Borrow George

The Bible in Spain. Volume 2 of 2

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Borrow G.

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Содержание

George Borrow
The Bible in Spain, Vol. 2 [of 2] / Or, the Journeys, Adventures, and Imprisonments of an Englishman in an Attempt to Circulate the Scriptures in the Peninsula

CHAPTER XXIX

Arrival at Padron – Projected Enterprise – The Alquilador – Breach of Promise – An Odd Companion – A Plain Story – Rugged Paths – The Desertion – The Pony – A Dialogue – Unpleasant Situation – The Estadea – Benighted – The Hut – The Traveller's Pillow.

I arrived at Padron late in the evening, on my return from Pontevedra and Vigo. It was my intention at this place to send my servant and horses forward to Santiago, and to hire a guide to Cape Finisterre. It would be difficult to assign any plausible reason for the ardent desire which I entertained to visit this place; but I remembered that last year I had escaped almost by a miracle from shipwreck and death on the rocky sides of this extreme point of the Old World, and I thought that to convey the Gospel to a place so wild and remote might perhaps be considered an acceptable pilgrimage in the eyes of my Maker. True it is that but one copy remained of those which I had brought with me on this last journey; but this reflection, far from discouraging me in my projected enterprise, produced the contrary effect, as I called to mind that, ever since the Lord revealed Himself to man, it has seemed good to Him to accomplish the greatest ends by apparently the most insufficient means; and I reflected that this one copy might serve as an instrument for more good than the four thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine copies of the edition of Madrid.

I was aware that my own horses were quite incompetent to reach Finisterre, as the roads or paths lie through stony ravines, and over rough and shaggy hills, and therefore determined to leave them behind with Antonio, whom I was unwilling to expose to the fatigues of such a journey. I lost no time in sending for an *alquilador*, or person who lets out horses, and informing him of my intention. He said he had an excellent mountain pony at my disposal, and that he himself would accompany me; but at the same time observed, that it was a terrible journey for man and horse, and that he expected to be paid accordingly. I consented to give him what he demanded, but on the express condition that he would perform his promise of attending me himself, as I was unwilling to trust myself four or five days amongst the hills with any low fellow of the town whom he might select, and who it was very possible might play me some evil turn. He replied by the term invariably used by the Spaniards when they see doubt or distrust exhibited: "*No tenga usted cuidado*, [1] I will go myself." Having thus arranged the matter perfectly satisfactorily, as I thought, I partook of a slight supper, and shortly afterwards retired to repose.

I had requested the *alquilador* to call me the next morning at three o'clock; he, however, did not make his appearance till five, having, I suppose, overslept himself, which was indeed my own case. I arose in a hurry, dressed, put a few things in a bag, not forgetting the Testament, which I had resolved to present to the inhabitants of Finisterre. I then sallied forth and saw my friend the *alquilador*, who

[1] See note, vol. i. p. 120.

was holding by the bridle the pony or *jaca* which was destined to carry me in my expedition. It was a beautiful little animal, apparently strong and full of life, without one single white hair in its whole body, which was black as the plumage of the crow.

Behind it stood a strange-looking figure of the biped species, to whom, however, at the moment, I paid little attention, but of whom I shall have plenty to say in the sequel.

Having asked the horse-lender whether he was ready to proceed, and being answered in the affirmative, I bade adieu to Antonio, and putting the pony in motion, we hastened out of the town, taking at first the road which leads towards Santiago. Observing that the figure which I have previously alluded to was following close at our heels, I asked the *alquilador* who it was, and the reason of its following us; to which he replied that it was a servant of his, who would proceed a little way with us and then return. So on we went at a rapid rate, till we were within a quarter of a mile of the Convent of the Esclavitud, a little beyond which he had informed me that we should have to turn off from the high-road; but here he suddenly stopped short, and in a moment we were all at a standstill. I questioned the guide as to the reason of this, but received no answer. The fellow's eyes were directed to the ground, and he seemed to be counting with the most intense solicitude the prints of the hoofs of the oxen, mules, and horses in the dust of the road. I repeated my demand in a louder voice; when, after a considerable pause, he somewhat elevated his eyes, without, however, looking me in the face, and said that he believed that I entertained the idea that he himself was to guide me to Finisterre, which if I did, he was very sorry for, the thing being quite impossible, as he was perfectly ignorant of the way, and, moreover, incapable of performing such a journey over rough and difficult ground, as he was no longer the man he had been; and, over and above all that, he was engaged that day to accompany a gentleman to Pontevedra, who was at that moment expecting him. "But," continued he, "as I am always desirous of behaving like a *caballero* to everybody, I have taken measures to prevent your being disappointed. This person," pointing to the figure, "I have engaged to accompany you. He is a most trustworthy person, and is well acquainted with the route to Finisterre, having been thither several times with this very *jaca* on which you are mounted. He will, besides, be an agreeable companion to you on the way, as he speaks French and English very well, and has been all over the world." The fellow ceased speaking at last; and I was so struck with his craft, impudence, and villany, that some time elapsed before I could find an answer. I then reproached him in the bitterest terms for his breach of promise, and said that I was much tempted to return to the town instantly, complain of him to the *alcalde*, and have him punished at any expense. To which he replied, "Sir Cavalier, by so doing you will be nothing nearer Finisterre, to which you seem so eager to get. Take my advice, spur on the *jaca*, for you see it is getting late, and it is twelve long leagues from hence to Corcuvion, where you must pass the night; and from thence to Finisterre is no trifle. As for the man, *no tenga usted cuidado*, he is the best guide in Galicia, speaks English and French, and will bear you pleasant company."

By this time I had reflected that by returning to Padron I should indeed be only wasting time, and that by endeavouring to have the fellow punished no benefit would accrue to me; moreover, as he seemed to be a scoundrel in every sense of the word, I might as well proceed in the company of any person as in his. I therefore signified my intention of proceeding, and told him to go back, in the Lord's name, and repent of his sins. But having gained one point, he thought he had best attempt another; so placing himself about a yard before the *jaca*, he said that the price which I had agreed to pay him for the loan of his horse (which, by-the-by, was the full sum he had demanded) was by no means sufficient, and that before I proceeded I must promise him two dollars more, adding that he was either drunk or mad when he had made such a bargain. I was now thoroughly incensed, and without a moment's reflection, spurred the *jaca*, which flung him down in the dust, and passed over him. Looking back at the distance of a hundred yards, I saw him standing in the same place, his hat on the ground, gazing after us, and crossing himself most devoutly. His servant, or whatever he was, far from offering any assistance to his principal, no sooner saw the *jaca* in motion than he ran on by its

side, without word or comment, further than striking himself lustily on the thigh with his right palm. We soon passed the Esclavitud, and presently afterwards turned to the left into a stony broken path leading to fields of maize. We passed by several farm-houses, and at last arrived at a dingle, the sides of which were plentifully overgrown with dwarf oaks, and which slanted down to a small dark river shaded with trees, which we crossed by a rude bridge. By this time I had had sufficient time to scan my odd companion from head to foot. His utmost height, had he made the most of himself, might perhaps have amounted to five feet one inch; but he seemed somewhat inclined to stoop. Nature had gifted him with an immense head, and placed it clean upon his shoulders, for amongst the items of his composition it did not appear that a neck had been included. Arms long and brawny swung at his sides, and the whole of his frame was as strong built and powerful as a wrestler's; his body was supported by a pair of short but very nimble legs. His face was very long, and would have borne some slight resemblance to a human countenance had the nose been more visible, for its place seemed to have been entirely occupied by a wry mouth and large staring eyes. His dress consisted of three articles: an old and tattered hat of the Portuguese kind, broad at the crown and narrow at the eaves, something which appeared to be a shirt, and dirty canvas trousers. Willing to enter into conversation with him, and remembering that the *alquilador* had informed me that he spoke languages, I asked him, in English, if he had always acted in the capacity of guide. Whereupon he turned his eyes with a singular expression upon my face, gave a loud laugh, a long leap, and clapped his hands thrice above his head. Perceiving that he did not understand me, I repeated my demand in French, and was again answered by the laugh, leap, and clapping. At last he said, in broken Spanish, "Master mine, speak Spanish in God's name, and I can understand you, and still better if you speak Gallegan, but I can promise no more. I heard what the *alquilador* told you, but he is the greatest *embustero* in the whole land, and deceived you then as he did when he promised to accompany you. I serve him for my sins; but it was an evil hour when I left the deep sea and turned guide." He then informed me that he was a native of Padron, and a mariner by profession, having spent the greater part of his life in the Spanish navy, in which service he had visited Cuba and many parts of the Spanish Americas, adding, "when my master told you that I should bear you pleasant company by the way, it was the only word of truth that has come from his mouth for a month; and long before you reach Finisterre you will have rejoiced that the servant, and not the master, went with you: he is dull and heavy, but I am what you see." He then gave two or three first-rate somersaults, again laughed loudly, and clapped his hands. "You would scarcely think," he continued, "that I drove that little pony yesterday, heavily laden, all the way from Corunna. We arrived at Padron at two o'clock this morning; but we are nevertheless both willing and able to undertake a fresh journey. *No tenga usted cuidado*, as my master said, no one ever complains of that pony or of me." In this kind of discourse we proceeded a considerable way through a very picturesque country, until we reached a beautiful village at the skirt of a mountain. "This village," said my guide, "is called Los Angeles, because its church was built long since by the angels; they placed a beam of gold beneath it, which they brought down from heaven, and which was once a rafter of God's own house. It runs all the way under the ground from hence to the cathedral of Compostella."

Passing through the village, which he likewise informed me possessed baths, and was much visited by the people of Santiago, we shaped our course to the north-west, and by so doing doubled a mountain which rose majestically over our heads, its top crowned with bare and broken rocks, whilst on our right, on the other side of a spacious valley, was a high range connected with the mountains to the northward of Saint James. On the summit of this range rose high embattled towers, which my guide informed me were those of Altamira, an ancient and ruined castle, formerly the principal residence in this province of the counts of that name. Turning now due west, we were soon at the bottom of a steep and rugged pass, which led to more elevated regions. The ascent cost us nearly half an hour, and the difficulties of the ground were such that I more than once congratulated myself on

having left my own horses behind, and being mounted on the gallant little pony, which, accustomed to such paths, scrambled bravely forward, and eventually brought us in safety to the top of the ascent.

Here we entered a Gallegan cabin, or *choza*, for the purpose of refreshing the animal and ourselves. The quadruped ate some maize, whilst we two bipeds regaled ourselves on some *broa* and *aguardiente*, which a woman whom we found in the hut placed before us. I walked out for a few minutes to observe the aspect of the country, and on my return found my guide fast asleep on the bench where I had left him. He sat bolt upright, his back supported against the wall, and his legs pendulous, within three inches of the ground, being too short to reach it. I remained gazing upon him for at least five minutes, whilst he enjoyed slumbers seemingly as quiet and profound as those of death itself. His face brought powerfully to my mind some of those uncouth visages of saints and abbots which are occasionally seen in the niches of the walls of ruined convents. There was not the slightest gleam of vitality in his countenance, which for colour and rigidity might have been of stone, and which was as rude and battered as one of the stone heads at Icolmkill, which have braved the winds of twelve hundred years. I continued gazing on his face till I became almost alarmed, concluding that life might have departed from its harassed and fatigued tenement. On my shaking him rather roughly by the shoulder he slowly awoke, opening his eyes with a stare, and then closing them again. For a few moments he was evidently unconscious of where he was. On my shouting to him, however, and inquiring whether he intended to sleep all day, instead of conducting me to Finisterre, he dropped upon his legs, snatched up his hat, which lay on the table, and instantly ran out of the door, exclaiming, "Yes, yes, I remember; follow me, captain, and I will lead you to Finisterre in no time." I looked after him, and perceived that he was hurrying at a considerable pace in the direction in which we had hitherto been proceeding. "Stop," said I, "stop! will you leave me here with the pony? Stop; we have not paid the reckoning. Stop!" He, however, never turned his head for a moment, and in less than a minute was out of sight. The pony, which was tied to a crib at one end of the cabin, began now to neigh terrifically, to plunge, and to erect its tail and mane in a most singular manner. It tore and strained at the halter till I was apprehensive that strangulation would ensue. "Woman," I exclaimed, "where are you, and what is the meaning of all this?" But the hostess had likewise disappeared, and though I ran about the *choza*, shouting myself hoarse, no answer was returned. The pony still continued to scream and to strain at the halter more violently than ever. "Am I beset with lunatics?" I cried, and flinging down a *peseta* on the table, unloosed the halter, and attempted to introduce the bit into the mouth of the animal. This, however, I found impossible to effect. Released from the halter, the pony made at once for the door, in spite of all the efforts which I could make to detain it. "If you abandon me," said I, "I am in a pretty situation; but there is a remedy for everything!" with which words I sprang into the saddle, and in a moment more the creature was bearing me at a rapid gallop in the direction, as I supposed, of Finisterre. My position, however diverting to the reader, was rather critical to myself. I was on the back of a spirited animal, over which I had no control, dashing along a dangerous and unknown path. I could not discover the slightest vestige of my guide, nor did I pass any one from whom I could derive any information. Indeed, the speed of the animal was so great, that even in the event of my meeting or overtaking a passenger, I could scarcely have hoped to exchange a word with him. "Is the pony trained to this work?" said I, mentally. "Is he carrying me to some den of banditti, where my throat will be cut, or does he follow his master by instinct?" Both of these suspicions I, however, soon abandoned. The pony's speed relaxed; he appeared to have lost the road. He looked about uneasily: at last, coming to a sandy spot, he put his nostrils to the ground, and then suddenly flung himself down, and wallowed in true pony fashion. I was not hurt, and instantly made use of this opportunity to slip the bit into his mouth, which previously had been dangling beneath his neck; I then remounted in quest of the road.

This I soon found, and continued my way for a considerable time. The path lay over a moor, patched with heath and furze, and here and there strewn with large stones, or rather rocks. The sun had risen high in the firmament, and burned fiercely. I passed several people, men and women, who

gazed at me with surprise, wondering, probably, what a person of my appearance could be about, without a guide, in so strange a place. I inquired of two females whom I met whether they had seen my guide; but they either did not or would not understand me, and, exchanging a few words with each other in one of the hundred dialects of the Gallegan, passed on. Having crossed the moor, I came rather abruptly upon a convent, overhanging a deep ravine, at the bottom of which brawled a rapid stream.

It was a beautiful and picturesque spot: the sides of the ravine were thickly clothed with wood, and on the other side a tall black hill uplifted itself. The edifice was large, and apparently deserted. Passing by it, I presently reached a small village, as deserted, to all appearance, as the convent, for I saw not a single individual, nor so much as a dog to welcome me with his bark. I proceeded, however, until I reached a fountain, the waters of which gushed from a stone pillar into a trough. Seated upon this last, his arms folded, and his eyes fixed upon the neighbouring mountain, I beheld a figure which still frequently recurs to my thoughts, especially when asleep and oppressed by the nightmare. This figure was my runaway guide.

Myself. – Good day to you, my gentleman. The weather is hot, and yonder water appears delicious. I am almost tempted to dismount and regale myself with a slight draught.

Guide. – Your worship can do no better. The day is, as you say, hot; you can do no better than drink a little of this water. I have myself just drunk. I would not, however, advise you to give that pony any; it appears heated and blown.

Myself. – It may well be so. I have been galloping at least two leagues in pursuit of a fellow who engaged to guide me to Finisterre, but who deserted me in a most singular manner; so much so, that I almost believe him to be a thief, and no true man. You do not happen to have seen him?

Guide. – What kind of a man might he be?

Myself. – A short, thick fellow, very much like yourself, with a hump upon his back, and, excuse me, of a very ill-favoured countenance.

Guide. – Ha, ha! I know him. He ran with me to this fountain, where he has just left me. That man, Sir Cavalier, is no thief. If he is anything at all, he is a *Nuveiro* [2]– a fellow who rides upon the clouds, and is occasionally whisked away by a gust of wind. Should you ever travel with that man again, never allow him more than one glass of anise at a time, or he will infallibly mount into the clouds and leave you, and then he will ride and run till he comes to a water-brook, or knocks his head against a fountain – then one draught, and he is himself again. So you are going to Finisterre, Sir Cavalier. Now it is singular enough, that a cavalier much of your appearance engaged me to conduct him there this morning; I, however, lost him on the way; so it appears to me our best plan to travel together until you find your own guide and I find my own master.

It might be about two o'clock in the afternoon that we reached a long and ruinous bridge, seemingly of great antiquity, and which, as I was informed by my guide, was called the bridge of Don Alonzo. It crossed a species of creek, or rather frith, for the sea was at no considerable distance, and the small town of Noyo lay at our right. "When we have crossed that bridge, captain," said my guide, "we shall be in an unknown country, for I have never been farther than Noyo, and as for Finisterre, so far from having been there, I never heard of such a place; and though I have inquired of two or three people since we have been upon this expedition, they know as little about it as I do. Taking all things, however, into consideration, it appears to me that the best thing we can do is to push forward to Corcuvion, which is five mad leagues from hence, and which we may perhaps reach ere nightfall, if we can find the way or get any one to direct us; for, as I told you before, I know nothing about it." "To fine hands have I confided myself," said I: "however, we had best, as you say, push forward to Corcuvion, where, peradventure, we may hear something of Finisterre, and find a guide to conduct us." Whereupon, with a hop, skip, and a jump, he again set forward at a rapid pace, stopping

[2] A fanciful word of Portuguese etymology from *nuvem*, cloud = the cloud-man.

occasionally at a *choza*, for the purpose, I suppose, of making inquiries, though I understood scarcely anything of the jargon in which he addressed the people, and in which they answered him.

We were soon in an extremely wild and hilly country, scrambling up and down ravines, wading brooks, and scratching our hands and faces with brambles, on which grew a plentiful crop of wild mulberries, to gather some of which we occasionally made a stop. Owing to the roughness of the way, we made no great progress. The pony followed close at the back of the guide, so near, indeed, that its nose almost touched his shoulder. The country grew wilder and wilder, and, since we had passed a water-mill, we had lost all trace of human habitation. The mill stood at the bottom of a valley shaded by large trees, and its wheels were turning with a dismal and monotonous noise. "Do you think we shall reach Corcuvion tonight?" said I to the guide, as we emerged from this valley to a savage moor, which appeared of almost boundless extent.

Guide. – I do not, I do not. We shall in no manner reach Corcuvion to-night, and I by no means like the appearance of this moor. The sun is rapidly sinking, and then, if there come on a haze, we shall meet the *Estadéa*.

Myself. – What do you mean by the *Estadéa*?

Guide. – What do I mean by the *Estadéa*? My master asks me what I mean by the *Estadinha*. [3] I have met the *Estadinha* but once, and it was upon a moor something like this. I was in company with several women, and a thick haze came on, and suddenly a thousand lights shone above our heads in the haze, and there was a wild cry, and the women fell to the ground screaming, '*Estadéa*! *Estadéa*!' and I myself fell to the ground crying out, '*Estadinha*!' The *Estadéa* are the spirits of the dead which ride upon the haze, bearing candles in their hands. I tell you frankly, my master, that if we meet the assembly of the souls, I shall leave you at once, and then I shall run and run till I drown myself in the sea, somewhere about Muros. We shall not reach Corcuvion this night; my only hope is that we may find some *choza* upon these moors, where we may hide our heads from the *Estadinha*."

The night overtook us ere we had traversed the moor; there was, however, no haze, to the great joy of my guide, and a corner of the moon partially illumined our steps. Our situation, however, was dreary enough: we were upon the wildest heath of the wildest province of Spain, ignorant of our way, and directing our course we scarcely knew whither, for my guide repeatedly declared to me that he did not believe that such a place as Finisterre existed, or if it did exist, it was some bleak mountain pointed out in a map. When I reflected on the character of this guide, I derived but little comfort or encouragement: he was at best evidently half-witted, and was by his own confession occasionally seized with paroxysms which differed from madness in no essential respect; his wild escapade in the morning of nearly three leagues, without any apparent cause, and lastly his superstitious and frantic fears of meeting the souls of the dead upon this heath, in which event he intended, as he himself said, to desert me and make for the sea, operated rather powerfully upon my nerves. I likewise considered that it was quite possible that we might be in the route neither of Finisterre nor Corcuvion, and I therefore determined to enter the first cabin at which we should arrive, in preference to running the risk of breaking our necks by tumbling down some pit or precipice. No cabin, however, appeared in sight: the moor seemed interminable, and we wandered on until the moon disappeared, and we were left in almost total darkness.

At length we arrived at the foot of a steep ascent, up which a rough and broken pathway appeared to lead. "Can this be our way?" said I to the guide.

"There appears to be no other for us, captain," replied the man; "let us ascend it by all means, and when we are at the top, if the sea be in the neighbourhood we shall see it."

I then dismounted, for to ride up such a pass in such darkness would have been madness. We clambered up in a line, first the guide, next the pony, with his nose as usual on his master's shoulder,

[3] *Inha*, when affixed to words, serves as a diminutive. It is much in use amongst the Gallegans. It is pronounced *ínia*, the Portuguese and Galician *nh* being equivalent to the Spanish *ñ*.

of whom he seemed passionately fond, and I bringing up the rear, with my left hand grasping the animal's tail. We had many a stumble, and more than one fall: once, indeed, we were all rolling down the side of the hill together. In about twenty minutes we reached the summit, and looked around us, but no sea was visible: a black moor, indistinctly seen, seemed to spread on every side.

"We shall have to take up our quarters here till morning," said I.

Suddenly my guide seized me by the hand. "There is *lúme*, *senhor*," said he; "there is *lúme*." I looked in the direction in which he pointed, and after straining my eyes for some time, imagined that I perceived, far below and at some distance, a faint glow. "That is *lúme*," shouted the guide, "and it proceeds from the chimney of a *choza*."

On descending the eminence, we roamed about for a considerable time, until we at last found ourselves in the midst of about six or eight black huts. "Knock at the door of one of these," said I to the guide, "and inquire of the people whether they can shelter us for the night." He did so, and a man presently made his appearance, bearing in his hand a lighted firebrand.

"Can you shelter a *Cavalheiro* from the night and the *Estadéa*?" said my guide.

"From both, I thank God," said the man, who was an athletic figure, without shoes and stockings, and who, upon the whole, put me much in mind of a Munster peasant from the bogs. "Pray enter, gentlemen, we can accommodate you both and your *cavalgadura* besides."

We entered the *choza*, which consisted of three compartments; in the first we found straw, in the second cattle and ponies, and in the third the family, consisting of the father and mother of the man who admitted us, and his wife and children.

"You are a Catalan, sir Cavalier, and are going to your countrymen at Corcuvion," said the man in tolerable Spanish. "Ah, you are brave people, you Catalans, and fine establishments you have on the Gallegan shores; pity that you take all the money out of the country."

Now, under all circumstances, I had not the slightest objection to pass for a Catalan; and I rather rejoiced that these wild people should suppose that I had powerful friends and countrymen in the neighbourhood who were, perhaps, expecting me. I therefore favoured their mistake, and began with a harsh Catalan accent to talk of the fish of Galicia, and the high duties on salt. The eye of my guide was upon me for an instant, with a singular expression, half serious, half droll; he, however, said nothing, but slapped his thigh as usual, and with a spring nearly touched the roof of the cabin with his grotesque head. Upon inquiry, I discovered that we were still two long leagues distant from Corcuvion, and that the road lay over moor and hill, and was hard to find. Our host now demanded whether we were hungry, and, upon being answered in the affirmative, produced about a dozen eggs and some bacon. Whilst our supper was cooking, a long conversation ensued between my guide and the family, but as it was carried on in Gallegan, I tried in vain to understand it. I believe, however, that it principally related to witches and witchcraft, as the *Estadéa* was frequently mentioned. After supper I demanded where I could rest: whereupon the host pointed to a trapdoor in the roof, saying that above there was a loft where I could sleep by myself, and have clean straw. For curiosity's sake, I asked whether there was such a thing as a bed in the cabin.

"No," replied the man; "nor nearer than Corcuvion. I never entered one in my life, nor any one of my family; we sleep around the hearth, or among the straw with the cattle."

I was too old a traveller to complain, but forthwith ascended by a ladder into a species of loft, tolerably large and nearly empty, where I placed my cloak beneath my head, and lay down on the boards, which I preferred to the straw, for more reasons than one. I heard the people below talking in Gallegan for a considerable time, and could see the gleams of the fire through the interstices of the floor. The voices, however, gradually died away, the fire sank low and could no longer be distinguished. I dozed, started, dozed again, and dropped finally into a profound sleep, from which I was only roused by the crowing of the second cock.

CHAPTER XXX

Autumnal Morning – The World's End – Corcuvion – Duyo – The Cape – A Whale – The Outer Bay – The Arrest – The Fisher-Magistrate – Calros Rey – Hard of Belief – Where is your Passport? – The Beach – A mighty Liberal – The Handmaid – The Grand Baintham – Eccentric Book – Hospitality.

It was a beautiful autumnal morning when we left the *choza* and pursued our way to Corcuvion. I satisfied our host by presenting him with a couple of *pesetas*, and he requested as a favour, that if on our return we passed that way, and were overtaken by the night, we would again take up our abode beneath his roof. This I promised, at the same time determining to do my best to guard against the contingency; as sleeping in the loft of a Gallegan hut, though preferable to passing the night on a moor or mountain, is anything but desirable.

So we again started at a rapid pace along rough bridle-ways and footpaths, amidst furze and brushwood. In about an hour we obtained a view of the sea, and, directed by a lad whom we found on the moor employed in tending a few miserable sheep, we bent our course to the north-west, and at length reached the brow of an eminence, where we stopped for some time to survey the prospect before us.

It was not without reason that the Latins gave the name of *Finis terræ* to this district. We had arrived exactly at such a place as in my boyhood I had pictured to myself as the termination of the world, beyond which there was a wild sea, or abyss, or chaos. I now saw far before me an immense ocean, and below me a long and irregular line of lofty and precipitous coast. Certainly in the whole world there is no bolder coast than the Gallegan shore, from the debouchement of the Minho to Cape Finisterre. It consists of a granite wall of savage mountains, for the most part serrated at the top, and occasionally broken, where bays and firths like those of Vigo and Pontevedra intervene, running deep into the land. These bays and firths are invariably of an immense depth, and sufficiently capacious to shelter the navies of the proudest maritime nations.

There is an air of stern and savage grandeur in everything around, which strongly captivates the imagination. This savage coast is the first glimpse of Spain which the voyager from the north catches, or he who has ploughed his way across the wide Atlantic: and well does it seem to realize all his visions of this strange land. "Yes," he exclaims, "this is indeed Spain – stern, flinty Spain – land emblematic of those spirits to which she has given birth. From what land but that before me could have proceeded those portentous beings who astounded the Old World and filled the New with horror and blood. Alva and Philip, Cortez and Pizarro – stern colossal spectres looming through the gloom of bygone years, like yonder granite mountains through the haze, upon the eye of the mariner. Yes, yonder is indeed Spain; flinty, indomitable Spain; land emblematic of its sons!"

As for myself, when I viewed that wide ocean and its savage shore, I cried, "Such is the grave, and such are its terrific sides; those moors and wilds, over which I have passed, are the rough and dreary journey of life. Cheered with hope, we struggle along through all the difficulties of moor, bog, and mountain, to arrive at – what? The grave and its dreary sides. Oh, may hope not desert us in the last hour – hope in the Redeemer and in God!"

We descended from the eminence, and again lost sight of the sea amidst ravines and dingles, amongst which patches of pine were occasionally seen. Continuing to descend, we at last came, not to the sea, but to the extremity of a long narrow firth, where stood a village or hamlet; whilst at a small distance, on the western side of the firth, appeared one considerably larger, which was indeed almost entitled to the appellation of town. This last was Corcuvion; the first, if I forget not, was called Ria de Silla. We hastened on to Corcuvion, where I bade my guide make inquiries respecting Finisterre. He entered the door of a wine-house, from which proceeded much noise and vociferation,

and presently returned, informing me that the village of Finisterre was distant about a league and a half. A man, evidently in a state of intoxication, followed him to the door. “Are you bound for Finisterre, *Cavalheiros*?” he shouted.

“Yes, my friend,” I replied, “we are going thither.”

“Then you are going amongst a *fato de borrachos*,” [4] he answered. “Take care that they do not play you a trick.”

We passed on, and, striking across a sandy peninsula at the back of the town, soon reached the shore of an immense bay, the north-westernmost end of which was formed by the far-famed cape of Finisterre, which we now saw before us stretching far into the sea.

Along a beach of dazzling white sand we advanced towards the cape, the bourne of our journey. The sun was shining brightly, and every object was illumined by his beams. The sea lay before us like a vast mirror, and the waves which broke upon the shore were so tiny as scarcely to produce a murmur. On we sped along the deep winding bay, overhung by gigantic hills and mountains. Strange recollections began to throng upon my mind. It was upon this beach that, according to the tradition of all ancient Christendom, Saint James, the patron saint of Spain, preached the Gospel to the heathen Spaniards. Upon this beach had once stood an immense commercial city, the proudest in all Spain. This now desolate bay had once resounded with the voices of myriads, when the keels and commerce of all the then known world were wafted to Duyo. [5]

“What is the name of this village?” said I to a woman, as we passed by five or six ruinous houses at the bend of the bay, ere we entered upon the peninsula of Finisterre.

“This is no village,” said the Gallegan, “this is no village, Sir Cavalier; this is a city, this is Duyo.”

So much for the glory of the world! These huts were all that the roaring sea and the tooth of time had left of Duyo, the great city! Onward now to Finisterre.

It was mid-day when we reached the village of Finisterre, consisting of about one hundred houses, and built on the southern side of the peninsula, just before it rises into the huge bluff head which is called the Cape. We sought in vain for an inn or *venta*, where we might stable our beast; at one moment we thought that we had found one, and had even tied the animal to the manger. Upon our going out, however, he was instantly untied and driven forth into the street. The few people whom we saw appeared to gaze upon us in a singular manner. We, however, took little notice of these circumstances, and proceeded along the straggling street until we found shelter in the house of a Castilian shopkeeper, whom some chance had brought to this corner of Galicia – this end of the world. Our first care was to feed the animal, who now began to exhibit considerable symptoms of fatigue. We then requested some refreshment for ourselves; and in about an hour, a tolerably savoury fish, weighing about three pounds, and fresh from the bay, was prepared for us by an old woman who appeared to officiate as housekeeper. Having finished our meal, I and my uncouth companion went forth, and prepared to ascend the mountain.

We stopped to examine a small dismantled fort or battery facing the bay, and, whilst engaged in this examination, it more than once occurred to me that we were ourselves the objects of scrutiny and investigation; indeed, I caught a glimpse of more than one countenance peering upon us through the holes and chasms of the walls. We now commenced ascending Finisterre; and, making numerous and long *détours*, we wound our way up its flinty sides. The sun had reached the top of heaven, whence he showered upon us perpendicularly his brightest and fiercest rays. My boots were torn, my feet cut, and the perspiration streamed from my brow. To my guide, however, the ascent appeared to be neither toilsome nor difficult. The heat of the day for him had no terrors, no moisture was wrung from his tanned countenance; he drew not one short breath; and hopped upon the stones and rocks

[4] “Flock of drunkards.” *Fato*, in Gal. as in Port. = a herd or flock. Span. *hato*.

[5] San Martin de Duyo, a village, according to Madoz, of sixty houses. There are no remains of the ancient Duyo.

with all the provoking agility of a mountain goat. Before we had accomplished one-half of the ascent, I felt myself quite exhausted. I reeled and staggered. “Cheer up, master mine; be of good cheer, and have no care,” said the guide. “Yonder I see a wall of stones; lie down beneath it in the shade.” He put his long and strong arm round my waist, and, though his stature compared with mine was that of a dwarf, he supported me as if I had been a child to a rude wall which seemed to traverse the greater part of the hill, and served probably as a kind of boundary. It was difficult to find a shady spot: at last he perceived a small chasm, perhaps scooped by some shepherd as a couch in which to enjoy his *siesta*. In this he laid me gently down, and, taking off his enormous hat, commenced fanning me with great assiduity. By degrees I revived, and, after having rested for a considerable time, I again attempted the ascent, which, with the assistance of my guide, I at length accomplished.

We were now standing at a great altitude between two bays, the wilderness of waters before us. Of all the ten thousand barks which annually plough those seas in sight of that old cape, not one was to be descried. It was a blue shiny waste, broken by no object save the black head of a spermaceti whale, which would occasionally show itself at the top, casting up thin jets of brine. The principal bay, that of Finisterre, as far as the entrance, was beautifully variegated by an immense shoal of *sardinhas*, on whose extreme skirts the monster was probably feasting. From the other side of the cape we looked down upon a smaller bay, the shore of which was overhung by rocks of various and grotesque shapes; this is called the outer bay, or, in the language of the country, *Praia do mar de fora*: [6] a fearful place in seasons of wind and tempest, when the long swell of the Atlantic pouring in is broken into surf and foam by the sunken rocks with which it abounds. Even on the calmest day there is a rumbling and a hollow roar in that bay which fill the heart with uneasy sensations.

On all sides there was grandeur and sublimity. After gazing from the summit of the cape for nearly an hour, we descended.

On reaching the house where we had taken up our temporary habitation, we perceived that the portal was occupied by several men, some of whom were reclining on the floor drinking wine out of small earthen pans, which are much used in this part of Galicia. With a civil salutation I passed on, and ascended the staircase to the room in which we had taken our repast. Here there was a rude and dirty bed, on which I flung myself, exhausted with fatigue. I determined to take a little repose, and in the evening to call the people of the place together, to read a few chapters of the Scripture, and then to address them with a little Christian exhortation. I was soon asleep, but my slumbers were by no means tranquil. I thought I was surrounded with difficulties of various kinds, amongst rocks and ravines, vainly endeavouring to extricate myself; uncouth visages showed themselves amidst the trees and in the hollows, thrusting out cloven tongues, and uttering angry cries. I looked around for my guide, but could not find him; methought, however, that I heard his voice down a deep dingle. He appeared to be talking of me. How long I might have continued in these wild dreams I know not. I was suddenly, however, seized roughly by the shoulder, and nearly dragged from the bed. I looked up in amazement, and by the light of the descending sun I beheld hanging over me a wild and uncouth figure; it was that of an elderly man, built as strong as a giant, with much beard and whisker, and huge bushy eyebrows, dressed in the habiliments of a fisherman; in his hand was a rusty musket.

Myself. – Who are you, and what do you want?

Figure. – Who I am matters but little. Get up and follow me; it is you I want.

Myself. – By what authority do you thus presume to interfere with me?

Figure. – By the authority of the *justicia* of Finisterre. Follow me peaceably, Calros, or it will be the worse for you.

“Calros,” said I, “what does the person mean?” I thought it, however, most prudent to obey his command, and followed him down the staircase. The shop and the portal were now thronged with the inhabitants of Finisterre, men, women, and children; the latter for the most part in a state of nudity,

[6] Galician; lit. the shore of the outer sea.

and with bodies wet and dripping, having been probably summoned in haste from their gambols in the brine. Through this crowd the figure whom I have attempted to describe pushed his way with an air of authority.

On arriving in the street, he laid his heavy hand upon my arm, not roughly, however. "It is Calros! it is Calros!" said a hundred voices; "he has come to Finisterre at last, and the *justicia* have now got hold of him." Wondering what all this could mean, I attended my strange conductor down the street. As we proceeded, the crowd increased every moment, following and vociferating. Even the sick were brought to the doors to obtain a view of what was going forward, and a glance at the redoubtable Calros. I was particularly struck by the eagerness displayed by one man, a cripple, who, in spite of the entreaties of his wife, mixed with the crowd, and having lost his crutch, hopped forward on one leg, exclaiming, "*Carracho*! *tambien voy yo*!" [7]

We at last reached a house of rather larger size than the rest; my guide, having led me into a long low room, placed me in the middle of the floor, and then hurrying to the door, he endeavoured to repulse the crowd who strove to enter with us. This he effected, though not without considerable difficulty, being once or twice compelled to have recourse to the butt of his musket to drive back unauthorized intruders. I now looked round the room. It was rather scantily furnished: I could see nothing but some tubs and barrels, the mast of a boat, and a sail or two. Seated upon the tubs were three or four men coarsely dressed, like fishermen or shipwrights. The principal personage was a surly ill-tempered looking fellow of about thirty-five, whom eventually I discovered to be the *alcalde* of Finisterre, and lord of the house in which we now were. In a corner I caught a glimpse of my guide, who was evidently in durance, two stout fishermen standing before him, one with a musket and the other with a boat-hook. After I had looked about me for a minute, the *alcalde*, giving his whiskers a twist, thus addressed me: —

"Who are you, where is your passport, and what brings you to Finisterre?"

Myself. – I am an Englishman. Here is my passport, and I came to see Finisterre.

This reply seemed to discomfit them for a moment. They looked at each other, then at my passport. At length the *alcalde*, striking it with his finger, bellowed forth:

"This is no Spanish passport; it appears to be written in French."

Myself. – I have already told you that I am a foreigner. I of course carry a foreign passport.

Alcalde. – Then you mean to assert that you are not *Calros Rey*.

Myself. – I never heard before of such a king, nor indeed of such a name.

Alcalde. – Hark to the fellow! he has the audacity to say that he has never heard of Calros the pretender, who calls himself king.

Myself. – If you mean by Calros, the pretender Don Carlos, all I can reply is, that you can scarcely be serious. You might as well assert that yonder poor fellow, my guide, whom I see you have made prisoner, is his nephew, the *Infante* Don Sebastian. [8]

Alcalde. – See, you have betrayed yourself; that is the very person we suppose him to be.

Myself. – It is true that they are both hunchbacks. But how can I be like Don Carlos? I have nothing the appearance of a Spaniard, and am nearly a foot taller than the pretender.

Alcalde. – That makes no difference; you of course carry many waistcoats about you, by means of which you disguise yourself, and appear tall or low according to your pleasure.

This last was so conclusive an argument that I had of course nothing to reply to it. The *alcalde* looked around him in triumph, as if he had made some notable discovery. "Yes, it is Calros; it is Calros," said the crowd at the door. "It will be as well to have these men shot instantly," continued the *alcalde*; "if they are not the two pretenders, they are at any rate two of the factious."

"I am by no means certain that they are either one or the other," said a gruff voice.

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[7] "By God! I am going too."

[8] Who served as a subordinate general in the Carlist armies.

The *justicia* of Finisterre turned their eyes in the direction from which these words proceeded, and so did I. Our glances rested upon the figure who held watch at the door. He had planted the barrel of his musket on the floor, and was now leaning his chin against the butt.

"I am by no means certain that they are either one or the other," repeated he, advancing forward. "I have been examining this man," pointing to myself, "and listening whilst he spoke, and it appears to me that after all he may prove an Englishman; he has their very look and voice. Who knows the English better than Antonio de la Trava, and who has a better right? Has he not sailed in their ships; has he not eaten their biscuit; and did he not stand by Nelson when he was shot dead?"

Here the *alcalde* became violently incensed. "He is no more an Englishman than yourself," he exclaimed; "if he were an Englishman would he have come in this manner, skulking across the land? Not so, I trow. He would have come in a ship, recommended to some of us, or to the Catalans. He would have come to trade – to buy; but nobody knows him in Finisterre, nor does he know anybody, and the first thing, moreover, that he does when he reaches this place is to inspect the fort, and to ascend the mountain, where, no doubt, he has been marking out a camp. What brings him to Finisterre, if he is neither Calros nor a *bribon* of a *faccioso*?"

I felt that there was a good deal of justice in some of these remarks, and I was aware, for the first time, that I had indeed committed a great imprudence in coming to this wild place, and among these barbarous people, without being able to assign any motive which could appear at all valid in their eyes. I endeavoured to convince the *alcalde* that I had come across the country for the purpose of making myself acquainted with the many remarkable objects which it contained, and of obtaining information respecting the character and condition of the inhabitants. He could understand no such motives. "What did you ascend the mountain for?" "To see prospects." "*Disparate*! I have lived at Finisterre forty years, and never ascended that mountain. I would not do it in a day like this for two ounces of gold. You went to take altitudes, and to mark out a camp." I had, however, a staunch friend in old Antonio, who insisted, from his knowledge of the English, that all I said might very possibly be true. "The English," said he, "have more money than they know what to do with, and on that account they wander all over the world, paying dearly for what no other people care a groat for." He then proceeded, notwithstanding the frowns of the *alcalde*, to examine me in the English language. His own entire knowledge of this tongue was confined to two words —*knife* and *fork*, which words I rendered into Spanish by their equivalents, and was forthwith pronounced an Englishman by the old fellow, who, brandishing his musket, exclaimed: —

"This man is not Calros; he is what he declares himself to be, an Englishman, and whosoever seeks to injure him shall have to do with Antonio de la Trava, *el valiente de Finisterra*." No person sought to impugn this verdict, and it was at length determined that I should be sent to Corcuvion, to be examined by the *alcalde mayor* of the district. "But," said the *alcalde* of Finisterre, "what is to be done with the other fellow? He at least is no Englishman. Bring him forward, and let us hear what he has to say for himself. Now, fellow, who are you, and what is your master?"

Guide. – I am Sebastianillo, a poor broken mariner of Padron, and my master for the present is the gentleman whom you see, the most valiant and wealthy of all the English. He has two ships at Vigo laden with riches. I told you so when you first seized me up there in our *posada*.

Alcalde. – Where is your passport?

Guide. – I have no passport. Who would think of bringing a passport to such a place as this, where I don't suppose there are two individuals who can read? I have no passport; my master's passport of course includes me.

Alcalde. – It does not. And since you have no passport, and have confessed that your name is Sebastian, you shall be shot. Antonio de la Trava, do you and the musketeers lead this Sebastianillo forth, and shoot him before the door.

Antonio de la Trava. – With much pleasure, *Señor Alcalde*, since you order it. With respect to this fellow, I shall not trouble myself to interfere. He at least is no Englishman. He has more the look

of a wizard or *nuveiro*; one of those devils who raise storms and sink launches. Moreover, he says he is from Padron, and those of that place are all thieves and drunkards. They once played me a trick, and I would gladly be at the shooting of the whole *pueblo*.

I now interfered, and said that if they shot the guide they must shoot me too; expatiating at the same time on the cruelty and barbarity of taking away the life of a poor unfortunate fellow who, as might be seen at the first glance, was only half-witted; adding, moreover, that if any person was guilty in this case it was myself, as the other could only be considered in the light of a servant acting under my orders.

"The safest plan, after all," said the *alcalde*, "appears to be to send you both prisoners to Corcuvion, where the head *alcalde* can dispose of you as he thinks proper. You must, however, pay for your escort; for it is not to be supposed that the housekeepers of Finisterre have nothing else to do than to ramble about the country with every chance fellow who finds his way to this town." "As for that matter," said Antonio, "I will take charge of them both. I am the *valiente* of Finisterre, and fear no two men living. Moreover, I am sure that the captain here will make it worth my while, else he is no Englishman. Therefore let us be quick, and set out for Corcuvion at once, as it is getting late. First of all, however, captain, I must search you and your baggage. You have no arms, of course? But it is best to make all sure."

Long ere it was dark I found myself again on the pony, in company with my guide, wending our way along the beach in the direction of Corcuvion. Antonio de la Trava tramped heavily on before, his musket on his shoulder.

Myself. – Are you not afraid, Antonio, to be thus alone with two prisoners, one of whom is on horseback? If we were to try, I think we could overpower you.

Antonio de la Trava. – I am the *valiente de Finisterra*, and I fear no odds.

Myself. – Why do you call yourself the *valiente* of Finisterre?

Antonio de la Trava. – The whole district call me so. When the French came to Finisterre and demolished the fort, three perished by my hand. I stood on the mountain, up where I saw you scrambling to-day. I continued firing at the enemy, until three detached themselves in pursuit of me. The fools! two perished amongst the rocks by the fire of this musket, and as for the third, I beat his head to pieces with the stock. It is on that account that they call me the *valiente* of Finisterre.

Myself. – How came you to serve with the English fleet? I think I heard you say that you were present when Nelson fell.

Antonio de la Trava. – I was captured by your countrymen, captain; and as I had been a sailor from my childhood, they were glad of my services. I was nine months with them, and assisted at Trafalgar. I saw the English admiral die. You have something of his face, and your voice, when you spoke, sounded in my ears like his own. I love the English, and on that account I saved you. Think not that I would toil along these sands with you if you were one of my own countrymen. Here we are at Duyo, captain. Shall we refresh?

We did refresh, or rather Antonio de la Trava refreshed, swallowing pan after pan of wine, with a thirst which seemed unquenchable. "That man was a greater wizard than myself," whispered Sebastian, my guide, "who told us that the drunkards of Finisterre would play us a trick." At length the old hero of the Cape slowly rose, saying that we must hasten on to Corcuvion, or the night would overtake us by the way.

"What kind of person is the *alcalde* to whom you are conducting me?" said I.

"Oh, very different from him of Finisterre," replied Antonio. "This is a young *Señorito*, lately arrived from Madrid. He is not even a Gallegan. He is a mighty liberal, and it is owing chiefly to his orders that we have lately been so much on the alert. It is said that the Carlists are meditating a descent on these parts of Galicia. Let them only come to Finisterre; we are liberals there to a man, and the old *valiente* is ready to play the same part as in the time of the French. But, as I was telling you before, the *alcalde* to whom I am conducting you is a young man, and very learned, and, if he

thinks proper, he can speak English to you, even better than myself, notwithstanding I was a friend of Nelson, and fought by his side at Trafalgar."

It was dark night before we reached Corcuvion. Antonio again stopped to refresh at a wine-shop, after which he conducted us to the house of the *alcalde*. His steps were by this time not particularly steady, and on arriving at the gate of the house, he stumbled over the threshold and fell. He got up with an oath, and instantly commenced thundering at the door with the stock of his musket. "Who is it?" at length demanded a soft female voice in Gallegan. "The *valiente* of Finisterre," replied Antonio; whereupon the gate was unlocked, and we beheld before us a very pretty female with a candle in her hand. "What brings you here so late, Antonio?" she inquired. "I bring two prisoners, *mi pulida*," replied Antonio. "*Ave Maria*!" she exclaimed. "I hope they will do no harm." "I will answer for one," replied the old man; "but as for the other, he is a *nuveiro*, and has sunk more ships than all his brethren in Galicia. But be not afraid, my beauty," he continued, as the female made the sign of the cross: "first lock the gate, and then show me the way to the *alcalde*. I have much to tell him." The gate was locked, and bidding us stay below in the court-yard, Antonio followed the young woman up a stone stair, whilst we remained in darkness below.

After the lapse of about a quarter of an hour we again saw the candle gleam upon the staircase, and the young female appeared. Coming up to me, she advanced the candle to my features, on which she gazed very intently. After a long scrutiny she went to my guide, and having surveyed him still more fixedly, she turned to me, and said, in her best Spanish, "*Señor* Cavalier, I congratulate you on your servant. He is the best-looking *mozo* in all Galicia. *Vaya*! if he had but a coat to his back, and did not go barefoot, I would accept him at once as a *novio*; but I have unfortunately made a vow never to marry a poor man, but only one who has got a heavy purse and can buy me fine clothes. So you are a Carlist, I suppose? *Vaya*! I do not like you the worse for that. But, being so, how went you to Finisterre, where they are all *Cristinos* and *negros*? Why did you not go to my village? None would have meddled with you there. Those of my village are of a different stamp to the drunkards of Finisterre. Those of my village never interfere with honest people. *Vaya*! how I hate that drunkard of Finisterre who brought you; he is so old and ugly; were it not for the love which I bear to the *Señor Alcalde*, I would at once unlock the gate and bid you go forth, you and your servant, *el buen mozo*". [9]

Antonio now descended. "Follow me," said he; "his worship the *alcalde* will be ready to receive you in a moment." Sebastian and myself followed him upstairs to a room, where, seated behind a table, we beheld a young man of low stature, but handsome features, and very fashionably dressed. He appeared to be inditing a letter, which, when he had concluded, he delivered to a secretary to be transcribed. He then looked at me for a moment fixedly, and the following conversation ensued between us: —

Alcalde. – I see that you are an Englishman, and my friend Antonio here informs me that you have been arrested at Finisterre.

Myself. – He tells you true; and but for him I believe that I should have fallen by the hands of those savage fishermen.

Alcalde. – The inhabitants of Finisterre are brave, and are all liberals. Allow me to look at your passport? Yes, all in form. Truly it was very ridiculous that they should have arrested you as a Carlist.

Myself. – Not only as a Carlist, but as Don Carlos himself.

Alcalde. – Oh! most ridiculous; mistake a countryman of the grand Baintham for such a Goth!

Myself. – Excuse me, sir, you speak of the grand somebody.

Alcalde. – The grand Baintham. He who has invented laws for all the world. I hope shortly to see them adopted in this unhappy country of ours.

Myself. – Oh! you mean Jeremy Bentham. Yes! a very remarkable man in his way.

[9] "The good lad."

Alcalde. – In his way! in all ways. The most universal genius which the world ever produced: – a Solon, a Plato, and a Lope de Vega.

Myself. – I have never read his writings. I have no doubt that he was a Solon; and as you say, a Plato. I should scarcely have thought, however, that he could be ranked as a poet with Lope de Vega.

Alcalde. – How surprising! I see, indeed, that you know nothing of his writings, though an Englishman. Now, here am I, a simple *alcalde* of Galicia, yet I possess all the writings of Baintham on that shelf, and I study them day and night.

Myself. – You doubtless, sir, possess the English language.

Alcalde. – I do. I mean that part of it which is contained in the writings of Baintham. I am most truly glad to see a countryman of his in these Gothic wildernesses. I understand and appreciate your motives for visiting them: excuse the incivility and rudeness which you have experienced. But we will endeavour to make you reparation. You are this moment free: but it is late; I must find you a lodging for the night. I know one close by which will just suit you. Let us repair thither this moment. Stay, I think I see a book in your hand.

Myself. – The New Testament.

Alcalde. – What book is that?

Myself. – A portion of the sacred writings, the Bible.

Alcalde. – Why do you carry such a book with you?

Myself. – One of my principal motives in visiting Finisterre was to carry this book to that wild place.

Alcalde. – Ha, ha! how very singular. Yes, I remember. I have heard that the English highly prize this eccentric book. How very singular that the countrymen of the grand Baintham should set any value upon that old monkish book!

It was now late at night, and my new friend attended me to the lodging which he had destined for me, and which was at the house of a respectable old female, where I found a clean and comfortable room. On the way I slipped a gratuity into the hand of Antonio, and on my arrival, formally, and in the presence of the *alcalde*, presented him with the Testament, which I requested he would carry back to Finisterre, and keep in remembrance of the Englishman in whose behalf he had so effectually interposed.

Antonio. – I will do so, your worship, and when the winds blow from the north-west, preventing our launches from putting to sea, I will read your present. Farewell, my captain, and when you next come to Finisterre, I hope it will be in a valiant English bark, with plenty of contraband on board, and not across the country on a pony, in company with *nuveiros* and men of Padron.

Presently arrived the handmaid of the *alcalde* with a basket, which she took into the kitchen, where she prepared an excellent supper for her master's friend. On its being served up the *alcalde* bade me farewell, having first demanded whether he could in any way forward my plans.

"I return to Saint James to-morrow," I replied, "and I sincerely hope that some occasion will occur which will enable me to acquaint the world with the hospitality which I have experienced from so accomplished a scholar as the *Alcalde* of Corcuvion."

CHAPTER XXXI

Corunna – Crossing the Bay – Ferrol – The Dock-yard – Where are we now? – Greek Ambassador – Lantern-Light – The Ravine – Viveiro – Evening – Marsh and Quagmire – Fair Words and Fair Money – The Leathern Girth – Eyes of Lynx – The Knavish Guide.

From Corcuvion I returned to St. James and Corunna, and now began to make preparation for directing my course to the Asturias. In the first place I parted with my Andalusian horse, which I considered unfit for the long and mountainous journey I was about to undertake, his constitution having become much debilitated from his Gallegan travels. Owing to horses being exceedingly scarce at Corunna, I had no difficulty in disposing of him at a far higher price than he originally cost me. A young and wealthy merchant of Corunna, who was a national guardsman, became enamoured of his glossy skin and long mane and tail. For my own part, I was glad to part with him for more reasons than one; he was both vicious and savage, and was continually getting me into scrapes in the stables of the *posadas* where we slept or baited. An old Castilian peasant, whose pony he had maltreated, once said to me, "Sir Cavalier, if you have any love or respect for yourself, get rid, I beseech you, of that beast, who is capable of proving the ruin of a kingdom." So I left him behind at Corunna, where I subsequently learned that he became glandered and died. Peace to his memory!

From Corunna I crossed the bay to Ferrol, whilst Antonio with our remaining horse followed by land, a rather toilsome and circuitous journey, although the distance by water is scarcely three leagues. I was very sea-sick during the passage, and lay almost senseless at the bottom of the small launch in which I had embarked, and which was crowded with people. The wind was adverse, and the water rough. We could make no sail, but were impelled along by the oars of five or six stout mariners, who sang all the while Gallegan ditties. Suddenly the sea appeared to have become quite smooth, and my sickness at once deserted me. I rose upon my feet and looked around. We were in one of the strangest places imaginable. A long and narrow passage overhung on either side by a stupendous barrier of black and threatening rocks. The line of the coast was here divided by a natural cleft, yet so straight and regular that it seemed not the work of chance but design. The water was dark and sullen, and of immense depth. This passage, which is about a mile in length, is the entrance to a broad basin, at whose farther extremity stands the town of Ferrol.

Sadness came upon me as soon as I entered this place. Grass was growing in the streets, and misery and distress stared me in the face on every side. Ferrol is the grand naval arsenal of Spain, and has shared in the ruin of the once splendid Spanish navy: it is no longer thronged with those thousand shipwrights who prepared for sea the tremendous three-deckers and long frigates, the greater part of which were destroyed at Trafalgar. Only a few ill-paid and half-starved workmen still linger about, scarcely sufficient to repair any *guarda costa* [10] which may put in dismantled by the fire of some English smuggling schooner from Gibraltar. Half the inhabitants of Ferrol [11] beg their bread; and amongst these, as it is said, are not unfrequently found retired naval officers, many of them maimed or otherwise wounded, who are left to pine in indigence: their pensions or salaries having been allowed to run three or four years in arrear, owing to the exigencies of the times. A crowd of importunate

[10] In Spanish, *guardacostas*.

[11] More correctly, *el Ferrol* or *farol*, the lighthouse. Nothing can more strikingly give the lie to the conventional taunt that Spain has made no progress in recent years than the condition of the modern town of el Ferrol compared with the description in the text. It is now a flourishing and remarkably clean town of over 23,000 inhabitants, with an arsenal not only magnificent in its construction, but filled with every modern appliance, employing daily some 4000 skilled workmen, whose club (*el liceo de los artesanos*) might serve as a model for similar institutions in more "advanced" countries. It comprises a library, recreation-room, casino, sick fund, benefit society, and school; and lectures and evening parties, dramatic entertainments, and classes for scientific students, are all to be found within its walls.

beggars followed me to the *posada*, and even attempted to penetrate to the apartment to which I was conducted. “Who are you?” said I to a woman who flung herself at my feet, and who bore in her countenance evident marks of former gentility. “A widow, sir,” she replied, in very good French; “a widow of a brave officer, once admiral of this port.” The misery and degradation of modern Spain are nowhere so strikingly manifested as at Ferrol.

Yet even here there is still much to admire. Notwithstanding its present state of desolation, it contains some good streets, and abounds with handsome houses. The *alameda* is planted with nearly a thousand elms, of which almost all are magnificent trees, and the poor Ferrolese, with the genuine spirit of localism so prevalent in Spain, boast that their town contains a better public walk than Madrid, of whose *prado*, when they compare the two, they speak in terms of unmitigated contempt. At one end of this *alameda* stands the church, the only one in Ferrol. To this church I repaired the day after my arrival, which was Sunday. I found it quite insufficient to contain the number of worshippers who, chiefly from the country, not only crowded the interior, but, bareheaded, were upon their knees before the door to a considerable distance down the walk.

Parallel with the *alameda* extends the wall of the naval arsenal and dock. I spent several hours in walking about these places, to visit which it is necessary to procure a written permission from the captain-general of Ferrol. They filled me with astonishment. I have seen the royal dock-yards of Russia and England, but, for grandeur of design and costliness of execution, they cannot for a moment compare with these wonderful monuments of the bygone naval pomp of Spain. I shall not attempt to describe them, but content myself with observing that the oblong basin, which is surrounded with a granite mole, is capacious enough to permit a hundred first-rates to lie conveniently in ordinary: but instead of such a force, I saw only a sixty-gun frigate and two brigs lying in this basin; and to this inconsiderable number of vessels is the present war marine of Spain reduced.

I waited for the arrival of Antonio two or three days at Ferrol, and still he came not: late one evening, however, as I was looking down the street, I perceived him advancing, leading our only horse by the bridle. He informed me that, at about three leagues from Corunna, the heat of the weather and the flies had so distressed the animal that it had fallen down in a kind of fit, from which it had been only relieved by copious bleeding, on which account he had been compelled to halt for a day upon the road. The horse was evidently in a very feeble state; and had a strange rattling in its throat, which alarmed me at first. I, however, administered some remedies, and in a few days deemed him sufficiently recovered to proceed.

We accordingly started from Ferrol, having first hired a pony for myself, and a guide who was to attend us as far as Rivadeo, [12] twenty leagues from Ferrol, and on the confines of the Asturias. The day at first was fine, but ere we reached Novales, a distance of three leagues, the sky became overcast, and a mist descended, accompanied by a drizzling rain. The country through which we passed was very picturesque. At about two in the afternoon we could descry through the mist the small fishing-town of Santa Marta on our left, with its beautiful bay. Travelling along the summit of a line of hills, we presently entered a chestnut forest, which appeared to be without limit: the rain still descended, and kept up a ceaseless pattering among the broad green leaves. “This is the commencement of the autumnal rains,” said the guide. “Many is the wetting that you will get, my masters, before you reach Oviedo.” “Have you ever been as far as Oviedo?” I demanded. “No,” he replied, “and once only to Rivadeo, the place to which I am now conducting you, and I tell you frankly that we shall soon be in wildernesses where the way is hard to find, especially at night, and amidst rain and waters. I wish I were fairly back to Ferrol, for I like not this route, which is the worst in Galicia, in more respects than one; but where my master’s pony goes, there must I go too; such is the life of us guides.” I shrugged my shoulders at this intelligence, which was by no means cheering, but made no answer.

[12] A little town charmingly situated on a little bay at the mouth of the river Eo, which divides Galicia from Asturias, famous for oysters and salmon.

At length, about nightfall, we emerged from the forest, and presently descended into a deep valley at the foot of lofty hills.

"Where are we now?" I demanded of the guide, as we crossed a rude bridge at the bottom of the valley, down which a rivulet swollen by the rain foamed and roared. "In the valley of Coisa Doiro," [13] he replied; "and it is my advice that we stay here for the night and do not venture among those hills, through which lies the path to Viveiro; for as soon as we get there, *adios*! I shall be bewildered, which will prove the destruction of us all." "Is there a village nigh?" "Yes, the village is right before us, and we shall be there in a moment." We soon reached the village, which stood amongst some tall trees at the entrance of a pass which led up amongst the hills. Antonio dismounted, and entered two or three of the cabins, but presently came to me, saying, "We cannot stay here, *mon maître*, without being devoured by vermin; we had better be amongst the hills than in this place. There is neither fire nor light in these cabins, and the rain is streaming through the roofs." The guide, however, refused to proceed. "I could scarcely find my way amongst those hills by daylight," he cried surlily, "much less at night, 'midst storm and *bretima*." We procured some wine and maize bread from one of the cottages. Whilst we were partaking of these, Antonio said, "*Mon maître*, the best thing we can do in our present situation is to hire some fellow of this village to conduct us through the hills to Viveiro. There are no beds in this place, and if we lie down in the litter in our damp clothes we shall catch a tertian of Galicia. [14] Our present guide is of no service; we must therefore find another to do his duty." Without waiting for a reply, he flung down the crust of *broa* which he was munching and disappeared. I subsequently learned that he went to the cottage of the *alcalde*, and demanded, in the queen's name, a guide for the Greek ambassador, who was benighted on his way to the Asturias. In about ten minutes I again saw him, attended by the local functionary, who, to my surprise, made me a profound bow, and stood bare-headed in the rain. "His excellency," shouted Antonio, "is in need of a guide to Viveiro. People of our description are not compelled to pay for any service which they may require; however, as his excellency has bowels of compassion, he is willing to give three *pesetas* to any competent person who will accompany him to Viveiro, and as much bread and wine as he can eat and drink on his arrival." "His excellency shall be served," said the alcalde; "however, as the way is long and the path is bad, and there is much *bretima* amongst the hills, it appears to me that, besides the bread and wine, his excellency can do no less than offer four pesetas to the guide who may be willing to accompany him to Viveiro; and I know no one better than my own son-in-law, Juanito." "Content, *Señor Alcalde*," I replied; "produce the guide, and the extra *peseta* shall be forthcoming in due season."

Soon appeared Juanito with a lantern in his hand. We instantly set forward. The two guides began conversing in Gallegan. "*Mon maître*," said Antonio, "this new scoundrel is asking the old one what he thinks we have got in our portmanteaus." Then, without awaiting my answer, he shouted, "Pistols, ye barbarians! Pistols, as you shall learn to your cost, if you do not cease speaking in that gibberish and converse in Castilian." The Gallegans were silent, and presently the first guide dropped behind, whilst the other with the lantern moved before. "Keep in the rear," said Antonio to the former, "and at a distance: know one thing, moreover, that I can see behind as well as before. *Mon maître*," said he to me, "I don't suppose these fellows will attempt to do us any harm, more especially as they do not know each other; it is well, however, to separate them, for this is a time and place which might tempt any one to commit robbery and murder too."

The rain still continued to fall uninterruptedly, the path was rugged and precipitous, and the night was so dark that we could only see indistinctly the hills which surrounded us. Once or twice our guide seemed to have lost his way: he stopped, muttered to himself, raised his lantern on high, and would then walk slowly and hesitatingly forward. In this manner we proceeded for three or four

[13] Signifying in Portugese or Galician, "A thing of gold."

[14] Tertian ague, or intermittent three-day fever.

hours, when I asked the guide how far we were from Viveiro. “I do not know exactly where we are, your worship,” he replied, “though I believe we are in the route. We can scarcely, however, be less than two mad leagues from Viveiro.” “Then we shall not arrive there before morning,” interrupted Antonio, “for a mad league of Galicia means at least two of Castile; and perhaps we are doomed never to arrive there, if the way thither leads down this precipice.” As he spoke, the guide seemed to descend into the bowels of the earth. “Stop,” said I; “where are you going?” “To Viveiro, *Senhor*,” replied the fellow: “this is the way to Viveiro; there is no other. I now know where we are.” The light of the lantern shone upon the dark red features of the guide, who had turned round to reply, as he stood some yards down the side of a dingle or ravine overgrown with thick trees, beneath whose leafy branches a frightfully steep path descended. I dismounted from the pony, and delivering the bridle to the other guide, said, “Here is your master’s horse; if you please you may lead him down that abyss, but as for myself I wash my hands of the matter.” The fellow, without a word of reply, vaulted into the saddle, and with a *vamos*, *Perico*! [15] to the pony, impelled the creature to the descent. “Come, *Senhor*,” said he with the lantern, “there is no time to be lost; my light will be presently extinguished, and this is the worst bit in the whole road.” I thought it very probable that he was about to lead us to some den of cut-throats, where we might be sacrificed; but, taking courage, I seized our own horse by the bridle, and followed the fellow down the ravine amidst rocks and brambles. The descent lasted nearly ten minutes, and ere we had entirely accomplished it, the light in the lantern went out, and we remained in nearly total darkness.

Encouraged, however, by the guide, who assured us there was no danger, we at length reached the bottom of the ravine; here we encountered a rill of water, through which we were compelled to wade as high as the knee. In the midst of the water I looked up and caught a glimpse of the heavens through the branches of the trees, which all around clothed the shelving sides of the ravine, and completely embowered the channel of the stream: to a place more strange and replete with gloom and horror no benighted traveller ever found his way. After a short pause we commenced scaling the opposite bank, which we did not find so steep as the other, and a few minutes’ exertion brought us to the top.

Shortly afterwards the rain abated, and the moon arising, cast a dim light through the watery mists. The way had become less precipitous, and in about two hours we descended to the shore of an extensive creek, along which we proceeded till we reached a spot where many boats and barges lay with their keels upward upon the sand. Presently we beheld before us the walls of Viveiro, upon which the moon was shedding its sickly lustre. We entered by a lofty and seemingly ruinous archway, and the guide conducted us at once to the *posada*.

Every person in Viveiro appeared to be buried in profound slumber; not so much as a dog saluted us with his bark. After much knocking we were admitted into the *posada*, a large and dilapidated edifice. We had scarcely housed ourselves and horses when the rain began to fall with yet more violence than before, attended with much thunder and lightning. Antonio and I, exhausted with fatigue, betook ourselves to flock beds in a ruinous chamber, into which the rain penetrated through many a cranny, whilst the guides ate bread and drank wine till the morning.

When I arose I was gladdened by the sight of a fine day. Antonio forthwith prepared a savoury breakfast of stewed fowl, of which we stood in much need after the ten-league journey of the preceding day over the ways which I have attempted to describe. I then walked out to view the town, which consists of little more than one long street, on the side of a steep mountain thickly clad with forest and fruit-trees. At about ten we continued our journey, accompanied by our first guide, the other having returned to Coisa Doiro some hours previously.

Our route throughout this day was almost constantly within sight of the shores of the Cantabrian sea, whose windings we followed. The country was barren, and in many parts covered with huge

[15] “Come along, my little Parrot!”

stones: cultivated spots, however, were to be seen, where vines were growing. We met with but few human habitations. We, however, journeyed on cheerfully, for the sun was once more shining in full brightness, gilding the wild moors, and shining upon the waters of the distant sea, which lay in unruffled calmness.

At evening fall we were in the neighbourhood of the shore, with a range of wood-covered hills on our right. Our guide led us towards a creek bordered by a marsh, but he soon stopped, and declared that he did not know whither he was conducting us.

"*Mon maître*," said Antonio, "let us be our own guides; it is, as you see, of no use to depend upon this fellow, whose whole science consists in leading people into quagmires."

We therefore turned aside, and proceeded along the marsh for a considerable distance, till we reached a narrow path which led us into a thick wood, where we soon became completely bewildered. On a sudden, after wandering about a considerable time, we heard the noise of water, and presently the clack of a wheel. Following the sound, we arrived at a low stone mill, built over a brook; here we stopped and shouted, but no answer was returned. "The place is deserted," said Antonio; "here, however, is a path, which, if we follow it, will doubtless lead us to some human habitation. So we went along the path, which, in about ten minutes, brought us to the door of a cabin, in which we saw lights. Antonio dismounted and opened the door: "Is there any one here who can conduct us to Rivadeo?" he demanded.

"*Senhor*," answered a voice, "Rivadeo is more than five leagues from here, and, moreover, there is a river to cross."

"Then to the next village," continued Antonio.

"I am a *vecino* of the next village, which is on the way to Rivadeo," said another voice, "and I will lead you thither, if you will give me fair words, and, what is better, fair money."

A man now came forth, holding in his hand a large stick. He strode sturdily before us, and in less than half an hour led us out of the wood. In another half-hour he brought us to a group of cabins situated near the sea; he pointed to one of these, and having received a *peseta*, bade us farewell.

The people of the cottage willingly consented to receive us for the night; it was much more cleanly and commodious than the wretched huts of the Gallegan peasantry in general. The ground floor consisted of a keeping room and stable, whilst above was a long loft, in which were some neat and comfortable flock beds. I observed several masts and sails of boats. The family consisted of two brothers, with their wives and families. One was a fisherman; but the other, who appeared to be the principal person, informed me that he had resided for many years in service at Madrid, and, having amassed a small sum, he had at length returned to his native village, where he had purchased some land, which he farmed. All the family used the Castilian language in their common discourse, and on inquiry I learned that the Gallegan was not much spoken in that neighbourhood. I have forgotten the name of this village, which is situated on the estuary of the Foz, which rolls down from Mondonedo. In the morning we crossed this estuary in a large boat, with our horses, and about noon arrived at Rivadeo.

"Now, your worship," said the guide, who had accompanied us from Ferrol, "I have brought you as far as I bargained, and a hard journey it has been: I therefore hope you will suffer Perico and myself to remain here to-night at your expense, and to-morrow we will go back; at present we are both sorely tired."

"I never mounted a better pony than Perico," said I, "and never met with a worse guide than yourself. You appear to be perfectly ignorant of the country, and have done nothing but bring us into difficulties. You may, however, stay here for the night, as you say you are tired, and to-morrow you may return to Ferrol, where I counsel you to adopt some other trade." This was said at the door of the *posada* of Rivadeo.

"Shall I lead the horses to a stable?" said the fellow.

"As you please," said I.

Antonio looked after him for a moment, as he was leading the animals away, and then, shaking his head, followed slowly after. In about a quarter of an hour he returned, laden with the furniture of our own horse, and with a smile upon his countenance. "*Mon maître*," said he, "I have throughout the journey had a bad opinion of this fellow, and now I have detected him: his motive in requesting permission to stay was a desire to purloin something from us. He was very officious in the stable about our horse, and I now miss the new leathern girth which secured the saddle, and which I observed him looking at frequently on the road. He has by this time doubtless hid it somewhere; we are quite secure of him, however, for he has not yet received the hire for the pony, nor the gratuity for himself."

The guide returned just as he had concluded speaking. Dishonesty is always suspicious. The fellow cast a glance upon us, and probably beholding in our countenances something which he did not like, he suddenly said, "Give me the horse-hire and my own *propina*, for Perico and I wish to be off instantly."

"How is this?" said I; "I thought you and Perico were both fatigued, and wished to rest here for the night: you have soon recovered from your weariness."

"I have thought over the matter," said the fellow, "and my master will be angry if I loiter here: pay up, therefore, and let us go."

"Certainly," said I, "if you wish it. Is the horse furniture all right?"

"Quite so," said he; "I delivered it all to your servant."

"It is all here," said Antonio, "with the exception of the leathern girth."

"I have not got it," said the guide.

"Of course not," said I. "Let us proceed to the stable; we shall perhaps find it there."

To the stable we went, which we searched through: no girth, however, was forthcoming. "He has got it buckled round his middle beneath his pantaloons, *mon maître*," said Antonio, whose eyes were moving about like those of a lynx; "I saw the protuberance as he stooped down. However, let us take no notice: he is here surrounded by his countrymen, who, if we were to seize him, might perhaps take his part. As I said before, he is in our power, as we have not paid him."

The fellow now began to talk in Gallegan to the bystanders (several persons having collected), wishing the *Denho* to take him if he knew anything of the missing property. Nobody, however, seemed inclined to take his part; and those who listened only shrugged their shoulders. We returned to the portal of the *posada*, the fellow following us, clamouring for the horse-hire and *propina*. We made him no answer, and at length he went away, threatening to apply to the *justicia*; in about ten minutes, however, he came running back with the girth in his hand. "I have just found it," said he, "in the street: your servant dropped it."

I took the leather and proceeded very deliberately to count out the sum to which the horse-hire amounted, and having delivered it to him in the presence of witnesses, I said, "During the whole journey you have been of no service to us whatever; nevertheless, you have fared like ourselves, and have had all you could desire to eat and drink. I intended, on your leaving us, to present you, moreover, with a *propina* of two dollars; but since, notwithstanding our kind treatment, you endeavoured to pillage us, I will not give you a *cuarto*: go, therefore, about your business."

All the audience expressed their satisfaction at this sentence, and told him that he had been rightly-served, and that he was a disgrace to Galicia. Two or three women crossed themselves, and asked him if he was not afraid that the *Denho*, whom he had invoked, would take him away. At last, a respectable-looking man said to him, "Are you not ashamed to have attempted to rob two innocent strangers?"

"Strangers!" roared the fellow, who was by this time foaming with rage, "innocent strangers, *carracho*! they know more of Spain and Galicia, too, than the whole of us. Oh, *Denho*, that servant is no man, but a wizard, a *nuveiro*. – Where is Perico?"

He mounted Perico, and proceeded forthwith to another *posada*. The tale, however, of his dishonesty had gone before him, and no person would house him; whereupon he returned on his steps,

and seeing me looking out of the window of the house, he gave a savage shout, and shaking his fist at me, galloped out of the town, the people pursuing him with hootings and revilings.

CHAPTER XXXII

Martin of Rivadeo – The Factious Mare – Asturians – Luarca – The Seven Bellotas – Hermits – The Asturian's Tale – Strange Guests – The Big Servant – Batuschca.

"What may your business be?" said I to a short, thick, merry-faced fellow in a velveteen jerkin and canvas pantaloons, who made his way into my apartment in the dusk of the evening.

"I am Martin of Rivadeo, your worship," replied the man, "an *alquilador* by profession. I am told that you want a horse for your journey into the Asturias to-morrow, and of course a guide: now, if that be the case, I counsel you to hire myself and mare."

"I am become tired of guides," I replied; "so much so that I was thinking of purchasing a pony, and proceeding without any guide at all. The last which we had was an infamous character."

"So I have been told, your worship, and it was well for the *bribon* that I was not in Rivadeo when the affair to which you allude occurred. But he was gone with the pony Perico before I came back, or I would have bled the fellow to a certainty with my knife. He is a disgrace to the profession, which is one of the most honourable and ancient in the world. Perico himself must have been ashamed of him, for Perico, though a pony, is a gentleman, one of many capacities, and well known upon the roads. He is only inferior to my mare."

"Are you well acquainted with the road to Oviedo?" I demanded.

"I am not, your worship; that is, no farther than Luarca, [16] which is the first day's journey. I do not wish to deceive you, therefore let me go with you no farther than that place; though perhaps I might serve for the whole journey, for though I am unacquainted with the country, I have a tongue in my head, and nimble feet to run and ask questions. I will, however, answer for myself no farther than Luarca, where you can please yourselves. Your being strangers is what makes me wish to accompany you, for I like the conversation of strangers, from whom I am sure to gain information both entertaining and profitable. I wish, moreover, to convince you that we guides of Galicia are not all thieves, which I am sure you will not suppose if you only permit me to accompany you as far as Luarca."

I was so much struck with the fellow's good humour and frankness, and more especially by the originality of character displayed in almost every sentence which he uttered, that I readily engaged him to guide us to Luarca; whereupon he left me, promising to be ready with his mare at eight next morning.

Rivadeo is one of the principal seaports of Galicia, and is admirably situated for commerce, on a deep firth, into which the river Mirando [17] debouches. It contains many magnificent buildings, and an extensive square or *plaza*, which is planted with trees. I observed several vessels in the harbour; and the population, which is rather numerous, exhibited none of those marks of misery and dejection which I had lately observed among the Ferrolese.

On the morrow Martin of Rivadeo made his appearance at the appointed hour with his mare. It was a lean haggard animal, not much larger than a pony; it had good points, however, and was very clean in its hinder legs, and Martin insisted that it was the best animal of its kind in all Spain. "It is a factious mare," said he, "and I believe an Alavese. When the Carlists came here it fell lame, and they left it behind, and I purchased it for a dollar. It is not lame now, however, as you shall soon see."

We had now reached the firth which divides Galicia from the Asturias. A kind of barge was lying about two yards from the side of the quay, waiting to take us over. Towards this Martin led his

[16] A town on the sea-coast about half-way between Rivadeo and Aviles.

[17] Query. See note, p. 45.

mare, and giving an encouraging shout, the creature without any hesitation sprang over the intervening space into the barge. “I told you she was a *facciosa*,” said Martin; “none but a factious animal would have taken such a leap.”

We all embarked in the barge and crossed over the firth, which is in this place nearly a mile broad, to Castro Pol, [18] the first town in the Asturias. I now mounted the factious mare, whilst Antonio followed on my own horse. Martin led the way, exchanging jests with every person whom he met on the road, and occasionally enlivening the way with an extemporaneous song.

We were now in the Asturias, and about noon we reached Navias, a small fishing-town, situate on a *ria* or firth: in the neighbourhood are ragged mountains called the Sierra de Buron, which stand in the shape of a semicircle. We saw a small vessel in the harbour, which we subsequently learned was from the Basque provinces, come for a cargo of cider or *sagadua*, the beverage so dearly loved by the Basques. As we passed along the narrow street, Antonio was hailed with an “*Ola*!” from a species of shop in which three men, apparently shoemakers, were seated. He stopped for some time to converse with them, and when he joined us at the *posada* where we halted, I asked him who they were: “*Mon maître*,” said he, “*ce sont des messieurs de ma connoissance*. I have been fellow-servant at different times with all three; and I tell you beforehand, that we shall scarcely pass through a village in this country where I shall not find an acquaintance. All the Asturians, at some period of their lives, make a journey to Madrid, where, if they can obtain a situation, they remain until they have scraped up sufficient to turn to advantage in their own country; and as I have served in all the great houses in Madrid, I am acquainted with the greatest part of them. I have nothing to say against the Asturians, save that they are close and penurious whilst at service; but they are not thieves, neither at home nor abroad, and though we must have our wits about us in their country, I have heard we may travel from one end of it to the other without the slightest fear of being either robbed or ill-treated, which is not the case in Galicia, where we were always in danger of having our throats cut.”

Leaving Navias, we proceeded through a wild desolate country, till we reached the pass of Baralla, which lies up the side of a huge wall of rocks, which at a distance appear of a light green colour, though perfectly bare of herbage or plants of any description.

“This pass,” said Martin of Rivadeo, “bears a very evil reputation, and I should not like to travel it after sunset. It is not infested by robbers, but by things much worse, the *duendes* of two friars of Saint Francis. It is said that in the old time, long before the convents were suppressed, two friars of the order of Saint Francis left their convent to beg. It chanced that they were very successful, but as they were returning at nightfall by this pass, they had a quarrel about what they had collected, each insisting that he had done his duty better than the other; at last, from high words they fell to abuse, and from abuse to blows. What do you think these demons of friars did? They took off their cloaks, and at the end of each they made a knot, in which they placed a large stone, and with these they thrashed and belaboured each other till both fell dead. Master, I know not which are the worst plagues, friars, curates, or sparrows:

> ‘May the Lord God preserve us from evil birds three:
> From all friars and curates and sparrows that be;
> For the sparrows eat up all the corn that we sow,
> The friars drink down all the wine that we grow,
> Whilst the curates have all the fair dames at their nod:
> From these three evil curses preserve us, Lord God.’”

In about two hours from this time we reached Luarca, the situation of which is most singular. It stands in a deep hollow, whose sides are so precipitous that it is impossible to descry the town until

[18] On the right bank of the Eo, over against Rivadeo.

you stand just above it. At the northern extremity of this hollow is a small harbour, the sea entering by a narrow cleft. We found a large and comfortable *posada*, and by the advice of Martin, made inquiry for a fresh guide and horse; we were informed, however, that all the horses of the place were absent, and that if we waited for their return, we must tarry for two days. "I had a presentiment," said Martin, "when we entered Luarca, that we were not doomed to part at present. You must now hire my mare and me as far as Gijon, [19] from whence there is a conveyance to Oviedo. To tell you the truth, I am by no means sorry that the guides are absent, for I am pleased with your company, as I make no doubt you are with mine. I will now go and write a letter to my wife at Rivadeo, informing her that she must not expect to see me back for several days." He then went out of the room, singing the following stanza: —

"A handless man a letter did write,
A dumb dictated it word for word:
The person who read it had lost his sight,
And deaf was he who listened and heard." [20]

Early the next morning we emerged from the hollow of Luarca; about an hour's riding brought us to Caneiro, a deep and romantic valley of rocks, shaded by tall chestnut trees. Through the midst of this valley rushes a rapid stream, which we crossed in a boat. "There is not such a stream for trout in all the Asturias," said the ferryman. "Look down into the waters and observe the large stones over which it flows; now in the proper season, and in fine weather, you cannot see those stones for the multitudes of fish which cover them."

Leaving the valley behind us, we entered into a wild and dreary country, stony and mountainous. The day was dull and gloomy, and all around looked sad and melancholy. "Are we in the way for Gijon and Oviedo?" demanded Martin of an ancient female, who stood at the door of a cottage.

"For Gijon and Oviedo!" replied the crone; "many is the weary step you will have to make before you reach Gijon and Oviedo. You must first of all crack the *bellotas*: you are just below them."

"What does she mean by cracking the *bellotas*?" demanded I of Martin of Rivadeo.

"Did your worship never hear of the seven *bellotas*?" replied our guide. "I can scarcely tell you what they are, as I have never seen them; I believe they are seven hills which we have to cross, and are called *bellotas* from some resemblance to acorns which it is fancied they bear. I have often heard of these acorns, and am not sorry that I have now an opportunity of seeing them, though it is said that they are rather hard things for horses to digest."

The Asturian mountains in this part rise to a considerable altitude. They consist for the most part of dark granite, covered here and there with a thin layer of earth. They approach very near to the sea, to which they slope down in broken ridges, between which are deep and precipitous defiles, each with its rivulet, the tribute of the hills to the salt flood. The road traverses these defiles. There are seven of them, which are called, in the language of the country, *Las siete bellotas*. Of all these the most terrible is the midmost, down which rolls an impetuous torrent. At the upper end of it rises a precipitous wall of rock, black as soot, to the height of several hundred yards; its top, as we passed, was enveloped with a veil of *bretima*. From this gorge branch off, on either side, small dingles or glens, some of them so overgrown with trees and copsewood, that the eye is unable to penetrate the obscurity beyond a few yards.

"Fine places would some of these dingles prove for hermitages," said I to Martin of Rivadeo. "Holy men might lead a happy life there on roots and water, and pass many years absorbed in heavenly contemplation without ever being disturbed by the noise and turmoil of the world."

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[19] The port of Oviedo.

[20] See the Glossary, *s. v.* Copla.

"True, your worship," replied Martin; "and perhaps on that very account there are no hermitages in the *barrancos* of the seven *bellotas*. Our hermits had little inclination for roots and water, and had no kind of objection to be occasionally disturbed in their meditations. *Vaya*! I never yet saw a hermitage that was not hard by some rich town or village, or was not a regular resort for all the idle people in the neighbourhood. Hermits are not fond of living in dingles, amongst wolves and foxes; for how in that case could they dispose of their poultry? A hermit of my acquaintance left, when he died, a fortune of seven hundred dollars to his niece, the greatest part of which he scraped up by fattening turkeys."

At the top of this *bellota* we found a wretched *venta*, where we refreshed ourselves, and then continued our journey. Late in the afternoon we cleared the last of these difficult passes. The wind began now to rise, bearing on its wings a drizzling rain. We passed by Soto Luino, and shaping our course through a wild but picturesque country, we found ourselves about nightfall at the foot of a steep hill, up which led a narrow bridle-way, amidst a grove of lofty trees. Long before we had reached the top it had become quite dark, and the rain had increased considerably. We stumbled along in the obscurity, leading our horses, which were occasionally down on their knees, owing to the slipperiness of the path. At last we accomplished the ascent in safety, and pushing briskly forward, we found ourselves in about half an hour at the entrance of Muros, a large village situated just on the declivity of the farther side of the hill.

A blazing fire in the *posada* soon dried our wet garments, and in some degree recompensed us for the fatigues which we had undergone in scrambling up the *bellotas*. A rather singular place was this same *posada* of Muros. It was a large rambling house, with a spacious kitchen, or common room, on the ground floor. Above stairs was a large dining apartment, with an immense oak table, and furnished with cumbrous leathern chairs with high backs, apparently three centuries old at least. Communicating with this apartment was a wooden gallery, open to the air, which led to a small chamber, in which I was destined to sleep, and which contained an old-fashioned tester-bed with curtains. It was just one of those inns which romance writers are so fond of introducing in their descriptions, especially when the scene of adventure lies in Spain. The host was a talkative Asturian.

The wind still howled, and the rain descended in torrents. I sat before the fire in a very drowsy state, from which I was presently aroused by the conversation of the host. "*Señor*," said he, "it is now three years since I beheld foreigners in my house. I remember it was about this time of the year, and just such a night as this, that two men on horseback arrived here. What was singular, they came without any guide. Two more strange-looking individuals I never yet beheld with eye-sight. I shall never forget them. The one was as tall as a giant, with much tawny moustache, like the coat of a badger, growing about his mouth. He had a huge ruddy face, and looked dull and stupid, as he no doubt was, for when I spoke to him he did not seem to understand, and answered in a jabber, *valgame Dios*! [21] so wild and strange, that I remained staring at him with mouth and eyes open. The other was neither tall nor red-faced, nor had he hair about his mouth, and indeed he had very little upon his head. He was very diminutive, and looked like a *jorobado*; but, *valgame Dios*! such eyes, like wild cats', so sharp and full of malice. He spoke as good Spanish as I myself do, and yet he was no Spaniard. Spaniard never looked like that man. He was dressed in a *zamarra*, with much silver and embroidery, and wore an Andalusian hat, and I soon found that he was master, and that the other was servant.

"*Valgame Dios*! what an evil disposition had that same foreign *jorobado*! and yet he had much grace, much humour, and said occasionally to me such comical things, that I was fit to die of laughter. So he sat down to supper in the room above, and I may as well tell you here, that he slept in the same chamber where your worship will sleep to-night, and his servant waited behind his chair. Well, I had curiosity, so I sat myself down at the table too, without asking leave. Why should I? I was in my own house, and an Asturian is fit company for a king, and is often of better blood. Oh, what a

[21] "God bless me!"

strange supper was that. If the servant made the slightest mistake in helping him, up would start the *jorobado*, jump upon his chair, and seizing the big giant by the hair, would cuff him on both sides of his face till I was afraid his teeth would have fallen out. The giant, however, did not seem to care about it much. He was used to it, I suppose. *Valgame Dios*! if he had been a Spaniard he would not have submitted to it so patiently. But what surprised me most was, that after beating his servant the master would sit down, and the next moment would begin conversing and laughing with him as if nothing had happened, and the giant also would laugh and converse with his master, for all the world as if he had not been beaten.

"You may well suppose, *Señor*, that I understood nothing of their discourse, for it was all in that strange unchristian tongue in which the giant answered me when I spoke to him; the sound of it is still ringing in my ears. It was nothing like other languages. Not like Bascuen, [22] not like the language in which your worship speaks to my namesake *Signor* Antonio here. *Valgame Dios*! I can compare it to nothing but the sound a person makes when he rinses his mouth with water. There is one word which I think I still remember, for it was continually proceeding from the giant's lips, but his master never used it.

"But the strangest part of the story is yet to be told. The supper was ended, and the night was rather advanced; the rain still beat against the windows, even as it does at this moment. Suddenly the *jorobado* pulled out his watch. *Valgame Dios*! such a watch! I will tell you one thing, *Señor*, that I could purchase all the Asturias, and Muros besides, with the brilliants which shone about the sides of that same watch; the room wanted no lamp, I trow, so great was the splendour which they cast. So the *jorobado* looked at his watch, and then said to me, 'I shall go to rest.' He then took the lamp, and went through the gallery to his room, followed by his big servant. Well, *Señor*, I cleared away the things, and then waited below for the servant, for whom I had prepared a comfortable bed, close by my own. *Señor*, I waited patiently for an hour, till at last my patience was exhausted, and I ascended to the supper apartment, and passed through the gallery till I came to the door of the strange guest. *Señor*, what do you think I saw at the door?"

"How should I know?" I replied. "His riding-boots, perhaps."

"No, *Señor*, I did not see his riding-boots; but, stretched on the floor with his head against the door, so that it was impossible to open it without disturbing him, lay the big servant fast asleep, his immense legs reaching nearly the whole length of the gallery. I crossed myself, as well I might, for the wind was howling even as it is now, and the rain was rushing down into the gallery in torrents; yet there lay the big servant fast asleep, without any covering, without any pillow, not even a log, stretched out before his master's door.

"*Señor*, I got little rest that night, for I said to myself, I have evil wizards in my house, folks who are not human. Once or twice I went up and peeped into the gallery, but there still lay the big servant fast asleep; so I crossed myself, and returned to my bed again."

"Well," said I, "and what occurred next day?"

"Nothing particular occurred next day: the *jorobado* came down and said comical things to me in good Spanish; and the big servant came down, but whatever he said, and he did not say much, I understood not, for it was in that disastrous jabber. They stayed with me throughout the day till after supper-time, and then the *jorobado* gave me a gold ounce, and mounting their horses, they both departed as strangely as they had come, in the dark night, I know not whither."

"Is that all?" I demanded.

"No, *Señor*, it is not all; for I was right in supposing them evil *brujos*: the very next day an express arrived, and a great search was made after them, and I was arrested for having harboured them. This occurred just after the present wars had commenced. It was said they were spies and emissaries of I don't know what nation, and that they had been in all parts of the Asturias, holding

[22] I.e. *Bascuence*, or *Vascuence*, the Basque language.

conferences with some of the disaffected. They escaped, however, and were never heard of more, though the animals which they rode were found without their riders, wandering amongst the hills; they were common ponies, and were of no value. As for the *brujos*, it is believed that they embarked in some small vessel which was lying concealed in one of the *rias* of the coast."

Myself. – What was the word which you continually heard proceeding from the lips of the big servant, and which you think you can remember?

Host. —*Señor*, it is now three years since I heard it, and at times I can remember it, and at others not; sometimes I have started up in my sleep repeating it. Stay, *Señor*, I have it now at the point of my tongue: it was *Patusca*.

Myself. —*Batuschca*, you mean; the men were Russians.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Oviedo – The Ten Gentlemen – The Swiss again – Modest Request – The Robbers – Episcopal Benevolence – The Cathedral – Portrait of Feijoo.

I must now take a considerable stride in my journey, no less than from Muros to Oviedo, contenting myself with observing, that we proceeded from Muros to Velez, [23] and from thence to Gijon, where our guide Martin bade us farewell, and returned with his mare to Rivadeo. The honest fellow did not part without many expressions of regret; indeed he even expressed a desire that I should take him and his mare into my service. "For," said he, "I have a great desire to run through all Spain, and even the world: and I am sure I shall never have a better opportunity than by attaching myself to your worship's skirts." On my reminding him, however, of his wife and family, for he had both, he said, "True, true, I had forgotten them: happy the guide whose only wife and family are a mare and foal."

Oviedo is about three leagues from Gijon. Antonio rode the horse, whilst I proceeded thither in a kind of diligence which runs daily between the two towns. The road is good, but mountainous. I arrived safely at the capital of the Asturias, although at a rather unpropitious season, for the din of war was at the gate, and there was the cry of the captains and the shouting. [24] Castile, at the time of which I am writing, was in the hands of the Carlists, who had captured and plundered Valladolid in much the same manner as they had Segovia some time before. They were every day expected to march on Oviedo, in which case they might perhaps have experienced some resistance, a considerable body of troops being stationed there, who had erected some redoubts, and strongly fortified several of the convents, especially that of Santa Clara de la Vega. All minds were in a state of feverish anxiety and suspense, more especially as no intelligence arrived from Madrid, which by the last accounts was said to be occupied by the bands of Cabrera and Palillos.

So it came to pass that one night I found myself in the ancient town of Oviedo, in a very large, scantily furnished, and remote room in an ancient *posada*, formerly a palace of the counts of Santa Cruz. It was past ten, and the rain was descending in torrents. I was writing, but suddenly ceased on hearing numerous footsteps ascending the creaking stairs which led to my apartment. The door was flung open, and in walked nine men of tall stature, marshalled by a little hunchbacked personage. They were all muffled in the long cloaks of Spain, but I instantly knew by their demeanour that they were *caballeros*, or gentlemen. They placed themselves in a rank before the table where I was sitting. Suddenly and simultaneously they all flung back their cloaks, and I perceived that every one bore a book in his hand; a book which I knew full well. After a pause, which I was unable to break, for I sat lost in astonishment, and almost conceived myself to be visited by apparitions, the hunchback, advancing somewhat before the rest, said in soft silvery tones, "*Señor* Cavalier, was it you who brought this book to the Asturias?" I now supposed that they were the civil authorities of the place come to take me into custody, and, rising from my seat, I exclaimed, "It certainly was I, and it is my glory to have done so. The book is the New Testament of God: I wish it was in my power to bring a million." "I heartily wish so too," said the little personage with a sigh. "Be under no apprehension, Sir Cavalier; these gentlemen are my friends. We have just purchased these books in the shop where you placed them for sale, and have taken the liberty of calling upon you, in order to return you our thanks for the treasure you have brought us. I hope you can furnish us with the Old Testament also." I replied, that I was sorry to inform him that at present it was entirely out of my power to comply with his wish, as I had no Old Testaments in my possession, but did not despair of procuring some speedily

[23] Query, Aviles?

[24] Job xxxix. 25: ".. the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."

from England. He then asked me a great many questions concerning my biblical travels in Spain, and my success, and the views entertained by the Society with respect to Spain, adding, that he hoped we should pay particular attention to the Asturias, which he assured me was the best ground in the Peninsula for our labour. After about half an hour's conversation, he suddenly said, in the English language, "Good night, sir," wrapped his cloak around him, and walked out as he had come. His companions, who had hitherto not uttered a word, all repeated, "Good night, sir," and, adjusting their cloaks, followed him.

In order to explain this strange scene, I must state, that in the morning I had visited the petty bookseller of the place, Longoria, and having arranged preliminaries with him, I sent him in the evening a package of forty Testaments, all I possessed, with some advertisements. At the time he assured me that, though he was willing to undertake the sale, there was, nevertheless, not a prospect of success, as a whole month had elapsed since he had sold a book of any description, on account of the uncertainty of the times, and the poverty which pervaded the land; I therefore felt much dispirited. This incident, however, admonished me not to be cast down when things look gloomiest, as the hand of the Lord is generally then most busy: that men may learn to perceive, that whatever good is accomplished is not their work, but His.

Two or three days after this adventure, I was once more seated in my large scantily-furnished room; it was about ten, of a dark melancholy morning, and the autumnal rain was again falling. I had just breakfasted, and was about to sit down to my journal, when the door was flung open and in bounded Antonio.

"*Mon maître*," said he, quite breathless, "who do you think has arrived?"

"The Pretender, I suppose," said I, in some trepidation; "if so, we are prisoners."

"Bah, bah!" said Antonio, "it is not the Pretender, but one worth twenty of him; it is the Swiss of Saint James."

"Benedict Mol, the Swiss!" said I. "What! has he found the treasure? But how did he come? How is he dressed?"

"*Mon maître*," said Antonio, "he came on foot, if we may judge by his shoes, through which his toes are sticking; and as for his dress, he is in most villanous apparel."

"There must be some mystery in this," said I. "Where is he at present?"

"Below, *mon maître*," replied Antonio; "he came in quest of us. But I no sooner saw him, than I hurried away to let you know."

In a few minutes Benedict Mol found his way upstairs. He was, as Antonio had remarked, in most villanous apparel, and nearly barefooted; his old Andalusian hat was dripping with rain.

"*Och*, *lieber Herr*," said Benedict, "how rejoiced I am to see you again! Oh, the sight of your countenance almost repays me for all the miseries I have undergone since I parted with you at Saint James."

Myself. – I can scarcely believe that I really see you here at Oviedo. What motive can have induced you to come to such an out-of-the-way place from such an immense distance?

Benedict. —Lieber Herr, I will sit down and tell you all that has befallen me. Some few days after I saw you last, the *canonigo* persuaded me to go to the captain-general to apply for permission to disinter the *Schatz*, and also to crave assistance. So I saw the captain-general, who at first received me very kindly, asked me several questions, and told me to come again. So I continued visiting him till he would see me no longer, and, do what I might, I could not obtain a glance of him. The canon now became impatient, more especially as he had given me a few *pesetas* out of the charities of the church. He frequently called me a *bribon* and impostor. At last, one morning I went to him, and said that I proposed to return to Madrid, in order to lay the matter before the government, and requested that he would give me a certificate to the effect that I had performed a pilgrimage to Saint James, which I imagined would be of assistance to me upon the way, as it would enable me to beg with some colour of authority. He no sooner heard this request, than, without saying a word or allowing

me a moment to put myself on my defence, he sprang upon me like a tiger, clasping my throat so hard that I thought he would have strangled me. I am a Swiss, however, and a man of Lucerne, and when I had recovered myself a little, I had no difficulty in flinging him off; I then threatened him with my staff and went away. He followed me to the gate with the most horrid curses, saying, that if I presumed to return again, he would have me thrown at once into prison as a thief and a heretic. So I went in quest of yourself, *lieber Herr*, but they told me that you were departed for Corunna; I then set out for Corunna after you.

Myself. – And what befell you on the road?

Benedict. – I will tell you: about half-way between Saint James and Corunna, as I was walking along, thinking of the *Schatz*, I heard a loud galloping, and looking around me I saw two men on horseback coming across the field with the swiftness of the wind, and making directly for me. "*Lieber Gott*," said I, "these are thieves, these are factious;" and so they were. They came up to me in a moment and bade me stand; so I flung down my staff, took off my hat, and saluted them. "Good day, *caballeros*," said I to them. "Good day, countryman," said they to me, and then we stood staring at each other for more than a minute. *Lieber Himmel*, [25] I never saw such robbers; so finely dressed, so well armed, and mounted so bravely on two fiery little *hakkas*, [26] that looked as if they could have taken wing and flown up into the clouds! So we continued staring at each other, till at last one asked me who I was, whence I came, and where I was going. "Gentlemen," said I, "I am a Swiss; I have been to Saint James to perform a religious vow, and am now returning to my own country." I said not a word about the treasure, for I was afraid that they would have shot me at once, conceiving that I carried part of it about me. "Have you any money?" they demanded. "Gentlemen," I replied, "you see how I travel on foot, with my shoes torn to pieces; I should not do so if I had money. I will not deceive you, however; I have a *peseta* and a few *cuartos*;" and thereupon I took out what I had and offered it to them. "Fellow," said they, "we are *caballeros* of Galicia, and do not take *pesetas*, much less *cuartos*. Of what opinion are you? Are you for the queen?" "No, gentlemen," said I, "I am not for the queen; but, at the same time, allow me to tell you that I am not for the king either. I know nothing about the matter; I am a Swiss, and fight neither for nor against anybody unless I am paid." This made them laugh, and then they questioned me about Saint James, and the troops there, and the captain-general; and not to disoblige them, I told them all I knew, and much more. Then one of them, who looked the fiercest and most determined, took his trombone in his hand, and pointing it at me, said, "Had you been a Spaniard, we should have blown your head to shivers, for we should have thought you a spy; but we see you are a foreigner, and believe what you have said. Take, therefore, this *peseta* and go your way; but beware that you tell nobody anything about us, for if you do, *carracho*!" He then discharged his trombone just over my head, so that for a moment I thought myself shot; and then with an awful shout, they both galloped away, their horses leaping over the *barrancos*, as if possessed with many devils.

Myself. – And what happened to you on your arrival at Corunna?

Benedict. – When I arrived at Corunna, I inquired after yourself, *lieber Herr*, and they informed me that, only the day before my arrival, you had departed for Oviedo: and when I heard that, my heart died within me, for I was now at the far end of Galicia, without a friend to help me. For a day or two I knew not what to do; at last I determined to make for the frontier of France, passing through Oviedo in the way, where I hoped to see you, and ask counsel of you. So I begged and bettled among the Germans of Corunna. I, however, got very little from them, only a few *cuarts*, less than the thieves had given me on the road from Saint James, and with these I departed for the Asturias by the way of Mondonedo. *Och*, what a town is that, full of canons, priests, and *pfaffen*, all of them more Carlist than Carlos himself.

[25] "Good heavens!"

[26] I.e. *jacas*.

One day I went to the bishop's palace and spoke to him, telling him I was a pilgrim from Saint James, and requesting assistance. He told me, however, that he could not relieve me, and as for my being a pilgrim from Saint James, he was glad of it, and hoped that it would be of service to my soul. So I left Mondonedo, and got amongst the wild mountains, begging and bettling at the door of every *choza* that I passed; telling all I saw that I was a pilgrim from Saint James, and showing my passport in proof that I had been there. *Lieber Herr*, no person gave me a *cuart*, nor even a piece of *broa*, and both Gallegans and Asturians laughed at Saint James, and told me that his name was no longer a passport in Spain. I should have starved if I had not sometimes plucked an ear or two out of the maize fields; I likewise gathered grapes from the *parras* and berries from the brambles, and in this manner I subsisted till I arrived at the *bellotas*, where I slaughtered a stray kid which I met, and devoured part of the flesh raw, so great was my hunger. It made me, however, very ill; and for two days I lay in a *barranco* half dead and unable to help myself; it was a mercy that I was not devoured by the wolves. I then struck across the country for Oviedo: how I reached it I do not know; I was like one walking in a dream. Last night I slept in an empty hog-sty about two leagues from here, and ere I left it, I fell down on my knees and prayed to God that I might find you, *lieber Herr*, for you were my last hope.

Myself. – And what do you propose to do at present?

Benedict. – What can I say, *lieber Herr*? I know not what to do. I will be guided in everything by your counsel.

Myself. – I shall remain at Oviedo a few days longer, during which time you can lodge at this *posada*, and endeavour to recover from the fatigue of your disastrous journeys; perhaps before I depart, we may hit on some plan to extricate you from your present difficulties.

Oviedo contains about fifteen thousand inhabitants. It is picturesquely situated between two mountains, Morcin and Naranco; the former is very high and rugged, and during the greater part of the year is covered with snow; the sides of the latter are cultivated and planted with vines. The principal ornament of the town is the cathedral, [27] the tower of which is exceedingly lofty, and is perhaps one of the purest specimens of Gothic architecture at present in existence. The interior of the cathedral is neat and appropriate, but simple and unadorned. I observed but one picture, the Conversion of Saint Paul. One of the chapels is a cemetery, in which rest the bones of eleven Gothic kings; to whose souls be peace.

I bore a letter of recommendation from Corunna to a merchant of Oviedo. This person received me very courteously, and generally devoted some portion of every day to showing me the remarkable things of Oviedo.

One morning he thus addressed me: "You have doubtless heard of Feijoo, [28] the celebrated philosophic monk of the order of Saint Benedict, whose writings have so much tended to remove the popular fallacies and superstitions so long cherished in Spain; he is buried in one of our convents, where he passed a considerable portion of his life. Come with me and I will show you his portrait.

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[27] The cathedral at Oviedo is one of the oldest and most interesting foundations in Spain. The first stone was laid by Alfonso II. in 802; the greater part of the existing edifice is of the fourteenth century.But the great glory of Oviedo, entitling it to rank as second among the holy cities of Christian Spain, is the Camara Santa, and the relics therein contained (see Burke's *History of Spain* vol. i. pp. 122–124, 140, 141, 147–150, 165, 275; vol. ii. pp. 8–11; and Murray's *Handbook*, sub. *Oviedo*).

[28] Benito Feyjoo was born in 1676, and having assumed the Benedictine habit early in life, settled at length in a convent of his order at Oviedo, where he lived for hard on fifty years. He died in 1764.A strange mixture of a devout Catholic and a scientific innovator, he was an earnest student of Bacon, Newton, Pascal, Leibnitz, and others, whose opinions he embodied in his own works. Learned, judicious, and diligent rather than a man of genius, he was original at least as regards his conceptions of the nature and limits of scientific research in Spain. He kept on good terms with the Inquisition, while he continued to publish in his *Teatro Critico* and his *Cartas Eruditas y Curiosas* all that the Inquisitors would desire to remain unread; attacked the dialectics and metaphysics then taught everywhere in Spain; maintained Bacon's system of induction in the physical sciences; ridiculed the general opinion as regards eclipses, comets, magic, and divination; and laid down canons of historical criticism which would exclude many of the most cherished traditions of his country and his Church. The best edition of his works is that by Campomanes, the minister of the enlightened Charles III., with a Life of the author. 16 vols. Madrid, 1778.

Carlos Tercero, [29] our great king, sent his own painter from Madrid to execute it. It is now in the possession of a friend of mine, Don Ramon Valdez, an advocate."

Thereupon he led me to the house of Don Ramon Valdez, who very politely exhibited the portrait of Feijoo. It was circular in shape, about a foot in diameter, and was surrounded by a little brass frame, something like the rim of a barber's basin. The countenance was large and massive, but fine, the eyebrows knit, the eyes sharp and penetrating, nose aquiline. On the head was a silken skull-cap; the collar of the coat or vest was just perceptible. The painting was decidedly good, and struck me as being one of the very best specimens of modern Spanish art which I had hitherto seen.

A day or two after this I said to Benedict Mol, "To-morrow I start from hence for Santander. It is therefore high time that you decide upon some course, whether to return to Madrid or to make the best of your way to France, and from thence proceed to your own country."

"*Lieber Herr*," said Benedict, "I will follow you to Santander by short journeys, for I am unable to make long ones amongst these hills; and when I am there, peradventure I may find some means of passing into France. It is a great comfort, in my horrible journeys, to think that I am travelling over the ground which yourself have trodden, and to hope that I am proceeding to rejoin you once more. This hope kept me alive in the *bellotas*, and without it I should never have reached Oviedo. I will quit Spain as soon as possible, and betake me to Lucerne, though it is a hard thing to leave the *Schatz* behind me in the land of the Gallegans."

Thereupon I presented him with a few dollars.

"A strange man is this Benedict," said Antonio to me next morning, as, accompanied by a guide, we sallied forth from Oviedo; "a strange man, *mon maître*, is this same Benedict. A strange life has he led, and a strange death he will die, – it is written on his countenance. That he will leave Spain I do not believe, or if he leave it, it will be only to return, for he is bewitched about this treasure. Last night he sent for a *sorcière* whom he consulted in my presence: and she told him that he was doomed to possess it, but that first of all he must cross water. She cautioned him likewise against an enemy, which he supposes must be the canon of Saint James. I have often heard people speak of the avidity of the Swiss for money, and here is a proof of it. I would not undergo what Benedict has suffered in these last journeys of his to possess all the treasures in Spain."

[29] Charles III. of Spain (1759–1788), the most enlightened of the Bourbon kings.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Departure from Oviedo – Villa Viciosa – The Young Man of the Inn – Antonio's Tale – The General and his Family – Woful Tidings – To-morrow we die – San Vicente – Santander – An Harangue – Flinter the Irishman.

So we left Oviedo and directed our course towards Santander. The man who accompanied us as guide, and from whom I hired the pony on which I rode, had been recommended to me by my friend the merchant of Oviedo. He proved, however, a lazy, indolent fellow; he was generally loitering two or three hundred yards in our rear, and instead of enlivening the way with song and tale, like our late guide, Martin of Rivadeo, he scarcely ever opened his lips, save to tell us not to go so fast, or that I should burst his pony if I spurred him so. He was thievish withal, and though he had engaged to make the journey *seco*, [30] that is, to defray the charges of himself and beast, he contrived throughout to keep both at our expense. When journeying in Spain, it is invariably the cheapest plan to agree to maintain the guide and his horse or mule, for by so doing the hire is diminished at least one-third, and the bills upon the road are seldom increased; whereas, in the other case, he pockets the difference, and yet goes shot free, and at the expense of the traveller, through the connivance of the innkeepers, who have a kind of fellow-feeling with the guides.

Late in the afternoon we reached Villa Viciosa, a small dirty town, at the distance of eight leagues from Oviedo: it stands beside a creek which communicates with the Bay of Biscay. It is sometimes called La Capital de las Avellanas, or the Capital of the Filberts, from the immense quantity of this fruit which is grown in the neighbourhood; and the greatest part of which is exported to England. As we drew nigh we overtook numerous carts laden with *avellanas* proceeding in the direction of the town. I was informed that several small English vessels were lying in the harbour. Singular as it may seem, however, notwithstanding we were in the Capital of the Avellanas, it was with the utmost difficulty that I procured a scanty handful for my dessert, and of these more than one-half were decayed. The people of the house informed me that the nuts were intended for exportation, and that they never dreamt either of partaking of them themselves or of offering them to their guests.

At an early hour on the following day we reached Colunga, a beautiful village on a rising ground, thickly planted with chestnut trees. It is celebrated, at least in the Asturias, as being the birthplace of Arguëlles, the father of the Spanish constitution.

As we dismounted at the door of the *posada*, where we intended to refresh ourselves, a person who was leaning out of an upper window uttered an exclamation and disappeared. We were yet at the door, when the same individual came running forth and cast himself on the neck of Antonio. He was a good-looking young man, apparently about five-and-twenty, genteelly dressed, with a *montero* cap on his head. Antonio looked at him for a moment, and then with an "*Ah*, *Monsieur*, *est ce bien vous*?" shook him affectionately by the hand. The stranger then motioned him to follow him, and they forthwith proceeded to the room above.

Wondering what this could mean, I sat down to my morning repast. Nearly an hour elapsed, and still Antonio did not make his appearance. Through the boards, however, which composed the ceiling of the kitchen where I sat, I could hear the voices of himself and his acquaintance, and thought that I could occasionally distinguish the sound of broken sobs and groans. At last there was a long pause. I became impatient, and was about to summon Antonio, when he made his appearance, but unaccompanied by the stranger. "What, in the name of all that is singular," I demanded, "have you been about? Who is that man?" "*Mon maître*," said Antonio, "*c'est un monsieur de ma connaissance*.

[30] Literally, *dry*.

With your permission I will now take a mouthful, and as we journey along I will tell you all that I know of him."

"*Monsieur*," said Antonio, as we rode out of Colunga, "you are anxious to know the history of the gentleman whom you saw embrace me at the inn. Know, *mon maître*, that these Carlist and *Cristino* wars have been the cause of much misery and misfortune in this country; but a being so thoroughly unfortunate as that poor young gentleman of the inn, I do not believe is to be found in Spain, and his misfortunes proceed entirely from the spirit of party and faction which for some time past has been so prevalent.

"*Mon maître*, as I have often told you, I have lived in many houses and served many masters, and it chanced that about ten years ago I served the father of this gentleman, who was then a mere boy. It was a very high family, for *monsieur* the father was a general in the army, and a man of large possessions. The family consisted of the general, his lady, and two sons; the youngest of whom is the person you have just seen, the other was several years older. *Pardieu*! I felt myself very comfortable in that house, and every individual of the family had all kind of complaisance for me. It is singular enough, that though I have been turned out of so many families, I was never turned out of that; and though I left it thrice, it was of my own free will. I became dissatisfied with the other servants, or with the dog or the cat. The last time I left was on account of the quail which was hung out of the window of *madame*, and which waked me in the morning with its call. *Eh bien*, *mon maître*, things went on in this way during the three years that I continued in the family, out and in; at the end of which time it was determined that the young gentleman should travel, and it was proposed that I should attend him as valet. This I wished very much to do. However, *par malheur*, I was at this time very much dissatisfied with *madame* his mother about the quail, and insisted that before I accompanied him the bird should be slaughtered for the kitchen. To this *madame* would by no means consent; and even the young gentleman, who had always taken my part on other occasions, said that I was unreasonable: so I left the house in a huff, and never entered it again.

"*Eh bien*, *mon maître*, the young gentleman went upon his travels, and continued abroad several years; and from the time of his departure until we met him at Colunga, I have not set eyes upon, nor indeed heard of him. I have heard enough, however, of his family; of *monsieur* the father, of *madame*, and of the brother, who was an officer of cavalry. A short time before the troubles, I mean before the death of Ferdinand, *monsieur* the father was appointed captain-general of Corunna. Now *monsieur*, though a good master, was rather a proud man, and fond of discipline, and all that kind of thing, and of obedience. He was, moreover, no friend to the populace, to the *canaille*, and he had a particular aversion to the nationals. So, when Ferdinand died, it was whispered about at Corunna that the general was no liberal, and that he was a better friend to Carlos than Christina. *Eh bien*, it chanced that there was a grand *fête*, or festival, at Corunna, on the water, and the nationals were there, and the soldiers. And I know not how it befell, but there was an *émeute*, and the nationals laid hands on *monsieur* the general, and tying a rope round his neck, flung him overboard from the barge in which he was, and then dragged him astern about the harbour until he was drowned. They then went to his house, and pillaged it, and so ill-treated *madame*, who at that time happened to be *enceinte*, that in a few hours she expired.

"I tell you what, *mon maître*, when I heard of the misfortune of *madame* and the general, you would scarcely believe it, but I actually shed tears, and was sorry that I had parted with them in unkindness on account of that pernicious quail.

"*Eh bien*, *mon maître*, *nous poursuivrons notre histoire*. The eldest son, as I told you before, was a cavalry officer, and a man of resolution, and when he heard of the death of his father and mother, he vowed revenge. Poor fellow! So what does he do but desert, with two or three discontented spirits of his troop, and going to the frontier of Galicia, he raised a small faction, and proclaimed Don Carlos. For some little time he did considerable damage to the liberals, burning and destroying their

possessions, and putting to death several nationals that fell into his hands. However, this did not last long; his faction was soon dispersed, and he himself taken and hanged, and his head stuck on a pole.

"*Nous sommes déjà presque au bout*. When we arrived at the inn, the young man took me above, as you saw, and there for some time he could do nothing but weep and sob. His story is soon told: – he returned from his travels, and the first intelligence which awaited him on his arrival in Spain was, that his father was drowned, his mother dead, and his brother hanged, and, moreover, all the possessions of his family confiscated. This was not all: wherever he went, he found himself considered in the light of a factious and discontented person, and was frequently assailed by the nationals with blows of sabres and cudgels. He applied to his relations, and some of these, who were of the Carlist persuasion, advised him to betake himself to the army of Don Carlos, and the Pretender himself, who was a friend of his father, and remembered the services of his brother, offered to give him a command in his army. But, *mon maître*, as I told you before, he was a pacific young gentleman, and as mild as a lamb, and hated the idea of shedding blood. He was, moreover, not of the Carlist opinion, for during his studies he had read books written a long time ago by countrymen of mine, all about republics and liberties, and the rights of man, so that he was much more inclined to the liberal than the Carlist system; he therefore declined the offer of Don Carlos, whereupon all his relations deserted him, whilst the liberals hunted him from one place to another like a wild beast. At last, he sold some little property which still remained to him, and with the proceeds he came to this remote place of Colunga, where no one knew him, and where he has been residing for several months, in a most melancholy manner, with no other amusement than that which he derives from a book or two, or occasionally hunting a leveret with his spaniel.

"He asked me for counsel, but I had none to give him, and could only weep with him. At last he said, 'Dear Antonio, I see there is no remedy. You say your master is below; beg him, I pray, to stay till tomorrow, and we will send for the maidens of the neighbourhood, and for a violin and bagpipe, and we will dance and cast away care for a moment.' And then he said something in old Greek, which I scarcely understood, but which I think was equivalent to, 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die!'

"*Eh bien*, *mon maître*, I told him that you were a serious gentleman, who never took any amusement, and that you were in a hurry. Whereupon he wept again, and embraced me, and bade me farewell. And now, *mon maître*, I have told you the history of the young man of the inn."

We slept at Ribida de Sella, and the next day at noon arrived at Llanes. Our route lay between the coast and an immense range of mountains, which rose up like huge ramparts at about a league's distance from the sea. The ground over which we passed was tolerably level, and seemingly well cultivated. There was no lack of vines and trees, whilst at short intervals rose the *cortijos* of the proprietors – square stone buildings surrounded with an outer wall. Llanes is an old town, formerly of considerable strength. In its neighbourhood is the convent of San Cilorio, one of the largest monastic edifices in all Spain. It is now deserted, and stands alone and desolate upon one of the peninsulas of the Cantabrian shore. Leaving Llanes, we soon entered one of the most dreary and barren regions imaginable, a region of rock and stone, where neither grass nor trees were to be seen. Night overtook us in these places. We wandered on, however, until we reached a small village, termed Santo Colombo. Here we passed the night, in the house of a carabineer of the revenue, a tall athletic figure, who met us at the gate, armed with a gun. He was a Castilian, and with all that ceremonious formality and grave politeness for which his countrymen were at one time so celebrated. He chid his wife for conversing with her handmaid about the concerns of the house before us. "Barbara," said he, "this is not conversation calculated to interest the strange cavaliers; hold your peace, or go aside with the *muchacha*." In the morning he refused any remuneration for his hospitality, "I am a *caballero*," said he, "even as yourselves. It is not my custom to admit people into my house for the sake of lucre. I received you because you were benighted and the *posada* distant."

Rising early in the morning, we pursued our way through a country equally stony and dreary as that which we had entered upon the preceding day. In about four hours we reached San Vicente, a large and dilapidated town, chiefly inhabited by miserable fishermen. It retains, however, many remarkable relics of former magnificence: the bridge, which bestrides the broad and deep firth on which stands the town, has no less than thirty-two arches, and is built of grey granite. It is very ancient, and in some parts in so ruinous a condition as to be dangerous.

Leaving San Vicente behind us, we travelled for some leagues on the seashore, crossing occasionally a narrow inlet or firth. The country at last began to improve, and in the neighbourhood of Santillana was both beautiful and fertile. About a league before we reached the country of Gil Blas we passed through an extensive wood, in which were rocks and precipices; it was exactly such a place as that in which the cave of Rolando was situated, as described in the novel. The wood has an evil name, and our guide informed us that robberies were occasionally committed in it. No adventure, however, befell us, and we reached Santillana at about six in the evening.

We did not enter the town, but halted at a large *venta*, or *posada*, at the entrance, before which stood an immense ash tree. We had scarcely housed ourselves when a tremendous storm of rain and wind commenced, accompanied with thunder and lightning, which continued without much interruption for several hours, and the effects of which were visible in our journey of the following day, the streams over which we passed being much swollen, and several trees lying uptorn by the wayside. Santillana contains four thousand inhabitants, and is six short leagues' distance from Santander, where we arrived early the next day.

Nothing could exhibit a stronger contrast to the desolate tracts and the half-ruined towns through which we had lately passed, than the bustle and activity of Santander, which, though it stands on the confines of the Basque provinces, the stronghold of the Pretender, is almost the only city in Spain which has not suffered by the Carlist wars. Till the close of the last century it was little better than an obscure fishing town, but it has of late years almost entirely engrossed the commerce of the Spanish transatlantic possessions, especially of the Havannah. The consequence of which has been, that whilst Santander has rapidly increased in wealth and magnificence, both Corunna and Cadiz have been as rapidly hastening to decay. At present it possesses a noble quay, on which stands a line of stately edifices, far exceeding in splendour the palaces of the aristocracy of Madrid. These are built in the French style, and are chiefly occupied by the merchants. The population of Santander is estimated at sixty thousand souls.

On the day of my arrival I dined at the *table-d'hôte* of the principal inn, kept by a Genoese. The company was very miscellaneous – French, Germans, and Spaniards, all speaking in their respective languages, whilst at the ends of the table, confronting each other, sat two Catalan merchants, one of whom weighed nearly twenty stone, grunting across the board in their harsh dialect. Long, however, before dinner was concluded the conversation was entirely engrossed and the attention of all present directed to an individual who sat on one side of the bulky Catalan. He was a thin man of about the middle height, with a remarkably red face, and something in his eyes which, if not a squint, bore a striking resemblance to it. He was dressed in a blue military frock, and seemed to take much more pleasure in haranguing than in the fare which was set before him. He spoke perfectly good Spanish, yet his voice betrayed something of a foreign accent. For a long time he descanted with immense volubility on war and all its circumstances, freely criticizing the conduct of the generals, both Carlist and *Cristinos*, in the present struggle, till at last he exclaimed, "Had I but twenty thousand men allowed me by the government, I would bring the war to a conclusion in six months."

"Pardon me, sir," said a Spaniard who sat at the table, "the curiosity which induces me to request the favour of your distinguished name."

"I am Flinter," replied the individual in the military frock, "a name which is in the mouth of every man, woman, and child in Spain. I am Flinter [31] the Irishman, just escaped from the Basque provinces and the claws of Don Carlos. On the decease of Ferdinand, I declared for Isabella, esteeming it the duty of every good cavalier and Irishman in the Spanish service to do so. You have all heard of my exploits, and permit me to tell you they would have been yet more glorious had not jealousy been at work and cramped my means. Two years ago I was despatched to Estremadura, to organize the militias. The bands of Gomez and Cabrera entered the province, and spread devastation around. They found me, however, at my post; and had I been properly seconded by those under my command, the two rebels would never have returned to their master to boast of their success. I stood behind my intrenchments. A man advanced and summoned us to surrender. 'Who are you?' I demanded. 'I am Cabrera,' he replied; 'and I am Flinter,' I retorted flourishing my sabre; 'retire to your battalions, or you will forthwith die the death.' He was awed, and did as I commanded. In an hour we surrendered. I was led a prisoner to the Basque provinces; and the Carlists rejoiced in the capture they had made, for the name of Flinter had long sounded amongst the Carlist ranks. I was flung into a loathsome dungeon, where I remained twenty months. I was cold; I was naked; but I did not on that account despond – my spirit was too indomitable for such weakness. My keeper at last pitied my misfortunes. He said that 'it grieved him to see so valiant a man perish in inglorious confinement.' We laid a plan to escape together; disguises were provided, and we made the attempt. We passed unobserved till we arrived at the Carlist lines above Bilbao: there we were stopped. My presence of mind, however, did not desert me. I was disguised as a carman, as a Catalan, and the coolness of my answers deceived my interrogators. We were permitted to pass, and soon were safe within the walls of Bilbao. There was an illumination that night in the town, for the lion had burst his toils, Flinter had escaped, and was once more returned to reanimate a drooping cause. I have just arrived at Santander, on my way to Madrid, where I intend to ask of the government a command, with twenty thousand men."

Poor Flinter! a braver heart and a more gasconading mouth were surely never united in the same body. He proceeded to Madrid, and through the influence of the British ambassador, who was his friend, he obtained the command of a small division, with which he contrived to surprise and defeat, in the neighbourhood of Toledo, a body of the Carlists, commanded by Orejita, whose numbers more than trebled his own. In reward for this exploit he was persecuted by the government, which, at that time, was the *moderado* or *juste milieu*, with the most relentless animosity; the prime minister, Ofalia, supporting with all his influence numerous and ridiculous accusations of plunder and robbery brought against the too successful general by the Carlist canons of Toledo. He was likewise charged with a dereliction of duty, in having permitted, after the battle of Valdepeñas, which he likewise won in the most gallant manner, the Carlist force to take possession of the mines of Almaden, although the government, who were bent on his ruin, had done all in their power to prevent him from following up his successes, by denying him the slightest supplies and reinforcements. The fruits of victory thus wrested from him, his hopes blighted, a morbid melancholy seized upon the Irishman; he resigned his command, and, in less than ten months from the period when I saw him at Santander, afforded his dastardly and malignant enemies a triumph which satisfied even them, by cutting his own throat with a razor.

Ardent spirits of foreign climes, who hope to distinguish yourselves in the service of Spain, and to earn honours and rewards, remember the fate of Columbus, and of another as brave and as ardent – Flinter!

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[31] George Dawson Flinter began life in an English West India regiment, served in the Spanish American forces, and afterwards obtained a commission in the Spanish army. In 1833, on the outbreak of the civil war, he declared for Isabella, and served with considerable distinction in the constitutional army. A prisoner in 1836, he was entrusted with a high command at Toledo in 1837, but having failed to satisfy the Cortes in an engagement in September, 1838, he cut his throat (see *Gentl. Mag.*, 1838, vol. ii. p. 553, and Duncan, *The English in Spain*, pp. 13, 189).

CHAPTER XXXV

Departure from Santander – The Night Alarm – The Black Pass.

I had ordered two hundred Testaments to be sent to Santander from Madrid: I found, however, to my great sorrow, that they had not arrived, and I supposed that they had either been seized on the way by the Carlists, or that my letter had miscarried. I then thought of applying to England for a supply, but I abandoned the idea for two reasons. In the first place, I should have to remain idly loitering, at least a month, before I could receive them, at a place where every article was excessively dear; and, secondly, I was very unwell, and unable to procure medical advice at Santander. Ever since I left Corunna, I had been afflicted with a terrible dysentery, and latterly with an ophthalmia, the result of the other malady. I therefore determined on returning to Madrid. To effect this, however, seemed no very easy task. Parties of the army of Don Carlos, which, in a partial degree, had been routed in Castile, were hovering about the country through which I should have to pass, more especially in that part called "The Mountains," so that all communication had ceased between Santander and the southern districts. Nevertheless, I determined to trust as usual in the Almighty, and to risk the danger. I purchased, therefore, a small horse, and sallied forth with Antonio.

Before departing, however, I entered into conference with the booksellers as to what they should do in the event of my finding an opportunity of sending them a stock of Testaments from Madrid; and, having arranged matters to my satisfaction, I committed myself to Providence. I will not dwell long on this journey of three hundred miles. We were in the midst of the fire, yet, strange to say, escaped without a hair of our heads being singed. Robberies, murders, and all kinds of atrocities were perpetrated before, behind, and on both sides of us; but not so much as a dog barked at us, though in one instance a plan had been laid to intercept us. About four leagues from Santander, whilst we were baiting our horses at a village hostelry, I saw a fellow run off after having held a whispering conversation with a boy who was dealing out barley to us. I instantly inquired of the latter what the man had said to him, but only obtained an evasive answer. It appeared afterwards that the conversation was about ourselves. Two or three leagues farther there was an inn and village where we had proposed staying, and indeed had expressed our intention of doing so; but on arriving there, finding that the sun was still far from its bourne, I determined to proceed farther, expecting to meet with a resting-place at the distance of a league; though I was mistaken, as we found none until we reached Montaneda, nine leagues and a half from Santander, where was stationed a small detachment of soldiers. At the dead of night, we were aroused from our sleep by a cry that the "factious" were not far off. A messenger had arrived from the *alcalde* of the village where we had previously intended staying, who stated that a party of Carlists had just surprised that place, and were searching for an English spy, whom they supposed to be at the inn. The officer commanding the soldiers, upon hearing this, not deeming his own situation a safe one, instantly drew off his men, falling back on a stronger party stationed in a fortified village near at hand. As for ourselves, we saddled our horses and continued our way in the dark. Had the Carlists succeeded in apprehending me, I should instantly have been shot, and my body cast on the rocks to feed the vultures and wolves. But "it was not so written," said Antonio, who, like many of his countrymen, was a fatalist. The next night we had another singular escape: we had arrived near the entrance of a horrible pass called "*El puerto de la puente de las tablas*," or the pass of the bridge of planks, which wound through a black and frightful mountain, on the farther side of which was the town of Oñas, where we meant to tarry for the night. The sun had set about a quarter of an hour. Suddenly a man, with his face covered with blood, rushed out of the pass. "Turn back, sir," he said, "in the name of God; there are murderers in that pass; they have just robbed me of my mule, and all I possess, and I have hardly escaped with life from their hands!" I scarcely know why, but I made him no answer, and proceeded; indeed I was so weary and unwell that I cared not what

became of me. We entered; the rocks rose perpendicularly, right and left, entirely intercepting the scanty twilight, so that the darkness of the grave, or rather the blackness of the valley of the shadow of death, reigned around us, and we knew not where we went, but trusted to the instinct of the horses, who moved on with their heads close to the ground. The only sound which we heard was the plash of a stream, which tumbled down the pass. I expected every moment to feel a knife at my throat, but "*it was not so written*." We threaded the pass without meeting a human being, and within three-quarters of an hour after the time we entered it, we found ourselves within the *posada* of the town of Oñas, which was filled with troops and armed peasants expecting an attack from the grand Carlist army, which was near at hand.

Well, we reached Burgos in safety; [32] we reached Valladolid in safety; we passed the Guadarrama in safety; and were at length safely housed in Madrid. People said we had been very lucky; Antonio said, "It was so written;" but I say, Glory be to the Lord for His mercies vouchsafed to us.

[32] There is still a fairly frequented high-road from Santander to Burgos, inasmuch as the railway from Santander to Madrid takes a more westerly route through Palencia, the actual junction with the main line from Irun being at Venta de Baños, a new creation of the railway not even mentioned in the guidebooks a few years ago, and now one of the most important stations in Spain.Yet in railway matters Spain has still some progress to make. From Santander to Burgos *viâ* Venta de Baños is just 120 English miles; but the time occupied in the journey by train in this year 1895 is just seventeen hours, the traveller having to leave Santander at 1 p.m. in order to reach Burgos at 6 o'clock the following morning!

CHAPTER XXXVI

State of Affairs at Madrid – The New Ministry – Pope of Rome – The Bookseller of Toledo – Sword-blades – Houses of Toledo – The Forlorn Gypsy – Proceedings at Madrid – Another Servant.

During my journey in the northern provinces of Spain, which occupied a considerable portion of the year 1837, I had accomplished but a slight portion of what I proposed to myself to effect in the outset. Insignificant are the results of man's labours compared with the swelling ideas of his presumption; something, however, had been effected by the journey which I had just concluded. The New Testament of Christ was now enjoying a quiet sale in the principal towns of the north, and I had secured the friendly interest and co-operation of the booksellers of those parts, particularly of him the most considerable of them all, old Rey of Compostella. I had, moreover, disposed of a considerable number of Testaments with my own hands, to private individuals, entirely of the lower classes, namely, muleteers, carmen, *contrabandistas*, etc., so that upon the whole I had abundant cause for gratitude and thanksgiving.

I did not find our affairs in a very prosperous state at Madrid, few copies having been sold in the booksellers' shops; yet what could be rationally expected during these latter times? Don Carlos, with a large army, had been at the gates; plunder and massacre had been expected; so that people were too much occupied in forming plans to secure their lives and property to give much attention to reading of any description.

The enemy, however, had now retired to his strongholds in Alava and Guipuzcoa. I hoped that brighter days were dawning, and that the work, under my own superintendence, would, with God's blessing, prosper in the capital of Spain. How far the result corresponded with my expectations will be seen in the sequel.

During my absence in the north, a total change of ministers had occurred. The liberal party had been ousted from the cabinet, and in their place had entered individuals attached to the *moderado* or court party: unfortunately, however, for my prospects, they consisted of persons with whom I had no acquaintance whatever, and with whom my former friends, Galiano and Isturitz, had little or no influence. These gentlemen were now regularly laid on the shelf, and their political career appeared to be terminated for ever. [33]

From the present ministry I could expect but little; they consisted of men the greater part of whom had been either courtiers or employés of the deceased King Ferdinand, who were friends to absolutism, and by no means inclined to do or to favour anything calculated to give offence to the court of Rome, which they were anxious to conciliate, hoping that eventually it might be induced to recognize the young queen, not as the constitutional but as the absolute Queen Isabella the Second.

Such was the party which continued in power throughout the remainder of my sojourn in Spain, and which persecuted me less from rancour and malice than from policy. It was not until the conclusion of the war of the succession that it lost the ascendency, when it sank to the ground with its patroness the queen-mother, before the dictatorship of Espartero.

The first step which I took after my return to Madrid, towards circulating the Scriptures, was a very bold one. It was neither more nor less than the establishment of a shop for the sale of Testaments. This shop was situated in the Calle del Principe, a respectable and well-frequented street in the neighbourhood of the Square of Cervantes. I furnished it handsomely with glass cases and chandeliers, and procured an acute Gallegan of the name of Pepe Calzado, to superintend the business, who gave me weekly a faithful account of the copies sold.

[33] See Introduction.

"How strangely times alter," said I, the second day subsequent to the opening of my establishment, as I stood on the opposite side of the street, leaning against the wall with folded arms, surveying my shop, on the windows of which were painted in large yellow characters, *Despacho de la Sociedad Bíblica y Estrangera*; [34] "how strangely times alter! Here have I been during the last eight months running about old Popish Spain, distributing Testaments, as agent of what the Papists call an heretical society, and have neither been stoned nor burnt; and here am I now in the capital, doing that which one would think were enough to cause all the dead inquisitors and officials buried within the circuit of the walls to rise from their graves and cry abomination; and yet no one interferes with me. Pope of Rome! Pope of Rome! look to thyself. That shop may be closed; but oh! what a sign of the times, that it has been permitted to exist for one day. It appears to me, my Father, that the days of your sway are numbered in Spain; that you will not be permitted much longer to plunder her, to scoff at her, and to scourge her with scorpions, as in bygone periods. See I not the hand on the wall? See I not in yonder letters a '*Mene*, *Mene*, *Tekel*, *Upharsin*'? Look to thyself, *Batuschca*."

And I remained for two hours, leaning against the wall, staring at the shop.

A short time after the establishment of the *despacho* at Madrid, I once more mounted the saddle, and, attended by Antonio, rode over to Toledo, for the purpose of circulating the Scriptures, sending beforehand by a muleteer a cargo of one hundred Testaments. I instantly addressed myself to the principal bookseller of the place, whom, from the circumstance of his living in a town so abounding with canons, priests, and ex-friars as Toledo, I expected to find a Carlist, or a *servil* at least. I was never more mistaken in my life: on entering the shop, which was very large and commodious, I beheld a stout athletic man, dressed in a kind of cavalry uniform, with a helmet on his head, and an immense sabre in his hand. This was the bookseller himself, who, I soon found, was an officer in the national cavalry. Upon learning who I was, he shook me heartily by the hand, and said that nothing would give him greater pleasure than taking charge of the books, which he would endeavour to circulate to the utmost of his ability.

"Will not your doing so bring you into odium with the clergy?"

"*Ca*!" [35] said he; "who cares? I am rich, and so was my father before me. I do not depend on them; they cannot hate me more than they do already, for I make no secret of my opinions. I have just returned from an expedition," said he; "my brother nationals and myself have, for the last three days, been occupied in hunting down the factious and thieves of the neighbourhood; we have killed three and brought in several prisoners. Who cares for the cowardly priests? I am a liberal, *Don Jorge*, and a friend of your countryman, Flinter. Many is the Carlist guerilla-curate and robber-friar whom I have assisted him to catch. I am rejoiced to hear that he has just been appointed captain-general of Toledo; there will be fine doings here when he arrives, *Don Jorge*. We will make the clergy shake between us, I assure you."

Toledo was formerly the capital of Spain. Its population at present is barely fifteen thousand souls, though, in the time of the Romans, and also during the Middle Ages, it is said to have amounted to between two and three hundred thousand. It is situated about twelve leagues, or forty miles, westward [36] of Madrid, and is built upon a steep rocky hill, round which flows the Tagus, on all sides but the north. It still possesses a great many remarkable edifices, notwithstanding that it has long since fallen into decay. Its cathedral is the most magnificent of Spain, and is the see of the primate. In the tower of this cathedral is the famous bell of Toledo, the largest in the world with the exception of the monster bell of Moscow, which I have also seen. It weighs 1543 *arrobas*, or 37,032 pounds. It has, however, a disagreeable sound, owing to a cleft in its side. Toledo could once boast the finest pictures in Spain, but many were stolen or destroyed by the French during the Peninsular war, and

[34] "*Office of the Biblical and Foreign Society*," rather an odd rendering of the original title!

[35] The briefest of all abbreviations and modifications of the objectionable *Carajo*.

[36] Rather south-south-west.

still more have lately been removed by order of the government. Perhaps the most remarkable one still remains; I allude to that which represents the burial of the Count of Orgas, the masterpiece of Domenico, [37] the Greek, a most extraordinary genius, some of whose productions possess merit of a very high order. The picture in question is in the little parish church of San Tomé, at the bottom of the aisle, on the left side of the altar. Could it be purchased, I should say it would be cheap at five thousand pounds.

Amongst the many remarkable things which meet the eye of the curious observer at Toledo, is the manufactory of arms, where are wrought the swords, spears, and other weapons intended for the army, with the exception of firearms, which mostly come from abroad.

In old times, as is well known, the sword-blades of Toledo were held in great estimation, and were transmitted as merchandise throughout Christendom. The present manufactory, or *fabrica*, as it is called, is a handsome modern edifice, situated without the wall of the city, on a plain contiguous to the river, with which it communicates by a small canal. It is said that the water and the sand of the Tagus are essential for the proper tempering of the swords. I asked some of the principal workmen whether, at the present day, they could manufacture weapons of equal value to those of former days, and whether the secret had been lost.

"*Ca*!" said they, "the swords of Toledo were never so good as those which we are daily making. It is ridiculous enough to see strangers coming here to purchase old swords, the greater part of which are mere rubbish, and never made at Toledo, yet for such they will give a large price, whilst they would grudge two dollars for this jewel, which was made but yesterday;" thereupon putting into my hand a middle-sized rapier. "Your worship," said they, "seems to have a strong arm; prove its temper against the stone wall – thrust boldly and fear not."

I *have* a strong arm, and dashed the point with my utmost force against the solid granite: my arm was numbed to the shoulder from the violence of the concussion, and continued so for nearly a week, but the sword appeared not to be at all blunted, or to have suffered in any respect.

"A better sword than that," said an ancient workman, a native of Old Castile, "never transfixed Moor out yonder on the *sagra*."

During my stay at Toledo, I lodged at the Posada de los Caballeros, which signifies the inn of the gentlemen, which name, in some respects, it certainly well deserved, for there are many palaces far less magnificent than this inn of Toledo. By magnificence it must not be supposed, however, that I allude to costliness of furniture or any kind of luxury which pervaded the culinary department. The rooms were as empty as those of Spanish inns generally are, and the fare, though good in its kind, was plain and homely; but I have seldom seen a more imposing edifice. It was of immense size, consisting of several stories, and was built something in the Moorish taste, with a quadrangular court in the centre, beneath which was an immense *algibe* or tank, serving as a reservoir for rain-water. All the houses in Toledo are supplied with tanks of this description, into which the waters in the rainy season flow from the roofs through pipes. No other water is used for drinking; that of the Tagus, not being considered salubrious, is only used for purposes of cleanliness, being conveyed up the steep narrow streets on donkeys, in large stone jars. The city, standing on a rocky mountain, has no wells. As for the rain-water, it deposits a sediment in the tank, and becomes very sweet and potable: these tanks are cleaned out twice every year. During the summer, at which time the heat in this part of Spain is intense, the families spend the greater part of the day in the courts, which are overhung with a linen awning, the heat of the atmosphere being tempered by the coolness arising from the tank below, which answers the same purpose as the fountain in the southern provinces of Spain.

[37] Domenico Theotocoupoulis, a Greek or Byzantine who settled at Toledo in 1577. He is said to have been a pupil of Titian. The picture so highly praised in the text is said by Professor Justi to be in "his worst manner," and is indeed a very stiff performance. There are many of *El Greco's* pictures in Italy, where his work is often assigned to Bassano, Paul Veronese, and Titian. His acknowledged masterpiece is the Christ on Mount Calvary in the cathedral of Toledo. *El Greco* died in 1625, after an uninterrupted residence of nearly forty years in Spain.

I spent about a week at Toledo, during which time several copies of the Testament were disposed of in the shop of my friend the bookseller. Several priests took it up from the *mostrador* on which it lay, examined it, but made no remarks; none of them purchased it. My friend showed me through his house, almost every apartment of which was lined from roof to floor with books, many of which were highly valuable. He told me that he possessed the best collection in Spain of the ancient literature of the country. He was, however, less proud of his library than his stud; finding that I had some acquaintance with horses, his liking for me and also his respect considerably increased. “All I have,” said he, “is at your service; I see you are a man after my own heart. When you are disposed to ride out upon the *sagra*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.