life not celebrated by a Christmas dinner. In our house the powers that be are great "Cristianos;" here Christmas Day is a strict fast, Bula or no Bula; and so starving nature had to content itself with oyster soup, several kinds of fresh fish, excellent pastry, all the delicacies of the season in vegetables, the finest of fruits, and good wine. However, we made up for it on New Year's Day by a regular feast after high mass, which I attended at the cathedral. This time the music was not military, but the regular choir, a good organ, and a string and reed band. The singing and playing was really fine, and a credit to the musical ability of the city; I had no idea the place could furnish as good. The attendance was numerous, and who can wonder? Here high mass is the people's opera. They see a gorgeous spectacle, and hear good music, all for nothing; and have besides a pleasing feeling that they have performed a work of merit—knocked off so many purgatorial days. Duty and pleasure, religion and amusement, go hand-in-hand in sunny Spain.

The weather since my arrival here has been bright and clear, and the sun hot, but the snow on the mountains makes the wind cold. We have light white frosts almost every night, and as there are no stoves nor fireplaces in the houses of this country, excepting in the kitchens, I feel chilly much of the time; and since an east wind commenced blowing, a few days ago, have been still more uncomfortable. However, the gardens do not seem to be affected; the pea plants are already so far advanced in growth as to be "sticked;" the broad beans are knee high, and will soon be in blossom; and we commonly have
artichokes for dinner—not merely mature heads, as in England, requiring to be picked to pieces leaf by leaf, and having but a small portion of each leaf eatable, but young heads that you cut up with a knife and fork and eat entirely, and most delicious they are. But, indeed, they can never have any frost worth complaining about here, for Tudela is in the centre of the chief licorice field of Spain. It is here an indigenous plant, grows wild anywhere and everywhere. Large stacks of its roots stand just outside the city's walls, thatched and protected from the weather by coverings of reed-canes, for there is a company established in Tudela that buys up all they can get. The best roots are sent to England and the United States; the next quality to France and Russia; from the worst is manufactured stick licorice for Spanish consumption. This company must be making money hand over hand. They are paying but one shilling and eightpence per hundredweight delivered for roots, and last year they exported over forty thousand pounds sterling worth.

This place has also, from a wild product of nature, another source of revenue. Esparto-grass is brought in from the mountain-sides and valleys in September and October, and bought up and sent away by agents for paper mills, principally French ones.

Tudela ought to be prospering, but if she is, it is so slowly as to be quite unapparent.
CHAPTER XIII.

Dry-docked—Domestic Arcana—a fair Señorita—"Oh! my Aunt!"—Departure from Tudela—The Imperial Canal—El Palacio del Bocal—a Palace of the Emperor Charles V.—Palace Chapel and Gardens—Canal Barge—a superb Canal Bridge—Novillas—Quail Ground—"Norfolk Howards"—In Aragon.

JANUARY 10, 1877.—I stayed longer than intended at Tudela, being there laid by the heels; a severe attack of influenza and sore throat dry-docked me. The señora wanted to call in a physician, the family Medico de Cabeza; but against such proposition was quoted the old proverb of the country, "El medico lleva la plata pero Dios est que sana"—the doctor carries off the money but the Lord cures—and I declined making his learnedship's acquaintance, except socially. My ailments gave me no exclusive right of complaining, for everybody in the house was suffering from the same indisposition. The east wind seemed to have brought a regular epidemic of it. I, however, was hit the hardest; possibly from being an unacclimated foreigner. The remedy of the country for light cases is to totally avoid wine, beer, and spirits, drinking instead of them barley-water sweetened with licorice, to take a long hot drink of mallow-flower tea (not the marsh-
mallow, but the smaller plant, the upland-mallow) the last thing at night and first on the following morning, and to lay in bed till noon; a course I was put through, and which did me much good; I recommend its trial to so afflicted countrymen at home. Here the dried flowers of the mallow with which the tea is made are sold at every apothecary’s shop. I found the decoction a fine sudorific and gentle soporific, the barley-water and licorice excellent for my throat.

While laid up at Tudela I studied my future course, and determined, so soon as it would be prudent to resume my tramp, to take the tow-path of the Canal Imperial from its commencement, a few miles below there, and follow it to Zaragoza; for, as it is one of the greatest irrigating canals in Spain, I wished to see it—its locks, bridges, and accessory works, and besides, should have a level road, for I was tired of climbing and descending; and, too, the scenery would be a change from that of mountains, through which my way had heretofore always been.

I found Tudela a convenient place to have a cold in, for there, when able to go out to take my daily afternoon’s constitutional stroll on the sunny side of some shelter from the wind, I could anywhere outside the town walls pull licorice roots out of the ground, to chew as I walked along. I am sorry for the cause of my detention at Tudela, of course, but hardly so at having been detained, for I was, as an invalid, necessarily much indoors, and so obtained considerable insight into the social ways of Navarra.

My friend the Major is undoubtedly right. As he truly said, “In this country social relations are decidedly mixed.”
Certainly, the señoritas of the house I have so recently left were most decided exemplars of his proposition. Except when "got up" for parade or a tertulia, on which occasions they were beautifully arrayed, they dressed like kitchen-maids, were regular Cinderellas, but nevertheless, with their hair in the latest Paris agony. One or other of them brought my early drink to my bedside and awoke me, as often as did the servant; made no bones of coming into my room, slop-pail in hand, and doing the chamber work while I was present, and habitually, and as a matter of course, both freely interlarded their discourse with ejaculations and expressions of the most objectionable character. Let us hope they did not realise their signification. They were words at whose English equivalents a scullery-maid of an English gentleman's establishment would stand aghast—expressions that no virtuous English woman ever uses.

And yet the señoritas in question belong to a most respectable rank of life, can and did behave in company in a most ladylike manner, will have independent fortunes at the death of their uncle, and have received the education of young ladies. For instance: the elder of the two, whom I am best acquainted and have most conversed with, is well up in geography and general history, has learned drawing, and "does heads" very nicely in crayons; has a fair theoretical and good practical knowledge of music—singing, and playing the guitar and piano very well—dances elegantly, and, excepting the expletives, talks charmingly. She has also learned French, and is a sufficiently good scholar of that language to enjoy a French novel; but she speaks it in a way that no Frenchman could understand, pronouncing the
A FAIR SEÑORITA.

words as though they were Spanish ones, and grouping them and pitching the emphasis all wrongly. She is twenty-two years old, fair as a lily, with a fine delicate colour in her cheeks; has beautiful, small, white, regular teeth, golden hair, and bright large chestnut eyes. She is full of life, grace, and vivacity, with a figure beyond praise. And she does not paint—no, not even use powder, nor does she dye, nor bleach, nor pinch—no, not even wear corsets; and she does not possess a tooth-brush! Water, soap, and nature does her beautifying. And she is besides an excellent cook and a slashing housemaid. Great Cæsar de Bazan! how our grandmothers would have admired such a girl! To be candid, I admired her not a little myself, and doubtless should have done so more, but that there was a much prettier girl—in fact, the handsomest I have seen in Spain—an almost daily visitor at the house.

This fascinating girl was in the habit of coming in the evenings with an aunt, a gay and lively young widow. She is only sixteen years old, but quite a woman in development and aplomb; a high-coloured, brilliant-complexioned brunette, with the true “ojos aríabes.” She is the best waltzer I ever put arm round; so, though not a dancing man, we used usually to take a spin together to the music of the guitar and the clapping of hands. The aunt (an old hunter, knows the crack of the whip) kept a very sharp eye on the young woman, who, on her part, was as demure, as “tan formal,” as possible in “dear auntie’s” presence, but far different when the widow was away; then she showed herself to be as wild as any unbroken filly who ever took bit in teeth and bolted; showed she had as much
of the world, the flesh, and the devil to the cubic inch as any she who lives. I liked that widowed aunt very well; she, too, is a good dancer, handsome, and *intrigante*, but I liked her best when she was not present and the niece was.

The Major is a great admirer of La Ysidra, and was not at all pleased at our "carryings-on." He said: "It is just like the women. She does not care a fig for the Englishman; but because he is an Englishman, and the only one she has ever seen, she flings herself at his head in a most barefaced manner." Now the fact simply is, the girl naturally likes to be admired; she is so extremely handsome it was impossible for me, and would be for any man of taste, to avoid showing admiration for her; and of course she felt flattered and pleased, and, after the manner of Spanish women, showed her feelings. And, after all, she is but a child.

However, to all things there must come a termination; so this morning, though the influenza and a feeling of weakness hung about me, the day being unusually fine, I determined to make a move; and so, shouldering my gun and traps and whistling to Juan, at 8.45 A.M. I took up the line of march.

Adieu was bid to the Major in his room, he not being out of bed at that early (?) hour. He seemed really sorry to part with me, and said many handsome things about England and the English and myself, concluding with the assurance should anything occur to me while in Spain, should I require in any way the good offices of a friend, I must let him know, and to the extent of his power I could command him; at all events, when my hazardous journey—
as he pleased to consider it—was terminated, I must write and tell him how it had fared with me. The rest of the household were also effusive in their farewells and good wishes.

As a travelling Englishman, and so, to a certain extent, a representative of my country—if an indifferent one—I had considered it a pleasing duty to create as favourable an impression as possible; and the manner of those I was parting with plainly showed I had been fairly successful.

I started feeling seedy enough, but it was just the day to gain strength in. During the night a most pleasant change in the weather had taken place; the horrid east wind had blown itself out and the lowering clouds away. It was replaced by a light balmy breeze from the southwest; and excepting a few fleecy cloudlets hanging round Moncayo's summit peaks, the sky was one fair expanse of azure and the sunshine warm and brilliant.

For two miles the broad, well-kept camino real, or highway, ran straight through the olive forest, and then forked. I took the left prong, that leading to El Bocal, or the mouth of the Imperial Canal. We should have called the other, or lower end, the mouth; but as Spanish ladies sit their horses on the "off" side, perhaps it is all right in Spain to call the upper end of a canal its mouth. It was a good road, planted with a double row of fine elms, but showed little sign of travel. The canal is not the highway it once was. No longer is it the great commercial artery of the country; an occasional barge-load of wood, and the carriage of the grain harvested on its banks, is all the transport business it now does.
At 10.25 A.M. I passed the little village of Fontanas, and taking a footpath to the left, found myself in a few minutes at *El Bocal*, looking with interest and pleasure at one of the finest river-dams in the world—a dam over which, with a roar I had often heard at Tudela, the entire flood of the Ebro rushed in one unbroken flashing sheet. Truly the Imperial Canal is a splendid work—the most worthy as well as most lasting of its great projector, Charles V., King of the Spains and Emperor of Germany. It is a work that has redeemed nearly sixty thousand acres of land from sterility, and made them a marvel of rich fertility; a work that does, and will long continue to, repay the world for the losses and sufferings caused by his ambition.

From each side of the dam extends for a considerable distance a fine river-wall, and immediately above it, on the right bank of the river, is the entrance to the canal. But the flood-gates are gone; no more do boats emerge or enter there; and the water is admitted through a tunnel in the stone apron replacing them, by an iron apparatus regulating its flow.

Close to the edge of the bank of the Ebro, just below the canal-head, stands a wing of what was once *El Palacio del Bocal*, a finely-dressed stone building three storeys high. The rest of the palace is a heap of ruins, a “cave” of the bank having some years ago let it down with a run. Thence, for some distance, I found the canal’s sides were of perpendicular cut-stone masonry, and eighty feet apart; the flow of the water between having a velocity of three miles an hour. Soon I arrived at the *Almacens*, or magazines—an
extensive range of stone buildings, storehouses for goods conveyed on the canal, but almost all empty. In their front was a commodious stone landing-wharf with steps down to the water's edge, and a row of mooring-posts—hard stone posts wrought round and having carved knob-heads; posts that have been in use for generations, perhaps since the canal was first used in A.D. 1528, and whose only sign of wear is their having become polished.

In the row of almacens stood a posada, and after there ordering my breakfast and disencumbering myself of my traps, I walked a few hundred yards to see an old “palace” of the emperor-king, standing close to the river, and behind the row of warehouses. It was not much of a palace. Nowadays it would not be a palace for a policeman; but it was a curiosity, as showing what one of Europe’s greatest potentates had built as a residence for himself. The building was in excellent repair, not that any care has been taken of or restoration done to it, but because it had been so solidly constructed as never to require repairs while it stands, and it will continue to stand so long as it is not meddled with. The palace is now used to store vegetables in. Just above it there is another dam across the Ebro, a more ancient one than that at El Bocal, having a very wide “race” close to the bank, immediately in front of the palace. This dam once threw water into the walled moat that protected the royal residence; but the moat’s head has been filled with soil, its drawbridge replaced by a permanent plank footway; it is now dry and protects nothing. Below, and quite close to the palace, is a handsome clump of six fine old mountain pines.
ON FOOT IN SPAIN.

I made a rough rapid sketch of the place, just to show what was a palace to an emperor who made Europe tremble.

Outside the moat, and immediately opposite its bridge, is the old palace-garden—a long parallelogram enclosed by high stone walls, pierced at the west end by a fine wide entrance; the gate being open I looked in. Up the centre of the garden is a gravel walk, on each side of which grows a row of old cypress-trees, leading to a large raised level grass-plot, surrounded with stone seats, looking wonderfully like a modern croquet-ground, but probably constructed for a bowling-green. The enclosure contains about one-and-a-half acres, and is utilised as a market-garden.

Two hundred yards farther up the river, and close to its banks, stands the palace capilla, a small chapel about the size of the lodge to an Englishman's park; a square building, with a roof running to a sharp point. Unfortunately all the apertures of the capilla were fastened up, and I could not see its interior. Outside it was in no way remarkable. Opposite thereto, and in line with the walled garden, is a small open plazuela, or pleasure-ground, having gravelled walks, grass-plots, and flower-beds, furnished with stone-seats under spreading shade trees, and its centre ornamented with a now waterless stone fountain.

My breakfast was a poor affair. The posada was roomy and clean, and its appearance had indicated better things. Charge: six reals.

Soon after one o'clock I resumed my tramp, taking the tow-path. Crossing the canal a little below the almacens
is a bridge of modern construction; it has stone piers and a wooden span, and is only remarkable as an example of bridge-building without knowledge of the true principles of so doing; some day it will unexpectedly take "a header" into the water. It afforded an opportunity to again measure the width of the canal, which was found to be still the same—eighty feet. The tow-path was a fine level, broad, waggon-road, but grass-grown, clearly showing that the traffic was but slight. Alongside of it, as also on the farther bank of the canal, ran a wide continuous strip of timber, consisting principally of elms. The remains of old stumps showed these plantations were ancient, but the standing trees are mostly young. After walking a couple of miles I came to a moored canal-boat—the first seen. It was a very old one to be still in use. Alongside stood its team of two mules and a horse, eating a bait of barley and chopped straw, mixed, from off a spread-out old rawhide, while the crew of half-a-dozen Aragones were loading their craft with firewood, that had been chopped in the plantation close at hand. The boat was very different from an English canal-boat, being built almost ship fashion, with a round bottom and keel, and was nearly the size of a Thames collier. It had no deck nor cabin, and a most prodigious rudder. I never before saw such a rudder.

Two hours more brought me opposite the village of Ribafordato and to the Ribafordato bridge; the former evidently a place of insignificant size and paltry appearance, standing on a barren knoll, which comes so close to the canal as to make its south bank for some distance a high
precipitous cliff. The latter is the finest canal bridge I have ever beheld; why such a structure was built to lead to so wretched a hamlet I cannot conceive. It is a brick bridge, with keystone, facings, and foundations of cut-stone, and its single span springs across not only the eighty feet broad canal but also the wide tow-path; a beautiful arch, the half of a true oval, whose width is its major diameter, and whose crown is forty feet above the level of the water. The approaches are two steep grades, at right angles to the bridge, and so parallel to the canal's course, which lead up to and down from its traverse; an extraordinary arrangement, presenting two right-angled turns to the inexpert teamster, so giving him in crossing one bridge two fine chances for a grand smash. The pitch of its traverse is very great; the slopes, too, coming together very acutely—indeed, the bridge's parapet-walls make quite a sharp angle in its centre. The gable-like profile thus caused contrasts strongly with the beautiful sweeping curve of the arch; and the combination of angle and oval, as seen when descending or going up the canal, presents to the beholder a very striking and pleasing effect.

Just below this remarkable bridge, I was passed by the barge seen before; its team was trotting, all hands were singing, and it went merrily by. Still farther on was another bridge; that leading to Cortis and Mallén, two towns to the south of me. It was very similar to the Ribaforado bridge, excepting in having two small arches on each side of the main one.

As the sun approached the edge of the horizon, the church tower and roofs of Novillas came in view, apparently
about a mile from the canal's course, and between it and
the river. It was time for me to seek a resting-place for
the night; and the canal evidently making a sweep to the
right, while the little town was some distance to the left of
my direct front, I attempted a cut off across the fields, got
entangled amongst irrigating ditches, and, notwithstanding
several successful water jumps, lost both time and distance
by so doing.

Novillas proved to be a small place, with a big church
standing immediately on the right bank of the Ebro; a
decent-looking little town, cleaner than most of the villages
I had seen, and I confidently looked to finding a com-
fortable posada, especially as I had been positively assured
of there being such. There had been two; but travel, and
travellers, had become scarce and infrequent. Novillas no
longer had an inn.

I sought a lodging-house, and found one—the only
one in the place. It was a little general store; grain and
vegetables, groceries and hardware, sausages and haber-
dashery, were there exposed for sale. The Amo—Spanish
equivalent for the French Bourgeois and American Boss—
said he could provide me with supper and breakfast, but
not a bedroom to myself, only a bed in a chamber where
others slept, but that they were personas regular—only
such were permitted to sleep in his house; so making
the best of the inevitable, I answered, “All right,” stacked
arms, refreshed myself with a tumblerful of wine, lit my
pipe, and waited for the seven o'clock meal; taking post
on a brick bench, covered with sheepskins, built under the
hood of the fireplace, and where I was soon joined by an
infantry sergeant and some peasants, who dropped in, and took seats next and opposite me. The sergeant proved to be the non-commissioned officer in command of the little garrison of twenty-five men billeted in the village, and one of the personas regular who lodged in the house.

Supper was plentiful in quantity, but in quality neither choice nor luxuriant. I was the only person favoured with a plate and tumbler, though all had clean napkins; the rest helped themselves direct out of the several dishes with wooden spoons, and drank their wine by tilting the bottle containing it, at arms length off, above their open mouths, and pouring a thin stream down their throats. The wine was not to my taste, being sweet and fruity. My dog, as always, was an object of general admiration; his size, beauty, and manners were greatly praised. "Oh!" said one of the peasants, "if it were only now the latter end of summer, what sport you could have with your dog and gun." Then I learned the country below me was, from the canal to the Ebro, and for many miles down, one vast grain field, which in the summer is full of quail, and that immediately after harvest an ordinarily good shot can confidently back himself to bag fifty birds every day he goes out.

On retiring for the night, I found the bedchamber was a little room, with a curtained-off alcove containing a bed—the sergeant's. Two more beds stood immediately in front of the partitioning curtain of the alcove, and pretty close together, for the room was very small. One was to be my resting-place, the other a couch for the third persona regular. This apartment's only window was in
the wall of the alcove, and consisted but of an eight-inch square hole, closed by a tightly-fitting wooden shutter; and its floor, as here seems to be the usual way in country places, was a cement one. Bed, sheets, floor, everything was clean; but when I looked up at the rafters a dreadful suspicion crossed my mind. Those rafters were dry-rotted and worm-eaten, until it was a standing miracle the roof did not fall in. If that ancient woodwork was not unpleasantly tenanted it would be most extraordinary. My prophetic apprehensions were soon realised. And though the "regular persons" who, for the nonce, were my room mates, did not disturb my sleep by snoring, they certainly did audibly scratch. And so did I, too, for "Norfolk Howards" ranged, reared, and ravished until the dawn of day, and I arose in the morning, when called by the amo at eight o'clock, if rested, certainly not refreshed. He left me a dim and smoking lamp to dress by, for the tightly-shuttered window-hole in the curtained alcove admitted no ray of light, and but that my watch told me differently, so dark was the room it might have been midnight. Down stairs my chocolate was ready waiting for me. I paid the modest bill of eight reals, and serene in mind, but decidedly irritated in body, pursued my way.

The road struck the canal in about a mile, at a point where it was crossed by another bridge, this time a modern one, much after the same pattern as that immediately below the El Bocal almacens. Close to it lay the barge that had passed me the evening before. The crew recognised and bid me "Good days," and "Go with God," in a cordial and hearty manner; and from them I learned that the boundary of Navarra was just behind me, and that I was in Aragon.
CHAPTER XIV.


JANUARY 11, 1877.—The weather of my first day in Aragon was simply superb; though in midwinter the temperature was as one of summer's finest, and a bright sun, and balmy invigorating breeze, soon raised my drooping spirits and insect-depressed soul.

The general features of the country I was passing through continued much the same as the day before, but the elm plantations being replaced with single rows of tall poplars, I therefore had a more continuous and open view of the landscape. On the opposite side of the canal stretched from its bank a vast expanse of brown, barren-looking country right up to the foot of the snow-capped sierra bounding the horizon. On the side I was, an almost continuous wheatfield, brilliantly green, and but occasionally broken by small vineyards and little olive groves, reached from the edge of the tow-path to the banks of the Ebro. Beyond, on the river's farther side, bare, arid, and
JULITUDES OF BIRDS.

forbidding, rose the bluffs of the Bardenas—very incarnations of wild sterility—perpendicular precipices, table-topped peaks, barren gorges, ridge on ridge, range after range, a chaos of dreary desolation.

The cornfields were alive with larks. They were there in thousands, in such quantities assembled, that I suspect the valley of the Ebro is the chosen wintering-place of the migratory larks of North-Western Europe. Indeed, so numerous were they, and so tame, that Juan became at last tired of chasing, and got to look on the birds as matters of course, unworthy of his attention, and so taking no further notice of them, galloped wildly about in an apparently purposeless way, unless for diversion and exercise. On coming to a low-lying part of the valley, where for a stretch of about one thousand acres the wheat-land was replaced with swampy growths of reed-canes, rushes, and sedge-grasses, Juan flushed a snipe, but far out of shot. Soon, the level of the valley rising a few feet, it was again a wheatfield. As the day grew older the temperature rose, it became oppressively warm, and my great-coat an almost unbearable nuisance, though it was rolled up, and slung knapsack fashion at my back; for, as saith the country's proverb, "En largo camino paja pesa"—on a long road a straw is heavy.

The breeze had died away, not a cloud was to be seen, the sun's rays were scorching hot, and the motionless air resounded with the song of birds. Besides the hovering larks, goldfinches, linnets, and many feathered songsters, whose names I knew not, whose plumages were strange to me, filled my ear with melody. Had not the tall poplars
been leafless, it would, indeed, have seemed summer come again.

I put up a covey of red-leg partridges, close to the canal. They had probably come to drink. My slung overcoat prevented the handling of my gun quickly enough to put in a shot, and they got away unscathed. Soon after that indefatigable ranger, Juan, took it into his head to cross the canal and beat the uncultivated wildlands on its farther side—a gravelly sandy waste, sparsely covered with stunted heather plants, sagebrush, oldman, rosemary, and wire-grass; and ere long galloped up another fine covey of birds, and pursued them till lost to sight beyond a rise of ground.

While following the canal, I saw numerous streams leaving it through stone culverts, passing under the tow-path, having well-constructed flood-gates governed by winches, and alongside each of which stood a square, pointed-roofed cottage—dwellings for water-bailiffs and section men—and all built much after the same pattern as the capilla of the emperor-king’s palace near the almaccus. These streams are from half a mile to two miles apart, and generally discharge two cubic feet of water at a rapid flow. They are the feeders for the irrigating ditches to which the plain between canal and river owes its fertility. I also passed two flour-mills, whose wheels were turned by still larger streams, also furnished by water from the canal. Not having seen any augmentation to its volume from confluents, its width remaining the same, and its current not slackening, the conclusion was inevitable that the upper course of the Imperial Canal is very deep,
and that it gradually shoals, and thus provision has been made whereby, without a lessening of the traffic capabilities its width affords, a sufficiency of the essential of fertility is furnished to the valley.

Noon was passed, when Gallar was arrived at, a town standing immediately below the left bank of the canal, of some size, having two large churches, but of a poverty-struck appearance, with a semi-abandoned look about it. The town lay much lower than the tow-path; lower even than the bottom of the canal. In fact, the difference in level between it and the river-plain had become considerable, for the canal had been without locks, and so engineered as to wind along the edge or face of the low bluff that bounded the south side of the valley of the Ebro, with no more fall than sufficed to maintain the current, while the plain had fallen rapidly. Close to the canal stood a fine large flour-mill, storehouse, and residence—quite a handsome range of buildings, enclosing an ornamental well-kept patio. They, and it, had an unmistakable air of prosperity. Alongside of the storehouse was a long flight of stone steps. Descending them, crossing by an old stone bridge the race from the mill, and traversing a narrow alley way, I found myself in the plaza of the town—a dirty, untidy, irregular square—and opposite a rambling old posada of most uninviting presence. Inquiry of a passer-by if there were no other inn elicited the answer: "Yes, and a better one, which stands just outside the town, and close to the canal." Thither I bent my steps, and was glad to find truth had been told in the matter. It was a much better inn—a clean, respectable-looking roadside house,
close to a fine bridge over the canal. A smart Aragonesa invited me to enter, took my orders, and ushered me into a tidy, cheerful room; that is, it would have been cheerful, but its walls were covered with an unusual number of far from unusually atrocious ecclesiastical outrages on fine art, hideously conceived and abominably executed—coloured prints of martyrs in torment and most impossible virgins. In due time a capital breakfast was set before me, the chief feature of which was an excellent dish of eels stewed in wine. The salad was well compounded and crisp, the lamb cutlets delicious, the eggs fresh-laid, the wine to my taste, and I refreshed myself and Juan without stint. For this good repast for man and dog I was only charged, inclusive, six reals, and departed feeling all the better for my short rest and long commons, and well contented with the world and myself. I even forgave the designers and makers of those awful pictures, for, as Sancho Panza told his ass, "Todos los duelos con pan son buenos."

On the near buttress of the bridge that stood by the inn was a water-gauge, showing the canal's depth close to the bank. It was a chance for accurate and reliable information—a thing not always procurable in Spain; and though I nearly slipped headlong down the steep bank into the canal on availing myself of the opportunity, succeeded in ascertaining that it was eight feet six inches from the water's level to the bottom.

Soon after leaving Gallar, the low bluff on whose edge the canal had heretofore ran rose into steep, but not high hills of barren gray clay, interstratified with layers of red cement, and coarse gravelly boulder-bands, having almost
perpendicular faces towards the valley; and the course of the canal became very tortuous, as it wound along, scarped most of the way out of the face of these cliffs, the tow-path being entirely made-ground, reveted in many places on its lower side with solid masonry, and several small lateral valleys were crossed by embankments carrying canal and road, some of them forty feet high, and faced with rubble masonry, whose cement was harder even than the stones it held together. The embankments were pierced with central archways to permit a discharge of the waters of the valleys, and through several of them sharp streams were flowing. A breast-high parapet of rubble and cement protected the tow-path wherever it traversed these combined aqua- and via-ducts. The lateral valleys afforded no vista of view, for they were invariably closed, within half a mile of the canal, by the wall of barren bluff, being, indeed, merely recesses in the general front presented by the upland to the plain. The engineering of this part of the Imperial Canal is admirable, and the work, oftentimes very heavy, has been most conscientiously and thoroughly performed. Nothing short of a convulsion of nature can break the canal.

In the course of the afternoon several ploughs were seen at work, all alike in construction, and most primitive in appearance. This is how they are made: the "beam" is a pole, twelve to fourteen feet long, at an acute angle to one end of which is fixed a shorter one, which serves instead of "stilts;" opposite this, and nearly at right angles to the long-pole, is another still shorter, sharp-pointed, and sometimes tipped with a piece of iron; this
last stick is "coulter" and "share" combined. The plough teams were mules, in pairs, and the method of harnessing curious. Two mules were attached together by a yoke, like what is used for oxen in England, only the "bows" were replaced by four straight sticks padded with half-collars, and in the centre ring of the yoke hung the traction end of the long pole of the plough, kept in its place by a wooden peg—no traces. The mules were driven entirely by the voice. Adjurations and anathemas seemed quite efficient substitutes for reins and whips; and a light headstall without blinkers was all the leather on them.

At four o'clock the town of Pedrola was sighted, lying half a mile to the left of the canal; and having learned from a shepherd—the only man met on my road in the whole course of the day—that it contained a posada at which accommodation could be obtained, the tow-path was left and the town made for, for I had gone far enough for one day, and the heat and weight of my traps had quite tired me. A little footpath, leading through gardens and small olive orchards, was taken, and their flourishing look and the imposing appearance of the town—at a distance—led me to hope it was a thriving prosperous space. Pedrola proved the most rambling, tumble-down, dirty, disreputable rookery yet seen in Spain, and its inhabitants looked like swarms of beggars and cut-throats. With difficulty the posada was found—a woebegone old building, whose ground-floor was a big stable, cart-shed, and lumber-hole, all in one, with a corner boarded off for a kitchen. Above, and just below the eaves, was a row of small holes in the front wall of the building, possibly windows for any apart-
ments the upper storey might be partitioned into. However, I had been so often already deceived by appearances in this country that I was not discouraged, and asked a woman in the kitchen for supper and a bed.

"You must ask the amo."

"Where is he?"

"At the café."

"When will he return?"

"Whenever he thinks fit, perhaps soon, perhaps not before morning."

Evidently "Mariatornas" was in a very bad temper, no satisfactory answers were to be expected from her. I sat down to wait, rest, and smoke a pipe, then started out to hunt up the café. I found it, a low dark room full of a bandit-looking crowd of herdboys, labourers, and loafers. There were about forty of them. Involuntarily I thought of the "Forty Thieves." Take the stage ruffians of a melodrama, make them as dirty as possible, give them each a long knife and a four days' beard, half fill them with ardent spirit, and, so far as personal appearance goes, you will have fair representatives of the customers of that café! Behind a filthy counter stood the presiding goddess, a large, handsome, but bloated brunette. I learned the posadero was not there. He had just left, and, unknowingly, I must have passed him, so I retraced my steps. At the posada I found the landlord arrived. I could get no accommodation. He told me there were no provisions, no rooms in his inn—the upper portion of the building was only a lumber-loft, but there was a lodging-house in town, the Casa Lorenza; there I could get a bed and meals.
It was with much difficulty the Lorenza house was found, a comparatively clean-looking little cottage in a narrow street. I knocked, and the door was opened by an old woman. "Could I get lodgings for the night?" "Was I a single man—alone?" "Yes." "Then I could not." And it was explained to me that the old woman was a lone widow and had but one bedroom in her house, a double-bedded one; she slept in one of the beds and let the other to "families;" a single man could not be admitted. I tried to persuade that very mature female she would be in no danger—indeed, she was old and ugly enough to rely confidently on her virtue—but it was no go. La Casa Lorenzo was like Caesar's wife. While talking to this ancient dragoness of propriety, a cloaked and sandalled individual, much the worse for drink, stepped up and volunteered to find quarters for me, and, as a last resource, I followed him. My conductor led me to several forbidding-looking dens, but none of them had an unoccupied bed, and he proposed to try the café. There we met with no better success, and to show my consideration for the trouble he had taken, I called for two copas of aguardiente, and took a drink with him. The liquor was excellent, and to my amazement only cost one farthing a glass. Then my self-constituted friend called for wine, and insisted on my taking a tumbler with him. While we were being served he volubly detailed to the assembled crowd my position, winding up with a declaration that he was quite willing to share his own private bed with me, adding we could take home a bottle of aguardiente and some bread and eggs, and make a night of it; he was not afraid, a man
who had a licence to carry arms, and could afford to keep a dog, must be both respectable and rich. This recklessly courageous and liberal chevalier in sandals was very dirty; unmistakable signs showed that "the familiar friend to man" harboured in his clothes, sported over his person. He was an insect preserve, and he was most decidedly drunk. I declined, therefore, his proffered hospitality with many thanks, assuring him nothing would induce me to incommode such a high-toned gentleman; and making my escape with difficulty from his tipsy importunities, sallied forth and started for the next town. I was very tired, very hungry, and it was getting dark, but there seemed nothing else for it.

While passing the last house of Pedrola, on my way out of town, I spied the first respectable-looking person I had seen in it, stopped him, stated my case, and asked if he could direct me to any place to stay at. He said: "In the town—no, but a little way out of it—yes; on the high road, the other side of the canal, is a new posada, there you may possibly get what you require." Hope dawned again, and crossing the Pedrola bridge I soon arrived at my last chance, and found the "new posada" was a barn-like building, daubed with mud, shut for the night, and showing no light. I knocked long and loudly. At last the upper portion of the halved door opened, and a voice asked who was there and what was wanted.

"A traveller requiring admittance."
"Have you your regular papers?"
"Yes."
"Have you a licence to carry your gun?"
"I have."
"Then come in."

The lower half of the door swung back and I stepped into utter darkness, so obscure was it that neither anyone nor anything was visible. I was bid to "Go up," and stumbling against a stairway groped my way to a loft used as a kitchen, and by the dim light from the embers of a sagebrush fire, perceived an old woman and young girl squatted back on their heels, one on either side of it warming their hands. I asked to be shown my bed, and to have supper prepared for me. The old woman looked me in the face, with as much amazement depicted on hers, as though I had asked for the golden apples of the Hesperides.

"Bed! our bed is the only one. Everybody sleeps in the mule quarters, in the straw. As for supper, you are too late for that. There is nothing to eat on the premises. If you must have a bed and supper you will have to go to Alagon. I do not expect you can get a bed in Pedrola. I am sure you cannot here, nor anything to eat either."

"How far is Alagon?"
"Two leagues—largas."

In plain English, I was eight miles from my supper and bed.

Was the tow-path of the canal or the road the shortest way? The road—the canal was half as long again. I wished the old woman and girl a very good night, and "went with God."

As the door of the posada nueva was bolted behind me, the last string of the cork to my champagne-bottled
patience was cut, only my mother-tongue seemed adequate to express the sentiments of the occasion, and, for the first time, Juan heard me speak in English. I do not think that sagacious dog was favourably impressed with the language, for he tucked his tail and looked scared. I was much, very much, dissatisfied. Eight miles farther to go, carrying weight, is no joke when a man has made his day's march under a hot sun; besides, I was very hungry, and therefore, my nationality asserting itself was, under such circumstances, cross.

While tramping along, it forcibly occurred to me that I was on the very portion of my route where my friend the San Sebastian banker had earnestly cautioned me on no account to travel the road after dark, nor let strangers know what way I was going; and it was pitch dark, and all the ugly-looking customers in Pedrola knew I had started for Alagon. I pulled up and prepared for possible contingencies. Not that I cared. It would, in my then frame of mind, have done me good to have had an encounter, been a vent to my feelings to turn my double-barrel loose and try the effect, on some of the denizens of that inhospitable atrocity of a town I had left behind me, of a couple of charges of "buck and ball," for I had drawn my partridge-shot out of, and dropped into, each barrel a loosely-fitting bullet and three buckshot, and carefully "chambered" them with snipe-shot, the most effective and certain load for night-work a gun can have. Not that I seriously apprehended molestation. I had little doubt but that the hard-looking cases I had seen at the café were, in reality, honest peasants, and, like the people of the posada...
nueva, more afraid of malas gente than I was; that they were, at worst, smugglers in peace, guerrilleros in times of civil war. What I really feared, though, was the possibility of losing my unknown way in the dark, and either arriving practically nowhere, or getting to Alagon when every house was shut up, no one about, and unable to discover the posada, or—horrible thought—find Alagon as deficient in accommodation for wandering strangers as the town just left; for a town Pedrola certainly is, having not only its two large churches and Plaza, but a population of, I should judge, from a thousand to fifteen hundred souls; for I was beginning to lose faith in Spanish statements to wayfarers, and becoming half a believer in what my friends at San Sebastian and Pamplona had told me, when they said the region I had entered was unfit for any decent man to travel through, excepting in the regular way.

The sky had become thickly overcast. Not a star showed a ray of light. It was dark as a closed grave. A strong cold wind blew directly from the snow-peaks of the Moncayo. Before me, in the direction of Zaragoza, probably beyond that place, strong vivid flashes of lightning almost continuously illumined the heavens. A downpour of rain seemed likely to make my circumstances still more disagreeable. The road showed dimly white when the far-off lightnings played, and I pushed on rapidly. Still I could not discern my way with sufficient certainty to avoid running occasionally into the heaps of stones placed at intervals along the sides of the road, stumbling over the ruts in the middle, and stubbing my toes against the half-embedded cobbles with which, in places, they had been
mended (?). More than once I was nearly down. No doubt, being tired, I went too near the ground.

The road soon diverged to the right, and after a short rise, seemed to be crossing an upland plain. It was very straight, with neither hedge nor fence of any kind, nor, so far as the light diffused from the distant flashes enabled me to judge, was there even a single tree near; it seemed to be traversing a waste. In fact, for an hour and a half, the faint indications of a road before me, surrounding darkness or gleaming lightning was all I could discern, for Juan had trotted on ahead. Truly it was a lonesome walk.

A long gradual descent, a bridge presumably across the canal, a short sharp declivity, and I was in a totally different country. On each hand was timber—olives most likely—shade-trees nearly met overhead. The continued gurgle of running water informed me I was near irrigating ditches, and at last I found myself amongst houses. I had been walking at the best pace I could go for over two hours; without doubt I was in Alagon. Not a soul was to be seen, not a light showed. It was close to nine o'clock, and I listened for the cry of the serreno. No sound came. I gave ten minutes' grace. The stillness remained unbroken. So concluding the town was of insufficient wealth and importance to employ any guardians of the night, I started on a voyage of discovery.
CHAPTER XV.


JANUARY 12, 1877.—Walking slowly down the centre of the chief street of Alagon, the glimmer of a light streaming through a crack in the door of an unprepossessing-looking house was spied. Advancing and knocking boldly, the door was immediately opened without question, and I looked in on a room lighted by the blaze of a brushwood fire, around which sat a semicircle of men, women, and children, who all stared with evident astonishment at me; doubtless they had supposed it had been some expected neighbour, for I think it was a social gathering I beheld. Announcing myself as a traveller in search of the posada, who wished to learn the way thereto, a young man got up and offered to be my guide, saying as a stranger, ignorant of the nomenclature of the streets of the town, directions would be of no use to me. After passing along some short, narrow, irregularly laid-out alley-ways, between dilapidated overhanging old houses, we came to a small
Plaza, and pointing to an open doorway, through which came a flood of light, my guide said: "Sir, there is the posada—a dios," and left me so suddenly, I had neither time to offer a propina, nor even thank him.

The open entrance led immediately into the kitchen of the posada, into which I walked. A goodly fire was cheerfully burning under the wide hood, and on the benches round it reclined several picturesque Aragonese peasants, while the ama and two criadas sat on the brick hearth, she knitting socks, they spinning yarn, like Arcadian shepherdesses, with their fingers and a distaff. The spinning-wheel of our grandmothers is a modern (?) invention seemingly, not yet known in Aragon's rural parts.

Greatly to the wearied traveller's satisfaction, I learned my wants could be supplied, and was immediately shown upstairs into a large bedroom, having two big alcoves, each with a double bed in it, and informed I would have it and them all to myself.

After making a comfortable toilet, for which there were all necessary appliances, I descended to my unconscionably late dinner with a ravening appetite. It was an indifferent though sufficient meal that I sat down to; want of notice and the time of night were, however, reasonable excuses for all shortcomings, but for the first time in Spain food was placed before me without a clean napkin being furnished.

The meal finished, the natives seated round the fire were joined, who immediately assailed me with innumerable questions. The Yankees have a world-wide reputation for inquisitiveness; as compared with the peasantry of
Northern Spain they are, I take it, a very reserved people. But here the stranger is questioned, not for the sake of asking, but for the pleasure of listening to what he has got to tell, for to a non-reading community a traveller is as a newspaper, sometimes as a novel, and the farther the distance whence he comes the more interesting is he. Some of the questions asked about England and the English are absolutely amazing. I verily believe several of my audience were so ignorant and confiding, that had a chapter out of the "Arabian Nights" been recited to them by me, with an assurance the venue was in Great Britain, and myself one of the actors therein, they would have seen nothing incredible in my statements. And it must be remembered that a people brought up from infancy to believe implicitly all the ancient and modern Catholic miracles, religious fairy-tales, and necromantic monkish legends, have credulity and love of the marvellous strongly developed in them. And they are also a stay-at-home people; the man amongst them who has made a few smuggling trips across the Pyrenees is a sort of Marco Polo in their imagination; none of these people seated round the fire with me had, for instance, ever been in Navarra, though that province is but a good day's march off, and they almost talked of El Reino de Navarra as of a foreign country. They, simple souls, seemed to think I had made an extraordinary journey, and prophesied I should never get to Barcelona—"It is too far off."

Ere long the ubiquitous guitar was produced. One of the men proved a good player, and after favouring the company with a few airs, started "La jota Aragonesa,"
which, of course, I was pestered to dance; and though, from the difference in rhythm of the music from that of the Navarra jotas, I suspected the dance too differed, more or less, I thought it better to risk dancing wrongly than disoblige by not dancing at all; so, being well refreshed by supper, the good wine, and warm fire, rose up, bowed to one of the maids, and handed her to the middle of the room, with a delighted grin across her broad Aragonesa face.

That girl's style of dancing is easily conceivable by anyone who has ever seen a heifer frisk about a pasture, the two performances being identical, and I was not sorry when she said "Gracias," and we sat down. By the time we had concluded the sound of La jota had half filled the large room with lads and lasses, the floor was immediately taken by as many couples as could find space to dance in, and a baile was improvised. Some of the dancing was very good indeed, and there was a commendable absence of the objectionable; unlike the Arguedas saturnalia, there were no flagrant improprieties perpetrated. Amongst the company were many good-looking men and women and one really handsome girl. With her I danced a jota, to acquire the Aragonesa style, and a waltz, for the pleasure of doing so, for she was an elegantly-made girl and waltzed remarkably well.

On retiring, I found my bed most comfortable, its linen white as snow, and no insects troubled the repose of the tired-out wanderer.

The peasants in the posada of Alagon were distinctly different in appearance from the Navarros, as markedly so.
as English from German bucolics; in fact, immediately upon crossing the line I noticed a change of type. These Aragonese are, both men and women, fuller-chested, heavier limbed, broader in the face, squarer-jawed, and their dress also is different and more picturesque. The men are mostly attired in this fashion: A short-waisted jacket, sometimes frogged, and slashed in the sleeves; a low-cut very open waistcoat, plentifully garnished with pearl buttons; cotton shirt, with very wide turn-down collar—generally a checkered or striped one—and no neck-tie; knee-breeches, usually of black velveteen, very wide, not reaching the knee, and open halfway up the thigh, the ribbons to tie them hanging unfastened. Below, and through the slash of the knee-breeches, shows a pair of loose white linen drawers, tied by a draw-string just below the knee, and met by woollen stockings without feet; no hats, and the hair cut Newgate fashion; a coloured kerchief folded narrow tied round the head; and on the otherwise bare feet, sandals. The sash completes the costume, and is almost a garment; very wide and long, blue or red in colour; it is wound many times round the waist, and reaches from the middle of the ribs to considerably below the hip-joints. It is a sort of universal pocket and travelling-bag; money, smoking apparatus, knife, provisions, string, anything and everything that has to be carried is, if possible, stowed away in the folds of the sash. A striped blanket, or rather scarf, in size and shape not unlike a Scotch plaid, is, when out of doors, thrown around their shoulders in all kinds of fantastic ways.

The skirts of the women are fully six inches shorter
than those worn by the Guipuzcoanas or Navarranas, and all wear numerous ones, each of a different colour and of a trifling less length than that immediately below it, the outer or uppermost one being finely and closely kilted for several inches below its waistband. The waist of the bodice is very long, as long indeed as it is possible to be worn, and the women of Aragon either lace very tightly or are naturally extremely small-waisted, perhaps both. Many of them wear a small shawl, which in shape, size, and manner of being put on exactly resembles those worn by Welsh market-women. They, too, tie a kerchief round the head as the universal out-door covering, but in many and diverse fashions, but do not cut their hair short. Stockings with feet and low-cut light shoes complete the list of their visible array.

Their feet are generally smallish, well-arched and plump.

The prevailing complexion of both sexes is the floribrunette; but the dark-sallow is numerous, and the red-Celtic not scarce.

In the morning, ere departing, I took a look round the town. The only remarkable object was the tower of its church. Dome-shaped, and covered with a chequerwork of white, pink, and green tiles, it had a fantastic and Tartar appearance. My way led through a succession of gardens, olive groves, and cornfields; these last had all been artificially brought to an exact, slightly-tilted level, or rather series of levels, each below one of its neighbouring enclosures, and every level surrounded with low earth-banks. They were, in short, catch-water fields, and a system of ditches enabled them to be flooded. Some were so, and
looked like small square lakes. Irrigation had, at immense cost of labour, been brought to perfection. Several large ranges of white buildings, having high chimneys, were probably factories or mills, and in the distance could be seen houses whose appearance suggested country seats—probably a nearer view would have resolved them into farmhouses and stables. Fine trees bordered the wide road on each side, and cottages were frequent.

Before I had gone far, two guardias civiles appeared and stopped me. They saluted and asked if I had a licence to carry arms. Replying that I had, I was about to produce and show it, when they said I need not trouble myself, my word was sufficient, and again saluting, passed on. I have frequently met members of this corps, always in couples and on foot, and have invariably been politely treated by them.

The guardias civiles, actually the rural police of Spain, are a government force of about seven thousand men, scattered in small posts all over the kingdom, and to their vigilance and activity is due the security of the roads; for though at no place numerous, considering the extent of the beat patrolled, their appearance is at any time and anywhere on the cards; and being invested with authority to kill if they think necessary, and having a great reputation for bravery, decision, and determination, they are held in much dread by the evil-disposed. They must be a picked body of men, for all I have seen were tall, handsome, well-built fellows. And their serviceable and picturesque uniform sets them off to great advantage. A cocked hat, in form much like a French gendarme's but more elegant in shape,
A COSY KITCHEN.

mounted with wide white braid; a blue frock-coat, with red and white facings, and white cord shoulder-knots; yellow belts, carrying pouch and side-arms; their nether limbs clothed in dark blue pantaloons, and leggings of dark chocolate-coloured cloth, reaching halfway up the thigh, and fastened with a row of buttons all the way up on the outside; and good walking high shoes, is their costume. Their long blue military cloak is generally rolled tightly up and carried en bandoulière, their breech-loading carbine slung across their back, their hands encased in clean white cotton gloves. All are close shaved, except a fierce-looking heavy moustache. Taking them altogether, they are the most stylish police force I have ever seen.

At eleven o'clock I reached Casetas, the first place I have seen in Spain at all resembling in appearance an English village. It possessed a “green,” well covered with a verdant close-growing sod, around which stood neat, modern-looking cottages; and a clean, tidy roadside tavern presented itself to my sight. I entered, gave the usual salutation, and asked for breakfast in the patois of the locality—I had picked up the words the night before in the Alagon posada. Being told my worship should have his breakfast cooked immediately, and shown into a room that served for kitchen and parlour, I mounted the raised hearth, and, stretching myself on the brickwork bench under the fire's hood, took a survey. The room was a pattern of cleanliness; its whitewashed walls and ceiling were without a stain; the tile-floor well swept; pots, pans, and other cooking and table utensils—scalded, scoured, and burnished—were hanging around or racked in profusion.
On the hearth glowed a cheerful bed of red coals—rosemary-bush charcoal—that diffused a grateful warmth and fragrant odour.

On her knees, just below me, was a good-looking peasant lassie, cooking my meal. She had very white, regular, and sound teeth, coal-black eyes, and, I thought, most unnecessarily short petticoats. The young woman—she seemed to be about four-and-twenty years of age—paid a high compliment to my assumption of the appearance and manner of a better-class native. Looking up with a smile, she said: "How is your brother?" "Very well, thank you," I replied with a laugh. The laugh puzzled her. She looked hard at me and asked: "Are you not of the mountains? A brother of Don Miguel of Tabuenca?" No, I was not; did not even know Don Miguel. That was very strange, we were as like as two eggs. Then she chattered on that she had an aunt and cousins in Tabuenca whom she visited often; that she knew the Señor Don Miguel very well. He was a great friend of hers. And she again showed her pretty teeth. And so she rattled away, talking and laughing as she cooked.

My breakfast deserves description: a bowl of strong excellent soup, a dish of black pudding spiced and seasoned with fine herbs and piñon nuts, pieces of fresh pork and sliced potatoes nicely browned in olive oil, lamb cutlets and greens, a well-mixed salad, cheese and olives, bread at discretion, and a bottle of excellent wine. After thoroughly satisfying myself, the remains and half a loaf of bread made a fine mess for Juan. The entire charge for all which was tenpence! On this trip I have so often been
charged much more for very indifferent fare, that the conclusion is inevitable—as a stranger and pilgrim—I have, three times out of four, been overcharged from twenty to fifty per cent. But though I have often felt sure I was being imposed on I have never said so. Really, as compared with English charges, the most exorbitant bill ever presented to me has seemed ridiculously small; and on the line I have taken travellers are so evidently scarce, that if these unfortunate posaderos do not impose on foreigners who on earth are they to impose on?

Notwithstanding the lavish display of utensils in the kitchen parlour of the Casetas inn, I had eaten with a wooden spoon and fork; indeed, I have seen no other table weapons since entering Aragon. As always, they were made of boxwood; the spoon very shallow, the fork—six-pronged—quite blunt, and the prongs close to each other. Practically, the two instruments are but very wide chopsticks. But, for a white man, I can handle chopsticks very fairly, and therefore have not been inconvenienced. I am told that in Aragon, only in first-class hotels, fashionable restaurants, and the houses of the very rich, are metal forks and spoons to be seen.

Soon after leaving Casetas, the handsome towers and domes of Zaragoza's famous churches appeared above the tops of the olive-groves surrounding that town, but it took me a two-and-a-half hours' walking to reach the city. As I neared it, the roads were deep in mud. The edge of the storm, whose lightnings had given me glimpses of my way when walking to Alagon the night before, had reached there.
ON FOOT IN SPAIN.

I had a letter of introduction from a Tudela acquaintance to a family at Zaragoza, with whom he was closely related and often lived. It had been explained to me that they did not take inmates, but, as his friend, they would make an exception in my favour, and gladly put his room and the entire house at my disposition. So I walked straight to the place, and there received so effusive and warm a welcome that, at once, I felt myself established "as one of the family."
CHAPTER XVI.


JANUARY 25, 1877.—The city of Zaragoza pleases me much. It is by far the most considerable town I have yet visited in this country, and has about it an air of prosperous, progressive activity, quite refreshing and absolutely novel, after my late experiences.

Sunday I attended high mass at one of the show churches, "El Pilar," and was greatly struck with its unique beauty, for in appearance it is totally different from any Spanish church I have seen, and is in a certain sense handsomer than any of them. In architecture, lighting, and ornamentation, it is a temple; but, though a place of worship, hardly a church. Full of marble sculpture, decorative painting, and gilding; well ventilated, light, airy, almost gay. The fine sacred music floating through it seemed almost out of place; the airs of an Italian opera would have sounded more in keeping with the surroundings. The congregation—a for the most part well-dressed and
respectable one—was continually changing. Streams of people, coming and going, passing and repassing, paying their devotions first at one beautiful shrine then at another, fills it with life and motion. The most frequented shrine was a very fine picture of the Virgin and Child, hung around with votive offerings, chiefly modelled in wax—some being as large as life—of hands, arms, breasts, and legs; legs, however, being more numerous than all the others taken together. More of the visitors to this shrine were sightseers than worshippers.

In the afternoon I went to a public dance in the bull-ring of the Plasa de Toros—a peasant ball only to be seen on Sundays—for I wished to see the interior of the ring, which is closed on week-days, and also a public peasant dance. Admittance was obtainable by all persons "decently attired," on payment of one real.

The Zaragoza bull-ring is a large circular building, not unlike in form of construction the old Roman amphitheatre, and much larger than the cursory glance I gave its exterior had led me to suppose; indeed, on pacing across it I was surprised by its dimensions. The circular, well-gravelled and swept arena, was three hundred feet across. Around were ten tiers of stone seats, rising one above the other; then two storeys of palcos or boxes, comfortably arranged with wooden seats, each storey consisting of one hundred and four boxes. It was evident over ten thousand spectators could be comfortably seated. In the centre of the arena was a circle sixty yards across, temporarily railed off for dancers, and two bands, a regimental and a citizen one, alternately played from two raised platforms. Both
bands were strong in numbers, and played well, keeping and marking the time extremely so. The dancers were all of the peasant class, and clothed in their holiday dresses, but, though picturesquely arrayed, and of good figures, were as a general thing very plain in the face. The way those people acquitted themselves was astonishing—vals, polkas, mazurkas were danced with an agility, grace, and precision far superior to anything of the kind I have seen in France. Indeed, the worst dancing of these common peasants was better than the best English ball-room performances, and I was well pleased by the general propriety of conduct observed. Whether such decorum was entirely due to the presence of police, polizones, not guardias civiles, or that the Aragones are more "proper" than the Navarras, I do not venture to decide. The ball concluded with a jota Aragonesa, some of the dancing in which was quite equal to the ballet-dancing of London theatres.

For this dance the ring filled with couples, and the scene was most gay and animated. Try and fancy the Hodges and Bettys of one of our rural districts dancing all the fashionable dances of the day with easy elegance, agile grace, and neat precision—if you can!

Fine well-kept roads lead from Zaragoza in all directions; and as, accompanied by Juan, my faithful and affectionate friend, companion, and guard, I take my daily constitutional, most charming views and fresh objects of interest continually present themselves. The other day I walked out to see the canal-locks, about three miles from town. They are two in number, and like everything connected with the Imperial Canal, well designed and
constructed. The first is one hundred and forty feet long, by thirty wide, with a drop of thirty feet; the second of similar dimensions, but only having a drop of half the first. These figures are approximations, for I had no means of making actual measurements.

Just above the upper lock is the finest flour-mill I have seen anywhere, except the "Lick" mill in California. The miller politely showed me over it. The water power being furnished by the canal without stint, and the fall close on forty-five feet, its capacity is very considerable; but, at the time, only twelve pairs of stones were running; for at present it hardly pays to convert grain into flour, wheat being now worth forty-eight to forty-nine pesetas per one hundred and thirty-eight and a half kilogrammes, while the best flour only fetches thirty-six, and second best, thirty-four, pesetas per one hundred kilogrammes. But this is unusual and temporary, and the market will soon right itself.

After showing me over the place, the miller took me into a handsomely-furnished sitting-room, and produced a bottle of wine for my opinion. It was quite different from any I have tasted in this country, and more of a cordial than a wine, in colour a bright garnet, very sparkling and clear; but I should not like it as a drink, for it is slightly sweet and strongly alcoholic. It had been made on the premises, from grapes off a hill-side in sight from the window, situated above the level of irrigation just beyond the canal. The wine was a perfectly pure one, had been nine years in the wood, and a few months in bottle. It had been made for, and never off the premises of, the.
miller, so he could vouch for its integrity; nor was there a single drop of it in the market. On taking a second glass I liked it better. It was decidedly a very fine wine. A third glass I declined; it really was too strong to drink much of.

A mile beyond the flour-mill is an artificial guano manufactory, and to it I was taken by the miller to see what he considered a splendid mastiff. The dog was a big, clumsy, cross-bred brute, and I was much more interested in the factory. The guano is made from the flesh of horses, mules, and asses, dried, pounded, and mixed with the dust of their calcined bones, and has a great reputation. Certainly if its rank as a fertiliser is at all proportionate to its rankness of smell, it is hard to surpass.

Below, and not far from where I tasted the wine, is another flour-mill, run also by water from the canal. It, too, was a large and handsome white stone building, but smaller than the other.

Returning to town by a different route, my way ran past a licorice-mill. I entered it, and introduced myself to its manager. He proved to be also its proprietor; and on my expressing a wish to see the process, kindly made himself my cicerone, showing and explaining everything connected with his fabric, from the chopping up and sorting of the roots to the final casting of the juice into oblong boxes, containing two hundred and sixty pounds each of cake licorice. Under the porticoes of the large patio, or interior courtyard of the building, were squatted on the ground about a hundred women, young and old, at work cutting the roots into convenient lengths by chopping them
on blocks with small hatchets, sorting by size and quality, and clearing from the soil adhering to them. All were singing, chatting, or laughing. In one side of the building, mules were turning huge stone rollers that bruised the chopped roots into pulp, the apparatus much resembling that used for crushing silver-ore in Mexico. Afterwards the pulped roots were macerated by steam, the resulting syrup being concentrated by boiling. The owner of the works was a young and most intelligent man, and extremely polite and friendly; a great admirer of all things English, and a student of our language. But though by hard study he had advanced so far as to have, with the assistance of a dictionary, translated very creditably "Oliver Twist" and "Hide and Seek," he could not speak intelligibly; for there being no one living in Zaragoza who can talk English, he was in utter ignorance of how the words of the language sound; neither, of course, could he understand me when I spoke to him in my own language.

Still nearer home I passed a potato-mill—a manufactory of starch, desiccated potatoes, potato flour, &c. &c., near which I obtained a splendid view. Rising above a foreground of dark green olive-trees appeared the towers, domes, and buildings of Zaragoza; beyond, a rugged, broken, desolate stretch of chaotic hills and ridges of gravel, gray clay, and cement; then, forty miles off, the Sierra of Alcubierre, dark blue and indistinct from warm haze, and showing no detail; above, brilliantly white with dazzling snow, the summits of the Sierra de Guara, distant seventy miles; while to the north-east—in which direction there stretched to the horizon an apparent desert of broken
A SPLENDID VIEW.

mesa—rose sharply and distinctly defined against a cloudless sky, the glittering peaks of the Maladetta mountains of the Pyrenees—more than a hundred miles away.

The day was a remarkably fine one, clear and brilliant, showing detail with a distinctness and reducing distance in a manner unknown to an English climate. I was so delighted with this view, that I went back the following morning to take a sketch of it. Alas! I could make no approach towards doing it justice. It was a view at once too panoramic in extent, too minute in its lovely details, and too charming in its gradations of tint and variety of colour to be more than hinted at within the limits of the four corners of a sheet of drawing-paper, and by the simple use of black and white; I was obliged to content myself with a most inadequate sketch of the centre of the town and country immediately back of it.

The following day I took a different road from town, and when about a mile and a half out, saw at work on the summit of a hill dominating the city, some hundreds of men and about fifty carts and horses, making excavations and moving soil. I supposed they were making fortifications, but was glad to find they were doing nothing so foolish. The work in progress was the construction of three large reservoirs, from which, by mains and pipes, to supply the houses of Zaragoza with water. Truly it is encouraging to see in progress a work of public utility in a country whose constructive energy has so long been exclusively devoted to, and monopolised by, military engineering. Waterworks are better for Spain than redoubts.

On my return I looked in at the foundry and ironworks
of Don Martin Rodon et Hermano, situate close to the little bridge over the Huerva, and a little without the Santa Engracia city gate, for I wished to renew my acquaintance with the young fellow at whose mother's house I had spent Christmas Eve in Tudela. He was quite glad to see and show me over the works. They were extensive and busy. I noticed the best turning-lathe in the machine-shop was branded "Edgar Allen, Sheffield." One for old England!

There are three theatres here. I have been to a performance at the principal one. The building is much after the same style as the San Sebastian theatre, but smaller. Like it, the ventilation, temperature, and lighting left nothing to be desired. There was a house of about seven hundred people, principally occupying the stalls and dress-circle. Military men, en grande tenue, and en pastiano, with their ladies, were very numerous, and the most stylish in appearance of the audience; but all the occupiers of stalls and boxes had the air and manner of the beau monde, much more so than I had expected to see in a provincial capital. The first piece was a political comedy—a hit at crises. The audience seemed to appreciate the points highly, but not being versed in Spanish politics, the allusions were lost on me, and I found it stupid enough. There were five actors and three actresses. The men were very fair artists, the women rather "sticky," one especially so—her corsets seemed to be preying on her mind. Afterwards came a spectacular ballet, "The Daughter of Fire." It was excessively well put on. Scenery and dresses were most artistic and beautiful; nor was there the remotest approach either to tawdriness or vulgarity about the performance, while, as
was to be looked for in Spain, the dancing was admirable. A bailador, two primera bailarinas, and forty danzarinas constituted the corps de ballet. One of the bailarinas danced as well as any “first lady” I have had the pleasure of criticising of late years. But what pleased me most was the general goodness of the corps, all of whom could, and did, dance well, with grace, ease, precision, and becoming naturalness; in striking contrast to the en evidence drilled and awkward ungainliness of an average London troupe. The “display” too was decidedly good. No “broom-sticks,” no “beef to the heels,” no padding, no big feet, no flat feet. Why does not some enterprising manager import an entire ballet troupe from Spain, and give the cockneys a chance to see, en masse, dancing and shape that is really elegant? He would certainly make a financial success, for the exhibition would be sure to draw, and their salaries be undoubtedly low; evidently so, for the best places in the theatre—the fauteuil stalls (butacas)—were only half-a-crown, the others proportionally cheap; so though the attendance was good, there could not have been over seventy-five pounds in the house; and out of this had to be paid a good orchestra of a leader and thirty-eight performers, and a prompter, eight actors and actresses, forty-three dancers, numerous supernumeraries, all splendidly dressed, and besides that, handsome scenery, gas, rent, and contingent expenses; and the management is making money!

Sunday I went to high mass at the metropolitan church—the “Seu”—the archbishop officiating. The cathedral was the greatest possible contrast to the “Pilar.” It
seemed the very type and exemplar of the mediæval cathedral—solemn, impressive, obscure; too obscure, for it is full of work of the highest merit—sculpture, carvings, paintings—a very mausoleum of art. Really lofty, its groined roof, supported by pillars and pointed arches, seems, in the dim light, still farther off than it really is. Indeed, on entrance, I thought the cathedral narrow for its height and length. It was only when I noticed how trifling a relative space the knots of kneeling worshippers occupied, and counted the numbers in some of the nearest of them, that I commenced to realise my mistake. Of course I could not pace the distance, but estimating by the eye, counting the squares of the marble inlaid floor between the rows of pillars, and multiplying by the average size of the squares, I presumed the width of the cathedral is at least two hundred and fifty feet, but this is possibly much within the mark. The organ was a very fair one, and the chanting and playing good.

There being a ball every Sunday night in one of the minor theatres, and wanting to see all phases of Spanish life that I could, I went after dinner, notwithstanding I had been warned there would be nothing worth seeing; but I was like the young girl, who being told that love was all folly, wished to see the foolishness of it. As far as I could learn from my informant, these Sunday balls were only frequented by the Zaragoza species of the genus Cad, and the females who were to be expected at a ball where the entrance fee was but a matter of two reais; that, in short, they were "Fivepenny Argyles."

The "Gran baile"—as the advertising posters called it—
A "GRAN BAILE."

was announced to last from eight o'clock in the evening to two o'clock of the next morning; and at half-past nine I looked in. The dancing-floor was one hundred feet by sixty in dimensions, around which were five rows of seats, and on the stage was a brass band of twelve performers, executing a waltz. I say "executing" avec intention; for though they kept excellent time, the instruments were brassy in tone, and out of tune, and the music (?) was atrocious. About sixty couples were footing it. As I had observed at the peasant-ball at the Plaza de Toros, the men, as a usual thing, danced better than the women; why, I cannot say. Perhaps the voluminous petticoats of the females lessened the apparent grace of their movements.

The best male dancers were, I noticed, waltzing with each other. By-and-by a policeman came in and went round the dancing-floor, stopping and separating all the male couples. The inference was plain. Here the authorities do not consider it proper for men to dance with each other in public. That policeman had a lively time of it. While discussing the matter with some loudly-expostulating couple at one end of the room, half-a-dozen others would start at the opposite one, and on his going in pursuit of them, as many more would commence at the place he had just left. Evidently they were "devilling him;" he rushed out and brought in another representative of the proprieties. But by then the number of dancers in the building had increased, and the last state of affairs was worse than the first; so he fetched two more, and the four, stationing themselves one in each corner of the floor, effectually enforced their prohibition.
The malefactors seemed disgusted and retired. Ere long I noticed several of them had returned, and were dancing with very queer-looking ladies. A sudden rush and dive of the four policemen revealed the true state of the case. The queer ladies were the remainder of the sinners against decorum, who, during their temporary retirement, had wrapped their own and their partners' cloaks around their waists, their scarf-shawls around their shoulders, their coloured neckties round their heads, and so attempted to circumnavigate the vigilance of authority.

These "riotous proceedings" were the only breaches of strict conduct. The dancing was proper, amounting to stateliness. Indeed, considering who and what the men and women were, the assumption of dignity with which they danced was almost ludicrous. There was none of that "romping to music," which I have sometimes seen even in "good society." The only thing a fastidious spectator could object to was the unconscious displays of the very few peasant-girls in the room, whose extremely short skirts were most emphatically unadapted to the whirling waltz, especially as they were not prepared for the occasion, after the manner of ballet-girls. Taken as a whole, the gran baile was a slow affair. I soon had enough of it, and left for home. Perhaps things went faster after midnight.
CHAPTER XVII.


JANUARY 24, 1877.—Zaragoza can boast of many agreeable promenades, or, as they are called, paseos, but the paseo par excellence, that of La Santa Engracia, is by far the finest I have seen this side the Pyrenees. It is a well-gravelled, smooth walk, hedged and planted with trees, one hundred feet broad, nearly half a mile long, and having cut-stone seats and gas-lamps at short distances apart, for its entire length. It terminates, at one end, by the well-built Plaza de la Constitucion, in whose middle stands the chief city fountain, a large, richly-carved stone basin, having in its centre a bold, well-executed figure of Neptune, round which are grouped four dolphins, from whose mouths flow copious streams of clear, sparkling water. At its other end it is bounded by a set of light, graceful, ornamental gates, railings, and stone pillars—La Puerta de Santa Engracia—through which is seen a charming expanse of olive groves, fine houses and their
grounds, and the distant *Sierra de Algairen*. The handsomely-planted, well-kept road beyond serving for a continuation of the promenade. Immediately without the low hedges, bounding on each side *El Paseo de Santa Engracia*, and running parallel thereto, are wide carriageways, pavements, and houses. The buildings to the right, going down, are principally cafés as to their ground-floors, private dwellings above stairs, a lofty continuous colonnade covering the pavement. They terminate by the *Theatro de Novidades*, succeeded by an open planted square, and the building used for the *Exposicion Aragonesa*. The houses to the left have, like the others, handsome white stone fronts, and are all private residences, excepting a few very elegant clubs and cafés, and the middle building, the handsomest of all, which is the college convent of the sisters *Jerusalen*. This row terminates with the official residence and offices of the Captain-General of the Province; the striking tower, entrance-porch, and broken archways of the ruined convent of *Santa Engracia*, a beautiful building of the richest Gothic style of the fifteenth century and almost totally destroyed by "Napoleon's barbarians" in 1808, and by a boulevard. Towards its farther end the *paseo* widens into a large circle, in the middle of which stands a well-executed statue of Pignatelli, the able engineer who completed the works on the Imperial Canal, here always spoken of by his familiar surname of "*El Moro*.”

Spaniards being great *flaneurs*, the *Santa Engracia paseo* is a regular afternoon resort. On Sundays it is quite crowded. Then not only does a population of sixty-eight thousand, turn out in force, but the country round about
SPANISH FASHIONS.

spends in its contingent of visitors and holiday-makers. It is a motley throng; all grades are represented, from the sandalled shepherd in jacket of sheepskin, and greasy, well-worn, and patched knee-breeches, his ragged blanket swinging from his shoulders, to the elegant citizen dandy and gorgeous military swell; from the short-skirted village maiden in garments of many colours, to the long-trailed lady of fashion. Zaragoza has as much wealth and enterprise as all the other towns seen since the frontier was crossed taken collectively, consequently on its public promenade there is a great display of good clothes. Indeed, the number of really well-dressed, stylish-looking men and women one sees here is remarkable. I join in a promenade, and make observations and reflections. I count the number of women wearing bonnets in an hour's walk—sixteen. These bonnet-wearing belles are well got-up stylish women, under the escort of genteel men; but their appearance is not, as they fondly fancy, improved by their Paris coiffure—quite the contrary. Amongst the elegant head-dresses of lace veils and mantillas, the bonnets, though as pretty ones as the centre of French taste ever sent forth, look flaunting, vulgar, almost barbarous. Amongst the best-dressed men, the overcoat to a great extent supplants the capa or Spanish cloak, much to the advantage of their appearance.

The more I see of the capa the less I like it. It can be put on so as to confer a look of elegance, but, as generally worn, gives a round-shouldered, almost hump-backed appearance. Usually its long folds impede their wearer's legs, make them shuffle and shamble, or, from preventing
the natural balancing swing of the arms, causes a roll in their walk. Even the few men in ulsters—for that garment has invaded the peninsula—look smarter than the majority of those wearing the cloak. A dressing-gown even of frieze gives an old-womanish look, but most of the men en capa seem as though they had some ancient females' petticoats tied round their necks.

The number of beautifully-dressed and pretty children is remarkable. Altogether the variety of costume is very pleasing to the eye. Not only are the local ones to be seen, but mingled amongst them those of Navarra, Catalonia, and the Basque provinces, mountaineers and plains-men. The military are in force, in mufti and regimentals, the latter adding greatly, by their variety, elegance, and showiness, to the general effect. Staff, lancers, dragoons, engineers, artillery, infantry, white, blue, pink, scarlet, green, gold, silver, and steel, make an ever-shifting kaleidoscope of colour and brilliancy. A sprinkling of tall, handsome guardias civiles, looking as though they might have just stepped off the boards of an opera-house, give quite a scenic air to the gathering, while the all-black curas in their ample cloaks, almost touching the ground, and wide shovel hats, serve as excellent foils and contrasts. Truly Spain is the land of the picturesque, as well as of the dance and song. A few well-horsed and appointed carriages, fairly filled, drive up and down. Some extremely handsomely-mounted, good-form men, dressed, gloved, and spurred à l'Anglaise, and whose horse-trappings are quite English, show off themselves and nags to the promenading
It is midwinter, not a cloud is to be seen, the sky is a brilliant blue, the air soft and balmy!

El Puente de Zaragoza is a very fine example of bridge-building in stone, considering it was constructed over four hundred and forty years ago, strong and massive, for the Ebro is liable to immense floods, yet withal light and elegant in appearance, but it looks also very quaint and queer. It has seven lofty arches, and six pairs of piers. The piers on the bridge's upper side are all sharp wedges; of those on its lower, four are half octagons, and the other two are large, square, three-storeyed houses, whose entrance-doors are accessible from the water by flights of stone steps, and which communicate with the footway of the bridge by trap-doors. No doubt these houses were designed to serve for the shelter and accommodation of a bridge garrison. The length of this bridge, without including approaches, is eight hundred and twenty-five feet; its width, excluding the deep semicircular recesses above the piers, thirty-six feet. It is very hog-backed, has a thick parapet, and up and down the river therefrom extend along each bank for considerable distances, deep, strong, river walls, having, at intervals, flights of stone steps descending to landing-places.

A little below the bridge, on the river's farther side, are the ruins of a large convent. Above it, on the city side, El Pilar, and from it is obtainable towards the south-west a lovely view of winding river and champaign country, backed in the far distance by the snow-clad Sierra de Moncayo, looking almost as near as it does from Tudela.