SAN JUSTO, SEGOVIA.

Dickinson Bros lith.

The houses appear small and insignificant, as they are clustered near its arches, and little their inmates appreciate that mighty monument of antiquity. One or two of the people were particularly indignant at the talbotype apparatus blocking up the streets: "How could any one wish to draw those old stones?" exclaimed one; while another, wiser than the rest, imparted to the assembled crowd that we were only taking a copy of it, in order to build something like it in our own country. One of the best views of the aqueduct is from the church of San Justo; its tower and ornamented apse forming a beautiful foreground to the picture. A pretty détour may be made through the valley to the San Lorenzo, a small suburb, where the river flows along over a stony bed, escaping from noisy mills, which are perched here and there amid the blocks of granite that border it. From this point the town is seen crowning the height; to the left the aqueduct joins it to the opposite hills; to the right rise the turrets of the Alcazar, its walls descending perpendicularly into the ravine beneath.

The waters of the Eresma flow joyfully along, while groups of women washing, crowd its poplar-fringed banks; one or two bridges cross it, and to the right rises the ruined convent of the Parral, formerly belonging to the order of San Jerome, which flourished so extensively in Spain. Their gardens were so celebrated, that a popular saying described them as the earthly paradise.

Enclosed in their rocky valley, they receive all the rays of the sun, and vegetation luxuriates in the shelter thus afforded. A hermitage formerly stood here, where the celebrated Juan Pacheco, Marquis de Villena, founded a convent in the year 1447. The civil wars, which ensued in the reign of Henry IV., prevented the completion of his design; it was, however, richly endowed, and became in course of years one of the most favoured possessions of

the order. But it has, of course, shared the fate of its companions. It is supposed to be most carefully guarded; some difficulty exists in seeing it, and it is necessary to apply to the governor for the keys.

This might lead one to imagine its remains were highly prized; but the man who came down to show it did not seem very particular as to his charge. In a few years it will be a heap of ruins; the grand portal of the church has already disappeared, and the interior rivals the Cartuja of Jerez in the scene of destruction it presents. The pavement is torn up, and the splendid tombs of the Villenas, its illustrious founders, have been sadly mutilated. A party of soldiers came in while we were there, and amused themselves scrambling over the monuments, and taking away some little record of their visit in the shape of a piece of sculptured marble; our guide did not seem to wish to interfere with their proceedings, and we of course had nothing to say.

On a hill, above the Parral, is a most interesting ruined church, dedicated to La Vera Cruz, built by the Templars in 1204. The keys are intrusted to the same watchful hands as those of the Parral. This temple was formerly used as the parish church of Zamaramala, a village at a little distance; but now it has fallen into disuse. It is of an octagonal form, with two very pretty entrances like our Norman gateways with zigzag mouldings, and has a square tower, the interior of which is very curious. The crosses of the knight are set round in the wall, and in the centre is an inner chapel, very low, and consisting of two stories; to the upper one of which you ascend by a flight of steps, and a tomb is there preserved, said to be an imitation of the Holy Sepulchre, but the resemblance did not strike us very forcibly. This chapel ought to be preserved as an interesting monument, from its singularity.

Below the Vera Cruz, in the valley, is the convent of the Virgin de la Fuencisla, where an image of the Virgin, dressed in all the splendour that can be lavished on such objects, is held in most especial veneration by the inhabitants of Segovia. The building itself leans against the overhanging cliff; some of the steps are cut in the solid rock which also serves as a roof to the staircase. The convent is in good preservation, but it does not contain anything remarkable, being indebted for its preservation not to its artistic merit, but to its favourite shrine. From the platform in front, the view of the Alcazar is very fine, as it stands out crowning the point of the cliff, although its general effect is much injured by its grey-slated roofs. It terminates a bold promontory, at whose base a small stream falls into the Eresma, which continues its unquiet course, foaming and rushing along between precipitous banks.

Crossing one of the bridges, you climb the heights on which the Alcazar stands, rather a steep ascent. In front is the lofty tower of the San Esteban, with its rows of arches and quaint architecture. All these Segovian churches are in the same style; their great peculiarity consists in having a corridor along one, or perhaps two sides, the arches supported by double columns, and highly decorated capitals. Along the cornice runs a rich border of tiny arches, with varied corbels, and quaint heads filling up the interstices. Some churches are more ornamented than others, but all bear the same stamp. One of the most picturesque is the San Juan, now converted into a house of refuge for the distressed pictures which are not considered worthy of a place in the museum, where have been assembled the contents of the deceased convents. The portal of this church is more enriched than the generality, perhaps it is of rather a later period; and although the corridor has been

blocked up, it makes a charming picture with its low square tower.

In the Plaza San Martin are façades of old mansions, now turned into shops, while the windows above bear witness to former splendour; and a tall square tower, belonging to the house of the Marquis de Lozoya, attracts attention. Some modern houses, painted in all the grandeur that the brightest ultramarine can confer, disfigure an adjoining street, but these are considered triumphs of taste of the present inhabitants, and an evidence of what rapid strides to improvement their city is making. There is scarcely a street that does not present some object which delights the eye from its originality; and to any one fond of drawing, Segovia affords a wide field for the pencil. Those who are tired of the Norman architecture of the churches may pay the nuns of the Corpus a visit, and look at their chapel, unmistakeably of Moorish origin, or in imitation of Moorish work. Horse-shoe arches, supported by extraordinary capitals, and short thick columns, divide the aisles, while above in the nave runs a long row of Moorish arches and stucco arabesques; all spoiled, of course, by whitewash, thickly laid on. The girl, who did the honours, was very anxious that we should read the history of a miracle which had been performed there in 1410; but we were hurried, and to her surprise preferred looking at the Moorish work. There is only one thing resembling this church, and that is the old synagogue of Santa Maria La Blanca at Toledo, which contains capitals of the same strange form.

We were particularly pleased with the cathedral, which, although small, is beautiful, and the more surprised, from not having heard much of it previously. There is a great deal to admire in the interior, combining, as it does, lightness with grandeur. The choir

and rejas are there, but do not injure the effect so much as in many others. The colour of the stone gives a rich deep tone to the whole building, which is considerably increased by the lovely pavement, with its diamonds of black, white, and salmon-coloured marbles, windows of rich-painted glass completing the edifice. The iron screens are magnificent, and all correspond—an unusual occurrence, which materially contributes to the beauty of the whole.

As the eye follows the lines of columns, it rests on the exquisitely moulded ribs of the groining which interlace each other, covering the vaulted roof with a network of tracery, most tastefully arranged. This cathedral is uninjured by whitewash, or any other vandalism of modern days; and in the interior, for a wonder, there is nothing over which to lament. In a hall, leading from them, the Custodia is kept on a sort of triumphal car, and in the centre stands the tomb of a son of Henry II., who was killed by falling out of the Alcazar window. The sala capitular has a splendid white and gold ceiling. The exterior of the cathedral does not equal the interior; it stands in a very awkward manner near the Plaza, and from thence the highly decorated pinnacles, which abound in the east end, give promise of a richly worked façade, but it is as plain as possible, without the slightest attempt at ornament.

Segovia suffered much during the wars of the Comuneros, when the Castilians, discontented with the conduct of Charles V. and his Flemish councillors, made a desperate struggle for the maintenance of their liberties. The Alcazar was one of the strongholds which resisted their encroachments, and by some most especial favour it has been spared alike from the ravages of war, or the steady and slow decay of time, and it remains still a most interesting record of former days. The grand entrance

tower, with its small turrets, is very imposing; it is now converted into an artillery college, and is kept in most perfect order. The suite of state apartments is quite magnificent. The artesonado ceilings are splendid specimens of that rich and singular mixture of Gothic and Moorish taste, which is so prevalent in Spain. All vary in design, each exceeding the other in richness, and the gilding looks as fresh as though it had been laid on but yesterday.

These rooms were decked out in all this splendour in the time of Henry IV., and one hall, now used as the library, has a frieze decorated with statues of all the Spanish monarchs down to Philip II. The situation of this Alcazar is very grand as you look down upon the cheerful valley beneath, but the view over the country is dreary enough, nothing but barren stony hills. All the portion devoted to the students is very well arranged, and a long gallery covered in with glass is appropriated to the use of the drawing classes. Nothing could be more civil than the soldier who did the honours, neither did he make —which somewhat surprised us—the slightest objection to Mr. T. placing his camera inside the railings to take a view; on the contrary, he seemed much interested in the proceedings, and was most anxious to have a portrait taken of himself.

Some of the gates of the town are very picturesque, particularly that of San Andrés, which is by far the finest. It is a massive portal, flanked by towers of solid masonry; but the battlemented parapet is partly ruined, and the whole structure much dilapidated. The cold in Segovia is intense in winter, and while we were there the snow fell thick, covering the ground, and resting on the roofs of the houses. It was very provoking, more particularly on St. Andrew's Day, for it prevented our seeing a grand fête held by the country people on that festival,

when they all assemble in the small Plaza, just within the gate of San Andrés. There is an old tree in the centre, round which they dance. I regretted it, especially at Segovia, where the peasant women have more character in their costume than in other towns. They all wear cloth jackets and bright yellow petticoats; the upper one is generally made of red stuff, edged with a broad green border, which they turn over their heads like a mantilla, the bright colours giving them a gayer appearance than usual, and the high-peaked hats are still worn by the men.

Altogether we were charmed with Segovia; the beautiful cathedral, the well-preserved halls of its Alcazar, the lofty towers and open arcades of the churches, which are perfect studies for the ecclesiologist, and the grand arches of its aqueduct towering above the gable ends of the houses with their wooden balconies, all form so many objects of interest, and combine to lend a peculiar attraction to this town.

We were told we should find wretched accommodation, but we were agreeably surprised at the inn where we stopped, near the large Plaza, for although the cuisine was not first-rate, we had one of the best rooms we had met with on our journey. Large, with two nice alcoves, it was more tidily furnished than usual, and the prices were much lower than in other places. We now bade adieu to Segovia, where we could have lingered much longer, had it been in a more genial season; and retracing our steps over the pass of the Navacerrada, with its pine forests, we reached Madrid in eleven hours. This is a splendid road, having been constructed not so much for the advantage of Segovia, as for the easier conveyance of royalty backwards and forwards to their alpine palace of La Granja.

Descending from the chain of the Guadarrama, you change horses at a wretched village called Las Rosas, a

bitter mockery to give such a name to a place where no plants of any description seem to grow. Bleak and wretched is the entire province, although the presence of some of the royal country palaces imparts more verdure as you approach the capital in this direction, than is seen on any other side. The palace of Madrid, occupying the commanding position it does, forms a fine object. But a by no means pleasing approach is presented in the bed of the Manzanares, whose stream is turned to account as a large wash-house for Madrid. The banks of the river are fringed, not with overshadowing trees, but with long lines of clothes hanging out to dry. Such an exhibition of the garments of a whole population was never seen, as is here displayed to the admiring gaze of the traveller, while hundreds of women are bending over the water beating and scrubbing away from morning till night. It certainly does not form an imposing entrance to a capital.

On our return to Madrid, we found everybody busily engaged in speculating on the approaching meeting of the Cortes; there were mysterious conversations, rumours of a coup-d'état, reports of some plots the Government were laying against the liberties of the country; in fact, all people agreed that something was to be done; the difficulty lay in ascertaining what that something really was to be. It was necessary that the outward semblance of the Constitution should be adhered to; this required that the Cortes should meet every year, and consequently the Parliament was convoked on the very last day the law permitted. During the lengthened recess the business of the country had been transacted by royal decrees; a more convenient and much less troublesome mode of carrying on the Government than submitting measures for discussion to a refractory Congress, and more economical than bribing deputies to secure their votes.

The important day at length arrived, and the Cortes were opened by commission, the Queen not attending in person. Business had scarcely commenced, when the government sustained a signal defeat in the election of Martinez de la Rosa, as President of the Lower House. Every one was now on the qui vive, to know what would follow; and each person, as is usual on such occasions, appeared to know more than his neighbour, while ominous shakes of the head, and most significant shrugs of the shoulder, concealed the little they really did know in the most approved manner. Some entertained fears of an émeute, and cautiously sent out to know if all was quiet in the streets, before they proceeded to the theatre, or their evening amusements; while others came to the very wise conclusion, that time would dispel the mysterious veil in which things were shrouded. On the following day, all who were fortunate enough to gain admission, flocked to the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, to be present at the grand dénouement. We joined the throng, who were hurrying to the former.

The Cortes of Spain, according to the arrangements of 1837, consists of two houses, the Senado, and the Congreso de los Diputados. The latter, are only elected for three years, and can, of course, be dissolved at the pleasure of the Sovereign; but they are obliged to reassemble within three months after the dissolution. The elections are almost always in favour of the government, and are carried on by ballot, which, however, does not contribute either to prevent bribery or intimidation, both being practised to a most extensive degree; for through the immense number of employés, which abound everywhere, ministers possess an overpowering influence, and they exercise it most unblushingly. Nothing can be quieter than the elections; there are no meetings in public, no hustings, where candidates have to win the sweet voices

of their constituents, no cheering, no colours, no enthusiasm; people walk into a room, prepared for the purpose, and deposit slips of paper in the urns, the votes having been given apparently in secret; but, notwithstanding, the result of each is as well known as if all had been done openly and in public.

At the end of the second day, the numbers are counted, and the result is proclaimed; but the fortunate candidates have no opportunity of returning thanks to the free and independent electors, who have placed them in the proud position they occupy; nor even can they make any solemn assertions or declarations, how untiringly they intend to devote themselves to their interests, and merit the honour which has been conferred on them. Nothing of all this awaits the member, who has been returned to the Spanish House of Commons. He seems to have no peculiar privilege, except that should he be absent from the capital at the time the House meets, he has the power of usurping the place of any person, who may have engaged a seat for Madrid in the diligence, or the malle-poste, and occupying it himself, in order that the House may not be deprived of his valuable services.

The members of the Upper House are nominated by the Sovereign; they are only for life; the Senate consists now of upwards of three hundred members. A senator here does not convey the same idea that a member of the House of Lords does with us; he has not necessarily a title—on the contrary, the great majority have none. There are some grandees who are senators, and many "titulos del reina," as they call those titles, whose bearers have not the honour of remaining covered in the presence of the Sovereign. The army, the church, the law, and the navy are represented in the Senate, the military having considerably the majority. The members of the cabinet have seats in both houses, sometimes attending one,

sometimes the other, according to the importance of the business which has to be transacted, but they can only vote in the one to which they belong. The Senate hold their meetings in the old convent of Doña Maria de Aragon, in the plaza of the same name; the church has been converted into the hall of assembly, which is a very handsome room, simply arranged, and seems to be very well adapted to its present purpose. There are several galleries for spectators; the Queen's throne occupies the place where formerly stood the high altar; it is on a raised platform, and in front of it are the chairs and desks of the presidents and secretaries, also the tribune, whence the members speak. Benches run down both sides, and each is provided with a comfortable writing-desk. The senators enter by two side doors, the grand centre one facing the throne, being reserved for the Sovereign. They have a very good library, and sundry committee-rooms.

The day on which we went, all the tribunes were crowded, and an unusually full attendance proclaimed the interest that was felt. There was some delay beyond the appointed hour; but at length the members of the government entered, and the appearance of Bravo Murillo in full uniform announced that he was the bearer of a royal message. One of the secretaries then read a long list of unimportant business, when Bravo Murillo ascended the tribune, and read the decree dissolving the Cortes, and convoking them for the 1st of March. "Vaya V^{d} con Dios," we all rose, and so ended this long session of 1852, which had only lasted twenty-four hours.

Bravo Murillo is not a very distingué looking person. He was a lawyer, a native of an obscure town in Estremadura, and studied for some years at Seville in the College of the Felipenses, where he is said to have imbibed that leaning towards the clergy which charac-

terised his administration. There were many notabilities present, the Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo, and one or two other bishops; Narvaez, too, had arrived from his retreat at Loja to mix himself once more in public affairs, little dreaming how soon the orders of exile he had issued against so many, would be put in force against himself. Concha and O'Donnell, Conde de Lucena were also among those pointed out to our notice; the former who had been Captain-General of Cuba at the time of the piratical expedition made by Lopez, the latter the representative of a family of whom nearly every member fell in the civil wars of their adopted country. We drove to the Diputados afterwards, but everything there was as quiet as though no meeting had taken place.

The Congreso is a fine building in the Carrera San Geronimo, with a statue of Cervantes in the plaza in front of it. The hall itself is semi-circular, and rather theatrical in its effect, with galleries for the corps diplomatique, and other spectators. There is a stage for the President and his secretaries, and a tribune whence members may address the house if they like; but they seldom avail themselves of the privilege, preferring to speak from their seats. Over the doors, are inscribed in letters of gold the names of the various martyrs who have suffered death for the cause of the Constitution; and when one reflects on the government they have, and the character of public men in Spain, one feels tempted to think they might have sacrificed their lives in a better cause. The ceiling is painted in brilliant frescoes and very gaudy. The committee-rooms are all very prettily fitted up, the walls done in scagliola, but nothing can be more unsuitable than their general aspect for the transaction of business; they have very much the appearance of a French café, and seem as if intended rather for

the discussion of a glass of eau sucré than of the stern and important affairs of state.

The day after the Cortes were dissolved, the decree appeared in the Madrid Gazette, proposing a change in the Constitution, rendering it little more than a name, and following in fact in the steps of their neighbours, proposing to hold their sessions with closed doors, &c. To the end of this decree, another was appended, forbidding the press to make any comments upon the measure, which was to be submitted to the Cortes for approval when it met again, as the authorities considered it unwise to allow people's minds to be prejudiced. This, at all events, was honest, and more to the purpose than the idle theory by which the Spanish press is supposed to be at liberty to express its sentiments freely; while every paper, whose opinions do not harmonize with those of the government, is seized, or obliged to withdraw its leading article, in order to be able to keep faith with its subscribers. This occurs now almost every day, and the newspapers appear with the stereotyped heading: "Nuestro numero de hoy ha sido recogido," (our number of to-day has been seized). Scarcely any of these journals escape the amputation of some limb; and the mutilated newspaper is forthwith dispatched to the subscribers, deprived of that portion which would probably have possessed the greatest value in the eyes of the public.

The measure which attacked the Constitution, proved most distasteful to the military and those who had exercised their energies, defending the throne of Isabel Segunda as a constitutional Sovereign. Difficulties soon arose; the minister of war, who had signed the decree for the banishment of Narvaez, refused to proceed to extremities, and exile a few more refractory generals to the Philipines. The Bravo Murillo cabinet fell, and its chief followed Narvaez to Bordeaux. Some say it bowed to the

universal opinion of the country, which triumphed even when the press was silenced; according to others, it fell before the resistance of a small party, whose object would not have been attained had it remained in power. A new government was then formed under Roncali, which outlived the re-assembling of the Cortes but a short period. General Lersundi succeeded, and is still prime minister; but what line of policy will be pursued by the present cabinet, remains yet to be developed.

People, however, must be actuated by higher and better principles, before things can really improve in this unhappy land; they must learn to prefer public to private interests, before there can be an honest or an upright government in Spain. From the highest to the lowest, all are corrupt: the government bribe alike the electors and the elected; taxes are remitted, patronage is dispensed, trade encouraged, every engine that a ministry, backed by hundreds of employés, can command, is set in motion to return the candidate who will be most pliant when elected. People in Spain only seek to obtain office for the advantages to be derived from it, or the benefits that may accrue to their families; in fact, they do not seem to understand, there can be a possibility of people seeking office with any other view. That there are exceptions, no one can doubt; but the prevalence of the complaint is too manifest, and the state of public morality has sunk so low, that such peccadilloes are considered as a matter of course, and do not call forth either astonishment or reprehension.

The problem of constitutional government in Spain has still to be solved. With nations, as with individuals, inveterate habits will for a time survive convictions, and a long-misgoverned country may, even whilst attaining to better things, practically adhere to that which, as a system, it repudiates. Such is the condition of Spain;

virtually trammelled, whilst theoretically free—encumbered by an antiquated régime, for which it sees no substitute, and which suddenly to suspend, would derange the whole machinery of government. Hence it is, that in the midst of those able disquisitions on national rights which, so long as they were tolerated by the government, did honour to the public press of Spain, and in some sort to its people, we are startled by the spectacle of ever-pliant Parliaments, and of Executives, of whatever shades of politics, foregoing, when in power, the principles which placed them there, and falling back upon a policy incompatible with the existing institutions.* In this spirit did Narvaez banish hundreds; and in the like spirit did Bravo Murillo banish him. Whence this inconsistency, amongst a people naturally intelligent, and disposed to make the system they have chosen a reality?

It has been said, that all nations have as good government as they deserve; an axiom, which, as applied to Spain, would certainly estimate her deserts at a very humble rate. It may be true of settled countries, but Spain, it should be remembered, is in the transition state, impatient of misrule even whilst enduring it. Trained in the school of absolutism, its continuance to the present time has been with her rather a necessity than a choice; more familiar to Spaniards than acceded to by them. The very elements of a better practice have to be created, and preconceived notions not only abandoned, but enlightened ones acquired. It was probably in despair of accomplishing these objects, and of coping with the present but by a recurrence to the past, that the late

* Señor Bertram de Lis, the Minister for the Home Department under Bravo Murillo, suspended a newspaper in Barcelona after it had by his direction and for the very same cause been prosecuted and *acquitted*. But this very man, as Under-Secretary of State in a previous ministry, retired from office rather than give his sanction to a law moderately restraining the Press.

Bravo Murillo ministry, instead of seeking a legitimate remedy in the diffusion of education, &c., became in its latter days so excessively reactionary; throwing amongst the people a very firebrand, in the form of a royal decree, proposing a change in the Constitution, by which amongst other reforms, as they were called, the discussions in the Cortes were to be secret, unreported by the press, and its president named by the crown. But the measure would seem to have been as impossible as it was inexpedient.

Men are still to be found in Spain, who rather than grapple with a present though temporary evil, would stamp it with all the sacredness of law, and perpetuate the same ruinous state of things, from which it has struggled so hard to emerge. Doubtless, the race that is now springing up, will be in a less difficult position: to them the past is mere history, and thus with fewer incongruities to reconcile, it may in time bring the administration of the country to harmonize with its institutions. That ill-timed decree was fatal to the Bravo Murillo ministry. Narvaez, quick to profit by this false move of his adversaries, emerged from his retirement in Loja, and with other influential persons, sought to put in nomination for the new Cortes men on whose constitutional principles they could rely. Though this was done in rigid observance of the law, and with a moderation little characteristic of the man, he was ordered to quit Spain in forty-eight hours under the absurd pretext of inspecting the condition of the Austrian army.

Nothing could be more unwise than this step. It put him once more in the right with the nation, by making a political martyr of the man whom they feared, and whose influence it had been their constant aim to neutralize. Narvaez afterwards insisted on his return to Spain, in order to take his seat in the Senate, and

addressed one or two very energetic expostulations to the Sovereign. On the one hand the law upheld him in his demand, whilst on the other his return was opposed to the views of the court. An illustrious personage is even reported to have said, "That both could not remain in the country."

It is to be lamented that qualities so eminent as those which distinguish the Duke of Valencia, should be obscured by defects which give his enemies a vantage-ground, and in some measure neutralize their effect. His temper is said to be hasty, and imperious to his colleagues; his language, when irritated, coarse and offensive; and his system of government more befitting the camp than the cabinet. But he has ever been loyal to his Sovereign, and staunch to his followers and his party; and if he cannot command the love of the public, he knows better than most men how to profit by its fears, and has ever applied this knowledge to the maintenance of public order. His will and energy are indomitable; and his display of them in 1843, when he threw himself, a denounced man, into the very heart of Spain, with a handful of followers, in face of an opposing army, and caused it to fraternize with his little band to the downfall of the regency, will ever stamp him as a man of that rare daring of which heroes are made, and which, though seemingly rash, had its origin in sound calculations and discretion.

At that period he found an army ill paid, and consequently undisciplined, and the ready tool of ambitious and turbulent leaders. He left it, on resigning office, effective and loyal. It must be confessed, however, that his military predilections raised it to a dangerous ascendancy, and that if it has since been confined within constitutional bounds, it is due to the foresight of his successor, Bravo Murillo. The Duke of Valencia is like-

wise lavish in his expenditure, and, like most Andalucians, fond of pomp and display; forming, in this particular, a striking contrast with the sober and retired habits of the other.

The admirers of Bravo Murillo describe him as possessing a fixity of purpose, unsurpassed by Narvaez himself, tempered by courtesy, and an ear ever open to all applicants. Educated for the law, he is fluent and argumentative in the Chambers, indefatigable in business, and has unquestionably surpassed cotemporary statesmen in seeking to promote the industry and material interest of his country. During his time, Spain witnessed the novelty of having her civil as well as her military list paid to the hour; and all state contracts entered into by him were punctually met. The loss of such a man is hard to replace in Spain, making more grave the error he committed, which drove him from her counsels. General Roncali, Conde de Alcoy, who succeeded him, was an untried statesman, with no very enviable celebrity as the stern avenger of an insurrection in Alicante and Cartagena in 1843. By disclaiming the retrograde policy of his predecessors, he somewhat calmed the tempest they had raised. But the sincerity of this disclaimer might well be doubted on the part of a ministry which tyrannized over the press beyond all precedent, and tampered in the most shameless manner with the election of Deputies.

One or two instances out of a thousand may show the manner in which ministerial influence is exerted. In Pinos de la Valle, in the province of Granada, the Alcalde, whose office it is to preside over the elections, was suspended by the Governor as being adverse to the government candidate, and a claim against the town of two hundred pounds was remitted on consideration of the ministerial candidate being returned. In the town of Orgiba, in the same province, a fine of like amount was

imposed, and a further one threatened, should the ministerial candidate not be returned; and as if this were insufficient, the Alcalde was suspended, the second Alcalde was put aside, and a friend of the candidate named to conduct the voting, although a criminal suit was actually pending against him. It may be asked how a government can be allowed to exercise so shameless and baneful an influence? The discussion is, indeed, a wide and difficult one; but one predominating cause may be found in that insatiable rage for government employment which pervades Spain. It is essentially a nation of two classes—"empleados," or persons holding office, dependent on the government for their very bread, and "pretendientes," or those who are seekers after place. Had Le Sage written in the middle of the nineteenth, instead of at the commencement of the eighteenth century, he could not have depicted the system more to the life. Public employment is the primary resource of every needy man who can read and write, as well as of thousands who cannot; the very door-keepers and porters, who encumber the public offices being Legion. It has been computed that their numbers have quadrupled within the present century; and, as a consequence, the administration of the country is some four times more complex and inefficient. Nor are the social evils of such a system less disastrous, at once draining the fields of their legitimate cultivators, and drawing off from the industrious pursuits of life those of the middle classes, whose labour and enterprize should enrich the country. There is, however, in Congress a phalanx of enlightened and determined men bent on sweeping away these relics of a past time, and whose voices will at length be heard. Although forming but a minority within the walls, they carry weight and conviction without them; and to this party, and its principles, many look for the ultimate regeneration of

their country, and for rendering its institutions a reality.

These remarks may appropriately be closed in the language of one of the most distinguished of that party, lately uttered in the Cortes. In a protestation against the coercion so shamefully exercised by government towards electors, Senor Madoz said: "What manner of governing is this? Anarchy, gentlemen, is not personified in the men who are called revolutionary, but in those who act thus. All is now distorted and reversed! We of the opposition are those who most faithfully uphold and serve the throne of Isabella II. You compromise it, and are placing it in imminent danger. We will ever defend it; and perhaps those who are now jeopardizing it, may, in the hour of danger, be the first to fly. Let the truth be said: I am one of those men who have most faith in a constitutional system. But my faith declines when I witness such things. We who have that faith should retire to our own homes, and proclaim ourselves partizans of a policy of retirement, in order not to become accomplices in this child's play, in which loyalty has no part, and in which meanness and intrigue are everything. For myself, I declare that if in 1853 we do not return to the pure forms of representative government, I shall not come again to Congress, for I have no wish to play a part in such a farce. Could we but hear from the House one word in reprobation of such enormities—could we but see one member of the government protest against such conduct, and display a wish to punish the offenders, I should be somewhat consoled, and still believe in the possibility of a representative government in Spain."

AT THE FOUNTAIN.

CHAPTER XVII.

Negra, ruinosa, sola y olvidada
hundidos ya los pies entre la arena
alli yace Toledo abandonada,
azotada del viento y del turbion.

ZORRILLA.

TOLEDO—CATHEDRAL—CAPILLA MAYOR—MUZARABIC CHAPEL AND LITURGY—SAN JUAN DE LOS REYES—SWORD MANUFACTORY—BRIDGE OF SAN MARTIN—DECLINE OF TOLEDO—CASTLE OF SAN CERVANTES—BRIDGE OF ALCANTARA—ALCAZAR—MOORISH REMAINS—DEPARTURE—CORDOBA—THE MOSQUE—SAN NICOLAS—THE ANGELUS—CAMPO SANTO—ERMITAS AND THEIR OCCUPANTS—THE SIERRA—RETURN TO SEVILLE—CONCLUSION.

TOLEDO is, perhaps, the most interesting town in Spain, containing, as it does, beauty of situation with historic recollections. It is but a short distance from Madrid; a drive of about six hours over rather a good road taking you from the modern to the ancient capital. What a contrast do not those two cities present! the one, the mere butterfly of to-day, looking as though it had been raised by royal decree to suit the purpose of the hour; the other, throned upon her seven hills, affording in her ruined

walls and crumbling towers, the history of Spain's past glories. As you approach Toledo, the general aspect of the country improves, the broad Tagus is seen flowing through the plains, and entering the deep gorge formed by the cliffs on which the city itself is built; and after girdling the town, it continues its course until it loses itself in the ocean below the noble city, which ought to have been the capital of the Peninsula.

Toledo is entered by a massive gateway, over which the Imperial arms are placed; and as you ascend the steep declivities, you pass the Puerta del Sol, a fine Arabic portal no longer used. Climbing the hill, you cross the picturesque Zocodover, the great plaza, and arrive at the Fonda de los Caballeros, a clean little inn, where a good-natured old lady is ready to bid you welcome. The general appearance of Toledo differs from that of any other Spanish city; the old capital of the Recaredos, and centre of the Gothic empire, it can boast of great antiquity; as the seat of the Christian primacy, it has ever been the head-quarters of a wealthy hierarchy; the abode of prelates whose virtues have been an honour to the Church over which they presided, and whose wealth was ever expended in benefiting the needy, and encouraging art.

The streets of Toledo are narrow and tortuous, and the steep hills on which the town is built render it a constant succession of ascents and descents. The houses are lofty, and built of a dull reddish brick; they have hardly any windows looking into the street, and present therefore a most gloomy appearance, offering a complete contrast to the bright white and green streets of Seville. At Toledo, too, instead of light "cancelas," massive portals afford an endless study, with their rich variety of decoration, and the heavy wooden doors present an impenetrable bar to any stray peeps into the interior of the houses. The

cornices of these entrances are ornamented with large stone balls, a style peculiar to this place, and the doors themselves are studded with iron nails, the heads worked in many different patterns. The principal street leading from the Zocodover is most picturesque, and the perspective is bounded by the graceful tower of the cathedral rising to the height of three hundred feet.

This edifice is naturally the first object of interest in the city. It is a museum of Spanish art, containing tributes from successive generations, offering specimens of every style from the thirteenth century, when it was raised on the foundation of a more ancient temple, to that of the eighteenth, when the wealth and taste and religious enthusiasm, which had inspired the people in preceding centuries, had died away. The exterior is disappointing; choked up by mean buildings, and rather sunk in a hollow, you might pass it by without even being aware of the existence of a cathedral. The façade from the plaza is fine, though only one tower is completed. In the interior the richness of detail rather detracts from the effect of the whole, and the columns are too massive for the building; they rest on heavy pedestals, and all has been spoiled by a slight touch of whitewash, although the stone itself is of a very pale white colour. In Seville the grandeur of the building prevents one from entertaining the slightest wish to examine it in detail; in Toledo, on the contrary, there are so many beauties, so many objects of interest inviting a careful scrutiny, that you feel as if you must dwell upon each in succession.

The present edifice was commenced in 1227, in the reign of Saint Ferdinand, and it was not completed until the time when the Crescent finally bowed before the power of Castile. During this long period it received constant additions and embellishments, and the talents of the first artists were called into requisition to enrich it

with the productions of their genius. The carved stalls of the choir are triumphs of the chisel of Borgoña and Berruguete, the gilded reja the master-piece of Villalpanda, and every chapel offers something worthy of note. The first point of attraction is the Capilla Mayor, where the high altar is enclosed by a most elaborate screen of rich Gothic stone-work, partially gilt, and adorned with numbers of statues. The retablo is very costly, and every niche is filled with figures, amongst them those of Alfonso VIII., and of the shepherd who guided the Christian arms to victory, under that monarch, at the Navas de Tolosa.

There is likewise a statue of Alfonso VI., and opposite to him one of a Moslem Alfaquí, which recals an incident in the early history of Toledo creditable alike to both Moor and Christian. When the Moslems were forced to yield to the triumphant arms of Alfonso VI., they surrendered only on one condition, that they should be allowed to continue the celebration of their religious ceremonies in the great mosque. This was guaranteed them by the Sovereign, and the Christian army took possession of Toledo. The conditions were faithfully fulfilled by Alfonso, but unfortunately he had soon occasion to leave the city and proceed to Leon, leaving the government in charge of his Queen Constance. She was a native of France, and so was Bernardo, then Archbishop of Toledo; and during the King's absence they determined on breaking faith with the inhabitants, and accordingly seized upon the mosque, converting it into a place of Christian worship. The Mahommedans instantly had recourse to Alfonso, who was highly indignant at his royal word having been broken; he returned in all possible haste to Toledo to punish the Queen and her adviser. But the injured Moslems, unwilling that any harsh measures should be taken, went out to meet the King,

headed by one of their chief men, an Alfaquí, who was held in great respect, and besought Alfonso not to carry out his designs of vengeance, but to pardon the Queen and all who had joined in committing so great and flagrant an act of injustice; the entreaties of the Alfaquí prevailed, the King forgave the culprits, and the statue of the Moslem, who behaved so generously, was erected in the Capilla Mayor.

Several of the early Kings are buried in this chapel, and here amid royalty lies the great Cardinal Mendoza, one of the most virtuous prelates that ever graced the archiepiscopal throne; the confessor of Isabella, her companion and adviser in the council and the camp, who tempered the sternness of the age in which he lived with the mildness and gentleness of his character. His sepulchre is richly ornamented in the plateresque style, and the portion of the edifice where it stands was considerably enlarged by Ximenez, who succeeded Mendoza in the primacy. The beautiful chapel of Santiago in the centre of the aisle was erected by the great Constable Alvaro de Luna, who after enjoying the favour of his Sovereign for so many years ended his days upon the scaffold in the great plaza of Valladolid. He not only built the chapel, but had likewise prepared a sumptuous tomb for himself of bronze gilt, ornamented with statues so arranged as to rise during the celebration of mass. This was, however, destroyed during his lifetime, and the present sepulchre of rich Gothic work was raised by order of Isabella, who had doubtless, after the lapse of years, learned to do justice to the character of the man her father had so grievously wronged. The inscription merely intimates that he ended his days in 1453. There are many other fine sepulchres both in this and the adjoining chapels, all altar tombs, of which there are so many beautiful examples in this country.

There is another chapel, "de los Reyes nuevos," containing the ashes of many of the Sovereigns of Castile; amongst others, of Henry of Trastamara; the whole is richly ornamented in white and gold. In the sacristy is preserved a most lovely custodia, the work of Enrique de Arfe, made by order of Ximenez; as a specimen of working in gold and silver, it is unequalled. It stands sixteen feet high, representing a Gothic temple, decorated with two hundred and sixty statues, all gilt, and of most delicate workmanship; in the centre is a remonstrance which belonged to Isabella, and was purchased at her death by the Cardinal.

At one end of the aisles is the Muzarabic chapel, erected by Ximenez, in order to preserve the memory of this ancient ritual, said to be the earliest used by the primitive Christians of the Peninsula. It was the one used in the time of the Goths, and was retained by the Christian inhabitants of Toledo, while the city was under the dominion of the Moors, during which period six churches were still consecrated to its services. The oldest of these was founded in the year 554; the most modern in 701. The buildings themselves have been so often modernized, that no trace of the original portions remain. The inhabitants clung with affection to the primitive ritual of their ancestors; but after the conquest, they were obliged to adopt the Roman liturgy, which was introduced into most of their churches. Ximenez, however, anxious that it should not be lost, erected this chapel in the cathedral, in order that the Muzarabic mass might be said there daily, and had it printed at Alcalá de Henares.

This service, which was performed in Toledo unaltered during the whole time the city was in possession of the Infidels, is particularly interesting, the more so from its having been transmitted from such early days, and so

carefully treasured by the prelates, even after it had been exchanged for another. This mass is still occasionally said in the old Muzarabic churches. The chapel erected by Ximenez, is very simple; on its walls are frescoes of the taking of Oran in 1508, that celebrated expedition when the Cardinal led his troops in person, and wielded the sword in one hand, while he held the crosier in the other.

In the nave is a Gothic chapel, on the spot where the Virgin is supposed to have descended to present the "casulla," the cassock, to San Ildefonso. This is the great miracle of Toledo, and allusions to it meet the eye in every direction; it has ever been a favourite subject with Spanish artists, more particularly in this diocese, over which San Ildefonso ruled. Cardinal Rojas erected this shrine in 1610; and within its cage of lace-like Gothic work, the identical slab on which the Virgin is said to have rested her foot, is carefully guarded. Bas-reliefs represent the miracle to which the chapel is dedicated.

The sun's rays stream in on all these precious objects through windows of painted glass; and though the colour cannot vie in depth or brilliancy with those of Leon, yet they heighten the general effect, and shed a sweet and softened light around. This brief sketch conveys but a very imperfect idea of this lovely cathedral, which possesses so many treasures of art, speaking of the magnificence of a long line of prelates, who loved to enrich the pearl of their diocese. But their wealth is now a thing of bye-gone days; the canons and chapter of Toledo, whose number and whose riches had no parallel, have vanished; the primate lives the greater portion of the year at Madrid, and the city, ruined and deserted, has received its final death-blow in the impoverishment of that hierarchy, whose princely revenues were spent within its walls. Large and noble cloisters are attached to the

cathedral, once adorned with frescoes, but now they have almost disappeared.

Perhaps after the cathedral, the most interesting monument—at least, of Gothic date—in Toledo, is the Church of San Juan de los Reyes, formerly belonging to a Franciscan convent, founded by the Catholic Sovereigns after the conclusion of the war with Portugal. It was completed in 1476, and much favoured by Ferdinand and Isabella, who enriched it with an extensive library and other valuable objects. Its beautiful Gothic exterior was covered with many heavy chains, mournful reminiscences of the Christian captives, who were released at the taking of Malaga and other towns. Some few still remain, but the great majority have been taken away; and the destruction of this beautiful convent, is one of the gravest charges which the Spaniards have to bring against the French.

The building was sacked, the splendid library committed to the flames, and the exquisite church, quite a triumph of florid architecture, was converted into a stable by the French troops. The rich ornaments, the delicate traceries, in which occur the initials of Ferdinand and Isabella, the gorgeous armorial bearings, and the elaborate inscription fringing the cornice, are all beautiful; but its painted glass windows have been destroyed, and all the statues within reach are mutilated. The ruined cloisters are still exquisite, although unroofed and despoiled of their ornaments; and the passages and corridors have been converted into a receptacle for the bad pictures which were expelled from the convents.

Leaving the gate, and descending the steep hill, you arrive at the verdant plains; a pleasant walk then leads to the sword manufactory, where the famed steel of Toledo is still fashioned. It is a large white building, and was erected for this purpose in the reign of

Charles III. The blades are all beaten with the hand, although for other branches of the manufacture, they use machinery driven by water power. The swords for the army are mostly made here, and some specimens of the ancient productions are preserved in a small cabinet. When we were there, they had none for sale, but we saw some of those wonderful swords so admirably tempered as to admit of their being bent into a circle. They were unfinished, and they asked about five pounds for them in that state; ten, being the price when completed.

Returning to the town, we passed the Basilica of Santa Leocadia, now called the Cristo de la Vega, on account of a remarkable crucifix contained in it, about the wonder-working power of which many legends are extant. This church was erected in 618, and within its walls were celebrated the early councils of Toledo. Close by is the noble bridge of San Martin spanning the gorge, with its quaint old gateways. Built in 1203, it was destroyed by a flood; again raised, it suffered much injury during the civil wars in the time of Pedro the Cruel, and was finally rebuilt by Archbishop Tenorio.

A curious anecdote is attached to the erection of this bridge. It appears that when nearly completed, and nothing but the keystone remained to be placed, the architect discovered he had committed some grievous error, and that on the removal of the scaffolding, the whole would fall. In vain, he sought to devise means by which to obviate the evil and save his reputation. Returning to his home, he confided to his wife the cause of his despair, telling her at the same time, that he never could survive such disgrace and ruin. The difficulty, which to him seemed insurmountable, was overcome by her ingenuity. That night, she silently left the house, and proceeding to the bridge, set fire to

the scaffolding in several places. The flames spread rapidly, and the whole giving way, the fame of the architect was saved, for the fall of the bridge was attributed to accident. He was employed to reconstruct a second; when, profiting by past experience, he this time committed no mistake, and the structure still exists.

Crossing the San Martin, a lovely walk may be taken round the hills on the opposite side, returning by the bridge of Alcántara, which spans the river at the other extremity of the town. Nothing can be wilder than the scenery; the granite rocks tossed about in strange craggy forms, crowned by the buildings of the town, all alike presenting a colour so uniform, that except under strong effects of light and shade, it is hardly possible to distinguish the one from the other. As you wind along the cliffs, you reach a small hermitage dedicated to the Virgen de la Valle, and from this spot, Toledo is truly magnificent.

However great may be the souvenirs of other Spanish cities, there are none which carry one back so many centuries. Others call forth recollections and tales of the wars of Moor and Christian; but in Toledo the mind may dwell on still earlier days, when the Gothic monarchs ruled in Spain. When their descendants resumed the dominion, which Roderick had lost, Toledo saw its ancient line of kings and prelates re-established, and it became the cradle of the glorious Castilian tongue, which may still be heard here in its greatest purity.

It was long the favourite residence of the Sovereigns; but after the succession of the House of Austria, it was deserted for Madrid, and, in course of time, her stately Alcázar was destroyed by the Portuguese; in a later invasion her beautiful convents were pillaged, and the hands of Spaniards themselves have since completed her ruin. Her hierarchy and vast religious establishments

were all that remained to support her; and now that they have been deprived of their revenues, she remains a lifeless sepulchre; her streets desolate and silent, inhabited by only a few thousand inhabitants, where once upwards of two hundred thousand lived in the enjoyment of wealth and prosperity. Now, it is a city rich in nothing, but the memory of the past.

Wandering along the rugged barren hills, you approach the old Moorish castle, which stands on a height commanding the bridge of Alcántara, and facing the Alcázar; it bears the strange name of San Cervantes, corrupted from that of San Servando. It was originally a monastery, dedicated to that saint, and was founded by Alfonso VI. soon after the conquest. Its defenceless condition outside the town, rendered it, however, a most uncomfortable residence for the monks, who soon abandoned it to more warlike occupants — the Templars, who maintained a strong garrison within its walls, till the period of their suppression. It then fell into ruins, and seems, from the mention of it in the dramas of Calderon de la Barca, to have been even in his days a deserted spot, frequented only by those who sought to arrange affairs of honour. In the valley below, is a curious remnant of Moorish work connected with one of the most fabulous and romantic incidents in Spanish story. It is supposed to have been the palace of the Infanta Galiana.

"Galiana de Toledo
muy hermosa á maravilla
la mora mas celebrada
de toda la morería."

The ruins prove that it was once a handsome dwelling; it stands in a charming situation, close to the river, and is known by the name of the Huerta del Rey. The exterior is plain, and we were not a little surprised on

entering what appeared to be only a peasant's cottage, so feebly lighted, that the eye could with difficulty penetrate the darkness, to see on those walls blackened with the smoke of ages, traces of Moorish windows and arabesque designs, which would be worthy of the halls of the Alhambra.

The road to Aranjuez leads along this valley, and the first portion is laid out as an Alameda. From hence there is a splendid view of the Alcázar, towering above the houses on the opposite side of the river, the gorge between spanned by the bold arch of the bridge of Alcántara. The commanding position, upon which the Alcázar stands, induced Charles V. to select it as the site of his palace. He entrusted its erection to Herrera and Covarrubias, and it was one of his favourite residences in Spain. Subsequently burnt by the Portuguese, it was partially restored by the Primate Lorenzana, towards the end of the last century, who devoted it to the manufacture of silk, an art for which Toledo was once celebrated. But it was destroyed during the French invasion, and little but the outer walls and magnificent staircase are now remaining of this massive edifice.

Returning to the Zocodover, you pass the Hospital de la Cruz, built by the great Cardinal Mendoza. Its portal is of exquisite plateresque architecture. It is now converted into a school for the infantry, in the same manner as the Alcázar at Segovia has been appropriated to the education of artillery officers.

Many picturesque old buildings are grouped together in the neighbourhood, and in a street adjoining is the convent of Santa Fé, devoted to noble ladies, where, as there is no "clausura," strangers may enter. The number of monastic establishments formerly existing in this city appears perfectly incredible. Seventeen monasteries and thirty-two nunneries occupied the best

TOLEDO.

Dickinson Bros lith.

part of Toledo. The rage for founding religious houses in olden times reached a dangerous extent; Mendoza would not allow of any being erected during his prelacy, considering that the practice had attained a height which was injurious alike to the welfare of the town and the true interests of religion; but after his death they greatly increased in number, and half the area of Toledo was soon covered with monastic buildings, a circumstance which has very materially contributed to accelerate its fall. The nuns in this convent wear the cross of Calatrava embroidered on their black robes; there are but six remaining, and they have the privilege of returning to their houses in case of illness.

The Plaza of the Zocodover is charmingly picturesque; its houses are ornamented with wooden balconies, which seem in a very dilapidated condition; but a desire to improve has even reached Toledo. One side has been recently modernised, and painted, and arranged in the most approved modern taste. Just outside the town is the noble hospital commenced by Archbishop Tavera, one of the great primates who shed lustre on the reign of Charles V. He died, however, before this building was far advanced, and it was completed by his heirs. Tavera's sepulchre of white marble reposes in front of the high altar of the church, a chef-d'œuvre of Berruguete, and a monument worthy of the founder of the hospital. The patio is magnificent, crossed by a covered colonnade from the great portal to the entrance of the church. Such institutions as these will long preserve the memory of the prelates, whose enormous treasures were always lavished on some object which might embellish the seat of their diocese, or benefit its inhabitants.

Many Moorish remains may still be seen here; the two most important, perhaps from their size, are the

ancient synagogues, now called the Santa Maria la Blanca and the Transito: the former bears more the form of a basilica than of a synagogue, but the horse-shoe arches, and the strange capitals of the columns are evidently Moorish. It is now in a deplorable state of dilapidation. An inscription over the doorway details all the various changes it has suffered, and the different purposes to which it has been destined.

It would take pages to describe all the different objects of interest in this town; every street presents something to arrest the eye, and those who have time to wander about, and penetrate into out-of-the-way corners, may find much to reward their curiosity. In the church of Santo Tome hangs the master-piece of El Greco; and the old Arabic tower, with its horse-shoe arches, is extremely picturesque. Here and there some ruined archway or richly-decorated ceiling, some noble saloon with its arabesque patterns, or graceful window with its marble column, reminds one of the Arab rule.

Our tour in Castile was at an end: we had visited most of the principal cities of this portion of the Peninsula, and were going to retrace our steps to Andalucia.

The plains of Castile present little to interest the traveller. Wide and solitary steppes, as lonely almost as the Desert—affording indeed signs of cultivation, but scarcely a trace of the hand which tills them—meet the eye in every direction, and render a journey through them one of dull and unvarying monotony; but though the rural districts of Castile offer little to call forth one's admiration, her cities are replete with interest.

Burgos, with her royal sepulchres; Leon, with her elegant cathedral; Valladolid, with her mediæval edifices; Segovia, with her Roman aqueduct and Moorish Alcazar; Salamanca, with her noble colleges; Toledo, with her palaces, her convents, and her hospitals, all in turn arrest

attention: the Escorial on the terraced slopes of its granite mountains, the proudest religious monument in the world; and in the plains below, Madrid, the modern capital, which has usurped the place of all those venerable towns. But with all these charms, although we could linger long in Castile to study her noble edifices, and admire and appreciate the more quiet and sterling character of her inhabitants, still for a residence, Andalucia is far preferable, where the towns do not wear the air of loneliness and ruin that stamps the cities of Castile, and where all is still clothed with a certain character of nationality.

And thither our steps were now turned, and gladly we found ourselves again at the rocky defiles of the Sierra Morena. The prospect is enchanting, as one leaves dull La Mancha behind, and the fertile valleys and olive-crowned hills of Andalucia appear in the distance. All looks bright and sunny, and the distant ranges of the Sierras, covered with their snowy mantle, bound the blue horizon. Winter has been exchanged for spring; for even in December, nature has assumed a verdant garb, young corn is sprouting up, and small irises cover the sides of the road with their deep-blue flowers. Bailen, Andujar, are passed, and at length after a journey of eight-and-forty hours, the towers of Cordoba break upon the view, backed by the villa-covered heights of the Sierra Morena, and washed by the waters of the Guadalquivir. All breathes an air of oriental luxury and enjoyment, after the stern capital of the Goths; the granite rocks are exchanged for feathery palms, the stony gorge of the Tagus for plains where the orange and the lemon perfume the air, and the aloe and cactus border the wayside, while the bright green of the pine clothes the neighbouring hills.

Cordoba retains but small traces of her former grandeur.

The traveller laments to find that the far-famed city of the Caliphs has degenerated into a third-rate provincial town; its population rapidly decreasing, and nothing within its walls to attract even a passing notice, save the half-Moorish, half-Christian pile, which once was classed as second only in sanctity to the great mosque of Mecca itself

The accounts handed down to posterity by the Arab historians of the splendour of Cordoba in the reign of the Abdurrahmans seem to border on the fabulous; but making due allowance for eastern exaggeration, we may believe that the Moslem court in those days, both in costly magnificence and in the learning of those who flocked to it, must have been far beyond those of cotemporary European nations. In the universities of Cordoba and of Fez, the sciences were sedulously cultivated, and the monarchs themselves encouraged the pursuit of knowledge, both by precept and example.

Cordoba lies on the north bank of the Guadalquivir, in the midst of a wide and fertile plain, covered with olive-trees, backed by the undulating range of the Sierra Morena, whose dusky hue is produced by the profuse quantity of underwood with which it is covered. Within it is lonely and deserted; and although the circuit of the walls is larger than that of Seville, Cordoba can only count about one-third of the population of the latter—not more than thirty or forty thousand inhabitants, where once dwelt above a million. The houses are low, carefully whitewashed, the streets wretchedly paved, and but few windows looking into them; in fact dead walls in many places face the street, in this respect offering even a more oriental appearance than Seville. Many of the old grandees still reside here: proud and uneducated, they pass their lives in ignorance of the world around them. This town had formerly a convent in nearly every street, buildings which are now mouldering into decay, or

converted into barracks and other government offices. There is an enormous plaza, which might be handsome from the size and regularity of its houses, were it kept in anything approaching to order, but it is a dirty, untidy place; its very uniformity preventing its even laying claim to being picturesque.

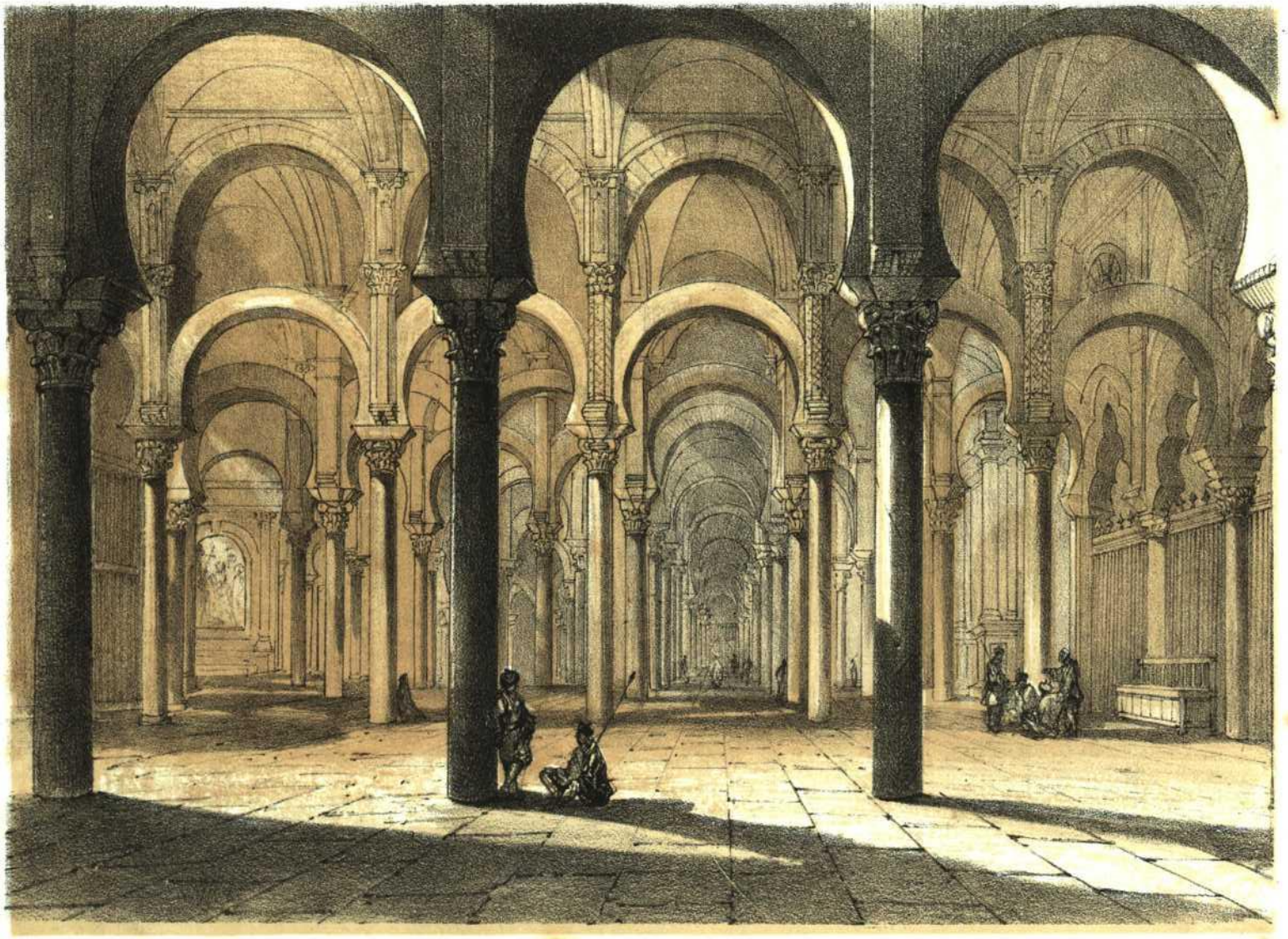
Everything in this ancient city sinks into utter insignificance when compared with the one centre of attraction, the Mosque. A lofty Moorish arch leads into a court, planted with orange-trees and adorned with fountains. Beautiful as this orange court still is, how much more beautiful must it have been before the large doors which led into the building were blocked up, when through them could be seen the opening vista of the temple, supported by its thousand columns. Then, myriads of lamps, scented with the perfumes of aloes and precious woods, shed light through the edifice, foreshadowing in their brilliancy the paradise in store for the followers of the Prophet. Within stood the Mihrab, the chapel in which the copy of the Koran was guarded, where lay the sacred volume written by the Caliph Othman, enshrined in its golden case, studded with emeralds and rubies; the ceiling formed of one solid piece of marble, sculptured in the form of a shell; and around, columns and interlacing arches and walls resplendent with gold and rich mosaics.

Where now are the followers of the Prophet? Another race and another faith have appropriated the structure to their service; but the sacred mosque of the children of Ishmael and the effeminate luxury which became their sensual creed do not harmonize with the severity of a Christian temple. It has lost the beauty and splendour with which it was clothed, and the worship to which it is now dedicated seems out of place within its walls.

There is not anything to which the Mosque of Cordoba can be compared. As you enter, the multitude of columns have an almost bewildering effect; there is no one particular object on which to dwell, aisle after aisle appears, long vistas of columns intersect each other, and the double horse-shoe arches, on which the roof is supported, increase the seeming confusion. The building is low—a defect rendered still more striking by the vast area of the edifice; and the artesonado ceiling, which once glittered like those of the Alhambra, has given place to a vaulted whitewashed roof. The columns, although composed of costly marbles, and brought with vast expense and trouble from different lands, yet from having been originally taken from still more ancient temples, they present a want of uniformity, which considerably detracts from the harmony of the entire building. They have no pedestals or bases, but spring straight out of the pavement, which is composed of coarse common flags. The eye is intercepted, as it tries in vain to sweep through the centre aisles; and when you advance to discover the cause of the obstruction, you suddenly find yourself in a lofty Gothic church, its upward lines soaring high above the low domes which encircle it.

It is much to be regretted that any part of the ancient mosque should have been removed, and that rather a new and suitable cathedral had not been erected on some other site. Yet we may console ourselves with the reflection, that if it had not been converted to its present purpose, it would probably have been lost to posterity.

The Mihrab is now carefully surrounded by iron railings, and although they mar the effect, they preserve it from destruction. It has not been converted into a chapel, and may still be contemplated as a mere object of art. The adjacent archway has been sadly interfered with, and a large painting by Cespedes covers



CATHEDRAL, CORDOBA.

Dickinson Bros lith.

the elegant arabesques. The ceiling over the entrance to the Mihrab is beautiful, and the mosaics within give it a very Byzantine appearance; and were it not for the presence of the horse-shoe arch, one would be reminded of the ancient Greek churches, which are so richly adorned with this style of ornament.

The Christian addition taken by itself is rather fine, and the carved seats of the choir are exquisite. There is a small sacristy behind the high altar, and the old man who conducted us through the mosque seemed to treat the things contained in it with very little respect. He was a strange character, and said he had belonged to the cathedral for the last thirty years. He told us that he had been a prisoner in France, and gave us a long account of all that the French troops had stolen from the cathedral, and told us how Murat had entertained serious thoughts of making the custodia a centre-piece for his dining-table. I never was in a church which seemed to have so little religious reverence attached to it, either in the conduct of the people, who made it a mere thoroughfare, or in that of the sacristans and those connected with the building.

In the sacristy is a heavy-looking monument of one of the prelates, displaying a greater expenditure of money than good taste; and in the room where the church plate is preserved is an exquisite custodia, another master-piece of the Arfes, who, fortunately for Spain, flourished just at the right period to fashion into forms of elegance and beauty the wealth which the discovery of a new world was bringing to her shores. Covered with silver-gilt statues, it is very similar in design to the one at Toledo. There are some very beautiful crosses likewise preserved here. On the staircase, descending to a sub-terranean chapel, is the white banner borne by St. Ferdinand at the conquest of the city.

Day after day we returned to this cathedral to contemplate its wilderness of arches and columns. It was erected on the site of an ancient Christian church. When the Arabs conquered Cordoba, they pursued their usual custom of dividing with the inhabitants their principal place of worship, and dedicating one half of it to their own faith. But the Moslem population increased so rapidly, that their portion of the building became too small, and the additions constantly made to it rendered it so inconvenient, that when Abdurrahman ascended the throne, he expressed a wish to raze it to the ground and build a new one in its place. To this, the Christians demurred as being a violation of the treaty agreed to on the capitulation of the city; but at length the caliph succeeded in gaining what he required, by giving them money to erect another church wholly for themselves.

This mosque, commenced in the eighth century, was embellished by each succeeding monarch, and received its largest addition in the days of Almansur. It remained in all its splendour until the conquest of Saint Ferdinand, and was then converted into a cathedral; but it was reserved for the days of Charles V. to see the vandalism committed, which destroyed the centre of the Moorish portion in order to adapt it better to Christian worship.

The orange court is now filled with loiterers who sit basking in the sunshine, or stand grouped around the fountains, filling their jars with water. It is a pity that the tower should be of such modern date, and not more in keeping with the scene than the present erection. The eye would willingly rest on a tower, such as the Giralda of Seville, or one of those exquisite minarets, which contribute so much to adorn the city of Cairo.

The mosque stands not far from the bridge, which is likewise Moorish, and which is guarded at one end

by an old castle, called the Calahorra. The view just beyond, looking back on the town, is extremely pretty; but it has a lonely and deserted appearance. There is a promenade along the banks of the river, but the inhabitants prefer walking in a small plaza, near one of the city gates, or else on a esplanade, which has lately been formed above the bridge.

In this square is a very pretty tower belonging to the Church of San Nicolas. It has inscribed on it in large letters Paciencia Obedencia. This is said to have been done by way of a gentle reproof to the inmates of the convent of San Martin, which formerly existed on the spot now occupied by the square. It seems they objected to this church being erected so close opposite to them, as it would impede the prospect they then enjoyed; but their remonstrances were of no avail, and when the tower was completed, the words enjoining patience and obedience were placed upon its walls, that they might always have before their eyes, what it was so advisable they should practise.

One lovely evening we were seated on the benches in the plaza, and the promenade was crowded with gay and idle loungers, when the Angelus sounded on the stillness of the air, and instantly every head was uncovered until the echo had died away, and the appointed prayer was uttered. This custom, once so general, is now almost obsolete, and this was the only time we ever noticed it during the whole of our lengthened stay in the country.

Cordoba does not appear rich in equipages, as far as carriages for hire are concerned; there were but two in the town, and those two were never to be had during the whole of our stay. We saw one or two four-in-hands, but the liveries were not quite in character with the number of the horses, and the coachman who was

driving one of them, had made himself comfortable by taking off his jacket. It is quite a penance to walk in the streets of Cordoba; they are so wretchedly paved, and driving, of course, must be still worse, unless the springs are better than they are generally in Spanish vehicles. At night, too, they are not particularly well lighted, the small lamps, burning before the shrines of saints, constituting the principal medium of illumination.

There is but little to see in the town itself, after a pilgrimage to the mosque has been made. We went to visit the gardens of the old Alcázar, where a few plants still flourish, and beside them rise the tall towers once inhabited by the Inquisition, now occupied as a prison.

Just outside the walls, is the cemetery—the best kept that I have seen in Spain. The coffins are placed, according to the general practice, in niches round the wall; but all have ornamented tablets, some with very poetical inscriptions, and all most carefully attended to. A small chapel, with a residence for one or two of the clergy, who have the charge of it, forms the entrance; and one of them, who really seemed to take a pride in it, showed us over the whole. Nothing could exceed the neatness of the gardens, of the rooms in the house, and the two pretty courts on each side of the church. It was laid out in 1834, on the ground belonging to the ancient hermitage of the Virgen de la Salud, to whom it is dedicated. Her image is placed over the high altar, and my companion told me it had been discovered, on that spot, about four hundred years ago, enclosed in a leaden case, having probably been thus concealed while the Moors were in possession of the city. Altogether, this Campo Santo is quite a model that might be imitated to advantage in other Spanish towns.

Some portions of the walls are extremely picturesque, and the towers and gateways are in very good preservation; but the dust renders a walk round them anything but a pleasant undertaking. The great charm of this place lies in the beautiful rides which abound in the neighbourhood. Clothed with the most magnificent verdure, the Sierra Morena presents quite a novel attraction in Spanish scenery, being covered with cortijos, where people reside for two or three months in the spring, and enjoy the charming scenery around. They see a great deal of society likewise, and their friends from the town spend the day with them, and dance under the shadow of the orange-groves. Most of the noble and wealthy families have here their country-houses, some of which are very handsomely furnished, and the tall and feathering palms that overshadow them recall the fact that here this graceful tree was first cultivated, on its introduction into Spain.

There is a charming villa called Arrizafa, a short distance from the town, belonging to the landlord of the hotel, where his guests may stay if they prefer it; and after you have passed this and approach the mountains, the scenery increases in beauty. Here the carob grows into a forest tree, the scraggy branches of the evergreen oak twist across the paths, and the ground is covered with plants of the many-coloured cistus Myrtles and multitudes of shrubs laden with bright blossoms, and groves of chesnuts and pines vary the scene; and one of the highest peaks is dotted with white houses, dwellings of lonely anchorites, known by the name of the Ermitas.

The site is well chosen; it commands the whole Campiña, as the flat country round Cordoba is called, from the castle-crowned rock of Almodovar to the distant peaks of the snowy mountains, while the broad river

meanders through the plains. The hermitages are surrounded by a low wall, and once within the enclosure you ascend to the principal house occupied by the Hermano Mayor, where there is a small chapel sufficiently capacious for the brethren. One or two portraits hanging upon the wall of an adjoining room, preserve the recollection of the members of some distinguished Cordobese families, who have ended their days in the seclusion of this retreat Here the knights of old came to expiate lives misspent amid the din and turmoil of the world—some perhaps moved by feelings of true repentance, although a favourite Spanish proverb would put a less religious construction on their motives, for it says: "When the wolf can find no more sheep to eat, he turns friar."

The Hermano Mayor had entered the Ermitas at the age of eighteen, and he now numbered seventy-eight years. For sixty years he had dwelt there apart from all the changing events of the world. Each hermit has a tiny house, containing one room with two alcoves; one for his oratory, the other for sleeping. Every house has a small garden round it, whose walls are trellised with vines, their purple bunches hanging in rich luxuriance. They live upon the produce of the ground they cultivate, and the charity of their neighbours; and one member of the community goes every month to Cordoba to beg. A pleasant idle life, well suited to those who delight in doing nothing, sanctified as it is, under the garb of religion.

One of the hermits was a most original character; he was a jolly-looking old man, and seemed delighted at the opportunity of talking about the world he had abandoned. He made us sit down while he related his history, heedless of the additional penance he would doubtless have to perform for indulging in such mundane conversation. He had been a colonel in the army, and served during

the war of independence; after the conclusion of which he travelled in France for three or four years. He said he had seen enough of the world, for he had tried it in all its phases. He married, and had an only child, but in 1832 both his wife and daughter were carried off by fever on the same day; and shortly after, disgusted with everything, he threw up his retiring pension of one hundred and forty pounds a year, and withdrew to the desert of Cordoba. He had, however, mistaken his vocation. He spoke in no terms of admiration of his Rosarios and Oraciones, which he seemed to consider great nonsense; and I have no doubt before long he will return to the world he has forsaken. Our friend was very amusing, but he rather destroyed the poetry of the scene: the situation is far more romantic than the inmates, for the most vivid imagination would have found it difficult to conjure up anything even bordering on the sentimental out of the hermits themselves.

Many a lovely ride may be taken from the Ermitas into the very heart of the Sierra through the pine forests; and as you cross the vast olive-yards, you see the ground covered with beautiful garden-roses, which were once cultivated here to a great extent. Even the Arab historians dilate upon the celebrity Cordoba had obtained for the abundance of its roses. The Sierra Morena is rich in mineral wealth: it contains an immense coal-field, the produce of which is very good; but there are no roads or means of transport, except on mules or horses, and the expense attendant on raising the coal, and carrying it, is consequently very great. The famous quicksilver mines of Almaden are well known, and the lead ore, which abounds, is of very superior quality. Some charming excursions might be made in this Sierra, and many picturesque villages, crowned with old castles, are dotted about amid the forests. On the slopes of one of the

hills, looking over the Campiña, stands one of those princely monasteries formerly occupied by the followers of St. Jerome; it is needless to add that it is now a mere heap of ruins. It lies embosomed in orange-groves, surrounded by luxuriant olives and evergreen oaks, and now forms a most convenient resort for parties of pleasure from Cordoba, who dine in the old refectory of the fathers, making the walls re-echo to many a merry laugh and joyous conversation. Just below in the valley, may be seen a large wall enclosing a considerable portion of ground; it presents as uninviting an appearance as can well be imagined, and yet the piece of ground within that ruined wall is said to have been once covered with magnificent buildings. The account given by eastern writers of the splendid city and palace of Az-zahrá savour much of the tales of fairy-land. Yet making due allowance for eastern hyperbole, there is no doubt that it must have been a wondrous place.

"Praise be to God," exclaims the Arab historian, "who allowed those contemptible creatures to design and build such enchanting palaces as these!" The palaces of Az-zahrá have crumbled into dust, and thus the works of man pass away, and the creations of his hand; the teeming earth and the azure sky alone remain unchanged.

Cordoba is now deserted and abandoned, not a trace exists of the city of Az-zahrá: the roses bloom unheeded on the slopes of the Sierra, and the country formed to be a paradise is left neglected by the hand of man; still, there are sounds of life and activity beginning to be heard around, and engineers may be seen at work preparing to lay down their iron roads to connect the cities of Cordoba and Seville. The whistle of the steam-engine will yet rouse the slumbering valleys, and the smoke of the locomotive curl in wreathed clouds over the plain.

The journey of twenty-four hours over the dreary and sandy road, which lies between Cordoba and Seville, will soon be shortened; but Ecija, the abode of many a proud and noble family, and Carmona, with its beautiful situation, and lofty tower, which aspires to imitate the Giralda, will no longer receive even a cursory visit, as the line of railway follows the course of the river, and reaches Seville by a speedier and more convenient route. Many a long day must elapse before we can dispense with the heavy lumbering diligence; we must still avail ourselves of it to return to the capital of Andalucia, whither we retraced our steps before bidding farewell to the Peninsula.

It is much to be regretted, that there should be so few attractions, in a social point of view, to induce foreigners to settle in Seville. The climate is charming, the city contains many interesting monuments, it is easy of access, the surrounding country is clothed with luxuriant vegetation, and is in many places picturesque; living, although much dearer than in other Spanish towns, is not expensive; but then, there is no society to lend its aid in making time pass agreeably, no libraries, no fresh supplies of books and publications to instruct or amuse the mind—none of those numerous resources which, not cities merely, but even provincial towns, might be expected to afford.

Spain has ever had for me a peculiar fascination. I dwelt with pleasure on the history of her people, and longed to visit the land over which such a halo of romance had been thrown. A residence in the country has in a great measure dispelled the vision in which imagination had indulged. I have found it neither so interesting as I pictured it, nor so common-place as some would make the world believe. Much as has been written of Spain, it is, with the exception of Seville and

Granada, in reality but little known and little visited; and yet, each of its provinces presents features of interest peculiar to itself. To the artist, it is a mine of wealth; to the general visitor, a land of many attractions, although, alas! of many discomforts also. To the passing traveller, it offers more charms than to the permanent resident; and when increased facilities exist of getting rapidly and with comfort through the Peninsula, it will afford temptations to the tourist of greater variety and novelty than any other country in Europe.

THE END.

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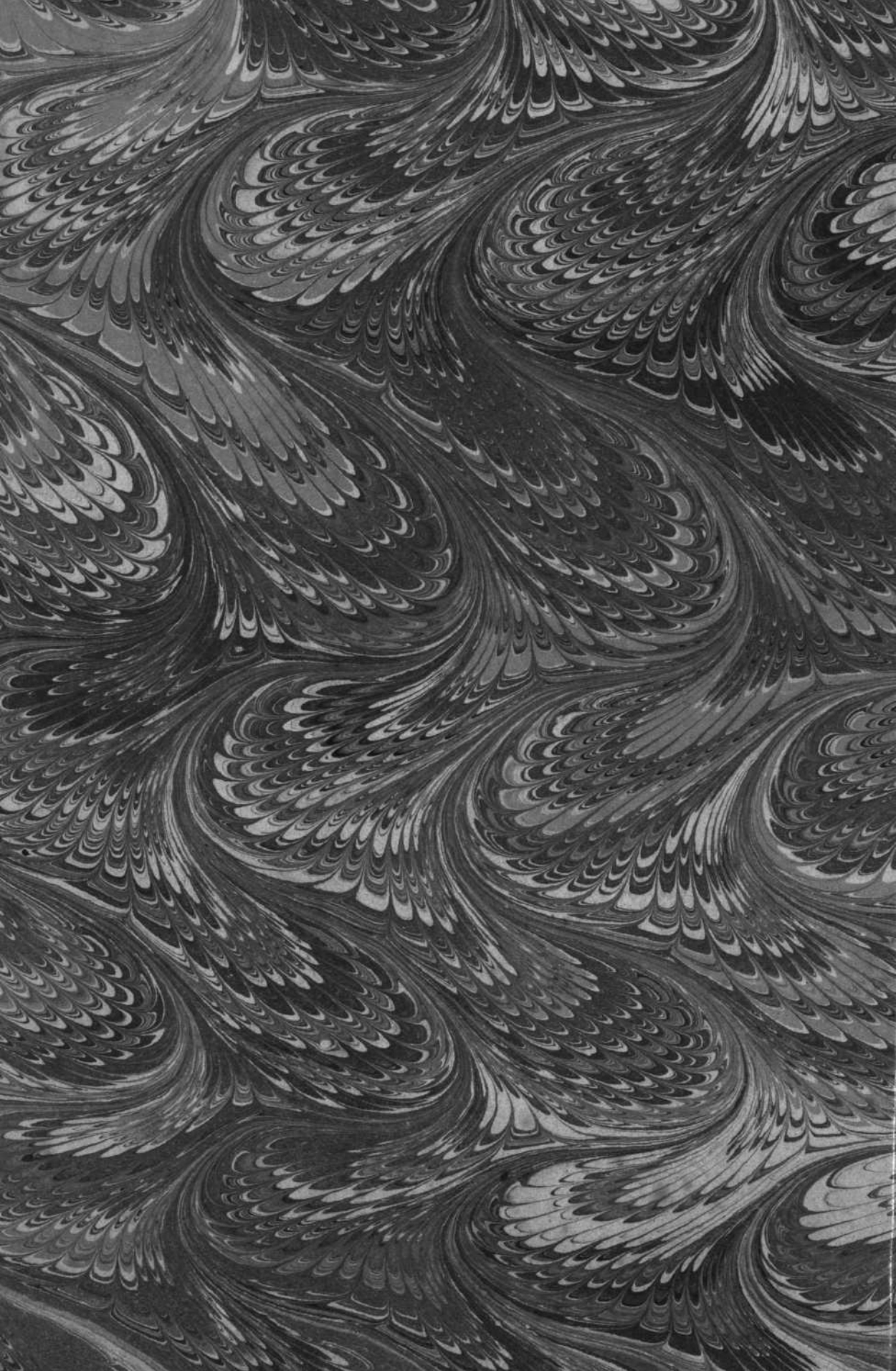

CASTILE
AND
ANDALUCIA

BY
LADY
LOUISA TENISON

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