

bear the same topographic relation to the vehicle, as the truffles do to a turkey, or the stuffing to a duck. There was much grumbling about the quantity of my luggage, and some hints thrown out, relative to the additional perils, suspended over our heads, or rather, under our seats, in consequence of the coincidence of the unusual weight, with the bad state of the *road*, as they termed it, and the acknowledged caducity of the carriage. I really was, in fact, the only one to blame; for I could not discover, besides my things, more than two small valises belonging to all the other six passengers together.

At length we set off, and at a distance of four miles from Madrid, as day began to break, we broke down.

The break-down was neither violent nor dangerous, and was occasioned by the crash of a hind wheel, while our pace did not exceed a walk: but it was productive of some amusement, owing to the position, near the corner of the vehicle which took the greatest fancy to *terra firma*, of a not over heroic limb of the Castilian law, who had endeavoured to be facetious ever since our departure, and whose countenance now exhibited the most grotesque symptoms of real terror. Never, I am convinced, will those moments be forgotten by that individual, whose vivacity deserted him for the remainder of the journey;

and whose attitude and expression, as his extended arms failed to recover his centre of gravity exchanged for the supine, folded-up posture, unavoidable by the occupant at the lowest corner of a broken-down vehicle,—while his thoughts wandered to his absent offspring, whose fond smiles awaited him in Toledo, but to whom perhaps he was not allowed to bid an eternal adieu—will live likewise in the memory of his fellow-travellers.

This *dénouement* of the adventures of the first carriage rendered a long halt necessary; during which, the postilion returned to Madrid on a mule, and brought us out a second. This proceeding occupied four hours, during which some entered a neighbouring *venta*, others remained on the road, seated on heaps of stones, and all breakfasted on what provisions they had brought with them, or could procure at the said *venta*. The sight of the vehicle that now approached, would have been cheaply bought at the price of twenty up-sets. Don Quixote would have charged it, had such an apparition suddenly presented itself to his view. It was called a phaeton, but bore no sort of resemblance to the open carriage known in England by that name. Its form was remarkable by its length being out of all proportion to its width,—so much so as to require three widely-separated windows on each side. These were

irregularly placed, instead of being alike on the two sides, for the door appeared to have been forgotten until after the completion of the fabric, and to have taken subsequently the place of a window ; which window—pursuant to a praiseworthy sense of justice—was provided for at the expense of a portion of deal board, and some uniformity.

The machine possessed, nevertheless, allowing for its rather exaggerated length, somewhat of the form of an ancient landau ; but the roof describing a semicircle, gave it the appearance of having been placed upside down by mistake, in lowering it on to the wheels. Then, with regard to these wheels, they certainly had nothing very extraordinary about their appearance, when motionless ; but, on being subjected to a forward or backward impulse, they assumed, respectively, and independently of each other, such a zigzag movement, as would belong to a rotatory, locomotive pendulum, should the progress of mechanics ever attain to so complicated a discovery. Indeed, the machine, in general, appeared desirous of avoiding the monotony attendant on a straight-forward movement ; the body of the monster, from the groans, sighs, screams, and other various sounds which accompanied its heaving, pitching, and rolling exertions, appearing to belong to some unwieldy and agonised mammoth and to move by its

own laborious efforts, instead of being indebted for its progress to the half-dozen quadrupeds hooked to its front projections.

The track along which this interesting production of mechanical art now conveyed us, bore much resemblance to a river, in the accidents of its course. Thus we were reminded at frequent intervals, by the suddenly increased speed of our progress, that we were descending a rapid: at other times the motion was so vertical, as to announce the passage down a cataract. These incidents were not objectionable to me, as they interrupted the monotony of the walking pace, to which we were condemned; although one or two passengers of rather burly proportions, seemed not much to enjoy their repetition. However this might be, assuredly we were none of us sorry to find ourselves at eight o'clock that evening safely housed at Toledo.

LETTER VIII.

PICTURESQUE POSITION OF TOLEDO. FLORINDA.

Toledo.

EVERY traveller—I don't mean every one who habitually assists in wearing out roads, whether of stone or iron—nor who travels for business, nor who seeks to escape from himself—meaning from ennui, (a vain attempt, by the way, if Horace is to be depended on; since, even should he travel on horseback, the most exhilarating sort of locomotion, ennui will contrive to mount and ride pillion)—but every one who deserves the name of traveller, who travels for travelling sake, for the pleasure of travelling, knows the intensity of the feeling which impels his right hand, as he proceeds to open the window-shutter of his bed-room, on the morning subsequent to his nocturnal arrival in a new town.

The windows of the Posada del Miradero at Toledo are so placed as by no means to diminish the interest of this operation. The shutter being opened, I found myself looking from a perpendicular ele-

vation of several hundred feet, on one of the prettiest views you can imagine. The town was at my back, and the road by which we had arrived, was cut in the side of the precipice beneath me. In following that direction, the first object at all prominent was the gate leading to Madrid—a cluster of half Arab embattled towers and walls, standing somewhat to the left at the bottom of the descent. These gave issue to the track mentioned in my journey, and which could now be traced straight in front, to a considerable distance.

The ground rises slightly beyond the gates of the town, and preserves a moderate elevation all across the view, retreating right and left, so as to offer the convex side of the arc of an immense circle. This formation gives to the view a valley, extending on either side, shut in on the left by mountains at a distance of four miles; while to the east it extends as far as the eye can reach,—some mountains, scarcely perceptible, crossing it at the horizon. The Tagus advances down the eastern valley from Aranjuez; which château is in view at the distance of twenty-eight miles, and approaching with innumerable zigzags to the foot of the town, suddenly forms a curve, and, dashing into the rocks, passes round the back of the city, issues again into the western valley, and, after another sharp turn to the left, resumes the

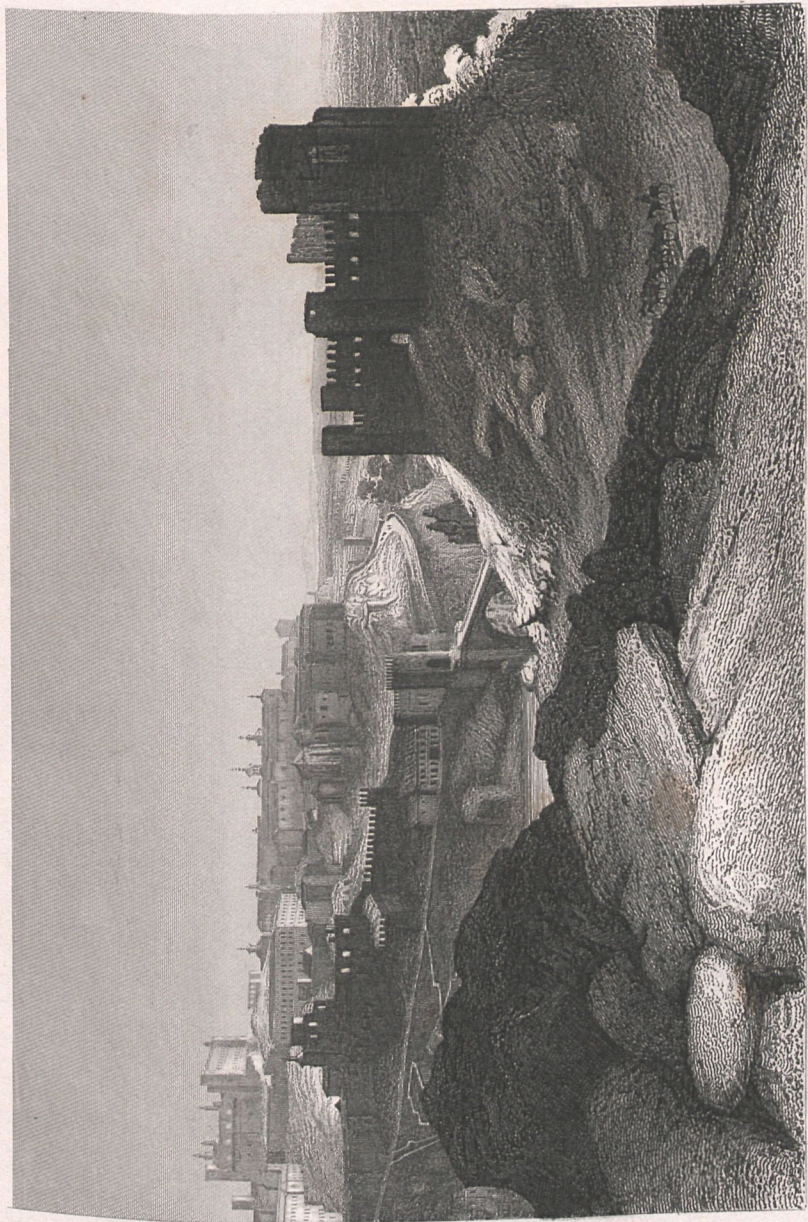
same direction as before. All this tract of country owes to the waters of the Tagus a richness of vegetation, and a bright freshness nowhere surpassed. So much for the distant view.

To judge of the nearer appearance of the town, I crossed the bridge of Alcantara, placed at the entrance of the eastern valley, and leading to Aranjuez. The situation may be described in a few words. Toledo stands on an eminence nearly circular in its general form. It is a mass of jagged rock, almost perpendicular on all its sides. The river flows rather more than half round it, descending from the east, and passing round its southern side. The left or south bank is of the same precipitous formation; but, instead of presenting that peculiarity during only a short distance, it continues so both above and below the town; while on the opposite side the only high ground is the solitary mass of rock selected, whether with a view to defence or to inconvenience, for the position of this ancient city. The Tagus is crossed by two bridges, one at each extremity of the semi-circle described by it round the half of the town. These bridges are both highly picturesque, from their form no less than their situation. They are raised upon arches of a height so disproportionate to their width, as to appear like aqueducts; and are provided at each extremity with towers, all, with one

exception, Moorish in their style. The lower bridge (lower by position, for it is the higher of the two in actual elevation) bears the name of San Martin, and is traversed by the road to Estremadura; the other leads to Aranjuez, and is the puente de Alcantara. We are now standing on this last, having passed under the Arab archway of its tower.

Its width is just sufficient for the passage of two vehicles abreast, and it is covered with flag-paving. The river flows sixty feet below. At the back of the tower which faces you, at the opposite end of the bridge, rises a rock, almost isolated from the rest of the cliff, and on its top the half-ruined towers and walls of a Moorish castle. On the left hand extends the valley, through which the river approaches in a broad mass. The road to Aranjuez follows the same direction, after having first disappeared round the base of the rock just mentioned, and is bordered with rose-trees, and occasional groups of limes, which separate it from the portions set apart for pedestrians. On the right hand the river (still looking from the bridge) is suddenly pressed in between precipices, becomes narrow, and at the distance of a few hundred yards, forms a noisy cascade.

Still looking in that direction, the left bank—a rocky precipice, as I mentioned before—curves round and soon hurries it out of sight. The lower part of



VIEW OF TOLEDO.



the opposite or town bank is ornamented, close to the cascade, with a picturesque ruin, on which you look down from your position. This consists of three stories of arches, standing partly in the water. Above and behind them rise a few larger buildings, almost perpendicularly over each other, and the summit is crowned with the colossal quadrangular mass of the Alcazar.

The ruinous arches just mentioned, are the remains of a building erected by a speculator, who had conceived a plan for raising water to the Alcazar by means of wheels, furnished with jars, according to the custom of this part of Spain. The arrangement is simple; the jars, being attached round a perpendicular wheel, successively fill with water, as each arrives at the bottom, and empty themselves, on reaching the summit, into any receptacle placed so as to receive their contents. The speculator, having to operate on a colossal scale, intended probably to superpose wheel over wheel, and to establish reservoirs at different elevations, as it would scarcely be possible to work a wheel of such dimensions as to carry jars to the height required (more than three hundred feet), even though furnished with ropes, which are made to turn round the wheel and descend below it.

Crossing the bridge, the road quits the river, or

rather is left for a certain space by it, until it meets it at the distance of a mile. This road is a favourite promenade of the inhabitants, and deservedly so. On each side, for the distance of a mile, it is bordered by hedges of magnificent rose-trees. These hedges are double on both sides, enclosing walks for the promenaders on foot. Behind those on the outside, the colours are varied by the pale green of the olive-tree ; and over them occasional clusters of lime-trees, mingled with the acacia and laburnum, furnish shade, in case of an excess of sunshine. This promenade, flanked on one side by the hills, and on the other, by the highly cultivated plain, in parts of which the Tagus is seen occasionally to peep through its wooded banks, is most delicious during the rose season. I should especially recommend the visitor of Toledo to repair to it during the first hour after sunrise, when thronged with birds, which are here almost tame, and fill the air with their music ; and also in the evening, when frequented by the mantilla-hooded fair of the city.

There is, however, notwithstanding the beauty and gay appearance of this profusion of roses, a singular effect produced by their situation. Usually seen surrounded by other flowers or by well-kept grass or earth, they do not look quite themselves on the side on which they rest their bushy foundations on a

dusty road, covered with deep ruts. The fish out of water forms a hackneyed, not to say a dried up, comparison; but we can compare the rather pallid and unnatural appearance of these plants to that of a bevy of ladies, who, tired of the monotony of a ball-room in Grosvenor Place, should resolve, precisely at the crisis when candle-light is more than ever required for their rather suffering complexions, to compel their partners to lead them, at sunrise, a galopade down Tattersall's yard. The roses, thus misplaced, are nevertheless roses, and cease not to be fair, in spite of their unusual *entourage*, and to contribute to the beauty and novelty of this picturesque promenade.

Amongst the variety of harmless weaknesses by which human imagination, and consequently human locomotion are influenced, I look upon one of the most irresistible (if such an epithet be applicable to a weakness) to be that fractional component part of the cravings of antiquarianism, which urges some persons in the search after, and rewards their labours on the discovery of, the locality supposed to be the birthscene of some great historical event, however insignificant in other respects, or even however loathsome its actual state may be to the outward senses. Thus, when, in Normandy, the worthy and probably waggish majordomo of the crumbling old castle of

Falaise, directs your attention to the window from which Duke Robert caught the first glance of the ankle of William the Conqueror's mother,—as she pursued her professional labours, and polluted with her soapsuds the silver brook a quarter of a mile below him,—and suddenly yielded his soul to its irresistible beauty : notwithstanding the impossibility of the thing, many, and I confess myself one, are too delighted with the window, and the rivulet, and the majordomo, and the — God knows what !—perhaps with the very impossibility—to allow themselves a moment's sceptical or sarcastic feeling on the subject.

I should mention that my visit to Falaise happening to take place shortly after the passage of the King of the French on a tour through his western provinces, the aforesaid cicerone pointed out a highly suspicious-looking inscription, being the initials of the monarch, carefully engraved in the stone ; which he informed me had been cut by Louis Philippe, on the occasion of his visit at midnight to the room of Duke Robert ; but of which I took the liberty of suspecting himself of being the sculptor, during some idle moment,—fond as he probably was of contemplating the innocently expressive countenances of his satisfied visitors.

Actuated by the feeling I have attempted to describe, one of my first inquiries at Toledo related to