towns of the interior no one makes use of a bank; if you ask the reason, and remind them that they lose interest, a Spanish gentleman will say, "Yes; but that is better than to lose the principal."

No Spanish labourer ever walks outside his door without his knife, and those who can afford it carry a revolver too. The knives are clasp-knives, opening with a spring, so as not to close without the spring being purposely loosened, when once opened; in shape they are exactly like the scimitar of old, but taper towards the point, and for about the two last inches are two-edged. Some of them, evidently made solely for the purpose of fighting, are a foot long in the handle and as much in the blade. Such a one was bought, out of curiosity, by an acquaintance of mine, at a fair not long since. On reaching his house, he opened it in the presence of his criada, or maid-servant. Truly it was a hungry, hideous-looking weapon; it seemed to thirst for blood. The poor criada shook her head. "Ah," she said, "Señor, Señor; a few years back, in the good old times, you would have had five years at Cuba for being in possession of such a weapon."

This is true enough, and the law to which she referred is, I believe, still unrepealed; but in these days of (almost) utter licence and anarchy, these knives—generally with the motto on the blade, "Viva la Republica Democratica Federal"—are sold by the thousand, openly, in every street and market-place. An ordinary one, used either for stabbing or for eating, is from four to six inches long in the handle, and as much in the blade.

The Spaniards have regular duels with these knives; and a well-matched pair of duellists will cut and thrust

for ten minutes, each turning aside the thrusts of his adversary on his "sombrero," or thick felt hat. Some men are great adepts, and are known to have killed two and even three adversaries, though the crime may not have been brought home to them.

A short time ago a man was carried into the hospital badly hurt by a stab. One of the official guards of the town examined the wound, and shook his head sagely. "I know well enough," said he, "whose hand dealt *that* thrust." On being asked, he said he knew by the character and disposition of the stab, and the spot where it was aimed at, whose practised hand had been at work.

While on the subject of knives, I must be allowed to make a still further digression.

There is a widespread impression among Englishmen that the knife is a weapon used always by stealth, and one that needs no skill. This is far from being the truth, or, at least, the whole truth. The general run of things when the knife is used is this:—Two men have a quarrel; words wax higher and higher; they repair to a little road-side *venta*, and drink a *copa* or two of vile wine. This heats their passion still more; they repair outside the house, knives are drawn, sombreros taken off. Both receive several cuts, and at last one falls mortally wounded. As a rule, the Spanish use of the knife is not "a stab in the dark and run-away" affair. It is a quarrel between two men, both of whom are on the alert. In times of festivity, such as the annual fairs, it is no uncommon thing for as many as nine or ten men to be carried off to the hospital mortally wounded.

Once more I recur to some of the other habits of the lower classes.

Their fare is the very simplest. Bread and fruit, and fruit and bread, with now and then, for the men, a "caña" (wine-glass) of Val-de-Peñas (the rough red wine of the country), is the staple of their sustenance. The only thing about which the Spaniards, high and low, are really particular, is their water.

In a country where the women drink nothing whatever but agua (water) from year's end to year's end, and the men little else, it is quite necessary to have that little good; and good it is in all cases. Go into the poorest hut, only tenanted by a few wood-cutters or itinerant miners, and ask for a cup of water, and the little "jarro," or porous four-mouthed water-jar, will be unhooked from the peg where it hangs in the sun, and you will have a drink of the purest, coldest water from the choicest spring—water perhaps brought from a distance of three miles by the water-carrier. Only be sure you hold the jarro up above your head with both hands, and pour the water down your throat in a refreshing stream, for your manners are voted simply indecent if you touch the brim with your lips.

As regards education, the lower classes have absolutely none. Seventy per cent. can neither read nor write. There are no schools to speak of in the interior: even for the higher classes there are no governesses, and it is no uncommon thing to find a well-born lady not *very* well up to writing a letter. The lower orders are, of course, grossly superstitious. Fortune-tellers abound. There is, however, a vast deal of natural courtesy, natural wit, natural intelligence. Uncultured and uneducated as he is, the Spanish poor man has the manners of a thorough gentleman. Go to the lowest road-side "venta"

(public-house), and elbow your way amid the throng who are drinking their *vino tintè*, and you will find a courtesy and a kindness to which an English road-side tavern is a stranger. The space you need will be cleared; your bad Spanish will be interpreted by some bystander for you; the "copa" of wine will be freely offered you (for your Spanish peasant is *very* generous), and the inevitable cigarillo will be offered you ere you leave. You will then be politely helped on to your horse, and receive, in a chorus, the usual viaticum, "Vaya usted con Dios," from one and all.

Again, the poor Spaniard is witty, though he *has* no education. From the time of Sancho no one enjoys a joke so thoroughly as he.

A Spanish boatman, of the lowest class, had picked up a smattering of broken English. As he rowed me across the ferry, he asked for a light for his cigarillo, and when I handed him one of my last Bryant & May's patent safety matches, looking at its colossal and substantial stem, he said, "*English* INDEED—*fine-growing timber—regular deals.*" I afterwards learnt that he had been unloading "deals" with some of my countrymen.

Another instance is this. A poor little cat the other day tumbled into my well, a depth of forty feet. With the assistance of the servant I got her out. On telling the man-servant of all the trouble we had had, and how rejoiced I was at the skill of his fellow-servant, "La salvadora de los gatos" (the saviour of the cats), he said. "Yes, you could only have done *one thing better than get her out—leave her in.*"

Again, as to the *intelligence* of the lower classes, they have a theory, and they illustrate it in practice, that they can tell every person's character by his eye

and gait, and in their estimate of human character they rarely fail. Their perception partakes quite of the marvellous. Witness this instance.

Some little time ago two men were caught by the officials, and charged with a robbery upon a large scale. As is usually the case in Spain, they were interrogated first by the lowest of the officials; both men stoutly swore they knew nothing whatever of it. The official scanned with a keen, scrutinizing glance, the bold, reckless faces of the two men before him, and then said, "Take *this* (pointing to one) outside for a few minutes till I come to speak to him; then," added he, aside, "I have a MEDICINE that will make *him* tell us all. As to the other, he is that sort of man that you can never get anything out of." He afterwards went out and administered to the one outside a good sound thrashing with a hazel-rod, and after a few strokes the hero confessed his own guilt—a fact the truth of which was abundantly proved afterwards by other and further evidence. The other man, who subsequently received a tremendous sentence, after being clearly proved guilty, refused to acknowledge his own guilt, and would not disclose the name of the receivers, though his half-pardon was made conditional upon his so doing.

CHAPTER VI.

SPANISH POOR.

THE position of the young unmarried women of the lower orders in Spain next claims our attention. Certainly the contrast between the perfect freedom of the daughter of the family in England, and the seclusion and strictness under which her Spanish sisters' days are passed, is a very striking feature in the domestic arrangements of the interior. In the lower walks of life the Spanish maiden is absolutely a prisoner—the prisoner of her madre, or her "tia," or aunt—until a kind Providence gives her a husband. No Spanish maiden, however poor, or however low her rank, can ever walk alone in the street, even for a few paces: if she do so her character is gone. She cannot go out to service unless her madre or tia be in the same service; and hence all the "criadas," or maid-servants, are widows who are allowed to have their children in their master's house, under their own eye, or unmarried over forty. The Spanish maiden has her choice of only two walks of life, until married life and a husband's protection become her own. Up to the time of her marriage she may either, if her father and mother be alive, go to a tailor's shop each day, returning at night, thus earning a few pence, and learning a trade. She is escorted thither and homewards by her mother, whose tottering steps and grey hair often contrast strangely with the

upright carriage and stately walk of the daughter by her side. While at work during the day she is under the care of the "maestro," or master tailor, who sits among his bevy of fair maidens at the open door, and superintends their work. All the "tailoring" is done in this way. You first of all buy the amount of cloth you need at a linen-draper's; it is then taken to the tailor's house, and he takes your measure, and reports upon the amount and fitness of the cloth, and sets his maidens to work. A good Spanish servant, if you get a tailor to cut the cloth, will thus, at odd hours, make a capital suit of clothes. If the Spanish maidens, however, have a mother who is a widow, or who has no settled home with her husband, and is for this cause obliged to go out to service to earn her bread, the maiden will probably be with her mother, and, receiving little or no wages, take an idle share in the household duties, and receive each evening—of course, in her madre's presence—the visits of her lover. Most of these girls have their lover, who, after his day's work is over, saunters idly, cigarillo in hand, into the kitchen which contains his Isidra, Maria, or Isabel—for these girls have very fine names—and performs his courting. The mother's watchful eye and ear are ever open, and the mother herself ever at hand. As to saying a single word, or, at least, having a walk or a good English "chat" *alone*, the young couple never even dream of such a thing. To so great an extent is this system of motherly surveillance carried, that should you call the mother away for a few minutes, she will not leave the young couple alone, but will order the young man to go out for some trifling article, or call the daughter to her side, that they may not have a private talk.

This seems strange, unnatural, and unneeded. The mother, during this period, treats her daughter quite like a child. If she does wrong—no matter though she be on the very eve of marriage—the mother administers a sound beating with her fists, and sometimes even a sound kicking. "Upon my word," said a pretty Spanish maiden thus situated, to me, "I really begin to think my mother is a bad old woman for beating me so." The Spanish mother has *no idea* of *trusting* her daughters; nor do they ever attempt the least religious or moral culture. Their system is to prevent any impropriety simply by external precautions. And I must say that the majority of poor girls, when led to the altar, would present a marked contrast in *purity* to an equal number of our English agricultural labourers' daughters. In Spain the daughter's purity is the mother's highest pride. Mother and daughter, though constantly quarrelling, and even coming to blows, are very fond of each other; and the old woman, when they go out shopping together, will carry the heavy basket, or cesta, under the burning sun, that she may not spoil her daughter's queenly walk; her dull eye, too, will grow moist with a tear, and her worn face will kindle with absolute softness and sweetness, if an English señor express his admiration of her child's magnificent hair or flashing black eyes. The poor old mother, too, will save and save, she will deny herself her morsel of "carne" or meat, and her little "caña"* of wine, on feast-days (and these poor creatures' luxuries are few indeed at best), that she may buy a ring or ear-rings of gold, to grace her daughter at the "Feria," and shame her rivals.

* Caña is the Low Spanish phrase for half a tumbler of wine.

The moment, however, that the daughter is married all this is at an end. The mother, to use a vulgar, but very expressive phrase, "washes her hands of" her care. From the moment of the completion of the marriage ceremony, the mother declines all responsibility, seldom goes to her daughter's house, and treats her almost as a stranger.

Among the higher classes, although different in kind, the treatment of the young unmarried maiden is almost as strict. She, too, like her humbler sister, can never have the privilege of seeing her lover in private, and very rarely indeed, if ever, is he admitted into the sala where she is sitting. He may contrive to get a few minutes' chat with her through the barred windows of her sala; but when a Spaniard leads his wife from the altar, he knows no more of her character, attainments, and disposition, than does the priest who marries them, and, perhaps, not so much. Happiness under such circumstances can hardly be expected as a rule, and yet the married life of the Spaniard, if not brilliantly happy, seems, at least, calmly peaceful. The pleasures of husband and wife lie in different directions, and each leaves the other free to follow out and enjoy them as he or she best can. They are not much together again, and in sunny Spain there is no fireside gathering—indeed, there are no fire-places, only "braseros" of charcoal—to bring husband and wife together in sustained intercourse. There is a very striking law in Spain, the very existence of which proves, better than any words of mine, the strictness with which the Spanish maiden is guarded, and the absolute authority of her parents. Its provisoes are these: Should a Spanish lad and lassie become attached to one another, and the parents absolutely refuse the match, and refuse their daughter

liberty and permission to marry, the lover has his remedy at law. He has but to make a statement of the facts on paper, and deposit it, signed and attested, with the alcalde, or mayor, of the township in which the lady's parents dwell. The alcalde then makes an order, giving the young man the right of free entry into the house in question within a certain number of days, for the purpose of wooing and carrying off his idol. The parents dare not interfere with the office of the alcalde, and the lady is taken to her lover's arms. From that moment he, and he alone, is bound to provide for her: by his own act and deed she has become his property. Cases have happened where the parents' judgment has been proved, by the bitter experience of their unhappy child, to have been the best, the would-be husband having turned out to be a seducer. But the law comes upon him with all its force, and he is bound to maintain her, in every way, as a wife, under pain of punishment. The whole Spanish law on the question of bastardy is very stringent, and bears severely—and deservedly so—on the man.

CHAPTER VII.

SPANISH CHARACTER.

In seeking to present a general and impartial outline of Spanish life in the interior, I promised to give some estimate of the Spanish character. The first thing you will notice as a leading characteristic is its *exceeding passionateness.* Whether this may be due in any measure to the fiery sun of their climate or no, I cannot say. Many thoughtful men with whom I have conversed upon this subject believe that such is the case. But the fact remains: no race is so fiery as this. The rule with the Spaniards of the lower order is a word and a blow. It is, however, quite a mistake to suppose that the uneducated Spaniard is *vindictive* in nature—quite the reverse. His anger, soon up, is soon down again, and the insult under which he smarted forgotten, whether it has been avenged or no. The only safe way to deal with these men when angry is never to thwart, answer, argue with, or irritate them at the moment when their passion is boiling over. "Speak an angry Spaniard fair," and very soon his anger will calm down, and he will become a rational being again. More than this—he will be willing and glad to acknowledge his fault, and shake hands and be on friendly terms again.

A case in point here occurs to my mind. A friend of mine, while out riding, came suddenly, at a bend in the road, on two angry men, who were just in the

act of drawing the knife upon one another. Contrary to the advice and entreaty of his companions, he sprang instantly from his horse, rushed in between them, separated, and expostulated with the combatants. The men, maddened with passion, deemed his arguments and entreaties worthless and an interference. At last one of them let fall the fact that they (the duellists) were brothers. Instantly my friend made use, and good use, of this point. "Sirs," said he, "would you, who sucked the same mother's breast, go down to the grave, one of you with a brother's blood on your soul!" For a moment the men's better feelings were aroused; the younger brother drew back, and sheathed his knife. "Right you are, señor," he said; "badly, shamefully, as my elder brother has treated me, I have no right to draw upon him; he is my brother, after all — my *elder* brother." My friend took the young fellow's arm, and walking beside his horse led him slowly away from the scene of temptation. Homeward they went, talking about indifferent matters, until at last they reached the "casa" of my friend. On entering it, this man (the younger combatant) said, while the tears streamed down his brown wooden face, "You are *my friend.* Thanks to God, I lie down to-night with hands not wet with my brother's blood." The men were miners, and of the lowest class of itinerant Spaniards.

Again—and possibly as a natural consequence of these frequent and deadly crimes, committed with the ever-ready knife — the Spaniard's utter disregard, utter recklessness about shedding man's blood, comes in here as another marked feature of Spanish character. The Spaniard thinks nothing at all of the higher and deeper aspects of his crime; he thinks

nothing, because perhaps he has *been taught nothing*, of the responsibility of sending his own soul or his neighbour's, without one moment's warning, to its last account. True, he feels a certain remorse, and a certain terror of the law may cause him to tremble. But, if his crime be not found out, with the morning sun his remorse has passed away. The brother's blood has dried upon the knife, and he can cut and eat his melon with the self-same blade without a pang, perhaps without a thought. And this disregard of human life does not entirely confine itself to the utterly ignorant classes. Like a vile infection, it spreads to those around. Two men, fighting in our streets, with revolver and knife, a few weeks since, both fell mortally wounded. Of course not one of the ring of bystanders had lifted a hand to prevent so ghastly a termination of what, in its commencement, had been but a trivial quarrel. The bystanders, I grieve to say, never do interfere. The two men were carried to the hospital; and on speaking to one of the chief officers of justice about the affair, "Yes," said he, lighting his cigarillo, "one is dead, and the other, I fancy, is *just walking on the border-land.*" With these words he quietly dismissed the subject. Another case, illustrating what I have said, here occurs to me. I went into a wayside venta with a friend, a Spanish gentleman, for a glass of the common rough red wine of the country, the Val-de-Peñas. Two men, words running high between them, entered soon afterwards: one drew his knife, with an oath. The hostess did not cease filling the copas of her customers. My friend, a really humane and good man, merely uttered the single word "Knife!" and, drawing my arm through his own, dragged me out.

Noticeably in warfare long continued—if we are to believe what has been written—the mind gets used to deeds of violence when so constantly presented to its view; and so, I suppose, it is in the case I allude to. But it is absolutely shocking to see how callous the lower classes have become to these swift, fierce deeds of blood.

"I wonder," said an educated man to me the other day, "how many men will be stabbed at the Feria *this* year."

I think any comment of mine upon this speech would be wholly superfluous. There is one reflection that I cannot help making here—one question that constantly presents itself to my mind, when I see the fearfully low state of religious and moral culture to which the masses in this country have been suffered to become a prey—it is this, *Who is to blame for these things?* Here is a country with undreamed-of mineral wealth; with vast resources of timber uncut, and of land uncultivated; with vineyards to the full as rich as those of sunny France, and with a glowing climate; yet her poor have no education, and nothing but huts to live in; her roads are mere tracts, all trace of which the winter storms carry away; and, above all, not only mental, but religious culture is a stranger to the masses; and who is to blame for these things?

The Spaniard, again, is a man *full of courage.* But it is courage of a certain and peculiar kind, and his courage is made up of paradoxes. He is reckless of his own life, and will fight with an adversary far his superior in skill. He is a daring horseman, and a still more daring driver. In the bull-ring or personal combat he shines for courage and adroitness; and yet in some things he is strangely timid.

As a soldier in the ranks, he has been proved not to be always very plucky, by the experience of past warfare. But I account for this upon this theory, that, being only semi-civilized, the Spaniard, like all semi-barbarians, cannot rely upon his comrades. These men do *not*, in trading or in fighting, loyally and fully *trust* one another. Then, again, the "presence" of a brave and yet unarmed man—his mere voice and presence—will awe two or three armed Spaniards. Again, in illness he is very timid; once the foe has fairly got him in its grip, the Spaniard gives up hope, and gives himself up to, as he calls it, "his fate."

So, then, his courage is made up of paradoxes, and I account for the fact in this way, that the nation is really only semi-civilized, and shares the characteristics of other semi-civilized peoples. Like them, the Spaniard knows no reliance on his comrades *en masse;* like them, he knows nothing of combination as a secret of strength; like them, he has not the full and free and absolute trust in God as the Defender of the right.

Yet, as a soldier, the Spaniard's patience under privations is of no common order, and his exceeding endurance of hunger, thirst, and nakedness would put to shame the endurance of an English infantry man.

I pass on to two bright spots in Spanish character —sobriety, and the politeness of all classes. The Spaniard, however ignorant, has naturally the manners and the refined feeling of a gentleman. A rude speech, a laugh at a foreigner's expense, would be voted simply indecent by him. Should an Englishman so far forget himself as to become

"drunk and incapable" in a Spanish town, I believe he would be politely carried home and his purse restored to his pocket. The Spaniard, again, is *no drunkard;* as he himself says, "I know when I have had enough." Rare as may be his opportunities of getting stimulants, he would not pass the bounds of moderation when the opportunity of drinking at another's expense is offered him.

Then the Spaniard, again, is *very contented.* Ask him why he does not ask more wages, and he would often say, "It is too much trouble," but oftener still, "I have enough." He is not, certainly, a "saving man"; on the contrary, *most* improvident. He reads the motto, "The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself," in its *wrong* sense, and he acts upon it.

In some other relations of life the Spaniard of the lower class does not shine. In a country where the very bread, the very existence of two out of every three men depends solely on "his beast," one would expect to find many merciful men. But such is not the rule. The Spaniard never calls his mule or donkey by any pet name; he calls the one "Mulo" (mule), pronounced "Moo - - - - - lo!" and the other "Borrico"* (donkey), pronounced "Bo - - - - reeko!" You hear the ominous sound "Moolo," and, instantly following it, a shower of blows and kicks, too often wholly undeserved. A bad-tempered mule or donkey driver will actually, if his beast be obstinate, seize its ear and bite until the blood streams down. This disregard of the sufferings of the rest of the creation seems to be sucked in with their mothers' milk, for

* The exact meaning of *borrico* is "*little* donkey," it being the diminutive.