

parish; the sheets were white and clean, nice pictures decked the walls. He was half wandering, half in a reverie, when I sat down at his bedside, but his talk was all of one thing, or rather of two very different things—the “blessed Lord” and the “old enemy.”

“Ah, sir,” said he to me, grasping my hand in his rough clammy fingers, while the beads of cold sweat ran down his forehead, “ah, sir, I thought I would take off my waistcoat to work. I knew it was wrong and the blessed Lord found me out; He found me out, He did; and here I am.”

He had taken off his waistcoat, in order to work more easily, on a chilly evening, and was suffering from inflammation of the lungs in consequence.

“The blessed Lord found me out; He did, He did,” that was the burden of his speech, repeated again and again.

Very touching it was to see his belief—the belief of a dying peasant, of a man, too, who could not read or write (for his friends read his Bible to him, I found)—in a personal God, a Being who was “about his path and about his bed, and spying out all his ways,” Who even took account of his wilful casting aside of his poor corduroy waistcoat.

I did and said all that I could to comfort and soothe the poor dear fellow, and then came another oft-repeated voice from his hot dishevelled pillow, “I struggle, and struggle, but the old enemy will come creeping round; yes he will come creeping round; but the Lord, sir, will be too strong for him; yes, blessed, blessed Lord!”

Still more touching, more striking was it to see this simple man’s belief—a stern, deep belief—in the

personality of Satan. To him the two "strong men" were warring for his soul; he was sinking and powerless, but he felt that the stronger would prevail, and he was satisfied.

And then came the final question,—that question which every sin-stained soul must ask itself at some time in the weary hours of the wakeful night, or on the feverish couch of bodily anguish,—“I wonder if the Lord will forgive me my sins?”

Can any one doubt it? Surely He who, as Divines say, is “not an austere Master,” He who asks no sacrifice but the outpourings of a broken and a contrite spirit, forgives all those who, even at the eleventh hour, with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Him.

And surely here was “hearty repentance and true faith,” so far as man may judge, *if* man may ever presume to judge at all. In the simple words of that poor dying peasant, I take it, was contained the very summing up of the Creed of the Ages, the personality and nearness of God, the power of the Tempter, the need of a human assurance of forgiveness.

“I took my waistcoat off in the cold; I knew it was wrong, and the blessed Lord found me out, He did. The old enemy will come creeping round, creeping round, but there is One stronger than he. I wonder if the Lord will forgive me my sins?”

Surely here was humility, repentance, and that craving for earthly support and assurance which betokens the deepest earnestness.

In three days the tongue of him who spoke these words was for ever still; within ten days the fresh-moved earth was heaped over a humble and still stoneless grave.

Far away from the Weald of Sussex, and the teeming acres of the Midland Counties,—far away, where the stunted olives rise in regular rows from out the sandy red soil, where the fierce sun of Spain smites down, on yellow river and thistle-clad field, and strange costumes,—two men lie in the dark, low-ceiled cell of a prison, in the interior, waiting to be led forth to death. Their crime had been a black one, the shooting of two of the “Guardias” of the existing Government in the public streets, in broad daylight; and of them a public example is to be made.

They spoke but little, if they spoke at all. On the day before their execution they desired to see an Englishman in whose employ they had once been. He came and asked them kindly, “What could he do for them?”

Poor fellows! it was no question “Will the blessed Lord forgive me my sins?” that they asked; their rude, untaught thoughts centred on one thing, the office they had held under an Englishman, and a kind one. “Will you obtain one favour for us?” they said; “and that is, that we may both, ere we die, be photographed together; and then let us hang together before your eyes on the walls of your sala: for you were our master, and we your officers.” Poor fellows! Their wish was granted, and their sad stern faces still hang on the walls of their English employer.

The day after the taking of their photographs, they were led out into the public streets, and, close to the scene of their murder, were shot. I saw, but a few weeks since, the likenesses of their pale, sad, heavy, determined faces.

There is one more closing scene of lowly official life

and death, which presents a marked contrast again to the first scene described from English life and character, and which, therefore, I subjoin.

It illustrates in a striking way the points in Spanish life and character among the lower orders which I am now endeavouring to bring out, namely, the absence of faith in a personal God, and the absorbing love of office.

Perhaps some who read these pages may think that the writer of them exaggerates, and gives too high a colouring to his pictures of Spanish life and character; and he takes this opportunity of saying that all that he says is the narrative of what he himself has witnessed, or what has been witnessed and related to him by men on whose veracity there can be no doubt. Any story of the truth of which there is a doubt he banishes from his pages, omitting thus many striking episodes because he has been unable to prove their truth.

When Phillip's well-known picture—I believe it is by Phillip, but, at any rate, it will be one well known to most who read these pages—of a Spanish girl holding up her babe for its father, who is a prisoner, to kiss through the open bars of the prison, and hiding her own tears under the child's frock, held aloft, was first exhibited, it was thought to be a *fancy* picture. I have myself seen, in the prisons of the interior, a prisoner standing gazing vacantly through the open bars of his stone-flagged, dark abode, while a dark-eyed Spanish girl made and handed to him his cigarette and a piece of bread, all the luxuries she could afford for her unhappy “*amante*.”

Truth is often stranger than fiction!

Of the following picture I had only the outline

given me in a few words. Those who live in Spain know well the different cries of the "serenos," or night-watchmen, in different cities. Sometimes it will be merely the time that is called out, thus: "La dos y media; el sereno!"—"Half-past two; the watchman." Sometimes the watchman will add to it a little notice of the weather, as did the old Charlies in London. "Four of clock, and a cloudy sky." Sometimes, more especially in times of political disturbance, he will add a political notice, which sounds strangely when heard every half-hour or hour in the stillness of the night,—“Las dos; el sereno; Viva la Republica Democratica Federal!”

Sometimes the cry will be different, and will be really beautifully sung, or rather chanted, by the deep bass voice of the sereno, if he take a real pride in his profession, thus: "Han dado—las dos—y me di-a; el sere no-o-o-o! nubla do" (this last termination, not strictly grammatical, to rhyme with the "o" of "sereno"). This means, "The clocks have struck half-past two; the watchman comes; a cloudy night."

One of these chanting watchmen, who took great pride in his office, lay sick of *calentura*, the Spaniard's deadly foe—a kind of fever, which has three stages, *calentura*, *calentura intermitente*, and *calentura perniciosa*, this last really dangerous.

Probably, as is often the case, his little ground-floor house, with its three small rooms, lying across the house and opening into one another, so that a free current of air passes through from the front-door to that at the back, stood in the suburbs of the city, far away from the wealthy streets of those whom, for years, he had served so faithfully, watched over so

carefully, when they could not watch over themselves.

His little pictures of the saints of his Church hung round his room; his tinselled image of "La Virgen" stood before his eyes; his sack of garbanzos, and his señora's little coop of young chickens were hard at hand; over him kind forms bent down; but his thoughts, poor wanderer, were far away from angels, either human or divine, although faltering woman's lips kept repeating again and again, as the Spanish poor women ever do in their extremity, the prayer,—

"Santa Maria,
Madre de Dios,
Madre de Gracia,
Madre purísima,
Madre castísima,
Ruega por nosotros." (Pray for us!)

He was not there; he was far away on his lonely beat, up and down the silent streets, "Han da; . . . dō; las dos . . . y me . . . diā: el sere . . . no"; and so with every onward march, of his long night, he was marching too, sometimes through wind and tropic rain; sometimes through fair moonlit streets; sometimes in cloudy weather, "Han da . . . dō . . . ; las tres; . . . nubladō . . . ō,"—the ruling passion strong in death.

So he went on, through the weary watches of the long night, "Han da . . . dō . . ."—"Han dadō . . . ō,"—"four o'clock," he would have said, but another machine, more delicate than clock or watch, "had gone." At the cock-crowing the Master had called, and "he must not say no"; and the simple, faithful, ignorant spirit had returned to Him who gave it.

Well, he knew but little, and was one of those to

whom little had been given. In that little, according to his light, he was found faithful; and is there not a blessing for him who has been faithful over a few things? for her who, though little, *quod potuit tamen, fecit*?

A friend has suggested to me that possibly the watchman's cry above alluded to may be "Andado," i.e., "It has struck." It may be so; either expression would be intelligible, and the aspirate is constantly dropped.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SPANISH FUNERALS.

THE different ways in which, in different countries, and by differing religions, respect is paid to the dead must ever be a very interesting study. In England, the simple yet touching meeting of the body at the "Lich-Gate" by the clergyman, and the opening words of the grand Funeral Service,—words so full of life and hope, "I am the resurrection and the life,"—have taken a very firm hold on our affections and feelings. And who, again, is there who has ever heard the ringing volley fired over the half-covered-in grave of some comrade in arms, and seen the long procession of stalwart men filing along with arms reversed, who has not felt the grandeur of *that* ceremony, and known the utter loneliness of the poet's words,"—

"Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried?"

The funeral, as at present conducted by the Church in Spain, perhaps is hardly so wedded to men's minds here as the civil or military funeral ceremony in England. And yet there are in it many elements of instruction and of beauty, and a fairly well-conducted funeral in Spain is well worthy of description. The one thing lacking in this especial service, which is an exceedingly grand and beautiful one, is, that so much is chanted, and so much is in Latin, that much of it

is lost. True, the little books containing the "Orden de los Entierros" can be purchased, but many of the Spaniards are, especially in the interior, wholly unable to read; thus the whole beauty of a really beautiful service is lost to them.

A few days since, I was standing at night in one of the beautiful squares of this large city from which I write, among some of the knots of men who, in this lovely climate, up to nine at night can enjoy a cigarillo and a chat about politics *al fresco*. Suddenly the hum of voices ceased; every woman, and nearly every man, went down on their knees on the stones; not a single head was covered. The procession of the Host, heralded by twenty lads with fiery torches, slowly wound by. I had seen the same sight, in some of the towns of the interior, treated with such disrespect, that the observance struck me with surprise.

A bystander told me that it was—he spoke in a whisper—the "blessings of our suffering Lord" being carried to a dying girl. Presently he added, with a true Spanish stoicism about life and death, "and in the next procession, *pobre* (poor thing!), she will bear a part." I knew only too well, by his quiet look and manner, that he could mean but one procession, and that the last in which any one of us can join on earth. The conversation led me to inquire into the matter of funerals and funeral rites in this country, and in my inquiries I found many matters of interest, and many things quite novel to me.

The funeral ceremony, and all pertaining to it, is, as nearly as possible, as follows:—After death the body is laid out carefully, and dressed in its fairest and richest clothes; a few bright flowers are laid upon the well-loved form, by rich and poor (if *decentes*), to

speak, as my informant told me, of "hope for a bright future, like the flower that will be better next spring." The body may only be kept for twenty-four hours, and in this country decomposition takes place so rapidly that there is little need of the restriction. At the end of that time, in the interior, the clothes are probably cut, or snipped, to prevent exhumation for the sake of the clothes; the coffin a very light painted coffin—often, in the case of a child, with a movable glass lid—is brought, and the remains are carefully laid in it. In the case of any suspicion of foul play of any sort, the doctor can order the coffin to be kept in the open cemetery for another day and night.

Thirty years ago, the body was always wrapped and laid in its mortaja, or shroud; but a Government decree, or, perhaps, long custom, here more binding even than decrees, has ordered that an especial dress need not be used. The story current among the poor peasantry, to account for this custom, is so strange that I may be forgiven for mentioning it. Thirty years ago, a poor woman (so they say) was carried to burial, wrapped in her mortaja; at the grave the lid was removed (as is common in Spain, where what is called "the last look" is taken at the grave), and suddenly the woman started up. She saw her mortaja around her, and fell back with a scream; suddenly brought to life, she had as suddenly died of the shock caused by the sight of her own shroud. So, say the poor peasantry, our laws order every one to be buried without a mortaja!

The next point to be decided about the remains of him who has gone to his long home is, of what class shall the funeral be: first, second, or third; in other words, what can we afford for it?

The priests, of course, are paid for a funeral by those who can afford to pay them ; and, indeed, hardly used and wretchedly paid as they now are, their pictures taken, part of their property and endowments gone, their position such that, in some of the towns of the interior, they have been forced from very poverty to enter some other profession, it is but fair that they should be paid for their services ; and the payment varies naturally according to the amount of ceremony and attention required. The first-class funeral costs sixty dollars (a Spanish dollar is equal to 4s. 2d. of English money) ; in this case the number of priests in the procession towards the grave is eight. The second-class costs forty dollars, and the number of priests engaged is four ; while the third-class only costs, so far as the Church is concerned, one dollar : in this case two poor priests are employed, possibly Franciscans, and they each receive the pitiful sum of half a dollar.

This matter once settled, the priests repair to the house where the coffin lies, dressed in their black gowns, with the short white linen tunic to the waist ; two of them enter the room where it is, and the corpse is sprinkled with holy water. The párroco and clero then chant the psalm "De profundis" (with some additions from other psalms), and the touching and expressive antiphon comes again and again. "If thou, Lord, shalt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who may abide it ?" The "Requiem æternam" is said and repeated ; four bearers, supplied by the town government, take down the coffin, and the procession towards the grave commences. The priests walk in pairs, the crucifix, banner, and cross, with oftentimes four lighted lamps, being borne by their side. As the

procession moves swiftly along, followed by a long train of men four deep,—for in Spain your friend, your cousin, your tailor, your cigar-merchant, your neighbour in the street, reverently puts on his darkest clothes, lights his cigarillo, and follows you to your long home,—the párroco chants the “*Exultabunt Domino,*” and the clero the “*Miserere mei, Deus,*” with the “*Requiem æternam.*” All these are intoned, in a deep sonorous voice, that can be heard a long way off. As the long array marches through the narrow street, hats are taken off by many, as a mark of respect, and women reverently bow their heads.

What follows varies according to circumstances. The direction in the office-book requires, or implies the attendance of the same priests at the grave and church; but, owing to the great distance of the cemeterios from the towns, the number of funerals in one day, and the fewness of the clergy, the beautiful prayers that follow, with the final “*May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful, rest in endless peace through God’s mercy,*” are often, as in the town from which I write, obliged to be offered at some wayside halting-place half-way, one priest attached to the cemeterio probably meeting the body there to say the last few words of hope, and the last “*Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine.*”

A few particulars shall here be added about some of the cemeterios in this country. In many of those attached to the towns of the interior, the whole state of affairs is very rude, very sad, very disheartening. No English turf is seen, but sand and rock; the small walled-in spot is absolutely crammed with bodies, and even before decency would admit of it, the bodies and coffins must be burned or buried to make room

for more! Epitaphs there are few or none; stones and tombs are few; and the tombs that there are, are simple square blocks of stone, with the name and date of death alone, and a few words at the bottom, saying to whose loving care the tomb is due. Thus, the whole inscription will be:—

“En pace descanso,
El Señor
MANUEL RUBIO,
29 de Nov^{bre} de 1840.
Sus padres y hermanos.”

Texts of Scripture, or poetry, I have rarely met with.

But in the cemeterios of the larger towns care is taken, and decency is insured, to a certain extent. Here, then, is a picture of one of these latter.

There are six or seven whitewashed quadrangles opening one into another, each quadrangle being formed of walls about fourteen feet to twenty deep. Into little, so to speak, pigeon-holes in these walls, just large enough to push in the coffin lengthways, the coffin is put; the little hole is sealed up with masonry, and a small square or semi-circular slab of stone placed upon the outside or mouth of the simple sepulchre. The wall is about twenty-four feet in height, so that six coffins are placed one above the other; and in the cemeterio of which I speak, each side of each quadrangle contained 168 coffins in these little niches, and as many, or rather many more, in all probability, in the ground in front.

These niches in the wall are taken by the first-class funerals. The niche is secured to the family for twenty years only, on the payment of seventeen dollars; at

the expiration of that period, unless they renew, the coffin is taken out, and, with the bones, is burned, or with all others unrenewed, is thrown into the huge pit within the walls of the cemetery, where all are thrown. The burning, however, is not general or needful.

The second-class grave is in the earth immediately in front of the walls of these quadrangles—under their shade, as it were. The bodies, or rather coffins, lie six deep, with their head touching the wall of the quadrangles. For these, underground, the price is two dollars; and these are never disturbed, for the obvious reason that there is plenty of burying room below ground in the quadrangles without the trouble of disturbing those bodies already buried. These second-class graves very rarely have any stone upon them, but here and there I noticed a tiny wooden cross, and here and there a shrub, which pious hands had planted. It did duty for all, whether shrub or cross, for all the six lay beneath it.

The third-class pay nothing for their six feet of earth. The coffins of these, if coffins they were, are simply put one upon the other, in a huge pit dug in two or three of these quadrangles, and covered in decently with sand. "These poor (*pobres*) fellows," said a Spanish sailor, who showed me over the place, "have the best of it after all, for they are never turned up." It was true. Death is a strange equalizer. In twenty years the rich man would be lying down in the sand of the quadrangle, by the side of his second and third-class brother!

This removal and re-interment of the first-class coffins takes place on the last day of each year; and the little slabs taken from these pigeon-holes are made

into a pavement, face uppermost, over the pit where all the bodies are re-interred.

Two privileges connected with cemetery rules should here be mentioned. By an extra payment, anybody can be laid for a few hours in the chapel near the cemeterio, and the proper sentences said over it there. Also, any niche can be purchased for ever, and thus the body never be disturbed, by a payment of fifty dollars instead of the seventeen spoken of above; and, in this case, the persons purchasing must engrave the word "Propriedad" upon the front of their niche.

The utter absence of any words at all of hope or faith upon the little marble slabs that closed the mouth of each niche, struck and surprised me greatly. In the whole of this huge cemeterio, I saw only one text of scripture, St. John, 11th chap., 25th verse. The ordinary inscription was as follows:—

"José Berez, Fallecio el dia 19 de Noviembre de 1852."

On some were the usual letters, R.I.P.A., or R.I.P., surmounted by a cross; then the name and date of death; at foot, the name, or rather the relationship to the dead, of those who caused the slab to be placed there; thus, "Su desconsolada familia," or "Sus padres y tios." Sometimes, but not always, the age was put; thus, "A los 28 años de edad."

The few tombs standing in the quadrangle marked vaults purchased by some rich family; they were huge, square, unsightly, and unworthy of any notice here. I did not even observe among them what is always very beautiful—the simple stone cross, now so common in England; nor could I help contrasting the tombs in this cemeterio—which, I must say, was

scrupulously clean, regular, and tidy—with the exquisitely beautiful array of tombstones, sculpture, flowers, and shrubs in a small cemetery in England—I mean that of Holywell, at Oxford,—probably the most tasteful in England.

As I strolled homewards, towards evening-tide, I met, coming towards the cemetery, one of the many daily funeral processions. It was evidently a funeral “de la primera clase,”—the four lighted lamps (it was but four o’clock, and we were in the bye-streets of the town) and the eight priests told me that at once. Coming, as I had, from the wilds of the interior, I made up my mind to join the procession and see for myself the whole ceremony. In a moment one of the many Spaniards following invited me, seeing my object, to make one of the four deep followers, and I did so. Every hat, even in the lowest streets, was taken off as we passed on our way, the priest intoning the sentences, as mentioned above. Four mere lads were carrying the coffin—a lightly-built one, but covered with fine lawn and with gold embroidery, and with a padlock and key at the side of the lid. We walked very quickly, for the evenings draw in swiftly in this semi-tropical climate, and darkness sets in.

The first thing that struck me was, how can those four lads, who are the bearers, carry that full-sized coffin at this pace? We all know that no soldier can march as can the Spaniard; and I can safely say, as an old pedestrian, that I never was so punished, to use a vulgar word, as I have been by having to keep up, under a burning sun, with a thermometer at 130° in the sun, for a four-mile walk with a Spanish miner. But the weight of the coffin, I