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JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

THE DUKE  
OR  
WELLINGTON'S  
SPANISH ESTATE

VOL. I.

HAMMICK

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

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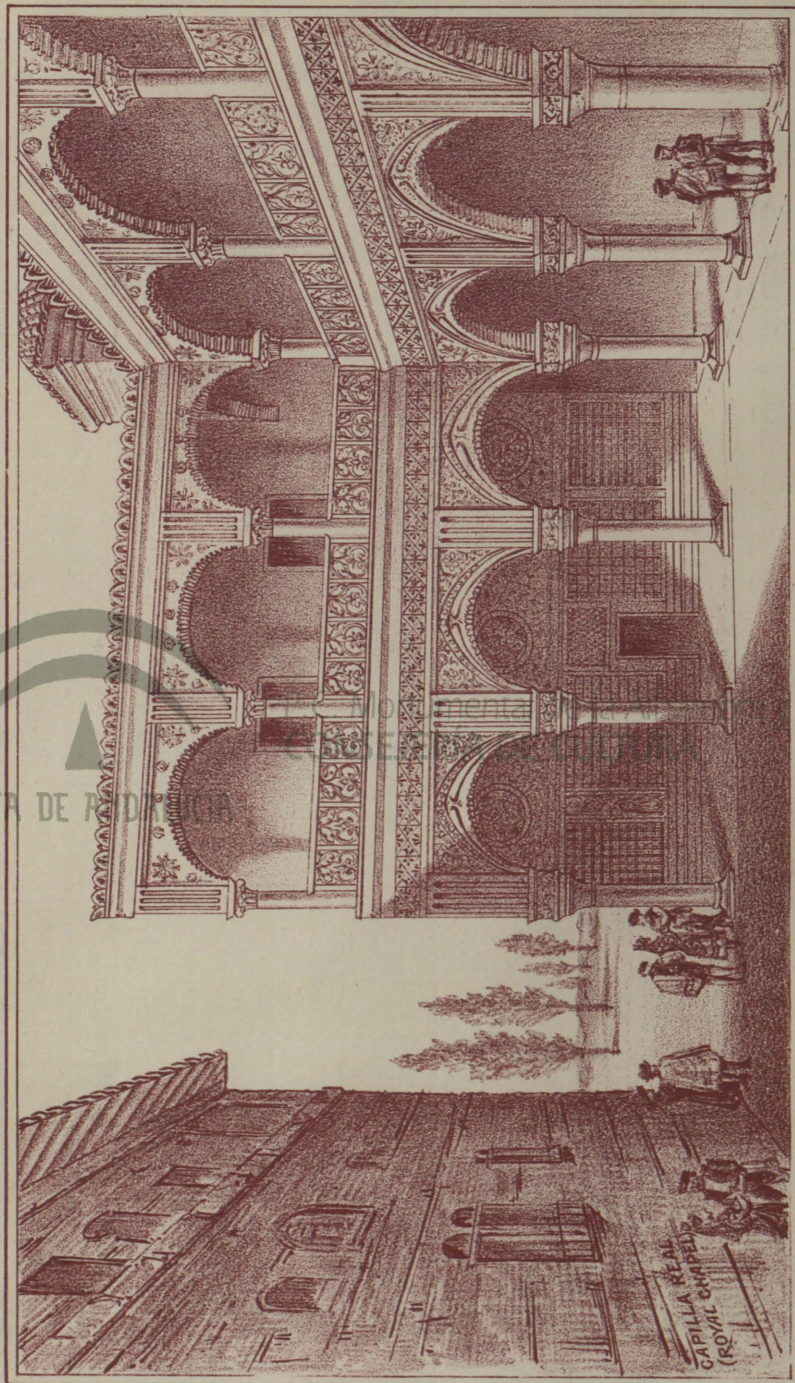
P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife  
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA



AN ENGLISH ESTATE IN SPAIN

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

JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA



CASA REAL.  
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Generalife

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THE  
DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S  
SPANISH ESTATE

A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

BY

DON HORACIO H. HAMMICK

A KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF CARLOS III. OF SPAIN

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TO HIS GRACE

HENRY WELLESLEY

THIRD DUKE OF WELLINGTON

AND

DUQUE DE CIUDAD RODRIGO

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

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

*THE AUTHOR*



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA



## P R E F A C E.

---

THERE is no country about which more books are yearly written than Spain, yet I would fain flatter myself that there can be no book more thoroughly unlike any that ever before was published than the one I have ventured to lay before English readers.

Other writers give us accounts of the Peninsula, of its natural appearance, of its artistic monuments, of its politics, its history, and literature.

My narrative only concerns its people, their character, their mode of life, their natural gifts, their shortcomings,—all the good and bad among them with which a sojourn of several years in one of the most charming but most secluded spots of the kingdom of Granada made me acquainted.

Readers who care at all to know what the peasantry really think, say, and do, the type of whose forefathers was given to the world by Cervantes in his Sancho

Panza, will not, I hope, find what they have here before them altogether destitute of interest.

My dealings with the late Duke of Wellington, and my connexion with his Spanish estates in the capacity of His Grace's friend and adviser, as well as the originator and planter of His Grace's vineyards and new olive-grounds, buildings, and farms, and all the et-ceteras of a great lordly—formerly royal—domain, may be considered equally important, though perhaps of less general importance.

H. H. HAMMICK.



11 PAUL MALL, LONDON:

April 1885.

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

JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

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# AN ENGLISH ESTATE IN SPAIN.

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## I.

UNDER the above title Mr. A. Gallenga published last year, in the first volume of his 'Iberian Reminiscences' (pp. 284 to 299), an account of a large property in the territory of Granada, bearing the names of 'Molino del Rey' and 'Soto de Roma,' owned by his Grace the Duke of Wellington, a nobleman known in Spain under the title of 'Duque de Ciudad Rodrigo.' In his description of the estate, which he visited in his capacity of correspondent of the *Times* in 1869, Mr. Gallenga made some allusions to the relations existing between the noble owner of that property and myself, who at that time had charge of it as the Duke's friend, or, as they say in Spain, administrador or apoderado (representative and plenipotentiary).

As, with respect to these relations, some difference arose in later times between the Duke and myself, I

deem it desirable, in the interest of both parties, to enter into some explanations which may satisfy all fair and reasonable persons as to the point on which I was at variance with his Grace. With this view I deem it expedient to call the reader's attention to the fifteen pages of Mr. Gallenga's work mentioned above which have reference to the subject, reserving the liberty of adding in this book such observations as may throw light on that part of it in which my conduct and that of the Duke—in our respective positions—are concerned.

## II.

Before I proceed with that part of the subject with which I am personally concerned, I think the reader will be glad to read in a few words the account of the estate of Soto de Roma as given by Richard Ford in the second edition of his 'Handbook for Spain,' published by Murray in 1847. 'This property,' he says, 'lies about three leagues from Granada, and is bounded on the west by the Sierra de Elvira, which rises like a throne over the carpeted Vega. It contains about 4,000 acres; it was an appanage of the kings of Granada, and was granted by the Spanish sovereigns at different dates to various subjects, and in 1776 by King Charles III. to Richard Wall, an Irishman, his former minister. It passed subsequently through other

hands, and it had reverted to the Crown, when at the close of the War of Independence in 1814 it was granted by the Cortes to the first Duke of Wellington, in the name of the Spanish nation, grateful for his signal services. The grant was confirmed and sanctioned by a royal decree of Ferdinand VII., who bestowed upon the owner the title of Duque de Ciudad Rodrigo.'

It should be borne in mind that neither the first Duke of Wellington nor his son and heir, the late Duke, ever had leisure or inclination to visit the Spanish property of which they had claimed possession for sixty-nine years. 'In 1814,' Ford states, 'Sir Henry Wellesley, acting in behalf of the great Duke, appointed as manager the contador, or accountant, of the Marquis of Alcanices. This latter, however, intrusted the affair to General O'Lawlor, an Irish gentleman in the Spanish service, who, as aide-de-camp, had stood at the conqueror's side in all his glorious fields.'

'The whole property, in 1815, produced about 3,000*l.* a year; it then declined in common with all other estates in the Vega; everything got worse, rents decreased and burdens increased.' Ford, who probably was acquainted with General O'Lawlor, asserted that the General 'put everything into repair; that where every other proprietor was robbed he did not allow the

Duke to be robbed ; that, far from making his fortune by his stewardship, O'Lawlor was a loser by the situation, which he held from pure love and respect to his great master,' etc. Without admitting the 'calumnies' which were spread by malevolence against O'Lawlor in Spain, and of which Lord Londonderry in ignorance made himself the echo in England, two facts result from Ford's own defence of O'Lawlor's character : 1st, that he did accumulate a large fortune ; 2nd, that he had many irons in the fire, among others the most profitable mines at Bejra, which probably determined his frequent absence from the estate, and prevented his paying sufficient attention to the Duke's interests in it.

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### III.

In a letter addressed to the late Duke of Wellington by the landowners, tenants, and labourers of the surrounding district, dated September 1872, and bearing five hundred signatures, an account is given of the stewardship of the various agents who had charge of the estate up to that year ; and with respect to the agency of General O'Lawlor it is stated that he may be said to have been rather a tenant (arrendatario) than an agent (administrador). The letter of the five hundred adds that the property of the Soto de Roma consisted then of alamedas (great avenues planted with trees, like



those of the Royal Park of Aranjuez), all of which O'Lawlor cut down, ploughing the ground, and cultivating it for his own account, as well as the Dehesa Baja (or Lower Pasture) and the adjoining farm (cortijo), now belonging to Don Carlos Marfori, the last favourite of Queen Isabella previous to her dethronement and expulsion in 1868.

General O'Lawlor, according to this same letter, was a thrifty farmer, so that in a certain season the olives (olivano) yielded as many as 14,000 arrobas (about 3,500 cwt.) of oil; and the letter adds that the General 'accumulated a large fortune during his agency,' which came to an end in 1845.

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#### IV.

In that year the estate was intrusted to the management of Don Roberto Grindlay. This new agent (apoderado), not wishing to be burdened with the cultivation of the estate, farmed out nearly all the land, the best part of which his predecessor had kept in hand, exacting so high a rent that some of the tenants had to pay as much as 320 reals (3*l.* 4*s.*) per marjal (a Spanish measure, about 27 square yards: the Spanish yard is three inches less than an English yard), a rent almost equivalent to the actual purchase price of the land, the agent himself only farming a few acres, with

the Lower Pasture (Dehesa Baja), the olive grounds, and a piece of land called Huerte Majara ; but this agent's management was so niggardly and improvident<sup>1</sup> that the estate gradually fell into decay. Nor were matters likely to improve under Grindlay's successor, Don Juan Mark, a brother of Mr. Mark, her Majesty's Consul at Malaga, who let out to farmers even the few acres which Grindlay had kept in hand, demanded a no less exorbitant rent, and cut down several rows of poplar-trees which his predecessors had left standing. Mr. Mark resided ordinarily at Malaga, having only at this time twice visited the Duke's property, which in his absence he left to the care of a Spaniard, Don José Calzado, as his sub-agent, formerly a clerk in the consul's office.

## V.

How the estate could thrive under the management of the absentee steward of an absentee landlord it cannot be difficult to imagine. But were there any doubt on the subject, it would be set at rest by the letter of the five hundred which I have before alluded to, and which gives a description of its condition certainly not to be charged with exaggeration.

‘ During the period of Señor Mark's administration,’

<sup>1</sup> *Tanto quiso economisar*, the Spanish expression ‘ He was so eager to save,’ conveys the idea that he saved *for himself*.

the letter says, 'the cultivation of the olives had been sadly neglected, and the production of oil had sunk to 2,000 or 3,000 arrobas, barely one-sixth of the average yield of former years. The whole Lower Pasture (Dehesa Baja), if we except the land of the Huerte Majara, was left to take care of itself, which it did so well that it was soon covered with a thick tangle of weeds, brambles, and bushes, of no avail for any other purpose than to shelter game for sportsmen. All the houses and premises, barns, sheds, etc., were in ruins. The Casa Real (Royal House, in olden times the abode of the Catholic sovereigns) has become the haunt of gipsies; an unclean mass of rubbish sheltering beggars and vagabonds, a good many of them a prey to the wasting fever of the Vega. It was a picture of desolation and misery. Throughout the whole extent of the domain there was not one mile of practicable road. The canals, which covered the land in every direction for the purposes of irrigation (old works bearing witness to the industry and intelligence of the Moors), were choked up here and there by the ruins of the fallen bridges, and overflowed the fields, turning the lowest grounds into quagmires, and breaking upon the roads and paths, which were thus obliterated, and at irrigation time, when the waters were high, became impassable. To these evils no attempt was made to find a remedy, no efforts towards improvement of any

kind up to very late years, when a steam-engine, to drive the mill to crush the olives for oil, was imported from England, together with other agricultural implements of recent contrivance, most of which were found unsuited to the soil' (more probably to the ignorant and stubborn nature of its cultivators). 'And throughout all that period of years no building ever rose from the ground, except a small farm-labourer's house and premises at Huerte Majara.'

## VI.

In this condition I found the Duke's estate at the time of my first visit.

In the autumn of the year 1854 I was for several months in the Crimea, where I was brought into frequent intercourse with Miss Nightingale, Lord Raglan, Lord Lyons, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and where I endeavoured to make myself useful in a variety of charitable and other practical ways. On my return, after a short stay at Constantinople and Smyrna, I took my passage to Gibraltar, whence I made my way to Cadiz, Cordova, and Montilla, thence to Granada. Whilst there, I asked permission of Don Roberto Grindlay, the Duke's agent, to see his Grace's property of Soto de Roma; but was answered that, in consequence of the heavy rains, Soto de Roma was under water; the

rivers had broken from their course, swept away several bridges, broken up some water-mills, and rendered the road impracticable. My projected visit had, therefore, on that occasion to be given up.

But three years later, in the autumn of 1858, I was again in Spain, on a riding tour with a friend: a tour which, beginning at the Pyrenees, took us, *viâ* Bilbao, Santander, Valladolid, Toro, Zamora, Salamanca, Madrid, and Cordovâ, again to Montilla. At this latter place I had my wine-cellars, in the charge of my agent, Don Luis Jurado, a gentleman farmer of his own land, renowned for his knowledge of vine-planting and for the production of superior wines.

This Don Luis invited us to accompany him to his *cortijo* (farm). As we approached the place I descried a great cloud of dust ahead of us, and as we came up to it we were shown the way into a field which was being laid out for wheat. I counted about a hundred ploughs at work, each drawn by a yoke of oxen, and as we passed each labourer stopped his oxen and saluted us with becoming dignity. As we rode on we met another cloud of dust, and had to get out of the way, for this was another herd of oxen on its way to the field we had left, to relieve those which had been at work since day-break. I greatly pleased the old gentleman by telling him that in the midst of these agricultural operations on so large a scale he reminded me of one of the

patriarchs of the grand old times, and I was by no means surprised to see such signs of veneration as his servants showed him. The men in their clean white linen shirts, and their handkerchiefs over their heads, and red sashes round their waists, and their hemp-sandal shoes, were a healthy-looking set of fellows, and they were the same as Don Luis Jurado brought to Molino del Rey a few years later to work in the Duke's service.

Don Luis was a sincerely religious man, and charitable to the poor. He had an altar near his bedroom for the celebration of private mass. He was very spare in diet, never drank anything but water, and that of the purest; his habits being common to all the members of his family and kindred—all fine specimens of that old Spanish sterling uprightness and Spanish pride which it is so rare to find nowadays.

During our stay at Montilla we again heard to what a ruinous state the Duke's property had been suffered to fall. If reports were to be believed, there was nothing so bad in all Spain.

## VII.

My business in Montilla being done, we proceeded to Granada, *viâ* Cabra, Priego, and Alcala Real, one of the most picturesque rides in the Peninsula. At Granada

we again applied to Mr. Grindlay for permission to see the Duke's estate. The leave was granted, but we were warned that we should have to wade through a flooded country, and such we found to be the case. We started early in the morning for Santa Fé, which we reached in three hours, but were several hours making our way over broken roads and swollen watercourses, and not without many mishaps to ourselves and our horses, before we alighted at the Duke's village of Fuente Vaqueros.

On crossing the bridge we were beset by a swarm of beggars, a score or two of them not more than half-clad in wretched rags, who complained that they had no bread, that the land was under water, all work at a standstill, many dying of fever and want; and they earnestly entreated us to acquaint their lord, the Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo, with their miserable condition.

We proceeded on our way, along a fine avenue of old elm-trees, to the Casa Real, the old royal mansion, which we found surrounded by pools of stagnant water. The woodwork on the ground floor had been burnt for firewood; there were no doors or windows, the walls were cracked and crumbling, the upper floor was tenanted by gipsies; we had to bait our horses with our own bread.

As we went on, all we had heard in Montilla about the havoc and dilapidation of the Duke's estate received

ample confirmation. The beautiful woods had been stripped of their timber, the canals which gave the land its chief value had fallen into decay, and their destruction had involved the estate in endless lawsuits with its neighbours. The Duke's cottages were far worse than any in Spain, many without windows, with stagnant water in the ground floor during part of the winter, the roofs falling through, and the tiles carried away. The beautiful old olive-trees which had been planted by Godoy, the Prince of Peace, in 1806, had never been pruned or trimmed; they had grown into one another in a thick canopy that no sun could penetrate, and the ground was overgrown with weeds up to our horses' knees. Hence the fall in the yield of olives to one-fifth of the average of former years; and had this state of things continued, it would have ceased altogether in a few years, the trees growing too old to be pruned to any good purpose, for the wood would have become too hard and brittle to produce healthy young shoots, so that in the course of time nothing could have been done but renew the whole plantation.

The worst of it was that the estate was freely open to plunder, for it was in the hands of guards who took bribes to absent themselves from duty, and the thieves had everything at their discretion.

From the Soto de Roma we proceeded to the hilly part of the estate, called the Molino del Rey, and were



taken through the olive-ground above described. Three miles farther we left the Duke's land on the way to Loja.

We arrived at Loja late at night, and the next morning we went to Malaga, where we took steamer for Gibraltar, and thence, after a short excursion to the coast of Africa, took our passage to Cadiz, Lisbon, Oporto, and Vigo, and embarked at this latter place in one of the Peninsular and Oriental steamers for England.

### VIII.

Up to this time I had had no acquaintance with the Duke of Wellington, nor until he wrote to me from his estates in Norfolk, asking particulars of my Montilla wines, of which his Grace had heard highly favourable reports. He ordered several casks of this wine, and hinted that, if I happened to be travelling that way, he would be pleased to see me. I went at once, and was received with much respect and kindness. Before dinner his Grace begged me to accompany him to his cellar and draw some wine from each cask. As the wine was drawn the Duke handed it to his guest, the Marshal MacMahon, Duke of Magenta, requesting him to taste the wines and tell him what he thought of them. The Marshal, as he handed back his glass, declared that they were 'the purest, neatest, and best-flavoured wines he had ever met with.'

The Duke was highly pleased, and charged me with a handsome present of game to take home to Mrs. Hammick ; and from that day his Grace frequently honoured me with visits in Pall Mall, and gave orders for other wines.

## IX.

In the autumn of 1863 a friend and myself projected a tour through Egypt and the Holy Land. The journey, however, was to begin *viâ* Spain, where I was desirous of seeing Montilla and other parts of Andalusia. On my informing the Duke of my intended trip, and offering my services if he had occasion for them, he told me that if I happened to go through Granada he would be much obliged if I would just give a glance over his estate of Soto de Roma, and give him some advice about what should and could be done, 'for the property was in an unsatisfactory state, and brought him no revenue.' He begged me also that, being at Cairo, I should procure him a bag of genuine Mocha coffee of the best quality. I willingly undertook both commissions.

## X.

I travelled straight to Montilla, where my agent, Don Luis Jurado, hearing of my intended visit to the Duke's estate, volunteered to accompany me, taking

with him his nephew, and the chief wine-broker of the district, Don Antonio Paula, besides some of his best men. It occurred to these friends of mine that it would not be enough to look over the estate, but that they should sink pits in various places to ascertain the real nature and capability of the soil; and, having agreed to this, we started on horseback, I bearing all the expenses of the cavalcade.

On the evening of the second day we arrived at the Duke's estate, Molino del Rey, and put up at the posada of the village of Illora. We went all over the estate, without being noticed by any of the clerks or other officials, and sank pits three feet deep in various parts of the domain. We found that the hills were almost of pure lime, with rubble-stone underneath, and the same was the case lower down, with deeper soil, and a mixture of iron and clay. The former was pronounced to be first-class soil for vineyards, and the latter for olive-trees, so that, if the Duke would plant it properly by trenching the land deeply beforehand, he would find that he had an Eldorado in his estate.

## XI.

I immediately communicated this report to his Grace, adding that I would place two thousand of the best vine-plants at his disposal through my agent Don

Luis Jurado at Montilla, and that on my way to Gibraltar, *viâ* Malaga, I would see Mr. Mark, her Majesty's Consul at Malaga, and through him acquaint Mr. John Mark, his Grace's agent, with what had been done.

On the following day, in fact, I was at Malaga, saw the consul, left the message for his brother, and took passage in the steamer for Gibraltar. Before leaving, however, I had an opportunity of seeing Mr. John Mark. I informed him of all that had occurred, and strongly recommended him to make a trial of the plantation, as I felt sure that by so doing he would have the approval of the Duke.

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## XII.

Leaving the matter in the agent's hands, I proceeded to Gibraltar, and thence to Alexandria and Cairo. Thanks to the kindness of the late Lord Lytton and his brother, Sir Henry Bulwer (afterwards Lord Dalling), then ambassador at Constantinople, I was enabled to go up the Nile to Assouan and back in a small steamer placed at my disposal by the Khedive, thus accomplishing in thirty days a journey which would otherwise have taken three months. On my return to Alexandria, in the first week of February 1864, I embarked in a Russian steamer for Jaffa. We landed there with much difficulty and some danger, thence rode to Jerusalem,

visited the Holy Places, rode to Jericho, to the banks of the Jordan, to Bethlehem, to Hebron, etc., the journey being especially memorable inasmuch as the keeper of the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane favoured me with sundry lots of flower-seeds. On the banks of the Jordan we filled our empty bottles of Montilla wine with Jordan water, which were sent to England through Mr. James, our consul at Jerusalem, and an American traveller bound to London, where the water came in time to be used for the christening of Prince Albert Victor, the Prince of Wales's eldest son;<sup>1</sup> and, what was of more moment to me, at Hebron I visited the vineyard of Eschol, and obtained a number of vine-plants, which I conveyed to Jerusalem, and thence, packing them carefully in soil, sent them to his Grace the Duke of Wellington.

### XIII.

Having thus completed our Syrian trip, we went back in an Austrian boat laden with donkeys to Alexandria, and thence proceeded to Gibraltar. From Gibraltar I went up to Montilla, where I was shown the 2,000 plants I had provided for the Duke's agent, Mr. Mark, who, I was deeply mortified to learn, had

<sup>1</sup> In memory of this event I put on one side several butts of my best wines of this year's vintage, not to be used until after the young Prince came of age, and marked them P.A.V. No. 10.

taken no step regarding the plantation, and, indeed, had completely disregarded my request and advice.

From Montilla I travelled to England, *viâ* Bordeaux, where I made a short stay, and arrived in Pall Mall about the first week in April.

#### XIV.

The Duke of Wellington had repeatedly called in Pall Mall, and showed some anxiety to be informed of my return the very moment of my arrival. Allowing me barely a day for rest, his Grace came to me and inquired whether the 2,000 vine-plants had been sent for by his agent. On hearing that they had not, he was seriously displeased, and declared that, as Mr. Mark had lost a year by his neglect, he should not be the man to plant his vineyard. He begged me to write to my agent, Don Luis Jurado, to ask him if he would undertake the plantation; and so eager was he about it that I had to write at once, his Grace insisting on posting my letter with his own hand, and asking me how long it would be before an answer could be received. On hearing that it would take a fortnight, he expressed his intention to call for it a fortnight from that day. When he called again he found the expected answer of Don Luis Jurado, who said that at his age (seventy-four) he had his hands sufficiently

full with his Montilla business ; but that, if he were allowed to take his own men, who practically understood the work, with him, he would be at his Grace's service. The Duke was well pleased, and desired me to make all the necessary arrangements, and to supply all that Don Luis and his men might require.

All this was done : the Duke gave me the funds for the purpose, and early in September Don Luis, with all his staff of planters, over sixty in number, besides water-carriers, wood-cutters, charcoal-burners, and stone-carriers, with their horses, pack-saddles, carts, and a little host of labourers, were on the spot.

On my arrival at Molino del Rey I found everything going on in a most business-like order. The wood-cutters were clearing the land of shrubs and trees of the evergreen oak ; the charcoal-burners were carrying it off and piling it into heaps ready for charring ; the trenchers were hard at work, following each other till a three-feet depth was attained ; the rubble-stones were thrown back over the land, and the stone-carriers were gathering them and carting them off. Hundreds of mules and donkeys were employed in this work. The water-carriers were supplying water to quench the thirst of the labouring men and horses.

It was one of the two finest sights I had ever seen in farming. The men, with their white linen shirts, their red sashes round their waists, their velvet breeches and sandal hemp shoes, looked extremely picturesque.

## XVI.

As a contrast to this gay sight I must describe the accommodation of the Duke's house at Molino del Rey. The house had been twice burnt down, and repaired with the half-burnt timber that had remained after the fire had been put out years before. It was kept by a poor widow, whose husband had died rather suddenly, no one seemed to know from what cause, and her children, one son and one daughter, had been taken from her: the son, aged fourteen, to drive the sub-agent's carriage; the daughter, only one year older, to live with the same sub-agent for immoral purposes. The mother's consent had been forced from her by threats of turning her out of her house. I took the old woman as a domestic servant, and learnt from her that her husband was a very able capataz, or foreman, at the Molino house, and Don Luis Jurado assured me that the poor man's death was caused by the water of the well, into which the sewage had been suffered to percolate. I examined the water, which was beautifully clear, but the very bad smell of which told the