

the finest lace-work. On entering it one is literally dazzled by the elaborate richness of the gilded carvings; the whole interior may be said to present one uninterrupted mass of florid decoration of the most faultless design.

But the poverty and wretchedness of the city of Burgos is in striking and painful contrast with the magnificence of this miracle of architectural beauty and perfection. Under the very shadow of these massive and stately towers there are hundreds of starving *hidalgos*.



A SPANIARD OF RONDA.

All the approaches to the cathedral are crowded with beggars. Indeed, this city—dull, dirty, and dilapidated, with its swarms of beggars—is a perfect type of Spanish poverty and retrogression, and, without trade or manufactures of any kind, there seems to be no hope of its becoming more prosperous.

Yet this dull and stagnant city was once the centre of the national life of Spain. This inhospitable region, with its mountain fastnesses and strongholds, proved the birth-

place and cradle of the Spanish monarchy. The people of the same region which held at bay, nearly a thousand years before, the legions of Imperial Rome, defied all the attacks of the impetuous Moslem.

A journey of seventy or eighty miles from Burgos brings us to Valladolid, one of the most ancient capitals of Spain. In it is still standing the house in which Christopher Columbus died. Here too are the houses in which Cervantes and Calderon lived.

Here was the scene of the first "auto-da-fe" of the Protestants in Spain. Here the weak and superstitious tyrant, Philip II., from the balcony witnessed the dying agonies of men "of whom the world was not worthy." This was the centre of the most intense Protestant activity in the days of the Reformation; and here the fire of the Inquisition raged most fiercely for its suppression.

Passing through one of the wildest and most rugged tracts of country in Spain, perhaps in Europe, in which, during a journey of a few leagues, forty-four tunnels and innumerable bridges are passed, at length the Escorial is left behind us, and in about an hour we are in Madrid.

For practical and commercial purposes the situation of Madrid could scarcely be worse. All that can be said in its favour is that it stands in the geographical centre of the country. Of all other places in the entire Peninsula it is the most difficult of access. Standing on an elevated plateau, the edge of which is lined with noble edifices, few cities in Europe, when first seen, make a more favourable impression upon the tourist. At an altitude of 2,450 feet above the level of the sea, the atmosphere, free from smoke and haze, is clear and full of light.

The clergy, though still very