

the Tietar enters the Tagus; the latter is crossed by a noble bridge built by the Cardinal Juan de Carvajal, and hence called *Puente del Cardenal*. The castle now seen about 2 m. below, is that of *Monfrague*, Monsfagorum; hence to *Torrejon el Rubio*, where a former palace is now degraded into a poor posada; the Vid is next crossed by a good bridge into a country given up to game and rabbits; then again crossing the Monte and Magasca by stone bridges, all the work of the cardinal, we reach *Aldea del Obispo*, and the oak woods in which Pizarro fed his pigs. Crossing the Tojos by another bridge, *Trujillo* terminates this wild ride.

PLASENCIA TO MADRID.

This ride, 41 L. altogether, is very wild and picturesque to *Avila*, 26 L.; from whence the *Escorial* may be visited. First night sleep at *Tornavacas*, 8 L.—*Posada de Coluras*—a picturesque village halfway up the *Puerto*; second night sleep at *Piedrahita*, riding through *Cabe-ruela*, 6 L., *Posada de Calisto*. N.B. eat the *tortuga* melons. Crossing the Xerte enter *Piedrahita*, *Posada de la Tia Polomi*; look at the once superb granite palace of the great Duke of Alba, ruined by the French: third night *Avila*, 10 L. The alpine road continues through *El Barco*, 4 L., a walled village on the *Tormes*, engulfed in the sierras, with a fine castle with machicolated towers: hence through *Villatoro* to *Avila*, 6 L. See index.

ROUTE 61.—PLASENCIA TO YUSTE AND TALAVERA DE LA REINA.

Those who are fond of fishing, shooting, sketching, geologizing, and botanizing, may ride to *Yuste*, 8 L., and thence taking a local guide over the *dehesas*, either to *Miravete* to the r. or to *Talavera* to the l.; but whether going to Madrid or on to Salamanca, let none when at *Plasencia* fail making the excursion to this convent, to which Charles V. retired, an old man wearied

with the cares of state. It lies on the S.W. slope of the *Sierra de Vera*, about an 8 hours' pleasant ride from *Plasencia*. The charms of this happy *Rasselas* valley are described in '*Amenidades de la Vera*,' Gab. Acedo, 8vo. Mad. 1667.

Pilgrims intending to sleep at the sequestered convent had better write beforehand to prepare the lessee, a worthy farmer, who can provide bed and board; direct to *Señor Don Patricio Bueno, Arrendador del Monasterio de San Geronimo de Yuste, Cuacos*; this post town is a poor village, where there is a decent *Venta* kept by a widow. The sportsman will find near *Yuste* deer, wild boar, roebuck, *Cabras montaneses*, and may-be wolves.

On leaving *Plasencia* cross the Xerte and ascend the steep hill *Calzones*, thence through olives and vineyards to the *Vera*, a sweet valley of some 9 L. in extent; after 4 L. of *dehesas y matos* the road ascends to the l. to quaint red-tiled *Pasaron*, a picturesque old town of Prout-like houses, with toppling balconies hanging over a brawling brook. Observe a turreted palace of the Arcos family. The road next clambers up a steep hill, amid oaks and fruit trees. As we rode on our cheerful companions were groups of sunburnt daughters of labour, whose only dower was health and cheerfulness, who were carrying on their heads in baskets the frugal dinner of the vine-dressers. Springy and elastic was their sandaled step, unfettered by shoe or stocking, and light-hearted their laugh and song, the chorus of the sheer gaiety of youth full of health and void of care. These pretty creatures, although they did not know it, were performing an opera ballet in action and costume: how gay their short *sayas* of serges red, green, and yellow; how primitive the cross on their bosoms, how graceful the *pauelo* on their heads: thus they tript wantonly away under the long-leaved chesnuts. Soon the beautiful *Vera* expands, with the yellow line of the Badajoz road running across the cistus-clad distance to *Miravete*; then

the Jeronomite convent appears to the l. nestling in woods about half-way up the mountain, which shelters it from the wind. Below is the farm *Magdalena*, where in the worst case the night may be passed; thence ascend to the monastery, keeping close to a long wall. This Spanish Spalatro, to which the gout-worn empire-sick Charles retired, to barter crowns for rosaries away, was founded in 1404, on the site where a covey of fourteen Gothic bishops had been killed at one swoop by the Moors, and took its name from the streamlet, the *Yuste*, which trickles behind it. Charles, May 24, 1554, sent his son Philip, (when on his way to England to marry our Mary) to inspect this place, which he had years before selected as a nest for his old age: he himself had planned, while in Flanders, the additional buildings, erected by Antonio de Villa Castin; these lie to the warm S.W. of the chapel; but on the 9th of August, 1809, 200 of Soult's foragers clambered up, pillaged and burnt the convent, leaving it a blackened roofless ruin. The precious archives were then consumed, all except one volume of the conventual title-deeds and documents, written out in 1620 by Fray Luis de Santa Maria. The prior was consulting these about some rights disputed by the *Cuacos* peasants, and, seeing the enemy, threw the tome into some bushes, and so it escaped for a time, and was lent us to read; now it no doubt is lost. Here we met also Fray Alonso Cavallero, an aged monk, who took the cowl Oct. 17, 1778, and remembered Ponz and his visit. For the foundation consult Sigüenza's History of the Order of St. Jerome, ii. 1, 29; and 1, 36, for a minute account of Charles when here; see also the History of Plasencia, by Fernandez, i. 25.

The convent is entered by the most patriarchal walnut-tree under which Charles used to sit, and which even then was called *el nogal grande*. Passing to the *Botica*, the few vases which escaped Soult's hordes were carried off in 1820 by one Morales, a

liberal apothecary, for his own shop in *Garandilla*, for the solid granite-built chapel, from its thick walls, which resisted the fire of the invaders, only saved the imperial quarter to be finally gutted by the constitutionalists: a door to the r. of the altar opened to Charles's room, whence he came out to attend divine service: his bedroom, where he died, has a window through which, when ill, he could see the elevation of the Host. Here hung the *Gloria* of Titian, which he directed in his will to be placed wherever his body rested, and accordingly the painting was moved with it to the Escorial. Philip II. sent a copy of it to Yuste, which was in 1823 carried off to *Terada*, near *Navalmoral*, by the patriots, and when the monks returned they were too poor even to pay for bringing it back. The *Coro Alto* was carved in a quaint tedesque style by Rodrigo Aleman: in a vault below the high altar remains the rude chest in which the Emperor's body was kept sixteen years, until removed in 1574.

Charles built four principal rooms, each, as usual, with large fire-places, for he was a chilly Fleming. From the projecting alcoves the views are delicious. At the W. end is a pillared gallery, *la Plaza del Palacio*, overhanging a private garden, and connected with a raised archway, *el Puente*, by which the Emperor went down: below remains the sun-dial, erected for him by Juanuelo Turriano, and the stone step by which he mounted his horse, and an inscription records the spot where he was seated, Aug. 31, 1558, when he felt the first approach of death. Charles arrived here Wednesday, Feb. 3, 1557 at one in the afternoon, and here he died Sept. 21 the next year, of premature old age, dropping like the ripe fruit from the shaken tree. Philip II. revisited the convent in 1570, and remained two days, but declined, from respect, sleeping in the room where his father died. "Guardando el respeto al aposento en que murió su padre, no queriendo dormir sino en el retrete, del mismo apo-

sento, y tan estrecho que apenas cabe una cama pequeña." So we read the record in the old book; *Δυνας γαρ αὐται, καὶ ἀπορχομαιναι λίαντες*. Philip did little for the monks, and when they begged of him, replied, "You never could have had my father here a year without feathering your nest."

The larger pleasure-grounds lay on the other side; nature has now resumed her sway, yet many a flower shows that once a garden smiled, and still an untrimmed myrtle and box edge leads to *El cenador de Belem* (Bethlehem): this exquisite gem of a cinquecento summer-house remained perfect until destroyed by Soult's vandals, as they did that other old soldier's nest, Abadia. Charles lived here half like a monk and half like a retired country gentleman. He was plagued by the ill-conditioned villagers of *Cuacos* (*Kass*), who poached his trout in the *Garganta la olla*, drove away his milk-cows, and threw stones at his son, the future hero of Lepanto, for climbing up their cherry-trees. His was no morbid unsocial misanthropy or dotage, but a true weariness of the world with which he had done, and a wish to be at rest. This monastic turn, and a longing to finish a stormy soldier-life in the repose of the cloister—a wish entirely congenial to Spanish character and precedent—was one long before entertained by himself. Spanish soldiers, when life is on the wane, yearn to recolour it as it were, by pious heroism, and seek to find an altar whereon to make expiation, grasping at the hem of the Church's garment, as drowning men do at straws. See on this subject, *Monserat*, p. 422. The Emperor did not, however, renounce all fleshly comforts. He brought with him his old servants, cooks especially (for our Caesar was an epicure), who knew his wants and ways, and whose faces he knew: he had his ride, experiments, and his prayers. He had friends to whom he could make known sorrows, and thus divide them, or communicate his joys and double them; he had the play and prattle of his little

boy. Phlegmatic and melancholy indeed he was by constitution, and from the inherited taint of his mother; he was also broken in health by gout and dyspepsia.

The true history of the much misrepresented retirement of Charles V. has at last been fully made known. Those curious to see the many errors of the careless Robertson, may turn to our notices of the "Cloister Life" in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 183. Long before, in 1845, it was stated in our Handbook that an accurate account of this interesting finale to the imperial career had been prepared from the original documents still existing in the archives of Simancas, by the Canon Thomas Gonzalez, their keeper. At his death this unpublished MS. was purchased of his nephew by M. Mignet, for the Archives of the French Foreign Office, of which he then had the management. On Mr. Stirling's application to see this MS. in 1850, all the purchase having appeared in print, M. Mignet just told him, that "he did not know where it was;" and when he applied again in 1851, was rudely treated by the then Archivista, M. Cintrat: armed, however, with an order from Louis Napoleon, which would take no denial, the unwilling officials at last produced the MS. for his examination. But before that, some papers in '*Fraser's Magazine*' were put forth by Mr. Stirling as a pilot balloon to his racy and exhaustive '*Cloister Life*,' published in October 1852. This work, having run to a third edition, led to the lively '*Charles Quint*,' &c., by Amadée Pichot, an 8vo. published at Paris, Feb. 7, 1854. That same month the original documents were printed at Bruxelles in their own language with an excellent preface, a signal service done to history by the accurate Gachard; and then, to conclude these curiosities of literature, the aforesaid Mons. Mignet, last if not least in the field, came forth in June with his '*Charles Quint*,' &c., 8vo. Paris, 1854: this dry performance—perceant male qui ante nos nostra dixerint

—just contained one allusion only to the existence of the "*charmant volume*" of Mr. Stirling, which had taken the book and bread out of his mouth.

The convent of Yuste, after the death of Charles, soon became forgotten. Few travellers cared to visit a retreat far removed from the beaten path. Lord John Russell, we believe, was one of the few pilgrims who preceded our humble selves and Hand-book. *Nous avons changé tout cela*; and now, when the long vacation begins, the solitude of the silent cell ceases, and Yuste has become a lion to be "done" by our nomade countrymen.

The ruin of this convent, commenced by Soult's hordes, was completed by the Church reformers of *Cuacos*, who, July 4, 1821, came, stole everything left by the invaders, kept horses in the church, and made the Emperor's room a place for silk-worms. The monastic sequestrations of 1835 have for a third and last time destroyed what the monks had partially restored, and chaos is come again.

Never, therefore, again will it be the lot of traveller to be welcomed, like ourselves, by the real and fit masters, the cowed friars, to whom news and a stranger from the real living world was a godsend. The day was passed in sketching and sauntering about the ruined buildings and gardens, with the goodnatured garrulous brotherhood: at nightfall supper was laid for the monks at a long board, but the prior and *procurador* had a small table set apart in an alcove, where "bidden to a spare but cheerful meal, I sat an honoured guest;" as the windows were thrown open, to admit the cool thyme-scented breeze, the eye in the clear evening swept over the boundless valley, the nightingales sang sweetly in the neglected orange-garden, and the bright stars, reflected in the ink-black tank below, twinkled like diamonds: how often had Charles looked out on a stilly eve on this self-same unchanged scene where he alone was now wanting! When supper was done, I shook hands all round with

my kind hosts, and went to bed, in the very chamber where the Emperor slept his last sleep. All was soon silent, and the spirit of the mighty dead ruled again in his last home; but no Charles disturbed the deep slumber of a weary insignificant stranger; long ere daybreak next morning I was awakened by a pale monk, and summoned to the early mass, which the prior in his forethought had ordered. The chapel was imperfectly lighted: the small congregation consisted of the monk, my sunburnt muleteer, and a stray beggar, who, like myself, had been sheltered in the convent. When the service was concluded, all bowed a farewell to the altar on which the dying glance of Charles had been fixed, and departed in peace; the morning was grey and the mountain air keen, nor was it until the sun had risen high that its cheerful beams dispelled the cowl and relaid the ghost of Charles in the dim pages of history.

ROUTE 62.—PLASENCIA TO SALAMANCA.

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This, the direct route, is by no means recommended: at *Aldea Nueva* the Roman road from Merida is crossed; remains of its pavement and abandoned bridges everywhere may be traced. *Baños* is so called from its hot sulphur baths, which have recently been well arranged, and are much frequented. This town, pop. 1500, is beautifully situated, with its pretty walks and river Ambros; the fine belfry of the Santa Maria deviates from the perpendicular; the wines are excellent; about 1 L. up is the *Puerto* or pass in the Sierra, the backbone which divides Estremadura from Old Castile: here Sir Robert Wilson, with a few undisciplined Portuguese, made a bold stand against the French coming down from