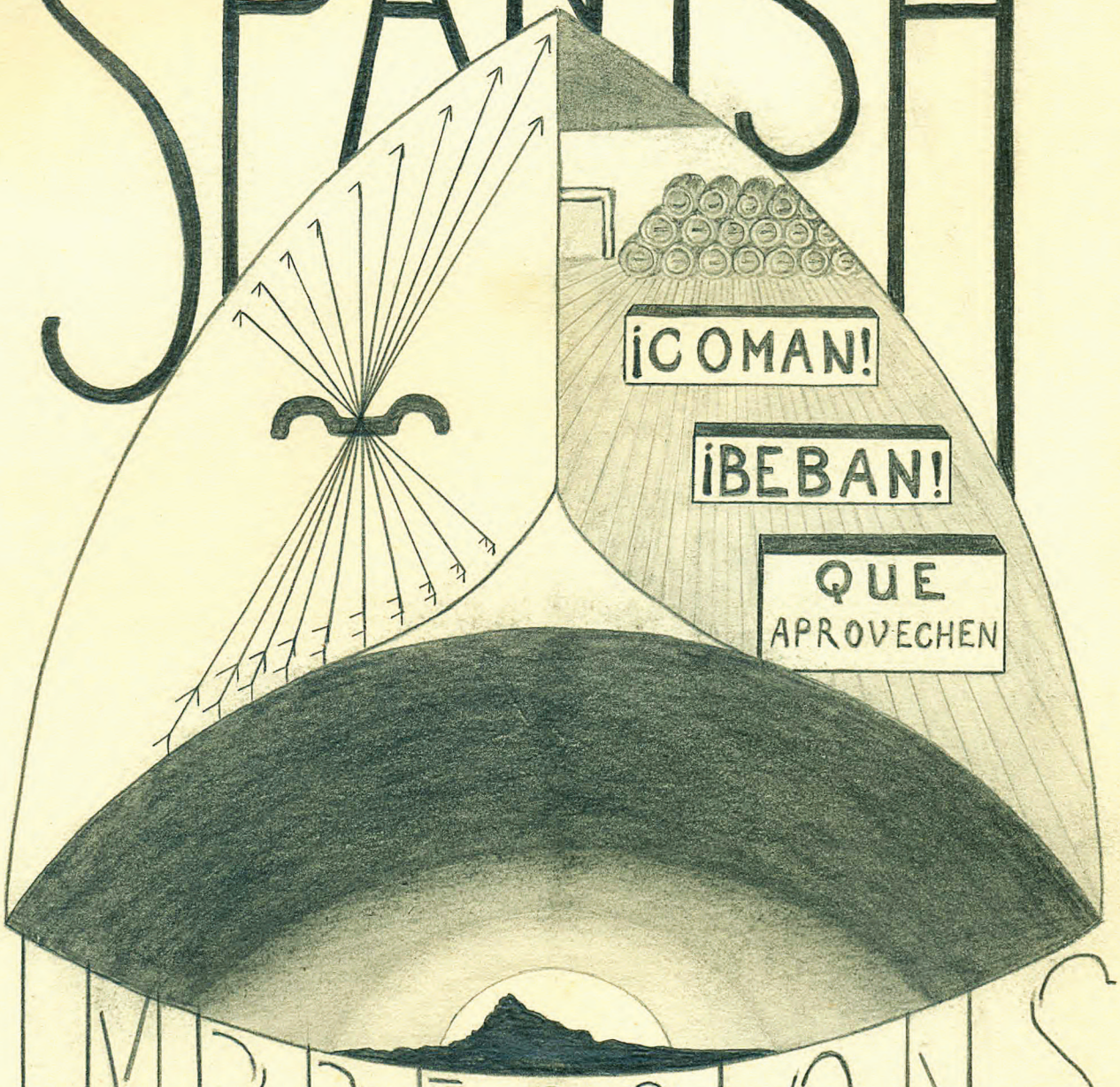
SPANISH IMPRESSIONS,

A DIARY,

BY

BRUNO SCARFE.

SPANISH



IMPRESSIONS

C O N T E N T S

ILLUSTRATIONS

Impressions of Spain.

My journey there was interesting but uneventful. I travelled by liner from Liverpool to Santander, the vessel being called the 'Reina del Mar'. We left the Prince's Stage, Birkenhead, at about half past nine at night, and on the Sunday morning we entered the bay of Santander, where it was raining hard. The 'Reina del Mar' is a new ship, and this was its second crossing; everything was new and clean, unsullied by passing generations of travellers from all over the world. The Bay of Biscay was a good test of the ship's ability to ride the heavy swell and the rough waves of that notorious coastline, and it succeeded admirably; there was hardly a movement. The food was excellent at all times, and there was always more than enough to eat and drink. I dreaded being sea-sick, but I was ~~alright~~ WELL throughout, and the day's stop at La Pallice - the port for La Rochelle in France - provided a good day's rest on terra firma: but it rained all the time.

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Sunday 29th of July.

I slept well [illegible], and I only just awoke in time to attend Mass on board the 'Reina del Mar', in the nearby lounge. Soon after we anchored in the bay of Santander: the town was rain-swept, and it looked very bedraggled. At eleven o'clock I stepped ashore, and at once went in search of my new lodgings, which I found easily enough, only a few houses from where I had been living during the previous summer. In the same family, there was an Italian girl from Naples, who was studying here for a diploma at the summer-school of Menéndez y Pelayo, and a French girl from Paris, daughter of the ~~Argentinian~~ French ambassador to the Argentine; they both spoke excellent Spanish, and often left me very bewildered with their rich vocabulary. On arriving, I had a quick cup of coffee, drunk beneath the scrutinising stare of both the family and our guests, after which I went out in search of Celia, the girl with whom

I had spent the preceding summer in Santander. The rain continued undisturbed by my presence, and the streets, last year always dry and dusty, were full of shallow, muddy puddles. Many of the buildings and blocks of flats which were last year still under construction were now inhabited; the town seemed to all appearances to be thriving and prosperous, very new - as it WAS all rebuilt after a disastrous fire which swept the town in 1942 - and popular. All the roads and pavements were crowded, and it was difficult to move. The flat in which I was to live was one of the older ones left unscathed by the fire; the wooden panelling in the dining-room and in my own room too reminded me of Gilling Castle; in all the corners there were statues and desks, pictures and soft armchairs: only the lavatory remained truer to Spanish tradition. Even there, though, the floor was dustless and gleaming, and I never once met one of the flea species, a satanic animal which had rendered my last visit very uncomfortable throughout; this year I came armed with caskets of powder designed in England for the protection of patriots travelling in distant lands; the fleas may well have taken fright of this on my arrival. Despite the rain and everything people usually have to say about Spaniards in England, they seemed to me to be as gay as ever and as well-off as before; the men escorted their beautiful spouses through the crowds, and all was courtesy. The shops were fine, filled with French and English products, dresses, perfumes: only the sun was missing.

I had lunch with the family at the very Spanish hour of 2.30 p.m. It consisted of a well-known British formula - eggs and chips -, followed by 'heart of the artichoke' and fruit. After lunch I went in search of my Spanish friend Casuso, but he was not at home. In order to reach his house, one has to walk through the oldest remaining part of Santander. In this part of the old town, and as in all Spanish towns, we can see how much attention the Spanish people pay to their attire, their own personal appearances, and especially that of their children. All the people living in this part are poor, and old people predominate; yet despite the grime and dirt of the houses and streets, where rags and tattered papers practically coat the ground, where broken bottles and evil smells are often all too common, the children are all beautifully dressed. This was a Sunday; but I saw the same phenomenon every day of the week, and it was

a cheering sight. The steeply climbing road, which eventually dominates the whole bay and town on its right, was cracked and oily; the pavements were smashed, the old houses decrepit; the background was one of soaring modern flats, not all completed, shooting proudly out of the ruins of the old and tottering rubble. These new flats, as throughout most of Spain, were nearly all at least seven or more stories high. Built of small red bricks of shallow proportions, hollow and simple, often but not necessarily covered over in a layer of grey cement, they were always beautiful and elegant.

Later in the day I again went in search of my friend Casuso, and this time with better luck. He proudly showed me all the modernisation which he had introduced into his home - rayon lighting, marble flagstones for the kitchen, a new white marble kitchen-range and other minor oddities. For an hour or so I discussed my plans for visiting the Spanish interior, and then I accompanied him and his wife to the centre of the town, where they were about to see a performance of the famous Antonio, ballet-dancer of Spain. Here, with time in hand before the performance was due to start, he invited me to a cup of coffee, which we took at one of the pavement cafés of the main street. Here, as during the previous year, I soon became very much aware of the typical Spanish desire and tradition of everyone's going out for the evening; nearly the whole populace comes out like this at night; towards nine o'clock at night the streets are at their fullest. Everyone puts on his or her best clothes, not drab dark blues or greys as in England, but light yellows, pale blues and greens, reds, dresses adorned richly with a flurry of exotic flowers, light and airy, rustling and swirling as at a dance, providing an irresistible fascination. The elder ladies strutted along, clinging affectionately to their husbands' weary arms; girls scampered about in groups of five and six or more; boys also in groups, though smaller, strode about earnestly discussing some acquaintance, some event of the day. The pavements were crowded, the air was warm, the sky dark, the shop-fronts brilliant in their blaze of lights. To all appearances this might have been a British bank-holiday at Brighton, except that this was at night-time, not at mid-day, that the colour was richer, the people more latin, brown-skinned, dark-eyed. In England at this time the streets are usually deserted, the shops closed, and the towns

show no signs of life - except at the occasional cinema door: here life was at its highest, pleasure at its greatest. Spaniards live by night, the English if at all, by day; life at night is an illusion, unreal to a certain extent, homely but make-belief, whilst life by day is very much down to earth, serious and real. The English work hard and are thrifty, thus few go short of money, while Spaniards work hard as well, but spend much of their salaries in a few glorious nocturnal hours, involving fine dresses and countless drinks.

At 7.30 p.m. the Reina del Mar left the town for Coruña and Valparaiso; all links with the past are broken for a few weeks at least, until my money comes to an inevitable end.

Monday 30th of July.

I slept for the first time for about five months in a soft and reasonably spacious bed - in a room unshared by any but myself: the blankets were light and the air warm throughout the night. I rose and dressed at eight o'clock, and had the traditional continental breakfast of coffee and a roll; I missed the English breakfast - even a school one - every day of my stay in Spain and my subsequent passage through France.

At nine I went out, but the streets were empty; there was hardly a soul to be seen; only towards mid-day is there any genuine sign of life in a Spanish town. The shops were open, but empty of both goods and most of their staff: there were of course no customers at that time of the day. The cafés were also open, but deserted, and the chairs still decked the table-tops; here and there a harrassed waiter was attempting to tidy his premises, remove the litter of the previous night, set the tables and chairs in order. I made first for the Bank, where I changed £27 worth of my scanty traveller's cheques, reserving my return-journey money to be changed at some later date; it took about half an hour to change them, as I was constantly being shown from one counter to another, being handed slips of paper to pass on, and waiting in newer and longer and slower queues. I succeeded at last, and then went for what I regarded as a well-earned coffee to a café which I had frequented during my previous visit to Spain. It was nearly ten o'clock, but the waiters were still in bed, and the maid who served me grumbled at having to work at that uncouth time of day - when

she very originally claimed she preferred to sleep. Then, having hastily gulped down a swarthy complexioned mixture of black coffee and milk scum, I returned to Cuca's, my hostess of Santander. I wrote a card home, assuring my parents at the other end that I was still alive, and little else; I also attempted to straighten out my finances, and work out a possible date for my departure to the interior.

I went to the Post-Office and posted my card home; on my way out I was struck by the agreeable sight of the city gardens in full bloom, and at the same time in full sunshine - a rare occurence this year. These gardens are, I suppose, the Spanish equivalent to our park with its green turf and weeping willows or other simpler trees, set out as a rule apart from the main thoroughfares of the town. Here the cars rolled by, a bare yard or two from luxuriant tropical palm trees; instead of the green turf and the trees, there were concrete paths bordered with head-high plants, crimson-leaved, brilliant red of petal, and of vast proportions. Their stems were thick and furry, soft and strong; every few yards these rich flower beds were interspersed ~~by~~ WITH obelisk-like palms, luscious, dark green, massive, motionless. Amidst the flowers fountains played day and night; not delicate and Parisian, but heavy and massive; not only practical in this sense, but also in that they were memorials to the dead. Not only is this part of the town decked with trees, but every pavement and street of the town has them by the side, and this also in almost every normal Spanish town. These are not only intended for pleasure and ornamentation, but also to provide fresh air and help to keep the usual summer dryness rather wetter than nature would allow.

In the evening I decided to call in at the annual fair, a temptation too great to be resisted. As I had foreseen, everything was fantastically colourful, noisy and gay: but there was a predominant lack of imagination. The fair seemed to consist mainly of two or three types of stalls: in the one, which was by far the most common, people could buy a small selection of very delicious fritters and other nutty comestibles. Then there were those, as in every country, were merry-go-rounds and childrens' amusements predominated; finally, there were innumerable stalls devoted almost entirely to various, though very closely related, types of shooting, with cognac to be drunk on the spot as almost the only prize - and I dislike the stuff.

There was however one redeeming feature; there were two stalls dedicated solely to literature: in one there were for sale normal thrillers and Wild Western books, newspapers and periodicals of a lighter and more frivolous nature: in the other there were for sale only books of a more classic bent - books on drama, poetry, the evolution of the novel in Europe, histories of Spain and the world, many volumes of Shakespeare in translated copies, and Don Quixotes by the dozens. These meritorious tomes were all for sale at slightly reduced prices, and a large proportion of them were second-hand. I have never seen anything quite as worthy as a book-stall in any English fair, yet the English are certainly by far the more literate of the two races. As always, once a thing revered becomes a commonplace read by all, it loses its popularity; when everyone can read, then the desire to read dwindles. In Spain there are many who can only read with difficulty; they adore books, for as yet they have not explored their many hidden corners, and never know what they will find next. In a Spanish town, bookshops are very frequent, and the books are usually of a high standard. This book-stall was very popular, and it took me an exasperatingly long time to penetrate the admiring crowd of customers. Again, however, I was struck by a certain lack of imagination: Spain of to-day can boast of no well-known writers, poets, novelists; a large majority of the books on sale were, I soon discovered, translations of Dickens, Tolstoy, Turgeniev, Lamartine, Musset, and an infinite variety of other foreign, non-Spanish books. It is a sad truth: Spain's literature depends for its fame on its rich past, on its now far-distant Golden Age, on the days of Columbus and Cervantes. Everywhere the atmosphere was gay and light, yet not as brutish or fierce as one is generally led to believe in England. I was not very impressed by Spanish traffic, which did its best throughout the evening to make any foreigner's life a peril should he so much as step for a moment beyond the final booths and caravans of the fair. The fair was situated between the port wharves and a road: cars and lorries were constantly racing past on either side, where, not unnaturally, anyone not desirous of remaining any longer within the fair itself would retreat for a while to rest from the noise and the crowds. Every minute, with a roar of hooters and brakes, heavy home-bound lorries would cruise happily down the centre of these roads, driving everyone willy-nilly to the sides. I

was not amused. I could only admire the fleeing Spaniards for their unusual turn of speed; they can move when it becomes very urgent to do so. At supper I had a long talk with Señor Peque, brother of my hostesss, on politics. I asked him for his opinions on Franco; he seemed reluctant to speak, but I eventually discovered that he was a member of the Falangist party, that is Franco's side. The Falange believe in strong Party discipline, and as a strong political party, unsplit by quarrels, it is very powerful. I asked him if he would rather that someone else rule in Spain, and what his opinions were on monarchy; he simply replied that at present there would be no-one capable of holding such a position competently, even were it offered him. He pointed out, however, that in such a country as Spain, with a populace such as it is, a ruler can spring up overnight; this person, were he to appear, might quite possibly come from the army. Yet even this is unlikely, as Franco held terrific prestige in the army which he led in wartime, and which put him into power afterwards; he holds all the reins in his hands. He went on to say that in fact Franco is unlikely ever to resign - except to become an almost as powerful Prime-Minister serving a titular Monarchy. In Spain, he said, it little matters what party a man comes from, the Falange or the Communist party, the Republicans or the Monarchy; if he has personality and leadership, whatever his creed, he will succeed. A ruler would be judged on his own merits, not on those of his supporters - for Spain will always remain a home for the Dictator, who will always hold supreme power. Should Franco die suddenly, and were no leader forthcoming, then there would be a meeting between a special comnitee, consisting of one Ecclesiastic, one member of the Cortes, and one from the armed forces; between them they would have to decide on the future ruler of the country: the final choice of these three democratically elected judges would be subject to ratification by the Cortes itself. The Falange seems to be more or less indifferent to the whole idea of a Monarchy: for them, a monarch would not necessarily have to come from any existing Royal Family, although he would not be prevented from doing so by law.

Tuesday 31st of July.

I was obliged to spend most of the morning indoors, at any moment expecting

a deluge from above, where British weather was still lurking in the clouds. I firstly tried to work out some possible route to follow in my explorations to the interior, and then, after lunch, spent some time thinking outside a pavement café. I was struck by the rareness of non-mechanised traffic, which in the course of almost an hour only consisted of one horse-drawn cart, a donkey, and two bullocks with a cart of fodder; nothing else. I had always been led to believe that Spain herself possessed very little in the way of mechanised vehicles, that all the traffic was either of French or Englich origin. Spain in truth is little behind the rest of Europe as regards this aspect of life; her transport is mechanised, though there is less of it than in other countries. Other European countries have had a very strong influence on Spain, especially America, and Spain has not shrunk away from all these offers of aid; she willingly imports both ideas and articles. Spanish industry is rapidly expanding; her railways are intending to be modernised - which at least shows a certain amount of ambition, and she imports a vast amount of foreign machinery every day for her new State industries. The only danger now lies in her mental approach to the European way of life, and the usual European way of using these benefits of science; she might well react against what have for long been regarded elsewhere as commonplaces of the industrial world, and then there would be some drastic surprises. With a quickening tempo of industry, the 'mañana'of today cannot hope or expect to survive tomorrow. Will Spain survive this rapid changeover from her traditional and cautious manner of living: will the campesino, with his still much-used oxen and scythe, readily become an ideal ciudadano, with his car and position of responsibility in the State factories ? Will there be a reaction to this rushing revolution, this industrialisation imported from strange and more culturally developed lands? As in Egypt, the temptation, when handed arms and wealth, is to be arrogant and abuse all one has been given.

While waiting at this café for nothing in particular to happen, and beginning to feel rather bored at the weather and other unalterable facts of life, I decided to succumb to the gentle temptation of having my shoes cleaned for me, an unusual luxury at school or at home. I beckoned, and set him to work: the limpiabota worked with a will. He sat about three inches from the ground on a tiny stool, which he carried with him in the company

of a similar miniature wooden box, which served at one and the same time as a foot-rest for the customer, and as a chest of drawers for himself. In this box he kept all the articles of his trade: several dusters of antique origin, several brushes, tins of what struck me as being varnish, and other bottles of dark, thick liquids. The dark-faced limpiabota set my foot on the raised pedestal - where I constantly dreaded getting cramp - and brushed, polished, almost washed my shoes with his strong smelling liquids. He is a man entirely independent of any master; he works when he wants, when he needs to, and where he likes. It is customary,however, for a limpiabota to spend most of his life in one town, even in one particular part of the town, frequenting a few special cafés, where he will become very well known, an accepted landmark. His equipment is simple and cheap, his skill comes quickly and with but little practice; once a limpiabota, always a limpiabota; once trained in such a job where absolute freedom is enjoyed, there is little that can entice him to change it for another, more regular, more tiring one. He is not restricted by factory regulations, he is not subjected to any form of discipline, to the caprices of unions or employers; this is a job which should most appeal to the individualism of the Spanish temperament, to the anarchism of the Spanish character. I asked this limpiabota how long he had been in the trade; for thirty-one years, he told me - and he did not seem to me to be much over forty. I also discovered that he had spent his whole life, according to Spanish tradition, in this home town of Santander; he had served this particular café for over twelve years, and this part of the town ever since he had first set up int the trade. This limpiabota seemed keen on his work; he rubbed exhaustingly for five minutes, and then only charged sixpence; and my shoes had not been exactly clean.

Later I was invited to a coffee with Don Miguel, brother of my hostess, at this same café, where we stayed for a long time. He seemed well up in English affairs, and for a time we discussed nothing but the death-penalty, which he thought should stay. He also instigated the subject, which I later found out came inevitably in any normal conversation, of Spanish women,and girls in particular. All Spaniards, including the women themselves, have a very high opinion of their women, their exquisite

girls; I reserved my judgement, rather to his indignation. He went on to ask whether in England it was the done thing to have coffee and cognac outside after lunch, towards half past three in the afternoon. I answered that, if anything, we might have some tea, possibly coffee, towards two in the afternoon, but that cognac would be an unlikely drink, especially at three-thirty in one's office - where I supposed one would probably be at that time. Here the café was crowded and noisy; no-one seemed at all interested in going to his or her work. In Spain one works from ten in the morning, or at the earliest nine-thirty, until two in the afternoon. Then, if so inclined, again from four-thirty to seven: in so honest a country, such matters are left to one's own discretion, I gathered. The idea of a real caballero working is still rather nauseous to the Spaniard; it is very condescending of him to turn up regularly for his work, and most of them often skip a day or two per week. Work for a Spaniard only means some more money, and they are not very interested in such unrealistic affairs. It is usually left to the wife, short of money wherewith to provide the next meal, to remind her husband of his marital duties towards her and the household. Several times during my stay in Santander I was astonished to hear Cuca reprimanding Don Miguel at lunchtime for having just got up. In this respect Don Miguel was very much the Spaniard of tradition, and also in that he was rarely narrow-minded on any point, or evenunduly prejudiced against England: he was always willing to listen to a different way of looking at and judging things, and although he might still disagree at the end, he was always interested to hear that not everything was done in other lands in the same way as in his own Spain. He was receptive in argument, and always suggested alternatives when in trouble; he seemed to be seeking an ideal all the time, as do all Spaniards, who often find themselves at sea in so practical and narrow a world.

In the evening I went for a short stroll alongside the quays before going out with Don Miguel, who had promised to show me something very, very Spanish, which he thought I might like. The evening was not particularly fine, as it had been overcast for most of the day; nevertheless, when the sun had shone brilliantly for a while during the previous day, a haze had formed over the bay, which prevented one from being able to

make out many details of the other shore. To-night, on the contrary, every detail of the distant side, three and a half kilometres away, was visible, seeming indeed to detach itself from the sombre, olive-coloured mountain towering above. Every roof, each white and gleaming wall, field and tree, glared fiercely through the peaceful evening twilight. I admired this further shore, which I had never visited, and which seemed now of its own accord to be approaching ever nearer for me to behold; the colours were pure, the shapes simple, harmonious, unspoilt. I walked slowly on, towards the smaller fishing harbour, where I found the fishermen at their evening meal. On board their tiny, picturesque, fragile-looking smacks, were small groups of relaxing, chatting, sleeping sailors; all appeared very tired. The tide was only half in, and these dainty vessels were left far below the harbour walls, rocking gently and playfully on the incoming swell. Grey smoke curled lazily past the skinny mastheads, through puny chimneys barely a foot high. It was fish for supper, and an agreeable smell rose from below; besides this there was bread, thick and golden as it lay on the dark and greasy boards; it did not have long to wait. There were nearly a hundred boats at rest, all motionless, occasionally swinging an inch one way, bobbing slightly at the prow, with the green water gleaming between them. This must have been the most welcome, care-free hour of the day; it was no longer raining, there was no furious noise of breaking waves, no shouts of weary men trying to make themselves understood despite the wind and the spray. There was something touching in their attitude of repose, so well-earned, so brief, so wonderful; in their weary, swarthy faces at rest for the first time for days.

Don Miguel had said that he would show me something typically Spanish: I was not really prepared for what in fact he had in store for me. He led me through the newer part of Santander, upwards, towards one of the older quarters which dominated the centre of the town. The roads and houses here were not in ruins, nor were they recent however; they were dark-fronted, slightly grimed with age and smoke, and the streets were narrower than elsewhere. Most of the people whom one met here were either sailors or fishermen, workmen, or woman completing the evening shopping.

Finally we entered a taberna, from the exterior similar to any other café of the town: but slightly different inside. I was most surprised at what I saw, especially as I was already familiar with a large variety of Spanish inns, and other drinking houses. The ceiling of the room that faced us on entering was hung with rows of large white slabs of ham; the walls were decked with innumerable Spanish wine-skins, black with age and use. The air was thick with smoke, fumes, heat; the room crowded with men of all callings and ages, though they were for the most part only ordinary street workmen, all dressed in dark blue smocks, drinking. Everyone was drinking, with his wine-skin held carefully an inch or so away from his mouth, staring upwards, watching the rich liquid cascading down, down into his already not-so-parched throat. The noise was tremendous; when not busy drinking, everyone talked, shouted, sang, danced, swayed giddily from side to side; some sat groaning, pallid, in the corners, too drunk to speak or move; everyone had had a few drops too many: the atmosphere itself was intoxicating. Later, when we returned home, Don Miguel told me that I had been unfortunate not to see a fight or a brawl, which was the usual thing there as the hours moved on and the wine flowed more freely. This first room was only a counter for quick drinks, where people usually stood up for most of the time. We left this and passed into a second and far larger one, where everyone was seated. This room was cleaner and the air fresher, for here people were more concerned with eating than with drinking alone. The decorations were more permanent, and more interesting; the walls on either side of the door through which we had passed in order to enter were lined with vast barrels of wine, whose ends were painted over with fascinating designs and pictures. On one there was a picture of a vast black cat, 'à l'art nouveau', as Evelyn Waugh might well have said. On another there was a chart with the signs of the zodiac, on yet another a vast, monstrous, human face which glared uneasily at you. One cask was painted over with the figures of two ballet-dancers, on a smaller one there was a wild interpretation of Bacchus at work. Each barrel had its design, its decorations, painted there in the course of years by passing artists who, inspired by the landlord's wine, and possibly short of money, had spontaneously set to work on a barrel, leaving there the token of his

trade, his presence there, his pleasure. There were, altogether, nearly forty casks in all, raeching from the wooden, boarded floor to the white-washed ceiling above. This ceiling was very high, up, being supported in three places by massive timber struts, which rose from the floor in the centre of the room. The walls were roughly plastered, the stones knit together with cream-coloured mortar. Along these walls hung ornaments of brasswork, brass jugs, pitchers, plates, and also local pottery. Everyone was busy eating, men and women, old and young, Spaniards for the most part, with some Italians, French people, and a curious Chinese-looking woman draped heavily from head to foot. At some tables there were only two or three people, at others there were as many as nine or ten; young men, flushed of face, caressed their fair ones; men were shouting, laughing, tossing off whole jugs or 'porons' of dark red wine, throwing bread at one another in jest and, in a word, making very merry. We took a table here, and Don Miguel ordered something for us to eat and drink; he bade me try my hand at drinking from a poron, which I did successfully - simply because I feared to arouse everyone's rather loud curiosity. Every other attempt that I made as the evening wore on became successively worse, until I eventually stopped. Everyone here was free; there were not only ordinary workmen from the streets and factories, from the boats and the docks, but office-workers, typists, businessmen, bankers, lawyers, doctors. Don Miguel went to great pains to point out that in Spain there was little in the way of class distinction; he said that a duke or a doctor was free to frequent a similar taberna, without in the least way incurring social discredit or a taint to his character. He spent a long time trying to convince me that Britain's political decline was due to her system of colonialism, where the colonisers rarely mixed with the natives of the country, or even made firm friends with them. He insisted that the whole idea of having colonies, as far as Britain was concerned, was in order to make more money - or out of greed. As far as England was concerned, the merits of a colony were judged largely on the financial prospects it could offer; the Spaniards on the other hand claimed that, although they had lost many of their colonies, they still retained a very deep affection from the natives of these lands, into which they had poured and

drawn not only money and financial aid, but love, friendship, affection; they had given their blood and toil so as to succour their colonies, they had inter-married, worked together, lived together. Spain's relations with her colonies should, he said, be judged in blood and love, not in money and profit. Meanwhile we ate asparagus, a whole plateful; also, at the same time, a type of local fish in tomatoe; cheese and bread concluded the meal, all washed down ~~throughout~~ with light-coloured red wine. In this Spanish taberna I was free to look and stare: no-one takes offence. Everything looked unreal, as it was so fundamentally opposed to anything English, to English social tradition, custom, practice. The people were so happy here, half-tipsy, flushed; the women were gleeful, the men boisterous. Don Miguel ended by proposing that, should I ever have any difficulty in telling a girl some news, a secret 'du coeur', and were the girl Spanish, I ought to bring her here to a Spanish taberna and set some red wine before her; all restraint dissappears soon afterwards, all embarrassment fades away to a shadow of its former self. We spent about an hour and a half here before returning, after a cooling walk, homewards, and to bed.

Wednesday 1st of August 1956.

I rose at a quarter past eight, and had breakfast soon afterwards. The preceding night did not have any disastrous effect on me and, except that I felt unusually cheerful, I was none the worse for the experience. I allow that various members of the family pointed out in the course of the day that I had sung quite undisturbed for an hour and a half during the previous night, when I had returned from the taberna; but that was all, and they assured me that it was of no consequence.

The morning was uneventful, and after the previous evening I now began to feel rather bored at my ordinary personal existence. I walked very leisurely along the wharves of Santander, enjoying the sight of large Spanish and French liners under repair, of tugs and cargo boats at work unloading or undergoing repairs. The warship 'Hernán Cortés', which I had watched entering the bay on the previous evening, was now moored alongside one of the quays; the sailors were at their continental breakfast of bread and butter, which they ate whilst polishing and

painting the worn and scruffy brasswork and other parts of the deck. Some of the sailors, those no doubt who were off duty, lounged over the sides of the destroyer and chatted with Santanderinas on the quays below. On another, non-naval vessel, the sailors were also at work themselves painting the funnel, the rigging, the bridge; this boat was laden with very fine coal dust, so I was agreeably surprised at the sailors' keeness in even attempting to keep such a ship clean. Further along the dockside a crane was hoisting giant tree trunks onto a lorry; I arrived just in time to see the third and last trunk being lowered into position on this diminutive, pre-war, crumbling wreck of the Spanish highways. Once in place, the lorry wheezed and groaned for about ten minutes, groaned heavily, moved one foot forwards, stopped, and started again at a snail's pace; five minutes later it had gone a hundred yards and showed very evident signs of imminent collapse.

I noticed all this as I sauntered at a pleasant Spanish speed towards the Station, where I intended to find out the times of trains from Santander to Leon. After discovering all that I wanted to know, I returned home, and then made for the Magdalena, the beach nearest the town itself. I arrived at about eleven o'clock; at one o'clock the sun succeeded in forcing a way through the dense white clouds which had followed me every day of my visit to Santander. The clouds did not dispel, but moved slowly away towards the mountains on the other side of the bay, where they always retire if not actually over the town of Santander. I slept heavily on the sand until lunchtime, enjoying the first real Spanish warmth of that summer; at two o'clock I walked home. I did the same in the afternoon, too tired to do anything exciting, and already believing that I knew all there was to know about the town. In the morning the beach had been crowded, mainly with inhabitants of the town or at least Spaniards; in the afternoon it was only half-full, and most of the people were foreigners or Spanish families from Madrid or the provinces. Throughout the morning a loudspeaker blared very noisy but pleasant tunes to the beach below, but in the afternoon there was no other sound but that of people chatting and babies screaming. The beach, both during the morning and during the afternoon, was covered in rags and dirty pieces of paper, for the Spaniards have a slightly irritating

habit of bringing baskets of food with them, no matter what their destination be, nor how long they would be spending there; in Spain I never once saw a public waste-paper basket.

I enjoyed both my walks home; most of the people who go to the beach prefer to take a bus, but they are either used to the beautiful sights offered them by the scenery of the countryside, or else are too lazy. I most enjoy this walk in the evening, when the air is fresher and the beach no longer holds so much attraction. On the left, as one returns to the town, lies the blue bay of Santander, with its golden sand banks in the centre, rising like a crocodile's back from the flat surface of the sea. Behind rise the dark-green, purple shadowed mountains of the Montaña, capped in wreathed, grey-white clouds which always cast a threatening aspect over the outskirts of the low-lying town. This forms a majestic, classical background, dignified yet overpowering. The beach at this point lies about a hundred foot below the level of the road, which rises in a sheer drop above. When on the beach one can see the gleam of cars passing far overhead, with a person occasionally leaning against the strong black railings that border the road, gazing as I often did at the beautiful view below. When on the road, one spies immediately below, the dazzling, light-coloured sand of the Magdalena, figures of people scurrying backwards and forwards over the beach, shadows of rowing-boats and sailing-dinghies riding gently on the dark shore water. On the right of the road, fifty foot above, stretches a row of detached villas, reaching from the beach to the town itself. These villas, white, grey, khaki, red, and yet other stranger colours, are all of different design; they are for the most part from two to three stories high, rectangular, with balconies, towers, porches, green-houses and lavish gardens leading down to the road. Each villa is in itself a pearl; it is impossible to compare two of them, so unalike are they in every respect. One is a mediaeval castle, another is like a twentieth-century luxury casino; each has a character of its own. Some are simple but large and airy, with colossal gardens, while others are smaller, more ornate, with finely-worked grills at every window, painted mortar, playing fountains. It is one large scene of luxury and beauty, of peace and repose. Nearer the town these villas give way to

towering new blocks of flats, last year scarcely started, now almost completed. These, like the villas, show imagination, for there are no two alike; the red brick façade contrasts splendidly with the white stone ledges underneath the windows, and surrounding the doors. These flats are ten stories high, and from personal experience I discovered that the escalators in many of them are either out of work, or else only work one way; thus one can go up safely, but one has to go down on foot, which is a shame. Also from personal experience I discovered that the rooms were every bit as beautiful as the exterior suggested, but infinitely small, with very low ceilings. This reflects the economic conditions under which these flats were first designed; a fire had destroyed two-thirds of the town, and the majority of the population were rendered homeless; the banks refused to put forward sufficient to rebuild the town on an aesthetic scale, with everything well arranged; and so, many of the new flats sprang up haphazard, at street corners, on one side of a large square, or behind a factory, always complying very strictly with financial and practical factors, to the detriment of uniformity and higher comfort for the future. Personally I prefer to see the flats where they are at the moment, unsymmetrically arranged and varying in construction, design, fabric: but I do regret that this should be at the price of losing space and comfort.

I spent most of that day, the first fine one I had, at the beach, burning my shoulders to shreds beneath the fiery sun. When I returned to my lodgings in the evening I changed into a jacket and flannels, then made once again for the fair. Here I had the rare luck of discovering a stall where I was infallibly lucky; you had to fire accuratey three times at a miniature handle on a casket of cognac; if you hit it three times, then you won a prize of a glass of martini or vermouth, a glass of 'anís' and one of cognac. I returned here every night until the fair left, and always, at the competition price of one peseta, I won my free drinks. Of course you have to turn a blind tongue to the quality of these drinks, which could be improved upon.

I soon began to be aware of a marked resemblance between one Spaniard and another belonging to what one might call a certain age-group, and a correspondingly noticeable difference between one group and another.

One may say that such a difference is bound to exist under any regime, in any country; here it existed too, but far more markedly than I have seen elsewhere. The first point was that nearly all the men and women over thirty years old were stout, the women more than the men. In the men I suppose that this was due to the food they ate, and their liking for wine and still stronger drinks regularly every day, with every meal. Beer has a similar effect in England, but on a much smaller scale, and with less marked effects. The women not only drink as regularly as the men and eat as much as they do, but to that is added the burden of a soft spot for delicacies, 'pastéles' and 'dúlces', and the bringing up of very large families of anything over five or six children. The men and women of this age are not tall, but rather short on the contrary; again possibly because of the social and economic conditions prevalent during the Civil war, when they would have been in childhood. The younger boys and girls tend on the whole to be lank and tall, though as the girls grow older they show signs of turning stout like their parents. When young, that is between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, both the boys and the girls are very handsome; as the boys grow older they look profoundly bored, and as the girls develop and approach middle-age their exquisite Latin beauty degenerates rapidly.

Thursday 2nd of August.

I had breakfast early so as to enjoy more of the day, one of my last at Santander for what I intended to be a week or more. Hardly had I sat down, when it began to rain; and it continued to rain. In the street below, men and women went to work as usual, without bothering to put on a raincoat or even hoist an umbrella: some, I later noticed, wore the modern-style plastic mack loosely slung over their shoulders, but even then the rain did not seem to be of any concern to them. One exception to this general air of nonchalance was a passing donkey, draped ceremoniously in a brown cape, with its rider, a young girl who was selling bread, rigidly wielding a black umbrella on high.

As it rained all morning, and as I eventually gave up the idea of going out, I was forced to stay in my room until my thoughts inevitably turned towards food, as they are usually wont to do when confined to restricted boundaries.

All the meals I had had at Santander with this family were good, as were those that still remained to be eaten; there was only one flaw. The gap between the meals is incredibly badly proportioned; breakfast is at nine or thereabouts: lunch is at two-thirty, there is no such thing as tea, and then supper or dinner is at ten-thirty at night. It was a killing existence I thought, as I waited indoors for lunch: it was one o'clock: only another hour and a half until lunch-time. Similarly in the evenings, at eight o'clock, there only remained another two and a half hours until the following meal. I grew to rely on an hourly cup of coffee, with a little something at twelve o'clock in the afternoon, repeated at intervals during the course of the evening. These snacks, as I fear they will be called, never deterred me from still feeling hungry after one of the main meals of the day, which are far larger than in England or France. Breakfast only consists of bread and coffee; for lunch there is an hors d'oeuvre of tomatoes, salad, and other similar vegetables, followed by a whole plateful of well-cooked French-beans, or rice interspersed with slivers of meat, after which there are fried potatoes, fried eggs, fish or other well-known dishes cooked à l'Espagnol; finally there is fruit, consisting of grapes, pears, plums. Supper is as important a meal, and here the hors d'oeuvre gives way to soup, but otherwise everything comes in roughly the same proportions. In a good Spanish household the meals can be very appetising, and there was not one that I really disliked here; even in a restaurant one is always free to ask for whatever one wants, even sinking to plain eggs and chips, which are always there for the asking. One other Spanish custom connected with meals is the habit of constantly munching large pieces of bread; these can be applied for at any time of day, and during meals they serve the dual purpose of replacing a knife during certain courses and adding the filling to delicacies which please the stomach enormously, but rather tend to increase one's appetite or else barely satisfy it. The eating of large quantities of bread is a habit to be found all over the continent - possibly because bread there does not keep for more than twenty-four hours; it is an easily-acquired taste, which is extremely practical.

My original intention in coming to Spain this year was in order to take photographs of interesting architecture, ruins, monuments, Cathedrals; I had forgotten the most essential part of my equipment at school, and although I sent for my camera before leaving England, owing to the vigilance of the Customs it only arrived on my last day in Spain. I was obliged, or rather I felt that I should, try to record somehow what I had seen; describing it is one method, and the only other which did not involve buying another camera was drawing. I had not done anything in that line for over a year, and then it had only been to draw portraits. There is a little difference between a person's head and a stained glass window, so I came to the conclusion that some practice might prove useful. There was not much to draw indoors, and outside it was raining; in any case Santander is practically a new town, and there is little of artistic merit in its older architecture. I was at a loss as to how to start; finally I drew a 'mirador', a typically Spanish invention which could be seen everywhere. There was an interesting one opposite my very window, and I spent half an hour trying to sketch it, after which I copied it in more detail, with little success. These miradors are projected windows - a cross between a balcony and a bay window, with the possibility of being at any height off the ground, in corners or on corners. Scientifically this is meant to provide an insulating space in winter as in summer, from the cold as from the heat. They are largely built of glass, with a wooden floor and ceiling, also possibly adorned with ironwork or 'rejas' up to waist level. They have a very interesting effect, for nearly every flat ~~of every house~~ has one facing out onto the street, with a resulting symmetrical ~~effect~~ appearance. They also give the town an air of antiquity; for the houses, with their miradors projecting regularly three or four feet for seven or more stories seem as in Mediaeval times to be leaning outwards, eventually all but meeting at a dizzy height over the street below. In the evenings they are usually dotted with dusky heads and shoulders; in the daytime with clothes set out to dry in the sun.

At twelve o'clock I went to my usual café, the 'Austriaca', and sat down for a while wondering what opportunities, so far undiscovered, this sorry

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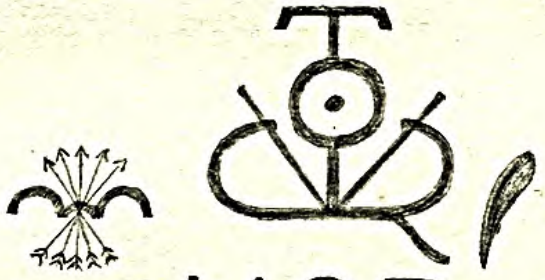

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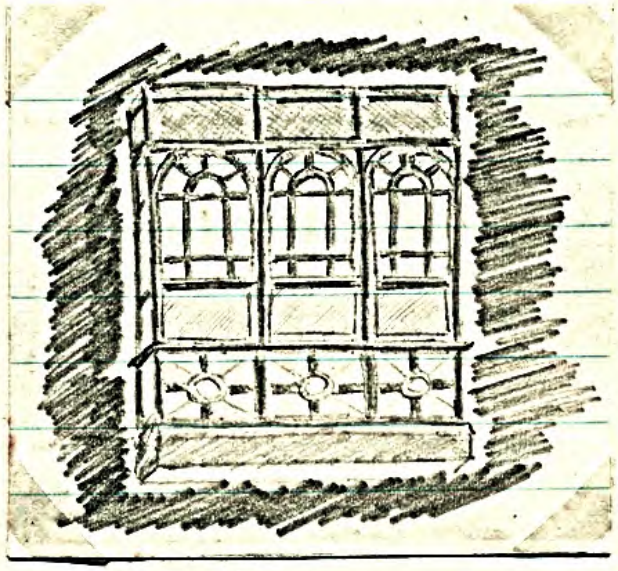
Spanish political slogan,
copied from the walls of Salamanca Cathedral.



A Mirador from
Santander.

weather could afford me here. I saw the same limpiabota at work on an elderly, rich-looking man of about fifty, with whom he was having an ardent conversation. In England, I reflected, it would be rare to find a business-man conversing intimately with a boot-black: in England it would not be the done thing. Spain is a country where there are few conventions relating to social distinctions; here traditions and customs have little influence on an individual, who is left free to do as he likes without suffering for it in any way at all. Spain is very much the land of class democracy, where the caballero can sup with an obrero, talk to him, play cards and gamble with him. Spain is the ideal country for the good Catholic or the good Communist; it is very un-English in every aspect of its life.

In the evening I bought my train ticket which was to last me for all my travel in Spain: valid for three thousand kilometres, one has to pay five pounds for it on application and buy a ticket, gratis, on the day of any particular journey. This economises a few pounds in the long run, though one is not freed from the obligation of queuing up for several hours each time one wishes to visit another town. With this small book, almost a 'ration-book', where the coupons are cut out every time one uses the R.E.N.F.E., you can travel from Irun to Seville, through the whole length and breadth of Spain, always provided that the railways there are owned by the R.E.N.F.E. company. In Spain the trains have not been nationalised, and besides this very large company, there are several other smaller ones which operate along the coastline and in certain parts of the country; this can make travelling very awkward, as I was to discover, especially with a kilometric ticket. Besides the necessary money for the ticket, you have to provide the railway authorities with a passport-type photograph, where there is no smiling. I hurried to a small 'photomaton' shop, near the railway-office, where they compounded one for me in seven minutes; it was horrible; I hope that it was worse than I really looked.

Friday 3rd of August.

In the morning I bought my 'billete complementario' for Leon, after queuing, as usual in Spain, for three-quarters of an hour. Afterwards I

changed another £5 worth of traveller's cheques at the Banco de España, returned home and had an early lunch. Don Miguel was my sole attendant, and proved as interesting and charming as ever: maybe he had just got up. Any way, having nothing topical about which to converse - it was still raining - he reverted to politics and the history of the political Falangist organisation to which he belonged. The Falange was started as a political right-wing organisation in the days of the Republic, when, he claimed, law and order had almost ceased to be observed or maintained. Murders were an every-day occurence in the whole of Spain, in Madrid as at Santander; the Republic was aware of what was happening, but chose to be lenient towards assassins and forgive rather than firmly and unpopularly condemn to death for every crime. Justice ceased to be rigidly enforced, and favouritism crept in towards all criminals of the same belief and creed as the Republic, which was ruled by a core of determined Reds: ~~they~~ kept more liberally-minded republicans under control. There came about a period when individuals, for their own self-protection, had to have resort to blood feuds and family vengeance: this was done merely in order to ensure one's life and honour which ~~was~~ were liable to be lost at any moment, without there being any prospect of justice for the wronged. The Falange made it its prime duty to protect the lives of all Catholics and other right-wing people out of favour with the Republic; a corps was formed, and when a murder was perpetrated against one of their protected, it would assemble at a few moments notice, hunt down the often Government-sponsored assassin, and shoot him in public, in the streets. The Republic took offence at this non-nationalised political party which tended to punish its henchmen on the spot. The leader of the Falange was abducted from his home in Madrid and privately shot: but this leader was also the legitimate 'leader of the opposition' and all the combined right-wing parties. The death by murder of Antonio de Ribera started the three year Civil war, in which the Falange supported General Franco as leader. It was the Falange that placed him in power after the war, and it is on the Falange that he now depends for his Government support. Since the end of the war the Falange has continued to exist as a party with the same purpose as before: the preserving of law and order throughout the country, which now, according to Don Miguel, enjoys the greatest peace

and order it has had for centuries. As for Santander, compared with the time of the Republic, life was now paradise. When under the control of the Republic, which it was for the first year of the Civil War, the Republican Reds of Santander put to death one thousand people. Some were shot in the streets, but many were disposed of by other means; these were taken by lorry to the lighthouse and thrown over the cliffs there into the sea far below, where they were smashed to pieces on the rocks, or else drowned. Some did not die, but these were thrown over the cliffs again until they succumbed: the drop is about one hundred and fifty foot. Now there is a vast marble memorial at the spot of these savage killings, dedicated to the dead, their families, and the cause. I finally asked Don Miguel if Republicans were tolerated in Spain; yes, he said, they were, provided they gave no trouble of any political nature. I asked if there were many; yes, quite a few, but no communists; these had abandoned Spain for the time as a lost cause./ The train for Palencia and Leon, to which I was travelling first of all, was due to leave at about two in the afternoon. Before boarding it I bought myself a book to read on the journey at the Station entrance. This was called 'Las Mil Mejores Poesias de la Lengua Castellana', reflecting the odd Spanish caprice of calling anything typically Spanish, or else well-known in Spain, as Castilian rather than Spanish. I have even heard it said that Spaniards abroad, when called upon to reveal their nationality, prefer to say they are Basques, or Castillians, rather than Spanish, which might imply something alien to Spanish provincialism or 'nationalism' as they call it there. Spaniards are proud ! I was destined to drag this wretched book a thousand kilometres before being able to leave it in Santander, and when travelling light, every article counts: when I bought it, I thought it could stay in my pocket without causing any inconvenience; I soon learnt better. I was lucky enough to find myself a seat: I make it almost a habit to catch a train an hour or so before it is due to leave; it usually pays in any country, but especially so in Spain - unless when the train arrives one and a half hours late in any case - also not uncommon in Spain. I was travelling third class; it is economic, and one cannot reach a place more rapidly in first than in third: but in Spain one has to reckon with a certain degree of comfort, and this is never provided in a third

class carriage. The seats were all of wood, while leather in certain places ~~x~~only helped to make them even more uncomfortable than ~~they would have been~~ had there been wood alone. The train left on time, which was at least a pleasant sign; it never really picked ~~u~~p any speed as it was obliged to stop at every village station for about five or six minutes. None the less I enjoyed the journey as far as Palencia, where I arrived towards eight in the evening. For this I thank the Spaniards with whom I shared the compartment; not the weather, not the train. The countryside too, offered me my first glimpse of the Spanish interior, and I was ready for anything in Spain. The land around Santander is extremely mountainous and rugged, far more so than any in England or even Wales, ~~x~~ which it resembles in many ways. The mountains seemed bleak and precipitous; their peaks remained permanently drowned beneath billowing masses of writhing grey mist and clouds, clinging, dreary. The sides of these giant ranges were dark green, covered either in scrub or thick, inpenetrable forest; everything looked wet, spongy, unnaturally green and dark. There was little flat ground amidst this chaos of hills; wherever possible, a small white-walled, red-roofed cottage clung bravely to the edge of a precipice; wherever there was sufficient flat ground, there was a huddle of houses, a miniature imitatation of a village with its grey bell-tower rising solitary above the delapidated roofs of the pueblo. We travelled through, not across, this kind of country for over an hour before leaving it for a different landscape, and this appeared in a matter of moments. Leaving the fertile green, the high mountain crests, the thick mist and drizzle, we emerged into a plain, almost entirely flat, where a merciless sun beat heavily down on us, waking everyone who had fallen asleep in a few seconds. An occasional ridge of bright grey or orange stone ran smoothly across the plain, ever at the same height, ending suddenly in a jagged cliff. The dark green vegetation turned yellow or brown; an occasional clump of olive-coloured poplars stuck awkwardly out of the arid plain, marking a drying pool or the banks of a sombre, deep, dark river. Here the fields had no boundaries: the sky and the railway were the only means of measurement. Crops, planted in an irregular fashion, ran into fields where cattle grazed; these were lean, fleet of foot, nimble of movement.

This dry-looking country, flat, harsh, Spanish to the core, continued unbroken until Palencia. This country is the table-land of Castile, the home of Don Quixote, motherland of poor, poverty-stricken peasants, denying them the right of existence and all means of earning a living; here are the famous mud-huts of our primitive ancestors, here they are still to be found, new and old, crumbling and inhabited, here in Castile. The sky above is pale-blue, hot, dry, heartless and unfeeling: but it has its savage beauty too.

In the same carriage as myself there were several priests, all of different orders, some business-men, workmen, gipsies. These varied at every station, and provided me with a constant source of amusement and more serious interest; there were no foreigners. These Spanish country-people all looked tough, strong, tired, sick at heart, yet they lived up to their reputation for being generous, willing to give away almost what they did not have. Cigarettes were freely exchanged, newspapers passed right through the train; conversation never ebbed, people rarely sat in the same place for more than ten minutes. At each station they rushed to the windows and doors, swarmed like an army of ants onto the low-lying platforms , spoke heatedly and affectionately to their many supposed cousins, nieces, relatives. All with one accord rushed back on board the train as it left the tiny village station, turned on the steps to wave a last farewell.

When I arrived at Palencia I made for the Cathedral, 'La Bella Desconocida' as it is called, re-echoing all that pride a Spaniard has in something that belongs to him and his friends rather than to the country and its inhabitants as a whole. It was closed, and so I could do no more than wander round the outside two or three times, trying hard in the falling darkness to pick out an occasional detail, a window, an arch, a gargoyle. The exterior was plain and massive, rather shapeless as far as I could make out; I hoped that this belied the treasures hidden within the bella desconocida. The tower was squat and short, the façade surprisingly plain for a Spanish Cathedral, the walls thick; the Cathedral lacked height. I had to wait for my 'connection' until three in the morning, so I decided that it might be worth having a meal somewhere in the meantime. I finally made my way to a small inn near the station, where I had a

surprisingly good meal at a low price. They served me with fried eggs, large and appetising; soup, which was filling and not at all disagreeable; ending with two large steaks, deliciously soft and savoury, fruit, and then coffee. The whole cost me 25pts, and I had the meal by myself in an inner room, dusty but cheerful, with table-cloths of red and blue on every table.

My journey from Palencia to Leon was not so fortunate. The train was crowded, and I had to stand all the way, trying grimly not to look too tired; we arrived at Leon station at five in the morning. It was bitterly cold, with the stars glittering sharply in the morning light, the crescent moon eerily clinging to a rapidly changing sky. I asked a station mozo to take me immediately to the nearest pension, provided it was not too costly. These mozos are to be found at all times of the day or at night; when at their best they wait in an orderly row at the back of the station, hoping to be selected by a tired traveller like myself; often they swarm annoyingly all over the station, round the baggage, round the trains. Five minutes later I was waiting in the hall of a pension; I dismissed the mozo with an over-generous wage of ten pesetas, and waited for my bed to be made. An oldish, harrassed lady in dressing-gown wandered slowly and sleepily in circles round the sheets; the bed was eventually made, but only after a manner. I was tired, and soon fell asleep in a bed too large for three and too hard for one.

Saturday 4th of August.

I slept until eleven in the morning, when I paid my bill, had a cup of chicory-tasting coffee, packed and left. I made for the station in order to find out in advance the times of trains leaving that night for Zamora, the next town on my list.

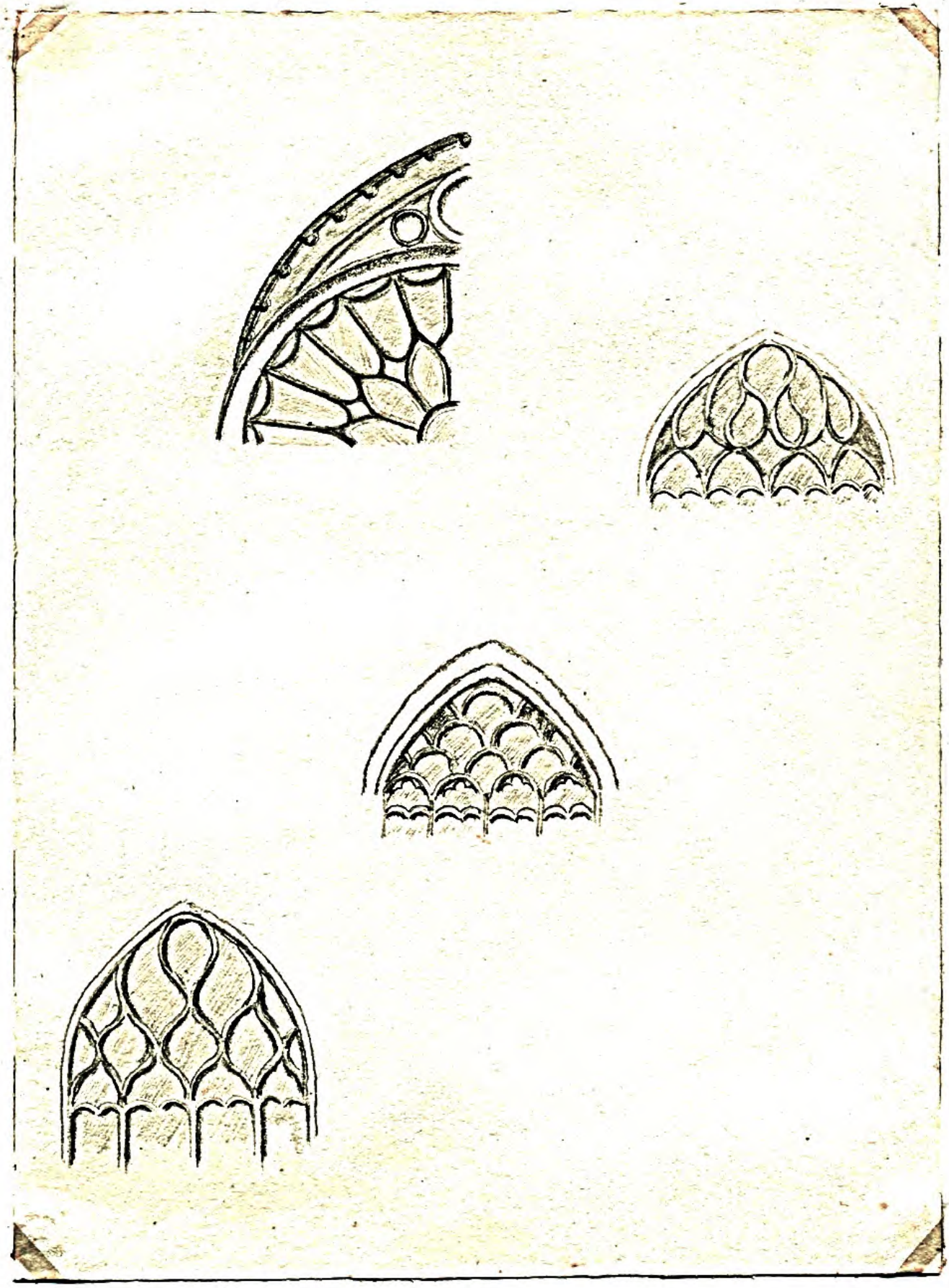
I had an irritating encounter with a boy of about nineteen, who seemed at first sight to be a limpiabota. I was crossing the large white bridge that leads to the station when he stopped me, took me very firmly by the arm, and led me back to the city end of the bridge. He took me to the side of the road. I here thought it advisable, or at least helpful, to tell him that my sandals did not need cleaning, and

in any case that I did not want them cleaning; he paid no attention. He seized my left leg, tapped the sole of my sandal, grinned, and began taking some tools out of a small box he was carrying. I took the hint and also made it clear that they did not even require mending; this he denied with a vigorous shake of his head. He began to nail on a rubber sole, telling me all the time that I would soon have needed it, as my leather sole was beginning to detach itself from my sandals. I repeated every few moments that all this was unecessary, but with little success; I told him he was wasting my time; he denied it. After a while he began on my right shoe, and by then I had come to the conclusion that any job done thus in five minutes, and only involving a few pieces of rubber, might prove useful, and could not possibly cost more than six or seven pesetas. I learnt meanwhile that his mother had been French, which explained his blonde hair. He finished with the right sandal; I took ten pesetas from my purse; he asked for twenty-five. I told him he had made a mistake, but he showed me a labour-card with wages marked: this time I should have paid more attention to what was written there, but it was all too technical, and I prefered to believe him; it didn't worry me in the least how much he wanted. I gave him my ultimatum: I said that he might have the 15 pesetas in my purse, and nothing else, or else he was at liberty to take the rubbers off, seeing that they had never been put there with my consent. He argued for a few moments, but was incapable of changing fifteen pesetas into twenty-five; the rest of my money was tucked away in my wallet, which I had not revealed. In the end he began to take off the sole, gave up, took the fifteen pesetas, cursed me roundly, and made off. Had there been one of my friends at hand - these friends of mine are the police, whom I know inside out - then I would have applied to him for justice; when wanted, the police are out of sight. I was irritated at this encounter with the boot-mender, which revealed all the worst side of Spanish generosity; he had insisted that I needed his aid against all admonitions to the contrary, and had then charged me five times as much as any normal person would have asked.

I made all the necessary enquiries at the station; later I discovered that all they had told me there was wrong. I made for the Cathedral,

whose spires are clearly visible at a great distance. Leon is mainly a new town, full of recently erected flats, as in Santander, but less beautiful and colourful. The remaining houses and shops are also quite modern, being rarely more than three or four stories high. This town is fairly compact, and is not very large. A bare handful of buildings however, stand out distinctly as belonging to long ago, and these are usually seperated slightly from the rest. There is for example the Palacio de los Guzmanes, or 'Los Reyes' as it is sometimes called, three stories high, and set by itself at a slight distance from the neighbouring houses of a more modern design. This ancient palace has in its courtyard some amusing and interesting gargoyles, which I saw from close to. They are grouped in twos, and each of them wears a really ghastly leer or grin, ast though at any moment it was about to spout a few gallons of water or even pounce down upon anyone who dared pass across the courtyard below. The courtyard itself is very old, and the grey stone carving on the walls were worn smooth in places. I entered the one remaining open room in the palace, n ow used for meetings of the Town Council; the room was a Royal appartment in itself. The walls were covered in paintings or murals of knights of the Middle-Ages; the seats were covered in red satin, the roof in many hundreds of differently coloured tiles or slats. These were grooved and set into the ceiling, all between projecting beams. At one end of this hall there stood a throne; along the walls were stalls of light-coloured wood, with folding desks and ornate legs; at the near end of the room there was a massive, dark mahogany desk, with a large crucifix at one side. Behind the desk, as though ready for a tribunal, were three dark armchairs, also in wood to match the desk; dominating the approach, set on the wall over the chairs, was a life-size portrait of the caudillo, his Generalísimo Franco in ceremonial uniform. I visited this Palace after seeing the Cathedral, to which I went straight away after leaving the station.

Leon Cathedral I first saw from the front, on the right; the fierce mid-day sun was shining fully onto this corner, and the pale yellow stone-work glittered like gold beneath it. It was majestic, soaring higher than any other Cathedral I had seen; this impression was maybe owing

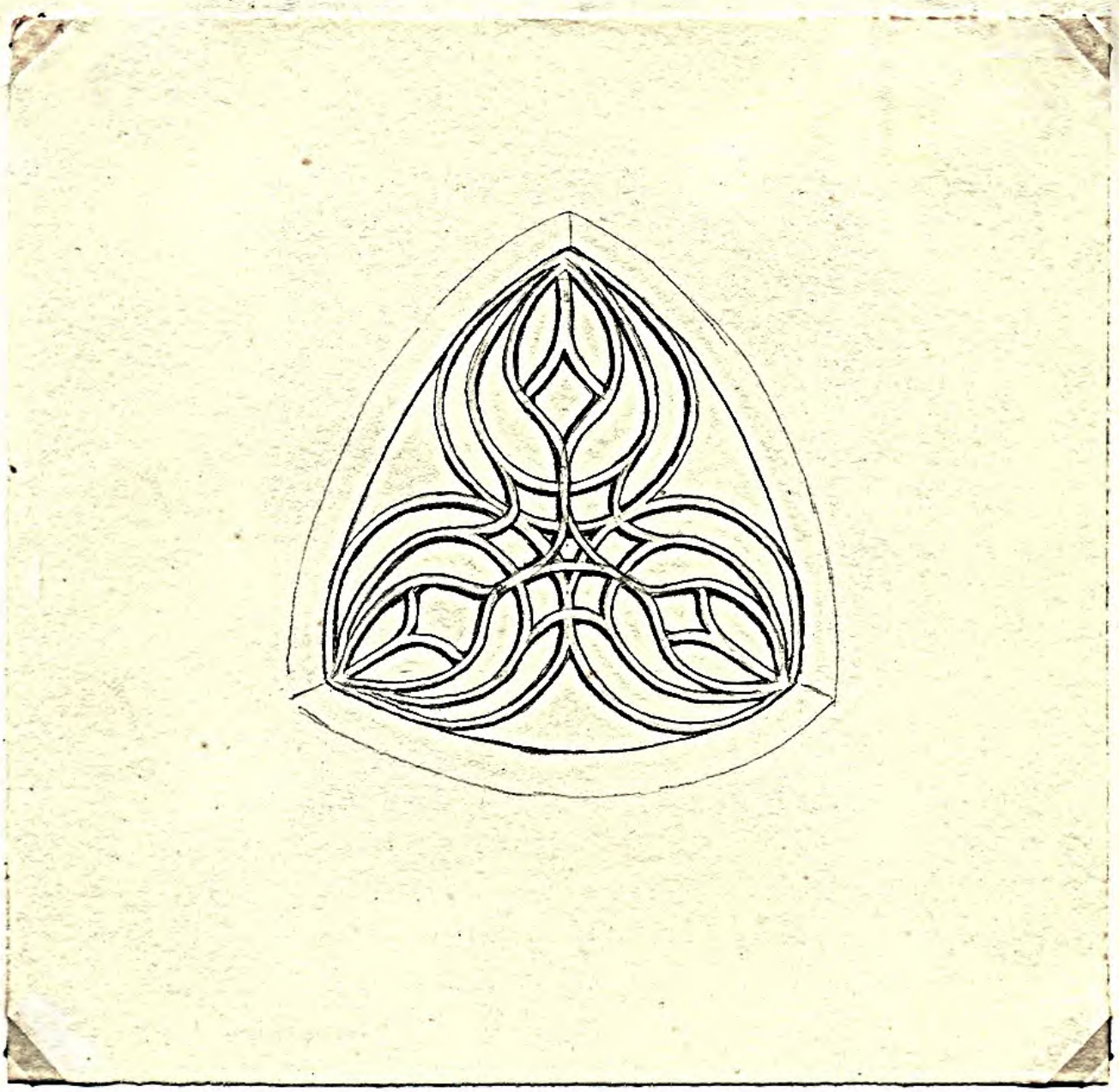


Windows of Leon Cathedral

to the light stonework which seemed in the distant heights to blend with the pale blue Castilian heaven. I walked slowly past the front; flying buttresses shot sharply out at right angles, away from the nave, out to the protecting towers. The windows, whose stained glass is reputed as the best in Europe, from the outside appeared to be rusted with age; they were old, and the window-stonework was of a very early Gothic, simple and as yet undeveloped, consisting largely of a few simple combinations of circles, barely adorned or sculptured.

I walked down a narrow side-street, hoping eventually to be able to pass down towards the right, and so go round the Cathedral; it was a cul-de-sac, and I was obliged to return. By now I felt very tempted to try to draw part of this beautiful façade, simple, but overpoweringly fine. I sat down at a small café, ordered a coffee and crisps - to satisfy the patron for the use of his chairs - and set to work drawing a small section of the rose-window. I sat there for over an hour, knowing that the Cathedral would not be opening until four or five in the evening, true to Spanish tradition. ~~I chose to draw~~ This façade window was different from, and more intricate in design than, those over the two main side-doors; I only discovered this later. When I had finished with this part of the exterior, I walked round to the back of the Cathedral, passing this time along the right hand side of it and seeing it in its entirety. The back was darker, and was surrounded by old, delapidated houses; but I was particularly interested by three large windows, one beside the other, each with a different type of tracery. This tracery was most un-English, and to me seemed not to be Gothic at all, although later I was told that it was Gothic, with French, Latin, Byzantine and several other influences whose names I have forgotten. To me it seemed oriental, possibly Byzantine, though I could hardly have been able to judge if this were so, as I had never seen any Byzantine architecture. I sketched these on foot, as there was nowhere to ~~stand~~ sit, leaning lightly against a spider-infested piece of wall - as I later discovered to my absolute horror. Finally, towards five in the evening, I made for the Cathedral entrance. I passed the worn and rounded columns that surrounded the doorway, I passed the washed-out statues of forgotten Saints, and entered the dim

interior. I had left the brilliant sunlight outside; here there was none: all was absolute darkness to my unaccustomed eyes. I was momentarily stunned, almost lost, in this apparent darkness. Only after a minute or two had elapsed did my eyes begin to function once more; I looked at once for light, and for the famous stained-glass. Brilliant dark-blues, overwhelming purples, blood-reds came gliding down from the lofty windows set up on high; I was delighted; this was like a subterranean forest, an unknown world. All the stained-windows were covered in flowers, plants, creepers, trees; life-like, gigantic dark-green leaves, twining stalks, young shoots, blossoms, shot forth on every side. In harmony with these rose the graceful columns of the Cathedral, climbing upwards, effortlessly, ever up into the cavernous roof; everything was highly ornate, richly decorated, beautifully carved; in all the corners, at every turn, you were confronted with a group of statues, stonework depicting trees, fauns, nymphs, life in the primitive forests. The darkness helped to bring out the rich colour of the windows, but at the same time prevented one from obtaining any idea of the remainder of the interior of the Cathedral itself, and all the detail which all too abundantly existed there. I obtained a pass and ticket to visit the Museum and the courtyard, through which a guide conducted us - for by now there was a whole group of people waiting for admittance. The Museum was impressive, but ~~—~~ compared ~~—~~ with the Cathedral and the courtyard outside, it ~~was reduced to a~~ became commonplace. The cloisters that bordered the courtyard were part Gothic, part Baroque; on all sides rose spires, towers, windows, roofs: this was the heart of the building. Round the walls of the cloisters were tombs of ancient warriors, many of whom had spent their last fighting the Mahomeddan Moors. The ceiling was very Baroque, although the actual vaulting was Gothic; spiralling columns and miniature pinnacles jutted out on every side, upwards and down, tapering into fancy globes, circles, wreaths, all painted in dark red, blue and gold. This was the first Spanish Cathedral I had seen, and although I was later to see some yet more wonderful, more richly decorated Churches, coming as it did after the old and ruined abbeys of England, of very simple and austere Gothic design when contrasted with Leon, I was bewildered that such profusion of art, architecture, sculpture,



Stonework from Leon Cathedral

and pure beauty could ever have existed without my having even heard mention of it. For me the ruined abbeys of England were now reduced to mere skeletons, devoid of more than the minimum in the way of beauty; I began to doubt whether in England there had ever been such a thing as civilisation: my whole artistic world began to crumble before my eyes. Such a miracle as Leon Cathedral, set in a land of clay and rush-houses, seemed incredible; there must be a mistake somewhere. Moreover, Leon Cathedral is not, as are the abbeys of England, in ruins; Masses are still celebrated every day; people still pray there before the lighted candles of their cause. I went round the cloisters several times, and finally sat down to draw a vast stone tracery window, set high over the roofs of the Cathedral. Here I stayed for over an hour, struggling with delicate circles and loops, tantalised by the richness of my surroundings; from where I sat, on a stone step, bathed in the evening sunlight, I could see the two towers, one Roman, simple, strong, square; the other early Gothic, also simple, but bearing in every corner, on each stone, the signs of craftsmanship wrought there in detail many centuries ago; besides these there were more rose-windows, windows large and small, butresses, gargoyles, a Paradise unspoilt.
I did not want to spend the night there, in spite of all the beautiful objects surrounding me, so I found my way out and made for the town. I had had no lunch, so I felt slightly hungry, and, not knowing any place worth frequenting for a meal, I made for the Pension Europa once more. There I left my journey-bag, ordered dinner for ten o'clock or thereabouts, and went out again for some more fresh air before going to bed. I had been informed that there was no train with a connection that night going to Zamora; so I was reluctantly compelled to pass another night at Leon. I walked along the banks of the river, which was all but dry; everywhere there were vast banks of shingle and gravel, with a thinly trickling stream disappearing at times underground. The Museum was closed, and after having a coffee to warm me, for it was bitterly cold, I made for the pension and supper. This night I had to share a room with a Gallician, as my room of the previous night was occupied. He entered towards midnight, groused out again in search of some matches, and re-appeared at about one in the morning. He became friendly after a few

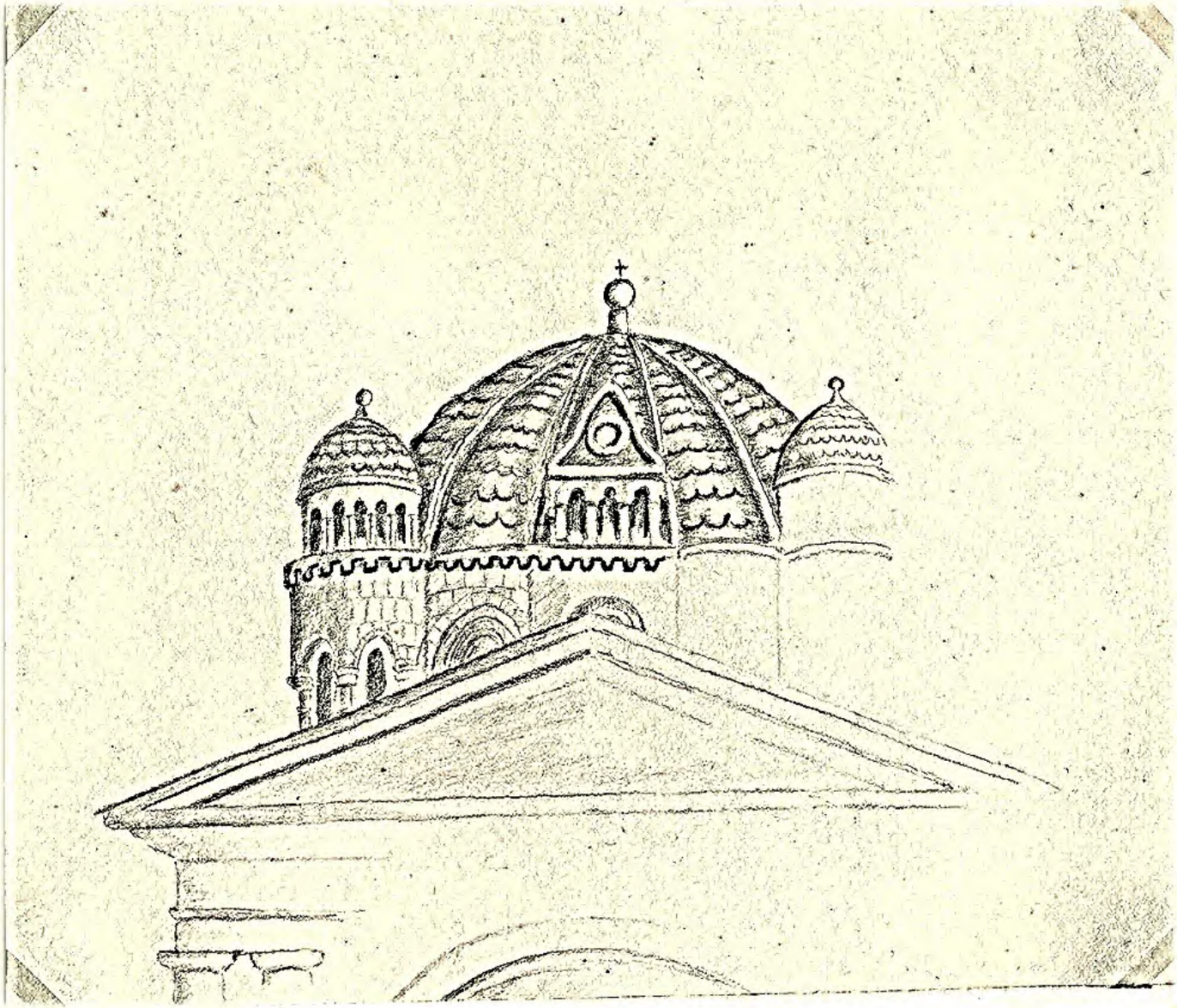
minutes silence, and informed me that he was travelling home to Gijon. Like many Spaniards, he seemed concerned mainly with the problem of his novia, or fiancée. He also seemed to be concerned with someone else's novia, which was rather un-Spanish; her he had only met that very day at Leon, where he had been spending a day or two. He assured me that to be a novio or a novia was a serious thing in Spain; he also admitted that one could continue being a novio or novia for as much as fifteen years before getting married and coming to a decision. When one became a novia, one had to follow a very strict code of behaviour; subject to the wish of the novio, his fiancé must never be seen, in the street or indoors, in the company of any other boy; she was not allowed to leave the house alone, and whenever she was seen alone outside, questions were liable to be asked. The novio would similarly follow such a code, though not necessarily quite as rigid. If either of the two was known to have broken any of these conventions or 'principios', the engagement could be automatically broken. The Gallician went on to say that in Spain people are very jealous with respect to engagements, and ill-feeling can easily be aroused if tradition is not strictly observed by all. Etiquette even forbade the novio from visiting his beloved when he wanted; times had to be arranged long in advance, and meetings always had to be held in public, or at least in the presence of friends.

Sunday 5th of August.

I was called at half-past six in the morning; I packed my belongings, paid my bill of sixty pesetas for bed and supper, and made for the station. The sky was already bright, and the few clouds that remained on the horizon glowed like live coals. It is the same in Spain in the morning as in the evening; the rising and setting of the sun is a glorious sight; the sky for a while resembles a fiery furnace, and turns first one colour, then another. At sunset there is a dramatic evolution from blue to orange, to red, yellow, green: the change is a slow one, and yet it is all over far too soon. Red always dominates, the red and orange fuse into green, a very delicate, pale green, less of a colour than an atmosphere, a mood, an impression. Everything in

Spain isd done dramatically, completely or not at all; half measures are not tolerated. Spaniards can be models of generosity, affability, and friendship; they can be the most talkative and gay people in Europe, or else the most cruel, heartless and merciless people the world had ever seen. Spanish weather is such that either the sky is a dream, a heavenly inspiration, or else an inferno of thunder, lightning and death. Spain is a land of drama and action, of passions and violence; land of the bull-fighters and caballeros, land of courtiers and lovers.
I had to queue for a very long time before obtaining my ticket; the booking-offices are very unnerving here. They usually open half an hourbefore a train is due to arrive, when there will be a queue of about sixty people. Five minutes before the train is due to leave the queue will still hold about forty-five of the original people. When the train leaves there will be no-one left: the assistant who gives out the tickets works at a leisurely pace until he sees he can no longer do so: only then, when faced with a riot, will he get down to some real work. Often he is only saved by the late arrival of a train; when he proves too slow, and people are faced with the prospect of missing their train, they board the train without a ticket. When the ticket-collector arrives, they are charged double, unless if they jump out onto the track in time, which I have seen done several times, even at night; money is valuable in Spain, although the Spaniards tend to attach as little importance to it as possible. I caught my train, which was late, and I was thus saved a long delay at Astorga, where my connection arrived on time. I had not partaken of any breakfast yet, and by now I was feeling very hungry; I had nothing with me to eat, and there are no platform trolleys in Spain as in England. At most stations there are 'Cantinas', where one can have a wine-skin refilled, but I had no wine-skin, and little taste for strong Spanish rural wines: I thirsted for a good cup of tea. I was, however, not entirely out of luck. One of my companions in the train had a large bag of plums; another had a case filled with tortillas, which is a mixture of egg, potatoes, cheese or meat, carefully hidden between vast hunks of Spanish flat-bread; yet another traveller had two wine-skins. After five minutes they began to unpack, and I was still digesting a fish-bone from a piece of tortilla

when we eventually reached Zamora; Spaniards are so generous ! Zamora, though not a large town, sprawls over miles of countryside. The houses are quite old, the churches historic; the Cathedral is a gem on account of certain parts of its architecture. Here I arrived at mid-day, and, knowing that I would have to wait for several hours before the Cathedral would open, I made for a café, faute de restaurant. I asked if there was anything interesting to eat; there was not, so I had to make do with lemonade and biscuits. Here I spent nearly two hours, writing up my diary on Leon and waiting for the hour hands to move slightly faster. Towards four o'clock I emerged, and made my way to the Cathedral, which is set high above the Duero. The Duero flows past the foot of the town, large but shallow, sullen, rushing powerfully between banks of dry gravel, specked with thin, olive-green bushes. Old and thick-set grey stone bridges span the river; some of the town's earlier houses lie broken in its stream, water swirling wildly through the doors, round the cracked walls. Overlooking the Duero, immediately above, stands the ancient castle, low-built, crumbling, but still strong and erect, extensive, proud: it is surrounded on all sides by tiers of battlements. The Cathedral came as a disappointment after the wonders of Leon; but there was one part of it, the most important as regards structure, which was visible for miles : that was the dome or 'cupula'. When I first saw it on arriving at Zamora,I was astonished at its foreign, Eastern appearance. It was of Byzantine origin, faded, yellow, soft and worn in the strong sunlight, as though heat and light had worn it to a mere shell. For a while I felt as though this were the East: no-one stirred in the streets; a black-caped old woman shambled slowly into her garden; the Byzantine dome dreamt on undisturbed, basking placidly beneath the Castilian sun. The heat grew intense: the silence was almost unnatural: the light was brilliant, dazzling. The entrance to the Cathedral was not Byzantine, and belonged to a different period, yet it did not seem out of place. The tower also belonged to a different and earlier period, but had been restored completely, like much of the remainder of the Cathedral. I chose myself a place to draw - on a low stone wall conveniently opposite the Dome and with an entire view of the façade. There I stayed for an hour, until I finally had to stop, with



The Dome of Zamora Cathedral

the sun beginning to wane. While drawing, I was entertained by the beautiful Cathedral bells; they began to chime at about four in the afternoon, and were still pealing at five. The sound was wonderful, and the scale of the notes extensive; echoes continued to reverbrate seconds after a bell had ceased sounding. The interior of the Cathedral ~~was~~ is nothing spectacular; everything has been renovated and otherwise restored, giving the inside a rather unreal, out-of-place effect. The pillars are low when contrasted with those of Leon, and over-thick in proportion to their height; the arches are heavy, square and low, yet on reflection I suppose that only thus ~~could~~ can they hope to fit in with the dome and the façade. As with the outside, so with the interior, the dome dominates the whole Cathedral; looking upwards you see the circular, twelve-windowed cupula [illegible], illuminating the Choir, side-altars, aisles. Unlike in Leon Cathedral, everything ~~was~~ is extremely light and airy: ~~had~~ were there ~~been~~ more detail, then it would ~~be~~ an easy to study and examine ; but there ~~was~~ is none. Decorations are few and simple: everything ~~spoke~~ speaks of simplicity to the utmost, reminding me later of the inside of the famous classical Escorial.

From the Church I went to the Museum, where I saw a brilliant show of Tournai carpets and tapestries. They were extensive, some even covering a wall and more of long chambers, all devoted entirely to this purpose. Made of wool, they belonged mostly to the XVth and XVIth centuries, with one or two of the XVIIth. The rich and perfectly preserved reds, dark blues and golds stood out startlingly, often giving the impression of being three-dimensional. Nearly all were of gothic design, treating of classical or biblical history; one tapestry depicted the parable of the labourers in the vineyard; another showed episodes of the fall of Troy, battles between the Greeks and the ~~xxxxxx~~ Trojans; Andromache, Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon, Menelaus, and a whole host of legendary characters dominated these scenes of conflict - while Helen, the source of all the trouble, gazed coldly and somewhat sadly from a cloud over Troy itself, witnessing the follies she had caused. On one tapestry Hector was being dragged, headless, round the walls of Troy: on another Achilles' heel lay exposed, blood pouring from it, as he writhed, dying, on the field of combat. One was almost tempted to stroke the burnished

steel of a helmet that lay on the ground, abandoned: the dark blue was so skilfully woven, that the helmet seemed to be lying on the tapestry, and not belong to the design within it. All the colours were rich, blending beautifully, artistically, as though these tapestries had only just been made. They were presented long ago to the Cathedral by the Duke of Alba, who is said to have brought them over with him when he left Germany and the Court of Charles V.

I left the Museum and passed out through the cloisters, through the court in front of the Cathedral, to the open air. I made my way to the Castle, expecting to see somthing of its interior, but I could not gain admittance. It was too well fortified to enter at any point other than at the main gate, so I had to withdraw. I walked slowly back through the town; it was now full of people out for their evening walk, and at times it was even hard to thread my way through the continuous chains of families, elderly women, and riotous children. I bought a few photoes of the Cathedral and then went to the departure point of the bus for the Station. I was early, so I took a few coffees in the meantime at a nearby, rather chic café; there was a group of soldiers on my right, making eyes to two girls on my left: soldiers are the same wherever you find them, and nothing can prevent them from doing what they want: I was slightly amused at the negative attitude of the girls. At eight-thirty my train left Zamora en route for Medina, where I had to find a 'connection' as they are still called in Spain; there I waited in the icy cold stamping up and down a windy platform. I finally went into the Venta and had a meal there, after which I was once again compelled to return to the cold outside: my connection arrived at one-thirty in the morning, and at two-thirty I emerged at Valladolid. Even there I was not to be allowed to sleep at once - and sleeping is one of the main pleasures of my life -. All the pensions were full, and at one point I was refused admittance because I was too long for the beds; I was highly irritated, and just a bit amused later on. I went round the pensions in the company of a mozo, who clearly knew the place all too well, and was all the more disturbed at finding everything full for the first time in his career: I nearly put him out of work. Eventually we had better luck, and yet it could have been improved upon.

My room was very bare; there was a small, broken cupboard in one corner: the window was minus a pane, and the sheets on my bed were dirty. I could not really complain, because the terms were good, and the only solution would probably have been to set out in search of another pension; here I only had to pay 18 pts. for the night. I offered up a few tired prayers to protect me from fleas and any diseases possibly concealed in the room, and slept strangely well.

Monday 6th of August.

I only awoke when someone threatened to bring down the door with his banging; it was nine o'clock. I had breakfast, which consisted of bread and butter - which was rancid - and chicory. It was sad to see how much the people wanted me to return there rather than go anywhere else; I took their address in case I did not find anywhere else to pass the following night, but inwardly resolved to sleep in the station rather than return to this winswept . infra-dig pension. I felt as though I deserved to be paid 18pts. for having spent the night there: all said, I was however satisfied to have slept indoors as opposed to outside. I set out for the famous Museum of Valladolid, of which I had heard so much at home. I was still walking in circles and asking the way there, when I saw before me what I at once took to be the Cathedral; it was only a parish-church, called San Pablo. The façade was exquisite, a blending of late Gothic and Plateresque; like one gigantic piece of sculpture, the mass of intricately interwoven figures and escutcheons, shields and pastoral scenes,all rose majestically upwards; it was solid yet airy: it seemed designed to impress with its complexity, and still it succeeded in impressing with its gracefulness. The entire front of the church consisted of this tableau in grey stone, very dark, but in places revealing white chips of old age: it was a genuine monument. The inside, as at Zamora, came as a disappointment; it was plain and with little decoration: there was no stained-glass here, nor, as I later found out, in the Cathedral itself. The front of San Pablo was,I suppose, as much as one might have asked for from an entire town: it was old, beautiful, well-preserved without having had to be restored, and a perfect example of that particular type of decadent gothic stone-work. I went

to the Museum, which was in a nearby building with a similar though smaller façade. This museum, which now houses a large collection of sculptures and paintings, used once to be a Theological College; now each room is filled with decorations from the Church of San Benito el Real, which was sacked by the Republic, and other Rehaissance statues, wood-carvings, and ecclesiastical ornaments from all over Spain. The museum is best known for its Renaissance statues, which are painted over until they resemble true-life; these are called policromado statues, and are for the most part the works of a local craftsman whose name was Alonso Berruguete. He lived and worked in the XVIth century; there are also statues by Juan de Juni and Pedro de Mena, other local craftsmen of the time, and paintings belonging to the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth centuries. Policromado statues are life-size sculptures, painted over several times with various adhesives and paints; platersesco work, which was later to give me a great deal of trouble, appears to be gothic work in decadence: it evolved from working in silver and wood, and much of platersque detail closely resembles silver-work: the trouble comes when one cannot tell decadent gothic, which is still gothic, from platersque: it is easy enough to say that Gothic work is usually in three-dimension, with depth and life, and that platersque work is in low-relief and mere ornamentation, but that would involve breaking up many sculptures and carvings into seperate headings within themselves. The truth is that many statues and works in stone - such as the façade of San Pablo, the Museum, and later on the Cathedral of Salamanca, belong in design to more than one period or type of stone-work. Gothic, when compared with Baroque, is more firm and resolute, full of shape, and is more sharply defined in its every feature; all is delicate and refined. Baroque work is less clear-cut, is more suave and supple, consisting of hundreds of gentle curves, carefully moulded shadows, and full features for its figures. They tend to contrast as over-idealised and true-to-life when compared with Gothic characters, who are on the other hand overstern and unreal. In all the rooms of the museum there were statues, some almost entirely gold-gilt, some only a foot high, carved in ivory; others were more than ten foot in height, vast and impressive, looted recently from the churches

of Valladolid, where they served the function of central pieces over an altar. There were several vast roods: one with a terrifying Christ, his knees coated in blood, blood flowing from his sides, dust caked to his thighs. All the statues were alive; their clothes fluttered in an imaginary breeze, their arms gesticulated wildly at imaginary crowds, their heads writhed in agony beneath the executioner's axe. The head of Saint Paul lay on a slab of marble: in the slab below lay his remains; his mouth gaped, the wrinkles on his forehead cut deep into one's mind: his tongue, dark-red, dry, protruded slightly from between his teeth: his countenance appeared aged, tragic, pitiable. On his shoulders were two gashes, deep, wrung there by the executioner's axe before his neck was finally severed. Saint Sebastian clutched, terrified, at the stake that bound him, the arrows still in mid-air. Saint Jerome smote his chest with a boulder, appealing to heaven: Abraham scanned the skies, with one hand thrusting his son to the ground, ready at heaven's command to kill him. There were also some statues, all of huge dimensions, which were used on floats at certain times of the year; these had to be dragged through the streets, and had been treated thus for centuries. Besides the policromado statues, there were plain, unpainted ones, still in the natural colour of the original wood. These were called statues of 'nogal blanco': besides these, there was an entire chamber devoted to the stalls from the church of San Benito, which were also in nogal blanco. They were immensely old, the fine marquetry work was cracked, and the wood was nearly black; on them thee were escutcheons from every diocese of Spain, finely worked and darkened with time. In one or two of the rooms, moorish mudejar roofs had been introduced; geometrical in pattern, gold and black contrasting strongly, they are puzzling to the eye. The Museum courtyard was the richest I was to see in Spain. The architecture was a mixture of Gothic and plateresque; from the ground floor rose delicate, twining pillars: these doubled in number at the second floor, doubled in intricacy, complexity of form, richness of the freely flowing, twisting spirals. The wall tracery was exquisite: each panel was different, imaginatively wrought, highly ornate in every aspect. The courtyard was all light grey in the pale sunlight, more of a dream palace from Constantinople than a house of studies in Spain.

I spent rather over-much on photographs of these statues and of the Museum court, so I decided that I would have to go without lunch for to-day; instead, I bought myself half a kilo of grapes - the small sweet ones, and also half a kilo of plums. These I took with me to a square behind the Cathedral, where I sat in the sunshine and set to work - trying hard not to look too hungry beneath the scutinising and somewhat amused stare of passers-by. I sat there for about half an hour, until a strange man, aged about twenty-eight, sat on the bench beside me. He was well-dressed, wearing a dark suit and white shirt: he struck me as being a student at the University there. He took a paper out of his pocket and began to read; I saw the words 'Suez Canal' and photoes of soldiers in battledress: I was interested. After a while he was joined by a friend, put the paper to one side, and engaged in conversation. Having nothing to do besides eat, I eventually picked up enough courage, and asked him if I might borrow it for a few minutes, as he was no longer reading it. He said that I was welcome to do so. Eventually his friend left, and we spoke together for a while: he wanted to know all about Suez, but I knew even less than he did about the whole disastrous affair. Having nowhere to spend the night, I asked him if he knew of some place, reputable and with clean sheets, not expensive yet very agreeable. He did, and took me in person to the 'Pensión America', where I was to spend the following night. He was studying to become a lawyer, and went to great lengths to convince me that in Spain, more than in any other country, it is ppactically impossible to 'set up' without influence and means. I did not know much about law in England, but I suspected that this was also a hard task, even in democratic England: I consoled him with this news. He was very affable, discussing everything we could think of - politics and religion, social economy, personal hardship in University life. I said good-bye when I had arranged my terms at the Pensión, thanked him heartily, and went on another journey of discovery. But there was not all that much left to see. First of all I visited the Colegio de la Santa Cruz, one of the University buildings. The entrance was also of plateresque work, but being under repair, I could not see it: in any case I had seen enough plateresque-work for a lifetime.

The courtyard resembled the museum's, except that it was much simpler, less exuberantly extravagant. After staring lovingly at some summer-school notices in a doorway - I did a three-week course at Santander during the previous year, and another at La Rochelle the year before that - I went deeper, through the corridors, into the garden . This was being sprayed when I entered, and I had to duck almost as soon as I showed my face. Ifound the gardener, but was unable to extract much information from him. I learnt that this was the vacation-time of the year, so that there would be no students for miles; he seemed to think I was looking for company. I asked him about the size of the University when it was in its prime; he said that he could not remember. I ~~tried~~ to point ed out that I was not ~~trying~~ ~~to~~ test ing his memory - as the University was more than a mere two or thee centuries old - and his personal reminiscences, but learn some of the many facts he had surely picked up about the home of his trade; there was no answer . I sauntered out again, slightly discouraged, in search of some more impressive building that might be regarded as an important section of the University. The main University block is reasonably large, but not historic. It was built specially for that purpose in the I8th century, having been designed by a citizen of Valladolid. The façade is strictly classical, very pure and dignified; round the front of the University buildings sits a grim, gaping row of lions and other mythical animals, all at head height, and supported on grey, well-worn pedestals.

From the University and the Colegio de la Santa Cruz I passed on to the Cathedral, which also belongs to more recent times. Built in the XVIIIth century, the whole form of the building tends rather to massive though elegant dimensions, as opposed to the light and airy structure of Leon Cathedral, or the dream-like aspect of Zamora dome. The inside is vast and plain, the pillars extremely rigid and square. The altar alone possesses some artistic merit, owing to the reredos that overhangs it. Unfortunately I only learnt this later, when the Cathedral was closed; when I was there, the whole reredos was in shadow anyway, as it is ~~itself~~ overhung by the wall above and around it: finally it is probably unnaccessible by the public, as the whole altar is seperated from the nave and the remainder of the Church.

In the evening I went for a walk through some of the older side-streets of Valladolid; while resentfully philosophising over the cheap price of Spanish watches and the emptiness of my cheque-book, I learnt that there was a Scottish College in the town, only a few minutes walk from here. I had read something about a Scottish College, or maybe an Irish one, or was it an English one ? at home, in George Borrow's 'Bible in Spain': I thought that maybe this was it, although I had my doubts. I set out in that direction, both in order to see it as a historic building, and because I might, bearing a letter of recommendation from my senior language master at Ampleforth College, hope to spend a night there under an English, possibly Scottish, roof.
From the outside it was only a plain, red-brick prison; I banged the door-knocker twice, loudly: I feared that maybe it was already closed for the night, as in Spain most religious houses close towards seven-thirty in the evening. Finally a boy of about eighteen opened me the door and asked me whom I wanted to see: did I want to see the Rector? Not particularly: I fear that kind of person, the unasked 'what do you want here at this time of night?' look, and I told the boy to take me to the sub-rector, or someone unimportant: the Rector was the only person in. The boy told me that he would possibly be asleep, but led me to his study; I was motioned in to his presence. The Rector must have been about seventy years old, or more: I started in Spanish, explaining the reasons for my visit to Spain: eventually I discovered that the Rector was absolutely one hundred per cent English: I changed to English. I told him what I was doing here, which seemed to puzzle him, and then my origins in England; he only knew Downside. I was slightly embarrassed, but I went on, and finally he invited me to spend the following night in the College, as all the students were out on vacation in England, where they lived. He then showed me round some of the more interesting parts of the College, the dark corridors lined with pictures of the English Catholic martyrs, the chapel, the refectory. This was large, XVIth century work, well lit from above and by means of vast, plain windows that dominated the room. The chapel was beautiful; over the altar hung a XVIth century reredos, unrestored, but well-preserved: ~~all~~ restored objects seem to me to lose all that charm gained

by time and age alone - they resemble wine, and are also subjected to the laws of taste and maturity. This particular reredos, brilliant gold under the strong altar-lights, full of statues all of them life-size, was a work of the disciples of Berruguete. The stalls were modern - dating to about 1909 - and, like most of the works I saw at Valladolid, or indeed at any Spanish town, they were the product of a local artisan. The side-chapels were twice as interesting, though probably far less valuable, than the high-altar with its reredos. There were two main side-altars, each embodying a special type of carving: this made use of vines and flowers as decoration. I was to see a similar, though far vaster work, later at Salamanca, which was almost identical in theme. This is baroque-work, and provided that it does not strive towards undue complexity of form and design, it appeals tremendously to all sense of the suave, the flowing and majestic. The roof of the chapel centred in a white dome, with paintings and sculptures inset on all sides; I later discovered that nearly every parish-church or convent in Spain has a dome in the centre, or at least dominating most of the building. This helps to light up the interior, and also helps to keep the place cool. The whole of this Church had been designed by a Jesuit brother long, long ago; his name is now forgotten. The College has a long history: it was nurtured and founded by English Catholic exiles and aristocrats, and later large funds were bestowed upon it by the Jesuit, Parsons, and the Earl of Leicester. It has been visited by George Borrow himself, and more recently By Hilaire Belloc, who is said to have arrived covered in straw from head to foot; I don't suppose that I was quite as bad as that.

Later in the evening I dined at a café near my lodgings: there I had warm sardines , which were not at all too bad, some fried eggs, chips, and finally a few glasses of red wine, at the total cost of twenty pesetas. All this I took in a small back-room, under the disapproving stare of some old men who seemed to be sampling every item of the possible twenty-three course meal; they probably thought I was being fussy over my food: in fact I was trying to choose my menu economically. I spent the night at the Pensión América, where my room, again, was barely furnished, but this time everything was clean, and the windows had enough

glass in them. I also liked this Pensión more than the one where I had spent the previous night because the people were more interesting. The man who owned the flat was a tailor - and I like all of that trade; they are always talkative, fair, generous. This pleasant, still young tailor, was assisted at his work by two beautiful, dark-complexioned girls: he called the elder of the two 'la morisca', a name that I rather fancied.

Valladolid is one of Spain's largest cities; most of the buildings are large and modern, and there are luxurious shops that cater for all kinds of tourists. The number of bookshops, many of which deal with the University, is enormous; most specialise, one for instance selling nothing but books on mathematics and modern diplomacy. Most of the streets are very narrow, and I often walked down them, sunk in the deepest of shadows, suddenly to emerge into one of Valladolid's many plazas; these contain beautifully arranged gardens, trees, flowers of all descriptions, lawns, and those welcome seats. Leon and Zamora both possess similar, though smaller squares, while Leon seemed to have been designed as a geometrical puzzle.

Valladolid has, it is true, more to offer the visitor than many other towns in Spain; yet, excluding the Museum and the Church of San Pablo, little remains. There is the Colegio de la Santa Cruz, but that is smaller than even a small English University College; the Cathedral only has its reredos, and the English College is not genuinely Spanish. The Church of San Benito has an enormous moorish entrance, consisting of one vast arch, super-imposed by yet another, with a dome inset, forming a porch of gigantic dimensions; nor is the interior as uninspiring as those of the other churches of Valladolid. There is some pretence at elegance, and the roof-vaulting is the best of the town; whereas the interior of the Cathedral at Zamora, and at Leon and Salamanca, is sadly isolated from the remainder of the Church, here it is not, and you can obtain a good view of the building as a whole.

In the course of the afternoon, the new rubber sole to my sandal came off; this may be because the boot-mender at Leon put a curse on it for my refusing to pay his price for it. In any case, I spent the rest of my stay in Spain with one foot higher than the other, and a hole wore

through the soleless sandal in a day and a half. The weather here was very disappointing; a cold wind, combined with sudden showers, tended to make me feel very ill at ease; my sweaters were all at Santander, as I had been warned I would not need anything more than a shirt in the interior.

Tuesday 7th of August.

I did little in the morning besides have breakfast and lunch. At mid-day I paid my bill at the Pensión America: this was 60pts, and included two main meals, a breakfast, and a bed for the night: I thought this was very modest, and profered a tip of 5pts. I said good-bye to the family, who had been most hospitable, and made for the bus that was to take me to the village of Simancas. It was a poverty-stricken little affair, this bus, and it had to be pushed for the first two hundred yards of the journey; the seats were three-quarters wood, with pieces of leather falling off all over the place; they were hard, and the bus was not altogether clean. It was quite full when we eventually left, ten minutes late, but most of the people on board were going to a village called Tordesillas, which came some time after Simancas. I believe that it was in this village that Juana la Loca was kept imprisoned for most of her life, and I would very much have liked to have seen the convent where she was kept - but I was short of money and time. The people on board were mainly villagers, who had come in to Valladolid for the day so as to do some shopping cheaply; in Valladolid things are notoriously low-priced, probably because the town caters mainly for the University and the students there. These country-folk all seemed poor: some were laden with melons, cases of tobacco, and others with food alone, bags of it: they were in high spirits. The road to Simancas was dreadful; it was full of holes, sharp turns, and puddles deep and wide; the road was lined for long stretches with beautiful, short, dark-green trees, as is the custom all over the continent, even on the meanest of ways. We constantly passed groups of people on foot, some waiting at the side , some standing in the middle of the road, all of them trying to stop the bus, on which they had expected to go home: they were very peeved at our non-stop attitude.

They were left there, by the side of the road, until later that evening.

I jumped out of the bus at Simancas - it was not going to stop just for me - and had a coffee at a roadside innw while waiting for the Castle to open; I was intending to see the National Archives, all of which are stored there. A group of French people also stopped here, and came in for a light meal. It was a family of four, on the way to Salamanca, and then Portugal. After a minute or two we broke the ice, and spoke for over an hour on England, which they had visited more than once, and Spain. The husband was an architect, and had, like me, roamed the land at the age of seventeen or eighteen, in search of art and architecture. I was to meet this family later, in Paris, when on my way back to England. They very kindly gave me their address, and then we went for a short walk round what there was of a village: the Castle was not yet open. On passing it, the husband broke into a murmur of architectural terms, expressing his sorrow at the state of the delapidated roof and the crumbling battlements: it is rather peculiar that a castle housing a nations most important state documents, relating to the days of her greatness and her empire, should now be falling into decay. It appeared that this family had already seen a great deal of Spanish village life, and this village was no exception to the general poverty of the countryside. The village-church had on its roof a gigantic stork's nest; the actual roof was full of holes, and the walls looked as though they might collapse at any moment. Most of the houses ~~of~~ Simancas were built of clay and straw; one, older than the rest, bore on its wall an ancient coat of arms; this village used to house the Court of the Spanish kings. ~~The older part~~

NO TRACE NOW REMAINS

of the original town of Simancas ~~is now invisible~~: ~~no trace of it remains~~, although once it was infinitely larger than even Valladolid, and was the capital of Spain. The clay and wattle fabrics ~~form~~ now a mere ghost of what there used to be here.

The Castle of Simancas is on the whole still in very good condition; there is only one part of the battlements broken, and I was told that this was soon, 'mañana' going to be repaired. The crest of the Castle

consists of seven hands, bordering the sides, with a castle in the centre; this once denoted terrific strength and defence power. This castle used formerly to mark the boundaries of Leon and Castile, belonging itself to the kingdom of Leon. When Ferdinand and Isabel, the Reyes Católicos, ascended the throne, Spain gradually became a united land, and the Castle passed into the hands of the Almirante of Castile, who enlarged the original castle on all sides; it was then that it was turned to the purpose of preserving National Documents of importance. There are two very small rooms in the Castle; the smallest of them was one of the first to be used for this purpose, and although tiny, it is really beautiful. The room is six-sided, and has two stories to it; the walls are of wood, and consist of large panels that can all be slid open, revealing inside the most important State Ecclesiastic and diplomatic documents in the Castle's possession. The wood is mainly pine, with nogal forming the centre of every panel; this wood dates back to the XVIth century, and is damp with oil, as are the strong iron bolts that fasten the panels. This chamber is small and compact: everything of value lies behind the walls, beautiful carved woodwork, while a barred window, high up the wall, overlooks the valley where the heart of Spain once beat. Another, slightly larger room, was the first where documents were housed in the Castle; here also are the most important of the archives of State. The roof is of fine Renaissance stonework, with the coat of arms of the Spanish Empire in the centre. Passing through a narrow corridor, I entered two large halls, one-storied, where the Castle archive-keepers are continuously at work, cataloguing all the documents and forming a vast index of everything within the Castle: I was told, rather gloomily, that this was an interminable job, and that the keepers would have to leave their sons at work there when they all died. From these two work rooms, also lined and filled with documents, I passed into a vast two-storied hall, where I learnt that the archives have at last been arranged in order, according to subject; along the walls there are nothing but State documents, relating to peace treaties, war declarations, marriages of State, Vatican Bulls and ordinary state correspondence; in the centre

of the room, reaching up to the ceiling itself, are diplomatic notices, correspondence and, in brief, the accumulated works of five centuries: the bureaucratic side of the Spanish Empire is here revealed absolutely, in its every aspect - the details of its armies, navies, administration both at home and abroad, in Spain as in Spanish America, the Low Countries, Flanders, Italy. This room, as are all the rest that I was shown, is panelled with light-coloured pinewood, and through the vertical wooden bars of each partition can be seen piles of neatly arranged and titled bundles of historic archives. There was one more room of importance that I saw; here, behind glass cases, are examples of Vatican Bulls, richly decorated in gold and black, and a variety of examples of various types of documents which are usually kept stored away, or ready for research in other parts of the Castle, where experts spend their whole life-time at work. Besides the Vatican documents, so richly ornate, there were letters written long ago by the Kings and Queens of Spain: reports of the battle of Lepanto: an INVENTORY of the ill-fated vessels of the great Armada: the marriage-contract of the Princess of Aragon to Henry VIII of England, still refered to as the Prince of Wales. My guide proudly pointed out that she was the only wife whom he did not have executed. In this room I saw the signatures of Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand 'Yo la Reina', 'Yo el Rey'; the vast scrawl of Henry VIII's large signature, the neat handwriting of Cecil, Queen Elisabeth I'Minister of State; I saw the almost illegible writing of the great generals of XVIth and XVIIth century Spain. Later, in the centre of the room, the guide uncovered a stand with a dozen revolving plaques: here I was shown the neat and well-formed handwriting of Cervantes, author of Spain's most famous novel: the writing of Luis de Leon, poet and, nearly, mystic: an example of the writings of Góngora, the famous Golden Age poet who invented his own kind of poetry; an example of Quevedo, Spain's most bitter, biting, satiric, sarcastic poet and novelist; a page of Herera, a page of the more recent Moratín. There were texts in Japanese, with translations affixed, directed to the King and asking for some more missionaries, please. There were copies of invitations to State Banquets of Spain's most glorious days, primitive pictures of Cuba, essays and reports by Christopher Columbus to the monarchs of the

glorious Spanish Empire of the day.
This castle contains unknown masses of documents, all of historical importance; the archive-keepers know the contents of a few; whilst others are still being examined, and yet others have not been opened since the time when they were written and sealed for future refer ence. Here lie the paper work and signatures, the writings, proclamations and declarations of centuries; here one might spend fifty years, and still not know a fraction of what occured in the years of Spain's glory. I spent an hour and a half here, with a guide all to myself; we roamed through musty passages, newly decorated halls, renovated corridors lined with more recent manuscripts; every now and again he would unlock the forbidden door, draw aside a dusty red satin curtain, revealing more of the wonders of the Castle, more of the secrets of this maze of still unexploredletters written four hundred years ago and more. I gave him a handsome tip, as the only fee of entrance was one peseta, which was meant to cover the stamps of the document I signed, showing my nationality and my innocence. I walked slowly out through the heavy metal-studded gateway, over the drawbridge and the moat, through the rest of the village, and out into the country adjoining it. There was no bus back to Valladolid, and I knew that I would have to walk it or, defying Spanish highway code, try hitch-hiking. This I did for over an hour before stopping a ramshackle, tumble-down lorry, which took me into the centre of the town. The driver spent most of the time telling me how low wages can be in Spain, and how badly done by are the country people in particular; they often have to live on twenty-five pesetas a day, and I already knew the price of meals in Spain. The landscape from Simancas to Valladolid is very inspiring and rugged. Except for the trees that border the road, there is no vegetation for many miles; on either side stretch yellow, dusty plains, with glittering grey-white mountains majestically lining the distant horizon . Every now and then there is the inevitable sierra of bare rock; everywhere ants are busily at work, destroying all that man has tried to plant or build; the cold wind buried its way through my thin white shirt, and ~~continued to~~ whined drearily over the plain.

When we arrived at Valladolid, I made for the R.E.N.F.E. office, but it had just closed, and the kind officials inside grinned happily at me through the glass doors; I had a strong impulse to remove them. I had gone there so as to find out the times of trains to Santander on the next day; now I would have to wait and chance it, hoping that I would not arrive at the Station too late, or too early. I then made my way to the English College, where I had been invited to spend the night. I could not find it; I asked the traffic police, and they did not know; I told them that it was not a new institution, and that it had been there for four centuries: they still did not know. Finally I managed to find it for myself, but I was hot. I knew that it was due to close at seven-thirty, and I only arrived at a quarter to eight. I entered, and was shown my room; I washed, and then went in to dinner with the Rector. We dined in a smaller refectory, reserved for conferences and special occasions. The Rector, although old and slightly deaf, was charming throughout; the dinner, which was of cold trout, meat, potatoes and fruit, was excellent. We were served by the boy who had opened me the door on the previous day, and had let me in to-night; he seemed rather sullen, though extremely obedient; apparently the Rector was annoyed with some new and temporary aide-de-cuisine, as all the normal staff was on holiday. We stayed there till late in the night, attended faithfully by the Rector's nine cats and kittens, one of which carried the title of 'la pequeña', pronounced in a very English way. The Rector was very fond of them, and this is the first place in Spain where I have seen either cats or dogs treated as pets; they were nimble, and hardly had a dish been set down for us at the side, than one of the cats had already been there to make sure it was not meant for itself. We talked for about an hour after dinner, mainly about England, and the Catholic schools there: I then asked his leave to retire for the night, and made my way through the pitch-black corridors to my room. I did not have only one room: I had a sitting-room to myself for the night, and made at and softest bed I have ever slept in, and my room. I did not have coing was English or French, as were such things as writing paper and books: they do not seem to place much trust in Spanish products.

Wednesday 8th. of August.

I was called at half past seven in the morning, and taken to Mass at a nearby church by the faithful boy. The church was plain from the outside, but the inside tended in places to be almost gaudy; Mass began on time.

After Mass we returned to the College, where I packed my affairs and had breakfast - alone, as the Rector was still out celebrating Mass. I enjoyed breakfast, and even picked up enough courage to ring the table-bell for the servant; I had been given two slices of ham, and two enormous pieces of red melon - which I do not fancy: I asked the boy if he could change the two pieces of melon for one of ham: this he kindly did. I also had a whole pot of coffee, and one of hot milk: there is nothing as agreeable as plenty of warm coffee for starting a day. The cats were absent, and after eating all I wanted, I took my bag, thanked the boy for his services, and left for the station. The Rector refused to let me pay for anything, so the boy profited from this. This College was very English after everything else I had seen in Spain; from the food to the surroundings, you might have thought, on waking in the morning and looking out of the window in to the peaceful, heavily-planted garden, that this was some country-house or mansion in England.

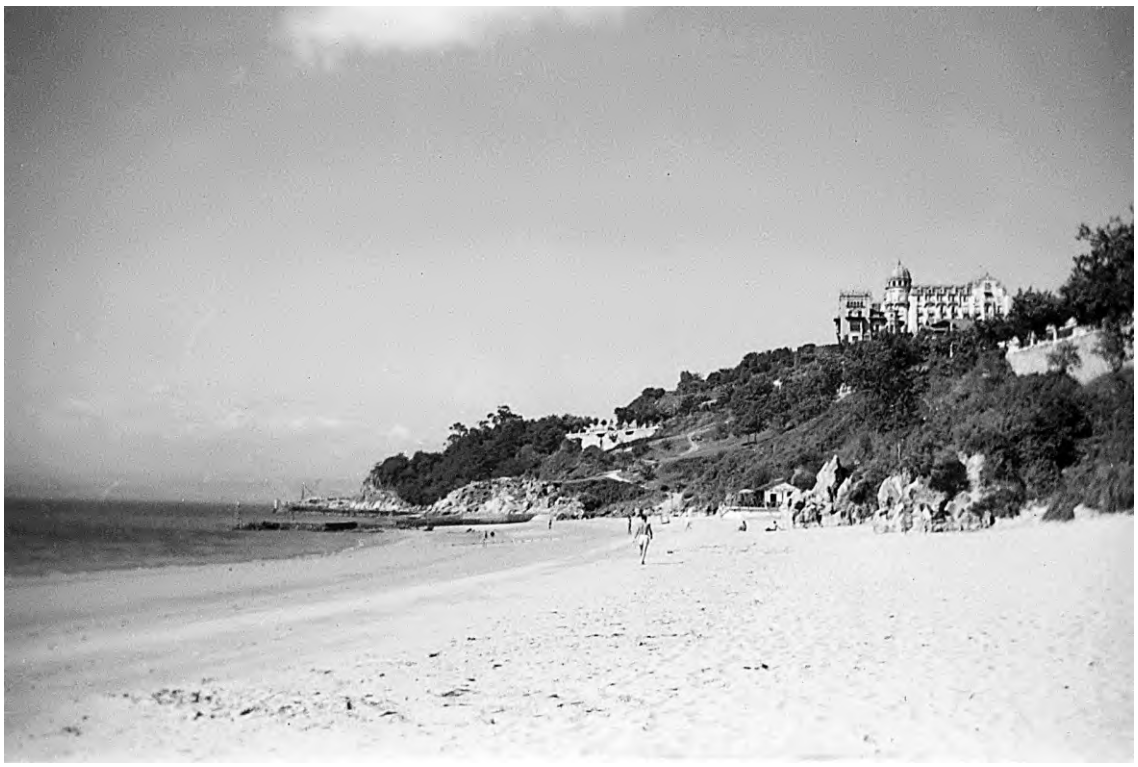
I walked back to the centre of the town and out again on the other side, until I at last reached the Station. I was in time for a train to Santander, but I had to wait, queuing, from 11.50 in the morning until 1.50 of the afternoon. I knew that, should I leave the queue, I might either not be issued with a ticket in time, or else I would be too late in the queue for any ticket at all to be left for me. So I waited, and Mr. Macdonell appeared in another queue; he is my Spanish Literature master at school, and I knew that he intended going to Spain for part of his summer holidays. He looked as though he had eaten nothing for a month, and to add to his unfit appearance he was wearing thick, black-rimmed sun-glasses, which at first prevented me from recognising him. Eventually I obtained my ticket - but only after they had warnedme that there would be no tickets left for Santander, and went out on to the platform. There I spoke to Mr.Macdonell for a while, until my train

took me out of reach. I started off without a seat on the train: after about half an hour I took over a corridor seat from a man who had just left the train, and soon after I was given a seat by a girl who had travelled extensively in the North of England, although herself a Spaniard. The train was a rápido, which meant that it had to stop at every station, but went quite fast between stations. I arrived at Santander towards eight in the evening. While on the train, I again enjoyed a tremendous amount of Spanish hospitality in the way of fruit, peaches, plums, grapes, and a piece of tortilla. At one of the stations where we stopped, I bought a bottle of wine, which to me seemed very strong: the other people in the carriage said that it was diluted with water. Whether it was or not, it had the same effect on me as a bottle of whisky; it took me days to recover from its extraordinary influence on my stomach.

When I arrived back at Santander I had supper at once, as I was very tired, and then went immediately to bed. There was a letter from my mother, and also one from my Godfather, which seemed to suggest that I try hitch-hiking for part of my journey. I did later on, from Irun all the way to Dieppe.

Thursday 9th of August.

I decided that before setting out for the second ~~and last~~ journey, I must have a definite rest; I was worn out by these Spanish train services, where the trains were slow and uncomfortable, and where one had always to queue up for hours for the least little object: I was also tired of waiting for trains that only appeared an hour late. It rained for nearly the whole day, and in the afternoon, when I saw Casuso, it was pouring. We had coffee together in the Paseo de Pereda, and tried to think of something to do in this shameful weather. After a short walk we seperated, as the weather was just too disagreeable. I wrote home, and posted my card, still feeling slightly queer after the wine I had drunk the day before. I went to bed at an early hour.



Friday 10th of August.

I got up and dressed at half-past eight, had breakfast, and received a phone-call from Casuso at nine.

I met him at his home in Calle Alta, from where we paid a visit to one of his friends on the opposite summit of the town. Then, rather tired already, we trudged down hill to the market where we bought some evil-smelling fishing bait. An hour later we were out on the bay of Santander, fishing hard. We anchored between the island and the shore below the Palaee; the current was strong, pulling out to sea. I did not have much luck with my fishing, and indeed I was feeling too cold to fish properly; the wind was ~~strong~~ SHARP, and once we were caught in an icy shower of rain. Eventually we packed up, and arrived at Puerto Chico at two in the afternoon.

At half-past two I had lunch at home, after which Don Miguel invited me to take a coffee with him. In the evening I went to see the film 'La Tunica Sagrada' at the 'Alameda'. The cinema was crowded, and the seats were of wood; a woman behind me kept on sticking her feet up my back, which I did not like in the least; as the film wore on, the air grew absolutely thick and smoky. When Casuso and I went out at the end, we were both perspiring strongly; it was cool outside, and after a few minutes wait I caught a trolley-bus h ome.

Saturday 11th of August.

I leapt out of bed earlier than usual, and spent from half-past nine in the morning until one o'clock at the Sardinero beach; it was a beautiful morning, and when I left, the beach was crowded.

In the afternoon it rained, but I was sati sfied: my back was burning me, and my face was red from the sun. I dreaded the approach of night. I saw Casuso in the afternoon, but not for long, as neither of us was feeling very much on form, and we did not seem to have anything about which to talk. In the evening I watched Cuca painting little kitchen tiles: she draws the design, which is simple and consists of a ballerina, a peasant-girl, or a peasant-boy, and then paints them; later she sells them in the town. Later at night, I went with the Italian girl and Asunción to another cinema, to see the German film 'Waltz Real'. I

really enjoyed this, largely because the Cinema was far more modern, and because we had better seats than for the other night. Here the seats were more like armchairs than anything else, and one had plenty of space on either side: the ventilation was better. I was amused by the filmlets, used for advertising purposes as in England, but here far more imaginative and picturesque. When we emerged it was raining steadily, as it had been when we entered; we walked home cheerfully enough however, Asunción with her novio, and I with the Italian girl. I felt very much in the grip of abulia all day long; what can I do about it in this weather ? There is nothing at all to do.

Sunday 12th of August.

I slept until nearly eleven in the morning, taking the hint on the previous evening that in Spain people like to sleep once a week. I went to twelve o'clock Mass at the parish church of Santa Lucia; the ~~place~~ BUILDING was crowded, and there were people standing at the sides. I did find myself a place, having arrived early as usual, but my view of the service was obstructed throughout by a kind gentleman who would stand up all the time. Once I caught a glimpse of the high-altar, but just enough to remind me that serving-boys do their task atrociously on the continent; maybe a more lenient attitude is required in Spain, I am not certain on that point.

I wore my white shirt with the stiff collars for the first time in Spain; I had always dreaded that the heat would play havoc should I wear it, but this summer all is different. In the evening I went for a walk along the edge of the bay, until I unexpectedly met some friends from aboard the 'Reina del Mar': ~~they were~~ THEY WERE rapidly approaching the end of their stay in Spain. I learnt that they were suffering disastrously from fleas, which had ruined my holiday of the previous year: I said that they might have some of my flea-killing powder, which I had not yet used at all; they were delighted. I took them home with me, after which I decided to take the law into my own hands, and show them the famous Riojano, which they had never seen. We entered, and they were soon astonished, but decided to stay and sample some of the drinks there; I ordered a poron of Jerez, which we passed round and

round, to the amusement of the other Spaniards there. We stayed for about twenty minutes, and then walked slowly back to the centre of the town, where we parted. I returned home and went to bed early. As usual I did not get to sleep for quite a while, because of all the noise going on in the street below. Every night, from about half-past ten onwards, the main house doors are closed all over the town. Some people, if not the majority, only go home long after this hour, and naturally want to enter their homes; they stand outside the house and clap their hands loudly and slowly for about a minute, and then wait for the door to be opened. Imagine the noise at one in the morning after a dance, with everyone returning at about the same time, and the whole town reverbrating to the sound of a steady and rythmical clapping. I thought at first - in my romantic innocence - that it was a novio calling to his beloved, and trying to make her appear at the balcony-window; but my ideas were put right by Don Miguel.

Monday 13th of August.

I arose very early, and, after breakfasting, I spent one and a quarter hours queuing at a R.E.N.F.E. office for a ticket to Madrid. The police come every day to this office in order to keep the queues under control; they arrive about a quarter of an hour before the office is due to open, and then fall everyone in according to where he or she thinks he should be; people often disagree. There is a custom whereby people usually ask their place in the imaginary queue when they arrive: what is so troublesome is that Spaniards from other less disciplined town s are not aware of this habit. I at last purchased my ticket to Madrid, marked for the 10.50 p.m. Mail Express : that meant that it should be a good journey.

I went for a relaxing walk in to the town, and then out again to the beach: there was every sign that the weather was going to be marvelous for a whole day. I had my first swim for days: the waves were somewhat large, but the water was at least warm. At one in the afternoon I returned to town, had a habitual coffee in the Paseo de Pereda, and then went in for lunch. I then had a good long sleep.

On waking I decided that I would have something to eat at the confiteria outside; I bought myself a delicious chocolate cake, full of chocolate and almond-cream: the chocolate had preserved the taste it still has when warm: it was rich. After an early dinner, I said good-bye for another week and went to the station. My reserved seat was safe, and the train left on time.

Tuesday 14th of August.

The train rumbled on over the plains of Castile: I slept fitfully. The other people in the compartment were silent; they too were for once trying to get some sleep. After two or three hours travel, the lights were suddenly switched on: passports were wanted. Everything checked, the lights went off, and we slept again.

We entered Madrid at 9.20 in the morning: I ~~disembarked~~ alighted, and made straight for a telephone. I had been given the address of a friend of Don Miguel with whom I hoped to be able to put up for two nights; by address, I really mean the phone-numbers, for there were many alternative ones. The telephones were American, and I had to buy jetons for them before operating them; every three minutes I was automatically cut off the line. I grew angrier and angrier: every time I was through to his friend, and had started to speak, I would be cut off: and I could not understand a word he was saying. Like some English people, I suppose, when they shout down the phone it is very unpleasant and difficult to make out what they are saying; all Spaniards shout down the phone. I was through to him for the fourth time, and was unable to make out as much as one word of what he was telling me; eventually I called for a mozo, who took over, wrote down the address Don Miguel's friend had been trying to get across, and found me a taxi to that destination. I felt harrassed: my fingers were covered in ink from my leaky pen, which had twice fallen to the ground as I tried to operate the American telephonic instrument; I had spent innumerable pesetas on jetons, and would now have to pay something terrible for a taxi, I supposed. But the fare was not over-high, and I was even satisfied to give him a good-enough tip. Don Miguel's friend opened the door of the flat in the street Victor Pradera, and

welcomed me in. He showed me into a room where I might stay for a few days, and I unpacked my few affairs. Shortly afterwards, he went to work, and I never saw him again, as he had to leave for the country on some errand or other.

I went out soon after and had a kind of breakfast, consisting of anchovies on a roll, coffee and crisps. Thew whole cost me twelve pesetas, and the snack was not at all bad: what mattered was that I needed it, and it helped to keep me going for the whole day long.

I then took a bus to the centre of the town, where I wrote a card home from the central Post-Office. This was a vast affair, with many counters, half of which were closed; and as for the rest, only at about two counters were there any people, all queuing for stamps.

From the Post-Office I went to the Prado, where I spent the remainder of the morning and some of the afternoon. From the outside, the Prado seemed small for a National Art Gallery, and one of the most famous in the world: but the inside was a maze of winding corridors, with the occasional vast chamber running almost the entire length of the building. There were charts and maps of the lay-out of the Museum in most of the rooms, but they would have needed a day to be understood: they seemed to be artistic yet precise, with a kind of three-dimension effect. The first thing that struck me as I entered was the large number of people at work copying the paintings; in front of every fifth or sixth picture there was an easel; sometimes there was a student at work there, sometimes no-one, but this all helped to give the Museum an appearance of great industry, and, what I think counts for so much in a Museum especially, an air of life. I wandered around rather aimlessly at first, as there was so much to see, and I was half-asleep, and I was not certain as to what interested me most. In any case I intended to return at a more opportune time, as I knew that the Museum would be closing in an hour or two. There were several rooms devoted entirely to the paintings of Goya - lifelike portraits of Lords and Nobles, as well as those entrancing, weird pictures of his favourite dwarfs, his goblin gypsies.

One of his pictures consisted almost entirely of a pale yellowish mist: at the bottom there was a wall, and over this peered the half-tragic, half-comic head of a dog. Besides these mysterious paintings by Goya, brutal and fantastic in theme, belonging to an unknown, vilified world, there were several by the famous Bosch, and some by Brueghel, all lurid, unreal, teeming with spectres and other nightmarish though fascinating figures. One of them was called 'La Triunfa de la Muerte': it was nerve-racking and grotesque, an imaginary - I hope - account of what happens to people when they are called to the other world; similarly, the temptations of Saint Antony left an indelible impression on my mind; they were so unforgettably horrible, and more than enough to drive any Saint mad. Here I saw paintings by the same Berruguete of Valladolid, all in gold and intended probably as church decorations; also some by El Greco, his characters grim with their elongated features, his colours as dark as the grave. I passed through a small but wide chamber devoted entirely to Velazquez, where I saw the 'Rendición de Breda' once again: in the appartment where I was living at Santander I had seen the same picture, but in tapestry-form: now I could see the difference between the original painting and all other imitations of it: in the painting there is an interesting, misty-blue background, as in all his main landscape paintings, for example that of the Príncipe Balthasar. In the tapestry this appears to have been omitted, or else it was changed to yellow: the broad haunches of the large horse in the foreground are interestingly exaggerated, and there is a fine, though discreet, look of victory in the Spanish Captain's face, as he receives the keys of the vanquished town. All this was missing in the tapestry at Santander, which nevertheless remained a very good one. There is so much exquisite work in the paintings of the masters, that they can easily be reproduced, omitting half the painting, and yet remain sound, easily inviting praise as ~~sound~~ good reproductions of an original. There were also many paintings by people of whom I knew little or nothing: there were vast dishes of over-ripe fruit and vegetables by a certain Menéndez, which filled nearly a whole passage, yet did not in the least raise my appetite for any such things. I spent about an

hour seeing everything in general, and nothing in particular, after which, noticing a sign pointing to a buffet, I made for it as fast as I could, fearing it might be full: but not everyone does as I do, and it was not even half filled. It was a beautiful buffet, more of a café than what it called itself, situated in a little courtyard in the centre of the Prado. On all sides rose the red-brick walls, covered almost entirely in ivy, with sparrows flitting about from branch to branch, from table to table. It was the perfect place to which to retire after spending any amount of time in a museum, and any building in Madrid is warm and tiring. Here I had my first two warm chocoladas: they were nourishing and refreshing, leaving me very much more satisfied afterwards than after drinking any number of cold oranges or beers. While resting here I was joined by three South Korean priests, who spoke good French and English, but no Spanish: I interpreted for them for a while. The Korean language reminded me at first very strongly of German: I wish I could speak any language at will !

I left the Museum at half-past two, and waited outside for a bus for three-quarters of an hour; they were all full of people who had just finished their work, and were now going home for lunch. It was unendurably hot, and I could not understand how the Spaniards waiting in the queue with me could stand the incompetence of their country - and the capital at that. I was feeling hungry and irritated, also slightly tired after the little sleep I had had that night. Eventually I took a different number bus, which dropped me near the house where I was staying. All the houses in this quarter are new or very recent: all the old houses here were bombed to rubble in the Civil War, and the job of rebuilding is still in progress. On reaching my lodgings I immediately lay down and slept - for three hours or so. I hoped that the suffocating heat would have lessened slightly by the evening. At six o'clock I went for a pleasant walk in to the town, and visited the Palacio Real, of which I had heard so much; presuming that it would soon be closing, I sat down outside, in the gardens, and simply looked at the exterior. The gardens were luxurious, and at the time

they were being watered by dusty-looking gardeners. There were fountains everywhere, hedges, seats, lawns, all open to the public gratis: at the time the public was mainly French. There was a beautiful sunset as I sat there in the evening, cooler now than at any other time of day. The Palace was lit up by the dying sun, and all the pillars and grey stone were pink and mellow, the perfect colour, I thought, for such a building, that was French rather than Spanish in all its lavish exterior decoration. It was on leaving the Palacio Real that I saw my first public statue of Don Quixote and his faithful squire, Sancho Panza. Rozinante was lean, his neck and head drooped low in front: Don Quixote was standing in the saddle, with one hand shielding his eyes as he gazed ahead, far over the plains of Castile, while with the other he held his trusty lance: he was thin, his features noble but sallow. Sancho was short and rotund, reclining comfortably in his saddle, shield strapped loosely to his back. I had often seen statues in private houses dedicated to one of this classic pair, but never to all three; most of them had been statues of Don Quixote alone. This public statue, really enormous in size, was most impressive.

The city of Madrid has next to no industry; all here is new and clean. The houses in the centre of the town are elegant: the Prado is simple, red brick and grey stone: the Correos too is handsome, almost a palace of grey stone. Further out the houses are built more for the sake of economy, still beautiful, but with diminutive rooms, and red brick takes over almost completely from the fine grey stonework of the centre. Madrid is full of trees and parks, gardens and terraces; every street has its trees at the side or in the centre. Everywhere there are gardens dense with thick, green foliage, shrubs, flowers. The streets themselves are wide, dry and dusty; round the base of every tree the pavement is cut away and there are several inches of cool, black water. The sky all day long was light blue; in the distance, on all sides, hung curling white clouds of a dangerous appearance; the heat was intense, heavy and tiring. All day long the streets were crowded with people, mainly foreigners, but also people going to their daily work, priests and officers, tourists.

On the way home at night - I walked - I bought myself my first peach in Spain: I ate it when I arrived home, and it did not impress me very favourably with its dry and acid taste. My bedroom at Madrid was simple but clean. There was a carpet and a wardrobe, a small bed-table and a bed-lamp, and, inevitably, the bed itself; this had the first really safe mattress I experienced away from Santander. Usually they are lumpy, and fade away to bare sheets at the edges: this was a good one.

Wednesday 15th of August.

I awoke at half-past nine in the morning, and the whole flat was deserted; I suddenly remembered that the following day was due to be a fiesta, and this now must be the following day. Shortly after the landlady appeared and confirmed my theories, but reassued me in that there were masses every half-hour until two o'clock or thereabouts of the afternoon; so there was still time.

I went to the ten o'clock mass at the nearby church of the Sacred Heart of Mary; it was a new building, as I had expected, but not at all in the old Spanish style. I preferred it as it was, simple and plain, but imposing, with the tall, single pale-yellow pillars rising to a similarly plain ceiling: I hope that it stays like that. The altar was also unencumbered by a reredos or a legion of statues, and over the altar was the inevitable dome, illuminating the building with the strong, pure Castilian light above. The church, thanks to its new outlook, was cool and airy, unlike that of Santa Lucia at Santander; and, I thought, this simple dignity was just as fit, if not more, to fill one with thoughts due to God and not other distractions. Here too the Church was packed, and as masses continued one after another, there was an almost incessant stream of people coming in and going out; unlike in English Catholic churches, here Communion is given out whenever required, and that is during the whole mass: I think that this provides a far greater sign of life than when all is silent, and only the priest with his acoloyte can be seen by the altar.

After Mass and Communion, I returned to my lodgings and had a ~~good~~ cup of coffee, presented to me by the ~~good~~ woman of the house. Then, suitably refreshed for the time being, daring the terrible heat, I rushed to the slightly cooler shelter of the Prado, where I spent an enjoyable and profitable morning. To-day it was crowded, and there were no painters at work, copying the famous Spanish masters: it was a fiesta. Feeling rather guilty, I made directly for the buffet, determined to have my refreshments first, and not, as yesterday, ~~afterx~~ afterwards. I had another chocolada, and then an orangeade, to see the difference; I preferred the chocolate. Soon after I left this place of repose, and began to visit the galleries more seriously than during the previous day. Again I spent some time only looking at the works of Velazquez and El Greco - whose paintings to-day struck me as being studies in shadow and light, whose heads appeared to be flickering candle-flames in the darkness of their background. I saw for the first time the paintings of Tintoretto and Rubens, pictures of vast dimensions, the colours light, but lacking in detail and the striking power of Velazquez or Leonardo, for instance. The 'Gioconda', copy of the famous anonymous painting now in the Louvre, awaited me unattended in a dark and peaceful corner, after I had been looking for it for over ten minutes, expecting something vast and magnificent. This copy was, I believe , a copy of the original by a disciple of Leonardo da Vinci: the colours are exquisite, rich, but restrained and pure, the face beautiful, and modest as ever; I missed the famous mystic landscape with which I usually associated the picture, and yet its absence helps one to concentrate on the main features of the head. Goya had whole rooms to himself, as had Titian with his numerous nudes, whose brightness of skin alone helped enormously towards the lighting of the vast museum rooms. It struck me after a while that all the painters whose works are to be seen in the Prado were good artists, and that they all knew how to paint, but that those who excelled were the artists who knew not only how to paint correctly, and depict exactly what they saw, but those who had a burning imagination, an original approach to life, to people, to this world. There are many paintings here that are very precise, detailed and correct, but that have missed

fame only because they lacked individuality, non-comformity, difference. After the Prado I went to the Retiro, a park of gigantic proportions. There were brilliant white statues on every side, still as though new, thanks to the intense heat and the dryness of the atmosphere; in the centre of the park there is a fine, circular and artificial lake, with rowing-boats dancing idly in the sun. At the far side of the lake is the famous statue of Alfonso XII, high up on his pedestal, surrounded on both sides by rows of classical white marble pillars of elegant dimensions. It was a beautiful park, and a perfect place in which to spend a whole afternoon; trees everywhere, as usual, helped to import some shade into this delicate heart of Madrid, and sparrows chirped happily on the pocket-café tables, in the trees, at one's very feet; there were not as many people here as I would have expected: most Spaniards prefer to completely leave the town where they live and work when there is a fiesta or other occasion of that sort. I stopped here for half an hour, and finally sat down and tried a Spanish copa of helados, which is a glass containing three icecreams, covered over in sugar and cinnamon; it was a delicious and ravishingly cold refreshment, though I felt strongly tempted to ask for more afterwards. All good things must come to an end, and I felt obliged to do something other than sit here all day long; I paid my billa and walked very slowly out of the park, caught a bus home, and there brought my diary up to date. I waited for the evening coolness to set in, but I was too impatient; I set out for the University buildings at half-past four in the afternoon. It was hot.

I was disappointed that the entire University was new, and also that it stretched for over a mile in all directions. It was all of red brickwork, with a large part of the University set high up on an incline of ground, overlooking Madrid and the plain behind. I could from here make out what I took to be laboratories, with the vast plain windows completely dominating the sides, and the Cathedral, which was on this mound, was still not to be entered, being under construction. Everything looked too clean and modern to be a University, though perhaps the interior of the buildings is different: I suppose that the original University, if there was one, would have been destroyed during the Civil

War. I doubt if I could have entered the University at this time of summer, as the students would be having their vacations: in any case it was too hot, and the buildings far too extensive and complicated to visit without being accompanied by someone who knew them.
I tried to find a friend whom I met in Oxford in the previous year, but she had just left for Majorca by plane: she would be back on Friday, but I explained to her mother that I would not be there by then. I was kindly received by the mother, who did not even know me, and who took me into her beautifully-furnished flat; the walls were thickly lined with books, mainly on engineering. I left after speaking to her for a few minutes, and made for my lodgings at the other end of the town. I decided to call in at the Puerta del Sol on the way, as I would be bound to pass by there. I had read, or heard mention of, this name in a book of Larra's, and again in George Borrow's 'Bible in Spain', but I could not remember any of the details. All I knew was that it served some function of minor importance, and that the whole of that part of the town used to meet there in the evenings: I also believe that it had some politikical significance; I knew no more than that. I left the bus at the stop for the Puerta del Sol, and asked a passer-by where the Puerta was, seeing no great and magnificent building of any sort myself. Yes, this was the Puerta del Sol. I was mystified. I asked where the Puerta might be: there was none. I was nettled. This plaza could only boast of two average sized fountains: it was not what I had been led to expect. I had expected to find some vast and superbly Spanish building or monument, possibly with a magnificent gateway or arch, all of grey stone or pink granite, dotted on every side with statues, possibly dominated by a vast engraving of the setting or rising sun. There was nothing.
From the mysterious Puerta del Sol I went to the Cathedral. From the outside it was plain, with two squat towers at either side. The interior was small, little larger than a normal parish-church; there were more side-altars than I had expected, with magnificent Spanish ironwork gates. The High-altar reredos was simple, the arches of the building Roman , and the not entirely unexpected dome looked down onto the altar. As the Cathedral for the Spanish Capital it seemed incredibly small; later I

discovered that there was yet another Cathedral in Madrid. All I know is that the one that I saw was in the older quarters of the town, in a street called the Calle de Toledo. I left this church very soon, passed between the wall and a row of citizens who were all sitting on chairs an the pavement's edge, facing out towards the street, and entered a musty but emptyish café which boasted that it could serve meals at any time. I ordered some chips and an egg, wine and grapes: I was served well, and the food was cheap: I felt better. There had been noone else in the café with me, and I longed for someone to whom to talk. I made slowly for the Estación del Norte, and enquired when there would be trains on the morrow for the Escorial: satisfied, I walked slowly homewards. On the way, I passed a Church of Discalced Carmelites in front of the Don Quixote plaza, and, curious to behold an evening service, I entered. This must have been Benediction, and when I entered there was a sermon in progress: I arrived when it was almost at and end, or else I might not have stayed for the remainder of the ceremony. The church was fairly modern; the architecture ~~was~~ ~~xii what~~ must have been Baroque; the place was full. I was delighted by the typically Spanish intonation of the Tantum Ergo~~m~~, which sounded mystic, dreamy, and appealed to me very deeply. I felt an urge to go to Confession, but I must have entered the Confessional from a wrong angle, as an ~~irritated~~ priest informed me that he was already hearing a confession: I was mystified.

Thursday 16th of August.

I got up at half-past seven in the morning, packed my affairs, and had breakfast at the neighbouring café. I wanted to buy the landlady some flowers, but there were no shops nearby where such articles were sold; I returned to the flat, paid my bill of sixty pesetas, and left the lady an extra ten pesetas for flowers, which I said seemed non-existent in this part of Madrid. She was delighted.

I walked slowly to the station: the heat was already setting in for the day, and on the way there I noticed some navvies at work on a building, already stripped to the waist and sweating profusely; it must be the devil of a bore working in this kind of weather, where walking

is in itself a killing pastime. I arrived in time at the station, and even managed to find myself one of the last remaining seats left on the train for the Escorial. The journey from Madrid to the Escorial took only fifty minutes: I travelled there in a train of three wooden, tiny pre-war coaches, which hurtled mercilessly from side to side, tossing everyone all over the floor, as it made its way rather rapidly through the sierras of Castile. At the Escorial I boarded a coach also of antique design, which only just managed to drag us up the steepish incline leading ~~up~~ to the old village and the Cathedral itself. The village was old and small, much of it having been restored; many of the streets were still cobbled, and the whole place had an air of importance and antiquity. The Monastery of the Escorial is very symmetrical, vast, calm and ~~unmovable~~ IMPASSIVE, surrounded on every side by a row of old, grey four-storied flats built originally to house the workers of the Palace and the rest of the staff. I made first of all for the famous Church.

It is quite uncomparable ~~to~~ with any other Spanish Cathedral I have seen, for instance ~~to~~ with my favourite one, that of Leon. To start with, the former is a study in Classical, GraecoRoman architecture, whereas Leon Cathedral is pure early Gothic, of French origins. Leon is slender, light and airy with its stained glass and delicate pillars, appealing to an entirely different sense of beauty and majesty than does the Escorial; they both succeed overpoweringly in conveying a sense of the divine, a feeling of the presence of God. When I entered the Escorial, which was at mid-day, there was no contrasting shock between lightness and darkness which I had experienced so vividly in Leon Cathedral; here everything was perfectly light, though far from bright; one could see all the details with ease. In the Escorial there are no stained-glass windows, no statues, no decorations; everything is tremendously simple, of magnificent proportions. The pillars, of solid grey granite - as is the whole of the Escorial - rise proudly and impressively upwards; they are so massive and strong, that one has the impression that they bear on their capitals the weight of the entire world above. There are four of these vast, central columns, the thickest in the world, set at the corners of a Greek-

shaped cross, and the Church is nearly square. On entering, I walked slowly towards the High-altar; near it there was a guide, busy explaining to a group of Anglo-French tourists some of the more startling facts relating to the Cathedral. The Escorial had been built for one reason only; not in order to offer thanksgiving after the Spanish victory of St. Quentin, nor as a token of reparation for the destruction by the Spaniards in that battle of a strategically placed church; it had been built as a token and symbol of the Counter-Reformation. Here there were no statues of Our Lady or the Saints, in order that men of all creeds might be united in the presence of one tabernacle and one God: here there was no excuse for difference of religious opinions; all were meant to unite in a common prayer to the one God. The guide went on to show that this was the most typically Spanish building in Spain, because those of Seville and Granada, although more ornate and beautiful, were thin and meaningless, built entirely of brick and plaster; this was a monument, made to last, made to symbolise the unmovable and unchangeable religion of God, the unchangeable and unshakable faith of the Castilian Spaniard. The granite of this Church was dragged block by block from the Sierra Guadarrama: it is the next largest edifice in granite to the Pyramids, yet it was built in its entirety within twenty-one years, and so under the supervision of one King, one architect, one creed. It was Philip II who provided the formidable stimulus to have this enormous Cathedral built in the short time it took to make: it was Philip II who helped to design it, who decided that it was to remain bare and magnificent, that it was to provide the nucleus of Counter-Reformation teachings and approach to religion. Philip II was a controversial king: many disagreed with his religious policies, but he survived, and triumphed over the bigotry of his time. The High altar contains the only statues in the Cathedral. They are all of bronze, and rise in four tiers, one statue at either end of the reredos, with two at the centre as well when finally the fourth and highest tier is reached. Thus there are ten statues in all, the largest, two metres in height, being at the top, and the smallest at the bottom, giving an impression of uniform structure. The columns

here are all of marble, of doric design. The dying King could look directly onto the High-altar from where he lay in bed, which was behind a glass-partition, and hear the mass where he lay. At the foot of the altar are two magnificent but simple pulpits, both of them gifts of Ferdinand VII: these are also of marble, with amber, precious stones, bronze and gold inlaid; like the Escorial itself, they are exquisite for their simplicity of design and the pure beauty of the bare materials, unobscured by countless decorations and ornaments.

Leaving the High-altar, I walked slowly round the church, listening to various guides speaking on different details of the architecture. There are four large organs, all of them belonging to the XVIth century; the dome of the Cathedral, which makes no pretence at great height, because of its massive proportions, is a third the height of St.Peter's in Rome, while the solid, dark, iron XVIth century gates of the interior of the Cathedral weigh a ton apiece, yet can be moved with one hand, so well made are the pivots. In the Escorial, between twenty-five and thirty masses are said daily, all of them in the morning within the space of three hours. The one and only memorial in the Church is to José Antonio de Ribera; it is a plain stone set at ground level in front of the high-altar, with his name engraved upon it, and nothing more. Even the Kings are not commemmorated here, as they have a special room to themselves elsewhere. José de Ribera was the right-wing political leader in Spain at the time of the Civil War: he was the first leader and founder of the Falange, now the Caudillo's political party. When Ribera was murdered by the Republic, his body was brought on foot over four hundred and fifty kilometres by members of the Falange, so that he might be attributed the honour of a martyr's burial: his is the only tomb in the Escorial: what glorious honour ! The Escorial fascinated me: it is the only classical building I have ever liked, and I like it as much, but for entirely different reasons, as that of Leon Cathedral. They are two wholely different structures, yet they both have that power of expression, beauty and divinity. Here I was struck by the immense grandeur and dignity, not one of rich stones and decorations, but of one overwhelming unity of design; here I was struck by the sombre, terrible masses

of grey granite stone, by the appearance of a monument bare of all superfluous, non-religious details, all on its own, steeped in its own greatness. Leon rejoices in the richness of its decorations, in its stained glass and its carvings, the Escorial in its austerity and the power of its bare classical splendour.

I left the Church towards one o'clock, and made for the village above, where I would have to spend several hours waiting for the Escorial to open again. I sat in the shade, under a row of dark green trees, with a high wall behind me; here I could relax and prepare for the hot afternoon. I spent over an hour here, watching people walking up and down the road in front, cars passing slowly now and then, heading for Madrid . Children played freely in the open, and one plucky little fellow went to a café and ordered a glass of water: it was not refused. The hours passed, and I decided to make sure as to when there would be a train to Salamanca. I set out for the station. The road was dry and dusty, hot despite the shade of the overhanging trees: no-one passed, as it was now lunch-time and the rest hour. The pavement was bad, full of cracks, with occasional large pieces missing: the cottages that from time to time bordered the road looked deserted and uninhabited. I walked on down to the station, leaving the high mountains behind me, plunging into the broad valley below. At the station I learnt that there would be a train going in the right direction at five-five in the evening. If the Escorial only opened at three, there would not be much time left, so I hastened back. I returned by a different route, up a narrow, arid looking lane, where I felt as though I should sooner or later be asphyxiated by the overpowering heat; trees on either side tried hard to keep me cool, but a forest would not have satisfied me. I returned to the open street-café, situated in the centre of the village's main street, where I met some English people, a student from London accompanied by his fiancée. With them I went to the Palace of the Escorial at three-fifteen. I acted as their interpreter, faute de guide. Compared with the Church, there was little of outstanding merit; everything was beautiful, but there was nothing REMARKABLE. This palace claims to possess the largest collection of tapestries in Europe, many

of them copies of Goya, whose originals are in the Prado. There are also numerous copies of other, less well-known artists, one of whom I think was called Vailly. The colours of the tapestries, smaller than those at Zamora, have all preserved perfectly, owing apparently to the healthy hot and dry weather conditions of the Palace and the whole of this part of Spain. The subjects of the tapestries are of a more frivolous nature than are those of Zamora, and here are depicted bull-fights (sham ones at that), scenes in a country-courtyard, dances, meetings of the nobles and so on. One room was of particular interest, for here two heads woven into the tapestry over the mantelpiece seemed definitely to be in three dimensions and to be protruding from the wall; the effect of the shading and the perfect preservation of the colouring was here even stronger than at Zamora, and the guide had to stop people several times from feeling the heads for themselves. Besides the tapestries there were other very fine palatial fittings: there were chairs in porcelain, chandeliers in porcelain and bronze; each room was entered through massive, rather over-heavy, light-coloured wooden doors, masterpieces of German XVIth century marquetry-work. In the Throne-room, the walls were lined with sixteenth century maps of Europe, tapestries of Spanish battles and naval encounters. Another room, more of a hall for its vastness, called the Sala de Armas, was lined with what seemed to be tapestry-work, but what in fact were fresco paintings. Here, in great detail, were scenes of some of Spain's most famous battles against the Moors, a scene from the battle of Lepanto, another from the battle of Saint Quentin; the colours were all perfectly preserved, except in front of the windows, where they were very slightly faded. It took ten years to complete this decoration, and I would only like to know why it was that the designer insisted that this fresco should resemble, and indeed be mistaken for, tapestry-work. We left the Palace rooms, and passed through a courtyard, down into the first Panteón. This is the burial chamber of the Kings and Queens of Spain, from the day when the Escorial was built. Here, in an almost circular vault beneath the high-altar of the church above, and lining every inch of the walls, set in wooden caskets, sleep the rulers of Spain from Philip to Ferdinand VII.

All the furnishings are in marble: the atmosphere is eerie, the room simple, bare of all but the most necessary decorations: an economical pyramid ~~as~~ for ~~regents~~ burials. I had ~~barely~~ just entered the Panteón of the princes, princesses, and members of Spanish Royal families, in fact the chamber of the 'Might-have-beens' and heirs, when I realised that in five minutes time my bus was due to leave for the station. Leaving behind me the cold, white marble tomb of Isabel II, I flew upwards, through passages, courtyards, and out to the main road; I was barely in time for the bus, which I only managed to catch because it was crowded, and the people took a long time to get on board.
I reached the station on time, and had a coffee whilst recovering from my frantic flight from the Escorial. I very much regretted not having been able to see the Escorial Library. At half-past nine in the evening I reached Salamanca, and set to work trying to find myself some lodgings for the night. I was accompanied for part of the time by a Liberal~~ist~~ Madrid cartoonist, who had taken a few days off work in order to pay his parents an unexpected visit. He showed me the way to a Dominican Church, where I had been told at the Escorial I might easily spend a few nights: it was closed, to the amusement of the atheist cartoon designer. The inhabitants of the Irish and Scottish Colleges had left Salamanca a year or two ago, and so I was out of luck. We parted towards half-past ten at night, as I supposed that he would prefer to see his parents than find me some lodgings, which he was under no obligation whatever to do: I had to insist that he do as he like, before he went; he was very kind, and ~~illiterate~~ cultured in taste. After a while, trudging hopefully along the now rapidly-emptying streets of the University city, I met two black-robed priests, an unusual sight at that time of the day. They were on the way home from the Post, and willingly offered to help me in my search for some lodgings, seeing that they knew the town at least slightly better than myself. We entered one pensión, but they wanted forty pesetas for the night; the priests advised me to refuse, which I would in any case have done of my own accord. We could not find anything else, and so they took me with them to their own house, where they said they would ask their superior for advice. It was by now about eleven at night,

and I was feeling tired. We entered their religious house: they consulted their superior, who at once got hold of a telephone directory and phoned through to two places; he soon found me some lodgings. I thanked him sleepily but gratefully, and, atill escorted by the two priest brothers, safely arrived at the Pensión Asturias, where I was to spend the following three days.

Before going to bed I ate half a melon, and drank a cup of near-chicory coffee. I was asked to fill in a yellow card with passport and identity numbers, for the good women of the house seemed in mortal fear of offending the city police. I then retired to my room. This was large, but held four beds: in term-time I was told they were all usually occupied, but now I had the room to myself. It was bare, there was no linoleum or carpet on the floor. There was a good, strong table in the centre of the room, and also three chairs: in the corner there was a large wardrobe full of belongings - I suppose the students'. It was half past twelve when I went to bed.

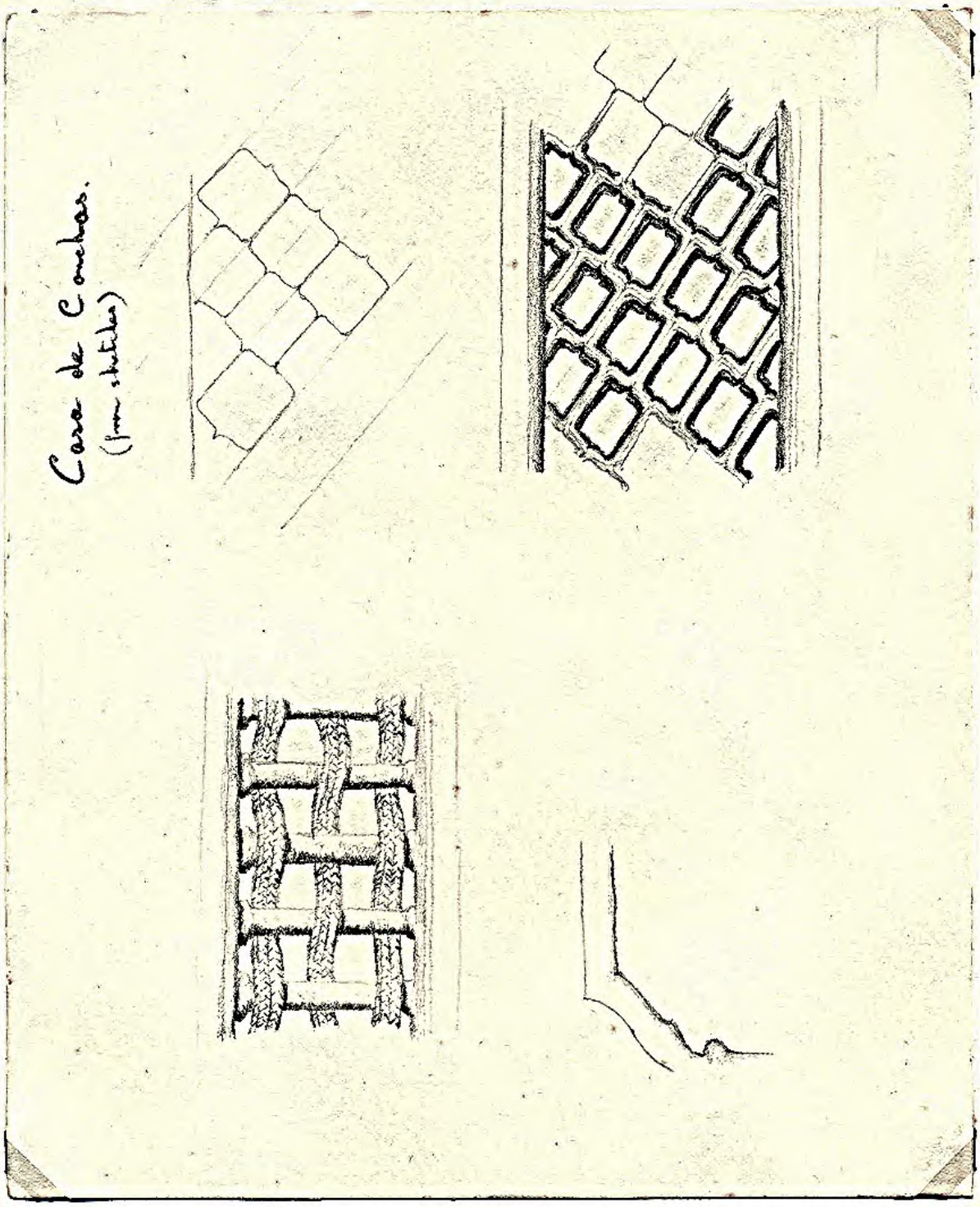
Friday 17th of August.

I awoke at eight in the morning, and at once wrote up my visit to the Escorial. At the same time I finished another quarter of my melon, and drank a cup of the same coffee as the night before. I was not certain whether to try to find myself better lodgings, but decided that this time economical circumstances should overrule all objections; in any case the place was clean, and the bed not too hard.

I left the pensión at ten in the morning, and made straight for the Irish College, in order to ascertain if indeed the reverend Irish fathers had left a few years before. I passed through an old and decrepit part of the town ~~in order~~ so as to find the College, a district where, I was later told, vice was at its strongest: this was supposed to be one of the last remaining slums in Spain. I was surprised that the Irish fathers should have chosen to place ~~their~~ college here. I finally found the right entrance to the College: I entered, and was told by an old man there that the Irish fathers were no longer there, but that he would willingly show me what there was to be seen.

The courtyard was old and beautiful, but in an increasing state of decay. I t was built in the xvith century, but had nothing in it of any particular interest. The Chapel, also dating to the same period, was very simple: the only decoration consisted of a reredos by Berruguete himself, also on a small and simple scale when compared with some of his more important works at Valladolid. The cupula was square, more of a tower than a dome, with some intricate gothic vaulting: otherwise the chapel was designed more for prayer and contemplation than as a work of art. Everything else in the Irish College seemed to have gone to ruin since the Irish Fathers left: there was grass in all the corners, between the large flagstones, in the gutters, on the stonework: it was sad to see. I thanked the caretaker, and wandered disconsolately out through the main door, now a leaning piece of old wood, over the broken steps in front of the College, and back to the heart of Salamanca.

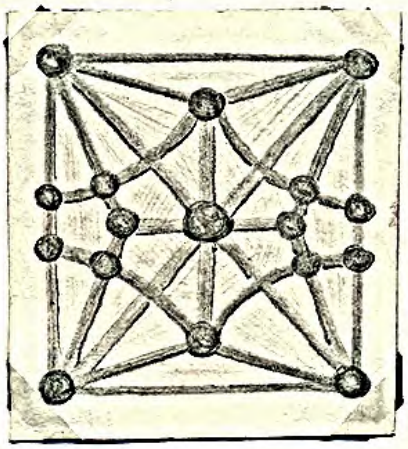
Leaving the Irish College, I had to pass in front of the Casa de las Conchas so as to reach the Cathedral; I decided that I would pay the Casa a visit on the way. I was about to enter when I heard a wailing of babies behind me in the street: there was an old, though not too old, woman, dressed partly in rags, yet still not entirely inhuman in appearance: once she was probably quite beautiful, now poverty had left its mark on her. She asked for alms: I was not certain how much to give her and, after toying with a two and a half peseta piece in my pocket, I snatched out a five peseta note which I thrust quickly into her hand. Her face lit up immediately, and her child ceased his crying: when I entered the Casa, she was still outside blessing me and singing some weird incantations. I was amused and gratified: were I to receive the same greetings at every such encounter, I think I would make it my life's work simply trying to please and help such people. Yet, as H. Belloc pointed out in his 'Path to Rome', if one does not give alms to such people, they are just as likely to exchange their one hundred and one blessings for as many curses. I loved the fifteenth century courtyard of the Casa de las Conchas: it was quite as noble and touching as the famous façade of the building. The stonework was finely wrought, of early Christian-Moorish design, with an



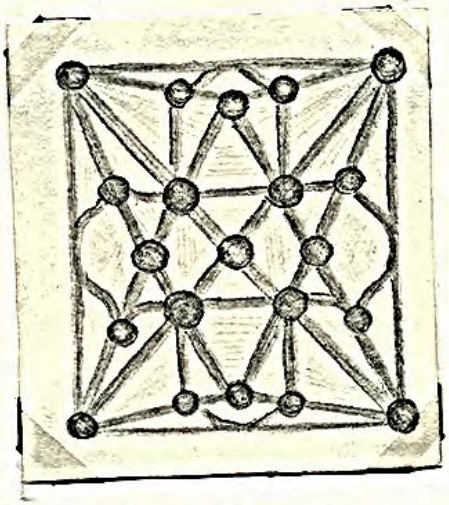
Salamanca: stonework from the courtyard of the Casa de las Conchas

exquisite tracery of grey stone along the edge of the courtyard roof. Everything was as Spanish as I had expected, but of an earlier, more experimental type, with, in places, exotic and strange stretches of masonry, possibly owing something to Moorish influences. This pleased me almost as much as the highly ornate, rather later court of the Valladolid museum. The most well-known part of the building is, of course, the exterior and the entrance, whose wall is studded with symmetrical rows of vast stone shells, and where each window is of a different type of architecture - a builder's maze. This façade is impressive for its decorations as for its size, and is one of the best-known landmarks of the city, recognisable even by the most inexperienced of visitors - like myself. The entire Casa de las Conchas is picturesque and unreal, a fairy-tale palace of the Arabian Nights.

As I wandered through the tiny, narrow, ancient city-streets, between old, deserted convent walls, past vast, baroque and gothic palaces, churches, private-houses, I thought that Salamanca must have been built as a home for Spanish art. Salamanca is a historic town, and in it, side by side, can be seen a dozen different mediums of architecture and design, all mingling, seeming still to be in a process of development. The New Cathedral, which it took two hundred and fifty years to complete, starting in the sixteenth century and ending int the eighteenth, combines gothic and baroque, plateresque and churrigueresque: everything harmonises. The roofing and the vaulting is all gothic, the passages high up on the Cathedral walls are gothic too, with an ornate fresco work beneath, depicting beasts and nymphs, angels, men and devils. Most of the side-altars are baroque, while the elaborate stonework surrounding them at the entrances is either gothic, baroque or plateresque: in one corner you have a retablo by Juan de Juni, in another corner one by Herrera. The Cathedral is very light and airy inside: stained-glass is rare, and the entire building is of light coloured sandstone or some such material. In many respects this cathedral resembles Leon; the pillars are slightly heavierand thicker, but they too give the impression of soaring easily upwards in search of their divine creator. Here one can see every stone of the



Roof-vaulting from
the New Cathedral,
Salamanca



Roof-vaulting from
the New Cathedral,
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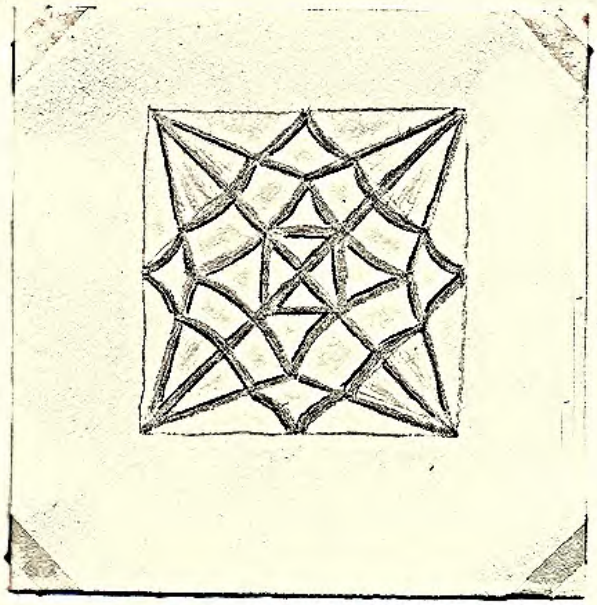
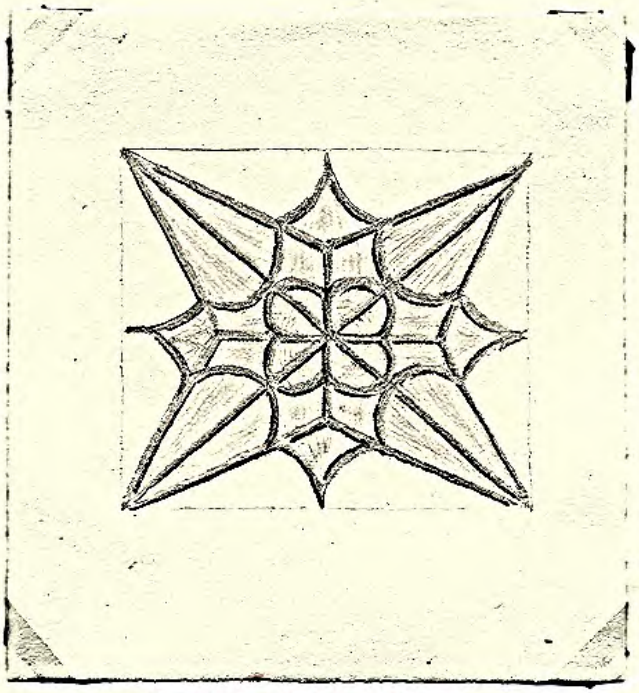


Roof-vaulting from the
Salamanca New Cathedral .



Roof-vaulting from
the Salamanca New Cathedral .

roof-vaulting, every spiral, every twist of the delicate tracery. The stalls in the Choir belong to the early seventeenth century, and are churrigoresque in design; they reminded me of the splendid stalls of Ripon Cathedral in Yorkshire, although there they are more recent. The organs, of which there are two, both of them belonging to the sixteenth century, are interesting both musically and because of their horizontally splayed pipes, giving the impression of a vast and cumbersome bird in flight, a dolphin leaping heavily over the waves, high up over the cathedral choir. The dome is splendid, far more ornate -possibly too richly decorated - than the interior of the dome at Zamora or that of the Escorial. Here in Salamanca Cathedral the inside of the dome is richly painted, and allows a tremendous amount of light to penetrate into the interior of the building. The Old Cathedral links up with the New one in such a way that in the place where the last row of pillars of the Old Cathedral once stood, there is now the dividing wall, and the last wall of the New Cathedral. The Old Cathedral dates back to the eleventh and twelfth centuries; here the columns are true Romanesque, heavy and solid, with a beauty all their own. They tend to have a similar effect, though possibly more artistic and less overpowering, to those of the Escorial; here they are rounded, and not square, and the stonework, as in the New Cathedral, is all of light-coloured sandstone, and not dark grey as at the Escorial. The retablo of this venerable Cathedral is magnificent, the treasure of the city: it was painted by an Italian, Nicolas Florentino, in the fifteenth century, and consists in all of fifty-three tablos, or sections. The colours are mainly rich gold and dark blue, contrasting vividly and artistically. The retablo itself could provide enough material for a whole book or a whole museum, it is so detailed, so vast and impressive, dominating the whole altar and Cathedral. I had to pass rather too quickly through the old and the new cathedrals, as it was closing-time: I resolved to return later in the afternoon, and try to draw some of the gorgeously rich and intricate stonework.

I returned to the town centre, on the way buying myself some grapes to take home with me, and a Daily Telegraph, Air Mail edition; I could

not resist a certain, rather expensive bookshop, where I bought a copy of Bequer's poems and one of Luis de Leon's, on whom part of my summer term Spanish literature paper had been set.
Satisfied, but somewhat hungry, I decided to have some proper meal, as books cannot be eaten, however appetising they are. After appeasing my hunger, I returned to the pensión, where I slept for two hours or so. In the evening, at about five o'clock, I set out again to the New Cathedral, armed with my sketch-book and diary.
I spent several hours there, trying to draw parts of the exquisite vaulting; I was so intent on my work, that I only just failed to enjoy yet another startling experience, that of being shut in for the night in the New Cathedral. The guide was on the way out, about to close the main door, when I stepped out and asked him what the time might be: I never saw anyone looking quite so startled: I was reprimanded, but made up any bad feeling with a tip for having disturbed him.
I went out, by kind permission of the custodian of the New Cathedral, and made for the Plaza mayor, where I sat down and enjoyed a good, reviving cup of coffee. I decided that my finances needed straightening out, and that if possible I should try to pass one or two nights at a monastery. I enquired of some kind policemen where the Benedictine House might be, and they replied that it was about four kilometres from Salamanca. I found out that the time was already too far advanced to hope to arrive before closing-time, and so I returned for the second time to the Dominican house, which had been closed when I went there for the first time, on the night of my arrival at Salamanca. A jovial brother opened me the main door and let me in; he gave me a sheet of information on the church, called the church of San Estéban, and armed with it I entered that glorious building. Here I was at once faced with the largest retablo that I have seen in Spain, in the whole of Europe. It was of simple baroque workmanship, as at the Colegio Inglés of Valladolid: here it was less highly ornate, and so, being baroque, more beautiful. The pillars were encircled by entwining branches of vines and flowers, grapes and large, large leaves. The whole retablo glittered with gold from floor to ceiling, and the

side-altars were no less precious. The High-altar of San Estéban is baroque, as are the two side-altars nearest it: the tower in the centre of the church is renaissance and, so, classical, while the façade end of the church - the part furtherest from the High-altar - is all of pure gothic, earlier even than the gothic of the New Cathedral. When I entered this church, the floors were having their annual spring-cleaning; there was a row of women, stretching from one end of the building to the other, all on their knees scrubbing hard with greyish water at the grimy floor-boards. They were behind time, as the church was due to close in a few minutes, and a monk came in to rebuke them. I was on the point of leaving the 'convento' as they are called in Spain, when the monk who had opened me the door asked me what I had seen: I had not seen enough, he told me: there was more, far more, and of greater importance. He led me back to the Claustro de los Reyes, and pointed out various details of the capitals, the pillars, the arches, the vaulting, all of which I had not paid much attention to before. He impressed on me that the pillars were all of the Renaissance, but with a strong touch of gothic about them: they were very elegant and classical. The upper section of the pillars was entirely plateresque work, providing an odd contrast with all the gothic vaulting and the classical pillars. He then took me up a stone winding-staircase, which is interesting for its lack of supports, and which in fact holds together because of tension applied at certain, to me rather dangerous-looking, joints. At the head of the stone stairs, and at the side, looking downwards, is a beautiful classical sculpture of the Virgin recumbent, with a book in her hands, and flowers at her side; she was life-size and extremely handsome. We passed through a series of dusty, dark corridors, until at last we emerged into the choir of San Estéban, the part set above the rest of the interior ground-floor of the church. This rests upon a very low and shallow arch, spanning the entire building, and giving an appearance of great width and strength - which it needed. There is nothing exceptionally interesting here, except for a large baroque piece of fresco painting on the inside of the façade wall: the side walls are adorned with large, grim pictures of the past rectors of the convent,

none of them very prepossessing. We left the church, and the good, ever jovial Dominican, took me to the patio known as the 'Algibes', which is far older than the claustro de los Reyes. This older courtyard is not really open to the public, and so I suppose that I was very lucky to be allowed to seeit in any detail, if at all. It was evening when we entered, and unfortunately there was no sun. This courtyard contains a really astonishing variety of architecture, belonging entirely to the XVth and XVIth centuries. Most of it was built at the close of the fifteenth century: it is two stories high, but with an extra floor on the side adjoining the main building. As one enters, on the ground floor and on the right hand side, the stonework is pure gothic Isabelino. The bases of the low, light yellow columns are gothic; the capitals are decorated with the little balls of the time of the Catholic monarchs, and the arches above are extremely shallow. On the right, and at right angles as one enters, set against the ground floor, there is a row of heavy-looking buttresses - which, the good Dominican told me, serve absolutely no purpose at all, and seem to have been a whim of the architects . The bases of the columns are again Gothic, and once again the central part of the pillars are cylindrical, while all capitals seem to have been forgotten: here the low and shallow arches become sharp edged, as opposed to the curved edges of the arches on the first side. On the second floor the columns have no bases, and the capitals return, again pure Isabelino gothic. Set into the wall between two of the unnecessary buttresses, there is a crest of the Reyes Católicos, which consists of the famous ox-yoke and the arrows. The third side is the same as the first, but with certain additions; the bases of the columns on the ground floor are Roman, and the capitals, instead of remaining gothic as previously, become plateresque - an interesting if somewhat strange mixture. At the second floor the bases of the columns at once lose all Roman identity, and revert to the old gothic, but the capitals steadfastly remain plateresque. In the centre of this wall, overlooking another entrance, is an exquisite, finely sculptured little window, pure gothic, but with plateresque decorations. Finally, on the fourth and last side, at right angles on the left as one enters, the ground-

floor columns have bases that alternate at random between gothic and Roman, while the capitals unanimously decide to adopt a plateresque attitude to the whole affair. A fine artistic medley for any building of any period and in any country ! In the centre of the courtyard stand two beautiful sixteenth century wrought iron wells, from which the Dominican poured me a drink of cool, ice-cold water.

Saturday 18th of August.

I slept badly at night, and had to take some aspirins; the atmosphere was too warm and invigorating, and I felt more like taking a walk than going to bed.

In the morning I got up as early as possible and made for the New Cathedral, determined to get in as much drawing as possible rather than incurring the risk of a night in the Cathedral. On the way there, I met Dom Tomás, the monk who had shown me round the church of San Estéban during the previous evening; he decided to take me on a quick tour of the neighbourhood of the Cathedral. We went first to the church of the Augustinian Fathers; here I saw what he told me is the best painting of the Virgin in the world: it was by Ribera, some of whose pictures I had seen in the Prado at Madrid: the colours were very light and fleecy, pale yellow and blue predominating, and the grouping of the child cherubs pleased me particularly. I was charmed by this joyous portrayal of the Virgin, who seemed carefree, enchanted by her surroundings. The church itself was recent, classical and baroque of the seventeenth century, with a fine high-altar of marble, with pillars of jaspar at the sides, surrounding the famous Virgin. From the Augustinian church we went on rapidly to the Convent of the Ursulines, with its interesting polygonal tower and Isabeline sculpturing. Opposite this rather plain and massive tower, with grass growing between its stones, like most of the buildings of Salamanca, is the Casa de las Muertes, built at the same time, round about 1512. The façade is interesting for its platesque work, which is highly detailed, and which was designed by the same architect as he who built the University of Salamanca; I was later told that in one of the upper rooms of this house the famous poet Luis de Leon once used to live, that is when he

was not in prison. Finally we entered the church of the Holy Cross, where we visited its famous side altar with the agonising Virgen de las Dolores, pierced with swords on all sides, surrounded by floral decorations in gold - again a work of the baroque period, with churrigueresque detail. I bade Dom Tomás adiós, and had breakfast in a small café near the Cathedral.

I returned for breakfast here on the following morning, and I was rather pleased by the hospitality and the homely atmosphere of the place. The counter was painted chocolate-colour, and there were only about four little tables at the side, each served with two stools of low height. These, as in nearly all Spanish cafés, had table-clothes; but what pleased me the most was the silence and rest of the town at that time of the morning, even at any time of day; the plaza mayor usually has some traffic and far too many people passing by all the time, but here everything was peaceful. The boy who served out the coffee would have his own breakfast at the same time, and would alternate btween conversation with me, and his newspaper, which was still full of the Suez Canal.

At ten o'clock I entered the Cathedral and began my few and scanty drawings of the vaulting, to the sound of organ-music and very hoarse singing by the canons. After a while I thought that I could detect the voice of yet another of my masters from Ampleforth; I thought that I could hear the urgent whispering of my French master, Mr. Shewring, who was doubtlessly here in order to inspect the organs, among other things. I knew that organs interested him very much, both to study and to play: I also remembered that Mr. Shewring was going to pass through Spain on the way to Portugal at some stage. I at last found him, already trying out the organs on various scales, and spent about half an hour listening as he experimented with the old, sixteenth century main organ of the Cathedral. I returned to my drawing, but we met again shortly afterwards not far from the Cathedral, and had coffee together in the Plaza Mayor. We discussed some of the less fortunate aspects of Spanish life, some of its inconveniences and archaisisms, and then parted, as he had to leave for lunch; we did not meet again, although he told me that he would be staying in Salamanca for another

few days.

I had lunch at the pensión, and then set out once more for the church of the Dominican Fathers, San Estéban. There I spent an entire idle evening and afternoon, simply talking Spanish and learning what I could of Spanish art and architecture. I went down to a room full of posters, books, index-cards, unopened packets of magazines, pots of glue and paint; here I was given large amounts of fruit, salami, bread, cheese and coffee, to the sound of my own voice recorded for the first time in my life on a tape-recorder. It is enjoyable, but rather frightening to hear someone saying exactly what you have just been saying, for the voice I heard over the tape-recorder did not remind me of myself ! The monks were on holiday, and their superior was away in France, so they were free to do almost as they liked; that explains why I met Dom Tomás in town that morning, and also why they all seemed to have so much time for doing nothing in particular. When I had arrived at San Estéban, there was only Dom Tomás: now there were about seven brothers sitting around the room and generally trying to entertain me and find out all there was to know about England and the English way of life. We stayed there, drinking and smoking, until nearly eight in the evening, when I insisted that I must go. These monks certainly were very hospitable ! Before leaving, Dom Tomás took me again into the church itself, and up behind the vast reredos: then, for the first time, I realised how much work has to go into such decorations: the pillars of entwining branches and grapes, all baroque-workmanship, were really enormous, nearly six foot in diameter, which is a great deal: they were entirely of wood, and consisted of large pinewood planks jointed together and then, of course, painted over and carved into shape. It was quite a normal occurrence for a leaf to fall off, yet when it did so it could cause a terrible amount of damage, enough even to break the floor or the altar below, so heavy is it. Behind the reredos there is a kind of attic, where one can see the timberwork needed to keep the altar-piece in position: all this timberwork belonged to the sixteenth century as well: the whole part behind the altar looks more like the wings of a complicated stage than the inside of a church.

Towards nine o'clock at night Dom Tomás, accompanied by another monk, took me to see the ancient Roman bridge of Salamanca, of which Mr. Shewring had told me: he advised me to see it mainly because of the wonderful view to be obtained from here in daylight; but now it was really too dark. The bridge itself was a staunch supporter of all that was ever Roman, broad, thickset, with strong, shallow arches and thick, grey stone piers. It was very, very long, even all the way, as it stretched magnificently over the wide and shallow, gently-flowing Tormes. The bridge was as straight and defiant as a Roman road, the river below as limpid and lazy as all that is Spanish. It was dark now, when we arrived there, and the whole town, spires, houses, churches, roofs, could be seen in strong silhouette against the black night heaven; if one could see Oxford thus from below, I am sure that the view would have been almost similar, for Salamanca is the Spanish equivalent in studies and architecture, in learning and in all that is beautiful . I was strongly reminded of Antonio Machado's poem 'Campos de Soria', and the lines

"tardes de Soria, mística y guerrera,
tardes tranquilas, montes de violeta".

I returned with the two brothers to their convent, and then made for the Plaza Mayor, which is only one hundred yards from the pensión where I was staying. This plaza is regarded by many as the best in Europe, even better than the plaza of St.Mark in Rome. It is completely in one style of architecture: four stories of elegant baroque, beautiful and dignified, rising equally on all four sides. The view is unbroken on all sides: nowhere does a chimney, a factory roof, an ordinary roof, a spire or steeple break the symmetry of this peaceful, majestic square, undisturbed by any civil wars, unspoilt by more recent touches of architecture. Everything is harmonious; the grey stone work harmonises perfectly with the small café tables and chairs, with the peaceful atmosphere of university life and learning, with the dark, moonlit sky above; the wind sent little flurries of grey cloud scurrying across the square of open high heaven above the broad and silent plaza. It was silent, but there were many people there; the men walked slowly round the inside of the plaza, going clockwise all the

time, while the women went in the opposite direction, always in their inevitable groups of four or five.

I finally returned to the pensión, where I had supper of fried tomatoes and eggs, with grapes and wine to accompany them down. I was sorry about the wine, which I had bought nearby that very morning at five pesetas, but which tasted strong, and sour.

The landlady entered and told me that there would be someone else sleeping in that room for the night; it would be a soldier, about to recommence his military service after having six months summer leave. He came in later, at about eleven, and we went out together for a quick coffee; this we took in one of the cafés of the Plaza Mayor, where we spent about a quarter of an hour before returning. He was one of a family of four, and his father appeared to be a landowner at a nearby village. The father's income was about £1000 a year, but that varied very much from year to year; this was a good year. He told me about his novia, who lived next door to the pensión, and whom he intended to marry when he had finished his military service for good and all. He was very sociable, and we went on talking until nearly one in the morning: as for politics, he just was not interested, although he was a good Catholic: the main topic for the Spaniard is his wife, his novia, or girls, or even the whole lot at once.

Sunday 19th of August.

I fell out of bed at nine o'clock, and thereupon decided to dress and go out. I had breakfast at my favourite café by the Cathedral, and afterwards attended the ten o'clock High Mass there. The Mass began with a procession round the interior of the Cathedral: there were several small servers in red and white, with a kind of beagle at the head, tapping a silver mace ceremoniously on the ground; he looked very bored. The servers were constantly chatting to one another, probably trying to tell themselves what to do next; they tripped over each other, stumbled backwards and forwards, at times almost running, at times sauntering along at a leisurely pace. They were too Spanish in their whole attitude to Mass, I thought, but they were saved by a congregation of about fifteen people, changing most of the

time as it was; what a congregation for Salamanca High-Mass, for the New Cathedral in mid-summer ! The server had little idea as to how to swing a thurifer, and another of the servers had little idea as to when to ring the bell; one redeeming feature was the singing, done by two boys of about eleven and twelve, and even they sang as though the whole thing was a joke. Mr. Shewring was at the organ for some of the time, and after the Mass tried it out again on various stops. He thought the organ was good, but was more interested in the University one, which was older and far more interesting: this one needed a good cleaning. He told me before leaving, or maybe it was I who told him, I cannot remember, that the Cathedral authorities intend to remove the whole of the vast churrigueresque choir, and place it behind the altar, so that the view of the Cathedral would be better: at the moment it is impossible to see the interior of the Cathedral in its entirety, as this choir is in the way - as at Zamora. It is a shame that these choirs should be in the centre of the Cathedrals, as they tend to break up the perspective, and render an idea or conception of the building as a whole quite impossible.

From the Cathedral I went to the University, which is almost opposite. It came very much as a disappointment after Oxford University, which makes up the whole of the city. Here it is only one small college, though I was told that there are a few smaller buildings associated with the University all over the town. This building is used mainly for purposes of administration, for reunions, meetings of the dons, soirées, convocations. The Univesity of Salamanca dates back to the sixteenth century in its buildings, and even earlier in its teaching tradition; it has produced some of the most famous writers in the world, including Calderon de la Barca, Luis de Leon, San Juan de la Cruz, Unamuno, and countless other men known not only for their literary ability, but also as soldiers, statesmen, courtiers, diplomats; here the plans for the finding and colonisation of America were submitted by Christopher Columbus to the Catholic Monarchs. It was in the University of Salamanca, at one time the greatest and most important in Europe, that the first laws were passed decreeing the equality of the native Indians of America with their Spanish overlords.

I went round the various ground-floor rooms with a guide and a group of French people; the most interesting room for me was the aula of Luis de Leon. Here it was that that famous poet, teacher of theology at the greatest University of Europe, once taught; from that very same pulpit that he delivered those lectures to the massed students of Spain and Salamanca, those lectures that were later to lead him to the dungeons of the Inquisition; jealous rivals denounced them as heretical; he was thrust into prison for five long years. A man of his emotional calibre, quick-minded, witty, emotional, easily upset, hating the petty weaknesses and grievances of this world, longing for friendship and comfort, longing his whole life long for peace and security, for a better milieu in which to write his immemorable sonnets, his denunciations of this world, his praises of the next: imagine such a genius, thrust into prison for five years for no fault, absolutely no other fault than his sincerity in an epoch of hypocrisy, back-biting, lies and scandal, denounced by scandal-mongers whom he himself so often condemned in his lyrical, spontaneous poetry. And such a wonderful recovery ... " as we were saying yesterday", in the lecture he gave on the morning of his return to life as a free man. Salamanca University fostered the works of Quevedo, and at the same time educated the Count Duke of Olivares whom Quevedo was to accuse later on of not helping towards the reform of the decadent Empire, that crumbling ruin. And yet this University building was sadly small for all its importance ! One room was called the Salinas Musical room, dedicated to Spain's greatest musician, who in his time studied also at the University, a friend of the great Luis de Leon. The Chapel was more recent, very small too, decorated on all sides by hanging red velvet; the Paraninfas, used recently for an international meeting, was austere but well-preserved with its dark oak benches, the hanging tapestries, the brilliant red furnishings. The cloisters were far more interesting, although they have been restored, repainted: they date back to the end of the fifteenth century, and the ceiling reminded me strongly of the Palacio de los Guzmanes in Leon. At the back entrance to the University the ceiling is of great interest: it is the only mudejar roof I have seen in its natural surroundings, in the

place of its origin, and not in a museum. All Arabian roof-work of this type seems to be an optical illusion, a maze of intricate yet not symmetrical patterns - and they are symmetrical. I left the University by the back-entrance, through which I had entered in the first place, and walked round to the back, where, oddly enough, one finds the main entrance. This was as vast as I had been led to believe; one large, elaborate piece of plateresque work: everything was in extremely low relief, more as though the entrance piece consisted of a series of tableaux, engraved rather than sculptured. It was fine but top-heavy, in so much as the entrance gave one to think that a palace lay behind, that the entrance doors were also dreams - which they were not.

I again spent the whole afternoon at the Church of San Estéban, in the company of the brothers of the previous evening, as well as that of a Spanish poet and artist. This was a rotund, round and small little man, bursting with life and witt: he would fly into delightful poetic exctasies over a piece of sculpture, a detail of a capital, a piece of the furnishings of the interior of the guest-rooms of the convent. Much of his Spanish was Andalusian jargon, highly ornate and flowery, rather exaggerated at times. He was extremely sincere in all he said; one even felt that he would willingly give his life for the sake ofa sculpture, a statue, a poem. He was exuberant with joie de vivre, with the pleasure of having a few days without routine work, a few days in which to enjoy art and poetry incognito, away from his native habitat. In a way he was reduced to the state of a child, pure love for an object dominating all other feelings. At moments I felt that he would burst a blood vessel, he was so emotionally strung, so dependent on his feelings, his reactions, his artistic self. I was amused and entertained by this man, whom I respected for his great devotion to the artistic ideal, as for the natural excesses that must need ensue from so uninterrupted and unallayable a passion. We ate there, in the modern-style guest-room, for nearly an hour: there were melons, drinks, and cases of tiny local cakes, dulces, and pasteles. I finally went as I wanted to see the Roman Bridge in the daylight for once, as this would be my last opportunity in which to do so.

The view from the bridge was beautiful, and everything was improved a thousand times by the setting sun, the sunscape of an El Greco. On one side of the bridge you are impressed mainly by the broad, sedate, sluggish aspect of the grand, winding Tormes; by the bent rushes, the green flowing water-weeds, curving elegantly from side to side in harmony with the smoothly, slowly passing water. On that side the sun was setting, on that side you saw the growing silhouette of the last vast villas of the town, perched magnificently on perilous crags high, high over the river. On the other side of the bridge you saw the dark green of Spanish poplar-trees, bordering the banks in groups of four or five; in mid-stream there are little islands, barely higher than the surrounding water, covered over in a thin but clean, light layer of turf; there are little islands dotted with dark, thick olive-coloured trees and bushes, and everywhere, on the grass, on the banks, on the bridge itself, the rich reds and yellows of the flowing skirts of the Spaniards. Cattle came down to drink at the edge of the Tormes; bulls for the most part, stamping, pawing at the ground, whirling round in circles in mock-combat with one another, ploughing gently through the shallow water at the edge, rushing heavily from shallow to shallow, from island to island, from land to water. I went home finally, rather tired after such an eventful three days: I would very much have liked to speak to Merche, daughter of the landlady, but tradition, with an iron hand, forbade all but the most discreet and public intercommunication. Later on I went out for one last coffee with another student staying in the same pensión; we went round quite a large part of the town, with him pointing out familiar landmarks, emphasising for the most part things I had already seen, impressions that I had already gathered for myself. He was friendly and helpful: a good Spaniard, and one with whom I feel that I would have got on very well in work or pleasure; he was writing a thesis on Lope de Vega, the Spanish Golden Age playwright, forerunner of Calderon de la Barca.

Monday 20th of August.

My farewells paid, I left Salamanca. I was sorry to leave this beautiful city, which in three days I had grown to love far more than any other Spanish town I have visited, including the well-known town of Santander. I loved the people of Salamanca, who gave me more friends than any other place in Spain: they were helpful, open, always ready to oblige and sympathise, to converse, to turn word into deed. They always had enough time in hand to proudly show me some hidden gem, some uncommon wonder of the city, some architectural treasure, some local habit. The city is rich in its art; it is pervaded by an air of repose, an air of work accomplished; the grass grows between the flags, birds hop from window to window, ivy hides whole buildings, whole walls are bared to the sun and rain, and yet I felt as though this was not mere decadence, idleness on the part of the inhabitants; I felt as though everything was natural, inevitably arranged by destiny, perfectly in keeping with the most advanced ideas on progress and beauty. The convents seemed to me to have been designed to appear empty, tranquil in the evenings, deserted in the mornings. I felt as though the delicately worked gargoyles would never have existed hadt they been compelled to serve an appreciative audience, a critical household, to this very day. I preferred the moss to cover the chinks of the broken stones, the ivy to scale the unassailable heights, the wind to murmur round the forbidding grey pillars of the Irish College. I loved to see the leaves rustling in the ancient courtyard of the Casa de las Conchas, the soft, warm Spanish wind kissing ones cheeks as one gazed over the ancient parapets of the Roman bridge, kissing the billowing skirts of the Spanish girls on the mid-stream islands, kissing the warm and dusty entrance to the great Cathedral. Salamanca was made to be as it is.

At nine-thirty on the morning I reached the station; the train arrived thirty minutes late, and so I profitted from the delay to breakfast off coffee and biscuits at the station 'cantina'. At the fonda of Medina station I had my first complete Spanish railway-station meal: it was not too bad, yet it confirms my belief that it is better in Spain to dine at a place where you can order precisely what you want, instead of

being obliged to accept the given menu. The Hors d'oeuvre consisted of tomatoes and some rather sickly, over-greasy sausage-meat paste. This was followed by a very good tortilla, and then by a stringy, chewy, rubbery cow-steak, with which I disagreed. Finally there were grapes, and a large pear.
I arrived at Santander at seven forty in the evening; I dined at once, and then had coffee out with Don Miguel at the Austriaca.

Tuesday 21st of August.

I discovered to my unrestrained surprise that I was beginning to run short of money; I decided therefore to pay my bill with the family at once, until I had won enough money by hitch-hiking in France to spend a few days comfortably in Paris. I was gravely disappointed by my lack of funds, but there was nothing for it; I had obviously spent too much somewhere.
I bought a bottle of Terry Cognac for my Mother, and some cigarettes for my Father; there was not enough money for much else. Finally, perhaps the most painful thing, I bought my ticket to Irun. As a last stroke of irony, I went to the Post-Office to collect my camera, which had arrived here while I was away at Salamanca.
In the evening I paid a farewell visit to Celia, catching her a canary from the sky as a parting act of friendship, and then bought some flowers for my own family-hostess. I bade Casuso farewell both in the town, and then later at the station, where he alone had come to see me off. The train was packed, and my cases plentiful and heavy. I was sorry to let Spain thus slip so easily out of my hands, but there was nothing to be done about it, excepting to wait for another year.

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I had my last meal with Spanish pesetas at Irun, and from there I hitch-hiked in stages - two days altogether - to Paris; my route was through Bayonne, Bordeaux, Angouleme, Poitiers, Tours, Le Mans, Chartres; I spent four days at Paris, and then I hitch-hiked through Rouen to Veules-les-Roses, where I spent two nights with friends. Then came the final night-crossing on a cross-Channel ferryboat, from Dieppe to Newhaven, and thence to Oxford and home.