

steak and the tea-kettle which infallibly mark the progress of John Bull, and have been introduced even into Greece and the Holy Land, are yet unknown in the ventas and pasados of the peninsula." This state of things is, however, gradually passing away. The tide of travel is beginning to turn toward Spain, and the result is the multiplication of books bearing upon that interesting country. And yet, in comparison with other European countries, the space that it fills in contemporary literature is almost infinitesimal.

The cynical French proverb, which says: "Africa begins at the Pyrenees," finds some degree of justification in the entirely new state of things with which the traveller finds himself confronted so soon as he passes out of France into Spain. Having crossed the mountain range which separates the two countries, everything is so new and strange that he seems to have passed into a new continent rather than a new country. Not only are the dress and manners of the people different from those of the rest of Europe, but the physical peculiarities of the country are different. Geologically, we are told, Spain is an extension of the Sahara, and the broad arid plains, the dried-up river beds, and the sterile and verdureless mountains, impress even the unscientific traveller with the correctness of this view. Then the hedges of cactus and prickly pears, the narrow streets, the flat-roofed, windowless Moorish houses, all tend to make one feel as if he were in Africa rather than Europe. The creaking of the Moorish water-wheel and the calling of the servants in the hotels, as in the tales of the "Arabian Nights," by the clapping of hands, all tend to heighten the illusion.

As Spain is a sort of connecting link between two continents, so it is between the distant past and the present. From whence or by whom it was originally populated is involved in mystery. Like all other ancient nations its early history is mixed with fable. Its most ancient historians, for example, would have us believe that the aboriginal inhabitants were borne thither by angels. And Castilian pride has placed its settlement so near the creation of the world one finds it difficult to imagine how they could have reached it in any other way. Approaching it from the north, even now it is not very easy to reach it except at two points. It is only at the eastern and western extremities of the Pyrenees, where that mountain range subsides into the