

of it. One gets gradually over his refined tastes and epicurean prejudices, however, and perhaps eventually becomes fond of the very dish which he had at first regarded with the utmost aversion. It is as strange as true, that those things we dislike the most on our first experience of them, often become in the course of time the most relished and esteemed by us. Where is the man to whom the first puff of a cigar was agreeable? and where is the inveterate consumer of the weed who could at once abandon its use without a single thought of regret? Then do not wonder, kind reader, that any Spanish dish, which seems almost an insult to your uncultivated taste, should be eaten with such gusto by the natives of the country, as well as by foreigners whose longer residence and greater appetites have given them a power of appreciation superior to your own.

Upon my entry into Spain, the oil and garlic so freely made use of by the national cooks, nearly forced me into starvation, but by degree my fastidiousness vanished, and I became even bold enough, before a fortnight had expired, to taste, without dissatisfaction, the celebrated "*olla podrida*," so universally admired in every

province of the Peninsula. This is a sublime compound, in the preparation of which all the ingenuity and genius of a Spanish cook are brought into requisition ;—his reputation is staked upon this die, and upon it is based whatever claims he may entertain of immortality. Its ingredients are multifarious, and the mode of mixing them elaborate and difficult. Two earthenware pots are generally used, though one is sometimes made to answer the purpose. In the former case, the different meats, such as a chicken, a slice of beef, and a piece of bacon, are put together into one of the vessels and boiled for a short time over the fire ; they are then allowed to simmer for several hours. In the other pot or pan the various vegetables are collected. These consist of beets, carrots, beans, peas, onions, celery, garlic, lettuces, and long pepper ; these are likewise permitted to simmer for four or five hours. Finally, the savoury contents of both utensils are emptied into an enormous dish, the meat being placed in the centre and the vegetables built up around like the wall of a city. It is then ready to be placed upon the table, and worthy of being devoured by monarchs. On the present occasion, how-

ever, two humble adventurers alone brought their appetites to bear upon the smoking and luxurious mass, while the fair Teresina, who stood in silence near the door, smiled incessantly at the fierce ardour with which we attacked and vanquished the national dish before us. The vegetable wall gave way before our terrific charge, and the wounded beef and lacerated bacon, fell in huge slices amid the awful ruins.

As soon as we had breakfasted in the morning, we enjoined Teresina to secure for us the services of a guide capable of escorting us through the intricate windings of the city, and pointing out to us the principal objects of interest within its limits. The damsel, having promised to fulfil our commands to the very letter, soon returned to our apartment in company with a handsome young man, whom she modestly introduced to us by the name of Carlos Virgo. The manner in which she performed this delicate piece of courtesy, the downcast expression of her eyes, the rosy colour of her cheeks, and the faltering accents of her voice, assured us beyond a doubt that the noble-looking youth she had brought into our presence was, in reality, the possessor of her affections and her

heart. We could scarcely suppress a slight feeling at the discovery, though we were not surprised that one of so majestic a bearing, of such elegant features, and gentle deportment, should have succeeded in rendering himself agreeable to the damsel. Carlos told us afterwards, in the confiding simplicity of his nature, the whole history of the affair, and concluded by giving us to understand that the lovely Teresina was to become his bride in the course of a few months. Happy Carlos!

Nothing can be more labyrinthine than the streets of Toledo. They are exceedingly narrow, tortuous, steep, and precipitous. The city is purposely constructed in this quaint and curious manner, both for the sake of coolness and security. The houses are of the most gigantic height, and of extremely solid architecture, while nearly every one of them has the appearance of having been erected centuries ago! A stern air of reserve and mystery seems to hang over them, and you experience a longing curiosity to become acquainted with their strange occupants, and to obtain an insight into the secret characters of their hidden life. Though you are aware that thousands of human beings are living and breathing

around you, yet it is only at intervals that you encounter a solitary individual. An intense and irrefragible silence envelopes the city like a spell. As you walk, the echo of your own footsteps is the only sound which meets your ear. The stillness of a sepulchre could not be more appalling. It seemed to us that a cemetery of the dead could not be more dismally quiet than this *cemetery of the living*.

The aspect of the place did not at all suit the temperament of my friend Ronalds, who affirmed that the sooner we got out of it the better, for that he was already seriously threatened with an attack of the blue devils. Our guide Carlos, however, appeared to regard matters in a different light. To him Toledo was the paradise of earth—an Eden, of which Teresina was the Eve. He declared, in a burst of patriotic enthusiasm, that there was no spot like it in Spain, and that Spain was the garden of the world! “The people of Toledo,” said he, “are more intelligent, more virtuous, and speak the Spanish language with more correctness, than the inhabitants of any other city in the entire kingdom. I love Toledo beyond all other places in the universe, and could not be induced to leave it for any

earthly consideration. I thank Heaven that I was born within the circle of its walls, and trust that when I die my bones may slumber undisturbed within its 'Sacred Field.'"

Arriving at the Alcazar, we entered the splendid ruins of this ancient fortress and palace. We were at once struck with admiration at its stupendous size and superb architecture. Though rebuilt and repaired by Charles V. in the sixteenth century, it was completely demolished in the late war of succession by the Portuguese, who set fire to it, and riddled it from "turret to foundation stone." The inner *patio* or court-yard is surrounded with marble pillars and broken arches, portions of staircases, and dilapidated galleries, but gives one, even in its present desolation, a grand conception of the beauty and magnificence which must once have reigned within its deserted halls. We ascended to the very highest points, and even there found moss and grasses growing beneath our feet. The view afforded us was transcendent. On one side we looked down upon the Tagus and the wild country beyond, while on the opposite side the entire city of Toledo, with its crowded mass of red-tiled houses, and its sublime cathedral

towering in indescribable grandeur above the forest of ordinary edifices, was all included within the scope of our vision. Carlos pointed out to us, with an evident feeling of pride, the most wonderful buildings of the city, and descanted at large upon the sieges through which they had passed, and the particular history which belonged to each of them. Everything relating to the Toledo of the present, or of the past, was as familiar to him as the alphabet. Every house was known to him, as well as every wild tale which tradition had associated with its origin. Nothing escaped his observation, and nothing did he fail to relate which he thought in any way calculated to entertain and interest us, or to redound to the credit of the venerable city, whose child and eulogizer he was so proud to be. Any praise you bestowed upon the marvels of Toledo, he appeared to regard as a compliment to himself, while a single word of disparagement he would have considered almost like a personal insult!

From the Alcazar we proceeded to the Cathedral, which, next to that of Seville, is considered the finest in Spain. It is built in the gothic style, though externally it possesses but

feeble claims to either symmetry or beauty. It is of huge and overwhelming size, and gives one the idea of a vast work of nature, rather than the creation of human art. The first stone of the present edifice was laid by St. Ferdinand, and the completion of the cathedral took place in the year 1492. Though externally its appearance is so cold and forbidding, yet its interior is radiant with splendour and beauty. The gothic windows contain some admirably stained glass, with designs of a scriptural character. The naves are five in number, while the central one, which is the most lofty, rises to the height of one hundred and sixty feet. The length of the edifice within is four hundred and four feet, and its breadth two hundred and four. The chapels are numerous and richly adorned with paintings and old marble tombs, some of which are sculptured in a highly beautiful and elaborate manner. Among the relics which are shown, is an image of the Holy Virgin, made of black wood, elegantly carved. This is placed upon a glittering throne of silver, and surmounted with a gilt canopy, sustained by a group of pillars. Upon her head is a crown, composed of precious stones, with a diamond

cross in front, while upon grand occasions she is gorgeously attired in garments of brocade, profusely ornamented with pearls and jewels of various kinds. But our space will not allow us to enter much into detail. The history, and a full description of the wonders of the cathedral of Toledo would alone be sufficient for several volumes. It is one of the most august edifices that religion ever reared, and for many a coming century will it stand, bidding defiance to the withering blasts of time, and teaching to the children of the present day the lessons of ages which have vanished like meteors for ever !

Continuing our walk, through a series of narrow lanes, we at length entered the *Juderia*, or former Jews' quarter of the town. Here we found, in a state of partial preservation, two very old and remarkable synagogues. Their appearance within only gave us a melancholy proof of their former splendour. Time has erased most of the finer work and architectural embroidery, yet the numerous pillars and Moorish horse-shoe arches which still remain, have a most peculiar charm in the eyes of the stranger. The Moorish-gothic and Hebrew styles are here

seen blended together, the united effect of which is incongruous and striking in the extreme. At present there are no Jews, acknowledging themselves as such, in Spain. A ferocious war of extermination was carried on against them in the fifteenth century, by Isabella, which terminated in their complete expulsion from the country. Being thus banished from the land, they sought refuge upon the shores of Morocco, where they now constitute a large population, though they are held in the utmost contempt by the Moors. In Spain the word Jew is a term of intense reproach, and if applied to a Spaniard, conveys to him a much deeper sense of insult than if you called him a beast.

The Jews are regarded as the scum of creation—the stagnant dregs of an originally inferior and miserable people. No charity whatever is extended towards them, even by those who profess philanthropy as their ruling motive. They are scarcely considered as within the pale of humanity, and are denied the possession of a single virtue, or redeeming quality. However great may be their faults and imperfections, however much they may have degenerated from their primitive condition, yet it must be con-

fessed that they are a people, even in their vicious barbarity, that will always eminently deserve our compassion and sympathy.

During the morning we visited several interesting churches, hospitals, and convents, which, afforded us much satisfaction ; and in the afternoon walked out to the "Fabrica de las armas," the celebrated sword manufactory. This establishment is situated on the banks of the Tagus, at a distance of nearly two miles from the city, and was at the period of our visit in the full tide of operation. The weapons here made are, it is well-known, of extraordinary character, and are particularly remarkable for their elasticity and exquisite temper. Some specimens possess the former quality in so astonishing a degree, that they may be coiled up and packed in an exceedingly small compass, without experiencing any perceptible injury from the contortion, and so extremely hard are their points, that they may be powerfully dashed against a stone wall with impunity. The Toledo blades have had a wonderful fame from time immemorial, and I do not believe that those which are now constructed at the manufactory, are at all inferior to any which have

been made in past years. Great care is taken in tempering the metal, for which the waters of the Tagus are supposed to possess peculiar virtues. The steel passes through an infinite number of gradual transitions, until it reaches its final stage of development, and the utmost caution is maintained in heating and cooling the metal. Carlos conducted us through every department of the establishment, and expatiated so learnedly upon the *modus operandi*, as not a little to surprize us at his rare intelligence. Thence we went into the *Armeria*, or show-room, where every variety of sword, pike, and battle-axe which had ever been in use in Spain, were collected and arranged in a tasteful manner. On leaving, we purchased a few daggers and rapiers, which we carried away with us as interesting memorials of this memorable spot.

Returning to the city, we strolled for an hour along the fashionable *Alameda*, which was then quite thronged with a picturesque crowd. This afforded us an excellent opportunity of seeing the Toledan inhabitants, of which we were exceedingly desirous, before taking our departure from the city. They struck us as being a fine-looking race. The men were sedate and

dignified in their bearing, and the women, though not so beautiful as those of Cadiz or Seville, were of noble forms, and animated with an expression of intelligence which I did not notice in any other part of the kingdom. Upon the Prado of Madrid, French bonnets and dresses are making sad inroads on the national costume, but upon the Alameda of Toledo all is original and characteristic of the Spanish race. By the way, the Parisian milliner is doing more towards undermining the old customs and romantic peculiarities of Spain, than anything else, and fashion is rapidly usurping the power which sovereign nature has wielded for so many years.

Carlos spent the evening with us in our apartment, and was very entertaining and agreeable. He had produced so favourable an impression upon us, that we were strongly tempted to take him with us as the constant companion of our wanderings. Upon the whole, however, we resolved to leave him to the soft blandishments of love, confident that he could not long remain contented with us, while absent from the bright eyes and gentle influence of his charming Teresina.

CHAPTER X.

OUR RETURN TO "THE HAPPY VALLEY OF THE CASTILES,"
AND JOURNEY FROM THENCE TO THE CITY OF SEVILLE.

WE took the diligence in the morning for Aranjuez, leaving the time-honoured city of Toledo without any serious or unconquerable feelings of regret. My companion Ronalds declared it was the most dismal place he had ever seen, adding that he never wished to set foot in it again.

The road over which we passed was good, and continued its course along the basin of the Tagus, an occasional wretched Castilian hamlet alone intervening to break the monotony of the scene. As we approached Aranjuez, the country became more pleasant and cheerful, while the highway was skirted with stately English elms, giving

variety and beauty to the landscape. Arriving at the town, we put up at a comfortable hotel kept by an enterprising and plump-faced Englishman. Here we secured good quarters, and had a better dinner than we had before enjoyed since our entry into Spain. A bottle of excellent ale, which was put upon the table by our worthy and hospitable landlord, gave additional zest and piquancy to the well-cooked and substantial repast.

After we had despatched our dinner, a young man entered the room to ascertain if we should re-require his services in the morning to conduct us through the palace and royal grounds, at the same time assuring us in the most emphatic manner, that nothing equal to them existed in any part of the world. Though we knew this to be an exaggeration, yet we accepted the fellow's proposition, and directed him to come to us as soon as we should have finished breakfast, when we should be ready to accompany him. He was punctual to the minute, and had already procured the necessary orders from the authorities for us to visit the public edifices and gardens. The Palace, though a fine building, presents but slight claims to regal splendour,

though several of its apartments are furnished with exceeding beauty and taste. It is occupied by the royal family during the spring months, at which time most of the nobility and the wealthy of the capital are here assembled, and the spot is said to present the most delightful effect imaginable. For the convenience of the Court, a railroad has just been constructed between Madrid and Aranjuez, which from its novelty must, at least for the first few years, yield a large interest to the proprietors.

In the height of the season, from twenty to thirty thousand persons are assembled at this place in quest of health, coolness, and rural enjoyment. The gardens are said to rival, and by some are even preferred to, those of La Granja. The fountains, though not so numerous, are equally elegant, and are well supplied with the pure and gushing element, which is continually murmuring upon the ear, and distributing its flashing spray amid the spreading branches. The town is provided with a grand amphitheatre for the bull-fights, and also with a theatre. Ferdinand VII established a telegraph between Aranjuez and the capital, perhaps more for the purpose of his own amusement than

for any practical benefit which was likely to arise from it. According to the hand-book for travellers in Spain, the first message which the whimsical king sent to the grave council of Castile, was, "A nun has been brought to bed of twins;" to which the following reply was immediately returned: "Had it been a *monk*, that would have been *news*!"

Having seen everything that was deserving of notice in the town, we took a peregrination of a mile or two into the country, for the special purpose of visiting a beautiful sylvan palace called the Casa del Labrador. This was erected by Charles IV, and in its architecture and decorations is similar to the Escorial, which was likewise founded by the same monarch. Returning to our cozy quarters at the hotel, we spent a cheerful evening in social converse with our merry host. He had passed many years in Spain, but so far from having forgotten the green fields and happy firesides of Old England, he talked with patriotic enthusiasm of his early years, as a bright dream which the cares and vicissitudes of life had chased away. "Oh no," said he, "I have found out too late, that there is no country so well adapted for an English-

man to live in, as the country in which he was born."

At noon on the following day, we took the places we had previously engaged in the diligence for Seville, and with joyous expectations bade farewell to our worthy host of the "Quatro Naciones," and dashed at a rapid pace over the suspension-bridge of the Tagus, and out of the pleasant valley of Aranjuez. A lonely and tedious journey was before us, occupying in extent more than three hundred English miles. We were in glorious spirits, however, in view of the manifold delights of southern Spain. Orange groves, and palm trees, and Cadiz girls, filled our fancies with delicious images, and thoughts of the sweetest pleasures haunted each passing hour! Reminiscences of the past regaled the *present*, while the magnificent arch of the future expanded over our heads like a rainbow. Mr. Ronalds' travelling servant, a Frenchman, who had remained in Madrid for the express purpose of taking charge of our luggage, had fulfilled our instructions in regard to extra provisions, in order to obviate the possible inconvenience of starvation on the highway. On examining our larder, we found it contained an entire turkey,

several loaves of bread and bottles of wine, and a mammoth sausage, of at least two feet in length by four inches in thickness.

We supped late in the evening at the town of Madridejos, with a population of about seven thousand. Here we found a decent inn, and procured a cup of excellent chocolate, this being the only refreshment we required. The country over which we had passed, possessed but few features to interest us, and as a whole presented a most desolate and abandoned aspect. True, it was the depth of the winter season, and no signs of vegetation could be expected, yet the rocky gorges and untilled plains offered anything but a proof of agricultural prosperity to our eyes. The post-towns on our route were nothing better than wretched and impoverished villages where we were completely beset by crowds of beggars, of both sexes and every age. Such miserable destitution, amounting almost to nakedness and famine, excited our pity and surprise, and gave rise to a discussion between us, upon the corrupt policy of a government which tended to undermine national industry, and entailed such an universal state of beggary upon the people. Give Spain education and a liberal government

and she will yet become one of the mightiest nations upon the earth. The Spaniards are naturally a noble race, and there exists in their character a rich vein of precious metal, which, when properly acted upon by outward circumstances, will produce treasures of untold and incalculable wealth. Ecclesiastical intolerance has stifled the growth of every virtue, and placed a tremendous barrier in the path of social progress. When this all-powerful obstacle is removed, the avenues of improvement and advancement will be opened to Spain, and then will she take that lofty and enviable position, for which nature seems to have designed her, and to which she would have attained long years ago, but for the terrible evils and calamities that have befallen her.

Pursuing our journey, we reached Valdepenas in the morning, where we made a brief halt for breakfast. This place contains ten thousand inhabitants, though its inn is a horrible place for a man making any pretensions to civilization, to enter. It is small, uncleanly, dilapidated, and much more largely supplied with fleas than lodgers, the former, as a general rule, being remarkably endowed with powers of leaping,

and taking particular delight in showing off their agility in the presence of strangers, whom they pounce upon as fearlessly as if they were capable of swallowing a human being at a mouthful!

The wine made at Valdepenas is excellent, and constitutes the common beverage in the northern parts of Spain. It is of a rich colour, and of an exceedingly agreeable, though pungent flavour. It is preserved in immense jars, and is transported into the different provinces by means of skins. From its abundance it is wonderfully cheap, and is as extensively drunk by the children of the poor, as by the most aristocratic grandees of the land. The town of Valdepenas is the heart of the district of La Mancha, which with its endless plains and occasional windmills, stretches away monotonously in every direction. Four leagues from the town of Manzanares is the identical prison in which Cervantes composed and wrote the adventures of his hero, "Don Quixote." This work of genius has given an immortal celebrity and interest to the most unpicturesque and uninviting portion of Spain. The province contains nearly eight thousand square miles, and consists almost

entirely of elevated table-land, rising and falling in such easy undulations, as to present for the most part the appearance of a boundless and level plain, without verdure, and destitute of trees of any description. The prospect is indescribably gloomy. One's thoughts are involuntarily turned inwards, to seek in retrospection that entertainment of the mind which is a foe to ennui, and which cannot be derived from a contemplation of the surrounding scenery. Happy that man who is always supplied with resources to meet such an emergency !

In the afternoon we rode through a splendid rocky pass, which like a stupendous natural gateway, ushered us without preliminary into the magnificent country of Andalusia. This vast and delightful territory is subdivided into the four provinces of Seville, Cordova, Jaen, and Granada, embracing an area of more than two thousand square leagues. The change in the scenery and climate was now very perceptible. The fields were greener, and the atmosphere more bland and mild. Everything gave assurance that we were entering a region of perpetual spring ; a land where the cold blasts of winter were unknown. Rolling on, we arrived at the

town of Baylen in the evening, where we stopped for supper, at a villanous-looking *parador*, or inn. We were not at all prepossessed with the aspect of the town, which had a most melancholy and disheartening appearance. A solitary palm tree, however, which we saw standing in the starlight, and waving its plume-like branches in the gentle breeze, aroused within me emotions of pleasure such as I had not experienced for years, and such as it would be impossible for me to express in words. It carried me back to those blissful days when, a youthful wanderer, without care or grief, I roved along the luxuriant banks of the mighty Amazon, and worshipped the Goddess of Nature at her most solemn altars and secret shrines! As we advanced on our journey we had become more and more excited, and consequently the hours lay heavier upon our hands.

But when the sun rose in oriental splendour upon the ensuing morning, his refulgent beams fell upon a landscape of entrancing beauty. The desert had disappeared, and in its stead there bloomed around us an Eden of terrestrial loveliness, such as no painter could gaze upon without inspiration, or poet behold without delight.

In a few hours we entered the ancient and renowned city of Cordova, famous as the birth-place of Lucan and the two Senecas, and regarded by the Carthaginians as "the gem of the South." Espousing the cause of Pompey, this city was laid in ruins by Cæsar, who slaughtered, moreover, a large portion of its valiant inhabitants. Under the Moors it became distinguished for great wealth and refined civilization, and was considered by them a perfect heaven of terrestrial enjoyment. Its adjacent scenery is exceedingly beautiful, while the land is remarkable for fertility, and a considerable portion of it is under careful cultivation. The present city contains but fifty-five thousand inhabitants, and seems to be in a wretchedly poor and languishing condition. Viewing it as it now appears, the most credulous can scarcely realize the extravagant tales of its former prosperity and grandeur, when, having become the proud capital of the Arabian dominions in Spain, so early as the tenth century, it is said to have contained nearly a million of inhabitants, and to have possessed three hundred mosques, six hundred inns, and nine hundred baths. It is deeply melancholy, reflecting upon this gorgeous picture of its former

magnificence, to behold this interesting city thus fallen and degraded. It is a sad and eloquent commentary upon the pride and vanity of man, and the mutabilities and vicissitudes which are wrought in human affairs by the untiring march of hoary Time! The individual passes away and is forgotten, and even the splendid city in which he lived during the brief years of his earthly sojourn, becomes a cemetery and a ruin! Had it been convenient, we should have preferred to have spent several days in Cordova in examining its various antiquities and curiosities, but our time being limited, we were not able to make arrangements for doing so.

Passing the superb bridge of dark marble which spanned the Guadalquivir, we rolled slowly through the narrow and crooked streets until we arrived at the post inn, where a temporary halt was made, in order to give the weary passengers an opportunity of appeasing their appetites, and deranging their stomachs with a hasty and half-masticated breakfast. While the others were enjoying their meal, we sallied out after having swallowed merely a cup of chocolate, and proceeded with rapid steps towards the celebrated Moorish mosque, or *Mezquita*, which