lambs, to be killed for the Easter feast, passed my door, the rain, the while, falling fast. One and all, we thanked God for that rain.

One word, and I have done. It is often objected to these processions that they give rise to a scene of lawlessness and disorder. True, they have done so in past years, of late time especially. Until a few years since, in this very town, each one of the penitentes used to carry a skull. Many used to join the procession tipsy, and, at the end, they would fight with the very skulls they carried. This, to my knowledge, has been. But it need not be. And, with a population so ignorant, so wholly uneducated as that of the Spanish interior, is not the procession and the acting a good way—nay, under present circumstances, is it not the only way—of bringing before vine-dresser, and water-carrier, and miner the great truths of Jesus Christ and Him crucified? At any rate, I saw many eyes, and those not women's eyes, wet with tears.

CHAPTER XI.

GOOD FRIDAY AT BAEZA.

Baeza is a cathedral town of the Spanish interior, with a population of some fifteen thousand souls. It is situated just outside the confines of the great lead mining district which has Linares for its centre, and untouched by the wave of commerce and busy modern life which breaks upon the latter. It keeps up its old traditions, its strict Catholic observances, its isolation, and tranquillity, and preserves still its ancient jealousy of the bustling town of Linares.

Linares is the seat of commerce for this part of the Spanish interior, Baeza of tranquillity and refined Spanish ease.

"Baeza quiere pares,
Y no quiere Linares."

So runs the ancient refrain.

Above all things, in its services, and other religious rites and ceremonies, Baeza maintains a proud superiority over other towns of its size. So magnificent are its processions, that they take rank in Spain well nigh beside those of Seville.

Perhaps the jealousy above referred to should hardly have been mentioned, so slight is it, more especially in the presence of the great doings of La Semana Santa—Holy Week: a kindly and unobtrusive jealousy, which time and increased inter-

course between the two towns are yearly softening,—a jealousy now no greater than that existing between "county families" and "business men" in England, of which populations these two towns, Baeza and Linares, are respectively the types.

Good Friday dawned upon the barren Campo with a chill east wind and a cloudless sky. Early in the morning, we, who were bent upon seeing the processions of Good Friday in Baeza, were in the saddle, for the ride from our humble cottage to that town was thirteen miles at least.

At 8·30, as we toiled up hill along the white, dusty road, the sun was beating down with almost tropical force. With head down and dripping flanks, our mules ambled along through a dry, scorching heat, with blinding clouds of granite dust, quite unknown at this season in the moist climate of England. But little did the two horsemen, who looked around from time to time upon the truly magnificent prospect, think of or care for dust and heat.

Below us, its naked banks showing all jagged and irregular against the morning sky, flowed the rapid, winding, yellow Guadalquivir, the tender green foliage of the oleander which clothe its banks being hardly visible. Beyond it, across its winding valley, like wave upon wave, rose countless hills clothed with the stunted vine and the dusky olive, carrying one's gaze up to the sharp, blue, jagged outline of the Sierra Morena.

To our left, a dim yielding line, on the clear horizon, rose the snow-clad mountains of the Sierra Nevada. To our right, rose one huge pile of mountains, streaked with silver lines of snow, and apparently, seen through the clear atmosphere of this part of the Peninsula, so

near, that one could hardly realize the fact that the foot of them was at least twenty miles away.

Here and there, as we mounted some hill or turned some curve, lay, in its sheltered hollow, a little town, stone built, the home of the farmer or the olive-dresser, and so much the colour of the surrounding country, that the eye at first sight failed to distinguish it. Gradually surveying the whole horizon, the view died away, bluer and yet bluer, until it was lost in the shade of the great mountains.

Such was our ride. Yet, here and there closer objects claimed our attention for a moment. At many a corner, propped up against loose stone wall, or nailed against olive tree or ilex, was a little wooden cross, sometimes painted black, and adorned with letters or initial, or with a half-faded wreath. The crosses are put up to mark the spot where a man has died a violent death. If each of these mute memorials could tell its own dark story, it would be the olden story, of the passionate word, the deathly blow, followed by years of bitter and, it may be, agonizing repentance.

Higher and higher we mounted, when, just as we were getting tired, our mules pricked up their ears, and shook themselves together for a trot. They knew more than we did, for a few moments brought us to a wayside fountain, well supplied with drinking utensils for man and beast, of the purest, clearest, coldest water—a spring so celebrated, that Spaniards, who are more particular about the quality of their water than about any other article of food or drink, send their aguaderos (water-carriers) to fill the canteros (earthen pitchers, carried two on each side in panniers on mule or donkey back) to this especial spring from

distances of three, four, or even eight and nine miles. Lad and lassie, men and women, in holiday costume, streamed up to the fountain; many of them chanting that wild, primitive, monotonous ditty peculiar to the Andaluz, the words of which are almost invariably impromptu, and the tone of which may be thus correctly described: five or six words are said rapidly upon one note, somewhat high; the voice is then, with the most peculiar and difficult runs, lowered several notes; it is then lowered and raised again, according to the pleasure of the singer.

Hundreds of men and women, chiefly of the lower class, were streaming along the road towards Baeza, as we started onwards. Many women, their right arm clasping tightly the waist of their companion, were "riding pilion" behind husband, brother, or father, on mules or donkeys. All were in holiday attire; and the bright handkerchiefs, tied gracefully enough over the ebon locks of the women, and their gaudy dresses, together with the bright-coloured head-gear of donkey or mule, and the invariable halter twisted neatly around the head-straps of the bridle, made a picturesque and pretty stream, lively enough, too, as they passed us, or we them, all speculating on the one subject that then occupied their minds—"What sort of procession will it be under this Government."

Happy, laughing faces, picturesque dresses, and ringing, joyous carols of laughter, or of song, or gay banter, are not disagreeable companions at the end of a dusty and somewhat monotonous ride; and certainly a better-behaved crowd I have never seen. They came from mine, from olive-lodge, from the "lodge in the garden of melons," from the vineyard, from the counter, yet there was no indecent jest, no

coarse expression, no oath heard—and such has been my constant experience of a Spanish crowd. True, they are ignorant, and cannot read or write, whereas an English crowd of the same character could probably do either; but the Spaniards of the lower class (as well as the higher) have one Christian grace unknown to Englishmen, the grace of natural courtesy.

At last we rode into the entrance of the town. Nothing very striking there. Old and rambling stone houses, with many of the windows without glass, but all with a strong cage of iron bars for protection; streets simply strewed with huge loose boulders of granite or other stone; crowds streaming with us towards the large "posada," or inn, at the outskirts of the township. The posada merits a moment's notice. It was once a (Franciscan, I believe) convent of considerable size, but now *tempora mutantur*, and the spacious "patio" (courtyard) stands thick with mule-carts, and all through the grey stone cloisters, venerable and inspiring respect even now, are beasts of burden, from the lowly donkey up to the fiery little Andalucian charger, slaking their thirst at the stone drinking-troughs with which they are fitted up.

Our mules safely tethered, we hastened to the Plaza, or market-square, an institution common to most townships of the Spanish interior, wherein the representation of the Lord's last suffering was to take place. This Plaza is a very large square, the four sides of which are composed of white-washed stone houses, the upper stories of which project (as in many old English towns—Chester, I believe, for one) over the lower, and are propped up with pillars of wood, which seemed, in many cases, quite weak and crumbling. Around this covered walk—for such it is—facing the Plaza, are

many little shops, where are sold various articles, but chiefly the aguardiente,—a strong spirit, distilled from wine and flavoured with aniseed,—in which the Spanish peasant's heart delights at early morn.

Every street is now discharging its hundreds into the Plaza; the crowd is orderly and quiet, if eager; for every eye will soon be gazing upon the likeness of its Lord and of His sainted mother. Wonderful sight, I thought, for the pencil of a Phillip, an O'Neil, or a Frith, is this crowd, as I gazed down from our balcony upon the moving mass beneath me. The coloured head-handkerchiefs of the women; the scarlet and crimson fajas (sashes) of the men,—some standing in the full, rich sunlight, some, more fortunate, in the blue shadow (for in Spain the shadow really is blue!); the ricketty-looking, nearly flat-roofed houses, and far away the snow-capped ridge of the distant mountains,—all these were matter for the artist's hand, and, with the aid of the strains of solemn Passion music, which soon sounded above the hum of human voices, brought over me that strange feeling of wishfulness for something eternally good and of pensive sadness which ever comes from the contemplation of a spectacle more than usually solemn and beautiful.

Suddenly there was a movement in the crowd beneath me—a crowd now numbering several thousands—as the music drew gradually nearer and nearer; but there was no noise nor disorder; and silently a row of men, two deep, dressed in long, flowing robes, with hoods turned over their heads, and each man bearing a huge lighted candle, came silently round the corner of the Plaza, and easily made a broad road through the ranks of the now silent and bare-headed crowd. These were the "penitentes," and their immediate

office was to keep a clear pathway for the procession of images soon to follow. And then, as I gazed, it came.

First, borne by four penitentes, our Saviour Himself, clad in a flowing robe of rich claret colour, gorgeously embroidered with gold; firmly around His sacred temples the crown of cruel thorns is pressed, and twined among His hair (real human hair), which, dabbled in blood, falls down over His shoulders. A more awfully natural picture of human agony I never saw. He has fallen upon one hand from exhaustion, and that shows a jagged and soil-stained wound; His head droops a little; His nostrils are slightly widened, as of one who pants for breath. But, oh! the terribly weary, and yet uncomplaining, suffering expressed in the Divine face! Oh! the exhaustion, the mute reproof, the look of utter weariness depicted in it!

As that figure passes slowly up the square, severing, with its quiet, mute, onward march, the thronging populace, every hand crossed its breast, every knee went low in mute adoration.

But He has gone!

In flashing steel helmets, buff coats, and steel breast-plates, behind Him march, two and two, one hundred Roman soldiers, the "Centurion's Guard." Some are riding on fiery Andalucian chargers, which fret and curvet through the crowd,—horses lent by some of the richest men of the town,—some march on foot.

Suddenly the band stepped to one side; the Roman soldiery, four deep, formed up around, above, and below the suffering Christ. The penitentes once more cleared a way through the thronging crowd. Another figure, which we all took for that of Mary the mother of Jesus, came slowly along between the

line of bare-footed penitentes. It was La Santa Veronica (Saint Veronica). She bore, holding it by the corners, a white handkerchief in her hands. As she is borne near to the image of Jesus Christ, she courtesies, as it were, being lowered by her bearers to the very earth. Once, twice, thrice, amid a dead hush, this ceremony of her performing her obeisance is gone through; and then she approaches, handkerchief in hand, her suffering Lord. She stoops down, she wipes the sweat, and blood, and dirt from the Saviour's bleeding brow and travel-stained face, and just as she does so, the handkerchief is swiftly rolled up by means of a spring, and another appears in her hands, with the image of Jesus upon it.

The legend of Saint Veronica is well known. She wiped the blood and sweat from the Saviour's face on the last journey to Calvary, and the handkerchief being folded three deep, she bore away upon it three images, as it were, of the Divino Rostro. One—so says the Spanish legend—was lost; one is in St. Peter's, at Rome; one in the Cathedral at Jaën, in this province, the capital town. And now the Virgin herself comes. As she too, in her turn, came round the corner of the street, the whole crowd in that teeming plaza sank simultaneously to its knees upon the dusty, rock-strewn square. I knelt, in company with some thirty Spaniards, in our balcony; and on looking around and about, up at the windows, into the balconies, and below upon the seething, crushed-up crowd, the eye could not discern one head covered, or one single standing figure. In her turn, Santa Maria drew near to her Lord and her God, and (as did Santa Veronica) made obeisance to him several times. Her arms move, she wipes her eyes, her pale

face is expressive of simple, sheer, approachable grief; her eyes are red and swollen with weeping. Beautifully, as she wipes her tear-streaming, blood-shot eyes, the bands (for they are many) play some of the most plaintive strains of Bach's Passion music, and at the saddest, most wailing note, the Virgin mother draws near and puts her arms around the neck and across the breast of her fallen, fainting, and bleeding son. Many an eye long a stranger to tears is wet with them now. Many a heart, doubtless—though we cannot say—is throbbing with the first pulsation it has felt for good since last Passion Week.

The procession vanished, and a slight, a very slight, indecency took place. As the people, rising from their knees, press too hardly upon the penitentes, these latter, with their heavy candles, beat them back. A blow from one of these candles, or tapers, as they are called, is no laughing matter: they average three or four feet in length, and are one and a half inch in diameter.

And so went out of sight, amid an orderly and gentle, but eager crowd, the first procession of Holy Friday. Well, people, especially Englishmen, who know nothing of Spanish character, and of the ignorance, the exceeding ignorance, of the masses here, often affect contempt, or indulge in ridicule, at the idea of these processions being productive of any good. Yet, when one considers that thousands in Spain know but little of God's great act of love but what they learn, and are yearly reminded of, through them, and when one sees the rough miner, the gay woman, the rude olive-dresser, on their knees, with streaming eyes, at this exhibition, one must surely make a very solemn pause before uttering any word

of disparagement or condemnation. True, I have heard the indecent jest and the ribald sneer, but it has been beautifully said that, even of those whose lips utter such language, it may be that "coming to scoff, they stay to hear."

After the procession, we breakfasted in the Casa de Huespedes, or lodging-house for strangers. Opposite to us sat a Spanish gentleman, who, over his sixth egg and third piece of bacalao (salt cod), glared angrily at the strangers who ventured to eat a modest slice of meat. Then to the churches of the town. In each one the images stood, on their framework, ready for the evening procession. The side altars were lighted; the incense smelt fragrant in the dark aisles. The pictures seemed to me poor; but in Spanish churches the light is so bad, and the pictures are hung with such utter disregard to light, that one could form, in so hurried a moment, no fair or trustworthy judgment upon their respective merits.

From the churches, of which we made quite a tour, we passed into the streets; and here we were surprised at meeting two men, heavily manacled around the ankle, bound together. They were, we found upon inquiry, prisoners (condemned felons, in fact), but men who, being "well-behaved," were allowed on Good Friday to parade the streets and solicit alms. I asked one of them what was his offence. "Man-slaughter with the knife," he said; "but it was entirely an act of self-defence; and if I had sufficient funds I should be released." At the corner of a side street, a table in front of her hiding her manacles, sat a sweetly-pretty Spanish girl; into a little tray before her every now and again a passer-by threw a few coppers. She,

too, was a prisoner, on a "Good Friday ticket-of-leave." We forbore to ask her the nature of her crime.

The last procession was after nightfall. The crowds, the music, and the images, in great measure, were the same. The image of Jesus Christ came up, and, in the dim grey evening light, by the many lit candles, we saw that he was washing Peter's feet. A silver basin full of water was on the ground: Jesus knelt at the disciple's feet, a silver jug in his hand. His attitude was that of earnest admonition, beautifully conveyed, the disciple's that of deprecation; and, as the solemn Passion music broke once more in the dusky evening over that bending crowd, one could almost hear the words,—"Dost Thou wash my feet?" and the solemn answer,—"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know." In this scene, I should say, the letter of the Holy Gospel is ignored, for our Lord was represented in a long, claret-coloured robe! Then was put forth before the crowd Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. He knelt, the sweat dripping down amongst real evergreens lit up with candles. Most awful of all was the next. The Christ was bound, bound with thongs of esparto grass, to flogging-post. His holy back was scored with the marks of the lashes, from which blood seemed oozing out; there was around one of His arms a great black-and-blue and livid wale, evidently the result of a foul blow. Then came many figures of Christ bearing His cross, in each one of which I noticed that His hand and knee were represented as fearfully lacerated and blood-stained. Then night fell all around. The crowds were dense. The Plaza was one mass of darkness, moving forms, and lighted candles. All was

hushed and still. You could even hear the night-wind blowing in fitful gusts (had we not all day been praying for rain?) from the mountains to the southward. The end was at hand.

The Crucifixion came at last before our bewildered eyes, and, in its severity, it was truly awful—it was almost too life-like. Night had thrown its shades of gloominess all around. The Christ was raised up aloft in that dim, silent, but teeming Plaza, nailed upon His cross of agony and shame,—a public spectacle, His dying figure barely lit up by torch of penitent or ruthless soldier. Little thin red streams of blood flowed down from His nail-pierced hands, crossing each other at the wrist, and passing to the armpit, and thence trickling down the sides, and soaking in gore the linen cloth at the waist.

I turned away sick and faint; it was all too frightfully real. The blood seemed clotted with sweat, dust, and dirt; the jagged edge of the foot-wounds was terrible to gaze upon. The two thieves, one on either side, had great ugly gashes through their shin-bones. On either side stood the long line of penitentes, whose lighted candles shed a fitful ray over the whole. And then even that great act in man's redemption was finished.

Next came some sweetly pretty little girls, each one with a pair of silver wings, carrying in their hands tiny banners, inscribed (in Latin) with the words, "For our salvation he hath died." Then passed upward the Roman soldiers, and the Virgin, with the dead body of her Lord in her arms.

One more spectacle later on, and all was over. A glass coffin, at ten at night, was borne past us. It

was beautifully illuminated, and in it lay a quiet body, with pale features, peaceful enough, swathed in a linen cloth. Mary Magdalene first, then St. John, then St. Veronica, followed the transparent coffin.

And then all was over. But I went home with altered feelings as to the use of all these externals; for I had been witness to a most impressive, a most solemn sight.

CHAPTER XII.

SPANISH SERVANTS IN A MINING DISTRICT—MARIA, ISIDRA.

So much has lately been written on the subject of servants, that, were it not that the Spanish servants in the mining districts, and other parts of Spain where the wave of progress and change as yet has hardly been heard, preserve, in a striking degree, their originality and individuality, one would hardly be justified in making them the theme of a separate chapter.

When we speak of servants (criadas or criados), male or female, we may do so without going into any specific differences. There is no broad line drawn between nurse and housemaid, butler and groom, inasmuch as the Spanish servant has no training for accepting any particular kind of place, and is ready to turn her hand to anything, making up, by willingness, sweetness of temper, easiness or indifference, for her lack of special knowledge.

Thus, a young woman will be nurse for a year; then take a fancy to cooking, and offer herself as cook, thinking herself fully competent for such simple cooking as she is called upon to do if she can stew, boil, and fry in oil, make a salad or a gazpacho, and boil goat's meat and flour into sopa de macho (goat's soup).

The man-servant, too, turns his hand to anything. Goes errands, opens the door, cigarillo in mouth, or rides on donkey-back behind his master to the mine, the olive-grove, or the shooting-ground. He never wears livery, but adopts his national or provincial costume, and is more of a free lance than a regular servant.

The man-servant is generally a young unmarried man; the maid-servant generally a widow, who, if she have children, must have them in the house with her; or a woman of mature age, say forty years, the younger unmarried women being jealously guarded at home by mother or aunt.

Those who expect in this chapter a reproduction of the several well-defined types of English servants,—the spruce footman, the man-of-all-work, the house-maid, or the trained nursery-maid,—will be much disappointed: for, instead of them, I shall present the hoyden, under the care of her mother, assisting her in her duties as servant, but not allowed to "go out" on her own account; the young widow, who turns to service for a living until she captivate some swain again; and the respectable married couple, who choose to subject themselves to the little trials of service, in order to save house-rent, the woman acting as cook, or nurse, or maid-of-all-work, the man working all day in the mine or the garden.

To state briefly, on the threshold of our subject, the leading differences between the condition of the Spanish and English servant, this may be said—that the Spanish generally has wages and not food provided, the English both; the Spanish has ample liberty, may dress as she pleases, go where she pleases, and have relations, friends, and followers in

the kitchen with her at all hours, whereas to the English servant no such liberty is accorded; the Spanish brings her furniture, bedstead, images, pots and pans, and pitchers, with her into her master's house, thus setting up quite a little establishment within an establishment; the Spanish servant is contented with the roughest, darkest sleeping quarters, not turning up her nose at its roughness and even unhealthiness. This seems hard; but it must be remembered that the homes of the Spanish poor are dark, windowless, one-storied shanties, a rug spread upon the stones being often their only bed; and also, that the dryness of the climate, and the very short hours of rest in the bed-room itself, in part act as a makeweight to these discomforts.

The wages of the Spanish servant are low; but it must be remembered that the rate of living in Spain is much cheaper than in England, the constitution not needing so much solid support beneath the Andalucian ever-shining sun as beneath the frowning skies and chilly rains of England.

The general scale of wages among the Spanish poor would be much as follows, varying, of course, from time to time:—A Spanish maid-servant would receive one peseta (tenpence) per day, without food, or fivepence with food—food merely meaning bread, soup, and vegetables or fruit; a man-servant two pesetas per diem, without food; a ploughman, during the ploughing season, would receive two pesetas per diem, with one meal of gazpacho; a vineyard-man, during the forty days of the vintage, would receive as much as five pesetas per diem. And these wages seem good; but it must be remembered that they are wages for these special seasons; that there is, owing

to the drought, no possibility of men being employed on the land all the year round, as in England; and so the labourer, his harvest or vintage finished, goes back to his donkey and his water-carrying until ploughing-time or harvest bids him return to sow or reap.

The usual wages of the Spanish private soldier would be one penny or twopence per day to spend, the rest of his pay being stopped for expenses of dress, &c. His fare is not meat, but soup, and bread, and vegetables. Since the Republican Government, however, the soldier has received, nominally, at least, much more money.

The sailor on board the Spanish man-of-war receives from five to six dollars per month and his food, or, if a preferente (first class), as much as ten dollars. The merchant sailor is more liberally paid, however, receiving from twelve to sixteen dollars per month with his food.

	£.	s.	d.
The Spanish Real (by which all accounts are reckoned) =	0	0	$2\frac{1}{2}$
The Spanish Peseta	0	0	10
The Spanish Dollar	0	4	2
The Spanish Pound	1	0	10

The *modus operandi*, when you need a servant, is as follows. You give notice to any one and every one you meet, servants at other houses included, that you need a servant; and the news of your need will quickly spread. Every morning, before the heat of the day, one servant after another will present himself or herself at your door, even as early as five or six o'clock. They never have any character, by word of mouth or by letter; and to ask a Spanish servant to bring you a character would bring an angry flush to her cheek and a strange fire to her eye, and she would turn

away at once, saying, "Well, I can go elsewhere. Good-bye."

There are generally drawbacks to each one of these poor creatures, especially in the mining districts, where all is of the roughest; where they are frequently called upon to serve very graceless masters, oftentimes English, French, or German. And you will find much difficulty in getting a suitable servant. One middle-aged, decent-looking widow will promise well, but you will find that her drawback, poor thing, consists of two utterly unmanageable lads, whose vagaries have driven her from place to place. Another, with a kind, dirty, honest face peeping out of her rags, quite alarms you, much as you like her appearance, when she tells you that all her traps, bedstead or cuatre included, are gone to the agencia de prestamos (pawn-shop). Much as your heart yearns to help her, you dare not engage her.

At last, there will come one, whose appearance you like. She has only one drawback in the shape of a daughter, of mature or marriageable age; still, Isidra —for such was the name of one who lived in our house—will help her madré in the house-work, and be useful. At any rate, her bright, black, bead-like eyes and racy smile promise a little amusement. So Isidra and her mother Isabel were reckoned among the tenants of our house. Good-hearted, willing girl as she was, she certainly was a drawback. A more mischievous, hot-tempered, reckless little hoyden I seldom met with. Utterly uneducated, a regular child of nature, with an exuberance of animal spirits seldom seen, she, to use a common but expressive phrase, "led her mother such a dance," that, at last, good and honest as was the old mother, we were fain to part

although all my body be black
My money's all Spanish treat
Here is the cross of the castles
& The arms of the King of Castille

with her. She would have a fit of the sulks, and refuse to work for hours; at last, her mother's patience would tire, and the old lady would beat and kick her daughter with her thick boot until, with loud screams, the daughter would turn upon her mother, and a regular wrestling-match between the two would ensue. At last, the daughter got the worst of it; and the mother, grieved at her tears, would leave the dinner to spoil, hurry down to the trinket-stalls in the market-square, and come home with a pair of brass ear-rings or a tinsel ring, and the two would kiss and hug one another for the rest of the day. Sometimes Isidra would make her escape, and, looking back in fits of laughter at her old mother, would climb and run along the flat roofs of the houses like a cat, the mother wringing her wrinkled hands, and shouting to her worthy daughter to return to her maternal embrace.

The girl was full of natural wit, and loved a joke, as do all the Spaniards, at their masters' expense, and their sayings, which in England would be called impertinent, and resented accordingly, are here so common, and spoken so courteously, that you cannot be angry with them. Indeed, the familiarity of the Spanish servants with their employers strikes me as more natural and far better than the constrained manner and ostentatious distance preserved between English servants and their employers.

As an instance of Isidra's ready wit, I may mention the following. Some members of my household complained of the mosquito-bites at night, and one of the male members thereof said, "But they never bite me." Isidra immediately said, *sotto voce*, "No, nor should I, were I a mosquito."

On another occasion, when I asked my servant to wake me early, her husband, a miner, who stood by, seeing some prickly plants and thistles which I had just gathered in the Campo lying on my table, said to his wife, "No need to wake the Señor. Put a few of his own thistles in his bed,"—and off he went to bed, shaking his sturdy sides with laughter.

The most curious study of Spanish character was when the lover of Isidra came nightly, his mine-labour ended, to make love to her. The strictness with which the old mother watched every movement of her daughter, the jealous care with which she prevented them from ever speaking a word in private, or being alone for ten minutes together, formed a sadly curious spectacle; for it showed, what is only too true, that the lower class of Spaniard does not seek to implant any moral self-control in her daughter's heart, but merely to fence about her purity with external precautions. The rein is held too tightly, hence the licence when a girl is married, and, therefore, as she says, free.

Poor Isidra! Her Novio's name was drawn in the Quinta for a conscript; and the last time I saw her, she said, with streaming eyes, "He has gone to the North; but I have a letter."

Maria, a somewhat fast young widow, shall form our next short study. She came one morning, a bright, smiling, cleanly-looking little woman, with her only child, Manuéla, and, struck with her nice address and appearance, we engaged her.

Maria certainly boasted the nicest disposition and the most unsatisfactory conduct possible! She was willing and obliging, but always out late at night. If she was in the house at evening, she always had two or

three very gitano-looking men sitting smoking around her. I expostulated mildly. "They are my brothers," or "cousins," she would say. I spoke more severely one afternoon, then repaired to my sofa and darkened room for the siesta; presently, I was awakened by Maria's voice. In her softest accents, she said, "Señor, you had but a poor dinner; I have the best melon in the town; take it, and render thanks to God, as I do."

This affability disarmed me completely; and we decided to give poor Maria a longer chance, as, indeed, we are all bound to do to one another. If we hope for mercy ourselves, why should we be "extreme to mark what is done amiss"?

One day we returned from a long journey, and went to bed tired and exhausted; the heat had been tropical. At one o'clock in the morning my door was fiercely assailed; I sprang up, lit a match, opened the window, and told the assailant, in no gentle language, to be gone. The only answer was a curse and an oath, with fresh blows at the door, and the shouting of our servant's name,—"Maria, Maria! come quickly, come quickly!" Suddenly, to my joy, I heard, at the end of the dimly-lit street, the watchman's cry, "It has struck one-and-a-half—Viva la Republica Democratica Federal." Away, at the sound, went my assailants. Weary and sick I got out my revolver, and laid it ready on the couch beside me, then lit my cigarillo, and waited to see if the ruffian would return. The sereno (night-watchman) passed under the window, and looked at the tiny oil-lamp; then passed along, singing his monotonous song, "Viva la Republica Democratica Federal." I did not stop him; to do so is a serious matter, and lays one open to a charge of timidity or suspicion—the two qualities never to be

shown to a Spaniard. Once let a Spaniard of the lower orders know that you disbelieve his word, or are afraid, or suspect wrong where you are not certain of it, and he will despise you for life.

I sat upon my tiny couch, with candles lit: the sereno's musical cry had died away in the distance—all was still as death. Suddenly, two footsteps came up hastily to my door, and, in one moment, with a heavy block of wood or a hammer, commenced smashing in the lock, cursing poor Maria, who, seeing I was on the *qui vive*, took good care to be fast asleep.

There was only one thing to be done. Here was I in a strange country, the language of which I could barely speak or understand, in a rough street, with a not very particular population around me. I opened the window, crouched down on the balcony, and fair warning—"I have a revolver; I'll fire." The only reply was a curse. I sent one bullet just over the men's heads, with a tremendous shout of "Cometh another." In one minute, before the flattening bullet rang, the two worshippers of Maria rattled, with hasty footsteps, down the street.

On the following night the summons at the door was, to my great surprise, repeated; Maria, too, appeared in "undress uniform" in my bed-room, demanding the key of the front-door to let in the intruder. "Señor, at your peril you refuse; it is the officer of justice come to challenge your shot of last night." I steadfastly refused, and told the officer of justice, if such he was, to come at a respectable hour, and not at midnight. Knowing the unsettled state of the country, I dared not open my doors to a stranger, and, in the morning, the hero appeared. His dignity—and the Spanish official lives for his office—was

offended at the idea of any one firing a pistol on his beat.

Burglary in Spain is almost unknown; of robbery on a small scale there is but little; but seizing and carrying off a man and keeping him until a ransom is paid, or stopping an unguarded train to rob it of the little square deal boxes of dollars, which are on their way to Madrid from the tradesmen and merchants at the different stations on its line of road, are not at all uncommon occurrences. Indeed, the crimes that follow in the wake of high civilization, such as skilful swindling, adroit burglary, robbery, and pocket-picking, are almost unheard of in the interior, as also are the crimes so common in England—such as arson, drunkenness, brutal assaults, and the like.

Purloining a little from the provisions of the master, the swift deed of blood with the knife, accepting a bribe, child-desertion,—but not child-murder, for a casa de espositos is always at hand to receive the foundling,—these are the common stamp of crime here existing.

After this last escapade, Maria and her little girl Manuéla, who pleaded hard to stay, were, of course, necessarily to be got rid of. I gave Maria six hours' notice, and told her she must be gone. I wished her well, but said, "Though I shall say nothing about it, I fear your companions are not a very creditable set." This insinuation her proud Spanish blood resented, and she pleaded so hard, that at last I withdrew the words, and the little couple bundled up their cuatres and their few clothes, and said a courteous Adios.

Of course the above, although a true, is an exceptional case; but it serves to show the freedom, almost amounting to licence, allowed to the servant; and also

brings out another point in the Spanish character in these semi-civilized districts, namely, the Spanish official's overweening pride of his office.

In the interior of Spain, the best servants are the Manchegans, or people of the province of La Mancha. One rarely does wrong in employing a man or woman of this province. The men wear, in winter, a fur cap, something like the old poacher's cap of England, with lappets over the ears; in summer, a coloured handkerchief, tied in knots at the back of the head, dark serge or leather trousers; and a heavy, shapeless coat in winter; in summer, a calico or coarse canvas shirt. The women wear as head-dress a dark silk handkerchief, pinned under the chin, a short, dark-coloured skirt of serge, and a little silk shawl on gala-days, trimmed with bright-coloured embroidery.

The Spanish servants carry a purse. That of the man is a long, narrow purse, of coarse knitting, with one hole; it is wound and tied round the waist within the faja or belt. To get money out of it necessitates the undoing of the faja, which is quite a serious matter. The woman's purse, oftentimes containing the savings of years, is a bag of coarse calico, strapped under her skirt to her waist. The chief store of money, however, is in a purse under the bedclothes. Sometimes it is deposited in a hole in the garden.

Let me tell you a little of the fare of the Spanish servant. In truth, it is very simple. Like their pleasure, so is their fare. As regards drink, water is the staple; but it must be water from the purest, freshest, oftentimes most distant well. This is brought to the door twice a day, and is sold for two farthings the pitcher. Now and then the friend or

brother brings a skin of wine, black wine of Cataluña, or Val-de-Peñas, from the vineyards of La Mancha; but it is little wine that the poor Spanish criada drinks,—she, at least, is quite contented with her everlasting "agua fresca," and she asks no more.

But the wine is cheap enough. If bought wholesale, that is, in a skin or barrel, it would come to little more than twopence-halfpenny per quart; it is, in fact, much like the English beer, and, like it, is strengthening. It is greatly used by the wet-nurses in the foundling hospitals, who find that they can suckle upon it without suffering. In fact, the Val-de-Peñas, which is much of the same body as Burgundy, almost takes rank beside the English stout for the support it affords to nursing mothers. The only other drink which the Spanish servant affects is the aguardiente (literally, "burning water"). This is a spirit distilled from these cheap wines, and strongly impregnated with aniseed, which makes it a good pectorate. Every man-servant drinks his copa of this (*i. e.*, wine-glassful) every morning ere his work commences.

As to food, the Spanish servant eats dry bread, with onions or fruit, and every sort of light, savoury fry and soup. To sit down to a good joint is a thing unheard of with them; and certainly they thrive upon their simple fare, and are stronger servants, and harder, more willing workers, than are their fellows in England. The standard dishes are, among the servants, the following:—Gazpacho, that is, lettuce, cucumber, onion, and bread chopped up together, and soaked in a basin of vinegar, oil, and water. Berengenas and beans, that is, the berengena, or egg-plant (*Solanum melongena* of the botanist), a pulpy, oval fruit, of purple colour, fried in oil, with dried beans.

Cocida, mutton or goat's flesh boiled to rags, and served up with garbanzos or peas. Tomates and pimientos fried in oil, with slices of bread. The pimientos are of two kinds, pimiento dulce, or mild capsicum; and pimiento picante, or peppery capsicum. And, as regards soups, there are the sopa de arroz, or rice soup; sopa de tomates, sopa de fideos, or vermicelli soup; and sopa de jamon, or soup of bacon. Very simple, then, is the poor Spanish servant's fare, always eaten out of one dish, the spoons of man or maid servant dipping into it quite mechanically. As to simples, wonderful—and oftentimes not misplaced—is the poor Spanish servant's faith in the herbs that grow around her. For fever, they will give the juice of the orange, with a few grains of magnesia. For the stilling of a crying baby they will not give the poppy-tree, which maddens the brain of the English peasant-child of the Midland Counties, but the berries of the arbutus-tree, if in season, here called "madronios," which have, beyond doubt, a certain soporific power. For colic, or griping, they give rue or a decoction of red sage; for a cut finger they use the barcamina, a sort of ice-plant, to lay upon the wound; for biliousness, a cup of strong coffee, with the juice of two lemons squeezed into it.

The Spaniard of the lower orders has faith enough to believe in this fact, namely, that in every locality, in every climate and land, the Almighty has planted the very herbs which are adapted to cure the special diseases of that locality, or climate, or land. The Spanish Government, to a certain extent recognizing this truth, pays a certain number of herbalists to experimentalize, and collect herbs by flood and field. 'Dioscorides' Herbal' is the text-book of these collectors.

Simple, then, indeed, are the dress, the food, the drink, and the medicines of the Spanish servants. With them, simple as they are, they are most contented, even happy, thriving, and joyous.

And, lastly, in our general picture, let us take a glance at the character of the Spanish servant. Not always quite honest, not always quite truthful, she is yet full of good-nature, and uncomplaining, sympathizing, and gentle. The Spanish servant, male or female, thinks of her master or mistress as a friend, and treats them accordingly, and is ready at all times to do anything for them. The Spanish servant is never tired of getting up from his or her scanty meal to serve you. Give him or her a fair share of freedom, of kindness and courtesy, and they will repay you with all the fervour and affectionateness of their nature.

I shall leave the reader to draw his own contrast between the condition and character of the Spanish and English servant, merely premising that in many points I think we might learn of them. And having presented to you an Isidra and a Maria, I will next offer you the portraiture of an ignorant and superstitious, but most faithful and noble-hearted Manchegan servant, Isabel.

CHAPTER XIII.

A STUDY OF A MANCHEGAN SERVANT—ISABEL.

A SERVANT'S life and character are not usually very full of romance, and Isabel's life and character were very simple. Indeed, their very simplicity, the simplicity of her life, the transparency of her very beautiful character,—a transparency so rarely met with in our world of attrition, and intercourse of bad and good,—chiefly warrant me in making Isabel the study of a separate chapter.

Isabel was an orphan. She dwelt with her widowed mother in Infantes, a small town of La Mancha, perhaps the dullest and most despoblado province in the Peninsula. Its 7,500 square miles contain little more than 220,000 or 230,000 inhabitants. The land, as a rule, consists of dreary steppes, where one wind-swept, arid plain, whose dust is impregnated with saltpetre, succeeds to another. In the summer there is fierce, blazing heat, and scarcely a tree or wood to break off the blazing rays; in the winter the levante, dry and piercing cold, sweeps over the plains. The Manchegan peasantry, however, living in their humble huts of earth or rudely thrown together stones, are among the most affectionate, temperate, honest, and, above all, witty of the Spaniards of the interior. And is not La Mancha the land of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza?

There are bright green tracts, however, as there are in everything that is dreary, even in the steppes of La Mancha. There, are some of the fine olive-groves; there, are the slopes crowned with vines of Burgundy; and every poor peasant, every Manchegan housewife, has, in autumn, her "cueros" (the skins of pig or goat dressed entire, and looking, when filled with wine, very much like the carcase of the animal itself, bloated and shorn of hair) of the Val-de-Peñas, or rough red wine, which maketh glad the heart of the weary. His crisp, salt, sparkling jest—a little rough sometimes, perhaps, a little spice even of the indecent in it, though he does not deem it so—and his glass of rough red wine are the Manchegan peasant's delight. The women are most homely in their habits, most neat in their dress, most thrifty in their housekeeping,—first-rate "hands" at knitting and needlework of every simple kind.

I saw Isabel first bending over the couch of a dying woman, and was struck with the tenderness of expression on her pale, kind, homely face, and the plaintive tones in which she kept on repeating the usual term of pitying affection among the peasantry of the interior, "Pobre! pobre!"

A little instance of this poor servant's homely ideas shall here be given. The dying person, of whom I went to take leave, had just been prematurely confined, in a high fever, of a still-born child. As I left the house, poor Isabel brushed quietly past me, and, to my astonishment, brought the little dead body for me to look at, with the simple words, "She dies; but she must be proud of giving birth to so fine a child: she will be proud, and it will arouse her a minute, to know that the Englishman has admired it!" Such an

incident, of course, is, in all its surroundings, exceedingly painful. Some may say it is "out of place" here; but as this record professes to be a simple, modest, and truthful rendering of Spanish life and character, without any gloss, I think I may be pardoned for inserting this, may I not? Anecdotes such as these seem to me to give a vivid picture of the Spanish poor in all their want of civilization, of polish, and yet in their natural goodness, in the naturalness of their feelings, oftentimes overflowing. Truly, if the Spanish poor have not the blessings, they certainly escape many of the curses of civilization and polish; if they have not the polish of "good manners," they often have the polish that comes from a naturally sweet disposition; if they do offend by their rough, uncultivated ways, they yet possess the interest that attaches to originality of thought, expression, and action. There is no stereotyped "gentleman's servant" in the interior of Spain.

Her poor young mistress died, and Isabel came into our service. In another chapter, the installation of Isabel and her Manuel (she was a married woman) in our casa has been noticed, and the ground need not be again trodden. The pair came, with their rude Manchegan furniture, their alforjas (provision bags), their jarros of Andujar ware, and last, but not least, their image of San Juan—a little dressed-up doll, with outstretched wooden arms, bright rosy cheeks, and dark streaks of paint for his hair, the simple Penates of the Manchegan peasant and his wife.

If countenance be an index of character, as all Spaniards firmly believe is the case, Isabel certainly would be, I thought, a treasure. Her pale, pensive face brightened up whenever Manuel came home, or

any good fortune befell ourselves, with a singularly sweet, gentle smile. Her quiet, plaintive voice, and her neat dress, certainly were better than any written character or testimonial, of which the criada of the interior knows absolutely nothing. Indeed, had we asked for a character, the usual "Bueno, then I go elsewhere," would most probably have been the abrupt end of the matter.

Affection takes the place of calm reason with the peasantry of La Mancha. Isabel soon became, with her rough, witty, stalwart husband, truly attached to us and our lowly home; and no offer of higher wages or a better home would tempt her for a moment to think of leaving us. "No," was her invariable reply; "you have trusted Manuel and me, and been kind to us; where you go, we shall go with you." In sickness and in health, Isabel was like a kind, simple-hearted elder sister more than like a servant. She knew nothing save what her natural goodness of heart taught her—the breathings of that Good Spirit, we are sure, that "bloweth where it listeth"—of the command, "Honour thy father and thy mother," with the promise attached to its performance; yet no one ever treated a mother more loyally, tenderly, and devotedly than Isabel. Whenever Isabel received her wages, it was "one-third for herself, one-third for Manuel, and one-third for 'mi madre' (my mother)." The pair were truly attached to one another, and poor Manuel's sad face, when his wife had the least "angustias," *i. e.*, sickness, was painful to behold. "Tengo muncho sentimiento que Isabel tiene las angustias" (I am deeply affected at Isabel's sufferings). Rough miner of La Mancha, he had the heart of an affectionate child!

She had only been married a few years—she is now thirty-six, and Manuel ten years older—when she came to us, because, though Manuel had long been an admirer and an accepted one, she did not think it right, just after her father's death, to leave the madre in her lone and desolate home. Time, however, softened the madre's, as time alone softens all, sorrow, and Isabel and Manuel became one, settling in our town, near his mining work, some twenty miles from Infantes.

Shortly after she came to us, a black-edged letter came from La Mancha. It was an ill-written scrawl, merely to say that her mother's only sister had just died. Isabel shed a few silent tears, then sat down (for a wonder, she could write a few rude hieroglyphics, a rare accomplishment on the steppes of La Mancha) and wrote a few lines to her aged mother,—not a consolatory epistle, but a few words of helpful assurance; for, as the Spanish and English proverbs both are agreed in, "A little help is worth much pity." This was the substance of the letter, as she herself told us:—"Manuel will be home early to-night. We shall both think of you; but we shall go out and buy you the mourning you will need, so do not be anxious on that score." She came upstairs, and said,—"I am going to take my letter to the correo" (post). Home she came in a few minutes, and first went to San Juan to ask his advice or solicit his prayers; then she went to the "cama," or bed, in the clothes of which lay, carefully secreted, the stocking full of silver, the hoardings of many weary years of work. It was with no niggard hand that her kindly spirit poured out an ample store of dineros, and together, ere supper was tasted, the two went forth into the

dimly-lit streets to buy the simple articles for their mother's mourning. With great joy she showed me her wealth of mourning—a plain black serge dress for the madre, with two black silk handkerchiefs for the head,—this last the regular "mourning attire" of the decent Spanish poor. For herself, she had bought nothing save one handkerchief, of homelier stuff than silk. Isabel expressed herself as very pleased with her little purchases, as she spread them on the bed for our inspection. "But," said she, "when I wake at night I shall think of the still lonelier mother at Infantes."

Many were the acts of courtesy, kindness, and even devotion of this humble sister. How often, in mixing with the lowly Spanish "decent poor," rude and uncultured as they are, is one reminded of the Divine Master's words of truth, "There are last that shall be first."

One night my wife was taken seriously ill, and in the poorer suburb of a Spanish town of the interior help is not easily accessible. Isabel and her lord had gone to bed, but I knocked softly at their door, and the cloud of tobacco-smoke showed me that one, at least, of the pair was awake. In less than five minutes Isabel's pale, sweet face and quiet rap were at the bed-room door, and, to my surprise, in fur cap, heavy boots, and Manchegan manta; behind her was Manuel. "Now," said he, "we both come to pass the night with you and sit up with the señora: Isabel to nurse, you and I, if occasion be, to go for el medico." Quietly and tenderly as a woman, Manuel went to my wife's bed-side, carefully examined the face, pronounced it as his opinion that it was not "calentura," rolled himself up in his manta, and sat down

opposite to me, close beside Isabel. He only spoke once or twice, and then it was in whispers; and so they watched with me through a part of the weary night.

A Spanish night-watch is dreary indeed. All around you dogs are howling, shut out into the street; the donkeys bray from the back of every house the live-long night; and, as the Spaniards themselves say, "A donkey's bray by night is a doleful bray." The Government of the country has just changed hands, and instead of "Viva la Republica Democratica Federal," as a prelude to singing the hour, the sereno had changed his watch-word to the customary one, "Ave Maria purissima! Las dos menos un cuarto. El se - - - - reno." After this occurrence, I had occasion, one midnight, to go for some article I had forgotten into the little ante-room adjoining the quarters of Manuel and his spouse. In a moment the quick, watchful, anxious ear of Isabel had heard me, and thinking illness was come again, she called out, "Don Hugo, es la señora mala?" *i. e.*, Is the señora ill again? I heard Manuel give a grunt and shake himself up, and, dreading another midnight invasion, gave the Spanish assurance, "Muy bien, gracias," — the equivalent to our English "All 's well."

Not always does one see such tenderness and watchfulness united with high spirit and high sense of right and wrong; but in Isabel's character the two were united.

A Spanish artisan overcharged me grossly for some work done within earshot of Isabel. She came into the room, her eyes alight with indignation, and swept my friend downstairs. "Go; I will come and settle with

you at your master's house." When he had gone, she took the bill and one-third only of the money in question with her, and returned in triumph with the receipted bill.

One more instance of Isabel's affectionate and anxious character, and that side of her character shall be dismissed. One dark night, when the streets were in a disturbed state, I had occasion to go a short distance. Isabel and Manuel were sitting over their fry of garbanzos and lard, each, a huge knife in hand, slicing and eating their cake of coarse bread; by their side stood, or rather lay on the table, a small pigskin bottle —the Scriptural bottle—of Val-de-Peñas, a Christmas present from the widowed mother at Infantes. As I put my hand on the door (I should say, that, in some of the poorer sort of houses in the interior, you must pass through the kitchen to get to the street-door), Isabel jumped up, and, one hand on the lock, the other on my arm, said, "Do not, I beg, go out to-night. We shall not enjoy our supper if you do." Was there not real, deep, unaffected feeling for a fellow-creature's welfare in those simple words of a poor Manchegan peasant?

Isabel was strictly truthful in all her dealings with and words to her employers; but her truthfulness seemed to spring rather from the devotion to kind employers—a trait so constantly illustrated in semi-civilized life—than from high principle. And do we not see, in the devotion of the semi-civilized person to one who is kind, and whom he feels to be his superior in many ways, the germ of a possible devotion to a higher and better Maestro than earth can offer? Indeed, are we not all led up, from devotion to earthly duty to devotion to a duty higher

than that laid on us by daily life? Do we not learn what Divine love is, first, by realizing the depth and intenseness of an earthly love, and are we not in the way to know more of God's nature when we receive and give a pure earthly affection, than many creeds could teach us? Truly, it seems to me, we all, civilized or uncivilized, need these stepping-stones. Poor Isabel! She would have cut off her right hand sooner than have told me an untruth or deceived me, I verily believe; yet she thought nothing of swerving from the truth for her employer's good, as she expressed it.

Many of the sayings of this couple were at least pretty, if not beautiful. Thus, of one who had wasted good health and fine opportunities, poor Isabel only said, "Pobre! a broken life!"—an expression that struck me at the time as exceedingly beautiful in its simplicity and truthfulness.

Again, when I noticed to Manuel that he did not sing his Andaluz ditties one day, he pointed to the sun, overcast with storm,—"Sun and song go together, like a pair of mules, señor." Like many of these homely sayings of the Spanish poor, there was truth at the bottom of it; for who does not feel more ready to sing or whistle on a bright and sunny than on a cloudy day? But whistling is unknown in the Spanish interior,—at least, I have never heard it.

One other trifling instance of Manuel's wit. The Spaniard of the interior holds the quality of uncomplainingness in high esteem. One of his words of high praise is to say of a man, "He never complains." Poorly or strong, I always answered the morning inquiry of my servants by saying, "Muy bien, gracias!" *i. e.*, "Thank you, I am very well." At

last, Manuel said to his wife, "We must call the Englishman 'Siempre Bien!'" (Always Well!)

The last thing each night, before they retired to rest, the two always came into our room—even into our bed-room—to say their "Que pass' usted buena noche," the Spanish "Good-night." And certainly they were a quaint spectacle: Isabel, in her neat evening toilet, with her kind, pale, homely face and bright smilé, and Manuel in fur-cap, faja with huge knife, and heavy boots, with his wooden, weather-worn, mahogany-coloured face, always giving his partner a sly nudge as they entered the door, and always making some little sally of wit. His weather-beaten, whimsical face was quite a study for a painter, and the colour of his face reminded me of some of Murillo's darker subjects.

Once Manuel, whose work lay at some mines a few miles off, and who, when necessarily absent at night, always returned for food and rest the following morning, punctually as clockwork, at eight, had been absent all night, and in the morning came not. Ten, eleven, twelve struck, and the ingredients for the breakfast-fry, in which his rude taste delighted, still stood in the pan uncooked. Noon came and waned into evening, still he came not. Poor Isabel! her face pale as ashes, a tear slowly trickling down either cheek, sat by the dying embers, helpless, and well nigh hopeless. The country roads were not very safe, Manuel's work was dangerous, and, had all been well, he might, she thought, have sent a message.

Seeing how weak and faint the poor woman was from taking no food, I said, "Isabel, Manuel will be here all safe and sound speedily; eat something, and brighten up for his coming."—"I cannot eat bread or

drink water until Manuel comes," was her sad, quiet, and strikingly Scriptural reply.

Poor thing! only on those mornings (about four in the course of the week) on which her Manuel came home did she enjoy the savoury and scalding fry in which the Manchegan peasantry delight. On other days (No-Manuel days, as she called them), her breakfast was simply a piece of dry bread and some celery, and a cup of water. That, varied with a little garlic (I always dreaded garlic days), was all she allowed herself; "for," said she, "when Manuel is at work, why should his Isabel feast?"

Night drew on, and no Manuel. Poor, pale-faced woman! I shall never forget her anxiety, as she sat rocking herself backwards and forwards that night beside the dying embers of the ornilla. The night before, ere retiring to rest, she had prepared a little surprise for Manuel, when, at eight o'clock, she should hear his ambitious double-rap. She had placed two pieces of my half-smoked cigars in the mis-shapen wooden hands of her patron saint, San Juan, who stood (as I have elsewhere said is often the case) at the foot of their bed, as the guardian of their life and slumbers,—a strange wooden image, looking stranger still with two cigars in hand. These cigars were to greet Manuel, and to appear as though they were a present from San Juan. Thus, in this poor creature's simple, homely ideas, a little religious lesson would be inculcated of her simple and misdirected, but true and loyal faith.

At last, late at night, a tap was heard at the door, —not the usual rat-tat-tat, but a modest, half-ashamed, single knock. It was Manuel. He had been detained, owing to an accident to one of his fellow-workmen, but was safe and sound himself.

I hurried down to offer my congratulations, and poor Isabel's face was a picture,—all sunshine and showers—tears and bright smiles fighting and conquering by turns. She went up to the bed-room, she lifted St. John from his table, with a cigar in each hand the Saint descended, and was carried to the supper-table. Manuel possibly, when he saw the tinsel of the saint's dress appear round the corner of the stairs, had dreaded a little lecture; but when San Juan's outstretched hands offered him two halves of Havana cigars, his soul was at rest again.

"Gracias á Dios, y á San Juan, Manuel," said poor Isabel. Then she carried up San Juan, despoiled of his cigars, kissed him, and placed him in his proper place again.

Duty first—this was a religious duty—then pleasure. Isabel soon had the humble repast, which had waited for her Manuel all day long, frying famously. Garbanzos, a bit of jamon dulce de Estremadura (sweet ham of Estremadura), and garlic, and pimientos. O luxury for a miner of La Mancha!—rich feast to sleep upon! And the two warm-hearted, simple people crouched over the glowing ornillas, and each, wooden spoon in hand, their vows performed, their thanks offered, ate their bread with a cheerful heart.

Well, Isabel was a treasure! But do not let any one who comes to the interior count upon getting one of such transparent simplicity of character, such devotion, such child-like faith. Of a truth, there are more Isidras and Marias than Isabels among the servants of the interior, although, doubtless, many and many an Isabel might be found frying her garbanzos, or knit-

ting gracefully, with her small, well-shapen hand, in her little stone cottage among the barren steppes of La Mancha. Well has an English poet sung:—

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

But one never sees a Manchegan servant-maid without a hiccough.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SPANISH MINERS' UNITED PRAYER MEETING.

A Poem.

How long, O Lord, the Holy and the True,
  How long, dear Lord, wilt Thou withhold Thy hand?
Lo, for these many months nor rain nor dew
  Have visited and blessed our thirsty land!

The green grass withereth and the floweret dies;
  Sweet carol to the Spring no bird hath sung;
The earth is iron, brazen are the skies,
  Long hath the blight on vine and olive hung.

Sure 'twere enough, Lord, Merciful and Good,
  That on our plains long since the sword began;
Wilt Thou withhold the green herb-giving food,
  Thy wrath fore-adding to the sin of man?

Yet, why reproach we? Soon shall come the Tide
  Of Passion, and that Friday, blest of all,
When He who pleadeth at His Father's side
  Shall walk* among us, and the rain shall fall?

But, no; with scorching wind and molten sky,
  Friday's dim dawn grew into dazzling day;
'Mid teeming crowds we watched, with wistful eye,
  Its sad procession thread the narrow way.

What men are these in sable dress who come,†
  Thorn-crowned each brow, and in each eye a tear?
Bare are their feet, and muffled is their drum,
  Seeming as men who mourn, what do they here?

* In the common parlance of the Spanish miners, it is said "Jesus leaves His Father's side on Good Friday, to bring a blessing to men."

† The "pentitentes," or "humildes," men who have sinned, and pay for the privilege of helping to carry Christ, and the Virgin, and Saints, thus doing penance during the Holy Week.

Whom bear they on, in robe of royal hue?
Death's Conqueror say ye? But His eye is dim!
Bid ye in that bowed form the sinner view,
The God who made, the Man who died for him?

Yet bear Him on, and let His gaze of love
Melt each hard heart and smoothe each suffering brow,
While His long train of faithful saints on-move,
Who suffered once, who walk in glory now.

Yea, bear Him on, and let His falling tear
Bless our parched earth. But see, He faints, He dies;
With wan, sweet face, a woman* draweth near,
Kisses His pale brow, wipes His weary eyes.

"And wilt Thou leave me, dearest Lord, for ever,
No more with gentle voice to succour me?
Lord, of my love, my hope, my life the giver,
I weep for ever if I weep for Thee!"†

So, following on through many a dusty street,
Came we to where a church door opened wide,
Beneath whose crumbling stones, whose four ways meet,‡
Poured and stood still the mute but living tide.

All bruised His knee, His holy Form down-bowed,
Scarce grasped His cross with bloodless, quivering hand;
His gaze reproachful melting all that crowd,—
See in the midst the suffering Saviour stand!

Oh, weary brow! Oh, agony too vast,
Too real, for these lewd eyes to look upon!
Oh, gaze of wonder, waking all the past,
My black, black past—Lord, do not me disown!

But, by Thine agony and sweat of gore,
But, by Thy broken, bruised, bleeding knee,
But, by Thy great deep love in days of yore,
And by Thy Mother's love, remember me.

* Saint Veronica, who, when Jesus falls beneath His cross, is carried to His feet, and wipes His face, the handkerchief retaining the impression of the sacred face.

† Saint Veronica's passionate prayer as she wipes the holy brow.

‡ Many of the Spanish churches open into a plaza, or square, as was the case in the processions here referred to.

The unheeding billow, or the hill-side lone,
Full many a time hath listened to a prayer
True as hath e'er been wafted to the Throne
From dim-lit aisle or incense-laden air.

And shall no God the rugged miner hear?
And shall no seraph bear, on wingèd feet,
An answer swift to them that worship here,
God's air their incense, and their church the street?

He said, who ask shall have, shall find who seek;
He said, in sorrow we should come to Him.
And hath His ear grown deaf, His arm grown weak,
His heart grown flinty, or His eye grown dim?

Then thrice to Heaven the wan, white hand was raised,*
As though in mute entreaty. Thrice the prayer,
"Give us the rain, Lord, and Thy name be praised,"
From thrice a thousand voices rent the air!

And, lo! scarce larger than the hand of man,
Such cloud as erst gladdened the prophet's view
(How swift from lip to lip the tidings ran),
Floats into sight athwart the cloudless blue.

Full many a prayer for blessings of the earth
Meets its best answer in the spirit's gain.
But we the Saviour, in our day of dearth,
Sought, and at eve it fell, the blessèd rain!

* By means of a spring the image of Jesus raises its hand three times towards Heaven to implore rain, the assembled crowd crying "Agua, agua, agua," thrice, *i. e.*, "Water, water, water."

CHAPTER XV.

LITERATURE OF THE SPANISH MINER.

THE title of this chapter would seem almost one given for the sake of mockery to any one at all conversant with the lower classes in Spain, for the genius of the Spaniards of all classes certainly is not literature of any sort worthy of the name; and, of the mining class, it is doubtful whether one in every eight, were the test applied, would be found able to read. The education of the young, compulsory in theory, is not carried out in practice, although slightly on the increase at the present time. The Spanish miner, then, seldom can read; and, if he can, his tastes do not lead him to it; and again, if he desires to spend some of his time in reading, the books within his command are always, or nearly always, trashy. They may be divided into the following classes, of each of which a specimen shall be offered in these pages. The religious, or superstitious; the fiercely political; the witty and coarse; the semi-obscene. And when I say books, I mean small pamphlets or broad-sheets, sold in the streets and squares for two or four farthings apiece, with grotesque frontispieces, generally, and flaming titles.

There are no books, properly so called, in the Spanish mining towns — certainly, no book-shops; and, in the cases of the rich and well-educated, it is a

very rare thing, in the interior of Spain, to find a book-shelf! And so, with nothing but the incredible miracle (which, by-the-bye, he does not now believe), told in rude, doggerel verse, the semi-obscene or blasphemous tale, and the pamphlet of some political partisan within reach, the poor Spaniard betakes himself and his surplus cash to the bull-ring, the cock-pit, the gambling-saloon; he throws the iron bar for money; he rolls the bola, or iron ball, for money; he plays "trugé," the usual game of cards among the miners, throughout the evening; or rattles the dominoes at the coffee-room, for money, too!

You will say, then, why write about his literature? I answer, because the nature of what there is in circulation among the reading miners is of a type almost passed by in England; and because, in these pages, my object has been to compare the state of the Spanish with that of the English miner in all particulars.

The pamphlets in which the Spanish miner indulges are generally of four pages in length, and chiefly consist of verse, the rudest doggerel. They are wretchedly printed, in the lowest Spanish patois or slang, according to the province in which they are designed for sale; and so bad is the grammar, and so impure the Spanish, that no one merely conversant with pure Castilian could understand them without trouble. Out of every ten words one would be a slang or patois term, not to be found in any dictionary!

These little pamphlets, costing, as a rule, one cuarto, or farthing, per page, generally consist of two, four, or eight pages, and are sold at every street-corner. Sometimes, on the road to a mine, a vendor will take his stand with a "new and curious recital." Miner

after miner will produce his penny for it, and the long stream of fluttering papers, as the purchasers hasten onward, will present quite a curious, but, indeed, a sad, a very sad, spectacle. For are they not, these books, oftentimes poison to the mind? Can a mind be built up sound and strong upon superstition, obscenity, the scurrilous joke, or the political propaganda? It would be contrary to all precedent were such the case.

I will offer you now, kindly reader, a type or specimen of the various kinds of pamphlets to which allusion has been made; and you shall form from them, unaided by any criticisms on my part, your own estimate of the influence for good likely to be exercised on the character of the poor Spanish miner by the cheap press of Spain.

Here is a specimen of the best class, the religious or superstitious. Do not be surprised at the wonders it recounts—at the improbabilities, I should say, impossibilities, of which it is full. Were it a sober tale, believe me the Spaniard, who lives upon excitement, would not buy, much less would he read it. The subjoined poem, translated by me with the greatest difficulty from a two-farthing broadsheet into the same rude doggerel in which it is written, was a short time since quite "the rage" out here. The miner read it out, with many a sneer, to his group of fellow-workers when the long Andalucian day was drawing to a close; the monthly nurse pondered it well, and read and re-read it, *sotto voce*, counting her beads and saying her "aves" in the still watches of the night, as I myself can testify.

Here, then, it is, translated word for word, without any attempt at embellishment on my part:—

New and Curious Paper, setting forth the miracle which the most holy Christ of the Wood and the Virgin of the Guide did in a Farm-house near Ronda in the present year.

(Let me add here, a miner, reading the title, said, "In the present year? Why, it has no date, so we can't tell when it was done!" He was right. The "new and curious paper" bears no date!)

Queen of Heaven, grant thine aid,
While it is by me essayed
In this history short to tell
All the wonders that befell
A poor Christian labourer
In our Spain, this very year;
Who in Ronda his bread won,
With his wife and infant son,
And his daughter, fair and dear,
Entering on her twentieth year!
To this poor man's house there came
Bandits seven, men of fame.
As they bound wife, son, and man,
To her room the fair girl ran,
And, to keep her body chaste,
She its portal locked in haste.
At her door each robber banged,—
"Thy three dear ones shall be hanged,
If thou dost not instantly
Yield thy person up to me."
And her mother, crying, said,—
"I and father will be dead,
If thou dost not instantly
To the robbers give the key."
Not one thought of honour lost
Brave Rosaria's full heart crossed;
But, with courage pure inspired,
Quick she took a gun, and fired
Through the door. The thieves then slew
Father, mother, baby too;
While at them Rosaria sent
Shot upon shot, till off they went.
Ere their footsteps on the moor
Ceased to sound, she oped the door.

Lo! the robber chief there lay,
His life-blood ebbing fast away;
Other twain lay him beside,
One was dying, one had died!

The valiant maiden then takes up the two dead men, the one wounded, and sets off with them, strapped on a mule by her own hands, to the office of the judge at Ronda. Arrived there:—

Admiration and surprise
Kindled in that good man's eyes,
As he listened to the tale
Of Rosaria, calm and pale,
As he looked upon the dead,
Hearing how their blood she shed.
"Yes," said he, "'tis true the twain
Robbers here by thee are slain.
But, señora, tell to me
Who, in slaying them, helped thee?"
"Holy Christus of the Wood,"
Said she, "in my peril stood
With His succour at my side,
And the Virgin of the Guide."

The judge then offers her a guard of men to pursue the remaining four robbers, but she refuses any aid save that of "the Virgin and her father's horse":—

To the temple then she went,
Fair Rosaria, and she bent
To the nailèd Christ her knee,
And, in anguish, thus spoke she.—
"Sinful, at Thy feet I lie,
Thanking Thee, O God, most high,
For that Thou, the succour sure,
Hast vouchsafed to keep me pure.
Now, dear Christ, lend me Thy skill,
These four robbers left to kill;
And, if so, I vow it Thee,
In a convent soon I 'll be.