

the French smashed nearly the whole of the painted glass, which is said to have been some of the finest in Spain.

This being the first Cathedral we had seen since crossing the frontier, was naturally regarded by us with particular attention. Begun in 1221, it was not finished till 1567, so that the period of its erection extends over the three centuries and a half, during which Gothic architecture passed through its successive stages in what we Britons have been accustomed to call, Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular. Even the Sacristan allowed, that it was founded by an Englishman, and as none are so jealous of strangers, or so much inclined to pass over in silence any benefit conferred by a foreigner on their country, as Spaniards, such an admission may be considered conclusive.

The exterior is greatly admired for the variety, and richness of its outline, which embraces a perfect forest of pinnacles, spires, and towers; but unfortunately it is so hemmed in with houses, that it is not easy to find a point taking in the whole sweep of the building from one end to the other. I must say, however, that the appearance of the west end, which, in its original condition, Fergusson puts down as one of the

best façades in existence, is sadly marred in my eyes by the crockets, which stand out in so stiff and formal a manner along the whole length of the two spires, and, as there are eight angles in each spire, and every angle is covered with a row of these incrustations, the effect is far from pleasing.

On entering you are at once struck with an arrangement peculiar to Spanish cathedrals. Instead of having the portion to the east of the transepts large enough to contain a full-sized choir, with the Episcopal throne, stalls for the Clergy, &c., as is the case in the Cathedrals of other countries, the high altar, flanked by a space of two or three bays only, is entirely cut off from the rest of the Church by gates, and screen-work of iron, in front, and on each side, while the actual choir occupied by the general body of clergy during Divine Service stands on the western side of the transept, forming, in reality, a sort of second choir within the constructional nave. This western choir, which can be entered only at its eastern extremity, is connected with the other by low iron railings, about five feet high, extending across the transept, and these, as far as we had the opportunity of judging from the five Cathedrals visited by us, are never removed. Fergusson seems inclined

to derive this arrangement from the Basilicas of primitive times, instancing San Clemente at Rome in support of his opinion, and by way of illustration remarks, that if the western door of the choir of Westminster Abbey were closed up, its plan would exactly represent this peculiarity of a Spanish cathedral.

The obvious objection to this arrangement is, that instead of there being an open nave, allowing the eye to range uninterruptedly from the western extremity to the grand central point of the interior, an enormous mass meets the eye at every turn (the enclosure of the western choir being often a wall of marble, thirty feet high), blocking up the whole breadth of the nave between the aisles, dwarfing the proportions, and marring, to a fatal degree, the general effect of the building.

The most interesting portion of Burgos cathedral is the *Capilla del Condestable*, built at the east end to be the burial-place of the Velasco family, the hereditary Constables of Castille. For elevation and spaciousness of proportion, this chapel might vie with many a church, while its magnificent tombs, profusion of sculpture, and other decoration, combined with its general sumptuousness, render it worthy to be the sepul-

chre of kings. Opposite the entrance stands a stone altar-screen of great beauty, attributed to Juan de Borgoña. But the tombs of the founder and his wife, surmounted by their recumbent figures in alabaster, have a special antiquarian interest, preserving as they do, the exact costumes, personal ornaments, armour, and other characteristics of an age when the dress of the high-born and noble, had been elaborated into an art. There is something very stately and impressive in these tombs, lying apart in their sequestered chapel, under the softened light, that descends from its lofty windows ; and were they in any other part of Spain, they would be regarded as prodigies of the sculptor's skill. But the eye, fresh from the exquisite delicacy and refinement of the royal tomb at Miraflores, which looks as if it had been wrought by no human hands, has become too fastidious and critical to bestow on the monument of Pedro Hernandez de Velasco, and his wife Mencia Lopez de Mendoza, all the admiration it deserves.

Burgos, like all the other Spanish cathedrals we visited, abounds in magnificent iron-work, a department of art which appears to have been cultivated with more care in this country than in the rest of Christendom. Almost every cha-

pel (and some Cathedrals contain no fewer than twenty) is fenced-in by grilles of most graceful design, and admirable workmanship; while the high altar is enclosed on two sides by railings, and in front by gates of the same material, each portion being usually a perfect marvel of the metal-worker's skill. Some of these gates stand thirty feet high, and when constructed of iron, as is almost always the case, are not only richly gilt, so as to have the effect of light and shade, but covered, in addition, with profuse ornamentation—groups of figures representing sacred subjects, which generally exhibit some type, or image of the Holy Eucharist—fruit—flowers—animals—filigree-work—and heraldic devices. The style of these *rejas*, as they are called, is almost invariably *cinque-cento*, which to me was their sole defect. Had they chanced to be formed of any other material than iron and brass, they would never have thus survived to testify to the cunning handiwork of Spanish Tubal-Cains.

There is another peculiarity in Spanish Cathedrals, which may be noticed in passing. At the intersection of the transepts with the nave, rises the *Cimborio*, a construction in the form of a dome, marked externally by a low tower, which

is often octagonal. As far as I can recollect, we have nothing like it in any of our pointed cathedrals, except the Octagon at Ely.

Nothing, however, at Burgos afforded us half the delight we enjoyed from a visit to the Carthusian Convent at Miraflores, about two miles from the town. Though a royal foundation, and still containing the remains of three royal personages, it has shared the downfall of other religious houses in Spain, and now shelters only five monks, who still cling to their old home. Its situation is dreary in the extreme, in the midst of an arid, hungry-looking plain, that reminded Lord Portarlington of the desert behind Cairo; and on entering the precincts, we found a melancholy-looking woman sitting listlessly in the outer cloister, typifying, unconsciously, the desolate condition of this once illustrious convent. Its style is Perpendicular of very simple, unadorned character, while the material, granite, gives it an air of severity and coldness, much more in keeping with its present condition, than with those palmy days, when it basked in the sunshine of royal favour.

The Church contains two of the most marvellous productions of art it was ever my good fortune to behold; a *Retablo*, or altar-screen, and an

alabaster tomb in front of the altar, both erected by Queen Isabella, with the first-fruits, it is said, of America's newly-discovered gold, the artist, El Maestro Gil, having completed this twin-triumph of his craft about the time that Columbus returned from his first voyage in 1493.

The Retablo, a species of altar-screen peculiar to Spain, runs to a height of about thirty feet by twenty-five, and is divided into compartments filled with a series of wood-carvings, characteristically coloured to represent the various events of our Lord's life, the Crucifixion being the grand central design, surrounded by "an innumerable company of angels." Nothing can exceed the beauty of this master-piece; the mere arrangement of such a multitudinous host of figures, exhibiting the utmost power of compression, without crowding or confusion, being itself a marvel of skill. Worthily to describe such a work would require the best powers of a Ruskin, and the barest outline is more than I could venture to attempt. It would take one hours to examine its various details, and I longed to have half a dozen pairs of eyes, and a memory of ten-fold capacity, to enable me to note down, and carry away, its myriad beauties.

The tomb erected by Isabella to her father,

Juan II., and mother, in front of the altar, is said to be the finest work of the kind in existence, an assertion I have no difficulty in believing after seeing that monument. Its material is alabaster, and the dimensions are noble, being about twenty-one feet by fifteen, while it rises five feet from the floor of the church. Its form is octagonal. Upon its horizontal surface lie the figures of Juan and his wife Isabella, arrayed in their royal apparel, and executed with such consummate skill, that one is tempted to fancy they had laid them down to rest, and were turned to stone during sleep, by the operation of some magic influence. The sides of the tomb are filled with subjects from our Lord's life, the four corners being occupied by figures of the Evangelists nearly two feet high, standing in the attitude of watchers over the royal pair. An air of deepest repose and peacefulness broods over the tomb, while its surpassing whiteness imparts a look of peculiar purity, as if it did not belong to earth. No description I could give can convey more than the faintest idea of the impression produced upon the mind by this miracle of Art, as you stand before it in the vain endeavour to master its details. The eye—challenged at the same moment by an infinite

variety of objects, rivalling each other in gracefulness of design, and consummate execution—knows not whither to turn, and glances in hopeless perplexity over the figures of Apostle, Evangelist, Martyr, and Saint, as they stand out adorned with superb costumes, and encircled by wreaths of flowers and fruitage, looking more like the creation of Angel-hands than the workmanship of any dweller in this lower world.

An iron railing which fences-in the tomb, though absolutely necessary to preserve its delicate details from injury, considerably mars the effect of the ornaments with which its sides are covered, by intercepting a clear view; and were the tomb ever photographed, or modelled, it would be necessary to remove this obstruction.

It was a heart-aching sight to look at that silent, deserted convent, with its spacious cloisters untrodden, and its garden overgrown with weeds, while the Brotherhood, once so much visited and honoured by the great ones of the earth, has now shrunk into a poor despised company of five, who can only wear the habit of their order by stealth, and at midnight. The very existence, too, of such marvels as the tomb and altar-screen, in a place on which the world now frowns, makes the contrast between past and present the more

keenly painful; and as we visited the spot on that stormy October day, all the accompaniments—sky, weather, and landscape—were in melancholy harmony with its fallen condition.

At Burgos we first noticed the horrible noise made by Spanish bell-ringers. An Englishman, with his recollections of the merry peals and sweet chimes of his own country, listens with astonishment and horror to the din of a Spanish belfry, where every ringer pulls on his own account, without the least regard to what his fellow-performers are doing, the grand object being to produce as much noise as possible. You listen in vain for anything like scientific ringing; and the mysteries of “Grandsire-bob,” “Single bob-minor,” “Grandsire-treble,” “Triple bob-major,” and all the other permutations of English Campanology, seem in Spain to be utterly unknown.

The dark-eyed little maid that waited on us, finding, I suppose, our manners did not come up to the standard of Spanish punctilio, which, in forms of address and salutation at least, elevates a fisherwoman into a duchess, and places an ostler on the level of a grandee, took every opportunity of giving us instruction in the correct phrases and modes of address, and, by way of



turning them to immediate account, made us use them on all occasions, so that we could get nothing we required from her until, like good children, we had asked for it "prettily." If we wanted bread, we were obliged to say, "Haga me, ustè, el favor de dar me del pan?" "Will your grace do me the favour to give me some bread?" and a similar formula was necessary whatever we asked for. Poor girl! She was very painstaking for our improvement, and I hope her good-natured endeavours to remedy the deficiencies of an English education were in some slight degree successful, though I fear, that in my own case, a course of instruction, extending over two days only, imparted but a very thin glaze of Spanish politeness to the unceremoniousness of manner native to most Englishmen.

The environs of Burgos contain several objects of interest, which every zealous sight-seer goes to see, though we saw them not. Among these are the cloisters of Huelgas, spoken of by Fergusson as "unrivalled for beauty both of design and detail, and unsurpassed perhaps by anything of their age in any part of Europe." Then again at San Pedro de Cardena, within a ride of the town, there is the burial-place of that peerless hero of romance and song, Rodrigo Ruy Diaz,

commonly called the Cid, a spot which no traveller of bygone times, before the days of chivalry were gone, would ever have left unvisited. I feel now that the omission was a grave dereliction of duty. Of course we fully intended, before we reached Burgos, going there in due form, but after all did not; for in these degenerate days, the very best intentions do not render any one capable of doing more than *son possible*, and, to say nothing of the deplorable weather, continual sight-seeing, with all its delights and enjoyments, is certainly very exhausting occupation for a middle-aged body like myself.

We used to take refuge from the cold and damp, which seem to contend for supremacy over Burgos, at the fireplace of the *salle-à-manger*, which was as good as a private room, except during diligence hours, occurring generally about midnight, when we were otherwise engaged. Here we met an English gentleman from Leeds, well acquainted with Spain, and we spent the Sunday evening very pleasantly together, discussing ecclesiastical affairs in general, and the probable future of the Church of England in particular.

If persons will but look at home they will find more & greater evils to be corrected than they will either in Spain or other countries; we are far from perfect, but the first to cry out "shame" at the faults of our neighbours - Colburns United Service Magazine Feb 1845 art. "London to England by Way of Spain" p. 142

## CHAPTER VIII.

**M**ONDAY, October 10.—Packed up and breakfasted, hoping to be off immediately. Had some difficulty in getting the bill, which seemed to be purposely kept back to the very last moment. When at length it did appear, it proved to be a document of singular brevity and conciseness, indulging in none of the details characteristic of such compositions. Its sum-total, however, amounting to 1041 reals, made up for every other deficiency. It is the natural tendency of bills, in all parts of the world, to produce a startling effect on the recipients; but in Spain, this is infinitely aggravated by the national method of computation, all accounts being made up in *reals vellon*, each of which is worth twopence three-farthings, so that the amount claimed by our host at Burgos was no less than £11. 8s.  $6\frac{3}{4}d.$ , a sum absurdly disproportioned to the accommodation and entertain-

ment supplied between Friday night and Monday morning. Particulars were asked for to enable us to discover where the imposition lay, but our Spanish, being very small and broken, had no power to elicit anything satisfactory. As Mr. Rider, the gentleman with whom we had made acquaintance yesterday, spoke Spanish fluently, and in such a manner as to produce an impression, we at once availed ourselves of his aid, and nothing could be more kind, patient, and business-like, than his method of settling the affair.

The landlord was sent for, and Mr. Rider cross-examined him on every point. With great difficulty, and considerable application of the screw, he made out a bill of 672 reals, inclusive of some gross overcharges. Beyond that point he could not advance, and when pressed to account for the difference between 1041, and 672, he turned sulky, and refused all further explanation. At last, finding he could not escape, he acknowledged that Lord Portarlington, being a great nobleman, and brother to the Queen of England, was charged the balance of 369 reals (in itself a tolerably large bill of £4. 4s. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.) for the various attentions and extra civilities he had received during his stay!! Naturally considering these were hardly worth so much, he declined

paying for them at so high a rate, and the upshot was, that, thanks to Mr. Rider's determination and good management, the bill was ultimately reduced to 760 reals, not, however, before he had been most grossly insulted by the landlady, who, meeting him on the stairs, attacked him like a bereaved tigress, and showered upon him a torrent of Spanish Billingsgate. As Mr. Rider was going to stay another day at the hotel, feeling very anxious he should not suffer on account of his good-natured assistance, we managed to patch up a sort of peace with the landlord, who, to do him justice, soon recovered his temper, and promised to behave properly to our countryman after our departure. This truce did not include his strong-minded help-mate, as we thought it the better part of valour not to meddle with her, while she stormed and raved, in the lower regions of the hotel, at the loss of her hoped-for spoil.

This altercation delayed us a good hour, and when at last I went down to see whether the luggage had been properly stowed away, I found Cambour, who since Tolosa had sadly declined from his first zeal and activity, having in fact become almost useless, looking more unpromising than ever, as, in a sort of muddled, sleepy way, he

professed to be helping Swainson. His face had become almost black, and every vein stood out on his forehead with fearful distinctness, while his general appearance led one to fear he had been spending his days and nights at Burgos in swilling the wine of the country, which has the colour and consistency of ink. He had, at any rate, made himself a most deplorable-looking object.

Having now been five days on the road, including our halt at Burgos, we began to feel rather ashamed of ourselves, and, as we were anxious to reach Madrid by Tuesday night, we determined, when once off, not to rest till we arrived at Castillejo, a village at the foot of the Somo-Sierra mountains.

The bad weather still continued, but between the showers we had magnificent bursts of sunshine, which, contrasting with the deep masses of storm-cloud through which they broke, gave infinite variety to the landscape. Extensive woods of ilex (a feature to which we afterwards became so much accustomed in Estremadura) appeared from time to time, dotted here and there with such picturesque groups of old pollards, while in many places the road was bordered by low scrubby vineyards, their fruit and foliage

being alike plastered with a chalky composition, which, having originally descended upon them in the form of summer dust, had been converted by the autumnal rains into a coating of mud, that would hardly improve the flavour of the approaching vintage. We passed several flocks of long-woolled sheep, on their way to winter-quarters among the sunny *dehesas* of Estremadura, attended by skin-clad shepherds, who looked the very picture of dreamy do-nothingness, and entire immunity from soap and water. Before entering Lerma we crossed the Arlanza, which, like many of the streams in this neighbourhood, abounds with trout. As we drove into the town in heavy rain, nothing could look more wretched—I do not even remember a single beggar making his appearance—and the ruins of a noble palace, built by the Duque de Lerma, in 1604, on a brow overhanging the town, which, after suffering pillage from the French, is now converted into a prison, served only to increase its wretchedness.

Hereabout the eternal brown *pañó pardo* of the Spanish peasantry began to be varied with brighter colours, and the women wore brilliant red stockings, and petticoats of blue or yellow, the latter being the most fashionable. One

soon remarks the extreme beauty of Spanish dyeing, and their scarlets, greens, and yellows are unrivalled for clearness, and distinctness of hue, so different from the dull muddy colours produced in England. The yellows are especially good, being more like a rich, warm canary, than what passes by that name among us.

At Aranda del Duero, we managed to walk on a couple of miles, in advance of the carriage, while they were changing horses, an operation of some time at a Spanish posting-house; and then on we travelled, stage after stage, for hours, until at last, near midnight, we drew up at the *posada* of Castillejo, in a decided state of mind. Having now been on the road more than thirteen hours, we were quite ready for bed, dinner being altogether out of the question, and finding the people of the inn were all asleep, we entered through the stable, which, as usual, occupied the ground floor; and going on a voyage of discovery upstairs, we soon met with the very things we were most in want of—a couple of very clean, comfortable bedrooms, without inhabitants, and forthwith we took possession.

Presently out came the mistress, and setting her arms a-kimbo (a very bad sign, I always

think, in the *beau sexe*), she overwhelmed us with a flood of Spanish, which, however unintelligible in sense, in sound conveyed an unmistakable declaration that our presence was by no means welcome. We had not, however, gone all that distance to budge for a little noise, and paying no heed to her ill-timed remarks, we began to exercise our rights of possession. After a while the daughter, hearing the disturbance, came out of her bedroom, and, so far from reinforcing her "respected parient," she proved a decided acquisition to our side, for, having been brought up at some provincial boarding-school, she could actually speak French! By her intervention we discovered that the hostess, having a conscientious objection to late hours, was perfectly scandalized at the idea of receiving travellers at midnight. Had we known in time of that prejudice, which, in the abstract, is highly commendable, we might have respected it. But here we were, at the foot of the Somo-Sierra, with a pass of considerable elevation to be crossed before we could reach any other inn, and so prejudice must needs give way to necessity.

Still the hostess would not give her consent to our remaining for the night in her house; at length Lord Portarlington brought matters