

last look of his fair domains, and faltering out his parting benediction, "God is great!"

It was with these excited feelings that they entered Grenada, and occupied an hotel which gave them a splendid view of the Alhambra. Hither they hastened the next morning. They entered the ancient palace of the Moorish kings, by what was called the gate of judgment: upon it is a key, sculptured on the marble, surmounted by a hand. They passed the remains of seven gates, before reaching the inner court, where Charles V. had the bad taste to project the erection of a palace, which yet remained unfinished. Close to this palace stands the Alhambra, the most perfect monument of Moorish splendour that exists. Passing through an oblong court, with a colonnade at each end, they arrived at the court of lions.

"Formerly," said the guide, "this was paved with marble: "it is now converted into a garden. It has a colonnade of one hundred and forty white pillars; and in the centre, as you see, is the celebrated fountain, supported by fourteen lions."

"Here, probably," said Mr. Delville, "during the falling fortunes of the Moorish kings, they retired, to meditate upon their altered destiny; and it was here, perhaps, that the undaunted Muza gave, in vain, those warlike counsels to Bobadil, which he was unable to follow, and which lost him his true and tried friend. Upon the alabaster

bowl, which the lions supported, are these concluding words: 'The purity of the alabaster and of the water may vie with each other. If thou wouldst distinguish the water, look narrowly into the bowl; for both might be liquid, or both solid, The water seems to envy the beauty of the basin, where it lies; and the basin is jealous of the crystal water. Beautiful is the stream that issues from my bosom, thrown high into the air by the profuse hand of Mahomed. His generosity excels the strength of the lion.'

From the court of lions they wandered into several halls, all magnificent, resembling each other, and all remarkable for the beauty of the walls and roofs. The fatal hall of the Abencerrages fixed their attention, from the history of treachery, and carnage attached to it. In the year 1491, when Abdali was king, two great families, the Gomels and the Legris, conspired the ruin of the Abencerrages, the greatest of the Moorish families. To effect this, they invented a story, which touched the honour of the king, and connected it with Albin Hamet, the chief of the family. The king, in his fury, resolved to extirpate their race; and they were sent for to the Alhambra, one by one, and the moment they entered, they were seized, and beheaded beside an alabaster vase, which now stands in the middle of the hall, and which is said to have overflowed with

their blood. Thirty-five of the family fell victims ; but the rest being warned by a page who escaped, they raised the city in their cause, penetrated the palace, and slew many of the Gomels and the Legris, who there defended the king, who finally took refuge in a neighbouring mosque. The conquest of Grenada speedily followed this event.

“ A house divided against itself must fall,” said Mrs. Delville ; while the young people gathered round the alabaster vase, and dwelt on the recent tale they heard.

It was not one day that could satisfy their curiosity about the Alhambra. Morning after morning they devoted themselves to it, and listened eagerly to all the wild tales and traditions that their guide was equally ready to tell. He was flattered by the profound attention with which the young English people listened to him.

From these pleasures, that realized all their romantic dreams, they were drawn by a visit to the cathedral. They were shown the sarcophagi of Ferdinand and Isabella, in white marble. They chose that their remains should repose in the city they had been so proud to acquire.

“ The conquerors and the conquered,” said Mr. Delville, “ are now at rest. This is a reflection which might well make many conquerors tremble at their victories.”

When they were visiting, a few days afterwards,

the estates of the duke of Wellington, about two leagues from Grenada, Ellen remembered this observation.

“The duke of Wellington, papa,” she said, “had nothing to reproach himself in his conquests: they will wear well.”

“They will. We were happy to have a countryman of so much ability, to execute the generous purposes of a generous people; and he was happy in a country which has seldom made war for its own aggrandizement. The annals of the Spanish campaign will always be a proud page in English history.”

The walks and the views about Grenada were beautiful. Their favourite walk was by the side of the banks of the Douro, which flows through a deep and finely-wooded ravine; and while all the beauty of the valley was around them, they had at intervals beautiful glimpses of the fair and distant city. Their introductions gave them access to the high, and their wanderings made them acquainted with the humbler classes. The mornings were often devoted to visits, gladly received; and they were sure to find the Spanish ladies, dressed for company, seated on a sofa, their fans in their hands, their basket at their feet, and their embroidery before them. There was great quickness and liveliness in their conversation; which, if not always intelligent, was amusing. They

were ready, as far as they were able, to answer the questions of the travellers; and Ellen was in a fair way of being spoiled, by the praises they bestowed on her beauty. Frank was a general favourite, and learned to dance the bolero almost as well as they did themselves. He had a quick ear, and caught their tunes and accent in perfection. His lively manners, artlessness, and spirit, were to them irresistible. He was always wandering about, and forming some new friendship, or making some new discovery.

Edward, more reserved, was less courted. He had made acquaintance with a priest of considerable talent, and was acquiring from him some valuable knowledge of the history and jurisprudence of Spain. This was an intimacy which Mr. Delville cheerfully promoted, while he was careful to accompany them often, and, unperceived, to watch the tendency of the information thus kindly given; and he was glad to withdraw Frank from an idolatry daily more absurd, and of which the boy was himself ashamed.

After a stay of six weeks, the day was at length fixed for their departure; and though there was no longer an object unvisited, yet it was a subject of regret to every one that they could stay no longer. But to have remained would have defeated all their plans for the winter; they therefore paid a farewell visit to their many friends, and their

favourite and regretted Alhambra. They walked through the market-place, and sent the carriage on before. They had never seen so extraordinary a show of fruit and vegetables. They purchased a melon for a penny, and found the flavour superior to any thing they had before tasted. To their astonishment, however, they saw that nothing had so quick or ready a sale as boiled potatoes: a regular steam-boiler was in constant requisition, and the demands upon its produce were incessant. Frank gave a penny to a little boy, who was standing looking on with wishful eyes. He bought some immediately, and sitting down, prepared to enjoy himself. Frank would gladly have done the same, but there was no time.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHARACTER OF THE MURCIANS—INUNDATION OF LORCA—MURCIA—TOWER OF MURCIA—ENGLISH AND SPANISH MODES OF LIFE—SOULS IN PURGATORY—EARTHQUAKE AT LA GRANJA—STORY OF THE MANIAC—DATE-TREES AT ELCHE—ALICANT—MOORISH PHYSICIANS—VALENCIA—CATHEDRAL—RELICS—TILE MANUFACTORY—RICE-GROUNDS—MANUSCRIPTS AT THE CONVENT OF LOS REYES.

THE regret of the English travellers for leaving Grenada, was heightened by the melancholy prophecies of their friends, concerning the misery of their accommodation on the road, and the certainty of being robbed more than once. If Mr. Delville had been alone, he would have disregarded these prognostications of evil; but having ladies with him, he thought it best to err on the safest side. He procured an escort of four soldiers at the cost of thirty-five dollars; and was assured, that under that protection he might travel all over Spain.

When they had given their last farewell glance to the Alhambra and Grenada, their attention was

directed to Murcia, and the character of its inhabitants. "They are remarkable," said Mr. Delville, "for their idleness and indifference. The Cardinal Bellegu, who was long their bishop, observed of them in a jest, that the sky and the soil of their country was good; but that which was between them, (meaning the inhabitants,) was detestable. This prelate, however, during the celebrated war of succession in Spain, being devoted to Philip V., put himself at the head of the Murcians, defeated the troops of the archduke Charles, and afterwards took Carthagena; so that he had no reason to complain of their courage. In the time of the Moors, Carthagena being attacked by the celebrated Abdellaris, the women dressed themselves like men, and rivalled the garrison in valour."

"These, Frank," said his mother, "these are ladies after your own heart."

Frank, however, was not quite sure:—he had some indistinct idea, that arms were not suited to a woman's hand: but his attention was so occupied by the soldiers, that he had not time to decide the point.

"What makes the Murcians so indolent, papa?" said Ellen.

"I do not know; unless it be the bad habits in which they are brought up. Murillo says, that the children are so spoiled by their mothers, that

they cannot endure to lose sight of the belfry of their native town. From this cause it is, that so few Murcians are seen in the universities, fewer still in the army, and yet more rarely in the marine. They only wish for idleness and plenty to eat. Their inactive disposition is not confined to the gentry; the artisans and labourers partake of it. They eat often, because they live upon vegetables highly seasoned with pepper. They have a particular dislike to beef, and think those who like it are Jews; in consequence of which prejudice it is not publicly sold in the market-place, but brought privately from a distance of three leagues. The costume of the villagers you will find highly picturesque."

The first town of any consequence at which they arrived was Bazu. They came upon it by surprise, after travelling over a plain swept by all the cold winds from the snowy mountains by which it was bounded, when it suddenly terminated in an abrupt descent, and the warm, sheltered valley in which the village stands received them.

The inn was unusually good; and they found themselves repaid for all they had suffered over the almost frozen plain. Early as they set off the next morning, they found time to go and see the nine iron columns in the market-place, made from the nine cannon with which Ferdinand

and Isabella took the town, after a desperate resistance. Upon one of them is the following inscription :—" It was with these cannon that Ferdinand and Isabella took the city from the Moors, in 1489, on the festival of St. Barbara, the patroness of the city."

As they passed Culla de Bazu, Frank remarked that there were more crosses, indicating murder, there than they had seen elsewhere.

" It is a curious circumstance," said Mr. Delville, " that these atrocities are more common near small villages than in more solitary places."

Lorca was their resting-place for the next night. It is picturesquely situated under the brow of a mountain; and an old castle surmounting the beetling cliff gives interest to the view.

It was market-day, and they saw a costume quite new to them. The women wore large white woollen shawls, thrown over their heads like a mantilla; and the men had white drawers, only reaching two inches below the knee, no stockings, and rope sandals. The Spanish hat was replaced by a black montera cap, fitting close to the head, with a small rim turned up all round. Others, from the cold Sierra, wore striped blankets, not unlike the Scottish tartans.

The market was full of a variety of articles; and Mrs. Delville delighted Ellen by buying a pair of rope-sandals, and a specimen of all that was new

or unusual; though Mr. Delville protested he did not know where they would find room to stow them away.

On the door of the Cathedral was a most liberal supply of indulgences from the archbishop of Carthage, and within the church were the names and banners of the Jews burned by the Inquisition.

“These registers of inhumanity and unchristian conduct,” said Mr. Delville, “placed here in the house of God, have an almost appalling effect on the mind; it is like placing an unrepented sin perpetually before the eyes of the Almighty.”

When they were again seated in the carriage, Ellen asked her father, what inundation it was about which he was questioning the landlord.

“It was one that happened here. It was a most severe calamity; and its effects are not yet, and probably never will be, overcome. Lorca enjoyed the greatest prosperity; but it is now arid and barren, from the destruction of an immense reservoir, which collected and distributed all the water for irrigation. Before this reservoir was constructed, every proprietor disposed at his pleasure of the water scattered over the country. A man named Lenourda submitted to the government a plan for regulating the irrigations; and this plan was rendered more than usually acceptable, from its offering to the crown an evident advantage. The reservoir was built, and an immense body of

water was collected in it. Unhappily, though the walls were very solid, they were not able to resist the accumulation of so large a mass of water. On the 30th of April, 1802, a weak part of the lining gave way, and the water rushed out on every side with such impetuosity that it swallowed up men, animals, trees, houses, and the public buildings; even huge rocks were swept away by it. The town of Lorca was almost wholly destroyed; and its ravages extended to a distance of six leagues Murcia itself felt its influence, though twelve leagues off.

“Six thousand persons, and twenty-four thousand cattle lost their lives by this fatal disaster. The unfortunate engineer was its first victim, he did not usually reside at Lorca, but he happened to be there that day, and hastened to the spot, hoping to provide some remedy for the disaster:— he was swept away in the torrent. The inhabitants looked upon his death as an act of divine justice.”

At the close of the fourth day from leaving Grenada they found themselves in Murcia. Within a league of that city, they entered the highly cultivated valley in which it is situated. It was a garden in which perpetual spring seemed to flourish, all was fragrant, green, and blooming. On a nearer approach, the road was enlivened by the country people, in their short white trowsers, crim-

son sash, and montera caps, while the carts and waggons, mules and horsemen increased at every step. It offered, in the life and movement it displayed, a striking contrast to the lonely deserted road that leads to Madrid. The streets themselves were clean, and the populace seemed less ragged, and wretched in their appearance. The convent-gardens skirt the streets, as they do in Seville, and the walls are overtopped by the heavily laden orange-trees, and the slender palm. As they drove to their inn a friar walked a little way before them, holding in his hand an image of St. Anthony, which the children were eagerly pressing forward to kiss.

The Cathedral, with its fine marbles and Gothic chapels, seemed hardly worthy their attention, after having seen that of Seville; but they mounted by an easy ascent, without stairs, to the tower, which is the principal boast of the Cathedral, being ten feet higher than that of Seville. The vale of Murcia was seen to great advantage from this spot. It is sixteen miles long and eight wide, and offers a rich variety of green, and trees of every hue and every form. Towards the east, where the vale narrows, the spires of Oripuela were distinctly visible, at the distance of ten miles; such was the purity of the atmosphere and the cloudless sky. The mountains that surround the the vale of Murcia are not unproductive. They

produce an abundance of vines and olives; but the Murcians are not celebrated for taking the utmost advantage of the gifts of nature. The oranges are an article of considerable commerce. The merchants who are engaged in it, mounted on donkeys, form sometimes small caravans. As they are not without fear of robbery, they sport a gun on their saddle, and ride with a martial air, wrapped in their blue cloaks. The donkeys, natives of Andalusia, are of a large size, and an infinitely superior animal to those seen in England.

“Papa,” said Ellen, “are we not to see the silk-manufactory?”

“It is so inferior to that of Valencia, my dear, which we shall visit shortly, that it seems a waste of time. It used to employ sixteen thousand persons; now they hardly require four hundred. Here it is all hand-labour: at Valencia machinery is used, so that Murcia has no chance of competition. The land round Murcia, as well as Grenada, has been infinitely less profitable to the agriculturalists, since the loss of the Spanish colonies has created a necessity for the imposition of new burdens upon the soil. In the vale of Murcia two crops are produced yearly: wheat and lentils, wheat and maize, or wheat and beans; and it returns about five per cent.

At Murcia they dismissed their escort of soldiers, satisfied that the fears of their friends at

Grenada, rather than the necessities of the road, had made them necessary; though they afterwards learned that the dispersion of a noted band in Andalusia, and their escape into Portugal, had been the chief cause of their safety.

The diligence goes in ten hours from Murcia to Alicant; and Mr. Delville thought it best to take advantage of it. They set off at an early hour, on a November morning. Nothing could surpass the beauty of the road; and the date-trees that border it, are said to be finer than those of Africa.

“Who could believe,” said Mrs. Delville, “that this is November, if we were only to look at the sky and the foliage?”

“How differently,” said Ellen, “the poor folks are feeling in Yorkshire: what red noses, blue lips, and frozen fingers they are now heirs to! O, I feel cold when I think of it!”

“Remember,” said Edward, “the vigour of mind and body they enjoy; the clear, decisive purpose, and the power and the will to carry it into execution; and look and envy, if you can, these pale-faced, nerveless creatures.”

“In the daily concerns of life,” said his father, “your observation may have some truth; but you must remember, that the nature of our climate requires great exertions for a man to live, and too often he lives but miserably with them all. Here

the common necessaries of life are so reasonable, that he has no motive for labour ; and I confess it is pleasant to me to see the people able to live and enjoy themselves, without that perpetual toil that gain brings with it in England."

" But, father," said Edward, " I thought you liked energy of character."

" I do, when it is necessary ; but I am not an enemy to the innocent enjoyments of life. The *dolce far niente* * of the Italians is grateful at times to us all : and I think we should all be happier in England, if we sacrificed less to show, and were content with humbler modes of existence. I am persuaded that both mind and body are frequently worn out by the anxious accumulation of riches, which, when acquired, are often valueless to the possessor ; the power of enjoying them, the easy day, the tranquil night, have all been hazarded, and lost in their acquisition : and Edward," continued Mr. Delville, " though the Spaniards have not those daily objects of attention and interest that we have, this is rather their misfortune than their fault. On great and important occasions, no nation under the sun have shown themselves more devoted to the service of their country. England has been free from all attacks on her native soil. What effect repeated

* Literally, " the sweet do-nothing."

invasions might have upon us; how far we should steadily continue to sow that which an enemy might reap; or remain firm to the good and just cause, where advantage might be gained by siding with the enemy, are questions that events have given us no opportunity of answering. But he who puts on his armour, must not boast himself as he who takes it off."

They stopped at Orihuela to breakfast. They walked into the church, which they found full of persons at their devotions. There was not a saint who had not a competent number of worshippers; and some were beating their breasts, with an intensity of anguish that was truly astonishing. Frank expressed himself desirous of acting the part of flagellant to some of them; and looked so merry, as he examined the waxen arms, legs, and bodies, hung up before a popular saint, that Mr. Delville was glad to get him out of the church before he was noticed.

"Orihuela," he said, "has long been famous for its superior bigotry, where all are bigots. I remember a very witty story told of the duke de Villa Mediana. It happened in this town. He was going out of the church of our lady of Atocha; a priest held towards him a silver plate, beseeching him to give something for the poor souls in purgatory. He gave a gold piece of some value. 'Ah! sir,' said the friar, 'there is one soul saved

already.' The duke gave another piece of the same value. 'Senhor,' said the delighted friar, 'you have saved a second soul.' The duke continued to give, in this manner, six gold pieces, to each of which his reverence made the same answer. 'But are you very sure?' said the duke. 'Yes, my lord, I can confidently assure you that they are all six now in paradise.' 'If that be the case,' said the witty nobleman, 'return me my gold pieces: they are no longer necessary; for if they are in paradise there is no fear of their returning to purgatory.'

The mirth that this story occasioned was only checked by a summons to the diligence. Their road lay through the Huerto of Orihuela; and it surpassed even the vale of Murcia in beauty.

"How lovely are those clumps of palm-trees!" said Mrs. Delville: "so much finer to the eye than even the solitary ones we admired yesterday."

"Yes," said Mr. Delville, "these scenes are lovely; but they bear the traces of destruction. We are about to pass to La Granja, which was so severely visited by an earthquake, in 1829."

"O, how I wish we could stop!" said Edward.

"I fear that is impossible," said his father.

The conductor, however, kindly consented to drive very slowly. The town was situated amongst groves of oranges and palms; but showed, by its ruined dwellings and houseless population, how fatal the

awful visitation had been. They only saw one upper story standing, and far the greater number of houses had been overthrown. The tower of the church had not been thrown down, but there was a wide rent from the top to the bottom. Upon the sides of some of the ancient walls the mournful inhabitants had built low houses of one story.

“I remember,” said Mr. Delville, “when I was at Toledo, and visited the mad-house there, I saw a middle-aged woman seated upon the ledge of the window, her eyes intently fixed upon the sky. She was a native of a village on the coast of Murcia, which was destroyed by this earthquake. She had been at a neighbouring hamlet, selling dates; and on her return to the village, she had seen her home, and with it her children, swallowed up. She had never spoken from that hour. All day long she sat on the window-ledge of the hall, gazing upon the sky; and every day it required the strength of two persons to take her from her window to dinner. She was perfectly harmless.”

After this story, they passed on, in mournful silence, through the villages which had suffered so overwhelming a calamity, till they arrived at Elche, which was called the City of Dates. It lies amidst a forest of palms. They are scattered amongst the houses, and seem to have been planted wherever there was a spot of land unoccupied. The colour of the fruit varied: some was green,

some yellow, some deep orange, and some brown. The taste of the yellow, bordering upon brown, they found the most agreeable. After passing through a wild country, they reached Alicant late; discovering first the sea, and then the castle on its high rock. They were conducted to an inn that overlooked the sea, against the walls of which the sea beat vehemently; and before them was the harbour, a busy and animated scene. The gardens of Alicant lie along the sea-shore, surrounded on three sides by lofty mountains. The houses are magnificent, and the rooms and staircases paved with the Valencia tile; the ground white, and a flower in the middle, executed with great delicacy and truth.

There was not much in Alicant to interest the young people. There is a manufactory of cloth; but the only interest attached to it is, that it is wholly a charitable institution, in which none but orphans are admitted, or children whose parents are unable to provide them with any occupation.

“And, papa,” said Frank, on hearing this mentioned, “there is a military school here, for the children of poor soldiers, who are taught to read and write, and cipher.”

“How did you find that out, Frank?”

“Why, I met one of them this morning at the harbour, and I showed him I knew how to bear arms as well as he did.”

“ I dare say you did,” said Mr. Delville, laughing. “ I hope you will not get into any scrape with that ready tongue of yours.”

“ O, papa!” said Ellen, “ there is the diligence. No hope for us now : we cannot see the castle.”

“ We should not have been allowed, I think, whatever might have been our leisure ; and therefore take a last look of the harbour, and let us be off. Frank, are we going to have a companion ?”

“ Yes, papa ; a wine-merchant of Alicant ; an Englishman. I have spoken to him.”

Mr. Mordaunt proved an agreeable addition to their party. He was going to Valencia, and knew well the country through which they were to pass. When they entered upon the Sierra, between Villena and Fuente de Higuera, he mentioned to them a singular circumstance. “ An English gentleman,” he said, “ was travelling through a narrow valley, in this Sierra, covered with aromatic shrubs, when his attention was excited by two figures on the opposite ridge of the hill. They were evidently employed in collecting something, he could not see, into large baskets. On enquiry they proved to be Moorish physicians, who came, every spring and autumn, from the coasts of Africa, to gather medicinal herbs.”

“ This, I should think,” said Mr. Delville, “ must be the only remaining tie between Spain and Barbary.”

“ It is ; and the deadly enmity with which they

are still regarded in this country, is indescribable."

The diligence stopped no where; and they were compelled to pass the beautiful Moorish ruins at San Felipe with only an earnest passing gaze. They are built on the summit of a hill, behind the city. The mountain is one hundred and twenty feet high; and they rose in fine relief, against the cloudless sky, in an irregular line of not less than two miles in extent.

"O, if we could but stop!" said Ellen.

But this was impossible. On they went, at the same regular and excellent pace of seven miles an hour, till at length they descended the mountain; and saw Valencia three leagues before they reached it. Its extensive buildings, massive walls, and numerous spires were very imposing.

"You will find," said their fellow-traveller, "that Valencia is a hot-bed of superstition. You will see some curious relics at the Cathedral." His information was correct. Their first visit was paid to that ancient edifice. They were shown, with much ceremony, an arm of St. Luke, the entire body of one of the innocents, and a picture of the Virgin, painted by St. Luke. The astonishment of the English travellers, at the unblushing effrontery with which these things were shown and told, imparted an air of gravity to their features which they would not otherwise have had.

"You have," said Mr. Delville to the sacristan

after a pause, "a relic more precious than any thing I see here."

"We have, senhor; the cup, the real cup out of which our Saviour drank at the last supper."

"May we see it?"

"No, senhor; it is too precious to be shown to heretics."

"You are quite right," said Mr. Delville. "This," he said, as they walked quietly away, "is what I call prudence. The sacristan is a very judicious man."

"I wonder they showed us any thing," said Edward.

"It is not at all improbable," said his father, "that the cup may be French or English; and it would have been awkward, had we pointed out the stamp. Cunning, my son, has its own left-handed wisdom."

Among the curiosities of Valencia is her beautiful manufactory of tiles. There was a large assortment very beautifully executed; the best about a shilling a square. A good workman gains in their manufacture a dollar a day.

"Surely," said Mrs. Delville, "they must be dearer than a carpet."

"Very much dearer," said Mr. Delville. "They are nine inches square: at one shilling a piece, only calculate how many they would take for a large room!"

"And," said Ellen, "the comfort of a carpet,

even of plain Kidderminster, outweighs their beauty."

"Not in this climate, Ellen. A carpet would be an insupportable nuisance, and not a comfort. Think of the fleas," said Frank.

"And the heat," said his mother.

"I was thinking of the look, I believe," said Ellen.

"Ah, true woman!" exclaimed her elder brother, with a good-natured smile.

"And I was thinking," said Frank, "I should like the tiles; for if any thing was thrown down, a flannel would set it all to rights; but a carpet is spoiled; and if one does it, it is never forgotten."

"But they break, Frank," said his mother; "and a fracture is as durable as a stain."

"Oh! if they break, I give them up entirely; and range myself firmly on the side of the carpet faction."

"We will take a few home," said Mrs. Delville, "for the old china-pantry; it will suit very well with the rest of the porcelain."

Mr. Delville hurried them in their purchase, for he was anxious to see the rice-grounds, a species of agriculture wholly new to them. It is confined to the low valleys which are almost always wet. The rice is always under water, and it is only drained to reap it. At the rice-harvest, the labourers are almost up to their knees in water. The sheaves

are cut, and laid on a kind of low sledge. The outward, tough skin is taken off in the mill. The Chinese effect this operation in a mortar, worked by a lever; but the Valencia method is preferred.

"It is a pity," said Mr. Delville, "that the cultivation of rice is so unhealthy, for the crop is always certain; and, besides yielding eight per cent, it is not long on the ground. It is sown in June and reaped in September."

"Is it so very unhealthy, papa? and why?"

"Very, Ellen. On account of the stagnant water, malignant fevers frequently prevail in consequence."

"The Valencians," said Mrs. Delville, as they walked home, "partake of the beauty of their climate. Their healthy countenances, and fine height distinguish them from the rest of Spain."

"They are gay and frank in their character," said Mr. Delville; "and during the fine summer evenings, the sound of music and the song is heard through all their border. Ellen, you walk as if you were tired."

"I am a little, very little."

"Well, you shall have time to rest; we are going to leave you for an hour or two, on a visit to the convent of Los Reyes."

"Ah!" said Edward, "that is a pleasure forbidden to you ladies."

“I do not think we lose much,” said his sister; “the friars are dirty people, and the nuns do not admit you.”

“It is six of one, and half-a-dozen of the other,” said Frank, as he ran after his father.

The convento de Los Reyes is about a quarter of a league from Valencia, and one of the finest in Spain. They readily obtained leave to see the interior. They saw nothing, however, that they had not often seen before, till they were shown the manuscripts. A fair copy of Livy excited much admiration; and the rich colours of the illuminated missals; the bright violet, red, and gold, as fresh and pure as when laid on, delighted them; but the gem of the collection was the Romance of the Rose, written as early as the ninth century. The friar displayed this treasure with enthusiasm.

“This,” said Mr. Delville, “as he took it in his hands, “this carries us back to past times. How often has this volume amused the dull hours of the feudal barons, and charmed the knights, and the fair ladies of that martial age; when books were not, and the wandering troubadour was welcomed with the feast and the rich wine-cup!”

The monk entered into these speculations; and their conversation insensibly wandered to Spain, to Valencia and its silk-trade. “It has been injured,” said the monk, “not only by France, but by the loss of her colonies. The mul-

berry-trees, cut down by the French, were just beginning to grow again, when this outlet for their manufactures being shut up, their trade has languished ever since; and their chief exports are now confined to raw silk. The manufactory is not now worth seeing."

They passed three hours in agreeable conversation; and when they returned to Valencia the monk accompanied them.

CHAPTER XX.

BARCELONA—EXECUTION—STOLEN IMAGE—CHARACTER
OF THE SPANIARDS.

IT was at Barcelona that Mr. Delville expected his affairs would detain him some months: they reached it from Valencia after an easy journey of two days. Its principal street, the Rambla, presents a gay and animated scene, from the gaudy dress of the peasants. Their red caps, hanging half way down their backs, their crimson sashes, and lively-coloured plaids, give to an English eye a peculiarly foreign air to the principal street of Barcelona.

“This city and the province of Catalonia,” said Mr. Delville, “is under the government of the Conde d’Espagna, a man whose character is firm and energetic in the highest degree. The following anecdote will illustrate his character better than any description could: ‘deeds not words’ is his motto. In 1827 a plot in favour of Don Carlos, brother to king Ferdinand, was formed in Catalonia. The Conde made himself master of all its details, and then represented to the king the absolute

necessity of his appearing on the spot with as little delay as possible. On his arrival, by the advice of the Conde, he called a convocation of bishops, ostensibly to consult concerning the state of the province. The Conde well knew the connexion of the bishops with the plot, and was in possession of documents that proved their guilt. He was delegated by the king to preside at this convocation; and all the bishops being assembled, he addressed them in the following manner. ‘My lord bishop,’ said he, taking a paper from his pocket, and unfolding it, ‘you know this;’ and turning to another, and showing another paper, ‘and you, my lord, know this; and so on, producing documents that connected every one present with the conspiracy. ‘And now, gentlemen,’ said he, addressing the assembly, ‘you perceive that I hold in my hands proofs of your treason. You, who have fomented this rebellion, can put it down: and I have instructions from his majesty, if the rebellion be not put down within forty-eight hours, (I am sorry for the alternative, gentlemen, but my instructions are peremptory,) to hang every one of you; and it will be a consolation to you to know that the interests of the church will not suffer; for the king has already named successors to the vacant sees.’

“This reasoning was decisive: the bishops knew the man they had to deal with; and within forty-

eight hours the insurrection was at an end. His conduct on this occasion justified the declaration of Ferdinand, that he wished he had a Conde d'Espagna in every province. He is guilty of much violent and arbitrary conduct; but he has a most difficult people to govern; and he only could have kept this province tranquil through all the anarchy and recent bloodshed in France. During the celebrated war of succession in Spain, when the archduke Charles and Philip V. disputed the possession of the Spanish crown, Barcelona sided with the archduke; and sustained a siege under Vendome, with a constancy and heroism almost unparalleled. After a breach had been made in the town, and fever and famine had taken those whom the sword had spared, the miserable remnant disputed its possession with the victors for sixty days: and when it was at length obliged to capitulate, such was their hatred of Philip, that most of the citizens quitted the town."

"How happy we are," said Mrs. Delville, "to be removed from all the horrors of civil war, and to live under equal and humane laws, impartially administered!"

The day after their arrival an execution took place. A felon was condemned to die for having murdered his fellow-prisoner. Three o'clock was the hour appointed; and all that morning, as well as a great part of the day before, there was an in-

cessant noise of little bells, carried by boys in red cloaks, with a box in one hand, collecting alms to purchase masses for the repose of his soul. Mr. Delville and Edward went to see the execution, but Frank shrunk from it with horror. In Barcelona there is a very singular society, called the Benevolent Society, which undertakes to soften the terrors of death, by giving to the condemned the three last days of his life, every thing he desires; the choicest food and wine, music, or any other recreation compatible with his safety.

“What a singular, what a heathenish idea!” said Mrs. Delville: “what is it but putting into practice the ironical advice, ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?’”

“It is, indeed,” said Mr. Delville, “totally at variance with our ideas of consolation at such a time; but they, who in life are not led to trust in their Creator, are naturally unable to seek him even in the gates of death. In man they trust; and out of a bitter fountain how can sweet waters flow?”

“Only conceive,” said Frank, “people addressing their prayers to such an image as this! — taking one out of his pocket.

“Where did you get it, Frank?”

“From the corner of a street: I want to take it home with me to England.”

“Oh, my dear Frank,” said his mother, “what have you done!”

“Look, mamma! it is an old battered, bruised thing!”

“True, Frank,” said his father; “but if you had been seen to take it, your life would have been the forfeit. When did you take it?”

“Last night, as we came home from the citadel.”

“The Catalonians are very superstitious, and nothing but the life of the offender could blot out such an affront as you have put upon them, had they known it. There is hardly any imposition too absurd for their belief. The Virgin Mary and our Saviour have sometimes been painted black. Their favourite saint, the virgin of St. Pilar, was of that colour; but hearing that their political enemies, called negroes, paid their adoration to her also, the church resolved to show that she refused their homage. She was white-washed; and it was one morning publicly given out, that the virgin of St. Pilar, had suddenly changed from black to white: and the good Catholics were invited to see the miracle with their own eyes. They went by thousands. Judge, my dear Frank, what they would say to those who stole their strange gods! There is now, in the citadel of Barcelona, a Catalonian peasant, condemned to ten years' imprisonment, for having said that the image of some virgin, whose name I forget, was made of wood, after the friars had asserted it was silver. If you are not more cautious, you will fill me with perpetual alarms.’

“Papa,” said Ellen, “the Spaniards appear to me to differ very much from each other; can you explain to me why?”

“I think I can, if you will have patience to hear me. There are in the inhabitants of their chief provinces, such striking differences of climate, manners, language, habits, character, and even exterior form, as to leave no identity between a Gallican and a Catalonian, an Andalusian and a Castilian. To describe them accurately they must not be taken as a whole, but divided into provinces, each influenced by the early nations who conquered them, and by their peculiar climate, laws, and productions. Yet as a nation, they have still some features in common. In many respects, the provinces have the same form of government. An absolute monarch is still the centre of all their affections. In literature they have the same taste, and copy the same models; and in many other particulars evince a common sympathy. When Spain discovered and conquered the new world, not contented to reign over a great part of Europe, she agitated and convulsed the other half, either by intrigues, or military enterprises. At this period the Spaniards were intoxicated with that national pride which appeared in their air, their language, and their persons. This splendour has decayed; but the air of grandeur, which in prosperity

was justified by circumstances, has survived their good fortune. The haughtiness of a Spaniard has become a proverb, and accounts for the brevity which disdains all detail. Pride is usually concise. It is related by a French traveller, that having met a shepherd with his flock, on entering Castille, and being curious to hear some particulars of the Spanish wool, he asked him a hundred questions. What sort of food was given them; whether he was on a journey; from whence he came; where he was going; when he began his travels; when he would return. The shepherd listened coldly to these enquiries, and replied: 'Here they breed, here they feed, and here they die.' He then pursued his journey.

"The gravity of the Spaniard frequently conceals a good and benevolent mind. They do not anticipate, but wait for you. Their heart commonly opens with their features; and they exhibit an unaffected frankness and good-nature, which announces and inspires confidence. They are not proud to their inferiors; but they have frequently shown an unbending spirit of independence, and even haughtiness, in their intercourse with their sovereign. Ferdinand VI., when prince of Asturias, was frequently in company with a nobleman of high birth, who was remarkably short in stature. The prince was always joking him on the

subject, and applying to him the appellation of little. He one day coolly replied, ' My lord, in my own house, I am called great.'

"The Spaniards possess considerable natural abilities, yet no persons can be more deliberate than they are in all their determinations. Where other tions fail, from being too precipitate, the Spaniard loses his object by his slowness. This is the more extraordinary, as their lively imaginations would seem likely to be irritated by delay. The Spaniard, however, though naturally cold and deliberate, when nothing extraordinary moves him, is inflamed to enthusiasm, whenever the ruling passions of his nature are roused; and a nation, distinguished by its gravity and slowness, becomes violent and ungovernable, on occasions that interest their national feeling. The most dangerous animals are not those which are in the most continued agitation. The character of the nation, at the present day, is less strongly marked than it has ever been. It has no favourite hope to animate its exertions. It is surrounded by imbecility and neglect. They can scarcely be worse off, nor will they for a long time be better. Till the Roman Catholic superstition weakens its hold on the minds of the lower class, and the higher acquire sound principle and knowledge, no great change for the better, can take place among the Spaniards.

They may be compared, at present, to an insect in a chrysalis state, which contains all the rudiments of a superior existence; but the development of which depends on favouring influences, that may be vouchsafed or withheld."

THE END.







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