

CHAPTER 21

Departure from Salamanca - Reception at Pitiegua - The Dilemma - Sudden Inspiration - The Good Presbyter - Combat of Quadrupeds - Irish Christians - Plains of Spain - The Catalans - The Fatal Pool - Valladolid - Circulation of the Scriptures - Philippine Missions - English College - A Conversation - The Gaoleress.



21.1 *The parish church of Pitiegua (courtesy of Trish Gurney)*

On Saturday, the tenth of June, I left Salamanca for Valladolid. As the village where we intended to rest was only five leagues distant, we did not sally forth till midday was past. There was a haze in the heavens which overcast the sun, nearly hiding his countenance from our view. My friend, Mr. Patrick Cantwell, of the Irish College, was kind enough to ride with me part of the way. He was mounted on a most sorry-looking hired mule, which, I expected would be unable to keep pace with the spirited horses of myself and man, for he seemed to be twin brother of the mule of Gil Perez, on which his nephew made his celebrated journey from Oviedo to Penaflor¹. I was, however, very much mistaken. The creature on being mounted instantly set off at that rapid walk which I have so often admired in Spanish mules, and which no horse can emulate. Our more stately animals were speedily left in the rear, and we were continually obliged to break into a trot to follow the singular quadruped, who, ever and anon, would lift his head high in the air, curl up his lip, and show his yellow teeth, as if he were laughing at us, as perhaps he was. It chanced that none of us was well acquainted with the road; indeed, I could see nothing which was fairly entitled to that appellation. The way from Salamanca to Valladolid is amongst a medley of bridle-paths and drift-ways, where discrimination is very difficult. It was not long before we were bewildered, and travelled over more ground than was strictly necessary. However, as men and women

¹ Lesage, *Gil Blas de Santillana*, chapter 2. The mule in question, grown lazy by carrying its master Gil Perez, Gil Blas's uncle, would never move faster than at a snail's pace.

frequently passed on donkeys and little ponies, we were not too proud to be set right by them, and by dint of diligent inquiry we at length arrived at Pitiegua, four leagues from Salamanca, a small village, containing about fifty families, consisting of mud huts, and situated in the midst of dusty plains, where corn was growing in abundance². We asked for the house of the cura, an old man whom I had seen the day before at the Irish College, and who, on being informed that I was about to depart for Valladolid, had exacted from me a promise that I would not pass through his village without paying him a visit and partaking of his hospitality.

A woman directed us to a cottage somewhat superior in appearance to those contiguous. It had a small portico, which, if I remember well, was overgrown with a vine. We knocked loud and long at the door, but received no answer; the voice of man was silent, and not even a dog barked. The truth was, that the old curate was taking his siesta, and so were his whole family, which consisted of one ancient female and a cat. The good man was at last disturbed by our noise and vociferation, for we were hungry, and consequently impatient. Leaping from his couch, he came running to the door in great hurry and confusion, and perceiving us, he made many apologies for being asleep at a period when, he said, he ought to have been on the lookout for his invited guest. He embraced me very affectionately and conducted me into his parlour, an apartment of tolerable size, hung round with shelves, which were crowded with books. At one end there was a kind of table or desk covered with black leather, with a large easy chair, into which he pushed me, as I, with the true eagerness of a bibliomaniac, was about to inspect his shelves; saying, with considerable vehemence, that there was nothing there worthy of the attention of an Englishman, for that his whole stock consisted of breviaries and dry Catholic treatises on divinity.



21.2 Schiedam gin bottles

His care now was to furnish us with refreshments. In a twinkling, with the assistance of his old attendant, he placed on the table several plates of cakes and confectionery, and a number of large uncouth glass bottles, which I thought bore a strong resemblance to those of Schiedam, and indeed they were the very same. "There," said he, rubbing his hands; "I thank God that it is in my power to treat you in a way which will be agreeable to you. In those bottles there is Hollands³ thirty years old"; and producing two large

² According to Madoz [*DG*, vol. 13, 74] Pitiegua had 50 modest houses, inhabited by 81 heads of household, and 200 souls. It sported a school with 40 children, and San Miguel church.

tumblers, he continued, "fill, my friends, and drink, drink it every drop if you please, for it is of little use to myself, who seldom drink aught but water. I know that you islanders love it, and cannot live without it; therefore, since it does you good, I am only sorry that there is no more."

Observing that we contented ourselves with merely tasting it, he looked at us with astonishment, and inquired the reason of our not drinking. We told him that we seldom drank ardent spirits; and I added, that as for myself, I seldom tasted even wine, but like himself, was content with the use of water.⁴ He appeared somewhat incredulous, but told us to do exactly what we pleased, and to ask for what was agreeable to us. We told him that we had not dined, and should be glad of some substantial refreshment. "I am afraid," said he, "that I have nothing in the house which will suit you; however, we will go and see."

Thereupon he led us through a small yard at the back part of his house, which might have been called a garden, or orchard, if it had displayed either trees or flowers; but it produced nothing but grass, which was growing in luxuriance. At one end was a large pigeon-house, which we all entered: "for," said the curate, "if we could find some nice delicate pigeons they would afford you an excellent dinner." We were, however, disappointed; for after rummaging the nests, we only found very young ones, unfitted for our purpose. The good man became very melancholy, and said he had some misgivings that we should have to depart dinnerless. Leaving the pigeon-house, he conducted us to a place where there were several skeps of bees, round which multitudes of the busy insects were hovering, filling the air with their music. "Next to my fellow creatures," said he, "there is nothing which I love so dearly as these bees; it is one of my delights to sit watching them, and listening to their murmur." We next went to several unfurnished rooms, fronting the yard, in one of which were hanging several fitches of bacon, beneath which he stopped, and looking up, gazed intently upon them. We told him that if he had nothing better to offer, we should be very glad to eat some slices of this bacon, especially if some eggs were added. "To tell the truth," said he, "I have nothing better, and if you can content yourselves with such fare I shall be very happy; as for eggs you can have as many as you wish, and perfectly fresh, for my hens lay every day."

So, after every thing was prepared and arranged to our satisfaction, we sat down to dine on the bacon and eggs, in a small room, not the one to which he had ushered us at first, but on the other side of the doorway. The good curate, though he ate nothing, having

³ The far-famed Dutch *Jenever*, one of Holland's main products, and its most prominent export commodity (next to processed herring) from the 17th century onward. It was mainly distilled from Russian grain, imported through the Baltic Sea.

⁴ This remark was added, if not to avoid insulting the hospitality of the Cura of Pitiegua, to make the correct impression on Borrow's devout readers. Throughout his life, Borrow drank like a hussar, as has been well established by subsequent researchers. [Fraser, A., 'A Time for Ale', in: *Proceedings of the 1989 George Borrow Conference*, 79-82; Stanley, Ph., 'Conviviality in Llangollen', in: *GBB* 23, 88f; Missler, 'Any Time for Medicine', in: *GBB* 26, 83-86.] Note, however, that he roughly a year before this scene took place, he wrote that he had 'deemed it expedient to leave off wine entirely, though it is necessary to my constitution, to prove to the Spaniards that I am not a drunkard; for it is the general opinion here that every Englishman gets drunk three times a day'! [Fraser, *Hasfeld*, 18]

taken his meal long before, sat at the head of the table, and the repast was enlivened by his chat. "There, my friends," said he, "where you are now seated, once sat Wellington and Crauford, after they had beat the French at Arapiles⁵, and rescued us from the thralldom of those wicked people. I never respected my house so much as I have done since they honoured it with their presence. They were heroes, and one was a demigod." He then burst into a most eloquent panegyric of El Gran Lord, as he termed him, which I should be very happy to translate, were my pen capable of rendering into English the robust thundering sentences of his powerful Castilian. I had till then considered him a plain uninformed old man, almost simple, and as incapable of much emotion as a tortoise within its shell; but he had become at once inspired: his eyes were replete with a bright fire, and every muscle of his face was quivering. The little silk skull-cap which he wore, according to the custom of the Catholic clergy, moved up and down with his agitation, and I soon saw that I was in the presence of one of those remarkable men who so frequently spring up in the bosom of the Romish church, and who to a child-like simplicity unite immense energy and power of mind, - equally adapted to guide a scanty flock of ignorant rustics in some obscure village in Italy or Spain, as to convert millions of heathens on the shores of Japan, China, and Paraguay.



21.3 'Black Bob' Craufurd

He was a thin spare man, of about sixty-five, and was dressed in a black cloak of very coarse materials, nor were his other garments of superior quality. This plainness, however, in the appearance of his outward man was by no means the result of poverty;

⁵ The Battle of the Arapiles (a group of hills), a.k.a. the Battle of Salamanca, was fought on 22 July 1812, a few miles south of the city, and was one of the decisive encounters between the French, under Marshal Marmont, and Wellington's Allied army of British, Spanish and Portuguese troops. It is unlikely that Wellington would have stopped off at Pitiegua right after this battle, because following on his victory he set out for Madrid, to the South-East, his route leading nowhere near the village. In October 1812, however, when retreating from the unsuccessful siege of Burgos, the army did pass through Pitiegua [Robertson, *Presence*, 302] and at that time he may well have rested here. But in either case he will not have been in the company of 'Black Bob' Craufurd, since this famous commander of the Light Division was by that time 8 months dead, having fallen in the assault of Ciudad Rodrigo in January 1812 (something which Borrow must have known very well either at the time of his visit or at the time of his writing *The Bible in Spain*)!

quite the contrary. The benefice was a very plentiful one, and placed at his disposal annually a sum of at least eight hundred dollars, of which the eighth part was more than sufficient to defray the expenses of his house and himself; the rest was devoted entirely to the purest acts of charity. He fed the hungry wanderer, and dispatched him singing on his way, with meat in his wallet and a peseta in his purse, and his parishioners, when in need of money, had only to repair to his study and were sure of an immediate supply. He was, indeed, the banker of the village, and what he lent he neither expected nor wished to be returned. Though under the necessity of making frequent journeys to Salamanca, he kept no mule, but contented himself with an ass, borrowed from the neighbouring miller. "I once kept a mule," said he, "but some years since it was removed without my permission by a traveller whom I had housed for the night: for in that alcove I keep two clean beds for the use of the wayfaring, and I shall be very much pleased if yourself and friend will occupy them, and tarry with me till the morning."

But I was eager to continue my journey, and my friend was no less anxious to return to Salamanca. Upon taking leave of the hospitable curate, I presented him with a copy of the New Testament. He received it without uttering a single word, and placed it on one of the shelves of his study; but I observed him nodding significantly to the Irish student, perhaps as much as to say, "Your friend loses no opportunity of propagating his book"; for he was well aware who I was. I shall not speedily forget the truly good presbyter, Antonio Garcia de Aguilar, Cura of Pitiegua.⁶

We reached Pedroso⁷ shortly before nightfall. It was a small village containing about thirty houses, and intersected by a rivulet, or as it is called a regata. On its banks women and maidens were washing their linen and singing couplets; the church stood lone and solitary on the farther side. We inquired for the posada, and were shown a cottage differing nothing from the rest in general appearance. We called at the door in vain, as it is not the custom of Castile for the people of these halting places to go out to welcome their visitors: at last we dismounted and entered the house, demanding of a sullen-looking woman where we were to place the horses. She said there was a stable within the house, but we could not put the animals there as it contained malos machos (SAVAGE MULES) belonging to two travellers who would certainly fight with our horses, and then there would be a funcion, which would tear the house down. She then pointed to an outhouse across the way, saying that we could stable them there. We entered this place, which we found full of filth and swine, with a door without a lock. I thought of the fate of the cura's mule, and was unwilling to trust the horses in such a place, abandoning them to the mercy of any robber in the neighbourhood. I therefore entered the house, and said resolutely, that I was determined to place them in the stable. Two men were squatted on the ground, with an immense bowl of stewed hare before them, on which they were supping; these were the travelling merchants, the masters of the mutes.⁸ I passed on to the stable, one of the men saying softly, "Yes, yes, go in and

⁶ This charming and highly praising portrait of the Cura de Pitiegua goes to show that Borrow was not always a compulsive priest-basher, but that he could appreciate a Catholic clergyman if that person lived a proper Christian life. For a more general description of the Spanish clergy, in the same positive vein, see Cook, vol. 1, 233f.

⁷ El Pedroso de la Armuña. Borrow did not follow the present National Road (N620 / E80) but rather the route of the modern railway from Salamanca to Medina del Campo.

see what will befall." I had no sooner entered the stable than I heard a horrid discordant cry, something between a bray and a yell, and the largest of the machos, tearing his head from the manger to which he was fastened, his eyes shooting flames, and breathing a whirlwind from his nostrils, flung himself on my stallion. The horse, as savage as himself, reared on his hind legs, and after the fashion of an English pugilist, repaid the other with a pat on the forehead, which nearly felled him. A combat instantly ensued, and I thought that the words of the sullen woman would be verified by the house being torn to pieces. It ended by my seizing the mute by the halter, at the risk of my limbs, and hanging upon him with all my weight, whilst Antonio, with much difficulty, removed the horse. The man who had been standing at the entrance now came forward, saying, "This would not have happened if you had taken good advice." Upon my stating to him the unreasonableness of expecting that I would risk horses in a place where they would probably be stolen before the morning, he replied, "True, true, you have perhaps done right." He then refastened his macho, adding for additional security a piece of whipcord, which he said rendered escape impossible.



21.4 The church of El Pedroso

After supper I roamed about the village. I addressed two or three labourers whom I found standing at their doors; they appeared, however, exceedingly reserved, and with a gruff "BUENAS NOCHES" turned into their houses without inviting me to enter. I at last found my way to the church porch, where I continued some time in meditation. At last I bethought myself of retiring to rest; before departing, however, I took out and affixed to the porch of the church an advertisement to the effect that the New Testament was to be purchased at Salamanca. On returning to the house, I found the two travelling merchants enjoying profound slumber on various mantas or mule-cloths stretched on the floor. "You are a French merchant, I suppose, Caballero," said a man, who it seemed was the master of the house, and whom I had not before seen. "You are a French merchant, I suppose, and are on the way to the fair of Medina." "I am neither Frenchman nor merchant," I replied, "and though I purpose passing through Medina, it is not with the view of attending the fair." "Then you are one of the Irish Christians from Salamanca, Caballero," said the man; "I hear you come from that town." "Why do you call them IRISH CHRISTIANS?" I replied. "Are there pagans in their country?"

⁸ Burke [footnote to 323]: 'A mute is the offspring of a stallion and a she-ass, a mule of a jackass and a mare.'

"We call them Christians," said the man, "to distinguish them from the Irish English, who are worse than pagans, who are Jews and heretics." I made no answer, but passed on to the room which had been prepared for me, and from which, the door being ajar, I heard the following conversation passing between the innkeeper and his wife:-

INNKEEPER. - Muger, it appears to me that we have evil guests in the house.

WIFE. - You mean the last comers, the Caballero and his servant. Yes, I never saw worse countenances in my life.

INNKEEPER. - I do not like the servant, and still less the master. He has neither formality nor politeness: he tells me that he is not French, and when I spoke to him of the Irish Christians, he did not seem to belong to them. I more than suspect that he is a heretic or a Jew at least.

WIFE. - Perhaps they are both. Maria Santissima! what shall we do to purify the house when they are gone?

INNKEEPER. - O, as for that matter, we must of course charge it in the cuenta.

I slept soundly, and rather late in the morning arose and breakfasted, and paid the bill, in which, by its extravagance, I found the purification had not been forgotten. The travelling merchants had departed at daybreak. We now led forth the horses, and mounted; there were several people at the door staring at us. "What is the meaning of this?" said I to Antonio.

"It is whispered that we are no Christians," said Antonio; "they have come to cross themselves at our departure."

In effect, the moment that we rode forward a dozen hands at least were busied in this evil-averting ceremony. Antonio instantly turned and crossed himself in the Greek fashion, - much more complex and difficult than the Catholic.

"MIRAD QUE SANTIGUO! QUE SANTIGUO DE LOS DEMONIOS!"⁹ exclaimed many voices, whilst for fear of consequences we hastened away.

The day was exceedingly hot, and we wended our way slowly along the plains of Old Castile. With all that pertains to Spain, vastness and sublimity are associated: grand are its mountains, and no less grand are its plains, which seem of boundless extent, but which are not tame unbroken flats, like the steppes of Russia. Rough and uneven ground is continually occurring: here a deep ravine and gully worn by the wintry torrent; yonder an eminence not unfrequently craggy and savage, at whose top appears the lone solitary village. There is little that is blithesome and cheerful, but much that is melancholy. A few solitary rustics are occasionally seen toiling in the fields - fields without limit or boundary, where the green oak, the elm or the ash are unknown; where only the sad and desolate pine displays its pyramid-like form, and where no grass is to be found. And who are the travellers of these districts? For the most part arrieros, with

⁹ [Author's note] "See the crossing! See what devilish crossing!"

their long trains of mules hung with monotonous tinkling bells. Behold them with their brown faces, brown dresses, and broad slouched hats; - the arrieros, the true lords of the roads of Spain, and to whom more respect is paid in these dusty ways than to dukes and condes; - the arrieros, sullen, proud, and rarely courteous, whose deep voices may be sometimes heard at the distance of a mile, either cheering the sluggish animals, or shortening the dreary way with savage and dissonant songs.



21.5 Medina del Campo on a market day

Late in the afternoon, we reached Medina del Campo, formerly one of the principal cities of Spain, though at present an inconsiderable place. Immense ruins surround it in every direction, attesting the former grandeur of this "city of the plain." The great square or market-place is a remarkable spot, surrounded by a heavy massive piazza, over which rise black buildings of great antiquity. We found the town crowded with people awaiting the fair, which was to be held in a day or two. We experienced some difficulty in obtaining admission into the posada, which was chiefly occupied by Catalans from Valladolid. These people not only brought with them their merchandise but their wives and children. Some of them appeared to be people of the worst description: there was one in particular, a burly savage-looking fellow, of about forty, whose conduct was atrocious; he sat with his wife, or perhaps concubine, at the door of a room which opened upon the court: he was continually venting horrible and obscene oaths, both in Spanish and Catalan. The woman was remarkably handsome, but robust and seemingly as savage as himself; her conversation likewise was as frightful as his own. Both seemed to be under the influence of an incomprehensible fury. At last, upon some observation from the woman, he started up, and drawing a long knife from his girdle, stabbed at her naked bosom; she, however, interposed the palm of her hand, which was much cut. He stood for a moment viewing the blood trickling upon the ground, whilst she held up her wounded hand, then with an astounding oath he hurried up the court to the Plaza. I went up to the woman and said, "What is the cause of this? I hope the ruffian has not seriously injured you." She turned her countenance upon me with the glance of a demon, and at last with a sneer of contempt exclaimed, "*Caráls,*

*que es eso?*¹⁰ Cannot a Catalan gentleman be conversing with his lady upon their own private affairs without being interrupted by you?" She then bound up her hand with a handkerchief, and going into the room brought a small table to the door, on which she placed several things as if for the evening's repast, and then sat down on a stool: presently returned the Catalan, and without a word took his seat on the threshold; then, as if nothing had occurred, the extraordinary couple commenced eating and drinking, interlarding their meal with oaths and jests.

We spent the night at Medina, and departing early next morning, passed through much the same country as the day before, until about noon we reached a small venta, distant half a league from the Duero; here we reposed ourselves during the heat of the day, and then remounting, crossed the river by a handsome stone bridge¹¹, and directed our course to Valladolid. The banks of the Duero in this place have much beauty: they abound with trees and brushwood, amongst which, as we passed along, various birds were singing melodiously. A delicious coolness proceeded from the water, which in some parts brawled over stones or rippled fleetly over white sand, and in others glided softly over blue pools of considerable depth. By the side of one of these last, sat a woman of about thirty, neatly dressed as a peasant; she was gazing upon the water into which she occasionally flung flowers and twigs of trees. I stopped for a moment to ask a question; she, however, neither looked up nor answered, but continued gazing at the water as if lost to consciousness of all beside. "Who is that woman?" said I to a shepherd, whom I met the moment after. "She is mad, LA POBRECITA," said he; "she lost her child about a month ago in that pool, and she has been mad ever since; they are going to send her to Valladolid, to the Casa de los Locos. There are many who perish every year in the eddies of the Duero; it is a bad river; VAYA USTED CON LA VIRGEN, CABALLERO." So I rode on through the pinares, or thin scanty pine forests, which skirt the way to Valladolid in this direction.



21.6 Old panorama of Valladolid

¹⁰ Something like 'Christ, what's this?' If the lady did indeed say *Caráls*, which Burke [Glossary] acknowledges as the Catalan version of the Spanish oath *Carajo*, then this exclamation has since dropped out of current Catalan vocabulary...

¹¹ At the village of Puente Duero. In 1783 the traveller Ponz noted in his guide to Spanish roads that at the entrance of Puente Duero '*se pasa el rio de este nombre por un gran puente*'.

Valladolid is seated in the midst of an immense valley, or rather hollow which seems to have been scooped by some mighty convulsion out of the plain ground of Castile. The eminences which appear in the neighbourhood are not properly high grounds, but are rather the sides of this hollow. They are jagged and precipitous, and exhibit a strange and uncouth appearance. Volcanic force seems at some distant period to have been busy in these districts. Valladolid abounds with convents, at present deserted, which afford some of the finest specimens of architecture in Spain.¹² The principal church, though rather ancient, is unfinished: it was intended to be a building of vast size, but the means of the founders were insufficient to carry out their plan: it is built of rough granite. Valladolid is a manufacturing town, but the commerce is chiefly in the hands of the Catalans, of whom there is a colony of nearly three hundred established here. It possesses a beautiful alameda, or public walk, through which flows the river Escurva¹³. The population is said to amount to sixty thousand souls.¹⁴



21.7 Sign above the entrance of the Caballo de Troya

We put up at the Posada de las Diligencias, a very magnificent edifice: this posada, however, we were glad to quit on the second day after our arrival, the accommodation being of the most wretched description, and the incivility of the people great; the master

¹² In preparation of the famous, nationwide *Desamortizacion* of Mendizabal, the monks of the Valladolid were expelled from their convents on 18 August 1835 at 7 a.m. The buildings were handed over to the *Milicia Nacional*, to be turned into barracks, stables and fortresses

¹³ Modern: Esgueva. This was the river which according to Ford ‘divides the town, acting as a sewer’, and flowed into the other rivers, the Pisuerga, just outside the city. Both rivers had public walks, or Alamedas: the Prado de la Magdalena, on the Esgueva, to the north-east of town; the Espolon nuevo and the Plantio de Moreras on the Pisuerga. [Ford, *HB*, 932]

¹⁴ Borrow’s description of Valladolid is sympathetic. Swinburne, who passed the city several decades earlier, was less impressed and called it ‘a large rambling city (...) run up in a hurry’ [Robertson, *Tour*, 66]. Note that Ford [*HB*, 931] credits Valladolid with only 24,000 inhabitants; while in 1840 Gauthiers [chapter 6, 62] only allowed 20,000 in a city that could harbour many thousands more. One reason for its depopulation was the cholera epidemic of 1834, which carried off 2,000 people in 15 days.

of the house, an immense tall fellow, with huge moustaches and an assumed military air, being far too high a cavalier to attend to the wants of his guests, with whom, it is true, he did not appear to be overburdened, as I saw no one but Antonio and myself. He was a leading man amongst the national guards of Valladolid, and delighted in parading about the city on a clumsy steed, which he kept in a subterranean stable.¹⁵

Our next quarters were at the Trojan Horse¹⁶, an ancient posada, kept by a native of the Basque provinces¹⁷, who at least was not above his business. We found everything in confusion at Valladolid, a visit from the factious being speedily expected. All the gates were blockaded, and various forts had been built to cover the approaches to the city. Shortly after our departure the Carlists actually did arrive, under the command of the Biscayan chief, Zariategui. They experienced no opposition; the staunchest nationals retiring to the principal fort, which they, however, speedily surrendered, not a gun being fired throughout the affair. As for my friend the hero of the inn, on the first rumour of the approach of the enemy, he mounted his horse and rode off, and was never subsequently heard of.¹⁸ On our return to Valladolid, we found the inn in other and better hands, those of a Frenchman from Bayonne, from whom we received as much civility as we had experienced rudeness from his predecessor.¹⁹

¹⁵ Borrow's opinion about this 'Parador Nuevo' of Valladolid is born out by the Resident Officer [vol. 2, 401] who passed here in June 1834 and equally despised the place.

¹⁶ The *Caballo de Troya*, in the Calle de Correos [Robertson, *Tour*, 66]. A passing tour group of the George Borrow Society ascertained that it was still functioning in September 2009.

¹⁷ As he proceeds on his journey, Borrow boards ever more frequently in inns run by 'foreigners', i.e. Genoese, Basques, Frenchmen etc. The reason for this is curious: as Ford [*HB*, 41] points out: the office of inn-keeper was a disreputable one, many of those who kept roadside inns being dishonest and in league with smugglers and bandits. Consequently native Spaniards concerned with their reputation would never stoop so low as to open a posada, and left the entire trade to outsiders or declared rogues, of which we have already met a number in these pages.

¹⁸ Zariategui was the commander of yet another Carlist raid in emulation of the great 1836 Gomez Expedition. The many rebel expeditions, which left the Basque Lands to cut through Castile, did tremendous harm, both militarily and to the reputation of the Liberal regime, which was visibly unable to stop them. Yet due to a simple lack of popular support outside the separatist regions, they never managed to succeed in their real objective, i.e. to induce new provinces to rise for the Pretender Don Carlos, and all, ultimately, had to march back again to base in the Basque Provinces. An undated 'History of Valladolid' by Juan Ortega Rubio [vol. 2, chapter 12, 202] bears out much of Borrow's account, writing that '*nuestra ciudad se encontraba en el mes de Setiembre [1837] sumamente apurada, porque los facciosos en los primeros días de dicho mes vagaban por sus alrededores, y aunque se llamó á las armas á todos los vecinos que estaban en disposición de llevarlas, sin embargo, aquellos al mando de Zariategui penetraron en ella y arrancaron la lápida de la Constitución. Nuestras autoridades abandonaron la ciudad el día 18, y cuando volvieron, el Gobierno las separó á todas de sus puestos por su debilidad y cobardía.*'

¹⁹ This occurred on the way back from Santander to Madrid, four months later, in mid October 1837. By 1845, the Parador was run by a Basque woman called 'La Bilbaina' [Ford, *HB* 930].

In a few days I formed the acquaintance of the book-seller of the place, a kind-hearted simple man, who willingly undertook the charge of vending the Testaments which I brought.²⁰

I found literature of every description at the lowest ebb at Valladolid. My newly-acquired friend merely carried on bookselling in connexion with other business; it being, as he assured me, in itself quite insufficient to afford him a livelihood. During the week, however, that I continued in this city, a considerable number of copies were disposed of²¹, and a fair prospect opened that many more would be demanded. To call attention to my books, I had recourse to the same plan which I had adopted at Salamanca, the affixing of advertisements to the walls. Before leaving the city, I gave orders that these should be renewed every week; from pursuing which course I expected that much manifold good would accrue, as the people would have continual opportunities of learning that a book which contains the living word was in existence, and within their reach, which might induce them to secure it and consult it even unto salvation.²²



21.8 The Scotch College of Valladolid

²⁰ Julian Pastor, a local bookseller and publisher [Knapp, I : 266; Robertson, *Tour*, 67; Ford, *HB* 933 & 936] According to Madoz [*DG*, vol. 15, 571] in the 1840s the bookshop was in the Calle de Cantarranas n° 31 (today's Calle Macias Picavea).

²¹ Twenty copies, according to Borrow's notice to his employers [Darlow, 220]. Within a few weeks, however, Pastor – who ran one of Borrow's better franchises - managed to sell all 40 copies left with him, and needed a fresh supply of 50 [Darlow, 226f; Missler, *Daring Game*, 43f]. During his stay in Valladolid, Borrow himself also made a sales-experiment in a nearby farmer's village. See the text from the '*Account of the Proceedings*' quoted in chapter 27 below.

²² Repetition of the ads was necessary for lesser reasons as well. As Borrow notes in his letter to Brandram of 5 July 1837 from Astorga: 'Before leaving I gave orders that the advertisements should be renewed every week, as evil-disposed, persons probably of the Carlist or Papist party, had defaced or torn down a great number of those which had been put up' [Darlow, 220].

In Valladolid I found both an English and Scotch College. From my obliging friends, the Irish at Salamanca, I bore a letter of introduction to the rector of the latter. I found this college an old gloomy edifice, situated in a retired street.²³ The rector was dressed in the habiliments of a Spanish ecclesiastic, a character which he was evidently ambitious of assuming. There was something dry and cold in his manner, and nothing of that generous warmth and eager hospitality which had so captivated me in the fine Irish rector of Salamanca; he was, however, civil and polite, and offered to show me the curiosities of the place. He evidently knew who I was, and on that account was, perhaps, more reserved than he otherwise would have been: not a word passed between us on religious matters, which we seemed to avoid by common consent. Under the auspices of this gentleman, I visited the college of the Philippine Missions, which stands beyond the gate of the city,²⁴ where I was introduced to the superior, a fine old man of seventy, very stout, in the habiliments of a friar. There was an air of placid benignity on his countenance which highly interested me: his words were few and simple, and he seemed to have bid adieu to all worldly passions. One little weakness was, however, still clinging to him.

MYSELF. - This is a noble edifice in which you dwell, Father; I should think it would contain at least two hundred students.

RECTOR. - More, my son; it is intended for more hundreds than it now contains single individuals.

MYSELF. - I observe that some rude attempts have been made to fortify it; the walls are pierced with loopholes in every direction.

RECTOR. - The nationals of Valladolid visited us a few days ago, and committed much useless damage; they were rather rude, and threatened me with their clubs: poor men, poor men.

MYSELF. - I suppose that even these missions, which are certainly intended for a noble end, experience the sad effects of the present convulsed state of Spain?

RECTOR. - But too true: we at present receive no assistance from the government, and are left to the Lord and ourselves.²⁵

MYSELF. - How many aspirants for the mission are you at present instructing?

²³ The *Colegio de Escoceses*, stood in the Calle del Salvador. It was originally founded in in 1627 in Madrid by a Scottish soldier, Coronel William Semple, and moved to Valladolid in 1770, where it remained until the 1980s. [Murphy, *GBB* 40, 107f]

²⁴ The *Convento de Augustinos Filipinos*, on the south-west side of the city, near today's Parque del Campo. It is now Spain's most important Oriental Museum.

²⁵ Mendizabal's *Desmortizacion* had stripped the all catholic institutions of their landed property. The few which were allowed to continue for the public good, were promised subsidies to compensate for the loss of income. Such subsidies were never paid, due to the cost of the war, the lack of financial efficiency, and the wide-spread corruption of the liberal regime.

RECTOR. - Not one, my son; not one. They are all fled. The flock is scattered and the shepherd left alone.

MYSELF. - Your reverence has doubtless taken an active part in the mission abroad?

RECTOR. - I was forty years in the Philippines, my son, forty years amongst the Indians. Ah me! how I love those Indians of the Philippines.

MYSELF. - Can your reverence discourse in the language of the Indians?

RECTOR. - No, my son. We teach the Indians Castilian. There is no better language, I believe. We teach them Castilian, and the adoration of the Virgin. What more need they know?

MYSELF. - And what did your reverence think of the Philippines as a country?

RECTOR. - I was forty years in the Philippines, but I know little of the country. I do not like the country. I love the Indians. The country is not very bad; it is, however, not worth Castile.

MYSELF. - Is your reverence a Castilian?

RECTOR. - I am an OLD Castilian, my son.²⁶



21.9 The English College of Valladolid

²⁶ This correction has a double implication. The rector emphatically declares himself to be an inhabitant of 'Old Castile', a.k.a. Castilla-Leon, the northern half of the great Spanish highland. But the expression also carries an association with the division into 'New' and 'Old' Christians, i.e. the part of the population which was originally Christian, and those, such as Jews and Moors, who only become so on being forced to convert. This division, which carried straightforward racist overtones, developed in the 16th century and continued deep into the 20th.

From the house of the Philippine Missions my friend conducted me to the English college²⁷; this establishment seemed in every respect to be on a more magnificent scale than its Scottish sister. In the latter there were few pupils, scarcely six or seven, I believe, whilst in the English seminary I was informed that between thirty and forty were receiving their education. It is a beautiful building, with a small but splendid church, and a handsome library. The situation is light and airy: it stands by itself in an unfrequented part of the city, and, with genuine English exclusiveness, is surrounded by a high wall, which encloses a delicious garden. This is by far the most remarkable establishment of the kind in the Peninsula, and I believe the most prosperous. From the cursory view which I enjoyed of its interior, I of course cannot be expected to know much of its economy. I could not, however, fall to be struck with the order, neatness, and system which pervaded it. There was, however, an air of severe monastic discipline, though I am far from asserting that such actually existed. We were attended throughout by the sub-rector, the principal being absent. Of all the curiosities of this college, the most remarkable is the picture gallery, which contains neither more nor less than the portraits of a variety of scholars of this house who eventually suffered martyrdom in England, in the exercise of their vocation in the angry times of the Sixth Edward and fierce Elizabeth. Yes, in this very house were many of those pale smiling half-foreign priests educated, who, like stealthy grimalkins, traversed green England in all directions; crept into old halls beneath umbrageous rookeries, fanning the dying embers of Popery, with no other hope nor perhaps wish than to perish disembowelled by the bloody hands of the executioner, amongst the yells of a rabble as bigoted as themselves: priests like Bedingfield and Garnet²⁸, and many others who have left a name in English story. Doubtless many a history, only the more wonderful for being true, could be wrought out of the archives of the English Popish seminary at Valladolid.

There was no lack of guests at the Trojan Horse, where we had taken up our abode at Valladolid. Amongst others who arrived during my sojourn was a robust buxom dame, exceedingly well dressed in black silk, with a costly mantilla. She was accompanied by a very handsome, but sullen and malicious-looking urchin of about fifteen, who appeared to be her son. She came from Toro, a place about a day's journey from Valladolid, and celebrated for its wine. One night, as we were seated in the court of the inn enjoying the fresco, the following conversation ensued between us.

LADY. - Vaya, vaya, what a tiresome place is Valladolid! How different from Toro.

²⁷ The *Colegio de Ingleses*, dedicated to St Alban, in the Calle Don Sancho. It was founded in 1589 by Robert Persons, endowed by Sir Francis Englefield, a former partisan of Mary Queen of Scots, and supported by Philip II. It was meant to train Anglophone Catholics as missionaries to England, no fewer than 23 of whom were executed while on their mission over the next half century. These were the men whose portraits Borrow sees on the walls [Murphy, *GBB* 40, 107ff; Burke, footnote to 296].

²⁸ 16th century Jesuits. They had, however, no connection to the Valladolid College. Henry Garnet was executed in the connection to the Gunpowder Plot of 1606; the Bedingfield family brought forth three Jesuits, but not one of them made an impact on English history. Borrow's choice of the names is unexplained [Murphy, *GBB* 40, 108].

MYSELF. - I should have thought that it is at least as agreeable as Toro, which is not a third part so large.

LADY. - As agreeable as Toro! Vaya, vaya! Were you ever in the prison of Toro, Sir Cavalier?

MYSELF. - I have never had that honour; the prison is generally the last place which I think of visiting.

LADY. - See the difference of tastes: I have been to see the prison of Valladolid, and it seems as tiresome as the town.

MYSELF. - Of course, if grief and tediousness exist anywhere, you will find them in the prison.

LADY. - Not in that of Toro.

MYSELF. - What does that of Toro possess to distinguish it from all others?

LADY. - What does it possess? Vaya! Am I not the carcelera? Is not my husband the alcaide? Is not that son of mine a child of the prison?

MYSELF. - I beg your pardon, I was not aware of that circumstance; it of course makes much difference.

LADY. - I believe you. I am a daughter of that prison, my father was alcaide, and my son might hope to be so, were he not a fool.

MYSELF. - His countenance then belies him strangely: I should be loth to purchase that youngster for a fool.

GAOLERESS. - You would have a fine bargain if you did; he has more picardias than any Calabozero in Toro. What I mean is, that he does not take to the prison as he ought to do, considering what his fathers were before him. He has too much pride - too many fancies; and he has at length persuaded me to bring him to Valladolid, where I have arranged with a merchant who lives in the Plaza to take him on trial. I wish he may not find his way to the prison: if he do, he will find that being a prisoner is a very different thing from being a son of the prison.

MYSELF. - As there is so much merriment at Toro, you of course attend to the comfort of your prisoners.

GAOLERESS. - Yes, we are very kind to them; I mean to those who are caballeros; but as for those with vermin and miseria, what can we do? It is a merry prison that of Toro; we allow as much wine to enter as the prisoners can purchase and pay duty for. This of Valladolid is not half so gay: there is no prison like Toro. I learned there to play on the guitar. An Andalusian cavalier taught me to touch the guitar and to sing a la Gitana. Poor fellow, he was my first novio. Juanito, bring me the guitar, that I may play this gentleman a tune of Andalusia.

The carcelera had a fine voice, and touched the favourite instrument of the Spaniards in a truly masterly manner. I remained listening to her performance for nearly an hour, when I retired to my apartment and my repose. I believe that she continued playing and singing during the greater part of the night, for as I occasionally awoke I could still hear her; and, even in my slumbers, the strings were ringing in my ears.