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SPAIN IN

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SPAIN IN 1830.

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JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

R. 353

SPAIN IN 1830.

BY

HENRY D. INGLIS,

AUTHOR OF "SOLITARY WALKS THROUGH MANY LANDS;" "A JOURNEY
THROUGH NORWAY," &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLS.

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SPAIN IN 1830.

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THE heats of summer had now so far subsided, as to justify a change from the elevated

plain of Castile, to the warm shores of Andalusia. Accordingly, being provided by the kindness of my friends in Madrid, with letters for the captains-general of the southern provinces, and for numerous private individuals, all which, together with the letters to his majesty's consuls, and to mercantile houses, brought with me from England, formed a budget of no contemptible size or value, I prepared for my long and fatiguing journey.

But although, in leaving Madrid to traverse the southern and south-eastern provinces of Spain, the traveller naturally anticipates in this journey of not less than sixteen hundred miles, many privations, and some dangers; there are also a thousand delightful and novel associations to excite his expectation. La Mancha, and the memory of its courteous knight; and the thousand reminiscences with which the genius of Cervantes has hallowed it,—the Sierra Morena, and its wild histories and lawless banditti,—Seville, which, with its orange groves and Guadalquivir, its masks and serenades, holds in the mind a sort of fabled existence,—Granada, its Alhambra, and snowy Sierras, and the host of historic and romantic

recollections with which it is peopled,—Murcia, and its groves of date trees, its earthquakes, and ruined villages, and benighted inhabitants. Valencia, and its rich plains and eternal summer, its gorgeous city and majestic antiquities.

There is only one road from Madrid to Seville; but there are various modes of travelling it. Diligences, which leave Madrid twice a week, perform the journey in four days and a half; resting every evening from about seven, till a little after midnight. Galeras, on springs, which have no regular day of departure, but which are to be found every week, perform the journey in ten days. A private coach and seven mules may be hired, by which eleven or twelve days will be occupied on the road; or this journey may, like every other in Spain, be performed by mules, and by this mode of conveyance, fourteen days must be allowed. But none of these modes altogether pleased me; because the road between Madrid and Seville is so varied in the degree of interest which it possesses, that no single conveyance could unite the advantages of rapidity and slowness, essential

to the enjoyment of the traveller who wishes to linger in those parts where peculiar attractions are to be found, and to pass rapidly over those uninteresting tracts that stretch between one point of interest and another. I resolved, therefore, to travel from Madrid to Ocaña, by Aranjuez, in a *caleche*; to take the diligence through La Mancha, to the foot of the Sierra Morena; to cross the Sierra to Anduxar on muleback; and there to be guided by circumstances and information, as to the mode of journeying to Seville.

I left Madrid at half-past six in the morning; and for the last time, passed out at the gate of Toledo, and across the magnificent bridge which spans the insignificant brook dignified by the name of the river *Manzanares*. If the Tagus, which flows but seven leagues distant, filled the wide channel which is now scarcely moistened by the scanty waters that ooze through it,—what beauty, what wealth, would it carry to the metropolis of Spain! What a belt of verdure would girt the capital—what delicious shades,—what charming freshness! How contrasted in imagination with the treeless desert that now lords it on

every side. But it is possible to suppose even greater changes than this; it is said to have been a favourite topic with Joseph Buonaparte, to speak not merely of diverting the waters of the Tagus to Madrid, but of connecting the capitals of Spain and Portugal by a navigable communication. There is only one step more needed, to present us with a vision of regenerated Spanish power, wealth, and glory—the annexation of Portugal to Spain,—the Peninsula one empire, and wisely governed.

The country between Madrid and Aranjuez presents little to interest,—it is cursed with dryness. In most parts the cultivation of corn is attempted, but the crops are scanty; and here and there are seen a few copses of degenerate olives. Vines are also grown on some of the slopes, but they are said hardly to repay the labour of the husbandman. At Valdemoros, a Moorish town, as the name implies, and formerly celebrated for its stocking manufactory, I stopped to take a cup of chocolate; and about one o'clock I crossed the magnificent bridge over the Jarama, erected by Charles III., and entered the valley of Aranjuez, where I arrived after about

half an hour's drive along the first perfectly shaded road I had seen since leaving Biscay. I had only a few hours to spend in Aranjuez, being desirous of reaching Ocaña that evening; and therefore I immediately presented myself to the governor, Don Lorenzo Bonaria, to whom I carried an introductory letter from the Duque de Montemar.

The charm of Aranjuez is entirely of a different kind from that which belongs to St. Ildefonso. The latter would be beautiful if the aid of art had never been sought. The neighbouring Sierra, and the natural woods that clothe its sides, and hang upon its defiles, would possess charms—even if man had never looked upon the scene to make it his own. Aranjuez, on the other hand, would never have been distinguished by any peculiar attraction, if the kings of Spain had not erected a palace there; and if the wealth which, in past ages, so copiously flowed into the coffers of these monarchs, had not been employed to make the spot worthy of a palace. A site however was chosen, where it was possible to accomplish much by the united aid of money and perseverance. The Tagus, during about

three leagues of its course, before reaching, and after passing Aranjuez, flows through a dead level, varying in breadth from two to three miles; and the object has been to cover this level with the richest verdure, and to assemble there all the natural productions that are congenial to the climate. The instrument has of course been irrigation; and the object has been completely accomplished. The most perfect shade, and the most charming verdure, cover this delightful retreat; every spot of ground is laid out with the utmost care,—unassisted Nature has been allowed to do nothing; every tree, almost every bush, has its known and allotted place; and millions of tiny rills are directed, when required, to the root of every individual tree, and to every cluster of flowers. The whole belt is occupied by gardens, woods, orchards, and innumerable avenues: and here and there, near the palace, the waters of the Tagus are trained into cataracts, that sights of shade and coolness may be answered by the refreshing sounds that fall upon the ear. Aranjuez was charming even when I saw it; although then the fresh verdure of spring had long passed away;

but here spring is constantly maintained by art;—and an unceasing succession of labour, assisted by irrigation, and aided by a warm climate, produces a never-ending renewal of beauty and vegetation. One charm of Aranjuez, however, the season did not permit me to taste. I am told, that walking among the woods of Aranjuez in the months of April or May, one would say that they had robbed the two Castiles of their singing birds, so full and charming is even the noon-day chorus of nightingales.

After walking over the gardens, which are kept in the most inimitable order, and where every fruit and vegetable suited to furnish forth a kingly banquet may be seen, I had no more time left than just permitted me to walk hastily over the principal apartments of the palace. I found it quite equal to the wants even of a king; and with this observation, I shall pass it over, having so lately occupied a chapter with the Escorial and St. Ildefonso: descriptions of houses are at no time very interesting. I received the greatest possible attention from Don Lorenzo Bonaria, who would scarcely excuse me from spending a

day or two at Aranjuez; a pleasure in which I would willingly have indulged myself, but for the necessity of proceeding south, and of passing the Sierras of Granada, before the approach of bad weather.

I left Aranjuez about five o'clock, having two leagues only to Ocaña. The moment I emerged from the belt of level ground, I found myself again in a wild ill-cultivated country, with as little water, and as few trees, as on the other side of the Tagus. We continued to ascend among low wild hills, with olives here and there scattered over them; and about seven o'clock, I arrived at the posada at Ocaña. Here I was obliged to wait supper until the arrival of the diligence from Madrid: fortunately, a good luncheon at Aranjuez, especially some delicious melon from the royal garden, had fortified me against delay; but had this been otherwise, I should nevertheless have been obliged to be contented, for nothing is more hopeless than an attempt to hasten the operations of a Spanish kitchen. A traveller may indeed take the care of his supper upon himself; and if he possesses the faintest idea of the art of cookery, this will

generally be his wisest plan. The diligence arrived about eight o'clock, and supper was immediately served. Every where south of Madrid, the first two dishes placed upon the supper table are soup—so called—and boiled eggs: the soup however is not soup, the whole of the liquid being generally absorbed by the bread: and the eggs are always boiled as if for a salad; but when bruised, and eaten with vinegar, and pepper, and bread, this part of the supper is not to be rejected; because it is more than probable, that the stew, or fowl, which follows, will be found reclining upon a bed of oil and garlic, from which it is impossible to extricate an untainted morsel. A few glasses of good Val de Peñas, and some delicious grapes and melons, go far however towards supplying deficiencies; and these luxuries are never wanting.

Towards the conclusion of supper, a guest of no small importance took his place at the table: this was no other than the celebrated Polinario, during eleven years, the dread of half Spain, and now following the honest calling of guard of the Seville diligence. I never saw a finer man, or one whose appearance

more clearly indicated the profession which he had abandoned. I could not help fancying, that his countenance expressed a certain lawlessness of mind, and contempt of peaceable persons like myself, which an assumed suavity of manner was unable altogether to conceal: this suavity of manner is, however, very remarkable; and I believe is in perfect accordance with his conduct when a robber; for Polinario was never guilty of any act of wanton cruelty or barbarity, but along with the most fearless courage, he always evinced a certain forbearance, not uncommon among Spanish banditti,—but in him, having a deeper seat than the mock civility of a Spanish thief, arising rather from a softness at heart, which afterwards led to a change in his mode of life. The history of this change is curious, and I pledge myself for its authenticity. The usual range of Polinario was the northern part of the Sierra Morena and the southern parts of La Mancha; and here he remained during eleven years. A few years ago, understanding that the archbishop of Gaen would pass the Sierra Morena in his carriage without other attendants than his servants, he lay in wait

for the prelate, and stopped his carriage. The archbishop of course delivered his money; and Polinario having received it, asked his blessing: upon this, the archbishop began to remonstrate with the robber, setting forth the heinousness of his offences, and the wickedness of his life: but Polinario interrupted the archbishop, by telling him it was of no use remonstrating upon his manner of life, unless his Grace could obtain a pardon for the past; because without this, it was impossible he could change his mode of living. The archbishop of Gaen is a good man; and feeling a real desire to assist Polinario in his half-expressed desire of seeking a better way of life, he passed his word that he would obtain for him his majesty's pardon; and Polinario came under a solemn promise to the archbishop, that he would rob no more. In this way the matter stood for eleven months; for it was eleven months before the archbishop could obtain the pardon he had promised; and during all this time, Polinario was obliged to conceal himself from the pursuit which the offer of a considerable reward had long before instigated. At length, however, the pardon was obtained;

and Polinario was free to lead an honest life. He admits, however, that he is not contented with the change ; and makes no hesitation in saying, that the promise made to the archbishop alone prevents him from returning to his former profession ; but, he says the archbishop kept his word to him, and he will keep his word to the archbishop.

I had resolved to take advantage of the diligence from this place, through La Mancha to the foot of the Sierra Morena ; because, notwithstanding the interest that attaches to La Mancha, from its connexion with Don Quixotte, it is not a country to linger in. There are few romantic beauties in La Mancha ; it is chiefly a wine country ; and producing, in other parts, corn, oil, and saffron : but it has few charms for the traveller who loves the picturesque and the beautiful ; and, although the road touches upon two or three points where Cervantes has laid the scene of certain exploits of the valorous knight, the chief field of these lies more to the left. Besides, the interest which the history of Don Quixotte has thrown over La Mancha, is of so visionary a kind, that the mere consciousness of passing

through La Mancha, gives to it all the force and reality of which it is susceptible.

It wanted more than three hours to the time when the diligence should set out, and all the passengers retired to bed; but I saw no advantage in going to a bad bed, to be roused from it, just when one might begin to be insensible to its badness; accordingly, I sat up until one o'clock, when I took my seat in the diligence. Before day-light, we passed through two poor towns, La Guardia, and Templeque, and arrived to breakfast at Madridlejos. Breakfast not being ready, I strolled through the street and market-place; and this being Sunday morning, all the peasantry were sauntering about, and making purchases: it seemed almost a population of beggars; for even the best of the peasantry, with their old brown cloaks, and little black caps fitting close to the head, conveyed a wretched idea of holiday respectability in Castile: how opposite from the population of the village at which I stopped one Sunday morning, in Biscay! The innkeeper in the posada where we breakfasted, was formerly Alcalde of the town, and was well known to have been at that time con-

nected with the banditti who infested this part of the country. He may still be said to be a robber, in one sense; for I was obliged to pay twelve reals for one cup of chocolate and two eggs.

From Madridlegos to Puerto Lapiche, there is nothing to interest. The nakedness of the country is in some degree relieved by olive plantations; but the soil is generally sterile and unproductive. Agriculture, throughout all these districts, including those parts of La Mancha which are not dedicated to the best wines, is in the lowest state: the natural indolence of the inhabitants is aided by old prejudices and ridiculous usages in husbandry, which they are by no means willing to relinquish; among these, one of the most injurious to the land, is the supposed necessity for allowing animal manure to rot before it be applied to the soil; the valuable gases fly off, and the vegetable fibre alone remains. The inhabitants of this part of Spain ought to be particularly careful that their manure be applied in the most effectual way, because they possess so little of it. The greater part of the husbandry of La Mancha, and of the southern

parts of Toledo, is performed by hand labour ; all the animal labour required, is performed by mules ; and throughout the whole of La Mancha, horned cattle are scarcely to be seen. Another cause of the depressed state of these districts is, that in La Mancha and the neighbouring provinces, but especially in La Mancha, there are immense tracts of crown lands, the revenues of which are appropriated in grants for military and other service ; these lands are managed by stewards of the crown, who rob the people, cheat the treasury, and, in fact, turn all the revenues to their own aggrandizement.

At Puerto Lapiche we are in La Mancha, and it is at this place, or at least in its neighbourhood, that the famous adventure with the windmills is placed by Cervantes ; for it was immediately after its unlucky termination, that Don Quixotte and his squire approached Puerto Lapiche. It was impossible to cast the eye towards the left, and see some windmills standing upon a small elevation, without calling to mind the chivalrous tone and heroic bearing of the knight of La Mancha. “ Fly not, ye base and cowardly miscreants ! for he is