comforts of his drawing-room and fireside by the exposure and rough fare of a day on the moors, so Picho made the roofs his hunting-ground, and gave fierce chase to all the cats around.

Why the Spaniard of the interior always calls a dog, in addressing him, "Picho," I know not, and I cannot find out. "Pecho," with an "e," means a breast; and the word "pichon," meaning a pointer-dog, is too far-fetched for the Spaniard of the interior, besides having no special application. However, everywhere you hear the muleteer, or servant, or donkey-driver, crying out "Anda, Picho," and "Malo, Picho." Poor Picho had evidently no home, and the reason, as the Spanish servant said, was because he had no heart! Doubtless, could he have told it, his history was a strange one, although no one in our township seemed to know anything at all about it. Yet the little, weak, cocky, stupid wanderer, with his cocked tail, and his velvety paws, could not have come from any great distance.

Picho was uncommonly clever. As the old Scotch shepherd said of his dog, "He knew when we were talking about him: he was unco' clever." Whenever his past history was in any way alluded to, Picho invariably left the room, possibly to avoid answering unpleasant questions.

If, at the moment of the question of his antecedents being mooted, (and, in the long, weary, hot summer, when no "English posts" arrived for weeks, or only came by fits and starts, passed through the pickets of the Intransigentes in a melon-bag, we had needs have recourse to every theme of conversation, however trifling!) the door was shut, and he could not get out of ear-shot, Picho would be sick at once

all over the room, and so force one of us to rise, and break off the subject, and let him out. This "being sick" ("vomito," as the criada called it) was one of Picho's favourite weapons of offence, or defence—a weapon, too, that he wielded on all occasions most successfully.

Was he to be beaten, he escaped it, if possible, by instantaneous and most corporeal sickness! Was there a disposition among us to discuss the hidden things of his former life, seized he was, instantly, with acute sickness! Did the rude boot of any fellow-inmate of the house push Picho away from his little seat in the shady corner of the sala, sickness was inevitable—an attack too often heralded by a shrill scream, which drew down from gentle Spanish hearts too much odium on the owner of the offending boot.

Picho's sex, in those weary days of tropic heat, when one must say something, but did not know what on earth to say, was a matter of much dispute among us for a long time. Was *he* "male or female"? There were certain little protuberances on the ridge of Picho's stomach, visible only when he rolled over, and put up his little paws in a beseeching—I might say abject—attitude, which seemed to indicate the latter; and, for a time, Picho enjoyed the privilege of the sex. We appealed, however, to the cura of a neighbouring parish, whom, possibly, because he had had so long an experience of *unmarried* life, we supposed (on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle) to be an authority in such matters. Gravely he lifted Picho from the ground, while his full, flowing canonicals covered any indecency, and shaking sagely his grey hairs, he gave (what very few clerics are content to

do, more's the pity!) an open verdict, in the following concise and priestly sentence,—

"Sunt dubii generis."

Surely he had studied, not only Latin, but the Latin Syntax of the Eton scholar! Ever after that, we "gave the prisoner the benefit of the doubt," and Picho, who had often been "it" before, was dignified by the sobriquet of "he," save by one of the younger criadas of the casa, who, being in love, and anxious to escape from the trammels of the unmarried maiden's life in the lower ranks, believed in the perfection of the male sex among all created animals, and, knowing by daily experience that Picho was not perfect, persisted in calling him "she."

In these few lines that follow, however, remembering the good old rule, "De mortuis nil nisi bonum," I shall give Picho the benefit of the doubt; and, since he has gone to that home for lost and starving dogs from whence there is no return, and where, possibly, there is neither male nor female, shall henceforth dignify him by the name of "he." Picho may, ere now, have dropped his sex, and be within the elementary rule; but I question whether Picho will ever fully come up to a high standard.

Now for the few fragments of his history that I have been enabled to collect. The ladies of the casa were out for a promenade on the Alameda one evening, when this queer little mortal came to them for shelter, and made himself a partner in their homeward walk. Stranger as he was, they took him home, and generously entertained him—alas! it was no angel that unawares they entertained. Cowardly, upstart, dirty in his habits, bad tempered, useless, and without

any character at all, such was Picho; but he had common-sense—he had found a good home, and he intended to stick to it.

Next morning Picho was put outside the door, that he might be at liberty to rejoin his friends. Steadily, he refused to leave the door. They had him "proclaimed," but no one claimed him (no wonder!); advertised in other ways, no one came forward as his owner. Spanish ladies have very soft hearts, and so Picho took up his quarters at their casa; eschewed men's society, showing a decided love for petticoats; despised and turned up his nose at kitchen meals; and gave the ladies, who called him "Pobre cito!" (Poor little fellow!) and supplied him with chicken-bones and a pillow to lie upon, the idea that he was most aristocratic, and had spent his life in high society.

I felt sure the little creature, with his undeniable, almost human, cleverness and perception, was a deceiver. But of what avail is it to speak when the star (even of a snob) is in the ascendant? *I* was but a guest for a short while, *he* was a recognised member of the family: indeed, *I* might almost be said to have been—I am sure *he* would have said so—his guest!

Picho was a thorough nuisance. He misbehaved himself in the bed-room; he left fleas on the sofa where I took my noon-day siesta; he got me into scrape after scrape for my harshness towards him, with the ladies; at last he even dared to take a plunge in my bath! This was too much. I envied, and, at last, hated Picho. Still, I bore it all patiently; his conceit was so unbearable, so excessive, that I felt sure it must have a fall ere long! For many months Picho lived upon an untruth, and, what is far more unusual, he fattened upon it. Idle, useless in every

dog-walk of life (he would not even bark latterly), he still ruled the roast.

The Municipal Guards, like our English rural police, are sometimes, if not always, smart fellows. As ill-luck would have it—or, rather, as the Nemesis of deceit will ever have it—the avenging angel came one day to the door, in the red-banded cap and clanking sword of a Municipal Guard from a neighbouring town. He came to the door; and, alas, for him! Picho had just been "shown the door" for one of his daily offences. The little white dog and the moustachioed Guard, towering high in air above him, looked at one another in silence for a moment. Then the Guard, taking the initiative, gave poor Picho a roll over with his foot, and said, "Carramba! why, you are the blind man's dog from——." (Bitch, he said.) Poor Picho: his character, and even sex, were trembling in the balance. What issues depended on a moment! It did not move, did not answer; the iron had entered too deeply into his soul. Ample admission of the charge was the poor little creature's look of guilty shame and of discovered fraud. The accusation was true—Picho was no scion of aristocratic house, but the tramping beggar's dog. The dream was over, the game was played out! He who had pretended that he could not sleep on straw, had oftentimes been used to the bare, hard stones; the dog who affected chicken-bones, and was a martyr to dyspepsia, had often begged in vain for dry crusts and offal!

A dog is like a human being in one way; if you do not show that you trust in him, and believe in him, you utterly destroy his *morale,* and soon break his spirit. From that day of public downfall and disgrace

he never rallied; he was quite crestfallen; life for him had lost its charm. I never saw his little white tail curled over his back then! Kindly, warm Spanish hearts saw his sorrow; and feeling that, after all, they had taken the one word of the man in office against Picho's long course of aristocratic tastes and habits, which seemed to come quite natural to him, (no beggar-on-horseback seemed he!) the ladies conveyed to his dog-mind, by additional tenderness, extra over-feeding, &c., that they still believed in him—still thought he had been the dog of a Duque at least; and that he was to be not only loved, but greatly pitied. "It must," so they said, "have been a dog dear to a Duke!"

I was absent from the house for a while. When I returned, Picho's star was once more in the ascendant: he was believed in; the Guard was "nowhere." "A Duke's dog!" I knew better. And now was my time to test the truth of Picho's tacit assurances by a crucial test. Two things I remembered about the "blind man" of the neighbouring town, whose leader and guide Picho had once, so said the Guard, been! He used to wear a heavy clog, and put it (not gently!) on his dog's back when he wanted to go on from some house where his "Una limosnita, por Dios!" had been refused; and I remembered also that the string by which the little dog (the new "Claimant") led his master was apt constantly to become entangled in the little fellow's legs; and the vision of the poor sightless "mendico," in his tattered breeches, and brown, still more tattered, manta, shouting, "Tuno; anda, Tuno," and sawing the air with the hand that held the string to get it free of the dog's legs, rose vividly before me.

I, too, would put on a clog—I, too, would be blind and saw the air; and then, if Picho screamed at the

uplifting of my clog, and pawed the air with his feet to get rid of a string, which existed nowhere but in his own memory, why, then there was no doubt at all; he was—as even the ladies of the casa agreed—no longer Sir Roger Tichborne, but plain Arthur Orton. The day and hour were fixed; I put on the clog, and clumped into the sala, where, with his laurels (redivivi) fresh upon him, lay, taking his noon-day siesta, poor Picho.

"The Claimant," about to be bandied about "bandy," was a trifle to poor Picho in his look of utter consternation as he heard the clump of my heavy boot along the stone-flagged floor of the sala coming towards him. He was on his mettle, for the ladies, who believed in him, were there; and what will not dog or man do to save their honour before ladies? Picho looked up deprecatingly; he knew that the game was up. Imitating the well-remembered action of the blind mendico, I waved the clog over his back, and called him "Tuno!" (scamp). Poor little dog! memories thick of other bitter days coming up before his mind, he screamed and whinnied for mercy long ere he had felt the weight of my descending foot. I desisted, thinking this amount of proof ample; and Picho sat, a tear in either eye, looking the very picture of dejection and misery.

"Is not this enough?" said I.

"No; try the string too; we can't believe our Picho to be an impostor."

The poor little dog's eyes were fixed upon me. Had I not felt him to be such an utter scamp, my heart would have melted at the mute appeal of his black eyes. But he had been too upstart, too troublesome. I sawed the air, with my right hand, high

above his head, as though seeking to disengage an imaginary string. The effect was immediate. (Oh, that such a crucial test could have been applied to "The Claimant," what trouble, what money had been saved!) First with a hind leg, then with a front; then, feeling no relief, first with the left, then with the right, the poor little dog pawed the air to free himself from a string which existed only in his little dog-imagination.

It was all over then; even the ladies scorned him, after believing against belief, and hoping against hope; and daily the finger of scorn was pointed at the unhappy little dog. From that day we all called him, not the dog of the Duke, but plain "Tuno." But the poor little beast never rallied. From that day his self-respect was utterly gone: he became daily more filthy in his habits, more distasteful to us all. Spanish servants are very kind at heart, as I have often proved; their affectionateness oftentimes exceeds their sense of honesty and their probity. Every Spanish servant (this is one of the bright points of their character) will help a kind master or mistress who is in trouble to the utmost of their ability—aye, will even suffer in their cause! And the Spanish criada took pity upon the despised Picho. The first step towards reinstating the little fellow, with true Spanish instinct she thought, was to transform him into a poodle. She shaved, with razor and soap-and-water, all his hinder parts, and brought him in to be looked at. We all called her *protégée* "Tuno"!

Next morning Picho had belied her hopes and betrayed her confidence; his self-respect was gone; and what other could you expect? He went into the bed-room of the guests, and committed nuisances!

The poor criada came in, and she, too, called him "Tuno." Then she went for her mother; the mother held the little animal by the tail; the daughter, Isidra, beat his ribs black and blue with her broom, and then, that breaking, with her clenched fist. I ventured to suggest that there was a great "danger of a dissolution of partnership" between tail and ribs if Picho, struggling, was held by the tail. "Bueno," said the old mother, "we must all depart, soul from body, some day."

Next day, to try and make the poor little beast more popular with us, they took him down, mother and daughter, to the washing-trough in the dusky olives around our town, and brought him into the room, held up, like a dead hare, by the hind legs, dripping wet. "Is he not beautiful now?" Next morning, his *morale* utterly destroyed, Picho went down to the little backyard, where the chickens were kept, and killed half-a-dozen before breakfast. The two servants beat him unmercifully, and we gave him to them to give away to any one who should take a fancy to him.

"Bueno," said the young criada; "like the rest of us, he must have ups and downs in life; just now he is descending from *carne* to *garbanzos*," *i.e.*, from meat to peas!

* * * * *

One day, shortly afterwards, at early dawn, I passed along the streets. In the dusky light I saw a little, dirty yellow-coloured body lying in the road; the cart of some early muleteer had passed over its ribs and crushed them—it was the body of a dog very like to Picho. Round the little neck was a cord. This throwing out of a strangled animal into the

streets is the rule in the towns of the interior. Constantly, in your promenade, you have to step across the body of cat or dog; and so dry is the air, that no offensive smell ever proceeds from these carcases in this climate. I went to inquire of the servants, "Where was Picho!"—"Dead, and cast out," was the answer. "Tuno had a fit last night, and died."

Perhaps so. But there was a bit of string round Tuno's neck. Well, he would never have ranked with "Cerf-vola," had he lived ever so long; so perhaps it is best that he has gone, potentially good, we will hope, to the place where all good little dogs go!

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SPANISH WINTER GARDEN, WITH SOME NOTICE OF SIMPLES.

As a rule, in the interior of Spain, at least in that part of Spain from which I write, the *useful* gardens are on the outskirts of the townships; and the small court-yards of the houses, if devoted to gardening, are merely filled with flowers in pots, one or two orange-trees, and the like, for ornament more than for use.

Bacon's Essays have immortalized the old-fashioned garden of England; and how many a knotty point has been settled, how many a bright and holy idea inspired, how many a ruffled spirit calmed, beneath the trees, and among the gay parterres, and on the smooth eye-soothing green turf of the English garden!

The Spanish "huerta," a word which is nearly equivalent to our English word "market-garden," is of two kinds—first, the market-garden, rented by some gardener, in the vicinity of a town, held at a fixed rent, and cultivated to supply the town with vegetables, fruit, and flowers; secondly, the huerta, or garden, belonging to the owner of some large house, or "palacio," in a town, with a small, but often beautifully fitted-up, little stone house within its walls, whither the master of the house and his family may retire for coolness during the parching heats of the summer months.

The huerta of the interior has always a peculiar and picturesque quiet beauty of its own. Enclosed in its crumbling, grey stone walls, with its old stone gateway, surmounted by a cross, also of stone, oftentimes belted in with groves of glaucus-leaved olives, or, in some parts of Spain, orange-trees, and always green and cool-looking, it contrasts strikingly with the barren plains around it, and, when you enter, seems quite like an oasis in the desert.

The cause of its fertility is not seen until you enter its walls, when the most prominent object that will strike you is a clump of trees at one end, formed of the pimiento, or pepper-tree, the orange, the acacia, or more often a single fig-tree of great age, with a rough table or two at its foot, and two or three ricketty chairs. Under the leafy shade (if in summer) of the fig-tree is a large well, or cistern, covered with luxuriant grass, ice-plants, and the like; and, with a huge pole resting on his collar, an old, broken-down mule is slowly going circuit around the well; if not blind from natural causes, he is sure to be artificially blinded. Gently, from morn till eve, he walks round and round the well, stopping to rest and muse as often as he lists, unless the gardener, who is at work hard by, gazes up from his work, and, seeing him halt, shouts dictatorially, leaning on his fork, "Arre, moo . . . . lo."

This is the old Moorish "noria," or well, and is universally used in the interior for the irrigation of lands and huertas. It may be thus described. The well is a large stone cistern; the pole, above spoken of as resting on the top of the mule's collar, is attached to a huge, lumbering, wooden wheel, reaching down into the waters of the cistern: on this wheel

are fastened (usually simply with common esparto-grass cord) some thirty or forty common pitchers, holding, perhaps, two quarts apiece (are not these "the pitcher broken at the fountain, the wheel broken at the cistern," of Eccles. xii. 6 ?) ; each one of these, as the wheel slowly revolves, catches up a small amount of water, and each, as it comes to the surface of the well and slowly rolls round in its turn, is, for a moment, necessarily with its mouth downwards, and discharges its water into a wooden trough, so placed as to catch much of the liquid stream from each little pitcher discharging in its turn.

The trough carries the water into one, two or three large stone reservoirs, each about two or three feet deep—seldom more in those that I have seen—the sides of which are formed of slabs of stone, sloping gently inwards. The water from these reservoirs is, as often as needful, suffered to run into a stone trough that encircles the garden, and in which, at regular intervals, are holes leading into the natural trenches in the earth of the garden, each trench encircling a bed of vegetables or flowers. This irrigation goes on well nigh every day, and the fresh, damp scent of the huerta, when you enter it from the crackling olive-groves or the dusty road, is truly refreshing and delightful.

Nor are the sloping stone sides of these reservoirs without their use. They are apportioned into separate spaces, and are hired by the washerwomen of the neighbouring town for a halfpenny an hour, for a stand for washing their clothes. All the washing of the interior is done in this way. The clothes are washed in the usual fashion, with soft-soap, and dipped again and again into the reservoir, and rubbed, with

no gentle hand, on the sloping stone sides of the reservoirs.

The Spanish "lavandera" never rubs the clothes with her hand: she does it entirely on these stones.

It is a picturesque and striking sight in the evening to enter one of these huertas, the large reservoirs of which are a favourite of the washerwomen. You pass through a belt of grey olives, and suddenly come upon the old "noria," and upon a row of some forty of these busy people, all chattering, talking, and singing at their work, and dressed in every variety of costume, and in the gaudiest colours imaginable—a short, bright yellow serge petticoat, with a deep scarlet border, being one of the favourites. But colour—in their dress, their shops, their sweetmeats—is a passion with the gay, ephemeral Andaluzes. I asked a poor man, who was eating his morsel of bread, with coloured lard, why he did not buy white lard? "Because it is more pretty coloured."

The value of irrigated land in Spain is ten or twelve times the value of land unirrigated. A great part of Spain is treeless and riverless, and the only annual crops are the barley, or "sevada," broad beans, or "habas," and the universal "garbanzos," all of which, of course, come on but once a year. There being neither shade nor water, nothing but these would grow and come to perfection.

On the irrigated grounds, however, the melons and succulent vegetables, so absolutely needful to sustain the very life in the hotter months, grow freely; and a good gardener will get as many as four good crops off his land in one year. Be it remembered, it is a semi-tropical climate, and the fierce heat succeeding the spring and late autumn to the equally fierce rains, the

plants grow and come to perfection as quickly as in a hot-house. Indeed, if you walk out in summer on a day when the sun has come out after a sudden downpour, the earth absolutely steams with the damp heat rising. So great is the known value of every sort of irrigation, from the homely "noria" to the Moorish irrigation works of Valencia and the surrounding country, that in some of the ancient decrees of Spain land is granted "with the free use of the waterworks of the Saracens."

And now let us pass through these grey-leaved olive groves that belt it in, and enter a typical huerta of the interior. Close to the stone gateway (I describe a garden which I constantly visit) is a little wooden cross set up against a wall. It is very flimsy, but none are sacrilegious enough to take it away or pull it down. It marks the scene of a murder five years ago, and you can just decipher the name of the murdered man upon it. Before your eyes as you enter (it is early in February), lie four spreading plots of green, each, however, of a different hue, covering a large area of ground, for these huertas are often very large. One is a plot of "papas," or potatoes, now high above the ground, and in full leaf. Here and there you may even see one of the purple flowers half-hidden by the rich green leaves. The potato is not popular with the Spanish poor, and does not form at all a staple article of food; still it is coming slowly into use among them. It is possibly a vegetable of too solid and bilious a character for these sunny skies and parching airs. Talking to a Spanish gentleman about the papas lately, and observing to him that much of our English bone and muscle took its origin from the potato diet, he said,—" The

prison authorities at ——" (naming a neighbouring town) "have put the prisoners on papas two days a week. Poor wretches! worse and worse, from garbanzos to papas, what *will* they come to!" The plot of papas is made pretty—how tasteful the Spaniards always are!—by tufts of early-sown sevada (barley), growing in regular rows amongst the potatoes. This is only used for the horses, and mules' "green meat," and is not suffered to get to maturity.

The next plot, the sober glaucus-green of which contrasts well with the rich bright green of the papas, is of "cardos." *Cardo* is a generic name in Spain for thistles of all sorts and kinds, but the cardo of the garden—called indiscriminately, *Cardo de comer*, or *Cardo dulce*, by the Spanish peasant, *Cardo hortense* by the botanist or scientific gardener—is a sort of artichoke, in leaf much like the common English artichoke. Its graceful, spreading, drooping leaves make it one of the most elegant vegetables of the Spanish garden. The stalk is eaten towards the root; cut into small pieces and boiled in milk, it is much used at all tables.

Contrasting with the rich green of the papas and the grey leaf of the cardo, is the deep green and dark purple of the "verengenas," or egg-plant (the *Solanum melongena*, I believe, of the botanist). The leaf is dark green, and the stalk and fruit purple. The fruit is of the shape and size of a hen's egg, and is a common article of food, boiled or fried with beans among the poor. They will even eat it raw, with a bit of bread and lard, and tell you it is "muy rico," although a more insipid morsel I never ate.

The fourth contrast is a far-spreading bed of crisp, blanched, endives, or "escarolas" (*Cichoriumen-*

divia), the faded green and yellow and white leaves of which contrast prettily enough with the darker plots. Throughout the winter endives are a constant guest at the tables of all classes. They are considered in Spain as "a medicine for the blood at spring-time," and the poor have the greatest faith in the medicinal qualities of the endive. They are bleached simply by being covered with the earth for a few days; and you will daily see the gardener, with his short, heavy hoe (azada) heaping the earth over a few of his treasures. The azada is not above two feet long in the handle, and the ironwork is very clumsy, as are all the gardening and agricultural implements of the interior. The Spaniard will not listen to reason on these points. You will see a row of thirty men hoeing wheat with these short, heavy hoes, causing them to stoop most painfully; and if you suggest a longer handle, they will say, "Bien; but when I am tired I can smoke a cigarette."

Sometimes in these gardens the colours will really be beautifully arranged, and the gardener points with pride to this his handiwork. Indeed, all the Spaniards have a great deal of taste in their arrangement of colour, both in dress and in gardens.

Straight across the middle of the wide garden runs a little avenue of the graceful oleander-trees, their pods full of wool now bursting open. Their drooping boughs meet twenty feet overhead, and lend a grateful shade even from the winter's sun, which is beginning to make itself felt.

Trees are scattered in clumps or straggling rows all over the ground. Here is a little avenue of pomegranates, their delicate, bare sprays bearing here and there half a pomegranate that has remained