

GRANADA TO VALENCIA, THIRD-CLASS.



IT is said that in Spain a railway train moves for fifteen minutes, then stops for ten; while in Portugal the ratio is reversed, there being fifteen minutes' rest for every ten of motion. The word *mañana*, to-morrow, is also a proverb for Spanish delay. When therefore we determined to go from the Alham-

bra to Valencia, not along any main railway, but across several, we were not surprised to find our journey slow, but we were surprised to find the diligence fairly on its way quite five minutes before the appointed time. What special matter occasioned this unprecedented over-punctuality we have never discovered.

Though the journey was mainly by railway, the first stage, from Granada to Jaen, was by diligence: a small omnibus, holding eight passengers when full, and drawn by mules, whose number varied from six to fourteen, according to the difficulties of the road—a road wild and uninteresting enough at first sight, but dear to every reader of "Don Quixote de la Mancha," the country traversed by it being La Mancha itself, the scene of the doings of the knight and the sayings of the squire. The diligence started from the Grand Square of Granada at five in the morning, and we started for the Alhambra at four, giving ourselves plenty of time, and fortunately, for by five o'clock the diligence was clear of the town, at full gallop up a gentle ascent. Till two in the afternoon we kept steadily on, galloping up every rise, and walking down every descent; obliged to run up, or we should never be at the top; obliged to walk down, or we should too soon be at the bottom.

The conductor was cheerful in tone and active in body; now in front encouraging the mules with his stick, now behind wearying the passengers with his tongue. During the nine hours' journey we came but to one village, the only other buildings being the solitary post stations. This was my first experience of Spanish rural life, and I began with eager interest to inquire into its details; but my first question was so absurd that I had no courage for a second. "Where is the school?" I asked, looking round. "The WHAT?" was the reply, given in a tone of extreme surprise. Then, with contemptuous pity, my companion continued in a milder tone, "This is Spain, not England." The houses were as bare inside and as cold outside as it was possible for them to be; no

pleasant gardens, no flowers climbing up the walls—nothing but bare walls and square doors and windows. A few dirty ragged children tried in vain to beg a few coins, succeeding only in getting a few rough words of refusal. And this apparently deserted and poorly cultivated district is classic ground, the scene of the story of "Don Quixote" and "Sancho Panza." Cervantes probably chose it as being a place where there was so much need of some one to think of those who wanted help.

At Jaen we had an hour before the train started, and we dined partly to fill up the time, and we found the landlord as niggardly with his food as he was liberal with his charges, and just as we felt we were beginning our dinner, we found that only the bill was to come. Then, in a kind of drag with three horses, we were about to start on our way to the station, not so much to avoid walking as for protection from the storm of piteous appeals to our charity—appeals we had no means of examining—but just at the moment of starting the proprietor appeared with a tiny piece of paper, stating three pesetas were charged for our ride.

"Why three pesetas? There are only two of us."

"One peseta for the luggage."

"What luggage?"

"The luggage of this señor."

"This señor has no luggage."

"Then the luggage of that señor?"

"That señor has no luggage."

"Then for the luggage just put on the roof."

"It is not ours."

"But here is the bill; three pesetas."

"Then alter it to two."

"But the luggage?"

"Keep it for the other peseta."

There was no appeal from this, and we escaped on payment of the right fare—two pesetas. We saved the tenpence, owing to our experience of a similar oversight at Madrid, where an omnibus-driver demanded and obtained eight pesetas (six and eightpence) from four of us, though we knew, and he knew we knew, it to be a simple robbery; but the train was just starting, and he was sure we would not put off an eighteen hours' ride for a whole day for the sake of a few shillings, or even to expose a roguery. But here at Jaen we were in no hurry, and could as easily walk as ride; so we were firm, and carried off our tenpence.

The railway was a new institution at Jaen, and the whole population was present to see the train start, and do honour to the spirit of steam. The carriages were of the most approved English type, but every window was broken by the exuberance of approving interest, and every window-strap had been cut off and carried away as a souvenir of the extension of the railway system to the town of Jaen. At the small town where the branch to Jaen joins the main line, we had more than an hour in which to make inquiries as to the best place to stay for the night, but no information of any kind could be obtained, and

there appeared to be no important stations nearer than Albacete, which would not be reached till the following noon. A fellow-traveller advised us to stay at Linares, a small town, where in 1875 an Englishman was carried off by brigands, and kept in the hills till ransomed, but we were assured that all was quiet now. We scouted as ungenerous the thought that our adviser might be a kind of missionary spider seeking to draw us to the neighbourhood of the brigand web, and trusting to fortune, left the train and sought the Linares coach. This proved to be a half-cart, half-omnibus, in which we travelled the intervening ten miles in the most absolute darkness, for it being late at night, the other passengers pulled up all the wooden shutters to keep out the cold, and it was not thought needful to provide any artificial light. In time we found Linares, and also supper.

The train from Linares to Baeza, where we were again to join the railway, started at 5 and arrived at

5.25, and at Baeza we had to wait till past 8. So we proposed to breakfast at the junction, partly to get through the time, and partly to have time to get through the breakfast. But to our inquiry for the refreshment-room, the only reply was, "You can get nothing here but fever, and that we don't charge for," referring to some local epidemic. The prospect of three hours' hunger at the station, to be followed by several more hours of hunger in the train, evoked the spirit of British enterprise, which not only triumphed over the immediate difficulty, but has left to posterity the germ of a refreshment-room at that station. Urged by gnawing hunger, we searched everywhere for food, and at last in an obscure nook we detected an official drinking coffee. The impetuosity of rabid thirst and the impatience of wasted hours culminated in the demand, "Where did you get that?" receiving the single word, "There!" uttered in surprise, and accentuated by a finger, directing our attention to an ancient lady and a tiny cupboard, on a shelf in which were a few bottles of spirits.

To our humbly offered petitions for coffee she only replied, "I have none."

"Can't you make some?"

"No; I only make for the men."

"Why not make some for us?"

"It wouldn't pay me to make a little."

"Can you make a dozen cups?"

"Yes; I can do that."

"Well, then, make a dozen at once."

We commissioned this extensive manufacture with absolute indifference as to cost; it was no longer English gold but Spanish coffee that was the standard of value. But it was decreed that only two of the twelve cups were to be ours, for when, like other owners of large stock, we advertised it, by parading the platforms drinking in the most ostentatious manner, a descent was made on us by a crowd of thirsty passengers, and in our turn we pointed with our fingers, and said, "There!" British capital had enabled us to risk heavy loss, for the total cost of the twelve cups was a whole shilling, but British enterprise enabled us to clear out the whole and still leave the old lady at work.

Finally the unpunctual train carried us off, and near midnight, after fifteen hours of slow motion, the train always appearing to be as reluctant to enter the next station as it had been to leave the last, we had to debate the important question, "Shall we go on through the night, or stay here twenty hours?" "Here" was Albacete, which has no train at all in the daytime, but two trains in the night, nearly at the same time. We had been on the move already for more than forty hours, but to stay for twenty-four hours at a fourth-rate manufacturing town was too fearful a task, and so we determined to persevere for nine hours more, and so reach Valencia and refinement as soon as possible.



A STREET IN GRANADA.

Every morning a slow train leaves Madrid for Valencia, and every evening a mail train, going a little less slowly, follows, and at the end of the journey overtakes it in the afternoon of the second day. Thus it happens that between Albacete and Valencia there is no railway train from early morn till midnight, as the slow train passes at midnight, and the mail about four. We had originally intended to go straight on to Valencia, but forty hours had somewhat deadened our energies, and the delight of third-class travelling had not been soft enough to lull us to sleep, or plea-

gentleman, producing a huge hammer, began to knock a row of nails into the end of the carriage in order to hang up sundry bags and other things, the question of emigration came into the range of practical politics.

So at the next halt we sent out half our party as a scout, who returned with intelligence that in the next carriage everybody was asleep, except one man, who kindly played airs from *Norma* on a flute to soothe any perturbed spirits, and prevent any uprising from the general slumber. So we transferred ourselves to this abode of peace, while one of the slumberers,



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sant enough to pass the time with rapidity. During the day we were tolerably orderly, but as evening fell the number of passengers increased, and with artificial light came cheerfulness, not to say boisterous mirth. In one of the five compartments was a guitar, in the next a tambourine, in the next a whistle and a squeaking doll, in the fourth another guitar, and in the fifth a something which emitted a wailing sound, and all these were in the hands of competent artists so far as vigour was concerned, but melody was less studied, and harmony suffered for want of sufficient rehearsal together. The audience consisted of our two selves, for all the others enlisted themselves as either vocalists, dancers, or both, adding also the exhilaration of constant hand-clapping and the suffocation of dense tobacco-fumes. After several hours of this, a cork in my eye, which took that direction from the unsteadiness of the gentleman who was extracting it from a bottle, suggested the question whether some other carriage might have two vacant seats; and when another

awakened by our entrance, kindly filled up the vacancy we had left, on hearing that there was "music going on," as he "was fond of music." But he too came back at the next station, remarking that "music is good as far as it goes, but it may go too far." We were too near exhaustion to be interested in enigmas, so we did not seek his meaning, if he had any, but kept the flute-player at work by continued praise and suggestions of favourite airs, for he played fairly well while his breath lasted, and we felt that he was the only plank between us and some outbreak of wilder melody.

Our Orpheus, flattered by our attention, continued to soothe until he could blow no longer, but we were able to keep him going until we were within a measurable distance of Valencia, which is the one town in Europe in which we could never find our way for the want of some one street of sufficient length and importance to serve as a base of reference.

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