

SECTION I.

MADRID AND THE CASTILES

(OLD AND NEW).

INTRODUCTION.

THE PROVINCES OF THE CASTILES : CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRY AND NATIVES.

THESE, the two empire provinces, join each other, and constitute a large portion of the central plateau of Spain, forming, in fact, one-third of the entire country, of which they are truly "the heart and citadel:" composed chiefly of tertiary formation, they rise at an average about 2000 feet above the sea, and this table-land is itself encompassed with mountains and intersected by diverging ranges: thus the **Montes de Toledo** divide the basins of the Guadiana and Tagus, while the **Sierra de Guadarrama** separates those of Tagus and Duero: to the east rise the **Sierras de Cuenca**, some of the highest mountains of these provinces. These provinces, now divided into Old and New, **Castilla la Vieja y Nueva**, formed under the ancients the districts of the Celtiberi, Oretani, and Carpetani. The N.W. portion was called **Bardulia** under the Goths: but this name was changed into that of Castilla so early as 801, and the distinction *Vetula, Vieja*, was afterwards added, to mark the difference between it and the *new* and more southern portions which were subsequently wrested from the Moor. The "canting" name Castilla was taken from the number of fortresses erected on the frontier of Leon and Asturias, whence the Moors called the province **Ardo-l-kalád**, the "Land of the Castles," and also **Kashtellah**.* The primitive Castilian castles were no unsubstantial *Châteaux en Espagne*, but formed real defences, held by brave men, and were built in imitation of Roman citadels, the solid masonry being quite unlike the Oriental *tapia* of the Moorish Alcazars of the south. The Castiles bear for arms, "Gules, a castle or;" these arms are carried as the emblem of the whole nation.

Castilla la Vieja, like Leon, being close to the north-west mountains, from whence the Gotho-Spaniard burst forth against the Moors, was soon recovered from the infidel: it became a petty sovereignty, a *Condado*, or "county," often, however, in some measure subject to the kings of Leon, until declared independent about 762, under the Conde Rodrigo Fruelaz. He was father of the renowned judge Nuño Rasura, whose descendant, Doña Nuña Rasura, twelfth countess, married in 1028 Sancho, King of Navarre; their son Ferdinand was the first who assumed the title of King of Castile, and of Leon also, on his marriage with Sancha, daughter and heiress of Bermudo III. These two king-

* Of the number of walled forts in Spain in earlier times, Livy (xxii. 19), Appian (B. H. 467), and Hirtius (B. H. 8), make mention.

[Spain, 1882.]