

example of this was afforded me at Algiers, whilst delayed there for the Governor's permit to leave the place. My friend and I sauntered through the streets, awaiting the rising of His Excellency, and passing by a handsome house, of which the door was open, our attention was attracted by the sight of a splendid flower-garden in the rear of the dwelling. The mistress of the house, perceiving the cause of our halt, appeared at the door, and with the utmost suavity of manner, invited us to enter and inspect the garden. We did so, the lady accompanying us, exhibiting her choicest floral treasures, and cutting off the prettiest of them. When about to take our leave, she requested us to wait a moment, and almost immediately returned with the cuttings neatly tied into two bouquets, which she presented to each of us, accompanied by a kindness of manner as attractive as the flowers were beautiful. "My dear fellow," said I to my companion, when fairly in the street, "did you ever meet with any thing like that in England or America? Were you ever so treated by one of our fair countrywomen?" His reply was in the negative, with the addition: "By Jove, in all probability, the door would have been slammed in our faces in England or America, by some menial, and the looking into the garden, been termed vulgarity." And he was right. An English woman would have considered it "most improper" to invite two strangers to inspect her adorned parterres, and quite "shocking" to cull bouquets for them. Wide as the poles asunder, certainly, are British and Continental notions of what is *comme il faut*.

In the course of these Sketches, I have already remarked on the absence, in Spain, of those odious pretensions to social superiority, which disgrace British society. One cannot have lived any time in Great Britain, Ireland or the Colonies, without having noticed these pretensions. They are characteristic of all ranks and classes. They form a never-failing source of amusement to the Wit and the Satirist, and of annoyance to the lover of his country, who is fretted to see his countrymen and countrywomen, objects of ridicule. In Spain there is a singular absence of these pretensions. I have seen miserable poverty-struck looking objects seated on the quarter deck of a steamer near to people of distinction, yet the latter showed no feeling but that of sympathy for their distress. I remember a case in point, to show how differently British people act under circumstances nearly similar.

Descending the Rhine in a steamer, one beautiful morning, a party of English ladies and gentlemen ascended to the deck to look at the scenery and enjoy the brilliancy of the day. Hardly

were they on the deck, than they began to cast their glances around at the other passengers, and then hurried off to select a spot where they might be alone. The perambulators of the deck occasionally approached them, to their evident great annoyance. Suddenly their servants were seen issuing from the cabin with chairs, and with these a fence was made around the exclusives. I sat at a distance watching them, and as I watched, I blushed for my country. Some of the foreigners looked highly offended, whilst others ridiculed the insolence of the act. To follow the chain of these remarks, I shall use the language of an Englishman who saw much of Spain:

"To the honour of Spain be it spoken, it is one of the few countries in Europe where poverty is never insulted, nor looked on with contempt. Even at an inn, the poor man is never spurned from the door, and if not harboured, is at least dismissed with fair words, and consigned to the mercies of God and His mother. This is as it should be. I laugh at the bigotry and prejudices of Spain; I abhor the cruelty and ferocity which have cast a stain of eternal infamy on her history; but I will say for the Spaniards, that in their social intercourse, no people in the world exhibit a juster feeling of what is due to the dignity of human nature, or better understand the behaviour which it behooves a man to adopt towards his fellow beings. I have said that it is one of the few countries in Europe where poverty is not treated with contempt; and I may add, where the wealthy are not blindly idolized. In Spain, the very beggar does not feel himself a degraded being, for he kisses no one's feet, and knows not what it is to be cuffed or spitten upon, and in Spain, the Duke or the Marquis can scarcely entertain a very overweening opinion of his own consequence, as he finds no one, with perhaps the exception of his French valet, to fawn upon or flatter him."

What a contrast to that description, are the social characteristics of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies.

The author just quoted, writing of Spain, says:—"She is the most magnificent country in the world, probably the most fertile, and certainly with the finest climate. Whether her children are worthy of their mother, is another question; but I content myself with observing that, amongst much that is reprehensible and lamentable, I have found much that is noble and to be admired; much stern, heroic virtue; much savage and horrible crime; of low, vulgar vice, very little, at least amongst the great body of the Spanish nation. I believe that no stronger argument can be brought forward in proof of the natural vigor and resources of Spain, and the sterling charac-