

success, but our bathroom was worthy of Diana. The clear cold stream gushed smoothly over its pebbly bed, and the pines which thronged its mossy banks spread a green network against the blaze of the noonday sun. A skein of brilliant blue dragon-flies flashed to and fro across the ripples; and at the head of the glade a solitary peak rose clear and sharp against the sky. The beautiful Dorothea cooling her crystal feet in the rapid water was the sole thing lacking to complete the picture. And even she would have been an embarrassing element from a practical point of view.

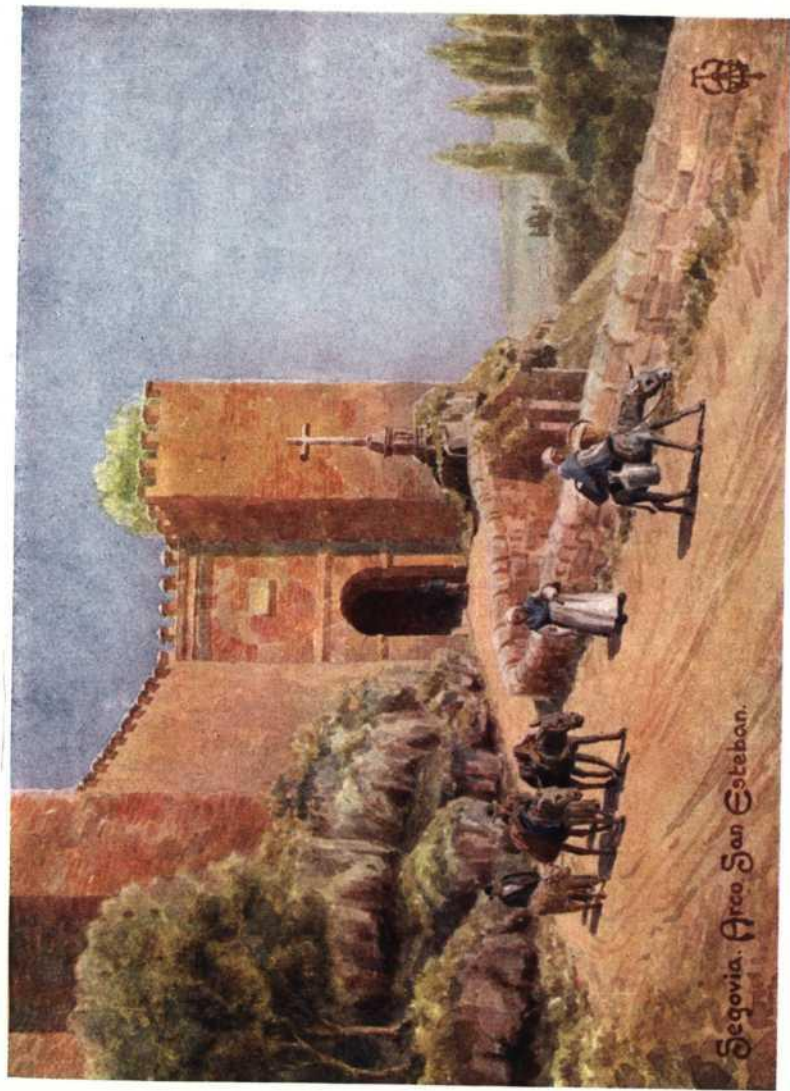
SEGÓVIA

Arco San Estéban.

How much they miss who travel through Spain by railway, and growle (legitimately enough) at the facility of obtaining baths at their hotels! The railway has happier fortunes—but not an illustrious one.

At the mouth of the valley stands the royal palace of La Granja, built by Philip IV. as a rival to Versailles. The structure is not nearly so fine, though the site and the fountains are finer. But who goes to Spain to see copies of things French? And we swung disdainfully past the gateway, and looked our course for the great cathedral tower that marks the position of Segóvia.

We were drawing quite close to the city when



Segovia. Arco San Esteban.

we overtook a party of four,—two *carabineros* and two civilians,—sauntering arm in arm along the roadway and amicably sharing cigarettes. But a hideous blight descended upon this innocent idyll when they drew up with us at the *Fielato*.¹ The *carabineros* shouldered their rifles and gave an extra twirl to their mustachios,—the civilians meekly held out their wrists for the handcuffs,—and Law and Order with their miserable captives strutted inspiringly into public view. Evidently Segóvia demanded a certain amount of style, and we two vagabonds eyed each other dubiously. But the Eresma had given us a “clean slate.” No one would have guessed from our looks that we had spent the night in the open and ridden across the mountains since the dawn. “Nevertheless,” quoth one of us sententiously, “what with the bad night, and the early start, and the long ride, and the hot sun, and the bathe, and the pine-woods, and the *comida* which we are going to eat, I expect there’ll be more *siesta* than sight-seeing for us this afternoon.”

There are a certain number of towns in Europe which form a class by themselves—a class of professional models for the delectation of the artist.

¹ The *Octroi* office, to receive the city tolls.

They do not necessarily possess the most interesting monuments, but they are blessed with a certain genius for assuming graceful poses, for wearing harmonious colours, and framing themselves into pictures from whatever point they are viewed. They are a very select company,—even Florence and Nuremburg can scarcely be included,—but Venice is one, and Bruges, and Rothenburg-a-Tauber; and Segóvia ranks with them.

The principal lion of the city was lying in wait at the gates thereof,—the huge granite Aqueduct, one of the wonders of Spain. Its mighty piers go striding like colossi across the valley, and the little puny houses “peep about under their huge legs.” By whom it was built is a matter of some question; possibly by Augustus,—more probably by Trajan¹; so at least say the learned, who are wofully wrong-headed about such things. The true story is that it was erected by the Devil in a single night, out of his love and affection for a fair damsel of Segóvia, to save her the trouble of going down the hill to draw water. Her townswomen unto this hour are profiting by her sumptuous love-token. But her poor suitor was not so

¹ Trajan was a Spaniard born, and his reign an extremely prosperous period for Spain.

fortunate. His Delilah found one stone a-missing, and took advantage of the flaw to repudiate her contract.

Beneath its broad shadow we dived in among the crazy patchwork houses of the *Azoquejo*, the once disreputable "Little Market" where Don Quixote's rascally innkeeper had been wont to "practise knight-errantry" in his callow days. A steep crooked street led us up under the toppling balconies, past the beautiful Romanesque arcades of the Church of San Martin, and the heavily rusticated façade of the sombre Palace of Pikes. Truly this was a captivating city; we made the confession immediately. And as yet all the grounds of our verdict were a few steps inside the back door.

Segóvia is Queen of Castilian cities, as Toledo is the King of them. But Segóvia does not lend her countenance to those who approach from the south. She sits with her face to the northward towering over the road from Valladolid:—an unforgettable vision, the fairy city of our dreams.

Spain seems to take a delight in concentrating her fascinations. For mile after mile she will trail you over a dull and spirit-quelling country, till all your enthusiasm is properly subdued. Then she

will suddenly overwhelm you with a whole cargo of accumulated perfections, an extravagance of beauty which leaves admiration aghast. And never was *coup de théâtre* more artfully developed than this great spectacle of Segóvia. A far-distant glimpse of a little group of turrets bristling upon the base of the mountains at the foot of the Seven Pikes; a tardy approach up the valley of the Eresma, whose trees and rocks impede all further view. The valley becomes a trench; and a vision of towers and cliffs begins to stir our anticipation; while the trench narrows down to a gullet, with sides so straight and smooth that they might have been cut by hand. Then comes a sudden turn; the rock gates swing wide open, and all in a moment the marvel stands revealed.

Perched upon the precipitous cliffs of a long wedge-shaped promontory between two confluent gorges, Segóvia has been aptly likened to a ship stranded sidelong on the mountains with its bows slanting towards the plain. The sharp prow and lofty forecastle are formed by the heights of the *Alcázar*; a little further aft is the "bridge,"—the high ground round the *Plaza Mayor*, where stands the cathedral, the central feature of the whole. And if one is to run the comparison to

will suddenly overwhelm you with a whole cargo of accumulated perfections, an extravagance of beauty which leaves admiration aghast. And never was *coup de théâtre* more artfully developed than this great spectacle of Segovia. A far-distant glimpse of a little group of towers bristling upon the base of the mountains at the foot of the Seven Pikes; a tardy approach up the valley of the Eresma, whose trees and rocks impede all further view. The valley becomes a trench, and a vision of towers and cliffs begins to fill our anticipation; while the trench SEGÓVIA descends to a gullet, with sides so straight The Alcázar that they might have been cut by hand. Then comes a sudden turn; the rock gates swing wide open, and all in a moment the forest stands revealed.

From the base the precipitous cliffs of a long perpendicular promontory between two confluent gullies appear, and have been aptly likened to a ship stranded on the mountains with its bows pointing toward the plain. The sharp prow and lofty foremast are crowned by the heights of the Alcázar; a little farther aft is the "bridge,"—the high ground round the *Plaza Mayor*, where stands the cathedral, the central feature of the whole. And if one is to run the comparison to



death, I suppose the funnel would be represented by the cathedral campanile, and the stern galleries by the aqueduct arcades. The likeness is undeniable, but altogether too prim and pedantic. As well might one picture a fairy in a tailor-made costume.

There is something almost life-like in the sweep of the tilted strata as the great cliff leaps above the summit of the poplars. It seems like the "station of the herald Mercury";—arrested motion rather than repose;—a great wave petrified in the act of breaking, with spires and gables for the spray upon the crest. Beneath it curves the green and fertile valley, the "terrestrial Paradise" of the Monks of El Parral¹; and the richness, brilliance and daring of the whole wonderful composition form a theme which is the despair both of pen and pencil alike.

The *Alcázar*, which is poised upon the extremity of the precipice, was gutted by fire some forty years ago, and is consequently largely a restoration; but it harmonises so admirably with the lines of nature that one hardly realises that it has not grown of its own accord. It has always been a royal stronghold, but never played any very important part in the

¹ "The Vineyard," a lovely dismantled monastery planted beside the Eresma, just underneath the town.

tumultuous drama of Spanish history ; our friend the enemy, with commendable discretion, having commonly preferred to gather his laurels from some less inaccessible bough. It has, however, attained a minor celebrity through the carelessness of a nursemaid. This sounds but a threadbare method of achieving greatness ; but the girl who accidentally dropped an heir-apparent out of a window of the *Alcázar* at Segóvia must be allowed to have fixed the standard at the very highest conceivable peg.

But the proudest day in its annals was that upon which Isabella the Catholic (newly apprised of the death of her brother King Henry) rode forth from its gateway to claim the homage of Castile and Leon. The moment was critical, for her succession was disputed ; but Segóvia stood firmly in her favour,—a worthy birthplace for the worthiest era of Spain. The site seems designed for such a pageant ; but it bore its own bane in the setting : for from the little convent of Sta Cruz, below the gateway of San Estéban, Torquemada was drawn to sway his nobler Queen.

Torquemada was Isabella's evil genius—the demon who was to turn all her blessings to a curse. It is but just to him to admit that he was honest in

his wrong-headedness ; that he believed as sincerely in the wickedness of an unauthorised conscience as in the righteousness of persecution, and would have gone to the stake himself in support of his tenets with as much resolution as any of his victims. It is the standing puzzle with such men how they could fail to recognise in their own spirit the condemnation of their own methods. Persecution they would have derided if applied to them by others. Why should they credit its efficacy when applied to others by them? And an even saner thought they might have gleaned from the old essayist¹:—"When all is done it is an over-valuing of one's convictions by them to cause that a man be burned alive."

The cruelty for which we chiefly condemn them is a crime for which they were not wholly responsible. The age was cruel,—“the most cruel of all ages,” wrote the grave Montaigne:—and the Inquisition did but deal with heresy as treason was dealt with by the State. Its secrecy was its new and horrible feature and the one most deeply resented at the time.

For at first, even in Spain, the Inquisition was not tamely accepted; and some of the noblest

¹ Montaigne.

churchmen were loudest in its rebuke.¹ It sinned against the light. It was a thing of devils; an atrocity only to be paralleled by the witch-doctors of Ashanti and Benin.

These grisly reflections are the inevitable Nemesis of all romantic and chivalrous associations; but they seem as sadly out of place in this sunny Eden as the trail of the serpent in its prototype. Isabella was a generous patroness to the little convent, and her own mottoes and badges figure in its delicate carving. She needed no such piety to keep her memory green.

The Valladolid road skirts the foot of the precipice on the larboard side and doubles back into the city, where the slope is easiest at the stern. But the straight path is taken by an irresponsible little bye-way, which rushes the steep ascent along the feet of the beetling ramparts, and succeeds in winning a footing inside the Santiago gate. Here the elegant horse-shoe arches look as if they might have been borrowed from the Alhambra; and as we issued from under their shadow we were confronted by the graceful campanile of the Church of San Estéban, a work of the thirteenth century,

¹ *E.g.* Talavera, first Archbishop of Grenada, and Peter Martyr, the Confessor and Biographer of Isabella.

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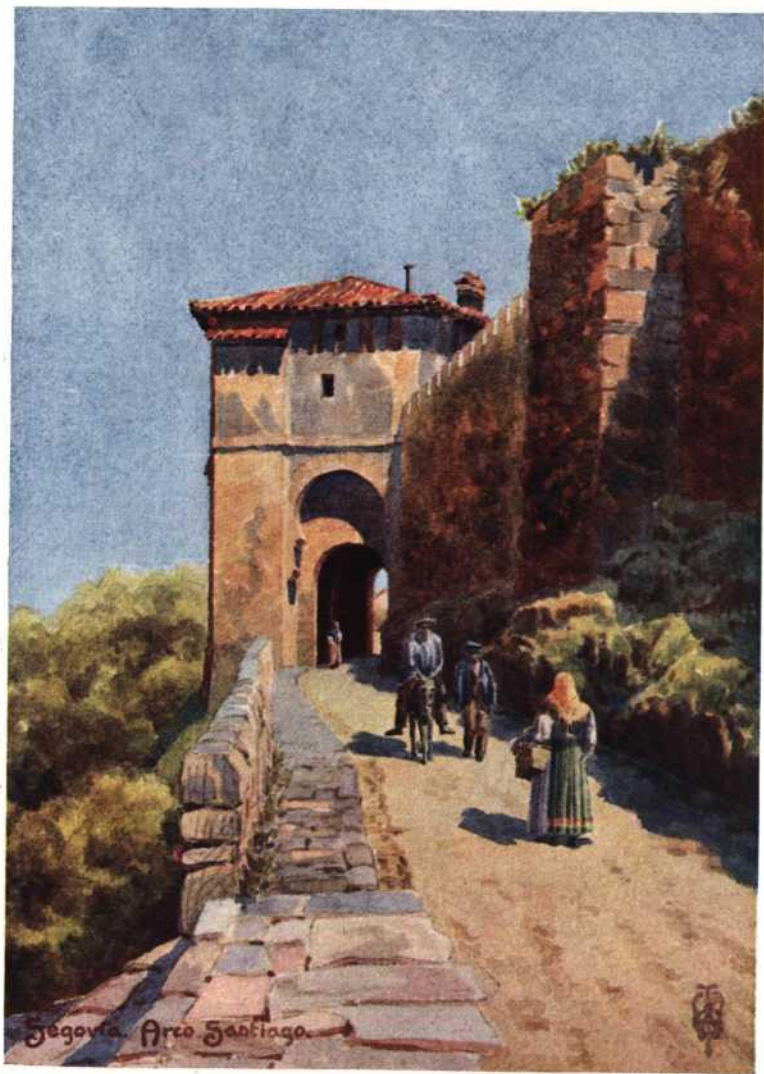
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SEGÓVIA

Arco Santiago.

The Valde Arco starts the foot of the precipice on the left-hand side and doubles back into the city where the slope is easiest at the stern. The principal path is taken by an irresponsible horse-drawn cart, which rushes the steep ascent along the top of its leaning ramparts, and succeeds in swinging round inside the Santiago gate. Here the ancient battlements arches look as if they might have been borrowed from the Alhambra; and as we stand here under their shadow we were consoled by the graceful campanile of the Church of San Esteban, a work of the thirteenth century.

¹ Cf. Villanueva, *On the Architecture of Granada*, and Peter Martyr, *On the Conquest and Biography of Isabella*.



Segovia. Arco Santiago.



and unique in Spanish architecture, though it may be mated in Provence. *Were* confronted, alas! for I fear it now stands no longer. The tower was badly cracked when first we saw it, and on the occasion of my second visit was being taken down as dangerous. As to its ultimate destiny it is quite impossible to prophesy: but Spaniards are capable restorers should they happen to think it worth while. It may be as reverently revived as the work at Leon Cathedral, or (*Di meliora!*) razed with as little compunction as the late leaning tower at Zaragoza.

The gateway of San Estéban is a little abaft the church, and, like its neighbour of Santiago, has distinctly a Moorish air. Not so the Arco San Andres, the other great gate, to the starboard. That is uncompromisingly Gothic, and large and massive enough to balance both the other two.

Upon this side the city is bounded by the little bourn of the Clamores, a scantier stream than the Eresma, but equally romantic and picturesque. It flows in a straight-sided gully like a natural moat, the upper reaches becoming gradually shallower and wider till they expand into the broad valley which is crossed by the aqueduct arcade. Here the most prominent feature is the cathedral, which

surges up out of the medley of houses, overtopping even the pinnacles of the *Alcázar*. It is the latest important Gothic monument ever erected upon Spanish soil, a sister church to the new cathedral of Salamanca, and, like it, of imposing and elegant proportions, though its details are less elaborately ornate.

We are far from exhausting the subject, but it is vain to continue the catalogue. The true fascination of the town must be felt and not described. I am afraid that even the Segóvians are not fully appreciative; for our host considered that we were wasting our time there, and wished to pack us off to la Granja to see the fountains play. "It was a shame," he said, "to spend every day in Segóvia." Segóvia!—where every street corner is worth a wilderness of fountains!

When Gil Blas was imprisoned in the "tower of Segóvia," his kind-hearted gaoler assured him that he would find the view from his window very fine—when he cared to look. This casual remark gains significance from the fact that it is about the only allusion to scenery in all that veracious biography.¹ For any hint to the contrary the

¹ The beautiful *Huerta* of Liria is the only district actually praised.

surges up out of the middle of houses, overtopping even the pinnacles of the *Árbol*. It is the latest important Gothic monument ever erected upon Spanish soil, a sister church to the new cathedral of Salamanca, and, like it, of imposing and elegant proportions, though its details are less elaborately ornate.

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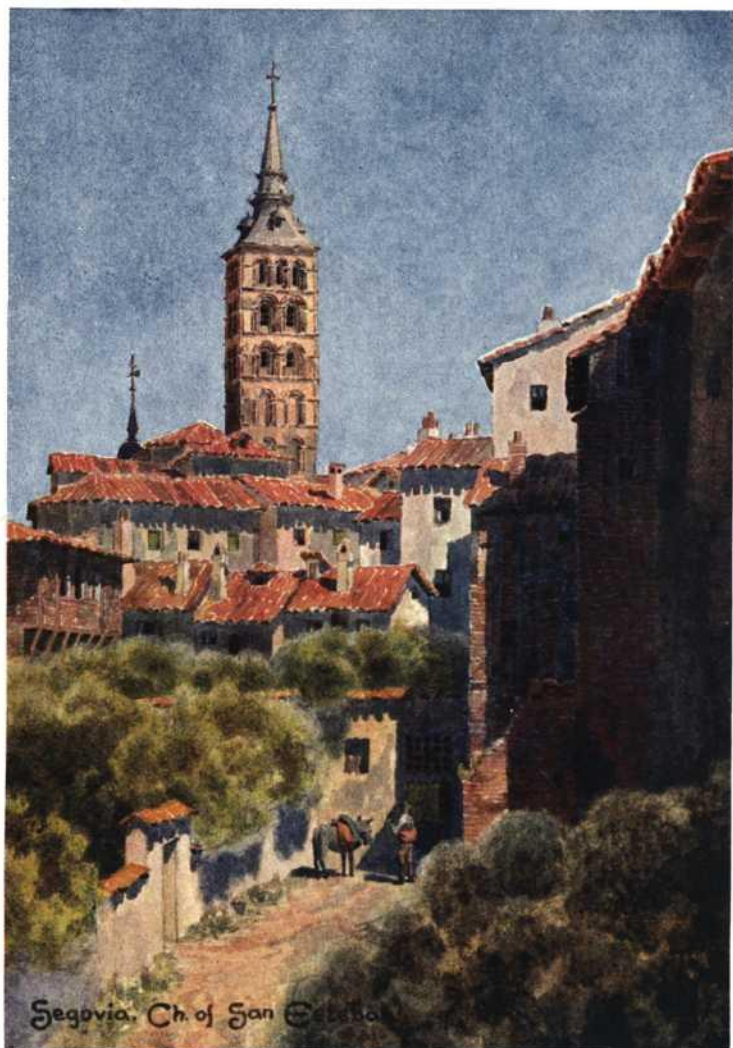
SEGÓVIA

Church of San Estéban.

that we were not worth the trouble of going there, and wished to pack us off to La Granja to see the fountains play. "It was a shame," he said, "to spend every day in Segovia." Segovia!—where every street corner is worth a wilderness of fountains!

When the King was imprisoned in the "tower of verities" the kind-hearted gaoler assured him that the view from his window very well repaid the loss of freedom. This casual remark may be traced down to the fact that it is about the only district in Segovia in all that veracious geography. For any hint to the contrary the

* The *Barrio de San Estéban* of Lugo is the only district actually named.



Segovia. Ch. of San Sebastián

Cantabrian mountains might be mole-hills, and Grenada itself as commonplace as Valladolid. Le Sage dealt with men, not with scenery, and no doubt, like Dr Johnson, would have preferred Fleet Street; but Segóvia wrings a tiny tribute even from him.

Gil Blas, it may be remembered, was not impressed by the prospect. He had a very bad fit of the blues, and could only observe that there were nettles by the stream. But doubtless he saw better ere leaving. His character (never much to boast of) was at least vastly improved by his involuntary sojourn, and perhaps it is not too fanciful to suggest that "the view from the window" may deserve some of the credit of the cure.

"There are none of beauty's daughters with a magic like thee," sings Byron to one of his *houris*; and the same whole-hearted allegiance to Segóvia will be paid by most of those who have once come under her spell. Grenada, perhaps, may equal her. So does Albarracin, in *tercio-decimo*: and the situation of Cuenca is probably the grandest of all. But even Grenada herself will not steal her admirers from Segóvia; and Cuenca, for all its brilliance, is a gem of fewer facets than this.

CHAPTER XIII

BÚRGOS

LAST but not the least among the merits of Segóvia is to be reckoned the fact that it pays some attention to its roads, for these are decidedly the best in all the central provinces. No doubt they owe something to their proximity to the Sierra de Guadarrama, which supplies them with their granite metalling, and even vouchsafes them an occasional shower. Yet there is a balance of credit to be shared among the worthy *camineros*,—those humble “pawns” who are posted at long intervals along the roadway (each with his donkey and his dog), diligently trimming the margins and spreading the tags of herbage over the surface of the road. The method seems somewhat original, but at least it has the merit of success; for the scraps of turf serve to catch the dews at night-time—and moisture is the chief desideratum upon every Spanish road.

The wide tawny plains which spread themselves northward from Segóvia are chequered with mighty pine-forests, the homes of solitude and shade. These rich green masses form a striking contrast to the bare red earth around them, and the pale blue of the distant mountains which show faintly upon the horizon beyond. For miles at a stretch the road burrows through these colonnades of tree-stems,—all plentifully blazed for resin, and festooned with the little earthenware pipkins in which it is collected;—and seldom indeed is either man or beast encountered to give a touch of life to the shadowy depths around. At one point we passed a venerable *padre*, faithfully conning his breviary as he trudged behind his mule; at another a small brown damsel lording it over a herd of gigantic kine. But the only other living creature was a large snake dusting itself in the roadway, over whom we narrowly escaped riding, for we were right upon him before we saw what he was.

Once clear of the pine-belt, the country quickly relapses into the monotony typical of the Duero vale. One may partly avoid it by taking the road to the eastward, and making straight for Búrgos by Sepúlveda and Aranda de Duero across a region of wild and lofty moors. But of the two roads to

Valladolid there is little to choose between Olmedo and Medina del Campo, and we may as well follow the more direct.

It is easy to understand, as we cross these great limitless levels, in what manner the Moors were so long able to maintain their supremacy against the hardier races of the North. The whole district is an ideal battle-field for the light-armed cavalry in which their strength consisted; and to set a medieval man-at-arms, cased in full panoply, to do a hard day's fighting under that roasting sun is a conception worthy of Perillus himself. The battles with which History concerns itself, however, are of a later age. The disconsolate little walled town of Olmedo (once one of the keys of Castile) has given its name to two desperate conflicts in the interminable civil wars which ravaged the peninsula in the middle of the fifteenth century. Here it was that Alvaro de Luna¹ gained his great victory over his confederate enemies in the reign of John II. Here, too, in the following reign, was fought a bloody fratricidal action between Henrique IV. and Alfonso, the brothers of Isabella the Catholic.

On the eve of this latter battle, Archbishop Carillo of Toledo² (as usual "agin the government")

¹ Cp. p. 207.

² Cp. p. 151.

sent a courteous message to his special enemy, the king's favourite, apprising him that forty knights had bound themselves by an oath to fight neither with small nor great, but only with him, the following day. Don Beltran de la Cueva, however, though he might not deserve his honours, at least knew how to wear them gallantly. He countered by remitting a full description of his horse and armour, so that the forty knights might make no mistake;—rode into battle as advertised;—and escaped unscathed. His spirit deserved no less:—perhaps even Carillo thought so. But one would like to know what became of the forty knights.

Olmedo figures also in fiction, but not in so martial a vein. Hither, in fear of his life along the road from Valladolid, fled our old friend Gil Blas—ex-assistant to Dr Sangrado—with more murders on his conscience than even that seasoned article felt quite easy under, and the avenger of blood at his heels in the shape of an enraged Biscayan. We followed the track of his agitated *Hegira*, but, of course, in the reverse direction, dropping gradually down to the level of the Duero by a bare and undulating road. The broad river-basin looks comparatively green and well-wooded

when viewed from the heights above Simancas ; yet as one crosses it, it is arid enough ; and the steep, flat-topped hills which bound it seem absolutely Saharan, whether looked at from above or below. The Duero itself at this point flows in a trench between crumbling yellow banks ; and the village near it, where Gil Blas struck up acquaintance with the barber and the strolling actor, lingers in our memory as the scene of our most decisive victory over our enemies the dogs. Our pockets were fairly bulging with ammunition as we descended into the *mêlée*, and whatever we missed on the volley seemed fated to catch the *ricochet*. Our last missile was expended absolutely at random on the sound of a dog behind us. But to judge from the yell which followed it, it was none the less effective for that.

Valladolid has the general unfinished air befitting a town that has made several unsuccessful attempts to establish itself as a Capital ; and its failure to support that dignity is perhaps less surprising than the fact that it should have been cast for the *rôle*. It stands upon no important river, on no commanding hill. There is hardly a village in the plain around it but might equally well have drawn a prize in the lottery which decreed its eminence.

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Burgos has the general unfinished air befitting a city that has made several unsuccessful attempts to establish itself as a Capital; and its failure to support any dignity is perhaps less surprising than the fact that it should have been cast for the rôle. It stands upon an important river, on no commanding soil. There is hardly a village in the plain around it but might equally well have drawn a prize in the lottery which decreed its eminence.



Burgos. Arco San Martin.

In strategical position it is inferior to Búrgos—to Toledo in historical prestige.

Its memories, too (even apart from Dr Sangrado), are none of the most cheerful; for it was one of the chief seats of the dreaded Inquisition, and no city save Seville can boast a blacker fame. The wretched Jews and Moors fill up the roll of the *Quemadero*,¹ but there were many scholars and nobles among the victims of the *Plaza Mayor* at Valladolid. Here died the noble San Roman, the first of the Spanish reformers. His ashes were collected by the very soldiers that guarded his pyre and were brought to London by the English Ambassador,—a foretaste of evil to come. Here it was that Don Carlos de Seso, his limbs mangled by torture and disfigured by the ghastly *San Benito*, paused as he passed the royal daïs, and sternly demanded of Philip, “as one gentleman of another,” how he could have the heart to tolerate such atrocities in his domain. “I would slay mine own son were he as thou art,” was the bigot’s answer. And so, to do him justice, he would;—on even less provocation;—as a certain grave in the Escorial can testify unto this day. But surely even Philip’s conscience can not have

¹ The place of execution at Seville.

been appeased by such a rejoinder. The memory of that awful indictment must have haunted him years afterwards in the long terrible days when he was himself meeting a yet more hideous death with equally resolute fortitude.

There was one at least of the judges who sickened at his share in that day's butchery: for when, many years afterwards, Carranza, Archbishop of Toledo, himself fell under the suspicion of the Holy Office, the remorse which he felt for de Seso was imputed to him for a crime. And the spirit which such a man could inspire in his fellows may be judged from young Julian Sanchez, who suffered the same day. The flames burnt the cords which bound him, and in his agony he wrenched himself free. The friars sprang forward to hear his recantation. But Julian's eye fell upon the heroic figure of his leader, still steadfast amid his sufferings, and with the cry, "Let me die like de Seso!" he flung himself back into the flames.

Nowhere in Europe had Protestantism nobler martyrs than the Spaniards: and numbers of them were men of eminence; for their very judges lamented that the learned men whom they had sent to confute foreign heretics were returning to preach the faith which they were commissioned to

destroy. But against such persecutors their cause was hopeless. Philip and Valdez were men with hands of iron.

Valladolid has many fine monuments, but they are scattered and lost among newer and less interesting surroundings. Even the old arcaded *plaza* is becoming deplorably modernised; and the old-world charm of Toledo and Segóvia may here be sought in vain. The Pisuerga river (upon which the city stands) forms the eastern boundary of the *Tierra de Campos*, as the Esla forms the western.¹ And the scenery of the two valleys is so nearly identical that a traveller dropped unexpectedly in either might be puzzled to say which. There are the same wide basin, the same crumbling yellow cliffs, the same troglodyte villages, the same Nilotic-looking stream. The only speciality of the Pisuerga is the extreme dustiness of the roads.

Dueñas is one of the most typical little towns of the district. Perched in full sunshine on one of the bare hills that flank the valley, it looks as thoroughly baked as a pie-crust, in spite of the poplared meadows at its feet. Here Ferdinand and Isabella first started their housekeeping, on a very modest scale indeed, with scarcely enough

¹ Cp p. 132.

capital to guarantee to-morrow's dinner. "Saving a crown, he had nothing else beside," sings the Scottish lassie of her suitor in the old ballad. But the royal lovers' crowns were still in abeyance; and the then wearer of the Castilian diadem had very different matrimonial plans for his high-spirited sister. Wherefore he, whom History remembers as the austere and politic Ferdinand, stole secretly across the hostile frontier, disguised as groom to his own attendants, at the imminent risk of a broken head; and the knot was safely tied in the cathedral at Valladolid, with the connivance of a few of Isabella's staunchest partisans.

The little cathedral town of Paléncia lies a little off the direct road; but it is most conveniently situated as a half-way house to Búrgos. The cathedral is a singularly fine one, though rather ramshackle externally; and, like a true Spanish cathedral, it is crammed with works of art. The streets are all quaintly colonnaded; but we were somewhat taken aback when we were shown the entrance to the *Fonda*, a miserable rat-hole in a blank and dirty wall. We had expected something better of Paléncia:—yet nothing quite so good as the delicious shady *patio* which we found at the end of the passage; for the hotel is

capital to guarantee to-morrow's dinner. "Saying a crown, he had nothing else beside," sings the Scottish lassie of her suitor in the old ballad. But the royal lovers' crowns were still in abeyance; and the then wearer of the Castilian diadem had very different matrimonial plans for his high-spirited sister. Wherefore he, whom History remembers as the austere and politic Ferdinand, stole secretly across the hostile frontier, disguised as groom to his own attendants, at the imminent risk of a broken heart; and the hour was well chosen in the cathedral at Valladolid, in the presence of a few of Isabella's standard-bearers.

DUEÑAS

The little cathedral town of Palencia lies a little off the direct road; but it is most conveniently situated as a half-way house to Burgos. The cathedral is a singularly fine one, though rather prosaically external; and, like a true Spanish cathedral, it is crammed with works of art. The choir is all quaintly colonnaded; but we were somewhat taken aback when we were shown the entrance to the *Florida*, a miserable rat-hole in a black and heavy wall. We had expected something better of Palencia;—yet nothing quite so good as the delicious shady *patio* which we found at the end of the passage; for the hotel is



Dueñas

really an excellent one, and its true entrance is from a street at the back. On the whole, we have nothing but commendation for Paléncia. Only we wish that the little sisterhood, "*Siervas de Maria, ministras para los enfermos*,"¹ would mind—not their p's and q's, but their m's and n's. A little ambiguity in the final syllable is so extremely compromising!

We quitted Paléncia early on midsummer morning, and soon regained the Búrgos road. The villages that lay before us were vomiting such volumes of smoke that we concluded Torquemada must be justifying its title by the celebration of an *Auto-da-fé*. But it proved to be only limekilns; and Torquemada is pretty enough to deserve a gentler name. Here the Pisuerga is crossed by a long crooked old bridge; and in the fields near by occurred the incident which forms the subject of Pradilla's famous picture, when poor mad Juana, escorting her husband's body from Búrgos to Grenada, elected to spend the night in the open sooner than shelter the faithless corpse in a convent of nuns. An incident worthy of Lear!

Now we deserted the Pisuerga to follow the

¹ The ambiguity would not be apparent to a Spaniard. To him *Invierno*, "Winter," is the assonym to *Infierno*, "Hell."

Arlanzon, a greener and narrower valley, though still somewhat dreary at times. The poppies were blazing in the brilliant sunshine with a splendour that dazzled the eye. They grow best where blood has been spilled, if we are to credit old folklore; and the Arlanzon valley may well bear out the assertion, for every stage in the journey—Torquemada, Quintana del Puente, Venta del Pozo—was the scene of some fierce skirmish during Wellington's retreat from Búrgos in 1812. His army suffered terribly hereabouts; for the roads were wellnigh impassable in that rainy autumn, and the sulky troops broke out of all control. At one time there were twelve thousand of them all drunk together in the wine-vaults at Torquemada! The result was almost disaster. But fortunately the stock of wine was a large one, and they left enough for the French. It may be urged in extenuation that the country vintages are more heady than one would think, especially for exhausted and starving men.

Our own difficulties arose not from rain but from sunshine, and the last few miles over the hilly ground were distinctly exhausting. But at these high levels even the sultriest sun is tempered by a crisp and bracing air. The traveller who starts early can

Arizson, a greener and narrower valley, though still somewhat dreary at times. The poppies were blazing in the brilliant sunshine with a splendour that dazzled the eye. They grow best where blood has been spilled, if we are to credit old folklore; and the Arizson valley may well bear out the assertion for every stage in the journey—Torquemada, Quintana del Puente, Venta del Pozo—was the scene of some fierce skirmish during Wellington's march from Burgos in 1812. His army suffered severely here, for the roads were water-logged.

BÚRGOS

Hospital del Rey.

It was a rainy autumn, and the roads were in a bad way. At one stage the rain had descended on them all drunk and dazed, the remnants of Torquemada! The army had been driven back, but fortunately the survivors were a few more and they left enough behind to be urged in extenuation that the soldiers were more heady than one would think, especially the exhausted and starving men.

Our own difficulties were not from rain but from sunshine, and the last few miles over the hilly ground were definitely exhausting. But at these high levels even the sultriest sun is tempered by a crisp and bracing air. The traveller who starts early can



Burgos. Hospital del Rey.

generally ride out the morning, and the leafy avenues of Búrgos were our haven at mid-day.

Búrgos shows itself off at best advantage when seen from the eastern side, but the approach from the west is not unworthy of the Capital of Old Castile. First we pass the beautiful *Plateresque*¹ gateway of the Hospital del Rey. Then the towers of Las Huelgas, the most famous Nunnery in Spain. The convent was founded by Alfonso VIII.,—a trespass offering after his great defeat by the *Miramamolin*² at Alarcon. And his atonement was accepted; for twenty years later he was able to hang up over the High Altar the sacred banner captured at Las Navas de Tolosa, the great victory which extinguished for ever the long domination of the Moor.

Under its folds the young Prince Edward of England knelt watching his arms on the eve of his knighthood in 1254. Here he was married — a boy bridegroom — to his girl-bride, the Princess Leonora of Castile; and hence he carried her away with him to his home in his northern

¹ The "Silversmith style," or early Spanish Renaissance. So called from the Cellini-like carving which is its leading characteristic.

² The Emperor of Morocco; at this time the martial Yakub aben Yussef.

island, where as the "dear Queen" of the Eleanor Crosses her name is held in honour to this day.

"Laws go as Kings wish," says the Spanish proverb; otherwise it is difficult to imagine how the nuns could have ever permitted such a shocking thing as a wedding in their own Conventual Church. When we peeped into it, the very effigies of the kings on the royal tombs were jealously shrouded—for propriety's sake! Formerly ten thousand dollars dowry and sixteen quarterings were indispensable to the lady who wished to renounce the vanities of the world in this exclusive cloister! But now the sisterhood is sadly reduced, and takes in "paying guests,"—to wit, another sisterhood, with whom they live (it is said) in peace and amity. I mention this because an old French curé, who visited the convent with us, seemed to regard it as the most astounding miracle that Búrgos had to boast.

The main entrance to the city is formed by the magnificent Arco de Sta Maria at the head of the bridge over the Arlanzon. It was erected to propitiate Charles V. after the revolt of the *Comuneros*; and that monarch's effigy consequently occupies the most conspicuous niche. He is surrounded by all the local heroes of Búrgos;—

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BÚRGOS

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Burgos. Arco Sta. Maria.

Diego de Porcelos, *Fundator noster*, whose German son-in-law erected the *Burg*,—Lain Calvo, chief of the early “Judges,”—and Fernan Gonzalez, the great count who founded the kingdom of Castile. But of course the greatest of all the city demi-gods is their “Champion Chief,” my Cid Ruy Diaz of Bivar. Doubtless he would have been their patron saint if the Pope could have been induced to canonize him;—a queer type of saint perhaps;—but there are queer types in the Calendar.

“My Cid” flourished about the time of our Norman Conquest, and from his youth upward was recognised as the doughtiest warrior in Spain. He was the sword-arm (according to legend) of three successive Castilian sovereigns; and his services culminated in the conquest of Toledo, where (again according to legend) he was commander-in-chief. Afterwards he fell into disgrace;—chiefly owing to his invincible ignorance of the dogma that you ought to stop killing Moors as soon as your king has made peace with them; and Alfonso VI. arranged the difficulty by banishing him from Castile,—to kill more Moors. “My Cid” now obtained letters of marque (or their equivalent) from the Moorish King of Zaragoza, and proceeded to carve out a kingdom for himself by the conquest

of Valéncia. This enterprise required money, and "My Cid" raised it from the Jews, leaving in pawn a sealed chest full of gravel, which purported to contain his family gems. Apparently he was indignant with the Hebrews because they would not accept his bare word; and it never occurred to either party that they were, in fact, accepting his bare word in the matter of the sealed chest. As a commercial transaction it seems a little bewildering; but it all came right in the end; and "My Cid" loyally redeemed his chest of gravel at full face value when Valéncia was subdued.

At Valéncia he reigned in great glory, reconciled to the king and victorious against all assaults of the Moors. There he made an edifying end, serenely indifferent to the gathering of the mighty host which his foes were assembling for their final effort. Thence he sallied for the last time at the head of his comrades,—a ghastly figure, stiff in death, but clad in full armour, and mounted on Baviéca, as he was wont to ride of yore; and all the Moors that beleaguered him fled at the sight of him, so that the spoil that he took at his death was more than he had ever taken in his life. Ximena, his widow, bore back his body to Búrgos, as he had bidden her; and his bones are exhibited

to inquisitive strangers in the Town Hall at a *peseta* a head! How could the Burgalese have the heart to ravish them from his own monastery of San Pedro de Cardena, where he slept with Ximena and Bavieca, like the tough old Berseker that he was?

Of all the cities of Northern Spain, Búrgos is probably the best known to the average tourist; but though the English language (for which one acquires a very keen ear after a month's abstinence) may be occasionally heard in the environs of the cathedral, yet the quaint old *calles* and palaces are still much less visited than they deserve. Many of the latter are particularly fine examples of their class, especially the stern old *Casa del Cordon*, which takes its name from the great cord of St Francis, sculptured over the portal,—a common embellishment in the palaces of that date; and the more graceful *Casa Miranda*, built (as we may surmise) by some relative of the “prudent” Don Diego, Don Quixote's hospitable host. This last is a lovely old building of Italian delicacy of ornament, but, now, alas! sadly mutilated and partitioned off into squalid tenements, not entirely innocent of fleas.

“It is never hot at Búrgos,” we had been told

by a friendly mentor: and I can testify that it is often cold there, for the place stands high, and the mountains of la Demanda rear their snowy crests at no great distance away. Yet the local saying, "Nine months of Winter, and three of H—l"¹ is distinctly a more impartial summary, and this month was apparently one of the three. The narrow streets blazed white and scintillating under the flood of sunshine. The wayfarer edged his way gingerly along the shady margin, and picked out the narrowest point before he would venture to cross. Then, after a timid pause, he would draw a deep breath and make a bolt for it. The sun caught him in transit like the blast from the mouth of a furnace; and he scuttled gasping into shelter, and cooled off on the further side. The Spanish shade temperature may perhaps be matched on a hot day in England, but it needs the *Piazza* at Venice to rival the fury of the sun.

There are, indeed, some few Salamanders who do not appear to mind it. A party of tonsured Franciscans were unconcernedly challenging it to do its worst. But most of the saner inhabitants wisely keep indoors till the evening; and whoso wishes to see *Búrgos Society* taking its airing, let

¹ Cp. note on p. 265.

by a friendly owner: and I can testify that it is often cold there, for the place stands high, and the mountains of *la Demanda* rear their snowy crests at no great distance away. Yet the local saying, "Nine months of Winter, and three of Hell" is distinctly a more impartial summary, and this month was apparently one of the three. The narrow streets blazed white and scintillating under the flood of sunshine. The wayfarer edged his way gingerly along the shady margin, and picked out the narrowest point below he would venture to cross. Then, after a few paces, he would draw a

BÚRGOS

Patio of the Casa de Miranda.

deep breath and look for it. The sun caught him in transit like the blast from the mouth of a furnace; and he scuttled gasping into shelter, and cooled off on the further side. The Spanish shade temperature may perhaps be matched on a hot day in England, but it needs the *Piazza* at *Venezia* to rival the fury of the sun.

There are, indeed, some few Salamanders who do not appear to mind it. A party of tonsured *Franciscans* were unconcernedly challenging it to the north. But most of the saner inhabitants wisely stay indoors till the evening: and whose wishes in the *Wagon Society*, taking its airing, let

* Cf. note on p. 255.



him seat himself after dusk in front of the Café Suizo upon the Espolon. Then all the beauty and fashion turn out to promenade upon a regulation hundred yards of pavement, under the eyes of their fathers and brothers, who sit sipping their coffee and *anis* beneath the trees. A very handsome company they are; but, alas! their hats and frocks are mostly Parisian creations. That most graceful of all head-dresses, the *mantilla*, is reserved for state occasions, such as High Masses and Bull-fights. "Nothing is sacred to a sapper,"—nor to a milliner, unless it is new.

There is a cathedral at Búrgos; and we feel ourselves justified in mentioning it, because we heard it frankly admitted that it was "a vurry fine church *for such a small town*." Our Amurrican Ruskin seemed to think it hardly class enough for Chicago; but in contests of this description the battle is not to the millionaire. The builder of the Escorial, for all his great possessions, knew that it was not for his craftsmen to rival the Cartuja tombs.¹

Indeed, there is something overwhelming about the magnificence of Búrgos. It is rather German in character, as Leon is rather French. Yet

¹ See p. 281.

though Juan de Colónia was a Rhinelander and Archbishop Maurice an Englishman, there is too much pure Spanish at Búrgos to assign all the credit to them. The building ranks as one of the wonders of Europe:—a cathedral perhaps as large as Canterbury, but finished throughout with the delicate extravagance of the *bijou* chapel of Roslin;—which, of course, is really Spanish also, if Scotchmen will excuse my saying so.

And, moreover, the splendour of the furniture is fully in keeping with the fabric: particularly the gorgeous metal *rejas*,—for what other craftsmen in Europe could vie with the Spanish smiths? Riches which might deck out a whole church among us lovers of bare walls are here found packed within the compass of a single chapel; and little gems of carving and inlay are thrust aside like lumber into corners where they can be scarcely seen. The whole is a dream of magnificence unsurpassable even in Italy: yet it is the gorgeous gloom of Toledo which still springs first to the memory when we contrast our own chaste chilly churches with the opulence of the shrines of Spain.

The cathedral stands upon steeply sloping ground well above the level of the Arlanzon. A long broad flight of steps leads up from the

street to the south transeptal entrance; and from the pavement of the northern transept the noble staircase of Diego de Silöe climbs up to another street level upon the further side. Beyond it and above are piled the quaint red-roofed houses, clambering tier upon tier up the flanks of the escarpment; yet for all their aspirations the bare steep mound draws clear of them, and "Dubreton's thundering citadel" frowns alone upon the crest.

This castle has rather an unsatisfactory interest for Englishmen, for it was the obstacle which checked the advance of Wellington in his great campaign of 1812. It stands at the tip of a long tongue of high ground which runs up to the river almost at right angles; and this extreme end is separated from the rest of the ridge by a deep depression, so that it forms a sort of semi-detached hillock, shaped like a gigantic mole-hill some three hundred and fifty feet high. The castle is included within the circuit of the city walls; and the cathedral is so close beneath it that it is wonderful that it escaped destruction during the bombardment. Yet even the stained glass which once adorned the clerestory was only destroyed by the explosion which occurred the following year. The castle was once the royal residence of Castile: but

nothing now remains of it except a few lines of grass-grown earthworks, which are utilised as rope-walks by the peaceful Burgalese. The modern fortress is on the hill of San Miguel, on the other side of the depression.

In Wellington's day San Miguel was merely an outwork. Its capture was a preliminary operation, and it was stormed early in the siege. With modern artillery such a *coup* would have been decisive. The citadel itself would have been blown over the pinnacles of the cathedral without more ado. But in those times the old line-of-battle ships fought their thirty-two pounders muzzle to muzzle, and "three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols" was considered "as good as a mile."

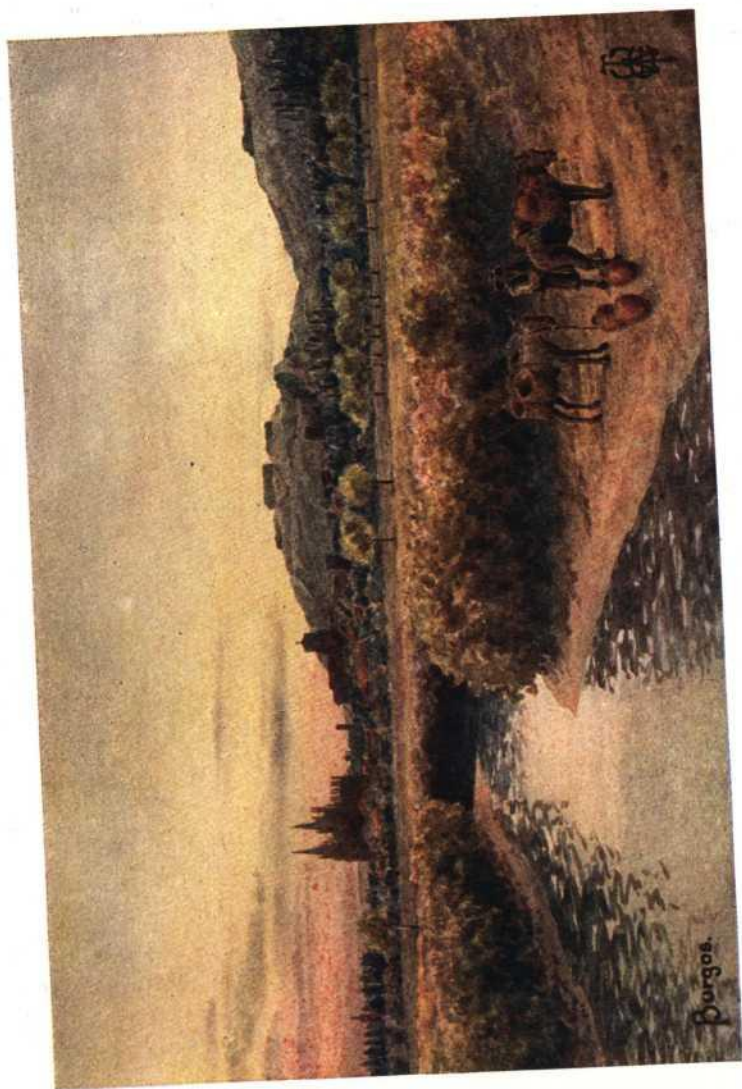
Wellington was, moreover, miserably provided with artillery, and the guns of the castle were far superior to his own. His troops were endeavouring to "tear down the ramparts with their naked hands"; and the conspicuous pillar which overlooks three counties from the lonely heights of Malvern, records the fate of the young heir of Eastnor who was killed while directing the approaches. A month's siege and five desperate assaults left the castle still unwon when the French

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From the East.

The garrison was, moreover, miserably provided with artillery, and the guns of the castle were far superior to those of the French. His troops were endeavouring to "dig down the ramparts with their naked hands," and the conspicuous pillar which overlooks these deserts from the lonely heights of Malvern, witnessed the fate of the young heir of Easton who was killed while directing the approach. A month's siege and five desperate assaults left the castle still unwon when the French



armies had gathered to relieve it: and the besiegers with muffled wheels stole away over the bridges in the night-time. The campaign which began so gloriously at Salamanca¹ had ended in another retreat.

Yet the labour and carnage were not wasted. Joseph had neither time nor money to spend upon repairing the battered fortress, and next year the tide of war rolled back like the surge of the sea. Wellington, riding at the head of his troops across the hills from the westward, was saluted by the thunder of a terrific explosion which darkened the heavens above him and shook the ground beneath his feet. Then first, with stern elation, he recognised the presage of Vitória. His foes had despaired of resisting him. The castle of Búrgos was no more.

¹ See p. 161.

CHAPTER XIV

ACROSS NAVARRE

It must give some flavour of unreality to our impressions of the Peninsula that we should not allude to the beggars until the ultimate chapter of all. And our only excuse for our negligence will sound like an aggravation of the error; for we hold that the Spanish beggar has been much over-advertised and does not (on his merits) deserve any more prominent place. The number of beggars in Spain varies directly in proportion to the number of tourists. They are most persistent at Búrgos; there is a moderate superfluity at Segóvia and Toledo: but in the out-of-the-way districts there is only the fundamental residue, and that (to speak frankly) we should be rather loth to spare.

“His honour the beggar, your brother”—the authorised official beggar—is a gentleman. He is frequently distinguished by a badge, like old Edie Ochiltree; and his resemblance to that worthy philosopher does not terminate with the

badge. He is seldom unduly importunate. He begs "in God's name"; and when "in God's name" you implore him to excuse you, he seems to resignedly argue that such an adjuration would never be refused on insufficient grounds. His station is in the church porches; but he sometimes goes stumping the *calles*, and breathing a supplicating "*Ave Maria*" into every open door—an invocation which generally brings a very peppery blessing rattling down the staircase from the busy housewife overhead. And in fine, his entire demeanour is so eminently high-bred and dignified that it seems a privilege to oblige him. You feel as if you were conferring an obol on Belisarius, and are consequently on the best of terms with yourself for all the rest of the day.

This "Lord High Vagabond of the Stocks" is, however, not quite pushing enough for the era. In be-touristed cities he is swamped by an army of interlopers. These are perhaps most frequently children; but the tribe is betrayed by their cry,—"*Perrita por pan!*"¹—*Señor-e-e-to! una*

¹ "A ha'penny for bread." The *perrita* or "little dog" = a halfpenny, and the *perro gordo* or fat dog = a penny. Thus "Two reals minus a little dog" is 45 *centimos*. The animal irrelevantly called a "dog" is the lion on the reverse of the coin.

perr-e-e-ta!” a capital phrase for a beggar’s whine! A small initiate was squatting beside me all the time I was sketching the Casa Miranda. She was engaged in coaching the baby—these were to be his first words. The baby being unresponsive, she maintained the refrain herself, at intervals of five minutes, in an uninterested semi-detached tone. If she got the *perrita* that would be so much profit; but she would not be depressed if she didn’t—she was not so keen about the *pan*. The benevolent stranger is misled by their bare feet and rags and persistency, and imagines that they are all on the brink of starvation; but if he wants to see real poverty let him penetrate to the remoter villages—and he will find no beggars there. There more than once I have been humbled to the dust at having my “tip” politely spurned by the dignified ragamuffins who have rendered me some trifling service. And lest I should ruin their self-respect with coppers, I have been forced to undermine their constitutions with cigarettes.

The last beggars whom we encountered at Búrgos, however, were “right” beggars. They were clustering round the entrance of the great monastery of La Cartuja¹ de Miraflores, awaiting

¹ *Certosa*. Charterhouse.

their daily dole. Everybody visits La Cartuja to see the marvellous tombs which Isabella erected for her father and brother—the masterpieces of *el maestro* Gil; yet not the least attractive feature are the white-robed Carthusian brethren themselves, and the ragged mendicants “coming for their soup” according to the immemorial usage of old.

The convent stands about two miles from Búrgos, on a slight eminence to the right of the Pancorvo road, and was the last of the great monuments of the city that we passed on our departure towards the east. The road had been rising almost imperceptibly all the way from Valladolid. Gradually the fields had got greener and the trees more plentiful as we left the dun plains behind; and now a fine row of big shady elms introduced a welcome variety to the everlasting poplars and half-grown acacias which had been our only solace for many a sultry mile. The country, moreover, now begins to assume a more mountainous character. Away to the right rises the desolate Sierra de la Demanda, the northern outpost of the rugged ranges round Sória,—perhaps one of the wildest districts in all western Europe at the present day. The wolf and the boar still roam

at will through its untrodden valleys, though I believe the bear now only survives in the Western Cantabrians and the Pyrenees. Here the venerable monastery of Silos lay securely hidden even from the sacrilegious Moors; and here in later years the dreaded *partidas* of Mina the *guerillero* were able to defy the utmost efforts of the French.

Our road passes only over the merest outskirts of these mountains, and leads us on through Briviesca by a long, gradual, and monotonous descent. Yet the gates of Castile are still before us, and we do not quit that most Spanish of provinces without seeing it once more in its sternest and wildest mood. North of the road lies the long level-topped ridge of the Montes Obarenes, a range not dissimilar to our own Mendips, and, like them, cleft with an unsuspected pass. For some distance we skirt the base of the hills; and then with a sharp turn to the left we dive suddenly into the grim defile of Pancorvo, a Deva gorge in miniature, where road, river, and railway jostle each other through a maze of fantastic limestone crags.

These mountain ramparts, pierced with their deep natural posterns, are a most characteristic feature of the Castilian frontiers; and probably that "Land of Castles" owes its name as much to

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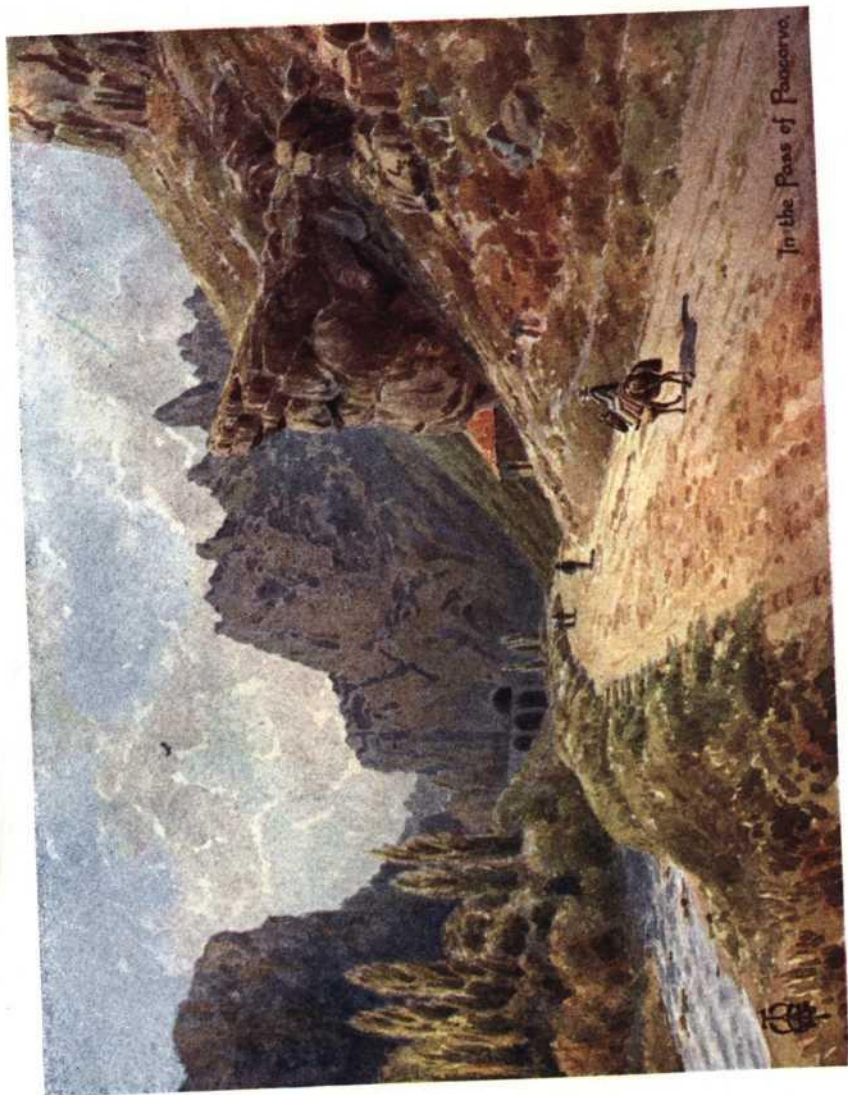
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THE GORGE OF PANCORVO

provinces whence *Spain* is once more in its sternest and wildest mood. North of the road lies the low, level-topped ridge of the Montes Obarenes, a range not dissimilar to our own Mendips, and like these, with an unsuspected pass. For some distance we skirt the base of the hills; and then with a slight turn to the left we dive suddenly into the precipitous *Devil's* gorge of Pancorvo, a *Devil's* gorge in miniature, where road, river, and railway jostle each other through a maze of fantastic limestone crags.

These mountain ramparts, pierced with their deep natural portholes, are a most characteristic feature of the Castilian frontiers; and probably that "Land of Castles" owes its name as much to

In the Pass of Pascevo.



them as to its man-built donjons and citadels. Indeed, it requires no very vivid imagination to discover the outlines of towers and battlements among the sheer bare weather-beaten stones. One magnificent imitation overshadowed our road in the *Serrania* of Cuenca, with keep and watch-tower and ballium as complete as a *Château Gaillard*. Another more ambiguous specimen we caught sight of in this very district;—one of those isolated conical hills crowned with a square rocky tooth, which are not uncommon in the neighbourhood of Pamplona. First it seemed that it was a rock,—then that it was a castle; and the balance of probability appeared to change every half mile. The road led straight up to our landmark and circled around the base, so that we saw it fairly close, and from three different sides; but whether it was really a rock or a castle we are not quite positive even to this day. There can be little doubt that it is to some of these *Fate Morgane* that we owe the old proverb concerning castles in Spain.

The northern face of the Montes Obarenes is much more broken than the southern; and as we run down from the pass into the pretty little town of Miranda, we may see, far away on our right,

that other great notch to the eastward where the Ebro forces its passage out into the Rioja plains. The Ebro is but young up here in the Vizcayan highlands; yet it is already a fine broad river; and the massive old stone bridge of Miranda, flanked by quaint houses and churches, makes a singularly attractive sample of Spanish scenery to the tourist newly arrived from Bayonne.

The river breaks through the mountains some ten miles lower, by a gap between two rocky headlands, known as the cliffs of Bilibio and Buradon; and beyond are the tawny undulating plains around Haro,—a famous wine-growing district, whose vintages usually reach the English market under the name of Bordeaux, though they taste just as good under their own. The view (given in the illustrations as *La Rioja Alavesa*) is one which is very typical of Spanish inland scenery. But a special local touch is given by the Navarrese villages bunched together at the tops of their conical hills, like so many hedgehogs with their bristles out. Navarre was a buffer state in medieval times, and anyone who had nothing else to do used to kill time by invading it. The Navarrese villages were always upon the defensive,

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and evidently acquired the habit of arranging themselves to suit.

Meanwhile our road to Pamplona keeps still to the northward of the mountains, and, crossing the Ebro at Miranda, makes straight for the heights of Puebla and Morillas, which answer to the Montes Obarenes on the opposite side of the vale. The little river Zadora comes rippling out to meet us; and the gap from which it issues admits us into a wide level basin some ten miles in diameter, to which the Zadora itself forms a somewhat irregular chord. The ground on the left bank of the river rises considerably higher than on the right, and culminates in a little shaggy knoll which stands close beside our road. Watch for it, and do not pass it unnoticed; it is the "Englishmen's Hill." Well has it earned that name, for it has been twice baptized in the blood of our nation. Once when a detachment of the Black Prince's army, under the command of Sir Thomas Felton, fell fighting valiantly against thirty times their number on the eve of the battle of Navarrete.¹ Again when Picton's "fighting devils" came like a storm

¹ This incident has been utilised by Conan Doyle in his *White Company*. But that story rather exaggerates the height and steepness of the hill.

against it in the crisis of the battle of Vitória, cutting their path through the centre of King Joseph's tottering array.

Salamanca was Wellington's most brilliant victory, but Vitória was unquestionably the ablest of his campaigns. This invasion was not like those that had gone before it—no mere sally from his impregnable mountain lines. At last he could wield an undivided command and an army as numerous as his opponents; and as he crossed the little frontier river Agueda, he had looked back to Portugal with a confident "adieu." Hill to the right and Graham to the left had already been slipped on their quarry; and against such a sweeping combination neither Tormes, Duero, nor Carrion could provide any adequate defence. Madrid was abandoned before him,—Búrgos was dismantled. And the retreating French convoys, with all their baggage, plunder, and munitions, were jammed in the city of Vitória at the head of the road to Bayonne.

Joseph sought to bar the advance at Pancorvo, and thought the defile was impregnable. He looked for assault from the southward, but the storm broke upon him from behind. Wellington had shifted his base by sea from Lisbon to

Santander; and sweeping Reille and Maucune before him, came pouring down the Ebro from the north. The stroke was a *coup de Jarnac*, as fatal as it was unexpected. The heights of Obarenes and Morillas were no longer barring the way; and Joseph hastily fell back to the hills behind the Zadora, the only remaining position which he could possibly hope to defend.

As it was in the days of Las Navas de Tolosa, so was it also in this "crowning mercy" of the Peninsular War. It was a peasant who led Kempt's brigade over the unguarded bridge at Tres Pontes, and fell, like his prototype of the Morena, at the moment of the victorious attack. Clinging in desperation to each successive thicket and farmstead, the French were pushed remorselessly backward into the chaos of transport behind. And even more fatal than the frontal onset was the blow struck far to the left on the very confines of the plain. There Graham stormed the village of Gamarra Mayor, and shut off the flying army from the use of the great royal road. Nothing that ran upon wheels could go along the branch road to Pamplona. Guns, ammunition, treasure, baggage, and plunder all fell entire into the hands of the victors; and probably at the moment Joseph was

very well contented that the prize was sufficiently valuable to effectually hamper the pursuit.

The battle was the ruin of Napoleon, as well as of his cause in the Peninsula. The struggle had sapped his strength for years, and the catastrophe came at the very crisis of his fate.¹ Among all his enterprises there had been none more thoroughly inexcusable;—wantonly conceived, treacherously undertaken, ruthlessly carried out. As great a blunder in statecraft as it was an outrage on humanity. “The Spanish canker destroyed him”; and so in bare justice it should.

Our route follows the track of the flying army along a deep green Navarrese valley between lofty and cliff-like hills. By its side runs the single line which connects Madrid with the frontier; but this turns off to the north about halfway to Pamplona, making for San Sebastián and Irun.

The villages are much devoted to *Pelota*²; and few are too poor to possess some species of primitive court. Those in the larger towns are most imposing erections; but any bare wall will do, and some of the churches have hoisted pathetic petitions that the parishioners will not practise against the

¹ During the sitting of the Congress of Dresden.

² A highly developed form of Fives.

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MIRANDA DEL EBRO

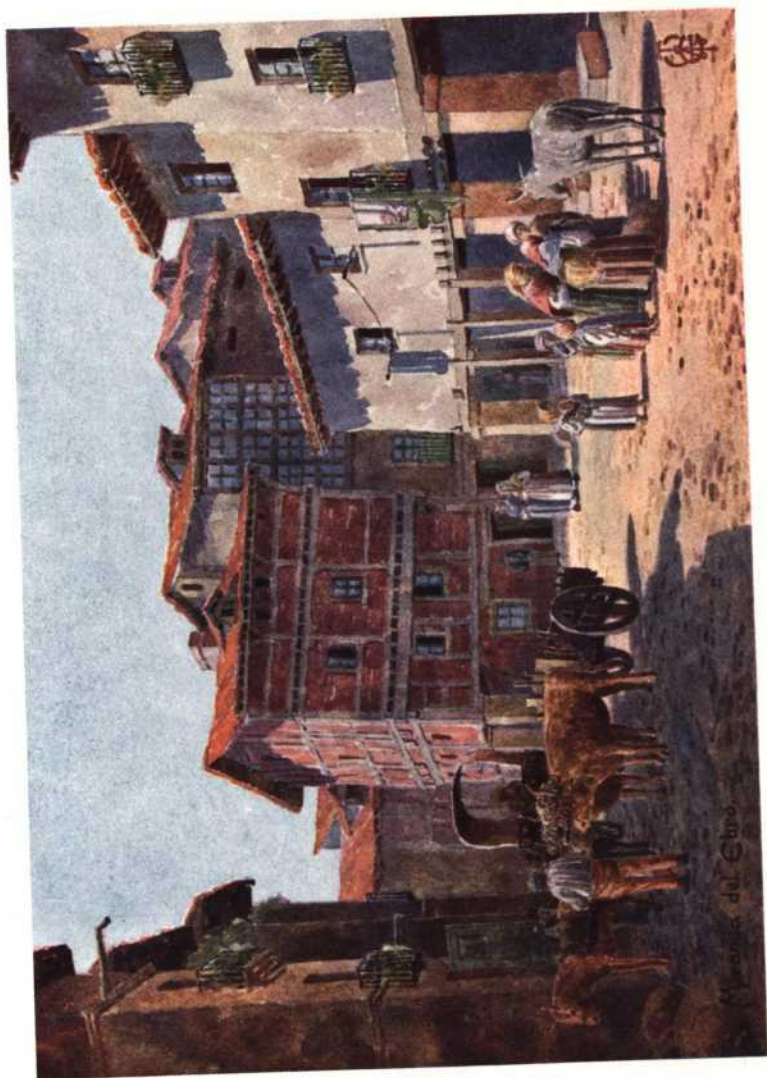
A Corner in the Town.

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¹ During the sitting of the Congress of Dresden.

² A highly developed form of Fivea.



walls *during the hours of divine service*. The houses themselves seem almost built with a view to the pastime, for they are solid square stone buildings, shouldering close up against the roadway ; and their blank expanses of ashlar are persistently commandeered by the boys.

Pelota is exclusively a Basque game. In Castile and Leon the men are content with skittles, and the boys are generally engrossed in the enacting of miniature bull-fights—a game in which the star performer invariably elects to play bull. Dancing is, of course, an amusement which is common to all provinces and to both sexes : but a game in the English significance is an institution which seldom appeals to the southern mind.

In this district, however, the cyclist provides a good deal of salutary exercise for the conscientious toll-keeper. For the Basque roads are not national but provincial, and the provinces maintain them by taking tolls. The stranger, however, is not generally aware of this custom ; and as the toll-bars are quite unobtrusive, he rides innocently past them on his way. His first intimation takes the shape of a breathless and howling *camintero* sprinting desperately along the road behind him,

and smarting under the conviction that he is being wilfully bilked.

Some little distance before we reach Pamplona we pass one of the most remarkable examples of rock formation that is to be met with even in Spanish hills. Here the deep glen of Larraun debouches upon the main valley, and across its mouth is drawn a huge natural wall of precipitous limestone which can hardly be less than a thousand feet high. The top is serrated, but both faces are equally sheer; and the thickness at the base is not relatively greater than one would expect in an artificial masonry dam. Probably, indeed, it was a natural dam originally, retaining a vast reservoir in the vale behind; but now it is cleft in the centre from top to base with a huge gash, clean-cut and narrow; and through this stupendous portal the little river issues from the vale.

Pamplona stands in the centre of an amphitheatre of mountains, rising out of the level arena on a sort of dais covered with walls and spires. It is the chief of the northern frontier fortresses; but its bastions date mostly from the days of Vauban, and its strength (from a modern military standpoint) must depend on the forts which cap the neighbouring hills. The cathedral is an interesting

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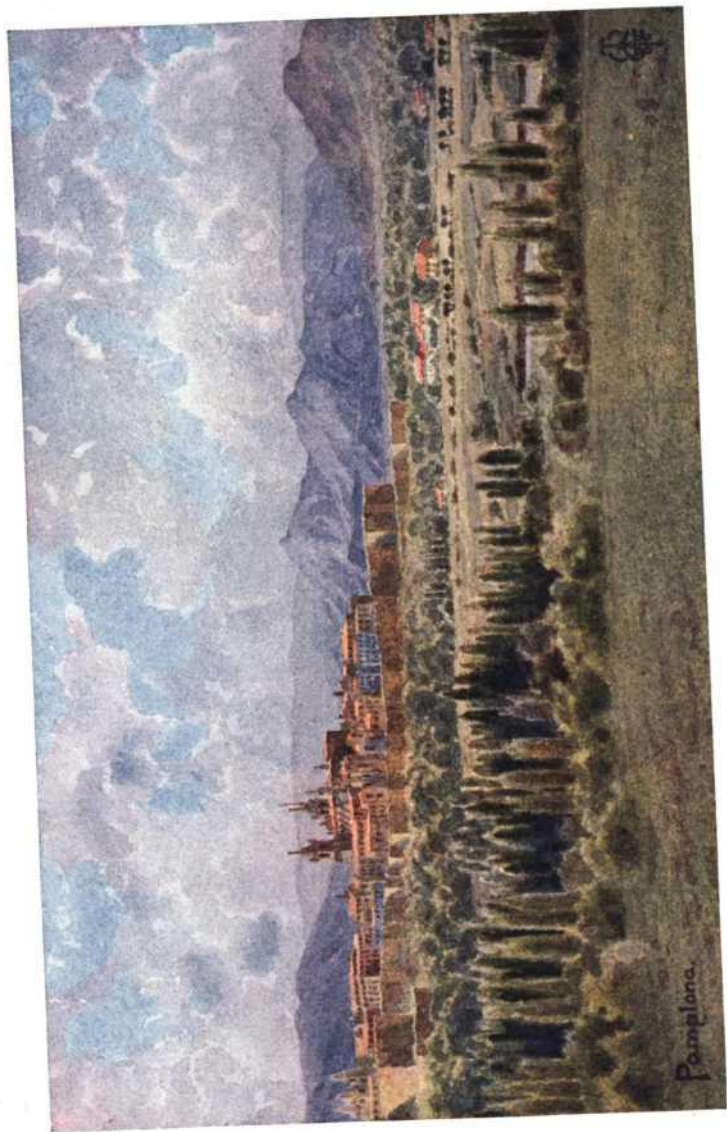
Some little distance before we reach Pamplona we pass one of the most remarkable examples of rock formation that is to be met with even in Spanish hills. Here the deep glen of Larran debouches upon the main valley, and across its mouth is drawn a huge natural wall of precipitous limestone which can hardly be less than a thousand feet high. The top is serrated, but both faces are equally sheer; and the thickness at the base is not relatively great.

PAMPLONA

From the Road to the Frontier.

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Pamplona.



building, and possesses a most lovely cloister; but the town generally is not very attractive to the artist, though it forms a good "jumping-off place" for exploring the country around.

The bare, windy wastes that stretch away from the city towards the Pyrenean foot-hills are not altogether so tenantless as they seem to a casual view. Several of the villages still bear traces of ancient prosperity;—Estella, charmingly situated in a rocky hollow; Sangüesa, with its noble monastery; Olite, once the Windsor of Navarre. The last-named might almost rank as a working model for an antiquarian. Its lanes are packed with the decaying mansions of the long-departed courtiers, and dominated by the huge ruined castle which was the home of the warrior kings. This palatial stronghold is noted as one of the finest examples in the Peninsula: a match for our own Bamburgh or Warkworth, and consequently with few rivals in the world.

As the capital of Navarre, Pamplona has, of course, been pre-eminent for its sieges; and it was in one of these that Ignatius Loyola received the wound which converted him from a dandy into an ascetic, and led to the foundation of the Order of Jesuits. But the siege which possesses

the greatest interest for an Englishman is that undertaken by the Duke of Wellington after Vitória; the enterprise which led to that series of desperate struggles usually lumped together vaguely as "the Battles of the Pyrenees."

The sieges of San Sebastián and Pamplona had been undertaken simultaneously; but neither made very rapid progress, and Soult was not the man to let them fall without an attempt to come to their aid. He had re-formed the wrecks of Joseph's army on the French side of the frontier; and advancing towards the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles, he assailed them both suddenly the same day. The detachments which guarded them were overpowered after a most resolute resistance, and Soult pushed down the valleys towards Pamplona, reuniting his forces on the road. Wellington had expected that the blow would be aimed at San Sebastián. He was momentarily outwitted; but he recovered just in time. Soult found his path barred at the fatal ridge of Saurauen,—just outside the Pamplona basin, and literally within sight of his goal. The beleaguered garrison heard the roar of that furious battle; they could watch the smoke-wreaths curling above the intervening ridge. But no French standards appeared in the

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OLITE

The Castle.



Castle of Olite.



mouth of the pass in the evening. When the battle was renewed two days later, the English were the assailants; and Soult and his beaten army could barely find safety in flight.

Saurauren was Wellington's last great battle on Spanish soil. A few weeks later the two great fortresses had fallen, and—first of all the allied Generals—he carried the war into France. Five years previously he had landed in Portugal—a “Sepoy General,” little more distinguished than Cornwallis or Eyre Coote. But those five years in the Peninsula had fixed his reputation for ever; and the giant who crossed the Bidassoa had but little to add to his stature on the field of Waterloo.

There is a choice of two roads from Pamplona to the frontier. The *kilos* are reckoned from Maya; but Roncesvalles bears the more historic name. In point of scenery there is little to choose between them; but perhaps Maya is the harder journey, for Maya includes Vellate, and this extra pass is the loftiest of the three.

The country towards Roncesvalles is at first much less mountainous in character than that towards Vitória; for the high peaks of the Pyrenees lie in the centre of the range, to the eastward; and those immediately before us, though wild and rugged,

do not show up very imposingly above the lofty levels upon the Spanish side. Near Pamplona the meadows are green and civilised, but the view becomes sterner and more barren as we draw near to the feet of the hills; and presently we enter a long, narrow, rocky gully—the bed of a mountain river—whose steep, bare sides are dotted with trim little bushes of box. How hot it was in that narrow gully! The sun's rays poured vertically into the breathless hollow, and their heat was radiated by every burning stone. Even the six-inch shadows of the box bushes were quoted at fancy values; and shedding our outer garments one after another, we eventually emerged at the further end in an almost aboriginal state.

“Are you thinking of resuming the garb of civilisation?” enquired one vagabond of another, as we halted for a moment on the little bridge near the village of Burguete. “I am thinking of resuming the garb of Adam,” retorted his comrade desperately, as he glared into the pool beneath. It was rather a public place for a bathe; but there are no passengers on a Spanish road at *Comida* time. And as that meal is invariably unpunctual, we knew that the little *Fonda* could be reached in plenty of time.

Burguete stands in the centre of a little cup-like valley; and prominent upon the further lip rises a big domed hill, one of the flankers of the pass. It is a sleek, smooth mountain, upholstered with green turf, and spangled with grazing sheep; and the big round beeches and chestnuts herd together all over its crest, as domesticated as on an English lawn. Yet the little hillock beneath it was the scene of one of the greatest of tragedies; for there stood the abbey of Roncesvalles, the sepulchre of Charlemagne's slaughtered Peers.

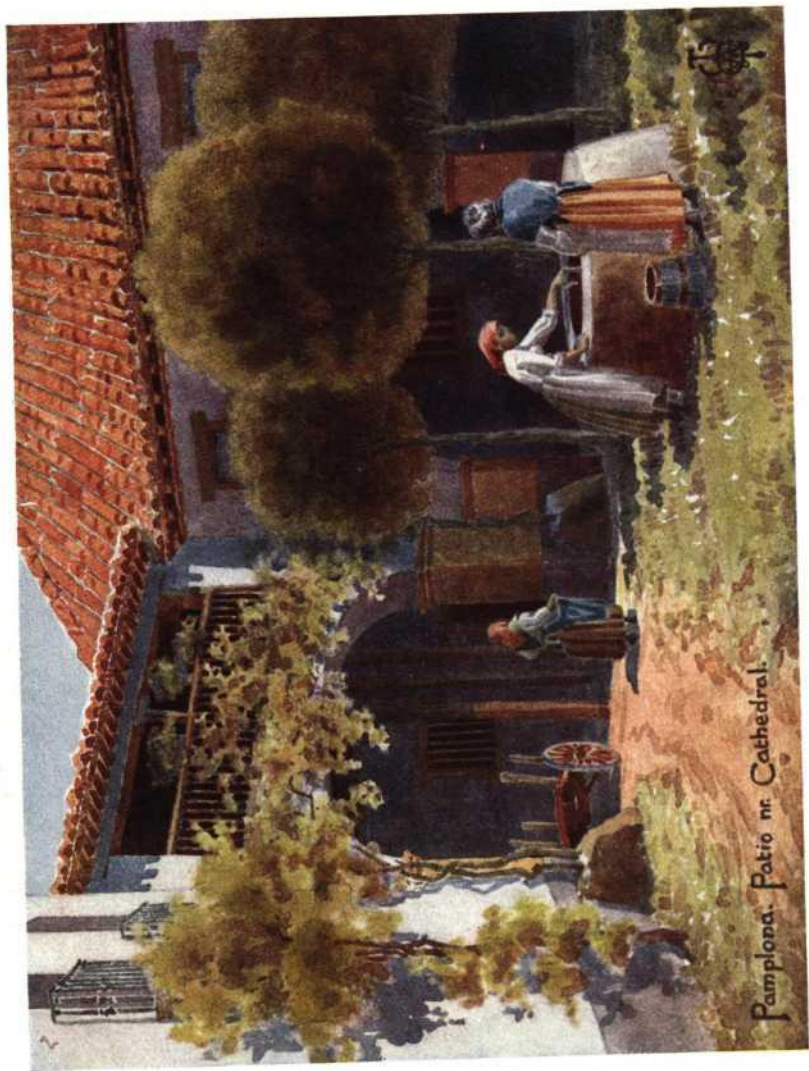
A good deal of controversial ink has been spilt over Charlemagne's famous Spanish expedition: and all the confusion of history has been worse confounded by romance. The French Epics tell of it as a glorious and successful crusade, undertaken in the cause of Christendom against the insolence of the Moors. The Emperor dictated his own terms in his enemy's palace at Córdoba, and it was only the treachery of Ganelon that led to the regrettable incident at the end. Very different is the story of the Spanish ballads. Their bards were most wofully sceptical of religious and disinterested invasion; they wished to be left to fight out their own quarrels with their own infidels, and felt no sort of satisfaction at the prospect of

Spain becoming a province of the Franks. It was their own native heroes, Bernardo del Carpio and the chivalry of Leon, who overthrew the Paladins at Roncesvalles. Is not Roland's "Durandal" in the armoury of Madrid to this day, to prove that the Spaniard was the better man?

In truth the expedition was directed against the newly-established Caliphate of Córdoba, in alliance with Suleiman Ibn-al-Arabi, the Moorish king of Barcelona, who was jealous of Abderahman's growing power. Charlemagne captured Pamplona (which was Christian), and obtained some acknowledgment of suzerainty from the Sheikhs of Gerona and Huesca. But Zaragoza held out against him with all its traditional obstinacy: the ill-matched allies could by no means pull together; and the campaign fizzled out abortively without any substantial gain. As for the dolorous rout which concluded it, that was the work of neither Goth nor Moor, but of the angry Basques of the mountains, a nation whom Charlemagne had not regarded, and whom he probably despised. They had seen their country pillaged, their capital Pamplona taken; and now, when the rearguard was entangled in the mountains, they at last got the chance of plunder and revenge. No doubt

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Pamplona. Patio nr. Cathedral.

they trapped them in that long rocky defile—straggling, way-worn, and cumbered with plunder and baggage—a position as hopeless as Elphinstone's in the Koord Kabul. The disjointed line was toiling painfully along the gullet; the slippery screes rose unscalable on either side; and the jutting crags that frowned at every corner afforded both ramparts and missiles to the unweariable mountaineers. None but the doughtiest warriors could have succeeded in breaking out into the basin of Burguete. And here their superior arms and discipline would enable them to fight their way across to the further side. Only one short ascent still remained to be surmounted; but their active enemy was before them, and the task was beyond their power. Wounded and exhausted, they drew together in a rallying square upon the little hillock; and there, fighting desperately, they were cut down to a man.

The course of that fight is retold in the very conformation of the valley, yet somehow the picture is inadequate. The drama is not quite worthily staged. The place is too homely and pastoral for the scene of that great Saga which Taillefer chanted between the embattled hosts at Hastings; and which has since thrilled the hearts of generations

of warriors, as Sidney's was thrilled by the tale of Chevy Chase. We need a more rugged environment for the memory of a departed demi-god. "He who aspires to be a hero," said Dr Johnson, "should drink brandy!" And perhaps, while he is about it, he might get killed in a Deva gorge.

There is a softer lay for the minstrel who would linger by the braes of Burguete; a tale of two true lovers, who, as usual, were distressingly ill-starred. Their story is even more ancient than the doughty deeds of arms that we have just been rehearsing; for it relates to the days of Charlemagne's illustrious grand-sire, Charles Martel. Othman ben Abu Neza, the Moorish warden of the marches, had espoused a Christian bride, Lampegia, daughter of Duke Eudo of Aquitaine; and fleeing with her across the mountains to seek refuge from his indignant suzerain, was overtaken in the pass of Roncesvalles, and slain in his lady's arms. The unemotional historian is convinced that the marriage was political, and hints that both Eudo and Othman were conspiring against their respective liege lords. But at least he will grant us a certificate as to the authenticity of the final catastrophe: and he flatly declines to go further even for Roland and his Peers.

Battlefields lie thick in Navarre, and even the Vale of Thorns is not absolutely the last of them. A second battle of Roncesvalles was contested upon the heights of Altobiscar, at the very crest of the Pass, in 1813. Here the British had been posted for six weeks, covering the blockade of Pamplona; and had greatly vexed the soul of their general by persistently deserting in twos and threes every night.

Why these seasoned soldiers, at this very hour of their triumph, should have been seized with so strange an epidemic, is a problem which might take a good deal of arguing. The only contemporary theory was the suggestion that they were finding things slow! But their fighting qualities did not seem to have got much affected. Soult finally attacked them in person with much superior numbers: and they offered a most resolute resistance, only giving ground after night-fall, when it was evident they were being outflanked. Cole, the hero of Albuera, led them stubbornly back along the mountain ridges towards Pamplona; and the act was played out at Sauraren, where he arrived just in time to seize the hill.

The ascent of the Pass upon the Spanish side is but trifling. A few brisk turns in the track, and

we have climbed from the abbey ruins to the summit of the *col* behind. Before us the road to France drops coil below coil into the deep green valley, a long descent of over three thousand feet. The actual frontier is some dozen miles further, at the village of Valcarlos; where a modest little bridge, shepherded by a horde of sentries, spans the waters of the infant Nive. But the spirit of Spain lags behind us up here upon this breezy saddle. Here is the true parting of the nations; and as we turn our faces plainwards, we feel that we are taking our leave.

Farewell and adieu to you, fair Spanish ladies!

Farewell and adieu to you, ladies of Spain!

For we've received orders to cross the salt waters;

We hope before long we shall see you again!

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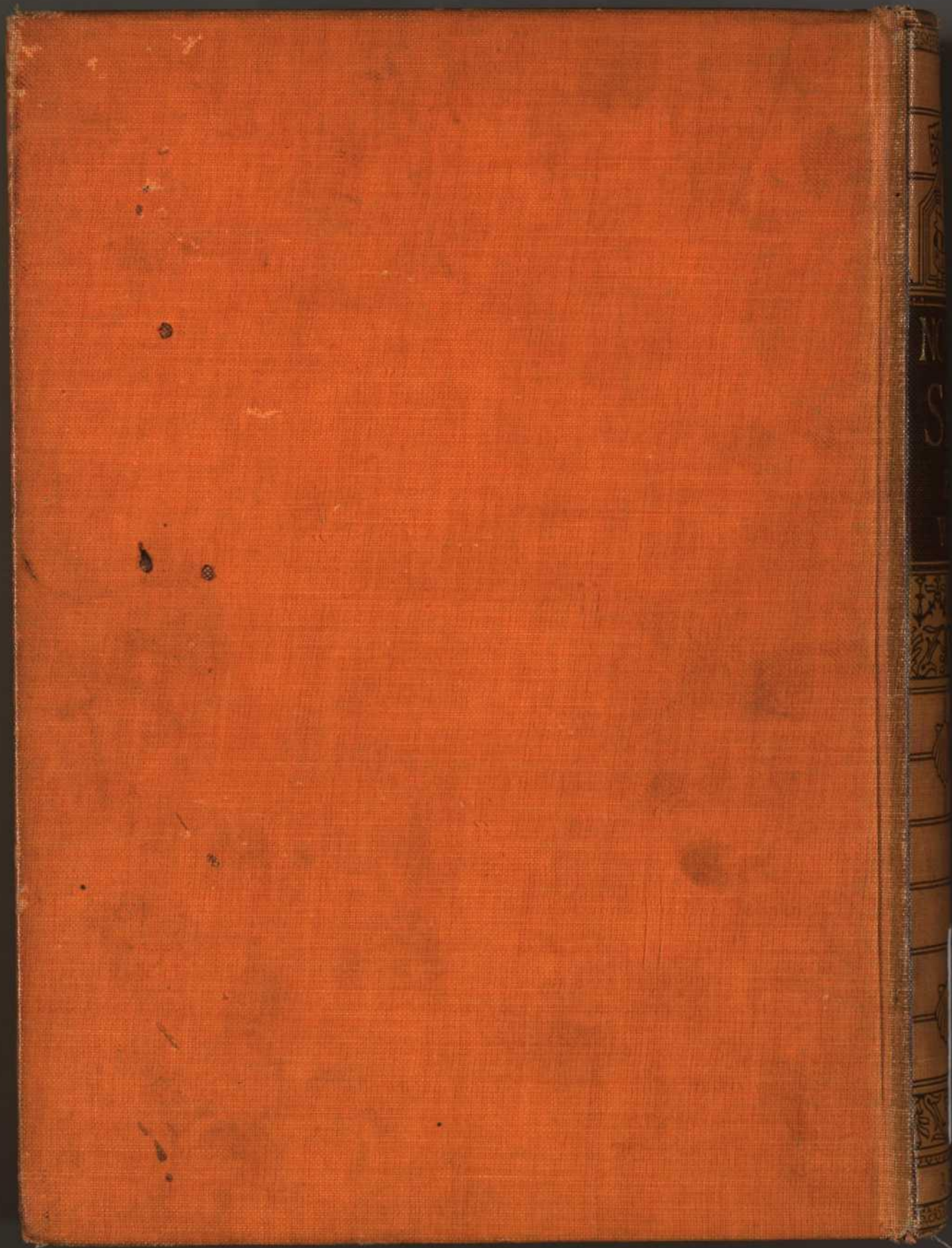
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NORTHERN SPAIN



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