

Being lighted only by two candles, and the recess deep, it was impossible to see very distinctly what it was, and certainly not to appreciate the merit of the workmanship, which Mr. Ford says is first rate. When we visited this church, they would not let us see the relics, and told us they were exhibited on Fridays; but the functions on the Friday we were there were unusually long, being in Lent, and the relics were not shown.

Whilst the ceremony was going on, two priests were busy in confessional chairs, close to where we were. After listening to the oft-repeated tales, and apparently sifting the consciences of the beautiful devotees, the priests closed their hands and prayed before giving absolution. One man seemed to bow to the very ground, overwhelmed with the burden of his sins. Dark, indeed, and numerous are the offences in this city of Valencia.

The nobles are, many of them, rich, and though their hangers-on and their agents consume a great part of their incomes, yet as they live in no great style and keep little company, many have ample means for so cheap a place. Infidelity in married life is a common crime, and gambling is the vice of every rank, especially the lower classes. I visited one of the cock-pits in the suburbs, and was astonished at seeing peasants, meanly dressed, flinging down their dollars every battle; but the cabarets in the suburbs, where wine may be drunk free of duty, are the places where the greatest gambling takes

place, and where frequently broils arise, and the winner loses not only his gains, but his life also.

The people are not now allowed to carry the long Valencian knife, which used to be stuck into every girdle. A fine of three dollars is imposed for the first offence of carrying a knife above a certain size, and the same penalty and imprisonment for the second offence.

Seeing one morning a crowd near a door, I went up, and saw a corpse of a labouring man, partly in a coffin, but with his head exposed, for his friends to recognize him. He had been found dead outside the walls, with two deep gashes on his cheeks and two on his breast, evidently done with a knife; and I am told, scarcely a week passes without a similar murder being committed.

The Valencians seem nevertheless to be a civil, obliging people, and are worthy of respect for their industry, love of liberty, and the distinguished scientific and literary men, as well as artists, the country has produced; but undoubtedly they are suspicious, passionate and revengeful. Many of the streets are lighted with gas, but those which are not, certainly present facilities for deeds of violence, and I am told most people carry pistols at night for their protection. The stranger, however, has no occasion to fear if he will treat every one with civility.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRESIDIO—CONVICTS — DIFFERENT TRADES — EXCELLENT REFORMATORY SYSTEM — GREAT SUCCESS — GALERA FOR FEMALE CONVICTS—HOSPITAL FOR ORPHANS—SAN VICENTE DE FERRER—BOTANICAL GARDEN—GATE OF THE CID—MANUFACTORIES—COMMERCE—HOTELS.

IF the vices and passions of a Southern people prevail in a place where, until the last few years, a strong government has not been enjoyed, it is greatly to the credit of the city of Valencia that they can boast of one of the best conducted prisons in Europe. Being one of the great social questions of the day, I made particular inquiries about it. There are a thousand prisoners; and in the whole establishment I did not see above three or four guardians to keep them in order. They say there are only a dozen old soldiers, and not a bar or bolt that might not easily be broken—apparently not more fastenings than in any private house.

The Governor, a colonel in the army, has established military discipline, and the convicts are divided into companies; the officers stand as stiff, when you pass, as soldiers presenting arms. The sergeants and officers are all convicts, who, of course, are acquainted with the temper and disposition of the prisoners, and best able to manage them; and the prospect of advancement to higher grades is an inducement to all to behave well. When a convict enters, he is asked what trade or employment he will work at or learn; and above forty are open to him, so that he has the means of devoting his time to any he knows; or if ignorant of all, to one he feels an inclination for, or which he is aware will be useful to him when he is liberated. Many a man may wish to return to his native village with what he has earned here, and he of course knows best what trade or employment will there not only be of advantage, but even a fortune to him. If he declines to work at any, he is sent to the public works or employed in carrying wood; but these out-door convicts are by far the worst conducted in the establishment, and are therefore kept distinct from the others, who by their selecting a trade, have shown a disposition to be industrious and improve themselves.

When first the convict enters the establishment he wears chains, but on his application to the Commander, they are taken off, unless he has not con-

ducted himself well. Among some hundreds, I only saw three or four with irons on their legs. There seemed to be the most perfect discipline: they work in rows, rose in rank as we passed, and seemed obedient to a word. They are not allowed to talk to each other during their work, but this rule does not seem to be very strictly enforced, and they may speak to their master, who is often one of themselves, and they may ask each other for tools, or anything requisite for their work, and every night after prayers, they are allowed to converse with each other for an hour. There were weavers and spinners of every description, manufacturing all qualities, from the coarsest linen cloths, to the most beautiful damasks, rick silks, and velvets, one a crimson, apparently equal to the Utrecht velvet. There were blacksmiths, shoemakers, basketmakers, ropemakers, joiners, cabinet-makers making handsome mahogany drawers, and they had also a printing machine hard at work. Mrs. H—— having purchased a leather ball for her boy, they printed on it his name, and the Presidio de Valencia, in gilt letters.

The labour of every description for the repair, rebuilding and cleaning the establishment is supplied by the convicts. They were all most respectful in their demeanour, and certainly I never saw such a good-looking set of thieves, useful occupations having apparently improved their countenances, though there were a few among them

I would rather not meet amongst the wilds of Spain. The greatest cleanliness prevailed in every part of the establishment. The dormitories were well ventilated, the beds neatly packed up, and water, the great requisite in a sultry climate, within reach of all. On the walls in large letters, were inscriptions in rhyme, the best way of inculcating good maxims. There was a neat chapel for their devotions, and a garden for exercise, planted with oranges. There was also a poultry yard for their amusement, with pheasants, and various kinds of birds; washing houses, where they wash their clothes; and a shop, where they can purchase, if they wish, tobacco, and other little comforts, out of one-fourth of the profits of their labours, which is given to them; another fourth they are entitled to, when they leave the establishment. The other half of their gains goes to the establishment, and often this is sufficient for all the expenses, without any assistance from the Government.

The Governor found that it was impossible to induce the convicts to work heartily without giving them an interest in their gains; but when once he had by this encouragement established industrious habits, it was more easy to correct their principles. Honour amongst thieves is really found here; the convicts keeping the accounts and no attempt made to deceive. It is doubtless the same feeling of honour which prevents their rebelling

and leaving the asylum whenever they feel disposed. It is surprising that the establishment requires so little assistance from the Government, as the expense of the officers and instructors is very considerable, and the Governor has invariably made the teaching and moral improvement of the convicts his chief consideration, without any regard to the profits to be derived from them.

The convicts were all cleanly dressed in woollen clothes of the same colour, which is requisite, in case of any attempt to escape. In summer they have lighter clothes. Their food is excellent, and consists of large brown loaves, about the colour of our best London brown bread, but finer in quality, and quite as good; rations of olla, rice, potatoes, and meat on *fête* days, which in Spain are numerous. Instruction is open to all every day, in a large school, which all the boys under twenty are obliged to attend for one hour, and any prisoner above that age, who wishes, may join the classes. I saw numerous instances of excellent writing (in the Spanish style), by lads and adults, who could not write a line when they entered; and many have qualified themselves for clerk's places, which they have obtained on leaving the prison. There is a good hospital with a dispensary, all as clean and comfortable as could be desired; but the average number in the hospital never, they say, exceeds two for every hundred. This system may be thought too indulgent,

but what is the result? During the last three years not one prisoner has been returned to it, and in the ten previous years, the average was not more than one per cent., though before that period, the number of re-committals was thirty per cent.

From January 1837 to 1846, the first nine years of the establishment, when the shops were not all open, and the institution in many respects incomplete, 3127 convicts confined there were liberated, and of these 2355 had learnt some trade, or received instruction, so that only 792 were without instruction, from their age or indisposition to receive any.

It may be said that the stabbings which occur so often in Valencia, would not be so common if severer punishments were inflicted, but they say that the use of the knife was much more frequent before this Presidio was established. The great principle here is to afford an inducement to the criminals to work, to teach industrious habits, to inculcate honourable and virtuous principles, and to send them into the world better men, educated and able to work at some trade, and with money in their pockets to start with, and not be obliged to have recourse to their old habits for subsistence.

The want of funds has prevented this institution being more perfect than it would otherwise have been. The prisoners might be classified better, and those who have picked a pocket for the first time, or some other light offence, kept separate from the

more hardened criminals. The same work might be performed, though of course at a greater expense, on the separate system, which has been found to answer so well; the canteen is very questionable, and probably it would be more judicious to appropriate their earnings to transporting the prisoners and their families to any colony or distant place they might wish to go to, giving them only a few pounds to start with, and not a large sum, which might be used as a capital to enable them to commit other crimes. The success attending the reformation of the adults in this establishment is really a miracle, and England ought to make an attempt to do the same. No prisoner ought to be turned out of prison without a shilling in his pocket, and greater efforts ought to be made to give them industrious habits.

Great honour is due to the Commander, Colonel Don Manuel Montesinos, for what he has accomplished without any model to guide him, and being obliged almost to invent a system. The old Convent of St. Augustin, half ruined and entirely dismantled, even without doors and windows, was changed by the labour of the convicts into the present clean, convenient and agreeable building. The Government did not contribute a farthing towards the expense, and yet, by degrees, he has worked up the establishment almost to perfection. He was personally so fine a specimen of what a soldier should be, so frank and courteous, and there was such an air of

truth in his dehortment, that I felt I could rely implicitly on all he has printed, and what he said to me, not boastingly, but simply answering my questions.

There is also at Valencia an establishment for the female prisoners, called the Galera. It contains one hundred and forty women, and is beautifully clean; the beds all piled up in fresh clean sheets. Their only labour is spinning and making ribbons. The diet is not so good as in the Presidio, but the bread is excellent, and each woman has twenty ounces of it every day, and two rations of a poor olla of rice and potatoes; but they are not allowed meat, except on Christmas Day. There is only one keeper to superintend so large a number. The institution contains a chapel, and a clean, comfortable infirmary, with its dispensary and kitchen, and a nice little garden for exercise and washing. I saw them at dinner, which was rather a pretty sight; all dressed alike, with bright-coloured handkerchiefs on their heads. I tasted the olla, which seemed very indifferent, and the woman pulled a wry face when I asked her if she liked it.

Two of the hundred and forty women had been re-committed five times; two others four times; four three times; and eight of them twice. The keeper said the women are worse than the men, and he did not believe more than half were really reformed. One-fourth of their earnings is given to

them, subject to many deductions ; one-fourth more when they leave, and the rest goes towards the expense of the establishment.

This institution has nothing to do with the other, and is in every respect inferior. There is the same discipline, but labour is not made so interesting, and there is no school. One of the women reads when they eat, and the walls are covered with useful truths and moral maxims, which few are able to peruse ; but funds are wanting here also, and there is no classification of the prisoners, the offenders for the slightest and heaviest offences associating with the worst in the place.

There are many other institutions in Valencia worth visiting, among others the Hospital for the orphans, instituted by San Vicente de Ferrer, and his image is preserved in the chapel. This Saint is the great apostle of Valencia. He is said to have barked in his mother's womb, which was taken to be a sure sign that he would turn out a mastiff, and hunt the wolves of heresy to hell. He was born in 1350, and was the son of an honest attorney, a miracle in Spain to begin with. He became a Dominican and a chief of the Inquisition, and preached a crusade against the Jews. His miracles are beyond all number, and representations of them in the streets delight the sight-loving Valencians on the Monday after Easter-Monday.

According to Mariana, the restoration of sight

to the blind, feet to the lame, even life to the dead, were miracles of ordinary occurrence with San Vicente; and his eloquence is said to have converted thirty-five thousand Jews, which, doubtless, as Mr. Prescott says, must be reckoned the greatest miracle of all. He is the male Lucina of Valencia, and possessed the gift of miracles to such a degree, that he is said to have performed them almost unconsciously, and not unfrequently in a sort of a frolic. Being applied to on a certain occasion, by a young married lady, whom the idea of approaching maternity kept in a state of constant terror, the good-natured saint desired her to dismiss her fears, as he was determined to take upon himself whatever inconvenience or trouble there might be in the case. Some weeks had elapsed when the good monk who had forgotten his engagement, was heard in the dead of night roaring and screaming in a manner so unusual, and so little becoming a professed saint, that he drew the whole community to his cell. Nothing for a time could relieve the mysterious sufferings, and though he passed the rest of the night *as well as could be expected*, the fear of a relapse would have kept his afflicted brethren in painful suspense, had not the grateful husband of the timid lady, who was the cause of the uproar, taken an early opportunity to return thanks for the unconscious delivery of his consort.*

* Doblado's Letters.

This institution, which reflects great credit on San Vicente and Valencia, contains one hundred boys and forty girls, who are admitted at the age of seven, and learn reading, writing and accounts, until they are twelve. From that age to fourteen, they go out during the day to learn useful trades, and return to sleep in the institution. The usual cleanliness is remarkable, and their diet seems abundant and very good; the bread excellent, and they have meat and vegetables every day. They pay six dollars entrance-fee, and afterwards all expenses are paid for them.

The Botanic Garden of Valencia is pretty, with its orange-trees, palms, hedges of lemon-trees and roses, and many choice plants in the hothouses; and the fine view of the Moorish-looking gateway of the city (now a prison), with its two lofty and more than semicircular towers, with their bold machicolations and the watch-towers on the top—an entrance worthy the City of the Cid. The gate through which the conqueror entered Valencia, a simple arch, near the Church of the Temple, is paltry, in comparison to these towers of the fifteenth century. There are very interesting remains of the Moors in the Huerta—aqueducts and wells—showing the pains they took in irrigating the land; and a day may be devoted to their examination.

Excursions into the country, to the promenades, and the botanical garden, are delightful, as the

streets are too narrow to enjoy the charming climate. I wonder more invalids do not spend their winters here, instead of those dull resorts, Nice and Pisa, where the climate is very inferior. Here there are galleries; an opera, which is not very bad; a casino, where there are English papers; and natural attractions, as well as agreeable and intellectual society. Good books may be got, for I observed many excellent booksellers' shops full of standard works, which one would certainly expect to find in a city which has produced so many scientific and literary men, and where, in 1474, the first press was erected in Spain, though Barcelona also lays claim to this honour. The earliest work was a collection of songs, composed for a poetical contest in honour of the Virgin, for the most part in the Limousin or Valencian dialect.* If, however, there were no resources, consumptive and nervous invalids could not select a better residence, as undoubtedly such a climate is not to be found in Europe. For five months they have scarcely had any rain until this week; and well may the watchmen who patrol the streets be called *serenos*, for seldom would they be justified in crying anything else but *serena*.

The Valencians are very much dissatisfied with the present taxes, which, they say, are generally

* Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella, vol. II, p. 189.

heavier than they were in the time of Espartero, though the extraordinary demands then made to support the Carlist war raised the taxes in some years to as much, and often a great deal more, than what they now pay. There are few poor in the streets, though more than in Catalonia; agriculture and manufactures giving employment to all. The manufactory of azulejos, or tiles, is very interesting. The best is a short distance from Valencia, with a pretty garden attached to it. The white ground of the tiles is clean and cool-looking in this hot climate. The flowers and figures are not so good as the more simple scrolls and mosaic Moorish patterns, which are frequently extremely beautiful. The price is generally from three pence to five pence a square of nine inches.

The silk manufactures are extensive; and in the cigar manufacture alone, a Government establishment, three thousand women are employed, at 1s. and some at 1s. 3*d.* a-day. It was a singular sight to see such a number of them together in the immense galleries of this enormous building; but, as silence is not imposed, the clack of their tongues was as noisy as the rattle of the machinery in our large cotton manufactories. Having a headache, I was glad to escape from such a Babel; but the glance I took was sufficient to satisfy me that the women of this class do not possess the attractions of the beautiful creatures I sometimes met in

the Plaza of Santa Catalina, their favourite resort, and in the churches and streets, and still more frequently observed riding in their tartanas. The girls in the manufactory were darker, and had more of the Moorish blood, than the ladies of Valencia, who have frequently a light and ruddy complexion. If a very garrulous old woman, the first corset-maker in Valencia, is good authority, the higher classes are splendidly made; and certainly they appear deserving of this praise.

The commerce of Valencia with England is very trifling. There are two English merchants, but guano and a little hardware are now almost the only articles of importation, though large quantities of silk and raisins are exported in the autumn. The French and Geneva cottons, and articles of *vertu* and hardware, have the greatest sale, being cheaper than ours.

The grao, or port, is a bad sandy roadstead, and very exposed, which is a great drawback on the commerce of Valencia. The merchants have their depôts there, which afford great facilities for smuggling. The drive to the grao is very delightful, through the beautiful Alameda.

The hotels are excellent. The Fonda del Cid, they say, is good; and the Posada de las Diligencias, Plaza de Villaraza, where we were, kept by an Italian, is as comfortable as could be desired. Excellent breakfasts, fish and meat, dinners of several courses,

and large rooms, for forty-eight reals (5s. a-day each).

There were a few fleas on the floors of the churches. An Arab poet called Valencia a terrestrial Paradise, but complained that there was one thing there which annoyed him, and put him out of humour, which was, that the fleas were continually dancing to the music of the mosquitoes.*

Mr. Ford says two or three days will amply suffice to see Valencia del Cid, and even contemplates travellers landing only for a few hours from the steamer. With great deference, I should say, that this is a place of all others to linger at. There is a fine school of paintings to study, noble works of art, a truly Spanish city, and so much to see, I should think it would be difficult to get through all in less than a week. We found ample occupation for ten days, for, as the proverb says, "Valencia is so full of beauty and delight, that a Jew might there forget Jerusalem."

* Mohammedan Dynasties, p. 6.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEPARTURE FROM VALENCIA—XATIVA—FINE RUINS—SPLENDID
VIEW—MULES—ALICANTE—MARQUIS ANGOLFI'S GALLERY—
TARTANA—ORIHUELA—ELCHE SURROUNDED WITH PALMS.

MONSIEUR L—— and Monsieur B——, whose acquaintance we had made on the road from Perpignan to Barcelona, agreed to accompany us to Granada. The road is said to be quite safe; but as they are both gentlemanly and intelligent men, we were glad of such an agreeable acquisition to our party.

We left Valencia in the morning with great regret. Until one o'clock, our route lay through the rich plain, planted with a variety of trees like a garden. We passed through several small villages, and observed many others in the distance, looking extremely picturesque, with their large churches ornamented with domes and towers. The irrigation

is very remarkable, a perfect net-work of little channels; and sometimes we saw portions of aqueducts, the works of the Moors. For a long time we had a view of the Lake of Albúfera, which extends for about four leagues near the sea. The plain is bounded with fine ranges of mountains, and frequently the views were pretty of the villages, and their groves of palm-trees, and oranges, and more frequently the carob, olive, and mulberry-trees; the foreground often consisting of aloes, prickly pears, and most picturesque peasants, with their shirts and kilt all of one piece, and covered with many coloured blankets, folded in Arab fashion, gracefully around them, or hanging loose from their shoulders, leggings and sandals tied on with blue and other coloured ribbons. Some wore the red lazzaroni-shaped cap, others gay-coloured handkerchiefs; those in rather better circumstances had low-crowned, flat velvet hats, with broad shovel borders and cockade; and others again, conical-shaped hats, with extremely narrow borders; but beneath all these head-dresses, such swarthy faces and bright eyes were seen, as Africa alone could match.

At Abareque we left the high road to Madrid, and turned more into the mountains. The cultivation of the land exhibits unwearied industry, fields above fields, in terraces. At different parts, where it is very hilly and therefore more difficult to irrigate, the contrast is very striking between the

parched and almost barren soil, and the rich brilliant vegetation in the plain beneath. We soon afterwards crossed a small river, and arrived at a quarter-past four o'clock at San Felipe, a clean and Moorish-looking place, of sixteen thousand inhabitants. The Romans called the city Selabis, and the Moors gave it the more beautiful name of Xativa; but in the War of Succession, Berwick was so enraged at the heroic defence of the people, assisted by six hundred English, that he ordered the city to be razed, and changed the name to San Felipe.

The cathedral is building, and contains nothing remarkable but the grand altar, which is very fine, ornamented with ten enormous yellow marble columns. The situation of Xativa is magnificent, at the foot of a fine range of mountains, with a picturesque castle, fatiguing to reach on a hot day like this; but if the heat and fatigue were ten times greater, it should not be missed. The ruins of the castle are very extensive, and many parts of them evidently of the times of the Moors; the solidity of the tapia-work is extraordinary, and there are cisterns, and also arches circular and pointed, evidently very ancient. The small church, with its pointed arches, is more modern.

The view from the summit is really magnificent. The foreground is splendid, consisting



of bold and almost perpendicular rocks, crowned with fortifications, wild shrubs growing in the crevices, and goats feeding on the scanty pasture; below lies the city, with its cathedral and other churches, and the more modern buildings mixed with orange and some few palm-trees; the old part, from the extreme narrowness of the streets, appears to be one mass of houses. Surrounding the city is an immense plain, perhaps the most verdant in the world, divided into small square fields, every one of them surrounded with its channel of water, planted on each side with a row of mulberry-trees, just now bursting into leaf. The contrast between their light-green foliage, and the rich deep colour of the corn and beans, is very striking, and has a beautiful effect. Beyond this plain are several villages, with their pretty churches, and fine ranges of mountains.

The hermitage of Santa Ana is situated on a picturesque hill, and the hermitage of La Murta is still more remarkable, perched on a magnificent high rocky hill, isolated in the middle of the plain, and around its base are the rice fields of Xativa. The distant view reaches over the Huerta of Valencia, and the metropolis itself is seen sparkling in the distance, and far away are the classic hills of Saguntum, and the Mediterranean. The view in the opposite direction forms a perfect contrast—wild, rocky moun-

tains, and a plain almost as barren, being nearly uncultivated; the inclination of the ground preventing its being irrigated. Not a village, or house, or any verdure perceptible—a flight of locusts might have passed over, and devoured every green thing.

We turned with still greater delight to the enchanting view of the rich gardens of San Felipe; and while gazing at this never-to-be-forgotten scene, the lapis-lazuli sky above and a glorious sunset, I thought of Ribera (Spagnoletto). This is a country to create a Claude, and yet here he was born, and spent his youth, until he went to Naples; but neither the bright blue skies of Spain or Italy, or the charms of Xativa, or the Campagna Felice, could dispel the moroseness of a genius which might have been engendered and formed within the walls of the Inquisition. Xativa, however, with all its beauty, was the birth-place of still greater horrors—the detestable family of the Borgias; and the infamous Cæsar, taken prisoner by Gonzalo di Cordova, was confined within these walls.

There was a curious procession in the streets to-night. A figure of Christ, splendidly arrayed in purple, and glittering with silver and jewels, was carried by four men. Six soldiers in ancient dresses, with visors and spears, protected the image, and above thirty men followed, bearing large wax tapers. A man walked behind, blowing a long trumpet, others were chanting. There was a partial illumination

in the town, every balcony had wax lights, and the procession-loving people seemed to enjoy greatly the scene.

Xativa was celebrated during the middle ages for its paper-mills, but the trade is now chiefly carried on in the neighbouring town of Alcoy. Mr. Gayangos says, the Spanish Arabs had the honour of introducing into Western Europe the manufacture and use of paper. There are, he says in the Escorial Library, several MSS. written in Spanish, as early as the tenth century, upon cotton paper, and specimens of linen paper abound likewise in MSS. of the following age. Idrisi, who wrote towards the middle of the twelfth century, mentions the city of "Xativa," as already famous for its manufactories of paper, which the Moors established in Spain, whence the art passed into France, Germany and England.*

The Posada de las Diligencias is very good, and we had an excellent dinner; having, as usual, taken the precaution to warn them, not to use their strong oil, saffron, garlic, and other Spanish abominations. There being no diligences beyond Xativa, we hired mules, and started at eight. Our route for two hours was very picturesque; along the bank of the river, through an immense amphitheatre of wild, barren, grey mountains, which, from the traces of terraces, appear to have been formerly extensively

* Mohammedan Dynasties, p. 375.