march up and down the platform. This arrangement appears to be necessary, for a railway official, travelling in a first-class compartment alone, has just been stabbed and robbed, and the villain has escaped. The poor victim shortly died of fever caused by his

wounds; all this happened within a few miles of Madrid.

The intense heat of the summer months may be gathered from these observations:—the few trees the Madrileños can boast of are planted in holes in rows: between each hole runs a waterpipe, and so by turning on the water at the highest part, the whole plantation is irrigated; and the public gardens are laid out in little square patches made to hold water. When the rains commence they are tropically heavy, and the whole country is cut into little gutters where the water has run down and made channels for itself.

Sketching in the street is always a trial of temper. Happily the people here are not quite so bad as either French or Italians; they come and look at your work, and pass on in a contented lazy kind of way. Of course, the boys are a nuisance, but if one is good-natured sketching is quite possible about Madrid. The police seem a respectable body of men,

but their services were not necessary in any sketching expedition of ours. For six francs a day one can live very well here.

The view of the Sierra Guadarrama from the city is splendid; the mountains are of that intense blue, varying to the lightest azure, which is only to be seen in this or an equally dry atmosphere. Madrid has the reputation of being unpicturesque, but some of the houses in the older parts remind one of old Rome, and are well worthy of the sketcher's pencil.

As the Picture Gallery was our first object, so it was our last. In making a farewell tour we went to the Sculpture Gallery, containing, among other statues, some of Canova's best work, and two portraits of the celebrated Isabel in crinoline and flounces, one holding up a baby. For bad taste these figures exceed anything to be seen even in London. The Museo also contains a collection of modern Spanish pictures, painted in Rome, most of

which came from the French Exhibition of 1889.

Velasquez had lost none of his charm: his freedom and mastery of execution still seemed little short of miraculous; Murillo was as atmospheric and divine as ever, and the pictures of Juan de Juanes, though hard, still appeared fine, and reminded me of Raphael. I was glad to find the first impression correct. I have not mentioned the rich collection of valuable vases, &c., in the long room, many by Benvenuto Cellini, because no one who loves painting can spare them any attention, placed as they are, in the midst of such noble pictures.

The beggars are certainly unspeakable; every kind of deformity which ought to be sheltered and cared for, is here exposed to view as an incentive to charity. Some take up a prominent position on the pavement and there perform their family duties; others stand about, enjoying the sun, and as you approach seem

suddenly smitten with the idea that they might as well have a copper out of you if they can get it by importunity, so they try for it—not so much that they want the money but that they would regret it if they lost an opportunity.

On the fête-day (September 24th) of the sister of the late King there was a bull-fight held for a charitable purpose; the streets were thronged with people, and the day was kept as a general holiday. The public buildings and most of the palaces were hung with velvet and gold draperies; the police wore their best uniforms—white breeches, long black gaiters, and cocked hats, while one division stood at the street corners, wearing swords and carrying canes with tassels. Over all was a brilliant blue sky, of that intense, hard, hopeless-looking blue never seen out of Spain, and a fiery sun.

The principal traffic in Madrid is carried on by means of mules, sometimes very richly caparisoned, with a picture painted on their

wooden collars. Women and donkeys do nearly all the work in Spain. The large triangular stirrups seen in Titian's and Velasquez' pictures are still in common use. Madrid divides its time between the church and the bull-fight; no wonder, therefore, Spain is about three hundred years behind every other European nation. The people seem to be up early and late: at five o'clock in the morning and two at night I hear the same noise of traffic in the streets, and constant talking in the cafés; in the latter, by the way, ices and cakes, and the inevitable water are the chief refreshments, partaken of even by men.

An American lately cut the principal figure out of a picture by Murillo in a church here, and sold it to a gentleman in America. The Spaniards found and claimed it, and it was generously given back by the purchaser, and restored to its place in the picture. There is a picture by Murillo advertised for now at the Gallery, which has been stolen.

The Spaniards are rather a short race of people; the men have good figures, which they retain late in life owing to their extreme abstinence; their chief defect is that their shoulders are very sloping. The women are large in the head, as a rule; it is a great pity they wear so much powder as to make their complexions look almost blue. The peasants, both men and women, have what is commonly called an aristocratic air, and their unrestrained attitudes and freedom of gesture give them a sculpturesque appearance. This is emphasized by a piece of drapery, a coat or cloak, generally hanging over the left shoulder.

CHAPTER V.

TOLEDO.

At six o'clock one evening we left Madrid for Toledo, a distance of thirty-one miles, which it took four hours to accomplish; fare, four *pesetas* twenty *centimos*. Perhaps the dreadful railway accident at Burgos the day before, where according to the Spanish papers—which had no news of the event till twenty-four hours after it had occurred—twenty-two people were killed and forty wounded, had something to do with the engine-driver's extreme caution.

Railway travelling here is undoubtedly very risky. *El Liberal*, one of the leading papers, says:—"There does not pass a month, no, not even a week, without our having to lament a catastrophe on the Spanish railways, and unfortunately the number is increasing."

The Hotel de Lino, the only one in Toledo suited to other nationalities than Spanish, is very comfortable and very dear; evidently wealthy travellers would not find it particularly difficult to go through Spain. We, however, retired from the hotel to a modest *casa de huespedes*, or *pension*, where we lived as best we might on oleaginous food at five *pesetas* a day.

The first impression made by Toledo on the western traveller is that it is a very remarkable place, even now bearing strong traces of Moorish influence. Beginning here, these traces increase as you journey southward; you never lose them again. The badly-paved streets are so narrow and tortuous that vehicles seldom go through them. Every window, even those of the highest story, is covered with a *reja*, or railing, and—what I ought to have said first—the walls are still intact, pierced at intervals with picturesque gates.

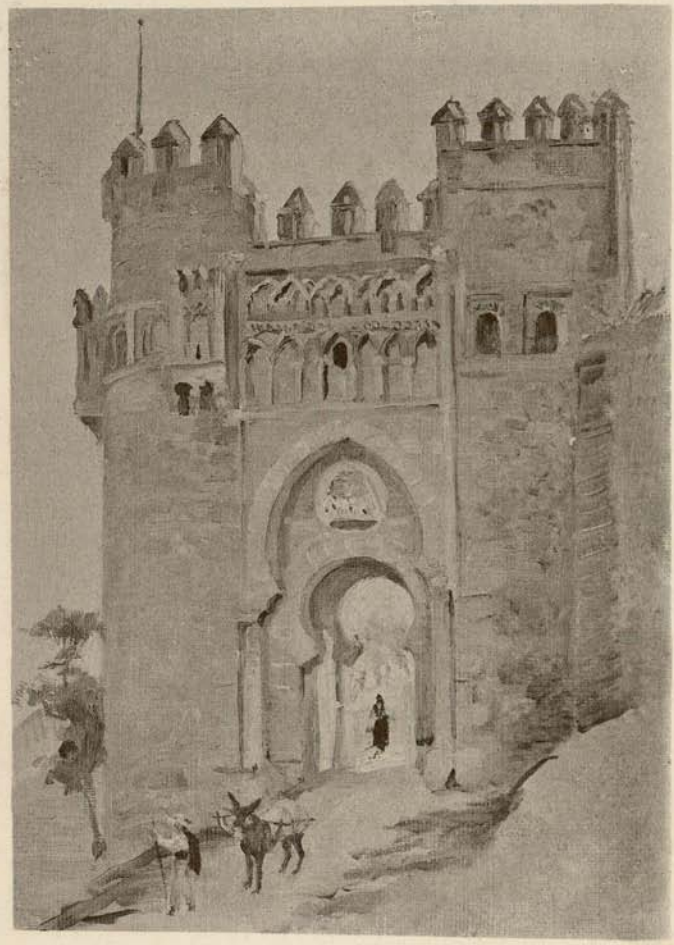
Toledo has one especial drawback, the

unparalleled impudence of the *gamins*, who run after you everywhere, asking for a *sou*, or a *centimito*, and even insult you for no perceivable cause. They are as persistent as the mosquitos, and beg as naturally as those noxious insects sting.

Of course, our first visit was to the cathedral, which, though neither so large nor so handsome as that of Burgos, is by some considered in better taste; at any rate, it is simpler, and has the advantage of possessing magnificent stained-glass windows. The choir and high altar are separated from the aisles, as usual, spoiling the general view; the *retablo** is the finest in Spain, and, singular as it may seem to praise such things as gilt and coloured statues, is really magnificent. Toledo has been, in its day, a great centre for saints and miracles; there are still to be seen some wonderful miracle-working images in the cathedral, and their shrines are hung round with numerous

* The reredos or screen rising from the high altar.

wax votive offerings. For example, if a person breaks his leg, and it is healed after a prayer to our Lady of Misericordia, the happy convalescent hangs up a little waxen leg at her shrine; if one's eyes grow dim, and the sight is restored after intercession with her, a waxen representation of the eyes is hung up to testify to her efficacy. There is shown here a miraculous stone on which the Virgin alighted when she came down to present San Ildefonso with a chasuble, which was formed of heavenly cloth; this the devout rub their fingers on before they cross themselves. The west front is a marvel of architecture, the tower inferior, and a *classical* doorway has lately been added on one side!—such is modern Spanish taste. The cloisters are fine, running round a *patio* filled with flourishing plants, such as myrtles, oleanders, cypresses, and vines. We will leave the cathedral at present—only to return for a more detailed inspection, as it is the pivot on which all Toledo turns, bigotry and



Puerta del Sol Gate in Toledo.

pleasure being the chief characteristics of the Toledanos.

Most unfortunately the noble Gothic Church of San Juan de los Reyes is suffering from the present Spanish craze for restoration, and a structure of loud Moorish design is being added to the Gothic cloisters, which have the deserved reputation of being the most perfect of their kind in Europe. From what we were able to see, amid scaffolding and hoardings, the interior of the church is most exquisite; the exterior is also extremely beautiful; from the walls hang a number of chains, suspended there as *ex-voto* offerings from captives delivered from the Moors after the conquest of Granada. The carving of the foliage of the capitals and cornices, and of the birds and animals which nestle amidst it, is so elaborate as to resemble nature itself; the quiet grey colour of the stone helps the general elegance of effect. High up in the angles of the transept are tribunes, or *ambons*, for the royal

family, which look like ivory-work. It is truly said that Gothic art never produced anything more suave, more elegant, or more pure. It alone is well worth the journey to Toledo. I much fear, however, that the restoring mania is going too far, and that the glorious Church of San Juan de los Reyes will be among the greatest sufferers.

As I mentioned before, we took a *cuarto* in a *casa de huespedes* which we found much cheaper than the hotel. The *cuarto* consists of two rooms, one leading into the other; the first opens out of a covered gallery which surrounds a *patio* open to the sky, filled with shrubs, and having three wells in it; you descend two steps into the room, after passing through an elaborately panelled door, made for defence rather than anything else, and having huge bolts and locks.

The walls are whitewashed, there is not a fireplace in the house except in the kitchen, the floors are tiled, and the small windows,

barred with iron, are almost beyond reach; you feel as if you were living in a convent. The furniture is very plain, simply chairs and tables enshrouded in white dimity; there is an entire absence of all the little elegances with which English rooms are filled. *In medio tutissimus*, &c. Over the *patio* is a kind of sail or awning, drawn at pleasure to keep out the sun or rain.

One can judge by the numerous precautions against it, how tremendous the heat must be in summer; even in September the sun is scorching, and it is almost impossible to remain exposed to his rays between twelve and four o'clock. The windows and balconies which project from nearly every house are beautiful, and give great character to the streets; the heavy doors, dotted with huge iron or bronze nails, very remarkable and unlike anything of the kind to be seen elsewhere. From all the precautions taken for security, it is evident there was some danger in Toledo

at one time. Once the capital of Spain, it has been besieged and defended many a time; of all its proud pre-eminence it only retains the reputation that the Spanish spoken there is the purest in the whole country.

The Hospital de Tavera is chiefly noticeable for its four beautiful *patios*; round their Doric pillars vines are twining, and in the midst oleanders bloom. The tomb of the founder, Archbishop Tavera, is not without merits—especially those of expression and finish.

On Sunday we attended High Mass in the cathedral, and very fine it was, unlike any Roman Catholic office we had ever seen before. The vestments of the priests were emerald green and gold, and a handsome man in a white wig was kept constantly employed in heading processions round the outside of the high altar, and to and fro from the altar to the choir. Add to this acolytes moving about in scarlet robes, women in black mantillas agitating their fans and "effacing" themselves, as

it were, on the floor, and men in picturesque garbs leaning on their long sticks behind all, and you have a picture easier to imagine than describe. The music—for which two organs were used, some of the pipes of which stand out at right angles from the instrument—was the most lively ever heard in church; very quaint and characteristic is this Spanish music, and, I imagine, unknown out of its native country. The ritual seemed singular, and at the elevation of the Host a whole chime of bells rang out with deafening noise, and the sacristan imperiously exacted of us that we should kneel.

The cathedral is more impressive on the second visit than on the first. The beautiful chapel of Santiago recalls that of the Condestable in Burgos, so pure is its Gothic architecture; "it is a gem of taste and elegance." Before the altar are the magnificent tombs of Don Alvaro de Luna, and his wife, Doña Juana, having kneeling life-sized

figures at the corners. Mention should also be made of the Muzarabic Chapel, founded to preserve in all its purity the Gothic ritual. It is chiefly remarkable for a contemporary fresco of the conquest of Oran by Cardinal Cisneros. The women in church are most picturesque objects; sinking on the bare stone floor, the highest and lowest continually agitate their fans, and their faces are a study of devotional expression; all classes here, as in Madrid, carry fans; one gets irritated with seeing and hearing them perpetually.

Of all the entrances to the cathedral, the Puerta de los Leones is the most exquisite; if Michel Angelo had seen it he would have found it more worthy of being the gate of Paradise than those of Ghiberti at the Baptistery, Florence. In this, and in the celebrated *rejas* of the choir and altar, are certain evidences of Italian influence; the human figures in that of the choir are more

than worthy of Ghiberti's hand. The stained-glass windows are a dream of beauty; half the glory of the cathedral consists in the rich mellow light which they pour on floor and shrine, on gilded altar and on richly-carved arch and pillar. No words of mine can convey an idea—even the remotest—of the Gothic cathedrals of Spain, their size, splendour, wealth of detail, and extraordinary magnificence. Those who have courage to face Spanish fare and Spanish boys may see for themselves; those who do not care to endure these evils can gain little from any description. The superstition and curious morality of the Spaniards, also, must be studied to be believed.

There is very little hope of progress here for many years to come. Shut in by the Pyrenean mountains and the encircling seas, Spain is at this day centuries behind the other nations of Europe in civilisation, and Toledo is backward even for Spain. As yet the desire for progress has not awakened in her; how then,

till she recognises what is wanting, can she endeavour to attain it? I have no hope for this country for many years to come. I trust the ubiquitous Cook will bring many more tourists here, and teach the people what Englishmen really are, not objects of curiosity and insult, but gentlemen who say what they mean, and mean what they say.

"Imperial" Toledo is like a proud and beautiful woman who is entirely uneducated. Splendidly situated on a steep rock crowned by the gigantic fortress of the Alcazar, at her feet the Tagus and the barren plains of Castile, she presents a brave appearance to the world; within, her narrow streets and sunless alleys are inhabited by people who, remembering only the legendary glories of the past, think themselves the centre of the universe, and neither know of nor care for the existence of other nations, other religions, other ideas, other customs.

To them a foreigner is an anomaly—a thing

to scoff at in whatever he does not resemble them exactly. News of the outside world there is none; and the only modern innovation they have adopted is that favourite indulgence of towns which do not boast the ordinary requirements of civilised life—electric light.

An image of the Virgin, known as the "Black Virgin," is held in the greatest veneration in Toledo, and said to be one of the many really authentic portraits; it is of wood, much darkened by time, but all concealed except the face and hands by a mass of silver tissue, covered with jewels. The altar is of silver gilt, and has a very glittering effect in the candlelight.*

We walked all round the walls, examined the gates, and thought the Puerta del Sol the finest. The bridge of Alcantara was built by a

* "The Virgin always wears in Spain the royal crown, and ranks as a queen. She has a household, composed of the greatest ladies of the kingdom, revenues, landed estates, &c., and her toilettes rival those of the most extravagant queens in the world."—O'SHEA.