and Mulahacen, towering like Titans above a growth of giants. Their lofty sides, cloven by tremendous chasms, and surrounded by steeps, seemed to forbid a resting-place to the foot, and to deny access to their summits, which shot upwards dark and sullen. From these had disappeared their wintry hoods of snow, and each pinnacle lifted its head blackened like all below by the wrath of tempests and the fire of unnumbered summers. One vestige of winter alone remained on the forehead of the Picacho, where, sheltered in a deep ravine, a snow-wreath lingered, and reflected in dazzling brightness the sunbeams as they crossed its surface. This solitary speck of white was the last trace of the snowy mantle the peaks assume in winter; as summer advances, they shake it off from their crests and flanks, which then re-appear in the drapery of dark colours natural to their rugged outlines.

Descending from the tower, I sought my way to the palace of the Alhambra, and found admittance. To come fresh from contemplating the savage grandeur of nature, was to put the feeble works of man to the severest test to which they could be subjected: yet, making due allowances, the founders of that pile might freely boast of the work of their hands. It is not my intention to describe a structure with which the public are well acquainted by the productions of abler pens than mine; it is enough to say that words fail to give any idea of its bewildering effect upon the senses. It is the *beau idéal* of a voluptuous Elysium; a scene to which every source of earthly enjoyment is summoned, and not in vain, to captivate and enthral the heart by lulling and soothing it to rest. And in a climate where inaction is frequently compulsory, and at times a necessity, how exquisitely adapted were those allure-

ments that delight the stranger's eye, to banish the care and thought inseparable from our hours of tranquillity! The Albaycin might be in open rebellion, the Christian might be wasting the beautiful vega with fire and sword, the alciades of the kingdom might be usurping the royal authority; but what were these disasters to him who could wander from marble hall to blooming garden, and surrender himself to the enchantment created by their vivid play of colours and the exquisite variety of their embellishments; or pillowed on luxurious ease, and fanned by the perfume of the orange-flower, sink into forgetfulness while the murmur of fountains fell pleasantly on the ear? The great charm, indeed, of the palace lies in its tendency to absorb the mind in dreamy contemplation. Everything ministers to that end: the long colonnades of slender pillars that hang like stalactites round the courts; the dim twilight of the lofty saloons; the delicate fretwork embossed upon their walls, and provoking the eye to unravel its mazes; the plash of fountains "singing a quiet tune;" all these produce that mixture of illusion and reality which transports the thoughts into the world of reveries and day-dreams. And if such be the effect of the scene shorn as it is of its ancient splendours, how much more powerful must its charms have been when there mingled with them the still-life that peoples an Eastern court; when the chivalry of the kingdom filled the ante-chambers, and mute attendants glided to and fro through the deserted walks, and the voice and smile of beauty were breathing their soft spells around!

Is it to be wondered at that each scion of royal blood counted this the summit of his desires; that he broke every tie of kindred, allegiance, or gratitude, to make it his own; and that when he attained it with hands

stained with blood, he forgot, as with few exceptions, did the later monarchs of Granada, in the baleful attractions of his palace, that his dominions were torn by misrule and dissension, and, slowly but surely, sinking beneath the arms of the Christians? It can hardly be doubted that the Alhambra contributed no little to the downfal of the Moslem kingdom: no man can behold its varied delights without confessing that they must have shed an enervating and deadening influence upon all within their sphere, and, however sparingly enjoyed, have been fatal to spirit and energy.

One of my first occupations was to procure apartments, not in this royal residence, for it is now forbidden to devote them to the accommodation of private individuals, but in one of the dwellings within the walls of the fortress. This was no difficult matter, as there are several houses of the description I required within its precincts; and on the following day I found myself installed in one—the property, by the way, of an English baronet, and situated close to the Arco del Vino. Its erection was probably coeval with the days of the Moors; but time, or the taste of subsequent occupants, had stripped it of every peculiarity of their architecture, except the small Moorish casements of the upper story. Here I lodged in a spacious apartment that overlooked the interior of the fortress; and every morning sallied forth to wander, with no definite object in view, among the existing memorials of its Moslem masters; sometimes from a high battlement watching the flight of morning from the east, to see it light upon the city below and steal along the plain; or descending by the northern gate to the Albaycin, roam through that ancient stronghold of turbulence; or turning up the course of the Darro, pursue the path

to the secluded college of Monte Santo. During the noontide heat, when occupation out of doors is necessarily suspended, and one is confined a close prisoner to the house, I had a never-failing resource against ennui in beholding from one of the windows a magnificent prospect of the Vega and the Sierra Nevada. The enchanting verdure of the former never palled upon the eye: none but those who have dwelt under cloudless skies, and exposed to the full force of an unshadowed sun, can understand how often the exercise of vision becomes under the glare of light physically painful, and how much to be appreciated is a spot of green upon which the sight may rest. Here, while the air was quivering with heat, and nearer objects appeared to glow, there was a broad expanse that reflected no dazzling sunbeams, and permitted the eye to dwell long upon its shady masses of verdure. And while a breathless stillness reigned around, and the city was wrapped in the silence of the grave, bespeaking, like the rocky and desolate mountain-chains in the distance, the exhaustion of nature, how cheering was it to behold a prospect wherein nothing drooped, and where stalk and leaf were flourishing in the utmost vigour of vegetable life! Indeed, the luxuriance of the Vega seemed almost the work of magic, so far was it from being affected by the burning and blighting influence which in every other direction had reduced the soil to sterility, and thrown a brown and arid tinge upon mountain and valley. Then at sunset I descended the Calle de los Gomeles, sure to find the streets alive with population, for the disappearance of the sun is the signal for all who can walk or crawl to emerge from house and cottage and enjoy the freshness of evening. In general the lower orders sat with their families at

the doors of their dwellings, the men smoking their papelitos, and the whole circle watching the beau monde wending its way to the Alameda. A stranger, however closely he may conform to the costume of the country, is quickly detected, and one hears the word "Ingles" pass from mouth to mouth on nearing these groups. This is their mode of tomando el fresco; that of the higher ranks again is only a shade less sedentary, its desires being bounded by the limits of the public paseo, beyond which the señoritas and their cavaliers scrupulously refrain from passing. From thence, the promenaders retire to the various cafés and neverias, to sip ices or the delicious agraz, and afterwards to fill the tertulias to which they may have the right of admission. One drawback only accompanies a residence in the Alhambra. As it is a fortress, and provided with a slender garrison, the routine of military discipline is accordingly enforced, and at ten o'clock at night the gates are closed. After this hour admission is difficult—I do not say impossible, for these ancient gates will readily unclose to a silver key if judiciously applied; but the difficulty consists in rousing the warders, who, being superannuated soldiers, are either too sleepy or too deaf to heed any but the loudest knockings and assaults upon their venerable charge. This inconvenience excepted, I do not know a more delightful quarter in Granada than the castle of its former lords. Here the traces of innovating hands are less perceptible than in the city below; and one finds no difficulty in forming a pretty accurate notion of what was its strength and grandeur under the Moorish domination. Besides this, there are varied and extensive prospects to be enjoyed from its massive towers; the most noted of other Moorish monuments are close

at hand; and, last but not least, one is spared the fatigue of climbing the steep approach from the city, an undertaking of no small moment and toil under an almost vertical sun.

One of the pleasures to which I had looked forward on approaching Granada was the prospect of conversing with some of my countrymen, whom I made sure of meeting there; for after some months' abstinence I felt a decided longing to hear myself talk in my mother tongue. It is true I laboured under no apprehensions of having forgotten it, having had proof to that effect in Cordova, where, on rescuing two English tourists from a dilemma brought on by their own ignorance of Spanish, I had the gratification of hearing one marvel to the other, "How well the —— Spaniard spoke English!" My sage compatriots jumped to the conclusion that he who wore a sombrero, chaqueta, and a faja girded round him, must perforce be a native of Spain; whereas the youngest urchins on the streets eyed one with a look expressive of their having discovered that the wearer of their national costume was no "viejo Christiano," but a stranger from a distant land. It was therefore with considerable satisfaction that, one morning, on calling upon an ex-alcaide of the city, I bowed to a personage whom the worthy dignitary presented as Don E——, and a countryman. The appearance of my new acquaintance was one of those which, once seen, are not soon forgotten. I recognised him immediately, although the only occasion on which I had seen him occurred many months previously, and then only for a few minutes. Having entered a bookseller's shop in Seville in quest of a work, I found the master of the shop seated at a chess-table along with the individual who now stood before me. My inquiry

was unsatisfactory; but during our brief colloquy, I caught a glimpse of certain features in the background that struck me as being strangely and whimsically put together. The countenance was sallow, very angular in its outlines, and deeply marked by small-pox; while from behind a pair of spectacles a couple of lynx-like eyes shot searching glances. Let the reader place this singular visage upon the most meagre and slender form he has ever beheld, and he has a pretty accurate description of Don E——'s outward man. Further acquaintance, which he was not slow to cultivate, brought to light his various accomplishments. Among these it was a singularity, that although professing to be exclusively a military character, he possessed a more than respectable knowledge of medicine. He was, besides, a perfect master of Spanish, which he wrote and spoke admirably; and was endowed with the gift of conversation in an eminent degree. So much for the bright side of Don E——'s character. In regard to the dark portion, truth compels me to state that a great deal more might be said. In the first place, a more wandering tongue it had never been my lot to meet. Its audacity exceeded belief. Mention the name of a public character or a personage of distinction, and it immediately proclaimed its owner to have been on intimate terms with the exalted individuals. Whether they were statesmen, orators, nobles, poets, or actors, mattered little to Don E——; to all and each he had borne company, and could pour forth, off-hand, a host of anecdotes to prove his intimacy with them. To this weakness he added another of a less diverting kind. He had an unpleasant habit of borrowing money on the strength of remittances expected, but which somehow or other never arrived; and, in short, Don

E—— lived upon his wits and his friends. To the credit of his Spanish ones be it spoken, they bore this failing with a grace which, if it be characteristic of the nation, must make it the admiration of all *chevaliers d'industrie*.

The most curious fact connected with this individual was the mystery that enveloped his origin and the country of his birth. His own account, of course, was not to be credited; and all the other indications that might furnish a clue were wholly at fault. His name was Scotch, his accent English, while the frequent use of Irish idioms bespoke him to have resided long in the Emerald Isle. This much, however, of his history was authentic: that he was engaged in the British Legion —in what capacity it is doubtful—and left that service for reasons best known to himself; subsequently entered the Spanish army, and held the rank of sous-lieutenant, which he also resigned for private reasons; and had since then been roaming through Spain, with no ostensible purpose or employment. During his service in the Legion he had the misfortune to be taken prisoner by the Carlists, of whose brutalities to himself, and others as unfortunately situated, he was in the habit of communicating shocking details. To this story I had always turned an incredulous ear, thinking it a fiction, like many others, until, on returning to England, I read the narrative of an officer of the British Marines who happened to be made a prisoner by the Carlists. From this I learnt that Don E—— had actually been captured, and that this part of the story was no fabrication.

Every day that I climbed the steep Calle de los Gomeles, under a hot and fierce sun, my eyes turned instinctively to the dark summit of the Picacho de la

Veleta, from whose brow there hung, like a jewel, the snowy speck I have already described. It was peculiarly tantalising, while oppressed by the stifling atmosphere of the street, to look up to its glittering surface, and know it was the centre of cool breezes, the faintest breath from which would have banished every sensation of languor, and sent one up the steep with the step of a mountaineer. As, however, these cool airs refused to quit their ancient seat on the mountain-top even for a moment, there was no other resource than to seek them there, and for once inhale a reviving draught in the midst of a torrid land. This project I had been prevented by various causes from putting into execution until I had become acquainted with Don E——. No sooner did that personage hear of my determination than he bestirred himself to aid it, and proved, indeed, a useful auxiliary. Nobody knew better than he where the best guide and the best mules were to be procured; and having laid in a store of provender for the expedition, we commenced our journey in the afternoon of a hot and cloudless day.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PICACHO DE LA VELETA.—ASCENT OF IT.—GALE AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.—MAGNIFICENT PROSPECT FROM THE SUMMIT.—LA ZUBIA.—THE RESTLESS SKULL.—THE NUNS.—ROUTE TO MALAGA.—A GALERA.—THE SPANISH MASTIFF.—GUARDAS DEL CAMINO.

As the Picacho is accessible by a bridle-track to within half-a-mile of its summit, the plan of the ascent was to proceed to the station of the neveros, near the snowy wreath from which they filled their panniers; having reached this, which we expected to do shortly after sunset, we were to spend the night there, and on the following morning, at earliest dawn, to commence the ascent of the loftiest peak. It was absolutely essential, in order to enjoy an uninterrupted prospect from the summit, that we should reach it at an early hour, for at midday, and even sooner, the surface of the country would be shrouded from view by the exhalations that rise from the valleys and plains, and diffuse themselves through the atmosphere. Considering, however, that only half-a-mile of the ascent remained to be performed on foot after starting from our resting-place, we reckoned with certainty upon accomplishing the distance in little more than an hour.

A short ride from the outskirts of the city brought us to the swelling roots of the mighty sierra, which from this point gradually sloped upwards for more than twenty miles, till it attained its highest elevation. Here on leaving the fertile vega, there was no imperceptible

transition from the prodigal abundance of a rich plain into the less fruitful cultivation of mountain acclivities. Sterility encompassed us from the moment our animals began to breast the rocky pathway; and looking upwards, the scenery wore the same aspect, impressed in bolder characters: dark, lowering crags, shivered peaks, and stony ranges pierced by gaps and ravines, denoted a region abandoned to desolation. Still it had its green spots; as our track generally led along the crest of elevated ridges, the eye from this vantage ground commanded the interior of the valleys on either side, and occasionally penetrated into the depths of others more remote. Some were beautifully green, and possessed their foaming brooks, along whose banks a few tall poplars were picturesquely sprinkled; one or two, again, were diversified by mountain hamlets, whose appearance in the heart of this rocky wilderness presented a picture of industry and content joined to an air of utter seclusion. A few houses grouped irregularly together—the church or ermita at one end, some straggling huts perched upon projecting crags, a thread of verdure stealing down the valley—these constituted a picture of peace, silence, and perhaps happiness, the effect of which, surrounded by its dusky frame of frowning ridges, was indescribably striking. At every step, however, that carried us upwards, such glimpses became less frequent, and for leagues we continued to toil among the wildest mountain scenery it is possible to conceive. The twilight of the southern skies then drew abruptly to a close; and while the failing light rendered our progress along the rugged track more than ordinarily slow, the wind began to rise, or, to speak more correctly, we began to ascend into a region where for the time being it was holding its boisterous

revels. On the summits of the unsheltered ridges, and in the narrow gorges between them, the gusts blew furiously, and withal roared so loud as to drown our voices even when we shouted to each other. At one precipitous slope, which scarcely afforded footing for our mules, the "burro" that carried our load of provender made a false step, and stumbled. Before it could recover itself a sudden blast poured down from the heights, and in an instant the poor animal was overpowered, and hurled on its side with a crash that boded havoc to our stock of edibles. Luckily the mozo held on stoutly by the halter, and succeeded in keeping its head to wind; and then the rest of us scrambling down to where it lay helpless and passive, raised it by main force, and pushed it up the ascent. This caused some delay, and when success had crowned our exertions the last traces of light had disappeared; notwithstanding the darkness, however, we struggled onwards, sometimes in sheltered nooks making good progress, but on the bleak ridges engaged in a stubborn contest with the wind, that threatened to launch us over the precipices that dropped away on either side. At length, when we were about to choose a place of bivouac for the night, as further progress on the verge of chasms was becoming a work of danger, on turning an angle of a rock Juanico descried a faint light; this he pronounced to proceed from the station of the neveros. The sight was peculiarly welcome, as, in addition to the difficulties of the path, the wind blew keenly, and we were both wearied and cold: pushing on, therefore, at a brisker pace, we arrived within a short distance of the spot where the light had been seen. The track, however, instead of leading direct to it, seemed to proceed along the ridge on which we

stood, and showed no indications of turning down into the hollow, at the bottom of which, and some distance to the left, was burning the fire that first attracted our notice. Unable to find a way, we shouted out for directions to guide us down the slope, the surface of which, one could plainly discern, was covered with huge blocks of stone. For some minutes the call was unanswered by those whom we supposed to be in charge of the station; at length a blaze of light burst forth from the spot, and illuminated a wide circle around it. The effect, under the circumstances, was peculiarly fine: in the centre was a dark figure, holding up the flaming brand, from which the wind carried a long train of sparks; behind him the mountain remained in undisturbed gloom, while the rude masses of rock in front cast strange shadows towards us: then the light sank with the same suddenness with which it appeared, and left the scene apparently involved in thicker darkness.

Our arrival was the cause of no slight astonishment to the solitary individual in possession of the fire: the sight of travellers was to him a rare event, as few but neveros ever pay these regions a visit; and when strangers did make their appearance, it was usually during the hours of light. He did his best, however, to make us comfortable, and placed his house at our disposal—if indeed that could be called a house which boasted of the skies for a roof, and consisted merely of a low wall encircling a fire placed on the ground. Round the interior ran a sort of divan, constructed of earth and sharp pointed stones, which served as a sleeping place at night. Upon this, wrapped in my manta, and with a huge water-melon for a pillow, I stretched myself, and speedily forgot in slumber the fatigues of the day. During the night I awoke several times, to hear the

wind howling fearfully around the nearest summits. As one or two cold blasts swept into our sheltered hollow, scattering the embers of the fire, and, in spite of cloaks and wrappings, sending a freezing chill into one's bones, I learnt to appreciate the advantages of a roof; and certain opinions I expressed on a former occasion, respecting the pleasures of spending a night under the canopy of heaven, underwent a decided change. When morning broke, the gale had increased to a hurricane. Its fury, only partially felt in the narrow ravine in which we lay, was plainly visible upon the exposed flanks of the surrounding ridges; such shrubs as found a footing on the rocky surfaces were seen to be bent flat to the ground, and from time to time large stones dislodged by the wind came rolling down the acclivities. In such weather it would have been dangerous to have mounted the Picacho, upon whose sides the wind beat with unbroken force—to say nothing of the extreme probability that, on reaching the summit, the prospect would be obscured by clouds and mists from the disturbed waters of the Mediterranean. My determination, therefore, was to wait until the gale showed some signs of abating, before I ventured higher up; and if it did not lull before the following day, then at all hazards to make the attempt rather than return *re infectâ*. The next question was how to beguile this interval of doubtful duration; for although the novelty of spending a day at an altitude of ten thousand feet above the sea was sufficiently pleasing, it required something more than this to prevent the hours from hanging heavy on our hands in the midst of the dreary scenery that encircled our retreat. Fortunately, the day previous I had received a packet of newspapers; and not having leisure to read them then, had brought them with me, in the expecta-

tion of finding some unoccupied moments for glancing at their contents. Now they served us in good stead, particularly as the nevero conducted us to an abode where we might read in positive comfort. The evening before, he had informed us that there was a "cueva" near, which was at our service, should we prefer passing the night there rather than in the open air. The word "cueva," however, which signifies a "cave," suggested the image of some "antre vast," dripping with icy dews; and under this impression we retained our positions by the fire-place, as being preferable to the damp couch that such an asylum promised. Now, however, it appeared that the "cueva" was the work of man, instead of a natural excavation in the mountain side; it was a construction resembling in form a huge beehive, and was situated in the ravine about fifty yards from our resting-place. A rude mass it was of stones and clay, only distinguishable from the blocks around by the rounded shape given it by its builders: in that point as well as in the nature of the entrance they seemed to have imitated the architecture of the industrious insects I have named, for admittance was only to be effected by crawling on hands and knees through an aperture left on one side. Here, reclining luxuriously on the straw with which the floor was covered, we listened with unconcern to the roaring of the blast, and could have defied the pelting of the storm had it come, for the place was perfectly water-tight. Moreover there were within our citadel no internal foes to peace; at that great elevation the insect plagues of Spain cease to exist, or at all events to molest; and thus it falls to my lot to boast of an event which it would be difficult for many natives or strangers to parallel—viz., that I spent a whole day in Spain unmolested by the assault either of pulga

or chinche. It was a day to be noted with a white mark.

Towards evening the violence of the wind subsided a little; and hailing this as a favourable omen, I resolved to move higher up the mountain to another hut, which the neveros had constructed for their convenience. My determination was sincerely regretted by our friend of the cueva, who, as I had allowed him unrestricted access to the store of provender, had spent half the day in frying rashers of bacon, and was exceedingly loth to desist from so agreeable an occupation. He readily, however, pointed out the track, which first crossed a ravine filled with snow, and from which the neveros filled their panniers, and then led up by a small rill fed by the melting of the snows higher up. Its banks were carpeted with a narrow margin of pale green sward, but, this excepted, no other trace of vegetation diversified the surface of brown rock that everywhere met the eye; it elevated itself around us sometimes into precipitous crags, but oftener into heaps of stony masses resembling gigantic walls overthrown and crumbling into ruins. At the head of a ravine we found the resting-place of which we were in quest. This was merely an overhanging ledge of rock, before which the neveros had raised a wall of loose stones; but, such as it was, its shelter was eagerly accepted, as the cold after nightfall was such that our warmest coverings excluded it with difficulty. Daylight was, therefore, a signal that brought the whole party with wonderful alacrity to their feet, or rather knees, for only by such a mode of progression was the exit from our den to be made. Juanico then kindled a fire and prepared "something hot" for breakfast, while we endeavoured by brisk motion to restore some animation to our limbs, cramped

and chilled by contact with the rocky and uneven floor upon which we had passed the night. Looking upwards to the Picacho, the ascent seemed devoid of dangerous obstacles; there were no yawning chasms to skirt, nor did I perceive a single ravine intervening between its towering summit and the spot where I stood; all was an uninterrupted rise, characterised by the usual feature of becoming more steep and precipitous at the highest point of elevation. Setting out in advance, I followed a track worn by the neveros, which, after ascending among massive fragments of rock for a quarter of a mile, was lost beneath a field of snow that spread round the base of the loftiest pinnacle that remained to be surmounted.

A little to the left there appeared some traces of a track; and pursuing this, which skirted the snowy field I have described, I found it led along the brow of a precipice, presenting a clear drop of several hundred feet. On the summit of this ran a narrow terrace, bounded on the right hand by a perpendicular wall of prodigious height, while the limited space between this and the abyss on the left was diminished one-half by a high bank of snow. This the breath of summer had melted in such a way that it overhung its base, and formed a half arch over one's head. For this reason it was necessary to proceed warily, lest by the displacement of a stone, or by a sound louder than usual, I should bring down the glittering roof as I passed under it, and be hurled along with the avalanche into the gulf below. In other respects, although the ground underfoot was moist and slippery from the melting of the snow, and sloped towards the precipice more decidedly than was agreeable, there were no dangers which ordinary caution could not obviate. It was only at one

or two points, where projecting buttresses from the wall narrowed the pathway to a ledge scarcely a foot in breadth, that one felt inclined to hold one's breath, for at these spots a slip or false step would have been destruction. After proceeding thus cautiously for a hundred yards, I discovered that my labour had been in vain; the ledge terminated in a natural ladder of rock, that descended by break-neck steps to the rocky depths far below. I was, however, far from regretting this unforeseen termination to the route I had chosen, for it had conducted me to a position where a spectacle of unequalled grandeur burst upon the sight. In front rose a semicircular precipice to the height of many hundred feet, being, in fact, a continuation of the wall of rock on my right, which now swept round with a noble curve to the left. Everywhere its sides were as perpendicular as if the plumb-line had been applied to them; and the foundations were hidden in an enormous mass of snow, whose unsullied purity contrasted strangely with the gloomy pile with which it was in contact. Round the summit of this vast amphitheatre rose a series of pinnacles of unequal height, the least of them exceeding a pyramid in bulk, among which the giant form of the Picacho towered conspicuously.

Turning back from this magnificent scene, I wended my steps along the terrace to the snowy field from which I had diverged, where I found Juanico waiting, and in some perplexity regarding the cause of my disappearance from view. Crossing the snow, our course lay directly up the steep face of the peak, which was here thickly covered with debris and massive blocks of micaceous schist, the material of which the upper part of the mountain is composed. Our progress could only be made by leaping from one mass to another—an

exertion that speedily became excessively fatiguing, and compelled us to pause at every ten yards of the ascent to recover breath and strength. At the same time the wind blew keenly, and easily penetrated the light summer clothing I wore, so that at the conclusion of such halts I found myself partially frozen. On this account I felt by no means inclined to linger by the way, and accordingly half an hour's strenuous efforts placed me on the summit of the peak. Following the example of Juanico, who had preceded me, I crept into a fissure of the rock; and there safely moored against the violence of the wind, had abundant opportunity to contemplate the prospect.

My first impulse was to look down the terrific precipice, on the brink of which I stood. The reader will easily picture to himself my position by imagining a circular wall eight hundred feet in height, on the coping of which I was steadying myself. Perhaps, also, he can enter into the mingled sensations of awe and wonder with which I looked into this yawning void, and regarded the colossal proportions of its barriers. Age had not scooped it out by the slow process of decay, but it appeared to have been cloven out of the mountain top by the stroke of a hand mightier than the elements; its sides, sheer and steep, were as sharp-edged as on the day they parted asunder; and all that time could effect was to blacken them, and thus fill the gulf they embraced with a gloom and savage dreariness it is difficult for words to describe.

The view, however, from the "earth-o'ergazing summit" of a lofty peak, though it draws the vision downwards, is one that makes our thoughts take an upward flight. Heaven above, earth beneath, and boundless space around—I know not what may stir the spirit

more than such a spectacle. To see on the one hand that world we call our own receding, as it were, into the distance, and on the other the broad threshold of immensity stretching out before us, awakens a host of feelings of overpowering force. We are standing on the confines of an upper world: no nearer may we stand in our mortal state: and urged by this thought, how intently does the eye scan the vault above it, as if it could catch a glimpse of the wonders so mysteriously hidden! But the mighty firmament baffles inquiry; the volume shall not open till the scales of mortality drop from our eyes. And then with what thrilling emotion does one look down upon the high places around, feeling that we behold them as they are seen by Heaven! How glorious to see the deepest recesses of this mountain world disclosed to view, as if a veil had been withdrawn from it; and with supernatural ease to pry into the depths of its narrowest gorges, its most hidden nooks, and trace the shape of its most inaccessible peaks!

It seems impossible for the smallest rock in that vast assemblage to lurk unseen, so searching is the power of vision with which one feels gifted. And then the sense of utter loneliness and isolation—the consciousness that here the shadow of no earthly thing can fall across one—that every sight and sound are Nature's alone—all this mingles with the other emotions awakened, and produces an impression connected with this spectacle never to be effaced from memory. That the reader may comprehend how vast and varied was the scene I surveyed, it is necessary to inform him that the Mediterranean, though fifty miles distant, seemed to lie at the feet of the huge pile from which I beheld it; and across its surface, perhaps fifty miles broad at

this point, were discernible the winding shores of that great continent which to this day is but partially known to Europeans. The waters of this inland sea were hidden beneath a cloudy veil of spray, raised, doubtless, by the action of the gale, which still lashed round the summit of the Picacho. Where they touched the "land of the Moor," as Barbary is called by the Spaniards, a narrow border of snowy purity running along the coast indicated that their meeting with the land was in no friendly mood. Had the day been clearer, I might have beheld more than the outline of these inhospitable shores, and by looking towards the south-west, might have descried the summits of the lofty chain of Atlas; but a hazy mist enveloped that quarter, and shrouded from view an object which could not be less than a hundred and fifty miles distant.

In the same direction, and although nearer, still some eighty miles distant, were the mountains of Ronda, and an assemblage of minor ranges: further to the west, the prospect was shut out by the intervening sierras of Granada and Elvira, at whose feet the vega spread its carpet of verdure. Though many a league distant, its aspect was still beautifully green, and, deep sunk among dark mountains, resembled an emerald lying in the hollow of a swarthy hand. Northward, the swelling crests of the Sierra Morena pierced the horizon; on the other side of them lay the table-land of La Mancha; and it is affirmed that on a clear day may be descried the Guadarrama hills, ten leagues to the north of Madrid. Then, on the north-east and east came into view the sierras of Murcia and Valencia; while more to the south the wild ranges of the Alpujarras, an imposing host of savage peaks, filled up the space between my tower of observation and the distant

Mediterranean. I doubt much if within the limits of Europe there can be found a prospect at once so vast and grand as that which is commanded from this summit. Land and water, mountain and plain, are here contemplated, on a scale of magnificence which almost realises the dreams of imagination: not one alone, but many provinces and kingdoms may be traced within the sweep of vision; and when memory recalls the history and fate of each, their past glories, their terrible convulsions, their influence upon the arts and sciences, the thoughts and opinions, and the civilisation of Europe and the world, it is difficult to say whether the historic interest of the scene, or its wondrous grandeur, leaves the deepest impression on the mind.* To the view-hunter there is no spot so likely to gratify his passion; and as that taste is shared in no inconsiderable degree by the fair sex, to them I would say that there is nothing to prevent them from contemplating this noble panorama from the altitude to which I had climbed. The Picacho, as I have already stated, may be approached on horseback to within a quarter of a mile of its summit; the remainder of the ascent, though steep and fatiguing to those unused to clambering, may be achieved without danger, or without any accident more serious than a trip or stumble among the slippery masses that encumber the acclivity.

Rapidly descending, we passed the station of our friend of the cueva; who, by the way, was released only once in fourteen days from his hermit's occupation, upon which occasion he visited his family in Monachil, a village at the foot of the Veleta. This hamlet

* According to a computation made by a recent traveller, the view from the Veleta embraces a circumference of a thousand miles.

occupied a beautiful nook, watered by a crystal stream, and surrounded with groves and vegetation; here we made our noontide repast on a bench at the door of a tavern, for venta there was none in the place. Our appearance speedily attracted an admiring throng of loiterers and famished urchins, who gazed upon the evolutions of a fork with a surprise that expresed their ignorance of its use as a substitute for fingers.

During the remaining portion of my stay in Granada, I wandered without settled purpose through the city and its environs, directing my steps as fancy impelled; sometimes straying up the narrow vale of the Darro, or visiting the Generalife, or bending my course through the Vega, with no fixed point in view. One of the longest of these excursions brought me to the village of Zubia, a locality seldom visited by travellers, though connected with a memorable event in the life of Isabel la Catolica. While the Christian forces beleaguered Granada, their noble queen, impelled by motives of curiosity, was desirous of approaching as near as possible to the walls of the city, in order to obtain a closer view of those spires and minarets upon which her triumphant subjects were destined to place the Cross. For this purpose she quitted the royal encampment at Santa Fe, and, protected by an escort, advanced as far as this village. The movement, however, did not escape the notice of the Moors; a strong body sallied forth and impetuously assailed the party, whose temerity seemed to invite an attack. In the skirmish that ensued, the queen found a place of retreat beneath the boughs of a spreading laurel, around which her gallant cavaliers fought stoutly until the arrival of succours from the Spanish host caused the foe to withdraw. To commemorate her safe exit from the peril of that day,

her Majesty subsequently founded a convent upon the spot. Connected with its erection are some startling particulars, which I extract from the monkish chronicle that records this deed of royal gratitude and piety:—

"The queen having ascertained from her confessor, Don Fernando de Talavera, first archbishop of Granada, that the day of the skirmish was consecrated by the Church to Saint Louis, King of France, dedicated to him the convent of the Zubia as an eternal monument of her gratitude. In the garden of the convent remained the laurel of the queen, close to which is a cross of large dimensions, placed upon a pedestal piously formed of skulls and bones of the dead. Among those spoils of our mortal frame there was a skull so restless, that however often it was ranged in order with the others, it would by no means abide in their company; it was repeatedly seen to leave its position, and this induced the friars to take more than ordinary precaution to fix it in its niche. But in spite of their purpose the skull leaped from the calvary, from which at length it remained excluded; for the friars being convinced that it was that of a Mahomedan, praised the mysterious hand that plucked it from among those which were anointed with the holy ointment in baptism."

Without much difficulty I gained admission into the garden of the convent, for, in common with all the monastic edifices in the hands of government, this religious building was abandoned to neglect, and bore witness to the depredations of the covetous or mischievous. The garden was overgrown with weeds, and in a state of complete disorder; but in the midst of it there still flourished a clump of noble laurels, the finest I had yet seen in Andalucia, and which anywhere would have attracted observation. Here, then, was the

site of the incident to which I have alluded; and I would fain have fancied that under the shade of the largest bush the queen had sought shelter, and from thence watched with anxious eye the struggle of her devoted followers against superior numbers; but the illusion could only have been indulged at the expense of truth: though venerable enough, my branching laurel could scarcely count more than a hundred summers, and was in all probability only a scion of the historic stem, which time had long ere this laid low.

As the day of my departure from Granada approached, I visited for the last time another convent, in order to discharge with all due punctilio that important ceremony in Spanish intercourse, the despedida, or leave-taking. It was not without regret that I entered for this purpose the parlatoria, where I had spent many a pleasant hour in chatting with those of the sisterhood with whom I was acquainted. On these occasions a variety of preserves and sweetmeats would be produced by the nuns, who considered themselves sadly affronted if I did not despatch a goodly portion of their store; after this would follow a string of questions touching Inglaterra, that "far countree" of heretics; while I, on my part, was equally inquisitive respecting the discipline and usages of conventual life. Necessary as was the extinction of monastic institutions, in order to remove an incubus that weighed down the moral and intellectual energies of the nation, one could not listen to the tale of these poor women without learning that, in the mode of suppressing the convents, much hardship and injustice had been inflicted upon helpless sufferers. In the first instance, their property had been forcibly wrested from their possession; an act of spoliation for

which there could be no justification, inasmuch as the abolition of monachism by no means involved the confiscation of conventual revenues: these were the private property of each religious community, and in strict justice they could no more be dispossessed of them than could a landed proprietor be deprived of his estates. This injustice will be better understood by the reader when he is made aware, that it was the custom of many individuals to enter convents, not so much from motives of piety as from the wish to pass the decline of their days in ease and comfort. For this end they contributed their quota to the convent funds; and, in fact, no one could enter a religious house without purchasing admission by a sum, which varied according to the rules of the order. Thus, in the establishment with whose inmates I had become acquainted, the terms of admission ranged from £150 to £200; and without this dowry its doors were closed against all who might wish to dedicate their lives to its service. For the same reasons there were to be found many parents who selected this as the most eligible mode of securing to their daughters a provision for life. In a nunnery there was provided for them a home, where they were certain to feel none of the miseries attendant on poverty and old age; and hence the step of quitting the world for the seclusion of a religious life, so far from being taken with reluctance, as we are usually inclined to believe, was to many females an event that promised them a refuge from dependency and want. The injustice, therefore, of confiscating to the uses of the state, property devoted to such purposes, can admit of no palliation. It was further aggravated by the inadequacy of the equivalent awarded to the ejected monks and nuns. This only amounted to the trifling pittance of a peseta,

or tenpence, a day—payment of which was of course the last matter to be attended to. In Spain, the rule of state is, that the most potent claimant gets justice done to him, while the weak and helpless go to the wall: so it was with the recipients of this pension which was invariably twelvemonths in arrear, and frequently longer. The consequences may be easily conceived: such only of the "exclaustrados" as were fortunate enough to possess friends or relatives, to whom they could appeal for assistance, succeeded in averting the pressure of poverty; but misery and destitution overtook the majority, and of the nuns there were not a few who, under such circumstances, betook themselves to a course of life the most opposed to that which they professed. After some time, permission was accorded to the nuns to return to their convents, a privilege of which numbers gladly availed themselves: their former homes, however, had in the mean time been reduced to mere shells of building; every article of a portable nature was gone; and, indeed, whatever portion of the structure might be converted into money was torn down and disposed of. To such an extent was this rapacious spirit carried, that in the parlatoria where I heard these things, the reja, or iron grating that separated visitors from the sisterhood, had not been spared; its place was now supplied by a wooden substitute of so frail a description, and so little calculated to exclude the world, that I was careful not to lean against it, lest I might unceremoniously be deposited at the feet of the sisters. When I rose to bid farewell, I preferred a request which may perhaps strike the reader as somewhat singular. The truth is, that, owing to the mode by which light was admitted into the apartment, I had not once caught a glimpse of Sor Theresa's and Sor

Paula's features, frequently as I had conversed with them; and I now begged the favour of being permitted to behold their countenances. The good sisters readily complied, and one of them getting a candle caused its light to fall upon the features of herself and her companion. Assuredly it was with no expectation of viewing charms above the common that I had solicited this favour, but I was unprepared for the ghastly spectacle the light revealed. The seclusion, and perhaps the severities of a convent life, had told upon the health of the sisters, and given to their countenances the hue of death; while the only feature that seemed alive was the eye, which seemed to shine with an unnatural lustre. It would have been no flight of imagination to have fancied them creatures not of flesh and blood, so corpse-like was their appearance—assisted, moreover, as the illusion was by their costume, which, with its hood and flowing drapery, might have passed for a shroud. Their voices, however, belied the unearthly character of their exterior, for they were low and soft, and deepened the effect of the kindly adieus that accompanied my parting.

The next thing was to find the means of conveyance to Malaga, whither I was proceeding. Tired, for the time, of mules, I bargained with a man for a tartana, or light covered cart, to convey me the whole distance. I agreed at once to his demand of eight dollars. "But then, Señor," said he, "the expenses on the road will be something, say ten dollars:" this was likewise agreed to. "Also a gratificacion for the mozo:" to this I had no objection. "Also—" but before he could finish the sentence I civilly bade him good morning, my patience being already considerably exhausted, and in no state to encounter the various "alsos" that might be forthcoming. The only alternative was, to

take a place in the galera, or waggon, which plies between the two cities, and was to start that evening. Nothing, it is true, could be more slow or wearisome than this vehicle, which consumed two days or more in performing a distance over which a modern mail-coach, on a good road, would have bounded in a few hours; but remembering Smollett's description of such a conveyance, and of its motley complement of passengers, I anticipated being repaid for physical discomforts by beholding in a Spanish galera some of the scenes that were wont to occur in an English waggon of the last century. As it slowly approached the spot where I was waiting for it on the outskirts of the town, I had full time to survey it minutely. The exterior was almost hidden by the multitude of packages which surrounded it in defiance of anything like order or arrangement. These were for the most part the property of the passengers, by whom the inside seemed to be filled: the noisy mirth I heard long before the cumbrous machine came up and displayed its mixed cargo—for there were as many females as males in the party. In front stepped six noble mules, harnessed in line, and decorated with bells; the most sagacious of the team leading the way, and pricking a safe passage among the ruts and inequalities of the road, which was in a wretched state of disrepair. About a mile from the city the conductor brought us to a halt, for the purpose of allowing the greater part of the passengers to descend: these were the friends of the intending travellers, and, in conformity with a custom of the country, had accompanied them for a short distance on their way. With our numbers diminished to six, we again started; and while the machine is rolling onwards to Santa Fe I shall describe its inmates. Each class of the com-

munity appeared to have contributed its representative: there was the Church, in the shape of a subordinate connected with the cathedral of Granada; War was represented by a grey-haired officer and a young soldier on furlough; Commerce, by a young Biscayan merchant on a trading journey to Malaga; while Don E—— stood for that numerous body who disdain a profession, and live nobody knows how. One and all were already on the best of terms with each other—for Andalucians do not take half a day to thaw into speaking terms, as is the use and wont among Britons—and were now in the highest spirits for the journey. Among the travellers, however, was one who played a different part, This was a mastiff of the breed called in Spain "perro alan." None are more renowned for fierceness and tenacity of hold than these dogs, which, with all the courage of the bull-dog, are far superior to him in weight and strength. In the Plaza de Toros, when it happens that a bull shows himself a craven, and shrinks from the lance of the picador, a storm of popular indignation breaks forth against the animal, and amid reiterated shouts of "Perros!" he is devoted to the dogs. On these occasions I have repeatedly witnessed a mastiff of this kind, after being tossed a dozen feet into the air, return undauntedly to the charge, and, though bleeding and mangled, endeavour to pin the bull to the ground. In this, however, it was rarely successful, for it was only when half-a-dozen were let loose at once that the lord of the pastures was fairly mastered. Being desirous of possessing a specimen of this description of dog, I applied to an individual in Granada who was said to be the owner of several. The man brought me an animal that struck me as being a perfect model of canine strength—deep-chested, with

a fore-arm and neck like a lion's, while the head was small and finely proportioned. Moreover, his pedigree was of the highest class; he was, as his master phrased it, "a son of the Alcaiceria."

This is the bazaar of Granada, which at night is cleared of all its denizens, and consigned to the exclusive guardianship of a race of these dogs, whose courage is proverbial. Such a mode of protecting property, I may remark, seems to be a favourite one with Spaniards, for in like manner the mosque of Cordova was guarded by a band of mastiffs, who were turned into its sacred precincts at nightfall; and it is only of late the custom has been abandoned. Finally, this son of the Alcaiceria, besides other recommendations, had peculiar claims to more than an ordinary share of ferocity, if such a quality is to be considered hereditary. It so happened that his grandsire and grandmother, while roaming in performance of their nocturnal watch among the narrow passages of the bazaar, discovered an individual lurking in a nook, with no good intent towards the commodities within reach. The unhappy man was instantly assailed by the savage pair, and in a trice worried to death: this, however, did not satisfy the animals, whose appetites had been awakened by the taste of blood, and they completed the tragedy by devouring a considerable portion of him before their keepers came in the morning to chain them up according to custom. For all these reasons I purchased this descendant of cannibal ancestors; whom, on my joining the galera, I found towing astern of it, not figuratively, but after a fashion that threatened him with the fate of "patas arriba," and that full soon. This being the first time he had ever been attached to a vehicle, he had taken it into his head that some evil usage was thereby intended

him, and instead of following quietly, was opposing, with a ludicrous air of defiance, the progress of the machine. With his paws extended in front to the full stretch, his attitude was a picture of stubborn resistance to superior strength; and rather than move an inch willingly, he preferred being dragged like a plough through the dust of the road. I speedily released him from his martyrdom; and on reaching Santa Fe, consigned him to the care of a peasant, who for a small remuneration undertook to conduct him to the termination of the stage. At Santa Fe commenced the miseries of the night: more passengers crept in under the tilt of the waggon, and diminished the scanty space so much, that at length it was impossible either to move or turn after having once taken up a position. We lay across the vehicle, our heads resting on the wicker-work which formed its sides. The veteran travellers had furnished themselves with pillows, in order to deaden the rude shock with which at each jolt their skulls came into contact with the wooden spikes that formed the top of the wicker-work; but the novices, among whom I was one, suffered unspeakably from their inexperience. For two long hours it seemed to me the vehicle was playing at football with my head; and gladly I rose as soon as a moonbeam strayed beneath our canopy, to follow it on foot. This I did for the remainder of the stage, which terminated shortly after sunrise at a venta about a league from Loxa. While the rest of the party took up their quarters at the venta, I pushed on to this town, with which I was already familiar.

Seen from the Vega, its aspect was striking and picturesque; it occupies the mouth of a gorge, in which the Genil turns to enter a narrow valley, between high

and rugged steeps. On the western side of the pass is built the principal portion of the town, the houses rising above each other in such a fashion that the foundation of one often appeared on a level with the roof of another. On the opposite side of the river a suburb leans against the precipitous slopes of the enclosing sierra, and communicates with the town by a bridge, celebrated of yore in the wars of Granada. At eight o'clock in the evening the galera came up, and I took my place in it with dismal forebodings: the hours, however, passed less drearily than I anticipated, for sleep came to my relief; and when day broke I found we were ascending a magnificent pass. On the left hand a wall of rock, many hundred feet in height, towered above our heads; while on the right a pile of stony fragments, confusedly heaped together, rose nearly to an equal height. Through a narrow passage left at the bottom of this abyss, the road wound upwards by a gentle ascent, and conducted towards a wild ridge, which rose athwart our line of direction, and appeared to bar all egress from the defile. Suddenly turning into an opening on the right, we emerged from our gloomy strait into a broken and mountainous region, through which we alternately ascended and descended for three hours; at length the galera stopped at a humble venta, and the stage was completed. The hostelry in question was the meanest of its class I had yet seen on the road. Its best apartments were two or three murky dens, into which a traveller in England would have been loth to introduce his horse. Presently it transpired that there was another and a better venta about a mile distant, with the proprietor of which our conductors had quarrelled, and in revenge had transferred their custom to this wretched dwelling. Not

being disposed to suffer martyrdom in their cause, Don E——, our Biscayan friend, and myself, started for the other establishment, which is called the Venta de Dornajos. When about a few hundred yards distant from it we perceived two men approaching, whose appearance in a lonelier spot would have caused us to prepare our fire-arms for service. These strangers, whose costume differed in nothing from that of the peasant, were, however, the friends and not the spoilers of peaceful wayfarers. Their ostensible office, that of guardas del camino, was to patrol the roads and keep them clear of brigands; but after the usual fashion in which the "cosas de España" are managed, they lounge about the ventas all day, and on the approach of a carriage stroll out to meet it, and claim a gratuity for their vigilance.

The venta we found to be far superior to the miserable hovel we had quitted; it could even boast of an upper story, in which there was tolerable accommodation for the weary; and here we passed the time until, at the usual hour in the evening, the galera drove up. The aspect of the country, ere darkness shrouded every object, was impressed with the same wild character which had marked the scenery since leaving Loxa; the same gaunt and bronzed sierras gathered round our route, and where a prospect was permitted, the same dark blue summits were seen in the distance. As the night wore on, it became evident, from the increasing dampness of the atmosphere, that we were approaching the sea-coast; a refreshing breeze at the same time banished the sultry calm we had borne with impatience, and acted like a charm upon the spirits. Some time before dawn the conductor desired us to alight and proceed onwards for some distance on foot, as the

galera was about to descend a steep declivity by a bad road, where an overturn was no unfrequent mishap. We were then crossing the amphitheatre of hills which encircle Malaga, from whose summits in daylight a noble prospect is commanded, but at that moment the obscurity scarcely permitted our eyes to distinguish the road; and when the dawn appeared we were nearly on a level with the town. In a few minutes more we had passed through the gardens that environ it; and thus terminated my first and last expedition in a galera.

CHAPTER XVII.

MALAGA.— ITS HISTORY. — ITS CAPTURE. A GOOD SPECULATION. — SMUGGLING.—ALMERIA.—ITS BEAUTIFUL BAY.—MULETEER'S COTTAGE.—I SPEAK LIKE A CHRISTIAN.—ROUTE TO PURCHENA.—INDUSTRIOUS CULTIVATION OF THE SOIL.—PERSECUTIONS OF THE MORISCOES.—TABERNAS.—PARTICULAR INQUIRIES.—PURCHENA.—BAZA.—GITANOS.—ROW IN THE VENTA.—GUADIX. — ASPECT OF THE SIERRA NEVADA.—PRONUNCIAMIENTO IN GRANADA.

THE position of Malaga, though neither picturesque nor imposing, is well adapted for the purposes of commerce. It lies in the bosom of a wide and beautiful bay, whose deep waters and sheltering promontories invite the merchantman to approach its shores without fear; while on the land side it is surrounded by a fruitful vega, backed by those vine-clad hills which have associated its name with the grape in all its varieties of preparation. The best point of view is from the mole, on the extremity of which stands a handsome lighthouse. Looking back towards the land, the eye rests upon a rocky height upon the right of the town, whose summit and flank are covered with the extensive remains of ancient fortifications. That mass of ruined walls on the lowest slope is the Alcazaba; while the fortress crowning the height is the Gibralfaro, which derives its name from the *pharos*, or lighthouse, that once threw its light across the bay to welcome the Roman mariner; between the two a communication was maintained by means of a narrow passage defended by lofty walls, and

fortified with towers. Still turning the eye to the right, the eastern flank of the bay is seen to sweep outwards in many a rocky curve to the sea; dark sierras come down from the interior, and confront with lofty brows the tideless waters; on the verge of each tall cliff a solitary watch-tower gleams in the sunshine: once its occupants looked out for the Algerine corsair, but their watch is now for the "contrabandista," no less than the African the enemy to Spain's commerce, and the offspring of her feebleness; here and there a level spot of shore lurks under the shadow of the cliffs, and furnishes room for a few scattered cottages and their smiling gardens; and in the furthest distance the village of Cantales lies in a sunny nook between two ridges, its humble roofs screened from the easterly gales by a bold headland, which closes the view in that direction. Nor is the view towards the left inferior in beauty, though of a character less romantic. In the foreground the city and its many-coloured edifices spread irregularly along the margin of the bay; in the centre towers the cathedral, its barbarous architecture softened down by the distance, and now resolving itself into an imposing mass of building; then, on the outskirts of the town, white villas peep out pleasantly from among the orange-groves, and the rich foliage in which they are bowered; and the eye lingers upon this sight, so rarely seen in Spain except in the vicinity of populous towns. Further to the left extends along the coast the Sierra de Mijas, having at its base the village of Churriana, a favoured retreat of the Malagueños; and in the far west, seen above all the mountain throng, the dark blue sierras of Ronda gather sternly together.

Malaga lays claim to a remote origin. It was known to the Romans by the name of Malaca; and long be-

fore their conquering eagles were seen before it, the Phœnicians are said to have frequented its port. Knowing as we do how far the merchant princes of Tyre and Sidon pushed their commercial expeditions, nothing is more probable than such a supposition, more especially as the surrounding sierras abounded in those precious metals for the sake of which their voyages appear to have been principally undertaken. Under the Moorish sway it was, as now, celebrated for the excellence of its fruits; and was a city of note during the last days of the kingdom of Granada. Its capture preceded that of the capital, and was effected only after a resistance honourable to the besieged, who yielded rather to famine than the sword: they and their families were sold into slavery, and their possessions appropriated by the conquerors. In reading the narrative of its fall, as transmitted to us by Spanish historians, one learns how transparent was the disguise of religious zeal or patriotism under which the belligerent Castilians veiled their crusade against the lands and wealth of the followers of the Crescent. The truth is, that the spirit of speculation was then, as now, a characteristic of the times—with this difference, that, being influenced by the propensities of a people inured to war, it sought to attain its objects by violence and the sword rather than by the arts of peace. A company of adventurers banded themselves to capture and spoil a Moorish city, just as capitalists now unite to construct a railroad or work a mine. If it yielded to their arms, the booty, in captives, riches, houses, and precious metals, repaid them, and "they sold out to advantage." If, on the other hand, its defenders succeeded in protracting their resistance till the approach of winter, when a siege, in the state of the military art as it then existed, could with

difficulty be carried on, the concern was generally wound up, and the speculators retired with loss. Thus, in reference to Malaga, there is extant the scheme of division, according to which the captors parted among themselves the city, in proportions corresponding to the contributions each had furnished towards the siege. At the head of the list we find the names of the Ponce de Leons, the Mendozas, Aguilars, Hurtados, Puertocarreros, and others of like renown, for their gallantry against the infidel; but lower down come a long string of burgesses and craftsmen, millers, tanners, armourers, and so forth, whose purses had liberally contributed to the undertaking, and to whom were now allotted their respective shares in the spoil.

Within the town are few objects of interest. Its cathedral is an unfinished structure, in the Hispaño-Italian style of architecture. The Alameda, however, is a noble promenade, diversified with fountains and trees, and bordered by a long line of stately dwellings, which throw into the shade anything of the kind to be seen in the other merchant cities of Andalucia. Outside the town, and beyond the Gibralfaro, is the site of the English cemetery, on a slope commanding a fine view of the Mediterranean. For long this was the sole public resting-place in Spain for British dead; and the credit of having obtained this boon from the authorities is due to Mr. Mark, the father of our present consul in Malaga. Previously, it was the custom to inter our countrymen in the beach, and then only at midnight; while the burial was accompanied by many circumstances to wound the feelings of mourners, and which it is surprising that the representatives of this nation at the Spanish court ever permitted to exist. The like fashion prevailed at Cadiz, where the only place of in-

terment allowed to Protestants was in the ditches of the fortifications.

Although the legitimate commerce of Malaga is great, it shares, like all the ports in this quarter, in the illicit traffic which has been called into existence by the absurdly prohibitory measures of the country. It is difficult to estimate the number of individuals engaged in this trade. I have heard it stated by persons on whose information I could rely, that it furnishes occupation to more than eighty thousand of the population along the coast and in the mountainous district of Ronda; but in reality the whole peasantry of Andalucia are interested in the trade, and if not professed contrabandistas, are always ready to join a "smuggling lay" when an occasion presents itself. The principal articles introduced are cotton goods and tobacco, the latter having the preference from being the more lucrative of the two. It is in vain that the most stringent measures are adopted by the government to suppress the traffic: if there were no other causes of failure, the universal corruption of its servants would suffice to neutralise the best devised scheme of prevention. For some months the system of protection had been placed on a new footing; a company had undertaken to enforce the laws, and had commenced operations by stationing steamers along the coast, in the hope of thereby baffling the smuggling boats, which are invariably the swiftest of their class. Yet their success was very partial; shortly before my arrival in Malaga, a landing of seven hundred "cargas" or mule-loads had been effected at Estepona, a town on the coast not far distant from Gibraltar: this could only have been managed through the connivance of the officials connected with the place.

On a beautiful evening I found myself on board of

a French steamer bound for Almeria. This is a port situated about one hundred and twenty miles to the eastward of Malaga, and lying close to the rugged regions of the Alpuxarras, which it was my present purpose to visit. From the summit of the Veleta I had descried the assemblage of wild sierras which bear that general name, and my resolution was quickly taken to embrace the earliest opportunity of penetrating into a mountain-land rarely trodden by the traveller, though, from the grandeur of its natural features and from historical interest, well worthy of his steps. Here, after the fall of Granada, the shadow of a kingdom was given to the last of the Moorish monarchs; here the last rebellion of the hapless Moriscoes was kindled by the fires of the Inquisition; and in the bosom of these savage chains they vainly strove to arrest by arms the course which Spanish cupidity had long meditated against the last remnant of their once powerful kingdom.

The last objects upon which my eyes rested ere we went below were the mountains to the westward of Malaga, crowned with the fading lustre of day; and when next morning I reached the deck, it was to behold on the left a chain of mountains rising gradually from the sea, and half veiled in purple shadows. The range followed the outline of the coast, close to which we were steering, and then bending its march inland, gave place to the wide healthy level called the Llanos de Almeria. Presently a beautiful bay opened into view, disclosing in its farthest recess a picturesquely situated town and castle. Towards these the steamer shaped its course, passing on the left a succession of craggy buttresses that boldly spring from the rocky wall on this side into deep water; and before noon the anchor was dropped in front of Almeria.

At the *table d'hôte* of the inn I took my place, as the last comer, at the foot of a long table, around which was assembled as motley a collection of guests as I had ever witnessed; yet though the variety was great, there were certain characteristics common to the whole party. All of them talked loud and long, all ate voraciously, and reversing the usual order of things, all appeared to have *un*dressed for dinner. Our transatlantic brethren are not singular in some things: many of these men sat at table with their shirt-sleeves rolled up to the shoulders; and without an exception all had their collars thrown far back, thereby displaying their hirsute throats and brawny bosoms. A stranger, however, just landed, would err greatly in concluding that such exhibitions as the above are frequent in Spain; in fact, these men belonged to the fraternity of commercial travellers and *commis voyageurs*, and only displayed the manners of their class, which neither in Spain nor elsewhere is distinguished for polish or refinement. The cause of their congregating in such numbers at this port arose from the circumstance of a sierra in the neighbourhood being lately found to possess numerous veins of lead ore, which promised to yield rich profits to the explorers. The discovery had awakened the highest excitement in a country where the inclination to gather wealth by any other means than the course of patient industry is a national characteristic; and the usual consequences ensued. A multitude of adventurers and capitalists flocked in from all quarters, and, although utterly devoid of experience or science, were now engaged in piercing the mountain with prodigious ardour.

So many as a hundred pits were said to be sunk upon one side alone of the mountain, each excavation being the property of a different owner. What their success

was, I found it difficult to learn ; but it appeared to me, from the amount of litigation connected with their proceedings, that they were better skilled in undoing the work of their neighbours, than in extracting riches for themselves from the hoards of mother earth. I gladly made my escape from the noisy throng, and, accompanied by a guide, proceeded to view the castle. We ascended by a steep and winding path, the upper part laboriously hewn out of the solid rock ; and reached, after passing through one or two gates, a wide open space which in days of yore had been the plaza de armas of the fortress. Still ascending, we gained the summit of the citadel, crowned by modern fortifications, which, from the date carefully emblazoned on the walls, had been constructed in the reign of Carlos Tercero. Few have heard of the Bay of Almeria, for it lies out of the track of tourists ; but in scenery it may challenge comparison with the most admired in the Mediterranean. The shores are everywhere high and striking, and fling their rocky masses into a noble crescent, within which all the navies of the world might find shelter. Perhaps a want of softness may be objected, as the eye ranges from point to point of its bold outlines, and sees cliff succeeding cliff with but little variety ; but at the time I viewed it, the scenery had relieved the sternness of its primitive character with the hues of sunset, and was wrapped in the tranquillity of evening. The waters of the bay at the same time partook of the surrounding repose ; and on their smooth surface the one or two white sails visible floated without appearing to move. On the eastern extremity of its shores there stretched out to sea a long line of black precipices, upon which the last of the sun's rays was shed with a brilliancy that enhanced by contrast the general

effect of the scene. Within the bay, however, they had ceased to penetrate, for sierras swelled upwards on its western flank, and now cast their shadows across the deep blue of its waters. Then came twilight; and that, too, in a short half hour darkened into gloom, over this beautiful daughter of the Mediterranean. What shall I say of thee, creation of summer skies, blue waters, and stately proportions? "O matre pulchrâ filia pulchrior," mayest thou never awaken to the roar of the tempest, nor reflect aught but the smile of heaven!

I had been fortunate in my experience of the Mediterranean: although associated in our thoughts with a peaceful temper, "its blood is sometimes up," and then, like all quiet people when fairly roused, its wrath is far worse than that of an habitual blusterer. Moreover, in so narrow a sea the navigator has a wild shore always within uncomfortable proximity; added to which, it is singularly deficient in harbours and ports of refuge.

"Where are the best ports in the Mediterranean?" inquired the Emperor Charles V. of an ancient mariner.

"Junio, Julio, Agosto, y Puerto de Cartagena," replied the veteran; meaning that Cartagena was the only safe harbour at all seasons, and that the others were not to be trusted except during the three months of summer.

The town lies at the foot of the eminence on which its castle is situated; and, following the rule observable in most places of Moorish origin, its dwellings keep under the shadow of its fortifications, and scrupulously avoid straggling far from their protection. Here they encircled the base of the rocks in a narrow band for at least two-thirds of their circumference. Looking from above, their flat roofs presented a singular appearance;

and being all nearly on a level, one might have passed from one end of a street to another by means of the passage they afforded. On the eastern side stretches its vega to the foot of a sierra which terminates in the Capo de Gata; in the midst wound the river of Almeria, its further bank clothed with the usual exquisite verdure of a vega; while on the nearer side groves of fig and olive-trees extended up to the skirts of the town.

As I wandered through the town I might have moralised much upon the weakness of human nature, and taken my guide for the text. This worthy was by no means unwilling to stoop to the office for the considerations it involved, but at the same time wished to keep up his dignity among the citizens of Almeria. Evidently his desire was, to impress them with the notion that he was the greater man of the two, and was only conducting me to the sights as an act of gracious condescension on his part. For this purpose he stationed himself at my right hand, presuming on my supposed ignorance of the law of Spanish etiquette, which enjoins that this is the post of those whom we consider ourselves bound to honour. Among equals in rank there is frequently a friendly struggle to yield this distinction to each other; and to a stranger it is always conceded. Of course, a hireling has just as much title to it as he has to lean on one's arm, or sit at the same table. Once or twice I dodged him and took my right place, in order to enjoy his crest-fallen looks and the air of trepidation he displayed when there was a chance of our meeting some of his acquaintances; but after all I found I had the worst of the diversion, for on these occasions he waxed sulky and uncommunicative, and was no better than a walking sign-post.

Next morning, with a roguish young muleteer for my

companion, I was bending my course towards the dark sierras that thickly cover this district, and increase in height as they recede from the coast. My route was inland, and would take me by the cities of Purchena, Baza, and Guadix, and conduct me once more to Granada. We left the town by a good road, amid gardens and groves; but this sank into the usual mule-track long before we had reached a hamlet about a league distant, where my muleteer had his abode; and stopping before a door, he requested me to alight and enter his home, pleading as an excuse for the detention some important piece of business. The truth, however, was, that having got hold of an Ingles, he was desirous of showing the animal to his family and friends; and when I entered, I found myself in the centre of an admiring throng of observers. I believe they had imagined me to belong to the mute creation, for on addressing them in their own tongue there was a general exclamation of surprise. "Ave Maria! he can speak like ourselves!" was the remark that ran round the circle; and some went even the length of declaring that I could "speak like a Christian." The flattering compliment I duly acknowledged; for a compliment it was, and meant that I could speak like a Spaniard. According to the notions of the country, none but Spaniards are Christians, so that the terms are used synonymously, and the Spanish is frequently styled the Christian language. Luckily, my powers of speech were not much drawn upon, and I had, accordingly, sufficient opportunity for making my own observations. I could easily have fancied myself in the interior of an Arab tent, so much was there bespeaking a wandering life in all that I saw. The roof was dome-shaped; the light had no other entrance than by the door; and all the furniture

in the place might have been borne by a camel; such as it was, it consisted only of articles of a very portable nature, and half an hour would have sufficed to have packed it all up, after the word to march had been given. With the exception of a single low table, and a couple of still lower chairs, I saw nothing but a few mats, rolled up during day, and at night spread out to form beds, and some cooking utensils. The mistress of the house was as dark as a mulatto, and had a scarlet handkerchief bound round her head, turban fashion; her sole ornaments were a pair of large gold ear-rings depending from the ears. On the floor a couple of tawny bantlings rolled about, in happy unconsciousness of the restraints of dress; indeed, the costume of the male seniors indicated a desire to doff as much of man's apparel as might be safely dispensed with. The whole party wore very wide and loose trowsers, terminating about a hand's-breadth above the knees, which were bare, so that, at a little distance, this part of their attire might easily be mistaken for a kilt. Then came the usual botines, or leggings, and shoes of untanned leather; jackets appeared to be altogether banished, and in their stead the vests received that amount of fanciful decoration, lavished by Andalucians on the former article of dress. This, with some little variation, is the costume of the dwellers in the Alpuxarras, as well as of the natives of the province of Valencia: the latter, however, frequently discard the sombrero calanes, for which is substituted a handkerchief, tied in a peculiar fashion on the head.

Once more upon the road, if such it might be called, for the path led up the channel of a mountain torrent, amid rocks and shingle, which the stream had deserted since the spring, and would only sweep over when the

winter's rains again called it into existence. On either side, the banks rose high and precipitous, but it was a pleasing feature to behold how the hand of industry had laboured to make them fruitful. The ground, whenever it could be rescued from the bed of the torrent, was carefully surrounded with embankments and brought into cultivation; and higher up, on the steep slopes, the soil had been collected into terraces, upon which vines and other fruits flourished luxuriantly. All this was a novel sight to me, accustomed as I had been to witness in the more fertile districts of Andalucia the richest portion of the soil alone devoted to culture, while the remainder was abandoned to the goatherd and his flock. Here, on the other hand, the industrious spirit of the Moor still lingered, clothing the mountain-sides with fruitfulness, and wresting her good things from the unwilling hand of nature. The spectacle vividly impressed one with the folly and wickedness of the policy which, for the worst of motives, could banish from this region a race which had left behind them these marked traces of a laborious and persevering nature. It was in truth a worse motive than religious zeal that prompted the fiat which condemned them to expulsion; and though Cervantes labours hard to persuade his readers that the step was a masterstroke of wisdom, and was the only one to be adopted towards the irreconcilable enemies of his country and faith, the grossness of the pretext was as apparent in his day to the unprejudiced, as it is in ours. We have the real truth from the pen of Don Diego de Mendoza, one of those warrior statesmen who illustrated the reign of Charles V., and were moreover as distinguished in the world of letters as they were for deeds of arms, and sage counsel. In his classic work in

Spanish literature—the "History of the War of Granada" during the year 1598, or to speak more accurately, the rebellion of the Moriscoes during that year —the truth is revealed in these words, "Our covetousness was the chief cause of the rebellion." The insurrection, it is true, was suppressed, and heavier burdens imposed on the mountaineers; but nothing less than their extirpation could appease the demon of avarice; their industry, activity, and thriving condition were a perpetual eyesore, which was borne with impatience for some years longer, till at last the sight could be endured no more, and in 1600 the mandate was issued for their expatriation from a region which they and their forefathers had redeemed from poverty. In that year Spain lost a million of industrious subjects, torn from this district and from Valencia, and added one more to the various seeds of decay implanted in her overgrown power. So iniquitous a transaction could not be perpetrated without its attendant measures of perfidy and cruelty: in the latter quality, Cardinal Lerma displayed an unenviable ingenuity; but the system of studied oppression, though carried to its height in his hands, was by no means a novelty to the Moriscoes. From Mendoza we learn how a people may be goaded into rebellion; the catalogue of their persecutions is a curious one, and includes almost every vexation that can rouse human nature to exasperation.

"The Inquisition," he writes, "began to harass them more than usual. The king forbade them the use of the Moorish language, and along with it all commerce and communication with each other; their black slaves were taken away; the Moorish dress, upon which they had expended much wealth, was prohibited; they were compelled to assume the Castilian attire, at

much cost to themselves; their women were commanded to appear unveiled, and their dwellings, which they were wont to surround with privacy, to be thrown open to the public eye; both these commands being hard to be endured by a jealous people. There was a rumour, also, that their children were to be seized and transported to Castile. They were prohibited the use of baths, so necessary for their cleanliness and refreshment. Previously, they had been debarred the enjoyment of music, songs, festivals, and weddings according to their customs, and every meeting for diversion." Such was the mode employed to reconcile the Moriscoes to the Spanish yoke and the Catholic faith.

At five o'clock we reached the small village of Tabernas, where I took up my quarters for the night. Having suffered much during the day from the heat, which, in the narrow ravine up which our road lay, was peculiarly oppressive, I was glad to find in the inn an apartment where I could enjoy in solitude the rest I desired. Its sole furniture consisted of a table and chair, both of them so dwarfish as to resemble toys for children, rather than articles for the accommodation of grown-up persons. The table, which for curiosity's sake I measured, was fifteen inches high by two feet long; its companion chair was proportionably diminutive, and only raised the occupant six inches from the ground. In this trifling matter the reader will observe a trace of the Moorish habit of sitting on the floor, from which these pigmy chairs are only the first remove. Although left to solitude, my chamber was far from being the abode of silence, for a solitary plank alone divided me from the noisy party of muleteers who occupied the kitchen below, and whose conversation ascended without a word being lost to the ear. As a

matter of course, I found myself made the subject of talk, and gathered a good deal of information, not only respecting myself, but the manners and customs of the English, that was perfectly new; neither did it take me by surprise to hear a voice inquiring, with unnecessary particularity, what was the road I proposed taking on the morrow—if I carried arms—and of what description they were. At an earlier period of my travels, before I learnt to estimate at their proper value those tales of danger and recent robbery which my good-natured friends used invariably to connect with the very route I intended to take, I should have listened with some suspicion to such queries, and on the following morning should have narrowly scrutinised every bush and rock that might have screened the person of a "ratero." But I had long since ceased to pay the slightest regard to the dismal narratives of kind friends, or to espy danger in the idle curiosity of village gossips; and, as my experience in Andalucian travelling increased, I settled down into the conviction that with proper precautions a wayfarer might roam the province from end to end without meeting a single cause for alarm. I do not, however, mean to affirm that its wild tracks are as fearlessly to be traversed as the beaten highways of England. Many causes conspire to forbid this; but the most prominent are the lawless pursuits of the population, and the nature of the country. Andalucia swarms with contrabandistas, few of whom could resist a tempting opportunity to commit robbery; and whose only resource, when overtaken by a run of ill-luck in their own calling, is to lie in wait by the roadside and cry "Boca abajo" to the next traveller. It is from this class that brigandism has drawn its supplies on every occasion that a band

has infested the country. From their habits of activity, their intimate acquaintance with highways and bye-paths, and the spirit of freemasonry that exists among the fraternity, they were the most desirable recruits to a bandit chief; and, without their aid, it is doubtful if such leaders could have held their ground so long as they did against the power of the government. Moreover, the physical character of the country peculiarly favours the highway robber. Besides being naturally wild and broken, it presents no obstacles to his escape in the shape of enclosures or fences. The blow struck, he may hold his flight across the country straight as the crow flies, without encountering any impediments except such as arise from the inequalities of the surface. This is the sort of ground he has always chosen for his exploits. It was on the heaths and extensive commons that the English highwaymen of the last century took their stand; and their disappearance is to be ascribed far less to an improved tone of morals, than to the fact of uncultivated wastes being now almost unknown, and every road bordered with its substantial fence. What between stiff hedges, stone walls, and turnpike-gates, a highwayman has now no chance of escape, and could scarcely spur his steed a mile without breaking his neck, or being descried by a score of witnesses. For the reasons, then, that I have stated, a degree of insecurity to be found nowhere else hangs over Andalucian roads, and will continue to do so as long as the present state of things exists in the province. Every now and then a band springs up in some district, holds the neighbourhood in terror for a shorter or longer period, and then the depredators vanish as suddenly as they appeared. Amid all these perils, however, a prudent traveller may steer his way without much chance

of a mishap. Let him eschew all the signs of riches, assume the costume of the country, be tolerably conversant with its language, shoulder a gun to scare away rateros, and his purse need apprehend little on the score of assaults from salteadores.

The next day's journey is best described by saying, that we were involved for many a burning hour among the wildest scenery that sierras can display. A lonely path was ours during that period; sometimes diving into a ravine where the prospect above and around disclosed only brown crags and toppling rocks; then struggling up some precipitous steep over a surface of slippery rock—our animals planting their steps in the holes worn by the constant passage of their kind along the track; and now skirting the edge of a precipice, and looking over its verge into the abyss below. At such times, although a stumble of our quadrupeds might have ended in fatal consequences to the riders, one had learnt, from familiarity with the danger, to regard it with indifference. More than once, as my feet overhung a precipice, I caught myself speculating on the precise spot, some two or three hundred feet below, my shoe would touch, should it fall off. By such a route we crossed the Sierra de Filabres, and after some ten or twelve hours' toilsome march reached the town of Purchena. The single street of which it consisted hung upon the northern flank of a mountain, at a spot where there existed the scantiest room for dwellings; yet within these straitened limits a king had once held the mockery of a residence and court. Here it was that Boabdil, the last of the Moorish monarchs, exercised the shadow of an authority permitted him by his conquerors, and ruled for a time over a few villages and valleys—the worthless remains of a kingdom that was once his. But

soon feeling ill at ease in his degraded position, he exchanged his dignities and powers for a large sum of gold, and departed for Africa, where he fell on a field of battle, bravely combating in the cause of his relative, Muley Ahmed ben Merini. "Strange," adds the Moorish chronicler, "that he who had not the courage to die in defence of his own kingdom and country, should sacrifice his life for the success of another!"

Next day was like the preceding, spent among the defiles and steeps of a sierra. Long shall I remember the Sierra de Baza, for besides being as rugged as mortal foot ever trod, the heat within its gorges and labyrinths was more oppressive than I had ever felt it in Andalucia. From the lateral ravines that opened into the valley by which we descended to the city of Baza, there poured blasts hot as those of the desert to heighten the temperature; and so intolerable was the scorching current, that on approaching the mouth of one, the whole party instinctively drew their sombreros over their faces, and bent over the opposite side of their mules, until the spot had been passed. At length the city appeared, coming into view rather unexpectedly, for it occupied a hollow in the midst of its fertile hoya, or basin; and the tops of its houses were only visible on gaining the brow of the surrounding height. In the posada, the sole occupants of the upper chambers I found on my arrival to be a party of Gitanos. Frequently as I had encountered the sons of Egypt on the highway, in the suburb of Triana, at Seville, and at the doors of their caverns above the Albaycin at Granada, this was the first time I had met them under the same roof. My fellow-guests were, however, the aristocracy of their tribe. The principal, or at least the wealthiest of the wanderers, was a widow, whose sex did not prevent her from engaging

in the calling so dear to Gitano natures, viz., trafficking in horseflesh. In a day or two a great horse-fair was to be held in the town, and to attend this she had come, bringing with her half a dozen gaunt steeds, which occupied the stables below. By successful dealings she was now well to do in the world, and could boast of her thousands of dollars; in addition to which she possessed the sole ownership of a lead-mine in the vicinity of Almeria. All these riches were to be inherited by an only daughter; whose hand, after being eagerly sought for by various members of the race, was at last engaged to a youth who accompanied the twain. The damsel had made her selection with judgment, for her novio was a handsome specimen of Gitano blood—tall and slender in figure, and with an oval countenance, the clear olive complexion of which contrasted to his advantage with the usually swarthy hue of his tribe.

The times are passed when the Gitanos roamed the country in large bands, plying by wholesale their unlawful crafts in the pueblos they traversed, and, wherever they moved, a terror to the lonely traveller. An old Spanish author, while thus journeying alone through the mountains of Ronda, graphically describes his meeting with a horde on the march, the mortal fear the encounter caused him, and the stratagem by which he extricated himself from the thievish crew, by whose hands it was no unusual thing for the solitary wayfarer to be despoiled of his life as well as purse. "While ruminating upon the wonders of nature, I fell in so unexpectedly with a troop of Gitanos, at a stream called the Doucellas, that I would have turned back had they not seen me, for immediately I called to mind the murders that then were occurring on the road, committed by Gitanos and Moriscoes. As it was an unfrequented one,

and I happened to be alone, and with no prospect of finding people passing by to bear me company, with the best spirits I could, while they began to solicit charity, I said to them, 'God save you, good people!'

"They were drinking water, but I invited them to try wine, and handed a flask of Pedro Ximenes of Malaga, and the bread I carried with me; for all that, they ceased not to beg and demand more and more. It is my custom—and he who travels alone should adopt it—to convert into small change the silver or gold that one requires for the journey from one town to another, because it is most dangerous to display gold and silver at the ventas or by the way; and my purse being therefore filled with small coins, I drew out a handful, from which I distributed charity (never in all my days had I done it with a better will than now) among the party. The women travelled in pairs, seated on very lean yeguas and nags; the children by threes and fours, on lame and footsore donkeys. The rogues of Gitanos marched on foot, nimble as the wind; and at that time they seemed to me both tall and athletic, for fear magnifies objects very much. The track was both narrow and dangerous, encumbered by many large roots of trees, and my beast stumbled as much as he could. From time to time the Gitanos gave it slaps on the haunches; while it appeared to me that they were about to do the same thing to my soul, for I journeyed on the lowest and narrowest part of the road, and the others along the sides above me, by paths winding among a thousand dwarf oaks and lentisks. In the midst of this perturbation and fear, as I proceeded, directing cautious glances at the sides, moving my eyes but not the head, a Gitano suddenly planted himself before me, and seized the bridle and bit of my animal.

While I was about to cast myself upon the ground, he exclaimed, 'I see your macho has lost the marks of age on its teeth.'

"Said I to myself, 'May you find the gate of heaven closed to you, O thief! for the fear you have caused me.'

"They inquired if I would exchange it; but as I considered that their object was to rob me, and that I could not get rid of them except by holding out the prospect of greater plunder, with the best face I could I drew forth some more change, and distributing it, said, 'I would do so with pleasure, but I have left behind me a friend of mine, a merchant, who is alone, and whose macho has fallen lame. I am now pushing on to the next pueblo, to fetch another animal to transport the load of money it bears.'

"On hearing the words 'solitary merchant,' 'lame macho,' and 'load of money,' they cried, 'God speed your worship! in Ronda we shall employ the alms you have bestowed on us.'

"I spurred my macho, and caused him to pace along these rugged tracks rather faster than he liked; they remained behind, speaking in their jargon, and waiting for the supposed merchant. Afterwards I saw one of the men condemned in Seville for robbery, and a female receive the punishment of a sorceress in Madrid. Of the children, some were naked, others clothed in a slashed jerkin or torn jacket; among the Gitanos one was attired in a superior manner, her costume adorned with plates of silver, and wearing bracelets of the same; the rest were only partially clad."

In the present day the Gitanos rove only in families or small parties; and if they rob, it is rather by fraud and deception than by the knife to the throat of the

wayfarer. Still, as of yore, their daily occupations are connected with the horse; to buy and sell, to steal, exchange, and metamorphose that noble animal, are the employments of the greater number; to which they add the vocation of clipping the hair of mules and burros—for in Spain it is the fashion to shear the backs of beasts of burden. In all the tricks and mysteries of the profession none such proficients as they: in transforming an unsound into a sound animal—in painting and otherwise disguising a stolen one, so that the owner himself would fail to recognise it—and in stupifying a vicious one, so as to give it the appearance of the best temper in the world, the Gitano is *longo intervallo* superior to all the other brethren of the craft; nay, more, he will convert the dullest piece of horseflesh into an animated and lively steed, while he seems only to be patting and fondling it. The trick is, I think, unknown in this country, and is effected by means of the ring he wears; from this projects an almost imperceptible iron spike, which acts like the rowel of a spur on the animal, causing it to prance and caracole, while the wearer seems only to be carelessly touching it with his open hand.

The road next day was less lonely than the paths we had hitherto painfully pursued by cliff and ravine; we were from time to time meeting parties of itinerant merchants hastening to find a market for their wares at the fair to which I have referred. Now a mule would pass us laden with bales of cloth, or a donkey staggering under a burden of alcarrazas, or porous earthen jars used for cooling water. Some of the travellers seemed to transport their household gear along with the stock in trade, for occasionally a beast would accompany the train groaning under a pile of mattresses, pillows, and

chairs, while frying-pans and brazen lamps suspended from the neck kept up a jingling accompaniment to its movements. Among the pedestrians came a gang of Catalan harvest-reapers, returning from their labours on the fertile plains of the province. I watched with admiration the free step of these sons of toil, as they rapidly approached. On they came at a long swinging pace that made their progress an astonishingly fast one; and this was the more difficult as the ground was rugged and uneven, aud peculiarly adverse to fleetness of foot; but, despising every inequality, their spare and sinewy forms bounded lightly over the surface, and holding a straight course over hill and dale, were speedily lost to sight. Their province is, however, noted for the pedestrian powers of its population, and their capacity to endure extraordinary fatigue.

At midday I halted at a venta, the name of which I have forgotten, being in hopes to obtain some breakfast —a refreshment which constant travel since daybreak had rendered very desirable. Before the door was congregated a troop of mules, burros, and machos; and as we approached it the sounds of music and mirth, proceeding from within, betokened that their owners were yielding themselves some relaxation previous to braving the long stage that awaited them on their way to Baza. On entering, I found the place filled with a throng of country people, principally young folks, and all, both men and women, arrayed in holiday attire. On the earthen floor, three or four soldiers, and as many dark-eyed partners, were dancing the fandango, and rattling their castanets to the strains of a guitar, which the performer accompanied with his voice. Making my way through the crowd, I passed into an inner chamber: here sat the seniors of the assemblage, on benches ranged

round the wall. As it was a festive occasion, the wine-cup did not pass untasted, and the consequences were observable in a manifest increase of Andalucian loquacity and gesticulation. I blessed the good fortune which had thrown a fair in my way, for, in anticipation of the concourse to be assembled here, the ventero had laid in a store of viands; and, for once, I could procure something better than the everlasting bacalao. Bread, eggs, grapes, and wine, were placed on a table about the size of a chessboard, and of the height of an ordinary chair; seated before this, upon a stool proportionably low, I proceeded to make my repast in the corner allotted to me.

The mozo of the venta was a tall youth, whose office, as cup-bearer to the gathering, had brought his lips into frequent contact with the generous fluid he dispensed: the consequences were apparent in his rolling eye, flushed cheeks, and the air of consummate self-importance with which he discharged his duties. One of the guests called him to fulfil some order, to which he paid no attention; the summons was repeated in an angrier tone, for the speaker was himself excited by the libations he had swallowed, and accompanied his order with a threat.

"Who dares to threaten *me?*" cried our mozo, as he stood rather picturesquely in the middle of the floor, his arms raised above his head to their full stretch, in support of a jar that might contain about a gallon of wine, and had the top of his heated cranium for an unsteady pedestal.

"Yo;" thundered the other in reply.

The word was hardly uttered ere the jar was launched at the head of the speaker, who, fortunately for its safety, ducked, and escaped the missile, which smote