persons to a degree hardly comprehensible nowadays.

The approach to, and appearance of the city, contrary to the usual run of Spanish towns, are strikingly grand—strikingly in accord, too, with its history and characteristics. Before any sign of habitation comes in sight the railway runs, mile after mile, through a wilderness of granite blocks—sometimes bare, sometimes covered up with small ilex coppice—that look like the city of a titanic dead. Here and there massive stone crosses speak of the religious fervour that for so long found a fitting home among these vast wastes, and then with a sharp turn of the road the city itself—the highest point of all this wind-swept plain—suddenly frowns upon the traveller from behind its strangely forbidding and yet perfect ramparts.

Hard stern life, armed fear, separatedness from all of beauty, graciousness, and luxury—these seem to form the atmosphere of this strange district. And it is an atmosphere that rather thickens than clears as we drive under the massive walls, skirt the east end of the cathedral—itself a stronghold, and forming one of the old city towers—and jolt up and down the narrow crooked streets, in seemingly unending quest of the one decent inn. The Avila of to-day is manifestly very much the Avila of 750 years ago, when Ramon of Burgundy had just completed its circumvallation, and the quaint half-church, half-fortress of San Salvador—or such portion of it as had then been erected—was newly dedicated

to that Prince of Peace with whose reign the grim old city had so very little to do.

The 'Dos de Mayo'—formerly, in brighter days for the traveller, when it was kept by an Englishman, the Hotel del Inglés—lies within a stone's throw of the cathedral, and right opposite the great western entrance and very noble principal façade. In natural order, therefore, the cathedral claims our first attention.

And, it must be confessed, does not worthily repay it. One understands, at the first glance around, that there is a vast amount of good detail to be studied; but, at the same time, the assortment of brown and red tints, the hideous velvet draperies—contrasting so oddly with the flat clerestory and its bald six-light windows—and some poor patchwork restoration about the west end, impart an unpleasant sickly flavour to the building. And so, all through this undoubtedly splendid church, blemishes tread on the heels of excellencies to a degree only surpassed perhaps in the world-venerated cathedral of Sevilla. There is really hardly a corner where one is not almost as much repelled as attracted. The gem of the whole is the skilful treatment of the east end, where wonderful strength is so happily wedded to exquisite grace, and the sturdy old chevet, with its solid, fortress-like exterior, endowed with as delicate, fine, and rich an interior as one could dream of. And yet here, turning away from the satisfying vista of the double aisle round the apse, one is confronted by work in the chapels opening out north and south,

as poor as the rest is praiseworthy. Anything worse than the chapel of San Segundo, with its dreadful baldachin, and the shrine wherein are preserved the bones of the saint, it would be difficult to meet with.

Of similarly unequal merit are the monuments and fittings of the church. Two exceedingly pretty wrought-iron pulpits—wrought as only skilful hands, three hundred years ago could work—stand at the angles of the Capilla Mayor and Crossing; and close to that on the south side is a very beautiful Renaissance monument—an alabaster altar—to San Segundo, contrasting refreshingly, in its pure and true workmanship, with the dreadful surroundings of his tomb. And then there is an exactly corresponding monument upon the north side, to Santa Catalina, just as devoid of art in design and work as that to San Segundo is brimful of it.

There is a very wonderful work of Juan de Borgoña's here—the great retablo. Not altogether of his, however, although he usually gets the lion's share of the credit for it, for with him were associated Pedro Berruguete and Santos Cruz. The solitary figures of Saints Peter and Paul, with the four evangelists and four doctors of the church, which occupy the lowest stage, are full of life and vigorous conception. The more ambitious compositions above—first, the *Annunciation*, *Nativity*, *Transfiguration*, *Adoration of the Magi*, and the *Presentation in the Temple*, and then the *Scourging*, the *Agony in the Garden*, the *Crucifixion*, the *Descent*

into Hades, and the *Resurrection*—are not nearly so satisfactory.

Avila is endowed with several churches besides San Salvador—the cathedral—which repay careful study. Above all, San Vicente. This church stands just outside the gate of the same name, upon the road to the station, and is at once one of the oldest foundations of the city, and one of the most beautiful legacies of the Romanesque period in the world. There is a certain charm at the outset, from the traditions hanging over its erection. San Vicente was put to death at the beginning of the fourth century, by command of the Emperor Dacian, because he had desecrated an altar of Jupiter. His body and those of two companions who were martyred with him were left to the vultures upon the scene of execution. Presently there passed by a rich Jew, who, beginning to mock at the three corpses, was promptly attacked by a serpent which issued from a hole hard by. Thereupon he vowed that, if he escaped, he would build a church to the martyrs' God. The vow was of course heard, and over the rock and serpent's hole—still to be seen in the crypt below the Capilla Mayor—arose the first church of San Vicente. As a matter of fact, not simply tradition, this same serpent's hole was used for centuries as a place of adjuration, it being supposed that the long-lived snake would bite any one who, putting his hand into the hole, swore falsely.

The old church has of course long since disappeared.

The present edifice dates mainly from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, though there are many portions of both earlier and later work. It is of the usual cruciform plan, with nave and side aisles—each ending in a well-proportioned apse—transepts, and raised lantern over the Crossing. The work throughout is almost beyond praise; to do anything like justice to it within narrow limits would be impossible. But three remarkable points may be noticed:—the admirable way, in both exterior and interior treatment, in which the difficulties arising from a sloping site are met; the noble west end, which, with its grandly lofty double porch, and double portal, seems to solve perfectly that problem of how to make a west end solemn, elegant, and at the same time useful, against which architects to-day so vainly tilt; and the curious open cloister, which is carried along the southern wall to a point, unfortunately, a little beyond the western porch. These open cloisters, usually bearing distinct evidence of being later additions, form a very peculiar—upon the whole very praiseworthy—feature in the architectural work of north-western Spain. They are to be met with at Valladolid (Santa Maria l'Antigua), at Burgos, and especially at Segovia, where they are comparatively common, and in excellent preservation.

But it is difficult to bestow even a passing word upon this lovely church without referring to the very remarkable thirteenth-century monument to the three martyrs which stands to the right of the crossing.

Remarkable both for excellence of workmanship and carelessly-allowed predominance of fault, the exquisite inner shrine being painfully covered up by the poor, late baldachin. Remarkable above all else, alike of wise and foolish work, for the perfectly glorious *life*—the inconceivable intensity of expression—embodied in the subjects descriptive of the martyrdom which are set forth upon the panels of the shrine. It is not too much to say that a loving study of one or two of these wonderful representations—real representations, however rude they may be when judged by some of the finicky, merely academical rules of a weakened art—is worth more than a whole day's ordinary sight-seeing.

When one is weary of poring over subjects in holes and corners it is a very pleasant relaxation to take a quiet walk round the city walls, turning aside here and there to glance at the continually-recurring monuments of art and bygone life which are to be met with. For, while Avila herself is so hidden behind her huge defences that comparatively little of the outlying country can be seen by the sojourner within her walls, it is a strange fact that most of her great buildings and points of interest lie without.

It is well to start betimes, because, contrary to Spanish custom, nearly all the churches close about 9.30 A.M. The best point of departure is by the south-eastern gate, opening upon the Plaza del Mercado. A busy scene indeed is this plaza upon market-day. Picturesque costume is not so striking a feature in

Spain as it is usually supposed to be, but no charge of this sort can be laid at the door of Avila. The men are wrapped up in voluminous *capas*—which, like charity, cover a multitude of underlying sins — and sport round beaver hats, of most absurd dimensions, or bright-coloured *gorras*. But the women are the finest. The correct thing is to have one's sober-coloured gown lined with bright red or green flannel. This is then thrown back over the head—not quite covering up, however, a brilliant kerchief head-dress—so as to present a magnificent and unimpeded view of a gamboge-coloured petticoat, and a pair of blue or purple stockings. It is very dreadful, indeed, to find the 'hush' of the London belle attaining to universal acceptation, and enormous development; but it has here at least the unwonted merit of acting as a fine block for gorgeous colouring.

And let it be gratefully noted that, as in other Castilian cities so in Avila, there is an absence of the dialects which sometimes so sorely oppress and trouble the stranger who has laboured to qualify himself in pure Spanish. The speech is a little rapid indeed—a little clipped too—but the veriest street imp may be readily understood or questioned.

At the extremity of the plaza stands the Romanesque San Pedro, exhibiting, both in design and execution, much of the same grasp and conscientiousness already noticed in San Vicente. The work is coarser, however, and the extraordinary massiveness of every portion

of the building gives it an unpleasantly cramped character.

Proceeding now along the crest of the hill, and turning gradually to the left, we come upon three of Santa Teresa's foundations for women—'Las Madres,' 'Las Gordillas,' and, nearer the station, 'Santa Ana.' A sharp descent of the northern slope leads, then, past the huge ruined Franciscan convent to the celebrated nunnery of the 'Encarnacion,' where, in November 1534, and at twenty years of age, the infinitely venerated saint took the veil, and from whence came at once her greatest comfort and greatest afflictions. It is a sufficiently wretched pile of buildings now, the chapel decked out with all that gilt and stucco can do, and the adjoining courtyard—a wilderness of untidy gravel and weed—presenting an eloquent exposition of its inscription, "*Sic transit gloria mundi.*" From this point a very fine view is obtained of the long line of city walls, clinging closely to the sharp undulations of the hillside, and bristling with their still formidable-looking circular towers. Four hundred and twenty years ago there was enacted here one of the strangest scenes which history furnishes. Henry IV. had, by a course of unbridled licentiousness and folly, driven into rebellion a large section of his nobles, who, headed by Carillo, Archbishop of Toledo, and Juan Pacheco, Marquis of Villena, determined to put the king's youthful brother Alonso upon the throne. The insurgents met here, before the walls of Avila, and

proceeded, as a first act of defiance, to a mock deposition of their sovereign. A great platform was erected, and upon a gorgeous throne in the midst was set an effigy of Henry, clad in all his royal robes. A herald then declared *seriatim* all the charges preferred against him, winding up by demanding his dethronement. Hereupon Carillo advanced, and deprived the king of his crown. The Marquis of Villena followed suit with the sceptre; and then the image, after being stripped of its robes of state, was delivered over to the tender mercies of the soldiery and rabble townsfolk, who trampled it under foot and finally tore it limb from limb. Alonso, who was at the time only eleven years of age, was now carried forward upon a shield by the nobles, amid enthusiastic cries of "Long live Alonso, King of Castile!" and seated upon the empty throne. The oath of allegiance was duly administered to the grandees, the people pressed forward to kiss the royal hand, and the heralds, with a great flourish of trumpets, proclaimed the formal accession of the new monarch to the crown.

Proceeding now up the gentle slope leading to the north-west angle of the city, the uninteresting Campo Santo is left to the right; and just at the corner, overhanging the rapid little river, there stands the tiny church of San Segundo. It is worth seeing, not only for the sake of its thoroughly good Romanesque detail, but also for the very fine monument to the patron-saint —too good for Berruguete, to whom it is ascribed—

which occupies a somewhat odd position just within the chancel-rails. The coffin lies underneath, with some relics within, but the body of the bishop-saint rests, as we have seen, in the cathedral. The church owes its foundation to the able combination of "*fortiter in re*" with "*suaviter in modo*" in San Segundo's character, marking the spot where he did to death a certain recalcitrant Moor, by pushing him over from the neighbouring tower.

The view from the door of this little church, across the river, bridge, and uprising opposite slope, is very fine. Right in front, some five hundred yards along the Salamanca road, stands a canopied cross, the *Cruz de Cuatro Postes*, which marks the spot where Santa Teresa bade farewell to her beloved Avila when she went forth, in 1567, to found her first convent at Medina del Campo.

Without crossing the river, the road may now be taken under the walls, and past the ruined San Isídoro —the oldest church in Avila, and still showing remains of excellent work. A few minutes' climb brings us to the Puerta de La Santa Casa, the south-western gate of the city, and from here an exceedingly pretty *alameda*, or garden, stretches away past the Puerta del Rastro—the southern gate—to the south-east corner of the city, and so takes us back again into the Plaza del Mercado. The views from this promenade, over the great brown *vega*, the silvery river, and the far off Sierra de Avila, are grand in the extreme. The large building just below

the Puerta de La Santa Casa is the hospital. Farther off, at the outside of the fringe of houses, lies San Nicolas; away to the left, Santiago, while the isolated mass of gray building to the eastward is the great convent and church of Santo Tomás—of which more anon. To see this promenade and landscape at their best, however, it should be visited when a full moon is throwing the shadows into brilliant black relief, lighting up the white houses and little plaza that lie on the slope, and sleeping on the gray churches and the outlying plain.

This same Santo Tomás calls for an excursion to itself, and something more than a glance in passing. The convent, which has lately been restored and handed over for seminarial purposes to the Dominicans, is one of the many foundations of the Reyes Católicos, and has a peculiar interest attaching to it from having been the educational home of their idolised son, Prince Juan, and a favoured residence of Ferdinand and Isabella themselves. Founded at the instance of the arch-Inquisitor Torquemada, it was fitting that this house should be the birthplace of the infinitely great, and as infinitely small scheme of blotting out Protestantism in blood. Grimly fitting, too, that when everything which wealth, power and love could do had been lavished upon Prince Juan, in order to make him in all ways a king of men, their Most Imperial Humanities, who had dealt out such abounding measure of life and death to others, should here be

awfully taught that the stage on which they could strut was, after all, small to nothingness. For the marble monument in front of the high altar of the chapel is not only a touchingly beautiful memorial to a touchingly beautiful young life, but it marks, too, the burial-place of hopes and labours than which the world has seen few greater, or seemingly more omnipotent. It is inexpressibly good that this monument, the product of a day when a care for nothing but elaboration had already begun to spell disaster to art, should be found so thoroughly pure and fine.

Which, by the way, marks off one of the special values of Avila as a place of usefullest study. It would be well for all those who cavil at Gothic work to observe truly the conception and much of the detail of the cathedral; for those who can only see rudeness of execution in the Romanesque to come and ponder over the ability of that martyr's tomb in San Vicente to tell its tale; or for him who has set his affections upon the antique, and denies to Renaissance work all but academic correctness, to stand before this monument to Prince Juan in Santo Tomás, and confess that it is as fine and cunning in design and true sentiment as it is delicate and perfect in workmanship.

It is, too, a noble church. The view down the fine single nave, from the western gallery, with the delicate groining contrasting strongly with the dark stone-work below, is very imposing. Better still perhaps is the view from the east end, when the afternoon light is

coming through the great rose window in front, bringing into strong relief the exquisitely carved oak-work of the choir, and throwing into a deeper shade than is its wont the dark, elliptical arch below.

Diving into the heart of the city one comes here and there upon many other interesting churches. There is San Juan, in the Plaza de la Constitucion, the baptismal place of Santa Teresa ; there is the strange dodecagonal chapel of Mosen Rubí, with the misshapen stone boars, the *toros de guisando*, just outside, over the meaning and destination of which so much ingenious speculation has been expended. Wonderful old houses too—Oñate and Polentinos, or the quaint battlemented house at the corner of the square where the Post Office is, with its characteristic coat-of-arms over the gateway, and the two stone heralds that are just delicious in their conceit and life likeness. "*Petrus Avila et Maria Cordubensis uxor*, MDXLI" runs the entirely suitable inscription.

And, finally, there is the Santa Casa itself, with the all-pervading memories of Avila's great saint. To find her birthplace we must seek the south-west gate of the city. Just inside lies a plaza of considerable size, bounded on the west side by the wandering old palace of the Duquesa de la Roca, with its grass-grown patio and fine old stone staircase, on the east by the low whitewashed Instituto, and on the north by a hideous whitened church, with an interior resplendent in blue and gilt which one would thankfully go a long way round not to be obliged to look at. And yet it is worth

braving the terrible surroundings wherewith a blind devotion has endowed the spot, for the sake of visiting the birthplace of one who, for good or evil—and certainly more for good than evil—has left broad footmarks behind her in the world.

"*En esta Capilla nació Nŕa Seráfica Madre Santa Teresa de Jesus, Doctora mística. A* 28 *de Marzo año de* 1515."

So declares the inscription in a small room opening out of the north transept of the church. In 1515 this was no vilely ornamented *capilla*, but a simple apartment in the house of Don Alfonso Sanchez de Cepeda, a citizen of Avila, and occupying an honoured position in his native place. There is small need to repeat the oft-told tale of the strange life of Teresa de Jesus, of her childlike graciousness and fervent devotion, her innumerable visions and exalted mysticism, her supremely patient work and final triumphing. But the memory of a woman who, in a ceaseless fight of forty-seven years, conquered self, conquered suffering, conquered persecution, and conquered time, is worth lingering over for a moment. The secret alike of her patience and success may best be told in some of her own words —words which, beyond all reasonable doubt, were a far more faithful mirror of her inner life than the manifold mystic declarations to which her devotees cling.—"I esteem it a greater grace," she wrote, "to pass one day in humble obedience, putting forth sighs to God from a contrite and afflicted heart, than to spend days in

prayer. . . . Lengthy prayers will not raise a soul when she is rather called to obedience." And again, "I cannot ask of our Lord, or even desire, rest, because I see that He lived altogether in labours. Which I beseech Him to give me likewise, bestowing upon me, first, grace to sustain them." And, finally, "I have learned this by experience, that the true remedy against falling is to lean on the cross, and to trust in Him who was fastened to it."

V.

MADRID.

AVILA, in point of actual distance, is some twenty leagues from Madrid; in point of time, five hours; in life, a century. It is the strangest instantaneous transformation, bringing with it at once a sense of confusion and of home-coming, to pass from the sluggish, unlovely ways of the former—rendered sluggish and unlovely by the persistent lingering of the olden time with all its works—into the brilliant, eager, well-ordered life of the capital. And, inasmuch as one speedily loses the sense of being dazzled or confused, the remainder of home-coming is very pleasant.

Altogether, Madrid must be pronounced a badly used place. It is infinitely better than its reputation. Granted that it owes its origin—or, more correctly speaking, its evolution out of a village—to the gross selfishness of a gouty monarch; granted that its climate is treacherous, its surroundings uninteresting, and its river a mockery—what then? So have most cities been built under the influence of a delusion, or self-interest; so are the immediate surroundings of nine great towns out of ten uninteresting; so are most climates inimical

to careless folk ; and as for the river—one never thinks about it. If it does less good than some other big ditches, it also does less harm. If brilliant life, propped up by all the thousand-and-one artificial aids which brilliant life nowadays requires ; if fine promenades, drives, streets, shops, houses, and crowds of well-dressed pleasure-seekers are allowed their current value, then Madrid must be placed high up indeed in the scale of European capitals.

And although, apart from its grand Museo, the city possesses comparatively little to interest the mere student of art or ancient record, yet for him whose sympathies are with to-day's weal and woe there are here subjects and experiences of the deepest significance. For in Madrid, as in no other great European capital, the life-blood of the country beats to its truest pulse. Ordinarily it is not fair to judge of the spirit or real condition of a nation by the mixed and diluted life of its greatest cities—*blasée* when it happens to be neither diluted nor mixed. But Madrid, with all its foreign ways and accessories, is altogether Spanish, and it has, moreover, a peculiar claim to be taken as a standpoint for observation, because, in the country districts, the widespread ignorance and superstition, and the *laissez-faire* spirit which causes the masses to be swayed now by the emissaries of one party, now of another, make all gauging false and unreliable.

And what does one find in Madrid ?

To a painful degree—painful because in the light and

under the influence of the best life and education the land can give, and of everyday intercourse with other cultivated nations—that very same mistrusting of the powers of State and Church, that absence of real, helpful citizenship, that love of display arising from self-complacency, which we set down at the outset as keynotes of Spanish life.

It is a terrible thing that it should be so—for a nation upon which rests to a remarkable degree the responsibility of possible and necessary development. Of family and social life there is little; of intelligent interest in art and literature next to nothing; of loyalty and reverence none. In a newly-awakened enthusiasm for a possibly great nation you speak, perhaps, to some cultivated and seemingly high-minded Madrilenian about his monarch, probably in terms of the sincerest admiration and commendation. "The sooner Alfonso packs up his traps and goes, the better!" is the rough reply. You comment upon the acknowledged corruption that prevails, and speak hopefully of some little progress that is being made in the direction of cleansing. Promptly there comes the comforting assurance that it is all illusory—all useless—unless preceded by a change of government. Change! change! change! It is the one universal cry. And just because, in the magic shuffling of the cards, there is a chance of some particular and private enterprise turning up trumps, or of somebody else's trump card disappearing.

And all the time the brilliant life and the courtly

magnificence which form such a potent weapon in the hands of the court's enemies roll on undisturbed. . . . Knowing all the heart-sinking and disappointment, the selfishness and callous indifference to to-morrow which lurk beneath, it is impossible to delight in it. No;—it is not quite home-coming, after all!

It is a relief to turn into the quiet Museo. That is home, at any rate—a veritable home of art. It is all in such deliciously small compass, all so well ordered, all so good. One has not to walk miles before attaining to favourite spots, or to stare over acres of unresponsive canvas before lighting upon familiar faces,—or even to command one's temper against officialism, or jostling. All is in a few rooms, and that by exclusion of the bad rather than through poverty.

The excellence, too, is so refreshingly its own—of Spain, Spanish. Beyond even the somewhat similar excelling of our National Gallery. One approaches the collection, aware, perhaps, of the fact that there is a grievous absence of representatives of the early Italian and German schools, and under the impression that he has already abundantly studied Velazquez and Murillo elsewhere. And then all sense of lacking, even as all complacent resting in former experiences, is delightfully lost in the wonderful revelation of what the real Velazquez was, of a fresh power in Murillo, and of a whole host of hitherto unknown and yet veritable masters, from sixteenth-century Antonio Moro, Coello, and Pantoja de la Cruz, through Pacheco, Ribera (with, after all, his

only too lifelike representations of what old days and old saints were), Zurbaran and Alonso Cano, down to Valdés Leal, or the Goya and Lopez of but a generation ago.

Above all, that astonishing apparition of Velazquez. The idea usually afloat about him is that he was a man who painted a few stiff gloomy figures, dressed in stiff gloomy costumes, in a stiff gloomy style. But here he comes before us as a perfect *facile princeps* in nearly every walk—not only in portrait-painting but in character and animal studies, in landscape, in historical subjects—trying all, and doing all well. His portraits, of course, all the world knows something of, without, however, realising how accurately and powerfully he reproduced the very men and women among whom he lived. But who is prepared for his almost superhuman studies of character—the *El Primo, El Niño de Vallecas, El Bobo de Coria,* or *Don Sebastian de Mora?* Or the power of composition, the clever gradation of tone in light and shadow, and the masterly delineation of accessories in *Las Meninas, Los Borrachos, La Rendicion de Breda, Las Hilanderas,* or the *Vista de la Calle de la Reina en Aranjuez?*

One cannot help regretting keenly that this greatest of Spanish artists, so many-sided in his powers, led so busy a life—fortunate courtier as he was—that he had but short hours left for his work, and often failed to finish even what he had begun. For he would never have palled upon one as Rubens and Murillo do. It is an