

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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EASTER CAROL.

BY HANNAH CODDINGTON.

Now banished our sadness,
With hearts full of gladness,
We welcome the Lord's jubilee.

'Tis precious, the story
How He hid His glory,
Our Saviour and Brother to be.

But Jesus immortal
Has passed the dark portal,
And lightened with sunshine its gloom.

We raise our glad voices,
All nature rejoices—
The cradle has conquered the tomb.

Aye, Christ has arisen!
And blessed the vision
In heaven to us he'll reveal.

The angels adore him,
His ransomed before him
In deep adoration all kneel.

No words can express thee,
No blessings can bless thee,
We feel it while anthems we sing;

Yet glory unceasing,
And praises increasing,
Be thine, our Redeemer and King.

PICTURES FROM SPAIN.

BY THE EDITOR.

AFRICA begins with the Pyrenees," says a French proverb; and certainly in crossing that mountain barrier one seems to have entered another continent rather than another country. Everything has a strange, half-oriental look. The blazing summer sun, the broad and arid plains, the dried-up river-beds,* and sterile and verdureless mountains, have all a strikingly African appearance. Indeed, it has been said that geologically Spain is an extension of the Sahara. In the country is heard the creaking of the Moorish water-wheel, and in the hotels servants are summoned, as in the tales of the Arabian Nights, by the clapping of hands.

Everywhere the traveller is struck by the contrast between the past and present. Three hundred years ago the Spanish monarchy was the most powerful in the world. The sun never set upon her dominions, and the eastern and western hemispheres poured their wealth into her lap. Now decay and desolation are everywhere apparent. We are confronted with the evidences of a glorious past and an

* "What! has the river run away, too!" asked the French troops when they entered Madrid. "Pour it into the Manzanares, it has more need of it than I," said a Spanish youth, fainting at a bull-fight, in quaint parody on Sir Philip Sidney, when a cup of water was handed him.

ignoble present. What their ancestors built the degenerate descendants do not even keep in repair. What is the secret of this national decay? "Only one reply," says an intelligent tourist, "is possible. The iniquitous Inquisition crushed out all freedom alike of thought and action. Jew, Moor, and Protestant were sentenced to the

tender Moorish lays of love suffuse the eyes with tears. The Moorish architecture, with its graceful arabesques, horse-shoe arches, and fretted vaults, finds its culmination in the fairy loveliness of the Alhambra, the most exquisite ruin in Europe. The wonderful development of Saracenic influence in Spain is one of the most

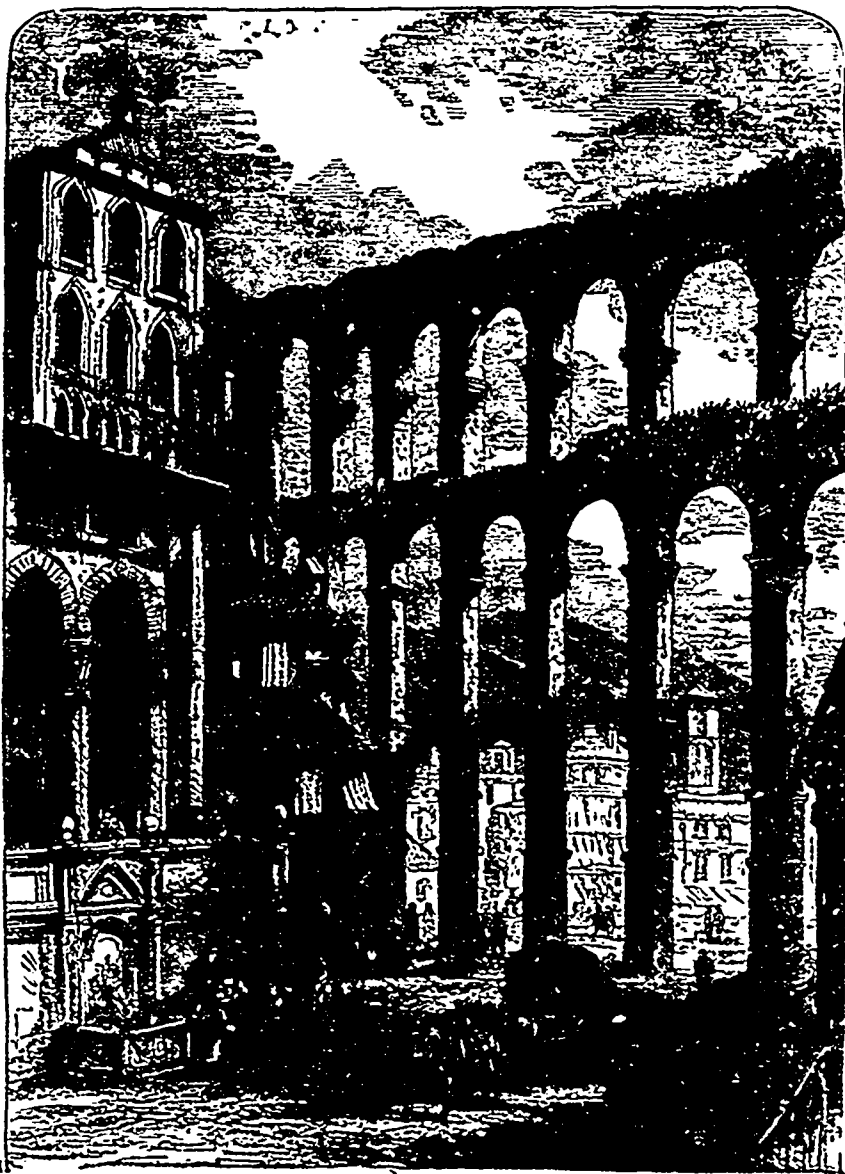
passed into a proverb. Even the railway porters address each other as "Your distinguished excellency," "Your honourable highness." The gloomy bigotry which seemed incarnated in Philip II, appears to brood over society, and nowhere is the antipathy to Protestantism more intense than in Spain.

There are in Spain a great number of gypsies—that mysterious people whose origin and history are the standing puzzle of the ethnologist. They are the same clever, unscrupulous, thieving charlatans that they are elsewhere in Europe. George Burrows, the distinguished Bible Society agent in Spain, who shared for years the wandering life of the gypsies, has given an interesting account of their manners and customs. The sinister qualities of the race betray themselves in the countenance of the men, as shown in the portrait of the chief, figured in our engraving.

In Ebro, "La Catedral del Pilar," is so called because it has in it an ugly little image of the Virgin Mary standing on a jasper pillar, and holding a child in her arms; which virgin, child, and pillar, the Catholics say, were brought from heaven by angels, the virgin herself coming with them, to the Apostle James, who happened to be sleeping on this very spot. Of course she told St. James he must build a church there, and afterwards this great cathedral, with eleven domes and two towers, said to be the largest in Spain, was built on the same spot.

The image, surrounded by ever-burning lights, and enclosed in a magnificent shrine, is the greatest object of superstitious veneration in all Spain. Hundreds of girls in Spain are named "Pilar," from the "heaven descended" image and pillar. Thousands of pilgrims come every year from all parts of the country, give their offerings of silver and gold, and kiss the small portion of the jasper pillar which is left exposed for the purpose. The jewellery and fancy shops of the city are full of wood, copper, brass, silver, and gold imitations of virgin and pillar. She is another Diana, and "Great is Diana of the Zaragozians," at least in the opinion of the silversmiths. The 12th of October is the anniversary of the descent of the virgin, and on this day 50,000 pilgrims have been known to flock into Zaragoza.

A few steps from the cathedral is the ancient leaning tower of Zaragoza, which, like the tower of Pisa, leans far out from the perpendicular. From its summit there is a fine view of the many-towered city, the olive and vine-clad plains around, the canal lined



OLD ROMAN AQUEDUCT, SEGOVIA.

flamca." Poverty, ignorance, and superstition are the present characteristics of the mass of the people.

Yet no one can travel through this now degraded land without stirrings of soul at its chivalric traditions, and its famous history. For eight hundred years it fought the battles of Christendom against the Moor. The story of its knightly champion, the Cid Campeador, still stirs the pulses, and the

striking events in history. When the rest of Europe was sunken in ignorance, fair and flourishing cities—Cordova, Granada, Seville, Segovia, Toledo—with their famous mosques, colleges, palaces, and castellated strongholds, attested the splendour of the brilliant but short-lived exotic Mahometan civilization of the land.

The pride and dignity and punctilious etiquette of the Spaniard has