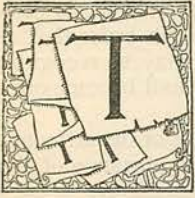


STREET LIFE IN MADRID.



HE unconscious life of a people, like that of individuals, is its most interesting expression; and habits and manners that are developed from the conditions of climate or of situation appeal more to the imagination than where costumes and peculiarities are accidental or factitious grafts from other races, or nations differently circumstanced.

In American cities the population is so complex that, beyond a few distinctive habits induced by climate, the people have as yet little that is picturesque in their out-of-door life. We see the Irish girl, who never before in her life had on a bonnet, walking off to church in the latest style from Paris, and the little Chinaman, with his pig-tail cut off or coiled out of sight, in as black a stove-pipe hat and polished boots as an English cockney or a Broadway "swell."

People complain even in the old cities of Europe of the disappearance of national costumes, and that everybody is getting to behave and dress like everybody else. This fact holds good in London, where the gay bonnet and flounced gown descend by degrees from the lady to the lady's-maid, next to the kitchen-girl, and so down to the lowest stratum of society, till the delicate hat has lost all color and nearly all form on the head of an old rag-picker.

But this is by no means true of every city, and, especially to an American, many places are still full of picturesque charm.

Madrid is not an old place, for it has nearly all grown up during the last three hundred years; but it looks in nearly all respects like a new city. Its fresh buff or pinkish rows of high stuccoed houses much resemble Paris, except that they lack mansard-roofs, and are mostly covered with flat-roofs made of red or yellow convex tiles. Little iron balconies project from every one of the French windows, and tier above tier of neat apartments rise over the little shops which form the *rez-de-chaussée*. Winding streets, narrow, and up and down hill, alternate with the broad, level avenues of the Prado and the Alcalá, while openings of every shape and size, from the beautiful Puerta del Sol to some trifling plot of grass and trees, surprise one at every turn or in whatever situation. Here and there the pedestrian comes across an old arch standing up with its light masonry against a background of the pure heavens, and

he observes that behind the arch heaps of brick or stone or the remains of an old cellar attest the fact that a convent has been removed or a palace destroyed. The churches, too, do not look like any others in Europe, except perhaps those in Italy, and with the flowing lines of their roofs stand jammed in among the other buildings, which they resemble only in size and color.

But while the city of Madrid possesses nothing very distinctive in its appearance, it is not so with the people who throng the streets at certain times of the day and evening.

One of the most significant sights of the population of Madrid is soon after sunset, and one night is much like another during the whole summer season. It was a warm Sunday evening when we first saw Madrid by gaslight, and in the brilliant heavens the full moon sailed with a luster and purity impossible in any climate less elevated and less free from moisture than that of the broad and lofty plateau in the midst of which Madrid is placed. A soft wind was blowing down the Prado, which is the great avenue of Madrid, and the air was dry and sweet. The shadows from the trees that line the footpaths in the center of the avenue lay black in the moonlight, while we saw the pale spires and domes about the city profiled in darkness against the silver shimmer of the night sky. On each side bright gaslights were dotted among the trees at the sides of the Prado, and in three or four directions, when other streets crossed this one, these gas-lamps marked their wide line as they dwindled away into a remote perspective. A very low murmur of voices sounded from the "salon" — that portion of the Prado set apart for society and not for walking or driving, where thousands of chairs accommodate the fashion of the Spanish population, and women in their black-lace mantillas, soldiers with steel helmets or gold lace and in black and scarlet, alternate with other men and with women and children to enjoy the freshness of the evening and one another's society.

The road at this point was also lined with open carriages, and the horses slowly passed, disclosing in one vehicle a couple of the black-eyed women of Spain with their lace head-dresses, in another three or four men with the bright spot of their lighted cigars glowing in the darkness, or again it was a family of children and their parents who were out to enjoy the night. Now and then a little



A DONKEY DRIVER.

tinkling of bells was heard and the rumble of a more rapid vehicle, and four or six little horses decked with red pulled along the fancy carriage of some young Spanish aristocrat.

In one part of the Prado, among the trees, was seen a festoon of gaslights as brilliant as those in the Champs Elysées at Paris, while a fountain of light poured down in some unaccountable way before the doors of a concert room which was hidden among the trees on one side of the Prado. A little farther along we were made aware of the presence of a Punch and Judy show by the striking of a bell which sounded like a hammer on an anvil.

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These shows, of which there are many about the city, are always announced by this peculiar bell.

Coming out at one end of the Prado, the carriage passed the church of the Atocha, where the young Queen Mercedes was married. This church is a large one, standing at the head of a bluff which rises from a valley at one end of Madrid. From this point, in the daytime, the eye reaches far away over the country; and on the outskirts of the horizon, blue and indistinct, one discerns the distant ranges of mountains, and follows with delight the rich and lovely hues of buff and pink and purple of the broad plateau,



AN OLD STREET.

which form a splendid mosaic of tints, though one realizes that the dry surface of the land can afford neither drink nor food. But in the night all these peculiarities escape observation, and it is only the quivering light that one sees over the landscape and in the sky — the soft light of the large stars, which here shine with a peculiar effulgence. Driving slowly here and there where great patches of clear moonlight shine on the stone fountains, we catch sight of groups of *aguadores* lying and leaning about as still as statues, patiently waiting their turn to fill casks, jugs, or strange-shaped earthen water-coolers. These *aguadores* are among the most picturesque classes of people in Madrid, and the dresses of both men and women are often brilliant with every strong hue. Nowhere do they show to greater advantage than in the evening, when gathered around the stone basin of the fountain in the square of the Puerta

del Sol. An irregular circle of pink, buff, and gray houses surrounds this square, and their fronts reflect the dazzling glare of six immense electric-lights, which render the square, as well as the streets that diverge from it, as bright as day. The basin of the fountain, full of water to its brim, repeats the light of the lamps in its still surface, and one sees in its mirror the image of dozens of the *aguadores* in their pink, blue, and white dresses. Men and women stand out in almost magical relief in the brilliant light, which touches with an enchanting radiance the dark braids of hair of the women, or lights up the gold beads about their necks, or reveals a scarlet bodice or an embroidered petticoat. Goya's pictures are full of such scenes as this, only they want the full effect of nature produced by the intense blackness of the shadows, which relieve against these brilliant lights.

But what is this church on the avenue of the Alcalá? Hundreds of colored lanterns are festooned across its front, and the globe of each lantern, with its tiny star of flame at the top, gives the building a festive look. It is some saint's day, and in honor of the saint the interior of the church blazes with a thousand tapers. From the church-door all along the sidewalk of the Alcalá the houses cast one long, deep shadow. But, ranged as thickly as they can be set, multitudes of little booths edge the sidewalk, and in each of them a dull lantern is suspended. Heaps of fruit, flowers, nuts, and small confections cover the table of each booth, and crowds of people of the lower classes hover about and chat and fill the sidewalk densely. The booths are erected for persons who have arrived for the fiesta at the church, and who here buy their lunches and suppers. All visitors to Naples will recollect how, on the road from that city to Pompeii, one sees of a summer morning men, women, and children stopping at the corners of the streets of Resina and the other little towns along the way, to procure a handful of potatoes from a pot which is boiling over a brazier on the sidewalk; or the traveler sees a man with his fist full of macaroni that he has purchased from another pot, while fresh fruit, figs, plums, or melons complete the breakfast of these simple people.

In Spain the same habits prevail, and at an early hour of the day, when the workman is going to his toil, little stands are set up for an hour or two where breakfast can be eaten in

the streets. The stands quickly disappear as the day advances.

Most cities have a mixed population of nationalities, and these diverse persons bring with them to some extent their own costumes; but in few cities are there so varied sets among the native population as are seen in Madrid. The streets are rendered still more gay by many different kinds of animals—ponies, mules, donkeys, and very fine horses, with trappings as varied as the dress of the owners. Across the forehead of the large, heavy ox a sort of helmet of thick wool or sheepskin, with its deep rich colors, looks like a bit of tapestry. The donkeys are often fairly laced over with a network of gay cords, while red, yellow, and blue tassels dangle over their heads, legs, and even down their tails, and form, with the multitude of little brass bells about their bodies, a most elaborate harness. Besides their harness, the donkeys are generally nearly covered with their big straw panniers, which hang on each side of them and reach nearly to the ground. Sitting at my window one morning, I was much amused in watching a market-woman and her donkey. The day was hot and the glare in the sunshine very great, while, as is so usual under such conditions, the shadows were very dark. The woman sat on the back of the little donkey, a party-colored handkerchief bound round her head, and with her red apron, her skirt, and two very big straw panniers, that reached nearly to the ground on the donkey's sides, jumbled together. Over her head was a white umbrella, which jerked about as the donkey stumbled along or she hitched at his bridle. The woman was on her way to market, and by and by I saw her cross the square on her way home. This time she was on foot, for her purchases filled the panniers of the donkey and loaded him down; but the woman had her beast by the tail, and alternately pulled and pushed at it to speed him on his way. One is constantly amused and surprised to see that the habits and manners of the Spanish people, as well as their faces, are precisely the same to-day as when Velasquez painted his sharp wry faces in the "Buveurs," or Murillo his dark children, with their loose straw baskets beside them, their bare, dusty feet, and the cunning look of their long, wide mouths, their narrow, sharp black eyes, and their bony chins. Coming out from a morning spent in the Museo del Prado, where one lingers, if not with delight, at least with admiration over Velasquez's broad and free painting of peasants in the picture called "The Forge of Vulcan," or examines with astonishment the brilliant drawing of the

face of the old ragged "Æsop," whose prototype one finds at every turn in the street—an "Æsop" begs a *real* as the visitor leaves the gate, and men, women, and children are constantly met lying with their dark, Murillo-like faces supported on their arms or turned up towards the sky, similar to those seen in the pictures of the Spanish old masters.

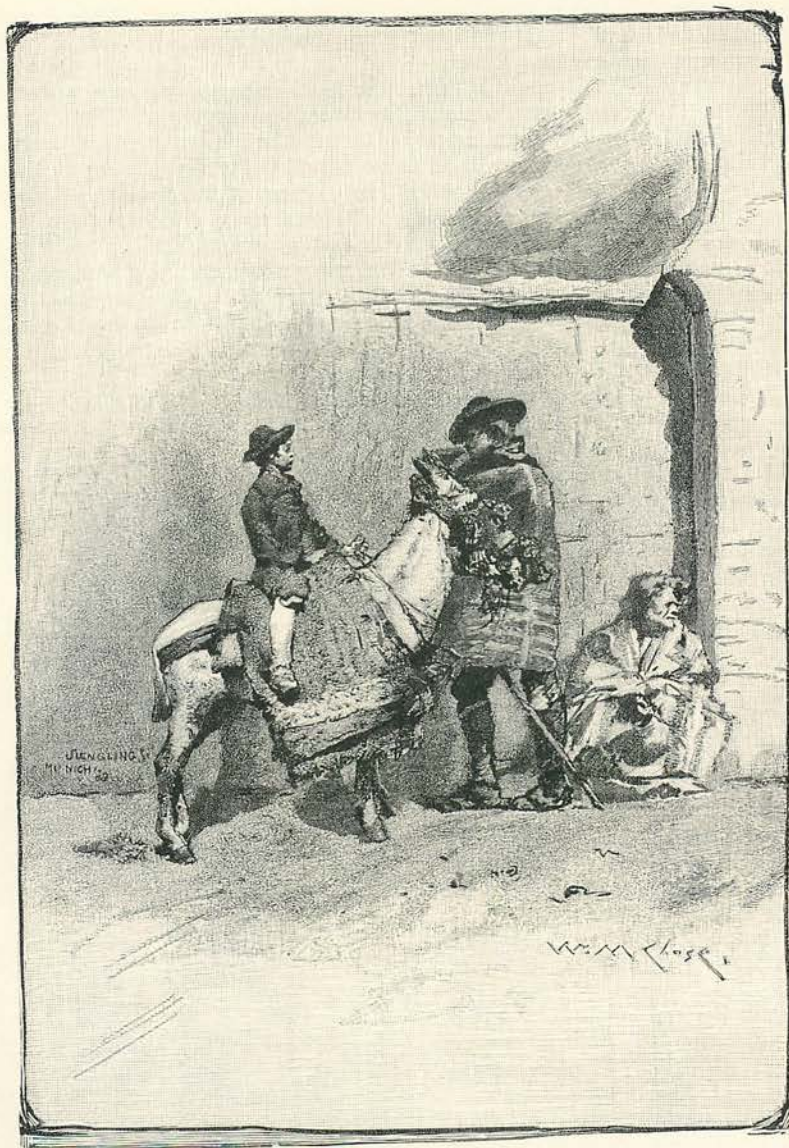
In one place appears a group assembled around a fountain with their water-jugs; and the red, yellow, and blue handkerchiefs bound about the heads of the women, and the slouched sombreros and brown coats or capes flung over the shoulders of the men, make bright, Goya-like pictures against the glowing sky and the whitish colors of the road and the buildings near them. Hollyhocks and red oleanders give



A COUNTRYMAN.

an added glow to the landscape, and the dark green of the pines and other evergreens contrasts with the white flint of the roads and the light sky.

Each city has its own peculiar street-calls and sounds; but none can boast of a greater variety than Madrid. Long before day the notes of yellow-legged partridges, which are here tamed for pets, are heard with their hammering noise, while the see-saw of the donkey's braying, more or less remote, rasps the ear like



A STREET INCIDENT.

a saw cutting across the grain of a dry board. Guitars are played by blind beggar-men, and it is seldom that the strumming of one cannot be detected in the neighborhood. If street-calls teach nothing else, everywhere they all emphasize the fact that vowels are the only sounds we distinctly hear; and the dry air of Madrid seems to affect their particular intonation similarly to the climate of America. Often in an unconscious moment the ear is deceived by a call which in New York would be at once recognized as that of the boy with "Extras." Spanish voices are seldom sweet, and when a woman with her tambourine sings under the window some snatch of the opera or the music

of a bolero, the notes are generally of rather a hard contralto voice, and are by no means as pleasing as the sight of the woman herself in a strong-colored petticoat, gay apron, and a square of red or blue cloth bound round her head.

If one finds the subjects of Velasquez, Murillo, and Goya everywhere out-of-doors, within doors a stranger often chances unawares upon some scene, the objects, colors, and chiaroscuro of which could be transferred without a change upon the canvas of either of these masters, and which resembles a picture two or three centuries old stepping from its ancient frame into the present. One of the most vivid



A SPANISH LADY.

of these pictures which I came across was the interior of an old curiosity shop.

From a narrow, winding street, whose whitish houses were closely shut up except where an occasional red or blue striped curtain kept the heat out from the little shop within, we entered a long brick passage-way, so dark it could hardly be seen by any one coming from the glare of the street. A narrow stairway led to the floor above, and here a door made of a great many little wooden panels, which latter indeed formed nearly the whole wall, led into the curiosity shop. A stout, pale Spanish woman received and conducted us into an inner apartment. The room which we entered was dusky, but our conductor drew up a Venetian blind that formed a roof over a very large French window, and through the slats of which the rays of sunlight straggled into the room, lighting it imperfectly. Here in the shop were a multitude of curious articles that were streaked by the sunbeams or were dim in the shadow; but yet the articles were scarcely more numerous than the furniture of many a parlor. On a low oblong table in the center stood a fine brass filigree clock with two tall figures of brass beside it. Pieces of old velvet embroidered with

gold and floss formed a number of small covers to this table; while beside the table half a dozen tall-backed chairs with black stamped leather covering were enlivened with big brass nails. On the wall hung faded scenes in ancient tapestry, and some old mirrors and portraits of Spanish men and women were in fine deep carved wooden frames or frames of bright gilded open-work. Each of them was very wide in proportion to the size of the mirror or picture which it inclosed, which gave the effect of great richness. Italian cabinets of ivory and black inlaid work were here, with a multitude of little drawers and doors, and in one part of the room was a case filled with curious and rare glass and china. In some of the little amorini plates antique jewels glittered among the heads of loves and cupids on the old Majolica ware, while glass jars of sea-green color were as peculiar and beautiful in form and in tint as Venetian glass.

Hung all around the entrance to the room were a large number of plates of an iridescent luster enamel in Moorish, Persian, Spanish, and Arabic designs. My fancy turned to this pottery, which flickered, pink, green, and yellow, in the varying daylight and had an almost fairy-

like beauty. To exhibit her wares more perfectly, our *cicerone* first raised and then lowered the Venetian blind, and as the sun alternately went under the clouds or shone clearly, the old curiosity shop dimmed into gloom or glimmered with its gold and deep colors into splendor like a Rembrandt.

The owner of the shop was almost as amusing as her wares. She was about forty and her hair was thin and gray; but she concealed her scant locks very well and her bright black eyes shone beneath a "banged" bunch of black hair on her forehead, while plaited hair made a big coil on top of her head. Her teeth were good and her features regular, but her skin had the yellow, bloodless look so very common in Spain. The woman talked with animation, but did not urge us to purchase anything.

After a little while her husband came, a tall, good-looking Spaniard with a bald head and a long nose, and we went with him into a back room of a very picturesque kind. This chamber was a small one, and on one side was a big window that led out upon a narrow iron balcony and looked down into a court-yard. In addition to Venetian blinds, long curtains of queer patterns were hung like sheets against this window, and I saw that other balconies all round the court-yard were draped in the same way. A tall oleander in full blossom stood in the window, and pushing aside the curtain I stepped out-of-doors. Here was indeed a bit of old Spanish life.

The walls of the houses rose five or six stories high, and, wherever the numerous balconies with their varied hangings left spaces for them to appear, grayish-white plaster walls, spaced off irregularly by rough timbers, were seen in every direction. Where the curtains were drawn back quaintly furnished chambers became visible, with an occasional parrot or macaw and a flowering plant. The court-yard was not more than twenty feet across and the patterns on the queer curtains could easily be counted. One feature of these balconies was entirely new to me; for raised nearly to the top of each separate story a light lattice-work of canes or bamboo in Gothic shapes held the curtains in their places and prevented the strong winds of Spain from blowing them up into the next balcony or across to their neighbors. The court-yard below was not very neat and held old water-jugs, casks, and broken flower-pots. The curtain of the window where I was standing had caught my fancy, and I did not rest till I had bought this old piece of rough whitish linen, on which were embroidered in soft-colored flosses a handiwork of strange birds and flowers, queer and lovely hued.

While I was thus occupied, my companion was examining a most gorgeous gold cabinet

inlaid with colored stones or enamel; and afterwards we went back to the front shop.

Here a most lovely effect met our eyes. In our absence the old curiosity shop had put on a semblance of light and shadow like one of Blaise Desgoffe's still-life pictures.

A long ray of sunlight lay across the center of the room in a brilliant golden band, and in the mirror in the side of the apartment I saw an image of the curiosity shop worthy of Rembrandt. In the looking-glass were reflected the brass clock and the vases that stood in the center of the room, with each bit of chasing sharp and clear, lighted as they were by the yellow sunbeam. This brilliant and charming effect relieved sharply against blackish colors where the old tapestry and cabinets could scarcely be discerned in the gloom, and the effect was yet further heightened by the bits of embroidery that lay on the table, whose half-shadows brought out vividly their scarlet and blue patterns.

But charmed as I was with this strong and lovely picture made without intention, my heart was in trade, and I did not leave the room till one of the old reddish-gold platters, a Hispano-Moresque dish, was my own, as well as the flapping curtain with its embroidered plants, that had screened the inner chamber from the queerest little court-yard I had ever seen.

But while these common scenes constitute such charming genre pictures, no city affords more dignified nor stately crowds, fit companions for the great historical subjects which Titian, Paul Veronese, and Tintoretto painted.

Chancing to be in Madrid on the occasion of the great requiem mass for Queen Mercedes, I was a spectator of the street crowd in the neighborhood of the church where the mass was celebrated. The day, as all summer days in Madrid are, was clear, and the sunshine sharply defined the lights and shadows in the light yellow streets and on the stuccoed houses, and glared upon the listless *aguadores* hanging round the fountains, and on the numerous little donkeys struggling under their heavy panniers of fruit, water-jars, or clothes-baskets.

At an early hour great crowds of men, women, and children lined the principal avenues which lead to the Church of San Francisco, and nursing babies, dwarfs, men with one leg or with the stump of an arm, were crowded as a big background to the coaches of the nobles, the battalions of cavalry, and the liveried police who occupied the middle of the streets and the square before the church. The horses in Spain are fine, and on this occasion many of the best of them were attached to the carriages of the *grandees* who took part in the funeral celebration.

As we neared the church the crowd became more dense and also more interesting. A liveried driver on a coach with the arms of Portugal reined in his horses to allow a carriage filled with priests in purple robes to pass it, and I heard murmurs that these priests were the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo and the Bishop of Salamanca. The great prelates of Spain,

had lived in every large capital in Europe. Their manners, as they stretched out their hands across one another or over women's shoulders to greet a comrade who had just arrived as especial ambassador for this occasion, had the heartiness and unconsciousness of men of the world, at home anywhere.

In our own country the women usually form



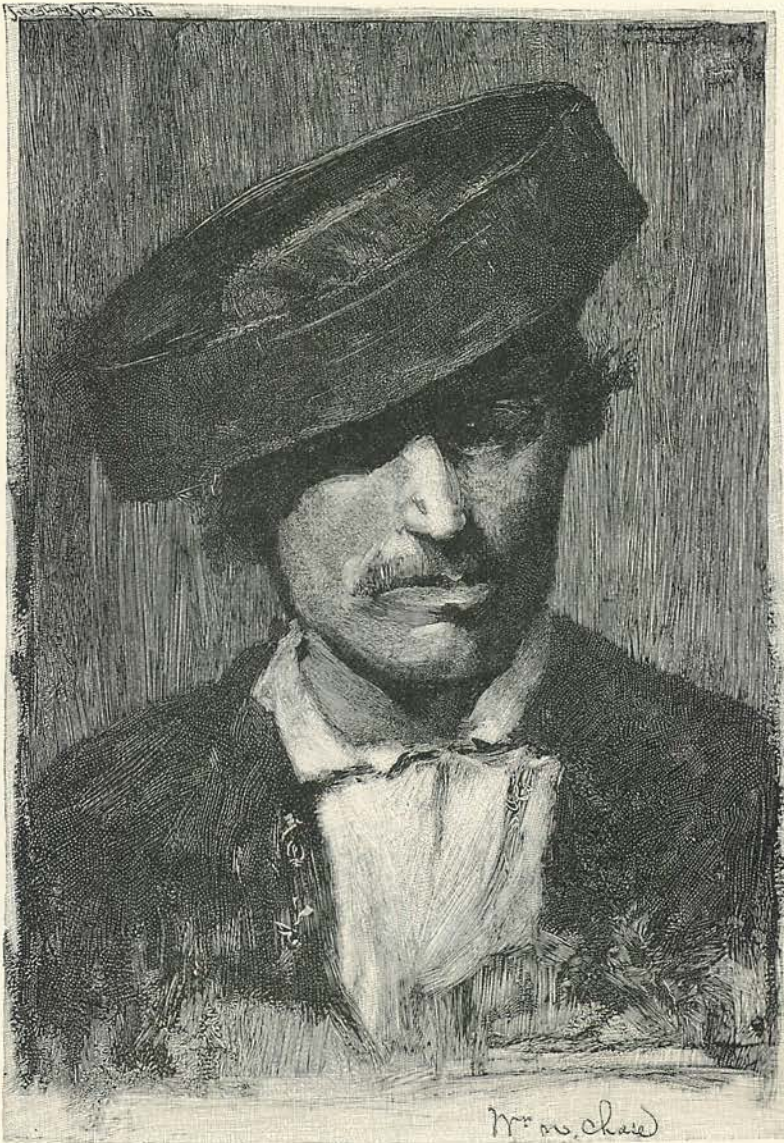
A SCAVENGER.

with their priestly dresses, mitred heads, and diamond rings, grasped their coach-windows or gesticulated to their lackeys, and looked out of the windows with full as impatient and excited an expression as was visible on the faces of their worldly neighbors whose horses or whose carriage-wheels had become entangled with their own. But this whirlpool of carriages gradually ran into a smooth stream, and as each ambassador or other dignitary at length drew up before the church-door he quietly descended beneath the canopy of black velvet that covered the entrance to San Francisco.

The group that was gathered in Madrid that day of the queen's funeral was very varied and brilliant. Here were diplomatists who

the bright feature of any gathering where both sexes are assembled. But in Spain it is quite different; and on this day especially the wives and relatives of the "Excellencies" all appeared in black, while Spanish nobles and the special envoys showed uniforms covered with orders made of every blazing precious stone, and their red and blue coats were thick with gold ornaments and gold lace. The chapeau under the arm of each one might almost have been made of the precious metal, so covered was it with gold embroidery.

As can be easily imagined, the effect of the crowd was like that of a fine picture — its background of the interior of the church hung in black velvet, and with a thousand blazing candles; and this background threw into a



A SPANISH GIPSY.

vague and curious light the gathered crowd within the church. Near at hand daylight mixed with the artificial glare of the candles, and the strong lights and shadows from the sunlight and the black canopy above the crowd in the vestibule of the church and around its entrance formed a picture which Rembrandt or Rubens, and even more especially Titian or Tintoretto, might have loved to paint. Either of these artists would have found in the contrasts of the candles and the velvet, the helmeted soldiery with their horses, and the peasants fit accessories for the dark Spanish women in their black lace mantillas, the burly blonde northern ambassadors, and the slender Spanish

noblemen covered with color, gold, and precious stones.

It is generally supposed that the special features of a face give it its beauty or ugliness; but artists are aware that charm lies in the general build and make-up of the countenance rather than in pretty eyes, nose, or mouth; to be pleasing the features must be set well. So far as we have seen, the faces of no nations are so harmonious as those of the Italians, the Turks, and the Moors of northern Africa. In them, and in the latter especially, the very ideal of beauty seems often to have been reached; and whether it be in the oval-eyed women of Perugia with their full eyebrows, oval cheeks, round

chin, gradual slope of ears, throat, and nose seen in the early pictures of Raphael, the noble and large sockets of the level-browed Roman women, or the heads of the Turks, each one of whom is fit to be cut in cameo, we find faces beautifully formed.

The Spanish type is quite different from any of these, and faces which might belong to the cunning Yankees are often met. Small eye-sockets, near together, and high, square cheek-bones, often inclose sharp little black eyes as cunning as a rat's; while the pointed and bony chin, the prominent nostrils, and the flattened forehead above the nose, which are the types of the peasants in the pictures of Velasquez and Murillo, are the prevailing forms here. These artists painted what they saw, and are no more to be blamed for their choice than are Leonardo and Raphael to be commended — they drew life as they found it.

But while such is the common type of Spanish face among all classes, many of the people are made in a different mold, or at any rate are modified from this one, and at the church that day I saw some beautiful women. If, as I said before, the Southern European faces have less in-

tellect, and possibly less conscience, in them than appears in northern countries, here in Spain it was in the passions and not in the appetites that the characters of the people seemed to be developed. Watching the grand Spanish women that day, so graceful, so self-contained, and so elegant under the slight shadow of their black lace mantillas, which lay in easy folds above the massy tresses of their glossy black hair and gathered about their white arms, bare to the shoulders except for the slight lace sleeves of their dresses, I saw faces which might haunt one in bad dreams. The little white chins were often hard and grim, and though their lips were full and soft, the muscles of their mouths contracted at times,—it might have been with malice or it might have been with envy,—and the delicate thin nostrils of their small noses looked made more to show cruelty than fun. Often their eyes blazed with a brilliant glow, yet I felt they lived rather through the passions, such as love or hate, than for greediness of food, slothfulness, or the physical comfort which deaden or stupefy the German and English race so often.

Susan N. Carter.

“IS THERE ANY WORD FROM THE LORD?”

(Jer. xxxvii. 17.)

DAYLONG a craven cry goes up:
 “The people drink a bitter cup,
 They languish, gathering stones for bread,
 Brave faith is fallen, the old hope dead.”
 The babblers will not cease:
 “The people have no peace.”

Trust is outworn, naught can be done,
 There is no good under the sun,
 The blue sky fades, the old faiths fail,
 The strong hand shakes, the warriors wail;
 Daylong the craven cry,
 “The people faint, they die.”

Are we, forsooth, so helpless, we
 That vanquish air, and earth, and sea?
 The sun shines yonder; somewhere glows
 The old first hope, bright as it rose,
 The hope whose accent high
 Shall brand this whining lie.

If doubts, risen idols of the Nile,
 Again the hallowed land defile,
 Thunder yet clothes green Horeb's crown;
 Let Sinai speak, and smite them down.
 Life nests yet in the clod,
 Israel has still his God.

The seers, the prophets, poets — they
 See yet the good gold in the day:
 They of his line that conquered Saul
 Can crowd small cowards to the wall,
 They that were Athens' might
 Can put pale wraiths to flight.

Poets, still red at heart, arise,
 Sing back the blue into the skies,
 Sing back the green into the grass,
 And bid these skulking phantoms pass:
 You, dauntless sons of song,
 Can blast this dastard wrong.

Once more, blest messengers, declare
 That love still lives, that life is fair;
 Say knowledge knows not, trust is all,
 And crush these wise which writhe and crawl;
 Wake, wake, your strains of fire,
 God's for us — strike the lyre.

John Vance Cheney.