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THE FORTUNATE ISLES: LIFE AND TRAVEL IN MAJORCA, MINORCA AND IVIZA

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Содержание

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FOREWARNING

"I hear you think of spending the winter in the Balearic Islands?" said the only Briton we met who had been there. "Well, I warn you, you won't enjoy them. They are quite out of the world. There are no tourists. Not a soul understands a word of English, and there's nothing whatever to do. If you take my advice you won't go."

So we went. And what follows is a faithful account of what befell us in these fortunate isles.

M. S. B.

I
SOUTHWARDS

We had left London on a tempestuous mid-October Saturday morning, and Sunday night found us walking on the Rambla at Barcelona, a purple velvet star-spangled sky overhead, and crowds of gay promenaders all about us.

When the Boy and I had planned our journey to the Balearic Isles (the Man never plans), our imaginings always began as we embarked at Barcelona harbour on the Majorcan steamer that was to carry us to the islands of our desire. So when we had strolled to where the Rambla ends amid the palm-trees of the port, it seemed like the materializing of a dream to see the steamer *Balear* lying there, right under the great column of Columbus, with her bow pointing seawards, as though waiting for us to step on board.

When at sunset next day the hotel omnibus deposited us at the port, the *Balear* appeared to be the centre of attraction. It still lacked half an hour of sailing time, yet her decks, which were ablaze with electric light, were covered with people. Ingress was a matter of so much difficulty that our inexperience of the ways of Spanish ports anticipated an uncomfortably crowded passage.

There was scarcely room on board to move, yet up the species of hen-ladder that acted as gangway people were still streaming –

ladies in mantillas, ladies with fans, ladies with babies, and men of every age, the men all smoking cigarettes.

Fortunately a recognized etiquette made those whose visits to the ship were of a purely complimentary nature confine themselves to the deck. When we descended to inspect our sleeping accommodation it was to find an individual cabin reserved for each of us; and to learn that, in spite of the mob on board, there were but four other saloon passengers. These, as we afterwards discovered, were a French honeymoon couple and a young Majorcan lady who was accompanied by her *dueña*.

Rain had been predicted, and was eagerly looked for, as none had fallen for many weeks. Yet it was a perfect evening. There was hardly a ripple on the water, and the air was soft and balmy. Behind the brilliant city with its myriads of lights rose the dark Catalonian mountains. Clustered near us in the harbour the crews of the fishing boats made wonderfully picturesque groups as they supped by the light of hanging lamps. And over all, high above the tall palms of the Paseo de Colon, the statue of Columbus pointed ever westwards.

Looking at the sparkling scene, it was difficult to credit that Barcelona, with its surface aspect of light-hearted gaiety, was under martial law, even though we had seen that alert-eyed armed soldiers guarded every street and alley, and knew that but a day or two earlier bombs had exploded with deadly effect where the crowds were now promenading. It was hard, too, to believe that at that moment the interest of all Europe was centred upon

that sombre fortress to the south-west of the town, within whose walls, only five days earlier, Ferrer had, rightly or wrongly, met the death of a traitor.

The warning siren sounded. The visitors reluctantly scuttled down the ridiculous hen-ladder. The moorings were cast away, the screw revolved, and we were off – bound for the Fortunate Isles.

Out of many wondrous nights passed on strange waters I remember none more beautiful. We were almost alone on deck. So far as solitude went the *Balear* might have been chartered for our exclusive use. The second-cabin passengers had all disappeared forward. The French bride and bridegroom had found a secluded nook in which to coo; and the vigilant *dueña* had led her charge into retirement.

We three sat late into the night watching the lights of the beautiful city of unrest fade away into the distance, while over the sinister fortress of Montjuich the golden sickle of the new moon hung like a note of interrogation.

The Spanish coast had vanished. The ship's bow was pointing towards Africa, and wild-fire was flashing about the horizon when at last we descended to our cabins. The lightning was still flashing, but it was far in our wake, when we awoke about four in the morning to find the *Balear* sailing along on an even keel, close by a mountainous coast whose highest promontory was crowned by a lighthouse.

Having dressed and refreshed ourselves with biscuits, and

chocolate made over a spirit-lamp, we went on deck while it was yet dark, and watched the land gradually become more and more distinct with the broadening dawn. The Boy, who had early recognised something British in the build of our steamer, made the interesting discovery from the unobliterated lettering on her bell that, though now known as the *Balear*, the vessel had begun her career as the *Princess Maud*, one of a line of steamers coasting between Glasgow and Liverpool.

As the steamer skirted the picturesque coast we tried, not very effectively, it must be admitted, to pick out the bays and headlands history connects with Jaime, the valorous young King of Aragon, who, accompanied by a great fleet, set sail from Barcelona one September day early in the thirteenth century, determined to wrest Majorca from the tyranny of the Moors, who for hundreds of years had dominated it. But when we had decided that it must have been round *that* point that his ships, with all lights extinguished, had crept at midnight to anchor in *this* bay, the appearance of yet another point and another bay made us waver. Still, there could be no mistaking Porto Pi, with its beacon tower on the point where the Moors, warned of the approach of the enemy, gathered in force to resist his landing.

The sun was illumining the wooded slopes about the ancient castle of Bellver, and shining radiantly upon Palma, lighting up the spires of the noble Cathedral and the encompassing city walls, and shining upon the mountains beyond, as about half-past six we entered the harbour, to find the wharf already busy with

people.

We had left grey gloom in London and in Paris. Here all was vivid and sparkling. The air was exhilarating, the port, with its nondescript craft, was a feast of colour. Voices speaking the island tongue sounded strangely in our unaccustomed ears. Our first impression of Palma was one of brightness: an impression conveyed partly by the warm amber and golden tints of the stone of which the charming city is built.

On the previous night we had thought the *Balear* half empty; but with the morning many unguessed passengers made their appearance forward. The *guardia civil*, who was travelling with his little boy, producing a pocket-handkerchief, dipped it in a bucket of water and scrubbed his son's face till it shone, the child keeping up an excited chatter the while.

The honeymoon couple were early on deck looking out for the Grand Hotel omnibus. But we were nearly alongside the wharf before the young Majorcan lady, closely shadowed by her *dueña*, left her cabin.

After the manner of Spanish aristocrats when travelling, she was dressed in black, and carried a fan that seemed to go oddly with her smart hat. She had a beautiful figure, and the graceful carriage of her race. But an expression of discontent, as though she were already weary looking for something that might have been expected to happen but did not, lent an unbecoming droop to her well cut lips.

Her companion was a shrivelled little woman, whose gums

were toothless and whose cheeks bore the pallor of enforced seclusion, but whose alert expression betokened generations of watchful patience. He would be an ingenious as well as an ardent lover whose attentions could escape the glint of those quiet eyes. A black mantilla covered her scant hair, a long semi-transparent shawl draped her narrow shoulders. In addition to her fan she held two parcels, one wrapped in green, the other in orange tissue-paper – a flimsy covering, surely, for a sea-passage.

We put ourselves in the care of the first porter who mounted the gangway – a handsome brigand with a slouch hat, curled moustaches, and yellow boots. Gathering up a mountain of light luggage in either hand, he tripped airily on shore, we meekly following.

A Spanish friend in London had recommended the *Fonda de Mallorca* (locally known as "Barnils'") as the best specimen of a typical Majorcan hotel, and there we had decided to stay until our plans for the next few months were matured.

As we left the harbour the hotel omnibus drew up in front of the Customs Office, and for the third and last time on the journey the solemn farce of the examination of our luggage was gone through. This time it was altogether perfunctory. Not an article was opened. The trunks, which followed on a cart, must have been treated with like trustful generosity, for their keys never left our possession.

As our baggage included a double supply of artist's materials requisite for a six months' stay, it turned the scale at

three hundred pounds. Between Charing Cross and Paris the overweight was charged 15s. 6d. From Paris to Barcelona we paid 35 francs. From there to Palma it travelled free. But though we saw fellow-travellers in variant stages of exasperation over vexatious claims, we paid no duty anywhere. Even the China tea that, unknown to my men-folk, I had smuggled, travelled unsuspected. And as tea in Majorca is a ransom, and Indian at the best, I had, while my small store lasted, an unfailing sense of satisfaction in my contraband possession.

The Hôtel Barnils gave us a cordial welcome. The grateful fragrance of hot coffee was in the air as we were taken upstairs and delivered into the care of Pedro, the chamber-man, who was smoking a cigarette as he cleaned the tiled corridors with a basin of damp sawdust and an ineffectual-looking broom.

Our suite of rooms on the second floor consisted of a tiny *salon*, from which on either side opened a bedroom. The smaller had a window to the Calle del Conquistador, the larger overlooked the inner courtyard with its potted palms and ginger-plants. All three rooms were papered alike in a pattern of large black and brown leaves on a yellow ground. The effect was decidedly bizarre. To those of a melancholy temperament it would assuredly have proved trying, even though there was a certain relief in the collection of French coloured lithographs that further adorned the walls.

Our sitting-room, which, like the bedrooms, was paved with tiles, had a tall window that opened to the floor and was guarded

by an iron railing. It had two red-covered easy-chairs, four fawn brocade small chairs, and a round table with a yellow and drab tablecloth.

In an amazingly brief space we were seated round that table drinking coffee out of tall glasses, and making acquaintance with the *enciamada*, a local breakfast dainty which is neither pastry, bread, nor bun, yet appears to enjoy something of the good qualities of all three. In form it somewhat resembles the fossil known to our nursery days as an ammonite. To picture a nicely baked and browned ammonite that has been well dusted with icing-sugar is to see an *enciamada*.

The little breakfast over, we went out to explore the city. Up the street of the Conquistador people were hurrying: men bearing on their heads flat baskets filled with pink or silver fish that were still dripping from the Mediterranean, and women carrying empty baskets. Following the stream, we found ourselves in the market, which is surrounded by tall, many-storied buildings.

It was an animated scene. Everybody was busy – all the people who were not buying were selling. And round about were commodities that were strange to us. The fish-stalls, which were clustered in a corner by themselves, displayed odd fish, many of them repulsive-looking, and all, in our eyes, undersized. The meat stalls revealed joints of puzzling cut, and were garlanded with gamboge and vermilion sausages, as though the Majorcans' love of bright colours manifested itself even in the food they ate.

The more attractive aspect of the fruit and vegetables drew us

up the alleys where the salesfolk sat placidly surrounded by huge gourds, radishes eighteen inches long, strange and unappetizing fungi. They had a varied assortment of goods, but the vegetable that appeared to dominate the market was the sweet pepper, or *pimiento*; everywhere it lay in heaps whose colour shaded from a vivid green to glowing scarlets and orange.

One or two ladies in mantillas were marketing, attended by maids whose hair, dressed in a single pleat, showed beneath the *rebozillo* that is the national head-covering of the country-women.

One piece of buying, and one only, did I venture on. The Man's favourite fruit is the green fig, a commodity that in London costs on an average eighteenpence a dozen. Seeing a woman with a hamper of choice fresh figs, I proceeded to try how Majorcan prices compared with those of Britain. Taking warning by the experience of a friend who, having asked for half-a-crown's worth of grapes in a foreign market, found himself confronted with the impossibility of carrying away his purchase, I discreetly held out the local equivalent of a penny and pointed to the figs.

The vendor, seeing that I had no basket, held a brief colloquy with a neighbouring salesman, which resulted in the production of a piece of crumpled newspaper. Signing to me to open my hands, she spread it over them and began counting the figs into it, carefully selecting the finest specimens from her stock. Having heard that food was cheap in these fortunate isles, I confidently expected that my penny might purchase four green figs: but

instead of stopping at a reasonable number, the woman went on piling them up until I felt inclined to say "Hold, enough!" When she desisted, the paper held a dozen juicy purple figs, and half a dozen of the golden green ones that are considered the more delicate in flavour.

A Spanish proverb declares that to reach perfection a ripe fig must have three qualifications: "A neck for the hangman, a robe for the beggar, a tear for the penitent." These had all the required attributes: the slender neck, the rent in the skin, the oozing drop of juice. Better figs, we imagined, were never eaten than the experimental pennyworth we bought that October day in Palma market.

The mind easily adjusts itself to existing conditions. A few minutes later it scarcely surprised us to see an old woman buy ten fine tomatoes for a halfpenny – or to hear her demand an eleventh as just value for her coin.

Leaving the market square, we wandered about the narrow streets, which, with their tall old houses and quaint *patios*– the spacious central courtyards – are full of picturesque scenes. Palma is densely populated, and the moving crowds gave us the impression of a people good-looking and well dressed as well as healthy and happy. Few of the ladies we met wore hats, and to me it appeared odd to see a lady in a well-cut tailor suit wearing a mantilla as, accompanied by her maid, she did her shopping.

Many of the native women had their hair in a long pigtail, and wore either the *rebozillo*– a neat white muslin headdress, in form

like a diminutive hood with a collarette attached – or a coloured silk handkerchief, or both. A small fringed shawl usually covered their shoulders. But it was in the matter of footgear that the Majorcan fancy appeared to run riot. Yellow boots, green boots, cream-hued boots, elastic-sided orange boots were displayed on the feet of otherwise sedately-garbed people of both sexes; and the children wore slippers of lively shades embroidered with gay flowers.

When a sudden shower, descending with tropical force made us seek shelter in a doorway whence we watched the passers-by, we had the opportunity of noting that, though all marketing dames wore smart boots, many of them had dispensed with stockings.

A sharp distinction seemed to be drawn in the dress of the classes. As we passed the church of San Miguel, troops of ladies who had been attending morning service were leaving it. With almost the uniformity of a livery, they wore black gowns of brocaded satin. Black mantillas covered their beautifully-dressed hair, and in addition to their rosaries, each carried a fan.

Our temporary shelter chanced to be close to the gate of Santa Margarita, and when the rain cloud had passed over, we went near to read the inscription graven in Spanish on the stone on one side of the gateway: —

> By this gate entered into the city on the 31st day of December, 1229, the hosts of King Don Jaime I. of Aragon, Conquistador of Majorca. As a remembrance of

that memorable occasion, on which Majorca was restored to the faith and civilization of Christianity, this gate, called "Bab-al-Kofol" in the time of the Islamite dominion, since then "Esuchidor" and "Pintador," and in modern times "Santa Margarita," was declared a national monument on the 28th of July, 1908, and restored at the expense of the State.

The records of the more ancient races who inhabited the island seem to have almost vanished. The Gymnesias, known as the people whose gracious climate rendered the wearing of clothes a superfluity; the Phoenicians, the Romans, even the Balearic slingers, are well-nigh forgotten, while memorials of the valiant young King of Aragon meet one at every turn.

Hunger sent us back to the hotel to have our first experience of the Majorcan cookery for which it is justly noted.

The cheerful dining-room opened into the square courtyard, whose walls were striped in broad lines of blue and white like the bandbox of a French milliner. On each of the six tables was a large decanter of red wine.

The first dish set before us required a certain amount of courage to tackle. It was a mound of amber-tinted rice in which was visible a weird conglomeration of fish, flesh, fowl, and chopped vegetables. The queer part was the preponderance of empty seashells, for while their contents had doubtless become incorporated with the other ingredients, the empty shells remained insistent and uninviting.

But hunger had made us reckless, and on venturing, we found the *arroz con mariscos* worthy the national esteem in which it is held. Highly seasoned meat of some sort followed. Then came delicately-cooked little fish; then something that defied us to discover whether it belonged to the animal or the vegetable kingdom. There were no sweets, but the dessert was abundant and delicious. Apricots, curiously exotic-looking apples that were streaked with crimson on a pink ground, great clusters of little yellow grapes that seemed as though the sunshine were imprisoned in their skins, and the tempting little baked almonds that are a speciality of Barnils'.

The rain, that in a few minutes had turned the narrow streets into rivers, had ceased as suddenly as it began. The sky was again a deep glowing blue, and the pure soft air was a pleasure to breathe, when ascending a stair we found ourselves on the flat roof of the hotel, which commanded an extensive view over the city. About us were many flat Moorish roofs, some used as gardens, others bearing great cages full of pigeons. To the south was the port with its gay display of shipping and the sparkling waters of the Mediterranean. To north, east, and west, the towers and domes and city walls encircled us. Beyond were the fruitful plains, and farther still the blue mountains.

Around us rose the softened murmur of the town, the chiming of bells, the whisper of the sea, the sound of voices speaking in strange tongues. All was charming, novel, and wholly delightful.

Chopin's description of Palma, written seventy years ago

when, with George Sand, he spent a winter in Majorca, needs no correction to-day: —

"Here I am at Palma," he wrote to his friend Fontana, "in the midst of palms, and cedars and cactuses, and olives and oranges, and lemons and figs and pomegranates… The sky is like a turquoise, the sea is like lazuli, and the mountains are like emeralds. The air is pure like the air of Paradise. All day long the sun shines and it is warm, and everybody walks about in summer clothes. At night one hears guitars and serenades. Vines are festooned on immense balconies. Moorish walls rise all about us. The town, like everything here, looks towards Africa. In a word, it is an enchanted life that we are living."

Soon after midnight a deep sonorous cry awoke me from the sleep of the pleasantly fatigued: —

> Alabado sea Dios…
> Las doce y media…
> Sereno…

it rang out in the stillness.

Jumping out of bed, I reached the open window in time to see the passing of a black figure wrapped in a great cloak, the rays from the lantern he carried throwing a wavering circle of light on the pavement beside him. It was the *sereno*, the guardian of the sleeping city.

Pausing before one of the closed doors, he smote on it three times with his staff. Then he turned, and passed out of sight, his

long wailing cry again rising into the night.

II
OUR CASA IN SPAIN

Palma was gay with bunting in honour of the birthday of the young Queen of Spain, when on the afternoon of our second day in Majorca we set out to deliver a letter of introduction that was fated to have an important influence on our future arrangements.

Much might be, and probably much has been written on the uses and abuses of letters of introduction. Sometimes the given letter proves a boon both to him who carries and him who receives it. Was not one of our best friends made known to us through the medium of a perfunctory note from a man we had not seen for many years, and whom the presenter of the note had never even met? When we left London we bore a letter of introduction to an Englishman resident in Barcelona, and he in turn gave us a letter to an American friend of his at Palma, who was Consul for certain of the Southern Republics.

The home of the Consul was at Son Españolet, an attractive little residential suburb about a mile beyond the city walls. The busy district of Santa Catalina lies between it and the sea. Undulating groves of almond and olive separate it from the hills.

Taking the mule-drawn tram-car that plies between Palma and Porto Pi, we alighted at Santa Catalina; and, after making various inquiries, found ourselves ringing the gate-bell of the house, over

whose tower fluttered the gay banner of the Consulate.

Had the Consul and his wife guessed that these three British invaders were going to trespass on their endurance for a period of six months, I doubt if they would have received us with such courteous geniality. As it was, their reception was so cordial that within half an hour of our meeting I felt emboldened to reveal what had been my secret desire – that we might rent a furnished house near Palma for the winter. Not a fine house – merely a roof under which we could stow our belongings, a centre from which our wanderings about the islands might radiate.

Could they advise us? Did they think such an idea was feasible?

The Consul shook his head.

"Not near Palma," he said. "At Porto Pi or the Terreno you might chance on one. But these are summer seaside places. Most of the houses there are shut up now. You'd find it dull and inconvenient in winter."

"This district seems delightful, and near town. Would there be a chance of our getting a house here?"

"Unfurnished, yes – furnished, no. But why not take a vacant house and hire what you need? There's only three of you. You don't want much."

"Say, Luis!" said pretty Mrs. Consul, "what about the house the Major left last week? That's empty now. Would that suit?"

For a moment the Consul looked meditative.

"I'm thinking," he said. "You're right. That's the very place.

Nice little house. Got a garden. Stable too. And a fine view from the veranda."

"Is the house near? Could we see it?" we asked.

"It's close by, in the Calle de Mas. We'll see about it, right away, now."

The Consul, happily for us, was a man of action. Ringing the bell, he summoned Isidoro, his man-servant, who summoned Margarita, his cook. And Margarita, having received instructions to search the wide world till she found the caretaker of the empty house and to bring her hither, departed at once on her quest. In an incredibly brief space of time she returned in company with a little old woman and two large door-keys.

Following her guidance we walked in procession round the corners of several secluded roads, whose yellow stone walls, flat roofs, and almost tropical foliage looked Oriental under the evening glow.

Viewed from the street, the house we sought, with its green shutters and tiled roof, resembled a hundred others. But when the big keys had performed their task, and we had passed through the two centre rooms and found ourselves on a wide stone-pillared veranda looking across the orange and lemon trees of the gardens to where the Mediterranean lay azure under the setting sun, our minds held no further hesitation. We knew that it was our own house.

Merely to assure ourselves that the house had no equal, we investigated the claims of two other vacant dwellings before

returning to the Consulate. One had a basement in which a native family lived – apparently wholly upon garlic. The other attempted to make up in stucco images what it lacked in view.

It was too late that night to take any steps towards securing the house. The Consul, himself a versatile linguist, knowing that our meagre Spanish could hardly be expected to prove equal to the subtleties of house-hiring, arranged to accompany the Man and the Boy next day to interview the owner, and if possible to see the negotiations completed.

I think we were all secretly uneasy until we learned that, on the personal recommendation of the Consul, the landlord had unhesitatingly accepted us as tenants, and that he had agreed to have the garden put in order, to mend any broken panes of glass in the doors or windows, to see that the well was clean, and to permit us to enter upon our tenancy at once.

And then, the house being secured, the important subject of furniture had to be considered. Knowing that with hired goods we would feel conscious of certain restrictions, we had resolved to buy what was absolutely necessary. And the question was – how much or how little furniture would three unexacting people require during six months of a picnicking existence in a gracious climate?

Already there were several indispensable articles in the house – two tables, one large enough to serve as dining-table, a bench, and a tall glass-doored corner cupboard. Beds would be needed, washstands, two more tables of the plainest description, half-a-

dozen rush-seated chairs of local make for utility, lounge chairs for our laziness, and looking-glasses for our vanity.

Still under the Consul's skilled guidance we visited an upholsterer's, a dark and narrow shop where the closely packed stock took up so much room that there was hardly space for a single customer. The shopkeeper, a smiling little round man in a pink shirt, and his daughter, a smiling big round girl in a white frock, entered heartily into the spirit of our requirements; and with the Consul's aid in the reduction of prices, we speedily acquired what was necessary.

We had landed on Majorca on Tuesday morning. Before dusk fell on Thursday our house was not only taken, but the furniture purchased. Electric light is a cheap luxury in Palma, and for our comfort in the winter nights we were having it put in. Knowing that the installation of the light, the scrubbing out of the house, and the raking up of the garden would occupy a day or two, we decided to remain at Barnils' until Monday, on which morning we would journey out to Son Españolet and take possession. Meanwhile we roamed about Palma with our eyes open to the necessities of our bare establishment, picking up a broom here, a coffee-strainer there, some wooden cooking-spoons yonder.

Matters moved with surprising briskness. Monday morning found the electric light fixed, the tiled floors well scrubbed, the scant provision of furniture in the rooms, and the garden dug. So, leaving our heavier luggage to follow by cart, we packed ourselves and our smaller baggage into a *carruaje*, and set out

for our new home. The progress thither was circuitous, as first we had to journey up and down the narrow streets of the town collecting the smaller purchases we had made.

First we called at a grocer's to pick up the supply of provisions that were to form the nucleus of our housekeeping. Then we meant to drive to the china shop where our store of crockery awaited us. Unfortunately the china shop, being situated on a street so steep that it ascended in a series of wide steps, was unapproachable by our two-horse conveyance. Leaving the carriage at the foot of the steps the Man and the Boy mounted to the shop, and by and by reappeared accompanied by a man and a maiden, all four laden with dishes.

Space in the conveyance had been limited before. Now, surrounded by earthenware cooking-pots, and basins, and jugs, and plates, we were jolted over the primitively paved streets, and out beyond the gate of Santa Catalina to the little house in Son Españolet.

Perhaps our sense of possession threw a glamour over the dwelling, but already it seemed to wear a look of home. The scanty furniture was in place, a few minutes sufficed to put the groceries on the shelves, the dishes in the glass cupboard, the earthenware cooking-pots and pans on the kitchen shelf. Then, when the table was spread with our new tea-cups, and decorated with roses and scented verbena from the garden, set in a jug, and the kettle was a-boil over our trusty spirit-lamp, we sat down, in great contentment, to enjoy the first meal in our *casa* in Spain.

The lines even of a foreign householder in Majorca are cast in pleasant places. From our point of view the Majorcan landlord has the worse of the bargain, his tenant the better.

We took our little house for three months, paying in advance the very moderate rent – it was twenty pesetas, about fifteen shillings, a month – and agreeing to give, or take, a month's warning. This done, our obligations appeared to cease. There were no taxes, at least none that the tenant was expected to pay. There was no water rate. The well in the garden afforded a supply of pure and wholesome rain-water. If windows were broken the landlord sent, or promised to send, a glazier to put in new panes. In the rare event of a chimney requiring cleaning, the accommodating landlord was expected to employ a mason to do the work. And with the arrival of the season locally considered best for the annual pruning of the vines – which is the period between the 15th and the 20th of January – a duly qualified gardener, instructed by the owner of the house, appeared and clipped those within our walls.

Our Majorcan home proved to be full of the most charming informalities. Its architecture was the perfection of simplicity; a child might have designed it. It was on one floor only, and measured fifteen paces square. There were neither hall nor passages, and in a short time we found ourselves wondering why we had ever considered such things necessary. All the doors were glazed. The front door opened directly into a sitting-room, whose wide glass door led to another room that opened on to the

veranda. To the right of the front door was the Boy's bedroom, to the left an apartment that served as studio. From the back sitting-room opened, on one side, a bedroom that had a useful dress closet; and on the other a compact little kitchen with a cool larder that was almost as big as itself. The kitchen walls were lined breast-high with blue and white tiles; and under the window that looked towards the sea was a neat range of stoves, for the consumption of both coal and charcoal.

The two sitting-rooms boasted the distinction of wall papers, and the ceiling of our favourite room – that which opened on to the veranda – represented an azure sky among whose fluffy white clouds flitted birds and butterflies. At one side of the house was a stable, and an enclosure fitted with stone tubs and jars, meant to be used in the washing of clothes.

The veranda, or *terras*, bade fair to become a perpetual joy to us. It was roofed by a spreading vine, whose foliage even in November was luxuriant. The former tenants had eaten all the grapes except one bunch, of which the wasps had taken possession; and we were either too generous or too timid to dispute their claim.

On the broad ledge of the veranda, on either side of the short flight of steps leading down to the garden, were great green flower-pots. Three held pink ivy-leaved geraniums, one contained a cactus that had exactly the appearance of four prickly sea-urchins set in mould, the others were empty.

The garden measured nineteen paces by twenty-two. Raised

paths of concrete divided it into eight beds. The four larger encircled the quaint draw-well; the four smaller were in a row, two on either side of the veranda steps. The beds held a number of fruit trees. There was a sturdy lemon that bore both fruit and blossom, and three orange-trees; one carrying about sixty mandarin oranges. And besides a second vine there were seven almond-trees and two apricots. A shrub in whose racemes of hawthorn-scented blossom bees were busy, we had never before seen. Later we learned that it was the loquat.

Some rose bushes, which obligingly flowered all winter, a jasmine, a tall scented verbena, a long row of sweet peppers, two clumps of artichokes, and sundry tufts of herbs completed our vegetable kingdom.

Majorca is a paradise for the gardener – or would be, were the rainfall more assured – for the climate varies so little that almost anything can be planted at any season.

The day we took possession of the house I sowed some rows of dwarf peas. In a week they were above the ground and continued to flourish exceedingly, until brought to a standstill by the long-continued drought. The rain in January set them a-growing again, and from early February till April we had dishes of green peas from our own ground.

At the foot of the garden, separated from it by a high stone wall, were two small dwellings. One was empty. In the other there resided a cobbler named Pepe, his wife, and a lean red kitten.

The sudden arrival of us foreigners proved an event of

extraordinary interest in the circumscribed lives of the pair, and of the skinny kitten, who developed into quite a handsome cat on our scraps. Mr. and Mrs. Pepe had no veranda, but from their patch of garden a tiny staircase led to a *mirador*– a species of roof watch-tower – from which they had a capital view of the town, the port, and of their neighbours.

As in these sunny November days we lived with the wide glass doors open to the veranda, there was so much to observe in our doings that for the first week at least of our stay Pepe's customers must have been neglected; for morning, noon, and night he was at his post of supervision. As we sat at table we got quite accustomed to seeing his squat figure outlined against the sky as he undisguisedly watched our movements. Sometimes he even carried his quaint spouted wine-bottle and hunk of rye bread up to the *mirador*, and enjoyed his breakfast with a vigilant eye on us.

Pepe had a taste for gardening, and grew chrysanthemums and carnations in the few feet of soil attached to his dwelling. Sometimes, with due ceremonial, he presented us with one of his striped carnations. And one day, when I was in the garden, he hastened down from his post of observation to reappear, smiling broadly, at our side gate, bearing the gift of a sturdy root of French marigold. We showed our appreciation of the compliment by sending him a boot to mend; and, courteous preliminaries having been thus exchanged, we continued to live on terms of distant amity. The marigold I promptly planted in one of the

empty green flower-pots, where throughout the winter it bore a constant succession of its brown and orange velvet flowers.

A family from Andalusia – a father, mother, and four children – occupied the house adjoining ours. They seemed good-tempered, easy-going folks, living a happy careless life in this land of sunshine. Their somewhat extensive garden was well kept and fruitful.

The father, like so many of the residents in these islands, was a bird-fancier. And when, on sunny mornings, assisted by his children, he had carried out the dozens of cages containing his pets, and had hung them on his pomegranate-trees, and on the pergola, where the purple convolvulus twined about branches heavy with golden oranges, our world was vocal with their song.

At the foot of their garden was a flourishing little poultry-yard, in which, with laudable success, they reared chickens and ducks and rabbits. They supplied us regularly with eggs, and when any of the live stock was ripe for the pot we always had the first offer of purchase.

The method of procedure was to catch the beast – plump rabbit, young rooster, or whatever it chanced to be – and to carry it, suspended by the legs and vigorously protesting, to the door of our *casa* to exhibit its proportions, and to inquire if we would like to purchase. On the sale being effected, as it usually was, for the quality of their live stock was unequalled, the victim would be taken away, to reappear half an hour later stripped of fur or feather, and with its members decorously dressed for cooking.

Early in the year the Andalusian family was increased by one – a fine boy. A few weeks after, the mother paid me a state visit to receive congratulations and exhibit the baby. Going into the studio, I said:

"Our neighbour has brought her new baby to show us."

The Man waved me away with a protesting paint-brush.

"No," he said. "Don't buy it. Send her away. I don't mind the ducks and the chickens, but I absolutely refuse to eat the baby!"

Life in the Casa Tranquila, as we had christened our winter home, was a pleasant irresponsible matter compared with existence in ceremonial Britain. Social pleasures we undoubtedly had, but no social duties. Housekeeping ran on the simplest of lines. Maria, the woman who had been key-keeper of the house while it was empty, came in to do the rough work. Apolonia, a smiling, rubicund old dame, with a keen sense of humour, acted as laundress. It was all so easy and unconventional and open-airy that we never quite got over the impression that we were enjoying a prolonged camping-out, and that it was by accident that our roof was of tiles and not of canvas.

Our morning began with the arrival of a baker who brought the bread, rolls, and *enciamadas* for the day's consumption. We did not use the milk of goats, though, twice daily, a little flock, with tinkling bells, their udders tied up in neat bags of check cotton for protection against the unauthorised raids of their thirsty kids, was driven past our door to be milked before the eyes of each customer. A sprightly matron served us morning and evening

with the milk of a cow, which her husband spent his days herding on any stray patches of herbage in the district.

Each day at noon, Mundo, the greengrocer, called with a donkey-cart containing quite a comprehensive assortment of fruit and vegetables. Three kinds of potatoes he always brought – new, old, and sweet – pumpkins that were sold in slices, egg-plants, garlic strung in long festoons, spinach, cauliflowers, sweet peppers, curious fungi, purple carrots, sugar beans; all at astonishingly low prices. I shall always remember the November day when, in a moment of forgetfulness, I asked for a whole pennyworth of tomatoes, and was afterwards confronted by the difficulty of disposing of so many.

A popular article of diet seemed to be the gigantic radishes, in which not only Mundo but all the little shops appeared to do a big trade. We puzzled long over the way in which they could be used before making the chance discovery that they are cut in round slices and eaten raw with soup or meat, as one would eat bread.

III
PALMA, THE PEARL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

As a place of winter residence for those who like sunshine, and are not enamoured of society, Palma could hardly be excelled.

For one thing, the town is just the right size. It is not so small as to allow the visitor to feel dull, or so large as to permit him to become conscious of his own insignificance.

While Palma is bright and full of movement and of cheerful sounds, it is an adorable place to be lazy in. The sunshine and soft air foster indolence; and though there is no stagnation, everybody takes life easily in this walled city by the southern sea. There is no bustle, no need to hurry. What is not accomplished to-day can be done to-morrow. And if to-morrow finds it still undone – why, what is the future made up of, if not of an illimitable succession of to-morrows?

When the ancients christened Palma "the Pearl of the Mediterranean," they gave it a title that to this day it deserves.

Something of the resplendence of the town is due to the warm-coloured stone of which it is built – a stone that shades from the palest cream to warm amber. Every stroll we took through its mediæval streets, every walk along its antique ramparts, every saunter down the mole, made us more and more in love with its

beauty, which we seemed always to be viewing under some new condition of light or atmosphere.

The Man never wearied of the crooked secret-looking streets and fine buildings of the old, old city. By day or night they held for him an inexplicable charm. He was always discovering some new "bit" – a quaint *patio*, a Moorish arch, an antique gateway, a curious interior, a sculptured window.

And the streets were always full of life. A cluster of officers in full dress chattering on the Borne; a company of soldiers marching to the strains of an inspiriting band; a priest, under a great rose-coloured silk umbrella, on the way to administer extreme unction to someone sick unto death – all the spectators falling on their knees as the solemn little procession passed by; or a party of queerly attired natives of Iviza, just arrived by the thrice-a-week boat, and curiously foreign both in speech and appearance, though their island home was only sixty or seventy miles distant; or a string of carriages whose occupants were on the way to a morning reception at the Almudaina, the old Moorish palace, now the residence of the Captain-General.

Everything in the place was new to us, and the feeling of novelty never waned.

As for the Boy, from the moment of our arrival his interest centred in the port. Its constantly changing array of shipping, and the fine sun-tanned buccaneers who did business on its blue waters, supplied him with endless congenial subjects for pictures.

The port of Palma nestles, one might almost say, right into the

heart of the city. The chief promenade, the Borne, ends on its brink. The Cathedral and the Lonja dignify its banks.

The gay life of the harbour lies open to the casual observer. Under the ramparts, by the side of the public road, old men in red caps and suits of velveteen that the sun has faded to marvellous hues sit at their placid occupation of net-mending. There, too, when the *falucas* are moored at the edge of the wharf, come the families of the fishermen to join them at lunch – the women bringing down wine and bread and the men supplying a tasty hot dish from the less saleable items of their catch. Sometimes a cloth is spread, and then the *al fresco* repast assumes quite a ceremonious air.

Stern on to the *muelle*, the long breakwater that partitions off the water of the harbour from the open bay, lie the larger craft: the most important of which are the white-painted steamers of the *Isleña Marítima*, the fleet of boats belonging to a Majorcan Company that carry mails and passengers between the island and Spain or Algeria.

Once Palma was a great maritime centre. Now little foreign shipping does business in her port. But though the bulk of the traffic is local, an open port always holds the element of the unexpected.

Sometimes a leviathan-like liner, making a holiday tour of Mediterranean ports, anchors by the wharf, and her tourists, eager to make the most of the hours at their disposal, hasten on shore to pack themselves into every available form of conveyance

and drive off, enclosed in a pillar of dust of their own raising, to enjoy a hasty glance at Valldemosa, Miramar and Sóller. When at sunset they steam out of the harbour it is with the pleasantly erroneous conviction that they have exhausted the attractions of the island.

Once a fine ship that sharp eyes recognized as the private yacht of the Czar of Russia quietly entered the bay, and after a brief stay, during which her voyagers held no intercourse with land, as quietly departed. And after a spring gale a Greek sailing ship, her main-mast gone, was towed in by a French tug. Sometimes it was the capture of a smuggler's *faluca* caught in the act of trying to run a cargo of contraband tobacco that furnished the excitement.

On the frequent feast days Palma was gay with flags. Every Consulate in the town – and they were many – mounted its special banner. The gun-boats sported strings of bunting out of all proportion to their size, the merchantmen flew their ensigns, and though the business of the town was transacted with its customary air of casual lightheartedness, the never-lacking holiday feeling was intensified.

One November feast day the Boy, who was painting at the port, discovered among the decorated craft a ship flying the British flag; a closer inspection revealed her to be the *Ancona* of Leith, just arrived with a cargo of coal. Nearer home I doubt if the proximity of a Leith collier would have appealed strongly to our patriotism. In that southern latitude things were different. A

sudden and fervent desire to hear our own northern accent awoke within us, and, incited by our adventurous son, we determined to board the *Ancona* and pay our respects to her captain.

It was a glorious morning, one of those wonderful mornings when the world seems newly born, that we three went down the mole. Lying beyond the schooner from Sóller, and the *pailebot* from Valencia that was shipping a cargo of empty wicker-cased wine flasks, we came to the *Ancona*.

Three railless plank gangways connected her with the wharf, and down two of the planks Majorcans in their elaborately bepatched blue linen suits were carrying straw baskets of coal. We ventured up the third. Our gangway ended on a six-feet-high platform situated on the verge of a hold still brimful of coal. As we hesitated on our perch, wondering what to do next, a bronzed man in slippers appeared. It was the first mate.

"It's a fine day," the Man gave colloquial greeting. "Is the skipper on board?"

"Ay. It's a real bonnie day," the mate made truthful reply. "No. He's just gone up the quay to see the ship's agents."

The homely words, the familiar accent, fell like music on our ears. A few words of explanation brought the mate to our elevated platform, where he spoke with the inherent appreciation of the Scot of the beauty of the town.

"Ay. It's a bonnie place this. I think it's as pretty a place as I've seen. No. We've been busy on board and I haven't had time to see the town yet. But I'm enjoyin' the view fine from here. The

captain? Oh, you couldn't miss him. You're sure to come across him. He's just up on the front."

So, in quest of a compatriot whom we couldn't miss, we set off up the street. And sure enough, before we had proceeded very far we met the captain face to face.

If the captain of the *Ancona* was surprised at being accosted by a trio of complete strangers, he was too much a Highland gentleman and a man of the world to reveal any astonishment. In five minutes we were all on a friendly footing, our nationality the firm basis of good-fellowship; a little later we were all seated outside the Lirico, over tall glasses of vermouth and seltzer, recalling familiar scenes and discovering mutual acquaintances.

The captain was at a loose end. We were going to the fruit market, to the bookseller's, to the Cathedral. So he came too.

In the market, as he saw me buy big bunches of yellow grapes at twopence-halfpenny a kilo (nearly two and a quarter pounds) his face lit up – "I'll be for sending the steward up here," he said.

Chance favoured us. We turned into the Borne just in time to see an infantry battalion march past to the strains of a good military band. A general had died and the soldiers were on their way to escort his body to the cemetery. The music, which was appropriately solemn, was played with great feeling. And as the procession moved slowly up the street the closed window shutters were thrown open and fair señoras in light dresses thronged the balconies.

It was as though Palma had determined to reveal herself at

her best to our companion. Even the interior of the Cathedral, lit by the brilliant sunshine that filtered through the stained-glass windows, seemed grander than ever.

"I've had a splendid time," the captain said when we parted. "Though I've been here two or three times, I never saw so much of the town before."

We were leaving next morning for Miramar, and before our return the *Ancona* would have sailed. But we said good-bye with the promise of meeting again – a promise that was fulfilled, for on two subsequent voyages the captain was a welcome guest at the Casa Tranquila.

"The captain is a gentleman," the Boy said half-a-dozen hours later when he returned from the ship, where, by special invitation, he had been having a smoke and a chat with her master. "See what he insisted on giving me. I refused, of course, but he made me take *that* and *this*."

"That" was a batch of thrice precious literature in the shape of sixpenny editions of novels and magazines. "This" was a tin of tobacco marked "full strength," that class of dark-complexioned rum-odorous tobacco that the Boy specially affects, and whose lack in Majorca had formed the theme of his only regret.

Life on the native craft in the port is entertaining to watch. The dark-skinned rovers of the deep contrast so oddly with the mildly domestic aspect given by the presence on board of the *patrón's* wife, and by her way of keeping hens loose on deck, and of hanging feminine garments to dry on the poop.

One Sunday morning we had been scrutinizing their doings with the open stare that life in Spain teaches one both to give and to take composedly, when we discovered that luncheon-time had stolen unawares upon us. As we walked back down the pier we glanced inquiringly at the cafés that lined the lower part of the way; they were all crowded with jovial seamen and uninviting. We had resolved to eat at the Lirico, and were leaving the pier, when something in the situation of a little open-air eating-place just on the brink of the sea, almost in the shadow of the city wall, attracted us; and advancing to the awning, under which little groups of people were seated, we demanded food.

The proprietress, a plump, smiling woman with a purple silk kerchief on her head and a green apron, welcomed us in fluent but, unfortunately, unintelligible Majorcan. She knew no Spanish. All we could gather was that if we seated ourselves she would give us to eat. And nothing loth, we sat down at an unoccupied table whose bare boards were scrubbed as clean as hands could make them.

Beyond the shade of the roof-awning the sun was shining; the pure air filtered through its matting sides, and in our full view the waves were dashing against the rocky shore. At a table close by, three old cronies were dining. Scorning the use of tumblers, they passed the quaint wine-flask from hand to hand, each in turn throwing back his head and letting the red wine fall in a stream, from what to us seemed an unbridgeable distance, between his parted lips. Four soldiers were eating macaroni. Two men who

had been fishing off the breakwater were supping thick soup.

A pretty little girl, her hair caught up in a business-like "bun," darted in and out amongst her mother's customers, her dark eyes quick to discern their wants. From inside the shanty that served as kitchen came an appetizing sound of frizzling.

Turning her attention to us, the little girl put the inevitable dish of olives and a flask of red wine on the table; then she placed a wooden fork and spoon, a plate, a tumbler, and a roll, before each of us. Then, with the suggestion of an air of ceremony, she carefully laid at the Man's right hand something resembling a folded piece of clean canvas. It was not until the meal was nearing a conclusion that we discovered it was intended to be used as a napkin.

The table thus spread, she darted into the kitchen and returned bearing a huge flat earthen dish, which held as inviting a mess as we had ever tasted. The main portion of its contents consisted of small thin slices of beef-steak, mushrooms, and strips of potatoes that had all been fried together, after the native fashion, in boiling oil. Daintily chopped green herbs lent a savoury garnish to the whole. After a momentary hesitation, due solely to lack of the customary cutlery, we helped each other with our wooden spoons, and fell to work with good will.

Perhaps there was some charm in the oddity of our surroundings, in the fresh breath of the sea air, in the sparkle of the blue water; perhaps it may have lain in the discovery that if meat is tender and well-cooked, a fork – and wooden at that –

is all the implement required. Certain it is that as we cleared the last chip of potato from the earthen dish we all agreed that we had enjoyed the simple meal more than anything we had eaten in Palma.

When we asked for the bill our little waitress received the sign of departure with dismay; and the mother, running out, added her protest. Something else was evidently in active preparation.

Fully convinced that to eat anything more would be an insult to the dish we had just finished, we waited.

A moment later she triumphantly carried out and set before us a plate containing a slab of fish, thickly covered with minced garlic and floating in a pool of rich red oil. It may have been a delicacy for which the establishment was famed. Our fellow guests were devouring it with evident enjoyment, zealously sopping up the oil with their rolls, and leaving their plates polished clean. But to us it came as an anti-climax.

Carefully inculcated politeness, combined with the knowledge that from the doorway the cook was eagerly watching us for sign of appreciation, induced us to choke it down with an outward affectation of gusto. But we left the garlic and the red oil. Even an exaggerated idea of the obligations of courtesy could not have prevailed upon us to swallow them.

We paid the modest bill and fled, lest worse should follow.

A few days later we returned to the quaint open-air café. It was a lovely evening early in November. All day out of a cloudless sky the sun had beat warmly upon Palma, and the sea had glowed

a soft misty azure. We had been busy indoors letter-writing, for it was a mail day. It was only after dusk that we were free and, leaving the Casa Tranquila, set off port-wards to post our letters.

The *Miramar*, the crack ship of the *Isleña Marítima*, was on the point of starting for Barcelona, and all the world of Palma was hastening towards the harbour to post letters on board; and then, while promenading the mole, to watch her departure.

After the *Miramar* had vanished into the darkness and the spectators had streamed towards the land, we still lingered on the breakwater. There was no moon, the stars were bright, the wavelets softly lapped the stones, and we felt placid and restful until quite suddenly we became aware that we were hungry.

Our proximity suggested the little shanty under the city wall by the sea, and thither we went.

It was the quiet hour there too. Except for three of the hussars we had seen before, the well-scrubbed tables were vacant. The soldiers, recognizing us, gave us friendly greeting, accompanied with the offer of their tobacco packets. Bright-eyed little Catalina ran to fetch the napkin, surely the sole emblem of gentility belonging to the establishment, and the señora herself appeared at the door of the shed, where she presided over the cooking-pots, to give us "Bona nit tengan" and to consult with us as to what we would like her to prepare.

She shook her head when we suggested beef-steaks and mushrooms. At that hour, apparently, beef was "off."

"Would we have soup? – Majorcan soup," she asked.

We shook our heads. No. We did not fancy soup.

Promising us fresh fish, and something with an untranslatable name, she disappeared into the shed. And, content to leave the selection to her, we awaited events.

The comrades in arms had gone, and a pale slender girl, beautiful in the small-featured, refined type so common in Palma, had taken her place at the next table. With her was a friend of the same style, but doubly attractive in that she was overflowing with vivacity. The younger girl sat silent, her hands folded, her head drooping, while the elder – who was knitting a petticoat gay with coloured stripes – chatted briskly. They did not eat, and we guessed they were waiting for some one to join them.

Sitting near them was a handsome taciturn man with a slouch hat, long curled moustaches, and a gaudy kerchief twisted about his neck. That the girls knew him was evident, for though he did not join in their conversation he seemed to listen to all that was said.

Just as we were served with crisp little fried fish, a figure, coming from the darkness where the waves were washing the stones, entered the circle of light. It was the expected man. Hanging up his rod and fishing basket, he took his place at the table beside the girls.

His skin was deeply bronzed, his garments were of blue cotton that sun and sea air had faded to a delicate hue. A scarlet sash was wound about his waist. His naked brown feet were thrust into string-soled green shoes.

Catalina, who had been watching for his arrival, ran out with a slender-spouted bottle of wine and three wooden spoons. Her mother followed close with an earthenware pipkin of the thick Majorcan soup that we had declined.

Grouped in an amicable trio, they ate from the same dish, and in turn drank from the slender spout of the green glass bottle. The pale girl remained pensively silent, but the other continued to talk, punctuating her conversation with dramatic movements of her hands. How we wished we could have understood what she was saying!

When the combined efforts of the three wooden spoons had searched the red earthenware vessel to its depths, the man who came from the sea rose and, lifting it in his hand without a word, walked to the edge of the water and threw the pipkin far into the Mediterranean. Then returning, he resumed his seat.

No one made any comment upon this inexplicable proceeding. Had the inoffending pipkin not been empty it might have seemed as though he were offering a libation to some unseen spirit of the water. But the actively plied spoons had succeeded in scooping out the last vestige of the soup.

In the meantime we had been occupied with our second course, which consisted of lengths of orange-coloured sausage, served hot with fried potatoes. And a new-comer, an old man, was eating a big plate of macaroni.

The nimble Catalina, flashing out, set a flat dish, heaped with some sort of stew, before the trio. What its contents were we

could only guess. The lively maiden and the man were already poking among them with their wooden forks. The pensive girl had produced a silver fork and was delicately helping herself, fastidiously turning over the ingredients. The handsome reticent man sat motionless but observant.

They ate in leisurely fashion – nobody hurries in Palma. The gay girl rattled on in her musical voice, gesticulating with her pretty hands the while, only occasionally dropping the thread of her dramatic recital to send her fork foraging with the others, or to throw back her head and let the red wine trickle down her throat.

"Will he throw that dish away when it is empty?" we were wondering, when the señora, who was making a special effort on our behalf, appeared in person carrying a tempting combination of sweet peppers and young pork.

The question answered itself. When they had finished, the dish stood empty and ignored. The wine flask was refilled, and when we had paid our score – wine included, it came to about sevenpence each – we left the quartette still sitting under the flickering light by the edge of the unseen waves: the charming girl still lively, the pretty one distraite, the fisherman amiable, and the handsome listener still silently attentive.

It had been an odd little interlude – nothing to relate, indeed, but one of those petty excursions beyond one's own stereotyped world that make the observers feel, for the moment, as though they were living in somebody else's life, not in their own.

We finished the evening at what chanced to be the popular entertainment. If I remember correctly, it combined the attractions of a cinematograph and a variety show.

We were again out in the starlight, and walking briskly westwards towards Son Españolet, when the Boy said abruptly: —

"I wish I knew why that man threw the pipkin into the sea!"

IV
HOUSEKEEPING

Although, at Son Españolet, we were subject to no police or other rate, a small weekly tax was levied with extreme punctuality, on behalf of himself, by a functionary called the *vigilante*.

The most onerous labour of this alleged guardian of the public would appear to have been the collection, on Sunday mornings, of a penny from each householder. I trust I do not malign a worthy citizen, when I hint that these periodic visits were the only occasions on which most of his supporters were made conscious of the *vigilante's* existence.

His professed duties were to protect the interests of the residents in the district by prowling about at night, to escort timid wayfarers home by the light of his lantern, and, like the *sereno*, to call those who wished to be roused at an early hour. But what manner of need a community already rich in police, *serenos*, *carabineros*, and *consumeros*, had of a *vigilante*, was hard to imagine.

Nobody seemed to know who appointed the *vigilantes*. The Boy had a theory that our *vigilante* had assigned himself to the post, and that his sole exertion lay in calling to collect the fees.

On the morning of our first Sunday at the Casa Tranquila an

imperative knock sounded at the front door. It was the *vigilante*, a good-looking white-bearded man clad in blue cotton. His designation was inscribed in bold letters on his cap-band. Having been forewarned of the custom, I handed over the expected ten centimos, which he accepted with the dignified courtesy of one who receives a right, and departed.

Two hours later the Boy, who had been out at the time of the visit, answered a second summons.

"It's the *vigilante*," he said, returning to the veranda where we were sitting. "Has anybody got a copper?"

"But I gave the *vigilante* his penny this morning," I said, hastening to the door.

At my approach the applicant, recognizing me, waved the matter aside, as though the mistake had been mine, and he was graciously pleased to ignore it.

"The houses are so many – one forgets," he said, and strutted off without loss of dignity.

On Christmas Day he paid us an extra visit, and, sending in a card with his best wishes, awaited, not in vain, a monetary expression of our good-will.

The card, which was resplendent in rainbow tints, and richly emblazoned in gold, bore a representation of a young, dapper, and exquisitely dressed *vigilante* who was smoking a cigar. At his feet were portrayed a noble turkey, several bottles of champagne, and other seasonable dainties. A side tableau showed the *vigilante*, armed with his staff of office and a huge bunch of

keys, opening a street door to a belated couple who, presumably, had been locked out.

On the reverse side of the card was a long poem, which, on behalf of its presenter, claimed many good offices; notably, that he captured the evil-doer, and that, filled with fervent zeal, he watched over our repose. It concluded by stating: —

"I try to be in all
A perfect Vigilante."

Apart from similar curious and amusing conventions, with which one has to become acquainted, the early days of housekeeping in Majorca find the foreign resident grappling with a succession of petty difficulties. Besides the differences of language, of coinage, of weights and measures, the dissimilarity of climate renders advisable, even necessary, a mode of living that would be quite unsuited to dwellers in Britain.

To begin with the morning – the customary Majorcan breakfast, which even at the best hotels consists of a glass of coffee, or a tiny cup of very thick chocolate, and tumbler of water taken with a single roll, or an *enciamada*, is a meal from which the ordinary Briton rises hungry. And one wonders why the Spanish landlord, whose table is so lavishly spread at other meals, should practise a false economy in the matter of breakfast. For, after all, a roll costs only a halfpenny. Dinner is invariably an early function, and an extensive one, for at their two later meals

Spaniards make up for their abstinence at breakfast. Between the two o'clock dinner and supper, which is served at any time between eight and ten o'clock, there is a long blank, which the English visitor usually bridges with a cup of tea.

To return to the question of breakfast. At the Casa Tranquila we compromised the matter, and broke our fast on an unstinted quantity of coffee or chocolate and milk, taken with fruit, rolls and butter, and *enciamadas*. Majorcan breakfast rolls are of two kinds – the ordinary crisp ones, and, what we liked better, a soft species called *panecillos de aceite*.

Bacon is unknown in Majorca, though ham, of strong flavour and repellent aspect, may be had. It sells at twopence an ounce; and if you wish to astonish the vendor, you can do so by ordering more than a quarter of a pound.

We had been warned that we would be forced to do without butter while in the islands. But matters have progressed – in Palma at least – since the old butterless days. Now the better class grocers sell a peculiarly white butter that is made at Son Servera, near Artá; and almost every provision shop stocks a tinned salt butter that comes from Copenhagen. By the way, the purchaser must not be surprised when asked if it is "pig's butter" he wants. The salesman only means lard.

Cow's milk, another article of diet that used to be scarce in the islands, can easily be obtained. The price charged is almost the same as in London and the milk is much richer.

With the aid of a Spanish dictionary it had been a

comparatively simple matter to make out a list of groceries with which to furnish the shelves of our empty larder. But I must confess that a first visit to a butcher's shop made me wonder if Majorcan sheep and oxen differed in construction from British animals, such odd forms did their dead flesh present.

Cold storage is unknown in Palma. The beasts are killed, cut up, and sold almost before they have had time to cool. And, if they were not invariably killed young, their flesh could hardly be so good as it is, the lamb especially being sweet and tender.

A fact that forcibly strikes anyone from a meat-eating country is the small quantities of animal food consumed. Where the wife of a British working-man might spend a shilling on beef, a Majorcan would spend twopence. Naturally the meat is sold in small pieces, and inspection is courted. The east-end butcher's printed command to his customers – "Keep your hands off the beef," would be scorned in the Balearic Isles. If you shop in native fashion, you walk about the shop, turning over and critically examining the pieces exposed within easy reach. When your selection is made you need not invest in any great quantity. If you fancy calf's head, custom does not compel you to buy a half head. You can have a pound, a half-pound, or even a slice.

If your taste turns to fowl, at your request the bird suspended by its heels is halved, quartered, or wholly dismembered. Its limbs may lack the noble proportions of a Surrey capon, but they will be well flavoured and succulent, and you can acquire a wing and slice of the breast, or a leg, or a yet smaller portion, as your

fancy inclines.

We had heard that Majorcans were apt to tax foreigners by making them pay more than was customary for anything purchased, but such occurrences were quite outside our experience; though I did come across an example of Majorcan reasoning that was so amusingly illogical that I am tempted to repeat it here.

Finding in our picnicking style of housekeeping that a cold tongue was a useful thing to have in the larder, I frequently ordered one from the estimable butcher who served us. For a time the price charged was moderate. One day without warning it was increased by a half.

My Spanish unaided did not enable me to argue the matter, but Mrs. Consul chancing to be with me next time I called at the shop, I got her to inquire the reason of this sudden and unexplained change of rate.

"Yes. The tongue was a small one, and the price high," admitted the plump wife of the butcher, who acted as his accountant. "But then I had charged the señora too little for those we had supplied her with at first. And though we have many customers, each ox we kill has only one tongue. And, as I had charged the señora too little for the others, to be just to myself I was obliged to ask more than the true price for the last one!"

The method of reasoning was so delightfully irrational and absurd that I cheerfully paid the confessed overcharge, and we left the shop laughing. Probably the worthy dame wonders to this

day what we found entertaining in the situation.

Many good and cheap eatables are to be had in Palma if one knows where to look for them. By degrees we found out the best place to buy the tasty little pies filled with fish, or meat, and herbs, raisins and pine-seeds, or the funny turn-overs stuffed with spinach, that all the bakers make; and discovered the confectioner who sold the nicest cakes and sweets, and where to buy freshly-baked almonds, and who had the best quince preserve.

A little investigation introduced us to articles of food that we would never have met had we continued to live in a hotel – to the *cocas* that so closely resemble the Scottish "cookies"; and the *bizcochos*, that are just crisp freshly toasted slices of the largest sized *cocas*.

When we arrived in October, fruit was plentiful. Delicious grapes were selling at twopence-halfpenny a kilo (about a penny a pound), and ripe purple or golden figs were eighteen a penny. As the winter advanced the price of grapes gradually rose. And though one day in early December I bought for fivepence in the market four pounds of well-flavoured yellow grapes, by the end of January the finest were a peseta (about ninepence) a kilo.

Fresh figs gradually declined in flavour as they rose in price. And towards Christmas the country folks, who come in on Saturday mornings to the smaller market that is held in the Plaza de Mercado, began to bring in rush baskets of the home-dried figs that have been ripened in the sun and packed between fig

leaves.

The continued drought raised the price of vegetables, though small cauliflowers were still only a halfpenny each, and a good sized bunch of carrots could be bought for the coin that is rather less in value than a farthing. Most Majorcan carrots are purple in hue, so deep a purple as to be almost black. They have to be partially cooked alone, before being added to anything else, as their colour dyes the water black. It is their only fault. Their flavour is excellent.

Early in February we began to use the green peas and turnips that in November I had sown in our garden; but for the lack of rain they would have been ready a month earlier. And an occasional sowing of spinach yielded a quick and unfailing supply throughout the winter.

The question of firing in so genial a climate is an easy one to answer.

For cleanliness, coolness, convenience and economy in cooking there is no fuel that compares with charcoal. As a charcoal stove has no flue, the lighting is attended with a certain amount of smoke from the resinous sticks that are sold specially for the purpose of kindling. But once the charcoal is lit it gives no further trouble. It will cook slowly or quickly, as desired, scarcely soiling the outside of the vessels used in the process: and will stay alight, without much attention, as long as the cook requires. Further, it has the exceptional merit of keeping its heat concentrated within a small area, so that the temperatures of both

the kitchen and the cook remain normal.

Our favourite sitting-room – the one that opened directly to the veranda – had the unusual advantage of an open hearth, and a few chilly days that occurred in November made us hasten in search of logs for burning.

Inquiry in the neighbourhood directed us to a large saw mill in the Calle de la Fábrica, where we ordered what to us was an unknown quantity of firewood. The price paid was less than five shillings. When the wood was delivered we were amazed to find that it half filled a cart; and that, in addition to an abundant supply of both logs and rough wood all cut into convenient sizes, the kindly saw-miller had included four little slabs of the resinous wood used for kindling.

The wood was built up on the floor under the lower shelves of our roomy larder, and there, all through November, December, and the first half of January, it lay untouched.

We had got to the point of discussing what we would do with it on our leaving for England, when the weather turned chilly enough to afford us excuse for indulging in the luxury of a log fire. But though we had a fire on every occasion when artificial heat was necessary, there were still logs remaining when at the end of April we quitted the Casa.

A prominent feature of our district, which lay just without the walls of Palma, was the elaborate system employed to guard against the smuggling of contraband goods into the city.

The boundary of Son Españolet, which joined the country,

was heavily guarded. In addition to high walls and much intricate zigzagging of barbed wire, wherever two roads met there was a little station-house, or, to be more exact, a shanty, for the shelter of *consumeros*, both male and female, whose duty it was to examine all goods entering the city limits. And at frequent intervals all along the boundary roads was a species of sentry-box, usually containing a chair and a water-jar, in which for sixteen hours a day a *consumero* was supposed to keep watch over his own bit of boundary, and to be ready, if anything suspicious attracted his notice, to warn the others, by a series of shrill whistles, to be on the alert.

During the long hours passed in enforced idleness at their posts, many of the men had contrived to give their surroundings quite a home-like appearance. A pleasant man, whose location was at the end of our road, always seemed to have his children playing about him; and often his wife used to take her knitting and the newest baby, and the family goat and a big earthenware pan of amber-tinted rice, and make quite a picnic under the trees near his watch-box.

Another *consumero* had a stripling vine that he was carefully training up the trellis over his shed. We sometimes saw him watering it. And one, a tall silent man, whose station abutted on a piece of vacant ground, had gradually erected quite a long range of hen-coops along the base of a warm wall; and there he would stroll in the sunshine attended by a flock of flourishing poultry, chiefly of the Plymouth Rock breed.

But these were exceptions. The majority of the *consumeros* seemed content to lazy away their days and doze away their nights as comfortably as possible. When the early winter darkness had fallen, it was picturesque to see them lighting a brazier, or sitting huddled up in their warm brown blankets beside its glowing embers fast asleep.

When we had been spending the evening in town and were coming home late, we sometimes enjoyed waiting until we were close upon one of these muffled figures, and then, in chorus, saying politely "Buenas noches."

Then we would see the comatose form galvanize into a semblance of life, and hear a drowsy voice from the midst of the enwrappings reply "Buenas noches tengan."

The discovery that the monetary recompense for the sixteen hours that the *consumero* worked or played was only two pesetas – or about eighteenpence of English money – showed that if he was not overwrought neither was he overpaid.

At nightfall these guardians of our district were reinforced by the addition of two active young *carabineros* who carried loaded rifles. So between the police, the armed soldiers, the sleepy *consumeros*, the elusive *sereno* and the ornamental *vigilante*, the residents of Son Españolet ought to have gone to bed with a feeling of security.

The question of language is a somewhat grave one in Majorca, where the inhabitants naturally, but inconsiderately from our point of view, insist upon speaking their native tongue, which is

neither Spanish nor French, but sounds like a corruption of both.

Majorcan, which is said to be much older than *Castellano*, the official language of Spain, is closely allied to *Catalan*. And though many words suggest French, Spanish, and even Italian influence, the islanders seem, by an ingenious chipping of terminations and the addition of weird sounds entirely their own, to have evolved a tongue which goes far towards outdoing all others in unmelodious sounds. A peacefully animated conversation in Majorcan suggests impending bloodshed. To overhear a quarrel would be horrific. Happily discord is rare in Majorca. As far as our six months of experience showed, a better natured or more harmonious people never existed.

The dialect in use in Minorca and Iviza, though practically the same as that of Majorca, varies in each island. So it is not surprising that the visitor to the Balearic Islands is strongly advised to confine his efforts to the acquirement of Spanish, not even to attempt to learn Majorcan. And indeed the facilities for doing so are few. We could find no Majorcan dictionary, though a weekly paper in the language, *Pu-Put*, is published in Palma.

All the educated classes speak Spanish fluently. Yet in most of the shops, even in Palma, and in the country districts, the native language prevails.

Very few of the working women understand Spanish. Their lives having been passed on the islands, they remain ignorant of any but their mother tongue; though it is common to find their menfolk speaking Spanish well, owing to their having been in the

army, or to their having passed the period of voluntary exile that most of them serve almost as they do the demands of the State.

Those who know, say that Majorca is a bad place to learn Spanish in; that in order to have a good accent the intending traveller is best to acquire it elsewhere. And as Borrow says, you must open your mouth and take your hands out of your pockets to speak Spanish.

Before leaving London we tried, after a very desultory fashion, to pick up a little Spanish. The Boy, who took Berlitz lessons, got on famously and was our mainstay from the moment we crossed the Spanish frontier at Port Bou. But he declares that he had not been long in Palma before he found himself speaking Spanish with a Majorcan accent.

For my part, in point of language I found the direction of even so small an establishment as the Casa Tranquila very puzzling, especially at first. After carefully gleaning a knowledge of the Spanish coinage that enabled me to count up to say ten, in pesetas and centimos, it was bewildering to find sums calculated in *reals* and in *perros grandes* and *perros pequeñas*.

I shall never forget the first time Apolonia, the laundress, appeared to deliver up our clean linen and to receive her just recompense. When I inquired how much we owed her, Apolonia told me the sum, but she did it in Majorcan.

"Onza reals, cuatro centims, dos centims."

"Que vale en pesetas?" I asked, but Apolonia could not reckon in pesetas. Raising her stubby fingers, she proceeded to make

cabalistic signs in the air, repeating the whole "Onza reals, cuatro centims, dos centims," in a voice that grew louder and louder, as though the more noise she made the more likely was she to pierce my thick understanding.

Maria, hearing the discussion, left her dusting, and running swiftly on her string-soled *alpargatas*, came to the rescue.

If matters had been bad before, they were now worse. Four hands were in the air. Two voices in Majorcan, that became momentarily more strident, kept repeating the tale of reals and centims until, feeling undecided whether to laugh or to cry, I cut the matter short by emptying the contents of my housekeeping purse on the table and imploring Apolonia to help herself.

After many protestations she agreed to do so. And with much reluctant and timorous hovering of her fingers over the coins, at last selected the exact sum; which, before taking possession of, she carefully spread before my eyes, calling upon Maria to witness that she had not abused my trust.

The calculations of Mundo, the vegetable man, were – if possible – more distracting; for having inherited the national characteristic of honesty to an almost unnatural degree, the worthy Mundo, in his desire to be strictly just in his dealings, had a way of splitting farthings that sometimes proved inexplicable, not only to his customers but also to himself.

How often, when he stood puzzling over some fraction of a penny, have I felt impelled to say rashly: "Bother the expense, Mundo. I'll make you a present of the half farthing!"

Fortunately for Mundo's opinion of my sanity, the spirit of economy that tinctures the balmy air of these Fortunate Isles prevented any such extravagant proceeding.

V
TWO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

After we were fairly settled in our house our first excursion naturally was to the Castle of Bellver, the ancient fortress that, from the veranda, we saw clearly silhouetted against the western sky.

The afternoon was glorious. The sky was a cloudless blue, the sunlight cast deep shadows; to drive there in one of the quaint, open-sided tramcars would have been a treat. But there had been thunder in the night, and the apprehensive authorities had decided that it was a day for bringing out the closed vehicles. So we sat in the stuffy little car, and drove out through crowded Santa Catalina and across the bridge that spanned the dry *torrente* of San Magin, and past the *consumos* sheds towards the Terreno, the favourite summer resort of Palma folks, whose charming villas clothe the slope leading to the steep hill on whose summit stands the old castle.

The sun was hot, the air exhilarating. Flowers – roses, zinnias, plumbago, chrysanthemums, geraniums – still bloomed in the villa gardens. To us it was a glorious summer day. To the Majorcans it was already winter. The pretty houses were nearly all empty. Their owners had returned to town.

The old road to the Castle is a stiff climb up a rocky slope. The

new road is an excellent carriage drive that winds round the hill. We chose the steep way, and found ourselves frequently pausing and turning to look back across the sparkling waters of the bay to Palma, which at that moment was looking, as it so often does, like some celestial city.

The air was fragrant with the essence of the pines that clothed the slopes – at their feet tall pink heath and wild lavender were in bloom.

When Jaime the First built Bellver for a summer palace, he made it an invincible fortress. One thing only could one imagine as more difficult than getting into the Castle, and that would be getting out of it. Yet, had we so willed, on this balmy afternoon the hitherto impregnable stronghold with its deep moat, its implacable walls, might have been ours without even a show of resistance; for when we reached the gateway we found it open and unguarded.

But fortunately for the reputation of Bellver our mood was pacific; and we were content to linger without until an old woman, who had espied us as she was leaving the Castle with what was presumably the washing of the custodian in a chequered handkerchief under her arm, ran back calling loudly for "Bordoi."

Bordoi appeared in the person of the custodian of the Castle. He was an old soldier, gaunt, lean, courteous, and evidently possessing a genuine pride in his charge.

The first thing to which he called our attention was the

grating set high over the entrance, through which, after the endearing fashion of their time, the occupants of the Castle were accustomed to shower a gentle hint to depart, in the form of arrows or boiling water, upon the heads of any visitors whose appearance they did not fancy.

The Castle, which is in the form of a circle, is built round a courtyard containing a great draw-well. Looking down, it was interesting to me to see that the moist sides of the interior were thickly coated with luxuriant maidenhair fern, such as we had years before noticed growing inside the mouth of the well in the house of the maker of amphoræ in Pompeii.

Reaching down his long arm, the custodian picked me a frond, explaining that it made a wholesome medicinal drink – "quite as good as sarsaparilla."

And here an odd query occurs to me. Does the office of caretaker conduce to dyspepsia, or does the enforced leisure of the occupation dispose to hypochondria? During a little journey through the Shakespeare country, for instance, it was impossible – even for such very polite people as ourselves – to avoid noticing the boxes of patent pills or of much-vaunted lotions that figured prominently amongst the private possessions of the people who showed us the places of interest.

The stern face of the old keep has frowned on many tragic sights. It was up these rocky slopes that the headless body of the third Jaime was borne, after his luckless attempt, at the battle of Lluchmayor, to wrest his kingdom from a usurper. And it was

there, too, that the boy son who had fought so bravely by his father's side was carried, desperately wounded.

In more recent times Bellver has acted the part of a State prison. Political prisoners, numbering as many as three or four hundred at a time, have been immured within its massive walls. It was easy to picture them clustering in the spacious courtyard about the well, or pacing the open-sided gallery overlooking it, or lingering on the flat roof, from which such an amazingly comprehensive view may be had.

Seen from beneath, the height of the Castle is dwarfed by its encircling walls. It is only on looking down from the battlements and seeing the immense depths of the surrounding moats that one realizes the strength of the inflexible grip in which captives would be held.

In these days a rescue by means of airship might be feasible. For an aviator to alight on the vast flat circle of the Castle roof, to pick up a prisoner, and fly off again, would presumably be an easy matter. But in those days airships were unknown, and it must have been maddening to be pent so near Palma that every building might be distinguished, to be able to note the coming and going of the ships, to view the fair fertile country in every direction, and yet know that the deep encompassing moat rendered any attempt at escape a futility.

In one of the rooms a memorial tablet had been inserted in the wall in remembrance of a deposed Minister of State, who endured six years of incarceration before dying there in 1808.

In his chamber a window, reached by steps and stone-seated, afforded a lovely prospect across the blue waters of the harbour to the stately Cathedral and the town. It was pitiful to see that the gaudy tiles that paved the embrasure were worn bare, and to note that, by some curious coincidence, the face in the bas-relief looked longingly towards the window.

In the immense kitchen the most remarkable feature was the chimney – a space like a large room – of which the smoke-blackened sides narrowed up and up, until far overhead its orifice appeared a mere eyelet of light against the sky. But this ancient fireplace had been superseded by a long range of charcoal stoves, and the savour of roasting oxen will never again ascend that giant chimney.

The Castle of Bellver is full of interest, but it is the roof that holds the visitor fascinated. On its surface one can walk round and round in perfect security, meeting a fresh and glorious picture at every turn. To the north the high velvet hills bar the view. Southwards, beyond the clustered roofs of the Terreno, the Mediterranean ripples away towards the African coast. Towards the west amid the hills lies Ben Dinat, where, after the historic battle, the Conquistador dined well off bread and garlic; and east is the lovely plain of Palma, with Santa Catalina and Son Españolet (and the quite inconspicuous Casa Tranquila) in the middle distance.

Round the battlements many names, both of the bond and of the free, were carven. Our guide proudly pointed out three that,

coming amongst the Spanish designations, we read with a curious sense of familiarity: —

"John Sutherland Black.
James Hunter.
James Hunter, Junr."

The date was August, 1905. And the owners of the British names, our guide told us, were scientific men who had journeyed to Palma to witness the total eclipse of the sun. And in so doing they assuredly showed wisdom, for it would have been difficult to find a better place from which to observe the phenomenon than this wide roof that seemed so near the sky.

When the men essayed to climb the high tower I waited below on the roof, and was idly leaning over the battlements when a stonecrop fast-rooted in the interstices of the wall attracted me. Wondering what manner of plant would choose to live in that arid situation, I was examining it closely when I discovered that, even in that seemingly inaccessible spot, a caterpillar had found it out, and was busily feeding on its succulent foliage.

The caterpillar might be a common one – I have little knowledge of entomology – but it was new to me; and its appearance was so unusually gay as to appear to merit description. The body, which showed alternate stripes of light and dark grey, was girdled by black bands, which were further decorated by spots of vivid scarlet; while the head – or was it the tail? – flaunted a double scarlet plume.

When the men again joined me, I drew the attention of the

custodian to the gaudy insect, and asked if he knew the species.

He shook his head dubiously, confessing that he had never noticed one like it before. Then his eyes caught sight of the plant on which it fed, and he instantly brightened up.

"I know that plant," he said. "It is valuable, señora, very valuable. It makes a good medicine."

Our next visit was to the Lonja. In the good old days when Palma was a great mercantile centre – the days when thirty thousand sailors found employment from its port – a Majorcan architect designed the Lonja to serve as an exchange.

This old-time architect and his builders must have been past masters of their art, for though hundreds of years have slipped by since then, and the Lonja no more serves any active purpose, it still survives to delight by the simple grandeur of its design. Seen as it stands with only a wide thoroughfare separating it from the sparkling waters of the port, with its palm-trees in front and a cloudless blue sky overhead, the antique building is one of the most beautiful sights in a city that abounds in beautiful things.

We had been told that the Lonja was open to the public on the afternoons of Thursdays and Sundays. So one Sunday evening, early in our stay, the Man and I stopped in front of the great door, and tried to push it open. It did not yield a hair's-breadth. Indeed, it seemed to wear an expression of stolid immobility, as though secretly defying our puny efforts to induce it to reveal the treasures it guarded.

Sitting in a chair in the shadow of the building an old

policeman was dozing. Him the Man roused and interrogated.

He shook his head over the idea of the Lonja being on view on stated days. But the Lonja was at the *disposicion* of the señor. The señor could see it on any day. He would fetch the keeper of the keys.

Toddling off across the square of the palm-trees, he disappeared, and in a few minutes returned, followed by that official, bearing the emblem of his office in the form of a massive key.

The great door opened and closed behind us, and we found ourselves in a vast square hall, from whose dark marble floor six noble pillars rose to meet the high vaulted roof.

Like the Cathedral, the Lonja was built of the warm, buff-hued native stone, and the marble flooring was also of Majorcan origin, for it was quarried in the mountains of the island. The materials used in the construction were the same; but while the Cathedral impresses by its solemn majesty of conception, the Lonja charms with its beautiful simplicity of design, its inspiriting sense of light and air. The four wide windows were partly boarded up, the light entering only through the open carving at the tops. Yet the hall was so well illuminated that it was easy to see every detail of the pictures that covered a great portion of the walls.

The collection of pictures, though of no great importance, one imagines might be better hung, better framed, and in some way catalogued. Certain of the canvasses lacked frames. A soiled

card inscribed with the name of the artist was stuck in the frames of others. One portion of the wall-space was covered by interesting old paintings that had been removed from the antique church of San Domingo. And a large modern picture by a well-known Spanish painter attracted us both by the excellence of its workmanship and by the peculiarity of its subject: a bride and bridegroom – the man old, uninviting, and with strangely deformed feet; the woman young, attractive, and evidently of a lower social position – were standing before a brilliantly lit altar joining hands in marriage. On the bride's left stood her peasant mother, proud almost to arrogance at the wealthy marriage her pretty daughter was making. Behind were two workmen brothers, whispering and giggling.

The satire of the artist's intention was revealed in the title, *En el nombre del Padre, y del Higo, y del Espiritu Santo*, which was conspicuously painted on the frame.

High on the wall over the door that opens on to the garden two grotesque gargoyles look down on a finely sculptured bas-relief of the Virgin and Child. Across the little enclosure with its fruit-laden palm-tree, its tired-looking olive – how is it that olives always seem to pine for mountain slopes? – and its aloes, is a strikingly antique gate.

As the keeper of the keys pointed out, it was the original gate of the mole of the ancient port, and when in the seventeenth century the harbour was reconstructed, it was wisely deemed worthy of preservation. Behind it is the antique Concilio del Mar,

which is now the Escuela Superior de Comercio.

Showing us a door leading to a staircase, the custodian suggested that the view to be obtained from the roof of the Lonja was fine.

He did not attempt to join our climb, and when we had mounted the eighty-two steps of the spiral stair we did not wonder that he had refrained. But the sight from the path which extended round the four sides of the square roof was wonderful. Each point of view held fresh interest – whether it was the harbour with the shipping and the shining sea beyond, or the grand Cathedral seen across the lively Marina, or the eight-storey-high houses, whose upper-floor dwellings opened to roof terraces or blossomed out in poultry-houses and dove-cots. But best of all, I think, was the vista of the road leading towards Santa Catalina, and the Terreno, and the Castle of Bellver, behind which the sun was setting.

VI
THE FAIR AT INCA

Our first experience of the Majorcan railway system was a curious and unexpected one.

Having a fancy to see Inca, a thriving town situated in the very heart of the island, we called at Palma station one November day and asked for a time-table. The one handed us – it was the latest issued – bore the date of July, 1907. But even although it was well over two years old there appeared to have been no alteration either in the hours of departure or of arrival.

Learning that Thursday was the market-day at Inca, we got up before sunrise on a Thursday morning and reached the station in good time for the train that was timed to leave at 7.40. The *other* train, for only two trains a day leave Palma, was out of the question, as it did not start until two o'clock.

We had imagined that the paucity of trains argued a corresponding scarcity of travellers, but to our surprise the station was already crowded with a pleasantly excited mob of people, all in gala dress.

The women had their mantillas or lace-embroidered *rebozillos* fastened to the hair with little gold pins, and many wore long white gloves reaching to the sleeves, which were decorated at the elbows with a row of gold or silver buttons. The little shawls

that are always a feature of native full dress were of all colours and materials, from silk with long fringes to richly-hued plush or delicate light brocades.

The trains of Majorca resemble those of most other civilized countries in providing first, second, and third-class carriages. The first are cramped and stuffy. The second are inferior to some old-fashioned uncushioned English third-class. The third closely resemble cattle-trucks with benches running along the sides and down the middle. They have no windows; leather curtains protect their open sides.

We went second-class, as did the majority of our fellow-travellers. Long before the hour of starting, every carriage, with the exception of the firsts, which were almost empty, was packed full of passengers, all talking at the pitch of their voices. But nothing happened until quite forty minutes after the time fixed for departure, when the engine gave a violent jerk, as though putting all its strength into a superhuman effort, the women crossed themselves devoutly, and the train moved slowly out of the station. So slowly indeed, that three late-comers, arriving on the platform after the train was in motion, not only succeeded in entering the train but were able, by running forward, to secure places in the front carriages.

Inca is separated from the capital by twenty miles of fertile orchard land. The single line of rail cuts through great tracts of country planted with fig-trees, with almonds, and with olives. In many cases the ground underneath the trees was red and golden

with autumn tinted leaves of grape vines, or verdant with the green of shooting corn.

As the moments passed, and the sun rose higher, the mist wreaths that had lain about the plain dispersed; and the blue hills to the north made noble background for the spreading plantations. Within our crowded carriage all was good humour. Nobody seemed to find anything to grumble at in the slow rate of progress.

An early stopping-place was Santa Maria. We had only come a few miles, yet girls were waiting to sell nuts, and biscuits put up in neat paper cylinders, to those of the travellers – and they were many – who had already had time to be hungry; while an old woman carrying a water-jar and tumbler attended, ready for the smallest coin to supply the thirsty with water.

The little journey was hardly begun, and there seemed but small reason to tarry at Santa Maria, yet the delay became so extended that the passengers, still maintaining their perfect good humour, began exchanging visits from one portion of the train to another. An old gentleman clad in a complete suit of striped mustard-colour plush and yellow elastic-sided boots called at our compartment to exchange compliments with a comely elderly dame, who in conjunction with handsome jewellery had her hair – which was in a pigtail – covered with a gaily striped silk handkerchief.

So the minutes wore on. At intervals a warning bell rang, but nobody accorded it the slightest attention, and wisely so, for

nothing happened. At length, with a joint-dislocating jerk, we again got under-way, only to come to a dead stop a hundred yards further on.

The train, it was at length admitted, was too heavy for the motive power. The empty first-class carriages were detached; that accomplished, we actually progressed. The twenty miles were ultimately covered, and we succeeded in reaching Inca, with its picturesque row of windmills and grand setting of purple mountains, only two hours late.

Joining the stream of people, we entered the town, to discover what spectators less accustomed to crowds would long ago have discovered – that by some lucky chance we had come to Inca on the great day of its year – the annual *feria*. All the ways leading towards the centre of the town were lined with empty vehicles and up-tilted carts, and in the narrow streets the owners were promenading.

The fair was largely a business matter. It presented few of the elements of entertainment common to that of an English country town. The only thing in the way of amusement that we saw was a merry-go-round, and that was being quietly ignored.

One interesting feature was that each street held its own species of merchandise. In one, clothing and brightly-hued foot-gear were sold. Another was wholly given up to sweet stalls, whose principal article was a species of white confection composed apparently of chopped almonds and sugar. That it was good the myriads of bees that were tasting its sweetness

bore testimony. In yet another street we had to walk between a long double row of women seated on rush-bottomed chairs, each bearing in her lap an earthenware cooking-pot full of a puzzling commodity that had something of the appearance of crimson threads. It appeared to be the only commodity they had to offer, and I own we never succeeded in discovering what it was.

The square in front of the principal church was the centre of attraction for us. On one side the ground was covered with a fine display of native ware. Jars, and plates, and pots, and vases, in the greens and yellows and browns that look so tempting and are so cheap. The touch of vermilion, artistically so valuable to the busy scene, was given by the huge sacks bulging with scarlet and orange sweet peppers that form such an important part of Majorcan food.

Two maimed beggars, the first we had seen in the island, were hobbling about reaping a harvest; and, raised on a little platform, a travelling dentist was extracting juvenile teeth free; to the satisfaction of certain thrifty parents, and to the visible distress of their offspring.

Just below the square was the cattle-market; and on its outskirts we saw, for the first time, a peasant clad in the native male dress that unfortunately has become so rare. The jolly old fellow wore the extremely baggy blue cotton pantaloons, the short black jacket, and wide-brimmed hat that make up so distinctive a costume. He even wore the quaint black shoes that suit the costume, and that seemed a blessed relief from the green

and orange elastic-sided boots in vogue.

A threatened shower and an actual thirst gave excuse for seeking refuge in a café. Most of those we glanced into were crowded with peasants, and we hesitated about forcing our way in. Finding at last one that looked more exclusive than the others, we entered and seated ourselves at one of the little tables set under the overhanging tissue-paper decorations.

The Boy and I wanted wine, the Man chose cognac. The active waiter quickly served us with huge tumblers of red wine set in saucers; and placing before the Man a bottle of brandy in which were immersed spiky herbs, left him to help himself. The wine was rich and fruity, the liqueur the Man declared delicious; and while the rain, which was now falling in earnest, pattered down, we sipped and watched the passing life of the street.

Just across the way, at the side entrance to a flourishing baker's shop, two women were frying dough-nuts in a big pan of boiling oil. The elder woman, scraping a segment of batter from the full basin at her elbow, deftly twisted it round her finger, then threw it into the oil, from which a minute later her assistant lifted it out with a long-handled spoon, transformed into a crisp golden ring.

The shower had ceased, the sun was again shining out, and there was much to see; so we paid for our drinks and departed.

"Fourpence!" said the Man, as he pocketed his change. "A penny each for the wine and twopence for the liqueur! It's enough to drive one to drink!"

The one drawback to the complete enjoyment of the fair was

the mud. The previous night had been wet, and the streets were inches deep in it. It was a buff-coloured slime of persistently adhesive nature, and not content with thickly coating one's shoes, it tried to drag them off. To walk about in mud three inches deep is fatiguing, so we decided to take the train that was due to leave Inca at one o'clock, instead of waiting for that leaving at four.

It was a merciful fortune that guided us, for the one o'clock train took three hours to cover its twenty miles. Yet the scenery, with its grey-green olive plantations set against a background of beautiful mountains and enlivened with quaintly attired olive-gatherers, was so fine that we did not tire of feasting our eyes upon it.

Our companions on the return journey were mainly men – Palma merchants probably, who had visited the fair as buyers and were anxious to return with the greatest possible expedition. When those who were so adventurous as to wait until the later train would get back to town, or whether they ever reached it at all, history does not relate.

VII
VALLDEMOSA

The fertile plain that occupies the greater portion of the island of Majorca is sheltered from cold winds by the range of mountains that runs along the northern coast. The scenery on the farther side of the mountains is of unusual grandeur, the tracts of precipitous country bordering the sea between Valldemosa and Sóller being exceptionally lovely.

The district, which is almost entirely devoted to olive plantations, is a scantily populated one. And as there are no *fondas* for a considerable distance, the Austrian Archduke Luis Salvador, who owns much land on the northern coast, has turned a large farm-house on his estate of Miramar into an *hospederia*, or free lodging-house, for the use of travellers.

There are many *hospederias* in Spain, but they are generally attached to monasteries and intended for the use of pilgrims to some shrine. That at Miramar is the only instance I know of one supported by a private individual, and many sojourners from far lands like ourselves must have felt grateful to the royal owner for the kindly provision he has made for them.

Within the friendly walls of the Hospederia any sojourner can for three nights find free accommodation, the Archduke providing house-room, linen, service, and fuel. The apartments

are always ready, the guest need send no warning of his intended arrival. All he requires to do is to supply himself with food sufficient for the sustenance of his party throughout the visit, as there are no shops within several miles of Miramar, and the servants at the Hospederia are forbidden to sell to the guests.

Very early during our stay at Palma we had purposed journeying northwards to see the places of whose wonders we had heard; but we were so pleasantly interested in our new home and strange environment that it was nearing the close of November before we felt disposed to take the journey.

At stated times diligences run the twelve miles between Palma and Valldemosa, and the charge is only sevenpence-halfpenny. But the diligence goes no farther than Valldemosa, and that is three miles distant from the Hospederia. So, when we had decided to go on the Tuesday morning, we engaged Bartolomé, a good-looking bachelor charioteer, who stabled his carriage and pair of horses in Son Españolet, to drive us thither.

But Tuesday morning, when it came, brought a sudden change of weather. A strong easterly wind was blowing, and the temperature, for the first time since our arrival on these favoured isles, nearly approached cold. Bartolomé was warned that the journey was postponed for a day at least, and we spent the hours of uncertainty in grumbling at the weather, and in consuming the most perishable of the stock of provisions we had laid in for the expedition.

Judging the Majorcan climate by our knowledge of that of

other countries, we were all secretly convinced that we had delayed too long, that the weather had probably changed for the winter, and that our little excursion might require to be postponed until spring.

But to our surprise and relief the succeeding morning proved calm and sunny. Having been duly instructed, Bartolomé drove up at ten o'clock precisely, with a jingling of bells that I am convinced set every feminine head in the Calle de Mas a-peer behind its discreetly closed venetian shutters. In appearance Bartolomé was the embodiment of buoyant geniality. His black hair curled in rings about his smiling face, and he had dressed for the occasion in a white suit, a pink shirt, and a pair of bright yellow elastic-sided boots.

Bartolomé's carriage, the sides of whose interior were decorated with four antimacassars on each of which was embroidered a flamboyant representation of a rampant steed, proved both roomy and comfortable, and we were only three in number. Yet when we had got packed in with our luggage, which included sketching materials as well as comestibles, there was scarcely room to stir. Never before had we realized what a cumbersome article food was: or calculated the bulk of – say – the bread even so small a family will consume in three days. And when you add to the loaves the meat and groceries, the vegetables and fruit, necessary for three days' moderate consumption, they will be found to occupy a surprisingly large amount of space.

The first portion of the journey led through the broad, fertile

plain north of Palma, where plantations of almond, fig, and olive succeed each other with scarcely a break – that wide expanse whose fruitfulness has gained Majorca the title of the orchard of the Mediterranean. Near where the hills meet the plain we passed the village of Esglayeta, an attractive hamlet consisting of little more than a church and a wayside *fonda*.

The noses of the horses had been pointing directly towards a precipitous cleft in the range of mountains, and almost unexpectedly we entered the valley that divided two great hills. As we drove on, the winding road gradually ascended, until we found ourselves in the midst of the mountains and within sight of the outlying portion of lovely Valldemosa.

In his *Byways of Europe* Bayard Taylor said: "Verily there is nothing in all Europe so beautiful as Valldemosa." And indeed the ancient town, rising on its heights amid still higher heights above the valley that runs seawards, is strikingly beautiful.

It is only when taking Valldemosa in detail that one notices that its people are not quite so handsome, that they lack the gracious and light-hearted bearing of the inhabitants of Palma, that their dress is poorer, and the streets more squalid. Perhaps the difference in climate may account for the difference in appearance, for Valldemosa stands high among the mountains, and its climate is both colder and damper than that of Palma. The situation is supposed to be extremely healthy. It was at Valldemosa, on the site afterwards occupied by the Carthusian monastery, that in 1311 King Sancho, who was afflicted with

asthma, built a palace to which he removed his Court, and from which he gave his hawking parties.

At the suggestion of Bartolomé, we paused to visit the church attached to the old monastery, which was shown us by an elderly woman, who, unlike most of the country people, spoke excellent Spanish and understood our efforts in that language.

Under her guidance we visited the chapel, a fine old treasure-house of carved effigies of saints, of paintings, and of relics in glass cases all carefully wrapped up and labelled. The colours of the paintings that adorn the walls and ceiling, the work of two Carthusian monks, are as vivid as though still wet from the brush. And the remarkable altar-piece, with its life-size figures in wax, is worth a special visit.

Walking through the cloisters of the Carthusian monastery, we passed the doors of the cells, which are now used as dwelling-houses, and it occurred to us to ask if our old woman knew in which of the cells George Sand had passed her memorable winter in company with her children and with Chopin, and if it would be possible for us to see it.

Our guide appeared to be familiar with both questions. She had no hesitation in answering them in the affirmative; and preceding us briskly down the long, ascetic-looking corridor (that accorded so ill with our notion of Madame Dudevant), knocked at the door numbered 1.

"But if people are living in the house, will they not object? We must not disturb them," we demurred.

Our guardian thrust aside our protest as trivial, and in truth it was offered in a perfunctory spirit.

"No, no," she assured us. "The señor will be pleased. He is a nice gentleman. He was the doctor of Valldemosa for thirty years, till he retired. He will show you the house himself."

And indeed the señor, when he appeared, was graciousness itself. Welcoming us after the Spanish fashion, he put his house and what it contained at our disposal. In this case the courtesy proved more than a form of words, for he personally conducted us over all his domain.

First he showed us the terrace garden, from whose low boundary-wall, as from a balcony, one could look over the scattered houses that nestled among their laden orange-trees, towards the distant sea. The sun was shining; the air was heavy with the perfume of the loquat blossoms; a delicious languor lay over all. It was easy to imagine George Sand leaning on that wall, whose base was so thickly fringed with luxuriant maidenhair fern, revelling in the beauty of her surroundings. But my thoughts and sympathy were most with the monks who, on the suppression of the convents in 1835, were obliged to leave their quiet cells and the gardens that must have been a perpetual delight to them, and go elsewhere to subsist on the scant pension of a franc a day.

Taking us indoors, the doctor showed us the living-rooms, five of which looked out to the terrace-garden. The name of "cell" suggests accommodation that is cramped and austere, but nothing could have been more cheerful than these sunlit

chambers.

In the large, airy *salon*, with its domed ceiling, one could easily imagine both musician and novelist finding abundant space to work, he with his "velvet fingers," as his companion christened them, she with her facile pen. And in the quaint kitchen, with its range of charcoal stoves and big, open fireplace, one could picture them gathering on the nights of that cold winter.

It would have been impossible to find a more idyllic setting for a romantic episode. Still, I must confess that doubts assailed me; for in November, 1838, when writing to a friend, George Sand had said: —

"I have a cell, that is to say, three rooms and a garden full of oranges and lemons, for thirty-five francs a year, in the large monastery of Valldemosa."

And this house of the doctor's, with its spacious *salon*, its large dining-room, its many sleeping-apartments? No, much though we desired it, the descriptions hardly tallied. Then in her account of the unusually severe winter Madame Dudevant wrote of the "eagles and vultures that came down to feast on the poor sparrows that sheltered in their pomegranate trees from the snow."

Now in the garden there was a *kake* tree laden with ripe rose-red fruit, and other trees, but no pomegranate. But then that was many years past, and the trunk of the pomegranate-tree might long ago have been burnt on that wide hearth in the kitchen.

Speaking of the matter to the good doctor, we found our uncertainty shared. Throwing out his hands he said humorously:

—

"Who knows? There is no record. It was *one* of the cells. That much is certain. And this was the house of the Superior. If not this house, it was another. That is enough."

But as we descended the slope from the monastery we agreed that, whether or not the great French *artistes* ever lived within the walls of that particular cell, there could be no question that they had breathed the sweet air of these terrace-gardens, and had known the enchantment of that wonderful panoramic view. And that made their personalities very real to us.

Bartolomé awaited us smiling, and, insinuating ourselves among our medley of belongings, off we set along the three miles of road that led to Miramar.

On the outskirts of Valldemosa we saw, for the first time in Majorca, vines climbing over tall trees by the wayside, their grapes in purple bunches suspended in profusion from the branches. The effect was so beautiful that we almost regretted the more prosaic vineyards near Palma, with the carefully trained vines that resembled well-pruned blackberry bushes.

As we advanced, passing through a succession of olive plantations that rose above us towards the grand craggy mountains and fell beneath us to the blue sea, glimpses of which we caught over the foliage, the beauty of the scene that gradually unfolded surpassed all that we had yet seen.

The Man groaned a little, as during the next three days he was fated to groan often, and for the same reason.

"This is *too* grand," he said. "It's hopeless. One could never paint it!"

Turning a bend of the road, Bartolomé drew rein with a flourish before a quaint dwelling by the wayside; and we realized that we had reached the Hospederia.

"I say! We ought to have sent word we were coming. I hope the house isn't full. I hope they'll have room for us," said the Boy, voicing the sudden apprehension of us all. But so far from being crowded with visitors, the Hospederia seemed totally deserted. The great door was shut and, except for a vagrant cat and a clucking hen, there was no sign of life about the place.

Shouting lustily for "Fernando," Bartolomé jumped down and, running to the door, knocked loudly. Receiving no reply, he did not stand upon ceremony but, pushing open the door, went in, beckoning us to follow.

Entering, we found ourselves in a large outer hall with a cobbled floor and a long well-scrubbed table and benches. Following our charioteer, who had opened an inner door, we went into a large dimly-lit room which, when the window-shutters had been opened, revealed itself as a long narrow dining-room of severely ascetic appearance. Tables extended down its length, chairs with seats of interwoven string stood round the walls.

"Look, señora!"

Running to a cupboard, Bartolomé had thrown open the door, disclosing shelves laden with china and crystal.

Again – "Look! señora."

Hastening to the opposite side of the room, he had opened the doors of a big *armário*, and was pointing to piles of clean table-linen.

It was as though we had strayed into some enchanted castle where all had been prepared for our coming by invisible hands. Going off to explore further, we found our way into a snug kitchen. The whole of one side was occupied by a brown-tiled charcoal stove, on which many dinners could have been cooked simultaneously. The shelves were laden with cooking-pots and pans, of every description; the walls shone with an array of well-polished utensils. Over charcoal embers a huge earthenware pot, that for its better preservation had been encased in a strait-waistcoat of wire-netting, was slowly bubbling.

Essaying to mount the stair leading from the hall, we peeped into closely shuttered apartments in which we could see the dim outlines of beds. And what we saw assured us of one thing – that there were no other guests at the Hospederia.

From the perfect order of the house, and the fact that the fire was burning, it was clear that someone must be close at hand. But we had come a long way, and in the meantime we were famishing.

Hastening to our aid, the ubiquitous Bartolomé spread the table, putting out plates and glasses, and finding wooden spoons and forks in the drawer of a side-table. Opening our packets of sandwiches and fruit, we invited him to join us.

We were all seated at table, busily eating, when a swift clatter of feet sounded on the cobble stones of the outer hall; and a brisk little brown woman ran into the room, voluble with apology for the temporary absence of the keepers of the Hospederia. Netta, she explained, was away. Fernando was working at the farm. In their absence could she be of any service to our excellencies?

Reassured on that point, the lady – Catalina was her name – remained to enliven our picnic lunch by rallying Bartolomé, who was an old acquaintance of hers, on his unparalleled effrontery in sitting down to table with us.

"You have no right to eat with their excellencies," she said. "You are only a coachman."

"But if he is a good coachman?" asked the Man.

"Ah, no, señor. He is not a good coachman. He is a bad coachman. And, besides, he cannot spread a table. See! he has given you no table-cloth, no napkins, when he knows the cupboard is full of them. No, he is a very bad coachman indeed!"

When our scrap meal was finished, Catalina proceeded to show us our sleeping accommodation. Unlocking a door that we had not tried, she led us through a pleasant room with two beds, to one with two windows – one facing the highroad, where Bartolomé's carriage still waited, the other affording a beautiful view of the rugged coast.

Catalina explained that these rooms were usually allotted to foreigners such as ourselves, the less attractively situated being reserved for natives of the island, who were at liberty to

share the Archduke's hospitality, although the Hospederia was originally intended for the use of other travellers. A handsome new dining-room in process of construction, though during our stay no one was actually working at it, was also planned for the accommodation of those from far countries, but to us the appointments of the older building seemed peculiarly in keeping with the quaint idea of the Hospederia.

The bedrooms were simply but sufficiently furnished. Each had two single beds, half-a-dozen chairs, a plain wooden table, and a tripod washstand holding the smallest basin and ewer we had seen outside France. The roofs were raftered. All was the perfection of austere cleanliness.

Before our inspection was ended Fernando, the host, a good-looking man with the gracious deportment of an operatic tenor, had returned. His grandmother had been the original housekeeper of the Hospederia. On her death, at the age of ninety-nine, her office had descended upon Fernando and his young wife Netta.

We spent the all too short November afternoon and evening in exploring the slopes about Miramar, looking at the glorious views that perpetually presented some yet more glorious aspect. The Hospederia was over a thousand feet above the sea, to which the ground fell precipitously. Above the house the land rose up and up until it ended in towering crags. Northward stretched the Mediterranean. Elsewhere the eye met nothing but range upon range of mountains.

The extensive grounds of Miramar are well shaded with olive and carob trees, but at every point that affords a specially good view of some part of the exquisite scenery the Archduke has caused to be erected a *mirador*, or walled enclosure, where one can sit in safety and glory in the beauty of the surroundings.

From one of these we watched the after-glow of the setting sun illumine distant peaks, bringing into prominence heights whose existence we had scarcely realized.

The darkness, falling swiftly, surprised us while a good distance from the Hospederia, and we had to find our way back by untried paths. But the fascination of the place held us captive, and when the moon began to peep out from among the clouds we could not remain indoors, as more sensible folks would have done. Wrapping up a little, for it was colder on the northern coast of the island than at Palma, we went out, determined to reach a headland by the sea, on which from above we had caught tantalizing glimpses of a shining white temple.

Except from a *mirador* the temple was not visible, and we wandered by many devious ways before we again came in sight of it, perched above the sea on a high rock that is reached by a stone bridge thrown over a deep gully.

As we felt our way along, for the elusive moon was again behind a cloud, all was silent, mysterious. Surely Miramar at nightfall in winter is one of the most silent places on the earth. We felt as though there was not a human being alive but ourselves.

Crossing the bridge timorously, we found ourselves

confronting the ghostly white chapel. When we had told Catalina of our desire to visit it, she had given us keys, but they did not fit. And as we proceeded to fumble with the lock, the silence was so intense that I could almost have imagined that someone within was holding his breath to listen. Had we knocked upon that closed door I had an eerie conviction that the spectre of some long-dead monk would have opened it.

But we did not knock. And the moon favouring us with a glimpse of her illumining power, we walked round the base of the temple, which is securely railed in, and watched the moon outline with silver finger-tips each point and pinnacle of the hills and shimmer softly on the sea.

When we returned to the Hospederia, Fernando had gone to fetch his wife; and Catalina, who had been left in charge, bustled into the dining-room to tell us that two *carabineros* had come, and were resting in the kitchen.

"Have they come after us?" cried the Man; and Catalina, who enjoyed even the mildest of humour, wrinkled her brown face in delight.

The dining-room where we sat was large and dimly lit by oil lamps. After the silence of those wooded slopes the prospect of even the company of two *carabineros* was alluring. So when I went into the kitchen to cook the lamb cutlets and tomatoes that comprised our modest supper, my men followed me.

The kitchen, which was the most picturesque part of the Hospederia, was looking particularly snug and cosy. A fire of

logs burned on the open hearth, below the shining tin pans and the strings of red peppers, and lit up the fine bronzed faces of the *carabineros*, who sat close to its warmth.

They rose when we entered, to offer us their seats. One, spreading his striped blanket on the low settle, invited the Man to share it; and while I grilled the cutlets and Catalina washed dishes at the sink, the men chatted as freely as their difference of language would allow, the *carabineros* talking of their long hours of duty – for their patrol begins at five or six o'clock in the evening and does not end until seven next morning – and of the constant watch that has to be kept for smugglers on that lonely and seemingly scarce accessible coast.

Leaving them to resume their night watch, we supped and went to bed, to be roused in the early morning by voices. Netta, the house-mistress, had returned, and thenceforward the lively Catalina would relapse into the position of merely an obliging neighbour.

VIII
MIRAMAR

When we went downstairs to breakfast Netta was setting the table; setting it, too, after a fashion of her own which never varied, were the meal breakfast, luncheon or dinner.

First she spread the cloth, whose lack at luncheon on the previous day had so offended Catalina's sense of what was neat and proper. Then she put before each place a big tumbler, a little tumbler, two soup-plates, and a wooden spoon and fork.

Netta proved to be tall and nice-looking, with tragic dark eyes, and a gravity of manner that was in striking contrast to her husband's smiling bonhomie. She was an admirable housewife. We never caught her at work; yet, without the slightest appearance of fuss and flurry, she managed to keep everything the pink of perfection.

The weather was hardly promising. Rain had fallen in the night; veils of mist smothered the crests of the near hills and completely obliterated the more distant. But we were resolved to let nothing short of an actual downpour keep us indoors. And as the Man wished to sketch at Valldemosa, which had captivated us all on the previous day, the Boy and I accompanied him thither. Perhaps it is unwise to attempt to renew first impressions. Possibly the charm of Miramar clouded our eyes to

the undoubted beauty of Valldemosa. More likely the fact that the sun only peeped out fitfully, and that the wind was damp and the sky sullen, influenced our view: but somehow Valldemosa seemed to have lost the glamour it cast over us when we first saw it basking in the warm sunlight. Everybody seemed chilly, and all the children looked as if they had colds in their noses.

Leaving the Man working at a water-colour of the old Carthusian monastery from rising ground above a covered well, we set off with the intention of augmenting our little stock of provisions from the shops of the town.

The store we chanced upon sold every likely and unlikely commodity, from green and orange boots to radishes. When we inquired where we might find a butcher, the shop-mistress, with a majestic wave of her hand, signed to us to follow her. And, walking in her footsteps, we threaded our way through an apartment, which was partly kitchen and partly an overflow stock chamber, into an inner room, where hung garlands of black and yellow sausages and the carcasses of two lambs.

This was the butcher's shop, she announced, and there was no beef, only lamb. So perforce we added yet more cutlets to our diet, and humbly craved bread. But the only loaves she had were so large that, rejecting them, we went in search of a baker.

In the less important Majorcan towns, shops are difficult to find. The fact that a tax is levied upon signs keeps all but the most prominent vendors from exhibiting one. The room of an ordinary house that opens directly to the street usually acts as the

place of business; and a cabbage, or a basket of striped haricot beans, set casually on the doorstep, often serves to indicate the existence of a general shop.

After a little searching we succeeded in finding a *panaderia*, but the loaves of the baker, in place of being smaller than those of the grocer (which sounds Ollendorffian), were so huge that they resembled cartwheels, or, to be more exact, perambulator wheels, baked of rye.

For a moment the choice lay between possible starvation and the prospect of trundling the mammoth rye loaf up and down the three miles of highway that lay between us and the Hospederia.

While we hesitated, the baker lady, and the half dozen or so of her intimate friends who had followed us into the shop to see what the foreigners would buy, regarded us interestedly. Then a compromise suggested itself.

"Would it be possible to ask the señora to divide the loaf?"

"Yes – without doubt."

The complacent señora already had the large knife in her hand. So, clutching the half of the still steaming rye loaf, we returned to the Man, with whom we had arranged to share an open-air luncheon.

Before we had reached him, the mist that had been threatening to swoop down upon us resolved itself into a shower. Taking advantage of the near vicinity of the covered well, we boiled our tea-kettle under the archway, and drank tea, to the surprise of the people who were constantly coming to fill their water-jars.

Then, the sun consenting, rather sulkily, to peep out again, the Man returned to his work, while the Boy and I, feeling no further temptation to linger at Valldemosa, took up our section of the cartwheel and set off for Miramar.

On the way, not far beyond the outskirts of the town, we caught sight of a notice-board, which stated that a Museum of Mallorquin antiquities might be seen in a house on the side of the road nearest to the mountains. Following the path indicated, we found ourselves, after a few minutes walking, in the courtyard of what had evidently been a fine old country seat.

The doors stood open to the world. Except for a beautiful flock of cream-coloured turkeys, the place seemed utterly untenanted. There was no sign of humanity until the Boy woke the echoes by smiting lustily on a cow-bell that hung outside the kitchen door.

Then a little sun-dried old woman popped her head out, and with a scared face fled up a broad flight of steps that led from the courtyard to the floor above.

She had gone to warn the custodian of the Museum; and that dame, quickly appearing, invited us upstairs to see the collection.

The house, Son Moragues, she told us, was one of the many owned by the Archduke on the different estates he had bought. He had never used it as a residence, and merely kept it as a receptacle for the specimens of typical Mallorquin manufactures, such as pottery, models of baskets, furniture, etc., he was collecting.

The object that interested us perhaps more than any other

exhibit was a jar that had been salved from the sea in Palma Harbour. Although a genuine antique it was of the shape in use to-day; and its unrecorded period of immersion had left it encrusted with a marvellous decoration of barnacles and shells.

What really delighted us most in the Museum were the views from the balconies; especially those obtained from a great old *terras* with a sloping floor, where we stood in the brilliant sunshine and watched the showers sweeping along the mountain tops and up the valley.

Down below us was a thick hedge of prickly pear, the edges of the fleshy leaves ruched with scarlet fruit. And beside us, as we leant on the edge of the balcony, was a wire tray on which a quantity of figs, gathered presumably from the trees in the field beneath, were drying in the sun.

The quaint old garden, which we saw on the way out, had tall box hedges and a spreading magnolia, and crumbling stone seats surrounded the fountain, whose waters have long run dry.

In the evening I had gone to bed early, leaving the others to follow their own devices, and was sleeping the sleep of the woman who had been all day in the open air, when an insistent calling of my name aroused me back to semi-consciousness, and I gradually gathered that I must descend to open the door. The men, who had gone out walking in the moonlight, had returned to find that, inadvertently, the house door had been locked and barred against them.

Had my room been less accessible, or my sleep more

profound, they might have knocked and called in vain, for although it was hardly nine o'clock, Fernando and Netta were deep in the slumber of the agriculturist in some unknown roof-chamber of the tall old house.

Although so isolated in position, Miramar is intimately connected with the romantic life-history of Ramon Lull – rake, recluse, scholar, fanatic, martyr, saint – what you will.

The father of Ramon Lull – the name is variously spelt: Raymund Lully in the English; Ramundo Lulio in the Spanish; and Ramon Lull in the Mallorquin, which has a bad habit of chipping the ends off words – was one of those brave young knights of Aragon who fought with their King during his invasion and conquest of Majorca. When that war had ended happily for all but the Moors, the parent Lull, in company with the other nobles who had supported King Jaime the Conquistador, was rewarded with an estate in Majorca. And there, about six years later, his son Ramon was born.

During his earlier manhood Ramon gave little hint of what he was ultimately to become. His behaviour was by no means sedate. Nay, more, it is on record that his love affairs were so numerous as to become a public scandal, which reached a climax on his riding on horseback into church in pursuit of a devout lady whom he madly adored.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.