

Archbishops of Granada have been proverbial since Le Sage's time, but retained withal kindly and courteous manners. He was dressed in a merino gown of purple, with a velvet cap on his head, and a gold crucifix hanging round his neck. He talked French, which he had probably learnt only from books, for he pronounced every word as if it were Spanish. He inquired if we were catholics. 'No, monseigneur, of the English church.' 'Ah, well,' he said, 'there is not much difference; pity that we should have quarrelled so long; you will soon be reconciled to us; yes; Dr. Poosey, Dr. Poosey; yes, &c.' And then the good old man insisted on explaining his pictures. There was one of the infant Bacchus and his attendants. Pointing to the principal satyr, the archbishop said, 'I don't know what that is exactly; it is either a saint or an Indian, I think.' At parting, we bent one knee and kissed his hand, and received, what can harm no one, an old man's blessing.

This prelate, I was told, had been banished to a see in the Canary Islands on account of his Carlist tendencies, and his recent appointment to Granada was in accordance with the conciliatory policy adopted by the present government. The archbishop's revenues, however, have been absorbed in the great vortex of ecclesiastical ruin, and even the small nominal income allotted by the state is not regularly paid him. I saw him, one day afterwards, taking the air, in what looked like a dilapidated hack cab. Not a hat was raised nor a head bent among the bystanders,

though I dare say they went down on their knees before the gilded coach of his predecessors.

During my abode at Granada, I made acquaintance with a less dignified but probably more influential personage, Pepé, captain of the Gipsies. He was an old man, with a skin resembling that of a mummy from the Sandwich Islands—brown, dry, and withered—strangely contrasting with his lively black eyes. He was dressed in the gayest Andalusian costume, and wore large ear-rings. On one of their holidays he came to tell me of a gipsy ‘funcion,’ which I might witness, if I pleased to treat the performers with wine. I found a considerable number of the tribe assembled in the upper room of a venta, half-a-mile outside the gates. Old Pepé was master of the ceremonies, and led off in a strange, wild, yet measured chant, which reminded me of the songs of the Ojibbeways. An ill-looking young man accompanied him with voice and guitar, all the people about joining at intervals in a savage chorus. Four young women, each with a partner, danced to the music. They were dressed in short gowns of gay but coarse cotton, and wore some bright flowers in their hair. With one exception they were singularly ugly. The same features were conspicuous in all. A long thin nose, high cheek bones, wide mouths, with the corners tending downwards, and showing rows of white teeth, long and narrow eyes, like the figures in hieroglyphics, a complexion like burnt umber, and jet-black shining hair. The dance was at first a mere

twisting of the arms and body, the feet remaining still, but gradually, as the music grew louder and louder, the paces of the dancers became fast and furious, till at last they might well have rivalled even the witches of Kirk Alloway. Then they stopped of a sudden, and the men refreshed themselves with deep draughts from the jars of wine, the women hardly tasting it. As the función went on, more and more swarthy faces crowded round the door and glided into the room; all, dancers or not, passing round the wine jars with great alacrity. At last, after an unconscionable quantity had been drunk, I took my leave, and, to my great surprise, found the charge to be about three shillings. The London monopolists would hardly have supplied water at the same price. Other travellers have since told me that they had paid as much as a doubloon for the privilege of witnessing a similar entertainment. Doubtless the Commissionaire, whom they employed as negotiator, intercepted a lion's share of the price. I think Bensaken, the Jew, an exception to the general rule of his craft; he seems a convert, at least, to Christian *practice*, whatever be the justice of the aspersions thrown by the Ximenez family on his orthodoxy in matters of faith.

He was one day nearly overreached by a cunning believer, a small well-dressed young man, with a rather prepossessing countenance, who arrived by the diligence from Malaga, and established himself in our Fonda. He told his family and personal history with charming frankness. His father was a Swiss,

but by the mother's side he was the nephew of an English baronet, at whose seat in Hertfordshire he stayed annually for the shooting season. The morning after his arrival he visited the Alhambra, and on returning found, to his despair, that he had lost his pocket-book, containing all his cash, and what he more regretted, his memoranda. He must go to Madrid and see his banker. Would Bensaken lend him a doubloon? The unsuspecting Jew complied. Fortunately, that afternoon arrived a letter from a landlord at Malaga, warning our host against trusting a young Swiss, who, by dint of losing his pocket-book, had succeeded in escaping from Seville, Cadiz, and Malaga, without paying his bill. The heroic Bensaken twisted up his moustache, assumed a cast-iron expression, entered the small man's room and extorted his money, in spite of tears and protestations. Next morning the bird was flown. How he had obtained his 'viaticum' we did not know till ten days after, when two ladies called upon me and begged my advice. 'We belong,' they said, 'to a Carlist family, and had just taken advantage of the amnesty to come back from England. On our way from Malaga to Granada, we travelled with a short young gentleman, an English Milord, he told us. Next morning he called in great distress, and said he had lost his pocket-book. We were softened by his tears—we had received kindness in England—we lent him forty dollars, which he promised to send back from Madrid, and has not done so.'

The scoundrel had been trading upon our national

character for honourable dealing. I assured the Señoras that he was no Englishman, but, on the faint chance that part of his tale might be true, I indited a letter for them to the Baronet whom the fellow called his uncle. Since my return to England I have heard of him. 'Milor' is a clerk in the bureau of the Hôtel des Princes, Paris.

Let me say a few words about an honest man, (by way of contrast,) one Señor Vazquez, who, during those burning mid-day hours, when prudent people stay in-doors and only fools rush out, came to teach me Spanish. He was a native of Castile, and had spent twenty years in England, so he was able both to speak his own language and interpret it—a rare combination in the South of Spain. The worthy man, in conjunction with a buxom Andalusian help-mate, was just organizing an English boarding-house in the Calle San Anton, which I cordially recommend to my countrymen. He had become thoroughly Protestantised and Anglicised, and had imbibed some of that contempt for his own country, and the things thereof, which is so observable in travelled Spaniards.

He told me some quaint stories illustrative of the ignorance and prejudice still lingering in the land: for instance; one day he was in company with some respectable persons of the middle class, when the conversation turned on an event which had just occurred at Granada. A young man of the Jewish persuasion had avenged the cause of Shylock, by

running off with the daughter of a Christian. 'What a shame,' said one; 'very likely the poor innocent children will have tails.' Some sceptic present interposed with a doubt as to whether Jews had tails really or not. The majority held that it was unquestionable; but as one or two still questioned it, the dispute was referred to Señor Vazquez, a travelled man. He quietly decided the matter in the affirmative; 'for,' said he, 'when I was in London, I saw Baron Rothschild, who is a Jew of a very high caste, and he had a tail as long as my arm.' So the sceptics were silenced, and smoked the cigar of acquiescence.

Señor Vazquez, however, on more important points, does his best to dispel the popular ignorance. He had circulated many copies of the New Testament in the vernacular, and had got the Lancasterian System introduced into the primary school. There is only one such school at Granada, attended by five hundred boys, and managed, in a way, by three under-paid masters.

At the end of a fortnight I was deprived of the services of my instructor by a sickness very prevalent during the hot months, and to which, after much resistance, I also succumbed so far as to keep my bed for two or three days. My notions respecting 'the faculty' in Spain were based upon *Gil Blas*; so it was with great reluctance that I consented to send for a doctor, resolved, at the same time, to resist all attempts at bleeding or dosing with warm water, for I expected a hungry-eyed Sangrado to come in, ogre-

like, with open lancet, and a 'fee-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman.' However, my Æsculapius turned out the gentlest of practitioners, for he merely prescribed starch and milk of almonds. Thus soothed and encouraged, nature exerted her *vis medicatrix*, and the doctor pocketed his 'fee,' without having the blood of an Englishman on his conscience, or lancet.

Seriously, it is a dreary thing to be ill in a strange land, without the quiet ministrations of household angels (whose visits to the sick room are neither few nor far between)—without even the occasional inroad of a man friend, full of contagious health and spirits, with a cheery 'Hollo! old fellow,' and a hearty laugh, as tonic as bark. Without these, how wearily the hours go by! One grows tired of the watching the creeping shadow on the floor; tired of listening to Dolores's or Carmen's doleful ditties over the way; tired even of reading about Sancho and his proverbial philosophy. So it was a pleasant change to me when a waiter came to say that a poor Englishman below wanted to speak to me. He was requested to walk up, and thereupon entered a gaunt, bony body, almost in rags, and a face ugly, weather-beaten, good humoured, fringed with shaggy locks, and crowned by a worse hat than ever shocked the baker-boys of the Strand. Yet there was an appearance of cheerful content in the midst of dilapidation and decay. I was sure he was an Irishman before he spoke; he was so like one of the unthatched, un-everythinged hovels of his country, which, neglected by man, have still

their share of the blessed sunshine. 'I beg yer honour's pardon, but hearing that ye were an Englishman, and as I'm from Ireland and a counthryman, I may say, of yer honour's, I made bould——' (Bravo! Patrick, I'll back your instincts against Lord Lyndhurst's reasoning—you're not aliens at heart.) So I made Patrick sit down and tell me how he had wandered to Granada.

His story was a long and sad story, but told cheerfully and manfully, without the least of that whine which hardens one's heart against the mendicant. He had come to Barcelona to work in a projected railway, which is a project still; so finding no work forthcoming there, he wandered to Madrid, where he arrived in time to see the attempted revolution of March, 1848. He found a poor girl lying in the street, her ankle shattered by a musket-ball. She addressed him in English, told him she was lady's-maid to Mrs. S., a lady then living in Madrid. So, at considerable risk to himself, he carried her home. [It happened, oddly enough, that I was acquainted with this very family at Madrid, (most kind and excellent people) and had heard from Mrs. S. the whole story. The poor girl's foot was amputated. She had been wantonly and deliberately fired at by the troops of the government, and had received no compensation, although the Duke of Valencia had given his palabra (Anglicè, 'palaver,') that she should. On the morning of the revolt she had walked out, innocent of any coming disturbance, carrying her mistress's little



dog in her arms, and her first words on being brought home were, 'Thank God! ma'am, they haven't shot Fido.' To return to my Milesian friend.] Colonel S. got him a situation in the quicksilver mines of Almaden. There, by inhaling metal instead of air, all his teeth dropped out, and he became so ill that he could work no more. So he wandered to Cadiz, hoping to find a ship in which he could work his passage back to England, but, failing, walked to Gibraltar, thence to Malaga, and finally to Granada. To crown his misfortunes, some one had robbed him of his only dollar, and he arrived with nothing in his pockets but a tattered Testament (Patrick happened to be a Protestant). He intended to walk to Madrid and try 'if anything would turn up.' I sent him with a note to the Condesa de R—— (an English lady, married to a Spanish nobleman at Granada). 'Dear me, Sir,' said the poor fellow, deprecatingly, 'I never saw a Countess in my life. I daren't go.' However, I told him she was an Englishwoman, and a very kind woman too, and at last he went. Next day he came back, with tears of gratitude in his eyes, blessing the day and the hour when he first saw a Countess. He had been a groom in his youth, and the Condesa had permitted him to stay and help in the stable, till she could find him a permanent place with some of her friends. So I hope Patrick's wanderings are over for awhile.

## CHAPTER XV.

WHEN I first unrolled the map of Spain at home, and projected my future tour, there was one portion of it which, above all, attracted my imagination—the district lying between the Sierra Nevada and the Mediterranean. It was plentifully seamed with those skeletons of sprats which are the geographical symbols for mountain ridges, the round dots which indicate towns were labelled with unheard-of names, and it was intersected by none of those double lines which betoken carriageable roads, and, by consequence, coaching-inns and a modicum of civilization. Finally, the title ‘Alpujarrez,’ bestriding the whole tract in capital letters, had something oriental in the very sound, and, accordingly, one of my first cares after arriving at Granada was to inquire, not whether a tour in the Alpujarrez were possible, (nothing out of the way is ever possible,) but how the impossibility might be done best, and most comfortably.

Now my friend Mr. S. had to go to Almeria, so we agreed to journey together as far as Ujihar.

Up to this time I had been sailing down the main stream of travel, bespeaking many little crafts by the way, most of them bearing ‘London’ legible in the

cut of their sails, but now I was to adventure myself up a by-creek, rarely seen by a trans-Pyrenean,—‘Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag.’ So it was naturally with high glee that I set about getting in stores and pilot for the voyage.

To drop metaphor:—I looked out for a pony, saddlebags, and servant. I was recommended to one Miguel, who had quadrupeds and bipeds of the requisite kind to let. This Miguel was otherwise called ‘Napoleon,’ and, indeed, his small stature, plump figure, and metallic countenance, gave him some resemblance to his hero eponymus. He made loud professions of incorruptible honesty, but I afterwards had reason to think him no better than the rest of his craft. He deluded me, though born in the far north, and a Yorkshireman into the bargain.

Our horses were ordered to be ready at 12 o'clock P.M. punctually, as the stroke of the chimes separated the 31st of July from the 1st of August. It takes long to rouse a man from his first sleep, and of course longer to rouse *two* men; then there were multifarious arrangements to transact respecting saddlebags and stirrups, and it was one in the morning before the cavalcade defiled out of Granada on to the plain. The moon had set, and the starlight would have hardly sufficed to indicate the road (for hedges are rare in Spain), had we not been guided by the songs of our three attendants. Your Spaniard always sings incessantly when he is not smoking, and fitfully when he is. So we followed leisurely in the wake of the

music, talking neither of Boabdil nor Pulgar, but of old Cambridge men, as famous in their way—Jack This and Tom That—just as if we had been riding to Trumpington, and as if the Gog-Magogs and not the Sierra Nevada had been looming on our left.

It was still dark when we reached the summit of the hill called 'the Sigh of the Moor,' where Boabdil, just discrowned, looked back, for the last time, on the towers of the Alhambra, over which gleamed the silver cross that had replaced the waning crescent. We looked back too, and could trace a dim outline, whether of crumbling ruin or jagged hill we could not tell, and just over it the bright stars that never wane.

At last day dawned, and with it a somewhat unpleasant discovery. In my negotiations with 'Napoleon,' I had expressly stipulated that my attendant squire should be young and active and cheerful, able to cook an omelette, or fight a bandit, or tell a story, according to order. The imperial word had been pledged to that effect; but lo! when I first beheld my man by the light of day, I found him old, toothless, and dirty, with a scrubby stubble of a beard, resembling that grown by Mr. Macready in the interval between the third and fourth acts of *Macbeth*, when remorse for the murder of Duncan has made him neglectful of his person. The fellow proved to be sulky, and a knave into the bargain—like master like man. However, there was no remedy, so, as the habit of our nation is, I grumbled, and rode quietly

on my way. We were skirting the extreme southwestern bases of the Sierra, and our path now lay along the breast of a hill, now dipped into the bed of a torrent, by which the mountain waters had found a way to the valley lying below on our right. The bounteous husbandry of nature had been repaid by a luxuriant growth of maize and flax, and poplars and mulberries. The hill-sides are plentifully sprinkled with white villages, each nestling in its own green orchards, from the midst of which rises the church spire, crowned with a vane, that glittered in the morning sun like a star above the holy place.

This same morning sun, however, begins to beat so fiercely on our heads, that we must make all speed to Lanjaron. We halt, nevertheless, for a few minutes to survey the ravine of Tablete, which is deeper, wider, and more precipitous than any we have yet seen. It is crossed by a lofty bridge of one single arch, and was the scene of a desperate struggle between the Spaniards and the Moors during the revolt of the Alpujarrez. My companion had brought a copy of Marmol in his saddle-bags, so we read the account of it at our first resting place. It was past nine before we came in sight of Lanjaron. The place lying in a hollow, is concealed till you are close upon it. The prospect which then burst upon us, cheering from its own exquisite beauty, was rendered still more cheering to us by the promise it afforded of rest and shade and breakfast. In the

centre of a deep ravine rises a rock, steep and abrupt towards the valley, and crowned with a ruined castle, but connected by a natural causeway with the sloping hill behind, where cluster the white terraces of Lanjaron. As the place is much resorted to by the rank and fashion of the Alpujarrez for its mineral waters, we had expected to find a fonda (or hotel), but we were deceived. There was only a posada, and that very primitive and oriental. The room to which we were conducted was furnished with four walls, bare but for whitewash; to these were subsequently added a rude table and a couple of stools, by the aid of which we managed to eat our own provisions and drink our own wine. The table being removed, two straw mattresses were laid on the floor, covered, to do them justice, with snowy sheets (indeed, the linen is always beautifully white), and on these we slept off our weariness, and rose refreshed to dinner at three. By four we were again in the saddle. On emerging from the narrow streets, we crept in single file up a narrow and rugged bridle-path which skirts the opposite hill.

Our necessarily slow progress gave us an opportunity of contemplating the slopes we were leaving behind us—a sight not soon to be forgotten, lit as they were by the evening sun, and rich in the deep sheeny foliage of chesnut, walnut, and fig-tree. In about an hour we came to the olive-groves of Orgiba. Before entering the village we made a digression to the right, in order to see a famous old olive-tree,

which had been specially commended to us before leaving Granada, as the pride of the Alpujarrez and the wonder of all the Spains. It is, indeed, a monster, fourteen yards round the trunk (they told us), and believed by the natives to be about two thousand years old. It may have yielded its fruit to Iberian, Carthaginian, and Roman masters, as well as to the Goth, the Moor, and the Spaniard.

Well might proud tales be told of thee,  
Last of the solemn wood!

But the quotation is not quite applicable, for hard by is another monster, scarcely less, and probably quite as old. They are the most picturesque trees of the kind I ever saw. An olive in its prime has neither beauty nor grace; it is only tolerable when, gnarled and contorted by time, it has reached a fantastic antiquity.

Thence we made a short cut by certain water-courses, which, being constructed on hydrostatical principles, were decidedly ill adapted for equestrian travel. However, the animals walked over stepping-stones and scrambled down mimic cascades quite naturally, and we finally found our level in the sandy bed of what must be a great river in winter time. We had now to make choice of two roads, one continuing along the river bed as it wound among the rocks, and the other climbing the hill by the puerto. We chose the latter, for the path on the bare mountain side was full in the moonlight, while the other was sunk in black shadow. As we rode on, we saw to our left the great bluff rocks, which almost

kiss over the stream, and form what is called the Angostura del Rio. These rocks, blanched in the bright moonlight, contrasted strangely with the intense gloom of the cleft between them. On the top of the pass we came upon a kind of wigwam, where two or three of the guardia, or rural police, were lodged. We gave them a few reals and a draught of wine, receiving in return the usual 'Vaya usted con Dios.' We soon began to descend by a path so steep and rugged, that it resembled a staircase with the stairs omitted; however, we got down safely, thanks to the nimbleness of our steeds. It is not like the nimbleness we are accustomed to in horses—bold, rushing, and impetuous, but a crafty and wary nimbleness, resembling that of a cat. Indeed, so like are their ways to the ways of cats, that in urging them to leap, one almost involuntarily addresses them with, 'Puss, puss!' At the bottom is a very picturesque mill, where the tendrils of a thick vine dip and sway in the mimic waterfall. We followed, as before, the bed of a stream, fringed with willows and oleanders; and finally, about ten o'clock, reached the rude Venta de Toriscon, where we were to halt for the night, or part of it. All the good folks, host and guests, had retired already to rest; that is to say, some half dozen were lying in the archway, with their saddles for pillows, and half-a-dozen more were stretched on the stones outside the door, with no pillow at all. We supped outside, under extraordinary difficulties as regarded table



and chairs. Of course the meal was furnished from the contents of our own saddlebags. Contrary to our expectation, there was a vacant upper chamber, on the floor of which two beds were speedily laid, and two bodies as speedily laid upon them. The window was unglazed, and the doorway was unprovided with a door—but what did that matter to men too sleepy to fear actual draughts or possible daggers?

Having six leagues to ride to breakfast, we were off at least an hour before dawn. Our road, as before, lay along the dry, gravelly beds of rivers,—very good smooth roads indeed, but liable to interruption. How the good folks of the Alpujarrez journey in winter—Sabe Dios! The whole ride to Ujihar is exceedingly uninteresting. On each side, the traveller's view is bounded by a steep bank of earth, and the road generally resembles a railway-cutting. About ten o'clock we came to the Barranco de la Matanza,—'Ravine of the Massacre,'—so called from the disastrous rout of the brave Marquis of Cadiz and the flower of Andalucian chivalry, bemoaned in many a patriotic ballad. Even my stupid old guide roused himself to an unwonted effort, and told me the story. Immediate after, we came upon Ujihar, a truly Moorish village, with flat roofs and latticed windows, with green plots of garden scattered among the gleaming white walls. S— said it reminded him of Nazareth. I have never since heard the word 'Nazareth,' even at church—God forgive me!—with-

out thinking of Ujihar, as it lay basking, so still and quiet, in the glare of that August sunshine.

While breakfast was getting ready, we strolled up to the church, a gaunt, unattractive edifice, with nothing to show, except, indeed, some daubs in the vestry, representing conflagrations and massacres, and a variety of atrocities said to have been committed by the Moors upon the Christians, during their famous revolt. I dare say the Moors have a long *per contra* account, if one only knew.

At five o'clock I separated, with great regret, from my companion, he, with his two attendants, taking the road to Almeria, while I, followed by my dilapidated esquire, turned inland towards Mairena, a little village visible on the mountain side about a league off, where I had determined to stay for the night.

The posada presented the most wretched and forlorn aspect, and the accommodation inside did not belie the promise of its exterior. To my inquiries respecting supper (my readers must pardon my perpetual references to the victualling department, for really these mountain rides develop an appetite unknown to persons engaged in the more usual sedentary occupations of life)—I say, then, to my inquiries respecting supper I received most disheartening replies. I ran through the whole gamut of larder and pantry in a descending scale, lessening my demands as I went on. 'Had they any mutton?' I asked—'No.' 'Chicken?'—'No.' 'Bacon?'—'No.' 'Eggs?'—'No.' 'Wine?'—'No.' 'Bread?'—'No.'

Here was a predicament!—and my saddlebags were emptied (chiefly, I believe, by the surreptitious nibbling of my Sancho.) However, they promised to send out and buy some bread and wine; and I also stipulated for some mulberries, for I had seen many trees by the wayside jewelled with rich purple fruit. While this primitive repast was being provided, I wandered about the environs of the hamlet. Some of the women, sitting at their open doors, were singularly beautiful,—Medoras or Gulnares all,—in striking contrast with the women of Ujihar or Lanjaron. Just out of the village I saw several families, each on its own 'era,' or thrashing-floor, busily engaged in beating out the corn. The dress of the men was exceedingly primitive, consisting of a shirt, and wide drawers reaching to the knee, which were, or had been, white. My appearance and northern complexion seemed to excite their wonder: long after I had gone by, on turning round I could see them still pausing in their work to gaze after me. A passing stranger is a sight passing strange at Mairena.

On returning to the posada I was shown into a kind of loft, with a square aperture for window, which seemed by its appearance to have been in quiet possession of the hens from time immemorial, and was, besides, insufferably close. I tried to convince the good hostess that eggs and chickens were the logical sequence of hens, but in vain; so I was obliged to content myself with bread and fruit and wine, as aforesaid. I had a table and chair set out

upon the flat roof, which commanded a grand view of the whole wild district, ridge upon ridge, and valley beyond valley. Here and there, high up in the lap of some great, grim, brown and grey mountain, was perched a white hamlet, with its own green fringe of orchard,—and through a gap in the ridge towards the south-east, I could see the deep blue Mediterranean, and I could even make out some sails upon it, as they glittered against the rising moon. Meanwhile, I was rather pestered with three old women, who surrounded the table, taking huge delight in seeing me eat, and asking various questions,—such as, whether England was in France? and what I had done to my hair to make it brown?

About an hour after nightfall, the various members of the family disposed themselves to sleep upon the roof; and I, thinking men's company better than hens', followed their example, and lay down close to the table, on which remained some relics of supper. In the middle of the night I was awakened by a stealthy step close by me, and, looking up, I saw a strange, wild figure of a man, all in rags. He was walking to and fro beside the table, evidently hankering after the viands thereon. At last he pounced upon them, and began coolly to break the bread and dip it in the wine. Before devouring each morsel, he held it up towards the moon, at arm's length, and, waving it to and fro, muttered, 'Thanks be unto thee, O Madonna, most holy.' I was amused at his thus breaking two commandments, and thanking the

Virgin Mary or the moon, whichever it might be by whose countenance he was stealing; but as he looked very lean and poor, I did not interrupt his feast by any sign of wakefulness.

I had scarcely dropt to sleep again, before I was roused by a loud shriek; then there was a scuffle; all the family started to their feet; the men swore, the women screamed, and then ensued such a bewildered Babel of chattering, that I in vain tried to make myself heard, and discover the cause of the disturbance. As it was past three, I rose, and ordered the horses out. My guide (save the mark!) now acknowledged to me that he had only once travelled that way twenty-five years ago, so the landlord, anxious, as I thought, to escape from the still screaming womankind, volunteered to accompany me till daybreak. On the way he told me the cause of the tumult. Some ill-conditioned admirer of his daughter's had clambered in at the window of the loft where she was sleeping. It was her shriek which brought the father to the summary expulsion of the intruder. 'But for your worship's presence,' he said, 'I would have stabbed the villain then and there.'

Deeds of blood are not unfamiliar in the Alpujarrez, to judge from the number of mortuary crosses we passed about half-a-league from Mairena. Mine host could not, or would not, give me any information respecting them. All he would say was, 'Tiempo de los Moros.' Some looked as if

they had been erected in the year 1849. We followed a rugged path over the side of a bleak wild hill, until, after crossing the rocky bed of a torrent, it merged in a more beaten track, and by-and-bye we overtook a fine bright-eyed lad, riding on a mule. He came, he told me, from Arolles (one of the mountain hamlets I had seen from Mairena), and he was very communicative with respect to the place and all it contained. He was just telling me how, the day before, the only child of an arriero had been drowned in a well, his father being absent at Calahorra (the place I was bound for), when we descried in the distance a train of mules. On nearer approach we could see a man riding on the last mule, with arms folded and head bent, neither smoking nor singing. 'That,' said the boy, 'is the poor father.' 'Ah, Don Diego,' he cried, when we met him, 'sad news from Arolles.' 'Ya lo sé,' replied the father quietly, and rode on. The ill news had flown fast. There was not a trace of emotion on the father's face; the wound, doubtless, as deep wounds do, was bleeding inwardly. After leaving the boy, whose heavily-laden beast could not keep pace with ours, my precious guide lost his way and mine, so we had at last to dismount, and scramble down the side of a hill so steep, that I was compelled to clutch the shrubs which grew here and there among the stones and shale. I expected every moment to see our horses roll neck-over-heels down, as their fore-feet are not adapted for clutching; but no, they managed to

scramble safe and sound (at least as sound as ever) to the bottom, and so did Sancho, whose neck, I suppose, is reserved for another fate. We were now descending the north-eastern slopes of the Sierra, and looking over a wide plain, dotted at intervals with natural mounds. One of these, almost at our feet, was crowned with a castle, evidently Moorish, but showing traces of recent repairs. At its base was the little village of Calahorra, which we reached at last, an hour before noon.

The posada was a great improvement on the last, and furnished me with plenty of ham and eggs. I should have enjoyed the soundest siesta, but for impertinent interruptions from martens, whose mud-nests formed a novel kind of cornice to the chamber.

A pleasant evening ride of three hours brought me to Guadix, where I lodged in a large and, comparatively speaking, comfortable posada outside the gates. This town (I beg its pardon), this city, boasts of a cathedral, an alameda, and last, not least, a neveriá, or ice-shop. Its narrow streets, hemmed in by mediæval walls and towers, present some very striking and artistic combinations. There was a fair going on, and it was all alive with bustle down to a late hour of the night, and the ways, strait enough already, were further blocked up with rude booths, lit with many lanterns, and frequented by crowds of customers.

We resumed our journey at dawn. The road from Diesma leads through a picturesque defile. I re-

marked the great earth banks, seamed and rent by winter rains; here and there occurred a large stone, which, having protected the earth beneath from the water, stood out isolated upon a pillar of its own, like those on the Mer-de-Glace, which are formed by an analogous process. About ten I reached Molinillo, a little mill, as the name imports, situated in a shady place, in a deep quiet glen, over which looks down the snow-streaked peak of Muleyhacen. The drowsy sound of the mill-wheel accompanied my siesta—a superfluous lullaby.

In the afternoon there arrived a spruce gentleman, an architect, he told me, of Granada, who proposed to join me in my ride thither. I gladly complied, because, in the first place, I was tired of the society of my 'guide;' and, secondly, the road we had to traverse bears an evil repute for robberies and assassinations. We, thanks to our good luck or the guardia civil, came to no harm, and admired at our ease the fantastic ridges of grey rock that rose around our path at every turn. After sunset, the whole earth and air seemed alive with the shrill chirp of the grillos (or crickets), which take up by night the chorus of the cicadas by day. And we, chatting almost as continuously as the grillos chirped, rode by moonlight back to Granada.



## CHAPTER XVI.

I HAVE a great passion for hill-climbing, and never see peak or ridge, however remote, without feeling an insane longing to be on the top of it. This is a weakness no one need be ashamed to confess, as it is shared by Mr. Justice Talfourd, and others of the wisest and best of our time. I remember, at my first school (whither I was sent at a tender age, in compliance with the national principle, that a mother's kisses may spoil a child, but a big boy's kicks cannot,) that I had a certain copy-book, on the outside of which was depicted Aurora in her aërial car, with a range of blue mountains in the distance, and I never could look at this picture without feeling ready to cry for spite, that I was condemned to slave at pothooks instead of being free to rove about hills like those. At another school, when a big boy myself, I have incurred the penalties of truantry, and risked my chance of being 'at the top of the tree,' solely for the pleasure of spending a long, hungry summer's day on the tops of the hills. This passion has since been fostered by Wordsworth, piqued by those gigantesque failures the Gog-Magogs, and not extinguished by long indulgence among Apennines and Alps. So that when I saw the Peak of Veleta rising deep

purple, with a fringe of gold, against the morning sky, receding at mid-day into misty distance, and then, as evening came on, approaching once more with a rosy smile,—I felt that I should leave a want unsatisfied if I departed from Granada without attempting the ascent. Not that the feat involves any danger, or much difficulty. High as its elevation is (nearly thirteen thousand feet), from the absence of glaciers it does not present the same obstacles as many lower peaks and passes of the Alps. This time, warned by experience, I assured myself of a trusty guide (worthy the name) in the person of José Villegas, who had, when a boy, tended goats on the Sierra, and was well acquainted with all its recesses. The saddlebags were loaded with provisions for three days (as if we had been ancient Greeks going on an expedition), consisting of cold fowl, ham, cheese, and bread, besides two great leathern scriptural bottles (filled with wine), and I am ashamed to say how many cigars.

Thus equipped, we started at three o'clock one fine afternoon in the middle of August. Our path lay, at first, over a bare, brown tract, then along steep hill-sides, occasionally skirting abrupt precipices of earth. Then, as we dipped down towards a stream, we came upon patches of cultivation, and passed more than one cortijo, or farm-house. We made all haste, but night had fallen some time before we descended the rugged way which leads to the Cortijo San Geronimo, where we were to rest ourselves and horses. José

beguiled the way by repeating a number of legends, which he had heard in his youth from the shepherds of the Sierra. Several of these related to the 'Laguna de Vacaras,' a small deep lake, embosomed high in the mountains. One ran thus:—A shepherd was tending his flock by the side of the lake, and there came two men in strange dress, one holding an open book, and the other a fishing-net. And the man read from his book, and said, 'Cast the net.' And he cast it, and drew up a black horse. And he with the book said, 'This is not it; cast again.' And he cast and drew up a pied horse. And he with the book said, 'This is not it; cast again.' And he cast and drew up a white horse. And he with the book said, 'This is it.' And they both mounted on the white horse and rode away, and the shepherd saw them no more.

These shepherds believe that some day the lake will burst through the mountain and destroy Granada. One night a shepherd, standing by the lake, heard a voice say,—

Shall I strike and break the dike?  
Shall I drown Granada Town?

And another voice answered, 'Not yet.' Another tale was about a friar, and how he met the devil by the lake side. These legends, José said, he had heard the shepherds tell of an evening when sitting in their huts together. In their vague and purposeless character, they resemble rather the fictions of Northern than those of Southern Europe. It may be,

however, that they have 'hung round the mountains' since the Moorish days.

The cortijo was so full that it was with difficulty that José found a place to lay out the contents of the saddlebags for supper.

Besides women and children without number, there were a lot of soldiers, who lived there, during the summer months, to take care of several hundred horses, and with a non-commissioned officer to take care of them. It seems that these dehesas, or mountain pastures, formerly monastic property, have now been resumed by the crown, and of late years the government have sent the young horses intended for cavalry service to the Sierra to escape the summer heats, and find the herbage which the scorched central plains do not afford. An English trainer would stare if he saw the rugged pastures to which they are consigned. It is here, doubtless, that they acquire those cat-like qualities which I have before mentioned as characteristic of Spanish horses. I was provided with a clean-looking bed, but, alas, I had scarcely laid down, when I was assailed by myriads of *chinchés* (known to English ears by an unsavoury monosyllable), whose continued attacks, in the guerilla style, made me repent a thousand times that I had not made my bed upon the stones outside, like José. When I complained to the master of the house of my fellow-lodgers, he replied quietly, 'Yes! it's the season for them.' So I was glad to get on horseback at midnight, followed by José and one of the soldiers,

#### ASCENT OF THE PEAK OF VELETA :

of whose services we should stand in need by-and-bye.

There was no moonlight, and the mountain presented to the eye a vast black mass, only starred here and there by the ruddy gleam of the shepherds' fires. As we ascended, the cold grew more and more intense, and the stars above shone sharp and clear (as on a frosty winter's night), unmellowed by any intervening mist. We had occasionally to dismount, and let our horses follow us over some unusually rough and stony tract, where Nature seemed to have carted her rubbish; our progress was, therefore, slow, and the dawn had already begun to break when we reached the furthest point accessible, even to Spanish horses, perhaps a thousand feet below the summit of the peak. We left our animals in the soldier's care, with directions to meet us in a valley lower down to the left, and commenced the ascent on foot. I made great efforts to reach the top before sunrise,—efforts painful enough in that rarefied atmosphere, and perhaps somewhat dangerous withal, for during several days after I continued partially deaf, my ears being swollen internally. I succeeded, however, in reaching the top just as the sun was rising out of the waters. It was a sight worth any effort, short of breaking a blood-vessel. The mountain up whose steep slopes we had been climbing breaks away towards the east in sheer precipices, at the foot of which is a deep gorge, choked with never-melting snow. The cliffs fronting the sun were bathed in a greenish light. At

our feet lay the Alpujarrez, a very jumble of mountains, as if in full revolt still; and beyond that the great sea. A thin haze brooded over its surface, and prevented any reflection of the morning light, so that it looked, not like water, but a nether heaven—starless, colourless, and void; not boundless, however, for we could see the coast of Africa stretching away beyond, in a dim, wavy line.

Gibraltar was hidden by a dark cloud, which the most ardently patriotic eyes would have striven in vain to penetrate; but the mountains beyond Malaga were clearly visible.

Looking westward, the shadow of the mountain was projected in a dark purple cone, and far to the north we could see over successive Sierras into La Mancha and Castile; while, just below, the whole vega of Granada, with its towns and woods, was spread as distinct as a model.

Very near the summit are some rude stone buildings in ruins, doubtless the remnant of the watch-tower from which the peak derives its name. José, however, had his legend ready for them: 'Once upon a time,' he said, 'there was a Moor, very old and very wise, and he brought his people up to the Picacho, and they dwelt here in these houses for seven years and a day. And during all that time there was no rain nor storm. And at the end of the seven years and a day the old Moor looked out over the sea, and he saw rising up a little cloud, like a man's hand, and he said, 'My children, let us go, for there is a storm

coming.' So they went, and the storm came and scattered their houses into ruins, as you see them now.'

Near the top of the peak nothing grows, except a kind of cushion-grass and the dwarf manzanilla, which is much prized by the cullers of simples. The Sierra, however, is rich in botanical treasures. Two years ago, a German established himself in a cave on the mountain side, for the purpose of collecting plants. He had hired an attendant from Granada, but the man soon ran away, thinking his master *uncanny*. Nevertheless, the indefatigable botanist lived on alone for some months in his cave, too bold to care for wolves, too poor to fear robbers, and too much of a philosopher to be scared at goblins. Several persons at Granada mentioned the fact, but no one could remember his name.

Jose, my myth-loving guide, assured me that Moorish doctors frequently came over from Africa to gather certain 'med'cinable' herbs, found only here. The story is in some degree accredited by the fact, that Granada, before the conquest, used to be a favourite place of resort for invalids from the neighbouring continent, insomuch that a part of the city especially frequented was called the Hospital of Africa. So the Sierra may enjoy a traditionary reputation among the Moors, for we have all heard with what fond regret they remember the fair kingdom which has been ravished from them.

After walking some time by the edge of the

precipice we descended to the appointed hollow, and found our horses enjoying themselves mightily on the short green grass—a rare luxury.

We lost no time in following their example, with appetites sharper than the mountain peaks and keener than the morning air. A large flat stone served for table, and a little pure stream close by, still fringed with ice of last night's freezing, served to cool our wine. After the feast we all slept for three hours in the warm sunshine, which, at an elevation of ten thousand feet, does not bake the baskers.

Shortly after recommencing our descent, I dismissed the soldier, happy with a fortnight's pay, and then we went on by the Peñas Resbaladizas, or 'slippery rocks,' in some places well deserving the name. Passing a pretty little cascade, we rode for a mile or two down an artificial water-course, made to fertilize, or rather create pasturage, where the hills slope down to the bed (I should say cradle) of the new-born Xenil. Here we found a large flock of milk-white goats, under the charge of a solitary goat-herd, who was encased in leather of a picturesque cut, and was leaning on his crook, just like the frontispiece to a Pastoral. I offered him a draught from my bottle, which one may always do without fastidious qualms, for the poor men, with instinctive politeness, do not touch it with their lips, but drink in the Catalan fashion—that is, they hold the bottle up some distance from their mouths, and let the wine flow at its own sweet will down their throats.



Here we diverged a little to the right to have a peep into the wild ravine of Guarnon, and about four in the afternoon came upon a cluster of shepherds' tents, pitched in gipsy fashion close by a little runlet of water, husbanded with great care, and made to trickle through hollow reeds. The occupants were old acquaintances of José, who thereupon made the opportune discovery that our horses wanted half-an-hour's rest. We accordingly complied with their hospitable invitation to enter, and I was forthwith comfortably installed on a pile of fleeces. The men were all engaged in occupations more useful than ornamental. One was sewing a pair of sheep-skin breeches for his little boy. What would Lopé or Montemayor say to the degenerate descendants of their shepherds, who never condescended to make anything humbler than a sonnet? However, our friends seemed quite happy and contented, unskilled as they appeared to be in the refinements of love and the metaphysics of despair—'Arcadiens sans le savoir.' Leaving the huts, we passed the ravine of San Juan, rich in green marble, says the *Handbook*, though I saw no quarries, and could not conceive how that unmanageable material is transported to the plains; for there seemed to be no better road than the narrow bridle-path which leads along the steep hills overhanging the Xenil, so narrow, indeed, that it was impossible to escape the embraces of the too-affectionate briars without leaving many shreds of my garments for relics. At last we descended to

the stream, and crossed it by a wooden bridge (which probably disappears every winter), at the little hamlet of Tablete. An artist would infallibly fall in love with a little mill that stands close by. Of all human inventions a water-mill is the most picturesque, and the dilapidated mill of Tablete, with its accessories of rocks, bridge, and poplars, would have been sketched a hundred times, had there been any landscape-painters in Spain. Leaving the hamlet, we climbed up the path on the right bank of the river, and reached Huescar the oliviferous at nightfall. Crossing the little plaza, where, beside the fountain under the trees, all the fathers of the village were assembled in a pipe conspiracy, we dismounted at the house of an elderly man, known by the name of El Tio Pardo, 'Nunky Gray,' who has a bed at the disposal of travellers.

I have to thank his good bustling wife, La Tia, for a cup of excellent chocolate and a clean bed.

Next day a ride of three hours brought us back to Granada. Both banks of the river are plentifully sprinkled with olive-grounds and orchards; here and there on a rocky point stand the ruins of an old castle—and far below, the Xenil, now chafing into angry foam against its rocks, now lingering in many a green, still pool, greets you with a murmur, the rarest and sweetest of all music in this southern land.

## CHAPTER XVII.

ON the 22nd of August, an hour before day-break, I left Granada 'for good,' much to the regret of landlord and waiters—*invitâ Minervâ*; for during several days past I had been the only guest in the house, and with me the whole hotel's occupation was gone. This melancholy state of things was owing to a combination between the various diligence inns on the great roads, which was like to ruin the Minerva. I hope not, for it is one of the best fondas in all Spain. We passed, about a quarter of a mile from the town, the little hermitage of St. Sebastian, whither Ferdinand accompanied poor Boabdil, to bow him out of his kingdom. This reminded me to turn round, and have *my* 'ultimo sospiro' too, for one cannot help feeling a little melancholy at saying good-bye, for the last time, to any place, person, or thing—how much more when that place is Granada. I shall never see it again. To me, the hill which finally hid it from my sight is its grave, and all that remains with me is the unbodied image which haunts the corridors of memory, thronged already with ghosts. This, however, is a very pleasant, cheerful spirit, which I take delight in evoking. But ghosts are apt to be too garrulous, as witness Darius, and Hamlet senior; so we will

bid ours back to his corridors, and trot on after the mayoral. As this functionary was to be my sole companion for two long days, I made it my first care to conciliate his goodwill, by showing an interest in his life—past, present, and to come. Nothing loth, he told me all about it. For the last fifteen years he had served as a soldier in Cuba and elsewhere, and had now returned home, to serve, perhaps, a harder master without the livery. The pay of a Spanish infantry soldier, so he told me, is twelve cuartos, about fourpence a-day—that of a cavalry soldier, two reals, fivepence and a fraction. Out of this they have to find their food—no easy matter one would suppose—and yet all the soldiers I saw in Spain were anything but starvelings. My ex-hero was a very cheerful, jolly personage, who took things easily, and burst out into song on the slightest provocation. When any one passed us with the usual salutation, he extemporized stanzas à propos, of which the following is a sample,—

Vaya usted con Dios!  
 Vaya usted con Dios!  
 Pero no se morirá nadie  
 Si no lo quiere Dios.

That is, in English,—

Go with the blessing of God!  
 Go with the blessing of God!  
 Nobody never would die  
 If it wasn't the will of God.

By which it may be seen, that the improvisadores of Spain are not subjected to many hard conditions, metrical or otherwise.

All along the level plain the land seems fértil and productive enough, but with the hill begins the desert. We saw, indeed, traces of former culture—furrows abandoned to perpetual fallow, and ruined albiges or water-tanks, lying like the wrecks of an ebbing prosperity, as perhaps they have lain since the expulsion of the Moors. The truth is, that cultivation, or irrigation (an equivalent term in these climates), is facile enough on the low grounds, but on the hills is only to be effected by skill, cost, and labour, as great desiderata in Andalucía as water itself. It may be, moreover, that from the diminution of population, the higher lands can no longer be cultivated to a profit. Will the repeal of our Corn Laws bring any of these wastes under plough again? Can corn be grown, shipped, and sold in Mark-lane, and leave a profit to the Andalucian farmer? I think not. The absence of rail-roads, the scarcity of other roads, the want of water communication, not to mention the oppressive and aggressive taxation, offer insuperable obstacles to a free-trade, and will effectually protect the British farmer from Spanish competition.

The white little village of La Mala (I hope it does not merit its name) was fast asleep as we passed through, all except one man, who was awake, and that wide—he was catching birds by a process novel to me. He had a rod about ten feet long, at the end of which was a kind of cup, and by means of this he lifted a ferret up to the eaves of the houses. The little animal wriggled itself under the tiles, and inva-

riably reappeared in about a minute with a swallow in its mouth. The man told me that the swallows were destined for the table. I suppose they will be served up under a more piquant name. A dreary desert, full of ups and downs (in which the former preponderate), and speckled with unhappy dwarfs of shrubs, leads to Alhama. The distance from Granada is eight long leagues. We did not meet a soul all the way till we got within a mile of Alhama, when we encountered a lady of extraordinary dimensions sitting on the back of a mule, in a kind of half-saddle, half-litter, and protecting her complexion with a huge red umbrella. She inquired with great anxiety whether we had seen or heard of any robbers by the way. I thought the red umbrella decidedly imprudent, as it would be visible for miles, and might, moreover, render the bearer liable to be mistaken by a sportsman for a flamingo, or by a bull for a matador.

The first view of Alhama disappointed me grievously. I had pictured to myself a grim fortress, perched on an isolated pinnacle of rock, and, lo! there it lay on the slope of a bare hill, its castle scarcely distinguished from the surrounding houses. Ay de mi Alhama! Alas, for my ideal! Alhama at first sight seemed, indeed, a mere 'dwarf of presage;' yet, on near approach, 'there grew' (as the poet goes on to say) 'another kind of beauty in detail, that made it worth the knowing.' Just under the castle walls runs a narrow glen, splitting the hill, so

narrow that it is scarcely seen till you are close upon it; and then, as you look down, it seems like a little strip of paradise, with its clear water, green leaves, and cool shadows. There is an aqueduct too, with low stone arches, spanning the market-place, and the whole town smacks of another people and another time. Not the least of its curiosities is the posada, which, by-the-bye, has been whitewashed, and has otherwise amended its ways since (perhaps in consequence of) Mr. Ford's anathema.

There was a fair impending, and the place was in consequence so full that I had to wait some time till a heap of corn had been dislodged to make room for my bed and me. In the interval I visited the stables, a low, rambling structure, with massive pillars like a crypt. When I asked about their date, I received the usual careless answer, 'Tiempo de los Moros,' for in Spain every erection is set down to the credit of the Moors, as surely as in England all destruction is debited to Oliver Cromwell (who, poor man, has a tolerably long score of authentic sins to answer for).

We left Alhama at four o'clock in the afternoon, an hour too late, as it proved. After topping the hill, we traversed a very narrow stony pass, then came upon some level pasture-ground, with a cottage here and there, each having its trellised vine, its nest of trees, and plot of tillage. The sun was just setting as we reached the puerto, a gap in the hills, through which the road winds down to the shore; here we caught the first glimpse of the sea. The short twi-

light scarcely enabled us to see our way down the rugged and steep descent, and in a little while it became pitch dark, for the night was cloudy and threatening. A few drops, precursors of a storm, determined me to halt for the night at a roadside hostel, called the 'Venta Nueva,' about a league on the hither side of Viñuela. These ventas are always built on the same plan, so that one description will suffice for all. The outer door, like that of a barn, admits the traveller and his horse into a kind of passage paved with round stones, leading directly to the stable behind. On one side, but not divided from it by screen or door, is a large low room, with a fire-place at the further end, which serves the family for pantry, larder, kitchen, dormitory, and what not. On the other side of the passage is a small room, with a door of its own, and a square hole in the wall by way of window, reserved for any guests too dainty to share the general floor. In this case, the small chamber was appropriated to me; and the good woman of the house set herself most indefatigably to clear away a lot of potatoes, which had occupied the corner destined for my bed. The host, meanwhile, never rose from his seat; but, graciously accepting a cigar from me, began to assure me that in his house I need fear no robber (not that I had mentioned the subject), that he was a man of honour, and muy caballero, 'very much the gentleman;' from all which I charitably concluded that he was a rogue. Happily I had no practical proof of the fact. I should have slept very well had



it not been for a foraging party of ants. However, preferring vegetable to animal food, they rather frightened than hurt me, and were probably grievously disappointed at finding a John Bull instead of their customary potatoes. I would not have answered for an Irishman in my place.

Next morning we started betimes, and our sure-footed animals groped their way safely to Viñuela in the dark. The dawn revealed to me that we had come into a new climate.

Not to mention the vines which covered every hill, the carob tree, with its strange leaves and pods, hung over the path; and below, in some well watered place, might be seen a plot of bright green sugar-canes. Sometimes we descended into the dry bed of the stream, at other times kept the zig-zag path on the hill-side. As we neared Velez, we saw the raisins laid out to dry, in frames resembling hot-beds; and many a fig-tree, with gigantic purple fruit, tempted me, and I did eat. Almost the only plant which I recognised for an old acquaintance was the catholic bramble, which spread itself over every hedge and bush, laden with unheeded and superfluous fruit. Indeed, I think the blackberries were as plenty as raisins.

Velez, both in colour and form, is an extremely pictorial town. Its houses are of a dingy white, somewhat dilapidated; it is crowned by a Moorish castle, in ruins, and is backed by a jagged grey sierra. What more could an artist want? Unhappily, man is not a camera lucida, and has an eye to creature

comforts, so, deterred by the bad repute of the posadas, I determined to breakfast on the sea-shore, which we reached by a road bordered with cactus and tall reeds. Velez was once a port, but the sea has receded. Hence to Malaga, for some twenty miles, the road lay along the shore; the vine-clad hills on the right hand, the calm blue sea on the left. We passed innumerable trains of mules and donkeys, conveying piles of raisins in white boxes to Malaga (some of which the gentle reader doubtless eat in his Christmas pudding). At frequent intervals stood huts of wattled reeds,—houses of call for the thirsty traveller,—and what traveller would not be thirsty under the circumstances? The floor was piled with water-melons, and on a table were ranged bottles of aguardiente; these, with the never-failing pipkins of water, formed all the store.

The morning had been cloudy and cool, but at last the sun shone out with all his August fervour. I was glad to discern, on rounding a headland, the tall factory-chimneys of Malaga, and still more glad when I at last drew rein at the door of the magnificent Fonda de la Alameda. It was past one o'clock, and I had been ten hours in the saddle.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE situation of Malaga is charming, and it is well worth while to climb the tower of the cathedral for the sake of the prospect. Shutting your eyes to the incongruous factory-chimneys, look at the two Moorish ruins linked together by a ragged curtain-wall—at the palm-trees scattered about the edges of the town—at the blue sea and winding coast-line on one side, and the bold bare hills on the other. The cathedral itself is built, like the mother-church of Granada, in a false classical style, which resembles a true classical style about as much as the hymns of a rhyming monk resemble the Odes of Horace. Nor is it rich in works of art. There is a ‘Virgin of the Rosary,’ by Cano, and in the sacristy a ‘Holy Family’ said to be an early Murillo, and a small ‘Madonna with dead Christ,’ by Morales. After all, it is a clean, cool, pleasant place, and there is a very sweet-toned organ, which plays at vespers every afternoon. The streets are full of the bustle of business, and one meets, not unfrequently, with sailors drunk and riotous at mid-day—chiefly, I am sorry to say, English or American.

There are many foreign merchants resident in the town, who seem to have infected the natives with an

industrial mania; at least, the paucity of promenaders on the Alameda was attributed to the busy season. At the table-d'hôte, English was the chief vehicle of conversation; you could have Harvey's sauce, pale ale, and Stilton cheese, for the asking. In the town are reading rooms and savings-banks, with other modern Transpyrenean inventions.

No infusion, however, of foreign elements can banish the bull-fight. There was one of these entertainments the day after my arrival, and for one day all Malaga forgot its raisins.

The occupants of the lower seats were exceedingly noisy and boisterous. Before the fight began, they amused themselves by singling out any man in the reserved seats unfortunate enough to be the wearer of a very glossy hat, or a pair of light kid gloves, and then they directed at him a discordant cry of 'Hat! hat!' or 'Gloves! gloves!' till the person in question removed the obnoxious article, and saluted the many-headed tyrant with bare head or bare hand. Even a lady with a bouquet was not exempted from persecution. The first three bulls happened to be very tame, or very sulky, and the ill-humour of the crowd rose to such a pitch, that they began to tear up the benches and fling them into the arena. Some of the most obstreperous were taken into custody and removed by the soldiers. An accident, however, restored them to perfect good humour. One of the chulos was just going to stick his banderillas into the fourth bull's shoulders, when, at that moment, the trumpet, which

was the signal for the matador to advance, sounded ; the chulo hesitated,—the hesitation was fatal. In a moment he was on the ground, and the bull's horn deep in his body. He writhed himself free, rose to his feet all streaming with blood, leaped the barrier at a bound, and fell on the other side—to rise no more ! He died that same afternoon. Shocking as it may seem, the crowd at once became cheerful,—the show could no longer be called a failure which had resulted in the death of a man. That same week there was a picador killed at Antequera. Indeed, these accidents are by no means so rare as the defenders of bull-fighting affirm. The managers of the ring conceal as much as possible the fatal results, fearful that the amusement may be suppressed by authority. Mr. Hodgson, who keeps the hotel, told me that, once on a time, he actually saw a chulo die of wounds received in the arena, and yet the man's complete recovery was afterwards announced in an official bulletin.

## CHAPTER XIX.

I HAD intended to go from Malaga to Gibraltar in one of the steamers, but the quarantine imposed on all vessels from France had put their times out of joint, so I determined upon riding thither along the coast. Some good-natured people at the hotel tried to deter me by narrating banditti stories. Among the rest, how a rich merchant of Gibraltar had been carried off to the mountains; and when his family were rather tardy in paying his ransom the brigands sent first a toe, and then a leg, by way of instalments on their side. However, I was not a rich merchant, and had little to lose except time: ‘*Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.*’ That is to say—‘If you meet with a thief put your hands in your pockets and whistle.’ Not that I should have objected to losing a few dollars for the sake of an adventure, provided I could have insured my life against lead and steel.

I engaged for my mayoral a round little dumpling of a fellow, known by the nick-name of Manuelito (when I asked for him by his real name at the house where he lodged, they did not know whom I meant). Fat as he now is, he was once the best-girt horseman of his day. When the poor Count Torrijos and his confederates were entrapped at Malaga, in the days

of Ferdinand the Bloody, the authorities wanted to have them put out of the way as soon as possible, so Manuelito was sent off to Madrid, with orders to ride, ride, ride,—not ‘for life,’ but for death. In four days and a half he returned with the death warrant, signed by the king.

Just as we were going to start, on the afternoon of August 27, I received a message from two French gentlemen at another hotel, begging to join ‘my party.’ I dare say they expected to find a more formidable escort than little Manuel. I consented of course, devoutly hoping that they might not be commis-voyageurs, a class of people from whom I have suffered much in France. Happily, they turned out to be tourists, with frank and lively manners, like all the gentlemen of their country. We had not ridden many leagues, before I was acquainted with both, as well as if I had known them for years. They were great friends, and of course of opposite characters. One took a romantic and sentimental view of things, like Victor Hugo; the other, a prosaic and common-sense view, like Paul de Kock. As it imports little to know their real names, I shall call them, for shortness, Mons. Victor and Mons. Paul respectively.

We jogged on together very comfortably along the dusty road, bordered with gigantic reeds, to the village of Torremolinos, where every garden has its palm-tree. They say that the palm cannot flourish except within sight of another palm, which touching

fact, or fiction, I recommend to any young poet wanting to try his hand at a sonnet.

Night came on before we reached Benalmedina, but we could see, as we passed, the grey walls of the old Moorish castle gleaming in the light of the young moon—the only crescent that shines there now. Then we followed a narrow glen (*chine* they would call it in the Isle of Wight,) down to the shore, along which our road lay to Fuengirola.

As we rounded one jutting point of rock, the waves wet us up to the knees. At ten o'clock at night we reached Fuengirola, and were lodged in a posada, very clean and commendable, as posadas go. Not that we had much enjoyment of its comforts, for the inexorable little man roused us at one A.M. This riding by night was no hardship to him, as he had acquired, from long habit, the power of sleeping in the saddle, or even, as in the present case, when perched cross-legged on a carpet-bag. We, on the other hand, found it hard to doze in equilibrium, so we beguiled the long leagues of monotonous shore by vigorous and well sustained chat—Monsieur Paul bursting out now and then, and astounding the grave Spanish echoes with fragmentary recollections of the 'Opera Comique.' We got to Marbella at seven A.M., and were provided with decent and comfortable beds, and with a dinner on which, if not decent or comfortable, we at all events contrived to dine. At three we prepared again for a start. 'Be sure,' I said to our silent, somnolent little



man, 'be sure you point out the Rio Verde' (which lies between Marbella and Estepona). This is the 'gentle river' of the ballad known to all Englishmen (though the original spirit is somewhat diluted) in the version of Bishop Percy,—the only bishop, by the way, who is remembered for his 'translations,' and whose 'relics' are still venerated by the staunchest protestants.

On the outskirts of the town we noticed the silk-like fibres of the aloe hung up to dry in the sun. A sort of cloth is made from them. The path here leaving the sea-side, crosses a wide flat, dotted with low green shrubs and intersected by streams, now shrunk into threads, whose sinuous courses are marked by a double fringe of oleanders. In the evening, we passed the remnants of what must have been a considerable town, from the extent of the walls still traceable. To the left, we saw the ruins of a building with massive arches. In answer to a question, Manuelito just grunted out, 'Cosa de los Moros,' and went to sleep again. In spite of such authority, I felt little doubt that it was the remnant of Roman baths. There was something very impressive in those nameless ruins, standing in that lonely desert between the mountains and the sea.

By-and-bye I began to be impatient for the Rio Verde, and wakened Manuelito: 'Passed it an hour since,' he replied. So, to this day, I am doubtful which of three or four streams is the 'gentle river;' and I could not, as the manner of travellers is, 'drop

a tear over the fate of Alonso de Aguilar' at the right place.

At eight in the evening we reached Estepona, a straggling village on the sea-shore, which is, or rather used to be, a nest of smugglers,—for that athletic and interesting race has of late been much reduced by the oppressive vigilance of the Spanish authorities. Gibraltar may be blockaded, commercially, by a very small force, so the only effective business now done in that line is on the frontiers of Portugal, and the boards of the Surrey and Adelphi theatres.

The posada at which we dismounted was full of bustle; but if the first comers had calculated on the best rooms, they were disappointed. Probably they had arrived a-foot, or on donkeys, and so were naturally displaced to make room for us true caballeros, who came on horseback. Man, in Spain, takes rank from the beast he rides, just as, in old Greece, the horseman took precedence of the 'hop-lite.' The mistress of the house was stone-blind, but, nevertheless, she directed and superintended her domestic arrangements with wonderful activity and precision. The tact of a blind person, especially one blind from birth, is an 'eerie,' almost fearful, thing to contemplate; it is like a second sight, and I do not wonder that we read of so many blind prophets and prophetesses. Their earthly paradise is lost to them, and the justice of nature requires that they should be compensated by a clearer foresight of the paradise to come. It was touching to see how, after her work

was done, she sat down and caressed her little daughter, passing her hand gently over her face,—a habit she had acquired, doubtless, during the child's infancy, to familiarize her touch with the features she could not see.

While our beds were preparing we supped, as we best could, in the common room down stairs. A chilly night wind came through the open door, and suggested to some one of us what a good thing a glass of punch would be, by way of night-cap. Monsieur Paul, who had a genius for cookery, whether of liquids or solids, sprang up at the word, stationed himself at the brasero of live charcoal,—coolly displacing the bystanders,—and, though he could not speak one word of Spanish, succeeded, by dint of good-humour and impudence, in obtaining all the utensils and ingredients he wanted. How the punch was made I never knew, but it was, or seemed to be, excellent. Difficulties vanish much sooner before the smiling, bustling Frenchman, than before the quiet, grumbling John Bull.

While the punch was brewing, one of the muchachas, finding out that I was an Englishman, beckoned me mysteriously aside, saying she had something to show me. I followed her to a cupboard, which she unlocked, and triumphantly displayed the contents, arranged with a view to artistic effect. In the centre was a large specimen of porcelain ware, such as in England we keep rather for use than show, and it was flanked with wine-glasses and teacups by way of

supporters. These were all trophies brought from Gibraltar by her betrothed, a brave contrabandista. He was now in prison, poor fellow, but as soon as he got out they were to be married, and, I suppose, to set up house with the treasures of the cupboard.

After a sound sleep of three hours we started again at midnight. Our road lay at first along the sands, and, after crossing a somewhat deep stream, kept inland over rugged furze-clad hills. We were lighted at first by the moon, and after her setting by the morning star, brighter and clearer than in our climate, and reflected in a long column of splendour from the water.

Once our guide turned sharply to the left, and we followed in silent obedience through tangled shrubs, till we came to a sudden stand-still on the top of a cliff looking down upon the sea. Then Manuelito awoke. His horse, abandoned to his own devices, had left the path, and was accordingly rewarded, as we retraced our steps, by many kicks and opprobrious epithets from his rider. This delayed us half-an-hour. About dawn, as we were riding along a green hollow, we heard a dull, booming sound. It was the first gunfire from the fortress. At the top of the next hill we came in sight of the rock, red with the first beams of the rising sun. 'Voilà!' cried Monsieur Victor, venting his enthusiasm in a simile, not perhaps of the newest (which, indeed, is too much to expect in an impromptu), 'Voilà le rocher, qui rougit comme une jeune fille à la vue de son amant!' The *pucelle*,

indeed, seemed modestly to retire as we advanced, and we had a two hours' plodding along the flat sand before we arrived at the Spanish lines. At the gate a carabinero asked for our passports, and demanded of what nation we were. The other two, being Frenchmen, were mulcted in a dollar and a half each; I, being an Englishman, was allowed to pass free. 'What can be the reason of that?' I said to Monsieur Paul. 'Voilà!' he replied, pointing to the cannon on the heights, 'une cinquantaine de raisons!' And truly those stubborn arguers speak a logic which silences all opponents. Nothing like cannon-law after all!



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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

## CHAPTER XX.

WHAT shall I say of Gibraltar? Is it not already more familiarly known to us than Plymouth or Chatham—seeing that we speak of it by the endearing diminutive ‘Gib,’ while we never say ‘Plym,’ or ‘Chat?’ Have we not all heard all about it, from the letters of our respective cousins in the Muffs or Bombardiers, who have spent their prescriptive time there watching over the interests of England, and between whiles shooting rabbits at Estepona, or making pic-nics at the cork wood? I shall say the less about it because, excepting in latitude, it has ceased to be Spain, and has become part and parcel of that most expansive ‘tight little island,’ of whose glory we are prouder than of our purses. Excepting the cloudless sky, the old castle, and a convent or two, now reformed and secularized to more cheerful uses, there is nothing in the place to remind you that it has ever been otherwise than a small English town. (I am forgetting the new cathedral, which is made to resemble a mosque, with a view, I suppose, to African conversions.) All the streets have received English baptism, and the houses are constructed on the principle of defying, instead of propitiating the climate, being low, small, and

compact, with neither court-yard nor fountain. Want of room may be one cause of this; for even the principal square, far from rivalling the vastness of a Spanish plaza, is cribbed and confined within very narrow limits. One side of this square is formed by the Club House Hotel (where we lodged), a sort of commercial inn, second-rate in everything but prices. In front of it a military band plays twice a week. The Frenchmen turned up their noses at the performance, as their wont is in all that relates to English art. I certainly thought that the drums drowned the trumpets,—that there was a deficiency of wind, and a superfluity of parchment. *Our* soldiers generally do more execution with their hands than their lips. The crowd which assembled on these occasions was curious, consisting, as it did, of Moslems and Jews, and a nondescript rabble of ‘Scorpions,’—the Anglo-Spanish mongrel race, that dwells on the rock, and nowhere else, like the monkeys. Here all creeds and all trades are alike tolerated; there is neither Inquisition nor perquisition. Taxes and tithes are unknown. The Gibel Tarif of the Moor is an English free port, much frequented by the catholic votaries of Mammon. As a matter of course, I devoted one morning to visit the batteries, under the guidance of a tall corporal of artillery. I got permission for Messrs. Victor and Paul to go too,—a favour not always accorded to foreigners. My national vanity was abundantly gratified by their admiration; and I quite agreed with them, that the

best thing we could do would be to show our enemies our preparations for defence, and then no one would be mad enough to think of repeating that most unsuccessful of farces, 'the siege of Gibraltar.' There are (so our corporal said) seven hundred and seventy guns mounted, or ready for mounting, provisions for three years, and ammunition for ever. We traversed the long galleries, cut within a few yards of the face of the cliff towards the land side, with embrasures at intervals, like the galleries of the Simplon road. In one of these embrasures, a few years ago, seven men were standing, to watch the effect of some experiments in gunnery, when a spark fell into a powder chest behind them, and blew them all out. All that could be found of them was buried in the cemetery on the Neutral Ground. The grave was pointed out to us. There was no officer among them. 'Fiat experimentum in corpore vili.' St. George's Hall, also excavated in the rock, is considered one of the chief lions. Balls are occasionally given in it for the fun of the thing, since it is difficult of access, not much more than forty feet long, and has the most unelastic floor conceivable. Then we went up to the signal house, perched on one of the summits,—for the rock of Gibraltar is so far like Parnassus, that it has two. Everybody agrees that the view from this point is one of the finest in the world, and I, for my part, agree with everybody. So clear was the air, that the rocks of Africa, though ten miles away, seemed scarcely a bow-shot from us. The pale blue



sky, the dark blue strait, dotted with white sails, and the grey shores, were all and each so distinct and clear, that it seemed like the drop-scene in a theatre rather than reality. Henceforth I shall always give Messrs. Telbin, Grieve, and Co. credit for high art. Monsieur Victor was so struck with the scene, that when we got back, he shut himself up to compose a copy of impromptu verses, the gist of which was some rationalism about 'Hercule' and 'ses colonnes.' While on the spot, we all made an impromptu breakfast, consisting chiefly of porter. Some veteran eggs were boiled for us, but they proved not nice, like the corporal, for he eat them all. We supposed he was training his appetite against a protracted siege. During *the* siege, they cooked and eat the roots of the dwarf palms which grow among the rocks, and English soldiers did, for once, drink water. Never was Gibraltar reduced to such straits.

In descending, we followed the path to St. Michael's Cave, which had recently been honoured with a visit from the Infanta and her husband. We went on till we got into inner darkness, with the mud oozing over our ankles, and the drops pattering frequent on our hats; then we held a conclave, voted it possibly romantic, but decidedly uncomfortable, and so retreated and emerged into the sunlight. The visit of the Infanta had taken place about a month before, and the rock was still echoing with the fame thereof. She was received by the governor with genuine courtesy and kindness. At first she appeared con-

strained and reserved; but when, at dinner, Sir Robert proposed Queen Isabel's health, in a hearty Anglo-Spanish speech, she thawed at once into geniality. When the Queen heard of the reception given to her sister, she immediately sat down, and with her own hand wrote to Narvaez, requesting that the Grand Cross of Carlos Tercero should be sent to the Governor of Gibraltar. This susceptibility of generous impulses is a noble trait in the Queen's character, and is a brighter ornament to her crown than any diamond there. She has been known, in default of money, to throw a costly bracelet to a beggar. That monarch is twice a monarch who ceases to be slave to a master of ceremonies. So the Grand Cross was sent forthwith; but the powers that move men like puppets, with their red tapes, forbade its acceptance. Truly, etiquette and courtesy are not always synonymous,—rather, shall we say, etiquette is courtesy in a strait-waistcoat.

I used to go for an hour or two every day to the garrison library, which is virtually thrown open to all strangers. I had a vast arrear of contemporary literature to make up; I was athirst for news, since even the universal *Times* does not include within its universe the kingdom of Granada. Every conceivable magazine and review is to be found on that ample table; and there is not an officer in the five battalions who has not an opportunity of going to school with little 'David,' and falling in love with poor 'Pen.' Altogether, 'Gib' is a pleasant place to

spend five days in, let the residents abuse it as they please. From the brave and gentle Governor, down to the brave and brusque 'Sub,' everybody was kind and hospitable. One evening, at a great dinner given by the 56th, sitting, as it were, in a flowing ocean of champagne, with an archipelago of entrées by way of islands, I could not help remembering how, that day month, I had been fasting involuntarily at Mairena, vainly appealing to empty larders and barren hens.

Such are the ups and downs of a tourist's life. This, in truth, it is which constitutes the charm of it, for the interchange of luxury and privation gives a tenfold zest to the enjoyment of each. Horace's Teucer understood this: 'Nunc vino pellite curas; cras ingens iterabimus æquor.'

## CHAPTER XXI.

I MIGHT have spared the quotation at the end of the last chapter, for it is somewhat stale at best, and, moreover, turned out inapplicable. My 'ingens æquor' dwindled down into the Bay of Algeciras. And this is how it came about:—A steamer was positively announced to be due at Algeciras early on the morning of the 3rd of September (our St. Oliver's Day), bound for Cadiz. Now, according to the sapient sanitary regulations then in force, any person coming direct from Gibraltar was held to be utterly pestilential, and inadmissible on board ship; whereas, if he crossed over to Algeciras, he became at once hale and sound, and might embark when he pleased. So, after hearing a sermon from the bishop on Sunday, the 2nd, I availed myself of the kind proposition of a young officer, the best of good fellows, to take me, Victor, and Paul, with all our effects, across in his yacht. As our friend's duties were all on shore, his pleasures were all on sea; and I believe he would have been better able to manage a vessel in a storm, than to put a squad of recruits through their drill. By dint of manifold tacks, we reached Algeciras in two hours and a half, the wind being dead against us, and the boat making more water than way. Our safe

arrival was commemorated, after our national fashion, by a good dinner, in the course of which we forgot all about an eclipse of the moon, promised by almanacs for that evening (that catholic planet having no objection, it seems, to Sunday labour). When we did sally out, she was shining above in undimmed brightness, and in the square below were shining many pairs of luminaries still brighter—the poor moon was doubly eclipsed that night.

Next morning we got up betimes, to be ready for the steamer, which had been promised as confidently as the eclipse; but hour after hour passed, and still it came not. We beguiled our impatience on the terraced roof, by looking over the level sands of the Neutral Ground for the smoke signalling its approach, and by making sketches, more or less rude, of the great Gibraltar rock, which lay before us like the British lion couchant. I find that the resemblance occurred to Mr. Borrow in the same place; but he supposes it to be menacing Spain, while to me the head appeared to be turned decidedly the other way. I suppose, if the French had it, their fancy would carve it into the outline of an eagle. Others have discerned a more ghastly similitude, and compare it to a corpse covered with a cloth, the hands crossed upon the breast, and the knees gathered up as from the death agonies.

Time wore on, and our patience wore off. Paul and Victor pished and poohed and pested, and abused everybody, particularly each other, more in

*ennui* than in anger. I strolled out, and took my seat under the acacias of the Alameda, killing time, and now and then an obtrusive ant, with *Don Quixote*. Whenever I looked up from my book, my eye fell upon the clearly-defined rugged outline of the Sierra, which lies to the north-west. I have said that I am a constitutional idolater of all high places, and I forthwith conceived a longing to stand upon some of the breezy summits before me. Where there's a will there's a way. I returned at once to my two *ennuyés*, and proposed to them to go to Seville by land. Victor acknowledged the brilliancy of the idea, but pronounced it impracticable; Paul pleaded hippophobia, and thought a steamer in the bush worth two horses in the hand,—so I was once more to take the road alone. As luck would have it, I saw in the street an old man, whose grey hairs and generally grand-paternal aspect tempted me to accost him, and inquire where I could get horses. He replied that he had two himself, and invited me to come and see them. I liked the look of them, and bargained for them and a sturdy mayoral to take me to Seville, *viá Ronda*—a four days' journey—for twenty-two dollars. I started the same afternoon. Our sea-loving lieutenant was at the door to see me off. 'Good-bye,' he cried out after me; 'take care of yourself! Two fellows 'of ours' were robbed on that road, coming from Ronda fair, last May.' I think it must be part of the military system at Gibraltar to inculcate a wholesome fear of robbers among the young subal-

terns, to prevent them straying too far a-field. After skirting the sands of the bay, and crossing the sluggish river by a ferry, we jogged quietly along, leaving the white town of San Roque on our right. Once or twice we passed a farm-house, whose inmates were sitting in a ring, stripping the grains of Indian corn from the stalk—'shucking,' I think it is called in America. All the way I saw nothing like a bandit, except two men with immensely long guns, and *they* were ranging a stubble-field with pointers for part-ridges, quite in a civilized and orthodox manner. As evening fell we came to a wood of pines and cork-trees, whose fresh young leaves contrasted well with their gnarled old trunks. Westward was a range of dark purple hills, whose summits were all ablaze with the fires of charcoal burners, while great clouds of smoke went trailing across the clear green sky—a glorious combination of colour for any painter who should have courage to trespass on conventionalities, and paint things as they are. We soon plunged into the thick wood, and lost sight both of purple hills and green sky. There was a dense growth of underwood, intersected by many tracks, among which we wound in a most tortuous and perplexed fashion. I thought I detected something of irresolution in my guide's movements, so I questioned him as to whether he were perfectly sure of the way. He answered with an *aplomb* which quieted my doubts. At last, after much riding, we came to a forced halt before an impenetrable thicket, and then he was obliged to confess that

he had lost his way and mine. Thereupon, I regret to say, I lost my temper too, and abused him much; but he bore it so patiently, that he speedily disarmed my anger, insomuch that I lighted the cigar of resignation, and gave him another. Then it occurred to me to try an expedient familiar to the heroes of novels under similar circumstances, and never known to fail—namely, to lay the reins on my horse's neck, and trust to his sagacity. I did so; but the unromantic brute stood stock-still, and began to browse. So we had nothing for it but to turn back and try another tack. We had not gone far before we came to a narrow, deep ravine, along the side of which we rode some time, hoping to find a passage. At last we found a place, over which we scrambled, not without peril to neck and limb, and finally, by great good luck, and to the surprise, I am sure, of both of us, we emerged into open ground and clear moonlight, not very far from the right road. My attendant, who had almost cried before we got out of the wood, now plucked up his spirits, and set off at a good round pace, trying to overtake the lost time. We soon came to a steep hill, called, if I remember right, the Cuesta Dudon, at the foot of which is a shrubby dell, haunted, if not by bandits, at least by the fear of bandits. We kept on along the level, chiefly by the dry sandy bed of the Guadaïro, till after midnight, and then the path turned sharp to the left, and climbed the steep hillside to Gaucin. It seemed as if we should never attain the summit. The horses were tired, and so was



at least one of the riders. Many a time the moonlight, shining on a cluster of white rocks, flattered my hopes that it was the village we sought; and at last, schooled by disappointments, I sturdily maintained the village itself to be only a cluster of white rocks, till we actually entered its narrow street. It was then half-past one, and we had been nearly ten hours on the road (and off it), when we finally dismounted before the fast-barred door of the posada. A vigorous kick woke the echoes—for they are light sleepers—and a repetition of the same woke at last the more substantial inmates of the place; and having pledged our word through the key-hole that we were 'people of peace,' we were admitted. A most succinct housewife lighted me upstairs, carrying a velon, or lamp, which would have passed muster in a cabinet of domestic antiquities, so indisputably Roman it looked. My bed was laid on the floor of a kind of loft, the walls full of chinks and crannies, through which all the cardinal winds entered at will, and kept noisy conclave. They were so kind as to blow out the light just before I got into bed; and, for the rest, I was too tired to need a lullaby, or fear a hurly-burly.

The south of Spain is traversed from west to east by a confused mass of mountain-ranges. Gaucin lies along the crest of the most southerly ridge, which, just above the village, culminates into a bold pinnacle of rocks. The little place can boast of a castle, in ruins already, and a convent marked out for ruin

hereafter, and that soon. Some trees still grow in what was the convent garden, and among them a palm, which I was surprised to see at that elevation. But its chief boast is the prospect seaward, which all the world can hardly match.

Through the wide, undulating plain—plain only by contrast—you may trace the winding course of the Guadaïro, and beyond that a long wavy line of sea-coast, terminating in the abrupt rock of Gibraltar. Across the blue straits the view is bounded by the bluff headlands of Africa.

I left the place at eight o'clock in the morning, after submitting to be robbed according to the approved fashion of civilised life. Mine host presented—not a pistol—but a bill, whose charges might not have been unreasonable at the 'Hôtel des Princes.' Our road lay, at first, among slopes covered with vast vineyards—the vines being studiously clipped of their luxuriance, and reduced to the dimensions of goose-berry bushes. At the little hamlet of Algotocin, on turning round I saw for the last time, through a great gap in the hills, 'the rock' and the straits. Soon after we came upon the village and square tower-flanked castle of Benadalid, on the summit of a mountain, itself embosomed in, and overtopped by, still mightier mountains, and so on for five long, long, leagues to Ronda. Not that the leagues should have appeared long—they were diversified by all the grand vicissitudes of hill scenery. Four elements go to form natural scenery—wood, water, variety of surface, and

human works. Now in Andalucia generally there is a great scantiness of the first two, so that nature has something of monotony and iteration in its grandeur. We have hill and valley, castles, churches, and villages, but, after all, we lack the softening grace of woodland, and we feel that the hills would be twice as grand if they had any lakes to reflect them. In truth, wood and water are to the face of nature what hair and eyes are to the face of men. In Spain, Nature is bald and blind.

But stay!—if I make too sweeping an assertion, here is Ronda, with its cascade and its orchards, to give me the lie.



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

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE town of Ronda is built along the edge of a cliff some six hundred feet high, just where a bleak and bare tract of table-land breaks suddenly away into a well-watered and fertile valley. It is intersected by a gorge, narrow and deep, running at right angles to the face of the cliff, which either the patient stream has excavated for itself, or some kindly convulsion rent for it. Just as it meets the cliff, this gorge is spanned by a bridge, massive as a Roman work, and, underneath, the little river flings itself down into the valley by a succession of bold leaps. By the side a winding path leads down to a number of water-mills, very diminutive, but as busy as the best. Each of them seems made for a vignette—nestling under a rock, covered with spontaneous creepers, and flinging down a shower of diamonds of the best water. I am sorry to mention, for the credit of 'Young Ronda,' that I was assailed by a shower, not of metaphoric diamonds, but of common silex—in short (as Mr. Micawber would say), some boys pelted me with stones.

I was under the rock, like another Dentatus, and my assailants above, so that, having gravity all on their side, the mischievous urchins, had the aim been

as good as the intention, might have brought my wanderings to an abrupt close. Fortunately, I met a sturdy miller, to whom I appealed; he flew into a great passion, and, in a scare-babe voice, poured upon them a torrent of vernacular invective, the only kind of torrent upon which the laws of gravity do not act. The lads fled tumultuously. Hereafter, perhaps, they may turn out capital guerilla-men, and use deadlier weapons, with deadlier effect, against a foreign invader. The good miller attributed the savage disposition of the infant mind to the want of education, and believed the government to have an especial spite against Ronda, since they had not established any primary school in the place. His own education seemed to have been neglected in early life. Probably the schoolmaster was abroad at the time, and has not returned yet. He spoke continually of 'the king,' and received, for the first time, from me intelligence of the accession of Isabel the Second.

The view from below is grand indeed—quite the finest of the kind I have ever seen. The huge rock, crowned with grey walls and ruined towers, and quaint white houses, dwarfed by distance and contrast to the appearance of baby-toys—the falling water, gleaming brighter by comparison with the dark dell from which it issues, and above it the bridge, rivalling even the grandeur of Nature here, where she is grandest—all combine to form a picture which, when once seen, is stamped on the retina of memory for ever. They wrong it by comparing it to Tivoli.

There is, indeed, here no Sibyl's temple, and the cascades are somewhat scant of water (at least, in summer), but all at Ronda is on a larger and nobler scale. No 'idler in Spain' could characterise it as a 'sweet, lovely spot'—no tasteless architects of villas, no impertinent capability-men can cockneyfy Ronda. Fortunately, in Spain there is not much danger of their trying. Yet at Ronda we miss the gentle ghosts that haunt Tivoli. What is Espinel to Horace? By the way, I have a fancy for buying authors *in situ*, so I did try to get a copy of *Marcos de Obregon*, but in vain; no one had ever heard the name, or knew whether it was a man or a book. I once made a similarly ineffectual attempt to get a copy of *Catullus* at Verona. Neither poet nor novelist were honoured, or even known, in their own land.

The town of Ronda boasts its fonda (start not, gentle reader, at the fortuitous rhyme; I am not going, like Mrs. Radcliffe's heroes, 'to vent my feelings in the following poem')—boasts, I repeat, its fonda, where the creature-comforts, external and internal, bed and beef, water and wine (with other alliterative antitheses), are supplied in first-rate style, considering the remoteness of the locality. I was charged, however, according to the standard which regulates the fleecing of officers from Gibraltar at fair-time. Happy Jasons these innkeepers, to whom the golden fleece comes of itself to be shorn!

Yet the stupidest of all the flock can hardly fail to get his money's worth at Ronda. It is like no other