

rarely made use of; and you are not, consequently, exposed to the annoyance of seeing and hearing your house invaded by a dense crowd, on a night you have appointed a month before, without any possibility of foreseeing whether you would be disposed or not on that particular night to undergo such a toil. These crowds are, I believe, unheard of in Seville; but those who are pleased in each other's society, know where to find each other; and without waiting for invitations, small circles are formed every evening, from which all crushing, fatigue, and intense dressing are excluded.

The winter is also a more advantageous season for the stranger, who would be totally debarred by the summer heats from the activity necessary for the satisfaction of his curiosity, in visiting the objects of interest contained in and around Seville. On the other hand, the summer season offers to his contemplation the successful attainment of a mode of existence suited to the burning climate; a problem found to be solved but in few instances. The first and most essential arrangement appears to be the turning night into day, and *vice versá*, as far as regards society and all locomotion. No one leaves his house until long after sunset, and visiting commences some hours later. The morning being consequently the time for repose, and the breakfast hour

nevertheless remaining the same all the year round, the *siesta* is very essential, and is judiciously placed between the dinner, which terminates at four, and the hour for movement—nine, when the Sevillano, refreshed by three or four hours sleep, and a fresh toilette, is infinitely better disposed for the evening's amusements than the denizen of more northern climes, who rises at that or a later hour from the chief repast of the day, and is put *en train* by the less natural and less durable stimulants of the table.

This mode of life presents other numerous advantages. A very prominent one is the inviolable division of time between society and solitude. We suppose the hour for rising eight,—immediately after the chocolate,—that of breakfast eleven. The intervening hours are solitary, and are frequently divided between the pillow and the toilette; while they are sometimes devoted to more useful occupations, and added to by earlier risers. From the family meeting at breakfast until the dinner hour, three, the time may be employed in business, reading, in fact, in every one's habitual pursuits. No intrusion is to be feared. No accursed idler lounges in to interrupt with his compliments, or gossip, your letter to your lawyer, or, if you are a lawyer yourself, that to your client; nor is the conscience of scrupulous porters burdened with the mendacious "not at home."

These hours are sacred, and guaranteed by the very air, which renders the streets impassable, but leaves the cool court protected from the sun's ray by the *toldo*, (canvas awning spread at a level with the roof, and which is reefed up at night like a sail,) and refreshed by its ever-murmuring fountain and cool marble pavement, to the peaceable enjoyment of its owners. The female portion of the family are thus enabled to devote themselves to household occupations, or to their favourite employments, without having to undergo, until the second getting up in the evening, the fever of a complete toilette, which would, during the day, be insupportable. The time thus devoted to society, is amply sufficient; as it may be prolonged, as each party feels inclined, from an hour or two after sunset, until the returning rays drive all back to their cool retreat.

The night of the festival of St. John is, in Seville, sacred, from remote time, to amusement and festivity. During the five or six hours of darkness accorded by the Midsummer sun, the banks of the Guadalquivir echo the gay melodious laugh, which enlivens the animated buzz of the crowd; and the morning ray gilds the upper windows of the deserted houses before their doors are opened to the supper-craving population. The rite practised on this occasion is marked by a simplicity altogether

antique. The youth of Seville, that is the masculine portion, have provided themselves with small boxes, containing a sort of sugar-plum of exquisite flavour. One of these is held between the finger and thumb of the *cavallero*, from the moment he sets foot on the promenade. On the approach of a party of ladies he endeavours to distinguish, as far off as the gloom permits, the features or dress of an already selected object of preference; or, if still free to make a selection, some countenance possessed of sufficient attraction to determine his choice. On discovering the owner of either of these requisites, he watches a favourable opportunity, and approaching the lady, offers the bonbon.

The *señorita*—of course unmarried—thus selected, is obliged to accept the compliment if properly offered, as well as the arm of the *cavallero* during the rest of the night; and, on arriving at her house, he receives from her parents, or chaperon, as the case may be, an invitation to supper. Should the lady be desirous of avoiding the compliment, of the approach of which she is usually aware, she must exercise her ingenuity in putting obstacles in the way of the attempt. In this effort many are successful, since the peculiar mode of proceeding, obligatory on those who make the offer, affords certain facilities. The condition is not binding on

the fair object of the compliment, unless the lips receive the bonbon immediately from the finger and thumb of the cavalier. This is a source of no small amusement to the *señoritas* at the expense of strangers from other provinces of Spain. Conscious of being the object of preference of some young beginner, or stranger uninitiated in the mysteries of the rite—and who, let it be understood, does not happen to be an object of preference with them—they will afford him every facility of approach, and on receiving the present in the hand, will repulse without mercy the luckless wight, whose retiring steps are accompanied by peals of laughter from all the party.

The month of June is likewise distinguished by the procession of the Corpus Christi. On this occasion all the principal streets are protected from the sun by canvas awnings; and from the windows of every house draperies are suspended, the materials of which are more or less rich according to the means of their respective proprietors. From an early hour of the morning, ushered in by sunshine and the gay orchestra of the Giralda bells, the vast marble pavement of the cathedral begins to disappear beneath the momentarily increasing crowd. Here all classes are mingled; but the most conspicuous are the arrivals from the surrounding

villages, distinguished by their more sunburnt complexions and the showy colours of their costume, contrasted with the uniformly dark tints of the attire of the Sevillanos.

Here are seen also in great numbers, accompanied by their relatives, the gay *cigarreras*, whose acquaintance we shall presently make in the *fabrica de tabaco*. The instinctive coquetry discernible, no less in the studied reserve of their looks than in the smart step and faultless nicety of costume, indicates how easy would be the transition to the quality of the still more *piquant* but somewhat less moral *maja*. The black satin, low-quartered shoe is of a different material; but the snow-white stocking, and dark green skirt the same — and the black-velvet bordered mantilla is the identical one, which was held tight to the chin, when passing, the evening before, under the city walls on the return from the manufactory to the faubourg at the other extremity of Seville.

The procession, headed by a band of music, and accompanied by the dignitaries of the diocese, and civil authorities of the province, bearing *cierges*, winds through the principal streets, and re-enters the church to the sound of the two magnificent organs, never heard in unison except on this anniversary. The exterior of the principal portal is

ornamented on this occasion with a sort of curtain, which is said to contain upwards of three thousand yards of crimson velvet, bordered with gold lace. The columns of the centre nave are also completely attired from top to bottom with coverings of the same material. The value of the velvet employed, is stated at nearly ten thousand pounds.

Christmas-day is also solemnized at Seville, with much zeal; but the manner of doing it honour presents more of novelty than splendour. At the early hour of seven the parish churches are completely filled. The organ pours forth, from that time until the termination of the service, an uninterrupted succession of airs, called *segruidillas*, from the dance to which they are adapted. On the gallery, which adjoins the organ-loft of each church, are established five or six muscular youths, selected for their untiring activity. They are provided each with a tambourine, and their duty consists in drawing from it as much, and as varied sound as it will render without coming to pieces. With this view they enter upon the amiable contest, and try, during three or four hours, which of their number, employing hands, knees, feet, and elbows in succession, can produce the most racking intonations. On the pavement immediately below, there is generally a group, composed of the friends of the performers,

as may be discerned from the smiles of intelligence directed upwards and downwards. Some of these appear, from the animated signs of approbation and encouragement, with which they reward each more than usually violent concussion, to be backers of favourite heroes. During all this time one or two priests are engaged before the altar in the performance of a series of noiseless ceremonies ; and the pavement of the body of the church is pressed by the knees of a dense crowd of devotees.

The propensity to robbery and assassination, attributed by several tourists to the population of this country, has been much exaggerated. The imagination of the stranger is usually so worked upon by these accounts, as to induce him never to set foot outside the walls of whatever city he inhabits, without being well armed. As far as regards the environs of Seville, this precaution is superfluous. They may be traversed in all directions, at all events within walking distance, or to the extent of a moderate ride, without risk. Far from exercising violence, the peasants never fail, in passing, to greet the stranger with a respectful salutation. But I cannot be guarantee for other towns or environs which I have not visited. It is certain that equal security does not exist nearer the coast, on the frequented roads which communicate between San Lucar, Xeres,

and Cadiz ; nor in the opposite direction, throughout the mountain passes of the Sierra Morena. But this state of things is far from being universal.

I would much prefer passing a night on a country road in the neighbourhood of Seville, to threading the maze of streets, which form the south-eastern portion of the town, mentioned above as containing the greater number of the residences of private families. This quarter is not without its perils. In fact, if dark deeds are practised, no situation could possibly be better suited to them. These Arab streets wind, and twist, and turn back on themselves like a serpent in pain. Every ten yards presents a hiding-place. There is just sufficient lighting up at night to prevent your distinguishing whether the street is clear or not : and the ground-floors of the houses, in the winter season, are universally deserted.

An effectual warning was afforded me, almost immediately on my arrival at Seville, against frequenting this portion of the town without precaution after nightfall. An acquaintance, a young Sevillano, who had been my daily companion during the first five or six days which followed my arrival, was in the habit of frequenting with assiduity, some of the above-mentioned streets. He inhabited one of them, and was continually drawn by potent attraction towards

two others. In one, in particular, he followed a practice, the imprudence of which, in more than one respect, as he was much my junior, I had already pointed out to him. A lady, as you have already conjectured, resided in the house, in question. My friend, like many of his compatriots, "sighed to many;" but he loved this one; and she was precisely the one that "could ne'er be his." She allowed him, however, a harmless rendezvous, separated from all danger, as she thought, by the distance from the ground to the balcony, situated on the first-floor. The lady being married, and regular visiting being only possible at formal intervals, these interviews had by degrees alarmingly, as appeared to me, increased in frequency and duration; until at length during two hours each evening, my acquaintance poured forth in a subdued tone, calculated to reach only the fair form which bent over the balcony, his tender complaints.

The youth of these climes are communicative on subjects which so deeply interest their feelings; and whether willing or not, one is often admitted to share their secrets at the commencement of an acquaintance. It was thus that I had had an opportunity of lecturing my friend on the various dangers attending the practice in which he was persisting, and of recommending him — the best advice of all being,

of course, useless — to revive the more prudent custom of by-gone times, and if he must offer nightly incense to the object of his fire, to adopt the mode sanctioned by Count Almaviva, and entrust his vows to the mercenary eloquence of choristers and catgut—to anything—or anybody, provided it be done by proxy. My warning was vain; but the mischief did not befall him exactly in the manner I had contemplated.

His cousin opened my door while I was breakfasting, and informed me that L— was in the house of Don G— A—, and in bed, having received a wound the previous night from some robbers; and that he wished to see me. I found him in a house, into which I had already been introduced, being one of those he most frequented. A bed had been prepared in the drawing-room, all the window-shutters of which were closed, and he was lying there, surrounded by the family of his host, to whom was added his sister. As he was unable to speak above a whisper, I was given the seat by the bedside, while he related to me his adventure.

He had just quitted the street of the balcony at about nine o'clock, and was approaching the house we were now in, when, on turning a corner, he was attacked by three ruffians, one of whom demanded his money in the usual terms, "Your purse, or your

life!" while, before he had time to reply, but was endeavouring to pass on, a second faced him, and stabbed him in the breast through his cloak. He then ran forward, followed by the three, down the street, into the house, and up the staircase; the robbers not quitting the pursuit until he rang the bell on the first-floor. The surgeon had been immediately called, and had pronounced him wounded within—not an inch, but the tenth part of an inch—of his life; for the steel had penetrated to within that distance of his heart.

My first impression was that the robbers were acting a part, and had been hired to get rid of him, —otherwise what were the utility of stabbing him, when they might have rifled his pockets without such necessity? But this he assured me could not be the case, as the person most likely to fall under such suspicion, was incapable of employing similar means; adding, that that was the usual mode of committing robberies in Seville. I left him, after having assured him how much I envied his good fortune; seeing that he was in no danger, and only condemned to pass a week or two in the society of charming women, all zealously employed in nursing him—for such was the truth—one of the young ladies being supposed, and I fear with justice, to be the object of his addresses.

The ungrateful wretch convinced me by his reply (as we conversed in French, and were not understood by those present) that his greatest torment was impatience to escape from his confinement, in order to see or write to the other fair one.

At the end of a week he was sufficiently recovered to be removed to the house of his family. From certain hints, dropped during a conversation which took place more than a month after the event, it is to be feared that the knife of the assassin, in approaching so near to the heart of his intended victim, succeeded, by some mysterious electric transmission, in inflicting a positive wound on that of the lady of the balcony.

I afterwards learned that it was usual for those who inhabited or frequented this part of Seville, and indeed all other parts, excepting the few principal thoroughfares and streets containing the shops and cafés, to carry arms after nightfall; and in shaking hands with an acquaintance, I have sometimes perceived a naked sword-blade half visible among the folds of his cloak. These perils only exist in the winter, and not in all winters; only in those during which provisions increase in price beyond the average, and the season is more than usually rigorous: the poor being thus exposed to more than the accustomed privations.