WANDERINGS IN SPAIN

HARE

Repton School Prize

HENRY R. HUCKIN, HEAD MASTER.

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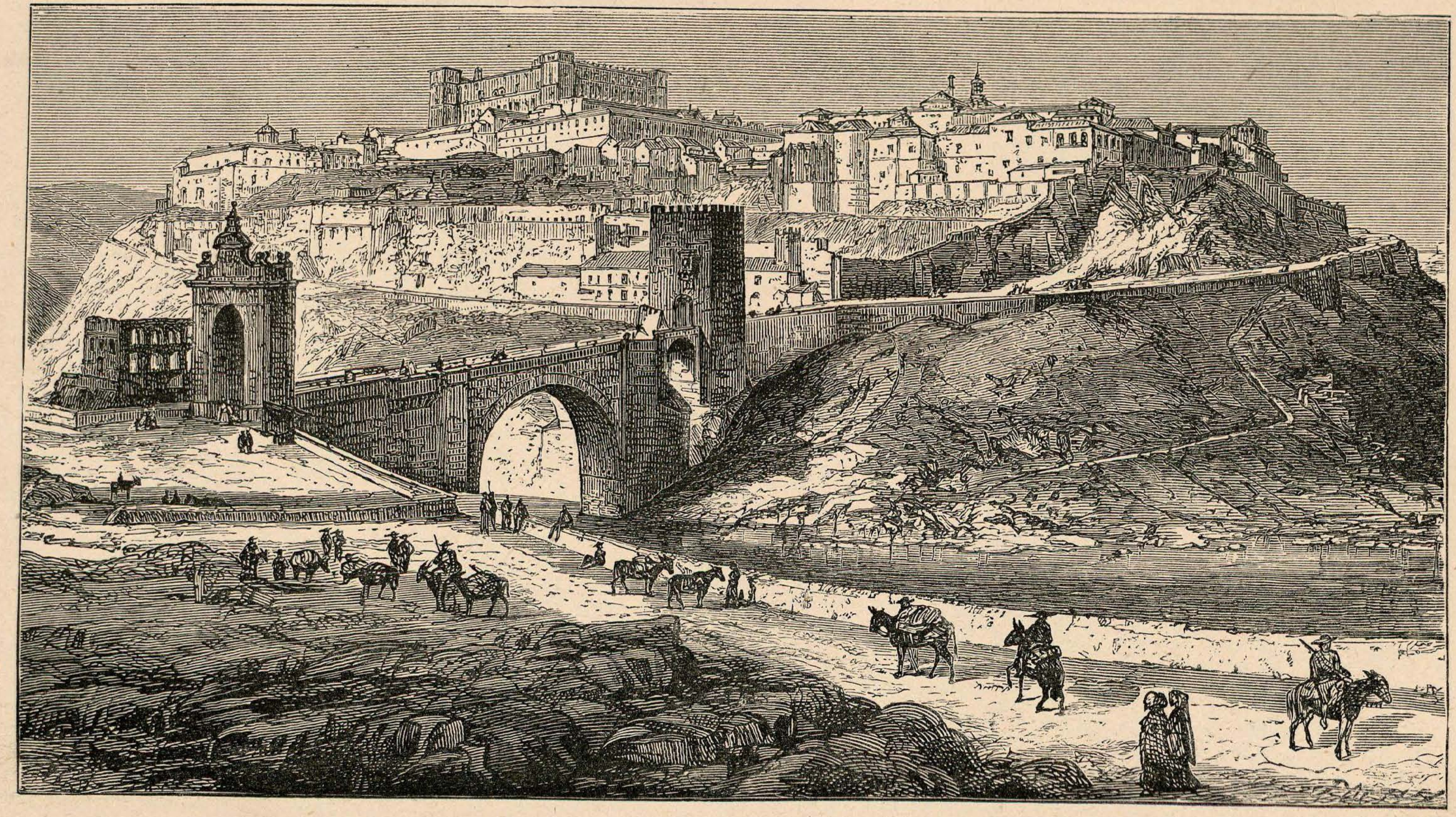

Frontispiece.

TOLEDO.

WANDERINGS IN SPAIN

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE are many ways of making a tour in Spain. Of these, the one which is usually chosen is the *comfortable* tour, which takes the traveller by the main line of railway to Madrid, showing him the cathedral of Burgos and the palace of the Escorial on the way, and which carries him on to Toledo, Cordova, Seville, and Granada, almost all places which may be visited and sojourned at with little more of difficulty or of discomfort than is to be met with between London and Paris. The traveller who follows this route generally declines spending his time in stopping at the smaller stations, even though they may be directly on his way; he is content with seing what he has been told is the cream of Spain. But he must not imagine that in doing this he has really seen Spain, or that such a tour can give him more than the most cursory glimpse, if as much, into the character and the habits of its people. And even the small benefit and interest which such a traveller might receive on such a journey is barred out from him, if he is hedged in, as is too often the case, by ignorant couriers, or the ciceroni who lurk like bloodthirsty leeches around the doors of the principal hotels.

He who would really see Spain, must go prepared to rough it, must be unembarrassed by a courier (a creature the Spanish mind hates as much as it despises the unfortunate master in leading-strings), must be content with humble inns, coarse fare, windows often glassless, vehicles always jolting, and above all must put all false Anglican pride in his pocket, and treat every Spaniard, from the lowest beggar upwards, as his equal. If he will bear these things, especially if he will unstiffen his English backbone, and genially and cordially respond to the many humble courtesies which he will undoubtedly meet with, he will enjoy Spain, and her abounding treasures of art, of history, of legendary lore, and above all of kindly generous hospitality, will be freely poured out for him. He must take Spain as he finds her; she is not likely to improve; she does not wish to improve; the only way of finding pleasure in her is to take her as she is, without longing for her to be what she is not. The Spanish standard of morals, of manners, of religion, of duty, of all the courtesies which are due from one person to another, however wide apart their rank, is a very different and in most of these points a much higher standard than the English one, and, if an English traveller will not at least endeavour to come up to it, he had much better stay at home.

It is also necessary at once to lay aside all false expectations as to what one will find. Spain is *not* a beautiful country. If a traveller expects to find the soft charm and luxuriant loveliness of Italy, life in Spain will be a constant disappointment: no hope can possibly be more misplaced. Spain is not the least like Italy: it has not even the beauty of the greater part of France. Beyond the Asturias and the valleys near the Pyrenees, there is not a tree worth speaking of in the Peninsula. There is scarcely any grass; the shrubs may even be counted; except when the corn is out, which here lasts such a short time, there is hardly any vegetation at all. Those who wish to find beauty must only look for beauty of an especial kind—without verdure, or refinement, or colour. But the artist will be satisfied without these, and will exult in the long lines, in the unbroken expanses of the stony, treeless, desolate sierras, while every crevice of the distant hills is distinctly visible in the transparent atmosphere, and the shadows of the clouds fall blue upon the pale yellow of the tawny desert. In the central provinces, hundreds and hundreds of miles may be traversed, and no single feature of striking natural beauty be met with; nothing more than the picturesque effects which may always be obtained by the groups of cattle, gathered round fountains by the dusty wayside or standing out as if embossed against the pale distances, or by the long trains of mules with their drivers in brigand-like costume and flowing *mantas* bearing merchandise from one town to another. On these plains, too, there is a silence which is almost ghastly, for there are no singing birds, scarcely even any insects. Such is the character of almost all the country now traversed by the principal railways, which was formerly toiled through in diligence or on mule-back. But even here, just when the spirits begin to flag, and the wearied eye longs to refresh itself, the traveller reaches one of the grand old cities which seem to have gone to sleep for five hundred years and to have scarcely waked up again, where you step at once out of the reign of Amadeo or Isabella II. into that of Philip II., and find the buildings, the costumes, the proverbs, the habits, the daily life, those of his time. You wonder what Spain has been doing since, and the answer is quite easy—nothing. It has not the slightest wish to do anything more; it is quite satisfied. The Catholic sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella made a great nation of it, and filled it with glorious works. Since then it has had, well—reverses, but it has changed as little as ever it could. It has delighted in its conservatism in everything, down to the sleepy wickedness of its Bourbon sovereigns. We said to many a Spaniard who lamented over the absence of Isabella, "Oh, but she was so dreadfully wicked." "Ah, yes," was the answer, with a look of much sympathy for the exile, "she had indeed all the dear old Spanish vices." And for the sake of those ancestral vices even, many will not rest till they have her back again.

How the Spaniards hate and abuse the railways, though they use them! Certainly they make them go as slow as possible, and bring the trains as nearly as possible to the speed of the old mule-traffic. And as for carriages in country places, they are little more than a square of bars with ropes between, through which you tumble, and stick, and flounder as best you may, while you are being furiously jolted over the rugged, rutty, rocky roads.

Except in the Asturias and some parts of Galicia, I am only aware of two places where there is anything that may be called beautiful *country* in Spain, and these are Monserrat, the noblest, the most gloriously beautiful of rocks, and the palm-groves of Elche. The latter is indeed quite surpassingly beautiful, and a painter might linger for ever upon the glowing loveliness of its contrasts, where the stony yellow plain sweeps up close with the luxuriant palm-woods. It has more of the ideal Africa than Africa itself, and is the most splendid oasis in a singularly dismal desert. Generally, African travellers complain of the Spanish deserts as being deserts without any oases at all.

Travel in Spain then becomes a constant movement from one town to another—towns which are not as beautiful as those in Italy, not as picturesque as many of those in France and Germany, but which have a peculiar charm of their own in their tortuous whitewashed streets, their vast brown mouldering palaces, and their colossal churches, which nothing but sight can give the impression of. Such a town Kenelm Digby describes when he wishes that his "Broadstone of Honour" may resemble "one of those beautiful old cities in Spain, in which one finds everything; cool walks shaded by orange-trees along the banks of a river; great open squares exposed to the burning sun, for festivities; narrow, winding, dark streets, composed of houses of every form, height, age, colour; labyrinths of buildings, all confused together, palaces, hospitals, convents, halls, all raised in an appropriate style of architecture; market-places, resounding to the busy hum of men; cemeteries, where the living are as silent as the dead; in the centre, the vast gothic cathedral, with its airy spires and massive tower, its fine sculptured portals, and its arches and capitals of varied tracery, its deep vaults, its forests of pillars, its burning chapels, its multitude of saints, its high altar lighted with a thousand tapers—wonderful structure! imposing by its enormous magnitude, curious in its details, sublime when seen from a distance of two leagues, and beautiful when only two paces from the eye. Then, in another quarter of the city, the vast arch or aqueduct, constructed by the

Romans, or, concealed by a grove of palms and sycamore, the ruins of the Oriental mosque, with its domes of brass and enamelled pavements."

Such a town as this is Salamanca on the beautiful Tormes; such is Segovia, with its richly decorated streets, its wide views over the wild surrounding sierras, and its deep green gorges filled with old churches and convents. Such, above all, is Granada, the climax of the beauty and interest of Spain, a place which alone is worth all and tenfold the fatigue and trouble which may be undertaken to reach it. Long before railway days, I knew some ladies, who being delayed for a few days between two steamers at Malaga, determined to reach Granada, though it was only possible to spend one day there. Day and night, though in feeble health, they rode on in ever-increasing exhaustion. At last, on the summit of a desolate mountain, their strength altogether gave way, and they felt it impossible to proceed further. But just then, a solitary traveller approached from the other side of the pass—the path was so narrow, so hemmed in by precipices, that it was impossible to linger—there was no time for many words, but as the stranger passed, he exclaimed, "Go on, go on, it is alike the Paradise of Nature and of Art,"—and they took courage and went on, and found it, as so many thousands of travellers have done since, the most perfectly beautiful place in the world.

There is no mine of interest which has been less explored than that of Spain. Singularly little has been written about it, even in its own language. The traveller's library need not be very large. There is no book like Ford, which cannot be done without, but then it must be the old original undistorted edition, which is now very difficult to procure. O'Shea is a capital guide-book for the commonly visited places, has more correct recent information than Murray, from which it differs entirely both in plan and material, and is the best for practical purposes. The volume of Kugler's Handbook, on the Spanish Schools of Painting, may be found useful in the galleries of Valencia, Seville, and Madrid, though most of its information is given in a more agreeable and attention-arresting form in a charming volume called "Spanish Towns and Spanish Pictures," by Mrs. W. A. Tollemache. Street's ponderous volume on the "Gothic Architecture of Spain" may be instructively studied for the churches of the north before leaving home. Hans Christian

Andersen's vivid sketches "In Spain" are pleasant reading upon the spot, and in French the admirable "Voyage en Espagne" of Théophile Gautier. But if one goes beyond mere architecture and picture-seeing, into that which makes Spain what it is, the living, active—or rather the dead, inactive—pulse of its people, filled with poetical thoughts, existing in an atmosphere of semi-Eastern imagery, which flows in songs and proverbs from their lips, there are a series of modern Spanish romances, giving an unexaggerated picture of the life and character of the people, which should indeed be more carefully studied than any hand-book, and which are the pleasantest of companions in the long weary railway journeys, which offer nothing to see and very little to think about. Perfectly charming are the little novels and poems of Gustave Becquer, the historical tales of Trueba, the poems of Don Melchor de Palau—but above all the inexhaustible wealth of beautiful word-pictures which may be enjoyed in the stories of Fernan Caballero, which collect so much, and reveal so much, and teach so much, that it is scarcely possible sufficiently to express one's obligation to them.

Tired of modern novels, a traveller, who has taken the trouble to make some acquaintance with the language, may be curious to know at least the names and characteristics of those who have used it with the greatest success, for, with the single exception of Don Quixote, Spanish authors are but little known beyond the Peninsula. Graver students may be referred at once to the "Literary Histories" of Bouterwek (tr. by Th. Ross) and Ticknor.

The earliest monument of Spanish literature (it is also the earliest epic in any modern language) is the rhymed chronicle known as the "Poem of the Cid." The hero's exile and return, his conquest of Valencia, the marriage of his daughters with the Infants of Carrion, the cruel treatment they suffer from their husbands, and their re-marriage with the Infants of Navarre and Arragon, are the events told naively in these rude verses. The Cid died in 1099, and the poem may date some fifty years later. The ordinary reader will get an ample idea of its gist and spirit in the admirable translations of John Hookham Frere (in his collected works, vol. ii., pp. 411—437).

After "The Cid" follow the rhymed tales of the Romancero and Cancionero-General, and the many volumes of romances and stories of knight-errantry so lovingly collected and studied by Don Quixote, and of which the curé and the barber made so ruthless a holocaust.

All but antiquaries, however, will skip at once from the age of Ruy Diaz to that of Charles V., when a new race of poets began to seek their inspiration from classical and Italian sources; when Virgil, Horace, and Petrarch were studied and imitated, and the Italian sonnet and canzone were acclimatised in Spain. Copious stores of lyric and pastoral poetry still survive to keep fresh in Spain the names of Boscan, Garcilaso, Mendoza, Herrera, and Luis de Leon. At last (1547—1616) appeared Cervantes. Don Quixote needs no word of comment, but the reader may perhaps be reminded that to the same pen Spain owes some capital stories, somewhat in the style of Boccaccio (the Novelas Ejemplares), and an admirable tragedy, "Numantia." The great outburst of Spanish genius extends (just as in Greece and England) through a period of little more than a century, contained within the reigns of Philip II., III., IV. What the Persian War was to the Greek, the discovery and conquest of the New World was to the Spaniard; and in the lull which followed either event the passionate attachment to the altars and homes of their fatherland, and the lofty pride in their history, which filled every breast in both nations, found its highest expression in the drama. Lope de Vega (1562—1635), who is said to have written nearly two thousand plays, stands first in fertility and inventive genius; Calderon (1600—1681) in wealth of imagery, and deep religious feeling. In his power of portraying the most tender "sensibility of principle," the most perfect "chastity of honour," Calderon stands alone among poets. Englishmen will do well to approach this singular genius through the graceful essay of Archbishop Trench, and the fragmentary translation of the Magico Prodigioso by Shelley.

So far the great charm of Spanish literature lay in the fact that its *chefs-d'œuvre* were less mannered and learned, and more original and national than those of other countries. But before the death of Lope de Vega a new school had arisen which affected a superlative purity of expression and style. Ample specimens of its versatile founder Gongora (1561—1627), and an interesting account of the controversies his works provoked may be found in an essay by Archdeacon Churton entitled "Gongora."

A beginner will find his best help to the language in Del Mar's Grammar, and Neuman and Baretti's

Dictionary; with these at his side let him begin by attacking Padre Isla's translation of Gil Blas or one of Fernan Caballero's novelettes.

Spain is now so encircled by railways that almost everything of importance may be visited by rail. The following is the tour we intended to make, though we were prevented ultimately from accomplishing a part of it, and it embraces all the principal objects of interest in Spain and Portugal.

IRUN (excursion in carriage to Fontarabia).
S. SEBASTIAN.
PAMPLONA (ride to Roncesvalles).
TUDELA (visit—by carriage—Tarragona, and—on mules—Veruela).
TAFALLA AND OLITE.
ZARAGOZA.
HUESCA (walk or ride to visit the neighbouring convents).
LERIDA.
MANRESA (drive to the curious mines of Cardoña).
MONISTROL (walk or drive to Monserrat, and remain some days at the convent, seeing the neighbourhood on foot).
BARCELONA (visit Pedralles, and San Culgat del Vallis—going by rail to Serdanola and walking from thence).
RIPOLL, rail and drive.
GERONA.
MARTORELL.
TARRAGONA (visit Poblet and other monasteries, taking the railway to Montblanch, and driving or walking from thence).
SAGUNTUM.
VALENCIA.
JATIVA.
ALICANTE, hence drive to—
ELCHE, drive to—

ORIHUELA, and on to—
MURCIA.
CORDOVA (ride or walk to the hermitages of Val Paraiso).
SEVILLE (drive to Italica).
XERES.
CADIZ, whence by sea, or ride by Tarifa, to—
ALGECIRAS, steamer to—
GIBRALTAR, and on mules to—
RONDA, whence ride and rail to—
MALAGA, or direct to—
GRANADA (excursion to the Alpuxarras and Alhama), diligence to—
JAEN, and on to Menzibar, whence by rail to—
MERIDA.
SANTAREM.
LISBON (excursion to Cintra and Mafra), by rail to Carregado and carriage, by Caldas da Rainha, to—
ALCOBAÇA, and on to—
BATALHA, and on to—
COIMBRA.
OPORTO, carriage or sea to—
VIGO, carriage to—
SANTIAGO, diligence to—
LUGO, and to—
VILLA FRANCA DEL VIERZO (whence ride or walk to the monasteries), and carriage to—
ASTORGA.
LEON, diligence to—
OVIEDO, ride to—
COVADONGA, and ride on to—
SANTANDER.
PALENCIA.
ZAMORA, diligence to—
SALAMANCA, diligence to—
AVILA.
MADRID.

TOLEDO.
ARANJUEZ, and return to—
MADRID (excursion by rail to Alcala, Guadalajara and Siguenza).
VILALBA, diligence to La Granja and diligence or carriage to—
SEGOVIA, diligence back to Vilalba and rail to—
ESCORIAL.
VALLADOLID (drive to the Tower of Simancas).
BURGOS (drive to Miraflores and S. Pedro de Cerdeña).
IRUN.

As a certain degree of physical well-being is quite essential to mental enjoyment, a Spanish traveller who intends to visit obscure places should certainly not set out unprovided with some of the comforts of life—some tea, Liebig's soup, soap, and a few common medicines should on no account be left behind. It should also be remembered, that except in the extreme south, and on part of the east coast, the cold in Spain is quite as severe, or more so, than in the north of Europe—though it is a dry healthy cold—and a good supply of warm wraps must be provided.

Spanish "Travellers' Rests" are of three kinds:—a *Fonda*, which answers to an hotel; a *Posada*, which represents an inn, though generally of very inferior quality; and a *Venta*, which is the merest public-house. In almost all the towns, howevet, are *Casas de Huespedes*, boarding houses, where food and lodging are supplied at a fixed price, and which, as regards the latter, are often very comfortable; of the former it is seldom that much can be said. Houses of this kind which have rooms to be let furnished, hang out a piece of white paper from the *middle* of their balcony, but when the rooms are unfurnished, the paper is placed at the corner of the balcony. Almost all Spanish houses are distinguished by a heavy shield or coat-of-arms, often of very curious historical origin. Such is the badge of "El Nodo" represented on the outside of this volume, which is borne proudly over the gates of Seville and its Alcazar, given by Alonzo el Sabio, when that town alone was faithful to him in his misfortunes, and meaning "No m'ha dejado" ("She has not deserted me"), *Madeja* being expressed by the central figure representing *a skein.*

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I.

NAVARRE AND ARRAGON.

ZARAGOZA, *December* 29, 1871.

WE have entered Spain at the end of December, which is by no means the best time of the year for beginning our tour. The traveller who intends to make a long progress through the Peninsula, and who wishes to do it comfortably and pleasantly, should not set out later than October, when he may hope to pass through one side of the bleak northern provinces, and reach beauty and sunshine before the cold weather sets in. In this we were prevented, but we have begun our journey, determined to find all possible compensation for our fatigues, to look at the bright side in everything, and, above all, not to be deterred by a little difficulty from seeing all we have come to visit.

Our passage of the boundary-line between

France and Spain was by no means triumphant. Just at the critical moment, when we were about to cross the Bidassoa, and all heads were out of the windows watching for the famous Isle of Pheasants, crash went the train off the line, knocking everybody back into their seats, and swamping sentiment in fright. We seemed likely to be detained for hours, but there is wonderful strength in numbers, and such a multitude of peasants obeyed the summons to assist in lifting the refractory carriages on to the line again, that less than an hour saw them all replaced, and five minutes after, we steamed across the narrow channel and entered Spain.

The change on crossing the boundary is strangely instantaneous, and the traveller is forced at once to realise how impossible it will be to travel in Spain without at least some knowledge of its language; for even on the frontier no other is understood, and the most embarrassing confusion is also in store for one who has not already mastered the intricate varieties of the Spanish coinage in which his fresh tickets have to be paid for. Immediately, also, Spanish customs come into play. You ask his worship the Porter to have the graciousness to assist you in lifting your portmanteau ("Mozo, hágame Usted el favor de llevar mi maleta"), and you implore his worship the Beggar, your brother, for the love of God to excuse you from giving him anything ("Perdóneme Usted, por Dios, hermano"). Pleasantly, however, does this excess of Spanish courtesy strike you when you are about to enter the railway carriage. However crowded it may be already, however filled up with the hand-bags and other impedimenta of its occupants, the new-comers, who would be scowled upon in England, are welcomed with smiles and willing help; places are at once made for them, their bags and baskets are comfortably stowed away, and everything that can be supplied is offered for their convenience; every Spanish gentleman is willing to assist, translate, or advise; and if you travel in the second-class carriages, which, as in many parts of Germany, are, in the north of Spain, often much more roomy and comfortable, and generally far less crowded than the first, not even the humblest peasant leaves it without lifting his hat and wishing you a hearty "A Dios, Señores."

The train crawls along in the most provoking way, stopping at all the small stations for two, four, ten, twenty minutes, and giving you ample time to survey the scenery. You feel impatient, but your Spanish companions are perfectly satisfied, "it is so much safer, so satisfactory never to have any accidents." Time is of no importance to them whatever. "One can smoke one's cigarritos as well in one place as another." This *insouciance* was fully displayed when we reached the junction station of Alsasua, where we were to change for Pamplona, and found our train had just been taken off by the company, without any previous notice having been given to that effect. It was pitch dark, and from the pouring rain which had continued for several days, the wild country round was little better than a swamp, so the prospect of a whole day's detention was by no means exhilarating; but finding our Spanish friends received the announcement with no greater expression of displeasure than a shrug of the shoulders, we thought it better to take it in the same way, and, as they said, to "avoid the fatigue of discomposing ourselves." Lanterns were brought to guide us down a slippery causeway and through a slough of red mud to a humble cottage-like Posada, where a woman with her head tied up in a bright red-and-yellow handkerchief gave us a warm reception, surrounded by her five cats and as many children. We found everything much better than we had expected; the small bedrooms had clean boarded floors, though no more furniture than was absolutely necessary, and the straw mattresses were covered with clean linen. There were no fire-places, but during the evening each was warmed for a time with a brasero filled with smouldering wood ashes. The night was bitterly cold, for the hills close around were thickly covered with snow; and after a humble supper of broth, boiled eggs, and potatoes, we clustered round a log-fire in the lower room, our party being increased by the station-master and two travelling bagmen, who diverted us with their various experiences, while the cats fought and screeched in the background. In the morning a small cup of chocolate was served to each, with some dry bread, for we had taken leave of butter on taking leave of the French soil. The hours of waiting passed more quickly than we expected, and the following afternoon we were speeding through the bleak mountainous country, interspersed with oak and cork woods.

Long before we reached it, we could see the rock-built Pamplona, its brown towers and walls standing out as if embossed against the delicate pale pink of the snow-tipped mountains, and rising from the long reaches of the dead green Cuenca, as the surrounding plain is called, the cup which contains the precious "key of Navarre," and which here closely resembles the Roman Campagna in its desolation and colouring.

The station is deep in the valley, and an omnibus took us into the town by a steep winding road, skirting the high walls, and passing a drawbridge and gateway. The only trees to be seen were a few white poplars, allowed to linger in life, when all other trees are cut down, in regard to the old Spanish belief that they were the first trees the Almighty created—the Adam of vegetation.

On entering the town the aspect of things is thoroughly Spanish: the brightly-painted houses thickly hung with balconies of wrought ironwork; the small "plazas" with their grey churches, in front of which groups of priests are seen mingling with the gay costumes of the peasantry; the great square surrounded by its heavy arcades; the avenues and gardens, especially that known as "La Taconera," the favourite resort of handsome black-robed señoras in their flowing mantillas, for here, indeed, a bonnet is unknown, and its wearer is followed about and pointed at as a curiosity.

From the great Plaza, considered to be one of the largest in Spain, in which 10,000 Jews were burnt alive to do honour to the marriage of a Count de Champagne—a human bonfire, which was visible from all the country round—a steep, stony street leads to the cathedral. Its Ionic front, built by Ventura Rodriquez in 1780, causes one to be agreeably surprised with the rest of the building, which dates from 1397, when Charles the Noble (or III.) pulled down an older church of 1100, leaving only the chapter-house and a part of the cloisters.

In the interior the tourist will first see the peculiar arrangement which is usual in the Spanish churches. Far down the nave, almost to its last pier, extends the raised *coro*, used only by the canons and choristers, and entirely shut in by its high partition walls, except where, towards the east, a passage marked by low brass rails (*rejas*), to prevent the priests from being pressed upon by the people, leads to the high altar, where the huge and splendid carved altar-piece, known as a *retablo*, takes the place of the reredos of an English cathedral. At the east end of the coro is the magnificent tomb of the founder, with his figure and that of his queen Leonor. The cloisters, enclosing a tangled garden and a lonely cypress, are a perfect dream of beauty, each canopied arch rising against the light open gallery of the second story, so as to display its delicate stonework to perfection. Here among other curiosities, is the tomb of Miguel Ancheta, sculptor of the choir stall-work, with a curious epitaph, and a little chapel enclosed by an iron palisade made from the chains taken in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. The knocker of the north transept door, formed by two serpents, is another noteworthy piece of ancient ironwork.

From the cathedral we follow the line of the walls—whose strength in the middle ages gave Pamplona the title of "muy noble, muy leal, y muy heroica," and which are said to have been originally founded by the sons of Pompey, who called the place Pompeiopolis,—till we emerged upon the Taconera, close to the church of S. Lorenzo, which contains a statue of the tutelar saint of the city, St. Fermin, who was born at Pamplona, but afterwards went to preach at Amiens, where his miracles are carved around the choir, and where the delicious scent of his dead body revealed its resting-place to the bishop, —his disinterment in mid winter being celebrated by an entire resurrection of nature, and the recovery of all the sick.

Near this is the citadel, which was besieged in 1521 by the army of Francis I., while Charles V. was absent in Germany. A handsome young knight, Ignatius Loyola, had been left to guard it, and defended it bravely, but was wounded and disabled, and the garrison surrendered upon seeing him fall. A cannon-ball had struck Loyola on both legs, and such was his personal vanity, that he insisted, after the wounds were healed, upon having his legs twice opened, and a projecting bone sawn off, lest their appearance should be injured; all, however, was of no avail, and he was lame for life. During his detention in the castle of Loyola, he asked for romances to amuse his convalescence, and none being forthcoming, lives of our Saviour and the saints were brought to him, which made him say to himself—"These men were of the same frame as I am, why should I not do as they have done?"—and he rose from his sick-bed with a firm desire to imitate them and to abandon the world and its vanities. The fair lady, to whom he declared that he would henceforth devote himself as champion, was the Virgin Mother of God, and the wars he would wage were those against the spiritual enemies of God's people. This change in the life of the founder of the Jesuits is commemorated at Pamplona by a small chapel near one of the gates, which contains an interesting portrait of Loyola, in his soldier's dress.

The Christmas mass in the cathedral of Pamplona was magnificent. No service in Italy can compare with the solemn bursts of music which follow the thrilling solos sung in these old Spanish churches, where every possible instrument is pressed into the service of the orchestra; and not less striking is the effect of the multitude of veiled figures who kneel in the dim light between the coro and the altar. At the *table d'hôte*, in honour of the day, we are regaled with *turrones*, a kind of almond hard-bake, only produced at Christmas.

A dreary journey, through a dismal barren wilderness, brought us to Tudela. On the way we passed Tafalla and Olite, once called the "Flowers of Navarre," and both of them royal residences, but now squalid villages of miserable hovels. In Olite, however, are two fine parish churches, and considerable remains of the ancient palace, which would be quite worth stopping at, and sketching between two trains, in fine weather, though the miserable town has no accomodation for travellers.

It was late and quite dark on Christmas Day when we reached Tudela and took a boy to guide us through the frozen streets to the Fonda della Caravaca. The cold was pitiless, and in our barely furnished rooms above a stable, without fire-places or even a brasero, it was impossible to obtain any warmth at all. Tudela does not, we think, deserve the praise Street bestows upon it, as containing "a church which is to be classed among the very best in any part of Europe," though the round-arched doors of the transepts are very grand, and that at the west end, of enormous span, encrusted all over with sculpture, is absolutely magnificent. I say round-arched advisedly, this style in Spain being more properly known as Gothic, while Pointed is spoken of as the German style. One descends a flight of steps from the west door into the church, which is greatly bedaubed all over and spoilt by grey and white paint. Similarly injured and much built up are the cloisters, which were exhibited to us, with some pride, by the priests of the church, from whom here, as everywhere in Spain, we experienced the greatest kindness and civility. A tower near the church,—which is a *parroquia*, not a cathedral,—has the picturesque Moorish decoration of coloured tiles inlaid in patterns.

In the evening we crossed the long narrow bridge of seventeen arches, and found a pleasant sunny walk by the banks of the Ebro, which is as yellow as the Tiber. But the fierce cold prevented our making the interesting excursion by diligence to Tarragona, and riding from thence on mules up the mountains to the abbey of Veruela, the oldest Cistercian house in Spain. Those who read as we have done the beautiful letters of Gustavo Becquer, written 'Desde mi Celda,' in this convent, and filled with the most lovely pictures of nature amid its surrounding scenery, will long to visit the spot whence they were drawn.

To do justice to the ugliness of the scenery between Tudela and Zaragoza would be impossible —to the utter desolation of the treeless, stony, uninhabited wastes, across which the ice-laden north-west winds whistle uninterruptedly. But at length the railway skirts the Ebro, and almost immediately passes the grand old bridge built in 1437, beyond which, on either side of the principal thoroughfare, rise the two cathedrals of Zaragoza, in which the chapter does duty for six months alternately. Through narrow, squalid streets an omnibus takes you to the broad open Plaza de la Constitucion, where the comfortable Fonda de Europa is situated. In this, as in all other Spanish hotels, a fixed price exists, which includes apartments, food—at the regular meals provided by the hotel—service, and lights. No extra charges are made. The cost of living in these hotels varies from the equivalent of five to eight shillings, generally in proportion to the importance of the place where you may be.

In the older Spanish towns it is useless to take a guide, and it is almost equally so to ask your way, as the natives are wholly unacquainted with their own antiquities, and uninstructed in their own history. It is only to those who wander indefatigably through the winding streets, that all the interesting objects gradually reveal themselves, though the process is often assisted by the ascent, in the first instance, of some lofty tower, whence the town is seen as in a map.

At Zaragoza the sights naturally begin with the bridge, to the left of which rises the older cathedral of El Seo. Its front, modernised in the seventeenth century, occupies one side of a square, which also contains the archiepiscopal palace and the Lonja, or exchange, a fine but decaying building of 1551, with a richly carved projecting soffit, beneath which many heads of kings and knights are inserted in medallion frames. The north-east wall and apse of the church are splendid specimens of mauresque diaper-work, inlaid with coloured tiles.

On entering the cathedral from the sunlit square, one finds oneself in absolute darkness until one's eyes become accustomed to the change, so intense is the gloom which reigns amid its solemn Gothic arches, where even the faint light from the small round windows high up in the walls is tempered by crimson curtains. Besides these there are no other windows in the body of the church, the whole face of the lower walls being filled up with a mass of Churriguerresque sculpture (so called from the much-abused architect, José Churriguerra, who died 1725), which, though paltry and tasteless in detail, is inexpressibly rich and gorgeous in its general effect. The centre of the five aisles is occupied by the coro, surrounded by a magnificent screen, incrusted with statues and bas-reliefs, which tell the stories of San Lorenzo and San Vicente. At its western extremity, or *trascoro*, a statue of Canon Funes kneels in a niche, on the selfsame spot where he is supposed to have knelt in his lifetime, when conversing with the Virgin. No low rejas, as at Pamplona, lead from the coro to the high altar, which only slightly recedes from beneath the beautiful lanthorn-tower, or *Cimborio*, of 1520. Over the altar is a vast retablo, around which are grouped the tombs of several sixteenth-century archbishops, and that of the heart of Don Balthazar, son of Philip IV., the well-known Infante of Velazquez, who died here of the small-pox, at the age of seventeen. On the right of the altar is a grand plateresque door leading to the sacristy, and near it a chapel commemorating the so-called martyrdom of the fierce inquisitor San Pedro Arbues, who shared the fate of Thomas à Becket, being murdered in this cathedral by Vidal Duranso, September 15, 1495. He well deserved this end for his cruelties, and it has been of the utmost service to art, in giving rise to one of the finest pictures of Murillo, a pendant to the St. Peter Martyr of Titian. Tradition says that, on his assassination, the great bell of Velilla was heard to strike, being the fourth time since the Moorish occupation; its miraculous tolling always announcing some disaster to the monarchy. At the west end of the church is a chapel containing the tombs of Archbishop Fernando, grandson of Ferdinand the Catholic, and his mother, Aña Gurrea, by the admirable sculptor Diego Morlanes.

Leaving the Seo, the traveller should cross to the other cathedral of El Pilar, than which it is impossible to imagine a more complete contrast. Outside, it resembles a mosque, or Sant' Antonio of Padua, in its endless towers and domes, covered with bright orange, green, and blue tiles, which glitter in the sunshine. Though much modernised in the last century, the exterior of the building, five hundred feet in length, is imposing from its vast size. Within, it is a monument of folly and bad taste, painted and gilt like a Parisian café. Towards its western extremity, in the centre of the nave, is the *sanctum sanctorum*, a semi-circular temple, surrounded by granite columns, where the Virgin, descending upon a pillar, part of which may be seen through a hole—it is too sacred to be gazed upon in its entirety—appeared to Santiago.

This famous shrine, which had its origin in Arragonese jealousy of the pilgrimages to the Castilian Compostella, is one of the greatest loadstars of Spanish devotion. Hundreds of pilgrims are always kneeling in front of the black image, or pressing to kiss its feet. The wardrobe of La Virgen del Pilar is inexhaustible, and she is constantly changing her gorgeous apparel, the priests who perform her toilette averting their eyes at the time, lest they should be struck with blindness by the contemplation of her charms. Fifty thousand pilgrims sometimes flock hither on the 12th of October alone, which is the festival of the Pilar; and no wonder, for "God alone," said Pope Innocent III., "can count the miracles which are then performed here;" while Cardinal Retz, who was here in 1649, affirms in his memoirs, that he saw with his own eyes a leg which had been cut off grow again upon being rubbed with oil from one of the Virgin's lamps.

In the Calle Santiago, near El Pilar, is one of the best specimens of an old Zaragozan house, enclosing a patio, or courtyard, surrounded with sculptured pillars, but now decaying, like everything here (except idol-worship), and turned into a coachmaker's yard. Hence, as well as the inexhaustible and interminable beggars would allow, we followed the narrow streets to the Plaza San Felipe, which contains the leaning tower of Spain—the grand octangular Torre Nueva, diapered all over with lace-like patterns from Moorish designs.

A neighbouring church, San Pablo, is a most picturesque relic of the thirteenth century, with a fine retablo by Damian Forment of Valencia, a coro of 1500, and another splendid octagonal brick tower. Hard by is the site of the Portillo, where Agostina, the maid of Zaragoza, snatched the match from the hand of her slaughtered lover and worked the gun in his place. Enclosed in a barrack near this are some decaying remains of the Moorish palace, Aljaferia.

We re-entered the town by the handsome promenade called Paseo de Santa Engracia, from a fine church which was completed by Charles V. All except the west front was destroyed by the French in 1808, but this, with its portal in the form of a retablo, is well worth examination, being filled with delicate sculpture of 1505 by Juan Morlanes. Gerónimo Zurita, the famous historian of Arragon, died and was buried in this convent, 1580. A little farther than this, on the line of the city wall, is San Miguel, perhaps the richest, as it is the most picturesque, of all the fifteenth century buildings of Zaragoza, covered with delicate Moorish tracery. All these would be most delightful and interesting, but in these fierce ice-laden winds it is almost impossible to look at them without feeling cut to pieces. Blocks of ice line the streets, and the miserable plants on the public walks are shrivelled up and blackened in their vases. People are walking about wrapped in huge *mantas* like blankets, which cover their heads and bodies at the same time: and now, in front of the hotel, a poor woman shivering with cold, though enveloped in a manta of gorgeous colours, is trying to earn a tew cuartos by singing snatches from the song of the season, the strange but wonderfully picturesque "Noche Buena." Here are some of them:—

"La Virgen se fué á lavar
Sus manos blancas al rio;
El sol se quedó parado,
La mar perdió su ruido.

"Los pastores de Belen
Todos juntos van por leña,
Para calentar al niño
Que nació la noche buena.

* * *

"San José era carpintero,
Y la Virgen costurera
Y el niño labra la Cruz
Por que ha de morir en ella"—

which may be rendered thus:—

"To the stream the Virgin Mother
Hied, her fair white hands to lave:
The wond'ring sun stood still in heaven;
And ocean hushed his rolling wave.

"One and all came Bethlehem's shepherds,
Fuel-laden from the height,
Warmth to bring the Blessed Nursling,
Who was born that happy night.

* * * * *

"A carpenter was good St. Joseph,
A seamstress poor the mother maid;
The Child it toiled the cross to fashion.
On which our ransom should be paid."

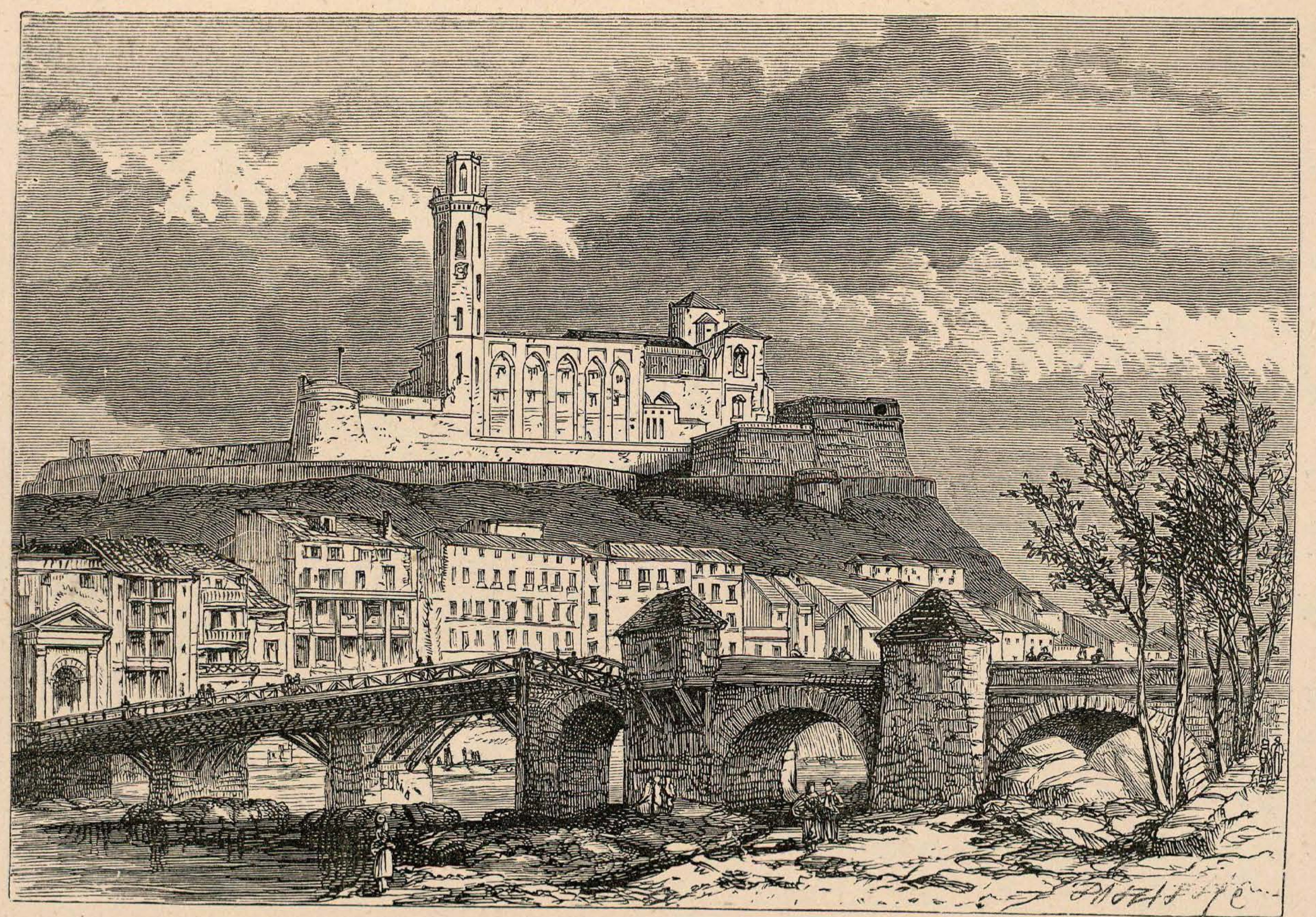
II.

IN CATALONIA.

CONVENT OF MONSERRAT, *January* 4, 1872.

HIDEOUS as was the country we had passed through before reaching Zaragoza, it paled before the frightfulness of that which we had to traverse on the way to Lerida—six hours without a tree or shrub or symptom of vegetation, but barren, malaria-stricken swamps, riven here and there into deep crevasses by the action of some extinct volcano, seeming alike forsaken by God and man. From Tardienta, a branch railway leads to Huesca, which is exceedingly worth visiting, as well for the sake of the relics it contains of the old palace of the Arragonese kings, as for the number of curious churches and convents scattered over the surrounding hills, which have never been sufficiently explored by English travellers. But the cold was still so severe, and the rain falling in such torrents, that we thought it safer to proceed at once to Lerida, where we knew we should find better accommodation, and where we had been told that the climate would begin to be milder.

It was not until we reached our destination that the scenery began to improve; but Lerida looks down upon an olive-clad plain, and in itself is gloriously picturesque, a huge mass of purple rock, three hundred feet high, being crowned by fortifications containing the old cathedral, with its tall tower and long line of cloister arches rising from the very edge of the precipice. The narrow space between the cliff and the river is occupied by the town—tall houses with arches and balconies facing a quay of heavy masonry, beneath which runs the Segre, and whence there is one of those views which artists love, of a still reach of river, with an old mill, and delicate gradations of pink and blue-green distance. A long bridge of yellow stone is broken midway, and across the ruined piers a wooden causeway on huge beams leads to the old brown gateway of the town. Just at one of the most charming bends of this view is the Fonda San Luiz, a thoroughly Spanish hotel, but clean and comfortable, and possessing a delightful terrace overhanging the river.



LERIDA.

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Through the driving fog, and up streets which were almost like cascades from the heavy rain which had fallen, we made our way to the old cathedral, which is now abandoned by the canons on account of the steepness of the ascent, but a visit to which Street declares to be alone worth all the journey from England. This visit is, however, difficult to accomplish, as, from its position inside the fortifications, a special order has to be obtained and countersigned by the governor and military authorities. The main edifice dates from 1230, and the cloisters are among the most beautiful in Europe, but cut up for barrack purposes. The fog prevented our seeing the grand view of the Pyrenees, but Lerida, the Roman Ilerda, lay stretched beneath, and the winding Segre, which is said to have proved fatal to the daughter of Herodias, who gallivanted upon its frozen waters till she fell through the ice, and it cut off her head, which continued to dance by itself.

Another hideous journey brought us to Manresa, where we arrived in the dark, and took a guide, to lead the way through the ankle-deep mud and up the steep, tortuous streets, quite impervious to carriages, to the Posada del Sol. The first aspect of our inn was not encouraging, when the boy who carried our bags opened a door into a stable, where a number of rough-looking men were drinking, and whence a filthy stair led to some bare brick-floored rooms, with pallet-beds and scanty furniture. As in all smaller posadas, looking-glasses are unknown here, so a small hand-glass may be conveniently carried. There was no washing-stand in our rooms, and when we remonstrated, a pie-dish was found for the ladies, but the landlady protested that for "los señores" such things were both unknown and unnecessary, as they could wash themselves at a public stone trough, of which there was one at the end of the passage, and another in the comedór (*salle à manger*); and at the latter, in fact, a Spanish traveller, in his shirt, coolly came to perform his ablutions while we were breakfasting. However, the willing kindness of our young hostess made up for much that was wanting; and a supper of broth, vegetables, and some rough scraps of boiled meat was supplied to us. In the evening we were amused by her *sang-froid* in receiving a visit from her lover in the room where we were, the one common room. When the time came for him to go, he looked round at us, and asked if he should kiss her as usual. "Certainly," she said; "why not?" Upon which he did kiss her—not once only.

But oh! how entirely Manresa itself makes up for any amount of suffering, when, having followed the filthy streets—not paved, but cut out of the living rock—for some distance, and having descended a rugged way between two walls, which looks as if it led to a stone quarry, the view from the esplanade before the church of St. Ignatius suddenly bursts upon your sight! In front rises the grand colegiata of El Seo, built of yellow-grey stone, perched on the summit of the dark rocks, broken into a thousand picturesque hollows, which are filled with little gardens, where Indian corn, and vines, and cypresses flourish. On the right rises range above range of gaily-painted houses of the most varied and irregular forms,—arches, balconies, overhanging galleries, little ledges of roof supporting tiny hanging gardens with ivy and jessamine tangling over their edge. Deep down in the abyss flows the Llobregat, crossed by its tall bridge of pointed arches, and ending at a richly carved stone cross on a high pedestal. Beyond the river are ranges of olive-clad hills, above which, as we were drawing in the afternoon, uprose in mid-air a glorious vision, lifted high into the sky: pinnacles, spires, turrets, sugar-loaves, pyramids of faint-grey rocks, so wonderful that it was almost impossible to believe them a reality and not a phantasmagoria —the mountains of Monserrat.

We seem to be following in the footsteps of Ignatius Loyola, who remained here, after his conversion, for a whole year in a cave, unknown by any, except his confessors. He fasted the whole week on water and bread (which he begged), and on Sunday indulged in a few boiled herbs strewn with ashes. He wore an iron girdle and a hair-shirt, scourged himself twice a day, slept little, and lay on the ground. Every day he spent seven hours on his knees in prayer, and he received the sacraments every Sunday. To mortify his former personal vanity, he went about begging with his face covered with dirt, his hair long and unkempt, and his beard and nails of appalling length. The children pelted him with stones. For a long time "he found no comfort in prayer, no relief in fasting, no remedy in disciplines, no consolation from the sacraments, and his soul was overwhelmed with bitter sadness. But eventually his tranquillity of mind was perfectly restored, and his soul overflowed with spiritual joy, and he afterwards assured F. Lainez that he had learned more of divine mysteries by prayer in one hour at Manresa, than all the doctors of the schools could ever have taught him." * He was consoled by the belief that the Virgin smiled constantly upon him from her sanctuary at Monserrat during the year of his penance.

The vast convent which contains the famous cave is jammed into the narrow space between the terrace and the precipice. Externally it is covered with sculpture, not in the best style, but very effective. Within, from the large church, a passage lined with pictures relating to the history of the Jesuits, leads to the "Santa Cueva," left in its rugged rock nature, only the lower part being incrusted with bas-reliefs, which can be examined by the light of the swinging lamps. On the altar is the crucifix of Loyola, from whose wounds blood is supposed to have streamed forth.

From the Cueva we mounted the opposite hill to El Seo, an interesting church, with a rich canopied entrance; within, dark and gloomy, with a small but effective coro, and some brilliant remains of the stained glass, of which the greater

* See Butler's "Lives of the Saints," vol. vii.

part was destroyed by the French. Here, at mass, the women all appear in white flannel hoods, and in the half light look like the dead in their shrouds, but the men wear mantas of the most gorgeous colours.

La Cueva and El Seo are the only two regular sights of Manresa, but inexhaustible is the ever-varying beauty of the views from the lovely walks on the heights above the Llobregat, in one of which, a stone cross, near the convent of Sta. Clara, marks a spot where Loyola used to preach.

The vision of Monserrat made us long for the nearer reality, but it was two days ere we could tear ourselves away from the beauties of Manresa. Then we took the train to Monistrol, which faces the great purple amphitheatre of mountains, and where, at the station, we found a *tartana* waiting—a round covered cart lined with carpet—in which we jolted up the hills for two hours and a half, the views becoming finer at every turn, till on a ledge of rock we suddenly came upon a tall cross, inscribed—"Aqùi se hizo la Santa Imagen en 880," and immediately found ourselves under the convent walls. A gateway, beside a wide-arched Gothic fountain, leads to the upper courts, on one side of which rise the conventual buildings themselves, with their half-ruined cloisters, and, on the other three, the immense suites of rooms destined for the reception of the pilgrims (of whom no less than 200,000 often come here in the month of September alone), and inscribed with the names of the different saints to whom they are dedicated—Santa Gertrudis, Santa Scholastica, Santa Teresa, San Alphonso, San Ignacio, &c.

We were assigned rooms in one of these: not uncomfortable, if their cold brick floors had had any fire-places to warm them. A man was sent to bring us some water, sheets, and towels, a little wood and charcoal was placed in the tiny kitchen which belonged to our apartment, and we were then left to shift for ourselves. Soon the bell warned us that the New Year's evening service was about to begin, and we hurried to the church, where, groping our way through the dark pillars, we took our seats close to the reja. There, so many candles were lighted around the altar, that the famous image—a black doll in a robe of silver tissue—shone forth resplendently. The priest who lighted the lamps, when he went up to her, kissed her on the cheeks. When all was ready a long procession of boys in surplices filed in and grouped themselves around the image. Then the strangest service began: singing, sweet and soft at first, but suddenly breaking off into the most discordant yells and shrieks, accompanied by a blowing of whistles and horns, beating of tin clappers, with fiddles, trumpets, and cymbals. There were about sixty performers, and a congregation of eight. Altogether it was most extraordinary, but we heard afterwards that this most unmelodious music was intended as typical of the rude worship of the shepherds at Bethlehem.

The image, like most of its kind, "black but comely," is attributed to St. Luke as a sculptor, and is said to have been brought to Barcelona by St. Peter in A.D. 30. During the Moorish invasion it lay hidden for sixty years in a cave, where its delicious scent discovered it to Bishop Gondemar, who attempted to remove it to Manresa, but when it reached an especial ledge of the mountain side it refused to move further. Hence an oratory arose on the spot, which was enlarged into a nunnery, converted in 976 into a Benedictine convent. The present church is due to Philip II., and was opened in 1599. It is of small interest. Some remnants of an earlier church, with the tomb of a young warrior, are preserved in the museum of the convent.

By lighting one match after another in the dark passages, we found our way back to our apartment, where we passed the night as the sole inhabitants of our vast wing of the convent. Only the hooting of an owl broke the silence, the bird which Spanish legend relates to have been present at the crucifixion, and ever since to have repeated in a terror and woe-stricken voice, "Cruz! cruz!"

Next morning we set off early up the mountains. It had frozen all night, and nothing could be lovelier than the effect of the thick hoar frost —every delicate leaf and blade of grass being encrusted with ice, and standing out like glistening diamonds against the grey fog. Without having seen a fog, no one should leave Monserrat, for, glorious as it is at all times, this natural veil lends an indescribable softness and mystery to the views, and the moment when the curtain draws up, and the sun bursts forth victoriously, is so intensely splendid. We were then in one of the high rock terraces, several miles above the convent, where no sound except the occasional cry of an eagle broke the entire stillness, for not a breath of air stirred the frost-laden boughs. Suddenly the mist rolled away, and in the distance was revealed on one side the long expanse of the

Mediterranean, from Barcelona to Tarragona, with the shining threads of rivers leading up to it through numberless towns and villages, and on the other the vast range of the Pyrenees, quite covered with snow, against the softest of blue skies. Deep below were the most tremendous abysses of rock, often perpendicular precipices of two and three thousand feet, but, wherever any soil could lodge, filled with the wealth of innumerable lovely shrubs—box, aliternus, laurestinus, filarœa, lentisck, euphorbia, and flowering heath,—all evergreens, which, according to the old Spanish tradition, are permitted to bear their leaves all the year round, because they sheltered the weariness of the Virgin Mother and the Holy Child during their flight into Egypt. Where these could not find foothold, the sides of the rock are clothed with cascades of honeysuckle, smilex, and jessamine. High in the rugged crags, remains of ruined hermitages seemed as if suspended over the face of the abyss, so utterly inaccessible that one would have thought the inmates could only have reached them by a miracle, and that it was quite impossible that the troops under Suchet should have climbed up thither to rob and murder when "they hunted the hermits like chamois along the cliffs."

The afternoon was occupied in visiting the different buildings of the convent and the relics they contain. Here again the chief historical interest comes from Ignatius Loyola, who came hither from Pamplona, as soon as he was cured of his wounds, and made a confession which lasted three days, to a saintly French monk who was then residing here. On his way up to the convent, he bought in the village a long coat of coarse cloth, a girdle, sandals, a wallet, and a pilgrim's staff. In the church he took a vow of perpetual chastity, and dedicated himself with the greatest fervour to the divine service. Then giving his horse to the monks, and hanging up his sword before the altar of the Virgin, in sign of renunciation of his temporal warfare, he walked away, barefoot and bareheaded, to his penance at Manresa.

On the second day of our stay we took provisions, and followed the winding paths, sometimes overhanging the perpendicular edge of the precipice, sometimes descending and burying themselves in deep ravines of box and ilex, till we reached the highest peak of the mountain group. Hence, the view is surpassingly magnificent. The whole of Catalonia, tossed and riven into myriad fantastic forms of hill and cleft, lies beneath, bounded only by the snowy ranges and the sea. So tremendous are the gorges into which you look down, that the eye can scarcely fathom their awful depths, and the birds descending into them, vanish away in the distance.

Just beneath the summit is the ruined hermitage of S. Geronimo, the furthest, but one of the easiest of access, of the many now desolated retreats which were so eagerly sought after by the devotional feeling of the Middle Ages, and where many of the proudest and noblest Spaniards passed their latter years in absolute solitude, attending to their own humble wants, and in a life of constant penance and prayer. Two little rooms remain here, with the paved terrace and the stone seat of the hermit, and certainly it would be hard for him to find a more heaven-inspiring place than this silent mountain peak, looking down through all the glories of nature upon the world he had renounced.

The ascent to S. Geronimo occupies about three hours, but we were away nine hours altogether. As we were returning, just as the bell of the convent, from its green invisible depths, gave notice, amid mountain echoes, of the Ave

Maria, an enchanter's wand seemed to smite the heavens, which above the sea burst into a crimson flush, melting into the most delicate emerald, while every crag of the valley glowed as if tipped with burnished gold, rising from its purple chasms; and then, silently, the blue veil arose and shrouded peak after peak, gorgeous in colour at first, but solemnly fading till all Nature was asleep beneath a grey mantle.

On the third day we set of in quite another direction, taking a precipitous path which winds around the gorge beneath the convent to the Cave of the Virgin, where the famous image was concealed during the Moorish occupation, angels guiding the priests who bore it, over rift and chasm, to a place of safety. We had taken the key from the convent, which admitted us to the cave, now a chapel, perched eyrie-like on the edge of the ravine, where a series of bas-reliefs tell the story of the shrine, and behind which a convent contains a pretty Gothic cloister with a well. Another path afterwards led us to the Cueva de Garin, where a painted stone figure commemorates a hermit, who long lived there on his hands and knees, and where his basket, pitcher, &c., are preserved. Behind the convent, a narrow strip of flat ground is occupied by a garden full of roses,—roses, which were white once, say the monks, and which owe their present purple colour to a drop of the Saviour's blood, which fell upon their leaves from the cross, as they bloomed on Mount Calvary. These are only a few out of a thousand subjects for the pencil, each more enchanting than the last; the enormous pinnacles of rock, the rugged pathways with their stone crosses and hermitages, and the ancient evergreen shrubs, combining at every step into fresh and better composition with the delicate pinks and blues of the mountain distance. Monserrat besides has the advantage of being a most comfortable place to stay at, as, though only lodging is given by the monks (for a voluntary payment, none is asked), there is an excellent Fonda in the courtyard of the convent, which provides as good food as can be found it Barcelona itself. The air is the purest and most reviving imaginable, and even in the first days of January the cold was not greater than in the valleys, as the monastery is so sheltered, while the rich growth of aloes attests the dryness of the soil; and on the higher terraces, in the brilliant sunshine, it was almost too hot. Altogether it is wonderful that Monserrat, surely far more beautiful than any single spot in France, Switzerland, Germany, or Italy, and so easily accessible in two days from the south of France (*via* Gerona and Barcelona), should be almost unknown to English tourists.