

At the further end of the room, to your left on entering, a Magdalen caught my attention immediately, as a picture of rare expressiveness, and I returned to it again and again, with ever-increasing pleasure. It is labelled as of the school of Murillo, but I cannot now recollect its number. I never saw such a delineation of intense, overwhelming sorrow, which absorbs the whole being of the penitent, and renders her totally unconscious of all else; as if in the whole universe there existed but two objects of thought—her own sin, and the Saviour's love.

Our next and subsequent visits were devoted with almost equal exclusiveness to another portion of the Museo, the room opening on the left side of the great central gallery, which is called, if I mistake not, the Queen's Cabinet. This room possesses more general interest, than the former, as it contains masterpieces of nearly every school. Here the eye lights at once on the finest equestrian portrait in the world, Titian's Charles V. It is indeed a superb picture, and Charles, with his grave, thoughtful face, and firm, easy seat, rides forth, lance in hand, like some Paladin of old, in quest of knightly adventure, and looks every inch a King. You never think of Art, or painter, while gazing at this marvel. You have the very

man before your eyes, and if he moves not, it is because for the moment he stands spell-bound, awaiting your pleasure.

Near it is Velasquez's reputed masterpiece, No. 155, called "*Las Meninas*" (the Female Pages). To those, who are conversant with the mechanical difficulties of painting, it must be an endless delight to study such a triumph of art, which a non-professional eye cannot sufficiently estimate. But the subject is so disagreeable, that I found my attention continually drawn away by the fascinations of the neighbour-picture, of which I have just spoken.

Velasquez has here painted himself in his studio, on the point of taking the portrait of the Infanta Margarita, the central figure, while her two ladies, *Las Meninas*, are doing their best to coax the little body, a girl about twelve, fair and inanimate as a wax doll, into good-humour, a task of no small difficulty, to judge from the ill-conditioned peevishness of her countenance. On her left, two dwarfs, male and female, are teasing a noble mastiff lying on the floor, who, thoroughly worried, and disgusted by their impertinence, is yet evidently determined not to be put out of temper by such caricatures of humanity, though you expect every moment to

hear his muttered growl of indignation. On the other side of the Infanta, withdrawn a little from the foreground, stands Velasquez himself, brush and pallet in hand, waiting with dignified patience, and gravity, for the desired expression, while in the background a door opens upon a landscape, to let out a retiring figure. It makes you sad to see two such natures, each, man and dog, so noble of his kind, at the mercy of beings so infinitely beneath them, as the spoilt child of royalty, and those misshapen butts of a silly court. You feel that Art is degraded, when one of her greatest masters is condemned to such a task; and yet out of those unpromising materials, the genius of Velasquez has wrought one of its most lasting monuments. For this picture has been called "La Teologia," the Gospel of Art; and our own Wilkie declared, that its power amounts almost to inspiration.

On the further side of Charles V., hangs another of Velasquez's portraits, with a background of exquisite freshness and beauty, Don Balthasar, a boy on a pony, sitting as if he were glued to the saddle, and galloping bodily out of the canvas.

Just opposite, on the other side of the room, is 319, another grand work, which to me was

the most interesting of all his historical subjects. It represents the capitulation of Breda, in June, 1625, after a siege of ten months. Spinola, the Spanish commander-in-chief, with his refined Italian face, and high-bred, elegant figure, occupies the centre of the picture, and as he receives the keys of the town from the governor, it is quite charming to observe the almost feminine expression of respect, and sympathy, with which he meets his gallant antagonist, taking away all the humiliation, and most of the pain, of being obliged to surrender to so generous a foe. Right in the fore-ground, on one side, bristles a whole forest of lances (from which the picture derives its name of "Las Lanzas"), an audacity of Art few could have ventured upon, but producing, by the magic of Velasquez's handling, a rare, and striking effect.

The gallery teems with magnificent portraits, some few of which I could mention. No. 1515, is marked in Ford as Rubens's portrait of Sir Thomas More, which must have been copied from some earlier likeness, as Henry VIII.'s great Chancellor had been beheaded more than forty years before Rubens was born.

No. 992, by Albert Durer, seems absolutely on the point of speaking, while another (972,) by

the same, inscribed with his signature, represents the painter himself, with a lovely bit of landscape, gleaming through an open window in the background. 905, Raphael's "Cardinal Julio de Medici," brings before you a master-mind, the *beau idéal* of an Italian Churchman. No. 1446, is a portrait of our Queen Mary, by Antonio More, a most forbidding, peevish countenance, admirably painted; 734, a young Italian, by Bronzino, pensive, and full of expression; while 765, and 769, are Titian's portraits of Charles V., with his Irish wolf-hound, and of Philip II. when young, clothed in a suit of armour, which is still preserved in the Armeria Real.

Some of these hang in the great central saloon.

The Queen's Cabinet contains several interesting works by the early Flemish masters, the Van Eycks, Hans Hemling, &c. Among them I particularly noticed a triptych, by Hemling, the "Adoration of the Magi," in which a quaint little market-place, half unthatched, shelters the Infant Saviour, the two folding panels containing a "Nativity," and a "Presentation in the Temple." The colouring is gorgeous, and the finish equals that of a miniature.

Another "Adoration" by the same hand, No. 467, is treated in a much plainer manner, as if the three Kings had gone to worship our Lord, in their every-day dress, while the colouring is more sober, and subdued.

I remarked also a series of subjects, catalogued as belonging to the German school of the fifteenth century, extremely beautiful, illustrating religious Art in its earlier, and more reverent days.

The Annunciation comes first. When the Archangel appears, the Virgin is on her knees in a Gothic oratory. The countenance of each forms quite a study, exhibiting that elevated heavenly expression so rarely observed, except in the older masters; while, with a touch of that almost comic quaintness peculiar to the art of that age, Gabriel's wings glisten with the motley splendour of a peacock's plumage. In each of the four paintings the foreground is framed-in with a pointed arch of great elegance, and the subject withdrawn with excellent effect into the recess thus formed.

The second represents the meeting of the Virgin and Elizabeth, with a German medieval house, and pretty landscape.

In the third appear Angels, with the Virgin, and Joseph, adoring our Lord, Who is painted as

the most diminutive infant imaginable, (by way perhaps of realizing more vividly His humiliation in taking upon Him our nature,) and on a hill in the blue distance stands Jerusalem. In the fourth, and last of the series, the Adoration takes place under a shed, in shape like a lych-gate. I found these paintings full of interest, not merely on account of their extreme beauty, and the reverential spirit with which the subjects are treated, but from the introduction of so many details of Gothic architecture, a feature very rarely to be noticed in the compositions of later masters, when the Renaissance style had become almost universal.

In the same room (the Queen's Cabinet), there is a most curious painting from the Escorial collection by Patenier (a master I had never heard of before), the "Temptation of St. Anthony." The Saint is on his knees, surrounded by demons in every form, each more grotesque and hideous than his fellow, from which you turn with pleasure to an exquisite background suffused by a strange, and almost ghastly tinge of green—a landscape taken from Dream-land, exhibiting one of those enchanting scenes of idealized beauty, which the early painters delighted to depict.

On the other side of the doorway are two hunting pieces, 1006, 1020, by Lucas Cranach, one of which represents a herd of deer being driven into a lake, where they are slaughtered wholesale by the cross-bows of sportsmen posted on the banks. The figures, countenances, costumes, buildings, and other details are all German, and the two pictures exhibit a disregard of perspective, that makes one quite uncomfortable, as you feel afraid the whole scene, lake, sportsmen, and game, is on the very point of slipping down bodily, to descend like an avalanche on your toes.

In an Englishman's mind, however, that magnificent collection awakens some very painful thoughts, as several of its choicest treasures once belonged to Charles I., and were sold after his death by the Puritans. Ford states, that Philip IV. bought so largely at the sale through his ambassadors, that eighteen mules were required to transport the purchases, when landed in Spain. One of them, the famous "Perla" of Raphael, a Madonna and Child, alone cost £2000, a very large sum to be paid for a picture in those days. It is said to be much damaged by cleaning, both at Paris and Madrid; but to my mind it still appears a masterpiece. The

Virgin's face is full of such tender sweetness, and maidenly modesty, while the background is one of those landscapes of deepest blue, with which Perugino, and painters of his date, loved to invest their imaginings of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Close to it hangs 741, another by Raphael, "La Virgen del Pez," Tobit presenting a fish to the Virgin. This is probably an earlier work, as its style is more severe, while the countenance of the Virgin wears an expression almost of sternness, and her figure exhibits the lofty dignity of a matron, rather than the flexible grace of a maiden. Many prefer this to the "Perla," over which it possesses the undoubted advantage of having suffered less from the barbarism of picture-cleaners.

A third of Raphael's great paintings, 784, called "El Pasma de Sicilia," from having been painted for a Church in Sicily, stands at the upper end of the Queen's Cabinet. It represents our Lord, Who is bearing His Cross, as having sunk exhausted on the ground, while the Virgin and three other women kneel beside Him, Veronica being in the background. Priests, and officers, follow on horseback, while foremost in the procession come soldiers, one of whom is in

the act of striking our Lord with a scourge. Calvary with its three crosses, and groups of spectators, rises in the distance. I was most pleased with the figure of Veronica, whose countenance expresses sympathy, and reverential pity, too deep for utterance.

This painting, too, has undergone cruel treatment from the picture-cleaners, who seem at Madrid to carry on their work of destruction on a fearful scale.

I will conclude this hasty notice of some few of the Museo's treasures (for several of its rooms, filled with gems of Art from almost every continental master, I had not time even to enter), with 229, a "Conception" of Murillo's, the most beautiful, I thought, of all his paintings I saw anywhere in Spain. The Virgin's face is radiant with a look of perfect innocence and purity, mingled with childlike wonderment at the unspeakable honour vouchsafed her; and the figure, while it has sufficient firmness, and substance to represent humanity, has yet marvellous lightness and buoyancy, as if she scarcely pressed the wreaths of cloud floating under her feet.

CHAPTER XI.

WHILE we were at Madrid, a bull-fight took place, the eighteenth, and last of the season. Though feeling the greatest repugnance to witness such a spectacle, I went nevertheless; and in spite of many revolting incidents, that made me heartily glad when it was over, I do not altogether regret to have been present, as the sight has enabled me to understand some points in the national character, which would otherwise have been quite unintelligible.

It came off on Monday, the 17th of October, this day of the week being most in fashion at Madrid; whereas, in the provinces, those exhibitions, so utterly unbecoming a Christian people, take place on the day, which above all others is associated in an Englishman's mind with everything that is sacred and peaceful. What is still more singular, religion has taken under her

especial patronage the national sport of Spain, and in that very arena, which more vividly than any other place of modern amusement recalls the bloody Roman circus, and the slaughter of the early Christians, the Spanish Church erects her altars, and celebrates the highest mystery of the Catholic faith. It will be thought almost incredible, being all the time only too true, that a chapel forms one of the various offices attached to a bull-ring, and whenever a bull-fight takes place, there mass is regularly said, and attended by all the performers; while a priest is at hand during its continuance, to administer the last rites of the Romish communion in case of any serious casualty. The chapel belonging to the Plaza de Toros at Madrid, which we visited the morning before the bull-fight, actually stands in the stable-yard, a strange situation for such a building.

No one, I suppose, would ever think of instituting a comparison between the bull-ring, and the stage. Many persons, whose judgment is entitled to the highest consideration, have thought a good play, well performed, calculated to produce a direct moral effect on the spectator; while the most enthusiastic votary of the bull-ring would hardly venture to say as much in

behalf of his favourite amusement. But the Church of Rome, while she excommunicates actors simply as such, *ex officio* in fact, without the least reference to their private character, is inconsistent enough to sanction, in this marked manner, and with the most solemn act of her worship, the spectacle of a bull-fight.

One of Shakspeare's most charming characters, Rosalind, propounds a theory, that lovers do not meet with the treatment they deserve—"a dark house, and a whip, as madmen"—simply because the lunacy is universal. Does the Church of Rome in Spain extend her sanction to that brutalizing exhibition for the same reason—the universality of the passion for bull-fighting among all classes in the Peninsula, high and low, secular and clerical? Has she compromised her mission as a Church—to humanize and soften the rugged nature of man—out of worldly wisdom, knowing that the Spaniards would have their beloved sport at all cost; and, for the preservation of her temporal influence, does she sacrifice her essential principles, as the professed representative of Him, whose mercy is over all His works?

This, however, is not all. According to Ford, who is anything but a bigoted Protestant, she

turns the national pastime to her own ends. In his "Gatherings from Spain," p. 287, he thus writes:—"In Spain, the Church of Rome, never indifferent to its interests, instantly marshalled into its own service a ceremonial at once profitable, and popular; it consecrated butchery by wedding it to the altar, availing itself of this gentle handmaid, to obtain funds in order to raise convents. Even in the last century, Papal bulls were granted to mendicant orders, authorizing them to celebrate a certain number of Fiestas de Toros, on condition of devoting the profit to finishing their Church; and in order to swell the receipts at the doors, spiritual indulgences, and releases from purgatory (the number of years being apportioned to the relative prices of the seats), were added as a bonus to all that was paid for places at a spectacle hallowed by a pious object."

Imagine our venerable Primate, his Grace of York, and the other Bishops of the Church of England, advertising, under their distinguished patronage, a set-to between Sayers and the Benicia Boy, for the benefit of the Sons of the Clergy, the Foundling Hospital, or any other charitable institution! Or, to put the case in another point of view, let us fancy the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, renting the



Grand Stand at Epsom on a Derby Day, as a pious speculation, with a view to raising funds for the restoration of the Abbey!

Surely charity-balls, fancy-fairs, and bazaars, and other questionable substitutes (now happily all but exploded) for genuine almsgiving, lose much of their objectionable character, and almost acquire an aspect of religion and virtue, when contrasted, as expedients for wheedling money out of Christian pockets, with the horrors of an eleemosynary bull-fight.

Nothing can prove more incontestably the hold gained over the Spanish mind by the Fiesta de Toros, "The Feast of Bulls" (as the bull-fight is called with grim irony, the poor victims having anything but a festive part to play), than the large sums of money expended upon it in a country, where funds are so much needed for important national objects. Each exhibition costs about £400, and lasts about three hours!

More than twelve performers are required, and as many towns possess a bull-ring, without being able to support a local company, they go about from place to place during the season, a term of five or six months, from Easter to the middle of October.

Readers of "Pickwick" will recollect Sam

Weller's interesting statistics respecting the London piemen, who, according to his account, adapt their comestibles to the time of year, meat-pies being in season at one period, while at another fruit tarts are all the fashion; or, to quote the pithy language of the original statement, "When fruit is in, cats is out."

In Spain the pig and the bull bear a similar relation to each other, the former never dying a legal death between Easter and the Feast of All Saints, during which period the sale of pork is strictly prohibited; while the slaughters of the bull-ring take place only from about Easter to Michaelmas, as the bulls do not fight well in cold weather.

In the forenoon preceding the performance, we went to see the bulls driven into the stalls, where they are kept till they make their first appearance, and their last, before the public. We heard so much about this ceremony, that we naturally expected something of no common interest. It proved, however, almost as tame a business, as driving a dairy of well-conducted English cows to their milking-ground; and were the *encierro*, as this affair of driving the bulls to the Plaza is called, ever introduced, with appropriate music, among the incidents of an opera, I would humbly suggest that the "Ranz des

Vaches" would be a strain much more "in accordance with the sentiments of the scene," as it appeared to us, than the *torero's* ballad, "Estando toda la Corte," so highly praised by Ford, and rendered into English with so much spirit by Lockhart.

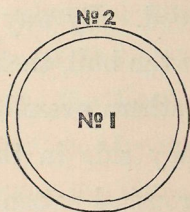
We took the opportunity of inspecting all the arrangements of the Plaza de Toros, which, in addition to the amphitheatre, contains quite an extensive range of buildings, among which we particularly noticed a small infirmary, where "casualty cases" (to adopt the language of Mr. Robert Sawyer) are taken direct from the bull-ring; and in the stables we found sixteen or twenty poor horses, the sweepings of cab-stand, and post-house, destined for that day's slaughter.

But really the most patient of readers will complain (and with justice) of being detained so long on the outside of that "charmed circle," which contains the *summum bonum* of a Spanish mob.

Let us enter then, and as the kindness of a gentleman we met at the Embassy has supplied us with tickets, our entrance will cost us nothing. We received at the same time a printed paper, which, combining in a measure the characteristics of a play-bill, and that peculiarly English document, "a list of all the running horses," gives

not only the names of the performers (who at Madrid, "the Court," are always the foremost men of their craft), but the colour, breeders' names, and birth-place of all the bulls, in the order of their appearance.

Our tickets being first-class, we mount to the upper story, on the shady side of the building, enter a box of the plainest description, and at once find ourselves in a vast circle, face to face with ten thousand human beings, the greater part of whom are "sitters in the sun," the price of places increasing in proportion to their shadiness. The ground-plan of the amphitheatre may be described by two concentric circles, of which the inner one, No. 1, forms the battleground, and is pierced, at intervals, by openings large enough to admit a man sideways, through which the men on foot, when sore pressed and unable to escape in any other way, dart into the outer space, marked No. 2. The actual ring encloses an area of about two acres, covered with the fine white sand, so common in most parts of Spain, and its surface, now so smooth and spotless, will soon be crimsoned by many a stain of blood.



Scarcely have we taken our seats (and uncommonly hard are they) before a flourish of trumpets is heard, the barrier opposite us is withdrawn, and in marches the entire troop of performers (the bull alone excepted)—*picadors*, *chulos*, *banderilleros*, and *matadors*, a team of four handsome mules, gaily caparisoned, and hung with bells, (whose office is to drag out the carcasses of bulls and horses) closing the procession, which forms the prettiest feature of the whole performance.

The appearance of the picadors, who alone of all the actors engaged are on horseback, is a ludicrous caricature of the gay, active, well-mounted *caballero* of ancient Spanish knight-hood. By way of protection against the horns of the bull, their legs are encased in a species of leathern overall, stuffed to such a degree, that as they ride in they look exactly like a row of dropsical patients, very much in need of tapping. Nor do their steeds cut a better figure, being the sorriest-looking jades imaginable, as they come limping in with one eye blindfolded, having been reprieved from the knackers, only to be butchered in the bull-ring.

There are some ten, or twelve performers on foot, *chulos* and *banderilleros*, and being