

baggage has to undergo custom-house examination which, owing to the slowness and irritating imperturbability of the Spanish officials, is a pretty severe trial to the traveller's patience. Soon after passing this ordeal, the defiles of the Lower Pyrenees are reached, and one forgets these petty annoyances in the recollection of the thrilling historic associations of the locality. Over this region for more than a thousand years the tide of battle has flowed. Victorious or defeated armies—Gallic, Roman, Goth, Moor, Spanish, French, British—have poured through these narrow valleys, or done desperate battle among these rugged hills. Here, as we learn from the romantic and legendary chronicles of the middle ages—

“Charlemain and all his peerage fell
In Fontarabia.”

And here, after the lapse of ten centuries, the Bidassoa was crossed at Fuenterrabia, and the Duke of Wellington fought his last battle on the soil of Spain.

Among the foothills of the Pyrenees the traveller is constantly reminded of the lower slopes and spurs of the Jura. The scenery, often rich, is always picturesque. But as we proceed southward the scene changes, and we find ourselves passing through a region as barren and desolate as can be well conceived. Far as the eye can reach it is a wilderness of stone—stones, stones, nothing but stones—of all forms and sizes. Sometimes these are piled together like the ruins of Titanic fortresses, sometimes scattered over the surface of the earth; sometimes perfectly bare, and sometimes with a thin and partial covering of vegetation. With rare intervals of comparative fertility, this stony desert continues till far past Avila, and nearly to Madrid. From Tolosa to Vittoria, a distance of about fifty miles, there are scarcely fifty houses.

Of course the towns along the route are few, but every one of them has a history which invests it with more or less romantic and thrilling interest. Vittoria is immortalized by the battle of June 21st, 1813, by which Wellington cleared the French out of Spain. Burgos, which is reached some hours after leaving Vittoria, is a city of much greater interest in every way. Its cathedral is one of the finest not only in Spain, but in Europe. From the hill overlooking the town it forms a magnificent pile of