

1563, the first stone of this edifice was laid; but four years afterwards Juan died, and Herrera, his pupil, succeeded him for twelve years, when he also died; but the building was concluded about 1594, probably after the designs of Herrera.*

The best *façade* is, as I have said, towards the mountain; and it is certainly, from its simplicity, rather handsome. Eight Doric columns, half built in the wall, sustaining a good cornice; and above these are four similar columns of the Ionic order, supporting a neat pediment. This is the principal entrance; and there are two others, one at each side.

The eleven thousand windows, which it is said

* The monastery, or the gridiron itself, is a parallelogram, of seven hundred and forty by five hundred and eighty feet; the palace, a handle affixed to one of the longer sides, projects about two hundred feet, and has a front of about one hundred and sixty feet; the four spires, or feet of the instrument, at the corners, are each two hundred feet high; the two spires rising above the entrance of the church, which occupies the centre of the building, two hundred and seventy feet; and its crowning dome, three hundred and thirty feet, with an interior diameter of sixty-six feet; the height of the pediment over the grand portal in the principal or western front is one hundred and forty-five feet; and the general height of the masonry to the cornice, whence springs the high-pitched roof, sixty feet. The windows in the grand front exceed two hundred in number; those in the palace front are three hundred and seventy-six; and the whole number of external windows in the building about eleven hundred.—*Sterling*, 172.

these buildings contain, in honour of the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne (an assertion which certainly no one will take the trouble to verify), are all small and contemptible, and being entirely without ornaments, give the building almost the appearance of a vast hospital; while the large edifices for the ministers which surround it are exactly like so many immense manufactories wanting chimneys, and could never have been designed by Herrera. The towers at the angles have picturesque roofs; but, on the whole, the exterior of the renowned Escorial has scarcely any other merit than its splendid situation and its simplicity, which may almost be called grandeur, arising from its straight lines; but which, carried to such an extent, become repulsively monotonous, and are almost destitute of architectural beauty.

There is a regular routine for visiting the sights. The palace and Casa del Campo may be seen in an afternoon; the chapel about four o'clock, and the convent only in a morning. We went first to the palace. The galleries and courts, representing the spaces between the bars of the gridiron, are spacious and handsome, leading to a suite of rooms, which are mostly in a dilapidated condition, though they still contain some tolerable paintings. A Madonna and Child, by Alonso Cano, is good; a Crucifixion, by Giulio Romano; a portrait of Philip II., by Pantoja; an Adoration of the Magi, by Rubens;

a Head of Christ, by Guido; a fine Landscape, by Salvator Rosa; St. Hermenegild and his wife and child, by Ribera, a very good painting; a Madonna and Child, they say by Rubens, but more like Vandyke; the Pope Innocent X. and his secretary, by Velasquez, is fine. They exhibit with great reverence the furniture of Philip II. The chairs he had made for his gouty foot, and the stains even on them, from the remedies he used; the oratory, in sight of the grand altar of the church, where he heard mass and died, clasping to his heart the veil of "Our Lady of Monserrat."

We then went into the Sala de las Batallas, so called from the battle-pieces painted in it by Granelo and Fabricio Castello, from an original chiaroscuro roll, a hundred and fifty feet long, which was found in the Alcazar of Segovia,* representing the Battle of Higuera (1431), where John II. and Alvaro de Luna defeated the Moors, with a loss of thirty thousand killed and wounded.† The King and his General are seen going to the fight in armour, the trappings of their horses reaching to the ground. They are afterwards represented in the middle of the battle, Luna piercing a man and making others prisoners. Then there are representations of Santa Fé and Granada, and Moorish ladies, probably the party at

* See Handbook, p. 471.

† Vida de Don Alvaro de Luna Quintana, vol. II, p. 65.

Zubia, witnessing the conflict between the Moors and the Christians. There is also in this gallery, by the same artists, a picture of the celebrated battle of St. Quintin, fought 10th August, 1557, the day of St. Lorenzo, when, as the Duke of Braganza said, Philip must have been in an awful fright if nothing less than the Escorial would satisfy the vow he then made to his patron saint, to build a church, a monastery and a palace. The vow cost millions, and Philip's victory was almost useless; for instead of taking advantage of the alarm in France and marching to Paris, he lost his time besieging St. Quintin.* There is also a representation of the fleet going to Lepanto, and that naval engagement. These paintings are very badly executed, and only interesting for the historical subjects, and as portraits of the men and manners of the time.

The gallery is handsome, and the roof painted with arabesques. We rambled through a great many apartments covered with tapestry, the colours remarkably bright, and sometimes pleasing; and saw four rooms, which are splendidly decorated with marquetry of the choicest woods, tortoise-shell ornaments inlaid with gold, rich furniture, and arabesque paintings. They say the workmen were forty-six years in finishing this suite, and that they cost fifty-eight millions of reals (above half a million sterling).

* See Handbook, p. 810.

We then went to the Casa del Campo, a little palace, built for Charles IV. when a prince. The architecture is wretched, the rooms small, and the walls covered with paintings, but almost all bad. I observed a St. John and the Lamb, which they say is by Murillo, but it appeared to me more like Ribalta; it is, however, a good painting; a tolerable Benvenuto Garofalo; a little Albert Durer, representing Christ addressing the Multitude on the Mount; the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes; a Garden Scene, by Rubens; some China figures and *bas-reliefs*, which were not bad; but, wearied with looking at insipid Bourbons and vile daubs, it was refreshing to turn to even copies of the loggie painted by Raphael in the Vatican.

Passing the portico of the principal *façade*, we entered the Patio de los Reyes, so called from six statues of Judah, seventeen feet high, which decorate the front of the church, but are not remarkable as works of art. This large court, and the buildings at the sides, are plain-looking, with an immense number of windows. The church is ornamented with a portico, formed of six Doric columns, forming five arches, leading into the interior, which is very simple and very grand, where indeed we may recognise the genius of Herrera, and the effect of the entrance is increased by the darkness of the anteroom. The form of the church is a Greek cross, with three naves; and

Mr. Ford says it is three hundred and twenty feet long by two hundred and thirty wide, and three hundred and twenty feet high to the top of the cupola which is sustained by four fine circular arches, that spring from simple cornices, resting on piers ornamented with fluted Doric pilasters. Many of the frescoes of the roof are by Luca Giordano, but they are all too yellow and bright with vivid blue tints, not harmonizing well with the simple grey granite; the pavement is of plain black and white marble, and very appropriate. The retablo of the grand altar is extremely handsome; and certainly, for its architecture, one of the best I have seen in Spain, and does more credit to Philip's Italian artists than any other of their works in this church. In the centre is a handsome-looking tabernacle, with three fluted jasper columns on each side; the Doric capitals, bases, and triglyphs of the cornice are gilt; the six columns above are Ionic, and the four above these Corinthian, as are also the two at the top, supporting a pediment. On the upper row is a crucifix and gilt figures of Saints; and there are also ten others in two rows. The space between the columns is filled up with paintings; those in the lower row are by Pelegrino Tibaldi, the others are by Zuccaro; but none of them of much merit: Christ at the Column is the best. The porticos of the oratories at the side are also beautifully ornamented with jasper columns;

and above are most interesting bronze-gilt, painted kneeling figures, representing Charles V., his wife Isabel, his daughter Maria, and his sisters Eleonora and Maria; and on the opposite side, Philip II., his three wives, and his son Don Carlos.

In the chapels there are some good pictures, especially those by El Mudo, who was an admirable painter. Philip, long after his death, might well say that none of his foreign artists equalled his dumb Spaniard; and, as Lope de Vega said of him, "Ningun rostro pinto que fuese Mudo," (No countenance he painted that was dumb.)*

Juan Fernandez Navarrete, surnamed El Mudo, was born at Lagrono in 1526, and died at Toledo in 1579. He studied in Italy, and is called the Spanish Titian, a title he deserves, from the grandeur of his compositions rather than from the similarity of his colouring. His works are chiefly to be seen here; indeed, I have seen none elsewhere, except two or three of much less merit in the Madrid gallery. It is strange, and deeply to be regretted, that a Court, which thus acknowledged the merit of one deserving artist, who was in truth incomparably superior to the Italians, brought here at a great expense to disfigure the building, did not look round for native merit. Joanes, the

* Sterling, p. 250.

Spanish Raphael, died at Valencia the same year as El Mudo; and the divine Morales lived seven years longer in neglected poverty in Estramadura had the services of these two great painters been secured, this church would indeed have been a museum of art.

St. James and St. Andrew, by El Mudo, are remarkably fine figures, the heads very expressive, the colouring rich, and the drawing bold. St. Jerome, by Zuccaro, is very good. St. Matthew and St. Bernard, by El Mudo, are excellent. St. Bernard and St. Benito, by Coello, are very nicely coloured and very fine. St. Francis and St. Domingo, by Juan Gomez, a scholar of Velasquez, are much in the style of El Greco. St. Matthew and Mary Magdalene, by the same artist, are very well done. St. Antonio and St. Paul, the raven bringing them food, by Alonso Sanchez Coello, the Velasquez of the Court of Philip II., is a very fine painting. St. Sebastian and another Saint are good. The Martyrdom of St. Just, by Juan Gomez, exhibits very fair colouring, but the drawing is confused. The Four Evangelists, in two opposite chapels, by El Mudo, are extremely fine, and the boy in one particularly graceful. The Annunciation, by Zuccaro, is pleasing. St. Santiago, very grand, by El Mudo.

The choir contains some carved columns, and some curious choral books, with very massive bindings, embossed with brass ornaments, but not con-

taining many pictures. The frescoes in the choir are very bad, and still worse in the cloisters, which are decorated with Doric pilasters, and are large and lofty, though not very remarkable for their architecture.

The principal staircase is plain and handsome, but the immense fresco on the roof is very indifferent, and so are the others on the walls. They represent the battle of St. Quintin; the fresco on the roof is called *La Gloria*, from an immense gloria or apotheosis of St. Lorenzo by Luca Giordano, by Luca fa Presto, as he may well be called, to have covered this enormous space in seven months. This poor artist, weak in his compositions, and chalky, ineffective in his colouring, was brought here from Naples by the King—a present of fifteen hundred ducats made to him, all the expenses of his journey and living paid, a pension of two hundred crowns a month assigned to him, and large prices also given for his works, which was requisite; for, as he used to say, he had three sorts of pencils, of gold, of silver, and of wood, and he made his pictures tally with his prices. Two priests were in attendance upon him, to explain to him the manner of treating sacred subjects which was permitted in Spain; and the Prior wrote an account to the King of what Luca fa Presto had done. On one occasion, he wrote thus: “Sire, your Giordano has painted this day about twelve figures thrice as large as life. To these

he has added the powers and dominions, with the proper angels, cherubs and seraphim, and clouds to support the same. The two doctors of divinity have not answers ready for all his questions, and their tongues are too slow to keep pace with the speed of his brush,"* and yet this is the divinity who is still worshipped by the modern schools of painting in Spain.

The upper cloister contains some pictures. A Christ at the Column, by El Mudo, is very good. The patio is extremely beautiful, ornamented in the centre with a handsome domed tabernacle, with Doric columns, statues, and four fountains and ponds, around which are beds of box cut into quaint shapes and figures.

The view from the cloisters, looking towards the mountains, over the charming terrace, is very fine.

The anteroom of the sacristia is decorated with arabesques, and also the sacristia, which is a very handsome room. The Forma of Coello at the end, is a very good painting; the draperies are excellent, and the heads are admirably drawn, but it has been very much injured by restorers. There are other works of art, worth observing: a Christ bearing the Cross, by Guido; several fine Riberas; Job with his Sheep is very good; a Dead Christ, exhibiting fine effect of light and shadow; a St. Francis, in a grand attitude, is also

* Sterling, vol. 1, 383.

by the same master. Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory, by El Greco, did not please me, though thought much of here.

We were admitted, the next morning, to the room behind the Coello in the sacristia, where the celebrated Forma, the miraculous wafer, which bled when trampled upon by Zwinglian heretics, is preserved in a gilt-bronze urn, and two gilt angels are represented as guarding it from danger, above are suspended the banners and trophies taken at St. Quintin; and the walls and floors of this little sanctuary are covered with beautiful marbles.

Our guide then conducted us to the Sala Capitular, the roof of which is rather prettily decorated, but the treasures of art which it once contained are now almost all in the museum at Madrid. The second room is decorated in a Raphaelesque style, and contains some fine Tintoretos; especially a Martha washing our Saviour's feet. In the third room is a St. Jerome, the best of two Titians; and a good Nativity by Ribera — the Madonna beautiful, and the head of the old woman, with a basket of flowers, is very fine.

In the chapel there are some paintings. A San Lorenzo, by Titian; this painting has been badly restored lately, but the saint is a fine figure. There is also a good Nativity by the same master; some hard paintings by Bosco; a Nativity, by Ribera, very fine; Christ bearing the Cross, by El Greco; and

a very excellent Holy Family, by Ribera, similar to one in the museum at Toledo. The Last Supper, by Titian, to my great disappointment, was locked up in the refectory, the custode ill in bed, and would not part with the keys.

We descended by a beautiful staircase of jasper and marbles into the Panteon, which is situated under the high altar of the church, in order that the dead may benefit from the daily elevation of the Host at the different masses, for which they all paid so liberally. The Panteon is an octagon thirty-six feet in diameter, and thirty-eight feet high, and the twenty-six niches with black marble urns, are destined only for kings and the mothers of kings. It is a splendid mausoleum; the marbles, porphyry, and jasper are so rich and beautiful, and the designs in good taste; but there is a repulsive chilliness which mocks the magnificence of the sculpture. Not a ray of light or sunshine can penetrate this dark abode; and it was only by the light of a flickering torch we could distinguish the names inscribed on the classic urns. There were many—especially that of Charles V., who really lies here—which make the memory busy with the past, and kindle deep reflections. There is another mausoleum called El Panteon de los Infantes, for the rest of the royal family, which is not shown, and, they say, not worth seeing.

We then ascended the dome, and on our way had opportunities of examining better the architecture

of the church, and the frescoes, which are chalky and very displeasing. That the King should have employed, at an enormous expense, such feeble foreigners, when so many better artists were starving in the country, reflects little credit on his taste or patriotism. The view from the summit is very fine of the wild and beautiful woods and picturesque mountains, and then the foreground is so interesting! The town looks like an immense barrack, and is very ugly; but the towers and high roofs of the Escorial, and the beautiful Court of the Evangelists, with its cloisters, ornamented with Doric and Ionic columns, are imposing; and the gardens, with their stiff beds of well-trimmed box planted in quaint shapes, form a striking contrast to the wildness and natural woods around. We were shown in the choir, the corner-seat where Philip II. was in the habit of sitting—a fit place for reflecting on his eventful life, and contemplating the beautiful church, of which he might well be proud—and we then went into an adjoining chapel, and saw a Christ in white marble, by Benvenuto Cellini; the head is fine, though the hair falls too much over the forehead; the body appears rather long; the legs, from the knees downward, very good; but the proportions did not appear to me to be very correct, though this impression may be caused from its being impossible to get at a proper distance from it.

Lastly, we visited the library, which is a splendid

room, nearly two hundred feet long. The Doric book-cases are very handsome, but the roof is wretchedly painted by Tibaldi; his paintings, representing Philosophy and Theology, are better than the others, but his drawing is exaggerated, and his colouring bad. This artist was born, in 1522, at Valdelia, a village near Milan, and was brought, with many others, to Spain by Philip II. The historical frescoes of Carducci underneath, benefiting, perhaps, from the contrast, are tolerably good. The Council of Nice, Geometry, the division of the Delta of the Nile, the Indian Philosophers, the Conversion of St. Augustine, and the School of Athens, and also the decorations between these paintings, are pleasing.

They show a beautiful Old Testament of the eleventh century, with letters of gold, containing some paintings, the outlines of which are good, but they are hard, and not well coloured. They will also show, if asked for, an exquisite Koran, tastefully decorated; indeed, there is scarcely a design in the Alhambra more beautiful than the one which adorns the title-page.

The most interesting painting in the library is that of Philip II., a pale, emaciated and care-worn old man, on the threshold of eternity, about to bid adieu to all his grandeur and renown—to his artists, to his Escorial, the magnificent toy of his declining years, and to all his wealth and immense power.

It looks like one who had felt the vanity of earthly successes, of even such victories as St. Quintin and Lepanto; and of all the magnificent architectural dreams he had lived long enough to realize; and like one who had also experienced the bitterness of reverses, the Armada defeated, the fleet destroyed, and the resources of even his immense empire exhausted. As long as it remains at the Escorial, this will, I think, be considered one of the most interesting portraits in the world.

I have endeavoured to give some idea of the Escorial in its present state, but it is impossible to describe the dismal solitariness of these now deserted courts and buildings; they say that there are a dozen chaplains for the service of the church, but not a single monk, priest, scholar, or servant even, belonging to the establishment did I see, except the very few officially employed. One cannot but feel some sympathy for the thousands of decrepid old friars and nuns who have been turned out of the convents of Spain into a world where they had often neither relations or friends, with a miserable pittance allowed them by Government, totally inadequate for their subsistence, even if regularly paid; many who had enjoyed the ease and comfort of these splendid institutions absolutely obliged to beg their bread. The priestcraft which created the Escorial—for, in all probability, the bigot Philip was but their tool—never contemplated that an edifice resembling the

palace temples of ancient Thebes in its enormous size, would rival those mighty ruins in solitariness, though not in magnificence. There is, however, a singular elasticity in the Roman Church which has enabled it to recover from severer blows than this; and as the priests are slowly re-establishing their power in Spain, it is not impossible that this palace-convent may again be crowded with monks and scholars.

CHAPTER XII.

PASS OF THE GUADARRAMA—LA GRANJA—PALACE GARDENS
 —SEGOVIA—CATHEDRAL—THE ALCAZAR—SAN ESTEBAN—
 SAN MARTIN—THE ROMAN AQUEDUCT—PICTURESQUE OLD
 STREETS—JOURNEY TO VALLADOLID.

WE started at twelve o'clock from the Escorial on horseback, not a carriage or *calèche* even to be procured. We left Madrid with the intention of going to Avila, but the weather was so unsettled, it was impossible to venture with a lady on such a long mountain-ride over a bad road. It was raining a little when we started for La Granja, and they thought us bold to think of crossing the Guadarrama with such a threatening sky; but the weather had been so indifferent lately, we had no hope of anything better, and the road being magnificent, we ventured, and it turned out a beautiful evening.

In two hours, we passed the village of Guadarrama, and in another hour a little village called Molinas. We then began the ascent of the range of mountains : the views were splendid, and every minute became finer and finer ; of picturesque rocks, a grand outline of mountains, rich woods, and the beautiful plain in the distance ; the pine-clad summits we afterwards crossed were perfectly Alpine, and the snow not quite melted. We were three hours in reaching the little hut where we began to descend. The view on the Granja side is equally magnificent—a wide valley, covered with fine pines, and the mountains around also clad with noble trees, except the grey granite heights of the Guadarrama partly covered with snow. This is certainly the finest pass I have seen in Spain, and would be admired even in Switzerland.

In two hours we reached La Granja, or San Ildefonso, the admirably constructed road descending through the splendid forest of pines as gradually as it had ascended. Water was not entirely wanting to the views we enjoyed to-day, as we heard almost continually a wild roaring amidst the rocks and woods, and occasionally saw the silvery torrent dashing along, especially at the bridge, an hour before arriving at La Granja ; and even when screened by its rocky bed and the luxuriant foliage, it was fine to hear the noise of this mountain river, swollen now more than usual by the late heavy rains. The palace

would have been worthy of its reputation if it had been built amongst the pine-clad valleys, a few miles from where it is, the site would then have been magnificent; but although the picturesque hill, covered with wood behind the gardens, and the snowy Penalara beyond, eight thousand five hundred feet high, are very fine, the view on the other side is extremely barren, and the low brushwood looks very miserable, especially after passing the forests of the Guadarama. The architecture also of this palace is not very remarkable. You first pass two long piles of buildings, with towers at each end. These lead into a large plaza with three sides, consisting of two ranges of offices, and in the centre are the royal apartments. The chapel, ornamented with a cupola, and two domed towers, and two other towers with rather picturesque roofs, decorate the *façade*.

The garden front is by far the best, consisting of two floors, with large windows, the ornaments of which are good. In the centre division, they are divided by high Corinthian pilasters, supporting a lofty and ugly pediment, decorated with indifferent statues. The wings of the building are ornamented with Doric columns on the ground floor, and Ionic on the first. The rooms which are occupied by the Queen are handsome, especially three which were fitted up last year;—one a boudoir, covered with flowers, is very beautiful, and shows she has a taste for elegance and luxury. The views from the

rooms are of the barren plain—indeed, it would be difficult to find a country residence with a more uninteresting prospect.

The King's apartments are much superior, the furniture is more beautiful, the rooms are larger, the floors are covered with marble; and the views are charming of the garden, the fountains, and the fine range of snow-clad mountains. One does not know whether to praise the disinterestedness of the Sovereigns who could strip the rooms they live in of the treasures of art they once possessed, or blame the Princes who, with splendid fortunes, live surrounded with daubs, with scarcely a painting which, if they have any taste, they could look at with pleasure. Even in the picture gallery there was hardly a decent painting. I observed a Coronation of the Virgin on metal, which appeared to be by Rubens; some Bassanos, which were not bad; and two equestrian statues of the son of Philip V. and his wife. In one of the rooms there were some little views taken by the present King, who is said to rise at four and five o'clock, and amuse himself with painting landscapes, but I cannot say with much success. In the gallery below there were some Bassanos, some wretched sculpture, and tolerable casts.

These apartments are paved with marble, and used for dancing by the gay Isabella; and at the end of the suite is a large saloon, which is the supper-room.

The gardens are said to have cost an immense sum, but are not to be compared to Aranjuez, consisting entirely of straight, stiff avenues; and the fountains, many of which are worthy of admiration, are much injured by the green colouring on the figures and ornaments—a wretched imitation of bronze. The isolated figures in the ground, also painted green, are bad enough; but the mixture of green and white is detestable. The Baths of Diana, with the sculpture around the fountain, would be very good, if it were not for some of the ornaments being thus bronzed. La Plaza de las Ocho Calles, with eight avenues and as many fountains, distant views of others, and the statue of Pandora in the centre, is very pretty. The fountain of Andromeda is also well done. It was, however, almost a relief to get out of the stiff French avenues, and walk through the natural brushwood to the large piece of water, the reservoir for the fountains, where the view of the mountains is very fine; indeed, few natural lakes can boast of such a landscape. The flower-gardens are not worth seeing.

This is a cool spot, even in the hottest weather, being three thousand eight hundred and forty feet above the level of the sea; and late at night we felt it cold, as we dined at ten o'clock; and well we might, as the panes of our window were broken, and the dinner at the Fonda

de la Viscaina was but cheerless, though our beds were clean.

We left La Granja at twelve o'clock on mules, and in a short time came in sight of the dome of the cathedral of Segovia, a picturesque old town; some of the streets and groups of houses are charming, and the plaza one of the most curious in Spain, affording finer subjects for the painter than even the Zocodover of Toledo. The buildings vary in height, and many of them are built entirely of wood, and rotten and tottering; lateral pressure alone appearing to prevent their falling into the plaza. It was fortunately market-day, being the eve of the grand *fête* of Corpus Christi, and the plaza was crowded with people—noble-looking fellows, in picturesque costumes.

A fine contrast to these old dilapidated houses is the east end of the stately cathedral, rising behind them, with its numerous pinnacles and rich fret-work. This is the only fine part of the exterior, the west end being very plain. Nothing can be more striking than the interior, with its lofty pointed arches, and the extraordinary character of lightness and elegance such an immense pile possesses. It is divided into three lofty naves, and almost all the windows are of richly painted glass. The roof is beautifully groined, and the upper part of the dome is excellent. The iron railings which surround the high altar are very elegant, but the altar itself is