

Wibrac by Rosich was one of the best specimens of buffa December. acting I have seen on the Italian stage. The struggles between the old man's debility, and his impetuous enthusiasm in favour of Carlota, the perpetual contrast between his gout and his gallantry, were marked with masterly skill and force.

There is no ballet at this theatre, nor at any other in Madrid. The cessation of this amusement forms a page in the scandalous chronicle of this capital. It appears, that some months since there was a corps de ballet at the Teatro del Principe, and that the ballet master was a person of rather an engaging appearance. The principal singer at the time had a very pretty wife, to whom her husband thought that gentleman was too attentive. She formed one of the corps de ballet; and so painful to her spouse was the thought of her being about to dance with his rival, after he should have finished singing, that sometimes he could not sing at all. The audience were not unfrequently surprised by losing half of a beautiful division of a song, which remained quite unutterable, as if frozen in the way; and once or twice, the poor jealous harmonist ran off the stage into the green-room, to look after his faithless consort. Things at last came to an issue; either there was to be no opera or no ballet, for both, it was clear, could not go on together. The former was fortunately preferred.

The second theatre (El Teatro de la Cruz) is large, and well calculated both for hearing and seeing the business of the stage. It is, however, as yet in a state of preparation for future decoration. The boxes are painted a dark grey, without any gilding or ornament whatever, with the exception of those appropriated to the use of the Royal Family, which are fitted up with purple velvet cushions and silk curtains. There is no ceremony required as to dress, which is proper enough, seeing that you may chance to have with

December. you in the same box two or three matrons, with their infants at the breast.

A great number of new comic pieces was produced during the season, which being entirely founded on patriotic subjects, pleased the multitude for a few nights, and then passed away for ever to the shades of oblivion. The most tolerable of these was a comedy in three acts, called *El trapense en los campos de Ayerve*.—"The Trappist in the fields of Ayerve." The scene opens with the camp of the Trappist's army, which consists of eight or ten soldiers, each clothed in a different uniform. One of these fellows, who is a humorist, makes a few dry remarks on the chances which he had of obtaining any pay, for though he wore the ensign of the Faith on his arm, he was free to confess that he loved the substantial rewards of this world. This observation he followed up with others, which were received with continued bursts of laughter by the audience, but they were really of so profane a tendency, that I would not venture even to allude to them. These jests at the expense of religion being over, a flourish of one drum and a rusty trumpet introduced the Trappist and his motley staff. He appeared in his hood and cassock, over which were belted a sword and poniard—strange accompaniments for the humble garb which he wore. The demeanour and language of this represented Monk were still more shocking to English habits than the ribaldrous jests of his corporal. After extolling the motives of his opposition to the Constitutionalists, as founded in the religion of the cross, he preached a sermon, in which he proved to the satisfaction of his troops that the patriots and Communeros, by whatever names they were called, were nothing more or less than fiends and evil spirits let loose from the other world. He then blessed his troops, and absolved them from all sins, past and future, assuring them of the highest seats in heaven. Among his staff was a tall,

thin, mortified fellow in the garb of a priest, who, though December. he wore a sword, trembled at the slightest allusion of a warlike character. He caused a good deal of mirth. The band proceeded to levy contributions on a neighbouring village, and where the smooth, hypocritical discourses of the Trappist did not prevail, he called in to his aid his bayonets. An elderly gentleman, who refuses to pay a single dollar towards such a cause, is taken prisoner, and torn from his only daughter, whom in the mean time one of the Trappist's officers endeavours to seduce. At length the Patriot troops come to Ayerve. They employ themselves in songs and harangues in favour of the Constitution, until they meet the Trappist, and after an action, they expel him and his wretched army from the neighbourhood, and the comedy concludes with songs and dances performed by a group of villagers. The enthusiasm with which every thing like praise of the Constitution, or a declaration of attachment to it in preference of life, was received by the audience, was remarkably animated. It was by no means uninteresting to observe a people, so long enslaved, triumphing at every opportunity in the enjoyment of their new-born liberties. The music in the intervals between the acts was of course all patriotic. The audience frequently joined in chorus, shouting Vivas and singing verses of Riego's hymn.

The theatres, however, do not excite the public attention here so much as they do in Paris and London. In Madrid, as in the other principal towns of Spain, the amusement to which the people are most fervently attached is that of the bull-fights. In summer these exhibitions are carried to their highest degree of excellence; in winter they are limited to six or seven bulls of inferior breed; which, however, sometimes afford what is considered good entertainment. They are presented every Sunday (except during

December. the Lent), the weather permitting, in a large amphitheatre, specially constructed for these exhibitions.


The amphitheatre of Madrid is a short distance beyond the walls, about one hundred yards from the gate of Alcala. It is capable of accommodating from six to eight thousand spectators. Let the reader imagine, in the first place, an extensive circular arena, which is bounded by a high and strong wooden partition that runs all round, and has in it four gates at the four points of the compass. One of these gates is used for the entry of the director of the games and the performers engaged in them; another for the entry of the bulls; the third for the egress of those bulls which are not killed; and the last affords a passage to the horses which drag out the bulls that are slain. The lower gallery for spectators is at a distance of five or six feet from the wooden boundary of the arena; this unoccupied space runs all round, in order that if the bulls overleap the boundary, as they sometimes do, they might be prevented from injuring the spectators, and be driven back to the arena, the nearest gate being opened. The lower gallery, as well as the arena, is exposed to the open air. The second gallery, which is above the first, is protected from the sun and rain by a tier of boxes, and the latter are roofed with tiles. Fifty reals are paid for the use of a whole box, four for a seat in the second gallery, and two for a place in the lower one.

My prejudices against bull-fights were strong, but happening one Sunday to see crowds of men, women, and children hastening to the amphitheatre, I could not avoid following in their train. Shortly after three o'clock, crowds began to pour in rapidly. The women and young girls were all in their hair, but covered, the better sort with black lace veils, and those of the less affluent classes with a black silk veil bordered with lace. The greater number of them had also their fans, which the Spanish women use not

only to cool their faces in warm weather, but to guard their eyes from the sun, as their head-dress is ill calculated for this purpose. It was not uninteresting to a stranger to hear the members of different parties recognizing each other by such names as Barbara, Maragita, Herminia, Olimpia, Nicancra, Nicolassa, Fernandina, Innocentio, Patricio, Francisco, Pedro, and others of similar terminations. December.

The director, dressed in the ancient Spanish style, with a short black mantle, a hat turned up at the sides, and on the left side a plume of red and white feathers, rode into the arena upon a handsome charger. After receiving the keys of the den from the Alcalde, who presided, and who sat in a box on the right of the king's box, he gave directions for the entertainment to commence. Two horses immediately appeared in the arena, each laden with two clownish riders, who were seated on a pad back to back. The hindermost rider kept his place by holding in his hand a cord attached to the pad. In his right hand he bore a long wooden staff, pointed with iron. A bull was then let into the arena the tips of whose horns were made harmless by being covered with lead. As soon as he saw the horses, he proceeded directly against one of them, and the combatants, who were apparently new to the office, offering no effectual resistance with their spears, he easily overthrew both horse and riders. He then attacked the other, and this contest was continued for some time with alternate success, the bull, however, being most frequently the conqueror, to the great amusement of the spectators.

Upon a flourish of trumpets being given, this bull retired, and two fresh horsemen, on separate horses, entered. They were handsomely dressed, in white and red silk jackets, decorated with gold lace; their hats were white, with a wide leaf, and a low round crown. These also carried each a long wooden staff or spear, with an iron spike in the end of



December.

it. A bull was then admitted, whose horns were in their natural condition. Nothing can be finer than the entry of a fierce proud bull into the arena. He rushes in; astonished by the crowd of spectators, he stops a while, looks around him, but when his eye lights on the horsemen in the arena, he paws the ground with the majesty of a lion, and summons up all his fury for the contest. This engagement being attended with danger, both to the horse and rider, it excited strong interest. One of the combatants, or as they are called in Spanish, picadores (pikemen), was thrown to the ground, but happening to be near the boundary of the arena, some of the spectators came to his assistance, and delivered him from the rage of the ferocious animal. The attention of the bull was, in the meantime, diverted by the banderilleros. These are pedestrian performers, who carry in one hand a flag (banderilla) of yellow or red silk, with which they approach the bull. As soon as he sees the gaudy colour, he rushes towards it, and the flag-bearer runs with all his speed to escape over the boundary, trailing the flag behind him. If he be in danger of being overtaken, he lets the flag fall on the ground: the bull immediately stops and vents all his rage upon it, as if under the impression that it conceals his adversary, while the fugitive has time to get away in safety.

The bull being now pretty well fatigued, the banderilleros, who were also handsomely though very lightly dressed, armed themselves with two strong steel darts each. They were short, fitted for the hand, and decorated with pieces of cut paper, so as to disguise them. It was the object of each performer to run towards the bull with agility, and just as the animal was in the act of stooping the head to toss him, to fix the two darts in the back of the neck. As soon as the bull felt the points of the weapons, he lifted his head again from pain, without attempting to touch his adversary,

who thus had time to escape. The animal immediately endeavoured by tossing his head to get rid of the darts; but this he was not often able to accomplish, as they were strongly bearded, and sometimes he was seen raging round the arena, his neck bristled with these torturing instruments. At length, when he was almost exhausted, a matador (slayer) approached him, holding in his left hand a large red flag, with which he engaged the bull's attention for a while, until, finding him in a convenient position, he thrust beneath the shoulders and up to the very hilt a long sword, which he held in his right hand, and which he had hitherto concealed from the eye of the animal as much as possible. The bull now fell, but was not yet quite dead, when an attendant came with a short knife, which he infixed at the junction of the spine with the head, and instantly put an end to his agonies. He was then dragged across the arena by three horses, and carried away. Two bulls were killed in this manner. The second was an immensely strong one; he leaped after the banderilleros twice over the boundary, but from the arrangement already mentioned, he was driven back into the arena without doing any mischief.

A third bull was killed in the following barbarous way. A green fir-tree was planted in the arena, immediately opposite the gate at which the bulls enter. Before this tree, a man covered with a kind of armour of stiff canvas, and having a false head of a monster with the mouth open superadded to his own stature, knelt on one knee. A thick wooden pole, pointed with a strong steel blade, was given to him, and fixing the lower end of it in the ground, he sloped the point so as to meet the bull on entering at the gate. The pole being so fixed, the gate was opened, and a wild bull immediately rushed in with such amazing force, that the spear penetrated completely through the ribs, and came out

December. near the back. Still the animal was not mortally wounded. He attacked his adversary furiously, who pretending to be dead, permitted himself to be rolled about. The bull seeing the thing before him apparently shapeless and void of life, soon left it, and ran maddened over the arena, the spear still remaining in his side. It was a shocking spectacle; but still so strong was the animal, that the matador could not get near enough, without manifest danger, to kill him. At length, by means of a curved knife, which was fixed on a long pole, one of the assistants cut the ham-strings. Even after this the victim made efforts to move; but at last he fell, and his agonies were terminated in the usual manner.

Here ended what might be called the second part. The third part was of a more innocent, and also of a more useful character. Five or six bulls, whose horns were leaded, were admitted successively into the arena, and the younger classes of the male spectators crowded to emulate each other in worrying the animals. By holding their cloaks before them, on one of those gay silk or worsted scarfs which most of the Spaniards wear under the vest round the waist, they induced the bull to run after them. If he were too quick upon them, they threw down the cloak or scarf, and ran away. Frequently it happened that they could not run fast enough, and the bull laid them prostrate; but his attention being immediately drawn off by another adversary, no harm ensued. One lad, however, in endeavouring to escape, fell down, and no person happening to be near, a bull was instantly upon him, and raised him aloft on one of his horns as if he were a fly. The lad, with great presence of mind, finding himself thus unexpectedly riding on the horn, caught hold of the end of it, and was thus carried about the arena. Fortunately for him he was soon tossed off again, without any other injury than a rent in his trowsers. In

this part of the entertainment it is that the national utility of ^{December.} these exhibitions consists; for it serves to accustom youth to danger, to render them active and dexterous, and in some measure to prepare them by these mimic combats for contests of a more important description. The whole concluded with a display of fire-works, which was upon a limited scale. There were about five or six thousand persons present.

CHAPTER VIII.

MADRID.—PUBLIC WALKS.—BUILDINGS.—SOCIETY.—THE
ROYAL FAMILY.—CHRISTMAS DAY.

December.

MADRID, as it stands at present, is as nearly as possible in the form of a square. It is enclosed on every side, either by walls or houses, and it has fifteen gates; some of which are constructed with so much architectural beauty, that they are conspicuous ornaments of the metropolis. The gate of Alcala* is particularly magnificent. It was built to commemorate the arrival of Charles III., and partakes therefore of a triumphal character. The order of the structure is Ionic, and it derives no small part of its noble effect from the situation in which it is placed. When the French attacked Madrid in 1808, their artillery exercised much ingenuity in endeavouring to deface the ornaments and columns of this gate. They fired through it repeatedly, and the marks of balls are still to be seen on the outside part of the structure, where they succeeded in breaking some of the capitals, and mutilating the statuary.

The stranger who catches a first view of Madrid upon entering by the gate of Alcala, is apt to form high expectations of its extent and magnificence. He sees before him the long wide street of Alcala, formed on both sides by a line of princely houses, and having a slight but graceful bend, which gives it rather the appearance of a vista in painting than of mere reality. Upon advancing a little he finds himself in full view of the Prado, or public walk, which extends

* So called, as it leads from Madrid to the town of Alcala.

to a considerable distance on his right, but on his left-hand December. reaches to a boundary which his eye cannot perceive. This latter part of the Prado it is which is most frequented. The central walk, which is very wide, is called the Salon. At each side of the Salon there are several narrow walks, which being thickly shaded by lofty elm-trees, give the Prado the appearance of a noble avenue to some royal palace. The space between the extremity of the Salon and the gate of Atocha, which is very nearly a mile, is also abundantly planted with elms laid out in walks, and, as well as the Salon, and the other parts of the Prado, decorated with fountains, which are embellished in an excellent style of workmanship.

Adjoining the Prado are public gardens, called Las Delicias. The latter may be understood as equivalent to Kensington Gardens, and the former to Hyde Park, though there is not the most remote similarity between them as to the extent or disposition of the grounds. Las Delicias are chiefly frequented in summer, because their walks are more umbrageous than those of the Prado, and they are cooled by a large basin of limpid water, round which are fountains that ever yield a pure and salubrious spring—the greatest luxury of a warm climate. Near these are the botanical gardens, which are also open to the public in summer.

Immediately beyond the basin of Las Delicias are to be seen some of the remains of the royal palace of El Retiro, once so famous for the extent and beauty of its gardens, its woodland shades, its fish-ponds, fountains, theatre, and other various curiosities. It was a palace of recreation, but was turned into a fortress by the French, who levelled all the trees around it, and made a desert of this once beautiful situation. Upon Ferdinand's return, he ordered this palace to be repaired; but little progress was made by the time the revolution broke out, and prevented him from pursuing his

December. wishes. No injury was done to good taste by the occurrence of this impediment, as the style in which the new buildings were commenced is Chinese. One or two of them are finished, and, so far as they go, resemble parts of the palace at Brighton. By some good fortune an equestrian statue of Philip IV. was preserved from the rage of the modern Vandals. It still remains in the grounds of El Retiro, and deserves never to perish.

On the fine Sunday afternoons of winter, between two and five o'clock, the Prado is generally very fully attended. The company, as may be supposed, presents a very different aspect from that of Hyde Park. The ladies are all, with perhaps no more than a dozen exceptions, dressed in black silk gowns, and shawls of various colours, but mostly violet. They appear in their hair, having no other covering on the head than the very slight one of a black or white lace veil, which is gracefully attached to the hair-knot on the top, so as to show a gold or tortoise-shell comb, and falls freely over the shoulders. Sometimes it is let down over the face; but generally it is folded back over the forehead, and drawn together under the chin by the hand, thus advantageously shading the countenance. This dress is so becoming, that in contemplating it one scarcely feels the want of variety. Every woman looks well in it, and where there are a figure and countenance really handsome, they shine with double lustre in this national costume. The handsomest women in Madrid are mostly from the provinces. The genuine Madrilenians are less remarkable for their beauty than perhaps those of any other province of Spain. They present striking contrasts to the slight but voluptuous form, the glowing cheeks, and large, hazel, soul-speaking eyes of the south. The libellers of Spain, i. e. the travellers, English, French, and German, all conspire to defame the virtue of the Spanish ladies; and, indeed, I have often heard it roundly asserted

here, that the general heat of the climate, the want of proper December. education, and the relaxation of morals, have placed virtuous female characters rather amongst the exceptions in this country. Far be it from me to offer any opinion where the delicate honour of woman is concerned.

The men appear almost universally enveloped in large cloaks, which give them a gravity of aspect perfectly in keeping with the serious pensive turn of their minds. The hats of the gentlemen are like those worn in England. When speaking to each other, their gesture is more varied, and even more passionate, than that of the French. They speak with great distinctness of articulation, and, at the same time, with amazing fluency. They seldom have recourse to the beauties of nature, or of poetry, to illustrate their meaning. No pointed turn of phrase, or happy allusion, which form the fascination of the elegant minds of England and France. They go directly to the business in hand, and talk it in a logical and emphatic manner, which now and then yields to a train of deep and philosophic thought.

For the two or three last Sundays of this month, the Prado was quite deserted; its walks and leafless trees having been mantled in snow,—rather an unusual circumstance in Madrid, at least for the length of time which the snow remained on the ground. At no time was it deep, as the heat of the sun, which almost uniformly comes out in this climate with intense strength at noon, kept it down. The range of the Guadarama, which, like minor Pyrenees, defend Madrid on the east, were, however, thickly covered with snow. When the whole country around the capital was appareled in this fugitive raiment of winter; the hills, the valleys, and corn-fields, the trees and cottages, all whitened with its influence, and the Guadarama frowning down upon them like the genius of the season, presented a snow scene of considerable beauty.

December.

The mornings and evenings of the winters in Madrid are usually very cold. In England a cold winter is considered salubrious: here it is the contrary; for Madrid is seated so high over the level of the sea, that its atmosphere is very thin; and a cold northern wind, which seems scarcely strong enough to extinguish a lamp, pierces to the heart, and not unfrequently freezes the very sources of life. Pulmonary complaints, brought on by this excessive cold, are common; and so rapid is their progress, that the sufferer is carried to his grave in three or four days. Sometimes these imperceptible blasts act on the limbs exposed to them like a palsy, and they are the more dangerous, as they chiefly haunt the atmosphere immediately after a brilliant and warm sun has left it. Hence it is, that in this season the Spaniards are seen usually muffled up to the eyes in their cloaks. By covering the lower part of the countenance they breathe a warm air, a precaution that is almost indispensable to their safety. Their lungs are generally bad; and this must be the case so long as they continue their deplorable custom of smoking cigars. The cigars most commonly used are nothing more than eight or ten grains of coarse tobacco wrapped up in a small square of white paper. It is not tobacco, in fact, which they chiefly smoke, but paper, which every body knows is impregnated with an oil that is more or less poisonous. The oil of yellow letter-paper is a rapid and rancorous poison, and though many Spaniards know this, they continue the habit.

The street of Alcala, superb in every other respect, is inconvenient for pedestrians, on account of the narrowness of the footway, and the roughness of the pavement. In snowy or rainy weather this inconvenience is much increased, as the footway is placed exactly under the pipes which convey the water from the roofs of the houses. These pipes project a little from the parapets, and the collected

rain falls from their heights on the footway below; the simple addition of a perpendicular conduit either not having been thought of, or having been deemed too expensive. A want of cleanliness is also as observable in the streets of Madrid as in those of Paris. The ante-hall of the principal houses is generally left exposed to every sort of passenger. Sometimes a poor old woman establishes in it her little stall for bread and fruit, and asses' milk; but this is no safeguard against its violation. Indeed, the proprietors invite every sort of disagreeable odour, as immediately within the large front door, or rather gate, accommodations are constructed which attract the passenger from the street.

Beyond the front door, which is generally open, there is an interior one, which is as generally closely shut. If a visitor desires to go in, he pulls a rope, which hangs near the door, and rings a bell. A servant appears at a small, square, grated aperture in the door, and demands his business; after which he is admitted to the interior of the house. In the highest order of houses a porter generally attends in the ante-hall; but in these cases the stairs ascend directly from the ante-hall, and, after the usual inquiries, the visitor goes up. In Madrid the higher classes chiefly live up stairs. The ground-floor apartments are all assigned to the use of the servants and kitchen, or are stored with lumber.

After leaving the street of Alcala, which is the only magnificent street in Madrid, the stranger enters a kind of a square, which is called *Puerta del Sol*—the Gate of the Sun. In former times it was one of the gates of entrance to the capital; but in consequence of the erection of the street of Alcala, and other additions on that side, the Gate of the Sun is now almost in the middle of Madrid, and is, in fact, for that reason, used as the exchange. In the mornings and evenings this place is crowded with persons, who, however, attend less for commercial purposes than to talk about the

December. news, and to lounge away an hour or two. The street of La Montera, which opens from the Puerta del Sol, is also much frequented by loungers. There are in it several gay and handsome shops, but they are not remarkable for richness. The trade of Madrid is limited to its own population (about 142,000), and is therefore inconsiderable for the metropolis of such a country as Spain. A little business is done in the morning; less in the evening. From one to half-past three in the afternoon the shops are all shut, as then the proprietors and their families are at dinner.

There are several other good streets in Madrid; but it is not within the design of this work to enter into any description of them. Generally speaking, they are lofty and narrow; and, from the want of business and bustle, they have a gloomy appearance. Indeed, Madrid, though built in a stately style, has been properly called the dullest capital in Europe. Every family lives very much within itself, hospitality being a virtue more frequently spoken of than seen in practice. Dinner parties are very rare indeed. The society of Madrid is chiefly seen in those evening assemblies which they term *Tertulias*.

A tertulia means nothing more than a meeting of persons, and in the Spanish houses there is no remarkable deviation from its literal signification. A few distinguished families have their Tertulias on certain nights of the week, to which any person who has been once invited is entitled, and indeed expected to go, on every successive similar occasion. The elders of the assembly club round the card-tables, the younger folk dance; while those who cannot pass for young, and do not wish to be deemed old, stand by and look on. There is no necessity for a particular introduction to the lady with whom a gentleman wishes to dance. If he observe her disengaged, he has only to walk up and make his obeisance to her, and if she chooses to dance she will rise; if not, she