

massive towers surmounted by light, airy tracery in which the solid stone has been wrought into 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. Notwithstanding all this elaborate and gorgeous ornamentation, there is nothing to offend the most fastidious taste. "This is due," no doubt, "partly to the massive grandeur and vast size of the edifice, partly to the fact that the brilliancy of the colours has been subdued by age; and partly to the general sombre tone which modifies without impairing the richness of the general effect."

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. 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. And yet this dull and stagnant city was once the centre of the national life of Spain. After the Mohamedan conquest, what remained of the Gothic monarchy was shut up in the north-western corner of the Peninsula; and the fastnesses of the Asturias and the defiles of the Pyrenees held for many generations all that remained of Christian Spain. This inhospitable region, with its mountain fastnesses and strongholds, proved the birthplace 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. When the Asturian kingdom gradually became united with and merged in Castile and Leon, Burgos became the capital of "Catholic" Spain. Here in the year 1025, when Sancho III. sat on the throne of Navarre, was born Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, the Cid, who performed such incredible exploits in his day and whose achievements furnish material for perhaps the most romantic chapter in the history of Spain.

We are anxious to hasten on to Madrid and to get a view of its royal palace which, on its own account and on account of the associations connected with it, is worth a pilgrimage to Madrid