

events to reach my destination by some circuitous course. Good manners forbade me to smile at their apprehensions ; but besides the utter unlikelihood of a few unharmed, half-starved fugitives assailing an armed traveller, my past experience had shown me how generally unfounded such representations were ; and had I lent them a credulous ear on landing in Spain, my travels might have ended in the first town I entered. Generally speaking, there are two states of mind into which the mention of the word "road" throws the Andalucian : he either becomes highly imaginative, or supremely credulous ; and it would be well for the traveller, as an universal rule, to receive with distrust the statements which under such circumstances he is certain of hearing. Nothing however, could dissuade Don Ignacio from bearing me company for part of the way : his motive for this step I suspected to originate in his fear lest harm should befall me ere I passed the dangerous localities near the town ; and as I entertained no misgivings on that score, I was the more urgent in my entreaties that he should spare himself so much unnecessary trouble : but all in vain, his determination was not to be shaken.

It came to pass, therefore, that at an early hour of the morning I was on the road to Zalamea la Real, accompanied by my friend and Don Francisco F——, a gentleman who was going on business to Veas, a village about half way to the former town. Zalamea was the first stage on a route which would lead me through the mountainous tract of which the western portion of Andalusia is composed, and, by the bridle-roads with which it abounds, bring me to Cordova without approaching the usual highway to that city. It was a journey not to be made without fatigue and some privations, but

these I was prepared to encounter in expectation of being fully repaid by some glimpses of the wild scenery I could not but meet, and some further acquaintance of a people who, living "remote from human ken," were invested with all the attraction that belongs to those whose ways are the antipodes of our own.

Our road lay up the valley of the Rio Tinto, between abundant crops of wheat and garbanzos, part of which were already reaped and laid upon the threshing-floor. This operation is similar to that noticed by travellers in the East, and consists in forming a circular area of beaten earth upon some spot exposed to the winds; the floor is then littered with the sheaves, and a number of horses, mules, or asses, being driven round the circle under the control of a man or boy, by the treading of their hoofs the grain is separated from the stalks, and afterwards winnowed.

My new companion I had met before in Moguer, and my knowledge of his history made me regard him with curious eyes. He was a short square-built man, who sat firmly on his saddle notwithstanding the curvetings of his sleek Andalusian, and the want of stirrups, which he probably disdained. His general bearing, as well as the expression of his restless eye, marked him as a man to elbow his way through the world, careless of whatever rebuffs or rude collisions he might sustain. Such in fact was his history, and it was not difficult to bring him to talk of his past career.

"You have heard, Señor, of Aguado, the famous Spanish banker of Paris. Well, he and I commenced the world together, with little enough, I assure you. It was during the War of Independence, and we became contractors to the French army here; and many a weary day have we passed together in following the

droves of cattle we collected for their use. At length the French were driven out, and Aguado accompanied them to their own land, where he is now a great man; while I, you see, am still toiling to fill the puchero. Ah, Senor! he possessed the education I am without, and but for that I might have been a millionaire like him. Me da rabia, to think of it," and thereupon Don Francisco drove his spurs into the animal's sides, causing it to plunge like a wild colt. In truth, his education amounted to a slight knowledge of reading, and the power of forming certain hieroglyphics which passed as his signature; but, these disadvantages notwithstanding, the natural energy and ability of the man had raised him to the position of a wealthy proprietor in his own town. He was the master of lands and vineyards, and a shipper of wines to England. The deficiencies of his education, however, were evidently a sore subject with him, for he recurred to the disadvantages they entailed more than once. "At all events," he continued, "my son shall never feel what I have experienced; I have sent him to England, where he is getting the best education money can procure for him."

An hour's ride brought us to Veas, having previously crossed the river by a ford. Nothing could be more monotonous than the country through which we slowly advanced towards this village. On every side were broad fields of wheat, relieved only by plantations of the sad-coloured olive, and here and there tracts of matas, or waste lands thickly clothed with shrubs, amid which a few sheep or goats struggled for a scanty subsistence. A far more agreeable prospect to the eye was presented by the steep slopes of the valley up which our route lay; vineyards clung to

these, and among them wound many footpaths, leading to hamlets whose spires were just topping the summit of the ridges. Here Don Francisco parted with us; but Don Ignacio, who originally intended to ride no further, changed his mind, and decided upon bearing me company to Zalamea. Without delay, therefore, we continued our progress; for to make a journey of nine leagues in a day, through so rugged a country as that which rose before us, demanded every moment of time, in order to obtain shelter before night-fall. A few miles beyond this ruinous village we began to feel the influence of the sierra; and exchanged the continuous flat we had been traversing for a gentle ascent, that at every step of our progress revealed something new; and for the tedious sameness, of which our eyes were weary, we had only to look back to enjoy a series of changing and beautiful views. Upon the summit of the first ridge we paused to survey the prospect that spread out far to the eye. Immediately before us we looked down upon a rapid descent, that sank into a narrow vale, the opposite side of which we must perforce climb by as steep and tortuous a path as that which conducted to the bottom. To the left, this valley opened into a wide tract of undulating surface, affording partial glimpses of the crops and woods that filled the hollow places; while far beyond rose the blue summits of the Sierra of Aracena, a cloud of vapour hovering above each peak, and following the outlines of its ranges. On the right might be seen in the dim horizon the Sierra de Berrocal, with the same snowy veil floating over, but never touching the mountain mass, and seeming like a phantom host holding its watch upon the frontiers of some world beyond.

A march in these wilds is little else than a succession of ascents and descents, and these of a breakneck description. Roads, in the usual meaning of the term, there are none; and the bridle-paths that supply their place, with a noble contempt for convenience or expedition, follow every inequality of the surface, generally descend the mountain sides where they are steepest, and cross the torrents where the passage is most difficult. Frequently, when I was the first to reach the crossing place, I have looked upwards at the string of mules following in single file, and speculated upon the mischief the fall of a single animal might cause: in that case, from the rapidity of the descent, and the impetus of its fall, it must have sent the whole of the foremost files rolling to the bottom.

Upon reaching the crest of a ridge by the usual toilsome process, we unexpectedly beheld in the succeeding hollow the tiled roofs of Valverde. The appearance of this mountain village was very unlike the invariable aspect of Andalucian pueblos. With very few exceptions, the exterior of the houses remained untouched by the whitewashing mania so prevalent in Spain, and they stood, therefore, in the native colour of the dark red stone of which they were constructed; this, together with the hue of their roofs, made it seem as if a conflagration had lately swept through the streets, and given to the whole the dull and calcined aspect they now wore. While our mozo was tending our horses in the inn, Don Ignacio and I strolled through the village. On each side we found sombre dwellings, remarkable only for their gloom and homeliness: from these we turned with more satisfaction to examine the costume of their feminine inmates, which was sufficiently singular.

A dark blue petticoat reaches a little way below the knee, showing off to advantage a neatly turned leg and ankle, which is incased in a stocking of the same colour, ornamented with white clocks. The shoes are of the unblackened leather commonly worn by the peasantry in this part of Andalucia. In place of the mantilla, a black shawl covers the head, the top of which is often surmounted by a Quaker-like hat. The women of Valverde enjoy the reputation of being pretty, and their appearance did not belie report. Their complexions are generally fair,—a style of beauty highly prized in Andalucia: when to this are added chestnut locks and a blooming cheek, they are then provided with the sum total of charms that, in the eyes of the Andalusian *majo*, complete his picture of female loveliness. As we walked through the streets, it was incumbent on our politeness to exchange greetings with the various families that sat at their thresholds, plying their household occupations in that public position, in preference to the dark interior of their dwellings. The accent in which they spoke sufficiently betrayed their Moorish ancestry; it was thick and guttural, and as different from the drawl and clipped Castilian of Seville or Cadiz, as the English of Yorkshire is from that of Bow bells. On the partition, brought into view by the door being kept open—which is the fate of nine out of ten doors in the village—the good housewives hang up for display such articles as they think will have an imposing effect upon the minds of observers. Among these, pots and pans in bright array made the most important figure; while the interstices were filled up with pictures, looking-glasses, images of the Virgin, and other finery.

As we were on our way back to the inn, we came to

a building whose narrow windows and gloomy appearance led us without inquiry to understand its use; and my companion turned aside to look in through a close grating that admitted light and air to one of the dungeons. It was so dark within that nothing was visible; and we should have concluded it was without a tenant, had not a voice issued from a corner, and in deep tones cried, "Que hay?" "La bahia junto à Cadiz," promptly replied my friend; and to this the other as quickly rejoined, "Y tambien al Puerto." What this means, the uninitiated reader will probably be at a loss to know; and I shall therefore inform him that it was merely an exchange of slang, in which the advice to mind each other's business was tendered on both sides. Our friend in the corner, however, followed up his advice with a variety of remarks upon our outward appearance; and as in this he had a great advantage, from being himself invisible, the combat was so unequal that we left him to growl out his anathemas in solitude. He was one of the seven prisoners whose escape from the prison of Moguer I have already mentioned. They had fled towards the sierra by the route we ourselves had taken; and this individual, being unable from fatigue to keep pace with his comrades, attempted to conceal himself in some growing corn near the village. It chanced, however, that he was espied by a corregidor, who observing something suspicious in this movement, demanded of him what he was doing there. He replied that he came to reap the corn, and that his fellow-reapers, having got drunk, had left him there. This answer not appearing satisfactory to the corregidor, the passport was demanded. The other at first attempted to question the authority of the village official, but on the latter despatching a friend for his

gun, at last admitted that he was without a passport, and was ready to go to prison.

A path like that by which we approached Valverde continued to wind along the ridges of the sierra, till at sunset it brought us to Zalamea la Real. Without being savage or sublime, there was a stern and lonely aspect about the scenery, that powerfully impressed the feelings; we did not meet a creature by the way, save one, who first became visible as an object standing on the summit of a distant rock, and leaning upon what my friend imagined to be an escopeta. Both he and the mozo immediately jumped to the conclusion that he must be one of the fugitive prisoners from Moguer, —perhaps the scout of his comrades in the neighbourhood; and in a trice their own pieces were cocked, and prepared for action. As usual, it was a false alarm; the suspicious character proved to be a goat-herd tending his flock and leaning on his staff, and probably conducted to that conspicuous position by no other motive than the wish to see as much as could be seen of life, in the solitude where his days were spent. Doubtless he was an honest man and true, but clothed as he was in sheepskins from head to foot, and eyeing us intently from under a weather-beaten sombrero, he looked the savage and robber to perfection.

It was a holiday in Zalamea, as appeared by many tokens. Upon the steps of a stone cross by the roadside, as we entered, was seated a party of village maidens, clad in their gayest attire. One of them was playing the guitar, to the sound of which two others were dancing the fandango; but as soon as they caught sight of us the dance was stopped, and the pair ran away to hide themselves among their companions. Further on, as we were descending the steep and slip-

pery streets of the village, another party came in view, diverting themselves with all the simplicity of a mountain life. It was a sort of procession they formed, and the foremost couple advanced with their arms wound round each other's necks, and singing some Andalusian strain, to which the others now and then joined in chorus: their bashfulness was not awakened by our presence, and the song continued, probably to the words of a couplet improvised in allusion to ourselves, as is the common practice in this land of music and song.

The situation of the village was not unlike that of Valverde. It occupied the centre of a deep hollow in the sierra, shut out from the world, and from every prospect but the heavens overhead, by a girdle of mountain masses, as treeless and withered as if spring was a stranger to the place. It seemed, indeed, as if the verdure that might have crept along their stony sides had been swept down to the village, and the little platform on which it stood: here, from the luxuriance of vegetation, the abundance of snug hedge-rows, and the general air of industry around, the prospect was as cheerful and animating as the other was the reverse. The village itself was in nothing superior to its neighbours, but was excessively clean—a distinction it shares in common with many towns of this part of the sierra. It is no exaggeration to say, that upon their streets, as the saying is, you might safely eat your dinner. We visited the church, which contained nothing worthy of remark; but upon issuing from it our friend Don Dionisio C—— was waiting at the door to welcome us to his native village. Don Dionisio was an opulent farmer, with whom I had become acquainted in Moguer, and on his departure for Zalamea had kindly charged himself with the commission to procure me

horses or mules for my journey to Cazalla; he now informed me that he had engaged for me a couple of mules and a mozo to be depended upon. A cordial welcome, however, was not the whole of Don Dionisio's kindness; he conducted us to his home, and insisted upon our making it our quarters as long as we sojourned in the village. It was an act of charity, for which I regretted I could not offer a more substantial acknowledgment than thanks; for, in truth, any place would have been a paradise compared with the wretched abode, half stable, half caravanserai, that passed as the inn of the place.

Early the next morning Don Ignacio and myself were in the saddle, and waiting beside a fountain, on the outskirts of the village for a friend, who had promised to accompany and guide us to the mines of the Rio Tinto. As soon as he appeared, we struck into a bridle-path, that crossed several ridges where their summits were most broken and precipitous, and was altogether so villanously bad, that nearly an hour and a half elapsed ere we accomplished the whole distance, which was no more than a league, or four miles. From the moment of starting, however, the point of our destination was indicated to our eyes by a column of thin white vapour rising uninterruptedly from one spot, and then streaming away to the south: this was the smoke occasioned by the calcination of the copper ore before it is removed to the smelting furnaces. As we drew nigh to the mines, the scenery became more savage and dreary; at one point, on rounding the shoulder of a rocky range, there rose before us a ridge of dark red hue, every cliff and rock of which, in addition to the fantastic shapes assumed, seemed as if scorched and rent by the all-powerful action of fire.

A little further on, the village of the Rio Tinto came into view, situated in a narrow vale formed by the continuation of the ridge just mentioned and another equally lofty; on its sides hung some straggling pines, and occasional patches of cultivation, to balance the gaunt aspect of the other, upon which sterility seemed branded for ever. My first move, on reaching the village, was to present a letter of introduction, of which I was the bearer, to the chief director of the mines; and as soon as that gentleman comprehended the purport of my visit, he volunteered to accompany us through them as soon as he had heard mass.

In the mean time we strolled, after leaving him, to the mouth of the shaft from which the ore was drawn up. The whole machinery, if indeed it was worthy of that title, was of the rudest description. It simply consisted of a windlass, at which four men were stationed, and undergoing the severest labour in drawing up bucketfuls of ore. On one of the party making a remark to that effect, the oldest of the labourers bitterly exclaimed, "Si, y para ganar seis reales;" and, in truth, fifteen pence was but a poor requital for the incessant toil demanded by their occupation. The director, as soon as his morning devotions allowed him, led us to a door in the side of the mountain; over which an image of the Virgin was placed, to watch over the safety of all who passed beneath it. This was the entrance for the miners and others; a long passage then became visible, which we traversed without inconvenience till we arrived at a shaft, where it was necessary to descend by ladders. The gallery was perfectly dry, with the exception of one or two spots upon which moisture was perceptible, and over these planks were laid.

This precaution is absolutely necessary, for the water of the mines is so surcharged with the sulphate of copper as to corrode and destroy almost everything with which it comes in contact. On descending the ladders, we found the temperature sensibly increasing, and then entered a lofty and vaulted gallery, the result of the workings of ages. The ore does not run in veins, as is usual in other mines, but is found disseminated in the rock, which here forms entire hills. The process, therefore, of extracting it is very simple; it is not mining but quarrying, nothing more being necessary than to hew out the rock and send it in blocks to the furnace. As if, however, to counterbalance the ease with which it is obtained, the percentage of metal is so poor as scarcely to repay the labour of the miners; three per cent., as I was informed, being the utmost obtained from the richest portions of the rock. On all parts of this spacious gallery, above our heads, and on its sides, were beautiful crystallisations of copperas; these were caused by the water that percolated through the crevices of the rocks, and, spreading over the interior surface, deposited a lining of the most delicate blue and white tint it was possible to imagine. Further on, we entered a side gallery, in which the temperature was equal to that of an oven, and here were a few miners at work, stripped of every unnecessary article of clothing, yet with the perspiration streaming from every pore. Their haggard looks and wasted forms sufficiently denoted the unhealthiness of their occupation, and how dearly existence was purchased.

The principal attraction of the mine, however, is its stream of sulphate of copper, without which it is questionable whether its working would not be abandoned. The waters issue from the mine at two or three dif-

ferent points, and are collected a little below the village into a stream towards which we bent our steps to behold the silent formation of the copper, by a process we owe to the light of science. Along the bed of the stream a wooden trough was conducted, into which the waters flow, and in this were laid plates of iron. By a chemical affinity it is unnecessary to explain, the particles of the iron are so acted upon as to be replaced by those of copper, which, when refined, yield from seventy to eighty per cent. of pure metal. As soon as one plate is judged to be completely transmuted, it is removed, and another substituted, so that the process is continually in action. Our conductor lifted up one of the lids placed to prevent extraneous substances from falling into the troughs, and showed to our view the copper at the bottom, retaining the original form of the iron plates, and by the force of the current burnished as bright as any hand could make it.

On taking a portion of it in the hand it crumbled into powder, and when dry, was scarcely to be distinguished from the rust of iron. The water, it is hardly necessary to say, was intensely acid, from whence the stream is termed the "agua agria." Lower down, it serves to turn a wheel employed in the smelting-house, wherein every part of the machinery was constructed on the most rude and simple manner. A good deal of the copper is sent to Seville, where it is used in the cannon founderies, and a smaller portion finds its way to Segovia, for the purpose of being issued in the shape of coin. The chief obstacle, however, to the profitable working of the mine, arises from the scarcity and consequent dearness of fuel. The article principally, if not solely, used is pine wood, which is brought from a great distance on the backs

of mules: the nearer localities have long ago been exhausted of their timber, while from the improvident spirit so characteristic of this country, no pains have been taken to rear up forests in the room of those the axe has cleared away. Very lately the price of wood had risen, in consequence of the increased distance from whence it must be brought; and should a further rise take place, the effect would be ruinous to the establishment. Mounting our horses, we followed the windings of the road till it brought us to Planes, where there is a manufactory of copperas, the production of which is effected by the boiling and evaporation of the *agua agria*. Here, as in the other establishment, everything was primitive and rude; the fuel was the brushwood of the neighbourhood, bundles of which were from time to time cast below some copper pans in which the liquid was heated; in another corner were some tubs provided with sticks, upon which, when it cooled, the copperas might crystallise.

Planes is situated, or rather hangs, upon the side of the mountain ridge that holds the ore in its depths. From thence we proceeded to the site of the ancient mines by a narrow path, where a stumble or false step of our horses might have sent the luckless rider down the steep declivity into the bed of the Rio Tinto, some hundreds of feet below. These are situated on the reverse of the ridge, very nearly at the back of the modern workings. As the path approached them it was fringed on either side by cork trees, skirting fields of ripening grain, and finally wound between immense heaps of scoriæ and rubbish, that rose grim and swarthy above the luxuriant scene. In truth, continued hillocks of the latter attested the antiquity of the mines, and the toils of past generations.

There were, besides, other memorials of the past in the vestiges that survived of the ancient Bætica, for here was once a Roman town, called into existence by the mineral treasures of the mountain. These relics, for the most part, consisted of large blocks hewn out of the reddish stone of the neighbourhood, intermingled with fragments of overthrown columns; close by was the cavern-like entrance to the ancient mines. At what date, or by whom, the ore was first extracted, we have no means of ascertaining; but, at all events, from the discovery in an old working of an inscription to the Emperor Nerva, we may form some notion as to the antiquity of the town that had Roman miners for its population, and fell in the general decay of the Roman empire.

Following again the same path, we retraced our steps to Zalamea, which was reached about three o'clock, and without loss of time Don Ignacio determined to proceed, in order to reach Valverde that evening. Our parting was, I trust, one of mutual regret; neither before nor since did I meet in Andulucia his equal for manly feeling, nor a nature which so quickly awakened confidence and friendship; and short as our intimacy had been, I felt, on leaving him, as if I had quitted an old friend. Early next morning I was on the road to Aracena, the most northern of the towns I purposed visiting in this group of sierras. Our route for nearly a league was the same by which we journeyed to the mines, but when nigh them my mozo struck off to the left, and then our path skirted a ridge on which seemed traced the withering effects of fire. The whole scene was a picture of savage desolation; and though now it lay in silence and grim repose, there were yet so many vestiges of ruinous destruction visible, that the thoughts

irresistibly recurred to the period when the huge masses around were glowing with heat, and the sierra itself reeling amid the convulsive movements of nature. On all sides rocks were riven and shattered, and displayed on their sides every variety of swarthy colour, while in many places the path wound beneath cliffs of a deep blood-red hue, unrelieved by a solitary speck of verdure. The transition was, therefore, the more unexpected and welcome, when, on the other side of the range, I looked upon a smiling prospect of fruitfulness and plenty—an undulating expanse covered with fields of wheat and cork-trees. This was the character of the scenery for hours, till, on ascending a height, there rose into view the castle of Aracena: its brown masses occupied the summit of a lofty peak, from which, as from a centre, a sierra on either side stretched away into the blue horizon. It was lost to view as soon as we descended a few paces into a wooded slope, at the bottom of which the village of Campo Frio unexpectedly appeared, environed with trees, and altogether the most picturesque of the villages I had yet seen. We bent our steps to the posada, there to make our noontide repast. It was a miserable cabin, and the master of it was a short, square-built, hard-featured man, whom we had passed lounging at the door of a neighbour's house, and who speedily made his appearance to receive his guests. To receive his guests! Alas! for them, scant is the welcome in store when, faint and weary, they stand at the open door of the venta or posada. They enter: if the inn-keeper be in a particularly good humour, he deigns to cast them a look, or perhaps inquires from whence they come, and sometimes goes so far as to show where their animals may be stalled: if, however, as is usually the

case, his temper be none of the best, he sits at the doorway apparently unconscious of the arrival or departure of the strangers, or else only marking their movements with a sullen aspect. All this would be a trifle unworthy of aught but a moment's notice, were it not coupled with so much barefaced roguery and extortion as altogether to make the compound of incivility and imposition a thing very hard to swallow. My host, however, of Campo Frio, belonged to the better order of his cloth, and I reproached myself before I had been ten minutes under his roof for certain uncharitable inferences suggested by his unprepossessing exterior. Pointing to myself, he addressed the mozo: "Italiano?" "No," replied the other: "Ingles?" "Ah," he continued, turning to me, "I speaks English;" and in the same breath, as if it was a weight upon his conscience, of which he must be rid by communication with me, proceeded to unfold his history. This, in truth, was an eventful one. He had served as a soldier in the War of Independence, and in one of the luckless defeats sustained by his country's arms, was made a prisoner by the French. What induced him to enter their service he did not choose to say; but, at all events, he was withdrawn from Spain, and was a sharer in the opening battles of the Russian campaign. Fortunately for himself, he deserted to the Russians eight or ten days before the burning of Moscow and the disastrous retreat to the Vistula, but, not liking the service of his new masters, begged to be delivered to the English. The request was granted, and in course of time he reached England, and was placed in a depôt of Spaniards somewhere near London. There he remained for nearly a year, and was at length restored to his native country by way of Gibraltar.

Although a prisoner during the whole of that time, his recollection of England appeared to be far from unpleasant. Much praise did he bestow upon the treatment of himself and fellow-captives; and, in particular, he lingered with so much satisfaction upon the days when his ration of bread and meat was as much as he could devour, that I fancied he almost wished them back again, though at the expense of his liberty. All this was narrated in Spanish, the English of my host having broken down before a few words had passed his lips; yet, ludicrous as it was, no small pride did he feel in his proficiency, and, as I could see, was considered a prodigy of learning by an admiring audience, composed of his wife and children.

In the mean time, my mozo displayed our stock of eatables upon a table so low that no human legs could find room under it, and with much gravity proceeded to make a gaspacho. This is an Andalucian compound—the dish, *par excellence*, of the country. Marcos pulled forth a couple of horns—one filled with oil, and the other with vinegar—a roll of bread, and then commenced bruising a little garlic in a wooden bowl, that likewise was extracted from his wallet. Into this was poured a portion of the oil and vinegar, a couple of onions previously cut into pieces; and lastly, some large slices of bread being crumbled into it, water was added to the brim, and then the art of the cuisinier was exhausted. Of this savoury mess he offered me a share; but half-a-dozen spoonfuls sufficed to satisfy my curiosity, and I preferred the dry bread and meat with which we were provided. Seeing this, my host invited me to a share of a repast he had prepared for himself, on a table as low and uncomfortable as that at which I was seated. Vainly I endeavoured to excuse myself,

protesting that I was not hungry; that I could not think of trespassing on his hospitality; and so forth. No denial would be taken by my host, except as an offence to himself; and with many misgivings, therefore, I arose and placed myself opposite him. Between us was a bowl, containing a dark-looking fluid—the black broth of Sparta was not more repelling—on the surface of which were floating several fragments of meat; while from time to time the hand of my entertainer, which water had not in all probability touched for a month, was immersed in the mess, in pursuit of others that were hidden to the eye. At his side was a basket, containing bread, eggs, and other edibles, which he drew out and placed before me with the air of a man who had seen the world. He cast a look of contempt at the fork with which I fished out one or two of the floating pieces, and doubtless must have marvelled much at the hesitation with which I swallowed them; but, as a good citizen of the world, he said nothing, and allowed me to finish with the bread. At parting, my surprise was awakened when he sturdily refused to accept of any recompense for the little we demanded. “No, no,” he said, “you are an Englishman, and I will take nothing from you, for I have eaten the bread of your country; and, moreover, if you pass this way again, I will give you a line to a cousin of mine who lives in the Plaza (*i.e.* Gibraltar), and has a situation in the establishment of the contractor of provisions to the garrison; and for my sake I am certain he will show you every attention.” Even an attempt to slip a peseta into the hand of one of the children was no less firmly repulsed; and I quitted his roof, glad to learn that mixing with the world does not always extinguish the better feelings of our nature.

Descending the slope on which the village lies, we crossed a valley clothed with evergreen oaks, and slowly climbed the mountain confronting us. In this fashion we toiled with patient industry amid the labyrinths of a wild mountain range, our mules creeping up the steep acclivities by paths winding to the summits, and again descending their opposite sides with cautious steps. After three hours spent in this tortoise-like advance, our nearer approach to Aracena was announced by the greater abundance of trees by the wayside, and fields of grain scattered over the mountain slopes. Our path up the ascent, crowned by the castle of Aracena, was between hedges and walls, whose appearance recalled the lanes and hedgerows of England. In Andalusia there is in general no other division between fields and properties but that presented by rude embankments of earth, on which the aloe and prickly pear, with their panoply of thorns, set at defiance the passage of man and beast. If well tended, more efficient fences cannot be; but the care of the husbandman generally ceases with the first formation of the hedge: it is left to thrive or decay just as chance may decree, and hence the usual prospect that meets the eye of the traveller on surveying a cultivated expanse, is to behold it dotted with solitary aloes, marking where fences had once stood. Here however the reverse was visible; few traces of carelessness were observable, either in the fences or cultivation; and having everywhere seen the gifts of nature in this rich and fertile country rendered valueless by the apathy of its people, it was a cheering sight to encounter on spots in the midst of the sierras evidences of labour and industry similar to that by which, in my own country, the obstacles of an ungrateful climate and soil are met and overcome.

Nothing could be more picturesque than the situation of the town when it became visible upon emerging from the lane by which our approach was made. It lay in a secluded hollow of the mountains, formed by the height on which the castle stood and a corresponding eminence at no great distance, and was overhung on all sides by woody slopes. High above it were craggy ridges, upon which the blast might howl, but its voice could scarcely descend to the sequestered nook in which the town rose, so deeply was it recessed within its encompassing heights. In a few moments we traversed the streets, here as elsewhere in the towns and villages of the sierra remarkably clean, and halted before the posada, which proved to be the best I had yet met out of Seville, inasmuch as it boasted of a decent apartment or two, not altogether devoid of a regard to the traveller's comfort.

Conservatorio de la Alhambra y Generalife  
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

UNTA DE ANDALUCIA

## CHAPTER VIII.

ARACENA.—ITS CASTLE.—THE INTOXICATED PRIEST.—EFFECT OF THE SCENERY.—EL PALACIO.—LOSE OUR WAY.—BIVOUAC IN THE SIERRA.—SANTA MARIA.—THE DEBATE.—THE LOST BURRO.

MINE host, though anything but a jolly fellow in proportions, for a breath might have blown him away, was at heart disposed to be complaisant, and on my inquiring for a guide to the lions of the town, volunteered his own services for that purpose. Our first visit was to the castle, whose turrets had been for half the day the object of my contemplation; and after a steep pull we stood under the walls. Near the summit stands a church, to all appearance constructed out of a portion of the ancient fortifications, but in the interior exhibiting traces of the early Gothic style of architecture. The custodier was sitting on the steps as we approached—a venerable old man, whose flowing beard and fantastic costume, added to the staff he bore in his hand, were in strict keeping with the title of hermit by which my guide accosted him; in other times he might have passed as a pilgrim, pausing here to rest before resuming his weary progress to some holy shrine.

From the summit a wide and varied prospect opened to the eye. To the south stretched a succession of plains and valleys, their fruitful soil overspread with vegetation; and beyond these, in the distance, a

wilderness of sierras, upon whose giant crests the gloom of evening was sinking fast. In the opposite direction the town lay at our feet, apparently struggling for a footing with the ridge that ran parallel with that on which we stood, and wherever the mountains receded, sending out long lines of streets to fill up the level spaces between.

At the back of the church my guide directed my attention to an arch of brick built into the rock, and bearing undoubted traces of great antiquity. At the top of the pillars, upon which the arch rested, it was possible to detect some traces of sculptural embellishments, although so obliterated by the hand of time as to render their shape or character a mere matter of conjecture. "Don't you think this looks like the head of a bull?" said my guide, pointing to one of the carvings, which consisted of a few lines scored upon the surface of the smooth stone. With some assistance from my imagination I discovered the resemblance; and then, continued he, "Does not this look like its tail?" Now, if it really was a tail, it was just as like a peacock's as a bull's, and so I suggested to my host, but with true antiquarian fervour he scouted my remark, as being conceived in a shamefully sceptical spirit. He then proceeded to narrate, how there was in relation to this bull an ancient prophecy, which thus ran: "In frente de este toro, hay un tesoro" (in front of this bull there lies a treasure): "but whether it be a mile or a yard distant, how deep, or how to be obtained, no man," said my host, "can tell." Had my host exercised as much imagination in regard to the interpretation of the prophecy as he had displayed in decyphering this memorial of the past, he might have perceived that the treasure which lay in front was the

rich and fertile country over whose vineyards and pastures, fields of grain and olive-groves, the eye could not wander without recognising in them a source of wealth far more lasting and profitable than hidden gems or gold; but influenced by the spirit of his countrymen—a spirit which would consume days or months in digging for buried riches, in the hope of attaining wealth by a sudden bound, rather than by the toilsome path of laborious exertion—he could divine no meaning in the tradition further than that prompted by its literal reading and his own unbounded faith in the existence of treasures beneath the soil.

Of the castle itself, nothing remained but fragments of mouldering walls and ruined bastions to attest that it once had been a stronghold of importance. As a modern fortress, it was incapable of the slightest defence; but from the care bestowed upon its fortifications by the Moors, and the multitude of square towers by which every accessible point was defended, it was manifest that, before the era of modern warfare, it must have played an important part in the fortunes of the surrounding district. One custom still lingered, coeval, probably, with the foundation of these walls, and on the score of its utility surviving the lapse of ages, and the ruin that had overtaken their turbaned founders. Every evening, at sunset, a light is displayed from the tower of the church by which the lower peak of this fastness is crowned; the light is maintained till morning, and is dedicated to the Virgin, who from that circumstance is styled “Nuestra Señora de Guia.” She is the protectress of the belated traveller, to whom this tower, sending its light for leagues through the cloud of night, rises as a beacon to guide his steps, in the same manner as, by day, he

is directed by the castle turrets, conspicuously visible long ere he reaches the town at their base.

Next morning, in company with a gentleman to whom I carried a letter of introduction, I made a round of the churches in the town. In several there were good paintings to be seen, though sadly obscured by the veil of dust that lay thick upon them, as upon every other work of art that had escaped the white-washing mania of the custodians. In the sacristy of the parish church is a portrait of Arias Montanas, who was born at a village about two leagues from Aracena.

It is one of the penalties which the sightseer must pay for the indulgence of his curiosity in this country, that, in general, the very last things to be shown are those which are really most worthy of note. On entering a church, the sacristan immediately hurries you to the altar, in the expectation of beholding you transfixed with rapture before some vile image of the Virgin—a thing of painted wood, covered with tawdry ornaments, and, as a work of art, far inferior in taste and execution to those specimens of feminine beauty by which perfumers' shops are embellished. In the same spirit are you conducted to inspect the service of church plate, and the vestments of the church functionaries. The latter are invariably displayed with feelings of pride, while a moment's leisure is with difficulty extorted, in order to survey such of the works of the ancient masters as may hang in neglect upon the walls.

Our survey ended, I was conducted by my companion to his dwelling, and ushered into a study, from a cupboard in which he brought out a stone bottle of liqueur, and set about all the preparations for a drink-

ing match. It was not without surprise I beheld his movements: the customs of the country are opposed to strong potations at all times, and especially before breakfast; and I was at a loss to know what I should ascribe them to, till it struck me that my entertainer might be one of those who imagine, as multitudes of his countrymen do, that from dinner-time till midnight, every Englishman, the highest ranks not excepted, is in a state of intoxication; and that, as a natural consequence, nothing should I prize so much as the opportunity of indulging in the national vice. It soon, however, became obvious that this supposition was wrong, and that, if my entertainer was influenced by any motive, it was rather the wish to victimise an aged priest who had joined us in our walk, and now made one of the party. It was an easy triumph, for the failing of the poor man was written on his face; and as he never refused the bumpers with which his entertainer plied him, the result may be anticipated. In less than half an hour he was carried out of the room by an attendant; and it is but due to him to say that, for representing intoxication in all its shapes within the compass of that short period, few would venture to equal him. He was garrulous, jovial, lachrymose, amatory, sullen, and finally insensible. In the amatory stage, he advanced into the centre of the room, discoursing learnedly of the joys of love—a strange theme for old age and celibacy—and then, suddenly turning aside to the youngest of the listeners, kissed him on the cheek ere he could prevent the unwelcome salute. It was an exhibition that filled one with disgust, not so much at the pitiable spectacle I was compelled to witness, as at the heartlessness which could find sport in the degradation of grey

hairs; so I quitted my entertainer, and saw him no more.

The reverend padre, while in possession of his faculties, mentioned that the following custom prevailed in a neighbouring village when a young man wished to profess himself the suitor of some fair maiden. On that occasion he proceeds to her residence, bearing in his hand the long staff used by the mountaineers, called cachiporra, or shortly, porra, and announces his presence by a loud knock at the door. At the same time, the staff is placed by the side of it, and he retires a short distance, previously exclaiming, "Porra dentro u porra fuera?" (porra within or porra without?) Should the maiden be disposed to favour his suit, she approaches and removes the staff in-doors; but if averse, it is whirled to the other side of the street: whereupon the lover understands his fate, and wends his way back, rejected and disconsolate.

In the evening my mozo brought me the information that a party of muleteers were about to proceed to Cazalla with a cargo of bacon, and coupled his news with the proposal that I should defer my own departure in order to swell their numbers.

"Wherefore should I do this?" I inquired. "Are they armed?"

"No, Señor," he rejoined; "but then the advantage of their company!"

It was hard to perceive what benefits would arise from their society, though on this point both my host and mozo were agreed; but in reality the motive to this request lay in the well-known disinclination of all ranks in this country to travel alone. Subsequently, after some months of wandering, I felt more disposed to yield to proposals of this kind; for after the novelty

of a solitary march had worn off, it was impossible at times to repress the feeling of loneliness that crept over the spirits amid scenes of solitude as silent and lifeless as the desert.

There is something pervading the scenery of this land, the effect of which it is difficult to describe, except by saying that it impresses one as no other scenery does; a stern, and at the same time a melancholy grandeur, the latter quality predominating, even among the vast and fruitful plains you slowly traverse, and more especially when winding amid a wilderness of tenantless dehesas, or by the sides of lofty sierras. At these times there mingled with the impressions of awe and sublimity one felt, none of those elevating thoughts inspired by the contemplation of nature on a vast scale; on the contrary, the effect was somewhat repelling, and resembled that produced by gazing upon a countenance where an expression of evil mingles with noble lineaments.

While my mozo, on the one hand, was urging me to be sociable, my host came forward with the usual tale of robberies on the way. "Maldito camino!" he said; "on that road was I robbed of 8000 reals, by three men, and five tracked me all the way from Cazalla for the same purpose." A little cross-examination, however, elicited the fact that this robbery occurred three years before, our host being unarmed at the time, and that no aggressions on travellers had since that date been perpetrated; so, in despite of the warnings and prophecies of the twain, I intimated that I was prepared to depart alone next morning, and that though willing to be reinforced by the muleteer auxiliaries, I would by no means delay my movements on their account.

Before sunrise we were threading our way through a labyrinth of hedge-rows and olive-groves, with our faces turned towards Cazalla: our path doubled and wound till it conducted us to a wood of evergreen oaks, which it took more than an hour to traverse. A better ambush for the salteadores, of whom I heard so much yesterday, could nowhere be found than among the ravines and broken ground with which it was intersected. I was now journeying eastward, having, in pursuance of my original plan to keep within the province, diverged from the northerly direction I had hitherto taken, by continuing in which I should have speedily reached the frontiers of Estremadura.

For some hours our course was a gradual descent from the mountainous elevations of Aracena, by the side of a small stream, whose clear waters were hurrying to swell the current of the Guadalquivir. The stream, in fact, was our guide, and our path crossed and recrossed it twenty times, once leading us unexpectedly to the small village of La Corte, concealed among orchards and evergreen oaks. On either side as we journeyed rose sierras with rounded outlines, differing little from those I had already crossed; from their summits descended dreary tracks of underwood to spread over their sides, and unite in the narrow vale through which we moved. Here and there a patch of bright green would come into view, denoting a partial attempt at cultivation; but, these excepted, there were no other signs, amid a progress of leagues, to testify that the country was not wholly abandoned by man.

About mid-day we passed through the village of Cala, which afforded a striking contrast to those higher up in the mountains, from the state of ruin in which it stood, superadded to the squalid misery that was ex-

pressed on the visages of a few forlorn individuals whom our appearance attracted to their doors. Our approach to it was through a wide level, covered with brushwood and straggling groves of oak; while in the distance another range, crossing our course, foretold the fatigues we were yet to encounter before our day's journey was brought to a close. Outside of the village we came to a halt beneath a chestnut-tree, and prepared to make our noonday meal. The mules were divested of their aparejo, and no sooner was the last article of their gear removed than each animal cast itself on the ground, to enjoy the luxury of a roll in the dust before Marcos fastened on the hobbles by which their erratic movements were to be restrained. This done, he compounded and discussed his gaspachos, and after smoking a paper cigar, composed himself for a siesta in the shade of the spreading foliage above our heads.

At the end of an hour we were once more on the wing. A short distance brought us to the great road from Seville to Badajos, which we crossed, not without a look of envy from myself, as I regarded its admirable condition, suggestive of whirling along at ten miles an hour of speed, and compared it with the rugged and narrow path along which our mules must crawl at a pace that consumes a whole day in performing the same distance which on the other would be the work of a few hours. I was saved, however, from further repinings by entering upon a vast undulating plain, which for beauty of a wild and striking description far exceeded anything I had yet seen. Scattered over its surface were clumps and solitary trees of evergreen oak, mingling with masses of rock, sometimes piled in cairns, sometimes strewed in profusion, but so picturesquely varied by hollows and glades as to present one of those

rare landscapes in the making of which Nature seems to have called in every charm. Art itself, in its most wayward and prolific moments, could have produced nothing to surpass this natural park. The effect was further heightened by a conical elevation in the centre, round whose summit ran a natural wall of rock, in which fancy might easily trace the mouldering battlements of a venerable castle. The resemblance, indeed, must have been striking, for it had procured for this mount the name of "El Palacio" from the dwellers in these regions. At the same time, the sinking sun was pouring a flood of light among the trees, with that splendour seen nowhere but in southern lands; so that the scene was carpeted with strange devices wrought in gold and dark shadows, and brilliant beyond description. There was warning, however, to ourselves in that same orb setting so gloriously, for by its last rays were we to seek our way over the wild sierra in front. On the other side of it were our quarters for the night, a hamlet called Santa Maria de la Zapatera. How far off it was Marcos could not recollect, for some years had elapsed since he had passed this way, and he was frequently at a loss whenever the path became more indistinct than usual.

At the foot of the sierra our path separated into two tracks, one striking up a barranco that clove the mountain from its summit to where we stood, and the other pursuing a less aspiring course along its base. As the first appeared the most direct route, we unhesitatingly selected it, and for nearly an hour breasted the mountain side, our path, from the darkening light, becoming every moment less distinguishable. At length it was lost among the tall brushwood, which grew up to the very top of the ridge. In truth, it was evident before

we thus came perforce to a halt, that the track had been long in disuse, and we had persevered only from the reflection that "returning were as tedious as go o'er." However, the former seemed now our only alternative; and without a moment's delay, for the short twilight was at its close, the mules were forced through the bushes in the direction most likely to conduct us to the other path, which unquestionably was the right one. No idea can be formed of the difficulty of such a proceeding, however simple it may seem. Our tired animals struggled for a short distance with the matted growth of the brushwood, which it required all their strength and weight to part asunder, and in doing which their riders ran no small risk of being swept off their backs by the violent recoil of the elastic boughs.

The contest was, however, beyond their power to continue long, even had they been fresh and vigorous, and endowed with the strength of giants. Once more we came to a stand-still; our animals, with their limbs trembling and sides heaving from their excessive toil, refused to advance a step further. The present dilemma was considerably worse than the first: we were now caught in a trap of branches and twigs from which there appeared no release; we could neither return nor advance, even if we had known what direction to take. For my own part, I saw no better prospect than to lie down where we were, and wait till the returning light came to our aid. This was no novelty to my mozo, who, as he assured me, had "camped out" for nights while acting once as an itinerating vendor of oranges; but I was unused at that time to a "lodging upon the cold ground," and felt doubtful whether contact with mother earth under such circumstances was an invigorating treatment for one who had left England as an

invalid. Still, there was no remedy, and after a brief debate we urged our reluctant animals a few yards deeper in the underwood, and brought them to a cleared space espied by the eye of Marcos. Dismounting here, we made our preparations for a bivouac. The spot we had now reached was a singular one: it was a patch of verdure, scarcely a few yards in circumference, and which by some chance had sprung up amid the surrounding brushwood. Nothing could surpass in richness and fragrance the herbage which grew upon it, and now promised a couch as perfumed and soft as that of a Sybarite. In a few minutes the task was over of unlading the mules and shackling their fore legs, lest they should be tempted to stray too far. Another moment or two was devoted to the contents of our wallets, and then Marcos proceeded to construct an off-hand pallet out of the trappings strewed around us. A horse-rug did duty as a mattress, or rather stretched upon the thick natural mattress of wild flowers and herbage that covered the ground; a saddle served for a pillow; and what more would the tired traveller desire? Certain it is, that no sooner had I rolled myself in my manta and laid my head on the saddle, than the fatigues of a long march of nine leagues speedily brought sleep to my eyes. The last thing they rested upon was the spectacle of Marcos, with his horns of oil and vinegar before him, proceeding, despite of the darkness and the manifold difficulties, to the concoction of the everlasting gaspachos.

About midnight I awoke with a sense of oppression on my breast, which I found was caused by my careful attendant having heaped upon my person all the rugs and coverings upon which he could lay his hands. He himself reposed at my feet, indulging in nasal sounds

loud enough to scare away such evil-disposed wolves as might be within hearing ; but at this time of the year little danger was to be apprehended from their fangs. The darkness, however, had given place to the brightest moonlight I ever remember to have seen. Not even beneath the tropics have I witnessed anything comparable to that glorious silver light, diffused as I then saw it between heaven and earth ; so brilliant and so palpable was the effulgence, that it seemed as if the rays might be caught in the hand and twined round the fingers in coils of lustre ; and I almost fancied the bushes bent beneath their weight. Perhaps, from the novel circumstances of the moment, the scene left a more vivid impression than similar ones have done, for I readily call to mind that hour of moonlight, with all its solemnizing influences, the deep silence unbroken by aught except the distant baying of some watch-dog, or the whispering of the night air among the shrubs, the mountain swelling upwards from our resting-place in rounded lines, and the shapes of others looming indistinctly through the silver haze. I bring to mind also having apostrophised the slumbering Marcos ; and blessed my stars that he was the owner of an honest heart, for had he been so inclined I might never have wakened more. It was just the place where a thrust of the navaja might be given with the certainty that no tales would ever be told of its work. How it further fared with us I know not, until at earliest break of dawn we were astir, when Marcos went in search of the mules, with which he soon returned. Upon awaking, refreshed and invigorated, I reflected that a traveller might find many a worse place of rest than a grassy couch beneath the serene sky of Andalucia.

To be sure, there are no curtains, nor pillows of

down, and your toilet is made when you have given yourself a hearty shake and run your fingers through your hair; but then there is no landlord to face in the morning, no vampires to disturb your night's rest, nor cry of fire to cause alarm; no damp sheets to sow rheumatism in the bones;—in short, you mount and ride away, as I did, wondering how people survive the dangers and discomforts of sleeping under a roof.

Now that the light of day made every object visible, it was no difficult matter to discover the right path. Into this our animals worked their way, through brake and briar, with comparatively little trouble, as it was all down hill; and we now found that the track, instead of breasting the sierra in Roman fashion, coasted along its base in a southerly direction. It led us to a "puerto," or mountain pass; and through the gap the ascent was an easy one to the summit, from whence, on the other side, there came into view the little hamlet of Santa Maria, where our quarters ought to have been the previous night. From our elevated station its cluster of lowly roofs, surrounding the village spire, seemed to rise in a little world of their own, the limits of which were the encircling sierras that closely hemmed in the small plain in the centre of which it stood. A slender stream wound round it and watered a succession of meadows, whose freshness and verdure gave an air of softness to this pastoral scene, in strong contrast with the savage and dreary mountains that towered above us. By the side of the same stream, leaping and brawling down the pass, we descended to the little valley, and entered the hamlet, whose inhabitants, even at that early hour, were up and busy. Marcos immediately hied to the alcalde, for the purpose of getting our passports viséd. While he was absent in

the workshop of the village Vulcan, who, it appeared, united in himself both these offices, I begged a glass of water from a woman, who, with many others, had been drawn to her door by the unwonted arrival of strangers. "Usted es de muy lejos?" (you are from afar?) she inquired as I thanked her. "Si, Señora; I am from England." "From England?" she repeated; "where is that town?" "It is a kingdom, far, very far, in that direction," I replied, pointing to the north-west. "Ah, Señor," she added, "my pueblo is also far off; I am from Llerena." "From Llerena in Estremadura?" "Yes," she answered, with a sigh. The reader will, perhaps, smile at my questioner's notions of distance, when he is informed that Llerena was only twelve miles from her present abode.

Such exaggerations, common as they everywhere are among the untravelled, are particularly so in Spain, because there a town may be very nigh another, and yet, from the wretched state of the roads, and the absence of the usual facilities for communication, be accessible only by a journey demanding much time and fatigue to accomplish. Under such circumstances, it becomes virtually as remote from its neighbours as if it lay in another kingdom. But the evil does not end here: the effect of this state of isolation—a state in which many if not most Spanish towns exist—is to contract the range of their sympathies, and to reduce their love of country to a selfish but not unnatural predilection for the narrow circle that bounds their knowledge. Hence has arisen that spirit of localism—the bane of Spanish nationality—which he who strives to make them a united people will find to be an obstacle less readily overcome than those other difficulties, in the shape of a diversity of languages, manners, and privileges, with which he

must contend. How deeply ingrained this spirit is in the Spanish character, we cannot fail to learn from the experience of past years; but if it were not so, every traveller who makes it his study to know the people of this country, while listening to the laudation which each individual bestows upon his native pueblo, coupled to a depreciating tone in respect to others, becomes impressed with the truth, that to maintain that fancied or real superiority, considerations of right or justice would be lightly regarded. All would desire to see their country the first nation in the world—with this difference, that the first of its towns, and the lawgiver to the others, should be that particular community to which each belongs. While this feeling, therefore, exists, it would be hopeless to see the spirit of dissatisfaction nowhere lingering. To eradicate it, one must break down the physical barriers within which it takes root and flourishes. When these are surmounted by the conversion of the almost impassable by-paths into practicable cross-roads, and by the formation of new routes across the wild mountain chains that traverse the land, the usual consequences will follow: communities and kingdoms hitherto estranged will be linked more closely together, and in the widening range of their sympathies, will think and act, not for themselves, but for the welfare of the whole.

The village official did not detain us long, and our exit from his pastoral kingdom was by the banks of the stream whose rise we had witnessed higher up in the sierra. It led us again, after its brief pause among the green pastures, to a point in the encircling range where an opening admitted a passage for its waters into mountain scenery as wild and savage as that among which they first saw the light. Our route from thence was a

winding track by the base of lofty elevations that became at every step more stern and imposing. There was, however, something inexpressibly sombre in their features, which not even the flood of noonday light could lighten up; the most perfect solitude reigned as we became involved deeper in their recesses; and but for the path we followed, upon which the vestiges of footsteps were visible, we might have fancied ourselves in a wilderness which no foot dared to cross. It was refreshing meanwhile to have at our side the streamlet of which I have already spoken; there was society and companionship in the flow and life of its waters, the only moving things in that silent waste besides ourselves; and I felt sorry when we turned away to strike into the road that leads from Guadalcanal to Cazalla. Proceeding by this new route, the character of the scenery remaining unaltered, we reached another stream, on whose banks we halted under the shade of a wild ash, to make our repast after the usual gipsy fashion. Unlike the disporting current of the other, this moved on slow and sluggish, and formed in front of us a pool of an olive-green tinge. It was an admirable spot for a bath, and had probably revived the strength of many a wearied passer-by, just as it was now refreshing the person of a countryman, whom we found luxuriating in its waters, while another was waiting for him on the brink. In a moment an acquaintanceship was struck up between the twain and my guide, much to the satisfaction of the latter, to whom a new conversationist had become a novel event since our departure from Aracena.

As a proof of the untravelled state of these mountain-paths, I may mention that, from daybreak of the preceding day till the present hour, during which time we ac-

accomplished fifty miles of our journey, we had encountered no one on our way; neither had we, except in the villages we traversed, espied a human figure. Some idea, therefore, may be formed of the eagerness with which my guide flung himself upon his new associates, and of the unbroken flow of his powers of speech; which, to compare small things with great, resembled the rush of a torrent that, having been pent up by some powerful impediment, suddenly found egress for its accumulated waters. The first inquiries of the trio were respecting their places of birth. My guide was from Zalamea, and his acquaintances from a village in the neighbourhood; this was enough to open their hearts, and cause them to regard each other as brother serranos. "Pay-sano," said the eldest of the pair, quite delighted with meeting a countryman, "sientese usted aqui," at the same time spreading a manta on the ground and inviting him to a share thereof. The young one, again, was not a whit less friendly, though in a different style. He communicated several particulars respecting his past life, and ended with the subject of his future prospects; a question that at the moment deeply engaged his thoughts. It appeared that an uncle of his, a sargento mayor in a regiment stationed at Madrid, had written to him to come up and push his fortunes in the metropolis. In proof of this, he pulled out a dirty and tattered letter, which he handed to Marcos to read for the benefit of the company. Marcos, however, was no scholar, and could make nothing out of it; and so, with the concurrence of the other, it was resigned to me. However, I had no better success in the matter of decyphering its contents. As, however, writing, spelling, and grammar are no part of a military education, it is no discredit to the worthy sergeant who penned the

despatch to say, that his penmanship was a collection of "pot-hooks and hangers" that defied the powers of any mortal but himself to read. But the want of proper information did not prevent Marcos from seizing upon so capital an opportunity for giving advice gratis. He debated the question, to go or not to go, with a zeal for the young man's interests that was truly edifying; and I am bound to record our decision was unanimous;—I say our, for my opinion was likewise requested upon the merits of the case. It was resolved that he should stay at home. What were the reasons that influenced my fellow-counsellors I cannot call to mind; for my own part, I was moved by the consideration that so simple a swain was no match for the wits of the Madrilénians, even under the auspices of a sergeant of the line.

During this conflict of tongues our teeth had been no less actively employed in the demolition of our various stores of provender. An hour having been thus spent, I started for Cazalla, much against the inclinations of Marcos, who would rather have postponed accomplishing the three leagues that remained of our journey until the sun had so far declined as to permit us to travel without being scorched by its noontide fierceness, which in the valleys and gorges was at times well-nigh insupportable. Our new friends, being bound for the same town, prepared to join company, but a loud outcry from the youngest arrested our departure. His burro was gone—had mysteriously disappeared—and certainly was nowhere visible. Stranger still, although the others dispersed in search of it, no traces were found of its movements, and in fact nothing to explain this unaccountable disappearance. Upon the other side of the stream there stood a

goatherd, a figure clothed from head to foot in sheepskins, and who had stationed himself there to feast his eyes with the unwonted sight of his fellow-creatures in that lone region ; and himself resembled some wild animal of the forest, attracted by the intrusion of the human form to gaze on the strange spectacle. Upon him fell the suspicions of the owner of the lost burro ; and without considering the manifest improbability of the deed, he advanced to his own margin of the stream, and placing himself in a belligerent attitude, menaced the other with violent death in a variety of ways if he did not instantly restore the missing animal. Such a charge, as was to be expected, only called forth a gruff answer ; and there is no knowing to what lengths rage might have hurried the nephew of the sergeant, had not one of the company, while looking at some osiers overhanging the stream, espied the animal under their shade ; its head was just appearing above the surface, the rest of the body being under water. The poor animal had either slipped in by accident, or, in imitation of its master, was recruiting its forces by a cool dip in the stream previous to a toilsome clamber in the sierra. From the moment of setting forth, our way was a continued ascent ; the first part through a wild pass called the Puerto Alto : about a league from Cazalla the character of the country altered, and our progress was through lanes deep sunk in the soil ; from the high banks on either hand hedges and trees threw a grateful shade across our steps. By and by land in cultivation appeared, and then vineyards and gardens, surrounding country houses ; all of these possessed orchards not far off, and many had trellised arcades of vines leading up to their doors. Amid this smiling prospect we approached our destina-

tion. Upon the very summit of the ridge we found a gentle hollow, in the centre of which, as in a nest, lay this mountain village. This site had probably been chosen by its founders from its affording the best shelter from the blasts of winter, for its position is undoubtedly high, and the air during that season must be sharp and piercing. I went straight to the posada, but its appearance and condition bespoke better accommodation for beasts than for man, or rather none at all for the latter. As such an establishment as a casa de pupilos was unknown, I was perforce compelled to apply for assistance in this dilemma to no less a personage than the comandante de armas, to whom I carried a letter of introduction. In doing so I did not anticipate that the courteous comandante, after reading the letter and hearing my request, would insist upon my making his house my home during my stay in the town. Invitations of this nature are to be estimated more by the tone and manner of the speaker than by the literal meaning of his words; and so much frankness accompanied the offer that I could not doubt its sincerity. I therefore accepted it; nor had I reason subsequently to believe I had construed the words for more than they were meant.

## CHAPTER IX.

CAZALLA.—THE IRON MINES OF PEDROSO.—ANDALUSIAN POLITENESS.—THE GENTLE BEGGARS.—TORQUEMADA AND HIS ASS.—CONSTANTINA.—LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.—BEAUTIFUL VIEW FROM THE CASTLE.—THE REGIMENT IN PETTICOATS.

THE following day I rested on my oars, being in need of some repose, as every bone and muscle was aching from the severity of an almost uninterrupted ride of forty-eight hours under a blazing sun: for that day I was sated with an inspection of the only church in the town. This was an edifice in no respect remarkable for beauty or symmetry, being in fact partly unfinished; the original design, after the plainest style of Gothic, having been mingled with sundry additions in the shape of a belfry and porches, which were conceived in the true pepper-box order of architecture. The remainder of the day was spent in strolling along the shady lanes in the environs, sometimes alone, and sometimes accompanied by my host when his duties afforded him leisure. I ought to mention that he had passed the middle term of life, and was a bachelor, and that his household was superintended by an elderly female and her niece, and that both were natives of the Basque Provinces. The next day, however, I was again in the saddle, and, accompanied by the comandante and several members of the ayuntamiento of the town, on my road to the iron mines of Pedroso, or, more accurately, the

foundry attached to them. About this establishment there was little to detain one long. I found its merits very much overrated; and having been a listener as we rode along to the speculations of my companions regarding the amount of injury likely to be done by it to the iron works of my country, I could not help smiling on seeing this formidable competitor, whom the smallest of its giant rivals in England might swallow up with ease. The situation is in a narrow valley, through which straggle the dwellings of the workmen and superintendents: it is said to be very unhealthy, especially in summer, when agues prevail to a great extent. Nearly all the iron manufactured goes to the establishments of the Rio Tinto and Almaden del Azogue; in the former to be converted into copper by the process I have already described, and in the latter to furnish the jars in which the quicksilver is transported. While the comandante and myself were inspecting the manufactory, the members of the ayuntamiento were closeted with the directors of the mines, being in fact a deputation from the civic authorities of Cazalla in reference to some claims upon the company. Apparently the dispute, whatever was its origin, had come to no amicable termination, for upon inquiring for our comrades we were directed to a farm-yard, where, to our surprise, we found them congregated. Although worsted in the fray, they still made an uncompromising stand for their dignity, and would not lower it by accepting any civilities, far less entering a house belonging to the enemy. Hence, therefore, the reason why we beheld them rolled in their mantas and stretched on the straw, disposing themselves to repose, like warriors after a hard-fought battle. They were now only waiting for our arrival to fall, like stalwart

men as they were, upon the provender, of which some of the party, in anticipation of such a result, had prudently laid in a store.

Next day was that of Corpus Christi, a high festival in the Romish calendar, and throughout Spain celebrated by processions and other solemnities. I had seen in all its pomp and circumstance the "funcion" wherewith Seville honours that day; and remembering the levity and sneers to which the spectacle gave rise among the bystanders with whom I was accidentally mingled, I was anxious to know if the worshippers of Cazalla treated their images more reverently than did those beside whom I stood in the shadow of the great cathedral. Nothing of the kind, however, was observable here: all were serious onlookers, and allowed no words to escape their lips derogatory to the splendour of the procession. This consisted of an image of the Virgin, clothed, as usual, in a black velvet robe spangled with silver; in front moved a few banners carried by priests, whose expression I liked better than the stolidity of countenance that characterises their brethren of Seville; and in the rear followed a long string of women and children. Neither was their gravity disturbed by witnessing the prodigious efforts to keep step of four men and a corporal of the *Cázalla nacionales*, who formed a guard of honour to close the procession: their performances in that way outdid anything the most awkward squad could get up.

In the evening my host made his appearance in full evening costume. I may remark, that in this the sur-tout, so far from being excluded, figures at parties just as frequently as the dress coat. Addressing me as if I were the master of the house, and he the guest, he requested permission to absent himself for an hour or

two from my society. In the style and nature of his request there was much to call to mind the formal politeness for which the old Spaniards were so famous: many traces of this still linger, in despite of the growing attachment throughout the nation for French manners, and a certain off-hand manner on the part of the rising generation, which is affected as being the sign of manliness.

Of these old ceremonious observances, by far the most troublesome to the stranger is that which enjoins him, when at table, to address an invitation to share the good things thereon to such individuals as may enter the room in which he is seated: it is a mere courtesy, and the traveller will frequently hear it extended to him by the peasant on passing the door, before which he is devouring his repast of bread, garlic, and oranges. It was long, however, before I schooled my tongue to utter the phrase in which the offer was couched, although well aware that it was neither expected nor intended that its purport should be understood in a literal sense. As long as this backwardness lasted, I doubt not I suffered in the estimation of native politeness, and was set down as a proud Englishman, "sin educacion," or at least so prejudiced in favour of my own customs, as to consider those of the country in which he dwelt as unworthy of adoption. Such, I fear, is the impression generally created by our conduct in regard to continental forms of politeness. Whenever these are harmless, it must be confessed, an obstinate adherence to our island customs is without excuse: yet, with every desire to be compliant, it is no easy matter to overcome an inward repugnance to saying what one does not mean; and as such a feeling is less understood among our continental neighbours

than at home, it seldom enters among the motives to which they attribute our aversion to some of their peculiar usages and styles of phraseology.

As it was the last evening I was to spend in Cazalla, I set forth for a farewell stroll among its shady lanes: it was a luxury I might not soon enjoy, and I was resolved to take advantage of the opportunity to the utmost. The apartment I occupied communicated with the sala, or principal room of the house, through which it was necessary to pass; and on my opening my door I beheld my host's housekeeper and her niece seated at its solitary table, and manifestly in deep distress of mind. Grief is a sacred thing, and I felt unwilling to intrude upon them; but as there was no other mode of egress, I could only steal as cautiously as I could towards the outer door. My consternation, however, was great when I found that the further I advanced into the room, the louder became the sobs of the females. I halted, uncertain what to do or say, until it flashed across my mind that somehow or other I might be connected with their sorrow. What have I done, thought I, to vex these poor people? but, at all events, it is my duty to inquire; which I accordingly did.

"Ay de mi," said the old lady; "I am a Basque, of good blood, and never thought I should be brought to this; but we are doomed to trials, and I submit, although I cannot help repining a little." This moralising vein I thought highly commendable, though rather out of place, and I complimented her for the Christian spirit she displayed. "So you see," she continued, "another misfortune has occurred to us to-day; a little account has been sent in, which we are unable to pay. Ave Maria! that I should have lived to endure this."

I now understood the drift of the old hypocrite, who was vainly endeavouring, with the corner of her apron, to squeeze a tear from her eye. Making a virtue of necessity, I inquired what was the amount of the demand.

"Three dollars," exclaimed the two in a breath; and accordingly the three dollars took their flight from my purse.

"But you will say nothing about this to the comandante?" they said, when I turned to depart.

"Palabra de honor! no," I responded, and left the gentle beggars in possession of their ill-gotten charity, to moralise in my turn upon the manifold tricks that are played upon travellers.

At five o'clock the next morning I was on my way from Cazalla to Constantina, passing through a country eminently beautiful, while every charm in the landscape was enhanced by the delightful freshness of a southern morning. The road led down a valley whose sides were carefully cultivated, and at every step our path was crossed by brooks of the clearest water. Then there were on either hand those deep-worn traces of which I have already taken note, each one roofed over with the thick foliage of overarching trees, and promising coolness and shade, however high the sun might be in the heavens. The only drawback to the perfect enjoyment of this lovely scene arose from the conduct of my guide, who was much given to profane swearing, and unmerciful usage of his burro. On remonstrating with him in regard to his cruelty, he chose to be offended, and offered me advice in his turn.

"Take care, Señor," said he, "how you interfere between a man and his donkey, which is just as bad as interfering between man and wife; and if you do,

perhaps you may get the answer of Torquemada cast in your teeth."

"What was that?" I inquired.

"Why, it so happened that Torquemada was beating his donkey very severely, when a courtier came by and bade him be more merciful to his beast. 'I shall do so for the future,' said Torquemada, 'since I now find he is a relation of yours, from the interest you take in him.' Wasn't that well said, Señor?"

"Passing well for a beater of donkeys."

On approaching Constantina, the termination to the valley through which we wound, was an Alameda of magnificent elms, by which we entered the town. At the other end of the long street of which it consists was the house in which I had engaged an apartment, having previously sent intimation to that effect from Cazalla; and my landlord, having seen me pass, came running after to receive me. The next thing was to deliver my letters of introduction. This was always an agreeable task, as I invariably found a kindly welcome awaiting me, as much, perhaps, for the sake of the country of my birth, as from the recommendation of the friends by whom I was introduced. It is a pleasure to me to record, as the result of having presented more than fifty letters of introduction during the course of my wanderings in Andalusia, that wherever I went I was met with frankness and cordiality. Once, but only once, did I fail to experience the reception I believed I had a right to expect. At the same time it is right to caution the reader against supposing, that introductions in this land are, as at home, mere tickets for dinners. Spain is not a dinner-giving country, and its civilities are seldom brought to bear upon the appetites of strangers.

Notwithstanding this, there is more real kindness in the many little services which an introduction to a Spanish house secures to the bearer, than in the formal invitation to dinner that in England succeeds the presentation of a similar despatch, and generally constitutes the sum total of attention. I always found, on the part of my Andalucian friends, so much willingness to second my wishes, that I sometimes regretted having given them expression, when I saw the trouble of which I was the cause. Besides this, their offices as guides to the places of note in their respective towns were freely at my command, and whatever local information I desired was hunted up with as much ardour as if it were for their own use. Above all, I cannot forget how deeply indebted I was to their local knowledge for a service the value of which is only in Spain to be fully appreciated—that of procuring muleteers and guides upon whose honesty and faithfulness reliance might be placed.

In the cool of the evening I made my way to the castle, whose grey battlements crown a steep isolated eminence, the base of which is half-encircled by the town. The ascent was by a road practicable for carriages, and was the work of the French. During the War of Independence this stronghold was carefully fortified by them, and converted into an important post in the line of communication between Andalusia and Estremadura. Hence, from the additions and alterations it underwent in their hands, little remains of the original fortress except the "keep," one or two massive towers at the angles, and the algabe, or reservoir of water. But the imperishable jewel of this ancient place of strength, one which neither the Frank nor Moorish spoiler could deface, was the magnificent view

to be enjoyed from the summit of its venerable walls. For extent and variety of scenery, I had as yet seen nothing in Andalusia to compare with it. Far to the south, the eye ranged unobstructed over sierra and plain, till it rested upon a ridge just melting into the horizon; this was the sierra of Carmona, and that town, though distant forty miles, was plainly visible. On a clear day, it is possible for the eye to pierce still further, and to behold the Giralda of Seville rising above the spires of the city; but a hazy mist, caused by the heat, hung like a veil over that quarter, and shrouded that familiar object from my vision. In the immediate neighbourhood of the town the prospect was a rich variety of gardens, olive plantations, and vineyards, intermingled in picturesque confusion, everywhere mounting the surrounding heights, and clinging to their steepest slopes. Looking back in the direction of Cazalla, all was an assemblage of mountain summits, rising above each other in a succession of ridges, till a loftier range surmounted this giant host, and, reflecting back the hue of heaven, was distinguishable only by the serrated edges of its crest and its deeper colours, from the canopy of blue that rested on its peaks. Such a scene, from the absence of every harsh feature, and from the rich tints in which the most prominent objects were clad, was one of exquisite beauty; and accustomed as I was to behold only a sad and stern expression in the scenery of this province, I was the more forcibly struck by the softness that here diffused itself over the landscape, and by the presence of charms I had deemed strangers to the land.

The position of Constantina is undoubtedly high, and a good deal of snow falls in the neighbourhood during winter. This is industriously collected and

deposited in an ice-house, for the purpose of being forwarded to Seville. Last winter was one of exceeding mildness, and, in consequence, the usual supplies of snow failed here ; so that the Sevillanos were compelled to seek in the sierra of Ronda the means of concocting the icy compounds and draughts indispensable to existence in a town that may well boast of being the hottest in Spain.

Descending to the town, I strayed to the Alameda, which I had already passed through ; and visited the source of a streamlet that, bursting forth by a copious spring, waters the principal street of the town, and on the outskirts serves to turn several mill-wheels. This fountain is situated in the garden of the Franciscan convent, adjoining the Alameda: the waters gushed forth with great violence, and were collected in a square basin built to receive them. Within the convent another spring issues to the light, and was surrounded with baths for the use of the fraternity ; but these, like the other portions of the building, have suffered from the state of neglect to which conventual establishments have been devoted since the suppression of the monastic orders. Lower down, in the course of the brook, the banks become highly picturesque : old-fashioned mills and dwellings, mingled with overshadowing trees, line the stream that dashes at speed over a rocky bed. The oleander, with an abundance of other shrubs, hang over the current, and climb among grey masses of stone projecting from either side. In the distance, the time-worn castle rises in the hoariness of antiquity, to mingle recollections of the past with this scene, wherein the verdure of nature, and the stir and life of the hurrying waters, are all emblematical of the present.

The couple in whose house I lodged were good-

natured and civil, and disposed to render me every service. The master thought it his duty to accompany me everywhere. No sooner did he see me with my hat in hand than he seized his own, and forth we went; whether it was to a tertulia or a stroll was a matter of perfect indifference to him. I suspect he acted under the impression that, without his assistance, I should infallibly be lost in the intricacies of the town—which by the way, consisted merely of one long street. He is the owner of a small possession, that just yields him a maintenance; yet, with the *dolce far niente* spirit of the land, he is content with this, and aspires to nothing beyond satisfying his daily wants. His property provides him a roof over his head, a cloak and cigar, not to mention a miserable pony, that is stabled in the room next to mine—for so things are managed here: and what more would a genuine son of Andalucia demand to make life flow without a murmur? Every evening he proceeds to the house of the estanquero, or privileged vendor of tobacco, where a kind of tertulia is held: and punctually at ten returns to supper. So has he done for years past; so will he do for the future; and thus the sands of his life run out unshaken and untroubled, and its close will be regarded by his fellows as the end of an enviable lot.

Neither in this town nor in Cazalla have the male inhabitants a news-room, or public place of resort; and, strange to say, there is no café. It would be wrong, however, to infer from this fact that the good citizens are devoid of the usual social qualities of their countrymen; in fact, the deficiency in both towns is supplied by substitutes which are rather singular. In Cazalla the point of union is a barber's shop, while a carpenter's does similar duty here. In these, at all hours of

the day, except those devoted to meals and the siesta, might be seen congregated a knot of politicians or group of idlers, busily discussing the affairs of state, and one and all wrestling sore with time. Sometimes, when their numbers are too many for the shop, the party adjourn to the street, and bringing out chairs, form a wide circle, while one reads the news aloud, or conversation passes round. This, it must be confessed, is a primitive state of things, but it is akin to the humour of the people, who are disposed to court publicity rather than otherwise. At these reunions it rarely happens that the stranger gathers information worth remembering; for, as may be imagined, the chief subjects of discourse refer to local politics or family histories, so that, on the whole, he would do well to avoid them. For myself, the principal source of the amusement I derived was from the queries put to me regarding Inglaterra: these were generally of such a nature as to betray a woeful degree of ignorance on the part of the speakers. Geographical knowledge, I need not say, is at the lowest ebb here, and hence I was frequently called upon to rectify the most ludicrous blunders. More than once it was manifest that my questioner was puzzled to tell whether London was in England or England in London; and, in truth, the words are often used synonymously. On one occasion a priest, who had been in Gibraltar, and seen there a regiment of Highlanders in the "garb of old Gaul," volunteered the information that the "regiment in petticoats" was invested with this feminine attire as a punishment for having misbehaved on the field of battle!

Of course, I fired up at this attack upon the gallantry of my Celtic compatriots, and assured my clerical informant that their costume, so far from being a badge

of ignominy, was worn by thousands, and that its origin was so ancient as to be lost in obscurity of history. My explanation, however, was far from shaking his faith in the "weak invention" I have just recorded. Scotland, he understood, was a cold country, and it was consequently impossible that a costume so ill-adapted for a northern region should prevail there. In vain I represented that the race by whom it was worn were of hardy frames, and being inured from their infancy to brave in that garb the rigours of the seasons, became insensible in time to the influences of climate. I was listened to with a smile of incredulity, which waxed more and more on my quoting the well-known anecdote of Sir Ewen Cameron, of Lochiel, who reproved his son for effeminacy because the latter used a snow-ball for his pillow when the twain lay down to pass the night on the snow. To the last the padre continued sceptical; he combated my facts with reasonings as original as his opening statement; and as the reward for my well-meant endeavours to defend the Gael, I had the satisfaction of finding that he regarded me as a second Baron Munchausen, in consequence of the anecdote to which I have alluded. It was in a somewhat different spirit that another gentleman accosted me, and, prefacing his remarks by professions of high regard for the English nation, proceeded to relate that he could do no less than entertain a warm feeling for them, either as a nation or individuals, inasmuch as it was his boast to possess English blood in his veins. In proof of this statement, he produced a roll of parchment, which on inspection I found was a document from Heralds' College, setting forth that a certain John King, of Wells, Somersetshire, had every right and title to be considered a gentleman. This individual, it

appeared, had left his country prior to the year 1610, for reasons unknown to my informant, and established himself in Carmona. There he married, probably, into some house proud of its "sangue azul:" on such an occasion proofs of gentle blood would be required ere he could wed the daughter of a "Christiano viejo y rancio," and Heralds' College would, therefore, come into requisition. The only offspring of this marriage was a daughter, from whom was descended my intelligent friend. In connexion with this I may observe, that it is by no means unusual to find throughout Spain families whose ancestors have been natives of Great Britain or Ireland. The latter isle can, however, boast not only of having transplanted more of her children to the soil of Spain than either of the sister kingdoms have done, but of having acquired by the deeds of her offshoots a degree of renown to which the others cannot aspire. She has been to Spain, what Scotland before the Union was to the Low Countries and Germany—a source of military talent, which, despairing of distinction at home, had to seek its field of fame among the distractions of foreign countries. In that career it is not surprising that the sons of Ireland should have prospered: in a land where there is courage, though rather of a passive than active kind, their impetuous energy and daring could not fail to cut a path to honours; and hence the rise of such men as Sarsefield, the O'Donnells, Flinter, and others of lesser note.

## CHAPTER X.

THE MOVILIZADOS.—THE CALLEJUELAS.—LA PUEBLA.—PLAIN OF  
THE GUADALQUIVER.—POSADAS.—THE SPANISH ASS.—ALMODOVAR  
DEL RIO.

In the phraseology of modern Spain, the assault and spoliation of travellers on the king's highway is not designated as it is everywhere else, a highway robbery, but is somewhat ambiguously styled a "novedad" or novelty. Of late no novelties of this disagreeable kind had occurred on the road from Constantina to Puebla de los Infantes; but as a portion of it, from time immemorial, had borne the worst of characters, I deemed it best to provide myself with a couple of men as a protection to my person and property. The men were movilizados, a body whose duty it is to patrol the roads and keep them clear of brigands. For this service they were admirably adapted, chiefly from the fact of their being natives of the vicinity, and in possession of that knowledge of the country, its paths, and haunts for desperate characters, without which brigandism can never be effectually extirpated from the localities in which it has taken root.

At four in the morning we started, just as the light enabled the eye to see objects distinctly. Foremost rode my escort, whose attire and accoutrements would have raised a smile at the Horse Guards. Their dress—for uniform it could not be called—consisted of a

short jacket, conical hat, and the leather leggings worn by the country people. At the right side hung a short escopeta or fowling-piece, hooked to the saddle, but in such a way as to be withdrawn and discharged at a moment's notice; at the left depended a straight sword in a rusty scabbard. In front of the high-peaked saddle each rider bestrode, was doubled a cloak; while behind there rose a pile of mantas and horse-cloths nearly reaching to their shoulders. Such is the style in which these men make their patrols: if benighted, they dismount and hobble their horses; the mantas are spread on the ground, and rolled in their cloaks they sleep soundly beneath the starlit sky. Away at daybreak, over sierra and dehesa, by tracks rarely trodden except by the contrabandista or brigand, they pursue their march; veiling their movements with such art as to come upon the haunts of the evil-doers at the moment when their presence is least expected. It is this independent style of acting, added to the secrecy attending their expeditions, which makes them so formidable to the robber population of the provinces; and whenever they have been extensively employed, the beneficial effects of their services have strikingly contrasted with the inefficiency of the regular troops engaged in the same vocation. The proceedings of the latter being more open to observation, could not fail to give timely warning to those against whom they were directed.

The conversation was not long in turning upon the exploits of my companions. Last year they seized three men, whose crime was horse-stealing. The robbers were drinking in a tavern in Las Navas, little suspecting the approach of the justicia, when they were surprised, bound hand and foot, and conveyed towards Constantina. The justicia, however, entertained no

thoughts of burthening that town with their support; and upon reaching a favourable spot, that is, some ravine by the wayside, they were sternly told that their moments were numbered. The criminals prayed for a priest to confess them ere they died, but that wish was refused by their captors: who observed, that those who committed murder—as they, it appears, had done—by assassination, had no right to that preparation for death they had denied to their victims. The “*cuatro tiros*” then stretched them on the ground, and their corpses were borne into Constantina on the backs of the horses they had stolen. These summary proceedings would probably be tolerated nowhere but in Spain. Here, however, in consequence of the corruption prevailing among the ministers of justice, and the facilities afforded to the escape of the worst malefactors by means of bribery or fraud, public feeling is little disposed to arraign the man who compels the law-breaker to pay on the spot the penalty of his crimes. This latitude may on the whole be conducive to the ends of justice, but it is obviously fraught with many evils; instances, indeed, are not wanting, where it has been abused to gratify revengeful passions, under the cloak of zeal for the public service.

Through a wild country we slowly journeyed till the callejuelas were reached, whereupon my escort showed more caution in their movements; they now advanced, as the proverb has it, “*la barba sobre el hombro.*” One rode on a little in front, while the other placed himself in the rear of the party, to be ready against any sudden onslaught upon that quarter. The callejuelas are so called from the nature of the road, which here, as in many parts of the country where the soil is clayey, has been so worn down by constant traffic as to

become a narrow and deep ravine between perpendicular sides. Hence it is peculiarly fitted for sudden attacks; from the nature of the ground, a traveller can receive no intimation of danger before a masket is presented at his breast, and the dreaded "Boca abajo" salutes his ears. The place, therefore, had become the subject of a local proverb, "Para robar, las callejuelas." However, nothing stirred as we wound in silence through the hollow way; and in another hour La Puebla de los Infantes came into view. La Puebla had once its castle, whose ruins crown an eminence not far distant: doubtless the village itself had its palmy days, when knights and men-at-arms had their watch on these crumbling towers; but now it seems to have survived the era to which it belonged, and only exhibits a sad spectacle of decay and poverty. Here the services of my escort terminated, and grateful men were they for the remuneration they received for the morning's ride. It was no great matter, to be sure, but then their pay was five months in arrear, for her Majesty of Spain is by no means noted for the punctual discharge of her servants' hire; and to men thus situated, such casual supplies are of no slight importance. From La Puebla the path led through olive-plantations, by a gradual descent; and, indeed, since leaving Constantina, our progress had been unceasingly down hill: at length, on rounding a high ridge, there opened upon the sight, stretching far to the left and right, the vast plain of the Guadalquivir. It was a noble prospect: as far as the eye could reach, fields of ripe grain succeeded each other without intermission, no other object breaking the yellow expanse than here and there a clump of olives. Hamlets, farm-houses, cottages, there were none; nothing to tell by whose hands was pre-