

conform to this custom ; but the murmurs of the bigoted crowd, and the dangerously savage looks of some of the penitents, who from the similarity of their dresses, covered faces, and great numbers, might without any fear of detection have inflicted summary punishment on me, very soon brought me to order, and made me more mindful for the future, of the greater homage that is paid in Spain to the image of the Madonna, than to the representations of our Saviour. A crowd of penitents, and another company of soldiers marching in order, closed a procession which certainly excelled anything I ever saw in Rome, though I have frequently seen the functions of the Holy Week, and also the funerals of two Popes. The figures were all, as I have said, as large as life, very well executed and painted, and the decorations of flowers really exquisite. The litters reminded me rather of the splendid religious procession on the walls of Medeenet Abou, at Thebes, and the general effect of the procession, of the admiring crowd, and of the solemn music, was very imposing, especially when on the appearance of the Virgin every head or knee was bent.

But what a subject to make a show of ! I must say, the expressions : "How pretty !" "How beautiful !" which I heard around me, grated harshly on my ear. How dreadful to think, that in a city of only thirty-five thousand inhabitants, fifteen hundred

men (such I am informed was the number), many of them of respectable station, should be found to submit to the penance of carrying a heavy cross for several hours, walking on their bare feet over rough pavements. In the evening there was another procession by torchlight, which may be said to be a continuation of the other. First came a number of persons, many of them gentlemen, walking two abreast, bearing torches, accompanied by a number of ragged urchins, picking up the wax falling from their lights on the pavement. As this wax is considered to have marvellous properties, and sells often at a very high price, it is a little fortune to them. After these a representation of our Saviour lying in the Tomb, which was gorgeously gilt and decorated, and accompanied with muffled drums. Then followed a representation of Mary. Afterwards another, of Mary returning from the tomb, still more beautiful; the litters were splendidly decorated with flowers and gilding, and illuminated with beautiful lamps. Then came three priests gorgeously dressed, and gentlemen carrying lights. Afterwards the Captain-General, the governor of the province a fine military-looking man, attended by a brilliant staff. A good band followed, and a regiment of foot soldiers. Afterwards a regiment of cavalry, with their commander at their head.

The effect of this procession was finer than the other, being by torchlight. I saw it from a balcony

in the long straight street of the Plateria, which was crowded to excess; and as every window in a house has its balcony, and they were all filled, the effect was very imposing. I walked in the street and observed many pretty faces on the balconies of the first floors, which were reserved for ladies only. A French silversmith and watchmaker, whose house we were in, and who had every window full of his best customers, said it was not etiquette to go where the ladies were, and talk to them, but as a stranger, I might go, under pretence of seeing Mrs. H——. I availed myself of the permission, and found several pretty and lively women, who so far from being offended at my presence, overwhelmed me with their civilities and questions about England.

The Murcians have the reputation of being a stupid race, and apparently they deserve this character. The Frenchman said, "I am but a watchmaker, but at the casino, on every point of history or common topic of information, I find myself an oracle compared to the Murcian nobles and gentlemen." They live in wretchedly furnished houses, and on a very poor, starving diet; but then they dress well and appear gay on the promenades, and that is their idea of happiness.

Our companions, MM. L—— and B——, ascertained that their grand display of silks and satins and rich lace mantillas was merely outside show, and that most of the ladies debarred themselves of even

the comfort of wearing chemises ; and being curious on the subject, they examined the bundles of clothes washing in the streams, and declared such luxuries were never to be seen, reminding me of the ladies described by Goldsmith in one of his letters, who would have a train, though they wanted a petticoat.

The men are jealous, and the women, they say, of easy virtue, and so inflammable, the custom of avoiding propinquity on balconies or elsewhere is very requisite ; but the knife is not used now as it used to be five or six years ago.

Much art cannot be expected in a province which has scarcely produced a single good artist or man of talent of any kind, except Orrente, who was born at Montealegre, so near the kingdom of Valencia, that he may almost be considered a Valencian artist. There is, however, here a very excellent gallery, belonging to Don José Maria Estor ; and, what is surprising in Spain, with a printed catalogue.\*

We left Murcia at five o'clock in the morning, and passing through the rich plain, were soon in a desert ; and at eight arrived at Lebrilla, and in an hour afterwards we passed the village of Alhama to our right, picturesquely situated on a rocky hill, and the Sierra rising behind, almost perpendicular, like a mighty wall. At eleven o'clock we arrived

\* An account of the principal paintings in this gallery will be found in Appendix B.

at Totana, and at three at Lorca, a large straggling town, of twenty-two thousand inhabitants, with some good houses and a cathedral, Italian in its style, and containing only one painting of any merit, a St. Joseph and Child, which appears to be of the school of Ribalta. The Moorish castle on the hill is picturesque at a distance, and the view from it is very fine of the rich huerta, surrounded with what is now a desert, but what would be the richest plain in the world if they had but water. For seventeen months before last week, they had no rain, and now the bed of the river Sangonera is quite dry.

The mountains are extremely picturesque, especially those towards the bleak Sierra, which are wildly broken; and being volcanic, the colouring is beautiful, rich browns and reds forming striking contrasts to the generally light sandy tint of the distant range. The town is very dismal-looking; the tiles of the roofs are of light brown, and the houses are almost of as dingy a colour. There does not appear one straight street, all of them twisting and turning in every direction; nor do there seem to be any palm, orange, or other trees mingled with them. From the castle, no town can appear more wretched, and yet the view on the whole is grand from its very wildness, and the road to the castle, through a mass of prickly pears, is characteristic. It was in this neighbourhood, Condé says, the Cid beat Mo-

hammered, the King of Seville, who was obliged to take refuge within the walls of Lorca.

The peasants here wear brown-coloured blankets for mantas, and both handkerchiefs and caps on their heads, as the Orientals heap one tarboosh on another to protect them from the sun. The diligence we came in from Murcia was, in appearance, nothing but a covered cart or galera, without springs, but we came along at a good pace, more than six miles an hour. To-morrow we shall be obliged to take a galera to Granada (having it, however, all to ourselves); not a horse, or carriage, or mule or saddle to be hired here. Our Posada St. Vicente afforded us clean beds, but we had such a wretched dinner, we could hardly touch anything they served us. The people were gipsies, and I was imprudently taking out my purse as the landlady was leaving the room. I observed she lingered to see the contents in a very suspicious manner. In consequence of the extreme misery in the country, which the long series of dry weather has necessarily created, the streets are full of beggars; and travellers with luggage, and an appearance of any wealth, in this rarely visited route are a novelty, and certainly a strong temptation. The houses have all the lower windows covered with iron railings, a modification of the Oriental lattices, but sufficiently impassable to satisfy Spanish or even Moorish jealousy.

There is generally a barber attached to all the large

posadas in Spain, or at all events there always appears to be one about when travellers arrive, and having frequently been asked whether I required their assistance, I availed myself of the offer here, and certainly it was extraordinary how well he did his work, with very rude instruments. He was as loquacious as Figaro, and would have it that no country in the world was so productive as Lorca, the crops of wheat returning a hundred-fold; but he did not speak so well of the inhabitants.

We left Lorca at four o'clock, in a vehicle which was nothing better than a covered cart; but as the road was tolerable, we found, from the machine being heavier, that it was much easier than the tartana.

As we were starting, we were pleased with some beautiful chanting, from a Rosario, or procession of labourers, who were paying this simple homage to the Virgin Mary. The solemn air in the stillness of the morning was very impressive, and we could not but feel some admiration for a custom, which rouses them from their beds so early, and is so good a preparation for the worldly business of the day.

Our route after leaving the cultivated ground was over a perfect desert, with a chain of mountains bordering each side of the plain; and close to them, on the right, I observed a Moorish castle. In three hours we arrived at Puerta de Lombreros, where we breakfasted at a miserable venta, on a fowl and our

excellent ham, which we had fortunately in our basket, for in the venta, as the hostess said, "there was nothing." Being a *fête* day at Lorca, we met a number of peasants all gaily dressed. One of them was a remarkably fine man, and many of them were very handsome.

The peasants of Murcia are physically very superior to the higher classes, even making every allowance for their more picturesque costume, but such a dress would make any people look well; and then they are such civil, good-humoured, obliging fellows, one cannot but like them. After leaving the Puerta, we entered into the wide dry bed of a river, along which our road lay the remainder of the day. In winter, if it were to rain hard, there could be no road to Granada. Nothing could be more dreary than this winding path, though sometimes the rocks on each side were picturesque, but generally dismally monotonous. The hills, which rise on each side of the river to the height of two or three hundred feet, were in many places terraced and cultivated; but the dreadful drought had prevented the crop from rising, except in a few places, where a greenish tint showed that the corn had taken root, but was not likely to reach maturity. How different from the rich fields of Murcia and Lorca, where the grain was already in ear. Few habitations were to be seen, and frequently we travelled miles without seeing a house or any vegetation, except occasionally



a few pale olives, and now and then an almond-tree. The parched ground prepared for the crops, was of the same grey colour as the bed of the river; nature truly in mourning, and the people destitute. The only travellers we met were peasants with asses laden with corn for the starving cities of Murcia, and picturesque these little caravans were, with their gay costumes and sometimes guitars. On the hills we occasionally saw a few shepherds, as wild as their goats.

Here we bade adieu to Murcia, and entered the renowned kingdom of Granada, undoubtedly the most interesting in all Spain for the beautiful scenery and the splendid remains; but it is necessary to take an interest in the war of Granada and the gallant Moors, to appreciate fully this part of our tour, where city after city reminds us of their glorious deeds and sad misfortunes.

As we approached Velez el Rubio, the bed of the river became much narrower, and an hour before arriving, our route lay through a narrow gorge, scarcely allowing space for the cart to pass, dreadfully rough, and even at times rather dangerous. The first view of Velez is fine, with its church with a dome and two towers, and picturesque ranges of mountains bounding the plain. This is an old Moorish town; but after the taking of Malaga, frightened with the horrors of that siege, the inhabitants opened their gates to Ferdinand, who treated

them better than Sebastiani did in 1810, though no defence was then made. The town itself is not large (only twelve thousand inhabitants), and seems to contain nothing remarkable. We wandered out to sketch, which we could scarcely accomplish, from the crowd which collected around us. Mrs. H—— was fairly mobbed; they got before her, and so prevented her drawing, that she was obliged to give up, and came to me with a score of boys and girls and grown-up peasants at her heels. A bonnet had not been seen for ages in the place, and drawing was apparently as great a mystery to them, for she found me with an equal number of peasants of all ages; but I had entered into conversation, and put them in good humour by praising their city, and they squatted down on the ground, rising occasionally to see how I was getting on, and amusing me with their criticisms on my performance, and their ambition to figure in the foreground.

The news of our arrival spread through the city, and a deputation waited on me, and with great gravity presented a letter for some Englishman, which had been many months at the post-office, and they concluded that of course it must be for me. We had two or three creepers in our beds, for the first time in Spain.

We left Velez el Rubio at half-past five o'clock, and were very soon in a dry bed of a river again, and in four hours halted at the miserable village

of Chiroval, where, in a still more miserable venta, we breakfasted on the provisions of our basket—cold fowl and ham, and a cup of tea. Water, hot and cold, can be procured at the ventas, but never milk. After leaving Chiroval, the road is wild, dreary and uninteresting, though the hills on each side of the plain were sometimes picturesque in their form. The road is tolerable through this wide valley, which gradually becomes more cultivated, and the mountain range, on our right, rather fine. There has been rain here, and the crops are springing up, and the land is rather rich near the village of Costadar, which we passed on our left. Soon after leaving that place, we had a fine view of the Sierra of Baza, a grand mountain chain, the summits almost covered with snow. At six o'clock we arrived at Cullar de Baza, a most extraordinary village, of between five and six thousand inhabitants, situated in a ravine, which twists in different directions among rocks, in which are excavated half the habitations of the place. I observed occasionally three stories of them, one above another, each story receding to admit of conical chimneys being made for every dwelling. Little paths lead up and down these rocks in every direction, and the views were not only curious but picturesque, from the mixture of rude cottages and these singular caves, most of them with their wooden doors, and some with porticos, and wild-looking peasants reposing beneath

them. Above the town is a long hill, richly cultivated, and on it a ruin, with a dome and tower, the work of the Moors; and beyond, a fine range of mountains, partly covered with snow. These caves in the rocks reminded me of the Western Mountain at Thebes, where numbers of the peasants live in similar excavations, formerly Egyptian tombs.

As we approached the town, we saw some peasants, admirably made, trying which could hurl the farthest heavy balls of lead; one crossed our path, and it was fortunate it passed under our mule's legs without breaking them.

To-day we change our cart, or small galera, for a regular full-sized galera. I must add, that it has been more tolerable than I expected, though the pace never exceeded three miles an hour. In the plaza where our posada is situate, I observed a number of noble-looking peasants; but the gay costumes of the Murcians and Valencians are now changed for more sober colours. Our inn was good, but we had a few fleas on the floor. They gave us chops and fried potatoes for dinner.

Early this morning we saw a crowd of peasants coming out of the little church, dressed in black and white and yellow-striped blankets; some of them were very fine-looking men. There were also a great many women, chiefly with red shawls on their heads, and gowns of every gay colour. As

the rain came down in torrents, we did not start till six o'clock. The first part of the road was very steep, and extremely difficult for the mules, on account of the mud, and loud were the vociferations of the mayoral and the zagal, shouting the names of the mules—"Commisario," (the name of the first); "Generale," (the second); "Valorosa," (the third); "Valeroso," (the fourth); "Gerona," (the fifth); and "Plateria," (the sixth); and when their names were called with a loud voice, dwelling, as they always did, with prolonged emphasis on the last syllable, without even the blow from a stick or a stone, which frequently followed, they always accelerated their pace in answer to the call. When we had the small galera, the six were fastened to it in a line, one after the other; now we have changed that conveyance for a regular galera, they are harnessed two abreast.

After ascending the hill, we entered on a wild, uncultivated plain; and I left the galera, and walked for ten miles through this dreary wilderness, without any other vegetation but clumps of rushes, to Baza. The distant view of this old Moorish city is very beautiful, situated on the slope of a hill, glittering in the sun, and surrounded with trees, their dark tints forming a striking contrast to the scarred rocky base of the hill behind; and beyond, to the left, rises the lofty Sierra, half-covered with snow. The siege of Baza, in 1489, was the last and most

important conquest Ferdinand and Isabella made before taking Granada. It lasted six months and twenty days. Twenty thousand died before the walls, from diseases and other causes, and from the valiant defence that was made by Al Infante Cidi Yahye, with ten thousand excellent soldiers from Almeria, besides the garrison of Baza, equally numerous. The energy of Isabella, and her extraordinary skill in procuring the means to furnish supplies of provisions and men, pawning her crown and jewels for that purpose, revived the drooping spirits of the Christians; and ultimately her presence in the camp encouraged, as usual, her soldiers.

When the provisions failed, the wretched inhabitants gave way to despair; the women especially exhibited their grief in the mosques and the streets of the city. It appeared to these unfortunates that with their loss of liberty they would lose also their present happiness, and all hopes for the future; but their grief was changed into joy, when the Christians admitted them to the rank of subjects of the King of Castile, and secured to them their liberty, property, and the exercise of their religion. When Baza fell, even the staunch old King, El Zagal, saw that the reign of the Moors was at an end.

A portion of a wall and tower are the only remains of that brave people, but these consist of tapia-work, of the most solid description; so much

so, that one piece, of about ten or twelve feet long and about seven feet thick, hangs over the ground like an arch, but only supported at one end. The town is large, and contains eleven thousand inhabitants, including the neighbouring hills, and has a tolerable posada, kept by a Frenchman. As we were leaving it, we had a splendid view of the picturesque old place, surrounded by its immense plain, cultivated near the town, and the rest either a desert from want of cultivation or rocky. Beyond the plain, there are fine limestone mountains; and being a cloudy day, the shadows were splendid.

In the pretty Alameda of Baza are four old cannons, now used as posts for lamps. They are simple pieces of iron, with hoops of the same metal around them; more rudely constructed things cannot be conceived, and I am inclined to doubt whether they are not much more ancient than the time of Ferdinand and Isabella. In the year 1324, at the siege of this city by Ismael, the King of Granada, the Moors made use of machines, which threw out red globes and made reports like thunder, causing great damage to the walls.\* These machines were evidently cannon, which the Moors certainly used at the siege of Algeciras, twenty years later.

From Baza to Venta de Baul, three leagues, our

\* Condé, vol. III, p. 173.

route lay over wild plains, rarely at all cultivated; and it was very late and dark when we arrived at the miserable venta, in as miserable a hamlet.

There are three classes of inns in Spain, the fonda, the posada, and the venta; without mentioning the paradors, which are like posadas, but less frequently met with, and the case de pupilos, which are only cheap boarding-houses. A fonda is the hotel of Spain, and seldom found except in capitals and large towns; and there good rooms, excellent beds, and such dinners as have always something eatable, even for the most fastidious, may reasonably be expected at the moderate price of about five shillings a day for board and lodging. Bachelors who have not the best rooms even less.

The posada is the genuine Spanish inn, and in out of the way places, where no diligences are expected, it is always a toss-up how it may turn out—heads, there is nothing in the larder, tails, there is; but with patience and perseverance, and a little soft-sawder, the landlord or landlady, who at least know where such things are to be got, will procure something for your dinner, or before morning to fill up the void the evening meal has created in the basket. The walls of the posada are always clean, as if just whitewashed. The linen of the frequently rude but good beds is beautifully white, and the pillows often edged with broad lace. The floors show no signs of dirt, and are generally



covered with pretty matting. A few fleas in the season may skip about, but are seldom found in the beds; and the more disgusting animals are certainly, at this season at least, uncommon. I must confess myself agreeably surprised with the Spanish posada, being much neater looking and much cleaner in reality than I expected.

The venta is the solitary road-side inn of the lowest description; nothing should be expected to be found in them but good bread, and often delicious water, cooled in jugs of argilaceous porous earth, like the Egyptian goollahs. The ventas have often a fair outside, but such as they were in the days of Gil Blas and Don Quixote, such are they now. Let those who wish to learn Spanish idioms, and study Spanish wit and manners, rejoice when chance throws them into a venta for an hour or two, but not for a night.

At first we were told that there was not a room disengaged in the venta, and we had the dismal prospect of sleeping in our galera, which is anything but weather-tight, and the night is bitter cold; but with a little persuasion, we got a small room with a comfortable fire for ourselves, and the landlady gave up her chamber to the French gentlemen.

There is often as much difficulty in arranging parties in the Spanish ventas and posadas as in the time of Don Quixote; and ladies are now not un- frequently obliged to pack together as they did then.

The landlady herself, with her moustachoes and dirty dress was but a poor guarantee for the assertion that the beds were clean, which, however, they proved to be, and we had a good supper of stewed fowls and fried potatoes, thanks to Monsieur L—— keeping strict guard of the pot, that garlic and other forbidden things were not put in.

Such a scene presented itself when we entered this venta, as Teniers only could depict. Above a score of the most picturesque rascals this world ever produced, were seated, in every variety of attitude, around an enormous fire, in the centre of the floor. There were costumes of Andalusia and Valencia, rich and poor, merchants and beggars; nor was beauty wanting, for in one corner sat as fair and pretty a blue-eyed girl as I have seen in Spain, and her presence seemed to sharpen the wits of the younger men. Half-a-dozen of the *guardia civile*, noble-looking fellows, were smoking their cigars, and enjoying the fire, like the rest. An old woman was taking an immense pan of stewed meat and soup off the fire, and placing it before three fine-looking men, who had just arrived, and were seated on low stools, round a little table, almost Oriental in its form. They helped themselves with spoons, and slowly and deliberately dipped and redipped into the pan, one after another, until their appetites were satisfied, when the old woman put it on the fire again for the next arrival. Others were

drinking, and all enjoying the fire, and certainly it was a glorious one.

At the other end of the barn was hung on the walls some of the harness of the mules, which by the strong light of the fire beaming through a very wide doorway, could be distinguished in the most comfortable portion of the building, partitioned off for the stable; and the jingling of their bells and the strumming of the guitar of a gay Andalusian, glittering with silver buttons, formed the music of the venta. There is no lack of fun in these Spanish caravanseras, tune follows tune, ballad after ballad, and jokes and wit abound, frequently until long after midnight, and sometimes a dance winds up the evening's amusements. It is then the gravest of Spaniards lay aside their gravity, and enjoy themselves.

“Entering an inn, he took his humble seat  
With other travellers, round the crackling hearth,  
Where heath and cestus give their fragrant flame;  
That flame no longer, as in other times,  
Lit up the countenance of easy mirth  
And light discourse.”—DON RODERICK, vol. I, p. 62.

We left the Venta de Baul at six, and soon after starting passed some wild rocks, and then came in sight of the Sierra Nevada, but the height of the mountains in the foreground prevented our seeing more than its snow-clad summits. We then crossed a plain covered with shrubs and stunted trees with

a picturesque range of hills in the distance, and arrived at the Venta de Gor, a miserable-looking place, where we commenced a terrible ascent for a galera. The road in some parts was so muddy as well as steep, that they were obliged to take the mules out of a galera which accompanied us, and the united teams could with difficulty drag up our cart. The mules were then sent down again for the other, causing a great delay. The view from the summit is fine, towards the village of Gor situated beneath, and a picturesque range of hills. We then descended over a wild, extensive tract, covered with low aromatic shrubs, and surrounded with mountains.

Soon we came in sight of the whole range of the magnificent Sierra Nevada, covered apparently, for one-third of the distance from the summit to the base, with snow, and forming a semicircular boundary to the view. As we approached Guadix, the scarred plain had all the appearance of immense natural fortifications, and soon we entered into a narrow gorge, through a line of these singular alluvial deposits, and immediately afterwards had a splendid view of the town of Guadix. A line of shrubs partly screened a natural wall more deeply scarred, but in the distance apparently quite flat on the summit, on which is situated Guadix, with its churches, towers, spires and houses, mingled with a variety of foliage; and behind the town is another deep-scarred natural wall, with what appeared to be

a level plain at the top of it; but on approaching we found it was broken into conical and various forms, more lofty than we at first conceived. These extraordinary alluvial deposits protect the city from the cold winds of the magnificent Sierra, which rises proudly behind.

This famous city of the Moors made no resistance to Ferdinand and Isabella, to the surprise of the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns and villages, who were astonished to see so strong a place surrendered without a blow. Cidi Yahye, who had so gallantly defended Baza, and who had been loaded with presents and favours by the crafty Ferdinand, induced his uncle, the old King El Zagal, to make terms with the Christians; and for a few small villages, and half the salt-mines of Maleha, a small and vile price, as Condé says, for the sale of a kingdom, El Zagal surrendered the district which acknowledged him as King, and his pretensions to the throne of Granada. The important cities of Guadix and Almeria, which Condé calls the most precious jewels in the crown of Granada, were surrendered on the same terms as Baza.

The year following, when Granada displayed symptoms of a vigour which might have saved the kingdom at an earlier epoch, Guadix was inclined to rebel; but Ferdinand appeared before the walls, and the inhabitants having the choice offered them of exile, carrying with them their personal effects, or

submission to a judicial investigation, they preferred taking refuge in Granada, or retiring to Africa. The inhabitants of Baza and Almeria, who were also implicated in this conspiracy, abandoned at the same time their cities to the Christians; and, as was probably foreseen by the politic Ferdinand, this influx of population into Granada hastened the conquest of a capital cut off from all supplies.\*

There are few remains of the Moors, except the walls of *tapia-work*, which, with the ancient towers, still protect the city. We had a difficulty in fording the river. I mounted the tower of the cathedral to enjoy a view of the glorious Sierra Nevada, the loftiest points nearly thirteen thousand feet high, and of the singular hillocks, in which are many habitations of the poor inhabitants.

The exterior of the cathedral is a confused mass, but the interior is in better taste. The choir is very beautiful, and is ornamented with some admirable carved figures and decorations. The west end of the choir is neat, and the two pulpits of white marble curiously carved.

We proceeded a league further to Purullena, our road passing through singular gullies caused by retiring floods. The first view of this village is very striking, many of the habitations being excavated in masses of clay, and the whole plain covered with these singular formations, which

\* Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella, v. I. Condé, v. III, c. 40.