

abundance, and round it are a variety of wooden tenements, which are occupied as butchers' stalls, and garnished with a lean and ill-dressed assortment of beef and mutton. The rest of the area is filled by market men and women, each surrounded by baskets of eggs or vegetables, festooned with unsavoury chains of garlic, or else intrenched behind conical heaps of potatoes, onions, pomegranates, tomatoes, or oranges. Here too one might usually see herds of hogs, all dead, yet standing stiff upon their legs, each with a husk of Indian corn in its mouth; or else hung straddling upon a barrel, and striving to touch the pavement with its feet.

The company usually assembled in this square is the very humblest to be found in Madrid; for it is the old and ruinous quarter of the city, to which it serves as a market and place of congregation. Furthermore, it is in this neighbourhood that one may find the greasy dwellings and slaughter-houses of the butchers. Here too pass innumerable carriages, carts, and wagons, going to or arriving from Toledo, Talavera, Aranjuez, Cordova, and Seville; not to mention strings of mules and asses, which are so continually filing through as to appear to be moving in procession. The greater part of the market-people are inhabitants of the neighbouring country: As they do not pass the night away from home, they have no occasion to put up at a posada,

but bring their own barley, which they put in bags and tie about the heads of their mules. As for themselves, they either supply their wants from saddle-bags, in which they carry bread and cheese or sausages, with a leathern bottle of wine; or else go aside to the nearest corner, where there is always an old woman with a portable furnace of earthenware or iron, over which she prepares sundry greasy stews in little earthen pucheros.

Most of these things, which rendered the Plazuela on ordinary occasions so animated, were now nowhere to be seen. The fish-stalls were vacant and deserted; the baskets of vegetables and the piles of fruit had been removed; whilst the hogs had either disappeared entirely, or were thrown into promiscuous heaps at one side of the Plaza, without much attention to the symmetrical arrangement of heads and feet. If, however, many objects were missing that are usually to be met with in the Plaza, there was, in return, one which I had never seen there before: this was the instrument of execution.

There are in Spain several modes of execution. The least dishonorable is to be shot; a death more particularly reserved for the military. Another is the *garrote*, which is inflicted by placing the criminal in an iron chair, provided with a collar which fits closely about the neck. The collar is then suddenly tightened by means of a powerful screw

or lever, and death is instantaneous. The garrote is also inflicted in some parts of South America by placing the culprit in the iron chair as before, and then introducing a wedge between the collar and his neck, which is broken by a single blow struck upon the wedge with a sledge-hammer. The last and most ignominious mode is hanging by the neck; a death more especially belonging to robbery, murder, and other ignoble crimes, but which of late years has likewise been extended, with even more than the usual brutal indignities, to the crime of patriotism. The men, however, who were this day to suffer, were of no equivocal character, and no one could either dispute or gainsay the justice of that sentence which had doomed them to die upon the gallows.

The gallows erected on this occasion consisted of a heavy oaken beam, sustained in a horizontal position, upon vertical posts of still greater solidity. The ascent to the gallows was effected by a stout ladder, or rather close stair, which leaned upon the horizontal beam, the middle of which, immediately beside the ladder, was wound round with sheep-skin so as to cover the edges of the wood, and prevent them from cutting the ropes by a sudden friction. This last precaution, the solidity of the structure, every thing, in short, announced a determination that justice should not be cheated of

its victims, nor they be subjected to unnecessary torture.

The approach to the gallows was guarded by celadores, and no one was allowed to come near it but the *verdugo* or hangman, who, as I arrived in the square, ascended the ladder with four ropes in his hand, which he adjusted with much care—the whole four close beside each other—round the middle of the beam, where it was covered with the fleece. The office of *verdugo* is in Spain utterly disreputable and abject. Formerly it was filled only by Moors, Jews, and miscreants; indeed it is still necessary to adduce evidence that one's ancestors were public executioners before being admitted to the degradation. Yet this office is not only accepted, but even sought after. There was in fact quite a concourse of competitors on a late occasion in Granada, each proving that he was descended, on the side of father or mother, from a public hangman. The cause of this singular fact is found in another equally singular. In Granada the *verdugo* has a certain tax upon all *verduras* or greens, whether for soup or salad, which are daily sold in the public market. Hence, being secure of profit, he can afford to put up with obloquy. As for the *verdugo* who officiated on this occasion, he was a stout and rather fat man, who seemed to thrive well between good cheer and idleness. His

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dress was a plain round jacket and trousers of brown. A broad sash of red worsted, wound round the middle, served instead of braces, and at the same time sustained a rotundity which seemed greatly in need of such assistance; whilst an oil-cloth hat, with a narrow rim and still narrower crown, but imperfectly covered his full and bloated features. Such was the figure of the verdugo.

The Plazuela-de-la-Cebada, though on this occasion its ordinary bustle and animation were wanting, was however by no means deserted. The balconies of the surrounding houses were crowded with groups of either sex, formed into a panoramic view, probably not unlike what the Plaza Mayor may present on the occasion of a bull-feast. The area below was thronged by the lower classes, blended in one vast and motley collection. There was an abundance of sallow mechanics, tinkers, and cobblers, with leathern aprons and dirty faces; or of thin-legged tailors, intermingled with gaily-dressed Andalusians, or with sturdy athletic peasants and muleteers from the neighbouring plains of Castile and La Mancha. Other men there were, standing apart and singly, whose appearance did not indicate a particular profession, and who, though poor and ragged, seemed too proud to be of any. These were covered to the nose in tattered cloaks, almost met by low slouched hats, between which their eyes wandered round with

a glance which betrayed anxiety. Perhaps they were robbers, comrades of the condemned men who were soon to suffer, with whom they might have taken part in many a scene of danger and of guilt.

The conduct of this ill-assorted crowd was not, however, unworthy of the occasion. Those who composed it seemed either fearful or unwilling to talk of the many crimes of the malefactors—either from a lingering awe of them, or lest they might be overheard by a companion. Some stood alone, muffled up in their cloaks, grave, thoughtful, and solemn; others in silent groups; whilst here and there a countryman leaned over his motionless borrico, directing his eyes in expectation along the street of Toledo. No clamor was anywhere to be heard, except from the boys who were dispersed about the square clambering along the grates of the windows, so as to overlook the heads of the taller multitude, now quarrelling for precedence, now forced, from inability to cling longer, to let themselves down and abandon stations which had cost them so much contention. There were also a few blind men singing and selling a ballad, which consisted of prayers for the men who were about to die; and now and then a person passed through the crowd, ringing a bell and begging cuartos to buy masses for the souls of the malefactors.

The few moments employed in reaching the

Plaza and walking round it sufficed to make these observations; but the arrival of the prisoners was much more tardy. Indeed, ten o'clock went by, and eleven was likewise tolled from the towers of many surrounding convents, without any indication of their approach. The day was cold and sunless, and the air of that chilly heartless kind which sets at defiance our endeavours to keep it out by additional clothing, and which will even find its way to the fireside, coming over us with a feeling of misery. I began at last to look with anxiety for the coming of the criminals. But when I came to compare their condition with my own, I could not but reproach myself for my impatience. "The remainder of their lives," said I, "is all condensed into the present hour, and that hour already on the wane! This remnant of existence may be infinitely valuable to them in making their peace with men, and in seeking reconciliation with Heaven: and yet you, who perhaps have years in store, would rob them even of this to relieve yourself from a short interval of weariness and inactivity."

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I had before only been disgusted with the scene around me; but now, becoming disgusted with myself, I turned away to beguile my impatience by wandering through the neighbouring churches. I admired anew the vast dome of San Domingo, and made once more the circuit of the convent. The

cloisters were even colder than the street. They were, besides, painted on every side with the actions of the patron saint—he who went hand in hand with the bloody Montfort in the persecution of the Albigenses, because they denied, some two centuries sooner than Luther did, that the true body of Jesus Christ is present in the sacrament; who founded the fanatic order which has furnished the Inquisition with many of its most relentless heroes. Some of these paintings were ridiculous, some bloody, and some disgusting. I returned once more to the Plaza, having gained but little in the way of equanimity.

When I reached the opening of the street of Toledo, and glanced my eye over the crowd which filled it, the multitude seemed moved by some new impulse. The women in the balconies were no longer saluting each other across the street, or shaking their fans in recognition to those who passed below. All eyes were turned in one common direction. The object of this general attention from the balconies was not so soon visible from the street below; indeed it was some minutes before we discovered, first the celadores, with their white belts and sabres, moving upward and downward—next their horses, spurred and reined into impatience, in order to intimidate the crowd and clear a way for the coming of the procession. Be-

hind the celadores were soon after seen the glittering points of many bayonets, vibrating with a measured motion from right to left, and only seeming to advance as they grew brighter above the sea of heads which intervened, growing upward and upward until the weapons of which they formed the least destructive portion were likewise visible. Presently the large bear-skin caps of the grenadiers emerged, until at last the whole was apparent, to the very feet of the soldiery. It was now, too, that might be heard the death-dirge, chanted by the humble monks who attended the criminals, swelling gradually above the hum of the multitude.

The soldiers were so arranged as to give the crowd on either side a view of the criminals. They were three in number, instead of two; but the first, though an accomplice of the others, had either been found less guilty at the trial, or else had made his peace with justice by becoming a witness against his companions. At all events he was not to suffer death, but only to be conducted under the gallows, and remain there during the execution. He was seated upon an ass, with his arms pinioned beside him. His head was bent forward so as nearly to touch the neck of the animal, and his long hair, whose growth had doubtless been cherished for the purpose during a long confinement, hung down on every side so as to form a complete veil about

his features; for the criminal felt the degradation, and dreaded lest he should be recognised at some future day. This was an honorable motive: it seemed, at least, to be so considered by the crowd; for none sought to invade the secrecy but one old woman, who stooped down to the ground as the culprit passed, and then hurried off to watch over the operation of her furnace and puchero.

The second criminal was dressed in a shroud; a living man in the garment of the dead. He sat bolt upright on an ass, and his feet were bound tightly together under the belly of the animal, to prevent any attempt to escape to the churches which lay in the way, and reach the sanctuary of some privileged altar. As for his hands, they were tied with a cord, and made to clasp a copper crucifix. But when it was pressed to his lips by the anxious and tremulous hands of the poor monk who walked beside him, he refused to kiss the image of the Saviour; nay, he even spit upon it. There was, in fact, more of the hardened villain about this malefactor than I had ever before seen. He was a small, spare man, of a thin, sinewy, and cat-like conformation, and such a cast of countenance, that had I not seen him, I could scarce have believed it possible for human features to wear such an expression of fiendish malignity. Wishing to learn his story, I asked his crimes of an old man who

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stood beside me. He answered the question first with a shrug and a shudder; then using an idiomatic phrase, which has found its origin in the frequency of murder in Spain, he said, "He has made many deaths; very many!"—" *Ha hecho muchos muertos; muchisimos!*"

The third criminal was dressed like the last, but his looks and bearing were as different as possible. He was far larger and stouter than his companion—stouter at least in body, though not in heart; for whilst the latter only seemed pale and wasted from ill-usage and confinement, this one had beside that bloodless livid look which can only be produced by intense fear. His hands were not bound to a crucifix like the other, but left at liberty to grasp a hymn which he was singing with the friar. He had perhaps pretended repentance and conversion with a view to interest the clergy in his favor; for in Spain criminals are often rescued by their intervention, even under the gallows. This uncertainty evidently added to his fear. It was indeed a disgusting and yet piteous sight to see the lips of the miserable man turned blue with terror, yet earnestly chanting as though his life depended on the performance—his hands as they held the paper, and every muscle, trembling in accompaniment to his broken and discordant voice.

The procession had now filed into the square,

and took possession of the area reserved immediately about the gallows. The first culprit was posted beneath, and the other two were dismounted from the backs of the asses and made to sit upon the last step of the ladder. The hangman now came to take possession of his victims. Getting upon the step next above them, he grasped the smaller and more guilty miscreant under the arms and retreated upward, dragging him after step by step, and pausing an instant between each, which was marked by a vibration of the ladder. At length the hangman stood on the highest step—his victim was a little lower. They had been followed the whole way by a humble monk, in a loose garment of sackcloth, and girded with a scourge. A long gray beard rested upon his breast, whilst his falling cowl discovered a half-naked head, shaven in imitation of the crown of thorns worn by our Saviour in his Passion. He seemed deeply anxious that the sinful man should not go thus into the presence of his Maker. Lost to every other feeling than the awful responsibilities of the moment, the tremulous earnestness of his manner testified to the arguments and entreaties with which he urged the sinner to repentance. But the heart of the murderer was obdurate to the last, and the crucifix was in vain pressed to his lips to receive a parting salutation.

The last moment of his life had now arrived.

The hangman took two of the cords which dangled from the beam ; and having once more convinced himself that they were of equal length, he opened the nooses and placed them about the neck of the malefactor. This done, he let himself down a single step, and seating himself firmly upon the shoulders of his victim, he grasped him tightly about the neck with his legs. He then drew powerfully upon the cords. The strangling malefactor made a convulsive but ineffectual attempt to reach upward with his pinioned arms, and then writhed his body to escape from the torture. This moment was seized upon by the hangman, who threw himself over the edge of the ladder, when both fell downward together. They had nearly turned over, when the ropes arrested their fall ; and as they tightened, they struck across the face of the hangman and threw his hat aside among the crowd. But he clung to his prey with a resolute grasp, recovered his seat, and moved upward and downward upon the shoulders of the malefactor. Nor was he left to his own efforts : his assistants below reached the legs of the victim, and drew them downward with all their might.

When this had continued a few minutes, the hangman stood erect upon the shoulders of his victim, and attempted to climb up by the cords, as he probably had been wont to do ; but whether he had

been stunned by the stroke of the ropes, or had grown heavier and less active since the last execution, his attempt proved abortive, and the loud cries of the multitude, outraged at the brutality, restrained him from a second effort. He then slid down by the body and legs of the criminal, until his feet rested upon the ground; and having tied a rope about the ankles of the dead man, he was drawn aside, so as to make room for his companion.

Meantime the remaining malefactor had continued at the foot of the ladder, singing with his confessor a chant, which made a singular and fearful accompaniment to the scene which was going on behind them. But his respite was a short one. The impatient hands of the hangman were soon upon him, lifting him step by step, as had been done with his companion. The dreadful uncertainty whether he were indeed to die seemed still to cling to him, and he strained his voice and chanted louder than ever. Before the ropes were put round him, he kissed the cross with a greedy eagerness, and then uttered his creed with great volubility, until, at the mention of the name of "Christ," a jerk of the executioner broke at once upon his chant and upon the delusive hope of pardon. Hangman and malefactor went off as before, and the latter was straightened and stretched like

the blackened corpse which hung stiff and motionless at his side.

The conduct of the crowd was singularly solemn. As each victim plunged downward from the gallows, there was a tremulous murmur upon every lip, ejaculating a short prayer for the peace of the guilty soul which was then entering upon eternity. The cloaks of all were unfolded; and as their lips moved in supplication, each crossed himself devoutly—first on the forehead, then over the face, and lastly upon the breast. These feelings, however, were not shared by the hangman. They might, perhaps, have been banished by the active part he had taken in the execution; or else they were ever strangers to his breast. No sooner, indeed, had he descended the last time, than he turned leisurely to readjust his disordered dress. He also recovered his hat, pushed out a dint which the rope had made in it; then, taking a half-smoked cigarillo from under the band, he struck a light and commenced smoking. I even fancied, as he looked round upon his victims, that the expression of his face was not unallied to satisfaction. Dreadful propensity of our nature, which often leads us to exult in the vilest deed, provided it be adroitly executed!

The crowd now began to disperse. Such as had asses mounted them and rode away; others rolled

themselves in their cloaks and departed. Nor did I linger, but moved off in a state of mind which none need envy. I experienced a return of the same sickly feeling of disgust with mankind and myself with which I had once rose from the reading of Rousseau's Confessions. Surely there can be nothing in such a spectacle to promote morality, nothing to make us either better or happier—a spectacle which serves but to create despondency, and to array man in enmity with his condition!

I hurried at once from the spot, determined to seek some society which might rid me of my thoughts and reconcile me to my species. On turning to leave the square at the Calle Toledo, I paused to take a last look at the now lifeless malefactors. The first executed had been loosened from the post to which his feet were bound, and his body still continued to knock against and revolve round that of his companion. However closely associated they might once have been in crime, they were now more closely associated in retribution. It was now, too, that I remembered that the same Plaza and the same gallows had known other and very different victims—that along this very street the purest and bravest of Spanish patriots had been drawn to execution on a hurdle; nay, it was more than likely that I had seen the very executioner who had ridden upon the shoulders of Riego!

CHAPTER IX.

NEW AND OLD CASTILE.

Journey to Segovia.—Choice of Conveyance and Preparations for Departure.—Galera.—Manzanares and the Florida.—Galera Scenes.—The Venta of Guadarrama.—Passage of the Mountains.—Segovia.—The Aqueduct.—The Cathedral and Alcazar.

LET us now turn to a more pleasing theme, the bustle and incident of an excursion to the country. I had been promising myself during the whole winter to quit the city so soon as there were any symptoms of spring, and to go on a visit to Segovia, returning by San Ildefonso and the Escorial. Towards the middle of March, the trees of the Prado began to put forth shoots abundantly. One or two apricot trees, sheltered by the palace of a grandee near the Recoletos, showed here and there a scattering blossom, sent as a spy to peep out and see if winter had taken his departure; and one who kept his ears open as I did might occasionally hear a solitary bird trying a note, as if to clear his throat for the overture in the garden of Retiro. Believing that I discovered the symptoms I so anxiously wished for, I determined to start immediately.

Nor was I doomed on this occasion to travel

without a companion. Fortune, in a happy moment, provided one in the person of a young countryman, who had come to Spain in search of instruction. He was just from college, full of all the ardent feeling excited by classical pursuits, with health unbroken, hope that was a stranger to disappointment, curiosity which had never yet been fed to satiety. Then he had sunny locks, a fresh complexion, and a clear blue eye, all indications of a joyous temperament. We had been thrown almost alone together in a strange and unknown land; our ages were not dissimilar; and, though our previous occupations had been more so, we were, nevertheless, soon acquainted, first with each other, then with each other's views, and presently after we had agreed to be companions on the journey.

The next thing was to find a conveyance. This was not so easy; for in Spain diligences are only to be found on the three principal roads leading from Madrid to Bayonne, Seville, and Barcelona. This inconvenience is partly owing to the little travelling throughout the country, but principally to the great exposure of the diligences to being robbed on the highway. Indeed, these vehicles, starting at fixed hours, and arriving at particular stands at known periods, are thence so easily and frequently waylaid, that all quiet people who are not in a hurry—and there are many such in Spain

—prefer a slower and less ostentatious conveyance. Hence the diligences are poorly filled, and, in fact, are scarcely patronized by any but foreigners and men of business, neither of whom constitute a numerous class. To avoid this double inconvenience to nerves and pocket, the travelling among the natives is chiefly performed in antique coaches, such as Gil Blas and Serafina rode in when they went to Salamanca, in large covered wagons, called *galeras*, or on mules that are constantly patrolling the country under the charge of an *arriero*. These all carry passengers, and the two last also take produce and merchandize, performing, indeed, all the interior transportation of the country. They travel at the rate of seven leagues or twenty-eight miles a day. Having, per force, decided for the galera, and found one that was to start on the thirteenth of March, we agreed with the master of it to carry us to Segovia, which is fifty-six miles from Madrid, and to provide for all our wants while on the journey; for which services he was to receive seven *pesos duros* (or hard dollars), agreeably to previous stipulation.

Our other arrangements were few and soon completed. One of them was to buy each an old watch, whether of tin or silver, not for the usual purpose of learning the time, but to give away, in case we might meet with any fellow-travellers on the high-

way, who should intimate that such a present would be acceptable. We did not so much make this provision from pure generosity of heart, as because we wanted, in the first place, to save our gold ones, and in the next to keep our ribs whole; for people who make these modest appeals to your charity, when they meet a person of a certain figure, take it for granted that he has a watch, and if it be not at once forthcoming, think that he has either concealed it or else left it at home, both of which are misdemeanors for which travellers get severely beaten.

On the night previous to our departure we returned home at a late hour, and before going to bed packed a little knapsack with sundry shirts and stockings, not to forget a little Don Quixote, which we looked upon as a talisman to take us safely through every adventure. The next morning we rose at an early hour, and put on our very worst clothes, so as not to make too splendid a figure in the mountains. Then, having taken chocolate, we shouldered our cloaks and knapsack, and took leave kindly of our hosts. They continued to pursue us with good wishes the whole way down stairs, commending us in rapid succession to all the saints. At the street door we turned to beckon a last farewell; Florencia was completely out of breath, and had got to the end of the calendar.

The clocks were just tolling seven as we reached the *meson* of our galera, and found a crowd of idlers assembled about the door to witness its punctual departure. It was such a group as may be seen any night in a *sainete* at the Teatro del Principe. There were fat men and thin men, with sugar-loaf caps and slouched hats, with shoes and with sandals, with gaiters and without them. There were none, however, without the *capa parda*, or brown cloak. While these worthies were indulging in their solemn wit, the group was joined by a young girl of beautiful features, but wasted and squalid appearance. Her mantilla was tattered, and hung in graceless folds about her head and shoulders, her gown faded and stained, and her dirty stockings in strong contrast with the care which Spanish women usually bestow upon their feet. Enough, however, remained to show that when the glow of health was yet fresh upon her cheek, when the artless smile of innocence and the blush of conscious beauty still beamed expression upon that faded face—she must have been more than lovely. In a moment the girl was completely at home among these kindred spirits, and the jokes and conversation were hearty and unrestrained. Having handed her snuff round to the bystanders, even to us who stood apart in the door-way, she presently went off, opening and shutting her fan with the swimming grace of an

Andalusian. She did not, however, go off alone, but was followed at a distance by a quick-stepping little man, with whom certain significant glances had been exchanged. She had come like a privateer among this convoy of hard characters, and had cut out and sailed away with a prize.

The galera, or galley, as it was not improperly called, had now been backed out into the street, when the master and his man began to bring out mules, two at a time, and to string them in a row until there were eight of them. They were fat, saucy-looking beasts, with the hair shaved away every where, except on the legs and the tip of the tail. As for the galera, it was neither more nor less than a huge wagon, or rather small house placed upon four wheels, of such solid construction as to seem built in defiance of time. The frame only was of wood, the sides being hung with mats of *esparto* or straw, and the bottom, instead of being boarded, had an open net-work of ropes, upon which was stowed the cargo. The passengers, and we happened to be the only ones, were to accommodate themselves on the load, in such postures as they might find convenient. The whole was completely sheltered and rendered habitable by a canvas pent-house, kept in place by several wooden hoops, traversed by reeds, the openings at the front and back being closed at pleasure by curtains of *esparto*. The

wood and iron work of the galera were of their natural color, but the canvas roof was painted so as to turn the rain, whilst on either side were large red letters, saying, "I belong to Manuel Garcia, regular trader to Segovia."—"Soy de Manuel Garcia, ordinario de Segovia."

So soon as the mules were put to, Don Manuel loosened a big dog, who had been on guard within, and who, whenever we had come to get a peep at our accommodations, had always jumped to the end of his chain, and looked most fiercely. As soon as the chain and collar fell to the bottom of the galera, he licked the hand of his master, then sprang at once to the ground, pawing and snuffing, and fell to racing about the mules as though he had been mad. We were now invited to crawl in. Don Manuel followed, taking a conspicuous station at the front, whilst the mate put himself between the foremost pair of mules, with a hand at the head-stall of either. "Arre!" said Don Manuel, and we set forward accordingly, the big dog prancing proudly beside us, now barking loudly at other dogs, and when met by a bigger than himself, placing himself upon the defensive, under cover of the galera. Though the vibratory motion of the ropes at the bottom in a measure overcame the jar, we found our vehicle rather uneasy upon the pavement; but on passing the Puerta de Se-

govia, its motion became easier, and we rolled onward quietly.

Our road lay for some distance along the bank of the little stream of Manzanares, here furnished with an occasional fountain, and planted with abundance of trees, under whose shade is found one of the most agreeable promenades of the capital. It is known by the pleasing name of Florida. As from thence Madrid is seen with better effect than from any other point, we abandoned the galera, and took to our feet, the better to enjoy the spectacle. Nor could we fail to admire the commanding situation of the overhanging city, its noble palace placed conspicuously towards the Florida, and the numerous spires emerging in every direction from out the mass, tinged as they then were with the lustre of an early sun. The interminable wheat-fields spread out on every side were now, too, beginning to assume a verdant appearance; and the woody groves of the Casa del Campo, the chequered kitchen gardens which occupy the low banks of the Manzanares and follow the meanderings of the stream, and the many bridges which connected its opposite shores, each broke agreeably upon the delighted eye, and combined to make up a most attractive picture.

But the scene now borrowed its chief charm from the pleasures of the season. Winter, as I said before, was just resigning the dominion of nature to a

happier guidance. The trees were resuming their verdure, and the birds, flying from the ardor of a warmer clime, were just returning to woo and to carol in the place of their nativity. The inhabitants seemed already sensible of the change. A few persons were strolling leisurely along at their early promenade on the Florida, which was further animated by people sallying out on mules or horses to begin a journey; with others more humbly seated upon panniered asses, and hastening to market, or with women descending to the river with each a bundle of clothes upon her head. Others, who had risen earlier, were already busy upon the bank, each upon her knees, with her clothes tucked tightly about her, and keeping time with her rapid hands to a wild and half-sung voluntary.

This valley of the Manzanares furnishes the only rural attractions to be found anywhere near Madrid. Hence it is in summer the chosen resort of the whole population. Here on the afternoon of a feast-day entire families come out to taste the joys of the country. Seating themselves in circles under the trees, they spread in the midst such provisions as they may have brought with them, and then make a joyous repast, with the earth for a table and the sky for a canopy. This over, they dance to the music of the voice, the guitar, and the castanet, mingled with the murmurs of the rushing river;

and at a late hour each seeks with a lighter heart the shelter of his habitation. Whilst this is passing upon the brink of the stream, the neighbouring road is thronged with horsemen and with the equipages of the wealthy*.

At the extremity of the Florida we were met by a trooper coming at the top of his speed; his polished casque and cuirass glittering brilliantly in the sun, and his sabre, the hair of his helmet, and the mane and tail of his horse all streaming backward. This unusual speed announced the coming of some distinguished personage, which the soldier was hurrying to make known to a piquet of cuirassiers, stationed at the barrier, that they might form in readiness to pay the customary honors. Presently afterwards we discovered the cause of this commotion in the approach of a gentleman, plainly dressed in a green surtout and cocked hat, followed

* Calderon, in one of his comedies, has given an animated description of such a scene.

“Aqui cantan, alli baylan,
 Aqui pralan, alli gritan,
 Aqui rinen, alli juegan,
 Meriendan aqui, alli brindan;
 Pais tan hormoso y tan vario,
 Que para su la Florida
 Estacion de todo el orbe
 La mas bella, hormosa y rica,
 Solo al rio falta el rio
 Mas ya es objeccion antigua.”

by two attendants, and mounted on a superb sorrel barb richly caparisoned. It was Don Carlos, heir to the throne. We took off our hats in passing him, as is the custom, and he returned the compliment with a similar salutation, accompanied by one of his most ghastly grins.

On reaching a bridge over the Manzanares, the road turned away to the left in the direction of Segovia. We now took leave of the Florida, and the country opened before us, stretching upward in successive ranges of irregular hills, which, though partially cultivated, were destitute of a single tree. Before us were the mountains of Guadarrama, their summits covered with snow. Whatever might be the season at the Prado and upon the banks of the Manzanares, it was evident that winter had still a strong hold upon the mountains, and that however warmly the sun might now play upon our backs as we moved onwards before him, we should have cold fingers ere we reached Segovia.

Having reached the open country, our host of the galera invited us to enter. He then drew from a canvas bag which hung beside him certain loaves of fine white bread and links of Vique sausages, being the stores which he had laid in for the voyage. The first thing Don Manuel had done on passing the barrier of the customs was to fill with wine his bota, or leathern bottle, at one of those

shops which are found just without all the barriers of Madrid, and where the wine, not having paid a duty of near one hundred per cent, is sold for about half what it costs within. He now took down the bota from where it hung, swinging to and fro on one of the reeds at the top of the galera; then leaving the mules to their own discretion, we all drew round and commenced a hearty attack upon our stores, sitting in a circle and cross-legged like so many Turks or tailors. There was a novelty in this primitive repast, which pleased us greatly, and of the bota we became completely enamoured.

The wine in Spain is everywhere transported—and so also is oil—in skins that are covered on the hairy side with a coat of pitch. If the skin belonged originally to a goat, the hair, being of no value, is not removed. Wine is said to keep better in skins than in casks; but the more probable reason why this kind of vessel is so universally used instead of barrels and bottles in Spain may be found in the scarcity of wood, and the great number of sheep and goats that every where cover the country. A skin requires very little preparation to fit it for use. It is first tanned a little, then coated with pitch, and turned inside out. The hole by which the original owner was let out is now sewed up; so are the legs, which serve as handles

to carry the *bota* to and fro, with the exception of one, which is tied round with a string, and serves as a spout to draw off the liquor. Another advantage of the *bota*, in a primitive country like this, is, that it keeps its place upon the back of a mule, and takes care of itself much better than a barrel. The universal use of the *bota* is one of the first things in Spain to excite the attention of a stranger; and Cervantes, who introduces the most familiar scenes and objects into the life of his Hidalgo, has made one of his most diverting adventures to turn upon this peculiarity. The reader will readily remember the adventure of the giants.

But to return to our little *bota* or *borracho*, "drunkard," as it is otherwise called; though a mere chicken to those we have just been talking about, one can scarce conceive a more agreeable little travelling companion. It was somewhat in the shape of a shot-bag, and held the convenient quantity of a gallon.

After passing through a country poorly cultivated and almost without population we arrived towards dark at the small town of Guadarrama, situated in a mountain valley at the foot of the highest range of the chain. The galera was driven into the long court-yard of the principal venta. Jumping to the ground we stretched our legs, and were ushered

into the kitchen, which, in a Spanish country inn, is the common place of congregation. We were at once welcomed to the stone seats, covered with mats, which projected from the wall beside, or rather within, the immense fire-place. In the chimney was a stone shelf, removed a few feet from the fire, which contained large splinters of pine wood. These blazed upward cheerily, sending forth a glare of light which illuminated the chimney and the nearer portions of the kitchen, and shone full upon the faces of the whole party.

The principal figure in the group was the ventero, who occupied the place of honor in the chimney-corner. He was a hearty-looking little man, and his figure, with the cleanly well-ordered disposition of the kitchen, gave favorable anticipations of our fare. He was short and fat; notwithstanding his rotundity, he had a well-turned little leg that would have done no dishonor to a more distinguished personage. He wore, over sundry inner garments, an outer jacket of black sheep-skin, which did not quite meet in front, but was fastened by chain clasps of silver; his breeches were of velvet; whilst his full and jocund face was surmounted by a narrow-rimmed, sugar-loaf hat of oil-cloth, decorated with a flaming royalist cockade—the badge of his political belief. The ventera was a busy, stirring woman, content in all things to execute

the orders of her lord. As for their daughter who waited upon us, she was well made and quick moving—a Moorish beauty, in short, whose black eyes could not be gazed upon with indifference. The most singular of the group, however, was a sort of esquire to the ventero, who did not seem to have any precise office in the house, but to whose share fell sundry little indefinite cares, such as carrying the passports of travellers to be signed by the police, and holding the candle. He was a thin, meager, little old man, who nevertheless seemed quite as happy in his leanness as the ventero in his rotundity. It was indeed an amusing sight to see the little man seated beside his master, with one arm over his thigh, and looking up to him from his lower seat as to a superior being, evidently seeking to catch the first expression of his will, by watching the movement of his lazy eye.

The society of the kitchen was soon after augmented by other arrivals. The new-comers, after allowing a sufficient time to elapse to show they were not so undignified as to be in a hurry, called for their suppers of soup and bacon. When asked by the ventera if they brought their own bread, each answered, Yes, and went to his cart or galera for a loaf, which he commenced cutting into a large basin, ready for the soup to be turned in upon it. Then when all was ready, and each was about to

sit down to his portion, he would call out so as to be heard by every one, "Gentlemen! who wishes to sup with me?"—"Señores! quien quiere cenar conmigo?" Being answered by general thanks for his invitation, usually expressed in the words, "Que le haga à usted buen provecho!"—"May it do you good service!" he would then fall to manfully, as if determined to realize the good wishes of the company.

With all the remnants of ancient observances and abuses which remain in Spain, there has also been preserved a fund of that old-fashioned punctilio, which having been banished from the higher classes, who have adopted the French manners, is still observed by the mass of the nation. The first time you enter a house you are told by the master that it is yours, to do with it whatever you may please; nor will a Spaniard ever so much as take a glass of water in your presence without first having offered it to you. Though there may be something irksome in this overstrained politeness, yet it gives, upon the whole, a courteous turn to the manners of a people*.

As for the master of our galley, he had been accosted almost immediately on entering the venta

* These remarks apply to every part of Spain which the author visited, except Catalonia.

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by its well-fed host, to know what the gentleman would sup upon. "*Lo que haya.*"—"Whatever there may be," was the answer. "*Pues, señor,*" said the ventero, "*hay de toda.*"—"Well, sir, there is something of every thing;" and then he began enumerating a long list of *liebres, perdizes, gallinas, jamon, y tocino* (hares, partridges, pullets, ham and bacon). Poor Don Manuel was embarrassed by the superfluity, and seemed to hesitate between the fear of not equalling our expectations and the opposite dread of paying away too much money. The moment was a critical one, and we watched the countenance of our master with interest; for we had been a good deal shaken during the day's journey, and had taken nothing but bread and sausage. Finally he put his foot down with an air of resolution, and ordered bacon and eggs, to be followed by a stewed hare and a dessert of olives. Upon this the ventero, who was still seated in the corner, put his hands upon his thighs and then threw his body forward so as to rise with ease and dignity. When fairly up he went to a corner where there were some hares hanging by their hind feet, with ears and tail cocked as if they were still bounding it over the lea. Little John—for such was the name of the ventero's uncle and esquire—attended punctually with a splinter of burning pine which he had taken from the chimney, and after a

short consultation, a fine hare was selected. "*Que gordo!*"—"How fat!" said the ventero. "*Que gordo!*" echoed little John. They then brought it over to me; I felt its ribs, and exclaimed, "*Que gordo!*"

We spent another half hour most agreeably in listening to the conversation of the varied assembly. Nor were we slightly interested in watching the process of depriving the hare of his skin, which Don Manuel at once took possession of, and stowed away in the galera. The hare was then torn piecemeal and put into a puchero, with plenty of pepper, salt, and saffron, and sundry morsels of garlic and tomata. All this was interesting to us, and when the dark-eyed daughter of the ventero lifted the lid and put a wooden spoon in to taste the viand, it became still more so. But this was nothing to the moment when the contents were emptied, great and small, into a large earthen dish, sending up a steam that filled the whole kitchen with the most grateful fragrance. Those who were busy with their humble soup were too proud to look after the heavy-laden dish as it sailed away into another apartment, leaving a track like a steamer's, only far more savoury. When, however, the daughter came to announce supper, we gave all who pleased a chance to partake; for Don Manuel issued a loud and general invitation, by saying, "*Señores! vengan*

ustedes à cenar con nosotros!"—"Gentlemen! come and sup with us!"

We followed our supper into the room where my friend and I were to sleep, and there found it crowded upon a small square table. Don Manuel and his man remained upon their feet until we were seated, nor would they put their spoons into the dish to help themselves until we had first done so. It was rather to our situation of guests and strangers that we owed this courtesy than to any feeling of inferiority on the part of our hosts. A Spaniard, though only an arriero, owns himself inferior to no man. Don Manuel, when he went to the galera to leave the skin of the hare, returned with a loaf of bread and our little bota; he had likewise loosened the dog from his post that he might partake of our supper. We had scarce taken our stations round the table before the animal posted himself beneath, where he was well attended to by the whole party. He seemed to understand perfectly the relation between us and his master, for he took our bones and received our caresses, and was altogether on tolerable terms with us throughout the journey; but when we met him afterwards in the street at Segovia, he took no notice of our whistle. Having ate of the eggs, the stew, and the bacon, and found all excellent, we amused ourselves awhile with the olives and in circulating the borracho.

Presently after our companions asked if we should take chocolate in the morning. We answered, "*Con mucho gusto.*" They then retired, saying, "*Que ustedes descansen!*"—"May you rest well!" The wreck of the supper likewise disappeared, and we were left in quiet possession of our chamber.

The next morning, before the dawn of day, we were suddenly awakened by the glare of a lamp streaming full in our faces. We should perhaps have been vexed at the unseasonable interruption, had we not discovered, on bringing our eyes to a focus, that the bearer of the lamp was no other than our little Morisca, who was bringing us the chocolate. Having swallowed it and put on our clothes, we said "*Adios!*" to such of our hosts as were stirring, then nestled ourselves close together upon a bunch of mats at the bottom of the galera, which presently after rolled out of the court-yard, and commenced slowly its winding course up the side of the mountain.

The morning was a cool one, such as we might have expected to find in this elevated region and in the neighbourhood of snow. Hence we were happy when the sun rose to abandon the galera and walk. There was something inspiring in this generous exercise, and in inhaling the unbreathed air of the mountain; so that when we had reached the top of the pass where New and Old Castile are

divided, we were both in full glow and in a high state of excitement. Then had there been any fine scenery within our reach, we were prepared to relish it. But neither of us was called upon to be sentimental either in feeling or expression. There were, indeed, a few young pines shooting up about our road, which was seen winding up the mountain, with many a turn, from the little village of Guadarrama. Here and there, along the declivity, were occasional ponds of stagnant water, now sources of disease, though only asking the aid of man to furnish the means of fertility. Over the extensive plains of New Castile, toward the south-east, might be seen some fields cultivated, though unenclosed; but there were more that had been abandoned, and the face of the country was uncheered by the presence of either tree or stream. The view on the side of Old Castile was still more desolate and dreary; for whilst the sun shone full and brightly upon the rival province, the broad shadows of the mountains of Guadarrama covered all that lay westward with obscurity.

During our winding descent along the side of the mountain, we met several groups of countrymen coming with loaded mules and asses from various parts of Old Castile, and toiling slowly up the acclivity. Their costume, though very singular, was not inelegant. They wore breeches, leg-

gings, and a peaked montera cap of brown cloth ; but instead of a cloak, they had an outside jacket, or rather cuirass of tanned sheepskin, strapped closely around the body with a wide girdle of leather, having in front a large iron buckle. This girdle served likewise as a belt to sustain a long flexible cartouch-box, which nearly surrounded the back ; for each had a loaded musket or fowling-piece hanging ready at the side of his mule. Some of these people had a dress very like the old Dutch costume. It consisted of a broad hat with a low crown, a jacket and waistcoat without collars, leaving the neck perfectly bare, and immense trunk hose, of the same dark-colored cloth with the rest, which hung like a sack about the thighs. The lower part of this singular garment formed a legging, which was wrapped tightly about the calf, and confined with many turns of a green garter. At the bottom it terminated in a gaiter, which fell loosely over the shoe. Some of these men wore ample great coats, likewise without collars, and not unlike what are ascribed, in paintings and upon the stage, to the inhabitants of Hungary ; but a jerkin or cuirass of leather strapped tightly about the loins was more common. Don Manuel told us that these people come from the neighbourhood of Astorga, in the kingdom of Leon. In dress and in physio-

gnomy, they had less the appearance of Spaniards than of Germans or Dutchmen.

X Towards three in the afternoon, we entered that famous old city of Segovia, of which the curious may find mention, under the very same name, in the Natural History of Pliny. Nor has Segovia failed to make a distinguished figure in modern times; for it was a long while the principal manufacturing city of the whole Peninsula. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, we learn from Townshend, that there were in Segovia thirty-four thousand persons employed exclusively in the manufacture of cloth; but now the whole population of the city does not exceed ten thousand. As a compensation for this decline, the number of convents has increased to twenty-one, and there are now twenty-six churches. Industry has fled—the clergy remain and multiply. In the open country between Madrid and Segovia, for one inhabited house that we came to, there were certainly two in ruins; indeed, it seemed as though we were passing through a depopulated territory. Many of these houses, we were told, had been destroyed in the war of independence; but it is likely, that in more instances, the insecurity of living isolated has led to their abandonment. As the villages in this part of Spain are separated by very long in-

tervals, it generally follows that he who abandons his house to seek security in the society of his fellow men, must likewise give up the cultivation of his field. Hence result a diminished production and declining population; and hence, too, the painful sight of wasted lands and ruined habitations.

On arriving in Segovia, we took leave of the galera, the mules, the dog, and Don Manuel, who promised to visit us at our posada. We were conducted to the Plaza Mayor by a lad who carried our knapsack, and were soon after installed in a narrow room, whose balcony overlooked the great square of Segovia, now no longer the scene of stir and turmoil. Having taken a greasy dinner, we wandered forth to look at the famous aqueduct of Segovia. "So marvellous a work," says Father Mariana, "that the vulgar still believe it to have been wrought by the devil."

This aqueduct is supposed to have been built by the Romans in the reign of the Emperor Vespasian. Its object was to convey the water brought from a great distance, over a steep ravine seven hundred feet wide, and more than ninety deep, which divided one portion of the city from the other. To effect this, two ranges of arches were thrown across, one above another. The upper one is on a level with the high land on either side, and has one hundred and fifty-nine arches. Though the middle part of

the aqueduct is ninety-four feet from the ground, yet the bases of the abutments are not more than eight feet wide—a fact which is the best comment upon the beauty, lightness, and perfection of the structure. Indeed, it is even admitted that, though inferior in extent and magnificence to the Pont du Gard, the aqueduct of Segovia is yet the greater wonder. The stones used in the construction of this aqueduct are all of equal size, about two feet square, and are put together without any cement, depending solely upon each other to be maintained in their places. A very few have fallen, but the action of the weather has worn away the edges of all of them, until they now appear nearly round.

Leaving the aqueduct, we went next to the cathedral—an immense pile in a finished and complete state. It is a fine, though not a first-rate, specimen of Gothic architecture. From the cathedral we passed on to the Alcazar, or old fortified palace of the Moorish governors of Segovia. When the Moors conquered Spain, they erected castellated palaces, which they called Alcazars, in every important city. This was the origin of the Alcazar of Segovia. It stands west of the city, on the extremity of a rocky peninsula, which is separated from the surrounding country by the deep bed of the river Eresema on one side, and on the other by that abrupt ravine which intersects the city, and to

which we are indebted for the wonderful aqueduct. Thus the Alcazar is surrounded on these sides by perpendicular precipices. A deep trench, cut across the rocky platform, separates it from the city on the third, and renders it completely insular. The fortification consists of a huge square tower, surrounded by high walls, which stand upon the edges of the precipice, and are flanked with circular buttresses, having conical roofs in the Gothic style. The arches of the interior are circular, and very massive.



Tower of Segovia.

The Alcazar of Segovia, once the abode and strong hold of kings, has served in later times as a prison for Barbary corsairs, taken along the coast

of Spain. Thus: it may well have chanced that a descendant of the very prince who reared this goodly Alcazar to be the pride of his house, has returned, in the condition of a slave, to dwell in the palace of his ancestors. The old tower, too, which rises in the midst, was long the mysterious abode of state prisoners, whether convicted or only accused of high treason. The reader will readily remember that Gil Blas, by an irksome residence in this very Tower of Segovia, was made to pay the penalty of having basked awhile in ministerial sunshine.

In the present day the Alcazar is devoted to a more dignified use. A number of noble youths are here educated with a view to becoming officers of enginery and artillery. Among the branches taught are mathematics, drawing, the French and English languages, and arms. Having a letter to a young Swiss, who was one of the cadets, we were readily admitted at the outer gate, and conducted across the drawbridge, through several winding approaches, into the court-yard behind the tower. We were much pleased with the cleanly and well-ordered arrangement of the sleeping-rooms, refectory, and hospitals; but what most delighted us was the appearance of the lads, all of them ruddy and healthful. We thought we had never seen such a collection of good looks. Nor was it a little curious

to see these generous youths, whose dress, manners, and pursuits belonged entirely to the nineteenth century, moving about among the walls and arches of other times, learning the art of taking citadels within the battlements of one, which, though once impregnable, would now scarce offer a day's resistance, or drawing men and horses in the very mosque of the Alcazar, whose hollow ceiling is still loaded with a profusion of minute and richly gilded ornaments, interlarded with maxims from the Koran, all the work of a people who were taught to abhor every imitation of animate things as idolatrous and abominable.

We have thus in Segovia monuments reared by three widely different people who have ruled in turn over the Spanish Peninsula; by Romans from Italy; by Goths from the frosty coasts of Scandinavia; or by the followers of Mahomet from the patriarchal regions of Arabia.

The Moorish part of the Alcazar may be esteemed rather a favorable specimen of the Arabesque, since its arches are circular instead of elliptical, and it is built with more than usual solidity. It is between the Gothic and the Grecian, destitute of the grandeur of the one and the beauty of the other. As for the Gothic style, as we see it exhibited in the cathedral, no one can deny the grandeur of its conception nor the hardihood of its execution. Gothic

architecture seems admirably adapted to the uses of religion. Its grandeur and obscurity inspire the mind with a feeling of awe and solemnity. But we turn with pleasure from the gloom of the Gothic to the simple elegance of the Grecian, from the cathedral of Segovia to the aqueduct. Here we see strength, durability, and convenience, combined with symmetry and beauty—here, the more we scrutinize the more we admire.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

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

CHAPTER X.

OLD AND NEW CASTILE.

La Granja.—Pedro.—Perplexities in the Mountains.—The Summit of the Pass.—Pedro's Anxiety.—Guadarrama.—Escorial.—Return to Madrid.

At an early hour in the morning after our arrival at Segovia, we left that city in a calesin for La Granja, which is also known by the name of its patron saint, San Ildefonso. Our vehicle was conducted by a half-witted fellow, who had just sense enough to hold his horse by the head, and run beside him, like one possessed, the whole seven miles of our journey. Towards eight o'clock we came in sight of the royal palace, and found its first appearance very imposing. When we approached nearer, however, it did not justify the opinion we had formed at a distance; for the front is irregular and destitute of all beauty. The same may not be said of the façade towards the garden, which is symmetrical and elegant. The fountains of La Granja form, however, its chief attraction, and render it one of the most interesting places in the world. They are very numerous, and are concentrated into a much smaller compass than at Versailles, so that when playing one may catch sight of nearly all of

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them at the same time. The finest view in the garden is at the angle, called Plaza de las Ocho-calles, where commence eight avenues of trees, each of which has at its extremity a fine fountain surrounded by statues. Even as we saw it, the sight was indeed beautiful, and we regretted greatly that we could not witness the playing of the waters. There are very many well executed statues in marble placed in groups or singly along the public walks; but the figures connected with the fountains are chiefly of lead, bronzed over.

The palace and garden of La Granja were erected by Philip V., who wished to have with him in Spain something which might remind him of his birth-place Versailles, and at the same time furnish a shelter against the burning heats of a Castilian summer. To accomplish this purpose, he fixed upon La Granja, which, being situated on the north-western declivity of the mountains of Guadarrama, is only shone upon by the sun during a part of the day, and then with rays that are in a measure powerless. Hence the seasons are here so far retarded, that the spring fruits do not ripen until midsummer. The site of La Granja was at first no more than a bed of rocks, thrown together in irregular masses, with scarce soil enough in the intervals to support a scattered growth of pines. It was first necessary to soften the asperities of the ground,

and to bring soil from the plain below. A lake was then formed on a platform at the top of the garden, and here all the torrents produced by the melting of the snow and by rains were collected with much art and labor to feed the fountains. This done, forest trees were planted in every direction, with canals of water running to the roots of each. But the result is said to show the vanity of art, when it attempts to render itself independent of nature; for the trees, seeking to push their roots into the earth, and meeting obstacles, are not found to flourish. Such as we see it, however, La Granja is a country residence worthy in all things of a great king. This the reader will more easily conceive, when he learns that the improvements cost forty-five millions of dollars, according to Bourgoanne, the exact sum which Philip V. left Spain indebted at the time of his death. The court passes the hot season in La Granja; during the rest of the year it is a complete desert.

Having seen every thing of note connected with the palace and garden, we returned to the posada. We now sat down to a rude and simple meal, which the keen air and exercise of the morning rendered most acceptable. Nor were we less pleased with the young girl who served us. She might already have seen fourteen summers, and was perhaps now entering upon her fifteenth, with new and unknown

sensibilities. She had been, as she told us, a week in La Granja—caught and brought in wild from some village in the mountains. She was hearty, well made, and active, and unbroken by sickness, indulgence, or disease; indeed, as her eyes glanced rapidly from one object to another, I thought I had never seen so much animation and vivacity. There was a simplicity about her, too, that was more than amusing. Our dress, language, and appearance, were different from what she had been accustomed to among the rude boors of the mountains, so that we came upon her like beings of a better order. She asked us whence we had come, and where our house was. "In America," was the answer. "Is it towards Madrid?"—"Esta por el lado de Madrid?" said she, naming the most wonderful place she had ever heard of. Willing to avoid a lecture on geography, I answered, "*Cerquita*" (thereabout). She then scrutinized our persons thoroughly, turned our hats round in her hands, and stroked my companion on the back, saying, "*Que paño tan fino!*" (what fine cloth!)

When our meal was over we endeavoured to find a guide to conduct us to the Carthusian convent of Paular, situated among the crests of the neighbouring mountains; but the direct passes had seven or eight feet of snow, and had not been traversed for several weeks, so that the convent could be reached

only by making a circuit of near thirty miles. We would willingly have staid awhile at La Granja to witness the playing of the waters, which was to take place in a few days in honor of some saint, and especially to study the character of our mountain beauty; but we were already getting tired of Old Castile and its inhabitants, at least of its innkeepers and horse-drivers. The people of this province have a high character in Spain for honorable conduct, and for being above either trick or treachery. They have an expression which shows what a good opinion they have of themselves; for, when speaking of an unworthy man or a dishonorable action, they say, "*No somos todos Castellanos Viejos*"—"We are not all old Castilians;" a favorite exclamation of my host Don Valentin, who, as I said before, was a native of La Rioja. We found, however, that there is no reducing a whole people to any fixed standard. As exceptions to this general character for honesty, shrewdness, and sobriety, attributed to the people of Old Castile, we found in our host at Segovia a regular rogue: the muleteer who brought us to La Granja was more than half a fool; and as for our posadero at the latter place, he was so thorough-going a sot that we found him as drunk as a loon at nine in the morning.

We now agreed with an arriero, who had come with two miserable little mules loaded with barley,

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to take us to the Escorial. He was not like either of the three characters just described; but just such a well-meaning dull-witted boor as may be found in any country. Though Pedro would be esteemed a very singular-looking mortal elsewhere, yet if one were to draw his portrait, it would serve for nine in ten of his Castilian countrymen. Pedro's face was long, with long legs and body. His frame was sinewy, and gaunt, and bony; so hollow, indeed, was he, both on the back and belly, that he had scarce more waist than a spider. Over his hatchet face he wore a pointed montera cap, next came a waistcoat and jacket without collars, and then a pair of primitive breeches, which were secured in front by a single iron button, and hung dangling from the hips. His leggings, which served likewise as stockings, were neither more nor less than tatters of old cloth, wound round the leg and foot; and instead of shoes, he wore a sandal of raw cow-hide, drawn up round the foot, and bound to it with a thong. As for Pedro's old cloak, of the same dingy brown with the rest of his apparel, it was now thrown over the back of one of his little machos, which were already drawn out in front of the posada. Having stowed our knapsack in one side of his alforjas or cloth saddle-bags, we placed a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine to make weight in the other; then, taking leave of the crowd which had gathered

round to witness our departure, we set out on foot from La Granja.

Before commencing our journey, some roguish fellow, or it may be some mere busy-body, had persuaded our simple arriero that the direct road to the Escorial, which had been shut up all winter by the snow, was now open. As a league or two would be cut off by taking this route, Pedro guided his mules at once into it when we left La Granja. Our road soon began to ascend the mountain, which was covered with pine-trees and watered by many rivulets. We occasionally met with a woodman returning, like the old man in the *Forty Thieves*, with a loaded ass, and an axe on his shoulder. None of them knew whether the pass were yet open. "If it were not already," they said, "it soon would be;" so we continued upward. When within a league of the top, we saw an ill-looking old fellow, with huge black mustaches, and a musket on his shoulder, who came out of the woods to meet us. He had red cuffs to his jacket, and a red cockade, which showed that he was one of the king's foresters and a royalist volunteer. The man looked at us with astonishment, and asked where we were going by that road. We told him to the Escorial. He then gave us to understand that the people were yet busy in opening the pass, and that none but foot passengers had yet crossed the mountain. Pedro

would now have retraced his steps to La Granja, in order to gain the road which crosses the mountain further south, and which we had followed the day before in the galera. But as there is nothing so irksome as to turn one's back upon any undertaking, we determined to keep on and brave every inconvenience. If the mules were unable to cross, we could leave them and Pedro in the snow together, then make the best of our way on foot, trusting to our own sagacity.

In addition to the probability of being arrested by the snow, we had before us the possibility of meeting with another obstacle; for there is no part of Spain more infested by highwaymen than this chain of Guadarrama. The numerous roads by which it is crossed, and the numbers of travellers who are constantly passing between Madrid and France, Portugal, and the intervening countries, hold out a powerful attraction to the freebooters, whilst the ravines and gorges of the mountains furnish the means of concealment. This last, however, is a matter of little importance, since Madrid is the head-quarters not only of the government and the police, but likewise of the robbers, who hold their rendezvous in the Gate of the Sun. A single story may be sufficient to give an idea of their numbers and hardihood.

Whilst I was in Madrid, the Swiss brigade of

three thousand men, in the pay of the King of France, left that capital to return home. They did not all march away at once, but in small parties, so as not to make a famine on the road, or put the little villages to any inconvenience. They were followed by droves of asses, loaded with a variety of effects, which they had picked up in Spain. Now and then came a weeping woman with an infant in her arms, equally miserable whether she abandoned her house or her lover. It seemed indeed that many of these sturdy Switzers had gained favor with the Spanish girls, who are fond of strangers generally, and who especially cannot resist a red head and a light complexion. Of the men who were gathered round, all seemed glad that they were going: the liberals, because their arrival had been the signal of returning despotism; the apostolics, because they had kept them from going to extremes with their enemies. The former said *Adios!* with a significant air; the latter muttered *Hereges*, or heretics. The military chest brought up the rear, so as to pay the expenses of all who had gone before. It was of course well escorted; yet the day after its departure from Madrid, when the soldiers of the escort had stacked their arms and were engaged with their meal, they were suddenly pounced upon by twenty or thirty long-legged Spaniards, who seized their arms, turned them upon the Swiss, whom they tied

like culprits, and then very leisurely carried away the money, to the amount of four or five thousand dollars.

Thus much for the boldness of the Castilian bandits. Though in this respect they yield to none in Spain, yet they are much less cruel than those of Andalusia and Valencia. They content themselves usually with banging the ribs of those whom they suspect of concealing their money, and seldom kill them if they make no resistance. During our ascent up the mountain, the snow so covered the sides of the road, that we could not see if it were skirted as usual by stone crosses. A single wooden one, nailed against a neighbouring tree, marked the site of a tragedy. But we found our chief security in the fact, that the road being now closed, there was no travelling, and consequently nothing to attract robbers; and we trusted that, unless accident should throw us into contact with some of these worthies, we should reach the Escorial with skins as whole as when we began our journey.

On approaching the top of the pass, we found the quantity of snow increasing. There was a narrow path, which had been cleared in the middle of the road, and along it our mules made a little progress, falling down occasionally either from fatigue or unwillingness to go on. Pedro dragged them each time on their feet again, and after a few

steps they would make another tumble. My companion and I, being in advance of the mules, soon after heard shrill and prolonged whistling and cries resounding through the thick pines of the forest. Presently after a sudden angle of the road brought us in sight of about twenty wild-looking fellows, who were descending the mountain. They were variously dressed in cloth or sheep-skin, and each had on his shoulder some ominous object that looked very like a musket. When they saw us the shouts increased, and the foremost ran rapidly to meet us. We were very anxious, and, pausing until Pedro came nigh, asked the meaning of the mystery. He told us that the people, who had been cutting a road through the snow, had finished their day's task, and were retiring to their place of rest, adding, by way of consolation, as he glanced to the yet distant summit of the mountain, whose snows were just then enkindled by the last rays of the sun, "God only knows when we shall get to ours!" As he uttered this in a despairing tone, down into the snow went both of the machos; and though Pedro pulled at their halters, and kicked, and cursed, and cudgelled, they seemed determined to pass the night there.

By this time the men gathered round us. The supposed bandits were only half-wild peasants of the mountains, and the imaginary muskets turned

into shovels and pickaxes. What were we doing there? and where were we going? asked they, with a thousand other questions, excited by the singularity of the rencontre. When we, in return, inquired if we could cross the mountain, they gave us to understand that there yet remained an uncleared space, where the mules could not proceed, unless indeed they were dragged head and heels over it, which they were ready to perform for us if we paid them well. This would be no easy task—one that would require much time and bear hardly upon the poor mules; so we told Pedro that he might either return with his mules, and we would employ one of the mountaineers to guide us, or else he might get them to take care of his beasts, and go himself with us to the Escorial. He determined, of the two evils, to choose the latter, made an agreement with one of the fellows to give his mules in charge to the landlord of the nearest inn, then giving us our cloaks and shouldering his own, together with the alforjas, we recommended our comrades to God, and took our departure. Long after, as we wound slowly up the mountain, we could hear them shouting and whistling, and occasionally cursing the mules as the poor animals fell to the ground or showed an unwillingness to go onward.

We now pushed on unembarrassed and with new energy. Soon after we came to the uncleared part

of the road, and mounted on the surface of the snow. The upper crust bore us almost everywhere; but sometimes we went floundering in, leg deep, and in extricating one leg would sink deeper with the other. At the top of the pass we once more caught sight of New Castile, and profited by a remnant of light to look around us. The mountains are here covered with a thick growth of pines, which are preserved from the common fate of trees in the Castiles by belonging to the crown. The ravines were torn by rapid torrents produced by the melting of the snow.

In ascending the mountain, the wind was so light from the north-west that it was scarce perceptible; but when at the top of the pass, we found it rushing up the valley with so much violence that we could not check ourselves with so poor a foothold as was furnished by the snow, but had to scud before it down the opposite hill until sheltered from its fury. My long cloak gave me infinite trouble on this occasion, for it fluttered about until I was afraid it would fly away with me. It was not thus with Pedro. His cloak happened to have many holes in it, and, as he threw the embozo over his left shoulder, one of them caught round the neck of our wine-bottle, which was peering out of one corner of the alforjas, and effectually secured it.

The winds throughout this whole chain of Gua-

darrama are extremely violent; for, placed as these mountains are, at an elevation of four or five thousand feet above the sea, with far-extending plains on every side, the currents of air come to them without obstacle and with unabated force. Hence, at the convent of the Escorial, the windows, though framed of iron, cannot resist the fury of the wind, but are frequently driven in. For a similar reason it has been found necessary to make a stone covered way, leading from the village to the convent, in order to protect the faithful, or take away any excuse which might lead to a neglect of their devotions. I was told in Madrid by one of the king's body-guard, that in crossing between La Granja and the Escorial, there have been instances of their being blown from their horses by the wind, or driven horse and rider against the rocks. These facts may serve to explain the double contest sustained by Napoleon in crossing the Somosierra. The crests of the mountain were alive with enemies, whilst his own followers were struck down about him by the fury of the storm; yet he overcame every obstacle by the mere force of his will, and triumphed at once over man and over the elements.

Having descended four or five miles, we came to an inn, where Pedro proposed that we should pass the night. Indeed he refused positively to go any farther, for it was already dark. We, however,

were anxious to get to Guadarrama, where we knew there was a good inn, for we were fearful of encountering filth and vermin, such as we had met with at Segovia; so we told him that he might halt if he pleased, but that we meant to sleep in Guadarrama. Upon this Pedro yielded, stipulating that we should at least fill our bottle with wine, for by this time it was completely empty. We willingly assented to this, gave him the real that he asked for, and pushed on a little in advance, where we seated ourselves behind a rock at the road-side to await his coming. When he at length arrived, we took a morsel of the bread and a draught from the bottle, then started with new life for Guadarrama. This vivacity, however, was a little damped by Pedro's giving us to understand that, from what he had heard at the inn, we had still eight miles before us. He told us also the true cause of his wanting to stay, which was, that the whole road we were about to traverse swarmed with robbers. Had he told us this before we reached the inn, we certainly should have stopped; but after going so boldly past, we could not return without mortification.

The night had now set in with more than usual darkness; for the stars were veiled by heavy, ominous clouds, which came tumbling over the crests of the mountain, driving rapidly before the now freshening breeze. "There will be snow on

the mountain before morning," said Pedro in a disconsolate tone, "and I shall have the devil's own time in getting to my mules again." "*Valagme Dios!*" he presently after added, with uplifted eyes and an air of greater resignation. Just after dark we had discovered the lights of Guadarrama, seemingly at no great distance. As we descended, however, an intervening hill rose gradually between, to cut us off from the cheering prospect. Other lights there were still nearer in a valley on our right, where there seemed to be several villages. It was there, Pedro said, that the robbers who haunted the neighbouring roads had their dwellings. The petty authorities of these places either share the spoil of the depredators, or else they are restrained from interfering by the dread of having their throats cut or their houses burnt over their heads.

There was something in all this of wild and high excitement. With eyes on the alert and pricked ears we hurried forward in silence, or if we spoke, it was in monosyllables and in a low voice. Pedro now began to tell us how to behave in the case of an attack. We were to stand close together, not to speak a word, and to do whatever we were ordered. The road over which we hurried was skirted with rocks and underwood, that furnished excellent lurking-places at each step. These, as we walked rapidly past them, were reconnoitred with a rapid glance.

The chief danger, we were told, lay near Guadarrama, where the meeting of a number of cross-roads furnishes much passing and an excellent station for robbers. As we came towards this spot, there were several dark objects in the road before us. We kept on, and found that they were trees beyond the roadside where it made an angle. At the junction were several crosses piled round with stones. We had scarce left these tragic devices at our backs, when we were startled by a rustling in the bushes on our left. We paused simultaneously—a hare sprung at that moment into the path: terrified at our approach, it bounded away before us, and presently after disappeared behind a rock. By this time we had been a long while upon the road, and yet Guadarrama did not make its appearance. We had no means of judging of the distance we had performed by the time; for if the darkness had permitted us to see our watches we should have been nothing the wiser, since, whilst one of them lost an hour, the other gained two in twenty-four. There could be no doubt, however, that it was eight or nine o'clock. We must have come more than twenty miles since we left La Granja, and yet there were no signs of our resting-place. Perhaps we had passed it at the junction of the roads; and then we must either retrace our steps, or else keep on, supperless and sleepless, to the Escorial. “*Valgame*

Dios!" exclaimed Pedro. Just at that moment we emerged from behind a sand-hill, and were suddenly accosted by a loud barking. We turned our eyes in the direction whence it came, and found ourselves close upon the little village of Guadarama, with its lights, its hum of voices, and its watchful dogs.

In the next minute we entered the identical inn where we had passed our first night on the way to Segovia. Our fat host welcomed us most cordially; nay, he even gave up to us his privileged seat in the corner. Little John, who always followed the motions of his master, was equally generous with his humbler station, and thus we were soon accommodated within the very funnel of the chimney, close to the crackling fire, and with the pine splinters on the shelf above blazing full in our faces. What a contrast, thought we, to our late condition—dashing through the wet and snow, or roaming in a dark cold night over a wild waste, hungry, with wet feet, the prospect of being benighted, and the fear of footpads. Here all things were in the very same state that we had found them two nights before,—the ventero and his man, his bustling wife, and his not-to-be-forgotten daughter, the brown beauty of whom we have already spoken. Even the group of strangers was so similar, that the individuals scarce seemed changed. There were,

however, no cooking preparations as before, nor any eating and drinking; for all had long since despatched their evening-meal, and were now dropping away to their respective sleeping places. We did not need, however, the smell of food, nor the clatter of pots and pans, to remind us of our supper, but straightway proceeded to discuss the matter with the ventero.

As we were now our own providers, we boldly ordered a stewed hare and a partridge. Pedro, who stood in the opposite corner, with the steam rising from his well-soaked sandals, and curling upward along his legs, to mingle with the smoke from his cigarillo, stared with astonishment at our extravagance. The hare and the partridge were, nevertheless, ordered, and were soon after placed in our bed-room upon a little table, whilst below was a brasero with embers. The ventero came in and took his seat beside us; now listening to our adventures, now aiding us to empty the glass, which each offered to him from time to time. As for Pedro, who perhaps had not tasted partridge since he was a boy, perhaps never, he struggled hard between his inward delight and the desire to preserve his gravity. He sat between us at table, and we plied him well with wine and viand. Now, it is matter of courtesy in Spain to eat and drink whatever is put upon your plate or poured into

your glass, in order to show your esteem for the favor. Pedro was aware of this, and therefore acquiesced with becoming resignation.

These matters being disposed of, each of us got into bed. We had offered Pedro to have one prepared for him; but he said he had no use for such a commodity—" *Mil gracias! que yo no gusto cama.*" "A thousand thanks! but I do not like a bed." Thereupon, having adjusted his alforjas in one corner, he rolled his old cloak around him, and threw himself flat upon the pavement, without removing either montero cap, legging, or sandal. He was, nevertheless, asleep and snoring ere we had adjusted our pillows.

The next morning we had our chocolate as before from the hands of our little Morisca. Pedro shouldered his alforjas, and, having taken a last leave of the venta and its inmates, we set out on foot for the Escorial. The road was dreary, skirted by rocks, with here and there a single *encina* or *alcornoque*. After a walk of eight miles we reached the Escorial, and found as comfortable lodgings as those we had left, in the posada of a motherly old widow woman. Pedro aided us in despatching a hearty breakfast. He was then paid for his own services, as well as for those of the mules which had given us so much trouble, and sent away with many good wishes. Nor did he neglect the parting saluta-

tions—"Stay with God," said he, "and may no ill happen to you!"—"Señores! queden ustedes con Dios, y que no haya novedad!"

The convent of the Escorial is situated on the south-eastern declivity of the Guadarrama chain, midway up the mountains. This magnificent building owes its existence to the bigotry of Philip II., who, being in a panic at the battle of Saint Quintin, vowed, if he gained the day, to build the most magnificent convent in the world, in honor of the saint whose name should be found that day upon the calendar. The battle being won, Saint Lawrence was discovered to be the thrice-happy individual in whose favor the vow had been made. A place was chosen to erect the convent, which already bore the name of the saint, and was called San Lorenzo del Escorial*. Furthermore, since Saint Lawrence was roasted to death upon a grid-iron, the architect, Juan Baptista de Toledo, took it into his head to build the convent in the figure of that culinary instrument. With this view, he represented the several bars by files of building, the handle by a portion of the church, and even the feet of his singular model by four insignificant towers, which rise at the corners. Indeed, the only poetic licence of which this new John the Baptist

* Escorial is derived from the word *escoria*, or dross: it is given to all places where there are old and exhausted mines.

was guilty was in supposing his gridiron to be turned upside down.

The exterior dimensions of the convent are seven hundred and forty feet, by five hundred and eighty. The principal dome over the centre of the church rises to an elevation of three hundred and thirty feet. It is built entirely of the granite found in the vicinity, and in the severest style, without any show of ornament;—it may also be added, as far as the exterior is concerned, without beauty. Indeed, there is no grand effect produced by the proportions of the whole; for the petty towers, rising at the corners, take much from the grandeur of the principal dome. There are also several ranges of irregular buildings, erected subsequently to the monastery, which lie adjacent, and greatly injure the uniformity of its appearance. It is within, however, and especially in the chapel, that the Escorial is to be seen and admired. There we witness, in all the majesty of its proportions, one of the noblest monuments of modern times.

The great chapel of the Escorial is in the form of a Grecian cross, and is surmounted by the huge dome of which we have already spoken. This dome is supported upon four square columns or masses of granite, which rise from the pavement to the roof, and which are of such vast dimensions, that they have small chapels in them, where mass is

daily performed. The organs, four in number, are placed on either side. At the back is a gallery for the choir. Opposite the choir is the principal altar, and the tabernacle for the reception of the sacred vessels, and for the exposure of the sacrament in seasons of high solemnity. The altar is in the same severe style with the rest of the building. It is very imposing, and excites in the beholder a religious awe, which is further augmented by statues of two kings, Charles V. and his son Philip, who are seen in open niches at either side, kneeling devoutly, with their faces turned in the direction of the tabernacle. The imposing solemnity of this chapel is, perhaps, surpassed by that of no sacred edifice in the world. There is here no profusion of ornament to dazzle and divert the beholder, whilst the rough granite, seen everywhere in its naked strength, is in happy accordance with the hardy grandeur of the edifice.

The Pantheon of the Escorial is the burying-place of the Spanish kings. The body of Charles V. was first deposited there, and his successors have likewise been buried in the same place, with only two or three exceptions. The Pantheon is a subterranean chamber, situated immediately beneath the grand altar of the chapel. We were conducted to it by one of the monks, who carried the keys of this chamber of death, whilst a familiar attended

with a light. A long arched staircase, lined on every side with polished marble, descending beneath the surface of the earth, brought us to the Pantheon. It is of circular form, with a vaulted dome, from the centre of which hangs a chandelier of rock crystal. This is never lit, save at the burial of a prince, and the feeble taper of our guide furnished but a scanty and insufficient light. We were able, however, to discover with its assistance a small altar standing in front of the staircase, upon which was a crucifix of black marble, with a pedestal of porphyry. The whole interior is lined with dark marble, beautifully veined, and of great lustre. It is divided into three ranges of horizontal niches or compartments, separated from each other by fluted pilasters, and running entirely round the circle. Each of these niches contains a porphyry sarcophagus, having a moveable cover. They are not all tenanted. The empty ones have blank scrolls to receive the names of future occupants. Others are already filled. We read on one "Carolus V."—an epitaph which carries with it the loftiest associations. There is an irresistible feeling of solemnity, which every one experiences in visiting the meanest dwelling-place of the dead. What then must be the sensation of him, who, after groping through subterranean passages, comes at length upon this mysterious dwelling-place, which

genius has sought to render worthy of being the last home of the mighty of the earth; and where, as Bourgoanne well expresses it, "deceased grandeur still struggles against annihilation!"

In examining the different portions of the convent, we passed down staircases and along passages formed in the very wall, which is from fifteen to twenty feet in thickness, and entirely of hewn granite. We came also upon several little chapels in these sequestered situations. Josephus speaks of similar staircases in describing the temple of Jerusalem. Had that famous building been constructed with equal solidity, no human fury could have been persevering enough to have completed its destruction. The apartments set apart for the royal family are very neat. They are hung with tapestry from the royal manufactory at Madrid. Some pieces are equal to the best productions of the Gobelins. One of the halls is painted with battles between Moors and Christians. The grand staircase is surmounted by a quadrangular dome. This is finely painted in fresco by Giordano. The first compartment represents the battle of Saint Quintin; another the accomplishment of the vow made on that occasion by Philip; and the last shows how the pious prince was at length admitted into the celestial regions as a reward for so many good actions.

The convent of the Escorial formerly possessed