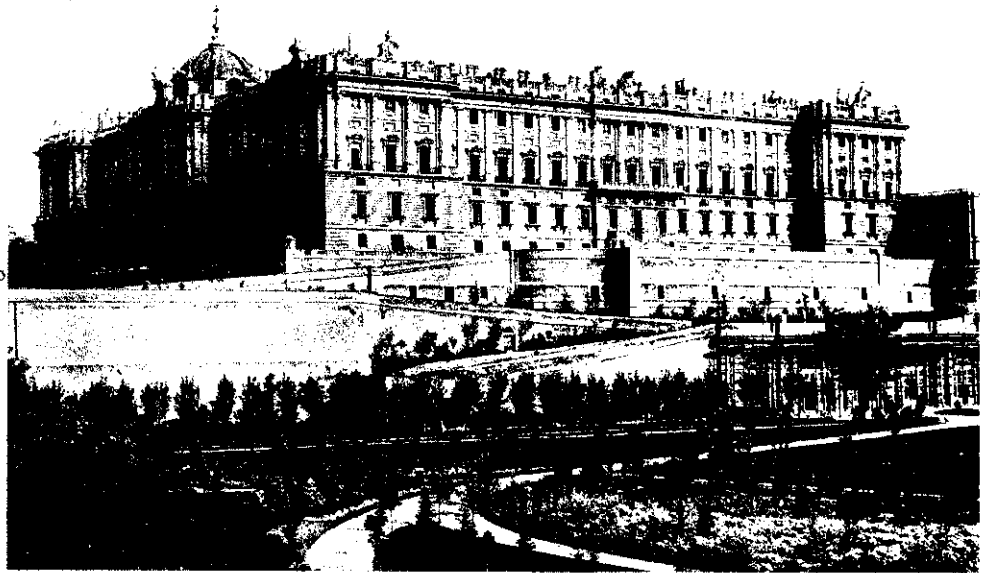




THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH, MADRID.

journey; and (3) the lack of any concise and reliable information as to the places most worth a visit, or the things to see when you get there. With regard to the language, there are few tongues as soft as Spanish, and few of which it is easier to acquire a colloquial knowledge especially if one is familiar with French and Latin—and there is certainly no country in the world where a stranger, knowing nothing of its language, will be less ridiculed than in Spain, where even the children are brought up on lessons demonstrating old-fashioned courtesy, and a chivalry fast disappearing in more Northern climes.

Spain is a country abounding in great cities—Madrid, Barcelona, Toledo, Saragossa, Cadiz, Seville, Cordova, Granada, Malaga, etc., etc., are only a few of the places filled with historic lore, which recur to one's memory, and to go to older places still, few who have been to Seville, have returned without a visit to the ancient ruins of "Italicus." The Spanish people, though in many respects centuries behind the times, are in others far beyond them. You can still see to day in Toledo the barred windows and narrow streets—relics of a Moorish past and yet, in Madrid, you find the most up-to-date Royal Palace in the world. You might witness the afternoon drives along the banks of the Guadalupe at Seville, or in the Park at Saragossa, and imagine yourself at Brighton or Cowes during the season—



THE ROYAL PALACE AT MADRID.



PUERTA DEL SOL, MADRID.

while to see the same people at a bull-fight you would believe the clock had been put back a century.

From being the greatest naval and colonising Power in the world, Spain has now become the least—but who is to say that her lessons have been learnt in vain? Who would be bold enough to prophesy that a nation, able to undertake the training of a Montezuma, and having internal wealth, a patriotic and courageous people, and a history not less glorious than our own, has completed all her records, or is indifferent to the possibility of being deleted from the map of Europe? Barcelona is the great business city, and without a doubt comes easily first as regards trade importance, shipping and general commercial instinct, and yet it has always been the "loca" of strikes, insipient Revolution and Anarchism. This may be partially accounted for by the preponderance of the "working" element, often badly paid, and always worked to excess.

The loss of the colonies was probably the very best thing that could happen from the point of view of the regeneration movement—they were unproductive to Spain, notwithstanding their excessive taxation, which was insufficient to pay the cost of keeping them in order—and the advent of a youthful and popular monarch a few years back did much, at any rate temporarily, to rally malcontents round the throne. There

has of late been less of corruption in Government circles, and more honest attempt not only at clean administration, but at the development of the country's latent resources, and the resistance to too much control of lay questions by the Church—perhaps in no country is the latter in possession of more influence, or in control of more tangible accumulated wealth. With good Government for a decade, Spain would emerge to a prosperity not enjoyed for two centuries, and her enormous mineral wealth, at present scarcely scratched over, would be sufficient to make of her a great exporter and manufacturer. She already has a good and growing population, and living is both comfortable and cheap. It may be that some day Portugal will be absorbed by her bigger neighbour, and, in any case, the Peninsula is well protected by the Pyrenees on the one side, and the sea on the other. Whatever happens, the real problem is one for the Spanish themselves—unity of purpose and aspirations—and when they have solved it by the abandonment of internecine strife, it will be found that their country has in front of her a future more glorious and prosperous even than her glorious past, a future perhaps to be influenced by the English blood and traditions, which will be handed down to the future Princes of the Asturias through our own Queen Ena, the first English Princess, as far as I can remember, to ascend the Spanish Throne.