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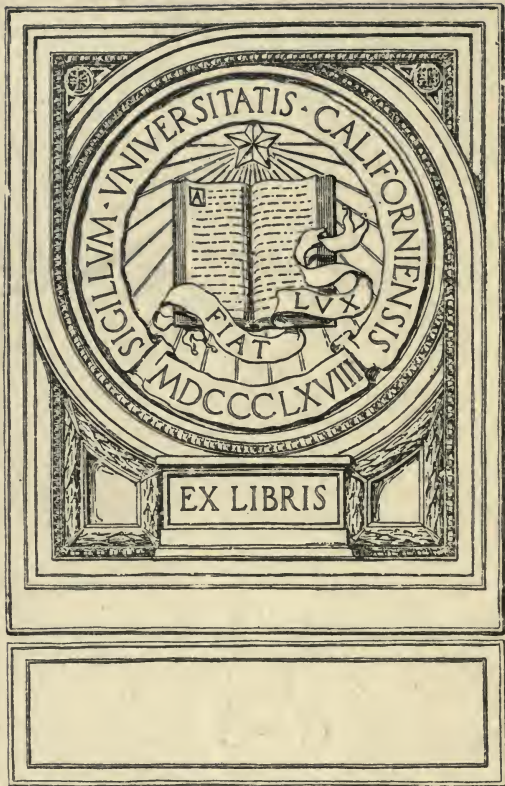


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THE PAINTERS OF THE SCHOOL OF SEVILLE



N. SENTENACH



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MURILLO

FRAGMENT OF "THE DREAM OF THE ROMAN PATRICIAN"

(Prado, Madrid)

[See page 174

THE PAINTERS OF THE SCHOOL OF SEVILLE

BY

N. SENTENACH



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE Pictorial production of Seville is of such real importance that it certainly deserves to rank as a school; it is distinguished by strongly marked tendencies and has been developed by a steady progress. The qualities of originality and of artistic merit which it undoubtedly possesses, accentuate the difference which exists between this school and those others, each so excellent in a different line, which flourished at the same time. The dominant note is one of colour, the excellence of which persisted even after the period of decadence had begun; but this colour, even at the zenith of the school's glory, had a certain pure Spanish sobriety of tone which distinguished it from that of other colourist schools such as those of Venice or Flanders. Their painters, indeed, give us tones of greater transparency and brilliance, but they lack the solidity which was so characteristic of the work of the school of Seville. The sobriety of palette so conspicuous in the painting of the school is typically Spanish and yet it has a peculiar character which marks the difference between the painting in Seville and that

in Madrid or Valencia, which are also colourist schools of the Spanish type. The palette adopted in Seville is more Oriental in tone than that of other districts of Spain, a fact which may be accounted for by the condition of light and atmosphere peculiar to the city in which the art was cradled.

Seville is the centre of the southernmost part of Spain and is situated in a wide plain which is watered by the Guadalquivir. The sun beats down on the city and its ardent rays glance back from the white houses standing out against a sky of intense blue, in a manner more suggestive of Africa than of Europe. The houses are reflected in a river the banks of which often disappear in a mirage of the plain, after the manner of such phenomena so often observed in Egypt; yet all this exuberance of light has the effect of harmonising the most discordant colours, bathing the whole scene in a golden fiery haze.

It is evident that this aspect of nature, which the artists have striven to represent faithfully, has had a great effect on the colour of the school, which is different to that of all others known to us. It is to the credit of the artists that this glamour of light and colour has not made them neglect the study of drawing. We find, on the contrary, that in every age, amongst Primitives, artists of the Renaissance and Realists, painters have striven to subordinate their love of colour to correctness of design and have shown a knowledge of linear and aerial perspective. It must be acknowledged that artists, possessing all these gifts together

with a strong and free execution, can vie with those of any other school in the matter of technique.

So far so good. Passing on to the purely æsthetic question of the quality of their inspiration, we must admit that, if they adopted a realistic method to express their ideas, they did so with the intention of placing truth of representation at the service of a higher inspiration, idealising their subjects and giving to the countenances they depicted an ardent and ecstatic expression which was in harmony with their own temperament. We cannot, therefore, consider the art of Seville as purely imitative; we must look beyond merely human sources to seek for its true inspiration.

The subjects usually chosen by these artists proves the truth of this assertion. We must note that the portraits which they left are neither so fine nor so numerous as those which have come down to us from other schools, while the faithful interpretation of nature for its own sake has not attracted them beyond the desire of putting a landscape background to some of their pictures. The subjects which they chose were, for the most part, religious in character. We see that they represent scenes in which the saints are introduced, or subjects which set forth the passion and death of Our Lord or the joys and sorrows of His Mother the Virgin Mary; we may note that the most dramatic and touching aspect of the scene is always chosen. They have deliberately selected from human nature those types which are the noblest and most sympathetic and we begin to understand why they never lost that

natural grace with which they were so liberally endowed. This tendency has introduced a marked domestic element into their compositions, which has made them appreciated by all those who make a cult of home life and the family. It is true that there are also certain works in existence which are intended to point the lesson to be learned from studying the tragic side of life and from meditating on the ephemeral nature of human joys, but these are very rare and were generally painted to execute a commission. As a rule touching and tender sentiment dominates the work of the painters of Seville unless they are caught up in a fine rapture towards the divine. It follows naturally that the school is famous for examples of female beauty in which grace and purity of type are conspicuous, notably in those figures intended to represent the Virgin and the Saints or those angels and children with which their happiest compositions are enlivened and adorned.

The fact that epic or historic compositions are very rare, can easily be accounted for by the removal of the Court of the Kings of Castille from Seville after the death of Don Pedro and by the discovery of America, which converted the city into a rich port where the treasures of the New World arrived to the exclusion of any other. This circumstance brought great wealth and prosperity to Seville and influenced the life and the customs of her inhabitants. We may, therefore, divide the progress of the school into periods which are dictated by their natural artistic evolution rather than

by the vicissitudes of national life. From these Seville always stood apart; although some of her sons possessed considerable influence at Court, it did not affect the ordinary life of her citizens. This isolation from the national life was not really prejudicial to Seville; her own natural resources were always sufficient for her needs.

It may be noted that the great period of art did not begin until after the city had been again won back from the Arabs. The Court of Castille, established in Seville by the King San Fernando, remained there during the reigns of his successors up to the death of Pedro I. The arts, naturally, developed freely during this period and we have some examples of the style of painting at that date in some frescoes which are still preserved and in illuminations of such acknowledged excellence as the *Canticles of the Learned King*.¹ These were, of course, the principal medium of colour used in those days. The removal of the Court of the Kings of the new dynasty of Trastamara from Seville caused a very natural decadence in art, but very soon, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, there began to appear those pictures which we now ascribe to the Primitives of the School. These, first of all, showed the influence of Italian art—chiefly of the great schools of Siena and Florence—but later adopted the canons of art as practised in the Netherlands, and as set forth by Van Eyck and his pupils during their journey through the peninsula.

¹ *Loores del Rey Sabio.*

Very soon the neo-classical renaissance in Italy began to exercise a direct influence on painting in Seville, and the art of the Italian masters, especially of Michelangelo, Raphael and Fra Bartolommeo, began to be admired to the exclusion of any other. The frequent communications between the ports of Spain and her sister-peninsula in the Mediterranean, the continual journeying of her artists to what was then the fountain-head of all artistic inspiration, of course contributed to this result. The masters of the Italian Renaissance were the true inspirers of the School of Seville. The school was fortunate also in taking its rise at a time which coincided with the discovery of America, a time of great prosperity because of the riches which were brought from that country, and one which was eminently favourable to the development of the fine arts.

It was not long, however, before the national genius began to feel its own power and to trust to its own guidance. The artists of Seville soon aspired to complete originality, raising the school from a state of vassalage and imitation to one of direct inspiration. And so, after a period of transition, in which the Italian traditions still strove for the mastery with the newly developed studies founded on a direct observation of nature, the great realistic Masters came to crown these splendid achievements with works in which, totally emancipated from any Italian influence, they give us the presentment of a true national art as it has developed in their own country. Roelas, Alonso Cano,

Zurbaran, and, above all, Murillo and Valdes Leal, are the "bright particular stars" of the school of painting in Seville; so much so that they have never yet been surpassed in their own style and it seems highly improbable that they will ever be so in the future.

Having dealt with these preliminaries, we may now proceed to map out the historical development of the school into those periods which appear suitable to the special character of its progress. We will begin with the period of the *Primitives*, after which we will consider another of very marked character, that of the *Renascence artists*; we will conclude with a golden century in which the *Realists* produce their most eminent and original works. After this date, a marked decadence leads down to almost total extinction.

It is interesting to note that the school is not without its preceptors, who explained and defined the fundamental theories of the art which had developed so luxuriantly, and who thus began the Bibliography of the School of Seville. Francisco Pacheco, an eminent painter, but a still more eminent literary man, spent his whole life in composing his work, "The Art of Painting, its Antiquity and Greatness," a book which, if it be not now of great practical use to students, was, no doubt, in its time, a complete exposition of the theories of the renascence artists; it is, even now, an excellent book of reference and a source of information concerning those artists who were his contemporaries. It was published in Seville in the year 1641. Another very important book by

Pacheco was his "Book of Description of Authentic Portraits," of which a most faithful reproduction, with facsimile illustrations, was published by its discoverer and latest possessor, Señor Don José Maria Asensio y Toledo in the year 1884. The books and statutes of the Academy founded by Murillo in 1660 must also figure in the Bibliography of the school; they are now in the Academy of Fine Arts in Seville and are as carefully preserved as works which contain so many interesting data deserve to be. We find some account of the artists of the times and their works in the "Feasts of the Holy Metropolitan and Patriarchal Church of Seville, for the new cult of the King Don Fernando," Seville, 1672, by D. Fernando de la Torre y Farfan, while Don Diego Ortiz de Zuñiga dedicates some special pages to the great painters in his "Ecclesiastical and Secular Annals of Seville from 1246 to 1671." The Court of the First Bourbon, which was brought to Seville in 1724 and remained there for four years, found a faithful chronicler in Don Juan José Navarro, Marques de la Vitoria, who, in his "Diary of the Journeys of Philip V.," gives us, according to the testimony of Cean Bermudez, very interesting information relative to the history of the fine arts to which he was so much attached.

During his stay in Seville, which was very profitable to him as an historian, Cean Bermudez acquired an immense amount of information about her painters, which he afterwards utilised when compiling his "Historical Dictionary of the Most Illustrious Professors

of the Fine Arts in Spain," published in Madrid in 1800. To this we must add a treatise on the School of Seville in his manuscript "History of Painting," which is preserved in the library of the Academy of San Fernando, as well as the "Artistic Description of the Cathedral of Seville," 1804, the "Description of the Hospital of the Holy Blood of Seville," 1804, and in his "Letter of Don Juan Agustin Cean Bermudez to a friend, on the style and taste of the Painters of the School of Seville and the degree of perfection to which it had been raised by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo," Cadiz, 1806.

About this time also, Ponz, in his "Journeys" (vol. iii.), gives us interesting information about the number of notable pictures to be seen in Seville and the condition in which they were to be found, and Arana de Valflora, in his selected "Sons of Seville," includes Murillo and other artists. The appendices of "Picturesque Seville," by Don José Amador de los Rios (1841), is worth consulting on account of the information that can be obtained there as to the *provenances* of certain pictures now scattered in various galleries. With these works we begin the series of studies which lead us down to modern erudition and to the writings of those critics whose industry has met with such signal success. In 1864, Señor Don José Maria Tubino published his "Murillo and his Times," in which he threw light on many very important facts in connection with the life and works of the chief of the school. Soon after, Don Pedro Madrazo added to facts already

known others which were discovered by his own researches, and compiled the "Enlarged Catalogue" of the Prado Gallery, the "Almanack of Spanish and American Illustration of 1880," and began his studies for "The Gems of Spanish Painting." Don Claudio Boutelon also, the director of the Academy of Fine Arts, has for many years dedicated his pen to exalt the glories of painting in Seville.

Don José Maria Asensio y Toledo, who, in 1876, published a very authoritative book on "Pacheco and his Works," has proved a most conscientious annotator of that author. In 1884, he began, as we have said, his reproduction of the "Book of Portraits." Meanwhile the author of this book published in 1885 his sketch on "Painting in Seville," with appendices on Miniatures, Glass, and Tiles of Triana.

In the following year Señor Don Luis Alfonso published an illustrated book entitled "Murillo—the Man—the Artist—his Works." Lastly, amongst the learned critics of Seville, Señor Don José Gestoso y Perez has added many new data to those already gleaned and has, in his preface to a "Dictionary of the Artificers who flourished in the City of Seville from the Thirteenth Century to the Eighteenth" (1899), thrown new light on the history of the school, especially with regard to the Primitives.

The various editions of the "Catalogues" of the Provincial Museum are also worth consulting with regard to the antecedents of works of art, as is also the catalogue of the "Pictures and Sculpture belonging

to the Gallery of T.R.H. the Infantes of Spain, Dukes of Montpensier, in 1806." The contents of this gallery have since been dispersed.

In the year 1905, when the works of Francisco Zurbaran were exhibited in Madrid, various studies on the work of this artist were published by Señor Don Salvador Viniegra, sub-director of the Prado Museum, and by other writers. These essays appeared in periodicals and reviews of that date. Señor Don Elias Tormo y Monzó has also written a monograph on the pictures of Zurbaran which are preserved in the Monastery of Guadalupe (1906). At the present time various critics are working with great industry and success amongst the municipal, ecclesiastical, and diplomatic archives of Seville; their efforts have been rewarded by finding out many interesting facts relating to the old Masters.

Some foreign authors have also directed their attention to the study of the Pictorial School of Seville. Without speaking of Sardraart, whose information as to the early art was very inexact, we may note that M. Latour, in his time, wrote on Pacheco's book and on other matters in connection with the artists of this school. Shortly afterwards Mr. Charles Blanch devoted considerable attention to the productions of the artists of Seville in his "Studies on the History of the Fine Arts." Later, Dr. Carl Justi, in his well-known work on Velazquez, when speaking of the youth and apprenticeship of the great Master in his native city, wrote a short account of the state of art and letters in Seville at that date.

In 1883, Mr. Charles Curtis published, in New York, a detailed study of Velazquez and Murillo, or rather, as he called it, "A Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Works of Don Diego de Silva y Velazquez and Bartolomé Esteban Murillo." This study shows true erudition and in some cases gives us a definitive judgment, although his attributions require a new rectification with regard to the latest data acquired in an age of higher criticism. In 1900 M. Louis Gonse gave us a very correct article on Murillo, which is remarkable for the excellent critique which he gives of that artist.¹

Of late years the School of Seville has awakened considerable interest among art critics, and many articles have been written on this subject in periodicals relating to the Fine Arts, to which the present author has contributed, always endeavouring to note any recent discovery which adds anything to the knowledge of the school.

Such is, in outline, the substance of the knowledge we possess with regard to the character, progress, and history of the ancient school of painting in Seville.

The vicissitudes through which the city has passed, the prices paid for works of art by commercial patrons, and the natural destruction due to the lapse of time, have combined together to disseminate the works of

¹ Quite lately Señor Don Enrique Romero de Torres has rescued from obscurity the work of the painter Pablo Legot, concerning whom he has published an interesting article in the "Revista de Archivos," 1910.

the school so much that we can only consider what remains as a very small part of the whole output.

In the capital of Andalusia we find only the pictures which are preserved in the churches, in the Provincial Museum, and in some private collections; all the rest have been dispersed so completely that we have to search for any given picture in the catalogues of foreign galleries.

Having briefly touched on these preliminary observations, we may now proceed to study the historic development of the School of Seville.

CHAPTER II

THE PRIMITIVES

THE conquest of Seville by Fernando III. in the year 1248 was followed by a marked development of the fine arts in that city; this happy result being brought about by the artistic knowledge of those in authority at the Court and the advanced state of culture enjoyed by the Arabs who continued to reside there.

About this time a great change took place in Seville, almost all the mosques being transformed into Christian churches; the most important of these became the cathedral, and over the smaller buildings the parish churches began to raise their domes, whilst portions of the ancient mosques were utilised as chapels. On the flat roofs of the minarets were placed the belfries of the new churches, as we can see to-day when we look at the graceful Giralda or the towers of San Marco, Santa Marina, Santa Catarina and others. The interiors of almost all these churches are decorated with paintings in fresco, which are still visible although much deteriorated. The walls of the mosque which was converted into a cathedral were also covered with frescoes, but these were destroyed when the old building was demolished to make way for the present

magnificent temple.¹ The only painting which we can regard as a relic of these times is the *Virgin of the Antigua* in the chapel of the same name. This very early fresco was removed, according to some authorities, in the year 1578, when it was transferred from the walls of the mosque to the position it now occupies.²

The Virgin is represented standing; the figure is full length and larger than life. She holds the Christ-child on her left arm and presents a rose with her right hand. Two angels, high up in the canvas, hold a crown over her head, and a third, higher still, bears a ribbon on which is written ECCE MARIA VENIT. According to Cean Bermudez, the figure of a king and queen could formerly be perceived at her feet, but they have been obliterated. The heads of both Virgin and Child are surrounded by a wide gold nimbus; the background is also gold and golden flowers are embroidered on the tunic with tight-fitting sleeves which the Virgin wears, as well as on the wide mantle which covers her head and reaches to her feet. The general style of painting suggests the beginning of the fourteenth century, although a tradition exists that it was an object of veneration to the King San Fernando. However that may be, it is the most ancient painting in Seville and may very well inaugurate our series of works executed by the school.

Don Alfonso X., son of Fernando III., was known as El Rey Sabio—the Learned King—on account of his

¹ See Gestoso, "Sevilla Monumental y Artística," vol. ii. p. 24.

² *Ibid.* p. 510.

love of culture and the attention which he gave to all its branches during his reign; he may be said to have devoted his whole time to the encouragement of art and literature. His own particular studies were directed to poetry, mathematics, astronomy and alchemy; the fine arts, which reached a very high level in his time, have a special character which distinguishes the work of his reign from that of any other.

The examples which we possess of sculpture, goldsmiths' work, seal-engraving and other artistic productions of this date suggest an equal achievement in the various branches of painting, and although there is no known specimen of the higher art, we find a considerable number of illuminated codices, illustrated by numerous miniatures which were executed by command of the Rey Sabio. We may mention the "Book of Stones," the "Study of Astronomy," the "Games," and lastly, the famous "Canticles," all of which were either partially or entirely painted in Seville, some of them being possibly by that Juan Perez,¹ the King's painter, who lived at Court in the year 1261.

The earliest of all these codices is, without doubt, the "Book of Stones," begun A.D. 1266, as it is explicitly stated in the MSS. The first painting represents the king dictating the work; it is followed by 450 miniatures which are either allegorical or show scenes of contemporary life.²

¹ See "Adicciones al Cean Bermudez," by Conde de la Viñaza, vol. i. p. 117.

² Some faithful reproductions of these miniatures have been issued by the Imp. de la Iberia, Madrid, 1881.

Next in date comes the no less interesting "Book of Chess, Dice and Draughts," which contains 150 miniatures that are placed at the head of the chapters in order to explain their contents. We see here the most varied scenes, in which the games, their pieces and accessories, are depicted in illustration of the subject of the book. There is no doubt as to the authenticity or the date of this book, both of which are set forth in the concluding words of the codex: "This book was begun and finished in Seville by command of the most noble King Don[Alfonso . . . in the era of 1321 years" (A.D. 1285). It is preserved, with the other codices belonging to the same king, in the library of the Escorial. Another codex, also illuminated, which we owe to Alfonso X., is the "Study of Astronomy"; it is doubly interesting, both on account of the subject-matter and the miniatures which illustrate the text, corresponding in style to those we have mentioned before.

Of all these codices, the one which was executed the last is the first in importance both on account of its ornate caligraphy and its exquisite paintings. The copy which is now in the Escorial appears to be the first of a more luxurious set of volumes taken from the "Book of the Canticles" and "Loores" of Santa Maria," which was composed by the Rey Sabio; it contains two hundred songs out of a total of four hundred which are to be found in the complete codex of the Escorial, and it is illustrated by 1226 vignettes in miniature, besides having initial letters and other embellishments. This

most beautiful work was, without doubt, begun in Seville about the year 1274, a little before the death of the Rey Sabio, as we can see by the heraldry, the style and the colouring of the first illustration; moreover the king declares in his will that he leaves these codices to the Cathedral Church of Seville in order that the chants may be intoned there at the feast of Saint Mary. It is evident that the paintings were not all executed in the reign of this king, because as the work progresses we can see a good deal of diversity of style in the costumes represented. Some writers have suggested that the miniatures were executed in the middle of the fourteenth century; notwithstanding this opinion, we may conclude that the greater part were painted in Seville during the life of King Alfonso.

The beauty of style, the perfection of detail, the harmony of the tones and the exquisite finish of this work, make it one of the most notable of the period; it offers, besides, an inexhaustible storehouse of data which helps us to realise all aspects of contemporary life. It was removed from the Cathedral of Seville to the Escorial by Philip II. at a date unknown.¹

We may also assume that the first part of the precious codex of the Escorial, which is entitled "The Coronation," was illustrated in the days of the Rey Sabio, not only because the subjects chosen for the illustrations relate to the investitures of the emperors

¹ See a study in the "Museo Español de Antigüidades," vol. iii., and also the edition of the "Canticles," issued by the Academia de la Lengua.

from the time of Alfonso VII. of Castille, called the Emperor of the Spains, but also on account of the character of the miniatures which sufficiently resemble those which we have just mentioned. The letterpress might indeed be of an earlier date; but, considered from the artistic point of view, we cannot consider this example more ancient. In this manner the library or *Cámara*, as it was called, of the Kings of Castille, began to be furnished with this class of literature.

All the codices dating from the second half of the thirteenth century obey certain fixed rules of style; they may offer some varieties in the feeling of the line, but they are all identical in composition. There is no perspective in the vignettes, the figures appearing on flat backgrounds which are either of burnished gold or painted in imitation of mosaic; they are derived directly from the frescoes and bas-reliefs with which the churches were adorned at that date. There is no doubt that these miniatures represent the highest achievement and the most advanced technique of painting known at that time; they have, moreover, the great advantage of indubitable authenticity.¹

During the reigns of the successors of Alfonso X. the arts continued to flourish luxuriantly. In the

¹ The precious codex of the Bible of Pedro de Pamplona, which is preserved in the Colombina Library, although not executed in Seville, was illuminated for the King Don Alfonso el Sabio. It is worthy of special mention on account of the unique character of its beautiful miniatures. Señor Boutelou gives a detailed account of it in the "Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones," vol. iv. pp. 55 and 85.

year 1396, we find a mention of the name of Anton Ronares, who was living at Seville as a master painter ; but, strictly speaking, we scarcely find a trace of native art until the reign of Pedro I. of Castille. The great fresco of *Santa Maria de Rocamador*, in the Church of San Lorenzo, shows us the characteristic style of painting peculiar to the fourteenth century and to the reign of this king.

The inspiration evidently came from France, a not unlikely circumstance when we reflect that the image represented was held in as great veneration in that country as that of Lourdes was by a later generation. We may note that the artists of Seville, after their manner, gave a more grandiose conception of the Madonna, whose cult had extended from France to the farthest regions, than had been given elsewhere ; the accessories are different, the outline is firmer and the choice of colour more subtle.

The Virgin is represented standing against a golden background ; she holds the Child in her arms, who raises His right hand in the act of blessing and caresses a little bird with His left. The Virgin's head is uncovered and her hair is encircled by the characteristic crown of the sovereigns of that date. Her red mantle, clasped over the breast, shows her neck and the white chemisette of her bodice ; she wears a skirt of blue brocade embroidered with gold. The upper part of the figure stands out from the gold background, while the lower appears against a wall of tiles of various colours which is seen in perspective. A ribbon

bearing the legend *Santa Maria de Rocamador* separates the golden background from the tiled wall. The heads of the Virgin and Child are surrounded by wide haloes ; the composition of the upper part of the picture is completed by two angels bearing censers.

There are also some other illuminations in existence, which are as remarkable as those which we have considered before. In the same year in which Don Pedro began his reign, or perhaps in the year 1350, the Trojan History was finished, which had been undertaken by order of Don Alfonso XI. It was translated from the French, which was taken from the original of Beneyto de Santa Mora, that was derived from the Greek text of the poems of Homer which were discovered in Athens by Cornelio. It is interesting to note how Beneyto, in translating and arranging the poem, turned it into a regular Book of Chivalry ; it is no less interesting to observe how the miniaturist-illustrator converted the Hellenic heroes into cavaliers of the Middle Ages. Armed *cap-à-pie* and endowed with a sort of enchanting heraldic character, they are dressed in the fashion of the day and the expression of their countenances is the most chivalric and romantic that can be imagined. The artist thought that he could, in this manner, best convey the intention of the poet.

Over and above the artistic interest of the codex, it is valuable on account of the information it gives on the subject of the dress, armour and furniture, the manners and customs of the fourteenth century. The miniatures themselves are beautifully executed ; some of

them are real pictures which have complicated compositions such as representations of battles or meetings of two armies, the figures of the heroes being painted with the richest detail.

There is no doubt that the Trojan History was one of the books which were executed in Seville in order to increase the library or *Cámara* of the palace of the Castillian monarchs during the sojourn of the Court in that city ; it was afterwards transferred to the Escorial by order of Philip II.

It may be affirmed that the tradition of the miniaturists was unbroken in Seville during these centuries. There are several codices in the Colombina Library which resemble this school, and even in the choral books of the churches we find some illuminations which date from this epoch. Just inside the fourteenth century—in the year 1390—the very interesting “Pontifical MSS.” of the Colombina presents us with an inexhaustible storehouse of information concerning the ecclesiastical liturgy of those times. With this example we may close our account of the state of painting in Seville during the fourteenth century.

CHAPTER III

THE MASTERS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

AFTER the death of Don Pedro I., which occurred in 1369, the dynasty of Trastamara arose and Seville ceased to be the residence of the Court of Castille. On this account there was some set-back to the progress of culture generally ; but the pictorial production did not suffer, owing to the resources which the city possessed in herself, and to the fact that she still remained the capital of the Andalusian region.

The arts were now no longer dependent on ecclesiastical patronage or royal munificence, but rather on the commissions offered by private persons, for the most part rich merchants and affluent bankers, whose love of ostentation prompted them to become patrons of art. About this time, also, there began to appear the paintings on panel and the devotional pictures which are so typical of the *Quattrocentisti* of Seville.

We now begin to hear the names of Benito Bernal, Cristobal and Pedro de Cardenas, Francisco and Juan Catalan, Diego de la Cenisa, Diego de Cordova, Garci Fernandez, Juan Hispalense, Juan Nuñez, Juan Sanchez

de Castro, and others, all of whom were painters of this school who flourished in the fifteenth century.¹

The first of the Primitives of whose work we find traces is Garci Fernandez, whose signature was discovered by Señor Gomez Moreno in a panel which is preserved in the convent of Saint Ursula in Salamanca. The signature runs: "g̃: F̄r̄z: p̄itor de Sevilla"; the panel is said to be the "first signed by a Spanish artist now known to us." It represents *The Slaughter of the Innocents* and appears to be part of a triptych of which the wings alone remain. The subject of the other is *The Presentation in the Temple*.²

Second in date we find Juan Hispalense, who signs the beautiful triptych in the collection of Señor Lazaro y Galdeano in Madrid; until quite recently it was considered the earliest work which could be attributed to the school.

In the centre of the triptych we see the Virgin, seated, with the Christ-child in her arms; before her four angels play on stringed instruments. The signature, "Johus Ispalesis," can be plainly discerned at her feet; on the wings are represented the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul. A delicately carved and gilded ornamentation, conical in form, completes the upper part of the picture, which, both in style and colouring, suggests the Italian, and more especially the Siennese influence, at that time

¹ See the "Ensayo de un Diccionario de Artifices Sevillanos," by Señor Gestoso," p. xliii. of the Introduction to vol. i., also vol. ii. p. 8.

² See "Cultura Española," 1908, p. 766, and the "Catalogo Monumental de la Provincia de Salamanca," p. 364, in which they are described and analysed by Señor Gomez Moreno.



JUAN HISPALENSE (TRIPTYCH)

(In the possession of Señor Lázaro y Galdeano)

THE VITAL
STATISTICS

predominant throughout the Peninsula. There was, of course, as yet, no attempt to employ oil paint as a medium.

We may safely affirm, after studying this incontestably authentic work, that Juan Hispalense is the Patriarch of the School of Seville, and we must place him second on the list of the artists of the school who have left signed pictures behind them. Before this time the paintings are absolutely anonymous and cannot be ascribed to any particular artist.

The Guild of Painters occupied a very important position in Seville, as we may infer from the documents which have come down to us concerning the *Imagineros como doradores en sabla, pintores de madera y fresco y sargueros*, as they were called. All these craftsmen formed one association or guild, which enjoyed special prerogatives; we can see, by referring to a petition which was presented to the Town Council on September 18, 1480, that they asked to be exempt from the rules which bound the other guilds.¹

In these documents we find a whole genealogy of painters linked together by the generic name of Sanchez, of whom the most distinguished appear to be Sanchez de San Roman and Sanchez de Castro. These artists were appointed "Veedores" in the case in question and they decided that the Guild of Painters must necessarily have their own rules and regulations.

Juan Sanchez de Castro must have arrived at some eminence in his profession, as he was entrusted with

¹ See Gestoso, "Diccionario de los Artifices," vol. i. p. xlv.

the execution of various important works, some of which are still in existence. It is for this reason that Cean Bermudez styles him the Patriarch of the School, he being the most eminent and, at that time, the earliest known artist whose works have come down to us; recent research has brought to light several painters before his time, and he has therefore lost his claim to the position assigned to him by Cean. Cean had, however, one advantage over the modern critic when appreciating the work of this artist; he could admire the retable which Sanchez painted for the chapel of San José in the Cathedral of Seville, which has now disappeared. We have, on the other hand, the great fresco of *Saint Christopher* in the Church of San Julian, which is signed and dated 1484; and the first oil-painting of the school is the work of this artist, as we can prove by authentic documents which have been taken from San Julian and placed in the Cathedral.

The first oil-picture is painted on panel; the figures are life size. In the centre we see the Virgin seated on a throne under a canopy with the Christ-child on her knee; she holds a coral rosary in her hand which He also holds in one of His. To the right is Saint Peter standing and to the left Saint Jerome, the latter wearing the scarlet robes of a cardinal. By the side of Saint Peter, the donor appears kneeling (and at the Virgin's feet this legend can still be clearly traced: "Juan Sanchez de Castro, pintor.")

This beautiful picture has been much damaged. It

was discovered by a happy accident, hidden behind a modern altar; the painting was in a very bad state and the figure of the donor had been cut away when the two lower corners were removed.¹

According to Pacheco, there is an *Annunciation* by Juan Sanchez in the Church of San Isidoro del Campo,² and Señor Gestoso mentions yet another exquisite work by this master which represents the Nativity of our Lord. It is placed in the Church of the Virgin del Aquila in the town of Alcalá de Guadaira.³

Sanchez de Castro had a brother named Anton and a son named Diego, both of whom were painters.

If we study the panel executed by Sanchez de Castro, we must soon be aware that a change is coming over the character of the painting which was hitherto traditionally accepted in Seville; we must note that, if the triptych of Juan Hispalense obeys the Italian influence so strongly felt at the time, the panel of Sanchez de Castro adopts the new style introduced into Spain by Jan Van Eyck when he made his famous journey through the Peninsula.

During the second half of the fifteenth century, the Flemish influence on art superseded all other in Castille; that this was specially the case in Seville we may judge by the fine picture which is signed by Juan

¹ See Gestoso, "Sevilla Monumental," vol. i. p. 210. Señor Tormo y Mansó published, in 1907, an article on the subject of this picture, illustrated by excellent photogravure illustrations. It was issued by the Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones.

² A monastery near the ruins of Italica.

³ A town in the neighbourhood of Seville.

Nuñez and is preserved in the Sacristy of the Chalices in the Cathedral. The Virgin is here represented at the foot of the Cross with the dead Christ in her arms. Saint Michael stands on her right hand, Saint Laurence on her left: the donor is portrayed at the feet of Saint Michael. This picture is certainly one of the most precious gems which adorn the Primitive School of Seville; apart from the surety and strength of the drawing, we are charmed by the intensity and the beauty of the colouring, by tones which are as brilliant as they are harmonious and which appear as if they had been painted quite recently. The colouring and the evidently authentic signature of the artist, besides some local details, enable us to classify the painting as belonging to the School of Seville; otherwise the style is so purely Flemish that it might very easily pass for the work of a fellow-countryman and follower of Van der Weyden or Gerard David.

The influence of northern art on the work of the artists of Seville becomes more and more apparent as time goes on; we can see it very clearly by studying the eight fine panels which were formerly in the church at Montserrat and are now, apparently, definitely placed in the Museo Provincial. They represent Saint Sebastian, Saint Catalina, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Andrew, Saint Christopher, Saint Anthony and Saint Bonaventura; they are all notable for the richness of the draperies and for the truly insurpassable elegance of the figures. If it were not for the Oriental and Moorish character of the tiled pavements and the trimming and embroidery



JUAN NUÑEZ
VIRGIN WITH THE DEAD CHRIST
(Cathedral, Seville)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

of the robes, we should hardly believe it to be painted in Seville, but should rather judge it to be the work of the master Bartholomäusaltar of the School of Cologne. It almost seems as if that artist must at least have superintended the execution of so delicate a production. The resemblance between this picture and Bartholomäusaltar's works in the Pinakothek of Munich is so striking that it seems as if they must be executed by the same hand; the size and type of the figures is the same and the costumes resemble each other so closely that we could almost believe that the cloth was woven on one loom and the garments cut from the same pattern.¹

We cannot, however, remain in any doubt as to the nationality of the artist who produced these works; the purely local details in the backgrounds and the greater richness of the embroideries bear witness to his origin. The resemblance which we have noted merely served to give a peculiar character to the production of the School of Seville, already so noted for delicate execution.

Another painter of the Sanchez family, who signs an interesting panel in the collection of Señor Cepero, is Pedro Sanchez, an artist who received a sum of money in 1492 for some *Mysteries* which he painted for the Cathedral. The picture belonging to Señor Cepero represents *The Entombment of the Saviour*; it is distinctly original and Spanish in character. The gold

¹ Reproduction of the Munich picture can be seen in "Klassischer Bilderschatz," No. 1537.

is used sparingly and a landscape background appears for the first time in the annals of the art of Seville.

The last name to record when speaking of Seville in the fifteenth century is that of Juan de Robleda, who, according to the documentary evidence we possess, must be considered rather as a decorative artist than as a painter of religious pictures.

Such are the records and such the principal facts which have come down to our times with regard to the work of the Primitives. No doubt both one and the other should be much more voluminous, as we may confess when we remember that a great concourse of artists was collected in the city of Seville on account of the work being carried on in the Cathedral—a work so stupendous that the promoters of the building scheme were stigmatised as being absolutely mad.

The fabric of the great basilica was begun in 1402, and was continued throughout the century; the sixteenth century dawned before it was completed. It will be easily understood that, in a city where the art of the miniaturist had reached so great an excellence, the illuminations of the choral books for the new church would be undertaken with great enthusiasm. We can see some of them to-day in the Cathedral and may note that they are considered to be amongst the most ancient of that priceless collection; they may be attributed to Juan de Castro, Diego Fernandez, Isabel Fernandez and other illuminators of that period of whom Señor Gestoso speaks in his "Diccionario" (vol. i.) and in his description of the Cathedral which

occupies the whole of the second volume of his "Sevilla Monumental."

Notwithstanding this artistic activity, the art of painting went through some sort of crisis owing to the departure of the Court from Seville, as we can judge by the petition presented in 1480, to which we have already alluded. In this document the painters declare that if the law is carried out to the letter, "we shall all be ruined and shall be obliged to leave the city where we were born." But the dawn was near, for the discovery of America was approaching, an event which was to benefit Seville above all other cities in Spain; it was to give a new impulse to art and to promote the future progress of the school by reason of the prosperity and magnificence which it engendered.

There is no more to be said about the *Cinquecentisti* of Seville. We have seen that these artists were always dominated by foreign influence; at first they imitated the art of Italy, then that of Flanders. Notwithstanding this fact, they showed their peculiar genius in many minor details in their colour scheme and in the character of their figures; they began, unconsciously and even prematurely, to aspire to a certain originality which was, in fullness of time, to arrive at a very high level of achievement.

In the last years of the fifteenth century the Italian influence reappeared, but it was already characterised by a marked leaning to the new classic art of the Renaissance. The artistic production of this period must have been very large; from the rare examples

which have been preserved we can but measure the greatness and importance of our loss. Amongst these lost treasures, Señor Gestoso¹ has brought one very fine work to our notice, a panel on which is represented the Christ Crucified, accompanied by the Marys, Saint James and the pious individual who gave the commission. This picture, according to the signature and date, appears to have been executed by Juan Sanchez, one of the many painters of that name who flourished at the time. The picture is now in the Cathedral and may be noted as a fine example of the painting of the school towards the end of the fifteenth century.

Gonzalo Diaz is another painter of this date, whom we may mention here. According to Cean Bermudez he finished the panels for the retable of the Magdalen in the Cathedral, in 1499; the central subject is the *Annunciation of the Virgin*, the side panels representing various saints. The drawing is good and the painting very fine.

We may now fitly consider the few examples of fresco still remaining to us, which we can assign to the school.

On the right bank of the Guadalquivir, at some distance from the city of Seville, which it dominates, stands a monastery which is remarkable both for its history and its architecture, and in which several very curious frescoes are preserved. This monastery, known as San Isidro del Campo, was founded by Alonso Perez de Guzman—the Good—he who flung a poniard to his

¹ See "Boletin de los Excursionistas Españoles, 1909," p. 9.

enemies in order that they might kill his son before he delivered up the fortress of Tarifa.

San Isidro del Campo is situated close to the ruins of Italica ; it is a beautiful example of that Oriental style of architecture which is decorated with brickwork. There were many fine specimens of this type in Spain, but this building reaches such a high level of perfection that it may be safely affirmed that the doorway leading into the church, which is composed of pointed and coloured brickwork, is even finer than the famous gateway of Santa Paula in Seville ; the cloisters, too, are so beautiful and artistic that it is hard to find any others that can compare with them. They are decorated, in the interior, with frescoes which are finer than any which are to be found in Seville.

We may note that in 1431 it was found necessary to supersede the Cistercian monks of the first foundation by others of the Order of Saint Jerome, who built these cloisters ; the frescoes which are to be seen in the inner courtyard represent the saints of this Order and others to whom the fraternity professed a special veneration. In the central space is the figure of Saint Jerome, dressed in the habit of his Order ; he is dictating to some monks the rules which they are to obey ; the lion lies at his feet. The other spaces are filled with paintings of life-sized figures of various saints, dressed according to their professions and in the fashions of the day in which they were painted ; by these paintings we may realise the exact appearance of the Castellians of that period. There is the cavalier (Saint Sebastian),

the deacon (Saint Lawrence), the soldier, the bishop, the Pope : each one is a faithful model of the fashions of the day. All these square spaces are decorated with a fanciful ribbon ornamentation, in the manner of the Christianised Moors.

These paintings have great artistic merit and are far finer than those in the Rábida, which bear some resemblance to them ; it is certain that no better example of this branch of art can be seen in the whole Andalusian district. In Seville, and only in Seville, we can trace a certain resemblance of style between this work and the illuminations in some of the choral books in the Cathedral, which date from the same period.

CHAPTER IV

ARTISTS OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD

ABOUT the beginning of the sixteenth century the first rays of the dawn of the Italian Renaissance began to be reflected in the art of Seville, although at first these were mingled with the earlier Flemish traditions to which the painters and *imagineiros* had become accustomed. This new influence is not noticeable in the figures, the costumes and the gilding, which were still executed in the old style, but it is easily discerned in the Italian character of the details introduced into the backgrounds and accessories, and these were destined to change, little by little, the whole appearance of the composition.

In the retables executed at the beginning of the century, we may observe that the arrangement is still purely Gothic. The *pradella* contains, as a rule, representations of half-length figures of saints, over which are placed one or two series of small panels under carved Gothic canopies, which run the whole length of the retable under the heavy moulding, or *batea*, which crowns the work. Nevertheless, both in the sculpture and in many details of the painting, we

can see clearly enough the nascent influence of Italian art.

This statement can be verified by studying the retable in the Chapel of San Bartolomé in the Cathedral, which was painted in 1504, as we learn by the inscription which runs round the composition. In the lower portion of this work, in the scenes representing the Passion, we find some very curious examples of the costume of the period and the same interest attaches to the dress of each one of the saints represented in the panels. In the central space is placed a very interesting statue of the Virgin and Child, which is contemporary with the painting.

The most striking example of the influence exercised by Italian art on the painters of the transitional period may be found in the altar in the Chapel of Maese Rodrigo, which is perhaps the most beautiful altar in *batea* of the whole Andalusian region.

The church was consecrated in 1506, according to trustworthy documentary evidence;¹ the retable must have been executed about the same time. The artist is unknown, but he was most certainly a native of Seville, as we can judge by some local touches in his work. The picture is divided into two parts. The centre of the upper portion has a representation of *The Descent of the Holy Ghost*; at the sides appear Saint Peter and Saint Paul on the right hand, Saint Gabriel and Saint Michael on the left, each one standing under his canopy. The centre of the principal division is

¹ See Gestoso, "Sevilla Monumental," vol. iii. p. 30.

occupied by a copy—or, to speak more correctly, by an interpretation according to the new style of art—of the *Virgin of the Antigua* in the Cathedral; at her feet kneels Maestro Fernando de Santaella, at that time the Rector of the Seminary to which the chapel formerly belonged, offering her a small model of the building which he holds in his hands. Figures of saints, some full-length, some only head and shoulders, complete the composition of this charming work. Both the style of the drawing and the types represented are strongly characteristic of the Renaissance; but, on the other hand, the colouring and the general tonality are such that we must class this masterpiece as a most brilliant example of Byzantine art. The brilliancy of the gilding harmonises so perfectly with the fresh carnations of the flesh-tints and with the rich colouring of the costumes, that the spectator cannot fail to be both surprised and delighted; the rest of the chapel is in complete harmony with the retable, which gives to the whole scene an effect of unity which cannot be matched anywhere else in Seville. It is a great pity that the name of this consummate artist is still unknown.

The superb Cathedral continued to attract a great concourse of artists; although it had been building for more than a century it was not yet finished and much fine decorative work was still being accomplished. The fame of its construction attracted to Seville some of the best artists in Spain, who were all anxious to be employed in the fabric; it was no doubt owing

to this circumstance that the brothers Fernandez (Jorge and Alejo) came to Seville from Cordova. The former was an eminent sculptor, who was engaged to finish the magnificent high altar by executing the *Piedad* and the figures of the Apostles which crown the erection; the latter was a very talented painter, as we may judge by studying the numerous works which he executed in Seville.

In 1508, so it appears, Alejo was invited by the City Council to leave Cordova, where he was living at the time, and to establish himself in Seville in order to paint and gild the statues which his brother had already completed. We see by this fact that Alejo was one of those numerous artists who did not confine themselves to painting religious pictures, but who also applied their talents to laying colour on gold, to painting flesh-tints and to gilding the carved figures executed by others, as well as colouring and gilding the retables and tombs erected in the churches. On May 15, 1508, we see that Alejo completed a picture into which he had introduced the King San Fernando; on the same day, he was commissioned to design the upper part of the retable over the high altar of the Cathedral, which was to be carved by his brother Jorge.

In 1509, 14,000 maravedis were paid to Alejo for the work which he executed in connection with the upper part of this retable; in 1514, the Fabric of the Church paid him two ducats for three illustrations in a choir book, which proves that he also excelled as a miniaturist; in 1520, we find him working at the

decoration of some triumphal arches which the citizens erected to celebrate the entry of the Emperor Charles V. into Seville. In 1530, he was still living in the parish of San Pedro, where he had been in residence for many years.¹

Alejo Fernandez occupies an important position in the School of Seville because, over and above his great merits as an artist, he first began to show qualities of originality and nationality and to acquire a habit of observing directly from nature; characteristics which were to constitute the greatness of the school and to endow it with strenuous life. As his talent developed, we notice that this tendency to realism makes itself felt, more and more, as the basis of his technique. If, at the outset of his career, he gave us an abundance of gilding, both in the backgrounds and in the costumes, he soon abandoned that mediæval treatment for one that was more in accordance with the highest pictorial effects. If at first his execution was somewhat timid or weak, he went on improving his style until he achieved a technique which is boldly effective, a technique in which he strikes the first note of that free and strong manner of execution which was to be accepted by all the great masters of the school. An examination of the works of this artist will confirm the opinion which we have just given.

Having painted the retable in the monastery of San Geronimo in Cordova, which has now disappeared, he is reported to have said to Pablo de Cespedes,

¹ See Gestoso, "Diccionario de los Artifices," vol. ii. p. 33.

who knew him, that "the artists of the day excelled chiefly in colouring and gilding." The painting of this altar-piece, which must have been very interesting, has been lost; but we find the artist, after his removal to Seville, continuing the same idea and applying the gilding to the beautiful picture of the *Virgen de la Rosa* which he executed in the Church of Santa Ana de Triana. In this admirable work the Virgin sits in a high chair, the back of which is covered with a rich drapery of brocade embroidered with gold; the charming contour of her head stands out before a wide nimbus and is partly hidden by a thin veil. She wears a low-necked tunic of red velvet trimmed with gold lace, under a great mantle of embroidered tissue which drapes her whole figure with supreme elegance; so artistic are the folds of the drapery that they would do credit to Van Eyck himself. The Virgin holds the Child in her arms and offers Him a white rose; two angels watch the divine group whilst singing joyful carols, and two others are represented up above, holding back the curtains which might otherwise have hidden the scene.

Alejo Fernandez shows, in this work, that he possessed a complete mastery of his art and that he was a great student of nature, but we see these qualities brought to even greater perfection in *The Adoration of the Magi* and the three other pictures which are preserved in the Sacristia Mayor of the Cathedral. In *The Adoration of the Magi* we may observe the great realism shown in the drawing of the kings' heads and the strength of the execution; it marks the artist



ALEJO FERNANDEZ

THE VIRGIN OF THE ROSE, SANTA ANA OF TRIANA

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as a true precursor of the great masters of the golden era. In the other pictures, which were formerly placed in the Sacristia Alta of the Cathedral, we find representations of *The Conception*, *The Nativity* and *The Purification of the Virgin*. In these works we cannot fail to be struck by the fact that the master is emboldened by the facility which his long practice has given to his brush, and has adhered to his habit of reproducing faithfully the types and accessories which are familiar to him. For this reason, his last works have a definitely marked local character.

Various other works are attributed to him, such as the eight pictures representing the *Life of the Virgin*, in the parish Church of San Julian, and two more in the Church of Santa Ana of Triana. One of these latter has for subject *The Adoration of the Magi*, the other represents *Saints Justa and Rufina*. The retable of the chapel known as the Doncellas, in the Cathedral, has also been attributed to Alejo; although it is not his, it has certain qualities which raise it to a higher level than was achieved by most of the work of that date.¹

Such is the authentic production of this artist, who, when he arrived in Seville, devoted himself to the

¹ There is a panel in the collection of Sir C. M. Robinson at Swanage, entitled *La Sagrada Familia*, which Mr. Herbert Cook attributes to Alejo Fernandez in an article which he contributes to the "Boletin de Excursiones," 1907, p. 102. There was a beautiful triptych representing *The Last Supper* in the Exhibition of Saragossa, which was attributed by M. Emile Bertaux to Alejo Fernandez. See "The Album of the Exhibition of Saragossa."

development of his talent both in the highest as well as in the more modest paths of purely decorative art in all its branches. He certainly inaugurated the style of painting which was to make the school famous. He was painting at a time when a splendid future was awaiting art, because Seville was the first port of Spain to receive the riches which came from America; and these riches were to be lavishly spent in purchasing the works of art produced by her most famous sons.

Another painter who must be included amongst the artists of the Transition period is Pedro Fernandez de Guadalupe, who gilded and coloured statues as well as being a painter of religious pictures. In 1509, he finished painting the twenty-two figures in relief which once adorned the ancient cupola, but which must have perished when the dome was destroyed; in 1522, he was paid one-half of the sum owing for gilding the iron side-gates to the Presbytery; in 1525, he finished the beautiful *Virgin with the dead Christ in her arms, the Marys, Saint John and male saints*, which can still be seen in one of the small lateral chapels in the Gate of the Clock in the Cathedral. All the panels of this picture are notable for the intensely spirited action of the figures as well as for the brilliant colouring which is so typical of the School of Seville; the whole work is distinctly local in character. The contract in which this same Fernando de Guadalupe bound himself to execute the retable on the high altar in the Church of Utrera is preserved to this day, dated in the year 1533.¹

¹ See Gestoso, "Diccionario de los Artifices," vol. ii. p. 37.

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In spite of the spirit of progress which was abroad, there were some painters who were devoted to the old ideals and who wished to suppress the new tendencies. Such a one was Cristobal de Mayorga, who was still alive in the year 1541, and who signed the archaic picture *Saint Lucy and Saint Michael* in the baptismal chapel of the parish church of San Andres. We may also mention Antonio Arfian of Triana, who held the same views on art, as we may judge after examining the frescoes which still exist over the door of San Sebastian and San Roque in the interior of the Cathedral. Another artist of this type was Anton Ruiz, who, according to Cean Bermudez, painted the panels on the altar of Santa Barbara in the Cathedral in the year 1544.

A fine triptych by an unknown artist, which is preserved in the church of the Asilo de San Fernando, also dates from this period; we may also note an interesting picture on panel of *Saint Telmo*, in the secretary's office in the Universidad Literaria, some fine pictures in the chapel of the Alcazar, representing Saint Sebastian and other saints, and, lastly, an altar decorated with very beautiful paintings in the Church of Santa Inez, which is strikingly Flemish in character and was probably not executed in Seville.

Some of these artists were also skilful in the art of executing *sargas*, or painting on cloth, a decoration much used in the interior of houses, where it took the place of tapestry; the most distinguished of these, the only one whose name has come down to us, is Alonso

de Aldana. Banners and standards were also painted in the same way, for use in America, some of which were executed by master-painters. These *sargas* are now very scarce, although they were once common enough, only small portions having been preserved.

The evolution from Gothic art to Renaissance had now been accomplished in the School of Seville; it only remained for the native artists to present to the world the most perfect copy of the new art which had just arrived from Italy.

CHAPTER V

THE RENASCENCE

THE artists whom we have just named were followed by others who had recently returned to their own country from Italy; they were so completely dazzled by the splendours of the Renaissance that they devoted their talents exclusively to the new style of art which they had so recently acquired.

These painters proceeded to impose the new technique wholesale on the school, destroying whatever was still preserved of mediæval traditions and holding up for imitation, quite frankly and without any reserve, those ideals of the classic Renaissance which were then adopted by the most renowned Italian artists, both Roman and Florentine.

The painters of Seville usually studied in Rome because the style of Raphael and Michelangelo excited their greatest enthusiasm, but, both on account of their ardent catholicism and because they began to understand that the art of the Renaissance was more of the form than the spirit, they were rather followers of Fra Bartolomeo de la Porta, whose inspiration was more decidedly Christian, than of either of the greater masters.

There is no sign of the influence of Leonardo on the School of Seville at this period; neither is there any hint of a tendency towards Venetian art; it was not until later that an artist was to arise who would penetrate the secrets of Titian's palette and apply them to his own work.

The Renaissance in Seville was purely Roman, being denied that salt of the country which gave so much value to the more spontaneous schools of Italy; her artists, nevertheless, surpassed their masters in the purity and strength of their colouring, a quality which was never wanting to Spanish artists, who had always a sense of colour.

The first man who really acquired the style then so much in fashion in Rome, and who succeeded in casting aside all mediæval influence, was Luis de Vargas, who, according to the best authorities, returned to Seville in 1551, after his long residence in Italy. Luis de Vargas was born in 1502 and he passed his youth painting the *sargas* of which mention has already been made; he was still quite young when he went to Italy to perfect himself in this art and he remained there, according to Pacheco, for twenty-eight years. This long residence abroad is reduced by Palomino to eight years.

The first work in which Vargas showed the character of the style he had acquired in Italy was a panel, *The Nativity*, which we can still see in the retable near the Gates of San Miguel in the Cathedral. It is signed in these words: "Tunc disceban Luisius de Vargas."

In this panel, which occupies the centre of the



L. DE VARGAS
ALTAR-PIECE OF "LA GAMBA"

(Seville)

retable, are life-sized figures; at the sides are *The Four Evangelists*, and, in the lower part, *The Incarnation*, *The Circumcision*, and *The Epiphany of Jesus Christ*. In these pictures we find a perfect example of the Roman painting on panel in the days of Raphael of Urbino, whom the artist strove to imitate in the correctness of his drawing and whom he surpassed in the transparency and beauty of his colour.

The mortuary chapel in which the retable hangs was founded in 1551 by the rich merchant Francisco de Baena. The great altar-piece known as *The Genealogy of Christ*, or more commonly as the *Retablo de la Gamba*, is the work in which the painter's qualities as a draughtsman, as a designer of classical composition, harmonious and yet complicated, and as a delicate and brilliant colourist, are shown to the greatest advantage. The retable is finely and rather fantastically carved and has some beautiful panels let into the woodwork; they represent choirs of angels, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, sacred allegories and the magnificent portrait of the preceptor Don Juan de Medina, the founder of the chapel.

The painting of the *Gamba* is a perfect example of all that the refined purism of the great artists of the Roman Renaissance could achieve. The correctness of the line is such that Raphael himself could not surpass it in some respects; the richness and transparency of the colouring is superior to that of the great master. The allegorical composition was, no doubt, inspired by the Preceptor Medina, who was

deeply versed in the doctrines of theology. We see here a most artistic representation of the genealogy and the redeeming mission of Christ, from the fall of the first man; Adam and Eve are there, with their sons, and on the genealogical tree are linked together the kings and prophets of the race of David, the last figure represented being that of the Virgin Mother. Vargas, who was a devout Catholic, put all his talent at the service of his faith in this picture.

We shall see, later on, that the praise which Mateo Perez de Alexio is said to have bestowed on this work and which is supposed to be the origin of the name by which it is known,¹ cannot be considered authentic, on account of incompatibility of dates. The *Gamba* must have been finished in 1553 and Alexio did not come to Seville until many years later.

Another picture signed by Vargas is the *Piedad* in the Church of Santa Maria la Blanca. In both of these works he appears not only as a fine draughtsman, but as an artist who is capable of designing an expressive and dramatic composition. In the *Piedad*, besides the Virgin with the dead Christ in her arms, we see the Magdalen, who kisses His feet, as well as Saint John, the Marys and other figures in the background. Although the style is not so pure as it is in the *Gamba*, the colouring is more vigorous and the expression of the faces more animated. This retable was presented by Francisco Ortiz y Aleman and his wife Melchora de

¹ Mateo Perez de Alexio is supposed to have said to de Vargas: "Vale piu la tua gamba che tut to il mio San Cristoforo."

Maldonado, whose portrait on panel the artist executed in the year 1564 ; a date which was also, most certainly, that of the painting of the altar-piece.

The effect of the artist's sojourn in Rome was also seen very clearly in the methods which he employed in fresco painting ; although much obliterated, we can still see some of the paintings which he executed in the Giralda, which were so famous in their day. There is a tradition that he also decorated the outer walls of the Ciborium of the Cathedral, but his most important work, which represents *The Last Judgment*, is still to be seen on the walls of the courtyard of the Casa de la Misericordia. The upper part alone remains. This fresco bears a strong resemblance to the great work of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, but the nude is not made use of so ostentatiously as it is in the composition of the Florentine painter.

The frescoes in the Arabic recesses of the Giralda, which are now almost obliterated, were finished in the year 1563 ; in the same year de Vargas began to paint the famous *Calle de la Amargura* on the exterior of the Ciborium of the Cathedral.

We must not forget that frescoes were painted in Seville before the arrival of de Vargas, the best exponent in that medium being Antonio Arfian, who painted in the archaic style. We shall speak of him later on.

Luis de Vargas died in the odour of sanctity in his natal city of Seville in the year 1568, after having been distinguished during his lifetime for exemplary piety.

He had also the sense of humour which characterised his fellow-citizens and is reported to have exclaimed as he gazed on a Crucifixion executed by an inferior artist: "Forgive him, Lord, for he knows not what he does!"

Pedro Villegas Marmolejo (1520-1577) was another classical painter of Seville who was inspired by the same ideals. He cultivated both art and literature at a time when all that part of Spain was inundated with a flood of culture. He was an intimate friend of Arias Montana, who was a shining light in the Humanities, at that time the goal of the highest literary attainments.

Villegas Marmolejo must have been in Italy, for although he never met Raphael, he had evidently studied his works, as we may judge by analysing his own. Amongst these we may note the panels in the retable of the Visitation in the Cathedral, which are signed by him; also the paintings, which are no less meritorious, in the Church of the Hospital of San Lázaro in the neighbourhood of Seville and those in the retable of the Annunciation in San Lorenzo. Before the altar in this church, Villegas Marmolejo is buried, according to the desire he expressed in his will.

In the book to which we have already referred, Pacheco refuses to recognise the merits of this artist, but Marmolejo's works protest eloquently against the critic's injustice, who was very likely influenced against him because he disliked his friend Arias Montana. The epitaph on his tomb was composed by the great

Humanist and remains as a proof of the cordial affection which he bore to the painter. It runs :

Deo viventium

Petro Villegae Marmalejo, Hispalen

Pictori solertiss. morib. integerrim.

Sensu et sermone opportunissimo

Annor LXXVII.

Arias Montanus amic. veter. uni.

Soli ex testamento pos. Viator pacem voveto

M. Perez Architectus amicitiae ergo

In cideb.

A. Chr. N. M. D. XCVII.

With regard to his *moribus integerrimus*, Cean Bermudez quotes a very curious letter written by Arias Montana himself to the Secretary Zayas, begging him to remove certain doubtful characters [from Vargas; a proof that the artist had little tolerance for bad behaviour or for lack of moral principle.

Considered exclusively as a painter, we must acknowledge Villegas to be a real master. His work was more purely Spanish in character than that of de Vargas, more Florentine than Roman in the grace and eloquence of his line and altogether characteristic of the School of Seville in the splendour of the colours. The composition and execution of the works we have considered are broad and masterly, and he certainly occupies a prominent place amongst the painters who adorn the school.

In his "Diccionario de los Artifices Sevillanos," Señor

Gestoso gives us some curious details about this painter, quoting his will, amongst other things, by which we can see that he was an upright man and one to whom art had proved a lucrative profession. He left a great part of his wealth to his friends and relations, being evidently, at that time, a widower and childless; he mentions, especially, his great friend Doctor Arias Montana, whom he names as his executor and residuary legatee, after all charges and bequests have been paid. There is, very likely, some truth in the tradition that a portrait of Arias Montana was painted by his friend; it may have been the original of the many copies of the great Humanist's portrait which exist at the present day.

The career of Antonio Arfian is one more proof of the great influence exercised by the Italy of the Renaissance over those who were already practising their art in Seville. This painter was a native of Triana, who began to paint for those fairs or markets which, from time immemorial, have exhibited in Seville their fifth-rate wares, old and new, on every Thursday in the year. He afterwards became an excellent painter of *sargas*, and then of frescoes. When de Vargas arrived in Seville, Arfian was the best fresco painter in the city, but he bowed to the master's superior talent, being much impressed by the new style of art which he had brought with him from Italy. Arfian was commissioned, together with Antonio Ruiz, to paint the frescoes in the old Ciborium of the Cathedral; later on he executed a *History of Saint George* in the parish

church of the Magdalen, in which he was assisted by his son Alonso. These frescoes were the last paintings which were executed in Seville following the old local tradition of the school; after this date Arfian became an ardent follower of the Italianised de Vargas.

About this time a good many foreign artists began to arrive. They were attracted by the reports of the prosperity of the city and confided in their talents to make their fortune; they were chiefly from Flanders and Holland, and profited by the quantity of vessels plying between the ports of these countries and that of Seville. The famous Pedro de Campaña, the equally notable Hernando Sturmio, Ziriceus and Francisco Fruter, were the most illustrious of the new arrivals.

Pedro Campaña was already settled in Seville in the year 1537, when he was paid 3750 maravedis for the pictures which he had painted on the sides of the great organ in the Cathedral; they are not now in existence, the present cases of the organ being much more recent in date. He continued to work in the Andalusian capital until a very advanced age, leaving behind him specimens of his exquisite work. Pedro Campaña, whose real name was Pierre de Kemprener, was a Fleming who was born in Brussels; he was probably a pupil of Van Orley and he certainly studied in Italy, where he helped to decorate a triumphal arch which was erected in 1530, by the city of Bologna, in honour of the emperor. After having secured the patronage of Cardinal Grimani in Rome, Campaña went to Spain and established himself in Seville, where his first

important work appears to have been the great retable in the Mariscal Chapel in the Cathedral.

This altar-piece is composed of ten panels, magnificently painted; in the centre is the *Purification of the Virgin*, over which is placed the *Resurrection of Our Lord*, and over that again is a *Crucifixion with Saint John and the Virgin*. In the side panels are represented Saint Ildefonso, Saint Francis, Saint James, and Saint Dominic, and lastly, along the base, is a representation of *Jesus disputing with the Doctors in the Temple*, flanked by the beautiful portraits of the Marshal Don Diego Caballero and his wife, Doña Leonora de Cabrera, the founders of the chapel.

This retable is considered to be one of the finest in the great basilica of Seville. Like so many others, it is raised on an architectural base, which is enclosed with iron railings in order to protect the officiating priest. The artistic merit of the work could not have been greater had it been entrusted to one of the best Italian artists of the period. In the background of the central subject is an architectural building of the classic order; the drawing is both correct and graceful, and the figures which are grouped amongst the columns of the portico are grandiose in style. The types are quite Italian, and the colouring is such as is usual, both in fresco and panel, at a period when artists had yet to learn to study nature in order to reproduce her subtleties. These pictures were executed about the year 1558 or 1559,¹ and must have been intended to

¹ See Gestoso, "Sevilla Monumental," vol. iii. p. 366.

rival some others by de Vargas, whom Campaña professed to surpass in the elegance and dignity of his figures as well as in the nobility of his types.

The Italian character of the painting in this altar-piece is more marked than it is in other important works by this artist, such as the retable of the high altar in the Church of Santa Ana of Triana, which arrested the attention by the beauty of the composition and the colouring, the latter being more brilliant than it was in the super-altar of the Mariscal Chapel. For this great retable he painted fifteen pictures illustrating *The Life of Saint Anne and the Virgin*, with an *Annunciation* which crowns the whole composition; *Saint George on Horseback* is the subject of the centre panel in the lower portion.

Pacheco tells us that Campaña left Seville for his own country soon after the completion of this important work, being disgusted because it did not excite sufficient admiration. If this were so, we must admit that jealousy rather than justice was in the ascendant, especially when we consider that his most inspired work, the *Descent from the Cross*, which formerly hung over the altar in the Chapel of Hernando de Jean, but is now in the beautiful sacristy of the Cathedral, was executed before this date.

The figures in this picture are all life-size, and are both dignified and expressive in character. The male Saints, mounted on ladders, are lowering the body of Christ from the Cross, the feet resting on the shoulder of Saint John; in the foreground the Marys survey

the scene, transfixed with grief. The Mother of Christ is almost fainting at the sight of the dead body of her Son.

In this work, Campaña shows himself the faithful pupil of his master Bernard van Orley, and the inheritor of the Flemish tradition; he casts away his acquired Italian manner and adopts instead that learned in his youth at Brussels. No doubt he then recalled to mind his master's *Descent from the Cross* now in the Hermitage Gallery at St. Petersburg, but he simplified the design considerably, and in so doing, increased the grandeur of the composition. Both in his drawing and in his colour we recognise what Pacheco called "that Flemish character which he could never quite abandon," and which is one of the greatest charms of this particular work. The chapel in which it was placed at first was destroyed by the French; it was afterwards taken to the royal palace, the Alcazar, from whence it was handed over to the Chapter of the Cathedral on January 17, 1814, who hung it in the appointed place.¹

Later on we shall refer to the religious cult which Murillo professed for this masterpiece.

Besides the works which we have already mentioned, there is a picture by this artist in the parish church of Santa Catalina, which represents *Jesus bound to the Pillar*; there is a large panel in San Isidro, *Saint Antonio Abad and Saint Paul the First Hermit*; there

¹ See the paper read by Señor Don Carlos Gimenez Placer, when he was received into the Academia Sevillana de Buenas Letras on December 18, 1887.



CAMPAÑA

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

(Cathedral, Seville)

are also eight panels in the retable of Our Lady of Peace in the Church of San Pedro, and there are two panels in that of San Juan de la Palma, representing *Christ Crucified*, attended by Saint John, the Virgin and Saint George. There is also a large picture attributed to him in the parish church of San Vicente which represents three cavaliers praying, with a monk standing behind them; another panel, setting forth a religious subject, is in the Church of San Roman.

The influence exercised by Pedro Campaña in Seville was, as we have seen, very great; we may talk of his Italian manner or of his Flemish origin, but we cannot deny the effect created by his work on the school. He was gifted with a vigorous imagination and a truly masterly execution.

Another foreigner who came to Seville, and who was influenced by the highest inspiration of the Italian Renaissance, was the Dutchman Hernando Sturmio, a native of Ziricea, a seaport of Holland which was famous on account of the resistance offered to the besieging Spaniards. Sturmio arrived in Seville in the middle of the sixteenth century; he was a contemporary of Pedro de Campaña, as we may gather from the fact that the master, together with Juan de Zamora,¹ valued his works in 1549. Sturmio is the painter of the great retable in the Chapel of the Evangelists (sometimes called the Chapel of the Santillanas) in the Cathedral. It is composed of nine panels the centre panel representing *The Mass of Saint*

¹ See Gestoso, "Diccionario de los Artifices," vol. ii. p. 20.

Gregory, with *The Resurrection* in the higher part, and *The Four Evangelists*, with Saints Justa and Rufina and others, along the base. In one of these panels is the signature of the painter, which runs : "Hernandus Sturmius Ciriescensis faciebat 1555."

All these panels were certainly painted in Seville. The finest is that in which the four Evangelists appear ; four figures which are conspicuous for the majesty and grandeur with which the painter has endowed them. They stand out against a luminous background and are seated in an attitude of profound meditation, engaged in writing the Gospels. Their attitudes and the foreshortening of their limbs recall to mind the figures of the Prophets in the Sistine Chapel, although the brilliant colour and the luminosity is far above the effect achieved by the Florentine Titan.

Sturmio was employed about this time to value some pictures by Antonio de Arfian and Antonio Ruiz, which proves that he was a recognised authority in artistic matters. No other works of his are left in Seville, neither are there any other facts known about his career, but the retable of the Evangelists is enough to warrant our considering him as an accomplished artist of great merit and originality.

Yet another foreigner, a native of Flanders who had been educated in Italy, exercised his art in Seville at this time ; his name was Francisco Fruter ; had he not died young, he would certainly have emulated the fame of his compatriot Campaña. Whilst Campaña was working in Seville, Fruter was executing the grand

triptych of *The Crucifixion* for the old Hospital de las Bubas. The figures are life-size; in the centre is Christ crucified, with the good and bad thief on either side. The great wings of the triptych are decorated with scenes representing *The Street of Mourning*, *The Virgin and Child*, under a canopy with heavy draperies, *The Descent from the Cross*, and *Saint Bernard kneeling*. This beautiful work has been placed in the Provincial Museum.¹

It is by means of this picture, and this picture alone, that we can judge of the merits of Fruter as an artist, because only the tradition remains of those works which Cean mentions. We do not know where to look for *The Adoration of the Magi*, *The Circumcision*, *The Presentation in the Temple*, and *The Two Evangelists*, which were formerly in the Convent of the Merced Calzada, or for *The Entombment of Christ*, which was in the Convent of the Nuns of Santa Maria de Gracia. Neither can we ascertain the whereabouts of a *Christ before Pilate* by the same painter, which Don Gaspar de Jovellanos acquired in Seville in the year 1778.

Fruter did not arrive at that perfection of colouring which distinguished the works of the preceding artists, but he was a painter who had great capabilities in the style of a purist who was affected by the Renaissance. He might fitly be spoken of as the Coxsie of Seville, on account of his refined classicism.

The native painters continued to acquire the Italian style from these foreign masters and it is hardly

¹ Nos. 36-38 and 39, in the Catalogue.

surprising that we should find a galaxy of illustrious Renascent painters in Seville; they were one and all absolutely subservient to the principles of Italian art, which appeared to them to have reached the highest possible attainment. This group of painters, who were united in their ideal, included Alonso Vazquez, Don Francisco Pacheco, the Cordovan ecclesiastic Pablo de Cespedes, the Portuguese Vasco Pereira, and the Italian fresco-painter Mateo Perez de Alexio, with others of less eminence.

Alonso Vazquez was a native of Ronda; he studied under Arfian in Seville. He was held in high esteem as an artist after he had executed the frescoes in the cloister of San Francisco together with Antonio Mohedano, who was as proficient in the art as he was himself. This was towards the close of the sixteenth century. The most important of those works which Cean Bermudez attributes to Vazquez are the fourteen great panels in the retable over the high altar in the Church of the Hopital General. We may also mention thirty-four small pictures in the retable of the altar of the Purisima in the Church of San Andres; they are earlier in date than those in the Hospital, which were completed in the year 1602. There is also a *Resurrection*, painted in 1550, in the Church of Santa Ana de Triana, two panels representing *The Assumption* in the Cathedral, dated 1593, and two pictures illustrating the *Life of San Ramon* which are in the Provincial Museum.

Judging by the important works which he accom-

plished, Alonso Vazquez must have been an eminent artist; we can also gauge his merits by studying the few which have come down to us. When studying his pictures in the Hospital, we may note that, besides the beauty of tone and colour peculiar to the artists of Seville, he excels in presenting dignified and majestic figures and in rendering the nude with a knowledge of anatomy, which we do not find exhibited by any other painter of his school.

Antonio Mohedano (1561-16—) worked with him. He was a native of Antequera who had studied in Cordova under Pablo de Cespedes, and he assisted Alonso Vazquez in the decoration of various cloisters. He also painted some pictures in the Archiepiscopal Palace by order of the Child Bishop of Guevara, who was, later on, when he occupied the See of Toledo, to be immortalised by El Greco. After this date we find the Bishop mentioned as a notable patron of art and artists. Mohedano was not only a painter, he was also a classical poet; he may be said to inaugurate the long list of cultured and literary artists who adorned the end of the sixteenth century in Seville. Pablo de Cespedes, his master Pacheco, the priest Roelas, Jauregui and some others may also be mentioned as being equally inspired by painting and letters.

The publicist Pedro de Espinosa, who was a friend of the artist and his fellow-countryman, included two sonnets by Mohedano in his "Flores de poetas illustres Españoles"; they are distinguished by a depth of meaning as well as by a mastery of the art of versifying.

At this time, as we have already said, we find strangers as well as native painters flocking to this centre of artistic activity; there was the Italian, Mateo Perez de Alexio, for instance, who showed his skill as a fresco-painter in 1584, when he executed the colossal *Saint Christopher* in the Cathedral, as well as Vasco Pereira, the Portuguese, who repainted the frescoes of Luis de Vargas and who worked on the celebrated tomb of Philip II., also executing other works in fresco with Mohedano and Vasquez, of which the memory alone remains.

The last examples of the miniaturist's art were given about this time by Andres Ramirez, an artist of great repute in Seville. He was paid 15,000 maravedis in 1555 by the Chapter of the Cathedral for some illuminations which he had executed in the choir books for the Festival of Saint Peter. He received other sums in 1558 for some illuminations in the choir books of the Church of the Holy Trinity.

All these artists and some others, of whom we shall speak presently, had an opportunity of displaying their talents in the decoration of the great monument which was erected in the Cathedral to celebrate the funeral rites of Philip II. From descriptions which we can consult we may infer that this erection took the form of an immense catafalque, consisting of three stories of different orders of architecture which reached almost as high as the roof of the church. It was composed of simulated marble and bronze with entablatures, inscriptions, statues and allegorical subjects in relief,

referring to the dead monarch and to the power of Spain. An architectural screen shut off the rest of the central nave from this catafalque.

When this great erection was completed, the Chapter agreed to celebrate the funeral rites on November 24, 1598. The service had just begun when a question of etiquette arose, which was debated with such violence by the representatives of the Inquisition and the Tribunal of Seville that, without respect of the occasion or the place, they broke out into cries and demonstrations; the tumult was so great that the interrupted service was finished in the Sacristy. The huge catafalque remained in the Cathedral whilst this question of etiquette was debated in the Royal Council; the point at issue being whether or no the President of the Tribunal had the right to have cloth placed on his seat. When the sentence was given, it was decreed that the Inquisition should pay for all the wax which had been consumed on the great day and that the President should be forbidden to place cloth on his seat. It was before this erection that Cervantes improvised the most celebrated of his sonnets, satirising the whole affair. He opens with these words:

“Vive Dios que me espanta esta grandeza
Y que diera un doblon por describilla . . .”¹

and concludes by informing us how the famous bully,

¹ By God! this grandeur impresses me immensely; I would give a broad doubloon to be able to describe it.

who really admired it and who challenged the world to deny its splendour :

“ Caló el chapeo, requirio la espada
Miró al soslayo fuese y no hubo nada !”¹

¹ He cocked his hat, he sought his trusty blade, he looked fiercely round, and, swaggering off, did nothing !

CHAPTER VI

THE PRECEPTORS

THE prosperity of Seville, so noticeable towards the close of the sixteenth century, was not only commercial. The city acquired riches on account of her direct communication with America, being the principal port for the merchandise from that country; but she was also distinguished by a literary, artistic and scientific culture such as has never returned again with the same force, although there has never been a lack of talent to sustain the glorious tradition.

The poetic development ran a parallel course to the artistic and even to the sculpturesque School of Seville; we find the illustrious names of de Rioja, de Jauregui and Arias Montana, side by side with those of the divine Herrera and of the most celebrated artists of the time. It is on this account, no doubt, that we find such picturesque phrasing in the poems and so many poetic ideas in the painter's compositions.

Some of these men appear to have been equally inspired by both arts and to have had equal facility in expressing their ideas with pen or pencil; this facility was so much admired that Pablo de Cespedes, the

Cordovan, was chiefly appreciated for his versatility when he came to Seville to display his great talent.

Pablo de Cespedes was a distinguished "beneficiado" of the Cathedral of Cordova; he was a learned man and an antiquary, who had passed some years of his youth in Italy because of his love for art, he being equally proficient in painting and sculpture. One day he prepared a surprise for the Romans, who awoke to find that he had modelled a head with which he had crowned a mutilated statue of Seneca which stood in one of the piazzas of the Eternal City.

Painting and sculpture were, however, not enough to satisfy the creative genius of de Cespedes; he was also an excellent poet and has left us the finest didactic poem on the subject of painting that is to be found in the artistic literature of Spain. The metre is distinguished by its grandeur and the sentiment by the nobility of its inspiration; for the sake of this epic, the painter has attained to all the honours of the Spanish Parnassus. The discourse on "The Comparison of Ancient and Modern Painting and Sculpture" was followed by another on "The Architecture of the Temple of Solomon"; both of these fall short of his highest literary achievement, the "Poem on Painting." Unfortunately only a fragment of this work remains, a matter of sixty-eight stanzas. They treat of the eulogy of Michelangelo,¹ whom he calls "the new Prometheus," of a description of a horse, and of other

¹ See the end of vol. v. of the "Diccionario" of Cean Bermudez, p. 268.

fragments, amongst which are the choicest gems of Spanish literature. The artist certainly deserves the title of a great teacher when we consider this poem.

Pablo de Cespedes was equally distinguished as a poet and as a sculptor of the most advanced Renaissance type ; proof of this fact is to be found in the Cathedral of Cordova, where we can see his *Last Supper*, a painting in rather a bad state of preservation, and his wood-carving of Saint Paul. He was summoned to Seville by the Chapter of the Cathedral in the capacity of a painter, his work being to assist in the decoration of the great Sala Capitular, which had just been completed. He appears to have enjoyed his stay in Seville for he bought a house there, which he frequently inhabited and in which he placed a collection of antiques and some rare books.

De Cespedes painted eight canvasses for the Sala Capitular in 1592, which are still in their place in the socles of the lower wall ; they represent allegories and have figures of women and children. There are four smaller paintings in medallions.¹ He painted two other large canvasses, *Saints Justa and Rufina* and *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, but the best work accomplished by him in Seville is the great panel *The Virgin of the Holy Well*, which hangs over the high altar in the Cathedral ; it is an excellent work which was given to the church by the Dean Lopez Cepero, a great collector

¹ On May 20, 1592, the Superintendent paid "to Pablo de Cespedes, for painting eight pictures for the new Chapter House, the sum of sixteen ducats of gold apiece."

of pictures in the nineteenth century, of whom we shall make frequent mention." The critics are not agreed as to the authenticity of this picture, but it has many of the artist's characteristics. But the man who is really representative of the spirit of teaching in Seville is Don Francisco Pacheco (1571-1654);¹ a man who was an enthusiast in art, but who desired above all things to regulate that art by the classical canons which he considered to be unsurpassable. As a youth he had studied in a school which was kept, with great credit, by a master of painting named Luis Fernandez, to whose studio flocked all the youths who aspired to artistic talent. He must have been a first-rate teacher since he turned out such creditable pupils as Pacheco, Herrera, and the Castillos, of whom we shall speak presently. There are no known works by this artist, but the pupils' proficiency speaks well for the master's talent. In this school the maxims of art were taught with a strong bias towards the Renaissance tenets, so much so that these became the goal of Pacheco's artistic career. He was confirmed in this faith by his literary and poetic friends, who considered that the Renaissance had presented a redeeming formula which had rescued art and letters from the barbarity of the Middle Ages.

An original sketch by Raphael, which Pacheco obtained—perhaps from one of the Spanish masters

¹ According to his baptismal register, Pacheco was a native of San Lucar de Barrameda. See "Pedro de Espinosa," by Rodriguez Morin, p. 110; also the "Catalogo Monumental de la Provincia de Cadiz," by Romero de Torres, p. 189.

who had brought it from Italy—acted as a sort of revelation to him and became his ideal of that classical purity of which he was so enamoured. From this time onwards Pacheco preferred correct drawing to all other achievements in art, and cultivated it even at the expense of colour, so much sought after by his contemporaries.

It is probable that the profession of a teacher was suggested to Pacheco by his uncle, the Canon, Don Francisco Pacheco, an excellent poet in the Horatian manner; he was assessor to the Town Council of Seville in all that concerned artistic matters. He took an active interest in the execution of the great shrine by Juan de Arfe, he composed classic verses in Latin for some decorative reliefs in the Cathedral, and he even wrote some couplets in honour of the great Saint Christopher by Perez de Alexio.

Francisco Pacheco the younger, learnt painting from the unambitious Luis Fernandez, a painter of *sargas*, yet he aspired to elevate his art to the highest level of the poetic Renaissance. While still young he began to collect notes concerning the art and the artists of classic times. In spite of the æsthetic culture to which he afterwards attained, he began his artistic career, about the year 1594, by painting banners and standards for the ships which were bound for the New World; afterwards he devoted his attention to gilding and colouring carved images, some of the most notable of these being those which he completed for his great friend the sculptor, Martinez Montañez. It does not

appear that he showed any sign of possessing ambition in art before the year 1600, then he was commissioned to paint six great pictures, illustrating the life of San Ramon, for the principal cloister of the Convent of the Merced—now a museum. Others by Alonso Vazques were executed with the same object.

Soon afterwards he decorated the ceiling of the Camarin, or principal reception-room of the palace called the Casa de Pilatos, which belonged to his great friend Don Fernando Enriquez de Ribera. The subjects chosen were taken from the legend of Dædalus and Icarus, and the commission appears to have given rise to a rivalry between Pacheco and the Cordovan, Pablo de Cespedes.

Being desirous of extending his knowledge of arts, Pacheco left Seville for Madrid; he was then able to study the paintings collected together in the Escorials of Madrid and Toledo. He set up an intimate friendship with Vicenzo Carducho while he was at Court, an artist who was much in sympathy with his ideals; in Toledo, he made the acquaintance of El Greco, whom he much admired. An account of all these events is given in his writings.

After his return to Seville, he started a school of painting in his own house. Many promising pupils passed through this studio, amongst others the greatest painter of all, the young Diego de Silva Velazquez, who was to achieve such universal renown.

Amongst the most important of Pacheco's paintings are the *San Ignacio de Loyola*, which he executed after

his death-mask for the College of San Hermenegildo, the *Last Judgment*, which is now in Paris, and other works for various churches in Seville.¹ But the greatest work which he achieved, the work in which he employed both his graphic and his literary talents, was his great "Book of Portraits." In this book Pacheco collected together portraits of the best-known men of the day, who were distinguished in arms, letters or art; he drew these portraits with great surety of hand and accompanied each one with a laudatory biographical notice. The completion of this book occupied Pacheco for about one-half of his life. It is a work of great interest, both on account of the facts given concerning the lives of the most illustrious men of the day, and of the excellence of the drawings, which are executed in so masterly a manner that we are almost inclined to suspect the hand of that most eminent and beloved pupil whom he eventually made his son-in-law. The house of Pacheco became in time a meeting-place for the most illustrious literary men of the day, and the artist conceived the idea of sketching his guests, a task that he began in the year 1599 and which he continued to the end of his days.

Pacheco designed an artistic frontispiece for his book, in which he wrote with his own hand :

¹ We can now attribute to Pacheco *Saint Fernando receiving the Keys of the City*, the *Conception*, with the portrait of Miguel del Cio, now in the Cathedral, the *Conception* in San Lorenzo, the panels of the retable of Saint John the Baptist in San Clemente, and nineteen pictures in the Provincial Museum. As to the authenticity of the great *Conception* in the altar of Cover, there are well-founded doubts

“A book of description of authentic portraits of illustrious and memorable men, by Francisco Pacheco, Seville, 1599.”

At the head of his gallery of portraits he placed that of King Philip II., who had died in the preceding year; after the king came the illustrious poet, Friar Luis de Granada, and other great personages. He also represented those who were less well known, but who, judging by the eulogiums he attached to their portraits, deserved a wider fame; he succeeded in accomplishing a hundred and seventy portraits, but unfortunately the greater number of them have been lost.

The book consists actually of fifty-six portraits, but there are in existence another seventeen drawings, including those of Velazquez, Lope de Vega, Domenico Theotocupoli and Francisco de Rioja.¹

It has been said that Pacheco gave his book to the Conde Duque de Olivares, but it appears more probable that, as Ortiz de Zuñiga declares: “At his death the book was lost, being divided up amongst various connoisseurs.”

The fragment which we now possess was preserved for a long time in some conventual library, according to the most likely accounts; for this reason neither Palomino nor Cean Bermudez even suspected its existence.

¹ Sr. Ascensio has made a careful photo-typographical reproduction of this book, which includes also an article entitled “Pacheco and his Works,” in which he gives a detailed account of all the vicissitudes through which the book has passed.

Doctor Don José Maria Asensio y Toledo was more fortunate. This man, who was very well known in Seville during the second half of the nineteenth century, and was much esteemed on account of his great knowledge and love of art, had the good fortune to track out and discover this fragment, which he acquired in 1864, afterwards publishing it, as he explains in detail, in a book which he wrote on the subject.

The portraits, as we have stated, are drawn in black and red chalk enclosed in artistic borders painted in sepia: they are busts, rather oblong in shape and are a fourth of life-size. Directly after each portrait comes the eulogy of the person represented, either in prose or in verse.

Besides these drawings, Pacheco executed about a hundred and fifty portraits in oil representing citizens of Seville. Amongst others is the presentment of the celebrated Nun-ensign, Doña Catalina de Erauso, a curious example of her sex, whose valiant deeds have become almost legendary. This portrait was executed by Pacheco when the lady passed through Seville; he has represented her in the dress of a soldier, just as she appears in the frontispiece of the biography which Don Joaquin Maria de Ferrer published in Paris in the year 1829.

Pacheco also painted miniatures, as we may note from the fact that he obtained eighty ducats for the deed which he illuminated for Don Pedro Lopez de Verastequi.

Although, as we have seen, Pacheco executed some

notable paintings, it may be said that he was considered chiefly by his contemporaries on account of his knowledge of artistic theory and his erudition; he was the first of the artists of Seville to place his pen at the service of his art. He produced a work in two volumes in which he had collected all the information that was then considered most useful for students of painting, and all the facts which he could get together relating to the great masters.

This work has been judged very harshly on account of its retrograde principles and its tending to impose too many limitations and restrictions on technique; it has been said to have exercised a bad rather than a good influence on art. But, even while admitting that in the evolution of Spanish art which was so soon to be accomplished—an evolution which was owing to the progress made in the direction of the observation of nature, and was to achieve its greatest triumph in this line—we must also acknowledge that there was, in the work of Pacheco, an elevation of sentiment which we can but admire. We must at any rate have some respect for the lofty spirit in which he accomplished his task; it may be that some day his work may be appreciated, or even applauded, although in many cases he errs in giving too rigorous precepts and useless counsel.

There is one important point to be noted. Pacheco has given us a great wealth of notices and allusions to the artists and their works, notices which are so exact that every critic, whether he will or no, must refer to

THE
GREAT
BRITAIN



41. Si alguno de los aventajados sujetos que se me ofrecieron, me obligava con justa razon a hazer del memoria copiosamente, era el famoso Luis de Vargas; por aver sido Luz de la Pintura, i padre dignissimo della, en esta Patria suya Sevilla, acudio el cielo ami desso, ofreciendome un'ecelen-
te

PACHECO
PORTRAIT OF LUIS DE VARGAS

the book in search of information. Again, the book would have its value for us if it were only for the great love which the author shows for his pupil and son-in-law, Velazquez.

Pacheco left Seville on various occasions to accompany his son-in-law on his journeys. He felt for Velazquez a most enthusiastic admiration, as we shall see when we consider the youth of the great genius.

During his sojourns in Madrid, Pacheco made use of his time to furnish the book which he was then writing with some useful notes; he also collected interesting portraits and biographies for the other book to which he was to consecrate the last years of his life. He lived to old age, for he did not die until the year 1654. The work and writings of Pacheco did not by any means find general recognition amongst his contemporaries. He was considered to be a painter of small capacity, his style was insipid and hard and his character fitted him rather to be an overseer of the Holy Office than a boon companion to his brother artists.¹

Pacheco was not a great painter; his efforts to narrow the outlook of art precluded him from any real eminence. But he was certainly a great *virtuoso* and an enthusiastic teacher who trained the genius of such illustrious pupils as Velasquez and Cano.

There was yet another essayist and writer on æsthetic ideas in Seville, Don Juan de Jauregui. His

¹ In 1616 Pacheco was named, together with Juan de Uceda Veedor of the Office of Painters for the Inquisition.

contemporaries were unable to decide whether he was more a poet or an artist; he was the intimate friend of all the literary men and artists of his day and was as much appreciated by the one as by the other.

It is a great pity that the portrait of Cervantes which he executed in Seville, the same that is mentioned by the writer in the prologue to his novels, has disappeared; if it were in existence, we should be able to study the features of the greatest genius known to Spanish literature. Cean Bermudez confesses that he had never seen a work by this painter, although he was so much praised as an artist both by Pacheco and Carducho.

Jauregui wrote a dialogue in verse between nature, painting, and sculpture, also a discourse in favour of painting. Both artists and writers took up the pen in these days to defend the privileges of art and to lessen the exactions levelled against the profession. The same difficulties had now arisen which had confronted El Greco in Castille; the Treasury impounded a tax on every work of art which was sold. The painters declared that the privileges of painting, which was a liberal art, were infringed by this proceeding and they demanded a royal decree freeing the artists from the payment of tribute in the exercise of their art. Gutierrez de Alcázar and Francisco Monales, whose works are unknown to us, obtained a power of attorney against Juan de Guisa in February 1642, obliging him to pay them seventeen golden ducats, on account of the royal decree which set them free from paying the tax.

The decision about this matter was followed in Seville by some separate writs concerning the rights of the Spanish painters, which we may read in the third paragraph of the third chapter of the second volume of Palomino's book, "The Museo Pictorico." He had a complete knowledge of his subjects and he here proves "that painting is enfranchised by divine right, and that painters may aspire to every class of preferment in these kingdoms."

Since that time the Spanish painters have not been forced to pay a tax in order to exercise their art.

CHAPTER VII

THE HARBINGERS OF REALISM

It may be said of Pacheco and Cespedes that their works were the last to be influenced by that wave of the classic Renaissance which had swept through Seville. The inspiration which had been manifested in Italy had arisen from the study of the antique; it was to be followed by one which was nourished by the direct observation of nature. This true Renaissance of art in modern life was reserved for the various schools of Spain to accomplish, for Italy had exhausted her forces by her own efforts to promote an artistic regeneration.

Meanwhile, El Greco declared in Toledo that Michelangelo was no painter. This dictum, pronounced by the great master of colour, who had dipped his brush in the Venetian tones and who was showing artists in Castille how many effects of the palette had remained unknown, had its echo not long after in the School of Seville. At first this was noticeable by a spontaneous movement, which was almost one of protest against the narrowness of the classic ideal; later, it was justified by the triumph of the native artists and by the tradition which had come down to them.

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Let us see how this result was obtained. At the outset of this movement, there appeared a veritable Titan who gave a high tone to art by his imaginative fire and his artistic talent and who was destined, by means of his great pupil Velazquez, to change for ever the character of the painting of his school and even of that of the whole of Spain. We refer to Francisco de Herrera (the Old) (1576-1656).

Herrera was a pupil of Luis Fernandez and he was, to quote Cean Bermudez, "the first painter who banished from Andalusia the weak technique which had marred the work of the Spanish artists and who adopted a new style which was to reflect the national genius." Pictorial technique owed to Herrera a new development in the School of Seville. Hitherto all the painters were, more or less, followers of that school which had been made manifest in the frescoes and panels of the Italian artists. But Herrera, by his spontaneous effort which was justified by the new and hitherto unknown effects he had obtained, showed that there were secrets of painting which could only be discovered by means of absolute knowledge and fidelity in imitating nature: he also proved that if the new manner of painting was not convincing when viewed from near by, it was only necessary to move back a few paces in order to obtain an effect of life-like reality which it would have been impossible to achieve following the old methods. Herrera accomplished this revolution in technique in Seville; he was aided only by his own inspiration and by the mastery of his tools

which he had acquired. The first paintings by this master which had the honour of being put in a public place were those on the retable over the high altar of the Parish Church of San Martin of Seville ; in them we can detect a certain want of experience and an effort to obtain effects which his, as yet, scanty knowledge of technique did not allow him to negotiate successfully. Nevertheless he reveals himself in this work as a painter of enterprise who attacks difficulties with unflinching courage and who marches on the direct road to his goal. The four pictures representing the *Life of Saint Martin* are well worth noting on account of the many beauties which distinguish them.

The ideal which the artist set before himself is grandiose and magnificent. Masses of light and of colour are there in audacious contrast ; the touch is so bold that at times it is almost rude and rugged. On the other hand, the canvasses which adorn the gallery in the Palace of San Telmo, which once belonged to the Duke of Montpensier, are remarkable for their general effect and for their astounding sense of tone. (Nos. 15 and 15A.) One of these represents a group of *Saint Augustine and other Bishops*, the other *Saint Jerome and other Fathers of the Church* ; both of these works vie with the great canvas in the Museum of San Hermenegildo in Seville, while the grouping of the figures and the massing of the light and shadow show a truly titanic power of imaginative genius and achievement. It was not, however, these qualities alone which rendered his paintings important, but the fact that all

his work was based on an accurate and profound knowledge of the human form. Herrera had assimilated all the greatness of the classic Renaissance. He had acquired a knowledge of anatomy, so necessary for the delineation of the nude, and he never feared or avoided introducing it into his work ; his figures, admirable in the painting of the flesh and in the anatomy of the body, the fore-shortening of the limbs and the attitudes adopted, show that he had thoroughly mastered the art of drawing. We may note all these qualities in his *Last Judgment*, which may still be seen in the Parish Church of San Bernardo ; it is a large canvas in which the vigour of the drawing and the admirable flesh-tints are worthy of the approbation of Michelangelo. In the upper portion of the picture we see the Eternal Judge, surrounded by the Apostles ; in the centre the figure of Saint Michael stands out alone as he separates the just from the unjust. The composition of this work, so clear, so expressive and so well balanced, is the model which was afterwards copied by the painters of the School of Seville, who have, as regards composition, excelled the artists of all the other schools in Spain.

Herrera's biographers declare that he drew with a cane reed and painted with a brush made of hog's bristles ; perhaps this was necessary in order to obtain the effects he required. Like Franz Hals, he was a painter of great force who wished to free the artists from the timidity of handling which had for so long marred their work.

Herrera also distinguished himself as a sculptor.

He is even said to have applied his ingenuity to moulding dies for forging money and that, in consequence of such illegal practice, he was prosecuted by the law. On one such occasion he took refuge in the Jesuits College of San Hermenegildo in Seville, where he painted the great picture for the high altar which is now in the Museum. When King Philip IV. was in Seville in the year 1624, his attention was arrested by this work to such an extent that he summoned the artist to his presence and forgave him for his past offence, saying: "What need of gold or silver has a man who possesses such talent? Go; you are free as long as you do not offend again."

The artist's peculiar genius was inspired, to a great extent, by his strong and vehement temperament. The age in which he lived and the constant tension of his mind made him intractable and passionate. His own children were unable to live with him. His eldest son, who was also a painter, stole his money and fled to Rome; his daughter became a nun; his pupils left him, terrified at the vehemence of his disposition.

When he was seventy-four years old, Herrera left Seville and established himself at the court, where he lived for some years in high repute, being no doubt protected by his pupil Velazquez, then at the zenith of his glorious career. While in Madrid, he painted *An Incident in the Life of San Ramon* in the Cloisters of the Merced, which is no longer in existence.

Herrera died in Madrid in 1656 and was buried in the Parish Church of San Gil. His merits must have

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been acknowledged to be very high, as we find the great Lope de Vega, when comparing him to Pacheco in his "Laurel de Apolo," using these words :

"Y como rayo de la misma esfera
Sea el planeta con que nazca Herrera
Que viniendo con el, y dentro de ella
Adonde Herrera es sol, Pacheco estrella."¹

Herrera was not a classic artist, neither was he altogether a realist, but he owed the inspiration of his work and the mastery which he had acquired in it to the direct study of nature. He is said to have made studies of fruit and still life in his studio, which had not been executed by any previous artist of the school ; from this fact we may infer that he had leanings towards the imitation of nature as a necessary method of acquiring the art of painting.

As a titanic innovator he opened up new avenues to the artist. He founded his theories on a sound knowledge of nature, giving them a new life, such as he would never have done had he followed those who were endeavouring to do the same by means of the Renaissance of an older manifestation of art. He was therefore one of the great conquerors in a new field of art who were to make the influence of Spain felt in the seventeenth century ; we can realise how fruitful his example was when we reflect that it was only through

¹ The planet under which Herrera was born was like a ray from the same sphere. Another painter came with him under the same auspices, for where Herrera was the sun Pacheco was the star.

his teaching that Velazquez accomplished his destiny. He numbered amongst his pupils his own son Francisco (the Boy), Velazquez, as we have already stated, and, as it appears, Valdes Leal; all these painters were impressionists and all were sent by Herrera to carry out an heroic struggle with nature. Thanks to his influence, all three attained a complete victory.

Another great innovator and revolutionary who distinguished himself in the School of Seville was the eminent licentiate Juan de las Roelas; better known as the Cleric Roelas (1558-1625). Born in Seville, the artist belonged to a distinguished family; his father, it is supposed, was Don Pedro de las Roelas, a general of the Navy, who died in 1566. His title of *licenciado* shows that, besides being ordained, he was a man of letters; he certainly divided his affections between art and literature for he made progress in the former from a very early age. Some of his youthful works deserve to be highly esteemed and appreciated. In the beginning, in those works which we are inclined to consider as having been executed in the sixteenth century, Roelas follows the fashion of classic sentiment which was then prevalent; these works offer a marked resemblance, as a general rule, to those of Pablo de Cespedes, but on other occasions they approach more nearly the style of Pacheco. He sometimes went so far as to copy the latter artist, as in the case of his *Conception*, which is now in the Academy of San Fernando in Madrid, and which is a replica of that attributed to Pacheco in the Museo in Seville. The same may be said of another

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Conception by this artist in the Alcazar of Seville and again of yet another in the Chapel of San Antonio in the Cathedral of that city.

The grandeur of the classic style, united to a brilliant colouring, was what attracted Roelas at this time, but he soon began to modify his ideal, owing to the faithful study of nature which he began to make. This study of nature occupied the minds of the painters of Seville almost exclusively at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when they were strongly influenced by the example of Herrera the Old. Roelas was under these complex influences when he painted his first great picture, *The Death of San Hermenegildo*, in the Hospital of the Cardinal in Seville, which some have attributed to Herrera, but others more definitively to his pupil.

the of way arrow

In this canvas we can note figures which recall to our minds those of the great imitator of naturalistic painting in Seville; there are others which, both in action and in repose, are portraits distinguished by a consummate realism, others again, especially those of the angels in the gloria, remind us, by the grandeur and the purity of the style adopted, of the most finished productions of the pencil of the Prebendary of Cordova. The most striking point in the whole picture is the atmospheric quality of the tones, which is superior to that of any of the models then held up for imitation and to which he was to owe much of his fame; another fine quality which Roelas shows in this canvas is his astounding talent for composition. To such a point of perfection does he carry his art of grouping figures and of

* It is by Alonso Vazquez -

harmonising the lines of his composition, that he probably surpasses the efforts of all the other painters of the school; he knew how to introduce into his pictures a greater number of personages and to group them more artistically than did any other artist of his day.

The picture of *San Hermenegildo* is divided into two portions. In the centre of the lower part we see the death of the Saint; a choir of angels receive his soul as he expires, and close to the princely martyr are the bishops who protect him, Saints Isidoro and Leandro. The composition is completed in the foreground by a portrait of Cardinal Cervantes, the founder of the Hospital, and in the middle distance by a figure which may represent the painter. In the upper portion is a "gloria" in which are quantities of angels playing on musical instruments; in the centre the figure of the Virgin stands out, as she prepares to receive the soul of the Saint.

The great picture is defaced by very coarse retouching, but even now we can perceive its real beauty. Facing it in the same church another great picture by this artist is placed; it represents *The Descent of the Holy Ghost* and is also much retouched.

Roelas was doubtless a great eclectic, but he had also his individual idiosyncrasies, which were to make themselves felt and by virtue of which he was to achieve renown. About this time he executed numerous works, many of which have been lost, which were commissioned by the wealthy religious Orders to decorate their monasteries and churches. Of this order were all the



ROELAS

THE DEATH OF ST. HERMENIJILDO

(Hospital, Seville)

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pictures for the Merced Calzada mentioned by Cean, the whereabouts of which is now quite unknown. Amongst these works one stood out pre-eminently; the subject was a religious allegory entitled *The Triumph of the Institution of the Order of the Merced*. In this work the Virgin was represented in the centre with the Christ Child in her arms; she was in the act of giving the scapulary to emperors, kings, monks and captives. On account of the types being so life-like and the faces so beautiful, this picture used to be known as the *Picture of the Heads* to indicate the excellence of the delineation. The beautiful and touching picture, *Saint Peter in Chains*, which is in the chapel of the church dedicated to that Saint, must have been painted about this time; the fine figure of the liberating angel stands out against the prison, giving an effect of light and shade which recalls the compositions of Rembrandt. About this date Roelas must have painted the impressive picture which hangs in what was formerly the Jesuits' Church, but is now that of the Literary University; in this work the *Holy Family* is represented in an allegorical manner. A group consisting of the Virgin, Saint Joseph, the Christ Child, with Saint Ignatius and Saint Jerome, stands under a gloria in which are represented beautiful angels, admirable both in attitude and in the foreshortening of their limbs, who play on musical instruments. Another work dating from this period is the *Saint Lucy*, "with a large retinue" according to Cean, which has now disappeared. Yet another picture which has been lost sight of is *The Beatitude*

in the Church of Saint John of the Palm. There were many others, all of which were fine in composition, of which, unfortunately, nothing but the memory remains.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century this fine artist was named Prebendary of the church of the village of Olivares, which was afterwards elevated to the rank of a collegiate church; and here he painted, in the year 1603, four magnificent canvasses in which he represented the *Life of the Virgin*. These works were commissioned by the treasurer of the college, the licentiate Alonso Martin Tenor, who left them to the church. They were afterwards removed, but have since been restored to the shrine for which they were intended.

Roelas was not content to live in retirement at Olivares, his artistic imagination and his consciousness of his great talents forbade him to condemn himself to such complete isolation. He was very anxious to see what notable things were being achieved in art and he appears, without any doubt, to have betaken himself to Italy about this date, where he must have feasted his eyes on all the marvels which were to be seen there. He then gave up his position as Prebendary for the sake of his artistic vocation, as we learn from Cean, who states that he had no share in the division of the tithes of the church from the year 1607 to that of 1624, when he resumed his duties.

It was not the purely Roman and classical art that delighted Roelas during his sojourn in Italy; he must certainly have gone to Venice, where the brilliant colouring adopted by that school made a deep

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impression on a mind which was already so well prepared for a complete assimilation.

There were many reasons why the School of Seville was destined to be the sister of the School of Venice; it was reserved for Roelas to confirm the existing bonds from a special artistic aspect and to consolidate the partnership between the two schools. The School of Seville, which was eminently a colourist school, was then developing that quality which most certainly belonged to her; and Seville, like Venice, was a maritime city which acquired a certain atmosphere on account of her navigable waters—an atmosphere which is only noticeable when traffic approaches a city by water. Moreover the sky of Seville is even more luminous and transparent than that which overhangs Venice; the sun shining on the buildings with a golden radiance reflects them in the waters of the broad river, just as they are reflected in the Venetian canals. The magnificence which was beginning to be shown in Seville in the adornment of her ceremonies, and the luxury which was being manifested in her private life, rivalled the most sumptuous ostentation of the City of the Adriatic; but the advantage now lay with Seville, which was beginning the great period of her prosperity because she possessed the most important harbour in Spain with regard to her dealings with the New World, whilst Venice, on the other hand, was declining from her former greatness as the Mediterranean ceased to be the ocean *par excellence* which controlled the destinies of the human race.

Roelas, always a colourist, perceived at once the exquisite tonality of the Venetians; studying their technique, he discovered that the most brilliant effects were obtained by the contrast of purple and gold with the transparent azure of sea and sky. He thought that if he could present the types of female beauty prevalent in Seville with this technical treatment, his native city need no longer envy the superior attainments of her rival. For all these reasons he gave his greatest attention to those sort of effects which were also characteristic of his own country. Tintoretto, Titian and Veronese all combined to influence the brilliancy of the colouring of Roelas; after his return to Seville, he handed on their richest tints and their most striking contrasts of light and shade to his school as an undying legacy. The truth of this statement can be verified by studying the works which he accomplished in the following years, beginning with the great *Saint James at the battle of Clavijo*, which is in the chapel of that Saint in the Cathedral. This work is worthy of the pencil of any of the great Venetians on account of the brilliant colouring; this is only matched by the greatness and originality of a supernatural imagination which silences any criticisms that may be offered by his enemies. According to certain documents which we have consulted, the *Piedad*, which is very badly restored and which hangs over the altar of the Augustias in the Cathedral of Seville, was also painted about this time. Roelas always had to cover very large spaces with his canvasses. Another of these

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represents the *Martyrdom of Saint Andrew*, in which he lavished all the acquired glories of his palette and made use of his Venetian studies to such an extent that he even dressed some of his models in costumes which might have been used by Bassano. This picture is one of the finest works of the School of Seville and it now ornaments the Provincial Museum (No. 89). It is remarkable for good composition, for the character of the figures, for excellence of drawing and for richness of colouring; once seen it will never be forgotten, and the more it is analysed the more it will be appreciated.

The Saint is represented at the moment of his martyrdom. He is raised up on a rugged cross; his venerable form is nude and is painted with great skill, giving an impression of age and nobility which inspire the spectator with feelings of respect. A group of soldiers on horseback are seen to the left; the character of the types and the expression of the faces as they gaze cruelly at the Saint, who raises his eyes to Heaven, are very remarkable. On high, a choir of beautiful angels, adult and children, painted as no other painter of the school had ever succeeded in representing them before, play on musical instruments and sing joyous canticles; on the earth, in the foreground, a group of executioners, who resemble those delineated by Bassano, but who are larger in their proportions, give great animation to the scene by reason of their picturesque and motley garbs. There are other accessory figures in the middle distance which succeed in giving great

interest and character to the scene; the composition is admirable and for its purely pictorial qualities can hardly be surpassed.

Notwithstanding the Venetian character of the whole painting, the individuality of Roelas made itself felt in this work; he shows his own mastery of technique by interpreting nature according to his own lights, and he manifests his acute and penetrating powers of observation by differentiating between the quality of one object and another. The flesh tints of the principal figure are painted with consummate realism, the effect of light shining on different surfaces is given with great exactitude, the distances are perfectly graduated and the whole scene is bathed in an atmosphere of golden light.

Roelas painted this great work for the Chapel of the Flemings in Seville, years before Rubens painted the same subject for the same Order in Madrid. It appears that Roelas finished his picture very quickly, after a long delay, which had been caused by those who had given him the commission wishing to lower the price; the painter, on the other hand, asked for it to be doubled, thus raising the sum to two thousand ducats. As was only natural, this new demand raised a dispute and it was at last agreed between both parties to pack up the picture and to send it to Flanders, where it was to be valued. This was accordingly done, and such was the admiration which the picture excited that the Flemish masters valued it at three thousand ducats, a sum which was eventually given to the artist, who refused



ROELAS

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. ANDREW

(Museum, Seville)

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to deduct anything from the valuation which had been made.¹

Soon after this event Roelas must have painted his best work, *The Translation of Saint Isidoro*, for the high altar of the church dedicated to that Saint ; some authorities consider that it was later in date, but there is no real authority for such a statement.

Isidoro, the learned Visigoth Archbishop of Seville, perceiving that his last hour has arrived, orders himself to be removed to his Metropolitan Church of San Vicente in order to die in this sacred place. Such is the pathetic scene represented in this great canvas.

The aged archbishop appears as the protagonist, he is kneeling on the ground, supported by one of his domestic chaplains, who shows him a crucifix ; another priest, wearing the sacred vestments and followed by one who raises aloft the Cross, by acolytes who bear the holy water and by sacristans with tapers and other requisites, administers the last Sacraments to the holy man. A compact mass of people fills the back of the church and witnesses the interesting ceremony ; to the left, in the middle distance, three figures, which appear to be portraits, are noticeable, one of them being probably that of the artist. The background represents the church, in the forefront of which we see the high altar. All this description refers to the lower part of the picture, the upper part is taken up with one of those luminous "glorias" peopled with

¹ As these ducats were of gold, we may calculate that the sum in question amounted to over £1200.

exquisite cherubim and seraphim which we have so often noticed in the compositions of Roelas. In this case Christ and the Virgin are also depicted surrounded with rays of light and accompanied by choirs of angels who play on various instruments and by some children who scatter flowers over the expiring body of Saint Isidoro.

This is the most finished work achieved by Roelas, in it he put on one side all foreign influence and was occupied only by a desire to interpret nature. He shows himself both spontaneous and original, at the same time he is a realist and a poet and it is certain that no more artistic work has been painted in Seville since that date. It stands, as it were, at the entrance of the golden era of the school; it is the pedestal on which was raised all the glory of the artists of the succeeding generations.

About this time Roelas, inspired by his success, determined to go to the Court, where he was justly confident of his powers to shine in his art. In 1616 he went to Madrid, where he was very well received; in the following year an appointment of painter to the King falling vacant, the Committee of Works and Forests proposed in the first place that it should be given to the "licentiate Juan de Roelas, who came from Seville a year ago, being desirous of receiving this charge; his father served your Majesty for many years. He is a virtuous man and a good painter."

After this followed a proposal to appoint Bartolomé Gonzalez or Felix Castelo, the decree being made by

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the King in a note written in the margin: "The appointment is to be given to Bartolomé Gonzalez."

The name of Roelas standing at the head of those who were suggested for the office shows that his great talents were recognised in Madrid; and although the King passed him over on that occasion, he showed a desire to conciliate him and gave him some royal commissions. When Philip IV. ascended the throne he appointed Roelas, probably at the suggestion of the Conde Duque of Olivares, to be a Canon of the Church of Olivares which had been raised to the rank of a collegiate church in the year 1624.

Being somewhat disappointed by his treatment at Court, Roelas departed to fulfil his new duties in the church in which he had formerly officiated as Prebendary. For this foundation he painted two more magnificent pictures, one representing *The Miracle of Our Lady of the Snow*, for the high altar, the other *The Birth of the Son of God*. He must have executed these works in a few months, for he died, according to the archives in the town of Olivares, in April of the following year, 1625.

We must admit that Roelas was a great genius; his memory has been respected in all times and should be held in the greatest honour. Cean says that "if the inhabitants of Seville had taken as much trouble to preserve the memory of their artists and to spread abroad their fame by means of engravings and woodcuts as the Italians had done for theirs, Roelas would have been as celebrated and as well known as he deserved to be."

To reinstate this great master is a worthy action, for by his splendid and prolific work he deserves to be placed in the highest rank of the artists of the school.

Zurbaran and Varela were pupils of this great master ; we shall speak of both of them in due course.

Juan del Castillo (1584-1649) was another master who initiated his pupils into the secrets of art, but who must be classed rather as a pedagogue than as a great painter.

Castillo was born in Seville and studied under that Luis Fernandez who had so many eminent pupils ; some authorities state that he was a pupil of Luis de Vargas, but that was clearly impossible as Cean proves that Vargas died some years before Castillo was born.

Castillo belonged to a family of painters, his brother Agustin followed the same profession. He removed to Cordova, where he was held in much estimation and where his son Antonio del Castillo y Saavedra was born, who may be considered the leader of that local school and with whom we shall come in contact from time to time. Juan del Castillo continued to execute important commissions in Seville, but he had not the talent of either Roelas or Herrera and he did not find sufficient scope for his energy. For this reason he lived for some time in Granada, where he made the acquaintance of Miguel Cano, a joiner, carver and sculptor of images for the retables, who was the father of Alonso

¹ Cean Bermudez, in his "Diccionario," gives a list of all his works, many of which are now lost. See the chapter dealing with the life of this great artist.

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Cano. The son, who was then quite a boy, accompanied Castillo to Seville when he returned to his native city to open an academy which was to have the honour of numbering amongst its scholars such notable men as Cano himself, Bartolomé Murillo, and Pedro de Moya.

Castillo varied his educational duties by executing some important works such as the pictures for the high altar of Mount Sion, those for the Church of San Juan of Aznalforache, and others for the Convents of Saint Augustin and the Regina Angelorum. Some of these works can be seen in the Provincial Museum, as, for example, *The Assumption of the Virgin with the Apostles*, a colossal picture, or a smaller *Nativity*, an *Annunciation* and a *Visitation* (Nos. 20, 63 and 70 in the Catalogue). These works are sufficiently well drawn and are fine in composition, but we cannot see any of those progressive qualities which then distinguished the painters of the school and which were so conspicuous in the technique of his rivals. We may rather note that the master, conscientiously applying recognised theories of art and accepting as gospel all that is traditional and consecrated by usage, was fearful of venturing forth on what might be a perilous adventure.

Castillo must have been a better teacher than he was an artist, to judge by the advanced and clever students who passed through his studio. No doubt that severe discipline, to which he had subjected himself in his youth, had restricted his great qualities and had led him to adopt the safest and surest methods.

It is interesting to note the attitude adopted by the painters of this school in the matter of submission to æsthetic ritual. In Castille and some other countries, painting owed its inspiration to the unbalanced mind of a fertile artist who followed those paths down which he was lured by his uncontrollable exaltation of spirit and the tension of his nerves. Such was the case with regard to the influence of El Greco in Toledo; in Seville, on the other hand, where the imagination of the artists would appear to be likely to conduct them to the wildest extravagance, the purity of line was never lost. Even if an overflowing imagination is patent in their compositions, in the form of the conception there is always noticeable the most perfect and healthy realism. We must not forget that such excellent draughtsmen as Vargas, Pacheco, Zurbaran, Roelas and Velazquez all learnt their art in Seville. The reason of the greater restraint of these artists may well be that the political state of Castille, so fatal to the glory of the nation, was very little felt in the Andalusian capital. The miseries in which Castille was plunged never cast their shadow over Seville, and art, the same as the other manifestations of municipal life, continued to flourish with great luxury and splendour.

Pacheco, Roelas and Castillo were laying the foundation of days of greater glory for the school; in their studios were to be found young men who were to make the history of art in the future—Velazquez, Zurbaran, Murillo, Cano and other distinguished artists. As the city acquired grandeur and riches, these painters were to

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immortalise her glory with the glamour of their great names and their imperishable works.

Castillo died in Cadiz in the year 1640. He had gone there to execute various commissions, and whilst in that city became very ill and died in great pain. He was only fifty-six years old. Another painter who may be mentioned now is one who has only recently been discovered by the researches of the distinguished Cordovan art critic, Señor Don Enrique Romero de Torres. This artist, Pablo Legot, whose works have hitherto been confounded with those of Agustin del Castillo, will take a high place in the history of the painting of his school. He was of Flemish origin but had been established in Seville about 1625; he worked in conjunction with Alonso Cano and was entrusted with the painting of many altar-pieces which were designed by other sculptors.

Legot often left Seville in order to work in the provincial churches and in those in Cadiz, afterwards returning to his duties in the capital; an interesting account of his life is given by Señor Romero in his study of this unknown painter, the authorities for which have been drawn from some very curious documents.¹ His style was firm and majestic; he drew freely from the life and, although he never achieved elegance in detail, he gave a certain grandeur to his compositions and made very finished studies of heads and drapery. We can see this in his *Saint Jerome* in the Cathedral of Seville,² and the *Apostles*, which he

¹ See "Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos", 1910.

² See Gestoso, "Catalogo de los Quadros de la Catedral de Sevilla.

executed in 1647 for the great hall of Cardinal Spinola's palace, must have been of the same character. He passed the last years of his life in Cadiz, where he died about the year 1670.¹

¹ See "Diccionario," by the Conde de la Viñaza, vol. ii. p. 330.

CHAPTER VIII

THE YOUTH OF VELAZQUEZ

ANYTHING that tends to throw light on the genius of Spanish painting is of such interest to the student that no apology is needed for devoting a special chapter to the early years of Velazquez—years in which he began to give evidence of those great capabilities which were to raise him, later on, to the highest pinnacle of art.

The artistic disposition of Velazquez was evident from his earliest childhood. All children have the pictorial instinct and very few are there who do not exercise it in their early years; but the attempts of those who have real artistic intuition are so interesting that they very soon arrest the attention of their elders, who thus discover their vocation for art.

This must have occurred in the case of the boy Diego de Silva Velazquez, who was born in Seville on June 6, 1599; he was the son of Don Juan Rodriquez de Silva and of his lawful wife Doña Geronima Velazquez, residents in the district of San Pedro, in which parish their son Diego was baptized on the date given above. He was named after his paternal grandfather, who had come to Seville from Oporto on account of political

dissensions which broke out when Portugal was incorporated with the Kingdom of Spain under Philip II. His family was recognised in Seville as belonging to the nobles and the *hijos-dalgos*, "according to the manner and custom of these kingdoms." Diego's father wished his son to adopt the army or the law as a profession, considering that in so doing he would be acting in conformance to the usual practice of those who were nobly born; but the young Velazquez was so decided in his desire to study art that he was obliged to seek a master to instruct him in the profession for which he showed such a predilection.

In those days there were three professional teachers in Seville who held open schools where the youths who wished to learn painting were admitted; there was Herrera the Old, Roelas, and Juan del Castillo, all of them pupils of Luis Fernandez, who has been mentioned already.

Roelas was then preparing to leave for Madrid, Juan del Castillo was still young; Diego's parents resolved to place their son under the guidance of Herrera, whose character had become harsh to such a degree that he tyrannised over his pupils in the most unbearable manner.

Velazquez had not long to endure the harshness of his master. When Pacheco returned to Seville after his first visit to Madrid, he also decided to open a school of painting, which Velazquez soon after entered, having explained to his father that it was impossible to remain with Herrera. He entered the studio in September

1611, that is to say, when he was but twelve years old ; his tuition under Herrera must therefore have been of short duration. But the impressionable youth understood perfectly the tremendous efficiency of the vigorous technique which that master had adopted ; he assimilated it so thoroughly that he never lost it and he owed the vigorous style which characterised his work all through his long artistic career to the early influence of Herrera. Although but a child, he understood instinctively the importance of the revolution in art which was being accomplished by Herrera ; full of enthusiasm, he accepted it and made those maxims the rule of his life. He was only with the master for a short time and he left him because he found him intolerable, but he must have owed him a debt of eternal gratitude, as he certainly owed his success in after life to the discipline and the originality of his first teacher.

Pacheco was a man of a very different character, but when the young Velazquez entered his brand new academy, probably as his first pupil, he had hardships to encounter, though of a different nature to those he had suffered before.

The elder Velazquez, in spite of his noble blood, bound his son as an apprentice to Pacheco, on the very hardest terms. When we consider the terms which Pacheco himself exacted, we must admit that a youth has been rarely enslaved more thoroughly by two strong wills acting in concert.

The entrance of Velazquez into the service of Pacheco was legalised by a deed, which, although it was the work

of a notary who inserted the usual clauses, is remarkable as containing the harshest and most oppressive conditions with regard to the obligations imposed on the apprentice; it practically enslaved him to his master, in whose favour his father gave up all his parental authority, practically delivering over his son to the harshest servitude. This contract was a regular form of penance for the boy about to become a painter; it constituted what was practically his desertion by his father, the Portuguese hidalgo, and it showed up the character of Pacheco in no pleasant colours. The terms of the contract, modernised as to language, run as follow :

“Let all who read this document know that I, Juan Rodriquez (de Silva), as lawful father and guardian of the person and goods of my son Diego Velazquez, aged twelve years, agree and consent to place him with you, Francisco Pacheco, to learn the art of painting . . . for a term of six full years . . . in order that, during all this period, my son may serve you in your house and in any way that you may order and command him to do . . . and you shall teach him your art without concealing anything . . . and during all this period you shall give him food and drink, clothes and shoes, a house and a bed in which to sleep be he well or ill . . . giving him, during the said time, a coat, breeches, a doublet and a short cloak, stockings and shoes, two shirts, a jacket and a hat . . . and if my son is of use to you or benefit, you shall profit; if he is a hindrance, you shall not suffer . . . and if he absents

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himself from your authority and your house, I will consider myself obliged to bring him back to you, from wherever he may be, and, for greater convenience, I give you the power to seek him yourself; and any judge before whom you bring him can take your own oath and declaration . . . and you, the said master, may not leave him under any pretext, or you will be fined five thousand maravedis. And I, Francisco Pacheco, agree and accept this contract in all its conditions and I receive as apprentice the said minor and will not fail in any point of this compact. . . ." The contract was drawn in Seville, September 17, 1611. The signatures of the contractors, the scribes and the witnesses followed.¹

The years of his youth which Velazquez passed in Pacheco's house must have been bitter enough. He went out only at such hours as the master permitted, he wore the dress he was given, he had many domestic duties to fulfil; with respect to art, he was obliged to cultivate the rigorous theories of the past, without one glimpse forward to the distant horizons of the art of the future. He had to submit to the criticism of a preceptor who looked to classicism as the one means by which the almost impregnable fortress of perfection in art could be stormed.

Notwithstanding these circumstances Velazquez kept to the revolutionary vigour of Herrera's style, not only in regard to his drawing, but also in regard to the

¹ The whole text of this document is printed in the author's "La Pintura en Madrid," p. 91.

study of nature which that master had initiated. Many and many a time must the young man have felt, in contradiction to the theories preached by the learned men, that there was, truly, a new field of art to discover ; as a sort of protest, almost obligatory in his case, against so much idealism which was already dead and so much classicism which was without life, he was forced to seek for vitality in nature, the eternal source of the renewal of existence. He found in the faithful imitation of nature an inexhaustible source of inspiration as to form and colour.

Velazquez had certainly good cause to protest against his surroundings, against the mythology of the erudite and the classicism of his master, but no doubt he owed many of his good qualities to Pacheco. If he had within him a consuming fire, it was Pacheco who disciplined and regulated its force and who gave to his genius that balance which enabled him to use it to the best advantage. He never allowed him to deviate from the severity of his drawing and the balance and the proportion of his figures, which we admire so much, were probably due to this early discipline.

Notwithstanding their different points of view, Pacheco admired the talent of his pupil. Although he saw that he practised precepts which were very different from those that he himself preached, he recognised that the young artist possessed a wonderful talent for art, and perhaps he even, at times, made him doubt the efficacy of his own doctrines.

Velazquez decided in favour of making direct studies

from nature. When he was going to paint he collected together fruit and various objects for that purpose, in order that he might in this way appreciate the tones and the play of light. In this way he executed his *Bodegones*,¹ following the example of his first master, Herrera, works which attracted the attention of all. The substance of the various fruits, the effect of reality obtained were admired in the first instance by Pacheco himself in "The Art of Painting," in which he so often mentions his pupil. "What should we say about the still-life studies?" he asks. "It is clear that if they are painted as my son-in-law painted them (achieving such success that he left others far behind), they are worthy of great commendation. With these studies and with the portraits of which we have spoken, he soon achieved a true copy of nature, converting to his own methods the minds of many others who were influenced by these examples."

The genius of Velazquez was made manifest in these studies, which he executed with absolute confidence and surety. It appeared to him to be the only way to accomplish his object, and when he was reproached with drawing back from the highest ideals, he replied: "I would rather be the first in these rough studies than the second in those delicacies." The phrase was worthy of a Cæsar of art.

Velazquez had also an opportunity of devoting himself to the study of the human form, in which he was destined to excel, because of the "Book of

¹ Paintings of still-life.

Portraits" which Pacheco began about this time. We have already suggested that the pupil must have assisted his master in this work and we know, on the authority of Pacheco, that he was making studies of heads "in charcoal and silver-point on blue paper and in other styles," also in oil, "for which purpose he had a country boy for an apprentice who acted as model, adopting various attitudes, now crying, now laughing, which gave him not the slightest difficulty." In this way Velazquez obtained a thorough knowledge of the contour of the human head, the difficult modelling and *ensemble* of which has never been so well understood by any other artist.

Endowed with an independent and original character, Velazquez went on developing his genius and preserving his own opinions, which all trended towards the definition of the new art. His intransigence and his spirited protest against every method that was not that of experimenting in the domain of nature, placed him at the head of the painters of his day; like a new Bacon in the realms of art, he owed his progress in the profession to which he had devoted himself, to experimental philosophy.

Another young painter, Alonso Cano, who was admitted to Pacheco's academy about the same time as Velazquez, became his beloved companion and fellow-student. He was about the same age as himself and he had great artistic talent. Less intransigent than Velazquez, he assimilated the doctrines of his master so far as to accept the canons of beauty imposed by

the classic artists of the Renaissance; for this reason he never adopted the purely realistic style of Velazquez, striving always after the ideal which he declared to be quite compatible with the study of nature. Perhaps it was on this account that he adopted a very definite æsthetic ideal; perhaps also, it was necessary to infuse all possible life into the new art before Velazquez fixed on it the final seal of triumphant realism.

Velazquez protested, through the medium of his work, against the classicism which was a regular cult in the gilded cage in which he found himself imprisoned; but as it often happens in life in the end, he found in this prison a consolation for all his misfortunes.

Pacheco had a daughter who was about the same age as the pupil whom he had admitted into his house; the constant intercourse, the recognition of the many merits of the young Diego by all, perhaps even the sittings for her portrait which the painter's daughter consented to give to the pupil, ended in the young couple falling in love with each other. Pacheco gave his consent willingly as he himself states: "After five years of education and tutelage I united him in marriage with my daughter, being moved to this course by reason of his integrity, good conduct and high character and by the promise of his great and original talent." This event took place in the year 1618, when Velazquez was not yet twenty years old; it was celebrated in the Parish Church of San Miguel on April 23, the Presbyter Doctor Acosta, the poet Roelas, and Father Pavon being witnesses as well as

various other people. His parents, who were still alive, do not appear to have opposed the match, which really completed the surrender of their son which they had made in favour of Pacheco. The union was one of perfect happiness, in which there was never a shadow of domestic dissension, and Doña Juana Pacheco died a week after her husband drew his last breath. Only two children, who were both born in Seville, were the fruit of this union.

In the following year, 1619, the young artist executed a picture which must have been a great undertaking and in which we can already perceive an evidence of some of his excellent qualities as a painter. This work is *The Adoration of the Magi*, now in the Prado Museum (No. 1054) in which he evidently made use of his wife and his first-born daughter as models for the Virgin and Child. Such is the firmness of the drawing, the purity of the tints in spite of their hardness, and the assurance of the execution, that it is easy enough to foresee the great future of this young man of twenty years old.

This was not the first subject picture painted by Velazquez. Palomino speaks of two previous works, one of which was the *Tablero de Mesa*, a table on which are cooking utensils, which are under the charge of a boy who holds a jar in his hands. He has "a brazier on his head, and being dressed in a rustic costume presents a ridiculous and amusing picture. In the other picture a poorly dressed boy counts money on a table, on which are also fish and vegetables; a dog



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THE WATER-CARRIER

(In the possession of the Duke of Wellington)

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watches the fish and other objects. It is signed with his name." We may note that in Palomino's time, the signature was already somewhat effaced. Another work, which was a figure composition but was still only in the character of a study, is the *Watercarrier of Seville* (nicknamed *The Corsican*). It is a well-balanced composition and the tonality is good; as a study of nature it is admirably realised, and the characteristics of the type are so excellent that it has always been considered to be the happiest effort of the great painter's youth. This picture appears in the catalogues of the royal collections in Madrid, from whence it must have been removed by the artist. It was recovered by Wellington from the baggage-waggons of King Joseph Buonaparte when he was flying from Spain after the battle of Vitoria and was afterwards given to him by Fernando VII. It is now at Apsley House, in the possession of the Duke of Wellington.

About this time, Velazquez executed other genre pictures, such as *Two Young Men Dining*, also at Apsley House, and *The Breakfast*, in which the same boys appear eating in company with an old man, which is now in the Hermitage Gallery at St. Petersburg. Next in date comes the *Old Woman Frying Eggs*, which is in Sir Francis Cook's collection at Richmond.

Before his marriage Velazquez also executed some pictures with religious subjects, which all belong to his early years; probably his efforts in this direction convinced him that the subject did not suit his special talent.

The first of these canvasses, judging by the style, is *The Virgin giving the Chasuble to San Ildefonso*, which we found, some years ago, in the Archiepiscopal Palace of Seville. All the critics who have since examined this work have given it, without hesitation, to the period of the youth of Velazquez; although it is very hard as to the light and shade and the types are very common, there is a purity of tone and a firmness of handling which persuade us that it is truly the work of a youth who is still inexperienced but who is yet a conscientious artist.

For all these reasons we must consider this picture as being executed before the year 1619, when Velazquez painted *The Adoration of the Magi*, now in the Prado Gallery, a picture which is of considerable use in determining the date of others painted since its execution.

Amongst the religious pictures painted during this period we find two which were believed to be lost but which have most fortunately come to light recently. Cean speaks of them as being in the Church of the Carmen Calzada in Seville; one of them is a *Conception*, the other *Saint John the Evangelist writing the Apocalypse*. There is no doubt that two pictures reproduced in the "Portfolio of the Arundel Club of London,"¹ which belong to Mr. Laurie Frere, are these very pictures. They were bought in Seville in 1809, from the collection of Señor Lopez Cepero, and have since remained hidden even from the industry of the

¹ Published in 1909.

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painter's biographers, who believed them to be lost. We are happy to see them appear so opportunely in the pages of the Portfolio. *The Conception* is evidently a work of Velazquez's youth. A certain desire to idealise the Virgin makes him give her something approaching a celestial cast of countenance, although he preserves the real features of the model with great fidelity; we may note that he is more skilful in drawing and more of a colourist than he appears in any previous work.

The *Saint John the Evangelist* is considered to be the finest work executed by him in Seville. The character of the head is common and very unsuitable to the type of intellectuality which distinguished the author of the Apocalypse of whom some of the masters of the Renaissance school, already referred to, have left such grand presentments. Nevertheless Velazquez succeeded in giving a certain grandeur of appearance to his model, and the draperies, as well as the hands and feet, are executed with a perfection which shows us that he was gradually approaching to the heights which he was destined to scale.

The handling was more delicate than that which had distinguished his earlier works; the figure is surrounded by an atmosphere which makes it appear rounder and more in relief. The *Saint Peter* in the collection of Señor Beruete, resembles this work in the attitude of the figure and the arrangement of the drapery, but it appears to be earlier in date.

This feeling of the value of atmosphere and this

isolation of the central figure is very striking in two works, *Jesus in the House of Martha and Mary*, now in the National Gallery of London, and *The Pilgrims of Emmaus*. In the former the aerial perspective appears to be an anticipation of that in *The Spinners*; the latter, painted on a long shaped canvas which he often affected, seems to close the series of the artist's youthful efforts executed whilst at Seville.

There are in existence various portraits which are generally recognised to be by his hand and which the critics agree were executed about this time. Portrait painting was the form of art in which Velazquez principally delighted. He had made a very serious study of the human head and by this means he had acquired sufficient confidence in his powers to warrant his placing his highest hopes in his future achievements as a portrait painter.

Besides helping his father-in-law in his "Book of Portraits," an undertaking in which he took much interest and which certainly stimulated his efforts in that direction, it was only natural that Velazquez should paint, with special care, the portrait of his wife Juana Pacheco, which we can see to-day in the Prado Gallery (No. 1086). To this period also belongs the *Portrait of an Unknown*, also in the Prado (No. 1103) which represents a man in a great white collar. Perhaps this portrait was one of those executed in Seville to gain surety of hand and to acquire fame enough to warrant an audacious scheme which he had in view. This was no less than a plan of journeying to the Court

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with the sole intention of painting the portrait of King Philip IV., who was then just beginning his reign.

Velazquez was supported in this resolution by Pacheco, who had every confidence in his training and his capacity. He left Seville in April 1622, accompanied only by his servant Juan de Pareja, and leaving behind him his wife and his two children; his father-in-law, who much regretted that he could not go with him, had provided him with letters of introduction to various friends and fellow-countrymen who were employed at Court.

The first visit of the young painter was to the house of Don Juan de Fonseca y Figueroa, who held the office of royal chaplain to the new monarch; he was a brother of the Marques de Orellana, who was also a great lover of the arts. Velazquez was specially charged by his father-in-law's circle of friends to paint the portrait of the poet, Don Luis de Gongora y Argote, who was then beginning to be held in admiration as the most eminent poet in society. But his chief anxiety, in view of the principal object of his journey, was to propitiate that famous son of Seville, the Conde Duque de Olivares; he who was just then beginning to dominate the Councils of the King and was disposed, from his lofty pinnacle, to look down with favour on his fellow-citizens.

Once in Madrid, Velazquez was most kindly treated by the Fonsecaas and his talent was admired by the Conde Duque; he painted Gongora's portrait, and

what is more—this point is now quite clear¹—those of the King and of Olivares. The former was not from life but from memory and from the use of indirect means; he was therefore obliged to return to Seville without having accomplished his object and without having had the opportunity to do so. He left, however, examples of his skill at Court, which were destined to have their effect and to lead the way to his ultimate good fortune.

Velazquez returned to Seville after having widened his knowledge of art by the contemplation of the masterpieces in the Escorial and in the royal palaces and galleries; he was not destined to stay there long, although no doubt he thought at the time that his hopes were blighted for ever.

In the spring of the following year, 1623, when he least expected a summons, Velazquez received a letter from Fonseca enclosing an order from the Conde Duque de Olivares, in which he was commanded to repair at once to the Court in order to paint the King's portrait. Fifty ducats were also enclosed to defray the expenses of the journey.

There is no need to say how the news was received in Pacheco's house. The paintings which Velazquez had left at Court had done their work; his merit was recognised and he was commanded to paint that portrait of the King which had for so long been the object of his desires and which was to be the foundation of his fame and his fortune.

¹ See Señor Mélida's essay, "A Receipt of Velazquez," Madrid, 1906.

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Pacheco was now unwilling to let his son-in-law go to Madrid alone; he wanted to be a witness to his triumphs and he accompanied him on his journey, returning to Court two years after his first visit there.

The two painters arrived in Madrid, where they were received by Fonseca; that same evening Velazquez was allowed to see the King, being placed behind a curtain in the royal palace. Fonseca was now anxious to show the Court some evidence of the skill of his protégé; he therefore allowed him to paint his own portrait, he being so well known to all that it was considered to be a good test. When it was satisfactorily accomplished, Fonseca arranged with a son of the Conde de Peñaranda to present it to the King. Every one present was filled with admiration when it was shown to the Court one evening and the King determined to have his portrait painted at once by this admirable artist.

The King was unable to sit to the painter before the month of August, but when the critical moment came, Velazquez executed the portrait with great ease and precision and with the assurance which his long practice had given him. We can see the result in the study of the head of the King in the Prado Gallery (No. 1071), in which he succeeds in delineating the character of the monarch so admirably, and in a manner which shows his knowledge of anatomy and phrenology so completely, that it might serve as a model for an ethnologist.

The triumph of Velazquez was complete. He was commanded by the King, through the Conde Duque, to transfer his home and his family to Madrid, and he was

given the sole right of painting the King's portrait, the other portrait painters being dismissed. Pacheco tells us all these facts, with great enthusiasm, in his "Art of Painting" (p. 136).

The same summer Velazquez executed his first full-length portrait of the King (Prado Gallery, No. 1070). The pose is rather different from that which was at first adopted; it has been proved that the lower part was afterwards altered, the position of the legs being changed. On October 6 of that same year, Velazquez entered the King's service, being received as the King's painter; "in order that he may provide himself with what is necessary to his profession, he is given twenty ducats a month as salary," besides being paid for the works which he executed. In this manner Velazquez began his career—that career which was to lead him to the highest pinnacles of art, and in which his achievements were to be universally recognised. Here we must leave him, but we may note before doing so that although he acquired and assimilated the characteristics of the School of Madrid, he still retained the impressions he had received in Seville. He succeeded in this way in forming a school of Spanish painting, using the word in the widest and most compendious signification of the term.

The Prado Gallery is the chief sanctuary where repose the specimens of his insuperable genius and there the enthusiastic may admire the products of his marvellous pencil.

There is an idea that he may have returned to

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Seville when Philip IV. made his famous progress through Andalusia in 1624; he passed through Seville on this journey and it is very likely that the artist may have been included amongst his suite, especially as some incident in this eventful journey appears to have been sketched by him.¹

After this occasion, there is no probability that he ever returned to his native city. Constantly attached to the Court, he left in Madrid those immortal works in which are to be found so much of the spirit and the precepts which characterised the art of Seville.

¹ See a sketch of the Cathedral of Granada, which is signed by him and is in the section of drawings in the National Library of Madrid.

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT MASTERS

ALONSO CANO

WITH these antecedents, the painting of the School of Seville now developed so rapidly that it soon reached its zenith, and may be considered as one of the most important that has never existed.

This apogee of art coincided, in the history of Seville, with the period of her greatest prosperity and importance. Called by her destinies to be one of the cities which profited most by the discoveries and conquests of the Spanish nation—more even than Madrid, the seat of government—she was also more inclined to luxury by reason of her manners and customs, her geographical position and the open-hearted nature of her inhabitants.

The artistic development of Seville reached a culminating point at this period; it was influenced not only by political circumstances but, very strongly, by the scenery amongst which it was evolved.

A brilliant sun which illumines all objects with an almost excessive radiance, a translucent sky of intense azure, flecked with rosy clouds, a broad and navigable

river with luxuriant banks covered with trees and flowers, arable land which is vivid green in the winter and golden with ears of grain in the summer, a wide horizon which sets the city in a spacious margin—such are the intensely vital elements of nature which surround Seville and which certainly conduce to a corresponding exaltation of the spirit.

The native artists, who were sensitive to all this natural beauty, were inspired by it to give a splendid form to their artistic vision, thus harmonising that vision to surrounding nature. Being richly endowed with imagination, feeling, and artistic ability, they gave a note of lyric sentiment to their compositions, a psychological interest to the faces they depicted and a sympathetic character to their conceptions.

When the school was at the zenith of its glory, the artists showed that they had formed a very high ideal, for they demonstrated, by their works, that they had a double conception of art. They endeavoured to show that the body, as it were, of art was only to be portrayed by the most faithful interpretation of the actual, by the absolute copy of nature; at the same time they maintained that the artist should strive to interpret the soul of art by setting forth the most elevated sentiments in their works. Only in this way could they call forth the enthusiasm and the admiration of the world.

Such is the character which the great masters began to impress on the school at the time of its supremacy. First on the list of those masters we must consider

Alonso Cano, born in Granada in 1601,¹ the son of that Miguel Cano with whom Juan del Castillo made friends in Granada, as has been already stated.

Cano must have been for some time under the tuition of a master of painting in Seville, but we soon find him in Pacheco's academy, where he was a fellow-student of Velazquez; he studied painting under Pacheco and, at the same time, sculpture under Martinez Montanez, thus following the profession of a carver of images which had been that of his father in Granada. This double artistic education must be noted, for, although it is not the first time that such a course was adopted by an artist, it yet occurred at a time when the study of painting demanded special devotion to the exclusion of all else and when the separation of the arts was just beginning to be accomplished.

Alonso Cano was always more a sculptor than a painter, although he spent much time studying painting and has left us some notable works; he never soared as high as did the other painters, but, in the end, he made astonishing progress. More of a draughtsman than a colourist, his drawings are always very correct; in the simple compositions which have come down to us we may notice that there is always something sculpturesque and that he does not succeed, as others do, in conveying to us a suggestion of life and an effect of colour. His works are composed with a strong sense of alto-relievo.

¹ See some curious documents in a work by August L. Mayer "Der Racionero Alonso Cano und die Kunst von Granada."

The first commissions executed by Cano in Seville were carvings for the retables of San Alberto and the Monastery of Santa Paula; he showed in them the results of his early classic training, both under the immediate direction of his master and the studies which he had himself made of the antique sculpture which was then in Seville. These antiques were to be found principally in the collections which were gathered together in the house of the Duke of Alcalá (the Casa de Pilatos); many of them came from neighbouring Italy, some of them had been found in the country round about Seville: they exercised considerable influence over the artists of that day.

The Church of San Alberto has passed through such vicissitudes that it is only by chance that a group of Saint Anne and the Virgin, which is of great artistic beauty, has escaped destruction. The retables of the two Saints John—the Baptist and the Evangelist—remain intact in the Church of Santa Paula; they stand for us now as a record of the celebrated disagreement which took place, in the artist's time, between the religious Orders of Seville. Those who preferred the Baptist placed his retable on the right side, those who affected the Evangelist, wished to give his altar the precedence. It was finally agreed that the two retables should be placed opposite to one another, so that neither Saint would feel aggrieved. The nuns of Santa Paula must have cultivated the Baptist for they placed the Precursor in the more honourable position.

The retables and the statues are models of good

taste and excellent examples of the art of the day. We must notice what a fine line is here in the composition, how rich the ornamentation, how beautiful the painting and gilding and how harmonious and decorative the effect of the whole. These retables are fine examples of that style which, later on, became characteristic of the works of Alonso Cano ; they were destined to have a striking influence on Spanish architecture.

Being desirous of executing some paintings, Cano entered into partnership with Don Sebastian de Lianos y Valdes, a well-known painter at that time in Seville. He must have possessed an amiable disposition, for his biographers record that he was the only one of Herrera's pupils who could endure his harsh temper. Even so he could not tolerate the peculiarities of Cano, which were so unbearable that he ended by challenging his companion. Cano, who was a skilful swordsman, had the misfortune to wound his adversary in the hand, and was in consequence placed under arrest. We shall meet Don Sebastian again in the course of this history and always in a prominent position.

This duel occurred just before King Philip IV. made that progress through Seville of which we have already made mention ; Cano hastened to place himself under the protection of the Conde Duque of Olivares, was attached to the Court and went to Madrid in the King's train. Here, thanks to his talents, which were already recognised, he obtained the direction of some building operations in the Alcazar. He undertook this work in 1638 and was afterwards appointed to the post of

drawing master to Prince Balthasar Carlos, the first-born son of Philip IV.

His early friendship with Velazquez, contracted when they were fellow-students in Pacheco's academy, was of much use to Cano at this period; it is even probable that if Velazquez accompanied the King in his progress through Andalusia, as we have before suggested, he may have been the confidant of the unfortunate artist or even the means by which he was saved from his awkward position. The friendship between these two artists always remained intimate and unchanged; Cano owed his safety to Velazquez on more than one occasion when fate, or his unbalanced nature, had led him into difficulties.

Cano's eventful history is not connected with that of the School of Seville after this date. He passed his unhappy existence at the Court and afterwards in Granada. He was compelled to leave the former because the violent death of his wife was imputed to him, apparently without any reason; it appears to be more likely that she received the penalty of her levity at the hands of a lover. In Granada he was appointed to the ecclesiastical post of Prebendary of the Cathedral, but he performed his duties in so irregular a manner that he was only allowed to retain it on account of some influential friends at Court, who finally obtained his ordination as a deacon, almost in spite of himself. He wore his clerical robes in a slovenly manner, as we can see by the great portrait which Velazquez painted of him in his old age, in the act of modelling a bust of

Philip IV. (No. 4081, Prado Gallery). Cano returned to Madrid on one occasion in order to arrange his affairs, and while there was one of those who supported the pretensions of Velazquez to be a Knight of Santiago, an honour for which he had a great desire. Velazquez repaid him for his kindness by immortalising him in one of his greatest works.

Alonso Cano never forgot Seville. At the height of his reputation, when he was in the full possession of his faculties, he presented a picture to the Cathedral which must call forth universal admiration. This beautiful work—*The Virgin and Child*—occupies the principal recess in the dedicatory chapel, which is situated in a transept of the Cathedral near the gate of the Courtyard of the Oranges.

Cano had already treated the same subject in one of the canvasses which adorn the Chapel of the Buen Consejo in the great Church of San Isidoro in Madrid; but on this occasion he rose to a far higher conception of beauty and he executed a work which is stupendous not because of its size, but on account of the concentrated knowledge of art which it reveals.

There could be no simpler composition representing the Virgin holding the Child in her arms; but when we consider the feminine beauty of the Virgin's features, the impasto of the colouring, the grandeur of the drapery, the tenderness and softness of the Child, and the delicacy of the detail, we must admit that once seen it will never be forgotten. It must be considered as one of the most precious gems that adorn the School of Seville.



CANO
VIRGIN AND CHILD
(Cathedral, Seville)

This admirable work was not executed in Seville, but in Malaga, during one of the painter's visits to that city. It was commissioned by the Musical Precentor Don Andres Cascante, who gave it to the Cathedral of Seville; the Chapter, wishing to give it a place of honour, hung it in the ancient Chapel of the Corona Domini. The retable in which it is placed was executed for the purpose by Jeronimo Franco, an official connected with the fabric of the Cathedral. The picture is probably one of the last and most highly finished works which that great master executed. No lover of art should leave Seville without having admired this marvel of the brush.

Alonso Cano left few other specimens of his art in Seville, his works being found principally in Madrid, Granada, and Malaga; they always hold their own when compared with the most notable works of other painters.

Cano possessed an artistic temperament of the highest order. He was proficient in all the graphic arts and was therefore capable of comparing them to each other and noting their different qualities. On this account his opinion on the various arts had much value; it will be remembered that he wrote on this subject and that he gave the palm to painting, which he considered superior to all other forms of art and, as it were, a compendium of them all, explaining in luminous phrases its complexity and its many difficulties. To one of his pupils, who could not understand that he undertook sculpture in order to rest from the labour of

painting, he said: "Are you unaware that it is harder to give form and relief to a substance which has neither than to give form to that which has already relief?" With this sentiment we may leave our artist, whose contributions to the art of Seville are now accomplished.¹

ZURBARAN

Although Zurbaran was not born in Seville and although his style of painting was not specially characteristic of the School, he certainly figures in the first rank of the masters who adorned it and he obtained in it a renown as great as that of the most illustrious of his day. He was decidedly influenced by the conditions of life in which he worked.

Zurbaran was born in Fuentes de Cantos (province of Badajoz), according to his baptismal register, which can be seen in the church of this village (No. 70; November 7, 1598). His parents, Luis Zurbaran and Ysabel Marquez, were modest working people whose last idea was that their son should not wish to adopt their profession, but should show a marked desire to study art. Perhaps this tendency may be explained when we remember that he married the daughter of the divine Morales, whom he had known since his childhood, and that the remembrance of the fame of her father, who

¹ Besides those works which we have mentioned, there are now in Seville *Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist* in the Church of the University, and the *Souls in Purgatory* in the Provincial Museum. The whereabouts of those mentioned by Cean as being in existence in his time is now unknown.

was still living when he was a boy, may have been responsible for this early vocation.

The biographers of Zurbaran introduce him to us in Seville as one of the most promising pupils of Roelas, as no doubt he was, judging by some of his works ; but we can prove that, before he studied with Roelas, he learnt the rudiments of painting from a certain unknown and obscure painter of Seville, who must have been his first master.

An esteemed friend of the writer's possesses a curious contract of apprenticeship which he found amongst the archives of Seville, which proves this fact ; it is impossible to do more than allude to a discovery made by another, but we hope that he will fulfil his promise and give this interesting document to the world with as little delay as possible.

No doubt Zurbaran had got beyond the instruction of his first master when he entered the studio of Roelas, who was then, no doubt, the most accomplished painter in Seville. Being endowed with a very strong character of his own, he did not become a copyist and continuer of his master's style, but rather, on the contrary, was inclined to become his opposite. Zurbaran embraced reality rather in a partial than in an absolute manner ; he was so much more a draughtsman than a colourist that he never attempted any of the colour schemes used by his master. His evolution was more towards the perfection of details than towards the proper understanding of the whole effect. His history may be told, as it were, by contraries and, owing to these conditions, his style is peculiarly interesting.

His first known work bears the date 1616, that is to say, when he was barely eighteen years old; the subject is *The Conception*, which is represented in the sky, while a choir of child angels stand on the earth and sing canticles in honour of the Virgin. The Virgin herself is represented as a girl of about seven years old; the little angels, who are all nude, are strongly reminiscent of Della Robbia.

We can observe in this picture that the artist, who was still so young, was also inexperienced; it is extraordinarily interesting on account of his extreme youth. The signature and date leave no doubt as to the authenticity of the work.

A little later, he executed the pictures which are now in the Prado, for the Carthusian Convent of Santa Maria de las Cuevas, in the environs of the city; one of these represents *The titular Virgin sheltering various Nuns under her Mantle*, a work in which we may notice the influence of the classic movement; another, *Saint Hugo surprising the Monks when eating Meat*; and, the most important of the three, a picture which appears to belong to a later date, *Saint Bruno before Pope Urban II.*, a scene of complete repose. These three pictures were all in the sacristy, according to Cean; there was also, in the same convent, a *Holy Family* and a *Child with the Thorn*, a subject which he repeated several times.

The two former of these pictures must belong to the youth of the artist, a conclusion to which we are brought

¹ "Catalogue of the Exhibition of Works by Zurbaran, in Madrid, 1901," No. 31.



by the slight execution and by the tendency towards classicism, but in the *Saint Bruno*, the technique is so advanced that it might be placed at a much later date. With these pictures, Zurbaran inaugurated the series of conventual works which he was to execute; he painted such faithful portraits of the monks of his day that he is generally recognised as the most characteristic painter of Spanish asceticism.

The canvasses for the retable of Saint Peter in the Cathedral appear to be the earliest commissions executed by Zurbaran; they were painted for the Marques de Malagon in 1625. We can see in them his fine draughtsmanship and his skill in representing character, two qualities which were his to a very high degree. These magnificent works were worthy of the church to which they were dedicated.

Zurbaran combined a great decorative talent with a powerful vigour of execution which never deserted him; his figures produced an imposing effect when framed in the severe retables which he always affected. It may be said of him that his art was Doric in its simplicity. This simple but dignified retable contains nine canvasses, the tenth, which represented the *Eternal Father* and which occupied the upper part of the altar-piece, having disappeared. These pictures laid the foundation of his reputation as a great painter.¹

¹ The subjects of the pictures are: Saint Peter in his pontifical vestments, in the centre; the Conception in the second division; four passages in the life of Saint Peter in the side wings; and three others with the same motive along the base.

After this first success, Zurbaran was commissioned to decorate the new cloisters of a monastery of monks of the Order of Mercy. Two of these are now in the Prado Gallery (Nos. 1120 and 1121); they are remarkable for correct drawing, but are not conspicuous in effect, although we may observe that he is already making a study of those white draperies in which he excelled later on. Whether or no these paintings were completely successful, it was either through these monks or others belonging to the same order that the painter received an expression of homage which must have been very gratifying to him. It appears that he intended to leave Seville in order to carry on his profession in his own country, Estremadura, being probably influenced by family reasons; he was already married at that date to his wife Doña Beatriz de Morales. When he came from Llerena to Seville, in order to paint pictures for the Order of Mercy, Don Rodrigo Suarez, a member of the Municipal Council of Seville, made a suggestion to the Council to the effect that the artist should be informed "how much the City desired and wished him to be a member of the State," and that he should be asked to take up his residence there, the City promising to care for his interests, protect him and help him as much could be.

When Alonso Cano, who was then living in Seville, heard of this proposal, he sent a petition to the Council to demand, in obedience to the regulations, that Zurbaran should pass an examination as to his proficiency. To these two petitions Zurbaran added a third,

in which he pleaded that there was no obligation for an examination, he having been approved of by the Chief Officer of Justice in Seville. The end of this curious case does not appear, but we learn that the Chief Justice summoned the principal painters to debate the question before him.¹

Zurbaran had no need to pass an examination in order to prove his merit. In the works which he executed soon after he was definitely established in Seville, the four pictures representing the *Life of Saint Buenaventura*, he showed that he was an admirable draughtsman and that he would need no better proof of his talent than these works afforded. In them the construction and the realism and the sincere interpretation of nature rivalled those works which were then² being executed in Madrid by the great copyist of nature and might even have been mistaken for them. Velazquez did not reach a higher level, either in style or in artistic conception, before the period when he painted *Los Borrachos*.³

These four pictures have been separated. *The Visit of Saint Thomas to Saint Buenaventura* is in Berlin; the most notable of them, *Saint Buenaventura presiding over a Chapter of Minorites* and *The Funeral of the Saints*, which are really beautiful, are both in the Louvre, where we can admire the characteristic heads of the theologians; the fourth, *Saint Buenaventura inspired by an Angel to declare the Election of the Pope*, is in the

¹ Gestoso, "Diccionario de los Artífices," vol. ii. p. 124.

² 1629.

³ *The Topers*.

Dresden Gallery and is no less fine than its companions. They were painted when Zurbaran had arrived at the zenith of his vigorous talent; although he made yet further progress and had not yet said his last word, he did not always convey the same sense of artistic strength, neither was his execution always so free from excess.

The famous picture in the Royal Gallery, *The Nativity*, which has been attributed to the painter of realism by some and to the great Estremenian by others, must have been painted about this date, when his work most nearly resembled that of Velazquez. The question of authorship has been finally decided in favour of Zurbaran, because the tonality, the study of white drapery and other characteristic details, suggest his severe technique rather than the more liquid painting of Velazquez, which was remarkable even in his harder early manner. *The Nativity* is, moreover, not the work of transition of any artist, but rather the most definite manifestation of his genius.

The document on which the attribution to Velazquez was founded, was no more than an entry in an inventory of the furniture and works of art belonging to the Conde del Aguila, who possessed the picture in 1784; the attribution being given by the public scrivener who made out the list. The Count's successor sold the picture, through the agency of Mr. Taylor, to King Louis Philippe; when his collections were sold it was acquired by the Royal Gallery.

About 1630 Zurbaran painted the *Ecstasy of the*

beatified Alonso Rodriguez which is now in the Academy of San Fernando, a composition founded on those of Roelas with a gloria in the upper part which distinctly recalls the works of that master. It was in the representation of glorias that Zurbaran remained, for a long time, faithful to the idea of Roelas, peopling them with nude child-angels or with adult angels in drapery, giving them all possible etheriality and much animation, but failing in that grace which is so remarkable in the works of his master.

Zurbaran was the painter of quiet; he loved to portray immovable figures engaged in meditation or absorbed in deep thought; his talent did not lay in expressing the grace of movement or the action of ethereal beings. His angels scarcely move their wings.

As we are speaking of the picture in the Academy of San Fernando, we may take the opportunity of protesting against the attribution to Zurbaran of some portraits of monks of the Order of Mercy which are in that gallery. None of those represented ever could have seen Zurbaran, neither could he have painted their portraits. They appear to us, after a detailed examination, to be excellent portraits by Carducho.

Zurbaran acquired so much skill by painting these fine works that he was enabled, at this time, to accomplish a masterpiece. This great picture was designed for the retable over the high altar in the Church of the College of Saint Thomas; the subject chosen was the apotheosis of the great Christian philosopher, whom he placed in a gloria by the side of the four great doctors

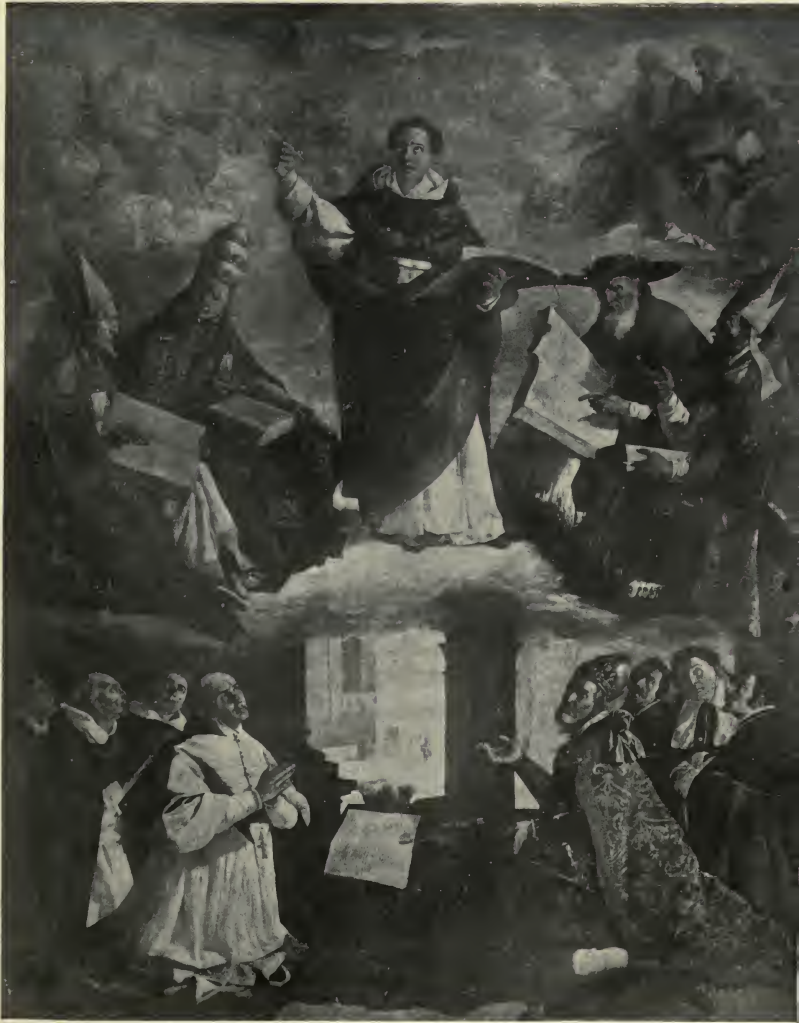
of the Church, Saint Clement, Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, and Saint Ambrose.

It is stated in a manuscript of Loaisa that the Prebendary Don Agustin Abreu Nuñez de Escobar served as a model for the figure of the Saint; if that were so, he was certainly admirably suited to represent him. In the lower portion of the picture, which closely follows the tradition of Roelas, we see the Founder of the College, the Archbishop Don Diego Deza with his household; opposite to them the Emperor Charles V. kneels before a *prie-Dieu* attended by cavaliers and monks. On the *prie-Dieu* is a great parchment which represents the deed of the Foundation on which is visible the signature of the artist and the date, 1631. The lower part of the picture closely resembles *The Translation of Saint Hermenejildo* by Roelas; there could not be more similarity than exists between the portraits of Cardinal Cervantes and that of the Archbishop, Don Diego.

This great canvas is considered the *chef-d'œuvre* of the artist and has a just claim to be so estimated; it is really an extraordinary work. Marvellously strong, both in drawing and in colour, in the grandeur and characteristics of the types it is almost superhuman; the draperies and accessories are studies of exactitude and realism. We may notice that the dresses and cloaks represented are of great richness and give evidence of the superlative industrial and artistic production of that time.

The picture excited the cupidity of Marshal Sout,

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ZURBARAN
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
(Museum, Seville)

who transported it to France; it was luckily one of those that eventually returned to Spain. All the details of this incident are written on a piece of paper which is affixed to the back of the canvas, on which we read: "This picture was looted from the College of the Dos Colegiales during the French invasion on February 1, 1810. The French then placed it in the royal palace of this city. When they fled from Spain, they took it to Paris, from whence it was afterwards brought to Madrid, where it remained until 1818, when it was restored to the College by Don Fernando VII. and was placed over the altar on January 26, 1819, the very Reverend Father M. Fr. Juan Ramon Muriel being Rector."

In 1821, the College was closed and the picture was placed in the Cathedral, being taken from the collegiate church by means of a hole which was made in the wall in order to avoid rolling up the canvas. Not long after this, the picture was restored to its original position, the paper which we have just transcribed being then placed on the back; it is written in the handwriting of the Rector Fray Juan De Zara. Lastly it was moved to the Provincial Museum, where it dominates one of the galleries and where it can be seen to better advantage than it could be in any other place.

Zurbaran never again executed a work so vast or so deep in feeling; he seems to have drained the resources of his art in this great effort, after which he did not make any further progress. It almost appears as if

he had exhausted his forces in this colossal effort and never afterwards recovered from the fatigue of his exertions. We have, after this date, very interesting studies, such as the *Monk in Prayer* of the National Gallery, the *Beatified Enrique Suzon* in the Gallery in Seville, the *San Francisco* belonging to Señor Beruete, and other notable works; but his work after this date was inclined to be coarse and the technique deteriorated, which is all the more incomprehensible as we are speaking of incontestably authentic works. The paintings in the Carthusian Convent at Jerez are conceived in a lofty spirit, but not so much so as was the case with the *Saint Thomas*; they were begun in 1633, being destined for an Order for which he had executed much work. The most important of these are perhaps *The Annunciation*, *The Adoration of the Magi*, and *The Circumcision*; they were at one time in the Gallery of San Telmo in Seville and are now, according to information received, in the Château de Rantau, in the collection of the Comtesse de Paris. Cean mentions others, in some of which his pupils must have aided him; some of these are in the Gallery of Cadiz.

Velazquez, who was always on most intimate terms with his fellow-citizens, the painters of Seville, must have been acquainted with Zurbaran's work when he obtained for him the title of Painter to the King about the year 1638, to judge by an inscription on one of the pictures in the convent at Jerez: "Fran de Zurbaran philipii regis pictor, faciebat — anno 1638." It is possible that this honour was obtained because of the



VELAZQUEZ OR ZURBARAN (?)

THE NATIVITY

(National Gallery)

paintings with which he decorated a ship, which was called the *Sacred King Don Fernando*; she was built in the dockyards of Seville in the year 1638 and was sent to Madrid for the use of King Philip IV. This monarch used to sail about the great lake in the Buen Retiro, endeavouring to create the illusion that he was cruising on the high seas.¹

This period of Zurbaran's life was one of great activity and was made memorable by many events. In 1639, he received, on the recommendation of Velazquez, a commission to send over eleven craftsmen, skilled in the art of colouring and gilding, to the Court from Seville; they were required to assist in the decoration of the great saloon in the Alcazar of Madrid, about which Zurbaran kept up a correspondence with the Marques de las Torres and with the architect, Don Juan B. Crescencio. It was also about this time that he journeyed to the monastery of Guadalupe in order to arrange about the position which was to be occupied by his paintings in the celebrated sacristy which was then only just beginning to appear above the foundations. He also had to approve of the whole architectural plan of this famous building. In 1639, he signed the principal canvasses which he executed in Guadalupe, and finally, in this year died Doña Beatriz de Morales, who appears to have been his first wife, there being every reason to suppose that he married again.

¹ Señor Gestoso has written an essay on the subject of this ship, in which we find mention of Francisco Zurbaran receiving 914 reales "for some painting on the same ship."

These paintings in Guadalupe are considered to be amongst the finest that he executed, and although they cannot compete with those he had already painted in Seville and although he was probably assisted in so large a work by his pupils, they may certainly be classed as being the most characteristic examples of his second manner. This second style is not so personal or so interesting as his first, but is rather suitable to a commercial undertaking. Thirteen pictures are attributed to Zurbaran in Guadalupe, in which town the Schools of Madrid and Seville are represented; the latter by Zurbaran and the former by Carducho Caxes and Blas de Brado. The chief examples of Zurbaran's skill, are *Jesus Christ witnessing the self-inflicted Flagellations of P. Salmeron*, the portrait of *Don Gonzolo de Illescus*, and the *Mass celebrated by P. Cabañuelas*. A complete list of these works is made in a book which treats of the subject.¹ It is sufficient, in the present instance, to indicate their existence as the work of this artist; they were not executed in Seville and have no connection with the history of the school.

From this time onwards Zurbaran himself has less connection with the School of Seville than he had in former years; during a whole decade we scarcely find a trace of his work. What was this already highly esteemed artist doing during this time? It is a question which his biographers have not yet solved and we have not sufficient data to enable us to fill up this long hiatus.

¹ See "El Monasterio de Guadalupe y los cuadros de Zurbaran," by Don Elias Tormo y Monso, 1906.

THE
MONT
PENSIERE



ZURBARAN
THE NATIVITY

(Collection of the Duke of the Montpensiere)

Some writers have suggested that, after the manner of other painters of his day, he got into trouble on account of some spilled blood and took refuge in conventual life; in that case he might have carried his affection to the Order, for which he had worked so long, to such a length that he might have sought a refuge with them.

However this may have been, it seems impossible that his pencil can have been idle so long. It is more probable that authentic works of his, which do not bear a date, were executed during this time and that they continued to augment his fame all over the world. There is no doubt that he must have undertaken that arduous task for a painter, a representation of the Crucifixion, some time during these years, as there is no record of his having achieved it previously. He must then have realised the great difficulties of the undertaking, both as regards the drawing and the power of expression, but he overcame them victoriously and has left us several great *Crucifixions*, in which the correctness of the anatomy and the modelling induced Cean to say that "they resembled sculpture." Besides this sculpturesque effect, they are remarkable for the expression of acute grief in the countenance which befits the most tragic moment of the Passion of Christ.

The Crucifixion in the Gallery of Seville is imposing in effect. Never has the most bitter death been expressed on a human countenance with greater power; the contrast between the agonised face and the serenity of the motionless body—a serenity to which Zurbaran was always inclined—is strongly marked and we may

note that the Sudarium falls over the body as if that body were already dead.

One of the most inspired works of this date is the *Beatified Enrique Suzon*, stamping the anagram of Christ on his own flesh; in this work he succeeds in expressing in the most admirable manner the impassiveness of pain suffered during the divine sacrifice and the mystic expression, so Indian in type, which characterises the Saint. It is now in the Gallery of Seville. In 1650 Zurbaran was summoned by Velazquez to Court, where he was ordered to decorate one of the balconies of the Palace of the Buen Retiro with paintings of a mythological subject—*The Labours of Hercules*. This was so contrary to his natural inspiration that he only executed four pictures, and these four with very little success. Having returned to Seville he reappears in Madrid in 1658, where he made a declaration in the trials of the celebrated process in which Velazquez sought to obtain the dress of a Knight of Santiago. Zurbaran had been living then at the Court “for several weeks” and he remained there until his death. Whilst in Madrid he executed four pictures, all of which were excellent and careful in technique; no doubt his talent received a stimulus by the great works which were then being produced by the School of Madrid.

If Zurbaran had progressed as far as did Velazquez in the comprehension of realism as a whole, no doubt he would have achieved as much renown, for never was the dawn of talent bolder or stronger; but his execution became less liquid and he became more attentive to the



ZURBARAN

ST. ANSELM

(Museum, Cadiz)



ZURBARAN
THE BLESSED ENRIQUE SUZON
(*Museum, Seville*)

local colour of each object and took less notice of the effect as a whole. That broad synthetic outlook, which gave to his colleague, the painter of Seville, the sceptre of Spanish painting, was not his. The subjects of his pictures, moreover, were not of interest to the world; they treated of cloistral concentration, of scholastic philosophy: he was bent rather on philosophic abstraction than on observation of nature. This disposition had its effect on his art, and on the ecclesiastical character of his compositions; his drawing was always firm and true; but his intonation and his perception of the rhythm of colour were not good. His women were rather robust than sweet or attractive and their costumes were rich rather than charming.

Zurbaran's own countenance has something of the hardness and dryness of his style of painting, as we may remark when we observe his authentic portrait in the Brunswick Gallery. As a painter of the School of Seville, however, we must place him in a prominent position.

CHAPTER X

MURILLO

THE emulation of all the artists gathered together in Seville had the natural result of causing great progress to be made in the painting of the school. All the physical and spiritual influences which had formed these artists were now concentrated on the evolution of a humble apprentice who was destined to endow the painting of Seville with its finest productions. This youth was gifted with extraordinary powers of observation and perception; he was destined to rise above all other painters by means of his real genius, to become the chief of his school, to see his name exalted above that of any of his rivals and to produce the most original and sublime works of any of his contemporaries in Seville.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo was a youth whose poverty had compelled him to become an apprentice rather than a pupil to Juan del Castillo, in whose studio he was employed in the most mechanical handiwork which is necessary to the painter's art. He was born on the last day of the year 1617, or, according to some authorities, on the first day of the succeeding

year; although this discrepancy of opinion is of no importance, it is as well to mention it here. His baptismal certificate is dated January 1, 1618, and in it he is mentioned as the son of Gaspar Esteban and of his wife Maria Perez, who ought to be named Perez Murillo or Murillo y Perez, as her sister was called Murillo. This sister, the painter's aunt, afterwards took the place of his mother and gave him the name of Murillo, which was also that of his great-grandmother.¹

The youth of Bartolomé cannot have been very eventful. His parents were humble folk who lived in a modest house in the Calle de las Tiendas, near the great Monastery of San Pablo, round about which Murillo must have played when a child; the house in which he lived must have resembled those described by Cervantes in his *Novelas ejemplares*, rather than the great mansions in the neighbourhood.

Murillo became an orphan when he was ten years old, and was adopted by his uncle, the surgeon Juan Agustin Lagares, the husband of Ana Murillo; when his uncle discovered that he had artistic aspirations, he took the boy to the studio of Juan del Castillo when he was only twelve years old.

This studio was then "the school which was most frequented by those who desired to learn painting," according to Palomino, and Murillo met there various youths who were destined, in after days, to arrive at considerable eminence. Amongst others we may

¹ See Cean Bermudez, "Carta a un amigo sobre el gusto de la escuela Sevillana."

mention Antonio del Castillo, who afterwards founded a school in Cordova, Alonso Cano, and Pedro de Moya; there were also many who were less notable as artists, and amongst these, no doubt, was numbered the humble apprentice Murillo, who appears, following the most reliable data, to have remained there eight years studying the difficult art of painting.

Murillo evidently made great progress during these years, being helped by his talent for observation and his power of applying himself to his work; he would no doubt have remained where he was, oppressed rather than helped by his master, if Castillo had not gone to Cadiz in 1639, as we stated before when speaking of that master. Murillo was now left in Seville to follow his own inspiration; he was evidently supporting himself at this date as there is no mention now of the uncle and aunt who adopted him when he became an orphan.

In order to gain a livelihood, the young man adopted the most mechanical and commercial means of doing so that was open to an artist in Seville; this was to execute, with the greatest haste and the least possible skill, those pictures which were then called battle-pieces, because they were carried to America by the ships and were there sold at a profit as banners.

These pictures were always devotional and generally very badly painted and wholly without merit, but a certain facility of the brush was a necessary quality for an artist to possess and a certain expertness was required in order to make them even tolerable; as no

work is ever quite profitless, it is probable that Murillo acquired a mastery over his tools that stood him in good stead later on. All we know is that his cargoes of pictures sold well in America and that he received many orders from the captains of the merchantmen, which he executed as if he had been employed in any other trade.

It happened about this time that his fellow-student, Pedro de Moya, appeared in Seville. Moya had left the studio in order to become a soldier, and having enlisted in one of the battalions which were destined for Flanders, went to that country and was able to admire the marvellous paintings produced by the various Dutch masters, which had become so famous in the world of art. Here he admired especially the works of Rubens and Van Dyck, the latter painter exciting his admiration by the elegance of his figures and the beauty of his colouring. To such a length did his enthusiasm carry him that he went to London in search of Van Dyck, intending to become his pupil and to learn from that wandering artist the secret of his exquisite art. His luck, however, deserted him, for Van Dyck died six months after he arrived in London, and he was so distressed at this sad event that he had no desire to remain there and left in order to embark for Spain, arriving at Seville in the same year, 1641.

Whilst in Seville, Moya had an opportunity of showing the painters of that school the progress which he had made since studying the art of the great Flemish portrait-painter; this demonstration attracted great

attention, especially as Moya was able to exhibit a painting by this master, who was previously unknown in Seville. Murillo was immensely impressed by the delicacy of the work, and he was most anxious to undertake a long journey himself, in order to study the purely European manifestation of art just then concentrated on oil-painting. The modern development of this medium was of much higher quality and of much greater effect than the earlier efforts in the same direction.

Moya remained for a short time only in Seville, whence he departed to his birthplace, Granada, where he was very successful in his profession. Short as the time was, his influence was strongly felt by Murillo. He determined to travel, in order to study the art of painting, if only as far as the Court, where the finest examples of that art were then to be seen.

Having worked hard at his pictures for the American market, and having collected together what money he had, he started for Madrid, no doubt accomplishing the journey in the most uncomfortable manner, but certainly filled with that enthusiasm and admiration of the beautiful which is only felt by youths who are upheld by high hopes.

Murillo was only twenty-five years old when he made this journey in the year 1643, and his youth enabled him to support the arduous journey without damage to his health, although it was a far rougher experience than if he had embarked at Seville for Italy or Flanders. His object in going to the Court was to seek his friend

Diego de Velazquez, who was then enjoying the advantage of some very influential friendships; it is pleasant to learn that Velazquez received his fellow-townsmen with great kindness, lodged him in his own house and obtained permission for him to study the treasures of art which then belonged to the crown of Spain.

Murillo arrived at Court at an opportune moment for the object which he had in view; moreover he was enabled to be an eye-witness of some very remarkable events which occurred during his stay in the capital. One of these was the fall of the powerful favourite, the Conde Duque de Olivares, an event which made Velazquez fear lest he should lose the appointment at Court which had been obtained by his favour. Philip IV., however, recognised the merits of his painter and did not withdraw his protection.

In the following year, 1644, the King made his progress through Andalusia, taking Velazquez with him. This occurrence was really beneficial to Murillo, because he could devote himself more entirely to copying and studying the masterpieces in the royal collections, but he must have felt some anxiety when he saw his protector leave Madrid and felt that he was now deprived of his advice and his good judgment. Soon after this separation Doña Isabel de Bourbon, first wife of Philip IV., died.

Murillo continued to make the best of his opportunities. He copied the pictures which suited his taste and in so doing he acquired a great facility in handling

and a great nicety of tone which was to be of much service to him in days to come. He studied, with penetrating observation, the works of the great colourists such as Titian and Rubens, both in Madrid and in the Escorial where he then dwelt; but he did not forsake his own school on this account. He felt an immense enthusiasm for Ribera's talent and he accepted those principles of realism or the actual interpretation of nature, which had been so admirably carried out by Velazquez. He fed his genius at these fertile springs in order to rise up later as the chief of his school.

Velazquez could not follow up, step by step, the progress achieved by Murillo, being obliged to remain with the King in Aragon and Catalonia. When he returned to Madrid, Murillo was just concluding his studies in order to return to his native city, from which he was destined never to stir again until quite near the end of his life. When he arrived in Seville he at once began to show what a mastery of his art he had acquired during this momentous period of his life, but it was a long time before Madrid heard of those marvels of inspired genius which now became the admiration and wonder of his fellow-countrymen.

Once more amongst his own people, his progress could be justly gauged; he must have given convincing proofs of it before the monks of San Francisco would have entertained his proposal to decorate the small cloisters of the monastery¹ with eleven pictures. The remuneration was modest but Murillo was anxious to

¹ Now destroyed. The site is marked by the Plaza Nueva.

show what he could do; all that he asked for was a stage on which he could display his talents.

In these cloisters he painted the following subjects: *Saint Francis in Ecstasy*, *Saint Gil before the Pope*, *Saint Philip*, *Five Episodes in the Life of Saint Diego of Alcalá*, *A Monk robbed by a Highwayman*, *Two Monks*, and a great canvas on which he represented *The Death of Saint Catalina*. Cean says that "in these pictures he presented to the public the three professors whom he had learnt to imitate in Madrid"; that is to say, that the influence of Titian, Ribera, and Velazquez appeared as strongly in his work as if he had been studying under their tuition. He showed more initiative than original talent, but he succeeded in gaining the public estimation thanks to the great principles that he had adopted.

The Academy of San Fernando in Madrid has two of these pictures—*Saint Francis in Ecstasy* and *Saint Diego giving Alms to the Poor*; they are not painted in exactly the manner which distinguishes those others which are now in the Louvre and in London, possibly because they were the first to be executed after his return to Seville; and we must admit that his technique is still hard and rather uncertain. In the *Death of Saint Clara* and in *Saint Diego in an Epidemic* the composition is stronger and the tonality finer; in these works we can see the forerunners of those greater ones which were to come after. In the *Saint Diego giving Alms to the Poor* we may notice his endeavour to interpret nature by a faithful rendering of the types and the colouring which he actually saw: so much is this the case that

the picture becomes a representation of the costumes of his day. We may notice, too, the little children and the poor people who gather round the Saint, types all of them of the *picaresco* studied from the rogues of his own countryside, who had also interested Cervantes and were attracting the attention of all students of realism.

A series of pictures representing poor ragged children was produced by Murillo during these early years of his artistic production; it is evident that those in the *Saint Diego giving Alms* had pleased the taste of the public, for he repeated the same type in many canvasses.¹

The effect produced by the work of the young Murillo was immense. Although, even at that time, painting had been most happily inspired in Seville, it was at once recognised that this youth, fresh from the Court, had such a decided talent that the greatest hopes were entertained as to his future. The circle of his admirers increased daily.

¹ These early works of Murillo are now scattered. The *Death of Saint Clara* is now in the Royal Gallery of Dresden, the *Two Monks* is in the collection of Mr. Francis Clare Ford, *Saint Francis in Ecstasy* is in that of Sir F. Cook. *The Food of the Angels* is in the Louvre, having been purchased in 1858 from the heir of Marshal Soult for 80,000 francs. It has been much restored. *Saint Diego of Alcalá praying for those Stricken with Plague* is said to belong to the Duke of Pozzo di Borgo in Paris. *The Monks and the Bandit* is in the collection of M. Ch. Baudet of Havre, *Saint Diego in Ecstasy before the Cross* is in the Museum of Toledo, *Saint Diego surprised by the Superior of the Monastery* is in the collection of Mr. Curtis in New York. The two we have already mentioned are in the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid.

Other religious communities now wished to follow the example of the Franciscans and to have the honour of possessing his work. He may, perhaps, have had some commission to execute in the neighbouring village of Pilas, for he made the acquaintance there of a gentle damsel, Doña Beatriz de Cabrera, or Corral de Cabrera—a “person of consideration,” according to Cean; she was the daughter of Cosme de Corral and Beatriz Mejia, and her beauty was destined to be immortalised by the artist who made her his coadjutor, by painting her in many of his works.

Judging by the intensity of expression which Murillo, that passionate soul, loved to depict on the faces of the heroes of his inspiration, he must have felt the deepest devotion to this lovely girl; no doubt the portrait of himself, which he painted on copper, bears witness of this affection by the expression which he has given to his own features. This painting, which we have seen in the possession of a connoisseur in Madrid, is an undoubtedly authentic portrait of Murillo at the age of twenty-eight; on the reverse, an allegorical figure of love raises in one of his hands a burning heart, and in the other, if our memory can be trusted, a phylactery with a distich inscribed on it in minute characters: “Neither for God, nor for me, would I do what I do for thee.”¹

This precious relic of the intimate private life of the great master has disappeared, but it has taught us, not so much the degree of progress in his art to which

¹ “Ni por Dios, ni por mi, haré lo que haré por ti.”

Murillo had attained at Madrid, but rather the taste and the literary inspiration which were his.

Murillo was by no means an uncultured man whose only ambition was to paint a picture well; we shall see by-and-by that his mind was open to all the influences of culture, it was illumined by the light of letters and science, it was capable of interest in the lore of history and archæology.

In 1648, confident in the brilliant future which seemed to be opening before him, Murillo married Doña Beatriz de Cabrera, whose excellent disposition justified his choice. Since that date he appeared never to have lost one day in the exercise of his profession; commissions succeeded each other without intermission and he was able to bring up the three children who were born to him in great comfort.¹

¹ The eldest of these children, Don Gabriel, must have been born in 1655, judging by the portrait painted of him when twenty-five years old—a portrait which inspired the master and of which we shall speak later on. Gabriel went to America when he was grown up and lived there to a great age. According to some authorities he adopted painting as a profession. Doña Francisca must have been born between the years 1657 and 1659; she afterwards became a nun in the Dominican Convent of Madre de Dios, in Seville, and was living there when her father died. Don Gaspar, baptized October 22, 1661, entered Holy Orders and became a Canon of the Cathedral of Seville; he also practised the art of painting. A story is told of him to the effect that when he was condemned by the Chapter to lose a certain amount of his pay because he had not observed certain formalities, he paid it to them with great goodwill, saying that he trusted the sum would be spent on urgently needed repairs for the Cathedral.

According to Señor Gestoso, Murillo had two other children named Isabel and José Esteban, to whom Don Miguel de Mañara stood

Murillo established himself in the first place in the parish of San Isidorø; later on he moved to the quarter of San Bartolomé, which had been the dwelling-place of the most illustrious men in Seville for all time. It was a quarter dedicated to artists and poets, and could claim amongst its inhabitants the names of Santa Teresa de Jesus, Rodrigo Caro, Hernando de Herrera, Gutierre de Cetnia, Mateo Aleman, Vargas, Montañez, Velazquez and Zurbaran. In this retired spot in the vicinity of the walls and gardens of the Alcazar, Murillo gave himself up without reserve to the exercise of the art in which he was to achieve renown.

Dating from this period of his life are many pictures representing street urchins and beggars, merry and delightful types which we may see in many of the European galleries. Of these we may mention: *The Street Boys*, in the Dulwich Gallery; *The Old Woman with a Boy*, in the possession of the Duke of Wellington; *The Two Boys eating Eggs and Melons*, in Lord Dorset's collection at Kingston Lacy; *The Little Beggar* of the Louvre; and the *Three Boys playing Dice*, in the Pinakothek at Munich, in which gallery there is a regular series of works of this *genre*. These pictures made Murillo's reputation as a realistic painter; they are pleasant, happily conceived and executed with surety of hand, but they do not show

sponsor, a fact which testifies to the old friendship which existed between this gentleman and the painter. Both children must have died young, as this is the only mention made of them. See Gestoso, "Diccionario de los Artifices," vol. ii. p. 66.

that supreme mastery of technique to which he afterwards attained, much less do they give evidence of that depth of inspiration which has elevated him to the rank of the immortals.

The careful study of nature noticeable in these works does not impress us with a sense of the overwhelming mastery of the painter over his material; a certain timidity and poverty of colour deprive his work of the surpassing effect obtained by the colossus of realism; all the same we cannot doubt that it was useful to Murillo to represent these essentially terrestrial types in order to mount up, through them, to those high inspirations which characterised his later work.

In spite of his careful realism, the trend of Murillo's genius did not lie in that direction; he merely used it as a foundation or base on which to build his idealisations. It was necessary that his lofty conceptions should be clothed in human form and his figures had to be perfect in order not to be considered as pure abstractions, which could not give the impression of real life.

His real inspiration lay in the representation of religious subjects, giving these their most sympathetic and attractive rendering.

It is said that in the year 1648 he painted a *Flight into Egypt* for the Convent of the Merced Calzada; ¹ it is difficult to determine which of the pictures representing the subject is the one specified.

About this time he executed, for the same convent, the *Resurrection* which is now in the Academy of San

¹ Now in the Museum of Seville.

Fernando ; in it we can note the transition of the artist from his earlier to his most mature manner. *The Holy Family with a Bird*,¹ which has been copied so often, dates also from this period. The scene is intimate and sympathetic in character, on account of the natural tenderness with which it is represented.²

*Rebecca and Eleazer*³ cannot be later in date than the last-mentioned work ; both were taken to Madrid by the first Bourbons, Philip V. and his wife Doña Isabel Farnesio, when they visited Seville.

¹ No. 854, Prado Gallery.

² Sent to France for the Napoleonic Museum, it was recovered by Spain in 1814.

³ No. 855, Prado Gallery.

CHAPTER XI

MURILLO

continued

THE colossal *Conception*, executed in 1652, was the work which revealed Murillo as an artist possessed of a strong religious inspiration; it was designed for one of the great walls in the Church of San Francisco, for the cloisters of which convent he had painted a series of pictures.

The figure of the Virgin, which is three metres in height, rises up with majesty from a footstool of clouds amongst which three beautiful child angels play. The figure itself is majestic, the drapery is better studied and more flowing than in any other work of this master; the execution is so strong that it almost seems as if the painter were making a parade of the untrammelled boldness of his technique. The monks were horrified at this bold brushwork, and having examined it in the artist's studio, where it appeared strange and coarse in execution, they declined the picture and declared that they would never receive it in such a state. But Murillo, who had calculated his effect, begged that the picture might be placed on the

wall for which it had been painted ; once it was there, the distance and the atmosphere so harmonised the bold touches that his work appeared to the greatest advantage. As every one was of this opinion, the artist demanded a double price for his picture, which the monks were compelled to pay in order to retain the masterpiece. According to another story, it was painted for a space over one of the side doors of the Cathedral, but being rejected by the Chapter was bought by the Franciscans, for whom the painter had always worked with success.

The *Conception* is now the admiration of all who visit the Museum in Seville. The grandeur of the style is sustained throughout, the colouring is sober, the lines are elegant ; Murillo never painted with greater strength or with greater sobriety. Perhaps we miss that touch of the ideal with which he endowed other pictures of the same subject ; it is more a splendid matron that is represented than a simple virgin. Even so, it is one of the most marvellous canvasses which he ever executed. This virile realism is noticeable also in a picture which Murillo was commissioned to paint by the Archdeacon of Carmona, Don Juan Federiqui ; it represents the famous saints-bishops of Seville, the brothers Saint Isidoro and Saint Leandro, the pride of intellectual Spain when times were as precarious as was the sixth century in which they lived.

Murillo represented the two saints as if he were painting their life-sized portraits ; they were attired in episcopal robes and were seated each on his seat, fixing

their attention on heavy volumes as if they were engaged in their favourite literary pursuits. He chose as models for these subjects two well-known ecclesiastics of the day—the licenciado Alonso de Herrera, leader of the choir, who sat for the younger Saint Leandro, and the licenciado Juan Lopez Talabon, who represented the elder Saint Isidoro. We learn these facts from contemporary manuscripts.

These pictures still adorn the spaces for which they were painted, for they hang opposite to each other on the walls of the great Sacristy of the Cathedral of Seville; their grand and masterly execution amazes and delights the spectator.

They are, truly, noble and interesting figures, full of life; the draperies, for the most part white, are so naturally and beautifully rendered that Murillo himself hardly ever surpassed them. It is easy to see that these two fine pictures awakened the greatest enthusiasm and increased the reputation of the artist. The admirable state of preservation of the pictures enables us to judge their merits and to enjoy their beauty. We realise at once that Murillo had arrived at the zenith of his technical skill and of his genius. He had scarcely concluded these works when he received a commission to paint another *Birth of the Virgin* for the Cathedral, a task which he undertook with renewed confidence, as we may well imagine when we gaze at the beautiful picture which hangs on the line at the Louvre.

Cean Bermudez saw this fine work in the dark Chapel of Saint Peter, where it made a great impression on the



MURILLO
ST. LEANDRO
(Cathedral, Seville)

public in spite of the place in which it hung being unsuitable to the display of its many beauties; notwithstanding this drawback, he was able to appreciate its merits to a high degree. He tells us that "the softness of the colouring, the disposition of the shadows and the beauty of the high lights made every one who passed by stop to admire the picture"¹ On another occasion he speaks of it as one of the best works executed by Murillo in his second manner and points out that the left arm of the woman in the foreground "might be the admiration and envy of the women of Seville."

This picture now hangs in a prominent place in the Louvre; the effect which it creates on the passer-by is such that no one could turn from it with indifference. The beauties of colour and composition leave a deep impression on the mind and it must be considered one of the most charming pictures in existence. In it, we may notice, Murillo begins to manifest that intense sympathy which has always made his works attractive and appreciated and which accounts for much of the popularity he enjoys with the public. Wherever there is an authentic work by Murillo in a public gallery, it is always the one which is the most surrounded by copyists; a proof that the public interest is as strong as ever.

The creations of Murillo are both attractive and sympathetic, the sentiment expressed is tender and the effect produced on the spectator is one of serene well-being. We seem to exist in one of those happy

¹ "Carta a un amigo."

moments when grief is afar off and when the sweetest affections of the human heart are gratified and all life is serene. As this sentiment is clothed in a most suitable and attractive form and as the colouring is both brilliant and harmonious, it is easy to see why the effect created is immediate and the memory agreeable.

Murillo had certainly the secret of touching the sensibility of the spectator. The faces of his subjects were always intensely expressive, showing that the body contained a feeling and sensitive soul, and they never fail to strike a chord of sympathy in the heart of the onlooker.

The] covetousness of Marshal Soult was set aflame when he heard reports of the extraordinary beauties of the *Birth of the Virgin*. The canons hid it when he came to Seville in the year 1811, but the invader demanded it so imperiously that the Chapter was obliged, regretfully, to give it up to him. Like other works which were obtained in the same manner, the picture was exhibited in the first public gallery of France. Connoisseurs and admirers of the master agree that it was one of the happiest and the most original works due to his palette.

There is no doubt, however, that the picture which really cemented his fame and which raised him to the highest pinnacle of popularity was the great work, perhaps the greatest that he achieved, which was also a commission from the Chapter of the Cathedral. It was entitled *Saint Anthony receiving the Visit of the Christ-Child*. It appears from various documents

and contracts that in the year 1656, Murillo was painting this picture¹ under contract of 10,000 reales (silver) the last instalment of which was only paid on December 11 of that year, although the altar-piece had been in its place since November 21. The silver real, in those days, was about equal in value to a modern peseta ; considering the greater value of money at that time, it will probably be not far from the case if we estimate the price of the *Saint Anthony* at about 15,000 pesetas of modern money.

The canvas measures 560 metres in height and 375 in width ; in this vast space is represented the moment when the humble friar receives in his cell the Christ-Child, who descends from Heaven in a blaze of glory and surrounded by angels.

The composition is truly great. It requires an imagination of the highest order, good taste and great skill in technique, to cover such a huge space with so simple a design, to make an artistic distribution of the groups and accessories and to render the picture interesting throughout.

In the foreground, to the right of the spectator, the figure of the Saint stands out, and surely the lonely figure of a humble individual was never represented with more animation and refinement. His ecstasy elevates and humbles him at the same time and truly the vision which is before his eyes is enough to enrapture the most unimpressionable. The Child Christ descends from Heaven in glory, surrounded by angels

¹ See Gestoso, "Sevilla Monumental," vol. ii. p. 541.

and cherubim who form charming groups in which there is a regular riot of childish beauty ; it seems almost as if the painter were letting loose the flood-gates of the paternal tenderness that he felt for his first-born, who was then about the same age as the little angels represented in the vision. If the friar were necessarily excluded from such paternal emotions, the painter, on the other hand, knew how to represent them with the utmost skill ; it is said truly enough that no one can give what he does not possess, but it is also true that a great artist puts into his work the deepest emotions of his soul.

This great picture abounds in detail, but the idea of the composition is never lost sight of for a moment. We may notice the admirable perspective of the floor of the cell, the opening at the back of the picture where light streams in through the doorway with diaphanous luminosity, the detail on the table to the left hand of the foreground, on which books are placed and a pot of white lilies really justifies the legend of the hovering birds trying to peck at the flowers.

If Murillo had no child before the year 1655, when his son Gabriel was born, we may certainly regard this picture as the overflow of his joy and thankfulness at the gift that had been sent from Heaven to make the happiness of his home. He paints the child, then about a year old, over and over again in this picture ; the face of the Christ Child and that of many of the angels in this, as well as in subsequent works, bear a strong resemblance in some particulars to that of the painter

himself. There is another legend attached to the picture which is far more prosaic than that of the birds. It is stated that the Duke of Wellington offered as many doubloons for the picture as would completely cover it if they were laid all over its surface. A calculation has been made that the sum realised would have amounted to £47,500.

Many years ago an opportunity occurred of seeing the *Saint Anthony* in a very good light, where its merits could be thoroughly appreciated. This opportunity arose from an event which threw consternation all over Seville at the time, but which was luckily not so irretrievably fatal as was at first feared. On the morning of November 5, 1874, it was discovered that the principal figure had been cut out and the picture horribly injured. The audacious thief who had accomplished this strange and impious deed had not realised that his theft would do him little good and that it could not remain hidden unless he destroyed the object for which he had accomplished the crime; as he did not pursue this course it was not long before the sorrowing inhabitants of Seville learned that their *Saint Anthony* had reappeared, and that it was not improbable that it could be returned to its original owners. Mr. William Schaus, a dealer in objects of art in New York, informed the Spanish Consul that a picture had been offered to him which, judging by the photographs and descriptions that were circulated all over the world, must be the stolen central figure of Murillo's masterpiece. The Consul, Don Hipolito Uriarte, arranged with Mr. Schaus that he

should buy the picture for the Spanish nation ; and the actual possessor, who was perhaps anxious to be rid of his bargain, sold it for the absurd sum of 250 dollars. On February 21 in the following year, 1875, a peal of bells announced to the citizens that the lost fragment had returned to Seville ; it appeared subsequently that Mr. Schaus had presented the *Saint Anthony* to Spain and had even refused the sum of 50,000 pesetas offered by the Government as a reward for his public spirit.

In order to restore the great canvas it was necessary to remove it from its position. Señor Don Salvador Martinez Cubells then restored it in a most masterly manner, and, by so doing, associated his name for ever with that of the painter of the much-travelled fragment. He gave the *Saint Anthony* a new lease of life, when it was feared that it was irretrievably damaged and, at the same time, he removed some unskilful "restorations" which had up to that date disfigured the picture. It is noteworthy that this huge canvas was backed in one day, the operation being begun at dawn. Martinez Cubells was busily occupied during the whole summer in cleaning and restoring the picture, which was then placed at the back of the choir in the Cathedral. On October 13, 1875, a religious festival was held here to celebrate the event and all Seville passed before Murillo's immortal work. On account of the light, its many beauties were more easily studied than had ever been possible before or than was possible after it had been replaced in its original position.

The *Saint Anthony* increased the reputation of

Murillo to such an extent that after its completion he had a never-ending procession of commissions, far more than he could undertake, even with his untiring and restless activity. The first works that he executed were those which decorated the lunettes in the Church of Santa Maria la Blanca or Santa Maria of the Snow, in Seville, a building which was a copy of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, although it was less sumptuous in its architecture. The lunettes were ordered by a great friend of the painter's, the Prebendary Don Justino Neve y Yevenes, who wished them to commemorate the events which led to the foundation of the Roman basilica on the Esquiline.

In the first of the series, the opulent Roman Senator, or patrician, Johannes and his wife are asleep in their house, almost in a state of stupor, as it might be during the hour of siesta in the dog days in Seville; we can picture to ourselves the complete silence of that great summer heat, which is only broken by the monotonous chirp of the cricket sunning itself in the outer air and conducing to an overwhelming desire for sleep.

The husband and wife are both anxious to know what to do with their great wealth, they being childless; they are surprised by a vision of the Virgin with the Child on her lap, which appears to them whilst they are asleep; they are inspired to build a church in her honour on a site which shall be covered with snow although it was then midsummer. This phenomenon did occur on the Esquiline that year.

The vision appeared on August 4, A.D. 367, and

afterwards the couple proceeded to Pope Liberio in order to inform him of the event. The Pontif ordered a procession to proceed to the spot indicated in the vision, which did actually discover the remains of snow as had been foretold. The pious couple, thinking that the miracle was accomplished, began at once to lay the foundation of the Basilica.

That this incident forms the subject of the best of the four lunettes, we may be assured after examining that composition. The people represented have none of the characteristics of those who lived in the fourth century, the architecture and furniture in the Pontifical dwelling are simply those of Murillo's own times. In spite of these drawbacks the intrinsic beauties of design and colour are so great, the scene is so well composed and so solemn in character, the whole work has such richness as well as such atmosphere, that we may safely affirm that the Venetians never painted a more brilliant scene or the painters of Seville one that was richer in tone.

Studying this picture, we might be led to the conclusion that Murillo was an uncultured man who was quite indifferent to historical accuracy and to archæology: but we should be making a great mistake. Murillo studied and appreciated literature, he was interested in archæology; but in his day archæological accuracy was not considered necessary in a work of art, the intention being merely to present the dramatic impression of the scene, an accomplishment in which the painters of that date excelled. Modern criticism

does not insist or even consider the necessity of archæological accuracy in the scenes represented by the great masters of old; if it did, their best works would be put on one side. This accuracy is peculiar to modern erudition, and although it does increase the harmony of the composition, it sometimes leads to a loss of spontaneity and dramatic effect which were the qualities most sought after by the great masters.

Notwithstanding this fact, as we said before, Murillo was far from being an ignorant man; he was sensible of the beauty of an idea and of the cadenced phrase in which that idea could be clothed. We have already noticed the words which he dedicated to his bride. Over a *Crucifixion* which was one of those framed by a wooden cross, he wrote the following words: "If He has done the greatest thing for thee, which was to die in order to save thee, why should He not also forgive thee?"¹ On another occasion, the collector, Don Juan Ignacio de Alfará y Aguilar, a native of Puente de Gonzalo, showed the artist a precious collection of Roman bronze coins; Murillo was so much taken with them that he offered him a picture of any subject he chose in exchange for them. It was with this object in view that he executed *The Institution of the Porciuncula*, as we learn from a document which was drawn up by order of the numismatist when he was waiting for the beautiful gift.²

¹ "Si lo mas hizo porti, que fue morir por salvarte, como no ha de perdonar te?"

² Discovered by Don Pedro de Madrazo.

To return to the four lunettes, the most happy is certainly that which represents *The Holy Matrimony performed before Pope Liberio*, although the Virgin in *The Dream* is the image of Mary with her Son in her arms and is the most beautiful and inspired group that can be imagined. These paintings, together with the *Saint Isabel*, which we must consider in detail, were for a long time the chief ornaments of the Academia de San Fernando. They are now in the Prado Gallery, where we trust they will soon be hung in a better room, that in which they are now placed being by no means suitable to the proper display of their fine qualities.

Of the two remaining lunettes, one is in the Louvre, which represents *The Conception* amongst clouds, with some priests at the Virgin's foot and some cherubs holding up a legend: "In principio dilexit eam." This work is not so noticeable either in composition or execution as those we have just mentioned. The fourth lunette represents *The Adoration of the Faith*, and in it we see a group of a mother and child with four monks and the legend runs: "In finem delixit eos." The painting was put up to auction in Paris in the year 1865, but its actual whereabouts is unknown.

It is impossible, from this time onwards, to follow step by step the enormous and almost inestimable production of the great Sevillian master. His studio became a veritable hotbed of paintings, in which one work was scarcely concluded before the canvas was stretched for another which he attacked without resting a moment. It is remarkable to note that the inspira-

tion of the master never flagged and that he never deteriorated into a commercial producer. Always inspired, always progressing, each new work is a model of beauty, of profound sentiment applied to the interpretation of the most varied subjects; each one gives evidence of possessing qualities both new and interesting.

Canvasses of gigantic dimensions alternate with others of smaller size in which he shows that he can concentrate much interest in a small space. He was not afraid of attacking compositions in which many figures had to form harmonious groups and many different passions had to be represented; he was equally capable of concentrating, with great intensity of expression, the whole interest of the composition on a small canvas and in single figures, such as *The Christ-Child as a Shepherd*, or *Saint John the Forerunner*, also as a child, a half-length of the Virgin, an *Ecce Homo* which is a long-shaped bust, *Saint Francis of Assisi*, also a head and shoulders, and many other works of the same type which he executed when resting from his other colossal enterprises.

Of all these single-figure subjects, the one which was considered the most inspired and which was copied many times was the *Ecce Homo*. Hundreds of copies, besides some replicas by the master, were made of this expressive and admirable figure as it was conceived by his pencil. The nobility and majesty of the countenance of the Saviour contrasts so strongly with the derisory garments and the attributes of majesty

with which his enemies had mocked him, that it cannot fail to induce men to respect the unjustly injured Lord.

The original picture was hung for many years over a side altar in the Chapel of the Pilar in the Cathedral, where, being well placed, it made a very realistic effect. In 1839, the Chapter presented it to King Louis Philippe of France, who, in return, sent the city various printed books, which are now in the Biblioteca Colombina, as well as a gold medal of great value. The whereabouts of this admirable picture is now quite unknown.¹

The subject of Christ on the Cross, that great and imposing figure in the act of sacrifice and death, was not treated by Murillo in an original manner or in a way that was likely to increase his fame. Some artists of the school—Castillo, Alonso Cano, and above all Zurbaran—had felt the tragic greatness of the crucified Christ, either in His agony or after His death. Velazquez, in Madrid, had possibly already painted his great *Crucifixion* of Saint Placido when Murillo was at the Court, while the great sculpture in high relief by Martinez Montañez had hung for some time in the Sacristy of the Chalices. Murillo, also, intended to represent the Supreme moment of the Passion, but although he often painted small Crucifixions for the

¹ See Gestoso, "Sevilla Monumental," ii. pp. 133a, 136 and 571. "The King of France," writes the Comte de Bondi to the City of Seville, "has 'admiré de la beauté et m'a chargé de vous en témoigner toute sa satisfaction.'" The pedantic Baron de Taylor, who arrived at Court in the train of the Duc de Montpensier, was an intermediary in this transaction.

altars and cells of the friars, some of them with devotional mottoes like that which we have already noticed, he was never sufficiently inspired to execute a large picture with a life-sized figure which produced a lasting impression. There is only one picture in which he succeeds in clothing the figure of Christ with an imposing grandeur, and that is in that work in the Gallery of Seville in which he represents him embracing Saint Francis. He succeeded in this because he was able to represent Christ in an act of intense affection towards the Saint of Assisi, as one showing love to His favourite sons, to those who were leaving all to follow Him, and in this way rather narrowing His mission on earth. Murillo's special gift lay in representing affection and tenderness; childlike and virginal expressions were the favourite themes of his pencil, and we must admit that no one could endow them with more tenderness or grace. The sentiment of paternal affection which he felt for the little angels which Heaven had given to his much-loved wife made him, no doubt, the most perfect interpreter of the infantile graces which he observed in them; from an overflowing heart, he was inspired to fill his glorias with these graceful creatures, making the picturesque groups the chorus of his great subjects and the joy of all his compositions. When he represented one of these child studies as a single figure, as, for instance, in *The Children of the Shell* or in the *Charity and Capuchin Monks*, he made it so interesting and attractive that surely no mother could

contemplate it without emotion, and when he introduced one of these into his compositions, which he did whenever possible, it was represented with a smile that rejoiced the hearts of the most unhappy.

The endeavour of Murillo was always in the direction of finding the highest form of art; he endeavoured to touch the deepest human sentiments, he thought that to realise the purest and highest, the most disinterested and the heroic, was to come very near to touching the divine. His was the most tender and sympathetic note struck by any master of the Spanish School. We must remember that even in the days of exaggerated realism, when everything that was rugged or showed evidence of hard and rough severity was considered typically Spanish, and the conquests achieved were more material than moral, there was also that other aspiration which aimed at realising those divine and human ideals that glorify existence. We may note, moreover, that if in certain regions of Spain neither nature nor the character of the inhabitants invite the artist to throw himself heart and soul into his creations, in Andalusia the sentiment of life is so vivid that it inspires the most enthusiastic productions of poetry and the most profound tenderness in art. From this source comes the sentiment and the poetry which is so noticeable in the art of Seville. Murillo will always remain the best exponent of this psychic æstheticism and his representations of women and children will always awaken sentiments of love and tenderness. The vision of the Virgin in *The Dream of the Patrician* is one of the

most beautiful that could be imagined, and whenever he introduced similar figures into his compositions, he rose to the same altitude, a feat which could only be achieved by a genius.

We must now follow the progress of his marvellous production.

About the year 1667 or 1668, the Chapter of the Cathedral commissioned Murillo to restore some of the allegories which Pablo de Cespedes had painted in the socle of the Chapter House and to add some decorative painting with medallions as well as an *Immaculate Conception* for the dome of the Cupola. He found himself destined once more to represent in all its beauty an image of the Mother of God.

This theme was at that time the object of the most impassioned enthusiasm of the Catholic theologians; it served to enforce and to define a dogma which they considered as fundamental and necessary to the principles of Catholicism. If the theologians made the dogma victorious in the higher ecclesiastical spheres by means of their writings and their arguments, Murillo certainly did much to popularise it by means of his paintings, in which he presented the subject with so much beauty and grace that the spectator felt a real enthusiasm and adoration towards the image represented.

As time went on, the warmth of Murillo's artistic temperament forced him ever to seek in what manner he could best express himself, in what manner he could find the most suitable treatment of the ideal which he followed. The real character of the man lay in his

altruism, in his affection towards humanity; from this source welled out his extraordinary love and the tender softness of his style which no other painter has ever attained. In the expression of these sentiments he was to show his highest gifts, and as always happens when genius is united to opportunity, he was very soon called on to undertake a task which was destined to call out his highest faculties.

Don Miguel de Mañara, a gentleman of Seville, was a very pious man of middle age; some people, on account of certain traditions of his youthful follies, consider him the real prototype of the Sevillian Tenorio, but in so doing they make several people take one form, for the celebrated Don Juan Tenorio lived in the reign of the Emperor Charles V. This de Mañara was a great friend of Murillo's who lived near him in the parish of San Bartolomé. He was as philanthropic as was the artist and he undertook the important work of transforming the old Hospital of San Jorge, which stood on the banks of the Guadalquivir and was used as a refuge for destitute invalids, into a magnificent institution which should be capable of supplying the necessities of those who were received there. Above all, it was necessary to build a large new church for the new institution.

According to a document which is dated June 19, 1670, Murillo agreed with Bernardo Simon de Viñeda to decorate the walls and altars of the new church with eight large canvasses. In these he was to represent symbolical passages from the Works of Charity, such as

Moses causing Water to spring from the Rock, The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, Abraham showing Hospitality to the Three Travelling Angels, Saint Juan de Dios carrying a Poor Man on his Shoulders, the famous Saint Isabel of Hungary tending the Poor; the list of these pictures was concluded by the *Christ healing the Paralytic, Saint Peter set free from Prison, and The Return of the Prodigal Son*. He also executed two medallions, the subjects being *The Christ-Child and The Little Saint John*. Besides these paintings there was one representing an *Annunciation* for a chapel.

These eight great illustrations of Charity were executed on huge canvasses, the figures being life-size; so inspired was the artist by his subject that the series gained him universal fame. Six of them were painted on long-shaped canvasses, suited to the walls they were to decorate in the Basilica, the remaining two, *Saint Isabel of Hungary* and *Saint Juan de Dios*, were uprights with domed tops to suit the shape of the retables they were to cover. Very few of these works remain in the places for which they were destined, most of them being scattered to the four corners of the earth. Let us consider them as they were in the artist's own day, relating the vicissitudes through which they have passed since then and their whereabouts at the present time. The *Moses* still remains in the upper part of the presbytery of the Church. In this great canvas, which resembles rather a long frieze than a picture, Murillo has represented the miracle performed by Moses, when, in order to appease the thirst of the children of Israel

in the desert, he struck the rock with his staff and caused the water to gush out for the relief of the multitude. The composition could not be more masterly. The figure of Moses stands out majestically from the groups of excited people, which are rendered in the happiest manner; the group to the right of the spectator being admirable in its animation. The long-shaped canvas does not interfere with the unity of the composition, because all Murillo's works are highly decorative in treatment and are absolutely suitable to the place for which they are destined. In this decorative quality he was probably unsurpassed by any other Spanish painter of his day.¹

The other great frieze, the companion picture to the *Moses*, hung opposite to it in the same church. The subject of this work was giving food to the hungry and the episode chosen was the highest example known, the miracle performed by Christ of the loaves and fishes. We see Murillo here under one of his most interesting aspects, that of landscape-painter and interpreter of nature in her richest beauty; we must note besides that the groups of people and the compact multitudes are executed with extraordinary ability. To the left we see Jesus surrounded by the Apostles: he is blessing the bread and the fish which are presented to him by a child of the people. It is interesting to remark that in this picture and its companion, as well as in so many others, both in the multitudes represented and in the

¹ There is a magnificent engraving of this picture by Esteve, who may be said to have devoted his life to this work.

choirs of angels, Murillo faithfully reproduced the local types which served him as models ; when he painted the principal personages he clothed them with so much dignity and nobility that he rivalled, if he did not exceed in power of expression, the most idealistic religious painters of the Renaissance. The heads of his Saints are always both attractive and expressive ; the types chosen were from amongst the highest in Europe and he sometimes succeeded in depicting a purely Hellenic cast of countenance.

Two great pictures, almost square in form, which represent *Saint Peter set free from Prison* and *Abraham showing Hospitality to the Three Travelling Angels*, have not remained in the original position. The former is in the Hermitage Gallery at Saint Petersburg, the second is in England in the Duke of Sutherland's collection at Stafford House. *Christ Healing the Paralytic* and *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, which were perhaps finer than those first mentioned, are also in England ; the former is at Stafford House and the latter in Orbell Park, Surrey, the residence of G. Tomlins, Esq. The reputation of these four paintings proclaim them to be worthy companions of the larger ones, which still remain in the Church of the Caridad for which they were painted."¹

¹ When Marshal Soult was in Seville his cupidity was excited by these pictures. The *Saint Isabel* eventually came back to Spain, but the others were sold in Paris, where they were acquired by the Duke of Sutherland, together with a Velazquez, for the large sum of 500,000 francs. Of the others, *Christ Healing the Paralytic* was bought by Mr. Tomlins from Marshal Soult for 160,000 francs, and

Saint Isabel of Hungary and *Saint Juan de Dios* make a pair of very different proportions to the six works that we have just noticed; the canvasses are vertical in shape.

The most famous of these is the *Saint Isabel*, which is admirable from every point of view; after many vicissitudes it has become the chief attraction in the room devoted to Murillo in the Prado Gallery. *Saint Juan de Dios* remains over the altar for which it was designed.

The Queen of Hungary is represented as performing an act of sublime charity; she is stanching the wounds and sores of the most miserable creatures conceivable. The scene is represented with so eloquent a brush that the picture has always been considered as one of the most inspired canvasses of the master, and as one of those which help to form the crown of his glory. When it adorned one of the galleries in the Academy of San Fernando, it was placed a little apart in a great room and there received the sidelight which it required; the effect produced on entering the gallery was so impressive that it was not soon forgotten.

The Queen, who was aided by her maids, was both majestic and modest in appearance. Murillo, who had a refined taste and who no doubt copied the hands of the model who was at the same time the inspirer of his works, has endowed her with the most beautiful hands

the *Saint Peter* was acquired for the Hermitage in 1852 when Marshal Soult's sale took place. The sum realised was 151,000 francs.



MURILLO

ST. ISABELLA, QUEEN OF HUNGARY

(Prado, Madrid)

that even he ever painted. She is represented as placing these delicate hands on the most revolting sores, as she tends the scrofulous head of a little child. The charitable queen is surrounded by poverty-stricken and unhealthy people; the contrast of their miseries with the richness of the palace impresses the spectator with a deep commiseration for poverty, which leads the mind on to the most complex social problems. The composition is most interesting, the tones are transparent, the technique masterly, the perspective and the atmosphere admirably rendered. It is not too much to assert that this picture must be recognised as one of the marvels of Spanish art.

The picture has suffered many vicissitudes and its possession has been disputed, but it must be conceded that as a work of art it is part of the glory of the whole nation. If it were to be restored to its original position it could not be appreciated there. It is a curious fact that the great painters of Seville produced admirable works which they were content to entomb in dark churches, whilst the architects and builders never acted in concert with the painters in order that their paintings might produce the best effect. The painters conscientiously produced masterpieces which were to be afterwards buried in outer darkness.¹

¹ The *Saint Isabel* was looted by Marshal Soult with the four which we have already mentioned, but it did not share the fate of the others, and eventually returned to Seville. Passing through Madrid, it was placed in the Academy of San Fernando, where it was seen to great advantage for some years; in 1900 it was transferred to the Prado Gallery with the two altar-pieces which hang in

The picture which represents *Saint Juan de Dios carrying a Poor Man on his Shoulders* is also interesting and has many beauties. Murillo foresaw that a good light could only be obtained when a door which was near was thrown open ; so he painted a very strong effect of light and shade which gave the work a great resemblance to those of Ribera. This circumstance gave him an opportunity of realising one of his hidden but all the more fervent ideals, one of which was to paint very strongly and with an intense effect of light and shade, in the manner of Spagnoletto, for whom he had conceived a great respect ever since he first saw his works. Murillo would have readily been one of Ribera's followers if his own special gifts had not led him to adopt a softer style ; he admired and even practised the methods of this painter, as we may notice if we study the arrangement of his draperies, particularly in those executed in his first manner, as well as in some of the heads and the treatment of the hands. The influence of the colossal designer, who modelled his figures with his pencil and who showed such vehemence in his compositions, was not lost on Murillo.

The *Saint Juan de Dios* is worthy of Ribera, both in the light and shade and the touch ; if its history were the same room. It was not the first time that the Central Government had endeavoured to possess these pictures, for we find that in 1800 a royal decree ordained that a good copyist should be sent to Seville in order to copy all the works of the Charity Series executed by Murillo, afterwards leaving his copies there and returning with the originals. This unlooked-for design was not executed owing to the complaints of the community and to the influence of the Principe de la Paz. See Gestoso, "Sevilla Monumental," voi. iii. p. 339.

not so well known and if the angel were not so characteristic of Murillo, it might have been attributed to him. But the charming face of the angel, who is helping the Saint in his charitable mission, is the signature of the artist.

The important work undertaken by Murillo for the new Church of the Caridad did not end with these eight pictures. He also executed an *Annunciation*, not unlike some others of his of the same subject; the figures were half life-size. There were also two oval-shaped paintings in which were represented the figures of *The Child Saviour with the Globe of the World* and *Saint John with the Lamb*, both of them examples of the grace and charm with which the great master could represent child life.

CHAPTER XII

MURILLO

concluded

MURILLO'S inspiration was inexhaustible and his industry was unflagging. He had scarcely completed this great undertaking, which might well have tired out the strongest constitution, before he was hard at work at another series of pictures in which his imagination and his artistic talent were to be manifested once more. He undertook to execute twenty-two large pictures which were to be the exclusive adornment of the Church of the Capuchin Monastery outside the walls of the city, the friars of that Order desiring to have a picture by the master over every altar in the church. This community of Franciscans must have been very wealthy to be able to give such a vast order to such a distinguished artist, and their church must have presented a magnificent aspect when the master had concluded his task. At the present day, the greatest treasures in the Provincial Museum of Seville are taken from this church, and nearly all the great canvasses executed for it are now to be found there.



MURILLO

ST. BUENAVENTURA AND ST. LEANDRO

(Museum, Seville)

Over the high altar are eight large paintings, the centre canvas representing *Saint Francis obtaining from the Virgin the Jubilee of the Porciuncula*;¹ over this was placed the *Saint Anthony and Saint Philip*; at the sides appeared *Saint John the Baptist* and *Saints Justa and Rufina*, full-length figures forming a pair, the first named Saint being accompanied by Saint Joseph, and the two female Saints by Saints Leandro and Buenaventura. Beneath these subjects were placed a *Saint Faz* and a *Virgin and Child* ("The Servilleta"²); over the altar hung a crucifix painted on wood.

At the end of the side aisles the two archangels, *Saint Michael* and *The Guardian Angel*, appeared, and in the eight chapels opening into the nave of the church were represented *The Annunciation*, *Saint Anthony*, *The Conception*, and *Saint Francis by the Crucified Christ* on one side, and on the other, a *Piedad*, *The Nativity*, *Saint Felix of Cantalicio* and *Saint Thomas of Villanueva*. Besides these works there was one of Murillo's famous *Conceptions* in the choir, and in the monastery there was a *Virgin of Bethlehem* and various *Crucifixions* over the altars and in the cells.

A tradition exists that Murillo painted all these pictures in the monastery and that many of his models were supplied by the fraternity. Whilst in the chapel or which they were painted they did not certainly enjoy a good light; but in the gallery where they now hang they can be recognised as veritable masterpieces.

In 1676, all these paintings were still hung in their

¹ A Franciscan feast.

² The Napkin.

original positions, as we know from the "Annals of Seville" which Ortiz de Zuniga published in the following year and in which he praised them as creations worthy of the highest fame; later on Cean Bermudez made a conscientious study of them in his "Letter" to which we have often referred.

In this series of pictures are included some of the most notable ever painted by Murillo. They are all of them works which are at the same time intensely expressive and intensely decorative; the groups and single figures are arranged with admirable balance and symmetry. Saints Leandro and Buenaventura are painted with great realism and admirable tonality both as regards the heads and the drapery; *Saint John the Baptist* shows a return to his Riberesque manner, which is most appropriate to the subject; *Saint Felix of Cantalicio* is tender and ideal in treatment; *Saint Francis embracing the Crucified Christ*, which has been copied so often, is symbolic and expressive to the highest degree. *Saint Thomas of Villanueva succouring the Poor* is without any doubt one of the finest conceptions that has ever presented itself to the mind of an artist. Murillo called it "my picture" because he felt profoundly any subject connected with charity; he felt it from the bottom of his heart and he employed all his experience and all his technical secrets to represent it on canvas. The picture is carefully finished throughout: the grouping of the figures is admirable, that of Saint Thomas standing out in front of the miserable beings by whom he is besieged, with his mitre on his head and

his countenance aflame with high thoughts of charity and altruism.

The smallest of the pictures, which is known as "The Servilleta," is also a marvellous creation, famous on account of the beautiful heads of the Virgin and Child which have also been frequently copied. The legend runs that Murillo had finished his work at the monastery when a lay brother begged for a souvenir. Having no canvas to offer the master he gave him a napkin instead, which he decorated in this wonderful manner. The prosaic tradition has not the beauty of the more poetic legends; it is besides a well-known fact that the picture was always intended to adorn the high altar of the church. All these paintings except the central picture, *The Porciuncula*, are to be seen in the Museo Provincial of Seville, where they form a most important series. For a couple of centuries they remained in the great church, where they were admired by the citizens of Seville, who flocked to the Capuchins' monastery for that purpose. When Napoleon's soldiers approached the city in 1810, the community was afraid that the treasury would be looted on account of the monastery being outside the walls, it being by that time well known that the French did not want vengeance alone, but all the spoil that they could collect. The canvasses were therefore hastily packed up and were sent to Gibraltar, the affair being arranged by the Chapter of the Cathedral, some valuable objects being also sent from the Basilica at the same time. They remained there for three years, afterwards being returned to the

monastery, though rather fewer in number than when they started on their journey. *Saint Faz* and *Saint Michael* were lost for ever; the *Guardian Angel*, the pair of the *Saint Michael*, was given to the Chapter of the Cathedral by the community, in token of the gratitude felt for the preservation of the series. It remains there until this day and is to be seen over one of the side altars in the great Church. *The Porciuncula* was not put back in a prominent place on account of the damage it had suffered.

When the monasteries were suppressed in 1835, all these jewels were in the care of the "Public Credit" and were housed in the Hospital of the Holy Ghost. When the first Carlist War was raging, and the riots of the Gomez party were feared in Seville, the Mayor of that day informed Don Manuel Lopez Cepero, the Prebendary, who was also a well-known connoisseur and one who had been instrumental in preserving works of art in Seville, that he gave him three hours in which to strip the house of the treasures, it being required as a hospital for the wounded. Señor Cepero succeeded, in twelve hours, in removing the Capuchins' pictures, as well as six hundred others, to some stores and outhouses belonging to the Cathedral. Four years later, in 1840, the Museo Provincial was instituted in what was once the Monastery of the Merced, and Murillo's series of pictures formed part of the notable collection which was made for that gallery. *The Porciuncula*, which was presented to the restorer, Don Joaquin Bejarano, when he retired from his labours in Gibraltar, was

taken to Paris by the Carlist Infante Don Sebastian. The rest have always remained in Seville.

This important work was scarcely finished before Murillo had entered into a new contract, by which he promised, on account of the great friendship he bore to Don Justino de Neve, the overseer of the building of the Hospital for Venerable Priests, just then being erected by the priests of Seville, to execute three pictures for the church belonging to that institution. He painted with this object a *Great Conception* for the choir, a *Saint Peter* for the church, and a *Virgin and Child distributing Bread to the Priests* for the refectory. He also painted, for friendship's sake, the portrait of Don Justino de Neve, whom he represented full length accompanied by his celebrated little dog, "at whom the dogs used to bark and who, in her turn, appeared anxious to attack them" according to Palomino's quaint phrase. The *Great Conception* was the work of all others in which Murillo was inspired to represent the apotheosis of the Mother of God; it may be said that it was his last, and his most finished presentment of the Virgin. He represents her surrounded by such a legion of little angels and by such a glory of celestial radiance that she reminds us of that woman described in the apocalyptic vision as being "clothed like the sun, with the moon at her feet and crowned with twelve stars." We are speaking of the *Conception* in the Louvre, where it shines resplendent, its presence there being owing to the rapacity of Marshal Soult, who took it to Paris as booty acquired during his victories in Spain;

it was afterwards, in 1852, disputed at a public auction by the Emperor of Russia, the Queen of Spain, and the French Government, the latter obtaining it by the bid of 615,300 francs—a larger sum than had ever been obtained before for a single picture.

The Virgin and Child distributing Bread to the Priests is now in the Museum of Buda-Pesth, after having passed through the hands of Marshal Soult and Prince Esterhazy; the *Saint Paul*, in which he again copied the manner of his favourite master Ribera, is in the same gallery. It is interesting to note how much the style of the Valencian painter pleased Murillo, who looked on it as a fine contrast to his own "sfumata" and perhaps too soft tonality; on the other hand, Ribera, when called on to execute subjects which required to be treated with tenderness or atmospheric effect—above all in the *Conceptions*—copied the tonality and the effects achieved by Murillo. So these two artists of directly antagonistic temperaments owed much to each other; a fact which is interesting psychologically. The intuition of genius is capable of taking up another point of view and of realising it to a great extent; with these two masters it is noticeable that when Murillo wishes to paint strongly, he adopts the style of Ribera, and when Ribera wishes to execute a painting with a soft touch, he adopts Murillo's technique. It is on this account that the work of the two painters is sometimes so alike that it is quite hard to attribute a picture to one or to the other. *The Magdalen* in the Prado Gallery¹

¹ No. 857.

is a case in point; the attribution is frequently changed from Ribera to Murillo. Judging by the general tonality as well as by certain details—notably the painting of the skull—we have no hesitation in giving it to the latter.

Murillo was also commissioned to execute the retables in another conventual church in the outskirts of Seville. He painted two canvasses for this purpose, the *Saint Augustine Writing* and the companion picture, *The Apparition of the Virgin to Saint Augustine*, both of which are now in the Museo Provincial in Seville.

A certain predilection for dark colouring may be observed in these works. Perhaps the master now required greater contrasts in order to harmonise his work completely to his own taste; perhaps he began to shrink from the luminous effects which he had sought in his earlier work. However that may be, we may notice the same tonality in other works of this date, such as *Saint Thomas of Villanueva when a Child dividing his Garments amongst the Poor*, in the *Saint Thomas the Bishop* belonging to Lord Northbrook, and in another *Saint Augustine*, which was painted for the Sacristy and is now also in London. The two pictures representing Saint Thomas were sold, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by the community to the Principe de la Paz, who gave them to General Sebastiani; according to the catalogue of the General's sale, the pictures were vigorously defended by the inhabitants of Seville before they allowed them to be taken away, and there was even

a skirmish in which several people were killed and wounded. This report appears to be quite imaginary and was probably invented in order to endow the pictures with greater interest; there is no record of such an episode among the archives of the city.

In the year 1662, Murillo, who was still living quietly in Seville, where the citizens regarded him with an unchanging affection, was summoned to Cadiz to execute a great altar-piece for the Capuchin Church of that city; no doubt the painter had been recommended to these new patrons by their brothers in Seville, who had been well satisfied with the marvels which he had painted for their church. The latest researches prove to us that Murillo achieved wonders during his stay in Cadiz. He was a guest in the house of his great admirer, the Marques de Pedroso, where he worked without relaxation, endeavouring to satisfy all those who were anxious to possess an example of his work. Besides some sketches of ships and boats of which Cean speaks with appreciation, he executed for the Marques de Pedroso the beautiful *Holy Family* which Cean saw in Seville and which is now in the National Gallery of London.

Palomino mentions it as being amongst his greatest works; and truly the master seems to have manifested in this fine canvas all the brilliancy and all the tenderness of feeling which his vast experience had enabled him to express; it is, as it were a compendium of his whole style and of his peculiar qualities. The beauty and dignity of the types, the transparency of the gloria in



MURILLO
THE MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE
(Cadiz)

which God the Father appears, the beautiful angels who surround Him there, cannot fail to strike the spectator; we feel as if the sacred persons represented were dwelling in an ideal mansion, somewhere betwixt Heaven and Earth.

This *Holy Family* was, appropriately enough, the last work accomplished by Murillo. After this date, Fate did not permit him to finish any other work and it may truly be said that not even his genius would have been able to create anything finer.

The sketch for the great picture *The Betrothal of Saint Catherine*, which was to adorn the high altar of the Capuchin Church, is in the possession of an amateur of Cadiz; other works by Murillo are to be found in the Cathedral, in the Hospital for Women, in the Church of San Felipe. Others, which were owned by private persons, have been nearly all sold, for the fame of Murillo's talent was so great that from his own days up to the present time, as we may learn from Cean, the demand for his pictures was so large that hardly any remained in the hands of private persons: "foreigners having hastened to take them away from Spain."

The last great work undertaken by Murillo was the retable of the Capuchin Church; it was to consist of five pictures. In the centre was to be placed *The Betrothal of Saint Catherine*, with *Saint Joseph with the Holy Child*, *Saint Michael*, *Saint Francis* and *The Guardian Angel* at the sides. It was ordered by the Friars on the strength of a legacy which had been left

to them by the rich merchant Don Juan Violante. The principal picture, *The Betrothal*, was in process of painting when Murillo, who was not at all active for his age, had the misfortune to fall from the scaffold. The effects of the accident were fatal.

The painter was obliged to be removed to his home in Seville after the accident, leaving the canvas which he had begun and the other four which he had designed to his distinguished pupil Meneses Ossorio; the sketches were already made and it is possible that the paintings were sent for the master's approval before they were hung over the high altar.

The great artist recovered to some extent from this accident, but he was never again able to resume his work. He appears to have become reconciled to his misfortune and he used to devote himself to the study of that art which he had cultivated so ardently and of which so many examples were to be seen in Seville. Being unable to work himself, he dedicated his leisure to admiring that of other great masters; so zealous was he that he had to be carried into the churches in order to feast his eyes on the treasures they contained. One of these was the great *Descent from the Cross* by Pedro de Campaña, which hung in a chapel in Murillo's own parish of Santa Cruz; before this picture, which we have praised when speaking of the work of that master, Murillo used to remain in a state of æsthetic rapture. He was so absorbed in his contemplation on one occasion, that when he was informed of the lateness of the hour and the necessity of closing the church, he

THE
MUSEUM
OF
ST. JOSEPH



MURILLO

ST. JOSEPH

(Museum, Seville)

exclaimed : “ Just let me see how those holy men finish lowering the body of Christ.”

The injury which he had suffered from the accident was, in the end, fatal to Murillo, who died in the arms of his devoted pupil Don Pedro Nuñez de Villavicencio on April 3, 1682 : on the following day, his testamentary request was carried out and he was buried at the foot of that great *Descent from the Cross* which had been the consolation of his last days. Under the dome of this church there remained for many years “ the body of Bartolomé Murillo, a great master of the art of painting ” as he is called in his burial certificate ; but it is not known now for certain where his remains are, as the church itself was destroyed.

Murillo's wife, Doña Beatriz Cabrera de Soto, predeceased him ; his eldest son, Don Gabriel, whom he had painted so often as a child, was in America ; his daughter Doña Francisca had become a nun, and only Don Gaspar, the priest, was in Seville when he died.

The great painter was a very strongly built man, who enjoyed perfect health ; his genius and his originality were strongly imprinted on a countenance which somewhat resembled those of Goya and Beethoven, although it was more placid and serene than either of these. His character was fundamentally pious and good ; he was moderate in his habits and absolutely devoted to his profession, having little time to devote to the vanities or pleasures of life.

As an artist he must be considered to be one of the geniuses of Spanish painting ; he was certainly one of

the most charming and attractive of all those great masters who have set their mark on the art of the country. His pictures were chiefly religious and in them he gave the most artistic form to the dogmas and ethics of Catholicism which he propagated in Spain by means of his art far more effectively than did the theologians with their writings and their sermons. Notwithstanding his predilection for religious subjects, he executed works of all kinds; some of his portraits are famous and he was very happily inspired in his landscapes and other studies.

The representations of Alonso de Herrera and of Juan Lopez Talabon, which he painted when executing the pictures of *Saints Isidoro and Leandro*, now in the large sacristy of the Cathedral of Seville, may certainly be considered as portraits on account of the animated and individual expression of the faces; but besides these he executed some very notable portraits. There is in the Cathedral a *Madre Dorotea*, painted in 1674, no doubt from a sketch or engraving of earlier date, as the pious foundress died in 1623; the head of the lady is said by Cean Bermudez to "excel the finest painted by the master." Don Nicholas Maestre has still in his possession the portraits of his ancestors, *Captain Don Diego Maestre* and *Doña Maria Felices*; in the Prado Gallery we find *Padre Cavanilles*, a bare-foot monk, while the Academia di San Fernando has a copy of his portrait of *Don Andres de Andrady*. Señor Beruete has in his collection the portrait of *Don Felix Esquivel*, as we learn from his coat of arms, a picture which he



MURILLO

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

(Prado, Madrid)

obtained from his heirs. In the palace of the Duke of Alba there is a portrait which is supposed, on good grounds, to represent Murillo's eldest son, Don Gabriel; his age appears to be about twenty-five, in the year 1680, when it was painted; which would be correct, as he was born in 1658. This portrait is certainly one of the most vigorous and realistic executed by the master. There are other portraits, but they are all in foreign hands; we may note the portraits of the *Conde and Condesa de Avalos*, in the collection of the Earl of Caledon, and the portraits of *Don Luis de Haro* and *Don Nicholas Omazurino* with a sketch in his hand. To Lord Northbrook belongs the original portrait of *Don Andres de Andrady y Col*, verger of the Cathedral of Seville, with his dog, on which he rests his hand; we have noticed the copy made by Simon Gutierrez at the beginning of this list of portraits.

The portrait of *Don Juan Francisco Eminente*, a great admirer of Murillo, has disappeared, but that of his wife, Doña Juana, is in the collection of Mr. J. C. Robinson in London. The *Archbishop Don Ambrosio Ignacio Espinola* is in the Stafford House Collection. The celebrated portrait of *Don Justino de Neve*, the founder of the Hospital for Venerable Priests, with his famous little dog at his feet, a portrait which Murillo painted when he executed the works which his friend had ordered for the church, is now in the Marquis of Lansdowne's collection at Bowood. The painter's own portrait, the original of almost all those that are known to us, was said to have been painted at the request

of his children; it is now in the collection of Earl Spencer. It has been copied and engraved several times.

Such are the best-known portraits—not many it is true—which were executed by the master; they all give evidence of a deep study of nature and show him as an attentive student of actual likeness, as a realist of the first order, as one who built the foundations of his art on the earth in order to raise his inspiration to the skies.

With regard to the interpretation of nature, we cannot say that he showed himself neglectful; in many of his pictures we may note backgrounds of landscape or architecture, a golden atmospheric effect, a play of light and shade, executed in masterly manner. We may also remark that although Iriarte was then considered the best landscapist in Seville, Murillo declined to collaborate with him in a work which the Marques de Villamanrique ordered with that express stipulation; he executed a series of pictures setting forth the history of David, with landscape backgrounds admirably rendered by himself.

It is strange that during Murillo's lifetime his fame scarcely penetrated beyond Andalusia, a fact which was no doubt due to his own modesty. What is even more strange is that in Madrid, where the paintings of all the artists in the kingdom were collected, hardly anything was known of his masterpieces until the Court of the Bourbons was transferred from Madrid to Seville, where his wonderful work surprised all those who saw it for



MURILLO
MADONNA
(Prado, Madrid)

the first time. It is said that when Charles II. heard of this talented artist, he appointed him one of his Court painters ; and Palomino tells us that a *Conception* was presented to the King by the painter's great friend Don Francisco Eminente, which was much admired by all. Palomino throws some doubt on the matter of the King's enthusiasm, who was then but a boy. All are agreed that Murillo was excessively modest and his most reliable biographer says of him : "Some men of genius are so shy that although they can perform miracles in the seclusion of the studio, they are embarrassed by their diffidence in public."

Notwithstanding this diffidence, there is no other painter whose works have been so popular or so much appreciated by the whole world.

The Court of Philip V. stayed in Seville in 1729, when the Queen, Doña Isabel Farnese, was quite enchanted with the divine inspirations of the master ; she acquired several works which were known to be authentic in those days and which could be removed from Seville. The rooms of Aranjuez and La Granja were then decorated with such fine works as : *Two Children with a Shell*, two *Purissimas* and another of the same subject half length ; *Rebecca and Eliezer*, *Holy Family with a Bird*, *Saint Bernard tasting the Nectar presented by the Virgin* and various others which form the glory of the Prado Gallery where they are now hung. Charles III. enriched his collection by some more pictures attributed to Murillo, but they were not so authentic and their *provenance* is not so well known. It appears

from statistics that have been drawn up, that England is the most favoured country and possesses a great many of Murillo's celebrated works; the galleries of Seville and Madrid are noted for the great quantity contained amongst their treasures; the Louvre has some very famous pictures, but the Hermitage Gallery of Saint Petersburg can show works which exceed these both in quantity and quality. In Italy the galleries of the Vatican and the Pitti Palace have fine works by the master, and the Pinakothek of Munich has collected together more pictures in the *picaresco* style than can be seen in any other gallery.

It is very difficult to make a complete catalogue of Murillo's works on account of their great number. Stirling, Tubino, and Curtis have all endeavoured to form such a list, but the author who has been the most successful in this matter, and who has illustrated the text with the most interesting notes and the most exact references, is Don Luis Alfonso in his "Murillo," to which work we must refer the students who desire more information concerning the painter's production.

There are few words to be added in his praise. Murillo achieved much because he felt much; he was an inspired man, a genius who so mastered graphic art that he was able to express by it his most intimate sentiments. It is for this reason that his work impresses us as being essentially original in character, because it rests on such deep foundations.

His spirit was not analytical. He did not aim at great refinement of line or at reproducing, in a



MURILLO
SKETCH FOR THE "VIRGIN AND ST. BERNARD"
(Prado, Madrid)

THE
MUSEUM
OF
THE
CITY OF
NEW YORK
AND
THE
MUSEUM OF
THE
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

mechanical manner, those impressions of light and colour which help to give an appearance of actuality to a model. His art was based on such studies, but he preferred to represent ideal beings, a little indefinite at times and appearing almost as if they were going to vanish away. This treatment was his great charm, and thanks to it his expression of the ideal reached a very high level of achievement and the spiritual intention of his works became almost more important than the form in which he clothed them.

We may seek in vain for the place where Murillo's remains were deposited; even the quarter of the city on which he threw so much lustre during his lifetime has vanished. The parish of Santa Cruz was destroyed by the French during the invasion, because they found it in a very ruinous condition. It was then that his remains were sought for, but without success, they having been mingled with those of many others in the crypt of the church. A commemorative stone has been placed by the citizens in the wall of a house in the Plaza to record the search made.

Authorities differ as to the house Murillo was living in at the time of his death. Some affirm that he lived in the Plaza de Alfaro, in a building which now houses the collections made by the Dean Señor Cepero and his descendants; a commemorative tablet to this effect has been placed in the portico. Others assert that he died in the neighbouring street, the Calle de Santa Teresa, opposite the Cathedral. According to Ponz, the well-known traveller, a slab of white marble

covered his grave on which a former generation had engraved the appropriate words: *Vive Moritus*.

There have not been wanting modern critics who have endeavoured to drag down the great reputation of Murillo, but the painter's works will always be held in the highest estimation on account of the sublimity of their character. He may be said, moreover, to have on his side the most influential portion of the human race, for he has secured the unanimous suffrage of the heart of woman.

Perhaps it will not be inopportune to insert here a story relating to an artist whose origin can be traced to Seville, although by his birth and his production he belonged entirely to another and neighbouring school.

Agustin del Castillo, the brother of Juan del Castillo, who was Murillo's master, had a son born in Cordova whom he named Antonio; Antonio's artistic talent was so great that many of his works can be compared to those of Zurbaran and even to those of Velazquez in his first manner. As a youth he was in Seville, but he returned to his native city of Cordova, where he became the great artist of his school and where he continued to practise his art for the remainder of his life. His salient qualities were great firmness of drawing and a truly revolutionary freedom as to composition. By reason of these characteristics, he became known as an artist who had arrived at the summit of his endeavour in his own peculiar line; but

being exiled from Seville, he had never acquired the grace and the fine colouring which distinguished her artists.

Antonio del Castillo often heard of the fame of Murillo and of the artists of the school who were flourishing at the time, but he would never admit that they had achieved anything superior to his own work. In the end, however, he decided to undertake a journey to Seville in order to see the wonderful masterpieces which were there. He was received by the artists of Seville with the greatest respect and he proceeded to study the works of Zurbaran, Cano, and Valdes, leaving those of Murillo to the last. Then he went to the Cathedral to study the famous *San Antonio*. The effect produced by this masterpiece was extraordinary. Speechless and overcome by emotion, Castillo remained before it for a long time, wrapt in profound contemplation. For a long time he could not articulate a word; at last, as if he were regaining possession of himself, he exclaimed, "Castillo is already dead," and he had to support himself by leaning on the wall in order not to fall down on the ground.

Castillo returned to Cordova, but he could not free his mind from this obsession. "Murillo! Murillo!" he used to exclaim, "is it possible that my uncle's humble apprentice can have achieved such grace and such exquisite colour?"

He painted very little after this episode and in his latest works he endeavoured to imitate the grace and

the colour of Murillo but without success. His spirit was completely broken; he became a prey to the deepest melancholy and he died not long after, deeply wounded in his artistic vanity.

THE ACADEMY OF SEVILLE

It is characteristic of Murillo's altruistic personality that he was not content with his own advancement and glory, but was anxious to form an Academy for young enthusiasts who should there be able to obtain instruction in art. This Academy became the greatest interest of his life, and it was, in a way, the crown of his life-work.

The system of teaching which he inaugurated was diametrically opposed to that of former masters. No doubt he remembered the vexations and the humiliations which he had endured in Castillo's studio and the hard terms agreed upon in contracts of apprenticeships to which the cleverest youths were bound to submit. He proposed to open to students a far wider and fuller course of study and he hoped, by these means, to awaken and inspire the highest enthusiasm. The Academy was not only intended for beginners, but the beginners could be encouraged by the example of the masters, who were always working and whom they were allowed to assist. In this way the system was completed and the Academy became the centre of enthusiasm and the fount where the student might seek for the sacred fire of art.

Murillo opened his Academy on January 11, 1660,

in the house of Lonja of Seville, and he realised then the greatest wish of his life when he became a master, looking on his pupils as "blood of his blood and bone of his bone." Bartolomé Esteban Murillo appears in the list of founders as President; Francisco de Herrera, son of Herrera the Old, who was then in Seville, was Vice-President; Sebastian de Llano y Valdes, the man with whom Alonso Cano had a duel, and Pedro Honorio de Palencia were consuls or councillors. The irritable Juan Valdes Leal acted as deputy, Cornelio Schutt was critic, the landscapist Ignacio de Iriarte was secretary, and Pedro de Medina was superintendent. The other Academicians were Murillo's pupils and some artists, who were, for the most part, his followers and admirers.

The Academy was not organised without serious disagreements; the admission amongst the directors of Valdes Leal constituted in itself a great difficulty. Nevertheless, Murillo had the pleasure of seeing his new institution in full working order during his own lifetime, it being supported principally by his pupils and friends. Notwithstanding their zeal, the institution was not completely successful; this fact was due not so much to the quarrels amongst the founders as to an issue which Murillo could not have foreseen. The times were changing and the fortunate circumstances which had favoured him during his laborious career were no longer so auspicious to the enterprise which the painter looked on as the crowning-point of his artistic mission. At his death, the Academy lost its principal support and the institution vanished, leaving behind it

some documents which are treasured amongst its most venerable archives by the Academia de Bellas Artes in Seville.

Murillo's Academy was the first institution in which, as Cean says, "the study of the nude man was publicly practised in that city, the model assuming an attitude and the master explaining the proportion and the anatomy." It was, moreover, the first to attempt that new manner of teaching the fine arts which has become prevalent in modern times and which is the direct outcome of the methods adopted by Murillo.

CHAPTER XIII

VALDES LEAL

AT the same time that Murillo flourished in Seville, another painter was working in the same city, who was, to a certain extent, his rival; this artist never succeeded in eclipsing the glory of the painter of the *Conception*, possibly on account of the serenity and admirable balance of Murillo's work and of the firm faith that he held of his artistic mission. Notwithstanding this fact, Don Juan Valdes Leal (1630-1690) was possessed of sufficient talent and originality to be considered as the only painter of the school who may be compared to the great master.

Seville and Cordova dispute the honour of being his birthplace. There have been animated discussions as to this point and the critics have used every endeavour to elucidate the mystery. Up to the present time no document has been found which has sufficient authenticity to settle the question in favour of either of the cities between which he passed his life. The only evidence in favour of Seville lies in the fact that in a census which was made of the residents of that city in 1665, amongst the soldiers who would be available in time of

war is found the name of Juan Valdes, living in the Calle Amor de Dios, who was a "native" of Seville.¹ This assertion corroborates the statement made by Palomino.²

But whether Valdes Leal was a native of Seville or of Cordova, whether his father came from one city and his mother from the other, it is in these cities that we must look for examples of his pictorial skill; the greater number of them are now in Seville.

The first known work by this artist is in Cordova in the Church of San Francisco; it is signed and dated 1648, when Valdes was not yet twenty years old. It represents the Apostle Saint Andrew and is executed with a strong touch, but still shows the inexperience which was natural to his youth. In style and tonality it differs completely from the character of Cordovan painting; it is easy to see that the artist has been educated elsewhere, and we can trace a certain attempt to imitate the tonality of Roelas and a facility of execution which he could only have acquired in the studio of Herrera the Elder. It seems almost certain that he must have studied under this master, after which he must have been for several years in Cordova, as, in 1654, he signed in that city a *Conception*, which

¹ Gestoso, "Diccionario de Artistas," vol. ii. p. 109.

² It may be that the parents of Valdes were natives of Cordova, although he was born in Seville. The fact that a Lucas Valdes is mentioned as being one of the principal goldsmiths of Cordova and that the painter often worked with the Cordovan goldsmiths lends colour to this assertion. See the author's "Bosquejo historico sobre la orfebreria española," 1909, p. 126.

Don José Amador of Los Rios saw in the collection of Don Aniceto Bravo in Seville. Don José describes the picture, which has since disappeared.

When only twenty-four years old, Valdes Leal married Doña Isabel de Garrasquilla, a lady who belonged to a distinguished Cordovan family, as we learn from Palomino; after this date he remained in Cordova. In 1658, he executed some admirable works of great size for the retable of the Church of the Carmen at Cordova, which were so bold in technique and so grand as compositions that they at once assured his position as a very prominent artist. A little before this date he must have painted the "*Saint Eloy* (called "of the Silversmiths") which is now in the Cordovan Museum, "very well composed and adorned with a gloria and a company of angels," as Palomino says. In this picture we may note that the richness of the detail appears more appropriate to tapestry than to painting and that the figure representing the Conception reminds us strongly of those executed by Murillo, which Valdes must have seen when he was in Seville. The very rich goldsmith's work introduced shows us the special *genre* of this work for which Cordova was so famous. There is also a portrait of his in Cordova of about this date—that of the Doctor Don Enrique de Alfaro when he was only a licentiate. It is admirable in expression and is a good likeness.

Some of this artist's biographers assert that Valdes painted, in this same year, a series of pictures for the monastery of San Geronimo as well as the portrait of

Don Miguel de Mañara for the Caridad; but there appears to be some mistake in the date. With regard to the portrait, the critics have not reflected that Don Miguel did not enter the fraternity until 1662 and that he was not made Superior until the following year; it is possible that the date on the picture should be read 1667 instead of 1657. The execution of the picture corresponds in style to that of the greatest and most mature period of the artist's production, to that period during which he painted some works for the same Church of the Caridad, of which we shall speak in detail later on. The San Geronimo series resembles work executed at a much later date than has been generally believed.

To return to the paintings in the Church of the Carmen in Cordova, we must admit that they give evidence of force and originality and that a young man of twenty-eight must have made a great effort in order to execute these twelve colossal canvasses so successfully. If effort there were, it is not evident; the young Valdes shows that he possessed sufficient talent to be hailed as a master, that he had a luxuriant and vigorous inspiration and a powerful artistic imagination. With regard to his technique, although at times it is weak, he generally succeeds in rendering dramatic, expressive and picturesque presentments of his subject.

In the great central canvas, the subject represented is *Elijah taken up to Heaven by the Fiery Chariot*. The prophet appears in the act of ascending to Heaven, whilst his disciple Elisha, remaining on earth,

begs him to give him a token of affection; Elijah presents him with his mantle, leaning from the chariot in which he is seated.

The animation with which the scene is presented is truly striking; the aerial group of the chariot, drawn by four white horses, leaves the earth amid flashes of light and glory in the midst of which the figure of the prophet stands out, making the spectators feel quite dizzy.

The side pictures are also dedicated to the history of Elijah. We see here *Elijah conquering his Enemies with a Sword of Fire*, *The Worshippers of Baal on Mount Carmel*, and *Elijah visited in his Dreams by an Angel*, all of imposing grandeur and fine tonality, luminous and diaphanous in colour and with effective landscape backgrounds. Amongst the other pictures we may notice the *Virgin of the Carmen*, the composition of which is traditional and was often used by the Andalusian painters. The Virgin is represented covered by a mantle and with her arms extended to many saints, male and female, of the Order, who are on their knees with outstretched arms on either side.

With regard to the decapitated heads of Saint Peter and Saint John the Baptist, Valdes began that type of subject which he often repeated during the course of his artistic career.

The pictures on the socle representing *Saint Acisclo*, *Saint Victoria*, *Saint Raphael*, and *Saint Michael* are less masterly in execution. They were probably the first to be painted and served as a preliminary study

before attacking the larger and more important work.

The execution of this great work explains the long sojourn at Cordova made by Valdes after his marriage; it is evident that his work had been crowned by success and that the accomplishment of the commission entrusted to him made him ambitious. He probably thought that in Seville he would have a better market for his work, for that same year, 1658, he removed there with his wife and presented a petition to the city, written and signed by himself, in which he pleaded, "that considering he had exercised the art of painting for some years, and considering also that on account of want of time he had not been able to pass his examination as a painter, he begged the Judge of the Supreme Tribunal that he would give him a licence to practise the said art in Seville as long as his employment lasted." Valdes left Cordova for Seville, as we have seen, in 1658, and in Seville he pursued his profession for many years. In the city of the Betis he had to compete with such eminent men as Murillo, Herrera el Mozo and the whole pleiad of the pupils of the great master, who was then the undisputed head of the school; he had even to contend against the reputation of Zurbaran, who had only just left for Madrid, as well as with the actual work of the many distinguished painters then collected together in Seville.

There is no doubt that the talent of Valdes was instantly recognised, one proof of it being that when

Murillo instituted his celebrated Academy two years afterwards, in 1660, Don Juan Valdes Leal was appointed to the important post of Deputy or Superintendent. He was, at this time, only thirty years of age.

In the year 1659, Valdes had acquired considerable renown on account of the pictures which he painted for the Church of San Benito of Calatrava,¹ which were notable for their colouring; the tints used being of great intensity and warmth. The figures, also, were dramatically expressed although the drawing leaves something to be desired and the whole work is more to be admired on account of the colouring than for any purity of line displayed. The subjects chosen were *Calvary*, in which he represented Christ crucified, with the Virgin and Saint John on either side, and the Magdalen embracing His feet, and a *Conception*, in which the Virgin is clothed after the manner of Murillo's Madonnas and is seen against a background of luminous atmosphere. Eight canvasses, of unequal merit, complete the sum of the first work executed by Valdes after he definitely settled in Seville.

The character of this painter had a good deal to do with the commissions he received, for he was one of those whose greatest wish is to attract public attention, who court notoriety and applause. He was a pushing man, who wished to advance his interests in life at all costs, and if rivalry did not with him take the form of bitter envy it at least fretted his spirit and made him

¹ Now in the Church of Monte Sion.

impatient. This ambition almost led him to destroy Murillo's newly born Academy, in which, however, he did not stay long enough to become its President, leaving both his post and the institution itself not long after he had entered on his duties. Soon afterwards he was elected President of the Fraternity of Painters of Saint Luke, which was in the parish of San Andres, and which he had joined some time before. Whilst in the Academy, he provoked many a quarrel on account of his want of moderation and his arrogance. Palomino relates that an Italian artist, who wished to study in the Academy for a few terms, was obliged to fly the city in order to save his life, because the jealousy of Valdes had been excited by the praises he had received. He not only forbade the unlucky man to enter the Academy, but, when he heard that he had exhibited his work on the steps of the Cathedral on a Saint's day and that they had been greatly admired there, he pursued him round the city with a dagger in his hand.

1667 appears to be the most likely date for the execution of the pictures representing the *Life of Saint Geronimo*, which are now to be seen in a special room in the Museum of Seville, with some portraits of holy men of the Order. The technique is already very far advanced.

Valdes Leal, as Murillo said, wanted to be first in everything; besides being a painter, he considered himself to be a sculptor, an engraver, and an architect. He was ambitious of being a sort of Dictator of Art and the centre of all that was accomplished in Seville.



VALDES LEAL
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
(Museum, Seville)

On one occasion, an opportunity presented itself in which Valdes was able to shine in all these capacities. The canonisation of the sainted King Ferdinand III., the Conquerer of the City, which had for so long been ardently desired in Seville, was to be celebrated there with extraordinary solemnity in 1671. Amongst other celebrations, the Chapter of the Cathedral decided to erect, inside the basilica, a stupendous building or architectural shrine, and the nave was to be decorated in a most magnificent manner. Valdes Leal was entrusted with the erection of the shrine in conjunction with the sculptor Bernardo Simon Pineda and with other painters of the second rank, who built and ornamented, in a wonderful way, the tabernacle which was to celebrate the canonisation of the Saint. In style it was frankly fantastic and almost disconnected, like that of the later developments of Spanish "barocco" architecture. We can form a very good idea of the appearance it presented by means of the engraving executed by Valdes, which gives a panorama of the whole work. Its erection occupied the best part of the year 1671.

The following year Valdes was obliged to visit Cordova, probably to arrange some family affairs; whilst there he met Palomino, who, although but a boy, was deeply interested in artistic matters. Palomino relates that he watched Valdes paint several times, when he was at work on a series of Madonnas which he executed whilst in Cordova for Tomas del Castillo; he was surprised to see that he painted standing, retreating

from the canvas every now and then, and then returning to paint on it, this being "his ordinary manner of painting, which was characteristic of his restless and vivacious temperament."

After his return to Seville, Valdes was commissioned by the great philanthropist Don Miguel de Mañara to give graphic form to some of his own philosophical ideas.

Don Miguel had known the artist since 1667, the date which we have suggested as being the most likely to be that of the painting of his portrait by Valdes. The friendship which sprang up between the fiery painter and the man who was, according to the legend, a great penitent, was to be fruitful of much æsthetic activity.

Mañara and Valdes were much alike in some respects. Pessimism, a scanty appreciation of the joy of life, a neurosis which disturbed its placidity and unbalanced its rhythm, influenced them both. They had similar views as to the importance of human life, set forth the "hieroglyphs of the end of our days" as the only truth worth seeking in life, which passed *in ictu oculi*—in a blink of the eye—as Valdes wrote on one of these pictures. In another, *The End of the Glory of the World*, the subject was symbolised by the most repulsive proximity of two biers on which is plainly visible the corruption of the bodies of a knight of Calatrava and a bishop.

This pessimistic view of life was reasoned out and epitomised by Mañara in his sad and depressing

Discourse on Truth,¹ in which he infers that life ought to be employed in thinking of its limitations. This decay of vital force, symptom of a decadent society, was only too well realised by Valdes, who was, to a certain extent, initiating the decadence of the school, as we may judge by studying a colossal picture, *The Worship of the Cross*. This work occupied the whole width of the Church of the Caridad, being placed over the choir, and with it was concluded the scheme of decoration which had been begun in 1670, by the more sympathetic pencil of Murillo, whose pictures were hung there at almost the same time as those of Valdes.

The contrast between the work of the two painters could not be more striking. Murillo is all sweetness, placidity, happiness, and evenness of inspiration; Valdes is sad to repulsiveness, so brutally crude that even his artistic proficiency can hardly make his work bearable; his attitudes are strained, his figures are huddled together, his composition is overcrowded. All these faults are visible in the *Worship of the Cross*, which appears to represent the humiliation of civil power by ecclesiastical, which latter is despoiling the former of its finery in order to obtain the title of Defender of the Cross of Christ.

A legend has crystallised for us the antagonism existing between the art of the two masters. Valdes is said to have shown his picture to Murillo, whose opinion on the subject he desired to have. Murillo said: "Comrade, one cannot look at these pictures without

1 "Discurso de la Verdad."

holding one's nose!" to which Valdes replied: "And you have painted a picture of Saint Isabel in which the poor people make one sick!"

Having concluded the unpleasant task set him by Mañara, Valdes received other commissions. Amongst these was one from the Archbishop Don Ambrosio de Spinola, who, in 1673-4, engaged him to execute various pictures "of small and medium size," according to Cean, "representing *Passages in the Life of San Ambrosio*, for the oratory beneath his palace." They are no longer in existence.

Soon after, he received an order from the Jesuits to paint some large canvasses, the subject being *The Life of Saint Ignatius de Loyola*. These pictures are now exhibited in a series in the new gallery in the Museo Provincial, which is devoted to the works of this artist; we see in them, though somewhat modified, the qualities which we have before noticed. The composition is rather "barocco," it is far removed from any logical or normal presentments of actuality and the colouring is decidedly too dark in tone. In that same year Valdes painted in water-colour the frontispiece to the "Inventory of the furniture, pictures, and jewels of the house"¹ for the Fraternity of the Caridad, no doubt by order of Don Miguel de Mañara; he then decided to visit the Court and repaired to Madrid with that intention. He studied there all the collections that he was able to examine and left behind him an example of the vivacity and facility of his draughts-

¹ "Inventario de los muebles, pinturas y alhajos de la casa."



VALDES LEAL
SAYING MASS

(Museum, Seville)

manship, in a sketch which he executed in a night-school.

After his return to Seville, Valdes continued to exercise his art in that city, and when Murillo died in 1682 he was considered to be the most eminent painter of the school. It is easy to see that the quality of his work improved as his mind became less disturbed after the removal of his rival. The best works of this period of maturity, and of a tranquillity of mind unknown until then, are perhaps the pictures in the Church of San Clemente. These represent *The Saint causing Water to flow from a Rock*, the *Apparition of the Chapel of Saint Clement*, a saint who was persecuted by the Emperor Trajan, and the finest of all, *The Triumphal Entry of Saint Fernando into Seville*, which took place on Saint Clement's Day, 1247.

In the winter of 1688, Valdes was employed, with the help of his son Lucas Valdes, in decorating the walls of the Church of the Venerable Priests, that church for which Murillo had executed some of his most inspired works—when his vigorous right hand was suddenly paralysed. He had only painted three pictures of the series when this misfortune occurred; they were almost historic, as one represented *The Apotheosis of Saint Fernando*, another commemorated the traditional *Visit of Saint Fernando to the Virgin of La Antigua before the Capture of the City*, and the third *The Surrender of the Mosque to the Archbishop Don Remondo*.

Valdes was incapacitated for work after this seizure

and before two years had passed by he had died of its effects. On October 15, 1690, his body was buried under the Church of San Andres, to which parish he belonged; the event caused great grief amongst the artists of Seville.

Valdes had a son, Don Lucas, whom he educated to be a painter; he was, to a great extent, the inheritor of his business as well as of his artistic talents.

Valdes Leal was an intrepid striver after the mastery of art; he devoted all his energies to this cause with the greatest enthusiasm, but perhaps he lacked serenity and a real confidence in his own powers. His striving after effect and his incorrectness are owing to his restless nature, which prompted him to solve difficulties rather by inspiration than by knowledge. For this reason his work is without that sustained character which is evidenced in that of other painters, and his production is very unequal; notwithstanding this fact, his individuality is always recognisable and he has a marked style of his own. He is in reality a great stylist. His chief quality is that of a vibrant colourist; he gives us at times notes of colour that are higher in key than that of any other painter of the School. On the other hand, his drawing degenerates into the "barocco" style when he is striving after grace and movement. There are some moments when he seems to resemble El Greco in his work, but he never acquired the spirited expression or the psychology of the great master of Toledo; in his presentment of sadness he equals, if he does not surpass him.

The last works of Valdes are the best and the most equable ; there is no doubt that the obsession which Murillo exercised over him during his lifetime prevented him from painting in peace and quiet. The serenity and modesty of the painter of the *Conception* provoked in him feelings of the most unconquerable irritation.

Valdes had, in reality, sufficient talent to justify more confidence on his part. His individuality is acknowledged to-day and he is highly esteemed. If art is to consist in a vision of reality seen through a temperament, we must admit that his was sensitive, to a high degree, to artistic beauty. He had an intuitive understanding of movement and of the effect of it on his figures and he sought to express this in a manner which was suited to his genius. If, in endeavouring to express motion, he became exaggerated, his exaggeration is very beautiful and picturesque.

FRESCOES AND ENGRAVINGS

Valdes was also skilful in fresco painting and has left examples of his handiwork in the Church of the Caridad in Seville, where he decorated the cupola with representations of the Four Evangelists, executed in this medium. His best fresco is in the Church of the Venerable Priests ; it represents *Four Angels flying with the Cross*. This is a very beautiful work which, by reason of the boldness of the foreshortening, the transparency of the tints and the general idea of the composition, recalls the most vigorous works of the artist ; it

is conspicuous for being executed in a manner which shows the magnificence of his style. There are some paintings to simulate bronze statues and reliefs in the roof and cupola which are also by Valdes.

As an engraver he was well worthy of consideration, as he manipulated his tools with great facility. We are indebted to his burin for his own portrait, which can be seen in the collection of engravings in the Biblioteca Nacional; it is notable for the contrast of light and shade and for the elaborate and complicated border in which it is framed. He also engraved the *Tabernacle of Juan of Arfe* and the greater number of the plates for the work entitled "The feasts of the Holy Metropolitan Church, setting forth the new cult of Our Lord San Fernando,"¹ which was written by Don Fernando de la Torre Farfan for the Feast of Canonisation to which we have before alluded.

Besides the works which we have already mentioned, there exists a tradition of many other memorable pictures executed by Valdes. The number of them is quite extraordinary and his facility and fertility of imagination were certainly remarkable. Cean Bermudez mentions some that were in Seville in his day, such as some pictures in the Chapel of San Lucas, in the Fraternity of Painters, and others in the Church of San Andres, all of which have disappeared with so many others by almost all the masters of Seville, works which ought to

¹ "Fiestas de la Santa Iglesia Metropolitana al nuevo culto del Señor San Fernando," Seville, 1671,

adorn the city at the present day. Valdes had a picture representing *Saint John the Baptist preaching in the Wilderness* in the Church of San Francisco, which was afterwards destroyed and in which was then placed Murillo's great *Conception*; the *Apparition of our Lord to Saint Catherine of Siena* no longer adorns the Church of San Pablo, and all the pictures representing scenes in the life of the founder at Los Angeles, which used to be in the second cloister of the Monastery of San Antonio, have disappeared.

A *Saint John the Evangelist* in the Church of the Madre de Dios, a *Holy Father* in that of San Benito of Calatrava, have shared the fate of *The Annunciation*, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, *The Name of Jesus*, *The Dream of Joseph*, and the *Ecce Homo* of the Merced Calzada. The *Passages in the Life of San Ambrosio* of the Archiepiscopal Palace are also supposed to have disappeared.

Five of the canvasses executed for the monastery of San Geronimo de Buenavista are preserved in the Museo Provincial; but others of the same series have been lost. In the inventory of the pictures which were seized by the invaders and collected together in the Alcázar of Seville in the year 1810, we find no fewer than sixty-eight pictures attributed to this master. Many of these may have been works which we have already mentioned, but the fact shows the estimation in which he was held by the French.

During the first half of the nineteenth century there were quantities of canvasses attributed to Valdes to be

found in private galleries. Don José Amador de los Rios mentions many of them, principally belonging to the collections of Don Aniceto Bravo and Don Manuel Lopez Cépero; at the present time there are still some to be found in the hands of private persons in Seville, Cordova, Madrid, and other places.

FRANCISCO HERRERA (EL MOZO ¹)

The son of Herrera el Viejo, who had the same christian name as his father—Francisco—(1622-1685) was called El Mozo, the youth, to distinguish him from his parent; he must certainly be mentioned as one of the masters of the School of Seville. We have seen him escaping from his father's home and travelling to Italy, not so much to seek for the purest fount of art as to live in tranquillity, far from the tyrannous control of the author of his days. In Rome, where he remained some years, Herrera devoted himself to the study of fresco and to acquiring a sense of colour. The Roman school had broken away from the classic tradition of the days of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Giulio Romano; it was now enchanted with the beauty of colour as it was set forth by Verrocchio and other masters. Herrera soon distinguished himself as a clever interpreter of natural objects, fruit, game, and fish, following up the study of still life which he had learnt from his father. He was nicknamed the *Spagnuolo degli pesci* because he painted fish so well.

The Youth.

Having heard of the death of his father, Herrera proceeded to Madrid and thence returned to Seville, where he must have been surprised at the great progress in art that had been made during his absence, thanks to the influence of Murillo and Valdes. He became almost entirely under the influence of these masters, and executed some important works for the Sacramentarium of the Cathedral—the *Purissima* and the *Holy Sacrament Adored by the Doctors of the Church*. Both of these works were remarkably well composed and were afterwards engraved. He also painted the enormous *Saint Francis raised up to Heaven by a Choir of Angels* for a chapter-house of the Cathedral, in which he appears to aim at outshining the effects achieved by Murillo and Valdes, by adopting a more vibrant note of colour; in reality he remained the slavish imitator of the genius of the two masters whom he pretended to rival. There is scarcely a stroke of the brush in the whole of this great canvas which is not made under the influence of their most famous works, although as a rule his work is immensely inferior to both one and the other.

The *Saint Francis* is mechanical and mannered and of that "barocco" style to which the art of Spain fell so soon after its period of greatest glory; Herrera el Mozo represents this decadent tendency more than does any other painter of the school.

The glory of Murillo very soon became insupportable to the younger Herrera. Although he had been appointed Vice-President, or Vice-Director of

the Academy, when that institution was founded, he could not for long tolerate a second place. He therefore decided to put an end to his discontent by taking up his residence in Madrid, where he hoped to find a wider field in which to exercise his undoubted ability.

And so it turned out in the end. After his arrival at Court, he was entrusted with the execution of very important works and his dexterity in fresco painting served him well. He was appointed the architect or superintendent of the royal works and he designed the great basilica, the Pilar de Zaragoza, which is considered, in spite of all its defects, as his greatest work. It will be seen that his stay in his natal city was very short, but it was important enough to demand a brief notice.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PUPILS OF THE GREAT MASTERS

It was only natural that such gifted artists as were those of whom we have spoken should not have remained unnoticed; their talents were generally recognised, the appearance of pupils anxious to imitate their style and to make use of their artistic discoveries was one of the first signs of their growing fame.

This phenomenon is, of course, very usual in all branches of culture, and indeed may be considered as a law which helps on its progress; but although in some cases the pupil succeeded, by his own talent, in becoming a master, for the most part he was without real genius and remained in the category of a mere imitator who followed, more or less cleverly, the style he had adopted.

All the great masters whom we have mentioned had pupils and even collaborators whose works will form the subject of this chapter. There are also some artists whom we must mention because of their real talent; their work has, in many cases, been mistaken for that of their masters. We will consider them in groups,

connecting them with the names of their leaders, so that the artistic sequence may be made evident.

THE PUPILS OF HERRERA EL VIEJO

Besides the eminent artists who owed so much to the influence of Herrera, we may also mention Francisco de Reina, who, about the year 1645, painted an excellent picture, *The Souls of Purgatory*, which is still to be seen in the Church Omnium Sanctorum. It is executed with great vigour and the light and shade are finely rendered; taking into consideration the anatomy, the quality of the painting and the composition, it is well worthy of the approval of his master, the painter of the *Last Judgment*. There is a tradition that Reina painted some more pictures for a chapel in the Church of Mount Sion, but his brilliant career was interrupted by his premature death, which took place in 1659 when he was still quite young. Another painter who may be classed as a pupil of Herrera is Ignacio Iriarte (1630-1685). Although Iriarte was born in Azcoitia in the province of Guipuzcoa, he may be considered as one whose work was fully in sympathy with the School of Seville; he was an eminent landscapist, no doubt the most notable in the whole of the Andalusian region. He arrived in Seville when he was only twenty-two years old, and his great progress in art was due to the teaching of Herrera the Old. It is true that when he attempted to follow his teacher's bidding in the interpretation of

real life, he failed as far as figures went, but, on the other hand, when he applied this vigorous work to landscape he reached a very high level of achievement. He may be said to be the ablest exponent of landscape-work amongst the painters of the old School of Seville. Iriarte probably met his first wife, Francisca Chaves, whom he married in 1646, at Aracena, when he was travelling up and down the valleys and sierras of the countryside in search of subjects for his pencil; he became a widower soon afterwards and married Doña Maria Escovar in 1669, as his second wife.

Iriarte was one of the most enthusiastic of the founders of the Academy and was nominated the first General Secretary of that institution; he was re-elected every year until 1669, when his name disappears from the register.

As a rule, he did not venture to paint figures in his landscapes, but left them to other artists who, in their turn—and we are speaking of the most celebrated amongst them—were glad to have his landscape backgrounds for their own pictures. We may remember that Murillo refused to accept these conditions when they were imposed on him on a certain occasion, although he always spoke of Iriarte in the highest terms, even saying that “he painted landscape so well, he must be divinely inspired.”

Iriarte's works were highly esteemed and with them were adorned many of the houses of Seville; he died in that city in 1685.

Don Sebastian de Llanos y Valdes, the man who

fought a duel with Alonso Cano and whose wounds were the cause of Cano's flight from Seville, was also a pupil of Herrera. Llanos was the only one of Herrera's scholars who appears to have been able to support his temper; after his apprenticeship he continued to exercise his art in Seville, where it was highly thought of, but it seems hardly probable that he did so professionally. His use of the prefix "Don," the small number of works that he executed, and his generous disinterestedness, all incline us to think that Llanos was a rich gentleman who cultivated art with fervour, rather than a professional artist.

If this be the case, we can understand the prominent position which he held in the Academy, of which he was one of the founders, and in which he inaugurated the office of First Consul or Vice-President. He was afterwards several times elected President, when quarrels were taking place between Murillo and Valdes; we see by the register of the Academy that no other individual guided the helm of the institution for a longer period or was more generous in the matter of donations. Cean tells us of a *Virgin of the Rosary* with some students standing by, which was signed by Llanos in 1667 and was then in the College of Saint Thomas at Seville.

The other pupils of Herrera were all those eminent masters of whom we have already spoken; it must not be forgotten that the transition of the school from the ancient to the modern style of painting was effected by this original artist. He was, as it were, the trunk of

that great tree of art from which was to spring in perfection the characteristic painting of Spain.

We cannot over-estimate the importance of the technique inaugurated by Herrera and transmitted by him through his pupils to the modern era.

PUPILS OF ROELAS

Eugenio de Roelas had also his followers and his imitators. From amongst these, the first place must be assigned to Juan de Uceda Catroverde, the painter of an excellent picture which represented *Jesus, Mary, and Joseph*, all life-sized figures, with the Holy Father on high. It is signed in the year 1623 and was seen by Cean in a retable in the Merced Calzada; ¹ the writer speaks of it as having great merits. It was painted in the Venetian style, "with great correctness in the design and nobility in the characterisation and the attitudes." There is also a canvas representing *Saint Anne and the Virgin* in the Museo Provincial which is attributed to Uceda. The dates of his birth and death are unknown.

Francisco Varela was another distinguished pupil of Roelas. He was born in Seville towards the end of the sixteenth century, and in 1610 he was sufficiently advanced in his art to be entrusted with the execution of some copies of works which the Catalonian P. Pascual Gaudin had left behind him in the Carthusian Monastery of Santa Maria de las Cuevas. The originals were to be sent to Grenoble, the copies remaining in their place.

¹ Now the Museo Provincial.

Three striking pictures by Varela were over the high altar of San Vicente, but were transferred to the sacristy when, in the seventeenth century, a new retable was constructed with other pictures which have since disappeared. Those of Varela represent passages in the martyrdom of Saint Vincent. He enjoyed a great reputation in Seville in his day and his works are to be found in many private collections in that city, all of them being considered excellent in quality.¹

The brothers or cousins named Ramirez, Cristobal, Geronimo, and Pedro, who flourished in Seville about the year 1660, were also pupils of Roelas. Cristobal was a fine draughtsman, Geronimo an avowed imitator of Roelas and a good colourist, as we may see for ourselves if we study his great picture the *Pope with Cardinals*, which he painted for the Church of the Hospital of the Cardinal, where are placed two notable works by his master. Pedro Ramirez, who was one of the founders and supporters of Murillo's Academy, was one of the most enthusiastic followers of that master, although he was apprenticed to Roelas.

THE PUPILS OF ZURBARAN

The unerring correctness, the severity and the firmness of Zurbaran were admired and imitated by artists

¹ Cean speaks also of a *Saint Michael* in the Merced, a *Saint James* in the Church of the Knights, a *Last Supper* in the sacristy of the Church of San Bernardo, which is considered his best work, and a *Trinity* in the Church of San Geronimo. The *Nativity* and the *Adoration of the Kings* in the retable in the Church of the University are also his.

of the School of Seville ; if this was not altogether due to unbiased impulse, it must have had its origin in the natural influence which one artist exercises over others who are his collaborators.

The principal pupils of Zurbaran were the brothers Polanco, who assimilated his style to such a degree of perfection that even experienced critics have mistaken their works for those of their master. The series of pictures representing Saint Esteban of Seville were all attributed to Zurbaran, but we now know that he only painted the *Saint Peter* and the *Saint Paul*, leaving to the brothers Polanco the central picture representing *The Martyrdom of Saint Esteban* and those others illustrating *The Nativity of Our Lord*, *San Hermenegildo*, and *San Fernando*. There is, in the Museo Provincial, a picture representing the *Twelve Apostles* by these painters, and in the gallery of San Telmo there is a *Santa Polonia* which is attributed to one of them.

About the year 1646, or 1649, these brothers executed some large pictures for the Monastery of San Pablo, having received the commission from P. F. Francisco de Jesus ; they represented scenes such as *The Apparition of the Three Angels to Abraham*, *Tobias with Saint Raphael*, *Jacob's Grief*, *Joseph's Dream*, *The Transfixion of Saint Theresa*, and others of which only the tradition remains.

Bernabé de Ayalá was another industrious artist who owed his education to Zurbaran ; but he was not so faithful to his first master, and afterwards transferred his allegiance to Murillo. This fact may be partly

accounted for by the removal of Zurbaran to Madrid, which left his pupil without a master and forced him to look to Murillo for instruction. In spite of his defection, Ayalá always preserved an affection for carefully studied draperies, which he arranged on a lay figure, after the habit of his first master. Ayalá was also one of the founders of the Academy and was a most assiduous supporter and *habitué* until the year 1671, when it is probable that he either died or was unable to paint any more. *The Assumption* in the Church of San Juan de Dios is by this artist, as are also the *Saint Nicholas*, *Saint Lucy*, *Saint Petronella*, and *Saint Roque*. Various pictures representing *Sibyls and Angels* by Ayalá are to be seen in the Hospital of the Pozo Santo, they are imitations of the full-length isolated figures which Zurbaran used to paint. There are also two paintings representing scenes from the life of *Saint Peter Nolasco* in the Church of Saint Paul, which have been attributed by some to Zurbaran.

PUPILS OF MURILLO

None of the masters of the School of Seville had more pupils than had Murillo. It was as much on account of his own talents as by reason of the education in art that he endeavoured to give that the pupils flocked to his side, making a regular phalanx of followers and imitators. If the school could have remained faithful to the artistic creed which had been given to it, it would have continued to develop and would have

reaped the harvest which was awaiting it after such careful culture. But very powerful reasons were against such a development.

We have already pointed out the cause which led to the downfall of the great Academy which had for so long been Murillo's ideal; but it is also true that, although it deteriorated, it had had certain happy results. The pupils caught up inspiration and the crystallisation of ideas, if we may put it in that way, became for them a definite æsthetic creed.

Murillo's two sons must head the list of his students. Don Gaspar and Don Gabriel both exercised the art with which they had been familiar from their childhood, as was only natural for the sons of a man who had achieved such triumphs in the art of painting. We know that Don Gabriel went to America and that according to Palomino he "was a man who showed great ability in painting and raised the highest hopes." We do not know if these were realised in the New World. Don Gaspar was a man of letters, both sacred and profane, he was a *beneficiado* of Carmona and afterwards a Canon of Seville Cathedral; it is said that he endeavoured to imitate his father in the character of his painting and that he was sometimes successful in the attempt. We have already noticed his disinterested behaviour in favour of the arts, when he took possession of his canonry in Seville.

The sons of the great artist did not inherit their father's genius; his true artistic offspring were rather those other artists amongst whom the most dis-

tinguished were Don Pedro de Villavicencio, a well-born man who was an unchanging friend to Murillo, and Francisco Meneses Ossorio, his favourite and faithful disciple.

Don Pedro Nuñez de Villavicencio (1635-1700) alternated between the profession of arms, which he was obliged to follow as a Knight of Saint John, and that of painting, for which he had a great affection. When he was at Malta, where his profession as a Knight took him, he received lessons from Mateo Preti, a native of Calabria, and when he returned to Seville he became Murillo's most devoted and intimate friend. He helped the master with his own money to organise and support his projected Academy; he was inseparable from him to his last moment, was a witness to his last will and testament, which was never really concluded, and held him in his arms when he died.

Villavicencio was a very skilful portrait-painter. Cean Bermudez praises his work very highly, especially a portrait of himself which was executed in indian ink and which Cean himself possessed. Cean considered his best work to be a picture which is called *Children playing at Dice*. It was offered to Charles II. by the artist when he was staying at the Court, and was much admired in former times when it hung in the Royal Palace. It is now No. 1119 in the Prado Gallery.

The true interpreter and the man who really carried out the precepts of the master was Francisco Meneses Ossorio (1630-1705?) Cean owned a picture of his

representing some children, which, he tells us, "many intelligent people regarded as one of the best pictures of the master."

He was truly his collaborator. He went with him to Cadiz, and it was he who was entrusted to finish the interrupted picture of *Saint Catherine*, with the other designs for the retable, when the accident to Murillo occurred. His work harmonises extremely well with the central figure which was begun by Murillo. An assiduous frequenter of the Academy in which he held the office of superintendent during the years 1668 and 1669, his committee-room was illumined by a *Conception* which he had presented to that institution. There is only one picture by this artist in the Museo of Seville, and in it we may notice his attempt to imitate the delicacy of tint and the grace which distinguished the works of Murillo. The subject of the picture is *Saint Cyril of Alexandria in the Council of Ephesus*.

How many works have been passed off for those of Murillo which have in reality only the faint reflection of the master's charm, having been executed by Ossorio? Cean, as we have said, owned one which "many intelligent people regarded as one of the best pictures of the master." He speaks also of other works by Ossorio: a *Saint Elias and the Angel* and a *Saint Philip Neri*.

Juan Garzon, also a great imitator of the style of Murillo, worked with Ossorio; it is difficult to find his works, perhaps because they are now attributed to the greater artist. Simon Gutierrez and Fernando Marquez were of those who received their education from Murillo

himself. They were officials and collaborators rather than students; they prepared many of their master's canvasses, which were afterwards touched up by him in the more important places, giving the whole that aspect of life which he only could bestow. Although Murillo painted his more important works without assistance, only in the way we have described could he have achieved his enormous output.

Juan Simon Gutierrez contributed funds towards the maintainance of the Academy for eight years, from 1664 to 1672. There are four of his works in the Museo Provincial which corroborate all that we have said concerning his assimilation of Murillo's style. The copy of the master's portrait of *Don Andres de Andrady y Col*, in the Academia de San Fernando, is also by Gutierrez.

Fernando Marquez was also a contributor to the funds of the Academy at this time; besides a portrait which was attributed to him in the Aguadosale, he is said to have executed, in conjunction with Gutierrez, a series of eight pictures illustrative of the *Life of the Virgin*, which were touched up by Murillo. They were sold at a high price in London in the year 1810. Marquez had a nephew, Esteban Marquez, a much less able man, whose work is sometimes confused with his own.

Murillo's slave, the mulatto Sebastian Gomez, was another painter whose progress was derived from the privilege of watching the master at his work. This man was destined by Murillo to size canvasses and to prepare

his brushes and other necessaries, but Gomez was inspired, of his own accord, to go off secretly in order to practise that art by which he saw his master work such wonders. After making some attempts by himself, he ventured to paint on a canvas which Murillo had begun. When Murillo saw what had been done, he said that it was good; when he was told that the mulatto was the artist he was inexpressibly surprised, and having recognised his talent he gave him his liberty and admitted him to the studio as a collaborator. So, at least, we are told by tradition, and the existing works by this artist are certainly good and bear out this story. Gomez died the same year as his master, for whom he had a veritable adoration.

Francisco Perez and his son Andres were also servile imitators of Murillo. The father gave liberally to the funds of the Academy between the years 1660 and 1673. There are some pleasant works by these artists in the Museo Provincial of Seville.

José de Rubira (1747-1787) must be numbered as another of Murillo's pupils; he acquired such dexterity in copying the master's works that a copy of *The Holy Family* which he executed for the Marques de Pedroso was, for a long time, considered to be an original. He was proficient in all branches of art, including that of the miniaturist; he even decorated coaches and carriages, which he enriched with charming designs.

The Holy Family, which is in the National Gallery, is the only work of Rubira that is known to us.

Francisco Antolinez may be said to be Murillo's last

pupil. He was an amateur rather than a professional painter, making use of his talent when he was in the money difficulties which sometimes beset him ; especially when he was in Madrid. He preferred to be considered a lawyer rather than an artist. Notwithstanding this half-heartedness, he assimilated both the colouring and the composition of his master, devoting himself to the execution of small canvasses, the subject being generally in connection with the life of Jesus and the Virgin. They were imitations of the style of Murillo ; in landscape his work had a certain charm. Many of these graceful pictures are to be found both in Seville and in Madrid, his best work being the *Birth of the Virgin*, which was hung in the Chapel of Saint Anne in the Cathedral of Seville.

Francisco Antolinez must not be confounded with his uncle José Antolinez, who was held in much estimation at the Court and who received his young nephew in his house when he first arrived in Madrid. Francisco died in Madrid ; he was already a widower and was preparing to enter Holy Orders in the last year of the seventeenth century, when the end came.

There were also artists who never received instructions from Murillo, but who were induced, by the beauty of his work, to imitate it as well as they were able. Alonso de Escobar was one of the successful imitators ; he painted an *Apparition of the Virgin*, which received the eulogies of Cean, for the Merced Calzada.

Of all those we have named, however, Murillo's most talented imitator and the man who may be said to have

carried on his inspiration was Alonso Miguel de Tovar (1678-1758), a native of Higuera, near Aracena (Huelva). Tovar went to Seville when he was quite young and there he applied himself to the study of Murillo's works and was able to execute some of his own which might have very well have been taken for those of the master. When the Court of Philip V. came to Seville and the Queen became so enamoured of Murillo's works, Tovar was sent for to arrange matters and to hand over to the Crown as many of the master's pictures as could be managed. In concert with the chief Court painter, Don Juan Rane, Tovar effected this, to the great delight of the Queen Doña Isabel Farnese. He was then given a definite appointment at Court, one falling vacant just then by the death of Don Teodoro Ardemans.

The decree by which Tovar received his appointment is dated April 14, 1729; he returned to Madrid with the Court, in charge of Murillo's pictures, and he remained there to the end of his days, painting pictures without ceasing and being particularly engaged in executing portraits of Court functionaries. He also rendered homage to his inspirer, whose portrait of himself he copied with consummate fidelity.¹

There are many works by Tovar which are attributed to Murillo and figure as his in well-known collections. *Our Lady of Consolation* in the Cathedral of Seville justifies Cean's remark that it was "the best picture painted in the city at that time"; and the *Virgin and*

¹ No. 1044 in the Prado Gallery.

Child in the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid shows us with what ardour he assimilated the ideals and the style of his master. Bernardo German de Llorente, called "de las Pastoras"—"the painter of the Shepherdesses"—was another artist who drew his inspiration from the school of Murillo. The name was given him because he nearly always represented the Virgin dressed as a shepherdess tending the lambs which were gathered together at her side; a pastoral inspiration very characteristic of the eighteenth century, and very much in the French fashion, which was at that time prevalent in Spain and had arrived at Seville. A certain pious ecclesiastic had invented a Virgin shepherdess and the idea had been taken up with great enthusiasm.

Llorente, like Tovar, enjoyed the patronage of the Bourbon Court, in which he received an appointment and with which he journeyed to Madrid. Here he painted the portrait of the Prince Don Felipe, at the command of the Queen Doña Isabel Farnese. He afterwards occupied the position of an academician on the active list in the Academy of Fine Arts which Fernando VI. established later on. There is a *Shepherdess* of his in the Prado Gallery,¹ which is a replica of the picture he painted in Seville inspired by the Missionary Capuchin Fray Isidoro of Seville, and which was hung in the church of his monastery, side by side with the superb works of Murillo. Llorente returned at length to his natal city and died therein.

¹ No. 174.



TOVAR
PORTRAIT OF MURILLO
(Prado)

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE

There are other painters who might be considered as followers of Murillo, because there has hardly been a painter in Seville since his time who has not copied his characteristic style or fallen under his influence; but those we have mentioned may be said to form his guard of honour. Some of them became so clever that the most expert critic can hardly distinguish their works from those of their master; this is particularly the case with works the value of which Murillo augmented by painting on the heads and other important parts of the composition, thus raising up the whole picture to his own level. Those artists who had not the happiness of knowing the master are also worthy of the highest respect; they succeeded, to a certain degree, in penetrating his secrets even if they did not reach to the innermost.

PUPILS OF DON JUAN VALDES LEAL

Valdes Leal had also certain champions of his art, beginning with his own son, Don Lucas Valdes, who was his collaborator in many enterprises and who, by that means, acquired the proficiency of a real master. Born in Seville in 1661, he received a literary education from the Jesuits, who favoured him on account of his father's paintings.

Lucas Valdes studied fresco very industriously and he preferred that medium to any other, which gave it a new life in a school where it had been much neglected by the great masters. There are, nevertheless, a few of his oil pictures in existence, such as the

Portrait of Admiral Curvel in the Hospital of the Venerable Priests, *Saint Isabel tending the Sick* in the Museo of Seville, and the *Institution of the Third Order* in the same gallery. In these pictures, although they have recognised merit, it is noticeable that oil is not the medium which is best suited to this artist's talent. The *Saint Isabel* is signed.

Fresco, as we have already pointed out, is the favourite medium of Lucas Valdes and in it he has left some notable works in Seville; the paintings in the Church of San Pablo and those in the Church of the Venerable Priests are the finest that he achieved. The paintings in the former church occupy the walls at the end of the transepts; they represent the *Processional entry of San Fernando into Seville* and are evidently inspired by the *San Clemente* of his father, though the son depicts a greater number of figures and shows greater historical accuracy.

The procession which he represents could not be more beautiful or more magnificent. The image of the Virgin is placed in a highly decorated coach, beyond which can be distinguished the Bishop Don Remondo and other mitred dignatories and the monks Saint Pedro Nolasco and Saint Domingo de Guzman. The King, who has witnessed the progress of the procession from a throne, is descending from it in order to join its ranks; he is followed by the Infantes and various priests. Saints Isidoro and Leandro view the scene from on high, and the composition is completed at the sides by four heralds, playing on musical in-

struments and holding aloft the arms of Spain, as they stand between pairs of Corinthian columns with the bodies of vanquished Moors at their feet.

This beautiful fresco reveals the painter to us as a true artist, worthy of being studied on account of his originality and also on account of the dexterity with which he handled his medium. The picture has good composition, good taste and excellent tonality to recommend it, and the beauty of the heads as well as the movement suggested make it a notable work. Lucas Valdes was a striking figure in the annals of the school; he executed many other great works and devoted his whole life to his profession.

The companion fresco to the one we have just described, if it were not as sympathetic in subject as the other, was not beneath it in actual merit. The ruthless hand of one whose humanitarianism could not tolerate the subject represented by the principal group of the picture, painted it out; but there is enough left to enable us to judge of the merits of the whole.

The central group represented a heretic mounted on an ass, who was being led to his doom; behind him was the King San Fernando himself, holding up a faggot with which he was going to set fire to the stake. An immense multitude was gathered round the scaffold to see the King give this exemplary proof of his piety; the groups of monks and soldiers were so well distributed that the artist can be said to have shown great skill in his composition.

It must be noted, with regard to these frescoes and

other works of Lucas Valdes, that although they harmonised perfectly with the taste of the day, they were never so "barocco" in style as we should be led to expect from the date at which they were executed, and from the example set by his father. His line was always marked by a certain severity which arose from a serious study of nature, his art was serener in its rhythm and less violent than that of his father, without losing anything of the rendering of action in the figures or in the beauty of colouring which delight the eye in the work of Valdes Leal. Don Lucas Valdes must be admitted to the ranks of the eminent masters of art.

In the frescoes which adorn the cupola of the same Church of San Pablo, Lucas painted some Saints in the vaulted niches, simulating statues; he painted these subjects with a certain rigidity to suit his purpose and he depicted the costumes and attributes with great care, being well versed in Christian iconography. Notwithstanding this fact, these figures were not executed with any greater archæological correctness than were the large frescoes, for such correctness was not sought for at that time. The persons represented were clothed in the fashion of the day in which they were painted; the buildings and the objects which decorated the scene were depicted with a marked tendency to Greco-Roman art which gave sumptuousness to the scene without any architectural correctness. The frescoes in the Church of the Venerable Priests are valuable on account of this very fact, for some of them, which represent contemporary scenes, give us the most com-

plete gallery of contemporary costumes. These great frescoes are painted to imitate tapestry and are sumptuous in their effect, being framed by very rich borders and supported by figures of angels. Lucas Valdes gave evidence of his imagination and his ability in the composition of these [magnificent works. All the frescoes bear Latin inscriptions explaining the scene represented. We learn from these that the subject of the first scene is "The Emperor Theodosius detained at the entrance of the Temple by Saint Ambrosius, who refuses him admission on account of the Massacres of Thessalonica." In the second we learn how "Charles II., King of Spain, who was not only the heir but the imitator of Rudolph I., Emperor of Austria, in 1685 gives up his carriage to a priest who is carrying the Eucharist and accompanies him on foot."

This latter picture is the more interesting because the uniforms of the archers, the costume of the monarch, the decoration of the carriage, the trappings of the horses and many other accessories, give us a perfect idea of the luxury of the Court of Spain in the days of the painter. So much detail is accumulated in the work that we realise that Valdes must have made a careful study of the costumes and decorations in use at Court.

The third fresco represents an act of humiliation. "The Emperor Maximilian gives up the chief places at his table to Saint Martin the Bishop and his attendant priest, while the Empress, on her knees, presents the cup."

In the fourth is represented yet another act of humiliation, the costumes and furniture being those of the painter's own times and the subject, "The act of humility of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa at the feet of Pope Alexander III," an event which took place in the thirteenth century.

In the fifth we see the "Pope Saint Leo detaining Attila," and in the sixth and last "Constantine the Great taking the lowest seat in the Council of Nicea."

All these scenes, we may notice, represent the supremacy of Church over State.

In the portico or vestibule of this church are still to be seen some of the frescoes of Valdes, but they have been very much retouched. They represent the hospitality received in that institution by poor priests, and the details of costume, furniture, and architecture give them great character. Some allegories and other Biblical subjects, executed by the great fresco painter of Seville, were said to be in the Cupola of the Church of Saint Louis of the Jesuits. Valdes was also an engraver. He assisted his father to execute the plates to illustrate the work of Torres Farfan; another engraving is attributed to him, the *David dancing before the Ark*, the only example of which is preserved in the Museo of Cordova.

Maria Valdes, a professed nun in the Convent of San Clemente, where her father had executed so many famous works, is said by Cean Bermudez to have executed miniatures and portraits in oil, but it is not easy to find examples of her art. She died in 1730.

Clemente de Torres, born in Cadiz 1665, was a very clever pupil of Don Juan Valdes Leal, and he was also a collaborator of his son Lucas; his works are very characteristic and have a distinct quality of their own. His interpretation of nature was somewhat crude, but his style was strong and effective and he is worthy of special mention. His frescoes on the pillars of the Church of San Pablo impress the spectator by the liveliness of the attitudes, the expression of the faces, and the intensity of the colouring, although they may be accused of being too "barocco" in style. Cean praises some works of the same character which are in Cadiz, and also his graceful style in pencil sketches and in water-colour, "which many intelligent people have mistaken for those of Murillo." When Torres stayed in Madrid, he made friends with Antonio Palomino, who, in 1724, sings his praises in a sonnet which is at the beginning of the second volume of his "Museo Pictorico." Torres returned to his natal city of Cadiz and ended his days there in 1730.

In the Museo of Seville we find three canvasses by this artist; one of these, which represents *Saint Nicholas de Bari*, is notable on account of the richness of the costumes worn. The Saint appears clothed in the most ornate vestments; round him are grouped three children whom he has saved from drowning in a well. The other picture shows us *Saint Dionysius Areopagite*, who is also clothed in vestments. It is fairly well drawn and the tonality is very fine.

Cristobal de Leon was another artist who helped

Lucas Valdes to execute his frescoes; he was entrusted with painting the decorative work and the birds with which Valdes loved to adorn his paintings. Besides this decorative work, Cean speaks of eighteen oil paintings representing Priests of Saint Philip Neri, the figures being life-size, the drawing fairly good and the painting very spirited.

Matias de Arteaga y Alfaro is also, judging by his style, a pupil of Valdes Leal. He excelled principally in executing sumptuous architectural scenes viewed in perspective; scenes in which are represented galleries, palaces, and gardens, which he enlivened with figures in the style of his master Valdes. We can study his style in many pictures which are now in the Museo of Seville and in the Church of San Pablo, which, as we have seen, is a regular gallery of the "barocco" art of Seville, such as it was at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Arteaga was also an excellent engraver. He must have lived to a great age, as he was secretary to Murillo's famous Academy in 1666 and Consul in 1669. He died, according to Cean, in 1704.

Pedro de Uceda may be considered, as far as we can judge from present data, as a collaborator and possibly a pupil of Arteaga, whose style he adopted. He died in 1741.

We must not omit the name of Luis de Silva, the flower painter, from this list, although we cannot suggest under which master he studied. There are many of his pictures in private houses in Seville, which were commissions executed by the painter as a pro-

fessional artist ; we know that he worked professionally because he asked to be examined as a painter in 1676, in order to pursue his calling unmolested.

With this name we must close the list of artists whose origin was derived entirely from Seville ; and with them is extinguished the glory of that school in which such prodigies had been executed and which had acquired such universal fame. There were, however, other artists who helped to achieve this great result ; they were foreigners by birth who pitched their camps in this centre of prosperity and enthusiasm for art, not so much in the hope of rivalling the native artists as of gratifying their tastes in such a hotbed of the arts as was at that time the city of the Betis.

Amongst these men we may mention Cornelius Schutt, a Fleming by birth, who was born at Amperes in 1644, and who, on his arrival in Seville, contracted a marriage with Doña Agustina Tello de Meneses. He lived for many years in the parish of San Ildefonso, where he certainly indulged his artistic tastes in conjunction with his other duties. He cannot, however, be labelled as a mere amateur on account of the very few examples of his skill which are to be found, because these few examples have such excellent quality that they can be compared with the work of the best professionals. A proof of his great affection for and appreciation of art is given in the fact that it was owing, in a great measure, to his initiative that the Academy was actually instituted. He held important posts in the institution and was even President ; he employed his own money

to keep up the funds, he was the last member to quit the sinking ship when the Academy was given up, and he collected all the papers and documents relating to this laudable attempt to give instruction in art.

A *Conception* of his may be mentioned and a mural tablet over the Carmona Gate of the city. There are also various works by this painter in private collections in Seville; his own portrait and that of Bishop Bruna being notable, and some sketches in which he tried to imitate the atmospheric effects achieved by Murillo. He was living in the year 1682, according to certain documents.¹

The Shrine of the Semana Santa, which was renovated and almost re-erected in 1688, after designs by Miguel Parrilla, gave work to various painters such as Pedro Honorio de Palencia and Pedro de Medina Balbuena. The former of these painters was employed to renovate the gilding and painting on the bases and the capitals of the columns. He was already employed as a painter in the Royal Palaces and other monuments in Seville, being "eminent in the art and one who had much experience and intelligence," as Cean says when he reports his nomination as a painter to the Palaces. He was also charged, on account of his good taste in those matters, to ornament the most imposing catafalques and triumphal cars for the Feast of the Corpus Christi. Palencia was living in the year 1670, in which year he entered a Jesuit confraternity.

Pedro de Medina was also employed in the same

¹ See Gestoso, "Diccionario de Artifices," vol. ii. p. 104.

manner. He was paid 34,000 maravedis "in payment of what he had done to restore the figures on the shrine." The Chapter also paid him 800 reals for a picture representing *Our Lady of Amparo*, which was placed in the Sala de Rentas of the Cathedral in the year 1677. He was a son of Juan de Medina, who in 1635 received 100 reals for painting the chariots for the Corpus Christi held in that year. It appears also that he was the painter who preceded Pedro Honorio de Palencia in his appointment as Painter to the Palaces, as it appears in the nomination of that artist.

Notwithstanding the advantages offered to artists in Seville, there were some who journeyed from thence to the New World, thinking that because the prosperity of Seville was derived from the riches which came from America, it followed that in America they would obtain a large recompense for their work. Encouraged by this delusive dream, certain artists of the School of Seville went at different times to America. Martin de Aldaz, Agustin Salazar, Miguel Aparicio and others went to Mexico, crossing the seas with the vain hope of achieving renown and of sowing the seeds of the principles of art in those countries, which had, in reality, been the inspiration of her schools of painting.

Such is, in brief, the glorious page which the pictorial School of Seville added to the history of universal art.

In this hotbed of artistic conceptions, works were produced more transcendental in character than were those of any other school in Spain: at the same time

the greatest problems of modern art found their solution there. If, in the beginning, the school went through a period of imitation, such as all schools undergo at the start, trying to assimilate the beauties of Flemish art as they were shown by the inventors of oil painting, and afterwards accepting the formulas of the Italian Renaissance, this imitation of others soon passed away. It was by the direct study of the glorious nature by which they were surrounded that the artists of Seville obtained their title to originality; they were the real pioneers of the modern school of painting and they obtained the lead of the Spanish School, which was destined, by its genius, to give a new luxuriant life to art. When her somewhat artificial Italian laurels were faded, painting was in need of a powerful impulse towards a new life. We must recognise the great importance of the original genius of Herrera the Old, the true patriarch of modern synthetic art, the master who handed on the tradition to Velazquez. Without understanding this fact, we miss the real trend of events; we fail to understand either Velazquez or his pupils, who were led by the contemplation of nature to endeavour to represent her in the simplest manner, but in the most synthetic spirit. If some of these artists were not strong enough to represent the outer semblance of things simply enough, but lost themselves in a sea of detail, on the other hand others were enabled to avail themselves of the new theories, and succeeded, at last, in conquering the difficulties of painting light and atmosphere. In this way they made their work far

more complete, more surprising in its aspect of realism and of life, and yet the realism was very far from destroying the ideality which was at the core of all their work. Murillo, the greatest painter of the school, proved the truth of this assertion by his works. His painting is founded on realism, yet he transports us, by the power of his divine inspiration, to the highest spheres ; by means of his mystical works, he introduces us to other worlds, to regions of more durable joys. He not only gives us a glimpse of Heaven, but he also penetrates and touches our most intimate affections by means of a psychological knowledge which unlocks for us the impassioned souls of his subjects and leads us to the comprehension of the moral grandeur of their actions. He not only shows us the outer semblance of reality, but he perceives—and he makes us perceive—that which is most real within ourselves and is bound to us by the ties of blood ; paternal love, womanly purity, and the peace of the home. Murillo will always be the genius of sympathetic painting, which he achieved by means of the most expressive imagery.

The ostentation and the wealth of which some authors boast show us that the city in her prosperity was capable of practising and sustaining habits of luxury ; we know that she was called on, for reasons that are historical, to play a great part in the world of commerce in the modern era. Having lost her importance as the Mediterranean navigation decreased, she regained it with greater amplitude when the Atlantic traffic reached her shores and her ports were privileged

to receive all the riches which came from new worlds overseas.

Art has her economic rules of existence and she rose and fell with the commercial prosperity of the city. At first Seville possessed the only port which was allowed to receive goods from America, and her licensed *Casa de Contratacion* was allowed to impose taxes and to exact tribute from the merchants, in virtue of being the only port which had connection with the newly discovered country. But affairs were not likely to remain always in the same state and we soon see this important commerce transferred to another centre, which was probably more convenient to all concerned. When Murillo went to Cadiz to paint the *Betrothal of Saint Catherine with the Holy Child*, and he represented a golden ring on her finger, it may be said that he symbolised the future of the Pearl of the Ocean, which was so soon to supplant Seville and to become the licensed port for the merchandise of the New World.

The declaration in 1717 of a naval monopoly in favour of Cadiz was the death-blow of commercial and artistic prosperity in the city of the Betis; from that day we see her inspiration decrease and almost disappear. It was impossible to carry on the study of art when the means to keep it alive were wanting. After 1729, the residence of the Bourbons in the city revived, to a certain extent, an enthusiasm for her artistic traditions; but it was the Bourbons also, who, when they returned to Madrid, took away from Seville her most able artists, leaving her altogether bereft of those who sought for

the sacred fire. So serious was her artistic plight that half a century elapsed before she produced a painter of even moderate talent.

In the nineteenth century, when the upheaval consequent on the Napoleonic invasion had subsided, the artistic spirit of the school had a new manifestation; certain painters then appeared—some of them are still alive—whose remarkable talents, modernism in technique and graceful imaginative qualities, made the ancient laurels of the school grow green again. These artists have followed a perfectly natural evolution and have yet been true to their own inspiration, earning the gratitude of all art lovers by so doing.

But we must not pursue this subject, our mission being to speak of the painting of an earlier age and of an art which has reached its culminating point. We have endeavoured to explain the cause and effect of all that took place in that early art, especially with regard to the School of Seville. For reasons which we have stated, the great enterprise of Murillo failed. The Academy was unable to fulfil its destiny and for many long years there was no sign of that artistic activity which had made the history of the school so glorious, of that fertile inspiration which caused the period of its greatest lustre to shine from afar and which has earned from posterity a crown of unfading laurels.

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