

tion to retire, so we rambled about the white city in the calm light of the stars and were walking along the fragrant banks of the Guadalquivir at daybreak.

“Well, upon my word,” said Pascual, “we have made a night of it ; but what the deuce I shall say to my wife, I’m sure I do not know. She’s a very jealous woman, that wife of mine, and I’m sure she won’t believe me if I tell the truth, so I must fabricate some ingenious lie. Indeed, she’ll be the death of me if I hint a solitary word about the ball.”

Returning to the Hotel, we took a refreshing ablution, and afterwards a hearty breakfast, and then, in spite of the loss of sleep we had sustained, we made arrangements for an excursion to the ruins of Italica, which will be detailed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV.

EXCURSION TO THE RUINS OF ITALICA—THE BIRTHPLACE  
OF HERNAN CORTEZ — HOUSE OF CORRECTION FOR UN-  
FAITHFUL WIVES—A CHARACTERISTIC INCIDENT.

As soon as Pascual had made arrangements for horses, and brought them fully equipped to the door, we mounted the animals, and set out in buoyant spirits towards the site of the ancient Italica. This famous city of the Romans was founded by Scipio Africanus, and is celebrated as being the birth-place of three Emperors—Trajan, Theodosius, and Adrian! Nothing now remains but a few stones and a half-buried amphitheatre, to mark the spot where it once stood : all else has passed away for ever. Getting without the walls of the city, we found ourselves in the midst of an extensive and garden-

like plain, with rich green meadows and cultivated lands, the country being on every side entirely open and unrestricted by inclosures of any kind. It was truly a pleasing scene, and more charming still did it appear when I contrasted it with the wintry desolation of my own land, and the chill blasts which were perhaps at that moment whistling around my much-loved home. After a few miles, a range of high and verdant hills rose with an easy and graceful slope, decorated with olive groves to their very summits. Ascending one of the hills, we turned our horses' heads when we had reached a sufficient elevation, in order that we might enjoy the fine view from thence afforded, of the beautiful and sun-lit landscape reposing at our feet. The city in the distance appeared to the utmost advantage; every house, white as a snow-flake, stood in clear relief, while far above them all, loomed in sublimity and grandeur, the magnificent tower of the solemn and august cathedral. It was a transporting spectacle—this glorious temple of man, raising its head so grandly, amid so smiling and sweet a scene.

At the summit of the ridge, we entered a small village called "Castileja de la Cuesta."

Stopping at a low and insignificant building, more suitable for a shed than a human habitation, we read the following inscription on a marble tablet placed directly over the door. "Here died Hernan Cortez, a victim to disgrace and sadness, the glory of our country, and the conqueror of the Mexican empire: he expired on the 2nd of September, 1544." The house (if such it may be called) was at the period of our visit, tenanted by a poor but proud apothecary, who, according to his own account, had served as one of the chief-surgeons in the Spanish army during the French invasion. He very hospitably invited us within, and entertained us freely with fruit and wine, for which he absolutely refused to accept even the smallest remuneration. We regretted afterwards that we had offered him anything, fearing that we might have wounded his pride. Taking us into a small chamber, between ten and twelve feet square, "here," said he, "in this room Hernan Cortez died, and here likewise, this little child of mine, that you see laughing in its mother's arms, was born!" Upon our asking him if he found selling drugs a profitable business, he replied, "I might do tolerably well, if business and sick-

ness came together. At this season of the year, when people have an abundance of money, there is comparatively but little sickness, whereas, in the summer, when there is plenty of sickness, the money is quite exhausted.

Having bidden the worthy druggist good bye, we remounted our horses and proceeded on our way. And it came to pass that, as we moved onward, Pascual soliloquised thus.

“I say, Master Ronalds, what a con-fo-fo-founded humbug is fame! You need’nt think I’m in-t-t-t-oxicated. That apothecary’s wine has somehow got into my head: but I’m a sober man. I ne-ne-never was drunk fifty times in the whole course of my christian life.”

It was evident that our poor guide had imbibed too copiously of the hospitable Doctor’s wine, though I’m half inclined to suspect he had found a quantum of liquor of still greater potency in some other quarter. However, he soon recovered his senses, when Ronald administered to him a severe reprimand, and threatened not only to inform his wife, but to discharge him instantly if he should on any future occasion indulge in a similar excess. This terrified the poor fellow exceedingly, who vowed and pro-

tested in an extravagant manner that if we would only pardon him this once and promise to take him with us to Gibraltar, he would behave himself in the most decorous manner possible, and we should never have cause to regret the clemency we had manifested in his favour. Though we placed but little confidence in what he said, yet we told him we would "put him upon his good behaviour," and that if he henceforth conducted himself to our satisfaction, we would take him with us from Seville. This assurance restored our crest-fallen squire to his former self-possession, and throughout the remainder of the excursion he was as loquacious and entertaining as ever.

On reaching the village of Santi Ponce we were assailed by a throng of beggars, many of whom brought bits of polished stone and mouldy coins of copper, which they begged of us by the love of the Virgin to purchase, and thus save them from the calamity of starvation. We listened to their piteous supplications and afforded them as much relief as lay in our power. We then rode on to the amphitheatre, which is situated a short distance without the limits of the town. But little now remains of this once stupendous

structure, which seems for many years past to have served as a quarry for the supply of stone. In the year 1774 the corporation of Seville employed its materials in the making of river dykes, as well as in the construction of a royal road to Badajoz. In its present condition, it presents an exceedingly impressive and melancholy monument of its former grandeur. Its form is clearly to be distinguished, and many of its arches are still visible, though sadly broken and half covered with grass and clambering vines.

We rode into the midst of the arena, where we dismounted, leaving our horses to graze upon the herbage, while we carefully explored the various vaults and recesses of the venerable ruin. The air was warm and still : not the voice of a single bird broke with its music the unearthly silence that reigned. Where were the gladiators who had long—long ago—shed their life-blood in administering to the furious pleasure of a Roman populace? Where were the thousands of human beings who had once filled these crumbling and lonely seats? Painful, aye, solemnly painful, was the inevitable answer that forced itself upon our minds. The grave will not give up its dead ; the present will soon become the

past, and the past will never return again. That which is gone to-day, is gone for ever. The mighty future alone can unfold the dread secret of its destiny.

Returning to Seville, we made a brief halt at an old convent which had been converted into a penitentiary for the correction of depraved and dissolute women. The number here imprisoned was above one hundred, who we understood were kindly treated, though not allowed any egress beyond the bounds of the institution, until the period of their captivity should have expired. Those whom we saw were so old and ugly, that we were almost certain that the charges brought against them by their respective husbands must have been devoid of any substantial foundation.

The country through which we passed on our way back to the city, was of a remarkably fertile character, and lined with a succession of plantations and flourishing olive farms. The olives of Seville are of a superior quality, and constitute one of the chief commodities of the province. Much attention is paid to the culture of this fruit, and if the traveller's leisure will permit, he will not regret a visit to one of the neighbouring *haciendas*. In such case he



should procure, if possible, a letter of introduction to the proprietor, either from his consul or banker, which will ensure him a hospitable reception, and afford him an opportunity of seeing everything of interest in the place.

As we journeyed on, a trifling incident occurred, which very favourably disposed us towards the peasantry of Spain. A large party of field labourers, attired in scarlet jackets and sashes, were returning to their homes after the toils of the day, and were singing in unison a lively song, in token of the happiness within their hearts. The sun was now sinking behind the hills, and the stars of evening were beginning to gem the vast canopy of heaven. A soft and rich twilight gave a sweet mellowness to the features of the surrounding landscape, infusing thoughts of romance and poetry into our minds, and making everything appear to us like the scenery of a picture or a dream. As we reached the body of peasantry, they immediately separated to each side of the road, and as we passed between them, they saluted us with the beautiful expression "Vaga vel con Dios," (go you with God). A thrill of pleasure ran through my veins as I heard this

national benediction, pronounced with such deep solemnity, and proceeding like a full and majestic chorus from the lips of these humble tillers of the soil. Crossing the Guadalquivir, we entered for the last time the gates of Moorish Seville.

## CHAPTER XV.

TRIP DOWN THE GUADALQUIVIR, AND DESCRIPTION OF  
CADIZ AND THE CARNIVAL.

It was on a bright and beautiful morning that we bade farewell to Seville, and embarked on board one of the small steamers of the Guadalquivir for Cadiz. Pascual accompanied us, and seemed to be in such high spirits on the occasion, that Ronalds could not restrain himself from intimating in emphatic terms, that such unbounded merriment was altogether unbecoming in a man, who was leaving an affectionate wife and child behind him. Our garrulous valet pleaded in extenuation, that his joy did not spring so much from the circumstance of his departure, as from the precious prospect of again beholding Gibraltar, the city of his birth, and of

once more mingling with his brothers and sisters and early friends, from whom he had been separated for so many years. "I am one of those happy individuals," said he, "who always look ahead, without minding what lies behind. Now when I leave Gibraltar to return, I shall not think of it at all, but shall have all my thoughts fixed in a focus upon Seville and my darling wife. True, she scolds me occasionally, and lectures me continually, but she is, notwithstanding, a good sort of a creature, and loves me a great deal better than I deserve."

The scenery of the Guadalquivir below Seville possesses but little beauty or interest. The only feature which relieves its dull monotony, is an occasional orange grove, from the midst of which peeps a cottage, like a bird from its nest, almost concealed from view by the thickness of the clustering foliage.

For the greater part of the distance the river meanders sluggishly through a low and marshy plain, unenlivened by a single habitation, and wholly given up to the dominion of roving cattle and aquatic birds. A more dreary and disheartening prospect could scarcely be conceived. There was nothing upon which the

wearied eye could repose with pleasure—a lonely expanse seemed to stretch illimitably on either side. As we approached San Lucar, however, the dim mountains of Ronda towered up in shadowy grandeur on the left, relieving in a slight degree the dismal nakedness of the landscape: had it not been for the quenchless mirth of Pascual, which was not in the least affected by the total want of beauty in the scenery, I might perhaps have relapsed into that unenviable state so expressively termed “the blues,” but as it was, such a catastrophe would have been utterly beyond the verge of possibility. Merriment is contagious, and a solitary wag is oftentimes sufficient to keep a whole company free from misanthropy and gloom.

San Lucar is a decayed town of about sixteen thousand inhabitants, the country around which is sandy and entirely destitute of trees. It is a most forlorn and desolate place, where no sensible traveller will tarry longer than “to shake the dust from off his feet.” But from this point, more than three centuries ago, the fleet of Fernando Magallanes set sail, on the first voyage of discovery round the world, from

which ill-fated expedition only one of his vessels ever returned.

We now took leave of the Guadalquivir and sailed out into the open sea. Our steamer was extremely small, and only adapted for river navigation, in consequence of which we tossed, and rolled, and pitched in so violent a manner, after getting into the agitated waters of the Bay, that Pascual soon lost his spirits and self-possession, having become home-sick and seasick simultaneously. Ronalds and myself, who were more experienced sailors, could not but laugh at the distress of our whimsical companion, though we used every endeavour to rally and recover him from the dejected state into which he had fallen.

It was not long before we caught the first glimpse of the beautiful city of Cadiz, seeming to rise, like a Venus, from the surface of the surrounding sea. We were absolutely transported at the sight, and declared it the most enchanting we had ever beheld. So transparent was the atmosphere, that though we were still several miles distant, every building was as distinctly defined as if we had been within a stone's throw of the wharf. Our

spirits were quite alive with excitement, as Cadiz was one of those few delightful spots, to visit which we had always looked forward with the deepest anxiety and pleasure. True, it has fewer works of art, or relics of antiquity, than perhaps any other city in the Peninsula, yet I venture to say that none produces a sweeter impression upon the mind of the sentimental wanderer, or leaves at the close of his visit, a more indelible effect upon his heart. No sooner had we reached our anchorage, than our vessel was beset on all sides by a fleet of importunate boatmen, with one of whom we instantly made arrangements for transporting ourselves and baggage to the landing-pier. We were then detained for a few moments by some wily custom-house officers, who intimated very plainly, that if we would give them a mere trifle, they would absolve us from the inconvenience of an examination: we availed ourselves of the hint, and shortly made our escape from the clutches of these terrestrial sharks.

Being now within the walls of lovely Cadiz, we straightway directed our course to the Fonda de Europa, where our amusing guide—

who by the way had perfectly recovered from his fit of sea-sickness—announced us in such extravagant terms to the landlord of the hotel, that taking us for gentlemen little short of royalty in point of rank, he introduced us to the very best accommodations that his house afforded, and actually it was the best establishment of the kind we had met with in the country. Our apartment was elegantly furnished, while its windows looked out on two of the principal streets, neither of which however was more than ten or twelve feet in width. The vista down one of these, from our front balcony, was unique and beautiful.

We set out to visit our Consul, and present the letters of introduction we had brought him. The old functionary received us with cordiality, and vouchsafed in a friendly manner to do every thing in his power to render our stay agreeable. After giving us an account of his residence in Cadiz, and supplying us with such information as might be serviceable to us in our peregrinations through the city, he left us for a few minutes and then returned, bringing with him a bottle of fine sherry, which he assured us us had been in his own possession nearly thirty



years. Having refreshed ourselves with this luxury, we sallied out with the Consul, who promised to introduce us immediately to the fashionable literary club-house called the Casino. In walking through the streets, we were particularly struck with their perfect cleanliness, as well as with the neatness of the pavement and the prevailing elegance of the dwellings, which are generally much larger and higher than those of Seville, though built very much in the same style, but surmounted by small square towers or cupolas, the effect of which is harmonious and graceful in the extreme.

Upon the roofs of the houses moreover were arranged an infinite number of flower-pots and ornamental urns, which had a most pleasing appearance when seen from below. Indeed, in some cases, the flat roof of a mansion is converted into a miniature garden, luxuriant with trees and plants of the choicest kinds, and laid out in garden plots with an extraordinary degree of taste and beauty. Throughout the summer it is customary for the inhabitants of Cadiz to take their evening meal upon the tops of their houses, and even to hold their tertulias occasionally in that elevated, but most

comfortable department of their mansions. By moonlight the scene defies with its beauty the most enthusiastic attempt at description. The snowy towers rise up around like gigantic phantoms, while the moonbeams are dancing merrily upon the rippling waters of the bay, and the innumerable stars and mighty planets are shining brightly within the quiet ocean of the firmament, and shedding their exquisite radiance upon the beautiful city of the sea. Then is the time to wander through the white avenues of dreamy Cadiz, and meet with those wild adventures which can alone be encountered there.

Arriving at the Casino, we entered with the consul, and were escorted by him through every part of the spacious and handsomely furnished edifice ; and were much surprised at the sumptuousness and taste displayed in its arrangements. It was not only well supplied with reading, billiard, and refreshment rooms, but had besides a grand apartment, elegantly carpetted, hung with rich drapery, and decorated with very handsome chandeliers and mirrors. This splendid chamber serves on extraordinary occasions as a ball room, and its appearance at

such times is quite that of a fairy scene. It was our good fortune to attend one of these rare and delightful entertainments during our sojourn in the city, which extended throughout that bewitching week, styled the "carnival season:" at this time Cadiz is the most fascinating spot in the world. Every one, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, share in the general festivity; and for a few days the sorrows of life seem to have been entirely forgotten, and nought but mirth and happiness appears to prevail.

It was at this joyous period, that we attended the magnificent ball given at the Casino. A more ravishing spectacle was never beheld by human eyes! At least three hundred of the fairest girls of Cadiz were present, decked in all the charms that youth and grace and beauty can bestow. Such a galaxy of female stars could scarcely be gathered together in any other land beneath the sun. The young ladies were for the most part attired with the utmost simplicity, being generally dressed in white, and wearing, with few exceptions, no ornaments, save the chaplet of blooming flowers around their heads. There was no gaudy display—no foolish affecta-

tion of style, but elegance and taste characterized the appearance, and graceful decorum marked the manners of every lady whom we saw. No wonder that Lord Byron was so captivated with these lovely daughters of Eve.

The dancers did not confine themselves to the ball room, but likewise performed their magic evolutions in the brilliantly illumined hall below. This was quadrangular and surrounded by marble columns, while the intervening arches were hung with lamps, curiously painted in imitation of the Chinese style. No more dazzling spectacle could be conceived, than was presented by this beautiful patio as we looked down upon it from the gallery above. A fine band upon the corridor was playing a series of inspiring national airs, while the animated throng of chivalry and beauty which filled the capacious hall, was circling through the airy mazes of the voluptuous waltz.

On the evening preceding the commencement of the carnival, we visited one of the principal theatres, in company with the consul, who assured us that something unusual would certainly take place, expressive of the general hilarity produced by the proximity of the coming

festival. We were not disappointed in our anticipations. The boxes and galleries were filled with beautiful women, and the pit with Spanish gentlemen, each of whom was dressed with the same elegance and care, as if for a fashionable ball. A more radiant scene of life and beauty, it would be difficult to imagine. The ladies in their gay shawls and lace mantillas, looked extremely fascinating, and wielded with such captivating grace their animated fans, that we were completely in raptures with the ease and poetry of their manner. Among them was one, who was pointed out to us as the belle of Cadiz, and well indeed did she deserve so distinguished a title. To say that she was beautiful is nothing,—she was unspeakably lovely—aye, fairer than the fairest image of a poet's dream! She was only fifteen—half child—half woman, but without exception the most exquisite embodiment of female charms, that ever dawned upon my vision. I lack words and power to paint her as she was; but with her soft blue eyes, she gladdens Cadiz still, and sheds a sunshine on every happy heart within her sphere. Go then, fond reader, and gaze upon her celestial countenance yourself;

listen to the sweet melody of her voice, and bask in the splendour of her witching smile. Thenceforth, the marble Venus of Florence will be forgotten, and you will realize, with loftier conceptions of truth and beauty, that nature in her unrestrained workings, soars far beyond the highest aspirations of art.

When the curtain at length rose, the excitement of the audience greatly increased. No sooner had the actors taken their positions upon the stage, than they were completely inundated with beans and confectionery, from every part of the house. Expecting an attack of this kind, they were not at all disconcerted, but continued the amusing farce to its termination, notwithstanding the storm of sugar-plums, by which they were vigorously and unceasingly assailed.

The sport was exceedingly contagious, and I am certain that for the time being, there was not a single person in the room, whose gravity had successfully resisted the nerve-restoring influence of laughter and mirth. It seemed as if grief had taken a temporary departure from the earth; but no where, is there more actual misery and sorrow among men, and more painful solicitude and anxiety among women, than within

the lofty sea walls of this gem-city of the ocean.

Cadiz, during the carnival, is the most romantic spot imaginable. You can scarcely believe that everything around you is real, and that you are not wandering through the shadowy mazes of some fantastic dream ; no rumbling of carriages, nor trampling of horses, resounds through the narrow streets, and the only sounds which break upon the ear, are the varying and mirthful tones of the human voice, and the low dashing of the sea against the rocky walls. Though Cadiz boasts an antiquity greater than Rome, yet so far from its being a city of ancient ruins and crumbling monuments, no city freshly sprung up amid the wilds of America, could present a newer and brighter appearance. Being built upon the extremity of a little peninsula, it is almost entirely encompassed by water, and is connected with the main-land by a narrow isthmus, only sufficiently wide to admit of a single road. It was founded by the Phœnicians, eleven hundred years before Christ, and is consequently the most venerable city in Europe. Its population, which not long since reached one hundred thousand, has now dwindled to nearly half that number, owing

to emigration and the loss of the transatlantic possessions of Spain. Its commerce is now restricted to a limited traffic in sherry wines, which last resource is gradually passing out of its hands. It has sustained many violent sieges, through several of which it has not passed unscathed, though on every occasion of this nature, its patriotic defenders have manifested the most determined energy and valour. At present, it is a city wholly given up to the ravages of Cupid and the blandishments of love. Life here is but a visionary slumber, a spot which Venus in her exile seems to have selected, as the sweetest birthplace for her charming and resistless daughters.

The city being lighted with gas, and illumined in addition, throughout the carnival, by the matchless radiance of the moon, presented the loveliest effect that can possibly be conceived. The clean and nicely swept streets were thronged with masqueraders of both sexes, and of all classes, so effectually disguised however by their grotesque costumes and squeaking voices, that recognition even of one's most familiar acquaintances, was rendered a matter of utter impossibility. Some were dressed in garments of snowy



white, and looked like phantoms as they glided quickly by. Others wore dominoes, or loose gowns of black or blue, affording perfect concealment to their persons, while their faces were secured from discovery by means of frightful-visaged masks, with powdered wigs of preposterous size. At least nine persons out of ten, whom we encountered in the streets were in disguise. Sometimes we would meet a party of men in frocks, and then again a troop of laughing girls tripped along in pantaloons. Many of the chirping damsels accosted us, and occasionally mentioned circumstances of such a character, as aroused our curiosity in the highest degree. It was in vain for us to enter into surmises, in regard to the identity or character of the individual who addressed us. All was shrouded in impenetrable mystery, and we were unable to obtain the slightest clue respecting any individual whose conversation and manner had particularly interested us.

Secure in their disguises, ladies of noble rank, and of irreproachable character, frequent the masked balls of Cadiz on public occasions, and that too, without the slightest danger of disagreeable scrutiny or insult. As it is not customary