





When their husbands are in prison, which often happens, the sacrifices they make, the hardships they endure, to soften their lot, or shorten, if possible, their captivity, are indeed surprising. Many of their customs are very peculiar, and they still endeavour to persuade people to believe in witchcraft, and the working of charms, &c. Their funerals, more particularly those of the children, are attended with all sorts of rejoicings, the night being spent in dancing and music.

Their most striking characteristics may be seen in their dances, and a curious scene they present, wild and almost uncivilized. Their movements carry one at once to Eastern lands. The contortions of the figure—for they dance more with the body than the feet—the manner in which the spectators beat time with their hands, while others sing, or rather screech, until they work themselves up to a state of frenzy, and the dancers become more and more animated, and all assumes a character of almost savage excitement. Every movement has a meaning, every gesture an expression, each flash of their fire-glancing eyes conveys more than words could tell. The dances themselves are coarse and disagreeable, but the whole presents a rich study for an artist—the varying expressions in the countenances of the surrounding groups; the young girls with their glancing eyes; the old women with their wizened, wrinkled countenances, indicative only of low and vicious cunning. Then comes the “vito,” the most animated dance of all; this is performed by a woman alone. She ties a handkerchief across her shoulder like a scarf, puts a sombrero on her head, which only adds to the saucy look they all have, and commences the usual evolutions. The spectators keep time by clapping their hands, an accompaniment which in gipsy dances replaces the castanets; the tambourine and the guitar are also called



into requisition, and the song commences, which always accompanies this dance.

Las mozitas son de oro ;  
 Las casadas son de plata ;  
 Las viudas son de cobre ;  
 Las viejas de hojalata,  
 Por el Vito—el Vito el Vito,  
 Por el Vito, &c., &c.

The dance concludes by her fixing on some one of the party, before whom she dances, and on whom the flashing glance of her eye is cast, when she throws him the handkerchief, and waits for it to be returned with a bright peseta in the corner. Those who cannot see these dances by wandering so far to the South, may see them this year on the walls of the Academy ; for they have been depicted to the life by Mr. Phillip, the artist, who spent some time in Seville, and to whom we owe the opportunities we had of seeing something of this strange race.

In Triana there are two or three churches, one dedicated very strangely to La Virgen de la O., the origin of which singular name I have never been able to discover ; she is rather a favourite patroness, however, in Triana, and many a young lady has the odd-sounding name given her, of Maria de la O. One church in Triana has undergone a sad metamorphosis ; it is now converted into a theatre, one of the lowest in Seville ; and the actual stone of the high altar still remains behind the scenes.

Although the Alameda is thronged with fashionables in winter, on the summer nights the gay world generally flock to the Plaza del Duque, a small square in the centre of the town, planted with trees. The casino or club is on one side of it, and in this neighbourhood are some of the most fashionable streets of Seville, such as the Calle de las Armas, San Vicente, &c. Another very pretty



little square is the Plaza Magdalena, which has likewise its acacia-trees, and fountain, and marble benches, and stands of aguadores who sell refreshing beverages. The Fonda de Madrid is in this square, certainly the best hotel in Seville, but the most expensive.

The largest square in the town is, of course, now called the Plaza de la Constitucion. It has a very fine specimen of plataresque work in the Casas Capitulares, a striking building, which was very nearly being sacrificed a few months ago. The Ayuntamiento wished to pull it down, in order to make a fine Paris-looking square, but they were fortunately prevented, and have now commenced building a new plaza at the back of it, on the site of the old Franciscan convent. It promises to be as ugly as might be expected from the taste of Spanish corporations in these days. On the Queen's birth-day and fête-day, her picture, and that of the King, are hung up, in front of the Casas Capitulares, sentries are placed on each side, and a military band serenades the pictures in the evening, treating them as though their majesties were really present—a curious custom, and one universally practised both in the churches and theatres on the occasion of any great "funcion" when the Queen is more especially concerned. Her picture figures in the state-box instead of herself, and receives the same honours which would be paid to her. In Madrid, during all the great services in the churches when Te Deums were sung in gratitude for her deliverance from the hand of the assassin at the time of Merino's attempt upon her life, her picture was put up in the open space before the high altar, with guards round it.

Some of the houses in the Plaza are very picturesque, with a covered arcade beneath, and the view of the Giralda from this point is beautiful, more particularly at sunset, when it assumes that pinky hue which glows on



it like fire. Near this plaza is the street of the silversmiths, where they sell all those pretty little silver and gold buttons which ornament the jackets of the Andalusian *majo*; they are, however, coarsely worked. Rosaries are also here, and a variety of ornaments in silver filagree, but very inferior to the productions of Malta and Genoa. The custom of having separate streets for particular trades prevails still in Seville, but it is fast disappearing, and a showy shop, full of electroplate, has made its appearance in the Calle de Genova, intruding on a domain formerly pertaining exclusively to the booksellers. Most of the shops of Seville are quite open to the street; no glass, but supported almost invariably by one of those slender marble pillars which abound in this city of diminutive columns.

There are several old houses in Seville, which, although not exactly of Moorish origin, bear traces of having been erected in imitation of the Arab style of architecture. One still exists in the best preservation, and is commonly known by the name of the Casa de Pilatos, and belongs to the ducal house of Medina Celi. It is said to have been built in imitation of Pilate's house at Jerusalem by one of the Riberas, who performed a pilgrimage there in 1519. Be this as it may, the house, although erected at the commencement of the 16th century, is a copy of the Alcázar, and some of its ceilings and rooms are very fine. Its staircase is beautiful, and quite unique in its style, the walls being covered with the most beautiful azulejos. The Duke of Alva's house bears traces likewise of Moorish architecture, but it is so very much decayed, that it has but little left to tell of its former magnificence. Both these houses are neglected by their owners, who, living in Madrid, may be said to have abandoned them completely. Some of the churches likewise retain their Moorish towers, and those of San Marco and Santa



Catalina are picturesque enough. In the interior they possess but little interest. They are neither remarkable for their architectural merits nor for any objects of art they contain; there are but few good pictures now to be found in them, and the pasos, the wooden images, are perhaps their greatest attraction.

In Seville there is even less society than in other Andalusian towns. There are not any balls or parties whatever, and people seldom meet except at the theatre or on the promenades. Each family has its own little circle, consisting of two or three relatives or friends, who come and sit together of an evening, or else they have a box at the theatre, and go there night after night. This is all very well for the inhabitants themselves who have their own relatives and friends; but for foreigners it is anything but lively: and the more to be regretted at Seville, where there are all the elements necessary for agreeable society. There are a great many families of the nobility residing here; they have charming houses, admirably calculated for receiving, and there is not by any means a deficiency of wealth. But they do not care about it; they are unused to it; it requires too much exertion, and they prefer going on with the same routine. Some will tell you it is a spirit of emulation existing about dress which prevents balls and parties being given: each strives to outvie the other in the splendour of her toilette, and as all cannot afford to be equally extravagant, they gradually give up appearing at any parties, which some more enterprising than the rest may have endeavoured to give, and at length the rooms remain deserted.

This is one of the many reasons the Sevillanos themselves give, and although it may sound rather absurd, I believe it is not very far from the truth. They meet at the theatre, see each other at the paseo, and the young ladies, when they are engaged to be married, find it



more agreeable to talk to their lovers at the *reja*, than excite their jealousy by accepting the attentions of others in a crowded ball-room. As young people, under such circumstances, are not generally allowed to be together without the presence of some third person, which we must presume to be very disagreeable, the lady stations herself at the window on the ground-floor, and there, with the jealous *reja* between her and her lover, she can discourse at her leisure, while he stands in the street, enveloped in his cloak. And there they converse by the hour, and whisper so low, that not even the passers-by can catch the echo of their voice.

“*Comme on doit avoir froid,*” said a Frenchman to me one night returning from the theatre, as we passed a hero who was always at his post, even during the comparative cold of Christmas. But the Spaniard did not feel cold, the genial climate of Seville makes it less of a penance standing in the street, than it would be either in France or England. They certainly do exhibit the most wonderful patience in remaining there for hours, night after night, and that for a length of time which would quite exhaust the patience of a less Oriental race.

Children in this country are much more independent of their parents than with us. The father is obliged to give his eldest son a certain portion of his fortune when he marries, even should he do so without his consent. A grandee must obtain that of the Sovereign, but young people, whose parents object to their marriage, have only to apply to the civil authorities and state their grievance. If no rational objections can be urged, the *alcalde* takes the young lady or gentleman, as the case may be, from the parents' house, and deposits them, as they term it, under the roof of some relative or friend, where they remain until the marriage takes place, the parents not having it in their power to prevent the ceremony being



performed. A woman in Spain retains her own fortune when she marries, and is in every point, as far as regards money, far more independent than a married woman in England. The husband, be he ever so extravagant, can never touch his wife's property; and it is very amusing to hear Spaniards discussing this subject, for they entertain an idea that women in England are mere cyphers in their own homes, and they never omit an opportunity of impressing us with the fact, that they are quite independent, and really manage their households themselves, and everything connected with them.

As there is not any society in Seville, a foreigner's acquaintance with Spaniards is pretty nearly confined to morning visits, for few become sufficiently intimate to join the select circle assembled round the brasero in the winter evenings, or in summer amid the flowers of the patio. The ladies do not spend much money on their dress—at least all they do is reserved for the paseo. In their own domestic circle they never seem to mind what they wear; at home, the commonest gown will do, for its defects are concealed by an enormous shawl, in which they muffle themselves up, with their hands tucked under it in the most comfortable manner possible.

The theatre here is not worthy of so large a town, and the performers are generally very indifferent. The lower tier of boxes is the most fashionable, and has a peculiar appearance, having only an iron railing in front. In winter there are both an opera and a dramatic company. Like most provincial towns they cannot afford to pay for first-rate singers, and have to put up with those who are about to make their *début* upon the stage, or whose career is drawing to a close. There is not much real taste for music in Spain, and singers and musicians do not find it a very profitable country to honour with their presence. It is hardly possible to get



up a concert, for no one will take tickets ; they are far more amused at the theatre, where the prices are low and there is more to see.

The dramatic company is tolerable ; they very often give the regular Andalucian pieces, particularly on fête days, and on those occasions when the lower orders predominate. They are still very fond of pieces in which the virtues of bandits shine forth, and in which such characters are invested with a heroism and a charm which tend to increase the admiration of the people for those who follow a profession where the rich are robbed only to benefit the poor, and the passers-by are deprived of their purses to pay for masses for the souls of the deceased companions of the spoilers. Some of their farces are very amusing, but the drama is heavy, so full of such long speeches, with scarcely any action or change of scenery. Of tragedy there is, strictly speaking, very little to be seen. Spaniards do not go to the play to be made wretched and miserable by having their feelings worked upon. They go to laugh and pass a pleasant evening, and not to cry ; consequently plays founded even on well-known tragical incidents, have the plot tortured in all variety of ways to prevent a melancholy ending, and bring health and happiness to everybody concerned.

An incident à-propos to this appeared in one of the papers, illustrative of the tender-heartedness of the inhabitants of Murcia. After the first representation of "Marino Faliero," the finale disgusted the public to such a degree, that before the second performance the following announcement appeared in the play-bills. "Notice is given that to-night the people will triumph, and that the Council of Ten will succumb." But this was outdone by the effect which "Adrienne Lecouvreur" produced. It hurt the feelings of the



Murcians so much that the manager issued a decree to the following effect. "Having observed that the public, who take such an interest in Adrienne, were profoundly hurt by the tragical death of the heroine, the manager has taken the advice of competent persons, and has arranged that in future it shall end happily, with the marriage of Adrienne to Maurice of Saxony. If this slight variation should meet with the approval of the enlightened public of Murcia, the efforts made to gratify them will be amply rewarded. The performances will terminate as usual with the national dances."

The Spanish paper which records this interesting episode in the history of the drama exclaimed, "What more tragical end could befall a dramatist than to have his works represented on the Murcian stage?" The Sevillanos are not quite so tender-hearted; they will allow translations to terminate as in the original, but certainly in genuine Spanish plays you hardly ever find any one who dies or is murdered on the stage. On Sundays and fête days they give two performances, one at four, which is chiefly attended by the lower orders, and another at eight, devoted to the more aristocratic portion of the community. They generally give one or two of the national dances, either as a wind-up or between the acts. There are some very tolerable dancers at Seville; one of the best has been already alluded to as living in the Giralda, from which she derives her designation of "La Campanera."

The lower orders are a happy, joyous set of people, abounding in all that wit and repartee for which the Andalucians are so celebrated. They are rather too prone to quarrelling, and are constantly falling victims to their impetuosity, and frequent use of the narvaja, which is drawn on the slightest provocation. One day when we were passing by the gate of Triana, a crowd was assembled



round a man who had just been stabbed. Some one had dropped a piece of two cuarts—less than a penny—and four or five began scrambling for it ; but in the course of the struggle one offended another, the knife was out, and the discussion was soon put an end to. The Andalucians are, however, considered more given to fair play than the inhabitants of the other provinces ; the Valencians, generally stab behind the back, but here at least they mostly use it face to face.

Proud and indolent, they are averse to exertion, and are quite willing to sit quietly enjoying themselves, while the inhabitants of Galicia and the Asturias perform the work, and earn the wages. But with all their faults, there is a something about the Andalucians one cannot help liking ; there is so much that is amusing, so much natural wit, with a certain sort of poetry attached to it—what they call the “sal de Andalucia,” which there is no translating, or explaining in any other language but their own. They are boasters to a degree, and indulge in exaggerations which have become proverbial. They love to sit in the sun with a cigar in their mouths, that indispensable addition to every Spaniard’s comfort. A cigar whiles away the time, makes the hours glide smoothly along, and is the faithful companion of all classes : at the “table-d’hôte,” in the diligence, on the promenade, and amid the family circle, he is never without his best friend. It is one of the first things to which ladies must make up their minds to resign themselves, when they undertake to travel in Spain ; it is so much a matter of course, that few Spaniards think it necessary even to apologise for smoking in a lady’s presence.

A supply of cigars will smoothe every difficulty in travelling, and one offered at the right time will find its way to the most obdurate heart. The government take, however, most unfair advantage of this ruling passion, and