

like an Eden, by an eternal wall of towering mountains, constituted a matchless scene of beauty, that could not fail to stamp itself indelibly upon the memory of the beholder.

One of my companions was a very strange and remarkable young man, whose conversation and reckless character excited my interest in the highest degree. His name was Arnaldo, and he was a native of Granada. His parents were both dead: his father, who was of noble extraction, had left him in possession of a considerable fortune. This, however, by a course of dissipation and extravagance he had well nigh exhausted, though sufficient was still left him to satisfy every rational desire of the present. I could not but admire as well as pity him, notwithstanding the many faults and artificial vices that surrounded him, and which were rapidly drawing both his body and soul into the dark vortex of resistless ruin. He was by nature magnanimous and noble, generous, affectionate, kind, and good, but his faculties had from childhood been undisciplined and unchecked, and had grown to their maturity in consequence, tangled and confused, like the vine-bound bushes of a wild and unproductive thicket.

His health was extremely delicate, an evident result of the free and unrestrained life he had led. Upon my asking him why he did not practise more prudence, he answered me, as nearly as I can remember, as follows :—

“ You ask me why I am not more cautious and attentive to the requirements of health ? My dear friend, I assure you that it would make but little difference—my fate is already decided. The physicians have warned me to be exceedingly prudent, but I should only gain a few anxious and tedious months by a faithful compliance with their well-meant but useless advice. They have told me that my lungs are seriously diseased, and that it will not be possible for me in any case to live for more than two years longer, and that if I am not very careful, I must die before half of that period shall have expired. So you will perceive that it is only a matter of time, and what signifies it to me whether my death takes place this year or the next ? I do not fear to die ! on the contrary, I feel ready at any moment to take my departure from this world. I have drunk the cup of pleasure to the very dregs, and it seems as if I had exhausted the sources of every human enjoyment. I believe that ennui would

drive me to suicide or madness, if I were obliged to amuse my wretched life for many years to come. I am admitted to the best society, and have still as much money as I desire, yet nothing gives me any satisfaction or joy. I am convinced that it will be better for me, and better for my friends, when all is over, and my sufferings are ended for ever! If there is another state of existence, I am prepared to meet it; if there is not, then my state will only be the same as before I was born, and my condition far preferable to the gloom and misery of the present. Even if I could extend my life by a wish, that wish would never be breathed!"

At the expiration of an hour we entered the wretched and poverty-stricken town of Santa Fé. This place, it will be remembered, was founded by Ferdinand and Isabella during the protracted and arduous contest which they waged against the Moors, and here, throughout the memorable siege which terminated in the conquest of Granada, the Spanish court was established. From this spot, moreover, Columbus was despatched on the gigantic mission of discovering the new world.

As we passed through the deserted streets,

several damsels whom curiosity had attracted to the balconies, waved their handkerchiefs in compliment to Arnaldo, whom they recognized, and who immediately returned the salute by taking off his hat and gracefully bowing to them from his saddle.

As the present town of Santa Fé is entirely devoid of attractions, save those of historical association, we tarried but a few moments, and then sallied forth from the gates on our return to the city. With the speed of a bird we glided over the enchanting Vega, and in an extremely short time re-entered the gates of Granada. Seeking the cool and delicious groves of the Alhambra, we there regaled ourselves upon a feast of ripe and luscious strawberries, and wiled away several hours in pleasant conversation and indolent repose. During the evening an incident occurred which, though of a trifling nature in itself, admirably illustrates one of the peculiarities of the Spanish character. We repaired to a certain *café* which had been our usual resort for several evenings previous. If it can possibly be avoided, a true Spaniard will never allow a stranger to settle a bill in his presence. He not only considers it his duty, but he moreover

insists upon the privilege of paying all charges himself. This, however, no person of just feelings will long allow. On the present occasion Ronalds and myself peremptorily refused to enter the place until it was perfectly understood that we alone were to meet every expense. After having finished our ices and other refreshments, we called for the bill, but to our infinite astonishment the waiter assured us that it was already paid. Ronalds was at first highly indignant, but our mortification considerably subsided and our surprise increased, when every gentleman of our party in turn, declared himself perfectly innocent of having cancelled the debt. The obligation had been discharged by some unknown person, a circumstance which is by no means novel or uncommon in Spain.

Coming from the café, we strolled in the bright starlight, through the town, and finally walked out upon the most beautiful Alameda, called *el Salon*. This is truly a delicious as well as magnificent avenue, completely embowered with overhanging branches, and skirted on either side with rosy hedges, luxuriant gardens, and the rippling streams of the Xenil and Darro, whose playful waters meet and mingle a

short distance below. At each end of the promenade is a fine fountain, which seems never to tire of throwing its shining spray among the foliage of the tall and handsome trees. Here, on tranquil evenings, are gathered the sentimental loves and lovers of the city, and here beneath the spreading boughs of the stately elms, many a soft word is spoken and many a solemn vow revealed. The perfumes of the sleeping flowers are floating in the air—the mellow sound of gushing waters is heard, and at intervals the sweet voice of the nightingale warbles forth its entrancing melody from amid the darkness of the clustering leaves.

In the morning we visited the Hospital of the Insane. This useful and philanthropic institution owes its origin to the charitable enterprise of Ferdinand and Isabella, and was one of the first asylums of the kind that was ever established. The edifice itself is a massive structure of stone, and well merits attention for the elegance and grandeur of its architecture. The lunatics of a furious and dangerous character are confined in small cells, some of them being secured with heavy chains. Those of harmless dispositions were allowed to associate together,

though the sexes of course were kept apart. We conversed freely with these pitiable beings, and were not a little entertained with some of the ludicrous remarks which they made to us. One of the patients, an elderly gentleman of about sixty, and with a very comical expression of countenance, told us that he liked his present quarters very well; but that the society was most intolerable, as his companions were no better than a pack of fools! This old fellow, we were assured, had formerly been a distinguished general in the Spanish service, and had been confined in the institution for several years. His principal amusement consisted in drilling and marshalling his fellows, who, as a general rule, paid so little attention to his commands, that on certain occasions he would break forth into strong denunciation of his stubborn and incorrigible troops, at the same time threatening them with discharge and the severest punishments.

The grounds of the institution were tastefully laid out, and indeed the entire arrangements were admirably adapted to promote the comfort and pleasure of the patients, and tended to impress us with new feelings of admiration towards

the Spanish race, who are ever kind and humane to such as are afflicted, and however fond they may be of the savage ferocity of the bull-fight, yet it is an excellent and praiseworthy trait in their character, that they never scoff at human suffering in any form!

In concluding this brief and imperfect sketch of Granada, we cannot refrain from recording a little personal incident, which seems to us to illustrate, in a forcible manner, the generous hospitality of the Andalusian Spaniards. Upon our leaving Madrid, a friend of ours had procured for us an introductory letter from a lady with whom we were totally unacquainted, addressed to her children who resided in Granada. Being reluctant, under these circumstances, to trespass upon the kindness of the family, we had concluded not to deliver the letter with which we had been so generously honoured. Imagine therefore our inexpressible surprise, when upon returning one day to the hotel, our host Velasquez told us that in our absence, the Senhoras C—— had called in their carriage, and had left word that they would be happy to welcome us at their house. Who after this, can have the effrontery to say that the hospitality of the



Spaniards consists in mere words and signifies nothing? On the contrary, I have always found them more sincere than any people among whom I have yet been thrown.

Calling without delay upon the ladies, we were received with the utmost cordiality and kindness. One of the daughters had an extremely sweet and fascinating expression of countenance, while her easy and graceful manners added a perfect charm to her appearance.

My boon companion Ronalds took the diligence one morning for Madrid, leaving me alone in Granada—alone, I may almost say, in the midst of Paradise! So gloomy were my feelings after the departure of my friend, that I determined no longer to remain in a place where every object of interest and of beauty only served to increase the sentiment of isolation and solitude that overpowered me.

## CHAPTER XX.

DEPARTURE FROM GRANADA, AND JOURNEY BY SEA TO VALENCIA—SCENES IN THE ROMANTIC CITY OF THE CID, AND JOURNEY FROM THENCE TO BARCELONA—THE FESTIVAL OF "CORPUS CHRISTI," AND THE AUTHOR'S FAREWELL TO SPAIN AND THE READER.

It was at midnight that I took my final departure from Granada. The moon was riding in lonely splendour through the silent heavens, and the mountain tops were radiant with the calm and mystic light. A rustling breeze stirred the dewy foliage, while the trembling strains of the nightingale, rising and falling in tones of exquisite melody, broke occasionally upon the ear : rapidly we rolled on, passing over the voluptuous plain, and penetrating the rugged defiles of the hills. At

length we reached the flourishing town of Loja, where we halted to partake of a hasty breakfast. In former times, this was a stronghold of immense importance, which bravely sustained itself against many severe sieges, but which was eventually compelled to yield to the chivalrous Ferdinand, who took possession of it in the year 1488.

Towards sunset we approached Malaga, which, as beheld from the mountain heights over which we were continually winding in easy curves, presented an exceedingly beautiful and impressive scene. Descending into the city, we sought at once the comfortable quarters of the Alameda hotel. The road over which we had journeyed had been recently beset with banditti, on which account our diligence had been accompanied throughout the entire route by an escort of six cavalry guards: only three evenings previous a robbery had taken place, and through the ill-timed and foolish resistance of one of the passengers, several of the party had been severely wounded, in addition to being rifled of their money, watches, and other valuables. Two men were afterwards shot on suspicion of having been connected with

the brigands, though the proofs brought against them were so slight, that their guilt in the opinion of many was a matter of considerable doubt.

On the following afternoon I embarked on board one of the Spanish coast steamers for Valencia ; and early the next morning our vessel dropped anchor in the spacious and picturesque Bay of Almeria. As soon as breakfast was over, I went ashore with some gentlemen, whose acquaintance I had made during the previous evening, and we took a delightful ramble together through the noiseless streets and pleasant environs of the town. The houses generally were low, and built very much like those at Tangiers, while the complexions of those of the inhabitants whom we saw, were quite as brown as those of the Barbary Moors. Under the Romans, Almeria was a place of great importance and of extensive commerce with the east. Falling into the hands of the Moors, it degenerated into a city of free-booters and pirates, who swept the coast with their galleys, and enriched themselves with the spoils and plunder of the sea. According to an Arabian bard, the province of Almeria was formerly "a land,

where if thou walkest, the stones are pearls, the dust, gold, and the gardens, paradise." Alas! that its glory should so sadly have departed, leaving so poor and insignificant a wreck behind. Its commerce is confined chiefly at present to the product of its lead mines, which are said to be inexhaustible, and if properly worked, could not fail to yield an enormous revenue. It really seems as if the people were poor, because the country is rich. There is a total lack of industry and enterprise, without which the most fertile lands soon become as profitless as the sands of the desert. In the rear of this withered city rises a steep hill, upon the summit of which stands the melancholy ruin of an old Moorish castle, while up and down the precipitous and rocky heights, extends the line of ancient walls, the effect of which, as seen from the water, adds much to the romantic beauty of the landscape.

Towards evening our steamer got once more under weigh, and calmly and majestically we glided over the quiet waters of the Mediterranean, while the gigantic hills of the rock-bound coast stood in magnificent relief upon our left, their summits refulgent with the hues

of the dying day. At day-break we entered the celebrated harbour of Cartagena.

A more superb port than this was never created by nature, or appropriated by man. It is nearly circular in form, and is surrounded with precipitous mountains, many of whose rocky peaks are crested with ruins and ancient fortifications, which in olden times maintained a ceaseless watch over the still waters below. The entrance to this wonderful harbour is extremely narrow; outside of it is a small island, which acts as an admirable breakwater against the raging billows of the sea. It is thus completely land-locked. Here a thousand ships might safely ride, sheltered alike from angry waves and boisterous winds. Cartagena as it now exists, contains only thirty thousand inhabitants, yet even in its present sad decay, it exhibits indubitable proofs of its former prosperity and power. Its quays, defences, parade-grounds and marine edifices, are on a scale of unrivalled grandeur, while the stupendous hospitals, barracks, rope-walks, and foundries, stand like so many proud monuments of departed industry and enterprise. In the vicinity of Cartagena, are valu-

able silver mines, which were discovered a few years since, and are now yielding a large return to the labour and skill of those who are engaged in mining them. Several companies have been formed, and smelting furnaces established, and there is a strong probability that further discoveries will soon be made, far transcending in richness the most flattering results which have hitherto been attained. The hills of Spain abound in precious ores and treasures of untold wealth, which only need the application of perseverance and ingenuity, to release them from their deep and hidden cells.

At sunset we sailed slowly out of the fine harbour, and on the following morning were again at anchor within a stone's throw of the strangely situated town of Alicante. This peculiar city lies at the base of a steep, dreary, and desolate hill, the summit of which is crowned with a venerable castle. It is encompassed with heavy walls and fortifications, which give the place an impregnable aspect as beheld from the sea. In the hands of the English, it might, indeed, be converted into a second Gibraltar, though under present circumstances it could

be taken without scarcely a show of resistance.

Leaving Alicante in the afternoon, we reached the anchorage of Valencia at an early hour on the ensuing day. My voyage was now ended, and it was with a feeling of real satisfaction and expectant pleasure, that I jumped into the little boat that was to convey me to the shore. Upon the beach glittered the white houses of the picturesque town of Grao, interspersed with gardens and groups of tufted palms. Here I took my place in a species of covered cart called a *tartana*, and rode through a continuous avenue of trees to the city. As the distance thither was not less than two miles, every bone in my body seemed quite dislocated, by the time this novel journey, in a vehicle without springs, was completed.

The first view of Valencia burst upon me like the wondrous city of a dream. It is encircled with massive walls, decorated with turrets and towers, and supplied with eight stupendous gateways, elaborately carved and surmounted with battlements of extraordinary solidity and strength. Along the base of the walls on the northern side is the bed of the river



Turia, which, though perfectly dry for the greater portion of the year, is sometimes filled to overflowing with a furious and devastating torrent, caused by severe rains and the accumulated streams of the adjacent mountains. It is therefore crossed by five substantial and handsome bridges of stone, which add not a little to the romantic effect of the well-shaded and delightful environs of the city. Entering one of the gates, I was taken at once, through narrow and gloomy streets, flanked with lofty edifices and immense houses, to the excellent "Fonda del Cid," which lies in the heart of the town and is located within a few steps of the noble cathedral. Here I procured a comfortable room and secured a capital dinner, including numerous vegetables and a choice variety of fruit. The strawberries particularly were very delicious, and superior in flavour to any I had eaten before.

Shortly after my arrival, I was so fortunate as to make the acquaintance of a young Irishman, with whom I was so much pleased, that we became henceforth inseparable companions. He had resided several years in Spain, and was now engaged in some commercial transactions

at Barcelona. He was a generous, cordial, loquacious, and merry fellow—in a word, a fair representative of the better part of his nation. He was much given to innocent exaggeration and story telling, (as is the case with the majority of his countrymen) though he was not on that account any the less agreeable or entertaining. On the contrary, I liked him all the better for his unrestrained frankness, which gave assurance of a kindly nature, united to a warm and uncorrupted heart. Being intimately acquainted with the city, its objects of interest, and places of amusement, he generously offered to be my *cicerone*, on condition that I would agree to accompany him to Barcelona in the ensuing week. To this I joyfully consented, and we forthwith began our excursions through the town.

Firstly, we ascended the tower of the Cathedral, from the summit of which a variegated and magnificent panorama of nature—including the sea—the mountains, and the garden-dotted plain, stretches in sublimity and beauty before the ravished eye. The country presents the most cheerful and rich effect imaginable, for of all the provinces of Spain, this, though one of the small-

est, is at least equal in luxuriance and fertility to any other. Its climate moreover is peculiarly soft and genial—like that of a perpetual spring. During the winter, frosts are seldom experienced, while throughout the summer, the noontide heats are tempered by refreshing breezes from the sea. The neighbouring mountains which wind around in a semicircular curve from shore to shore, abound in minerals and fine forests, within whose shady retreats, innumerable varieties of rare plants and beautiful flowers are found. The botanist will here revel in a succession of constant delights. Flora herself will crown him with fragrant garlands, and strew his pathway with buds and blossoms of every hue. She will smile kindly upon his labours, and intoxicate his senses with the sweetest perfume.

The extensive Vega is under the highest cultivation. Not a square inch is neglected or unemployed. No system of irrigation could be more perfect or beneficial than the one which is here adopted, and which was inherited as an invaluable legacy from the Moors. The entire plain is intersected with an infinite number of artificial canals communicating with each

other, and supplied with water from a capacious reservoir above. At a given signal, some of the canals are closed by means of small dams, while others are at the same time opened, in order to maintain an equal distribution of the water, which like the blood in the human system, is kept in constant circulation. So remarkable is the fertility of the soil thus carefully attended to, that four and five crops are said to be annually produced from the same ground. The chief staple is rice, which, variously prepared, constitutes in Valencia one of the principal articles of food. During certain periods of the year, the rice swamps are extremely unwholesome, and those who live in their immediate vicinity are peculiarly subject to severe attacks of intermittent fevers. The labourers are proverbially short-lived, and are said very rarely to attain the age of sixty years.

Rambling through the city, we visited many public edifices and splendid structures, which though interesting enough to the actual beholder, would, we are quite certain, prove but a scanty source of interest for an indulgent reader: we shall not therefore make any attempt to describe them. The *presidio*, or penitentiary, gave us

undoubtedly more satisfaction than any other institution we visited. Here we beheld nearly a thousand prisoners, under the most admirable system of discipline, and severally engaged in every branch of human industry. I could scarcely realize that I was within the walls of a prison, so like an immense and enterprising factory was the general aspect of the interior, and so happy and contented seemed the busy operatives in their various employments. They are each allotted a fixed amount of labour to perform, beyond which, the profit of their workmanship is their own. This is indisputably an excellent arrangement, and tends in a great measure to improve the morals, and ensure the future good conduct of the unfortunate captives. Want of regular occupation is, in every country, the most prolific source of crime, while encouraged industry, on the contrary, exercises a potent influence in restraining the growth of those social vices which spring from minds corrupted and faculties misemployed.

We were much gratified with our peep at the silk factories of Valencia. The black silk which is here made for mantillas, is unsurpassed in texture and quality by any which is elsewhere

manufactured. It is extremely fine and strong, and is spun with the utmost caution and skill. The establishments are large and well-ventilated, while the operatives, who are mostly females, present a vivid contrast in their appearance to the sallow-complexioned and sharp-featured tobacco girls of Seville, showing conclusively the superior advantages of unrestricted sunshine and fresh air. The damsels generally had a healthy look, while some of them possessed features of exquisite regularity and beauty. In one large hall that we entered, forty or fifty of the girls were employed in sorting cocoons. They seemed in joyous spirits, and notwithstanding the disturbance created by our approach, they continued their easy labours, singing in chorus a sweet and expressive national song.

Valencia is a quaint and peculiar city. There is an air of aristocratical grandeur and legendary gloom about its lofty buildings and tortuous streets, that calls up a thousand romantic associations in the mind. From time immemorial it has been noted for the frequency of its murders and assassinations, though since the late establishment of a vigilant night police, these horrible crimes have been comparatively of rare

occurrence. The celebrated Cæsar Borgia was a Valencian, as were most of his chosen bravos and secret attendants. The stranger, however, need not give himself any uneasiness, or indulge in any useless apprehensions. He may reasonably assure himself that he is actually as safe as he would be in the city of London. No Spaniard will seek his life without a cause—murders are seldom committed from mercenary motives. Jealousy and sudden passion are the usual causes, and it is but seldom indeed that a Valencian stoops so low as to murder for mere money alone, and even when he does, you may be certain that it was desperation, and not avarice, which actuated him.

One day my Irish friend insisted on taking me to a cock fight. This is a favourite pastime with the Spaniards, but one which had not previously fallen under my observation. Upon approaching the building within which the peculiar exhibition was to take place, the shrill and vociferous notes of numerous chanticleers assailed our ears like the sounding clarions of an impending battle. Inspired with military ardour we entered the place, our curiosity being now highly aroused to witness the sanguinary fray.

The fighting arena was not more than ten or twelve feet in diameter, and was surrounded with a wooden rim like that of a bowl, two feet or more in height. Above this, rose in regular gradations, a series of circular seats, gradually increasing their circumference as they neared the line of the boxes, which were separated from the pit by a low, but ornamental, railing of wood. When we entered the furious combat had already commenced. Two fine cocks occupied the arena, one of whom was white and the other perfectly black. So greatly exhausted was the former, that bets of five to one were running against him. The black champion, on the contrary, appeared quite fresh, and at intervals crowed triumphantly as if certain of victory. But I remembered that the battle was not always to the strong, and the result in this instance conclusively proved to me that the tide of circumstances may be changed even at the last moment, and the chaplet of laurel fall upon the head of him by whom it was least expected. The defeat of the white bird was considered quite certain by both parties, when suddenly gathering himself up for a moment as if for a final spring, he thrust his spurs with such fatal energy into



the breast of his adversary, that he laid him instantly dead at his feet! The feeble conqueror however, did not long enjoy his triumph; tottering across the miniature field of battle, he uttered a single chirp—then laid himself down also and died! The amusement, it must be confessed, is a brutal one, and not calculated to improve the morals of the beholders. Yet as it is the fate of nine of these birds out of ten to meet with an unnatural end, it matters but little to them whether their heads are twisted off by the merciless cook, or whether they meet with their death in a civil warfare with each other amid the applause and uproar of a gaping and betting crowd—if anything, more useless to humanity than the feathered gladiators themselves.

On the next afternoon we bade farewell to “beautiful Valencia,” and rolled out of the city in the diligence for Barcelona. Our route lay along the Mediterranean, affording us at times magnificent glimpses of the sea. Shortly after leaving Valencia, we passed the splendid convent of San Miguel, formerly one of the richest and most powerful in Spain: now like all other establishments of the kind, it is in a dilapidated and impoverished condition. Continuing our

journey without interruption throughout the night, we reached Vinaroz about noon on the ensuing day. Proceeding from hence, we crossed the Cenia and entered the extensive and populous province of Catalonia. The road from the frontier to Amposta has a bad name, and has been the scene of many a fearful crime. Crossing the Ebro, our road lay over a dreary plain, unenlivened by a solitary habitation: at length we plunged into a wild and rocky gorge, which carried us again rapidly to the shore of the sea.

Now the scenery became more pleasing, while vineyards and fig and olive groves, margined the road on either side. In the evening we approached the ancient city of Tarragona, which being perched upon a precipitous height, and flanked with double tiers of fortifications and heavy walls, presented in the soft light of the stars, a picture of grandeur and sublimity that I shall never forget. Gazing upon it, I experienced a feeling of deep awe, as I thought of the many terrible and wonderful scenes through which it had passed. It was founded by the Phœnicians, and was at one time the winter residence of the Roman Prætor. It was afterwards totally destroyed by the Moors under Tarif, and re-