

all active, well-made men, dressed in the old-fashioned Spanish costume, something like a court-suit, consisting of silken coat, embroidered waistcoat, spangled breeches, and silk stockings, they form a most brilliant, picturesque group, and light up the scene with their flashing colours.

The matador, or *espada* (as it seems now to be the fashion to call him), the performer *par excellence*, who closes each fight by despatching the bull single-handed, is dressed much in the same style, and has his hair gathered like a woman's into a thick mass at the back of his head.

This gay procession, strange precursor of the bloody scenes that follow, having advanced with flourish of trumpets to the centre of the ring, halts, and makes obeisance opposite the box of the president, who, by throwing to an alguazil the key, which admits the bull, gives the signal for the commencement of the performance.

The door, on which twenty thousand eyes are fixed in steadfast gaze, now opens, the bull comes bounding forth towards the centre of the ring, and there, stunned at once by the sudden burst of sunshine, after the darkness in which he has been immured, and the novel scene upon which

he has made so abrupt an entrance, he pauses for an instant transfixed, and glares around in fierce amazement. It is a moment of intensest excitement, but before you fully realize the tumult of emotion compressed into those brief seconds, the bull, breaking the spell that enchained him, has charged one of the chulos full tilt, and presses him so closely that he has barely time to vault over the barrier, a height of at least six feet, which the bull clears after him with an activity, that seems impossible to so large an animal, only to find himself, however, carried back by his own impetuosity into the ring, by one of the side passages provided for such an emergency.

One of the three horsemen, always in the ring, riding forward now plants himself in front of the bull, and couching his lance, armed with a steel point, something like the spike of a boat-hook, aims at the junction of neck and shoulder-blade. The bull, eager to be at somebody, accepts the challenge, and, dashing at the horse with his tremendous horns, pierces him through the heart, and as steed and rider roll over in the dust, a fountain of blood (one of the most horrible sights imaginable), spouting forth, with the force of a jet, two or three feet high into the



air, soon drains out the poor horse's life, and releases him from misery.

The chulos have already darted forward to the rescue of their comrade, and distracting the bull's attention by waving their scarlet flags and cloaks in his face, they extricate the picador as he lies entangled and helpless under his horse; the other horsemen take up the game, placing their horses always so as to cover their own persons; chulos dart here and there, and everywhere, and when, maddened and confounded by so ubiquitous a swarm of foes, the bull singles out any one, and charges home, he finds him as unassailable as a ghost, so perfect is the coolness and self-possession, with which these consummate artists evade the charge, stepping aside with graceful ease at the very moment, when you expect to see them tossed into the air.

In ten minutes two more horses are struggling in their death-agony, while those that are still able to continue the fight, move about half disembowelled, treading on their own entrails, and the sand is covered with many a pool of blood.

The bull, too, now begins to show symptoms of distress, and, with neck and shoulders wounded and gory, he pauses, poor creature! a moment

for breath. One would think such a spectacle had power to move the hardest heart, and that the noble beast having "proved the mettle of his pasture," might be allowed to retire, and enjoy the life his courage had thus redeemed. In all that throng of ten thousand, not a dozen voices would be found to give expression to such a sentiment, and the victim of man's cruelty must furnish to the uttermost his portion of the entertainment, the first act of which has alone been exhibited as yet!

And now the banderilleros, each armed with a pair of the light, gaily-ornamented darts, from which they take their name, come forward, and, with astonishing dexterity, plant in the bull's neck these instruments of torture, to which fireworks are attached, and as they explode one after another, a new ingredient of horror is thrown into the scene; while the poor bull, in the midst of fire and blood, bellows with pain and dismay, and, goaded into fresh efforts, rushes wildly through the ring, without presence of mind, or strength enough left to make a successful charge; till at last, black with sweat, and foaming at the mouth, he stands at bay, with the sullen determination of despair, as if, having at length found out what it all meant, he



was resolved to die like a hero. The crisis has come, and with one of those ruthless cries, that carry back the mind to the butchery of the Roman Circus, and the martyrdom of the early Christians, the matador is called for, and you feel he comes almost upon an errand of mercy, to terminate so horrible a spectacle.

Armed with a bright rapier, a trusty, well-proved weapon of admirable temper, and with a flag in his left hand, he advances towards the president's box, and, bowing, obtains permission to exhibit his skill. Calmly taking his station right before the bull, he waves his crimson streamer across his eyes, an insult which in a moment concentrates every energy of departing life, and as the dying beast lowers his front for a final onset, the flag drops over his head, the death-stab passes through his spine, and, staggering like a drunken man, with streams of blood gushing forth from mouth and nostrils, the vast mass settles down like a sinking ship, and in a few moments all is still. The gaily-caparisoned mules come cantering in, the bull, and the horses he has slain, are dragged out at a gallop, the pools of blood are effaced by basket-loads of fresh sand, and, with a speed unknown

in other Spanish transactions, the ring is cleared for a fresh encounter.

Sometimes the matador is unlucky, or nervous, and, as we saw, does not succeed in giving the *coup de grâce*, until he has made several fruitless attempts. In such a case, no matter how great a favourite he may usually be, loud and angry are the taunting cries, that assail his ears from every quarter of the amphitheatre.

On this occasion, eight bulls, and fifteen or sixteen horses, were killed, and blood enough flowed to satisfy the most truculent Englishman, for the rest of his days. Anything more horrible, and utterly revolting, than the whole spectacle, I cannot conceive, and it seems to me impossible to overrate the brutalizing influence exercised by the bull-ring upon the nation at large. Nor do I wonder, after witnessing such an exhibition, and the frenzy of delight excited by its most shocking incidents, that in Spain even human life is lightly esteemed, among a population, to whom blood-shedding is an amusement, and the murderous use of the knife, on the smallest provocation, has ever been so fearfully common.

The operation of the same influence may be



traced in the domain of Art, where the most painful subjects are delineated with a reality, that leaves nothing to the imagination; and a Figure literally drenched with gore is one of the most customary representations of the suffering Redeemer, when the artist does not possess sufficient refinement to elevate his conception of the subject above the level of the national taste.

In the midst, however, of the horrors, that surrounded us, as we sat that afternoon in the Plaza de Toros, one incident occurred that afforded a momentary relief.

Six bulls had already been killed, and when the door opened for the seventh, he walked in with so pompous a solemnity of manner, worthy of the stateliest alderman in a civic procession, and looked so intensely peaceable, that he was welcomed with screams of laughter from every side. Had he been a deputation from the Peace Society, commissioned to remonstrate against so barbarous and cowardly a sport, he could not have acted his part better. He was a wise bull, the wisest of his race, and gave us all an eminent example of the magic potency of good-humour. A punster would affirm he must have come from the shores of the Pacific, so perfect



was his temper, so indomitable his love of peace.

Many and ingenious were the expedients employed to provoke him to pugnacity, but every one signally failed. Falstaff himself had not a more decided objection to fighting. He had evidently come into the ring, with his mind made up not to break the peace against any of her Majesty's subjects, no matter what provocation and insult were heaped upon him. His demeanour was a living comment on Horace's description of the model citizen, and the words, with one alteration, exactly represent him :—

“ Tenacem propositi *bovem*  
 Non civium ardor prava jubentium,  
 Non vultus instantis Tyranni,”

(a line that will apply to the President of the day, as he looks down from his stately box on the arena,)

“ *Mente quatit solidâ.*”

*Banderillas* were tried in vain, and cracker after cracker exploded without eliciting the smallest spark of combativeness. In Falstaff's phrase, he was “cold-spur” all over; and so hopeless a subject for the ring did he appear, that dogs, auxiliaries frequently called in to rouse an inert, spiritless bull, were not intro-



duced on this occasion. The amphitheatre rose *en masse*, the fierce tumult of man's animal instincts, as they burst forth from that vast crowd, producing a savage grandeur, that made one shudder; and amid scornful cries of indignation, and a fluttering of handkerchiefs, "thick as leaves in Vallombrosa," demanded another bull.

Such a demand is irresistible; two oxen are turned into the ring (for without these no bull can be driven), and in their company, to our great delight, Don Pacifico disappeared, amid the laughter, and jeers of the audience, to live, let us hope, according to the story-book phrase, "happily ever afterwards," while the unfortunate proxy died in his stead.

It was really the greatest conceivable relief, when the whole affair came to an end, and with very much the same sensations, most people feel on going away from a dentist's at the conclusion of some unpleasant operation, we found ourselves once more in the Calle de Alcalá, nor do I think either of us will ever again take a seat within the enclosure of a bull-ring.

Moreover tho' we English are apt to denounce & preach, it does not lie in our mouths to say much. There are many Englishmen who wd be glad to take up cock-fighting, & it is only a generation since a large number of good husbands & tender fathers were ready to declare it the finest sport in the world. Blake indignantly wrote - "A game cock slipped, armed for fight -  
Deth the rising sun affrights"

See Prof. Wilson (Christophe North) also a Christian poet, wrote of cock-fighting with some  
 Siamese, & picture of bird thus hideously disfigured are still shown in London shop win-  
 dows with other sporting prints. Sir Thomas Grove is further off, but it is recorded that he was an  
 expert in the detestable game of trying a cock to a post & throwing sticks at it.  
 fr. Gems & Men in India by John Lockman Kipling - 1891

## CHAPTER XII.

**T**HE first time Lord Portarlington dined at the Embassy, he met Mr. Christopher Sykes, of Sledmere, who, having made a tour in the northern provinces, was now staying at Madrid, on his way to the South of Spain. As it turned out, on comparing notes, that Mr. Sykes' intended route coincided, in all material respects, with the ideas sketched out, in a somewhat indistinct outline, for our future proceedings, it was soon arranged we should all combine into one party, and travel together as far as Seville. This arrangement, by giving fixity and definitiveness to our plans, was a great advantage to us, as Mr. Sykes, having spent some weeks in the country, had carefully studied the various routes laid down in Ford, and had thus been able to settle what he purposed doing, with more distinctness than was yet possible in our case, amid the conflicting attractions presented



by the pages of that most agreeable author, drawing us simultaneously to every quarter of the compass.

It was therefore decided, that on Saturday, October 22nd, we should, please God, leave Madrid by rail for Toledo, and there commence our riding tour, taking Yuste and Placentia on our way over the Sierra Morena, down to Seville.

Our party would thus consist of six, including Swainson and Mr. Sykes' servant Elfick, with David Purkiss, an Englishman, very highly recommended by Ford, who had lived for some years at Madrid, and was perfectly acquainted with the language, and ways of the country.

From the first I took an interest in Purkiss, partly because he is one, like Dogberry, "that hath had losses;" and partly because he is a descendant of the charcoal-burner of the same name, who carried the body of William Rufus from the New Forest to Winchester, and of whom local tradition reports, that, through all the intervening centuries, a direct heir has never once failed him, while the very same house and land, occupied by him at the time he paid the last act of piety to his Sovereign, is now (or was at least quite recently), in the possession of his family.

I little thought, while conversing on the sub-

ject with some ladies in the train, as we passed through the New Forest on my way to town, that in a short time one of that family would belong to our party, and for so considerable a period have so much to do with our daily wants and comforts. But, as that eminent moralist, Mrs. Gamp, remarks, "Sich is life!" and in travelling it is impossible to conjecture with whom one may come into contact.

Now that our plans had become settled, great preparations for the journey were immediately initiated, more especially in getting up such a costume for the road as would comply with the directions of Ford, who most urgently counsels travellers in Spain to dress like the natives; and while our talk was of Andalusian hats, of *fajas* (sashes for the waist, of silk, or worsted, universally worn by the peasantry) and *zamarras* (jackets of black lambskin), high boots, and buttons of silver filigree, we never went out of our apartment at the Peninsulares, without encountering some bootmaker, or tailor; one of whom, being painfully deaf, used to tax all the patience of the waiter, Alphonse, a good-natured Frenchman from Bourdeaux, while he tried to convince him of the various short-comings of his tailoring, which, like a genuine Spaniard, he



considered absolutely faultless, simply because it was his own.

I alone ventured to disobey Ford's injunctions, though various were the arguments employed in persuading me to adopt some portion, at least, of Spanish clerical costume for my travelling dress, and much ingenuity, and perseverance were expended in recommending the use of the enormous shovel-hat, not much less than a yard from end to end, which crowns the pericranium of a Spanish priest. Feeling, however, that, apart from the weighty consideration of expense, our group would be none the worse, in an artistic point of view, for a little toning down, I was quite satisfied with my ordinary garb, and preferred the freedom and ease of my old battered wide-awake, to the ponderous dignity of a clerical *sombrero*.

Lord Portarlington and Mr. Sykes thought it best to purchase horses at Madrid, not wishing to trust to the contingencies of the road; and for those who can afford it, and have fully made up their minds to use their purchase long enough to work out the price, a period of some two or three months, such a plan is unquestionably the best, because it involves no greater expense,

than the hire of a horse for a journey of that duration.

A mule, however, is on the whole the more serviceable animal; not only on account of his greater powers of endurance, and freedom from ailments, but because, in many of the out-of-the-way districts, the bridle-track is often so narrow, that his smaller hoof finds "ample room and verge enough," for safe action, while the broader foot of a horse, as I afterwards used to remark, will sometimes absolutely stick fast in deep holes, so that he extricates himself with no small difficulty, and occasionally loses a shoe.

Many were the consultations held on the matter of horse-flesh, and kindred subjects, with the coachman at the Embassy, who gave us useful hints for the road, highly necessary in such a country as Spain, where the diet, and general management of horses are so different from what we are accustomed to in England. Being a Yorkshireman, he regarded Mr. Sykes with a deference and respect, it was pleasant to remark, in consequence of his being the son of one standing so high in public estimation, as the venerable Sir Tatton Sykes.

We spent a morning at the Armeria Real, one



of the finest armouries in the world, with poor Mr. Southwell for our cicerone. I never saw anything in the least approaching the variety, and exquisite workmanship of its contents, the only drawback to our enjoyment of them arising (as usual) from the impossibility of doing justice to more than a few objects, during the time we were able to stay there.

The room, being long and narrow, 227 feet by 36, is admirably adapted for its purpose, and the effect, on entering, is most striking, when, after mounting a dark staircase, you emerge into that stately gallery, and find yourself in the presence of those memorials of Spain's prosperous days (when her troops were the best in the world), stretching out before you in long perspective. Around us hung armour of every shape and device, from the plainest suit of the common man-at-arms, up to the profusely-ornamented panoply of noblemen and princes; while lances and spears, swords and pikes, muskets and pistols, gleamed in bright array on every side.

Viewed simply as an accumulation of art-objects (if so newly-coined a phrase may be introduced into the company of so many representatives of antiquity), this collection of warlike plenishing is marvellous; nor can anything pro-

duce a more forcible conviction of the all-pervading influence of Art during the Renaissance period, than the singular fact, that in the very region most hostile (as is supposed) to her very existence—the battle-field—she has achieved some of her most enduring triumphs. The warrior of that day went out to battle, not only protected from many of its dangers, but clothed with apparel of almost imperishable beauty; and Vulcan's craft became again, as in Homeric days, the handmaid of poetry and grace.

If any would fully appreciate the beauty, and refinement of ancient armour, let him lay the headpiece of a modern Guardsman, with its common-place ornamentation, and device, which are worthy of a coppersmith's invention, alongside some helmets of the fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, all rich with exquisite chasing, enamel, damascene-work, and gold, and he will not be long in perceiving the difference between the results of mechanical contract-work, and the creations of living Art.

To the Madrid Armoury, however, an interest of even a higher nature attaches. Those magnificent suits, on which the armourers of Milan, and Germany, exhausted the choicest resources of their skill, are not mere creations of Art,



-serving no other purpose than to give proof of her boundless powers. They have all done actual service in the midst

“of plumed troop, and the big wars,  
That make ambition virtue;”

and were worn, not by nameless soldiers, but by such men of renown, as the Great Captain, Gonzalvo de Cordova, Columbus, Cortez, Charles V., and his son, the victor of Lepanto, whose names are consecrated in history.

The room contained besides a goodly display of banners, many of them won from the Infidel at Granada and Lepanto; with two or three Union-jacks, taken, we conjectured, from Nelson at Vera Cruz, the sight of which, in the land of Talavera, Salamanca, and Vittoria, made us smile.

We took a turn afterwards through the royal stables, chiefly in the hope of seeing the carriages, which are said to be well worth inspection; for the series descends in unbroken succession from the earliest date of state-coaches. We did not, however, succeed in our object, it not being the right day.

The stables would give a terrible shock to the notions of an English groom, being kept in a

very slovenly manner, and from their site and defective ventilation, they must be insufferably hot in summer. They contain a large number of fine horses, and mules, with the name of each animal painted over his stall. One of the mules, the most vicious beast in the stud, was marked out for public opprobrium, in this land of the Inquisition, by the title of "Protestant"—a master-stroke of satire, which penetrated us three Englishmen to the very soul. To be compared to a mule at all, is not complimentary to the feelings of "Britishers," with whom these mongrel quadrupeds are no favourites. But to be condemned to a place in the same category with the most vicious of the race was so perfectly annihilating, that, humiliated and crest-fallen, what could we do, but turn away and depart in silence, sadder and wiser men!

After so severe a blow to our religious feelings, who that has the spirit and heart of a Briton, will wonder, that we had no desire left for going through the interior of the royal palace, not knowing what further outrage to our national pride we might meet with there?

To prove, however, that, in spite of such aggravating provocation, we bore no malice, I will just add, that the exterior is imposing,