they are called "soft lead," and are sent into the English or French market.

I think I have mentioned that each one of the thirteen furnaces in operation on these works turns out forty-five tons of hard lead per diem! Whence comes the tremendous demand for lead? is a question the writer has often asked, and of which he has never received a satisfactory solution.

Hard by the furnace-house stands the shed for the "blast-engine," a small but powerful machine, for giving "blast" for the first process of desilverization. English industry and mechanical skill are represented even in these far-off wilds, for I noticed on this engine the words, "Ransome, Sims & Head, Ipswich, England."

We come now to the process of desilverization. On an average, every ton of lead from the mine in question contains twelve ounces of pure silver, and it is therefore worth while—"it pays," to use the mining phraseology—to extract it. The operation is thus performed, in two different ways:—First, the lead is re-molten in a furnace, to a certain extent; the blast from the engine is brought to bear upon it, and the lead runs off easily, while the silver remains fixed. This is the common means of "desilverizing"; but a later method, although only at present in use in one or two, at most, of the smelting-works of Spain, yet is a far superior method. It is briefly this:—The pigs of hard lead are again smelted in another set of furnaces, and poured into a large "pot," capable of holding ten tons of the molten liquid. A certain percentage of zinc, I know not what particular proportion or preparation, in powder is stirred in the lead, and it attracts and brings to it all the silver; the "pot" is

then skimmed, and a "refiner" finishes the work at leisure. The lead is then poured once more into the moulds, and is "soft lead." It is strapped on mule or donkey back, and sent off to the nearest station.

There is but one more operation that I need notice. It is the "smelting" of the slag, or refuse from the first operation. It is done at what are called the "high-furnaces," and from this slag a certain proportion of pure lead is obtained.

The coal for heating the furnaces costs in Spain £2 10*s*. per ton, thus forming a most expensive item in the mining account. It is brought from England, or from the mines of Belmez, and finds its way to each distant mine, from the nearest railway station, in panniers on mule or donkey.

Coal is a luxury unknown to the Spanish poor, who still warm their feet over the tiny brasero of carbon or charcoal; even using the tiny charcoal made from the olive-trees, and called "picon," the fumes of which are rank poison.

I noticed, as we left the works, a shed full of lead in the rough state, *i. e.*, partly admixed with granite; and on asking my companion how much there was lying there waiting its turn to be smelted, he informed me that each of the two sheds contained some 800 tons, more or less. I quote this simply to give some idea of the scale on which the lead-mining and smelting of the ore is carried on in this country.

Walking homewards in the bright evening of the Spanish spring day, for it was March, it was a striking thought that for upwards of half a mile the road was "burrowed under," and that one's fellow-creatures were winning their bread 900 feet below one's path!

Some mention should be made of the "runs" or

falls of earth and rock. I noticed several little valleys, as it were, of broken ground and rock, and my companion told me they were "runs," or places where the earth had fallen in upon the mine. And now the "day-shift" are on their homeward road with us, and we must say "Adios" to the men at the mines.

Two beauties of the dreary mines shall here be mentioned. The roof of the "old mines" (*i. e.*, those unworked for some time) is covered with the most exquisitely-graceful stalactites, of snowy whiteness, of carbonate of lime; and ferns of unimagined grace droop from the damp, dark soil of the unused shaft. Thus far, Nature throws her graceful veil over the deformity left by man. The second beauty has ceased, or nearly so. Until the decadence of religious observances, which came in with the fall of Isabella of Spain, there used to be suspended in each mine, on the first level, a tinsel image of Nuestra Señora (the Virgin); two tiny oil lamps (miner's lamps) were, night and day, burning before it, since each miner, as he ascended, poured, as a thank-offering, what remained of the oil in his lamp into the Virgin's lamps, which were thus ever alight. This spectacle is now but rarely to be witnessed.

CHAPTER VI.

CHARACTER AND SOCIAL STATE OF THE SPANISH CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF THE ENGLISH MINER.

The two classes of men which it is here attempted to describe present a very marked contrast both in character and social state. And, first, as to the character of these two classes. No one can have been conversant with the English miner without having noticed how deeply the religious element—of a kind oftentimes mistaken, and sometimes amounting even to austerity—enters into and forms a leading feature in the character of the English miner. I speak specially of the miners of Cornwall and Wales, having not had sufficient experience of the miner in the North to justify me in estimating his character. And this religious element — which is common to the English peasant classes, whether a man be the old-fashioned, honest, simple-hearted churchman, who takes "the parson" as his oracle, sits under him, as a matter of course, twice every Sunday, and rejoices to hear "our parson deliver himself beautiful," or whether he be the austere, unreasoning Calvinist of the Sussex weald; or the self-opinionated and harsh-judging, but earnest and ecstatic, Methody of Cornwall or the Midland Counties—this religious element seems to me hardly to enter at all into the character of the Spanish peasant or miner, the two presenting on this point, therefore, a decided contrast.

The phraseology of the English miner, his words, in health or in sickness,—if not downright offensively and obtrusively religious, as is oftentimes the case,—are, at least, tinged with the religious element. How often, in visiting the sick or dying among this latter class, do we hear, it may be from blanched and trembling lips, the language of a most Christ-like resignation, of a most child-like trust in the Lord of us all, a most bright and blissful hope for the future!

"It is the Lord's will; let Him do what seemeth Him best."

"This parting would be bad, if it weren't for the thought of Heaven."

Or, if the strong man be leaving all that he loves on earth, how often will his last words, as he leaves his wife and children to the tender mercies of a cold and hard-hearted world, be—"The Lord will provide. He never leaves those that trust him."

Again, how touchingly is the true nature and attitude of prayer depicted in the word used commonly by the poorer classes in the Midland Counties, where praying is invariably called begging; and to pray, to beg.

And, in health, the English miner takes a pride in his religion, and in all its accompaniments. His amusements are few, but his religious excitements are many. He pays to belong to the "connexion"; he leads a class, he is anxious to be appointed an itinerant preacher, and is ready to serve his apprenticeship for that purpose "on trial," and thenceforward to preach, and lead the sonorous, rough-cutting Wesley's hymn in the little stone chapel on the grey hill-side.

The following may be quoted as an instance of the religious element in the Cornish miner's character. One of these men told me that the two finest sayings

he ever heard were those of a dying man, who, on being pitied, said,—"Don't pity me. Down goes the body, up goes the soul to glory!" And that of an infirm man, who, for want of room inside, was compelled to ride upon the step of a Cornish coach. One of the inside passengers asked of him,—"Is your life insured, old gentleman?" And the answer was,—"No; but my soul is!"

Again, the religious emotions of the English miner, and others of different employments in his own rank of life, often (far oftener than is supposed) finds vent in a sort of religious verse, or rather doggerel, of which the following lines, composed by a man of low estate, are here subjoined from a heap of the same now lying before me, as being eminently characteristic. They are entitled—

Lines on a Fire witnessed September 21st, 1872.

I.

"Behold, our *newmerus* stacks of corn,
How beautiful they stand;
Like jewels they our farms adorn,
All over England.

II.

In them we all can plainly see
The Bread that giveth life
To all the human family
While in this world of strife.

III.

Of every sight they are the best,
Setting but one aside;
And that is Christ, who giveth rest
To all for whom He died.

IV.

But 'tis an awful sight to see
  Our corn to ashes burn,—
A lesson, sir, for you and me,
  If we can only learn.

V.

The wheat and barley, beans and straw,
  Was there consumed by fire;
A sight which we together saw,
  But could not it admire.

VI.

Some in their hearts with secret prayer
  Addressed the heavenly throne;
While others did profanely swear,
  And did their God disown!

VII.

This fire reminds me of a day,
  Which like an oven will burn,
When sinners will be turned away
  Who now salvation spurn.

VIII.

O, may we learn the lesson given,
  That, when our life is past,
We may receive the joys of heaven,
  Which will for ever last!

IX.

No fires there to burn our grain,
  No tears to w*h*ipe away;
But perf*i*ct happiness will reign,
  Through one eternal day.

X.

There, with the Father and the Son,
  And the Good Spirit too;
We hope to live, when we have done,
  With fires here below."

And not only are the ideas and the talk of many of the lower classes in England thus coloured and tinged, or even saturated with the religious element, but their hope, on the bed of pain and death, oftentimes burns with a lustre almost unearthly—a sure, blunt, matter-of-fact belief in Heaven and immortality as things tangible, unknown among men who are far their superiors in education, and, perhaps, even sometimes in moral conduct. Of this personal religion—of this child-like trust, of this calm, Christian resignation in time of suffering or death; of this bright hope of immortality, little—aye, passing little—is found in the character of the Spaniard of the same social position. He does not, it is needless to say, read the Bible—that rich store-house of thought and religion—it is not found on his shelves, and, were it put into his hand, not one in eight could read it. His conversation is entirely free from being tinged with the religious element, and when he touches upon these matters, so dear to the heart of his English brethren, it is too often with an admixture of levity which is strangely out of place. Thus a religious miner, whose boast it was that for many years he had never failed to purchase (the honour is paid for) the privilege of carrying one of the images in the processions of La Semana Santa, said to his master, a well-known Spanish mine-owner,—"I have had a bad time lately, and cannot afford to pay for the privilege of being one of the bearers of San Juan. Will you advance me the money? For I could not bear to miss the performance of that sacred duty; and won't I just shake him!"

Indeed, the religious indifference of the miner's character, compensated for, in some degree, in social

intercourse, by his strict sense of honour and his easy good-nature, is as marked as the earnestness of the Cornishman. It is to be feared that his religion has lost its vital power, and has but little hope upon him. When the tinkling bell of the procession carrying the Host to some dying brother is heard coming slowly down the street, the miner, with his wife looking idly on, will merely say, "It is so and so dying. Bueno" (well); then idly light his cigarette, and dismiss the matter.

Sometimes, however, among the women of the mining population, will be found a really strict and simple religion. A Spanish nurse, whom I well knew, was one out of many instances of this. Whenever she had a few moments to spare, she would be found sitting on the door-step or at the open window, reading one of the books of the "Misa," or one of the multitude of printed prayers to "Nuestra Señora," or religious tracts, which are sold for a couple of farthings apiece at the corner of every street. Every night thrice she rose to count her beads and pray, sitting, half-audibly. One night her adopted child's fate was trembling in the balance, for he had been drawn for the army, but was seeking exemption on fair grounds. As the old church-clock tolled the hour each time, she rose from her bed, counted her beads, and prayed for her favourite's deliverance. The fatal morning dawned,—exemption was not to be his. I saw her on her return from the Governor's office. "How are you, Alfonsa?" I inquired; and the touching answer came from her quivering lips as the tears rolled down her careworn face, "Bien, con mucha pena," that is, "Well, but with many a pang." Nothing shocked poor Alfonsa so much as to hear it said, "To-morrow

we will do this or that." She always, in an earnest voice, added, crossing her breast, "Si Dios quiere" (if God will). But she, poor thing, was very ignorant; and, on the sorrowful occasion just referred to, she deemed that her prayer was not granted, nor even heard, because God was angry with her for having neglected some religious ceremony of her parish church!

But such cases are the exception, and are far from being the rule. And if, in his carelessness about public worship, about his private devotions, and in the general absence of that definite personal religion, and sense of responsibility to his God, the Spanish miner presents so marked a contrast to his English brother, so also is the child-like trust in God, and the Christian resignation in times of trial, which characterize the latter, too often absent.

Seldom, if ever, do you hear those well-worn words, "The Lord will provide," or any word denoting the existence of trust in the Fatherhood of God, from his lips. In their place are found words and ideas which have a far different colour. "I suppose they will be able to rub on;" or, "It is bad, very bad, most unlucky." In fact, trust in his "luck" takes the place with him of trust in his God. True, no one is so cheerful, so joyous as the poor Spanish miner; but his joy is a surface joy, his cheerfulness is built upon no foundation. He is light-hearted rather because he refuses to think at all about the future, with all its unknown dispensation of weal or woe, than because he can leave it in the hands of a Providence which he feels to be all-merciful and all-wise.

And as regards Christian resignation, when days are dark or friends are few, but little is found in the

Spanish miner's character. His resignation is rather the resigning himself into the hands of a merciless necessity, than those of a kind and wise Providence. "It is hard, but it is my fate;" or, "Bad, but one can't control these things;" or, "Ah! life is a mule-cart journey, you must get into some ruts," are some of his common phrases. And of that bright hope of immortality which so often has astonished and delighted one when seen bearing its blessed fruit at the death-bed of a poor labourer or miner in some rude cottage or outlying hamlet in England, the poor Spaniard has but little share.

By his rude cuatré (small bedstead used by the better class of miners), still oftener by his rude litter spread upon the brick-floor of his one room, his wife and some other good woman will repeat, as he turns his face to the wall to die, the prayer to God, to Christ, to the Virgin guardian of the town in which he lives, but his lips hardly respond; he is thinking of his work, of his employers, of all that he is so soon to lose, rather than of all that he so soon may gain. But he does not complain,—and that is great praise; seldom does suffering of body wring a murmur from the blanched lips of the dying Spaniard. "If I am to die, what matters it whether it be to-day or to-morrow?"

There is, however, one point in which the Spaniard, with his indifference, his ignorance, his superstition, contrasts very favourably with the Englishman. "Cant"—by which I mean that excess of superficial religious talk so common among the Methodists of Cornwall and Wales—is a thing unknown to him; nor does he ever condemn, or even harshly judge, the religion of his neighbour. And in this last-named

point, both among high and low, the Roman Catholic Church strikes me as grafting a more favourable, because a more modest and charitable, spirit upon her sons. Where all are under the Church and her decrees, there, then, is found not egotism, no exaltation of self, no religious pride. Perhaps the Puritanical spirit finds the grey skies and sombre mists, and rugged sounding shores of the Cornishman, better suited to its development than the bright skies and sunny plains of Spain,—though whether or no climate and scenery have, together with race, their share in fostering any special phase of Christianity in a country, is too deep a matter to be more than mooted here.

In another point the character of the Spanish contrasts favourably with that of the English miner. The former is, essentially, a sober man. Rarely is he "given to drink." He always commences his morning with a dram of aguardiente; but this is needful for the climate, to fortify the inner man; indeed, if you take the Spanish miner before he has had this potion, he is more inclined to be quarrelsome than at any other time of the day. The proportion of "drinking men" in any Spanish mine is about three per cent., whereas in England, although not more than that number may be regular drunkards, yet there are very few who do not sometimes "break out," and go "on the spree."

Again, the Spaniard is the very child of mirth, the Englishman of seriousness. The Spaniard sings as he goes to his work, sings as he returns from it, sings at his work; plucks the bright flower of the Campo to put it in his button-hole; loves society and good-fellowship, and spends his evening trolling forth to

the tinkling guitar the wild ditties of his land, of love, and mirth, and jest.

How different is the Englishman! Life is no jest to him,—rather it is a serious reality. In silence he wends his way in the grey of morn to his work; silently he works; silently he returns homewards; silently he smokes his substantial English clay-pipe, and drinks his muddy ale, only now and then speaking a work or two, those words being the result of the musing of many minutes!

As regards contentment, the Spaniard, again, bears off the palm from his better-fed, better-housed, better-educated brother. No matter how small his wages, he never dreams of striking: coarse though his fare, it is eaten with a smile; comfortless though his lodging, he will welcome you to it as his "casa"; standing out in marked contrast to his brother across the sea, who is seldom, if ever, really contented.

Again, the Spaniard is the very child of courtesy; he is, as it were, one of "Nature's gentlemen." He could not say or do a rude thing. To walk with the stranger; to relieve him of any load he may be carrying for a mile under a burning sun; to offer you—and the offer is meant—a share of his simple meal, if you chance to come upon him when dining,—is simply his habit.

The story told of a rencontre between the late Bishop Wilberforce and a Berkshire peasant lad is not without its point under this heading. The Bishop's keen eye, during a confirmation, espied the countenance of a lad presented for that rite which he thought he recognized as the countenance of one whom he had previously confirmed, and, on his chaplain apprising the lad of that prelate's surmise,

"Him's a loiar, then," was the rejoinder of this wild bustard of the Berkshire Downs! A Spaniard would shrink in horror from the bare idea of using such language.

The impulsiveness of the Spaniard, again, comes out in marked contrast to the slow, calculating disposition of his English brother. As an instance of the two characters, the following anecdotes may be cited. A Spanish miner, with whom the writer of these pages was living, took umbrage at the conduct of some woman—of very shady character, alas!—towards himself, and, in his passion, turned the woman out of the house, saying, "She is a *mala mujer*" (a bad woman). I said nothing; but two hours afterwards he had invited the "mala mujer" to the share of his homely fare, merely saying, in answer to my look of surprise, "No one can afford to throw stones." An English miner, if my memory serve me correctly, acted very differently on a similar occasion. His neighbour's wife had grievously gone wrong in breaking the wedding tie, and it came to his ears. He slowly lit his clay-pipe, meditated for a whole evening, and then, having made out the bearings of the case entirely to his own satisfaction, and the unhappy girl's condemnation, he announced, as he rose to retire to bed, the conclusion to which his cogitations had led him in the following terse sentiment:—"Why, I'm saying to myself, you must be a naughty woman; surely you must,"—a conclusion on which he afterwards doggedly acted to the end of his days.

Sad as is the impurity before marriage, which most certainly does exist both among the mining and agricultural populations in parts of England, it must be confessed that it is more than equalled by the tone of

morality after marriage in the Black Country of Spain.

It is no uncommon thing for a woman to have her "querido" (favourite, or darling), and the husband, in his way, being equally guilty, both are fain to wink at the delinquencies of the other. And although the mother guards her daughter from all opportunity of misconducting herself, by external precautions of the most stringent and tyrannical nature before marriage, yet cases are not uncommon where a mother will actually sell the honour of her daughter, a child of fourteen or fifteen, for the trifling sum of a few Spanish dollars. The indifference with which impurity is looked upon and spoken of in the Spanish mining-districts (and, perhaps, in others also) is something truly alarming.

I have said that a certain sense of honour and a great natural warmth of disposition aid in compensating for the Spaniard's want of definite religion and sense of moral duty. And instances of the former are not wanting in the daily life of the Spanish miner.

A short time since, two Spanish pitmen quarrelled below ground, and decided on repairing to the bank to settle their quarrel by the knife. The one went up by the ladder, his adversary, feeling weak, requesting to be wound up in the bucket, showing his perfect trust in the good faith of his foe. Most carefully, indeed with extra precautions, when he arrived at the bank, the miner brought his adversary safely to the surface. The two men fought, and the man who had so carefully brought his adversary into the daylight fell, mortally wounded, by his hand.

Again, you may see a crowd of three hundred

Spanish miners forming a ring around two of these combatants. The fact of a fight is soon known to the Municipal Guards, who, sword in hand, hasten to the spot, probably to find one being carried off to hospital mortally wounded. Should a single foul stroke have been given, the bystanders will detain the survivor, and hand him over to custody as a coward and a villain; but should the fight have been a fair one, the survivor, though wounded, will make, or have made for him, a safe escape, nor will one lip be opened to inform against him and betray his name.

To sum up what has been said in terse, but true sentences, it may be asserted that the Spanish miner is the very child of mirth, the English of seriousness. The Spaniard loves the song and the dance; the Englishman, his beer drank in silence, and his own fireside. The Spaniard loves to wander; the Englishman's boast is that he has worked on one farm for twenty years. The Englishman seeks to save money, and increase his wages; the Spaniard never saves, he lives but for the passing hour, and would think "agitation" too much trouble. To the Spaniard (of course, when I say Englishman and Spaniard, I allude to the peasantry), life is a jest; to the Englishman, a reality, and a stern one. The Spaniard is naturally polite; the Englishman naturally boorish. The Spaniard affects dressiness, even in his rags, and has a passionate love for gaudy colour; the Englishman affects a decent dress only on Sundays, and is content with the old grey, brown, or white smock-frock; or, in these enlightened days, when smocks are, I hear, fast disappearing, he is pleased with the customary suit of solemn black. The Spaniard plucks the bright flower of the Campo, and puts it in his button-hole; the English-