

birthday. I was born in March, I think. In January my mother caught cold, and as she grew worse my father fetched the doctor, and then her father and mother came to see her, but nothing did any good. In April she died. . . . I thought I should die too.

After her death my father took to grumbling about the food and house and everything. Nothing my sister could do was right. . . . I believe she only married in the summer because she couldn't stand his constant blame. At any rate she married badly, a good-for-nothing who had twice her years, and who ill-treated her continually. A month or two later my father, who must have been fifty, married again, a young woman, a labourer's daughter without a *duro*. . . . He told me he was going to do it, for the house needed a woman. I suppose he was right. But I was too young then to take such things into consideration, and I had loved my mother. When I saw his new wife I did not like her, and we did not get on well together.

Before this, however, early in the summer that came after the death of my mother, I went for the first time to see a bull-fight. My father wanted me to go, and my sister, too, so I went. I shall never forget that day. The *chulos* made me laugh, they skipped about and took such extra-good care of themselves; but the *banderilleros* interested me. They were quick and courageous that I saw at once; but after they had planted the *banderillas* twice, I knew how it was done, and felt I could do it just as well or better. For the third or fourth *banderillero* made a mistake! He didn't even know out of which eye the bull was looking at him; so he got frightened, and did not plant the *banderillas* fairly. Indeed, one was on the side of the shoulder and the other didn't even stick in! As for the *picadores*, they didn't interest me at all. There was no skill or knowledge in their work. It was for the crowd, who like to see blood and who understand nothing. Then came the turn of the *espada*. Ah! that seemed fine to me. He knew his work I thought at first, and his work evidently required knowledge, skill, courage, strength—everything! I was intensely excited, and when the bull, struck to the heart, fell prone on his knees and the blood gushed from his nose and mouth, I cheered and cheered till I was hoarse. But before the games were over, that very first day, I saw more than one *matador* make a mistake. At first I thought I must be wrong, but soon the event showed I was right. For the *matador* hadn't even got the bull to stand square when he tried his stroke and failed. Ah, I see you don't know what that means—"to stand square?"

"Yes," I answered, "I do partly, but I don't see the reason of it. Will you explain?"

"Well," Montes answered, "it's very simple. You see, so long as the bull's standing with one hoof in front of the other, his shoulder-blades almost meet, as when you throw your arms back and your chest out; that is, they don't meet, but the space between them is not as regular, and therefore, not as large as it is when their front hooves are square. Now, the space between the shoulder-blades is none too large at any time, for you have to strike with force to drive the sword through the inch-thick hide, and through a foot of muscle, sinew, and flesh besides to the heart. Nor is the stroke a straight one. Then there's always the backbone, too, to avoid. And the space between the backbone and the outermost thick gristle of the shoulder-blade is never more than an inch and a-half. So if you narrow this space by even half an inch you increase your difficulty immensely. And that's not your object! Well, all this I've been telling you I divined at once. Therefore, when I saw the bull wasn't standing quite square I knew the *matador* was either a bungler or else very clever and strong indeed. In a moment he proved himself to be a bungler, for his sword turned on the shoulder-blade, and the bull throwing up his head, almost caught him on his horns. Then I hissed and cried, "Shame!" And the people stared at me. That butcher tried five times before he killed the bull, and at last even the most ignorant of the spectators knew I'd been right in hissing him. . . . He was one of your *Mazzantinis*, I suppose!"

"No," I said, "I've seen *Mazzantini* try twice, but never five times. That's too much!"

"Well," Montes went on quietly, "the man who tries once and fails ought never to be allowed in a ring again. But to go on. That first day taught me I could be an *espada*. The only doubt in my mind was in regard to the nature of the bulls. Should I be able to understand new bulls, bulls, too, from different herds and of different race, as well as I understood our bulls? Going home that evening I tried to talk to my father, but he thought the sport had been very good, and when I wanted to show him the mistakes the *matadores* had made, he laughed at me, and, taking hold of my arm, he said, "Here's where you need the gristle before you could kill a bull with a sword, even if he were tied for you!" My father was very proud of his size and strength, but what he said had reason in it, and made me doubt myself. Then he talked about the gains of the *matadores*. A fortune, he said, was given for a single day's work. Even the pay of the *chulos* seemed to me to be extravagant, and a *banderillero* got enough to make him rich. That night I thought over all I had seen and heard, and fell asleep and dreamt I was an *espada*, the best in Spain, and rich, and married to a lovely girl with golden hair—as boys do dream.

Next day I set myself to practise with our bulls. First I teased one till he grew angry and rushed at me; then, as a *chulo*, I stepped aside. And after I practised this several times, I began to try to move aside as late as possible and only just as far as was needful; for I soon found out the play of horn of every bull we had. The older the bull the heavier his neck and shoulders become, and, therefore the sweep of horns in an old bull is much smaller than a young one's. Before the first morning's sport was over I knew that with our bulls at any rate I could beat any *chulo* I had seen the day before. Then I set myself to quiet the bull, which was a little difficult, and after I'd succeeded I went back to my pony to read and dream. Next day I played at being a *banderillero*, and found out at once that my knowledge of the animal was all important. For I knew always on which side to move to avoid the bull's rush. I knew how he meant to strike by the way he put his head down. To plant the *banderillas* perfectly would have been to me child's play, to beat with our bulls. The *matador's* work was harder to practise. I had no sword; besides, the bull I wished to pretend to kill was not tired and wouldn't keep quiet. Yet I went on trying. The game had a fascination for me. A few days later, provided with a makeshift red *capa*, I got a bull far away from the others. Then I played with him till he was tired out. First I played as a *chulo*, and avoided his rushes by an

inch or two only; then, as *banderillero*, I escaped his stroke, and as I did so, struck his neck with two sticks. When he was tired I approached him with the *capa* and found I could make him do what I pleased, stand crooked or square in a moment, just as I liked. For I learned at once that as a rule the bull rushes at the *capa* and not at the man who holds it. Some bulls, however, are clever enough to charge the man. For weeks I kept up this game, till one day my father expressed his surprise at the thin and wretched appearance of the bulls. No wonder! The pasture ground had been a ring to them and me for many a week.

After this I had to play *matador*—the only part which had any interest for me—without first tiring them. Then came a long series of new experiences, which in time made me what I was, a real *espada*, but which I can scarcely describe to you.

For power over wild animals comes to a man, as it were, by leaps and bounds. Of a sudden one finds he can make a bull do something which the day before he could not make him do. It is all a matter of intimate knowledge of the nature of the animal. Just as the shepherd, as I've been told, knows the face of each sheep in the flock of a thousand, though I can see no difference between the faces of sheep, which are all alike stupid to me, so I came to know bulls, with a complete understanding of the nature and temper of each one. It's just because I can't tell you how I acquired this part of my knowledge that I was so long winded in explaining to you my first steps. What I knew more than I have told you, will appear as I go on with my story, and that you must believe or disbelieve as you think best.

"Oh," I said, "you've explained everything so clearly, and thrown light on so many things I didn't understand, that I shall believe whatever you tell me."

Old Montes went on as if he hadn't heard my protestation. The next three years were intolerable to me; my step-mother repaid my dislike with interest and found a hundred ways of making me uncomfortable, without doing anything I could complain of and so get altered. In the spring of my nineteenth year I told my father I intended to go to Madrid and become an *espada*. When he found he couldn't induce me to stay, he said I might go. We parted and I walked to Seville; there I did odd jobs for a few weeks in connection with the bull-ring, such as feeding the bulls, helping to separate them and so forth; and there I made an acquaintance who was afterwards a friend. Juan Valdera was one of the *cuadrilla* of Giralda, a *matador* of the ordinary type. Juan was from Estramadura, and we could scarcely understand each other at first; but he was kindly and careless and I took a great liking to him. He was a fine man; tall, strong and handsome, with short, dark, wavy hair and dark, mustache, and great brown eyes. He liked me I suppose, because I admired him and because I never wearied of hearing him tell of his conquests among women and even great ladies. Of course I told him I wished to enter the ring, and he promised to help me to get a place in Madrid where he knew many of the officials. "You may do well with the *capa*," I remember he said, condescendingly, "or even as a *banderillero*, but you'll never go further. You see, to be an *espada*, as I intend to be, you must have height and strength," and he stretched his fine figure as he spoke. I acquiesced humbly enough. I felt that perhaps he and my father were right and I didn't know whether I should ever have strength enough for the task of an *espada*. To be brief, I saved a little money, and managed to get to Madrid late in the year, too late for the bull-ring. Thinking over the matter, I resolved to get work in a blacksmith's shop, and at length succeeded. As I had thought, the labour strengthened me greatly, and in the spring of my twentieth year, by Juan's help, I got employed on trial one Sunday as a *chulo*.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

INDIRECTION.

FAIR are the flowers and the children, but their subtle suggestion is fairer;  
Rare is the roseburst of dawn, but the secret that clasps it is rarer;  
Sweet the exultance of song, but the strain that proceeds it is sweeter;  
And never was poem yet writ, but the meaning outmastered the metre.

Never a daisy that grows but a mystery guideth the growing;  
Never a river that flows but a majesty sceptres the flowing;  
Never a Shakespeare that soared but a stronger than he did enfold him;  
Never a prophet foretells but a mightier seer hath foretold him.

Back of the canvas that throbs the painter is hinted and hidden;  
Into the statue that breathes the soul of the sculptor is hidden;  
Under the joy that is felt lie the infinite issues of feeling;  
Crowning the glory revealed is the glory that crowns the revealing.

Great are the symbols of being, but that which is symbolled is greater;  
Vast the create and behold, but vaster the inward creator,  
Back of the sound broods the silence, back of the gift stands the giving;  
Back of the hand that receives, thrill the sensitive nerves of receiving.

Space is as nothing to spirit, the deed is outdone by the doing;  
The heart of the wooer is warm, but warmer the heart of the wooing;  
And up from the pits where these shiver, and up from the heights where those shine,  
Twain voices and shadows swim starward, and the essence of life is divine.

RICHARD REALF.

'ORB' CORRUGATED IRON is the best iron manufactured in New Zealand.—ADVT.

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

WHERE there's a will there's very often a lawsuit.

Alimony is the silver lining to the cloud of divorce.

The age of wisdom: From seventeen to twenty one.

Women are not always deep thinkers, but they are generally clothes observers.

No matter how much a man hates a creditor, he invariably asks him to call again.

The reason some people 'love at first sight' is because they don't know each other then.

A loud necktie doesn't necessarily indicate a depraved heart; the wearer's impulses may be better than his taste.

It makes no difference how much confidence a man has in a friend, he will always wish the day after he tells him his trouble that he had not told him quite so much.

Do not flatter yourself that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into relation with a person, the more necessary do fact and courtesy become.

Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair,' though written after its author had made a success as a novelist, was nevertheless, refused by every reputable house in London, the writer finally being forced to bear half the expense of publication.

Why do people wait until a man is sick and can't eat to send him good things? When he is well and would like something good no neighbour comes in with fancy jellies, old wines and things like that. Things are very unfair.

POETRY AND PROSE.

'Where are you going, my pretty maid?'

'Into society, sir,' she said.

'May I go with you, my pretty maid?'

'If you've plenty of money, good sir,' she said.

'I have a penny,' she said.

'I wish you good morning, sir,' she said.

We all know that a woman cannot throw a stone with any certainty of hitting a mark as big as the side of a house; but she can thread a gross of needles while a man is finding the eye of one, and she can detect beauty in a squalling baby where no man can see anything more than a pudgy mass of unattractive humanity.

At a watering place in the Pyrenees the conversation at table turned upon a wonderful echo to be heard some distance off on the Franco-Spanish frontier. 'It is astonishing,' exclaimed an inhabitant of the Garonne; 'as soon as you have spoken you hear distinctly the voice leap from rock to rock, from precipice to precipice, and as soon as it has passed the frontier the echo assumes a Spanish accent.'

SUMMER IN ST. PETERSBURG.—As a rule, there is not much to see at St. Petersburg in the summer. The families of the great nobility are usually away in their country estates or at their villas in the islanding islands which dot the Neva; while the Imperial Court is sometimes at Tsarskoye-Celo, but much more frequently at Gatchina. The Winter Palace, the Hermitage, the museums and picture galleries are open to sightseers; but there are no balls and no receptions, no races, and very few public amusements.

MAINE JAW-BREAKERS.

Don't visit the commonplace Winnepesaukee,  
Or the rivulet Onoquinapaskeasagog,  
Nor climb to the summit of bare Woonoak,  
And look eastward toward the clear Umbagog;  
But come into Maine to the Welokenbacook,  
Or to the saucy little River Essoukiasagook,  
Or still smaller stream of Chiquassabunticook,  
Then visit me last on the great Anasagotucook.

THE SPREADING OF SLANDER.—A lady who had been in the habit of spreading slanderous reports once confessed her fault to St. Philip de Nevi, and asked how she could be cured. He said 'Go to the nearest market-place, buy a chicken just killed, pluck its feathers all the way as you return, and come back to me.' She was much surprised, and when she saw her adviser again he said: 'Now go back and bring me all the feathers you have scattered.' 'But that is impossible,' she said. 'I cast away the feathers carelessly; the wind carried them away. How can I recover them?' 'That,' he said, 'is exactly like your words of slander. They have been carried about in every direction; you cannot recall them. Go and slander no more.'

WIDOW-STRANGLING IN FINL.—The death of a man was always closely followed by that of his wife, and in the case of a chief by that of all his harem. If a married woman died a passport to the shades was furnished her in the shape of her husband's beard, which was cut off and placed under her left armpit. Widow-strangling was carried out with imposing ceremonies. All the relatives of the deceased assembled in the hut which he had occupied in life, and to them the widow was brought in. Her brother if she had one, was the executioner, and the instrument was his waist-cloth, which he wound about her entrance. The victim was made to assume a position on hands and knees, and the long cloth was given a turn about her neck and held on either side by her brother and another man. She was then instructed to expel all the air from her lungs and hold up her hand as a signal that all was ready, which being done, the cloth was drawn tight and a swift and nearly painless death ensued.

THE CIRCASSIAN BEAUTY A MYTH.—That the whole of the Caucasus abounds in lovely women is a mistake. What are called Circassian beauties are to be found not far from Batoum, in the Lowlands, and neighbourhoods of Akhazitzi, Ozergeth, and Lowni, very small villages and so-called towns. They are also to be found in the north of the Caucasus, also at Anapa, and the small villages extending from that town to Lochi on the coast, but they are not beauties at all, and I can assure you that nine men out of ten would travel through those districts without noticing them. They are mostly poor peasant girls. They have lovely eyes, it is true, but without any expression. Up to the age of fourteen they have nice features, but after that age they become very coarse-looking indeed. Some have fair, some have dark hair, generally long and plenty of it. It was from the neighbourhood of Lougdidi that the Sultan of Turkey originally procured girls for his harem. Of course we sometimes hear of one or two extraordinary beauties in that part of the world, such as the 'Bouones Klara von der Decler of Tiflis,' but such women are only beautiful to the native eye. Europeans find nothing about them to admire.