

and we landed, in no very romantic mood, amid the whirl and confusion of Custom House officers examining the luggage, of porters seizing it in every direction, and of importunate people from the different hotels, each recommending his own with all the energy and vehement gesticulations generally displayed on such occasions by the excitable inhabitants of the south.

We walked up to the hotel on the Alameda, now the great resort of all the English, and certainly it is far superior to the general class of Spanish hotels, although wanting a great deal to make it equal to similar establishments in other continental countries. The house is one of the handsomest on the Alameda. We found the prices for our party very high, and went to look over some of the other hotels, but the little we saw of them convinced us we had better remain where we first took up our quarters. We made accordingly an agreement with the landlord, and engaged our rooms for the winter. I cannot say that to English ideas they presented much appearance of comfort, the scanty furniture consisting of nothing more than a sofa, a table, and a few chairs: the absence of carpets and of curtains to the windows did not impress one very highly with the arrangements of the much vaunted English hotel at Málaga. However, we soon became accustomed to it, and resigned ourselves to what could not be avoided. The impossibility of getting furnished houses or apartments in towns in Spain is a very serious disadvantage to families spending the winter in that country, being driven either to remain in the hotels, where the charges are high in proportion to the comforts they afford, or else obliged to take unfurnished rooms and buy the furniture—the latter an unprofitable speculation for families intending to remain but a few months in a place; for in Spain, even more than

elsewhere, it is difficult to find purchasers just at the moment you would wish to meet with them. The hotel in which we resided is situated upon the north side of the Alameda or public walk, and has the full benefit of the sun during the winter—a great advantage to invalids. They only can tell the comfort of having rooms facing the sun, who have lived much during the winter in southern climates, where there is a total absence of fire-places or stoves, and where the houses are so badly prepared against cold, that it is impossible to find either a door or a window which closes properly. When we arrived, the apartments were rather too warm, for the heat in October was excessive; but we soon found the advantage of the position, when the winter really commenced.

The Alameda is a fine long promenade, with four rows of acacias forming three avenues, the centre and broadest of all being reserved for pedestrians. Had it been along the sea shore, like the Chiaja at Naples, it would be beautiful; but as it is, the effect is quite destroyed from its being shut in from the sea and enclosed by two rows of houses. At times, the dust there is almost intolerable; but nevertheless it is the only promenade Málaga possesses, and as such, is the place where all the world walk up and down, to see and be seen. There is a very pretty marble fountain at one end; but the absence of shade—for acacias are not of much utility in affording shelter from the sun—and the want of flowers, which abound in the Alamedas of other towns, render it very commonplace.

Here, on fête days, in particular, the stranger may see the inhabitants promenading in their gayest dresses. Such a variety of colours meet and dazzle the eye as to make him at once conclude that whatever attractive qualities Spanish women may possess, taste in dress

cannot be considered among them. The most striking novelty on first landing in Spain is the mantilla, or black veil, which is generally worn, although here and there bonnets are creeping in, and Spanish women are sacrificing the only becoming peculiarity they have left in order to imitate the fashions of their neighbours. There is an elegance and a dressy appearance about the mantilla which create surprise at its not having been adopted by other nations ; and if Spaniards could only be made to feel how unbecoming bonnets are to them, the rich masses of whose splendid hair prevent the bonnet being properly worn, they would cherish the mantilla as conferring on them a peculiar charm in which they are safe to fear no rivals.

I know that I shall be accused of insensibility and want of taste, when I confess that my first disappointment on landing in Spain was the almost total absence of beauty amongst the Spanish women. Poets have sung of Spain's "dark glancing daughters," and travellers have wandered through the country, with minds so deeply impressed with the preconceived idea of the beauty of the women, that they have found them all their imaginations so fondly pictured, and in their works have fostered, what I cannot help maintaining, is a mere delusion ; one of the many in which people still indulge when they think and dream of Spain. The women of Spain have magnificent eyes, beautiful hair, and generally fine teeth ; but more than that cannot be said by those who are content to give an honest and candid opinion. I have rarely seen one whose features could be called strictly beautiful, and that bewitching grace and fascination about their figures and their walk which they formerly possessed, have disappeared with the high comb which supported the mantilla, and the narrow *basquiña*, which gave a peculiar character

to their walk. With the change in their costume, those distinctive charms have vanished. The gaudy colours which now prevail have destroyed the elegance that always accompanies black, in which alone, some years since, a lady could appear in public. No further proof of this is required than to see the same people at church, where black is still considered indispensable, and on the Alameda with red dresses and yellow shawls, or some colours equally gaudy and combined with as little regard to taste. The men have likewise abandoned the cloak, and now appear in paletots and every variety of foreign invention: nor have they either gained by their sacrifices at the altar of French fashion. By no means distinguished in figure, none needed more the rich folds of the capa to lend them that air of grace and dignity which it peculiarly possesses. Although I have not yet discovered the beauty of Spanish women, I must say that the Malaguenians are fairly entitled, in all that does exist, to dispute the palm with the inhabitants of any other town we have visited. There are some very pretty faces and very characteristic of the Spanish countenance. They are generally very dark, and almost all have that peculiar projecting brow which gives to the face quite a character of its own. The women have a universal custom of putting fresh flowers in their hair. It strikes one much, upon first arriving, to see those of every class, even the poorest, with some flower or another most gracefully placed in their rich black hair, the beauty of which is not a little enhanced by the bright red rose, or snowy jasmine contrasting so well with their raven tresses. The hair is generally worn plain, curls being seldom seen, for they do not suit the mantilla; and if flowers cannot be procured, some bright ribbon is invariably worn as a substitute. The love of brilliant

and showy colours, appearing to form a ruling passion in the present day, offers a singular contrast to the fashion of twenty years ago, when a lady who would have ventured into the street dressed in anything but black would have been mobbed and insulted by the people. As it is, the lower orders are not very tolerant of customs and habits which differ from their own standard, and are in the habit of giving vent to their opinions of strangers, who go about their towns, in terms sometimes most complimentary, but oftener just the reverse, especially when they happen to have anything about their dress which displeases the critical eye, or excites the merriment of the lively Andalucian. The people, however, are fast following in the steps of the upper classes, and abandoning their rich and picturesque dresses. In short, in many ways, Spaniards are losing those peculiarities which have invested their land with a certain poetical charm, and are adopting many of the trivial commonplaces of other countries, which, to a passing observer, may seem to indicate an advancement in civilisation; but alas! they make but little progress in those more sterling and intellectual qualities, and those industrial pursuits, which would enable Spain once more to assume that place which the natural advantages of her soil and position would qualify her to hold among the nations of the present day.

Our first visit to the theatre at Málaga confirmed my impressions of the exaggerated accounts generally given of Spanish beauty. All the best people were there, but only two or three very pretty faces were to be seen in the boxes. The pit, divided into seats, each having its own number, is wholly appropriated to gentlemen. When first we arrived, the Alcalde or one of the Ayuntamiento always presided in the centre over the royal box; but this practice has been discontinued

lately, and the audience may now indulge in their applause or disapprobation unrestrained. There was an Italian company—of course a very indifferent one. They acted on alternate nights with the Spanish performers ; but we generally went on the evenings the latter gave their representations, the Spanish pieces offering to us a greater attraction than Italian Operas by inferior singers. One of the pieces, which had the greatest run, was a Spanish comic opera, called the Tio Caniytas, which has taken immensely the last two years. An unhappy Englishman is the hero of the play, and his endeavours to cultivate the society of a youthful gipsy, in order to acquire with more facility the Gitano language, afford the Spaniards a good opportunity of turning our countrymen into ridicule ; and he is victimised in turn by the old uncle and by the lover of his dark instructress. There are some very pretty airs introduced, and a characteristic dance called the Vito. It is amusing to a stranger from the costume and the plot. Being partly in the Andalucian and partly in the Gitano dialect, it is rather incomprehensible to any one who has not been some time in the country. Some of the lighter Spanish pieces are very attractive ; but their tragedies, however well they may read, are indeed formidable on the stage, as they contain very long speeches and very little action.

While we were at Málaga, they brought out a piece called the Mercado de Londres (the London Market), illustrating the adventures of a Spaniard in London. The incidents were not very flattering to our national pride, as the story turned on the interesting subject of a man selling his wife—an event which they seem to imagine is of the commonest occurrence in "*soberbia Albion.*"

The district of Málaga was formed into a bishopric

and made suffragan to the see of Seville, in 1488. Pope Innocent VIII. had issued a bull, authorising the Grand Cardinal Mendoza to erect churches wherever he might think fit in the cities gained from the Moors. The cathedral was commenced in 1522 : and its design is by some ascribed to Diego de Siloe. The façade cannot boast of much architectural beauty ; it is flanked by two towers — one completed, the other not yet raised above the façade, remaining, like all cathedrals in Spain, unfinished. Of the time of Philip II., it offers nothing remarkable either in the interior or exterior ; the latter is, however, decorated with some rich marbles. The existence of these, which had been covered over with plaster and whitewash, was hardly known, until a few years ago, when one of the richest merchants in Málaga, a British subject, undertook to clean the façade at his own expense, preparatory to the first visit of the Infanta and the Duke de Montpensier.

The effect of all the cathedrals I have yet seen in Spain is destroyed by the plan of having the choir in the centre of the church, facing the high altar, instead of behind it. It prevents the eye taking in the whole of the edifice, chokes up the nave and renders it impossible to obtain a view of the high altar, unless sideways from the aisles. No beauty of execution in the choir itself can atone for the manner in which it mars the general effect of the whole building : it also seems to interfere with the due observance of public worship, for the frequent processions of priests and acolytes, to and from the bishop's throne, which is situated in the choir, serve only to distract the attention which should solely be devoted to the altar.

The crowds of women, all in black, form a very striking feature on first entering the Spanish churches.

They all kneel, or sit on the floor with their feet gathered under them, and fill up every pause in the service with the fluttering of their fans. There are not any seats, consequently all must stand or adopt a similar alternative. However fatiguing to those unaccustomed to it, the effect is pleasing ; for instead of the noise and confusion that seats more or less occasion, a change of attitude is only indicated by a gentle wavy motion as they change from one position to the other : besides, the religious impression it produces, that *there* there is no exclusiveness — the rich and the poor, the humble and the great, find themselves all placed upon the same equality.

The men—such of them as do attend, and they are not many—appear to go there more for form than anything else. They rarely use a book, and never kneel, except for a few moments, during the elevation. Indeed, a Spanish church, and a Spanish congregation of the present day, leave on the stranger's mind anything but a favourable impression of the religious condition of the country.

We were most painfully struck with the apparent indifference to these things when we joined the crowd which thronged to the cemetery on All Souls' day, a day ostensibly set apart for praying at the tombs of their deceased relatives. It appeared far more like a festive promenade, where all had met to enjoy each other's society and talk and amuse themselves. All who went, it is true, were in mourning ; but their countenances but little accorded with the sombre garb they had assumed, and, with some few exceptions, was the only evidence of sorrow to be seen.

The cemetery is prettily situated on a knoll outside the town, surrounded by immense walls, some seven feet in thickness. These are all perforated with niches,

in which the coffins are placed in regular rows, and then walled up, with the inscriptions let into the face of the wall. Some are buried in the ground within the enclosure, and there are several very handsome monuments. A magnificent chapel marks the burial-place of the Heredias, one of the wealthiest families in Málaga. On All Souls' day the tombs are lighted up, and hundreds of candles placed in every direction against the walls and over the monuments, which are covered with fresh flowers and wreaths of everlastings, the pious or formal offerings of surviving friends. There were some, indeed, who were weeping over the graves of those who had been dear to them; but the vast majority walked round and round, utterly heedless of the ostensible object for which they had assembled; or perhaps, if they did heave a passing sigh, at the sight of some well-known name, it was soon forgotten in the all-engrossing conversation of the living. Spaniards must have a strange power of abstracting their minds for a moment from things around them, and returning to them again; or else their prayers must be merely on the lips, for it is quite extraordinary how they will pause, in the middle of a prayer, to make some commonplace observation, and then continue their devotions, as if the remark had been a mere parenthesis. Even the beggars will come and kneel down by your side in church, and beg and pray alternately in the most singular manner. But, whatever be the class, whether rich or poor, there seem to prevail, generally, an apathy and indifference in everything connected with religion, which indicate the sad, but inevitable reaction, to be looked for after a system in which intolerance was confounded with piety, and the essence of religion with its mere forms.

The sea formerly covered the space on which the

Alameda is now built; and even further inland may be seen a fine horse-shoe arch, which was formerly the entrance to the Moorish arsenal. The present harbour was commenced in the reign of Philip II. The fruit market is held close to the hotel, and presents a very gay appearance from the glowing and brilliant colours of the fruits and vegetables exposed for sale. The delicate tinge of the clustering grape; the bright scarlet of the tomata; the rich green of the pimienta; the dark purple of the fig; the golden hue of the oranges and lemons, are all blended together, and the fruits are heaped around in the most lavish profusion.

Near the Custom House there has been planted lately an avenue of *Bella-sombras* (*Phytolacea dioica*), a very pretty broad-leaved tree, which grows rapidly but soon decays; and all around are masses of scarlet geranium, which flourish here in the highest luxuriance. Close by is a small fort, from whence may be obtained one of the best views of the town. Here it appears backed by its *Alcazaba*, and the double line of walls which connect it with the more lofty fortress of the *Gibralfaro*. Below, the gigantic cathedral seems to occupy nearly the entire town, while the Mole stretches into the sea, with the light-house at the extremity of the harbour.

The *Guadalmedina* runs along the western side of the Alameda, dividing the principal portion of the town from the *barrios* or quarters of the *Trinidad* and *Perchel*, which are inhabited by a very low and disorderly set of people—a reputation they seem to have possessed ever since the days of Cervantes. There is hardly a drop of water to be seen in the bed of the river, save, now and then, in the winter months, when an unusual quantity of rain has fallen in the mountains, and then it suddenly becomes a raging