IBERIAN SKETCHES
Travels In Portugal And The Northwest Of Spain (1884)

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TRAVELS IN PORTUGAL

AND THE NORTH-WEST OF SPAIN

BY JANE LECK

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT GRAY, F.R.S.E.

GLASGOW
WILSON & MCCORMICK, SAINT VINCENT STREET
1884

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CHAPTER III.

Leon to Villafranca—Ponferrada—Orense—Vigo.

An hour or two after leaving Leon we were surprised to see, far to the left, that is towards the south, what we at first imagined to be a large lake. A moment's reflection on the geography of the country convinced us that we were mistaken, and that we were actually beholding a mirage. We seemed to be looking at an immense calm lake, on which vessels were dreamily floating. Here and there its shores seemed broken by steep headlands or long low promontories, and behind one of the latter we could see the tall bare masts of a number of ships crowded together in a harbour. For about half an hour I should think we had this wonderful illusion in full view, and then "as rare things will, it vanished." The morning had been very hazy, but the weather was, at the time of our seeing this phenomenon, brilliant and cloudless.
We passed Astorgo, and almost wished we had arranged to stop there. It is the centre of the Maragato country, a district of some sixty miles square, of which the inhabitants form a little independent community. They wear a particular and very picturesque costume, intermarry only among themselves, and bear the character, somewhat rare in Spain, of being thoroughly honest and trustworthy. The women do most of the farm-work, while the men adopt the trade of carriers. Their honesty and bravery is a guarantee for the safety of the goods entrusted to them, so that they are almost without rivals in their business. I fear the railway officials are not Maragatos. Two of our portmanteaus were tampered with while under their charge. I would warn intending travellers in Spain to avoid the ordinary valise, which, although locked, can be pressed open at the ends, and have its contents drawn out by means of a hook.

This part of the country is famous for its mules and donkeys. Between Leon and Astorga we noticed numerous groups of them grazing near the railway. Dogs seem to be very scarce and poor in
Spain. The few we saw were half-starved, mongrel-looking creatures, that one could scarcely believe to be of the same species as the hero of "Rab and his Friends."

The day before leaving Leon we had gone to the railway station, to make enquiry concerning the journey to Vigo, about which "Bradshaw" failed us. The station-master, who spoke French, was very civil, told us that we would find a diligence for Orense, awaiting the arrival of our train at Villafranca, and promised to send on word to reserve four seats for us the following day. It would be difficult to say, then, whether our surprise or annoyance was the greater, to learn, on our arrival at Villafranca, after a seven hours' journey, that there was no such thing as a diligence thence to Orense, but that it started from Ponferrada (a place we had passed two hours before in the train), and that there was no train back to Ponferrada until the following day!

After the first natural feelings of vexation had subsided, we were rather pleased with this unexpected ending to our day's journey. Villafranca is an old-fashioned village that calls itself a town,
in the very heart of the Vierzo or Spanish Switzerland. It is finely situated on a steep hill-slope, and surrounded on all sides by orchards and vineyards. It is such an out-of-the-world place that it seems difficult to imagine any stranger visiting it, unless blown thither by contrary winds as we were; yet they say it is a favourite starting point for pedestrian tourists and fishers, the streams in the neighbourhood being famous for their trout. The little hotel in the principal square is a most primitive place. No one belonging to it could speak anything but Spanish, and we had considerable difficulty in getting the hostess to understand that one large room with four beds was scarcely sufficient accommodation, according to our British ideas, for two gentlemen and two young ladies. In the end, however, we got fairly well-lodged, my sister and I sharing a room immediately above the stable, with only a huge wooden shutter for a window, where all night long we were reminded by nose and ears of the proximity of the mules.

The dining-room was a small, low-roofed room, with a massive, iron-barred door that might have graced a city jail. The table was high and the chairs low,
and the cutlery below par, but the food we got, including broiled trout and stewed kid, was good and well-cooked, and the wine was excellent. Our waitress, a daughter of the house, was a handsome girl, dark and Jewish-looking, but most tantalizingly slow in all her movements, although anxious in her own way for our comfort.

On a hill behind the inn stands San Lorenzo, a very ancient church with a square tower, and beyond it is the old castle, now used as barracks. The great attraction of Villafranca is, however, the quaintness of the streets. We had a good view of the town as we followed in the wake of a religious procession, in honour of the Virgin. There was first a brass band, then a number of men bare-headed, and carrying candles, next a hideous wooden image of the Virgin, dressed in black velvet, and carried shoulder-high, then a few priests in brocaded vestments, and lastly, almost all the female population of Villafranca in their gayest dresses and head gear, many of them also carrying candles.

The streets are narrow and badly paved, and were nearly ankle-deep with mud, so that those in the balconies had the best of it. Every balcony
and window was gay with flags and coloured hangings of silk or calico, meant evidently for such occasions. At intervals of two hundred yards or so the procession came to a standstill, the music ceased, and the faithful, I suppose, said an "Ave Maria." We were amused to see several very small bare-footed children keeping pace with the crowd. Twice I had to come to the rescue of a little three-year-old, who was in imminent danger of having her limbs dislocated in an awkward iron grating in the street. We did not follow the procession back to the church, where I doubt not there would be some special service on replacing the Virgin, after her annual outing.

The following morning we took train back to Ponferrada, passing Toral, whence the railway is soon to be completed to Orense. The district that we had thus twice to traverse was fortunately a most beautiful one, like an immense orchard of cherry, peach, and almond trees, all in full bloom, and set off by a background of fine blue hills. We could not help noticing the peculiar colour of the soil, which was in some places actually brick-red,
and presented a striking contrast to the brilliant green of the wheatfields.

In this part of the country the peasant women wear very large crescent-shaped ear-rings of gold or silver, which look as if they had been handed down from mother to daughter for generations. One gets only a chance glimpse of these ornaments, however, as the usual head-covering, a gay kerchief tied under the chin, effectually conceals them. We spoke to a woman at the railway station about her ear-rings, which looked particularly ancient, and were a little disappointed to learn that such ornaments were to be had from any local silversmith.

Ponferrada is a romantic-looking ancient town, built on the steep banks of the Sil, overlooked, and formerly protected, by an immense square castle belonging to the Knights Templar. The streets are steep, and particularly badly paved. The Plaza, or square, a distinguishing feature of Spanish towns, occupies the highest part of Ponferrada. This town is a terminus for several coach routes, so there is a good deal of life and stir about it. There are constantly carriers' waggons coming or going, drawn by oxen, mules, or horses, sometimes by all
three. The waggons are light vehicles covered with a sort of straw matting, and furnished with wheels made of a solid block of wood, which creak, so as to be heard a mile off. The oxen, they say, draw better with this excruciating sound; if this be true it must surely be in the vain hope of escaping from it. It is something to know that the carreteres are obliged to grease their wheels before entering a town.

On going to take seats in the coach for Orense we learned that the journey was a matter of seventeen hours, not of twelve, as we had been informed. That seemed bad enough, but, in reality, by the time we reached Orense the following day, we had been almost twenty-one hours on the road. We started at four o'clock in the afternoon, and so had three good hours of daylight to commence with. Shortly after leaving Ponferrada we began the ascent of the Cantabrian mountains, which lay between us and Orense. The road went winding back and forwards up the face of the hill, so that for fully two hours we were still in sight of Ponferrada.

Our party just filled the back part of the diligence,
which resembled a small low-roofed omnibus seated for four, and entered by steep steps, to ascend or descend which was a work of art and of time. The front part, a coupé seated for two, was occupied by a Spanish lady and gentleman, while the box-seat was taken up by the driver and his two assistants. The whole conveyance was set on low lumbering wheels, and seemed guiltless of springs; it was drawn by six to twelve mules, according to the nature and condition of the road. With the exception of a few miles about the middle of our journey the road was splendidly built, and in excellent repair. The exception was, however, very marked; it occurred when it was too dark to see anything save the stars, but we seemed to drive for miles along an exceptionally rough river-bed, taking no special care to avoid the boulders. Some of the bumps shook us together in a most unceremonious way, and brought coach and mules to a momentary stand-still.

We passed through several badly paved villages during the night, congratulating ourselves on merely passing them, as the various and powerful odours that greeted us appeared enough to induce a
pestilence. By daylight we had regained an excellent highway, and had leisure to admire an extensive panorama of mountain-tops, all the valleys and lower slopes of the mountains being hidden from us by a stratum of cloud. We had expected to stop at breakfast-time for chocolate, but on arriving at the place mentioned by the driver, he said there was no time to wait longer than the couple of minutes necessary for changing mules, so there was nothing for it but to continue our fast, broken only by a few sweet biscuits and some wine, since three o'clock the previous day.

Descending the mountains we followed pretty closely the course of the Sil, a river which, after many windings among those Galician mountains, at times watering a fertile plain, and again pent up, chafing and foaming in a narrow gorge, eventually joins the Minho, not far from Orense. The railway, now almost completed between Ponferrada and Orense follows the course of the river, on the opposite side from the road. It will help to make this beautiful Sil valley, with its wild Alpine scenery, more accessible to tourists than it now is.

The difference of climate between the Leonese
and the Galician side of the mountains, is very marked. It was as if in crossing the water-shed we had passed from April to June. The roadsides, as we descended towards Orense, were a mass of the most brilliantly tinted wild flowers, and the trees, which on the other side had only commenced to bud, were here in full leaf. One wildflower in particular we noticed for the first time, the bright blue *Anchusa sempervirens*. This little flower, which from a short distance might be mistaken for a Speedwell, was largely cultivated by Spanish monks wherever they happened to settle, during the middle ages, whether on account of some medicinal properties, or only because its colour seemed borrowed from their native skies, I know not. It grows wild in several places in Scotland, and is a sure index to the site of an ancient monastery, as it is found only in such a neighbourhood.

Galicia, mountainous, well wooded and well watered, is one of the most beautiful provinces of Spain. Its inhabitants, like the natives of most mountainous lands, are passionately attached to their home, and although forced to seek occupa-
tion in distant towns, they retain their native dress and dialect, along with an unyielding hope of return to their hills. So many of these peasants adopt the trade of carrying water, a necessary one in most Spanish towns, that Gallego or Galician has come to be almost synonymous with water-carrier. The Galician peasantry are particularly fond of bright colours. The women wear stuff petticoats of bright blue, orange, or scarlet, short black velvet jackets, and gay-coloured kerchiefs on their head. The goitre is unfortunately very prevalent in this district.

At Orense we bade a by no means reluctant adieu to the diligence, and after a two hours’ rest we continued our journey by rail to Vigo, where we arrived at 9 p.m. Almost the whole way the railway skirts the rapid and beautiful river Minho, which forms the northern boundary of Portugal, so that looking out towards the river we saw more of Portugal really than of Spain. I have seldom passed through more pleasing scenery than that between Orense and Vigo. Both banks of the river are beautifully wooded, and the hills which on the Portugese side, rise close to the river, are
soft and green to their summits. On the Spanish side every available patch of ground is devoted to vine-culture, the vines in this district being trained on trellises, supported generally by rough hewn stone pillars. Both banks of the river are guarded by strong fortresses, and occasional fortified towns. Salvatierra, on the Spanish side, is picturesquely situated on a slight eminence, and is literally a town within a castle. Tuy and Valença, one in Spain the other in Portugal, each being built on a height and divided only by the swift flowing Minho, seem from a little distance to be merely different parts of the same town. Near Tuy we saw orange trees, for the first time since entering Spain. The ripe richly-coloured fruit, burnished by the rays of the setting sun, looked most tempting among its cool glossy green leaves. Amid such beautiful scenery we could not object to the rate of travelling, which was ten miles an hour.

We had a most comfortable saloon carriage, admirably adapted for seeing the country. The conductor sat in the same carriage with us, and in the intervals of his novel-reading, was very attentive in pointing out to us the various points
of interest in the journey. It was quite dark when we came in sight of Vigo, but the lights, terrace after terrace, reaching from the high level of the railway down to the water's edge, and the reflected lights from the lamps of the vessels at anchor in the bay, made the whole place look like fairyland.

As we were breakfasting next morning, a pleasant looking white-haired lady came in and sat by us. She introduced herself as an American, who, with her brother, had been staying in the hotel for a year. Her accounts of the town we had just come to were most favourable. She and her brother, a highly educated, liberal-minded Roman Catholic clergyman, had come to Vigo with the intention of remaining for a week, and had been so charmed with the climate and scenery, that even then, at the end of a year, they were in no hurry to leave it. The total want of English society was their only hardship, but even that had its bright side, as it enabled them both to pursue their literary labours without interruption.

The same morning we made the acquaintance of Mr. Stone, a Scotchman resident in Spain for the last thirty years. Having been engaged in con-
tracts for almost all the railway lines in the northwest of Spain, he was of course well acquainted with the country, its people and customs; and to him we owe a good deal of the interest and pleasure we felt, in our visit to Vigo and its surroundings.
CHAPTER IV.

Vigo—Pontavedra—Santiago de Compostella.

THE Ria, or loch of Vigo, is an arm of the sea running inland for about fifteen miles, and having its entrance effectively guarded by the three rocky islands of Cia. On the southern shore of the loch, about eight miles from the ocean, stands the town of Vigo, its white tile-roofed houses clustering all over the hill that rises steeply from the water's edge. Its bright cheerful aspect is doubly inviting after the sombre look of the inland towns.

Vigo is a place of rapidly increasing importance. Its population, now about 16,000, has almost trebled within the last fifteen years. A new theatre and a great many houses are in course of erection; several new streets and an esplanade are being formed; a tramway line is being laid from the railway station
down to the mole; and plans are being prepared for a long new iron pier. The pier is a much-felt want, for at present all large vessels must anchor in the loch, and send their cargo ashore in lighters. The shipping trade of Vigo is likely soon to increase largely, when the railway line from Leon, and that connecting Spain and Portugal are completed, for the loch forms one of the finest natural harbours in Europe. Almost the whole of the present building, and other improvements going on in Vigo, are due to the enterprise of the brothers Barcena, two of its wealthiest citizens.

The present pier, built out from a rocky point, divides the town into two little bays, round one of which, the western, clusters the original little fishing village from which the large and prosperous town has sprung. This parent hamlet is a thoroughly picturesque little nook. The narrow two-storey houses, dilapidated but gaily painted, are built crescent-wise round the little bay, just above high water mark. The upper storey projecting far beyond the under one, and supported on heavy stone arches, forms a deep arcade, under which the women sit on their doorsteps knitting or sewing,
keeping a lookout on the bright blue water, for the first welcome sail of the returning fishing fleet. The arrival of the fleet at half-tide is a sight to be remembered. The long white sandy beach is then crowded with hundreds of gay figures, men, women, and children, all as busy as ants, but a good deal more noisy. Here all is fish that comes to the net; nothing that swims seems too repulsive-looking to be used as an article of food. Most of the fish are cut up and cleaned on the spot; and of course were the refuse to remain on the beach it would become offensive, so at every ebb-tide there are dozens of women employed in gathering out of the water, with large flat wickerwork rakes, all that might be left to render the beach unsavoury. In spite of this care there is no mistaking the fishing quarter when one comes to it, but one ceases to think of the odour, in watching the charming groups of fisher-folk, who seem naturally to arrange themselves in the most artistic attitudes. The fishermen wear white linen trousers, turned up over the knee, and tanned as they are by sun and sea, look more like Coolies than Europeans. They carry the fish from the boats in enormous flat baskets, which they
balance beautifully on the head, the long woollen cowl which they wear serving to steady the load. As soon as the business of the day is over, the men are seen loitering about the empty boats or the arcade, playing with, and caressing their children, of whom they seem specially fond.

Just beyond this little bay there is a long stretch of sandy beach, glistening with shells, among which the beautiful iridescent lady-oyster, *Anomia ephippium*, is most noticeable, on account of its abundance, its unusual size, and its brilliancy.

The climate of Vigo all the year round is said to be delightful. Frost and snow are unknown; fires, except for cooking purposes, are unnecessary even in winter, while in summer the hottest day is never without a cool breeze in the afternoon. Orange and fig trees are plentiful, and every little garden has its trellis of vines. Camelia trees are very large and luxuriant, and tall beautiful Nile lilies grow almost wild. Wildflowers, such as violets, the cuckoo-flower, wild hyacinth, rock-rose, and the brilliant little anchusa, grow everywhere in the neighbourhood in great profusion. A large sorrel, *Oxalis cernua*, wild geraniums, periwinkle, and wild
mignonette, were also abundant. The country about Vigo bears a great resemblance to the West Highlands of Scotland, in its pine-covered hills sloping to the sea, the fresh verdure of its grassy knolls, and its abundance of golden whin.

Donkeys and mules, which are so much used in Leon and Castile, are here replaced almost entirely by oxen and small ponies. Women too, in Vigo, occasionally supply the place of beasts of burden, being employed in gangs of four or six, to draw the trucks of sand used in forming the new esplanade. We saw women breaking stones by the roadside, mixing mortar for house-building, and working like navvies on railway-embankments; but how could we give vent to our righteous indignation, remembering that in the colliery districts of Britain women are still working at the pit-head!

Vigo has little industry beyond its fisheries. The men are said to be very lazy, and by no means too independent to live on their wives’ earnings rather than on their own. Masons earn about three shillings a day, yet English contractors find it cheaper to bring workmen from England, and pay them eight shillings, for, not to speak of the lazi-
ness of the Spaniards, they indulge in so many holidays that their working year amounts to only 240 days.

From Vigo to Santiago is a distance of about fifty-five miles, of which thirty miles must be done by diligence or carriage, the remaining twenty-five being accomplished by railway. We left Vigo at half-past five in the morning, in a comfortable little waggonette, and were rewarded for our early start by the sight of hundreds of country-women and girls, flocking towards the town with their varied produce for the market. Oranges, vegetables, eggs, and live fowls, were the principal commodities, carried invariably on huge baskets on the head. The road for miles presented quite a gay scene, with its animated groups of pedestrians, varied by an occasional donkey as gaily decked as its mistress. Brilliant yellow seemed the prevailing colour in dress, but a good many of the women wore a peculiar kind of upper petticoat which we had seen nowhere else. It was shaped like a circular cloak, and made of black cloth trimmed with a broad band of scarlet round the foot and up the left side, where the edges
met. We stopped one young woman and bought some of her oranges, for which she asked 2½d. a dozen. They were small, but very sweet and juicy, and evidently just pulled from the tree. Being early trained to carry burdens on their heads, Spanish peasant women are erect, and walk well. It is a common thing to see a woman walking along the road knitting or spinning flax from a distaff, or even carrying a baby, and at the same time bearing on her head an immense basket of fruit, or a large earthenware jar of water. The earthenware water-jars in common use in Spain, resemble the antique pottery of Etruria or Pompei. To poise them empty or full, so gracefully and securely as those Spanish women do, one would require to be to the manner born.

About an hour and a half’s drive from Vigo we passed through a cheerful little town called Redondela, lying in a narrow valley, which is crossed by a high, fragile-looking railway viaduct of great length. A railway is now being made from this point on to Pontevedra, and will in time be con-
tinued to Carril, making Santiago very easy of access from Vigo.

We reached Pontevedra at half-past nine, and had breakfast comfortably in the principal hotel, which overlooks the great square. The town boasts of several squares, in which the various markets are held. One of those “plazas” has almost every house adorned by the coat-of-arms of some illustrious family, for this used to be a favourite residential town, much affected by nobles whose health and purses had suffered by the dissipations of the capital.

The two principal churches are “The Virgin of the Pilgrims” and the handsome but never completed church of Santa Maria. The church of the Virgin, situated at the end of one of the best streets, is chiefly remarkable for its highly ornate convex façade. Near the Alameda, a promenade well shaded by trees, and commanding a splendid view of the loch of Pontevedra, stand the ruins of a Gothic church, which must at one time have been a perfect gem. Until lately its walls were used as quarries by anyone who required stones, but now the town is becoming alive to the expediency of preserving what is certainly the most beautiful building in the
district. The Lerez, a fine clear river of considerable size, well stocked with fish, flows through Pontevedra.

Our next stage was over the hilly country which divides the Ria of Pontevedra from the Ria of Carril. We crossed the river Umia, and had the spot pointed out where lately the Duke of Edinburgh was nearly drowned while fishing. As the story goes here, he was saved by an old Englishman resident in the neighbourhood, who held out a stick to him, calling, "Catch hold of this stick, Mr. Duke; I say, Mr. Duke, catch hold of this stick!"

After a pretty steep ascent, our road lay for several miles along the shoulder of a hill which was literally covered with boulders. Huge masses of rock, piled one on the top of another, sometimes so delicately poised as almost to make one tremble lest they should come crashing down without warning, or standing singly near the road-side like petrified mammoths, gave the landscape a weird and eerie look. All the more lovely, by contrast, did the soft woods look, and the green fields, that greeted our nearer approach to Carril. This bright and thriving little town stands at the head of a loch of
the same name. It is a calling-place for large steamships, both English and French. Its unlimited extent of white sandy beach serves to attract summer visitors.

The railway journey from Carril to Santiago, 25 miles, took two-and-a-half hours. We kept alongside of the loch as far as El Padron, the spot where, according to tradition, the dead body of St. James landed, having sailed hither in a stone coffin from Palestine, in the miraculously short time of seven days. There was no apparent necessity for such speed, as the body after landing lay concealed and unknown in a cave for 800 years. At the end of that time, the appearance of heavenly lights over the place, led to its discovery, and to the surname of Compostella, (Campus Stellae) being added to Santiago, as the name of the world-renowned shrine in which the bones were deposited. In El Padron, and well seen from the railway, stands the ancient Church of St. Maria, even older than the Cathedral of Santiago, adorned with two square towers, having peculiar graduated pyramidal roofs.

The town of Santiago stands high, and is much subject to cold bleak winds. The imposing spires
of the Cathedral are seen from a great distance, and so irresistibly attract one's eyes and mind, that one forgets to dwell upon the decayed melancholy aspect of the town. The Cathedral, its surrounding monasteries, its vast seminaries, and the palatial hospices built for the accommodation of pilgrims, compose such a group of ecclesiastical buildings as can be seen nowhere else. The principal façade of the Cathedral, comparatively modern, is very grand, but has suffered much from restoration. The portal is high above the level of the street, and is approached by two flights of steps, but this entrance is used only for royalty. The façade terminates in a figure of the tutelar Saint, while immediately behind rise two towers of the most elaborate workmanship. The most beautiful tower of all is the Torre del reloj, or Clock Tower at the south end of the Church, which is a most striking object as seen closing the vista of the principal street, the Calle del Pilar. It is one of the gems of Santiago, and is said indeed to be one of the finest towers in Spain. The Church was originally a good deal shorter than it now is, and the old western portal, La Gloria, still stands com-
plete within the more modern one. This ancient doorway, one of the chief boasts of the Cathedral, is adorned with wonderful figures of Christ and the Apostles, and of the four-and-twenty elders, all of which are in perfect preservation, and spoiled only by having their cheeks painted by some local artist. The colour, however, is fortunately wearing off. An exact copy of La Gloria is to be seen in the Kensington Museum.

The present Cathedral of Santiago was founded in 1082, on the site of a still older one, but so many additions have been made at different times, that it is difficult to make out what really is the original building. The Puerta Santa, or pilgrims’ door, is opened only in jubilee years, by the Primate, with all the pomp and show of a municipal demonstration. A Santiago jubilee year is one in which St. James’ day falls on a Sunday. During those years the bishop of Santiago is privileged to grant such absolution and indulgences as can usually be obtained only from the Pope in person. The sides of the doorway are richly decorated with small statues, more or less defaced, but above the lintel there are three niches filled with large figures, all quite per-
fect, dressed in pilgrim garb, and bearing the crook and scallop shell.

The interior of the cathedral, highly vaulted, dimly lighted, and divided by rows of massive pillars, is solemn and impressive. An old writer says that, "such is the excellent beauty of this temple, that, any one going up sad to the gallery and looking down, will thereupon become cheerful and contented."

Unfortunately the centre of the nave is blocked up by the choir. The retable of the high altar, of carved and gilded wood, is more massive than beautiful. There stands the celebrated statue of St. James that all pilgrims are expected to kiss, which they manage to do by ascending some steps behind the altar, a certain spot between the shoulders being the proper place for such salutes.

The Reliquary, or Capilla de los Reyes, as it is also called, is a most interesting chapel, even for those who doubt the efficacy of the numberless relics contained in it. Most of the relics claim at least the interest due to their having been carefully preserved for centuries, and having been gazed on with superstitious awe by the great ones of the
earth, who made pilgrimages hither from all parts of Europe, from the twelfth century till the Reformation. In this chapel stands an equestrian statue of Santiago himself, as he appeared to help the Spaniards against the Moors in the battle of Clavijo. There is a printed list to be had of the various relics, with the date of their presentation to the church, but they are not very attractive to outsiders, consisting chiefly of bones, teeth, hair, and other such things that would have been better buried. Some of them are encased in magnificent shrines of silver or gold, all studded with gems; but the bones of St. James himself, too precious even for such a shrine, were built into the foundations of the cathedral. Several Spanish monarchs, who lived and died as early as the thirteenth century, are buried in this chapel. There is a good library connected with the cathedral, and adjoining it is the chapter-house, a large hall, hung with magnificent Flemish tapestries. Its richly carved stone roof is unfortunately so gilded and painted that no one would guess it to be other than stucco. In this room is kept a mighty silver censer that used to hang under the cathedral dome. It is said to be
the largest in existence, and accordingly bears the name of "El Rey del Mundo." Long ago, when the church used to be frequented night and day by bands of devout pilgrims, this grand swinging censer was a sanitary necessity in the otherwise badly ventilated building. The fine, well-preserved Gothic cloisters bear the date 1542.

The square in front of the cathedral is bounded on its other three sides by handsome old buildings, one of which, a hospice for pilgrims, was founded by Ferdinand and Isabella. It has a magnificent sculptured doorway and a grand cornice, and bears on large tablets on each side of the entrance, the arms of Leon and Castile. Many of the surrounding monasteries have handsome chapels attached to them, but beside the cathedral they are reduced to comparative insignificance. San Martin, however, is conspicuous for its splendid altar and exquisitely carved choir-stalls.

The scallop-shell, the badge of pilgrimage, is a common architectural ornament throughout the town. On the walls and doorways of houses, on the arcades of the streets, on the fountains, in fact,
Santiago.
on every place where such decoration can be introduced, its fan-like valve attests the pilgrim city.

The beggars in Santiago beggar description. Some of them look so utterly miserable that one cannot help giving them a trifle, although that, of course, only encourages the recipient to go and send seven others worse than himself. Not even in a church can one get rid of such supplicants, except in the actual presence of a priest or verger.

The worst of it is that one cannot help shrinking from contact with the poor wretches, who after all are of the same clay as ourselves, and who catch hold of one's dress without the least idea evidently, of causing annoyance or repugnance.

We had a pleasant journey back to Vigo, as we came, rejoining our carriage at Carril. Between Santiago and Carril we passed a fine old monastery and church, Nuestra Señora de la Esclavitud, with a peculiarly beautiful lichen-covered tower. This in ancient times was a sanctuary for criminals of even the worst description.

In driving through the country we noticed that many of the little houses we passed were decorated with a small bush, or branch of a shrub, tied to the
door or window, and on inquiry we found this to be the sign of wine being sold on the premises. "Good wine needs no bush." If a house becomes famous for its wine, people will find it without a sign-board. A peculiar erection which we saw in almost every garden, puzzled us for some time; a kind of ark of stone, set upon short toad-stool pillars, surmounted by a cross, and pierced on each side by narrow bevelled slits. We had almost decided to regard them as family vaults, when we learned that they were houses for drying maize.

Our driver was very attentive and agreeable. He was the first Spaniard we met who had the courtesy to ask if the ladies would object to his smoking. On this excursion, especially in the wild and sparsely inhabited district between Pontevedra and Carril, we saw numbers of kites (Milvus regalis) hovering far overhead, wheeling about in wide circles, without any apparent motion of "their broad expanded wings." To our driver we were indebted for the Spanish name, "milano," of this bird, as also for the names both in Spanish and Galician of many other natural objects. Of those the brilliant yellow brimstone butterflies (Gonia-
pteryx rhamni) were perhaps the most noticeable, as they flitted ceaselessly about the flowers on the wayside.

Near Vigo, on our return journey, we saw an exquisitely lovely wildflower, which we afterwards found to be the Narcissus pallidulus. Its drooping head, and white, delicate, waxen petals, made it a conspicuous object on the shady green bank where it grew. In the same neighbourhood a tall white heath (Erica arborea) was growing in great abundance.

At intervals all along the road we noticed recesses cut in the rocky banks, and the sun was strong enough even at this early season to teach us what a boon such cool resting-places must be, to weary pedestrians in the heat of summer.