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REVELATIONS
OF SPAIN
IN 1845

HUGHES

VOL. II

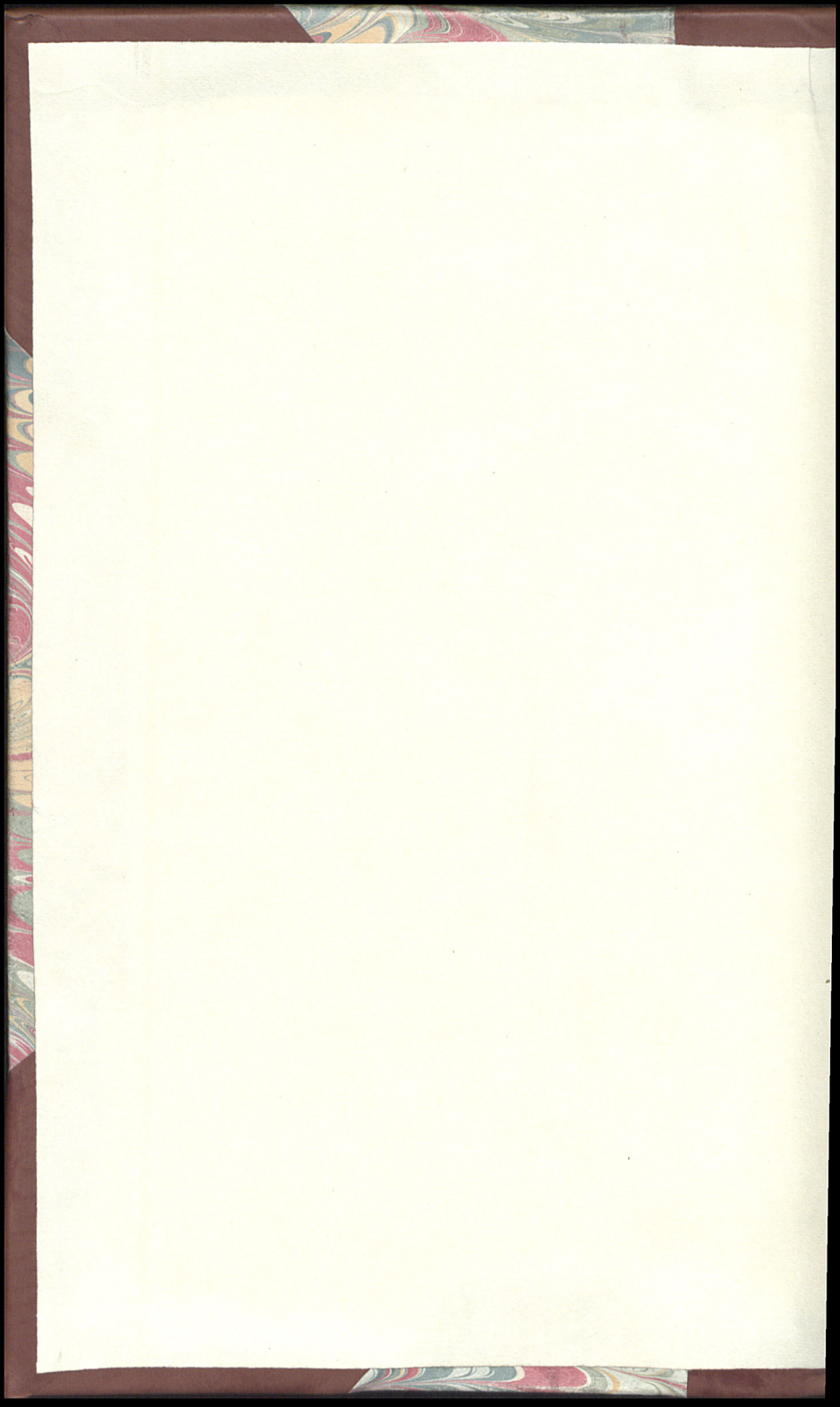
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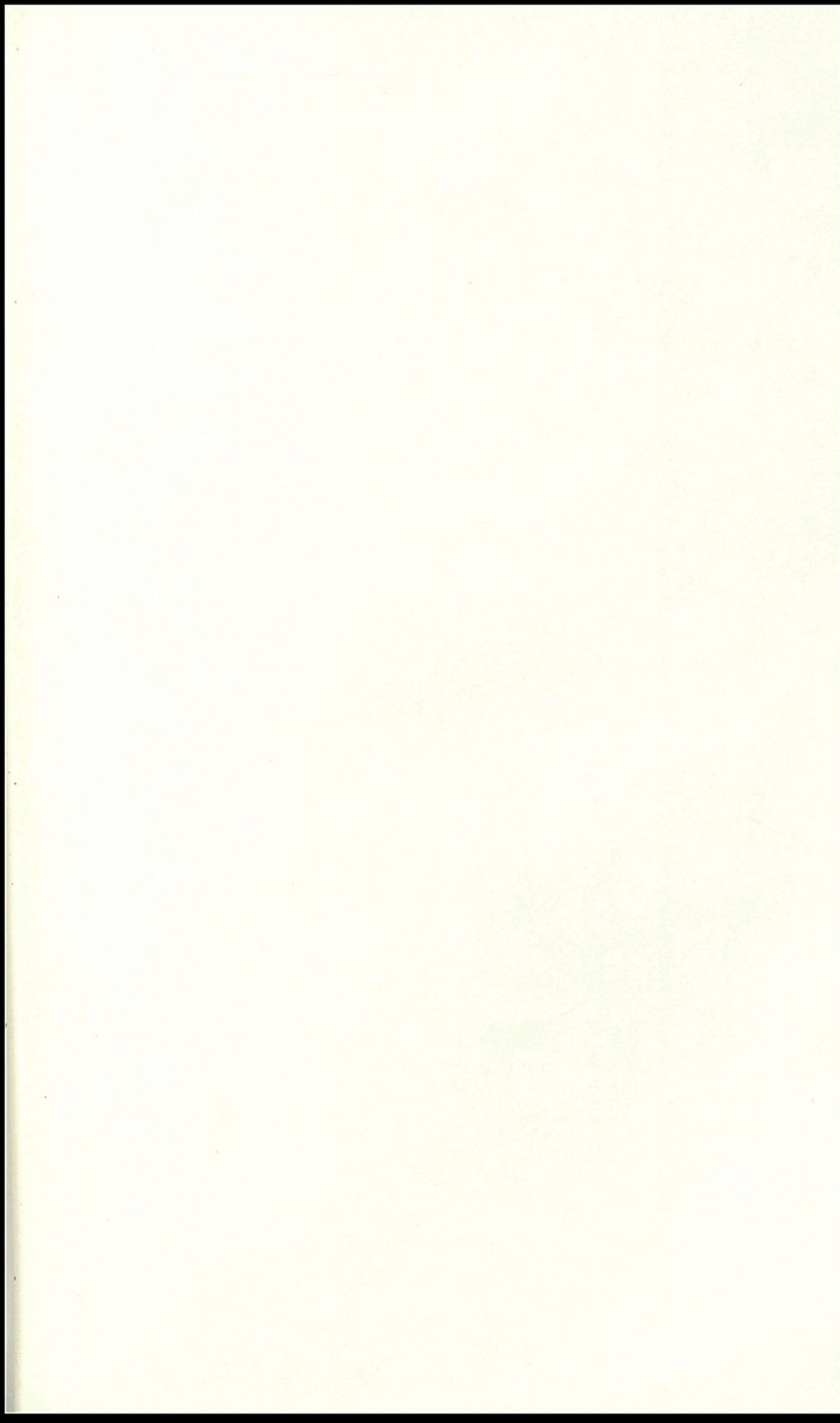
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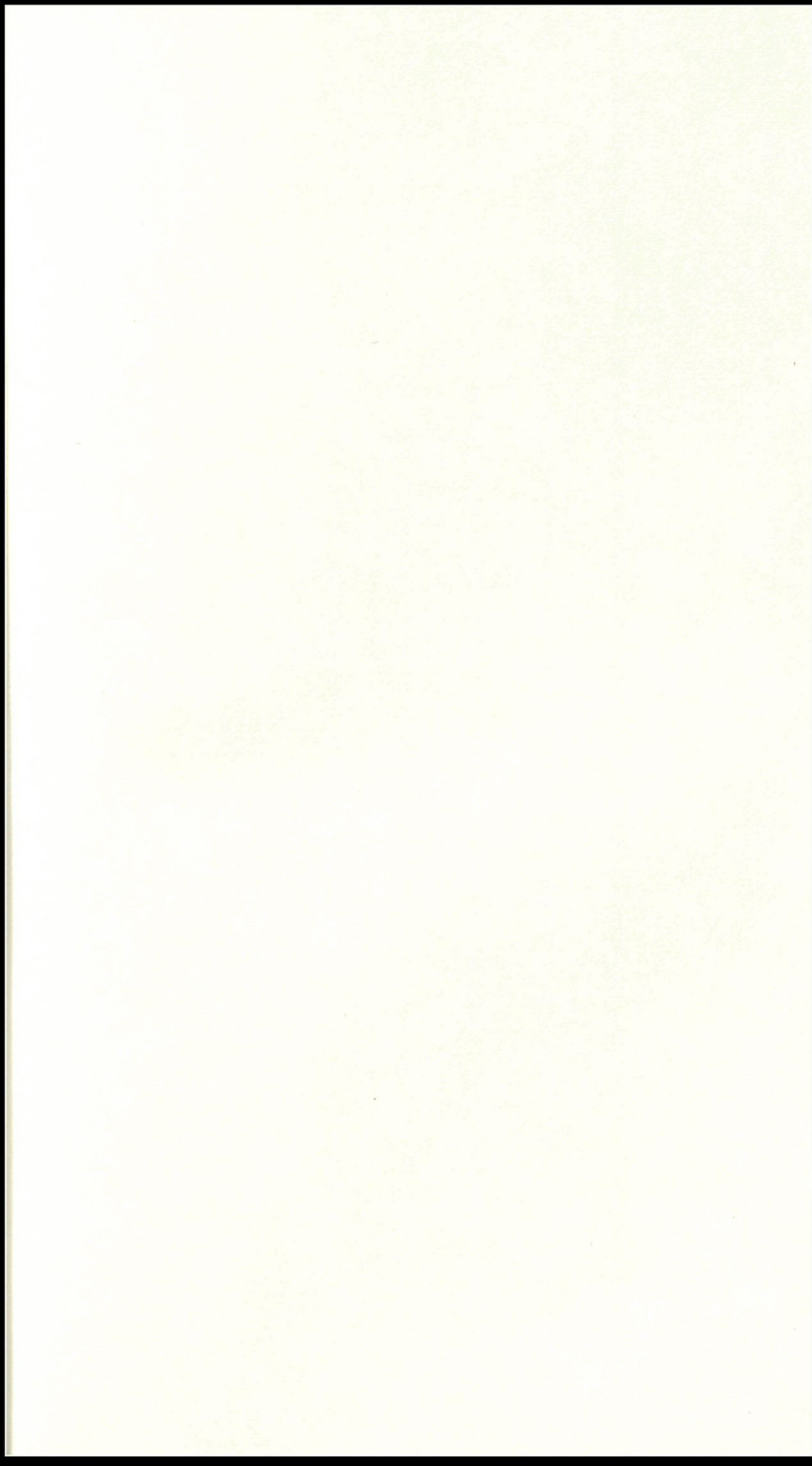
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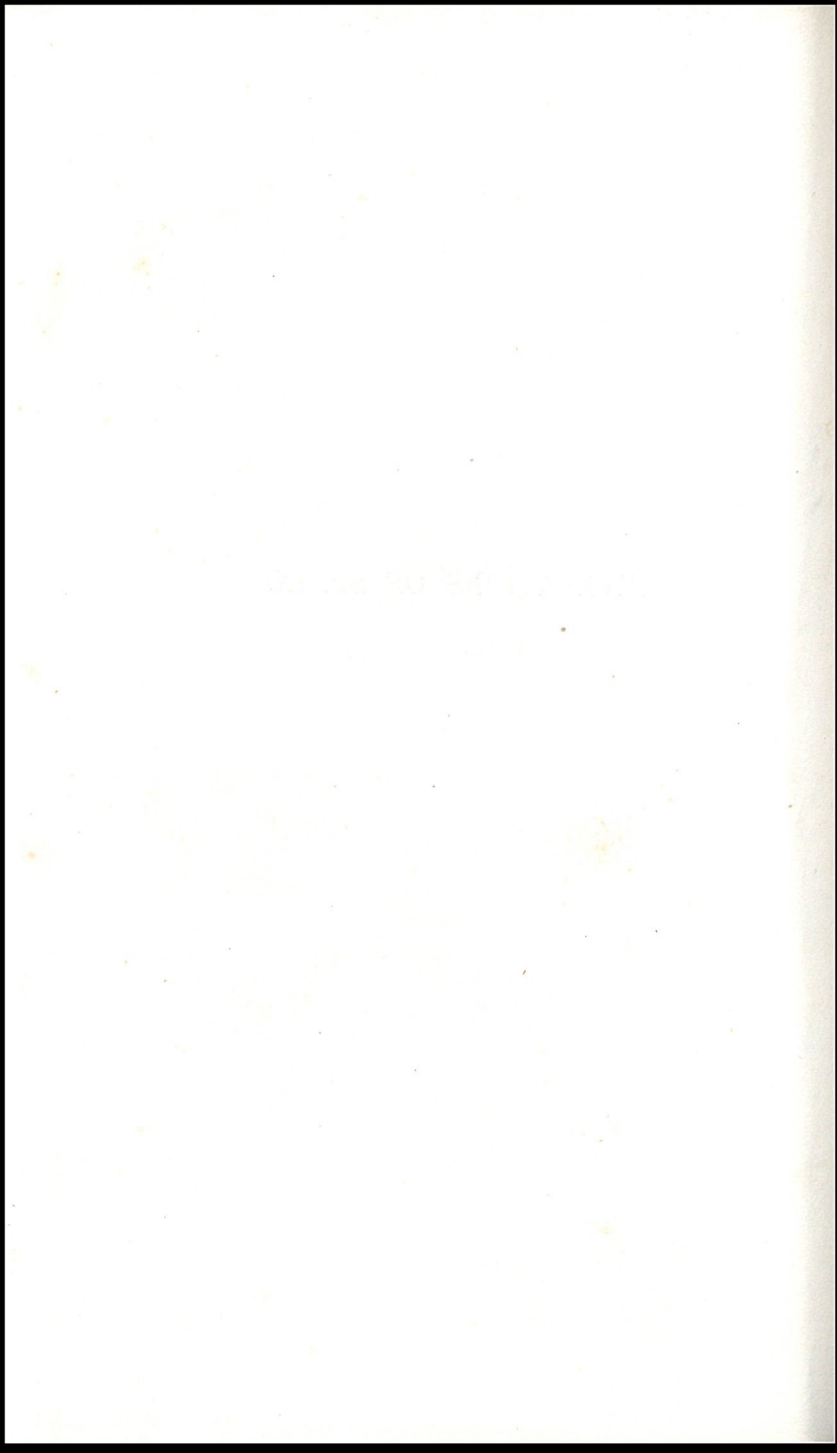


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REVELATIONS OF SPAIN.

VOL. II.



REVELATIONS OF SPAIN

IN 1845.

BY

AN ENGLISH RESIDENT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
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REVOLUTIONS OF SPAIN

BY

W. H. STUBBS

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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REVELATIONS OF SPAIN.

CHAPTER I.

NATIONAL MANNERS.

It is singular, upon landing in the Peninsula, and making a short excursion for a few miles in any direction, to see reproduced the manners of England five centuries back—to find yourself thrown into the midst of a society which is a close counterpart of that extinct semi-civilisation, of which no trace is to be found in our history later than the close of the fourteenth century and the reign of Richard the Second—to behold the scant and ill-tended roads frequented by no vehicles but the rude and springless agricultural cart, now laden with manure, and now with village beauties, and the resort of no other passenger but the weary plodder upon foot, and the rudely accoutred equestrians of the Canterbury Tales; and if you extend your journey a little further, to light perhaps upon a party of skirmishers, a besieged town, a hurried detachment of marching troops, as in our own days of civil strife and our wars of the rival Roses.

Or passing into the interior of the dwellings of men, to find in the comfortless *venta* not even a chair to repose you, in the cheerless *posada* no cup of wine to refresh, although it be the land of luxuriant vines—for by a curious perversity of wrongheadedness, the *posada* and *venta* are almost never found combined, though their disunion is as obvious a violence as the divorce of knife and fork. Methinks our victuallers and vintners in the days of the Crusaders were no such inveterate dunces; that no gentle knight nor stalwart man-at-arms, nor even unnurtured tramper, was forced in Merry England of old, as in Spain at the present hour, to sup in one house and sleep in another!

The face of the country is as little changed since the time of Cervantes, as the popularity of his inimitable *Don Quixote*, and bating a little dissimilarity in the strictly professional costumes, the panorama is as dirty and as picturesque as ever. The greater preponderance of mules and donkeys, round hats, red belts, and jackets, forms the only striking difference from the *cortège* of Chaucer's pilgrims, the high-peaked saddle and heavy iron stirrups being pretty much the same as in England of old (for the iron-work here, from the stirrup to the plough, is the same as at the birth of Christ). The very horses are branded as a protection from thieves, as they were in Chaucer's time by statute. *Romerias*, or pilgrimages in Spain, are still commonly resorted to by the votaries of piety and pleasure; and there are more highwaymen than ever met at Gad's-hill, to strip them on their journey.

The *paletó* is now the almost universal summer wear of gentlemen, and those who would pass for such in

Spain. It is an alteration of a Parisian mode, and a combination of the principle of the modern coat with the ancient Spanish capa. Innumerable loops and buttons set off this garment in that taste for external decoration which is here so prevalent, and frogs and braid are sometimes added with a love of oddity and finery which has a touch of the semi-barbarous. The sleeves of this singular surtout are looped and buttoned, sometimes left open to the elbow; for the influence of climate, and the relaxing effects of extreme heat, show themselves in everything; and the linen thus exposed to view is not always snow unimpeachable.

But the genuine local costume is magnificently appropriate. With all the charm of local colouring it combines great ease and comfort. No straggling and dragging skirts, no strapped-down pantaloons, no dandified hats that press the throbbing temples,—the perfection of inconvenience and annoyance. Jackets are nearly universal, and the small round easy Spanish hat, jauntily tufted, peaked in certain districts and set off with silver tags, is covered almost invariably with black velvet, and displays to marvellous advantage the embrowned lineaments and dark moustaches and eyes of these natives of the southern soil.

The effect of the ever-lighted cigarrillo is likewise extremely picturesque. White costume in summer is very prevalent and effective. Bear-skins, black-dyed sheep-skins, and the warm Catalan jacket of *punto* are much worn in winter, while braces are unknown to the bulk of the men, whose trousers or small-clothes are supported by the *faja* or sash (usually red) encircling the middle. The leathern legging is still

universally worn by the common people even in the midst of summer. In illustration of the same principle of omnipotent convenience, and the oppressiveness of the extreme heat, no one ever yet saw an Andalucian peasant's gaiter buttoned, and many of the people have never worn a stocking, which they say the perspiration makes disagreeable, but supply its place with a bandage swathed over either leg, from the ankle up to the knee, the interstices of which serve to let in the air. Porters and hard-working peasants rarely wear any but hempen shoes, just catching the toes and heels, and tied over the ankle like an ancient sandal, the foot being otherwise, as with the ancients, entirely naked. The effect is more picturesque than pleasant. But the hempen shoe being left of its natural colour, and the cord which fastens it round the leg of a pale blue, it is not disagreeable to the eye.

Stays are not worn at all by the common class of women, and the corsets of the higher orders lace in front. You will confess that I have been curiously minute in my examination. These corsets closed only in front, are becoming very general here, and the chances of fair ladies breaking their arms by hideously twisting them behind their backs and lacing till they are ready to faint with exhaustion, fatigue, and perspiration, while the thermometer is at 100°, have thus become happily lessened. Many a beautiful shoulder is spared an ache and a distortion. I suppose you will say that it was not my business to investigate the more recondite mysteries of ladies' toilets; but "*humani nil alienum!*"

The Spanish tertulia is a charming relaxation. It

is the absence of all constraint which constitutes its peculiar attraction. There is no formality, no needless ceremony. Every one enjoys himself in his own way. You dance, chat, sing, lounge, just as you feel inclined, and provided you do not violate the essential conventional proprieties, no one takes you to task. In the southern cities these entertainments take place during summer in the open air, for the *patio* or central court, which resembles the *atrium* of Roman houses, is exposed to this loveliest of skies, and adorned with fountains and the choicest aromatic plants and flowers, growing naturally in large fixed vases.

The southern *patios*, too, are for the most part supported by arabesque pillars. But in whatever part of Spain you enter society of an evening, you find the same delightful freedom from constraint, and your northern stiffness is perforce relaxed by the graceful unbending which pervades the *tertulia*. A tolerable proof of the fascination which this new aspect of society exercises over young English people of both sexes, is the facility and rapidity with which for the most part they acquire a conversational knowledge of Spanish. Repugnance vanishes, difficulties are overcome, our northern organs acquire a flexibility to which they were hitherto strangers, and our eagerness to take part in all that is going on makes us accomplish lingual miracles.

The manner and address of young Spanish ladies have a natural simplicity, a candour and primitive artlessness, above all, a benevolent kindheartedness, which win and enchant all that come near them. It is not an undue freedom, but a cheerful and con-

riding innocence, which none but demons would abuse.

The pomp of "your grace" and "your lordship," the literal translation of ordinary Spanish phrases, is happily got rid of amongst relations and familiar acquaintances, as well as in addressing servants. Although the *usted* and *usia* prevail ever in familiar conversation outside the hallowed circle of intimacy, they are not carried beyond it; and an intimate friend, if addressed thus formally, would deem his acquaintance disagreeable, or a son thus accosted by his father would conceive himself disowned and on the point of being disinherited. You are no sooner acquainted with a family than your christian name is inquired, and you are addressed by it ever after. Brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, parents and their children, invariably address each other with the *tu* and *tú*, answering to the French *tu et toi*. So likewise do cousins, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, and school-fellows. Masters and mistresses adopt the same formula in addressing their servants.

Students of the same college or university likewise adopt it in their intercourse, and members of the same profession, soldiers, sailors, and in general all who are on a footing of particular intimacy. It may fairly, therefore, be assumed that half the Spanish people address each other constantly by *tu* and *tú*, and in this view the formality of the more ceremonial style stands to a certain extent excused, the endearing *tu* becoming the test of a more exquisite friendship, the rapturous seal of the intercourse of fond lovers, and the tender and undying privilege of married life.

Spain still retains universally the excellent and healthful habit of dining early; and even the Queen's state banquets take place for the most part no later than five o'clock. It is thus possible to attend a theatre as well as dine, and suppers are not an invasion on the breakfast hour. The Spaniards eat light breakfasts—a cup of coffee and a little toast, or in the season a bunch of grapes with dry bread, and no accompanying beverage—for those who take wine at breakfast are the smaller number; and the dinner follows for the most part at two or three o'clock. The first meal is almost strictly the Roman *jentaculum*.

The old custom of *aguinaldos*, or the exchange of presents on the new year, is still kept up, with considerable spirit, but is chiefly confined to the younger branches of families. Sweets and toys are the chief things given away, with now and then the smaller articles of dress, and sometimes (I grieve to say but rarely) books, music, and engravings. The *aguinaldos* answer to the French *étrennes*, and the style of presents is pretty much the same as in France.

The *juguetes* or toys are for the most part imported from beyond the Pyrenees, British hands having not yet, it seems, attained the necessary degree of "spirituel" execution of these fabrics to find favour in the eyes of the smugglers who provide them. A favourite mode of conveying the treasured sweets to the expectant señoritas and niños is in boxes of transformation-paper, which produce different profiles and landscapes, according as they are held up to the light—a style borrowed from Paris. It is needless to say that the *dulce* is devoured before the picture.

Pastillas de boca, or eating-pastiles, are much in vogue on these occasions, and they have a proverb: *Gastar pastillas de boca*, "To waste fine words of flattery."

The imperfect construction of Spanish houses has caused the sacrifice of many a life, not alone by cold winds and rain beating in, in winter, through enormous fissures and crevices round every door and window, but by means still more extraordinary. Conspirators are constantly overheard through the want of close rooms, and the chinks on every side of an apartment make amply credible the paradoxical proverb that "stone walls have ears." Except the representative Chambers and Municipalities, and the Junta of revolutionary times, there are none but secret political bodies in the country. Those who do not constitutionally meet and resolve in public will naturally conspire in private.

Intrigues and plots are likewise more congenial to the Spanish nature. Masonic lodges and political clubs, of whose doings you never hear a word save *sotto voce*, are the active levers of political society, and subversive and sanguinary conspiracies are too often on the carpet. These cling, till they ripen in the recesses of private houses, but even here they are not exempt from the *surveillance* of police spies, who are frequently attached to suspected individuals. The ricketty confines of the chamber, too, often betray the plot which is hatched within, and clumsy Spanish keyholes divulge the secrets of their masters. Thus curiously do they pay for their lagging in the march of civilisation.

A common plan with burglars here is to bore through the roof, which, from the thinness and rottenness of the tiles, is easily effected, or to descend in the middle

of the night from the apartments overhead. As none but the rich have entire houses, and each flat or floor constitutes a house in itself, when the rooms overhead are vacant, look out for squalls in the shape of robbers, since, no matter how strongly secured is the lower part of the house—no matter how impregnable a fortress you may think it made by “locks, bolts, and bars,”—the wolf may still be inside.

The common staircase, which is open all day to all the world, enables the burglar to secrete himself readily in the unoccupied apartment. But he will sometimes even take them for the half-year to effect his purpose, should he have the scent of a rich prey beneath. Thus, it was but the other day that the apartments of Doña Maria de A. were robbed at noonday, while she was absent with her family at Rota, on the Bay of Cadiz, for the summer bathing. They slit the windpipe of the poor old woman left as care-taker; but that was nothing! The house was a very good one, but the garret or upper story went for little, so as to come within the dimensions of the robbers' purse; and it was a joint-stock concern, there being four of them.

Burglaries, however, are not very frequent in this country. There is a prejudice in the best houses against the upper story, which is commonly termed “*El Zaquizami*,” or, still more comically, “*Las Aguas Hurtadas*,”—stolen waters; intimating that the occupant's supply of water comes in from the sky through the roof, whereby the water-carriers are “robbed.”

There is a brief, off-hand, business-like, and matter-of-course mode of recording homicides and attempts at assassination here, which is at least as amusing as

dangerous. The official accounts, and the notices in the journals, are never longer than this: "Yesterday, the body of a man, name unknown, was picked up in the Guadalquivir, stabbed in several parts of the chest." "In the Triana some market-people and Gitanos quarrelled; a female, named Maria del Carmo, was despatched with half-a-dozen *puñaladas*."* "The night before last, in the Calle de la Sierpas, a quarrel arose between some paisanos; † high words were exchanged, when, in the exaltation of the parties, one drew out a pistol, and shot his opponent dead. It is said to have been a love dispute. Justice is informing itself." This last sanguinary affair took place in front of my hotel. The assassin escaped. Justice is rather slow here in "informing itself," for it has not yet detected the murderer. That pistol-bullet might clearly have been as readily put into any other man in Seville.

"Juan Pedro, soldier of the 2nd battalion of the regiment of Arragon, was arrested for a disorder in the Alameda Vieja, having wounded seriously with a knife two men and one woman, at eight P.M." What a singular contrast this to the three or four columns which such an event would have occupied in the London journals.

A very peculiar feature of the semi-civilisation which prevails in all parts of the Peninsula, is the savageness and approximate starvation of the canine population. Many thousand dogs in a state of *feræ naturæ* prowl through the streets of all the great towns, acting in fact as the only effectual scavengers, and removing with great gusto into their own stomachs

* Blows of a knife.

† Town's-people.

offal, which the laziness of the inhabitants would leave, perhaps, in the streets, to inevitable putrescence.

In 1808 the French, who then occupied both the Spanish and Portuguese metropolis, combined grand military operations against the dogs of Madrid and Lisbon; but though they shot many thousands, the dogs soon re-appeared in the same numbers, and had the satisfaction shortly afterwards of seeing their Gallic enemies expelled by British valour from both Peninsular kingdoms.

It was but a sorry aim for the gallantry of Murat, then Grand Duke de Berg, and of Junot, Duke d'Abrantes, which latter title was the only fruit of the French expedition to Portugal; but the dogs, to be sure, had their enemies, who asserted that their depredations far exceeded their usefulness, and that their howling at night in the public squares was more pernicious to the health of the inhabitants, by depriving them of sleep, than their scavenger-work could be advantageous in cleansing even such streets as then rotted in the sun. I incline to the belief that the baying was far less prejudicial than the noxious exhalations. The wise men of Madrid are, however, of a different opinion, and the Ayuntamiéto of that capital have this year taken measures for the extermination of all these *perros vagabundos* by administering poison. It is nearly incredible, yet I am a personal witness to the fact, that the instinct of these animals attained to such a pitch of exquisite sagacity, that, finding a few of their numbers to die from poisoned meats thus administered at night, they fled in troops out of Madrid every evening, and entered the city in the

morning, the moment the gates were opened! They thus out-generalled the municipality as well as Murat.

The administrative authorities of Madrid have latterly shown some substantial proofs of progress, having prohibited servile work on Sundays and holidays, as well as the sale of articles which are not of extreme necessity. But they were soon obliged to modify the order.

The private vehicles for the conveyance of individuals, which one meets at singularly rare intervals in the country parts of Andalucía, are of the most primitive simplicity of construction, without springs or any contrivance to subdue the bumping of the aboriginal roads, and drawn almost invariably by oxen rudely harnessed with ropes. There is no attempt at ornament, unless ornament may be called a tall frontlet composed of parti-coloured pieces of cloth or calico, sometimes of green boughs and flowers, built over the foreheads of the labouring *bueyes*, as they trudge with parting legs and opening hoofs, to keep off the plague of flies. There is no driver or driver's seat, but the oxen are impelled by a lazy, clouded hind with the goad, just as when they drag the plough. The ordinary carro is a horrid creaking vehicle of the roughest-hewn planks, upon wheels of solid timber—the lightness and elegance of whose ingenious construction is enhanced by the music of the ungreased wheels and axles, varied by the screeching soprano of a crazy draw-well or two, a little off the road.

When this primitive cart is used as a carriage, a couple of mats or blankets—sometimes a mattress of

the indian-corn straw—is thrown over it, and then it is fit for a substantial farmer's family. Ascending a little in the social scale, we arrive at the Tartana, still upon lumbering, solid wheels, and without springs, but provided with several different seats, and with a temporary cover rigged up,—a sort of *char-à-banc*—an occasional rich *labrador* or ambitious *alcalde* sports at intervals his *calesa*, a species of cab, with short, thick butts of shafts, adapted for mule or horse, the cover permanently fixed and thrown well forward, like that of an Indian buggy, as the climate requires, and baskets of flowers and other gewgaws gaudily painted over the entire body of the vehicle. Lastly, the coach of the *hidalgo*, whether titled or untitled, may be sometimes met, the long-tailed horses or mules arrayed in heavy harness, and their heads and necks tinkling all over with bells, to announce the great man's approach—as the bell-wether of the district.

His coach in some sort aims at what was a Paris or London fashion thirty years since; and is staringly painted in some dead, unvarnished colour, perhaps, too, with some village painter's flowers stuck over it, to demonstrate his and the owner's taste. And at times, when his children go out in it for an airing, it may be seen swinging on its rough springs, and progressing at the rate of a league per hour, behind a brace of oxen.

The pride of the *hidalgo* class in these lumbering vehicles is a singular comment on the folly of human vanity. A butcher going to his box at Highgate,

And buckling to his one-horse chair
Old Dobbin or the foundered mare,