

If you are a man, you will feel as perfectly at home where you are as you would were his Grace to put all his mansion at Strathfieldsaye at your disposal.'

LV.

After this, which I considered a salutary lesson, I proceeded to explain to him the duties of his office, and the relations in which we were placed towards each other.

'At the time the Duke saw you at my office in London, he addressed many questions to me about you, which I answered as satisfactorily as I conscientiously could. The information he received from me he, I presume, communicated to his legal advisers, the Messrs. Farrer, and these gentlemen, hearing that you were nearly related to Mr. Serjeant Manning, a gentleman eminent in the law, and that you were a nephew of Mr. Walter Oke Edye, also an eminent gentleman in the law, recommended his Grace to appoint you his agent. I suppose his Grace fancied he would particularly please me by this appointment; for he distinctly said that he would make you his agent, but that you should be amenable to my control; and this is what I particularly want to impress upon you, that his Grace holds me responsible for everything you may do. Meanwhile, however, legally he has put me entirely in

your power. Still, I accept the position, because his Grace knows that I have ever intended to do something for you, and he has thus afforded me an opportunity of doing it, and I shall be glad to avail myself of it.'

LVI.

Here I reminded him that he had only been with us in his early boyhood ; that he was very young when he was taken from us, and that for several years we had known nothing of him, and could not say what his life in that interval might have been like. 'You may rely on my goodwill to help you and to promote your interests to the full extent of my abilities, Master Harry,' I said. 'And I should rejoice if in a year or two I might be able to hand over this vineyard and its produce with all the estates to your keeping.'

In the meantime I added that he could take up his abode with me at La Torre, which would enable me to give him all the advice and instruction he might stand in need of.

LVII.

And thus, going to work at once, I explained to him that his first duty should be to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the stores at the Molino house. I meant the oil-plant ; such as the places

where the fruit is garnered, the mills for grinding it, the boilers for boiling the water and pressing the oil out of the pulp, the jars to receive the oil, and the carts for carting the fruit to the Molino ; for I remembered that on the previous year I had passed several carts broken, with all their load of olives scattered on the ground, and there left to lie for days for any passers-by to pick them up. I told him after that to take a survey of the boundaries of the estate, begging him to make me out a full account of all these things. Further, I informed him that the Duke had paid a considerable sum for some new oil-machinery, which was doubtless on its way to Malaga, and had thence to be conveyed to the estate over a distance of some eighty miles or more. 'Of course,' I said, 'it must be expected that iron presses should be very heavy ; and in all probability you will require some very strong truck made on purpose to bring them up. And bear in mind that there is no time to be lost, for when the rains set in the roads will become almost impassable, and the rivers so high that nothing can any longer be brought across. There is a man here of the name of Vega, an able and trustworthy man, who will be of great use to you, and will point out all these matters, and enable you to bring me a report of them, that we may afterwards go over the ground to examine them together, and settle what is best to

be done. You may also go over to Soto de Roma and do the same in that as in this part of the estate.'

LVIII.

In course of time Mr. Edye brought me his report, with full details of such information as he had received from Vega. It was not a very cheering document. The stores at the Molino house were empty. The old wooden oil-presses, which had perhaps been in use ever since General O'Lawlor's time—and long before, for they were most substantial—and which Don Luis Jurado had still been able to turn to good purpose, had been removed, and some fragments of new oil-machinery were scattered here and there, as if it had been worthless. The mill had been taken to pieces, and altogether put out of gear. There was an end to the supply of water, for the reservoir about two miles up the stream was broken and empty, and the water-course obstructed. The carts had been exposed to the sun and rain, and were rotten and useless. The harness was in no better condition. The long rows of jars, which were fixtures, were cracked and unavailable; for any oil that was put into them would ooze out and be wasted. There was no means of mending the cracks of these jars, for the manufactory for these articles is some twenty miles off, and its wares must be ordered in

good time : for this year's oil it was now too late. We heard from Vega that till the new machinery came in there was nothing that could be done ; for whatever had been done the previous year was worthless and continually breaking to pieces. Unless a man who understood the work was brought out, Vega thought it could not be made available. It was very wrong of Calzado, Vega added, to remove the old presses and mills till he had the means to carry out his new-fangled notions.

LIX.

Such was the state of Molino del Rey when Mr. Edye came to it in September 1866.

There is no doubt that these evils were in a great measure to be laid to the charge of the owner of the estate. It was all owing to the Duke, who forced us to live under tents, and afterwards in the small cottage of La Torre, thus losing the services of Jurado, who had done so well with the oil of the previous season.

LX.

The boundaries of the Duke's property of Molino del Rey were not difficult to make out, because they were traced by large stones erected as landmarks. The watercourses, however, had swerved from their direction in several places, so that two of the water-mills had

been cut off, as well as two gardens. But this had occurred many years before—so many that nobody living was able to mention the date of the occurrence. The base of the hills had 16,000 olive-trees ; but these were deficient in many places. Considerable work had been done in former years to rear up a costly solid aqueduct in masonry to carry the water all round for the irrigation of the olive-trees, and also to drive the oil-mills ; but some of these works had been suffered to fall into dilapidation, many years elapsing without any attempt being made to repair them, or prevent the water running to waste.

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y General
LXI.
CONSEJERIA DE CULTURA

The flat piece of ground called Huerte Majara, upwards of 200 acres in extent, which received the water after it had been used for the olive grounds, and thus became very rich and productive, had been brought into cultivation with English ploughs ; but from want of efficient ploughmen the experiment had failed, and the luckless ploughs were left to rot or rust beside the high-road, ready to be carried off by any one who might take a fancy to them. A small capataz's, or farm labourer's, house had also been built upon the spot, but those who had tried to live in it had been attacked by fever, from the miasma to

which the overflowing waters had exposed it : no one would live in it, nor even remain in charge of it. It ought to have been built inside the olive plantation, on the waste land on the side of the hill overlooking it. The well at the Molino house was in the same state as when I left the place two years before, and it entailed the same expense for the men and beasts that had to fetch the water, a four miles' distance. No attempt to remedy this evil had been made, and none could be tried for some time ; for the winter rains would soon set in, and prevent any work being done till the summer of the following year. The brook that ran from Illora beside this well received all the sewage of the town of Illora, as well as the refuse of the oil-mills of that place, to such an extent that by the time it arrived at the Molino house it was as black as ink. To use this water to make the Duke's oil was altogether out of the question, so there was no alternative but to continue the employment of the water-carriers as before.

LXII.

Moreover, there were not in Spain engineers who understood this kind of work. To provide practical men with some knowledge of these things it was necessary to put off the work till the following year. Only the carts

and harness could be sent to Granada for the required repairs, and this was done, and in due time they were returned in good order for carting in the olive crop ; but there was no shed under which to shelter them from the sun and rain, and, as even their axles were wooden, in less than a year they were again useless, so that they entailed a yearly expense.

Thus ended the report of the state of the Molino del Rey when Mr. Edye's agency commenced in September 1866.

LXIII.

It was not until late in October that the new oil-machinery ordered by the Duke's late agent arrived. In due time the freight and heavy duties on this machinery were paid. A strong waggon had been constructed, and this was sent with several yokes of oxen to Malaga to bring up the new contrivance to Molino del Rey. Three weeks had been employed with a dozen yoke of oxen and some mules in bringing it as far as Larcha ; but the rains now broke out, the river Xenil ran high, and many days had to elapse before the water subsided sufficiently to allow the river to be crossed. At last, far into November, the carts and waggons drove in, and the application of the new machinery to the process of oil-making began. There was, however, no com-

petent machinist in Granada. We went to Malaga, to Seville, to Madrid, but nowhere in Spain could an available engineer be found. In the meantime the olives were being gathered and carted to Molino, a work that was carried on till the spring; the water could not be made to act on the mill-stones—there was not water in sufficient quantity for the purpose. There arose a hundred difficulties, to overcome which it became necessary to have an engineer out from England, and it was May before the oil-machinery was fairly at work. Even then it was frequently out of order, and served its purpose only temporarily. The next season the same troubles arose, the same patching and mending, the same necessity to send to England for the proper man. And so it went on, year after year, an incessant setting up and breaking down. Had these obstacles been foreseen, it would have been far better to have put the whole matter of oil-machinery into the hands of such a practical house as Witham and Co., of Leeds, who would have sent out the machinery with artisans of their own able to set it to work. Till that could be done it was folly to remove the old gear.

A serious loss, amounting to about 3,000*l.*, was thus incurred, owing to the trust the Duke had placed in his agent and sub-agent. The loss arose chiefly from

the continual breaking of the machinery and the waste of oil, and its being kept in the berry till the machinery was made available, besides the cost of many messengers despatched to various places to look for an able engineer.

LXIV.

Mr. Edye's report as to the Soto de Roma was almost *nil*. He had not been able to get any of the books, and the house was still occupied by the late agents, who were making up their books, which, if one may believe their clerks, were all to be made up anew.

The Duke sent me a letter his Grace had received from his former agent, Mr. Mark, dated October 18, 1866, which runs as follows :—

'I yesterday informed Mr. Farrer that, wishing to surrender up my charge as satisfactorily as possible, I had given Calzado instructions not to leave a stone unturned so as to settle that succession tax before making the transfer of the agency, and that, finding that it could only be arranged at Madrid, Calzado had proceeded thither with that object.

'Although I confess to have anxiously awaited your Grace's order to deliver up for the last two months, still I now regret that it has come during Calzado's absence.

'It therefore remains for your Grace to inform me whether, once there, you would wish him to carry the question through, or would prefer Mr. Edye to undertake it.

'If the former, I will confirm my order to Calzado to push through it as quickly as possible, so as to return to Granada to hand over, or, if the contrary, I will telegraph to him to leave it *in statu quo* and withdraw.

'Regarding the tithes compensation claim, Calzado need only refer Mr. Edye to the advocate in Madrid who acts in your Grace's behalf, and that gentleman will give him his legal views as to its actual position.

'I should not have entered upon it had I not obtained his opinion of its justness, but at the same time, *entre nous*, I was given pretty clearly to understand that a moment would arrive while pursuing it when considerable personal influence would have to be exerted in the capital so as to obtain the acknowledgment of the Government obligation.

'I will further add that, had I not thought that we could wield this influence through friends at Court, I would never (well as I know the soil tread on) have entertained the subject.

'I trust I need not explain to your Grace that I simply allude to the influence of friends to be exerted in behalf of justice.'

The Duke inclosed me the above letter, and observed 'that it treats of the tax and tithes compensation claim, with regard to the tax (which by-the-by is for succeeding to the Spanish title, and not for succeeding to the estate). As Mr. Calzado has begun the transaction, I think it better to leave it to him, inasmuch as it is fairly the remnant of his own administration. Will you therefore have the goodness to beg Mr. Edye to allow him to act and give all the assistance in his power, inasmuch as he has now my power of attorney?

'With regard to the tithe compensation claim, Mr. Calzado will refer Mr. Edye to the proper advocate, so that Mr. Edye may take his place as my apoderado.

(Signed) 'WELLINGTON.'

LXV.

In the meanwhile the usual rains had set in; the rivers were out, the bridges rotten in many places, and very scanty knowledge could be gathered about the condition of that part of the property during the winter. The only contrivance to prevent the overflowing of the streams was to cut down trees, to drive the timber into the water as piles, cramming the branches and small wood behind these piles so as to

make them do duty as a clumsy embankment. But it was no easy matter to get over these flooded lands, to see whether the works were effectually done or not, and the weekly wages paid for this purpose formed a very serious item in Mr. Edye's finances, which I had to find him throughout the whole winter. He was, besides, plagued with many petty lawsuits arising from the damages done by the waters, and of these there was no end.

LXVI.

On my examination of the Duke's vineyard in September 1866, I was taken through every part of it by the Montilla capatazes whom I had left in charge. They showed me the extraordinary growth that some plants had attained, the largeness of the shoots, and the richness of the green leaves. This, I was told, was owing to the deep trenching and the frequent moving of the soil, letting in sun and air. For as in these parts it seldom rained between April and September, it was necessary to go deep into the ground to reach the roots underneath; and the results of this method of planting would be seen every year afterwards in the large bunches of grapes, and the rich and full juice they would yield. And indeed, even in this, merely the second year of its growth, there were grapes enough to make about ninety arrobas of wine,

and as many of vinegar, the latter made from an imperfect quality of grapes.

The question was, How was the wine to be taken care of? In answer, the chief capataz took me to the Molino house, and showed me the stone trough of the oil-mill, saying that if the agent would allow it they could for this small quantity make it answer the purpose for this year. So I desired him to make a thorough cleaning of the trough, and make use of it. And in this way the first wine ever produced on the Duke's estate was preserved.

The only lock-up place in the Duke's estate was this one oil-cellar, with its long rows of jars, sound and broken; and here I took care of his wine and vinegar up to May 1867, when I left it in charge of the Duke's new agent, Mr. Edye.

LXVII.

The chief capataz reminded me that he and his fellows had been at work on this vineyard since September 1864, when it began. They had left their home in Montilla to serve their own master, Don Luis Jurado, who had requested them to stay with me up to this time to prove by the success how wise had been his management of this vineyard; that this having now been accomplished, they wished to go back to

their wives and families, as they had been terribly roughing it for these years, and they hoped their determination to leave would not offend me.

I could well sympathise with these men, for my position was analogous to theirs. By the Duke's want of firmness in yielding up the Molino house to his agent the preceding year, I had myself gone through terrible hardships in the winter: first in the tents, and then in the cottage, where I had risked my life sleeping for weeks on a damp floor, and, moreover, always in the expectation of a nightly attack by a gang of robbers who were known to be only six miles off behind the mountains. And what prospect had I of being rewarded for the sacrifices I was making here, to say nothing of the losses occasioned by my absence from my business in England?

LXVIII.

Although I daily considered all this, I still felt that I was somewhat bound in honour to the Duke, at any rate for this one year; for, although my losses were serious, they were nothing compared with those the Duke would infallibly sustain if I withdrew from his affairs. Resolving, therefore, to go on for some time longer, at least through the year ending in September 1867, I told these capatazes that I admitted the truth

of their assertions, and that they had done their work in a first-class manner. I shook hands with all of them, made each a handsome present, and bade them commend me to their wives and families, and also to go and see Don Luis Jurado and tell him all that had occurred at Molino del Rey, begging him to be so kind as to look out for other capatazes to fill their places. They could bear witness to the rough life I myself had to endure, and they could see that, as at present it was impossible for me to build houses, I had reared a number of huts as a preliminary stage to more substantial buildings, and that these huts, being near the vineyard, were the best I could contrive for them. I added that they could always rely upon me for anything I could do to oblige them, and that I hoped soon to see them back again.

LXIX.

Thanks to the Duke's vacillation, I had before me eighty or ninety fanegas of vineyard, in the most splendid order, without either master or man to carry on its cultivation. The capatazes, one and all, impressed upon me the urgent necessity of building a cellar of sufficient extent, which they defined in their own way, saying that it should contain not less than 500 butts, besides a space for the winepresses and *tinajas*.

or vats, to receive the juice as it comes from the presses, to allow the fermentation to go on for months before it is fit to be put into the casks. I assured them that all these suggestions should be put before the Duke, and off they went.

LXX.

It may be remembered that when I wished to remove the stones that had come out of the vineyard I was compelled to lay them by the side of it, the Duke's agent denying me the right to cart them farther away. What was I to do with them? Previous to his departure, Don Luis Jurado had marked out a site for a suitable cellar, on a hill in front of the vineyard. From this cellar to the vineyard, and through the olive-ground to the Molino house, a good road was a necessity, especially when the rains came down; for the soil was so loose that one would sink almost to the knees in going across it. I marked out a road through the vineyard and the olive-plantation about two miles in length, carted all these stones into it, and thus opened an easy and firm communication from end to end. To go through the olive-plantations I had to carry the road across several streams of water. What I should have wanted for the purpose was a quantity of round brick arches, under which the water should flow and over which the carts could travel. But bricks of that

hardness I could neither have ready made nor order them of any Spanish artisans ; for Spain had been for so many years in a state of more than semi-barbarism that its vast capabilities lay buried many fathoms underneath it, like her money, hidden no one knows where. There were thus very few able artisans in the large towns, and none whatever of any class in country villages. My only resource, therefore, was to cut down several trees and lay them across these watercourses, covering them over with the soil at hand. But the sun in summer and the rains in winter so quickly brought the wood of these bridges to decay that it was necessary to renew them every year.

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

LXXI.

The Molino house was full of working-men and labourers ; some sleeping on stone benches round the kitchen, others in the oil-cellar on sacks of straw, others again under temporary sheds that I had reared for them till something better could be provided. The olive-gathering had commenced ; several men were busy knocking them down from the trees, while something like a hundred, between old men, women, and children, were gathering them as they fell, all under the superintendence of Don Manuel Vega. Don Manuel, whom I have previously mentioned, had been employed in the offices at Granada under Don Roberto Grindlay.

He was a smart young fellow about thirty, with a wife as fine and handsome a woman as he was a man, both elegantly dressed in the picturesque Andalusian costume; but they were unwilling to live at the Molino house on account of its dilapidation, and because so many capatazes had died there of fever that no one was disposed to brave its dangers. Vega lived, therefore, away from the estate, thus greatly lessening the value of his services as a superintendent of the olive-gathering.

In course of time, however—*i.e.* as late as February 1867—the olive-gathering was accomplished; but the machinery for oil-making was not advanced to anything like satisfaction, and the cry at Illora was that the Duke's sub-agent, Calzado, had hit his Grace very hard by dispelling even the hope of saving the oil for this year. However, things turned out less disastrous than was expected, for in the meantime a working engineer arrived from England, and by the end of May I had saved all the oil, and was thus relieved from the pangs of prolonged anxiety.

LXXII.

A month had now passed since the capatazes of the vineyard had gone back to their homes, and I had received no news from Don Luis Jurado respecting their

successors, so that I began to feel some uneasiness about the delay. All I knew was that Don Luis, my old servant Paula, and all their people were very sore about the Duke's behaviour towards them, and to soothe their anger I undertook a journey to Montilla to see what my personal influence could effect towards a mitigation of their ill-will. After several days' negotiation I was able to return, bringing back not a few of the men who had left us, together with some others, but at an increased rate of wages. As soon as I arrived at La Torre I was waited upon by the mayor and town council of Illora, who presented a lengthy petition, representing the serious distress under which Illora was labouring, and stating that in that town and the villages of the surrounding district, where the ordinary daily rate of mortality was two or three, as many as thirty deaths had occurred in one day—a calamity entirely arising from famine and fever. I urged my inability to find the means to meet so dreadful a contingency, but yet answered that I would help them to the extent of my power, and offered to employ fifty in the trenching work in the vineyard. I had indeed intended to bring these labours to a close and devote the means at my disposal to other purposes, but the pressure put upon me by these earnest councilmen in behalf of their suffering people induced me to yield to their solicitations and to bear the hardships we were all enduring for a little

longer. Instead of fifty labourers in the trenches I had to receive a hundred, and it was with the utmost difficulty that I could keep them down even to that number.

LXXIII.

From Soto de Roma, also, there came applications for loans. The mayor and town council of that locality implored my help to enable their starving poor to tide over the winter.¹ They begged me hard, through the Duke's agent, Mr. Edye, to supply them with some kind of work ; and besides, the town council applied for loans of seeds to enable the poor tenants to sow their lands for the coming season. Besides attending to all these requests, I killed an ox at Christmas and sent it to the town council to give these poor starving people a day of rejoicing. A few weeks after that festivity the sunny days ensued, and the subsiding of the rivers made it possible for me to cross over to the Soto. I took the Duke's agent and Don Paula with me (the latter would never leave me), as well as Don Manuel Vega, and gave up two days of the week—in the first place to survey the boundaries of that part of the estate, and then to inquire into the causes of the poverty and distress prevailing within its district.

¹ See p. 220.

LXXIV.

Everything being ready, I started from La Torre at two o'clock in the morning, and after crossing the river five miles off I arrived at Casa Real, the centre of this part of the estate, from which I imagined some original bridle-paths or footpaths would lead me to the farther portions of the estate. Instead of mere paths, however, there branched off from the house several broad avenues of old elm-trees, each avenue more than a mile in length, some of them again dividing into double and treble avenues, customary in conjunction with royal country residences throughout Spain. I took the avenue to the right leading from Casa Real to the river, very near to the spot where I had already crossed it, and after riding through a plantation of elm-trees we came to some highly cultivated lands, exceedingly well watered, in sight of which I drew rein, and, turning to Vega, inquired whose property it was.

'This,' he said, 'does not now belong to the Duke. It is an enclave in the estate of Soto de Roma, all surrounded by the Duke's land, and has a right of water from the Duke's streams ; the land has been in its present owner's family for about fifty or sixty years, and the ownership is not now disputed, though with respect to the water right there has been no end of litigation.'

To put an end to it Don Roberto Grindlay, during his agency, endeavoured to buy the land back for the Duke, but the price asked was treble its value, and nothing came of it. Lately, however, there have been deaths in the owner's family, and so many claims to a share in it have been started that it might be easy to get it for its real worth.'

And so, in fact, it turned out, for three years later I bought this property in the Duke's name, and paid some instalments of the purchase money ; but I had no opportunity of completing the payment before I left the Duke's affairs.

LXXV.

We passed on over streams and brooks, bearing close in upon the right, to the edge of the Duke's boundaries, where the horses sank down to their knees in mud at every step. The Duke's agent, Mr. Edye, had more than one smart tumble from his Norfolk cob (a present which had just been sent out to him from his Grace) ; he called out to his horse to 'port,' 'starboard,' and other seafaring terms. We thus made out about a mile's survey ; but the horses were tired, and we had to ride back to La Torre, where we arrived at 11 A.M., having been in the saddle for nine hours without a halt. Twice a week I carried on this survey of the Duke's boundaries, up to the month of May, when I had made it out in a

tolerably satisfactory manner as far as the village of Larcha.

LXXVI.

As I came to a wood near this place bordering on a large stream of water, my attention was called to a deep cutting which ran through it, and I heard the axe freely plied by several people evidently at work within it. As we waded across the water and neared the wood, the noise of the axes at once stopped, and of the men who had used them not one was to be seen. I searched the wood up and down, in and out, but in vain. All I could find was the trunks of twenty-seven trees recently felled. None of the guards was on the spot. Vega was very silent, and could give no explanation. The phenomenon was quite beyond his comprehension, and he could not imagine where the men could have gone, or how they could have hidden themselves so quickly.

LXXVII.

On my next visit to the Soto I crossed the river, and, turning to the left, I followed the Duke's boundaries till I had reached half-way to the village of Peños Puente; but so deep on this side were the intricacies of the Duke's boundaries, the streams had evidently been so often turned from their course, that to trace the

border-line was extremely difficult. Vega stated that this once had been the Duke's land, but it had ceased to be so, he did not know how or why. The guard who alone could speak with any certainty about the fact was now dead, and no landmarks had ever been set up on this part of the estate. The rivers had run very wild; the old Moorish canal had broken through its dikes, these had never been repaired, and much land had consequently fallen out of cultivation. Ever now at every fresh outbreak of the canal lawsuits arise; and very naturally, because its waters, after going over the Duke's lands, are bound to go on to those of the Duke of Abrantes and other neighbouring proprietors, and their tenants are prompt to enforce their obvious and acknowledged water-rights. I pointed out to Mr. Edye that it was absolutely necessary that he should try to make out the boundaries of the Soto estate, and begged him to persevere in the discharge of his duty, and stay the cutting of trees, the result of which would be the total ruin of the property, inasmuch as the poor tenants could not get to their lands unless they first obtained leave to cut young trees from the banks of the rivers and so make bridges with them, covering the bridges with soil, and when all the trees were cut down they would be at a loss what to do.

I advised him to take up his quarters in Casa Grande, which had been used by the agents for a cen-

ture or more, and to discontinue all kinds of labour till the ensuing harvest ; for the poor could do very well during the summer, particularly so at the Soto, which was all watered, and the crops never failed, if the tenants could only find the means of sowing and improving their land,

LXXVIII.

I instanced the Huerte Majara, which was a thorough wilderness, all overrun with weeds, and allowed thus to lie fallow. The English ploughs might be seen alongside the high road unused. An attempt had indeed been made to use them, but the sub-agent Calzado himself understood nothing about English ploughs ; he could not teach his labourers what he knew not himself, and so the cost of these implements, with their freight to Malaga, the customs duties, and the carriage to Molino del Rey, all amounting to a considerable sum of money, was a dead loss. The same may be said of a thrashing-machine and a steam-engine, both bought in England at the cost of many hundreds of pounds, with their freight, duties, and carriage, which added a considerable item to these costs ; and all these purchases were made to please the ideas and fancies of the sub-agent, who, having been a clerk in the Consul's offices at Malaga, assumed the airs of an English gentleman, and thus prevailed

on his superior to represent to the Duke the necessity of all these things. When he had them, he played with them as a child with a new toy, until he tired of them, from want of understanding, and then let them lie in rust and dust and ruin. His next hobby was that the Duke's oil could not be made without a new set of oil-machinery, so he insisted with his superior that he should press on the Duke that new necessity, and the machinery was, as we have seen, on its way when Mr. Edye came to the agency. As to the state in which things were when this sub-agent had left, I must refer the reader to the report drawn up by Mr. Edye and Don Manuel Vega. It would seem that the breaking up of all the old gear of the oil-machinery and the imperfect orders that had been given to get new machinery made were the result, to say the least, of great carelessness and ignorance combined. Such, at least, is the opinion of the people in Illora and the villages about it; and there is no doubt that many serious consequences, which were to endure for years, were the result.

LXXIX.

The Duke had made me a present of four six-shot revolvers, one of which his Grace called a lady's-companion, and which I therefore handed over to Mrs. Hammick, when she came to La Torre to share with

mè the danger of being carried off by the brigands. I made a target, with a bull's-eye in the centre, and invited all the reputed crack shots to come and try the Duke's weapons, the invitation extending to the ladies. The latter, of course, fired first, some of them making good hits at thirty paces' distance. Then came the turn of the gentlemen, then the guards. Lastly Don Horacio was called up, and the only shot he fired went through the bull's-eye, and thus ended the trial. On the strength of that I sent word to the *mal-hombre* Calzado, the late sub-agent, that I should give him the choice of pistols, for I felt a longing to rid the country of all such *malas gentes*. This was talked about far and wide, in every village, and Molino del Rey might after this be traversed all over without dread of the *mal-hombres*, who had hitherto made it their lurking-place. Petty thefts became of rare occurrence, and the labourers' wives and daughters crossed all over the estate from village to village safe from insult or outrage, as they had never been before.

LXXX.

Two men had been seen entering the Molino house and pass through it to the oil-cellars, asking at what time Don Horacio was about, and other particulars. This visit was repeated two or three days in succession,

till the thing awakened suspicion, and Vega and the guards brought me word that they were highwaymen—in fact, murderers escaped from Granada. They were now coming up to La Torre, and the guard on duty informed me that they were to be seen about a mile below, walking quickly up the hill towards us. I had not my faithful and valiant Paula with me at the time, but I was sure these fellows could not know me, and therefore I merely placed the guard on the parapet outside the stables, and bid him be sure to take aim at the villains if he saw them closing upon me. I then took my double-barrelled gun on my shoulder, put the lady's-companion into my pocket, and walked down the La Torre road to meet them. I was going, apparently, to pass them, and, as they probably had never seen me and could not therefore recognise me, they would not have hindered me; but, seeing they had no arms visible, I immediately stood up in front of them, and laying my gun on the ground I pointed my dainty six-shooter, as it were, behind their ears, and at once fired off one of the barrels into the air, crying out—

‘Where are you going?’

‘To La Torre.’

‘What is your business?’

‘We want Don Horacio.’

‘I am the man!’ and as I said this I fired another shot in the air. Down they both fell to the

ground in their fright, but were quickly on their legs again; and, recovering from their fright, away they scampered as hard as they could, tumbling one over the other in their headlong flight. Seeing their defeat, I called out after them, 'I have you!' the sound of my voice alone adding to their speed: at the same time bang! bang! went my double barrellled gun, though without any intention or attempt on my part to hit them.

They were taken soon after at one of the villages, and described the encounter they had to the alcalde, who told them: 'Thank your stars! You have had a narrow escape, for the Englishman might have killed you. He is a dead shot, and altogether a terrible customer to such as you. Take my advice and never go near him again, for neither you nor any of your fellows can have anything to do at La Torre. All the business is carried on at the Molino. Should Don Horacio shoot you dead, it would only serve you right.'

After this adventure, harmless as it was, Calzado never showed himself again, and peace seemed to be established at La Torre.

LXXXI.

The expenses of the Soto de Roma during the winter months were very heavy, and no means of checking or reducing them could be devised ; for the rivers were incessantly breaking from their courses, and no better remedy against the overflowing waters could be devised than by cutting down trees and driving them into the ground as piles, thrusting in the tops—the small wood and foliage of the trees—as a support to the piles. But the swollen waters prevented anybody crossing the rivers to see what was being done. The chief guard of the Soto, Don Rafael by name, had been managing these things for years in his own way, and was not amenable to control. The breaking down of the canal dikes was another evil the repair of which was an immediate necessity. So the chief guard used to bring in his weekly bills : ‘ For cutting trees so many men ; so many for making piles ; so many for driving them ; and so many for stuffing the branches behind them ;’ and this had to be done sometimes at two or three different places. The canals were another item of the same description : ‘ For so many hundred bricks ; so many donkeys and men carrying the same ; so many loads of cement ; and so many donkeys carrying the same.’ Then came the

bricklayers: 'so many men repairing the canals at such a spot, and so many at another;' and the charge 'for the cost of large stones, and the carrying of the same.'

LXXXII.

All these bills were carefully made out and signed by the brick-burner, the lime-burner, the cement-burner, and receipts in the best order were produced as evidence that all that was due had been paid. But some proper check and control were needed; and therefore, having become somewhat more intimately acquainted with the ins and outs of the Soto, I made up my mind to satisfy myself that all was right by going to the bottom of everything.

I told Mr. Edye and Paula that I might want their company, but gave them no inkling of my probable movements. I sent them to bed at an early hour, but at one o'clock after midnight I got up, had Paula called, and bade the party saddle their horses and arm themselves with provisions for men and beasts, not forgetting their guns and pistols.

We thus set out in the dead of night, and stole unperceived through the olive-grounds to the road leading to the Soto de Roma. The river was very high, and the horses had to swim across. We made our way to the canal that was being repaired, and the

bricklayers had just arrived on the ground, at break of day, when we made our appearance. It was still dark enough for us to be taken for chance passers-by, and I addressed the bricklayers as if I were a stranger asking my way to Granada; then entering on some conversation, I inquired of one of them if he had had a long job.

‘Not very long,’ was the answer.

‘Ha! But how many days have you been here?’

He told me, so many.

‘And how many men have been at work here since the job began?’

Again the answer was ready, and he told me the number.

‘Where do you buy those bricks?’

‘Don Rafael buys them.’

‘Who is Don Rafael?’

‘The chief guard of the Soto.’

‘Hand me some of those bricks! Are they good?’

He handed me a couple of them. I knocked them together: they had no ring. ‘What do you think of them? They are not half-burnt—are they?’

‘No, señor.’

‘What is the use of repairing such a canal with half-burnt bricks? The work will have to be done over again next year.’

'Likely enough, sir, but the Duke has got plenty of money : it will be of no consequence to him.'

'What are the wages of bricklayers in these parts?'

'Why, Don Rafael bids me make out my bills for sixteen reals a day, but he only pays me fourteen.'

'Now tell me how many days you and your men have been here at this work.'

He told me the number.

'Are you sure?'

'Quite, señor.'

'I see here comes a pair of very fine oxen with a load of stones. Whose are they?'

'Don Rafael's.'

'Where does he get the stones?'

'Out of the river, in the summer.'

'How often does Don Rafael come to see you? Every day?'

'Oh no ; only once or twice, now and then.'

'Early in the morning?'

'Oh no ; not till nine or ten.'

'About breakfast time, I suppose?'

'That is just it, señor.'

'How far did you say it is to Granada? About three leagues?'

'Si, señor.'

'Must I keep straight on?'

'No, señor ; you had better get into the avenue of yonder trees, and then follow it straight.

'Thank you very much. Mr. Edye, give this good bricklayer a cigar. He is a capital fellow. He has taught me a lesson this morning how to lay bricks which I shall never forget.'

LXXXIII.

So we pressed on through the *alamedas*, and came upon a countryman in charge of horses, donkeys, and mules.

I counted thirty-three heads of animals. Then I inquired :—

'Do you take out a licence to graze all this herd?'

'Si, señor.'

'Have you got it here?'

'Si, señor.'

'Let me see it.' He handed it. I read it. The licence was granted for only eight beasts.

'How is this, my friend? Are those only eight?'

'Oh! late at night we turn in all we have ; at eight in the morning we drive home all but eight.'

Then, turning to Mr. Edye, I said : 'Do you see? The fellow's licence bears your signature.' Then addressing the man again :—

'Where is your guard?'

‘Over those *alamedas*.’

‘What? Is he never here?’

‘Only now and then.’

‘Here is a lesson for you, Mr. Edye! Did I not most earnestly desire you not to grant any more of these grazing licences? You heard me say that I was anxious to rid the Duke’s property of these nuisances. What can be more disgraceful to a nobleman’s park than the sight of these galled, knee-broken, half-starved brutes? The profit to the Duke is *nil*, depend upon it, and the way it is managed is by feeing the guards to keep away so that they may pretend they see or know nothing about it. Besides, it gives the owner of all these animals the right to trespass over these *alamedas*. Now, Mr. Edye, what have you to say to this?’

‘Don Rafael asked me to sign these licences: it had always been done, and it was all right.’

‘And so you signed them. And by so doing you thwarted my purpose, which was to rid the estate of all these nuisances. Besides, you see, these practices breed corruption among the guards, who are the Duke’s servants, and yet plunder the Duke’s property which they are paid to protect.’

LXXXIV.

We passed on. Presently, as we turned sharply round the corner of a thick wood, I heard a chopper at work. I dashed in, and suddenly came upon a man seated on the ground who was scooping out wooden bowls. I called out to him, 'Who are you? What are you doing here? You have been cutting down the Duke's trees!'

'No, señor.'

'But I see you have been doing it. There lies the felled timber.'

'What I now do I have done this fifteen years or more, and I have seen no duke. We call this "No Man's Land!"'

'Ah, but it is the Duke's land!'

'But the Duke never comes here: we never see his face.'

'Mr. Edye, call one of your guards, and have this fellow taken to Granada at once.'

'No, you won't,' said the man.

'Why should not I?' I said.

'Because there is never any guard on the spot when I am here.'

'So, then, you are on terms with the guards? What is the fee you give them to keep out of the way? *Una onza?*'

‘No, señor. In times past, when the trees were large, we may have given *una onza* [a doubloon]. But now *cien reales* [one pound] is all I give.’

‘I have never seen so bold a fellow as you here before. I am much obliged to you for your information. Now you had better pick up your bowls and be off at once to Granada, or you may be sure I shall send for the Civil Guards to take you there.’

LXXXV.

My mare, Duquesa, had a wonderfully quick ear. At some distance off through the same wood she suddenly stopped, and as I looked about me and listened I heard a number of hatchets chopping. I could not proceed through the wood, which was here an impervious thicket, but I went back, and skirting the wood along the road I found a path leading to the river side. Here I came upon several fellows, who had already felled many trees—about twenty-three, I counted—but away they scampered before I could lay hold of one of them.

LXXXVI.

I therefore made my way to the brick-burner, and engaged him in conversation.

'Are you the brick-burner?'

'Si, señor.'

'Have you any well-burnt bricks for sale?'

'No, señor, not now.'

'When are you likely to have any?'

No answer.

I looked the man hard in the face—a face I was sure I recognised as not quite new to me.

'I rather think I have seen you before. Can you tell me where?'

No answer.

'Surely you are one of the fellows who ran away from me when I searched the wood at Larcha.'

His wife, who was standing by, cried out, 'Ah, Jayme! you are found out.'

'Now, my good woman, I shall take this fellow off to Granada. Is he your husband?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Is he not the man I saw cutting down so many trees at Larcha?'

'Yes, sir.'

'How is it that the bricks are only half-burnt?'

'Because my man has not charcoal enough to burn them.'

'Now, you have been sending a lot of bricks to the Soto for some repairs to be done to the canals, have you not?'

The woman undertook to answer. 'To be sure he has.'

'Will you tell me how many you sent?'

No answer.

Then I took out my 'lady's-companion,' and I put the mouth of the barrel close to the man's ear. Then I tilted it upwards and fired one charge in the air, bidding Mr. Edye call up one of his guards and send the fellow in custody to Granada.

His wife then cried out, 'Tell the truth, Jim; out with it!' Then the man confessed how many bricks he had sent, how many donkeys had been laden with them, how many men had gone with the donkeys, what was his charge for the bricks, and how much he got altogether for payment. Then it was discovered that there was no truth either in the quantity or in the price, or in anything he had stated. And he concluded as others had done before:—

'I just made out the bill as Don Rafael bade me.'

And it came out that Don Rafael and the man had gone shares in the money they had made out of the fraudulent sale.

I then asked, 'How long have you been living by such tricks?'

His wife cried out, 'All his life!'

'So you fell the Duke's trees, and you use the wood to burn the bricks? And you only half-burn