

to her dexterity and industry. On an average, each pair of hands makes two hundred cigars a-day. In another apartment we beheld about six hundred men engaged in the same employment. In going through this room, I was particularly struck by the pale and cadaverous aspect of every countenance, and could not help forming impressions unfavourable to the wholesomeness of the occupation. On inquiring, however, of one man, who seemed to be the "oldest inhabitant" of the place, he informed me that such was not the case, and that he had been forty years in the establishment without suffering from any worse malady than pains in the chest. In summer, it sometimes happened that the odour of the tobacco caused some of the workmen to become giddy and sick; but beyond that he knew of no worse effects from inhaling its fumes, and that the mortality was not greater among them than in other pursuits. As the manufacture of tobacco is a royal monopoly, there are no other establishments for the making of cigars than those under the Crown, of which, besides this one, there may be half a dozen scattered over Spain. Notwithstanding, however, the immense numbers here fabricated, it is questionable whether the supply is equal to the demand in a country like this, where the cigar is to the inhabitants the breath of their nostrils, and to the poorest, even more than to the higher classes, has become a necessary of life. In spite, therefore, of the rigours of a prohibitive system, a vast deal of smuggling goes on; and as it is the interest of every smoker—that is, of every Spaniard—to give it encouragement, the revenue must be defrauded to a serious extent. Indeed, the defiance of the law seems to be attended with complete impunity. It is no uncommon sight to behold men hawking about tobacco

from house to house, with little show of secrecy. For this, the penalty according to law, is ten years of presidio; but in effect it has become completely inoperative, as is shown by the fact I have stated.

The words law and presidio are connected in one's thoughts with places of durance, of which there is but one in Seville. The old prison was situated in the Calle de las Sierpes, but now exists no more, having been demolished in order to make place for a splendid hotel and café. Previously, however, to its destruction I visited it, in order to indulge my curiosity with a glimpse of a class of prisoners who were its temporary inmates, and of whom I had heard a great deal. While Spain was the theatre of the Carlist war, one of those roving bands that supported the cause of the Pretender, by sparing neither friend nor foe, had descended into Valentia with a view of ravaging the country, which was generally favourable to the Queen's cause; here, however, the plundering horde, for it scarcely deserved the name of army, was encountered by the royal forces and effectually checked, being routed with the loss of many prisoners. These were now lodged in the old prison, previous to their conveyance to a much securer abode within the sea-girt fortifications of Cadiz, which at that period of the war was the general receptacle for those "facciosos" who might be captured on the borders of the Southern provinces. In the first story of the building, which was in a partially dilapidated condition, I found the quarters of the officers and men. A small detachment of "nacionales" kept guard, and occupied the corridor that ran round the patio or open court that forms the centre of every Andalusian dwelling; at the various doors opening into it, sentries with loaded muskets were posted. I was far from expecting

to see anything resembling regular uniform on the persons of the prisoners, but I confess I was unprepared for the rabble-like appearance they presented. Some were mere boys of fourteen or fifteen years of age, and appeared to have been supplied from that swarm of youthful beggary and crime that infests the streets of Spanish cities. These were confined in a cell apart from the others, and on my approach desisted from their squabbles to assume the mendicant's whine and solicit charity. The others had nothing either in their bearing or habiliments to denote the soldier. As I looked through the iron grating that served as door to the gallery in which they were secured, I saw what seemed a mob of peasantry of rather more savage aspect than usual.

Few were without the Valencian manta, their cloak by day, and blanket by night; beneath which were visible tattered and mud-stained garments of every hue and shape peculiar to the northern provinces. The greater number sat on the floor, supporting themselves against the walls of the gallery; and in this attitude remained as immovably fixed as if chained to the spot. The most striking feature of the scene was the silence that reigned among the wretched throng. It rarely happens that the national vivacity is depressed, but here it was thoroughly quenched, and one and all seemed too dispirited to exchange words, or even to look at each other. Generally they sat as I have described, gazing moodily on the opposite wall, or reclining their heads on their knees, either asleep or feigning to be so. I had asked and obtained permission to enter this den, but my purpose changed during the few minutes that I made these observations. Through the gratings there poured forth from the

interior an effluvium that resembled the breath of the pestilence, and of so sickening an effect that with difficulty I retained my position for the short time that I overlooked the scene within. The impossibility of inhaling such a poisonous atmosphere without experiencing worse consequences was self-evident; and when I turned away from the spot, it was with pity for the wretched beings thus crowded together into a narrow compass, and too surely imbibing and communicating the seeds of disease and death. These anticipations were unhappily realised not long afterwards. A short time after their removal to Cadiz, typhus fever of a malignant kind broke out among the prisoners, and swept them off by scores. Their fate was no doubt connected with the loathsome state of the prisons, into which they were thrust at the end of each journey, but it was not a little accelerated by sheer starvation. The only allowance for food supplied by the authorities was a halfpenny per diem to each prisoner, out of which he had to sustain existence in the best way he could. Generally speaking, he purchased with one farthing a crust of bread, and with the other a salad; and unless he succeeded in begging or stealing an addition, this was all the fare upon which he supported the fatigue of a long march. From these causes it happened that few survived their journey to Cadiz, for those who did not sink by the way were so exhausted and feeble, that on the fever breaking out they were cut off after a few days' illness.

The inhuman treatment of prisoners was a feature common to the contending parties in the civil war, and it would even seem as if, on certain occasions, they vied with each other in inflicting cruelties on all who fell into their hands. Of the atrocities perpetrated by

the Carlists I both heard and read much ; and making every allowance for exaggeration, it was not to be concealed that their cause was stained by barbarities that would have become a race of savages.* On the other hand, the Queen's forces were not slow to retaliate ; and the murder of Cabrera's mother, by one of the generals of the Constitutional army, will ever remain one of the foulest deeds committed during that unhappy contest.

Following my conductor to another grated door, which he unlocked and pushed open, I passed forward without inquiry, and found myself in a small and gloomy chamber, lighted by a narrow window high up in the wall. My first impulse was to turn back, for this was the cell of the officers ; and as I considered that curiosity was hardly a sufficient excuse for intrusion among them, I felt I had no business there. However, it was too late to retreat, and, moreover, my entrance was unheeded by the whole party, whose attention seemed too deeply engrossed in various ways to notice the presence of a stranger ; so that if unwittingly I enacted the part of the " Curioso Impertinente," I could reflect with satisfaction that it was before an audience whose eyes were sealed. The

* In a pamphlet published at Valencia, by an officer of the Constitutional army, who had been taken prisoner by the Carlists, it was stated that he and his comrades, after being subjected to privations and inhumanities of no ordinary kind, were at one time denied food by their captors for such a length of time as to be driven by hunger to the revolting necessity of partially devouring the corpse of a fellow-prisoner. The statement is so horrible that one hesitates to yield it belief ; yet after all, it is scarcely credible that it would be publicly made by one whose comrades were at the time alive, and in a position to give it a contradiction, if untrue.

cell was tenanted by six officers, whose beds encroached upon its narrow dimensions, and scarcely left a passage for walking. Up and down this one of them was pacing with hasty strides, as if seeking relief from anxious thoughts; the others, with one exception, sat round a bed, which they had converted into a card-table, and by the aid of a dirty pack of cards, were buried in oblivion of everything but the interests of the game, upon which some small coins were staked. The remaining prisoner, though excluded from the game, displayed even more excitement than the players in its progress, and eagerly bent over it, while his eyes followed with the watchfulness of a lynx every card that fell from their hands. There was nothing in the appearance of these men to mark the soldier or the gentleman. Their uniform was simple and unpretending, consisting of a surtout and pantaloons of green cloth, with a cap of the same colour, the whole being devoid of lace or ornament of any kind. Indeed, had they been clothed in the ordinary garb of the country they would have passed for farmers or shopkeepers, from which class it is probable they had originally sprung.

Strange to say, although human life is but cheaply valued in Spain, nothing is more rare than to see it forfeited for the commission of crimes. As regards the infliction of punishments for offences of an atrocious kind, the law there is as severe as it is in our own country; and, like it, demands blood for blood. There is, however, a manifest dislike to carrying its last sentence into effect; and any plea or subterfuge is accepted by the ministers of justice in order to cover this aversion, which without exception they share with the nation at large. Whence this state of feeling

arises it is difficult to say; but it is certainly a most striking anomaly in the national character, that the same people which hesitates not to butcher its prisoners in cold blood, will shrink from enforcing the deliberate award of justice when it demands the life of a murderer. I had occasion to make these remarks on witnessing the execution of a criminal by the "garrote vil," a mode of inflicting death practised, I believe, nowhere but in Spain. The sufferer was stained with the blood of two victims—namely, his wife and her aunt, both of whom his navaja had deprived of life. It appeared that on account of his profligacy his wife had forsaken him, and taken refuge under the roof of her aunt, where she was afforded shelter for some time. At length the ruffian indicated a desire for her return, which was met with a refusal; and on proceeding to the house where she resided, an altercation on the subject ensued between the parties, the result of which was his drawing his knife upon the defenceless pair, and wounding them so desperately as to cause their death in a few days. Being speedily apprehended, his trial commenced at the instance of the husband of the aunt; and it is worthy of remark, as illustrative of the tardy pace of justice in this land, that eighteen months elapsed between the commission of this murderous act and its expiation on the scaffold. According to the procedure in criminal cases, his trial commenced in the court of "primera instancia" of San Lucar la Mayor, within whose jurisdiction the outrage was perpetrated; and, after the usual delay, was terminated by his condemnation to ten years' imprisonment. From this sentence the husband of the murdered woman appealed to a higher court, which reversed the decision of the inferior one, and imposed the penalty of death by the

garrote vil. Another appeal was, however, permitted by law for the accused, and he availed himself of it; but in the end the last sentence was confirmed, and, as a preliminary to his execution, he was placed "en capilla." This ceremony is emphatically the preparation for death; the criminal is now bid to resign every hope in this world, and to think only of eternity. For this purpose two days are allowed him, during which time a priest is in attendance day and night, whose office it is to prepare the guilty wretch for his approaching doom, and to administer such consolations as the Roman Catholic creed provides for these occasions. On the morning of the third day the capilla terminates, and he is led forth to execution.

This closing scene of a criminal's career is now transferred to a spot which was formerly dedicated to very different purposes; and nothing more strikingly marks an altered state of feeling in Catholic Spain than the indifference with which the transmutation is regarded. Without the ancient wall of the city, and not far from the bridge across the Guadalquiver, stands a huge pile of building which was once a convent of Augustinos descalzos, and was commonly known by the title of the Convento del Populo. It received this name from the circumstance of a notable miracle having occurred in the neighbourhood; and as the performer in the wondrous spectacle was too holy an object to be sheltered in a private dwelling, it was forthwith committed to the custody of the Augustines, in order to be publicly displayed for the benefit of the faithful. It happened that, during a great inundation in the year 1626, the waters of the river entered the vestibule of a house not far distant from the convent, and rose up to a picture of Nuestra Señora del Populo, which was suspended

there. Still continuing to rise, the tide detached it from the wall; and, as the story goes, for three days afterwards it was seen floating upright on the surface of the river, while the lamp that was usually kept burning before it still followed in faithful attendance without sinking or being extinguished. The holy fathers lost no time in claiming this wonderful picture, whose virtues could not fail to sanctify the roof under which it rested; and it was accordingly placed in their convent, which, from this event, began to be known as that of the Populo. The time, however, arrived when monachism was suppressed in Spain; and the convent being at the same time confiscated, was applied by the government to the uses of the state, and converted into a prison for every class of delinquents. Among the other alterations consequent upon this change, there was constructed at the back, which faces the Plaza de Toros, the place of execution for criminals. This consisted of a platform raised to a level with the top of the lofty wall surrounding the convent, and so placed as to overlook a space of ground calculated to contain a large assemblage of spectators. A short time before the fatal hour sounded, I was on this spot, which I expected to see filled with a dense crowd. In this, however, I was mistaken: so far from witnessing the multitude which a similar spectacle would draw in England, I beheld only a gathering neither numerous nor respectable; such as it was, it was wholly composed of the lowest class of the populace. The greater part of them were formed into groups, which spread over the area without preventing a passage from one side to the other; a liberty which the water-venders were not slow to turn to advantage, as was evident from the drawling cries that rose from every quarter. As yet, the platform,

round which ran a slight iron railing, was without an occupant, so that there was displayed in full view the apparatus of death rising in grim state from the centre. It was as simple and as devoid of repulsive features as such an instrument could be, yet the headsman's axe was uncertain and lingering compared with its fatal embrace. The machine was an arm-chair, solidly constructed of dark wood; to the back was attached a substantial post, about four feet high. Just about the place where the neck of a sitter would reach, something like an iron chain could be observed. This is the immediate instrument of death, for the chain being put round the neck of the criminal, is tightened by means of an iron bar in the hands of the executioner, who uses it in the same manner that the waggoner secures his bales, by twisting with a wooden staff the cords that bind them. A turn or two of the bar suffices to produce suffocation, and that with less amount of pain to the condemned wretch—or, at all events, with fewer tokens of suffering—than probably any other method of extinguishing life adopted by the penal code of civilised nations. Shortly after the clock of the cathedral had sounded the appointed hour, a few soldiers appeared upon the platform and took up their station at the back of it; then came some officials, clothed in black, among whom the executioner and his attendant were to be distinguished by the professional way in which they inspected the apparatus I have described; and finally, after a slight delay, the criminal himself came into view.

Neither groans nor execrations greeted his appearance, and the deepest silence prevailed while he moved to the chair, though with a feeble step. As soon as he had placed himself in it, the executioners advanced to

perform the first part of their office, which consists in binding the legs and arms of the criminal to the corresponding parts of the chair. This was the work of a few moments, during which I had opportunity to note the remarkable garment in which he was arrayed. It was a robe that enveloped him from the neck to the feet, so that, with the exception of the head, his person was wholly concealed; and its singularity arose from the strangeness of the colours, which were white and yellow, the latter being apparently daubed over the other in great splashes. It is difficult to give an idea of the extraordinary spectacle presented by the wretched man as he sat encased in this gaudy and fantastic death-gear, which seemed to mock the pale visage that surmounted it. Such, however, has been the usage in Spain for ages; and the murderer and the heretic have marched in this attire, the one to the scaffold and the other to the stake, bearing the ignominy of which its colours and devices are supposed to be emblematical. The last strap being firmly braced, the executioners retired, and gave place to a priest, who formed one of the surrounding group: he now came forward to receive the last confession of the criminal, and administer to him the consolations of his faith. For this purpose he bent his ear down to the mouth of the other, and raising the skirt of his black robe, drew it over his own head as well as that of the speaker, in order that no part of their conference might reach the bystanders near him. This, however, was perhaps a needless precaution, for as soon as he proceeded to his duty, the others on the stage retired to its furthest limits, and left him alone with the confessing sinner. When his task was done, and he had withdrawn to the back of the platform, the executioner once more stepped for-

ward, and grasped the fatal bar, while an assistant placed himself at his right hand. The criminal then began to recite the Apostles' Creed, every word of which, as his voice was clear and firm, was distinctly audible, even at the distance where I stood. When he had pronounced the words "Y en su unico hijo Jesu Christo," the bar revolved with the quickness of thought, the assistant cast at the same instant a black cloth over his face, and his lips were sealed for ever. At the same time the exclamation, "Ave Maria purissima!" burst with a shout from the lips of the spectators, some of whom continued to repeat it for a few moments, as if it could still reach his ears. He was, however, beyond the influence of mortal sounds, as death appeared to be nearly instantaneous: a convulsive quivering of the limbs for a second or two was all that indicated the struggle of existence parting with its earthly frame; and when it was over, and the cloth had been removed from his countenance, his features exhibited no traces of pain or suffering, but were as composed and placid as those of a sleeper. The crowd did not linger long upon the place after this last act of the ceremony was performed, and before half an hour elapsed it was deserted by all but the few stragglers it usually displayed.

At the north-western extremity of the city there is to be seen a spacious promenade, that, with its alleys of trees and stone benches, seems planted like an oasis in the midst of the dense mass of houses which cover that quarter. This is called the Old Alameda, and although now abandoned to solitude and neglect, under its shady elms, in the palmy days of Seville, were its daughters and gay gallants wont to assemble. Here was generally placed the scene of those adventures which

the older Spanish novelists and dramatists loved to connect with the capital of Andalusia. Since, however, the construction of those beautiful walks which extend along the bank of the Guadalquivir to the southward, and which well merit their name of "Las Delicias,"—for, while wandering amid that leafy city of tree, flower, and shrub, the spectator feels as if transported to a scene of enchantment—since that period the old Alameda has fallen from its high estate, and sees few traversing its far-famed avenues. At the southern extremity stand two time-worn columns, part of the ancient temple of Hercules, erected by the Romans: these now support statues of Hercules and Cæsar, also the relics of Roman art, but which, as long inscriptions testify, have been dedicated by Spanish servility to the emperors Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second. The most striking object, however, that intrudes upon the Alameda, is the gloomy and deserted edifice at its northern angle. Here, after many changes, the tribunal of the Inquisition for the last time held its dark and secret meetings, and carried on the work of persecution against freedom of thought and liberty of conscience. Originally the edifice was possessed by the Jesuits, and was long a college, in connexion with their order, for the education of poor students; but, on their expulsion from the kingdom, the Inquisition sought and obtained licence to set up their court within its walls. Previous to that time, the seat of the tribunal was in the ancient Moorish fortress that protected the suburb of Triana, on the opposite side of the river: probably that structure was selected from the number and security of its dungeons, which were then the chief agents in the conversion of the unhappy Jews, and in reconciling, as it was termed, the conquered

Moors to the Catholic faith. Established here in 1481, the Office proceeded to its accursed work of imprisoning, torturing, and burning; and by this means, as an inscription on the walls triumphantly recorded, succeeded before the year 1524 in causing twenty thousand heretics to abjure their errors. In the same detestable spirit it proclaimed, that more than a thousand persons, obstinately wedded to their heresies, "had been delivered to the fire, and burnt." The ancient fortress having, however, fallen into a ruinous state, was abandoned by the Holy Office, who transferred their tribunal to the city, and after various changes of residence were finally accommodated with the vacant college of the Jesuits. Here they exercised their powers until the Inquisition was extinguished throughout Spain, in the year 1820. The edifice then became a military barrack; but during a popular commotion in 1823, some rioters entered it, and accidentally setting fire to a store of powder which it contained, a considerable portion of the building at the back was demolished, and now lies a mass of shattered and blackened walls. Since that event, which probably rendered it unfit for the services of the state, this handsome edifice has been consigned to abandonment and neglect, and now confronts with ill-omened aspect its partner in desolation, the once gay and crowded Alameda.

Of the Quemadero, or structure upon which the victims of the Inquisition perished by fire, no traces now remain. Its site was placed without the walls of the city, between the Puerta de la Carne and the Cementerio General; but in 1809 it was razed to the ground by the French, and that so effectually as to efface every vestige of its existence. According to

report, its shape was an oblong square, the material used being brick ; and at each corner stood a pillar sustaining a statue of terra-cotta. Tradition, moreover, relates that the first to expire upon the pile was the artificer who constructed it : it is certain, however, that the last to be committed to its flames was a blind beata, or sister of charity, in the year 1781 ; but in her case the corpse was burnt at the stake, death having been previously inflicted by another mode.

Many years previous to its abolition, the Inquisition had ceased to take cognisance of heretical depravity, as it was styled, and had become little else than a political engine in the hands of Absolutism. Its dungeons were filled as usual, and the scaffold from time to time received its tribute of victims ; but I doubt much if, among the numbers who thus suffered, a single one was immolated for denying the established faith of the country. The truth is, that during that period there had grown up among the enlightened class, and consequently the most formidable, an indifference to religion itself ; and the Inquisition was not slow to perceive that such a feeling was far from being hostile to the office. Religious apathy, and infidelity, however deeply they may have tainted the minds of a community, have seldom subverted its ecclesiastical institutions ; nay, more, there is much less danger for the latter when surrounded by unbelief, than amid the proselytising and fiery spirit of a new sect. There is no enthusiasm in scepticism ; it argues, detracts, and sneers, but wants that consuming zeal by which fervent minds are impelled to overthrow not only the principles but the works of their opponents, or to perish in the attempt. Thus it happened in Spain, where those who recognised no religious principles what-

ever—that is, the majority of the Liberal party—were content to leave the Established Church in possession of its rights and immunities, while affecting to view with contempt its doctrines and ceremonies. In this state matters might probably have continued, had not Absolutism been so closely connected with the ancient faith of the country. Its firmest partizans were the priests who attempted to arrest its downfall before the rapid diffusion of constitutional principles, by the usual arguments of tyranny: none of these was so fit for their purpose as the Inquisition, with its widespread system of espionage, its secret denunciations, its midnight arrests and dark tribunals. It furnished a machinery of terror, which was accordingly set in motion for the suppression of Liberalism; and by the relentless severity of its proceedings, proclaimed both the fears and the policy of the ruling powers. From that moment its fate was decided, and on the next convulsion in this agitated country it sank to rise no more, the object of abhorrence to all but the fiercest supporters of absolute authority.

Secret denunciations I have mentioned as forming a part of the system by which the Inquisition swept victims into its dungeons. The mode it adopted was similar in principle, though not in practice, to that of the lion's mouth at Venice, and permitted individuals to prefer accusations against those whom they were willing to impeach and betray. The names of the accusers were never suffered by the Holy Office to transpire, but if it deemed their representations worthy of notice, a visit from its familiars was sure to startle the denounced at some moment when he least expected it, and perhaps be followed by his conveyance to one of its numerous cells. Such a system; by the suspicion

and distrust it inspired, was well calculated to repress every expression of opinion, while, at the same time, it invited the selfish or weak to purchase favour for themselves by becoming the denouncers of their friends. Many anecdotes are current in Spain with regard to individuals being betrayed by those on whom they reposed implicit confidence; but I shall only relate one which I heard from the lips of a party who was thus denounced, and in consequence subjected to a visit from the Inquisition.

During the reign of Fernando Septimo, the Absolutist faction for a time enjoyed an ascendancy which it did not fail to support by the terrors of the Holy Office. At that time the leaders of the constitutional party were under proscription, and had no other resource than to become refugees on foreign shores; from whence, however, they did not cease to carry on their schemes for restoring liberty to their country. One of these plans was to establish in England a periodical, to be written in the Spanish language, and in support of Liberal principles; from thence it was to be secretly disseminated through Spain. Such was a project seriously entertained by some of the refugees in London; one of whom, more zealous than discreet, transmitted a prospectus of it to an English merchant then resident in Seville. Our countryman received the paper, and was so far from attaching importance to its contents, or from imagining it involved himself in the schemes of the expatriated Liberals, that he showed it to a friend who happened to enter the room just as he had finished its perusal. In this, however, he was mistaken; the following morning, at an early hour, his dwelling was entered by the officers of the Inquisition, who demanded the document to which I have alluded. Having readily surrendered

it, he was then subjected to a series of interrogatories, all of which seemed to be put under the impression that he was the agent of some formidable conspiracy, organised against the government by the constitutional exiles in London. His statements, however, as to the possession of the document and upon other points, were so probable and consistent, that suspicion could find nothing to seize upon ; and after a lengthened examination the functionaries departed, leaving him in no slight astonishment regarding the cause of their visit. It is unnecessary to add, that nothing was further from his thoughts than to suspect his friend of being concerned with it. Time, however, at length threw light upon the affair, while at the same time it brought him his revenge. The downfall of the Absolutist party took place, and was followed by riots which invariably were directed against the detested prisons of the Inquisition. That of Seville, which I have described, was broken into, its prisoners liberated, and archives burnt. Among those who took a part in the work of destruction was a gentleman, who, on glancing at one of the manuscripts, about to be destroyed, perceived that it related to our countryman, and accordingly rescued it from the flames. This was the act of denunciation that had subjected his dwelling to a visit from the Inquisition; and, on its being brought to him for perusal, he recognised the handwriting as being that of the friend of whom I have made mention. His revenge on this occasion was as ample as could well be imagined. He invited the denouncer to breakfast, and when the repast was concluded placed before him the evidence of his baseness, without adding a single remark. The other was at once overwhelmed with shame and confusion; and knowing that neither excuse nor apology could be urged, quitted the room

in silence, with feelings which no man would envy, added to the conviction that from that day he would be known to the world as a spy of the hated Inquisition.

Subsequently, on my visiting Granada, I was favoured by a Spanish friend there with the perusal of a document which had once formed part of the archives of the Inquisition. The reader may imagine the feelings with which I proceeded to the examination of its contents, from which I anticipated some insight into the arcana of the Holy Office, or perhaps a narrative of dreary persecution and unknown martyrdom. To a certain extent these expectations were disappointed, though the volume was not without its interest, being connected with a breach of religious vows, and unfolding the spirit in which the Office dealt with ecclesiastical offenders. The manuscript, which consisted of rather more than twenty pages, recorded the trial and sentence of a padre guardian, or spiritual adviser to a convent of nuns. Of his offence, it will suffice to say that it involved an unprincipled abuse of his confidential position, and proclaimed the frailty of two of the sisters. The process was conducted after the usual style of the tribunal; no witnesses examined, or proof sought, but every circumstance of guilt elicited by interrogatories addressed to the culprits, and more particularly to the feminine portion of them. By such means the truth was wrung from their lips, together with many details that seemed to be unnecessarily inquired into; and the whole was wound up with the confession and penitent avowals of the arch-culprit himself. Such as they were, the tribunal deemed them of sufficient weight to influence its sentence, which, compared with the magnitude of the offence, will strike the reader as being singularly disproportionate. For three weeks he was to recite, morning and evening, a

couple of prayers designed for such offenders, to be followed by the same number of paternosters. That done, the holy father had expiated his immoralities, and satisfied the justice of his church. What would have been his sentence had he rejected the errors of Romanism, and preached the pure truths of the gospel? In vain would a blameless life have pleaded against an imprisonment of years, rendered unspeakably painful by the various modes which the Holy Office employed to crush the spirit and fortitude of the solitary sufferer.



P. C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER VI.

LEAVE SEVILLE FOR MOGUER.—ESCASEÑA DEL CAMPO.—IMPRISONMENT THERE.—TEXADA.—THE CONTRABANDISTA.—NIEBLA.—ITS RUINOUS STATE.—EL CONVENTO DE LA LUZ.—ITS PROPRIETORS.

If the reader takes up the map of Spain and casts a glance upon that portion which lies between Seville and the frontiers of Portugal, he will behold a tract of country level as it borders the coast, but broken into mountains and valleys as it recedes inland. As my eye rested upon the dark shade indicating a region of stern peaks, frowning precipices, and lonely mountain paths, I felt rising strong within me all my attachment for such scenery: "The Sierra, the Sierra!" I mentally exclaimed, and burned with impatience to listen once more to the muleteer's song, and with him breast the mountain side. The arrangements for that purpose were soon completed, and I started on a beautiful May morning for Moguer, a town not far from the boundary line between the two kingdoms, and situated at the point where the Rio Tinto becomes navigable. Crossing the Guadalquiver by an ancient bridge of boats, we took our way through the suburb of Triana, followed by the curious eyes of such as were astir among the gipsy horde that form its population. These sons of Egypt have abandoned for a residence here, the wandering habits but not the evil propensities

of their race ; and Triana is notorious as the abode of robbers and desperate characters. When the cholera swept through Spain, no place suffered so severely as this ; fourteen thousand of its inhabitants were said to have been smitten by the pestilence, without however causing any visible diminution in their number. From the heights beyond there is a fine view of Seville and the adjacent country. While we were slowly climbing the steep acclivity, I turned to take a last look at the ancient metropolis of Andalusia. Even in its decay, though forsaken by commerce and industry, the old city bore itself with some of the pride of the haughty hidalgos who once filled it ; and, strong in its monuments of former greatness, seemed superior to misfortune. From its white walls extends a vast plain exceeded by none in fertility, and watered by a navigable river ; a combination of advantages which ought to make, and did make it for a time, the most flourishing of towns in the southern provinces. But all these, by the blindness of its rulers, have been rendered unavailing. The golden harvests of Mexico and Peru were preferred to the more solid though less dazzling fruits of agriculture ; monopolies sprang up under a false system of political economy ; impolitic restrictions were enforced, till at length the productive industry of the country was checked, and old age came on before its time. There is yet hope, however, for Seville ; the springs of its resources are not dried up, but only repressed. A wise and enlightened administration would work like a charm upon the country ; let it but foster the gifts of which nature has been everywhere so bountiful, and cease to postpone these to the ambition of becoming a manufacturing nation, then might return the golden days of Spain ; but when

did experience ever warn the rulers of this strange people, or instruct the people themselves?

At San Lucar la Mayor I stopped to dine at the posada, which may be taken as a specimen of the inns throughout Andalucia, and the entertainment there as that to be usually expected by the traveller. Entering what would be considered in England a pothouse of the commonest order, I found the mistress serving in the only apartment it contained for public accommodation; in one corner two men were playing at cards, and, as usual, seasoning their diversion with disgusting oaths and exclamations.

“What have you to give me to eat?”

“Eggs.”

“Nothing more?”

“Yes; bacalao (stockfish) but dry.”

“And what else?”

“That,” said the hostess, pointing to some very lean sausages hanging from the rafters.

“That will not do.” So with eggs and bread and some wine I made a tolerable dinner. My knife was the navaja, so dangerous in the hand of the intoxicated or infuriated peasant; it is a clasp-knife usually four or five inches long, the blade being broad in the middle and tapering to a fine point; with this he cuts his bread, peels his orange, and, when necessary, lays open the side or deals a gash upon the face of his antagonist. Afternoon came ere I had reached the small village of Escasena del Campo, the limit of my first day's journey. In the inn no apartment was to be found fit for “gente decente,” but I was directed to the cottage of an old woman who had apartments to let to strangers. It was necessary, however, to obtain permission for this purpose from the alcalde; and as that high dig-

nitary was enjoying his siesta, and could not then attend to affairs of state, I had to encounter some delay. After waiting for an hour, I was at length admitted to the shelter afforded by four tottering walls, and a roof through which daylight was visible in a score of places. My hostess was a very fluent speaker, or rather questioner, and quite took away my breath by the rapidity with which her queries followed one another. In ten minutes she had extracted from me a short account of my history, and my reasons for travelling. To all this I submitted with a good grace, for I knew my time was coming. Seizing an opportunity, I inquired after the health of one of the residents in the village. Then came two or three interrogatories regarding the welfare of some other individuals whom I named, to which she replied with rising curiosity at the extent of my information; and at length I concluded by asking, "How is Don Francisco T——?" At this last inquiry she arose quickly from her seat, and shading her eyes with her hand, peered curiously in my face.

"Ave Maria!" she cried; "you are the Englishman who was imprisoned here."

"The same, O grandmother," I replied.

To explain this allusion, it will be necessary to entreat the reader's patience for a moment. Two years previously, in company with C—— and a Spanish friend who was about to visit a relative in the vicinity, we reached this village late at night, and not a little fatigued. It was not till we were nearly driven to despair that, after a long search in the village, and in another a quarter of a mile distant, we obtained the shelter of the roof under which I was then sitting. This secured, our next thought was to cook some eggs that

had fortunately fallen in our way. C—— had managed to procure a frying-pan, and was absorbed in the interesting process of frying them, while I was blowing into a flame a few twigs that made up our fire, when a noise at the door turned our attention thither. To our surprise, the doorway was filled with dark figures; beneath their cloaks were plainly visible the points of drawn swords. One of the group then advanced into the middle of the room, and politely addressing us, requested to see our passports.

“Passports!” we both exclaimed in a breath.

“Why, we have left them in Seville.”

“Who are you?” was next inquired.

“We are Englishmen, who, intending only to spend a day or two here, did not think it necessary to bring our passports from Seville, to which we intend to return.”

This reply did not seem satisfactory to our questioner. He consulted with the armed force in the rear, which, during this dialogue, had pounced upon our double-barreled guns. After a brief consultation, he informed us, as the result of their deliberations, that our presence was required in the council-chamber of the village. Remonstrances were vain, and so, escorted by the band already mentioned, we marched to the hall of justice, where we underwent a long string of interrogatories regarding our objects in coming to the village. Our papers and letters were demanded and given up: among these came to light the letter of introduction in the possession of our Spanish friend, who, by the way, was as negligent as ourselves; and everything plainly showed that we were merely peaceful travellers, and no emissaries of the “factious,” as our interrogators were inclined to suppose. Some further con-

sultation then took place among our captors, and at length it was announced to us that we should be detained in custody until the gentleman to whom the letter of introduction was addressed came forward to be responsible for our good behaviour, or the English consul at Seville was communicated with. Loud was our indignation at this treatment; but resistance, of course, was unavailing.

There being no regular prison, we were borne off to a place which was used as the village granary, and ushered into a dismal and spacious barn. As far as we could judge by the light of a solitary lamp, it was devoid of windows, and altogether no bad substitute for a prison. A mattress was next dragged in, a blanket or two thrown upon it, the door locked and barred outside, and we were left to our meditations. What those of my companions in captivity were I do not know, but I was too tired and sleepy to feel very acutely the loss of my liberty; and so it happened that when, next morning, it was notified that we were free to depart, our friend's friend having engaged to answer for our respectability, I did not fall into ecstasies of joy, but walked out as quietly as if our quarters had been an hotel, and not a place of durance.

This incident was the commencement of my acquaintance with Don Francisco T——, by whom, as alcalde of the village, our arrest and incarceration were effected in person. The good alcalde, I believe, on further consideration, was inclined to think he had been somewhat over strict in the discharge of his duties. With the natural good feeling, therefore, of an honest heart, he endeavoured, by the abundance of his good offices and the profuseness of his hospitality, to banish from our minds any soreness that might have arisen on

that account. On the present occasion his reception of me was that of an old friend; he insisted upon my leaving my lodgings and taking up my abode under his roof; which on the following morning I did, and remained there during the few days I spent in the village. Don Francisco was a wealthy farmer, and no bad specimen of his class. Simple and unassuming in his manners, perhaps even retiring, his ability in the matters of agriculture had made him what he was; in other respects his information did not extend beyond that of the generality of his countrymen, but he was superior to them in being free from most of the narrow prejudices that warp their minds. I used to contrast him favourably with two farmers from the vicinity of Ronda, who spent a month in a "casa de pupilos" at which I happened to be staying. These men, whatever was the purpose that brought them there, were for the period of their stay almost immovable fixtures in the public room of the house. From breakfast till dinner time, they sat facing each other at the brazier filled with charcoal, by which the room was heated; hats on head, and wrapped in their long cloaks, moodily smoking paper cigars, and seldom exchanging a word with each other, or with any one around. I only saw them smile once, and that was at some piece of gross buffoonery perpetrated by one of the attendants. As regards myself, many words did not pass between us: such as they were, they conveyed to me the information that my country had always been the worst enemy of Spain, had risen only by her downfall, and was fomenting the present civil war for purposes of her own advantage; or, if that was not the subject of their discourse, it was to assure me that England was fast sinking among nations, had passed her prime, and

would, in her turn, be the prey of those whom she had so long plundered.

One trait in the character of Don Francisco pleased me more than any other, because now becoming rare in Spain. It was his old Spanish reverence for the religion of his fathers, and the display of a devotional feeling—to me the more striking, as I had witnessed it nowhere among the population of the towns in which I had been a resident. Infidelity, and a total neglect of the outward forms of the national faith, are there united with the adoption of the Liberal principles of which they are the strongholds. Whenever the word “Dios” occurred in our conversation, he reverentially lifted his hat from his head; and at the “oracion” the whole family joined with him in repeating aloud the prayers set apart for that occasion. When they were concluded, his children came, each in its turn, to kiss his hand; while to myself, and the others who happened to be in the room, they added, “Beso las manos a usted.” After dinner, on the first day of my being an inmate of his house, I expressed a determination to visit Texada, once a Roman city but now in ruins, and distant a league from the village. To go on foot, as I wished to do, appeared to my host and hostess a most unbecoming thing for a caballero, and both endeavoured to dissuade from the attempt; which they besides evidently considered as something beyond human strength to accomplish. However, they yielded at last to my wishes, and provided me with a guide. The village itself, I may mention, lay on the brow of a declivity that rapidly sank into a level plain, now green with the crops of the year; on the right, at the distance of twelve miles, were seen the white buildings of San Lucar la Mayor, through which I had passed; and right in front, the

blue outlines of a spur of the Sierra Morena closed the prospect. Midway between the slope upon which I stood and a corresponding one that rose out of the plain some two leagues distant, was an elevation, which, if not really artificial, was wondrously fashioned by nature's hand into the proportions of a circular mound; this was Texada, the "plaza," or fortress, as my guide called it. In ancient warfare it must have been a place of some strength; the remains of Moorish walls encircle the brow of the eminence: these were constructed, not of stone or brick, but of a kind of concrete formed of gravel and cement, and so durable and tough as to present a stubborn resistance to the assaults of time and hostile weapons. The process by which they were raised to the required height deserves explanation. The material, when hot, was spread on the wall to the depth of two or three feet; but as it was in a liquid state, wooden boxes were used to confine it, until by cooling it had acquired sufficient solidity to maintain an upright form and bear the weight of succeeding layers. In many places, both on the interior and exterior of the walls, the apertures were visible in which was inserted the framework of the scaffolding necessary for this purpose: it would appear that the builders had not thought it worth their while to fill them up; and indeed so fresh and recent was the aspect of many portions of their handiwork, that it was not difficult to imagine that the workmen had only that morning quitted the scene of their labours. On the summit, some dilapidated farm-offices are the sole representatives of the streets and edifices it once contained; but on the western side, at the foot of the ascent, are to be seen the foundations of baths, in the waters of which Romans and Moors had probably refreshed themselves. According to

Rodrigo Cearo, the decay of the place was caused by the insalubrity of the situation, the inhabitants deserting it on that account for Escasena and Paterna del Campo.

As we returned, my guide paused at a fountain, whose waters flowed into a watering-trough for cattle. Above the jet was the following inscription : “ Nuestra Señora de la Luna, Patrona de Escasena, que se ve en el convento de los Padres Carmelitos Calzados, ha parecido en el termino de esta villa.” (Our Lady of the Moon, Patroness of Escasena, who is to be seen in the convent of the Carmelite Fathers, has appeared within the boundaries of this township). Respecting the image thus stated to be in the holy keeping of the Carmelite Fathers, my guide gravely related the following tradition :—

“ A charcoal burner was plying his occupation in a neighbouring wood, felling and uprooting trees, when in a lonely spot he discovered a muñeca, or image of the Virgin. This he placed in his sack, and carrying it home, proceeded to impart the news to his family. ‘ Vaya !’ said he, ‘ I have found a curiosity !’ and forthwith opened his bag to display it to them : to his surprise, no image was there. The next day he returned to his work : judge of his amazement when he espied the missing image in the very spot where he had originally found it. A second time he deposited the muñeca in his bag, and to make all sure, he secured the mouth of it, Señor, in this way : he fastened it with twenty knots and more, and immediately sallied homewards to relate the wonderful intelligence. Upon reaching his hut, the bag was opened ; but wonderful to tell, in spite of all his precautions, the image had again escaped. A third time, then, he went in search, and found it reposing in its old quarters, as if no mortal

hand had ever profaned it; and so it was evident that Our Lady had appeared under the form of the image, and a chapel was consequently erected on the spot where the apparition took place."

Seeing that I listened to this miraculous history without betraying any signs of incredulity, my guide was encouraged to continue:—"Pues, Señor, there happened here another thing equally curious. A farmer took a print of the Virgin, and placed it in the open field under some clay; and for all the rain that fell, not a drop wetted it, and it was seen by many of the pueblo to be as dry as when he first placed it there."

"Possibly he had covered it up so close with the clay that no water could penetrate," was the suggestion of my unbelief.

"No, Señor, he covered it up very loosely indeed: and more than that—his wheat escaped, while that of his neighbours was utterly ruined by the blight."

In the evening came an invitation to Don Francisco and myself, to celebrate the opening of an escribania, or attorney's office, in the village. It came to pass, therefore, that next day, in our holiday attire, we made our way to the scrivener's residence, at the door of which a large party of the guests was grouped. Our entertainer, who was a short man with one eye, ushered us into the sala or principal room of the house, where preparations had been made for the festival. On the centre was a table loaded with sweetmeats, flanked by bottles of liqueurs of all colours. After waiting until all were assembled, our host in person proceeded to distribute the eatables around. First came merengues, then liqueurs, next mostachones and biscochos of various kinds, panales or sugar plums, which the water-sellers give along with a glass of water; these were

handed round in rapid succession, and washed down with glasses of wine, liqueurs, or the aguardiente of the country. On returning home we were joined by two of the guests, to whom I was introduced by Don Francisco, there being some sort of relationship between them. They entered with us, and after sitting a short time, each rose up in his turn, and, bowing low, placed his house at my disposal. This, I was well aware, was the Spanish method of conferring on a stranger the privileges of friendship; and I rose therefore in my turn, and expressed in suitable terms my gratitude for the honour done me. Furthermore to cement the friendship, I visited them that same evening—which indeed it was absolutely necessary I should do, according to the laws of Spanish etiquette—and submitted to the usual interrogatories that pass between confidential associates. My age, the number of my family, my religious belief, my wedded or unwedded state, and various other particulars, were all made the subject of inquiries, and freely commented upon by the good people, as if I had been some specimen of the animal kingdom just caught, and whose peculiar properties it behoved them to investigate and discuss: yet, withal, there was so much simplicity in their queries and discussions, that I could not help entering into the spirit of the thing, and was soon quite at home in acting the part of showman to myself. In the evening it was determined to have a dance. Some time previously a Portuguese dancing-master had found his way to the village, and since his appearance nothing was in fashion but quadrilles, mazurkas, and escocesas. Alas for the Fandangos, the Boleros, the Zapateadas, and other dances of the people! they had in consequence been voted ungenteel, and fit only for the corral, and

the swarthy dancers who wind their arms to the lively rattle of the castanets. The assembly room, when we reached it, was lighted up, and filled with the dark-eyed belles of the village, to whose numbers, I regretted to see, those of the male sex bore no proportion. All exerted themselves, however, to do justice to their instructor—doing their steps, as it is called, with praiseworthy minuteness. Some treacherous memories, however, occasionally murdered “L’Eté” and “Trenise;” and as this invariably brought us to a stand-still, the doctor was appointed by acclamation fogleman: for the remainder of the evening his duty consisted in bawling out “Ladies’ chain,” “Advance and retire,” “Turn your partners,” and so forth. It was late before we parted, the concluding scene being a *pas de deux*, performed by my host’s young daughters.

Next morning, the guide whom I had engaged made his appearance; and, after swallowing a hasty breakfast, I prepared to depart—the pressing entreaties of my host and hostess notwithstanding, whose kindness appeared to increase with every moment of my stay. They were very desirous I should remain a few days longer, to witness a fair that was to be held in the neighbourhood; but I did not feel at liberty to trespass on their hospitality any longer, and with reiterated thanks, and under an express promise to renew my visit should I return to Seville, I bade them farewell. Out of the village our route led down one of those bridle paths so characteristic of the country. From the wearing effects of the constant passage of vehicles, added to the fury of the winter rains, the path in time sinks as it were into the soil, and becomes in truth a ditch just broad enough to permit the movement of a cart. Creeping shrubs hung from the walls of this singular road, and

caught our hats and cloaks as we wound along without catching a glimpse of aught but the sky overhead. At length we descended to a plain that bore all the signs of industrious cultivation. Large fields of maize yet green, and of wheat ready for the sickle, spread away to the left; while beyond them rose the spires of Manzanilla, the town itself being hidden from view by dark olive-woods: on the right extended a wide common browsed on by numerous herds of cattle. Altogether it was a prospect that might well make glad the heart of the owner, with its assurances of golden gains and of labour well rewarded; but it wanted the charm of variety, and the eye soon grew tired of meeting field after field of waving grain. My guide in the mean time was by no means disposed to let the hours pass in silence, and before we had traversed a league was enjoying a complete monopoly of the conversation. Juanito was above the middle height, of a spare and wiry frame, seldom smiled, and spoke and thought like a man who had seen something of the world. His adventures had been somewhat of a varied kind, and were more or less connected with the systematic infraction of his country's laws; but this did not lower him in the estimation of his friends or the public, and for myself I confess my feelings rather inclined to him for the same reasons: in a word, he either was or had been a contrabandista. One incident in his history is worth telling. On one occasion, when engaged with some confederates in a "smuggling lay" near Malaga, he had the misfortune to be captured by a Columbian cruiser, by which he and his fellow contrabandistas were carried to Gibraltar. Here they were confined for some time in the hold of the vessel, closely watched, and with a very scanty allowance of food.

To make matters worse, each day it became less and less, till at length it ceased altogether, and for three days they suffered all the agonies of hunger. In despair, a plan was concerted in order to reach the shore, and make known to the authorities the horrible privations they suffered. As they were allowed to ascend to the deck, but only four at a time, it was agreed that of those who could swim, that number should attempt to reach the shore. This was accordingly done. The little party suddenly throwing off their cloaks, plunged into the sea and made for the land; and in spite of the boats which were instantly sent in pursuit, contrived to reach it in safety. On the case being made known to the governor, orders were despatched to the Columbian vessel for the immediate liberation of the captives. "And thus, you see," concluded Juanito, "I am indebted to your countrymen for my liberty, and perhaps my life; for it was the intention of our captors to carry us to Columbia, though it is but too probable we should have perished by the way, from the barbarity of our treatment." His last expedition was undertaken in company with a party of contrabandistas, who were summoned to aid, and if need be to defend by the strong hand, the unlading of a vessel which was despatched from Gibraltar with a rich cargo of tobacco. When assembled, their numbers, the reader will be surprised to learn, amounted to 250 men, all well armed with escopetas, many of them with two. Upon approaching the spot where the landing was to be effected, which was somewhere within the frontiers of Portugal, they were met by another band of 150 under a different command, and in conjunction proceeded to their destination. It may be conceived that the passage of so large a force of armed men through the country

did not fail to alarm the Portuguese authorities, and a body of troops was despatched to disperse the daring party. Between these and the bold contrabandistas some skirmishing ensued, and one or two of the latter were wounded; but as the vessel they expected did not make her appearance, it was judged expedient to make no further resistance, and they accordingly separated without accomplishing their object. Each man had two horses, and received payment according to the sufficiency of his animals and the load they could carry: in general the agreement ranged from twelve to thirty dollars, subject to the stipulation, that if no cargo was discharged, the half only should be claimed.

What government, we may well ask, can ever hope to put down smuggling, when its subjects unite in such formidable numbers to maintain the traffic? A strong executive, aided by a combination of favourable circumstances, and a lavish expenditure of treasure, might, perhaps, undertake the task with some show of success; but it almost excites a smile to see attempted by the feeble and corrupt hands of Spain, the suppression of a system against which far more powerful nations have contended in vain. When we witness the wide extent of her frontier, and know, moreover, that her officials are scantily remunerated, and consequently open to temptation, we do not wonder at everywhere seeing such articles as English cottons, thread, stockings, muslins, and the like, which are excluded from introduction by duties amounting to a prohibition. Gibraltar is the emporium from whence the contraband cargoes are supplied; thus being, in peace as in war, a thorn in the side of Spain. The amount of our exports to the "Rock" sufficiently proves this. In 1844, their value

reached one million sterling, an amount which was infinitely beyond the consumption of the 12,000 dwellers there; and which would certainly create surprise, did we not know that, either by connivance or open violence, three-fourths of it reached the interior. At the same time, it is curious to observe that our exports to Spain, officially declared, amounted to no more than 500,000*l.* in value. If we add to this a million and a half for what passes through Gibraltar, and by the frontiers of Portugal, upon the mules of the *contrabandista*, we shall form some notion of the real amount of our trade with the former country.

Our road led through two or three villages apparently crumbling into ruins. In these miserable spots, however, are frequently to be seen houses of a superior description, whose owners are gentlemen of property, and men of refined education. The cause of their existence amid such desolation is, as I have already stated, to be found in the general insecurity of life and property which pervades Spain. No man thinks of making a country-house his abode, but chooses the village or hamlet nearest to his property, and from thence sallies forth to superintend the operations of his dependents. For the same reasons, farm-houses are rare; master and servant inhabit the same *pueblo*, and often have to travel a weary league or two before reaching the farm.

In one of these villages, not far from Escasena, my attention was struck by a mansion which might once have claimed to be the pride of the place; but now, roofless and dismantled, its only distinction was to elevate its mouldering walls a little higher than its fellows in decay. The basement-story, I found, was converted into a yard for cattle; and from that a staircase of beautiful white marble, though now sadly

fractured and mutilated, led to the upper rooms. The history attached to it was an every-day one: the founder had returned from Mexico laden with wealth, which purchased for him the title of marquis, and reared this edifice with its marble columns and costly decorations. His inheritor speedily dissipated the gains, probably ill-gotten, of his parent; and the third in succession now resides at La Isla in indigence and obscurity. His necessities had been such as to cause him to sell the very roof and flooring of this his paternal dwelling for the sake of the sum the wood might bring.

From a long way off the towers of Niebla had been visible, but at the slow pace of our steeds the distance between us seemed never to diminish. At length we reached the banks of the Rio Tinto; its dark waters, gushing over a rocky channel, conveyed an idea of refreshing coolness, in delightful contrast with the oppressive heat that loaded the atmosphere. Following the windings of the river for a short distance, we came to a spot where it was crossed by an ancient bridge of nine arches. Beyond this, to the left, rose the sun-burnt and crumbling walls of the town, crowning a slight eminence, at whose base still wound the river we had passed; while nearer the bridge the higher battlements of the castle overlooked and commanded the passage across. The road between the bridge and the town seemed to have been the work of the elements and time, rather than of the hand of man. We toiled up a steep path, paved by the rock which the winter torrents had laid bare, and fringed on either side by oleander bushes, whose rich bright blossoms were a welcome sight to eyes that ached from the glare and reflection of the sun upon dusty paths. Huge masses of rock intercepted our progress at every step, and

covered the declivity beside and below us; others had held their downward way to the bed of the stream, where their site was marked by the foam that broke over them.

On coming abreast of the walls of the town, Juanito turned off and led the way to a posada just fronting the gate, where he proposed halting for our midday repast. The aspect of this place of entertainment for man and beast was anything but cheering to a way-worn traveller. Stretched on their mantas about the entrance lay half-a-dozen muleteers, enjoying their siesta during the heat of the day. No one concerned himself in the least degree about us, nor indeed did an eye unclose, though the clatter of our steeds as we led them over the flinty pavement of the dwelling might have been heard in the farthest corner; and I was looking in vain for the master of the establishment among the recumbent forms around me, when my attendant, who was better versed in the ways of the place, walked up to a very stout woman reclining sleepily on one of the low chairs of the country, and inquired if they had any barley for his animal. A shake of the head intimated there was none, and spared our hostess, for such she was, the trouble of opening her lips. To have inquired for provisions of any description would only have elicited a stare of astonishment at our want of forethought, and we therefore sat down to the scanty store we had brought along with us. Our repast did not detain us long; and not being in the mood to abide longer than was needful in this mansion of Morpheus, I sallied forth, accompanied by Juanito, for a ramble through the town.

Entering by the gate on the eastern side, under an archway of Moorish architecture, we passed at once into the midst of ruins and desolation. It was a

melancholy sight to witness, and I involuntarily turned to a crumbling staircase that conducted to the summit of the walls, thinking that I might descry some quarter from which the life had not departed so utterly as it had from this scene of solitude and decay. Still it was everywhere the same; there were whole streets of houses of which nothing but the walls remained standing, and which now resembled long rows of skeletons clinging together for support; the whole seemed ready to sink into the ground before the first blast that swept over the fortifications to touch with its wing the long grass that grew upon hundreds of hearthstones and thresholds.

Had all this been wrought by the elements, or by war, or any one of those catastrophes that suddenly overthrow the work of years, one could have looked upon it with pity and regret, yet not without hopes of returning prosperity; but a worse agent than these had made the town the wreck it was, and more fatally assailed its future prospects. Its ruin was the fruit of that national decay, the traces of which cross the observer's path wherever he wanders. Living Spain is no more; her industry and energy are but the languid efforts of old age; her vitality circulates feebly through a frame which once revelled deep in avarice, injustice, ignorance, and superstition, and for the sake of these stretched itself under the blighting shadow of misgovernment and corruption: she drags on her existence painfully and laboriously; and as the extremities are the first to grow torpid, so has this remote town been the first to share in her failing strength, and exhibit the earliest tokens of dissolution.

Meanwhile, I clambered along the battlements: sometimes slipping among the long grass that waved

over them, or stepping cautiously on tottering towers that had erst borne unmoved the tread of the Moorish sentinel, I came to an angle that commanded a fine view of the valley through which the river wound towards the sea. A little further on, a yawning breach opposed my advance; and I descended to *terra firma*, where the view was confined to wretched cabins harbouring a population of dark-skinned women and half-naked children. The town, like Palos and Moguer, is said to be peopled by the descendants of the slaves; whom the conquerors of the New World brought back with them as the spoils of the sword; and certainly the present inhabitants resemble Mulattoes much more than Europeans: but in the want of positive evidence for this fact, it is just as likely that their darker hue arises from a stronger infusion than usual of Moorish blood. Of the few we met, one was a little urchin of five or six years, who, divested of everything but nature's garb—*en cuero* as they call it in Spain—came sauntering down the street with the air of a Bond-street loungeur. He paused when his eye caught us, and, folding his little arms, turned round and honoured me with a stare that would have done credit to an exquisite. I presume his survey was satisfactory, for, nodding his little head in approval, he marched on and left us.

On the way to the town, and while wandering through its silent streets, Juanito, in proof of the ancient riches of the place, had more than once launched out into glowing descriptions of treasures of gold, and I know not what else, that had lately been dug up within the walls. Tales of this kind are so frequent in the mouths of the vulgar in Spain, that I seldom paid any attention to them; but I know not what whim induced

me now to consider his account as highly probable. The thought struck me just as I stood before a dwelling that bore evident traces of having been a portion of the ancient fortifications; and, as a beginning must be made somewhere, What place, thought I, so likely as this, to know something of the buried wealth of its former masters? The "Dios guarde à usted" of Juanito was responded to by the customary "Pase usted adelante." Crossing the threshold, I found myself under a kind of dome, into which the light was admitted by an aperture in the top; the only inmate was a woman, who desisted from spinning while she replied to my inquiries. I was directed to go to the house of "Antonio el coxo," the way to which she described with a minuteness that left me quite bewildered on her concluding; but, luckily, Juanito was more acute, and without much difficulty piloted the way to the mansion of "Antonio the cripple." "Quien es?" was the answer to the knock of Juanito, who by this time was full of enthusiasm for the cause of antiquarian research, and thundered at the door as if it was a matter of life and death that brought us there. "Gente de paz" (people of peace), we rejoined; and thus re-assured, a wicket in the door was opened—or, more accurately, just enough of it to permit the swarthy spouse of Antonio to reconnoitre the persons whose impatient summons had nearly demolished the frail bolts.

The information we received was very unsatisfactory; the lord of the house was absent on a journey, and, moreover, had bestowed his treasures upon a friend in Moguer. As a last hope, I inquired if any other virtuoso was to be found in the place; and, considering for a moment, our dark friend replied that most probably the cura might possess some ancient coins and

other relics of the past. To the habitation of the cura I therefore wended my way, and halted before a dwelling whose exterior wore a more respectable air than any I had hitherto seen. The doors were closed, betokening that its inmates had not yet shaken off their siesta; my watch, however, told me that, by the customs of the land, the drowsy god should have abdicated half-an-hour before; and curas, I thought, should not set an example of sloth to their flocks. So these reasons directed my hand to the knocker; and, the servant being informed as to the purport of my visit, I was ushered into the antesala. In a few moments the cura made his appearance, and in reply to my question related, that some peasants, while working in a field belonging to him, had discovered, close to the river's edge, a large jar: upon breaking open this, there was displayed to view a multitude of Moorish coins, the whole of which were silver. The quantity was calculated to exceed in weight an arroba, or measure of twenty-five pounds. As almost invariably happens, the finders were unable to part the booty in peace, so that the circumstance became known to the authorities, who claimed the whole; and as the land in which it was found was his property, he became entitled to a portion, which he received. Of these he showed me a few, and very frankly presented me with one. It was of the usual shape of Moorish coins, being square, and stamped with Arabic characters, and in a state of perfect preservation. With many thanks I bade adieu to the kind and courteous cura—who, like almost all those of his profession I subsequently encountered, was a gentleman in his bearing and manners—and in a few moments was on the road to Moguer.

Winding round the northern side of the fortifica-

tions by a rocky path, I descended into the valley of the Rio Tinto, and followed the course of the "dark river," for such its name imports, amid rich fields of wheat and barley: intermingled with these were green and luxuriant vineyards, while villages and spires upon the slopes gave life and animation to the scenery. Half a league beyond Lucena, we turned up the acclivity on our right to reach a convent, whose towers, and tall cypresses rising on its brow, form a conspicuous object to wayfarers in the hollow of the valley. The conventual buildings I found undergoing a metamorphosis little imagined by the pious founder; workmen were busily engaged in converting them into a country mansion; and on all sides cells and oratories were shaking off their monkish repose, and waking to the noise of the implements by which they were transformed into bedrooms and salas. To my regret I learnt that the proprietor and his lady had taken their departure eight days previously; but I received a cordial welcome from the superintendent of the works, to whom I was recommended by a letter from the señora. In other days, Padre Alonzo, as he was still called, had ruled the temporal affairs of the brotherhood of which he was a member; he had, however, lived to see his brethren expelled from their home, their possessions confiscated, and the scanty pittance accorded them as an equivalent cruelly withheld, by a government that broke its faith as soon as plighted, and cared as little for their want and wretchedness as it did for its own credit and honour. Let me not, however, be understood as wishing to bespeak sympathy for monastic institutions: here, as everywhere else, their existence was the bane of the country; and so generally admitted was this by Spaniards of all shades of opinion, that had Don Carlos

ascended the throne of Spain, the most strenuous resistance to their restoration, would have been offered by his own followers, to whom, with the exception of the priestly advisers, they were as odious as to the Liberal party.

From the great size of the convent, it must have been the property of a numerous as well as wealthy community. There were three cloisters, all communicating with each other: the first into which the padre conducted me was small, but the next was spacious and well designed. In one chamber was piled a confused heap of ponderous tomes, part of the library of the brotherhood, and evidently regarded as useless lumber, which it would be a charity to take away. Apparently the worthy padre bore no great love to them, for he pressed me to consider as mine sundry volumes I was inspecting with much interest: they were ancient editions of the Fathers, and would have been a treasure to a bibliomaniac; but black letter and vellum, though invested in my eyes with the veneration that belongs to antiquity, did not inspire me with the enthusiasm required to transport them over hill and dale for the next three or four months, and accordingly I civilly declined the padre's generous offer of his master's property. One volume, however, I possess, and it is one which, as a memorial of those whom I may never see again, I preserve with religious care. On my way to England, while the steamer was pausing for its despatches in the Bay of Cadiz, I received from the señora a Latin Bible, which she rightly judged would be more welcome to a Protestant than the rarest work of ancient lore in the convent library. The moth and worm had been busy with its pages, and on the last one some hand had borne record that its teachings

had been in vain against the canker of disappointed hopes. Even in the cell there was the spirit which could write—

Ya es la esperanza perdida
 Y un solo bien me consuela
 Que el tiempo que pasa y vuela
 Llevará presto la vida.

As I passed through the convent gates, it would have been strange had I not wished that sorrow might never enter there: I had received too much kindness from its new masters to think of anything else at that moment. The history of the lady was, besides, peculiarly interesting. The daughter and co-heiress of a wealthy planter of the Havanna, in her early years she received the usual amount of instruction accorded to females there, and which was of a kind corresponding to the life of indolence and frivolity she was expected to lead. This, however, did not suit the tastes of Manuela G——, in whose mind the love of knowledge was deeply implanted. In the literature of her mother tongue there was little to slake her thirst for information, and she turned therefore to acquire the languages of Europe, and especially the English, as a key to that knowledge her own country could not afford. Difficulties and discouragements did not repress her spirit, manifold as these were under the planter's roof, where prejudices abound, and where the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was considered a gratuitous folly; at length, by toilsome exertions she became a self-taught mistress of English, which she spoke with a purity and elegance I have seldom heard equalled.

In point of solid acquirements her progress was proportionally great; even in England, whose boast is in

the number of her well-read and intellectual women, her place would have been a high one. From the Havanna she repaired to Cadiz, having previously married the husband of her choice, an officer in the Spanish navy, and who to his ancient lineage added the frankness and openness of disposition that everywhere seem part of a sailor's nature. Her children were in England, receiving their education at a Protestant school; a step she had taken not without grave remonstrances from her friends, to whose minds, moulded in the spirit of modern liberality in Spain, the possession of no faith at all was far more pardonable than a leaning towards one adverse to the national creed. But her strong good sense taught her to think otherwise, even if there had been no reason to believe that in this matter she acted in accordance with convictions which were not exactly those of her forefathers. Such characters are rare anywhere, but in Spain they "dwell apart like stars."

The bells of Moguer were tolling the animas when we entered the town, after an hour spent in winding amid vineyards intermingled with fields of yellow wheat, and the remains of pine-woods, where were blooming a vast variety of flowers. Juanito led the way with confidence to the inn, where I deposited my valuables in the "seguro," and thence proceeded to present my letters of introduction.

CHAPTER VII.

MOGUER.—THE PINZONS.—PALOS.—THE CONVENT OF LA RABIDA.
 —ITS RUINOUS STATE.—PICNIC THERE.—ESCAPE OF PRISONERS.
 —RIDE TO ZALAMEA.—VALVERDE.—COSTUME OF THE INHABITANTS.—HOLIDAY IN ZALAMEA.—RIO TINTO.—ITS MINES OF COPPER.—THE ANCIENT BÆTICA.—CAMPO FRIO.—THE TRAVELLED INNKEEPER.

THE first house to which I directed my steps was that of the Pinzons, the lineal descendants of Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the hardy mariner who was the first of his class to imbibe some of the enthusiasm of genius, and himself shared in the dangers that attended the search for an unknown world. In introducing this family to the reader, I trust I shall not be considered as violating the privacy of domestic life. As a general rule, there is no extenuation for those who heedlessly drag into their pages such individuals as they may meet with in the sacred boundary of the family circle; but something may be urged for the unwillingness of the world to lose sight of those who bear a name with which history is familiar: the children of those whom it has elevated to a niche in the temple of fame are in some measure its own, and by virtue of this tie must it claim an interest in their welfare, as well as the right to learn something of their fortunes. At all events, if I err, I do so in company with the amiable author of the *Chronicles of the Alhambra*. It was under the roof of the

Pinzons that I first read the narrative of his acquaintance with their family, and his sketch of its respective members, by whom, I may add, it was referred to with feelings of gratification and pride.

The member of the family to whom I bore an introduction was absent on a sporting expedition, from which he was expected to return that night: his mother, however, placed the house at my disposal, but I only begged the address of some casa de pupilos; and being fully instructed on this point, took my leave, with the promise to pay a formal visit on the morrow. Assisted by a mozo from the inn, I found the house; and climbing a narrow and tortuous staircase, made my way into an apartment that served as a kitchen, hall, and passage to other chambers. In this was seated the mistress, whose reception of my proposal to quarter myself under her roof amounted to a positive refusal, but after some expostulation I wrung an unwilling permission to remain. A mattress was dragged into a room whose musty smell and cobwebbed appearance bespoke the length of time it had been out of use; a couple of chairs were backed against the damp walls, and my habitation for the night was prepared. Comfortless as it was, I had expected something worse; and in this state of agreeable disappointment, betook myself to my couch, quite satisfied that a ride of ten hours would speedily drown in slumber every feeling of discomfort.

The next morning, while at breakfast, a young man of engaging exterior walked in, and announced himself as Don Ignacio Hernan de Pinzon. Many words had not passed between us before we had arranged a plan of operations for the day: the first part was to be dedicated to the contemplation of all the lions in the place; and the second part to commence with dinner at his

mother's, from whom he was the bearer of an invitation to that effect.

Moguer is situated on the brow of a ridge that bounds on the south the valley of the Rio Tinto, or Aciger; and may be described as an assemblage of a few long streets diverging from a common centre, rather than a compactly built town. With the exception of the principal church, which contains some ancient marble tombstones, upon which repose the sculptured effigies of knights in armour, and a tower built in imitation of the Giralda of Seville, there is little to attract a traveller's eye. Our survey of its public edifices was therefore speedily concluded, and to while away the time we entered the bodega, or wine storehouse, of a large proprietor, who, besides his possessions in vineyards, was one of the pillars of the church in Moguer. As I had seen the principal establishments of a similar kind in Port St. Mary's and Xeres, I was prepared to see nothing superior in this one, large and well filled as it would have been deemed by a stranger to the town. There was the usual display of portly butts, bearing on their shoulders, like so many Atlases, comrades as bulky as themselves; in corners men were drawing off from casks of fiery Catalan brandy the due proportion of alcohol, by means of which the pure juice of the grape is converted into that compound known to English palates as a full-bodied wine.

I confess, however, my surprise was great when the obliging padre, after introducing me to sundry casks of meaner note, inquired if I would like to taste St. Peter or St. Paul. In total darkness as to his meaning, I replied at random, "St. Paul;" and then made the discovery, that upon several of the largest tuns the padre had conferred the names of his favourite saints,

which were legibly painted thereon. It was an odd way of evincing veneration for a saint, but no more strange than the custom once prevalent in Spain when she possessed a navy, of christening her vessels of war—the ministers of devastation and bloodshed—with the titles of San José and Santissima Trinidad. About 3000 or 4000 butts of the wine from this district are annually shipped to Xeres, where they are consumed in the manufacture of sherry. It is principally in the composition of the inferior kinds they are used, and the flavour peculiar to the Moguer wine is very readily detected in the low-priced sherries that abound in the English market.

At dinner I met the whole family of the Pinzons, consisting of the señora, her daughter, two sons, Ignacio and Isidoro (the latter in the priesthood), and a son by a former marriage; these are all that survive; and as yet no member has been tempted by the chase of fortune to forsake the roof under which they live in harmony and brotherhood. In the evening we strolled along the brow of the valley, and looked down upon the scene that lay below. Here, when about to be lost in the sea, the Rio Tinto winds through an extensive flat, that on the opposite side rises into a gently swelling declivity. To the left was Huelva, built on the extremity of a ridge running parallel with the valley; below, almost at our feet, San Juan del Puerto; and more distant to the right, Trigueras. Retracing our steps homewards, a violent thunderstorm broke over our heads, and compelled us to take shelter in the nearest cottage, the sole inhabitants of which were an aged female and her daughter, a woman of middle age. As the loudest peal shook the cabin, it was followed by a shriek from the latter, who fell from her

seat and rolled in convulsions on the floor. In a short time, however, the fit passed away; but it was striking to hear the terms of affection and endearment lavished upon the unconscious daughter by her affrighted mother.

“Joy of my heart,” she exclaimed, “will you not speak to me? Oh, daughter of my soul, one word! Hija de mi alma, I’m your mother, your mother.”

In listening to these phrases, so Oriental in their character, we recognise how deeply the spirit of the East is seated in the nature of Spain: in phraseology, costume, manners, it is readily traced; and above all is it observable in that repugnance to change, so eminently the feature of nations that dwell near the rising sun. One might almost imagine that some secret link binds the fate and fortunes of Spain to those of the East. When the Ottoman Empire was thundering at the gates of Vienna, Western Europe was overshadowed by the might of Spain with the Indies. Both were then at the climax of their greatness, and both with equal steps approaching to the brink of that decay which since then has swallowed them up. And now, when the East is beginning to awake from the sleep of centuries, and to enter upon a new political existence, there are symptoms of a like movement in this land, so long in darkness. Separated by distance and position, the two are stirring feebly, as if it were by the same summons, and their steps are equally devious and uncertain; both have wandered into revolutions and bloodshed, and still evince a desire to tread that ensanguined path; and upon each has descended the sword with such a sweep, that it were hard to tell whether their past torpidity were not better than the exhaustion that has followed its stroke.

At an early hour next morning we were astir, in order to escape the heat of the sun, which during the middle of the day had now become oppressive; a long ride was before us, and our destination was Palos and the convent of La Rabida, names that play an important part in the struggling fortunes of Columbus. Accompanied by a gentleman who was an inmate of the same casa du pupilos, and by Don Ignacio, I set forth on the back of a white steed of ancient aspect: the saddle was made in imitation of an English turn-out, but furnished with stirrup-irons of dimensions so minute, that if more than the point of the toe was inserted therein, the boot was caught as if in a trap, and required to be disengaged by the hand. Don Ignacio bestrode his own Andalu-cian; the high peaks of his albarde were lost in a multitude of cloaks and mantas, in readiness for whatever storm might overtake us. The way to Palos lay through a country of varied though not striking beauty, relieved by occasional glimpses of the sea. One long street alone gave that place a claim to the title of town, or rather village; but such as it was, it lay snugly at the foot of a conical eminence, on whose summit rose the remains of ancient fortifications. Turning down a side street of two or three houses, we stopped before the door of one which is said to have been the habitation of Martin Alonzo, and is still occupied by a relative of the family. There was nothing to mark it, either without or within, as superior to the others; it was nothing more than the abode of a wine-grower, furnished with its due compliment of bodegas, wine-presses, and tinajas, together with its distilling and boiling apparatus.

The inhabitants of this town, like those of Niebla, are said to be descended from slaves introduced by the

adventurous mariners who resided here before removing to Moguer and other towns. Xeres de los Caballeros, a town of Estremadura, is also said to have been peopled by them; and there may be some foundation for this in the fact that Pizarro and Cortes, and the majority of their followers, were natives of that province. At all events, whatever be their origin, it is undeniable that a marked difference distinguishes the personal appearance of the inhabitants of Palos from that of their brother Andalucians. Their complexion is not swarthy, but partakes rather of a copper colour; the cast of their features is square and angular, and the hair crisp and coarse. Having taken the names of their masters, there are thus to be found here the noblest surnames in Spain, borne by a population which is little removed above want.

The convent of the Rabida is little more than half a league from the town: from a hacienda, or property belonging to my companion's family, could be descried its belfry, rising above the pines that cluster round and hide from view the main building. A more sequestered spot could scarcely be chosen, or one where the world could be sooner forgotten. In full view of the sea, it crowned the extremity of a ridge that pointed towards the west; and when regarded by the seamen from his passing bark, must rise conspicuously among the surrounding objects in the landscape. Whether by accident or design, everything was in keeping with its Arab name of Rabida, or the wilderness; pine-woods and wild shrubs closed in around the high walls; the paths that approached them were broken and rugged, and seemed to come from scenes of wilder desolation; every vestige of cultivation was excluded, as if it were feared that the sight of man's handiwork might recall the world to

bosoms which had abjured its ties. If there was any prospect open to the eye, it was that which showed the sea, and their fellow-men tempting its treacherous surface. The general aspect of the convent is that of an assemblage of high walls associated together without much regard to regularity or the rules of architecture. But the porch was an object of deeper interest than if it had been framed of the noblest proportions. Beneath its humble arch rested the discoverer of the New World, when, weary and way-worn, he begged a cup of water at the door. The conversation that ensued brought out the sympathies of a heart which was alive to the noble enthusiasm of genius; and when it ended, he must have felt that now, if ever, his star was ascending. What rising hopes must have smoothed his brow as he departed! and how light must have been his step beneath the gloomy pines that seemed to frown him away as he approached the door!

Passing forward, a cloister is entered, in which an inscription bears witness that it was repaired and restored in 1804; a vain memorial, for since the expulsion of the monks, and the confiscation of their convent by the government, there are no traces here but those of neglect and pillage. It was a scene of sordid destruction. Since the government had taken no care of it, the whole neighbourhood had assumed the right to remove and abstract whatever might repay their trouble, the very roofs were torn down, and the floors gone for the sake of the beams that supported the tiles; and even without that excuse the hand of wanton dilapidation was everywhere visible. On the right hand of the patio, facing the entrance, lies the way to the chapel, which is an edifice of modern construction. The choir was destroyed, and a marble slab at the foot of the

altar had been torn up by sacrilegious hands in the hope of finding treasure hidden beneath. Their act disclosed a vault, in which, probably, reposed the dust of the pious founder, before it was scattered by unhal- lowed curiosity, for on descending into it, and groping about, we laid our hands upon the mouldering frag- ments of a coffin. From the chapel we made our way into another cloister, and ascending a staircase, dangerous from the damage it had received, gained the corridors into which opened the cells of the monks. Among them is shown one in which Columbus is said to have slept, during his visits to the convent. If the tradition be true, then had the fathers consulted well the feelings of the wanderer.

Its windows look out upon the ocean—that wide ocean so full of mystery and dread to the common minds that understood him not, and a trackless waste to the contented knowledge of his day, but across which the daring eye of his genius beheld a path as straight and bright as that cast upon the waves by the sun sinking in the west. This must have been his chamber; and tradition must be right in appropriating the next one to his faithful and influential friend, Fray Juan Perez de Marchena. The floors of this, as well as of many cells adjoining, had vanished before the Vandalism of which we saw so many traces. Yet the perpetrators of it were only acquitting themselves as true Spaniards; they could be no legitimate descendants of the men who repaid Columbus with black ingratitude, and sent him to the grave in sorrow, if they did not now deface a spot his name had made memorable. The eyes of my companion filled with tears as he witnessed the scene of havoc. His interest in the place was deeper and nearer than mine; his ancestor had been the

comrade of Columbus; and, justly proud of that connexion, he felt all the more keenly the worse than slighting disregard his countrymen rendered to a place which was a striking page in the history of their great benefactor.

We mounted up to the belfry, and sitting down on the ridge of the roof, found a relief in looking upon the varied scenery the prospect embraced. Facing us, to the west, was the sea; on the left, all was shadowed by pine-woods and low copse; in the other direction, across the estuary of the Rio Tinto, the town of Huelva, covering the lower half of a declivity; and up the valley, the river winding its course amid fields of golden grain. The day, besides, was bright and fine, with a gentle air from the west; and having worked ourselves up into a passion down below, we were in a fit state to imbibe something of the spirit that western breeze had caught from the calm sea over which it floated towards us. By little and little we yielded to the feelings it inspired; and then, while surrounded by this peaceful scene, and canopied by a heaven of purest blue, it was passing pleasant to look upon river and sea, and forest and flower, basking in the sunshine, and enjoying, as it seemed, with quiet gladness the genial light of day.

Close to the convent, on the west, is a creek, called El Estero del Domingo Rubio. Tradition marks this as the final point of departure of Columbus's little squadron for an unknown world. This moment in his troubled career—the close of long years spent in patient yet courageous hope—one battle painfully won, and another lowering before him—a contest in which he beheld the elements ranged against him, along with men more intractable than they,—this mo-

ment, so full of new hopes and fears, has been seized by not a few of our painters, as a fit subject for the canvas, but without, as I thought, having rendered it sufficient justice; so I proceeded to sketch a parting scene for myself. I anchored the trio of adventurous barks in the creek, and gave them a fair wind, for on their quaint high poops the scarlet-and-gold banner of Spain is fluttering seawards, and impatiently pointing the way to lands through which it is to be borne in triumph. The topsails are loosened, and the last preparations for departure complete; but the decks are deserted by the crew—they are in the chapel of the convent, listening with emotions that stir each heart as it never felt before, to the last mass they shall perhaps hear celebrated on Christian ground. And now the concluding chaunt is over, and a procession of monks issues from the gates, and, bearing the host under a canopy, winds down to the ships, followed by the mariners and a crowd of weeping relatives. The crew ascend the sides of their vessels, and, leaning over the bulwarks, exchange silent adieus with the throng that lines the shore, who in their part mingle vows to our Lady of the Rabida with prayers for their safe return. One alone is wanting to complete their numbers; it is a man short of stature and of slender proportions, whose lofty brow and dark thoughtful eye, together with the bronze of his complexion, give an expression of determination to his small and delicate features. It is Columbus, who has lingered behind to press once more the hand of the monk in whom, amid all difficulties, he found a true and constant friend. They part at length; the commander issues his orders, the sails are swung round to meet the wind, and the expedition is begun.

Descending from our lofty perch, we again surveyed the cell of Columbus, and, scrambling by the broken staircase of which I have made mention down to the basement-story, were surprised to hear voices and loud laughter in the chapel, where lately all was silence. Peeping in, we discovered that the merriment proceeded from a party of young folks of both sexes, who had come across from Huelva to spend the day here. They had brought provisions with them, and were dispersed about the chapel, devouring their repast; some seated on the steps of the altar, others on their folded mantas, but the greater number on the masses of broken pavement or demolished partitions with which the floor was strewn. A picnic in the sanctuary of superstition! Can this be the soil of monkish, priest-ridden Spain, the land of the Inquisition, with its dungeons of torture and quemaderos—where kings went in solemn pomp to witness the wholesale burning of their subjects, and bore stern rebukes from pitiless inquisitors when they exhibited signs of compassion for the hapless victims? It is even the same land, but the mighty are fallen. They are outcasts and wanderers, and the citadels of their bigotry dismantled or converted to profane uses. Some are now colleges and museums; others, manufactories, barracks, hospitals, or prisons. In Seville, the place of execution is upon the wall of a convent; and I have seen strolling Thespians set up their stage in the hall of another. Verily the land is changed!

A short time sufficed to bring us to the hacienda of the family at Palos, where we found dinner waiting, and returned by nightfall to Moguer.

A few days after this excursion, the whole town was in an uproar. Seven prisoners confined in the

“carcel” had, by means of files furnished them by accomplices, succeeded in cutting through an iron grating which admitted light into their dungeon. The aperture through which they escaped was about the size of an ordinary octavo volume; and it appeared incredible that men could have forced themselves through an opening which it would have been difficult for a child to have passed through. The wise ones shook their heads on seeing this, and regarded it as a blind to divert inquiry from the real mode of escape, which was probably effected through the door, the guardian thereof being moved by sundry considerations to open it for their behoof. However, there was a great show of zeal for their recapture; horsemen were starting off at full speed, and escopetas loaded to shoot them in the event of resistance. This would unquestionably have been the fate of two condemned to the gallows, had they been overtaken by their pursuers, whose instructions were to inflict on them summary vengeance, whether they resisted or not. Such off-hand justice is by no means unfrequent in this country, and is a good deal patronised by the authorities, whom it saves a world of trouble, not to mention the miserable ration of horse-beans served out to each prisoner. The criminals, however, were spared the fate intended for them on this occasion, for the party in search returned next morning without having captured one, and without intelligence of any kind, except the surmise that they had fled northwards. This was the route I was about to take, and my friends in Moguer joined in considering it, since the escape of these prisoners, as highly unsafe; and more than one pressed me to defer my departure till further information was obtained of their movements, or at all