

were upwards of a million inhabitants here, three hundred mosques, nine hundred baths, and six hundred *fondas*. It may have been so, but there is oddly little evidence of any such greatness. The report reminds one irresistibly of the two million men of King Agrican's army whom Orlando killed, according to Don Quijote, with his own hand. But, if the city that was the successful rival of Bagdad and Damascus as a seat of learning, and the centre of European civilisation, has been reduced to the size and rank of an overgrown village, there is some consolation to be derived from the fact that everything one has to see has thereby been brought within the narrowest possible limits. For the treading of Córdoba's pavements is an operation something between dancing the tight-rope, walking on eggs, and tip-toeing stakes of iron. The more important thoroughfares can boast of a flagged side-walk, indeed, but it is so narrow that an ordinarily voluminous *capa*, or a priest's gown, takes up the whole of it, and so the polite foreigner is only compelled to dance and dodge all the more by what might otherwise be his salvation.

To catch Córdoba awake it is necessary to get up very early in the morning—the earlier the better—and saunter through the Plaza de la Corredera and adjoining streets. If one has before only known the sleepy, deserted town of high day, refusing utterly to acknowledge ordinary working hours, and so making travellers and guide-books speak of her as a city of the dead, the scene now will be simply unrecognisable. However other

market-places may have been scornfully or carelessly passed by, this one must on no account be missed. For in the bustling play enacted here each morning between six and nine o'clock, there is to be gained a first insight into the quickness and force of the Southern character, and into the quaint customs of oddly mixed, and as oddly unleavened races—customs which one has perhaps only read of in books, and imagined to belong to days long since gone by. And there are piles of strange fruits and flowers too, glorious in colour, form and profusion, which it is a shame only to admire when they are set forth upon the table.

A winding street—all the streets are most bewildering in their winding—leads down from these open-air markets to the handsome promenade formed upon the northern bank of the Guadalquivir. This stops short, however, most unfortunately, some distance from the Roman-Moorish Puente Viejo, and so we must make a *détour* to the right—back into the silent white old streets—in order to reach the central attraction of Córdoba, the Great Mezquita and its dependencies.

It may seem heretical to couple the mosque in this way with anything else. But, after all that the visitor has heard and read about this wondrous Arab temple, it will be strange if it does not woefully disappoint him, and stranger still if he does not find great store of interest and beauty in its surroundings. There is the bridge itself—the Puente Viejo—one of the earliest records of the Moor in Spain, built upon old Roman

foundations very soon after Don Roderick's discomfiture at the Guadalete, and preceding Abd-el-Rhaman's mosque by a good seventy years. The heavy Doric gateway which guards the entrance to the town from the bridge is a characteristic piece of Herrera's genius, and if the reliefs upon it are by Torrigiano, they are in no way worthy of the man who wrought the San Gerónimo in the Sevilla Museo, or Henry VII.'s sepulchre in Westminster Abbey. Still newer and poorer is the churrigueresque Triunfo column close by, with its figure of the angel Raphael, the city's tutelary, as he appeared to the painter-priest Roelas three hundred years ago, saying :—

“Yo te juro por Jesu Cristo crucificado
Que soy Rafael angel, á quien Dios tiene puesto
Por guarda de esta ciudad.”

The view from this corner is most superb. In front lies the full sweep of the Guadalquivir, with the isthmus of irregular arches which spans it, and the green plain upon the other side. Below the bridge some ruins of a Moorish mill jut clear out into the water, and farther to the right—inland—are the walls of the old and new Alcázars, with their delicate fringing of green and gold orange trees. Behind rise up the dark battlements of the mosque, ugly and stern indeed in themselves, but relieved by a feathery date-palm here and there, and the vista of dazzlingly white streets. Over all the glorious blue of a Cordoban sky lights up and colours everything.

And then, after a couple of minutes' walk up the road, and stopping to admire the exquisitely-sculptured Plateresque portal of the Foundling Hospital, one turns aside through an insignificant opening in the massive wall, and that perfectest of visions, the Patio de los Naranjos—court of orange trees—bursts upon the view, with the creamy delicate belfry-tower, rival of Sevilla's Giralda, rising up on the left above the dark shining foliage and flame-coloured fruit.

All of which is really pleasanter to behold than the Mezquita itself, the central figure of the whole picture. A marvellous building is this mosque, no doubt—and unique. It is huge too, fairy-like withal, lovely in detail, wonderful in the inconceivable perspective of its avenues of columns, and there is about it an air of Eastern gorgeousness. In fact, it is anything you please except just what it should be as a great religious house—imposing. Now and then, in some corner, when the view is contracted, and when a group of kneeling black-robed penitents induces a much-needed dwarfing of humanity, there may be formed some notion of what the place was in its better days. After its second enlargement, that is to say, when the *Mihrab** had just been added, and the Patio de los Naranjos finished; when there was as yet no need of windows, but all these avenues of delicate columns within opened straight

* *Mihrab* = 'place inhabited by the Spirit of God'—so the holy spot, to which the Moslems turned in prayer, and where the sacred books were kept.

upon the even more lovely, and exactly corresponding avenues of orange trees without; before Almanzor had conferred unwieldiness by adding the eight eastern naves; before an obtrusive Renaissance cathedral had been thrust down in the centre, and when, in place of the present bald, mean vaulting, there was fine *artesonado* work of sweet-smelling woods. Now, however, when the place has been thus shorn of all beauty of proportion, shorn, too, of the old rites, and the old life, it is grievously hard to get over the idea that one is in an exaggerated crypt.

Of curious and beautiful detail there is of course no lack. The thousand columns—once 1419—which support the roof, naturally claim the first attention, and provide an ever-fresh field of study and speculation. They are of differing styles, dimensions, substances and colours; were brought here from various centres of the old civilised world—Carthage, Constantinople, Alexandria, Nîmes, Narbonne, Tarragona, etc.; and form perhaps the most remarkable instance to be found of how the Arabs, in their earlier architectural efforts, relied upon the already-shaped material of other countries. Some there are, too, of marble from the Sierra Morena, from Loja and Cadiz, with capitals of Corinthian order wrought with stiff leaf foliage, in imitation of those brought from afar, and indicating the already-budding artfulness of the Hispano-Arab workmen.

And there are most precious specimens of arabesque work, such as the decoration of the Holy of Holies (the

sanctuary, or *Ceca*) and of the opposite *Mahsurah*, or seat of the khalif. The former consists of three chapels, all rich in arabesque and mosaic, but the two outer ones, where the sacred vessels were kept, yielding in elaboration and gorgeousness to the central *Kiblah*, with its delicate heptagonal shrine and shell-like roof. Here was preserved the *Mimbar*—perhaps pulpit—of sandal and ebony woods inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, and, within this, the sacred Koran transcribed by Othman, and stained with his blood. The *Mahsurah* is a grandly-decorated chamber facing the *Mihrab*, and raised some four feet from the ground. The cupola roof is very similar in character to that of the sanctuary, but the walls are covered with the later stucco ornamentation of the thirteenth century—such work as we find prevailing in the Alhambra. On the western side of this *Capilla de Villaviciosa*, as it is now called, they are uncovering a very lovely chapel, remarkably similar to the *Mahsurah*, only upon the level of the flooring of the mosque. Very probably this formed one of three chapels corresponding with those of the *Mihrab*, ere it was turned into the plainly stuccoed *Capilla Mayor* of the first Christian church—the portion of the mosque which was devoted to purposes of Christian worship before the present hideous sixteenth-century erection was perpetrated. The earlier cathedral may still be traced in its entirety; and it is noteworthy that, while it left many disfiguring touches behind it, there was shown in its designing a respect for the main conforma-

tion of the mosque which might have read a lesson to the later and more ambitious Christian innovators.

How the great Mezquita of Córdoba was built—the offspring of a sudden desire on the part of Abd-el-Rhaman I. to counteract the attractions of Mecca, and outvie the temples of the newly-conquered land; how he purchased the old Christian basilica for his site, and pushed on his work with such ardour that the amazingly short space of ten years saw it concluded—though he himself was cut off when the shell was yet incomplete—is an old tale. It is difficult, however, to resist reproducing the graphic portrayal of a Christian, priest-ridden community as looked at from the Mahomedan point of view, to be unearthed from the Arab legends concerning the great kaliph's plans and directions for his new temple. "Let us raise to Allah," he said, "an *Aljama* which shall surpass the Temple of Jerusalem itself. Let us build the western Kaaba upon the very site of a Christian sanctuary, which we will destroy, so that we may set forth how the Cross shall fall and become abased before the true Prophet. Allah will never give the power of the world unto those who make themselves the slaves of drink and lustfulness while they preach penitence and the joys of chastity, and enrich themselves at the expense of others while they extol poverty. For these the sad and silent cloister; for us the crystalline fountain and the shady grove; for them the hard and unenlightened life of dungeon-like strongholds; for us the sweetness of social

intercourse and scientific culture. For them, intolerance and tyranny; for us, a ruler who is our father. For them, a people lying in the darkness of ignorance; for us, an instruction as widespread and free as our religion. For them, the wilderness, celibacy, and the doom of the false martyr; for us, plenty, love, brotherhood, and eternal joy."

X.

SEVILLA.

ALTHOUGH an entrance is made at Córdoba into the charmed region of Andalusian life, one only meets there with the hard, the in some sort poverty-stricken side of it. There is its brightness, its *insouciance* and originality—something of its colour, picturesqueness, and *gracia*, too, with much of its record—but nothing of its brilliant garb or luxury. Not until Sevilla is approached does one encounter the *majo* and all his ways. But then it is the very land of the dandy, both in person and spirit, which opens out before us. No longer must one frequent the churches, monasteries, or markets in order to gain an insight into the people's character, or the people's life. These are either deserted, or handed over to the perfunctory souls. One must saunter upon the *paseo*, or mix with the throng in the café, casino, or theatre, or walk with special wideawakeness the Amor de Dios, the Sierpes, the Francos, or Cuna, the very roadways of which are turned into broad footpaths for the eager, handsomely-dressed crowd of *flâneurs*, who prove that the well-worn old sarcasm,

"Spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsæ,"

was only libellous through its exclusiveness.

Fortunately, the paseos and favourite plazas of Sevilla are very charming—notably Las Delicias, with its over-arching acacia trees and bright bordering of garden, or the Plaza Nueva, second best of all Spain's plazas, only surpassed by Salamanca's great square, and perhaps even more attractive than its rival in its Oriental garnishing of date-palms, and its splendid colour contrasts. And there are other pleasant aspects of one's idle hours here. As everybody save the foreign sight-seer and the beggar seems to be well dressed and happy, so do all go their ways in perfect order and decorum. Whatever we may know about ugly and degrading sights and scenes round corners, during the small hours of the night, or in the home, there is nothing to be met with in ordinary experiences but ever-smiling courtesy and unsoiled prettiness. "A holiday humour too good to last!" one is tempted to cry. But no;—it is the same to-morrow, and the next day, through genial sunshine and bitter east wind, political calm or revolution, prosperity or the frowns of fortune. And if we come back to visit Andalucia's queen next year she will greet us with the same comeliness of both perverted and unperverted nature.

But perhaps the most delicious of all Sevillian bits are the peeps into the patios of the houses, which the quieter streets afford. Anything more exquisite after its kind—more perfectly ordered, delicately arranged, and

beautifully kept up—than the court of a Sevillian gentleman's residence cannot be imagined, and the poorer classes follow suit with marvellous success and unanimity. There is no great outer door as at Toledo, but cunningly-wrought and fairy-like iron gates, which only serve to set off an enticing picture of marble pavement, colonnade and fountain, in a framing of palmitos, bananas and lemon trees, with here and there a coquettishly-perched cage of singing birds. In no other place is there so great a temptation to become the inquisitive prier into the domestic ways of one's fellows.

So far all is sweet and pleasant—all well in keeping, too, with expectation and desire. But then, if the traveller happens to be burdened with tastes or knowledge which require other food than laughter and prettiness, and if—as is very likely—he has come down from the north with the oft-repeated assurance sounding in his ears that he must wait till he gets to Sevilla in order to see anything really great or precious in art-work, he will be faced at every turn by the cruellest disappointment. It is astonishing—only explicable by the supposition that the natives are influenced by the superficial opinion of the average tourist—how persistently even the cultivated Spaniard will refer to Sevilla as the home of all that is fine in both Christian and Moorish work. And the astonishment is only increased by the thought of the unequalled store of good and beautiful things which the land possesses in other quarters, and of which he at least

—the said Spaniard—might be expected to have some appreciation. The fact is that, apart from a few good paintings, there is no work here which will bear analysis. In the far-famed cathedral, the Alcázar, and the Casa de Pilatos—the three buildings which will probably be put forward in order to support the alleged value of Sevilla as a point of architectural study—there is any amount of *ad captandum* effect, and much fragmentary excellence. But there is neither harmony nor consistency of style; there is a lack of the honesty and grasp which underlie all true art, and late additions or restorations have in each case wrought infinite mischief. It is absurd to compare such bungling as one finds here with the pure, conscientious, and noble work at Granada, Toledo, Burgos, Leon, Santiago, or Tarragona.

And so in all the divers paths of art, literature, and antiquarian record—in church, salon, and library, as upon the paseo—the way to enjoy Sevilla is to forget the past, to put away criticism, and to give oneself up to the spirit that cares for no prize save the gratification of the moment's impulse and fancy.

In which spirit let us cross the bright Plaza Nueva, and enter the great cathedral, only pausing for a moment outside to note that the platform, or *gradas*, upon which it stands, with the enclosing pillars brought from the Roman ruins of Italica, formed in mediæval times a place of refuge, where the criminal, or unfortunate, might shelter himself under the unassailable jurisdiction of the Church; while in later days, before the

erection of the neighbouring Lonja, they were the recognised haunt of the Sevillian merchants and bill-brokers.

The first view of the interior is one of the supreme moments of a lifetime. The glory and majesty of it are almost terrible. No other building, surely, is so fortunate as this in what may be called its *presence*. Nave, side aisles, and lateral chapels, all of singularly happy proportions, a vista of massive and yet graceful columns, a rightly dim religious light, gloriously-rich stained glass, and an all-prevailing notion of venerable age—such is the sum of one's first impressions.

“Then the place fulfils its mission,” some may exclaim. So far as the ordinary visitor is concerned, certainly. For he will not care to get beyond first impressions, and the cathedrals of Sevilla and Córdoba will probably be the only sacred buildings in Spain of which he will keep alive any definite recollection. But it is a pity that it should be so—a pity that so gorgeous a piece of work as this, the motto of which from its first shadowing out upon paper has been *Grandeza*, should not be able to do more than impress, and perhaps awe, careless souls. Beyond some effects of proportion, light, colour and piecemeal excellence, there is nothing here of the subtle teaching and pure exempling of the Salamanca ‘Vieja,’ Toledo, or Tarragona. The term “fortunate” may have seemed just now to be an opprobrious one wherewith to describe so impressive a building, but it is really the only just epithet. Age after age

a great band of glorifiers of self through self's handiwork have been employed here in producing what they determined should be a world's marvel, and, thanks to the rare combination of lavish magnificence of idea with a particularly adjusted light, they have turned out what passes current through most hands as pure gold. That there has been but little sacredness of purpose, and none of that greatness of conception which can at once grasp the completed whole, and design each individual part, is shown by the absence of anything like consistency of style, and the blemishes which wait everywhere upon excellence—the ugly, square, east end, the debased groining, the insignificant plinths, the bald windows, their careless head tracery, and an exterior which is simply beneath criticism.

But we are forgetting the spirit in which we were to come here. Before destroying the effect of the first vision by such details as these, it will be well to turn aside and look at some of the really glorious works of art which make the cathedral a veritable museum. Here are Murillo's *St. Anthony of Padua*, and the *Angel de la Guarda*, types of effective church decoration, even looking at it merely from the garnishing point of view, and making one more than ever grieve over the suspicion with which the Anglican Church regards the artist-painter. The *Angel de la Guarda*, close to the great western door, is perhaps the better known of the two, both by description and reproduction, but the *San Antonio*, in the Capilla de la Pila, is by far the finer

The saint kneels in his cell, stretching out his arms towards the Saviour, who, in the form of a little child, floating in light which emanates from Himself, and attended by angels and cherubs, is coming down in answer to His servant's earnest prayer. In conception and composition, drawing and colouring, this superb picture is unexceptionable, while the smallest accessories are painted with wonderful care. And although there is something of the inevitable Murillo prettiness about the infant Christ, there is at the same time an unwonted dignity and protecting power—a fine divinity—while the kneeling figure is quite living in its expression of yearning dependency and trustfulness. There is a double interest attaching to the painting now, for in November 1874 the figure of St. Anthony was cut out, and taken away. About two months afterwards a German artist in New York informed the Spanish consul that he believed the missing portion had been offered to him, for some ridiculously small sum. This, upon examination, proved to be the case, and, thanks to the prompt action of the authorities, and the skill of the chief restorer of the Madrid Museo, the rehabilitated picture was hanging again in its place within another seven months, the work of restoration being so admirably carried out that it is difficult, save by the closest inspection, to discover any mark of damage.

Sevilla's great artist is represented here by many other admirable examples—notably by one of his best *Conceptions*, a *St. Ferdinand*, and the *Justa* and *Rufina*,

in the oval Sala Capitular—but the two pictures of *El Angel* and *San Antonio* are not only far beyond all the rest in value, but stand out like giants among the other art treasures of the cathedral. And yet there is a long array of good things—a fine *Nativity* by Luis de Varga, the *Generacion* of the same painter, Campaña's famous but overpraised *Deposition*, at the foot of which Murillo wished to be buried, some wonderfully good frescoes by Pablo de Céspedes, and a host of less remarkable but still noticeable works by Pacheco, Zurbaran, El Greco, and Goya. In church-plate and vestments Seville is richer than any other of the Spanish cathedrals, except perhaps Burgos. The silver altars, the endless silver and bronze candelabras—one so colossal that it needs twenty men to carry it into the church—Arfe's gloriously rich and delicate monstrance, the jewelled censers, chalices, and crosses, the golden keys and diamond stars, are splendid to satiety.

But the crowning glory of the cathedral is its fifteenth and sixteenth century stained glass, especially that of the upper windows of the nave, the transepts, and east end. The lower windows are filled in with the poor design and colouring of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and thereby receive quite an unnecessary accenting of their grave architectural defects, but those upper lights, though belonging to a period when the disfiguring canopy had assumed its most gigantic proportions, are models of splendid colouring, and of that didactic purpose which is so often lost

sight of in glass decoration. It can hardly escape note here, how impossible it is to appreciate the value of this sort of work without really caring to study it with the help of a field or opera glass;—how windows which one might pass by as mere examples of the massing of fine colours, will stand revealed presently as full of life in conception and design, in purpose and power. It is almost invidious to make any selection from such a store as lies before us, but perhaps the finest examples are the *Assumption of the Virgin* over the south-west door, the *Conversion of St. Paul* in the Santiago chapel, the *Entry into Jerusalem* over the 'Lagarto' doorway, and its *vis-à-vis*, the *Cleansing of the Temple*.

The time to understand the extraordinary beauty of this old glass* is just as the evening is closing in, and the vast cathedral is becoming shrouded in the gloom of twilight. Watching then, as the shadows spread around, it will be seen that while the later, poor colours turn indistinct and gray, and then become suddenly quite blank, the older pieces only deepen and glow the more. To secure a perfect arrangement of all circumstances for a process of this sort, one should choose a winter's afternoon when there is some solemn ceremony to follow vespers—say such an occasion as the Feast of St. Cecilia, or, better still, the Christmas *Seixes*—when a stand must be taken before the high altar for a good half-hour or so in the dusk, if one wishes to secure a

* With the designing of which Espinosa, upon doubtful authority, credits Raphael, Titian, and Michael Angelo.

good place, and when there is the subtle contagion of a surrounding and only dimly visible humanity spell-bound by expectancy. The darkness has perhaps already begun to creep round the capitals of the palm-like columns, and to draw out overhead its mysterious veil of depth and infinity. Presently the noiseless, black-robed figures which are ever flitting hither and thither over the pavement become blurred and indistinct, and there is a sudden awakening to the consciousness that the small ring of worshippers which the daylight left around the crossing has grown into a great sea of heads and shadowy forms. And all this time the watery blues and reds of the lower line of windows have first become ashen, and then weakly died out, before the gathering gloom of the side aisles and the soft brilliancy of the lights around the altar, while the grand old models above seem to look down upon the scene with ever-increasing vividness and life. How the deepened, only glorified, violet and crimson here give up the ghost one never seems to know, for long before it comes to that the solemn roll of Jorge Bosch's organ—one of the very few organs in Spain that have any solemnity of tone about them, or that are properly handled—has burst upon the ear, and all other thoughts are lost in the strange and weird scene that is fulfilling a spot in the blackness with phantasy and sound.

These *Seices* are experiences never to be passed by, or forgotten. The *raison d'être* of the whole thing is

dancing—so persistently and manifestly dancing, that it is difficult to believe that the *funcion* had its origin in any Christian symbolism whatsoever, and one turns with relief to the legend that a spectacle of this kind was just the most effective temptation which a liberally-minded prelate could devise, in order to induce the worldly Sevillian folk to come to church on certain solemn occasions. Be that as it may, at five o'clock every afternoon during the octaves of the Immaculate Conception and Corpus, ten *seixes* or choristers (music, dancing, *funcion*, and performers are alike indiscriminately called "Seixes") dance and sing in the most charming and graceful old-minuet fashion in front of the high altar, dressed in the style of pages of the seventeenth century, in striped blue and white, or red and white, silk jackets and breeches, white silk stockings, and 'beef-eater' hats with long trailing feathers. The costume and the slightly mundane castanet accompaniment—into which the little performers put their whole souls—strike one, perhaps, as out of keeping with the sacredness of the edifice; otherwise the whole affair is carried out with so much decorum and earnestness that it is not half so strange or repulsive as it might be deemed.

Two sets of words and music are selected for each octave, and are used upon alternate evenings. It is impossible to procure anything like accurate copies, the reproduction or sale of the music being jealously guarded against by the Chapter, whose property it is.

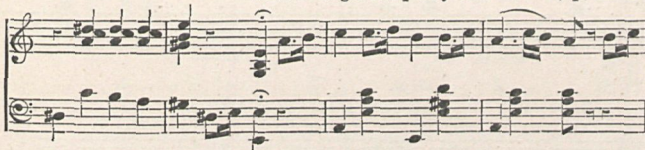
The only plan, therefore, is to take it down from ear, and bribe the little seixes themselves to furnish the words. One set runs as follows:—

INTRODUCTION.

Andante.
Sva. |



Salve O Vir-gen mas pura y mas bel - la, que la Au-



rora y que el as-tro del di - - a! Hija y madre y es - po - sa Ma-



ri - - a, y las pu-er-tas de Di-os O - ri - en - tal! Sal-ve O

