

of the country ; and take, certainly, a greater interest in such pursuits than any other nation."

"You are a wonderful people," said Dr. Curtis, "and I am proud of being a Briton ; yet I confess these are not my habitual feelings, though they are still to be found at the bottom of my heart.

"In all the common occurrences of life ; its every day cares and sorrows ; its familiar speculations ; and," he added more solemnly, "in its future hopes, I am a Spaniard."

"It is natural, very natural," said Mr. Delville ; "your household gods, your penates are here. Long, my dear sir, may you live for the advantage of both nations."

Dr. Curtis gave and received the most cordial adieus, and quitted at length the little party with something like regret.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPANISH SHEEP—SEGOVIA—AQUEDUCT—SCOURING THE WOOL.

ON leaving Salamanca, the young people were very much interested in observing the gaiety and elegance of the provincial costume; and they remarked that the inhabitants seemed to be distinguished by greater neatness and affluence, and superior vivacity.

“The Leonese,” said Mr. Delville, “are zealous Catholics: on the religious fête-days they illuminate the fronts of the churches, and dance there all the evening to the music of the castanets and the pandero.* The lower class run through the streets at night, and make an incessant noise with this instrument.”

“A custom, I should think,” said Mrs. Delville, “more honoured in the breach than the observance; but the joy and sorrow of the lower orders is commonly noisy.”

“It is the case with all uncultivated minds,”

* An instrument similar to the Basque drum, but more piercing in sound.

replied Mr. Delville, "whatever be the rank of the individual. It is only education, and very early habit, that enables us to command our feelings of liking and disliking. A penetrating eye still discovers them as they flash forth, and faintly disappear. Something of this strong control over our feelings arises from distrust, and, perhaps, from pride. We are not sure that those around us will participate in our feelings, and we endeavour as much as possible to conceal them."

"Dr. Curtis," said Ellen, "had great command of countenance. When the procession passed us in the street, and those images were displayed that looked so like dressed dolls, not a muscle of his countenance moved; though I remarked that he stole a glance at you and mamma, to see what you felt."

"You are a nice observer, Ellen," said her mother; "but I doubt whether the doctor had any merit in keeping his countenance composed during the procession. He is too much accustomed to see these things to feel either astonishment or disgust; but he is sufficiently a man of the world to know that English spectators feel very differently from the Spanish looker-on."

"Yes," said her father, "the Roman Catholic in the presence of a Protestant has a nervous sensibility to exhibitions which, at any other time, he would pass unnoticed."

"Conscience," said Edward, "makes cowards of us all."

"It is not an evil conscience," said Mr. Delville, "for they commonly reverence and believe what we reject: but they know so well our opinion on the subject, that our presence on these occasions is disagreeable to them."

"Dr. Curtis," said Edward, "was a most entertaining companion. I wish, sir, you would tell us something of the curious system of pasturing the sheep, that he spoke of. It seems so singular that millions of sheep should be led about Spain. How much uncultivated land there must be!"

"There is a vast proportion for so rich a country. This subject has engaged the attention of some very sensible men; and there seems now hardly a difference of opinion amongst the better informed, as to the bad results of this wandering custom.

"Its details are, however, highly interesting, and I will endeavour to make you clearly understand them. The name of *merino*, which with us marks a particular kind of sheep, signifies in the language of the country, wandering, ambulatory; and is highly descriptive of their habits. They do not always remain in the same farm, or the same province; but they travel from one to another. Those who patronize this system say, that besides materially improving the wool, the dearth

of green food at certain seasons of the year, renders this plan indispensable. On the other hand, those who oppose it say, that in France and Estremadura, where this wandering custom is not followed, the wool is as fine and as good as that found on the backs of the travellers. Towards the beginning of May, nearly five millions of sheep leave the plains of Estremadura, Andalusia, Old and New Castille, and Leon; and are conducted by the shepherds to the mountains of the two Castilles, those of Biscay, Navarre, and even Arragon. On these more elevated spots, they find a fresher herbage, less dried up by the burning sun; which in summer destroys all verdure in the plains. The high ground near Segovia is very much frequented by the sheep."

"But how do they travel, papa? Who conducts them?"

"The details of their march, Ellen, are very curious. The rich proprietors, that is to say, those who possess the greatest number of sheep, have formed themselves into a company called the Mesta: this association being necessarily a monopoly, it is difficult to alter any of its laws. It would have been impossible for a few proprietors with small flocks to have undertaken these yearly peregrinations:—this society was formed to do away this inconvenience; and under the superintendence of persons chosen for the purpose, the

flocks are led to the uncultivated lands and mountains of Spain. The Mesta employ between forty, and fifty thousand shepherds, who lead a wandering and almost savage life, who never cultivate the ground and rarely marry; their knowledge being confined wholly to the sheep, and in that department they are very skilful. This society had its origin in the fourteenth century. The plague, which at that period destroyed two-thirds of the inhabitants of Spain, left immense tracts of country without proprietors. Those who first took possession of them, being without hands to cultivate them, turned them into pasture.

“Some noblemen wishing to put in their claim to these lands, seized upon the sheep; and in 1350, an edict of Alfonso, king of Castille, declared all the cattle under his special protection. A counsel of shepherds was accordingly formed; whose privileges were confirmed by John II., under the regency of the dutchess of Lancaster, his mother. This board acquired such high consideration, that in 1499, Queen Eleanor sent ambassadors to it, to request that they would feed their flocks in Portugal, paying to the owners of the land a small sum of money by way of indemnity.

“The flocks of the Mesta are divided into smaller troops of ten-thousand sheep each; at the head of which is a mayoral, or chief-shepherd, to direct them, fifty inferior shepherds, and the same num-

ber of dogs, who keep watch over the sheep. The chief-shepherd is on horseback, and has a salary of about sixty pounds English. The wages of the inferior shepherds vary according to their skill and usefulness. The best paid have about thirty shillings a month; and the worst, not more than eight: but to these last two pounds of bread a day are given. Every shepherd may have a certain number of sheep and goats of his own; but their wool belongs to the proprietor of the flock. The shepherd has only the milk, the flesh and the young ones they produce.

“Abundant supplies of salt are provided: the sheep eat as much of it as they like. The annual consumption for a thousand animals, is two thousand five hundred pounds.

“The Mesta is composed of proprietors possessing, some four, and others sixty thousand sheep.”

“The mayoral, or chief-shepherd,” said Edward, “had need to be an intelligent man.”

“He is selected for his activity, good sense, and experience. He is also obliged to have some knowledge of the diseases of sheep, and their cure. The march of these large flocks is regulated by particular laws, derived from immemorial custom. The sheep have a right of pasturage in all those waste lands which are reserved for that purpose, paying a fixed price to the proprietors, beyond which they can exact nothing. They cannot enter

upon cultivated grounds ; but the owners are obliged to reserve them a passage, forty-five fathoms wide. The sheep travel two leagues a day in their own pastures ; but they go six, when they pass through arable lands. Their emigrations extend to a hundred and twenty, and a hundred and fifty leagues.

“The Mesta has its particular laws, and a tribunal called the ‘Honourable Council of the Mesta.’ It is composed of four judges ; and one of the members of the Council of Castille is their president.”

“Pray, papa,” said Ellen, “what are the objections to this system ? Who are hurt by it ?”

“The kingdom at large, my dear. The cultivation of corn is neglected, which if more carefully attended to, would benefit the whole country, and give more permanent employment to the labouring classes.

“The feeding sheep benefits only their owners, who bear a very small proportion to the population of Spain.

“Within the last hundred years the value of wool has doubled, whilst the cultivation of grain, which requires so much labour, and is so precarious in its produce, has scarcely risen in price.”

“Do you know, sir,” said Edward, “the profit derived from a flock of ten thousand sheep ?”

“Ten thousand sheep produce about five-hun-

dred weight of wool, which will yield about two-thousand pounds of our money; from which the wages of the shepherds, losses, and all attendant expenses are to be deducted. The profit, however, is still very considerable: no risk attends the occupation, and the expenses may be estimated almost to a fraction, one year with another."

"And when are they shorn?" said Frank. "I love sheep-shearing time."

"I have been expecting that question," said his father. "It is in the month of May, when the fleece begins to be troublesome, that the wool is cut off. They begin their travels about April: and whether it be habit or instinct that then draws them to the climate most proper for them at that season of the year, it is said that the uneasiness they show to be off might, in case of need, serve as an almanac for their conductors."

"Does the shearing," said Frank, "take place in the fields? How I should like to see it!"

"This, in Spain," said Mr. Delville, "is an operation of great importance. It is performed in great buildings, contrived so as to receive whole flocks of forty, fifty, and even sixty thousand sheep. Each flock belonging to one proprietor is called *cavana*, to which is added the name of the proprietor. Some flocks have a greater reputation than others; and none but the wool of those accounted the best is used at the manufactory of

Guadalaxara, where the best cloth in Spain is made. These sheep-shearings are seasons of great festivity, the same as the vintage, or the harvest. It is a time of rejoicing both to the owner and workmen. The latter are divided into two classes; each of which has its distinct employment. A hundred and twenty-five shearers are necessary for every thousand sheep; and what is worthy of remark, each sheep produces four sorts of wool, more or less fine, according to the part from whence it is taken.

"As soon as the shearing is finished, the wool is made up in bags, and sent to the different seaports, where it is shipped without any other preparation. If it is not to be exported, it is sent to the different scouring-places in various parts of Castille."

"Pray, papa, how is it scoured?"

"At Segovia, Ellen, we will go and see the process, which will make it much clearer than my description. And see, children! you are fortunate: there are two shepherd-boys on the hill with their dog. Look well at them."

"How wild, yet happy, they look," said Ellen. "The shirt, I suppose, is made of sheep's-skin."

"Yes, and underneath that is another of the same kind. What a fine dog! is it not Edward?"

"Yes; but it has not the perfect head and figure of Rover."

"No," said his father, with a smile, "I did

not mean to insinuate that any dog could equal Rover."

They were now approaching Segovia,* the *Areatorum* of the ancients. Their way led through a steep and winding road, on the side of an immense rock between two valleys.

"The sumptuous fêtes given to Anne of Austria, in 1570," said Mr. Delville, "prove how much more opulent the place was then than it is now. The goldsmiths, the jewellers, and the cloth and woollen merchants, were then the most opulent of the burgesses; but the introduction of foreign stuffs has greatly hurt the commerce of the place."

"Money," said Edward, "used to be coined here. I have at home a silver Segovia coin."

"Only copper money is coined here now. The more precious metals are stamped at Seville.

"The machine for stamping money is most ingenious. The stream of the small river Eresma, which you saw wandering at the foot of the mountain, turns all the wheels; and the whole process is performed almost without the assistance of man. A die, put in action by particular wheel-work, strikes at the same time both sides of the coin, and completes the border; which last is usually

* It was of the bridge of Segovia, which he had himself built, that Philip II. remarked, "That so fine a bridge only wanted a river."

struck by itself, after the double impression is made."

When they alighted from the carriage, Mr. Delville said, "There are two things we want to see here; and we must be off early to-morrow morning. One of them, the Alcázar, or palace of the Gothic kings, is situated on the highest part of the rock. Edward is very anxious to see it; but I think it would take the rest of the party half a day to go there and back. I propose sending him up to it with a guide; and he will give us, on his return, an account of what he has seen."

This was cheerfully agreed to; and, after a frugal meal of eggs and bread, he set off on his mountain-excursion; the rest of the party turned towards the town.

Segovia is built upon two hills, and spread over the valley by which they are separated. This position made it very difficult for a part of the citizens to be supplied with water. According to the learned, however, this difficulty was removed in the reign of Trajan, by an aqueduct, which to this day is one of the most astonishing and best preserved of the Roman works. It begins on a level with the rivulet it receives, and is at first supported by a single line of arches, not quite three feet high. It runs, by a gentle ascent, to the summit of a hill on the other side of the city; and appears to become more exalted in pro-

portion as the ground over which it is extended declines.

At its highest part it has the appearance of a bridge boldly thrown over a prodigious abyss. It has two arches, which form an obtuse angle relatively to the city, and it is at this angle that it becomes almost sublime. Two rows of arches rise majestically one above the other; and the spectator feels some impression of fear in comparing their slender base with their amazing height.

"How does it stand?" said Ellen, after the first burst of admiration had subsided. "Does it not look as if the first storm would throw it down?"

"And yet," said her father, "it has braved uninjured the efforts of sixteen centuries. It is composed of square stones placed one upon another, without any exterior appearance of cement; though we cannot be certain whether they were really united without this aid, by being cut and placed with peculiar art, or whether the cement has been destroyed by time."

"One cannot see those wretched houses," said Mrs. Delville, "raised against the pillars of the arcades, without great regret."

"As they scarcely rise to a third of the height of the aqueduct," said Mr. Delville, "they serve at least to give an appearance of projection to its magnificent and lofty proportions."

They would still have lingered at the aqueduct;

but their guide told them, that if they moved so slowly, the manufactory might, on their arrival, be closed. They therefore hastened their pace, and had the satisfaction to find they were in time. They were received with great civility by the director, who surprised them by speaking English.

Mr. Delville led to the object of their visit, by asking, what quantity of wool was annually scoured there.

“About five hundred ton,” he replied; “but by this operation it is reduced to one-half that weight. Our situation, you see, is well chosen: the ground is laid out in the form of a basin, the sloping sides of which terminate in a common; and being open to the sun and air in all directions, it is an excellent place for drying the wool.” He then led them to the spot where the wool was sorted, each fleece being carried there as it was tied up. Mr. Delville remarked upon the quickness and decision of the sorters, who were separating it into three heaps.

“They are so accustomed,” said the director, “to this business, that they find no difficulty in it: but it requires a long apprenticeship. When perfect in this part of the business, they can tell at first sight from what part of the animal each lock of wool is taken. There are, you see, different degrees of fineness. These three sorts thus separated, are extended upon wooden hurdles, where they are

spread, beaten, and cleansed from the dust and dirt. They are afterwards taken to the washing-place, which, if you will allow me, I will now show you."

The little party followed his guidance, and he stopped once or twice to answer the questions of the young people, with whose intelligence he seemed greatly pleased. The first thing they saw at the washing-place was an enormous copper.

"When the water in this great vessel is boiling-hot," said Senhor Melchor, "it is let out by these two great spigots, that open or shut certain pipes, by which it is conveyed into these three square wells, lined, as you see, with hewn stone, and which are about four feet deep. The hot water falls upon a bed of wool, that covers the bottom of each well, and which is turned in every direction by a man at each well. For each sort is washed separately, and according to its fineness, requires the water to be more or less hot. After this first operation; the wool is again spread upon hurdles to drain off the dirt and the water."

"And what is done with the coarse locks I see here?" said Mr. Delville.

"They are sold for the benefit of souls in purgatory," replied the director, devoutly crossing himself as he spoke; an example which was immediately followed by his men.

The wool underwent a second washing in cold

water, and was then laid out on the sloping meadows to drain and to dry.

The English party expressed themselves charmed with the simplicity and ingenuity of the arrangements. Senhor Melchor seemed gratified by their praise, and said, "Four sunny days are scarcely sufficient to dry the wool, even in this southern exposure. When this is accomplished, initial letters on the bags in which it is put, indicate the sort of wool contained in each: and they are accompanied by a mark, which points out the flock which has furnished it; so that a connoisseur who saw the bags, would say, 'This is fine, or superfine wool, from the Escorial, Negrette, or Bejar flocks;' the only three we admit here, or which are used at Guadalaxara."

Mr. Delville thanked the director for his politeness, and the Senhor pressed him to go into his house, and take a cup of chocolate; but the sun was now fast sinking behind the rocky defile which had been their entrance into Segovia; and with many acknowledgments for his politeness, the travellers bid him farewell.

"Papa," said Ellen, "I did not think I should like a manufactory so much; but I suppose I was not tired because I understood every thing I saw. I do not think, Frank, that Edward will have as much to tell us as we shall have to tell him; only," she added, "he will not believe it."

"And why not?" said her mother; "or if so, my dear, what is there in his disbelief to affect you?"

"Nothing at all, mamma," she said, laughing; "only I know what he will say; he will talk of the mountain-air, and the roughness of the way, and of the sheep, and the castle; and then he will ask, if all that is not better than seeing fleas washed out of dirty wool."

Every one laughed at this sally.

"You have a happy imagination, Ellen," said her father: "I should never have thought of all the strong points of Edward's case, but for your skill in arranging them. You forget the aqueduct; surely that is a heavy balance in our favour."

"Thank you, papa; I am so glad you thought of it! How very beautiful it looked in deep shade; and that bright, catching light, running along each projection of the pillars!"

Ellen was destined to be disappointed. Edward returned about an hour after they had reached their inn; and the first words he spoke were in admiration of the aqueduct, which he had seen in every variety of position in his descent from the mountains, and had stood to admire under the magic influence of a flood of moonlight. He was in high spirits, charmed with his excursion, and glorying in having made it.

"Fair and softly," said Ellen; "we have been charmed also."

She was about to sit down near him, when he started up in affected alarm, protesting that they must have brought home as many fleas as would stock a watering-place.

"There, mother," said Ellen, in a whisper over her shoulder "did I not tell you so?"

"I am afraid, indeed, my dear, it is a hopeless case. I advise you to ask him to relate his adventures: perhaps they are not so extraordinary as you imagine."

This appeared very good advice, and she determined to follow it. When she had composed her countenance, she thus addressed him.

"Come, Edward, let us hear your adventures; what you saw, and how you liked the castle."

"I had no adventures at all: I wish I had. It is a fine old palace; and Alfonso the wise began there to construct his astronomical tables. Since the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella it has not been a royal residence. I was shown the tower where Gil Blas supposes his hero to be shut up. The castle has a deserted look, though not very much out of repair; and one wing is used as a prison. What I most enjoyed was the mountain-walk, the beautiful views, the difficulty and sometimes the danger of the way. What did you see?"

"Oh, the aqueduct; and very beautiful it was : and the establishment for washing the wool, where every thing was so well arranged ; and the wool-sorters showed great skill and intelligence : and then there was such a boiler, large enough, I think, to have boiled us all !"

"That I should like to have seen ; but still I set my castle against your fleas."

"They are much upon a par," said Frank, coming to Ellen's assistance.

"How do you make that out ?" said his brother.

"Why, they are both instruments of punishment."

"Thank you, good, kind Frank," said Ellen, while every one laughed heartily : and by the help of this lively repartee, the comparisons that had so distressed her were dismissed for the evening.



CHAPTER IX.

ST. ILDEFONSO—TOMB OF PHILIP V.—GARDENS OF ST.
ILDEFONSO—MADRID.

THE appearance of St. Ildefonso at a distance does not announce the residence of a great court. The country is barren; and a few wretched hamlets give no idea of a royal abode. Such are the feelings of a traveller as he approaches this celebrated palace: he does not suspect, that in that spacious, and seemingly naked horizon, there are manufactures of various kinds; such as paper, cloth, and glass; or that the environs of St. Ildefonso are decorated with rivulets, cultivated fields, meadows, and clumps of green oaks: yet such is in reality the case. On a nearer approach the country becomes more beautiful: a number of meandering streams beautify the verdure; and the deer, wandering through the copses or bounding on the hills, add life and interest to the landscape. The group of buildings, formed by the castle and adjoining edifices, at the base of mountains rising in naked grandeur, and covered to the very summit

with the foliage of trees, presents altogether a novel and delightful picture.

When they arrived at the gate fronting the royal residence, Mr. Delville observed, that "in planning St. Ildefonso, Philip V. was supposed to have had Versailles in his mind. It is known that he left France with great regret; and he probably wished to embody in his new kingdom, those recollections and associations that were dear to him. A Frenchman has observed, that this Spanish palace, in its resemblance to his own court, is like a diminutive shade in painting, and smooths the passage from one country to another, so as to lessen half the distance: and this I imagine to be the highest praise a Frenchman could bestow.'

"Philip V., then," said Ellen, "was very fond of this place."

"The proofs of his attachment," said her father, (as they followed their guide to his tomb,) "have survived him. His remains are deposited in this chapel."

The young party stood round the mausoleum in silence: its very simplicity had in it something awful. The tomb which contains an illustrious individual always excites serious reflection. Their projects and their termination are brought before us in a more impressive manner. How much stronger is this feeling over the grave of a prince,

whose reign holds so distinguished a place in modern history, and forms the nucleus of the last exploits and greatest disasters of Louis XIV.; a prince, for whose interest Europe was agitated by three wars, within less than half a century; and whom innumerable conquests could not render happy.

“What a subject, my children,” said Mr. Delville, “for reflection on the vanity of all human greatness!”

They indulged these natural feelings at the tomb of Philip; and then turned gladly away, to visit the delightful abode which he had made for himself in the rocky bosom of the mountains and the solitude of the woods. The king’s apartments looked out upon a parterre surrounded with vases and marble statues, embellished by a cascade, which, for the richness of its decorations, may be compared with the finest of its kind. These waters answer the double purpose of supplying numerous fountains, and diffusing life and verdure through the magnificent gardens, the sight of which many deem worthy a journey into Spain. They are a league in circumference, and the inequality of the ground affords every moment new points of view. The principal avenues answer to different summits of the neighbouring mountains; and one, terminated by the great front of the palace, is parti-

cularly pleasing. From that spot, five ornamented fountains are seen ; the most remarkable of which is Neptune standing erect among his marine court.

The young people were enchanted.

" Oh ! look, papa !" said Ellen, as the fountain of Fame rose in a single jet-d'eau of a hundred and thirty feet in height, and fell in a gentle shower around them.

The guide, who saw and enjoyed their admiration, now came forward, to say that there was a yet more beautiful spot to be seen.

They proceeded, accordingly, to a high, flat ground, in front of the king's apartment. In the thick part of the foliage, two arbours were contrived, from whence twenty watery columns, clear as crystal, rising to the height of the surrounding trees, united their confused noise, to the rustling of the leaves. There they seated themselves, and looked around with unsated eyes.

" Philip V.," said Mr. Delville, " did not enjoy this enchanting scene : death surprised him before the gardens were finished. It is melancholy to think, that the expences of this undertaking, together with the extravagant wars in which he was compelled to engage, ruined the finances of Spain. It is curious, that he died in debt, to the amount of forty-five millions of piastres—exactly the sum which this palace cost him."

"What an immense expence!" said Mrs. Delville; "especially as so much of what we admire seems owing to nature."

"It is the triumph of art, my dear; for I understand, that at the beginning of the last century, this enchanting spot was only the sloping summit of a pile of rocks; that it was necessary to dig and hew out stones, and out of the sides of the rock to cut a hundred different channels, in order to convey vegetative earth to every place in which it was intended to substitute beauty for sterility; and to procure by mines, passages for the roots of the numerous trees which are planted there."

"Wonderful!" said Ellen: "and what complete success has attended these endeavours: art has hid its own arts, which I remember mamma once said was its highest perfection."

"One failure there has been, Ellen," said her father, "and only one. The trees, naturally of a lofty growth, whose roots sink deep into the earth, already prove the insufficiency of art when it attempts to struggle against nature: many of them languish with withered trunks, and life stagnates in their naked branches. Every year new beds are made with gunpowder, to supply their places by fresh trees. Every thing here is charming; but as a whole, it wants shade."

"Certainly," said Edward, "I have never seen any thing like it before; and therefore I am per-

haps a better judge than more practised eyes, of its resemblance to nature : but I do not think that art is hidden : nature is not so perfect. It has always some happy defect which marks its freedom from the schoolmaster. I would rather wander, with my fishing-rod, a day by our own lovely Greta, than lounge here for a month."

"Hear him!" said Ellen. "Oh Goth! oh Vandal!"

"And I say, hear him," said his father, "for his sound, good sense. Long, my dear boy, may you preserve this simplicity of taste, and these home-attachments. Nature is always pleasant to us. Art, however exquisitely disguised, after a time, imparts less unmingled satisfaction."

From the gardens they went to see the celebrated manufactory for mirrors. It was then idle, so their curiosity was not gratified. The mould in which the largest is made was all they saw. It was thirteen feet and a half one way, seven feet nine inches broad, and six inches deep. The glass is not very clear; but from their size, these mirrors have found their way into most of the royal palaces of Europe.

They dined upon venison; and then proceeded to Madrid, which they were anxious to reach while it was light. Nothing on the road, even within half a mile of the city, indicated an approach to the capital of Spain: long files of mules

carrying chopped straw, as fodder, to Madrid were alone visible. There seemed neither environs nor outskirts, nor any of those accessories by which the metropolis is commonly distinguished. At length their eager eyes discovered, first, a dim outline, and then a forest of belfries and spires were clearly defined against the cloudless sky ; till the whole city lay before them, built in the form of a long square ; and fertile plains extending to the right and left.

They were stopped a few moments by the custom-house officers ; but the scrutiny was the slightest possible. They caught a glimpse of Spanish ladies in the street ; there was the mantilla and the fan they had heard of so much ; the black sombre dresses, which gave the population a solemn air ; the water-carriers, with their green jackets, offering with reiterated cries cold water to the passengers ; the friars, one, two, three, four, they counted all in different dresses, before they had proceeded fifty paces ; the glancing silver, and superb dresses of the military, each in their turn fixed their eager attention, and absorbed all their thoughts, till they stopped at " The Golden Fountain," the inn which was to receive them for the night.

CHAPTER X.

NEW CASTILLE—MADRID—PRADO—SERVANTS—VISIT TO
THE INQUISITION—ITS HISTORY.

THE first thing that a stranger does on arriving at the end of his journey, is to walk instantly into the town. Our travellers did the same. All eye and ear, their thoughts were yet so fixed on others, that they were unconscious how much they were themselves objects of attention. The first impression they received was, that every one seemed walking for amusement; none were occupied with business. The passengers had all that easy loitering step which indicates a perfect freedom from any imperative demand on their time or attention.

They had arrived themselves at a happy moment: the siesta was over, and every one was now on their way to the Prado. They went down the Calle de Alcala, and were struck with its beauty. Standing at the end of it, they saw on the right and the left the extensive Prado, with its four rows of trees stretching in fine perspective to the gates that terminate it: behind it is the magnificent gate of the Alcala; and before the Calle de Alcala they

had just passed through, stretching into the very heart of the city, and adorned on each side by a range of splendid buildings, most of them the hotels of the foreign ambassadors.

"What a beautiful street!" said Mrs. Delville. "I was not prepared for such a scene as this."

"It deserves all your admiration," said Mr. Delville; "but it is the only one of this description that you will see at Madrid. But let us move on; this crowd is all pouring into the Prado." *

In the Prado they at length found themselves; and at first the novelty of the scene blinded their judgment and repressed their opinions; but the influence of novelty is soon over in young minds.

The carriages broke the spell. Frank espied one very neat in its outward appearance, driven by a coachman without stockings: his mirth was with difficulty stifled, as moving along with the slow pace of the Spanish grandee, it was perpetually in his sight. Another, covered with gilt and more than usually handsome in its finishing, had behind it a servant dressed like a street vagabond, without a coat, and to the last degree dirty and shabby. The contrast he offered to the stately individuals within was truly entertaining.

Ellen was caught by the fan used universally by

* A walk about two miles long, and two or three hundred yards broad. The frequented part is not above half a mile long, and without shade.

the ladies, the children, and the humblest females. In their hands it looked a totally different instrument to what she had seen it in her own country; and as she watched a child of six years of age, and an Asturian nurse, with her shirt, brown jacket, and blue and yellow petticoat trimmed with gold; and saw each fanning herself with profound gravity, she unconsciously laughed aloud. It was a soft, sweet laugh however, and the bright colour that immediately flushed her cheek was in very lovely contrast with the dark complexions of the Spanish ladies.

After passing an hour in the most frequented spot in Madrid, they went home full of all they had seen, and delighted to talk it over. Mrs. Delville remarked on the very superior manner in which the Spanish ladies walked to those of France or England.

"It is true," said Mr. Delville, "but easily accounted for. An Englishwoman walks for exercise; she goes out for air and health, and not solely to be seen or observed.

"The Spanish ladies walk only to be seen: they never go out without a careful attention to the toilette; and every step they take is with the view to make an agreeable impression. The result is, that the Spanish ladies far excel our countrywomen in this accomplishment."

While walking the streets, the young people

were struck by groups of women, especially at the fruit-stalls, combing and plaiting each others hair, and too frequently engaged in an examination of each other's heads that admitted of no mistake. Their discoveries were not always so distressing.

Walking out early one morning with his sons, Mr. Delville saw on one of the streets, "*Calle de la Inquisition.*"* Their curiosity was immediately awakened, and they had no difficulty in finding the edifice itself; but it was only the building where prisoners were confined, not that in which they were judged and tortured. This was in an adjoining street, called the Street of the grand Inquisitor, whose house, including all the offices of that court, occupied it almost entirely.

"Is it not astonishing, sir," said Edward, "that during the time of the Constitution, when a general freedom from all old abuses was proclaimed, that the Inquisition was not thrown down? In a popular commotion at Rome, in 1559, on the day of Paul the fourth's death, a Roman mob liberated the prisoners in the Inquisition, wounded the grand inquisitor, burnt the house down to the ground, and were with great difficulty prevented from destroying the principal convent of the Dominicans."

"It does indeed appear extraordinary that no

* Street of the Inquisition.

burst of popular feeling was directed against it ; but we are told that it was not an object of abhorrence to the common people ; and that the leaders of the movement-party did not object to that tribunal ; and even thought it necessary for the prosperity of Spain. If this be true, and we hear from good authority that it is, it explains its safety."

The building used as the prison of the Inquisition was constructed above immense vaults, originally formed by the Moors, and afterwards converted into dungeons.

Mr. Delville requested permission to visit them ; but he was informed that the air in the dungeons is such as to render a visit unsafe.

"I do not imagine," he replied drily, "that it was ever very wholesome or invigorating ; but if I am disposed to venture will you go with me ?"

"No, Senhor."

The door was closed, and no further conversation took place.

From the prisons they went to the other branch of the Inquisition, in the adjoining street. A part of the house of the grand inquisitor is in a dilapidated state ; but other parts are inhabited by private individuals.

The porter, though they bribed him liberally, made much difficulty in allowing them to enter ; and they were almost in despair of succeeding,

when he consented to conduct them to the room formerly used as the hall of justice, or rather of judgment. They saw nothing but a long gloomy room, without one article of furniture ; but it required little exercise of imagination to see, in fancy, the inquisitors and their satellites, the trembling victims and the instruments of torture. It appears incredible, that any others than those to whom its existence would bring power or wealth, should desire the re-establishment of the Inquisition.

"Yet I believe," said Mr. Delville, "that a large number of the Spaniards would look upon it with complacency."

"Papa," said Frank, "I do not quite understand what the Inquisition was, or how it proceeded, or why it is so much abused. While we are sitting in the shade of the botanical garden will you tell me?"

"I have no objection. Edward has made me the same request ; and I think it is a subject that would not please either your mother or Ellen. Pope Innocent III., alarmed by the first dawn of those opinions which afterwards ushered in the full light of the Reformation, appointed a commission for the prosecution and punishment of heretics in the provinces of Languedoc, Provence, Dauphiné, and Savoy. This was followed by the establishment of an Inquisition in those countries, in 1208. In every corporation permanent inquisito-

rial commissioners were established, composed of the parish priest and three lay assistants. They were invested with unlimited powers for the discovery of heresy, in the bosom of private families, and the silent recesses of the heart. By degrees, however, these important powers were withdrawn from the bishops and secular assistants, and committed, without participation or reservation, to the newly-established order of mendicant friars, founded by St. Dominic. 'It was necessary,' observes the learned Abbé Marsollier, 'to confide this charge to persons in a perfect dependence on the court of Rome, and devoted to her interests. It was requisite to have leisure and be undisturbed by other employments, and be without parentage, alliances, or ties, that they might have neither connexion nor interest with any one. They were required to be hard-hearted, inflexible, without pity and without remorse; because they were to establish a tribunal the most severe that the world ever saw. Finally, they were to be zealous for religion, moderately or not at all clever, but interested by particular and personal views in the ruin of heretics.' All these requisites were united in the mendicant order of St. Dominic, and in their hands alone this terrible tribunal was placed. Every portion of that institution, its form, intention, and execution was the offspring of the evil

spirit: it partook of his character, and created all the misery and wretchedness that properly belong to him.

“ It was under the pontificate of Gregory IX., and in the year 1232, that Spain received the same benefit which had been conferred on the south of France. It is remarkable that Spain, a country over which it has for more than three centuries exercised an unrelenting despotism, was that in which its first establishment was most firmly resisted, and where it was the slowest in taking root. Catalonia, Valencia, Aragon—all successively rose up in arms against it. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the form of procedure against the accused was different from what it afterwards became; but it was not till the reign of Ferdinand V. and Isabella, that the Inquisition assumed the peculiar form and character, which it afterwards maintained, even down to the period of its abolition, under Joseph Buonaparte. You will be sorry to hear that Diego Deza, the Dominican friar who so warmly espoused the cause of Columbus, in the Dominican convent at Salamanca, was himself Inquisitor at Cordova; and such were the cruelties he practised, and the abuses of his authority, that the people rose up against him. He was tried; and though the favourite of Ferdinand, having once been his confessor, yet the

crimes laid to his charge were so clearly proved, that he was deposed. Such is the imperfect state of human virtue."

"And Columbus, sir," said Edward, "was he a partizan in those actions?"

"We must not enquire too curiously into the opinions of that great man on that point. He lived in an age when all religion consisted in a very strong feeling of bigotry; and since he was never called upon to declare them, we may give him the benefit of that silence."

"What were the forms used, sir?"

"Denunciation and secret impeachment. This is the most usual mode of proceeding in the Inquisition in preference to that of accusation. Anonymous denunciations are received with the same avidity, and acted upon precisely in the same manner as those given under the sanction of a name; and though by the constitution of the holy office, an information upon oath subjects the informer, if his charge prove calumny, to the same punishment which would have been inflicted upon the denounced, had he been condemned, yet the inquisitors have in no instance awarded this punishment. Their policy being to encourage denunciations, they soon found it expedient to dispense with a law which would have rendered the holy office nearly idle. Denunciation was never more frequent than at the approach of the

Easter communion, when the confessors imposed it as a sacred duty upon their penitents, to disclose all they had seen, heard, or learned, which either was, or appeared to be contrary to the Catholic faith, or to the rights of the Inquisition. This abuse of what the Catholics call the sacrament of confession, for the purpose of encouraging the basest tendencies of the human heart, was solemnly authorized, by the public reading, in all the churches, during two Sundays in Lent, of an ordinance to that effect, issued by the Inquisition, in which they denounced on those who did not act up to this injunction, the most horrible canonical censures; a proceeding, as it has been justly observed, as unbecoming the place in which it was promulgated, as it was opposed to the spirit of the gospel. The consequence was, that many persons, recollecting certain loose or unguarded speeches, to which at the time they had attached no evil import, became uneasy at not having revealed them, made their confessors the confidant of these scruples, and they lost no time in transmitting them to the Inquisition. The nearest relations were not exempt from this horrible treachery. The husband and the wife, the father and the child, were mutually denounced; for on these conditions alone absolution was procured."

"O father, how horrible!" said Edward.

"Horrible indeed, my son; and this fact alone

accounts for much of that low tone of morals and feeling which is obvious in Catholic countries. This iniquitous tribunal had three sorts of prisons, public, intermediary, and secret. The public ones are those in which the holy office confines persons who, without being guilty of any crime against the faith, stand accused of some offence, the punishment of which belongs by privilege to, and is within the jurisdiction of the Inquisition. The intermediary are destined for the reception of those servants of the holy office, who have committed some crime, or have been guilty of some fault, in the exercise of their functions, without being suspected of heresy. The secret prisons, which we were not allowed just now to visit, were those where heretics, or persons suspected of being heretics, were shut up; and where they could hold no communication except with the judges of the tribunal. What renders these prisons truly terrible is, that no one ever enters them without being eternally lost in public opinion. In Spain all kinds of infamy are inferior to this. In his own estimation and that of his countrymen, the galley-slave, condemned to wear iron on his limbs for life, is respectable, when compared with him, however innocent, who has inhabited those dens of infamy and shame. What must have been the reflections, what the agonies of spirit, endured by the miserable being consigned to those abodes of

worse than death. During the winter months they were fifteen hours out of the twenty-four in utter darkness; for no prisoner was allowed to have light after four o'clock in the afternoon, or before seven in the morning: he was exposed to all the rigours of cold, in a retreat where the cheerful blaze of a fire was never seen; and to aggravate these bodily sufferings, he was conscious that his name was blasted for ever. The minds of the unhappy prisoners, we are told, became a prey to so inexpressible a dejection, that they settled into a hopeless and sullen despondency; a despair so strong and intense, that it is said the rack itself was unable to rouse them out of it. I will not shock you, my children, by a detail of the horrors of the torture. While it was inflicted in the most inhuman manner, two inquisitors and a secretary were present; which last person took down, not only all the forms of accusation, and all the answers made by the accused; but noted also every sigh, every tear, and every exclamation of the prisoner: thus leaving, unconsciously, a record against themselves, that will no doubt appear in that day, when we are told we must give an account of even every idle word."

"How could human nature bear such inflictions?" said Edward: it seems impossible.

"It is indeed wonderful; and the mixture of strength and weakness has sometimes excited in my

mind a deeper tribute of admiration than I have felt for those who never shrunk from the deadly pangs they were compelled to endure. We hear of those who, in the midst of unendurable pain, have recanted their religious opinions, yet twenty-four hours after refused to sign that recantation. This always has struck me as great courage; for they have experienced the evil they yet venture again to endure for truth's sake. The instances of fortitude are at all times wonderful in the victims of the Inquisition, because the whole system is addressed to the mind as well as the body. Before corporeal torture is inflicted, the accused are made to taste all the bitterness of mental anguish, and all the sickness of hope delayed, before pain is inflicted."

"They must have some other motive, surely, sir. It cannot be even a fanatic love of truth that led them to the commission of such crimes."

"No, certainly not. When a man was arrested on a charge of heresy his estate was confiscated: when convicted, it was sold for the benefit of the Inquisition, whose retainers were paid out of it. Nothing was easier than a charge of heresy; a crime always difficult to define and of very arbitrary construction. The inquisitors had always in their pay a set of miscreants, ready to denounce any one pointed out to them; and in nine cases out of ten, the plunder to be obtained was

the prime, or rather sole motive of the prosecution. They prevented all improvement, and they banished knowledge from the kingdom; and cherished, in the ill-fated nation over which they tyrannised, the most odious of all vices—domestic treachery. Of them may we truly exclaim, in the language of Scripture: ‘O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.’”

CHAPTER XI.

MANNERS AND FASHIONS OF MADRID.

BEING now comfortably settled in lodgings, they set themselves seriously to sight-seeing. One of their favourite places of resort was the botanical garden, to which, by the letters of Dr. Curtis, they had a constant access. It is more frequented by gentlemen than ladies, in consequence of a regulation of which they were unable to understand the motive. Every lady on entering must throw aside her mantilla; it is not sufficient to let it fall on her neck, it must hang on her arm. The Spanish ladies consider this obligation as amounting to a prohibition: for the proper arrangement of a mantilla is no trifling or easy task, and not to be accomplished without the aid of a mirror: she, therefore, rarely exposes herself to a discipline which might send her to the Prado with her mantilla awry.

Such was their morning's amusement: and once they went to the theatre; where, necessarily, most of the wit of the play was lost upon them, though they had sufficient amusement in looking round the house, and remarking its arrangement, so dif-

ferent from those of English theatres. The ladies sat in a part of the house by themselves, the places of which being of the highest price, they might afterwards go to any part of the house they liked. This permission was evidently acted on; some going to speak to their friends in the pit, others reaching no further than lobby, where they staid to talk to their acquaintance. At the conclusion of the entertainment, the bolero was danced by two Andalusian peasants, in their gay and glittering dresses; and this exhibition pleased them more than all the rest of the performance.

In private houses they were often gratified by excellent music; not on the guitar, for in Madrid it was rarely to be heard; but on the piano; most of the ladies playing very well. Their vocal powers are not considered so good: they were disappointed in the Spanish singing. Italian songs were the voluntary choice of the fair musician; but if requested they sang Spanish music. Their tertulias, or evening parties, they found remarkably dull: such was their estimation of it, because they had enjoyed the pleasures of a cultivated society in England: but the Spanish ladies were not sensible of any thing wanting in their assemblies: those who were well known to each other met regularly, at a particular house selected for the evening; talked, and played a little at cards, and separated at eleven; no refreshment of any kind being

handed round, or thought of. Foreigners who had good introductions, received a general invitation to go to their house of an evening whenever they liked; but Spanish conversation was so little suited to English ideas and feelings, that Mrs. Delville and Ellen rarely mixed with them. The same objection did not exist to appearing in public, and where there was any thing to be seen, they were certain to be found. After having visited the Prado every day for a week, they began to think that it was possible to be weary even of that gay scene; and they gradually learned to prefer the more quiet walk of the Retiro. There, one day, they had the good fortune to see Ferdinand VII. walking, attended only by a valet.

Mr. Delville pointed him out, and all turned to look at the absolute king.

"What!" said Ellen, "that stout gentleman in blue?"

"Yes, even so; that stout, jolly-looking gentleman in blue, is Ferdinand VII. of Spain."

"He has not such a very bad look, has he?" said Ellen. "Look, how he is laughing!"

"It is said, and probably with truth, that his real failing is in having no character at all; a circumstance which has always left him at the mercy of those counsellors, who were for the time being at the head of the government. He was most unfortunate in his early years, and in having a

bad mother. To a king, the consequences, the mischiefs arising from a bad education, are irreparable. A man in a lower condition of life has some chance of having a portion of its evil influence corrected by those around him, and his own experience; a king, never. Truth arrives always slower at the foot of a throne than elsewhere; but at the throne of an ignorant monarch it never arrives at all."

On their return home, among other objects of curiosity, they remarked upon the extraordinary thickness of the external doors of the houses at Madrid.

"They are like the doors of a prison," said Frank.

"Yes," said Mr. Delville, "and the caution with which they open them confirms the resemblance. When you ring at the door of a Spanish house, the answer to the bell is, 'Who is there?' and the reply, literally, 'People of peace.'"

"Yes, papa; how astonished I was when we called at Senhor Mendoza's, to see them draw aside that little shutter in the great door, and look out and reconnoitre us; and even when this examination had taken place, the porter seemed to hesitate in letting us in. What can this seemingly churlish habit arise from?"

"In the first place, Ellen, none but the richest people have houses to themselves. The floors