matchless all over the world. I once heard a brace of Espadachins, or bullies, retort their compliments:—

"*Belitre!*" said one, "I'd catch you in my teeth, and fling you so high that there would be an eclipse of the sun!"

"*Bribon!*" said the other, "I'd seize you by the leg, and hurl you up so far that you would not come down till the middle of a new century!"

The necessity of the Spanish literati putting their heads together once more, and fixing the orthography of their noble language upon an intelligible basis, has long been apparent to every scholar. An idea of the prevalent confusion may be conceived from the fact that the *g*, the *j*, and the *x*, may still be used almost indiscriminately for each other. I tried this just now with the Spanish word for the game of chess, which is commonly spelled "a*g*edrez." It was not to be found spelled with a *g*. I next tried it spelled with the *j*, but it still was not to be found. At last I discovered it written with the *x*—"a*x*edrez." It speaks little for the energy or industry of Spaniards to have put up so long with so intolerable a nuisance. There are many hundreds of words to which the same principle applies, and which enhance most distressingly to students the toil of wading through a dictionary. No Castilian who is proud of his noble language, and desirous of opening out its treasures to other nations, should tamely consent to the continuance of this nuisance. The dictionary upon the use of which I found these observations is that in two volumes, quarto, by Nunez de Taboada, one of the best lexicographical works ever published. Attempts have been made to settle

the orthography, but have produced so much confusion and diversity—that the plain and perpetually recurring word "example," for instance, may be and constantly is written in any one of three ways, "*exemplo*," "*ejemplo*," or "*egemplo*." These matters are plain enough to Spaniards, but with foreigners it is different. When I visited the Lonja at Seville, and passed through the celebrated gallery containing, in cases of glass and mahogany, the immense series of official documents relating to the Indies, from the days of Columbus and of Cortés down to the revolution of 1820, I was no little surprised to see on these sacred archives—these glorious historic treasures—the most striking evidence of the unsettled state of the orthography of a language as glorious as the deeds which it commemorates. The word "Register" was spelt, on papers lying cheek-by-jowl, in three different ways, "Registro," "Rejistro," and "Rexistro!" The Spanish Academy undertook to systematize the orthography of their rich and magnificent language in the commencement of the present century, and laid it down as an unalterable rule, for instance, that *Alexandre* should be written *Alejandre*; *Don Quixote*, *Don Quijot*; *anarchia*, *anarquia*, &c. Now you cannot put language thus in a Procrustian bed, and make us depart from the cherished memories of our youth. The result is, that at the end of forty years every one spells pretty much after his own fashion, using his *g*'s, his *j*'s, and his *x*'s, indiscriminately, and the name even of the national wine may be met in the varieties of *Jerez*, *Xerez*, and *Gerez*. The confusion in the spelling and pronouncing of the *b* and the *v* is equally

unfortunate. "Wine" is as often spelt "*bino*" as "*vino*;" and I have seen the word "bile" printed in a medical lecture "*v*ilis" instead of "*b*ilis," which, considering the meaning of the Latin words respectively, produced rather a ludicrous effect. But the inaccuracy is indeed universal, and (for one comical instance) I have scarcely ever seen the common Latin phrase, "*in flagranti*," printed otherwise than "in fragranti." Think of a murderer caught "in fragranti!"

One is more puzzled at first by the Spanish naturalisation of foreign names, than even by that which prevails in France—a system, by the way, pursued in every European language except the English and German. Thus, in conversing once with a learned Castilian professor, when he indulged in some enthusiastic declamation about the battle of "Salamina," I thought for a moment he alluded to his Alma Mater, Salamanca, upon whose name in poetical phraseology you may ring such changes as "the Salamantine city," &c. But presently, when he invoked the shades of "los Antiguos Helenos," I found that it was of "Salamis" he was speaking. From thence he passed by an easy transition to the plains of "El Maraton," and the pass of "Las Termopilas." Not less singular was the effect, when he introduced the most famous names of heroic Greece, "Milciades" and "Temistocles," "Esquilo" and "Erodoto," "Ector" and "Aquiles," "Filipe," "Alejandro," and, unluckily, "Jerjes." Doubtless, our pronunciations appear to Castilians barbarous. But, indeed, we are all barbarians.

Like most continental tongues, the Spanish, in

adopting words from other languages, changes their form, and moulds them to some resemblance to its own particular genius. The final *o* or *a* is invariably thus applied, but the most ludicrous of all these adaptations which I have met is the Spanish *cuackiero* for the English *quaker*.

Until the end of the last century Spaniards were contented to take even the dictionary of their language at second hand from the French, a degree of literary apathy and patriotic supineness probably unexampled, and nearly incredible, when we reflect upon the noble qualities of the Spanish tongue. *Españolismo* was then unheard of, and this was indeed a species of contraband against which prohibitory laws would have been admissible. "*Avergonzado yo*," said Señor Capmany; "I burnt with shame, as all good Spaniards should, that even in this branch of our literature, converted within our own house into a passive trade and traffic, we had to buy a dictionary from foreign hands." And Señor Capmany set to work like a man, toiled on for six years, and produced his excellent *Diccionario Francés-Español*, which has been the foundation of all the works that have succeeded it, including that of the Spanish Academy. The collection of words is now complete, and all that remains is finally to settle the orthography, when "Young Spain" may enrich the world with the outpouring of a new literature. But there are no symptoms yet of the revival.

Spaniards are not at all particular on the score of orthography, and the best classics amongst them are strangely slovenly and heedless. I once received a letter upon the eternal state-of-Spain question from a

Manchegan, who had the reputation of being an erudite historian. It was a very ambitious composition, and terminated thus:—

"May measures of national improvement and material amelioration take the place of these miserable contests of party, in which daggers are wielded by *Scylla's* assassins!

"*Amigo del corazon,*

———."

To this I replied without delay:—

"Charybdis, too, was a very turbulent character.

"*Tu afectisimo,*

———."

CHAPTER XXXII.

FAMILIARITY WITH BLOODSHED.

Cruelty and indifference to the sufferings of others are to a certain extent inherent in all rude and savage men. I do not believe that the Spaniard is essentially more cruel than ourselves; the educated and refined portion of the community are pretty much like other people; but human life is certainly less valued in Spain than in any other European country, the half-Asiatic regions of Russia and Turkey excepted. Murderous and horrid executions, with scarcely a shadow of law to sanction them, awake in Spain but small commiseration. The spectacle is so often repeated, that it has become almost a thing of course. The scenes of the late civil war have left indelible impressions on the minds of the living generation; they have been nurtured with blood and horror; and the turbulence of successive insurrections has the effusion of blood for its accustomed termination. The beat of the drum is, near or far, perpetually in men's and women's ears, and *émeutes* and *fusillades* are nearly as frequent as the discharge of harmless rockets. Familiarised thus with violence and bloodshed, the minds of the people are less sacredly influenced by the solemn thought of death than in other countries; death is less mournfully noted amongst friends; the

visitation of this dread calamity awakens less reflection; and even funereal ceremonies, though there is much of pageant about them, much of gilding on the coaches, and pomp in the waxen torches, have little of the staid solemnity and calmness of sincere but decent grief. The procession to the grave is usually treated as the merest ceremony; and the corpse of the poor man is thrown into a trench, like a dog, without a coffin and with scarce a covering.

There is no doubt whatever that the respect paid to human life and death is the surest test of civilisation. Looking through European countries we see this evinced in a perfectly graduated scale, and tried by this test we cannot highly rate the Spanish claim to civilisation. But the fault, after all, is more in circumstances than in any permanent deficiency of character, and it is easy to trace the causes which have led to this development. The ferocity of the contests between Goth and Moor, the cruelties of the Inquisition transmitted to the most recent times, the repeated extermination of Jews and Mahometans, the clearing of whole Provinces, the gloomy character of most of the Sovereigns, and the bigotry of those who surrounded them, the atrocities committed during the French occupation and in many subsequent scenes of the Peninsular war, the murderous civil strife between Constitutionalist and Carlist, and the yet unsubsided ferment of revolution, are abundantly sufficient to account for this phase of character. The sanguinary and cruel spectacle of bull-fights likewise perpetuates the indifference to bloodshed, and difficult as it will be to accomplish it, these spectacles must be gradually

abolished. As the great desideratum in Spain is a revenue, I may suggest a means of discountenancing the practice of bull-fighting and collecting a revenue at the same time, which is not perhaps unworthy of the minister's notice. Let the tickets to these spectacles be stamped, and let such a scale of duties be levied as this: a *peseta* (ten-pence) for the lowest class, two *pesetas* for the next, and three for the highest class; the boxes where fine ladies go to gaze at the butchery, to be taxed a dollar per head.

This project is a perfectly serious one, the only drawback from which is, that it might make an administration unpopular. But the moment there is a strong government, and a minister of right feeling, the plan will probably be carried into effect. I suppose it is too much to ask any Peninsular minister to abolish bull-fighting altogether, and that to destroy the Constitution would scarcely lead to so fatal a Pronunciamiénto. But it may and ought to be discountenanced, and the most effectual means of leading to its gradual discontinuance is by making it very expensive. The same considerations of morality and financial expediency equally apply to the lottery. There is no more gambling nation in Europe than the Spanish, and every one (even the beggar) purchases lottery tickets. Let these be in every instance stamped, if ministers will permit the poisonous indulgence, which perverts the minds of the people from the pursuits of honest industry; let an additional revenue be derived from the practice, and a check imposed upon its duration.

People often talk of Moorish ferocity, as having

imparted a stain of blood to the Spanish character. But I have seen too much of the Moors to credit this, which *à priori* is absurd. I have seen them in Morocco and in Gibraltar, and more elegant and dignified men (though faithless) than the Moorish merchants in both places, and many of the class of proprietors, it would be difficult to meet in any country. They certainly do not love the Christians, but they do not hate them more intensely than Christians of different persuasions hate each other at home, and they are as far superior to the Jews of Barbary, as it is possible for one race to be to another. I therefore smile at the notion of Moorish ferocity as forming an essential element of character; and I believe that in the conflicts of Algeria, and the incidents of razzia and reconnoissance, the ferocity is chiefly on the French side. The notion, too, of Moorish savageness being left as a legacy to Spain, can ill be reconciled with the fact, that there is as much ferocity in the North, the population of which is chiefly of Gothic origin, as in the South, where the Moorish type preponderates, and the natives of which are remarkable as being the gayest and most light-hearted community in Spain. If the ferocity of the North be an essential element of character, then we too must be ferocious, for we are likewise of Gothic parentage. The fact is, that we are all the creatures of circumstances, that the Spanish now are not a tenth part so ferocious as the people in the great French cities were during the Reign of Terror; that this stain has almost entirely disappeared from the French character, and may ere long from the Spanish, and that the

ferocity of their Moorish blood is what Spaniards term a Bú.*

The clowns of all countries, when their purpose is crossed, and their temper ruffled, become savage. The drivers of brutes are too frequently brutes themselves—yet with a difference; if the brute does his work well and kindly, he will not generally be ill-used. I admit that there are heartless scoundrels, who will sometimes belabour without reason their more noble brute-companions. But these are exceptional cases. The majority of men have hearts, and use them. Still there is much to condemn in the treatment of dumb animals in Spain. The patient and willing ox is goaded, goaded, goaded, unmercifully, and for ever. The painful yoke, and fatiguingly stooped neck, are not enough; the bull-ring, it would seem, is ever in the driver's imagination; and the goad is urged as incessantly into its neck and haunches, as if it were the ribboned *banderilla*. The cries by which these jog-trot torturers accompany the infliction of the goad, are of the most uncouth and savage description:—"*O buey!—Ah, ah bruto!—Chit, buey!—Fú, fú!—Qué diablo!—Tá, buey!—He!—Olá, buey!—Poorrr, poorrr!—Ea, buey!*"† a thrust of the goad accompanying or following each exclamation. Often have I wished that I had possession of the goad, and the right to use it against the torturers. They do not understand remonstrance, and the only successful logic with them is that which

* Bugbear.

† Oh, ox!—Ah, brute!—Tush, ox!—Fie, fie!—What the devil!—Have a care, ox!—Holloa, ox!—Well, ox! &c.

irresistibly appeals to their feelings. The goad in their own hides might teach them to be tender of its use; and Doctor Johnson's burlesque line might fairly be altered to :—

"Who gores poor oxen should himself be gored!"

While I reject the imputation of cruelty as at all in the nature of an essential characteristic, I must state that, owing to the rudeness of the rural population, there is more cruelty unreflectingly displayed by them, than in more cultivated countries, and that the lower standard of intelligence amongst masters makes them indifferent to these brutal displays. There is likewise another element which enters into the question, the more passionate nature of a Southern people, and the greater preponderance of sanguineous temperaments, than amongst the colder and more phlegmatic people of the North. Blows, for the most part, here, are struck in anger; not in cool ferocity, but in unreflecting rage; and the dumb brute shares, like his fellow-workmen, in the violent assaults of the momentarily maddened clown. To this extent of stronger, more rapid, and more ungovernable passions, I must admit the greater permanent ferocity of Spaniards, than of the people of the North.

But this violent passion is alternated with kinder moods, and the peasant or working man who belabours at one moment, may be seen caressing the next. I never shall forget the extraordinary scene which I witnessed between a drunken farmer and his mule. I must premise by stating, what is sufficiently well known, that drunkenness in the Spaniard is a vice of

extreme rarity, though the contrabandists, muleteers, and working farmers, can drink large quantities of wine, and often do so, but without being in the least affected. The farmer, whose name was Gil Acedo, had brought his produce to market, and after having drunk to his heart's content, was returning from Toledo to his village of Arjos, near the small river Guadajaroz. His son conducted the string of mules and asses, on the backs of which he had brought his corn to market, and the farmer trotted on before on a fine mule, jogging from side to side, half-growling, half-roaring out snatches of a seguidilla. Suddenly he stopped short, his eye became dilated, his hair appeared to stand on end, he looked sobered all at once. He searched his saddle-bags hurriedly, groped nervously in every corner, almost tore the cover in his excitement; he gnashed his teeth, and shrieked out that he had lost his money! Sixty dollars, sixty hard and shining *duros*, sixty beautiful coins with Ferdinand's ugly head on them, had flown. It was a good quarter's income to him. At first he hung his head mournfully, uttered the agonising interjection, *quay!* and almost wept. But in another instant his hot southern nature was roused, his soul was tortured by the thirst of revenge, hatred and malice brimmed over, and he proceeded to wreak his feelings of aimless resentment upon the unoffending brute which he bestrode—himself a greater brute. He plied the poor mule about the head and shoulders with a thick stick, until it broke. Next he thumped it with his clenched fist, until he benumbed and almost broke his arm. The savage then jumped off the unfortunate animal's back,

kicked, and bit it several times with the utmost ferocity, until he drew the blood repeatedly from its ears and neck!

Meanwhile his son, a younger and more peaceable Gil, came up, and with some difficulty pulled his father away from the mule. The old ruffian's rage was now turned upon his son, whom he would have probably hurt, but that extreme violence had exhausted him.

"*Tate! Alto,*"* said the son. "Are you sure you have lost it? Search the saddle-bags again."

The old fellow shrugged his shoulders, growled, but did as he was desired. The canvas-bag, with the sixty dollars, was immediately found in a corner of the saddle-bags.

"*Fú! fú! Verguenza!*"† said the more manly son, with undisguised contempt.

"*Vulgame Dios, qué lastima!*"‡ said the old dog, dancing and shouting with joy, embracing his mule, and covering with kisses and caresses the very parts which he had bitten!

* Take care! Stop! † For shame! ‡ Bless me, what a pity!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE WINE COMMERCE OF SPAIN.

THE largest source of Andalucían wealth, and the most important branch of trade in Southern Spain, is the generous wine of this extensive district. The white wines of no other country can bear an instant's comparison in point of universal reputation with them. The growths of Sicily, Italy, and the Ionian Islands, are not to be named with the wines of Malaga, Xerez, and Sanlucar; Teneriffe and Cape are under a bar; the white wines of Portugal have little celebrity, and Madeira will never be a wine in very general use in England; while the Rhine wines, the sparkling Moselles, and Champagnes, are either adapted only to peculiar palates, or produced in such limited quantity and (when pure) so high in price, that the ascendancy of sherry in England is paramount, and may, without rashness, be predicted to be permanent.

But though the average annual consumption of sherry wine in England amounts to the enormous quantity of 24,000 butts, or *two millions and a half of gallons*, the Spanish are far from being satisfied, and most unjustly and inaccurately speak of a permanent decline in British consumption. There is no such permanent decline. It is true, that, on the introduction of the income-tax in England, there was a perceptible falling off here, as in other articles of luxury. Our consump-

tion of Spanish wines, which, in 1840, was 2,500,760 gallons, in 1841 was reduced to 2,412,821, and in 1842 to 2,261,786 gallons. But this latter amount was never attained by the Spanish exports to England before the year 1834, it having previously ranged under two millions of gallons. Our consumption in 1842 was greater than in 1835, and equal to 1837 ; while again in 1843 it exceeded 2,600,000 gallons. The Andalucían creed is therefore entirely erroneous. Our consumption of sherry, upon a ten years' average, has considerably increased, while that of port has decreased. The curious in such matters will nevertheless be astonished to see how nearly neck and neck is the race of port and sherry for British favour. Portugal in 1840 sent 2,668,534 gallons of wine to England; Spain sent 2,500,760 gallons. Portugal, in 1841, sent us 2,387,017 gallons ; Spain, 2,412,821. This is almost a tie, almost racing under a sheet. With the revival of trade, and the prospect of the removal of the income-tax, the consumption of sherry is again rising. But while no favour extended to the wines of Portugal can far depress the demand for the growth of Spain, it is certain that the suicidal policy pursued by the latter country towards us prevents an immense increase of the consumption of sherry in England. The vast extension in the cultivation of sherry wine, and in its export to the British islands, is entirely a modern creation. In 1810 it was merely in its infancy, and the great increase has occurred since 1830.

The true cause of the existing depression amongst the Andalucían wine *labradores*, and of the groaning superabundance of stock in the enormous bodegas of

Xerez, is that master-evil of the age—excessive production—an evil of which the pernicious effects can be traced from Cadiz to Manchester. Each new market is regarded as an exhaustless mine, and all other considerations are subordinate to the one insatiable and thoughtless aim of overfeeding the capon till it burst. We commence with emasculation and we end with plethora; overloading its stomach till the new-found treasure perishes; and even while we contemplate the cold remains of the golden-egged goose, we never will admit that it was slain by our own selfishness. All the wealth of Andalucía was poured into her vineyards, and capitalists thought of no investment but the vine. Choice sherries were 90*l.* the butt on board at Cadiz—ay, very superior qualities 180*l.* Preparing wine was coining—they never could make enough of it! What has been the result? Vineyards that four years back were valued at 50,000 dollars, can nowhere find a purchaser now at 25,000 dollars; in fact, this description of property has ceased to have a fixed and current value; both prices and terms of payment are dictated by the caprice or discretion of a limited number of bidders; a part of the viñedo, or extent of country under vines, is now only half cultivated, with no other crop introduced, and the grapes in some instances are left ungathered to rot upon the cepa!

The question of a commercial treaty with England has been unhappily made a weapon of party warfare, through the unscrupulous dexterity of French agents, and the groundless prejudices of Spaniards. A question so purely economical and commercial could never

have been in good faith consigned to the political arena; but since it has been so consigned, we must not commit the bull to the Matadors, but endeavour to withdraw him gently, by calmness, reason, and moderation. When Espartero was at the head of affairs, it was said by his perfidious and unprincipled enemies, that he was bent on chaining Spain to the car of England, and about to conclude with her a venal treaty of commerce, with the sole aim of recompensing the support she had given him in climbing to the supreme power. Those whose interests were too directly involved, and who knew too well the falsehood of these accusations, lent themselves with timid subserviency to the revolutionary movement, which ended by displacing Espartero; and when they awoke at last to a consciousness of their folly, betrayed the most miserable inconsistency. Now they proclaimed aloud that their province was ruined because there was no treaty of commerce, and that the scouted Duke of Victory was alone capable of concluding it. When every effort to kick against the goad was vain, they made their petty Pronunciamiéntos, forgetful that it was the original movement of this description which they blindly joined, that riveted their adamantine chain.

Espartero was, at every period, an overrated man. Since he lost at Ayacucho the empire of Peru—an equivocal sort of service to render to the mother-country—for a quarter of a century he proved himself little more than an expert intriguer, and even this character he forfeited at last. He was out-intrigued in the most palpable manner, and, what all around him

clearly saw, was a mystery to his understanding. He acquired, chiefly through the zeal and ability of his lieutenants, the reputation of a general; but no man can point to any truly brilliant action which he has ever won in the field. Since his final exit, the Spaniards are surprised that we should have been blind enough to pay him such marked attention in London, and ashamed that they should have suffered themselves to be bestrode so long by so pigmy a Colossus. His attempts to re-establish a footing for himself in Vigo and Algesiras have but taken once more the measure of his true capacity; and the same indecision and lack of energetic will, which kept him at Albacete, suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, until all was lost, were precisely the causes of the failure of a commercial treaty with England. Our diplomatists unfortunately made it a personal question, conceived that Espartero alone had the power and inclination to make those concessions which our mercantile interests demanded, and fell into the mistake which we committed in Greece, when we championed Count Armensperg first, and Tricoupi afterwards, and found both, like Espartero, to be men of straw. We have been taught, in more quarters than one, the lesson, to treat with nations and not with individuals.

There cannot be a doubt that Espartero had within his grasp all the elements requisite for the conclusion of an advantageous treaty of commerce with England, had he possessed the decision and strength of will to enter resolutely into these negotiations before his power had begun to wane, and his dynasty to subside in contempt. His very enemies, who then exclaimed

most strongly against his policy, as a base subserviency to England, now admit that, had he boldly pursued it, it would have most materially strengthened his position, by securing the decided support of a formidable power, and withdrawing from the eyes of his countrymen the spectacle of his vacillation. Previously to the Regent-Duke's exercise of the chief power in the State, no Government, whether Moderado or Progresista, would have dared, during the civil war, to mention the subject of such a treaty, or could have breathed it without the probability of the Pretender deriving great advantage. The feelings of the Catalans and Navarese against such a treaty were well known; and equally manifest was the repugnance of France, who desired, yet would not enter into, a treaty with England herself, for the benefit of her wines, and would suffer no other country to do so—conduct worthy of a dog—more worthy of a cat—in a manger.

It would have been unquestionably imprudent, under such circumstances, to adopt a course which would inevitably have paralysed one of the most important members of the Quadruple Alliance. But everything since then is changed: the question of Dynasty is settled, and the question of Regencies at rest; the evil of Contrabandism has attained to a more monstrous growth: it is a cancer in the State, which must be cauterised. The cry of the wine districts is raised to Madrid for relief, and, if denied, it will be raised to Heaven for vengeance. When tranquillity is established and order restored, to repudiate fair and reciprocal treaties of commerce is a course at variance with sound policy, as with civilisation, and fatal to

those agricultural and commercial interests, which form the best, perhaps the only, patrimony left at this day to the Spanish nation.

The advantages of more liberal and extended commercial relations between Spain and England, are by no means limited to the groaning wine-vaults of Xerez. From the Mediterranean to the Bay of Biscay, from the Pyrenees to Portugal, there is no part of the kingdom that would not share in them. Cheap and comfortable clothing, of solid, substantial, and improved fabrics, may be brought within the reach of the humblest population; fair and honest trade substituted for contrabandist cheatery; and the material welfare of the people immensely enhanced. Every dollar's worth of British manufactures brought into the country will be an instrument of civilisation. Those who are now naked and comfortless may be presently taught self-respect, and imbued with the pride of honest industry; a well-stocked homestead may beget a desire for peace, and a wish for legitimate gains; and pestilent public disturbers may be converted, by the golden wand of commerce, into a virtuous, a thriving, and a contented population. The multitudinous interests involved in the wine preparation and export will set in motion an equal amount of activity in the other parts of the kingdom. Trade begets trade: the inland districts will awake the seaports into life; and the farmer, having found a vent for his wines, will necessarily become a more extensive purchaser of manufactures. Barcelona will share the benefits of his increased pecuniary capacity, as well as England; hawkers and dealers will pervade

the country with "dry goods" in every direction; and the smuggler will be changed, with great advantage to himself and family, into a fair trader. Whatever is true of the wines of Xerez will be equally true of those of Sanlucar and Malaga, of Val de Peñas and Valencia. It will be equally true in time, of the excellent wines, brandies, and fruits, which form the true wealth of the greater part of the principality of Catalonia, where no more than a dozen *pueblos* are supported by their vaunted manufacturing industry. It is true of the wines and brandies, the silk and the fruits, both green and dry, of Malaga, Valencia, and Murcia: of the olives of Seville, Jaen, and Cordova; of the wools of Estremadura and Castile; of the products of the rich and various Andalucían mines; of the barks, dye-stuffs, preserved fruits, spices, and other products of the fertile soil of Spain. These agricultural and mercantile riches of her various provinces may be exported to England and her colonies in enormous quantity; and wine, which has hitherto been known only as an article of luxury amongst us, may have its use extended, when reasonably cheapened, to millions of fresh consumers.

Every one of the commodities I have mentioned is stored in large quantities throughout the provinces; the stocks by far exceed any possible local consumption; they are either of a perishable nature, or they do not, like wine, improve with time. Even wine loses 5 per cent. annually from the cask by leakage. They are all legitimate objects of commercial regulation, either by treaty or tariff convention; and unless

some such means be adopted, intelligent men admit that they see impending, upon a greater or lesser scale, the ruin of the other provinces, as well as of the South of Spain.

It is a prevalent opinion here, that strong wine is drank in England only by the class of *Los Lores*, as they write the name of "Lords;" and the notion is almost equally prevalent, that the clothes of British travellers are stitched with gold thread, which circumstance causes our countrymen to be always stripped to the skin when they fall into the hands of robbers. I have found it extremely difficult to disabuse the Andalucians of the first of these popular errors; and their amazement was extreme when I informed them that French and German wines are almost the only ones in use among our aristocratic classes, and that for one glass of port and sherry consumed by them there are ten consumed of claret and champagne, of hock, mozelle, and burgundy. But the notions which correctly prevailed during the war are still propagated over the Peninsula, and to extirpate a popular belief once deeply rooted, is a Herculean task. This fact, however, conclusively proves that sherry is in no respect regarded as an article of high luxury in England; that its consumption is, for the most part, amongst the middle classes; and that, by a more liberal commercial policy, it may be extended *ad infinitum*.

I do not suppose that the most ardent partisan of prohibiting systems would desire the restoration of that era of pure prohibition, when the punishment of death was annexed to the introduction of British merchandise into Spain. Yet, such was the glorious

policy of Philip V., who, in 1739, was so indignant at the taking of Portobello, that he published an edict ordering every British subject to depart forthwith from Spain, under pain of being arrested and dealt with as a prisoner of war. A second edict decreed the punishment of death against whoever should dare to introduce British goods into the kingdom of Spain; nay, against all who should have the audacity to send to the English the productions of Spain or her colonies! The ferocity was strictly impartial. Those were the days for prohibitionists to live in. This sanguinary code was evaded, notwithstanding; for the same goods were imported and exported by neutral powers; and to this period, just a century back, may the Spanish Treasury trace the plague of contrabandists. This suicidal measure subsequently caused the ruin of the minister who proposed it; it gradually became entirely disregarded, and by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, ten years after, England obtained the privilege of sending a ship yearly to the Spanish possessions in America.

The steadiest empire of delusion that the world has ever seen is that which has since prevailed in Spain with regard to customs duties. The most frightful financial embarrassments do not open her eyes. Her deficit is of 5,000,000*l.* sterling per annum, yet she rejects a customs income which would amount to nearly as much. France loses by smuggling 3,000,000*l.* annually, England loses 2,500,000*l.*, Spain loses an entire customs revenue! For the sake of a handful of imperfect producers, she strikes with prohibition her whole magnificent seaboard, erects a wall across

every bar, makes stagnant all her seas, shuts all her ports, consents to paralyse her entire frame, that the phalanges of a single band may be in motion. What are a few hundred Catalans by the side of Castile and Estremadura, Andalucía, and Murcia, Valencia and Aragon, Galicia and Léon, Asturias, the Basques, and Navarre? All Spain is scathed with discomfort and barbarism for the sake of something less than Kidderminster. A nation which might be amongst the greatest in Europe, is bound down like *Gulliver* with cords of Lilliput, and transpierced with miserable fiscal arrows. Dear articles for cheaper, inferior articles for better—rubbish or nakedness, is the alternative. The perfection of the system would be to go clothed in skins, like the old Spanish almugavar infantry.