

cuit along the l. bank, over hill and dale, to *Garrovillas*, and thence descended to the river, which here pours through a more level country a tranquil deep blue stream, reflecting the azure sky, and not the dun tints of calcined rocks; pass over at *La Barca*; at this ferry, too, are the remains of a noble Roman bridge, *de Alconetar*, or *del Mandible*, for the high road from Merida to Salamanca crossed the Tagus here: all is now a ruin, save 5 arches on the r. bank: the masonry resembles that of *Alcantara*: to the r. the rivulet Monte enters the Tagus: a shaft of a Roman bridge and a military stone remain: above is a ruined castle. This, indeed, is a lovely spot and scene, made for poet and artist, and especially avoided by Spaniards:

Yet have I loved thy wild abode,
Unknown, untrodden silent shore,
Where scarce the woodman finds a road,
And scarce the fisher plies an oar.

For man's neglect I love thee more;
Nor art nor avarice intrude
To tame thy torrent's thunder stroke,
Or prune the vintage of the rock,
Magnificently rude.

A stony *Rambla* now leads up to *Cañaveras*, a poor village, where we slept; hence to *Coria* the hills throughout the ride command glorious views, especially after passing the convent *San Pedro de Alcantara* and the cork-woods. *Coria* rises sweetly over the Alagon, crossed also by a ferry, for the bridge with 5 arches stands high and dry in the meadow; the river has changed its course, or *ha salido de madre*, and deserted its mother, which never seems to "know that it is out" nor care; the Corians, on their part, take no steps to get it in again, but trust to the proverbial habit of unfaithful rivers returning to their old beds like repentant husbands: *Despues de años mil, vuelve el rio á su cubil*. Many Spanish rivers want bridges, while occasionally bridges want rivers: but Spain is the land of the anomalous and of contrasts, and these *Pontes asinorum*,—superfluous luxuries—are plentiful as blackberries (see *Olloniego*, *Dueñas*,

Zaragoza, &c.); yet the poor Corians alone are called *Los Bobos*, bridge boobies: *Bovo* is an Arabic word for fool. Some who love Greek derivations connect *Coria* with *καρος*, *quasi καρος*, which also is hardly a compliment.

Coria, *Caurium*, *Posada Nueva del Tio Joaquin*, *calle de las Monjas*, a dull decayed town of some 2500 souls, is the see of a bishop, suffragan to *Santiago*. The walls are said to be among the few which escaped the order of *Witiza*, by which the cities of Spain were dismantled: constructed of simple solid granite, without cement, and averaging 30 feet high by 19 thick, they are defended by towers placed at intervals, and disfigured by paltry houses built up against them. Here the walls are considered Roman, in Italy they would be called *Pelasgian*. Walk on them on the *Paredon* for the view, and also on the pretty *Alameda* near *San Francisco*. Observe the modern aqueduct and the huge Castilian *Torre de San Francisco*, with corner bartizan turrets and machicolations, constructed out of ancient materials. The old city gates have been modernised; in that of *La Guia* is some mutilated sculpture. The cathedral is Gothic, built of granite, with buttresses and a pepperbox steeple; the principal entrance is ornamented with elaborate cinquecento plateresque work: the cardinals' heads, in the open gallery to the r., are finely designed. The interior, without aisles, resembles a large college hall. The *silleria del coro* is very old and curious, of the rude but bold carving of 1489. The *retablo* is all gilding and churriguerismo. Observe the highly enriched sepulchre of *Catalina Diaz*, obt. 1487, and wife of the architect, *Martin Caballero*, obt. 1495, and the kneeling figure of *Bishop Garcia de Galarza* in his magnificent tomb, on the Gospel side of the high altar; and near it another kneeling effigy of another prelate, *Pedro Ximenez de Prexamo*, obt. 1495. The *Alva* family have a palace here, and portions of an ancient synagogue remain.

Coria, in 1812, was the winter-quarters of Lord Hill, whose kindness, coupled with valour, strict discipline, and punishment of plunderers, won golden opinions, when contrasted with the misconduct of the invader. The whole country to Plasencia was ravaged by Soult; for the dreadful details see Toreno ix. and Durosoir 231; *Coria* was sacked August 15, 1809, "the heavens blushing by night at their fires, while columns of smoke by day marked their progress." The bishop of *Coria*, aged 85, was sick in bed at Hoyos, where, Aug. 29, a detachment of French were hospitably received by him, and the officers entertained by his clergy at table. This they repaid by murdering six of their hosts and a servant; and to conclude, after plundering the house, they tore the sick prelate from his bed and shot him (Schep. ii. 432).

Quitting *Coria*, the first 4 L. to *Plasencia* run on the r. bank of the *Alagon*, through desolate *encinares* to the ferry at *Galisteo*: and in case (as it was with us) the boatmen happen to be absent, you may ford the stream just below the town to the r., probatum est. Ruined *Galisteo*, rising with its castle and long lines of battlemented walls, which conceal the town, looks imposing. Pop. 1200. The palace, belonging to the Arcos family, contains a superb *patio* with open galleries and granite columns, a fine staircase, and medallions of the time of Charles V.; all is sadly abandoned. Observe also outside the walls a fantastic Dominican convent with two brick towers and a handsome portal, founded in 1545 by a Count Osorio, by whom also was built the fine bridge which crosses the Yerte, a tributary of the *Alagon*; 3 L. over bleak undulating hills lead to sweet *Plasencia*. Whatever Spaniards may say it is not worth while to make a *détour* to *Malpartida* to see the Corinthian Parroquia, designed in 1551 by Pedro de Ezquerria; they vastly admire the cornice and candelabra, the granite statues of St. Peter and Paul: the interior was

completed in 1603. The sculpture of the chief *retablo* is by Agustín Castaño, 1622. The fine materials of this church came from the quarry near the town *de Los cinco Hermanos*. A long league leads to *Plasencia*, placed on the last knoll which descends from a snow-clad sierra.

PLASENCIA. Inns — *Posada de las tres Puertas—Parador Nuevo*. In the *Calle del Sol* also, Doña Francisca Arenal has a tidy little house. This town is girdled by the sweet clear Xerte, while the two valleys separated by the snow-capped Sierras de Bejar and de la Vera are bosoms of beauty and plenty: that to the N.W. is called *el Valle*, that opposite is justly named *la Vera*, ver ibi purpureum et perpetuum. The picturesque town is defended by crumbling walls, 68 semicircular towers, with a ruined Alcazar to the N. and a long connecting line of aqueduct. *Plasencia*, seen from outside, is indeed most pleasing on all directions: here river, rock, and mountain,—city, castle, and aqueduct, under a heaven of purest ultra-marine, combine to enchant the artist; the best points of view are from the granite-strewn hill, opposite the *Puerta del Postigo*. The valley to the S.W. is charming, and the bridges artistical. The families of Monroy, and especially that of Carvajal, have done much for this city. Consult '*Historia y Anales de Plasencia*,' Alonso Fernandez, folio, Mad. 1627.

Here, it is said, stood the Roman *Ambracia*, and on *Ambroz*, its deserted site, Alonso VIII., in 1190, founded the present city, which he called, in the nomenclature of that devout age, "*Ut Deo placet*;"—the *Een-shallah*, the "*Si Dios quiere*," the "If the Lord so will." Made a bishopric, suffragan to *Santiago*, it rose to be a flourishing town. Now decayed, it scarcely contains 6000 souls, having never recovered the fatal August, 1809, when Cuesta, neglecting the Duke's repeated request, omitted to secure the passes of Baños and Perales, and thus let Soult come down on Talavera, neu-

tralize that hard-fought victory, and plunder Plasencia as he passed through. The ornate Gothic cathedral, begun in 1498, is unfinished in some portions, and has been altered and disfigured in others. The S. entrance is granite built and noble. Observe the windows, the open-worked railing and plateresque façade and candelabra: the Berruguete *Puerta del Enlosado*, to the N., is grand and serious, with Julio Romano-like medallions and arms of Charles V. and of the Carvajals. The *Capilla Mayor*, commenced by Juan de Alava, was completed by Diego de Siloe and Alonso de Covarubbias. The *silleria del coro*, carved in 1520 by Rodrigo Aleman, is most elaborate, although somewhat *tedesque*; in it sacred, profane, serious, ridiculous, bachanal, and amatory subjects are incongruously jumbled together. Observe the two stalls near the *Coro alto*, and the Gothic spire: Aleman also carved the throne of the bishop, and the confessional of the *Penitenciario*. The retablo of the high altar, with the Assumption of the Virgin, and statues, are by Gregorio Hernandez, 1626. The chief subject is the Assumption of the Virgin, to which assumption this cathedral is dedicated; the gaudy colours and gilding, and frittered drapery, are unpleasing, but it forms a grand whole. Some of the cherubs are quite Murillesque. The *reja*, in which the Assumption figures again, is a masterpiece of Juan Bautista Celma, 1604. The fine arts seem to have been ill-fated in this cathedral, for the pictures of Francisco Ricci, given by the Bishop Lozano for the high altar mayor, have been retouched, the Marriage of St. Catherine, by Rubens, stolen, and the Nativity, by Velazquez, burnt with the chapter-house in April, 1832. Observe among the fine sepulchres that of the kneeling prelate Pedro Ponce de Leon, obiit 1753, wrought in the Berruguete style. The portal to the *Sacristia* is in rich plateresque; here is treasured up an image of the Virgin, which is only exhibited on the 15th of August, or on very great

public calamities; a noble staircase leads to the roof; ascend it for the panoramic view.

The bishop Pedro de Carvajal lies in the *San Nicolas*; observe his kneeling effigy: this powerful Plasencian family rose high in the church, under the Valencian Borgia popes: one member, a cardinal, lies buried in Santa Croce at Rome. In the *Monjas de San Ildefonso* is the noble tomb of Cristobal de Villalba; the effigy is armed and kneeling. In *San Vicente* is another armed one, now cruelly mutilated, of Martin Nieto, 1597, and was one of the finest things in Estremadura; attached to this Dominican convent is *la Casa de las Bovedas*, built for the Marques de Mirabel in 1550. Observe the patio and pillars, and the saloons painted in fresco with the wars of Charles V. In the cloistered terrace, *el Pensil*, were arranged some antiquities found at Capara and elsewhere, and among them a colossal foot. The gardens are pretty. The superb armoury disappeared with the French. Just outside the gate towards the bridge is an elegant cross with light spiral support, and in the *S. Juan Bautista*, near the river, the recumbent statue of the founder, *Almaraz*.

From Plasencia there is a wild but picturesque ride to *Avila*, 26 L. by the *Puerto de Tornavacas*. The angler and artist may at least make an excursion to the *Puerto*, 8 L., by the charming valley of the Xerte, which winds up amid fruit and verdure, walled in on each side by the snow-capped *Sierras de Bejar* and *Vera*; he might put up at *Cabezuela*, distant 6 L.

ROUTE 60.—PLASENCIA TO TRUJILLO.

Those who wish to know what a *despoblado* and *dehesa* mean, may ride this rough route, 14 L., it is characterised by the smell of aromatic herbs, the silence of solitude, and the undisturbed happy existence of the *feræ naturæ*. The *Puerto de la Serrana*, whence robbers are said to spy the traveller, is distant 3 L.; hence to *San Carlos*, 2 L., near which

the Tietar enters the Tagus; the latter is crossed by a noble bridge built by the Cardinal Juan de Carvajal, and hence called *Puente del Cardenal*. The castle now seen about 2 m. below, is that of *Monfrague*, *Monsfagorum*; hence to *Torrejon el Rubio*, where a former palace is now degraded into a poor posada; the Vid is next crossed by a good bridge into a country given up to game and rabbits; then again crossing the Monte and Magasca by stone bridges, all the work of the cardinal, we reach *Aldea del Obispo*, and the oak woods in which Pizarro fed his pigs. Crossing the Tojos by another bridge, *Trujillo* terminates this wild ride.

PLASENCIA TO MADRID.

This ride, 41 L. altogether, is very wild and picturesque to *Avila*, 26 L.; from whence the *Escorial* may be visited. First night sleep at *Tornavacas*, 8 L.—*Posada de Coluras*—a picturesque village halfway up the *Puerto*; second night sleep at *Piedrahita*, riding through *Cabe-ruela*, 6 L., *Posada de Calisto*. N.B. eat the *tortuga* melons. Crossing the Xerte enter *Piedrahita*, *Posada de la Tia Polomi*; look at the once superb granite palace of the great Duke of Alba, ruined by the French: third night *Avila*, 10 L. The alpine road continues through *El Barco*, 4 L., a walled village on the *Tormes*, engulfed in the sierras, with a fine castle with machicolated towers: hence through *Villatoro* to *Avila*, 6 L. See index.

ROUTE 61.—PLASENCIA TO YUSTE AND TALAVERA DE LA REINA.

Those who are fond of fishing, shooting, sketching, geologizing, and botanizing, may ride to *Yuste*, 8 L., and thence taking a local guide over the *dehesas*, either to *Miravete* to the r. or to *Talavera* to the l.; but whether going to Madrid or on to Salamanca, let none when at *Plasencia* fail making the excursion to this convent, to which Charles V. retired, an old man wearied

with the cares of state. It lies on the S.W. slope of the *Sierra de Vera*, about an 8 hours' pleasant ride from Plasencia. The charms of this happy *Rasselas* valley are described in '*Amenidades de la Vera*,' Gab. Acedo, 8vo. Mad. 1667.

Pilgrims intending to sleep at the sequestered convent had better write beforehand to prepare the lessee, a worthy farmer, who can provide bed and board; direct to *Señor Don Patricio Bueno*, *Arrendador del Monasterio de San Geronimo de Yuste*, *Cuacos*; this post town is a poor village, where there is a decent *Venta* kept by a widow. The sportsman will find near *Yuste* deer, wild boar, roebuck, *Cabras montaneses*, and may-be wolves.

On leaving Plasencia cross the Xerte and ascend the steep hill *Calzones*, thence through olives and vineyards to the *Vera*, a sweet valley of some 9 L. in extent; after 4 L. of *dehesas y matos* the road ascends to the l. to quaint red-tiled *Pasaron*, a picturesque old town of Prout-like houses, with topping balconies hanging over a brawling brook. Observe a turreted palace of the *Arco* family. The road next clambers up a steep hill, amid oaks and fruit trees. As we rode on our cheerful companions were groups of sunburnt daughters of labour, whose only dower was health and cheerfulness, who were carrying on their heads in baskets the frugal dinner of the vine-dressers. Springy and elastic was their sandaled step, unfettered by shoe or stocking, and light-hearted their laugh and song, the chorus of the sheer gaiety of youth full of health and void of care. These pretty creatures, although they did not know it, were performing an opera ballet in action and costume: how gay their short *sayas* of serges red, green, and yellow; how primitive the cross on their bosoms, how graceful the *pañuelo* on their heads: thus they tript wantonly away under the long-leaved chesnuts. Soon the beautiful *Vera* expands, with the yellow line of the *Badajoz* road running across the cistus-clad distance to *Miravete*; then

the Jeronimite convent appears to the l. nestling in woods about half-way up the mountain, which shelters it from the wind. Below is the farm *Magdalena*, where in the worst case the night may be passed; thence ascend to the monastery, keeping close to a long wall. This Spanish Spalatro, to which the gout-worn empire-sick Charles retired, to barter crowns for rosaries away, was founded in 1404, on the site where a covey of fourteen Gothic bishops had been killed at one swoop by the Moors, and took its name from the streamlet, the *Yuste*, which trickles behind it. Charles, May 24, 1554, sent his son Philip, (when on his way to England to marry our Mary) to inspect this place, which he had years before selected as a nest for his old age: he himself had planned, while in Flanders, the additional buildings, erected by Antonio de Villa Castin; these lie to the warm S.W. of the chapel; but on the 9th of August, 1809, 200 of Soult's foragers clambered up, pillaged and burnt the convent, leaving it a blackened roofless ruin. The precious archives were then consumed, all except one volume of the conventual title-deeds and documents, written out in 1620 by Fray Luis de Santa Maria. The prior was consulting these about some rights disputed by the *Cuacos* peasants, and, seeing the enemy, threw the tome into some bushes, and so it escaped for a time, and was lent us to read; now it no doubt is lost. Here we met also Fray Alonso Cavallero, an aged monk, who took the cowl Oct. 17, 1778, and remembered Ponz and his visit. For the foundation consult Sigüenza's History of the Order of St. Jerome, ii. 1, 29; and i. 36, for a minute account of Charles when here; see also the History of Plasencia, by Fernandez, i. 25.

The convent is entered by the most patriarchal walnut-tree under which Charles used to sit, and which even then was called *el nogal grande*. Passing to the *Botica*, the few vases which escaped Soult's hordes were carried off in 1820 by one Morales, a

liberal apothecary, for his own shop in *Garandilla*, for the solid granite-built chapel, from its thick walls, which resisted the fire of the invaders, only saved the imperial quarter to be finally gutted by the constitutionalists: a door to the r. of the altar opened to Charles's room, whence he came out to attend divine service: his bedroom, where he died, has a window through which, when ill, he could see the elevation of the Host. Here hung the *Gloria* of Titian, which he directed in his will to be placed wherever his body rested, and accordingly the painting was moved with it to the Escorial. Philip II. sent a copy of it to Yuste, which was in 1823 carried off to *Texada*, near *Navalmoral*, by the patriots, and when the monks returned they were too poor even to pay for bringing it back. The *Coro Alto* was carved in a quaint tedesque style by Rodrigo Aleman: in a vault below the high altar remains the rude chest in which the Emperor's body was kept sixteen years, until removed in 1574.

Charles built four principal rooms, each, as usual, with large fire-places, for he was a chilly Fleming. From the projecting alcoves the views are delicious. At the W. end is a pillared gallery, *la Plaza del Palacio*, overhanging a private garden, and connected with a raised archway, *el Puente*, by which the Emperor went down: below remains the sun-dial, erected for him by Juanuelo Turriano, and the stone step by which he mounted his horse, and an inscription records the spot where he was seated, Aug. 31, 1558, when he felt the first approach of death. Charles arrived here Wednesday, Feb. 3, 1557 at one in the afternoon, and here he died Sept. 21 the next year, of premature old age, dropping like the ripe fruit from the shaken tree. Philip II. revisited the convent in 1570, and remained two days, but declined, from respect, sleeping in the room where his father died. "Guardando el respeto al aposento en que murió su padre, no queriendo dormir sino en el retrete, del mismo apo-

sento, y tan estrecho que apenas cabe una cama pequeña." So we read the record in the old book; Δειναι γαρ κοιται, και αποιχουμεναιο λειοντος. Philip did little for the monks, and when they begged of him, replied, "You never could have had my father here a year without feathering your nest."

The larger pleasure-grounds lay on the other side; nature has now resumed her sway, yet many a flower shows that once a garden smiled, and still an untrimmed myrtle and box edge leads to *El cenador de Belem* (Bethlehem): this exquisite gem of a cinquecento summer-house remained perfect until destroyed by Sout's vandals, as they did that other old soldier's nest, Abadia. Charles lived here half like a monk and half like a retired country gentleman. He was plagued by the ill-conditioned villagers of *Cuacos* (Καζοι), who poached his trout in the *Garganta la olla*, drove away his milk-cows, and threw stones at his son, the future hero of Lepanto, for climbing up their cherry-trees. His was no morbid unsocial misanthropy or dotage, but a true weariness of the world with which he had done, and a wish to be at rest. This monastic turn, and a longing to finish a stormy soldier-life in the repose of the cloister—a wish entirely congenial to Spanish character and precedent—was one long before entertained by himself. Spanish soldiers, when life is on the wane, yearn to recolour it as it were, by pious heroism, and seek to find an altar whereon to make expiation, grasping at the hem of the Church's garment, as drowning men do at straws. See on this subject, *Montserrat*, p. 422. The Emperor did not, however, renounce all fleshly comforts. He brought with him his old servants, cooks especially (for our Cæsar was an epicure), who knew his wants and ways, and whose faces he knew: he had his ride, experiments, and his prayers. He had friends to whom he could make known sorrows, and thus divide them, or communicate his joys and double them; he had the play and prattle of his little

boy. Phlegmatic and melancholy indeed he was by constitution, and from the inherited taint of his mother; he was also broken in health by gout and dyspepsia.

The true history of the much misrepresented retirement of Charles V. has at last been fully made known. Those curious to see the many errors of the careless Robertson, may turn to our notices of the "Cloister Life" in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 183. Long before, in 1845, it was stated in our Handbook that an accurate account of this interesting finale to the imperial career had been prepared from the original documents still existing in the archives of Simancas, by the Canon Thomas Gonzalez, their keeper. At his death this unpublished MS. was purchased of his nephew by M. Mignet, for the Archives of the French Foreign Office, of which he then had the management. On Mr. Stirling's application to see this MS. in 1850, all the purchase having appeared in print, M. Mignet just told him, that "he did not know where it was;" and when he applied again in 1851, was rudely treated by the then Archiviste, M. Cintrat: armed, however, with an order from Louis Napoleon, which would take no denial, the unwilling officials at last produced the MS. for his examination. But before that, some papers in '*Frazer's Magazine*' were put forth by Mr. Stirling as a pilot balloon to his racy and exhaustive '*Cloister Life*,' published in October 1852. This work, having run to a third edition, led to the lively '*Charles Quint*,' &c., by Amadée Pichot, an 8vo. published at Paris, Feb. 7, 1854. That same month the original documents were printed at Bruxelles in their own language with an excellent preface, a signal service done to history by the accurate Gachard; and then, to conclude these curiosities of literature, the aforesaid Mons. Mignet, last if not least in the field, came forth in June with his '*Charles Quint*,' &c., 8vo. Paris, 1854: this dry performance—perreant male qui ante nos nostra dixerint

—just contained one allusion only to the existence of the “*charmant volume*” of Mr. Stirling, which had taken the book and bread out of his mouth.

The convent of Yuste, after the death of Charles, soon became forgotten. Few travellers cared to visit a retreat far removed from the beaten path. Lord John Russell, we believe, was one of the few pilgrims who preceded our humble selves and Hand-book. *Nous avons changé tout cela*; and now, when the long vacation begins, the solitude of the silent cell ceases, and Yuste has become a lion to be “done” by our nomade countrymen.

The ruin of this convent, commenced by Soult’s hordes, was completed by the Church reformers of *Cuacos*, who, July 4, 1821, came, stole everything left by the invaders, kept horses in the church, and made the Emperor’s room a place for silk-worms. The monastic sequestrations of 1835 have for a third and last time destroyed what the monks had partially restored, and chaos is come again.

Never, therefore, again will it be the lot of traveller to be welcomed, like ourselves, by the real and fit masters, the cowled friars, to whom news and a stranger from the real living world was a godsend. The day was passed in sketching and sauntering about the ruined buildings and gardens, with the goodnatured garrulous brotherhood; at nightfall supper was laid for the monks at a long board, but the *prior* and *procurador* had a small table set apart in an alcove, where “bidden to a spare but cheerful meal, I sat an honoured guest;” as the windows were thrown open, to admit the cool thyme-scented breeze, the eye in the clear evening swept over the boundless valley, the nightingales sang sweetly in the neglected orange-garden, and the bright stars, reflected in the ink-black tank below, twinkled like diamonds: how often had Charles looked out on a stilly eve on this self-same unchanged scene where he alone was now wanting! When supper was done, I shook hands all round with

my kind hosts, and went to bed, in the very chamber where the Emperor slept his last sleep. All was soon silent, and the spirit of the mighty dead ruled again in his last home; but no Charles disturbed the deep slumber of a weary insignificant stranger; long ere daybreak next morning I was awakened by a pale monk, and summoned to the early mass, which the prior in his forethought had ordered. The chapel was imperfectly lighted; the small congregation consisted of the monk, my sunburnt muleteer, and a stray beggar, who, like myself, had been sheltered in the convent. When the service was concluded, all bowed a farewell to the altar on which the dying glance of Charles had been fixed, and departed in peace; the morning was grey and the mountain air keen, nor was it until the sun had risen high that its cheerful beams dispelled the cowl and relaid the ghost of Charles in the dim pages of history.

ROUTE 62.—PLASENCIA TO SALAMANCA.

Villar	3	
Aldea Nueva	3	6
Baños	2	8
Bejar	3	11
Pedro mingo	2	13
Fuente Roble	2	15
Monte Rubio	4	19
Salamanca	4	23

This, the direct route, is by no means recommended: at *Aldea Nueva* the Roman road from Merida is crossed; remains of its pavement and abandoned bridges everywhere may be traced. *Baños* is so called from its hot sulphur baths, which have recently been well arranged, and are much frequented. This town, pop. 1500, is beautifully situated, with its pretty walks and river Ambros; the fine belfry of the Santa Maria deviates from the perpendicular; the wines are excellent; about 1 L. up is the *Puerto* or pass in the Sierra, the backbone which divides Estremadura from Old Castile: here Sir Robert Wilson, with a few undisciplined Portuguese, made a bold stand against the French coming down from

Gallicia and Oporto, while the Spanish troops abandoned the position without firing a shot. Thus Soult was enabled to reach the rear of the English at Talavera, which he never could have done had Cuesta attended to the Duke's urgent request to garrison these impregnable passes. The obstinate procrastinator only sent some troops the very day the French arrived at *Bejar*; but *mañana* is the curse of Iberia, and the Socorros de España, tarde o nunca, "late or never," never were a particular blessing. This *Bejar* is another of the steep fresh picturesque towns of this wooded Sierra. Pop. about 5000. The river *Cuerpo del Hombre* fertilizes the environs. The *alcázar* of the Duke is a striking feudal object, with a classical *patio*, fountain, and fine views. It was gutted by Soult's troops, when the pictures and fine armoury disappeared. Near *Bejar*, Feb. 20, 1813, M. Foy received a complete beating from Lord Hill. At *Calzada*, 4 L. from Salamanca, the Roman road is again crossed, and the vestiges deserve notice. Another route to Salamanca passes through Ciudad Rodrigo.

ROUTE 63.—PLASENCIA TO CIUDAD RODRIGO.

Abadia	7
Lagunilla.	2 .. 9
Herguijuela	5 .. 14
Batuecas	1 .. 15
Alberca	3 .. 18
Maillo	} 5 .. 23
Tenebron	
Ciudad Rodrigo	3 .. 26

A visit to the convent of *Batuecas* is *very strongly recommended* to the artist; the localities are most picturesque: it will be well to write some time beforehand to Señor Don Manuel Becerro, *Arrendador del Convento de las Batuecas, Alberca, Provincia de Ciudad Rodrigo*; meantime provision for man and beast is always to be had from *Alberca*, nor is there any want of game and delicious trout. This circuitous route is sprinkled with Roman antiquities, although seldom visited; attend to the provend, as the accom-

modation is very alpine, and, without fail, take a local guide. The leagues to *Alberca* are given approximately, as they are very long, and the country intricate. You can sleep the first night at *Granadilla*, 5 L.; the second at the convent of *Batuecas*, 8 L.; passing through *Pesga*, 2 L., and *Las Mestas*.

We took the following route. On leaving Plasencia ascend to the *Nuestra Señora del Puerto*, whence the view is superb, and thence to *Oliva*, 2 L. In the courtyard of the Count's house are some Roman military stones. The costume of the peasants now changes: the males wear leather jerkins, open at the arms; the females short serge petticoats of greens, reds, and yellows, with handkerchiefs on their heads. About 1 L. on is *Capara*, the site of the ancient Ambracia, now a solitary farm. To the l. near it is a Roman bridge of 4 arches, quite uninjured. Masses of granite ruins lie to the l., and in a lonely road entangled with creepers is a noble Roman granite gateway, or arch; the sentiment inspired by this relic of past pomp, pride, and power, as it stands here alone in its glory uncared for and unobserved, is sad and solemn; each of the four sides has an open entrance, about twelve feet wide; the dome is falling in from decay. On each front which faces the road are two pillars without capitals, and between them and the pilasters of the arch are remains of pedestals on which statues once stood. The upper portion has been stripped of its facings. Now the route continues alongside of the Roman road to Salamanca. The solid convex paving and raised footpath are in excellent preservation, save that wild oaks grow out, a proof of long absence of traffic. The muleteers creep along by a broken mud track by the side, ashamed to tread on the mighty causeway. The whole line has been traced by Velazquez and others. (See Laborde, fol. edition, xi. 131.)

Abadia is a wretched hamlet, prettily situated on the Ambroz at the head of the valley under the Sierra de Be-

jar : here is a square-built palace of the Duque de Alba, once an "abbey" of the Templars ; some massy walls, battlements, and horseshoe arches may be traced in the more modern work. The alterations were made by the "Great Alva," "The Duke" of Spain (Don Quixote, ii. 25), who is held by foreigners to be a bloody perfidious bigot, and by Spaniards to be a model soldier of his king and the true faith ; for the Moorish spirit of the Spaniard of that age was implicit devotion to the Kalif, and propagandism of creed by fire and sword : "God's enemies" were to be exterminated, by all means fair or foul, for Rome never held out any toleration, mercy, or good faith towards heretics. Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, born in 1508, was sent into the Low Countries by Philip II. the champion of the Papacy ; there his viceroy became president of a *junta* of blood and *venganza*, under which some 18,000 persons were butchered. In 1573, when the Protestants cast off the iron yoke of Spain, Alva was recalled and disgraced. To be fairly judged, the spirit of his country and age must be taken into account ; certainly he had that love of poetry and nature which indicating some tenderness, shines like a vein of silver in the rough granite ; his tutor was Boscan, the Petrarch of Spain, and friend of Garcilazo de Vega. To *Abadia*, this loop-hole of a retreat, the old soldier, more weary of a king and country's ingratitude than of war's alarms, withdrew as Xenophon did to Scyllus, and like him passed his time in study, combining the healthy sports of the field with the recreations of social hospitality (Diog. Laert. ii. 52). So the great Condé reposed under his laurels at Chantilly, in the society of Boileau and Racine. The gardens of *Abadia* were Alva's joy and delight ; he decorated them with fountains and terraces, with statues and marbles wrought at Florence in 1555 by Francisco Camilani ; but the troops of Soult ravaged the parterres, breaking down balustrades and ornaments, and mutilating

the Italian sculpture ; some few fragments have since been collected together, among them a head of Trajan. The enclosed gardens were divided into two portions, an upper and lower : an inclined plain leads to a myrtle-overgrown spot where Alva loved to sit. The fountain, once supported by marble statues, is now dry, the ground is strewn with broken sculpture, which glistens, bleaching amid the thorns and thistles, legacies of the Gaul. Near a ruined pavilion a cypress—sole constant mourner of the dead—rises sadly out of the corn, for now the garden is ploughed up by the resident steward.

The Venta at *Abadia* is wretched ; it will be better to apply for a bed at the palace. The next day is a very long ride. Start before sunrise and ascend to *Lagunilla* 2 L., and then through a wood of gigantic chesnuts to *Val de Nieve* ; a streamlet which divides Leon from Estremadura, is crossed and recrossed until it joins the Alagon ; ascending again ride on in 2 hours to *Herguijuela*—observe the *cenereros* or singular cloth mantillas and silver clasps of the women—next either pass to *Soto Serrano*, or avoid it by cutting off to the l. to *las Mestas* 2 L., a sickly miserable place, hanging with its cypresses over a sweet trout-stream. The fishing in this district is excellent, especially in the Rio Batuecas, the Cabezudo, and Cuerpo del Hombre, tributaries of the Alagon.

The road now continues for an hour and half, up and down purple Scotch-like hills, covered with heath and aromatic shrubs : the district on the r. bank of the Alagon is called the *Hoya* or *Tierra de las Hurdes* or *Jurdes*, a name derived by some from *Gurdus*, an old Iberian word, which, according to the Spaniard Quintilian ('Inst. Or.' i. 5), signified doltish, stupid. The word, preserved in the Basque, means a pig ; such may be the origin of *gordo*, engourdi, fat and heavy. The savage misery of this district, a disgrace to civilization, is strongly denounced by Madoz, ix. 362.

The wild road soon turns to the r., and ascends the course of the *Rio Batuecas* into a most alpine gorge; soon the monastery is seen to the l. nestled below in a sheltered nook, with its white belfry, and rising amid chesnuts and cypresses. It was for a long time a refuge to travellers, a light of religion and civilization in this benighted district. The valley and the whole of *Las Jurdes* were believed, even by the wise men of Salamanca, although only 14 L. off, to be haunted by demons and inhabited by pagans. In 1599, Garzia Galarza, Bishop of Coria, in granting leave to found a convent, rejoiced that Satan and his legion, would be then expelled by the discalceate Carmelites. These idle tales about the Batuecas were credited by Monsieur Montesquieu, who gave deep offence to Spaniards by his statement, "Il y a dans leurs montagnes des nations qui leur sont inconnues;" much of this was quoted by Moreri, and worked into an embroidered novel by Madame de Genlis; the offended Spaniards published grave refutations; see on this valley '*Verdadera relacion de las Batuecas*,' Manuel de Gonzalez, 4to. Mad. 1693; Ponz, vii. 201; Padre Feijoo, '*Teatro Critico*,' iv. 241. In sober truth the Carmelite monks did their best to civilize the locality: they prepared a school for the peasants, and a lodging for all wayfarers. Their establishment in fact was a little town; a lofty wall, about a league in circumference, enclosed gardens and groves; the eminences were studded with hermitages, among which a cell in a cork tree, *el alconorque*, with the motto *Morituro satis*, was always pointed out. Another tree, a noble cypress, called from its stem *el baston*, is indeed a specimen. These and the wonders of alpine and ascetic nature were duly in our time lionised by the good fathers. To this valley of Rasselas far removed from everything connected with the world, state prisoners were sometimes sent and forgotten: and lonely indeed is this mountain nook; far away from the world's cities, with which it has nothing in common.

Here nature, silent amidst her grandest forms, suggests retirement and repose, which seem associated with the localities, *praesentiorum aspicimus Deum!*

The name *Batuecas*, by those who see Greek in everything, has been derived from *Babus*, because the valley lies *deep* in a funnel of hills; so do many other Spanish dells, without being called Batuecas; and it would be equally reasonable etymologically to derive our town *Deal* from *δηλος*, because the sea is there open and clear, or *Leith* from *λεθην*, because the Scotch in it *forget* their own interests.

The valley, about 3 m. long by 2 wide, is girdled by mountains, of which *La Peña de Francia* is the loftiest and wildest; on this "high place" is a *Santuario*, or chapel of the Virgin, whose image and shrine is visited by thousands on the 8th of every September. It is called the rock of France, because May 19, 1434, a Frenchman named Simon Vela, after travelling all over the world, discovered the miraculous image. Mons. Simon was a Parisian, and took the name of Vela because the Virgin bade him *watch* and search for this particular image. Others say the *Peña* was called after some French auxiliaries who retired here with Don Roderick after the battle of Xerez; at all events these localities, long the asylum of rogues, were considered to be haunted. During the war of independence the villagers concealed Mons. Simon's image, which only reappeared after the English had driven his countrymen out of Spain. For its miracles consult '*Historia y Milagros*,' 4to. Salamanca, 1567, or '*Historia de la Thaumaturga Imagen*,' &c., Domingo Caballeros, Salamanca, 1728. This work contains a fac-simile of the hand-writing of the revered Simon, and describes, in the 2nd part, 548 miracles worked by this graven image.

Quitting the deserted convent a steep road to the r. leads, commanding a succession of alpine views and amid walnuts and chesnuts, over the *Reventon* to *Alberca*, 1 long L.,

Posada Nueva. This is a dark, dingy, dirty hamlet, with prison-like houses, partly built in granite, wood and plaster-work; hence next day by an uninteresting country, with the flat table-lands of central Spain stretching to the r., we enter the province of Salamanca, one of the six into which the ancient kingdom of Leon was divided.

There is a bad road from Alberca to Salamanca, 12 long L., through *Aldea Nueva* and *Carrascal del obispo*. At *Tamames*, 3 L. from Salamanca, the Spaniards under Del Parque, on Oct. 18, 1809, defeated the French commanded by Marchand and Maucune.

The route to Ciudad Rodrigo through *Tenebroz* is utterly uninteresting.

SECTION VIII.

THE KINGDOM OF LEON.

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The kingdom of Leon, lying out of the hacknied track, and not visited as it deserves, abounds with sites of unrivalled military interest; the painted sculpture is of the first class; the scenery in the Vierzo and Sierras is magnificent. The chief cities, Salamanca, Valladolid, and Leon, are full of architectural and artistical interest, while to the historian the archives of Spain lie buried at Simancas. The Summer months are the best for the hills, the Springs and Autumns for the plains.

THE KINGDOM OF LEON.

El Reino de Leon, which runs up from the plains of the Castiles into the spurs of the Gallician and Asturian Sierras, is one of the most ancient of the once separate and independent kingdoms of the Peninsula; the natives, being situated near the mountain-den from whence the Lion of the Goth first turned

upon the Moor, were among the earliest to expel the infidel invader, whose hold was slight and whose resistance was feeble when compared to his deep-fanged retention and defence of Andalucia. Nor, when we behold the dreary steppes and rugged hills of Leon, and pass over the mountain barrier into the cold damp Asturias, can we be surprised that the Arab, the lover of the sun and plain, should turn readily to the more congenial south. The Christian dominion was extended by Alonso el Catolico, who, between A.D. 739-57, overran and reconquered the plains down to the Duero and Tormes. The Moors nevertheless continued to make annual *Algaras* or forays into these parts, more for purposes of plunder than reconquest. Thus this frontier arena was alternately in the power of Christian and Infidel, until about the year 910, when Garcia removed the court from Oviedo to Leon, and gave its name to his new kingdom, to distinguish it from those of Castile and Navarre, and other counties and lordships. Indeed, as the ranges of hills which from Catalonia to Galicia separate district from district, had divided the country politically as well as geographically, so the dislocated land seemed to indicate distinct petty principalities, and to prevent national unity, and foster local partition and that *isolated independence* which is the inveterate tendency of this unamalgamating land; the early Christian counts, lords, dukes, or kings (sheikhs in reality), were rivals to each other, and when not at war with the Moor, quarrelled among themselves after the true Iberian fashion, "Bellum quam otium malunt; si extraneus deest, domi hostem querunt" (Just. xlv. 2). The male line of Leon failed in 1037 with Bermudo III., whose daughter carried the crown to her husband Ferdinand of Castile, who redivided his domains by his will, which, however, his son Sancho reunited; Leon and Castile were finally joined in the person of St. Ferdinand, and have never since been separated.

The kingdom contains about 20,000 square miles, with a million inhabitants. These hardy, ill-educated agriculturists neither change their homes nor habits; creatures of routine and foes to innovation, they cling to the ways of their forefathers; yet although purely tillers of the earth, their practice is barbarously backward, and they plough in the primitive style of Triptolemus and the Georgics; most farmers are slow to improve, and these are no more to be hurried than are their mules. Their minds, like their cumbrous creaking wheels (see Index, *Chillo*), are blocked up with dirt and prejudices which have been accumulating since the deluge. Living in a province most of which is Swisslike, they are only beginning to make butter, while as regards mills and manufactories, the waste of water power is great even for Spain.

The Leonese are influenced by local differences, and modified by the nature by which they are surrounded. Thus near the Sil, they resemble the Gallician mountaineers, as in the Sierras, near the Asturias, they partake of the Asturians, while in the southern portions they differ very little from the old Castilians. The lofty cordillera, the back bone which separates Leon from the Asturias, and often covered with snow, is cold, and wind blown, some portions are well timbered; while the pastoral vallies are refreshed by infinite streams, the scorching plains below produce much corn and *garbanzos*, and a strong red wine is made near Toro. The marly fresh-water basin, or *tierra de Campos*, between Zamora, Leon, and Valladolid, is the land of Ceres; but although bread is a drug, nowhere is the population more scanty or miserable; they dwell in mud hovels made of unbaked bricks, or *adobes*, the precise Arabic *at-tob*, which vie with the wigwams of La Mancha in discomfort. This tract is as uninteresting as the *ventas* are uncomfortable; woe betide him who drives or rides across these interminable plains in winter or summer, the apologies for roads are then either axle or ankle deep in mud, or clouded in a salitrose dust, which seems ignited under the African sun.

Near Salamanca many of the yeomen are wealthy, and live in isolated farms,