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SKETCHES

IN
SPAIN.

BY
CAPT. S. COOK

VOL. II.

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SKETCHES IN SPAIN.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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SKETCHES IN SPAIN

DURING

THE YEARS 1829, 30, 31, & 32;

CONTAINING

NOTICES OF SOME DISTRICTS VERY LITTLE KNOWN;

OF THE

MANNERS OF THE PEOPLE,

GOVERNMENT, RECENT CHANGES,

COMMERCE,

FINE ARTS, AND NATURAL HISTORY.

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife

CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

BY

CAPTAIN S. S. COOK, R.N. K.T.S. F.G.S.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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SKETCHES IN SPAIN.

CHAPTER XV.

Robbers.

The high way robbers in Spain may be divided into three classes. First, *rateros* or *raterillos*, a specific term derived from a substantive signifying mean and petty thieving. They haunt many districts, especially in upper Andalusia, where they sculk about the outskirts of towns and villages, attacking the unwary traveller in the dusk, generally with a great numerical superiority. They are not unfrequently gypsies and other vagrants of the same description, and their ignoble habits make it unnecessary to describe them more fully.

The second class is composed of bands occasionally mounted, but more frequently on foot, to whom the appellation of *salteadores* may be given. They either remain constantly out, or sally forth from their villages, on occasional, preconcerted enterprises, returning afterwards to their usual occupations.

The third, are the royal or noble race, who are regularly equipped and keep the field constantly, on horseback under acknowledged chiefs in open defiance of the authorities. They are now only found in lower Andalusia.

The second class is the most numerous. They are seen in the Castiles, Valencia, Murcia, Andalusia, and occasionally in Catalonia and Estremadura, but rarely in Galicia, Asturias, the northern or free Provinces, Navarre or Aragon.

A regular organisation of *salteadores* exists in the wretched villages of the Somosierra and Guadarrama, who infest the great roads of Bayonne and Valladolid, and occasionally even those which connect the *sitios reales*. They were seldom sufficiently strong to attack the diligences, but the couriers from France were never secure from them during the time I was in Spain.

They have correspondents in the villages from whom they obtain intelligence. Their beats extend to within a few miles of Madrid, and the favourite scene of their exploits is the plain at the south foot of the range. They are scarcely ever captured and no serious measures appear to have been taken to abate such an abominable nuisance, which a few cavalry would easily effect. The Russian ambassador was robbed and ill treated a few months since whilst travelling post, and just as I left the country, a lady from America who had the imprudence to display a quantity of diamonds at Burgos, was stopped on the way to Madrid by eight men, who demanded the casket, of which they knew all the particulars. She was in the diligence and I believe the other passengers were not molested. In other parts of old Castile they are now rare, but a few *presidarios* occasionally make their es-

cape, and exchange the monotonous employment of working on the canal for more congenial occupation. As they have no connections in the villages, they are, however, in general soon recaptured.

In the mountains of Valencia, a few months since a *salteador*, named from his diminutive size and activity "El Gato" the cat, had carried on his operations most successfully for a considerable period.

He had been a constitutional leader and being outlawed adopted this mode of life. He was courageous, generous and charitable to the poor, seldom injuring any one excepting the Miqueletes (armed police) to whom he bore implacable hatred. His unerring aim and knowledge of the country enabled him to kill great numbers of them. He was at last surprised whilst engaged in a love affair, being betrayed in all probability by a rival. He refused to surrender, and, I believe died by his own hands. The dreadful murder related by the young American took place amongst a savage race on the lower Ebro; very few persons were concerned in it. The regular bands occasionally take the redressing of grievances into their hands. Some years since, I believe in La Mancha, a party existed, the leader of which has been known to enter the villages in the day time and summoning the authorities, order the magazines to be opened and provisions to be distributed to the poor. It frequently happens, that after floating on the verge of society for a period, these characters either by positive *indulto* or pardon, or by connivance of the tribunals, from whom they purchase impunity by sacrificing a part of their gains, are again absorbed into the circulation, and become peaceable and orderly citizens. In two different towns of old Castile, I was lodged in the principal *posadas*, of

which the masters were retired robbers. They were both superior men in style and manners; one accompanied me about the town as guide, his house was orderly and well conducted. In that of the other the company had a more suspicious and equivocal appearance, and an individual was pointed out to me in the groupe assembled at the fireside, who had very recently been condemned to death.

In 1830, it was officially announced in the gazette, that the scattered bands from various parts of the Sierra Morena, after being some time in repose, had assembled their remnants, consisting of a considerable number, and had made an attack in the Despeña Perros (a celebrated defile on the road to Andalusia) upon a chain of presidarios who were on their way to some southern depot. The escort who were conducting them, however, had better fortune than their predecessors in their rencontre with Don Quixote in the same district, and they were repulsed. This expedition which required extensive cooperation and intelligence amongst people spread over a large tract of country, and was undertaken for the sole and disinterested object of releasing some companions from durance, could only have been witnessed in Spain.

Although the object cannot be defended; the motives of people thus true and faithful in a bad cause, reflect credit on them, and are very different from those which influence similar associations in other countries.

The wide range of Andalusia, however, is the classic ground of the robber tribe, where every rank and gradation may be seen, and the life of this peculiar modification of society studied in mass or in detail. The whole range of the kingdoms incorporated in this province, exhibit its semi arab race, in the constant exercise of habits derived

from their ancestors. The boundaries are so marked, that the instant you cross the Guadalquivir and enter the Sierra Morena, they are seldom seen. The population of the greater part of that range are so far from leaguings with or tolerating them, as is practised in the places a few miles distant, that a battue is commenced as soon as they are heard of, and nothing more than a foray or inroad is practicable. An instance took place whilst I was in the Sierra; a small roving party on horseback appeared suddenly near Guadalcanal, where the people who gave me the information had spoken to them the preceding morning. They remained only a few hours in a post where they were unmolested owing to the inactivity of the alcalde, and the absence of the commandant of realistas, the only disposeable force in the place; but they soon effected their retreat across the Guadalquivir.

The robbers of Andalusia differ from the others by their manners and gallantry, especially to the women, which are general, although exceptions may be found.

A lady whom I know, was saved from robbery, by her presence of mind and touching the point of honour of this singular race. She was travelling and had halted to breakfast in a defile where a band was stationed, who soon made their appearance. With admirable coolness she invited them to join her, in the frank manner usual in the country, which they accepted, and then left her unmolested. This could only have happened in Andalusia. Instances occurred whilst I was in Spain of their returning the chattels of ladies when they took every thing besides; but this romantic generosity is not always displayed.

When I entered Spain, the roads of Andalusia were tolerably secure, owing to the following circumstance :

An officer, named Castro, met with a party who robbed him and committed the last outrages on his wife, in his presence. He had no alternative than to submit; but like an ancient Spaniard, he vowed a deep and noble revenge. After maturing his plan, he went to the king and offered to exterminate the race of robbers, if his conditions were complied with: These were the absolute and independant command of a party of cavalry to be selected and managed entirely by himself; a roving commission, with jurisdiction unconnected with alcaldes and other authorities; and the power of executing those he should apprehend, summarily and without recurring to the tribunals, which would render all his efforts unavailing. These terms were granted; he soon sallied forth, like a new Hercules, and in a short time the roads became as secure as in most other parts of Spain. Amongst his feats, was the entire destruction of a band, I have heard amounted to forty, directed principally by a woman, who, if the stories related be true, occasionally caused strange and dreadful cruelty to be practised on the men who fell into her hands. I never heard the entire number he had caused to be executed: but it must have been very great. It was impossible such services should be performed without raising a host of enemies in the friends and connections of the departed and others who were interested in maintaining the abuses which led to these rigorous measures. Intrigues were set on foot, and it was determined to ruin him. The difficulty was how to proceed against a man who could be looked on only as a public benefactor, and who was to be prosecuted by the very persons who had granted his commission. At length it was effected. The office was undertaken by a prelate, whose diocese was the

chief scene of his operations, and who ought rather to have assisted him in bearing up against these machinations. He was accused of exceeding his powers; of interfering with the privileges of the church; of sending individuals to their long account, without their being properly shrived, by which the prayers of the faithful came too late and were made unavailing. These charges were the more plausible, as his favourite plans were to execute criminals as quickly as possible after conviction, and if practicable, on the scene of their offences. As these places were generally in *despoblados*, there might have been a difficulty in finding even a capuchin to smooth their way, had he been ever so zealous in the cause. He was accordingly suspended from duty, and ordered to be tried. What the result would have been, it is difficult to say, but he was saved by the energetic remonstrances of the Captain general, who knew his value. His powers were however taken away, and he was ordered to act under the common authorities. The effect of this ill judged interference soon became evident: robbers sprang up like the men of Cadmus, and in a short time the country became more infested with them than it had ever been in the worst times. They then offered to reinstate him, but he refused to accept an office fraught with such peril to the holder of it.

The first who started was a man whose name will be handed down in the legends of Andalusia as the most perfect bandit who has ranged her territory for a very long period. His surname I never heard; but his baptismal appellation was Jose-Maria, and by that he is always known. He is a native of a village near Antequera, a district celebrated for producing these characters. He committed a murder and was outlawed. He then com

menced robbing, having probably no other means of living. He was soon joined by others, who procured horses by degrees, until a troop of twelve was mounted, when he gradually became master of the field. By the union of courage, skill, tact, consummate knowledge of the country and of conducting enterprises, he defied every effort to apprehend or destroy him. He had auxiliaries and correspondents in all the towns and villages within his occupation, and recruited at will, having, I have heard at least 40 candidates for a vacancy when it occurred in his troop. By a proclamation of the Captain general, the authorities of four places amongst which were Moron and Estepa, were publicly denounced as abetting and assisting him. His system was so completely organised that there were gradations of punishment for those who interfered with him. In one instance, the alcalde of some place had taken measures against him. He went to the spot where his bullocks were at work, and ordering them to be placed in a line, his troop dispatched them; a heavy loss in a country where there is no remedy for such misfortunes. A worse act of the same kind was performed near Antequera. The men of Alameda, which was in the centre of his principal beat, armed themselves and went in pursuit of him. As this system must have proved fatal to him if persevered in, he decreed dreadful vengeance; sending notice that the first men he met with belonging to the place, should be shot. In a short time he fell in with three men, and ascertaining by their *cartas de seguridad*, that they belonged to Alameda, he ordered them instantly to be put to death. One of them was only wounded by the first volley, and called out that he was not a native of the place; finding this to

be true, they bound up his wounds, placed him on horseback, and conveying him to a *Cortijo*, left him with sufficient provisions to last until he should procure other relief. These instances were, however, rare, and he seldom committed violence, unless on what, he considered reasonable grounds, or for self defence. In a short time, his second in command, whose name was Juan Caballero separated from him, and formed another troop, ranging the same line of country but without interfering with his former commander.

The country was thus scoured by these bands, whose range included all lower Andalusia from the gates of Cadiz to near Andujar, and the district between that river and the line of Antequera and Ronda. They commanded the great road of Andalusia, the communications of Malaga with Madrid, of Granada with Seville, and all those of the Serrania de Ronda; in fact all the principal routes of the southern provinces. The greater part of this tract consists of *despoblados* covered with brush wood and in some seasons affording pasturage. Vast plains with rising grounds, enabled them to command extensive views unseen, to move without difficulty in every direction, and constantly to vary their route and thus elude pursuit. Their marches were performed in incredibly short periods, and after a few days rapid evolutions they retreated into unknown fastnesses of the Serrania, to recruit and divide the spoil. Besides the other disadvantages of its being impossible to procure accurate information of his movements until it was too late, his troop was so well mounted that the cavalry were harassed to death, without the chance of coming up with him unless by accident.

One of his plans was to occupy some *cortijo* or suitable

post on the great road, when galeras and other carriages were expected. He took regular military possession of these places, detaining all the passengers to prevent alarm being given, until he had concluded the operation, when they were released.

I was at Seville, when he took advantage of the absence of the Captain general who was at Vejer with all the disposable troops, and occupied for a whole day a post on the great road of Madrid, which was actually in sight of the Giralda. His prisoners in the afternoon amounted to near seventy. The diligence passed during the time, but his object was not to rob that conveyance, which was too hazardous in such a locality, and drawing every body inside, he allowed it to pass without being perceived. Amongst the sufferers were some officers of a regiment in garrison, and a youth who was repairing to Seville with all the money his friends could raise, in order to be ordained a priest. He begged that it might be returned, but Jose only gave him a dollar, observing that the distance he had to travel was very short, and that he would find ample assistance from his brethren in the city.

The robbery of the diligences was always a separate enterprise, and was generally executed either at night or at dawn of day. I believe his gains from these conveyances were inconsiderable, and he found it better to accept "mail" which was paid by the proprietors. Galeras and occasionally convoys of arrieros conveying merchandize were his best prizes. He captured a galera from Cadiz whilst I was last in Andalusia, which was conveying the cigars intended for the royal mouth. They were sent from the Havannah, and the consumption was very great, the custom being only to light and then throw them down, when they were picked up by the attendants; on this

occasion they were distributed amongst the peasantry in Andalusia. A part were recaptured and brought to Seville, where they were considered prize of war, and circulated amongst the amateurs in the place.

He carried off the breeding stallions of a cavalry depot from near Utrera about the same time, thus sparing no sort of available plunder.

He once occupied a post on the great road of Madrid when a great number of detenus were assembled. In the middle of the day, he ordered a sheep to be killed and dinner to be provided, to which the whole party sat down together; after the repast one of the scenes so characteristic of the people, took place. The excitement, which in northern countries would have ended in quarrelling or drunkenness, with this semi African race, took a different direction. Some ladies who were of the party were in the most imminent danger, when they were saved by the voluntary "devouement" of certain *solteras* (single women) who came forward and offered themselves to the sacrifice, entreating that the matrons might be spared. The robbers were so pleased with their conduct that they not only returned their property, but made them presents in remembrance of the adventure.

This class of robbers, are frequently complaisant and even jocular and good humoured in the exercise of their calling. A man well known at Seville, was stopped by one of the great bands. His baggage was dismantled in the usual manner and the contents of his portmanteaus laid out on the ground. He begged for some favourite article to be returned, which was done, and he went on to some others. At last; as he appears to have had the same sort of attachment to his goods which Fielding describes Mr^s Honour to have felt on a very different oc-

casation, the heap was diminishing so fast, that one of the gang called out to the captain, in Andalus, the neatness of which is lost in the translation. "Hold! if you do not stop, in place of robbing him, he will rob us." Alluding to the avidity with which he demanded his baggage, that he might not be satisfied with what was really his own property.

In the spring of 1832, one of the chief followers of Jose Maria came to Seville and surrendered himself with some others. He was immediately taken into pay and sent in pursuit of his former leader, whom he engaged to take, dead or alive. In a short time he disagreed with his companions, who assassinated him and dispersed, part of them returning to their former commander, and again offering their services. He enquired for their leader, when they confessed what had happened. He said nothing, but desired them to fall into their places in the troop. Soon afterwards he called some of his most trusty followers and desired them to take a station behind the strangers, and when he should give the signal, to dispatch them. This was soon done, and the hand of justice anticipated in the fate which awaited them, whenever they might after this complication of crimes have been taken.

The principal salteadores in Andalusia were a family who resided in the towns between Granada and the Guadalquivir, in many of which they had connections and were regularly organised. This were said to be rich and seldom sallied forth but for some certain object. Their last exploit was unusually bold and enterprising. The Captain general of Granada, was travelling in state from Madrid, to take command of his province. He was provided with an escort; but apprehending no danger, he rode on with it. The robbers fell on his

rear, and captured the whole of his baggage, with his chest, containing a large sum in specie, which it is the absurd custom of the country to convey in this manner.

This was, however, "too bad," and a most severe search being made, the parties were taken and executed at Granada. Amongst them, was the alguazil mayor (chief constable) of a town, I think Martos, in whose possession some of the dresses of the general were found. This feat could only have been excelled by robbing the royal person, between the sitios. I was once offered to be put under charge of a man who would, by his connections have conveyed me safely through the midst of these people, but I had not occasion to avail myself of it. I should have done so with perfect confidence. In the Alpujarras and other districts where salteadores are always ready, they frequently obtain intelligence at the police offices, and travellers cannot be too careful in these parts, in enjoining secrecy to their attendants. One of the narrowest escapes I had from being robbed, took place in consequence of a dispute which was kept up until a late hour, between the civil and military authorities, as to whose duty it was to sign my passport. The consequence was, a party went out, whom I missed by accidentally turning down a *barranco* to follow a geological section.

The difficulty and delay amounting often to impossibility of conviction before the ordinary tribunals, induced the government to take a step which has been severely and unjustly criticised, that of substituting councils of war to the ordinary tribunals for the trial of these offences. No one ought to approve such a system, but there may be cases, in which it is justifiable, and without any predilection for martial law out of its own sphere,

it is surely a less evil than impunity from crime. I never heard any charge against the officers employed on these commissions, and their hands have a purity unknown in any other tribunal in Spain, in the discharge of that awful duty.

When I was last at Seville the road was so insecure, that a lady of rank who was going to Ecija was escorted by nearly thirty men, paid for the purpose by her husband.

The ancient practice of travelling in large bodies for mutual defence was renewed the same spring at the great fair of Mairena. This fair is resorted to from all parts, for the purchase of horses and other animals. The Valencians, whose country is unfavourable to the breeding of stock, came in a body of nearly one hundred, all armed, carrying the money necessary for their purchases. The silversmiths of Cordova, were prevented attending by the same cause of the insecurity of the roads.

The timidity and easy good nature of the people in many instances operate as a direct encouragement to the enterprises of men who are in general any thing but courageous, and who seldom attack but with a great superiority of numbers, and from the confidence that those whom they assail are unarmed. Two resolute men with muskets will seldom be molested, unless by the larger bands, and even they are often deterred by a shew of resistance.

The last time I went to Andalusia was in the winter of 1831—32. At that time, the road from Xeres to near Andujar was kept by the royal bands of Jose Maria, and Juan Caballero. Some stragglers infested the road between Cordova and Baylen, and made a valuable capture of a galera with a considerable sum of money, which

some one was imprudently sending without an escort. This prize gave a stimulus to others, and the times appeared so favourable that a band of young Manchegos took the field and commenced operations in the Despeña Perros. It happened that their "coup d'essai" was a diligence which had already been robbed near Ecija by Jose Maria, so that they did not obtain much. They were so raw in their trade, that they forgot to ask for the watches, which some of the passengers retained. The escort, whom we questioned afterwards, ow t they came to allow the coach to be robbed by such a set of *Novillos*, declared that the passengers forbid their firing and would not permit any resistance to be made.

A very few days after this occurrence, I set out by the same conveyance for Seville; with the road thus manned the chances were against our arriving unmolested. Before we reached Valdepeñas, where we were to sleep previous to entering the defiles of the Sierra Morena, a conversation took place amongst the company in the diligence; in the party was a *moustache* who had served in the war of independance and was then on his way to join his regiment in the corps of observation upon the frontiers of Portugal. This officer and myself soon agreed that the being spread out upon the road with the "Boca Abajo" was to be avoided if possible. Neither of us had much to lose; my companion admitted he had nothing, and I had only the quantity estimated to be necessary in order to ensure civility, in case of accident, a precaution which should always be taken in Spain, to avoid the chance of much worse evils than the loss of a few dollars. But we thought the disgrace of being robbed by a few common *salteadores* made it worth the risking resistance to them.

With the mounted troops we had no chance of contending, but we were of opinion, that with the assistance of the mayoral and two escort who were on the coach, by arming ourselves and alighting to walk through the defile, where we should be on equal terms, and be able to charge or pursue, if necessary, that we could beat off a much greater number than our own, which the escort alone could not do. The plan was very soon arranged, but none of the other passengers were inclined to take part in it. They declared they would rather run the risk of being robbed. We accordingly determined to persevere alone, and the conversation dropped. In the company was a man from the north, whose appearance made his assistance rather desirable, but he reasoned like the others. At length, after a long pause, finding we were not likely to change our plan, with the pride so thoroughly characteristic of the people, he said with the greatest politeness to the officer. "Do you think yourselves better men than us, that you should walk across the mountain whilst we sit in the coach. We will shew that we are equally capable with you, and will walk in company with you." However, none of us were put to the trial, for on sending for the mayoral to give the necessary directions, he said that we were to take up Polynario at Santa-Cruz, and as he was personally acquainted with all the gang, we should not be molested. We accordingly passed without accident, but four of them were in the gorge, waiting for the galeras, some of which were robbed daily, and one of them was pointed out to me, working in a vineyard near Baylen.

The next day on the way to Cordova, we passed a detachment who were posted in a *cortijo*, but they did

not attempt to molest us. We passed the dead body of one who had been killed in a quarrel amongst themselves, most probably respecting the division of spoil. We escaped the large bands by a fresh agreement having been made by the administration of diligences, who paid, I understood, an ounce, (about three guineas) for each coach, by way of black mail, to Jose Maria. To make up this sum, the fares which were already very high, were raised.

The roads near Ecija were patrolled by cavalry, but in this state of things which the Captain general was striving to the utmost to remedy, he was counterworked at Madrid, and an order was sent to call in all the cavalry, and not employ them any longer on such service. I believe this order was the result of complaints of the commanding officers of regiments, but it was not obeyed, and the principle of "Salus, suprema lex," applied to justify the disobedience.

In the spring, I found great improvements made, the road being regularly patrolled by militia, which would have made the execution of any enterprise next to impossible. No real termination however to these enormities can be put, until the government adopt the plan followed in Calabria, by making the communes responsible, and obliging them to repay the losses incurred by travellers in their territory*.

* Since these transactions, Jose Maria has received the indulto or pardon, and is living quietly in some town of Andalusia. His example was followed by Juan Caballero, and I understand the roads are once more secure.

CHAPTER XVI.

Commerce and Revenues.

The external commerce of Spain is at present carried on almost solely with France and England. The former country takes lead, a proportion of wool, some fruit, and a few other articles of little value. Oil formed an article of export, the quantity grown in France not sufficing for the consumption in the great soap manufactories of Marseilles, but in consequence of the prohibitory system of Spain, a corresponding duty has been laid on their produce, and it is now sought for in the east of Europe. With the exception of these and a small quantity of inferior articles, which are sent to America and to the north of Europe, the whole export trade may be said to centre in England. We take the greater part of the wool, nearly all the better wines of the coast, most of the barilla, fresh and dried fruits, the raisins, almonds, oranges and lemons of the south, nuts and chesnuts both from Catalonia and the northern provinces, some kinds of which form almost the sole article of exportation and of revenue from the land, and latterly corn from Castile.

The adjusting exchanges between countries thus situated, and regulating returns, which must be made in

some shape or other, in encouraging the consumption of articles of native growth, by those who desire and are able to pay for them, would appear to be true economy; the whole study of the Spanish professors is to destroy and annihilate the best trade they possess. They have adopted the maxims of that school of political economy, which teach that the commercial greatness of England is the ruin of other countries, that her prosperity is incompatible with theirs, and that her manufactures are sustained at the expense of others. It is not surprising where information on these subjects is so scanty as it is in Spain, that these doctrines should have made progress. The trade with England is scarcely permitted, and is so fettered that the merchants are placed in the situation of enemies rather than friends. It is true, that the decrees are worded generally, so as not to violate the treaties in force, and the customs of civilised nations, but in fact, they bear almost entirely against the English trade, which, if properly regulated, would be a most beneficial one to both countries, and favor the French, who profess to want nothing, and in reality take very little of the produce of the soil, in return for the manufactures they are hourly forcing into circulation, and whose commerce, if any supply of necessary and indispensable articles can be said to be so, is carried on at a national loss to Spain.

The falsity of the maxim that the trade and prosperity of England depends on the poverty and distress of others, and of their requiring war for their support, have been sufficiently demonstrated by the vast increase of her trade since the peace. That the misery and distress of other countries favors her preeminence, is

equally untrue. The reasoning which maintains these dogmata may be compared to that of the traveller, who, perceiving a house in a village larger than the rest, should undertake to demonstrate that the proprietor had necessarily built it at the expense of his neighbours, or had stolen the materials from them. The causes of the greatness of England are her having been the founder of the modern system of manufactures, and the first to shew the real value of commercial pursuits, in a great national and economical point of view; to her possession of the mines of coal and of iron; to her unrivalled and hitherto inimitable skill in most of the useful arts, whilst other nations are obliged to imitate or copy her productions, which they can rarely equal; lastly, to the security of property for a long time exclusively enjoyed by her under a better administration of government than that of her neighbours, and to the application of accumulated capital resulting from the joint operation of all these causes. These are the real causes of the superiority of Great Britain, and not the exclusive or prohibitory laws which had no more to do in producing it than many other parts of the system now falling to decay. The examination of the countries which are most behind the others in Europe will readily satisfy the impartial observer that their custom is valueless in comparison to what it would be, were they differently situated. The consumption of foreign manufactures proceeds every where from the superfluities of the more wealthy ranks of society and the general circulation of money in the mass, and very little from that of the greater number, who are clad every where in the rude products of the native looms. The peasantry of the papal states, certainly

the lowest in Europe, in manufacturing skill strongly prove this; nearly the whole of their garments are home-made. The warm and handsome clothing of the Andalusians, to whom the jealousy of the Castilians prohibited the retention of the costume of their ancestors, and who are the best clad peasantry in Europe; the pure African habit which has survived all changes in Valencia, Murcia and lower Aragon, the substantial and cleanly dresses of the Manchegos and the rugged and patched drapery of the Asturians are all alike of domestic manufacture.

The consumption of British or French articles does not proceed from those, who are the great mass of the population, but from the classes in whom easy circumstances operate to create the feeling of luxury and vanity of display which are in skilful hands the sources of revenue. The government of Spain is quite ignorant of this mode of extracting resources. With the best and most patriotic intentions their acts operate inversely as they are intended, and are annihilating the sources of commercial prosperity. The duty of those intrusted with the management of a state, especially one where there is little or no controul over the acts emanating from the throne, is unquestionably to forward the civilization and resources of it, without regard to the feelings and interests of others, and to encourage, check, or to proscribe, if necessary, such trade as may be prejudicial to it. In this the duty of the ministers of Spain is clear, the only question is whether they have taken the right method, of which a good deal of inquiry and observation would seem to prove the contrary. After the expulsion of the armies of Napoleon but more especially since the establishment of the *sistema constitucio-*

nal, and its fall, the attention of the government has been really and steadily directed to the calling forth the resources of a country which ought to hold the first place in Europe, and which has only been kept back by a long series of mismanagement on the part of the governors of it. These were two methods of effecting this, together or separately, that of raising the agriculture on which the ancient wealth of Spain depended, and from which nearly all the fortunes of the country directly or indirectly are derived. The other by forcing the establishment of manufactures with a view of applying those maxims of certain economists which declare that every country is sufficient for itself, and ought to live on its own resources, providing for its own wants by the employment of its own hands. On a subject embracing such a complexity and variety of considerations it is difficult to offer an opinion, but the probability is that they have taken the short end of a lever instead of the long one, and applied the lesser power in place of the greater to effect the desired purpose.

Perhaps the best parallel to the situation of Spain in these days, may be by supposing England suddenly put back to the state she was in during the early period of the Tudors, when the civil wars had just ceased, the monasteries still on foot, "au grand complet," vast territorial possessions in the hands of a very few individuals, of illustrious names but in a state of beggary and unable to divide their estates burdened to ruin by taxes and other charges, rather tied to their properties than deriving any benefit from them, the roads hardly passable, no canals or scarcely internal or external navigation or commerce, an enormous and unfathomable public debt (unknown in those times), whilst all the rest of

Europe was in the same situation as at present. We should have little idea of the judgment of ministers who should propose to raise their country to a par with others by the establishment of a few manufactories at Glasgow, if that portion of the kingdom belonged to them, whilst they left the whole of England, where the consumers of these manufactures were to be sought, in the same state of depression as before, and so far from relieving the proprietors of lands, were daily subjecting them to additional, unjust and illegal exactions. This is a precise picture of Spain at this moment. A few Catalan companies are masters of the commercial policy of the government and dictate the law as their narrow interests suggest, forcing the consumers to use their bad and dear articles, whilst not a step is taken to relieve the agriculture, which maintains nearly the whole population, from burdens which in any other country would be insupportable. For some years past a virtual prohibition on nearly all foreign manufactures and products has existed. The productions of the Catalans are professedly unequal in quantity to meet the demand, are of far inferior quality, both of beauty and durability and of higher price than those of their foreign competitors. The women, who are the great consumers of these objects have so little partiality for the products of their own country, that their being exotic is the greatest recommendation with them. The consequence of this system is, that the commerce as regards importation fluctuates between the insufficient supply of the native manufactures; what is absolutely prohibited but is introduced by favor and particular exemption to individuals to make up for that deficiency, and the immense quantity which is constantly poured in by contraband. The balance of trade between England and Spain

is in fact, adjusted by the smugglers in the same manner as between France and England; We should otherwise have a large sum to pay in specie annually to both countries, if the theories of certain professors were correct. In Spain, when they wish to ascertain the state of trade, a private inquiry is set on foot as to the amount of the importation of silver, an inveterate prejudice of ancient habits. The proof of the manner in which extraordinary balances are arranged was furnished in 1830 and 1831. A sudden demand for wool, corn, and oil, the latter accidentally and in consequence of the loss of the Greenland ships, the former from increased activity in the woollen manufactures, and a bad harvest in England, raised the exchange considerably against us; according to this theory specie ought to have been sent to repay the articles demanded. Not a dollar arrived, the balance was adjusted by bills negotiated at Paris and other places in the north of Europe, and in a few months the exchanges returned to their usual course. In ordinary times a large portion of the value of exports is received by the assistance of the smugglers, the treasury profiting nothing by it, and the loss accruing to them being laid upon the land, which is already in a state of ruin. These observations refer to the system of commerce as regards the kingdom generally. A late regulation, has very much increased these evils. From the abuses in the collection of the revenue, especially in that termed the *consumo*, or *derechos de puertas*, corresponding to the *octroi* in France, and the *gabelle* or *dazio* in Italy, the attention of government was called to them. As these taxes produced little or nothing, it was determined in an evil hour, to let or farm them. A bidder was found in a state jobber on a great scale at Madrid, who undertook the collection on a

small increase to the rate at which they had been estimated by the scanty returns for some years past, guaranteeing, as he well might, the punctual payment. The administration of the revenue of the whole kingdom was put into his hands, and the collection extended to places which had always been exempt from that mode of contribution.

Not the slightest suspicion was entertained of any change. It was as secretly managed as the famous expulsion of the Jesuits, and the good citizens who had been slumbering over a light system of duties, were as little aware of the harpies who were about to assist at their banquets, as the learned order were of the fate reserved for them, when summoned by the *alcaldes* to quit their retreats. This alteration took place in March 1830, and by it the revenue is divided into two branches, that of the general customs of the kingdom, which are taken by the government on first entry at the custom houses, and are comparatively unimportant, and those far heavier which are the *derechos de puertas* or duties of consumption and are received by the *impresa* or farmer general.

The sum understood to be paid for this privilege, is fifty five millions of reals, between five and six hundred thousand pounds. For this small sum the farmer is master of the consumption of nearly every article over the whole kingdom. Every place which is deemed of sufficient importance is subjected to it. The proceeds of course are unknown, but it is probable that the receipts of two or three of the principal cities clear the expences and that all above is gain excepting the collection, which I have heard amounts to 30 per cent, and the enormous dilapidation the management is subject to, in common with every thing in Spain.

The tax bears most unequally, but to judge of this

it is necessary to look at the distribution of consumers or payers of it in the country. The towns may be divided into the following classes. First, the metropolis and the large cities on the coast, in which alone can be said to exist any commercial energy. Secondly, the provincial capitals in the interior, where the residence of authorities and tribunals and of a few old families who are not yet ruined, maintain a certain degree of activity; next to these but much lower is a class termed in the country of *Clerigos*, which depend for a tottering existence on the chapter and ecclesiastical bodies, with perhaps colleges, which in most instances replace the splendour and wealth that have long passed away. Toledo, Valladolid, Cuenca, Alcala de Henares, Leon and Segovia, may be quoted as examples. The last class are the small towns and villages termed of *Labradores*, whose population consists almost solely of farmers, agricultural labourers, and the stewards of non resident proprietors. The last is by far the most numerous class, and is spread over all Spain, embracing a large portion of the population. In these places there is frequently scarcely a shop. A place called the *tienda* supplies miserable oil and wine with a few of the rudest articles used by the peasantry.

The salt and tobacco are a separate monopoly, and are sold at the *estanco*; The small quantity of other goods which are indispensable are bought at fairs or when they visit the larger towns, and commerce which was formerly so flourishing can scarcely be said to exist, among a portion of the community who ought to be the principal consumers. Of the decrease of revenue in some of these places an idea may be formed from one city, the ruined and decaying capital of a large province.

Before the war of Napoleon the custom house receipts were a million of reals per month, they are now ten thousand. I am acquainted with a place in the Sierra Morena where so late as during the *sistema*, there were thirteen *posadas* in full work from the transit through it; there are now three, the proprietors of which can scarcely live. In the first class of cities the revenue is considerable and the collection comparatively easy. In the second it is more difficult from the reduced circumstances of the consumers and the dreadful charges on the sources of their income. In the last class the expences of collection are hardly paid, and the cupidity of the collectors is proportionably great. They may be seen in the decayed and crumbling towns of Castile, prowling about the ruined suburbs like famished wolves, frequently exceeding their powers and jurisdiction. In these the consumption of articles excepting of real necessity is very small and is daily diminishing. The people have an elasticity of mind which enables them to bear privations and misfortunes without murmuring or repining. If the women cannot pay the price demanded, they cheerfully retire and do without. If they cannot appear in the *paseo* as they were wont to do they remain in their houses for weeks or months, only going out privately to mass, to visit relations, or from other unavoidable causes.

The distress which is so universal in Spain is the real cause of the scanty appearance in public of the women, which some wag persuaded a modern traveller, was caused by the priests retaining them in their harems. The total amount of the revenue collected is very considerable, and the misfortune is, that by these and other means, is levied sufficient to carry on the

government, which is now devoured by a set of cormorants, whilst scarcely any benefit results to the public. The operation of this mode of taxation is very unjust, as it bears chiefly on the articles of necessity, which from their bulk, and comparatively small value, will not pay the expense of smuggling. No article is exempt from their rapacity. The unhappy beings at Granada who gain a toilful and precarious existence, by grubbing up the last remains of the forests of the Sierra Nevada, and with their asses are ranged along the Carrera del Darro, have each paid a comparatively heavy duty, inexorably levied at the barrier, whilst they must wait days to find customers for their miserable cargo. In like manner, a poor man to whom I was indebted for an important piece of geological information, who gained his livelihood by the scanty profits afforded on the quantity of sandstone his ass could transport a distance of fifty miles, for the use of the polishers of marble, had paid his quota to the Cerberus of the gates before he was allowed to enter.

From the nature of the arrangement of the *impresa*, the head of it dictates the royal decrees, almost at will. Shortly before I left Spain, an edict was issued levying a tax for his benefit on every horse sold, of so much per cent, this being made out to fall under the *derecho de consumo*. Their tyranny on the baggage of travellers is excessive. I knew a Spanish merchant who had been detained three days by a regular trial, and put to an expence of nearly eighty pounds, for having a pair of new pantaloons, and some writing paper in his portmanteau. This gentleman assured me that he had ascertained there were in the same diligence contraband goods, sanctioned by the parties guilty of this ty-

rannical exaction to, the amount of twelve millions of reals.

The articles of higher value, and smaller volume, are either easily smuggled, or the duties are paid by the more wealthy consumers of them. In many districts, nearly every article that adorns the female form, from the mantilla to the shoe (which can only be made in Spain), is of foreign manufacture, and in a great degree, contraband. In their houses, in general, both sexes wear the plainest attire. A grandee of Spain, in the morning, may be seen in a jacket and trowsers of the coarsest and most common cloth; the women in a corresponding manner.

The equipages and horses are almost entirely laid down, and the few families known still to be opulent, are equally solicitous with the others to avoid display, or the slightest appearance of wealth.

The royal household is conducted on the same scale of economy, from the impossibility of money being furnished from the treasury, to meet a higher expenditure. At a grand review at Madrid, when the king went in state, and in the greatest pomp he could afford, to a splendid pageant, which had been for some weeks in preparation, his carriage alone was drawn by horses, those of his suite had only mules. When the sister of the Queen came to espouse the infante Don Sebastian, who is comparatively rich, the banquet he gave to his spouse and to the King and Queen, who met the cortege on the road to Aranjuez, where the nuptials were celebrated, was furnished from an hotel where I was staying at Madrid. The repast was forwarded in a public *galera*, hired for the purpose, with the *mozos* of the inn to attend it, the master following in a carriage with the more choice viands, and this for

a distance of nearly fifty miles. The same universal distress, the same cheerful and patient bearing of it, extend and cover alike

“ *Panperum tabernas, regumque turres.* ”

The contraband trade is carried on in vast lines, extending in every direction over Sierra, and through barranco, on the shores of the Ocean, or amid the snows of Mont Perdu, and the wastes of Estremadura, it is in endless and unceasing operation, limited only by the demand, stayed only by the misery of the consumers, and their inability to pay the price, or buy at all.

The existence of regular commerce and contraband are coequal. Ascertain the fact, whether any smuggling is going on, and you know what the state of the district is as to trade; it is the perfect exemplification of the protective system, in its worst operation. It is so managed by the existing laws, that in some places, there is a double process, smuggling in and out, going on simultaneously, neither of course producing any benefit to the revenue. I witnessed these operations at a frontier place, where the authorities were only waiting my passing the boundary, to arrest me, and commit a breach of the law of nations; at the same time mules were arriving in the middle of the day with cargoes of wool brought from a great distance, and at dusk passed over to the French side, to load other articles in return; thus evading both import and export duty.

The French, who had the benefit of this ingenious mode of collecting revenue, and whose custom house was arranged for the purpose of facilitating it, were hardly better. The system of Saint-Cricq was then in full vigour. I was informed by a shrewd and respec-

table Italian, who had followed the fortunes of the empire, and remained in the service, but seemed ashamed of the drivelling manner the department was managed, that a sample of every separate bale was sent by post to Paris in letters, in order to have the value and duty assigned in the offices there. The operations now, however, are carried on chiefly upon a grand scale, in a manner beyond the power of government to check or controul, but by an entire change of system.

The French have possession of the chief foreign trade in the free provinces of the north, and of course, by contraband, command a great deal of inland consumption in the interior districts.

The principal depot of this commerce is Bayonne, which was made free, for the purpose of commanding the trade on the north coast. On the coast of Catalonia and Valencia, considerable contraband trade is carried on from Marseilles. They had an extensive command openly, of the markets in Catalonia during the occupation, but that has now almost ceased, owing to the misery of the country. The soldiers were employed in the fortified places, and, I have heard, even paid for conniving at and assisting the introduction of goods, whilst on their posts. The English direct trade is very small, as in fact nearly every thing is prohibited, but a prodigious quantity of goods find their way into the southern provinces, by means of Gibraltar, and Cadiz.

The merchants themselves have nothing to do with these enterprises, but simply dispose of their goods to dealers and others, who undertake the final disposal of them. A large quantity of English goods is also transmitted from Portugal, the frontier of which cannot be effectually watched.

The mode of conducting commerce practised by these two great nations, is diametrically opposite.

The English merchants deal wholesale, and disdain the petty trade sought after with such avidity by their rivals. Whilst you seldom meet an English commercial traveller, except on a large scale, the country where the French have access, is overrun by numbers of traders, with the smallest possible means. In many instances, one of these persons is deputed by several houses, who are not rich enough to employ an agent singly. To this description of people, the selling any portion of their goods is an object, and they weary their customers with importunities. This is an epitome of the whole French commerce, which, with a small exception, is carried on upon similar principles. The object is to avoid the contingent possibility of a small loss, rather than the bold gain which is the object of the British capitalist. The commerce of France which is next in amount to that of England, is an organisation of minute particles, a vast collection of hucksters and pedlars, with few merchants, in the extended sense of the term, excepting some foreigners and capitalists in the great towns.

The magnificent navy of Spain being now extinct, the government has resorted to the plan of *impresa* or job of *guarda-costas*, which are a speculation of various individuals, but chiefly of Riera, the great farmer of taxes, etc., at Madrid. These vessels are mostly schooners and brigs, and are good models, and of decent exterior, affecting the style of men of war. Their habits are, however, little less than piratical, and they are the scourge of the lawful trader, whilst the contraband is carried on without intermission

under their guns. To this association is confided the prevention of unlawful trade, on the vast extent of the Spanish coast.

By the singular and infelicitous combinations of affairs in this country, the powerful individual who is head of the management of the revenue, is doubly interested in maintaining the disastrous state of commerce here sketched. By the farming, his interest is to uphold the high duties, whilst, in order to gain by the *guarda costas*, the more tyrannic and unjust the law of customs, the greater is the inducement to contraband, and the greater the contingent probability of seizures. He has only to enter on the speculations of roads, to employ the men sentenced in consequence of his own acts, to render complete this new system of political economy.

The smuggling proceedings are now chiefly conducted on a great scale. Files of mules set out from certain places, laden with prohibited goods. It is unnecessary to particularise the channels, which exist with the perfect knowledge and connivance of the people in office, of every rank, from the lowest *guarda* on the beach, to the foot of the throne. By practices universally tolerated, some of these transactions are managed to a very large extent.

I was in a city a few months after the establishment of the *derechos de puertas*, whilst the machinery was new, and might have been supposed to work with at least temporary vigour. In three nights, four hundred *cargas* or mule loads arrived, and were safely housed. When it was nearly finished, the chief manager had information that all was not right. He rose at an early hour, and repaired to one of the gates, when he met a whole guard of his men marching in regular order with

their *capas*, and an officer at their head. On causing them to uncase, he found the whole of their bodies swathed with contraband goods. It is difficult to say where a remedy is to be found for corruption like this. These men were serving, understanding they were to be paid according to their good conduct to their employers. The fact is, from time immemorial, owing to the miserable pay given to the people employed, and the example set by every rank, and almost every individual, corruption may be said to be universal. The pay of subordinate officers, on whom a great deal depends, is a *pese'a* per day, about tenpence halfpenny. It is impossible to suppose men thus situated, can be faithful, and resist temptation. One of the many strange perversions of character to be found in this singular country, is in the management of these proceedings.

They are frequently on so large a scale, that a great number of people must necessarily be concerned, who live in the expectation, that they will finally share their proportion in the division of the bonus paid. There is no instance of their betraying those with whom they are connected, which they would think a dishonour, whilst they violate their public duty without scruple. Thus the principle of fidelity which is so deeply characteristic of the people, is inverted and acts against those, to whom, if they followed a better system, it would be equally applied. The smugglers who frequent the Portuguese frontier, are chiefly *Manchegos*, and may be seen in bands of two hundred, on horseback, armed and capable of resisting any force they may meet with. Their habits during these long marches are quite orderly, their horses excellent, and they are courteous to the strangers they may meet with. I was informed that since

the farming of the duties , at the instance of Riera, who is in fact dictator in every thing relating to his interests, the government have taken away the horses of the inhabitants of a valley, celebrated as the scene of some of these transactions, thus depriving the people of the means of obtaining their livelihood, by a mode so tyrannical, as never to have been practised in any period of the history of Spain.



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

CHAPTER XVII.

Finance.

It is impossible to give any idea of the financial situation of Spain at present, as no certain data exist, and no one, scarcely those in the treasury, are acquainted with the real state of it. There is an accumulation of debt, for a long period back, which every successive change has added to, without diminishing the smallest particle, and the late government most materially increased it, by calling in the French, whose expences are as yet unpaid, and by refusing to acknowledge the loans of the cortes, which placed them in the impossibility of receiving foreign aid, to reestablish the Spanish finances. A system has been commenced, however, and is following up with patient zeal, for cleansing the Augean stable, and they are now likely to know in a few years, what is the real debt, and consequently their ability to pay the interest, and in pursuance of this plan, they are gradually consolidating the unfunded debt, which is the most uncertain portion of the whole. I have been informed that the labour of investigating accounts and claims in such a condition as those of Spain now are, is quite incredible.

A curious state of things arose from the situation of

finances, after the last invasion. By processes I have often heard explained, but could never perfectly comprehend, except in their result, it appears that for a long time after the invasion, the gold which had disappeared in France, was actually lying in chests at Madrid, where it was useless, never having been put in circulation. It was still there when I entered Spain in 1829, and the Napoleons were paid, at Bordeaux, six and seven *sous* each above their real value. No progress can possibly be made in the internal economy of Spain, until steps are taken to regulate the interest of money, and give facilities for transacting business, in making payments, and in raising private loans, when indispensable. The bank at present appears to be on a solid foundation, but it is in the region of convulsions, which have ruined every similar establishment. The concentration of the different branches of revenue, which have been hitherto under different departments, managed independently by their own head, each being subject to any sudden call from the head of the government, without inquiry into the possibility of his demands being complied with, has been effected lately, after considerable opposition, and the minister of finance now directs the whole expenditure. This, and the gradual abolition of monopolies, and exclusive privileges, and the substituting contracts for the ruinous system of working by government itself, are solid benefits, which Spain owes to the late administration. The net revenue of Spain, according to the best accounts I could collect, may amount to six millions sterling; but there are no data for correct affirmation of it. This sum, which is collected with great difficulty, and at a rate ruinous to a large portion of the population, might be paid with

ease, by any one of the larger provinces, were the country in the state it ought to be. The cost of collection, I have generally heard from the best authorities, amounts to seventy per cent, but the loss by fraud, and connivance at abuses, cannot be estimated. The principal heads are, the customs, the *derecho de puertas*, monopolies of salt and tobacco, the land tax, under various denominations, the subsidy paid by the free provinces, and the contribution paid by the clergy, who contribute one fourth of the whole taxes of the kingdom, as is mentioned under the respective head. It is impossible to know what quantity of foreign goods is consumed, owing to the fraudulent introduction which supplies the greater part of the demand of several provinces. Regular budgets are now published, a quite recent practice, but it is, from the want of check, next to useless labour. According to that of 1832 the value of imports was twenty six millions of reals, about two hundred and seventy thousand pounds. Of exports about one hundred and fifty five millions. The latter is certainly the nearest the truth, as the contraband is less. These sums include the returns of the Balearic Islands. The system they are now pursuing, goes rapidly to decrease these miserable proceeds from the richest country, naturally, in Europe. The tobacco, which is almost an article of necessity, but of which the use is decreasing, owing to the system followed, is taxed at forty eight to one, that is, the tobacco which can be purchased at Gibraltar for one real, must be paid by the Spanish peasant, if he obey the law and go to the *estanco*, forty eight reals; the consequence is obvious. I visited the magnificent building commenced for the custom house of Malaga, before the French revolution,

which was lately finished, and ordered to be fitted as a tobacco manufactory. They had been at work for two years. The cigars were accumulated to the amount of several millions, and they had sold two or three boxes only. Any of the wastes of lower Andalusia would produce tobacco of excellent quality, and probably more than sufficient for the consumption of all Spain, whilst they pay a large sum for the miserable refuse of a country, with which they have scarcely any other connexion, and the people are deprived of a necessary of life, and demoralized by smuggling, or occasionally sent to pass their lives *in presidio*, for thwarting this wretched system. I believe inquiries have lately been made, as to the practicability of growing tobacco on the banks of the Guadalquivir, in the plain above Seville, which there is no doubt is practicable, but very probably the *vega* of Malaga, or some of the country near Gibraltar, or some parts of Catalonia, which are the soil of the red sandstone, might be better suited to its cultivation. The ground also across the river, and in the Sierra Morena, is the finest possible, and superior to the alluvial deposits of the vale of the "Great River." In Estremadura are vast quantities of the finest land, and Aragon, and many parts of the Castiles appear equally suited to it. The greatest loss probably of the whole of the neglected branches of agriculture, is that of the mulberry. It is almost confined to Valencia, Catalonia, Murcia, and a part of Granada. A small quantity is also grown in Aragon, where I understood the fine Chinese silk worm had been tried with perfect success. On no subject is there more prejudice than in this, and the government seems borne away by the torrent, the usual decrees not being published, and the subject being apparently, out of the routine of the

offices. The whole of Estremadura, of upper and lower Andalusia, of lower Navarre, and of lower Aragon, and the interior of the Sierra Morena, are admirably suited to the culture of trees which would be a mine of wealth, if attended to. There are peculiarities in the climate; the remarkable equability and steadiness of it, after the vernal rains have passed, are only counterbalanced by the parching drought, which in all these districts, dries and withers up the vegetation. This makes it indispensable to have water to enable the tree to recover, and reproduce its leaves, as it would otherwise perish. From the effects of habit, more than from any other cause, there is a reluctance to engage in enterprises which afford only a moderate profit. This requires the attention of government, so powerfully is it rooted in society. Of course it is fatal to agriculture, which at present gives only a slow return.

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 Agriculture.

The system of letting land varies very much. In many parts the lands are regularly let, by money rent. In general, however, the destructive and improvident mode of management by agents is the practice. In others the *metairie* or dividing system, the parties sharing the produce, as in Tuscany, might be found. In very many places, the peasantry are masters of the soil, and pay very little rent. In a portion of the vast possessions of Medina Celi, which came under my observation, one ninth only of the value of the rental was paid to the landlord, the rest being consumed in taxes and other expences. With this proportion, and the paying exorbitant interest when money is required, it is impossible the proprietors

can be otherwise than poor. Agriculture is, in most parts, in the rudest state.

The spring corn is generally thrown on the ground, which has not been touched, and has all the winterweeds remaining in it. It is then scratched in with a miserable plough, and left to nature. The dryness of the climate causes this to be a trifling evil, for the heat sets in, the corn ripens, and the weeds perish together.

It is not uncommon in the south, to see men returning from plough, seated on a mule, or even on an ass, with their whole apparatus tied on by their sides. Every thing is in the same proportion. If you ask them why they do not improve, the answer would be, who is to pay the expense? We have already more corn than we can sell or consume, and we follow the plan of our ancestors. We should pause before condemning this reasoning when we see in England, four horses and a bullock, dragging one plough, yoked in a line, and four magnificent horses to a wheel plough as in Hampshire, where they can only plead in part the same excuse. The oriental scriptural practice of ploughing with many yoke together, is very much practised in Andalusia, where I have counted the number of twelve, as in the calling of Eleazar.

There are three great state jobbers or public undertakers, who are indispensable in the present state of insecurity of property, and the difficulty of prevailing on individuals to enter into speculations, or produce funds to execute public works. The public treasurer Remisa, is one, whose operations are on the smallest scale, being chiefly confined to roads, and to some affairs in mines. The greatest is Riera, a Catalan of obscure history, whose means appear gigantic, although it is probable, like every one connected with government, in this country, his final ruin

will be the result. It is next to impossible to escape the meshes, in which every one who deals in public contracts, is enveloped. Besides the *derecho de puertas*, described under the head of revenue, he farms the royal arsenals, the government having wisely given up the management of these expensive establishments, and consigned the trifling work now necessary, to contract. He has a large share in the *impresa* of the *guarda costas*, of which it is doubtful, if in the end, it pay the expense; and he has speculations in lands, etc. Aguado, the court banker, who resides at Paris, is returning a part of the enormous fortune he has made in a few years, by outwitting the French stockbrokers, and by successful management in the intricate paths of speculation in loans, and other financial operations, in a mode which will probably cause his name to be remembered, when the impure origin of his fortune is forgotten. He has undertaken to complete the canal of Castile, or, as it ought to be called, of old Castile, which the government could never have effected in these times, on conditions which appear fair and equitable. The canal is to be finished in seven years, of which two are expired, the contractor and his posterity enjoying a fixed rate of toll for eighty years. The work is principally done by *presidarios*, or convicts, of which the present state of law in Spain affords an ample supply. These are furnished by government, but the expences, under certain regulations of diet, etc., are paid by the contractors. The canal commences near Reynosa, in the montaña de Santander, fifteen leagues distant from the port of the same name, to which there is a project of making a rail way of communication. From thence it passes by Palencia to Valladolid, and then, by two branches, to Rio Seco, and Prados de Alburnes. The

whole will be about seventy miles in length, the branches included; a small distance in the plains of Castile, but of vast importance, as the commencement of a system, which may be increased to the improvement of those unproductive wastes. Beside this great enterprise, are those of draining marshes in lower Andalusia, another plan of great utility, and certain profit, in which both Aguado and Riera are concerned.

Mode of collecting the Revenue.

The ordinary collection of the revenue, is vested in the *intendentes*, who have appointments at will, of provinces varying in size and importance, but it is generally understood that, unless in cases of misconduct, the duration is for five years. Their powers are very great, and their office can scarcely, in the present state of Spain, be performed, without giving dissatisfaction, and creating discontent.

This class of functionaries are almost invariably men of low origin, very many of them having been originally escribanos. They rise gradually, their interest increasing in the ratio of their wealth and their success in management; that is, of their robbery. The maritime districts are the most sought after, owing to the enormous gains which result from the favouring contraband dealings.

Their functions are nominally independent of the Captain general, or chief military authority, but, for various reasons, they are sometimes at variance, sometimes yielding to, or acting in concert, whilst at times they beard him with impunity.

Besides the intendente, there is a treasurer or reciever

general of the province. These two functionaries are naturally in close contact, and in general have an understanding together; but it sometimes happens that the integrity of one is a check in the rapacity of the other. The office of military paymaster was formerly sometimes united with the chief executive authority, but of late it has been wisely separated, and now merges in the intendencia.

As in every other department, the jealousy of authorities so nearly balanced, is a constant source of prejudice to the public service. The most arduous part of their duty is to enforce the payment of arrears of taxes, which is a matter of extreme difficulty in a country where universal distress and inability to pay exist, where the people are naturally slow, and skilled by long practice in procrastination and evasion, where the fiscal is considered a common enemy, and every one is ready to assist his neighbour in eluding and defeating the claims of it. In some parts it is customary for the people, in order to avoid personal litigation and oppression, to agree with the intendentes for a certain sum, which is then levied amongst themselves, and paid in the mass. These districts are termed *Encabezados*. When the arrears are not paid, an expensive process is carried on against the district, in the manner of an exchequer suit, and the whole community are frequently involved in difficulty, or probably ruined. It is still worse when individuals are singled out in these places, which have not made the contract. In these cases, after the preliminary forms have been gone through, a posse of the scum and offal of the human race issue forth, like the destroying angel, or the simoom of the desert, blasting and withering every

thing they touch. They seize on the unhappy victim, sell his furniture, his oxen, or his mules, the only capital he possesses. The product is consumed in the expences, and in feeding these harpies; the state gains nothing, and a valuable subject is reduced to utter and irretrievable ruin, and is either forced to emigrate from his native place, or probably, if he be of a bold and active turn, to join a band of robbers. Where matters are not carried to this extremity, the evils are very great by processes, which fall on the richer inhabitants, or those who occupy the better houses, which are rated by classes. Many of them are obliged to retire into smaller, or leave the place. Thus the burdens are increased of those who remain, and struggle to maintain their rank amongst their neighbours, as no abatement or reduction is ever made, and the demands are enforced, until the whole village is reduced to beggary, and gradually disappears. Financial troubles are aggravated by the difficulty, next to impossibility, of raising money, but on terms ruinous to the borrower.

These causes are in silent but ceaseless operation over most parts of Spain, and are yearly abstracting valuable capital from the common stock, and adding *despoblados* to the vast tracts which already fall under that denomination, many of which, a few generations ago, were flourishing and populous, and full of towns and villages. These evils are augmented by the character of the people, who submit to misfortune with most enduring patience, not stupid apathy or indifference, nor the mode common in some countries, of distorting the view, and believing misfortunes to be advantages, but from the operation of what is termed in France, *heureuse organisation*, a buoyant cheerfulness

and elasticity of mind, possessed in an equal degree by no other.

If the occurrence of such things were mentioned at Madrid, they would plead necessity, the "sturdy adversary," as the French republicans defended the issue of their assignats and other acts. They would ask the inquirer, how the revenue was to be raised? who was to pay the army and the charges of the state? How were you to deal with regular combinations to resist, under every pretext, the payment of the fiscal, who was considered, by general consent, a common enemy? They might probably add, in the official phrase when the worst decrees are promulgated, that the *paterno corazon del Re seria conmovido*, at the recital of such distresses, but where was the remedy? They might produce the instructions to the intendentes and other authorities, who are enjoined, in the most eloquent language, to temper justice with mercy, to be kind, patient and charitable to the people, and ask how it were possible such things should pass, under a system, where, certainly every virtue is ordered to be exercised by the functionaries.

The charges on the land are so high in most parts, that it is quite incredible how the *labradores*, or cultivators can exist at all. There are the tithes, from which very few parts are exempt. The *voto de Santiago* which is a rate levied on each plough before it is put into the ground. This tax is paid to the chapter of Santiago, in grateful recollection of the services performed by the saint, who appeared on a white horse at the battle of Clavijo, and assisted in destroying the Moors, in the manner of Castor and Pollux at the lake Regillus. This tax is confined to the provinces, then in possession of the infidels, and the possessors of lands are thus doomed

to pay for the misfortunes of their ancestors, although many of them aided in the expulsion of the Mahometans. In some parts, there are manorial rights on the produce of the soil, like the old customs of mills in England, and other charges and obligations of the same sort. There are the ordinary and extraordinary land taxes paid to government, which are enormously heavy, and were considered ruinous, but have lately been increased, to pay for the *joyeuse entrée* of the duke d'Angoulême. The province of the kingdom of Aragon has always paid a heavy general land tax, under the name of *cadastro*, which was considered a full equivalent to the charges on the lands in other parts of Spain, under different denominations, and even to bear heavier than in most of them. A demand was lately made of the general rates of Castile, in addition to the old tax, not a particle of which was proposed to be remitted. When I was at Zaragoza, the proprietors were opposing this iniquitous imposition on lands of which the produce was almost unsaleable, and the owners in a state of ruin, but with very little chance of success. When the corn is trodden out, which is done immediately after it is gathered, the Franciscans, and other mendicant friars appear with humble, supplicating looks and kind words, and as they often perform the real work of the upper ranks of the hierarchy, and are generally popular among the distributors, they are seldom refused a share, especially if it be a good year. Next comes the sending to market, often at great distances, on roads only practicable for mules; the *derechode puertas*; the dues of the *alhondiga*, or corn market; a forced right of metage; the whole crowned by ruinously low prices, and uncertain demand, which in some provinces causes it to be a problem,

whether a good crop or a bad one be the greater evil, and that the people are starving in the midst of abundance.

In some parts they have to pay what is called *primicias*, consisting of the entire produce of the first year on lands newly brought into cultivation, a fatal impediment to the improvement of the soil in parts where it is most required. In addition to these charges are those of cultivation, the wages being high, in a country where hands are scarce, and the men who raise the crop have often to travel great distances to arrive at the scene of their operations. A statute of limitation to the claims of the treasury is very much wanted. There are processes at law going on, at a cost ruinous to the parties, to recover the amount of taxes claimed as arrears unpaid, at the time the lands were actually in possession of the French during the war of independence, and subject to the exactions of war and military execution; the parties in many instances being long since dead, or the property having passed into other hands. A decree came out in 1832 on this subject, in answer to some new quibbles raised by the *escribanos*, expressing with the utmost *naiveté* the king's surprise that any further objection should be made to pay claims so evidently just and reasonable, admitting however that proofs of requisitions made, and assistance afforded to his allies, during that period, should be considered equivalent. The villages which consist entirely or chiefly of *labradores*, mentioned before, and whose consumption of articles furnishing direct revenue, is so small that it amounts to little or nothing, are occasionally subject to a peculiar mode of contribution. A calculation is made of the quantity of tobacco and salt (the principal exciseable articles), which they *ought* to consume. These are transmitted to them,

without being required or demanded, and are placed under the charge of the *alcalde*, who is made responsible for the amount. The people are forced, from want of means of paying, to do without, or obtain supplies from contraband dealers at a cheaper rate. There is consequently no sale, and the officer at the stated time being called on for payment, is frequently ruined by the sums thus exacted from him. Amongst the extra charges on the rural communes, in some parts there are a set of vermin, who live by performing peregrinations with proclamations, issued at intervals, in the manner of ours against vice and profaneness. The proclamations are against theatres and other amusements, and are carried about by these heralds, to places where a theatre was never heard of. They are paid very heavily for their work by the people whose morals they are intrusted with the care of preserving.

Amongst the extraordinary modes of raising revenue is one, which is happily rare, and is illegal, but it has been in practice very lately in a province, where the people drew it on themselves by adhering to a worthless cause, which would leave little subject of regret, but that in such cases the guilty and innocent inevitably suffer together. The Captain general, or chief military commandant, makes a progress or tour of inspection to examine the condition of the provinces under his command. On arriving at certain places, he expresses dissatisfaction with their state. What is called a protest is drawn up against them. A sum is ordered to be paid forth with under pain of much worse consequences, and is summarily levied in the manner of a war contribution. The money thus raised is divided into three parts, one of which goes to the king, one to the levying officer, and the

remainder to pay the law expences, and feed the jackals and vultures who follow the camp, and assist in winding the prey. The province is thus successively cropped by a mode which is purely oriental, and seems the connecting link of administration between the governments of Europe with those of Asia and Africa.



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