Pedro, in common with all others of his special trade in the interior of Spain, added to his trade of barber those of "Dentista y Sangrador," *i. e.*, dentist and bleeder, which last appellations he deserved equally well with that of barber. He drew teeth and blood from all and any, and even went so far, in times of small-pox, as to add vaccination to his other surgical operations.

If you sat down in Pedro's shop to have your hair cut, just as he commenced, some poor, care-worn looking Spanish mother would appear at the door, and say, "Pray come at once, and bleed my child"; in which case he would smile blandly, and say, "Dentro media hora" (within half-an-hour), finish his task, and hurry off. For bleeding, which is the constant remedy in spring-time for the feverish diseases of men, women, and children, Pedro received only one peseta, a coin equal to tenpence of English money, and for tooth-drawing only fivepence! Constantly have I been sitting in Pedro's shop, and some unhappy creature has come in, seated himself beside me, and then and there been operated upon, the tooth extracted being handed round to be commented upon, and the instrument to be admired!

I fixed a day for shooting, or trying to shoot, the red-legs with the decoy; and on a bright, sunny morning in early March presented myself at the barberia of Pedro de Dios, ready accoutred for the rough walking of the Campo. An English sporting get-up is, perhaps, the best for an Englishman; but the Spaniard often wears a pair of canvas or flexible leather shoes or boots, or wraps several rolls of stout canvas round his feet and the lower part of the leg, binding it with thongs, and is thus enabled

to keep his footing where there is much rocky walking.

The rocky, or rather stony, sides of some parts of the Sierra are terribly trying walking, especially when one has a gun and other traps to carry; and in dry weather even the sides of the hills, as you descend, from the dry, hard nature of the baked earth, are almost as slippery as the rocks themselves. In such places, the man who is flexibly shod has a tremendous advantage over his companion of the iron English boot, and will outstrip him both in ascending and descending the sides of a hill, or Sierra.

The goatherds, and ruder sort of cazadores (sportsmen), invariably, when engaged in their respective avocations in a rocky district, are shod with sackcloth or canvas, as above described, it being rolled so thickly as to preserve the foot from injury from glass or rock, and the leg from the prickly brushwood.

Pedro wore the soft, I the hard, foot-gear. He had just finished bleeding a neighbour's child, and was free for the day. He first took down his pajaro in its cage, drew a nightcap over the latter, and slung it over his back. Then he took his becerra, or gun-rest, and strapped it across his back, throwing a thick rug over the two. He shouldered his gun, and off we tramped for the puestos, or shooting-posts, which lay some five miles out in the Campo, or wild country.

Let me offer a short explanation of the three Spanish words here used. The word "pajaro" simply is an equivalent of the English generic word "bird," but with the prefix "el" (English "the") before it, it always means, in the rude phraseology of the Spanish interior, "the decoy-bird." The word "becerra" means literally, I believe, "snap-dragon," but it

is used here to denote a gun-rest. This gun-rest is much like an English spade-handle, shod with an iron spike, but, of course, much shorter, so that when it is driven into the earth, the loop is just of the height of a man's head when he is sitting on the ground. In the loop of the handle, if I may so call it, is a small steel trough, just fitted to hold the gun-barrel, and moving noiselessly on a pivot, so that the gun-barrel can be turned to, and pointed at, any angle, high or low, to right or left. The "puesto," or post, is the ambush of the cazador, and will be presently fully described.

I have omitted mention of one very needful weapon which we carried with us, namely, a good stout bill-hook, for cutting off boughs of trees.

The walk, although the levante (east wind) blew keenly, and the March sun blazed down quite fiercely enough, was a very interesting one, so far as scenery was concerned. My companion was pleasant, but, like many fine sportsmen, very silent withal.

The country through which our road lay was of the wildest, only showing signs of cultivation at rare intervals, in the shape of an olive-grove crowning the slope of some hill less rocky than its fellows; or a field of sevada (barley), so dry and baked that the clods, like triangular bits of rock sticking up, absolutely bruised one's feet.

First, we passed through a wide plain of tawny red sand, and granite boulders here and there peeping out. It was completely dotted over with clumps of "gamon," or wild asphodel. (I am no botanist, but I give the names by which the several plants I speak of are here known; the botanical vocabulary of the interior is, however, very slender.) These clumps of

asphodel are, as far as the leaves are concerned, exactly similar to so many clumps of garden daffodil; but, unlike them, each clump shoots up from two to eight or nine succulent stems, each clothed towards the top with graceful bell-shaped flowers, in size and shape like those of the English blue-bell—but pure white, with tiny pink or purple stripes, and pink stamens. The effect of these flowers spangling the arid plain for half a mile is very beautiful. In these plains there are no large trees. In the arid plains whence I write, a wood is unknown; the trees do not average more than twenty feet in height, and are stunted, dwarfed, and dry-leaved.

Here and there, from among the asphodels, stood up little stunted trees of the encina, or evergreen oak (*Quercus ilex*), one of the commonest trees in the Spanish interior.

Waste after waste we tramped across covered with wild thyme (tomillo), looking brown and withered, but sweet enough in a pressed handful, and also with every sort of prickly, dry, aromatic underwood, the small, stunted holly growing about two feet high, and interlaced with dry bents (this holly is called "cojoco" by the peasantry); the "dractarma," or mare's tail; the "lentisco," or Spanish mastich shrub (*Pistachia lentiscus*), supposed by the peasantry to be very poisonous; these, with the clumps of asphodel, the dry, interlacing bents, and the clumps of green "juagarzo," formed a splendid cover for hares, rabbits, or foxes.

So I remarked to Pedro. "Si, señor" (Yes, sir), said he; "but since the Republic, every one in Spain is a sportsman, and every one carries an escopeta, and so we find now neither hare, rabbit, nor partridge

in the Campo,—no! hardly so much as a fox, or a wild cat!" It was true. Until Serrano's Government came, the name of the cazadores was Legion: every one carried a gun, and betook himself to the Campo.

The most picturesque scene upon the road, or rather no-road, which we pursued, was at a turn where we followed a winding path, known only to sportsman or goatherd, round the bend of some hills. Under a stunted encina, two goatherds were sitting down, in their sheepskin jackets, huge mantas, and with a gun and a dog beside them, their flock of brown, black, white, and sandy goats browsing all around on the crisp, aromatic herbage; above their heads rose a huge hill, with square blocks of grey stone or rock (granite) piled in wild confusion one above the other—so grey, so serrated, that one almost seemed to be looking upon—

"The rough rude ocean frozen into stone,"

and down these crags or boulders, or rather square blocks of grey granite, came part of the flock of goats, gambolling and skipping down from one slat to another, as though enjoying the feat. Growing out from every crevice and hole in these stones were stunted encinas and chaparros, their dark green or glaucus foliage contrasting beautifully with the quiet, grey colour of the slats of stone. Far beyond us, and all around, lay the blue serrated peaks of the Sierra Morena; and, at our feet, a tiny stone well, of the purest water, gushing from the rocks, with a well-worn hole for a man to stoop down and drink of the crystal stream. I was just kneeling down to slake my thirst, when my companion sprang forward with a stick

which he carried. "Culebra," he cried ("adder"), as he aimed a tremendous blow at a spotted adder, that wriggled untouched into its hole just above the little well.

It was of a dark-brown colour, with bright yellow spots, and would have been in measurement about a foot-and-a-half long.

Spain abounds with reptiles, and at every footfall we scared a lizard, a scorpion, or an adder. The lizards (lagartos) shot away instantaneously into the nearest shrub; the adders moved more slowly, and we managed to despatch one on our return journey.

Along a ledge of rock, on one side of which was an olive-grove protected by a hedge of "pita" (aloe), the sword-like, spike-like leaves of which thrust their sharp points almost into our path—a path so narrow, so slippery, that, with my thick, English shooting-boots, and heavy load, and gun, I reeled over, and nearly fell three or four times; then up a steep mountain side, knee-deep in ground-holly, lentisco, bents, wild thyme, and the like—so we tramped along. At last we reached the top of the hill; and a more beautiful hill-top I never desire to behold. Splendid as cover for wild animals, bird, or beast, it was also equally splendid from its surroundings. Far away, in a belt, stretched the blue mountains of the Morena; at our feet lay the wildest of wild countries, covered with brushwood, from which rose up, here and there, slope after slope, bristling with grey slabs of rock. A few tilled fields, and dusky olive-groves, and goatherds, just reminded us that man was near; but all the rest simply spoke of desolation, wildness, and the chace!

We were on a table-land of short, thymy turf, dry as stubble from the long droughts, and dotted all over with thickets of evergreens and clumps of aromatic brushwood. The breeze, though cold, was delightfully refreshing after such a clamber; but, alas! that need, that *one* need, of suffering humanity in Spain, namely, water, was not to be had. We had both forgotten our water-bottle, and had not brought so much as an orange. So we knew our fate: we must wait till set of sun, with parched lips and thirsty.

But, fortunately, I had brought up a tiny flask of Catalan wine! The turf of this table-land was so short, the surface of the ground so level, that it would have made a first rate bowling-green; and then, the prospect—it was simply magnificent!

With a glass, we could see the shelving stones, the grey-granite slabs bristling up one of the hill-sides; and these, my companion said, were the haunt of numberless foxes. These foxes live and bring up their young in the crevices of these huge stones, and there is no "stopping *their* earths"; once run to ground, they are safe. But not only foxes, but wolves—a stray wolf or two from the Sierra Morena—often bear their young there; and, last summer, a friend of mine took, with great difficulty, a nest of three or four young wolves from their hiding-place amid the crevices of these grey rocks, and tried to bring them up by hand—by the bottle, as it were! He failed, however, for one and all of the young ones died within three months of their capture.

I thought of the litter of wolves—I scanned the grey rocks for the foxes. I gazed in admiration on the wild, barren scene around and below me; but my dreams and thoughts were soon dissipated when

Pedro handed to me the bill-hook, and bade me cut boughs!

We had come to one of the best of the puestos. The puesto, or post, is of two kinds; sometimes, in stony pieces of ground, it is a small circular enclosure of stones, loosely piled on one another, in which case a small crevice is left for the gun. Here, however, the puesto was of the ordinary kind—namely, of brush-wood. The way it is made is this. A spot is selected where there are one or two clumps of evergreen brush-wood, about eight feet in diameter, the brush being about two to three feet high. The sportsman clears a circular space inside, large enough for him to lie down in, and cuts a small opening in front for the rest. We chose a good puesto, cleared off the loose brush-wood placed by the last occupant to thicken the walls of the puesto, and then cut plenty of fresh boughs, and cleared a larger space within; then we wove green boughs around the rest, and stuck it firmly in the ground in the hedge of the puesto. Round the old stump of a tree, called "the decoy-rest," we twined evergreen, to make it look "natural," as my companion called it, and put a screen of the same round the cage, so that, when placed upon the rest, the sides were hidden by the green fringe of lentisco, and the top of the cage was open to the blue sunny sky. We drew the nightcap off the cage, and put it on the top of the stump. In a moment, ere we could jump over the sides of the puesto, and ensconce ourselves within it, the decoy-bird (a male red-leg) began his peculiar call—calling, chucking, whistling, and crowing in turns. "Do-it-quick, do-it-quick, do-it-quick, chuck, chuck, chuck, crr-r-r-ow—chuc-chic, chuc-chic, chuc-chic—wh-h-h-h-ew!"

Just as we had fairly settled ourselves in the small circle of evergreen, up rode a Spanish caballero of the town, a famous cazador, his servant on a donkey close behind him, carrying his master's gun.

"What, you've taken the best puesto, you thieves!" He, too, had come out for his day's decoy-shooting, and was evidently chagrined, though he laughed good-humouredly enough as he trotted across the short turf and sand of the plateau to the next puesto, at finding his favourite lair pre-occupied.

I pulled out a few sandwiches, and offered part to my companion. "No," said he, "it is Friday, and we eat no flesh on that day in Spain; although, for my part, I do not see why flesh is worse for the stomach on Friday than on any other day. But, there, I don't know."

We watched and waited hour after hour. At last we heard the answering call of another partridge, and heard the whir of its wings as it flew a short distance towards us—the red-legs are not flyers, but run like greyhounds—and rustled about in the brushwood. However, it never came within sight or gun-shot, and not another bird was heard. A "slower" day's sport—if sport it can be called—it has never been my lot to have; and, lying cramped up in the tiny space, with a burning March sun overhead, and the chill east wind driving through the green walls of our little circle, I felt simply uncomfortable and dispirited; and talking and smoking are, of course, unallowable. It may suit the Spaniards, who are somewhat indolent, to lie ensconced in these tiny puestos and breathe the sweet hill air, and turn over lazily for a shot at fifteen yards, but commend me rather to a ramble over moorland or stubbles, or wanderings along many miles

of quiet river, fishing-rod in hand, or a frosty night upon the edge of the mere, when wings come flapping heavily landwards from the stormy sea.

Homeward we tramped, for the pajaro had become sulky and would not call; and as we tramped across a bit of broken ground, Pedro consoled himself for his disappointment by bringing down a partridge. Then we beat some heathery ground for hare or rabbit, but without success; saw a stray fox or two sneaking home to his "earth," or rather, to his "rock," in the grey pile of stones and rocks; flushed a small flock of avefrias, a sort of plover, and saw a green lizard of large size—nearly a foot long.

My musings, as we tramped home as quickly as we could—for, although armed, it is by no means safe to be out on foot in the Campo after dusk—were all upon the poor pajaro, and the treacherous trade to which he is apprenticed.

I remember an old man, a gardener, in England, telling me, almost with the tears in his eyes, that his neighbour had succeeded at last in teaching his parrot to swear; "and," he added, to my infinite amusement, "it do seem such a shame, sir, to make the poor bird commit such a sin!"

If the pajaro be a moral agent, as was the parrot in my poor gardener's philosophy, it certainly is a shame to let him allure his fellows into danger or death, especially if, as is often the case, his victim be a widow, or a young maiden lady seeking for a husband!

CHAPTER VI.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS IN SPANISH WILDS.

PERHAPS one of the most striking features in the character of the Spaniard is his exceeding cheerfulness — a cheerfulness that no adverse circumstances (save illness) seems to be able to daunt. And he is a man very easily contented. The rudest joke affords him a laugh, the simplest, roughest festivity can cheer and delight him.

Among Spanish amusements, the annual fairs and the festivals of Mother Church stand in the foremost places. Christmas, with its cold east wind, tempered by the ever-glowing sky; Holy Week, with its winding processions, ushering in the glorious Resurrection morn, succeeded by other spring and summer festivals,—add each their quota to the poor Spaniard's modest "roll of delights," until the harvest is reaped, the sacks safely stored in the cameras of the owners, the paja laid up for the horses' winter supply, when, suddenly, harvest and granary are forgotten, and one fair in swift succession succeeds to another. It may here be noted that, as it appears to me, the Spanish working-man's and tradesman's character contrasts most favourably with that of his compeer in England. In the latter country, both the "time to work and the time to play" (the latter, probably, because it comes so rarely) are not used, but abused; or, in other words, an Englishman makes it his business to gain

money, nay, even to grub for money, and he begrudges every holiday or half-holiday, which loses him, as he thinks, a certain portion of his labour and his capital.

"Carramba," said a poor Spanish agricultural labourer to me, when I told him that his grey-smocked brothers over the water had only two holidays in the year, except the sober Sunday; "Carramba, what is the good of life at all, at that price?"

The remark struck me as forcible and true. The Spaniard, as regards play and work, keeps to the golden mean. He is never so absorbed in business as to be unwilling to shut his shop and take a holiday with his dependents; and, when taking his holiday he rarely exceeds the bounds of temperance and moderation, and is ready to return to work as lightly as he went to play. If to "use this world without abusing it" be the right rule of life, in this respect the joyous Spaniard has the best of it.

Some description shall now be given of a few of the Spanish holidays.

In one town where I was in the spring of last year, I was surprised by a little crowd gathering round my door, and by a sharp double knock. On opening the door, the gaily-caparisoned head of a magnificent snow-white sheep was thrust in. Gay ribbons and gold streamers covered her body, and almost hid her well-combed hair. On her forehead, in the shape of a cross, were bound, with gold ribbon, three shining ounce-pieces of gold. A sweet-looking young priest stood on one side of the pretty creature, which tossed its meek head ever and anon, as though proud of its trappings, and on the other the master of the ceremonies, who requested me, in honour of the

Virgin of ——, patroness of the town, to buy half-a-dozen tickets, entitling me to join in the raffle shortly to be held for the sheep and her three gold pieces.

Each ticket cost two reals (fivepence), and some thousands were sold, the whole sum realized being spent in decorating the churches of the town, and giving a magnificent display of fireworks on the night of the festival of Nuestra Señora de ——."

There is another custom in Untrodden Spain chiefly to be found in the least-known towns of Andalucia. It is exactly similar to an Irish wake.

A little child has died, and is to be buried. The friends, fellow-workmen, neighbours, all come to the house where the little one lies, gaily decked out with flowers and tinsel, in its white flimsy coffin. There is music and dancing, there is eating and drinking. The mother is in the room, and receives, not sympathy, but congratulations, and at last, with joy, the little one, thus early delivered from the "waves of this troublesome world," is followed to its grave by the long and lively train of friends and followers.

It should here be added, that there is a peculiar sweet cake made specially for these funeral feasts.

However much the idea of festivity at such a season may grate upon some deeply sensitive minds, it must be acknowledged that this modest expression of joy is more in accordance with the sentiments of the English Church, expressed in her magnificent funeral service, than are the hushed voices, and darkened room, and mock tears, so familiar to us at the funeral of an English innocent.

The Spanish mother, tender-hearted and loving as she is, oftentimes, when spoken to sympathetically about the loss of her darling, will say that "It is

better for the little one, and that, therefore, it behoves her not to repine;" or she will say, "It may be it is taken away from the evil to come." And by such speeches the exquisite German poem (Andersen's) has often been vividly brought before my mind, where a German mother, overcome with grief at the loss of her darling, is brought to resignation and calmness by the guardian angel of the little child placing before her tearful and bewildered gaze the book of what that child's life would have been had it been spared.

"Then she saw her child, her heart's dear treasure,
Fated not to joy and peace, alas!
Fated, not to know a pure life's pleasure,
But through want, and sin, and shame to pass!

"Then the mother knew her human blindness,
And, even through her tears, she brightly smiled:
'Blest,' she said, 'be God, who in His kindness
Bore from earth, and sin, and woe, my child!'"

I quote from the beautiful rendering of Mr. W. C. Bennett.

Speaking of Spanish mothers' feeling, it may not be out of place here to mention a most touching and pathetic epithet applied by some of them (of the lowest rank) to the life of one who has missed his mark in the world, and lain down in sorrow. Of such a one they say, "It was a broken life."

A beautiful sight, connected with the feasts of the Church, may often be witnessed on the eve of the feast in some of the least-known towns. You will be stumbling along the dark, unpaved streets in some dim-lit town, and suddenly you will see a little knot of men and women, of the poorest class, gathered under the oil-lamp that hangs over the crumbling

door of some tiny chapel. You will hear, ever and anon, a little whir of murmuring voices, uttering in unison the same response. Look in, and on the right side of the small, old-fashioned altar, beautifully lit with wax candles, will be seen five or six young women kneeling two and two. Their heads are lowly bowed, their hands are clasped in prayer. In front of the altar three priests are praying, in Latin, that the sins of these five penitents, for such they are, may be pardoned and forgotten.

Standing out in marked contrast with the darkness, profanity, and bustle of the streets without, this little scene has much the same effect on one as the coming upon some moss-grown, crumbling cross, or the ruins of some ancient chapel, in the wilds of the Devonshire or Cornwall seaboard. It calms the spirit, it gives the too-weary mind a moment's repose, it lifts the heart awhile to heaven, and thought of better things.

In the town from which I write, a long succession of fairs commences in August, and hardly dies out until September has made its acquaintance. The town is roughness itself. The thermometer in the shade stands at 102° at mid-day! All the "seeing the fair," then, must be done either before 8 A.M. or after 5 P.M., and, indeed, both in fair times and in ordinary times, those are the hours when most of the business is done. From 5 A.M. to 7 A.M. more money probably changes hands than during the whole after-part of the day.

The first fair, lasting one week, and held annually, is the Jarra Fair, or, as it is more commonly, but less correctly styled, the Jarro Fair. Be it remembered that, in Andalucia, the one great need of rich and poor—the one luxury which all can and will have—is