

believe, that if they can bury a hair from their enemy's head together with a living frog, whatever torment the frog suffers will be shared by the head that grew the hair. They believe also that they are in the power of any enemy who finds their spittle, and if they spit on the ground, most carefully obliterate the marks, but commonly spit on their own clothes for safety's sake.

Here is enough told perhaps to give a fair impression of the state of native civilisation upon ground that is to yield to the white man's wealth and power. We part, therefore, from our clever guide, though we have not yet gone through a tithe of all the odd things that he has to show to those whom his book makes willing companions of his journey.

SPANISH PROVERBS.

THE Spanish proverbs, the floating literature of Spain, handed down by verbal tradition, smell of garlic, and orange-peel, and are as profoundly national as the English nautical song or the Welsh triad.

They are shot at you, or stabbed into you, or pelted at you, at every tavern door and at every table d'hôte. They are the grace for the sour gaspacho and the unsavoury salt cod-fish (bacalao). They are the Spaniard's shield and stiletto. They are the wisdom of the age before books, and as Spain changes no more than China, they are the wisdom of the present day. They are to the cigarette smoker and melon eater what quotations are to the club-man, and to the debater in parliament whom country gentlemen always cheer when he quotes Horace—thinking it Greek, to show they understand him. To many who do not think at all they supply the place of books altogether, and are the traditional Corpus Juris of traditional wisdom bequeathed them by their ancestors; who did think. It might be a question, indeed, worth the theorist-spinner's while to trace the effect of these floating proverbs on a race to which they serve as creeds, statutes, and guides of life; of which they express the mode of thought; and, at the same time, influence and direct it—moulding and being moulded. In these proverbs we find every phase of the Spanish mind exemplified—its "pundonor," its punctiliousness, its intolerable and mean pride, its burning fever for revenge, its hardness that we call cruelty, its love of ease and pleasure, its unprogressiveness, and its ardent religious instinct which degenerates to superstition. For all those pleasant national vices that brought their own special scourges, these proverbs have warning or encouragement. Their kinder feelings, too, do not pass unmentioned. Proverbs with wise men are the small change of wit; but with the Spaniard they are too often his whole mental capital. By an apt quotation a good memory can always appear a genius in Spain, and proverb writers being all anonymous when

living and forgotten when dead, there is no indictment in the High Court of Plagiarism against the appropriator who lets off his mental firework without saying that he purchased it, but yet was not the maker. When a man in England is witty, we suppose the wit is his own; but when a Spaniard is witty in rolling diligence or in striving steam-boat, you may be almost sure it is the proverb of some contemporary of Cervantes, dead this two hundred years, that tickles your diaphragm, and which you swallow with a smile like a French sweetmeat. It acts as a sort of mental snuff, pleasantly irritates, and leaves you refreshed. A man must be very mentally dyspeptic, indeed, who cannot digest a proverb without inconvenience or struggle. If a Spaniard sees you smiling at a Spanish street group rather overdoing the bowing, as Spaniards sometimes will, he will say in a rhyme, "A civil tongue is not expensive, and it is very profitable." As the old Italians of Macchiavelli's time used to say: "It is a good outlay to spoil a hat with often taking it off." You feel at once that you have heard a shrewd proverb intended to explain to worldly people the courtesy of a proud race.

In Ireland, as in Spain, you are often astonished by wit that appears extemporaneous, but is really old as Brian Boru—merely, in fact, an old quotation newly applied, and picked up as a man might pick a fossil off the road to fling at his pig. The first time I met a proverb-monger was in a Seville steamboat, as I sat watching the passengers doing homage to the bull-necked, pig-eyed Commandante, who sat in a state arm-chair under the striped quarter-deck awnings. The Commandante was silent, in a sort of brutal-pasha luxury, beating on the deck with his heavy bamboo cane, watching with his stiff-necked bullety-head two charming sisters, who sat coquetting and winning hearts not many feet off. Every wave of their shining black fans fanned some lover's flame—every quick furl of them let in the sunshine of their eyes, like pulling up blinds, on some happy one of their retinues. Those little black hooks of side curls had hooked many a heart, I was sure; and I myself began to feel I had such a thing about me. I heard a quiet, chuckling, good-natured laugh behind me, and saw sitting on the low gunwale of the vessel, a real Majo—a pure Andalusian buck of the first water: laced jacket, round turban cap, leather greaves, javelin-stick, cigarette and all. He was resting his arm on a pink hat-box, and watching the two beautiful sisters with the almond eyes.

"Jeweller's daughters, for they have diamond eyes," he said, in a quick, merry voice, at the same time handing me his open cigar-case, the Spaniard's mode of entering into conversation and introducing himself. He saw I was amused by his proverb, and that I was a foreigner. What a curious feeling it is, being a foreigner! Spanker used to