

in the neighbourhood of the palace be ever finished—a point certainly doubtful, since the palace itself makes no progress towards completion—half Madrid will find accommodation in it, and have the honour of being seated in the largest theatre in Europe. I should probably not have visited the theatre so soon, if the road from my lodgings to the Calle de Alcala had not led me daily past the theatre, where I generally stopped a moment to read “the bills of the play.” These, as in the olden times in England, set forth the merits of the play,—narrate a few of the principal events,—tell how, in one act, there is a most witty dialogue,—and how, in another, there is a scene which must delight every body; and conclude with some eulogy upon the genius of the writer. The first visit I made to the theatre was to witness the representation of a comedy by *Solis*, to be acted in the *Teatro del Principe*. I walked in and took my seat without any one asking for my ticket, which is not demanded until the play is nearly concluded; so that a lover of the theatre, who might be scarce of money, might gratify his appetite for nothing.

The *Teatro del Principe* is miserably small for

a metropolitan theatre : it will contain no more than 1500 persons ; but it is light and pretty, painted in white and gold, and round the ceiling are the busts of the principal Spanish poets, dramatists and novelists, their names being inscribed under each. The six in front are no doubt intended to occupy the most honourable places : they are Calderon, Lopez de Vega, Cervantes, Garcilaso, Ercillo, and Tirso. Calderon and Lopez are placed in the front, where I think Cervantes ought to have been. The house was well filled ; the ladies generally wore mantillas, but some were in full dress ; and a few had ventured upon French hats. There is one peculiarity in the Spanish theatres, which seems at first sight, inconsistent with the state of society and manners. Excepting the private boxes, there is scarcely any place to which a lady and a gentleman can go in company. In Madrid the only places of this description will not contain thirty persons ; but, on the other hand, an ample provision is made for ladies. The greater part of the space occupied by the first tier of boxes in the English theatres, is thrown into one space, called the *cazuela* ; and here, ladies, and only ladies, have the right of

entrée. The most respectable women go to the cazuela, and sit there unattended; nor is this arrangement unfavourable to intrigue. The entrée to the cazuela secures the entrée of the whole house; and between the acts the cazuela is almost deserted, some having gone to visit persons in the boxes, but the greater number getting no farther than the lobby, where it is not unusual to meet a friend; and when the comedy ends, every lady finds an escort ready. It is a fact too, that if the cazuela be crowded during the first act, there is generally room enough during the second, and more than enough during the third. This needs no explanation.

I saw only one really beautiful countenance in the theatre; but there were some expressive faces, and inexpressibly fine eyes, almost worthy of a serenade. Here, the fan seemed a most indispensable companion; for besides its common uses, it exercised the powers of a critic, expressing approbation or dislike; and between the acts, it proved itself a powerful auxiliary to the language of the eyes.

The play, like most of the Spanish comedies, was a piece of intrigue, plot within plot, and

abounding in strange situations, and innumerable perplexities and difficulties, scarcely to be comprehended by a spectator unless possessing a previous knowledge of the piece; and to be thoroughly enjoyed by a Spaniard only. The acting was spirited, the dresses characteristic, and the orchestra not contemptible; and the satisfaction of the audience was shewn in immoderate bursts of laughter.

The play being ended, the next part of the entertainment consisted in the *Bolero*. This is danced by two persons; the man, in the dress of an Andalusian peasant—for to Andalusia the dance properly belongs—with dark embroidered jacket, short white embroidered waistcoat, crimson sash, white tight small clothes, white stockings, and the hair in a black silk knot; his partner in a gaudy dress of red, embroidered with gold. These are nothing more than the usual holiday-dresses of the Andalusian peasantry. The dance itself, is a quick minuet; advancing, retiring, and turning; the feet all the time performing a step, and the hands occupied with the castanets. I had heard much of the indelicacy of the *Bolero*, but I could find nothing in it in the slightest degree indecorous.

The dance is long, at least it is often repeated; three or four times the dancing ceases, the music continuing, and the dancers standing opposite to each other; and after a short interval, the entertainment is resumed.

At this theatre, and at the *Teatro de la Cruz*, Italian operas are performed twice a week; sometimes at the one theatre, and sometimes at the other; a very bad arrangement, because it forces the lover of Italian music to have a box in both houses; and after all, one is apt to make a mistake as to the house in which the opera is performed. The Italian opera is a losing concern in Madrid; the prices are too low, and the house is not large enough to ensure a return. The star, when I was in Madrid, was a *Signora Tosi*, who received no less than 1,200*l.* sterling to perform three nights a week for five months. This *Signora Tossi* was a remarkable favourite in Madrid; she performed in an opera which had been written expressly for her; and when this opera was announced, the house would have been filled even if it had been three times larger. Nothing could gain admittance but bribery; if one inquired for a ticket, the answer invariably was, that all were sold: but

if one chose to add, "I would give a handsome gratuity for a ticket," a ticket was produced, and an additional dollar given for it. Upon this occasion the corregidor of Madrid pocketed as many as 40 or 50 dollars a day by trafficking in tickets; he bought 40 or 50 tickets before the theatre opened, and sold them during the day at different prices, according to the demand. So great was the rage for the opera, and so great the dearth of tickets, that the most disgraceful means were resorted to in order to gain admittance: one evening I myself saw two persons detected with forged tickets. The excellence of the Opera of Madrid last season, almost excused the madness,—not the meanness of the public. Tossi, I thought a great singer: she resembles Catalini more nearly than any one I have ever heard; but she possesses more sweetness and melody of tone; and is a better actress, and a finer woman than Catalini ever was. The other vocal parts were well supported, and the orchestra, with a hint and a rebuke now and then from Tossi, acquitted itself well. The prices of the theatres in Madrid are as moderate as the poorest amateur could desire; the best places in the house are to be had for 2s. 6d., and very

excellent seats cost but 1s. 3*d.*; the public benches in the pit are only 10*d.*

The existence of a good Italian opera in Madrid, and the easy access to it, have no doubt had some effect in fostering a taste for music, especially Italian music. Spain, with all its sins, has not to answer for the sin of neglecting the fine arts. There are at this moment four Italian operas in Spain: in Madrid,—in Malaga, in Granada, and in Barcellona; and this is fewer than usual; for Cadiz and Seville can also generally boast of an Italian company; and wherever there is an operatic company, there is also a company of comedians. I shall have occasion afterwards, to notice the operas of Malaga, Granada, and Barcellona; at present I confine myself to Madrid. There, music is universally cultivated; and it is rare to find a Spanish woman, even in the middle ranks, who is not a good pianist. The music of Rossini, set to the piano, is the most in vogue; but the German masters also are known to many,—and justice is done to them. That instrument so interwoven with our ideas of Spain—the guitar, is now little cultivated in Castile by the higher or middle ranks; it is in the southern provinces,

and in some of the more retired Spanish towns, such as Toledo, that the guitar still maintains its power, and exercises its witcheries. In Madrid too, in the evening, the lower orders are frequently seen sitting at their doors thrumming their guitars; and I have more than once observed a soldier sitting before the guard-house with his guitar, while his comrades sat on the ground listening, and joining in the chorus. If the ladies of Madrid know how to play the guitar, they refrain from displaying their knowledge. The piano is their instrument, and they do it justice. In vocal music, the ladies of Madrid are not proficient; there is a want of melody in their voices which forbids excellence. This roughness in the voices of the Spanish women, forcibly strikes a stranger upon his first entrance into Spanish society, and is felt to be disagreeable even in conversation: of its effect in vocal performance, one has rarely an opportunity of judging.

In Madrid, Spanish music is not much cultivated,—this is a pity; for although it knows neither operatic performances, nor any compositions of a sustained character, it owns many beautiful and original airs, well worthy of being

preserved. A collection of these has lately, I believe, been published in England, accompanied with some charming poetry, from the pens of Mrs. Hemans and Dr. Bowring.—These are to be heard in the theatres, and occasionally in the mouths of the lower orders. If a lady be requested to play a Spanish air, she will comply; but otherwise, she will always prefer Italian music.



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

CHAPTER IV.

MADRID.

The King, Queen, and Royal Family; Personal Appearance of Ferdinand; a Royal *Jeu d'esprit*; the King's Confidence in the People, and Examples; Character of the King; a Carlist's Opinion of the King; Favourites,—Calomarde,—Alegon,—Salsedo,—the Duque d'Higar; rising Influence of the Queen; Habits of the Royal Family; Court Diversions; Rivalry of Don Carlos; the Queen's Accouchement, and Views of Parties; Detection of a Carlist Plot; the Salic Law; Court Society; Persons of Distinction, and Ministerial Tertulias; Habits and Manner of Life of the Middle Classes; a Spanish House, and its singular Defences; Abstemiousness of the Spaniards; Evening and Morning Visits; Balls and Spanish Dancing; Character of Spanish Hospitality; Spanish Generosity and its origin; Examples of Ostentation; Morals; Gallantry and Intrigue; the Morals of the Lower Orders; Religious Opinions in the Capital, and decline of Priestly Influence; Jesuitical Education; the Influence of the Friars; Causes of the decline of Priestly influence, and the continuance of that of the Friars; Convent Secrets; curious Exposé at Cadiz; Devotion in Madrid.

THERE is perhaps no European Court about which so little is known, as the Court of Madrid,—nor any European sovereign whose

character and habits are so little familiar to us, as those of Ferdinand VII. The first time I saw the king, was on the day of my arrival in Madrid: he was expected to return from *St. Ildefonso*, and I mixed with the crowd in the palace-yard about an hour before he appeared. There were several thousand persons present, of all ranks, and his Majesty was received with respect, but with no audible demonstrations of welcome. Upon this occasion, I was not sufficiently near to observe the countenance and demeanour of the king.

The next time I saw his majesty, was on the Prado, the Sunday following, when he appeared in his state equipage, followed by the equipages of the two Infantes. The display was regal: his majesty's carriage was worthy of a more powerful monarch: it was drawn by eight handsome horses, elegantly caparisoned, and was followed by the two carriages of Don Carlos and Don Francis, and by that of the Princess of Portugal, each drawn by six horses; and the cavalcade was attended by a numerous party of huzzars.

There were no other persons than their Majesties in the royal carriage. The king was dressed in military uniform, and his royal consort wore a pink French crape hat, and printed muslin gown. When the royal cavalcade passed, the king was received with the usual silent tokens of respect; but when the carriage of the infante Don Carlos appeared, I could distinguish a few *vivas*. The king took scarcely any notice of the obeisances of his subjects; but the queen seemed anxious to conciliate their favour by many sweet smiles and affable bendings of the head. As for Don Carlos, none of the *vivas* were lost upon him: he had a bow and a grim smile for every one. It is said, and I believe with truth, that the king does not like this public competition with his brother for popular favour; but it has long been the invariable custom for all the branches of the royal family of Spain, to attend prayers every Sunday evening in the royal chapel in the convent of *San Geronimo*, and afterwards to drive along the Prado.

A few days afterwards I met the king and queen in the Retiro, on foot; they had been

viewing the menagerie, and were returning to their carriage. Ferdinand VII. king of Spain, is like a lusty country gentleman, not the meagre figure he appears in Madame Tassaud's exhibition; he is large, almost to the extent of corpulency; his countenance is fat and heavy; but good natured, with nothing of *hauteur*, still less of ferocity in it: it betrays, in fact, a total want of character of any kind. The queen is a remarkably pleasing, and, indeed, a remarkable pretty woman; and the charm of affability, which is universally granted to her by those who have had the honour to approach her person, shines conspicuously in her countenance: she looks like 28 years of age, but I believe she is some years younger. The king took little notice of the people who stood by, and who acknowledged the royal presence; but the queen bestowed upon them her usual smiles and curtesies. She was then an object of much interest with the public, for she was expected shortly to give birth to an heir to the Spanish throne; and to this event, most thinking persons looked forward, as one that must produce

an important influence upon the future condition of Spain. His majesty stepped into the carriage first, leaving the queen to the gallantry of an old general, who was their only attendant,—perhaps this is Spanish court etiquette: but that I may not be the means of fixing upon his majesty the character of an ungallant monarch, I must relate a circumstance that will certainly make amends for this seemingly ungracious act.

I happened to be walking one day in the Calle de Alcalá, when the royal carriage drove up to the door of the Cabinet of Natural History, and being close by, I stopped to see the king and queen. The king stepped from the carriage first; he then lifted from the carriage, a very large poodle dog, and then the queen followed, whom, contrary no doubt to royal etiquette, his majesty did not hand, but lifted, and placed on the pavement; and then turning to the crowd who surrounded the carriage, he said to them "*Pesa menos el matrimoni,*" which means, Matrimony is a lighter burden than the dog,—a very tolerable *jeu d'esprit* to have come from Ferdinand VII.

It is a general belief in England, that the

king of Spain seldom trusts himself out of his palace; at all events, not without a formidable guard: but this idea is quite erroneous; no monarch in Europe is oftener seen without guards than the king of Spain. I could give numerous instances of this, which have fallen under my own observation; but I shall content myself with one. A few days before leaving Madrid, while walking in the Retiro about six in the evening, in one of the most private walks, I observed a lusty gentleman, in blue coat and drab trowsers, with one companion, about twenty paces in advance; and, as my pace was rather quicker than their's, I caught a side look of the lusty gentleman's face: it was the king, accompanied by a new valet, who had just succeeded Meris, who died a week or two before, of apoplexy. I had frequently seen the king without guards; but never before, at so great a distance from attendants, or in so retired a place; and that I might be quite certain that this was indeed the redoubtable Ferdinand, I followed, in place of passing. He walked the whole length of the Retiro, parts of which are more than a mile from any guard

or gate; the garden is open to every body; some of the walks are extremely secluded; so that he was the whole of the time, entirely in the power of any individual who might have harboured a design against him; and all this struck me the more forcibly since, upon that very day, it had been announced for the first time in the *Gaceta de Madrid*, that the refugees had passed the frontier; and in the same paper the ordinance had appeared, for closing the universities. The king walked like a man who had nothing to fear; and never once looked behind him, though his companion occasionally did. Before making the circuit of the Retiro, he reached the frequented walks, which were then crowded, and where he was of course recognized, and received as usual. This exposure of himself seemed to me extraordinary, and scarcely to be accounted for: the best of kings have occasionally suffered by their temerity; and surely Ferdinand can have no right to suppose himself without an enemy: his conduct shewed either a very good, or a very hardened conscience.

But, in truth, the king has not many enemies; many despise him, but few would

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

JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

The king was not so much exposed as
the refugees had been to the public gaze

injure him. I have heard men of all parties, —the warmest Carlists, the most decided liberals, speak of him without reserve; and all speak of him as a man whose greatest fault is want of character; as a man not naturally bad; good tempered; and who might do better, were he better advised. An honest adviser, a lover of his monarch, and a lover of his country, Ferdinand has never had the good fortune to possess; but, counselled always by men who desire only to enrich themselves, and to maintain their power, he is constantly led to commit acts both of injustice and despotism, which have earned for him the character of tyrant. A despicable king might often make a respectable private gentleman. That capital failing in the character of an absolute king, which may be called want of character,—leading him to listen to every tale that is told,—is the fruitful source of injustice in every department of the Spanish government. And the same fault that in a king, leads to the advancement of knaves, and the neglect of deserving men—to robbery of the nation, and the ill-servicing of the state, would, in a private sphere,

*The knaves find out the King
The King must find out the deserving men*

only lead to the dismissal of a footman, or the change of a fruiterer. I am acquainted with a Colonel in the Spanish service, who, after serving his country fifteen years, and receiving seventeen wounds, was rewarded with the government of an important fortress; two months after being appointed to this employment he lost it; and a distant connexion of the mistress of one of the ministers, was put in his place. The colonel demanded, and obtained an audience of the king; shewed his wounds, and asked what crime he had committed: the king said he must inquire of *Salmon*, who had told something to his disadvantage; and this was all the satisfaction he ever obtained. This man, a brave officer, and a loyal subject, was converted into a disaffected person; and yet even he, although then leagued with the Carlists, spoke of the king as a man who would act better if he were better advised: "Leave him," said he, "the name of king; let him perceive no difference in the externals of royalty; leave him his secretaries and valets; give him his segar; and let him have his wife's apartments at hand; and he would con-

sent to any change that might be proposed to him by an honest and able minister." A bad education has produced its worst effects upon a naturally irresolute and rather weak mind. Ferdinand was badly brought up, by his mother; at an early age he was shamefully kidnapped by Napoleon, and long kept a prisoner, where he could learn nothing of the art of good government. He afterwards fell into the hands of a bigot, his late wife: and constantly assured by those around him of the precariousness of his throne, with the liberals on one side, and the apostolicals on the other, he has felt the impossibility of acting for himself; and has confided all, to those who have undertaken to keep the state vessel afloat.

The man who has most the ear of the king, is Don Francisco Tudeo Calomarde, minister of justice, as he is called in Spain. The private opinions of Calomarde, are decidedly apostolical; but the opinions of his colleagues being more moderate, he is obliged to conceal his sentiments, and to pretend an accordance with theirs. The ministers who are reputed to be moderate in sentiment are Don Luis Ballasteros, minister of finance; Don Luis Maria

Salagar, minister of marine, and generally considered the most able in the cabinet; and Don Manuel Gonzalez Salmon, secretary of state, and nominally prime minister. This minister, for several years, held only the office of *interim* secretary of state; because, as was generally believed, etiquette forcing the king to take the prime minister along with him to his country palace, the advancement of Salmon would have deprived Calomarde of this privilege: lately, however, Salmon has been named secretary of state without reserve, probably because he would not serve upon other conditions; or, according to another version, because he threatened Calomarde with some *exposé* if he opposed his advancement.

Calomarde, unquestionably no fool, is understood to keep all together; the minister of the marine is the only other man of talent, and he is a new man, possessing little influence, and who could not, for a moment, support himself against Calomarde; he was only a few months ago presented with the rank of general, that etiquette might enable him to hold some office with which the king wished to reward his services.

But Calomarde had not the king's undivided ear; and, if report speak truly, he has tale-telling and cabal to encounter, as well as those in inferior stations. There are other two individuals who, without high state offices, possess great private influence, and are generally looked upon in the light of favourites. These are the Duque de Alegon and Salsedo. The former was appointed last autumn to the office of captain-general of the guard; an office that keeps him much about the king's person. This Alegon is a dissipated old man, long known to the king, and who used, in former days, to pander to his pleasures; the king has never forgotten the convenient friend of his younger days, and has now thought of rewarding him. The services of the Duque de Alegon refer to many years back. Before the king wedded his bigot wife, not affection, but religious fear kept him faithful during that connexion; and now, the love he bestows upon the young queen, entirely supersedes any call upon the services of Alegon.

The other individual, who is justly considered the royal favourite, *par excellence*, is Salsedo, who holds the office of private secre-

tary. A dishonourable link formerly bound him to his sovereign, and he still retains his influence. It is generally known, that previous to the marriage of the king with his present wife, the wife of Salsedo was in royal favour. Salsedo is decidedly a man of good tact, if not of talent; his having retained his post fourteen years is some proof of both. His principles are understood to be moderate; at all events his advice is so, for he has sense to perceive that an opposite policy would probably accelerate the ruin of both his master and himself. Salsedo possesses more influence in the closet than Calomarde, — the king likes him better, and confides in him more. The influence of Calomarde is not favouritism; the king looks to his opinion, because he trusts to his knowledge. There are still one or two others who have something to say at court, particularly the Duque d'Higar, the best man of the *Camarilla*, and a man both of talent and information: but the influence of the Duque d'Higar is not great. The favourite *valet de chambre*, who died of apoplexy some months ago, was also fast creeping on towards high favour; and his death has

thrown more influence into the hands of Salzedo.

But it is now generally supposed, that the rising influence of the queen will in due time discard every other influence about court: No king and queen ever lived more happily together, than the present king and queen of Spain. The king is passionately attached to her; and it is said she is perfectly satisfied with her lot. He spends the greater part of the day in her apartments; and when engaged in council, leaves it half a dozen times in the course of an hour or two, to visit his queen. The habits of the court are extremely simple: the king rises at six, and breakfasts at seven; he spends the morning chiefly with the queen, but receives his ministers and secretary at any time before two; at half-past two he dines, always in company with the queen. Dinner occupies not more than an hour; and shortly after, he and the queen drive out together: he sups at half-past eight, and retires early. The queen does not rise so early as the king; she breakfasts at nine; and the king always sits by her. There is scarcely any gaiety at court. The queen is fond of retirement; and excepting

now and then a private concert, there are no court diversions.

While I was in Madrid, the favourite pastime of the king and queen was of rather an extraordinary kind; especially as the queen was on the eve of her accouchement. It consisted in looking at the wild beasts, which are kept in the Retiro. Almost every evening about five o'clock, the royal carriage might be seen crossing the Prado, on its way towards the menagerie; and as the Retiro was generally my afternoon lounge, I had frequent opportunities of seeing this royal diversion. There is a large square court about 200 yards across, inclosed with iron railings, and round the interior of this court, are the cages of the wild animals; and in this court, sat the king and queen upon a bench, while the animals were turned out for their amusement,—such of them at least as were peaceable,—camels, elephants, zebras, &c. &c. The keepers mounted upon the backs of the animals, and made them trot round the area; and when this had been done often enough to please their majesties, the beasts were led in front of their royal visitors, and made to kneel,—which act of homage however

they sometimes refused to perform. Upon one occasion, the man who rode the camel, not being able to keep his seat, turned his face towards the tail, sitting upon the neck of the animal; their majesties were in ecstasies at this exhibition; the king, I thought, would have died with laughing.

I was witness, another time, to a strange scene of rivalry between the king and Don Carlos. When the king's carriage drove up to the gate of the court, Don Carlos and his wife and family were seated in the area, and his carriage was in waiting; upon this occasion, the king arrived in state; a party of dragoons attended him, and his coachmen were in court dresses. The carriage of Don Carlos was in strange contrast with that of the king; it was drawn by six mules, harnessed with ropes; in place of postilions in court dresses, his servants were in the dress of Spanish peasants in their holiday clothes,—one on the coach-box,—the other employed as a runner by the head of the mules. Don Carlos affects all this appearance of simplicity and Spanish usage, to please the people; and for the same reason, his wife generally appears in a mantilla. The moment

the king's carriage appeared, Don Carlos left the court with his wife, and continued to walk in the most crowded part of the garden while the king and queen remained, dividing the attention which their majesties would otherwise have received, and indeed engrossing the larger share of it. I could not avoid remarking the greater popularity of Don Carlos among the lower orders: while they only took off their hats as the king passed, they bowed almost to the ground at the presence of the Infante. The appearance of the queen, however, always produced a favourable impression, especially when contrasted with that of her aspiring rival. One cannot look at the spouse of Don Carlos, without perceiving that she covets a crown; while in the countenance of the queen, we read indifference to it.

Upon frequent other occasions while in Madrid, I had proofs of the anxiety of Don Carlos to recommend himself to the people. The most marked of these, was upon the evening when the queen gave birth to a princess: not an hour after this was known, the Infante drove through the streets and along

the Prado, in an open carriage, along with his three sons, who, by the repeal of the Salic law, were that day cut out of their inheritance.

The event to which I have alluded,—the accouchement of the queen—was a matter of deep interest in Madrid; and before its accomplishment there was the utmost anxiety among all ranks. Each party had its own views. The moderate, or government party, and many belonging to the other parties, who desired peace and tranquillity, anxiously looked to the birth of a prince, as an event that would at once extinguish the claims of those who, but for the repeal of the Salic law, would have had a right to the throne, in case of the birth of a princess. The Carlists secretly wished that the event might be precisely the opposite; and the liberal party, seeing some possible advantage in whatever should tend to unsettle the existing government, united their wishes with those of the Carlists: but, the great majority of the respectable inhabitants, perceiving in the birth of a prince, a guarantee for the tranquillity of the kingdom, and the security of

*Salique
law
abolished
Ferdinand
on the
birth of the
present queen
Isabella*

property, devoutly wished that such might be the event.

The anxiety that filled the public mind, was fully partaken by the government; for it was well known to the heads of the state, that conspiracies were on foot; and that, in the event of the birth of a princess, the Carlists would have a pretext for an open manifestation of their views. They, however, had resolved not to wait this event, but to anticipate it; and a plot, which might possibly have proved successful, and which, at all events, must have led to scenes of blood, perhaps to revolution, was fortunately discovered on the day before that appointed for its execution; and the most prompt measures were immediately taken for crushing it. On the fifth of October, about midnight, carriages, accompanied by sufficient escorts, were taken to the houses of Padre Cirilo, the chief of the Franciscan order of friars; of Don Rufino Gonzalez; of Don Man. Herro, both Counsellors of State, and of thirteen others; the conspirators were put into the carriages, and driven off,—Cirilo to Seville; Rufino to La Mancha, and the others

to different places distant from the metropolis. The conspirators intended that some of the heads should have repaired to the inner court of the palace while the king was engaged in his evening drive; that about a thousand of the royalist volunteers—who are for the most part Carlists—should assemble at the palace yard; that the entrance to the palace should be taken possession of; the king seized upon his return, and forced to change his ministers, and to restore the Salic law. I feel little doubt, that if this plot had not been discovered, it would have led to more than a change of ministers. Among the military, and even among the guards, there are many discontented men, who fancy they see in the elevation of Don Carlos, a guarantee for a more impartial system of promotion; and the royalist volunteers of Madrid, 6000 strong, and all provided with arms, and accustomed to manœuvre them, are, with few exceptions of the lowest classes, and chiefly Carlists.

I walked to the palace yard the evening when it was expected the event would be known: it presented a dense mass of persons,

chiefly of bourgeois and of the middle classes, all waiting with anxiety the announcement of the event, upon which the tranquillity of the country so greatly depended. At length the white flag—the announcement of a princess—was slowly hoisted. There was a universal and audible expression of disappointment: “*Que lastima! que lastima!*” and the crowd slowly dispersed.

The repeal of the Salic law was not in itself an unpopular measure; and had there been no claimants to the crown under the old law, or no party to take advantage of disunion, and support these claims, it would have been a matter of indifference to the people, whether the queen gave birth to a son or a daughter: the repeal of the Salic law was only the revival of the ancient law of Castile, and *per se*, gave no dissatisfaction. It was the peculiar circumstances in which the country was placed, and the state of parties, that rendered the birth of a prince or a princess a matter of importance: the event created much disappointment to the government party, but no discontent: it is well known that the Constitutionals on the frontier had trusted

to the latter, and hoped to profit by it: but the effect was rather against than favourable to that party; because the Carlists, seeing their own ultimate chances increased, were therefore more interested in assisting government to suppress the Constitutionalists, whose ascendancy would leave them no hope.—But to return to the court.

There is nothing of court society at Madrid: the secluded habits of the king and queen, I have spoken of already; and there is scarcely any visiting among the courtiers. The persons of distinction in Madrid lead a most monotonous life: one lady only, the Duchess of Benevente, opens her house once a week,—this is on Sunday evening, and she receives, among others, those of the foreign ministers who choose to visit her. Her parties, however, are far from being agreeable: the Spaniards of distinction who frequent her *tertulia*, generally withdraw when the foreign ministers are announced. This disinclination on the part of the Spanish grandees, and others holding high court preferment, to associate with the foreign ambassadors, is notorious in Madrid. At the *tertulia*, of the wife of Don

Manuel Gonzalez Salmon, the foreign ministers used formerly to be present, but they discovered that they were regarded in a light little different from that of spies; and they are now never seen at these tertulias. In Madrid there are no ministerial, no diplomatic dinners; and among the persons of most distinction, entertainments are extremely rare. There is, in fact, nothing like gaiety among the upper ranks in the Spanish metropolis. And yet, if you remark to a Spanish lady that there is little society among the higher classes in Madrid, she will express the utmost astonishment that you should have imbibed so false a notion of Madrid and its society; but her idea of society and yours differ widely. If a dozen houses are open, into which a Spanish lady may go when she pleases, sit down on the sofa with her friend, fan herself, and talk till she is tired; this she considers society,—and this is the only form of society to be found among the highest classes in Madrid,—gaiety there is none.

Previous to travelling into Spain, I had heard much of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of obtaining access to Spanish society;

and before I had the means of judging for myself, I received frequent corroboration of this opinion. One of his majesty's consuls, whom I accidentally met in the Pyrenees, and whose appointment lies in the largest city of Spain, next to Madrid; a man too, who, both by his rank, for he is the nephew of a peer, and by the affability of his manners, would be likely to be every where well received, told me that I should probably leave Spain with no greater knowledge of Spanish society than when I entered it; that it was more than probable I should never see the inside of a Spanish house: and he concluded by saying, that he had been four years in Spain, and actually *did not know if the Spaniards dined off a table cloth.* This was rather disheartening: and when I waited upon the British minister upon my arrival in Madrid, I received from him no greater encouragement. He told me that Spanish houses were closed against foreigners; and that, for his own part, he knew nobody, and visited no where.

I am not able to reconcile these opinions, and the experience of others, with my own; my advantages, considerable as they certainly

were, could not be compared with those of the accredited representatives of government, who had resided many years in the country. It is a fact, however, that I had not been many days in Madrid, before I had the entrée of several Spanish houses, both in the higher and in the middle classes of society: this good fortune I may partly attribute to my intimacy with an *attaché* of the Spanish embassy in London, who, grateful for the attentions he had received from my countrymen, repaid them in the manner most acceptable to me,—namely, by making me acquainted with a numerous circle of friends and relatives. His father, a member of the council of state, may easily be supposed to have possessed the power of assisting the inquiries of a traveller; and to him, and to my young friend, now secretary to one of the legations in Italy, I have to return my best thanks for a hundred civilities.

It is the habits of the middle classes, that best interpret the condition and character of a people; and to these I mean at present to confine myself. I shall begin by giving the reader some idea of the interior of a Spanish house;

but let me premise, that the houses in the different cities of Spain, bear scarcely any resemblance to each other: the houses of Madrid differ in almost every thing from those of Seville,—which, again, are in many respects different from the houses in Malaga and Valencia. These distinctions are sufficient to excuse a detail so apparently trifling, as the description of a house; because they arise from a distinction in the manners and habits of the people inhabiting the different provinces of Spain.

In Madrid, the whole of the middle classes, and, indeed, all excepting the very highest ranks, live in stories, or flats, as they are called in Scotland,—each story being a distinct house. The outer door of every house in Madrid is of an enormous strength, more like the door of a prison, or of a convent, than of a private dwelling house; and in the centre, there is a small window, about six inches long by two broad, grated with iron, and with a sliding shutter. When one rings at the door of a Spanish house, the answer to the bell is a voice, which calls out "*Quien es?*"—who is it? or who comes?

and the person wishing to be admitted, must answer "*Gente de paz*,"—literally, People of peace. But this assertion does not content the person within, who then shoves aside the shutter and peeps through; and the usual colloquy is carried on through the grating, before the door be thrown open, unless the person without, be known to the servant within. One cannot help endeavouring to account for the origin of so singular a custom; and perhaps the truest guess that can be made, is, to refer it to the suspicion, and feeling of personal insecurity, which are the offspring of bad government, of political persecution, and religious inquisition. The window shutters of the houses are as massive as the doors; and the glass of the windows is purposely so bad, that it is impossible to see into a house from the opposite side of a street: three panes, however, are always of good glass, so that one may be able to see out.

The house which I select for a description of its interior, as a fair sample of the dwelling-houses of the middle classes in Madrid, belonged to a gentleman holding a government appointment of 50,000 reals (500*l.*)

per annum ; which may be equal to about 700*l.* a-year in London : and, with very few variations, this house may be taken as an average specimen of the houses of professional men, *employées*, and independent persons, of from 500*l.* to 1,000*l.* per annum. The principal room, answering to the English drawing-room, is large, and well-lighted ; a handsome straw matting, worked in a pattern of coloured flowers, and which looks quite as pretty as a carpet, entirely covers the floor, which is generally of brick. There is no fire-place in the room ; the walls and roof are both what is called stained, and this is as well executed as I have ever seen it in England ; and the furniture of the room consists of a large mahogany sofa, with hair cushion, covered with flowered black satin ; mahogany chairs, with green and straw-coloured basket-seats ; four small mahogany tables, of good material, and prettily carved, and a large round table in the centre of the room—just an English loo-table—upon which stands a handsome service of china ; a mirror, and two marble slabs between the windows, and a few pictures—copies from Spanish

masters,—complete the furniture: but let me not omit five or six low stools, scattered here and there; for every lady has her footstool.

At one end of this room, opening from the side, is a recess, twelve or thirteen feet square, and not concealed by any curtain. This is a bed-room,—a bed-room too in constant use. The bedstead is of steel or brass wire; the bed is covered with a counterpane, trimmed with broad lace; the furniture is all of mahogany, and the wash-hand basin and ewer are of brass.

A wide archway opening at the other end of the drawing-room, leads to an ante-room, covered with the same matting as the drawing-room, and furnished with a couch, chairs, and footstools, covered with blue satin. At the side of this ante-room is another recess, open like the other, containing two beds, between them a small marble slab, with a vessel of holy-water, and at the head of each a small image of Christ in ivory. This is the matrimonial chamber. The rest of the house consists of a long, tortuous, and rather dark passage, from which the other rooms enter: these are, a small parlour, or study, always

poorly fitted up; a boudoir, with a low couch covered with black satin, a couple of footstools, a table, and very handsome looking-glass; this important room is either matted, or floored with Valencia tiles; and the walls are generally covered with a French paper, and adorned or disfigured as the case may happen, with a few pictures, religious, or of an opposite character, or both, according to the taste of the señora.

The worst room in almost every Spanish house, is the dining-room, or rather eating-room, for every meal is taken in the same room: the floor has generally no matting,—the walls are unadorned,—the furniture is of the commonest description,—and the room itself so small, that the table, which nearly fills the room, is rarely large enough for more than six persons. This at once lets a stranger into an important secret in the economy of Madrid society; that there is no probability of receiving an invitation to dinner. I say Madrid society, because in the southern provinces, the dining-room and its uses are different. But although a stranger must not expect many invitations to dinner in Madrid, yet, if he be once received

into a family upon a familiar footing, and should pay a visit while the family are at dinner; or just sitting down to dinner, he will not be denied admittance; but will be requested to walk into the eating-room, and a chair will be immediately placed for him at table. This civility, however, must be accepted with discretion; because the civil speech, which is invariably addressed to a stranger, when he concludes his first visit,—*Esta casa es a la disposicion de V^a.*,—“This house is at your disposal,”—is a form of words not to be always interpreted literally. I have omitted to mention the Spanish kitchen, which is provided with a stone table, in which there are six or eight circular holes for charcoal, and numerous earthen vessels to fit these holes. Generally speaking, respectable Spanish houses, whether in Madrid, Seville, or Valencia, are scrupulously clean. I have never in any country, seen kitchens and bed-rooms so clean as they are in Spain. The description I have given may serve to convey to the reader a tolerably accurate idea of the houses of Madrid; some may contain a greater number of apartments; and others fewer; and some may be a

little better, others a little worse furnished; but in the material points, they are all the same; they have all an elegant drawing-room, bed-rooms in recesses, a wretched dining-room, and a luxuriously fitted-up boudoir.

In a former chapter, I spoke of the manner of living among the middle classes in the northern provinces. In Madrid, and generally in Castile, there is somewhat more luxury in the table, though the Spaniards as a nation, may justly be characterized as abstemious, and little addicted to the pleasures of the table. The *olla* or *puchero*, is not the sole dish that graces the tables of the middle and upper classes in Madrid: there is generally a stew of some kind added, and dinner is always followed by cakes, sweetmeats, and fruit; but this is after all but an indifferent dinner for one with an income of 700*l.* or 800*l.* a-year. And there are still very many in Madrid, even in the upper ranks, who are contented with the *puchero*; and I was myself acquainted with one or two families in good circumstances, who yet lived in a way which we should call *piggishly* in England, sending to the cook-shop for a *puchero*, and to

the wine-shop, for the daily portion required at dinner.

The inhabitants of Madrid, excepting the trades people, rise late, and breakfast between ten and eleven, upon a cup of chocolate, with scarcely any bread, and a glass of cold water. Going to mass, dressing, paying and receiving visits, and walking the streets, occupy the ladies till the dinner hour; and this, following the example of the court, and in order that it may not interfere with the claims of the Prado, is early, even among the highest ranks. Then follows the siesta; and the interval between the siesta and dressing for the Prado, is usually passed upon the balcony. After the Prado, is the tertulia, which may be said to be the only form of Spanish society. When you have the entrée of a house in Madrid, and pay your visit in the evening, you find the family assembled near the windows, with two or three strangers, chatting and laughing; the ladies of the house without mantillas, and the visitors generally wearing them. The young ladies, or señoritas, are in one part of the room, with one or two caballeros; and the

Senora de Casa in another, probably conversing with a priest or friar; unless she be young, in which case there is no division in the society. The room is usually badly lighted, most commonly with a semi-luna at the farthest corner,—and the master of the house is rarely one of the party. He is a member of another tertulia. The conversation is always lively, and somewhat piquante, and the visitors stay late, and are not presented with any refreshment.

If the visit be made in the morning, the lady, if not walking the streets, or gossiping, is found in her boudoir, seated upon a low couch, in a black silk dress; her feet upon a footstool; and beside her, a large basket, such as Murillo has so often painted. She is always engaged in some kind of embroidery,—and her fan, which she resumes the moment you enter, lies on the table before her.

The only kind of party to which a stranger is invited in Madrid, is a ball; but there is no necessity for an invitation, if one has the entrée of the house. At these parties, the ladies are rarely dressed in the Spanish fashion, but

generally *a la Française*, with white or coloured dresses,—the only distinguishing, and never to be mistaken mark of a Spanish woman, being the fan. The Spanish ladies invariably dance well; and yet their mode of dancing is as opposite as possible from the French style: it is the management of the head and shoulders; and the *manner*, not the power of motion in the limbs, that distinguish the Spanish woman. There is another remarkable difference between the Spanish, and the French or English dance: the gravity of countenance,—and generally, the silence that prevails among quadrillers, both in France and England, is remarkable, and even ludicrous; but the Spanish ladies talk and laugh while they dance,—seeing no reason why one pleasure should suspend another. At these parties there is rarely any refreshment offered; a glass of water may be had, but nothing more. Are the Spaniards a hospitable people?—This is a question that cannot be answered by a simple monosyllable: it seems difficult to separate hospitality from generosity; and yet this distinction must be made in speaking of the conduct of Spaniards towards

strangers. A Spaniard considers himself to be remarkable for his hospitality, because he is at all times happy to see a stranger within his doors: he says, speaking to an Englishman, "in your country you invite a foreigner to your house, and there the civility ends; he cannot return without another invitation. But here, if a stranger be once received within our houses, they are ever afterwards at his disposal; he needs no farther invitation." This is true enough, but it scarcely amounts to hospitality. This word, from the days of Abraham, who fed the angels, has signified setting meat before one; but a stranger might live years in a Spanish city, and be on terms of intimacy with many wealthy Spaniards, and might yet never break bread within a Spanish house,—certainly never by invitation. I speak at present of Madrid, and the cities of the interior. In Cadiz, Malaga, Valencia, and Barcellona, dinner parties are occasionally given. But, with this seeming want of hospitality towards strangers, there is much, and very uncalled-for generosity. Wherever a stranger goes in company with

a Spaniard,—if to a coffee-house, to the theatre, to a bull-fight,—even to shops where fancy articles are sold, the Spaniard insists upon paying: any remonstrance offends him; nor will he ever, at any after time, permit you to repay the obligation in a similar way. He is at all times ready with his purse; and draws its strings with the alacrity of a man who is eager to give away his money. It is difficult to refer to any common principle, the different ways in which a Spaniard and an Englishman shew kindness to a stranger. The Spaniard lays out his money upon him cheerfully; but gives him nothing to eat: the Englishman, on the other hand, would dislike paying a crown for a foreigner, but would ask him to dinner again and again, and thus lay out ten times its amount.

I fear this apparent disregard of money, may have some connexion with that great and unfortunate failing in the character of the middle classes in Spain, particularly in Castile—love of display, or ostentation. This failing belongs to the middle and upper classes in an extraordinary degree; while inconsiderateness, and carelessness of to-morrow, are conspicuous in

the characters both of the middle and lower classes. Almost every one in Spain lives up to his income. Even the employées, who hold their posts by a very uncertain tenure, seldom lay by any thing; they generally die pennyless: and it is a certain fact, that the families of employées who have died beggars, have swelled the Spanish pension list to a most formidable length. A Spaniard will dine without a table-cloth, to save the expense of washing; but this, not that he may lay by his money,—but that he may have the eclât, not the *pleasure*, of frequenting the opera; the *pride*, not the *gratification*, of eating ice in the *Café Catalina*. I have known some extraordinary instances of this love of display: a Spanish officer, with whom we had some acquaintance, invited us to accompany him and his wife to the Prado. A handsome carriage drove up to the door, attended by two servants in gay liveries: will it be believed, that the carriage and servants were hired for the occasion; and that this officer was married, had a family, and possessed only his pay, amounting to about 140*l.* a-year? What sacrifices must have been made for the indulgence of this

piece of vanity! I knew the family of a judge, consisting of a widow, and four daughters, all of whom appeared every Sunday on the Prado with new satin shoes and clean white gloves: the pension of a judge's widow is 8000 reals, (80*l.* sterling). There is nothing remarkable in these instances; and the same love of display is visible among the lower orders in Madrid, as far as this can be shewn in their rank of life. Persons in very humble circumstances are seen in most expensive dresses; and it is not at all unusual to meet a female servant with a comb, fan, and mantilla, whose united expense would amount to 4*l.* or 5*l.*

In the upper and middle classes of society in Madrid, morals are at the lowest ebb: though veils are almost thrown aside, and serenades are rare, Spain is still the country of gallantry and intrigue. Want of education among the women, and the absence of moral and religious principle among the men, are the fruitful sources of this universal demoralization. In the education of a Spanish woman, all has reference to display; knowledge forms no part of it. The business of her life, is dress and show; and its object, admiration: this leads to

gallantry, and all its train of consequences. It is impossible to walk into the street, or along the Prado, without perceiving even among children, that the rudiments of Spanish indiscretion are already laid. Little girls of the tenderest age shew by their gait and manner, that they are already initiated in the business of life. I have heard others, scarcely escaped from childhood, talk in a manner that would have made an English married woman blush,—and, to gather something even from infancy, I have heard a child five or six years old, ask its companion, how it could disregard appearance so much as to venture out without a proper *ceinture*.

In married life, I have reason to think that infidelity is more universal than in Italy; but the origin of it is different, and the thing is differently managed in the two countries. It is a great error to imagine—as some old writers upon Spain, and accurate writers in other respects, have asserted—that there is any connivance in Spain on the part of the husband: Spanish husbands, with few exceptions, are too proud to bargain for their own dishonour. While I was in Madrid, two instances

occurred, in which husbands murdered their wives in fits of jealousy: in neither of these cases was the thing sifted to the bottom; because it was known that in doing this the villany of two priests would have been brought to light. The *Cortejo* of Spain is by no means the *Cisesbeo* of Italy. The *liaison* in Spain is a secret one; it has not originated in interest or vanity, but in passion; and the greatest pains are taken to conceal it from the husband, and even (intimates excepted) from the world. There are not in Madrid the same opportunities for the formation and prosecution of intrigue, as in Seville and the cities of the south. In these, the gardens and summer houses, — the walls of both forming a part of the street, — are particularly favourable to the serenade, the billet-doux, and their recompense. In Madrid, opportunities are more precarious: the mass, the street, the balcony, are the only places of rendezvous; and of these, the latter is the most prized. Walking the streets, while all the world enjoys the siesta, wakeful señoras and señoritas are here and there seen behind the curtains that fall over the balconies, and which are supposed to

shade the light from the eyes of the sleeper; and now and then some medium of intelligence is seen fluttering downward, to be picked up by a cloaked *cabalero*. There is another important difference between the gallantries of Spain, and of Italy or France: in Spain, they are not confined to married women: improper *liaisons* are not unfrequently formed by unmarried ladies; and those whom one sees on the balconies, are much more frequently señoritas than señoras.

Intrigue is not confined in Madrid to the upper, or even the middle classes of society; but is found also among the trades people. Sometimes during the hours of sleep and silence, I have ventured, in passing along the street, to draw aside the curtain that is meant to secure an uninterrupted siesta to the inmates of the embroiderers, perfumers, or dress-makers' shops; and I have more than once interrupted a *tête-à-tête*. It is fair to add, however, that I oftener found the señorita fast asleep. It is well understood in Madrid, that during the time of siesta, no one enters a shop where a curtain is drawn; but a stranger may

sometimes do unpermitted things, under pretence of ignorance.

The lower orders in Madrid cannot be characterized as grossly immoral: they are not drunken and brutal, like the mob of London; nor ferocious and insolent, like the *canaille* of Paris. In walking the streets of Madrid, it is rarely that one sees either quarrelling or gambling; and I believe it might be possible to walk through any part of the city with the corner of a handkerchief hanging out of the pocket, and to return with it in its place: petty larceny, a Castilian thinks beneath him. Between the character of the Castilian and the Andalusian, there is as marked a distinction as that which exists in the characters of any two people inhabiting different kingdoms; but I will not anticipate.

I suspect that among the upper and middle ranks in Madrid, religion is as low as morals: among them, priestcraft exercises very little influence; and, indeed, ridicule and dislike of all orders of religion, form a very common seasoning to conversation. There can be no doubt that the occupation of the Peninsula by the

French army, has gone far towards diminishing the respect in which the priesthood was formerly held by the great majority of all classes in Spain. In Madrid, I have never heard one individual above the rank of a small tradesman, speak with respect, of religion,—or with affection, of the priesthood. There cannot be the smallest doubt that, in the capital at least, both the clergy and the friars are sensible of a great diminution in the power which they formerly enjoyed; and their tone and bearing are altered accordingly. At present, they, at all events the regular clergy, yield a little to the tide that has set in against them. I have been surprised to hear the freedom with which some of the priests have spoken of the state of Spain. I have heard them particularly lament the difficulties that stand in the way of publishing books, and admit the oppressive nature of the enactments that regard education. The clergy have not the same interest as the friars, in supporting the present system, because they have not the same fears. A revolution that might possibly chase every monk from the soil, and which would, at all events, despoil them of

their possessions and terminate their dominion, would probably but slightly affect the clergy of the church ; and I have observed that since the French revolution, their fears have diminished. The example of France, in the respect it has shewn for the rights of the church, they look upon as a guarantee of their own security ; and perhaps justly. Government still seeks for support in the influence of the church, and endeavours, by every means, to keep up this influence. This, it may easily be supposed, is attempted through the medium of education, which, throughout Spain, may be said to be a government concern. The schools in Madrid are all conducted by Jesuits ; and the education received in them, is such as might be expected from their heads. This surveillance commenced when the king returned to the head of the government, in 1824. The colleges were then remodelled ; and all the public seminaries, even those destined for military education, were placed under Jesuit heads. I have frequently met in the streets of Madrid, long lines of students of the *Colegio Imperial*, and of the *Semmario de Nobles*, some in military

uniform, and each company headed by a priest. And no choice is left to the people, as to the education of their children: the only choice is, the government school, or no school; for obstacles, almost insurmountable, are thrown in the way of private tuition. Before a family dare employ a tutor, the permission of government must be obtained; and the tutor must provide himself with a license; this implies minute inquiries into character, political and religious opinions, &c.; so that, in fact, no tutor is ever licensed, unless there is a perfect security that the system of education to be pursued by him,—intellectual; political, and religious,—shall be precisely the same as that taught in the public seminaries: there is nothing therefore gained by private tuition. Whether the priesthood may possibly regain any part of its lost influence, owing to the present system of education, may admit of a question. If Spain should remain in its present condition, without revolution or change, it is probable that the growth of liberal opinions may be retarded; the thousands now educated on jesuitical principles, and denied the means of real knowledge, were not old

enough during the existence of the constitution, to have caught a glimpse of the light which at that time dawned upon the darkness of Spain; nor have they had opportunities of being influenced by French principles, during the time of the occupation of the Peninsula. The policy of the Spanish government, therefore, with respect to its surveillance of education, is not unworthy of a government that desires to maintain itself by the blindness of the people.

The influence of the friars is much greater than that of the priests; though this also diminishes daily. I speak of Madrid only. In many of the other cities of Spain, of which I shall afterwards speak more in detail—particularly in Toledo, Seville, Granada, Lorca, and Murcia, and in most of the smaller towns, I think it almost impossible that the influence of the friars could ever have been much greater than it is. In Madrid, less attention is paid to religious ceremonies and processions, than in any other city of Spain; and one sees fewer external proofs of the veneration of the people for the character of friar. A Franciscan may pass from one end of Madrid to the other,

without having one claim made upon his paternal blessing by a grown-up person. I have seen the Virgin of St. Rosalio, and an image of St. Thomas, carried through the streets, with some hundreds of friars accompanying them, without any one being excited to a greater act of devotion than raising the hat from the head : and during my morning walk, when I invariably looked into the churches belonging to whichever of the convents that happened to lie in my way, I seldom saw more than half a dozen persons at their devotions. All this is very different at Toledo and Seville ; and judging by the difference I have observed in the proofs of bigotry apparent in the different Spanish cities, I feel myself justified in believing that the influence of the friars, as well as that of the priests, has sensibly diminished in Madrid. But it is far from being small : it still exists, with less or more force, among all ranks : and the breast of a friar is still the favourite depository of family secrets. From my house, I could see the regular visits made by friars to several houses within the range of my window ; and little children may at all times be seen in the

street, running after the monk of any order, to kiss his hand and beg his blessing.

There are many reasons why the influence of the friars should decline more slowly than that of the priesthood: as the first of these may be mentioned, the greater immorality of the lives of the latter. This immorality is notorious throughout Spain; and, indeed, they take little pains to conceal,—I will not say their peccadillos,—but the opportunities and temptations to commit them, which they create for themselves; and they obtain full credit for yielding to these temptations. Perhaps it is doing wrong to the clergy to assign to the friars greater purity of life than to them; but whatever may be the immoralities of the monks, they have more the art, and they possess better opportunities too of concealing them. Priests live in the world, and have worse opportunities of concealment than other men, because their profession lays them open to scrutiny; but friars live in a world of their own, fenced round, not only by walls of stone, but by a more impenetrable wall of prescriptive veneration,—and they are very daring eyes that pry into the secrets of the cloister.

But strange, and even dreadful events, occasionally occur, to lay open the hidden scenes that are transacted within a convent's walls. One such occurred last September, while I was in Madrid. One morning, the Superior of the monastery of San Basilio was found in bed murdered,—his throat cut, his hands tied, and several stabs in his body. There could be no doubt that the murder had been committed by the friars; and as no pretence could be found against instituting an inquiry, a commission was accordingly appointed to investigate, and sat during several days. Strange disclosures were made; it appeared that the superior had been a good man, and remarkably strict in the observances enjoined upon the order,—too much so for the inclination of the friars, who had been accustomed to commit every kind of excess, and to transgress in the most essential points, the rules of the convent; particularly in being absent during the night. The superior used to reprove this laxity, and exerted his authority to restrain it; and dislike towards him was naturally produced. In these circumstances, no doubt, rested in the

mind of any one, that the murder was committed by the monks; but it had been resolved, that in some way or other the affair should be got rid of. The porter of the convent, who, previous to the appointment of the commission, had declared that no one had entered, so qualified his words before the commissioners; that through his evidence, they found a loop-hole by which justice might ooze out:—he said, that he had some recollection, when half asleep, of having seen a person enter; but besides the impossibility of any one entering, unless the porter had been so much awake as to open the gate, the murder could not have been committed by one person. The result was, that the commission broke up without coming to any decision; but as a sacrifice to public opinion, three of the friars were committed to prison on suspicion. It was well understood that the affair would never go further; and I was assured by the wife of a person holding a high official employment, that in a few months the imprisoned monks would be found again in their convents. When the king returned to Spain in 1823, he hanged a friar for a murder; but this was done at that