

ly esteemed. The painter was also a favorite guest. A wish was expressed for some memento of those pleasant visits. An old brother begged Murillo to paint a Madonna for the Monastery. He would be delighted to comply with that request. But where was the canvas? There was no suitable material for the purpose. Spanish friars have always been adepts in their art. The brethren were not to be baffled. Would this do? asked the brother who had solicited the boon, as he pointed to his napkin. Why not! said the painter, and entered into the humor of the proposal. A less consummate master would have hesitated to try his hand, or trust his fame, with such material to work upon. But the roughness of texture only made the genius of the production all the more conspicuous. That piece of square, coarse cloth was firmly stretched upon the board. Beneath the wondrous skill of the immortal Murillo that Madonna of the napkin, a master-piece of Europe, the gem of that Seville gallery, was rapidly produced. And so in regard to the communication of revealed truth: "the treasure is in earthen vessels" that the excellency of the power may be of God. The literary plainness, through which, in some exceptional cases, inspiration wrought its marvels, only reveals more palpably the source and secret of a light which streams over the sacred page. The woof through which the fabric of inspired truth has been woven, may seem at times to be sober and homely fibre and shade; but it is shot with golden hues and threads; and, with all the ease and flowing softness of a silken robe, the style of inspired writers adjusts itself to the form and substance of revealed truth: