



SPAIN
AS IT IS

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G. A. Hoskins, Esq^r del.

The Convent of Montserrat

SPAIN, AS IT IS.

BY

G. A. HOSKINS, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF

“TRAVELS IN ETHIOPIA, AND VISIT TO THE GREAT OASIS,”
ETC. ETC.



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SPAIN AS IT IS.

CHAPTER I.

CHURCHES—SAN JULIAN—SAN LUIS—SANTA PAULA—UNIVERSITY—SAN CRISTOBAL—SAN PABLO—SAN ANTONIO—SAN VICENTE—SAN LORENZO—SAN CLEMENTE—OMNIUM SANCTORUM—SAN MARTIN—SAN ANDRÉS—SAN JUAN DE LA PALMA—SAN PEDRO—SAN BERNARDO—SANTA MARIA DEL BLANCO—SAN ALBERTO—LA CARIDAD—THE FINEST MURILLOS IN SEVILLE.

THERE are a great many churches in Seville worth visiting for their architecture, and especially for the valuable paintings they contain ; but those who are not interested in this subject, may pass on to the end of the chapter. Travellers should give their *valet-de-place* a list of those churches and sights they wish to see, as they know best when they are open.

In the Church of San Julian we saw a San Cris-

tobal, colossal as usual, by Juan Sanchez de Castro, painted in 1484, and therefore one of the oldest works of art in Spain. Unfortunately it has been restored, and is now again in a bad state, but the drawing is very good. In his belt are small representation of pilgrims, and a figure is looking up in amazement at the giant. They have also a Holy Family, by the same painter, which enjoys a high reputation for curing the sick, but unluckily it is now in the chamber of an invalid, and we could not see it. As the guide remarked, it might cause her death to remove it (*Cosas de España*). There is a little Conception, pretty, and somewhat in Murillo's style.

The *façade* of the Jesuit's church, San Luis, now a workhouse, is a rich specimen of the plateresque. The tower of the Church of St. Mark is Moorish, and ornamented with arches.

The Church of Santa Paula has on the portal leading to it a beautiful azulejos dado, representing a lady, four cypresses, and arms, pavements, &c., and the arch of the portal is pretty. The portico of the church is still more beautifully decorated with azulejos, Raphaelesques, and figures and angels. Two St. Johns, by Cano, were put by in a store-room, the church being under repair.

The University was also erected by the Jesuits, after designs by Herrera. The court, with its marble columns is pretty, but the church is not

remarkable for its architecture. In a simple Corinthian retablo are three fine paintings, by Roelas, who was the painter of the Jesuits as Murillo was of the Franciscans and Zurbaran of the Carthusians. One is a Holy Family, in which there is a fine figure of a Jesuit in the foreground. The Madonna is very beautiful, and St. Joseph unusually so; the drawing of this painting is excellent, and the colouring extremely rich. This painting and the two others, the Nativity and the Adoration, are the finest paintings in Seville of this great painter, and deserve to be particularly studied. Above is a Holy Family, painted by Pacheco.

In this church are two colossal statues of St. Peter and St. Paul, said to be by Montanes; also a fine Crucifixion, by the same artist, and a small painting of an infant, by Roelas. The tombs of the Duke of Medina Celis' family, removed from the Carthusian, are very fine. The columns, are covered with plateresque decorations. The figure kneeling before the open book, and the angel opposite, forming together what may be intended for the Annunciation, are very beautiful.

In the Church of San Salvador the San Cristobal, by Montañes, is fine. The legs are extremely good, but the light is so bad, the rest of the figure is imperfectly seen. This church was built on the site of a mosque, but the small court, planted with

oranges, and the fountain where the Moslems performed their ablutions, is all that remains of the ancient building.

San Pablo is large, with a gorgeous retablo; but the church is not in good taste, and is scarcely worth visiting. The large fresco in the transept, representing I think the apotheosis of some church dignitary, is by Lucas Valdes, who was born at Seville in 1661. The saints at each end of the painting are graceful, but the colouring is not good, and apparently injured. There are four large figures (frescoes) of the Evangelists, on the columns of the nave, which are finely drawn and well coloured. In the sacristy there are three subjects, painted on the roof by Arteaga, one of a family of engravers, who flourished at Seville in the seventeenth century. Our Saviour appearing to St. Paul, surrounded by a host of soldiers, is not bad; but the best is a group of angels, carrying up the saint to heaven.

In the Church of San Antonio Aben there is a Christ, by Montañes, the head and hands of which alone are visible, and are very fine, though the silver ornaments with which it is loaded, destroy the effect. In another part of the church they showed us the large tortoise-shell cross, belonging to this figure, when it is carried during the processions of the Holy Week.

In the Church of San Vicente there is a tolerable

Deposition from the Cross, by Morales, and some indifferent, large paintings, by Francisco de Varela, who was born at Seville, towards the end of the sixteenth century, and was a pupil of Roelas; but, to judge from these paintings, not one of his best.

San Lorenzo is a curious old church, and the Conception, by Pacheco, is beautifully coloured and well drawn, and certainly the cleverest painting I have seen by this master. The retablo is good, and ornamented with excellent and richly-coloured sculpture, by Montañes, representing the life of the saint. *Il Nuestro Señor de Gran Poder*, by the same artist, is an uncommonly fine statue, and full of expression.

The Church of San Clemente has a beautiful roof of alerce wood, with charming open-work, the great attraction of Moorish rooms. The retablo of the high altar is by Montañes, in the plateresque style; but the effect is rich, and some of the decorations, especially on the columns, are very elegant. There are numerous niches, filled with statues, crowned with a Christ and the Creator above; and all seemed to be by Montañes, and good. There is also, in a side chapel, a St. John the Baptist pointing to the Lamb on a rock, very excellent, by Pedro Delgado; and there are also two indifferent paintings of St. Ferdinand, by Pacheco.

The Church of *Omnium Sanctorum* has a Moorish tower, having formerly been a mosque, and in

the church there is a little Moorish arch, with very pretty azulejos.

The Church of San Martin consists of one aisle, and its retablo contains some old paintings, by Herrera el Viejo, in his earliest style, and not at all good. The Chapel of Juan Sanchez Gallego, built in 1500 and repaired in 1614, is covered with beautiful azulejos, and over the altar is ornamented with a Descent from the Cross, which, from the inscription, is a Roman painting. The colouring of the flesh is good. In a chapel at the end of the church there is a large and fine painting, by Valdes, of Our Saviour bearing His Cross.

In the Church of San Andrés there is a Conception, but not by Montañes, being very inferior to that master's works; and some little pictures, by Villegas (born here in 1520), of which the one of the Creator is certainly the best. It is well drawn, and the colouring is good. There is a face of the Virgin de la Valle, said to be by Montañes, and it may be, for it is well executed, but the hands are stiff.

In San Juan de la Palma there is a Crucifixion, by Campaña, which is rather hard but the Virgin and the Magdalen at the foot of the Cross are beautifully drawn, and the colouring and the expression admirable. A San Juan, carved in wood, by Castillo, is full of expression and very good, the hands also are well painted. The Christ at the column, mentioned in the Handbook, does not exist there now.

This church was once a mosque, and on the left of the entrance there is an Arabic inscription, stating that "this great temple was rebuilt in 1080, by Axataf."

The Church of San Pedro has a tower, which is rather Moorish, and the windows lighting the staircase are curious. The roof of the church is open carved work, and very beautiful. There are some paintings, said to be by Campaña, but spoilt by repainting. The Angel delivering St. Peter, by Roelas, is very fine; the colouring and drawing admirable, particularly the angel.

The Church of San Bernardo has a pretty dome and tower, and contains a fine Last Judgment, by Herrera el Viejo. Some of the figures are very excellent, particularly the angel in the centre with the sword, and the figure in red in the right corner of the picture. On the other side of the painting are some half-naked figures, finely drawn. I could not get sufficient curtains drawn to see this picture as it deserves. The statue of San Bernardo, by Montañes, is cleverly executed; and there is also a tolerable painting of the Last Supper, by Varela, the drawing and colouring of which are better than the expression, yet still it is a good painting.

The Church of Santa Maria del Blanco, which was formerly a synagogue, contains a Last Supper, by Murillo. The Christ is fine, and the light on the cloth good; but the painting is much

injured and dirty, and could never have been a first-rate work of the master. There is also a Dead Christ, and a St. John and a St. Francis on each side; all three pictures by Vargas. The Magdalene kissing the Saviour's feet is very beautiful, but this painting is also in a wretched state.

The Church of San Alberto is not worth visiting, as the Cano, spoken of by the handbook, does not exist now. I observed a St. Michael, which seemed to be by Pacheco; but it was the time of High Mass, and I could not examine the church well without disturbing the congregation.

La Caridad, outside the walls, is a refuge for bedridden old men, and was rebuilt and almost founded by Signor Miguel Manara, a friend of Murillo's. It now contains eighty invalids, but as they must be bedridden, they are seldom allowed to leave their beds, even if partially restored health enables them. The building itself is worthy of admiration, independent of the treasures of art it contains. The court is beautiful, and ornamented with marble columns. Looking through a window, I saw the old people lying in their beds chatting cheerfully. The room seemed well ventilated and comfortable, and scrupulously clean, as is usual in Spain. Entering the church we first observed the Descent from the Cross, by Peter Roldan, carved in wood; the background is admirable and perspective excellent, but the silver ornaments on the Dead Christ, and other figures in

the foreground, spoil the effect. Pedro Roldan was born at Seville in 1624, and was a scholar of Montañes, and so fond of his art, that it is said that when business obliged him to leave his studio to go to Seville, he used to carry a lump of clay in his hand, and model as he jogged along the road on his ass.

We then observed a horrid, disgusting painting of a dead prelate, by Valdes Leal, which Murillo said he could not look at without holding his nose; and opposite to it the Triumph of Time, by the same painter, who was born at Cordova in 1630, and was a pupil of Castillos. As Sir F. Head observes, this observation was probably made by Murillo to soothe the irritation of an artist who was dangerously jealous of every painter of talent. In the Triumph of Time, the skeleton, instruments, globe, and book are finely coloured. Under the roof is a painting representing the Triumph of the Cross, also by Valdes, but not particularly good.

The first of the Murillos we saw was San Juan de Dios; St. John of God carrying a poor man to the hospital. The head of the poor cripple is not seen, but the attitude is fine. The principal light is admirably thrown on the head of St. John, and on an angel with exquisite drapery behind, to whom the Saint is turning to see who is assisting him in his labour of love. This painting is full of expression, extremely natural, and the colouring admirable. The background is very dark, but the light is bad.

The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes is a splendid painting: the five thousand are grouped in the distance, and a wild landscape beyond, such as may often be seen amongst the sierras of Spain, with a fine sky and beautiful play of light. In the foreground, on one side, the principal figures of a group of ten, are Peter speaking to a boy with a basket of fishes, whom Murillo only could have painted so inimitably, and another Apostle giving our Saviour the loaves. Christ is seated, calm and dignified, not very beautiful in feature, but natural and unpretending, the meekest of men, when performing one of His greatest miracles. Other Apostles are watching our Saviour, and two grand figures are looking at the multitude. The group on the other side of the picture consists of a matron and her child, and an old woman with a remarkably fine head. They are gazing at our Saviour with feminine curiosity, to see what He is doing. The basket in the foreground, which contained the bread, is well painted. Beneath this painting is a little St. John and the Lamb, by the same artist.

The finest Murillo here, and perhaps in the world, is the Moses Striking the Rock. The figure of Moses with his hands folded, and white beard, looking up to heaven, is majestic beyond description; and his yellow tunic and crimson mantle are admirably painted. The rock from which the water flows is dark, and in the gloom of this sole portion of the picture