

as they are called by the higher class, the "Carnestolendas," his soul delights: in the prospect of their coming, in their delights when they have come, in their memory when gone, he lives, and smokes, and smiles.

What is it to him that but last night a batch of political prisoners went guarded closely past his door, for whom Carnaval had, and will have, thoughts and memories all too joyless? What to him that the poor lassie next door is going to fast, and sew, and weep, for the conscripts have been drawn again, and her Novio has been drawn for service?

Long before the streets were placarded with the huge posters, or, as they are called here, "Los Bandos," saying that the 15th, 16th, and 17th, being "Los dias del Carnaval," masks and mascaradas may be worn in the streets "until set of sun," and a general holiday observed; long ere this, the town of which I write—a large country town under the ragged woods and barren granite peaks of the Sierra de Jaën—was waking up: making dresses, buying masks, idling, gambling, smoking, dressing up figures in all sorts of strange costumes, laughing, or working, if needful, to save a few pesetas for the Carnaval.

On Sunday, February 8th, the scent of the coming festivities hung not lightly in the air. At eleven o'clock two bulls, dressed out in gayest streamers, headed by a brass-band playing its loudest and its liveliest, and followed by a crowd of gaily-dressed men and women of the lower orders,—peasants, muleteers, artisans, gitanos, in every conceivable costume,—promenaded the streets, and then proceeded to the bull-ring. The bull-fight then took place—a subject already sufficiently described. Thousands thronged the ring;

even the poorest had his peseta ready to pay for admittance.

Next day entered my trusty Manchegan servant, her pensive face bright with smiles. "Good news for the English officer! Mañana, carne de toros en la Plaza!" (Beef in the market to-morrow!) Never, by any chance, do you get beef in the interior save after a bull-fight: it cannot be killed, owing to the heat and its bulk, in the summer; and, owing to the absence of fodder,—I mean grass and herbs, the Campo being barren and often treeless,—no cattle are seen in the winter months. So, mañana, for the first time during my residence here, since the last bull-fight, nearly eight months ago, we had beef. Joyous sound! joyous smell! Thoughts of a good dinner, after living on coarse fish, and goat's flesh, and dry hares, and still drier red-legged partridges, for months, to get a slice of beef. I thought, "I will eat it; I will close my eyes; I will stop up my ears; I will put an English pipe between my lips, and I will resolve that I am in England!"

It was not to be. The beef was like boiled shoe-leather, and smelt badly.

Not contented, not satiated with the bull-fight, the cock-pit must also be open for the Spaniard. It is simply one pitched room, in a small house on the outskirts of the town; and thither, about once a fortnight, flock the partisans of this cruel sport. The tinker, the miner, the small tradesman, the fondista, will keep his cock, and back it, on Sundays, for an ounce of gold; or, if he cannot afford that, for a dollar or so. The passion, in Spain, is not for sport, but for the gambling which is a frequent concomitant of the sport. With all classes gambling is one of the recognized and

lawful pursuits, or, at least, pleasures of life. You shall be sitting in a small public gaming-room, devoted to "rouletta," in will walk a peasant, who has been hoeing beans all the week at two pesetas (20*d.*) per diem; he will stake a dollar, lose it, and walk out with a smile. The cocks may be seen in little wicker coops, side by side with decoy-partridges, standing in the sunny street, their masters sitting beside them on the pavement outside their house-door. The best fighters come from England, and an English cock is backed readily at two to one. The tails of these cocks are cut off, and, with their feathers clipped and docked, they present, eating their wheat or barley and shreds of raw goat's flesh, a pitiable and disgusting sight. The fight generally results in a death!

Throughout the week before Carnival gaming was everywhere to be seen. The small itinerant carriers of "rouletta-boxes," which are about the size and look much like the organ of the itinerant organ-grinder in England, flocked into the town, each box being well filled with biscuits—the same crisp, well-curled, flimsy biscuit that is eaten with an ice in England—and instilled into the veriest child the first idea of gambling. The wheel and numbers are on the lid of the box: the child puts a farthing on the box, and says, "Numbers 3 and 5"; the wheel turns, and, if it stops at 3 or 5, the child gets a pennyworth of sweet biscuits. Frequently I have seen a mother give her children—perhaps of the age of five or six years!—a farthing a piece, and lead them through the throng to the rouletta-box.

Games of the very roughest kind were the order of the day. Here is a description of one or two. A heavy water-pitcher was slung upon a rope, fastened, from

window to window, across the street in which I live; traffic—traffic means only panniered donkeys and mules, and an occasional horse or lumbering mule-cart—went on uninterruptedly, for, as soon as a muleteer wanted to pass, the two tallest girls or women, who were amusing themselves with the rope-and-pitcher play, lifted it over his head with a small, forked stick. Imagine this in one of the chief streets of an English country town of 30,000 inhabitants! What would Policeman A 1 not have to say to it? “Thoroughfare obstructed.—Disorderly lot!”

The rope-and-pitcher game is this: one of the party is blinded, and allowed to make so many slashes in the dark at the pitcher; but he cannot see, and the party tell no tales, so one of the hoydens who stand by ties a string to the pitcher, and when the blindfolded boy is just getting near the mark, she pulls it along the rope to the farther end. Whoever hits and breaks the pitcher wins, and then the fragments are used for an all-round game of ball!

Other games and amusements were of the following kind:—In the Plaza, or Market Square, where the scene is always a strikingly picturesque one, day and night, summer and winter, a young fellow, who had lost one leg in the war of the north, played the game of “Bull.”

This was the game; and the crowd around his play-circle was so dense, that I could hardly elbow my way into quarters sufficiently close to admit of my seeing it properly:—The man—a fine young Manchegan, of some twenty-three summers—took off his wooden leg, and poised himself perfectly, standing still, or hopping about, in the circle, on the uneven, half-pitched

ground. His companion, a boy about eight years of age, put on his head a huge pair of bull's-horns, with eye-holes, &c., and, thus accoutred, rushed and butted again and again at the *ci-devant* conscript, who, hopping nimbly aside with his one leg, and also with the help of a glaring scarlet handkerchief which he threw, if hard-pressed, over the boy's eyes, most neatly avoided the shock. This butting and hopping aside, sometimes round and round the ring, hotly pursued by the boy with the bull's-horns, sometimes merely letting the horns almost touch his stomach, and then deftly stepping aside, throwing the scarlet over the bull, would last as long as ten minutes. Then, taking off his cap, the hero solicited and received cuartos or dineros of the better sort. The Spaniards were delighted; the Plaza rang with their shouts of "Olli!" "Olli!" and their laughter.

The game was strangely rough and rude; but, remember, we are in the interior. The surroundings, however, were picturesque. The Plaza, or broad open square, dotted all over with the fruit and vegetable vendors' tents, changes its general hue from month to month. In the melon months its general hue is dark green. When the chestnuts, walnuts, and common nuts form the chief store, then the prevailing hue is a soberer one of russet-brown; but the moment that the naranjas, or oranges—the grand fruit of Spain—and lemons come into season, the whole place changes its colour, and the prevailing hue in January, February (this last the chief orange month—every child, every peasant, has his orange in hand or pocket), and March is the rich golden yellow of the orange. They lie in heaps all over the market

square, and can be bought for less than a cuarto a piece; *i. e.*, four for a penny.

It has been well said, by an Englishman once well known, who has passed to his rest, that "of all the birds, he loved best the robin, because it always trilled out its plaintive ditty when the leaf of autumn began to fall, and the other birds ceased to sing."

"Sweet messenger of calm decay."

And, further, that "of all the fruits, he respected most the orange, because it came, with its cooling acid juice, cheap, and within the reach of every fever-stricken pauper in cottage or hospital, just at the time when other fruits could not be procured."

The Spaniard thinks the same; and he will tell you, "for bile, for calentura, for inflammatory attacks, God has sent an antidote in the orange of Spain." The great medicine for biliousness, costiveness, and for other complaints, among the Spanish peasantry of the interior, is the juice of an orange squeezed into a glass, with two farthings'-worth of magnesia.

The Spaniards believe firmly that the *fruta del tiempo* (fruits of the season) are the only proper medicinal agents, and they act upon their belief. Every mother gives her child daily three oranges; every peasant eats an orange three times a day, with a slice of bread, after his meals; and whether he be riding his donkey or driving his mule-cart, the peasant will not miss his orange.

If the one-legged man, and the *mascara de toro* assaulting him, were a great source of amusement to the simple-hearted, rude, and ephemeral crowd that daily hemmed them in, no less so were a tiny dog, who, shaven and shorn as to his hind-quarters to look

like a poodle, danced to the squeaking of a fiddle—this latter, as rare here as a guitar in England—and the wooden figures, stuffed with bolsters, which were set up, dressed out, outside several of the houses, to be looked at, pelted, and thrown over, amid roars of laughter, or carried on the shoulders of women up and down the street, in the midst of an admiring and vociferous crowd.

Such was the aspect of our town until the morning of Sunday, the 15th, dawned, and saw at every street-corner the huge posters announcing the advent of El Carnaval. Sunday, the first of the three days, was wet and cold, and only the very roughest and rudest masks were seen promenading the streets. Here was a man, dressed simply in his wife's embroidered petticoat, put on like a surplice, and a huge, triangular paper hat, black in colour, and two feet in height, with no mask on, but his face blackened, or painted scarlet. Here was another, dressed as a woman in her *deshabille*; the dressing-gown being a chintz window-curtain, loosely wrapped round him. He wore a mass of false hair, and a paper mask, a woman's face. In such-like rough costume, followed by a cheering crowd, did the few most resolute and determined masqueraders, of the lowest classes, promenade the dripping streets, embrace in the street any one they chose—it is not etiquette ever to attempt to discover who your saluter is—and enter houses to offer their congratulations in squeaking, falsetto voice.

The smaller *ventas* (wine-shops), with their cool, dark, den-like shops, their tiny dripping counters, green basins, and two huge casks of wine of La Mancha, the rough-red and the satiny-white (*Val-de-Peñas, tinto y blanco*), were thronged. But there was

no drunkenness to speak of, for the Spaniard, ill cultured as he is, is no drunkard.

On my return to my house from my dreary Sunday's walk, the middle and some of the better classes were all turning out in masks to a huge ball at the casino, which commenced at ten on Sunday night and ended at five on Monday morning.

One incident occurred, which may here be mentioned, at this ball. Men, of course, went, many of them in the dress of women; and no one could tell whether his partner was man or woman, for every one talks in a shrill falsetto. A friend of mine went to the ball, and selected the prettiest girl in the room, as a sensible man would naturally do, for his partner. They danced together three or four times, and at last he met an acquaintance unmasked, and asked if he knew who his partner was. "Well, then, if you want to know, you've been dancing all the evening with your own old cook,"—a lady who not only had passed her fortieth summer, but who had acquired the habit of drinking too much aguardiente at times, so that her name had become somewhat of a bye-word.

Monday dawned chill and wet. Towards two o'clock, when, on a sunny Carnival-day, the streets would be thronged, rain fell heavily, and only a few draggled mascaras (mascara is both the mask and the wearer of the mask) picked their way through the streets, where pools of water stood, and streams of water ran down.

"A very bad Carnival," said an old peasant of La Mancha to me, as he brought me in, in a common washhand-stand basin, about three pints of Limonada de vino. This is the Carnival-drink of the peasantry of La Mancha. It is simply a mixture of water,

orange-juice, spice, and white Val-de-Peñas wine. It is brewed in an ordinary bed-room basin, and each person dips his copa (wine-glass) into it, and drinks and smokes the Carnival nights away.

Many weddings took place in the three days of Carnival. The poor are married at the church. The higher classes in the interior are married first by the priest in the drawing-room of the bride's casa; that religious ceremony over, the civil judge of the township (the Juez) performs another civil or ceremonial marriage. He holds a book with the form of marrying, the couple stand before him, and he decrees "that the children born of such a marriage shall be legal heirs," &c. Then, in the evening, comes a supper and a merry dance.

Tuesday was a typical Spanish day, and in the joyous sunshine, at noon, every house (poor or rich) sent forth its crowd of mascaras to promenade the uneven streets until set of sun. The very servant who, an hour before, has brought you your dinner, comes up to you in the street, screams in your ear (often saying something vastly impertinent, because she wears a "cara," as the lower classes call the mascara), and calls you Don Juan, or Don Jaimé, in shrill falsetto voice. All, in fact, who like this rough play—among the middle and poorer classes, men and women too; among the higher, only men—put on whatever costume they like, of the roughest sort, and walk the streets, saluting every hapless stranger whom they know by name, grasping his hand, and absolutely "button-holing" him, until he is deaf with their screaming in his ear. Sometimes the mascaras "hunt in couples"; sometimes surround you in a body of six or eight; sometimes—constantly, indeed, for this forms

a great portion of the fun—they enter your house; you cannot tell who on earth it is, for they are dressed as a bride, as a Hussar, as a Moor, as a miner in his underground dress; and it is considered “ill-form” to attempt to unveil your guest or pry into his secrets.

What is seen in the streets of the interior, then, at Carnival time is this:—A motley group of people, in every variety of costume, but, be it known, of the very coarsest and the very gaudiest that can be imagined, strutting up and down the streets, screaming out in falsetto, like parrots, entering houses, *sans cérémonie*, and greeting every one they know in a somewhat demonstrative and alarming manner. The streets are simply one mass of colour, glitter, and noise, for many of these groups have castanets, tambour, guitar, and many sing loudly. At every street corner you will see the “fandango” being danced—the typical dance of Andalusia—by a man and woman in costume. Here is one dancing pair that I noticed especially. The man was the type of an Englishman (!), wearing a tall black hat, long black coat, and grey trousers; his face was blackened. His fair partner was dressed in a short white linen skirt, with tawdry lace, cherry-coloured jacket, bare feet, and hands laden with brass and silver rings. A more grotesque couple I have seldom seen. And with what spirit they danced, in the dirty road, on the uneven, pitching stones, until the perspiration streamed off their faces!

The “fandango” is a most peculiar dance. The two, each with the hands over the other’s shoulders, in every hand a castanet, which they keep on clicking, stand close to one another (face to face), and dance in an active, unceasing, untiring series of little tremulous shuffles, the whole frame seeming to

tremble. At the end of every minute the two pirouette round, and, face to face again, with clicking hands and whole frame vibrating, the guitar of their accompanist going tinkle, tinkle, tinkle monotonously, they commence another dance.

Here are some of the costumes which, while church-bells called to prayer, and beggars cried for "Una limosnita, por Dios" (an alms, for God's sake), and extra guards, with clanking swords, told no tale of peace or joy, thronged our streets:—A woman's petticoat, put on like a surplice, and a triangular hat, three feet high, and "shorts" and bare legs; mask, either blackened or scarlet face, or any sort of paper mask, long nose, or deformed nose, or no nose at all; woman's face, with woman's hair, and paint. These might be counted by the dozen. Spanish soldier's private dress, *i. e.*, long blue coat, and brick-dust coloured baggy trousers, and gaiters, green facings. Hussar uniform (all these faded or ragged)—light blue, yellow facings; black leather from the knee to the boot. Woman's dress—white skirt, with scarlet border a foot broad, yellow shawl, esparto-grass sandals, guitar or castanets; another—white dress plastered over with patches of yellow, red, and blue paper gummed on to the skirt, black mantilla. Here is another—An Indian, all covered with yellow and green paper, in strips, glued to his clothes. He looked like a wild Indian, or a walking forest of green and yellow, as the papers rustled, and flew up and down in the wind. All was colour, noise, and glitter.

But, to a thoughtful mind and a deeper-gazing eye, there was a sad and earnest background to the music and the paint of the light-hearted Andaluz. In the morning, and at mid-day, and at noon, as I passed

through the Plaza, the streets simply swarmed with beggars of every age and sort, men, women, and children, so wretched, so starved-looking, so fittingly dirty. They seized one's coat, if they were grown-up beggars; they showed their half-naked breasts; they thrust a stump of an arm into your face, tearing off the bandages; they showed their scars of scrofula or other affliction; the children seized your hand, kissed it, and would cling on like leeches. From one and all rose up the bitter, abject cry,—“For God's sake, señor, a bit of meat, a tiny bit, and the Virgin give you good health for ever and ever.” Poor, unhappy, forlorn crowd—they make one's very heart ache to look at them!

Then, sitting on the pavement all around the Square—I counted one row of sixty—were the labourers waiting to be hired for farm-work. Now and then a maestro would come up, and send off four or five to work; but when I passed at four o'clock there still sat there a crowd of these motley figures, poorly clad, many with naked feet, many with sandals, nearly all having no head-gear but a gaudy handkerchief tied over their crisp black hair. Poor fellows! with their rough vacant faces, and their unkempt dress, they seemed deserving of help; but work was scarce, and, like the labourers of ancient story, they sat there “all the day idle.”

Ash-Wednesday dawned, and one or two mascaras, in defiance of authority, still patrolled the half-empty streets; and, I believe, the “sardina” (a species of small, silvery fish, like the anchovy, which forms a staple article of food among the poor of the interior in the winter months) was carried out and buried, a ceremony still performed in some parts of Spain.

A few horns were blown here and there, I know not why, as I wandered home at dusk; and the soldier's bugle from the barracks outside the town, the setting sun, and the warm atmosphere, almost made one fancy that one was listening to the Aldershot bugle winding, on a bright, still summer evening, along the range of the Hog's Back!

Here is the prayer, sold for a farthing, and repeated aloud at the different houses of the town by poor and ragged vendors on Ash-Wednesday:—

“NA. SA. DEL CARMEN.

“ORACION.—Oh Virgen piadosísima! refugio y esperanza de pecadores, postrados á vuestros piés te suplicamos, por aquella honra que teneis de ser Madre de Dios, Virgen perpétua, que cuando mi alma pecadora salga de este cuerpo mortal, me la guardes y me la defiendas de los infernales espíritus, y cuando mi lengua no pueda llamaros, venid, Señora Madre mia del Cármen, acompañada de toda la córte celestial, y llevarnos seguros ante el acatamiento de vuestro dulcísimo Hijo Jesús, y para la hora de mi muerte le encomiendas mi alma: Virgen piadosísima, no nos desampares en aquella grave necesidad de la tremenda hora, y no permitas que por mis culpas se pierda en nosotros la sangre preciosísima que derramó tu dulcísimo Hijo Jesús.

“*Hay concedidas innumerables indulgencias por varios Excmos. é Illmos. Sres. Arzobispos y Obispos por rezar esta oracion y llevar consigo esta milagrosa imágen.*”

CHAPTER X.

LA SEMANA SANTA; OR, HOLY WEEK IN A SPANISH MINING DISTRICT.

To an outsider, dwelling in one of the most primitive old mining townships of Spain, the presence of Lent is marked by little of especial interest to the eye or ear. The "forty days" were ushered in by a Wednesday of glowing and well-nigh scorching heat, the thermometer, towards the end of that season, standing in the shade at 75 and even 78 degrees.

The churches were draped in black; the priests looked wan and worn; every night, at the corner of every street, and even until one and two in the morning, the wild, wailing chant of the Lenten ditty, the words of which tell, in Latin, of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, were heard, oftentimes breaking one's rest, and suddenly breaking off in a shout of laughter, which was strangely out of place in the mouth of the troop of boys of all ages who were the singers of a theme so solemn.

Twice a week might be seen the strings of donkeys, each bearing on his panniered sides a couple of huge "atun," the sea-fish chiefly sent to the interior during Lent, the long tails of which flipped up the dust as the donkey ambled along. My Manchegan servant-maid and her husband prepared a grand new dress for their patron saint, San Juan,—a dress of crimson silk,

with spangles of gold,—to be put on upon Easter Day. This was the gift of one of the parochial clergy.

Holy Week dawned at last upon a land utterly scorched up; upon crops of barley and wheat brown as sienna; upon plains of beans drooping as though they had been scalded with hot water; upon the wild flowers of the Campo, which would have been as a carpet of scarlet, and blue, and yellow, to the rock-strewn earth, all withering and discoloured.

My old Manchegan servant shook his head. "If rain does not fall, señor, in the Holy Week, God will send no rain at all." Bread had gone up two cuartos (farthings) in the one-pound loaf; the beggars added to their usual cry, "Ave Maria purisima, de me una limosnita, por Dios," the words, "Bread is going from the poor." Up to the Wednesday in Holy Week there was not a cloud seen in the sky; the earth was as iron, and the heavens above our head were as brass. Wearily I started for a four-mile walk along the rocky road to one of my most distant mines. The sun beat down fiercely as in summer; the levante (east wind) blew remorselessly along its clouds of dust. My usual companion, a Spanish miner, refused to converse about crops or weather; he was in the bitterest of bitter humours. Suddenly we came upon a Spanish peasant, with his sandals of esparto-grass, trotting behind a donkey laden with a large pigskin of wine. "Caramba," said my companion, "if you are caught about to sell wine in the Campo, you will be fined 55 pesetas. I wish you joy."

The allusion was to the new "Bando" which had just been issued, and in which it was decreed that any person selling wine or spirituous liquors in the country should be mulcted in the sum of 55, and any person