ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDINGS.

We returned to our *fonda* by the public promenade, for it was the fashionable hour to take a stroll, and, as my companion said: "We can see the beauties of Lerida as we go along."

Walking by the side of my elegantly-attired acquaintance of that morning's making, I could not help mentally inquiring how many *young* British officers would volunteer themselves as cicerone to show the lion of the place and their garrison (for the cathedral is now a barrack) to an unintroduced foreigner, dressed in clothes hardly respectable from the wear and stains of such a trip as I am making, whose face was sunburnt and weatherbeaten, and who would afterwards allow himself to be seen by all the fashions of the place, walking in familiar converse with him on the public promenade? I fear not many. But I presume a Spanish officer and gentleman, however youthful, considers his rank and position too assured, too unquestionable, for him to fear misconstructions.

After resting awhile, the lieutenant proposed our doing the places of worship now in use, and we accordingly proceeded to the parish church of San Lorenzo, being the one ranking next in age and merit to the old cathedral. This edifice stands on a lesser eminence than the fortified hill, just in its front, and not far therefrom; and a priest told me: "It was built in the latter part of the thirteenth century, so is now something over six hundred years old."

Thence we strolled to the new cathedral—an edifice constructed by order of the king when the old one became a barrack of the fortress in 1707. It is considered a very
sacred building, for in its sacristy are deposited our Saviour's swaddling-clothes (*credat Judæus*). This new cathedral is decidedly, for a Spanish church, ugly. Built in the poorest, baldest possible style; an attempt at, and failure in achievement of, being classic. Its interior is profusely gilt, and full of most indifferently-conceived and worse-executed images and figures. Then we took an outside view of the archiepiscopal palace, a still more modern structure and a fine range of buildings. There were more churches to see, but I had had enough of that kind of entertainment for one day; besides, it was almost dinner-time.

Last Friday being that of *La Purificacion de Nuestra Señora*, a masked ball in celebration and commemoration of that event was given by the "Society of Arts and Belles-Lettres of Lérida." It is an annual affair, and the ball of the place. I was honoured by an invitation, and would have gladly gone—wishing, as a matter of course, to see a Spanish masked ball "of society"—but could not procure a fitting costume on so short a notice; and, though pressed to go as I was, did not think it would be in good taste to do so, and, therefore, most determinedly declined. However, the colonel and girls insisted I should at least accompany them to see the rooms and decorations, declaring they would go before the company would arrive, so that I might look at everything at my convenience.

The hall of the society was a good-shaped but very small ball-room, having only a capacity for eight quadrille sets to dance at a time. It was most tastefully decorated; and ante-rooms were numerous, and well supplied with toilet, &c., arrangements. After taking a look, we all went
FIESTA DE SAN BLAS.

up a flight of stairs to inspect the society’s "art collection" in a room above the hall. There were about fifty pictures hung on its walls; the best being some very fair copies of works of Rubens and Murillo. The remainder consisted of copies, in oil, of well-known chromos, a few original—very original—landscapes, and some creditable pencil sketches. On the table were set a few academy busts and figures, and several albums filled with identically the same pictures that in England are affixed on handkerchief, glove, and sweetmeat boxes! If the society’s belles-lettres are not superior to their beaux arts, there is room for advance in both branches.

Saturday was the Fiesta of San Blas—a martyr-bishop who still works miracles by curing, in some way not clearly explained to me, sore throats; I wish he would cure my blistered feet. The proper way here to observe this church festival is to go on a picnic; and, therefore, the roads leading out of town were thronged with people, baskets on arm; and on all sides groups were to be seen seated on the ground eating and drinking. A Spanish town of nearly twenty thousand souls can, for such a purpose, turn out a goodly number of devotees.

The picnickers were small tradesfolk, servants, and working people; but, promenading the roads as lookers-on, were a large majority of the fashionables of Lerida—chiefly military and official people, got up in the latest style, miraculously gloved and booted. Amongst them a hand or foot of average British proportions was not to be seen. In fact, since leaving Navarra I have observed the extremities of the upper classes getting smaller and still more small, and
am beginning to believe that, excepting the labourers, Spaniards are truly a small and handsome handed and footed people.

In the afternoon I witnessed the first street squabble I have seen in Spain. Two middle-aged peasants, quite sober I think, exchanged a few hard words, and then, more like Britons than Frenchmen, instead of venting their feelings in violent gesticulations and noisy clamour, they pitched into one another. But they fought just like children. The combat was soon over. A cavalryman who happened to be passing called on them to desist, and to enforce his order promptly drew his sabre and most impartially belaboured the peacebreakers with the flat of it—a rough-and-ready policing that quickly brought the combatants to order.

Lerida, though the capital, and in all respects chief town of one of Spain's largest provinces, is quite the reverse of being a handsome city. It has not one really good street or plaza. Its public buildings are ugly and mean. Its shops small, dowdy, and uninviting; but the place shows signs of progress. It is spreading, and every addition is after a modern and more civilised fashion. Ere long the town will have at least one fine thoroughfare, and not only are its streets lit with gas, but also many of its shops and dwelling-houses. Lerida is also clean and devoid of foul smells—two excellences rare enough in many of the Spanish towns I have seen.

The fine river fronting its chief street, and the expanse of country beyond, afford a most pleasing prospect to the eye; and the weather whilst I have been here has impressed me with the idea that its climate is superb. But I am told
it is not always so, winds from the Pyrenees bringing cold and fogs. This time last year, I am informed, water froze in the bedroom jugs, and for twenty days the sun was obscured either by fog or clouds. However, I have everywhere heard this season is an exceptionally fine one.

Just across the bridge over the Segre lies the city’s chief promenade—a miniature Tuileries gardens, five hundred yards long by seventy yards in breadth. It is tastefully planted and arranged in flower-beds, in shrubbery, in gravel-walks, &c., and well furnished with shade-trees. Beyond, and close thereto, are the *Campos Elyseos*, a sort of botanical garden and place of respectable gaiety. It contains a summer theatre, large dancing-floor, shady groves and avenues; and there, during the season, a regimental band plays on two evenings of each week, and numerous and frequent *bals champêtres*, theatrical performances, &c. &c., are patronised by all classes. I am told that from early spring until late in the autumn, the *Campos Elyseos* is a very paradise of flowers; now, both it and the promenade are almost flowerless, untidy, and forlorn.

The stone bridge connecting these *paseos* with town boasts of great antiquity, that is to say its site, as such, does. The present structure stands upon foundations laid before Christ by the Romans. And it is related on authority “not to be disputed” that, just below where it stands, Herodias and the fascinating *bailarina*, her daughter, while showing off on the light fantastic, on the ice, to an admiring audience crowding the ancient bridge, broke through and perished, and, strange to relate, the ice closing over their bodies, cut off the head of her whose feet had
danced off St. John's, and the unhappy head continued the step and figure of the dance, *la jota*, until exorcised by the "Catholic parish priest!"

The present bridge over the Segre is two hundred yards in length, and has seen better days—shows signs of much adversity. Of its four standing arches no two are of the same age, shape, or size, and I think even the oldest is not original, but a repair of a catastrophe. The river is subject to tremendous and destructive freshets. Not many years ago an unusually heavy flood brought down the half nearest town of the bridge. The gap has been replaced by a lattice-work iron structure, which, it is believed, allowing the water to pass through it, will stand the pressure. I doubt it—think it will leave its supports.

There is more money in this dilapidated old capital of Lerida than appearance indicates. For instance, there are here a great many men whose private incomes range from eight hundred to twelve hundred pounds a year—considerable sums in so cheap a country as Spain; but none of them keep a carriage nor even saddle-nags; they live in houses whose outsides are neglected, dirty, and untidy to the last degree; hang their washing to dry over the railings of the front balconies of their residences, and on strings tied across the windows facing the streets; do not entertain, and, except that their manners and tables are good, and their dress extravagantly so, live like the rest of the community and hoard their money. Andalusians, Aragonese, Castillians, all agree in telling me, except for personal show and pageantry, that it absolutely hurts a Catalan to part with even the smallest coin; that they are more "cannie" than Scotch, more "close" than Yankees.
AN UNFORTUNATE TOAST.

The telegraph department chief is extremely attentive and kind; asks me out to walk with him each afternoon, and shows and explains everything of interest. He is Andalusian, and by all odds the best-informed man on scientific topics as well as general subjects I have yet met in Spain. He says I must not judge "the Spains" by what I have seen; that I have passed through the worst part of the peninsula, and its most uncouth inhabitants. I take the statement as I do the country's nuts—with a considerable amount of salt—for I have discovered there is a terribly strong sectional feeling pervading the minds of even the most enlightened Spaniards.

It appears to me this is, socially and politically, a country of five Irelands, each discontented with the central authority, no matter what party wields it, and cordially hating and despising the other four. I see evidences of this being so every day, and have all the time. While at a convivial party, when in Guipuzcoa, being towards the small hours called on for a toast, I had given "Viva España," to my mortification and surprise, the filled and half-raised glasses were, without exception, set down on the table, and the host rising to his feet, addressed me thus: "Much appreciated sir, it is from no disrespect to you that all present refuse to drink the toast you have, doubtlessly intending a compliment, favoured us by proposing. Kindly substitute for 'España' 'Guipuzcoa,' and the sentiment will be received with enthusiasm, but no true Basques will drink 'Viva España,' far sooner would they drink 'C——jo al España.'"

My usual morning ramble, to exercise my dog, is along the banks of the Segre, and I daily admire the simplicity
and effectiveness of the only floating flour-mill I have ever seen, and which, being situate opposite where I usually terminate my walk, I sit, and contemplate, while resting.

It consists of two barges, sixteen feet apart, but decked together with strong timbers, "Castalia steamship" fashion. On one of the barges is a wooden house—the mill; between them is the motive power—an undershot wheel, of fourteen feet diameter and twenty floats, making seven revolutions per minute. These Siamese-twin barges are moored by iron cables close to the bank of the river, in a rapid, and at an angle to and catching the course of its stream. It is the cheapest constant power I have yet met with. The mill has been steadily going, night and day, since 1863, consuming only a trifle of lubricating oil, requiring but slight repairs, wanting no trained engineer, no refittings of expensive gearing, and having no boiler to prime or burst.

There are plenty of rivers in England with, in places, sharp enough currents to run such machines. Why are they not so utilised?

The dress of the Catalan peasant differs but slightly from that of the Aragonese, but that little suffices to invest it with a totally different aspect. It is, in the case of the men, simply a change of headgear, and an addition of short gaiters, covering the calf of the leg, of brown leather. The provincial (they call it national) head-dress is of red-cloth, shaped almost exactly as is, and looking just like, an old English nightcap of preposterous size; the very counterpart of the stage's traditional smuggler's cap. But, all things being comparative, instead of giving the wearers
A SPANISH CEMETERY.

a lawless look, in my eyes, now used to the handkerchief brow-bound, bare-crowned Aragonese, they look to be as much like quiet, civilised people, as those appear to resemble half-wild savages. The costume of the women is also more modernised. The petticoats are again long and less voluminous, and the waists of a reasonable shape and size.

My friend the telegraph chief took me yesterday to see the public cemetery, which lays about half a mile out of town, and on the opposite side of the Segre, and obtained my admittance. It is a very beautiful one, and, though typical as regards this country, very different from anything of the kind to be seen in Great Britain. The Lerida cemetery is a square enclosure of several acres in extent, divided by gravel-walks, bordered by tall cypress-trees, and dotted with many extremely handsome monuments, and not a few of great antiquity. There certainly was not a single unsightly one, nor any of my chief aversion—tombstones. The cemetery grounds are enclosed by a continuous building of white stone pierced by four gateways, each one of which is in the centre of a side. Along this boundary building runs on the inside a wide covered pavement, whose roof is supported on arches—cloisters in fact—while it (the building) consists of four tiers of small niches, or receptacles, for coffins; above-ground vaults they might be described as.

The mode of burying is to place the coffin in a niche and brick it up a foot back from the flush of the wall. In the space left a memorial marble, or more frequently a metal frame, having a glass door, is cemented. In the latter
case the frame contains wreaths, inscription scrolls, and ribbons, flowers, little wax saints, &c. &c., invariably artistically arranged. Many of the most recent ones contain photographic portraits of the departed, as they appeared in the flesh, handsomely mounted and framed. In the centre of the side of the range, facing the main gateway, is a very pretty mortuary chapel, and in it I observed three ladies and a little girl on their knees, before the shrine, praying. On each side of the principal cemetery grounds are large annexes, where those who like to be really buried can have their wishes gratified by being put underground. In them were some monuments, but not many. Evidently the niches with the pretty fronts were preferred.
CHAPTER XXIII.


FEBRUARY 15, 1877.—The Thursday before carnival Sunday was a preparatory fiesta, and at eleven o’clock a cavalcade of maskers formed in front of our hotel, headed by a band of music and a triumphal car, bearing a boy dressed up as a goddess of something or other, and thence made a peregrination of the town, collecting money as they went, towards defraying the expenses of the approaching carnival. It was a well-got-up procession, if small. The fantastically-dressed and masked musicians were regimental bands, and made very good music. The triumphal car was a cart belonging to our fonda, and had been decorated in the yard.

The carnival is to be unusually well observed this year, and considerable money has been already placed in the hands of the committee of ceremonies, who have the direction of affairs. The weather promises to be all that can be desired; the only fear is, that the pedestrians will find it too...
hot for comfort, midday being now as warm as it ever gets to be in England's summer, while wasps and butterflies are already numerous.

The inhabitants of Lerida seem especially fond of having architectural designs and landscape scenery painted on the outside of their houses. The designs are generally very good, and their execution admirable, but unfortunately, from economical motives, the vehicle used is distemper. At home a week would obliterate them. Here they last for years, but soon acquire a dirty, washed-out look, and being never touched up, render a building's appearance worse than if no attempt at mural decoration had been made.

The chief of the telegraph department has been my great companion here, and our daily walks together are invariably prolonged into the country, for he is a great lover of the picturesque and nature. About the beauties of Andalusia he is most enthusiastic; says I have not seen Spain's show district, and promises me much pleasure if ever I am tempted to visit his country. Our stroll generally winds up with a seat in the Campos Elyseos, and a cigarro, whose flavour is rather helped than otherwise by the perfume from beds of narcissi in full flower, over which flit and dart numberless sphinx convolvuli. And this is early February!

I had intended a full, true, particular, and detailed account of carnival time as spent in the ancient city of Lerida, but have been (for once in a while, let us say) so busy playing the fool, that I have taken no notes whatever; while masks and ankles, bromas and intrigue, music and wine, noise and folly, are so mixed and muddled up together
THE CARNIVAL PROCESSION.

in my brain that I find my recollection of incidents a complete maze. And perhaps it is as well, for I cannot tell of my own foolishness without revealing that of others; and to do the first would be une bêtise, the last not the fair thing.

The grand procession on Carnival Sunday was extremely good, and the dresses of the maskers as nearly correct as possible—some of them very expensive—and the characters well sustained. It was twenty-five minutes in passing our balcony, which, by-the-way, was subjected to an almost continual bombardment of comfits, flowers, and sweetmeats—a tribute to the youth and beauty collected there, which latter was considerable. The order of procession was as follows:

Four Soldiers and a mounted Commander (time of Charles V.).
Giants (dance of cudgels).
Dwarfs.
Impostors (a numerous group).
Students of Folly, directed by their respective Masters.
Band of Trumpeters.
Infantry with Chief and Standard (time of Charles V.).
Cavalry escort (time of Charles V.).
Allegorical Cars and Groups, representing the different Towns of the Province.
Representation of Lerida.
Band.
Mounted group of Chinese.
" " Indians.
" " Greeks.
" " Romans (ancient).
" " Turks (very ferocious).
" " Persians.
" " Africans.
" " Arabs.
Allegorical cars of “Gambling,” “Heroes,” “Quacks,” &c. &c.
Grand car of Los Graciós Pau Pi.
Mariners and Jockeys.
Band.
Flying Guard of Honour, with carriages of Maskers.
Infantry.
Cavalry.

I was told many of the masqueraders had spent for the occasion over fifty pounds in their equipment, and the procession was admirably mounted. I have since learned the cavalry chargers, the officers' private nags, in fact, all the best horses in the country, were in it. After the procession had made the tour of the principal streets it disbanded, and the individuals and equipages of which it had been composed were merged in the throng of masqueraders, crowding every square, street, and alley of the city, which indeed was also full to overflow of the peasantry from the surrounding country.

I was told that at carnival time everybody would be in the streets, grotesquely masked and disguised, and behaving like lunatics. It is perfectly true.

In the evening there was a grand public ball, but as there were to be several more such I did not go, preferring to wander about the city all night, "seeing the folly of it," and seeking adventures. I did not find them difficult to meet with. I was also honoured by an invitation to a mask and fancy dress ball at the Casino de Artesanos, but the streets, &c. &c., had an irresistible fascination. A fancy dress assembly of comme il faut people would have been a very tame affair compared to the fun, fast and furious, the intrigue and consumación of a Spanish city on
THE BAL MASQUÉ.

the night of Carnival Sunday. Neither did I see the fireworks announced to take place in the evening, for the appointed time for them was when I was better engaged—eating a most excellent dinner.

Monday night I went to one of the gran bailes de trajes. We were a party of twelve—six caballeros and as many señoritas, paired off, of course. Our ladies were most thoroughly disguised and closely masked, but withal very handsomely attired. So well, indeed, were they disguised that, on assembling ere starting out, they were not able to recognise each other, so, after much fun from mutual mistakes, they all unmasked to have an inspection of each other. A bröma, or pass-word, was then fixed on, so that each individual of the party should be able to recognise any of the others, for it would not have done to trust to knowing each other's costume in a dense crowd wherein there might be many more almost identical ones.

The ball was in full swing when we arrived, and a most terrible jam it was. A pavilion had been temporarily erected on the plaza for a ball-room—a light frame and canvas building calculated to provide dancing room for six hundred; but as there were nearly fifteen hundred present, dancing was a farce, consisting merely of jumping up and down in one place with your arms round your partner, and being well squeezed; however, most of them seemed to like it. The din was deafening. All were talking in that piercing falsetto which is considered the correct way to disguise the voice, laughing, or singing. So loud was the noise, it was but occasionally the sound of a large brass band, playing on a raised platform, could
ON FOOT IN SPAIN.

be heard with sufficient distinctness for it to be possible to distinguish what dance was being played. But what did it matter, a man can jump up and down, and be squeezed, and squeeze, to any tune, or for that matter to no tune at all. Of course, we got separated, and had the greatest possible difficulty to get together again; and, in a good-natured way, made as much mischief as possible, persecuting other couples and standing fire ourselves. None of our ladies were discovered, but two of us were—two of the militaires. My fair companion penetrated the disguise of some of her intimates and their companions, and putting me up to saying several things to them, caused considerable consternation. In fact, our party became at last such objects of interest as to render retreat in subdivisions a strategic necessity. Ultimately we all rendezvoused, in the small hours, at a club cafe, had a jolly supper, and went home in a body, finding the streets as we passed along lively with other returning maskers.

This saturnalia continued with unabated ardour for three days, and though there was plenty of drinking I saw nobody intoxicated. As a result there was no quarrelling, no bad language, in fact, there was not even any rudeness. Everybody was jolly; nobody had headache. The wind-up was a midnight torchlight procession, pretty much the same as the inaugural one in organisation, but very different in pictorial effect, for it was a burlesque funeral. The grand car of Los Graciós Pau Pi was changed into a hearse, on which reclined the effigy of his Grace. The band of students of folly and their respective masters had become robed priests and bishops, bearing immense lighted
tapers, but some of whom were furnished with a hoof, or tail, or pair of horns, that accidentally on purpose revealed themselves. All the mummers wore crape. The bands played solemn music, the sham priests chanted a parody requiem, all the mounted men carried flaming flambeaux, and the cars and carriages were illuminated with red and blue Bengal lights.

The long procession filed down the narrow main street of Lerida, between the lofty, many-storeyed, and balconied houses, every window, every balcony, even the very house-tops, a dense mass of spectators, all dressed and masked in fantastic gorgeousness. Over the scene flashed and played the cross-lights and shadows from the moving torches; the chant filled the air with solemn dirge; the roll of the muffled drums made fitting accompaniment. It was a combination of the funereal and the grotesque, only I suspect to be seen in Spain since the general advent of modernism in Europe.

Arrived at the chief plaza the procession halts, a mock funeral oration is said over the dead "Pau Pi," and the lights are extinguished. Immediately, the devil and a band of demons rush out of the crowd, seize on his body and flee away, pursued by everybody, yelling, screaming, and cheering. Of course the devils are ultimately overtaken, dispersed; the sham corpse rescued from their clutches, and interred in a hole previously prepared for him. The carnival of 1877 is dead and buried, a thing of the past. No more such feast, frolic, and folly until—the next time.

On the 14th there was quite a gathering in the ladies' reception-room, assembled to make my last evening gay
and pleasant, for on the morrow I had fixed my start. It was late, very late, before the last adieu was said that night. Many had been the pretty speeches made; not a few the mutual promises to write. Something had been spoken about "a year and a day." In fact the half-serious, half-joking farewells were made that the circumstances of the case, the recent frolic, the day itself (the 14th of February), and the claims of beauty called for. Besides, when people do not really expect to meet again, they, of course, make the most of the situation—unless they are in earnest, in which case generally (I am told) they miss making their points.

I achieved a tolerably early start—for Spain—from this most pleasant of fondas; that is to say, I got away in time to be at the post-office by eight o'clock—the advertised time for opening the delivery office—for I expected letters. I had to wait over an hour before the official appeared, lounging lazily along the street playing with the office-key and smoking a papeleta. I have long bottled my feelings about the administration of the postal department of this country. It is infamously conducted; but what can be expected when the entire concern is run, not for the public benefit, but for the private one of political adventurers, who are rewarded for assisting conspiracies by appointments in a service wherein they know plundering is never found out; ai de me España! While waiting, an acquaintance seeing me came up and chatted. Like everybody else here, he seemed to think I have been wonderfully lucky in getting through the trip from Zaragoza in safety, and repeated with great confidence the oft-made statement that a band of ten
DEPARTURE FROM LERIDA.

robbers (a product of the late civil war) infested the district I had lately traversed, living by depredations on all and sundry who they might catch; and assured me, as many had before, that my double-barrel and big dog would have been no protection from them, they being all armed with Remington breech-loading carbines, and desperate and determined criminals, who, in the wild thinly-peopled track in which they ranged and harboured, had long evaded or defied the guardias civiles. Allowing sufficiently for Spanish romancing, I am inclined to believe there is some truth, some substratum of fact to this general belief. Quite possibly the two Frenchmen were “stuck up” by this very gang, and I have had a lucky escape. However, it is quite refreshing to hear of past dangers; heretofore they have invariably been promised me, as experiences to come.

It was a lovely balmy morning, the sky a cloudless blue, a warm haze mellowing the distant mountains. My way led across an extensive plain, strongly accentuated by detached, flat-topped, steep-sided hills, and small, peaked, and pointed mountains, and seamed by miniature valleys. In many places rows of almond-trees bordered the road, masses of bloom, and looking extremely beautiful. Irrigating ditches abounded, and the wheatfields were a brilliant green.

I passed several old women and panniered donkeys gathering weeds: the donkeys after their usual way, the old women with short bill-hooks, with which they cut the weeds off close to the ground, and then crammed them into the panniers. Thinking the weeds might be “greens,” and that by asking I might get a wrinkle, I inquired of one
of these ancient females why she collected them. "For rabbits," she replied. "We all keep rabbits, and get their food for nothing, as you see, and so do our donkeys get theirs too." So much, thought I, for so-called Spanish laziness and thoughtlessness for the morrow. Would to heaven the old women of rural England were as lazy and thoughtless in the donkey and rabbit line. Rabbit stew or pie two or three times a week would surely be better, and, all things considered, cheaper than the occasional-snared hare, while the donkey would cost less and be far more useful than a lurcher. However, in Spain there is no workhouse to pauperise and demoralise the peasantry. Here, to be thrifty or starve is the alternative, and as none care to go hungry to sleep and to breakfast on expectation, all are thrifty. So here there is no poor rate, no wages squandered in drunken "sprees," and none of the necessarily attendant crime. The peasantry of this country, so far as I have seen of them, are, as a mass, better fed, better clothed, better conducted, more intelligent, honest, sober, and self-respectful, and far more happy than their compeers in old England; and were it not that they are degraded and warped by superstitious influences, that purposely make and keep them tools for all wickedness, they might be the first peasantry of Europe.

At the little town of Bell-lloch, only remarkable, so far as I observed, as having l's enough in its name to beat any average Welsh town, I breakfasted, for it was close upon noon when I arrived there. Fried bacon and sausage, a herb omelette, and bread and wine at discretion, was the repast. There was plenty to spare for me and Juan; the
meal was cleanly served, and the inclusive charge ten-
pence.

Beyond this town of four l's, the ground became more
diversified, even hilly; then followed a true plain, sur-
rrounded with far-away blue hills and mountains, and, to
my left, glimpses of the white Pyrenees.

A dip of the road into a large broken valley, laying
considerably below the general level of the country, brought
me amongst seeming hills again; and on a large detached
one to my right stood an old church, in build so exactly a
Welsh one as to be a real surprise to me. It was certainly
strikingly different from any Spanish church edifice I have
ever seen.

A chance presenting itself to make a considerable cut
off, and at the same time exchange the hard high road for
a pleasant footpath, the opportunity was not neglected.
This path took me through a fine grove of poplars, alive
with starlings, singing and chattering; and Juan, who as
usual was ranging at a swinging gallop far and near, put
up a brace of redlegs. They rose from the centre of a
nearly bare fallow, some two hundred yards ahead of him.

Soon after three o'clock the small town of Mollrusa was
reached. It stood on the bank of a considerable-sized but
nearly dry watercourse, the stream having been diverted for
irrigating purposes. A comfortable clean _posada_ was soon
found, having a wide sunny verandah to sit in. A good-sized
bedroom, sufficiently furnished, was assigned me, and clean
towels and fresh water brought. Clearly I was in a more
civilised country than _Los Montegros_. On the dressing-table
were two books, and taking them with me, I stepped forth
through the open window on the verandah, and there sat down to amuse myself. I expected nothing else but to find I had chanced upon some lives of saints, that being the class of books my experience had taught me to expect. But I was wrong. On looking at their respective titles they proved to be a very badly-matched pair; one was called (I translate) "History of the future—a treatise upon the Imperialism of the Grand Monarch, and the triumphs of the CATHOLIC Church unto the end of the world, according to the most celebrated ancient and modern prophecies—dedicated to Don Carlos de Borbon y de Este." I read a considerable portion of this interesting (?) work. Its author took much the same line, and handled his subject in precisely the same manner, as a certain well-known British nonconformist preacher does to explain, amplify, and reveal (?) the Book of Revelation; and, from it, forecast the future. But as Liberalism was the "Scarlet Lady," and the Protestant Church one of the worst of the "Beasts," the conclusions come out differently from those of the B. N. P's., though I must confess the Spaniard's reasoning was quite as close and conclusive, and his style far more dignified and lofty than his British compeer's, while his phrasing was most impressive and appropriate. The other book was an excellent Spanish translation of Volney's "Ruins of Empires." To alternately read a little of each book was a mental drinking of hot grogs and eating of ice-creams.

While reading, a sweet perfume from time to time was wafted past me. It proceeded from a lot of pinks in full flower, growing in the open air; and near them flourished some fine cacti, the first I have yet seen in this country.
A REST.

My supper was not bad. Soup, stewed rabbit, lamb chops and fried potatoes, partridge and sprouts, almonds, raisins, and olives, bread and wine.

To-morrow's march will be a long one. To-day's was short. So I have rested myself well, and written up my notes.
CHAPTER XXIV.

A nearly "adorned the most" Maid — Interesting Roadside Objects — A simple Matron — Tarrage — A lovely Prospect — Carlist Attack on Ceverra — Illuminations — Catalan Loyalty (?) — The University of Ceverra — Mountain Scenery — A good vegetarian Repast — Strange ruined Castle.

FEBRUARY 17, 1877.—Wishing to make an early start from Mollrusa, not only on account of the length of the march before me, but because the midday hours are now so very hot as not to be fit to walk during, for one who is burdened with his little all, I explained the matter to the hostess, and ordered chocolate precisely at seven.

"Certainly; any time your worship likes," was the prompt reply.

At seven sharp I was ready and in the kitchen. Nobody else was there. No fire was lit. I clapped hands — the country's substitute for bell-ringing — stamped, blew my dog-whistle, and halloed until I was tired. More than once I had half a mind to wait no longer. If no one would get up, even to receive payment of the bill, was I bound to lose the cool of the morning?

It was thirty-five minutes past seven when, at last, a servant-girl made her appearance, not quite half-dressed,
and rubbing her eyes. Did my worship want chocolate? No, not at that time of day. Could not wait an hour for an eggshell full of chocolate. Wanted to pay the bill and be off. Away went this nearly "adorned the most" beauty, flying upstairs to ask her mistress how much there was to pay. I sat down and solemnly lit a pipe, believing thoroughly there would be plenty of time to finish it in ere she again appeared. And there was; not that she took the opportunity to finish her toilette. No such thing. On reappearance she had, if possible, more loose ends to her than before. Goodness knows the bill was moderate enough—one shilling and eightpence, all told!

An hour's walk brought me to the little village of Golnez, where, at a ventorrillo, I obtained for three halfpence a glass of aguardiente and small loaf of bread, the latter to divide with Juan as a "stop-gap," to be eaten as we walked along. A few miles farther was Bellpug, a little town by which coursed a fine irrigating head of water from the right, while just beyond, upon a serrated eminence, stood a most picturesque old monastery, whose three galleried and pointed-arched cloisters gave it a most imposing appearance.

Bellpug, though very small, is yet a walled town, and its old gateways are handsome arches; the one by which I left being remarkable for having in a recess over its keystone a very quaint picture of Christ and Roman soldiers, while just beyond stands a handsomely-proportioned monolith cross, about twenty feet high, and of evident antiquity. In Cataluna these old crosses seem to abound, many of them carved and of singular merit. In the town's
centre stands an old Gothic church, with a fine octagon tower. A couple of miles farther on my way there appeared by the roadside what seemed to be an unusually large league-stone. It proved instead to be a memorial one, but in commemoration of what I could not determine, for so old was the inscription thereon that it had become illegible; only the date, 1608, was decipherable. A niche, countersunk in its upper portion, a foot deep, contained a stone crucifix, whose Christ was most admirably carved; one leg, however, had crumbled to powder. Over the opening was an iron grating, almost eaten up with rust.

The general features of the scenery remained much the same as the day before, the only novel one being a small tract of swamp-land, patched here and there with beds of rushes. On it were several flocks of lapwings, which afforded sport and exercise to Juan, who pursued them with eagerness. Half-past eleven found me standing on a stone bridge, over a large irrigating canal, whose waters flowed from my left—El Cañal de Urgel.

It was high time to find a place to breakfast at, and seeing a cottage of unusually neat appearance, a little way off, and close to the banks of the canal, I started for it, to prospect for a meal. A young woman, with a beautiful set of teeth and two babies, was sitting on the ground in front of the cottage; and, in answer to my queries, replied there was no meat in her house, but if I would be satisfied with a herb omelette, and bread and wine, she would gladly accommodate me. How many eggs were put in that omelette I know not, but I do know that thereon I and Juan made, with the assistance of a small loaf of bread, a
hearty breakfast, and both of us were sharp set; nor on my part did I spare the wine, for it was good, and I hot and thirsty. The charge was ninepence-halfpenny! With great simplicity, this handsome young mother asked me if the silver coin I tendered her was good, for, she added, “It is very seldom I see silver money, not often enough to know much about it.” I mention this as an instance of the fact, that to these peasants other money than copper is a rarity, and as showing their great unsophistication.

After refreshing the inner man I took a long rest in the warm sunshine, greatly enjoying it, my pipe, and the lovely view. Larks were soaring and singing in hundreds; goldfinches were everywhere. The air rung with melody; and, though but the middle of February, the perfume of a garden full of flowers added its subtle charm, while the busy bee hummed and flitted around!

It was close on four o’clock as I approached the town of Tarrage; a long straggling place lying between two moderately-sized hills, the one to the right crowned by a modern fort—or old one furbished up—the other, surrounded by high loopholed-walls, while, in the centre of the plaza stood a nearly new stone blockhouse, round, and pierced for musketry. Evidently Tarrage had not meant to be captured by any of Don Carlos’s flying columns. On a far-off eminence appeared the extensive ruins of a square tower, topping an entrenched, scarped, and terraced hill, and looking in its shape and surroundings very Moorish.

The only noticeable building I saw in Tarrage was a church, much like the one of Bellpug, but a little beyond the town I came upon a lovely cemetery. This garden of
ON FOOT IN SPAIN.

the dead was in general design like unto the Lerida cemetery, but much smaller and older looking. The arches of its colonnades were very sharply pointed, the banded columns extremely light—in fact, the architecture was quite Byzantine. It was full of flowers and old monuments, and its gateway really most handsome. On a grass plot between the highway and the entrance to this charming resting-place for the weary departed, stood, on a wide octagon stone base, a most beautiful cross; its shaft, a very slender octagon monolith, over twenty feet high, the surmounting cross a large florid one, carved in the richest possible way. The handsomest thing of the kind I have yet seen in stone. One arm of the cross was gone. The inscription on the pedestal was so worn away that it was only determinable that there had been one. Evidently the cross was very old.

There was a fine background to cemetery and cross—three ranges of mountains. The farthest off—the snowy Pyrenees—showed sharply clear against a cloudless sky, while the base of the nearest was so indistinct with warm haze as almost to be invisible. Broken, irregular foothills, flat stretches, numerous wash-outs and gullies, near and far groves and clumps of trees occupied the intervening space. It was a beautiful view, and in all respects strikingly reminding of California. The day had become blazing hot. I sat down on a grassy bank, and long enjoyed the lovely prospect.

The next halting-place—Cervera—I arrived at soon after five in the evening, and entered the gateway through its surrounding wall with the fag-end of a procession, for
CARLIST ATTACK ON CEVERRA.

the place was en fête. Immense and most tasteful bouquets of paper flowers, lamps covered and decorated with many-coloured muslin, flags, were everywhere; the narrow streets of the little town were so many rainbows; the many balconies and open windows all occupied by spectators dressed in their best, and the streets full of bands of music and processions.

Making my way to the chief fonda, I entered, engaged a room and seat at table, and without loss of time took my stand on the balcony to observe the scene. A respectably-dressed man standing by me, who I have since ascertained was the landlord, and on whose breast glittered a decoration, kindly explained the affair to me.

The city was celebrating the repulse of the Carlistas, two years ago. The fiesta had been officially established as an annual celebration of that "great" event, and many who had been prominent on the occasion had received a decorative medal, he amongst them, and my informant lightly touched his breast and bowed. One morning six hundred Carlists made an unexpected dash at the place, and two hundred got inside the gate and established themselves in the nearest houses on each side of it before opposition could be made. Then, twenty-four regulars, forty volunteers, and four peasants armed with shot guns, hastily threw a barricade across the end of the street, manned it, and not only stopped the enemy's advance, but kept up so lively a fire on the gateway as to deter the four hundred Carlists without from entering to support their van, and thus gave the alcalde and other authorities time to sound the alarm bells and summon all able-bodied
citizens to turn out in defence of their homes. Into cellars, holes, and corners, into any and every place where safety might be sought went the valiant citizens, leaving the gallant sixty-eight at the barricade and the six hundred Carlists to fight it out. The four hundred outside, having a natural reluctance to be killed, fell back, so those in the houses, finding themselves abandoned, and thinking from the uproar in town that the citizens were organising and their position untenable, saw fit to advance backwards. On emerging into the street they were charged from the barricade and driven pell-mell through the gateway they had entered at, losing forty-two prisoners; while the casualties to the assailing defenders was but six volunteers, three regulars, and two out of the four peasants, these last falling outside the town gate, one killed on the spot, the other dying in a couple of hours. The repulse of the "Carlist army" by the "brave and loyal city of Céverra" was one of the "events" of the late war.

Truly, while not noticing much for which they might be justly proud, these people often make monstrous mountains of minute molehills.

When night fell all the lamps were lit, the illumination being excessively effective. The narrow streets, overhanging roofs, projecting balconies, dark shadows, gleaming many-coloured lights, and moving figures, presented a scene of strange beauty mingled with grotesqueness. A party of vocal serenaders, who, with an attendant crowd, were promenading the streets, halted in front of the fonda, and, very well led, sung in score some stirring Catalunan airs. As I sat in the balcony, almost near enough to the fair
CATALAN LOYALTY

occupiers of that of the opposite house to shake hands with them, and looked up and down the street and on the picturesquely-dressed crowd below, the spectacle quite realised my idea of the Spain of romance.

Later on, municipal fireworks were exhibited from a platform in front of the ancient university of Cataluna. They were far better than I expected; indeed, quite tasteful, and numerous exclamations of astonished delight from an admiring crowd testified to their appreciation of the display.

Every available spot from which a view could be obtained was occupied, the jam in the streets being excessive, somewhere between four and five thousand men, women, children, and soldiers—for the town is now strongly garrisoned—were wedged in a mass; but there was no pushing, no elbowing, no pocket-picking, and nobody intoxicated, nor did I hear a rude word uttered! The grande finale showed a portrait of the king, surrounded with flashing lights. It was the officially prepared moment for a display of loyalty, but there was none. Though the chef-d'œuvre of the performance, not even an exclamation of wonder or delight was indulged in by any of the audience excepting children. No notice whatever was taken of the portrait of "the little Alfonso." Royalty is not popular in Cataluna. Its people are Republican almost to a man. During the time the fireworks were playing a regimental band gave us good martial music, and on its marching away, the people dispersed either to cafés or their several homes. The fiesta was over.

I was regaled with good fare, and had a most comfortable
room. My bill was but one shilling and eightpence-half-penny; and, having for once succeeded in getting my chocolate in good time, at half-past seven the following morning I was again en route.

The old university building demanded my attention before leaving Ceverra, for it was once a famous seat of learning. It is now utilised as a barrack for troops, serving to maintain the present military despotism called the Spanish constitutional government—Toga cædit arma. I should have liked to view its interior, but a sentinel barred the way. This university was founded by Philip V. in 1717, when it became the virtual successor of the old Lerida university. It is a quadrangular pile of buildings enclosing a large courtyard, entered through a very handsome porch gateway. The edifice has a front of one hundred and fifty-five yards, and looks scholastic and imposing.

As I left Ceverra a thick white fog enveloped everything. The road, a ramp round a hill-side, wound off to the right and disappeared, while a deep valley seemed to lay below me. As a narrow but well-worn footpath descended the steep slope to my left, I suspected it was a cut off, and, chancing it, followed down the almost perpendicular declivity, and before long struck a returning curve of the high road. Soon the fog lifted and I found myself in a valley, winding amongst low hills along whose centre my road ran.

The hills confined the view considerably; but every turn disclosed a fresh and interesting scene, and my walk was most enjoyable. Many a hill top was crowned by an old church or ruined tower. Numerous were the pretty villages.
scattered around, and several Roman cement mills were passed. Wheatfields, vineyards, olive groves, almond orchards occupied the entire valley, and up the furrows on the hillsides climbed tongues and strips of deciduous oaks, ilex, and corks.

As I progressed the hills gradually closed in, becoming too, more mountainous in character; and, ere long, pines—the first seen since leaving the divide between Guipuzcoa and Navarra—replaced the oaks. By-and-by, though my road descended rapidly all the way, I found myself once again amongst mountain scenery. To my right was a deep, perpendicular-sided gorge, along whose centre coursed a mountain stream. The pines had become timber; the road a scarped ramp. It was very like a bit of the wildest of Welsh mountain scenery. But the deep blue hue of the heavens, and a flock of about thirty magpies chattering on some bushes, stamped it with a foreign look.

I had intended to breakfast at a little town called Panadilla, but missed, or rather overshot the place, not knowing it lay some distance off the road up a hillside to the left. But coming soon after midday to a roadside house, I entered, and asked if I could have breakfast there. It was not a posada; but an old man, who seemed its master, said, "Yes, certainly; the family are going to eat directly, you can join us." So we all four sat down: the old man, his daughter (a good-looking girl of eighteen or so), a young man (a labourer), and myself. The first course was an old friend, a dish I had not seen for years: pumpkins sliced, French beans, and macaroni, stewed together in olive-oil and water, and highly seasoned. It was very good.
Then a herb omelette. Bread and wine as usual. Charge, for man and dog, sevenpence-halfpenny. A pleasant siesta in the warm sun and fragrant air occupied the time till two o'clock, and I departed.

Still wilder and more mountainous became the way.

More magpies, also more partridges. Indeed, all the afternoon Juan was finding birds, but they were excessively wary, always rising at great distances before him, and then flying straight across from the mountain side we were on to that beyond the opposite edge of the valley.

I passed through two little villages—clean-looking groups of houses, more civilised in appearance than I had seen for some time. The influence of the not far-off seaport, full of English, American, and French enterprise and capital, was beginning to show itself.

Every hour that I walked my surroundings were more picturesque; the country passed through becoming quite Swiss in appearance, and my road continually crossing and recrossing by stepping-stones a wide brawling stream, flowing down a deep, wooded, and lovely ravine. At last a turn in the road gave a peep at a most strange-looking ruined castle. It was perched on the summit of a rock that in dimensions was a hill, and immediately beneath, around an old gray church, nestled a snug cluster of cottages, while still farther below, through a gap in the tufted pines, showed a curve of the highway I was following. If amongst those buildings I could find accommodation, then there would I pass the night, for it was getting late, and I had gone far enough.
CHAPTER XXV.


FEBRUARY 18, 1877.—Close beside the road, just below the little village, under the ruin-crowned rock, I found a decent-looking venta, and gladly learned that there a room and meals were to be had. Immediately opposite stood a casa del cura and its attendant private chapel, and as I sat in the porch of the venta, smoking, sipping aguardiente and water, and resting, I observed the cura, a fat jolly-looking priest, crossing the road towards the village church. Seizing so good an opportunity to make inquiry about the ruin, I accosted him, and, after the usual politenesses of the country had passed between us, asked about it. It had been a Moorish stronghold of great importance, built to command the pass I had just travelled down.

In the course of the evening several teamsters stopped at the venta; with them I sat down to an indifferent supper, and afterwards, round a blazing fire of pine branches and cones, to chat. These men were very respectful and civil to me, but, only speaking Catalan,
which is quite as different from Spanish as the broadest Yorkshire or Cornish is from the Queen's English, conversation on my part was much like the Scotch shepherd's definition of metaphysics: "He who listens understands not what he that speaks means, and he who speaks does not quite understand what himself says."

The room and bed furnished for my accommodation was quite clean, but the house was an old one, and midnight marauders attempted to rob me of sleep. However, with the expenditure of considerable "powder," and some vigorous sallies, I kept them more or less at bay.

In the morning I succeeded once more in getting an early start, for the energetic old woman who kept the posada was stirring before break of day, attending to the wants of the carreteros. Paying the modest bill of one shilling and threepence, and astonishing the old woman with a gratuity to which she was evidently quite unaccustomed, I departed, just as the dawn was gathering strength.

The grade of the road still continued to fall sharply. Soon the hills opened right and left; a wide, wild view of mountains and valleys came in sight, and conspicuous above all, right in front, rose an isolated, jagged mountain, all points, pinnacles, and pillars—Montserrat. There could be no question about it; it was the wildest, most striking mountain I have seen in Spain, and startlingly like, in its profile against the sky, to "Granite Mountain," in central Arizona. That it too was one of nature's granite monuments seemed certain, though how such could be, considering the geological characteristics of the country, puzzled me greatly.
At eight o'clock I came to a pretty little santa, and peeping in, observed before a shrine that was all gilding, flowers, and wax images, some women and children on their knees praying. One of the former having, doubtless, filthy lucre in her heart, on getting a glance of me arose hastily, crossed herself with almost startling rapidity, and leaving the service she was engaged on for that of Mammon, approached and asked if I wanted anything, adding, she kept the little venta in front, and had the best of aguardiente and other things. I did want something, for I was hot and dusty, so I tried the aguardiente, purchased a loaf of bread for self and dog, consumed a cigarrilla, tried another little drink, made a present to the Image, paid a few coppers, and started on my way refreshed, the business-like devotee returning within the santa presumably to finish her prayers.

The gorge to my right deepened, widened, opened into a wild broken valley, and in its centre I beheld the considerable town of Igualada, whereat I arrived soon after ten o'clock.

Repairing to a house to which I had been recommended by the old señor, father to the señoritas of my Lerida fonda, I entered, and soon found myself quite at home, for its master and mistress, on my mentioning who had recommended me to their care, vied with each other in attentions.

I found Igualada a town of some manufacturing and business importance, and of considerable industry. It has a population of nearly sixteen thousand souls, and there daily arrive and depart three stage-coaches, well-horsed,
and from six to eight sixteen-mule freight wagons, plying from and to Barcelona. Of course Igualada is a walled town. It also is defended, or rather kept in subjugation, by two small towers situated on a flat-topped eminence to its south—new, I think—and also by a strong garrison.

This town can boast of one tolerably good and fairly wide street; some quaint little plazas, and several factories, these last-mentioned being clustered together on the banks of a river—when there is water in it—and for the rest, the usual complement of rookeries and cut-throat-looking alleys, called in Spain streets. There are also well-constructed gasworks, but owing to “political questions”—what on earth politics have to do with it, a benighted Englishman could not be made to understand—the town remains in nightly darkness, for gas is not supplied. Perhaps the Ultramontane party, now rapidly gaining strength under the Alfonso cabal, consider gas as having dangerous political tendencies. The manufacture of cottons, of cloth, velveteens, Roman cement, and iron founding, are the chief industries. Churches, of course, are numerous. There are eleven, including the hospital chapel. I looked at and into the chief places of worship, but saw nothing of unusual interest about any of them, excepting La Paroquia, and not much there, only seven hideous and grotesque human monsters, each protruding horizontally as many feet or more beyond its eaves, and serving as rain-water spouts. These figures were of all sexes, nude, and I think some monk of old had a hand in their horrible designing. In the same church there was, however, in one of the recessed and railed-off shrines,
A SAFE DRINK.

a large picture that, from what I could see of it, may be a fine old master; but in this country the ecclesiastical powers that be have a most provoking way of railing-off church pictures, so that a fair inspection of them is impossible. Igualada in many respects is a better town than Lerida, compared to which it looks new. Few of the houses appear to be over two hundred years old, while a great many are comparatively modern, say fifty years of age. The factories are quite things of to-day. I was comfortably and well housed and fed while in Igualada, and charged but three shillings and fourpence for a capital dinner, excellent supper, good room, luxurious bed, no insects, and my morning chocolate and azucarillo; and after despatching the last, started for the monastery of Montserrat, the mountain of that name in full view looking quite close, as if but an hour’s walk off.

It was a bright clear morning, and though early, being but half-past seven o’clock, quite warm. My road soon commenced to climb the mountain, and the views were lovely. By a quarter to ten I had reached the little village of Castelloni, and seeing that thence the acclivity became quite steep, and being besides hot and thirsty, I regaled myself with the copa de aguardiente and following glass of cold water, that experience had by then taught me was so refreshing and safe a drink. My road then became a mountain ramp, winding as it climbed among rocks and pinnacles; while huge laurestinas in full flower, boxwoods higher than a man’s head, pines, hollies—in fact, a wilderness of trees and shrubs—covered every portion of the mountain’s side.
ON FOOT IN SPAIN.

Seeing a practical way whereby some steep climbing would enable me to effect a considerable cut off in the winding road, I left the highway, and plunged into the covert, catching, as I did so, a glimpse of two guardias civiles and a peasant, rounding one of the curves of the road directly above, but certainly had, at the time, no idea they also had seen me. I was mistaken. I had barely gone twenty yards when, emerging into sight on crossing a narrow opening in the thicket, I was stopped by a loud and imperative "Alto!" Looking round, I perceived, some thirty paces to my left, the guardias civiles and their companion. They had seen, and, scrambling down the mountain's side, aimed at intercepting me; but, miscalculating time and distance, or headed off by thick brushwood, had not succeeded in doing so. The guardias civiles stood with their carbines "ported," and called upon me to lay my gun down and come to them. Thinking it no greater distance for them to travel than it was for me, not wishing to lose ground, not indeed caring a straw about making their personal acquaintance, I did nothing of the kind, but, resting haversack and double-barrel against a rock, commenced coolly rolling a cigarette and staring at them.

Immediately one of the guardians of the road advanced upon me, doing so exactly as a sportsman walks up to his dogs when on a dead point, and holding his cocked carbine as a pigeon-shooter does his gun, when the string is about to be pulled; the other, placing the peasant in his front to cover himself, brought his weapon to the "charge." Evidently I was an object of suspicion, if not of apprehension.
CAPTURED ROBBER.

When the advancing guardia got near enough to perceive I was grinning with hardly-suppressed mirth, and very evidently a peaceable pilgrim, he threw his carbine into the hollow of his arm, saluted, and politely demanded my papers. I drew my pocket-book, and was about to produce my "Derby," when, with a wave of the hand, the guardia stopped me, saying: "Let not your worship trouble yourself; I see you are a pious pilgrim to the sanctuary of our Lady of Montserrat—go with God."

While he spoke, I observed more closely the apparent peasant, and it struck me his attitude was that of a man handcuffed. I asked: "Who have you got there?" The reply showed that the tales of my Lerida friends were not devoid of foundation. "A robber captured this very morning, and, please our Lady, I will get here of the gang when this fellow is made to confess."

"'Tis well, my friend—go you with God," I answered, and we went our several ways. So at last, after wandering hundreds of miles alone on foot and through the wildest places of Northern Spain, I have met the real live Spanish bandit; but alas! for the interest of my story, without his weapons and companions, a manacled and helpless prisoner, though probably therefore greatly to the advantage of my personal comfort, and to the preservation of my travelling personal estate. I have seen "the robber of the mountain," and am not his.

By the middle of the day I got to Horno del Velio, a most romantically-situated church, parsonage, and posada. This establishment for the benefit of souls and bodies stands on a spur of the Montserrat mountain, whence,
beyond a wild chaos of hills, valleys, and broken mountains, is obtainable an imposing sight of the snow-clad Pyrenees. The church was quite small; the posada not much of a building. But there was a fine large walled water-tank—a preserve for fish to fast on, and to supply water for irrigation—a considerable garden, and the place, as a whole, looked very pretty. My arrival was almost simultaneous with that of the passenger-carrying mail-cart from Igualada to Monistrol, a town on the farther side of the mountain. In it, besides the driver, were two travellers, and with them I sat down to breakfast on soup, bacon, omelet, and bread and wine.

The priest of the Church of Horno del Vello was in the room, and talked most affably to me all the time. Probably from my having uncovered myself to him on entering, which the others did not do, and because I was walking to the monastery, he took me for a Catholic pilgrim. I told him of the robber. "Ah!" he exclaimed with a start of interest, "what was he like? How was he dressed?" I described him as accurately as the opportunity for observation had permitted me to notice.

"He is not the chief, only one of the gang."

"Then there is a band of robbers in these parts?"

"I fear I must confess such is the truth. It is a great scandal to our holy mountain, especially as they occasionally harbour in the ruined hermitages during winter, and I hoped it was their leader who had been taken."

The priest then asked me in Latin if I spoke that language, when, though I replied in the same tongue, he continued the conversation in Spanish—greatly to my satis-
factions, for my colloquial Latin would have soon broken down—saying: "So I supposed, and I perceive you belong to the well-instructed class of Englishmen. Pray tell me what has been the general effect of Lord Ripon's conversion, and is the truth about Queen Victoria beginning to leak out?"

"What truth?" I asked, knowing well enough the rumour to which he alluded, for the assertion that England's Queen had become a Catholic had often before been most confidently made to me, even by ignorant peasants.

"Her conversion," said the priest; "you know she has for some time been reconciled to Mother Church."

"Nobody has heard of such a thing in England."

"Openly, of course not. There are reasons of state for great discretions, but all good Catholics here know it is so; and I had supposed so great a fact could not be entirely concealed from the faithful there."

Clearly it was no use arguing the point, for, admittedly, I could not speak with authority, and the priest believed himself in a position to do so. I therefore turned the conversation by making inquiries about our Lady's sanctuary of Montserrat.

It was very hot when I resumed the ascent, and quite a relief to find myself, from time to time, in the cool shadow of overhanging rocks, or in one of the many re-entering curves of the tortuous road that was in shade; but though the oppressive warmth and continuous ascent combined to fatigue me, my walk was most enjoyable. The fine scenery, continually changing, the extraordinary diversity and luxuriance of the vegetation, above and below me, the beautiful...
and various wild flowers, the hum of bee, and buzz of winged insects, united to make it enchanting. Greeves and blackbirds were very numerous, and Juan flushed out of the thick covert of the mountain's side many redleg partridges.

At a quarter to four o'clock I came to a handsome granite pillar in which was countersunk a white marble slab, charged with an artistically-cut bas-relief representation of the mountain, and Ntra. Sra. De Montserrat, with an inscription, setting forth that the monument was erected in commemoration of a miracle performed on that spot by the "Virgin of Montserrat," on the 5th May, 1862, attested by—and then followed the names of five Dons and Doñas. And this is the latter part of the nineteenth century!

Half an hour's further walk, and, on turning a sharp curve of the road, I suddenly found myself close to the monastery, and beside another memorial pillar. On it I read, inscribed in Castellano: "Here became immovable the Saint Image in 880." Like as had the image, nine hundred and ninety-seven years ago, I too had reached a resting-place.
CHAPTER XXVI.

Monasterio de Montserrat—Income of "The Queen of Montserrat"—Arrangements for Pilgrims—Ascent to the Summit—The Mediterranean sighted—A Tourist—Suggestive Services—A Dreamland—A Honeymoon Couple—A Ramble over the Mountain—La Montaña de Montserrat—A Mountain of Delight.

FEBRUARY 21, 1872.—For three days have I been the inmate of a monastic institution, and fain would I here remain, at least for some little time longer, for I am in love—fairly enamoured of this beautiful, this most charming mountain. But I cannot stay, alas! To-morrow I must go. To Montserrat all pilgrims—and every visitor is presumably one—are cordially welcome, and entitled to free quarters—not rations—but only for four nights; then, the rules of the place—unchangeable, like the laws of Medes and Persians—command you to pass on.

I am now sitting in my dormitory, trying to straighten out the tangled web of confused and mixed-up impressions. Lovely views, ruined hermitages, sacred chapels, holy tanks and springs, wonderful caverns, beetling crags, towering pinnacles, the varied beauty of more than eight hundred different kinds of trees, shrubs, and plants—matted and mingled in luxuriant profusion on mountain side, in dark
ravine, on summit levels—are all blended together in a brain muddled with listening to innumerable tales and legends of wonders, miracles, and apparitions, while the everlasting melody of chant and Ave Maria ring in my ears. Here, where for close on a thousand years prayer, praise, and adoration has ascended to the female divinity of modern belief—here, where seems mingled with every breath one draws the monkish lore of ten centuries, it is not easy to write an intelligible account of what is seen and heard.

It is a pleasant little chamber I am in; a small room of a range of buildings devoted to pilgrims, being No. 1 of the Aposentos Sta. Teresa de Jesus. The institution has considerably over a thousand apartments fitted up to accommodate visitors, and the Directory is building more, for during the summer and autumn months not only is every bed occupied, but all the numerous villages at the foot of the mountain are filled to overflowing; and everyone giving to the "Queen of Montserrat," according to their means or inclination, the more that come the better for her coffers. From the best data I can get, I have made a rough estimate of the present income accruing from these voluntary contributions, and cannot set the total at a less sum than fifteen thousand pounds a year, and am told it is sometimes double that amount.

There are other sources of revenue—the sale of rosaries, model images, blessed measures in ribbon of different dimensions of the Virgin, and other pious remembrances, all of most trifling intrinsic value, but charged for at a sufficiently high rate. Not the least of
these is the Almacen, or warehouse; a place whereat nearly everything can be bought, even tobacco—a Government monopoly—which, too, is a post-office, a stage-office, and a posting-house, all to the profit of the monastery.

The arrangements are all very convenient. To me, as a lone bachelor, only a single room is assigned, and I have to get my meals at the restaurant-café, but were I en famille, a range of rooms would be provided, having attached thereto a well-found kitchen and chambers for my servants. At the Almacen I should purchase—at a sufficient profit to “our Lady”—provisions of all kinds and fuel, and obtain the use of bedding, linen, and all things necessary, and so live comfortably, indeed luxuriously, if my purse and inclination permitted and prompted me to do so. At the café I fare sufficiently well, but find it dear, as compared with everywhere else. If, however, as its host tells me, he has to pay a heavy percentage for rent and as thank-offerings to the shrine, there is good reason for such being the case.

I have the cleanest of rooms, the whitest of bed linen, and am well looked after by an old monk—who is my chambermaid.

The evening of arrival was agreeably spent, wandering around the immediate precincts of the place, and examining and admiring the remains of the old monastery, destroyed by the French in 1812; when, after pillaging the place, with a completeness long practice had perfected the Napoleonic soldiers in, they, on the 31st July, buried so many barrels of powder in its foundations, that the
explosion, when fired, was heard at a distance of twenty-four miles.

I attended evening devotions in the new church—a building of imposing appearance and size, most solidly built—and was well pleased with the choral service. Montserrat is celebrated for its school of church music, and choir, organ, and instrumental performance was the best of the kind I have heard in Spain. The monks had fine bass voices, the boys lovely sopranos, and the effect of the alternate verse and response was really fine.

Early in the morning of my first day, I started for the top of Montserrat. I was alone. In the season, guides are numerous. Now none are here, for visitors are rare. On my arrival I was the solitary one. But guides are not much in my line. There were sure to be beaten paths to every place of interest. An old mountaineer could not get puzzled, let alone lost, in so small a range. At 7:40 A.M. I arrived at the first hermitage, a ruined stone cabin on a jutting rocky shelf, with its holy spring and tank beside it. Thence the ascent was so steep that occasionally, like the first of Montserrat's Christian solitares—the Friar Juan Garin—I had to go "on all-fours, like a cat;" occasionally, too, the way led along narrow ridges, or between perpendicular wall and sheer precipice—no road for giddy heads or uncertain feet—but I pressed boldly onward, and near noon found myself arrived among the summit peaks, immediately behind the monastery.

Out of breath, tired and hot, I sat down to rest. I was on a narrow sharp comb, or ridge, between two sugar-loaf-shaped pinnacles of conglomerate rock; by my side flowered
a fine aloe and some cacti; two jay-birds screamed, scolded, and chattered at me; maiden-hair ferns, and pretty little blue, yellow, and crimson flowers grew on every coign of vantage, peeped from every crevice; a balmy soft breeze fanned my cheek. I was over four thousand feet up in the air, and a striking and splendid view was spread before me. I gazed on it with peculiar interest, for to me its main feature was the Mediterranean. The end of my long tramp was in full view!

I stood up and gazed around. What a panorama! To the north, the snow-capped Pyrenees; to the south, the shining sea; between, mountains and valleys, hills and dales, isolated peaks and spreading plains, winding rivers, cities, towns, and villages were laid out like a map. I could see the mountains of Valencia and of Aragon, the peaks and summits of far-off Majorca and Minorca.

There was another ruined hermitage close by me; to it I repaired, and at its "holy tank" quenched my thirst. Then—for I was getting hungry—by a different path I returned to the monastery to get my late breakfast.

At the restaurant-table sat another visitor. The waiter informed me, in a very audible aside, that he was my countryman. The stranger proved to be an Austrian tourist, but spoke tolerable English. He was well dressed and shod for his work, and furnished with a light and conveniently-arranged knapsack.

During our meal together we became quite sociable, and he informed me he was a great tourist, spending a considerable portion of each year travelling about, that he had "done" nearly all Europe, but that this was his first visit
to Spain. "Thus far I am well pleased with the country," he went on to say, "and this mountain strikes me as being most interesting and unique." So expressing my satisfaction at hearing Montserrat was attractive to him, I indulged a hope to have the pleasure of his company rambling over it.

"Oh, I am going directly I have finished dinner. I never stay long in a place; all I care for is to see it. I can read up all the particulars by-and-by; that's the way I always do," was his answer.

"Out of some handbook?"

"Well, yes, generally. And I always carry the one of the country with me; see here, for instance."

And he produced, out of his knapsack, the two volumes of Murray's "Handbook for Spain."

"This is the best on this country, the others are nowhere; but it bothers me sometimes, because the bulk of it was written so long ago. I used to wonder why Murray did not bring out a new one, but I see now it would not pay. Too few tourists come to Spain. I daresay they lost money on this one."

As he rose to leave, I offered to go with him a short distance on his road to keep him company.

"Very glad," said he, "but I am not alone. I got a guide in the village of Collbato, at the foot of the other side of the mountain. A first-rate fellow, showed me all the caves, hermitages, and so forth, that were not too far off our road; but we have had a misunderstanding about his pay. I thought I had engaged him for so much for the day: he says the tariff of the mountain is by the trip, so I
shall have to pay him again to take me to Monistrol, where I aim to catch the train to Barcelona.”

Monistrol was in full view of where we stood, with a plain unmistakable carriage-road, running all the way to it, down the mountain-side. Why on earth anyone but a blind man should take a guide I did not comprehend. This “great tourist” thought differently, however. “I never,” said he, “go without a guide anywhere in a strange country; it would be so terrible to get lost.” And when I told him I had come from the Bay of Biscay, alone all the way, and never was in Spain before, his countenance plainly showed it was only out of politeness he did not express his entire disbelief of the statement.

Went to evening service again. It is so charming to sit in the dim light, listen to the “angelic voices,” look at the “celestial lights,” and fancy oneself a spectator of the Invencion de la Santa Imagen on this very spot a thousand years ago, and afterwards to burn incense to the goddess Nicotina, on the monastery’s terrace, and think the view still more lovely by moonlight than by day. By-the-bye, I have discovered the Mediterranean can be plainly seen from the terrace when there are no low-lying clouds intervening.

Yesterday morning I arose at seven, and, as usual, glanced, the first thing, out of my window to judge the coming weather. It was easy to judge the past; everything was mantled with virgin snow, nor was the storm quite over; flakes were floating thickly about, falling, rising, going this way, going that; in fact, we were in the snow-cloud, for the peaks opposite—behind the
Cueva de Garin—were above it, standing clear against a brilliantly blue sky, while below us lay a white fleecy sea of tumbling cloud-billows, through which, in places, pierced mountain-summits like so many rocky islands of a ghostly sea. It was a dreamland; vague, mysterious, beautiful, and ever-changing, pierced and rent by gleams of rainbow-tinted light. All at once the snowflakes commenced whirling upwards in fantastic spiral columns, swirls, and streams with astonishing rapidity, and dissipating as they reached the upper stratum of air. The storm was over; the entire view came out sharp, clear, and defined; the heavens were cloudless; the sun shone bright and warm.

While dressing, a robin-redbreast hopped on my window-sill, the first I have seen this winter and in Spain. He seemed like a messenger from home.

The snow disappeared with magical rapidity, for, when I emerged from the Sta. Teresa de Jesus building to cross over to the restaurant for my morning chocolate, it had vanished. The snow-storm was as though it had been a vision.

All the morning I wandered about the mountain, visiting caves, hermitages, chapels, gazing at the lovely views, gathering wild flowers, thoroughly enjoying myself; then, as before, returned to a late breakfast.

More company—three persons. This time one of them was really and truly my countryman. He was the cicerone of the party, and an old resident in Spain. The other two, a Belgian nobleman and bride on their wedding tour. They had come to “do” the monastery—in a carriage and pair; seen what was to be seen—out of the window of the
vehicle; after breakfast they would look around for a couple of hours, drive on to Monistrol, and then take the train home. It was a long way to come to spend so short a time; perhaps they too intended to read up "all about it," and persuade themselves they had seen it all. After breakfast we raced round, and glanced at as many things as the time permitted, and I persuaded the party to go as far as Garin's cave. His statue was much admired, and the bride greatly interested by the short sketch of the Garin legend I gave her. They were pleasant people. She was beautifully dressed, but more appropriately to the Bois de Boulogne than a rough mountain; and though graceful, active, and lithesome, her absurdly high-heeled Polish boots made her glad enough to accept a hand along the narrow, steep, and rocky trails. All three were greatly taken by Juan's handsome appearance, good behaviour, and winning ways, and caressed him much; he is certainly a most attractive dog.

My countryman is, I find, an old resident of Barcelona, connected with the diplomacy, and acquainted with all the leading officials. He has given me a most cordial invitation to call at his home, which I shall most certainly do, for I like his style.

This morning, having yet much to see, and knowing my time here is drawing to a close, I took my breakfast with me, and have spent the entire day rambling over the mountains, seeing all I could of the nine wonderful caverns, the thirteen hermitages, the six chapels; a heavy day's work, for most of these places of pilgrimage are perched upon apparently inaccessible peaks. In fact, I have been making
a chamois of myself, for had I gone to them by the usual trails, they could not have been visited in twice the time. All are interesting spots, having connected with them legends and tales of hermits, of bandits, of military operations, Carlist occupations, and supernatural appearances. I feel strongly tempted to break through my rule, not to let my letters be after the guide-book fashion, and to give a particular account of them all—but I won’t.

To-day I was favoured with an exceptional sight. One of the eagles of the mountain sailed close below me, and lighted on a jutting ledge. I could have dropped him with a revolver. He was a very large and beautiful specimen. Mine host of the restaurant says eagles are now very rare. He has only once seen one in twelve years.

I wrote just now I would avoid the guide-book dodge, but must give a short general description of the mountain. La Montaña de Montserrat is situated about twenty-four miles north-east of Barcelona, in a bee-line; an isolated mountain, springing from its base almost perpendicularly into the air. According to the Spanish author, Florey, “None can say whether it is a castle of towers and bulwarks, a bouquet of mountains, or a single mountain in the form of such.” And he is right. Montserrat is one huge block of conglomerate, split in its upper portions into a multitude of tower-shaped pinnacles, having numerous benches, and seamed with dark ravines. Its circumference is about fourteen miles, its height three thousand nine hundred and ninety-three feet—at least those are the figures given by the Presbítero Amettler, a celebrated naturalist of the community of Montserrat, who took his measurements from a
BIBLIOTECA DE LA ALHAMBRA
A MOUNTAIN OF DELIGHT.

rock lying in the centre of the Llobregat, a river washing the foot of the mountain, and situated just in front of the peak of La Santa Maria. Close to the highest point of the mountain are the remains of the Ermita de S. Jerónimo, which for three years was a Carlista military look-out during the late civil war. The monastery is a few feet below halfway up the mountain in perpendicular elevation. La Sierra de Montserrat is a botanist’s paradise. The monks say there is a specimen of every plant in the world growing somewhere or other on it. Of course this is not quite true, but there is a most astonishing variety of them. To the geologist, from its strange forms, the extraordinary fact of being where it is, its large and peculiar caverns, its uniqueness, this mountain must always be full of charm. To the admirer of natural beauty, to the lover of monastic lore, to the “pious pilgrim,” Montserrat is truly a mountain of delight.
CHAPTER XXVII.


FEBRUARY 21, 1877, Midnight.—Here, the central point of attraction, the very raison d'être of the whole concern, the ancient source of almost fabulous wealth, the present cause of prosperity, is La Santa Imagen de la Virgen de Montserrat. It therefore requires description. The sacred image is barely two feet in height, and is a representation, in wood, of a middle-aged female seated on a chair, and supporting on her knees a wooden infant. Mother and child are quite black, not with age, evidently they were always so. Traces of gold show that their hair was once gilt. To an unbiased eye the group looks like an unartistic representation of an African mother and her little one. However, that the image is the most correct and authentic likeness extant is, from the standpoint of a Spanish Catholic, not possible to doubt, for it was, according to "incontestable" evidence, the handiwork of St. Luke, who executed it from sittings vouchsafed to him at Jerusalem by the Virgin herself.
The local guide-book says: "The image of Maria de Montserrat beams with such an expression of superiority, piety, and sweetness, that it is difficult to resist the impression that it appeals to our very soul." When I read these words I was amazed, and went back to have another look, for it had seemed to me the Madonna's black face was forbidding ugly. I remain of the same opinion still, but admit that the figure is most gorgeously arrayed and tinselled.

This illustrious work of St. Luke was brought to Spain by the "Prince of the Church, St. Peter," given in charge of San Eterro, the first bishop of Barcelona, and became that city's "object of adoration in times of calamity and source of consolation;" and at last, in the fourth century, the bishop San Severo, and the miraculous lady of Barcelona, Santa Eulalia, with the consent of San Pauiano, who guarded this sacred treasure in the Church of the Saints Justo and Pastor, it was exposed for present and future veneration, over the chief altar of Barcelona's then cathedral. There for over three hundred years the "Jerusalemitish image of Mary" remained the pride and glory of Cataluna.

Then came the Arabs, and made things unpleasant, all round, for the pious Goths. These latter worthies greatly feared the infidels would have but scant respect for their dark divinity, and when Barcelona, after a gallant defence of three years, feared falling under the power of the Saracen, her citizens determined their beloved image should be placed beyond the reach of possible indignities. So on May 10, 718, Eurigonio, captain of the Goths, governor of the city, &c., and Peter, the bishop of Barcelona, with a
ON FOOT IN SPAIN.

strong escort, carried this "Pearl of the Apostle" to the most secret recesses of the mountain of Montserrat, and hid it with diligent caution in a cave, closing the entrance thereof so that no man should ever find it. Now for one hundred and seventy-two years did the image remain hidden from the pious adoration of the faithful, and though its memory was vividly preserved, none knew where it had been concealed; when in 810, the Moors having been driven out of the country adjacent to Montserrat, and the true faith restored, the following extraordinary sequence of events occurred.

Some good little boys of the village of Olesa, who herded their parents' flocks at the foot of Montserrat, observed one Sunday at dusk on a ledge of its eastern slope a bright light, like unto a multitude of burning candles, which issued out of the mountain's side and illuminated the darkness. While gazing with astonishment at this prodigy, the boys plainly heard harmonious strains of celestial music floating in the air. Thinking no doubt these manifestations were for their special and private benefit, these knowing young urchins said nothing to nobody, but the following evening repaired to the same spot, hoping to be again entertained; but there was no performance. Nothing daunted, they kept on repairing, and on the following Sunday, at the same hour, lo! and behold! the lights and, band as before.

Having enjoyed the "celestial lights" and "angelic voices," many succeeding Sundays, these wonderfully reticent and discreet juveniles at last thought fit to inform their respective papas and mammas about it; and, ere
long, the wondrous tale reached the parish priest. He started out to satisfy himself, and for five consecutive Sunday nights, with his own eyes and ears, had it fully confirmed. Then he marched off and told his bishop, to wit, Gottomaro, first bishop—after the expulsion of the Moors therefrom—of the parishes of Manressa and Vich. Fortwith Gottomaro assembled all the clergy of his diocese, and all the persons of note in the neighbourhood, before which distinguished audience the lights and music played with great brilliancy and execution. Then Bishop Gottomaro, sending some agile young mountaineers to scale the height to the very place, a great discovery was made. The lights retired unto a small opening in the rock, and being followed, a cave was entered, in whose centre lay, clothed in garments of striped silk, the lost image; which miraculously showed its joy at being recovered, by exuding "a most fragrant smell." Immediately the bishop, the clergy of the diocese, the notabilities of the neighbourhood, the good little boys, and all and sundry, climbed up to and entered the cave, prostrated themselves before and adored the image, all smelling the sweet perfume. And the day following a devout procession was organised, to bear to the Cathedral of Manressa the recovered "Moreneta, Queen of Montserrat."

The route to Manressa from this cave of lights, music, sweet smells, and silk-clothed image, was then a trail across the mountain, and on the procession's arrival at the place where now the monastery stands, a halt was made, for to there is a long steep climb, and the processionists doubtless had had about enough of it; certainly the image