Théophile Gautier

Travels in Spain (Voyage en Espagne, 1840)

Published with engravings by Thomas Robert McQuoid (English, 1820-1912), courtesy of the Internet Archive

Picadores in a Spanish Tavern at the Foot of the Alhambra （1842）
Wilhelm Gail （German，1804–1890）
Artvee

Contents

Parts I to III - The Basque Country

Contents

Translator's Introduction

Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) was born in Tarbes, in the Hautes-Pyrénées region of south-west France, his family moving to Paris in 1814. He was a friend, at school, of the poet Gérard de Nerval, who introduced him to Victor Hugo. Gautier contributed to various journals, including *La Presse*, throughout his life, which offered opportunities for travel in Spain, Algeria, Italy, Russia, and Egypt. He was a devotee of the ballet, writing a number of scenarios including that of *Giselle*. At the time of the 1848 Revolution, he expressed strong support for the ideals of the second Republic, a support which he maintained for the rest of his life.

A successor to the first wave of Romantic writers, including Chateaubriand and Lamartine, he directed the *Revue de Paris* from 1851 to 1856, worked as a journalist for *La Presse* and *Le Moniteur universel*, and in 1856 became editor of *L'Artiste*, in which he published numerous editorials asserting his doctrine of 'Art for art's sake'. Saint-Beuve secured him critical

acclaim; he became chairman of the *Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts* in 1862, and in 1868 was granted the sinecure of librarian to Princess Mathilde Bonaparte, a cousin of Napoleon III, having been introduced to her salon.

Gautier remained in Paris during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, and the aftermath of the 1871 Commune, dying of heart disease at the age of sixty-one in 1872.

Though ostensibly a Romantic poet, Gautier may be seen as a forerunner to, or point of reference for, a number of divergent poetic movements including Symbolism and Modernism.

This enhanced translation of his *Travels in Spain* has been designed to offer maximum compatibility with current search engines. Among other modifications, the proper names of people and places, and the titles given to works of art, have been fully researched, modernised, and expanded; comments in parentheses have been added here and there to provide a reference, or clarify meaning; and minor typographic or factual errors, for example incorrect attributions and dates, in the original text, have been eliminated from this new translation.

Part I: Paris to Bordeaux

Some weeks ago (April, 1840), I let fall this sentence, quite casually: 'I would gladly visit Spain!' Five or six days later, my friends having deleted the prudent conditional tense with which I had qualified my desire, repeated, to anyone who would listen, that I definitely intended to take a trip to Spain. To this positive formula succeeded the question: 'When are you leaving?' I replied, without comprehending what I was committing to: 'In eight-days' time.' The eight days having elapsed, people expressed astonishment on seeing me still in Paris. 'I thought you were in Madrid.' said one. 'Are you back already?' asked another. I now understood that I owed my friends an absence of several months at least, and that I had to pay the debt as swiftly as possible, or be harassed without respite by my officious creditors. Theatre foyers, and the varied asphalts and elastic bitumens of the boulevards, were forbidden me until further notice: all I could obtain was a delay of three or four days, and, on the fifth of May, I began the process of ridding the country of my unwelcome presence by climbing into a coach bound for Bordeaux.

I will pass lightly over the first post-stations, which offered us nothing out of the ordinary. To right and left lay all kinds of crops, in stripes like those of tigers or zebras, looking exactly like those tailors' cards where samples of cloth for trousers and waistcoats are displayed. Such perspectives delight agronomists, landowners, and bourgeois others, but offer meagre fodder for the enthusiastic traveller and student, who, telescope in hand, sets out to observe the universe. Since I had left in the evening, my first memories, of Versailles are only faint sketches blurred by the night. I regret having passed through Chartres without an opportunity of viewing the cathedral.

Between Vendôme and Château-Regnault, pronounced *Chtrno* in the language of the postilions (so well portrayed by Henri Monnier, in his illustration of a passing diligence), rise

wooded hills whose inhabitants carve homes from the living rock and live underground, in the manner of the ancient Troglodytes. They sell the stone removed from their excavations, so that each hollowed-out house yields a corresponding one in relief like a work in plaster removed from the mould, or a tower built from the stones of a well; their chimneys, long pipes hammered out from the thickness of rock, end flush with the ground, so that the smoke leaves the earth in bluish spirals and without visible source, as from a sulphur-pit or volcanic terrain. It's all too easy for the facetious passer-by to throw a stone that lands in the breakfasts of these hidden folk, while absent-minded or short-sighted rabbits must frequently fall into the pot alive. The construction of these dwellings obviates the need to descend to one's cellar to select one's wine.

Château-Regnault is a small town with steep, twisting slopes, lined with poorly-sited, tottering houses, which seem to support each other in their upright stance; a large round tower, above a few embankments of ancient fortifications draped here and there with green sheets of ivy, slightly enhances its appearance. From Château-Regnault to Tours there is nothing remarkable about the country, wooded on every side, or the long yellow stripes that extend as far as the eye can see, which they term *ribbons*, much like those round the plaited queues that carters wear: that's all, in sum; then the road plunges, suddenly, between two fairly steep slopes, and, a few minutes later, we discover the city of Tours, which its prunes, Rabelais, and Monsieur de Balzac, have rendered famous.

The Tours bridge is much praised, though in itself nothing extraordinary; yet the town is charming in appearance. When I arrived, the sky, through which a few puffs of cloud trailed nonchalantly, possessed a bluish tint, of extreme mildness. A white line, like that traced on glass by the edge of a diamond, cut the limpid surface of the Loire. This adornment was formed by a small weir, produced by one of the sandbanks so common in the bed of that river. Saint-Gatien showed as a brown silhouette in the clear air, its Gothic spires surmounted by domes and bulges like the Kremin belltowers, giving the city's outline a wholly picturesque Muscovite appearance. A few other spires and towers belonging to churches whose names I do not know, completed the picture. Boats with white sails glided, with the motion of slumbering swans, over the river's azure mirror. I would like to have visited the house of Tristan l'Hermite, Louis XI's formidable accomplice, which remains in a marvellous state of preservation, with its notable and dreadful ornamentation composed of twists of rope and other intertwined instruments of torture, but lacked the time; I had to rest content with following the Grande-Rue, which must be the pride of the Tourangeaux, as the inhabitants of the city are named, with its pretentions of rivalling the Rue de Rivoli.

Châtellerault, which enjoys a wide reputation for its cutlery, possesses nothing of note, except for a bridge with ancient towers at each end, creating the most charmingly feudal and romantic effect in the world. As for the arms-factory, it is a large white mass with a multitude of windows. Of Poitiers I can say nothing, having traversed it in driving rain, and in darkness blacker than an oven, except that its cobbles are perfectly execrable.

As daylight returned, the carriage was travelling through wooded countryside, apple-green trees planted in soil of the brightest red producing a most singular effect. The farm-roofs were covered with hollow tiles, grooved in the Italian manner. These were also bright red, an alien

colour to eyes accustomed to the dark and sooty tones of Parisian roofs. Due to an odd custom, whose motive escapes me, the region's builders begin by constructing the roof; the walls and foundations follow. The frame is erected on four stout planks and the roofers complete their work before the masons start.

Angoulême, a town perched, oddly, on a very steep hillside, at the foot of which the Charente causes two or three mills to emit their babble, is built according to the same fashion. It has a kind of Italianate air, enhanced by the clumps of trees that crown its escarpments, and a species of large pine-tree, expanding much like a parasol, akin to those in Roman villas. An old tower which, if my memory serves me correctly, is surmounted by a telegraph station (the telegraph has saved many an old tower) adds to the severity of its general appearance, and allows the town to hold its own as regards the horizon. Ascending the slope, I noticed a house daubed externally with a crude fresco depicting Neptune perhaps, or Bacchus, or Napoleon. The artist having neglected to add the name, all suppositions are allowed and may be defended.

Up to this point, I admit that an excursion to the east of Paris, to Romainville or Pantin, would have seemed just as picturesque. There is nothing flatter, emptier, more insipid than the interminable strips of land, like those strips by means of which lithographers portray the Paris boulevards on a single sheet of paper. Hawthorn hedges and stunted elms; stunted elms and hawthorn hedges, with further off a row of poplars, their green plumes stuck in level ground, or a willow with a deformed trunk and powdery wig, there you have the whole landscape; for human presence, an engineer, or a roadworker, tanned like an African Moor, who watches you pass by, hand resting on the handle of his hammer, or a poor soldier returning to his regiment, sweating and staggering beneath his equipment. But beyond Angoulême, the physiognomy of the landscape changes, and one begins to comprehend one's distance from suburbia.

On leaving the department of the Charente, one encounters the first areas of moorland. These are vast stretches of grey purplish-blue land, with more or less pronounced undulations. A rare moss, of no great height, heathers reddish in tone, and stunted patches of broom, form its whole vegetation. It has the melancholy air of the Egyptian Thebaid, and at every moment one expects to see a file of camels or dromedaries; it seems as if no human being has ever been there before.

Having crossed the moors, one enters a quite picturesque region. Groups of houses, beside the road, are buried like nests among clumps of trees resembling those in Hobbema's paintings, with wide roofs, wells clothed in wild vines, large oxen with astonished eyes, and hens pecking among the manure-heaps. All these houses, note, are fashioned of cut stone, as are the garden walls. On every side one sees the outlines of buildings, abandoned on pure whim, and started up again a few steps away. The natives are akin to children who have been given building blocks to play with, and who can, by employing a selection of wooden pieces cut into rectangles, make all manner of constructs; they remove their roofs, carry about the stones of their house, and create a completely different one from the same materials. Gardens flourish beside the road, dotted about with sweet-peas, marguerites, and roses, and surrounded by beautiful trees of the most humid freshness, and the views plunge down to meadows containing cows up their knees in grass. A side-road perfumed by hawthorn trees and wild roses; a group of trees beneath which stands an unhitched cart; peasant women with their flared headdresses

like an alim's turban, and tight red skirts; a thousand unexpected details delight the eye and add variety to the route. By passing a bitumen glaze over the scarlet-tinted roofs one might think oneself in Normandy. Camille Flers and Louis Cabat would find ready-made subjects there. At this latitude berets begin to show themselves; all are blue, and their elegant shape is far superior to that of mere hats.

It is in this region also that one encounters the first ox-drawn carts. These vehicles have a quite primitive, Homeric appearance. The oxen are harnessed to a single yoke, adorned with a small sheepskin headband; they possess a mild, grave, and resigned air, formed like sculptures worthy of some Aegean bas-relief. Most wear a white canvas caparison which protects them from horseflies and the like. Nothing is more singular than the sight of these oxen, in their long shirts, slowly raising their wet shiny muzzles to gaze at you from large dark-blue eyes, which the Greeks, those connoisseurs of beauty, found so remarkable, that they made them an epithet of Juno: *βοῶπις Ἥρη,* Ox-eyed Hera.

A wedding, taking place in an inn, furnished the opportunity to see a gathering of people native to the region; since, in a space of more than a hundred leagues, I had not seen ten of them. The natives are very ugly, especially the women; there is no difference between the young and the old; a peasant woman of twenty-five or one of sixty are equally withered and wrinkled. The little girls have caps as imposing as those of their grandmothers, which gives them the air of those Turkish street-children, with enormous turbaned heads and slender bodies, in Alexandre Decamps' sketches. In the stable of this inn I saw a monstrous black goat, with immense spiral horns and flaming yellow eyes, which had a hyper-diabolical appearance, and might have presided worthily over the Sabbath in the Middle Ages.

Daylight was fading when we arrived at Cubzac. In the past, one crossed the Dordogne by ferry; the width and speed of this river made the crossing dangerous, now the ferry has been replaced by a suspension bridge of the boldest design: it is known that I am no great admirer of modern inventions, but it is really a work worthy of Egypt or Rome as regards its colossal dimensions and grandiose appearance. Piers formed by a series of arches gradually rising in height, support the suspended roadway. Ships under full sail can pass beneath as if between the legs of the Colossus of Rhodes. Towers of fenestrated cast-iron, to render them lighter, serve as trestles for the iron wires which cross with a carefully-calculated symmetry under tension; these cables, outlined against the sky, seem to possess the tenuousness and delicacy of a spider's web, which further adds to the marvellousness of the construction. Two cast-iron obelisks are placed at each end as on the peristyle of a Theban monument, and the ornamentation would not have been out of place there, since the architectural genius of the Pharaohs for the gigantesque would not have disavowed the Cubzac bridge. It takes thirteen minutes, watch in hand, to traverse it.

An hour or two later, the lights of the Bordeaux Bridge, another marvel, though of a less striking aspect, glittered, at a distance away that my appetite wished much shorter, since the rapidity of a journey is always obtained at the expense of the traveller's stomach. Having exhausted the bars of chocolate, biscuits and other supplies in the carriage, we began to think of cannibalism. My companions looked at me with eyes full of the fear of starvation, and, if there had been yet another leg of the journey to do, we would have repeated the horrors of the

raft of the *Medusa*, and eaten our straps, the soles of our boots, the crowns of our hats and the other items shipwrecked people are accustomed to, and which they digest perfectly well.

Bordeaux

On descending from the vehicle, one is assailed by a crowd of porters who share out your belongings it requiring twenty or so to carry a pair of boots: this is commonplace; but what is more amusing is that these are a species of agent posted by the hotel proprietors to snatch up the traveller as one passes by. The whole of this rabble shout aloud a chorus of praises and insults in gibberish: one grabs you by the arm, another by the leg, this one by the tail of your coat, that by the button of your vest: 'Monsieur, try the Hotel de Nantes, an excellent place!' 'No Monsieur, stay away from there, it's the bedbugs' hotel, that's its real name,' the representative of a rival inn hastens to add. 'Hotel de Rouen! Hotel de France!' cry the little band following you, vociferously. 'Monsieur, they never clean the pots; they cook with lard; the rain wets all the rooms; you'll be flayed, robbed, murdered.' They all seek to deter you from visiting rival establishments, and this procession only quits the chase when you have finally entered one of them. Then they quarrel among themselves, hurling deprecations and decrying each other as bandits, thieves, along with other most plausible insults, before they set out, in sudden haste, in pursuit of other prey.

Bordeaux greatly resembles Versailles in terms of the style of its buildings: it is evident that its architects were preoccupied with the idea of surpassing Paris in grandeur; the streets are wider, the houses vaster, their stories higher. The theatre is of enormous dimensions; it's the Odéon merged with our Stock Exchange, the Bourse. But the inhabitants find it difficult to populate their city; they do all they can to appear numerous, but all their southern turbulence

is not enough to furnish those disproportionate buildings; the high windows rarely display curtains, and the grass grows in a melancholy fashion in the immense courtyards. It is the grisettes, and the women of the people, who animate the city; they are really very pretty: almost all of them possess straight noses, cheeks lacking pronounced cheekbones, and large black eyes in pale oval faces, creating a charming effect. The customary headdress is most original; it is made up of a bright coloured kerchief, like a madras, worn in the creole style, set far back, and containing the hair which sits quite low on the nape of the neck; the rest of the outfit consists of a large straight shawl that descends to the heels, and a dress of Indian cotton with long pleats. These women have an alert and lively gait, the waist supple and arched, and slender in nature. They carry, on their heads, baskets, packages, and jugs of water which, incidentally, are of a very elegant shape. With their amphorae on their heads, and dressed in their pleated costumes, one might take them for Greek girls, each a Princess Nausicaa on her way to the fountain.

The cathedral, built by the English, is quite beautiful; the portal contains life-size statues of bishops, of a much truer and more studied execution than ordinary Gothic statues, which are posed *en arabesque* and sacrificed wholly to the requirements of architecture. While visiting the church, I saw, set against the wall, Léon Riesener's magnificent copy of *The Scourging of Christ*, after Titian; it was awaiting a frame. From the cathedral, my companion and I went to the Saint-Michel tower, where there is a vault which possesses the property of mummifying the bodies placed there.

The top floor of the tower is occupied by the caretaker and his family who cook at the entrance to the vault and live there in the most intimate familiarity with their dread neighbours; the man took a lantern, and we descended by a spiral staircase, with worn steps, to the funereal hall. The dead, approximately forty in number, are arranged upright around the vault, leaning against the wall; this perpendicular attitude, which contrasts with the usual horizontality of corpses, gives them an appearance of phantasmic life which is most fearsome, especially in the yellow, flickering light of the lantern which oscillates in the guide's hand and alters the position of the shadows, from moment to moment.

The imaginings of poets or painters have never produced a more horrible nightmare; the most monstrous whims of Goya, the deliriums of Louis Boulanger, the devilries of Jacques Callot and Teniers are nothing by comparison, and all the makers of fantastic ballads are rendered obsolete. More abominable spectres have never emerged from the German night; they are worthy of appearing at the sabbath on the Brocken, with the witches, in *Faust*.

Here are contorted, grimacing faces, half-peeled skulls, half-opened flanks, which reveal, through the mesh of ribs, lungs dry and withered as sponges. On this side, the flesh has been reduced to powder and the bones break through; on the other, no longer supported by fibres of cellular tissue, the parchment-like skin hangs about the skeleton like a second shroud; none of these heads have the impassive calm that death imprints like a supreme seal on all those it touches; mouths yawn horribly as if strained by the immeasurable boredom of eternity, or sneer with that sardonic empty laughter which mocks life; the jaws are dislocated, the neck muscles swollen; fists clench furiously; the backbones arch in desperate tension. They seem as if irritated at having been dragged from their graves, and having been disturbed in their sleep by profane curiosity.

The caretaker showed us a general, slain in a duel – the wound in his side, like a wide mouth with blue smiling lips, is perfectly distinguishable – then a porter who expired, suddenly, while lifting an enormous weight; a dark-skinned woman only a little blacker than the pale-skinned ones placed near her; a woman who still had all her teeth and an almost intact tongue; and, finally, a family who died from eating poisonous mushrooms; and, supreme horror, a little boy who, to all appearances, must have been buried alive.

This last figure is sublime in its pain and despair; never has the expression of human suffering been carried further: the nails dig into the palms of the hands; the nerves are stretched taut like the strings on the bridge of a violin; the knees make convulsive angles; the head is thrown back, violently; the poor child, with an incredible effort, has turned around in his coffin.

The room where these dead are located is a cellar with a low vault; the soil, suspiciously soft, is composed of human detritus fifteen feet deep. In the middle rises a pyramid of more or less well-preserved debris; the mummies exhale a bland and dusty odour, more unpleasant than the pungent perfumes of bitumen and Egyptian natrum; some of them have been there for two or three hundred years, others for only sixty; the fabric of their shirts or shrouds is also fairly intact.

Leaving the vault, we departed to view the belfry, consisting of two towers joined at their summit by a balustrade of original and picturesque taste, and then the church of Sainte-Croix, next to the old people's hospice, a building with full arches, and twisted columns, with foliage carved wholly in the *Greek-meander* manner, in Byzantine style. The portal is enriched with a multitude of groups that quite brazenly carry out the precept *Crescite et multiplicamini*: *grow and multiply*. Fortunately, the efflorescent, tufted arabesques conceal what might seem strange in regard to this manner of rendering the spirit of the divine text.

The museum, located in the town-hall's magnificent mansion, contains a fine collection of plasterwork and a large number of notable paintings, including two small pictures by Cornelius Bega which are twin priceless pearls, combining the warmth and freedom of Adriaen Brouwer with the finesse and refinement of Teniers; there are also works by Adriaen van Ostade of great delicacy, by Tiepolo revealing the most baroque and fantastic of tastes, by Jacob Jordaens and Van Dyck, and also a Gothic painting which must be by Fra Angelico or Ghirlandaio: the Paris museums have nothing in terms of medieval art to match it; only it is impossible to hang pictures with less taste and discernment; the prime locations are occupied by enormous crustaceans of the modern school from the era of Pierre-Narcisse Guérin and Guillaume Léthiers.

The port is crowded with vessels of all nations and varied tonnage; in the evening mist, they seem a host of cathedrals adrift on the water, since nothing resembles a church more than a ship with its slender masts and criss-crossed strands of rope. To end the day, we entered the Grand-Théâtre. Conscience compels me to say that it was full, despite the opera being Françoise Boïeldieu's *La Dame Blanche*, which is far from being a novelty these days; the auditorium is about the same size as that of the Paris Opéra, but much less ornate. The performers' singing was as out of tune as it is at our original Opéra-Comique.

In Bordeaux, the Spanish influence can already be felt. Almost all the signs are in two languages; the booksellers stocking at least as many Spanish books as French. Many people know how to *hablar* in the idiom of Don Quixote and Guzmán de Alfarache: this foreign influence increases as one approaches the border; and, to tell the truth, the Spanish tongue, in this half-way house, prevails over the French: the patois that the people of the region speak has much more to do with Spanish than with the language of their fatherland.

Part II: Bayonne – Human Contraband

Leaving Bordeaux, moorland reappears; sadder, gaunter, and drearier, if possible, than ever; decked out with heather, broom and *pinadas* (*pine-groves*), with, here or there in the wilds, some shepherd crouching, guarding his flock of black sheep, or a hut like an Indian wigwam: it provides a most dismal spectacle and very little entertainment. No other tree is visible but the pine with its notch from which resin flows. This large wound, whose salmon-colour contrasts with the grey tones of the bark, gives a most lamentable appearance to a tree suffering the deprivation of the majority of its sap. The groves look like woods unjustly slain, the trees raising their arms to the sky in a plea for justice.

We passed through Dax in the middle of the night, and crossed the Adour in dreadful weather, with pouring rain and a wind strong enough to de-horn oxen. The further we advanced towards hotter regions, the more bitter and sharp the cold became. If we had not had our overcoats with us, our noses and feet would have frozen like those of the soldiers of the Grande Armée in the Russian campaign.

When daylight broke, we were still amidst the moorland; but the pines were interspersed with cork-oaks, trees that I had always imagined in the form of corks themselves, but which are, in fact, enormous in height, at the same time both oak and carob in the strangeness of their attitude and the deformity and roughness of their branches. Pools of brackish water, and of a leaden colour, extended on both sides of the road; salt-laden air reached us in gusts; A vague murmur I failed to recognise, sounded on the horizon. At last, a bluish silhouette appeared on the pale backcloth of the sky: it was the Pyrenees mountain-range. A few moments later, an almost invisible line of azure, marking the Ocean, announced to us that we had arrived. Bayonne soon became visible in the form of a pile of crushed tiles and an awkward, squat bell tower; I say nothing ill of Bayonne, for the view of a city in the rain is, of its nature, dreadful. The port was not very full; a few scarce pontoon-boats lounged beside the deserted quays, with an air of nonchalance, in admirable indolence; the trees which form the promenade are very beautiful and temper somewhat the austerity of all those straight lines displayed by the fortifications and parapets. As for the church, it is painted in straw-colours and light beige; the only thing remarkable about it being a kind of baldachin in red damask, and a few paintings by Nicolas Lépicié and others, in the style of Charles-André van Loo.

Bayonne is virtually a Spanish city as regards language and customs: the hotel where we stayed was called the Fonda San-Esteban. On it being learned that we were about to make a long trip throughout the Peninsula, we were given all kinds of recommendations: 'Buy red belts to gird your waists; equip yourself with muskets, combs, and vials of insect-repellent water; take biscuits and other provisions; the Spaniard's breakfast is a spoonful of chocolate, dinner a clove of garlic washed down with a glass of water, and supper a hand-rolled cigarette. You should also take a mattress each, and a cooking pot to make soup.' The French- to-Spanish guidebook for travellers was not very reassuring. In the chapter on the traveller at the inn, we read these fearsome words: 'I would like to partake of something.' – 'Have a seat,' the hotelier replies – 'Very well; but I'd rather eat something thing more nourishing' – 'What have you brought with you?' continues the owner of the *posada* – 'Nothing', replies the traveller sadly – 'Well! How can I cook a meal for you: the butcher is over there, the baker beyond. Go, buy some bread and meat, and, if there's coal for the fire, my wife, who can cook a little, will supply you with dinner.' The traveller, furious, creates a dreadful row, while the impassive hotelier writes on the bill: six *reals* for rowdiness.

The coach for Madrid leaves from Bayonne. The coachman is called a *mayoral* and wears a pointed hat adorned with velvet and silk tassels, a brown jacket embroidered with coloured embellishments, leather gaiters, and a red belt: behold the small initial token of local colour. Beyond Bayonne, the country is extremely picturesque; the Pyrenees range is more clearly seen, and its mountains, with beautiful undulating lines, make the horizon appear more varied; the sea is frequently visible to the right of the road; at each bend one catches sight, suddenly, between two mountains, of those sombre, yet soft-blue depths, cut here and there by curls of foam, whiter than snow, of which no painter has ever been able to convey the true idea. Here I make honourable amends to the sea, of which I have previously spoken irreverently, having only viewed the waters off Ostend, which are little more than the Scheldt estuary, as my dear friend *Fritz* (*Gérard de Nerval*) once maintained, so spiritedly.

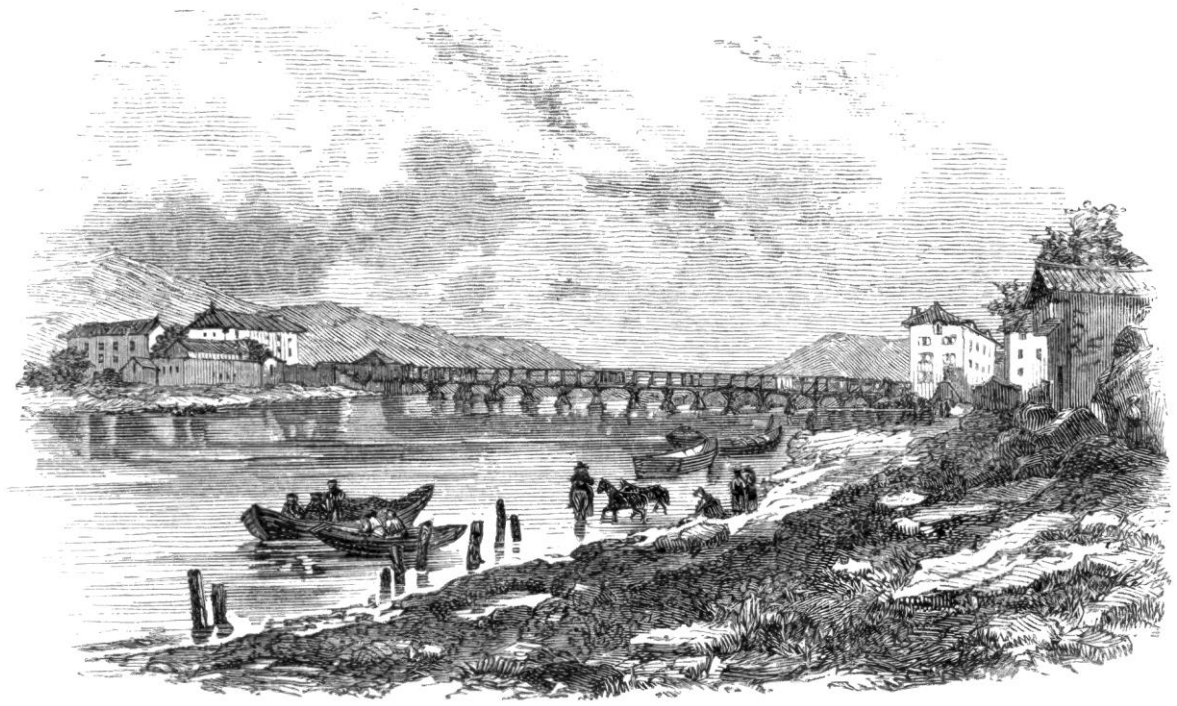
The dial of the church at Urrugne, which we passed through, had this funereal inscription written in black letters: *Vulnerant omnes, ultima necut:* all things wound, the last kills. Yes, you are right, melancholy dial, every hour tracked by your sharp-pointed hands hurts us, and every turn of the wheel bears us towards the unknown.

The houses in Urrugne, and Saint-Jean-de-Luz which is not far distant, have a bloodthirsty and barbaric physiognomy, due to the strange custom of painting the doors, the shutters, and the beams that hold the masonry sections etc. in antique red or oxblood. After Saint-Jean-de-Luz, one comes to Behobie, the last French village. There are two items of trade on the border, to both of which war has given rise: first that of cannon-balls found in the fields, then that of human beings. A Carlist is transported like a bale of merchandise; there is a variable rate: so much for a colonel, so much for an officer; the deal done, the trafficker arrives, takes his man, bears him onwards, and renders him to his destination as he might a dozen scarves or a hundred cigars. On the far side of the Bidasoa river one reaches Irun, the first Spanish village; half of the bridge belongs to France, the other to Spain. Close to this bridge is the famous Pheasant Isle where the marriage of Louis XIV was celebrated by proxy. It would be difficult to celebrate anything there today, because it is no bigger than a medium-sized fried sole.

A few more turns of the coach's wheels and perhaps one of my fondest illusions will vanish; I will see the Spain of my dreams disappear, the Spain of the *romancero*, the ballads of Victor Hugo, of Mérimée's short stories, and Alfred de Musset's tales. Crossing that dividing line, I remembered what the good and witty Heinrich Heine had said to me, at the Liszt concert, his German accent full of humour *and* mischief: 'What will you do, as regards all this talk of Spain, once you've been there?

Part III: The *Zagal* and the *Escepeteros* – Irun – The Little Mendicants – Astigarraga

Half of the Bidasoa bridge belonging to France, and the other half to Spain, you can have one foot in each kingdom, which is very grand: here, the gendarme grave, honest, serious, the gendarme fulfilled, having been rehabilitated, according to Léon Curmer's *Les Français*, by Édouard Ourliac; there, the Spanish soldier, clad in green, savouring the sweetness and softness of a rest in the green grass, with blissful nonchalance. At the far end of the bridge, you enter immediately into Spanish life, full of local colour: Irun in no way resembles a French market town; the roofs of the houses jut out like a fan; the run of tiles, alternately round and hollow, forms a kind of crenellation, with an alien Moorish appearance. The protruding balconies are of ancient ironwork, crafted with a care surprising in so remote a village as Irun, and indicating a great but vanished opulence. The women pass their lives on these balconies shaded by an awning with coloured bands, balconies which are like so many aerial chambers added to the body of the building; both sides are left open and give passage to cool breezes and ardent glances; as for the rest, look not for the tawny and *brazen* hues (forgive the term), those brown shades, of a well-smoked pipe, that a painter might hope for: everything is whitewashed according to the Arab custom; but the contrast of this chalky tone with the dark brown colour of the beams, roofs and balconies, succeeds in producing a fine effect.



Bridge of Irun

At Irun, the horses left us. Ten mules were harnessed to the coach, each shaved to the middle of its body, half hide, half hair, like those medieval costumes which seem in two sections made of different cloth and sewn together by chance; the creatures, thus shaved, have a strange appearance and seem frighteningly lean; since the denudation allows us to study their anatomy in depth: bones, muscles and even the smallest veins. With their furry tails and pointed ears, they look like enormous mice. In addition to the ten mules, our staff was augmented by a *zagal* and two *escopeteros* adorned with their *trabucos* (*muskets*). The *zagal* is a kind of coachman, a sub-*mayoral* who applies the brakes on perilous descents, keeps an eye on the harnesses and the coach-springs, drums up relay-animals, and plays the role of a coachman, but more efficiently. The zagal's costume is charming, extremely elegant and light; he wears a pointed hat embellished with bands of velvet, and silk pompoms, a brown or tobacco-coloured jacket, with undersleeves and a collar made of pieces of cloth of various colours, usually blue, white, and red, and with a large flowery arabesque in the middle of its back, breeches studded with filigree buttons, and for shoes *alpargolas*, sandals attached by cords; add to this a red belt and a colourful cravat, and you have the most characteristic look. The *escopeteros* are guards, *miqueletes* (*militia men*) appointed to escort the car and frighten the *rateros* (that's what we call the petty thieves, there), who cannot resist the temptation of robbing isolated travellers, but whom the edifying sight of a musket is enough to deter, out of respect, and who in passing greet you with the sacramental: '*Vaya usted con Dios*'; go with God'. The clothing of the *escopeteros* is roughly similar to that of the *zagal*, but less coquettish, less embellished. They are positioned on a double seat at the rear of the coach, and thus dominate the countryside. In the description of our caravan, I forgot to mention a small postilion mounted on a horse, who heads the convoy and gives impetus to the whole array.

Before leaving, it was necessary to have our passports, already quite adorned, stamped. During this important operation, we had time to take a look at the population of Irun which displays nothing particular, except that the women wear their hair, which is remarkably long, gathered in a single braid which hangs down to their haunches; shoes are rare there, and stockings even more so.

A strange, inexplicable, hoarse, fearful, and risible noise had been annoying my ears for some time; think of a multitude of jays being plucked alive, children being whipped, cats in love, saws grinding their teeth away on hard stone, cauldrons being scraped, or prison-cell hinges grinding rust, forced to release their captive; I, for my part, believed that it was a princess whose throat was being slit by some fierce black-skinned native; it was, in fact, nothing but an oxcart travelling along the Rue d'Irun, whose wheels were caterwauling dreadfully for lack of being greased, the driver no doubt preferring to add the grease to his soup. The cart was certainly very primitive; the wheels being solid and turning with the axle, like those, of their little carts, that children make of pumpkin peel. The noise can be heard half-a-league away, and seems not to displease the natives of that country. They thereby possess a musical instrument which costs them nothing and which plays itself, by itself, as long as the journey lasts. It seems to appear as harmonious to them as a violinist's exercises on the fourth string do to us. No peasant would wish for a cart that failed to sing: this type of vehicle must date from the Flood.

On the façade of an old palace transformed to an ordinary house, we saw for the first time an example of that white plaster panel which shames many another old palace with its inscription: *Plaza de la Constitucion*. The true state of things will always emerge in some way: one could not choose a better symbol to represent the current state of that country. A constitution in Spain is like a handful of plaster on a granite surface.

As the climb is steep, I walked as far as the city gate, and, turning around, cast a farewell glance at France; it was a truly magnificent spectacle: the chain of the Pyrenees descended in harmonious undulations towards the blue sheet of the sea, crossed here and there by a few silver bars, and, thanks to the extreme clarity of the air, far, far away, one could see a faint, pale salmon-coloured line, which jutted out into the immeasurable azure and formed a vast indentation in the coastline. Bayonne, and its advanced sentinel, Biarritz, occupied the far end of this indentation, and the Bay of Biscay was outlined as clearly as on a map; from here we would lose sight of the sea until we were in Andalusia. Farewell, brave Ocean!

The mules galloped up and down the slopes at extreme speed; a balancing exercise on the steep track, which can only be performed thanks to the prodigious skill of the drivers, and the extraordinary surety of the creatures' feet. Despite our speed, from time to time a laurel branch, a small bouquet of wild flowers, a necklace of mountain strawberries, pink pearls threaded by a blade of grass, fell into our laps. These bouquets were thrown by little mendicants, girls and boys, who followed the coach, running barefoot over the sharp stones: this way of asking for alms by sacrificing yourself has about it something noble and poetic.

The landscape was charming, somewhat Swiss perhaps in appearance, and offering a wide variety of views. Mountain ridges, the gaps in which revealed higher ranges, rose on both sides of the road; their flanks cultivated in different ways, or wooded with holm-oaks, formed a

vigorous foil for the distant, misted peaks; villages with red-tiled roofs blossomed at the foot of the mountains amidst clumps of trees, and I expected at any moment to see Kettly or Rutley, those characters from Paul Duport's comic-opera, emerge from the alien chalets. Fortunately, Spain does not take things that far.

Torrents as capricious as women, form waterfalls, here and there; divide, and converge again, amidst rocks and over pebbles, in the most diverting way; and serve as a pretext for a multitude of the most picturesque bridges in the world. These bridges, infinitely multiplied, have a singular character; the arches rise almost to the parapets, so that the road over which the carriage passes seems no more than six inches deep; a sort of triangular pile of stone forming a bastion usually occupies their centre. It is not a very arduous occupation, that of a Spanish bridge; there is no sinecure more perfect: one can walk beneath it three-quarters of the year. The bridges rest there, with an air of imperturbable phlegmatism, and a patience worthy of a finer fate, awaiting a river, a trickle of water, a little humidity even; feeling no doubt that their arches are mere arcades, and that their title of 'bridge' is purely a product of flattery. The torrents I spoke of earlier are at most four to five inches deep; but they serve to create a lot of noise, and enliven the solitary spaces they traverse. From time to time, they drive some mill, or manufactory, by means of channels and locks, built as the landscapers require; the houses, scattered about the countryside in small groups, are of a curious colour; they are neither black, nor white, nor yellow, but the colour of roast turkeys: the comparison, though trifling and culinary, is nonetheless strikingly valid. Patches of holm-oaks, and clumps of other trees, happily, enhance the broad outlines and severe misted hues of the mountains. I insist on mentioning these trees, because nothing in Spain is rarer, and from now on I shall have scant opportunity for describing them.

We changed mules at Oiartzun, and arrived, at nightfall, at the village of Astigarraga, where we were to sleep. We had not yet tried a Spanish inn; the *picaresque* and teeming descriptions of *Don Quixote*, and of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, came to mind, and it made the body itch just thinking about them. We anticipated omelettes adorned with Merovingian hair, with feathers and feet involved, quarters of rancid bacon complete with the bristles, equally suitable for making soup or brushing one's shoes, wine in goatskins, like those the good knight of La Mancha slashed at so furiously, or even nothing at all, which is far worse, and trembled at having naught to eat but the evening breeze, and to sup, like the valiant Don Sancho, on an air on the mandolin.

Profiting from the little daylight that remained, we visited the church which, to tell the truth, looked more like a fortress than a temple: the narrowness of the windows, cut like loopholes, the thickness of the walls, the solidity of the buttresses gave it a squared, robust attitude, more warlike than pensive. This is often the form of churches in Spain. All about it lay a kind of open cloister, in which was suspended a very large bell, rung by agitating the clapper with a rope, instead of swinging the enormous metal shell itself.

On being conducted to our rooms, we were dazzled by the whiteness of the bed curtains and window drapes, the Dutch cleanliness of the floors, and the perfect attention to every detail. Lovely, tall, shapely girls with magnificent braids falling over their shoulders, perfectly-dressed, and nothing like the *maritornes* Cervantes promised, went to and fro with that degree

of activity that augured well for the supper which was not long in coming, excellent, and very well served. At the risk of appearing pedantic, I will describe it; since the difference between nations consists precisely of the thousand little details that travellers neglect in favour of those vast poetical and political reflections that one can write equally as well without visiting the country concerned.

For the first course, we were served with a thick soup, differing from ours in that it possessed a golden-yellow tint, owing to the saffron with which it is sprinkled to give it flavour. Behold, local colour indeed: golden-yellow soup! The bread was very white, very dense, with a smooth, slightly golden crust; and noticeably salty to a Parisian palate. The forks had their tails curved backwards, and their flat heads cut into comb-like teeth; the spoons also had a spatula-like appearance that our silverware does not have. The linen was a type of coarse weave damask. As for the wine, we must admit that it was the colour of the finest bishop's-cassock-purple that could be seen, sufficiently full-bodied to be cut with a knife, and rendering the carafes in which it was contained completely opaque.

After the soup, they brought *puchero*, an eminently Spanish dish, or rather the only Spanish dish, because we ate it every day from Irun to Cadiz, and vice-versa. The composition of a decent *puchero* stew involves a hind-quarter of beef, a leg of mutton, a chicken, a few pieces of a sausage called *chorizo* stuffed with pepper, chili, and other spices, slices of bacon and ham, and on top of that a fiery tomato and saffron sauce; that is the animal content. The vegetable content, *verdura*, varies according to season; but cabbage and *garbanzos* are always there in the background; the chickpea, *garbanzo*, is hardly seen in Paris, and I cannot define it better than by saying: 'It's a pea which aspires to be a bean, and succeeds only too well.' All this is served in an array of dishes, but the ingredients are mixed on one's plate in such a way as to produce a truly complex mayonnaise with an excellent taste. This mixture will seem somewhat rustic to gourmets who read Carême, Brillat-Savarin, Grimod de La Reynière and Monsieur de Cussy; however, it has a charm of its own, and will please eclectics and pantheists. Then came chickens, cooked in oil because butter is a thing unknown to Spain, and fried-fish, trout or hake, roast lamb, asparagus, salad, and, for dessert, small macaroon biscuits, toasted almonds with an exquisite taste, and *queso de Burgos*, which is goat's-milk cheese possessing a great reputation that it sometimes deserves. To end with, they brought a drinks-stand with Malaga-wine, sherry and brandy, *aguardiente*, which resembles French anisette, and a little cup (*fuego*) filled with embers to light the cigarettes. This meal, with a few minor variations, is everywhere reproduced throughout Spain...

We left Astigarraga in the middle of the night; since there was no moon, there is naturally a gap in my story. We passed through Hernani, a town whose name awakens the most Romantic memories, without seeing a thing, except for heaped-up hovels, and rubble, outlined vaguely in the darkness. We traversed, without stopping, Tolosa, where we noted houses adorned with frescoes and gigantic coats of arms carved in stone: it was market day, and the square was covered with donkeys, mules harnessed in a picturesque manner, and peasants with singularly fierce faces.

By dint of ascending and descending, and crossing torrents on drystone bridges, we finally arrived at Bergara, where we dined, with profound satisfaction, since we had long forgotten the *jicara de chocolate*, swallowed while half-asleep, at the Astigarraga inn.

Parts IV to VI - Burgos and Vallodolid

Contents

Part IV: Bergara – Vitoria: a National Dance Performance and the French Strongmen – The Pancobo Gorge – Donkeys and Greyhounds – Burgos: A Spanish *Fonda* – Galley slaves in coats – The Cathedral – El Cid's Chest

At Bergara, which is the place where the treaty between Baldemero Espartero and Rafael Maroto was concluded, I saw a Spanish priest for the first time. His appearance seemed quite grotesque to me, although I have, thank God, no Voltairean ideas about the clergy; but *Basil*, Beaumarchais' caricature of such, came to mind, involuntarily. Imagine a black cassock, a coat of the same colour, and, to crown all, an immense, prodigious, phenomenal, hyperbolic, titanic hat, of which no epithet, however bloated and gigantic it may be, can give even the slightest idea. This hat was at least three feet in length; the edges rolled upwards, and forming a sort of horizontal roof in front of and behind the head. It would be difficult to invent a more baroque and more fantastic form: which however did not prevent the worthy priest from possessing a very respectable appearance and walking about with the air of a man who has a perfectly clear

conscience in regard to the shape of his headdress; instead of a rabat, he wore a small dog-collar (*alzacuello*), in blue and white, like Belgian priests.

After Mondragón (*Arrasate*), which is the last town, or, as the Spanish say, the last *pueblo*, of the province of Gipuzkoa, we entered the province of Álava, and it was not long before we found ourselves at the foot of the mountain-pass leading to Salinas de Léniz (*Leintz Gatzaga*). A roller-coaster would seem nothing compared to it, and at first the idea that our carriage was going to cross the mountain seemed as ridiculous as our walking on the ceiling upside-down, like flies. The miracle was accomplished thanks to six oxen harnessed at the head of our ten mules. I have never, in my life, heard such an uproar: the mayoral, the zagal, the escopeteros, the postillion and the herdsmen made their assault on it with a storm of cries, invectives, whiplashes and goads; they drove the wheels on with their hands and shoulders, and supported the box from behind, pulling the mules by the halter, and the oxen by the horns, with incredible ardour and fury. The carriage, at the end of this interminable line of men and beasts, created the most astonishing effect in the world. There were a good fifty paces between the first and last creature in the team. Let me not forget to note, in passing, the bell-tower of Salinas de Léniz, which possesses a rather attractive Saracenic shape.

From the summit of the pass, you can see, if you look behind you, the various levels of the Pyrenees chain in infinite perspective; they look like immense draperies of ribbed velvet thrown down at random and crumpled into bizarre folds at the whim of some Titan. In Arroyabe, which is a little further on, I noticed a magical light effect. A snowy ridge (*sierra nevada*), which the closely-packed mountains had hidden from us until then, appeared suddenly, standing out against a lapis-lazuli sky, of a blue so dark as to be almost black. Soon, on all sides of the plateau we were crossing, other inquisitive mountains raised their heads, laden with snow and bathed in clouds. The snow was not compact, but divided in narrow veins, like ribs of silver lamé, its whiteness enhanced by the contrasting azure and lilac hues of the escarpments. The cold was bitter and increased in intensity as we progressed. The wind had scarcely been warmed in caressing the pale cheeks of these beautiful chilly virgins, and as it reached us felt as icy as if it had come straight from the Arctic or Antarctic pole. We wrapped ourselves as tightly as possible in our overcoats, since it is beyond shameful to possess a frozen nose in a torrid country; a scorched one is acceptable.

The sun was setting as we entered Vitoria (*Vitoria-Gasteiz*). After traversing all manner of streets adorned with mediocre architecture in gloomy taste, the carriage halted at the *parador viejo*, the ‘old hostelry’, where our trunks were carefully inspected. Our daguerreotype-camera apparatus especially worried the brave customs officers; they approached it with infinite caution, like folk who are afraid of being hurled into the air: I think they took it to be a machine for delivering therapeutic electric shocks; we took care not to have them reconsider that salutary idea.

Our belongings having been inspected, our passports stamped, we owned the right to disport ourselves among the city streets. We took advantage of this immediately, and, crossing a rather beautiful square surrounded by arcades, we made directly for the church; shadows already filled the nave and amassed themselves, mysteriously and threateningly, in the darker corners where phantasmal shapes could be vaguely discerned. A few small lamps flickered,

casting a sinister yellow light, and glowing mistily like stars through fog. I know not what sepulchral chill gripped my body, and it was not without a slight feeling of fear that I heard a melancholy voice whisper, very close to me, the sacramental formula: '*Caballero, una limosna por amor de Dios*: Monsieur, alms for the love of God'. It was a poor devil of a wounded soldier asking for charity. Here the soldiers beg, an action which is excused by their profound poverty, since they are paid irregularly. In this church at Vitoria, I became acquainted with those fearful sculptures in wood which the Spaniards so strangely abuse by painting them.

After a supper (*cena*) which made us nostalgic for the one at Astigarraga, the idea came to us to visit the theatre: we had been enticed, in passing, by a grandiose poster announcing an extraordinary performance of French strongmen, to end with a certain *baile nacional* (*national dance*) which appeared to consist of cachuchas, boleros, fandangos and other furious dances.

Theatres in Spain generally have no special facade, and are only distinguished from other houses by the two or three smoky oil-lamps hanging about the doors. We paid for two seats in the orchestra stalls, which are termed lunette seats (*asientos de luneta*), and bravely entered a corridor whose floor was neither planked nor tiled but simply native earth. They care no more for the walls of these corridors than for the walls of their public monuments that bear the inscription: *Prohibited, under penalty of fine, the deposition of*, etc., etc. Yet, holding our noses tightly, we arrived at our seats only half-asphyxiated. Add to this custom their incessant smoking of cigarettes during the intermissions, and your idea of a Spanish theatre will prove less than balsamic.

The interior of the auditorium is, however, more comfortable than its surroundings promise; the boxes are well-arranged, and although the decor is very simple it is fresh and clean. The *asientos de luneta* are armchairs arranged in rows and numbered; there is no attendant at the door to take your tickets, but a little lad comes and asks for them before the end of the show; all you receive on initial entry is a voucher.

We hoped to find, there, examples of the Spanish female type, of which we had so far seen but few; yet the women who furnished the boxes and the galleries revealed only the Spanish mantilla and fan: that was already a great deal, but not, however, sufficient. The audience was mostly made up of soldiers, as in all towns where there is a garrison. In the pit, one stands, as in very primitive theatres. In order to resemble the theatre at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, all it really lacked was a row of candles, and an employee to snuff them; but the globular glass of the oil-lamps consisted of segments arranged like melon slices (*côtes de melon*) joined at the top by a circle of tin, which is hardly an advanced style. The orchestra, composed of a single row of musicians mostly playing brass instruments, blew valiantly into their cornets, sounding a ritornello that was ever the same, reminiscent of a Franconi's Circus fanfare.

Our Herculean compatriots lifted masses of weights, and twisted many an iron bar, to the great satisfaction of the assembled gathering, and the nimbler of the two climbed a steep length of rope and performed other routines, all too well known, alas, in Paris, but probably new to the population of Vitoria. We fretted with impatience in the stalls, I wiping the eyepiece of my opera-glass with furious activity, so as not to lose any of the impending *baile nacional*. Finally, the trestles were lowered, and the *Turks* on duty removed the weights and all the rest of the strongmen's equipment. Imagine, dear reader, the ardent anticipation of two young,

enthusiastic and Romantic Frenchmen who are about to view Spanish dance for the first time... in Spain!

At last, the curtain rose on a set which intended, in vain, to conjure an air of enchantment and magic; the cornets repeated, with more fury than ever, the fanfare already described, and the *baile nacional* advanced in the form of a male and female dancer, both armed with castanets.

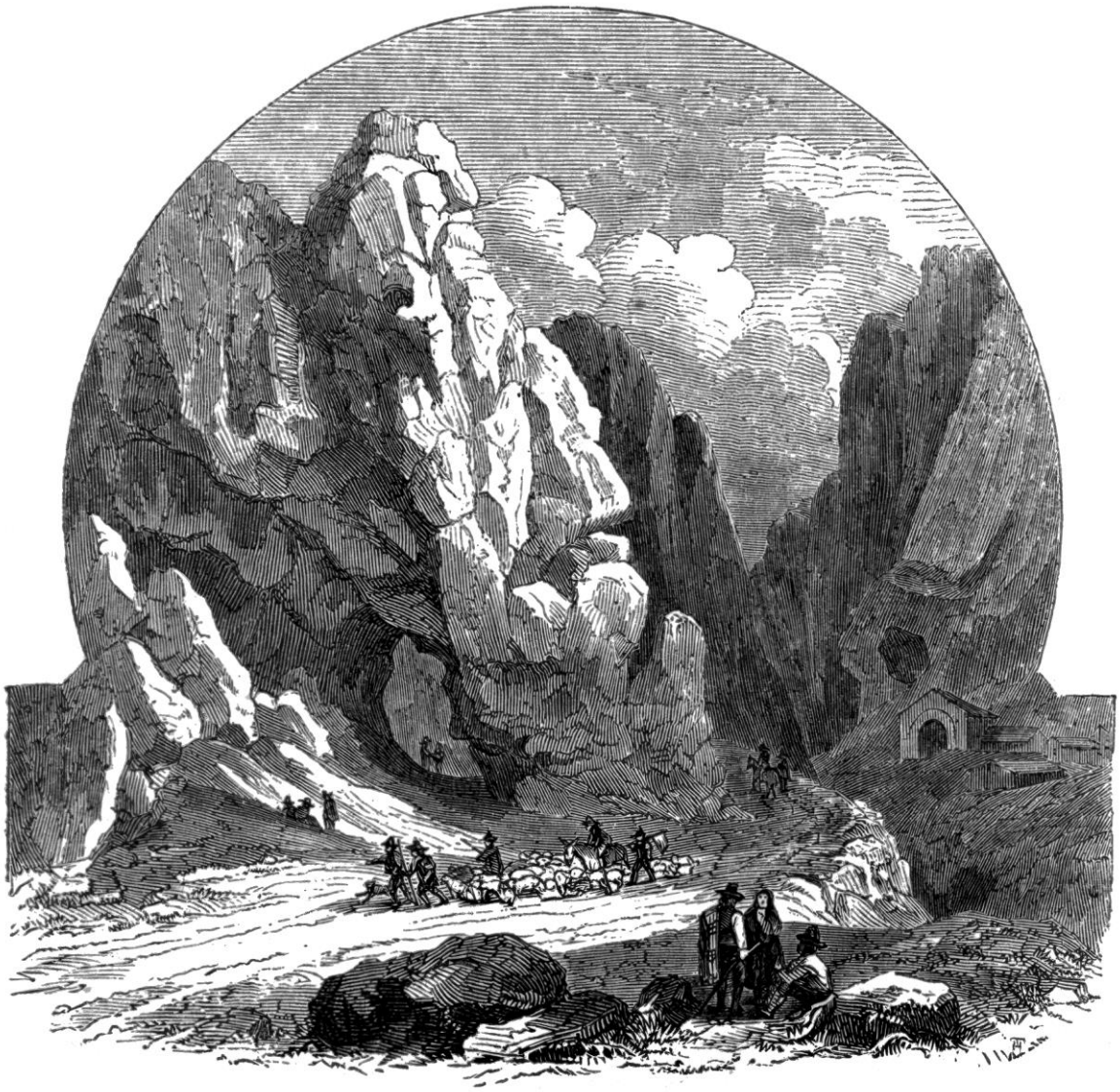
I have seen nothing sadder and more lamentable than these two grand wrecks who *failed to inspire each other*: the fourpenny theatre never bore on its worm-eaten boards a couple more worn-out, more exhausted, more toothless, more melancholy, balder, or more ruined. The poor woman, who had plastered herself with crude white make-up, possessed a sky-blue hue which brought to mind the anacreontic image of a choleric corpse or a freshly-drowned man; the two red spots with which she had adorned the tops of her bony cheekbones, to brighten a little her eyes like boiled fish, contrasted in a most singular manner with this blue tint; with veiny, fleshless hands she clicked a pair of cracked castanets which chattered away like the teeth of a man with a fever, or the hinges of a moving skeleton. From time to time, with a desperate effort, she stretched the loose sinews of her hocks, and managed to lift her poor old leg carved to the shape of a baluster, so as to produce a little nervous caper, like a dead frog subjected to a Voltaic pile, and to make the copper flakes of the dubious overskirt that served as her basquin sparkle and glitter for a second. As for the man, he moved about in a sinister manner in his corner; he rose and fell limply like a bat crawling on its stumps; his appearance was that of a gravedigger burying himself, his forehead wrinkled like a hussar's boot; his parrot's nose, his goat's cheeks gave him a most fantastic appearance, and if, instead of castanets, he had held a Gothic rebec, he might have posed for the lead in the dance of the dead, in the Basel fresco.

Throughout the dance, they did not once raise their eyes to each other; one would have said that they were afraid of their mutual ugliness, and feared bursting into tears at seeing each other so old, so decrepit and so funereal. The man, indeed, fled his companion as from a spider, and seemed to shiver with horror in his old parchment skin, every time a figure of the dance forced him to approach her. This macabre bolero lasted five or six minutes, after which the fall of the curtain put an end to the torment of these two unfortunate people... and to ours.

This is how the bolero appeared to two poor travellers taken with local colour. Spanish dance exists only in Paris, as sea-shells do, which are found at the curio-sellers, and never at the seaside. O Fanny Elssler, who are now in America among the savages, even before our journey to Spain we suspected that it was you who had invented the cachucha!

We retired to bed quite disappointed. In the middle of the night, someone came to wake us so as to set us on our way; it was still freezing cold, a Siberian chill, which is to be explained by the height of the plateau we were crossing, and the snow with which we were surrounded. At Miranda de Ebro, we met with our trunks once again, and entered Old Castile (*Castilla la Vieja*), in the kingdom of Castile and Leon, symbolized by a lion holding a shield strewn with castles. These lions, repeated endlessly, are usually made of greyish granite and have a somewhat imposing heraldic presence.

Between Ameyugo and Cubo de Bureba, small insignificant villages where relay animals are provided, the landscape is extremely picturesque; the mountains draw closer, the road is narrower, and immense perpendicular rocks rise at the edge of the track, as steep as cliffs; on the left, a torrent, crossed by a bridge with a truncated arch, boils at the bottom of a ravine, turns a mill, and covers with foam the stones which hinder it. In order that nothing detracts from the effect, a Gothic church, falling to ruin, the roof shattered, the walls embroidered with parasitic plants, rises amidst the rocks; in the background, the Sierra appears vague and bluish. The view is undoubtedly beautiful, but the Pancorbo Pass exceeds it in singularity and grandeur. The rocks there leave only sufficient space for the track, and one arrives at a place where two great granite masses, leaning towards each other, simulate the arch of a gigantic bridge that has been broken at the centre, so as to close the way to some army of Titans; a second, smaller arch, carved in the thickness of rock, further adds to the illusion. Never has a theatre designer imagined a more picturesque or more easily-comprehended backcloth; when you are accustomed to the level perspectives of the plains, the surprising effects that you encounter at every step in the mountains seem impossibly fabulous.



Pass of Pancorbo

The *posada* at which we stopped for dinner had a stable as its vestibule. This architectural arrangement is invariably repeated in all Spanish *posadas*, and to reach your room you are forced to pass behind the rumps of the mules. The wine, even darker than usual, also possessed a certain local bouquet of goatskin. The girls who served us wore their hair hanging down to the middle of their backs; beyond that, their clothing was that of lower-class French women. National costumes are generally only retained in Andalusia, and there are now very few traditional costumes worn in Castile. As for the men, they all wore pointed hats, trimmed in velvet with silk tassels, or somewhat fiercely-shaped wolfskin caps, and the inevitable tobacco or chimney-sweep coloured coat. Their faces, moreover, showed no notable characteristics.

From Pancorbo to Burgos we encountered only three or four small, half-ruined villages, dry as pumice and the colour of toast, including Briviesca, Castil de Péones, and Quintanapalla. I doubt that, in the depths of Asia Minor, Alexandre Decamps ever found walls more roasted,

more scorched, more tawny, more grainy, more crusty and more furrowed than these. Along these walls certain donkeys ambled, which were worthy of his Turkish donkeys, and which he ought to go and study. The Turkish donkey is fatalistic, and we see from his humble and dreamy expression that he is resigned to all the blows that fate has in store for him, which he will endure without complaint. The Castilian donkey has a more philosophical and deliberate expression; he understands that we cannot do without him; he belongs to the household, has read *Don Quixote*, and prides himself on being a direct descendant of the famous *Grison* beloved of Sancho Panza. Side by side with the donkeys also wandered purebred dogs of noble race, with perfect paws, shapes, and coats, among others, large greyhounds in the style of Paul Veronese and Velasquez, of an admirable size and beauty; not to mention a few dozen *muchachos* or street-urchins, whose eyes sparkled amidst their rags like black diamonds.

Old Castile is, undoubtedly, so named because of the large number of old women found there: and what old women! The witches of Macbeth crossing the heath at Dunsinane to prepare their infernal cuisine, were charming young girls by comparison: the abominable shrews of Goya's caprices, which until now I had taken for nightmares and monstrous chimeras, are simply portraits of fearful accuracy; most of these old women have beards like mouldy cheese, and moustaches like grenadiers; and then, only see their attire! If one took a piece of fabric and worked for ten years to dirty it, scrub it, pierce it, patch it, so as to rid it of its original colour, one could not achieve the sublimity of those rags! These adornments are enhanced by a haggard and fierce appearance, very different from the humble and pitiful demeanour of the French poor.

A little before arriving in Burgos, a large building on a distant hill was pointed out to us: it was La Cartuja de Miraflores (*the Charterhouse*), about which we will have occasion to speak more fully. Not longer after this, the cathedral's spires gradually revealed their serrations against the sky; and half-an-hour later, we entered the ancient capital of Old Castile.

The square in Burgos, in the midst of which stands a rather mediocre bronze statue of Charles III of Spain, is large and does not lack character. Houses red in colour, supported by pillars of bluish granite, enclose it on all sides. Under the arcades, and in the square, are all kinds of small traders, while an infinite number of donkeys, mules, and picturesque peasants stroll around. The Castilians' ragged clothes appear there in all their splendour. The least beggar is nobly draped in his cloak like a Roman emperor in his purple. These coats, can be best compared, for colour and substance, to large pieces of spongy fungi (*amadou*) torn apart at the edge. The cloak of *Don César de Bazan*, in the play *Ruy Blas*, does not come close to those triumphant and glorious rags. All is so threadbare, so dry, so inflammable, that one considers it imprudent to smoke or use a lighter. The little children of six to eight years old also have coats, which they wear with the most ineffable gravity. I cannot recall without laughter a poor little devil who only had a large collar which barely covered his shoulders, but who draped himself in the absent folds with such a comically pitiful air that it was enough to make one split one's sides. Those condemned to the *presidio* (forced labour) sweep the city and remove the filth without emerging from the rags that swaddle them. These galley slaves in coats are indeed the most astonishing scoundrels one can see. At each sweep of the broom, they make as if to sit or lie down on a doorstep. Nothing would be easier for them than to escape, but when I

raised this, I was told that they refrained from doing so due to their natural goodness of character.

The *fonda* at which we arrived was a genuine Spanish *fonda* where one heard not a word of French; we were obliged to deploy our Castilian, and force our throats to growl out the abominable *jota*, that Arabic and guttural sound which does not exist in our language, and I must say that, thanks to the extreme intelligence which distinguishes the natives, we were understood quite well. Sometimes a candle was brought when we had asked for water, or chocolate when we desired ink; but, apart from these small, very forgivable mistakes, everything went well. The inn was served by a crowd of dishevelled girls who bore the most beautiful names in the world: Casilda, Matilde, Balbina; the names are always charming in Spain: Lola, Bibiana, Pepa, Hilaria, Carmen, Cipriana, serve as a label for the least poetic creatures that one can see; one of these girls had hair of a most vehement red, a colour which is quite common in Spain, where there are many blondes and many redheads especially, contrary to the generally accepted belief.

They do not put mere sprigs of the boxwood blessed on Palm Sunday in the rooms here, but large branches in the shape of palm-fronds, plaited, and woven together in spirals, with great elegance and care. The beds lack a bolster, but own to a pair of flat pillows placed one on top of the other; they are generally very hard, though the woollen mattresses are fine; but they are not in the habit of carding the wool, they only turn it over with the tips of a pair of rods.

In front of our windows, we viewed a strange sign, that of a leading surgeon who had thereon been depicted, with a student, sawing off the arm of a poor devil sitting on a chair, and we could also see a barber's shop, the barber, I swear, in no way resembling Figaro. We saw through his window the gleam of a large, somewhat shiny shaving dish of yellow copper, which *Don Quixote*, if he were of this world, might well have taken for *Mambrino's* helmet. Spanish barbers, if they have lost their traditional costume, have retained their skill, and shave one with great dexterity.

Through having been the principal city of Castile for so long, Burgos has failed to retain a pronounced Gothic appearance; With the exception of one street where one sees a few windows and porticos from the time of the Renaissance, with coats of arms supported by statues, the houses hardly date back beyond the beginning of the seventeenth century, and are nothing if not vulgar; they are outdated but not ancient. Yet Burgos has its cathedral, one of the most beautiful in the world; unfortunately, like all Gothic cathedrals, it is embedded amongst a crowd of ignoble buildings, which prevent us from appreciating it as a whole and grasping its sheer mass. The main portal opens onto a square, in the midst of which a pretty fountain rises, topped with a fine white marble statue of Christ, the focal point of all the city's pranksters, who enjoy no sweeter pastime than throwing stones at sculptures. This portal, which is magnificent, decorated, pierced and burgeoning like lace, was unfortunately scraped and planed down to the first frieze by unknown Italian prelates, great lovers of simple architecture, sober walls and ornamentation executed in good taste, who wanted to present the cathedral in the Romanesque style, feeling great pity for these poor barbarians of architecture. little practised in the Corinthian order, and appearing to know nothing of the benefits of the Attic style and the triangular pediment. Many people are still of this opinion in Spain, where the *Messidor* style

flourishes in all its purity, preferring to the most ornate and richly-chiselled Gothic churches all kinds of abominable buildings pierced by many windows and *decorated* with columns like those at Paestum, just as in France before the Romantic school had restored the Middle Ages to a place of honour, and made people understand the meaning and beauty of their cathedrals. Here, twin sharp, saw-toothed spires, carved as if with a template, scalloped, embroidered, and chiselled, down to the smallest detail, as on the bezel of a ring, soar towards God with all the ardour of faith, and all the passion of an unshakeable conviction. These are not our doubting bell-towers that dare to venture into the sky supported only by their own stone lacework and ribs as thin as spider's silk. A further tower, also sculpted with incredible richness, but less lofty in height, marks the place where the transept crosses the nave, and completes the magnificence of the silhouette. An innumerable crowd of statues: saints, archangels, kings, monks, animates all this architecture, and the stony population is so numerous, so crowded, so teeming, that it surely exceeds in quantity the flesh and blood population occupying the city.

Thanks to the grace and kindness of the civil governor, Don Henrique de Vedia, we were able to visit the cathedral and appreciate its smallest details. An octavo volume describing it, an atlas of two thousand plates, twenty rooms filled with moulded plasterwork, would still fail to give a complete idea of that prodigious efflorescence of Gothic art, denser and more complex than the virgin forests of Brazil. I who could only write a simple note or two, scribbled hastily, and from memory alone, on the corner of a posada table will be forgiven for various omissions, and a degree of negligence.

On first stepping into the church, you are halted in your tracks by an incomparable masterpiece: it is the carved wooden double-door which opens onto the cloister. It represents, among its other bas-reliefs, the entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem; its jambs and sills are filled with delightful figurines, of the most elegant shape and of such finesse that one cannot understand how an inert and opaque material like wood can lend itself to such capricious and yet spiritual fantasy. It is undoubtedly the most beautiful double-portal in the world after that of the Baptistery in Florence designed and cast by Ghiberti, which Michelangelo, who knew it, found worthy of adorning the entrance to paradise. The admirable panels of the Burgos door, should be moulded and cast in bronze, to ensure for them all that space of eternity which is at humankind's disposal.

The choir, in which the stalls, called *silleria*, are located, is enclosed by wrought iron grilles of inconceivable workmanship; the pavement is covered, as is the custom in Spain, with immense mats of esparto-grass, and each stall also has its own carpet of dried grasses or rushes. Raising one's head, one sees a kind of dome formed by the interior of the tower of which we have already spoken; it is an abyss filled with sculptures, arabesques, statues, columns, ribs, lancets, and pendants dizzying in their effect. One could gaze upwards for a year and more and still not have viewed all its details. It is densely-formed like a cabbage, pierced rectangularly like a fish-slice, vast as a pyramid, and delicate as a woman's earring, and one cannot understand how such a filigree could have hung in the air for so many centuries! Who were the men who executed these marvellous constructions unsurpassed by the prodigality of fairy palaces? Is that race of individuals lost? And we, who boast of being civilized, are we, in fact, merely decrepit barbarians? A deep feeling of sadness grips my heart on visiting one of these

prodigious buildings of bygone times; I become immensely discouraged, and only aspire to retire to a corner, set a stone beneath my head, and wait, in an immobility of contemplation, for death, that absolute immobility. What is the point of our labours? What is the point of all our fuss and noise? The most extreme of human efforts will never reach beyond this. Ah well! We know not the names of these divine artists, and to find some trace of them, we must search the dusty archives of the monasteries. When I think that I have spent the best part of my life rhyming ten or twelve thousand lines, writing six or seven poor octavo volumes, and three or four hundred trivial newspaper articles, and find myself wearied by it, I am ashamed of myself and of this age, where so much effort produces so little. What is a thin sheet of paper next to a mountain of granite?

If you would like to tour this immense madrepore with us, this mass of coral built by those prodigious human polyps of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we will commence with the small sacristy, which is quite a large room despite its title, and contains an *Ecce Homo,* a *Christ on the Cross* by Murillo, and a *Nativity* by Jacob Jordaëns, framed in richly carved woodwork; in the middle a large brazier is set, which is used to light the censers, and cigarettes too perhaps, since many a Spanish priest smokes them, a thing which seems no more improper to me than snuffing powdered tobacco, a pleasure the French clergyman has no scruple in permitting himself. The brazier is a large yellow-copper basin placed on a tripod and filled with embers or small lit coals covered with fine ash, producing a gentle flame. In Spain, braziers stand in for fireplaces, which are extremely rare.

In the large sacristy, next to the small one, we note a *Christ on the Cross* by Dominikos Theotokopoulos, better known as *El Greco,* an extravagant and most singular painter, whose works one might take for sketches by Titian, if it were not that a certain affectation of elongated and exaggerated forms makes them instantly recognisable. To render his paintings with a touch of pride, he applies here and there brush strokes of incredible petulance and brutality, thin, sharp gleaming strokes which traverse the shadows like sabre blades: all of this does not prevent El Greco from being a great painter; the fine works of his secondary style closely resembling the Romantic paintings of Eugène Delacroix.

You will have undoubtedly viewed, in the Spanish Museum in Paris, the portrait of El Greco's daughter, attributed to him, a magnificent rendering that no master would disown, and can therefore judge what an admirable painter he must have been; when he was in his right mind, that is. It seems that his concern to avoid imitating Titian, of whom it is claimed that he had been a student, disturbed his brain and caused him to display a degree of extravagance and caprice which allowed the magnificent faculties he had received from Nature to emerge only in intermittent glimmers; El Greco was also architect and sculptor, that sublime trinity, a luminous triad, often encountered in the heavens of supreme art.

The walls of this sacristy hold woodwork cabinets, their scalloped columns carved with flowers, of the richest taste; above the woodwork a row of Venetian mirrors reigns, the point of which I can scarcely understand, unless they are purely ornamental, since they are too high up for one to be able to gaze into them. Higher than the mirrors, with the oldest touching the vaulted ceiling, portraits of all the bishops of Burgos are arranged in chronological order, from the first to he who today occupies the episcopal see. These portraits, though painted in oil, have

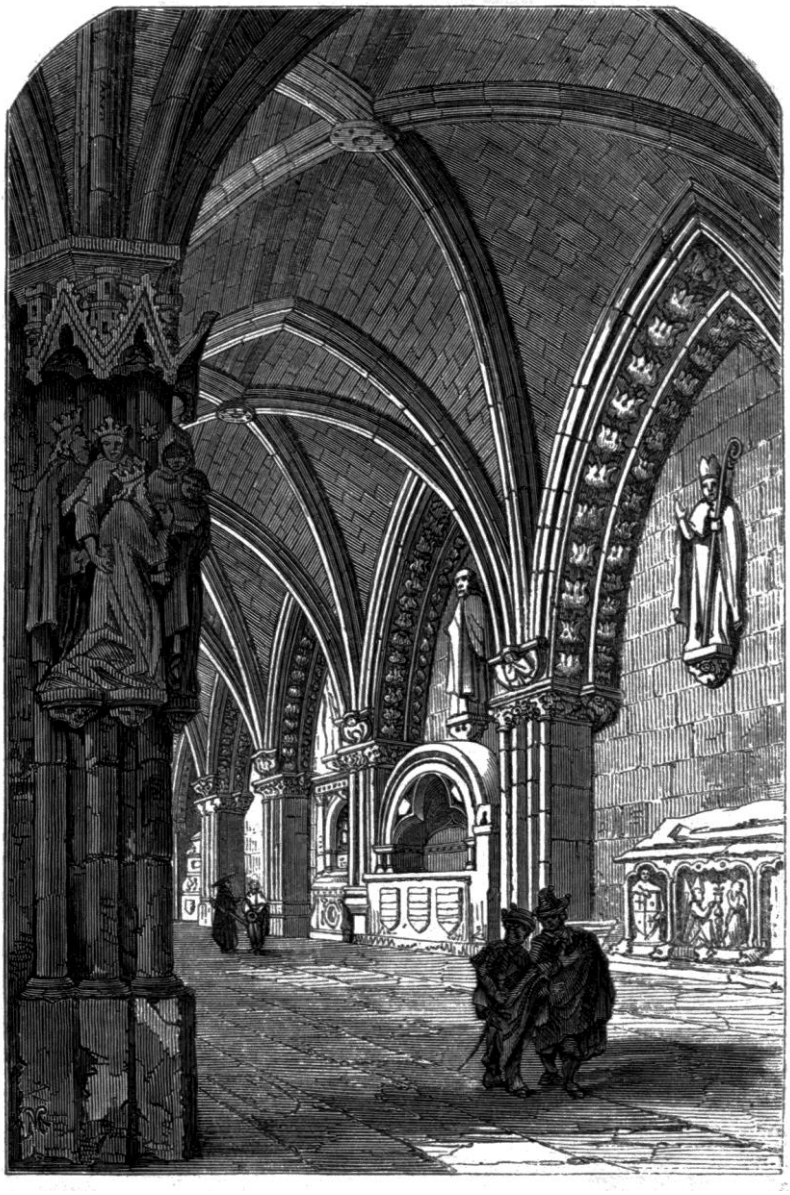
a pastel, tempera appearance deriving from the fact that paintings are left unvarnished in Spain, a lack of precaution which has allowed many fine masterpieces to be consumed by humidity, a thing to be regretted. These portraits, although most of them are very detailed, are not paintings of the first order, and moreover they are hung too high for one to be able to judge the merit of their execution. The centre of the room is occupied by an enormous buffet, and immense baskets woven from *espartos*, in which church ornaments, and utensils of worship, are stored. Under two glass domes, two coral trees are kept as a curiosity, though much less complex in their branches than the slightest arabesque of the cathedral. The door is decorated with the arms of Burgos in relief, with a scattering of small heraldic-red crosses.

Jean Cuchiller's chapel, which we passed through next, is nothing remarkable in terms of its architecture, and we were hastening to leave it, when we were asked to raise our eyes and observe a most curious object. This was a large chest held against the wall by iron clamps. It is difficult to imagine a more patched-up, worm-eaten, and ruined trunk. It is without doubt the oldest chest in the world; an inscription in black letters conceived thus: *Cofre del Cid*, immediately granted, as you can believe, enormous importance to these four boards of rotten wood. This chest, if the chronicle is to be believed, is precisely the one that the famous Ruy Diaz de Vivar, better known under the name of El Cid Campéador, lacking money, hero though he was, like many a plain writer, offered, filled with a mass of sand and stones, as collateral to an honest Jewish pawnbroker who furnished loans, with a prohibition on opening the mysterious trunk before he, El Cid Campéador, had repaid the amount borrowed; which proves that the usurers of that time were more easy-going in nature than those of our day. We would now find few Jews or Christians naive and good-natured enough to accept such a pledge. Monsieur Casimir Delavigne made use of this legend in his play *La Fille du Cid*, but he substituted for the enormous chest a less than imposing box, which contained nothing but *the gold of El Cid's words*; and no Jew, even a Jew of the heroic age, would lend anything in exchange for such a box of bonbons. The ancient chest is large, wide, heavy, deep, and furnished with all kinds of locks and padlocks: full of sand, it would have taken at least six horses to move it, and the worthy Israelite might well have supposed it filled with clothes, jewels, or silverware, and have resigned himself more easily to the Cid's caprice, a caprice provided for by the Penal Code, as it provides for many another heroic fantasy. With all due respect to Monsieur Anténor Joly, his staging of Renaissance theatre is therefore inexact,

Part V: The Cloister; Paintings and Sculptures – The House of El Cid; The Rope House; The Santa Maria Gate – The Theatre and the Actors – La Cartuja de Miraflores – General Thiébault and the Bones of El Cid

On leaving Jean Cuchiller's chapel, one enters another room with a most picturesque style of decoration: oak woodwork, crimson hangings, and a ceiling of Cordoba leather displayed to best effect; in this room can be seen a *Nativity* by Murillo, a *Conception*, and a painting depicting Jesus in a most finely-achieved robe.

The cloister is filled with tombs, most of them closed off by tight and extremely strong iron grills; these tombs, all of illustrious character, are carved into the thickness of the wall, adorned with coats of arms and studded with sculptures. On one of them I noticed a group consisting of Mary and Jesus holding a book in their hands, of great beauty, and a chimera half-animal, half-arabesque, of the strangest and most impressive invention. Upon all these tombs lie life-size statues, either of armed knights or of bishops in their regalia, which one might readily mistake, through the iron mesh of the gates, for the dead they represent, so realistic are the poses and the slightest details.



Cloisters, Burgos Cathedral

On a door-jamb, I noticed, in passing, a charming little statuette of the Virgin, of delightful execution and extraordinary boldness of conception. Instead of the contrite and modest air that is usually granted to the Blessed Virgin, the sculptor has represented her with a look in which voluptuousness mixes with the ecstasy and the intoxication of a woman about to give birth to a god. She stands there, her head thrown back, breathing in, with all her soul and body, the ray of fiery light emitted by the symbolic dove, with a combination of ardour and purity of rare originality; it is difficult to achieve anything new with regard to a subject so often repeated, but to genius no subject is ever exhausted.

The description of the cloister alone would require an entire book; but, given the little space and time I have, you will forgive me for uttering only those few words, and entering on the church, where I will address at random, to right and left, the masterpieces as they come,

without choice or preference; because all there is beautiful, all is admirable, and what I shall not speak of equals at the very least what I shall.

One first comes to a halt in front of the *Passion of Jesus Christ*, in stone, by Philippe de Bourgogne, who was unfortunately not a French artist, it seems, as his name, or rather his epithet, might lead one to believe. It is one of the largest bas-reliefs in the world. According to Gothic practice, it is divided into several compartments; *The Garden of Olives*, *The Bearing of the Cross*, *The Crucifixion between the Two Thieves*; an immense composition indeed, which, as regards the finesse in execution of the heads and the richness of detail, is worth anything that Albrecht Durer, Hans Memling, or Holbein wrought, of a most delicate and elegant nature, with their miniaturist's brushes. This stone epic ends with a magnificent *Descent to the Tomb*: the groups of sleeping apostles who occupy the lower panels of *The Garden of Olives* are almost as beautiful and as pure in style as the prophets and saints of Fra Bartolommeo; the heads of the blessed women at the foot of the cross show a pathetic and painful expression of which Gothic artists alone possessed the secret, here this expression joins with rare beauty of form; the soldiers stand out for their singular and fierce accoutrements such as those attributed to ancient, oriental or Jewish characters of the Middle Ages whose true costumes we do not know; they are also portrayed with a boldness and bravado which make the happiest contrast with the ideality and melancholy of the other figures. All this is framed by architecture formed like goldsmith's work, of incredible lightness and good-taste. The sculpture was completed in 1536.

Since we are on the subject of sculpture, let us speak at once of the choir-stalls, admirable works of carpentry perhaps unrivalled in the world. These stalls are so many marvels; they represent subjects from the Old Testament in bas-relief, and are separated from each other by chimeras and fantastic animals in the shape of seat-arms. The flat panels are formed with incrustations, highlighted with black hatching, like niello work on metal; arabesque and caprice have never been taken further. Here is inexhaustible verve, incredible abundance, perpetual invention both in idea and execution; it is a new world, a separate creation, as complete, as rich, as that of the deity, where plants are alive, men flower, where a branch ends in a hand and a leg in foliage, where the sly-eyed chimera opens wings equipped with claws, where the monstrous dolphin emits water through its blowhole. An inextricably interwoven mesh of florets, foliage, acanthus leaves, lotus blooms, flowers with calyxes decorated with egret-feather aigrets and tendrils, serrated and contoured vegetation, fabulous birds, impossible fish, mermaids, and extravagant dragons, of which no language can convey even the idea. The freest fantasy reigns in all these inlays, to which their yellow tone on the darker background of the wood grants the appearance of Etruscan vase-painting, an appearance completely justified by the frankness and primitive accent of the line. These images, which the pagan genius of the Renaissance illuminates, have no connection with the purpose of the stalls, and sometimes the choice of subject reveals complete forgetfulness of the holiness of its location. There are children playing with masks, women dancing, gladiators wrestling, peasants harvesting grapes, young girls tormenting or caressing some fantastic monster, creatures plucking harps, and even little boys imitating in the basin of a fountain the famous *Manneken-Pis* in Brussels. With a little more slenderness in their proportions, these figures would be equal to the purest Etruscan forms: unity of appearance coupled with infinite variety of detail, that is the difficult problem that medieval artists almost always solve with success. Five or six paces away, this carpentry,

so fanciful in execution, becomes serious, solemn, architectural, brown in tone, and entirely worthy of serving as a frame for the pale and austere faces of the canons.

The Constable's chapel (*Capilla del Condestable*) is in itself a complete church; the tombs of Don Pedro Fernandez de Velasco, Constable of Castile, and that of his wife, occupy the centre and are without the slightest ornamentation; the sculpted figures are of white marble and magnificent workmanship. The man lies in his battle-armour enriched with arabesques in a superior style, from which the sacristans make prints on moist paper which they sell to travellers; the woman has her little dog beside her; her gloves and the patterns of her brocade dress being rendered with incredible finesse. The heads of the two spouses rest on marble cushions, decorated with their crowns and their coat of arms; gigantic coats of arms decorate the walls of the chapel, and, on the entablature, figures are placed bearing stone poles to support banners and standards. The *retablo* (which is what the architectural facade around an altar is called) is sculpted, gilded, painted, interspersed with arabesques and columns, and represents the circumcision of Jesus Christ, with life-size figures. On the right where hangs a portrait of Doña Mencia de Mendoza, Countess of Haro, there is a small illuminated, gilded, chiselled Gothic altar, embellished with a host of figurines, thought to be by Antonin Moine, since they are so light and spiritually oriented; on this altar there is a Christ in black jet. The great altar is decorated with silver blades and crystal suns, whose shimmering reflections form plays of light of singular brilliance. At the summit of the vault a sculptured rose of incredible delicacy blooms.

In the sacristy which is close to this chapel, we see embedded a midst of the woodwork a Mary Magdalen which is attributed to Leonardo da Vinci: the softness of the brown half-tones blended with the light ones by imperceptible degrees, the lightness of touch displayed in the hair, and the perfect roundness of the arms make this supposition entirely plausible (*the painting 'The Enigma of Mary Magdalen', is currently attributed to Gianpetrino one of his pupils*). Also kept in this chapel is the ivory diptych which the constable took to the army and before which he said his prayers. The *Capilla del Condestable* belongs to the Duke of Frias. Take a passing look at the statue of Saint Bruno, in coloured wood, which is by Manuel Pereira, a Portuguese sculptor, and at the tomb of Pedro Fernández de Villegas, translator of Dante's *Inferno*.

A grand staircase of the most beautiful design, with magnificent sculpted chimeras, held us spellbound for a few minutes. I have no idea where it led and into which room the little door at its end opened; but it is worthy of the most dazzling palace. The great altar of the chapel of the Duke of Abrantès (*the chapel of Santa Ana*) is one of the most singular works that can be viewed: it represents the genealogical tree of Jesus Christ. Here is how this curious idea is rendered: the patriarch Abraham is lying down at the foot of the composition, and into his fertile chest plunge the hairy roots of an immense tree, each branch of which bears an ancestor of Jesus, and is subdivided into as many branches as there were descendants. The summit is occupied by the Blessed Virgin, on her throne among the clouds; the sun, moon and stars, in silver and gold, sparkle through an efflorescence of branches. The degree of patience it took to carve all those leaves, sculpt those folds, hollow out those branches, separate all those characters from the background, we dare not think of except with fear. This *retablo*, so worked,

is as large as the facade of a house, and rises at least thirty feet high, including three levels, the second of which contains a Coronation of the Virgin, and the last a Crucifixion with Saint John and the Virgin. The artist was Rodrigo del Haya (*sculptor of the main altarpiece of the cathedral*) who lived in the mid-16th century (*the work is now attributed to Gil de Siloé, its main section completed 1492*).

The chapel of Saint Thecla is as curious as one can imagine. Both architect and sculptor seem to have set themselves the goal of as much ornamentation as possible in as little space as possible; They succeeded perfectly, and I would challenge the most industrious ornamentalist to find place in the entire chapel for a single rose window or a single fleuron. It is in the richest, most adorable, and most charming bad taste: nothing but twisted columns surrounded by vine-stocks, infinitely coiled volutes, little chains of cherubs with winged cravats, great bubbles of cloud, flames blowing in the wind emitted from perforated boxes, open fans of light rays, blooming and bushy chicory plants, all gilded and painted in natural colours, with miniature brushes. The patterns of drapery are executed thread by thread, point by point, and with fearful meticulousness. The saint, surrounded by the flames of her pyre, flames whose ardour is aroused by Saracens in extravagant costumes, raises her beautiful enamelled eyes to the sky, and holds in her little flesh-coloured hand a large sacred branch, curled in the Spanish manner. The vaults were worked in the same taste. Other altars, of a smaller size, but of equal richness, occupy the rest of the chapel: here is no Gothic finesse, nor the charming taste of the Renaissance; richness is substituted for purity of line; yet it is still very beautiful, as is everything excessive and complete in its own way.

The cathedral-organs, which are of formidable size, possess batteries of organ-pipes arranged on a transverse plane like cannons, aimed with menacing and bellicose effect. The private chapels each have their own organ, but smaller. On the *retablo* of one of these chapels (*the Chapel of the Presentation*) we saw a painting of such beauty that I know not to which master it should be attributed, except perhaps to Michelangelo; the undeniable characteristics of the Florentine school in its finest period shine out victoriously from this magnificent painting, which would be the pearl of the most splendid of museums. However, Michelangelo almost never painted in oil, and his paintings are fabulously rare; I would gladly believe that the composition was painted by Sébastien del Piombo, following the outlines of a cartoon by the sublime artist. We know that, jealous of Raphael's success, Michelangelo sometimes employed Sebastian del Piombo to combine colour with drawing and surpass his young rival. Regardless, it is an admirable painting; the Holy Virgin, seated and nobly draped, veils with a transparent scarf the divine nudity of little Jesus, standing next to her. Two angels, in contemplation, swim silently in the ultramarine of the sky; in the background we see a harsh landscape, rocks, earth and a few distant sections of wall. The head of the Virgin has a majesty, calmness, and power that cannot be conveyed in words. The neck is attached to the shoulders by lines so pure, so chaste and so noble, the face breathes such sweet maternal tranquility, the hands are turned so divinely, the feet have such elegance and such great style, that one cannot can take one's eyes from this painting. Add to this marvellous sketch a simple, solid colour, sustained in tone, without false lights, without the lesser refinements of chiaroscuro, with a certain touch of the fresco that harmonizes perfectly with the tone of the architecture, and you

have a masterpiece of which one can find the equivalent only in the Florentine or Roman schools.

There is also, in the cathedral of Burgos, a *Holy Family* without the painter's name, which I strongly suspect to be by Andrea del Sarto, and Gothic paintings on wood by Cornelis van Eyck, the like of which can be found in the Dresden Gallery; paintings of the German school are not rare in Spain, and some are of great beauty. We will mention, in passing, some paintings by Fra Diego de Leyva, who became a Carthusian at the Cartuja de Miraflores, at the age of fifty-three, among others the one which represents the martyrdom of Saint Casilda, whose breasts the executioner severed: blood gushes in large quantities from two crimson patches left on the chest by the amputated flesh; the two half-globes lie next to the saint, who looks, with an expression of feverish and convulsive ecstasy, at a large angel with a dreamy and melancholy face who brings her a palm-frond. These fearful paintings of martyrs are very numerous in Spain, where the love of realism and truth in art is pushed to the ultimate limits. The artist spares one not a single drop of blood; we are forced to view the severed veins which retract, the living flesh which trembles, and whose dark purple contrasts with the bloodless and bluish whiteness of the skin, the vertebrae cut by the executioner's scimitar, the violent marks left by the rods and whips of tormentors, the gaping wounds that vomit water and blood from their livid mouths: everything is rendered with terrible truth. Jusepe de Ribera painted, in this genre, things that would make even *el verdugo*, the executioner himself, recoil with horror, and it takes all the terrible beauty and diabolical energy which characterize that great master to support such ferocious depictions of flaying and the slaughterhouse, which seem to have been painted for the pleasure of cannibals by the executioner's servant. There is truly something disgusting about martyrdom, and the angel with its palm-frond seems slight compensation for such atrocious torment. Yet Ribera very often refuses this consolation to his tortured figures, whom he leaves to writhe, like severed parts of a snake, in dark menacing shadows that no divine ray illuminates.

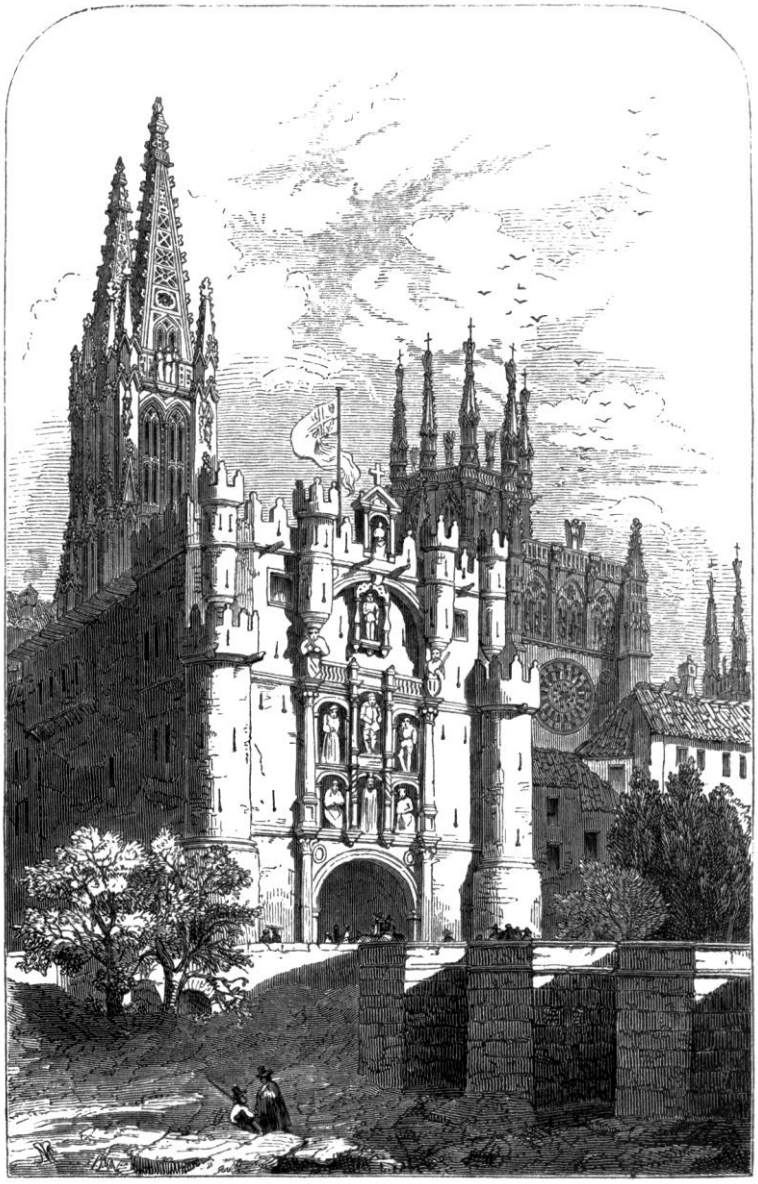
The longing for the actual, however repulsive it may be, is a characteristic feature of Spanish art: the ideal and the conventional are not part of the genius of a people completely devoid of aesthetics. Sculpture is not enough for it: it requires painted statues, rouged Madonnas with realistic clothes. Material illusion is never carried far enough to satisfy its taste, and that unbridled love of realism often makes it traverse the distance that separates statuary from Philippe Curtius' cabinet of wax figures.

The famous and revered Burgos Christ, which can only be seen once candles are lit, is a striking example of this strange taste: here is no longer stone or illuminated wood, but human skin (at least so they say), padded with great art and care. The hair is real hair, the eyes have eyelashes, the crown of thorns is made of real briars, no detail is forgotten. Nothing is more lugubrious and more disturbing to see than this elongated, crucified ghost, with its false evocation of life and its dead immobility; the skin, of a rancid and brown tone, is streaked with long streams of blood so well imitated that one might believe that they were actually flowing. It takes no great stretch of the imagination to believe the legend that this miraculous crucifix bleeds every Friday. Instead of gathered loose drapery, the Burgos Christ wears a white petticoat embroidered with gold which hangs from his waist to his knees; this addition produces

a singular effect, especially for those who are not used to seeing Our Lord thus costumed. At the foot of the cross three ostrich eggs are embedded, a symbolic emblem whose meaning escapes me, unless it is an allusion to the Trinity, the source and seed of all.

We left the cathedral dazed, crushed, intoxicated by masterpieces and unable to admire it further. We had strength, at most, to cast an absent-minded glance at the arch of Fernán González, an attempt at classical architecture, created at the start of the Renaissance by Philippe de Bourgogne. We were also shown the Cid's house; when I say the Cid's house, I express myself badly, I mean the site where it may have been: it consists of a square of land surrounded by boundary-markers; there remains not the slightest vestige authorising this belief, but also nothing to indicate the contrary, and, in such a case, there is no detriment in relying on tradition. The Rope House, so named for the stone coils of rope that border the doors, frame the windows, and embellish the architecture, is worthy of examination; it serves as the residence of the civil governor of the province, and we met there a group of mayors from the surrounding area, whose physiognomy would have seemed suspicious at the corner of a wood, and who would have done well to demand of themselves their own identification papers before permitting themselves to go about freely.

The Santa Maria Gate, built in honour of Charles V, is a remarkable piece of architecture. The statues placed in the niches, though short and stocky, have a strength of character and a power which makes up for their lack of slenderness. It is a shame that this superb triumphal gate is obstructed and shamed by I know not how many plastered walls erected there on the pretext of providing fortification, and which it should be a matter of urgency to raze to the ground. Near this gate is the promenade which runs along the Arlanzón, a most respectable river, two feet deep at least, which is a great deal in Spain. The promenade is decorated with four statues representing four kings or counts of Castile of a rather fine appearance, namely: Don Gonzalo Fernández, Don Alonzo, Henry II and Ferdinand I. That is almost all that is worth seeing in Burgos. The theatre is even cruder than that of Vitoria. That evening a play in verse was performed there: *El Zapatero y el Rey* (the Shoemaker and the King) by José Zorilla a most distinguished young writer, extremely popular in Madrid, who has already published seven volumes of verse, which boast of both style and harmony. All the seats had been booked in advance; we were forced to deprive ourselves of the pleasure and wait till next day for a performance of Charles Favart's *Les Trois Sultanes*, interspersed with Turkish songs and dances of transcendent foolishness. The actors knew not a word of their parts, and the prompter shouted the text at the top of his lungs, thereby drowning out their voices. The prompter is protected by a tin carapace, a rounded lid on four sides, against the *patatas, manzanas and cascaras de naranja*, potatoes, apples and orange peel, with which the Spanish audience, impatient as they were, never failed to bombard actors who displeased them. Everyone carries their own supply of projectiles in their pockets; if the actors have performed well, the vegetables are returned to the pot to add to the stew, the *puchero*.



The Santa Maria Gate

For an instant we thought we had found the true Spanish female type in one of the three Sultanas: large arched black eyebrows, thin nose, elongated oval face, red lips; but an officious neighbour told us that it was a young French girl.

Before leaving Burgos, we paid a visit to the Cartuja de Miraflores, located half a league from the city. Some poor aged and infirm monks were allowed to lodge in this charterhouse awaiting their end. Spain lost much of its romantic character with the suppression of the monasteries, and I fail to see what it gained in other respects. Admirable buildings whose loss is irreparable, and which had been preserved until then in a most meticulous manner, full of integrity, will deteriorate, collapse, and add their ruins to the ruins already so frequent in that unfortunate country; an incredible wealth of statues, paintings, art objects of all kinds, will be lost without benefit to anyone. It seems to me that one could imitate our Revolution in a better

way than through foolish vandalism. To cut each other's throats for the ideas you think to possess, to fertilise with your bodies the meagre fields ravaged by war, such is good; but stone, marble and bronze touched by genius are sacred; spare them. In two thousand years your civil discords will be forgotten, and posterity will only know you were a great people through a few marvellous fragments found by excavation.

La Cartuja is sited on top of a hill; the exterior is austere and simple: grey stone walls, tiled roofs; everything for the mind, nothing for the eyes. Inside, there are long, cool, silent cloisters whitewashed with quicklime, the doors of cells, lead-meshed windows in which are enshrined a few sacred objects in coloured glass, in particular an *Ascension of Jesus Christ*, singular in its composition: the body of the Saviour has already disappeared; we see only his feet, the hollow imprints of which have remained in the surface of a rock surrounded by holy figures expressing adoration.

A small courtyard, in the centre of which a fountain rises from which crystal-clear water filters, drop by drop, encloses the prior's garden. A few vines brighten somewhat the gloom of the walls; a few clumps of flowers, a few sheaves of plants grow here and there, mostly at random and in picturesque disorder. The prior, an old man with a noble and melancholy face, dressed in a garment resembling a coarse robe as much as anything (monks were not allowed to retain their habit), received us with great politeness and made us sit round a brazier, since the weather was not too hot, and offered us cigarettes and *azucarillos* (*lumps of sugar*) in cold water. A book was open on the table; I allowed myself to take a look: it was the *Bibliotheca Carluxiana*, a collection of passages from various authors praising the order and way of living of the Carthusians. The margins were annotated, in the prior's own hand, with that good old priestly handwriting, straight, firm, somewhat large, which speaks of long reflection, and which a hasty, anxious, and worldly person might attempt in vain to acquire. So, this poor old monk, left there out of pity in an abandoned monastery whose vaults might well shortly collapse above his unknown grave, still dreamed of the glory of his order, and with a trembling hand inscribed on the white pages of the book some passage, forgotten and newly-discovered.

The cemetery is shaded by two or three large cypress trees, as in Turkish cemeteries: this funerary enclosure contained four hundred and nineteen Carthusians who had died since the construction of the monastery; thick, bushy grass covers the ground, where we find neither grave, cross, nor inscription; they lie there confusedly, humble in death as they were in life. This anonymous cemetery has something calm and silent which eases the soul; a fountain, placed at the centre, mourns, its tears clear as silver, all those poor forgotten dead; I took a sip of the water filtered through the ashes of so many holy people; it was pure and icy as death.

Yet if the dwelling of men is poor, that of God is rich. In the midst of the nave are the tombs of Don Juan II and Isabel of Portugal, his wife. We would be surprised if human patience has ever achieved a like work: sixteen lions, two at each corner, supporting eight escutcheons with the royal arms, serve as their base. Add a proportionate number of virtues, allegorical figures, apostles and evangelists, and have branches, foliage, birds, animals, coiling arabesques wind through it all, and you will have but a poor idea of this prodigious work. The crowned statues of the king and queen repose on the lid. The king holds a sceptre in his hand, and wears a long garment, carved and decorated with inconceivable delicacy.

The tomb of Infante Alonso is on the left of the altar, the Gospel side. The infante is represented kneeling in front of a prie-dieu. A vine pierced with holes, on which small children hang to pick grapes, festoons, with inexhaustible caprice, the Gothic arch which frames the composition half-embedded in the wall.

These marvellous monuments are carved from alabaster, and by the hand of Gil de Siloé, who also carved the sculptures of the high altar; to the right and left of this altar, which is of rare beauty, two doors open through which we see two motionless Carthusians in garments like white shrouds: these two figures, which are probably by Diego de Leyva, deceive the eye at first glance. Alonso de Berruguete's choir-stalls complete this ensemble, which one is surprised to find amidst a deserted countryside.

From the top of the hill, we were shown the monastery of San Pedro de Cardeña, in the distance, where the tomb of El Cid and Doña Jimena, his wife, is located (*the tomb is now in Burgos Cathedral*). About this tomb, a bizarre anecdote is told which we will repeat, without guaranteeing its authenticity.

During the French invasion, General Thiébault had the idea of transferring the bones of El Cid from San Pedro de Cardena to Burgos, with the intention of placing them in a sarcophagus on the public promenade, in order to inspire heroic and chivalrous feelings in the population through the magnanimous placement of these relics. It is said, in addition, that, in a fit of militaristic enthusiasm, the honourable general slept beside the hero's bones, to summon up the courage for this glorious removal, a precaution of which he had no need. The project was not carried out, and the Cid returned to Doña Jimena, in San-Pedro de Cardena, where he remained thereafter; but one of his teeth, which came loose, and which had been stuck in a drawer, disappeared without anyone knowing what had become of it. The only glory lacking to the Cid was that of being canonized; as he would have been if, before dying, he had not had the heretical and offensive Arabic idea of wishing his famous horse Babieca to be buried beside him: which led to grave doubts concerning his orthodoxy. In regard to the Cid, we should point out to Monsieur Casimir Delavigne that the hero's sword is called Tizona and not Tizonade, which rhymes too closely with lemonade. All I have said detracts not at all from the glory of El Cid, who, in addition to his merit as a hero, has so potently inspired the unknown poets of the Romancero, Guillén de Castro, Juan Diamante, and Pierre Corneille.

Part VI: El Correo Real; The Galleys – Valladolid – San Pablo – A Performance of Hernani – Santa Mária la Real de Nieva – Madrid

***E**l correo real*, in which we left Burgos, deserves special mention. Imagine an antediluvian carriage, the obsolete model for which can only be found in fossilized Spain; enormous wheels, with very thin spokes, spreading far from the chassis, painted red in the time of the Catholic Isabella; an extravagant superstructure, pierced with windows of all shapes, and lined inside with small satin panels which may have been pink at some remote time, enhanced with sewn decorations in chenille, which nothing has barred from being executed in several different colours. This respectable carriage was crudely suspended by means of ropes, and secured in vulnerable places with esparto-cord. To this vehicle was added a line of mules, a string of the creatures of reasonable length, with an assortment of postilions and *mayorales* in jackets of Astrakhan lambskin, and sheepskin trousers of a very Muscovite appearance, after which we left amidst a whirlwind of cries, insults and whip-lashes. We went at a breakneck pace, devouring the terrain, as the vague silhouettes of objects flew past, to right and left, with phantasmagorical speed. I have never seen mules more inspired, restive or fiercer; at each relay-post, it took a veritable army of *muchachos* to attach each one to the carriage. These diabolical beasts emerged from the stable rearing on their hind feet, and it was only by means of a cluster of postilions hanging from their halters that they were eventually reduced to a state of quadrupedalism. I believe what inspired their frenzied ardour was the idea of the meal that awaited them at the next *venta (inn)* because they were fearfully lean. On leaving one little village, they began to kick and rear so furiously that their legs became caught in the traces: then there ensued a flurry of kicks, and unimaginable blows with sticks; the whole file collapsed, and an unfortunate postilion who was at the head, mounted on a horse which had probably never been harnessed, was pulled out from beneath the almost flattened heap, bleeding from the nose. His mistress, who was present at the departure, uttered soul-splitting screams such as I would not have believed could emerge from the human chest. In the end, we managed to untangle the ropes and set the mules back on their feet; another postilion took the place of the wounded man, and we set off with unparalleled speed. The country we crossed had an aspect of unusual savagery: large arid plains without a single tree to break their uniformity, ending in mountains and hills of yellow ochre that distance could barely render bluish. From

time to time we traversed earthy villages, built of adobe, mostly in ruins. As it was a Sunday, lines of haughty Castilians draped in their spongy rags, stood, motionless as mummies all along the yellowish walls lit by pale rays of sunlight, engaged in *tomar el sol (taking the sun)*, a recreation which would make the most phlegmatic German die of boredom in an hour. However, this most Spanish of pleasures was very excusable that day, since it was atrociously cold, a furious wind sweeping across the plain with a noise like the thunder of chariots full of armour rolling over bronze vaults. I cannot believe that in Hottentot kraals or Kalmyk encampments one would encounter anything more savage, more barbaric, and more primitive. Taking advantage of a halt, I entered one of the houses: it was a windowless hovel, with a crude stone hearth placed in the centre, and a hole in the roof to allow the smoke to escape; the walls were covered with a dark bitumen worthy of Rembrandt.

We dined at Torquemada a *pueblo* located on a small river partially blocked by old ruined fortifications. Torquemada is remarkable for the complete absence of any windows: the only tiling is in the *parador* which, despite this incredible luxury, nevertheless has a kitchen with a hole in the ceiling. After having swallowed a few *garbanzos* (*chickpeas*) which rattled into our bellies like grains of lead onto a tambourine, we returned to our carriage, and the steeplechase began again. The carriage, on the heels of those mules, was like a saucepan attached to a tiger's tail: the noise it made aroused them even more. A fire of straw lit in the middle of the road very nearly made them take the bit in their teeth. They were so suspicious that you had to hold them by the reins and put your hand over their eyes when another carriage came in the opposite direction. As a general rule, when two carriages pulled by mules meet, one of them must overturn. Finally, what was fated to happen happened. I was turning over some fragment of a hemistich in my head, as is my habit when travelling, when I saw my comrade, who was seated opposite, lurch towards me, in a sudden parabola; this unusual action was followed by our abrupt arrest, and a general cracking sound: 'Are you dead?' my friend asked me as he terminated his course. 'On the contrary,' I replied, 'and you?' 'Hardly at all,' he replied. And we emerged as quickly as possible through the broken roof of the poor carriage which had broken into a thousand pieces. We saw with infinite satisfaction, fifteen paces away in a field, the case containing our daguerreotype equipment as fresh and intact as if it had still been in the Susse Brothers' shop, busily taking views of the colonnade of the Bourse. As for the mules, they had fled, taking with them the front-axle and the two smaller wheels. Our losses amounted to a button which had popped due to the violence of the shock and could no-longer be found, it is genuinely impossible to overturn in more admirable fashion.

One of the most comical things I have seen was the *mayoral's* lament over the wreckage of his carriage; he tried to fit the pieces back together like a child who has broken a glass, and, finding the damage irreparable, he burst forth in a dreadful bout of swearing, stamped his feet, punched himself, rolled on the ground, imitating the excesses of ancient tragedy, or, deeply-moved, indulged in the most touching elegies. What distressed him most was the fate of the pink cushions scattered here and there, torn, and soiled with dust; these cushions were the most magnificent thing his *mayoral* imagination could conceive, and his heart bled to see so much splendour vanquished.

Our position otherwise was not too cheerful, though we were attacked by a rather untimely fit of laughter. Our mules had vanished like smoke, and we had nothing left but a dismantled carriage without wheels. Fortunately, the *venta* (*inn*) was not far away. There, we found two *galleys*, which took us and our luggage. The *galley* perfectly justifies its name: it consists of a cart with two, or four, wheels, which has neither base nor flooring; beneath, a network of reed-ropes forms a sort of net where trunks and packages are placed. A mattress is spread on top, a purely Spanish mattress, which in no way prevents you from feeling the corners of the luggage piled haphazardly. The passengers arrange themselves as best they can on this new kind of bridge, next to which the gridirons of Saint Lawrence and those of Aniceto Ortega's opera *Guatimotzin* are beds of roses, because it was at least possible to turn around on them. What would those philanthropists who would have convicts travel in post-chaises say, on seeing these *galleys* to which the most innocent people in the world are condemned when they visit Spain?

With these charming vehicles, deprived of any kind of springs, we traversed four Spanish leagues an hour, that is to say five French leagues, a league more than a best-served mail-coach on the finest of roads. To travel faster, English race-horses or coursers would have been required, while the road we followed was broken by the steepest of climbs and downward slopes, always descended rapidly at a triple gallop; it takes all the confidence and skill of the Spanish postilions and drivers not to shatter a vehicle into fifty thousand pieces at the bottom of some precipice: instead of overturning once, we might have overturned at every opportunity.

We were shaken about like mice that are shaken against the walls of a mousetrap, to stun and kill them, and it took all the grave beauty of the landscape to prevent us giving way to melancholy and soreness; but those beautiful hills with their austere lines, their sober and calm colour, gave so much character to a landscape constantly renewed, that the bumping we received from our *galleys* was more than compensated for. A village, or a former convent built like a fortress, varied the view which was of an oriental simplicity, recalling the distant landscape of Decamps' *Joseph Sold by His Brethren*.

Dueñas, located on a hill, looks much like a Turkish cemetery; caves, dug into the solid rock, receive air through small flared turrets like turbans, which possess the deceptively strange appearance of minarets. A church in the Moorish manner completes the illusion. To the left, on the plain, the Castile Canal appears from time to time; its channel is as yet incomplete.

At Venta de Trigueros, we harnessed to our galley a *chestnut* steed of singular beauty (we had given up on the mules), which fully justified the much-criticised colour of the horse in Eugène Delacroix's *The Justice of Trajan*. Genius is always correct; what it invents exists, and nature almost imitates it in its most eccentric fantasies. After crossing a road flanked by embankments and flying buttresses of a rather monumental character, we finally entered Valladolid, slightly bruised, but with our noses intact and our arms still attached to our chest without the aid of those black pins that secure the arms of a new doll. I say nothing about our legs, where numbness pricked us, as if from all the needles manufactured in England, and where the passing feet of a hundred thousand invisible ants swarmed.

We descended at a superb *parador*, perfectly clean, where we were given two excellent rooms with a balcony opening onto the square, carpets of coloured mats, and walls painted in

yellow and apple green tempera. So far, we had found no justification for the reproaches regarding uncleanliness and dilapidation which all travellers heap upon Spanish inns; we had not yet found scorpions in our bed, and the promised insects had failed to appear.

Valladolid is a large city which is almost entirely depopulated; it could house two hundred thousand souls and has barely more than twenty thousand inhabitants. It is a clean, calm, elegant city, where one already senses one's approach to the Orient. The facade of San Pablo is covered from top to bottom with marvellous sculptures from the early Renaissance. In front of the portal, granite pillars surmounted by heraldic lions are arranged like markers, holding, in all possible poses, the escutcheon of the arms of Castile. Opposite is a palace from the time of Charles V, with an extremely elegant arcaded courtyard and sculpted medallions of rare beauty. Merchants disburse their vile salt and awful tobacco within this architectural pearl. By a happy coincidence, the facade of San Pablo is located in a square, and one can capture a view of it with a daguerreotype camera, which is a thing intensely difficult to perform as regards medieval buildings, they being almost always embedded amidst piled-up houses, and wretched stalls; but the rain, which did not stop falling during the time we remained in Valladolid, prevented any attempt to do so. Twenty minutes of sunshine amidst the showers of rain in Burgos had enabled us to reproduce the two spires of the cathedral and a large piece of the portal in a most clear and distinct manner; but, in Valladolid, we lacked even those twenty minutes, which we regretted all the more as the city abounds in charming architecture. The building where the library is located, which they wish to turn into a museum, is in the purest and most delightful taste; although some of those ingenious restorers who prefer plain stone to bas-relief have shamefully erased its admirable arabesques, enough still remains to make it a masterpiece of elegance. We should point out, to our readers who are architects, an interior balcony indenting the corner of a palace on this same San Pablo square, and forming a *mirador* (*viewpoint*) entirely original in taste. The column which joins the two arches is very well cut. This house, we were told, was the one in which that dreadful king Philip II was born. Let me also mention the colossal fragment of the unfinished granite cathedral, by Herrera, in the style of Saint Peter's in Rome, the construction of which was abandoned in order to create the Escorial, that lugubrious fantasy of Charles V's melancholy son.

We were shown, in a church which was not in use, a collection of paintings gathered during the suppression of the monasteries, and brought together there by orders from above; this collection proves that the people who pillaged the churches and convents were excellent artists and admirable connoisseurs, since they left behind only these horrible crustaceans, the best of which would not sell for fifteen francs on a bric-a-brac stall. At the Museum, there are some passable paintings, but nothing superior; on the other hand, there are many sculptures in wood, and many ivory Christs, remarkable rather for the grandeur of their proportions and their antiquity, than for any genuine beauty. As regards any other relics, people who head to Spain seeking to buy curiosities return disappointed: not a precious weapon, not a rare edition, not a manuscript, nothing at all.

The Plaza de la Constitucion in Valladolid is very beautiful, and vast in size: it is surrounded by houses supported by large columns of bluish granite, each carved from a single piece of stone to beautiful effect. The palace of the Constitucion, painted apple-green, is

decorated with an inscription in honor of *innocente Isabella*, as the little queen is called here, and with a dial, lit at night like that of the Hotel-de-Ville in Paris, an innovation which seems to greatly delight the inhabitants. Beneath the pillars are established multitudes of tailors, hatters, and shoemakers, the three most flourishing trades in Spain; this is where the main cafes are, and all the population's movement seems to be focussed on this point. In the rest of the city, you scarcely meet a single passerby, perhaps a *criada* (*maid*) going to fetch water, or a peasant driving his donkey before him. This air of solitude is further enhanced by the large surface area of the city, where squares are more numerous than streets. The Campo Grande, next to the Great Gate, is surrounded by fifteen monasteries, there may even be more.

That evening there was a performance, at the theatre, of a play by Manuel Breton de Los Herreros, a dramatic poet highly esteemed in Spain. The piece had the rather odd title: *El Pelo de la Desa*, which literally means the *Hair of the Pasture*, a proverbial expression whose meaning is hard to understand, but which corresponds to our saying: 'The fish-barrel smells always of herring.' It is about an Aragonese peasant who must marry a well-born girl, and who has the good sense to recognize that he can never become a man of the world. The play's comedy consists in the perfect imitation of dialect, the Aragonese accent, which is scarcely perceptible to foreigners. The *baile nacional*, without being as *macabre* a dance as that of Vittoria, was still quite mediocre. The next day, they performed *Hernani or Castilian Honour*, by Victor Hugo, translated by Don Eugenio de Ochoa; we were careful not to miss such a feast. The play is rendered, line for line, with scrupulous accuracy, with the exception of a few passages and scenes which had to be cut to suit the demands of the public. The portrait scene is reduced to nothing, because the Spaniards feel it insults them, and consider themselves indirectly ridiculed. There are also a host of cuts in the fifth act. In general, Spaniards are angered when people speak of them in a poetic manner; they claim to have been slandered by Hugo, by Mérimée and by all those, in general, who have written about Spain: yes... slanders, though beautifully done. They deny with all their strength the Spain of the Romancero and the Orientalists, and one of their main pretensions is to be neither poetic nor picturesque, pretensions, alas, all too well justified. The drama was well played: the *Ruy Gomez* of Valladolid was certainly equal to the one on the Rue de Richelieu, and that is saying something. As for *Hernani, the poisonous rebel*, his acting would have been most satisfactory were it not for the tiresome whim of his being dressed like a troubadour on a clock-mount. Doña Sol was almost as *young* as Mademoiselle Mars (*Anne Salvetat*), without her talent.

The theatre in Valladolid is of quite good design, and, although it is only decorated inside in simple white with decoration *en grisaille*, the effect is pretty; the decorator had the odd idea of painting window frames on the proscenium walls, adorned with excellent imitations of speckled muslin curtains. These windows give the boxes nearest the stage a singular appearance. The balconies and fronts of the boxes are open, with carved balusters, which allows you to see whether the women have small feet and are well shod, and even whether their ankles are thin, and their stockings neat; which presents no disadvantage to Spanish women, who are almost always irreproachable in that respect. I read, in a charming article by my literary stand-in (since *La Presse* penetrates even to these barbaric regions) that the balconies in the gallery of the new Opéra-Comique are constructed according to this system.

On leaving Valladolid, the landscape changes character, the moorlands reappear; only they have more numerous clumps of stunted holm oaks than those near Bordeaux, and the pine-trees are more flared and resemble a parasol in shape. However, the moors display the same aridity, the same air of solitude, the same aspect of desolation; here and there are a few piles of rubble adorned with the names of villages burned and devastated by the rebels, around which a rare few ragged, puny-looking inhabitants wander. As for the picturesque, there are only a few women's petticoats: these are a very bright canary-tail yellow, brightened with embroidery of several shades, representing birds and flowers.

Olmedo, where we halted for dinner, is wholly in ruins; entire streets are deserted, others blocked by collapsed houses; grass grows in the squares. Like those accursed cities of which Scripture speaks, there will soon be no inhabitants in Olmedo other than the flat-headed viper, and the short-sighted owl, and the desert serpent will rub the scales of its belly over the altar stones. A ring of old dismantled fortifications surrounds the city, while a generous clothing of ivy dresses the nakedness of the gutted and cracked towers with its green mantle. Large and beautiful trees line these ramparts. Nature tries to repair the ravages of time and war as best it can. The depopulation of Spain is fearful: in the time of the Moors, it had thirty-two million inhabitants; now it has at most ten or eleven. Unless it undergoes a happy change of fortune which is hardly probable, or a supernatural fertility rate, once flourishing cities will be quite abandoned, and their ruins of brick and adobe will melt imperceptibly into the earth which devours everything, cities and peoples alike.

In the room where we dined, a large woman, formed like Cybele, walked up and down, carrying under her arm an oblong basket covered with a cloth, from which came little plaintive and fluted moans, resembling those of a young child. This intrigued me greatly, since the basket was so small it could surely only contain a microscopic and phenomenal child, a Lilliputian, fit for showing at fairs. The enigma was soon explained; the *pasiega* or nursemaid (which is what she was) took a puppy the colour of café-au-lait from the basket, sat down in a corner, and very gravely suckled this new type of infant. She was on her way to Madrid to fulfil her role there, and fearful of finding her milk exhausted.

The landscape, after quitting Olmedo, fails to offer much variety: only I noticed, before sunset, an admirable effect; the rays of light illuminated the flank of a distant mountain range, all the details of which stood forth with extraordinary clarity; the sides bathed in shadow were almost invisible, the sky possessed a saturnine hue – a painter who rendered the effect exactly would be accused of exaggeration and inaccuracy – This time the posada was far more Spanish in appearance than those that we had seen before: it consisted of an immense stable, surrounded by whitewashed rooms, each containing four or five beds. It was wretched and bare, but not unclean; the characteristic and proverbial dirt was not yet made visible; there was even, an incredible luxury, a series of engravings in the dining room representing *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (*The Adventures of Telemachus, by Fenelon*), not the charming vignettes with which Célestin Nanteuil and his friend Henri Baron illustrate the story of that sullen son of Ulysses, but those awful coloured daubs with which the Rue Saint-Jacques floods the universe. We left at two in the morning, and when the first light of day allowed me to distinguish anything, I saw a spectacle I shall never in my life forget. We had just relayed at a village

called, I believe, Santa Mária la Real de Nieva, and were climbing the first ridges of the range we had to cross, in appearance like the ruins of a Cyclopean city: immense cliffs of sandstone in architectural form rose on all sides and traced the silhouettes of fantastic Babels against the sky. Here, a flat stone fallen across two other rocks simulated, unmistakably, *peulven (menhirs)* or druidic *dolmens*; further on, a series of peaks in the shape of columnar shafts represented porticos and propylaea; at other times, it was no less than chaotic, an ocean of sandstone frozen at the moment of greatest fury; the grey-blue tone of these rocks further increased the uniqueness of the perspective: at every moment, interstices in the stone gushed forth in vaporous mist, or filtered crystal tears from springs in the rock, and, what particularly delighted me, melted snow had collected in the hollows and formed small lakes bordered by emerald-coloured grass, or set in a circle of silver made by snow which had resisted the sun's action. Pillars erected here and there, which serve to identify the track when snow spreads its treacherous layers over both road and precipice, give the place something of a monumental air; torrents foam and murmur on every side; the road spans them by means of those drystone bridges so common in Spain: one encounters them at every step.

The mountains rose higher and higher; when we had crossed one, another yet higher appeared which had not at first been visible; the mules were incapable of mounting the heights, and we had to resort to oxen, which allowed us to get out of the cart and climb the rest of the sierra on foot. I was truly intoxicated by the pure vivifying air; I felt so light, so joyful, and so full of enthusiasm, that I shouted, and performed somersaults like a boy; I longed to throw myself head first into all those delightful precipitous voids so azure in hue, so vaporous, so velvety; I wanted to plunge beneath the waterfalls, dip my feet in every spring, snatch a branch from every pine-tree, wallow in the sparkling snow, mingle with all of Nature, and merge like an atom with that immensity.

Beneath the rays of the sun, the high peaks sparkled together like dancers' overskirts with their rain of silver spangles; others had their heads buried in the clouds, and blended with the sky in imperceptible transitions of hue, for nothing bears a closer resemblance to a mountain than a cloud. There were cliffs, the undulations, tones, and shapes of which no art could give an idea, neither the pen nor the brush; the mountains seemed everything one dreams them to be: which is no small praise. Only one imagines them as larger; their enormity being perceptible only through comparison: if you look closely, you realize that what you took from a distance to be a blade of grass is a pine-tree sixty feet high.

At the corner of a bridge very suitable for an ambush by brigands, we viewed a small column with a cross: it was the monument of some poor devil who had ended his days in this narrow gorge, due to *manoairada* (an itchy trigger-finger). From time to time we met travelling *Maragatos* in their sixteenth-century costumes, leather jerkins tightened with a buckle, wide breeches, and broad-brimmed hats; or *Valencianos* in white linen drawers which resemble the petticoats of the Greek klephtes, a handkerchief tied round their heads, their white gaiters bordered with blue and footless in the style of the ancient *knemis*, and a long piece of fabric (*capa de muestra*), striped transversely with bands of bright colours, draped over the shoulder in a very elegant manner. What we could see of their skin was as tawny as a Florentine bronze. We also saw convoys of mules harnessed in the most charming style with bells, fringes and

colourful blankets, their *arrieros* (*muleteers*) armed with rifles. We were enchanted; the degree of picturesqueness desired was evident in abundance.

As we climbed, the bands of snow became thicker and wider; but a ray of sunlight set the mountain flowing, like a lover who smiles through his tears; on every side, small streams trickled, scattered about like the dishevelled hair of naiads, and brighter than diamond. By climbing higher, we reached the upper ridge, and seated ourselves on the plinth at the base of a large granite lion marking the limits of Old Castile on the mountainside; beyond, lies New Castile.

A fancy which took me to cull a delightful pink flower whose botanical name I do not know, which grows in the cracks in the sandstone, obliged me to climb a rock which we were told was the place where Philip II sat to see what point the work on the Escorial had reached. Either the tradition is apocryphal, or Philip had devilishly good eyesight.

The cart, which was crawling painfully up the steep slope, finally reached us. The oxen were unhitched, and we galloped down the slope: we stopped for dinner at Guadarrama, a small village crouching at the foot of the mountain, whose only monument is a granite fountain erected by Philip II. At Guadarrama, in an odd reversal of the natural order of dishes, we were served goat's milk soup for dessert.

Madrid, like Rome, is surrounded by empty countryside, possessing an aridity, due to drought, and a desolation, of which nothing can give the true idea: not a tree, not a drop of water, not a green plant, no appearance of humidity, nothing but yellow sand and iron-grey rocks. At a distance from the mountain, they are no longer even rocks, but simply large stones; here and there, a dusty *venta* (*inn*), a cork-coloured bell-tower showing its nose at the edge of the horizon, large melancholy-looking oxen dragging those carts of which we have already given the description; a peasant on horseback or on a mule, with his rifle on his saddlebow, a sombrero over his eyes, and a fierce expression; or, occasionally, long strings of pale donkeys carrying cut straw, tied with nets of cord; and that is all: the donkey who walks in front, the *coronel* (*lead*) donkey, always has a little plume or a pompom which marks its superiority, in the hierarchy of those long-eared people.

After a few hours, which our impatience to arrive made appear even longer, we could finally see Madrid quite clearly. A little while later, we entered the capital of Spain through the Puerta de Hierro: the cart first followed an avenue planted with tall, stocky trees, and flanked by brick turrets which serve to pump water. While speaking of water, though the description is scarcely a happy one, I forgot to say that we had crossed the Manzanares, on a bridge worthy of a more serious river; then we passed the queen's palace, which is one of those buildings that is considered to be in good taste. The immense terraces which elevate it give it a rather grandiose appearance.

After submitting to a visit from the customs officer, we installed ourselves close to the Calle de Alcalá and the Calle de Prado, on the Calle del Caballero de Gracia, in the Fonda de la Amistad, exactly where Madame Espartero, Duquesa de la Victoria (*Maria, the wife of the Premier, Baldomero Espartero*), lodged, and we found nothing of greater urgency than to

send Manuel, our domestic servant, *aficionado* and consummate tauromachian, to obtain tickets for the next bullfight.

Parts VII to IX - Madrid

Contents

Part VII: The Bullfight – Sevilla the Picador – The Estocada (Death-Blow) known as *Vuela Pies*

Nonetheless, we still had to wait two days for the bullfight. Never did the hours seem longer to me, and to overcome my impatience I reread, more than ten times, the poster, copies of which were affixed to the corners of the main streets; this poster promised mountains and marvels: eight bulls from the most famous pastures; Sevilla and Antonio Rodriguez, as *picadors*; Juan Pastor, also called *el Barbero*, and Arjona Guillen, known as *Cúchares*, as *espadas*; all with a notice prohibiting the audience from throwing orange peel into the arena, or other projectiles capable of harming the bullfighters.

In Spain, the word *matador*, to designate the one who kills the bull, is rarely employed; he is termed the *espada* (sword), which is a nobler name possessing greater character; nor does one say *toreador*, but rather *torero*. I am giving, in passing, this useful information to those who seek to add local colour to their romances and comic-operas. Our bullfight was a *media corrida*, a half-*corrida*, since in the past there used to be two, every Monday, one in the morning, the other at five in the afternoon, which made up the entire *corrida* (*coursing of the bulls*): the afternoon corrida alone is still performed.

It has been said, and repeated, on all sides, that the taste for the bullfight is waning in Spain, and that civilisation will soon render such events obsolete; if so, it will nonetheless be mourned, as the bullfight is one of the greatest spectacles that can be imagined; but that day has not yet arrived, and sensitive writers who declare the opposite only need to visit the Puerto de Alcalá on a Monday, between four and five o'clock, to convince themselves that the taste for this *savage* entertainment is not about to be lost as yet.

Monday, the day of the bulls, *dia de toros*, is a public holiday; no one remains at work, the whole town is in uproar; those who have not yet purchased a seat stride towards the Calle de Carretas, where the ticket office is located, in the hope of securing a vacant place; since, in an arrangement that cannot be praised enough, the enormous amphitheatre is divided into stalls and numbered throughout, a practice that should be imitated in the theatres of France. Calle de Alcalá, which is the artery into which the city's populous streets discharge, is filled by pedestrians, horse-riders and carriages; it is for this solemn ritual that the most baroque and extravagant *calessines* and carioles emerge from their dusty sheds, and the most fantastic teams, the most phenomenal mules, come to light. The *calessines* recall the *corricoli* (*curricles*) of Naples: large red wheels, a box without springs, decorated with more or less allegorical paintings, and lined with old damask or tired serge with fringes and frays of silk, achieving a certain *rococo* air to most entertaining effect; the driver sits on the bench, from where he can harangue, and apply his cane to, his mule at his ease, thus leaving more room for that practice. The mule is adorned with as many feathers, pompoms, tassels, fringes and bells as can be attached to the harness of any quadruped. A *calessine* usually also contains a *manola* and her female friend, with her *manolo*, without prejudice to a bunch of *muchachos* hanging from the rear. All this flies along like the wind in a tornado of screams and dust. There are also carriages drawn by four or five mules whose equivalents can only be found in the paintings of Adam Frans van der Meulen representing the conquests and hunting expeditions of Louis XIV. Every vehicle is involved, because the great thing among the *manolas*, who are the grisettes of Madrid, is to travel in a calessine to the Plaza de Toros; they pawn their mattresses to have money for the day, and, without being exactly virtuous the rest of the week, are certainly much less so on Sundays and Mondays. One also sees country-folk arriving on horseback, rifles on their saddles; others alone, or with their wives, on donkeys; all this without counting the carriages of the society people, and a crowd of honest townspeople and señoras in mantillas who hasten onwards; for here is a detachment of the National Guard advancing on horseback, trumpets to their lips, to clear the arena, and not for anything in the world would we wish to miss the emptying of the arena, and the precipitous flight of the *alguazil*, after throwing the lad in charge the key to the *toril* where the horned gladiators are imprisoned. The *toril* faces the *matadero*, where the slaughtered creatures are skinned. The bulls are brought, on the previous evening and night, to a meadow near Madrid, which is called *el arroyo*, the destination for *aficionados* on foot, a walk not without some danger; for the bulls roam freely, and their drivers have a hard time restraining them. Thence they are delivered to the *encierro* (the arena's stable), using mature oxen, accustomed to that function, mixed in with the savage herd.

The Plaza de Toros is located on the left, outside the Puerto de Alcalá which, incidentally, is a rather beautiful gate, in the style of a triumphal arch, with trophies and other heroic ornaments; the plaza is an enormous arena appearing nothing remarkable on the outside, whose walls are whitewashed; as everyone buys their ticket in advance, entry takes place without the slightest disorder. Everyone climbs to their place and seats themselves according to their number.

Here follows the interior layout. Around the arena, of truly Roman grandeur, runs a circular barrier, made of planks six-feet in length painted oxblood-red and decorated on each side, which is about two feet from the ground, with a wooden ledge, on which

the *chulos* and *banderilleros* place their feet in order to jump to the other side when they are pressed too hard by the bull. This barrier is called *las tablas*. It is pierced with four doors, serving for the entry of the bulls, the removal of carcasses, etc. Behind this barrier, there is another one, a little higher, which forms, with the first, a kind of corridor where tired *chulos* stand; the picador *sobre-saliente* (the replacement), who must always be there fully dressed and fully caparisoned in case his leader is injured or killed; the *cachatero*; and a few *aficionados* who, through sheer perseverance, manage, despite the regulations, to slip into this blissful corridor whose entrances are as much sought after in Spain as those to the backstage of the Opéra in Paris.

As the exasperated bull often penetrates the first barrier, the second is also furnished with a rope-net intended to prevent a second lunge; several carpenters equipped with axes and hammers stand ready to repair any damage that may result to the fences, so that accidents are virtually impossible. However, we saw bulls of *muchas piernas* (strong-legged), as they are technically called, penetrating the second barrier, as evidenced by an engraving from *La Tauromaquia* of Goya, the famous creator of *Los Capricos*; an engraving (*number twenty-one*) which represents the death of the mayor of Torrejón de Ardoz, miserably skewered by a rampant bull.

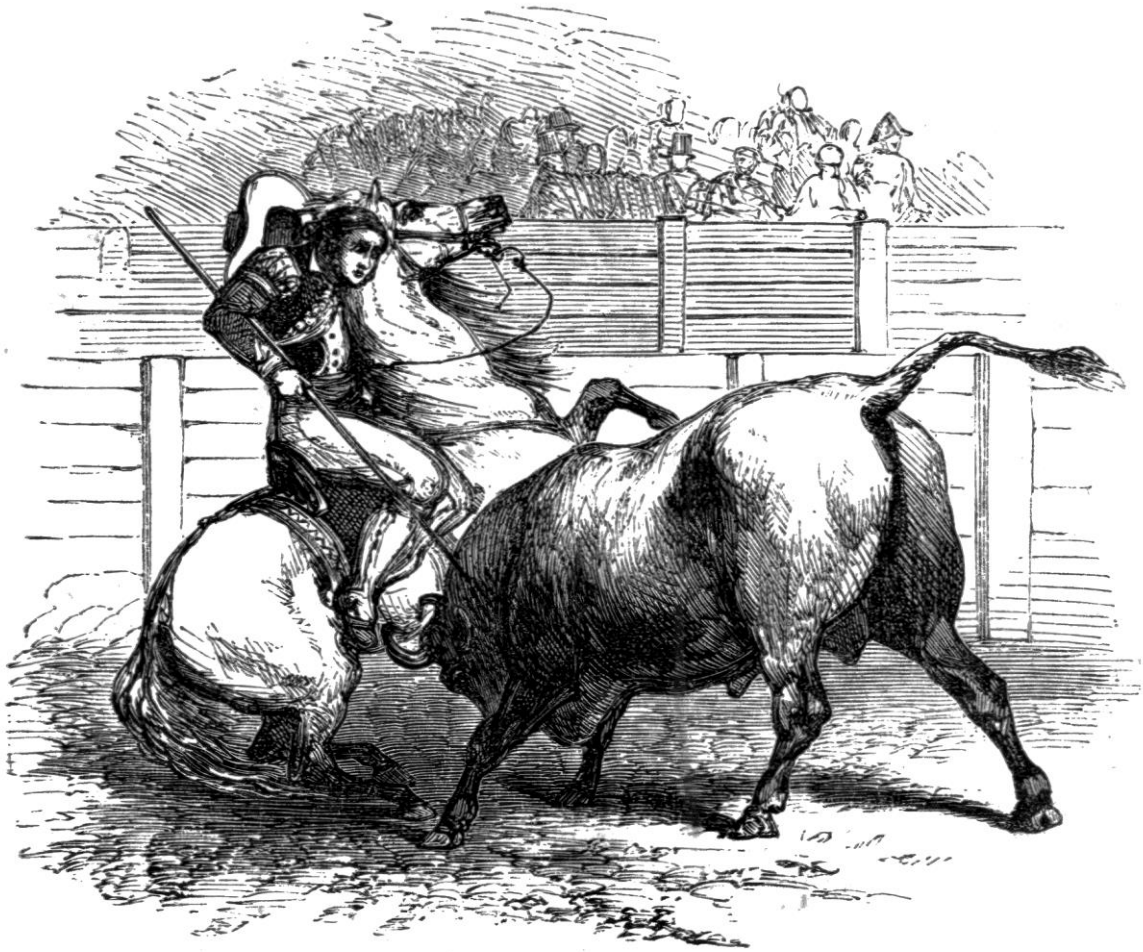
From this second enclosure rise the stands intended for the spectators: those which are near the ropes are called *barrera* places, those in the middle *tendido*, and the others which back onto the first row of *grada cubiertas*, take the name of *tabloncillos*. These stands, which recall those of the amphitheatres of Rome, are made of bluish granite, and have no other roof than the sky. Immediately after come the covered places, *gradas cubiertas*, which are divided as follows: *delantera*, the front; *centro*, the middle; and *tabloncillo*, the rear. Above, rise the lodges called *palcos*, and *palcos por asientos*, to the number of a hundred and ten. These boxes are large and can accommodate around twenty people. The *palco por asientos* offers this difference from the simple *palco*, that you occupy a single seat, like a balcony stall at the Opéra. The boxes of *la Reina Gobernadora y de la inocente Isabel* are adorned with silk draperies and hidden by curtains. Next to them is the box belonging to the *ayuntamiento* (municipality) which has charge of the place, and is obliged to resolve any difficulties that arise.

The arena, thus organised, contains twelve thousand spectators, all seated at ease and with a perfect view, something essential in a purely ocular spectacle. The immense enclosure is always full, and those who cannot get *sombra* seats (places in the shade) would rather be cooked alive on the stands in the sun than miss a bullfight. It is *de rigueur*, for people who pride themselves on elegance, to have their box at the *Taureaux*, as in Paris, a box at *Le Théâtre des Italiens*.

On emerging from the corridor to find my seat, I felt a sort of dazzled vertigo. Torrents of light flooded the arena, for the sun has a superior lustre and the advantage of not shedding oil, which gas itself will not eclipse for a long time yet. An immense murmur floated above the arena, like a mist of noise. On the sunlit side, thousands of fans and small round parasols fixed to reed-sticks throbbed and sparkled; it looked like a swarm of birds of varying colour attempting to take flight: there was not a single empty space. I assure you that it is a more than

admirable *spectacle* to view twelve thousand *spectators* in a theatre so vast that only the deity can paint its ceiling that splendid blue drawn from the urn of eternity.

The National Guards on horseback, very well mounted and very well dressed, toured the arena, preceded by two alguazils in costume, with plumes and hats in the style of Henri IV, black jerkins and capes, and riding boots, chasing before them a few stubborn *aficionados* and a few stray dogs. The arena remaining empty, the two alguazils went to seek out the *toreros*, consisting of the *picadores*, the *chulos*, the *banderilleros* and the *espada*, the main actor in the drama, who made their entrance to the sound of a fanfare. The *picadores* rode horses which had been blindfolded, as the sight of the bull could frighten them and cause a dangerous situation for them all. The *picador's* costume is very picturesque: it consists of a short jacket, which does not button, of orange, crimson, green or blue velvet, burdened with gold or silver embroidery, sequins, piping, fringes, filigree buttons and decorations of all kinds, especially on the shoulder pads where the fabric completely disappears under a luminous and phosphorescent jumble of intertwined arabesques; a waistcoat in the same style, a frilled shirt, a colourful and carelessly knotted tie, a silk belt, and tawny buffalo-skin pants padded, and lined with sheets of metal internally, like a postilion's boots, to defend the legs against blows from the bull's horns; a grey hat (*sombrero*) with an enormous brim, low in shape, embellished with an enormous tuft of favours; a large bun, or cadogan of black ribbons, which is called, I believe, a *moño*, and which ties the gathered hair behind the head, completes the adjustment. The *picador's* weapon is an iron-shod spear with a point one or two inches long; this spear is unable to cause the bull any grievous harm, but is enough to irritate and deter it. An inch of leather tailored to the picador's hand prevents the spear from slipping; the saddle is very high in front and behind, and resembles the steel-clad harness in which knights of the Middle Ages were encased for tournaments; the stirrups are made of wood and form sabots, like Turkish stirrups; a long iron spur, sharp as a dagger, arms the horseman's heel; to direct the horses, often only half-alive, no ordinary spur would be sufficient.



Sevilla the Picador

The *chulos* possess a very agile and gallant air, in their short satin breeches, green, blue or pink, embroidered with silver on all the seams, their white or flesh-coloured silk stockings, their jackets decorated with designs and motifs, their tight belts, and their hats, *monteras*, tilted coquettishly towards the ear; They bear cloth capes (*capas*) on their arm, which they unfurl, and flutter in front of the bull to irritate, dazzle, or confuse it. They are well-shaped, lean and slender young people unlike the *picadores* who are generally noted for their tall height and athletic shape: some require strength, others agility.

The *banderilleros* wear a similar costume, their specialty consisting of planting sticks equipped with iron barbs, and embellished with strips of paper, into the shoulders of the bull; these pointed darts are called *banderillas*, and are intended to revive the bull's fury, and arouse in him the degree of exasperation needed for him to present himself correctly to the *matador*'s sword. The banderillero must set two *banderillas* in place at a time, and to do this must pass both of his arms between the horns of the bull, a delicate operation during which any distraction might prove dangerous.

The *espada* differs from the *banderilleros* only in his richer, more decorative costume, sometimes of purple silk, a colour particularly displeasing to the bull. His weapons are a long sword with a hilt in the form of a cross, and a piece of scarlet cloth sewn onto a transverse rod; the technical name for this kind of fluttering shield is a *muleta*.

Here then you have the theatre and the actors; we will now display them in action.

The *picadores* escorted by the *chulos* first salute the box belonging to the *ayuntamiento* from which the keys of the *toril* are thrown down to them; the keys are collected, and handed to the alguazil, who takes them to the lad appointed for the fight, who races away at full speed; all this amid the jeers and cries of the crowd, since the alguazils, like all the representatives of government, are hardly more popular in Spain than are the gendarmes and city officials among us. Meanwhile, the two *picadores* place themselves to the left of the gates of the *toril* which faces the queen's box, since the exit of the bull is one of the most interesting features of the bullfight; they are posted at a short distance from each other, leaning against the *tablas*, secure in their saddles, spears in hand, and prepared to receive the savage beast in a most valiant manner; the *chulos* and *banderilleros* remain at a distance or scatter themselves about the arena.

All these preparations, which take longer to describe than in reality, ignite one's interest to the highest degree. All eyes are fixed anxiously on the fatal door, and among these twelve thousand glances there is not one turned in any other direction. The most beautiful woman on earth would scarcely receive a glance at that moment.

I admit that, for my part, my heart was gripped as if by an invisible hand; my temples were moist, and hot and cold sweats ran down my back. It was one of the strongest emotions I have ever felt.

A loud fanfare sounded, the two red doors were released with a crash, and the bull rushed into the arena amidst an immense cry from the audience.

The bull was a superb animal, almost completely black and gleaming, with an enormous dewlap, a square muzzle, sharp and polished crescent-shaped horns, slender legs, and a tail constantly in motion, bearing between his shoulders a tuft of colourful ribbons of his *Ganaderia* (*cattle-ranch*), fixed into the hide with a needle. He stopped for a second, sniffed the air two or three times, dazzled by the broad daylight, and astounded at the tumult; then, spotting the first *picador*, he rushed towards him at a gallop with furious momentum.

Sevilla, was the *picador* so attacked. I cannot resist the pleasure of describing here the renowned Sevilla, truly the ideal of his kind. Imagine a man about thirty years old, with a grand manner and fine figure, robust as a Hercules, swarthy as a mulatto, with superb eyes and a physiognomy like one of Titian's Caesars; the expression of jovial and disdainful serenity which reigned in his features and his posture, in truth, possessed something heroic. On that day, he was wearing an orange jacket embroidered and interlaced with silver, which remains inscribed in my memory in indelible detail: he lowered the point of his spear, stood stock still, and withstood the shock of the bull so impressively, that the savage beast staggered, and passed by, bearing a wound which soon streaked his black hide with crimson; he halted, seeming

uncertain, for a few moments, then rushed with added rage upon the second *picador* posted some distance away.

Antonio Rodriguez dealt the bull a good blow of the spear, which opened a second wound immediately adjoining the first, since one must only stab at the shoulder; but the bull returned on him headlong and plunged its entire horn into the horse's belly. The *chulos* came running, shaking their capes, and the foolish beast, attracted and distracted by this new bait, began to chase them at full speed; but the *chulos*, setting foot on the ledge of which we have spoken, jumped lightly over the barrier, leaving the animal most surprised at their vanishing.

The blow from the bull's horn had split the horse's belly, so that its entrails spilled out and flowed almost to the ground; I thought the *picador* would retire to mount another: not in the least; he touched the animal's ear to see if the blow was likely to be fatal. The horse was only unseamed; the wound, though dreadful to look on, could be healed; they replaced the intestines in the horse's belly, added two or three stitches, and the poor creature was fit for another bout. The rider gave him the spur, and, after a brief gallop, placed himself further away.

The bull began to comprehend that little more than a spear thrust was to be gained from the *picadores*, and felt the desire to return to his pasture. Instead of charging without hesitation, he returned, after a few paces, to his *querencia* with an air of imperturbable obstinacy; the *querencia*, in terms of the art of the bullfight, is any corner of the place that the bull chooses to rest in, and to which he always returns after having attempted the *cogida*; a goring by the bull is termed the *cogida*, while the *torero's* pass is termed the *suerte*, or *diestro*.

A swarm of *chulos* came, waving brightly coloured *capas* before the bull's gaze; one of them pushed his insolence so far as to cover the bull's head with his rolled-up cape, which thus resembled the sign outside *Le Bœuf à la Mode*, which everyone in Paris must have noted. The furious bull rid himself of this untimely ornament as best he could, and sent the innocent fabric flying into the air, trampling it in rage when it fell to the ground. Taking advantage of his increased wrath, a *chulo* began to taunt him and draw him towards the *picadores*; finding himself face to face with his enemies, the bull hesitated, then, choosing his target, rushed on Sevilla with so much force that the horse rolled over with all four shoes in the air, for Sevilla's arm proved a buttress of bronze that nothing could move. Sevilla fell beneath the horse, which is for the best, since the man is protected from a blow from the bull's horn, and the body of his mount serves as a shield. The *chulos* intervened, and the horse was left with only a cut to the thigh. Sevilla was helped to his feet, and returned to the saddle with perfect tranquility. The horse ridden by Antonio Rodriguez, the other picador, was less fortunate: it received such a violent blow in the chest that the horn sank in up to the hilt, and vanished entirely within the wound. While the bull tried to free his head from the horse's body, Antonio clung with his hands to the edge of the *tablas* which he traversed with the help of the *chulos*, since the *picadores*, once unhorsed, weighed down by the steel fitments of their boots, can no more move than could Medieval knights encased in their armour.

The poor horse, left to his own devices, began to stagger across the arena, as if he were drunk, entangling his feet in his bowels; streams of black blood gushed impetuously from his wound, and streaked the sand with intermittent zigzags which betrayed the unevenness of his gait; finally, he approached, and collapsed close to, the *tablas*. He raised his head two or three

times, rolling one already glazed blue eye, drawing back his lips whitened with foam, which revealed his bony teeth; his tail beat weakly on the earth; his hind feet moved convulsively and launched a last kick, as if he wanted to break the dense skull of death with his hard hoof. His agony was barely over when the *muchachos* on duty, seeing the bull was occupied elsewhere, ran to remove the saddle and bridle. The horse remained lying on his side, disembowelled, and forming a dark silhouette on the sand. He was so thin, so flattened, that one might have taken him for a cut-out made of black paper. I had already noted, at Montfaucon, what strangely fantastic forms horses take in death: without doubt, the corpse of such a creature is the saddest one can view. The head, so nobly and purely structured, now gripped and laid flat by the dreadful hand of nothingness, seems as if once inhabited by human thought; the dishevelled mane, the outspread tail, have something picturesque and poetic about them. A dead horse is a corpse; any other animal whose life is spent merely a carcase.

I emphasise the death of the horse, because it delivered the most painful sensation I experienced while watching the bullfight. It was not, however, the only victim: fourteen horses occupied the arena that day; a single bull killed five of them.

The *picador* returned with a fresh horse, and there were several more or less successful exchanges. But the bull began to tire and his fury to subside; the *banderilleros* arrived with their barbed darts lined with paper, and soon the bull's neck was adorned with a collar of these, which the efforts he made to free himself fixed even more immovably. A little *banderillero*, named Majaron, thrust in his darts with great delight and audacity, and sometimes even beat an entrechat with his feet before retiring; he was therefore greatly applauded. When the bull had seven or eight *banderillas* trailing from him, whose iron barbs tore his hide and whose paper rustled in his ears, he began to run here and there, bellowing frightfully. His black muzzle was white with foam, and, in the intoxication of his rage, he dealt such harsh blows with his horn against one of the doors that he sent it flying from its hinges. The carpenters, who followed his movements with their gaze, immediately replaced it; a *chulo* attracted the bull from another direction, and was pursued so vigorously that he barely had time to leap the barrier. The bull, exasperated and enraged, made a prodigious effort and rode over the *tablas*. Those who found themselves in the corridor leapt about where they were with marvellous agility, and the bull was returned to the arena through another door, driven back with canes and hats by the spectators in the front row.

The *picadores* withdrew, leaving the field open to the *espada*, Juan Pastor (*'El Barbero'*), who went to salute the box belonging to the *ayuntamiento*, and ask permission to kill the bull; permission being granted, he threw his hat, his *montera*, in the air, as if to show that he was going to exert his all, and marched towards the bull with a deliberate step, concealing his sword beneath the red folds of his *muleta*.

The *espada* fluttered the scarlet cloth, towards which the bull was blindly rushing, several times; a slight movement of his body was enough for him to avoid the momentum of the fierce beast, which soon returned to the charge, violently butting its head against the light fabric which it moved without being able to pierce it. The favourable moment having arrived, the *espada* placed himself straight in front of the bull, waving his *muleta* with his left hand, and holding his sword horizontally, the point at the height of the animal's horns; it is difficult

to convey in words the degree of interest, full of anguish, the frenetic attention which this situation arouses, one worth all of Shakespeare's dramas; in a few moments, one of the two actors will be killed. Will it be the man, or the bull? They are both there, face to face, alone; the man has no defensive armour; he is dressed as if for a ball, in pumps and silk stockings; a woman's pin would pierce his satin jacket; he possesses a scrap of cloth, a frail sword, that is all. In this duel, the bull has all the material advantage: he has two dreadful horns, sharp as daggers, immense power when in motion, the anger of a brute unaware of danger; yet the man has his sword, and his courage, and twelve thousand eyes fixed on him; and beautiful young women will soon applaud him, with the tips of their white fingers!

The *muleta was* moved aside, leaving the *matador*'s chest exposed; the bull's horns were only an inch from his chest; I thought him lost! A flash of silver passed, with the rapidity of thought, between the twin crescents; the bull fell to his knees uttering a bellow of pain, with the hilt of the sword between his shoulders, like Saint Hubert's stag bearing a crucifix between the base of its antlers as represented in that marvellous engraving by Albrecht Durer.

Thunderous applause echoed throughout the amphitheatre; the *palcos* of the nobility, the *gradas cubiertas* of the bourgeoisie, the *tendido* of the *manolos* and *manolas*, erupted, and vociferated, with all the ardour and exuberance of the south: *Bueno! Bueno! Viva El Barbero! Viva!!!*

The blow that the *espada* had just delivered is, in fact, highly esteemed and is called the *estocada a vuela piés*: the bull dies without losing a drop of blood, which is the height of elegance, and falling to his knees seems to recognise the superiority of his opponent. The *aficionados* (dilettanti) claim that the inventor of this move was Joaquín Rodríguez Costillares, a famous bullfighter of the eighteenth century.

If the bull does not die instantly, one sees a small mysterious fellow, dressed in black, leap the barrier; one who has taken no part in the preceding events: he is the *cachetero*. He advances in a furtive manner, observes the bull's final convulsions, determines if he is still capable of rising, which is sometimes the case, and treacherously thrusts into him, from behind, a cylindrical dagger tipped with a lance-head, which severs the spinal cord, and ends the bull's life with the speed of lightning; the correct placement is behind the head a few inches from the base of the horns.

Military music announced the death of the bull; one of the doors opened, and four mules magnificently harnessed, with plumes, bells, woollen tassels, and small yellow and red flags, in the colours of Spain, trotted into the arena. This team is equipped to remove the carcasses which are attached to the end of a rope fitted with a grappling-iron. First the horses were dragged away, then the bull. Those four brightly-adorned and sonorous mules which drew over the sand, at a furious speed, all those corpses which had themselves been racing about so furiously a moment ago, had a strange wild appearance, which somewhat concealed the lugubrious nature of their function; a lad arrived with a basket of earth which he sprinkled on the pools of blood in which the bullfighters' feet might slip. The *picadores* resumed their places next to the door, the orchestra played a fanfare, and another bull rushed into the arena; because this show has no interval, nothing delays it, not even the death of a *torero*. As I have said, their understudies are already there fully dressed and armed in case of accident. It is not my

intent to recount, successively, the death of the eight bulls which were sacrificed that day; but I will mention a few noteworthy variants and incidents.

The bulls are not always so ferocious; some are even quite gentle and ask nothing better than to lie down quietly in the shade. One perceives, from their honest and good-natured appearance, that they prefer their pasture to the arena: they turn their backs on the *picadores* and, most phlegmatically, allow the *chulos* to shake capes of all colours in front of their noses; the *banderillas* are not even enough to rouse them from their apathy; it is therefore necessary to resort to violent means, to *banderillas de fuego*: these are a kind of firework-dart, which flare up a few minutes after being planted in the shoulders of the *cobarde* (cowardly) creature, and burst forth in energetic sparks and detonations . The bull, by this ingenious invention, is therefore at the same time pricked, burned, and stunned: even if he is the most *aplomado* (leaden) of bulls, he cannot but choose to be enraged. He indulges in a host of extravagant antics, which one would not credit such a heavy beast of being capable; he roars, he foams, and twists in all directions to free himself from the ill-placed fireworks that fry his ears and scorch his hide.

The *banderillas de fuego* are only employed, however, in the last extremity; it is a mark of dishonour, if the bullfighters are obliged to resort to them; but when the alcalde takes too long to wave his handkerchief as a sign of his consent, there is such a commotion that he is forced to yield. There are unimaginably loud cries and vociferations, howls, and the stamping of feet. Some shout for the *Banderillas de fuego!* Others for the *Perros! Perros!* (the dogs). They heap insults on the bull; he is called a brigand, an assassin, a thief; they offer him a place in the shade, they make him the butt of a thousand jests, often very witty. Soon a chorus of canes, beaten against the woodwork, join the vociferations which have become insufficient. The planks of the *palcos* creak and split, and the paint from the ceilings descends in whitish films like snow mingled with dust. The audience's exasperation rises to its peak: *Fuego al alcalde! Perros al alcalde!* (fire and dogs take the alcalde)! shout the enraged crowd, shaking their fists at the box reserved for the ayuntamiento. At last, the blessed permission is granted, and calm restored. In these kinds of *shouting-matches*, pardon the term, since I can't think of a better one, quite clever jokes are sometimes made. I will report a quite brief and vivid one: a *picador*, magnificently dressed in a brand-new outfit, was resting on his horse without doing anything, and at a place in the arena where he was in no danger. *Pintura! Pintura!* cried those members of the crowd who noticed his lack of movement – *A painting! A painting!*

Often the bull is so cowardly that even the *banderillas de fuego* are insufficient. He returns to his *querencia* and refuses to engage. The cries of: *Perros! Perros!* start up again. Then, after a sign from the alcalde, *messieurs les chiens* are introduced. They are admirable creatures, of an extraordinary purity of breed, and great beauty; they rush straight at the bull, who tosses half a dozen into the air, but who fails to prevent one or two of the strongest and bravest dogs from ending up by grabbing his ear. Once they have taken hold, they are like leeches; one could drag them backwards without making them let go. The bull shakes his head, knocks them against the barriers: nothing helps. When this has lasted for some time, the *espada*, or the *cachatero*, thrusts a sword into the side of the victim, who staggers, bends his knees and falls to the ground, where he is then done to death. They also, on occasion, employ a kind of

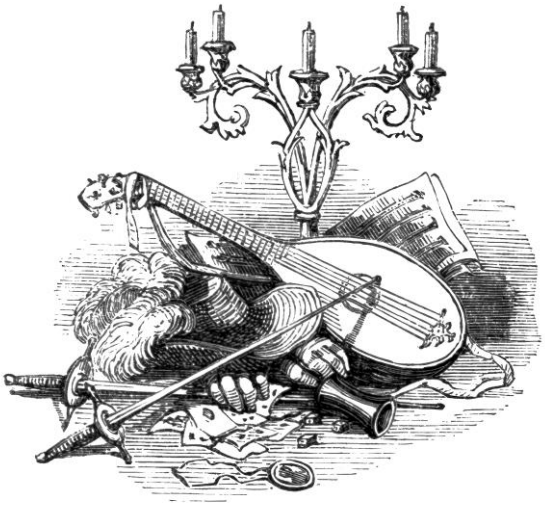
instrument called a *media luna* (half-moon), which severs his hind hocks and renders him incapable of any resistance; then it is no longer a fight, but a disgusting act of butchery. It often happens that the matador's blow misses its target: the sword strikes a bone and recoils, or it enters the throat and makes the bull vomit blood in large quantities, which is a grave fault according to the laws of *tauromaquia*. If at the second blow the beast is not despatched, boos, whistles and insults, are heaped on the *espada*, for the Spanish public is an impartial one; it applauds the bull and the man according to their respective merits. If the bull disembowels a horse and fells a man: *Bravo toro!* if it is the man who wounds the bull: *Bravo torero!* but it refuses to tolerate cowardice either in man or beast. One poor devil, who did not dare dart the *banderillas* into an extremely ferocious bull, excited such tumult that the alcalde was forced to promise to have the man imprisoned so that order could be re-established.

During this same bullfight, Sevilla, who is an admirable picador, was greatly applauded for the following action: a bull of extraordinary strength caught his horse beneath the belly, and, raising its horns, lifted him completely from the ground. Sevilla, in this perilous position, scarcely wavered in his saddle, kept his feet in the stirrups, and managed his horse so well that it fell back onto all four feet.

The bullfight had been excellent: eight bulls, and fourteen horses killed, one *chulo* slightly injured; we could not have wished for anything better. Each session must bring in twenty or twenty-five thousand francs; the amount is granted by the queen to the main hospital, where injured *toreros* find all imaginable manner of help; a priest and a doctor, wait in a room in the Plaza de Toros, ready to administer, one, remedy to the soul, the other, remedy to the body; I believe a Mass used to be said, and still is, for them during the bullfight. You can see that, clearly, nothing is neglected, and that the impresarios are people of foresight. When the last bull has been slain, all the folk leap into the arena to view it more closely, and the spectators then retire, discussing the merits of the different *suertes* or *cogidas* which most impressed them. And the women, you will ask me, what of them? Is that not one of the first questions asked of the traveller? I confess I know nothing about it. I seem to recall, vaguely, that there were some very pretty ones not far from me, but cannot affirm it with any degree of certainty.

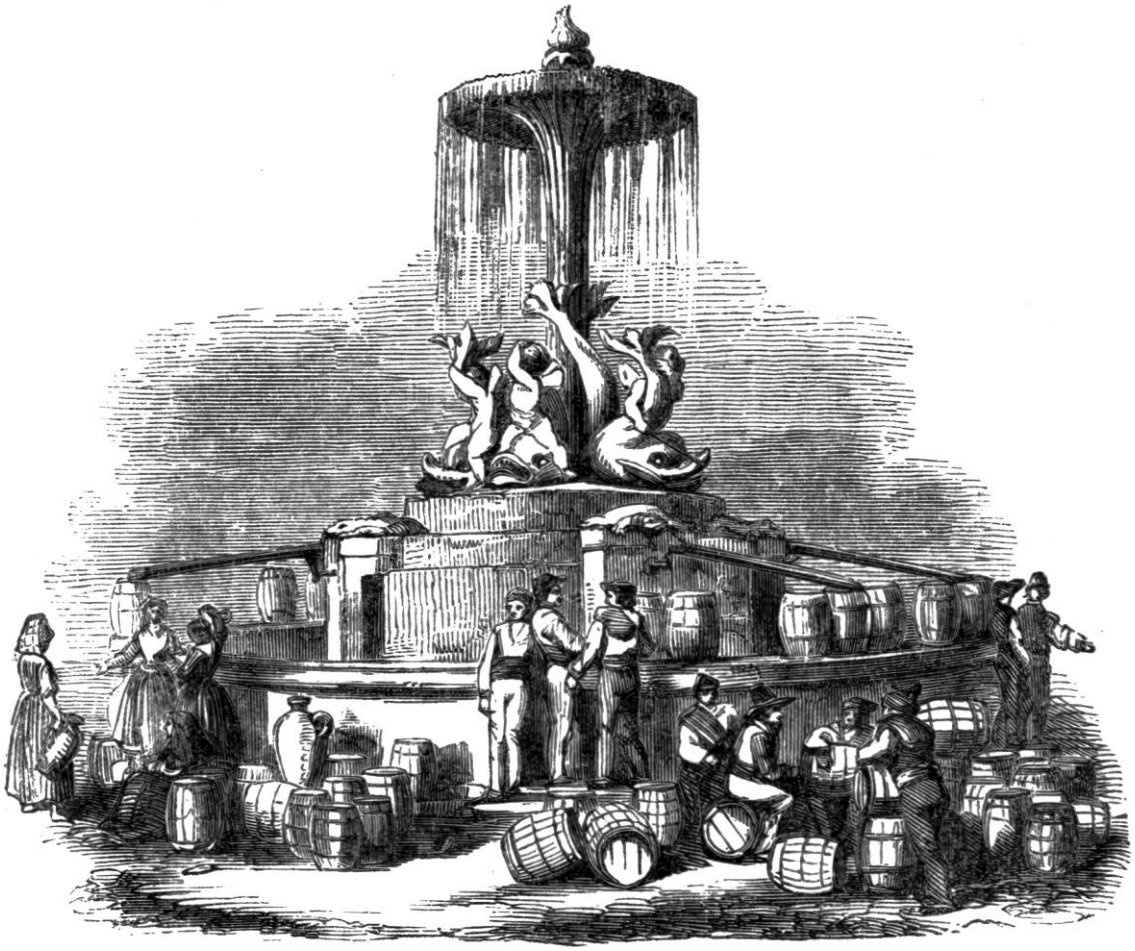
Let us visit the Prado, to clarify this important point.

Part VIII: The Prado – The Mantilla and the Fan – The Spanish Type – Water-Sellers; The Cafés of Madrid – Newspapers – The Politics of the Puerta de Sol – The Post-Office – The Houses of Madrid – Evening Gatherings (*Tertulias*) – Spanish Society – The Prince's Theatre – The Queen's Palace, that of the National Assembly, and the Monument Commemorating the Second of May 1808 – The Armoury – The Parque de Buen Retiro – Goya



When one speaks of Madrid, the first two ideas that the name awakens in the imagination are the Prado and the Puerta del Sol: since we have the inclination to do so, let us go to the Prado; at the hour when the promenade begins. The Prado, comprising several alleys and side-alleys, with a roadway in the middle for vehicles, is shaded by tall and stocky trees, the bases of which bathe in a narrow pool bordered by bricks, to which channels bring water at specific hours; without this precaution they would soon be consumed by dust and scorched by the sun. The promenade begins at the monastery of Atocha, passes in front of the gate of that name, then the Alcala Gate, and ends at the Recoletos Gate. But the fashionable world haunts the space circumscribed by the fountain of Cybele and that of Neptune, from the Alcala Gate to the Carrera de San Jerónimo. The large space there is called *the salon*, lined with chairs, like the main avenue of the Tuileries; on the side of the living room, there is a side alley which bears the name *Paris*; it is the city's Boulevard de Gand (*now the Boulevard des Italiens*), and Madrid's fashionable meeting-place; and, as the imagination of fashionable people does not exactly chime with the picturesque, they have chosen the dustiest, least shaded, least convenient place on the whole promenade. The crowd is so large in this narrow space, squeezed between the *salon* and the roadway, that it is often difficult to put one's hand in one's pocket to extract a handkerchief; you have to conform, and follow the line like a queue at the theatre (in the days when theatres saw queues). The only thing that could have led to this place being selected is that one can see and greet people in their carriages traversing the roadway (it is always honourable for a pedestrian to salute a carriage). The equipages are less than brilliant; most of them are dragged by mules whose blackish coats, full bellies, and pointed ears have a most unsightly effect; they look like mourning carriages following a hearse: the carriage of the queen herself is quite simple and bourgeois. An Englishman with pretensions of being a millionaire would certainly disdain it; no doubt, there are exceptions, but they are rare. What does charm the eye are those fine Andalusian saddle-horses, seated on which the most fashionable people of Madrid parade about. It is impossible to view anything more elegant, nobler, or more graceful than an Andalusian stallion with his beautiful erect mane, long, well-furnished tail which descends to the ground, harness decorated with red tufts, arched head, glowing eyes, and neck bulging like a pigeon's throat. I saw one ridden by a woman, as pink

in colour (the horse, not the woman) as a Bengal rose glazed with silver, and of marvellous beauty. How great the difference between these noble beasts which have retained their beautiful primitive form, and those locomotive ‘machines’ of muscle and bone which we call English coursers; and which feature no more of the equine than four legs and a backbone to support a jockey!



Fountain at Madrid

The spectacle embodied by the Prado is truly one of the liveliest that can be seen, and it is one of the most beautiful promenades in the world, not regarding its location which is quite ordinary, despite all the attempts that Charles III of Spain made to correct that defect, but because of the astonishing crowds that attend there every evening, from half past seven to ten o’clock.

One sees very few women’s hats along the Prado; with the exception of a few sulphur-yellow pancakes, which must once have adorned educated donkeys, there are only mantillas. The Spanish mantilla is therefore a reality; I had thought it only existed in the romances of

Monsieur Crevel de Charlemagne: it is woven of black or white lace, more often black, and is placed over the back of the head on top of the comb; a few flowers set on the temples complete this hairstyle which is the most charming imaginable. With a mantilla, a woman would need to be as ugly as the three theological virtues not to appear pretty; sadly, this is the only part of the Spanish costume that has been retained: the rest is *à la francaise*. The last folds of the mantilla rest on a shawl, an odious shawl, and the shawl itself is accompanied by a dress of ordinary material, which in no way resembles a basquin. I cannot help being astonished at such blindness, and I do not understand why women, ordinarily clairvoyant as regards their beauty, do not realise that this, their supreme effort at elegance, exhibits merely provincial pretension, with mediocre results. The ancient native costume is so perfectly suited to the beauty, proportions, and manners of Spanish women that it is surely the only garb possible. The fan somewhat corrects this pretension to *Parisianism*. A woman without a fan is something I have not yet seen in this happy country; I saw women with satin shoes and no stockings, but they carried a fan; the fan accompanies them everywhere, even to church where you meet groups of women of all ages, kneeling, or squatting on their heels, who pray and fan themselves with fervour, interspersing everything with Spanish signs of the cross, which are much more complicated than ours, and which they execute with a precision and speed worthy of Prussian soldiers. Manoeuvring the fan, is an art completely unknown in France. The Spanish excel at it; the fan opens, closes, turns in their fingers, so quickly, so lightly, that a conjurer could do no better. Some elegant folk create collections of fans at great cost; we saw one that contained more than a hundred different styles; from every country and every era: ivory, tortoiseshell, sandalwood, sequined fans, fans painted in gouache from the days of Louis XIV and Louis XV, rice-paper fans from Japan and China, no style was lacking; several were studded with rubies, diamonds and other precious stones: it is a luxury in good taste, and a charming hobby for a pretty woman. The fans as they open and close produce a little whistling sound which, repeated more than a thousand times a minute, projects its note through the confused noise which enwraps the promenade, and contains something alien to a French ear. When a woman meets a person she knows, she grants them a little wave of the fan, and emits in passing the word *agur* (*good evening*) which is pronounced *abour*. Now let me address the subject of Spanish beauty.

Ladies on the Prado

What is understood in France as the Spanish type does not exist in Spain, or at least I have not yet encountered it. We usually imagine, when we say the words señora and mantilla, an elongated and pale oval face, large black eyes surmounted by velvety eyebrows, a thin, slightly-arched nose, a pomegranate-red mouth, and, above all, a warm and golden tone justifying the Romantic phrase: *She is yellow as an orange*. That is the Arab or Moorish type, not the Spanish type. The Madridleñas are charming in the full sense of the word: out of every four there are always three pretty ones; but they in no way correspond to the idea we have of them. They are small, neat, well turned-out, with slim feet, arched waists, and breasts rich in contour; but they have extremely white skin, delicate and lined features, and heart-shaped mouths, and exactly mimic certain Regency portraits. Many have light brown hair, and you cannot take two turns on the Prado without meeting seven or eight blondes of all shades, from ash-blond to a red as vehement as the red beard of Charles V. It is an error to believe that there are no blondes in Spain. Blue eyes abound there, but are not as greatly esteemed as black ones.

At first I had some difficulty accustoming myself to viewing women with low necklines as if for a ball, with bare arms, satin shoes on their feet, flowers on their heads, and fans in their hands, walking alone in a public place, because there one does not offer a woman one's arm, unless one is her husband or a close relative: one must be content to walk beside them, at least

as long as it is daylight, though after dark they are less rigorous about this etiquette, especially with foreigners who are unused to it.

We have heard great praise bestowed on the *manolas* of Madrid: the manola is a type that has vanished like the Parisian grisette, and the trasteverine of Rome; she still exists, but stripped of her primitive character; she no longer displays so bold and picturesque a costume; ignoble Indian cotton has replaced those skirts in dazzling colours embroidered with exorbitant motifs; the frightful leather shoe has displaced the satin slipper, and, dreadful to think of, the dress has lengthened by a good two finger-widths. In the past they relieved the drab appearance of the Prado with their lively looks and singular costume: today it is difficult to distinguish them from petty-bourgeois women and tradesmen's wives. I searched for a sign of the *purebred* manola in every corner of Madrid, at the bullfight, at the Jardin de las Delicias, at the Nuevo Recreo, at the feast of Saint Anthony, and never came across a perfect example. Once, while walking through the Rastro quarter, the Temple district of Madrid, and having passed a large number of beggars who were lying asleep on the ground clothed in dreadful rags, I found myself in a small deserted alley, and there I saw, for the first and last time, the sought-after manola. She was a tall, well-built girl, of about twenty-four years old, the highest age at which girls may still be termed *manolas* or grisettes. She had a dark complexion, a strong, sad look, a somewhat coarse mouth, and something African in the lines of her face. An enormous braid of hair, blue by dint of being almost black, braided like the rushes of a basket, coiled around her head and attached itself to a large tortoiseshell comb; clusters of coral hung from her ears; her tawny neck was adorned with a necklace of the same material; a black velvet mantilla framed her head and shoulders; her dress, as short as that of the Swiss women of the Canton of Berne, was made of embroidered cloth, and revealed thin, sinewy legs enclosed in well-made black silk stockings; her shoes were satin, in the traditional fashion; a red fan trembled like a cinnabar butterfly between fingers laden with silver rings. The last of the manolas turned the corner of the alley, and vanished before my eyes, amazed at having seen, if only the once, an Opéra character in a Henri Duponchel costume, alive and walking about the real world! I also saw at the Prado some *pasiegas* from Santander in their national costume; these *pasiegas* are reputed to be the best nursemaids in Spain, and their affection towards children is as proverbial as the probity of Auvergnats in France; they have a skirt of red cloth with large pleats, bordered with a wide braid, a black velvet corset also braided with gold, and for hairstyle a madras variegated with dazzling colours, the whole accompanied by jewellery, silver, and other native coquetries. These women are very beautiful, possessing a most striking air of strength and grandeur. The habit of rocking children in their arms gives them an upright, arched attitude which encourages chest development. Viewing a pasiega in costume is a species of luxury comparable to having a klepht ride behind your carriage.

As yet I have said nothing regarding the male mode of dress: consult the fashion plates published six months ago, in some tailor's shop, or reading room, and you will gain a perfect idea. The thought of Paris occupies everyone, and I remember seeing on a shoe-shiner's stall: 'Boots polished here in the Parisian style (*estilo*)' Paul Gavarni's delightful designs are the modest aim of the modern hidalgo: ignorant of the fact that only the finest Parisian dandies can achieve it. However, to do the men justice, we must say that they are far better dressed than the women: they are as varnished, as white-gloved as possible. Their clothes are correct, and their

trousers commendable; but the tie is not of the same excellence, and the waistcoat, the only part of the modern costume where fantasy can be displayed, is not always in impeccable taste.

There is a trade in Madrid that we lack the idea of in Paris: that of the retail water-seller. His 'shop' consists of a *cántaro* (*pitcher*) of white clay, a small basket, woven from rushes or made of tin, which contains two or three glasses, a few *azucarillos* (sticks of caramelized and porous sugar), and sometimes a couple of oranges or lemons; others have small barrels surrounded by foliage which they carry on their backs; some, along the Prado for example, even have illuminated counters topped with yellow-copper emblems and flags that are in no way inferior to the magnificence of the coco-sellers of Paris (*coco being a herbal tea made of liquorice and lemon water*). These water-sellers are usually young Galician *muchachos* in tobacco-coloured jackets, and short trousers, with black gaiters, and a pointed hat; there are also a few Valencianos with their white canvas breeches, their cloth cape worn over the shoulder, their tanned legs and their *alpargatas* (*sandals*) edged with blue. A few women and little girls, in insignificant costumes, also sell water. They are called, according to their sex, *aguadores* or *aguadoras*; from every corner of the city one can hear their high-pitched cries, modulated in all tones, and varied in a hundred thousand ways: *Agua, agua, quien quiere agua? Agua helada, fresquita como la nieve!* This lasts from five in the morning till ten in the evening; These same cries inspired Breton de Los Herreros, an esteemed poet of Madrid, to write a song called *La Aguadora,* which gained success throughout Spain. The lack of water in Madrid is truly an extraordinary thing: all the output from the springs, all the snow from the mountains of Guadarrama, fails to suffice. There are many pleasantries spoken about the poor Manzanarès, and its naiad's dry urn; I would like to see the appearance of the river in any other city consumed by such thirst. The Manzanarès is drunk from at source; the aguadores anxiously look for the least sign of water, the slightest humidity, to appear between its dry banks, and carry it away in their *cantaros* and siphons; the laundresses wash clothes with sand, and even in the midst of its river-bed a Muslim would lack the means to perform his ablutions. No doubt you remember that delightful article by Joseph Méry on the lack of water in Marseille, multiply it sixfold and you will have but a slight idea of Madrid's thirst. A glass of water sells for a *cuarto* (a few sous); what Madrid needs most, after water, is a coal to light its cigarettes; the cry: *Fuego, fuego*, is heard on all sides and mingles incessantly with the cry of: *Agua, agua*. The struggle between the two elements is fierce, it being a question of which can make the greater noise: the fire, more inextinguishable than that of the Roman goddess Vesta, is carried by young people in small cups, full of coals and fine ash, equipped with a handle so as not to burn the fingers.

Now it is half-past nine, the Prado's population is beginning to disperse, and the crowd are heading towards the cafés and *botillerias* (*refreshment places*) which line the long Calle de Alcalá and the surrounding streets.

The cafés of Madrid seem to us, who are accustomed to the dazzling and magical luxury of the cafés of Paris, to be, in truth, drinking dens of the lowest order; the manner in which they are decorated is reminiscent of those booths in which bearded women and live mermaids are shown; yet this lack of luxury is more than compensated for by the excellence and variety of the refreshments served there. It must be admitted that Paris, so superior in everything, is

behind in this respect: the art of the café-owner here is still in its infancy. The most famous cafés are *La Bolsa*, on the corner of Calle de Carretas; *Nuevo*, where the *exaltados* (*radicals*) meet; the café... (I forget the name), a customary gathering-place for people who belong to moderate opinion, whom they term *cangrejos*, that is to say crabs; and *Levante*, close to the Puerta del Sol; which is not to say that others are inferior; merely that these are the most frequented. And let us not forget the *Café del Principe*, next to the theatre of that name, a common meeting-place for artists and writers.

We will enter the Café de la Bolsa, if you wish, which is decorated with small mirrors cut in intaglio beneath, so as to form designs, as we see in certain pieces of German glassware: here the menu consists of *bebidas heladas*, *sorbetes* and *quesitos*. The *bebida helada* (frozen drink) is contained in glasses that can be distinguished as *grande* or *chico* (large or small), and a wide variety is offered; there is the *bebida of naranja* (orange), of *limon* (lemon), of *fresa* (strawberry), and of *guindas* (cherries), which are also as superior to those awful jugs of sour redcurrant and citric acid that they are not ashamed to serve you in Paris, in the most splendid of cafés, as genuine sherry is to authentic wine from Brie: the *bebida* is a kind of liquid ice, a snowy puree with the most exquisite taste. The *bebida de almendra blanca* (white almonds) is a delicious drink, unknown in France where we swallow, under the pretext of sipping barley-syrup, I don't know what abominable medicinal mixtures; it is also offered as iced milk, half strawberry or cherry, which, while your body is boiling in the torrid zone, allows your throat to enjoy all the frost and snow of Greenland. During the day, before the iced drinks are available, there is *agraz*, a type of drink made from green grapes and contained in bottles with oversized necks; the slightly tangy taste of *agraz* is most pleasant; you can also drink a bottle of *cerveza de Santa Barbara con limon*; but this requires a degree of preparation: first a bowl and a large spoon are brought, like that with which punch is stirred, then a waiter approaches carrying the beer-bottle, fastened with wire, which he uncorks with infinite care; the cork pops, and one pours the beer into the bowl, into which one has previously emptied a carafe of lemonade, then one stirs everything with the spoon, fills one glass and swallows. If you dislike such mixtures, you need only enter the *chufas horchaterías*, usually run by Valencians. The chufa (*tigernut*) is a small tuber, from a species of sedge, grown in the neighbourhood of Valencia, which is roasted and crushed, and from which an exquisite drink is made, especially when mixed with snow: this preparation is extremely refreshing.

To complete the menu, allow me to say that *sorbetes* differ from those in France in possessing more consistency; that *quesitos* are small hard ice-creams, moulded in the shape of a cheese: there are all kinds, made with apricots, pineapples, oranges, as known in Paris; but they are also made with butter (*manteca*) and with as yet unformed eggs, removed from the bodies of disembowelled hens, which is a method unique to Spain, since I have only ever heard of this singular refinement in Madrid. One is also served chocolate, coffee and other *spumas*; these are a type of whipped ice-cream, in nature extremely light, and sometimes sprinkled with very finely grated cinnamon; accompanied by *barquilos*, biscuits rolled into long cones with which you taste your *bebida*, as with a straw, by sucking slowly through one of the ends; a small refinement which allows you to enjoy the freshness of the beverage for longer. Coffee is not offered in cups, but in glasses; it is quite rarely taken otherwise. All these details may seem tedious to you; but, if like us you were exposed to heat of thirty to thirty-five degrees

Centigrade, you would find them of the greatest interest. One sees many more women in the Madrid cafés than in those of Paris, though cigarettes and even Havana cigars are smoked there. The newspapers most frequently found in them are the *Eco del Comercio*, the *Nacional* and the *Diario*, which prints the events of the day, the times of masses and sermons, the temperature, and notices regarding lost dogs, young peasant girls looking to be employed as nursemaids, parlour maids seeking a position, etc., etc. – But now eleven o'clock strikes; it is time to retire; Barely a few lingering strollers line the Calle de Alcalá. The streets are occupied only by the *serenos* with their lantern on the end of a pike, their coat the colour of a stone wall, and their measured cry; all you can hear is a chorus of crickets singing, in little cages adorned with beads, their disyllabic lament. In Madrid, they have a taste for crickets: each house has its own, in a miniature cage made of wood or wire hanging in the window; they also have a strange passion for quails which they keep in slatted wicker-baskets, and which, with their eternal *pick-per-wick*, provide a pleasant alternative to the *crick-crick* of the crickets. As is said of the cup-and-ball game, those who like the sound must be exceedingly tolerant.

The Puerta del Sol is not a gate, such as one might imagine, but rather a church facade, painted pink and embellished with a clock-dial lit at night, and a large sun with gilded rays, hence the name Puerta del Sol. In front of this church, there is a kind of square or crossroads; where the length of the Calle de Alcalá is crossed by the Calle de Carretas, and the Calle de la Montera. The Post Office, a large formal building, occupies the corner of the Calle de Carretas, with its facade facing the square. The Puerta del Sol is a meeting-place for the city's idlers, and many there appear to be, since a dense crowd occupies it from eight in the morning. All those grave personages, stand about, wrapped in their coats, despite it being excruciatingly hot, under the frivolous pretext that what protects against cold must also protect against heat. From time to time, we see emerge, from the motionless folds of a cape, a thumb and index finger, yellow as gold, rolling a *papelito*, containing a few pinches of chopped tobacco, and soon from the mouth of the grave personage a cloud of smoke rises, which proves that he is endowed with lungs, which one might have doubted given his perfect immobility. Speaking of *papel espanol para cigaritas*, let me note in passing that I have not yet seen a single booklet of cigarette-papers; the natives of the country use ordinary writing paper cut into small pieces; all such liquorice-tinted booklets, with grotesque colourful drawings and the texts of *letrillas* (*little lyric verses*) or farcical *romances*, are exported to France, to our lovers of local colour. Politics is the general topic of conversation; the theatre of war greatly occupies their imaginations, and more strategy is composed at the Puerta del Sol than on all the battlefields, and in all the campaigns in the world. Juan Manuel Balmaseda, Ramón Cabrera, the Palillos brothers, and other more or less important guerilla leaders, may reappear on the scene at any moment, tales are told of things that make one shudder, cruelties that are outdated, and have long been considered tasteless by the Caribs and the Cherokees. Balmaseda, in his last campaign, advanced to within twenty leagues of Madrid, and, having surprised a village near Aranda del Duero, amused himself by breaking the teeth of the *ayuntamiento* and the alcalde, and concluded the entertainment by having horseshoes nailed to the feet and hands of a constitutional priest. As I expressed my astonishment at the perfect tranquility with which this story was received, I was told that it took place in Old Castile, and there was thus no need to worry about it. This reply sums up the entire situation in Spain, and provides the key to many

things which seem incomprehensible to us, when viewed from France. Indeed, for an inhabitant of New Castile, what happens in Old Castile is as uninteresting as what occurs on the moon. Spain does not yet exist as a united entity, it is still *Las Españas*: Castile and Leon, Aragon and Navarre, Granada and Murcia, etc.; folk who speak different dialects and cannot stand each other. As a naive foreigner, I protested at such refinements of cruelty; but it was pointed out to me that the priest was a constitutional priest, which greatly attenuated the matter. Baldomero Espartero's victories, victories which seem mediocre to us, accustomed as we are to the colossal battles of the empire, frequently serve as a text for the politics of the Puerta del Sol. Following such triumphs, where a couple of men were killed, three prisoners taken, and a mule, bearing a sabre and a dozen cartridges, was seized, fireworks were lit, and oranges or cigars, arousing an enthusiasm easy to conceive, distributed to the soldiers. In the past, grandees visiting the shops near the Puerta del Sol, on being granted a seat, remained there for a large part of the day, chatting to the customers, to the great displeasure of the owners, distressed by such a mark of familiarity; and they still do so, even today.

Let us, if you please, visit the Post Office to see if there are any letters from France; this pre-occupation with letters is truly unhealthy; you may be sure that on arriving in a city, the first building a traveller will visit is the post office. In Madrid, letters marked *poste restante* are each given a number; this number and the name of the recipient are written on a list which is displayed on pillars; there is a pillar for January, for February, and so on; you look for your name, make a note of the number, and request your letter at the depot, where it will be delivered to you without any further formalities. After a year, if a letter has not been claimed, it is burned. Under the arcades of the Post Office courtyard, shaded by large blinds made of esparto-grass, every sort of reading-room is established, as under the arcades of the Odéon in Paris, and there one may read the Spanish and foreign newspapers. Postage charges are not very great, and, despite the innumerable dangers to which the mail is exposed on its journey, the roads being almost always infested with rebels or bandits, the service is maintained as regularly as possible. It is also on these pillars that offers of service are displayed, by poor students, who seek to polish one's riding boots in order to complete their courses in rhetoric or philosophy.

Let us now traverse the city at random, since chance is the best of guides, especially in Madrid which is not rich in architectural splendour, and where one street is as interesting as another. The first thing you see when you gaze up at the corner of some house or street, is a small earthenware plaque on which is written: *Visita. G(eneral). Manzana.* and a number 'n' (*indicating block 'n', on the general visitation route for tax purposes*). These plaques were formerly used to number the houses, grouped into islands or blocks. Today everything is numbered as in Paris. You would also be surprised at the various plaques proclaiming '*Asegurada de incendios'* (*insured against fire*) adorning the facades of houses, especially in a country where there are no chimneys, and where fires are never lit. Everything is insured, even the public monuments, even the churches; the civil war, it is said, is the cause of the great eagerness for such insurance (*which funded teams of firefighters*); since no one can be sure they will not be more or less roasted alive by some Balmaseda or other, all try at least to save their homes.

The houses in Madrid are constructed with lath, bricks, and adobe, except for the jambs, masonry-piers, and corbels, which are sometimes of grey or blue granite, and are all carefully plastered and painted in rather fanciful colours, celadon-green, ash-blue, buff, canary-tail yellow, rose pompadour, and other more or less anacreontic hues; the windows are framed by decorations, and simulated architectural features, with many a volute, scroll, little cupid, or vase of flowers; and adorned with Venetian blinds striped in wide blue and white bands, or esparto-grass matting which is watered to charge the breeze that passes through it with humidity and freshness. The wholly modern houses content themselves with being plastered with lime, or whitewashed with milk-white paint, like those in Paris. The projecting balconies and *miradores* break somewhat their monotonous straight lines, casting sharp shadows, and varying the naturally flat aspect of buildings all of whose projecting reliefs are painted and treated like theatre decorations: illuminate all of this with a glowing sun, plant at various distances, in these streets flooded with light, a few señoras in long veils holding their fans, spread in the manner of parasols, against their cheeks; a few sunburnt, wrinkled beggars, draped in shreds of canvas, and mossy rags; a few half-naked Valencians with the appearance of Bedouins; and bring forth, from between the roofs, the small humped domes, and bulging pinnacles ending in lead cones, of a church or monastery, and you will obtain an interesting enough view; one which will prove to you that you are, at last, no longer in the Rue Laffitte, and that you have definitely left the asphalt behind, even if your feet torn by the sharp stones of Madrid's pavements have not already convinced you of the fact.

One thing that truly surprises is the frequency of the following inscription: *Juego de villar*, which recurs every twenty steps. Lest you imagine that there is something mysterious in these three sacred words, I hasten to translate them: they only mean *Billiard Parlour*. I cannot understand what the devil the need is for so many billiards tables; the whole universe could take a turn. After the *juegos de villar* the most frequent inscription is that of *despacho de vino* (wine-shop). Val-de-Peñas and other full-bodied wines are sold there. The counters are painted in vibrant colours, decorated with draperies and foliage. The *confiterías* (*confectioneries*) and *pastelerías* (*baker's-shops*) are also numerous and quite attractively decorated: the Spanish confitures deserve a particular mention; those known as angel-hair (*cabello de angel*) are exquisite. The pastry is as good as it can be in a country where there is little butter, or at least it is so expensive and of such poor quality that it can hardly be used; it is close to what we call *petit-four* pastry. All the street signs are written in abbreviated characters, the letters intertwined with each other, which initially makes them difficult to understand for foreigners, the great readers of signs, if ever there were any.

The house interiors are vast and comfortable; the ceilings are high, and space is nowhere constrained; in Paris an entire house would be built in the shafts of certain staircases; you traverse long lines of rooms before arriving at the section that is actually inhabited; all these rooms being decorated only with lime plaster or in a flat yellow or blue shade, enhanced with coloured strips and panels of simulated woodwork. Paintings, darkened by smoke, of a blackish hue, representing the beheading or disembowelling of some martyr, a favourite subject of Spanish artists, hang from the walls, most of them unframed and merely tacked to their stretchers. Parquet is something unknown in Spain, or at least I have never seen it there. All the rooms are tiled with brick; but, as the bricks are covered with matting, of reeds in winter

and rushes in summer, the inconvenience is greatly reduced; these reed and rush mats are woven with great taste; the natives of the Philippines or the Sandwich Islands could do no better. There are three things which for me are precise thermometers of the state of civilisation of a people: pottery, the art of weaving either wicker or straw, and the method of harnessing beasts of burden. If the pottery is beautiful, of pure form, correct as in ancient times, with the natural hues of pale or red clay; if the baskets and mats are finely made, skilfully woven, enhanced with arabesques of admirably chosen colours; if the harnesses are embroidered, stitched, and decorated with bells, woollen tassels, designs of the most discerning choice, you can be sure that the people are primitive and still very close to the state of nature: civilised people have no idea how to make pottery, or matting, or a harness. As I write, I have in front of me, hanging from a pillar by a string, the *jarra* that is filled with the water I have to drink: it is an earthen pot worth twelve *quartos*, which is to say about six to seven French sous; the shape is charming and I know of nothing purer except the Etruscan. The rim is flared, and forms a four-leafed clover, each leaf hollowed out like a spout, so that you can pour water from whichever one you wish; the handles, fluted with a small moulding, attach with perfect elegance to the neck and sides, in a delightful curve; to these charming vases, fashionable people prefer those abominable English containers, swollen, pot-bellied, humped, and coated with a thick layer of glaze, which one might take for riding boots polished with whiting. But, in speaking of boots and pottery, I stray far from my description of domiciles; let me return to them without further ado.

The small amount of furniture that is found in Spanish homes is in dreadful taste, reminiscent of *Messidor taste* or *Pyramide taste*. The art of the Empire flourishes there in all its integrity. Here you will find those mahogany pilasters terminating in the heads of sphinxes in green bronze, those copper rods and framed *Pompeii* garlands, which have long since disappeared from the face of the civilised world; not a single piece of furniture sculpted in wood, not a table inlaid with mother-of-pearl, not a lacquer cabinet, nothing; ancient Spain has vanished completely: only a few Persian carpets and damask curtains remain. On the other hand, there is an abundance of truly extraordinary chairs and sofas of straw; the walls are defaced by false columns, false cornices, or daubed with some tint of tempera paint. Scattered about the tables and shelves are little biscuit-fired or porcelain figurines representing troubadours, or the opera-characters Mathilde and Malek Adel, or other equally ingenious subjects fallen into disuse; poodles in spun glass, plated candlesticks garnished with candles, and a hundred other magnificent items which it would take too long to describe, but of which what I have said above must offer sufficient token; I lack courage to speak of the atrocious illuminated engravings that possess the misplaced pretension of embellishing the walls.

There may be a few exceptions to all this, but the number is small. Nor should you imagine the homes of upper-class people as being furnished with greater taste and opulence. The description, applies with the most scrupulous accuracy, to the houses of those with carriages and eight or ten servants. The blinds are always lowered, the shutters half-closed, so that the apartments are left with a third of the usual daylight, something one must get used to, in order to discern objects, especially when one enters from outside; those who are in the room see perfectly, but those who have arrived are blind for eight or nine minutes, especially when one of the previous rooms is fully lit. It is said that skilful mathematicians have calculated the optics

required for perfect comfort during an intimate tête-à-tête in an apartment so arranged. The heat is excessive in Madrid, it comes on suddenly without the usual transition to spring; and they say of the temperature in Madrid: 'three months of winter, nine months of hell'. One can only shelter oneself from this storm of fire by staying in the lower rooms, where almost complete darkness reigns, and where perpetual moistening maintains the humidity. This need for freshness gave rise to the fashion for *búcaros*, which would seem a strange and savage refinement offering nothing pleasurable as regards our French amours, but which seems a most desirable thing in the best taste to lovely Spanish women.

Búcaros are a kind of vase, in red earthenware from America similar to that from which the chimneys of Turkish pipes are made; they come in all shapes and sizes; some are decorated with threads of gilt and strewn with roughly painted flowers. As they are no longer made in America, *búcaros* are becoming rare, and in a few years will be as unobtainable, and legendary as old Sèvres ware; then everyone will want one.

To deploy *búcaros*, one places seven or eight of them on marble pedestals or corner tables, fill them with water, and seat oneself on a sofa to wait for them to produce their effect, so as to savour the pleasure while meditating appropriately. The clay takes on a darker shade, the water penetrates its pores, and the *bucaros* soon exude and spread an aroma resembling the smell of wet plaster, or a damp cellar that has remained unopened for a length of time. This transpiration of the *búcaros* is so profuse that after an hour half the water has evaporated; that which remains in the vase is cold as ice, and has acquired a taste of wells and cisterns which is quite nauseating, but which is found delicious by its *aficionadas*. Half a dozen *búcaros* are enough to permeate the air of a boudoir with such humidity that it strikes you when you enter; it is a kind of cold vapour-bath. Not content with smelling the aroma and drinking the water, some people chew small fragments of *búcaros*, reduce them to powder, and end up by swallowing them.

I attended a few evening gatherings, or *tertulias*; there is nothing remarkable about them; people dance to the piano as in France, but in an even more modern and more lamentable way, if possible. I cannot imagine why people who dance so little do not, instead, resolve to abandon dancing completely; which would be simpler and just as amusing. Their fear of being accused of favouring the *bolero*, the *fandango*, or the *cachucha* renders the women perfectly immobile. Their costume is very simple, compared to that of the men, who are always dressed like fashion plates. I made the same remark at the Palace of Villa-Hermosa, at a performance for the benefit of foundlings (*niños de la cuna*), attended by the queen mother, the 'little queen', and all the grand and beautiful people Madrid contains. Women who were duchesses two times over, and marquises four times, wore dresses that, in Paris, a milliner visiting a dressmaker's house would disdain; they no longer know how to dress in the Spanish, but do not yet know how to dress in the French manner, and, if they were not so pretty, would often run the risk of appearing ridiculous. Only once, at a ball, did I see a woman in a pink satin basquin, trimmed with five or six bands of pale black, like that of Fanny Elssler in Alain-René Lesage's *Le Diable Boiteux*; but she had danced in Paris, where the Spanish costume had been revealed to her. *Tertulias* cannot cost much to those who give them. Refreshments are conspicuous by their absence: no tea, no ices, no punch; only a dozen glasses of perfectly clear water, and a plate of *azucarillos*, on a table in the main salon; while one would be taken generally for an indiscreet man, and *sur*

sa bouche (a glutton), as Henri Monnier's *Madame Desjardins* would say, if one took the Sardanapalian to the point of sweetening one's water with sugar; that only occurs in the wealthiest houses: it is not out of miserliness, merely that such is the custom; moreover, the ascetic sobriety of the Spaniards is perfectly adapted to this regime.

As regards morals, it takes one more than six weeks to understand the character of a people and the customs of a society. Nonetheless, novelty creates a first impression which may fade during a long stay. It seemed to me that women in Spain had the upper hand, and enjoyed greater freedom than in France. The attitude of the men towards them seemed to me most humble and submissive; they render them service with scrupulous exactitude and punctuality, and express their passion in poems of every measure, rhyming and assonant, *sueltos* (*blank verse*) and others; from the moment they have placed their hearts at the feet of a beautiful woman, they are only permitted to dance with their great-grandmothers. The conversation of women of fifty years of age, and of noted ugliness, alone is granted them. They can no longer make visits to houses where there is a young woman: a frequent visitor vanishes suddenly and reappears after six months or a year; his mistress has forbidden him the house: he is received as if he had been there the day before; this is quite accepted. As far as one can judge at first glance, Spanish women are not capricious in love, and the relationships they form often last several years. After a few evenings spent at a gathering, the couples are easily discernible, being visible to the naked eye – if you wish to receive Madame X, you must invite Monsieur Y, and vice versa; the husbands seem admirably civilised, and a match for the most good-natured of Parisian husbands: with no sign of the ancient Spanish jealousy, which is the subject of so many dramas and melodramas. To completely dispel all illusions, everyone speaks perfect French, and, thanks to those few elegant people who spend the winter in Paris, and make visits backstage at the ballet, the puniest little Opéra '*rat*' (*trainee*), the most insignificant little *marcheuse* (*extra*), are perfectly well-known in Madrid. There I found what exists perhaps in no other place in the universe, a passionate admirer of Mademoiselle Louise Fitzjames, whose name will serve as a transition from the *tertulia* to the theatre.

The Teatro del Principe has quite a wide repertoire; dramas, comedies, sketches and interludes are performed there. I saw a play by Don Antonio Gil y Zárate performed there, *Carlos II el Hechizado*, composed entirely in the Shakespearean manner. *Carlos* strongly resembled the *Louis XIII* of Victor Hugo's *Marion de Lorme*, and the scene with the monk in prison is imitated from the same author's *Notre Dame de Paris* where *Claude Frollo* visits *Esmeralda* in the dungeon where she awaits death. The role of Carlos was filled by Julián Romea Yanguas, an actor of admirable talent, to whom I know no rival, except Frédérik Lemaître, in a completely different genre; it is impossible to carry truth through illusion further. Matilde Diez is also a first-rate actress: her role is played with every nuance, exquisite delicacy, and surprising finesse of intent. I only find one fault with her, and that is her extreme speed of delivery, a fault which is not one of Spanish performers alone. Don Antonio Guzmán, the gracioso (*comic actor*), would not be out of place on any stage; he is very reminiscent of the mime Paul Legrand, and, in certain moments, of Étienne Arnal. At the Teatro del Principe they also perform fairy-tales, interspersed with dances and entertainment. I saw there represented, under the title of *La Pata de Cabra* (*The Goat's Foot, by Juan de Grimaldi*), an adaptation of Ribié and Martainville's *Le Pied de Mouton*, formerly played at the Gaieté. The choreographed

section was singularly mediocre: the leads were less able than the Opéra's least understudies; on the other hand, the secondary parts displayed extraordinary intelligence; the Cyclop's dance was executed with rare precision and clarity: as for the *baile nacional*, it no longer exists. We had been told in Vitoria, Burgos and Valladolid that the best dancers were in Madrid; in Madrid, we were told that true cachucha dancers only existed in Andalusia, in Seville. That remained to be seen; but we were afraid that when it came to Spanish dances, we would be obliged to return to Fanny Elssler and the two Noblet sisters (*Marie-Élisabeth and Félicité*). Dolorès Serral, who caused such a sensation in Paris, where I was one of the first to point out the passionate audacity, the voluptuous flexibility, and the petulant grace which characterized her dancing, appeared at the Madrid theatre several times without producing the slightest effect, so forgotten is the feeling for, and understanding of, their traditional and national dances, in Spain. When the *jota aragonesa* or the *bolero* is performed, everyone rises and leaves, only the foreigners remain, and the lower orders, in whom the poetic instinct is always more difficult to extinguish. The most famous French author in Madrid is Frédéric Soulié; almost all the dramas translated from French are attributed to him: he seems to have acceded to the role of Monsieur Eugène Scribe.

There, we are finished with the subject; it is merely a question now of completing our survey of public buildings: this is quickly done. The queen's palace is a large, very square, very solid construction, of beautiful, well-dressed stone, with many windows, an equivalent number of doors, Ionic columns, Doric pilasters, and everything else that constitutes a building in good taste. The immense terraces which support it and the snow-laden mountains of the Guadarrama against which it is outlined, enhance whatever of its silhouette might have seemed tedious or vulgar. Vélasquez, Mariano Maella, Francisco Bayeu, and Tiepolo painted fine ceilings there, in more or less allegorical styles; the grand staircase is very beautiful, and Napoleon found it preferable to that of the Tuileries.

The building that houses the Cortes (*the legislative chambers*) is fronted by Paestumnian columns, and lions in wigs, in most abominable taste: I doubt that good laws can be enacted in such architecture. A bronze statue of Miguel Cervantes stands opposite the Cortes in the middle of the square (*Plaza de las Cortes*); it is undoubtedly laudable to erect a statue to the immortal author of *Don Quixote*, but it should have been better done.

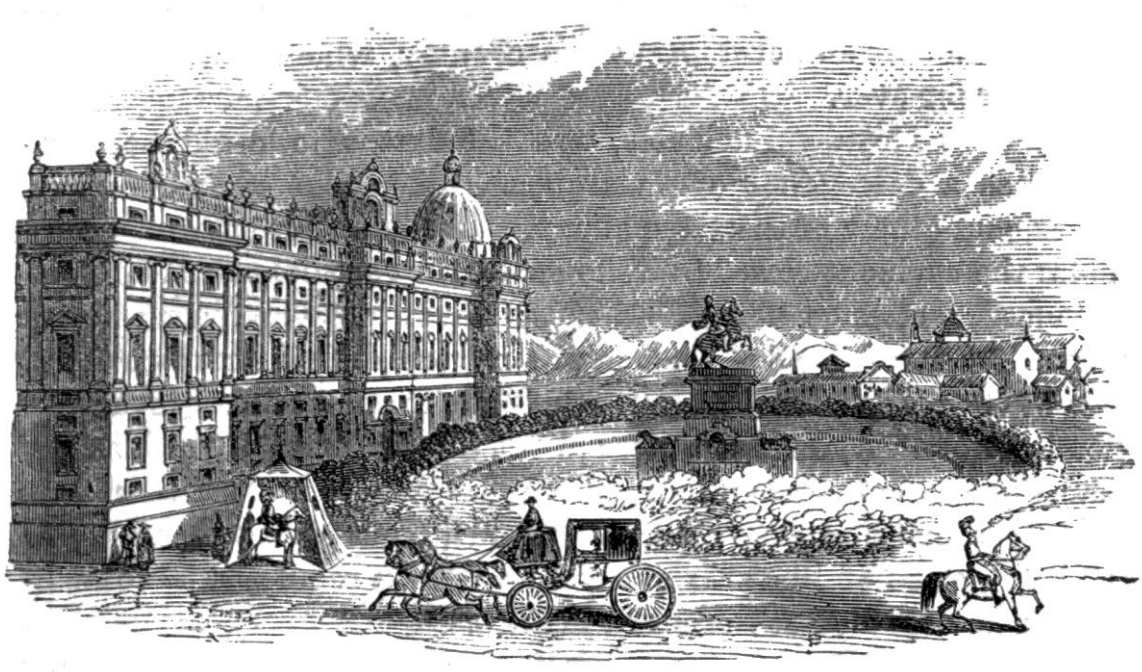
The monument to the victims of *Dos de Mayo* (*the uprising of the Second of May, 1808*) is located on the Prado, not far from the art gallery. On seeing it, I thought for a moment that I was transported to the Place de la Concorde in Paris, and viewed, like a fantastic mirage, the venerable obelisk of Luxor, which until now I had never suspected of vagrancy; it is a kind of grey granite slab, surmounted by a reddish granite obelisk quite similar in tone to that of the Egyptian needle; the effect is quite beautiful and does not lack a certain funereal gravity. It is to be regretted that the obelisk is not all of a piece; inscriptions in honor of the victims are engraved in gold letters on the sides of the base. The *Dos de Mayo* is a heroic and glorious episode, the depiction of which the Spaniards somewhat overdo; everywhere we see engravings and paintings on this sole subject. You will have no difficulty believing that we French are not represented in the finest manner: we are made to seem as dreadful as the Prussians are at the Cirque Olympique.

The Armeria (*the Armoury*) fails to correspond to the idea we have of it. The Musee d'Artillerie, in Paris, is incomparably richer and more complete. There are few whole suits of armour, and of authentic manufacture, in the Armeria of Madrid. Helmets from earlier or later periods are placed on breastplates in a different style. The reason given for this disorder is that, during the French invasion, all these interesting relics were hidden in attics, and there they became confused, and were jumbled together, without it being possible to reunite them, and remount them with any degree of certainty. Therefore, one should in no way trust the claims of one's guide. A wooden carriage carved with admirable workmanship, and which obviously could not date back further than the reign of Louis XIV, was shown to us as being that of Jeanne la Folle, the mother of Charles V. Charles V's own vehicle, with its leather cushions and curtains, seemed to us a more credible exhibit. There were very few Moorish weapons: two or three shields, a few yatagans (*Turkish short sabres*), that was all. What are more interesting are the embroidered saddles, studded with gold and silver, and coated with steel blades, which are of great number and in bizarre shapes; but there is nothing certain about their date or the person to whom they belonged. The English greatly admire a kind of triumphal iron-plated hackney-carriage, offered to Ferdinand VII around 1823 or 1824.

Let us mention in passing, purely for the record, various fountains in a most corrupt, but quite amusing *rococo style*; the Toledo Bridge, ornately decorated, in poor taste, with urns, ovoids, and sculpted leaves; and some oddly colourful churches, topped with Muscovite bell-towers; and head towards the Buen-Retiro, a royal residence located a few steps from the Prado. We French, owning to Versailles, Saint-Cloud, and, formerly, the Château de Marly, are hard to please when it comes to royal residences; the Buen-Retiro seems to us the dream made real of some wealthy tradesman: it is a garden filled with ordinary but showy flowers, little ponds decorated with rockeries, vermicular bossed surrounds, and fountains, in the style of grocers' shopfronts, greening ponds on which float wooden swans painted white, and other mediocre marvels of tastelessness. The natives of the country are rendered ecstatic by a certain rustic pavilion built of logs, the interior of which has somewhat Hinduistic pretensions; the first Turkish garden, the naïve, ancestral Turkish garden, its kiosks glazed with coloured tiles, through which blue, green and red views of the landscape could be seen, was far superior in taste and magnificence. Above all, there is a certain chalet which is indeed the most ridiculous and farcical thing that one could imagine. Next to this chalet is a stable furnished with a stuffed goat and its kid, and a grey stone sow suckling its male litter of the same material. A few steps from the chalet, the guide detaches himself from you, and, full of mystery, opens the door. When he calls to you and finally allows you to enter, you are met with a dull sound of cogs and counterweights, and find yourself face to face with hideous automatons pounding butter, spinning a spinning-wheel, or rocking, with wooden feet, wooden children asleep in carved cradles; in the next room, their grandfather is sick, lying abed, his medicine next to him on a table; scrupulousness has gone so far as to place an indescribable but very well-imitated urn under the bed; this is a most accurate summary of the main splendours of the Retiro. A fine bronze equestrian statue of Philip V, the pose resembling that of Louis XIV on the Place des Victoires, somewhat relieves all this mediocrity.

The Madrid Museum, a description of which would fill an entire volume, is extremely fine: works by Titian, Raphael, Paulo Veronese, Rubens, Velázquez, Ribeira, and Murillo abound

there; the paintings are very well lit, and the building's architecture is not lacking in style, especially within. The facade which overlooks the Prado is in rather bad taste; but in brief the construction does honor to the architect Juan de Villanueva, who devised the plan – having visited the galleries, go to the natural history rooms and view the mastodon-like *deinotherium giganteum*, a wondrous fossil with bones like bars of brass, which must at the very least match the behemoth of the Bible; a piece of gold ore which weighs sixteen pounds; Chinese gongs whose sound, whatever they say, closely resembles that of a cauldron being kicked; and a series of tables representing all the variations which can arise from the inter-breeding of the white, black and copper-skinned races. Do not forget, in the Academy, three admirable paintings by Murillo: the *Foundation of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome* (two works), and *Saint Elizabeth tending the sick and leprous*; two or three admirable efforts by Ribeira; a funeral by El Greco, some portions of which are worthy of Titian; a fantastic sketch by the same El Greco, representing monks performing penances, which far exceeds the most mysteriously funereal scene that Monk Lewis or Ann Radcliffe could have dreamed up; and a charming woman in Spanish costume lying on a couch, by dear old Goya, the national painter par excellence, who seems to have been born into this world expressly to gather together the last fading vestiges of Spain's ancient customs.



Museum, Madrid

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes is, recognisably, Velasquez's grandson. After him come José Aparicio, and Vincente López Portaña; decadence is complete, the circle of art is closed. Who will reopen it?

Goya is a strange painter, a singular genius! – Never was originality more obvious, never was a Spanish artist more Spanish – a sketch by Goya, four strokes of the brush in a cloud of aquatint say more about the customs of the country than the longest descriptions. In his adventurous existence, his enthusiasm, his multiple talents, Goya seems to belong to the golden era of art, and yet in some way is our contemporary: he died in Bordeaux in 1828.

Before attempting an appreciation of his work, let us briefly outline his biography. Don Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes was born in Aragon to parents in a position of moderate wealth, but nonetheless adequate enough not to hinder his natural disposition. His taste for drawing and painting developed early. He travelled, studied in Rome for a time, and returned to Spain, where he rapidly made his fortune at the court of Charles IV, who granted him the title of painter to the king. He was received by the queen, by the Duke of Bénavente, and the Duchess of Alba, and led that life of a great lord, shared by Rubens, Van-Dyck and Velasquez, which is so favourable to the blossoming of artistic genius. He owned a delightful *casa de campo* (*country house*), near Madrid, where he held dinners, and had his workshop.

Goya was prolific; he produced sacred subjects, frescoes, portraits, scenes of everyday manners, etchings, aquatints, lithographs, and everywhere, even in the vaguest sketch, he left the imprint of a vigorous talent; a lion's claw always scrapes at his wildest drawings. This talent, though perfectly original, is a singular mixture of Velasquez, Rembrandt and Reynolds; his work recalls those three masters in turn, or even simultaneously but as a son suggests his forefathers, without servile imitation, or rather through a congenial pre-disposition rather than by formal intent.

His two equestrian portraits of Charles IV and Maria Luisa, both on horseback, can be seen in the Madrid Museum: the heads are wonderfully painted, full of life, finesse and wit; also, one of a Picador, and a scene from the invasion, The Massacre of the Second of May. The Duke of Osuna owns several paintings by Goya, and there is hardly a great house that does not have some portrait or sketch by him. The dome of the church of San Antonio de la Florida, where a fairly well-attended celebration of his works often takes place, half a league from Madrid, was frescoed by Goya with the freedom, audacity and effects which characterise his art. In Toledo, in one of the cathedral-chapter rooms, we saw a painting by him representing Jesus delivered up by Judas, a night-time scene that Rembrandt would not have disavowed, and to whom I would have attributed it, at first, if a canon had not pointed out the signature of that expert painter of Charles IV. In the sacristy of the Cathedral of Seville there is also a painting by Goya, of great merit, showing Saint Justina and Saint Ruffina, two virgin martyrs, the daughters of a potter, as indicated by the *alcarazas (white-glazed ceramics)* and *cantaros (pitchers)* grouped at their feet.

Goya's method of painting was as eccentric as his talent: he took coloured paint from tubs, and applied it with sponges, brooms, cloths, or whatever came to hand; he trowelled and rendered his canvas like mortar, and added touches of emotion with great strokes of his thumb. Using such expeditious and peremptory processes, he could cover almost thirty feet of wall in a day or two. All this seems to me to pass somewhat beyond the bounds of simple ardour and enthusiasm; the most passionate artists by comparison merely *lick* the canvas. He executed, using a spoon as a brush, a scene from the *Dos de Mayo*, where we see the French shooting at

Spaniards. It is a work of incredible verve and fury. This interesting painting is relegated, without any show of honour, to the antechamber of the Madrid Museum.

The artist's individuality is so strong and definite that it is difficult to render even an approximate idea of him. He is not a caricaturist like Hogarth, William Bunbury, or George Cruikshank: Hogarth, serious, phlegmatic, exact and meticulous as a Richardson novel, always revealing a moral intent; Bunbury and Cruikshank, remarkable for their malignant verve, their farcical exaggeration, owning nothing in common with the creator of *Los Caprichos*. Jaques Callot would come closer, Callot, half-Spanish, half-Bohemian; but Callot is clean, clear, fine, precise, faithful to the truth, despite the nature of his outlines and the boastful extravagance of his forms; his most singular devilries are strictly possible; his etchings are set in broad daylight, where refinement of detail obviates striking effects or chiaroscuro, which are obtained only through the sacrifice of certain elements. Goya's settings are in the depths of night, where a sudden ray of light outlines pale silhouettes and strange phantoms.

His work is a composite of Rembrandt, Watteau, and Rabelais' entertaining dreams; a singular mixture! Add to this a high Spanish flavour, a strong dose of the picaresque spirit of Cervantes' portrayals of *Escalanta* and *Gananciosa*, in his short story *Rinconete and Cortadillo*, and you will still have only a very imperfect idea of Goya's talent. We will try to convey this, if possible, in words.

Goya's drawings are executed in aquatint, pricked out and vivified by etching; nothing is freer, simpler, or more direct; a line indicates a whole physiognomy, a streak of shadow serves for background, or suggests dark, half-sketched landscapes; gorges in the *sierra*, stages prepared for a murder, a sabbath, or a *tertulia* of Bohemians; though this is rare, because *backgrounds* scarcely exist in Goya. Like Michelangelo, he disdains external nature completely, and employs only enough of it against which to pose his figures, and even then, he places many of them in obscurity. From time to time a section of wall cut across by a broad width of shadow, a black prison-arcade, a barely indicated arbour; that is all – I have said that Goya was a caricaturist, for want of a better word. It is caricature in the mode of Hoffmann, where fantasy always mingles with extreme states of mind, and which often extends to the lugubrious and terrifying; all those grimacing heads seem as if drawn by the claw of Charles Nodier's demon, *Smarra*, on the wall of some suspect alcove, by the intermittent glow of a dying night-light. One feels as if transported to some world, incredible, impossible, and yet real – tree trunks look like phantoms, men like hyenas, owls, cats, mules, or hippos; nails may be claws, pointed shoes fit goats' feet; the young rider is an old corpse, and his beribboned hose envelop a gaunt femur, a meagre tibia and fibula; never have more mysteriously sinister apparitions emerged from behind Doctor Faust's stove.

Goya's caricatures are said to contain various political allusions, though few in number; they relate to Manuel Godoy, to the old Duchess of Benavente, to the queen's favourites, and to certain lords of the court, whose ignorance or vices they stigmatize. But we must search for their likenesses through the thick veil which obscures them – Goya made other drawings for the Duchess of Alba, his friend, which have not yet been published, undoubtedly because of the ease of identification – Some treat of fanaticism, gluttony, and the stupidity of the monks; the others represent contemporary manners or witchcraft.

Goya's self-portrait serves as a frontispiece to *Los Caprichos*. Here is a man of about fifty years, with narrow slanting eyes covered by large eyelids, adorned with malignant and mocking *crow's-feet*, his chin curved like a sabot, the upper-lip thin, the lower prominent and sensual; the whole framed in those sideburns adopted in the south, and topped with a Bolivar hat; a characterful and powerful physiognomy.

The second plate represents a money-marriage, a poor young girl sacrificed to a decrepit and monstrous old man by greedy parents. The bride is charming with her little black velvet mask and her basquin with fringed sleeves since Goya captures Andalusian and Castilian grace perfectly; the parents are hideous in their rapacity and jealous misery. They look unimaginably like sharks or crocodiles; the child smiles through tears, like April rain; while they are mere eyes, claws, and teeth; the intoxication produced by her adornments prevents the young girl from feeling the full extent of her misfortune – This theme often returns to the tip of Goya's pencil, and he always knows how to draw from it piquant effects. Next, is *El Coco*, a bogeyman, who comes frightening the little children, and who would frighten many another; since, after the shade of Samuel in the painting of *The Pythoness of Endor*, by Salvator Rosa, we know of nothing more terrible than this scarecrow. Then there are the *majos* who court bold lasses on the Prado – lovely girls in well-made silk stockings, in little mules with pointed heels, which cling to the foot by a toenail, their hair adorned with a long-toothed open-cut comb, taller than Cybele's mural crown; wearing a mantilla of black lace arranged like a hood, casting its velvety shadow on the most beautiful black eyes in the world; lead-weighted petticoats to highlight the opulence of the hips, beauty spots placed in ambush at the corner of the mouth, and near the temples; kiss-curls from which to hang all the lovers in Spain, and large fans spread like peacock tails – the *majos* are hidalgos in pumps, in prodigious tailcoats, with bicorn hats under their arms and clusters of trinkets adorning their stomachs, making triple-step curtsies, leaning over the backs of chairs to blow crazy clouds of madrigals like cigar smoke into a beautiful lock of black hair, or pawing with the tip of a white glove some more or less suspect divinity. Then come *officious mothers*, giving their overly obedient daughters the advice of Mathurin Régnier's hypocritical *Macette*, and washing and waxing them ready for the Sabbath. The type of the *officious mother* is wonderfully well rendered by Goya, who, like all Spanish painters, has a lively and profound feeling for the ignoble; one could not imagine anything more grotesquely horrible, more viciously deformed; each of these shrews exhibits the ugliness of the seven deadly sins in one; the devil is charming compared to her. Imagine wrinkles like ditches and counterscarps; eyes like hot coals drenched in blood; noses like the fluted spout of an alembic, all buboed with warts and excrescences; hippopotamus jaws bristling with stiff hair, tigerish moustaches, mouths like money-boxes contracted by hideous sneers; somewhat reminiscent of a spider and a woodlouse, and which stirs in you the same disgust as when you set foot on the soft belly of a toad – so much for the real; but it is when he abandons himself to his bent for demonography that Goya is especially admirable; no one knows better than him how to send dense black clouds burdened with vampires, stryges, demons into the close atmosphere of a stormy night, or outline a cavalcade of witches on a strip of sinister horizon.

Above all, there is a page of utter fantasy which is indeed the most dreadful nightmare ever dreamed; it is entitled: *Y aún no se van! (And, still, they don't go!)* It is frightful; Dante himself could not achieve that effect of suffocating terror; imagine a bare and gloomy plain over which

a slanted cloud hangs painfully like a disembowelled crocodile; and a large stone slab, the lid to a tomb, which a lean toiling figure attempts to raise. The stone, too heavy for the gaunt arms which support it, which feel as if they are close to cracking, falls back despite the efforts of the spectre and other shorter shades who simultaneously stiffen their shadowy arms; several are already trapped beneath the stone, now momentarily displaced. The expression of despair which is painted on all these cadaverous faces, in these eyeless sockets, finding their efforts all in vain, is truly tragic; it is the saddest symbol of laborious impotence, the darkest poetry, and the bitterest derision that anyone has ever created concerning the dead. The sheet *Buen viage (Bon voyage),* where we see a flight of demons, of students from the seminary of Barahona de las Brujes, who take to the wing, and hasten towards some nameless deed, is notable for its liveliness and energy of motion. It seems as if one can hear those long-haired, spiny membranes palpitating in the dense night air like the wings of a bat – the collection ends with these words: *Ya es ora* (*It is time*) the rooster crows, and the phantoms vanish as the light dawns.

As for the aesthetic and moral significance of his work? We are ignorant of it. Goya seems to have given his opinion on it, in one of his drawings in which a man is represented, his head resting on his arms, around whom eagle owls, tawny owls, and *cocquecigrues* flutter – the caption to this image is: *El sueno de la razon produce monstruos: the sleep of reason produces monsters*. True, but harsh indeed.

These *Caprices* are all that the Bibliothèque Royale in Paris has by Goya. However, he produced other works: the *Tauromaquia*, a suite of thirty-three plates, the *Disaster of War* containing twenty drawings, which must have included more than forty (*eighty-two are now known*); his etchings after Velasquez, etc., etc.

The *Tauromaquia* is a collection of scenes depicting various episodes of bullfighting, from Moorish times to the present day – Goya was a consummate *aficionado*, and spent much of his time with the *toreros*. He was also the artist most competent of all to handle the subject in depth. Although the attitudes, poses, defences and attacks, or, to speak technical language, the different *suertes* and *cogidas* are of impeccable accuracy, Goya shrouds these scenes in his mysterious shadows and fantastic colours – what fierce and bizarre faces! What strange wild details! What a fury of movement! His Moors, expressed somewhat in the manner of the imperial Turks, in terms of costume, have the most characteristic physiognomies – A scratched-in feature, a black blot, a strip of white, and here is a character who lives, moves, and whose physiognomy is etched forever in the memory. The bulls and horses, though sometimes of a somewhat fabulous form, possess a life and a spirit that are often lacking in the creatures displayed by zookeepers: the exploits of Gazul, El Cid, Carlos V, Pedro Romero, Falces' student, and Pepe Illo, who perished miserably in the arena, are retraced with entirely Spanish fidelity – like those of the *Caprichos*, the plates of the *Tauromaquia* are executed in aquatint, enhanced with a burin.

The *Disasters of War* would offer a curious connection with the *Misfortunes of War*, by Jacques Callot – here are hanged corpses, heaps of the naked dead, women being raped, the wounded being borne away, prisoners being led away, folk being shot dead, monasteries and convents being pillaged, populations fleeing, families reduced to begging, patriots being strangled, all this treated with those fantastic details and exorbitant touches which might make

one believe this in an invasion of Tartars in the fourteenth-century. But what finesse, what profound knowledge of anatomy, is displayed in all these groups which seem born by chance and caprice from the pencil-point! Tell me if ancient Niobe could have surpassed, in desolation and nobility, that mother kneeling in the midst of her family before the French bayonets? – Amongst these drawings which are easily understood, there is one quite terrible and mysterious, and whose meaning, vaguely glimpsed, is dark with the frissons of terror. It is a dead man half-buried in the earth, raising himself on his elbow, and, with his bony hand, writing, blindly, on a sheet of paper placed next to him, a word which is well worth the blackest of Dante's: *Nada* (nothingness). Around his head, which has retained just enough flesh to be more dreadful than a stripped skull, swirl, barely visible in the depth of the night, monstrous nightmarish faces illuminated here and there by livid lightning. A fateful hand supports a scale whose scales are unbalanced. Do you know of anything more sinister or more desolate?

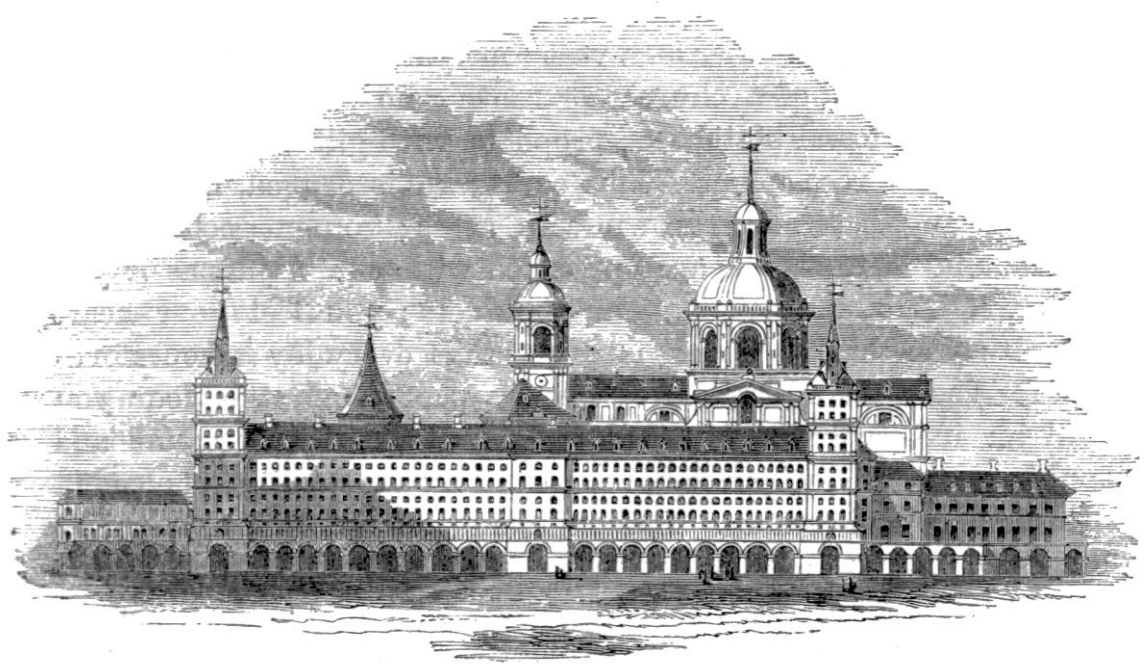
At the very end of his life, which was a long one, as he died in Bordeaux at the age of over eighty, Goya improvised some lithographic sketches on stone, which bear the title of *Dibersión de España* – these are of bull fights. We can still recognize, in these leaves, pencilled by the hand of an old man who had been deaf for a long time, and was almost blind, the vigour and movement of the *Caprichos* and the *Tauromaquia*. The appearance of these lithographs is most reminiscent, curiously enough, of the manner of Eugène Delacroix in his illustrations of *Faust*.

In Goya's tomb is buried the ancient art of Spain, the forever-vanished world of bullfighters, majos, manolas, monks, smugglers, thieves, alguazils and witches, all the local colour of the Peninsula – he came just in time to gather up and record it all. Believing that he was only indulging his whims, he depicted the portrait and the history of the old Spain, while believing he was serving the ideas and beliefs of the new. His caricatures will soon be seen as monuments to that history.

Part IX: The Escorial – The Thieves

To visit the Escorial, we rented one of those fantastic carriages decorated in shades of grey, and embellished within in pink, which we have already had occasion to speak of; this, harnessed to four mules, complemented by a fairly well camouflaged *zagal*. The Escorial is located seven or eight leagues from Madrid, not far from Guadarrama, at the foot of a mountain range; one cannot imagine anything more arid and more desolate than the countryside that one must traverse to get there: not a tree, not a house; long slopes rising one after another, dry ravines, which the presence of several bridges designates as the beds of torrents, and here and there a view of blue mountains capped with snow or clouds. This landscape, such as it is, does not, however, lack grandeur: the absence of any vegetation gives the contours of the land an extraordinary severity and starkness; as one draws further away from Madrid, the stones with which the countryside is dotted become larger and show an ambition to become rocks; these stones, of a bluish-grey, mottling the flaky ground, have the effect of warts on the roughened

back of a hundred-year-old crocodile; they sharpen the silhouette of the hills, which resemble the rubble of gigantic buildings, in a thousand bizarre and jagged edges.



The Escorial

Midway along the road, at the conclusion of a fairly steep climb, one reaches a poor isolated house, the only one encountered in a space of eight leagues, opposite a spring which produces clear water, drop by drop, and ice-cold; one drinks as many glasses of water as there are in the spring, allows the mules to regain their breath, and then sets off again. One soon sees, detached from the vaporous mountainous background by a bright ray of sunlight, the Escorial, that leviathan of architecture. The effect, from a distance, is very fine: it resembles an immense oriental palace: the dome and the balls of stone that terminate all the spires contribute greatly to this illusion. Before arriving, one traverses a large grove of olive trees decorated with crosses bizarrely perched on large slabs of rock with the most picturesque effect; after crossing the woods, one emerges and enters the village, and finds oneself face to face with the colossus, which loses a lot when seen near to, as do all the colossi of this world. The first thing that struck me was the immense number of swallows and swifts circling in the air in innumerable swarms, uttering shrill, strident cries. These poor little birds seemed frightened by the dead silence which reigned in this Thebaid, and tried to inject a little life and noise into it.

Everyone knows that the Escorial was built following a pledge made by Philip II at the siege of Saint-Quentin (in *1557*), when he was obliged to cannonade the church of Saint-Laurent; he promised the saint to compensate him for the church, he was robbing him of, with another larger and more beautiful one, and kept his word better than the kings of the earth

usually keep it. The Escorial, begun by Juan Bautista, finished by Juan de Herrera, is undoubtedly, after the pyramids of Egypt, the largest pile of granite that exists on earth; in Spain it is called the eighth wonder of the world; each major country has its eighth wonder, which makes at least thirty-eight wonders of the world.

It embarrasses me extremely to give my opinion of the Escorial. So many serious, well-placed people, who, I like to believe, had never seen it, have spoken of it as a masterpiece, and a supreme effort of human genius, that it might give me, a poor devil of a wandering journalist, the air of wishing to demonstrate a biased originality, by taking pleasure in countering the general opinion; and yet, in my soul and conscience, I cannot help finding the Escorial the most tedious and sullen monument that a morose monk and a suspicious tyrant could dream of, for the mortification of their fellow human beings. I know well enough that the Escorial fulfilled an austere religious purpose, but gravity is not dryness, melancholy is not sluggishness, meditation is not boredom, and beauty of form can always be married happily to an elevated idea.

The Escorial is arranged in the shape of a gridiron, in honour of Saint Lawrence. Four towers or square pavilions represent the feet of that instrument of torture; the main buildings connect these pavilions together, and form the framework; other transverse buildings simulate bars of the grid; the palace and the church are located in the handle. This odd design, which must have given the architect much trouble, is not easily grasped by the eye, though it is very clear on paper, and, if one were not advised of it beforehand, one would certainly not perceive it. I do not blame its puerile symbolism on the taste of that age, since I am convinced that a given manner, far from harming artists of genius, aids them, supports them, and obliges them to find resources within it, of which they would not otherwise have thought; but it seems to me that one could have made completely different use of them. People who love *good taste and sobriety* in architecture will find the Escorial a thing quite perfect, since the only line employed is the straight line, and the only order, the Doric order, the saddest and poorest of all.

One of the first things that strikes you unpleasantly is the earthen-yellow colour of the walls, which one might think made of adobe, if the joints of the stones, marked by lines of a garish white, did not reveal the opposite. Nothing is more monotonous to view than its six or seven storey buildings, without mouldings, pilasters, or columns, but with little narrow windows which look like the cells of a beehive. Its plan is that of a barracks or a hospital; the only merit of it all is that it is made of granite. A merit thrown away, since from a hundred yards away you could well mistake it for oven clay. A humped dome squats heavily on top, which I cannot do better than compare to the dome of Val-de-Grâce, and which has no other ornament than balls of granite in profusion. All around it, so that nothing is lacking in terms of symmetry, are edifices in the same style, that is to say with rows of small windows, and not the slightest ornament; these main buildings communicate with each other by galleries, in the form of bridges thrown over the streets, which lead to the village, which today is only a heap of ruins. All the surrounds are paved with granite, and the boundaries are marked by little three-foot high walls, embellished with the inevitable granite balls at every corner and indentation. The main portal, which is flat with the body of the monument, fails to break the aridity of line and is barely visible, though it is in fact gigantic.

One first enters a vast courtyard at the end of which rises the portal of a church, which has nothing remarkable other than colossal statues of prophets, gilded ornamentation, and figures tinted with pink. This courtyard is paved, damp, and cold; grass greens the corners; simply on setting foot there, tedium weighs upon your shoulders like a lead cope; your heart is constricted; it seems as if all is over and all joy is dead. Twenty paces from the door, and you smell an icy stale odour of holy water and sepulchral vaults, brought to you by a current of air blessed with pleurisy and catarrh. Though it is thirty degrees outside, the marrow freezes in your bones; it feels as if the heat of life will never be able to warm the blood in your veins, which is now colder than the blood of a viper. The walls, impenetrable like the tomb, prevent the air of the living from filtering through their thick walls. And yet! Despite this claustral and Muscovite cold, the first thing I saw on entering the church was a Spanish woman kneeling on the stone pavement, who was striking herself on the chest with one hand, and fanning herself with the other with at least equal fervour; the fan was, I remember perfectly, green in colour like the sea or an iris-blade, which sends a shiver down my spine when I recall it.

Our guide to the interior of the building was blind, and it was truly a wondrous thing to note with what precision he halted in front of the paintings, of which he pointed out the subject and artist without hesitation and without error. He made us climb to the dome, and walked us through an infinity of ascending and descending corridors which equal in complexity those of the *Confessional of the Black Penitents* (*The Italian*) by Ann Radcliffe, or *Les visions du château des Pyrénées* (*Catherine Cuthbertson, 1803*). The guide was named Cornelio; he was in the best of moods, and seemed very happy despite his infirmity.

The interior of the church is melancholy and bare. Enormous mouse-grey granite pilasters with large micaceous grains like those of kitchen-salt rise to the vaults painted with frescoes, whose azure and vaporous tones blend poorly with the cold and meagre colour of the architecture; the *retablo*, gilded and carved in the Spanish style with very beautiful paintings, amends this aridity of decoration a little, where all is sacrificed to I know not what tasteless symmetry; the gilded bronze statues kneeling on both sides of the *retablo*, which represent, I believe, Don Carlos and various princesses of the royal family, are in the grand style and produce a fine effect; the nave, which faces the great altar, is in itself an immense church; the stalls which surround it, instead of being leafed and flowered in fanciful arabesques like those of Burgos, contribute to the general rigidity, and have only simple mouldings for decoration. We were shown the place where, for fourteen years, the sombre Philip II seated himself, that king born to be a grand inquisitor; his stall occupies an alcove; a door made in the thickness of the woodwork communicates with the interior of the palace. Though not possessed by any very fervent feelings of devotion, I have never entered a Gothic cathedral without experiencing a mysterious, profound, and extraordinary emotion, and without a vague fear of meeting the Eternal Father himself at the corner of some group of pillars – with his long silver beard, purple cloak and azure robe, gathering in the folds of his tunic the prayers of the faithful. In the basilica of the Escorial, we are so dejected, so crushed, we feel so firmly under the domination of an inflexible and gloomy power, that the uselessness of prayer is thereby demonstrated. The god of a temple so made would never allow himself to weaken.

After visiting the church, we descended to the Pantheon. This is the name given to the vault where the bodies of the kings are deposited; it is an octagonal room thirty-six feet in diameter by thirty-eight high, located precisely under the main altar, so that the priest, when saying Mass, has his feet on the stone which forms the keystone; you descend to it by a staircase of granite and coloured marble, fronted by a beautiful bronze gate. The Pantheon is entirely covered in jasper, porphyry and other no less precious stones. In the walls there are niches with ancient ornate coffers intended to contain the bodies of the kings and queens who have departed their lives. There is a penetrating and deadly chill in this vault; the polished marble shimmers icily with reflections, in the trembling rays of the torch; they appear as if streaming with water, and one might believe oneself in a submarine grotto. The monstrous edifice presses upon you with all its weight; it surrounds, embraces, and suffocates you; you feel caught as if in the tentacles of a gigantic granite polyp. The dead in their sepulchral urns appear more dead than others, and it is difficult to believe that they could ever be resurrected. There, as in the church, the impression is sinister, desperate; among all these dreary vaults there is not a single hole through which one can see the sky.

In the sacristy, some good paintings remain (the best having been transferred to the Royal Museum in Madrid), among others, two or three paintings on wood from the German school, of rare perfection; the ceiling of the grand staircase was frescoed by Luca Giordano, and represents in allegorical manner Philip II's vow, and the foundation of the monastery. What Luca Giordano painted on these acres of Spanish plaster is truly prodigious, and we, we moderns, already out of breath in the midst of the shortest task, cannot but find the possibility of such work hard to imagine. Pellegrino Tibaldi, Luca Cambiaso, Vicente Carducho, Romulo Cincinato, and several other artists painted cloisters, vaults and ceilings at the Escorial. The one in the library, which is by Carducho and Pellegrino, is in fine, clear and luminous fresco tones; the composition is rich, and the arabesques which intertwine with it are in the best taste. The Escorial library is peculiar in that the books are arranged on the shelf with their backs to the wall and their edges towards the viewer; I am unaware of the reason for this oddity. The library is rich in Arabic manuscripts especially, and must contain priceless, completely unknown treasures. Now that the conquest of North Africa has made Arabic a fashionable and contemporary language, we must hope that this rich mine will be explored in detail by our young orientalists; the rest of the books seemed to me to be generally books on theology and scholastic philosophy. We were shown some manuscripts on vellum with historiated and miniaturised margins; but, as it was Sunday and the librarian was absent, we wer unable to view more, and had to leave without having seen a single *incunable* edition, a much more noticeable inconvenience for my companion than for myself, who unfortunately lack the passion for bibliography or anything else.

In one of the corridors there is a life-size white marble Christ, attributed to Benvenuto Cellini, and some very singular fantastic paintings, in the style of the 'Temptations' created by Jacques Callot and David Teniers the Younger, but of less recent date. As for the rest, one cannot imagine anything more monotonous than those endless corridors of grey granite, narrow and low, which penetrate the building like veins in the human body; you truly need to be blind to find your way about; we ascended, we descended, we made a thousand detours, and one would only have to walk there for more than three or four hours to completely wear out the

soles of one's shoes, since the granite is as harsh as a file and as rough as sandpaper. When we reached the dome, we saw that the balls of stone, which from below appear as large as bells, are of enormous size, and might be used to create monstrous globes of the world. An immense horizon unfolds at your feet, and you embrace, at a glance, the mountainous country which separates you from Madrid; on the other side, the mountains of Guadarrama rise: you can therefore comprehend the whole layout of the monument; you can immerse yourself in its courtyards and cloisters, with their rows of superimposed arcades, their fountains or central pavilions, and their sloping roofs, as in a bird's eye view.

When we ascended the dome, there was on a chimney-top, in a large straw nest like an upside-down turban, a stork with her three fledglings. This interesting family presented the strangest profile in the world; the mother was standing on one leg in the middle of the nest, her neck buried in her shoulders, her beak majestically placed on her crop, like a philosopher in meditation; while the little ones stretched out their long beaks and necks to beg for food. I hoped to witness one of those sentimental scenes from natural history, where we see the great white pelican bloodying its side in order to nourish its young children; but the stork seemed very little moved by these demonstrations of hunger, and stirred no more than do the storks in the wood-engraving that adorns the frontispiece of those books Sébastian Cramoisy printed. The melancholic group further added to the profound solitude of the place, and added a further Egyptian touch to that Pharaonic pile. Descending, we viewed the garden, where there is more architecture than vegetation; there are large terraces and beds of trimmed boxwood which present designs like branches of old damask, with a few fountains and a few greenish water features; a dull and solemn garden, starched like a *golilla* (*correctly a valona, a seventeenth century Spanish linen collar*) and entirely worthy of the gloomy building it accompanies.

There are, they say, a mere one thousand one hundred and ten windows visible on the exterior, which causes great astonishment to the bourgeoisie; I did not count them, preferring to believe the number rather than engage in such activity; but there is nothing improbable in it, for I have never seen so many windows together; the number of doors is also fabulous.

I left this granite wasteland, this monastic necropolis with a feeling of satisfaction and extraordinary relief; it seemed to me that I was returning to life, and that I might still be young and rejoice in the creation of the good Lord, a thing of which I had lost all hope beneath those funeral vaults. The warm, luminous air enveloped me like a soft fabric of fine wool, and warmed my body frozen by their cadaverous atmosphere; I was freed from that architectural nightmare, which I had believed unending. I advise people who are conceited enough to pretend that they are bored, to go and spend three or four days in the Escorial; they will learn there what true boredom is, and may entertain themselves for the rest of their lives with the thought that they could be at the Escorial and are not.

When we returned to Madrid, there was joyful astonishment among the folk there to see us still alive. Few people return from the Escorial; you die of consumption there in two or three days, or you blow your brains out, if you are English. Fortunately, we are of robust temperament, and, as Napoleon said of the cannonball that sought to carry him off, the monument that could kill us has not yet been built. The thing which caused the most surprise was to see that we returned with our watches; since, on the roads of Spain, there are always

folk very interested in knowing the time, and, as there is neither clock nor sundial there, they are forced to 'consult' the watches of travellers – Speaking of thieves, let me recount a story of which we were almost the heroes. The coach from Madrid to Seville, in which we were to leave, but in which there was no more room, was stopped in La Mancha by a band of rebels or thieves, which amounts to the same thing; the thieves divided the loot and were preparing to take their prisoners to the mountains and force their families to pay a ransom (might one not have thought this took place in Africa?), when another, more numerous band arrived, who attacked the first, *stole* their prisoners, and indeed led them off to the mountains.

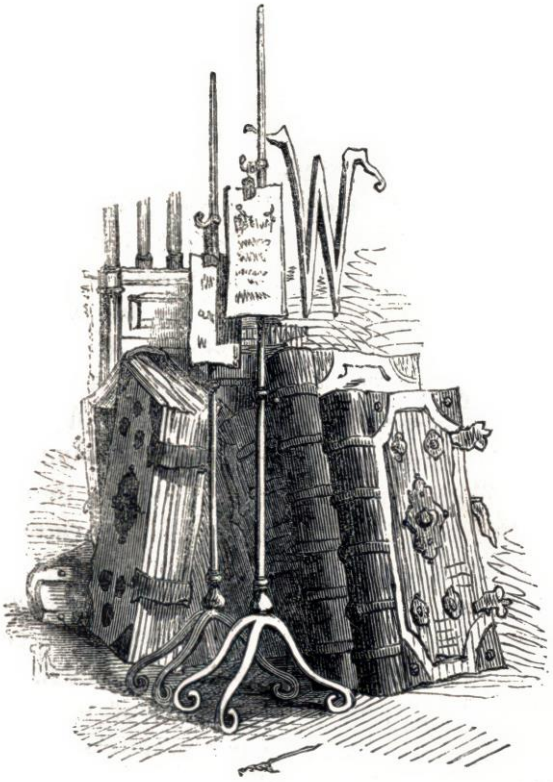
On the way, one of the travellers took a box of cigars from a pocket they had neglected to search, removed one, and struck a light. 'Would you care for a cigar?' he said to the bandit, with Castilian politeness, 'They are from Havana.' '*Con mucho gusto*,' replied the bandit, flattered by this attention; and there were the traveller and the bandit, cigar alongside cigar, inhaling and puffing to light them fully. A conversation began, and one thing led to another. The thief, like all tradesmen, began to complain about his trade: times were hard, business was going badly, too many honest people were becoming involved and ruining his profession; people were lining up to rob these wretched stagecoaches, and often three or four gangs were obliged to fight over the spoils of the same vehicle and its convoy of mules; thus travellers, certain of being plundered, took only the bare necessities and donned their worst clothes. 'Look,' he said with a gesture of melancholy and discouragement, pointing to his worn and patched coat, which would have merited enveloping Probity itself, 'is it not shameful to be forced to steal such rags? Is not my jacket most virtuous? Could the most honest man on earth be worse dressed? We take travellers hostage, but these days their families are so hard-hearted they can't bring themselves to untie the purse strings; there's the cost of our food, and, after a month or two, more cost yet for a charge of powder and lead to shatter the skulls of our prisoners, which is always unpleasant after becoming acquainted with them. To carry on this trade, you have to sleep on the ground, eat acorns which are frequently bitter, drink melted snow, make immense journeys on abominable paths, and risk your skin at every moment.' So spoke this brave bandit, more disgusted with his profession than a Parisian journalist whose turn it is to provide copy. 'Well, why,' said the traveller, 'if your trade displeases you, and brings you so little, not take up another?' – 'I've dreamed of doing so, and my comrades too; but what would you do? We are hunted, pursued; we'd be shot like curs if we went near a village; we must pursue our livelihood.' The traveller, who was a man of some influence, remained thoughtful for a moment. 'So, you'd willingly quit your role if you were granted an *indulto* (amnesty)?' 'Indeed,' they all replied, 'do you think it's fun, being a thief? You have to work like slaves, while sick as a dog. We'd rather be honest.' – 'Well!' the traveller replied, 'I undertake to obtain your pardon, on the condition that you grant us our freedom.' 'So be it: go to Madrid; here's a horse and money to make the journey, and a pass so that our comrades will let you by. Return quickly; we'll wait for you at a certain place with your companions, whom we'll treat as best we can.' The man rode to Madrid, obtained an *indulto* for the bandits, and returned to free his comrades in misfortune; he found them sitting quietly among the bandits, eating a La Mancha ham glazed with sugar, and granting frequent embraces to a skin full of wine from Val-de-Penas stolen expressly for them: what delicate attentions! They were singing, and having a fine time, and were possessed of a greater desire to become thieves, like the rest,

than return to Madrid; but the leader of the band gave them a severe moral dressing-down which brought them to themselves, and the whole troop then set off, arm in arm, for the city, where both travellers and thieves were welcomed with enthusiasm, since brigands captured by travellers are something truly rare and curious.

Parts X to XII - Toledo, Granada, and Málaga

Contents

Part X: Toledo – The Alcazar – The Cathedral – The Gregorian Rite and the Mozarabic Rite – Our Lady of Toledo – San Juan de Los Reyes – The Synagogue – The Galiana Palace, Charlemagne and Bradamant – Florinda's Dwarf – The Cave of Hercules – The Cardinal's Hospital – Toledo Blades



We had exhausted the curiosities of Madrid, we had viewed the palace, the Armeria, the Buen-Retiro, the museum and the academy of art, the Teatro del Principe, and the Plaza de Toros; we had walked the Prado from the fountain of Cybele to the fountain of Neptune, and a slight feeling of ennui began to invade us. So, despite a temperature of thirty degrees Centigrade and all kinds of horrifying stories about rebels and *rateros*, we set off boldly for Toledo, the city of fine swords and Romantic daggers.

Toledo is one of the oldest cities not only in Spain, but in the entire world, if the chroniclers are to be believed. The most conservative place the date of its foundation before the flood (why not under the pre-Adamite kings, a few years before the creation of the world?) Some attribute the honour of having laid its first stone to Tubal, others to the Greeks; some to Telmon and Brutus, Roman consuls; others to the Jews, who entered Spain with Nebuchadnezzar, relying on the etymology of Toledo, which comes from *Toledoth*, a Hebrew word meaning generations, since the twelve tribes contributed to building and populating it.

Be that as it may, Toledo is certainly an admirable old town, located a dozen leagues from Madrid, Spanish leagues I mean, which are longer than a twelve-column newspaper article, or a penniless day, the two longest things I know of. One travels there by one-horse gig, or in a small stagecoach which leaves twice a week; we preferred the latter as being safer, since beyond the mountains, as formerly in France, one draws up one's will before the briefest journey. The dread of brigands must be exaggerated, for, in a very long pilgrimage through those provinces with the reputation of being the most dangerous, we never saw anything that could justify such a degree of panic. However, the fear adds greatly to the pleasure; it keeps

you alert and protects you from boredom: you are performing a heroic action, displaying superhuman courage; the anxious and fearful look of those who remain behind enhances you in your own eyes. A trip in a stagecoach, the most ordinary thing in the world, becomes an adventure, an expedition; you are leaving, it is true, but you are unsure whether you will arrive or return. That is something, in a civilization as modern as ours, in this prosaic and misguided year of 1840.

We left Madrid by the Toledo gate and bridge, decorated with stone vases exuding flames, scrolls, statues, and foliage, all in mediocre taste, and yet producing something of a majestic effect; we left behind on the right the village of Carabanchel, where Hugo's *Ruy Blas* sought that little blue German flower for *Maria de Neubourg*. He would not find today the least *vergissmeinnicht* (*forget-me-not*) in this hamlet of cork-oak, built on pumice stone. One enters, by a vile path, onto an interminable dusty plain, covered entirely with wheat and rye, the pale yellow of which further adds to the monotony of the landscape. A few crosses auguring ill, which here and there spread their fleshless arms, a few bell-tower spires which reveal an insignificant village in the distance, or a dry ravine bed bridged by a stone arch, are the only features which present themselves. From time to time, we met a peasant on his mule, rifle at his side; a *muchacho* chasing two or three donkeys in front of him, loaded with jars or chopped straw held by cords; or a woman, poor, haggard and sunburnt, dragging a savage-looking brat, and that was all.

As we advanced, the landscape became more arid and more desolate, and it was not without a feeling of inner satisfaction that we saw, on a drystone bridge, the five green-clad huntsmen on horseback who were to serve as our escort, since an escort is needed when travelling from Madrid to Toledo. Might one not think one was amid the plains of Algeria, and that Madrid was surrounded by its own *Mitidja* populated by Bedouins?

We halted for lunch at Illescas, a town or a village, I am not sure which, where we saw some traces of ancient Moorish buildings, and whose houses have windows adorned with complex ironwork and surmounted by crosses.

Lunch consisted of soup with garlic, eggs, the inevitable tomato *tortilla*, toasted almonds, and oranges, all washed down with a Val-de-Penas wine, fairly good, though thick enough to cut with a knife, bitter with resin, and the colour of blackberry syrup. Its cuisine is not Spain's best offering, and the inns have not improved appreciably since *Don Quixote*; those descriptions of omelettes full of feathers, tough hake, rancid oil, and chickpeas that could serve as bullets, are still most true to life; I know not, for example, where one might find today the fine chickens and monstrous geese served at *Camacho's* wedding.

From Illescas, the terrain becomes more rugged, and results in an even more abominable road; nothing but potholes and death-traps. Though this did not prevent us from travelling at full speed; the Spanish postilions are like Morlach coachmen, they care little for what sits behind them, and as long as they arrive, even if only with an axle and the little front wheels, they are satisfied. However, we reached our destination without incident, in the midst of the cloud of dust raised by our mules, and the huntsmen's horses, and we entered Toledo, panting with curiosity and thirst, through a magnificent gateway in the Arab style, with an elegantly curved arch, granite pillars topped with stone balls, and decorated with verses from the Koran.

This portal is called the Puerta del Sol; it is red, sun-burnt, and candied in hue, like a Portuguese orange, and stands out admirably against the limpidity of a lapis-lazuli sky. In our foggy climate, we can barely gain an idea of that violence of colour, and harshness of contour, and the paintings that recall it always seem exaggerated.

After passing the Puerta del Sol, you find yourself on a sort of terrace from which you enjoy an extensive view; there is the Vega dappled and striped with trees and crops which owe their freshness to the irrigation system introduced by the Moors. The Tagus, crossed by the San Martín bridge and the Alcántara bridge, flows swiftly with yellowish waves, and enfolds the city almost entirely. At the foot of the terrace, the brown and shiny roofs of the houses, and the bell-towers of the monasteries and churches, their green and white earthenware tiles arranged in a checkerboard pattern, float before the eyes; beyond, one sees red hills and bare escarpments on the horizon. The view is singular in that it is entirely deprived of that ambient mist in the air, which with us, always bathes the broadest perspectives; the transparent atmosphere leaves the contours all their sharpness, and allows one to discern the smallest detail at considerable distance.

Having retrieved our luggage, there was nothing more urgent than to seek out a *fonda* or *parador* of some kind, since the eggs we partook of in Illescas already seemed far away. We were led, through alleys so narrow that two loaded donkeys could not have passed abreast, to the Fonda del Caballero, one of the most comfortable in the city. There, collecting the little Spanish that we knew, and with the help of pathetic mime, we managed to make the hostess, a gentle and charming woman, with the most interesting and distinguished air, comprehend that we were dying of hunger, something which always seemed to greatly astonish the natives of the country, who live on air and sun, in the highly economic fashion of chameleons.

The whole kitchen was put to work; about the fire, countless little pots were set, in which the spicy stews of the Spanish cuisine are distilled and sublimated, and we were promised dinner in an hour. We took advantage of that hour to examine the *fonda* in more detail.

It was a fine building, no doubt some old hotel, its interior courtyard paved with coloured marble forming a mosaic, and decorated with white marble wells, and troughs lined with earthenware tiles for washing the glasses and bowls.

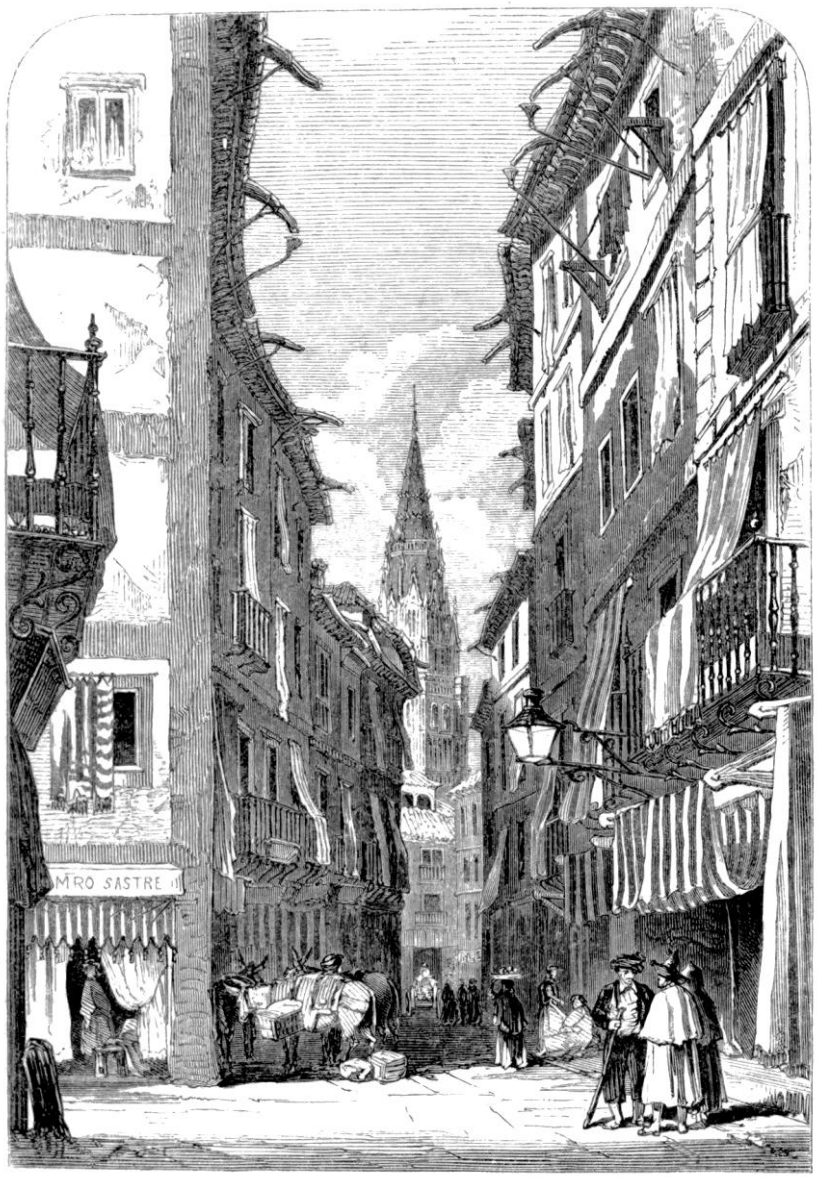
The courtyard is called a *patio*; it is usually surrounded by columns and arcades, with a fountain in the middle. A canvas *tendido* (*awning*) which is folded up in the evening to let in the cool night air, serves as the ceiling for this sort of inside-out living room. All around, at the height of the first floor, there is an elegantly-worked iron balcony, onto which the windows and doors of the rooms open, rooms which one enters only to dress, dine, or take a nap. The rest of the time, we remained in this courtyard-salon, which was furnished with paintings, chairs, sofas, a piano, and embellished with flower-pots and orange trees in tubs.

Our inspection was barely over when Celestina (a strange and whimsical serving girl) came to tell us, while humming a song, that dinner was served. The meal was quite passable: cutlets, eggs with tomatoes, chicken fried in oil, and trout from the Tagus, accompanied by a bottle of

Peralta, a thick sweet mulled wine, flavoured with a certain hint of muscat which is not unpleasant.

The meal over, we wandered into the city, preceded by our guide, a barber by trade, and an aid to tourists in his spare time.

The Toledo streets are extremely narrow; one could link hands from one window to its opposite, and nothing would be easier than to climb over the balconies, if those very fine grilles and elegant bars of rich ironwork, with which they are so lavish beyond the mountains, did not keep such good order by preventing aerial familiarities. The lack of width would make all those partisans of civilisation cry aloud, who dream only of immense squares, vast market-places, wide streets and other more or less progressive embellishments; yet nothing is more reasonable than narrow streets in a torrid climate, and the architects and engineers who are cutting such large gaps in the massif on which Algiers stands will shortly realise it is so. At the bottom of these narrow passages, conveniently set between blocks and islands of houses, one enjoys delightful freshness and shade, and one moves around under cover of the ramifications and porosities of this human coral-reef called a city; the ladles full of molten lead that Phoebus-Apollo pours from the sky at midday scarcely reach you; the projecting roofs serve as a parasol.



Street in Toledo

If, by misfortune, you are forced to pass through some *plazuela* (*little square*) or *calle ancha* (*wide street*) exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, you soon appreciate the wisdom of former days, when architects chose not to sacrifice everything to some foolish idea of regularity; the paving slabs are like those red-hot sheet-metal plates on which showmen make geese and turkeys dance the *krakowiak*; the wretched dogs, lacking shoes or *alpargatas*, cross them at the run, uttering plaintive howls. If you raise a door-knocker, you burn your fingers; you can feel your brain boiling in your skull like a cooking pot on the fire; your nose turns crimson, your hands burn, you evaporate in sweat. This is all that large squares and wide streets achieve. Anyone who has spent between noon and two o'clock in Madrid's Calle de Alcalá will agree with me. Moreover, to win spacious streets, the houses are reduced in size, while the opposite seems more reasonable. It is to be understood that this observation only applies to hot

countries, where it never rains, where mud is seldom found, and vehicles extremely rare. Narrow streets in our rainy climate would be abominable cesspools. In Spain, women go about on foot in shoes of black satin, and make long journeys thus; for which I admire them, especially in Toledo, where the pavements are composed of small sharp brightly-polished stones, which seem to have been carefully placed with the cutting edge uppermost; but the women's small arched and muscular feet prove as tough as the hooves of a gazelle, and they flit about as gaily as anything on diamond-cut pavements which makes the traveller accustomed to the softness of asphalt from Seyssel on the Rhône, and the elasticity of Antoine Polonceau's bitumen, cry out in anguish.

Houses in Toledo present a severe and imposing appearance; they possess few windows on the facade, and those are usually barred. The doors, decorated with bluish-granite pillars topped with stone balls, a decoration which is frequently reproduced, have an air of solidity and thickness added to by constellations of enormous nails. The houses have the air, at one and the same time, of monastery, prison, fortress, and to some extent harem after the Moors passed through. Some of the residences, in bizarre contrast, are decorated and painted externally, either in fresco or tempera, with imitation bas-reliefs, grisailles, flowers, rocailles and garlands, with vases, medallions, cupids, and all the mythological jumble of the last century. These *trumeau* and *pompadour* houses produce the strangest, most farcical effect beside their sullen sisters of feudal or Moorish origin.

We were guided to the Alcázar, located like an acropolis on the highest point of the city, through an inextricable network of small alleys, where my companion and I walked one behind the other, like the geese in the ballad, for lack of room to link arms, and we entered it after some discussion, since the first reaction of those to whom one addresses oneself is always a refusal, whatever the request may be. 'Come back this evening; or tomorrow; the guard is taking a nap; the keys are lost; you need permission from the governor': such are the answers one receives at first; but, by exhibiting the sacred *peseta*, or the gleaming *duro* (*a five-peseta coin*) in case of extreme difficulties, we always ended up forcing the issue.

The Alcázar, built on the ruins of the ancient Moorish palace, is today itself in ruins; it looks like one of those marvellous architectural dreams that Piranesi pursued in his magnificent etchings; it is by Alonso de Covarrubias, a little-known architect and sculptor, but far superior to the heavy and ponderous Juan de Herrera, whose fame is much overrated.

The facade, flowery and ornamented with the purest Renaissance arabesques, is a masterpiece of elegance and nobility. The ardent Spanish sun, which reddens marble and gives stone a saffron hue, has coated it with a dressing of rich and vigorous colour, very different from the leprous black with which the centuries encrust our old buildings. According to the expression of a great poet, Time has passed his thumb, thoughtfully, over the edges of the marble, over the too-rigid contours, and given to this sculpture, already so supple and so soft, a supreme polish and final completion. I especially remember a large staircase of magical elegance, with columns, banisters and marble steps already half-broken, leading to a door which opened onto a void, since that part of the building had collapsed. This admirable staircase, which a king could traverse, and which leads to nothing, has about it something prestigious and singular.

The Alcázar is built on a large esplanade surrounded by crenellated ramparts in oriental fashion, from the top of which one discovers an immense view, a truly magical panorama: here the cathedral thrusts its disproportionate spire into the heart of the sky; further away, in a ray of sunlight, shines the monastery of San Juan de los Reyes; the Alcántara bridge, with its tower-shaped gateway, spans the Tagus in bold arches; the Artificio de Juanelo (*Juanelo Turriano's hydraulic water-lift*) clutters the river with its storied red-brick arcades which one might mistake for the remains of Roman constructions; and the massive towers of the Castillo de Cervantes (this Cervantes has nothing in common with the author of *Don Quixote*), perched on the rough and misshapen rocks which border the river, add one more set of jagged features to a horizon already cut so deeply by the ridged vertebrae of the mountains.

An admirable sunset completed the picture: the sky, through imperceptible graduations, went from the brightest red to orange, then to pale lemon, to arrive at a strange blue, the colour of greenish turquoise, which blended, in the west, with the lilac hues of night, whose shadow was already cooling that hemisphere.

Leaning on the corner of a niche, and looking down, in a bird's eye view, at this city where I knew no one, and where my name was completely unknown, I fell into a deep meditation. Faced with all these objects, all these forms, which I saw now and probably would never see again, I was possessed by doubt of my own identity, I felt so absent from myself, transported so far from my own sphere, that everything seemed a hallucination, a strange dream, from which I was about to wake with a start to the sharp, quavering sound of vaudeville music rising from beyond the edge of some theatre-box. By one of those leaps of thought so common in reverie, I reflected on what my friends might be doing at that hour; I wondered if they had noticed my absence, and if, by chance, at this very moment, as I was leaning over that niche in the Alcázar of Toledo, my name was fluttering on some beloved and faithful Parisian lips. Apparently, my internal response was not in the affirmative; since, despite the magnificence of the spectacle, I felt my soul invaded by an immeasurable sadness, and yet I was fulfilling the dream of my whole life, I was touching with my fingers one of my most ardently cherished goals: I had spoken enough, during the lovely verdant years of my Romanticism, of my fine blade from Toledo, to be curious to see the place where it was made.

It took nothing less than the suggestion made by my friend that we go for a swim in the Tagus to rouse me from my philosophical meditation. Bathing is so a rare a feature in a country where, in summer, the riverbeds themselves are irrigated with water from the wells, that it made sense not to neglect the opportunity. On the guide's assertion that the Tagus was a serious river, and possessed enough moisture to yield a cupful or two, we descended in all haste from the Alcázar, in order to take advantage of the daylight, and we headed for the river. After crossing the Plaza de la Constitución (*Plaza de Zocodover*) lined with houses whose windows, furnished with large esparto-grass blinds rolled-up or half-raised above the projecting balconies, gave it a most picturesque look of Venice and the Middle Ages, we passed under a beautiful doorway in the Arab style with a brick arch (*El Arco de la Sangre*), and arrived, by a steep and abrupt zigzag path snaking along the rocks and walls which serve to enclose Toledo, at the Alcántara bridge, near which there was a suitable place for bathing.

During the journey, night, which succeeds day so swiftly in southern climes, had fallen, and the darkness was complete, which did not prevent us from clawing our way into that estimable river, made famous by Queen Hortense's languorous Romantic air (*'Fleuve du Tage'*), and by the golden sand it bears in its crystal-clear waters according to the poets, the servants, and the travel-guides.

Our bathing over, we ascended again, hastily, so as to return before the doors were closed. We enjoyed a glass of *horchata de chufas* and iced milk, yielding an exquisite taste and aroma, and were guided back to our *fonda*.

The plaster of our room, like all Spanish rooms, was whitewashed and covered with those encrusted yellowed pictures, those mystical daubs executed like beer signs, which one meets with so often in the Peninsula, that part of the world which contains the greatest number of bad paintings; which is said without detriment to those that are good.

We determined to fall asleep as soon, and as deeply as possible, in order to wake early, and visit the cathedral the next morning, before the services began.

Toledo's cathedral is considered, and with good reason, to be one of the finest and, above all, richest in Spain. Its foundation is lost in the mists of time, and, if local authors are to be believed, it goes back to the apostle Santiago, the first bishop of Toledo, who indicated the place to his disciple and successor Elpidius, hermit of Mount Carmel. Elpidius raised a church at the place so designated, invoking Saint Mary and granting it her title, while that divine lady still lived in Jerusalem. 'Notable felicity! Illustrious coat of arms of the Tolédans! Most excellent trophy of their glories!' exclaims, in lyrical effusion, the author from whom I extracted these details.

The holy Virgin proved not ungrateful, and, according to the same legend, descended in body and soul in order to visit the church in Toledo, and brought with her own hands to the blessed Saint Ildefonso a beautiful chasuble *made of heavenly cloth*. 'See how well this queen repaid us!' cries our author again. The chasuble still exists, and we see embedded in the wall the stone on which the divine foot was planted, the imprint of which it still retains. An inscription, conceived thus, attests to the miracle:

QUANDO LA REINA DEL CIELO

When Heaven's Queen,

PUSO LOS PIES EN EL SUELO

set her foot on this floor,

EN ESTA PIEDRA LOS PUSO

it was on this stone it was set

Legend further relates that the Blessed Virgin was so pleased with her statue, found it so well made, so well-proportioned, and so good a likeness, that she kissed it and granted it the

gift of working miracles. If the Queen of Angels came down to our churches today, I doubt she would be tempted to thus embrace her image.

More than two hundred of the most serious and honourable authors relate this story, which is as proven, to say the least, as that of the cause of Henri IV's death; as for myself, I have no difficulty believing in this miracle, and am happy to accept the tale as authentic. The church remained as it was until Eugenius, sixth bishop of Toledo, enlarged and embellished it, as much as his means allowed, under the title of Santa María de Toledo, which it still retains today; but in the year 302, the time of the cruel persecution suffered by Christians under the emperors Diocletian and Maximian, the prefect, Dacian, ordered the temple to be demolished and razed, so that the faithful no longer knew where to ask for and obtain the bread of grace. Three years later, Constantius, father of the great Constantine, having ascended the throne, the persecution ceased, the prelates returned to their seats, and Archbishop Melantius began to rebuild the church, on the same site. Shortly afterwards, around the year 312, Emperor Constantine, having converted to the faith, ordered, among other heroic works to which his Christian zeal impelled him, the repair and construction, at his own expense, in the most sumptuous manner possible, this basilica church of Our Lady of the Assumption of Toledo, which Dacian had destroyed.

Toledo then had as archbishop Patruinus, a learned, well-read man, who enjoyed the friendship of the emperor; this circumstance left him complete freedom to act, and he spared no expense in building a remarkable temple, of great and sumptuous architecture: it was this cathedral, that survived the time of the Goths, was visited by the Virgin, became a mosque during the conquest of Spain, and which, when Toledo was taken by King Alfonso VI, became a church again, the plan of which was carried to Oviedo by the order of the king of Asturias, Alfonso II the Chaste, in order to build, in accordance with that layout, the church of San Salvador of that city, in the year 803. 'Those who are curious to know the grand and majestic form the cathedral of Toledo possessed at the time when the Queen of Angels descended to it, only have to visit that of Oviedo, and they will be satisfied,' adds our author. For our part, we very much regret having been unable to grant ourselves that pleasure.

Finally, in the happy reign of Ferdinand III known as the Saint, Don Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada being archbishop of Toledo, the church took on the admirable and magnificent form that we see today, the form, it is said, of the temple of Diana at Ephesus. O naive chronicler! Permit me to believe not a word of it: the temple at Ephesus was no match for the cathedral of Toledo! Archbishop Rodrigo, assisted by the king and the entire court, after saying a pontifical mass, laid the first stone on a Saturday, in the year 1227; the work continued with great enthusiasm until the final touches had been made to it, and it had been brought to the highest degree of perfection that human art could attain.

Forgive the brief historical digression; I am not accustomed to the task, and will return swiftly to my humble role as tourist, guide, and literary daguerreotype.

The exterior of Toledo cathedral is far less rich than that of Burgos: no efflorescence of ornaments, no arabesques, no necklace of statues blossoming about the portals; solid buttresses, clear sharp angles, thick armour of dressed stone, a bell-tower of robust appearance, possessing none of the delicacy of Gothic jeweller's-work, all this coated in a reddish hue, the colour of

toast, or the sunburnt skin of a pilgrim returned from Palestine; the interior, on the other hand, is hollowed out and sculpted like a cave full of stalactites.

The door (*Puerto del Reloj*) through which we entered is of bronze and bears the following inscription: *Antonio Zurreno del arte de Oro y Plata, faciebat esta media puerta* (*Antonio Zurreno, artist in gold and silver, made this half of the door*). The impression one experiences is of the vividly grandiose; the church is divided into the nave and four aisles, two on each side: the nave is of disproportionate height, the aisles seem as if bowing their heads while kneeling as a sign of adoration and respect; eighty-eight pillars, as tall as towers and each composed of sixteen tapered columns joined together, support the enormous mass of the building; a transverse arm cuts the main nave between the choir and the high altar, forming the arms of the cross. All this architecture, a rare merit in Gothic cathedrals which were usually re-built several times, is in the most homogeneous and finished style; the original plan was executed from beginning to end, except for a few side-chapels which in no way conflict with the harmony of the general appearance. Stained-glass rose-windows sparkling with emerald, sapphire and ruby colours, set in stone ribs, produce a soft, mysterious filtered light conducive to religious ecstasy, and, when the sun is over-bright, esparto-grass blinds lowered over the windows maintain a semi-darkness full of cool air, which makes the churches of Spain such favourable places for meditation and prayer.

The main altar or *retablo* alone could pass for a church; it is an enormous pile of columns, niches, statues, foliage, and arabesques, of which the most minute description could give only a very faint idea; all this architecture, which rises to the vault and curves about the sanctuary, is painted and gilded with unimaginable richness. The tawny and warm tones of the antique gilding complement, in splendour, the glittering threads and rays of light caught in their traverse of the ribs and projections of the ornamentation, producing admirable effects, of the greatest and most picturesque opulence. The paintings, on a gold background, which adorn the panels of this altar equal, in their richness of the colour, the most dazzling Venetian canvases; this union of colour with the severe and almost hieratic forms of the art of the Middle Ages is encountered only very rarely; one might mistake the style of some of these paintings for Giorgione's finest manner.

Opposite the high altar is placed the choir or *silleria*, according to Spanish usage; it is formed of three rows of carved, excavated wooden stalls, cut in a marvellous way, with historical, allegorical, and sacred bas-reliefs. Gothic art, on the verge of the Renaissance, produced nothing purer, more perfect, nor better designed. This work, involving a fearful amount of detail, is attributed to the patient chisels of Philippe de Bourgogne and Alonso Berruguete. The archbishop's stall, set higher than the rest, is in the shape of a throne and marks the centre of the choir; jasper columns, of a brown shiny hue, crown this prodigious carpentry, and on the entablature rise alabaster figures, also by Philippe de Bourgogne and Berruguete, but in a freer and more flowing manner, of admirable elegance in appearance. Enormous bronze desks covered with gigantic missals, large mats of esparto-grass, and two organs of colossal size, placed facing each other, one on the right, the other on the left, complete the decor.

Behind the *retablo* is the chapel where Don Álvaro de Luna and his wife are buried in two magnificent juxtaposed alabaster tombs; the walls of this chapel are decorated with the arms of

that constable, and the scallop shells of the Order of Santiago, of which he was the grand master. Close by, embedded in the vault of that portion of the nave which they here call the *trascoro* (*afterchoir*), I noticed a stone with a funeral inscription: that of a noble Toledan, whose pride revolted at the idea that his grave might be trampled on by the feet of people of low rank and doubtful extraction: 'I prefer my chest not to be trodden by the masses,' he had said on his deathbed; and, as he bequeathed a great deal of property to the church, his odd whim was satisfied by housing his body in the masonry of the vault where, indeed, no one was likely to step on him.

I shall not attempt to describe the side-chapels one after the other, it would take a whole volume for that: I will content myself with mentioning the tomb of a cardinal, worked with unimaginable delicacy in the Arab manner; the best comparison would be with guipure lace, but on a larger scale, and will arrive, without further delay, at the Mozarabic or Musharabic chapel, both terms being employed, one of the most curious in the cathedral. Before describing this chapel, let me explain what these words *Mozarabic chapel* mean.

At the time of the Moorish invasion, the inhabitants of Toledo were forced to surrender after a two-year siege; they sought to obtain the most favourable terms for their capitulation, and among the articles agreed was this: namely that six churches would be kept for those Christians who wished to live alongside the 'barbarians'. The churches were those of San Marcos, San Lucas, San Sebastián, San Torcato, Santa Olalla, and San Justo. By this means, the Christian faith was preserved in the city during the four hundred years that Moorish domination lasted there, and for this reason the faithful Toledans were called Mozarabs, that is to say mixed with the Arabs. During the reign of Alfonso VI, when Toledo was returned to Christian authority, Cardinal Ricardo, the papal legate, wanted to abandon the Mozarabic office in favour of the Gregorian rite, supported in this by the king and by queen Constance, who both preferred the Roman rite. The clergy revolted, amidst a loud outcry; the faithful revealed their indignation, and there was nearly a mutinous popular uprising. The king, dreading the way things were going, and afraid the populace might take them to the last extreme, pacified them as best he could, and proposed to the Toledans this *mezzo termine*, this singular measure, entirely in the spirit of that age, which was accepted with enthusiasm on both sides: the supporters of the Gregorian rite and the Mozarabic rite were each to choose a champion and have them fight one another, so that God would decide in which manner and rite he preferred to be praised. Indeed, if ever God's judgment were acceptable it must certainly be so in regard to liturgy.

The champion of the Mozarabs was one Don Ruiz de La Matanza; the day dawned; La Vega was chosen as the location for the fight. The victory remained uncertain for some time, but in the end Don Ruiz had the advantage and emerged victorious from the lists, to cries of delight from the Toledans, who, weeping with joy and throwing their caps in the air, entered the churches to kneel and return thanks to God. The king, queen, and court were most upset at this triumph. Realising, somewhat late, that it was an impious, reckless and cruel thing to have a theological question resolved by bloody combat, they claimed that only a miracle could decide the matter, and proposed a new test, which the Toledans, confident in the excellence of their ritual, were willing to accept. The test consisted, after a general fast and prayers in all the

churches, of placing on a lighted pyre a book containing the text of the Roman liturgy, and another of the Toledan liturgy; the one which survived the flames without being burned would be deemed the best and most pleasing to God.

The test was carried out, point by point. A pyre of dry, highly-inflammable wood was erected on Zocodover Square, which, since it was created, had never seen such an influx of spectators; the two breviaries were thrown into the fire, each party raising their eyes and arms to heaven, and praying to God for the liturgy in which they preferred to serve him. The Roman ritual was rejected, the leaves scattered by the violence of the fire, and emerged from the ordeal intact, but a little scorched. The Toledan remained majestically in the midst of the flame, in the place where it had fallen, without stirring and without receiving any damage. Some enthusiastic Mozarabs even claim that the Roman missal was entirely consumed. The king, the queen and Cardinal Ricardo, the Papal legate, were scarcely content, but there was no path of retreat. The Mozarabic rite was therefore preserved and followed with ardour for many years by the Mozarabs, their children, and grandchildren; but, in the end, understanding of the text was lost, and no one remained capable of speaking or comprehending the office, the object of such lively dispute. Don Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, archbishop of Toledo, not wanting to let such a memorable rite fall into disuse, founded a Mozarabic chapel within the cathedral, had the rituals, which were in Gothic characters, translated and printed in ordinary letters, and instituted priests especially responsible for uttering this office.

The Mozarabic chapel, which still survives today, is decorated with Gothic frescoes of the highest interest: their subjects are battles between the Toledans and the Moors; the conservation is perfect, the colours as vivid as if the painting had been completed yesterday; an archaeologist might find from them a thousand intriguing items of information as regards weapons, costumes, equipment, and architecture, since the main fresco represents a view of ancient Toledo, which must have proved highly accurate. In the side frescoes the ships which brought the Arabs to Spain are painted in great detail; a professional seagoer might again draw useful information from them concerning the complex history of the navy in the Middle Ages. The coat of arms of Toledo, five sable stars on a field argent, is repeated in several places in this low-vaulted chapel, barred in the Spanish fashion by a gate of fine workmanship.

The chapel of the Virgin, entirely covered with porphyry, jasper, yellow and purple breccia of an admirable polish, is of a richness which exceeds the splendours of the *Thousand and One Nights*; many relics are kept there, including a shrine donated by Saint Louis, which contains a fragment of the true cross.

To catch our breath, we will, if you please, take a walk in the cloister, which frames with elegant and severe arcades beautiful masses of vegetation to which the church’s shade grants freshness, despite the consuming ardour of the season; all the walls of this cloister are covered with immense frescoes, in the style of the Van Loo family, by a painter named Francisco Bayeu. These compositions, simply arranged and pleasantly coloured, are out of keeping with the style of the building, and undoubtedly replaced older paintings which had deteriorated over the centuries, or had been found too Gothic in style by people of good taste in those days. A cloister beside a church is well-sited; it happily allows a transition from the tranquility of the sanctuary to the hustle and bustle of the city. One can walk there, dream, and reflect, without however

being required to follow the prayers and ceremonies of worship; Catholics enter the temple, Christians more often linger in the cloister. This state of mind was understood by the Catholics, such skilful psychologists. In religious countries, the cathedral is the most highly-decorated, the richest, the most gilded, the most ornate of places; it is there that the shade is coolest, and the feeling of peace deepest; the music is better there than in the theatre, and the pomp of its spectacle has no rival. It is the central point, the place that attracts all, much like the Opéra in Paris. We have no idea, we Catholics of the North, with our Voltairean temples, of the luxury, elegance, and comfort of Spanish churches; such churches are furnished, alive, and lack the glacially deserted appearance of ours: the faithful can live there on familiar terms with their God.

The sacristies and chapter house of Toledo cathedral are of a more than royal magnificence; nothing is more noble or more picturesque than these vast rooms decorated with the solid and severe luxury to which the Church alone holds the secret. One sees only joiner's work in walnut or black oak, tapestry or Indian damask door-hangings, curtains of embossed fabric with large heavy folds, ancient drapes, Persian carpets, fresco paintings. I shall refrain from describing them one by one, and will only speak of a room decorated with admirable frescoes representing religious subjects, in that German style which the Spaniards imitate so well, attributed to Berruguete's nephew, if not Berruguete himself, since those prodigious geniuses travelled the threefold path of their art at the same. I would also cite an immense ceiling by Luca Giordano, over which a whole world of angels and allegories teem, foreshortened in the freest manner, and which creates a unique optical effect. From the centre of the vault springs a ray of light which, though painted on a flat surface, seems to fall perpendicularly towards your eye, whichever side you observe it from.

Here the cathedral's treasures are kept, that is to say beautiful copes of brocade, uncut cloth of gold, and silver damask, wondrous guipure lace, silver-gilt shrines, diamond-studded monstrances, gigantic silver candlesticks, and embroidered banners; all the equipment and accessories needed for the presentation of that sublime Catholic drama which we call the Mass.

One of these rooms contains the Blessed Virgin Mary's wardrobe, since cold statues of marble or alabaster are not enough for these southerners' passionate piety; in their transports of devotion, they heap ornaments of extravagant richness on the object of their worship; nothing is lovely enough, brilliant enough, costly enough; under this flow of jewels the form and substance disappear: it concerns them little. Their greatest aim is for it to be materially impossible to hang one more pearl on the marble ears of the idol, to embed a larger diamond in the gold of her crown, or to trace one more pattern of jewels on the brocade of her dress.

Never did a queen in ancient times, not even Cleopatra, who drank pearls, or an empress of the Late Empire, or a duchess of the Middle Ages, or a Venetian courtesan at the time of Titian possess a more glittering casket, a richer trousseau than Our Lady of Toledo. We were shown some of the dresses: one is entirely covered, masking the background, with patterns and arabesques of fine pearls among which there are some of inestimable size and value, among others several rows of black pearls of incredible rarity; suns and stars of precious stones stud this prodigious dress, whose brilliance the eye can scarcely tolerate, and which is worth several million francs.

We ended our visit with an ascent of the bell tower, whose summit we reached via a series of ladders that were quite steep, and not very secure. About midway we came across, in a kind of storage area that we traversed, a series of gigantic mannequins, coloured and dressed in the fashion of the last century, which are employed in some procession akin to that of the *tarasque* at Tarascon.

The magnificent view visible from the top of the spire compensates to a large degree for the effort involved in the ascent. The whole city appears before one's eyes with the clarity and precision of those scale models sculpted in cork by Auguste Pelet, which we admired at the last industrial exhibition. The comparison may no doubt seem most prosaic and not very picturesque, but in truth I cannot find a better or more accurate one. Those humped and tortured rocks of blue granite, which enclose the Tagus and one side of Toledo's horizon, further add to the singularity of this landscape, flooded by and riddled with a harsh, pitiless, blinding light, which no reflection tempers, and which is further increased by the radiant, cloudless, vapourless sky, turned white by the heat, like iron in the furnace.

The heat was indeed atrocious, that of a plaster-kiln, and a rabid curiosity was demanded in order not to relinquish the exploration of monuments in this Senegambian temperature, but we still possessed all the ferocious ardour of enthusiastic Parisian tourists for local colour! Nothing deterred us; we only stopped to drink, since we were thirstier than African sand, and absorbed water like dry sponges. I really don't know how we missed becoming dropsical; not counting wine and ices, we consumed seven or eight jars of water a day. *Water! Water!* was our perpetual cry, and a chain of *muchachas*, passing jugs from hand to hand from the kitchen to our room, was barely enough to quench the fire. Without this persistent flood, we would have turned to dust like the sculptors' clay models when they neglect to dampen them.

Having viewed the cathedral, we resolved, despite our thirst, to visit the church of San Juan de los Reyes, but it was only after long negotiation that we succeeded in obtaining the keys, because the church had been closed for five or six years, and the monastery of which it is part is abandoned and falling to ruin.

San Juan de Los Reyes is sited on a bank of the Tagus, close to the Puente de San Martín; its walls possess that beautiful orange tint which distinguishes ancient monuments in climates where it seldom rains. A collection of statues of various kings in noble, chivalrous attitudes, and of proud appearance, decorates the exterior; but this is not what is most singular about San Juan de los Reyes; all the churches of the Middle Ages are populated with statues. A multitude of chains hanging from hooks adorn the walls from top to bottom: these are the shackles of Christian prisoners set free following the conquest of Granada. The chains, hung up there as ornaments, and ex-votos, give the church the somewhat strange, forbidding, though false appearance of being a prison.

An anecdote on this subject was related to us, which I will set down here since it is short and characteristic. The dream of every *jefe politico* (*civil governor*), in Spain, is to lay out an *alameda* (*promenade*), as every prefect in France desires a Rue de Rivoli in his city. The dream of the *jefe politico* of Toledo was to grant his citizens, therefore, a pleasant walkway; the location was chosen, the earthworks were soon completed, thanks to the cooperation of the *Presidio* (garrison); all that was missing from the promenade were trees, but trees cannot

be improvised, and the *jefe politico* had the wise idea of replacing them with stone markers linked together by means of iron chains. As money is scarce in Spain, the ingenious administrator, a resourceful man if ever there was one, thinking of the ancient chains of San Juan de Los Reyes, said to himself: 'By Heaven, there's the perfect solution!' And the chains from the prisoners delivered by Ferdinand and Isabella were attached to the boundary stones of the *alameda*. The locksmiths who carried out the work each received a few fathoms of this noble scrap-metal; a handful of intelligent people (for there are some everywhere) opposed this barbarity, and the chains were returned to the church. As for those that had been given as payment to the workers, they had already been forged into plough-shares, iron shoes for the mules, and various utensils. The tale is perhaps a slander, but it has all the characteristics of plausibility: we relate it as it was told to us: now let us return to our church. The key turned, with some difficulty in the rusty lock. This slight obstacle overcome, we entered a ruined cloister of admirable elegance; slender, semi-detached columns supported, on flowered capitals, arcades with extremely delicate ribbing and embroidered decoration; on the walls ran long inscriptions in praise of Ferdinand and Isabella, in Gothic characters interspersed with flowers, branches and arabesques; a Christian imitation of the Moors' employment of sentences and verses of the Koran as architectural ornamentation. What a pity that such a precious monument should have been abandoned in this way!

By giving a few kicks to doors obstructed by worm-eaten boards or blocked with rubble, we managed to gain entry to the church, which is of a charming style, and seemed, apart from a degree of violent mutilation, to have been completed only yesterday. Gothic art has produced nothing more pleasant, elegant or finer. A gallery surrounds all, pierced and fenestrated like a steel fish-slice, its adventurous balconies being suspended from the beams of the pillars, whose recesses and projections it follows perfectly; gigantic scrollwork, eagles, chimeras, heraldic animals, coats of arms, banners and emblematic inscriptions like those in the cloister complete the decoration. The choir placed opposite the *retablo*, at the far end of the church, is supported by a low arch of beautiful appearance and great boldness.

The altar, which was undoubtedly a masterpiece of sculpture and painting, had been mercilessly overturned. These unnecessary devastations sadden the soul and make us doubt human intelligence: how can old stones hinder new ideas? Can we not make a revolution without demolishing the past? It seems to me that the *Constitucion* would have lost nothing by Ferdinand and Isabella's church being left intact; she, that noble queen who trusted in genius, and endowed the universe with a new world.

Risking our lives on a half-broken staircase, we entered the interior of the monastery: the refectory is quite large and holds nothing in particular except a frightful painting set above the door; it represents, made even more hideous by the layer of dirt and dust which covers it, a corpse prey to decomposition, with all those horrid details treated so complacently by Spanish artists. A symbolic and funereal inscription, one of those threatening biblical sentences which give such terrible warnings of human nothingness, is written at the bottom of this sepulchral painting, singularly chosen for a refectory. I know not if all the stories about the gluttony of monks are true; but, for my part, I would possess but a mediocre appetite in a dining room decorated in that way.

Above, on each side of a long corridor, the deserted cells of the vanished monks are arranged like cells in a bee hive; they are all exactly the same as each other, and plastered with lime. This whiteness greatly diminishes the poetical impression by ridding the dark corners of terrifying chimeras. The interior of the church and the cloister are also whitewashed, giving them an air of the fresh and recent that contrasts with the style of the architecture and the condition of the buildings. The absence of humidity and the heat have prevented flowering plants and weeds germinating in the interstices of the stones and rubble, and the debris lacks the green coating of ivy with which time clothes ruins in northern climes. We wandered through the abandoned building for quite some time, following its endless corridors, ascending and descending hazardous staircases, like none other than Ann Radcliff's heroes, but saw no ghosts, in fact, except for two wretched lizards which fled on all fours, doubtless ignoring, in their capacity as Spaniards, the French proverb: 'The lizard is man's friend.' As for the rest, this walk among the veins and members of a great construction from which life has withdrawn, is the liveliest of pleasures one can imagine; forever expecting to encounter at the corner of an arcade an ancient monk with gleaming forehead, eyes flooded with shadow, walking gravely, arms crossed on his chest, on his way to some mysterious service in the desecrated and deserted church.

We retreated, since there was no more of interest to see, not even the kitchens, to which our guide led us downwards with a Voltairean smile that a subscriber to the *Constitutionnel* would not have disavowed. The church and the cloister are of rare magnificence; the rest is of the strictest simplicity: everything for the soul, nothing for the senses.

A short distance from San Juan de los Reyes is, or rather is not, the famous synagogue (*latterly the church of Santa María la Blanca*) in the Moorish style; since, lacking a guide, you might pass it by twenty times without suspecting its existence. Our guide knocked at a door cut in the most insignificant reddish adobe wall in the world; after some time, since the Spaniard is never in a hurry, someone came, opened the door, and asked us if we wished to visit the synagogue; upon our affirmative answer, we were introduced into a sort of courtyard filled with uncultivated vegetation, in the middle of which flourished an Indian fig-tree with deeply incised leaves, of an intense and brilliant greenery as if they had been varnished. In the background was a characterless building, looking more like a barn than anything else. We were taken into this hovel. Never was there a greater surprise: we were in the midst of the Orient; the slender columns with capitals shaped like turbans, the Turkish arches, the verses from the Koran, the flat ceiling with cedarwood compartments, the daylight admitted from above, nothing was lacking. Remains of old, almost erased, illuminations dyed the walls strange colours, and further added to the singularity of the effect. This synagogue, of which the Arabs made a mosque, and the Christians a church, today serves as a workshop and dwelling for a carpenter. His workbench took the place of the altar; this desecration is very recent. We can still see the remains of the *retablo*, and the inscription on black marble which notes the consecration of the building to Catholic worship.

Speaking of the synagogue, let me set down a rather curious anecdote here. The Jews of Toledo, no doubt to abate the horror they seemingly inspired in the prejudiced Christian

population who thought them deicides, claimed not to have consented to the death of Jesus Christ, as per the following: when Jesus was put on trial, the council of priests, chaired by Caiaphas, consulted the tribes to know whether he should be released or executed: the question was put to the Jews of Spain, and the synagogue of Toledo declared itself in favour of acquittal. This tribe was not covered in the blood of the Righteous One, and therefore did not deserve the execrations heaped upon those who voted against the Son of God. The original response of the Jews of Toledo, with a Latin translation of the Hebrew text, is said to be preserved in the Vatican archives. As a reward, they were allowed to build this synagogue, which is, I believe, one of the few that was thereafter tolerated in Spain.

We had been told of the ruins of an ancient Moorish pleasure-garden, the Galiana Palace; we were led there after leaving the synagogue, despite our fatigue, because time was pressing, and we were due to leave next day for Madrid.

The Galiana Palace is located outside the city, in La Vega, and you reach it via the Alcántara bridge. After a quarter of an hour walking through fields and crops where ran a thousand small irrigation canals, we arrived at a clump of fresh-looking trees, at the foot of which a water-wheel turned. of the most ancient and Egyptian simplicity. Earthen jars, attached to the spokes of the wheel by reed cords, lifted the water and poured it into a channel of hollow tiles, leading to a reservoir, from which it was easily directed to places where one could quench one's thirst.

An enormous pile of reddish bricks was outlined, in broken silhouette, behind the trees' foliage; it was the Galiana palace.

We entered this pile of rubble, inhabited by a peasant family, through a low door; it is impossible to imagine anything darker, smokier, dirtier or more cavernous. The Troglodytes were housed like princes compared to these people, and yet the charming Aixa Galiana, the Moorish beauty with long henna-tinted eyes and brocade jacket studded with pearls, had set her little slippers on this broken floor; she had leaned on this window, watching in the distance the Moorish horsemen in the Vega practicing throwing the *djerrid* (*wooden javelin*).

We continued our exploration, bravely; climbing to the upper floors on shaky ladders, clinging with hands and feet to the tufts of dry grass, which hung like beards from the sullen old walls.

Having attained the summit, we noticed a strange phenomenon; we arrived with white trousers, we left with black ones, but a blackness that was leaping, teeming, swarming: we were covered with imperceptible little flies which had precipitated themselves upon us in compact masses, attracted perhaps by the coolness of our northern blood. I never would have believed that there were so many flies in the world.

A few pipes to bring water to the ovens are the only vestiges of magnificence that time has spared: the glass and enamelled earthenware mosaics, the marble columns their capitals covered with gilding, relief-work, and verses from the Koran, the alabaster basins, the stones pierced with holes to allow perfumes to filter through, all have vanished. What remains is a carcass: high walls and piles of bricks that dissolve to dust; for these wondrous buildings, recalling the enchantments of the *Thousand and One Nights*, are sadly built only of bricks and

adobe covered with a layer of stucco or lime. All this lacework, all these arabesques, are not, as is generally believed, cut from marble or stone, but moulded in plaster, which allows them to be reproduced endlessly, and at minimal expense. It takes all the conserving dryness of the Spanish climate for monuments built with such frail materials to survive till our day.

The legend of Galiana is better preserved than her palace. She was the daughter of King Galafre, who loved her above all, and had a pleasure house built for her in La Vega with delightful gardens, kiosks, baths, and fountains that rose and fell according to the moon's phase, either by magic or one of the hydraulic devices so familiar to the Arabs. Galiana, idolised by her father, lived most pleasantly in this charming retreat, occupying herself with music, poetry, and dance. Her hardest task was to evade the gallantries and adorations of her suitors. The most importunate and relentless of all was a certain petty king of Guadalajara, named Bradamant, a giant of a Moor, bold and fierce. Galiana could not stand him; and, as the chronicler says: 'What matter that the knight is full of fire, if the lady is made of ice?' However, the Moor was not discouraged, and his passion to see Galiana and speak to her was so strong that he had a covered way dug from Guadalajara to Toledo along which he came to visit her every day.

At that time, Charlemagne, son of Pepin, came to Toledo, sent by his father, to bring relief to Galafre against the king of Cordoba, Abdelrhaman. Calafre lodged him in this same Galiana Palace; since the Moors allowed their daughters, willingly, to receive famous and important people. Charlemagne had a tender heart under his iron armour, and it was not long before he was madly in love with the Moorish princess. At first, he tolerated Bradamant's attentions to her, not yet being sure of having himself touched the beauty's heart; but as Galiana, despite her reserve and modesty, could not long hide from him the secret preference of her soul, he began to show jealousy, and demanded the suppression of his swarthy rival. Galiana, who was already French to the core, or so says the chronicle, and who moreover hated that petty king of Guadalajara, gave the prince to understand that she and her father were equally annoyed by the pursuits of the Moor, and that she would be glad to be rid of him. Charlemagne did not need to be told twice; he challenged Bradamant to single combat and, though Bradamant was a giant, defeated him, cut off his head, and presented it to Galiana, who found it a gift in good taste. This gallantry advanced the French prince strongly in the heart of the beautiful Moor, and, their mutual love increasing, Galiana pledged to embrace Christianity, so that Charlemagne could wed her; which was swiftly done, Galafre being delighted to give his daughter to so great a prince. In the meantime, Pepin had died, and Charlemagne returned to France, taking Galiana with him, she being crowned queen, and received with great rejoicing. This is how a Moorish lady become a Christian queen, 'and the memory of this story, still associated with the ancient building, deserves to be preserved in Toledo,' adds the chronicler by way of final reflection.

Before all else we needed to rid ourselves of the populations of microscopic insects that had stained the folds of our formerly white trousers; fortunately, the Tagus was not far off, so we bore Princess Galiana's flies there directly, and did as foxes do who gradually immerse themselves in water up to their noses, gripping with the tips of their teeth a piece of bark, which they later abandon to the river when they feel it is sufficiently crewed; for the infernal little creatures, encroached on by the waves, take refuge and lie dormant thereon. We ask forgiveness

from our readers for these ample and picaresque details which would be better suited to *La Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* or Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*; but a trip to Spain would not be complete without them, and we hope to be absolved on behalf of local colour.

The far bank of the Tagus is lined with sheer cliffs which are difficult of approach, and it was not without some difficulty that we descended to the place where we were to carry out this great drowning. I began to swim like a mariner as cleanly as possible, in order to be worthy of a river as famous and respectable as the Tagus, and, after a few strokes, I arrived at some ruined buildings, shapeless remains of masonry, which topped the level of the river by a few feet only. On the bank, on precisely the same side, stood an old ruined tower, with a semi-circular arched entrance, where some laundry hung up by washerwomen was drying, prosaically, in the sun.

I had merely reached the Baño de la Caba (*or Cava*), otherwise known to the French as the bath of the legendary Florinda, and the tower that I had in front of me was the tower of Rodrigo 'the last king of the Goths'. It was from the balcony of this window that Rodrigo, hidden behind a curtain, spied on the young girls bathing, and saw the beautiful Florinda la Caba comparing her legs, and those of her companions, to discover who had the roundest and shapeliest. Behold, on what things great events hang! If Florinda had possessed an ugly calf or an unsightly knee, the Arabs would not have entered Spain. Unfortunately, Florinda had trim feet, slender ankles, and the whitest, most attractive legs in the world. Rodrigo fell in love with the reckless bather, and seduced her. Count Julian of Ceuta, father of Florinda, furious at the outrage, betrayed his country to take revenge, and called on the Moors for aid. Rodrigo lost this famous battle which is so much talked about in the *romanceros*, and perished miserably in a coffin full of vipers, where he had lain himself down to do penance for his crime. Poor Florinda, stigmatised by the ignominious name of Caba, was held responsible by all Spain for this horror; yet what a preposterous and singular idea to have allowed a bath for young girls to face the young king's tower!

Since I have mentioned Rodrigo, let me also note here the legend of the Cave of Hercules, which is inevitably linked to the story of that unfortunate Visigoth prince. The Cave of Hercules (*Cuevas de Hércules*) is an underground passage which extends, it is said, three leagues beyond the walls, and whose entrance, tightly closed and padlocked, is in the alley of San-Ginès, on the furthest elevated point from the city. On this place there once stood a palace founded by Tubal; Hercules restored it, enlarged it, and established his laboratory and his school of magic there, for Hercules, of whom the Greeks later made a god, was above all a powerful cabalist. By means of his art, he built an enchanted tower, whose talismans and inscriptions stated that, if anyone entered this magical enclosure, a fierce and barbarous nation would invade Spain.

Fearing that this disastrous prediction would be fulfilled, all the kings, and especially the Gothic kings, added new locks and fresh padlocks to the mysterious entrance, not because they had certain faith in the prophecy, but because, as wise people, they cared not at all for involvement in such enchantments and sorceries. Rodrigo, more curious, or more in need as his debaucheries and prodigality had exhausted his wealth, wished to attempt the adventure, hoping to find considerable treasure in the enchanted depths: he made for the passage, at the head of a few determined folk equipped with torches, lanterns and ropes, and arrived at its entrance, carved from the living rock, closed with an iron cover amply-padlocked, and adorned

by a tablet on which could be read, in Greek characters: *The king who unlocks this passage and is able to discover the wonders it contains, will meet with both good and evil*. Previous kings, fearful of the consequences, had not dared go further; but Rodrigue, risking evil in hopes of good, ordered the padlocks to be broken, the bolts forced open, and the lid lifted; those who boasted of being the bravest descended first, but soon returned, trembling, pale, frightened, their torches extinguished, and those who could speak reported that they had been rendered afraid by a dreadful vision. Rodrigo, still resolving to breaking the spell, arranged fresh torches in such a way that the air flowing from the cave could not extinguish them, placed himself at the head of the troop, and entered boldly: he soon came to a square chamber, its architecture of the finest, in the midst of which stood a bronze statue, tall in stature and fearsome in appearance. The statue's feet were set on a column three cubits high, and it held in its hand a mace with which it struck great blows upon the pavement, producing the sound and gusts of air which had caused so much fear on first entry. Rodrigo, brave as any Goth, resolute as any Christian who trusts in God and is unsurprised by pagan enchantments, advanced upon this colossus and asked its permission to visit the wonders that were there.

The bronze warrior, signifying its agreement, ceased striking the earth with its heavy mace: it was possible to see what lay in the room, and it was not long before Rodrigo came across a chest on the lid of which was written: *He who opens me will see wonders*. On seeing the statues acquiescence, the king's companions recovered from their fright, and encouraged by the auspicious inscription, prepared to fill their cloaks and pockets with gold and diamonds; but all that was found in the chest was a rolled-up canvas on which were painted troops of Arabs, their heads girded with turbans; some were on foot, others on horseback, armed with shields and spears, and an inscription whose meaning was: *He who has come this far, and opened the chest, will lose Spain, defeated by people such as these*. King Rodrigo tried to conceal the melancholy emotion he experienced, so as not to cause the others sadness, and sought to see if there would not be some compensation for so disastrous a prophecy. Looking higher, Rodrigue saw on the wall, to the left of the statue, a cartouche which read: *Wretched king! You entered here to your misfortune!* And, on the right, another meaning: *You will be dispossessed by foreign nations, and your people suffer harsh punishment*. Behind the statue was written: *I invoke the Arabs*; and in front: *I do my duty*.

The king and his courtiers withdrew in confusion, filled with dark foreboding. That same night there was a furious storm, and the ruins of the Tower of Hercules collapsed with a dreadful crash. Not long afterwards events justified the prediction in the magic cave; the Arabs, depicted thus on the rolled-up canvas in the chest, displayed, in actuality, their turbans, spears and shields of a strange shape, on the unfortunate soil of Spain: all this, because Rodrigo gazed at Florinda's leg, and clambered down into a cellar.

But as night is falling, we must now return to the *fonda*, have supper, and sleep, since we still have to visit the hospital of Cardinal Don Pedro Gonzales de Mendoza, the arms factory, the remains of the Roman amphitheatre, and a thousand other curiosities, and we leave tomorrow evening. As for me, I am so weary of treading the diamond-sharp pavements, I would rather walk on my hands a while, like the clowns at the circus, and rest my aching feet. O

hansom-cab of civilization! Omnibus of progress! I invoke you, painfully; yet how would you have done in the streets of Toledo?

The Cardinal's hospital (*Hospital de Tavera*) is a large building of broad, severe proportions, which would take too long to describe. We will cross, in haste, its courtyard surrounded by columns and arcades, only remarkable for two circular air shafts with white marble copings, and immediately enter the church to examine the tomb of the cardinal, carved in alabaster by the prodigious Berruguete who lived for more than eighty years, blessing his homeland with masterpieces of varied style but always equal perfection. The cardinal lies on his tomb in his papal vestments; Death with his bony fingers, has pinched his nose, and a supreme muscular contraction that sought to hold back the soul on the verge of escape clamped the corners of the mouth and tapered his chin; never has the mask of a dead person's face been more sinisterly faithful; and yet the beauty of the work is such that we forget whatever is repellent regarding this spectacle. Little children, in attitudes of desolation, support the plinth and the cardinal's coat of arms; the most free and fluid terracotta possesses no greater a freedom and fluidity; it is not sculpted, it is kneaded!

There are also, in this church, two paintings by Doménikos Theotokópoulos, known as El Greco, an extravagant and bizarre painter who is, at present, scarcely known outside Spain. His folly was, as you may know, his fear of being seen as an imitator of Titian, whose pupil he had been; this preoccupation led him, stylistically, to indulge in the most baroque refinements and caprices.

The first of these two paintings, that which represents the *Holy Family*, must have rendered poor El Greco somewhat unhappy, since, at first glance, one might take it for a Titian. The ardent colouring, the liveliness of tone in the draperies, a beautiful yellow-amber glow which warms even the freshest nuances of the Venetian painter, everything combines to deceive the most practiced eye: the brushstrokes alone are less broad and thick. What little reason El Greco still possessed must have capsized utterly on the dark ocean of madness after having completed this masterpiece; there are few painters likely to go mad for a similar reason these days.

The other painting, whose subject is the *Baptism of Christ*, belongs entirely to El Greco's second style: here there is an excessive use of black and white, violent contrasts, a singular use of colour, freedom in the poses, draperies folded and crumpled at will; while in all this there reigns a depraved energy, a sickly power, which betrays both the great painter and the mad genius. Few paintings interest me as much as those of El Greco, because the worst always reveal something unexpected, beyond imagining, that surprises one and makes one dream.

After the hospital we visited the arms factory. It is a vast, symmetrical building, in good taste, founded by Charles III of Spain, whose name can be seen on all monuments of public utility; the factory is built close to the Tagus, whose waters are used to temper the blades, and drive the wheels of the machinery. The workshops occupy the sides of a large courtyard, surrounded by porticos and arcades as are almost all courtyards in Spain. Here, the iron is heated; there, it is subjected to the hammer; further on it is tempered; in one room are wheels for polishing and sharpening; in another scabbards and hilts are made. We will carry this investigation no further, since it offers our readers nothing in particular, and will only say that

the composition of these rightly famous blades involves the old iron shoes of horses and mules, carefully gathered for the purpose.

To confirm that the blades of Toledo still deserve their reputation, we were led to the testing room: a worker, of tall stature and colossal strength, took a weapon of the most ordinary kind, a straight cavalry sabre, drove it into a lead ingot fixed to the wall, and made the blade bend every way like a riding crop, so that the hilt almost reached the tip; the elastic and flexible temper of the steel allowed it to withstand this test without breaking. Then the man placed himself in front of an anvil and gave it a blow so well applied that the blade entered a millimetre or so; this feat made me think of the scene from a Walter Scott novel (*The Talisman, chapter XXVII*), in which Richard the Lionheart and Saladin practice cutting iron bars and cushions.

The Toledo blades of today then are equal in that respect to those of yesteryear; the secret of their temper is not lost, only the secret of their form: modern works in truth only lack that one little thing, so despised by progressive people unlike those of ancient times. A modern sword is merely a tool, a sixteenth-century sword is both a tool and a treasure.

We had hoped to find in Toledo various old weapons, daggers, poignards, longswords, two-handed swords, rapiers and other curiosities suitable to set as trophies on a wall or a dresser, and we had learned by heart, for this purpose, the names and the marks of the sixty armourers of Toledo collected by the medievalist Achille Jubinal, but the opportunity to put our knowledge to the test did not present itself, since there are no more such blades in Toledo than there is leather in Cordoba, lace at Mechelen, oysters at Ostend, or pâté de foie gras in Strasbourg; it is in Paris that all the rarities are found, and if we encounter any of them in foreign countries it is because they come from Mademoiselle Delaunay's little shop, on the Quai Voltaire.

We were also shown the remains of the Roman amphitheatre and the *naumachia*, which have the exact appearance of a ploughed field, like all Roman ruins in general. I lack the imagination needed to go into ecstasies over such problematic nothingness; that is a task I will leave to the antiquarians; I would rather speak to you of the walls of Toledo, which are visible to the naked eye and have an admirably picturesque effect. The buildings blend very happily with the uneven contours of the land; it is often difficult to say where rock ends and rampart begins; each civilisation has set its hand to the work; this section of wall is Roman, that tower is Gothic, and these battlements are Arab. The entire portion which extends from the Puerta de Cambron to the Puerta de Bisagra (its name derived some say from *via sacra*), where the Roman road probably ended, was built by Wamba king of the Visigoths. Each of these stones has its story, and if I wished to relate everything, I would need a volume instead of an article; but what does not exceed the bounds of my role as traveller is to repeat once more what a noble sight Toledo makes on the horizon, seated on its throne of rock, with its belt of towers, and its diadem of churches: one cannot imagine a stronger or more severe profile, a form coated with richer colours, or a city that preserves the physiognomy of the Middle Ages more faithfully. I remained in contemplation of it for more than an hour, trying to sate my sense of vision, and to engrave the silhouette of that admirable perspective in the depths of my memory: night fell too soon, alas, and we retired to bed, since we had to leave at one in the morning, to avoid the worst of the heat. Indeed, our *calesero* (*coachman*) arrived punctually, at midnight, and we

clambered, still asleep but in a state of pronounced somnambulism, onto the meagre cushions of our carriage. The dreadful jolting caused by Toledo's cobblestones soon woke us enough to enjoy the fantastic appearance of our nocturnal caravan. The carriage, with its large scarlet wheels and extravagant trunk seemed to pass through waves of houses closing behind it so near were the walls! A *sereno* (*watchman*) with bare legs, loose breeches, and the colourful headscarf of the Valencians, walked before us, bearing at the end of his spear a lantern whose flickering rays produced a play of shadow and light that Rembrandt would not have disdained to employ in some of his fine etchings of night-watches and patrols; the only noise to be heard was the silvery tremor of the bells on our mule's neck, and the creaking of the axles. The townspeople slept as soundly as the statues in the Chapel of Los Reyes Nuevos. From time to time, our *sereno* thrust his lantern under the nose of some odd fellow sleeping in the street, and drove him away with the shaft of his spear; for wherever sleep takes a Spaniard, he spreads his cloak on the ground, and retires to bed, with a perfect show of philosophy and phlegmatism. In front of the gate, which was not yet open, and at which we were made to wait for two hours, the floor was strewn with sleepers, snoring in every possible tone, because the street is the only bedroom which is not also full of animals, and where entering your alcove requires the resignation of an Indian fakir. Finally, the accursed gate swung on its hinges, and we returned by the road we had come.

Part XI: A Festival Procession in Madrid – Aranjuez – A Patio – The Countryside of Ocaña – Tembleque and its Garters – A Night in Manzanares – The Knives of Santa Cruz de Mudela – The Puerto de los Perros – The Colony of La Carolina – Bailén – Jaén, its Cathedral and its Dandies – Granada – The Alameda – The Alhambra – The Generalife – The Albaicín – Life in Granada – The Gitanos – The Charterhouse – Santo Domingo – An Ascent of Mulhacen

We were obliged to return to Madrid to take the diligence for Granada; we could have travelled to Aranjuez and waited for it there, but ran the risk of finding it full, and we decided on the former course.

We arrived at Illescas at around one, half-roasted, if not wholly so, but without further incident. We could barely wait to complete the journey which had nothing new to offer us, except that we were travelling in the opposite direction.

My companion preferred to sleep, while I, already more familiar with Spanish cuisine, began to compete for my dinner with countless swarms of flies. The hostess' daughter, a charming child of twelve or thirteen years, with Arab eyes, stood near me, a fan in one hand, a small broom in the other, trying to ward off the unwelcome insects which returned to the charge buzzing more furiously than ever as soon as the fan slowed or halted its movements. With this aid, I managed to cram a few morsels, fairly free of flies, into my mouth and, when my appetite was a little appeased, I began a dialogue with my insect-hunter which my ignorance of the Spanish language necessarily constrained a good deal. However, with the help of my *precious* dictionary, I managed to carry on a very passable conversation for a foreigner. The little one told me that she knew how to read and write all kinds of printed script, even Latin, and that in addition she played the *pandero* (*tambourine*) quite well, a talent of which I urged her to give me a sample, which she did, with very good grace, to the detriment of my comrade's sleep, whom the jingling of the copper plates, and the dull sound of the donkey-skin brushed by the thumb of the little musician, ended by waking.

The fresh mule was harnessed. We had to set out again on our way, and really needed substantial moral courage to leave, in thirty degrees of heat, a *posada* where the perspective consisted of several rows of jars, pots and *alcarrazas* (*earthenware jugs*) covered with beads of moisture. Merely drinking the water is a pleasure I only truly experienced in Spain; it is indeed pure, clear and of exquisite taste. The Muslim prohibition against drinking wine is the easiest of prescriptions to follow in such climes.

Thanks to the eloquent speeches our *calesero* never ceased to deliver to his mule, and the little stones that he threw at its ears with great dexterity, we progressed quite well. He called the creature, whenever circumstances grew difficult, *vieja*, *revieja* (old, doubly-old), an insult to which mules seem particularly sensitive, either because the reproach is always accompanied by a lash of the whip handle on its spine, or because it is most humiliating in itself. This epithet, applied several times with great aptness, allowed us to arrive at the gates of Madrid at five in the evening.

We were already familiar with Madrid, and saw nothing new there except the Corpus Christi procession, which has lost much of its ancient splendour through the suppression of the monasteries and their religious brethren. However, the ceremony does not lack for solemnity. The route of the procession is dusted with fine sand, and *tendidos* (*awnings*) of sailcloth, stretching from one house to another, maintain shade and coolness in the streets; the balconies are adorned with flags and adorned with pretty women in full regalia; it is the most charming sight imaginable. The perpetual merry-go-round of the fans which open, close, palpitate, and beat their wings like butterflies seeking to settle; the elbow movements of women gathering themselves in their mantillas and correcting the lie of an unsightly fold; the glances thrown from one window to another at their acquaintances; the pretty nod and the gracious gesture which accompany the *agur* (*greeting*) with which the *señoras* respond to the riders who greet them; the picturesque crowd intermingled with *Gallegos* (*Galicians*), *Pasiegas (from Vega de Pas)*, Valencianos, *manolas* and water sellers, all this forms a spectacle of delightful animation and cheerfulness. The *Niños de la Cuna* (foundlings), dressed in their blue uniforms, walk at the head of the procession. In this long line of children, we saw very few who had a pretty face, and Hymen herself, in all her conjugal carelessness, would have had difficulty producing anything uglier than these children of Love. Then came the banners of the parishes, the clergy, the silver shrines, and, under a canopy of cloth of gold, the *Corpus Dei*, beneath a hot sun of unbearable brilliance.

The proverbial religious devotion of the Spaniards seemed to me to wax cold indeed and, in this regard, one might have believed oneself in Paris at that time when declining to kneel before the holy sacrament was a sign of opposition to it, and one in good taste. At most, as they approached the dais, the men touched the brim of their hats. Catholic Spain no longer exists. The Peninsula is left with Voltairean, and liberal ideas in respect of *feudalism*, the *inquisition*, and *fanaticism*. Demolishing monasteries seems to it, to be the height of civilisation.

One evening, near the Post Office, at the corner of Calle de Carretas, I saw the crowd parting in haste, and a host of sparkling lights approaching along Calle Mayor: it was the holy sacrament borne, in its carriage, to the bedside of some dying person; since in Madrid the good Lord no longer travels on foot. Their flight was so as to avoid having to kneel.

Since we are talking of religious ceremonies, let me say that in Spain the cross on the pall covering the dead is not white as in France, but an equally lugubrious sulphur-yellow. They don’t use a hearse to carry the corpse away, but a bier with arms.

Madrid proved unbearable, and the two days we had to linger there seemed two centuries at least. We could do no more than dream of orange trees, lemon trees, cachuchas, castanets,

basquins, and picturesque costumes, since everyone related wonderful stories of Andalusia to us, with that somewhat boastful emphasis which the Spaniards can never rid themselves of, any more than can the Gascons of France.

The desired moment finally arrived, since everything occurs at last, even the day we wished for, and we set off in a most comfortable diligence, drawn by a team of shaven, gleaming, and vigorous mules, who trotted at a brisk pace. This diligence was upholstered in nankeen, and furnished with blinds and green curtains. It seemed to us the height of elegance after the abominable carts, *sillas volantes* (*two-wheelers*), and carriages, in which we had been shaken about until then; and we would have been very comfortable except for that oven-like heat which scorched us, despite our fans always being in motion, and the extreme thinness of our clothing. Thus, as we rolled along in that oven of ours, there was a perpetual litany of: *Jesus! What heat! I'm suffocating*! *I'm melting*! and other assorted exclamations. However, we bore our troubles patiently and, without grumbling too much, let our sweat cascade down our noses and from our temples, since, at the end of our weary torment, we would have sight of Granada and the Alhambra, the dream of every poet; Granada, whose name alone makes the dullest bourgeois, official, or corporal of the civic guard burst into expressions of admiration, and dance on one foot.

The countryside about Madrid is sad, bare and scorched, though less stony on the southern side than the road via Guadarrama; tracts of land, tormented rather than rugged, embrace one another and succeed one another uniformly, with no other particularity than dusty and chalky villages, scattered here and there amidst the general aridity, and which one would scarcely notice if the square tower of a church did not attract one's attention. Pointed spires are rare in Spain, where the square bell-tower is the most common form. At forks in the road, dubious crosses extend their sinister arms; from time-to-time ox-carts pass by, the herdsman asleep under his coat; or peasants on horseback, with fierce faces and rifles on their saddles.

The sky, at midday, is the colour of molten lead; the earth, a grey micaceous dust, which turns a barely blue shade in the furthest distance. Not a single clump of trees, not a shrub, not a drop of water in the bed of the dry torrents; nothing to rest the eye or refresh the imagination. To find a little shelter from the devouring rays of the sun, you must traverse the narrow band of rare blue shadow cast by the walls. It is true that it was the middle of July, which is not exactly the coolest time to travel to Spain; but I am of the opinion that countries should be visited in their most violent season: Spain in summer, Russia in winter.

Until we reached the royal residence (*sitio real*) of Aranjuez, we encountered nothing that deserves special mention. Aranjuez is a brick-built castle with dressed-stone corners granting it a red and white appearance, with large slate roofs, pavilions, and weather vanes, which recall the type of architecture adopted by Henry IV and Louis XIII, in the palace of Fontainebleau, and the apartments of the Place Royale (*Place des Vosges*) in Paris. The Tagus, which is crossed by a suspension bridge, maintains a freshness of vegetation admired by the Spaniards, and allows northern trees to develop vigorously. In Aranjuez elms, ash trees, birches, and aspens can be seen, as much a curiosity there as Indian fig-trees, aloes and palm-trees would be here.

A gallery was pointed out to us, one built expressly, along which Manuel Godoy, the famous Prince of Peace, went from his house to the castle. Leaving the village, we saw on the left the Plaza de Toros, which is quite monumental in appearance.

While the mules were being changed, we hastened to the market to stock up on oranges, and obtain some ices, or rather pureed snow with lemonade, from one of those open-air *refresco* shops as common in Spain as *cabarets* in France. Instead of drinking *barrels* of cheap wine or small glasses of brandy, the peasants and herb sellers at the market imbibe a *bebida helada*, which costs them no more, and at least fails to addle their brains or stupefy them. The absence of drunkenness renders the common folk far superior to the corresponding classes in our so-called civilised countries.

The name of Aranjuez, which is claimed to have been formed from the two Latin words: *ara Jovis* (*Jove's altar*), clearly indicates that the residence stands on the site of an ancient temple of Jupiter. We lacked the time to visit the interior, but hardly regretted it, since all the palaces are alike. It is the same with courtiers: originality is only found among the people; the masses seem to have retained the privilege of being poets.

From Aranjuez to Ocaña, the landscape, without being remarkable, is however more picturesque. Beautifully contoured hills, struck cleanly by the light, line each side of the road, whenever the whirlwind of dust amidst which the stagecoach gallops, enclosed like a god in its cloud, dissipates, borne away by some favourable breath, and allows you to view them. The road, though poorly maintained, is quite good, thanks to the wonderful climate of a region where it almost never rains, and to the scarcity of carriages, almost all transport being achieved on the backs of animals.

We were obliged to have supper, and to sleep, at Ocaña, so as to wait for the *correo real* (*royal mail-coach*) and take advantage of its escort by accompanying it, since we were about to enter La Mancha, then infested by bands led by Palillos, Polichinela, and other honest folk whom it was disagreeable to encounter. We stopped at a good-looking hostelry, with an arcaded *patio* covered with a superb *tendido*, whose canvas, single or doubled, formed more or less translucent designs and symmetries. The name of the manufacturer and his address in Barcelona were written there most legibly. Myrtles, pomegranates and jasmines, planted in red clay pots, brightened and perfumed this interior courtyard, lit by subdued half-light and full of mystery. The *patio* is a charming invention: you enjoy more freshness and space there than in your room; you can walk there, read there, be alone or with others. It is a neutral ground for meeting people, who, without going through the boredom of formal visits and presentations, end by knowing each other and bonding; and when, as in Granada or Seville, one can add the pleasure of a jet of water, or a fountain, I know of nothing more delicious, especially in a country where the thermometer remains at Senegambian heights.

While waiting to be fed, we went off to take a nap; it is a habit you absolutely must adopt in Spain, since the heat, from two till five in the afternoon, is something Parisians have no idea of. The pavement burns, the iron door-knockers turn red, a shower of fire seems to rain from the sky, ears of wheat ripen swiftly, the earth cracks like the enamel of an overheated stove, the cicadas flex their abdomens and click with more vivacity than ever, and the little air that reaches you seems to be blown through the bronze mouth of a furnace; the shops are closed,

and you could not persuade a shopkeeper to sell you anything for all the money in the world. Only dogs and the French occupy the streets, as the common saying, most ungracious in regard to ourselves, has it. The guides, even if you gift them Havana cigars or tickets to the bullfight, two things eminently attractive to a Spaniard, refuse to take you to the least of monuments. The only thing left for you to do is to sleep like all the others, and to this you quickly resign yourself; for what can one do while awake in the midst of a sleeping nation?

Our rooms, which were whitewashed, were perfectly clean. The insects of which we had been given such vivid descriptions had not as yet appeared, and our sleep was undisturbed by nightmarish centipedes.

At five in the evening, we arose to take a walk while waiting for supper. Ocaña is not rich in monuments, and its greatest claim to fame is a desperate attack by Spanish troops on a French redoubt during the war of invasion. The redoubt was taken, but almost the entire Spanish battalion was left behind. Each of these heroes was buried in the place where he had fallen. The ranks had been in such tight formation, despite a deluge of grapeshot, that they can still be recognised by the symmetry of the grave-pits. Juan Batista Diamante wrote a play entitled *El Hércules de Ocaña*, undoubtedly composed for some athlete of prodigious strength, like the Goliath of the Cirque-Olympique. Our visit to Ocaña brought back memories thereof

The harvest is brought in, here, at a time when the wheat is just beginning to turn yellow, and the sheaves are carried to large areas of beaten earth, a sort of merry-go-round where horses and mules thresh the ears by stamping their hooves. The animals are harnessed to a sort of sled on which stands, in a pose of proud and daring grace, the man charged with directing the operation. It takes a lot of poise and self-assuredness to maintain oneself on this frail machine, drawn by three or four horses, while exercising the full force of the whip. A painter of the school of Louis-Léopold Robert would benefit greatly from viewing these scenes of a biblical and primitive simplicity. Here the fine tanned faces and sparkling eyes, the Madonna-like features of the young women, the characterful costumes, the bright light, the azure sky and the sun, concede nothing to Italy.

The sky that evening was a milky blue tinged with pink; the fields, as far as the eye could see, presented an immense sheet of pale gold to the gaze, where, here and there, like islets in an ocean of light, carts drawn by oxen appeared almost hidden beneath the sheaves. The chimera of a painting free of shadows, so much pursued by the Chinese, was realized. Everything was bright and clear; the darkest shade failed to exceed a pearly grey.

In the end, we were served with a passable supper, or at least one our appetite made us think was such, in a low-ceilinged room decorated with little paintings on glass in a rather bizarre Venetian rococo style. After supper, my companion Eugène (*Eugène Piot*) and I, being mediocre smokers and only able to take a minimal part in the conversation because of the requirement to convey everything we had to say in the two or three hundred words we knew, returned to our rooms, saddened somewhat by the various stories of brigands that we had heard related at table, which seemed all the more terrible to us for being only half-intelligble.

We were obliged to wait till two in the afternoon for the *correo real* to arrive, since it would not have been prudent to set out without it. We also had a special escort of four horsemen

armed with blunderbusses, pistols, and large sabres. They were tall men, with characteristic faces, framed by enormous black whiskers, peaked hats, wide red belts, velvet breeches and leather gaiters, looking far more like thieves than gendarmes, and whom it was wise indeed to have accompany you, for fear of encountering them later.

Twenty soldiers crammed into a cart followed the *correo real*. Such carts are un-sprung with two or four wheels; a net of esparto-cord serves as support for the boards. This succinct description allows you to judge the position of those unfortunate fellows, forced to stand while gripping the rails with their hands so as not to tumble on top of each other. Add to that our speed of four leagues an hour, the stifling heat, a sun vertically above, and you will agree that it required heroic good humour to find the situation pleasant. And yet these poor soldiers, barely covered by their tattered uniforms, with empty stomachs, having nothing to drink but heated water from their flasks, shaken about like rats in a trap, did nothing but laugh out loud and sing, all the way along the road. The sobriety of the Spaniards and their patience in enduring fatigue is something miraculous. They seemed Arabs still, in that particular. One cannot take indifference to material existence any further. Yet these soldiers, who lacked bread and shoes, possessed a guitar.

The whole tract of the kingdom of Toledo we were traversing was dreadfully arid, presaging our approach to La Mancha, the homeland of Don Quixote, and the most desolate and infertile province of Spain.

Soon, we passed La Guardia, an insignificant little village with a most wretched appearance. At Tembleque we bought, for the fair ladies of Paris, a few dozen garters in cerise, orange, and sky-blue, embellished with gold or silver thread, with mottos in woven letters that would put to shame the most gallant doggerel verse on the kazoos at the Saint-Cloud Fair. Tembleque has a reputation for garters, as Châtellerault in France has for penknives.

While we were bargaining for the garters, we heard beside us a deep, hoarse, menacing growl, like that of an angry dog; we turned around suddenly, not without apprehension, unsure how Spanish mastiffs communicate, and found that this howl was produced not by an animal, but by a man.

Never has nightmare, planting its knee on the chest of a delirious patient, produced a more abominable monster. Hugo's *Quasimodo* was a Phoebus compared to him. A square forehead, hollow eyes, glittering with a wild light, a nose so flattened that only the nostril-holes marked its place, a lower jaw two inches more advanced than the upper; such in two words is the description of this scarecrow, whose profile formed a concave arc like those crescents adorned with the moon's face in the Almanach de Liège. The achievement of this wretch was to possess no nose and to imitate a dog, which he did wondrously well, being more nose-less than Death himself, and howling more than all the boarders of the Barrière du Combat (*The Pantin toll-gate in Paris, a site where bull-baiting took place*) at lunchtime, combined.

Puerto Lápice consisted of a few more or less half-ruined hovels, squatting, perched, on the slope of a cracked, gravelly hillside, crumbling due to drought, and collapsing into curious ravines. It seemed the height of aridity and desolation. Everything was the colour of cork and pumice. Fire from heaven seemed to have passed that way; a grey dust, as fine as crushed

sandstone, still coating the scene. Its state of misery is all the more heartbreaking because the brightness of an implacable sky highlights its depth of poverty. The cloudy melancholy of the North is nothing compared to the luminous sadness of hot countries.

Viewing such miserable shacks, one feels pity for thieves forced to live on the proceeds of their marauding in a country where one would be hard put to find the means to cook a boiled egg within ten leagues around. The volume of stagecoaches and convoys of carts is quite insufficient, and the poor brigands who roam La Mancha must often be content for their supper with a handful of those sweet acorns which were *Sancho Panza's* delight. What can one derive from people who have neither purses nor pence, who live in houses furnished with four bare walls, and with only a frying pan and a jug for utensils? Plundering such villages seems to me one of the most dismal fantasies that could occupy the heads of workless thieves.

A little way beyond Puerto Lápice, we entered La Mancha, and saw on the right two or three windmills which lay claim to having sustained, victoriously, the impact of *Don Quixote's* lance, and which, for a quarter of an hour, turned their flaccid sails nonchalantly beneath the breath of a wheezing wind. The *venta* where we stopped to drain two or three jars of fresh water, also boasted of having hosted Cervante's immortal hero.

I will not weary readers with a description of our monotonous road through a flat, stony, dusty countryside, dotted here and there with olive trees showing glaucous, diseased green foliage, where we only encountered wild, haggard, mummified peasants, with sun-scorched hats, short breeches, and gaiters of thick blackish cloth, wearing ragged jackets on their shoulders, and driving before them some mangy donkey its coat blanched from old age, with drooping ears, of pitiful appearance; and where, at the entrance to some village one sees half-naked children, brown as mulattoes, who watch one pass with fierce and astonished gaze.

We arrived at Manzanarès in the middle of the night, dying of hunger. The courier who had preceded us, in exercising his right as first-comer, and his knowledge in the matter of lodgings, had exhausted all the provisions, consisting, it is true, only of three or four eggs and a slice of ham. We uttered the keenest and most touching cries, declaring we would set the house on fire and roast the hostess herself in the absence of other food. This energy earned us supper around two in the morning, for which we had to wake up half the town. We ate our quarter of kid, eggs with tomatoes, ham, and goat's cheese, while consuming a fairly passable little white wine. We all dined together in the courtyard, in the light of three or four yellow-copper lamps, similar to ancient funeral lamps, the night air causing the flame to flicker, producing strange shadows and shafts of light and granting us the appearance of lamias and ghouls tearing apart pieces of disinterred children. So that the meal might possess a wholly enchanted air, a tall, blind-girl approached the table, guided by the noise, and began to sing verses to a plaintive and monotonous tune, which sounded like some vague Sibylline incantation. Learning that we were foreigners, she improvised laudatory verses in our honour, which we rewarded with a few *reals*.

Before returning to the coach, we walked about the town, a little gropingly it is true, but still, it was better than remaining in the courtyard of the inn.

We attained the market square, though not without setting foot, in the shadows, on some sleeper under the stars. In summer folk generally sleep in the street, some on their coats, others on a mule-blanket; here, on a bag filled with chopped straw (they are the sybarites), there, simply on the bare breast of mother Cybele with a stone for a pillow.

Peasants who arrived in the night slept pell-mell among strange vegetables and raw foodstuffs, between the legs of their donkeys and mules, waiting for daylight, which would soon appear.

A faint ray of moonlight vaguely illuminated a sort of ancient crenellated building in the darkness, in which one could recognise, by the whiteness of its plaster, defensive works carried out during the last civil war, which the years had not yet had time to harmonise with the rest. As a conscientious traveller, this is all I can say about Manzanarès.

We clambered into the coach once more; sleep overtook us and, when we opened our eyes, we found ourselves in the vicinity of Valdepeñas, a town renowned for its wine. The earth and the hills, dotted with stones, were a red tone of singular rawness, and we could distinguish on the horizon bands of mountains as jagged as saws, with an extremely clear outline despite their great distance.

Valdepeñas itself owns to nothing extraordinary, and owes its entire reputation to its vineyards. Its name of the ‘valley of stones’ is perfectly justified. We halted there for lunch, and, struck by an inspiration from heaven, I formed the idea of first consuming my own drink of chocolate, and then the one intended for my comrade, who had not yet awakened, and, foreseeing future famine, I added to each cup as many *buñuelos* (a kind of small doughnut) as would fit, so as to achieve a sort of fairly substantial soup, as I had not yet reached the state of asceticism camels achieve, which I accomplished only later after long exercise of an abstinence worthy of an anchorite of earliest times. I was not yet acclimatised, and I had brought from France an incredible appetite which inspired respectful astonishment among the natives of the country.

After only a few minutes, we left in great haste, as we had to follow the *correo real* closely, so as not to lose the benefit of an escort. Leaning out of the vehicle to take a last look at Valdepeñas, I dropped my cap on the path; a *muchacho,* between twelve and fifteen years of age, noticed it, and, to gain a few coppers as a reward, picked it up and began to run after the diligence, which was already far away; however, he caught up with us, though he ran barefoot, on a path paved with sharp, angular stones. I threw him a handful of *cuartos* which certainly made him the most opulent scamp in the whole country. I only report this insignificant circumstance because it is characteristic of this ability of the Spaniards, the foremost walkers in the world, and the most agile runners that can be seen. I have already had occasion to speak of these postilions on foot whom they call *zagales*, and who follow carriages at the gallop for whole leagues without appearing to feel fatigue, and without even breaking sweat.

At Santa Cruz de Mudela, all kinds of small knives and *navajas* were offered for sale; Santa Cruz de Mudela and Albacete are renowned for this fancy cutlery. These *navajas*, of a very characteristic Arabic and barbaric taste, have pierced copper handles whose holes are filled by red, green or blue inlays; curved excisions, vividly shaped, embellish the blade which

takes on the shape of a fish and is always very sharp; most carry mottos like this: *Soy de uno solo* ('I belong to one alone'); or *Cuando esta vivora pica, no hay remedio en la botica* ('Whenever this viper stings, no remedy medicine brings'). Sometimes the blade is incised with three parallel grooves, the hollows being painted red, which gives it a truly formidable appearance. The size of these *navajas* varies from three inches to three feet; some *majos* (peasants of noble air) have ones which, when open, are as long as a sabre; a jointed spring, or a ring that one turns, holds the blade open. The *navaja* is the favourite weapon of the Spaniards, especially among the common folk, who handle it with incredible dexterity, while making a shield of their cape rolled around the left arm. It is an art which has its own principles akin to fencing, and masters of the *navaja* are as numerous in Andalusia as fencing-masters in Paris. Every wielder of the knife has his secret and individual moves; their followers, it is said, at the sight of a wound, recognize the *artist* who executed the work, as we recognize a painter by his touch.

The undulations in the terrain became more frequent and pronounced; we did nothing but ascend and descend. We were approaching the Sierra Morena, which forms the boundary of the kingdom of Andalusia. Behind this line of purple mountains lay the paradise of our dreams. Already the stones were changing to rocks, the hills to tiered ranges; thistles six or seven feet high bristled on the sides of the road like the halberds of concealed soldiers. Though I have no pretension to being a donkey, I truly like thistles (a taste, moreover, that I share with the butterflies), and these amazed me; the thistle is a superb plant from which charming ornamental motifs can be created. Gothic architecture possesses no arabesque or foliage more cleanly cut or more finely carved. From time to time, we saw large yellowish patches in the neighbouring fields, as if sack-loads of chopped straw had been emptied there; however, the patches of straw, as we passed by, rose like a whirlwind and flew away noisily: they were swarms of resting locusts; there must have been millions of them: it was strongly suggestive of Egypt.

It was about then that, for the first time in my life, I truly suffered from hunger: Ugolino in his tower was no hungrier than I, and unlike him I lacked four sons to eat. The reader, who remembers me downing two cups of chocolate in Valdepeñas, may perhaps be surprised at this premature state of starvation; but those Spanish cups are no bigger than a thimble and contain at most two or three spoonsful. My sadness was especially deepened, at the *venta* where we left our escort, on seeing a magnificent omelette intended for the troop's dinner gilded by a ray of sunlight that descended the chimney; I prowled about like a hungry wolf, but it was too well guarded to be carried off. Fortunately, a lady from Granada, who was in the stagecoach with us, took pity on my martyrdom and gifted me a few slices of La Mancha ham glazed with sugar, and a piece of bread, which she had held in reserve in one of the pockets of our vehicle. May that ham be returned to her a hundredfold in the next world!

Not far from the *venta*, on the right of the road, stood pillars on which the heads of three or four criminals were exposed: a spectacle which always reassures one, by proving that one is in a civilised country.

The road climbed, making numerous zig-zags. We were about to thread the Puerto de los Perros: this is a narrow gorge, a gap made in the mountain wall by a torrent that barely leaves room for the road which runs alongside it. The Puerto de los Perros (*the Despeñaperros Gorge,*

the Pass of the Dogs) is so named because it is through this that the defeated Moors left Andalusia, taking with them the joys of civilisation which they had granted Spain. Spain, which touches on Africa as Greece touches on Asia, is not made for European customs. The genius of the East shines there in all forms, and it is perhaps unfortunate in that respect that it has not remained Moorish and Muslim.

One could not conceive of anything more picturesque and grandiose than this gateway to Andalusia. The gorge is cleft into immense red marble cliffs whose gigantic layers overlap with a kind of architectural regularity; these enormous blocks with large transverse cracks, veins of the mountain's marble, by means of a terrestrial cross-section of which one can study the anatomy of the globe, have proportions which reduce the largest Egyptian granites to microscopic size. In the gaps, cling holm oaks, and enormous cork-trees, which seem no bigger than tufts of grass on an ordinary wall. As we reached the bottom of the gorge, the vegetation thickened to form an impenetrable thicket through which once could see, in places, the crystal waters of the torrent gleaming. The escarpment is so steep on the side of the road that it was considered prudent to provide it with a parapet, otherwise coaches, always travelling at the gallop, and difficult to steer because of the frequency of the bends, might very well somersault five or six hundred feet at least.

It is in the Sierra Morena that the *Knight of the Sorrowful Face*, in imitation of *Amadis* on the *Peña Pobre* (*the Poor Rock*), accomplished his famous penance which consisted of doing somersaults in his shirt among the sharpest stones, and Sancho Panza, most positive of men, common sense accompanying his master's noble madness, found *Cardenio's* saddle-pack so well stocked with ducats and fine shirts. One cannot take a step in Spain without encountering some memory of Don Quixote, for Cervantes' work is profoundly Spanish, and those two figures sum up in themselves the entire Spanish character: chivalrous exaltation, an adventurous spirit united with a deeply practical common sense, and a sort of jovial good-naturedness full of refined and caustic wit.

At Venta de Cárdenas, where we changed mules, I saw a pretty little child with dazzling white skin, lying in a cradle, looking like a wax Jesus in his crib. The Spaniards, when they are not yet tanned by the sun, are in general extremely white in complexion.

On crossing the Sierra Morena, the appearance of the country changes completely; it is as if one passes, suddenly, from Europe to Africa: vipers, returning to their nests, streaked obliquely across the fine sand of the road; aloes begin to brandish their large thorny swords at the edges of ditches. These large fans of fleshy, thick, blue-grey leaves at once gave the landscape an altered appearance. One truly felt in an alien place, and understood that one had altogether left Paris behind; the difference in climate, architecture, dress is less disorientating than the presence of those large plants from torrid regions one is only used to seeing in hothouses. The laurels, holm-oaks, cork-trees, fig-trees with their gleaming metallic foliage, have about them something free, robust, and wild, indicating a climate where nature is more powerful than human beings and can do without them.

Before us, in all its beauty, spread the kingdom of Andalusia, like an immense panorama. The view possessed the grandeur in appearance of the sea; mountain ranges, graduated by distance, unfolded in undulations of infinite gentleness, like long azure waves. Large trails of

pale vapour clothed the intervening spaces; here and there bright rays of sunlight glazed some closer peak, shimmering with a thousand colours like a pigeon's throat, with gold. Other oddly-crumpled mounds resembled the fabrics in old paintings, yellow on one side, blue on the other. All this was flooded with glittering light as splendid as that which illuminated the earthly paradise must have been. The sun's rays streamed over this ocean of mountains like liquid gold mingled with silver, spraying a phosphorescent gleam of foam over every obstacle. The vista seemed greater than the broadest landscapes of the English artist John Martin, and a thousand times more beautiful. The infinite is far more sublime and prodigious viewed in the light than in semi-darkness.

While gazing at this marvellous picture, which altered to present fresh magnificence at each rotation of the wheels, we saw the pointed roofs of the symmetrical pavilions of La Carolina rise above the horizon; La Carolina is a sort of model village, belonging to an agricultural community, constructed by the Count of Floridablanca (*José Moñino*) for Charles III of Spain, and populated by him with Germans and Swiss brought there at great expense. This village, built suddenly, conceived by an act of will, possesses the tedious regularity which dwellings lack that have gathered slowly, one by one, at the whim of time and chance. Everything is in straight lines; from the centre of the square, you can see the whole town: here is the market in the Plaza de Toros, there is the church and the alcalde's house. It is well laid-out, certainly, but I prefer the most wretched of villages blessed with a little adventurousness. Moreover, the colony failed: the Swiss became homesick merely from hearing the bells ring, and died like flies; they were obliged to halt the bell-ringing. Not all died, however, and the population of Carolina still retains traces of its Germanic origin. We ate a proper dinner at Carolina, washed down with excellent wine, without them needing to serve double portions; we no longer followed the mail-coach, the roads being perfectly safe that side of the gorge.

Aloe trees, increasingly African in size, continued to appear beside the track, and to the left a long garland of flowers of the brightest pink, sparkling amidst emerald foliage, marked the winding bed of a dried-up stream. Taking advantage of a relay halt, my travelling companion ran towards the flowers and brought back an enormous bouquet; they were oleanders of incomparable freshness and brilliance. Monsieur Casimir Delavigne's question to the Greek river could be addressed to this stream, whose name I do not know, and which perhaps does not have one: 'Eurotas, Eurotas, que font tes lauriers-roses? (*Eurotas, Eurotas, what of your oleanders?*)

The oleanders were succeeded, like a melancholy reflection following a crimson burst of laughter, by large olive groves whose pale foliage recalled the floury hair of the willows of the North, and harmonised admirably with the ashen hue of the land. This foliage, with its sober, austere and soft tone, was very judiciously chosen by the ancients, those skilful connoisseurs of natural correspondences, as a symbol of peace and wisdom.

At about four, we arrived at Bailén, famous for the disastrous Capitulation of that name. We had to spend the night there and, while awaiting supper, we took a walk through the town and surrounding areas with the lady from Granada, and a very pretty young person who was going to take the sea-water baths at Málaga, in the company of her father and mother; since the customary reserve of the Spaniards quickly gives way to a straightforward and cordial

familiarity, as soon as they are sure that you are neither travelling tradesmen, rope dancers, or sellers of unguents.

The church at Bailén, whose construction hardly dates to before the sixteenth century, surprised me with its strange colour. The stone and marble, preserved by the Spanish sun instead of blackening as under our humid skies, had taken on reddish tones of extraordinary warmth and vigour, bordering on saffron and purple, like the hue of vine leaves in late autumn. Next to the church, above a small wall gilded by the warmest of glows, a palm-tree, the first I had ever seen in open ground, suddenly rose against the dark azure of the sky. This unexpected palm-tree, like a sudden revelation of the Orient, at a bend in the street, had a singular effect on me. I expected to see the ostrich necks of camels silhouetted against the sunset light, and the white burnouses of Arabs, part of some caravan, flowing by.

The picturesque ruins of the ancient fortifications offered sight of a tower, well-preserved enough that one could climb it by using one's hands and feet and taking advantage of protruding stones. We were rewarded for our trouble with a most magnificent view. The town of Bailén, with its tiled roofs and red church, and its white houses clustered at the foot of the tower like a herd of goats, formed an admirable foreground; further off, the wheat fields undulated in waves of gold, and in the far background, above several ranges of mountains, one saw shining, like a wedge of silver, the distant crest of the Sierra Nevada. Veins of snow, startled by the light, sparkled with reflected and prismatic lightning rays, and the sun, like a great golden wheel of which its disc was the hub, spread its flaming rays like spokes in a sky nuanced with all the varied hues of quartz and agate.

The inn where we were to sleep consisted of a large building, a solitary room only, with a fireplace at each end, a ceiling of blackened rafters varnished by smoke, stalls on each side for horses, mules and donkeys, and for travellers a few small side-rooms each containing a bed made of three planks placed on twin trestles and covered with those sheets of canvas between which float a few slabs of wool which the hoteliers, with the cold-blooded effrontery that characterises them, claim to be mattresses; nonetheless, that did not prevent us snoring like Epimenides and the Seven Sleepers combined.

We left early next morning to avoid the heat, and again viewed those beautiful oleanders, bright as glory and fresh as love, which had enchanted us the day before. Soon the Guadalquivir with its murky and yellowish waters rose to block our path; we crossed it by means of the ferry, and took the road to Jaén. On our left, we noticed the tower of Torrequebradilla struck by a ray of light, and not long after saw the curious silhouette of Jaén, capital of the kingdom of that name.

An enormous ochre-coloured mountain, tawny as a lion's skin, in the dusty light, bronzed by the sun, rises suddenly in the midst of the city; massive towers and the long zig-zags of ancient fortifications streak its gaunt sides with their strange and picturesque lines. The cathedral, an immense collection of architectural styles, which, at a distance, seems larger than the city itself, rises proudly, an artificial mountain beside the natural mountains. This cathedral, in the style of Renaissance architecture, which boasts of possessing the authentic cloth on which Saint Veronica gathered an imprint of the figure of Our Lord, was built by the Dukes of

Medina Coeli. It is beautiful, no doubt, but from afar we had dreamed of it being more ancient and, above all, more intriguing.

On my way from the *parador* to the cathedral, I looked at the theatre posters; the day before, they had performed Voltaire's *Mérope*, and that same evening were to perform *El Campanero de San-Pablo, por el illustrissimo señor don José Bouchardy*, in other words: *Le Sonneur de Saint-Paul*, by my comrade Jospeh Bouchardy. To have one's play enacted in Jaén, a wild town where it is customary to walk about with a knife in your belt, and a rifle on your shoulder, is certainly flattering, and very few of our great contemporary geniuses can boast of such success. If in the past we have borrowed various masterpieces from the ancient Spanish theatre, today we are repaying them for their plays with vaudeville and melodrama.

After our visit to the cathedral, we returned, like the other travellers, to the *parador*, the appearance of which seemed to promise an excellent meal; a café was attached to it, and it had quite the air of a European and civilised establishment. But I noticed, as we sat to the table, that the bread was hard as a millstone, and asked for a softer version. The hotelier would not consent to change it. During the quarrel, someone else noticed that the dishes had been reheated, and must have been served at a previous meal. All began to utter the most plaintive cries, and demand a new, entirely fresh, dinner.

The answer to the enigma was this: the diligence which preceded us had been stopped by the bandits of La Mancha, so that the travellers, borne off into the mountains, had not been able to consume the meal prepared for them by the hotelier from Jaén. The latter, in order to recover his expenses, had kept the dishes and reserved them for us, in which matter his expectation was disappointed, since we all rose and ate elsewhere. The unfortunate dinner would have to be presented a third time to subsequent travellers.

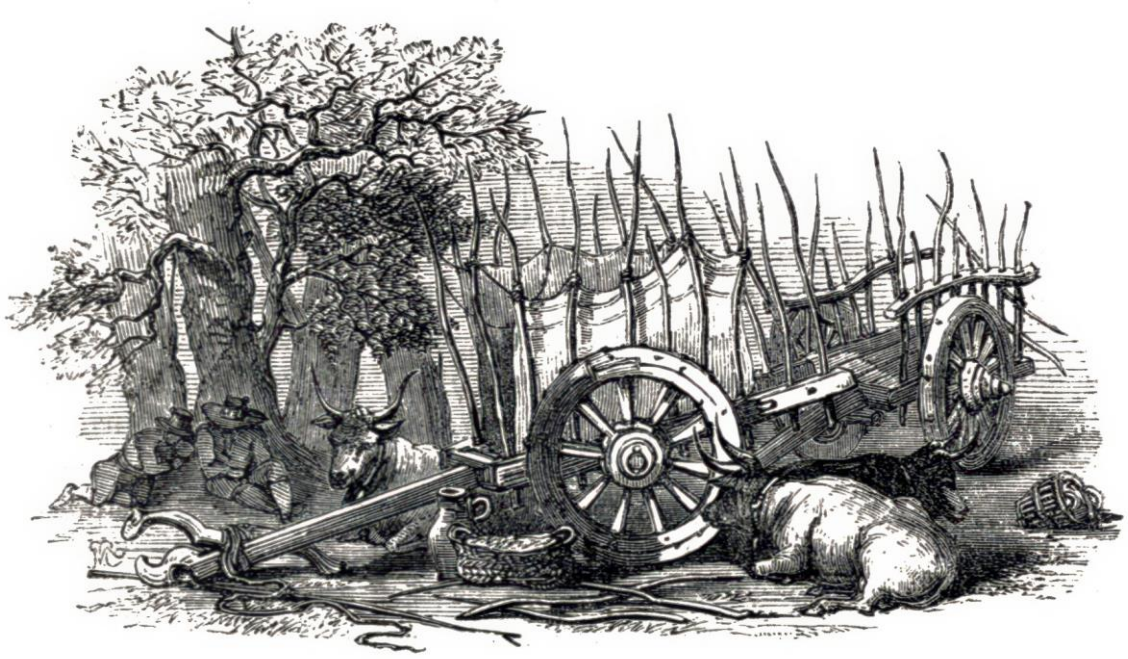
We took refuge in a run-down *posada*, where, after a long wait, we were served a few chops, a few eggs, and a salad, on dog-eared plates, with mismatched glasses and knives. The meal was mediocre, but it was seasoned with so many jests and bursts of laughter regarding the comic fury of the hotelier on seeing his guests leave in procession, and the fate of the unfortunate people to whom he would not fail to present his bony chickens reheated a third time on the stove, that we were more than compensated for the meagreness of the repast. When once the ice is broken, Spaniards, seemingly cold at first, become childishly happy, and offer an extreme display of naive charm. The slightest thing makes them laugh till they cry.

It was in Jaén that I saw the most picturesque and authentic national costume: the men, for the most part, wore blue velvet breeches decorated with silver filigrane buttons, gaiters from Ronda, decorated with stitching, braided cord, and arabesques, of a darker leather. The height of elegance is to fasten only the button at the top, and that at the bottom, so as to reveal the calf. Wide yellow or red silk belts, a decorated brown cloth jacket, a blue or brown coat, and a wide-brimmed peaked hat, embellished with velvet and silk tassels, complete the outfit, which looks quite similar to the traditional costume of Italian bandits. Others wore what is called a *vestido de cazador* (hunter's outfit), in tawny deerskin and green velvet.

Some of the women-folk wore red capes which pierced the darker depths of the crowd with bright sparks and scarlet sequins. The curious attire, the tanned complexions, the sparkling

eyes, the liveliness of the faces, the impassive and calm attitude of the *majos*, more numerous there than anywhere else, gave the population of Jaén an appearance more African than European; an illusion to which the heat of the climate, the dazzling brightness of the houses whitewashed in accord with Arab custom, the tawny tone of the land, and the unalterable azure of the sky, add greatly. There is a saying in Spain about Jaén: 'An ugly town, with ill-looking people,' which no painter would find to be true. Besides, there as here, for most folk, what they mean by a beautiful city is one laid out in straight lines, and furnished with an ample quantity of street lamps and bourgeois people.

On leaving Jaén, we entered a valley which extends to the Vega of Granada. At first it is dry; the gaunt hills, crumbling from drought, burn you with reflected brightness, like fiery mirrors; there's no trace of vegetation except a few pale tufts of fennel. But soon the valley narrows and deepens, the watercourses begin to flow, vegetation is reborn, shade and freshness reappear, and the *Rio de Jaën* occupies the bottom of the valley, where it flows swiftly between the stones and the rocks which thwart it, and block its course at every moment. The path runs alongside, and follows the river in its windings, because, in mountainous countries, the torrents are ever the most skilful engineers for tracing a passage, and the best one can do is to follow them, and be guided by them.



Vega of Granada

A farmhouse at which we stopped to drink was surrounded by two or three channels of running water which further distributed it to a clump of myrtles, pistachio-trees, pomegranate-trees, and others of all kinds, exhibiting extraordinary growth. It had been so long since we had

seen true greenness that this uncultivated, three-quarters wild garden seemed to us a little earthly paradise.

The young girl who poured us a drink from one of those charming porous clay pots which keep the water so fresh, was very pretty, with eyes elongated to the temples, a tawny complexion, an African mouth as full and ruddy as a beautiful carnation, a flounced skirt, and velvet shoes of which she seemed very proud and conscious. Her type, frequently found in Granada, is clearly Moorish in origin.

At a certain place the valley narrows, and the cliffs approach until they barely leave space for the river. Formerly, coaches were forced to enter and progress along the bed of the torrent itself, which was dangerous however, because of the rocks and crevices, and the height of the water, which, in winter, rises considerably. To obviate this inconvenience, one of the cliffs was pierced through and a fairly long tunnel made, in the manner of railway viaducts. This work, involving considerable effort, dates from only a few years back.

From there, the valley widens, and the path is no longer obstructed. There is a gap here, in my memory, of several leagues. Oppressed by the heat, which the stormy weather made truly suffocating, I ended up falling asleep. When I awoke, the darkness, which falls so suddenly in southern climates, was complete, and a dreadful wind raised whirlwinds of fiery dust; this wind must be closely related to the African sirocco, and I know not how we failed to be asphyxiated. The outlines of objects vanished in the fog of dust; the sky, usually so splendid on summer nights, seemed like the vault of an oven; it was impossible to see two steps in front of you. We entered Granada at about two in the morning, and went straight to the Fonda del Comercio, said to be a hotel run in the French style, where there were no sheets on the bed, and where we slept fully dressed on the boards; but these petty tribulations affected us but little; we were in Granada, and in a few hours would visit the Alhambra and the Generalife.

Our first care was to have our local guide direct us to a *casa de pupilos*, that is to say a private house in which boarders are accommodated, since our stay in Granada being fairly long the mediocre hospitality of the Fonda del Comercio would no longer suit. This guide, named Louis, was French, from Faremoutiers en Brie. He had deserted at the time of the French invasion under Napoleon, and had lived in Granada for more than twenty years. He had the strangest bodily form one could imagine: his height, at five feet eight inches, contrasted most singularly with his small head, wrinkled like an apple, and the size of a fist. Deprived of all communication with France, he had retained his former Briard dialect in all its native purity and spoke like *Jeannot* in the comic-opera (*Jeannot et Colin*), seeming to recite, endlessly, words penned by Monsieur Charles Étienne. Despite living there for so long, his obstinate brain had refused to furnish itself with a new idiom; he barely knew the most essential phrases. From his Spanish home derived only his *alpargatas* (*espadrilles*) and his little Andalusian hat with turned up brim. These concessions troubled him greatly, and he took revenge by overwhelming the natives he encountered with all sorts of grotesque insults, in Briard of course, since master Louis was afraid of being struck, and cherished his skin as if it was something worth.

He led us to a very decent house, on Calle Párraga, near the Plazuela de San Anton, and a stone’s throw from the Carrera del Darro. The female owner of this boarding-house had lived

in Marseille for a long time and spoke French, a deciding factor for us, whose vocabulary was still very limited.

We were lodged in a room on the ground floor, whitewashed, and furnished with an ornament like a rose of varied colours in the ceiling; but this room had the advantage of opening onto a *patio* surrounded by white marble columns topped with Moorish capitals, undoubtedly from the demolition of some ancient Arab palace. A small pool with a fountain, in the centre of the courtyard, kept it cool; a large mat of esparto-grass, forming a *tendido,* filtering the rays of the sun, and scattering gleams of light, here and there, over the sections of pebble-stone paving.

It was here that we ate our meals, where we read, where we lived. We barely entered our room except to dress and sleep. Without a *patio,* an architectural arrangement reminiscent of the ancient Roman *atrium,* the houses of Andalusia would not be habitable. The sort of vestibule which fronts it is usually paved with small pebbles of varied colours, forming rough mosaic designs, and representing sometimes flower-tubs, sometimes soldiers, Maltese crosses, or simply showing the date of construction.

From the roof of the house, topped with a sort of *mirador* (*viewpoint*), we could see, on the crest of a hill, clearly outlined against the blue sky amidst clumps of trees, the massive towers of the fortress of the Alhambra coated by the sun with extremely hot and intense reddish hues. The silhouette was completed by two large juxtaposed cypresses, whose black tips extended into the azure above the red walls. These cypresses were never lost from sight; whether we climbed the snow-streaked sides of Mulhacen, or whether we wandered across the Vega or on the Sierra Elvira, we could always locate them on the horizon, dark, and motionless beneath the flow of bluish or golden vapour, which denoted the distant roofs of the city.

Granada is built on three hills, at the end of the Vega plain: the Vermilion Towers (*Torres Bermejas*), so named because of their colour and which are claimed to be of Roman or even Phoenician origin, occupy the first and the least elevated of these eminences; the Alhambra, which is an entire city in itself, covers the second and highest hill, its square towers linked together by the high walls and immense blocks of buildings, which enclose within their interior gardens, groves, buildings, and courtyards; the Albaicín is located on the third slope, separated from the others by a deep ravine crowded with vegetation, cacti, gourds, pistachio trees, pomegranate-trees, oleanders and tufts of flowers, at the bottom of which flows the Darro with the quickness of an alpine torrent. The Darro, which bears gold, traverses the city, sometimes beneath the open sky, sometimes under bridges so long that they deserve the name of tunnels, and meets the Genil, which is content to bear only silver, in the Vega, a short distance from the promenade. This course of the torrent through the town is called the Carrera del Darro, and from the balconies of the houses which border it one may enjoy a magnificent view. The Darro cuts into its banks a great deal, and causes frequent landslides; also, an old verse, sung by the children, alludes to its penchant for carrying everything off, and a grotesque reason for it is given. Here are the lines in question:

Darro tiene promiseido

River Darro gave a promise

El vasarse con Genil

To up and marry the Genil

Y le ha de llevar en dote

And bore away as a dowry

Plaza Nueva y Zacatín

Plaza Nueva and Zacatín

The gardens called Los Cármenes del Darro, of which there are such delightful descriptions in Spanish and Moorish poetry, are found on the banks of the Carrera del Darro, rising towards the fount of Los Avellanos.

The city is therefore divided into four large districts: Antequerula, which occupies the ridges of the hill, or rather mount, crowned by the Alhambra; the Alhambra and its appendage the Generalife; the Albaicín, once a vast fortress, today a ruined and depopulated district; and Granada proper, which extends into the level area around the cathedral and the Plaza de Bib-Rambla, forming a separate quarter.

This is the topographical plan of Granada, more or less; crossed in its entire breadth by the Darro, bordered by the Genil which bathes the Alameda (promenade), and sheltered by the Sierra Nevada, which can be seen at each end of the street, brought so near by the air's transparency, that it seems as if one could touch it with one's hand from the upper balconies and *miradores*.

The general appearance of Granada greatly belied any predictions I might have formed. Despite myself, and the numerous disappointments already experienced, I refused to believe that three or four hundred years, and waves of bourgeois living, might have so transformed the scene of so many romantic and chivalrous actions. I imagined a city half-Moorish, half-Gothic, where bell-towers mingled with minarets, and gables alternated with terraced roofs; I expected historic houses adorned with carvings, coats of arms and heroic mottos, strange buildings, their floors overlapping one another, with protruding beams, balconies adorned with Persian carpets, and blue and white jars; in sum the realisation of an opera set, representing some marvellous perspective on the Middle Ages.

The people you meet, in modern costume, wearing flared top-hats, and dressed in proprietorial frock-coats, involuntarily produce an unpleasant effect and seem more ridiculous than they actually are; since they could not in reality stroll about, to the greater glory of the local colour, in the Moorish *albornoz* (*loose robe*) of the time of Boabdil, or steel armour from the days of Ferdinand and Isabella. They take it upon themselves, like almost all the bourgeoisie in the cities of Spain, to proclaim that they are not in the least bit picturesque, and to demonstrate their degree of civilisation by means of trousers with boot-straps. Such is the idea that preoccupies them: they are afraid of being seen as barbaric, as backward, and when the

savage beauty of their country is praised they humbly excuse themselves for not yet having acquired railways, and for the lack of steam-driven factories. One of these honest townspeople, to whom I praised the amenities of Granada, replied to me: 'It is the best-lit city in Andalusia. Note how many street lights there are; but such a shame that we fail as yet to employ gas jets!'

Granada is a cheerful, lively city full of laughter, even though it has lost its former splendour. The inhabitants multiply and it enjoys a large population; the canopies there are more beautiful and in greater numbers than in Madrid. Andalusian exuberance fills the streets with a movement and a life unknown to serious Castilian pedestrians, who raise no more noise than their shadows: what is said here applies especially to the Carrera del Darro, the Zacatín, the Plaza Nueva, the Cuesta de Gomérez which leads to the Alhambra, the square containing the Theatre (*the Teatro del Campillo, fronting on the Plaza de Bailén renamed the Plaza Mariana Pineda. The theatre had been formerly the Teatro Napoléon, then the Teatro Principal, and ultimately became the Teatro Cervantes, now demolished*), the borders of the promenade, and the main arterial streets. The rest of the city is criss-crossed in all directions by inextricably narrow alleys, three to four feet wide, which cannot admit carriages, and are wholly reminiscent of the Moorish streets of Algiers. The only noise one hears is of donkeys' or mules' hooves, raising a spark from the gleaming paving stones, or the monotonous plink-plink of a guitar being strummed in the depths of some courtyard interior.

The balconies adorned with blinds, flower pots, and shrubs; the vines that venture from one window to another; the oleanders that throw their gleaming bouquets over the garden walls; the unfamiliar play of sunlight and shadow that recalls the paintings of Decamps that depict Turkish villages; the women seated on doorsteps; the half-naked children playing and leaping about; the donkeys coming and going laden with parcels of feathers, and bales of wool, give the lanes, almost always sloping upwards, and sometimes interrupted by a few steps, a particular appearance which is not without charm and whose unexpectedness more than compensates for any lack of regularity.

Victor Hugo, in charming oriental style, said of Granada: 'She paints her houses in the richest colours.' That is accurate in every detail. The wealthier houses are painted on the outside in the strangest manner, with simulated architecture, grisaille ornamentation, and false bas-reliefs. There are panels, cartouches, piers, vases emitting flames, spirals, medallions decorated with pompom roses, ovals, chicory-leaves, and pot-bellied cupids supporting all kinds of allegorical implements, painted on backgrounds of apple-green, dusty pink, yellowish-brown: the rococo genre taken to its ultimate. At first it is difficult to accept these as the facades of serious dwellings; one feels one is walking endlessly among scenic flats, backstage, in some theatre. We had already seen buildings decorated in this way in Toledo, but they were different from those of Granada in their excessive ornamentation and the curious use of colour. Personally, I am not averse to the fashion, which is bright on the eye, and makes a happy contrast with the chalky tint of walls painted with whitewash.

I spoke earlier of the bourgeoisie dressed in French costume, but fortunately folk there do not follow the fashions of Paris; men retain the peaked hat with velvet brim, decorated with tufts of silk, or truncated in form, with a large brim curved like a turban; the jacket embellished with embroidery and patches of cloth in colours of every kind on elbows, facings, and collar,

vaguely recalling Turkish jackets; a red or yellow belt; trousers with turn-ups, held by filigrane buttons or coins soldered to a shank, the leather gaiters open at the side, revealing the leg; but all this more dazzling, more flowery, more colourful, more exuberant, more laden with tinsel and frills than in other provinces. We also saw many costumes which are referred to as *vestido de cazador* (hunting wear), made of Cordoba leather and blue or green velvet, enhanced with ropes of cord. The grandest style involves carrying in one's hand a cane (*vara*), a white stick, four feet long, and bifurcated at the end, on which one leans nonchalantly whenever one stops to chat. No self-respecting *majo* would dare to appear in public without his vara. Two handkerchiefs whose ends hang from the jacket pockets, and a long *navaja* (*folding-knife*) passed through the belt, not at the front, but in the centre of the back, are the height of elegance for these popinjays of the people.

The costume appealed to me so much that my next step was to order one. I was taken to see Don Juan Zapata, a man with a great reputation regarding national costume, and who harboured a hatred for dark clothing and frock coats at least equal to my own. Finding in me someone who shared his antipathy, he gave free rein to his bitterness, and fed my heart with an elegy on the decadence of his art. He recalled, with a pain that resonated with me, those happy times when a foreigner dressed in the French mode would have been booed in the streets, and pelted with orange peel, when the *toreadors* wore fine embroidered jackets worth more than five hundred pesetas, and young people of good families exorbitantly-priced embellishments, and ropes of cord (*aiguillettes*). 'Alas! sir, only the English purchase Spanish clothing now,' he cried, as he finished measuring me.

This Señor Zapata behaved as regards the clothes he produced, much as Hoffman's *Cardillac* with regard to his jewellery. It troubled him greatly to hand them over to his customers. When he came to try the fit of my costume, he was so dazzled by the brilliance of vase of flowers he had embroidered, in the centre of the back, on the brown surface of the cloth, that he became madly joyful and to commit all kinds of extravagances. But, suddenly, the thought of leaving this masterpiece in my hands stifled his mirth and darkened his mood. Under the pretext of I know not what essential alterations, he enveloped the jacket in a length of wrapping, and handed it to his apprentice, as a Spanish tailor would think himself dishonoured if he had to carry a parcel himself, and then ran away, as if all the devils were after him, while giving me a fierce and ironic glance. The next day he returned alone and, taking from a leather purse the money I had paid him, told me that it was too painful for him to part with the jacket, and that he preferred to return me my *duros*. It was only on my observing to him that the costume would inspire a true idea of his talent, and enhance his reputation in Paris, that he consented to yield.

The women of Granada had the good taste not to abandon the mantilla, the most delightful hair-adornment that can frame a Spanish lady's face; groups of them traversed the streets and walk-ways, in their black lace, their hair covered thus, a red carnation at each temple, and promenaded along the walls, wielding their fans with incomparable grace and agility. A woman's hat is a rarity in Granada. The elegant ones may well have some jonquil or poppy-coloured thing in a hat-box, that they reserve for special occasions; but such occasions, thankfully, are rare, and those dreaded hats only see the light on the Queen's saint's-day, or at

solemn Lyceum events. May our fashions never invade the city of the Caliphs, and that fearsome threat contained in those two words daubed in black at the crossroads: *Modista francesas (French couture)*, never be realised! So-called serious minds will no doubt find my attitude outdated, and laugh at my picturesque grievances, but I am among those who believe that patent-leather boots and rubberised overcoats contribute little or nothing to civilisation, and who consider civilisation itself an undesirable thing. It is a painful spectacle for poets, artists, and philosophers to see form and colour vanish from the world, the lines blurring, the tints becoming confused, and a most desperate uniformity invading the universe under the pretext of it representing some kind of progress. When everything achieves the same uniformity, travelling to other countries will become utterly pointless, yet it is precisely then, by a happy coincidence, that the railways will achieve their full development. What is the point of journeying afar, at a speed of ten leagues an hour, merely to see some Rue de la Paix lit by gas and filled with comfortable bourgeoisie? I believe that such was not the divine plan, the deity having formed each country in a different manner, granting it specific vegetation, and populating it with unique inhabitants as regards their conformation, language, and appearance. To wish to impose the same livery on folk from differing climes is to misunderstand the nature of creation, and to commit one of the thousand errors of European civilisation; in court-dress one is much uglier, yet just as barbaric. The poor Turks under Sultan Mahmud II have cut a fine figure indeed since the reform of their old Asian costume, and since enlightenment has made infinite progress among them!

To enjoy a walk, follow the Carrera del Darro, cross the square housing the Teatro del Campillo (*Plaza de Bailén, now the Plaza Mariana Pineda*) where a funeral column has been erected in memory of Isidoro Máiquez by Julián Romea, his wife, Matilde Diez, and other artists of the drama, and which is overlooked by the facade of the Arsenal, a rococo building, daubed in yellow and garnished with statues of grenadiers painted mouse-grey.

The Alameda of Granada is undoubtedly one of the most pleasant places in the world: it is called the *Salon*; a singular name for a promenade: imagine a long avenue with several rows of trees of a greenness unique in Spain, terminating at each end in a monumental fountain, each of whose basins raises strangely deformed aquatic gods of a delightful barbarity on its shoulders. These fountains, contrary to custom where such constructions are involved, pour forth large sheets of water which evaporate in a fine rain and humid mist, spreading a delightful freshness. In the side alleys, the flow of streams of a crystal-clear transparency is channelled along beds of coloured pebbles. A large parterre, adorned with water-jets, filled with shrubs and flowers, myrtles, rose-bushes, jasmines, the entire cornucopia of Granadan flora, occupies the space between the Salon and the River Genil, and extends as far as the bridge built by General Sébastiani at the time of the French invasion. The Genil, in its marble bed, arrives from the Sierra Nevada through laurel groves of incomparable beauty. Glass and crystal, by comparison are too opaque, too dense, to give an idea of the purity of this water which on the previous day had spread, as yet, in silver sheets, over the white shoulders of the Sierra Nevada. It is a torrent of molten diamond.

In the evenings, between seven and eight, the elegant Granadins and their *little friends* meet at the Salon: their carriages follow the road, deserted most of the time, since the Spaniards

are extremely fond of walking, and, despite their pride, deign to show themselves doing so. Nothing is more charming than seeing the young women and girls come and go in small groups, in mantillas, arms bare, fresh flowers in their hair, satin shoes on their feet, fans in their hands, followed at some distance by their friends and chaperones, because in Spain it is not customary to give one's arm to a woman, as we have already pointed out when speaking of the Prado in Madrid. This habit of walking alone gives them a frankness, an elegance, and a freedom of movement that our women do not have, who are always hanging on someone's arm. As the painters say, they bear themselves perfectly. This perpetual separation of man and woman, at least in public, already signals the Orient.

A spectacle of which the peoples of the North would be hard put to gain an idea is the Alameda of Granada at sunset: the Sierra Nevada, whose jagged outline borders the city on that side, takes on unimaginable shades. All the escarpments, all the peaks, struck by the light, become pink, but a dazzling, ideal, fabulous pink, glazed with silver, mingled with iris and opal-tinted reflections, which would make the freshest hues from the pallet seem muddy; their tones born of mother-of-pearl, translucent rubies, veins of agate, and adventurine-quartz defy all the magical jewellery of the *Thousand and One Nights*. The valleys, crevices, and cavities, all the places the rays of the setting sun fail to reach, are of the blue of lapis-lazuli and sapphire, and compete with the azure of sky and sea; the contrast of tone between light and shadow has a prodigious effect: the mountain seems to take on an immense robe of shifting silk, spangled and ribbed with silver; little by little the splendid colours fade and melt into violet half-tones, shadows invade the lower hills, the light retreats towards the highest peaks, and the whole plain lies in darkness while the silver diadem of the Sierra still sparkles in a serene sky, beneath the farewell kiss of the sun.

The walkers take a few more turns, then disperse, some to seek out sorbets or agraz at Don Pedro Hurtado's café, the best parlour for ices in Granada; others to the *tertulia*, to meet their friends and acquaintances.

This hour is the most cheerful and lively in Granada. The open-air stalls of the aguadores and sellers of ices, are lit by a multitude of lamps and flares; the street-lights and lanterns lit before images of the Madonna compete in brightness and number with the stars, which is say a great deal; and, if it is moonlight, one can read the most microscopic print perfectly. The light is blue instead of yellow, that is all.

Thanks to the lady who had prevented me from dying of hunger in the diligence, and who introduced us to several of her friends, we were soon widely received in Granada, and led a delightful life there. It is impossible to receive a freer, kinder, or more cordial welcome; within five or six days, we were completely at home and, following Spanish usage, were referred to by our first names: in Granada, I was Don Teofilo, my comrade Don Eugenio, and we were free to call the women and girls of the houses in which we were received by their first names, Carmen, Teresa, Gala, etc. This familiarity was accompanied by the most polished manners and respectful attention.

Thus, we attended the *tertulia* every evening, in one house or another, from eight till midnight. *Tertulias* take place in patios surrounded by alabaster columns, and adorned with a fountain whose basin is ringed by flowers in pots, and boxes of shrubs on whose leaves the

drops fall with a hiss. Six or seven lamps hang from the walls; sofas and chairs made of straw or rushes furnish the arcades, guitars lie here and there; the piano occupies one corner, and card-tables another.

On entering, guests greet the mistress and master of the house, who never fail, after the usual pleasantries, to offer you a cup of chocolate, which it is in good taste to refuse, and a cigarette which we sometimes accepted. These duties once accomplished, one makes one's way to a corner of the *patio* and joins the group that seems most attractive to you. Parents and elderly people play *Trecillo* (*or Ombre, a predecessor to Quadrille and Whist*) the young men flatter the young ladies, recite rhymed verse composed that day, are scolded and granted penances for the crimes they may have committed the day before, such as having danced too often with a pretty cousin, or cast too keen a glance towards some forbidden balcony, along with other small peccadilloes. If they have been very good, in return for the gift of a rose they have brought, they are given a carnation from the bodice or hair, and they respond with a glance and a light pressure of the fingers in taking the lady's hand when ascending to the balcony to listen to the music before retiring. Love seems to be Granada's only occupation. One has no sooner spoken two or three times to a young girl before the whole town declares you *novio* and *novia*, that is to say engaged, and utters a host of innocent jokes about your so-called passion, which disturb you by making marital visions swim before your eyes. This form of gallantry is more apparent than real; despite the languorous looks, the burning glances, the tender or passionate conversations, the charming diminutives, and the *querido* (darling) with which your name is preceded, you must not assume anything. A Frenchman to whom some worldly woman uttered a quarter of what a young Granadan girl says without consequence to one of her many novios would believe some romantic tryst promised that very evening; a matter in which he would be much mistaken; if he behaved a little too freely, he would quickly be called to order, and commanded to declare his matrimonial intentions to her grandparents. This honest freedom of address, so far removed from the stilted and artificial customs of the Northern nations, is preferable to our hypocrisy in speaking which conceals, deep down, a greater crudeness in action. In Granada, showing interest in a married woman is regarded as quite extraordinary, while nothing is seen as more commonplace than courting a young girl. In France, we find the opposite: no one ever says a word to young ladies, which is what renders subsequent marriages so often unhappy. In Spain, a novio sees his novia two or three times a day, speaks with her without being overheard, accompanies her for walks, visits and chats with her, at night, through the railings of a balcony, or a ground floor window. He has all the time in the world to get to know her, to study her character, and so avoids entering on marriage blindly.

If the conversation languishes, one of the gallants takes down a guitar and, strumming the strings with his nails, marking the rhythm with the palm of his hand on the belly of the instrument, begins to sing some joyous Andalusian song or some farcical verses interspersed with *Ay!* and *Ola!* strangely modulated and with singular effect. Some lady sits down at the piano, and plays a piece by Vincenzo Bellini, who seems to be the Spaniards' favourite maestro, or sings a romance by Manuel Bréton de Los Herreros, the great lyricist of Madrid. The evening ends with a small improvised ball, where they never, alas, dance the jota, fandango, or bolero, such things being left to the peasants, servants and gypsies, but a contradance or a rigadoon, or

sometimes a waltz. However, at our request, one evening, two young ladies of the house were willing to perform the bolero; but first they closed the windows and the *patio* door, which usually always remain open, so afraid were they of being accused of bad taste and an affection for local colour. Spaniards, in general were angered when we spoke to them of the cachucha, castanets, majos, manolas, monks, brigands or bullfights, though deep down they have a great fondness for all these truly national and characteristic things. They ask you, with a visibly annoyed look, if you think them not as advanced as you in civilisation, for the deplorable mania for imitating the English or French has penetrated everywhere. Spain today is at the stage of Jean-Baptiste-Paul Touquet's popular edition of Voltaire's writings (*Voltaire-Touquet*), and of the *Constitutionnel* of 1825, that is to say hostile to all colour and poetry. Be it always understood here, that I speak of the so-called enlightened class that inhabits the cities.

When the contradances are over, one takes leave of one's hosts, saying to the wife: *A los pies de usted (at your service)*; to the husband: *Beso a usted la mano* (*I kiss your hand*); which is answered by: *Buenas noches et beso a usted la suya* (*Good night, and I kiss your hand likewise*) and on the doorstep, as a final farewell: *Hasta mañana* (until tomorrow) which commits you to returning. While being companiable, the common people themselves, the peasants, and even shameless scoundrels possess among themselves an exquisite urbanity very different from the crudeness of our own masses; it is true that a stab could easily follow a hurtful word, which ensures that the interlocutors employ a deal of caution. It is to be remarked that French politeness, once proverbial, has vanished since people stopped wearing swords. The law against duelling will ultimately make us the rudest people in the universe.

On returning home, one meets, beneath the windows and balconies, young gallants wrapped in their capes occupied in *pelar la paba* (plucking the turkey), making conversation that is with their *novias*, through the grilles and railings. These nocturnal conversations often last until two or three in the morning, which is not surprising, since the Spaniards spend part of the day sleeping. One may also encounter a serenade, played by three or four musicians, but most often the lover alone, who sings verses to the accompaniment of the guitar, his sombrero over his eyes, and his foot placed on a stone or a post. In the past, two serenaders in the same street would not have tolerated each other; the first occupant would lay claim to the spot, and forbid any guitar other than his to sound in the nocturnal silence. Such pretensions were maintained at the point of the sword or knife, unless the watch happened to pass by. Then the two rivals would unite together in attacking the patrol, if they had not yet settled their particular quarrel. Serenaders' susceptibilities have softened over the years, and everyone can *rascar el jamon* (scrape away at the ham) under their beauty's wall in peace.

If the night is dark, one must be careful not to set foot on the stomach of some honourable hidalgo wrapped in his mantle, this serving as his clothing, bed, and home. In summer nights, the granite steps of the theatre are covered with a pile of vagrants who have no other refuge. Each has their own step, as it were their own apartment, where one is always sure to find them. They sleep there, under the blue dome of the sky with the stars as nightlights, sheltered from bedbugs, their leathery skin defying the bites of mosquitoes, their visages tanned by the fieriness of the Andalusian sun, and as black, to be sure, as that of the darkest mulattoes.

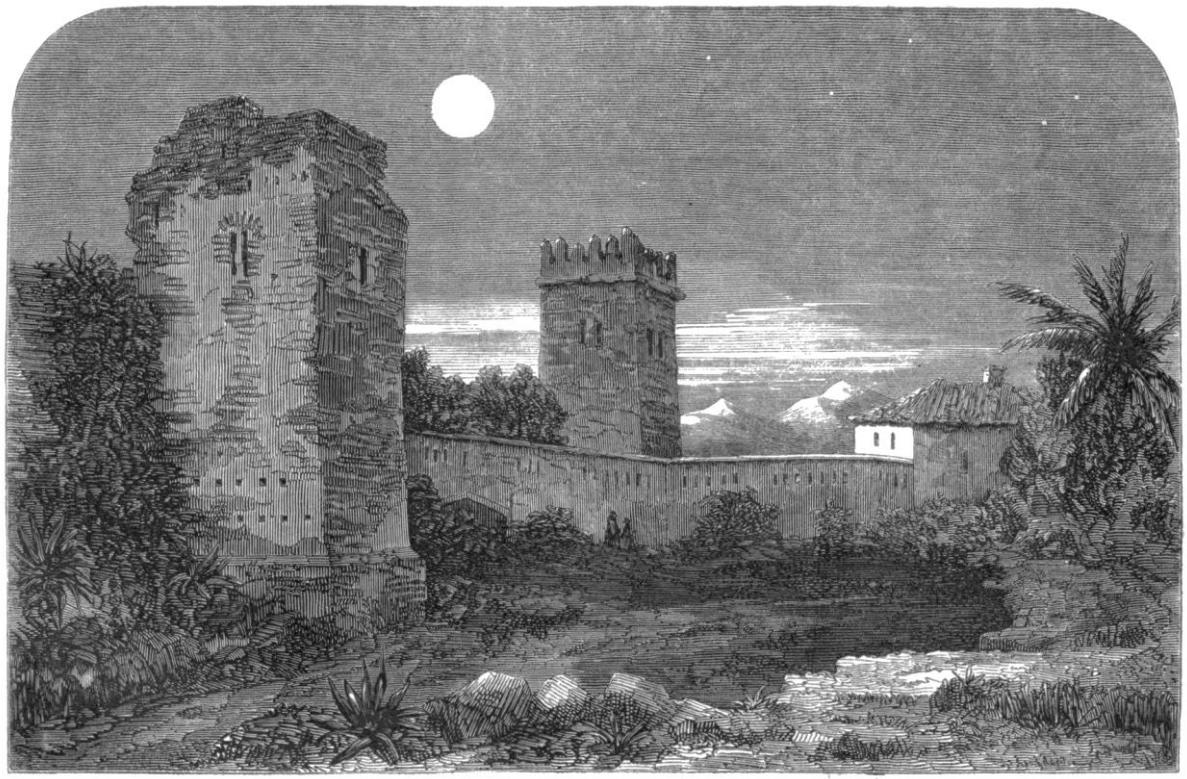
Such, with a few variations, is the life we led: the morning devoted to shopping within the city, a stroll in the Alhambra, or a walk to the Generalife, and then the obligatory visit to the fair ladies with whom we had spent the evening. If we returned to our lodgings only twice on a given day, we were reproached for being ungrateful, and were received with such kindness that we indeed regarded ourselves as savage, fierce, and negligent in the extreme.

We had such a passion for the Alhambra that, not content with going there every day, we wished to stay there permanently, not in the neighbouring houses, which are rented at a high price to the English, but in the palace itself, and, thanks to the protection afforded us by our friends in Granada, without granting us formal permission they promised not to pay attention to our doing so. We lodged there for four days and nights, which were without a doubt the most delightful moments of my life.

To visit the Alhambra, if you so wish, let us pass by the Plaza de Bib-Rambla (*Vivarambla*), in which the valiant Moorish toreador Gazul once fought the bull, and whose houses, with their balconies and their wooden miradors, have the appearance somewhat of chicken coops. The fish-market occupies a corner of the square, the centre of which forms a platform surrounded by stone benches, populated by money-changers, and sellers of alcarrazas, earthen-pots, watermelons, haberdasheries, romances, knives, rosaries and other small wares in the open air. The Zacatín, which has retained its Moorish name, connects the Plaza de Bib-Rambla to the Plaza-Nueva. In this street, bordered by side-alleys, covered with *tendidos* of sail-cloth, all the commerce of Granada hums and bustles: hatters, tailors, shoemakers, makers of trimmings, and cloth- merchants occupy the majority of the shops to which the refinements of modern luxury are still unknown, and which recall the ancient stalls between the pillars in the market-halls of Paris. Crowds flock to the Zacatín at all hours. Sometimes a touring group of students from Salamanca, who play the guitar, tambourine, castanets and triangle, singing comic verses full of verve; sometimes a horde of gypsy women with their blue flounced dresses strewn with stars, their long yellow shawls, hair in disorder, and necks encircled by large necklaces of amber or coral, or else a line of donkeys loaded with huge jars huge and driven forward by a peasant from La Vega burned like an African.

Gate of the Vivarambla

The Zacatín opens onto Plaza-Nueva, one section of which is occupied by the superb Chancery Palace, remarkable for its rustic columns, and the formal severity of its architecture. Having crossed the square, we begin to climb the street called Cuesta de Gomérez, at the end of which we find ourselves on the border of the Alhambra's jurisdiction, face to face with the Puerta de las Granadas, named Bib al-Buxar (*the Gate of Glad Tidings*) by the Moors, with on its right the Vermilion Towers (*Torres Bermejas*) built, according to the scholars, on Phoenician foundations, and inhabited today by basket-weavers and clay-potters.



Exterior of the Alhambra

Before proceeding further, I must warn my readers, who might find my descriptions, though scrupulously accurate, inferior to the idea they have formed of it, that the Alhambra, this palace-fortress of the ancient Moorish kings, fails to correspond in the least to the appearance imagination grants it. One expects terrace superimposed on terrace, minarets embroidered with openwork, perspectives formed of endless colonnades. There is none of this in reality; from the outside, we only see large, massive towers the colour of brick or toast, built at different times by the Arab princes; on the inside, merely a series of rooms and galleries decorated with extreme delicacy, but nothing grandiose. Having expressed these reservations, let us continue our visit.

Passing through the Puerta de las Granadas, we find ourselves within the walls of the fortress and under the jurisdiction of a special authority. Two paths trace their way through tall trees. Let us take that on the left, which leads to the fountain of Charles V (*Pilar de Carlos V*); it is the steeper of the two, but the shortest and the most picturesque. Streams flow rapidly in channels floored with pebbles, spreading freshness at the feet of the trees, which almost all belong to northern species, and whose verdancy provides a most delightful sense of life only a stone’s throw from Africa. The sound of babbling water mixes with the loud buzzing of a hundred thousand cicadas and crickets whose chorus never ceases, and inevitably summons the notion, despite the coolness of the place, of a southern and torrid clime. Water gushes from every crevice, from beneath tree-trunks, through the cracks in the ancient walls. The warmer it is, the more abundantly the springs flow, since it is the snow that feeds them. This mixture of

water, snow, and heat grants Granada a climate without parallel in the world, a true earthly paradise and, when seemingly plunged in deepest melancholy, one does not have to be a Moor to apply the Arabic saying to oneself: *He is thinking of Granada*.

At the end of the path, which continues to ascend, we find the large monumental fountain dedicated to the Emperor Charles V which forms a retaining wall, with devices, coats of arms, emblems of victory, imperial eagles, and mythological medallions, in the Germano-Roman style, heavily and powerfully ornate. Two escutcheons bearing the arms of the House of Mondéjar indicate that Íñigo Lopez de Mendoza, Marquis of Santillana, raised the monument in honour of that red-bearded Caesar. The fountain, of solid masonry, supports the grounds of the ramp which leads to the Gate of Justice (*Puerta de la Justicia*), through which one enters the Alhambra proper.

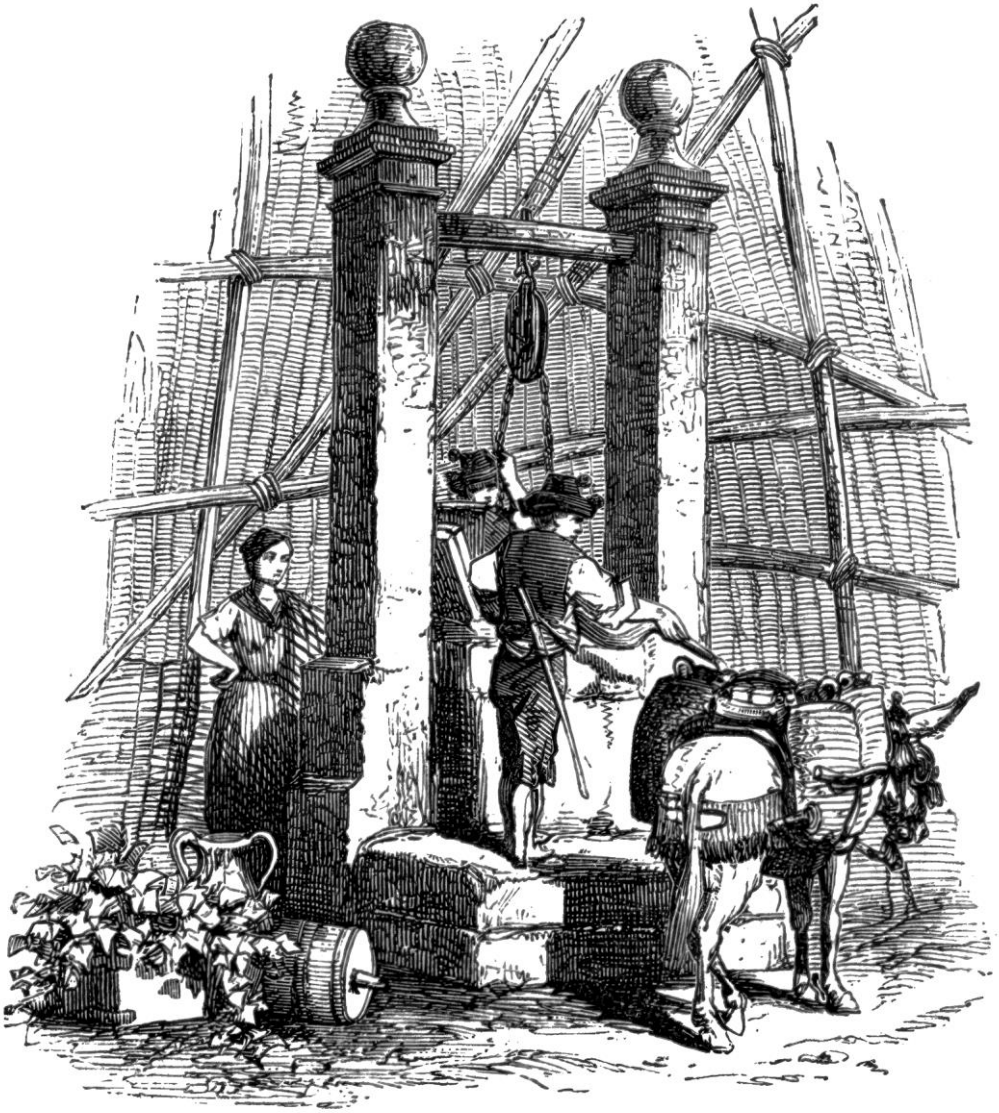
The Gate of Justice was built by King Yusef I, Abu al Hajjaj, around the year 1348 AD: the name comes from the Muslim custom of administering justice at the threshold of their palaces; which has the double advantage of displaying majesty while not allowing anyone to enter the interior courtyards; for Monsieur Pierre Paul Royer-Collard's maxim that: 'Private life should be walled away,' was invented many centuries ago in the Orient, that land of the sun from which all light and wisdom comes.

Tower, rather than gate, would be a term more aptly applied to King Yusef's construction, since it is indeed a large square tower, fairly tall, and pierced by a large hollow heart-shaped arch, to which hieroglyphs of a key and a hand deeply engraved on two separate stones add a forbidding and cabalistic air. The key is a symbol greatly revered by the Arabs, due to a verse in the Koran which begins with these words: *He opened*, and to its several other hermetic meanings; the hand is intended to ward off the evil eye, the *jettatura*, much as the little coral hands folk wear in Naples as a pin or charm are thought to protect them from malicious glances. There was an ancient prediction that Granada would not be taken till the hand grasped the key; we must admit, to the shame of the prophet involved, that the two hieroglyphs remained as ever in the same place when Boabdil, *el rey chico*, as he was called because of his small stature, emitted that historic sigh at the fall of Granada, *suspiro del Moro*, which gave it name to a rock in the Sierra d'Elvire.

The massive crenellated, tower, glazed with orange and red against a backcloth of open sky, with an abyss of vegetation at its back, the city in the valley's depths, and further off long mountainous folds veined with a thousand hues like African porphyry, forms a truly splendid and majestic entrance to the Arab palace. Below the gate is a guardhouse, where poor, ragged soldiers take a nap in the same place where caliphs, seated on gold-brocaded couches, dark eyes motionless in their marble faces, fingers buried in the waves of their silky beards, listened with a dreamy and solemn air to the complaints of the faithful. An altar, surmounted by an image of the Virgin, is attached to the wall, as if to sanctify from the first step this ancient residence of the followers of Muhammad.

Once through the door, we entered a vast square, the *Plaza de los Algibes (the Square of the Cisterns)*, in the centre of which is a well whose rim is surrounded by a kind of wooden hut cloaked in esparto-matting beneath which one can imbibe, for a *cuarto*, large glasses of water as clear as diamonds, as cold as ice, and of exquisite taste. The Quebrada (the *Broken*) Tower,

the Tower of Homage, the Tower of Arms, the Vela Tower (*the Watchtower*) whose bell announces the times of water distribution, and the stone parapets where you can lean on your elbows to admire the marvellous spectacle that unfolds before you, surround the square on the one side; the other is occupied by the palace of Charles V, a grand monument of the Renaissance period which we would admire anywhere else, but upon which we heap curses here, when we recall that it covers a corresponding area of the Alhambra demolished intentionally to embrace its heavy mass. This alcázar (*palace*) was designed by Alonso Berruguete; the trophies, the bas-reliefs, the medallions of its facade were carved by his proud, bold, and patient chisel; the circular courtyard with marble columns, where bullfights were to take place, is undoubtedly a magnificent piece of architecture, but *non erat hic locus (this was not the place for it)*.



The well of the Plaza de los Algibes

We enter the Alhambra proper through a corridor located in the corner of the palace of Charles V, and arrive, after a few detours, at a large courtyard designated variously as the *Patio de los Arrayanes* (Courtyard of the Myrtle trees), *de la Alberca* (the Reservoir), or of the *Mexuar,* an Arabic word for the official who oversaw royal protocol.

Emerging from a dark corridor into this large enclosure flooded with light, one experiences an effect similar to that of Daguerre's Diorama. The wave of some enchanter's wand seems to have transported you to the Orient, four or five centuries ago. Time, which changes everything in its course, has in no way modified the appearance of these places, where the appearance of the Sultana *'Subduer of Hearts'* (*from the Thousand and One Nights*) and the Moor *Tarfe* in his white cape (*see Lope de Vega's play: Los hechos de Garcilaso de la Vega y Moro Tarfe*) would not cause the least surprise.

In the middle of the courtyard is a reservoir, long and wide, of three or four feet in depth and rectangular in shape, bordered by two beds of myrtles and shrubs, and terminated at each end by a kind of arcade with slender columns supporting Moorish arches of great delicacy. Basins with water-jets, the outpouring of which flows into the tank through a marble channel, are placed before each arcade and complete the symmetry of design. On the left are the archives and a room to which, among debris of all kinds, is relegated, to the shame of the Granadans it must be said, a magnificent vase from the Alhambra, nearly four feet high, covered with ornaments and inscriptions, a work of inestimable rarity, which alone would make a museum famous, and which Spanish neglect allows to deteriorate in an ignoble corner. One of the wings which form the handles was recently broken (*see the Alhambra Vase, in the Museo Arqueologico de la Alhambra*). On the left side, also, are the passages which lead to the ancient mosque, converted into a church, during the conquest and dedicated to Santa María de la Alhambra. To the right are the servants' quarters, where the head of some dark-haired Andalusian servant, framed by a narrow Moorish window, produces a satisfactory enough oriental effect. In the background, above the ugly roof of rounded tiles, which replaced the cedar beams and golden tiles of the Arab roof, rises the majestic Comares Tower, its serrated vermilion battlements outlined against the sky's admirable clarity. This tower encloses the Hall of the Ambassadors, and communicates with the *Patio de los Arrayanes* by a kind of antechamber called the *Sala de la Barca*, because of its boat-like shape.

This antechamber to the Hall of Ambassadors is worthy of its role: the boldness of its arcades, its variety, the intertwining of its arabesques, the mosaics on its walls, the ornamentation of its stuccoed ceiling, moulded like the roof of a cave adorned with stalactites, painted in azures, greens and reds, traces of which are still visible, creates an ensemble of charming oddity and originality.

On each side of the door which leads to the Ambassadors' room, in the very jamb of the arcade, above the covering of glazed tiles whose triangles of sharp colour adorn the lower part of the walls, there are two niches, of white marble, hollowed out in the shape of small chapels and carved with extreme delicacy. This is where the ancient Moors left their slippers prior to entering, as a sign of deference, much as we doff our hats in places which demand respect.

The Hall of Ambassadors, one of the largest in the Alhambra, fills the whole interior of the Comares Tower. The ceiling, made of cedar wood, offers those mathematical variations so familiar to Arabian architects: all the pieces are placed so that their outward and inward angles form an infinite complexity of design; the walls vanish under a network of ornamentation so tightly, so inextricably intertwined, that the best comparison is with several layers of lace set one on top of another. Gothic architecture, with its stone lacework and carved rosettes, is as nothing compared to this. Ornamental pierced fish-slices, or the paper embroideries cut with a pastry cutter in which confectioners wrap their sugared almonds, alone gives some idea. One of the characteristics of the Moorish style is to offer few large projections or profiles. All this ornamentation is developed in flat planes, and the depth of relief hardly exceeds four to five inches; it is akin to a form of tapestry executed in the plaster itself. One particular element may be distinguished: the use of writing as a decorative motif. In truth, Arabic writing with its contoured and mysterious forms lends itself wonderfully to this use. The inscriptions, which are almost always *suras* from the Koran, or in praise of the various princes who built and decorated the rooms, flow along the friezes, over the jambs of the doors, and around the arches of the windows, interspersed with flowers, foliage, lacework, and all the riches of Arabic calligraphy. Those of the Hall of Ambassadors signify *Glory to God, power and riches to the faithful,* or contain words of praise for Abu Nasre (*Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Nasr, Muhammad I*), who, *if he had been transported into the heavens alive, would have eclipsed the brightness of the stars and planets*; a hyperbolic assertion which seemed a little too oriental to us. Other bands of writing are charged with the praise of Abu Abdullah (*Muhammad V*), another sultan who worked on this part of the palace. The windows are decorated with pieces of verse in honour of the limpidity of the waters of the reservoir, the freshness of the shrubs, and the scent of the flowers which adorn the courtyard of the Mexuar, which can, in fact, be seen from the Ambassadors'' room through the door and the columns of the arcade.

The pierced loopholes with interior balconies, at a great height from the ground, the framed ceiling with no other decoration than the zig-zags and interlacing formed by its fitted sections, give the Ambassadors' room a more severe appearance than the other rooms of the palace, one more in harmony with its purpose. From the rear window, one enjoys a fine view of the Darro ravine.

With this description complete, I must however destroy one more illusion: all this magnificence is executed neither in marble nor alabaster, nor even stone, but simply in plaster! This sadly contradicts the idea of enchanted luxury that the very name Alhambra positively evokes in the imagination; but nothing is truer: with the exception of the columns, usually carved in one piece, whose height hardly exceeds six to eight feet; a few pavements slabs; the hollows of the basins, and the small chapels for depositing slippers, there is not a single piece of marble used in the interior construction of the Alhambra. It is the same with the Generalife: none have exceeded the Arabs in the art of moulding, hardening and carving plaster, which acquires in their hands the hardness of stucco without its unpleasant glossiness.

Most of these forms of decoration are moulded therefore, and were replicated with little effort wherever symmetry required. Nothing could be easier than to reproduce a room of the

Alhambra; to do so, it would be enough to take the impressions of all the ornamental motifs. Two arcades of the Tribunal Hall (*Sala de los Reyes, the Hall of the Kings*), which had collapsed, were rebuilt by workmen from Granada with a degree of perfection that leaves nothing to be desired. If I were rich enough, one of my fantasies would be to create a duplicate of the Patio of the Lions in one of our public parks.

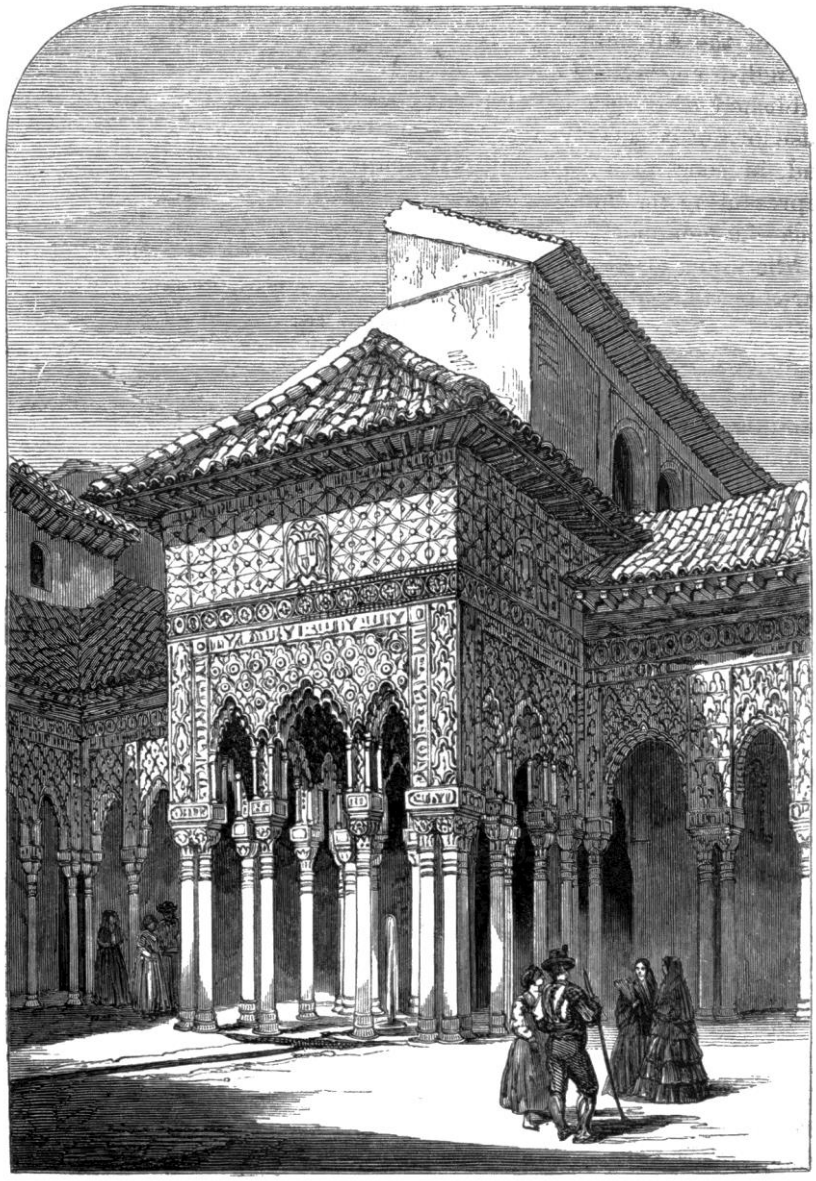
From the Hall of Ambassadors, one walks, via a corridor of relatively modern construction, to the *Tocador* (boudoir), or Queen's Dressing Room, (*the Peinador de la Reina*). It is a small pavilion located on the upper floor of a tower from which one enjoys the most admirable of panoramic views, and which served as an oratory for the Sultanas. At the entrance, one notes a slab of white marble pierced with small holes to allow ingress to smoke from perfumes which were burned beneath the floor. On the walls, fanciful frescoes attributed to Bartolomé de Ragis, Alonso Ferez, and Juan de La Fuente, are still visible. On the frieze, amidst groups of cupids, are the figures of Charles V and his empress, Isabel. It is difficult to dream of anything more elegant and charming than this dressing room with its little Moorish columns, and low arches, suspended over an azure abyss, the floor of which is dotted with the roofs of Granada, and to which the breeze brings the perfumes of the Generalife, of an enormous clump of oleanders blooming on the brow of the next hill, and the plaintive mewing of the peacocks that stroll on the ruined walls. How many hours I spent there, in a state of serene melancholy so different from the melancholy of the North, one leg dangling over the abyss, urging my eyes to fully capture every shape, every contour, of the admirable picture which unfolded before me, and which they will likely never see again! No description, no painting could ever achieve that degree of brilliance, that glow, that liveliness of tone. The most ordinary tints acquire the colours of precious stones, all forming the one spectrum. Towards the end of the day, when the sun is low, inconceivable effects are produced: the mountains sparkle like heaps of rubies, topazes and garnets; a golden dust bathes the valleys, and if, as is common in summer, the ploughmen are burning stubble on the plain, the plumes of smoke rising slowly towards the heavens take on magical hues from the fiery sunset. It surprises me that Spanish painters, in general, darkened their paintings so much, and set themselves, almost exclusively, the task of imitating Caravaggio, and the more sombre masters. The paintings of Decamps and Prosper Marilhat, who mainly painted locations in Asia or Africa, give a much more accurate idea of Spain than all the works brought to France, at great expense, from the Peninsula.

We will cross, without stopping, the Garden of Lindaraja, which is at present no more than uncultivated land, strewn with rubble, bristling with brushwood, and enter for a moment the Sultana's Baths, tiled with mosaics of glazed clay, and embroidered with filigreed plaster that puts to shame the most intricate of corals. A fountain occupies the centre of the room; two alcoves are hollowed from the wall; it was here that the 'Subduer of Hearts' (*Alcolomb*), and Zobéide (*See Antoine Galland's translation of Les Mille et Une Nuits, or The Thousand and One Nights, 1806: the Histoire de Ganem, Volume IV, and other tales*), rested on golden tiles, having savoured the delights and refinements of the oriental baths. One can still see, about fifteen feet from the ground, the stands or balconies where musicians and singers sat. The bathtubs are large tubs of white marble in a single piece, set in small vaulted rooms, lit via pierced rosettes and stars. We will omit, for fear of falling into tedious repetition, a description of the Room of Secrets (*Sala de los Secretos*), where one notices a singular acoustic effect and

whose angles are blackened by the noses of the curious who whisper there some impertinence which is faithfully transported to the opposite corner; of the Hall of the Nymphs (*Sala de las Ninfas*), where above the door once sees an excellent bas-relief of Jupiter transformed into a swan, caressing Leda, executed with an extraordinary freedom of composition, and audacity of chisel; of the apartments of Charles V, in an outrageous state of devastation, which reveal nothing of interest other than their ceilings decorated with the ambitious inscription: *Non plus ultra*; and transport ourselves to the Court of the Lions, the most curious and best preserved portion of the Alhambra.

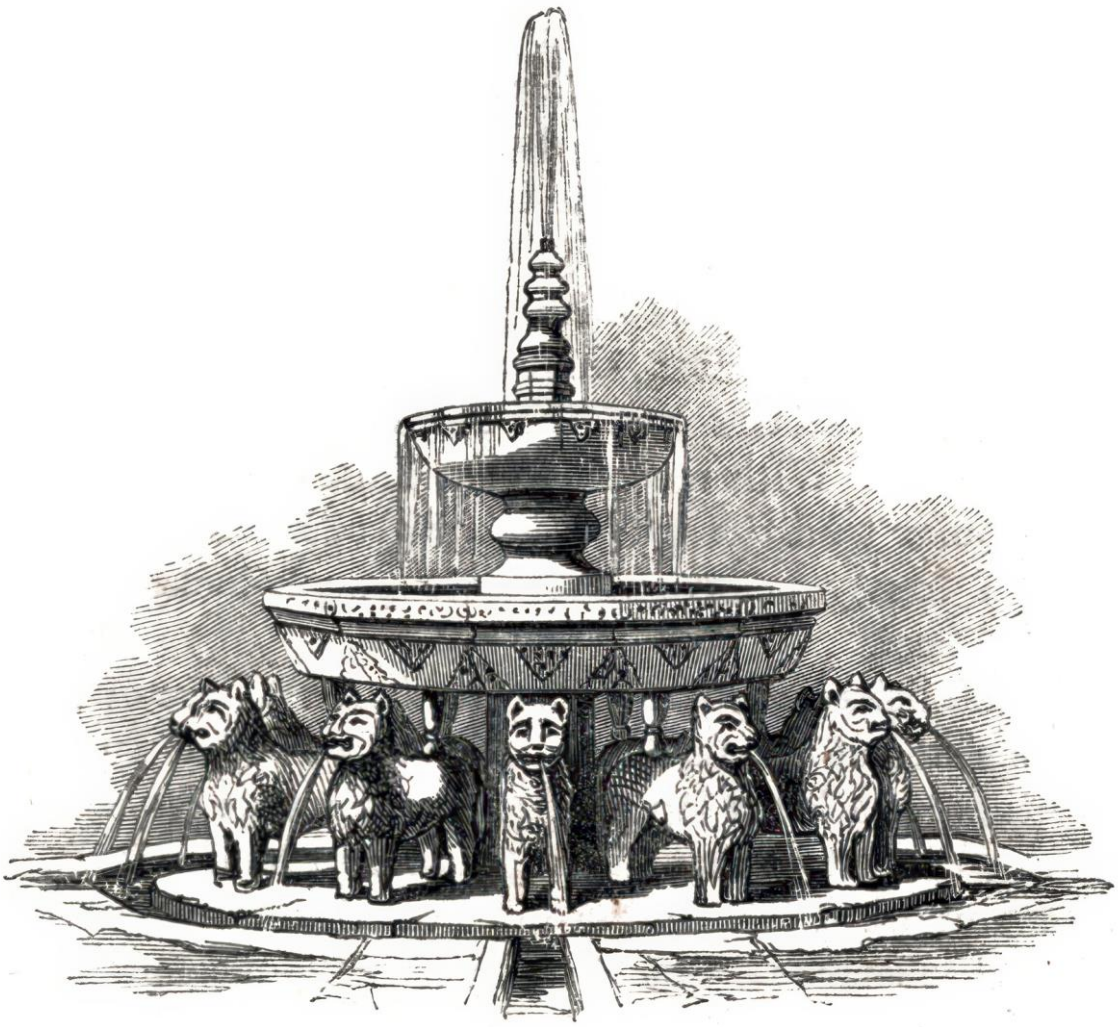
The engravings by English artists and numerous drawings that have been published showing the Court of the Lions give only an incomplete and quite false idea of the place: they almost all lack the correct proportions, and, through the excessive elaboration required to render the endless details of Arab architecture, suggest the idea of a monument of much greater importance.

The Court of the Lions is a hundred and twenty feet long, seventy-three feet wide, and the arcades which surround it are no more than twenty-two feet high. They are formed of a hundred and twenty-eight columns of white marble arranged in symmetrical alternating groups of four and three; these columns, whose elaborate capitals retain traces of gold and other colours, support arches of extreme elegance and most precise forms.



Pavilion of the Court of the Lions, Alhambra

On entering, you see before you, at the far end of the rectangle, the Tribunal Room, whose ceiling is an artistic masterpiece of inestimable rarity and value. Its Arab paintings are perhaps the only ones that have reached us. One of them represents the Court of the Lions itself with the famous fountain though painted in gold; various characters, whom the dilapidated state of the painting does not allow us to distinguish clearly, seem occupied in jousting, or warfare. The other has as its subject a kind of divan or Council of State to which the Moorish kings of Granada have gathered, whose white burnouses, olive-coloured heads, crimson mouths, and mysteriously dark pupils can still be clearly seen. These paintings, it is claimed, are on treated leather, glued to cedar panels, and serve to prove that the precept of the Koran which prohibits the representation of living beings was not always scrupulously observed by the Moors, even if the twelve lions of the fountain were not also there to confirm that assertion.



Fountain, Court of the Lions, Alhambra

On our left, amidst the arcade's length, is the Hall of the Two Sisters, which is opposite the Hall of the Abencerrages on the right. Its name of *Las Dos Hermanas* comes from two immense slabs of white Macael marble, of equal size and perfectly alike, which are set in its pavement. The vault or dome, which the Spanish call, most expressively, *media naranja* (half-orange), is a miracle of work and patience. It looks akin to the cells of a beehive, the stalactites in a cavern, or the clusters of soapy globules that children blow from a straw. Its myriads of small vaults, or domes of three or four feet which rise out of each other, intersect and merge their edges at every moment, seem rather the product of fortuitous crystallisation than the work of human hands; blue, red and green colours still gleam in the hollow of the mouldings with a brilliance almost as vivid as when they were first created. The walls, like that of the Ambassadors' Hall, are covered, from frieze to eye level, with stucco elaborations of incredible delicacy and complexity. The floor is covered with these glazed earthenware tiles whose black,

green and yellow angular shapes form a mosaic with a white background. The centre of the room is occupied by a basin with a jet of water, according to the invariable custom of the Arabs, whose dwellings seem to be nothing more than large embellished fountains. There are four below the portico of the tribunal, as many below the entrance portico, another in the Hall of the Abencerrages, without counting the *Taza de los Leones*, which, not content with pouring water through the mouths of its twelve lions, launches a torrent towards the sky through the basin which surmounts them. All this water flows, through channels cut in the paving of the rooms and the paving of the courtyard, to the foot of the Lion fountain, where it is swallowed by an underground conduit. This certainly creates a type of dwelling where one is unbothered by the dust, but one wonders how habitable these rooms were in winter. No doubt the large cedar doors were closed, the marble pavement was covered with thick carpets, fires made from kernels and fragrant timber were lit in the *braseros* (*braziers*), and there the inhabitants awaited the return of fine weather, which is never long in arriving in Granada.

I shall not describe the Hall of the Abencerrages, which is similar to that of the Two Sisters, and contains nothing of interest except its old wooden door assembled from diamond shaped panels, which dates from the time of the Moors. In the Alcázar of Seville, we shall note another in exactly the same style.

The *Taza de los Leones* enjoys, in Arab poetry, a wondrous reputation; there is no praise with which these superb animals are not showered; I must admit that it is difficult to find anything that looks less like a lion than these products of African fantasy: the legs are plain stumps like those pieces of rough-hewn wood that are pushed into the underneath of cardboard dogs to keep them balanced; the muzzles, striped with transverse bars, undoubtedly meant to represent the creatures' whiskers, create a perfect semblance of the muzzles of hippopotami; the eyes are primitive in design, and reminiscent of the shapeless attempts of children. However, these twelve monsters, if one accepts them, not as lions, but as chimeras, as ornamental whims, produce, with the basin they support, a picturesque and elegant effect, which helps one to understand the reason for their reputation, and the praise contained in the Arabic inscription of twenty-four lines of twenty-two syllables, engraved on the walls of the basin into which the waters of the upper jet fall. I ask forgiveness from our readers for the somewhat barbaric fidelity of this translation:

'O you who gaze on these lions fixed in place, note that they need but life itself to achieve perfection! And you, to whom this Alcazar, and this realm fall, take it from the noble hands that without incurring hostility or resistance governed them. May Allah save you for the deeds you have done, and preserve you forever from your enemy's vengeance! Honour and glory to you, O Muhammad our king, adorned with noble virtues with whose aid you have conquered all! May Allah never allow this fair garden, an image of your virtues, ever to be surpassed by some rival! The marble that shades the fountain's basin is like mother-of-pearl beneath the clear glittering water; the surface resembles molten silver, since the water's clarity above the whiteness of the stone is unparalleled; it gleams like a drop of translucent perfume on an alabaster face. It is hard to follow its course. Observe the water, observe the basin, and you will fail to distinguish whether this is water rendered immobile, or marble that flows. Like the prisoner of love, whose visage shows only annoyance or fear beneath the gaze of the envious,

so the water, in its jealousy, shows indignation against the stone, while the stone shows envy on encountering the water. To this inexhaustible flow may be compared the hand of our king, who is as liberal and generous as the lion is valiant and strong.'

It was into the basin of the Fountain of Lions, that the heads of the thirty-six Abencerrages, lured into a trap by the Zirids, fell. The rest of the Abencerrages would have suffered the same fate without the dedication of a little pageboy who, at the risk of his life, ran to warn the survivors, and so prevent them from entering the fatal courtyard. One is shown large reddish patches in the depths of the pool, indelible accusations against the cruelty of their executioners left behind by the victims. Unfortunately, scholars claim that the Abencerrages and the Zirids never existed. I, relying utterly on the romances, on popular tradition and on Monsieur de Chateaubriand's brief tale ('*Les Aventures du Dernier Abencérage'*), firmly believe that the purplish stains are of blood and not rust.

We had established our headquarters in the Court of the Lions; our furniture consisted of two mattresses which we rolled into some corner during the day, a copper lamp, an earthenware jar, and a few bottles of sherry which we placed in the fountain to cool them. Sometimes we slept in the Hall of the Two Sisters, sometimes in that of the Abencerrages, and it was not without some slight apprehension that, stretched on my mantle, I watched the bright rays of the moon, astonished to encounter the flickering yellow flame of a lamp, falling, through the openings in the ceiling, into the water of the pool, and onto the glistening pavement.

I recalled to mind the popular legends Washington Irving gathered to form his *Tales from the Alhambra*. The stories of the *Headless Horse* (*El Caballo Descabezado*) and the *Hairy One (El Velludo)*, related, gravely, by Father Juan Velázquez de Echevarría (*the author of 'Paseos por Granada y sus Contornos'*), seemed extremely probable to me, especially when the light was quenched. The verisimilitude of such legends appears much greater at night, in the darkness traversed by those uncertain gleams that lend a fantastic appearance to all vaguely-outlined objects: doubt is a child of the daylight, faith a daughter of night, and I am one who is still surprised that Saint Thomas believed in Christ, after merely placing his finger in the wound. I am not certain I did not see the Abencerrages walking the arcades in the moonlight, carrying their heads under their arms: the fact remains that the shadows of the columns took on devilishly suspicious shapes, and the breeze, passing through the arcades, seemed like human respiration.

One morning, it was a Sunday, around four or five o'clock, while still asleep we felt our mattresses flooded with a fine, penetrating rain. The water jets had been turned on earlier than usual, in honour of a prince of Saxe-Coburg who was to visit the Alhambra, and who was to marry, it was said, the young queen when she was of age.

We had barely risen and dressed when the prince arrived with two or three members of his suite. He was furious. The guards, to celebrate his visit more worthily, had fitted the most ridiculous hydraulic contraptions ever known to the fountains. One of these inventions sought to represent the queen's journey to Valencia by means of a small carriage of tin, accompanied by lead soldiers, which was activated by the force of the water. Judge the prince's satisfaction with this ingenious and constitutional refinement. The *Fray Gerundio*, a satirical newspaper published in Madrid (*edited by Modesto Lafuente y Zamalloa*), persecuted the poor prince with

particular savagery. It reproached him, among other crimes, for contesting the bill too heatedly in inns, and for having appeared at the theatre in the costume of a *majo*, with a peaked hat on his head.

A group of Granadans, men and women, came to spend the day at the Alhambra; there were seven or eight young and pretty women, and five or six cavaliers. They danced to the sound of the guitar, played little games, and sang in chorus, to a delightful tune, a song, by Fray Luis de Léon, which had achieved popular success in Andalusia. Since the water-jets were exhausted, having launched their silvery fireworks too early, and the fountains were therefore dry, the young girls sat in a mad circle, as if in a basket, on the edge of the alabaster basin in the room of the Two Sisters, and, throwing back their pretty heads, took up the chorus of the song together.

The Generalife is located a short distance from the Alhambra, on a summit of the same hills. One arrives there by way of a sort of sunken path which crosses the ravine of Los Molinos, and is bordered by fig trees with enormous shiny leaves, holm-oaks, pistachio-trees, laurels, and rock-roses in an incredibly lusty show of vegetation. The ground on which one walks is composed of moist yellow sand, of extraordinary fertility. Nothing is more delightful than to follow this path, which seems to be traced through virgin American forest so densely is it choked by foliage and flowers, while one breathes in the dizzying scent of aromatic plants. Vines spring from clefts in the broken walls, and hang fanciful tendrils and jagged leaves from every branch, like Arab ornamentation; aloes open their fans of azure blades, orange-trees contort their knotty trunks, and cling with their rooted fingertips to cracks in the cliffs. Everything flowers, everything blossoms in a dense disorder filled with the charm of chance alignments. A stray branch of jasmine mingles its white stars with the scarlet flowers of the pomegranate tree; a laurel, arching from one side of the path to the other, embraces a cactus, despite its thorns. Nature, abandoned to herself, seems to take pride in coquetry, and to wish to show how even the most exquisite and skilful works of art, are far inferior to her labours.

After a quarter of an hour's walk, one arrives at the Generalife, which is, in a way, merely *la casa de campo*, the summer-house, of the Alhambra. The exterior, like that of all oriental constructions, is very simple: high walls without windows, surmounted by an arcaded terrace, and topped with a small modern belvedere. All that remains of the Generalife is the arcade, and large arabesque panels, unfortunately plastered with layers of whitewash which are renewed, obstinately, in a desperate desire for cleanliness. Little by little, the delicate sculptures, the marvellous guilloches, of this fairy-tale architecture are choked, obliterated, and lost. What today is nothing more than a vaguely vermiculated wall was once a piece of lacy openwork as finely wrought as those leaves of ivory the patience of the Chinese carves into fans. The whitewasher's brush has destroyed more masterpieces than Time's scythe, if we are permitted to use a mythological and obsolete expression. In one fairly well-preserved room, we noted a series of darkened portraits of the kings of Spain, which possess only historical merit.

The true charm of the Generalife lies in its gardens and waters. A canal, lined with marble, occupies the entire length of the enclosure, and its abundant and rapid waves flow beneath a series of arcades of foliage formed by twisted and oddly-clipped yew-trees. Orange-trees and cypresses are planted along each border; at the foot of one of these cypresses of monstrous size,

and which dates back to the time of the Moors, Boabdil's wife (*Morayma*) if legend is to be believed, often proved that bolts and gates are feeble guarantors of the virtue of a Sultana. What is certain is that the tree is very large and very old.

The perspective is completed by a gallery-portico with water jets and marble columns, like the Court of the Myrtles in the Alhambra. The canal changes direction, and you enter other enclosures decorated with water-features, whose walls retain traces of sixteenth-century frescoes, depicting rustic architecture and landscape views. In the middle of one of these pools, blooms a gigantic basket-shaped oleander of incomparable brilliance and beauty. When I first saw it, it seemed an explosion of flowers, a firework-display of vegetation; a splendid and vigorous bouquet of freshness, almost loud enough, if that word can be applied to colour, to render the complexion of the most crimson rose appear pale! Its lovely flowers gushed forth, with all the ardour of desire, towards the pure light of the sky; its noble leaves, shaped expressly by nature to crown it in glory, laved by the mist created by the water-jets, sparkled like emeralds in the sun. Nothing has ever made me feel a more vivid sense of beauty than that oleander of the Generalife.

Water reaches the gardens by way of a kind of fast-flowing ramp, flanked by low walls like guardrails supporting channels, formed of large hollow tiles, from which the streams emerge into the open air with the most cheerful and lively gurgle in all the world. On every level, abundant jets leap from the centre of small pools and push their crystal plumes into the thick foliage of the laurel trees, whose branches cross above them. The hill flows with water on all sides; at every step a spring rises, and one always hears some wave, diverted from its course, murmuring nearby, which will feed a fountain or bring freshness to the roots of a tree. The Arabs carried the art of irrigation to its highest level; their hydraulic works attest to a most advanced civilisation; those works survive to this day, and it is to them that Granada owes its status of the paradise of Spain, and enjoys an eternal spring despite African temperatures. An arm of the Darro was diverted by the Arabs, and directed more than two leagues to attain the Alhambra hill.

From the belvedere of the Generalife, one can clearly see the plan of the Alhambra, with its enclosure of half-ruined reddish towers, and its sections of wall rising and falling, following the hill’s undulations. The palace of Charles V, which is invisible from the side where the city lies, pushes its square robust mass, gilded with a soft light by the sun, above the damask slopes of the Sierra Nevada, whose pale spine rises oddly against the sky, The Christian bell tower of Santa María displays its silhouette above the Moorish battlements. A few cypresses yield dark sighs of foliage through the crevices of the walls amidst all this light and azure, like a sad thought amidst the joy of a celebration. The slopes of the hill that descend towards the Darro and the Molinos ravine vanish beneath an ocean of greenery. It forms one of the most beautiful views one can imagine.

On the other side, as if to provide a contrast to so much freshness, rises an untouched hillside, scorched and tawny, coloured in tones of ochre and sienna, which is called *La Silla del Moro* (the Moor’s Chair) because of a few ruins which it bears on its summit. It was from there that King Boabdil watched Arab horsemen joust against Christian knights in the Vega. The memory of the Moors is still very much alive in Granada. It seems like only yesterday that

they departed, and judging by what they left behind, it seems a shame that they went. What Southern Spain needs is a North-African not a European civilisation the latter being alien to the ardour of the climate and the passions it inspires. The mechanism of a constitution is only suitable for temperate zones; above thirty degrees Centigrade, such charters melt or self-immolate.

Now that we have completed our visit to the Alhambra and the Generalife, let us cross the Darro ravine and visit, by means of the path that leads to Sacromonte, the dwellings of the gitanos (*gypsies*), who are quite numerous in Granada. This path is cut in the flank of the Albaicín hill, which overhangs it on one side. Gigantic barbary-figs and monstrous prickly-pears, with their paddles and spears of verdigris, bristle along the gaunt and whitish slopes; beneath the roots of these large succulent plants, which seem to serve as spiked barriers and fences, the gypsies' dwellings are dug into the living rock. The entrances to these caves are whitewashed; a taut rope from which a piece of frayed curtain hangs serves as a door. Here wild families swarm and multiply; naked children, without distinction of sex, and tawnier in complexion than Havana cigars, play on the threshold, and roll in the dust, uttering sharp, guttural cries. Gitanos are usually blacksmiths, mule-shearers, veterinarians, and above all horse-dealers. They have a thousand methods for granting fire and vigour to the most sluggish and exhausted of animals; a gitano would have made Rocinante gallop and Sancho Panza's donkey prance. Their true metier, in fact, is that of thief.

The gypsies sell amulets, tell fortunes, and practice the doubtful industry usual for women of their race: I have seen few who are pretty, though their faces were remarkable in type and character. Their swarthy complexion brings out the limpidity of their oriental eyes whose ardour is tempered by some mysterious sadness, akin to the memory of an absent homeland and fallen greatness. Their lips, a little thick, strongly coloured, recall the blossoming African mouth; the smallness of the forehead, the hooked shape of the nose, demonstrate an origin common also to the gypsies of Wallachia and Bohemia, and to all the children of this strange people who crossed paths, under the generic name of Egyptians, with the society of the Middle Ages, and whose enigmatic affiliation has been uninterrupted for so many centuries. Almost all have such a natural majesty in their bearing, such a frankness of bearing, and are so well mounted on their haunches, that, despite their rags, dirt and poverty, they seem to possess the nobility of antiquity and the purity of a people free from admixture, for the gypsies only marry among themselves, and the children who arise from temporary unions are mercilessly rejected from the tribe. One of the pretensions of the gitanos is to be good Castilians and good Catholics, but I believe that deep down they are still to some degree Arabs and Muslims, a charge which they defend themselves from as best they can, out of a remnant of the terror aroused by the vanished Inquisition. Some deserted and half-ruined streets of the Albaicín are also inhabited by richer or less nomadic gitanos. In one of these alleys, we saw a little girl of eight years old, completely naked, who was practicing dancing the *zorongo* on the stony paving. Her sister, haggard, emaciated, with smouldering eyes in a citron-coloured face, crouched on the ground beside her, a guitar on her knees, the strings of which she plucked with her thumb, producing music similar to the hoarse chirping of the cicadas. The mother, richly dressed, her neck laden with beads, beat time with the tip of a blue velvet slipper which her gaze caressed complacently.

The savage attitude, the strange attire, and the extraordinary colouring of this group would have rendered it an excellent motif for a painting by Jacques Callot or Salvator Rosa.

Sacromonte (*Abadía de Sacromonte*), which contains the caves of martyrs, discovered through some miracle, offers nothing of great interest. It is a monastery with a fairly ordinary church, beneath which the crypts were dug. These catacombs yield nothing that might produce a strong impression. They consist of a labyrinth of small narrow whitewashed corridors, seven or eight feet high. In recesses, made for the purpose, altars are erected, decorated with more devotion than taste. Here the shrines and bones of saintly folk are locked away, behind fences. I expected a dark, mysterious, almost frightening underground church, with squat pillars, a low vault, lit by the uncertain reflection of a distant lamp, something like ancient catacombs, and I was not a little surprised by the clean and pretty appearance of this whitewashed crypt, lit by skylights like a cellar. We somewhat superficial Catholics need the picturesque to achieve religious feeling. Devotees hardly think about the play of light and shadow, or the more or less clever proportions of its architecture; they know that beneath the mediocre altar are hidden the bones of saints who died for the faith they profess: that is enough for them.

The Charterhouse, now devoid of its monks like all the monasteries of Spain, is an admirable building, and one cannot regret sufficiently the diversion from its original purpose. I have never fully understood what harm cenobites, cloistered in their cells voluntarily, and living by austerity and prayer, could do, especially in a country like Spain, where there is certainly no shortage of land.

We ascended via a double staircase to the church portal, surmounted by a statue of Saint Bruno in white marble, which has quite a beautiful effect. The decoration of this church is singular and consists of moulded plaster arabesques of a truly prodigious variety and fertility of motif. It seems that the architect's intention was to compete, though in a completely different style, with the lacework of the Alhambra in lightness and complexity. There is not a place as wide as a hand, in this immense building, which is not adorned with flowers, damask, leaves, guilloche, and is not as complex as a cabbage-heart; it would be enough to make anyone who wanted to make an exact drawing of it lose their mind. The choir is clad with porphyry and precious marble. A few mediocre paintings hang here and there along the walls and make you regret the spaces they hide. The cemetery is near the church, and in accord with the custom of the Carthusians, no tomb or cross designates the place where the deceased brothers sleep; monastic cells surround the cemetery and each is provided with a small garden. In a plot of land planted with trees, which undoubtedly served as a place for the monks to take their walks, a sort of pond with sloping stone margins was pointed out to me, where a few dozen pond-turtles were crawling about, clumsily, sniffing the sunlight and quite happy to be safe these days from the pot. The Carthusian rule required the monks to forego meat, but the turtle was considered a fish by casuists. They were there to be eaten by the monks. The revolution saved them.

While we are visiting the monasteries, let us enter, if you will, that of San Juan de Dios. Its cloister is one of the most bizarre, and in quite prodigious bad taste; the frescoed walls represent various admirable events in the life of San Juan, framed by grotesque decorative fantasies which outdo the most extravagant monsters of Japan or the carved figurines of China

in their curious deformities. There are mermaids playing the violin, ugly women dressing, chimerical fish amidst impossible waves, flowers that look like birds, birds that look like flowers, mirrors in the shape of lozenges, faience tiles, love-knots, in inextricable medley!

The church, fortunately of another era, is almost all gilded over. The altarpiece, supported by Solomonic columns, produces a rich and majestic effect. The sacristan, who served as our guide, seeing that we were French, questioned us about our country, and asked us if it was true, as they said in Granada, that the Emperor of Russia, Nicholas I, had invaded France. and made himself master of Paris; such was the latest news. These gross absurdities are spread amongst the people by the supporters of Don Carlos (*Carlos María Isidro Benito de Borbón, pretender to the Spanish throne*) to make them believe in some absolutist reversion on the part of the powers of Europe, and to revive the failing courage of those disorganised bands with hopes of future aid.

Inside the church, I saw a most striking sight: an old woman crawling on her knees, from the door to the altar; her arms, stiff as stakes, were outstretched in the form of a cross, her head was thrown back, her eyes rolled upwards revealing only the whites, her lips pressed against her teeth, her face glistening and leaden; it was a picture of ecstasy taken to the point of catalepsy. Never did Francisco de Zurbarán depict a more ascetic or more feverish ardour. She was performing a penance ordered by her confessor, which still had four days left till its completion.

The monastery of San Jéronimo, now transformed into a barracks, contains a Gothic cloister with arcades of rare character and beauty on two levels. The capitals of the columns are embellished with foliage and fantastic animals created with charming caprice and fine workmanship. The church, desecrated and deserted, offers this peculiarity, that its ornamentation and its architectural reliefs are not real but painted on, in grey, like the vault of the Bourse. This is where Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, nicknamed ‘El Gran Capitán’, is buried. His sword, which was kept there, was recently removed and sold for two or three duros, the value of the silver which garnished the hilt. This is how many objects, considered precious as art or as souvenirs, have disappeared, with no benefit to the thieves other than the pleasure of doing wrong. There are better ways to imitate our Revolution than stupid vandalism. Such is the feeling one experiences every time one visits a depopulated convent, on seeing so much ruin and pointless devastation, so many masterpieces of all kinds lost without recourse, and the vast labour of several centuries overturned and swept away in an instant. We have no right to prejudge the future; but I doubt it can render us what the past created, and that we destroy as casually as if we had something finer to set in its place. Could we not build that something finer *elsewhere*, given that the earth is not so covered in monuments that we must raise new buildings on the rubble of the old? Such reflections preoccupied me when I visited the former monastery of Santo Domingo in the Antequerula quarter. The chapel is decorated with a surcharge of pendants, beading and unimaginable gilding. Nothing but twisted columns, volutes, chicory leaves, incrustations of coloured breccia, glass mosaic, marquetry in mother-of-pearl and nacre, crystal, bevelled mirrors, rayed suns, transparent panes, etc., everything that the tortuous taste of the eighteenth century, and a horror of straight lines can inspire that is disordered, counterfeit, deformed, baroque in the extreme. The library, which was saved,

consists almost exclusively of folios and quartos bound in white vellum, their titles handwritten in black or red ink. These are, in general, theological treatises, casuistic dissertations, and other scholastic productions, of little interest to mere literati. The collection of paintings in the monastery of San Domingo has been gathered from abolished or ruined monasteries; a collection which, with the exception of a few beautiful ascetic heads, and several scenes of martyrdom which appear to have been painted by the executioners themselves, as they reveal vast erudition in the art of torture, offers nothing remarkable or superior, and demonstrates that the devastators were true art experts, since they knew how to keep the finer works for themselves. The courtyards and cloisters are of great beauty, decorated with fountains, orange trees, and flower-beds. How wonderfully well-arranged everything is for reverie, meditation and study! What a shame that the monasteries were inhabited by monks, and not poets! The gardens, left to their own devices, have taken on a wild rustic character. Lush vegetation invades the paths; nature everywhere has regained possession of her rights; in place of each fallen stone, she sets a tuft of grass, or flowers. What is most remarkable in these gardens is an alley of enormous laurel trees, forming an arbour, paved with white marble and adorned on each side with a long bench of the same material with an upturned back. Spaced water-jets maintain the freshness of this thick green vault, at the end of which one enjoys a magnificent view of the Sierra Nevada from a charming Moorish mirador, part of the remains of an ancient Arab palace incorporated within the monastery. It is said that this pavilion communicated with the Alhambra, a fair distance away, by means of long underground tunnels. This is a common idea, however, in Granada, where the least Moorish ruin is always attributed with possessing five or six leagues of underground passages, and a hidden treasure guarded by enchantment.

We visited Santo Domingo frequently, to sit in the shade of the laurel trees and bathe in a pool, in which the monks, if the satirical songs about them are to be believed, frolicked happily with pretty girls they had kidnapped or seduced. It should be noted that it is in the most Catholic of countries that holy things, priests, and monks are treated most lightly. Spanish couplets and tales about religious people compare favourably, as regards their degree of licence, with the facetious works of Rabelais and François Béroalde de Verville, and, on observing the manner in which religious ceremonies are parodied in the old plays, one would hardly suspect that the Inquisition ever existed.

Speaking of bathing, let me set down here a detail which will prove that the thermal arts, carried to such a high degree by the Arabs, have indeed lost their ancient splendour in Granada. Our guide led us to a rather well-arranged bathing establishment, with dressing rooms arranged round a patio shaded by a covering of vines, and largely occupied by a reservoir of most clear water. So far so good, but what do you think the bathtubs were made of? Copper, zinc, stone, wood? Not at all; nothing like. I shall tell you, since you will never guess. They were enormous clay jars like those in which oil is kept; these bathtubs, of a new species, were buried to about two-thirds of their height. Before seating ourselves in these jars, we had them covered with a white sheet, a precaution with regard to cleanliness which seemed extremely odd to the attendant, and which we had to ask of him several times before he obeyed, so astonished was he. He explained our whim to himself by making a commiserative gesture with his head and shoulders, and saying, in a low voice, the single word: *Ingleses!* We were squatting in these pots, our heads sticking out, akin to partridges in a terrine, creating a somewhat grotesque

appearance. It was only then that I comprehended the tale of *Ali-Baba and the Forty Thieves*, which had always seemed rather difficult to credit, and had made me doubt for a moment the veracity of the *Thousand and One Nights*.

There are still ancient Moorish baths (*El Bañuelo*) in the Albaicín, a pool covered with a vault with small starred vents, but they are not in working order, and there is only a cold-water feed.

This is, to a large extent, all there is to do in Granada, during a residence of a few weeks. Distractions are rare: the theatre closes for the summer; the Plaza de Toros is not employed regularly; there are no casinos or public establishments, and one finds French and other foreign newspapers only at the Lycée, whose members hold sessions on certain days at which speeches and verses are read, there is singing, or comedies usually composed by some young poet of the upper echelons, are presented.

All are conscientiously active in doing nothing: gallantry, smoking, making verses, and especially playing at cards, is enough to fill life pleasantly. There is no sign of that furious anxiety, that need to act and to bustle about, which torments the people of the North. The Spaniards seem to me to be a very philosophical people: they attach little or no importance to material life, and comfort is a matter of complete indifference to them. The thousand artificial needs created by northern civilisation seem to them childish and embarrassing pursuits. Indeed, not having to continually protect themselves from the climate, the enjoyments of an English *home* inspire in them no desire whatsoever. What does it matter to folk who would pay for a draught of air, a breath of wind, that windows fit tightly? Favoured by clear skies, they reduce existence to its simplest expression; this sobriety and moderation in all things gives them a great sense of freedom, an extreme feeling of independence; they have time to live, while we can hardly say the same. The Spanish do not accept that one must work first and then rest. They much prefer to do the opposite, which actually seems wiser to me. A worker who has earned a few *reals* leaves his work, throws his beautifully embroidered jacket over his shoulder, takes his guitar, and goes off to dance, or make love, with the *majas* he knows until he had not a single *quarto* left; then he resumes his work. With three or four sous a day, an Andalusian can live splendidly; for this sum, he can obtain white bread, an enormous slice of watermelon, and a small glass of anisette; his accommodation only costs him the trouble of spreading his coat on the ground under some portico or the arch of some bridge or other. In general, work seems to the Spaniards a humiliating thing and unworthy of a free man, which is a very natural and very reasonable idea in my opinion, since God, wanting to punish man for his disobedience, was unable to find a greater torture to inflict on him than earning his bread by the sweat of his brow. Pleasures won like ours through pain, fatigue, mental stress, and endless diligence seem to them to cost far too dearly. Like simple tribes living close to nature, they have a rightness of judgment which leads them to despise conventional enjoyments. For someone arriving from Paris or London, those two whirlwinds of all-consuming activity, of feverish and over-excited existence, the life one leads in Granada provides a singular spectacle, a life wholly occupied by leisure, filled through conversation, siestas, walking, music, and dance. One is surprised at the happy calmness of these figures, the quiet dignity of these physiognomies. None possess the pre-occupied look of the passer-by in the streets of Paris. All

seem at ease, seeking the shade stopping to chat with friends, while showing no haste to arrive. The certainty of being unable to earn anything extinguishes all ambition: there are few careers open to the young. The most adventurous go to Manila, Havana, or take service in the army; the rest, given the pitiful state of the Spanish economy, sometimes go for entire years without being paid. Convinced of the uselessness of effort, they make no attempt to win unattainable wealth, and spend their time in a charming idleness favoured by the beauty of the country, and the warmth of the climate.

I found hardly any arrogance among the Spaniards: nothing is as deceptive as the reputations given to individuals and peoples. I found them, on the contrary, extremely simple and good-natured; Spain is the true country of equality, if not in words, then at least in deeds. The least beggar lights his *papelito* at the *puro* of the great lord, who lets him do so without the slightest affectation of condescension; the marquise smilingly steps over the ragged bodies of the scoundrels sleeping across her doorway, and when travelling she does not grimace at drinking from the same glass as the *mayoral*, the *zagal* and the *escopetero* who are her attendants. Foreigners have great difficulty adapting to this familiarity, especially the English, who have their letters bought to them on plates, and pick them up with tweezers. One of those esteemed islanders, journeying from Seville to Jerez de la Frontera, sent his *calesero* (coachman) to the kitchen to eat. The latter, who, in his soul, thought it would be honouring a heretic to even eat at the same table with him, said nothing, and concealed his anger as studiously as a traitor in a melodrama; but, in the middle of the road, three or four leagues from Jerez, in a dreadful wasteland, full of potholes and brushwood, our man threw the Englishman, very neatly, from the carriage, and shouted to him, while whipping his horse: ‘Milord, you did not find me worthy of filling a place at your table; I, Don Jose Balbino Bustamente y Orozco, find you, too poor company to sit on the bench in my chaise. Good evening!’

Maids and servants are treated with a familiar courtesy very different from our affected politeness, which seems with every word to remind them of their inferior status. A small example will prove my claim. We had gone together to the country house belonging to Señora ***; in the evening, they wanted to dance, but there were many more ladies than gentlemen; Señora *** called the gardener and another servant, who danced all evening without embarrassment, without false shame, without servile eagerness, as if they were members of society. They invited the prettiest and the most titled to dance, in turn, and they complied with the request with all possible good grace. Our democrats are still far from this everyday equality, while our fiercest republicans would rebel at the idea of appearing, in a quadrille, opposite some peasant or lackey.

The remarks above, as with all generalisations, suffer from an infinity of exceptions. There are undoubtedly many Spaniards who are active, hardworking, sensitive to all the pursuits of life; but such is the general impression that a traveller receives after a stay of some length, an impression often more accurate than that of the native observer, less struck by, and taken by, the novelty of what they see.

Encountering a view of the Sierra Nevada at the end of every street, and with our curiosity satisfied in regard to Granada and its monuments, we resolved to make a more intimate

acquaintance with the mountains and attempt an ascent on Mulhacen, the highest peak in the range. Our friends first tried to dissuade us from this project, which could not fail to present some danger; but, when we were seen to be quite determined, we were offered a huntsman, named Alexandro Romero, who had a thorough knowledge of the mountain and was capable of acting as our guide. He came to see us at our *casa de pupilos (lodging house)*, and his frank and masculine countenance immediately convinced us in his favour; he wore an old velvet waistcoat, a red woollen belt, and white canvas gaiters like those of the Valencians, which showed his taut, muscular legs, tanned like Cordoba leather. A pair of *alpargatas* of braided rope served as shoes; a small Andalusian hat, scorched from the sun, a rifle, and a powder-horn on a chain, completed his attire. He took charge of the preparations for the expedition, and promised to bring us the next day, at three o'clock, the four horses required, one for my travelling companion, another for me, the third for a young German who joined himself to our caravan, and the fourth for our servant, in charge of the culinary part of the expedition. As for Romero, he went on foot. Our provisions consisted of ham, roast-chicken, chocolate, bread, lemons, sugar, and most importantly a large leather purse called a *bota*, filled with excellent wine from Val-de-Penas.

At the appointed hour, the horses arrived in front of the house, and Romero beat on our door with the butt of his rifle. We mounted the saddle, still barely awake, and our procession set off: our guide preceded us as a runner, and showed us the way. Though it was already daylight, the sun had not yet appeared, and the undulations of the lower hills, which we had passed, stretched round us, cool, limpid and blue like the waves of a motionless ocean. Granada faded into the distance in the vaporous atmosphere. When the orb of flame appeared on the horizon, all the peaks turned pink like young girls before a lover's gaze, seemingly showing a modest embarrassment at being seen in their morning negligee. Till then we had only climbed fairly gentle slopes that merged into one another, and offered no difficulty. The ridges of the mountain range join the plain in easily managed contours, which form a lower plateau which is readily accessible. We had arrived at this first plateau. The guide decided that we should breathe our horses, allow them something to eat, and have lunch ourselves. We settled at the foot of a rock, near a small spring whose crystal waters glittered beneath emerald grass. Romero improvised a fire, as skilfully as an American savage, using a handful of brushwood, and Louis made us some chocolate which, augmented by a slice of ham and a sip of wine, composed our first meal in the mountains. While our lunch was cooking, a superb viper slid by us and seemed surprised and displeased by our installation on its property, which it demonstrated by a rude hiss which earned it a good stinging blow with a cane on the belly. A small bird, which had observed the scene with a very attentive air, no sooner saw the viper put out of action than it came scurrying, its throat feathers bristling, its wings flapping, its eyes on fire, screaming and chirping, in a strange state of exaltation; retreating every time one of the segments of the venomous snake twisted convulsively, but soon returning to the charge and giving the creature a few pecks, after which the bird rose three or four feet in the air. I have no idea what the snake can have done, while it lived, to this bird, or what grudge we had satisfied in killing it, but I never witnessed greater joy.

We set off once more. From time to time, we encountered strings of little donkeys coming down from the upper regions, laden with snow which they were carrying to Granada for the

day's consumption. The men who led them greeted us, as we passed, with the sacramental: *Vayan ustedes con Dios*, and our guide made some jokes about their merchandise, which would fail to reach the city, and which they would be forced to sell to the attendant in charge of irrigation.

Romero preceded us, jumping from stone to stone with the lightness of a chamois, shouting: *Bueno camino* (good road). I would be most curious to know what that brave fellow meant by a poor road, because there was no sign of a path. To the right and left the ground fell away, as far as the eye could see, into charming precipices, profound, blue, and vaporous, varying from fifteen hundred to two thousand feet in depth, a distinction which, worried us little, however, a few hundred yards more or less making little difference. I remember with a shudder a certain pass, three or four rifle shots in length and two feet wide, a natural bridge with a chasm on either side. As my horse was at the head of the line, I had to go first over this sort of tightrope, which would have given the most determined acrobat food for thought. In certain places, the path was so narrow that my mount only had room to place its hooves, and each of my legs overlooked a different abyss: I sat motionless in the saddle, as upright as if I was balancing a chair on the end of my nose. That journey of a few minutes seemed long indeed to me.

When I reflect, calmly, on this incredible ascent, I am astonished, as at the memory of an incoherent dream. We followed paths where goats would have hesitated to set foot, climbed slopes so steep that our chins touched our horses' ears, across rocks and crumbling stone, along terrible precipices, describing zigzags, taking advantage of the slightest accident of terrain, seemingly advancing little, but always climbing by degrees towards the summit, the goal of our ambition, and which we had lost sight of since we attacked the mountain, because each plateau hid the next from the eyes. Each time our animals stopped to catch their breath we turned about in our saddles in order to contemplate the immense panorama presented by the canvas of the encircling horizon. The heights we had surmounted seemed like a vast geographical map. The Vega of Granada, and all of Andalusia, unfolded beneath the impression of an azure sea on which a few white puffs of cloud, struck by the sun, represented sails. The neighbouring bald summits, split and cracked from top to bottom, possessed tints of ash-green, Egyptian-blue, lilac and pearl-grey in the shadows; and tones of burnt-orange, lion-pelt, and burnished gold, the warmest and most admirable in the world, in the light. Nothing conveys the idea of chaos, of a universe still in the hands of the Creator, as does a mountain range viewed from on high. It seemed as if a race of Titans had tried to build one of those enormous towers there, one of those prodigious *Lylacqs* (*Sanskrit: Līlās, playful endeavours*) which alarm the Lord; that they had piled up the material, and begun the gigantic terraces, when an unknown breath like a storm shook and overturned their attempts at temples and palaces. It felt as if we were amidst the rubble of an antediluvian Babylon, in the ruins of some pre-Adamite city. Those enormous blocks, those pharaonic heaps awaken the idea of a race of vanished giants, so clearly is the old age of the world written, legibly, in deep wrinkles on the hoary forehead, and shrunken visage of those thousands-of-years-old mountains.

We had reached the region of the eagles. From time to time, we saw one of those noble birds perched on a solitary rock, its gaze turned towards the sun, in that state of contemplative

ecstasy which replaces thought in animals. One, indeed, floated at a great height, seemingly motionless in the middle of an ocean of light. Romero couldn't resist the pleasure of sending him a bullet as if it were a business card. The lead carried away one of the great wing-feathers, while the eagle, with indescribable majesty, continued on its way as if nothing had occurred. The feather twirled for a long time before reaching the ground, where it was picked up by Romero, who employed it to adorn his felt hat.

Narrow veins of snow began to appear, scattered patches in the shadow of the rocks; the air became more rarified, the escarpments became steeper and steeper; soon the snow lay in immense sheets, in enormous piles, the sun's rays no longer possessing the strength to melt it. We were above the sources of the Genil, which we saw in the shape of a blue ribbon, glazed with silver, rushing in haste towards its beloved city. The plateau on which we found ourselves rises to about nine thousand feet above sea level, and is dominated only by the peaks of Veleta and Mulhacen, which rise another two thousand feet or more towards the unfathomable abyss of the sky. It was there that Romero decided that we would spend the night. The harnesses were removed from the horses, who could go no further; Louis and the guide turned up brushwood, roots, and juniper trees, to keep our fire going, for, although the heat on the plain was thirty to thirty-five degrees, it was so cool at that height that the setting sun would necessarily give way to bitter cold. It might have been about five o'clock; my companion and the young German wanted to take advantage of the twilight to climb the last hill on foot alone. As for me, I preferred to rest, and, moved by the grandiose and sublime spectacle, I began to scribble in my notebook a few verses, which if not well written, at least possess the merit of being the only alexandrines composed at such an elevation. Having created my poem, I made some excellent sorbets for dessert with snow, sugar, lemon-juice, and brandy. Our camp was quite picturesque; the saddles of our horses served us for seats, our coats for carpets, and a large heap of snow sheltered us from the wind. In the centre burned a fire of broom which we fed by throwing a branch in from time to time, which twisted and hissed, darting forth jets of sap of every colour. Above us, the horses stretched out their narrow heads with soft, dull eyes, to catch a few puffs of heat.

Night was approaching swiftly. The lower mountains were shrouded first, in succession, and, like a fisherman fleeing before the rising tide, the light leapt from peak to peak, withdrawing towards the heights, to escape the darkness which advanced from the floor of the valleys, drowning everything in bluish shadow. The last shaft of sunlight, which lingered on the peak of Mulhacen, hesitated for a moment; then, opening its golden wings, flew like a bird of flame into the depths of the sky and vanished. The darkness was complete, and the quivering of our fire, magnified, sent grim shadows dancing over the walls of rock. Eugène and the German did not reappear, and I began to worry: they might have fallen from a precipice, or been swallowed by a pile of snow. Romero and Louis were already asking if I would sign a certificate to the effect that they had neither slaughtered nor robbed these two honest gentlemen, and that, if they were dead, it was their own fault.

Meanwhile, we strained our lungs uttering the loudest and wildest of cries to show them the direction of our bivouac, in case they were unable to see the fire. At last, a gunshot, echoed by all the slopes of the mountain, told us that we had been heard, and that our companions were

only a short distance away. In fact, they reappeared after a few minutes, worn out with fatigue; and claiming to have seen Africa distinctly on the far side of the sea, which is quite possible, because the purity of the air is such in this climate that the view may extend up to thirty or forty leagues. They ate very happily, and by playing bagpipe tunes with the aid of the wineskin, rendered it almost as flat as the purse of a Castile beggar. It was agreed that everyone would take turns tending the fire, a task which was faithfully carried out. Only our circle, which at first possessed a fairly lengthy circumference, shrank more and more. From hour to hour, the cold increased in intensity, and we ended up literally setting our feet in the fire, to the point of burning our shoes and trousers. Louis burst into lamentation; he missed his *gazpacho* (cold garlic soup), his house, his bed, and even his wife; he promised himself, by his great gods, never to be ambushed into a second ascent, claiming that the mountains are more interesting from below than from above, and that he must have been mad to expose himself to breaking his bones a hundred thousand times, and to finding his nose and ears frozen in the middle of August, in Andalusia, in sight of Africa. All night he did nothing but grunt and moan in this manner, and we failed to silence him. Romero, who said nothing however, was only dressed in linen, and had only a narrow band of cloth to wrap about himself.

At last dawn broke; we were shrouded in cloud, and Romero advised us to begin our descent if we wanted to be back in Granada before nightfall. When it was light enough to distinguish the objects around us, I noticed that Eugène was as red as a cooked lobster, and at the same time he made a similar observation regarding myself which he thought it unnecessary to stifle. The young German and Louis too had become cardinals; Romero alone had retained his boot-leather complexion, and his bronze legs, though bare, had not suffered the slightest change. It was the harshness of the cold and the rarified nature of the air that had made us blush like this. Ascending is nothing, because you look higher, but descending with the abyss in perspective is a completely different matter. At first, this seemed totally impractical to us, and Louis began to cry out like a jay being plucked alive. However, we could not remain on Mulhacen indefinitely, an uninhabitable place if ever there was one, and, with Romero in the lead, we began the descent. Describing the path, or rather the absence of path, down which this devil of a man made us scramble, is impossible without being accused of stupidity; never was such a company of daredevils gathered for a *steeplechase,* and I doubt that the boldest *gentlemen-riders* have ever surpassed our exploits on Mulhacen. Roller-coasters are gentle by comparison. We were forever standing in the stirrups, and leaning back on the rumps of our horses, so as not to describe unending parabolas above their heads. All the contours of the landscape were blurred to our eyes; the streams seemed to be returning to their sources, the rocks wavered and tottered on their bases, the most distant objects seemed to us two steps away, and we had lost all idea of their proportions, an effect which is produced in the mountains, where the enormity of the masses of rock, and the verticality of their planes, no longer allow distances to be comprehended in the usual manner.

Despite these obstacles, we arrived in Granada without our horses having made the slightest misstep, though, they had only one shoe left between them. Andalusian horses, and these were definitely authentic examples, are unequalled in the mountains. They are so docile, so patient, so intelligent, that the best thing to do is to give them free rein.

Our return was awaited with impatience, for our fire shining like a lighthouse from the Mulhacen plateau had been seen from the city. I wished to go and tell the charming Señoras B*** about our perilous expedition, but was so tired that I fell asleep on a chair, holding a sock in my hand, and slept without waking till the next day at ten o'clock, in the same position. A few days later, we left Granada, with a sigh at least as deep as that once uttered by King Boabdil.

Part XII: The Thieves and Pirates of Andalusia – Alhama de Granada – Málaga – Students on Tour – A Bullfight – Montes – The Theatre

A piece of news designed to rouse a whole Spanish city spread suddenly, throughout Granada, to the great joy of *aficionados*. The new Málaga arena was finally complete, having cost the contractor five million reals. To solemnly inaugurate it with exploits worthy of the golden eras of the bullfighter's art, the great Montes (*Francisco Montes Reina*) from Chiclana had been engaged with his company, and would take the lead role there for three consecutive days; Montes, the foremost toreador in Spain, the brilliant successor to Pedro Romero and 'Pepe Illo' (*José Delgado Guerra*). We had already attended several bull-fights, but had not had the pleasure of seeing Montes, whose political opinions prevented him from appearing in the Madrid arena; and leaving Spain without having seen Montes would have been as savage and barbaric as leaving Paris without having heard Mademoiselle Rachel (*the actress Elisabeth Félix*). Although by the plan of our route it would necessitate travelling via Cordoba, we could not resist the temptation, and we resolved to push on to Malaga, despite the difficulty of the journey and the little time that remained for us to do so.

There was no coach from Granada to Málaga, the only means of transport being *galeras* (*carts*) or mules: we chose the mules as safer and quicker, because we would need to follow the side roads in the Alpujarras, in order to arrive on the first morning of the event.

Our friends in Granada directed us to a *cosario* (*leader of a convoy*) named Lanza, a good-looking fellow, a most honest man, and well in with the bandits. That would seem a mediocre recommendation in France, but things are not the same beyond the mountains. The mule drivers and *galera* drivers know the thieves, strike deals with them, and for a fee of so much per traveller or convoy, depending on the conditions, they obtain free passage, and are not hindered. These arrangements are maintained on both sides with scrupulous probity, if such a word is not too out of place where such transactions are concerned. When the leader of the troop who controls a route is amnestied (*indullo*), or transfers his funds and his clientele to another for any reason, he takes care to officially present the *cosarios* who pay their *shady contribution* to his successor, so that they are not molested by mistake; in this way, travellers are assured of not being robbed, and thieves avoid the risk of an attack, and an often-perilous struggle. Everyone benefits.

One night, between Alhama de Granada and Vélez (*Vélez-Málaga*), our *cosario* had dozed off on the neck of his mule, at the back of the line, when loud cries, suddenly woke him; he saw the gleam of *trabucos* (*blunderbusses*) at the side of the road. There was no longer any doubt, the convoy was being attacked. Surprised at this, he threw himself from his mount, raised the mouths of the blunderbusses with his hand, and declared his name. 'Ah! Your pardon, Señor Lanza!' cried the bandits, embarrassed at their mistake, 'we did not recognise you; we are honest people, incapable of such discourtesy, we have too much honour to take from you even a cigar.'

If you are not accompanied by a known individual on the road, you are forced to trail numerous escorts armed to the teeth, behind you, who are very expensive to employ and offer a less certain protection, since the *escopeteros* are, commonly, retired thieves.

In Andalusia, it is customary when travelling on horseback to the bullfight to wear the national costume. So, our little caravan was quite picturesque, and looked very fine as it left Granada. Joyfully seizing this opportunity to wear a disguise outside of the days of the Carnival, and to be free of our dreadful French undress for a while, I had donned my *majo* outfit: a peaked hat, an embroidered jacket, a velvet vest with filigrane buttons, a belt of red silk, knitted breeches, and gaiters open at the calf. My traveling companion wore his suit of green velvet and Cordoba leather. Others wore the *montera*, a black jacket and breeches adorned with silk trimmings of the same colour, with a yellow cravat and sash. Lanza was notable for the luxuriousness of his silver buttons made of multiple coins soldered to a shank, and the flossed-silk embroidery of a second jacket worn on the shoulder like a hussar's pelisse.

The mule assigned me as a mount was shaved to halfway-down, which made it possible to study its musculature as easily as on a skinned carcase. The saddle consisted of two colourful blankets doubly folded so as to reduce as much as possible the protrusion of the animal's vertebrae and the slope of its spine. On each flank hung a wooden trough similar to a rat-trap, as a sort of stirrup. The harness was so laden with rosettes, tufts, and other decorations one could barely discern the surly and obstinate profile of the animal itself through this ornamental profusion.

It is while travelling that the Spaniards display their original and ancient essence one more, and free themselves of all foreign influence; the national character reappears in full amidst

these convoys through the mountains which hardly differ from caravans in the desert. The roughness of the barely-visible tracks, the grandiose wildness of the landscape, the picturesque costume of the *arrieros* (*muleteers*), the bizarre harnesses of the string of mules, horses, and donkeys, all this transports you a thousand leagues from civilisation. The journey then becomes a genuine thing, an action in which you are participating. In a diligence, one is no longer a man, one is merely an inert object, a bundle; you differ but little from your luggage. You are thrown about from one place to another, that is all. You might as well stay at home. What constitutes the traveller's pleasure is the difficulty, the fatigue, the danger itself. What pleasure can there be in an excursion where one is always sure of arriving, of finding horses available, a soft bed, an excellent supper, and all the comforts one can enjoy at home? One of the great misfortunes of modern life is the lack of the unexpected, the absence of adventure. Everything is so well regulated, so well-organised, so well labelled, that chance is no longer a possibility; another century of improvement, and everyone will be able to predict, from the day of their birth, what will happen to them till the day of their death. The human will would then be completely annihilated. No more crime, no more virtue, no difference in physiognomy, an absence of originality. It will become impossible to distinguish Russians from Spaniards, the English from the Chinese, or the French from Americans. We will no longer even be able to recognise each other, because everyone will look the same. Then an immense ennui will grip the universe, and suicide will decimate the population of the globe, since the main motive of life will have been extinguished: that of curiosity!

Travel in Spain is still a perilous and romantic enterprise; one must make an effort, show courage, patience, and strength; one must risk one's skin at every step. Privations of every kind, an absence of the most essential necessities of life, the danger of roads that are truly impassable for anyone other than Andalusian muleteers, the infernal heat, a mind-numbing sun, are the least disadvantages; you also have the *guerillas*, the thieves, and the hoteliers, gallows-birds whose probity depends on the number of rifles you carry with you. Danger surrounds you, follows you, precedes you; you hear whispered around you none but terrible and mysterious tales. Yesterday, bandits dined in this *posada*. The members of a caravan were kidnapped, and led into the mountains by thieves for ransom. Pallilos has laid an ambush at a certain place where you must pass! No doubt there is a lot of exaggeration in all this; yet, however incredulous one might be, there must be something in it all, when one sees, at every bend in the road, wooden crosses bearing inscriptions of this kind: *Aqui mataron á un hombre* (*here they killed a man*) … *Aqui murio de manpairada* (*here one died of an itchy trigger-finger*) ...

We left Granada in the evening, and had to walk all night. It did not take long for the moon to rise and glaze the cliffs exposed to its rays with silver. The shadows of the rocks lengthened, and stood out strangely on the road we were following, producing singular optical effects. We heard the bells of the donkeys that went ahead with our luggage, like the sound of scattered notes from a harmonica, in the distance, or some *mozo de mulas* (*muleteer's lad*) singing verses of love in a guttural yet ever so poetic voice, that night in the mountains. It was charming, and I am grateful to report here two stanzas, probably improvised, which have remained engraved in my memory by their graceful oddity:

Son tus labios dos cortinas
Your lips are two curtains
De terciopelo carmesi;
Of crimson velvet;
Entre cortina y cortina,
Twixt curtain and curtain,
Niña, dime que sí.
Girl, grant me a yes.
Atame con un cabello
Come, tie me, with a hair,
A los bancos de tu cama,
To the head of your bed,
Aunque el cabello se rompa,
And though the hair breaks,
Segura esta que me vaya.
Be sure I'll not leave you.

Soon, we passed Cacín, where we forded a pretty river a few inches deep, whose clear waters flickered over the sand like the bellies of common bleaks, and rushed in an avalanche of silver gleams down the mountain's steep slope!

On leaving Cacín, the road turned dreadfully bad. Our mules suffered from stones striking their bellies, and jets of sparks scattered beneath their hooves. We ascended, we descended, skirting precipices, tracing zigzags and diagonals, for we were now in the inaccessible solitudes of the Alpujarras, a savage and precipitous mountain range, from which the Moors, they say, could never be completely driven, and where some thousands of their descendants live concealed from all eyes.

At a bend in the road, we had a moment of deep fear. We saw, by the light of the moon, seven tall fellows draped in long coats, peaked hats on their heads, *trabucos* over their shoulders, standing motionless in the middle of the path. The adventure we had sought so long was now occurring in the most Romantic way possible. Sadly, the bandits greeted us most politely, with a respectful: *Vayan ustedes con Dios.* They were precisely the opposite of thieves, being *miquelets*, that is to say irregulars. O bitter disappointment for the two enthusiastic young travellers, who would have gladly paid the price of an adventure with their luggage!

We were to sleep at a small town called Alhama de Granada, perched like an eagle's nest on top of a sheer cliff. Nothing is as picturesque as the sharp bends the road leading to this eyrie is obliged to make, so as to conquer the difficulties of the terrain. We arrived there about

two in the morning, thirsty, hungry, and worn out with fatigue. Our thirst was quenched by three or four jars of water, our hunger appeased by a tomato omelette, which for a Spanish omelette contained not too many feathers. A mattress, stony hard, resembling a sack of walnuts, was spread on the ground, and provided for our rest. After two minutes or so, I slept the sleep, religiously imitated by my companion, attributed to the righteous. The day found us in the same attitude, as motionless as lead ingots.

I descended to the kitchen to beg some food, and, thanks to my eloquence, obtained a few chops, a chicken fried in oil, half a watermelon, and for dessert some prickly pears the thorny covering of which the hostess removed with great dexterity. The watermelon did me a deal of good; the pink pulp in its green skin contains something fresh and reviving, and is a pleasure to see. As soon as one bites into it, one is flooded to one's elbows with the slightly sweet juice, of a very pleasant taste, which has little similarity to that of our cantaloupes. We both needed refreshing slices of the fruit to temper the heat of the peppers and spices that enliven all Spanish dishes. Burnt inside, roasted outside, such was our situation: the heat was atrocious. Lying on the brick tiles of our room, we left our mark in patches of sweat; the only way to achieve a relative coolness is to block all the doors, and windows, and rest in total darkness.

However, despite the scorching temperature, I threw my jacket, bravely, over my shoulder, and went for a stroll through the streets of Alhama de Granada. The sky was as white as molten metal; the stones of the pavement gleamed as if they had been waxed and polished; the whitewashed walls glittered with micaceous sparkles, while the pitiless, blinding light penetrated into the smallest of corners. The shutters and doors creaked from lack of moisture; the dry ground split, the vine branches twisted like greenwood in the fire. Add to this the reflections from the neighbouring rocks, which were like fiery mirrors returning the sun's rays even more fiercely. To add insult to injury, I had shoes with thin soles, through which the pavement burned my feet. Not a breath of air, not a breath of wind to stir a feather. Nothing drearier, sadder, or more savage could be imagined.

Wandering, at random, through the solitary streets, the chalk-white walls pierced by a few rare windows blocked by wooden shutters, and with a wholly African appearance. I arrived without meeting a body, I'll not say soul, in the town square, which is of great and picturesque interest. It is spanned by the stone arches of an aqueduct. The ground is a plateau, sliced from the summit of the hill, and has no pavement other than the rock itself, carved with grooves to prevent one's feet from slipping. One whole side is precipitous, and overlooks an abyss, at the foot of which can be seen, amidst clumps of trees, water-mills turned by a torrent foaming like soapy water.

The hour set for our departure approached, and I returned to the posada as wet with perspiration as if I had endured a downpour of rain, but satisfied to have done my duty as a traveller in a temperature that could hard-boil an egg.

The caravan moved off again along abominable, but most picturesque, paths, where only mules could maintain a foothold: I had rested the reins on the neck of my beast, judging her more capable of handling herself than I, and relying on her, entirely, to avoid false steps. Several rather lively discussions I had already had with her to encourage her to walk alongside my comrade's horse, had convinced me of the uselessness of such efforts. The

proverb: *stubborn as a mule*, is a truth to which I pay homage. Poke a mule with the spur, she halts; strike her with a whip, she lies down; pull on her reins, she gallops: a mule in the mountains is truly intractable, she senses her importance and abuses it. Often, she will stop, suddenly, in the middle of the road, raises her head in the air, stretch out her neck, contract her lips so as to reveal her gums and long teeth, and utter inarticulate sighs, convulsive sobs, and frightful cackles, horrible to hear, which resemble the cries of a child whose throat is being slit. You could beat her during such vocalization exercises without moving her a step forward.

We were travelling through a veritable Campo Santo. The crosses erected to mark murders became frighteningly frequent; in good places, there were sometimes three or four in the space of less than a hundred yards; it was no longer a road, it was a cemetery. It must be admitted, however, that if in France we chose to perpetuate the memory of every violent death with a cross, certain Paris streets would more than bear comparison with the Vélez-Málaga road. Several of these sinister monuments bore dates that were already ancient; they stir the traveller's imagination endlessly, make one attentive to the slightest noise, keep one's eyes on the alert, and prevent one from being bored for a single moment; at each bend in the road, as soon as a rock suspicious in form appears, or a clump of dangerous-looking trees one says to oneself: 'There a hidden scoundrel hides, perhaps, who takes aim at me, and would render me the pretext for a fresh cross for the edification of future travellers and passers-by!'

Once that section of the route was done with, the crosses became somewhat rarer; we traversed mountainous locations of grandiose and severe appearance, their summits intersected by large archipelagos of vapour, in a wholly deserted landscape, where we encountered no other habitation than some reed hut, the dwelling of an aguador, or a seller of brandy. The brandy is colourless, and drunk from elongated glasses, which are filled to the brim with added water, that whitens it in the manner of eau de Cologne.

The air was heavy, the weather stormy, and suffocatingly hot; a few large drops, the only ones that had fallen in four months from that implacable lapis-lazuli sky, speckled the weathered sand and gave it the appearance of a panther's skin; However, the rain was transient, and the celestial vault resumed its immutable serenity. The weather was so constantly blue during my stay in Spain, that I found in my notebook a note written thus: 'Saw a white cloud,' as being a thing entirely worthy of remark. We folk of the North, whose horizon cluttered with mists offers an ever-varied spectacle of shapes and colours, where the wind builds mountains, islands, and palaces of cloud, that it constantly dissolves to rebuild elsewhere, can form no idea of the deep melancholy inspired by that azure as constant as eternity, which we found forever hanging above our heads. In a small village that we passed through, everyone had rushed outside to enjoy the rain, just as in our country we rush inside to seek shelter.

Night fell, quite suddenly, with no pretence at twilight, as happens in hot countries, with us not far from Vélez-Málaga, the place where we were to sleep. The mountains softened into shallower slopes, and died away into small stony plains crossed by streams fifteen to twenty yards wide and a foot deep, bordered by gigantic reeds. The funereal crosses reappeared in greater numbers than ever, their whiteness rendering them easily distinguishable in the blue vapour of night. We counted three within a distance of twenty yards. The area was wonderfully desolate too, and most suitable for an ambush.

It was eleven o'clock when we entered Vélez-Málaga, whose windows blazed joyfully, and which echoed to the sounds of singing and guitars. The young girls, seated on their balconies, sang verses which their *novios* accompanied from below; at each stanza there was endless laughter, shouting and applause. Other groups danced the cachucha, fandango, and jaleo on street corners. The guitars buzzed, dully, like bees, the castanets chattered, and clicked their beaks: all was music and joy. It seemed to me that the only serious business Spaniards know of is pleasure; they engage in it with an admirable frankness, abandon and enthusiasm. No people seem less unhappy; foreigners, in truth, as they traverse the Peninsula, find it hard to credit the seriousness of past political events, and can scarcely imagine that this is a country desolate and ravaged by ten years of civil war. Our own country-folk are far removed from the happy carefreeness, the jovial gaze, and the costumed elegance of the Andalusian *majos*. And, in terms of education, they are far inferior to them. Almost every Spanish peasant knows how to read, possesses a memory furnished with poetry recited or sung without losing a beat, ride horses to perfection, and is skilled in the handling of knives and rifles. It is true that the admirable fertility of the earth, and the kindness of the climate, exempt them from the stupefying labour which, in less favoured countries, reduces a man to the status of a beast of burden or a machine, and robs him of the divine gift of strength and beauty.

It was not without personal satisfaction that I tied my mule to the bars of the posada. Our supper was very simple; all the maids and lads had gone dancing, and we had to be content with a simple *gazpacho*. Gazpacho deserves a special description, and we will give here the recipe, which would have raised the hairs on the head of the late Jean Brillat-Savarin. One pours water into a soup-bowl, to this water is added a drizzle of vinegar, cloves of garlic, onions cut in quarters, cucumber slices, a morsel of chili pepper, and a pinch of salt. Then one soaks pieces of bread in this agreeable mixture, and serve it cold. In our country, well-behaved dogs would refuse to dip their muzzles in such a mixture. It is the favourite dish of the Andalusians, and the prettiest women are not afraid to swallow large bowls of this infernal soup in the evening. Gazpacho is considered very refreshing, an opinion which seemed somewhat daring to us, but, however strange it may seem on first tasting, we became accustomed to, and even grew to like it. Most providentially, to wash down this meagre meal we were granted in compensation a large carafe full of an excellent dry white Málaga wine which we conscientiously emptied down to the last drop, and which repaired our strength exhausted by a journey of nine hours, on improbable paths, and in a temperature approaching that of a kiln.

At three, our convoy set off again; the weather was overcast; a warm mist covered the horizon, the humidity of the air suggested the nearness of the sea, whose solid blue bar soon appeared on the horizon. A few flakes of foam fluttered here and there, and the waves died away in large regular swirls over fine sawdust-like sand. High cliffs loomed on our right. Sometimes the rocks left us free passage, sometimes they blocked the path, and we ascended to circumvent them. The direct route is not often workable on Spanish roads; the obstacles so difficult to remove, that it is better to go round than surmount them. The famous Latin motto: *Linea recta brevissima* (*the straight line is the shortest*), proves completely false there.

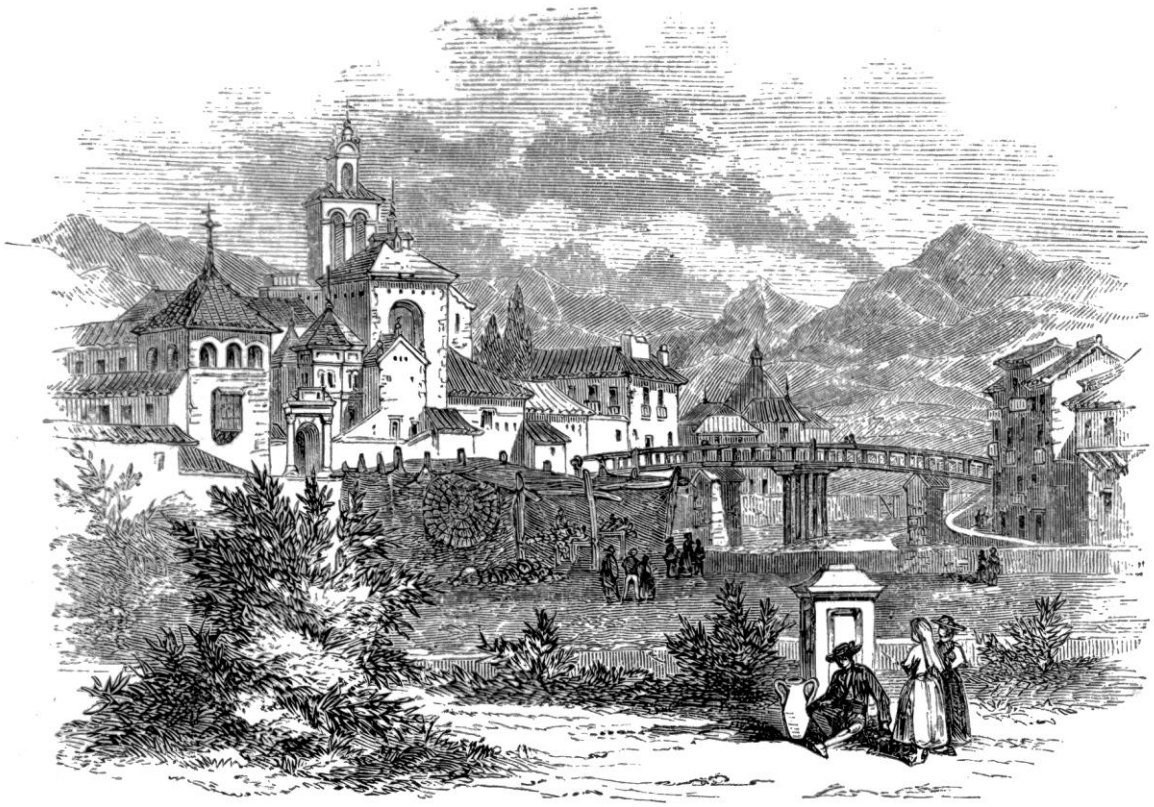
The rising sun dissipated vapour like idle smoke; sky and sea recommenced their azure struggle, one in which it was impossible to say which of the two had the advantage; the cliffs

took on their gilded hues of iridescent red, amethyst, and burnt-topaz; the sand began to turn dry and powdery, and the water to shimmer in the intense light. Far, far away, almost on the horizon, five sails fluttered in the wind like dove's wings.

From far to near, small houses, as white as sugar, appeared on the slower slopes, with flat roofs and a kind of peristyle formed by a trellis supported at each end by a square pillar and in the middle by a massive pylon of fairly large Egyptian shape. The *aguardiente* booths multiplied, still built of reeds, but already more stylish, their counters whitewashed and daubed with a few red stripes. The road, now distinctly marked, was bordered by a line of cacti and aloes, interrupted here and there by gardens and houses before which women mended nets, and naked children played. When they saw us passing by on our mules, they shouted: '*Toro, toro!*' Because of our majo garb we were taken, for the owners of *ganaderias,* or for *toreros* from Francisco Montes' quadrille.

Carts drawn by oxen, and strings of donkeys, followed one another at shorter intervals. The movement that forever takes place on the outskirts of any large city was already in evidence. From all sides came convoys of mules carrying spectators for the opening of the arena; we had met many of them in the mountains, travelling from thirty or forty leagues around. The aficionados there are, in vehemence and fury, as much superior to our dilettanti as a bullfight is superior in interest to an opera performance; nothing deters them, neither the heat, difficulty, nor peril of the journey; so long as they arrive, take their places near the *barrera*, and are able to strike the bull's rump with their hand, they believe themselves amply paid for their efforts. Where is the tragic or comic playwright who can boast of exercising such attraction? This does not prevent tender and sentimental moralists from claiming that the taste for this *barbaric entertainment*, as they term it, is diminishing, day by day, in Spain.

One cannot imagine anything more picturesque or unusual than the surroundings of Málaga. It feels as if one has been transported to Africa: the dazzling whiteness of the houses, the dark indigo tone of the sea, the dazzling intensity of the light, everything creates the illusion. On either side of the road enormous aloes bristle, brandishing their cutlasses; gigantic cacti, with grey-green platelets and deformed trunks, twist hideously like monstrous boas, or the spines of stranded sperm whales; here and there a palm-tree rises like a column, spreading its crown of foliage next to a European tree astonished by such proximity, and seemingly troubled at finding this formidable African vegetation crawling at its foot.



Malaga from the Alameda

An elegant white tower stood out against the blue sky: it was the Málaga lighthouse; we had arrived. It must have been about eight in the morning; the town was bustling with activity: sailors went to and fro, loading and unloading the ships anchored in the port, with an animation rare in a Spanish town; the women, dressed and draped in large scarlet shawls which framed their Moorish faces wonderfully, walked quickly, dragging after them some infant, naked or in a shirt. The men, huddled in their capes, or jackets over their shoulders, walked swiftly, and, curiously enough, the whole crowd appeared to be heading in the same direction, that is to say towards the Plaza de Toros. But what struck me most, among this colourful crowd, was encountering six African galley-slaves hauling a cart. They were of gigantic size, with monstrous faces so wild, so unhuman, imbued with such a stamp of ferocious bestiality, that I was seized with fear at their appearance as if I were viewing a streak of tigers. The sort of canvas dress which served them for clothing made them seem even more diabolical and more fantastic. I know not what led them to the galleys, but I might well have placed them there for the sole crime of possessing such faces.

We halted at the *Parador de los Tres Reyes*, a relatively comfortable inn shaded by a beautiful vine whose branches twined about the balcony railings, and adorned with a large room where the hostess sat, behind a counter overloaded with porcelain, as if in a Parisian café. A very pretty servant, a charming example of the beauty of the women of Malaga, famous throughout Spain, led us to our rooms, and gave us a moment of great anxiety by informing us

that all the tickets for the bullfight were taken, and that we would have great difficulty obtaining them. Fortunately, our *cosario*, Lanza was able to find us two *asientos de preferencia* (numbered places); on the sunlit side, it is true, but that was of small concern: we had long ago sacrificed the skin on our faces, and one more layer of tan on our brown and yellowed visages was no matter. The bullfights were to take place on three consecutive days. The tickets on the first day were crimson, those on the second green, those on the third blue, to avoid confusion and prevent the adherents from entering twice for the price of a single ticket.

During lunch a group of students on tour arrived; there were four of them and they looked more like models for a Jusepe de Ribera or Murillo painting than students of theology, so ragged, unkempt, and dirty were they. They sang comic verses to the accompaniment of tambourine, triangle and castanets; the one who beat the *pandero* (*tambourine*) was a virtuoso in his genre; he made the donkey-skin resonate with his knees, elbows, feet, and, when all these means of percussion failed to suffice, tapped its round, decorated with copper discs, on the head of some *muchacho* or some old woman. One of them, the orator of the troop, took up the collection, spouting, with extreme volubility, all kinds of jokes to excite the audience's largesse. 'Just a *realito!*' he cried, adopting the most pleading postures, 'so I can finish my studies, become a priest, and live without working!' When he had obtained the small silver coin, he stuck it to his forehead next to the others already extorted, just like the *almahs* (*dancing-girls*) who, after performing, cover their sweating faces with the *sequins* and *piastres* thrown at them by ecstatic Ottomans.

The bullfight was scheduled for five o'clock, but we were advised to attend the arena around one, because the corridors would soon be crowded with people, and we would not be able to reach our stalls, though they were numbered and reserved. We therefore ate a hasty lunch, and headed to the Plaza de Toros, preceded by our guide Antonio, a skinny boy, exceedingly constrained by a large red belt which further highlighted his thinness, the cause of which he charmingly attributed to sorrow in love.

The streets were filled by crowds that grew denser as we neared the arena; the aguadors, the sellers of iced *cebada (barley-water)*, paper fans and parasols, and cigars, and the carriage-drivers, created a frightful uproar; a fog of noise, like a vague rumour, that hung over the city.

After a fairly long detour through the narrow and complicated streets of Málaga, we finally arrived at the arena, which is unremarkable on the outside. A detachment of soldiers had great difficulty containing the crowd which desired to invade the place; though it was at least an hour before the bullfight, the stands were already filled from top to bottom, and it was only with many nudges of the elbows, and exchanged invectives, that we reached our stalls.

The Málaga arena is of truly ancient grandeur and holds fourteen to fifteen thousand spectators within its vast funnel, of which the arena proper forms the floor, and whose parapet rises to the height of a five-storied house. The bullfight yields some idea of how the Roman Circus might have looked, during the spectacle of those dreadful games where men fought hand to hand, or against ferocious beasts, before the eyes of an entire people.

One could scarcely imagine a stranger and more splendid sight than that presented by those immense stands filled by an impatient crowd, seeking to cheat the time given to waiting with

all sorts of antics and *andaluzadas* of the most piquant originality. Those in modern dress were few in number, and those who were so clad were greeted with laughter, jeers and whistles; the spectacle gained much from it: the bright colours of the jackets and sashes, the scarlet draperies of the women, the fans that folk waved, of motley greens and yellows, freed the crowd from that dark, lugubrious aspect which our crowds possess, in which sombre tones dominate.

There were quite a few women, and I noticed many pretty ones. The Malagueña is distinguished by the golden pallor of her even complexion, the cheek being no deeper in colour than the brow, the elongated oval of her face, the vivid crimson of her mouth, the delicacy of her nose and the radiance of her Arabian eyes, which one might believe dyed with henna, the eyelids freely extending towards the temples. Perhaps one should attribute this effect to the severe folds of the red drapery which frames their faces; they have a serious and passionate air which is wholly reminiscent of the Orient, and which the women of Madrid, Granada, and Seville, neater, more graceful, more coquettish, and always somewhat concerned with the effect they produce, fail to possess. I saw some admirable faces there, superb types of which the painters of the Spanish school have not taken enough advantage, and which would offer a talented artist a series of rare and entirely new studies. To my mind, it seems strange that women choose to view a spectacle where a man's life is at risk every moment, where blood flows in streams, where unfortunate horses collapse then rise to their feet entangled in their own entrails; one might easily imagine these women to be violent in temper, with bold gazes, and frenzied gestures, yet one would be quite wrong: never have sweeter Madonna-like faces, more velvety eyelids, more tender smiles, bowed over an infant Jesus. The various twists and turns of the bull in its agony are followed attentively by pale and charming creatures of whom an elegiac poet would be content to make a Donna Elvira (*see Mozart's opera, Don Juan*). The merit of each blow is a subject for lips so pretty that one would prefer to hear them speak only of love. Despite the fact that they witness, dry-eyed, scenes of carnage which would make our sensitive Parisian ladies ill, it would be wrong to infer that they are cruel and lack tenderness of soul: it in no way prevents their being good, honest-hearted, and compassionate to the unfortunate; but habit is everything, and the blood-stained aspect of the bullfight, which is what strikes foreigners the most, is what least concerns the Spanish women, who are attentive to the worth of the blows, and the skill displayed by the *toreros*, who run less severe risks than one might first imagine.

It was only two o'clock, yet the sun flooded the entire side of the stands in which we were seated with a deluge of fire. How we envied those privileged folk refreshed by the shade the upper boxes cast! After having travelled thirty leagues on horseback through the mountains, sitting for a whole day beneath an African sun, in a temperature of thirty-eight degrees Centigrade, was a bit much for a poor critic who, on this occasion, had paid for his place and had no wish to forego it.

Those in the *asientos de sombra* (seats in the shade) hurled all kinds of sarcastic comments at us; they directed the water-sellers towards us to save us from catching fire; they desired to light their cigars from the hot coal of our noses, or offered a little oil so we might fry completely. We responded as best we could, and when the shadow, retreating with the hour, delivered one of them to the scorching sun, there were endless bursts of laughter and bravos.

Thanks to a few jugs of water, several dozen oranges, and an endless waving of our two fans, we defended ourselves from the fire, and had neither been cooked to a turn, nor struck by apoplexy, by the time the musicians sat themselves down in their stand, and the cavalry-picket set about evacuating the arena which swarmed with *muchachos* and *mozos* who merged I know now how with the general mass, though mathematically there seemed scarcely room for another person; but a crowd in certain circumstances possesses a wondrous elasticity.

An immense sigh of satisfaction, exhaled from fifteen thousand chests, relieved the weight of expectation. The members of the ayuntamiento were greeted with frenzied applause, and, as they entered their box, the orchestra began to play the Spanish airs: *Yo que soy contrabandista* (*'The song of the horse' from Manuel García's operatic monologue 'El Poeta Calculista'*), and *Riego's* march (*named for Rafael del Riego*), which the whole assembly sang simultaneously, clapping their hands and stamping their feet.

I do not intend to recount here the details of the bullfight. I had opportunity to make a thorough account of it during our stay in Madrid; I merely wish to report the main facts and the remarkable events of this contest in which the same toreros took part for three days without resting, and in which twenty-four bulls were killed, and ninety-six horses left in the arena, but without any other accident for the toreros than the blow from a horn that grazed the arm of a *capeador*, an injury which was in no way dangerous, and did not prevent him from reappearing in the arena next day.

At exactly five o'clock, the doors of the arena opened, and the troupe which was about to perform made a tour of the circus in procession. At the head walked the three *picadores*, Antonio Sanchez, José Trigo, both from Seville, and Francisco Briones, from Puerto Real, with fist on hip, lance resting on foot, and the gravity of triumphant Romans ascending to the Capitol. The saddles of their horses had the name of the arena's owner marked out in golden studs: *Antonio-Maria Alvarez*. The *capeadores* or *chulos*, wearing tricorn hats, in their brightly-coloured coats, came next; the *banderilleros*, in the costume worn by *Figaro*, followed closely. At the rear of the procession, isolated in their majesty, came the two *matadores*, *the swords* as they say in Spain, Montes from Chiclana and José Parra from Madrid. Montes was with his loyal quadrille, a thing most important for the safety of the participants; since, in these times of political dissension, *toreros* who are Christinos (*liberal supporters of Isabel II*) often refuse to aid Carlist *toreros* who are in danger, and vice versa. The procession ended, significantly, with the teams of mules whose purpose was to remove the carcases of the dead bulls and horses.

Battle was about to begin. The alguazil, in bourgeois costume, who was to carry the keys of the *toril* to the lad appointed, and rode his spirited horse very badly, prefaced the tragedy with a somewhat hilarious farce: first losing his hat, then the stirrups. His trousers, lacking foot-straps, rose to his knees in a most grotesque way; and, the door having been maliciously opened for the bull to emerge before the rider had time to withdraw from the arena, his heightened fear rendered him even more ridiculous by the contortions he made his mount perform. However, he kept his seat, to the great disappointment of the crowd; the bull, dazzled by the torrent of light which flooded the arena, failed to see him at first and allowed him to depart without a blow from his horn. It was therefore amidst a burst of immense, Homeric,

Olympian laughter that the fight began; but silence was soon restored, the bull having split the mount of the first *picador* in two and unhorsed the second.

We only had eyes for Montes, whose name is known throughout Spain, and whose prowess is the subject of a thousand marvellous stories. Montes was born in Chiclana, in the vicinity of Cádiz. He is a man of thirty-six years old or so, a little above average in height, with a serious demeanour, a measured gait, an olive-pale complexion, with no remarkable features other than the mobility of his eyes, which alone seem alive in that impassive face; he appears more agile than robust, and owes his success to his composure, rather than to the accuracy of his foresight, and to his in-depth knowledge of his art rather than to his muscular strength. From the very first steps a bull takes in the arena, Montes knows if the creature is short or long-sighted, and whether he is *clear or dark*, that is to say whether he will attack honestly or resort to a ruse; whether he is *muchas piernas* or *aplomado*, nimble or heavy-footed, and whether he will shut his eyes when delivering a *cogida (goring)*, or keep them open. Thanks to these observations, made with the rapidity of thought, he is always in position for a sound defence. However, as he takes cool temerity to its ultimate limits, he has received a good number of blows from a horn in his career, as evidenced by the scar that crosses his cheek, and he has several times been borne seriously injured from the arena.

That day he was dressed in a costume of apple-green embroidered with silver, of extreme elegance and luxury, for Montes is rich, and, if he continues to occupy the arena, it is from love of his art and his need to experience the emotions aroused, his fortune amounting to more than fifty thousand duros, a considerable sum if we think of the cost of costumes that *matadores* are obliged to lay out, a complete outfit costing fifteen hundred to two thousand francs, and of the endless journeys they must make from one city to another, accompanied by their quadrilles.

Montes is not content, as are other *swords*, merely to kill the bull when the signal for death is given. He watches over everything, directs the fight, and comes to the aid of the *picadores* or *chulos* whenever they are in danger. More than one *torero* owes their life to his intervention. One bull, refusing to be distracted by the capes that were being waved in front of him, gored the belly of a horse he had overturned, and tried to do the same to its rider who was sheltering behind the corpse of his mount. Montes grasped the fierce beast by the tail, and made it do three or four waltzing gyrations, to its great displeasure and the frenzied applause of the entire audience, which gave the picador time to rise. Sometimes Montes stood upright in front of the bull, his arms crossed, his eyes fixed, at which the monster stops, suddenly, captivated by this clear gaze, as sharp and cold as a sword blade. Then there are cries, howls, vociferations, the noise of stamping feet, and explosions of ‘bravo’ of which one can barely form an idea; delirium takes possession of all, a general feeling of dizziness agitates the fifteen thousand spectators on the benches, drunk on aguardiente, sunlight, and the sight of blood; handkerchiefs are waved, hats leap in the air, while Montes alone, calm amidst this furor, savours, silently, his deep and self-contained joy, then bows slightly like a man capable of many another feat. For such acclaim, I can understand that one might risk one’s life in a moment; such folk are not overpaid. O singers with golden throats, dancers with enchanted

feet, actors of every sort, emperors and poets, who think you have roused enthusiasm, you have not heard them applaud Montes!

Sometimes, the spectators themselves beg him to perform one of these skilful tricks from which he always emerges victorious. A pretty girl calls out to him, throwing him a kiss: 'Come, Señor Montes, come, Paquiro (his nickname), you who are so gallant, perform a little something, *una cosita*, for a lady.' And Montes leaps over the bull, places his foot on its head, or else shakes his cape in front of its muzzle, and, with a sudden movement, wraps himself in it so as to form an elegant shape with the drape, one with impeccable folds; then he leaps aside and lets the beast pass, since it is charging too fiercely to halt.

Montes' manner of killing the bull is remarkable for its precision and lack of risk, and the calm execution of the blow; with him, all question of danger vanishes; he is so composed, so much the master of himself, and appears so sure of success, that the contest seems nothing more than a game; perhaps too much emotion even is lost. It is impossible to fear for his life; he strikes the bull where he wants, when he wants, and how he wants. The balance of the duel is too unequal; a less skilful *matador* sometimes produces a more striking effect due to the risks and chances he runs. This may, without doubt, seem merely a refined barbarity, but the *aficionados,* all those who have witnessed a bullfight, and sided passionately with an honest and brave bull, will certainly understand. An event which happened on the last day of the races will prove the truth of our assertion, and showed Montes, in a somewhat harsh manner, to what extent the Spanish public exhibit a spirit of impartiality towards man and animal.

A magnificent black creature had been released into the arena. From the abrupt manner in which he emerged from the *toril*, the connoisseurs in the crowd had formed the highest opinion of him. He combined all the qualities of a fighting bull; his horns were long and sharp, and the tips well curved; his lean, slender and sinewy legs promised great agility: his broad dewlap, and well-developed flanks, indicated immense strength. Thus, he bore the name of Napoleon in the herd, as the only title that might indicate his incontestable superiority. Without the slightest hesitation, the bull rushed at the *picador* posted near the *tablas*, and knocked him and his mount down, the latter being left dead on the spot, then rushed at the second, who was no more fortunate, and was barely given time to leap over the barrier, all crushed and crumpled from his fall. In less than a quarter of an hour, seven disembowelled horses lay on the sand; the *chulos* could only wave their coloured capes from afar, and chose not to lose sight of the palisades, leaping to the other side as soon as Napoleon seemed likely to approach. Even Montes himself seemed troubled, and once he placed his foot on the edge of the framework of the *tablas,* ready to cross in the event of alarm, and too keen a pursuit, which he had not done in the two previous fights. The joy of the spectators was expressed in loud exclamations, and the most flattering compliments aimed at the bull flowed from everyone's lips. A new feat performed by the animal roused their exasperation and enthusiasm to the last degree.

A *sobre-saliente* (understudy) of a *picador,* since the two leads employed were hors de combat, awaited, with lowered lance, the attack of the fearful Napoleon, who, without worrying about a further barb in the shoulder, took the horse under his belly, with a toss of his head made the steed's front legs descend on the edge of the tablas and, with a second, lifted its rump, and flung horse and master over the barrier, into the safety corridor which runs all around the arena.

Such a wondrous feat roused thunderous cheers. The bull was master of the place which he traversed like a victor, amusing himself, for lack of adversaries, by turning over the corpses of the horses which he had torn apart and throwing them into the air. The supply of victims was exhausted, and there was no longer enough in the arena's stable to remount the *picadores*. The *banderilleros* stood on the *tablas*, not daring to descend to harass with their paper-adorned darts this formidable opponent, whose rage certainly needed no further stimulation. The spectators, impatient with this kind of entr'acte, shouted: *Las banderillas! Las banderillas! Fuego al alcalde!* Fire, take the alcalde, who failed to issue the command! Finally, at a sign from the governor, a *banderillero* broke from the group and lodged two darts in the neck of the furious beast, before fleeing with all his speed, but still not swiftly enough, for a horn grazed his arm. and split his sleeve. Then, despite the vociferations and the jeers of the people, the alcalde ordered the death-blow, and made a sign to Montes to employ his *muleta* and sword, in spite of all the rules of bullfighting which require that a bull receive at least four pairs of *banderillas* before being delivered to the *matador's* thrust.

Montes, instead of advancing as usual to the middle of the arena, stood about twenty steps from the barrier, as a refuge in case of misfortune; he was very pale, and, without indulging in any of those attentions, that courageous coquetry, which had won him the admiration of all Spain, he displayed the scarlet *muleta*, and called to the bull which needed no asking before charging. Montes executed three or four passes with the *muleta*, holding his sword horizontally and at eye-level with the monster, who suddenly fell as if struck by lightning, and expired after a single convulsive leap. The sword had entered his forehead and pierced his brain, a blow forbidden by the laws of bullfighting, the *matador* being required to pass his arm between the horns of the animal, and deliver the blow between neck and the shoulders, which increases the risk to the man and grants his bestial adversary some slight chance.

When the nature of the blow became understood, for it had happened with the rapidity of thought, a cry of indignation rose from the *tendidos* to the *palcos*; a tempest of insults and whistles followed, amidst incredible tumult and noise. 'Butcher, assassin, bandit, thief, galley-slave, executioner!' were the gentlest terms employed. 'To Ceuta. with Montes! To the flames, with Montes! Set the dogs on Montes! Death to the alcalde!' such were the cries resounding from all sides. I have never witnessed such fury, and I confess with a blush of shame that I shared it myself. Vociferations were soon no longer enough; fans, hats, sticks, jars full of water, and fragments torn from the benches, were hurled towards the poor devil. There was still another bull to kill, but its death went unnoticed throughout this dreadful bacchanal, and it was José Parra, the second sword, who dispatched it with two fairly well-aimed blows. As for Montes, he was livid, his face turned green with rage, his teeth printed bloody marks on his pallid lips, though he displayed great calm and leaned with an affected grace on the hilt of his sword, the reddened tip of which he had wiped in the sand, quite against the rules.

What determines popularity? None could have ever imagined, the day before, or the day before that, that an artist so reliable, so much a master of his audience as Montes, could be so thoroughly punished for an offense undoubtedly urged on him by absolute necessity, given the extraordinary agility, vigour and fury of the animal. When the fight was over, he clambered into his carriage, followed by his quadrille, and departed, swearing to his great gods that he

would never set foot in Málaga again. I know not if he has kept his word, having remembered the insults of that final day longer than the triumphs and ovations of its beginning. I think now, that the Málaga public was unfair to the great Montes de Chiclana, all of whose blows had been superbly delivered, and who had demonstrated, at the most dangerous moments, both heroic composure and admirable skill, so much so that the people, enchanted, had donated to him all the bulls he had conquered, and allowed him to cut off their ears as a sign of his ownership, so that they could neither be claimed by the hospital or the contractor.

Stunned, intoxicated, sated by violent emotion, we returned to our *parador*, hearing in the streets we followed only praise for the bull, and imprecations against Montes.

That same evening, despite my fatigue, I took myself off to the theatre, wishing to pass without any transition from the bloody reality of the arena to the intellectualised emotions of the stage. The contrast was stark; there the noise, the crowd; here solitariness and silence. The room was almost empty, a rare few spectators scattered here and there across the empty benches. However, they performed *The Lovers of Teruel*, a drama by Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch, one of the most remarkable products of the modern Spanish school. It is a touching and poetic story of lovers who maintain an invincible fidelity despite a thousand temptations and a thousand obstacles: the subject, despite often successful efforts on the part of the author to vary a situation that is ever the same, would seem too simplistic to a French audience; the moments of passion are treated with great warmth and enthusiasm, though sometimes spoiled by a certain melodramatic exaggeration to which the author abandons himself too readily. The love of the Sultana of Valencia for Isabel's lover, Juan Diego Martínez Garcès de Marsilla, whom she has had brought to the harem asleep, due to the employment of a narcotic, the revenge of this same Sultana when she finds herself scorned, the guilty letters from Isabel's mother found by Rodrigo de Azagra, who uses them as a means to wed the girl and threatens to show them to the deceived husband, are somewhat forced, but lead to moving and dramatic scenes. The play is written in prose and verse. As much as a foreigner can judge the style of a language whose subtleties he is ignorant of, Hartzenbusch's verses seemed to me superior to his prose. They are free, open, lively, varied in style, quite moderate in their use of those poetic amplifications to which the ease of their prosody too often leads southerners. His prose dialogue seems imitated from modern French melodrama and suffers from heaviness and over-emphasis. *The Lovers of Teruel*, with all its faults, is a literary work and far superior to these organised or disorganised translations of our boulevard pieces which today flood the theatres of the Peninsula. I found evidence of the author's study of ancient romance and the masters of the Spanish stage, and it is to be wished that young poets from beyond the mountains might take that path rather than wasting their time rendering dreadful melodramas into more or less legitimate Castilian.

A fairly comical *skit* followed the serious play. It was about an old fellow who employed a pretty servant, 'to do everything,' as the Parisian *Petites Affiches* (*advertising posters*) would say. The girl first introduced, as her brother, a great Valencian devil, six feet tall, with enormous whiskers, and an enormous *navaja* (*pocket-knife*), who was equipped with an insatiable hunger and inextinguishable thirst; then a cousin no less fierce, bristling with blunderbusses, pistols, and other destructive weapons, which cousin was followed by a smuggler uncle bearing a

complete arsenal and of similar appearance, all to the great terror of the poor old man, already repentant of his reckless wish. The various rascals were rendered with admirable truth and verve by the cast. In the end a wise, military nephew appeared who freed his rogue of an uncle from the gang of brigands installed in his house, and caressed the servant-girl while drinking his wine, smoking his cigars, and plundering his house. The uncle promised that from now on he would only be served by elderly male servants. These *sketches* resemble our vaudevilles, but the plots are less complicated, and often consist of a few detached scenes, like the interludes in Italian comedy.

The performance ended with a *baile nacional* performed by two pairs of dancers in fairly satisfactory fashion. Female Spanish dancers, though they do not have the finish, precision, and elevation of their French counterparts, are, in my opinion, much superior to them in grace and charm; since they practise less and are not subject to these dreadful exercises in flexibility and posture which make a dance class seem like a torture chamber, they avoid that leanness of a horse in training which gives our ballet-dancers an excessively anatomical even macabre appearance; they retain the contours and fullness of their sex; they look like women dancing not *danseuses*, which is a quite different thing. Their style has not the slightest connection with that of the French school, where immobility and perpendicularity of the bust are expressly recommended; in leg-movements the body participates almost not at all. In Spain, feet barely leave the ground; there are none of these arching legs, of those contortions which make a woman look like an open compass, and which give a tasteless air of indecency to French ballet. Here, it is the body that dances, the back that arches, the flanks that bend, the waist that twists with the suppleness of a lover or a snake. In inverted poses, the dancer's shoulders almost touch the ground; the arms, hanging freely, possess the flexibility and softness of a loose scarf; the hands seem as if they can barely rise so as to set the ivory castanets, with their braided and gilded cords, sounding; and yet, when the moment comes, the agile leaps of a young jaguar replace voluptuous languor, and prove that these bodies, soft as silk, hide muscles of steel. The Moorish *almahs* still follow the same system today: their dance consisting of harmoniously lascivious undulations of the torso, hips and loins, with arm movements above the head. The Arab tradition has been preserved in various countries, especially in Andalusia.

Spanish male dancers, though mediocre, display a bold, gallant and cavalier air, which I much prefer to the equivocal and insipid graces of the French. They do not seem concerned with themselves or the audience; they merely gaze and smile at their female partner, with whom they always appear passionately in love, and whom they seem ready to defend against all. They have a certain fierce grace, a certain insolent arch look which is specific to them. Removing their makeup, they would make excellent *banderilleros*, and could fittingly leap from the theatre's boards to the arena's sand.

The *malagueña*, a dance local to Málaga, is in truth charmingly poetic. The cavalier appears first, *sombrero* over his eyes, wrapped in his scarlet cape like a hidalgo out walking and seeking adventure. The lady enters, draped in her mantilla, fan in hand, with the air of a woman off to stroll on the *Alameda*. The cavalier tries to steal a glance at the face of this mysterious Siren, but the coquette manoeuvres the fan so well, opening and closing it so aptly, turning it about it so swiftly while level with her pretty face, that the gallant, disappointed,

retreats a few steps and executes another stratagem. He makes the castanets sound forth beneath his coat. To this, the lady gives ear; she smiles, her breast tremors, the tip of her little satin-clad foot marks the measure in spite of herself; she throws away her fan, and mantilla, and reveals the loose dress of a dancer, sparkling with sequins and tinsel, a rose in her hair, a large tortoiseshell comb above. The rider removes his mask and his cape, and both perform steps of delightful originality.

As I returned, beside a sea which reflected the pale face of the moon in its burnished steel mirror, I reflected on the striking contrast between the arena's crowd and the theatre's emptiness, on the multitude's eagerness to witness the brutal fact and its indifference to the speculations of the mind. As a poet, I began to envy the gladiator; I regretted having abandoned action for reverie. The day before, in the same theatre, a play by Lope de Vega had been performed which attracted no more people than the work of some newcomer: ancient genius and modern talent are worth less than a single blow from Montes' sword!

Moreover, the other theatres in Spain are hardly better attended than that of Málaga, not even the *Teatro del Principe* in Madrid, where a great actor, Julián Romea, and an excellent actress, Matilde Diez, perform. The ancient vein of Spanish drama seems exhausted beyond recovery, yet never has a river flowed in greater waves in a deeper bed; never was there a more prodigious and inexhaustible fertility. Our most copious playwrights are still far from the achievements of Lope de Vega, who had no collaborators and whose works are so numerous that the exact number is unknown, and of which there is barely one complete copy. Calderón de la Barca, without counting his comedies of cape and sword, in which he has no rival, has made multitudes of *autos sacramentales*, a species of Catholic mystery-play where the strange depth of thought and singularity of conception combine with enchanting poetry of almost flowery elegance. We would need catalogues in folio to designate, simply by their titles, the plays of Lope de Rueda, Juan Pérez de Montalbán, Luis Vélez de Guevara, Francisco Quevedo, Tirso de Molina, Fernando de Rojas, Agustín Moreto, Guillén de Castro, Juan Diamante, and many others. The number of plays penned in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is beyond imagining; one might as well count the leaves in the forests or the grains of sand in the sea: they are almost all in octosyllabic verse employing occasional assonance, printed in two quarto columns on coarse grey candle-paper, with a crude engraving on the frontispiece, forming notebooks of six to eight sheets. The bookstores are full of them; thousands of them can be seen hanging pell-mell on open display, amidst the romances and verse tales of the stockists; one could apply to most Spanish playwrights, without exaggeration, the epigram made about a too fertile Roman poet, who was burned after his death on a pyre made of his own works. There is a fertility of invention, a wealth of action, a complexity of plot, of which one can scarcely form an idea. Well before Shakespeare, the Spanish reinvented the drama; their theatre is Romantic in the full sense of the word; apart from some erudite puerilities, their plays derive from neither the Greeks nor the Romans, and, as Lope de Vega says in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* (*The New Art of Writing Plays Today, 1609*):

'... Y cuando he de escribir una comedia,

'... And when it comes to writing plays

Encierro los preceptos con seis llaves.'

I've six keys to unlock its precepts.'

The Spanish playwrights appear to have been little concerned with depicting character, though we find, in every scene, fine and piquant lines of close observation; humankind is not studied in a philosophic way, and we hardly encounter, in their drama, the minor characters so frequent in great English tragedy, those sketched from life itself, who contribute only indirectly to the action, and have no other purpose than to represent some facet of the human soul, their unique individuality, or to reflect the poet's thoughts. In their plays, the author rarely allows his personality to be seen, except at the close of the drama, when he asks forgiveness of the audience for his faults.

The main driving-force of Spanish theatre is the question of honour:

'Los casos de la honra son mejores,

'Examples of honour are best,

Porque mueven con fuerza a toda gente,

Since they move everyone deeply,

Con ellos las acciones virtüosas

In them virtuous action shows

Que la virtud es donde quiéra amada.'

That everywhere virtue is loved.'

So said Lope de Vega, who understood the drama thus, and never failed to follow his own precept. The question of honour played in Spanish theatre the role of fate in Greek tragedy. Its inflexible laws, its cruel necessities, easily gave rise to dramatic scenes of great interest. *El pundonor* (*point of honour*) a species of chivalrous code with its own judgements, subtleties and refinements, is much superior to the Ανάγκη, the ancient fatality, whose blows fall blindly, at random, on guilty and innocent alike. We are often repelled, when reading Greek tragedies, by the situation of the hero, equally a criminal whether he acts or not; the Castilian point of honour is always perfectly logical and in accord with itself. It is, indeed, simply exaggerated human virtue driven to the last degree of sensibility. In his most terrible anger, in his most dreadful act of vengeance, the hero maintains a noble and solemn attitude. It is always in the name of loyalty, marital faith, respect for his ancestors, or the integrity of his coat of arms, that he draws his great steel-bladed sword from its sheath, often against those he loves with all his soul, and whom an imperative necessity obliges him to destroy. The struggle of passion grappling with the question of honour provides the main point of interest in most plays of the old Spanish theatre, a deep interest, keenly felt, and arousing the spectators' sympathies, who,

in the same situation, would have acted no differently to the character. With so fertile a theme, one so deeply rooted in the customs of the age, we should not be surprised at the prodigious ease with which the ancient playwrights of the Peninsula practised their art. Other, no less abundant, sources of interest lie in virtuous action, chivalrous devotion, sublime renunciation, unalterable loyalty, superhuman passion, ideal delicacy, and resistance to the most skilfully-wrought intrigues, the most complex threats. In this form of the drama, the poet appears to offer the audience a finished model of human perfection. All the qualities that exist are heaped on the head of the prince or princess; rendering them more concerned with purity than the white ermine that prefers to die rather than incur a stain on its snow-white fur.

A deep feeling for Catholicism and feudal custom breathes throughout this theatre, truly national in origin, content, and form. The division into three acts, followed by Spanish playwrights, is without doubt the most reasonable and logical. Exposition, entanglement, and denouement, such is the natural sequence of all dramatic action, if well understood, and we would do well to adopt it, instead of the ancient division into five acts, two of which are so often pointless, namely the second and the fourth.

However, one should not imagine that the old Spanish pieces were exclusively sublime. The grotesque, that indispensable element of medieval art, appears there in the form of the *gracioso* (jester) and the *bobo* (fool), who lighten the gravity of the action with pleasantries and witty retorts, more or less at random, and produce the effect, at the hero's side, of those deformed dwarves in motley doublets, toying with greyhounds larger than themselves, who appear alongside some king or prince in old portraits in art galleries.

Leandro Moratín, the author of *El Sí de las Niñas*, and of *El Café* (‘*La Comedia Nueva’*), he whose tomb can be seen in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, provided the last echo of Spanish dramatic art, as the elderly Goya, dying in Bordeaux in 1828, was the last still recognisable descendant of the great Velasquez.

Nowadays, only translations of the French melodramas and vaudevilles are performed in the theatres of Spain. In Jaén, in the heart of Andalusia, Bouchardy's *Le Sonneur de Saint-Paul* is played; in Cadiz, a stone's throw from Africa, Bayard and Vanderburch's *Le Gamin de Paris*. The *sketches*, once so cheerful, so original, with such an intense local flavour, are now nothing more than imitations borrowed from the repertoire of the Théâtre des Variétés. Without mentioning Don Francisco Martínez de la Rosa, and Don Antonio Gil y Zarate, who already belong to a less recent era, the Peninsula nonetheless possesses several young people of talent and promise; but public attention, in Spain as in France, has been diverted from the theatre by the seriousness of the events. Hartzenbusch, the author of The *Lovers of Teruel*; José de Castro y Orozco, to whom we owe *Fray Luis de León, or the Century and the World*; José Zorilla, who successfully staged the drama *El Zapatero y El Rey*; Manuel Bréton de Los Herreros; Ángel de Saavedra, Duke of Rivas; Mariano de Larra, who killed himself for love; and José de Espronceda, whose death has just been announced in the newspapers, and whose compositions were marked by a fierce and passionate energy sometimes worthy of his model, Byron, are – alas, of the last two we must say *were* – writers full of merit, ingenious, elegant and fluent, who would take their place alongside the ancient masters, if they did not lack what we all lack, certainty, a fixed starting point, a fund of ideas shared with the public. The question of honour,

and heroism portrayed in the old plays is no longer understood or appears ridiculous, and modern beliefs are not yet sufficiently formulated for poets to provide an interpretation.

We should not, however, place too much blame on the public, who invade the arena, meanwhile, seeking emotion where it lies; after all, it is not the people's fault if the theatre is less attractive; worse luck for us, the poets, if we allow ourselves to be vanquished by the gladiators. In short, it is healthier for the mind and the heart to see a brave man kill a ferocious beast beneath the sky, than listen to a talentless performer sing an obscene piece of vaudeville, or spout adulterated literature, behind the footlights' smoke.

Parts XIII to XV -Seville, Cadíz, Gibraltar, and Valencia

Contents

Part XIII: Écija – Córdoba – The Archangel Raphael – The Mosque

As yet we had only experienced travelling by two-wheeled cart; the four-wheeled equivalent we had yet to try. One of these amiable vehicles was about to leave for Córdoba, already burdened with a Spanish family; we completed the load. Imagine a low-slung affair, equipped with slatted sides, whose floor is simply woven esparto-grass, into which trunks and packets are piled without much concern as to the projecting corners. Over the pile are thrown two or three mattresses, or, to be more precise, in our case two canvas bags within which a few lumps of lightly-carded wool bobbed about; on these mattresses the poor travellers lie, transversally, in a position quite similar (forgive the mundane comparison) to that of calves being carried to market. True, the travellers' feet are not bound together, but their situation is scarcely improved by that. The whole affair is covered with a large awning stretched over iron hoops, led by a *mayoral*, and drawn by four mules.

The family with whom we journeyed was that of a well-educated engineer who spoke good French: they were accompanied by a great scoundrel of mongrel appearance, formerly a brigand in José Maria's band, and now a mine supervisor. This fellow followed the wagon on horseback, a knife in his belt, a rifle at his saddle-bow. The engineer seemed to think highly of him; he praised his probity, with regard to which the man's former profession gave him little or no concern; It is true that when speaking of José Maria (*José Maria Hinojosa Cabacho, known as 'El Tempranillo'*), he told me several times that the aforesaid was a brave and honest man. This opinion, which would seem slightly paradoxical to us as regards a bandit, is shared in Andalusia by the most honourable folk. Spain has retained an Arabian inclination on this point, and brigands there easily pass for heroes, an identification less bizarre than it seems at first, especially in southern regions where imaginations are extremely impressionable. Contempt for death, audacity, composure, prompt and bold decision-making, skill and strength, the kind of greatness which attaches to a man in rebellion against society, all those qualities which act so powerfully on minds that are still scarcely civilised, are they not the qualities that define greatness of character, and are people wrong to admire them so, in men of such energetic nature, even though their use of them is reprehensible?

The road we followed rose and fell, quite steeply, amidst a country studded with hills and criss-crossed by narrow valleys whose depths were occupied by dry stream-beds bristling with enormous stones that jolted us about dreadfully, drawing shrill cries from the women and children. Along the way, I noted various admirably-poetic and colourful sunset effects. In the distance, the mountains took on hues of purple and violet, glazed with gold, of an extraordinary fieriness and intensity; the complete absence of vegetation gives this landscape, composed solely of earth and sky, a character of grandiose bareness and fierce harshness whose equivalent exists nowhere else, and which painters have never rendered successfully. We stopped for a few hours, at nightfall, in a small hamlet of three or four houses, to let the mules rest and allow us to obtain some food. Improvident, like all French travellers, though a five-month stay in Spain should have taught us better, we had brought no provisions from Málaga, so were obliged to sup on dry bread and a little white wine which a woman from the *posada* was kind enough to supply us with, for Spanish pantries and cellars do not share the abhorrence that nature has, it is said, for a void, and embrace its nothingness with a secure conscience.

At about one in the morning, we set off again, and, despite the dreadful jolting, the children of the mine-employee rolling all over us, and the frequent shocks our bobbling heads received on striking the sides of the wagon, we soon fell asleep. As the sun tickled our noses with a ray like a gilded ear of wheat, we approached Carratraca, an insignificant village, unmarked on the map, possessing only its sulphurous springs effective for treating skin-disease, which attract a rather suspect population, and an unhealthy trade, to that lost place. They play a devilish game of cards there; and, though it was still very early, both cards and coins were already in play. It was somewhat hideous to see these sickly people with greenish earthy faces, full of an ugly rapaciousness, slowly extending their convulsive fingers to seize their winnings. The houses of Carratraca, like all those in the villages of Andalusia, have been whitewashed; which, combined with the bright colour of the tiles, the vine garlands, and the shrubs that surround them, grants them an air of celebration and ease quite different from the ideas we have in the rest of Europe of Spanish uncleanliness, ideas generally false, which can only have come about in connection with a few miserable hamlets in Castile, of which we ourselves possess the equivalent, and worse, in Brittany and the Sologne.

In the courtyard of the inn, my eyes were attracted by crude frescoes of primitive naivety, representing bullfights; around the paintings were *coplas* (*verses*) in honour of Paquiro Montes and his quadrille. The name of Montes is quite as popular in Andalusia as that of Napoleon is here; his portrait adorns walls, fans, and snuff-boxes, while the English, great exploiters of the latest fashion, whatever it may be, distribute, from Gibraltar, thousands of scarves on which the features of the famous *matador* are reproduced, printed in red, purple, and yellow, and accompanied by flattering captions.

Learning from our hunger of the previous day, we bought some provisions from our host, in particular a ham for which he made us pay an exorbitant price. There is much talk of highway robbers; but it is not on the road that danger lies; it is beside it, in the inns, where they slit your throat, where they fleece you in complete safety, without you being able to resort to defensive weapons and fire your rifle at the lad who brings you your bill. I pity the bandits with all my heart; such hoteliers leave them little opportunity for gain, and only hand travellers over to them once they are like lemons from which the juice has been squeezed. In other countries, they make you pay dearly for whatever they sell you; in Spain, you pay for the absence of the same with its weight in gold.

Our siesta over, the mules were harnessed to the wagon, each of us regained our place on the mattresses, the *escopetero* mounted his little mountain-pony, the *mayoral* gathered some small stones to throw at the ears of his mules, and we set off once more. The country we crossed was wild without being picturesque: the hills bare, rough, flayed, stripped to the bone; the beds of the stony torrents like scars carved in the ground by the ravages of the winter rain; the olive groves whose pale foliage, caked with dust, stirring not a single thought of greenery or freshness; here and there, from the torn tuff or chalk sides of the ravines, sprang a few tufts of fennel whitened by the heat; over the powdery trail lay the tracks of snakes and vipers, and above all this the sky burning like the roof of an oven, with not a breath of air, not a breath of wind! The grey sand raised by the mules' hooves fell without a swirl. A hot sun beat down on the canvas awning of our wagon, where we ripened like melons under glass. From time to time,

we descended and went on foot for a while, keeping to the shadows cast by the horse or the cart and, having stretched our legs, scrambled back to our places, squashing the children and their mother somewhat, since we could only reach our corner by crawling on all fours under the low arch formed by the hoops above the wagon. Through crossing quagmires and ravines, and taking short-cuts over the ground, we strayed from the correct route. Our *mayoral*, hoping to recover it, forged ahead, as if he knew perfectly well where he was going; since *cosarios* and guides only concede that they are lost in the last extremity, and only after leading you five or six leagues from the true path. It is fair to say, however, that nothing was easier than going awry on this fabled track, barely visible, whose course was interrupted at every moment by deep ravines. We found ourselves among wide fields, sparsely sown with olive trees possessing twisted and stunted trunks in fearful attitudes, and lacking any trace of human habitation, or the appearance of any living creature; since morning, we had only encountered a half-naked *muchacho*, driving in front of him, amidst a torrent of dust, half a dozen black pigs. Night fell. To make matters worse, it was not a moonlit one, and we had only the flickering light of the stars to guide our way.

At every moment, the *mayoral* left his seat and descended to feel the ground with his hands, hoping to come across a rut, some wheel-mark that would indicate the track; but his searches were in vain, and, most reluctantly, he found himself obliged to inform us that we were lost, having no idea himself where he was: he could not imagine why, having covered the same route twenty times, and could reach Córdoba with his eyes shut. This all seemed rather suspicious, and it occurred to us that we were perhaps exposed to being ambushed. The situation was otherwise unpleasant; we found ourselves caught at night in a deserted countryside, far from any human aid, in the midst of a region renowned for containing more thieves than all the rest of Spain combined. These reflections undoubtedly also occurred to the mining employee and his friend, the former associate of José Maria, who must have been knowledgeable in such matters, because they loaded their rifles with bullets, silently, and did the same with two others in the wagon, handing us one each without saying a word, which was most eloquent. In this way, the *mayoral* remained unarmed, and, if we made contact with the bandits, he would find himself reduced to powerlessness. However, after wandering at random for two or three hours, we saw a light far off, gleaming beneath the branches like a glowworm; we immediately made it our pole-star, and headed towards it as directly as possible, at risk of overturning with every yard. Sometimes a crevice in the ground hid it from view, and all of nature seemed extinguished; then the light reappeared, and our hopes with it. Finally, we were close enough to recognise the window of a farm, that being the heaven from which our star shone, in the form of a copper lamp. Ox-carts and agricultural implements scattered, here and there, reassured us utterly, because we might easily have attained some haunt of cutthroats, some *posada de barateros*. The dogs, having noticed our presence, were barking with the full force of their lungs, so that the whole farm was soon in uproar. The occupants emerged, rifles in hand, to identify the cause of this night-time alarm, and, having seen that we were only honest travellers gone astray, they politely suggested that we enter the farm to rest.

It was these good folks' supper time. A wrinkled, tanned old woman, somewhat mummified, whose skin was creased at every joint like a hussar's boot, was preparing a gigantic *gazpacho* in a red clay bowl. Five or six greyhounds of the tallest size, slender, broad-

chested, exquisitely groomed, and worthy of a royal pack, followed the movements of the old woman with the most studious attention and the deepest gaze of melancholy longing one can imagine. But the delicious treat was not for them; in Andalusia, it is men and not dogs who eat soup made from bread-crusts soaked in water. Various cats, the absence of whose ears and tails, for in Spain they are docked of these ornamental superfluities, gave them the look of Japanese chimeras, also gazed, but from a greater distance, at these appetizing preparations. A bowl of the said *gazpacho*, two slices of our own ham, and a few bunches of grapes the colour of amber, made our supper, for which we were obliged to compete with the invasive familiarities of the greyhounds, who, under the pretext of licking us, literally tore the meat from our mouths. We rose, and ate standing, plate in hand; but the devilish creatures stood on their hind legs, placed their front legs on our shoulders, and so found themselves level with the coveted morsels. If they failed to steal them, they gave them at least two or three licks of the tongue, thus releasing the first, most delicate flavours. These greyhounds seemed to be descended directly from a famous dog, one whose history does not however appear in Cervantes' writings. That illustrious animal held the role of washer-of-dishes in a Spanish *fonda*, and, when the servant was reproached because the plates were not quite clean, she swore by the great gods that they had nevertheless been washed by seven streams of water, *por siete aquas*. *Siete Aquas* was the name of the dog, so designated because he licked the dishes so closely one would have said they had been washed seven times; he must have neglected to do so that day. The greyhounds on the farm were certainly of that same breed.

We were loaned a young lad as our guide who knew the paths perfectly, and led us without incident to Écija, at which we arrived around ten in the morning.

The entrance to Écija is quite picturesque; you arrive over a bridge at the start of which rises an entry-arch, of triumphant effect. The bridge spans a river which is none other than Granada's Genil, and which is delayed by the ruins of ancient arches, and the dams for the water-mills; once across, you emerge into a square planted with trees, and decorated with two monuments in a baroque style. One is a statue of the Holy Virgin gilded and set on a column whose hollow base forms a kind of chapel, embellished with tubs of artificial flowers, ex-*votos*, wreaths woven of strips of reed, and all the trinkets of southern devotion. The other is a gigantic Saint Christopher, also of gilded metal, his hand resting on a palm-tree staff proportionate to his size, carrying on his shoulder, with a most prodigious contraction of muscles and an effort sufficient to lift a house, a tiny Baby Jesus of charming delicacy and appeal. This colossus, attributed to the Florentine sculptor Pietro Torrigiano who broke and crushed Michelangelo's nose with his fist, is perched on a column of Solomonic order (this is the name given here to such twisted pillars), of soft pink granite, whose spiral terminates midway in volutes and extravagant florets. I have a great liking for statues carved in this way; they produce a finer effect, and can be viewed from further off, to their advantage. Ordinary bases are massive and flat-sided, robbing the figures they support of lightness.

Écija, although absent from the tourist itinerary, and generally little known, is nevertheless a most interesting town, with a specific and original appearance. The bell-towers which form the most acute angles of its outline are neither Byzantine, Gothic, nor Renaissance; they are Chinese, or rather Japanese; you might take them for the turrets of some *Miao* temple dedicated

to Confucius, Buddha, or Fu, because they are entirely clad with porcelain or earthenware tiles coloured in the brightest hues, or with green and white glazed tiles arranged in a checkerboard pattern, granting them the strangest aspect in the world. The rest of the architecture is no less chimerical, the love of over-elaboration being taken to its limits. It is nothing but gilt, incrustations, breccias and coloured marbles like crumpled fabric, nothing but garlands of flowers, love-knots, swollen-cheeked angels, and all this illuminated, painted, with a crazed richness, and in sublime bad taste.

The *Calle de los Cabelleros*, where the nobility live, and which contains the most beautiful mansions, is truly something wondrous in its way; it is hard to believe one is in a real street, amidst houses inhabited by real beings. Balconies, railings, friezes, nothing is straight, all twists and turns, blossoms in florets, volutes, and chicory-leaves. You cannot find a square inch that is not guillochéd, scalloped, gilded, embroidered, or painted; all that the genre known to us by the name *rococo* has created of the inharmonious and disordered, with a richness and accumulated wealth of display that good French taste, even in the worst eras, has ever known how to avoid. The presence of this Dutch-Chinese pompadour style in Andalusia amuses and surprises. The run-of-the-mill houses are plastered with lime, of a dazzling whiteness which stands out against the dark azure of the sky in a wondrous manner, and with their flat roofs, narrow windows and *miradores*, they made me dream of Africa, an idea prompted equally by the temperature of thirty-seven degrees Centigrade, usual for the place in 'cool' summers. Écija is known as Andalusia's 'oven', and never has an epithet been better deserved: located on low ground, it is surrounded by sandy hills which shelter it from the wind, and reflect the sun's rays like concentric mirrors. We lived there in the state of being fried; which did not prevent us from valiantly traversing it, in every direction, while waiting for lunch. The *Plaza Mayor* presents a very original look with its pillared houses, its rows of windows, its arcades and its projecting balconies.

Our *parador* was quite comfortable, and we were served an almost decent meal which we savoured with a sensuality that was quite appropriate after so many deprivations. A long snooze in a large, well-shuttered, dark, moist room completed our rest, and when, at around three o'clock, we climbed back into the wagon, we appeared serene and completely resigned.

The road from Écija to La Carlota, where we were to sleep, crosses uninteresting country, with an arid and dusty appearance, or at least the season made it appear so, and has left scant trace in my memory. From far to near, a few olive trees and a few clumps of holm-oaks appeared, while aloes showed their bluish foliage to characteristic effect. The mine-employee's dog (for we possessed quadrupeds in our menagerie, not counting the children) raised a few partridges, two or three of which were downed by my travelling companion. It was the most remarkable incident of that stage of our journey.

La Carlota, at which we halted for the night, is an unimportant hamlet. The inn occupies a former monastery which had first been transformed into a barracks, as occurs almost always in times of revolution, military life being that which is most easily transferred to and embedded in buildings arranged for monastic life. Long arcaded cloisters formed a covered gallery on all four sides of the courtyards. In the midst of one of them yawned the black mouth of an enormous, and very deep well, which promised the delightful treat of very clear, very cold

water. Leaning over the edge, I could see that the interior was lined with the most beautiful green plants which had grown in the gaps between the stones. To find some greenery and some freshness, it was indeed necessary to gaze into the wells, since the heat was such one might have believed it produced by a nearby fire. The temperature inside a greenhouse where tropical vegetation is grown alone gives some idea of the heat. The very air burned, and the gusts of wind seemed to carry igneous molecules. I tried to take a walk outside in the village, but the heat, as if from an oven, that greeted me at the door made me retreat. Our supper consisted of jointed chicken lying higgledy-piggledy on a layer of rice, which was as seasoned with saffron as a Turkish pilau, and a salad (*ensalada*) of green leaves swimming in a flood of vinegary water, starred here and there by a few dollops of oil undoubtedly stolen from the lamp. This sumptuous meal finished, we were shown to our rooms, which were already so occupied that we ended the night in the midst of the courtyard, in our coats, an overturned chair serving for a pillow. There, at least, we were only exposed to mosquitoes; by donning gloves and veiling our faces with a scarf, we escaped with no more than five or six insect bites. It was merely painful, rather than disgusting.

Our hosts possessed slightly sinister faces; but for a long time now we had ceased to pay attention to such things, accustomed as we were to more or less forbidding visages. A fragment of their conversation that we overheard revealed that their feelings matched their looks. They asked the *escopetero*, thinking that we understood no Spanish, if there was not an ambush prepared for us a few leagues further on. Our former associate of José Maria replied, with a perfectly noble and majestic air: 'I will not allow it, since these young gentlemen are in my company; moreover, they anticipated being robbed, and carry with them only an amount strictly necessary for the journey, their money being in bills-of-exchange to be drawn in Seville. Besides, they are both tall and strong; as for the mining employee, he is my *friend*, and there are four rifles in the wagon.' This persuasive reasoning convinced our host and his acolytes, who on this occasion were content with the ordinary means of robbery permitted to innkeepers in all countries.

Despite all the dreadful tales of brigands reported by travellers and natives of the country, our adventures were limited to this, the most dramatic incident of our long wandering through regions reputed to be the most dangerous in Spain, at a time certainly favourable to that kind of encounter; the Spanish brigand was for us a purely chimerical being, an abstraction, a simple poetic conceit. We never encountered the shadow of a *trabuco*, and regarded the idea of thieves with an incredulity equal at least to that of the young English gentleman whose story Prosper Mérimée tells, who, having fallen into the hands of brigands who robbed him, persisted in seeing in them only extras from some melodrama posted there to perform for him.

We left La Carlota at about three in the afternoon, and in the evening lodged in a wretched gypsy hut, the roof of which was constructed simply of branches cut and laid, like a kind of coarse thatch, over transverse poles. After drinking a few glasses of water, I lay down quietly in front of the door, on the breast of our common mother Earth, and, gazing at the azure abyss of the sky in which large stars seemed to hover like swarms of golden bees, stars whose glittering formed a luminous haze similar to that produced around their bodies by the swiftly-beating, and thus invisible wings of dragonflies, it did not take me long to fall into a deep sleep,

as though I were lying on the softest bed in the world. However, I had only a stone wrapped in my cloak for a pillow, while a few decent-sized pebbles imprinted themselves on the hollow of my back. Never did a more beautiful and serene night swathe the globe in its blue velvet mantle. Around midnight, the wagon set out again and, when dawn broke, we found ourselves no more than half a league from Córdoba.

One might believe, perhaps, from the description of these halts and stages, that a vast distance separates Córdoba from Málaga, and that we travelled far in a journey which lasted no less than four and a half days. The distance is only about twenty Spanish, or thirty French, leagues; but the wagon was heavily loaded, the road abominable, with no relays available to change mules. Add to this the intolerable heat which would have suffocated both animals and people, if we had ventured forth during the hours when the sun was at full strength. However, the slow and painful journey left us with solid memories; excessive speed when travelling takes away all the charm of the route: you are borne away as if in a whirlwind, without having time to see anything. If you arrive almost immediately, you may as well stay at home. For me, the pleasure of a journey is in travelling not in arriving.

A bridge over the Guadalquivir, the river being fairly wide at that point, serves as an entrance to Córdoba on the Écija side. Nearby can be seen the ruined ancient arches of an Arab aqueduct. The bridgehead is defended by a large square tower, crenellated, and supported by casemates of more recent construction. The city gates were not yet open; a crowd of ox-carts, the oxen majestically crowned with yellow and red esparto-grass tiaras; mules and white donkeys loaded with chopped straw; and countrymen in sugar-loaf hats, dressed in brown wool *capas* descending in front and behind like a priest's cope, the head inserted through a hole made in the centre of the fabric, waited for the set hour with the phlegm and patience common to Spaniards, who never seem in a hurry. Such a gathering at a Paris barrier would have caused a dreadful uproar, and would have swelled to invective and insult; there was no other sound here than the tinkle of a copper bell on some mule's collar, or the silvery ringing of the bell or a leading donkey changing position or resting his head on the neck of a long-eared colleague.

We profited from the pause to examine the interior view of Córdoba at leisure. A beautiful gate, in the style of a triumphal arch of Ionic order, and of such excellent taste that one might have believed it to be Roman, formed a most majestic entrance to the city of the Caliphs, though I would have preferred one of those beautiful Moorish archways flared to a heart-shape, such as we saw in Granada. The mosque-cathedral rose above the walls and roofs of the city more like a citadel than a temple, with its high walls denticulated with Arab battlements, and its heavy Catholic dome squatting on an oriental base. It must be confessed that the walls are painted a quite abominable yellow. Without being one of those people who love mouldy, leprous and blackened buildings, I have a particular horror of that infamous pumpkin hue which so charms priests, factory-owners, and religious chapters everywhere, since they never fail to tarnish in this way all the marvellous cathedrals delivered to them. Buildings must be painted and always have been, even in ancient, and purer, times; but a better choice for the nature and hue of their coating is needed.

At last, the doors were opened, and we experienced the necessary preamble of being inspected quite closely by the customs officers, after which we were free to head, with our trunks, for the nearest *parador*.

Córdoba has a more African appearance than any other city in Andalusia; its streets or rather its alleyways, whose tumultuous pavements resemble the beds of dry torrents, strewn all over with bits of straw that escape the donkeys' loads, in no way recall the manners and habits of Europe. One walks there between endless chalk-coloured walls, with sparse windows latticed with grilles and iron-bars, and only encounters some beggar with a forbidding face, some devotee hooded in black, or some *majo* passing by with the speed of lightning, on his brown horse with a white harness, striking thousands of sparks from the paving stones. The Moors, if they could return, would have little to do on resettling there. The idea that one might have previously formed, when thinking of Córdoba, that of a city with Gothic houses and open-work spires, is entirely false. The universal use of lime-plaster gives a uniform colour to all monuments, fills the wrinkles of their architecture, erases the stone-embroidery and prevents one determining their age. Thanks to the use of lime, a wall made a hundred years ago can scarcely be distinguished from one completed yesterday. Córdoba, once the centre of Arab civilisation, is today nothing more than a cluster of small white houses from which spring a few Indian fig-trees with their metallic greenery, and a few palm-trees with their blooming carapaces of foliage, houses which are divided into islands by narrow corridors through which two mules would have difficulty passing abreast. Life seems to have withdrawn from this vast body, formerly animated by the active circulation of Moorish blood; now all that remains is its bleached and charred skeleton. But Córdoba has its mosque, a unique form of architecture, and completely new even to travellers who have already had opportunity to admire the marvels of Arab architecture in Granada or Seville.

Despite its Moorish appearance, Córdoba is nevertheless a Christian city, and placed under the special protection of the Archangel Raphael. From the balcony of our *parador*, we saw a rather odd monument raised in honour of that celestial patron; one which we wished to examine more closely. The Archangel Raphael, from the top of his column, sword in hand, wings outstretched, glittering with gilt, seemed a sentinel eternally watching over the city entrusted to his guard. The column is made of grey granite with a Corinthian capital of gilded bronze, and rests on a small tower or lantern of pink granite, the base of which is formed by rockeries on which are grouped a horse, a palm-tree, a lion and a most fantastic sea-monster; four allegorical statues complete the decoration. Inside the base is enshrined the coffin of Bishop Pascual, a character famous for his piety and his devotion to the holy archangel.

On a cartouche one may read the following inscription:

Yo te juro

I swear to you

por

by

Jesu Christo cruzificado

the crucified Jesus Christ

Que soi Rafael angel a quien

That I am the Archangel Rafael to whom

Dios tiene puesto por guarda

God gave the power to protect

de esta ciudad

this city

But, how do we know, you may ask, that the Archangel Raphael was the actual patron of this ancient city of Abd al-Rahman I, he and not another? I will reply by referring to a romance or lament printed, by permission, in Córdoba, by Don Raphael Garcia Rodriguez, on Calle de la Librería (*formerly Calle de los Libreros, and now Diario de Córdoba*). This precious document bears at the head a woodcut vignette representing the archangel with open wings, a halo around his head, his travelling staff and his emblematic fish in his left hand, majestically encamped between two glorious vases of hyacinths or peonies, the whole accompanied by an inscription thus conceived: *Verdadera Relación y Curioso Romance del Señor San Rafael: Arcángel y Abogado de la peste y Custodio de la Ciudad de Córdoba (True Relation and Curious Legend of the Lord Saint Raphael, Archangel, Advocate during the plague, and Guardian of the city of Córdoba)*.)

It tells of how the blessed archangel appeared to Don Andrés Roelas, gentleman and priest of Córdoba, and addressed him, in his room, in a speech, the first sentence of which is almost exactly the one engraved on the statue's column. This speech, which the writers of legend have preserved, lasted more than an hour and a half, the priest and the archangel seated face to face, each on a chair. This apparition took place on the seventh of May in the year of Christ 1578, and it is to preserve the memory of this that the monument was erected.

An esplanade surrounded by railings extends all around this construction and allows you to contemplate it from all sides. Statues, thus placed, have something elegant and slender about them which pleases me very much, and which admirably offsets the bareness of a terrace, public square or overly-large courtyard. The statuette placed on a porphyry column, in the courtyard of the Palais des Beaux-Arts, in Paris, may give some slight idea of the advantage that could be gained, in the way of ornamentation, by this manner of placing such figures, which thereby take on a monumental aspect they would otherwise lack. This thought had already occurred to me, in front of the Blessed Virgin, and the Saint Christopher, of Écija.

The exterior of the cathedral appealed to us but little, and we were afraid of being cruelly disenchanted. Those lines of Victor Hugo's:

Cordoue aux maisons vieilles

Córdoba with its old mansions, many in number,

A sa mosquée, où l'œil se perd dans les merveilles...

Has its mosque, where the traveller's gaze is lost in wonder…

appeared too flattering to us, in advance of the fact, yet we were soon convinced that they were only just.

It was Caliph Abd al-Rahman I who laid the foundations of the Mosque of Córdoba (*the Mezquita*), towards the end of the eighth century; the work was carried out with such vigour that the construction was finished at the beginning of the ninth: twenty-one years were enough to complete the gigantic building! When we think that a thousand years ago, a work so admirable and of such colossal proportions was executed in such a short time by a people who later fell into the most savage barbarism, the mind is astonished and refuses to believe in the so-called doctrines of progress that are current today; we even feel tempted to side with the opposite opinion when we visit countries formerly occupied by vanished civilisations. For my part, I have always greatly regretted, as I have said before, that the Moors did not remain masters of Spain, which certainly was the loser by their expulsion. Under their domination, if we are to believe the exaggerated popular legends, so gravely collected by historians, Córdoba possessed two hundred thousand houses, eighty thousand palaces and nine hundred baths; and its suburbs comprised twelve thousand villages. Now it has less than forty thousand inhabitants, and seems almost deserted.

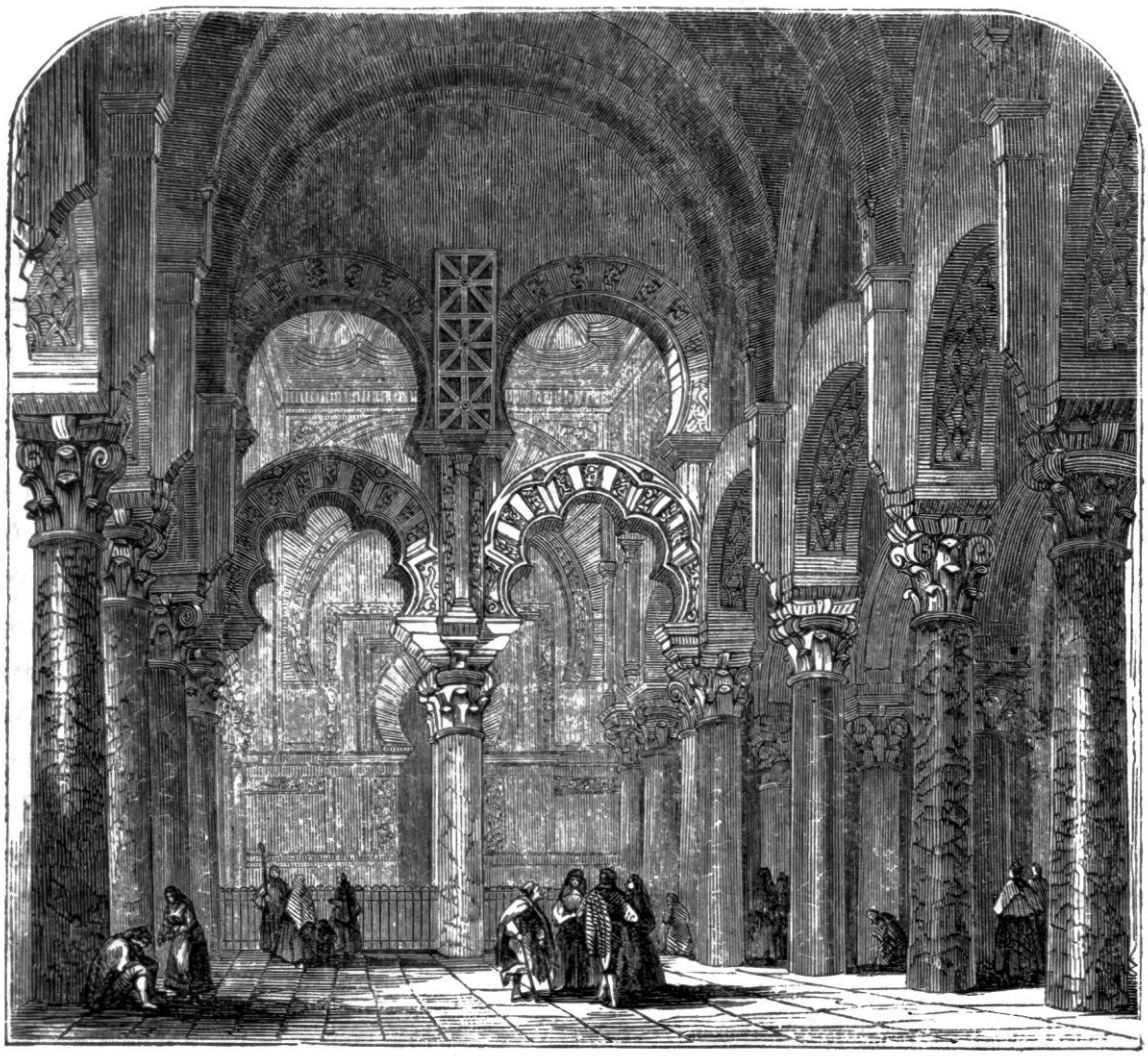
Abd al-Rahman I wished to make the Mosque of Córdoba a destination for pilgrimage, a Western Mecca, the foremost temple of Islam after that in Medina in which the body of the prophet rests. I have not yet seen the *kasbah* of Mecca, but I doubt whether it equals in magnificence and extent the Spanish mosque. One of the originals of the Koran was once kept there, and, an even more precious relic, a bone from Muhammad's arm.

The common folk even claim that the Sultan of Constantinople still pays tribute to the King of Spain so that Mass is not said in a place especially dedicated to the prophet. This chapel is ironically called by the devotees the *Zancarron*, a term of contempt signifying 'the jaw of an ass, or a rotten carcass.'

The Mezquita is pierced by seven doors which are less than monumental, since its very construction is opposed to such ideas, prohibiting the majestic portal imperiously demanded by the sacramental architecture of Catholic cathedrals, and nothing of its exterior prepares you for the admirable sight that awaits within. We will, if you please, pass through the *Patio de los Naranjos*, an immense and magnificent courtyard planted with monstrous orange trees, and contemporary with the Moorish kings, surrounded by long arcaded galleries paved with marble, and on one side of which stands a bell-tower in mediocre taste, a clumsy imitation of the Giralda tower in Seville, as we were able to see later. Beneath the pavement of this courtyard, it is said, there is an immense cistern. In the days of the Umayyads, one entered the mosque itself on the same level as the *Patio de los Naranjos*, because the dreadful wall which blocks the view from without was only built later.

The best idea that we can give of this strange building is to say that it resembles a large esplanade enclosed by walls, and planted with rows of columns at intervals. The esplanade is four hundred and twenty feet wide and four hundred and forty long. The columns number eight hundred and sixty; it is said to cover only half of the original mosque.

The impression one experiences on entering this ancient sanctuary of Islam is indefinable and is unconnected with the emotions that architecture ordinarily causes: it seems more as if one is walking through a roofed forest than a building; whichever way one turns, the eye wanders among avenues of columns which extend and intersect as far as the eye can see, much like marble vegetation springing spontaneously from the ground; the mysterious half-light that reigns in this forest further adds to the illusion. There are nineteen arcades width-wise, thirty-six lengthwise, but the openings to the transverse arcades are much smaller. Each nave is formed of two rows of superimposed arches, which appear to cross and intertwine like ribbons, producing the strangest effect. The columns, all of a piece, are barely more than ten to twelve feet high topped by capitals of an Arabian-Corinthian style full of strength and elegance, which recalls the palm-tree of Africa rather than the acanthus of Greece. They are made of rare marble, porphyry, jasper, green and purple breccia, and other precious materials; there are even some ancient ones which came, it is claimed, from the ruins of an ancient temple of Janus. Thus, three religions' rites are associated with the place. Of those three religions, one has disappeared irrevocably into the abyss of the past with the civilisation it represented; the second has been driven from Europe, where only one foot remains planted, into the abyss of eastern barbarism; the third, having reached its apogee, undermined by the critical spirit, weakens day by day, even in the countries where it once reigned sovereign and absolute; and perhaps the old mosque of Abd al-Rahman will last long enough to see yet a fourth system of belief arise to dwell in the shadow of its arches, and celebrate a new god with other forms and other rites, or rather a fresh prophet, since the god never changes.



Mosque of Cordova

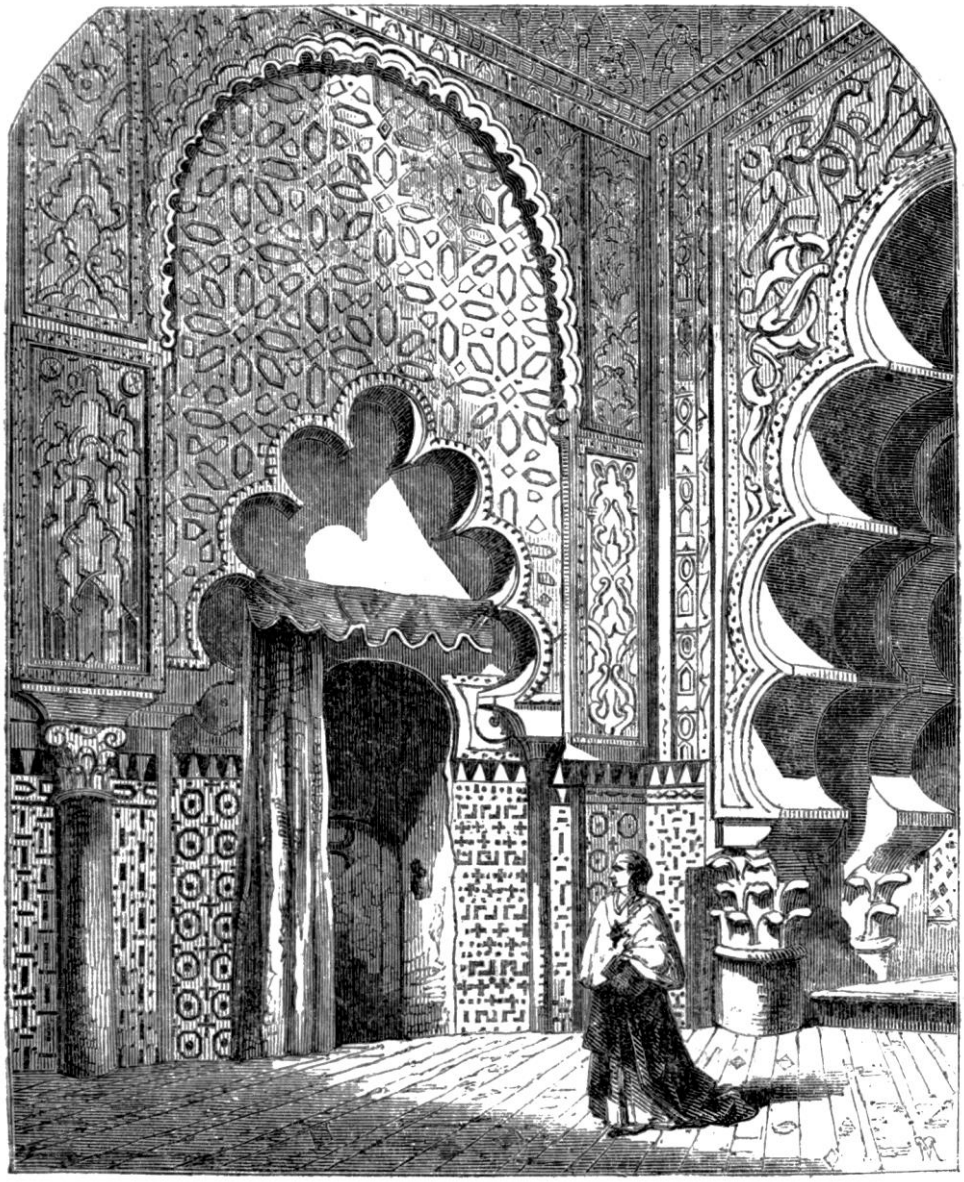
In the days of the Caliphs, eight hundred silver lamps filled with aromatic oils lit these long naves, making the porphyry and polished jasper of the columns gleam, raising scintillations of light from the golden stars of the ceilings and, drawing from the shadows mosaics of crystal and quotations from the Koran intertwined with arabesques and flowers. Among these lamps were the bells of Santiago de Compostela, conquered by the Moors; upended, and suspended from the vault with silver chains, they illuminated the temple of Allah and his prophet, astonished at having become Muslim lamps rather than the Catholic bells they once were. Our gaze then played freely through the long colonnades and one could view, from the rear of the temple, the orange-trees in flower and the fountains of the *patio* gushing forth a torrent of light made even more dazzling by the contrast with the semi-darkness of the interior. Sadly, the magnificent perspective is obstructed today by the Catholic church, an enormous mass buried heavily at the heart of the Arab mosque. Altarpieces, chapels, and sacristies complicate and destroy the general symmetry. This parasitic church, a monstrous mushroom of stone, an architectural wart borne on the back of the Arab building, was built to the designs

of Hernán Ruiz, and is not without merit in itself; we might even admire it elsewhere, but it is forever regrettable that it occupies the space it does. It was built, despite the resistance of the *ayuntamiento*, by the chapter, due to an unexpected command from Emperor Charles V, who had never seen the mosque. He said, after visiting it some few years later: 'If I had known, I would never have allowed the ancient work to be touched: you have built what can be seen everywhere, in a place which can be seen nowhere else.' This just reproach made the members of the chapter bow their heads, but the damage was done. In the choir one can admire an immense work of carpentry, stalls carved from solid mahogany and representing subjects from the Old Testament, the work of Don Pedro Duque Cornejo, who spent ten years of his life on this prodigious task, as one can read on the tomb of the poor artist, lying on a slab a few steps from his work. Speaking of tombs, we noticed a rather singular one, embedded in the wall; it was shaped like a trunk and closed with three padlocks. How will the corpse, locked up so carefully, open the stone locks of its coffin on the day of the Last Judgment; how will it find the keys in the midst of the general disorder?

Until the mid-eighteenth century, the old ceiling of Abd al-Rahman's day, made of cedar and larch wood, was preserved with its coffers, its soffits, its diamonds and all its oriental magnificence; it was replaced by vaulting, and half-domes, in mediocre taste. The old paving has disappeared under brick which has raised the level of the floor, submerged the shafts of the pillars, and made the general defects, of a building too low for its size, even more apparent.

All this desecration does not prevent the mosque of Córdoba from remaining one of the most marvellous monuments in the world; while, as if to make us feel the mutilation of the rest more deeply, a portion, which is called the *Mihrab*, has been preserved, as if by a miracle, in its original integrity.

The carved and gilded wooden ceiling with its *media-naranja* studded with stars, the pierced windows furnished with grilles which gently filter the daylight, the arcade of trefoil columns, the mosaics of coloured glass, the verses from the Koran in letters of gleaming old, which wind among the most gracefully complex ornaments and arabesques, form a whole of a richness, beauty, and magical elegance, the equivalent of which is only found in the *Thousand and One Nights*, and which yields nothing to any art. Never were lines better chosen, colours better combined: even the Gothic artists, in their finest caprices, in their most precious goldsmith's-work, betray something unhealthy, emaciated, sickly, which smacks of barbarism and the childhood of art. The architecture of the *Mihrab*, on the contrary, shows a civilisation at its highest point of development, an artistry at its peak; beyond which lies only decadence. Proportion, harmony, richness and grace, nothing is lacking. From this chapel, one enters a small, excessively-decorated sanctuary, the ceiling of which is made of a single block of marble hollowed out like a conch-shell and carved with infinite delicacy. This was probably the holy of holies, the formidable and sacred place where the presence of Allah seemed more perceptible than elsewhere.



Chapel of the Mosque of Cordova

Another chapel, called the *capilla de los reyes moros (la capilla real)*, where the Caliphs said their prayers, while separated from the crowd of believers, also offers curious and charming details: but it lacks the radiance of the *Mihrab*, its colours having vanished under an ignoble coat of white.

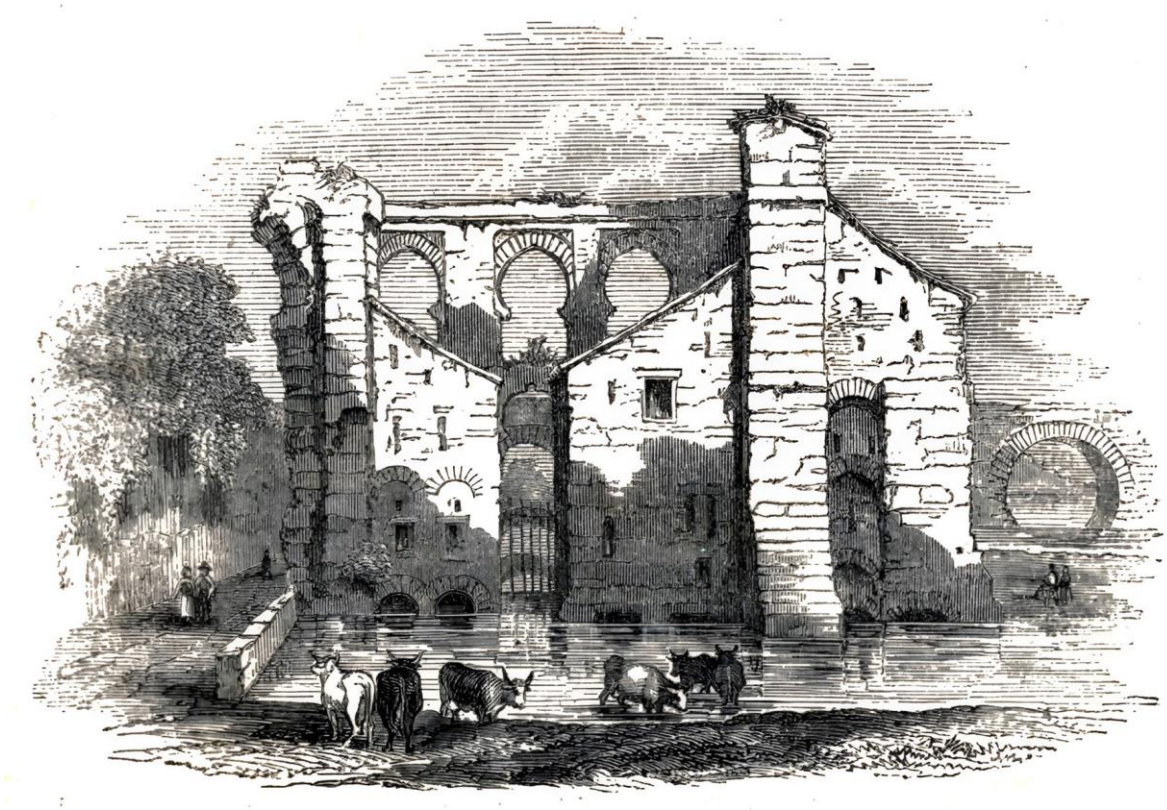
The sacristies are full of treasure: there are monstrances sparkling with precious stones, silver shrines of enormous weight and incredible workmanship, as large as small cathedrals, candlesticks, golden crucifixes, copes embroidered with pearls: a luxury more than royal and completely Asian.

As we were about to leave, the verger who served as our guide led us, with an air of mystery, to a dark corner, and pointed out, as a supreme curiosity, a crucifix which it is claimed

was carved with a fingernail by a Christian prisoner, on a column of porphyry at the foot of which he was chained. To bear witness to the authenticity of the tale, he showed us the statue of the poor captive, a few yards away. Without being more Voltairean than needed as regards legend, I cannot help but think that in the past they had devilishly hard nails, or that porphyry was then extremely soft. This crucifix is not the only one; there is a second one on another column, but much less well-shaped. The verger also showed us an enormous ivory tusk suspended from the centre of a dome by iron chains, like the hunting-trophy of some Saracen giant, some Nimrod from a vanished world; this tusk is said to belong to one of the elephants used to bear the materials during the construction of the mosque. Pleased by his explanation and his complacency, we gave him a few coins, a generosity which seemed to greatly displease the former friend of José Maria, who had accompanied us, and extracted from him this somewhat heretical sentence: 'Would it not have been better to give the money to a brave bandit rather than a wicked sacristan?'

Leaving the cathedral, we stopped for a few moments in front of a pretty Gothic portal which serves as the facade of the Foundling Hospital. One might admire it anywhere else, but it is eclipsed there by its wondrous neighbour.

Having seen the cathedral, there was nothing to keep us in Córdoba, where our visit had not proved the most stimulating ever. The only entertainment a foreigner can enjoy there is to go swimming in the Guadalquivir, or undergo a shave in one of the numerous barber shops which surround the mosque, an operation which is accomplished with great dexterity, using an enormous razor, its little brother perched on the back of the large oak armchair where you are seated.



Moorish Mill, Cordova

The heat was intolerable, as it was augmented by flames. The harvest had been completed not long before, and it is the custom in Andalusia to burn the stubble once the sheaves have been gathered, so that the ash fertilises the earth. The countryside was ablaze for three or four leagues around, and the wind, which scorched its wings in passing over this fiery ocean, brought us blasts of hot air like those which escape from the mouths of stoves: we were in the position of those scorpions that children surround with a circle of shavings which they then set on fire, and which are forced to make a desperate exit, or commit suicide by turning their sting on themselves. We preferred the former solution.

The wagon in which we had come brought us back by the same route to Écija, where we sought a two-wheeler to take us to Seville. The driver, having viewed us both, thought us too big, strong and heavy to accept, and made all kinds of difficulties. Our trunks were, he said, so excessively heavy that it would take four men to lift them, and they would instantly damage his carriage. We countered this last objection with the greatest of ease by placing the trunks thus slandered on the rear of the carriage ourselves. The fellow having no more objections to make, at last decided to leave.

Flat or vaguely undulating land, planted with olive-trees, whose grey colour is faded further by dust, and sandy steppes with rounded blackish lumps of vegetation here and there, like the galls on leaves, these are the only objects which offer themselves to one’s gaze for several leagues.

At La Luisiana, the entire population were stretched out in front of their doors snoring beneath the stars. Our carriage roused rows of sleepers who leant against the walls, grumbling, and lavishing on us all the richness of Andalusian vocabulary. We supped in a rather ill-looking *posada*, stocked with more guns and blunderbusses than household utensils. Monstrous dogs stubbornly followed our every movement, seemingly awaiting the signal before tearing us apart with their teeth. The hostess seemed most surprised at the calm voracity with which we dispatched our tomato omelette. She seemed to find the meal superfluous, and to regret serving food that would be of no benefit to us. However, despite the sinister appearance of the place, our throats were not slit, and they had the clemency to allow us to continue our journey.

We encountered sandier and sandier ground, into which the wheels of the carriage sank up to their hubs. We now understood why our driver had been so concerned with our specific gravity. To relieve the horse, we dismounted and, around midnight, after following a path which climbed, in a zigzag, the steep planes of a mountain, we arrived at Carmona, where our bed awaited. Lime-kilns cast long reddish reflections on this rock-strewn ramp producing Rembrandt-like effects of admirable power and picturesqueness.

The room we were given was decorated with badly-coloured lithographs representing different episodes of our July Revolution of 1830, the storming of the Hôtel de Ville, etc. This pleased us, and almost moved us: it was like a little piece of France framed and hanging on the wall. Carmona, which we barely had time to look at as we clambered back into the carriage, is a small town as white as fresh cream, to which the campaniles and towers of an old convent (*Santa Clara*) of Carmelite nuns give a rather picturesque appearance: that is all there is to say concerning the place.

From Carmona onwards, the succulents, cacti and aloes, which had abandoned us, reappeared bristlier and more ferocious than ever. The landscape was less bare, less arid, more rugged, the heat had lost a little of its intensity. Soon we reached Alcalá de los Panaderos (*Alcalá of the Bakers, now Alcalá de Guadaíra*), famous for the excellence of its bread, as its name indicates, and its bullfights involving *novillos* (young bullocks), attended by *aficionados* from Seville during the holidays. Alcalá de los Panaderos is well-situated at the bottom of a small valley through which a river (the *Guadaíra*) winds; it is sheltered by a hill slope, on which the ruins of an ancient Moorish palace still stand. We were approaching Seville. Indeed, the Giralda, the cathedral bell-tower, soon appeared on the horizon, first its windowed lantern was revealed, then its square tower; a few hours later we passed under the Puerta de Carmona (*no longer extant*), whose arch framed a background of dusty light where wagons, donkeys, mules and ox-carts crossed paths, amidst waves of golden vapour, some arriving, the others departing. A superb aqueduct (*Caños de Carmona*), of Roman appearance, raised its stone arcades to the left of the road; on the right the houses grew closer and closer together; we were in Seville.

Part XIV: Seville – La Cristina – La Torre del Oro – Italica – The Cathedral – La Giralda – El Polho Sevillano – La Caridad and Don Juan de Marana

There is a Spanish proverb about Seville which is often cited:

Quien no ha vista a Sevilla
Whoever has not seen Seville
No ha vista a maravilla.
Has wonders awaiting them still.

I admit, in all humility, that this proverb would seem more accurate if applied to Toledo or Granada than to Seville, where we found nothing especially wondrous, except the cathedral.

Seville is sited on the banks of the Guadalquivir, in a large plain, and this is where its name Hispalis came from, which means 'flat ground' in Carthaginian, if we are to believe the scholars Benito Arias Montano and Samuel Bochart. It is a vast, diffuse city, wholly modern, cheerful, smiling, lively, and must indeed seem delightful to the Spaniards. A greater contrast to Córdoba one could not find. Córdoba is a dead city, an ossuary of houses, an open-air catacomb, over which abandonment sifts its whitish dust; the rare inhabitants who show themselves at the street-corners seem like apparitions who've misread the time. Seville, on the contrary, has all the energy and buzz of life: a maddened cloud of noise hovers over it at every instant of the day; Seville barely has time to rest. Yesterday occupies it little, tomorrow even less, it is all of the moment; memory and hope are the recourse of unhappy folk, while Seville is happy: it lives to play, while its sister, Córdoba, seems to dream gravely, in silence and solitude, of Abd al-Rahman, its great captain, and all its vanished splendours, flaming beacons lost in the night, of which only the ashes remain.

To the great disappointment of travellers and antiquarians, whitewash reigns supreme in Seville; the houses don their shirts of lime three or four times a year, which gives them an air of neatness and cleanliness, but conceals from the investigator's eye the remains of those Arab and Gothic sculptures which formerly decorated them. Nothing could be less varied than this network of streets, where the eye sees only two hues: the indigo of the sky, and the chalk white of the walls, against which the azure shadows of the neighbouring buildings are silhouetted, for in hot countries shadows are always blue and not grey, so that objects seem illuminated on one side by moonlight and on the other by the sun's rays; however, the absence of any dark tints produces a city full of cheerfulness and life. Doors closed by iron-grilles reveal *patios* within, decorated with columns, mosaic paving, fountains, flower tubs, shrubs, and frescoes. As for the exterior architecture, it is nothing remarkable; the height of the buildings rarely exceeds two or three stories, and there are barely a dozen facades of artistic interest. The streets are set with small stones like those in all the towns of Spain, but are lined with pavements of fairly-wide flat stone slabs over which the people progress in file; The pavement is always yielded to women, in the event of an encounter, with that exquisite show of politeness natural to Spaniards even of the lowest class. The women of Seville justify their reputation for

beauty; they almost all look alike, as is common in pure lineages of a marked type: their eyes slope up towards the temples, are fringed with long brown eyelashes, and produce an effect of light and dark unknown in France. When a woman or a young girl passes you by, she lowers her eyelids slowly, then suddenly raises them, grants you a look of unbearable brilliance, then turns her glance about, and lowers her eyelashes again. The Hindu dancer (*bayadère*) Amany, when dancing the Pas des Colombes, can alone give an idea of these incendiary glances which the Orient has bequeathed to Spain; we have no terms to express this manoeuvre of the pupils: the verb *ojear* is missing from our vocabulary. These glances, so bright and abrupt, which almost embarrass the stranger, are of no special significance however, and are focused indifferently on the first object that comes along: a young Andalusian woman will gaze with those passionate eyes at a cart passing by, a dog chasing its tail, or children playing at bullfighting. Compared to theirs, the eyes of the people of the North are dull and empty; therein the sun has failed to leave its reflection.

Pointed canine teeth, which resemble in whiteness those of young Newfoundland dogs, grant something wild and Arabian of extreme originality to the smiles of the young women of Seville. The forehead is high, domed, polished; the nose thin, tending a little to the aquiline; the mouth brightly-tinted. Sadly, the chin sometimes ends in too abrupt a curve, an oval divinely begun. Slightly thin shoulders and arms are the only imperfections that the most demanding of artists could find in the Sevillanas. The fineness of limb, the smallness of the hands and feet, leave nothing to be desired. Without any poetic exaggeration, one could easily find in Seville women whose feet a child could contain in its hand. The Andalusians are very proud of this quality, and wear their shoes accordingly: the similarity between their shoes and Chinese lotus shoes is considerable.

Con primor se calza el pié
A foot that is neatly shod
Digno de regio tapiz
Worthy of a king's carpet

is a verse of praise as frequent in their romances as a complexion of roses and lilies is in ours.

These shoes, usually made of satin, barely cover the toes, and appear to have no sides or back, being trimmed at the heel with a small piece of ribbon of the same colour as the stockings. In our country, a little girl of seven or eight years old would be unable to wear the shoes of a twenty-year-old Andalusian woman. Thus, they never stop making jokes about the feet and shoes of Northern women: such as 'with the shoes a German woman wears to a ball, we'd make a boat for six to sail the Guadalquivir'; or 'a *picadores* wooden stirrups might serve as slippers for Northern ladies', and a thousand other *andaluzades* of this kind. I defended the feet of our Parisian women as best I could, but met only with disbelief. Sadly, the Sevillanas are only Spanish as regards the head and feet, in their mantillas and shoes; dresses in French colours

will soon be in the majority. The men are dressed like fashion plates. Sometimes, however, they wear small white cotton jackets with matching trousers, a red belt and an Andalusian hat; but this is rare, while the costume is also far from picturesque.

It is to the Alameda del Duque (*Alameda de Hércules*), that one goes to breathe some fresh air during the intervals of the theatre, which is close by, and above all to La Cristina, where it is a delight to see the pretty Sevillanas in small groups of three or four, parading about and taking their exercise, between seven and eight in the evening, accompanied by their gallants in attendance or expectation. They have something of a nimble, lively, dashing air, prancing rather than walking. The agility with which their fingers open and close their fans, the brilliance of their gaze, the assurance of their bearing, the undulating suppleness of their waists, gives them a most individual physiognomy. There may be in England, France, or Italy, women of more perfect, more regular beauty, but certainly there are none prettier or more piquant. They possess to a high degree what the Spanish call *sal*. It is something of which it is difficult to give an idea in France, a compound of nonchalance and liveliness, of bold responses and childish manners, a grace, a spiciness, a ragout, as the painters say, which is something separate from beauty, and often preferred to it. Thus, in Spain they say to a woman: 'How salty, *salada,* you are!' No compliment is worth more.

La Cristina (*Jardines de Cristina*) is a superb promenade on the banks of the Guadalquivir, with a salon paved with large slabs, surrounded by an immense white marble bench adorned with an iron back, shaded by oriental plane trees, with a labyrinth, a Chinese pavilion, and planted with all kinds of northern trees: ash, cypress, poplar, willow, which are admired by Andalusians, as palm-trees and aloes might be admired by Parisians.

At the borders of La Cristina, pieces of sulphurous cord wound around poles grant a ready light to smokers, so that one is free from the annoyance of those children bearing hot embers who pursue you while crying: *Fuego!* rendering the Prado in Madrid unbearable.

Nonetheless, to this walk, pleasant though it is, I prefer the river-bank itself, which offers a spectacle ever-lively and constantly renewed. Amidst the current, where the water is deepest, are stationed brigs and commercial schooners, with slender masts and rigging, whose dark silhouettes stand out clearly against the lighter background of the sky. Little vessels pass each other on the river in all directions. Sometimes a boat bears a company of young men and women, who descend the river playing the guitar and singing *coplas* whose rhymes are dispersed by the wild breeze, and whom walkers applaud from the bank. The *Torre del Oro,* a sort of octagonal tower with two upper stories diminishing in size, and crenellated in the Moorish style, whose foot bathes in the Guadalquivir near the landing stage, and which rises into the azure air amidst a forest of masts and ropes, ends the perspective most happily on the near side. This tower, which scholars claim to be of Roman construction, was formerly connected to the Alcazar by sections of wall which were demolished to make way for La Cristina, and supported, in the days of the Moors, one of the ends of the iron chain which barred the river, and whose other end was attached to the masonry buttresses opposite. The name *Torre del Oro* comes, it is said, from the fact that gold brought from America by the Spanish galleons was stored there, under lock and key.

Torre del Oro

We walked there every evening, and watched the sun set behind the suburb of Triana, which is on the other side of the river. A palm-tree of noblest form raised its canopy of leaves into the air as if to greet the declining star. I have always loved palm-trees and am never able to see one without feeling transported into the poetic world of the patriarchs, amidst Oriental enchantments, and Biblical magnificence.

Each evening, as if to reawaken our sense of reality, on returning to Calle de la Sierpe (*Calle Sierpes*), where Don César Bustamente, our host, lived, with his wife, who was Jerez born and had the most beautiful eyes and longest hair in the world, we were accosted by well-dressed fellows, of most decent appearance, with eye-glasses and watch-chains, who asked us to visit, rest and take refreshments with some *muy finas, muy decentes* people, who had charged them with offering an invitation. These honest people seemed very surprised at first by our refusals, and, thinking that we had not understood, went into more explicit detail; and then, on

finding their efforts wasted, contented themselves with offering us cigarettes and sight of 'the Murillo', for Murillo, I must tell you, is the honour and also the bane of Seville. His is the only name pronounced there. The meanest bourgeois, the leanest abbot, owns at least three hundred Murillos of the best kind. What is this murky thing? A Murillo in his vaporous style. And this? A Murillo in his warm style. And this third one? A Murillo in his chillier style. Murillo, like Raphael, has three styles, which means that any type of painting can be attributed to him, and leaves admirable latitude to amateurs who wish to fill their galleries. At every street corner, one comes across the corner of a picture-frame: it is a thirty-franc Murillo, which an Englishman would pay thirty thousand francs for. 'See, sir knight, what design! What colours! It is a *perla*, a *perlita*.' How many pearls have been shown me that were not worth framing! How many 'originals' which were not even good copies! That does not prevent Murillo from being one of the most admired painters in Spain, and the world. But here I have strayed far from the banks of the Guadalquivir; let us return there.

A pontoon bridge joins the two banks, and connects the suburbs to the city. Over this, one passes, in order to visit, near the town of Santiponce, the remains of Italica, birthplace of the emperors Trajan, Hadrian and Theodosius and, it is claimed, the poet Silius Italicus. One can view a Circus, in ruins yet still distinctive in shape. The vaults where ferocious beasts were kept, and the gladiators' stalls, are perfectly recognisable, as are the corridors and stands. All of this is built of cement, with stones embedded in the mixture. The stone cladding was probably pillaged to be used for more modern constructions, since Italica was long Seville's quarry. Some rooms have been cleared, and serve as refuge, during the hours of scorching heat, for herds of bluish pigs which escape, grunting, between the legs of visitors, and are today the only population of the ancient Roman city. The most complete and interesting vestige which remains of all its vanished splendour is a large mosaic, which has been surrounded by a wall, and which represents the Muses and Nereids. When it is wet with water, its colours are still most brilliant, though, through greed, the most precious stones have been removed. We also found, in the rubble, some statue fragments executed in quite good style, and there is no doubt that skilfully-directed excavations would yield important discoveries. Italica is about a league and a half from Seville, and, by means of a carriage, it is an excursion that one can easily cover in an afternoon, unless one is a fanatical antique dealer, and wishes to examine, one by one, every old stone suspected of bearing an inscription.

The *Puerta de Triana* (*not extant*) also has Roman pretensions and takes its name, it is said, from the emperor Trajan. The appearance is monumental; it is of Doric order, with double columns on each side of the arch, and is decorated with the royal arms, and surmounted by a pyramid. It is overseen by its own alcalde (*magistrate*), and serves as a prison for the nobility. The *Puertas del Carbon y del Aceite* (*not extant*) are also worth a look. On the *Puerta de Jerez* (*not extant*) the following inscription can be seen:

Hercules me edifico

Hercules first constructed me

Julio Cesar me cerco

Julius Caesar surrounded me

De muros y torres altas

With walls and high towers; at last

El rey santo me gano

Ferdinand the Saint won me,

Con Garci Pérez de Vargas.

Through Garci Pérez de Vargas.

Seville is encircled by crenellated walls, flanked at intervals by large towers, several of which are in ruins, and surrounded by ditches which are now almost entirely infilled. The walls, which would offer scant defence against modern artillery, produce, with their saw-toothed Arabic battlements, a rather picturesque effect. The city's foundation, like that of every Roman wall and encampment, is attributed, as the verse declares, to Julius Caesar.

In a square neighbouring the *Puerta de Triana*, I saw a most singular spectacle. It was a family of bohemians camped in the open air, constituting a group that would have delighted Jacques Callot. Three sticks arranged in a triangle formed a rustic tripod, which supported, over a large fire scattering tongues of flame and spirals of smoke in the breeze, a pot with strange and dubious contents, such as Goya might have added to his depictions of the cauldrons employed by the witches of Barahona de las Brujas. Near this improvised hearth, sat a swarthy, copper-skinned gypsy-woman with a hook-nosed profile, and naked to the waist, proving her complete disregard for appearances; her long black hair fell in a wayward manner down her thin, yellow back and over her bistre-coloured forehead. Through her disordered locks gleamed large oriental eyes of mother-of-pearl and jet, eyes so mysteriously contemplative that they grant even the most bestial and degraded physiognomy a poetic quality. Around her, there wallowed three or four squealing brats in a most primitive state, black as mulattoes, with pot-bellies and spindly limbs which made them look more like human quadrupeds than bipeds. No little Hottentot was ever more hideously dirty. Her state of nudity is not rare in Spain and shocks no one. We often met beggars whose only clothing was a scrap of blanket, and haphazard fragments of underclothes; in Granada and Málaga, I saw boys of twelve to fourteen years of age wandering the squares, with less covering than Adam when he left the earthly paradise. The suburb of Triana is full of encounters of this kind, since it contains many gitanos, folk who have the most advanced opinions in matters of casual dress; the women cook in the open air, and the men indulge in smuggling, mule-shearing, horse-trading, etc., when they are not perpetrating something worse.

The Cristina, the Guadalquivir, the Alameda de Duque, Italica, and the Moorish Alcazar, undoubtedly arouse one's interest: but the real wonder of Seville is its cathedral, which is indeed a surprising building, even after viewing the cathedrals of Burgos and Toledo, and the Mosque in Córdoba. The chapter which ordered its construction summarized their plan of campaign in this sentence: 'Let us raise a monument that will make posterity think us madmen.' A splendidly broad aim, and well-executed. Having been granted carte-blanche, in this way,

the architects and artists performed wonders, and the canons, to hasten the completion of the building, sacrificed their whole income, reserving only enough to fund the bare necessities required for living. O thrice holy canons! Sleep sweetly beneath your slabs, in the shadow of your beloved cathedral, while your souls bask in paradise, in choir-stalls probably less well sculpted than its own!

The most extravagant, monstrous, prodigiously-sized Hindu pagoda-temples fail to even approach the dimensions of Seville's cathedral. It is a hollow mountain, an upturned valley; Notre-Dame de Paris could walk with its head upright in the central nave, which is of enormous height; pillars as tall as towers, yet appearing slender enough as to make one shudder, rise from the ground, or hang from the vaults like the stalactites in a giant's cave. The four side-naves, though less high, could house churches along with their bell-towers. The *retablo mayor*, or main altar, with its ascending stories, its superposed architecture, its rows of statues filling each level, is an immense construction in itself, rising almost to the vault. The paschal candle, as large as a ship's mast, weighs two thousand and fifty pounds. The bronze candlestick that supports it is akin to the column in the Place Vendôme; it is an imitation of the candlestick in the Temple of Jerusalem, as it appears on the bas-reliefs of the Arch of Titus; everything is of grandiose proportions. Twenty thousand pounds of wax, and an equivalent amount of oil, are burned each year in the cathedral; the wine which is used for the consumption of the holy sacrifice amounts to a fearful quantity of eighteen thousand seven hundred and fifty litres. It is true, though, that five hundred Masses are said every day at the eighty altars! The catafalque which is used during Holy Week, and which is called the *monument*, is nearly a hundred feet high. The organs, of gigantic proportions, look like the basalt colonnades of Fingal's cave, and yet the thunderous hurricanes that escape their pipes as big as siege cannons seem like melodious murmurs, the chirping of birds and seraphim beneath those colossal warheads. There are eighty-three windows with stained glass coloured after cartoons by Michelangelo, Raphael, Durer, Pietro Perugino, Pellegrino Tibaldi and Luca Cambiaso; the oldest and most beautiful were executed by Arnao de Flandes the Younger, a famous glassmaker. The most recent, which date from 1819, show how greatly art has degenerated since the glorious sixteenth century, that supreme era of the world's art, in which the tree of humanity bore its most beautiful flowers and its most delicious fruits. The choir, in the Gothic style, is embellished with turrets, spires, pierced niches, figurines, and foliage; an immense and meticulously-executed creation which astounds the imagination and can no longer be comprehended today. We remain truly confounded in the presence of such works, and wonder, in deep concern, whether vitality is, with every new century, ebbing from the aging world. This prodigious work of talent, patience, and genius, at least bears the name of its author, and admiration finds someone on whom to focus. On a panel on the Gospel side, the left, is traced this inscription: *Este coro fizo Nufro Sanchey entallador que Dios haya año de 1475*: 'Nufro Sánchez, sculptor, whom God has in his care, made this choir in 1475'.

To try to describe the riches of the cathedral, one by one, would be a great folly: it would take a year to view it thoroughly, and one would still not have seen everything; volumes would not suffice to merely create a catalogue. Sculptures in stone, wood, and silver, by Juan de Arphe, Pedro Millán, Juan Montañés, and Pedro Roldán; and paintings by Murillo, Francisco de Zurbarán, Pedro de Campaña, Juan de las Roelas, by Luiz de Vargas, Pedro de Villegas

Marmolejo, the Francisco Herreras the Older and Younger, by Juan de Valdès Leal, and by Goya, clutter the chapels, sacristies, and chapter houses. One is so overwhelmed by magnificence, repelled or intoxicated by masterpieces, one no longer knows where to turn; the desire to, and impossibility of, seeing everything provokes a kind of feverish dizziness; you wish to remember everything, yet every minute you sense a name escaping you, a lineament fading from your brain, one painting eclipsing another. Desperate appeals are made to one's powers of recall, one urges oneself not to omit a single glance; the least rest, the hours for dining or sleeping, seem to be thefts committed against oneself, because a blind imperative necessity drives you onward; and yet soon one must leave, for the steamboat's boiler has already been fired, the water hisses and boils, the chimneys disgorge their white smoke; tomorrow you will leave all these wonders behind, perhaps never to see them again!

Not having space to speak of everything, I will limit myself to mentioning Murillos' painting of the *Vision of Saint Anthony of Padua*, which adorns the baptistry chapel. The magical art of painting has never been taken further. The saint in ecstasy is kneeling in the midst of the cell, all the meagre details of which are rendered with that vigorous reality which characterises the Spanish school. Through a half-open door, we glimpse one of those white arcaded cloisters so conducive to daydreaming. The heights of the painting, drowned in a pale, transparent, vaporous light, are occupied by a group of angels of truly ideal beauty. Attracted by the force of prayer, the Child Jesus descends from the clouds towards the upraised arms of the saint, whose head, raised in a spasm of celestial ecstasy, is bathed in radiance. I place this divine painting above Murillo's *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Curing the Sick* to be viewed at the Academy of Madrid (*the Prado*), above his *Moses Striking the Rock*, and above all this master's depictions of virgin and child, however beautiful and pure they may be. Who has not seen the *Vision of Saint Anthony of Padua* has not viewed the crowning work of this artist of Seville; it is as if one imagined one knew Rubens yet had never seen, in Antwerp, his *Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy*.

All the architectural styles meet in Seville Cathedral. The severe Gothic, the Renaissance style, that which the Spaniards call *plateresco* (*plateresque*) or goldsmith's work, and which is distinguished by a madness of ornamentation and indescribable arabesques, the Rococo, the Greek, the Roman; not one is missing, since every century has built its chapel, its *retablo*, with the taste peculiar to itself, and the building is not even complete, for several of the statues filling the niches of the portals, representing patriarchs, apostles, saints, and archangels, are only made of terracotta and placed there as if provisionally. On the side of the *Patio de los Naranjos*, at the summit of the unfinished portal, one currently sees a steel crane, symbolic of the fact that the building is unfinished, and that the work is to be renewed later. A like gallows also appears atop the Cathedral of Saint Peter at Beauvais; but when will its weight of stone, slowly hoisted into the air by returning workers, make its pulley, rusted for centuries, creak again? Perhaps never; since the celestial aspiration of Catholicism has ceased, and the sap which caused this flowering of cathedrals to emerge from the soil no longer rises from the trunk to the branches. Faith, which doubts nothing, wrote the first stanzas of all these great poems in stone and granite; reason, which doubts everything, did not dare complete them. The architects of the Middle Ages are like some tribe of religious Titans who piled Pelion on Ossa, not to dethrone the God of thunder, but to admire the gentle figure of the Virgin Mother, smiling at the Child Jesus,

more closely. In our age, where all is sacrificed for a crude and stupid feeling of well-being, we no longer understand those sublime pangs of the soul reaching for infinity, translated into spires, needles, arrows, pinnacles, those ogives (*pointed arches*) stretching their stone arms towards heaven, and meeting, above the heads of the prostrate people, like gigantic hands in supplication. All the neglected cathedral treasures which garner no profit make economists shrug their shoulders pityingly. Even the congregation begins to calculate how much the gold of the ciborium is worth; those who previously did not dare raise their eyes to the gleaming sun of the Host, tell themselves that pieces of glass could perfectly well replace the diamonds and precious stones of the monstrance; Seville's cathedral is hardly frequented except by tourists, beggars and dreadful old women, atrocious dueñas clad in black, with owl-like faces, skull-like smiles, and spidery fingers, who cannot move without a clicking of aged bones, medals, and rosaries, and who, under the pretext of begging for alms, whisper I know not what terrible proposals in one's ears, concerning dark hair, ruddy complexions, burning glances, and ever-blooming smiles. Spain itself is no longer Catholic!

The Giralda, which serves as the cathedral's campanile and dominates over all its bell-towers, is an ancient Moorish tower built by an Arab architect named Ali al-Ghumari, said to be the inventor of algebra, to which his treatise *Al-Jabr* gave the name (*it was in fact written by Muhammad al-Khwarizmi*). The effect is charming and most original; the pink colour of the brick and the whiteness of the stone of which it is built, give it an air of cheerfulness and youth in contrast with the age of a building which dates back to the year 1171; a very respectable one, at which a tower can allow itself a few wrinkles and forego a fresh complexion. The Giralda, as it is today, is over three hundred and forty feet high and fifty feet wide on each side; the walls are smooth up to a certain elevation, where the Moorish windows begin with their balconies, trefoils and white marble columns, framed by large diamond-shaped brick panels; the tower formerly ended in a roof of varnished tiles in different colours topped by an iron bar decorated with four golden metal knobs of prodigious size. This work was replaced in 1568 by the architect Hernán Ruiz the Younger, who elevated the tower of Al-Ghumari the Moor a hundred feet further towards the pure light of the heavens, so that a bronze statue (*the Giraldillo, or the Triumph of the Victorious Faith*), could gaze towards the mountain ranges and talk freely with the passing angels. To build a bell-tower on top of a tower was to conform in every way to the intentions of that admirable chapter of which we have spoken, who wished to seem mad in the eyes of posterity. Hernán Ruiz' work is made up of three stories, the first of which is pierced with windows, in the embrasure of which bells hang; the second, surrounded by an openwork balustrade, bears on the sides of its cornice these words: *Turris Fortissima Nomen Dni Proverb.18*; the third is a kind of dome or lantern on which revolves the gigantic figure of Faith, in gilded bronze, holding a palm in one hand and a standard in the other, which serves as a weather-vane and justifies the name Giralda given to the tower. This statue was cast by Barthélémy Morel (*after a design by Luis de Vargas*). It can be seen from extremely far away, and when it gleams in the azure heavens, in the rays of the sun, it truly seems like a seraph hanging in the air.

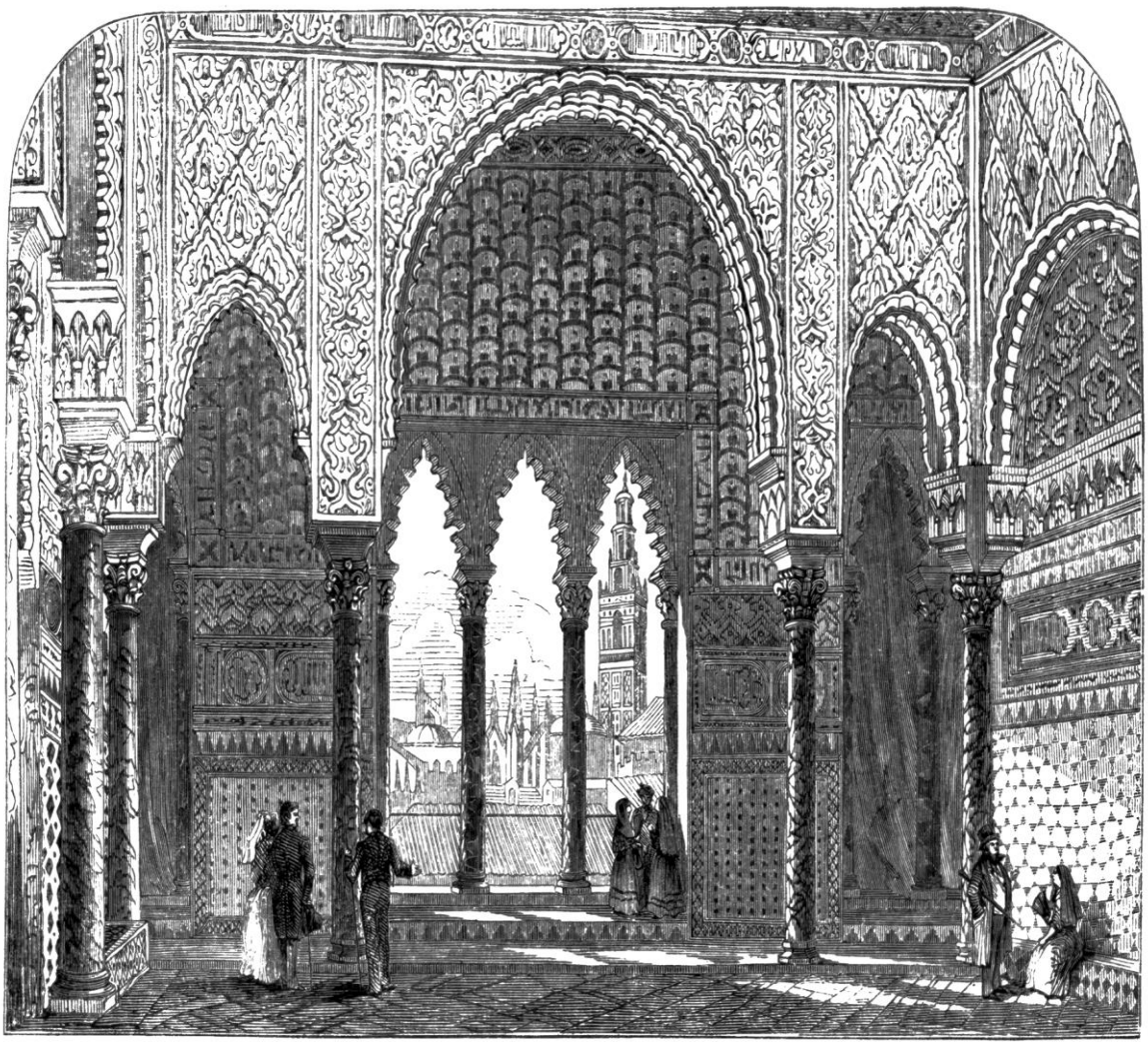
One climbs the Giralda by a series of ramps without steps, so gentle and easy that two men on horseback were able to climb it from the foot to the summit, from which one enjoys an admirable view. Seville is at one's feet, sparkling white, with its bell-towers and turrets making

vain efforts to rise to the pink-brick level of the Giralda. Further off, the plain extends, over which the Guadalquivir maintains its course; one can see Santiponce, La Algaba and other villages. In the background, to the north and west is the Sierra Morena chain with its jagged peaks clearly visible despite the distance, such is the transparency of the air in this admirable country. On the other side, towards the south and east, the bristling sierras above Jimena de la Frontera, Zahara de la Sierra, and Móron de la Frontera, are tinged with the richest hues of lapis-lazuli and amethyst; an admirable panorama riddled with light, flooded with sunlight, and of a dazzling splendour.

A substantial number of column-sections cut to the shape of boundary-markers, and linked by chains, with the exception of a few where gaps are left free for circulation, surround the cathedral. Some of these columns are ancient, obtained from either the ruins of Italica, or the remains of the ancient mosque whose site the current church occupies, and of which only the Giralda, a few sections of wall, and one or two arches remain, one arch serving as a door to the courtyard of the orange-trees. The *Casa Lonja de Mercaderes* (*the commercial exchange*), a large square perfectly regular building, designed by the weighty and sombre Juan de Herrera, boredom's architect, to whom we owe the Escorial, the saddest monument in the world, is also surrounded by similar boundary-markers. Isolated on every side, and possessed of four identical facades, the Casa Lonja is located between the cathedral and the Alcazar. The Archives of the Indies are kept there, including the letters of Christopher Columbus, Francisco Pizarro, and Hernán Cortés; but all these treasures were guarded by such fierce dragons that we had to content ourselves with inspecting the outsides of the boxes and files, arranged in mahogany cabinets like packets of cloth. And yet, it would be a simple task to place five or six of the most precious handwritten items under glass, and offer them up to the gaze of curious travellers.

The Alcazar, or ancient palace of the Moorish kings, though very beautiful and worthy of its reputation, offers few surprises to those who have already seen the Alhambra in Granada. There are still those endless small white marble columns, painted and gilded capitals, heart-shaped arches, panels of arabesque intertwined with legends from the Koran, cedar and larch doors, stalactite-like domes, and fountains adorned with sculptures which may differ to the eye, but whose description cannot convey their infinite detail and minute delicacy. The Hall of Ambassadors (*Salón de Embajadores*), whose magnificent doors remain, in all their integrity, is perhaps more beautiful and richer than that of Granada; sadly, the idea occurred to someone of employing the gaps between the columns supporting the ceiling to accommodate a series of portraits of the kings of Spain from the earliest days of the monarchy to the present. Nothing in the world could appear more ridiculous. The ancient kings, with their breastplates and golden crowns, still cut a passable figure; but the last of them, hair powdered white, in modern uniform, produce a most grotesque effect; I will never forget a certain queen with spectacles on her nose and a little dog on her knees, who must feel very out of place there. The so-called baths of Maria de Padilla (*Baños de Doña María de Padilla*), the mistress of Pedro I, who lived in the Alcazar, are still as they were in Arab times. The vaults of the drying room have not suffered the slightest alteration. Charles V, has left too many traces of his passage in the Alcazar in Seville, as in the Alhambra in Granada. This mania for building one palace inside another is one of the most commonplace and most disastrous, and that it has destroyed so many historic

monuments merely to replace them with insignificant buildings is forever to be regretted. The grounds of the Alcazar contain gardens designed in the old French style, with yew trees trimmed to the most bizarre and twisted shapes.



Hall of Don Pedro, Alcazar, Seville

Since we are visiting the monuments, let us visit for a few moments the Tobacco Factory (*Real Fábrica de Tabacos*) which is only a stone's throw away. This vast building, well-suited to its use, contains a large number of machines for grating, chopping, and grinding tobacco, which emit the sound of a multitude of mills, and are operated by between two and three hundred mules. This is where *el polbo sevillano* is produced, an impalpable, penetrating dust of a golden yellow colour, with which the marquesses of the regency liked to sprinkle their lace ruffs: the strength and volatility of this tobacco are such, that one sneezes on the threshold of the rooms in which it is prepared. It is sold by the pound and half-pound in tin boxes. We were shown the workshops where the cigars are rolled into leaves. Between five and six hundred

women are employed in the work. On setting foot in the room, we were assailed by a hurricane of noise: they were talking, singing, and arguing all at once. I have never heard such a commotion. Most were young, and some were very pretty. The extreme casualness of their dress left one free to appreciate their charms. Some held the end of a cigar, resolutely, in the corner of their mouths with the aplomb of hussar officers; others (oh Muse, come to my aid!) others... chewed tobacco like old sailors, since they were allowed to take as much as they could consume on the spot. They earn four to six *reales* per day. The Seville *cigarera* is a type, like the *manola* of Madrid. One must see her, on a Sunday or on the day of a bullfight, in her dress fringed with immense ruffles, her sleeves trimmed with jet buttons, and with the *puro* (*cigar*) whose smoke she inhales, and which she passes from time to time to her male companion.

To have done with all this architecture, let us pay a visit to the celebrated Caridad Hospital (*Hospital de la Caridad*), founded by a real-life Don Juan (*Miguel de Mañara*), and by no means a mere character in fable, as one might have believed. A hospice founded by Don Juan! But, yes! This is how it happened. One night our Don Juan, emerging from an orgy, encountered a procession on its way to the church of San Isidoro: its penitents, masked in black, bearing yellow wax candles, a cortege more mournful and more sinister than any ordinary funeral. 'Who is the dead man? Is it some husband killed in a duel by his wife's lover, or some honest father who held on to his heirs' bequests too long? cried Don Juan, heated by the wine. 'The dead man,' replied one of the coffin bearers, 'is none other than Don Juan de Mañara, whose funeral we are going to perform; come with us, and pray for him.' Don Juan, having approached, recognized by the light of the torches (for in Spain the dead lie with their faces uncovered) that the corpse not only possessed his likeness, but was none other than himself. He followed his own bier into the church, recited the prayers with the mysterious monks, and the next day was found unconscious on the pavement of the choir. The event made such an impression on him that he renounced his wild life, donned the religious habit and founded the hospital in question, where he died amidst an odour of sanctity. The Caridad contains a few Murillos of the greatest beauty: *Moses Striking the Rock* and *The Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes*, two immense compositions of the richest order, and *Saint John of God Carrying a Sick Man* in which the saint is depicted being supported by an angel, which is a masterpiece of colouring and chiaroscuro. Here the painting by Juan de Valdés Leal, known as *Los Dos Cadaveres* (or *Finis Gloriae Mundi)*, may be found, a bizarre and terrible painting compared to which Edward Young's darkest conceptions (*in his 'Night Thoughts', illustrated by William Blake*) may pass for happy idylls.

The Plaza de Toros was closed to our great regret, since the Seville bullfights are, according to aficionados, the most brilliant in Spain. This place is unique in being semi-circular, at least in regard to the boxes since the arena is round. It is said that a violent storm destroyed the one side, which has not been rebuilt since. This arena provides a wonderful sight of the cathedral, and forms one of the most beautiful views one can imagine, especially when the stands are populated by a glittering crowd, adorned with the most vivid colours. Ferdinand VII founded a bullfighting school in Seville, where students were trained first on bulls made of cardboard, then on *novillos* (young bullocks) with padding on their horns, and finally on serious adversaries, until these pupils were worthy of appearing in public. I know not whether the revolution has respected this royal and despotic institution. Our hopes disappointed, all that

was left to do was depart; our places were booked on the steamboat for Cádiz, and we embarked amidst the tears, cries, and wailing of the mistresses or lawful wives of the soldiers, a change of garrison, who were travelling with us. I know not if their grief were sincere, but that ancient despair, that desolation of the Jewish women in the days of Babylonian captivity, could never have appeared so violent!

Part XV: Cádiz – A Visit to the Brig 'Voltigeur' – The Rateros – Jerez de la Frontera – The Toro Embolado – The Steamboat – Gibraltar – Cartagena – Valencia – La Lonja de la Seda – The Convent of La Merced – The Valencians – Barcelona – The Return

After travelling by mule, on horseback, in carts, in carriages, the steamboat seemed something miraculous, like the magic carpet of Fortunatus (*in the anonymous folk-tale*) or the arrow of Abaris the Hyperborean (*in the Greek myth*). To devour space like that speeding arrow, and this without difficulty, without fatigue, without being shaken about, while walking on deck, and watching lengths of the coastline pass before you, despite the vagaries of the wind and the tide, is undoubtedly one of the finest innovations of the human mind. Perhaps for the first time, I found that civilisation had its good side, I will not say its beautiful side, because everything it produces is unfortunately tainted with ugliness, and thereby betrays its complex and diabolical origin. Compared to a sailing ship, the steamboat, convenient as it is, appears

hideous. The former looks like a swan spreading its white wings to the breeze, the other like an iron stove charging off at full speed astride a windmill.

Regardless, the paddles adorning its wheels, aided by the current, drove us swiftly towards Cádiz. Seville was already sinking below the horizon; but, due to a magnificent optical effect, while the roofs of the city seemed to merge with the land, and fade into the distance, the cathedral appeared to expand and took on enormous proportions, like an elephant standing amidst a flock of slumbering sheep; and it was only then that I fully comprehended its immensity. The tallest bell-towers did not overtop its nave. As for the Giralda, remoteness gave to its pink bricks the hues of amethyst and adventurine, which are incompatible with the architecture of our sad northern climes. The statue of Faith sparkled on the summit like a golden bee on the tip of a tall blade of grass. A bend in the river quickly hid the city from our sight.

The banks of the Guadalquivir, at least on the path to the sea, lack the enchanting aspect granted to them by poets' and travellers' descriptions. I know not where they found those groves of orange-trees and pomegranate-trees with which they perfume their romances. In reality, one sees only low, sandy, ochre-coloured shores, yellow and troubled waters, whose earthy hue can scarcely be attributed to rainwater, rainstorms being so rare in that country. I had already noticed, with regard to the Tagus, this lack of clarity, which perhaps derives from the large quantities of dust that the wind precipitates, and from the friable nature of the terrain crossed. The harsh blue of the sky is also a factor, and its extreme intensity makes the tones of the water appear earthy, and less vibrant. Only the sea can match the transparency and azure of such a sky. The river continued to widen, the banks decreased in height and grew flatter, and the general appearance of the landscape was reminiscent of the physiognomy of the Scheldt between Antwerp and Ostend. This Flemish memory in the midst of Andalusia was quite strange in the context of our being beside the Guadalquivir with its Moorish name; but it presented itself to my mind so naturally that the resemblance must be real, for I swear I had scarcely thought since of the Scheldt, or of the trip I made to Flanders some six or seven years ago. For the rest, there was, little movement on the river, and what could be seen of the countryside beyond the banks seemed uncultivated and deserted; it is true that we were in the depths of a heatwave, a season during which Spain is little more than a vast heap of ashes without vegetation or greenery. And all the river-birds, the herons and storks, one leg folded beneath, the other half-submerged in the water, awaited the passage of some fish in such complete immobility that one might have taken them for birds made of wood and mounted on a stick. Boats with lateen sails set like pairs of compasses went up and down the river with and against the wind, a phenomenon I have never really understood, though it has been explained to me several times. Some of these boats carried a third small sail in the shape of an isosceles triangle, fore or aft of the two larger sails: rigged thus they are very picturesque.

Around four or five in the evening, we passed Sanlúcar de Barrameda located on the left bank of the river. A large building, its architecture modern in style, built in the regular form of a barracks or a hospital which constitutes the only charm of today's constructions, bore on its frontispiece some inscription which we were unable to read, which was hardly a cause for regret. This square box with its many windows was built by Ferdinand VII. It must be a customs-house, warehouse, or some similar fabrication. Below Sanlúcar, the Guadalquivir

widens out and takes on the proportions of an arm of the sea, whose shores become nothing but increasingly narrow lines between sky and water. It has grandeur, but of a somewhat dull and monotonous nature, and we would have been exceedingly bored without games, dances, and the castanets and tambourines of the soldiers. One of them, who had attended performances given by an Italian troupe, imitated the actors' and especially the actresses' words, songs, and gestures, with great joy and enthusiasm. His comrades laughed till they held their sides, and seemed to have forgotten, completely, those touching scenes on departure. Perhaps their weeping Ariadnes had already wiped their eyes and were laughing just as heartily. The passengers on board the steamboat took part, freely, in this hilarity and belied as best they could the reputation for imperturbable seriousness attributed to Spaniards by the rest of Europe. The fashions of the days of Philip II, of black clothing, starched collars, a devout demeanour, and a cold and haughty look, ended longer ago than is generally thought.

With Sanlúcar behind us, by an almost imperceptible transition, we entered the Mediterranean; the billows lengthened to regular waves, the water changed colour, and so did some of the passengers' faces. Those predestined to that strange disease called seasickness begin to seek out solitary corners, and leant in melancholy fashion against the rail. For my part, I perched myself, bravely, on the cabin next to the paddle-wheels, studying my sensations conscientiously; for, never having made the crossing, I did not yet know if I would be condemned to those inexpressible tortures. The pitching and tossing surprised me a little at first, but I soon recovered, and regained my serenity. Emerging from the Guadalquivir, we turned to larboard and followed the coast, which was far enough away that it could only be distinguished with difficulty, since evening was nigh, and the sun descending majestically into the sea, on a glowing staircase formed by five or six levels of clouds of the richest purple.

Darkness fell as we arrived in Cádiz. The lanterns of the vessels at anchor in the harbour, the lights of the city, and the stars in the sky, glittered on the lapping waves, in millions of flakes of gold, silver, and fiery flame; in areas of calm the lanterns' reflections, as they stretched out over the sea, traced long paths of light to magical effect. The enormous mass of the ramparts stood out strangely amidst the deep shadows.

So as to disembark, we had to be transferred, with all our belongings, into small boats whose owners, with dreadful vociferations, fought over the travellers and their trunks in much the same way as the coachmen in Paris carrying folk to Montmorency or Vincennes. We found it difficult not to be separated, my comrade and I, as one of them pulled us to the left, and the other dragged us to the right, with an energy that was scarcely reassuring, especially if we consider that these contests were executed on 'canoes' which the slightest movement caused to oscillate, like a swing, under the feet of the wrestlers. However, we arrived without incident on the quay, and, after having endured a visit to the customs office, which was nestled beneath the city gate in the thickness of the wall, we found our way to our lodgings in the Calle San Francisco.

As you might imagine, we were up with the dawn. Entering an unknown city at night is one of the things that most irritates the curiosity of the traveller: one employs one's greatest efforts to make out the configuration of the streets, the shape of the buildings, and the physiognomy of the rare passers-by, through the shadows. At least, in this way, the element of

surprise is maintained, while next day the city appears to you in its entirety, suddenly, like a theatre-set when the curtain rises.

No pigments of the painter's writer's palette are bright enough, no hues luminous enough to convey the dazzling impression that Cádiz made on us on that glorious morning. Two unique shades caught one's eye: of blue and white; but a blue as vivid as turquoise, sapphire, cobalt, and everything excessive of azure one could imagine; and a white as pure as silver, milk, snow, marble, or the best, crystallized cane-sugar! Blue filled the sky, and was echoed by the sea; the whiteness was the city. One could not imagine anything more radiant, more sparkling, with a light more diffuse yet more intense at the same moment. Truly, what we call the sun, in France, is nothing more than a pale night-light, at the point of death, on a sick person's bedside table.

The houses in Cádiz are much taller than those of other cities in Spain, which is explained by the conformation of the land, a narrow islet attached to the mainland by a thin strip of land, and the desire for a sea view. Each house rises, on tiptoe to look, with curiosity, over the shoulder of its neighbour, and raise its head above the dense circuit of ramparts. As this is not always sufficient, almost all the terraces have at their corner a turret, a belvedere, sometimes topped with a small dome; these aerial viewpoints enliven the city's outline with innumerable serrations, and produce the most picturesque effect. All is plastered with lime, and the whiteness of the facades is further enhanced by long vermilion lines which serve to separate the houses and mark the floors: the balconies, protruding some distance, are enveloped by a large cage of glass, adorned with red curtains and filled with flowers. Some of the side streets end in empty space and lead, seemingly, to the sky. These azure voids are charmingly unexpected. Apart from its cheerful, lively and bright appearance, Cádiz has nothing remarkable to show in terms of architecture. Its cathedral, a vast sixteenth century building, though lacking neither nobility nor beauty, yields no surprises after the wonders of Burgos, Toledo, Córdoba and Seville: it is in the style of the cathedrals of Jaen, Granada and Málaga; classical architecture with the neater, more slender proportions Renaissance artists preferred. Its Corinthian capitals, of a more elongated form than the canonical Greek version, are very elegant. As for paintings and ornamentation, richly, excessively, burdened, and in bad taste, there is a surfeit. However, I ought not to pass over in silence a wood sculpture of a little crucified martyr, a seven-year-old child, painted with perfect feeling and exquisite delicacy. Enthusiasm, faith, pain, mingled, in the childish proportions of the delightfully-carved face, in the most touching way.

We went to view the bullring, which is small and reputed to be one of the most dangerous arenas in Spain. To reach it, one crosses gardens filled with gigantic palm-trees of various species. Nothing is more noble, more regal, than a palm-tree; its great star of leaves at the summit of its fluted column shining so splendidly in the lapis lazuli of an oriental sky! The scaly trunk, as slender as if it were in a tight corset, appears so like the waist of a young girl; its bearing is so majestic, so elegant! The palm and the oleander are my favourite trees; the sight of a palm-tree or an oleander arouse joy in me, an astonishing gaiety. It seems to me that one cannot be unhappy in their shadow.

The bullring in Cádiz lacks continuous *tablas*. Here and there are placed wooden screens behind which *toreros* who are too hotly pursued retreat. This provision appeared to us to offer far less security.

The stalls were pointed out to us which hold the bulls during the fight; they are in a kind of cage made of large beams, closed with a door which is raised like a mill or weir gate. To excite the bulls' rage, they are prodded with spikes, and rubbed down with nitric acid; indeed, every means is sought to poison their mood.

Due to the excessive heat, the bullfights were suspended; a French acrobat had set up his trestles and ropes in the centre of the arena ready for the next day's entertainment. It was here that Lord Byron watched the bullfight of which he gives, in the first canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, a most poetic description, though one which does little credit to his knowledge of bullfighting.

Cádiz is enclosed by a narrow circuit of ramparts which clasp its waist like a granite corset; a second line of reefs and rocks protects it from attack, and from the waves, and yet, a few years ago, a terrible storm shattered and overthrew these formidable walls, which are more than twenty feet wide, in several places, immense sections of which still lie, here and there, about the shore. On the glacis of these ramparts, lined at intervals with stone sentry-boxes, one can circumambulate the town, to which only one gate opens on the landward side, and watch the canoes, feluccas, and fishing boats, lateen-rigged or otherwise, on the open sea or within the harbour, toing and froing, carving out graceful arcs, traversing each other's path, changing tack, and toying with the wind like albatrosses; vessels which seem on the horizon nothing more than dove feathers borne through the sky by a wild breeze. Several of these vessels, like the ancient Greek galleys, have at the bow, on each side of the boat, a large eye painted in natural colours; these eyes seem to watch over the vessel's progress, and grant that part of the boat, in appearance, a vaguely human profile. Nothing is more animated, livelier, or more cheerful than this seeming glance.

On the mole, in the direction of the customs gate, there are signs of unparalleled activity. A colourful crowd, in which each country in the world is represented, swarms, at all hours, at the feet of the columns topped with statues which decorate the quay. From the white skin and red hair of an Englishman, to the dark skin and black woolly hair of an African, and passing through all the intermediate shades of coffee, copper and golden-yellow, all varieties of the human species are gathered there. In the harbour, in the near distance, three-masters, frigates, and brigs sway, hoisting the flag of their respective nation each morning, to the beat of a drum; the merchant ships, and steamboats, whose chimneys belch bicoloured steam, berth closer to the quay because of their lower tonnage, and form the foreground of this vast marine portrait.

I possessed a letter of introduction to the commander of the French brig *Voltigeur*, stationed in Cádiz harbour. Upon presenting it, the captain, Adelbert Lebarbier de Tinan, graciously invited me, and two other young people, to dinner on board, the next day at about five. At four, we were on the pier, seeking a boat and a skipper to convey us from the quay to the ship, a twenty-minute trip at most. I was most surprised when the man asked for a duro (*five pesetas*) instead of the usual fare of a peseta. In my nautical ignorance, seeing the sky perfectly clear, and the sun glittering as on the world's first day, I had innocently imagined the

weather was fine. That was my naive conviction. On the contrary, the weather was atrocious, and I was not long in realising it to be so when the boat made its first few tacks. The sea was broken, choppy, and dreadfully hostile. The wind was enough to dehorn an ox. We leapt about as if we were in a nut shell, and took on water at every instant. After a few minutes, we enjoyed a foot-bath that quickly threatened to turn into a hip-bath. The spray from the oars drenched the collar of my coat, and ran down my back. The skipper and his two acolytes swore, stormed, and tore the sheets and rudder from one another's hands. One wished this, the other that, and I foresaw the moment when they would fall to blows. Our situation was critical enough that one of them began mumbling part of a prayer to some saint, whose name I forget. Fortunately, we were approaching the brig, which was swaying nonchalantly at anchor, seeming to watch, with an air of disdainful pity, the convulsive movements of our little boat. Finally, we docked alongside, and it took us a further ten minutes or more before we could seize the grappling-hooks, and climb on deck.

'That's what we call brave exactness,' said the commander with a smile as he watched us clamber aboard, streaming with water, our hair weeping like a sea god's beard, and ordered that we be given trousers, shirts, jackets, in short, a complete change of clothing. 'That will teach you to trust poetic description; you think squalls cannot exists without orchestral thunder, waves mingling their foam with the clouds midst the rain, and lightning bolts splitting the deepest darkness. Be assured that, quite probably, I will only be able to land you ashore in two to three days' time.'

The wind was indeed dreadfully violent, the rigging quivered like a set of violin strings beneath the bow of a frantic musician, the bell clanged with a sharp sound, and its clapper threatened to break off, and fall in pieces to the bed of the harbour; the pulleys creaked, squeaked, hissed, and, at times, uttered sharp cries which seemed to spring from a human throat. Two or three sailors doing penance in the shrouds, for I know not what peccadillo, met with all the difficulty in the world in not being swept away.

All this did not prevent us from enjoying an excellent dinner, washed down with the best of wines, and seasoned with the kindest words, though with diabolical Indian spices also, enough to make even someone with hydrophobia drink. Next day, as we were unable to launch a boat to fetch fresh provisions from shore due to the bad weather, we had a dinner no less pleasant, but whose peculiarity was that each dish contained some ingredient of much earlier date. We ate peas stored since 1836, fresh butter from 1835, and cream from 1834, all of miraculous freshness and perfectly preserved. The heavy weather lasted two days, during which I walked on deck, never tiring of admiring its cleanliness as if maintained by a Dutch housewife, the finish of every detail, the genius of organisation displayed by that prodigy of human thought, which we simply call a vessel. The copper of the carronades sparkled like gold; the planks gleamed like the best varnished piece of rosewood furniture. Indeed, every morning the vessel is cleansed, and even if it is raining heavily the deck is still washed-down; inundated, mopped and sponged, with the same scrupulous thoroughness.

After two days the wind died down, and we were taken ashore in a longboat rowed by ten oarsmen. Only, my black coat, heavily impregnated with sea water, was unable to regain its

elasticity when it had dried, and always remained dotted with shiny grains of mica and as stiff as a salted cod.

The appearance of Cádiz from the sea is delightful. To see it, sparkling white between the azure of the sea and that of the sky, makes one think of an immense crown of silver filigree; the dome of the cathedral, painted yellow, seems like a vermeil tiara set in its midst. The flower vases, scrolls, and turrets that adorn the houses vary infinitely in their contours. Byron characterised the physiognomy of Cádiz wonderfully in a single touch:

'Do thou, amid the fair white walls,

If Cádiz yet be free,

At times from out her latticed halls

Look o'er the dark blue sea'

(*Stanzas composed during a Thunderstorm. First published, Childe Harold, 1812*)

In the same poem, the English poet expresses his opinion on the somewhat questionable virtue of Gaditan women, which he was undoubtedly right to entertain. As for myself, without pursuing that delicate question here, I shall limit myself to saying that they are very beautiful and of an individual type; their complexion has that paleness of polished marble which brings out the purity of the features so well. Their noses are less aquiline than the Sevillians, their foreheads are small, the cheekbones not very prominent, and they are close to the Greeks in physiognomy. They also seemed broader to me than other Spanish women, and taller. Such is at least the result of the observations that I was able to make while walking around the Salon, on the Plaza de la Constitución and at the theatre, where, incidentally, I saw Pierre Zaccone's *Gamin de Paris* (*El Poluello de Paris*) very well-acted by a woman in man's clothing, who danced boleros with great fire and enthusiasm.

However, as pleasant as Cádiz is, the idea of being enclosed, firstly by the ramparts, then by the sea, within its narrow isle, makes you long to escape. It seemed to me that the sole thought that islanders must entertain is to visit the mainland: which also explains the perpetual travels of the English, who exist everywhere, except in London, where there are only Italians and Poles. Indeed, the Gaditans are perpetually busy crossing from Cádiz to El Puerto de Santa María and vice versa. A light general-purpose steamboat, leaves every hour, while sailing boats, and canoes, attend on and provoke the wanderer. One fine morning, my companion and I, reflecting on the fact that we had a letter of recommendation from one of our Gaditan friends to his father, a rich wine merchant in Jerez de la Frontera, which read: 'Open your heart, your house, and your cellar to the two gentlemen who present this', we climbed aboard the steamer, to the cabin of which was affixed a poster announcing, that very evening, a bullfight interspersed with comic interludes, which was to take place at El Puerto de Santa María. It would complete our day, admirably. With a carriage, one could go from El Puerto de Santa

María to Jerez, stay there a few hours, and return in time for the bullfight. After a hasty lunch at the Fonda Vista Alègre, which could not be better deserving of its name, we set out with a guide, who promised to be back at five for the *funcion*: which is the name for any spectacle, whatever it may be, in Spain. The road to Jerez crosses a mountainous, rugged, hillocky plain, as dry as pumice stone. In spring, this desert is said to be covered with a rich carpet of greenery dotted with wild flowers. Broom, lavender, and thyme perfume the air with their aromatic emanations; but at the time of year we visited, all trace of vegetation had disappeared. Here and there one could barely see a few mops of dry, yellow, thready grass, coated all over with dust. The track, if the local chronicle is to be believed, is very dangerous. *Rateros* are often encountered there, that is to say countrymen who, without being professional bandits, seize the opportunity when it presents itself, and cannot resist the pleasure of robbing an isolated passerby. The *rateros* are more to be feared than the true bandits, who conduct themselves with the regularity of an organised troop subject to a leader, and who spare travellers so as to put them under fresh pressure on some other route; and then, none resist a band of twenty-five men or so on horseback, well-equipped, and armed to the teeth, instead of a couple of *rateros*, by whom one might be killed or at least injured; and then the *ratero* might be embodied in the herdsman who passes by, the ploughman who greets you, the ragged and tanned *muchacho* who sleeps, or pretends to sleep, in a thin strip of shade, in a crevice of the ravine, or your *calesero* himself, leading you into an ambush. One knows not; danger is everywhere and nowhere. From time to time, the police employ agents to assassinate the most dangerous and best known of these rascals, in bar-room quarrels which are provoked on purpose, and this method of dealing justice, though of a somewhat summary and barbarous nature, is the only practicable one, given the absence of evidence and witnesses, and the difficulty of catching such culprits in a country where it would take an army to arrest a single man, and where counter-policing is carried out with such intelligence and passion, by a people whose ideas of yours and mine are scarcely more advanced than the Kabyles of Algeria. However, here, as everywhere else, the bandits prophesied failed to appear, and we arrived in Jerez without incident.

Jerez, like all the small Andalusian towns, is whitewashed from head to toe, and owns to nothing remarkable by way of architecture other than its *bodegas*, or wine-stores, immense cellars with large tiled ceilings, and long white walls deprived of windows. The person to whom we were recommended was absent, but the letter had its effect, and we were immediately taken to the cellar. Never could a more glorious spectacle be presented to the eyes of an alcoholic; we walked along aisles of barrels arranged four or five rows high. We were obliged to sample all of this, at least the main variants, and there are an infinite number of main variants. We tried a whole range, from eighty-year-old sherries, dark, and thick, with the taste of muscat, and the strange tint of the green wine of Béziers, to dry sherries the colour of pale straw, smelling of flint, and like to Sauternes. Between these two extremes, there is a whole register of intermediate wines, with hints of gold, burnt-topaz, and orange-peel, extremely variable in taste. Only, they are all more or less fortified with brandy, especially those destined for England, where they would not be found strong enough without that; since, to please British palates, wine must be disguised as rum.

After so complete a study of the oenology of sherry, we found it difficult to return to our carriage with a majestic uprightness of attitude sufficient to avoid compromising France vis-à-vis Spain, it being a question of international self-esteem. To fall or not to fall, that was the question, a question much more embarrassing than that which gave so much pause to the Prince of Denmark. I must say with legitimate pride that we went to our carriage in a most satisfactory state of perpendicularity, and gloriously represented our dear country in our battle against the headiest wine of the Peninsula. Thanks to the rapid evaporation produced by a heat of thirty-nine to forty degrees Centigrade, on our return to El Puerto de Santa María we were able to discuss the most delicate points of psychology, and appreciate the fiercest passages of the bullfight. This event, where most of the bulls were *embolados*, that is to say, had padding on the ends of their horns, and in which only two were killed, delighted us with a host of comical incidents. The picadors, dressed as mock Turks, with Mameluke-style cotton trousers, jackets with rayed suns on the back, and turbans like Savoy-cakes, were reminiscent of those extravagant Moorish figures that Goya sketched with three or four strokes of the burin on the plates of *La Tauromaquia*. One of these clowns, while waiting for his turn to place his dart, blew his nose on the corner of his turban with admirable philosophy and phlegm. A wicker *steamboat*, covered in canvas, and drawn by a team of donkeys, dressed in red shirts and wearing tricorn hats as best they could, was driven to the centre of the arena. The bull rushed at this contraption, shattering and overturning it, and hurling the poor fools into the air in the most amusing fashion in the world: I also saw, in that arena, a *picador* who killed the bull with a spear, in the handle of which was concealed a device whose detonation was so violent that all three, bull, horse and rider fell backwards; the first, because it was dead, the other two by the strength of the recoil. The *matador* was an old rogue dressed in a worn workman's blouse, and clad in yellow stockings, which were falling down, and looked like Jeannot from the comic-opera (*Jeannot et Colin*), or a garishly costumed acrobat. He was knocked over several times by the bull, to which he dealt such ill-performed blows that the use of the *media-luna* became necessary to put an end to it. The *media luna*, as its name indicates, is a crescent-shaped blade attached to a pole, similar to the pruning-hooks used to trim large trees. It is used to slice the animal's hocks, it then being finished-off, without risk. Nothing is more ignoble and more hideous: when risk is eliminated, disgust follows; it is no longer a battle, but mere butchery. The poor creature, dragging itself along on its stumps, like Hyacinthe (*Louis-Hyacinthe Duflost*) at the Variétés, when he acts the role of the *Dwarf* in the sublime parade of *Les Saltimbanques* (*by Dumersan and Varin*), offers the saddest spectacle that one can see, and one desires only one thing, that it might regain enough strength to disembowel its stupid tormentors with a last blow of its horn.

The wretched part-time matador reserved to himself a special task, that of *eating*. He consumed seven or more dozen hard-boiled eggs, a whole sheep, a calf, etc. Observing his leanness, one had to believe that he worked very infrequently. A large crowd attended the event; the many majos' were richly dressed; the women, of a completely different type from those of Cádiz, covered their heads with long scarlet shawls, rather than mantillas, which perfectly framed their beautiful olive faces, their complexions almost as dark as those of mulatto women, faces in which the mother-of-pearl of the eyes and the ivory of the teeth stood out with singular brilliance. Their pure lines, their tawny, golden tone, would lend themselves

wonderfully to the painter's art, and it is unfortunate that Louis Léopold Robert, that Raphael of the world of countryfolk, died at so young an age, and never travelled in Spain.

Wandering about the streets, we came upon the market square. It was evening. The shops and booths were illuminated by lanterns or hanging lamps, and made a charming sight, starred and spangled everywhere with brilliant points of light. Watermelons with green rind and pink pulp; prickly-pears, some in their thorny capsule, others already shelled; bags of *garbanzos* (*chickpeas*); monstrous onions; grapes the colour of yellow amber, finer than clusters brought from the promised land; garlic garlands; peppers and other spicy foodstuffs, were piled high and made a picturesque showing. In the alleys left between the merchants' stalls, countrymen drove their donkeys to and fro, the women dragging their children along. I noticed one girl of rare beauty, with jet-black eyes in a bistre-coloured face, the smooth hair at her temples gleaming like twin shells of black satin, or a pair of raven's wings. She walked along with a sober, yet radiant air, her legs free of stockings, her bare feet charming in satin shoes. This coquetry as regards footwear is widespread in Andalusia.

The courtyard of our inn, employed as a *patio*, was decorated with a fountain surrounded by shrubs where a tribe of chameleons lived. It is difficult to imagine a more bizarrely hideous animal. Imagine a species of pot-bellied lizard, six to seven inches long more or less, with disproportionately shaped jaws, from which it darts a viscous, whitish tongue, as long as its body; with the eyes of a toad that's been trodden on, protruding, enormous, enveloped in a membrane, and with complete independence of movement; one eye looks at the sky and the other at the ground. These dubious lizards, that live only on air, according to the Spaniards, but which I have, in truth, seen eating flies, have the property of changing colour, depending on the place in which they happen to be. They do not become scarlet, blue or green instantly, or vary from one moment to the next, but rather, they blend with, and adopt, the colour of the objects closest to them after an hour or two. On a tree, they will turn a beautiful green; on blue cloth, a slate-grey; on a scarlet surface, a reddish-brown. Placed in the shade, they discolour, taking on a sort of neutral, yellowish-white hue. One or two chameleons would look fine in the laboratory of an alchemist, or of Doctor Faust. In Andalusia, a cord of a certain length is hung from the ceiling, the end of which is placed between the creature's front legs. It then begins to climb, and does so until it reaches the ceiling above, to which its claws cannot grip. It then descends to the foot of the dangling rope, and rotating one of its eyes measures the distance which separates it from the floor; then, after a little reflection, it resumes its ascent with admirable seriousness and gravity, and so on, indefinitely. When two chameleons are placed on the same rope, the spectacle becomes one of transcendental comedy. One could split one sides laughing, contemplating the contortions, the frightful looks of the two ugly guests, when they meet. Wishing to transport these entertainers to France, I bought a couple of the amiable creatures, which I took with me, in a small cage; but they caught a chill during the crossing, and died on our arrival at Port-Vendres. They had grown thin, and their meagre anatomy showed through their flabby and wrinkled skin.

A few days later, the announcement of a bullfight, the last, sadly, that I was able to see, induced me to revisit Jerez. The arena at Jerez is very large and beautiful, and possesses a certain architectural character. It is built of bricks, with a higher level in stone, a combination

which produces a good effect. There was an immense teeming crowd, varied and colourful, and a great fluttering of fans and handkerchiefs. I have already described several such events, and will only report a few details from this one. In the midst of the arena a pole was planted, terminating in a sort of small platform. On this platform, a macaque crouched, making grimaces and flaunting its lips. It was dressed like a troubadour, and held by a fairly long chain which allowed it to describe a large circle on the ground with the pole as its centre. When the bull entered, the first object that caught his eye was the monkey on its perch. Then a most entertaining comedy was played out: the bull chased the monkey, who quickly returned to his platform. The furious bull banged his horns fiercely against the post, and delivered terrible shocks to the macaque, who was prey to the deepest terror, and whose frozen trances alternated with irresistibly comic grimaces. Sometimes, not being able to hold on firmly enough to the edge of the platform, though it clung on with hands and feet, the macaque fell onto the back of the bull, where it clung desperately. There was unbounded hilarity, and fifteen thousand sets of white teeth illuminated all those tanned smiling faces. But comedy was followed by tragedy. A poor little dark-skinned African lad, a local boy, who was carrying a basket full of pulverised earth to throw on the pools of blood, was attacked by the bull, which he believed to be occupied elsewhere, and was tossed into the air twice. He remained lying on the sand, motionless and lifeless. The *chulos* came and waved their capes in the bull's face, and lured him to another corner of the square, so that the lad's body could be taken away. They passed very close to me; two *mozos* held him by his feet and head. The strange thing is that he went from black to deep blue, which it seems is the colour of a black skin on turning pale. This event did not interrupt the bullfight in any way: '*Nada, es un moro*; it's nothing, he was a Moor', such was the funeral oration for the wretched African. But, if the crowd was indifferent to his death, the same was not true of the monkey, which twisted its arms about, uttered dreadful cries, and struggled with all its strength to break the chain. Did it view the African as an allied being, a more successful brother, the only friend capable of understanding its plight? Indeed, I have never seen anguish more acute, more touching, than that of this monkey crying for the African lad, and the fact is all the more remarkable, since it had seen picadors felled and in danger of dying, without showing the slightest sign of concern or empathy. At the same moment an enormous owl landed in the middle of the arena: it no doubt came, in its capacity as a bird of the night, to seek out the African's soul, and bear it off to the ebony paradise of his people. Of the eight bulls in this race, only four were to be killed. The others, after having received half a dozen lance-blows and three or four pairs of *banderillas*, were brought back to the *toril* by large oxen with bells around their necks. The last, a *novillo*, was abandoned to the amateurs, who invaded the arena in tumult, and dispatched it with knives; such is the passion of the Andalusians for the bullfight, that it is not enough for them to be spectators, they must also take part, otherwise they would leave dissatisfied.

The steamboat *Ocean* was about to leave harbour where bad weather, the intense bad weather that I have already spoken of, had detained it for several days; we boarded with a feeling of personal relief, since, due to events in Valencia and the disturbances which had followed, Cádiz found itself somewhat under siege. The newspapers seemed to be filled with poems or serialised tales translated from the French, and on the corners of all the walls were stuck small, somewhat forbidding *bandos* (*notices*), prohibiting gatherings of more than three,

under penalty of death. Apart from these reasons for desiring a speedy departure, we had been travelling with our backs turned to France for a long time; this was the first time in many months that we had directed our passage towards the motherland; and, however free one may be from national prejudice, it is difficult to defend oneself from a modicum of chauvinism when one is far from one's own country. In Spain, the slightest allusion to France excited me, and I was ready to sing of glory, victory, laurels, and warriors, like an extra at the Cirque-Olympique.

Everyone was on deck, running to and fro, waving goodbye to the boats returning to shore; I, who left behind on shore no one to regret or remember, rummaged around in the nooks and crannies of the little floating universe which was to serve as my prison for a few days. In the course of my investigations, I came upon a small room filled with a large quantity of earthenware urns of an intimate and dubious shape. These little Etruscan vases surprised me by their number, and I said to myself: 'Here's a most unpoetic load! O Jacques Delille, humble abbot, king of periphrasis, by what circumlocution would you have designated in your majestic alexandrines this domestic, nocturnal pottery? We had barely gone a league when I understood what these receptacles were for. From all sides people shouted: '*Me mareo!* My heart fails me! Lemons! Rum! Vinegar! Smelling-salts!' The bridge presented a most lamentable spectacle; the women, so charming a moment ago, were turning green like eight-day-old corpses of the drowned. They lay about on mattresses, trunks, and blankets, completely neglecting all grace and modesty. A young mother who was breast-feeding her child, and was seized with seasickness, had neglected to close her blouse and only noticed it when we had passed Tarifa. A poor parrot, also affected in his cage, and understanding nothing of the anxieties he was experiencing, delivered his repertoire with the most comical tearful volubility in the world. I was fortunate in not suffering any sickness. The two days spent on the *Voltigeur* had undoubtedly acclimatised me. My comrade, less happy than myself, plunged down into the interior of the vessel, and failed to reappear till we arrived in Gibraltar. Why has modern medical science, which deals with migraines in rabbits with so much solicitude, and amuses itself with dying duck-bones crimson, not yet devoted itself to seeking a remedy for this horrible malaise, which causes more distress than an intense pain?

The sea was still a little rough, although the weather was magnificent; the air was so transparent that we could clearly see the coast of Africa, Cape Spartel, and the bay where Tangier is located, which we regretted not being able to visit. This strip of mountains, akin to clouds, from which they differ only by their immobility, was therefore Africa, the land of prodigies of which the Romans said: '*Semper aliquid novi Africam adferre*' (*'There is always something new out of Africa': Pliny the Elder, Naturalis Historia, Book 8 xvii.42, quoting a Greek saying*), the oldest continent, the cradle of oriental civilization, the home of Islam, and that black-skinned world where shadow, absent from the sky, is found only in the complexions of its people, the mysterious laboratory where nature, on its way to producing *homo sapiens* (*the term first used by Linnaeus in 1758*), turned the ape into the human. To view her, and yet pass by; a new refinement, indeed, of Tantalus' torment!

Near Tarifa, a town whose chalk-white walls are sited on a low hill, behind a small island of the same name, Europe and Africa near each other, and seemingly desire to grant each other a kiss of alliance. The strait is so narrow that one can see both continents at the same time. It

is impossible not to believe, when one is on the spot, that the Mediterranean, at a time which cannot be very remote, was an isolated sea, an inland lake, like the Caspian Sea, the Aral Sea, and the Dead Sea. The spectacle that presented itself to our eyes was of wondrous magnificence. To the left Europe, to the right Africa, their rocky coasts, clothed by distance in shades of pale-lilac, and the hues of a pigeon's throat, like the colours of a double-weave silk fabric; ahead, the boundless and ever-widening horizon; above a turquoise sky; below, a sapphire sea of such clarity that we could see the entire hull of our vessel, as well as the keels of the boats which passed near to us, and which seemed rather to fly through the air than float on water. We were sailing amidst an intense light, and the only dark tint to be discovered for twenty leagues around came from the long plume of thick smoke that we left behind us. The steamboat is really a northern invention; its boiler always alight and raising steam, its funnels, which will eventually blacken the whole sky, pouring forth clouds of soot which harmonise admirably with the fogs and mists of the North. Amidst the splendours of the South, it cannot but seem out of place. Nature was cheerful; large snow-white seabirds skimmed the edges of their wings along the waves. Tuna, sea-bream, fish of all kinds, gleaming, varnished, sparkling, leapt, somersaulted, and frolicked among the breakers; sails succeeded one another, from moment to moment, white and swollen, like the breasts, full of milk, of some Nereid seen above the wave. The coasts were dyed in fantastic colours; their folds, their clefts, their escarpments, caught the sun's rays in such a way as to produce the most marvellous, and unexpected effects, and offered us a constantly renewed panorama. Around four o'clock, we were in sight of Gibraltar, waiting for the quarantine officers, as they are termed, to visit, inspect our papers with tweezers, and check that we were not, by some chance, bearing in our pockets the germs of yellow-fever, blue- cholera, or black-plague.

Gibraltar's appearance disorientates the imagination utterly; we no longer know where we were or what we were viewing. Imagine an immense rock, or rather mountain, fourteen hundred feet high, which suddenly, abruptly, rises from the middle of the sea, on an isle so low and flat that it can barely be seen. Nothing prepares one for it, nothing explains it, it is unconnected to any upland chain; it is a monstrous monolith precipitated from the sky, a piece of some ruined planet which has fallen during a battle among the stars, a fragment of a broken world. Who placed it there? Only the deity, and eternity know. What further adds to the effect of this inexplicable rock is its shape: it looks like a vast, enormous, disproportionate, granite sphinx, such as might be have been carved by Titans who were also sculptors, and beside which the monstrous mortuary temples of Karnak, and the pyramids of Giza, possess the proportions of a mouse compared to an elephant. The elongation of its legs forms what is called the tip of Europe; the head, somewhat truncated, is turned towards Africa, which it seems to look at with a deep, dreamy attentiveness. What thoughts can this mountain contain, given its slyly meditative attitude? What riddle is it proposing or endeavouring to unravel? Its shoulders, loins and rump extend towards Spain in large nonchalant folds, in beautiful undulating lines, like those of a lion at rest. The city lies at the foot, almost imperceptible, a wretched detail dwarfed by its mass. The triple-deckers at anchor in the bay look like those toys from Germany, those small miniaturised models of ships, such as are sold at seaports; the yachts, like flies drowning in milk; even the fortifications are barely visible. However, the mountain has been excavated, mined, tunnelled, everywhere; it has a belly full of cannons, howitzers and mortars; it is full of

munitions designed for war. Here is the luxury and coquetry of the impregnable. But all these armaments offer only a few almost imperceptible contours to the eye, merging with the wrinkles in the rock, only a few holes through which the bronze mouths of the artillery pieces stealthily pass. In the Middle Ages, Gibraltar would have bristled with dungeons, towers, turrets, crenellated ramparts; instead of remaining at its foot, the fortress would have climbed the mountain, and rested like an eagle's nest on the highest ridge. The current batteries are level with the strait, which is narrow at this point, making free passage well-nigh impossible. Gibraltar, rightly known as the 'entrance gate' to the Mediterranean, was called by the Arabs *Jabal Tariq* (*named for the eighteenth-century Moorish leader*) from which its present name derives Its ancient name was Calpe. Abyla, in Africa, known to us as *Le Mont des Singes*, is on the opposite coast, close to the town of Ceuta, currently a Spanish possession, being the Brest and Toulon of the Peninsula and where the most hardened galley-slaves are sent. We could clearly see the lines of Abyla's escarpments, and its summit, shrouded in clouds despite the serenity of the rest of the sky.

Like Cádiz, Gibraltar, located on a peninsula at the entrance to a gulf, is only linked to the continent by a narrow strip of land termed 'neutral ground', on which customs barriers are established. On the mainland, San Roque is the final Spanish possession of note. Algeciras, whose whitewashed houses gleam against the universal azure like the silver belly of a fish above water, is precisely opposite Gibraltar, on the far side of the bay; in the midst of this splendid blue, Algeciras was conducting its own petty revolution; We could vaguely hear gunshots. crackling like grains of salt being thrown into the fire. The ayuntamiento even took refuge on our steamboat, where he began smoking a cigar as calmly as possible.

As our quarantine officers found no infection, we were surrounded by boats, and a quarter of an hour later were on land. The effect produced by the physiognomy of the city is most strange. In taking a step, you travel five hundred leagues; somewhat more than Tom Thumb and his famous boots. Earlier, one was in Andalusia; now one is in England. From the Moorish towns of the kingdom of Granada and Murcia, you suddenly arrive in Ramsgate; here are the brick houses with their gutters, their double doors, their sash windows, exactly as in Twickenham or Richmond. Go a little further, and you will find cottages with painted gates and fences. The walks and gardens are planted with ash-trees, birch, elms, and the green vegetation of the North, so different from those silhouettes of varnished sheet-metal that are passed off as foliage in southern countries. The English have so pronounced and individual a style that they present themselves in the same manner everywhere, and I really know not why they travel, since they transport all their habits with them, and carry their interiors on their backs, like snails. Wherever an Englishman finds himself, he lives exactly as if he were in London; he needs his tea, his rump-steaks, his rhubarb-tarts, his beer and his sherry if he is well, and his calomel purgative if he is unwell. By means of the innumerable boxes that he drags with him, the Englishman obtains everywhere the 'home comforts' necessary for his existence. How many things these honest islanders need to live, how much trouble they go to in order to be comfortable, and how I prefer Spanish sobriety and paucity to all these refinements and complications! For a long time, I had not seen those horrible bonnets on women's heads, those odious cardboard domes covered with a scrap of fabric, which are called hats, in the depths of which the fair sex bury their faces. in so-called civilised countries. I cannot

express the unpleasant sensation I felt at the sight of the first Englishwoman I met, a hat with a green veil on her head, walking like a grenadier, her large feet clad in large boots. It was not that she herself was ugly, on the contrary, but I was accustomed to the purity of breeding, the delicate lines of the Arabian steed, to an exquisite grace in the gait, an Andalusian charm and amiability, and this rectilinear figure, with her tin-plate countenance, half-dead physiognomy, and angular gestures, her precise and methodical outfit, her sanctimonious air, and lack of naturalness, produced a laughably sinister effect on me. It seemed to me that I was suddenly in the presence of the spectre of civilisation, my mortal enemy, and that this apparition meant that my dream of wandering freely was over, and that I was obliged to depart, never to return, for nineteenth-century life. Before this Englishwoman, I felt ashamed at my not wearing white gloves, spectacles, or patent leather shoes, and cast a confused look on the extravagant embroidery of my sky-blue peacoat. For the first time in six months, I understood that I was far from properly dressed, and appeared not the gentleman.

Those long British faces, those red-coated soldiers looking like automatons, facing the sparkling sky and the brilliant sea, are not in their rightful place; one comprehends that their presence is due to a surprise-attack, to a usurpation. They occupy, but they do not inhabit their city.

The Jews, rejected or frowned upon by the Spaniards who if they are no longer religious are still superstitiously prejudiced, abound in Gibraltar, which has become a place of heresy to the Spaniards since the English ‘unbelievers’ are there. The Jewish men, with Semitic profiles, traverse the streets, their gleaming sunburnt pates topped by the customary cap set towards the back of the head, dressed in worn robes narrow in width, and dark in colour: the women, often beautiful to the eye, and whose costume is more attractive than the men, wear black cloaks, the hoods bordered with scarlet, of a picturesque character. Encountering them made me think vaguely of the Bible, of Rachel at the well, of primitive scenes of patriarchal times, for, like all oriental peoples, they preserve in their elongated black eyes, and golden complexions, the mysterious echoes of a vanished world. There are also many Moroccans and Arabs from Tangier and the North-African coast in Gibraltar, where they run little shops selling perfumes, silken belts, slippers, fly-swatters, decorated leather cushions, and other small Barbaresque products. As we wished to shop for trinkets and curiosities, we were taken to visit one of the owners, who lived in the upper town, through stepped streets less English in form than those of the lower town, and allowing, at certain bends, views of the Gulf of Algeciras, magnificently lit by the last light of day. Entering the Moroccan’s house, we were enveloped in a cloud of oriental aromas: the sweet and penetrating perfume of rose-water met our nostrils, making us think of the mysteries of the harem, and the wonders of the *Thousand and One Nights*. The merchant’s sons, handsome young men of around twenty, were sitting on benches near the door, breathing the evening freshness. They were gifted with that purity of features, limpidity of gaze, and nonchalant nobility, that air of amorous and pensive melancholy, which are the attributes of pure lineages. The father had the full and majestic countenance of a Magian king. We considered ourselves ugly and petty next to this solemn fellow; and in the humblest of tones, hat in hand, asked him if he would deign to sell us a few pairs of yellow Moroccan slippers. He made a sign of acquiescence, and when we pointed out to him that the price was a little high, he replied in a grandiose manner in Spanish: ‘I never overcharge: that is a Christian

custom.' It is thus that our commercial mistrust renders us objects of contempt to uncivilised nations, who fail to comprehend that desire to earn a few more centimes which leads folk to commit perjury.

Our purchases made, we descended to Lower Gibraltar, and took a walk on a beautiful promenade planted with northern species of trees, interspersed with flowers, sentries, and cannons, where we viewed carriages and riders, absolutely as if we were in Hyde Park. All that was missing was the statue of the Duke of Wellington as Achilles. Fortunately, the English were unable to darken the sea or blacken the sky: the promenade is outside the city, looking towards the tip of Europe and towards *Le Mont des Singes*, the mountain of the monkeys. Gibraltar is the only place on our continent where, Barbary macaques, those friendly quadrumans live and multiply in the wild. Depending on how the wind is blowing, they move from one side of the rock to the other and thus serve as a barometer; it is forbidden to kill them under very severe penalties. As for me, I saw none, there; but the temperature of the place is hot enough for macaques and cercopithecidae, most sensitive to cold, to live without stoves and heaters. Abyla, on the African coast, if its modern name is to be credited, must enjoy a similar population.

Next day, we left this species of artillery park, and hotbed of contraband, and sailed for Málaga, which we already knew well, but which it gave us pleasure to see again, with its slender, white lighthouse, and the perpetual toing and froing within its crowded harbour. Viewed from the sea, the cathedral seems larger than the city, and the ruins of the ancient Arab fortifications, on the rocky slopes, produce a most Romantic effect. We returned to our inn of the Three Kings, where the kindly Dolores gave a cry of joy on recognising us.

We set sail again, on the morrow, weighed down by a cargo of raisins; and, as we had lost a little time, the captain resolved to ignore Almería, and push on to Cartagena.

We hugged the coast of Spain closely enough that it was never out of sight. The coast of Africa, receding with the widening Mediterranean basin, had long since vanished from the horizon. To port, we viewed a long series of bluish cliffs, with odd escarpments, perpendicular clefts, displaying here and there the white dots indicating a village, a lookout tower, or a customs officer's hut; to starboard, lay the open sea, sometimes gleaming, shaped by the current or the wind, sometimes a dull and matt azure, sometimes crystalline and translucent, sometimes with a trembling shimmer like a dancer's basquin, sometimes an opaque, oily grey, like mercury or molten tin: yielding an unimaginable variety of tones and aspects, the despair of painters and poets. A procession of red, white, and yellow sails, belonging to vessels of all sizes and all flags, brightened the eye, and removed whatever melancholy profound solitude engenders. A sea without a sail is the most melancholy and heartbreaking spectacle one can contemplate, on realising that there is not a single thinking being in so large a space, not a heart to understand the sublime spectacle! One barely perceptible white dot on the unplumbed, limitless blue, and the immensity is populated; there lies interest, drama.

Cartagena, which is called *Cartagena de Levante* to distinguish it from Cartagena in the Americas, occupies the depths of a bay, a sort of rocky funnel in which vessels are perfectly sheltered from every wind. There is nothing especially picturesque about its layout; the most distinctive features it left in our memory were two windmills silhouetted in black against a

background of open sky. Barely had we set foot in the boats to go ashore when we were assailed, not by porters to remove our luggage as in Cádiz, but by dreadful scoundrels praising the charms of a crowd of Balbinas, Casildas, Hilarias, and Lolas, so loudly that nothing of it could be understood.

Cartagena's appearance differs entirely from that of Málaga. As much as Málaga is cheerful, smiling, and lively, Cartagena is gloomy, sullen beneath its crown of bare and sterile rocks, as dry as the Egyptian hills whose flanks the pharaohs mined. The limewash has disappeared, the walls have returned to their original dark colours, the windows are defended by iron grilles with complicated bolts, and the houses, which are thus more forbidding, possess the prison-like air which distinguishes Castilian manor houses. However, without wanting to fall into the trap of the traveller who wrote in his notebook: 'All the women of Calais are cantankerous, redheaded, and hunchbacked,' simply because the hostess of his inn combined those three faults, we must say that we only saw, at these windows so well furnished with iron-bars, charming faces and the physiognomies of angels; perhaps that is why the iron-bars are fitted so closely. While waiting for dinner, we went to visit the maritime arsenal, an establishment designed in the most grandiose proportions, and today in a state of abandonment which is sad to see; the vast basins, the dry docks, all the inactive sites where another Armada might be built, are no longer in use. Two or three rough carcasses of vessels, like the skeletons of stranded sperm whales, rotted obscurely in one corner; thousands of crickets had taken possession of these large deserted buildings; one knew not where to place one's feet so as not to crush them; They made so much noise with their stridulations it was difficult to hear each other speak. Despite my professed love for crickets, a love I have expressed in prose and verse, I would have to agree there were a few too many.

From Cartagena, we sailed to Alicante, of which, according to a verse from *Les Orientales* by Victor Hugo, I had conceived, in my thoughts, infinitely too serrated a profile:

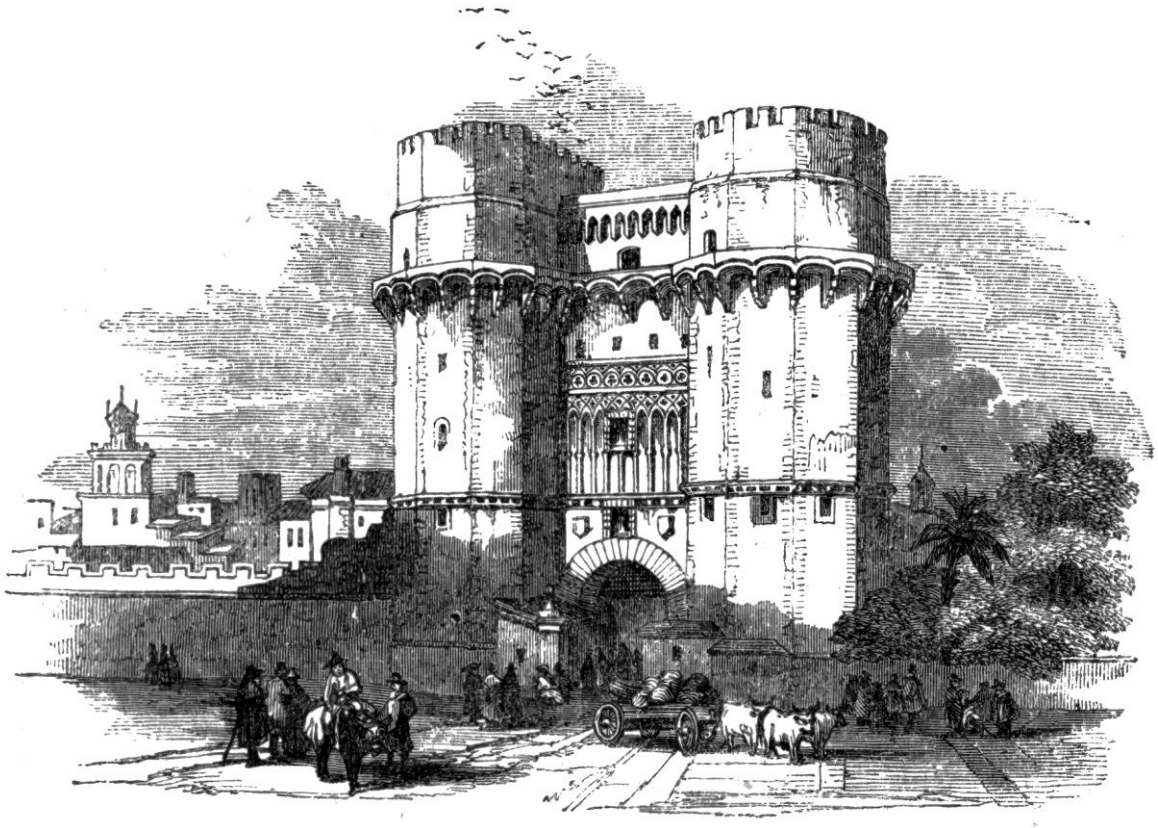
Alicante aux clochers mêle les minarets:

Alicante with its bell-towers mingles minarets.

Alicante, at least today, is unable now to display that admixture, which I acknowledge to be infinitely desirable and picturesque, given that, firstly, it has no minarets and, secondly, the tower of the only bell-tower is a very short and inconspicuous one. What characterises Alicante is the enormous rocky mount that rises from the centre of the city, which rock, magnificent in shape and colour, is topped with a fortress (*Sánta Barbara*) and flanked by a gatehouse suspended over the abyss in the most daring way. The town hall, or to grant it more local colour, the palace of the *Constitución,* is a charming and tasteful building. The Alameda, paved with stone, was shaded by two or three tree-lined avenues of trees quite fully-leafed for trees in Spain if their base is not standing in a pool of water. The houses stand tall and have a European look. I saw two women wearing sulphur-yellow hats, a threatening symptom. This is all I know of Alicante, where the steamboat only touched for the time necessary to take on freight and coal: a break which we took advantage of to have lunch on shore. As one might well imagine,

we did not neglect the opportunity to undertake a conscientious study of the local wine, which I found not to be as good as I had imagined, despite its incontestable authenticity; this was perhaps due to the taste of pitch imparted to it by the *bota* which contained it. The next stage would take us to Valencia, *Valencia del Cid*, as the Spanish say.

From Alicante to Valencia, the cliffs along the coastline continued to present bizarre shapes, and unexpected aspects; a square notch in the summit of a mountain, was pointed out to us, which seemed to have been made by the hand of man. The following day, towards morning, we anchored in front of El Grao: as the port, and its suburb of Valencia, is called, the quays extending half a league into the sea. The swell was quite heavy, and we arrived at the landing stage quite wet. There we took a *tartane* to travel into the city. The word *tartane* is usually understood in a maritime sense; the Valencian tartane is a box covered with oilcloth, equipped with two wheels, its chassis lacking a single spring. This vehicle seemed to us, to yield an effeminately soft ride compared to a *galera*; Monsieur Alexander-François Clochez's carriages are no kinder. We were surprised and embarrassed at feeling so comfortable. Large trees lined the road we followed, an amenity which we had long lost the habit of seeing.



Gate of Valencia

Valencia, as regards picturesqueness, corresponds but little to the idea one gains from the romances and chronicles. It is a large level city, confused and straggling in layout, and without the advantages that the disorder of their construction grants to old cities built on more uneven terrain. Valencia is located on a plain called La Huerta, in the midst of gardens and crops where perpetual irrigation maintains a freshness that is very rare in Spain. The climate is so mild that palm-trees and orange-trees grow in open ground next to Northern tree species. Valencia does a large trade in oranges, moreover; to measure them, they are passed through a ring, like cannonballs whose calibre one wishes to establish; those that fail to pass through are of the first grade. The Guadalaviar (*the Rio Turia, now diverted, west of the city*), crossed by five beautiful stone bridges, and bordered by a superb promenade, passes the city by, almost beneath the ramparts. The numerous bleedings of its veins for irrigation render its five bridges mere objects of luxury and ornamentation for three quarters of the year. The Puerta del Cid (*an old name for the Puerta de Quart*), through which one passes to go to reach the Guadalaviar promenade, is flanked by two large crenellated towers (*Torres de Quart*), quite fine in appearance.

The streets in Valencia are narrow, and lined with tall houses with a rather sullen aspect, on some of which one can still see a few crude and mutilated coats of arms; one can make out fragments of eroded sculpture, nail-less chimeras, nose-less women, and weapon-less knights. A lost Renaissance window, lodged in a dreadful wall of recently-constructed masonry, prompts the artist to gaze upwards from time to time while drawing from him a sigh of regret; these rare vestiges may be looked for in dark corners, in the depths of backyards, but Valencia, in truth, has a most modern appearance. The cathedral, of hybrid architecture, despite a gallery apse with full Romanesque arches, possesses nothing to attract the attention of the traveller after the wonders of Burgos, Toledo and Seville. A few finely-carved altarpieces, a painting by Sebastian del Piombo, and another by Jusepe de Ribera, called Lo Spagnoletto, done in his tender manner, whereby he tried to imitate Correggio, are all that is worth noting. Valencia's other churches, though numerous and rich, are built and decorated in the strange manner of rocaille ornamentation of which we have already given a description several times. One can only regret, when viewing all its extravagance, that so much talent and spirit was merely wasted and lost. *La Lonja de Seda* (Silk Exchange), in the market square, is a delightful Gothic monument; the large hall, its ceiling resting on rows of columns whose ribs twist in spirals of extreme delicacy, is of an elegance and cheerfulness of appearance rare in Gothic architecture, which was generally better suited to expressing melancholy than happiness. It is in La Lonja that carnival festivities and masked balls take place. To complete this description of the monuments, let me say a few words regarding the old convent of La Merced, where a large number of paintings have been gathered together, some mediocre, others plain bad, with only a few rare exceptions. What charmed me most at La Merced was a courtyard surrounded by a cloister, planted with palm-trees of a truly oriental grandeur and beauty, which shot like arrows into the clear air.

The real attraction of Valencia for the traveller is its people, or rather those of the Huerta, the fertile plain that surrounds it. The Valencian countrymen have a characteristic and unique mode of dress, which cannot have varied much since the Arab incursion, and which differs little from the present dress of the Moors of Africa. This costume consists of a shirt, loose trousers of heavy canvas tied with a red belt, and a green or blue velvet vest adorned with

buttons made of silver coins; the legs are enclosed in white wool cnemids or leggings bordered with a blue fringe, and leaving the knee and ankle exposed. For shoes, they wear *alpargatas*, sandals of woven rope, the soles of which are nearly an inch thick, and which are attached by means of ribbons like Greek buskins; their heads are usually shaved in the Oriental manner and almost always wrapped in a brightly coloured kerchief; on top of this scarf a small shallow hat with turned-up brim is placed, embellished with velvet, silk-tassels, foil, and tinsel. A piece of colourful fabric, called a *capa de muestra*, decorated with rosettes of yellow ribbons, which hangs over the shoulder, completes this outfit, which is full of nobility and character. In the corners of his cape, which he arranges in a thousand ways, the Valencian keeps his money, his bread, his watermelon, and his *navaja* (knife); it is both a shoulder-bag and a cloak for him. It should of course be understood that here we are describing the full costume, worn on festive days; on ordinary, working days, the Valencian wears little more than his shirt and underclothes: then, with his enormous black sideburns, sunburnt face, fierce gaze, and bronzed arms and legs, he truly has the look of a Bedouin, especially if he undoes his kerchief and reveals his shaved head, blue with fresh stubble. Despite Spain's pretensions to Catholicism, I always found it difficult to believe that these men were not Muslims. It is probably to their fierce looks that the Valencians owe their reputation as an evil people (*mala gente*) a characteristic attributed to them by the other provinces of Spain: I was told twenty times that in the Huerta of Valencia, when you wanted to rid yourself of someone, it was not hard to find a countryman who, for five or six duros, would take care of the matter. This seemed to me pure slander; I have often met people in the countryside with dreadful visages who have always greeted me most politely. One evening, we went astray, and almost had to sleep under the stars, the city gates being closed on our return, yet nothing untoward happened to us, though it had been in darkness for some while, and Valencia and its neighbourhood were in rebellion.

By notable contrast, the women among these European Kabyles are pale, blonde, *fair and rounded*, like the Venetians; they have a sweet, sad smile on their lips, a tender blue light in their eyes; one could not imagine a more perfect contrast with the men. Thus, the black devils of the paradise of La Huerta have white angels for wives, whose lovely hair is held back by a large-toothed comb or traversed by long needles decorated at their ends with silver balls or beads. In the past, the Valencian women wore a delightful national costume reminiscent of that of Albanian women; unfortunately, they have abandoned it, in favour of appalling Anglo-French costumes, dresses with leg-of-mutton sleeves, and other such abominations. It should be noted that women are the first to abandon national dress; there are few in Spain, other than among the masses, who preserve the old costume. This lack of taste in relation to dress is surprising on the part of the often-coquettish sex; but astonishment ceases when we realise that it is a question of their being fashionable, and not that of appearing at their most beautiful. Such women will always find the most wretched scraps of clothing charming, if those scraps are the height of fashion.

We had been in Valencia about ten days, waiting for another steamboat to pass by, for the weather had prevented departures, and disrupted the schedules. Our curiosity was now satisfied, and we only aspired to return to Paris and see our parents once more, our friends, our beloved boulevards, and the river; I believe, God forgive, that I may even have harboured a secret desire to attend the vaudeville; in short, civilised life, forgotten for six months,

imperiously demanded our presence. We longed to read a daily newspaper, sleep in our own bed, and were filled with a thousand other philistine fantasies. At last, a packet-boat from Gibraltar appeared, which picked us up, and bore us to Port-Vendres, touching at Barcelona where we only stayed a few hours. Barcelona's aspect resembles Marseille, and the Spanish style was scarcely apparent there; the buildings are large, regular, and, except for the baggy blue-velvet trousers and large red caps of the Catalans, one might think oneself in a French city. Despite its Rambla planted with trees, and its beautifully aligned streets, Barcelona has a somewhat staid, stiff air, like all cities too tightly corseted in a web of fortifications.

The cathedral is very fine, especially the interior, which is dark, mysterious, almost frightening. The organs are Gothic in style and enclosed by large panels covered in paintings: a Saracen head grimaces violently under the pendant which supports them. Charming fifteenth century chandeliers, open-worked like reliquaries, hang from the ribs of the ceiling. Leaving the church, you enter a beautiful cloister of the same period, a place of reverie and silence, whose half-ruined arcades have the greyish tones of ancient Northern architecture. *Calle de la Platería* (*Silversmiths' Street*) dazzles the eyes, the windows of its storefronts glittering with jewellery, in particular enormous clustered earrings like bunches of grapes, heavy, massively rich, and somewhat barbaric, but producing a majestic effect; these are bought mainly by well-off countrywomen.

The next day, at ten in the morning, we entered the little sheltered bay at the end of which sits Port-Vendres. We were in France. What can I say? As I set foot on the soil of my homeland, I felt tears in my eyes, not of joy, but of regret. The vermilion towers, the silver peaks of the Sierra Nevada, the oleanders of the Generalife, the long moist velvety glances, the lips like carnations in bloom, those small feet and slender hands, all this returned so vividly to my thoughts, that it seemed to me this France, in which I sought a mother once more, was nonetheless a land of exile. The dream was over.

The End of Gautier's Travels in Spain