

theatre open to the air, in very perfect condition, with a circus near it; a most curious subterranean passage leading to the river; and last, but of greatest interest to us all, the magnificent aqueduct we passed on entering the night before. It is built of huge granite blocks, and bricks of a rich warm red—a combination that produced excellent effects of colouring. It has three tiers of arches, the highest rising to an elevation of about eighty feet. Ford's description is so admirable, that I am tempted to quote it:—"The magnitude of these colossal monuments is very impressive; they are the standards the Romans have left, whereby to measure their ambition, power, and intellect. There is indeed a sermon in these stones, and the idea of the once Mistress of the World rules even in decay. How, when all this greatness has vanished, can any one fret about the petty griefs of his brief hour? This is indeed a lonely scene, a thing of the past: here let the stranger muse of a still evening, as we have often done,—these monuments, like himself, have nothing to do with the present Emeritan, on whom their poetry, and attractions are lost. These mighty relics, which have defied ages, are of a different date and people, and have outlived the names of their founders. Yet there

they stand grey and shattered, but upright, supporting nothing, now, but the weight of centuries. Above them is spread, like a curtain, the blue sky, beautiful and bright as at the first dawn of creation, for Nature decays not; yet never, perhaps, were these arches, even when perfect, so touchingly picturesque as now; the Vandal has destroyed their proportions, but Time—and who paints like it?—has healed the scars with lichens, and tinted the weather-beaten fragments. Their former glory is indeed subdued, but how tender the pity, which the past conjures up!”

It was on Sunday afternoon (November 6th), that we visited the scene our countryman so poetically describes. The air breathed a soft autumnal warmth, and the sky wore as bright a blue, as when he sat there years ago meditating on Rome's by-gone grandeur, while above our heads an untold number of sparrow-hawks, that nestle in safety within the weather-worn nooks and crevices of the aqueduct, careered through the air like swallows in the summer sunshine.

Its lateral surface, which would otherwise want variety, is broken into bold alternations of light and shade by massive buttresses running

from the base to the summit. Had not the world become so accustomed to see the remains of past ages barbarously treated, it would hardly be credited that the Emeritans, as Ford calls the people of Merida, have actually pulled down several of these buttresses for the mere sake of the stone.

The finest view, perhaps, in all Merida, is commanded by a terrace at the back of the *Posada de las Animas*, close to the great Roman bridge. Below flows the river, spanned by the eighty-one arches, which insure a safe passage during the widest-spread inundation. A square tower of the same date, but pierced in Moorish days by a horse-shoe arch, stands at its townward extremity, and serves as a *tête de pont*; while a noble wall rising directly out of the water, and terminating in a broad quay, flanks the bridge to the south. The salient points of view as you turn towards the town, are distinctively Roman, a solitary palm-tree, the pride of some burgher's garden, alone excepted, and they stand out with all the more prominence from the uninteresting character of the general landscape. The Guadiana flowing between low banks has no more beauty than is inseparable from every stream of pure water; and as the eye

takes in a further range of country, it sees nothing more attractive than a featureless expanse of corn-land. Altogether we perfectly coincided with Ford's opinion, that, for ordinary tourists, there is but one day's occupation at Merida.

This being the last town of any importance before reaching Seville, we had to think of the provend, and Purkiss delivered the note from Montanches, hoping the gentleman to whom it was addressed would kindly help us, as we had searched the whole town for "the excellent red wine, something between claret and burgundy," so highly praised by Ford, without discovering anything better than the produce of the last vintage, now about three months old, and consequently unfit for use. Don Bulnes' friend was unfortunately too ill to be seen, but the lady of the house most kindly sent as a present, two magnums of excellent wine with a polite message, remarking at the same time to Purkiss, how strange it was Don Bulnes could imagine any of the wine, specified in his note, should be still left, seeing he had himself finished the very last bottle, when he was at their house on Merida fair-day!

Thankful indeed were we for this most welcome supply, and having proved its excellence

at dinner, sent it out when the things were removed, to be put up as usual with the rest of the stores for use on the road. Nothing more was thought of it till dinner-time next day at Andramalejo, when one of us asked, "Where is the Merida wine?" "That was all finished, my Lord, at Merida." "Not by us certainly, nor a quarter of it, one bottle being perfectly full, and the other nearly so, when they were removed." It turned out that the landlady and her maid, having cleared the table, had immediately taken the two decanters into the kitchen perfectly empty, greatly to the astonishment of the servants, who naturally wondered what could have become of all that wine! None of us, I need hardly say, ever saw a drop of it again; and we not only lost the lady's seasonable present, but moreover must have lain for twenty-four hours under the tacit imputation of having drunk an inordinate quantity.

We left Merida at mid-day, Monday, November 7th. Crossing the Roman bridge, and turning to the left, a mile from the town, we quitted the Badajoz road, taking another running directly south. The country improves on ascending a gentle slope, which commands an extensive prospect. At our feet lay the great plain north

of the Sierra Morena, its surface broken here and there by isolated mountains, which rose in abrupt blocks out of the dead level, a characteristic feature of the South of Spain, where almost every breadth of champaign country is dotted with these detached elevations. One of these masses to the south-east had a very striking appearance, its height, which was considerable, being all effective in consequence of its position. We were unable to ascertain its name, having unfortunately no maps with us, but such as were almost worthless, their principal office being to mislead us perpetually.

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JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

CHAPTER XXVII.

TO-DAY we had a short march of only five leagues, and the Church of Andramalejo rose before us nearly the whole distance like a beacon, pointing out our destination for the night. This neighbourhood is a very Goshen of wheat-culture, and the tillers of its soil have the reputation of being some of the richest farmers in Spain. It is, however, a most tedious district to ride through, and, at our slow pace, we found those five leagues far more fatiguing than some of our longest journeys through scenery of more interest and variety.

Andramalejo is an overgrown village, full of goodly houses, some of which we longed to take possession of for the night, and inhabited by well-to-do people, with a decided turn for finery, if we might judge from the ample stores of haberdashery displayed in the mercers' shops, which, as in most Spanish towns, seemed to

monopolize the commerce of the place; while we poor hungry wayfarers looked in vain, as we rode along its streets, for some indication of comestible merchandise. Even the posada was quite of an inferior description, though the people of the house, Valencians, were very civil, and did their best to make us comfortable. Muleteers abounded in every corner. Just before going to bed, I looked out of our sitting-room, and at that moment the posada presented a picture that would have delighted the eye of an artist. Like most inns of its class, it was divided into three parallel compartments, arranged somewhat like the nave and aisles of a church. The central, and principal division, contained an open fire-place, surrounded by a group of people at supper, under the dim light of a lamp suspended from the roof. The floor, I may almost say, was paved with somnolent muleteers, several of them having chosen "their lodging upon the cold ground," close to an open door, large enough for a barn, through which streamed a flood of moonlight; while on all sides arose those peculiar sounds, which sleeping humanity utters, though so conscientiously averse to acknowledging them.

Next day saw us on our road to Zafra, and

just outside of the town, near some stagnant pools, which the recent rains had replenished, we passed the largest assemblage of washer-women we had seen since leaving Madrid. Every family at Andramalejo seemed to be celebrating its washing-week. There must have been, at least, a hundred water-nymphs collected on the occasion, but by the time I had counted seventy-five, such peals of laughter arose from every group at the idea, I suppose, of a traveller stopping to number them, that my feeble powers of arithmetic were put to flight by such a demonstration, and the process was never completed.

We had now entered one of the great olive-districts, and, although the tree has little beauty of form or foliage, its groves serve at any rate to clothe the nakedness of the landscape, and redeem it from utter monotony. Ever since leaving Merida, we had kept the high road, and were constantly meeting muleteers, and other travellers, with whom, according to the pleasant custom of the country, we used to exchange salutations. One of these parties hailed us with more than common animation, accompanied by a profusion of smiles and gestures, crying out at the same time, "Placentia! Placentia!"

having seen us, it appeared, previously in that neighbourhood. They were then on their way into this oil-growing country, and, having completed their purchases, were now returning home into the northern wilds of Estremadura.

The day was so warm, that any chance strip of shade along the way-side proved most welcome. Before reaching Zafra, we passed the town of Todos los Santos (All Saints), girdled with a belt of gardens and orchards, in a high state of cultivation.

Zafra nestles under the southern slope of the hill, which, on the north, overhangs Los Santos, and is one of the best country-towns we have seen anywhere in Spain. It is thriving and clean, with an excellent boarding-house, kept by very civil, attentive people. Nowhere indeed were we better off, than at Zafra; for, in addition to the comfort of large, well-furnished rooms, we enjoyed, and in good time too, the rare luxury of a roast leg of mutton, which Purkiss had cleverly managed to cook in the frying-pan, and as it was no bigger than a similar joint of English lamb, we consumed it to the very bone with great satisfaction and thankfulness.

None but those, who have made a riding-tour

in this hungry land, the very name of which Ford wittily derives from *σπάνιος*, destitute, can understand the important aspect the commissariat assumes in the incidents of each day.

In other countries, scenery, art, antiquities, national manners, are naturally the principal objects of a tourist's consideration. Inns, dinners, and such like necessities of our lower nature, may safely be taken for granted; they are sure to turn up, sooner or later, without taking much thought about them. In Spain, however, such pleasant freedom from care would issue in starvation *pur et simple*. We tried it once, and were so thoroughly dissatisfied with the result, that we never repeated the experiment.

One of the first things that strikes a reader of Ford, unversed in *cosas de España*, is the pertinacity with which he insists on attention to the provend. While making out your route, and acquiring other preliminary information, you become perfectly bored with the incessant repetition of this advice, which the Handbook elevates to the dignity of a fundamental principle; and, like most novices, you decry the warnings of experience as so much "tedious prattle." But ere you have been a week in the

saddle, you discover the greatness of your error, you feel to the full the truth of the definition, "Man is a cooking animal," and during the remainder of your sojourn in Spain, "the Art of Dining" will rank in your mind as only second to the Fine Arts.

This will account for the prominence occupied by the commissariat in the record of most Spanish tours. One author, and he, too, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, actually calls his book after a well-known national dish, an incontestable proof of the interest with which the culinary department is invested in the eyes of wanderers through the Peninsula!

Let this then be my apology for so frequently introducing the subject. A tour in Spain, which omits all reference to the provend, may be pleasant reading for fairies, elves, and other sprites, to whom the sensation of hunger is unknown; but to substantial humanity, with its daily necessities, such a book will be only a delusion and a snare, giving no information on one important particular, nor showing the reader how he may travel through the country without coming to an untimely end.

I cannot give a better idea of the superior civilization of Zafra, than by stating that it

actually contains a *café*, which was kept by a very good-natured old dame, whose cellar supplied our slender stores with a few bottles of sherry. . . At intervals during the night, I had heard various sounds in the house, as if some of the inmates were still up, and, on inquiring in the morning what had been going on, was told that two of the women sat up the live-long night to dry and iron some linen of ours, which, at Merida, had been sent home wet as it came from the Guadiana, and was now in danger of becoming mildewed. The payment received for this seasonable service does not, I think, detract from the good-nature of the action, more especially in a country where industry is supposed not to be too common.

Before setting off next day (November 9) for Monasterio, we went to see the old castle, built by the Figueroas family, but now, we understood, in the possession of the Duque de Medina Celi. From the battlements we gained a very pretty view of the town, which, enclosed by gardens and olive groves, lies sheltered and snug under the low hills that screen it from the north. One of the most conspicuous objects is the bull-ring, a building we hardly expected to

find in a remote country town, of some five thousand souls. The taste for bull-fighting seems, however, to increase as we approach Andalusia; and yesterday, at Andramalejo, we noticed quite an extensive *Plaza del Toros*, suggesting the notion that, in these parts, agriculture and taumachy flourish in amicable companionship.

There was time only for a hasty inspection of the town, with its smart drapers' shops (the pet line of business in Spain), one of which we entered. It was arranged with great taste, and opened into a *patio*, or Moorish court, in the centre of the house, which looked charmingly bright and gay, with marble fountain and goldfish, orange trees and beds of violets. At another, we bought an almanac for 1860, and, on comparing it with an English one, found that in Estremadura, during November, the day is longer, by an hour and eighteen minutes, than in England at the same season, an immense advantage to wayfaring people like us.

Olive groves afford the only relief to the monotony of the great corn-plains extending from Zafra to Monasterio. It is a land of corn

and oil, where farmers thrive, and travellers are bored.

We were now travelling along what is styled by courtesy a highway, being such, however, only by fits and starts; as a mile of good road was often succeeded by a league or so of holes, ruts, and quagmires, where passengers in the diligence are obliged to hold on like grim death, if they would escape a simultaneous dislocation of their whole system. Spanish road-making, except on the Royal lines, which are generally excellent, appears to be an intermittent fever, with intervals of varying and uncertain duration. While the fit lasts, a mile or two, here and there, are constructed in an admirable manner, the adjoining portions being left in such deplorable condition, that, on approaching them, you seem to be suddenly exchanging a good firm road for a ploughed swamp, where any amount of disaster may befall you.

Several times to-day I was altogether in doubt, being somewhat ahead of the party, whether I was still in the road, or had diverged into the adjacent fields, as, in fact, even diligences are often obliged to do, to avoid some "slough of despond" more than commonly dan-

gerous. Many of the carriage-roads in Spain enable one to realize what perils and difficulties used to beset the traveller in England in the days of our forefathers, and how unconscious we are of the blessings we daily enjoy in the excellence of our highways.



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CHAPTER XXVIII.

IT was a long ride to Monasterio, and when we reached it more than two hours after nightfall, it was to find the very worst accommodation we had yet fallen in with anywhere. Short of lying on the floor, nothing could be worse, and as it was in a private house, to which our host at Zafra had given us an introduction, we could not, without perhaps giving offence, have recourse to the various expedients for bettering our condition, which would have been available in a posada. Our letter of introduction was addressed to the municipal secretary of the place, a functionary something like the town-clerk of an English borough, who, having no sufficient accommodation in his own house, transferred us to the hospitality of his married daughter, for whom he did the honours after a fashion perfectly overwhelming to us wayworn and hungry travellers. Sinbad the Sailor's Old

Man of the Sea was hardly a greater bore to that "ancient mariner," than this gentleman proved to us that evening. He had the most confirmed habit of incessant repetition I ever observed in any person. Within the space of less than half an hour, he told us five or six times over, that he was Secretary to the Municipality of Monasterio adding once (what, to do him justice, he did not repeat), that one small head — his own — contained all the wisdom, learning, and intellect of the whole corporation; that he remembered Lord Wellington, Lord Beresford, and General Doyley, being upon terms of intimate friendship with the latter; that not long ago the ex-King of Bavaria stayed at his house, and gave the postilions much money, &c., &c., with an infinity of other "bald, disjointed chat."

It was a marvel to hear precisely the same sentences come rolling out of his mouth in sonorous Castilian, again and again, with hardly a single variation, so that, in a short time, we could tell exactly what was coming next. This infliction we bore with the patience of despair, but when he insisted on calling Purkiss away from the frying-pan, for the fourth or fifth time, to interpret to us his municipal dignities and

acquaintance with great personages, both regal and military, we really could stand it no longer, and managed to convey to the old gentleman how sensible we felt of his high position and distinguished antecedents, though we by no means desired selfishly to monopolize his society, or to detain him from his family circle at that late hour. He was good-natured enough to act on the hint, and, to our great relief, betook himself to the group assembled round the kitchen fire, where, let us hope, he found more willing audience.

All this time, a crowd surrounded the house-door, and any opportunity of peeping into the den that served us for a sitting-room, was eagerly embraced by the inquiring spirits of the place, a man belonging to the family presiding over the exhibition, and ejecting each spectator in turn from his "quoin of vantage" as soon as he had enjoyed a good stare at the strangers.

Next morning, to our surprise and relief, the old gentleman never showed face. But when the bill was presented, his non-appearance was perfectly accounted for, he being probably aware, from previous acquaintance with Englishmen, that we were hardly likely to submit to the extortion his daughter was meditating,

in her monstrous demand of a gold piece, more than sixteen shillings, for each of our three beds, the servants having had none whatever. Nor was he far wrong in his surmise, as even our veneration for the intimate friend of General Doyley, and Secretary to the Municipality of Monasterio, did not enable us to overcome our repugnance to so preposterous an overcharge, from which we finally struck off one-third, and then parted on the best terms with our host and hostess.

We were now (November 10th), only two days' ride from Seville, and as man and beast began to require a little rest, our arrival there was regarded by the whole party as the *summum bonum* of present existence.

The muleteers, Marcos and Tomas, showed today unusual alacrity in getting on, and belaboured their donkeys with an earnestness that was altogether unaccountable, until some one recollected an incident of the preceding night, which seemed to explain this unwonted energy. A very suspicious-looking individual, having his face enveloped in the muffler of his cloak, passed us with the usual salutation of the road, not long before we entered Monasterio. We set him down as a *ratero*, or footpad, the lowest class

of Spanish highwaymen, and he seemed on the look-out for any chance enterprise that might turn up. At that moment our cavalcade was by no means in compact order, we three being considerably ahead, then came Swainson and Elfick, while Purkiss and the muleteers brought up the rear. Of them he requested a light for his cigar, a very common manœuvre with these gentry, as it allows close approach without exciting suspicion, and gives an opportunity of examining at leisure the condition and numbers of a party. This inspection convinced him apparently, that it would be unsafe for him single-handed to attack the three, and he skulked off, leaving a profound impression on the minds of Marcos, and Tomas, of which next day we reaped the benefit.

From Zafra we had been gradually approaching the out-lying ranges of the Sierra Morena, and at Monasterio reached a point, which in Wales would be called "the turning of the waters," the northern streams seeking the Guadiana, while the southern take a contrary direction, and fall into the Guadalquivir. Every now and then we came upon scenes of rare beauty, awakening recollections of many a choice landscape on the canvas of the old masters.

Verdant glades stretched far into the recesses of ilex-woods, where brooks, pure as crystal, glittering in the sunshine, meandered through brakes of luxuriant underwood; while across the overlapping folds of gently-sloping hills, to which distance imparted a tinge of mingled blue and purple, with here and there a naked strip of bright red soil, such tempting views opened to the south, luring us onward to the sparkling clime of Andalusia. Above us gleamed a sky of cloudless azure, and so fervid was the noontide heat, that we gladly availed ourselves of the shade of some wayside trees for a brief protection from its power.

This lovely day closed with a sunset, of which no words of mine can give more than the feeblest description, though it is pleasant to refresh the impressions it has left on the memory. The western sky glowed with

“clouds of all tincture

Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together ”

into a vision of such unearthly loveliness, that as they floated in a dazzling expanse of sapphire and amber, we seemed to be gazing on a sea of glory studded with “the Isles of the Blessed!” Every moment the sky became suffused with

some new marvel of colouring, which, gradually fading away with the declining sun, gave place to an illumination of purest white; while through the east, belted with a zone of fire, like a Queen came forth the moon, pacing up the heavens.

It was not until we had passed Ronquillo, our halting-place the night before entering Seville, that we traversed anything worthy of being dignified with the title of a mountain-pass, and even then it appeared in a very mild form, clothed with dwarf forests of arbutus in flower, and gumnasticus, and directly overlooking the broad plain of the Guadalquivir. During the last few days we had been indulging our imagination with ideal pictures of almost tropical scenery, which Seville was to realize, and had decked out its environs with groves of bananas, palm trees, and other choicest specimens of oriental vegetation. There were to be leagues of orange and citron woods skirting our path on each side as we rode along; while cacti, aloes, and such-like inferior productions, might appropriate whatever space their betters had left unoccupied. We quite revelled by anticipation in the delicious softness of a southern climate.

Never was imagination so unmercifully snubbed by the inexorable reality of facts! For after descending the slopes of the Sierra Morena we found ourselves in the midst of a most unpoetical landscape of common-place corn-fields, which, unvaried by tree, or hedge, or shrub, stretched out before us apparently to the very gates of the city, dispelling in a moment the fond dreams of beauty which our imagination had conjured up. As for the much-vaunted Guadalquivir, that "ancient river" of Iberian romance, it has here no more character or variety than the most ordinary canal, and its waters, all the time we sojourned on its banks, looked like nothing so much as a mixture of diluted mud, and brickdust.

Altogether our approach to Seville rudely disenchanting us of many a fair vision, and the sallies of Imagination which had caused us this disappointment, received a check that was not soon forgotten; so that for the future, whenever we drew near any spot of world-wide fame, we allowed her less liberty of outrunning our tardy steps, and investing it with her own bright hues, only to mock us afterwards by the contrast between the actual and the ideal. We still felt, however, as we dismounted at the

Hôtel de Londres, how much cause we had for thankfulness, in having thus accomplished the first portion of our journey with such perfect success, the whole cavalcade, biped and quadruped, arriving safe and sound, somewhat wayworn, it is true, with the many leagues we had travelled, but all the more disposed for thoroughly enjoying the interval of rest we had promised ourselves within the walls of Seville.



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CHAPTER XXIX.

ONE of the most interesting contributions to the perfection of modern mapping has been the introduction of those imaginary lines, that indicate the habitat of the various productions of different countries, mineral, botanical, and zoological. One of these lines, not generally recognized by chartographers, we crossed on entering Seville. Our ride through Estremadura had been full of enjoyment, and in those far-reaching solitudes, amid forests of ilex, and aromatic wastes of gum-cistus, we had discovered charms, unknown to the well-beaten paths of ordinary travel, the recollection of which no lapse of time can altogether efface. Yet even here our pleasures were not without alloy;

“Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid.”

It was a drawback moreover, which cannot fail to

come home to the feelings of every true-born Briton—we could get no butter!! From the day we left Madrid, to the hour when we passed under the arch of the Puerta Triana at Seville, our course had lain through a land, where milk is a rarity, and butter exists not. The excellence of the bread in the South of Spain has been celebrated for centuries, and we can conscientiously contribute our crumb of evidence to the general testimony in its favour. But what is even the best bread in the world, *dry*? No wonder then we never fully appreciated its sweetness until we reached Seville, where we crossed the line of demarcation, and re-entered the Regions of Butter! We did not inquire curiously into the origin of that which was set before us, nor ask whether it had been produced on the meadowy banks of the Guadalquivir, or the sunny slopes of the Sierra Morena. Nay, we even preserved a philosophical tranquillity, when some one ruthlessly suggested it might very probably have come from climes beyond the sea, and perhaps commenced its voyage in the famous Cove of Cork. And, sooth to say, it *had* a decided flavour of brine, not to specify other peculiarities, which would hardly qualify it for appearing on an English breakfast-table. But

Estremadura is an admirable Reformatory for fastidiousness of appetite, and we ate our salt and highly-odorous butter, with as keen a zest, as if it had been the primest Dorset, that ever left the dairy-farms of the Vale of Blackmore.

No town in the South of Spain is more visited than Seville. All sorts of people go there, with all sorts of motives. The artist goes to fill his portfolio with the picturesque forms and showy costumes of Majo, and Maja. The lover of paintings makes a pilgrimage there to see Murillo in all his glory. The seasons of the Church, Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter, attract thousands from devotion, or curiosity; the religious ceremonies of the place being, it is said, of peculiar interest, and unrivalled, except at Rome. Some even go to Seville for the sake of the excellent shooting, which abounds almost within sight of its walls. As for ourselves, though we were neither artists, nor professed connoisseurs, neither sportsmen nor devotees, yet doubtless, when the idea of going there first entered our minds, we felt a laudable desire, and formed excellent resolutions, to make the best use of our visit, by seeing all the lions. But, with the changeableness incidental to poor humanity, two of us at least approached the gates in a very altered

mood. The long rides, rough ways, and short-comings of the last three weeks, had considerably blunted the keen edge of our enthusiasm for sight-seeing, and when we found ourselves securely established among the creature-comforts of the *Hôtel de Londres*, our first concern was "to take our ease in our inn," and restore exhausted nature.

This hotel is by far the best we stayed at in any part of Spain. It stands on one side of a new square (formed by the removal of a convent), *La Plaza Nueva*, which, from its extent and openness, may be called the lungs of Seville. The only defect in the appointments of the hotel seems almost to belong to the climate, and would have passed unnoticed at another season—the doors and windows were more ready to open, than to shut, and after the sunny skies, and pleasant warmth of the last three weeks, we found Seville almost as rainy and cold as Madrid, with even fewer resources for making such weather bearable. At Madrid grates are not uncommon in sitting-rooms, and though fuel is excessively dear, you have at any rate the option of paying or starving. But at Seville such things seem to be altogether unknown, and we had to sit in great-coats, and other wraps, while the

only object that represented to us the grand central point, around which an Englishman's domestic affections concentrate, was a brazier of live embers, a very indifferent, and costly substitute for a glowing pile of best Wallsend. In fact, almost the only purpose the *brasero* really serves is drying linen, after it comes from the laundress; for in Spain its condition when sent home depends entirely on the state of the weather: if it is dry, your shirts will be dry; if wet, they too will be wet, and it is by no means a pleasant process to dry them on one's person.

We were waited upon by a young Hungarian, for whom, on account of his misfortunes and friendlessness, we soon began to feel a hearty sympathy. His family, which occupied a most respectable position in Hungary, had been "out" in 1848, his father being one of the patriot leaders. At the close of the war they emigrated to the United States, whence on his father's death the young man had returned to Europe, and finding no other way of life open, had engaged himself as waiter to the Hôtel de Londres, his partial knowledge of English being his chief recommendation for the post. I never saw any one more thoroughly to be pitied, not so much because he thought himself utterly

friendless (for he was young, and in time might have made friends), but because he seemed to have no definite religious principles, or anything whereon to stay his desires and hopes. The only feeling that stood firm amid the tumult of his soul was an intention to commit suicide, as the surest refuge from the misery and degradation that surrounded him. Of the sinfulness of self-murder he had not the slightest conception, though he was by no means devoid of religion, without however any power apparently to apply either its obligations, or consolations to his own circumstances. In his present condition he could perceive nothing but intolerable degradation, out of which no possible good could be educed. We used to have long conversations with him, which no doubt relieved his mind for the moment, and he often spoke of our stay at the hotel as the happiest period he had known for a long time; but I fear no permanent effect was produced, by giving his mind a healthier tone, and at last in parting from him, we could not help feeling very painful forebodings respecting his future career.

It has been said, "There is not a more solemn and beautiful temple in the world than the great Cathedral at Seville." We approached it for the first time through the Patio de los

Naranjos, "the Court of Orange-trees," the largest portion remaining of the old Mosque, on the site of which the present building was erected. Such enclosures, shutting out with their high walls the sounds and sights of the outer world, and solemnizing the mind ere the house of God is actually entered, appear to have been usually attached to Moorish places of worship. The original fountain, surrounded by rows of fruit-laden orange-trees, still occupies the centre of the court, and at the north-east corner rises one of the most beautiful towers in Europe, the far-famed Giralda, the landmark and ornament of Seville, and the first object the eye rests on as you traverse the wide plain that encircles the city. As it came forth in the freshness of its original beauty from the hands of Moorish builders, few constructions could have more perfectly united the gracefulness of a minaret with the solid firmness of a tower, its elevation of one hundred and eighty-five feet being relieved throughout by windows of extreme elegance, and enriched with panelling of shallow arcades, and tracery of varied pattern, without sacrificing in any degree the impression of strength and solidity. But, in spite of Ford's encomium, I cannot admire what he calls



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Alhambra y Generalife
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THE GIRALDA, SEVILLE.

“the rich filigree belfry, which, elegant and attractive beyond description, was most happily added in 1568 by Fernando Ruiz.” In my humble opinion, “this happy addition” simply spoils the rest of the tower.

It is time, however, to enter the Cathedral. Passing through a narrow corridor terminated by an old horse-shoe arch, you emerge into the solemn gloom that veils the interior of the grandest ecclesiastical building in Spain. The effect is overwhelming. The sudden transition from the bright sunshine of the outer air produces a sensation of darkness; all is confused and indistinct, while the eye, instinctively seeking relief, looks upward to the clerestory, where, through windows few and small, a feeble ray of daylight comes struggling in. By degrees the magnificent proportions of the building reveal themselves, and in the awe-struck sense of majesty and grandeur, which almost oppresses the mind, you unconsciously acknowledge the supremacy of Pointed Architecture. Till I stood within the Cathedral at Seville, I had considered the Duomo at Milan internally the most awe-inspiring building I ever saw. But though it is hardly fair to place the impressions of yesterday side by side with those whose freshness has been

effaced by the lapse of years, there can be little doubt that the interior grandeur, and solemnity of this church is not approached by its Italian rival, to which it has so frequently been compared. Each is justly condemned on account of its departure from the strict principles of the style, to which it professedly belongs. Yet even Fergusson allows Seville Cathedral to be "so grand, so spacious, and so richly furnished, that it is almost impossible to criticize, when the result is so splendid and imposing." In fact, our English cathedrals, with all their strict adherence to the principles of true Gothic, do not by any means so thoroughly realize the idea of temples dedicated to the service of the Most High, from having been stripped of so many accessories indispensable to the full development of Pointed Architecture, such as painted glass, sculpture, wood-carving, embroidery, mural decoration, metal-work, and other branches of Ecclesiastical Art. Without these (at least in some measure), the noblest building will present a bald, cheerless aspect, provocative of neither reverence, nor devotional feeling; while, on the contrary, so powerfully do the varied creations of Art affect the mind, that as soon as you enter the Cathedral at Seville, where (apart from

Romish peculiarities, indicative equally of bad taste and unsound theology,) everything the eye rests upon harmonizes with the great purpose of the building, its religious spirit at once takes possession of the soul, and with the Patriarch of old, you feel, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, this is the Gate of Heaven!"

Every department of Art has contributed to the decoration of this Cathedral. Murillo, and his enemy, Juan Valdes Leal, Morales, Zurburan, Roelas, and Vargas painted for it; Montañes, the Phidias of Seville, and Alonzo Cano, his greatest pupil, enriched it with their sculptures, while its painted glass, though by no means of the best date, is yet gorgeous in colouring, and highly effective. It abounds in superb Retablos (one of which, above the high altar, would, of itself, make any other cathedral famous), magnificent tombs, church-plate of untold value, some of it the production of Juan d'Arfe, the Cellini of Spain, and last but not least, iron-work of exquisite design and execution, a species of church ornamentation, in which Spain seems to excel all the rest of Christendom. In fact, you are reminded at every turn of Fergusson's remark, that at the very

period when the Reformation had brought both the building and decoration of churches to a complete stand-still throughout every other portion of Europe, at that moment an increased stimulus was given to Ecclesiastical Art in Spain. "Here the old faith was never shaken. The country had lately become, by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, for the first time, a united monarchy. In their reign the discovery of Columbus had opened to Spain a new world and the most brilliant prospects. The final expulsion of the Moors had thrown into the hands of the Church unbounded wealth and power, and at the same time inspired it with the zeal, which has ever prompted the expenditure of such wealth on monuments for public use, before it became absorbed in individual selfishness. All these causes made this the great cathedral-building age of Spain."

CHAPTER XXX.

NEARLY every morning during our ten days' stay at the Hôtel de Londres, we used to hear from about nine to twelve, in the rooms overhead, the various sounds, vocal and instrumental, that accompany a regular "practice," and occasionally a similar exercise was repeated in the evening. The softer and sweeter notes being unable to penetrate the intervening floor, what we generally caught were decidedly *altissimi*; so that while we could not but admire the energy and diligence of the performers, our love of music was more tantalized than gratified. On asking the waiter the meaning of these *matinées musicales*, he told us, that the *prima donna* of the Seville opera, an Englishwoman, occupied an apartment above us; and soon after, a young Englishman staying in the Hotel, whose acquaintance we had made at Madrid, gave us so favourable an account of the lady, and said so

much about the indifferent reception she had met with at Seville (England and the English being at present in the lowest depths of Spanish unpopularity), that we determined patriotically to go to the theatre, by way of expressing our sympathy for our countrywoman. We were unlucky in the opera, the "Trovatore," nor was the performance that night, we were told, an average one; but after making all fair allowances, it is impossible to imagine anything more dead-alive, and insensible than the whole audience, boxes, pit, and gallery. I heartily pitied any one condemned to sing to such an assemblage of stocks and stones.

Most people picture the Southern Spaniard as a gay animated creature, breathing an atmosphere of poetry, and sentiment; to whom music and singing are an element of existence necessary as vital air. The peasantry exhibit, no doubt, many indications of such a temperament; but anything more dull and unimpassioned than the upper classes cannot be conceived; and from my observation no community, which goes to the expense of maintaining an opera company every winter, can have less "music in its soul," than the citizens of Seville, who give one more the idea of a colony of Dutchmen transplanted to

the banks of the Guadalquivir, than the children of fiery Andalusia. Indeed, in walking through the streets no one can fail to notice the wooden, expressionless character of nearly every face, each having precisely the same physiognomy, complexion, features, and lack of animation as its neighbour. And as I am inditing veritable facts, not making up pretty pictures, I am obliged with extreme pain to state, that even the womankind of Seville, despite the fictions of poet and painter, presented to my eyes (which, I must own, are but dim-sighted) the same uninteresting uniformity. What others have seen let them describe; but for my own part, I can only say that the ladies of Seville, as I saw them, have none of that supereminent attractiveness so often imputed to them by travellers. There seems no variety of feature and expression, and Donna Sabina, who is at this moment crossing the *Plaza*, is an exact duplicate in dress and general appearance of Dolores standing on a balcony opposite; both of them being mere reproductions of Donna Carmen, whom we met an hour ago driving near the Cathedral. This is all the more remarkable, because the costume is so picturesque, and the almost universal black tells immensely in favour of the wearers, imparting

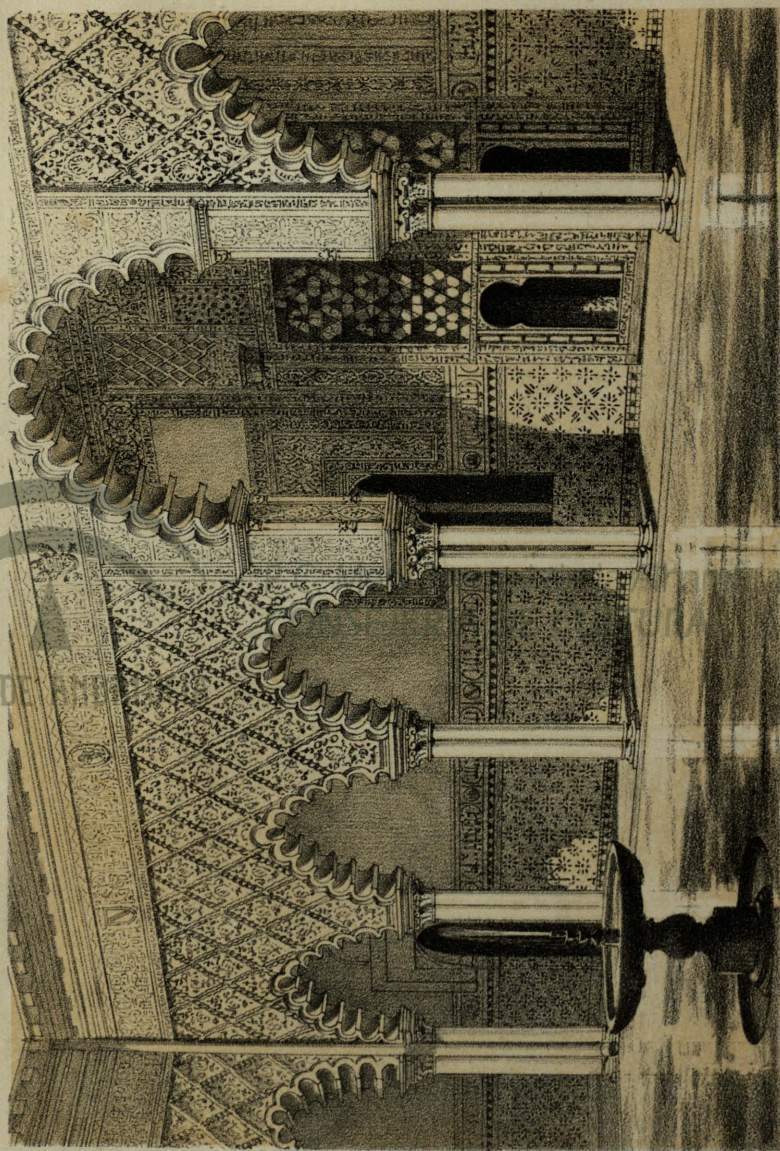
to all a refinement, of which coloured dresses would deprive the great majority. The Spanish ladies certainly excel in eyes, eyelashes, and eyebrows, and when you add magnificent hair, glossy as a raven's wing, and then display its bright luxuriance without bonnet, or any save the lightest head-dress, you have in most instances enumerated the principal attractions of Spanish beauty.

The *lacquais de place*, a being seldom found in Spanish towns, flourishes in Seville. Ford mentions the names of several. We found Joseph Serfaty, a compound of Spaniard and Irishman, very civil and obliging. His English, however, is so peculiar, both in phraseology and pronunciation, that sometimes it was a severe trial to keep one's countenance. From internal evidence, I should say he must have been the author of the following advertisement, spelling inclusive, which I met with one day:—

“HOTEL DE L'EUROPE.

“CALLE DE LAS SIERPES, SEVILLE.

“This splendid establishment, that has been *throughout* repaired, and many improvements introduced, is *offerd* to the public in general, it



ALCAZAR, SEVILLE. THE GRAND PATIO.

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being considered one of the best in Spain; its situation is central, and *near* all the public *Lyons* and Promenades. The most distinguished visitors have favoured it with *there* patronage."

Of course we went to see the celebrated Alcazar, which stands not far from the Cathedral, withdrawn from the busy haunts of men into a sequestered space, which, including gardens, &c., &c., covers a considerable extent of ground. Authorities on Moorish architecture inform us that it is very questionable how much of the present building is the work of the Moors, so many are the alterations and additions introduced into the original design by successive possessors. Several parts, indeed, are known to have been built by Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles V., and others, each imitating, however, more or less successfully, the various characteristics of the Moorish style. Without attempting to describe the different portions of the palace, or to analyze what is old and what of later introduction, I will only say that the general effect is quite enchanting. We passed through about twenty rooms, each more lovely than its neighbour, where the fancy and inventiveness of Oriental Art has expressed itself in every form

of grace and beauty ; and when the charms of colour are superadded, in hues sometimes rich, sometimes of a more delicate tone—a pale, cold green here, with there a scarlet or crimson of dazzling brilliancy, succeeded by blue of deepest ultramarine, or softened down by a mellow brown—while an exquisite taste and refinement tempers the whole into faultless harmony, an effect is produced on which the eye dwells with ever-increasing pleasure. Marvellous indeed (thought we, as we gazed on this triumph of colouring) must be the beauty of the Alhambra, if it exceed the glories of the Alcazar !

The loveliness of the place, however, has not exempted it from witnessing scenes of horror, one of the most revolting having been the murder, by order of Pedro the Cruel, of his half-brother, Don Fadrique, Master of the Order of Santiago, which, according to the description of the old Spanish ballad, was attended with circumstances of peculiar atrocity.

Nothing can be more attractive than the views from several of the rooms over the gardens, laid out by Charles V. in the *cinque-cento* style, with fish-tanks and fountains, alcoves and sunny terraces. This was by far the prettiest spot we saw in Seville ; and in spring, when the

borders, it is to be hoped, are put into trim order, and the walks weeded, a more delicious retreat cannot be conceived. I must not forget to add that restorations, in excellent taste, have been commenced in some portions of the Alcazar, and in others completed.

We could not help remarking how few worshippers were generally to be seen in the Cathedral, even the women, who, in most Roman Catholic countries, are so regular in their devotions, attending the services in comparatively small numbers. Nor was their behaviour always reverent, it being by no means uncommon to see a female, on her knees, holding quite a lengthened conversation with some chance bystander. But, on one occasion, we saw the whole of the vast interior filled to overflowing.

On Sunday, November 20, a grand *funcion* in honour of the Virgin took place, to implore her blessing on the war with Morocco, which, at that moment, seemed to be the sole subject of thought and conversation, from one end of Spain to the other. The principal feature in the ceremony was a multitudinous procession of laity and clergy, carrying an image of the Virgin through the Cathedral and its precincts,

in the midst of *kneeling* thousands. We had gone for the purpose of seeing the sight, without being at all aware of the nature of the procession; but when we discovered that all persons present would be expected to *kneel* while the image passed by, we went away, and did not, as the French would say, *assist* at the ceremony. If it be not idolatry to perform to an image such an act of devotion as *kneeling*, which thousands of Protestants will not do (at least in their public worship), even to the One True God, it is difficult to understand what is to be considered a breach of the second commandment.

But though we could not remain in the Cathedral, we still enjoyed the sight of the vast crowd, which all Seville and its neighbourhood was pouring forth, in confluent streams, towards the grand centre of attraction; and the myriads of women, clothed in the ever-graceful *mantilla* and *basquiña*, formed a perpetually-changing picture of national physiognomy and costume, which we thought ourselves most fortunate in witnessing.

Seville is to receive the prisoners *that are to be taken* in the impending war with Morocco, an arrangement exhibiting a daring obliviousness of Mrs. Glasse's immortal recipe, though it is not without its parallel in the history of other

nations. In England there is a disposition to regard this war in a ludicrous aspect—as a childish playing at soldiers; whereas to persons on the spot it would appear to be the expression of a strong national feeling, which, at the present moment, fills every Spaniard's mind with a combined impulse of patriotic and religious enthusiasm, prompting them, now that they can afford the expense of a war, to show forth in the sight of Christendom that they are the non-degenerate descendants of those men who drove the Moslem out of Europe, and were the foremost soldiers of their time. In fact, the whole nation, which has ever been prone to dream grandly, fancies itself to be undertaking a new Crusade; is ready to make great sacrifices for its furtherance; and, with a second Isabella on the throne, aspires to repeat the conquest of Granada on African soil. Nor can one contemplate without respect and sympathy the spectacle of a nation like Spain, striving, after centuries of decay, to reinstate itself in the estimation of mankind by recovering its former renown; and they are disposed to be very angry with England at the present moment, because, in our endeavours to prevent this war, they can see nothing but a desire to shut them out of the only field of foreign con-

quest that has been open to them for generations.

A latent feeling seems always to reside in a Spaniard's mind, that foreigners look down on their nation and country; hence arise apparently both their shyness and their habit of boasting, the latter being perhaps nothing more (in intention, at least), than self-assertion carried to an undue extent, by way of doing themselves the justice which is denied them by others. In this they greatly resemble the Welsh. Their shyness is very remarkable. We used to notice that a Spaniard hardly ever stares at a stranger, unless he can do so unobserved; and if discovered, will avert his face, as if detected in some guilty action. It is this national shyness which makes them so stiff and abrupt in their manner; but, as soon as they are treated *as gentlemen* (which all, down to muleteers and peasants, consider themselves), their stiffness at once vanishes, and their manner becomes cordial and attractive.

Englishmen who know the country intimately, speak in the highest terms of the lower classes, and the rural population generally, and it is a circumstance greatly to their credit, that, in all our wanderings through town and country,

along the highways and byways of the land, from Bayonne to Gibraltar, we never saw more than four men who were in the least intoxicated. If they would only leave off those two national sins—bad language, and misuse of the knife—they would be some of the finest peasantry in the world.

Seville, the birth-place of Murillo, is said to possess some of his best paintings, and an entire saloon at the Merced, the Museo of the town, is monopolized by his works. But none of them gave me half the pleasure I enjoyed in looking at the "Concepcion," and other pictures by him in the Madrid Museo, and altogether I was grievously disappointed with the Seville collection. Whether it was the slovenly, neglected air of the desecrated church, which forms the principal portion of the Museo, or the height at which the pictures are hung under a dim light, or whether the fault was in myself, the result was equally unsatisfactory. I derived little enjoyment from my visit to the Merced, and there being some difficulty in getting admittance, so unlike the facility with which you can at all times enter the noble Museo at Madrid, I never went there again.

Two private collections, however, afforded us

a great treat; one at the palace of the Duc de Montpensier, and another at the house of a gentleman in the town. The former contains four magnificent Zurburans, bought in England when Louis Philippe's gallery was sold in 1848, during that terrible season of commercial distress which rendered the purchase of first-class paintings a luxury few could indulge in. There were several fine specimens of other masters, which we longed to see more at leisure; but the attendance of a footman, however civil and obliging, is fatal to the full enjoyment of pictures.

The other collection, though compressed into a small room, contains, in my poor judgment, some gems of exquisite beauty. A St. Francis by Murillo comes first. The holy man on his knees receives into his arms the infant Saviour, his countenance lighted up with such a mingled expression of love and devotion, reverence and tenderness, that he seems no longer to belong to earth, but to be absorbed in the raptures of some ecstatic vision. A St. Sebastian by Francia, struck me as one of the most charming paintings I ever saw. Such a sweet, heavenly countenance, from which every trace of physical suffering had been cast out by an expression of the most perfect patience and resignation, while

such wonderment as may sometimes be observed in the face of a good child, seemed to inquire in mute astonishment how any one could find pleasure in the infliction of pain! It was a picture to be gazed at for hours. Nor must I forget a Holy Family, attributed to Perugino, with one of those unearthly backgrounds he took so much pleasure in painting.

At the Caridad, a kind of alms-house on a large scale, I was greatly struck with a picture of Juan Valdes Leal, the enemy and rival of Murillo. It represents a bishop in his coffin, with owls and "the creeping things man inherits after death," around him in the dark vault, while above, the heavens are opened and a pierced Hand comes forth holding a pair of scales, one of them containing emblems of earthly pleasure, the other a cross, and a heart burning with Divine love. The balance is perfectly *even*, suggesting, as it seemed to me, a much finer moral than if the world had been made to preponderate, and teaching that in the ministers of Christ there must be far more than respectable blamelessness—entire devotion, and surrender of the whole heart. It was altogether a fearful illustration of our Lord's words (Revelation, iii. 15), "I know thy works, that thou

art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."

The houses at Seville are proverbially picturesque, and, though we did not see them at the right season for appreciating the full extent of their attractions, yet even in November we could not fail to admire the skill with which the requirements of a southern climate are converted into elements of beauty. Moorish architecture seems to possess this quality in common with Gothic, that while nothing is introduced merely for the sake of ornament, essential features are so treated as to become in the highest degree ornamental. Passing through a kind of porch terminated by a gate of open iron-work, which is often of extreme elegance, you enter the *patio*, a central court, occupying very much the same position in the ground-plan of the Moorish houses, as the great hall used to hold in the mansions of the Middle Ages, and determining the size and general arrangements of the building. Along each of the four sides of the patio runs a row of columns supporting a gallery, into which the rooms on the first floor open; from the centre of the marble floor rises a fountain of the same material, emitting a ceaseless flow of purest water, that soothes the ear with its gentle

lulling sound, while flower-stands and vases of violets, myrtle and orange-trees, fill the air with delicious fragrance. Covered with an awning, which is not removed till sunset, the patio is the general living-room of the family for more than half the year; and on summer evenings many a group that would tell with excellent effect in the artist's sketch-book, may be observed in these apartments through the iron *cancel* opening to the street.

The most elaborate specimen of domestic architecture we saw is the *Casa de Pilatos*, so called from being built, it is said, in imitation of Pontius Pilate's house at Jerusalem, by one of the greatest nobles of the day, Fadrique Enriquez de Ribera, in 1533, to commemorate his pilgrimage to the Holy City. The style is a compound of Moorish and Gothic, and in spite of the liberties taken with architectural propriety, the result is extremely pleasing. It is the very house for summer. The grand staircase is a superb display of gilding, colour, and marble; but its glassy polish renders it the most uncomfortable mode of going up and down stairs it was ever my lot to meet with, and a fall on such a surface would be a certain introduction to the tender mercies of a Spanish bone-setter.

The use of coloured tiles for skirting and even panelling rooms, is a striking feature in Spanish houses, that might be transplanted with benefit into other lands. It is of Moorish introduction, and is admirably adapted both for ornament and cleanliness. By means of it, a surface of bright colour takes the place of a blank wall, giving room for a great variety of ornamental patterns; there is no difficulty in keeping it clean, it has always a fresh, cool look, which in a warm climate is an especial recommendation, and above all, it does not harbour *petites bêtes*.

Lord Portarlington wished to play on one of the great organs, feeling sure that instruments so celebrated must be capable of emitting something better than the coarse metallic sounds with which the services of Seville Cathedral are usually accompanied. Noise there is in abundance, but melody and devotional feeling are wanting altogether; nothing, in fact, to indicate a fine instrument, or superior playing. The English Consul, Don Manuel Williams, who with every kindness and attention did his best to make our visit agreeable, undertook to obtain the necessary permission; and, finding that the regular way of proceeding would involve, among

other characteristics of the Circumlocution Office, a petition to the Dean and Chapter, to which a reply could hardly be expected for about a fortnight after our departure from Seville, made a private application to some of the Canons. One of them, Don Calamarde, was utterly scandalized at the idea of the great organ of Seville being profaned by heretical manipulation, and would have given a decided refusal; another, having a little more good-nature, did not absolutely say "No," but begged the performance might be as brief as possible, fearing, no doubt, the orthodoxy of the instrument would be compromised.

An appointment having been made with the head-blower, who, with more liberality of mind than his superiors, did all he could to further the scheme, we went one day to the Cathedral after morning service, and in a few minutes had the satisfaction of hearing very different playing from any we had heard there before, while the blower was charmed to listen to something better than the harsh sounds which usually fell on his ears. Just, however, as the organ had come under perfect control, and a rich stream of melody poured forth through the long-drawn aisles and lofty vaulting of that glorious temple, our enjoyment came suddenly

to an end. A meeting of the Cathedral Clergy, of which we were not aware, happened at that moment to be going on in the Chapter House. On hearing the organ in full career, the Archbishop, who presided, having probably been told nothing of the *quasi*-permission that had been obtained, despatched a message to the blower, commanding him instantly to stop the instrument; and by the time he had descended from the loft, here came our old enemy Calamarde and gave him such a tremendous scolding (which was evidently intended to glance off, right and left, on us), that the poor man vowed he would resign his situation, the emoluments of which are very trifling. We were very much vexed, both on his account and on that of the Consul, whose gentle nature would feel such rude treatment, and whose faithful attachment to the Spanish Communion might have secured him, without any difficulty, the grant of so trifling a favour. Let us hope such incivility is peculiar to Seville. A fortnight later at Granada, an ordinary *commissionnaire* obtained, for the mere asking, such a permission as was denied to the British Consul at Seville!

In my visits to the Seville Post-office, I used to be much struck with one of the arrangements

of the place, peculiarly convenient to strangers, at the same time that it proves the limited correspondence of the country. Every day, as soon as possible after the arrival of the mails, two lists are prepared, one containing the name of every native, and the other of every foreigner, for whom there are letters. These lists are hung up in the vestibule of the Post-office, remaining there a month; and the Spanish hand being generally an admirable specimen of calligraphy, they are as legible as print. Such an arrangement, though utterly impracticable in England, entirely prevents the mislaying and detention of letters so common in foreign post-offices.

One afternoon, we made an excursion to Alcalá de Guadaira, a small town two leagues from Seville. There are as many Alcalás in Spain, as Stokes and Whitchurches in England, each having some suffix to distinguish it from the rest. This takes its name from the river, which, girdling it on two sides, creates a verdant belt of gardens and orchards, in the midst of an arid plain. In summer it must be a delicious spot with its narrow strip of luxuriant vegetation by the water-side, a little Goshen of fruit and flowers, while the greenish-hued stream falls

with a pleasant sound over the weir of a picturesque old mill, that has ground wheat since the time of the Moors.

It was anything but summer weather when we were there; heavy rain, with a regular gale from the South-West. We scrambled through the remains of the old Castle, in no small peril of being carried away bodily. It is said to be one of the finest Moorish fortresses formed of *tapia* still existing in Spain; and coming from a country where cob-walls are general, I took particular notice of its construction. *Tapia* is a *spécialité* of Ford's, and from his account it must be a far more elaborate composition than the cob-walls of England and France.

When a wall is to be built, a framework of wood, fastened by movable bolts, and shaped according to the size of the intended construction, is laid on the proposed spot, and having been filled with a mixture of earth, mortar, and pebbles, sufficiently moistened to bind, the composition is then rammed together till it becomes a firm coherent mass, the bolts are withdrawn, the frame moved further on, and the same process is repeated, till the whole building is completed. When thoroughly dried and seasoned, it is said to be indestructible, not requiring a coat of

plaster, as with us, to keep out the weather. I should, however, entirely doubt its power of resisting artillery. I observed no trace of straw, so much used in English cob-walls. One side of the platform on which the Castle stands is occupied by a colony of gipsies, who, as the Kenites of old, have made their nest in the rock. These burrows look by no means uncomfortable, and are, like their occupants, highly picturesque.

Alcalá is celebrated for its bread and its water. Its fifty ovens supply Seville with the best bread in Spain, and Serfaty quite insisted on our carrying off several loaves, as an act of homage to the *genius loci*. They were beautifully white and light, but too close-grained and firm for English tastes, requiring a large accompaniment of butter. This is the prettiest drive in the neighbourhood of Seville, and as there is a very neat posada, it would be a pleasant episode to go and spend a couple of nights under the shadow of the old Moorish Castle on the banks of the Guadaira.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HAVING spent ten days at Seville, we felt anxious to be once more on the road, and after a multiplicity of business in settling accounts, paying bills, and laying in a fresh store of provisions, we left by rail for Cordova on Monday afternoon, November 21st. The engagement with Marcos and Tomas, the muleteers from Toledo, having expired at Seville, was now renewed, and extended to Gibraltar. Originally they had agreed to go with us only from Toledo to Talavera, a journey of two days; but they behaved so well, and seemed so thoroughly to enjoy the expedition, that it became a mutual convenience to travel together all the way to Seville. They were most good-humoured, honest fellows, sober, and singularly free from the common vice of the Spanish peasant—bad language,—and very considerate to their beasts. Marcos was a grotesque compound, having the figure of Sancho Panza