

has been here about twenty years, has, however, a high English manner, which was rather amusing in a land where the priests are now so crest-fallen. The college was founded by the celebrated Jesuit Parsons, in the time of Philip II., and they have large possessions in this one of the richest districts in Spain.

The Colegio de Santa Cruz is now the museum, but unfortunately it is seldom open, and many were the journeys I made to it before I succeeded in finding the *custode* at his post. There are no regular guides at Valladolid, and besides the distances being considerable, there is not a city in Spain where there is greater difficulty in sight-seeing. One church is open at one hour, another never opened at all, and the keeper of the keys resides at a distance; but as a general rule, early in the morning is the most likely time to find them open. The best plan here and throughout Spain, is to make a list of all you wish to see, and give it to your valet; and thank your stars if your hostess, in dispensing this patronage to her favourites, accidentally selects one who even knows when the places are closed.

The *façade* of the museum is plain and good; the cornice, the parapet, and the six buttresses, ornamented with little Corinthian columns, dividing the windows, have a good effect. The centre is more elaborately finished; the portal, with its cir-

cular arch and richly decorated columns, is covered with elegant plateresque ornaments. Above the entrance is a *bas-relief*, representing the founder, Cardinal Mendoza, praying to the Virgin. In the interior there are a prodigious quantity of bad paintings, but many good ones, and two rooms full of admirable figures, carved in wood and painted, by the best Spanish sculptors. It is a collection from the different convents destroyed by the French, a small portion only of the immense treasures of art they once contained. An account of this gallery will be found in Appendix E.

Valladolid is a fine old town. Besides the buildings I have described, beautiful bits of architecture, churches, towers, old palaces, and charming groups of houses, with their very picturesque roofs, are continually met with. The Plaza Mayor, or de la Constitucion, is very handsome, with an imposing tower on one side; and all round the large square there is an open arcade, supported by Doric columns, where the people walk in crowds, and loiter in the gay shops. The habitations above these arcades are large, and look very pretty, with their various-coloured awnings hanging over the balconies.

The Fuente Dorado is picturesque. Some of the old streets are curious; and in the Plateria, where the silversmiths reside, the shop-windows were well stored with jewellery, but not equal or to be compared

to the work of ancient times. Valladolid has also its promenades. The Campo Grande is an immense place—so spacious, that Napoleon, it is said, reviewed there thirty-five thousand men. On one side is a very pretty Alameda, with a flower-garden, fenced with roses. Several large buildings adorn this plaza—the Colegio de Niñas Huerfanas, for female orphans; San Juan de Letran, which looks imposing at a distance; and the convent of Carmen Calzados, now a military hospital, but once full of treasures of art.

The Alameda there is frequented in the winter, being partially protected from the cold winds that are then prevalent, but from which, like true Castilians, they make no efforts to protect themselves by planting trees. The fashionable promenade in the summer is El Plantio de Moreras, which is really delightful, affording private retired walks, as well as a long wide avenue for the crowd, and all cooled by the refreshing breezes from the Pisuerga, which is really a river, and not a dried-up bed, as is usual in Spain.

The promenade was crowded, but there was little beauty, and few ladies, compared to the number of gentlemen; it leads to the bridge, which is not remarkable. Two large hospitals (one for orphans) we passed on our right were formerly convents; and their beautiful arched galleries near the roofs—some open, and others now partly walled up, but

the columns still visible, are interesting. The country around Valladolid is very rich, so that it must ever be a flourishing place; and there is a stir in the streets indicating a traffic very different from the deadness of Toledo. Such commerce may enrich her citizens, but can never restore it to its former splendour, when it was the residence of a Court, when the priests were almost princes, and the large ruined palaces were inhabited by the nobles, who in Spain follow their Sovereign. Foreign and civil wars, and ecclesiastical reforms, have completed her ruin, and reduced Valladolid to the rank of a flourishing little provincial town. At the *Fonda de las Diligencias* we had a few creepers; but the rooms look clean, and the dinners were tolerable.

We hired a carriage and two mules, and drove over to Simancas, a castle belonging to the Henriquez, the Grand Admirals of Castile; and when taken from them by Ferdinand and Isabella, made the depôt for the national archives. The distance is four leagues, and the country is very uninteresting. An old bridge leads up to the little town, and a more wretched-looking place cannot be imagined. It is surprising that a great nation should keep their valuable records in such a miserable out-of-the-way spot, where it is wearisome both to mind and body to visit them. The Escorial, with its thousands of empty rooms, is admirably adapted for such a purpose; and now it is absolutely requi-

site to find a more suitable place, as there is no space left for the cart-loads which come annually from Madrid; and the cases are heaped, like huge bricks, in the centre of some of the rooms.

We walked through thirty-eight chambers, some of them with galleries and decent bookcases; but the secretary had got the tertian fever; and though he was well enough to talk to me, he would not accompany us, and produce the valuable papers which he keeps under his lock and key. I should have liked to have seen the letters of Queen Mary and Mary Stewart, the will of Isabella, the codicil of Charles V.; but it was after one o'clock, and he would not leave his house; nay, more, he cheated us, sent his nephews, who were to show us everything, but who, in fact, knew nothing, and had not the keys; and when we returned, he was in bed, and would not stir. I urged the length and expense of the journey, the fatigue and the unpoliteness to a lady, to require her to come to-morrow; the impossibility of our doing so, as we had taken our places to leave Valladolid in the diligence; and I also offered a handsome bribe. The sun was hot, and he would not leave his house or give the keys to his nephews. It is to be hoped that the archives will soon be removed to a more convenient place, and from the custody of such a good-for-nothing secretary.

We saw the outside of El Becerro of Alfonso XI., which is a kind of doomsday-book, and contains an

account of the rents paid to the Crown; but they would not let us open it. We found on a table the convention of Boabdil, by which he agreed to leave Spain, and saw his signature; and a whole volume of the Italian accounts of the Great Captain, signed by himself, in a large, vile, illegible hand. One contained, in his handwriting, an account of their accuracy. There were many tempting titles, but my application to examine them was refused.

In the plain below the castle, the King Don Ramiro defeated the Moors, A.D. 939, killing thirty thousand men; and Mariana says, according to some, sixty thousand men gaining great spoils, and a number of prisoners. It is said two angels on white horses fought in the vanguard of the Spaniards, a thing which, the historian adds, never happened, unless, as in this case, the victory was very important.*

* Lib. 8, cap. v.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOURNEY TO LEON—THE MESTA—WRETCHED APPEARANCE
OF LEON—THE CATHEDRAL—SAN ISIDORO EL REAL—SAN
MARCOS DE LEON—INNS—RETURN TO VALLADOLID.

WE left Valladolid at half-past seven o'clock in the morning, in the *coupé* of the diligence, and had a wearisome drive of twelve hours to Leon, through a country always flat, sometimes consisting of large fields of corn and poor pastures, often entirely uncultivated, and never as it should be; not a fence to be seen, and utterly treeless. The villages are like those of the Fellahs on the Nile, without the graceful palms, being built entirely of mud; the churches are generally of the same tint as the burnt-up soil; and even the tiles of the roofs are of the same monotonous colour.

We saw large flocks of Merino sheep, generally half-starved looking things, each flock attended by

about a dozen shepherds and as many fine dogs. They were migrating from their winter quarters in the warm, but now burnt-up, plains of Estramadura to the highlands of Leon. If the flocks had not been so immense, one could have fancied them Bedouins, rambling from pasture to pasture. This migratory system is called the Mesta, an institution which is mentioned as enjoying the attention of Government as early as 1273, under Alfonso the Wise.

When Estramadura was conquered by the Moors, the cities and population destroyed, and the uncultivated plains were only calculated for sheep-walks, the highlanders of Leon and Castile occupied the pastures in the winter seasons; and in process of time, by right of occupation, claimed an interest in the soil which has often been disputed; but the system still exists, though curtailed of many of its privileges. Mr. Ford says, the term Merino is derived from Marino, because, it is said, the original breed of sheep was imported by sea from England under our Henry II.; and sheep formed part of the portion given by John of Gaunt, when his daughter married the heir of Enrique III. We observed herds of cattle and horses, but no farm-houses, the labourers all living in the villages. At Ceinos, I noticed an old tower of a church, with Saxon arches, now almost tumbling to pieces; and before arriving at Rio Seco, I saw a long

wall of hewn stones, apparently a Roman aqueduct.

Rio Seco is a more important-looking place. The tower of St. Maria, with its circular arches, is fine; and one of the retablos in the interior is said to be by Jordan, and another by Juan de Juni; but our mayoral would not allow us time to see them. Near the village of Mayorga, on the comparatively pretty river Cea, Lord Paget, with four hundred of the fifteenth regiment, charged six hundred French dragoons, and rode down men and horses; and in the same plains Franceschi's dragoons, with an equally gallant charge, scared away Blake and his whole army.*

Our diligence was very good, and the road admirable, and we came at an excellent pace. The mules and horses—generally two of the latter in the team of eight—were first-rate.

In the time of Trajan, the soldiers of the seventh legion founded a village, which they called Legio; but the Gothic King Leovigild changed it to Leon. No place suffered more from the religious war, which lasted so long. In 845, the Moslems arrived before the city, which they besieged, battering its walls with war-engines, until the inhabitants deserted the place, and the Moors plundered whatever they found, and

* See Handbook, p. 615.

set fire to it. They then attempted to demolish the walls, but could not accomplish their purpose, owing to their solidity and strength, being seventeen cubits in thickness.* It was recovered by the Christians in 918, and, according to Mariana,† Ordonez was afterwards crowned there King of Leon, the first of a long list of monarchs who bore that title.

Al-Mansur, in 982, made a sudden irruption into Galicia, and marched without opposition to this city, which he invested and took, putting the inhabitants to the sword. He next ordered the demolition of the fortifications; but finding that, owing to the strength and thickness of the walls, the operation was likely to last some time, he gave up his purpose. Leon was soon recovered from the Moors, the redoubtable Al-Mansur being, as the Spaniards say, defeated in 1002 at Calacanaçor, though the Arabs give a different account.

Mariana relates, that on the day of the battle a man, in the dress of a fisherman, on the banks of the Guadalquiver, at Cordova, notwithstanding the immense distance from the fight, cried out in Arabic, with a sorrowful voice, that Al-Mansur, at Calacanaçor, had lost his tambour, which gave rise to the story that the devil, in the shape of a man, had announced

* Al Makkari, vol. II, p. 114.

† Liv. 7, chap. xvi.

the victory.* Abdu-l-Malek, in 1004, defeated the King of the Galicians; and, according to Al Mak-kari took and destroyed Leon, but another author says he was defeated.† There is no doubt this city was long the capital of the kingdom, until Don Pedro I., in 1350, removed his Court to Seville; and it gradually became the poverty-stricken place we now find it.

The old metropolis still looks well at a distance. The cathedral is in an imposing position, though the towers want height, and the distant range of hills is agreeable after the dismal plains we have crossed. The approach over the bridge, and along the fine Alameda, full of promenaders, some of the women pretty, is worthy of the time-honoured capital; and before we reached our lodgings, gates and arches, of an old date, frequently of tapia, walls and semi-circular towers, reminded us of the transitions Leon has experienced.

The interior of the city is wretchedly dull, and has a sad, ruinous, deserted appearance. They say, however, that it has improved greatly during the last few years. Almost all the property in the town formerly belonged to the priests; but since the destruction of the convents, many who purchased their possessions have repaired them. The

* Mariana, lib. 8, chap. ix.

† See Mohammedan Dynasties, vol. II, p. 222.

Grand Plaza, however, looks still very miserable and poverty-stricken ; though if it were kept neat and clean, it would be handsome, the Consistorio, on one side, being rather imposing. There are many palaces standing, which prove that the former magnificence of Leon was not a fable. One belonging to the powerful Guzmans is very fine. This name is more intimately associated than any other with Spanish history.*

A singular coincidence is noticed by Garibay. Three of the sovereigns of Leon and Castile, of the same name, had mistresses of the noble house of Guzman ; and the descendants of each of these ladies, albeit illegitimate, ascended a throne. Doña Ximena Nuñez de Guzman was the mother of Alfonso VI., of the Infanta Elvira, who married Henry Count of Portugal, and became the mother of Don Alfonso, Henriquez I., King of Portugal ; Doña Maria Guillien de Guzman, the mistress of Alfonso the Astrologer, gave birth to Beatrix, who married Alfonso III., fifth King of Portugal ; and Leonora de Guzman gave birth to the Count of Trastamara, afterwards Henry II., King of Castile.†

I admired still more La Casa del Ayuntamiento

* The life of Guzman el Bueno is the shortest but not the least interesting of Quintana's *Vidas de Espanoles Celèbres*.

† See Miss Pardoe's interesting work, *Memoirs of the Queens of Spain*, vol. I, p. 255.

close adjoining, the ground-floor ornamented with Doric, and the floor above with Ionic, columns.

The pride and glory of Leon is her cathedral, commenced by Bishop Manrique de Lara about 1200; and certainly it is surprising to see so splendid an edifice—one of the most beautiful temples, in the early pointed style, in the world—situated in a wretched, miserable little town of five thousand poor inhabitants. Its pampered magnificence is almost insulting to the extreme poverty of the people, and one cannot help thinking that its assumed privileges and exactions have not merely emptied the purses, but preyed even on the blood, bones, and marrow of the impoverished population, who might feast for a week with the value of one only of the countless magnificent windows which adorn this temple. The keeping up such a building, with a Bishop and a host of clergy, is obviously beyond the means and wants of such a place as Leon, and the poor neighbourhood around it.

The *façade* is fine, but the two handsome square towers require more lofty and more elegant spires than those which are now upon them. One of these is a short, elaborate, filigree spire, and the other is of more ordinary work, though intended to correspond. The centre of the *façade* connected with the towers by short flying buttresses, is ornamented at the top with small columns with Ionic capitals, and lanterns; beneath which is a fine wheel,

window, and below the latter four other windows, with pointed arches, and a parapet gallery in front of them.

The three entrances into the church on this, the west side, are decorated with arches of the same style, elaborately ornamented with figures; and an image of the Virgin, of better execution than the others, stands between the doors of the centre entrance. Some of the sculpture borders on the grotesque, especially the Last Judgment, in which devils are represented filling vast cauldrons with the wicked.

The interior of the church is strikingly elegant, and far surpasses the exterior; but the effect is much injured by the walls being whitewashed, and the capitals of the piers coloured yellow, and still more by the choir filling up the centre aisle, and entirely destroying the effect of it. It is only at the other end, before the grand altar, commanding at the same time views of the beautiful transepts, that a correct idea can be formed of the extreme elegance of this Gothic interior. The east end of the exterior is very good; the pinnacles, flying buttresses, and the chapel of Santiago, are very rich and imposing; but still the interior is far superior. There are no side chapels, dark, and filled with rubbish, as is usual in Spanish cathedrals. The walls were formerly almost one blaze of gorgeously-painted windows, two lofty rows, divided by a gallery, and beneath pointed arches. The lower

row of windows is now almost entirely bricked up, and painted in a bad style; the upper row is still glorious, and when both existed, they must have been truly charming.

The transepts are very elegant, the wheel-windows there magnificent, and the little columns are very graceful. The grand altar is overloaded with a heavy churrigueresque marble transparente, which appears monstrous, compared to the light, elegant architecture of this beautiful temple. It is difficult to resist a longing to strip away all this gorgeous trumpery, destroy the abominable choir, which obstructs the view, pull down the brick-work which fills up the windows of the aisles, scrape off the whitewash which covers the walls, and the yellow-wash which covers the capitals of the piers, and the fine old tombs; and then, correctly restored to its pristine state, and not till then, this temple would deserve the reputation of being the most graceful and elegant cathedral in the world—*Pulchra Leonina—Leon en Sutileza*.

The stalls of the choir are ornamented with carved figures: those full-length, in the upper row, are better than the busts below. The *trascoro*, or west end of the choir, is splendidly decorated with gilt columns and arches, containing sculptures in yellow alabaster, richly adorned with gilding. The subjects are the Adoration and Offerings of the Three Kings, the Annunciation, and a Nativity, in

which two subjects are represented, the Virgin in bed, attended by nurses, and below the Child is seen. They are well done, but it is scarcely possible to have sufficient good-humour to admire anything which destroys the effect of this noble aisle.

Behind the altar is the tomb of Ordone II., ob. 923, the founder of a cathedral which existed on this site, which was destroyed by the Moors. He lies at full length in his robes, and is surrounded with a host of figures, which look showy, but are badly executed.

In the chapel opposite is the tomb of the Condesa Sancha, not worth observing, except that she was rich, and, for her prodigality to the priests, murdered by her nephew and heir, who was torn to death by horses, as represented in the sculpture.

Behind the grand altar is also the tomb of San Alvito, ob. 1063, in a plateresque style. The columns covered with vine-leaves and fruit are very elegant.

In the chapel of the Carmen is a curious old tomb of a Bishop, and figures weeping around him : this is coloured with a yellow-wash. Behind the confessional is a fine old tomb (yellow again), with a procession of priests, some kneeling and weeping ; the ornaments very boldly carved.

In the chapel of Nuestra Señora del Dado (our Lady of the Dice), is the miraculous image of our Saviour, which is said to have bled when an unfor-

tunate gambler in disgust flung his dice at the Infant's face ; and some such tale is certainly requisite to give the least interest to a very common-place group of the Madonna and Child.

The entrance into the chapel of Santiago, of the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, is very rich and beautiful ; and the chapel itself is light and elegant in the extreme. The painted glass, the work of Flemish artists, in the three lofty pointed-arched windows, is magnificent. There are in each of them twelve figures, divided into three rows, and representing Virgins, Saints, Bishops and Kings, as large as life, and coloured splendidly. The architectural ornaments above the altar are beautiful, but the altar itself is churrigueresque, and in the worst taste. A carved door leads into the cloisters, which are very charming ; on one side of the corridors noble pointed arches open into the court, and the walls opposite the latter are also adorned with similar arches, and beneath them are numerous fine old tombs, in semicircular alcoves richly decorated. One in the corner, of an ancient founder, is remarkable ; and the retablo of the Veronica is very curious and very beautiful.

The capitals of the columns from which the arches which decorate the walls spring, are very singular, containing camels, other animals, figures and curious ornaments. The roof is nicely groined, but the decorations appear more modern, and

are in less pure taste. On the walls may be traced some curious fresco paintings, though unfortunately they are all greatly injured, and most of them entirely destroyed. Some fine heads, with inscriptions of Abraham, &c., may be seen. Some cities, with numerous towers. The Last Supper, and young attendants, painted with considerable grace. Christ at the Column, and Christ Disputing with the Doctors.

We visited the cathedral a second time, shortly before sunset (sending for the keys). The rich, warm stone of the exterior, with the sun's setting rays upon it, was then very beautiful; and the painted glass within was gorgeous beyond description, especially the wheel window and two side windows of the transept. We then saw, behind the grand altar, the silver sarcophagus, elegantly decorated with well-executed statues of saints, and a figure of the patron of the church, San Froylan, which could not be seen on our visit in the morning, the Corpus Christi being exhibited on the altar for eight days, and no one being then allowed to approach it. The possession of the body of this Saint created vast disputes, which were determined by placing it on a mule, and letting the animal carry it where he liked.*

San Isidoro el Real, called El Real from its royal

* See Handbook, p. 320.

founders, Ferdinand and Sancha, is a curious mixture of Saxon, Gothic, and Italian architecture. The chief entrance into the church, on the south side, is ornamented with a Saxon arch and sculpture of a rudish kind, representing the Sacrifice of Isaac and other subjects; but the effect of this old entrance is injured by the white glaring coat of arms, and the white figure of San Isidoro on his horse of the same colour, riding over the Moors at Baeza. The other entrance on this side, now closed, with the three circular arches above it, is more elegant; and the round chapel, with its circular arches, is interesting. The square tower is fine, with its plain Saxon arches, the upper row consisting of triple arches, supported by light, elegant columns. These can only be seen by passing through the convent.

The interior of the church is dark and imposing, but it enjoys the high privilege of having the Host always visible, and lights are burning on the altar night and day, in honour of San Isidoro, or, as he was styled by the eighth council of Toledo, the egregious Doctor of Spain, who worked all manner of miracles as he was brought here from Seville—curing the lame and blind, and casting out devils. He must have been useful to the church-building societies of those days (*alias* the Church of Spain), as his body could never be moved in a morning from the place where they halted at night, until the in-

habitants had vowed to build and endow a church on the spot.

Though this saint was distinguished during his life for learning, he was after his death the protecting tutelary of Leon, striking with blindness the leader of a mob who attacked this convent, fighting at the battle of Baeza with sword and cross; and at the great victory of Navas de Tolosa a noise of arms was heard from his sepulchre, showing the strong interest he took in the event.*

On the grand altar is an exquisite cross, worthy of Benvenuto Cellini. The buttresses which divide the aisles are ornamented with half-columns, with curious capitals, representing animals and children, coloured yellow, as usual here. The Panteon, a very low little chapel, dedicated to Santa Catalina, is the burial-place of many of the Kings of Leon and Castile. The sarcophagi scarcely appear more imposing than so many large handboxes with gilt borders; but they are really of marble, the colour of alabaster, and contain the bones of eleven kings, twelve queens, many infants, and half a dozen saints. The columns, also of marble, supporting this little chapel, are broad and short, with enormous capitals; the shafts, like the sarcophagi, painted a light greenish-white, and the capitals coloured yellow, as usual.

The roof alone is undefiled, and is covered with

* See Handbook, p. 609.

curious old paintings representing various Biblical subjects. They are undoubtedly very ancient; and to judge from the very defective drawing, and yet the pains that have evidently been taken in thus elaborately adorning the last abode of royalty, I should say they are the most ancient paintings in Spain. On one little dome is a representation of our Saviour, with the four Evangelists. On another, Adam and Eve in Paradise, with different animals, and the guardian angel. I also observed the Massacre of the Innocents.

Under one arch, the different months of the year are depicted. January and February are utterly defaced; March is represented by a wood-cutter at his work; April, by the planting of young trees; May, the season for journeys, by a traveller on an animal, which has the tail of a mule, but the head more like that of a horse; June and July, by a reaper with a sickle, busy about the harvest; August, September, and October, by a representation of the vintage, collecting grapes into a basket from a vine; November is represented by a figure killing a pig; and December, by his enjoying it with a bowl (of good stuff, we will presume) before a Christmas fire. The months are inscribed to assist dull intellects; and in another place Gallus is written over a cock, lest it should be mistaken for anything else; the effect is good and rich, the colouring being better than the drawing.

The cloisters are elegant, and in good taste; and there is also another neat patio, with circular arches and Doric pilasters; and the Doric portal of one of the doorways is also very pretty.

A short walk along the Bernesga, which is but a poor stream, leads to the immense and once rich convent of San Marcos de Leon, finely situated close to the bridge, on the bank of the river; commanding extensive views of its windings, and the rich, verdant plains beyond; and on the other side the snow-tipped mountains in the distance.

This convent was founded for the knights of Santiago in 1168, and rebuilt by Juan de Badajoz, 1514-49, and its Abbot was mitred. The *façade* is truly magnificent. The ornaments in the Corinthian pilasters on the ground floor, and on the half-columns above, are plateresque and extremely rich. Between each column and pilaster are elegant niches for statues; and below medallions, containing *alto-relievo* busts. At each end of the *façade* is a tower, ornamented with arches; and over the arched entrance of the richly-decorated portal, in the centre, is a good figure of Santiago, fighting the Moors.

Every column of this splendid *façade* is a study, for the curious figures of animals and ornaments with which they are all entirely covered. They must have been the work of years, and it is not surprising the convent was never finished. The cloisters are splendid, the lofty circular arches of