of everyday observation; for, in this nineteenth century one may live in some parts of the Peninsula for years without coming across (except on the stage) the old-time national costume which we have described.

Romantic Spain, the novelist, painter, and poet, is almost exclusively associated with the northern and eastern provinces differing widely in many striking points, even as to the language. In the southern half of the Peninsula the long occupation of the Moors has left traces which it will yet take many a generation to efface. The seclusion of the women in the south, for instance, is still semi-oriental, although this is gradually giving way before the advancing tide of modern ideas. But in spite of the insensible influence brought to bear on Spanish conservatism by an increasingly liberal education, and by growing contact with other nations, English girls would fret sorely at the trammels with which custom hedges in their Spanish sisters.

The Andalusian girl of to-day, even amongst the lower classes, is never allowed out of the house alone, even upon the most trivial errand or for the shortest stroll; she must be always accompanied by a relative or dependent. Should she break her shackles—which by the way she does not feel as such—she would be exposed to imminent dangers to return from the man she might meet, and would certainly lose caste with her friends.

At certain hours of the day, and more especially at certain days of the week, the unmarried girls of the upper and lower middle classes encase themselves in their tightest corsets (which as a rule are entirely discarded in the house), and deck a costume in the latest fashion. This armed for conquest they are escorted to the promenade or passe, where resort lads, eligible and ineligible. Should one of these be favourably impressed by some fair one, he proceeds to declare his preference by what in England would be called importuning staring, and by persistent following at the heels of the lady. If intent on forsoaking the paths of single blessedness, the ordinary usages of society are employed to obtain an introduction; but if these fail, it is by no means unusual for the smitten youth to follow the young lady (unless she happens to be escorted by a relative of the leisure class). The ceremony is with all the fervour of the southern imagination, the most extravagant praise of her beauty.

To these blandishments the lady apparently pays not the slightest heed, though, if there is any sympathy, a quick glance from her is sufficient to encourage her admirer. He will then, as a rule, follow the señorita to her house, where the invitation is always given at any possible moment until the damsel appears at one of the barred windows. These manoeuvres are repeated for a considerable length of time until, after a few unavailing efforts, the patient suitor is rewarded with a few words—perhaps of expostulation. These lead to explanations and declarations of love and devotion on the part of the gentleman. Should these be favourably received, the young lady will then ask her mother or nearest female relative if Don So-and-so can come across these infatuated mothers holding sweet converse—somewhat disjointed and interrupted it is to be feared—with a girl perched up on a fourth or fifth floor balcony and leaning out, as she is craning his neck from the pavement below. The common staircase too, of the tall houses let out in flats are by no means despised by love's votaries, the writer having more than once discovered a young couple whispering in self-protecting rhymes through the thin grating of the thick outer doors.

All this savours to our insular notions of the decidedly ridiculous, but on the other hand the freed of intercourse with the opposite sex accorded to English and American girls is regarded by their Spanish contemporaries as in shaking tatters and leaves.

After a more or less lengthy acquaintance cultivated in this manner, the suitor, if in a position to marry, speaks to papa and seeks his permission to enter the house. Matrimonio then regarded as critical, and shortly afterwards a visit may be expected from the father, or if he is dead, from the mother of the young man to the nearest relative of the lady, formally to "ask her hand" on behalf of the bashful lover. One sees frequently in the newspapers an announcement that Señor Don So-and-so has visited Señor Don somebody else a salvar la mano (to ask the hand) of his lovely daughter Carmen or Mercedes, as the case may be, for his son.

It is open to discussion whether this portion of the proceedings may not be worthy of imitation in other countries. It must certainly save the suitor much embarrassment, and the impedimenta of the marriage ceremony thoroughly into the financial part of the transaction in a business-like spirit, untrammeled by love's doubts, or fears, or hesitations.

Supposing everything to proceed satisfactorily, the ceremony of betrothal or tomar dichas takes place. The young couple with their near relatives meet at the parish church, where certain papers are filled in (and charged for); the banns can then be nailed in church. Before the actual marriage ceremony, however, each party must present a document signed by a Catholic priest, affirming that he or she has confessed and received absolution. A state official attends to legalize civilly the marriage, and as with dissenters in England, his presence is absolutely essential to the validity of the ceremony.

As soon as the impending marriage is formally announced, the guests, male and female, are invited and relatives pour in. Two or three months before the wedding-day, the house for the newly-married couple is chosen and furnished by the father. The ceremony takes place in the morning or afternoon. If the bride is young, her dress is white, with wreath of orange blossoms and veil; if of mature age a black dress and lace mantilla are considered more correct. There are no bridesmaids, but a madrina (literally godmother), and witnesses are indispensable. After the ceremony, the guests assemble in the house of the bride's parents, or if more convenient, in a private room in some hotel, where an elegant repast is served, but there is no wedding-cake. A toast is then proposed, in which the bride and groom take part; the latter retire before the evening is finished, going to their own house. The following day the newly-married pair pay a formal visit to their respective parents, and then start off on the wedding trip.

On their return they send bon-bons and cartons of sweets in elegant bouquets to their friends, who are followed by cards "offering their house." Until etiquete is complied with on this point, no visits are usually made. In Biscay and the northern provinces the marriage customs differ in many particulars. For one thing the men are to our ideas more highly honoured and lessendsWithly treated, and the girls are consequently more circumspect. The custom of not allowing unmarried girls out of the house alone is, however, rigidly
enforced, and the promenade is also the happy hunting-ground for the youths of the district.

In the villages of Biscay the maidens of the poorer classes wear a distinctive costume from that worn by matrons or widows. It is in the "Valle de Arabats," which is called the heart of Biscay, that the ancient customs are most rigidly kept up. A head kerchief of bright colours, made by the weaver's own hands, is the distinctive mark of the single girl. The plat- liminary steps of making acquaintance on the poteto are similar to those already de- scribed, excepting that the man keeps his distance better, and the maiden is more careful to assure herself that the pretendiant is actuated by deeper feelings than mere caprice. As in Andalusia, the women of Spain are never left alone; all the wailing must be overheard by the dueno, who is, however, often very lenient and discreet. As soon as the lovers are agreed, the family of the man makes a formal visit to the girl, and their exaggerated compliments as to the beauty of the bride, and the worth of the future bride- groom, are exchanged. Contrary to the custom in Andalusia, the woman brings all the necessaries for the house. In the country, however, and amongst the poorer class, the couple share and share alike, and the two fathers perform a sort of duet together. Says one, "I give a bed." "I also," replies the other; but not infrequently when one father has reached his limit and refuses to follow suit, the match is abruptly broken off. But when no such catastrophe occurs, the parents between them manage every business detail, down to procuring the necessary documents, such as certificates of baptism and good conduct, exemption from liability to military service, &c. The religious ceremony is upon the same lines as the Roman Catholic service in England, except that in the middle of it thirteen pieces of money are placed on a plate, with the marriage ring, and presented to the priest. This money is locally called anaza, and varies in value according to the position of the parties.

It is only their just due that a Spanish girl makes excellent wives and tender mothers. They are good, industrious, and caring in all domestic matters, and are generally "keepers at home," while their imperfect education and lack of intellectual interests are to women in and around the bride.

The following is a description of the "Wafer":

"My dear Annette! you are scientific as well as practical," quoth little Mrs. Bowen admiringly, as he left his mark on the spot in our sanitary code. "What is the use of doctors examining houses and dust-bins for microbes. When they let more than soiled clothes go out of a house?"

"I certainly have my own theories how influenza is propagated, at any rate," said Miss Bond, peering up her lips and speaking oracularly. "I need not spread in your home, Bella, if you follow the above plan with your family. A big bottle of sanitas costs 2s., and is invaluable. In surgery as well as in the laundry. Find out the children's wounds with a rag dipped in the liquid. No fobs or lock- jaw will follow!"

Fortunately the latter misfortune does not often come after a cut or a bruise or a scrape. But Mrs. Bowen found her friend's recipe was a wonderful thing for "skinning" over broken knees and elbows.

"It seems to me, a lady who has cooked in her laundry will never be out of vinegar or salt," said Miss Bond one day to her friend as she gave this advice. "Another good thing is, that ammonia—and how would our seagulls look without ammonia—is the best remedy for waxy stings. A third inducement to have proper laundry necessaries at home is, that sanitas not only purifies linen, but mends up the family in the way of accidents.""The three reasons for understanding the art of washing," quoted Mrs. Bowen, laughing. "It sounds like the triple heads of a sermon, Annette.""Lecture or not, Miss Bond was always applied to on every occasion that her skill was needed. Mrs. Bowen, I am sorry to say, was a constant trial to his wife in the matter of "slinging ink.""

By a particular twist of his wrist when using a pen he could scatter quite a shower of black spots in an infinitesimal space of time. He was also warranted always to leave an inkpot wherever it was most in the way, and most invisible to the naked eye.

Result—half the ink has disappeared from tablecloth.

Now, on an oval table in the big drawing-room Mrs. Bowen had a much cherished oriental sand- clock, crimson, em- bored, gold. We watched her protest) that it was more Mr. Bowen's misfortune than his fault that this particular cloth should be visited by a deluge of ink from an open ink- stand.

His wife fed to Miss Bond, almost in tears. Her Cairnese treasure was surely spoiled. His quick eye caught the energetic spinster putting on her bonnet and running over to No. 17, "our best chance is while the stain is still wet. Oh, Mr. Bowen, how could you?"

Then the weft; very glad to get away from the bustle round the oval table.

"Get me some of the tepid boiled milk from breakfast," directed Miss Bond. "Now I am going to soak this unlucky stain.

With the tips of her fingers she gently rubbed the cloth in the warm milk, changing the fluid every time it grew tinged.

"The two P's—Promptness and Patience," she said as she renewed the milk for the fifth time. "They are required with ink. Never be satisfied till you have been to the end. There's quite a art to it."

"Will nothing but fresh-boiled milk answer?"" inspired the mistress, looking somewhat ruefully at the empty jug.

"Butter milk is even better if you have it at breakfast. Warm, and use it exactly the same. Be careful to wash out every atom with water or a sour smell will remain. Finish by press- ing with a cool iron."

"Pure goodness, many thanks!"

Miss Bond walked. She knew this burst of gratitude betokened a lively sense of advice to come. She only tarred three seconds by the clock, then—

"If my husband spills ink on a white damask cloth (I hope he will never do so again, but it is well you are prepared) am I to proceed in the same way?"

"Not at all," came the prompt answer.

"Salt is usually at hand in an eating room, for all ordinary soiling," said Miss Bond, taking a little on the tip. Then apply lemon—on one cut in half does best—and pour boiling water through. As demonstrated in the past, Bella.

Mrs. Bowen had almost forgotten that gone-by lesson. But she turned up her April's "O. P. P." and refreshed her memory.

Anyone who meets with a similar misfortune can do the same.