From Bordeaux to Bayonne, down through the Landes, is a most interesting ride, as I dimly recollect; but I have no notes of it, and I infer that nothing particular occurred as I sped through the fat, nice, pleasant country. I had a short stay at Bayonne—long enough, however, to enable me to mark by ethnological signs and tinge of complexion that Spain was near. There were architectural signs, too, for there were colonnades in some of the streets to shelter promenaders from the powerful sun. Plenty of soldiers in Bayonne, and plenty of Hebrews. All of the latter seem to be engaged in the money-changing business. The whole art of money-changing consists in undervaluing the coin you are buying, and setting an exaggerated value on that you are giving for it. I must have lost a small fortune in the course of my money-changing transactions, therefore am I a most determined adherent of a uniform system of coinage for all civilized nations; and that coinage, I maintain, should be decimal. Fancy a foreigner getting small money for a sovereign after he has incurred a debt of one and sixpence for a hot salt-water bath on the South

Coast! The fair attendant offers him a crown-piece, two half-crowns, two florins, two shillings, two sixpences, two groats, two threepenny bits, a postage stamp, a wheedling simper and a charity-bob. He is puzzled, and to my thinking he is justified in being puzzled; and if the attendant be not exceedingly attractive he is cheated. Coinage should be simple—should be so plain in identity that a child could distinguish it in the dark, and its worth should descend in regulated gradation. This reform will come eventually. One of the objections to a universal mintage may be that there would be a struggle as to whose profile should be sunk into the stamps—a point on which many rulers are solicitous, for they foresee that it is the only species of immortality they will ever attain. His Majesty of Araucania might legitimately protest against having his individuality merged in the lineaments of the artistic concretion of the Republic of San Marino, and the Queen of Madagascar (what is her name, by-the-bye ?) might not easily be weaned from a natural longing for the luxury of having her own face in the perpetual youthfulness of Hebe imprinted on the

discs which circulate at Tananarivo. That objection might be met in two ways; one side of the coin might be common to all the world, and the other reserved for the vanities, or the vanities might toss up, and acquire the renown of the numismatist's glass-case in turn.

That the reform will come I am convinced, but not while the Hebrews can hinder it. It is their interest to have this diversity of coinage; and they are very conservative of what is their interest. I have for a long time been trying to make up my mind about the Hebrews. My sympathies fly out to them because they have been persecuted, foully persecuted, on account of their religious belief, while, on the other hand, my antipathies are stirred because they make to themselves an idol of gold. Beautiful are the daughters of Israel with a striking Old Testament beauty, marvellously imperious considering the lengthened apprenticeship of helotry through which they have served; but *naïveté* is not the quality one would look for in their countenances. As well seek a dimple, or a blush, or a coy reserve. Oh! beautiful indeed, and

to an imposing degree, with long straight nose, full orbs, pursing lips, clean-chiselled regular contour; but the earliest lesson they learn is how many grains Troy go to a silver shekel. They may have in them still the fire of Jael, who drove the tent-peg into the skull of the tyrant, or the fierce genius of the poetic Deborah, who was one of the first to strike the lyre of triumph; but, alas! that it must be said, the gentle Ruth, gleaning in the fields of barley, is a lost tradition of the race. I can almost imagine the tender-eyed Leah and the well-favoured Rachel figuring in an idyl of another Wakefield family; but, then, where are we to seek for them? Not in Bayonne. There are no artless Jewesses there; the pupils under their black lashes glitter with the glow of cupidity, and I prefer the light of love. There is something in it more womanly and mellow. I have seen the eyes of a Jewess almost bulge out of their sockets like those of the telescope fish, as she gazed on the treasures of Notre Dame at Paris—to me a degrading dilatation—and I set it down to the instincts engendered by centuries of servitude, when the Jews

discovered that the surest mode of checkmating their masters was by amassing money, and lending it out to them at usurious rates. Certes, they are a pushing and clannish tribe, and skilled in the mimetic arts; but they are not so high-souled and all-influential as their friend Disraeli would fain make them in a chapter of elaborate gush in that fine novel, "Coningsby." In the main I admire them; but I could wish that they stripped to manual toil oftener; that they were less obsequious in indigence, and less despotic and dictatorial when they are in authority—niggers and Hindoos can be that; that they were less prone to exhibit their entire stock-in-trade in the shop-window; that they were less ostentatious in their hospitality, when they are hospitable, and that they had a quieter taste in raiment. Now, I think I have had ample retribution out of that greasy matron at Bayonne, who exploited me when converting my honest notes of the Bank of England into Spanish duros.

From Bayonne the train rattled along not far from the fringe of the Bay of Biscay, by Biarritz and St. Jean de Luz, and across the bridge spanning

the Bidassoa to Irun, the border town of Spain, close by Fontarabia's wooded height. Here we had a pause for customs and passport examination and change of carriages. No railway official could give me any information as to how far the line went; it might go to Madrid, it might not go more than a few miles; the country was unsettled. These officials impressed me as sulky or stupid or timorous, or all three combined, and made glaring contrast with the smart servants on the London, Chatham and Dover line, who know everything that regards their calling, and are always quick and decisive in answer without taint of rudeness. But I was recalled from my comparisons by one word, which wrought a magic effect upon me.

That word was "*caballero!*"

How elate I felt! I realized that I was in Spain, and seemed to grow in inches and self-esteem. I lent myself to an unconscious swagger, tipped my hat jauntily on one side of my head, and was swayed by an almost irresistible inclination to retire to some unobserved corner and wax the ends of my moustache.

The speaker was a Guardia Civil, the Spanish equivalent for a French gendarme. A solemn man in a cocked-hat, protected by a glazed cover, his complexion was of sickly walnut-juice sallow, like the flesh-tint on a portrait in oils by an old master. The complexion was characteristically Spanish. He was the State personified, and had much dignity. He told me I might count upon getting to Beasain, a village in a valley at this side of one of the mountains of the Pyrenean range, but that progress beyond that by rail was problematical, as the Cura Santa Cruz had torn up the track.

This was the first I had heard of the Cura Santa Cruz, one of the most ferocious and redoubtable of the partisans of Don Carlos. Truculent were the stories which were told of him. He was Raw-head-and-bloody-bones in cassock; priest and picaroon, with a well-developed tendency towards wholesale murder; Bogie with a breviary—that is, according to some. According to others, he was a brave, disinterested and reverend patriot; a sort of Hofer-cum-Tell individual, etherealized by the sanctity of his vocation. Anyhow, be he maleficent or be-

nign, it was clear that he was Somebody, and had filled the whole country-side with awe. He led a corps of guerrilleros, who rejoiced in the nickname of the Black Band; and such was the terror inspired by their exploits, that the whisper that Santa Cruz was hovering near stunned opposition, and brought in any ransom demanded. He must have been in one of his benign moods on this occasion, for he permitted our train free passage through his territory; and in the evening we drew up in a snow-bound basin, where shuddered the straggling hamlet of Beasain. I took up my lodging for the night in a two-storied cabin, and sent a news-letter to London, recounting what I had seen and heard so far. I was urged to this by an intimation which had reached me, that a rival had preceded me on the road to Madrid by twenty-four hours. The first blow is half the battle, and I calculated that if I could get the ear of the public in advance of him, there would be a point gained. Communication with England was open from Beasain. Heaven knows how it would be to-morrow or next day.

There was fearful tangible evidence of the presence of Santa Cruz in this remote valley. At one extremity where the cavernous opening of the railway tunnel made a dark gap in the hillside, the track had been wrenched from its fastenings, and the sleepers smeared with oil and set on fire. Heaps of charred timber marked the spot, and alongside, down in a ravine, lay the wreck of shattered carriages and locomotive, just as they had been tumbled in a topsy-turvy blending of complete collapse. It made me tremble to reflect what this meant, and I came to the conclusion that Santa Cruz was thoroughgoing in his warfare and restrained by few scruples of compassion.

Over the fumes of the brasero, the brass-pan with its stifling embers of charcoal, placed on a stand in the middle of my room, my landlord and I with outstretched palms held long confab before I turned into bed. His mother had been French, and we gossiped in that tongue. His views were tolerably impartial, but it was plain that the Carlists had his good wishes. The factions were partially dispersed, but were not defeated, he said; they would give

more trouble; and then he horrified me with a well-authenticated tale of a recent fight at Aspeitia, where an old villager had taken refuge in a house which was subsequently occupied by the troops. He fell dead after a volley fired by the Carlists. His son was one of those who had joined in the volley, and the awful muffled rumour was spreading among the peasantry that it was by the son's bullet the father had been slain.

CHAPTER III.

A Make-Believe Spain—The Mountain Convoy—A Tough Road to Travel—Spanish Superiority in Blasphemy—Short Essay on Oaths—The Basque Peasants—Carlism under a Cloak—How Guerilla-Fighting is Conducted—A Hyperborean Landscape—A Mysterious Grandee—An Adventurous Frenchman—The Shebeen on the Summit—Armed Alsasua—Base Coin.

AND this is sunny Spain, the land of the olive and the vine. Spain it certainly is in the absolute sense of the word in political geography, but in no other. It is no more Spain than the Highlands are England. The language, the race, the habits, the growths, are different. The language, the Euscara, is known to only one man not born within the borders, the polyglot Prince Lucien Buonaparte. A hackneyed legend runs that the devil tried to learn it, and dislocated his jaw. The race is the aboriginal Iberian, and has none of the languor of the south in it—a stubborn, not a supple race.

The habits of the people are industrious. The growths are rather of the apple and the pine than the olive and the vine.

There before us rises the wall of Nature's handiwork which shuts us out from the true Spain.

In my boyhood I often gazed with admiration on a print of Napoleon crossing the Alps. He was astride of a prancing white charger. I have since learned to detest Napoleon, and to know more of mountain travel. That masterful general, but cruel, dishonourable, bad man—demon-man with genius undoubted and will unbendable, but with the most unscrupulous of insatiate and insensate ambitions, and a leaven of littleness—did not face the heights of St. Bernard on a mettlesome steed, but on a patient mule, and the luxury of his apparel was restricted to furs. Wrapped up in the thickest clothing I could find, I watched the convoy forming outside the station at Beasain in the sunlit cold.

The train from San Sebastian got in at nine in the morning, and before ten a procession of six waggons, built after the massive, clumsy fashion of the French diligence, was drawn up in line. Horses

and mules, generally in teams of five—three leaders and two wheelers—were yoked to the ramshackle vehicles. The passengers, muffled in cloaks, rugs, scarfs, shawls and comforters—for there was ice in the breath of the keen air of the mountain—literally packed themselves in the narrow "insides" of the old-fashioned coaches. There were five in the low, narrow hutch upon wheels with myself, all males; we were as close as sardines in a box. There were some ladies of the party. I trust they had more space at their disposal. The luggage was piled on the roofs and covered with tarpaulins, the drivers mounted the seats in front, whips were cracked, and off we bounded at a pace that would rouse the applause, or peradventure the envy, of the gentlemen who tool the Brighton coach. Gaily our skinny steeds breasted the rise, sending a curl of mist from their hides, and shaking merry music out of the collars of bells round their necks as they clattered over the hard road. For three miles we dashed along at express speed. How spirit-stirring is rapid motion! I actually was warming into a wild joy, and praying that we might en-

counter the Carlists, under the influence of this gallop in the bracing morning atmosphere.

Suddenly there is a stop. The Carlists? No. But here the ascent begins, and a body of mountaineers await us with a string of bullocks. The three leaders are unharnessed and attached behind; and eight bullocks, two by two, are yoked in front of the pair of mules who act as wheelers. The same is done with the other waggons. I watch this process of yoking the bullocks with much curiosity. A strong piece of board is run across the heads of the pair who are coupled, and firmly tied in front of the horns; a sheepskin is thrown over that, for what purpose I cannot tell; and the ropes by which the bullocks drag us are fastened to the piece of board afore-mentioned. They pull, not against the shoulder, but against the horn. Their owners, muscular peasants, lightly clad, though it is cold, walk beside them with long pointed sticks, and occasionally goad them in the flanks. When that does not suffice, they push them, or rain blows on their hides, or twist their tails, and when all other means fail they swear at them. But the grave oxen

move no quicker; they cling to their own gait as if deeply convinced of the truth of the adage, "Fair and easy goes far in the day." The peasants call one "demonio" and another a cow; but the sleepy pair keep never minding, as they waddle along with drooping heads, held closely together as if whispering conspiracy.

At this early point in my experiences, the painful knowledge is forced upon me that the Spaniards are highly accomplished in the art of imprecation. If our army swore terribly in Flanders, I have my theory to account for it. They must have picked up the habit there, and the Spaniards under Alva had left their traces behind them in the speech of the region they had occupied. As a rule, swearing betrays a poverty of invention; it is the resource of the vulgar and ignorant to emphasize their assertions; but in Spain the swearing developed an originality that almost reconciled one to it. There was an awful insolence, a ribald riotousness in some of the oaths which redeemed them from the scorn which every well-balanced mind should feel for displays of petulance. I respect a

good round oath—an oath that blanches my cheeks and makes me imagine that it would not be extraordinary if the ground were to open and swallow the varlet who uttered it. That sort of oath is to be tolerated for its audacity. The malediction is a higher form of oath, and some maledictions are magnificent. To the amateur I can recommend King Lear's upon Cordelia, Francesco Cenci's upon Beatrice—which is more Shakspearian than Shakspeare—and even puny Moore's upon the traitorous Gheber. The joint-stock oath which Sterne puts into the mouths of the Abbess of Andoüillets and the novice, Margarita, who had the whitlow on her middle finger, is passable for its fantastic ingenuity; and the strong locutions pat in the lips of a certain Duke—unless notoriety belies him—are to be licensed because of his rank, and because he is a soldier. But he should have the courage to blurt them out on all occasions. He who dares to outrage society should not shrink from offending an individual.

"You —— naughty boy, why did you sound the wrong call?" said H.R.H. to a bugler, but as soon

as he got out of earshot of a certain Personage, he muttered in an angry undertone, "You canonized little beggar, you know what I meant."

The Spaniards are liberal and earnest and dogged in their railings, anathemas, and execrations, but still the sleepy oxen do not hurry themselves. They care no more for a volley of select comminations than the jackdaw of Rheims did for the archbishop's curse. Of a verity this bullock's pace is a snail's pace, and we have ample leisure to inspect the peasants as we crawl along. Brawny, hardy, and firmly-knit as Highlandmen, their faces are weather-beaten and frank; their manner, when one speaks to them, independent but polite; in dress like unto their Celtic kinsmen of Brittany, short-jacketed, loose, and slovenly, but in stature more like to the tall mountaineers of Tipperary. They must be poor, very poor; but they have the appearance of content, and with it of honesty, sobriety, and civility.

And now a little secret must be imparted. Every man-jack of these ox-drivers is a Carlist, and that is the reason we are not attacked to-day! In a

week those innocent clowns may be blazing away at the regular army of Spain from the brushwood on a hillside, for after such fashion are Carlist wars conducted. A band assembles at the call of some chief—that is to say, the peasants leave their cabins and meet at some rock, some conspicuous tree, or some cross-roads. They have with them a flag, perhaps; perhaps a priest or two; they are badly armed with such arms as insurgents carry—blunderbusses, flint-muskets, fowling-pieces, horse-pistols; they have no distinctive uniform, except a few of the older bands—the permanent army of Carlism—which are clad in the seedy clothes that the French Garde Mobile wore during the late war. The campaign opens; a descent is made upon some village, the mayor is asked to supply so many hundred rations, and the young men are summoned to join the flag. Sometimes the mayor refuses, and there is a fight between "the volunteers of liberty," that is to say, the local national guard, and the Carlists. On the average, so the reports go, one man is killed in each of these combats, and three wounded. That is a battle at this stage of

the Carlist war. With the regular troops sent against them the Carlists act otherwise. They take up ground in some inaccessible eyrie, pop at the passing detachments from their ambuscade, draw them on in the hope of catching them in a trap; but the troops are cautious, they pepper away at the Carlists from a distance until the Carlists run, and the affair ends, as usual, with the loss of one man killed and three wounded. The peasants return to their cabins to tell the tale of their gallantry, and if the troops perchance should come their way, why they are but inoffensive, ingenuous tillers of the soil, the most peaceful beings on the face of nature. The firearm is hid in the thatch or in the neighbouring hedge. But the officers who lead the troops do not allow their enemies the monopoly of gasconade. In the *Gaceta de Madrid* the bulletin of the engagement duly appears, and the names of the doughty warriors are chronicled for the admiration of the señoritas. One Carlist chief—at least, so pretend the wags—had been killed outright thrice, wounded mortally five times, and has had his band completely dispersed and

broken up seven times in the *Gaceta*, and yet he is still alive and troublesome. A most outlandish war, but how disastrous in its effects on the trade and prosperity of the country! It could not be carried on if the soil were not rich to plenteousness. There is an adventurous vigour in the breed, too, and the terrain lends itself to guerilla fighting. So far, I know nothing of the merits of Carlism; but this I can divine, that it is the old rivalry betwixt town and country, and the "pagans" or villagers are all Carlists—question of transmitted feud or local traditions, or both. The rustics have the advantage over the town-bred men; they are familiar with the by-paths; every sheiling is a refuge for them, every dweller therein a self-constituted scout. When they choose to seek them, they must have secure hiding-places. Artillery is an arm of derision in the hills; cavalry can rarely act effectually, and in the way of reconnoitring is next to useless, as its movements can be espied from rock-cover on every eminence; but in the open these insurgents can do nothing against disciplined troops. Pity that they should be such fools as to

abandon their pleasant and comfortable, if humble, homesteads, to help on the aspirations of any right-divine make-believe claimant to the heaven-sent mission—by accident of birth—of impressing other human beings that he is wiser than they, and should have revenues and reverence for condescending to govern them.

What would our ox-drivers do, I wonder, if they could overhear and understand the conversation in which thoughts like these are exchanged in the lumbering Noah's ark they are helping through their domain? We are getting nigh and nigher to the clouds, and the quilt of snow on the mountain grows thicker. The pathway is traceable only by the marks of the hoofs of beasts of burden and the ruts of wheels, and the fleecy banks at each side rise gradually higher. It is palpably colder, and yet we are far from the culminating point of the Pyrenean pass; straight saplings are not infrequent around, and here and there a lowly hut in a nook under some sheltering rock, both hut and rock hoary with snow, startles us with the reminder that human beings actually live here. The Basques,

said Voltaire, are a people who sing and dance on the summit of the Pyrenees. Our ox-drivers do not sing, neither do our muleteers. This interminable glare is becoming very fatiguing to the eyes, and the higher we ascend the rarer are the refreshing little streaks of darker hue. Stumps of dwarf trees replace the straight saplings to be seen lower down; and hardly are we on the crest of one snow-capped hill than another, hidden under the same smooth sheet of everlasting lime-white, mocks us. Slowly and painfully the oxen toil along, and the peasants by their side sink knee-deep at every step. Will this ever end? It was picturesque at first to watch the long caravan coiling over the spiral track which turns right and left like a corkscrew. Now it is tedious, for we are chilled and worn-out, hungry and cramped. The sublimity of nature is grandiose, but there may be too much of it. One tires of rolling perpetual cigarettes; one even tires of studying the forcible Spanish adjurations that begin with the third letter of the alphabet. My companions, four French commercial travellers, relapse into silence and doze off into fitful starts of

the sleepiness begot of extreme cold; the fifth—a grandee of Castile I take him to be at the very least by his appearance, broad swarthy countenance, shaven upper lip and chin, and short spade whiskers of a night-black—the fifth, this Spaniard, did not relapse into silence, for he had never uttered a word since we started.

What weariness to the flesh is this tedious climb to regions hyperborean! I catch myself yawning. What if our waggon were to break down! At last one of the Frenchmen bursts out, "*Dieu de Dieu, j'en ai assez.*" He would stand or rather sit it no longer, opened the door, and alighted. We all followed his example, even to the taciturn Spaniard, and took to the road. A walk in advance might send the blood circulating, and on we plodded in the middle of the path, regardless of the snow which soaked into our boots and saturated our trousers to the knees. Not a living being was visible but two crows who bore us company, and hopped on our flanks like a covering-party. The road was tantalizing in its tortuousness; after walking a furlong we found ourselves a couple of

yards directly above the point we had quitted a quarter of an hour before. One of the Frenchmen, seeing this, had an inspiration; he determined to go up the mountain perpendicularly, and before we could dissuade him he had sunk to his armpits in a treacherous crevasse. We dragged him out by making a cable of our pocket-handkerchiefs and throwing it to him. He took his wetting in good part.

"Ah!" he cried, "shan't I have something to tell them when I get back to the Boulevard des Italiens." And then, as if reflecting, he added, "But no, 'twill never do; they'd call me *farceur*."

A red-brick building with an arrangement of iron on the roof, as if it had been employed as a signal-post, faced us—high up on the pinnacle of a ridge at one moment; was at our side the next; behind us anon; and directly before us now. By turns it was small and large. We were asking ourselves (all except the Spaniard; he never spoke) was this a phantasmagoria, when a jingle of bells was heard on the still air. Where did it come from? We could see nothing. Suddenly, as a