

dying civilities as to which should hold the door while the other ascended. No sooner were we seated than my companion inquired whether I was military; adding, that he was a Carlist captain of cavalry returning from a six months' emigration.

Notwithstanding the complete polish of his manners in addressing me, it was evident he enjoyed an uncommon exuberance of spirits, even more than the occasion could call for from the most ardent lover of his country; and I at first concluded he must have taken the earliest opportunity (it being four o'clock in the morning) of renewing his long-interrupted acquaintance with the flask of *aguardiente*: but that this was not the case was evident afterwards, from the duration of his tremendous happiness. During the first three or four hours, his tongue gave itself not an instant's repose. Every incident was a subject of merriment, and, when tired of talking to me, he would open the front-window and address the *mayoral*; then roar to the postilion, ten mules ahead; then swear at the *zagal* running along the road, or toss his cigar-stump at the head of some wayfaring peasant-girl.

Sometimes, all his vocabulary being exhausted, he contented himself with a loud laugh, long continued; then he would suddenly fall asleep, and,

after bobbing his head for five or six minutes, awake in a convulsion of laughter, as though his dream was too merry for sleep. Whatever he said was invariably preceded by two or three oaths, and terminated in the same manner. The Spanish (perhaps, in this respect, the richest European language) hardly sufficed for his supply. He therefore selected some of the more picturesque specimens for more frequent repetition. These, in default of topics of conversation, sometimes served instead of a fit of laughter or a nap: and once or twice he hastily lowered the window, and gave vent to a string of about twenty oaths at the highest pitch of his lungs; then shut it deliberately, and remained silent for a minute. During dinner he cut a whole cheese into lumps, with which he stuffed an unlucky lap-dog, heedless of the entreaties of two fair fellow-travellers, proprietors of the condemned quadruped. This was a Carlist warrior!

The inhabitants of the Basque provinces are a fine race, and taller than the rest of the Spaniards. The men possess the hardy and robust appearance common to mountaineers, and the symmetry of form which is almost universal in Spain, although the difference of race is easily perceptible. The women are decidedly handsome, although they also are anything but Spanish-looking; and their beauty is

often enhanced by an erect and dignified air, not usually belonging to peasants, (for I am only speaking of the lower orders,) and attributable principally to a very unpeasant-like planting of the head on the neck and shoulders. I saw several village-girls whom nothing but their dress would prevent from being mistaken for German or English ladies of rank, being moreover universally blondes. On quitting Vitoria, you leave behind you the mountains and the pretty faces.

For us, however, the latter were not entirely lost. There were two in the Diligence, belonging to the daughters of a Grandee of the first class, Count de P. These youthful señoritas had taken the opportunity, rendered particularly well-timed by the revolutions and disorders of their country, of passing three years in Paris, which they employed in completing their education, and seeing the wonders of that town, *soi-disant* the most civilized in the world; which probably it would have been, had the old *régime* not been overthrown. They were now returning to Madrid, furnished with all the new ideas, and the various useful and useless accomplishments they had acquired.

Every one whose lot it may have been to undertake a journey of several days in a Diligence,—that is, in one and the same,—and who consequently recol-

lects that trembling and anxious moment during which he has passed in review the various members of the society of which he is to be, *nolens volens*, a member; and the feverish interest which directed his glance of rapid scrutiny towards those in particular of the said members with whom he was to be exposed to more immediate contact, and at the mercy of whose birth and education, habits, opinions, prejudices, qualities, and propensities, his happiness and comfort were to be placed during so large and uninterrupted a period of his existence,—will comprehend my gratitude to these fair *émigrées*, whose lively conversation shortened the length of each day, adding to the charms of the magnificent scenery by the opportunity they afforded of a congenial interchange of impressions. Although we did not occupy the same compartment of the carriage, their party requiring the entire interior and *rotonde*, we always renewed acquaintance when a prolonged ascent afforded an opportunity of liberating our limbs from their confinement.

The two daily repasts also would have offered no charm, save that of the Basque *cuisine*,—which, although cleanly and solid, is not perfectly *cordons bleu*,—but for the entertaining conversation of my fair fellow-travellers, who had treasured up in their memory the best sayings and doings of Arnal, and the other

Listons and Yateses of the French capital, which, seasoned with a slight Spanish accent, were indescribably *piquants* and original. My regret was sincere on our respective routes diverging at Burgos; for they proceeded by the direct line over the Somo sierra to Madrid, while I take the longer road by the Guadarramas, in order to visit Valladolid. I shall not consequently make acquaintance with the northern approach to Madrid, unless I return thither a second time; as to that of my fellow-travellers, I should be too fortunate were it to be renewed during my short stay in their capital.

## LETTER IV.

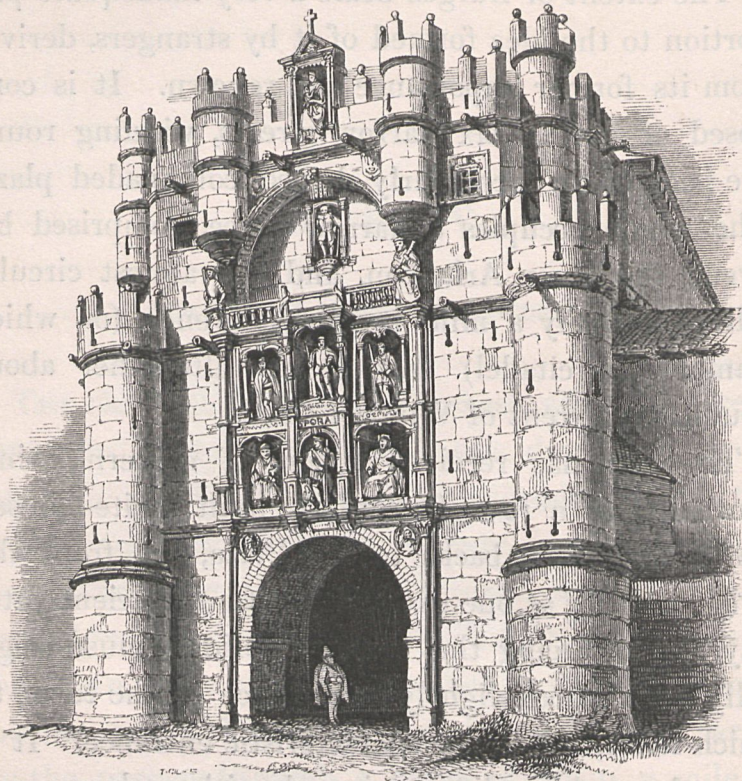
ARRIVAL AT BURGOS. CATHEDRAL.

Burgos.

THE chain of the Lower Pyrenees, after the ascent from the French side, and a two days' journey of alternate mountain and valley, terminates on the Spanish side at almost its highest level. A gentle descent leads to the plain of Vitoria; and, after leaving behind the fresh-looking, well-farmed environs of that town, there remains a rather monotonous day's journey across the bare plains of Castile, only varied by the passage through a gorge of about a mile in extent, called the Pass of Pancorbo, throughout which the road is flanked on either side by a perpendicular rock of from six to eight hundred feet elevation. The ancient capital of Castile is visible from a considerable distance, when approached in this direction; being easily recognised by the spires of its cathedral, and by the citadel placed on an eminence, which forms a link of a chain of hills crossing the route at this spot.

The extent of Burgos bears a very inadequate proportion to the idea formed of it by strangers, derived from its former importance and renown. It is composed of five or six narrow streets, winding round the back of an irregularly shaped colonnaded plaza. The whole occupies a narrow space, comprised between the river Arlançon, and the almost circular hill of scarcely a mile in circumference, (on which stands the citadel) and covers altogether about double the extent of Windsor Castle.

The city has received a sort of modern facing, consisting of a row of regularly built white houses, which turn their backs to the Plaza, and front the river; uniting at one extremity with an ancient gateway, which, facing the principal bridge, must originally have stood slightly in advance of the town, to which it formed a very characteristic entrance. It is a quadrangular edifice, pierced with a low semicircular arch. The arch is flanked on the river front by small circular turrets, and surmounted by seven niches, containing statues of magistrates, kings, and heroes; while over these, in a centre niche, stands a semicolossal statue of the Virgin, from which the monument derives its title of "Arco de Santa Maria." Another arch, but totally simple, situated at the other extremity of the new buildings, faces another bridge; and this, with that of Santa Maria, and a



ARCO DE SANTA MARIA.

third, placed halfway between them, leading to the Plaza, form the three entrances to the city on the river side.

The dimensions of this, and many other Spanish towns, must not be adopted as a base for estimating their amount of population. Irun, at the frontier of France, stands on a little hill, the surface of which would scarcely suffice for a country-house, with its



surrounding offices and gardens : it contains, nevertheless, four or five thousand inhabitants, and comprises a good-sized market-place and handsome town-hall, besides several streets. Nor does this close packing render the Spanish towns less healthy than our straggling cities, planned with a view to circulation and purity of atmosphere, although the difference of climate would seem to recommend to each of the two countries the system pursued by the other. The humidity of the atmosphere in England would be the principal obstacle to cleanliness and salubrity, had the towns a more compact mode of construction ; whilst in Spain, on the contrary, this system is advantageous as a protection against the excessive power of the summer sun, which would render our wide streets—bordered by houses too low to afford complete shade—not only almost impassable, but uninhabitable.

The Plaza of Burgos (entitled “de la Constitucion,” or “de Isabel II.,” or “del Duque de la Victoria,” or otherwise, according to the government of the day,) has always been the resort of commerce. The projecting first-floors being supported by square pillars, a sort of bazaar is formed under them, which includes all the shop population of the city, and forms an agreeable lounge during wet or too sunny weather. Throughout the remainder of the town,

with the exception of the modern row of buildings above mentioned, almost all the houses are entered through Gothic doorways, surmounted by armorial bearings sculptured in stone, which, together with their ornamental inner courts and staircases, testify to their having sheltered the chivalry of Old Castile. The Cathedral, although by no means large, appears to fill half the town; and considering that, in addition to its conspicuous and inviting aspect, it is the principal remaining monument of the ancient wealth and grandeur of the province, and one of the most beautiful edifices in Europe, I will lose no time in giving you a description of it.

This edifice, or at least the greater portion of it, dates from the thirteenth century. The first stone was laid by Saint Ferdinand, on the 20th of July 1221. Ferdinand had just been proclaimed king by his mother Doña Berenguela, who had invested him with his sword at the royal convent of the Huelgas, about a mile distant from Burgos. Don Mauricio, Bishop of Burgos, blessed the armour as the youthful king girded it, and, three days subsequently to the ceremony, he united him to the Princess Beatrice, in the church of the same convent. This bishop assisted in laying the first stone of the cathedral, and presided over the construction of the entire body of the building, including half of the two principal towers.

His tomb may be seen at the back of the Choir. From the date of the building its style may at once be recognised, allowing for a difference which existed



INTERIOR OF THE CHOIR.

between England and the Continent, the latter being somewhat in advance. The original edifice must have

been a very perfect and admirable specimen of the pointed architecture of its time in all its purity. As it is, unfortunately, (as the antiquary would say, and, I should add, the mere man of taste, were it not that tastes are various, and that the proverb says they are all in nature,) the centre of the building, forming the intersection of the transept and nave, owing to some defect in the original construction, fell in just at the period during which regular architecture began to waver, and the style called in France the "Renaissance" was making its appearance. An architect of talent, Felipe de Borgoña, hurried from Toledo, where he was employed in carving the stalls of the choir, to furnish a plan for the centre tower. He, however, only carried the work to half the height of the four cylindrical piers which support it. He was followed by several others before the termination of the work; and Juan de Herrera, the architect of the Escorial, is said to have completed it. In this design are displayed infinite talent and imagination; but the artist could not alter the taste of the age. It is more than probable that he would have kept to the pure style of his model, but for the prevailing fashion of his time. Taken by itself, the tower is, both externally and internally, admirable, from the elegance of its form, and the richness of its details; but it jars with the rest of the building.

Placing this tower in the background, we will now repair to the west front. Here nothing is required to be added, or taken away, to afford the eye a feast as perfect as grace, symmetry, grandeur, and lightness, all combined, are capable of producing. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this front taken as a whole. You have probably seen an excellent view of it in one of Roberts's annuals. The artists of Burgos complain of an alteration, made some fifty years back by the local ecclesiastical authorities, nobody knows for what reason. They caused a magnificent portal to be removed, to make way for a very simple one, totally destitute of the usual sculptured depth of arch within arch, and of the profusion of statuary, which are said to have adorned the original entrance. This, however, has not produced a bad result in the view of the whole front. Commencing by solidity and simplicity at its base, the pile only becomes ornamental at the first story, where rows of small trefoil arches are carved round the buttresses; while in the intermediate spaces are an oriel window in an ornamental arch, and two narrow double arches. The third compartment, where the towers first rise above the body of the church, offers a still richer display of ornament. The two towers are here connected by a screen, which masks the roof, raising the apparent body of the façade an additional story.