

with the wine of the country ; to these is added the quantity of bread produced from four bushels of wheat : and all remain in view during the performance of high mass. At the conclusion of the final response, the sheep are removed from their pedestal, and make for the chapel-gates, through which they issue ; and urged by the voice of their driver, the peculiar shrill whistle of Spanish shepherds, and by the more material argument of the staff, proceed down the entire length of the cathedral to the music of the aforesaid whistle, accompanied by their own bleatings and bells, until they vanish through the great western portal.

Returning to the transepts, we find two objects worthy of notice. The cathedral having been erected on uneven ground, rising rapidly from south to north, the entrance to the north transept opens at an elevation of nearly thirty feet from the pavement. To reach this door there is an ornamental staircase, of a sort of white stone, richly carved in the *renaissance* style. This door is never open, a circumstance which causes no inconvenience ; the steps being so steep as to render them less useful than ornamental, as long as any other exit exists.

A beautifully carved old door, of a wood become perfectly black, although not so originally, gives access to the cloister from the east side of the



south transept. The interior of the arch which surmounts it is filled with sculpture. A plain moulding runs round the top, at the left-hand commencement of which is carved a head of the natural size, clothed in a cowl.



HEAD OF SAINT FRANCIS.\*

The attention is instantly rivetted by this head: it is not merely a masterpiece of execution. Added to the exquisite beauty and delicate moulding of the upper part of the face, the artist has succeeded

\* The above woodcut may, it is hoped, serve as a guide to future travellers in their search for this head, of which it has no pretension to give an adequate idea.



in giving to the mouth an almost superhuman expression. This feature, in spite of a profusion of hair which almost covers it, lives and speaks. A smile, in which a barely perceptible but irresistible and, as it were, innate bitterness of satire and disdain modifies a wish of benevolence, unites with the piercing expression of the eyes in lighting up the stone with a degree of intellect which I had thought beyond the reach of sculpture until I saw this head. Tradition asserts it to be a portrait of Saint Francis, who was at Burgos at the period of the completion of the cathedral; and who, being in the habit of examining the progress of the works, afforded unconsciously a study to the sculptor.

The two sacristies are entered from the cloister: one of them contains the portraits of all the bishops and archbishops of Burgos. Communicating with this last is a room destined for the reception of useless lumber and broken ornaments. Here the cicerone directs your attention to an old half-rotten oaken chest, fixed against the wall at a considerable height. This relic is the famous Coffre del Cid, the self-same piece of furniture immortalised in the anecdote related of the hero respecting the loan of money obtained on security of the supposed treasure it enclosed. The lender of the money, satisfied by the weight of the trunk, and the chivalrous honour



of its proprietor, never saw its contents until shown them by the latter on the repayment of the loan : they were then discovered to consist of stones and fragments of old iron.

One is disappointed on finding in this cathedral no more durable *souvenir* of the Cid than his rat-corroded wardrobe. His remains are preserved in the chapel of the Ayuntamiento ; thither we will consequently bend our steps, not forgetting to enjoy, as we leave the church, a long gaze at its elegant and symmetrical proportions. It may be called an unique model of beauty of its particular sort, especially when contemplated without being drawn into comparison with other edifices of a different class. Catalani is said, on hearing Sontag's performance, to have remarked that she was "la première de son genre, mais que son genre n'était pas le premier." Could the cathedral of Seville see that of Burgos, it would probably pronounce a similar judgment on its smaller rival.

The profusion of ornament, the perfection of symmetry, the completeness of finish, produce an instantaneous impression that nothing is wanting in this charming edifice ; but any one who should happen to have previously seen that of Seville cannot, after the first moments of enthusiasm, escape the comparison which forces itself on him, and which is not in favour of this cathedral. It is elegant, but deficient



in grandeur ; beautiful, but wanting in majesty. The stern and grand simplicity of the one, thrown into the scales against the light, airy, and diminutive, though graceful beauty of the other, recalls the contrast drawn by Milton between our first parents ; a contrast which, applied to these churches, must be considered favourable to the more majestic, however the balance of preference may turn in the poem.



## LETTER V.

TOMB OF THE CID. CITADEL.

Burgos.

THE Ayuntamiento, or Town-hall, presents one façade to the river, and the other to the Plaza Mayor, being built over the archway which forms the already mentioned entrance to the central portion of the city. The building, like other town-halls, possesses an airy staircase, a large public room, and a few other apartments, used for the various details of administration; but nothing remarkable until you arrive at a handsomely ornamented saloon, furnished with a canopied seat fronting a row of arm-chairs. This is the room in which the municipal body hold their juntas. It contains several portraits: two or three of kings, suspended opposite to an equal number of queens; the two likenesses of the celebrated judges Nuño Rasura and Lain Calvo, near which are seen the simple square oaken chairs from within the angular and hard embrace of which they administered the laws and government of Castile;



a full-length of Fernan Gonzalez ; and lastly, one of the Cid.

Owing to the singularity of this last portrait, it is the first to attract attention. The hero is represented in the most extraordinary of attitudes : the head is thrown back, and the face turned towards one side ; the legs in a sort of studied posture ; a drawn sword is in the right hand, the point somewhat raised. The general expression is that of a comic actor attempting an attitude of mock-heroic impertinence ; and is probably the result of an unattained object in the mind of the artist, of producing that of fearless independence.

Beyond this apartment is the Chapel, a plain, not large room, containing but two objects besides its very simple altar, with its, almost black, silver candlesticks. Over the altar is a Conception, by Murillo ; and, in the centre of the chapel, a highly polished and neatly ornamented funereal urn, composed of walnut-wood, contains the remains of the Cid : the urn stands on a pedestal. On its two ends in letters of gold, are inscriptions, stating its contents, and the date of its application to its present purpose. I was told that the bones were contained in a leaden box, but that a glass one was being prepared, which, on opening the lid of the urn, would afford a view of the actual dust of the warrior.



The remains of the Cid have only recently been conveyed to Burgos from the monastery of San Pedro de Cardenas, about four miles distant. They had been preserved there ever since his funeral, which took place in the presence of King Alonzo the Sixth, and the two Kings, sons-in-law of the hero, as soon as the body arrived from Valencia.

This monastic retreat, if dependence may be placed on the testimony of the Cerberus of the Alcalde,—the cicerone (when duly propitiated) of the municipal edifice,—did not turn out to be altogether a place of repose to the warrior. According to this worthy, an amusing interpreter of the popular local traditions, the exploits performed subsequently to the hero's interment were such as almost to throw a shadow over those he enacted during his mortal existence. One specimen will suffice. Some twenty thousand individuals, including the monks of all the neighbouring monasteries, were assembled in the church of San Pedro, and were listening to a sermon on the occasion of the annual festival in honour of the patron saint. Guided by curiosity, a Moor entered the church and mingled with the crowd. After remaining during a short time motionless, he approached a pillar, against which was suspended a portrait of the Cid, for the purpose of examining the picture. Suddenly the figure was seen by all pre-



sent, whose testimony subsequently established the fact, to grasp with the right hand the hilt of its sword, and to uncover a few inches of the naked blade. The Moor instantly fell flat on the pavement, and was found to be lifeless.

You would be surprised at the difficulty of forming even here, in the midst of the scenes of his exploits, a definite idea of this Hercules of the Middle Ages. For those who are satisfied with the orthodox histories of the monks, he is without defects — a simple unsophisticated demi-god. But there have been Mahometan historians of Spain. These are universally acknowledged to have treated of all that concerned themselves with complete accuracy and impartiality; and, when this happens, it should seem to be the best criterion, in the absence of other proof, of their faithful delineation of others' portraits.

However that may be, here is an instance which will give you an idea of the various readings of the Cid's history.

Mariana relates, that an Arab expedition, headed by five kings (as he terms them) of the adjoining states, being signalized as having passed the mountains of Oca, and being occupied in committing depredations on the Christian territory, Rodrigo suddenly took the field, recovered all the booty, and made all five kings prisoners. All this being done



by himself and his own retainers. The kings he released after signing a treaty, according to which they agreed to pay him an annual tribute. It happened, that on the occasion of the first payment of this, Rodrigo was at Zamora, whither he had accompanied the King of Castile; and he took an opportunity of receiving the Arab messengers in presence of the court. This was at least uncommon. The messengers addressed him by the appellation of Syd (sir) as they handed over the money. Ferdinand, delighted with the prowess of his courtier, expressed on this occasion the desire that he should retain the title of Syd.

This anecdote undergoes, in the hands of the Arab writers, a curious metamorphosis. According to them, the expression Syd was employed, not by tributary kings, but by certain chiefs of that creed whose pay the Catholic hero was receiving in return for aid lent against the Christians of Aragon.

They attribute, moreover, to this mirror of chivalry, on the surrender of Valencia, a conduct by no means heroic—not to say worthy a highwayman. He accepted, as they relate, the pay of the Emyr of Valencia to protect the city against the Almoravides, who at that period were extending their conquests all over Moorish Spain. The Cid was repulsed, and the town taken. After this defeat he shut himself



up in a castle, since called the Peña del Cid (Rock of the Cid), and there waited his opportunity. On the departure of the conquerors from the city, in which they left an insufficient garrison, he hastened down at the head of his campeadores, and speedily retook Valencia.

The Cadi, Ahmed ben Djahhaf, left in command of the place, had, however, only surrendered on faith of a capitulation couched in the most favourable terms. It was even stipulated that he should retain his post of governor; but no sooner was the Cid master of the place than he caused the old man to be arrested and put to the torture, in order to discover from him the situation of a treasure supposed to be concealed in the Alcazar; after which, finding he would not speak, or had nothing to reveal, he had him burned on the public place.

The Citadel of Burgos, at present an insignificant fortress, was formerly a place of considerable importance, and commanded the surrounding country; especially on the side on which the town—placed at the foot of the eminence—lay beneath its immediate protection, and could listen unscathed to the whizzing of the deadly missiles of war as they passed over its roofs. During the various wars of which Castile has been the theatre at different periods, this citadel has, from its important position, occupied the



main attention of contending armies; and, from forming a constant *point-de-mire* to attacking troops, has finally been almost annihilated. The principal portion of the present buildings is of a modern date, but, although garrisoned, the fortress cannot be said to be restored.

The extent of the town was greater than at present, and included a portion of the declivity which exists between the present houses and the walls of the fortress. At the two extremities of the town-side of the hill, immediately above the level of the highest-placed houses now existing, two Arab gateways give access through the ancient town-walls, which ascended the hill from the bottom. Between these there exists a sort of flat natural terrace, above the town, and running along its whole length, on to which some of the streets open. On this narrow level stood formerly a part, probably the best part, of the city, which has shared the fate of its protecting fortress; but, not being rebuilt, it is now an empty space,—or would be so, but for the recent erection of a cemetery, placed at about half the distance between the two extremities.

Before, however, the lapse of years had worn away the last surviving recollections of these localities, some worshipper of by-gone glory succeeded in discovering, on the now grass-grown space, the situa-



tions once occupied by the respective abodes of the Cid and of Fernan Gonzalez. On these spots monuments have been erected. That of Gonzalez is a handsome arch, the piers supporting which are each faced with two pillars of the Doric order on either side; above the cornice there is a balustrade, over which four small obelisks correspond with the respective pillars. The arch is surmounted by a sort of pedestal, on which is carved an inscription, stating the object of the monument. There is nothing on the top of the pedestal, which appears to have been intended for the reception of a statue.

The monument in memory of the Cid is more simple. It consists of three small pyramids in a row, supported on low bases or pedestals; that in the centre higher than the other two, but not exceeding (inclusive of the base) twenty feet from the ground. On the lower part of the centre stone is carved an appropriate inscription, abounding in ellipsis, after the manner usually adopted in Spain.

It is not surprising that these monuments, together with the memory of the events brought about by the men in whose honour they have been erected, should be fast hastening to a level with the desolation immediately surrounding them. The present political circumstances of Spain are not calculated to favour the retrospection of by-gone glories. Scarcely is time



allowed—so rapidly are executed the transmutations of the modern political diorama—for examining the events, or even for recovery from the shock, of each succeeding revolution; nor force remaining to the exhausted organs of admiration or of horror, to be exercised on almost forgotten acts, since those performed before the eyes of the living generation have equalled or surpassed them in violence and energy. The arch of Fernan Gonzalez, if not speedily restored, (which is not to be expected,) runs the risk, from its elevation and want of solidity, of being the first of the two monuments to crumble to dust; a circumstance which, although not destitute of an appearance of justice,—from the fact of the hero it records having figured on an earlier page of Castilian annals,—would nevertheless occasion regret to those who prefer history to romance, and who estimate essential services rendered to the state, as superior to mere individual *éclat*, however brilliant.

You will not probably object to the remainder of this letter being monopolized by this founder of the independence of Castile; the less so, from the circumstance of the near connection existing between his parentage and that of the city we are visiting, and which owes to him so much of its celebrity. Should you not be in a humour to be