

COMPOSTELLA AND THE SHRINE OF ST. JAMES.

A YACHT bound on a delightful summer cruise, and bearing a party bent on mingled pleasure and instruction, has only, on leaving New York, to steer her course to the east along the 41st parallel of latitude to reach Oporto or the mouth of the Minho. This beautiful river separates Portugal from the Spanish province of Galicia, "the Bay Country," *el país de las Rias*. The seafarer, continuing to sail northward along these enchanting shores, will find such a succession of magnificent estuaries, broad, deep, and penetrating far into the land, as is to be met with nowhere else in the Old World. The deep bays which indent the south and western coasts of Ireland can alone compare with the glorious *rias* of Vigo, Pontevedra and Arosa. Twice a year the iron-clad fleets of Great Britain select the broad bosom of the last-named estuary for their evolutions.

The soil and climate of this favored land would make the traveller from Asia fancy himself back again on the fairest shores of Palestine and Syria. And, in good sooth, the intelligent and enterprising Phœnicians, from the earliest historic ages, were not slow in finding out this early home of the Gael, and in establishing—from *Gades*, the modern Cadiz, and *Hispalis*, the Seville of our day, to Cape Finisterre—profitable marts for the exchange of the rich stuffs, the beautiful pottery, and other products of Phœnician industry.

Up the calm, sunny waters of that superb Bay of Arosa, the largest and northernmost of the Galician estuaries, a Phœnician trading-vessel was sailing about the year of Our Lord 43. It threaded its way securely among the many lovely islands which gem the upper portion of the bay, until it entered the deep stream of the Ulla, and cast anchor before the Roman town or municipium of Iria Flavia. On this vessel were Theodore and Athanasius, two of the devoted disciples of the Apostle James the Elder, and his fellow-laborers in Spain before the latter's journey to Jerusalem during the great famine of the years 40 and 41 (A. D). James, like the other Apostles dispersed over the surface of the Roman empire, had hastened to Jerusalem to bring the alms of the Spanish Christians to their famine-stricken brethren of Palestine.¹

The persecuting rage of the Pharisees and Sadducees was roused to increased violence by the presence in Jerusalem of the Apostles

¹ See Acts of the Apostles xi., 28, 29, 30; xii., 1 and following.

and their disciples. St. James must have distinguished himself above his brethren by his characteristic zeal and outspokenness; for he drew on himself the chief hatred of the Sanhedrim and the animadversion of King Herod. Now about that time, "Herod the king stretched forth his hands to afflict some of the Church. And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. And, seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take up Peter also. Now it was in the days of the Azymes. And when he had apprehended him, he cast him into prison, . . . intending after the Pasch to bring him forth to the people."¹

So James, who, with Peter and John, had been privileged to witness the Transfiguration of Our Lord on Mount Thabor, and was chosen to be with Him during the terrible agony of His soul in the Garden of Olives, was the first of the apostolic company to shed his blood in Jerusalem. He drank the cup of Christ's passion during the Eastertide and in the holy city. Peter was selected as a still more pleasing victim for the sacrifice, to be offered to the popular fury ere the paschal solemnities were ended. But Peter's appointed work was not yet accomplished; and God's angel saved him from Herod and the Jews.

The faithful companions of the martyred James obtained possession of his body, bore it in all haste and secrecy to the nearest seaport, Joppa, where they happily found a Phœnician merchantman bound for the southwestern coast of Spain. On this they embarked with their treasure, trusting to Providence for a safe issue to their voyage.

A numerous band of the disciples of the Apostle-martyr soon joined Athanasius and Theodore. Their names, to the number of thirteen, are mentioned by the early Spanish annalists, and by Bolandus and Henschius in the "*Acta Sanctorum.*"² These zealous and faithful fellow-workers had not been idle among the Gael while James and his two companions were performing the errand of charity and zeal which ended so tragically in Jerusalem. And now that the Apostle of Spain had been brought back in death to rest forever in the field of his labors, far away from the shore of his native sea of Galilee, there were fervent Christians to meet him at Iria Flavia. One of them, a Gallo-Roman lady, named Lupa, helped the disciples in their need, and had the body of her beloved master conveyed with all due secrecy into the interior of the country, in an ox-cart, such as farmers used. This was to baffle the jealous vigilance of the hostile Jews and Pagans.

Arrived at a property of her own, she surrendered to Athanasius and Theodore the marble sarcophagus prepared beforehand for

¹ *Ibidem* xii., 1-4.

² *Acta Sanctorum*, Februarius, tom. i., p. 6.

her own burial, as was then the custom. Her family vault was on the face of a hillock amid a grove of larch and oak. There they set about erecting over the tomb-vaulted chamber, one of the *Memoriæ*, or memorial chapels, so often mentioned by the Christian writers of the early ages of the Church.

This hillock, and the farm of which it was a part, have borne ever since the name of Libredon, most probably from their being the free gift (*Liberum donum*) of the proprietress, Lupa, to the Apostle, her father in Christ. The hillock itself was only the spur of a neighboring mountain, known popularly as Monte Burgo.

This sacred *Memoria* on the hillside, containing the body of St. James the Elder, is the centre around which has grown up the glorious city of St. James (Santiago), with its great cathedral and the magnificent monastic edifices and hospitals for pilgrims, which were the wonder of Christendom ever since the end of the ninth century. Mountain, hillside, and the neighboring slopes and valleys, all form the site on which piety and history have bestowed the appellation of Compostella (*Campus Stellæ*), "the field of the star." How aptly this name was given we shall presently see.

In course of time the two inseparable companions in life and death of St. James, Athanasius and Theodore, closed their career, and were buried by the side of their venerated master. Long before this, however, and as soon as the memorial chapel had been completed, the majority of the thirteen disciples, leaving a few behind them to minister to the spiritual wants of the Galician Christians, set out for Rome, obtained episcopal consecration at the hands of St. Peter, and then returned to Spain to continue the work of their apostleship.

The history of the Church, in this part of the Iberian Peninsula, is surrounded with no little obscurity during the remainder of the first century and down to the era of Constantine the Great. This same obscurity hangs over the fate of the memorial chapel at Libredon. It is easily accounted for.

The persecution which, under successive emperors from Nero down, raged in Rome and throughout Italy against the Christian name, was, generally speaking, far more relentless in the Provinces of the Roman empire than in the neighborhood of the Capital. The annals and traditions of almost every city of Italy attest the foundation of each principal see, either by some disciple of the Apostles, or, by a follower of these immediate disciples. Thus, Ravenna which, in the first and second centuries, was the great imperial shipyard and military storehouse of the vast Roman fleets, was evangelized by St. Apollinaris, ordained bishop by St. Peter, and appointed to the work of the apostolate in Ravenna. Apollinaris shed his blood in defence of the flock he had gathered to Christ;

so did more than one of his successors. So was it with Milan, in the north of Italy, and with Naples in the south. Nor did it fare otherwise with the churches of Asia, Africa, and Greece. St. James the Younger was stoned to death in Jerusalem, and his successors in that see, for centuries, only looked forward to a bloody death as to the natural inheritance left by their predecessors. We all know, in Asia Minor what befel St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist; and St. Ignatius, and St. Irenæus. It was the same heroic tale of suffering told in every part of the empire. That the persecution should have been less fierce along the Ulla and the Minho might be accounted for by the remoteness of this land of the Gael, and by the peaceful habits of a pastoral people, sheltered by their forests and mountains. We know how plentifully the blood of Christians flowed in the south and east of Spain, as well as in the north, in Seville, in Valencia, in Barcelona, and in Saragossa.

However, long before the Roman emperors had ceased to wage war on the unresisting followers of Christ, or the proconsuls and magistrates in the provinces had ceased to hunt them down or proscribe them, the barbarian invasions began to shake, wave upon wave in quick succession, the mighty fabric of the Roman power. The barbarians, at first, were no less ferocious enemies of Christianity, no less unsparing destroyers of such Christian edifices as dared to appear above ground, than the pagans of Rome and Greece, of Africa and Asia. The fertile regions of southern Gaul fell an easy prey to the invading hordes, who soon poured across the Pyrenees.

Between the unrelenting persecutions of their Roman masters and the destructive ferocity of the first barbarian invaders, the Christians of Spain knew no rest from evil. The Suevi, who possessed themselves of Galicia, were, if anything, more cruel and oppressive than either Goth or Vandal. The Christian societies on either shore of the Bay of Arosa, or along the course of the Ulla and the neighboring streams, were either exterminated or reduced to slavery, or driven to the hospitable fastnesses of the Asturian mountains. Thus fared it with generation after generation of the much tried Christians of Galicia. All local traditions were lost among the scattered and suffering remnants of the Gallo-Roman population evangelized by Saints Athanasius and Theodore.

Iria Flavia was ruined. The forest protected from observation the lowly memorial chapel with its treasures. To be sure, the tradition continued throughout Spain that her apostle had been buried in Galicia. But in Galicia itself the accumulated misfortunes of so many ages had blotted out from the memory of men all knowledge of the precise spot which contained his relics. The Suevi,

who kept their grip on the fair and fertile lands of Galicia, were Arians, like the Visigoths who held sway throughout the rest of Spain down to the Moorish invasion. So that everything among the Christian Celts of northwestern Spain, during these troublous centuries, tended but little toward reviving the memories of the hallowed dead.

When the Mohammedans, in the eighth century, possessed themselves of the fairest provinces of Spain, the men who fought for faith and country found a safe asylum, an impregnable stronghold in the Asturias. The Galicians, then forming in language and blood one great community with the Portuguese, opposed a mighty barrier to the progress of the infidels.

Meanwhile a town of some four or five hundred souls had arisen near the hill which held the *Memoria* of St. James and his two disciples. This town bore the name of San Fins¹ de Lovio, and the forest-covered hill that had so long kept the secret of its buried treasure was known as Monte Burgo de Libredon. Their population formed a part of the diocese of Iria Flavia; for that Roman Municipium, like the Imperial City of Braga beyond the Minho, remained amid its ruin and decay an episcopal see.

The tide of warfare between the Mohammedan invaders and the Christian princes was then (about 813) rolling, back and forth unceasingly, its fierce waves from the foothills of the Asturias to Cadiz and Valencia. From Cordova, the capital of the Moslem power in the peninsula, the conquering infidels seemed to be strengthening their hold on the country, if not extending their possessions. It was the first stage of that sublime struggle of seven hundred years by a Christian people against their irreconcilable foes, of which history affords no parallel save in Catholic Ireland's battle of centuries against British Protestantism.

The period from 770 to 820 was, according to the rich and beautiful literature describing the last heroic enterprises of Charlemagne and his barons, the time when the emperor crossed the Pyrenees at their head to drive back the Moslems to Africa, and to free from their yoke the tomb of the Apostle, St. James. Certain it is, that the current traditions, dating from the beginning of the ninth century, and embodied in the romantic recitals of the age, tell us how the emperor, at Aix-la-Chapelle, was warned in a vision of the dangers which threatened the extinction of Christianity in Spain, and was clearly shown the road which was to lead him and his soldiers to Iria Flavia, and the then undiscovered shrine which held the remains of St. James and his two disciples. All this is stated at length in the writings of Padre Fita and other Spanish

¹ Written also "Finns." The early local annalists call it also "St. Felix."

archæologists, who have, in our day, thrown such light around Compostella and its hallowed memories.

Without pronouncing any judgment on the historical value of these legends, certain it is, that in the year 813, according to Archdeacon Zepedano's sober and conscientious history,¹ it pleased Our Lord to comfort and strengthen the Christian hosts who were battling for the faith in Spain, by revealing to them miraculously the burial-place of His beloved companion, apostle, and martyr.

There exists abundant documentary evidence dating from the ninth century and the ages immediately following, which go to attest all the facts connected with the revelation or re-discovery of the Apostle's tomb and the authenticity of his remains.

It happened during the pontificate of St. Leo III. (795-816) and the reign of Alfonso II., surnamed the Chaste, who was king of the Asturias and Leon from 793 to 842. There is a letter of the holy Pope to the bishops of Spain congratulating them on the re-discovery of the body of St. James, acknowledging its authenticity, reciting the facts of the Apostle's labor in the peninsula, his martyrdom in Jerusalem, the translation of his remains to Iria Flavia and their burial not far from that sea-port. It is the same ground covered by the bull of the Thirteenth Leo, *Deus Omnipotens*, issued on November the 1st, 1884, after two of the most thorough, judicial, and scientific investigations ever instituted.

The most ancient narrative of the discovery of the Memorial Chapel is given in a ninth century manual of a noble Brotherhood, known as the Caballeros Cambeadores of Santiago, who were, immediately after the finding of the tomb and the identification of the remains, founded in Compostella by Alfonso-the-Chaste to watch over the basilica he was rearing above the tomb. Their duties also comprised the guidance and protection of pilgrims, procuring them hospitality, changing gratuitously the money brought with them from abroad into the local Galician currency. This kind office secured foreign pilgrims from the impositions practised even in the ninth century by the money-changers, who were for the most part Jews. It also gave rise to the name popularly given to this Brotherhood—the Cambeadores. By the royal decree instituting this Protective Society of knights none were admitted to membership but the sons of the highest nobility. We see here the origin of the Knights of Santiago or St. James of Compostella and the other orders of chivalry founded to protect pilgrims on their way to and from the shrine of the Apostle.

But let us see how St. Finns de Libredon came to be called Compostella, and how the Memorial Chapel and its treasure were

¹ *Historia de la Basilica Compostellana*, p. 12.

found anew. We translate from the Manual of the Cambeadores, written in the ancient local or Galician dialect :

“ This book,” it says, “ relates the origin of the Cambeadores of the Church of St. James (*Santiago*), and how the body of St. James in its full integrity was revealed.

“ It had remained hidden away in a marble sarcophagus in an underground cave formed of two stone vaults. This cave was in the middle space of Monte Burgo of Libredon, and at the foot of the village of St. Finns de Solobio, in the canton of Bonaval. In the place was also another village called Caminho¹ from the name of the road leading directly to the Church of the Apostle.

“ St. Finns then counted some 400 inhabitants. Below it was a lofty spur or hillock covered with a forest growth of larches and great gnarled oaks. In the midst of this wooded steep people began to see bright lights accompanied with harmonious voices. Stars also appeared. There was one oak tree towering above the others, and over it would shine forth a star-like body surpassing the other lights in splendor.

“ Thereupon San Payo, a hermit who was wont to celebrate Mass for the inhabitants of St. Finns informed Theodimir, Bishop of Iria Flavia, of these manifestations. The bishop forthwith set out with his priests and attendants, arriving at Solobio on the 24th day of July. Taking up his abode with his suite in a castle belonging to one of his relatives, a gentleman by name Espanya, he watched the phenomena from his lofty position. In the middle of the night appeared the lights with the star-like bodies—among these the bright star above the giant oak.

“ The next morning the holy bishop sang Mass in Solobio, and then went to where this great oak tree stood. They cleared away the forest growth until they came to the holy cave. On entering it they saw that it had been skilfully constructed with its double arched vault. There was a small altar, and beneath it a sarcophagus covered with a slab. Two other sarcophagi stood one on each side of the altar, but lower than the central tomb.

“ They (the bishop and his people) began a solemn supplication, the entire population fasting. Then, as if by inspiration, they opened the middle sarcophagus and saw that they had found the body of the holy apostle. For the head was detached from the trunk and he held a pilgrim's staff wrapped in a lettered scroll, which said : ‘ Here lieth James the son of Zebedee and of Salome, the brother of John—who was put to death by Herod in Jerusalem and came by sea with his two disciples as far as Iria Flavia in Galicia, and was thence borne hither in an ox cart belonging to Lupa, the owner of this field. Further they did not wish to go.’

¹ The original text is in the old Gallego or Galician dialect common to Galicia and Portugal, which formed one political province down to the twelfth century.

“ ‘Cecilius, disciple of the apostle, together with the other disciples, erected this.’ ”¹

Fortunately there exist in more than one martyrology in use before the ninth century the most explicit attestations of the prevailing belief that the Apostle St. James had preached the Gospel in Spain, and that, after his martyrdom in Jerusalem, his body had been carried to this field of his labors and buried there. Then, it has ever been the constant tradition in Galicia, that the episcopal see of Iria Flavia was founded by the Apostle.

Bishop Theodomir lost no time in informing his sovereign, Alfonso II., of the discovery of the Memorial Chapel at Libredon, and of the preternatural phenomena which had led to it. Meanwhile the population far and near, moved by the discovery and by the miracles performed in the cave on the hillside, were pouring into St. Finns.

On this steep hillside, above the memorial chapel and the triple tomb, soon arose a basilica, with a group of monastic institutions belonging to the Order of St. Benedict, the zealous monks ministering to the spiritual needs of the ever-increasing multitude of pilgrims. The mountain of Libredon, with the forest-clad spurs and hillocks around, and the valley beneath, were from that year of 813 called Compostella in the Galician tongue (*Campus Stellæ*, the field of the star). On this favored site soon grew rapidly the historic Santiago, the city of St. James.

Alfonso II. hastened with the foremost amongst his clergy and nobles to come to Libredon; and with them bore solemn witness to the facts authenticated by Bishop Theodomir, the saintly hermit of Payo, and the populations of Solobio and Caminho.

The abrupt hillside was a most unfavorable site for the erection of a large church edifice. But the sturdy and intelligent builders of the ninth and succeeding centuries were accustomed to overcome difficulties which would appal our modern architects. They cut down the steep slope so as to construct, on a level with the top of the arched memorial chapel, a vast platform on which were laid the foundations of the contemplated basilica, bearing the name of San Salvador, in honor of the Saviour for whom St. James had shed his blood. In the church thus built the high altar was placed directly over that in the crypt or cave beneath, where reposed the body of the apostle with his two faithful companions. The entire building, as well as that of the adjoining Benedictine Monastery, was planned and constructed with an eye to solidity and security. The pagan Norsemen were scouring the northern and southern seas and making ruthless war on every religious edifice. The terrible Mos-

¹ *Historia y Descripción Arqueológica de la Basílica Compostelana*, por el Doctor D. Jose Zepedano, Lugo, 1870.

lem hordes were carrying desolation into every part of Spain left exposed to their incursions. Alfonso-the-Chaste wisely determined to secure, in so far as he could, the newly discovered tomb and its priceless treasures against the sudden attacks of all enemies of the Christian name. Thus the Basilica of the Saviour with the adjoining edifices, resembled more a fortress than a peaceful house of prayer. Things remained in this state for upwards of seventy years. Alphonso II. had endeavored to provide generously for the support of the clergy, both regular and secular, by granting them (or rather St. James himself) the ownership in fee simple of the land for a circuit of three miles, together with taxes and revenue derived from other places.¹ Then it was that Pope Leo III. to whom King Alfonso made known all that had just happened in the Field of the Star, wrote his letter of congratulation.²

Under Alfonso III., in July, 896, a new and more spacious edifice was begun. This was consecrated in May, 899, in presence of the royal family, seventeen bishops, and a vast concourse of all classes. In 977 this edifice was destroyed by the celebrated Almanzor, the Vizier of Hiquem or Hixem II., Caliph of Cordova. Almanzor thought, in his fanatical hatred of Christianity, that by destroying the Shrine of Compostella he should deal a mortal blow to Christianity in Spain, yet he did not, nevertheless, succeed in violating the tomb of the Apostle. This could only be reached through an opening in the floor of the upper church. When the ruthless conqueror penetrated to the crypt, he found, seated before the shrine, a man,—a monk some say,—of venerable and majestic aspect, who reproached Almanzor with all the blood he had shed, and the sacrileges he had committed, and told him that the justice of God would strike him down before he could return to Cordova.

Almanzor had already despoiled the basilica of its treasures. The bells he had taken down from the towers and sent on before him, with the beautiful doors of the temple, to Cordova, borne on the shoulders of the captive citizens of Compostella. After having levelled to the ground as much as time would permit him of the upper church, and burned the monastery and city, Almanzor set forth on other expeditions. Victory followed his standards everywhere till he came to Medina-Celi. There a fearful pestilence resembling Asiatic cholera fell suddenly on his army, and threatened its utter extermination. Almanzor himself was seized by the

¹ See the Royal Diploma, in Don José Zepedano's *History*, pp. 34 and 35.

² This letter, Don Zepedano assures us (p. 14), has been verified by Mgr. Giovanni Grimaldi, Prefect of the Vatican Archives. It is, moreover, quoted at length in the great manuscript work, *The Book of Calistus II.* (1119-1124), preserved in the treasury of Compostella, and which Cardinal Paya was thinking of publishing while the writer was in Galicia (1882-83).

avenging plague, and died amid the most excruciating tortures, declaring to his attendants that, "in all his vast army there was not one man so much to be pitied as their chief."

Meanwhile the spoils of Compostella, with the cathedral doors and bells, were received in triumph in Cordova. The doors adorned the entrance to the great mosque, and the bells, plated with gold and silver, were hung up and used as lamps in the mosque itself. There King St. Ferdinand found them, when, on June 30, 1235, he entered Cordova as conqueror. He compelled the ministers and guardians of the mosque to carry the bells back to Compostella on their own shoulders. It was a just application of the *lex talionis*.¹

But the stout-hearted Galicians were not prevented by the ruin wrought by Almanzor from repairing, without a day's delay, the ruin he had caused in Santiago. King Bermudo II. made it his especial care to rebuild and enlarge the basilica and to fortify it against sudden attacks. It was then reconsecrated,—a far more beautiful edifice than before.

In the eleventh century the Northmen invaded Galicia a second time; and the Bishop, Don Cresconio, who had performed a heroic part in repelling the invaders, not only fortified the junction of the Rio de Padron with the Sar, but surrounded Compostella with high and strong walls, and erected on the west front of the cathedral two great towers which were deemed impregnable.

With the conversion of the Northmen to Christianity and the repression in Spain of the Mohammedan pride and power, the long-felt need of a more spacious church edifice gave rise to the great Cathedral of St. James, as it now stands with its successive modifications. We say "great" in a qualified sense. It was, on account of the declivity on which the primitive memorial chapel had been erected, found extremely difficult to rear a structure rivalling in length and breadth the great thirteenth century cathedrals of Burgos, Toledo, or even Leon. But the aim of the builders was to afford accommodation, on the great jubilee festivals, to the enormous crowds of pilgrims who flocked to the Shrine. Men came from every country in Christendom to the Shrine of St. James, drawn by the wish of reviving within their own souls the dried up or slowly flowing springs of Christian piety, or of atoning for heinous public sins by generous and heroic public penance, or, again, by the hope of obtaining near the tomb of the Apostle relief from some grievous and inveterate infirmity. They came thither to pray, to weep for their sins, not to

¹ Such is the account given of Almanzor's last expedition and death by Señor Don Joaquin Guichot, the historian of Seville.

witness the splendors of public worship. These they could behold at home, without risking long journeys over sea and land.

What the Bishop—Diego Pelaez I.—and his successors sought and obtained in enlarging as far as they could the existing basilica, was to erect as many confessionals as possible in the lengthened aisles and multiplied chapels of the new twelfth century cathedral. The Shrine of the Apostle was, in the design of the Redeemer of souls, an abundant and overflowing fountain of life within His Temple; it behooved the chief pastors there to have the cleansing and life-giving waters placed everywhere within the sacred precincts within reach of the thirsty and fainting multitudes. This design was admirably carried out by the men who began the reconstruction and enlargement of the Basilica on July 11th, 1078.

Guide books and superficial writers on Spanish subjects and localities tell their readers that the names of the architects and artists who superintended this restoration, and left such remarkable works behind them, are utterly forgotten. Well, it so happens that Aymeric, the Secretary of Calixtus II., who visited Compostella with this Pope about 1110 (and while the latter was only Archbishop of Vienne), assures us that this restoration was begun in 1078, under the direction of "Master Bernardo, a wonderful old man" (*senex mirabilis magister*), and of Master Roberto. What wonders these two distinguished architects achieved inside and outside the cathedral we are faithfully told in the "Book of Callistus II." At the time, however, when Aymeric and his master visited Compostella, not only was the cathedral unfinished, but, in 1117, the interior was utterly ruined by fire.

This was caused by the Spaniards themselves, unhappily. Dona Urraca, daughter of Alfonso VI. of Leon, had married the Count of Burgundy, brother of the Archbishop of Vienne, soon to be Pope Calixtus II. Her husband died before Alfonso VI., leaving after him an infant son, so famous afterward as Alfonso VII., El Emperador. Dona Urraca next married Alfonso I., King of Aragon, who, refusing to acknowledge the Salic Law prevailing in the Kingdom of Leon, upheld his wife's rights to the crown as against those of her infant son. An Aragonese army invaded Galicia, ravaging and destroying with barbaric ferocity. They possessed themselves of Compostella; and it was while they were contending there for the mastery that the cathedral was burned.

The Archbishop of Vienne, with his secretary, Aymeric, hastened to Galicia, to defend the rights of his nephew, the infant Alfonso VII. In Compostella he was charmed with the magnificent piety of citizens and pilgrims. His book, begun and almost finished near the Shrine of the Apostle, was completed and further added to in Rome, while he occupied the papal throne. It is one of the wonders of mediæval literature.

The Mohammedans were not slow in profiting by these feuds between the Christian princes. All through the twelfth century, as before, the most determined efforts were made by the former to regain the provinces from which they had been driven. The youth, the boyhood almost, of Alfonso VII. was spent in arms, who thereby prepared himself for the great successes which won him the title of El Emperador. Meanwhile the resources of his kingdom were taxed to the utmost to maintain a strife seemingly endless. Things came to such a pass that the Archbishop and Chapter of Compostella were forced not only to surrender the funds collected for rebuilding the cathedral, but to give up for a time their own revenues.

According to Don Zepedano, when Ferdinand II. came in pilgrimage to Compostella in 1168, the Church of the Apostle was in a pitiful condition. The ruin caused by the fire of 1117 had only been very partially repaired. The interior of the edifice was filled with scaffolding, while the impoverished clergy had no funds to continue the work, and the western nave with its aisles were scarcely begun. The king had brought with him the most skilled architect he could find, the "Master Matthew," now so well known throughout the English-speaking world. To this energetic worker the king entrusted the completion of the cathedral, providing him with ample means for the undertaking.

Master Matthew inspired his workmen with his own spirit, and in 1188, on the 1st of April, the edifice was completed, and the glorious triple arch of the western portico was thrown open to the public. It is still known by the name of *La Gloria*. It is so called from the colossal figure of Christ, enthroned in glory, in the tympanum of the central door. A modern Spanish writer, Villamil, does not exaggerate the merit of this grand work of Christian art, when he says that this portico, considered as a monumental piece of iconography, may well be esteemed as the most excellent in existence.

It is an epic in stone. In the tympanum of the central door Christ is seated on His throne and in the act of judging the living and the dead. With Him are the apostles as His assessors. The Judge displays the wounds in His hands, feet, and side. Angels on each side bear the instruments of His passion. Above the throne in the semi-circular vaulted space are seated the twenty-four elders described by St. John in the Apocalypse, all seated and half of them bearing harps, while the other half bear cups full of perfumes—the prayers of all God's saints. Two semi-circular and concentric lines of smaller figures above the thrones of the apostles and evangelists represent the multitudes of the blessed; some of them are already crowned, while others receive crowns from the

ministering angels, and others again hold books and scrolls to which they point with the finger. These are the teachers and guides of the generations among whom they live.

So much, in brief, for the tympanum and vaulting of the central door. That to your left, or the northern door with its wealth of sculpture, represents paradise. There is a world of vegetation, typical of the garden of everlasting delights, amid whose shady depths one beholds two concentric ranks of figures bearing palm branches. The corresponding space above the southern door—to your right—are the multitudes of the damned. Here the scenes of the resurrection, of the separation of the just from the wicked, and of the effects of the final doom, are graphically pictured, or rather suggested in a few masterly and eloquent touches. The whole space, above and below, is alive with the episodes of this tremendous drama.

But the last judgment, the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem and the misery of the eternally lost, are not the sole themes which the mediæval poet-artist has here treated. The life of Christ on earth and the destinies of His Church, as well as the struggles of every individual soul among His followers, are either most beautifully and clearly delineated in the lower portions of this sublime composition, or so admirably symbolized as to be intelligible to the minds of the worshipping multitudes. The exquisite grouped columns which support the central tympanum, or from which spring the arches and vaulting, are together with their pedestals and capitals, all one living mass of historical sculpture. The architects and artists who reared the church of St. James in Compostella, like those who contemporaneously labored to make of the cathedral of St Mark in Venice, "the Book of the Lamb written within and without," were inspired and directed by the same living faith. Amid the "Field of the Star" as on the blue waters of the Lagoon, around the shrine of the great son of Zebedee and Salomé as around the tomb of the second evangelist, Catholic art, like some workman sent down from the heavenly Jerusalem, created immortal masterpieces, embodying in stone which breathes and lives and speaks, the story of Christ's infinite love and the terrors of His justice.

The onyx pillar which faces you in the group supporting the tympanum of the middle porch, is covered with sculptures representing the double genealogy of Christ, His human ancestry according to Mary, His mother, and His eternal birth as the One Son of the One Living God. Look up to where the Father holds on His knees and presents to the adoring love of men and angels His Son made man and crucified for our redemption, while the Holy Spirit, as the dove, proceeds from both, and with outstretched wings prepares to descend and transform this lower world.

Then let your eyes rest on the capital of that pillar-group, and admire how *Maestro Mateo* could make the rough, dull, cold stone tell the story of Christ's temptation in the wilderness, whither the Holy Spirit had borne Him after His baptism. It was to teach every one of us, every human being who professes to follow Christ, how to open his own soul to that same Holy Spirit, and with His help to overcome this lower world. Nay; look down at the pedestal of the column, and see that human figure prostrate beneath the superincumbent mass and strangling these monstrous animals, which figure forth the worldly spirits of pride and sensuality.

The salient columns at the angles of each sustaining group are covered with a spiral growth of vegetation, like the mighty trees in a tropical forest, and among their leafage you see figures of men and animals pursuing each other—the lively image of man's perpetual battle with the animal instincts of his earthly nature.

In this unavoidable strife, the disciple of Christ has only to lift his eyes to the Model, Master, and Judge above him, and to open his heart to the ever ready grace of the Holy Ghost. The *Sursum Corda* which echoes from this grand page of sculpture, is, to him who has an eye to read, an intelligence to understand, and a heart to nobly dare, as thrilling as the divinest chant of preface that ever pealed through the aisles of the cathedral within.

I shall merely add that in the northern door you have the prophets who announced the coming of Christ, and in the southern porch the Apostles who were His companions, the founders of His Church, and the fathers of the modern civilized world.¹

Shall we, citizens of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and other great cities of the union, never have casts of this great work of *Maestro Mateo*? I ask the question now, as we are preparing to celebrate the centenary of Columbus, and to recall some at least of the glories of the great country which sent Columbus to discover the western world.

The western front as left by the architect in 1188, although embellished by works of such transcendent excellence, in no wise resembled the west front of Rheims or Amiens, of Notre Dame de Paris, of Bourges or of Chartres. The structure as beheld from the adjoining square, with its double sweep of lofty ballustraded steps, around what seemed a central door leading to the crypt, had as much the appearance of a fortified castle, as of a church edifice. The majestic front itself with its towers, although made a thing of beauty and a joy forever by *Maestro Mateo*, was evidently

¹ In 1866 Signor Buicciani was commissioned by the Directors of the Kensington Museum to obtain an exact cast in plaster of the portico *La Gloria*. It would be a patriotic act in our great municipalities in the United States to get casts of the same for the instruction of our architects.

constructed so as to resist some sudden attack from the Moslem. And the mighty hosts which the Moorish emperors led into Spain at that same period, fully justified the design of the architect.

But, let us enter the portal of *La Gloria* as it was thrown open to the public on the day of the restored temple's consecration, April 1, 1188. The architect, who, like his brother-artists of the Middle Ages, labored chiefly for the glory of religion, has left inside the portal itself a kneeling statue, a life-like image of himself. The face is turned toward the high altar, and the tomb of St. James, which lies in the crypt immediately beneath the altar. With his right hand he strikes his breast, and in his left is a scroll with the simple words *Matthæus Architectus*.

Thus was fulfilled the wish of Pope Calixtus II. The temple which he had seen thronged to overflowing with the pilgrims who flocked to Compostella from every land in Christendom, had arisen from its ruins enlarged, beautified, a joy and a wonder to Spaniard and foreigner alike.

The innumerable hordes which crossed the Straits of Gibraltar in 1189 to 1195 under the command of the Moorish Caliph Al-Manssour, never invaded Galicia. Not till 1589, when the English fleet under Drake, after the destruction of the Armada, appeared on the coast of Northern Spain, was the shrine of St. James threatened with desecration or destruction. The English under Essex had filled Cadiz and the neighboring seaboard with dismay and horror, sacking, destroying, desecrating all that was holy. No Mohammedans could have surpassed these hordes in their work of devastation.

There was universal alarm in Compostella, Galicia, and the Asturias when Drake appeared off Corunna. The then Archbishop of Santiago, Don Juan de San Clemente at once sent away into the interior the precious relics contained in his cathedral, as well as such of the gold and silver ornaments as would tempt the cupidity of the invaders. The pious prelate took on himself alone, with the aid perhaps of some one of his clergy, whom he could trust as himself, to place the bodies of St. James and his two disciples where Drake and his men could not find them or would not seek for them. The archbishop performed his task by night and in the profoundest secrecy. The prevailing terror urged him to use all haste. Then it was that the report went abroad in Compostella and spread throughout Spain, that the archbishop and his attendants, when they approached the tomb of the Apostle, were driven back by a fierce light which radiated from the shrine. At any rate he was reported to have said to those who questioned him on the night's proceedings "that the great Apostle would know how to protect his shrine from the sacrilegious hands of his enemies."

As the days passed and no English made their appearance, the archbishop summoned the most skilled masons he could find, obliterated the entrance to the tomb from the upper Basilica, after having walled up every avenue of approach to it in the crypt itself. The real secret of what the prelate had done amid the terror and haste of his midnight work in the shrine, died with him. Both clergy and people continued to believe that St. James and his disciples reposed, undisturbed in the holy cave and the Gallo-Roman sarcophagus of the pious Gaelic convert, the Lady Lupa. Nor were they substantially wrong in this, as we shall now see.

Since that month of alarm in 1589, no person, priest or layman, king or cardinal, was ever allowed, or ever ventured to approach and to see the crypt with its triple tomb. When Cardinal Paya, now Archbishop of Toledo, became, in January, 1874, Archbishop of Compostella, he formed the determination of doing for the body of St. James what has been effected in our days for the bodies of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Claire, Sts. Philip and James the younger, as well as St. Ambrose and St. Charles Borromeo,—namely, of reopening solemnly their tombs, of verifying and attesting the condition of their hallowed remains.

An opportunity for this verification was afforded in Compostella by the ruinous state of certain portions of the cathedral around the high altar. The Cardinal-archbishop appointed a commission of eminent and enlightened clergymen and no less eminent physicians and scientists, who followed every step in the proceedings, recorded and signed them day by day.

It was known, from the annals of the Basilica, that the altar-tomb of the Apostle was placed exactly in the crypt beneath the high altar in the church above. An opening was, therefore, made in front of the high altar and the commissioners descended into the crypt at the foot of the Gallo-Roman sepulchre. This and the two adjoining tombs of St. Theodore and St. Athanasius, were found empty! Nay so much of the Gallo-Roman sarcophagus donated by Lupa, as could be, in a moment of extreme haste, taken away with the relics, had been removed with these.

The commission ordered every part of the adjoining ground to be searched to a depth of five or six feet. At length behind the Roman tomb itself, and in the very centre of the apse, workmen came upon a rudely constructed grave marked with a cross, and made up of the bricks and fragments of marble taken from the Gallo-Roman sepulchre. The hardened plaster which covered the fragments bore the impress of a hand in more than one place.

It was, manifestly, the work of some one who, urged on by some mortal fear, amid the darkness, and in secret, had been thus burying away some cherished treasure. Everything there was eloquent

of the hurried labor of love performed by the aged Archbishop San Clemente. They opened this rudely constructed grave, and only found a confused heap of human bones, without paper or inscription of any kind enabling the discoverers to say to whom these relics belonged.

Then began the scrupulously conscientious work of the physicians and scientists belonging to the commission. Every fragment in the heap was carefully set apart and sorted. After the most minute examination, it was ascertained that the fragments belonged to three skeletons of the male sex, one of them being somewhat older than the others, and offering several stains or marks not found on the corresponding pieces belonging to the other two. The skull of this older skeleton, which bore these peculiar stains and other distinctive characteristics,—was also incomplete. The mastoid bone was missing.

Now it so happened that Archbishop Gelmirez, who occupied the See of Compostella from July, 1100, to 1140, had sent to the Bishop and Chapter of Pistoia, in Italy, this very same missing portion of the skull of St. James; and in the course of the further investigation ordered in 1884 by Leo XIII., the Papal Commissioner, Monsignor Agostino Caprara, found on the portion of the skull still reverend in the Cathedral of Pistoia, the characteristic stains and marks which distinguish the corresponding part of the older cranium in Compostella.¹

Cardinal Paya adhered rigorously to the rules laid down by the Council of Trent in investigations of this important nature. Having arrived, as well as the commissioners, at the conclusion that the three skeletons discovered, as we have just related, belonged to St. James the Elder and his two disciples, an authentic copy of the proceedings and conclusions was forwarded to the Sacred Congregation of Rites and laid before the Pope. His Holiness forthwith named a special committee of seven cardinals to examine and report on the matter. On May 20, 1884, the cardinals reported that several points mentioned in the Compostella investigation should be sifted more thoroughly. Thereupon Mgr. Agostino Caprara was directed to proceed at once to Spain as Special Commissioner of His Holiness, and to probe to the bottom every tittle of the evidence furnished by Cardinal Paya. The Papal Commissioners, says Leo XIII., in his bull, "having taken the sworn testimony of the witnesses summoned by him; having rec-

¹ The letter of Archbishop Gelmirez, copied from the original kept in the archives of the Cathedral of Compostella, is given by Don Zepedano at page 26 of his work. Superficial critics have no idea of the solid ground on which Leo XIII. and his cardinals advanced in every step which led to the publication of the Bull *Deus Omnipotens*.

onciled some apparent contradictions in their former testimony; having examined at Compostella and Madrid the professional experts in archæology, history, and anatomy, competent to decide on the matters inquired into; having carefully inspected the remaining parts of the more ancient (Gallo-Roman) sarcophagus, and compared them with the materials of the tomb which contained the discovered relics, as well as surveyed the part of the apse in which these were found; and, finally, having once more questioned the skilled anatomists regarding every portion of the venerated skeletons, the commissioner returned to Rome, and completed his labors by an accurate report of all that he had done.

“Wherefore, having once more called together in the Vatican the same Committee of Cardinals on the 19th July of the present year (1884), and a thorough discussion of every doubtful point resulting in a clearer manifestation of the truth, the question was put: ‘Shall the judgment pronounced by the Cardinal-Archbishop of Compostella, regarding the identity of the relics discovered in the centre of the apse of the principal sanctuary of the said Metropolitan Basilica, and judged to belong to the Apostle James the Elder and to his two disciples, Athanasius and Theodore, be now confirmed?’

“And our Beloved Sons, the Cardinals aforesaid, together with the Prelates Consultors, considering that all the questions submitted to them were verified beyond the possibility of contradiction, and that, therefore, they had arrived at that certain knowledge of the subject-matter which, in conformity with the sacred canons and the constitutions of our predecessors the Roman Pontiffs, is to be sought for in such inquiries, thus made answer: “*Affirmative, sen sententiam esse confirmandam.*”¹

Leo XIII., in order to revive throughout Christendom the ancient piety of our forefathers toward the shrine of St. James in Compostella, not only made of the year 1885 a jubilee year in Spain for all who visited the tomb of the Apostle, but extended to every diocese in the Catholic world the privilege of sharing the spiritual favors bestowed on pilgrims to Compostella.

Ever since the 25th of July, 1179, in virtue of a bull of Alexander III., it is a jubilee year in Compostella when the 25th of July, the feast of St. James, falls on Sunday. This happened in 1886, and will again happen only in 1897 within the present century. In the next century these jubilee years will be: 1909, 1915, 1920, 1926, 1937, 1943, 1948, 1954, 1965, 1971, 1976, 1982, 1993, 1999.

¹ Leonis XIII. *Acta*, vol. iv., pp. 159-172.

This favor was conferred by Pope Calixtus II., and was confirmed by Eugene III., Anastasius IV., and Alexander III. Happy those among our readers whose age will permit them to look forward beyond the limits of the present century to the enjoyment of long years in the next. Thrice happy should devotion lead them to the ancient land of the Gael and the favored shrine of St. James on some future jubilee year. They will find in the "Field of the Star" and its inhabitants still living, ardent and bright with the light of other days, that faith which led Bishop Theodomir and Alfonso-the-Chaste to the blessed cave in the hillside of Libredon. Should our pilgrims boast of the old Celtic blood which warms the heart of the writer, they will remember, on crossing the waters of the deep Ulla, and climbing the steep iron pathway that leads thence to the *Campus Stellæ*, that among the first to whom St. James brought the Gospel truth in Spain, were those Gaels of the Asturias, and that it was a noble woman of that race who granted to the disciples of the martyred Apostle a resting-place in her own family sepulchre.

BERNARD O'REILLY.

¹ The inscription on the marble sarcophagus in which repose once more, since 1884, the relics of St. James, is as follows:

D. M. S.
 ATIANO. ET.AT
 T.E.T LVMP.SA.
 VIRIA EMO
 NEPTIS PIANO. XVI.
 ET S. F. C.
