

clopedia of the convents and monasteries of Toledo ; and could announce each morning, with the precision of an almanack, the name of the saint of the day,—in what church or convent he was especially fêted, and at what hour the ceremony would take place. She was likewise *au fait* of the foundation, ancient and modern annals, and peculiarities of every sort which belong to every religious establishment of the many scores existing in Toledo. Her administration of the household affairs was admirably organized owing to her energetic activity. Her love of cleanliness would frequently induce her to take the sweeping department into her own hands—a circumstance which was sure to render the operation doubly successful, for the brooms, which in Toledo are not provided with handles or broomsticks, were exactly of a length suited to her stature. Before we take leave of her, here is one more of her original replies.

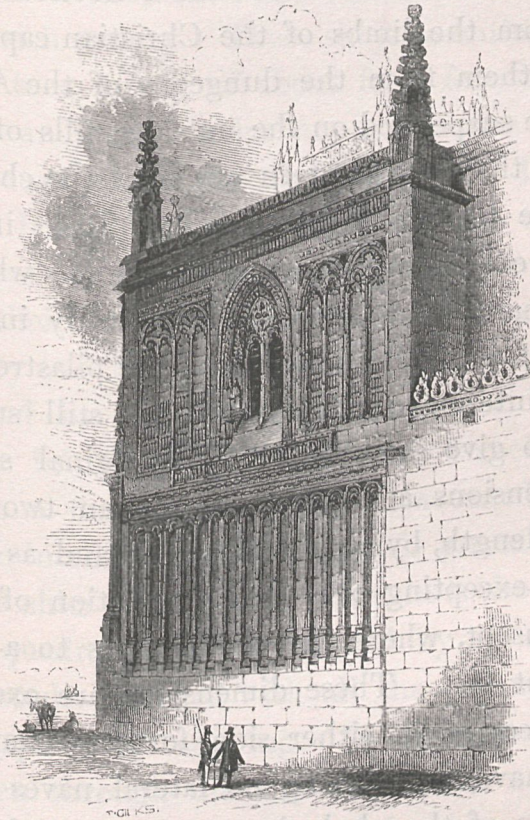
I complained to her at breakfast that the eggs were not as fresh as usual ; and, suiting the action to the word, approached the egg-cup containing the opened one so near to her, that the organs of sight and smell could not but testify to the justice of my *reclamation*. Shrugging her shoulders, until they almost reached the level of the table—and with much contempt depicted on her countenance : “ How could it be otherwise ? ” she exclaimed, “ the egg

was taken a quarter of an hour ago from under the hen ; but you have broken it at the wrong end."

The monastery called San Juan de los Reyes, was founded by Ferdinand and Isabella, on their return from the conquest of Granada, and given to a fraternity of Franciscan friars. An inscription to this effect in gothic characters runs round the cloister walls, where it forms a sort of frieze, in a line with the capitals of the semi-columns. The inhabited part of the establishment is in a state of complete ruin, having been destroyed by the French during the Peninsular War. The cloisters are, likewise, in a semi-ruinous state: the part best preserved being the church; although that was not entirely spared, as may be supposed from its having been used as cavalry stables.

The choice of a situation for the erection of this convent was perfect in the then flourishing state of Toledo; and, even now, its picturesque position lends a charm to the melancholy and deserted remains still visible of its grandeur and beauty. It stands on the brow of the cliff, commanding the termination of the chasm already described as commencing at the bridge of Alcantara. It commands, therefore, the ruins of Roderick's palace, placed a few hundred yards further on, and on a lower level; still lower the picturesque bridge of

St. Martin, striding to the opposite cliff, over arches of ninety feet elevation, and the lovely *vega* which stretches to the west.



CHURCH OF SAN JUAN DE LOS REYES.

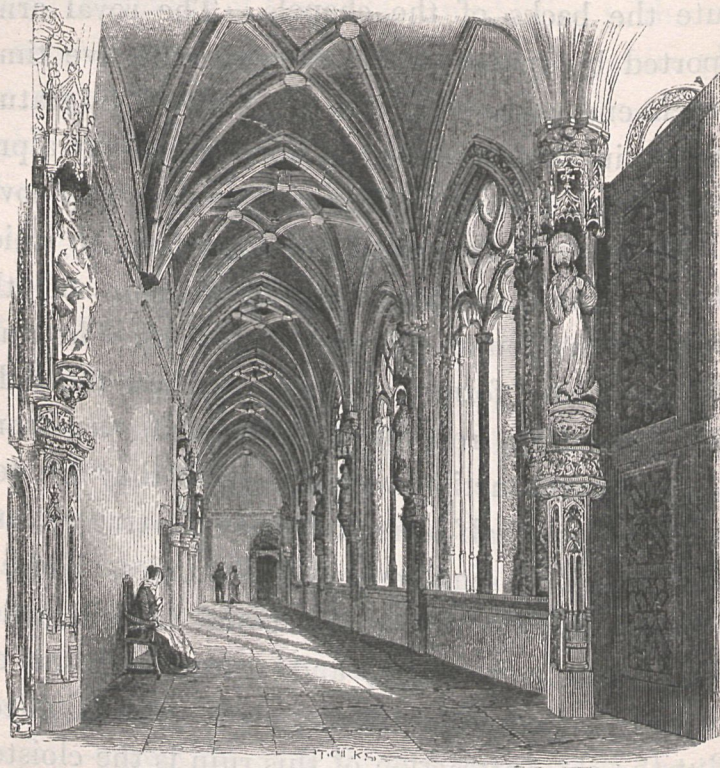
This monastery was one of the most favoured amongst the numerous royal endowments of that period. It is said that its foundation was the result of a vow pronounced by Ferdinand and the Queen

before the taking of Granada. In addition to the scale of magnificence adopted throughout the entire plan, the royal founders, on its completion, bestowed a highly venerated donation—the collection of chains taken from the limbs of the Christian captives, rescued by them from the dungeons of the Alhambra. They are suspended on the outside walls of the two sides of the north-eastern angle of the church, and are made to form a frieze, being placed in couples crossing each other at an acute angle; while those that remained are suspended vertically in rows by fours or fives, in the intervals of the pilastres.

The interior of the church is still sufficiently entire to give some idea of its original splendour. Its dimensions are rather more than two hundred feet in length, by eighty in width, and as many in height—excepting over the intersection of the nave and transept, where the ceiling rises to a hundred and eight feet. These dimensions are exclusive of three recesses on either side, forming chapels open to the nave, there being no lateral naves or aisles. The style of the whole is very ornamental; but the east end is adorned with an unusual profusion of sculpture. The transept is separated from the eastern extremity of the building, by a space no greater than would suffice for one of the arches; and its ends form the lines, which being prolonged, con-

stitute the backs of the chapels. The royal arms, supported by spread eagles, are repeated five times on each end-wall; separated respectively by statues of saints in their niches, and surmounted by a profusion of rich tracery. These subjects entirely cover the walls to a height of about forty feet, at which elevation another inscription in honour of the founders runs round the whole interior. The transepts not being formed by open arches, the sides afford space for a repetition of the same ornament, until at their junction with the nave they are terminated by two half-piers covered with tracery, and surmounted by semi-octagonal balconies, beneath which the initials of Ferdinand and Isabella, made to assume a fancy shape, and surmounted by coronets, are introduced with singularly graceful effect.

But the chief attraction of this ruin is the cloister. A small quadrangle is surrounded by an ogival or pointed arcade, enriched with all the ornament that style is capable of receiving. It encloses a garden, which, seen through the airy-web of the surrounding tracery, must have produced in this sunny region a charming effect. At present, one side being in ruins and unroofed, its communication with the other three has been interrupted; and, whether or not in the idea of preserving the other sides from the infection, their arches have been closed nearly



CLOISTER OF SAN JUAN DE LOS REYES, TOLEDO.

to the top by thin plaister walls. Whatever may have been the motive of this arrangement, it answers the useful purpose of concealing from the view a gallery which surmounts the cloister, the arches of which would neutralize the souvenirs created by the rest of the scene, since they announce a far different epoch of art, by the grievous backsliding of taste evinced in their angular form and uncouth proportions.

Until the destruction of the monastery by the French, the number of monks was very considerable; and in consequence of the unusual privileges accorded to their body, had become the objects of especial veneration. A curious proof of this still exists in the form of a printed paper, pasted on one of the doors in the interior of the church, and no doubt preserved carefully by the fifteen or sixteen brothers, who continued after the dispersion of the rest to inhabit the few apartments, which, by their situation over the cloister, had escaped the flames; and who were only finally compelled to evacuate their retreat on the occasion of the general convent crusade of the late revolution. It is an announcement of indulgences, of which the following is the opening paragraph:—

“Indulgence and days of pardon to be gained by kissing the robe of the brothers of San Francisco.

“All the faithful gain, for each time that they kiss the aforesaid holy robe with devotion of heart, two thousand and seventy-five days of Indulgence. Further than this, whosoever of the faithful shall kiss the aforesaid holy robe devoutly, gains each time eight thousand one hundred days of pardon. The which urges to the exercise of this devotion the Princes, Kings, Emperors, Bishops, and highest dignitaries of the Church, and the monks of other re-

ligious orders; and even those of the same order gain the same, according to the doctrine of Lantusca, who writes, 'Videant religiosi quantum thesaurum portent secum.' Since those who with hearts filled with lowliness and love, bend the knees to kiss the precious garment, which opens to so many souls the entrance to Heaven, leading them aside from the paths of perdition, with trembling and terror of the entire hosts of hell, are doubtless those who gain the above-mentioned Indulgences, &c."

Cardinal Ximenes had assumed the habit of this monastery before his nomination to the see of Toledo.

Among the numerous relics of the ancient prosperity of this ruinous corner of Toledo, are seen the walls of the palace of Don Juan Hurtado de Mendoza. To them were confided the secret murmurings of Charles the Fifth's vexation, when, elated with his Italian successes — lord of the greatest empire of Christendom, and flattered by the magnificent hospitality of the Genoese, he only resorted hither to be bearded by his Spanish vassals, and to hear his request for supplies unceremoniously refused. Although monarch of nearly half Europe, and, better still, of Mexico and Peru, that sovereign appears to have undergone the torments of a constantly defective exchequer.



His armies were not numerous for such an empire, and yet they were frequently in revolt for arrears of pay. Could at that time the inventor of a constitution on the modern principle have presented himself to Charles, with what treasures would he not have rewarded him? On his arrival in Spain, in the autumn of 1538, the emperor convoked the cortes in Toledo, "for the purpose of deliberation on the most grave and urgent causes, which obliged him to request of his faithful vassals an inconsiderable contribution, and of receiving the assurance of the desire with which he was animated, of diminishing their burdens as soon as circumstances should enable him to do so." All assembled on the appointed day—the prelates, the grandees, the knights, the deputies of cities and towns. The opening session took place in the great salon of the house of Don Juan Hurtado de Mendoza, Count of Melita, in which the emperor had taken up his abode; and two apartments in the convent of San Juan de los Reyes, were prepared for the remaining meetings—one for the ecclesiastical body, presided by the Cardinal de Tavera, archbishop of Toledo, accompanied by Fray Garcia de Loaysa, cardinal, and confessor of the emperor, afterwards Archbishop of Seville—the other for the lay members of the cortes.

Although an adept at dissimulation, what must have been the impatience of Charles, while under the necessity of listening, day after day, to reports of speeches pronounced by the independent members of his *junta* on the subject of his unwelcome proposition, without the consolation of foreseeing that the supplies would eventually be forthcoming. The orators did not spare him. The historian, Mariana, gives at full length the speech of the condestable Don Velasco, Duke of Frias, a grandee enjoying one of the highest dignities at the court, who commences by declaring that, "with respect to the Sisa," (tax on provisions, forming the principal subject of the emperor's demand,) "each of their lordships, being such persons as they were, would understand better than himself this business : but what he understood respecting it was, that nothing could be more contrary to God's service, and that of his Majesty, and to the good of these kingdoms of Castile, of which they were natives, and to their honour, than the Sisa ;" and, further on, proposes that a request be made to his Majesty, that he would moderate his expenditure, which was greater than that of the Catholic kings.

On an address to this effect being presented to the emperor, he replied, that "he thanked them for their kind intentions ; but that his request was

for present aid, and not for advice respecting the future:" and finding, at length, that no Sisa was to be obtained, he ordered the archbishop to dissolve the *junta*, which he did in the following words:—"Gentlemen, — his Majesty says, that he convoked your lordships' assembly for the purpose of communicating to you his necessities, and those of these kingdoms, since it appeared to him that, as they were general, such also should be the remedy; but seeing all that has been done, it appears to him that there is no need of detaining your lordships, but that each of you may go to his house, or whether he may think proper."

It must be confessed that the *grandees*, who had on this occasion complained of Charles's foreign expeditions, and neglect of his Spanish dominions, did not pursue the system best calculated to reconcile him to a residence among them. Instead of taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by social intercourse, for making amends for the repulse he had suffered from the *cortez*, they appeared desirous of rendering the amount of humiliation which awaited him in Spain a counterpoise to his triumphs in his other dominions. On the close of the above-mentioned session, a tournament was celebrated in the *vegu* of Toledo. On arriving at the lists, an *alguacil* of the court, whose duty it was to clear the

way on the emperor's approach — seeing the Duke de l'Infantado in the way, requested him to move on, and on his refusal struck his horse with his staff. The duke drew his sword and cut open the officer's head. In the midst of the disturbance occasioned by the incident, the *alcalde* Ronquillo came up, and attempted to arrest the duke in the emperor's name — when the constable, Duke de Frias, who had just ridden to the scene of bustle, reining in his horse, exclaimed, "I, in virtue of my office, am chief minister of justice in these kingdoms, and the duke is, therefore, my prisoner;" and addressing himself to the *alcalde*: "know better another time, on what persons you may presume to exercise your authority." The duke left the ground in company of the last speaker, and was followed by all the nobles present, leaving the emperor entirely unaccompanied. It appears that no notice was taken by Charles of this insult; his manner towards the Duke of Infantado on the following day being marked by peculiar condescension, and all compensation to the wounded *alguacil* left to the duke's generosity.

The personal qualities of this prince, as a monarch, appear to have been overrated in some degree in his own day; but far more so by subsequent writers. The brilliancy of his reign, and the homage which

surrounded his person were due to the immense extent of his dominions; and would never have belonged to him, any more than the states of which he was in possession, had their attainment depended in any degree on the exercise of his individual energies. When in the prime of youth, possessed of repeated opportunities of distinguishing himself at the head of his armies, he kept aloof, leaving the entire conduct of the war to his generals. His rival, Francis the First, wounded at Pavia in endeavouring to rally his flying troops, and at length taken prisoner while half crushed beneath his dead horse, was greater—as he stood before the hostile general, his tall figure covered with earth and blood—than the absent emperor, who was waiting at Valladolid for the news of the war.

Nor were the qualities of the statesman more conspicuous than those of the warrior on this occasion. Having received the intelligence of his victory, and of the capture of his illustrious prisoner, he took no measures—gave no orders. To his general every thing was left; and when the captive King was, at his own request, conveyed some time after to Spain, the astonished emperor had received no previous notice of his coming. He allowed himself to be out-manceuvred in the treaty for the liberation of his prisoner; and when Francis broke the pledge