

despairing incongruity and uselessness, and may fairly be held to confer that 'handsomeness' of cityhood of which so much is thought nowadays. For any one in search of rest, and the invigoration of a pure and bracing air, who is not quite dependent upon society for his thoughts and aspirations, and who has some measure of sympathy with bygone creeds upon all subjects, it would be difficult to find a more fitting spot wherein to sojourn than the crest of this sea-riven limestone rock.

But let us hasten up some one of the winding and picturesque streets opposite the hotel, to the top of the hill, in quest of the cathedral. For the far more devotional builders of the days when religious ordinances had not to be carefully sugared and spiced before the guests could partake thereof, always loved to crown their dwelling-places with the great, Mother church, whenever there was vantage-ground obtainable. The people did not mind the little climb, and here, at Tarragona, there is a striking instance of the effect to be gained by a well-calculated position.

If the city could not yield another shred of beauty or interest than this glorious mediæval cathedral, one would be amply repaid—ay, for a journey from a distant land! It is a perfect example of the true art that may reside in simplicity and, at the same time, the essential simplicity—the directness of purpose which, unadorned in all essential parts, comes to simplicity—that underlies all real artistic work. 'Medi-

æval' is an ambiguous term to use, but the church is so catholic in character that it is difficult to assign it to any exact style, or period. It is grandly Romanesque, and yet there is unsparing employment of the Early-pointed arch and profuse stiff-leaf decoration. It was, probably, being slowly built and perfected from about A.D. 1100 to A.D. 1300 ; but then alterations and additions were made—notably the Chapter-house, the *cimborio*, the belfry-tower, the clerestory windows, and two or three of the Gothic chapels—up to perhaps the year 1500, or so. Some comparatively modern 'improvements,' such as the gaudy, red marble chapel of Santa Tecla, opening out of the south aisle, and one or two other chapels on the north side, are grievous blemishes in an otherwise almost irreproachable interior, but these can come to be almost ignored in the loving study of exquisite detail into which one is insensibly drawn, or in an ever fresh delight in the general vistas down the nave or side aisles, across the transepts, or from whatever point one takes a stand. There is not much special interest attaching to furniture, relics, or ritual arrangements,* and it is a positive relief for once to have little to do but simply sit at the feet of a noble, and, so to speak, unattended piece of architectural work. Even the tombs are of comparatively slight interest, and this is a strange point about an

* But there is a very elaborate high altar, some fair tapestries, admirably carved *silleria* and throne, and a Roman bath, carved out of one piece of stone, and used as a font.

archiepiscopal see so ancient and great that it actually disputes the primacy with Toledo.

But even finer, in their way, than the cathedral are the sunny, flower-brightened Romanesque cloisters—entered from the eastern corner of the north aisle by a round-headed doorway, of most exquisite design and sculpturing. Here is a spot, indeed, wherein to while away an afternoon! The sunshine will fall gently through the delicate, round-headed lights and Moorish tracery of the arcading; there will be the song of birds and the hum of insects among the flowers and shrubs, with, ever and anon, a snatch of chanting, or the roll of the organ, from within the church; and, if one takes to studying all the lovely work and enrichment, sketching the quaint and vigorous carving of the capitals and abaci, or poking about all the old chapels and altars, there is an only too great store of interest and beauty.

These abaci and capitals are particularly strong and good. The example which is offered, with strange unanimity, by the chance writers upon the work here, is the comical illustration of the story of the rats and their captive cat; but there are some others very much finer, and not of so pagan—therefore, perhaps,* unbecoming—a sort. There is a most wonderful gladiatorial

* Only *perhaps*. For, after all, there is no didactic purpose to be looked for in such work. The artist may give a fairly free scope to any exuberance of fancy. And scenes of this fable character are not so much out of place in sacred precincts as the Cupids and other mythological subjects which a later style could import even into its churches.

scene, upon the north side, and a *Deposition*, in which the varying characters and minds of the chief personages represented are set forth to the life, even while only indicated by a few strokes of the chisel. There is Arimathæan Joseph, in all his eagerness and self-importance, with just a delicious *soupeçon* of busybodiness; there is the professional nonchalance of the man who has been called in to draw out the nails; there is the overwhelming, disfiguring grief of the Blessed Virgin, and then the perfected death that there has been upon the Cross. It is all work such as we met with conspicuously upon the martyrs' tomb in San Vicente at Avila, and is quite an instruction in these academical times.

The best plan at Tarragona, as indeed elsewhere, is to strike up a friendship with the architect of the *Ayuntamiento*, and secure either his guidance or, at any rate, his keys. Admittance may be readily gained in this way, not only into the fine Romanesque churches of San Pablo and Santa Tecla, now closed to the public,—the latter one of the oldest Christian temples in Spain, *restored*, it is said, by San Olegarius at the commencement of the twelfth century—but to a series of highly important remains which are only known to such residents in the place as happen to be in some way interested in antiquarian research. Perhaps the finest of these forms almost a part of the cathedral itself. The Capilla del Sacramento is usually represented to have been built by Bishop Agustin in 1561, and to be possessed of a very

noble classical or Corinthian portal. A more careless or unfortunate statement could not be made. There were alterations and adaptations made here, sure enough, by the good coin-collecting bishop, and towards the close of the sixteenth century, but they were chiefly execrable and obtrusive. The chapel is really a piece cut off from a still perfect Roman vault, of great length, the arched *bóveda* springing direct from the ground. The blocks of stone, of which it is constructed throughout, are of large size, carefully faced, finely jointed and set without lime or cement. From its design and solidity the building was originally, one would say, a granary; while in the earlier Christian days, before Bishop Agustin meddled with it, the canons used it as their refectory, when they lived in common. Some idea of the solidness of the edifice may be gathered from noticing the enormous weight that has been super-imposed upon the vault of the chapel, without any additional support; while, by gaining admittance into the cut-off, northern, portion—now used as a lumber-room—the work may be examined in its naked and original state.

It is remarkable, in so ecclesiastical a city as this, that, with the exception of the cathedral, the tiny San Pablo, and Santa Tecla, there is hardly a vestige of interest for the ecclesiologist in the whole neighbourhood. Upon the Lérida line of railway, however, there are two or three places over which a couple of days should be spent. There is, first, Reus, the birth-place of Spain's last great general, Prim, and her last

great painter of modern times, Fortuny; worth seeing, too, as a type of a busy, flourishing Catalan town. And some fifteen or twenty miles farther on—a short walking distance from the Espluga station—there is a little group of ancient ecclesiastical buildings, Poblet, Santa Creus and Vallbona, each fine in its way, and that a very distinct way.

Of these three, Poblet—founded by Ramon Berenguer IV. after the reconquest (A.D. 1140), upon the spot where the body of the venerated hermit Poblet was miraculously discovered—is by far the most noteworthy. Not perhaps from an architectural point of view; for, like most places that grew sometime too rich and too powerful, it carelessly lost much of its artistic worth in magnificence, over-elaboration, and a confusion of styles. Nevertheless, in the long series of chapel, church, cloister, palace and conventual buildings, now of pure Romanesque workmanship, now early, now late Gothic, there are stretches of detail—as for instance in the Coro and Capilla Mayor of the great church, and in the grandly-sculptured capitals of the cloister columns—which fairly root one to the ground with the desire to linger over their beauty of design and handiwork. In some ways, too, now that thirty years have softened the sharpness of its desolation, the place is perhaps more lovely than it was when all bright and clean and readily comparable in all its parts.

But it is the sad history that is everywhere written on these rent and blackened walls which invests the

monastery with its greatest fascination. Only yesterday it was the most magnificent religious house in Europe. And no mushroom, for throughout ages—as far back as the thirteenth century—it had been a great autocracy, so successful in its career that its material, literary and regal wealth and rights came to be untold—unbounded. It was for centuries the absolute lord of the province. The monarchs of Aragon, from Alonso the Second down to ‘El Infante de Antequera,’ and great Ferdinand’s immediate successor, esteemed it an honour, not only to lie in the choir of Poblet after death, but to rest there under the shadow of the monkish cowl; while after these a long list of famous warriors, dukes, counts and bishops attests the lasting glory and exaltation of the place. And then the end came, in the savagest wickedness on the part of both the destroyers and destroyed,—quick and sudden on the one side, of long, subtle growth of corruption on the other. There is no doubt about it that princely Poblet had come to be a perfect sink of iniquity, of the most hideous debauchery and cruelty, and one feels inclined to forgive the band of ignorant country folk who rose against their oppressors, and utterly destroyed their habitation and their works.

In one of the cells here died that strangest meteor of the eighteenth century, Philip Duke of Wharton, a foremost peer of England in his day, and then impotently wreaking his vengeance for deserved castigation by fighting against us at Gibraltar in 1727.

He was the Wharton whom Pope described as being endowed

“ With every gift of Nature and of Art,
And wanting nothing but an honest heart ;
His passion still to covet general praise,
His life to forfeit it a thousand ways.”—

Words which might not inaptly be placed as an epitaph upon beautiful Poblet.

XVI.

BARCELONA.

THE fine, undulating scenery of the Tortosa and Tarragona country accompanies the road for yet another fifty miles northwards, culminating at Martorell, where the Noyá marries the Llobregat amidst surroundings that are almost grand. Just at the juncture of the two rivers there is a Puente del Diablo, which is picturesque enough to decide one to make a few hours' halt here, leaving Tarragona early in the morning and resuming the onward journey by the evening train. The Moorish arches, very acutely pointed—the middle one no less than 130 feet span—rest upon Roman foundations of massive bossaged work, 2300 years old, and the ascent is so steep that a vehicle can only be got over with great difficulty. Leaving Martorell all beauty of scenery is speedily hidden behind the sombre colour and ordering of a huge manufacturing district, and Barcelona reveals herself in a squalor and dreariness that sit but ill upon the boastedly First City of Spain.

The boast is justified, however, in so far at least as the concerns of everyday life, polity and progress are engaged. The city presents her ill-favoured side to the

traveller coming from the south, and, when once within the circle of her brighter ways, he will look in vain for any of the smudginess whose kingdom and on-coming have been heralded. To realise the fact that there is rolling by him here a greater volume of trade than in all the other great centres of Spanish commercial life put together, he will have to go down to the eastern side of the port, across to Barcelonetta, or to such out-lying districts as Badalona, San Martín de Provensals, San Andrés, or Sans.

And yet there is everywhere apparent the gay animation bred of a prosperous and forceful existence, and it is this which constitutes one of the great charms of the place. In no town-ways of Spain—not even in those of Sevilla—is the saunterer so well rewarded as in Barcelona. One need never weary of pacing along the really brilliant *Calle Fernando*, down the glittering *Plateria*—quaint, narrow, tortuous, as all honest old *Platerias* ought to be—or up the noble *paseos* of the *Rambla*, the *Paseo de Gracia*, the *Calle Córtes*, and the *Parque y Jardines de la Ciudadela*. There is continual occupation for both eye and mind in the ever-shifting and gorgeous colouring, and in all the movements of a colossal game of life. The hour does not much signify—early or late morning, afternoon, or night, it is all one—for Barcelona folk seem able to do without sleep, and at all times the air is soft and delicious, and yet so fresh from the sea, or from the hill country which backs up the city, that one is ever impelled onwards.

This line of promenade, or road, formed by the Ramblas of Santa Mónica, del Centro, de San José, de Estudios, de Canaletas, and the Paseo de Gracia, is a veritable triumph of boulevarding. Europe may be challenged to produce anything finer. It runs from the port right through the heart of the town, and out into the country, a practically uninterrupted series of carriage-drive and public promenade, shaded nearly all the way by over-arching plane trees. The lower portions are lined by handsome shops and cafés, with the best hotels and theatres; and all the upper reach—the Gracia paseo—by the imposing blocks of houses of the Ensanche, the residential region *par excellence* of the city. The little Rambla de San José, too, may justly be accorded its more popular name of ‘de las Flores,’ for here, each morning, is held the flower-market, when both sides of the broad central walk are lined with stalls heaped up in dazzling profusion with all the floral wealth which Southern sunlight, nature and art can produce.

So far so well. It is a tribute of admiration which thousands of casual visitors will pay to the Mistress of the Mediterranean. And in some sort it is a pity, for they are thereby held back from caring for the better beauty of some of the fine buildings here, or for that best ornament of all—a lovely and unspoiled natural surrounding.

Truth to say, Barcelona does hide away her worthy bits in a most vexatious manner. Her great cathedral,

her churches of Santa Maria del Mar, Santa Ana, Santa Maria del Pino, her old Benedictine monastery of San Pablo del Campo, her Roman remains, her fine Renaissance houses—everything in fact save the Lonja and the Casas Consistoriales and Diputacion—have to be sought up and down the narrowest and least inviting of ways. We shall only have time to look at the salient features of one or two of these; and first, passing by the Casa de la Diputacion, let us make our way up the Calle del Obispo, and turn into what looks like a quaint garden, girt round with grimly fragmentary architectural remains.

This, the cloister way, is not the principal entrance into the cathedral. There are the great western doors; but all the façade on that side is too abominable to be often encountered, though for centuries a tax of a peseta towards its completion has been exacted upon every marriage here celebrated. And there is a very noble north transept entrance, the Puerta de San Ivo, at which nobody ever looks, but which is well worth studying, for its contour of moulded doorway, niched arcading, lovely rose window, and elegant octagonal clock-tower to crown all. But the north side of the cathedral is dark and dismal, and so one always seeks out the cloister entrance, and unfailingly revels in the contrast between the inner and the outer worlds. Is it blazing hot without, a torrid sun pouring down on the whitened walls and pavements? Is it dull and cold, with gusts of rain, perhaps, sweeping up the nar-

row street? Is there the din of some high festival, or other special excitement, fulfilling the air with unrest? Then within it is cool and shady, with the sleepy murmuring of fountains; or it is bright with sunlight and flowers; or it is peace-bestowing in its stillness and purity. The architectural features of the little court, too, are not so very fragmentary when one comes to look more carefully at them. There is a regular Gothic peristyle all round, with delicately-clustered columns, and panelled buttresses. There is a particularly interesting series of chapels, too, beginning in the south-west corner with the ancient Santa Lucia, which perhaps—certainly its round-headed doorway—formed part of the old cathedral buildings. Within these chapels are the remains of some fine, painted retablos, apparently of Flemish work; while the iron *grilles*, the curiously carved tombstones which form a great part of the pavement, the fresh greenery of the centre garden, and the studies of costume and character here to be obtained, all go to make up an ample excuse for our lingering, and oft returning.

The north-eastern angle of the cloister is enriched by a projecting bay, or pavilion, which must not be passed without a careful glance at its graceful little bronze figure of St. George and the Dragon, forming the centre piece of a fountain. And then, through a very lovely round-headed portal—a portal which, like that of the Santa Lucia chapel, formed part of the old eleventh-century cathedral of Don Ramon Berenguer, El Viejo—

an entrance is gained into one of the most impressive of all Spain's noble cathedrals.

The term must be guarded from exaggeration, or misconception. The place is impressive in the same sense as is Sevilla cathedral, and from similar attributes of fine proportion and carefully arranged lighting. It will not, of course, bear the analysis, or confer the teaching, that Tarragona will—or Salamanca *Vieja*, Toledo, Burgos, Leon, or Santiago. And yet there is more good work to be studied here than the church usually gets credit for. Because it cannot be assigned to any one of the ordinarily recognised and accepted styles, folk say of Barcelona cathedral—of this newer, fourteenth-century building at which we are looking—that it is “a poor attempt at Gothic,” or words to that effect. But it may reasonably be doubted if the making a poor attempt at anything under the face of the sun was ever a feature of the Catalan character. He is far too powerfully willed an individual for that,—or *was*, at any rate, before he got bitten by a modern love of display. And it is hardly fanciful to see here, as in some of the stern, solid, domestic architecture of the province, quite a distinct school, and one which is entitled to very high praise, even while the work is, of necessity, somewhat archaic. The Catalan architect was given two problems to solve, without, perhaps, much aid in the way of studying other models: he had to devise means of defence against a relentless sun, and he had to provide for the requirements of a very ex-



acting ritual—a ritual which exacted, really, three churches, two for the clergy and one for the people. These problems were, of course, being solved elsewhere, but it may be questioned if it was ever so cleverly done as here,—with the same directness of purpose, and, withal, gracefulness. The simple expedient was adopted of putting one church wholly and bodily within another, and then endowing the outer one with a great series of chapels, which could be used even while the services were proceeding in the inner sanctuary, and so the people left free to assist at whatever service they desired, without let or hindrance. Then the light was admitted through small windows in these side chapels, and in a very far-off clerestory; it was further governed and utilised by rich stained glass, and was finally thrown in fuller and altogether effective fashion upon the eastern end, through the larger windows of the chevet. All this was carried out with great ideas upon the subject of scale, and with a fine grasp, and then all the rest became a matter of detail—and the election of models.

In this last it must be confessed there was occasionally a break-down. Still, far more good than bad work was imported; and it speaks volumes for churches such as this now under our consideration, that they can contend successfully and easily, in their awful solemnity and impressiveness, against faults—little faults on the part of the old workers, and big, glaring faults on the part of their successors—which would

quite take away the character of intrinsically poorer buildings. There are blemishes here at every corner, but yet one hardly notices them. On the other hand there are splendid vistas everywhere to arrest the eye — eastwards, from out of the gloom of the people's nave, away to the rich and gloriously-lit chevet, or westwards from the high altar, across the dark Coro to the delicately-arcaded lantern, and the dim old green and ochre window beyond. Or,—perhaps especially— from the south-west and north-west angles, when one catches the wonderful interlacing and intersecting of dark arch and column reaching with ever varied form and effect away into the shadowy recesses above the aisle chapels. Then there are numerous fine bits of detail,—such as the simple and pretty arcading which, by way of triforium, runs below the clerestory windows, and is carried round the (western) *cimborio* upon a slightly higher level, and with more enriched work. Finally the stained glass is most glorious, repeating itself in the afternoon sunlight upon floor, column and triforium, in colours as vivid as those of the actual windows.

There are two tutelar saints whose remains are preserved and venerated here;—Santa Eulalia, the events of whose martyrdom by the Emperor Dacian figure in bas-relief upon the trascoro, and the San Olegario who was sometime Bishop of Barcelona, and finally Archbishop of Tarragona. The former lies in a great chapel-crypt below the high altar,—a very favourite and effect-

ive position with Catalan architects—while the good bishop rests in an ornate *camarin* behind the altar of the gothic Capilla del Sacramento, formerly the Sala Capitular. His body, presumedly undecomposed after 800 years, except at the tip of the nose, may be seen by the curious, dressed in full pontifical robes and preserved within a glass case. With the exception of these, however, and the tombs of Don Ramon Berenguer and his wife, and Bishop Novales, the cathedral has but slight monumental interest.

Nor are the fittings and reliquaries remarkable. Perhaps the greatest treasure is the miraculous crucifix which Juan of Austria, Felipe Segundo's half-brother, is supposed to have borne with him in the battle of Lepanto. The body is slightly bent to one side, having twisted itself thus out of the way of infidel bullets,—quite an unnecessary precaution, one would have thought, for Omnipotence to stoop to. The organ is fair, dating, in some of its best parts, from the year 1546. And below it hangs one of the huge, staring, Saracen's heads,—vulgarly called *La Carassa*,—which, in some such position as this, or introduced into architectural decoration, figure in so many old Catalan churches. These simply commemorate the re-conquest from the Moors, and the triumph of Christianity over Mahomedanism, but they also occasionally form—as here—a part of the organ itself, made to work and speak by means of a pedal.

Grouped closely around the cathedral there is a

long series of noticeable remains and buildings. Exactly opposite the north transept door stands the Benedictine convent of Santa Clara, founded A.D. 1233 by two of the saint's nieces. Then come the old palace and archivo of the Aragon kings—showing some good fifteenth-century Gothic detail in parts, but, like Santa Clara, hopelessly spoiled by modernisation and adaptation—and the desecrated but still very beautiful and pure thirteenth-century Gothic chapel of Santa Agueda, or Agata. These old palatial buildings, together with some portions of the neighbouring Casa Consistorial, are chiefly interesting now from an historical point of view, taking one back to the days when Barcelona was ruled by her own counts, and when, a little later, she was the brightest jewel in the crown of Aragon. Here, in 1479, died the last and greatest monarch of Aragon, the lion-hearted Juan the Second. Here, eleven years before, he had lost his best friend and noble wife, Juana Enriquez; and here his more famous son, Ferdinand El Católico, acquired, in a youth spent amidst the warrings and faction fights of which Barcelona was ever the hot-bed and centre, those qualities alike worthy and unworthy which made him presently the most successful ruler Spain has ever possessed.

And there is older record here than any of these middle-age memories. Close by, in the corner house of the Calle Paradis, there may be seen some very perfect and beautiful Roman columns, of the Corinthian order, about forty feet over base, capital and massive

architrave. They would seem to have belonged to a temple of Hercules which stood hard by, and they afford striking evidence of the magnificence of the city when she was still a great Roman 'Colonia,' and even then well stricken in years. And then there come the already-glanced-at Casas Consistoriales and Diputacion, which have formed for five hundred years past the centre of the strong political life of the city. Both these buildings—and especially the intrinsically better of the two, the Diputacion—have been grievously cut about and covered up by latter-day 'improvements,' but they still possess points of rare merit. The finest portion of the Consistorial is the very picturesque Catalan-Gothic façade in the Calle de la Ciudad, declared to belong to the middle of the fourteenth century, but surely somewhat later. The Diputacion is full of splendid old bits—delicate Gothic arcading, picturesque staircases, vigorous carving, and, above all, the exquisite, lace-like front of the little chapel of St. George.*

The neighbouring San Jorge Salon, and Secretaria, are enriched by some excellent examples of the undoubtedly great, but just now over-praised, Fortuny, —vigorous and clever like all the productions of the clever Catalan artists, and like these failing simply from lack of patient observation, and perfected training on the part of the creator.

* There may be studied here, in this little chapel, some of the finest specimens conceivable of the art of embroidery, in the shape of *capas* and *dalmaticas*, and a magnificent altar frontal.