England at dear old Christmas-tide! On the evening before Christmas-Eve I was journeying down the wild and lovely line of railway from Cordoba to the wilds of the interior. Cordoba certainly needs no Christmas decorations. Nature had bestowed them upon her with no grudging hand, in the spacious patio (or quadrangle) of her magnificent mosque, in the gardens of her ancient houses, in the cemeterio, and, peeping above her old Moorish city-walls, the orange-trees were to be seen simply laden with fruit, the dark green foliage presenting a strange contrast to the clusters of rich yellow fruit. How beautiful are her old grey towers, and seminaries, and convents! How striking is the contrast between their crumbling walls and the dark leaf and golden clustering fruit of the orange-trees that grow under their shade! But how different from an English Christmas landscape—I mean, of a typical Christmas, when the leafless trees are white with hoar-frost, and the moon shines clear and cold overhead, and even the grass is crisp under the traveller's hasty homeward feet. A few miles from Cordoba the orange-trees are gone, and nothing is seen for miles and miles but undulating hills, to all appearance barren, and certainly treeless. These plains and slopes are now, owing to the lack of rain this season, as hard and dry and full of cracks as in the heat of summer; but they are covered with the growth of a peculiar weed, something like a dry thistle—so dry that the spark from a cigar will kindle half an acre into a blaze. Wild and desolate indeed are these undulating steppes, and one can hardly believe that crops of wheat have even been garnered in from them—at present, I can compare them to nothing but the skeleton of a wheat-field; while stand-

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ing up out of these tall thistles every now and then you come upon ten or twelve low, clumsy, shapeless pillars of stone, each about eight feet high, planted in an oval shape. For what purpose they were originally used I know not, but they lend a strange picturesqueness to the wildness of the scene. Here are one or two Christmas landscapes as we pass along. On one side, purple and hazy in the dim distance, stretches the wild range of the Sierra Morena; all around you are slopes upon slopes, naked, save from the spectral thistles that clothe their sides; the winter sun is just sinking, with a red defiant glare, behind yon thistled hill; one or two stars are just showing in the cold, blue, steely, cloudless sky; just at your feet, abutting on the railway, are the crumbling ruins of some old Moorish building, the past and the present blended in a grotesque union; along the one winding path across the brow of the hill, a goatherd is leading his flock of kids and goats; his wife, in bright yellow (Judas's colour!) dress of flannel, is riding on her ass a few paces behind. It is Christmas, yet their forms are half lost in a cloud of dust; the air is dry, steely, and cold, and they are anxious to get to their little home beneath the old Moorish tower of El Carpio.

By moonlight, seen from the railway, the town of El Carpio is exceedingly picturesque. I saw it once—a dull group of stone houses clustering around its huge, quaint Moorish tower, the crescent moon just rising behind the barren hill on whose summit it stands. For miles and miles around are undulating hills, covered with dusky olive-groves. Those who expect great beauty in the olive-groves will be woefully disappointed; there is nothing to see in the grey-leaved, the nutrient olive, but long, regular rows of

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runty trees, something like the pollard-willows of English home scenery, standing in plains of red sand scantily covered with withered grass. Here is another scene, that shall bring me to my subject, for it was the first little herald of Christmas drawing near. At a small station, not far from Pedro Abad, a grey-haired mother came with her son—her *boy* she called him, though he was a manly-looking young giant of five or six and twenty summers—who was going to pass (so she said) his first Christmas away from home. "We shall miss you, dear boy, on Noche-Buena; but we shall pray for you on that sacred night in church." She clasped "her boy" in her arms ere he got into the carriage, and mother and son had a last kiss! It was a touching sight this: her pale, care-worn face, set in rich iron-grey hair, her glistening eye, and her last words,—"Mind you write to papa every week, at least, by 'post'; he will look for a letter so anxiously. *Con Dios.*" It brought back to my own mind the memory of other days, and of a mother's tenderness, and anxious care, and parting words, when she too—I mean my own mother—had brought *her* boy to the station, and given much the same parting instructions, and the self-same blessing, "*Con Dios*"—God be with thee, my son! After that, into our carriage jumped a family of the lower class—a father and mother, and three children—going to spend their Pascua with friends at a distance. Each child had a little tambor, like our tambourine, with tinkling bells, and the noise they made was most discordant; for twenty miles they never ceased. We could not hear the sound of our own voices. Here was Christmas on the horizon with a vengeance! Then came in a young artisan, off to spend his Pascua at his own home, his pockets,

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as he said, "full of money." He was overflowing with good-humour, and jumped out at every station to buy a fresh bottle of white aguardiente, which is a kind of brandy and aniseed. It is the spirit chiefly drunk by the middle and lower classes in Spain, and is, when good, a capital cordial. Fishermen, and miners, and other labourers, like to have a glass of this, which is so cheap as to be within the reach of all, before commencing work in the morning. This young fellow walked round and round the carriage, and, getting over the partitions, insisted on every one drinking out of his bottle. He always gave me the first sip, because, as he said, "You are a stranger." When are the Spanish poor anything but courteous? Again and again I begged off; but, no, drink I must. "Come, señor, señor, just a drop more; Christmas is coming, and it only 'comes once a year.'" I did not like it; but I like still less the thought of offending a good-natured friend, so I took a pull at each of the *five* fresh bottles, each, as he said, with a shout of triumph, "better than the last." I thought differently, and could only think of Mr. Layard's adventure, recounted in his interesting work on monasteries, when the Prior pressed him to eat some particularly delicious soup. Mr. Layard tasted one mouthful—it was nauseous in the extreme—and then professed *he could not think of depriving his host of such a treat*, "it was so good." "For that very reason I insist upon your eating *every morsel*, adorable friend; I will even stand by and see you eat it to the last drop." My own case, I thought, was a similar one.

On the morning of Noche-Buena I awoke, despite the aguardiente, in a little township of the interior, ready to see and observe all that was to be seen and

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observed. It is a busy little town this whence I write, and the streets and Plaza were crowded with buyers and sellers; the boot shops were crammed, as also were the linen-drapers' stores, and the sweetmeat and grocery shops. From all the country round the poor had come to buy their clothes, and boots, and Christmas dinner. Truly it was a most picturesque and motley crowd through which I had to thread my way. All down the streets, squatting on the narrow strips of pavement, where there was any pavement, were the beggars, most of them wrapped in their huge woollen mantas, or rugs, with a coloured handkerchief pinned over their heads—a very dirty one, in most cases. One showed the half-raw stump of an amputated leg; another, a scalded arm; a third was blind. From one and all arose the same cry, "Give me, sir, for the love of God, a trifle, and may He grant you for ever good health. I haven't got a cuarto (farthing) for my Christmas dinner." Giving to beggars in Spain is more desirable than giving in England, I always have considered, for, in the first place, they have not always the chance of a meal and shelter in the workhouse (such as it is) of their districts; and, in the second, they are recognized as an institution.

Time was when "begging-tickets" were given, although that system has been since discontinued. I make it a rule to give sometimes, and ask in return that they will remember me in their prayers, and perhaps they do. At any rate, I often feel that other hands are paddling my little canoe when I am too weak to paddle it for myself. Perhaps the poor Spanish beggar's prayers are offered and prevail; who knows? Here was a Valencian peasant, in his canvas suit, with his wife in glaring yellow dress,

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buying boots for their young ones; here, in the sweetmeat shop, were mothers and nurses buying lumps of turron for their pets at home; here, in the grocery shop, was a swarm of working-men buying goats'-milk cheese. Donkeys laden with panniers full of gaudy cloths and flannels, or with pitchers of water, or oil, or vinegar, or with baskets of fruit, or cheese, or turron, all were standing about the street. The whole scene may best be described thus:—clouds of dust blowing; hundreds of women in dresses of the coarsest, but most gaudy—bright yellow and red predominated—in colour, all shouting and screaming to get their needs supplied at the lowest price; heaps of fruit, chestnuts, walnuts, pomegranates, potatoes, sweet batatas of Malaga, lying at every street corner; a blazing hot sun, but bitter, searching east wind; men in every variety of uncouth dress, all, without exception, smoking and shouting,—this, with numbers of children sucking turron and sugar-plums, and playing upon their tambores and zambombas, was the sight that greeted my eyes on the morning of Christmas-Eve. Every woman had a red or yellow kerchief as head-dress, every child a tambor or zambomba in its hands; all were laughing, screaming, elbowing, bargaining, or smoking—such a busy, gaudy, animated scene I never before have witnessed. The turron and zambomba are characteristic of a Spanish Christmas, and must have a few lines devoted to them in this place. "Turron" is much the same as the Turkish sweetmeat called "halvak": it is a kind of white rock, made of pressed almonds, sugar, and meal, and is the great Spanish sweetmeat. In all the sweetmeat shops you can buy it by the ounce or

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pound at Christmas time. Sometimes it is flavoured with one thing, sometimes with another. It is always a most luscious mouthful, but too clogging for an English palate. The best is the "turron de alicante"; but the kind bought by the lower orders is made in a homely way of honey, barley-meal, and whole almonds stuck in it. The love of sugar-plums and all sorts of sweetmeats is quite a passion with Spanish ladies. They eat a great deal of sweet things and drink a great deal of water; and, as a rule, when they get to about forty, they become very stout—the sweetmeats are fattening, I suppose.

As to the "zambomba," one of which is now lying on my table, it is the most primitive musical instrument you ever saw. It is an earthen pot, something like a flower-pot, varying in size from very small to very large and unwieldy. One end of this little earthen vessel is open to the air, over the other end is stretched a piece of parchment; a hole is cut in the parchment, and a reed, that is, about six or eight inches of the stem of a strong reed, is inserted into the hole, and hermetically sealed. You carry the zambomba by the reed, which sticks out. All you have to do to play this instrument is to wet your fingers with water, (must I say spittle?) and rub them up and down the protruding stem of the reed; a hollow, rumbling, hideous noise, called in Spain "rom, rom, rom," is produced. So popular is this instrument, that as you pass up and down a Spanish street, you hear in almost every house the "rom, rom, rom" of the zambombas. These can be bought at any little stall in the market, and they only cost from twopence to two shillings. The noise of the zambombas, the wild Andalucian ditties,

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the laughter and shouts from every house, as you pass up a Spanish street after nightfall on Christmas-Eve, are most striking. In the Plaza, or market-square, the stalls of fruit, toys, and sweetmeats are all decked out with gay ribbons and artificial flowers. The piles of pomegranates show a little more than formerly of their russet hue, the piles of melons are supplanted by chestnuts and batatas, but of fruit there is still no lack. But the buying and selling of the little sucking-kids is a noticeable feature—"cabritas," they are called; and here is a drove of the pretty little animals being handled, petted, weighed, bargained for, and then driven or carried home. This is the poor man's Christmas dinner,—with herbs and good cooking a savoury morsel. One of them can be bought for about three pesetas and a half, *i.e.*, about three English shillings. The churches were decked with gay ribbons and artificial flowers, the bells were clanging throughout the day for the frequent services. Let me mention two more Christmas dishes in Spain, the "pavo trafado," or truffled turkey, and the heaps of almonds and cocoa-nut biscuits. The luscious comestibles are, from their rich oily nature, to the Spaniard, in his dry summer but cold winter, what the rich blubber is to the Esquimaux in the far and frozen north. Nature (*dux optima*) teaches both the unlettered folks what the special need of their bodies is at each special season of the year.

Evening drew on, and about four some of the shops began to close; the streets gradually grew quieter and quieter; women were walking slowly home, basket on arm, laden with fruit, and meat, and boots, and at the top of each basket lay what appeared to be a white stocking stuffed full of something. This is the little

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Christmas present laid upon the child's pillow at early morning; and when the little thing with waking eyes first opens its treasure, it looks up, and says, "Thanks to Father Christmas for that." Boots, biscuits, and ripe apples were the contents of one stocking I opened. But every foot was homeward turned to eat the Christmas evening meal before going to the midnight misa at the churches. As a rule, the Spaniard does not drink heavily at this season, but eats his meals peacefully with his wife and children, and spends the evening with them over the glowing embers of the brasero, until his church-bell at midnight summons him to prayers. At half-past ten, after smoking a peaceful pipe with a friend, I walked up the deserted and dark, but far from silent, streets. The night was pitch dark, the east wind blowing bitterly; the tiny oil lamps, stuck here and there, were showing their sickly light; from every house came gay, wild ditties, and the scraping "rom, rom, rom" of the zambombas, and the tinkle of guitar, or the rattle of the tambores, half drowned in shouts of joyous laughter. One or two noisy men were quarrelling at the door of a wine-shop, whom I avoided with hasty steps. Services were being held in the churches.

There is one feature I will notice before passing on to the midnight misa of the Church. In the interior, many of the houses have one window, generally a small bow-window, fronting the street. The strictly religious put in it the image of some saint who is their patron, or from whom they have received a benefit; and on every night of a Saint's Day, and sometimes in the day-time, two or four candles burn at the side of the image. The passer-by can either doff his hat, cross himself, or

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take no heed. This showed that the house is the home of a religious Catholic. Need I say that on Christmas-Eve these little glass temples were all lighted up? I could not attend the midnight service, so I asked a friend who dwelt hard by the church to go for me. He went at a little before twelve. The church was full; the service orderly; the people of all classes. There were muleteers, wrapped in their blue and white checked rugs; here, Spanish gentlemen, enveloped in their graceful capas, or capes, the universal great-coat of the interior, a long cape reaching to the ankles, lined with rich fur or velvet, wrapped and buckled round the body, and then, with a twist, thrown over the shoulder; here, again, were crowds of the commonest people,—miners, fruit-sellers, servants, and the like,—the women kneeling on the rush matting of the dimly-lit church, the men standing in dark masses behind, or clustering in groups round every pillar. Each one, as he entered, dipped his hand into the little vessel at the door, and reverently crossed himself with holy water. The most noticeable features were the several altars in a blaze of light; the rich, or at least gaudy, dresses of the officiating priests; and the whirr—I can call it nothing else—of hundreds of nimble fingers, as of one crossing the forehead, at every most solemn part of the service. At last, from under the altar, the senior priest (I take it to have been the senior) took out the image of the Babe New-born reverently and slowly, and held it up in his hands for adoration. Instantly every one crossed himself, and fell on his knees in silent worship. A few moments were allowed for silent prayer. Of music there was little. The priest, kneeling at the altar, offered aloud his supplications

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for all, and Noche-Buena was over. Slowly, and in groups of three or four, the worshippers left the church, and picked their dark road home.

Wherever one is, it is dear to one to see honour done to Him who brought "peace" on the earth, goodwill to men! Yes; and far more than peace and goodwill. To Him who taught us that mankind are brethren, and their God is Love; to Him who bade us regard *all* men as brothers; to Him, who, coming as a poor man, has shed everlasting honour on the lot of poverty—a lot, until His time, despised and rejected of men; to Him who has for ever sanctified toil, and trial, and disappointment, and suffering; to Him who has brought us near to our loved and lost ones, and shown men how to work, and suffer, and pray,

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"Till with the morn those angel faces smile
Which we have loved long since, and lost awhile,"—

yes, it is sweet to see honour done to Him, whether it be in the simple and intelligible services of our dear old English ivy-wreathed church, or by the whirr of speechless hands, where the cloaked crowd of Spaniards stand in mute worship in the dark aisles. Wherever it be, it is sweet to see honour done to Him. Life's cheerful halting-places at best are few, and of short duration. Noche-Buena had soon fled by, and on Christmas-Day I strolled out once more. The market-place was more busy than ever, every shop was loud with traffic; but the bells were clanging still, and I joined the throng that pressed towards the principal church. It was dark, but its altars were lit. Its aisles and nave were about half full. There were the same dark, kneeling forms of women in front, the

same motley crowd of men, who came and went out at pleasure, behind. Suddenly a little bell rang—I know not for what—and the whirr and rustle of hundreds of crossing hands was like the sound of a flight of doves, when one scares them at night from the bare trees of the wintry wood. All through Christmas-Day the shops were crowded with buyers, all through Christmas-Day the streets rang with wild music. At night I said to an old Spanish peasant, "Haven't you had enough holiday?"—"No, señor," said he; "there are other Saints' Days coming, and when you think that at this time God Himself came down to give us 'liberty,' *you* will not think it too much."

"Vaya uste dcon Dios" is my New Year's wish, for you, gentle reader, whoever you are.

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CHAPTER XXV.

"PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TO MEN."

"PEACE on earth, goodwill to men" was not, alas! the burden of our Christmas carol and our New Year's greeting in the wilds of the interior. How often, since that day when the angels sang songs of peace and joy, has the Divine Christmas greeting seemed an idle mockery, when the pale moon is looking down on fields of the suffering and the slain; or on the widow and the orphan crouching over the half-empty grate; or, as was the case but just now in Spain, on disquietude, and plotting, and anxiety of every sort, misrule, disorder, and conspiracy, "men's hearts failing them for fear."

A few Christmas episodes in our life in the interior might, I have thought, prove of sufficient interest to warrant me in jotting them down, without comment or adornment.

I was travelling much, both by day and by night, about Christmas time, and the most unobservant eye could not fail to see sufficient indications of some extraordinary movement. The Guardias Civiles, preservers of law and order throughout Spain, were being shifted about in bodies from place to place. Here, a body of twenty, wrapped in their huge capas, rifle in hand and sword-bayonet by side, with their keen dark eyes scrutinizing every fresh face, would enter the railway carriage; at another station two, with a

prisoner, would join them, silent and stern as ever. Every honest man welcomes and respects these brave, clever, truthful, sober, indefatigable preservers of peace and justice; they are a terror only to evil-doers!

I have already given a slight sketch of the services which these men are ever ready to perform, but I will recur to the subject again. Before Señor Martinez de la Rosa, the well-known author of 'Poems for Children,' and other poems, came to be connected with the Cabinet of Christina, he was robbed on the highway. When he came into power he was instrumental in forming a body of guards who, mounted or on foot, should keep the roads free from banditti. They were dressed after the fashion of the French gendarmerie, probably owing to the French influence then prevailing at Court, and numbered, at first, some five or six thousand. These men are chosen for (1) having been steady and good soldiers; (2) height and strength; (3) education; but they have all served in the regular army for a certain time, and are equally able to hunt in couples as policemen, or in large bodies as regular troops. Their pay is two pesetas per diem, and an allowance, if mounted, for fodder for their horses. Their chief occupation, of late, has been not so much to suppress robbery in the camp as to quarter themselves in disaffected towns, and prevent outbreaks and licences.

Men *kept* their Christmas time as usual: outwardly all was noise, and festivity, and glitter; but every eye was looking forward to one day—the day on which the Córtes would re-assemble, and demand of Emilio Castelar an account of his arduous but nobly fulfilled stewardship.

Strange whispers went about. Every Spaniard is a

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politician, whether he light his errant watch-fire, and strew his rough bed to leeward of a clump of prickly pear or aloe; or, wrapped in his manta, pass his nights on the stone floor of the roadside venta; or sip coffee in his casino among his sympathizers (for each casino is devoted to a separate phase of politics); or smoke his scented Havana over the brasero of his palacio—whatever be his rank or station, he is a politician, and believes it to be his duty to interfere in the affairs of his country.

I heard one poor man—very poor, very ignorant—say, "Castelar will come down. He promised to sever Church and State, and give us liberty of thought; *he has not done so!* He promised to do away—oh vast expense and useless tax!—with a standing army; *he has not done so.*" And the poor old fellow's tattered coat shook with indignation, and his eye grew moist with a tear as he said, "Poor Spain!" This sentiment about Castelar's non-fulfilment of his promise is a stereotyped one; I am constantly hearing it among the lower orders.

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Speculations as to what change would take place on the 2nd and 3rd of January were rife among us. Some believed power would be left with the Intransigentes; some, but few, that Castelar would continue Dictator for a few weeks, provisionally; some, that the "Infant" would be placed upon the throne. "Pi y Margall and the Cantonal system" was the watchword of the lower orders.

Strange photographs went up in the streets, the most remarkable of which I here transcribe: it is one of large dimensions, costing three or four pesetas. In one corner stands on a white pedestal a draped and graceful woman, flaring torch in hand, representing

Liberty; on the pedestal is written, in French, "Les droits de"—I cannot decipher; bareheaded, or waving hats in the air, comes to her feet a long winding procession of men, women, and children in working dress, the end of the long, snake-like line being lost in the distant hills; a church stands by—they disregard it; one solitary ploughman stops his oxen to wave his hat. Far away is the distant sea, with one or two flying sails and the smoke of a steamer upon its calm bosom. At intervals, to the very end of the long line of human beings, are carried banners; on the first is written "Francia" (considered by all Spaniards the champion of civil liberty); on the second, "España"; on the third, "Autriche"; on the fourth, "Siciles"; then "Romagna"; on the rest the letters are too dim to be deciphered.

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In the foreground is a mass of crowns, sceptres, handcuffs, codes, &c., lying broken and in confusion on the ground, and looking like—what at first glance I deemed them to be—a heap of stones.

But the most striking feature of the photograph has yet to come. Borne on the clouds of heaven, float gently earthward hosts of angel-forms, some pen in hand, as though coming to chronicle the new era of *La Libertad;* some pouring upon earth their rich cornucopias of fruit and flowers. In the midst of this heavenly host, a huge lion crouching beneath His feet, which are half-veiled in clouds, stands in majestic repose the figure of our blessed Lord; His right hand is raised to bless; in His left hand he bears His cross; and upon His head is the crown of thorns. Above this Divine Rostro the clouds are bright, and in shadowy, yet plain, letters shines out of them the inscription—"Fraternité."

At the foot of the photograph is written, REPUBLICA UNIVERSAL DEMOCRATICA FEDERAL: EL PACTO; and the following terse sentence from Béranger:—

"Pueblos, formád una santa alianza
Y estrechád vuestra mano."

That is,

"Form a holy league, ye towns,
And act in concert."

The idea of our blessed Lord being the Champion of Liberty is one common in Spain, and hence there is no blasphemy or culpable levity in the picture described. There is a couplet common in Spain at Christmas-tide,—

"At this time on earth was He
Born, *and with Him Liberty*."

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The lines, or an equivalent, will be found in 'Ecos Nacionales,' by V. Ruiz Aguilera.

Beyond the rumours, the anxious faces, the photographs, and the movements of troops, there was but one incident to mark the reign of uncertainty about Christmas time, and that was an attack upon the train on its way to Madrid, which I chronicle merely as showing the lawless state of the country. The night-train to Madrid picks up, as is well known, money from various towns, all of which is sent in small boxes, with padlocks and leather straps buckled over them. Some fifty armed brigands, finding their ways and means straitened, stopped the train by waving a red lamp, and demanded of the terrified guard the boxes of money, commanding no passenger to put his head out of the window of his carriage. One rash person disregarded the injunction, and received a slash in the cheek from a sabre. It is needless to add,

that these men got safely to the mountains with their booty. It is not often one hears of such deeds on a large scale; but every now and then, in some parts of the interior, some young fellow who is known to be rich is carried off, and a heavy ransom demanded. In the last case that came under my notice the young fellow was surprised in the Campo, while out for his afternoon paseo, carried off to the Olivares, or the Sierra, and £400 demanded and paid for his release. This system of "levying black-mail," so common in Southern Italy, is still carried on in the wilder parts of Greece and in the mountainous districts of the Levant. In Spain, if you desire a walk over the hills—and a walk is very enjoyable in spring and winter, when the tints of the mountains are *simply exquisite*, varying from the deepest purple to the brightest roseate hue, and the earth is just putting on its robe of vernal green—it is best to walk with a friend, and to carry arms equally serviceable against dogs or men; and it is safer not to be outside the city walls after dusk—you may be robbed, or at least annoyed.

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One more "Christmas episode." On Christmas-Eve the alcalde of a town not far from where I write was enjoying his coffee, cigarillo, and politics in his casino; he was popular with the masses, and so, to do him all honour, a party of gipsies came in, chaired him, carried him round the room, and then *insisted on his dancing the fandango with them!* The whole scene, when recounted to me by an eye-witness the following night, struck me as so thoroughly Spanish, and worthy of these dark-eyed daughters of the sunny South, that I have ventured to mention it.

At last the eventful day, January 2nd, 1874,

arrived, and at evening-time club, casino, and venta were thronged with little knots of eager and expectant politicians, waiting for a telegram; but, as subsequently transpired, nothing definite had taken place. On that day the only sign of excitement that came under my notice was the shout of some fervid artificer on his way to his work, "Down with Castelar." Silently another body of guards marched into our town that night, or the night after, and then came the news of the Spanish *coup-d'état* of 1874, awakening general surprise and bewilderment.

On Monday some apprehensions were felt as to the possibility of an insurrection, and the guards, leaving their barracks in the narrow streets of the town, fortified themselves in a walled spot a few hundred yards outside the walls, where they could act more freely. I walked, about 4·30 P.M., down the streets, which were almost deserted and—rare sound in Andalucian streets at that hour—echoed to my footfall; the shutters were up in many of the private houses, and nearly every shop was closed. I wanted some coffee—a modest wish, surely!—and at last found a grocer's shop with the door only half closed.

Then came the news of the clever way in which the *coup-d'état* at Madrid, on January 3, had been managed. It was thus graphically related to me by a Spanish gentleman. The Córtes had listened to Señor Castelar's magnificent speech, his defence of his own short administration: the votes were taken, Señor Salmeron being in the chair, and it was found that there were one hundred for, to one hundred and twenty against Castelar's continuing in office. He then rose and said—"I have one favour to ask,

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that you will construct a Ministry before you leave the room."—"That we will do," was the quiet answer of the President. Just then two aides-de-camp entered the chamber and gave a note to Señor Salmeron, who handed it to his secretary to read aloud to the assembled diputados.

The note was terse and soldier-like, and to this effect:—"That those assembled in the Córtes should, *within five minutes*, disperse to their own homes. (Signed) PAVÍA, Governor-General of Madrid."

Loud cries of "Shame, shame!" were heard, and great uproar prevailed; the President proposed to arraign General Pavía himself at once, and deprive him of his position. At this juncture the two aides-de-camp left the chamber, and met the General himself, who was in waiting close by. They told him what it was proposed to do with him. "Oh that is it, is it?" said he; "come along, men." At the head of two trusty regiments—and with officers and soldiers alike, as a rule, Pavía is very popular—the General entered the Córtes, and, at the word of command, the first rank fired a volley into the ceiling above the heads of the diputados. The effect was magical. In a moment the diputados were seen hurrying out as fast as they could, and even leaping over any obstacles, as a chair or bench, that came in their way. Only one or two foreigners were left in the Córtes, and they were courteously escorted home by some of the troops, with their band playing the *Marcha Real* (Royal March) down the thronging streets.

Castelar was summoned to appear, and was asked by General Pavía to form a Ministry, which, of course, he could not undertake. Marshal Serrano

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then appeared, coming from the house of the Russian Ambassador.

Outside the Córtes the streets were lined with troops. At the head of other streets cannon frowned. Every volunteer was ordered to render up his arms at certain depôts named, and that order was acted upon quietly and instantly. Volunteers were hurrying, arms in hand, to the depôts, and giving up their insignia in the greatest haste.

The Marshal, it is said, rode through one or two of the principal squares, and shouted "Viva la Republica Española!" and it is also said, that people, foregoing their favourite term, "Democratica Federal," took up the cry "Viva la Republica de España!"

Perhaps the populace are weary of all this long-continued unrest, of trade suspended, and lines cut, and posts stopped, and are glad to espouse the first hope of a settled Government. At any rate, the soldiers will be glad of the turn things have taken, and will follow their Generals.

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> "Non, si male nunc, et olim
> Sic erit,"

we have been saying for a long time; and it may be the "nunc" has passed, and the "olim" is at hand; at any rate, we all thirst for order, justice, and peace, and perhaps these are near at hand.

But there has already been twelve hours' fighting at Zaragóza, between the volunteers and the regulars, resulting in a victory for the latter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"PICHO": A SPICE OF SPANISH SAL.

THERE are, among dogs of the interior, three principal tipos, or types—in fact, what in England would be called three common varieties.

But, before speaking of the dogs, it should be premised, that, although they are wholly distinct varieties —as different as are the English mastiff, greyhound, and poodle—yet in the limited vocabulary of the interior they are all spoken of as "perros," *i. e.*, dogs, and addressed as "picho"; and the common people simply have no special names by which to distinguish them.

For instance, a Spanish peasant was asked, in a court of law, whether a certain dog was a sporting dog or terrier, and, as he could not by any means understand the difference, the question had to resolve itself into one more simple,—"Was it a large dog or a small dog?"

Indeed, one great obstacle to gaining any progressive knowledge of natural history in the interior is, that the vocabulary is so limited, that one name is used for at least half-a-dozen flowers; and among small birds the case is just the same.

And even in conversing on these subjects with the ordinary Spanish gentleman of the interior there is the same difficulty. I have often observed, while

prosecuting the study of wild-flowers of the Campo, or wild-birds, he has but one name for half-a-dozen shrubs or flowers!

The typical dog of the interior—the commonest "tipo," would be called a lurcher in England; and such, of a mongrel sort, he really is: he looks like a cross between greyhound and lurcher. He stands about two feet high (not more — oftener less); his coat is not curly, but he is not to be called short-haired; in colour, he is almost always sandy, with oftentimes white belly; his tail is long, always carried curled beneath the rump, and rather bushy; his body is long, lithe, and thin; and his legs long and sinewy.

This dog is so common as to form quite a feature in the towns and on the Campo. You meet his sly, foxy gaze (he looks always half-cowed), and see his drooping brush and protruding ribs everywhere. In the summer and winter alike, groups of these animals are lying by day outside the houses, on the pavement, lazily winking at the sun, and never offering to move, unless they hear the unmistakable, "Anda, picho!" ("Get out, dog!"), with which they are constantly saluted, and which is the sure forerunner of a kick. At night, they are constantly left out of doors, and, in some towns where I have resided, I have been kept awake by the howling, barking, and scurrying up and down the street, and often by the fighting, of these semi-jackals.

Oftentimes, when returning home late at night, I have stumbled over one of these animals. He gets up slowly, walks a step or two, looks at you (no doubt) with disgust; and you hear him settle himself to rest again on his uncomfortable bed. It is strange, but

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perfectly true, as I have often proved, that these dogs will never obey the "Get out!" if the command be given in English; but once say, in a shrill voice, "Anda!" and Picho, expecting a kick, moves in a moment. I have heard it often said—I know not with how much truth—that instances are on record of a horse being brought from abroad, and, when submitted to English grooms and their masters, proving utterly unmanageable, because he could not understand the language. In one instance, the story related to me was, that the horse, when told to "Come over" by the groom, and receiving the customary pat on the haunches, by which English horses are admonished to step over from one side of the stall to the other, while their bed is being made, did not understand even that elementary command, and that the groom, in despair, said to his master,—"What am I to do with him, sir? He won't even come over!" And the narrator told me, that when a foreigner went into the stable, a fellow-countryman of the horse, and told him what was expected of him in his own language, he obeyed at once! At any rate, no Spanish group of dogs will attend to you unless you speak to them in their "mother-tongue."

These dogs are used for two purposes: First, they are used as guards, or watch-dogs, by the men who live in the forlorn, lonely little stone lodges, among the olive-groves or huertas of their masters, in the wild Campo; and also, as watch-dogs, they are kept in the various casas in the towns. By all ranks and all sorts of persons are these strange hounds kept. You visit a house in some particular street of a town of the interior, tenanted, perhaps, by twelve different families (for in Spain, where the rich have but a

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"flat" of a house to themselves, the poor take half a room, and call it their "Casa in the town!"), and, if you go by day, you will find half-a-dozen of these creatures lying asleep within the massive outer doors; or, if you go at night to make your visit, you will find your rap is half-drowned by their barking, or, at least, you stumble over some of their sleeping carcases at the outer door. Secondly, they are used for hunting the hares and red-legged partridges, and even foxes and wild-cats, in the Campo. And this, in reality, is the chief purpose for which they are kept.

Go out for a ride, or stroll into the Campo, or wild country—and in Spain the Campo bears a romance about its very look—and you will meet these half-wolves, half-dogs, at every sweep of the hills. The goatherd, tending his flock which browses on the short, crisp, aromatic herbage of the slopes, has his band of these dogs. The guard of the olives has his pack also of three or four trotting behind him, as he rends, with his clumsy axe, a branch off the unfruitful trees, here and there, in the grove. The "gitano"—a name which in Spain means anything that travels—or gipsy, has his pack also of three or four trotting behind him; and even the plain, rude peasant, journeying, as is his wont, from one town to another, his wife on the donkey packed as tightly, and to the full as uncomfortably, as his Penates, which he always carries with him, will have his dog trotting behind his heels, as he plods along through dusky olives and sandy plains, over ravine, and across mountain gulley. The mode of hunting with these dogs is peculiar.

Be it remembered, first of all, that much of the Campo is unpreserved, and any one who likes may

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make it his coursing or shooting ground. The game, of course, is very wild. It consists of rabbits, hares, red-legged partridges, which refuse to rise; snipes and woodcocks, in the occasional swampy spots; foxes and wild cats everywhere. In any case, however, you must have a Government licence to carry fire-arms. You want a day's hunting with these dogs, and speak to the guard of some olives. He says, "Yes," names the day, and organizes "his pack."

The bright scarlet coats and spirited horses of the Pytcheley or the Quorn would laugh one to scorn. The morning breaks, as most Spanish winter mornings do break, bright and clear; not a cloud to be seen in the sky—not a spot of wet in the road, very often. Here is "the pack," composed of these sandy-haired dogs and one solitary greyhound (*rara avis in terris*) in a leash. Here, too, is the master of the field, a simple olive-dresser, "all clad in leather." His short jacket is of rough, untanned leather; his cap is of fur; his gun is not a gun, but a semi-Moorish "piece," something akin to the old English fowling-piece; his steel buttons glaring enough; his steel chain across his shoulders, on which hang his small leather wine-bottle and his dog-call; his leather "shorts," and his boots of untanned leather—all remind you that it is the chase, but not the refined sport of Old England.

The greyhound in leash, the pack running far and wide, you sally forth, each one with gun on shoulder (and does not the mere fact of gun on shoulder make an Englishman's heart dance?); the dogs range far and near; on you go—now tumbling over some sharp bit of granite, half-concealed in thistles and twiny dry grass, or bents or rushes—now breasting

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some steep hill, the short grasses of which are dry, and slippery as glass—now making your way across some mountain gulley, which, to say the least, is rough walking. Yet, with old English memories of the turnip-fields and stubbles, where, with many a friend who long since had laid his weary bones beneath the scorching skies of India, or in the green churchyard of the country that once you called your home, you once, in the damp, fresh autumnal morning, pursued your game,—with these memories fresh upon you, you still enjoy the rough and wearying chase,—and, lo! just as you are in thought far away, hearing the evening bugle-call along the range of the "Hog's Back" (Aldershot), or exchanging kindly greetings, also in thought, with some old squire, on whom your eyes will never look again on this side the grave,—suddenly you hear the Spanish cazador yell out, "Liebre, *oy!*" The pack has put up a hare or a rabbit, you can scarcely say which, as its dusky, undefined form scuttles away amid the thick crop of thistles, furze, and dried bents: all the dogs are after him; but in a moment the greyhound is let slip, and goes straight towards the ill-fated hare. Surely ere night-fall his carcase will be boiling (rich morsel!) in the ornilla of the olive-guard! The Spaniard has not much idea of sport *as* sport—a good run (without a death) has little charms for him.

Now comes the tug of war: there is no fair play, as in our English coursing; remember we are in Spain, and as Spanish political prisoners have no fair play, neither do Spanish hares. Over hidden lumps of rock and stone, through little thickets of brushwood, on you run—straight down upon his prey you see the greyhound making. But the chase,

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which would be interesting, is spoiled—"the pack" (clumsy runners as they are) are spread all over the Campo. Wherever and whenever the poor hare doubles, retreats, or feints, one or two of the pack cut her off; and before ten minutes have pumped the wind out of your lungs, the greyhound is upon her, and you hear the wild shout of the leather-clad game-keeper (?) as he pulls the reeking form from his pack, and puts an end to its misery with a blow across the ears.

Then, in the short bents, or on fragments of rock, you all sit down; the leather bottle is passed round; freely you drink the rough red wine, which costs but fourpence a quart; and then you light each one your cigarillo, and you smoke for ten minutes; and—perhaps, your thoughts, as you look around at the wild sweep of half-clad hills, at the undulating groves of dusky olives, at the wild, semi-civilized forms around you—perhaps your thoughts wander back once more to home: to the turnip-field, and the stubbles, and that quiet river, along whose banks you used in other days to wander, fishing-rod in hand, and to faces probably long since laid beneath the earth—so it has often been to me.

As to the next sort of dog, the "Spanish bull-dog," or bull-mastiff, as he is called, I have but little to say. He is, when well-bred, very handsome; his measurement of height in general varies from 2 ft. to 2 ft. 8 in. The one from which my subjoined description is taken stands 2 ft. 9 in.

"Liberal" is more like an English blood-hound than any other species of dog with which I am acquainted. His hair is very short and fine, and of a rich sandy-red colour; his sleepy, massive head,

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with its small eyes, and ears almost invisible, so short are they cropped, and so sunken in the side, gives one an idea of easy good-nature, which is the characteristic of many of these powerful dogs, for powerful they are. "Liberal's" legs are a study in themselves, so massive as to seem almost unwieldy; his tail he carries gracefully drooped—it is, like his body, covered with short, fine hair.

These dogs are used by the higher classes as guards for their town houses, and you see them dozing peacefully, winter and summer, outside in the street. As a rule, like most creatures that are conscious of possessing power, these dogs are singularly gentle; and it is well that it should be so, for, if aroused, the Spanish bull-dog would prove, with his heavy jaws and massive limbs, a most formidable antagonist.

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The third "tipo" among the dogs of the interior is, like the first mentioned, a very common one. He is a little fellow, with white curly hair and a small curly tail; his ears are long, and coated with silky white hair; his little legs are very tiny, and also coated with silky short hair; he has the brightest of all little bright faces; the most impudent, roguish, expressive black eyes. He is usually, from his impudence, his habit of tearing everything he can find to pieces, and from his dirty habits, a regular little bore.

This little fellow, standing about eight inches nothing without his shoes, is the typical "lady's" lap-dog; the pet of the poor man's casa; the little scamp who snaps at your fingers from under the straw, if you pry too closely into the market-panniers of hens and canaries, turnips and onions, carried on the shoulders of mule or donkey to the early morning's market, or nibbles at your heels in the rich man's

casa. This little creature is one of the most intolerable little bores that can be conceived. In mischief and fun ever a child, he will carry off your slippers, tear your trousers, nibble your heels, jump up on the spread table and steal a bit of cooked chicken, and then run out into the yard and worry and kill your live chickens. Well for you if he does not enter your bed-room at night—he alone has the run of all the bed-rooms!—and "commit a nuisance!"

Well does he, the plague of every quiet criada, deserve the name or epithet so constantly applied to him, "Tuno," a word which, of constant use among the stable-men, muleteers, and lower class of domestic servants, implies, as nearly as I can render it into English, "scamp."

There is a well-known proverb among the Chilian Spaniards—"Chili is a paradise for women, a purgatory for men, and a hell for brutes."; and the last part of the proverb is equally true of the interior of Spain. The wretched treatment which the dumb brutes receive on all sides can be expressed by only one word—it is simply revolting. Nowhere as in the interior of Spain—Chili, I am told by Spaniards who have been resident there for years, is "far worse" (God help the brute creation if it is!)—nowhere is one so forcibly reminded of the old and oft-quoted words of Holy Writ, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain." Only take one single walk, and you will see every sort of brutality practised upon dog, donkey, or mule.

The poor donkeys are beaten, as they pass along the unpaved street, by the very boys of ten and twelve, simply for pleasure's sake, sometimes with a stick as thick as an ordinary crutch. I have seen

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blows given, and remonstrated without effect, on the spine of the unhappy laden donkey, near the tail, which made him stagger, and go tottering from side to side for a hundred yards, the brutal driver, or master of the drove, riding a few yards behind, totally unconcerned at seeing the beast, on whom his livelihood depends, thus heinously ill treated. One's blood boils, and one often interferes; but whatever may be the moral result in the future on the mind of the man with whom you expostulate, the result in the present upon the body of the poor brute is a double shower of blows, and a torrent of the vilest language!

What follows is the sketch of a real dog, but the writer must be pardoned for acting as his interpreter, and drawing a *little* on his own imagination.

Lost and starving dogs are plentiful in Spain, and poor Picho, as the criada called him, was taken into the house where I was staying. He was a very fair specimen of the last "tipo" I have described, as I thought at the first sight of his erect, cocky tail, (*very* rare in Spain this, where, large and small, the poor dogs absolutely *shrink from* a human being!) and his roguish black eyes, and his strutty little curly carcase. No sooner was Picho installed as a dependent than Picho was master of the casa. He liked the quarters, and made them his own—bed-room, sitting-room, drawing-room, sofa, or bed; all, save the kitchen, which he thoroughly despised from the first, were made, by a "daily beating of the bounds," and oftentimes, I grieve to say, "leaving of strange land-marks," quite his own!

There was only one *un*aristocratic place where Picho deigned to walk, and that was the *house-tops*. These in Spain have so gentle a slope, that dogs, cats,

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and, in some cases, even men, can walk them without fear of a fall. In Spain, in the interior, the top story, or what we should call in England the "attic-floor," can only be used for one purpose, namely, as a "camera" or granary, owing to the intense heat, which renders sleeping in the top story impossible; it is therefore used as a barn for the sacks of habas, trigo, or garbanzos, or sevada (beans, wheat, peas, or barley), to be stacked in for the winter; and frequently, in taking a house in the interior, you will find *the camera let to a different tenant*, who has free access at all times to it *through your house*—perhaps, *as is the case with me*, through your study! These little granaries are each filled with sacks of grain, and weekly the renter will come with his labourers to carry home a sack or two, as occasion may demand. Rats and mice abound in Spain, and in Spain, as elsewhere, love the grain, especially if its value is enhanced (as the value of every blessing, even of education, is!) by their having to *pay for it*, by gnawing through the tough sacking. The Spaniards, therefore, make a tiny hole, looking out upon the roof, just large enough to admit of a cat's entering from the roof into the camera; and so the cats, exiled from the house, wander about the roofs, and always, for their shelter, creep into one of these little port-holes, and jump down to find a bed, dry and soft, and a mouse or rat or two, in the camera. On a rainy day you may see cat after cat running along the roof to these tiny pent-houses, and jumping down among the sacks, thus preserving them from the attacks of mouse or rat. Necessarily from all this, it follows that many cats are about the roofs of Spanish houses; and, just as an English squire loves to vary the

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comforts of his drawing-room and fireside by the exposure and rough fare of a day on the moors, so Picho made the roofs his hunting-ground, and gave fierce chase to all the cats around.

Why the Spaniard of the interior always calls a dog, in addressing him, "Picho," I know not, and I cannot find out. "Picho" means, literally, a breast; and the word "pichon," meaning a pointer-dog, is too far-fetched for the Spaniard of the interior, besides having no special application. However, everywhere you hear the muleteer, or servant, or donkey-driver, crying out, "Anda, Picho," and "Malo, Picho." Poor Picho had evidently no home, and the reason, as the Spanish servant said, was because he had no heart! Doubtless, could he have told it, his history was a strange one, although no one in our township seemed to know anything at all about it. Yet the little, weak, cocky, stupid wanderer, with his cocked tail, and his velvety paws, could not have come from any great distance.

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Picho was uncommonly clever. As the old Scotch shepherd said of his dog, "He knew when we were talking about him: he was unco' clever." Whenever his past history was in any way alluded to, Picho invariably left the room, possibly to avoid answering unpleasant questions.

If, at the moment of the question of his antecedents being mooted, (and, in the long, weary, hot summer, when no "English posts" arrived for weeks, or only came by fits and starts, passed through the pickets of the Intransigentes in a melon-bag, we had needs have recourse to every theme of conversation, however trifling!) the door was shut, and he could not get out of ear-shot, Picho would be sick at once

all over the room, and so force one of us to rise, and break off the subject, and let him out. This "being sick" ("vomito," as the criada called it) was one of Picho's favourite weapons of offence, or defence—a weapon, too, that he wielded on all occasions most successfully.

Was he to be beaten, he escaped it, if possible, by instantaneous and most corporeal sickness! Was there a disposition among us to discuss the hidden things of his former life, seized he was, instantly, with acute sickness! Did the rude boot of any fellow-inmate of the house push Picho away from his little seat in the shady corner of the sala, sickness was inevitable — an attack too often heralded by a shrill scream, which drew down from gentle Spanish hearts too much odium on the owner of the offending boot.

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Picho's sex, in those weary days of tropic heat, when one must say something, but did not know what on earth to say, was a matter of much dispute among us for a long time. Was *he* "male or female"? There were certain little protuberances on the ridge of Picho's stomach, visible only when he rolled over, and put up his little paws in a beseeching, I might say abject, attitude, which seemed to indicate the latter; and, for a time, Picho enjoyed the privilege of the sex. We appealed, however, to the cura of a neighbouring parish, whom, possibly because he had had so long an experience of *unmarried* life, we supposed (on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle) to be an authority in such matters. Gravely he lifted Picho from the ground, while his full, flowing canonicals covered any indecency, and, shaking sagely his grey hairs, he gave (what very few clerics are content to

do, more's the pity!) an open verdict, in the following concise and priestly sentence,—

"Sunt dubii generis."

Surely he had studied, not only Latin, but the Latin Syntax of the Eton scholar! Ever after that, we "gave the prisoner the benefit of the doubt," and Picho, who had often been "it" before, was dignified by the sobriquet of "he," save by one of the younger criadas of the casa, who, being in love, and anxious to escape from the trammels of the unmarried maiden's life in the lower ranks, believed in the perfection of the male sex among all created animals, and, knowing by daily experience that Picho was not perfect, persisted in calling him "she."

In these few lines that follow, however, remembering the good old rule, "De mortuis nil nisi bonum," I shall give Picho the benefit of the doubt; and, since he has gone to that home for lost and starving dogs from whence there is no return, and where, possibly, there is neither male nor female, shall henceforth dignify him by the name of "he." Picho may ere now have dropped his sex, and be within the elementary rule; but I question whether Picho will ever fully come up to a high standard!

Now for the few fragments of his history that I have been enabled to collect. The ladies of the casa were out for a promenade on the Alameda one evening, when this queer little mortal came to them for shelter, and made himself a partner in their homeward walk. Stranger as he was, they took him home, and generously entertained him—alas! it was no angel that unawares they entertained. Cowardly, upstart, dirty in his habits, bad tempered, useless,

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and without any character at all, such was Picho; but he had common-sense—he had found a good home, and he intended to stick to it.

Next morning Picho was put outside the door, that he might be at liberty to rejoin his friends. Steadily, he refused to leave the door. They had him "proclaimed," but no one claimed him (no wonder!); advertised in other ways, no one came forward as his owner. Spanish ladies have very soft hearts, and so Picho took up his quarters at their casa; eschewed men's society, showing a decided love for petticoats; despised and turned up his nose at kitchen meals; and gave the ladies, who called him "Pobre cito!" (Poor little fellow!) and supplied him with chicken-bones and a pillow to lie upon, the idea that he was most aristocratic, and had spent his life in high society.

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I felt sure the little creature, with his undeniable, almost human, cleverness and perception, was a deceiver. But of what avail is it to speak when the star (even of a snob) is in the ascendant? *I* was but a guest for a short while, *he* was a recognized member of the family; indeed, *I* might almost be said to have been—I am sure *he* would have said so—his guest!

Picho was a thorough nuisance. He misbehaved himself in the bed-room; he left fleas on the sofa where I took my noon-day siesta; he got me into scrape after scrape, for my harshness towards him, with the ladies; at last he even dared to take a plunge in my bath! This was too much. I envied, and, at last, hated Picho. Still, I bore it all patiently; his conceit was so unbearable, so excessive, that I felt sure it must have a fall ere long! For many months Picho lived upon an untruth, and, what is far more unusual, he fattened upon it. Idle, useless in every

dog-walk of life (he would not even bark latterly), he still ruled the roast.

The Municipal Guards, like our English rural police, are sometimes, if not always, smart fellows. As ill-luck would have it—or, rather, as the Nemesis of deceit will ever have it—the avenging angel came one day to the door, in the red-banded cap and clanking sword of a Municipal Guard from a neighbouring town. He came to the door; and, alas for him! Picho had just been "shown the door" for one of his daily offences. The little white dog and the moustachioed Guard, towering high in air above him, looked at one another in silence for a moment. Then the Guard, taking the initiative, gave poor Picho a roll over with his foot, and said, "Carramba! why, you are the blind man's dog from ——." (Bitch, he said.) Poor Picho: his character, and even sex, were trembling in the balance. What issues depended on a moment! It did not move, did not answer; the iron had entered too deeply into his soul. Ample admission of the charge was the poor little creature's look of guilty shame and of discovered fraud. The accusation was true—Picho was no scion of aristocratic house, but the tramping beggar's dog. The dream was over, the game was played out! He who had pretended that he could not sleep on straw, had oftentimes been used to the bare, hard stones; the dog who affected chicken-bones, and was a martyr to dyspepsia, had often begged in vain for dry crusts and offal!

A dog is like a human being in one way: if you do not show that you trust in him, and believe in him, you utterly destroy his *morale*, and soon break his spirit. From that day of public downfall and disgrace

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he never rallied; he was quite crestfallen; life for him had lost its charm. I never saw his little white tail curled over his back then! Kindly, warm Spanish hearts saw his sorrow; and feeling that, after all, they had taken the one word of the man in office against Picho's long course of aristocratic tastes and habits, which seemed to come quite natural to him, (no beggar-on-horseback seemed he!) the ladies conveyed to his dog-mind, by additional tenderness, extra over-feeding, &c., that they still believed in him—still thought he had been the dog of a Duque at least; and that he was to be not only loved, but greatly pitied. "It must," so they said, "have been a dog dear to a Duke!"

I was absent from the house for a while. When I returned, Picho's star was once more in the ascendant: he was believed in; the Guard was "nowhere." "A Duke's dog!" I knew better. And now was my time to test the truth of Picho's tacit assurances by a crucial test. Two things I remembered about the "blind man" of the neighbouring town, whose leader and guide Picho had once, so said the Guard, been! He used to wear a heavy clog, and put it (not gently!) on his dog's back when he wanted to go on from some house where his "Una limosnita, por Dios!" had been refused; and I remembered also that the string by which the little dog (the new "Claimant") led his master was apt constantly to become entangled in the little fellow's legs; and the vision of the poor sightless "mendico," in his tattered breeches, and brown, still more tattered, manta, shouting, "Tuno; anda, Tuno," and sawing the air with the hand that held the string to get it free of the dog's legs, rose vividly before me.

I, too, would put on a clog—I, too, would be blind and saw the air; and then, if Picho screamed at the

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uplifting of my clog, and pawed the air with his feet to get rid of a string, which existed nowhere but in his own memory, why, then there was no doubt at all; he was—as even the ladies of the casa agreed—no longer Sir Roger Tichborne, but plain Arthur Orton. The day and hour were fixed; I put on the clog, and clumped into the sala, where, with his laurels (redivivi) fresh upon him, lay, taking his noon-day siesta, poor Picho.

"The Claimant," about to be bandied about "bandy," was a trifle to poor Picho in his look of utter consternation as he heard the clump of my heavy boot along the stone-flagged floor of the sala coming towards him. He was on his mettle, for the ladies, who believed in him, were there; and what will not dog or man do to save their honour before ladies? Picho looked up deprecatingly; he knew that the game was up. Imitating the well-remembered action of the blind mendico, I waved the clog over his back, and called him "Tuno!" (scamp). Poor little dog; memories thick of other bitter days coming up before his mind, he screamed and whinnied for mercy long ere he had felt the weight of my descending foot. I desisted, thinking this amount of proof ample; and Picho sat, a tear in either eye, looking the very picture of dejection and misery.

"Is not this enough?" said I.

"No; try the string, too; we can't believe our Picho to be an impostor."

The poor little dog's eyes were fixed upon me. Had I not felt him to be such an utter scamp, my heart would have melted at the mute appeal of his black eyes. But he had been too upstart, too troublesome. I sawed the air, with my right hand, high

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above his head, as though seeking to disengage an imaginary string. The effect was immediate. (Oh, that such a crucial test could have been applied to "The Claimant," what trouble, what money had been saved!) First with a hind leg, then with a front; then, feeling no relief, first with the left, then with the right, the poor little dog pawed the air to free himself from a string which existed only in his little dog-imagination!

It was all over then; even the ladies scorned him, after believing against belief, and hoping against hope; and daily the finger of scorn was pointed at the unhappy little dog. From that day we all called him, not the dog of the Duke, but plain "Tuno." But the poor little beast never rallied. From that day his self-respect was utterly gone: he became daily more filthy in his habits, more distasteful to us all. Spanish servants are very kind at heart, as I have often proved; their affectionateness oftentimes exceeds their sense of honesty and their probity. Every Spanish servant (this is one of the bright points of their character) will help a kind master or mistress who is in trouble to the utmost of their ability—aye, will even suffer in their cause! And the Spanish criada took pity upon the despised Picho. The first step towards reinstating the little fellow, with true Spanish instinct she thought, was to transform him into a poodle. She shaved, with razor and soap-and-water, all his hinder parts, and brought him in to be looked at. We all called her *protégée* "Tuno"!

Next morning Picho had belied her hopes and betrayed her confidence; his self-respect was gone; and what other could you expect? He went into the bed-room of the guests, and committed nuisances!

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