

**THE MONK OF THE MONASTERY
OF YUSTE; OR, THE LAST DAYS
OF THE EMPEROR CHARLES V: AN
HISTORICAL LEGEND OF THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

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The Monk of the Monastery of Yuste; Or, The Last Days of the Emperor Charles V: An Historical Legend of the Sixteenth Century by Mariana Monteiro

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MARIANA MONTEIRO

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From the Spanish.

By MARIANA MONTEIRO.



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Figure 1. Relationship between the number of species (S) and the number of individuals (N) for 10 different species. The regression line is labeled 'R² = 0.98'.



INTRODUCTION.

ON the southerly brow of the Sierra del Salvador, forty leagues east of Madrid, one mile from Jaraiz and within gunshot from the small town of Cuacos, is still to be seen the celebrated monastery where, in past ages, one of the most renowned men of Christendom breathed the last sigh of his mortal life.

I have seen this monastery. I have passed many hours of my youth under its sad-coloured arches, endeavouring to decipher in its ruins the secret of a great repentance and the heroic poem of a heartfelt piety which, in old age, prompted him to renounce all the pomps of a world wherein all laurels fade, and to cast himself into the arms of Christ. I have frequently contemplated with tearful eyes those walls which, under the hand of time, are fast crumbling like the proud oak

falls to pieces under the woodman's axe; and the arid paths of my imagination have been furrowed by reminiscences of history.

Those green woods and luxuriant trees which surround the building often bestowed their ambrosial perfumes and cool shades to soothe his fevered brow.

On the borders of the lake where he was wont to pass his idle hours is still to be seen the walnut-tree which, in an innocent freak, he planted with his own hands.

The inclined mound rising up to the vestibule of the palace yet remains which he used to ascend on his pet pony; and in this humble vestibule is still preserved the stone he used when dismounting, and the old leathern arm-chair, standing under the scutcheon of Austria, from whence could be seen the high crests of the Mirabete and the extensive plains of the Arañuelos, furrowed by rivers which resembled silver ribbons, and where he used to sit in the spring, listening to the nightingales singing in the Sierra Jaranda, or taking the sunshine on winter evenings.

In a room, lit up solely by such light as

comes through a thick grating of iron bars like a prison cell, may still be seen the mean arm-chair which served him for repose and meditation; and hewed out in the wall is a small aperture which permitted him to hear Mass from his bed when stricken by sickness.

Under the high altar of the church, in a dark vault, and suspended by four ropes from the ceiling, still hangs the oaken coffin which was made for him, and placed there in order that the priest when celebrating Mass should stand over his remains. These are the last vestiges which speculation, injury, and ingratitude of the age have respected of this great man.

On quitting the monastery and taking the road to Cuacos, the traveller will see the scutcheon of Austria sculptured on the granite walls surrounding the monastery, or, rather, the garden of the palace.

What diverse emotions are produced by the sight of that scutcheon! Some pass it by listlessly, and will even cast a contemptuous smile upon it: others gaze upon it with the stupidity of ignorance.

"All this has gone by," say the first.