

we dismounted. They searched us for arms, and took away our watches, which they eventually returned. They then led the way to a ravine, where the brush-wood effectually concealed us. I was politely told it was only a question of ransom. I answered that I supposed so, but desired to know who was the chief of the band, as I did not wish to treat with all of them. On this, one of them told me he and another were the leaders. He then gave me a letter to read, in which they had fixed my ransom at £40,000. In this letter my brothers were repeatedly informed that I should be murdered if their request was not attended to. They also gave directions about sending the money. It was to be carried by a man dressed in black, with a white hat, and a red handkerchief in his hand. The man was to be mounted on a white mule. He was to go without arms and alone, unless he required a guide. The route was exactly laid down, with injunctions only to travel from sunrise to sunset. In case he should be robbed by other thieves, my brothers were to replace the money or I should be shot. I observed it was useless asking for such a sum—that we could not raise it. They, however, requested me to sign the letter, which I did. They ordered my foreman to take the letter to my relatives at Linares, entrusting him with our two horses, which were only in their way.”

The party continued travelling all that day and night, their prisoner on a donkey, and they on foot; only resting for a short time on two occasions. On the road they fired three shots at a sportsman about three hundred yards off, who did not answer when called, fortunately without hitting him.

“We arrived at seven o'clock in the morning at the

place where they kept me all the time I was their prisoner. They formed a kind of hut by clearing a space of brushwood, joining the top branches, and covering them with more brushwood. The heat during the nine days I remained there was anything but agreeable. My bed consisted of brushwood and a manta, a kind of rug. They brought food, wine, and tobacco regularly. I was only threatened the first day, probably with the intention of making me write letters urging my brothers to send my ransom as soon as possible. This I refused to do, and seeing that their threats were useless they abandoned this system, and told me they did not intend to hurt me—that they were sorry to be obliged to place me under such restraint. During my captivity I was guarded by four of the robbers. One of the men who took me, and two others who showed themselves the next day, went forwards to secure the money. My guards were very cautious; they never put down a rifle without first withdrawing the cartridge. Most of the brigands appeared to be men who had not worked for some time back. Several of them expressed themselves well, although their chief subject of conversation referred to their former exploits and to the circumstances which had led them to adopt this mode of life. They disapproved of capital punishment. One of them said he was giving a good education to his son, and that if he thought he would take to his father's profession he would shoot him."

On the 13th, those who had been waiting for the ransom returned. Mr. Haselden then heard he was free, but was only allowed to start on his way back in the evening.

"The chief then gave me £6, saying I might re-

quire it on the road—that it would not be right for a caballero to go about without a penny. With Spanish politeness he excused himself for having detained me, and hoped I should find all my friends well at home. Not to be behindhand, I expressed the hope that the money would benefit them, ‘que les aproveche a ustedes e dinero.’ To one of them, a Malagueno, I said, ‘Hasta otra vista.’ He answered, ‘Yes, but under less damnable circumstances.’ The chief then informed me that henceforth I might travel about those mountains with safety, as they would be the first to take care no other band should molest me. I then mounted the mule, and, accompanied by one of the brigands, rode across the country for several hours. At midnight, on reaching a path which he said would lead to a house, he left me. About half-an-hour later I came upon some woodcutters, with whom I spent the rest of the night. Next morning one of them guided me to our mine, and thence I proceeded to Linares, where I arrived on the evening of the 13th. I then first learned the amount of the ransom sent—namely, £6,000. My relatives in Linares were nine days without hearing directly from me, with alternate hopes and fears, according to the different reports that went about the place, but without being certain whether I was alive or not.”

The following is a word-for-word translation of the first letter sent by the bandits to Mr. Haselden’s brothers, after being first submitted to him for perusal on the day of his capture, and signed by him. It runs thus:—

“Your existence depends upon four millions of reals, for we know very well that your capital amounts to more than one hundred millions of reals,

and so, even if you give us this sum named, you will still have sufficient for your sustenance and that of your family; and this is done so as not to embarrass your capital. Now, you have surely heard of Chico de Portero, of the city of Ciudad Real, who was simply quartered because his parents and the authorities did not send the amount we asked for. Well, we shall treat you in like manner, if you (?) do not send the amount asked for. If you choose to inform the civil or military authorities, it is a matter of no moment to us, but you will pay for it with your head! Two courses are thus open to you, either to give the required money or to lose your life, and, in this last case, we shall commit an outrageous deed with you—one that will serve as an example for the future. The money must all be sent in gold, without sign or mark, for, if mark or sign be found upon the gold pieces, you shall forfeit your life. Adios."

*Particulars of the route by which the money is to
be sent.*

"The conductor of the moneys sent must be a person in your family's full confidence. He must be dressed wholly in black, with a white hat; in his hand he must carry a red handkerchief, and seem as though he were wiping the sweat from his brow; and he must be mounted on a white mule. He must go, first, from Linares to Guarraman, then to Cuesta, to Cuesta del Carreton, Venta de Robledo, Huerteruelas, Molina de las Tuntas, Las Azeas," &c. (here follows a string of a dozen small hamlets), "and, lastly, to Arrobas. If we do not come forward to meet him on his road, he must return by precisely the same road. Whenever he does not know the road, he is

free to take a guide from one of the villages, without, however, disclosing the object of his journey. He must ride from rise to set of sun. Where the setting sun overtakes him, there must he halt and pass the night, whether it be near a town or in the open campo, nor must he stay his footsteps at any of the pueblos (villages) above mentioned. If any one but ourselves should get hold of the money he bears, it will cost you (?) double the amount, or you will be shot. Therefore, it is to your interest to keep the affair secret, and not allow any one to accompany your messenger. If you do transgress these rules, you will be shot."

The use of the expression, "you will be shot," in a letter addressed to the family, must be explained in this way, namely, that the letter was, as it were, written to the unhappy captive, he being forced to sign and address it to his family, as though it were a letter from himself!

The letter was received, and a sum close upon £900 in gold was at once transmitted to these men. That sum, however, proved wholly insufficient to obtain the release of the unhappy captive. The only answer it elicited was the following, hastily written in pencil on a scrap of paper. The robbers, however, in it lowered their demand, as will be seen, from £40,000 to £10,000.

Second Letter of the Brigands.

"Received 100,000 reals, with which we can do nothing. If within five days we do not receive one million reals, be it known unto you that your beloved brother will be shot."

After eleven days' captivity the brigands accepted

the sum of £6,000, and Mr. Haselden was restored to his home and friends.

It will be asked, who are these robbers, and what steps were taken by the Spanish Government to capture them?

In answer to the first, reference may be made to another chapter in this book, where some account is given of them. They are sometimes men proscribed for political offences, who take their gun to the mountains when an adverse party comes into office, returning to the haunts of civilization when their own party is again in the ascendant. Oftentimes, again, they are men who have escaped from prison; still more often, men who have been pardoned (after lying for months, perhaps, under sentence of death) by one Government, but, with the advent of another, know well that their pardon will be cancelled. Many are convicts, who were released, as at Cartagena, by the Communists; some, again, have taken to the Sierra in order to avoid serving as soldiers against the Carlists. And, as regards the steps taken by the Government, the following may be said. Family influence or money will oftentimes procure a prisoner's release; and so, although one of this band was undoubtedly captured and confined for a night, yet ere morning he had escaped; indeed, when taken by the volunteers of the hill villages, he chatted gaily with them on his road to prison, and actually, a goat being killed on the march, he was appointed to cook the feast! No doubt his practice in the Sierra enabled him to perform his duty well.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOCIAL STATE OF THE HEART OF ANDALUCIA.

THE reader will, ere this, have formed for himself, from the foregoing pages, some estimate of the condition of the country which the writer has made his study. In this chapter it is proposed to give a bird's-eye view of the social state of the wilds of Andalusia.

Let me commence with the laws, and those who break them. The laws of Spain, theoretically, the laws as they are written, are excellent and most elaborate; the laws practically and in working are bad.

In each town of importance there are three administrators of justice at the present moment: the *alcalde*, or chief magistrate, and the *sub-alcaldes*; the *juez*, or judge of the district; and (in Spain of to-day) the military governor of the province, and his sub-governors. The office of the *alcalde* is something partaking of the nature of mayor and corporation, sheriff, and Inspector of Education and Nuisances. The *alcalde* is elected each year, or oftener, by the votes of the township. He may be a gentleman, or a tradesman, or some one of even lower grade. Generally there are two *alcaldes* and two assistant-*alcaldes*. The *alcalde* receives all the taxes of the town, and he is bound, out of this revenue, to keep the roads in good

repair, to preserve public order, to pay for schools, and, generally, to look after the well-being of the pueblo which has elected him. He walks about the town, followed by a municipal guard, sword trailing behind him, his note-book in hand, and spies out all that is going wrong. But, alas! of the thousands or hundreds of pounds that find their way into the alcalde's strong-box, only a small portion, too often, is used for its proper purposes. The alcalde's office is unpaid, yet why are men so anxious for it, and why does many an alcalde, who was nearly penniless when elected, resign his office, after a couple of years, with money enough to start a *café* or build a dozen houses?

Then there is the judge of the town; the judge of the larger town adjoining it; the regent, or head of all the judges of the province; and, finally, the judge, or president of the nation, at Madrid. The first of these is called the juez municipal; the next, juez de primera instancia; the third, the regent; the fourth, the president of the nation.

The office of the judge is unpaid, save by fees, on a fixed scale, and (must I say it?) bribes. Civil and criminal cases, as a rule, are tried before the same judge. The first hearing is before the municipal judge. If it be a matter of too great importance, he sends it to the next above him, and so on.

Castelar has introduced, by a late edict, the trial of civil cases before a jury of twelve men. Before his edict, a prisoner, or claimant, however, might claim this as a privilege. The blots in the Spanish administration of justice are great indeed: a judge may constantly be bribed. Thus, in one case that I knew, the judge, a man of strict integrity, refused a bribe of £70; the case went to the higher court, and

there the judge accepted it, and gave a verdict accordingly.

Here is a case illustrative of the ludicrous as well as the pernicious side of this system of bribery.

A lawyer, in my own pueblo, was, according to an old and barbarous law, condemned to have his right hand cut off for forgery. He escaped, being a man of property, by paying a bribe of £500 to the judge for the time being. Of course, however, his sentence was left recorded on the official list, and he received no formal acquittal; in fact, he walked about under a sentence of the loss of his right hand.

Another judge soon succeeded the first, and, being a strict disciplinarian, as most of them are for six months, finding the sentence against the unhappy lawyer still "recorded on the books," and seeing the man walking about with *two* hands, he proceeded to order execution. The poor lawyer drew out another £500, and proffered it once more to his foe: it was accepted, and he was free; but the sentence still stood recorded on the books.

Judge succeeded to judge, and each, in his turn, accepted the bribe. The lawyer's whole capital is now gone in bribes, and, when the next judge comes, next year, he will most surely lose the long-fought-for right hand! This story is given on the authority of a friend, but has not yet been verified by the author.

Another blot in the administration of Spanish law is the system of constant remands. You bring a prisoner into court, you appear against him; the judge, for no earthly reason, remands the man. Six months after you receive a summons to attend the court: the same weary routine of identification, &c., is gone through, and the judge says,—“You are remanded

again." The poor, pallid wretch, guilty or not guilty, is carried back to the same lousy, filthy den called a prison, there to languish for another six months.

A third blot in Spanish justice is in the conduct of the lower officials. If they find a man drunk and incapable, they are allowed to beat him to a certain extent. This power they abuse in the vilest manner. A poor miner whom I knew (a teetotaller, by the way) was subject to fits. One night he was seized with one, and fell down in the street. The municipal guards came up, raised up his head, and beat him so cruelly with the scabbards of their swords, that one arm was broken. They took him to the hospital, and the doctor, a humane man, seeing what was really the state of the case, informed against the two municipales for "exceeding their duty." The judge, however, or *alcalde*, acquitted them both!

These municipal guards, who wear a sort of uniform, and always may be seen in the market-place, on the look out for a disturbance, &c., are a cross between an English policeman and a sheriff's officer or bailiff, and, consequently, they are thoroughly hated. A Spanish girl will, jestingly, say, "If I must marry either a butcher or a municipal guard, I think I would elect the former." And, be it remembered, that to marry into a butcher's family even is a terrible disgrace.

The civil guards, too, noble-hearted fellows as they are, are somewhat severe. Indeed, the whole principle on which the Spanish legal officials carry on their profession is this, that every culprit is a brute beast, a mad dog, and to be treated accordingly.

Here is an instance. A man (a miner) got excited with drink, and stabbed two men in the street. The

civil guards, rifle in hand, pursued him, and ran him to ground in a courtyard. The guard who came up first presented his rifle at the man's head, and said,—“Give yourself up, or I fire.”—“Never,” was the answer; and in a moment the fellow's brains were scattered all over the patio!

Here is another instance. In other days the order, “Take special care that they don't escape,” meant “Kill your prisoners on the road.” One batch of convicts (political prisoners), on hearing this order given to the civil guards, said, through their spokesman, “Please shackle both our hands and feet, that you may have no excuse for shooting us.”

Another blot upon the Spanish administration of justice is the proviso that every one who kills or maims another, even if the deed be a just one, and simply done in self-defence, shall suffer a certain term of imprisonment.

Here is an instance which happened to a mining agent, a personal friend of the writer's. A miner of his own mine conceived that Mr. H. had insulted him, and rushed at him with a knife. Mr. H., who was unarmed, rushed away, and met the guard of the mine, gun on shoulder. Breathless, he seized the gun, the guard held it doggedly. Up came the would-be assassin, and the guard knocked him off, and protected Mr. H. On being asked why he so acted, he said,—“If you had had a fair fight with gun or knife, all well; you both had, may be, gone to glory. But if you had shot him, you would have had two things, remorse and prison.”

From the administration of justice, to those who come within the pale of the law, the transition is an easy one. A more lawless, desperate set than those

who, to evade the law's sentence, or to escape being drawn at the conscriptions, betake themselves to the sierras, or mountain fastnesses, and there win a precarious existence by hunting, robbing, and other kindred pursuits, it would be hard to find. These denizens of the Sierra Morena are quite a race of themselves. Some are "ladros factiosos," or political robbers; some "partidos," which is much the same thing; some are miners and others who have committed murder; some are those who (to use their own phrase), "if they must shoot at all, prefer shooting deer to Carlistas"; some are common thieves and robbers. These men, many of them, own a kind of wild allegiance to some robber-chieftain, at whose bidding they will carry off any rich man, handing most of the ransom-money to their chieftains. They cannot be taken, owing to the thick brushwood, the wild precipices and crags, the caverns, and the wide extent of their mountain-home. Now and then, riding in the Sierra, you will see a man, quite like a savage and half-naked, who will fly like hunted hind at the approach of another human being, and be lost in the brushwood in a moment. Red-deer, quails, foxes, badgers, and partridges are plentiful, and a few bears, and these men are first-rate shots; so that they have enough meat, while the charcoal-burners and chicken-sellers from the hill-villages supply them with tobacco and skins of red wine.

Oftentimes, when these men get an exceptionally "good haul," they will get clothes, rig themselves out like caballeros, and take train to Seville or Madrid, to enjoy themselves, and then return to the hills, or stay in Madrid to become politicians!

Some of them are men of some attainments and

education, who, for political offences, have been outlawed. These, if their favourite Government should come into power, would emerge at once from their hiding-place, and accept office!

Sometimes these outlaws may be seen "groping for fish," wherewith to vary their diet. They descend to the plains, strip naked, and wade in the shallows of the river, putting a wary hand under every rock and boulder. One man stands on the bank, his fire lit, his frying-pan hard by, ready to cook the fish. Women, too, stand idly gazing, unshocked at these naked figures, until a few fine but coarse barbel are caught, when all sit down to the feast. They catch the barbel by the gills, and, as soon as caught, put his head into their mouths to kill him with a bite.

In the winter, the large shooting-parties of Spaniards and Englishmen who seek the Sierra for red-deer and large game (the *caza mayor*), often come across these wild banditti, and, if they fancy themselves likely to be over-matched, they strike tent at midnight, and make good their retreat to the nearest town. These shooting-parties generally consist of at least fifty men, all well armed.

"A Spanish prison," so says a Spanish *refran*, "is not a vineyard." Once inside its filthy walls, and manacled, you may never see daylight again, or you may be despatched to Cuba (if a political prisoner), or, in rare cases, you may be shot in the market-place of the town wherein your offence was committed. The prison diet is very coarse; its eternal round consists of the coarsest oil, beans, peas, potatoes, and rice, all given in homœopathic doses. No bed, save what you supply yourself, is allowed you. In winter's cold and summer's heat you lie manacled, chained

to the filthy stone floor of the dungeon. Your companions are, usually, some eight or nine in number: their conversation is the filthiest, their habits the vilest. "This floor is harder than the feet of Christ," is their common blasphemy!

In some places, the prisoners are employed in constructing or repairing the Government roads of the first, second, or third class. At such times they may be seen, working in the full blaze of the Andalucian day, in gangs of forty. At every hundred yards stands an overseer, and a knot of soldiers, with loaded rifles. Each prisoner has a chain from the ankle fastened to an iron band across the waist. At night they are chained to each other, two-and-two. These men are called "presidarios." When employed on a road at any great distance from their prison-houses, a temporary barrack is sought for them in the nearest houses.

The indulgences allowed to Spanish prisoners are threefold. Firstly, on feast-days they may wander the streets, heavily manacled, to get what they can by begging of the passers-by. Secondly, their relations are sometimes allowed to bring them some little luxury, if the master of the prison be leniently inclined. Thirdly, were a man of influential position condemned for, say, ten years, his relations might get him off by having him bound as servant to some friend, who will be responsible for him to be "brought up when called for," and give him, in the meanwhile, food and clothing.

Besides the sierras, there are other retreats open to those who fly from justice, or from a world that has dealt hardly with them. Many of the "cortijos," or small lodges in the Campo, belonging to, and used as

summer-houses by the landed proprietors of the country, are kept by these outlaws, and no one cares to interfere with them, or inquire into their past history, or, at least, these places form a home for many of them, who aid the regular guards in looking after farm, or olives, or vineyard,—assist at all the hunting-parties,—and, now and again, when very hard up for food, ask a moderate amount of pecuniary assistance from the landlord—a request which it is prudent to grant.

Again, those who have been disappointed in their worldly affairs, sometimes find a shelter in one or other of the few monasteries now remaining in the South, paying a fixed price for their humble room, working in the garden at early dawn to secure their vegetable sustenance, praying for the welfare of their fellow-creatures, idling and sleeping their sad life away. Theirs, to use the touching phrase of a poor Spanish girl, ever has appeared to me to be “a broken life,”—a life more aimless, if possible, and less manly than that of the wild denizens of the Sierra Morena.

The monastery called “Las Hermitas,” at Cordoba, a short time since numbered among its inmates one or two men who had “known better days,” and, among others, a world-wearied colonel in the army, who (for no crime) had retired thither to pass the close of a somewhat noble life.

The new levy of middle-aged men has made hundreds fly to the shelter of the Sierra. It is not that the Spaniard would not, but that he cannot, be patriotic, “For,” says he, “for what am I going to fight?” And there is, it is to be feared, too much truth in what he says. Besides, in the army he is

poorly fed. A short time since a fine young carpenter near me was "drawn," and went to the depôt. Three times within the first fortnight the warm-hearted apprentice wrote to his master. In his last letter he concluded with the words—"At last they have varied our meals. We used to have rice and garbanzos twice; but now, *gracias a Dios!* we have rice and garbanzos in the morning, and garbanzos and rice in the evening!"

Passing away from the Sierra, with its outlawed and unhappy inhabitants, and entering upon the cultivated plains, we shall find that, in all that relates to agriculture, Spain is well-nigh a century behind the age. There are many small holdings, and they are generally let on the following terms. Common (that is, rather sterile) land would fetch three or four dollars the fanega (the fanega=8,000 square yards, as nearly as I can calculate: I see the best Spanish dictionary calls it 400 square fathoms). Really good land would fetch about eight dollars per annum. I speak of arable land, for Andalucia knows no green pastures. An olive-grove would, in its perfection, be valued at an annual rental of four reals per tree, a vineyard not much more than a halfpenny or penny per tree.

Many farms are let on the following terms: the landlord claims annually one-third of the produce, or £50, say, per annum, and a certain number of pigs or sheep in addition. But the farming is of the roughest. It is needless to say that the English plough or the threshing-machine have not found their way into the wilds of Andalucia. The two mules dragging their quaint plough, just stirring the surface of the earth, wind slowly along the fallow; the unmuzzled ox