

Chap. 1

Circumstances attending my first meeting with
the Gypsies of Spain.

About ~~the~~^{twelve} in the afternoon of the 6th of January 1836 I
crossed the bridge of the Guadalupe a boundary over between
Portugal and Spain and entered Madajoz a strong town
in the latter kingdom containing about eight thousand
inhabitants ~~and~~ supposed to have been founded by the
Romans. I instantly returned thanks to God for having
preserved me in a journey of five days through the wilds
of the Alentejo, the province of Portugal the most
infested by robbers and desperate characters, which
I had traversed with no other companion human companion
than a ~~dog~~ almost an idiot who was to convey back
the mule which had brought me from Alca Gallega; I
intended to make but a short stay, and as a
Diligence would set out for Madrid the day next
but one to my arrival I purposed departing
therein for the capital of Spain.

I was standing at the door of the Inn where I had

taking up my temporary abode: The weather was gloomy, and
rain seemed to be at hand; I was thinking on the state
of the country I had just entered, which was involved in
bloody anarchy and confusion, and where the ministers of a
religion falsely styled Catholic and Christian were blowing
the trumpet of war instead of preaching the love-inspiring words
of the blessed Gospel - suddenly two men wrapped in long
cloaks, came down the narrow and almost deserted street;
they were about to pass, and the face of the nearest was
turned full towards me, I knew to whom the countenance
which he displayed must belong, and I touched him on
the arm - The man stopped and likewise his companion,
and said a certain word, to which after an exclamation
of surprise he responded in the manner I expected. The
men were gitanos or gypsies members of that singular
family or race which has diffused itself over the face
of the civilized globe, and which in all lands has
preserved more or less its original customs and its
own peculiar language.

He instantly commenced ^{de}conversing in the Spanish dialect
of this language with which I was tolerably well acquainted.
I asked my two newly made acquaintances whether

There were many of their race in Badajoz and the vicinity. They
informs me that there were eight or ten families in
the town, and that there were others at Merida a
town about six leagues distant. ~~They~~ ^{enquire} by what means
they live, and they reply that they and their brethren
formerly gave a livelihood by trafficking in mules
and asses, but that all those in Badajoz were very
poor with the exception of one man who was exceedingly
wealthy or rich, as he was in possession of many mules
and other cattle. They removed their cloaks for a moment
and I found that their under garments were rags.

They left me in haste and went about the town informing
the rest that a stranger has arrived, who spoke Promman,
as well as themselves, who had the face of a hyena, and
seems to be of the "errabe" or blood. In less than
half an hour the street before the Inn was filled with
the men, women and children of Egypt: I went out
amongst them, and my heart sank within me as I
surveyed them, ~~so much~~ ^{more} vilely dirt and misery I had
never before seen amongst a similar number of human
beings; but the worst of all was the evil expression of
their countenances, which spoke plainly that they

were conversant with every species of crime, and it was not long before I found that their countenances did not belie them. After they had asked me an infinity of questions, and felt my honor, face and clothes they retired to their own homes.

Last night the two men of whom I have already particularly spoken came to see me, they sat down by the hearth in the middle of the apartment, and began to smoke small paper cigars. We continued for a considerable time in silence surveying each other, of the two Gitanos one was an elderly man, tall and very thin, long skippy and comical features though perfectly those of a Gypsy, he spoke little and his expressions were singular and grotesque, his companion who was ~~indeed~~ ^{probably} the man whom I had first noticed in the street differed from him in many respects; he could be scarcely thirty and his figure which was about the middle height was of Italian proportions; shaggy black hair like that of a wild bear covering the greater part of his immense head, his face was frightfully scathed with the small pox and his eyes which glared like those of ferrets.

~~Two~~ who though well bred was not ashamed to
speak to a poor Ytano; but tell me I beseech you, brother,
from whence you come; I have heard that you
have just wages from Salvo, but I am
sure you are no Portuguese as ~~as~~ I have been
told myself, but they are very different from you
I rather take you to be one of the Corachi, for
I have heard say that there is much of our blood there
You are a Corajano are you not?

Myself. I am of Moor though I have been in the
country. I was born in an island in the west
sea calls England which I suppose you have heard
spoken of.

First Yipsy. yes yes I have a right to know
something of the English; I was born in this Toros
and remember the day when the English handmares
stamp'd over the walls and took the town from
the Ytano: well do I remember that day though
I was but a child, the streets ran red with blood
and wine: are there Ytanos then amongst the
English

Myself. There are numbers, and so there are amongst

most nation of the world.

Second Gypsy - Vaya! And do the English calové gain their bread in the same way as those of Spain. Do they share and trim; do they buy and change beasts; and (lowering his voice) do they now and then choose a grass?

Myself. They do most of these things, the men frequent fairs and markets with horses, many of which they steal, and the women tell fortunes and perform all kinds of tricks by which they gain more money than their husbands.

First Gypsy: They would not be called if they did not; I have known a Gitano gain twenty ounces of gold by means of the hobkemp baro in a few hours, whilst the oily Gypsy, her husband would be toiling with his spears for a fortnight, brimming the horses of the Bourgeois and yet not be a dollar richer at the end of the time.

Myself. You seem wretchedly poor. Are you married?

First Gypsy. I am, and to the best looking and clearest called in Badajoz, nevertheless we have never shown since the day of our marriage and a curse seems to rest upon us both. Perhaps I have only to thank myself: I was once rich, and had never less than six burros.

wife however soon set me out, she went to the Lady of
the corridor to whom she bore a most wonderful faith,
promising treasures and titles and I was not ^{to} ~~not~~ go I was
set at liberty, and returned to Spain as quick as I
could.

Myself. Is it not the custom of the Gypsies of Spain to
relieve each other in distress; It is the rule in other
countries.

First Gypsy. El Roalty ha mandado la lvi de los Calés,
(The King has destroyed the law of the Gypsies) we are no
longer the people we were once, when we lived amongst
the Syrians and Arabs, and kept aloof from the Spaniards, we
hang now amongst the Spaniards till we are become almost
like them, and ~~we are no longer like brothers as formerly~~
ready to assist each other at all times and seasons, and
very frequently the Gitanos is the worst enemy of his
brother.

Myself. The Gitanos then no longer wander about but
have fixed residences in the towns and villages.

First Gypsy. In the summer time a few of us assemble
together and live about amongst the plains and
hills, and by doing so we frequently contrive to

pick up a horse or a mule for nothing and sometimes
my knock down a Buzón and strip him, but it is
seldom we are true to pay, we are much looked
after by the Buzones, who help us in great need and
allow us, sometimes when wandering about we are
attacked by the labourers and then we defend ourselves
as well as we can. There is no better weapon in
the hands of a gitano than his "cachas" or shears
with which he trims the mules: I once snipped off the
nose of a Buzón and opened the greatest part of
his skull in an affray at which I was present
up the country near Trujillo.

Myself - Have you travelled much about Spain
with gipsy. Very little, I have never been out of this
province of Estremadura, except last year as I took
you into Portugal. When we wander we do not
go far and it is very rare that we are over-
sly our brethren of other parts. I have never
been in Andalusia, but I have heard say that
the gitanos are many in Andalusia, and are
more wealthy than those here and that.

They follow better the Gypsy law.

Myself. What do you mean by the Gypsy law.

Both Gypsy. Therefore do you ask brother you know what is meant by the law of the Calis better even than ourselves.

Myself. I know what it is in England and in Hungary, but I can only give a guess as to what

it is in Spain: - What do you conceive it to be in Spain? - cheating and churning the Poor on all relations and being true to the State in life and death.

At these words both the Gitanos sprang simultaneously from their seats, and exclaimed with a boisterous shout:

Charhipi: x

~~My meeting~~ ^{the meeting} with the Gitanos was the occasion of my remaining at Badajoz a much longer time than I originally intended: I wished to become better acquainted with their condition and manners, and above all to speak to them about Christ and his word, for I was

convinced that should I travel to the end of the
universe I should meet with no people more in need
of a little Christian exhortation, and I accordingly
continued at Badajoz for nearly three weeks.

Among this time I was almost constantly among them
and as I spoke their language and was considered by them
as one of themselves, I had better opportunity to
arrive at a fair conclusion respecting their character than
any other person whether could have had, whether
Spanish or foreigner, without such an advantage.
I found that their ways and pursuits were in almost every
respect similar to those of their brethren in other countries
by cheating and swindling they gain their daily
bread, the men principally by the arts of the jockeys
by buying selling and exchanging animals at which
they are wonderfully expert, and the women by selling
fortunes selling goods smuggled from Portugal and
by dealing in love pills and diabolical. The
most innocent occupation which I observed among
them was trimming and shearing horses and
mules, which in their language is called "muntaban"
and in Spanish "esquilan" and even whilst

every day this art they not infrequently have recourse to
foul play, doing the animals some covert injury, in
the hopes that the proprietors will suppose of them to
them at an inconsiderable price in which event
they soon restore the animals to health, for knowing
how to inflict the harm they know likewise how to
remove it.

Melton they have none. They never attend mass, nor
ever hear them employ the names of God, Christ
and the virgin, but in execration and blasphemy; from
what I could learn it appeared that their fathers had
entertained some belief in metempsychosis, but they
themselves laughed at the idea, and were of opinion
that the soul perishes when the body ceases to breathe,
and the argument which they used was rational
enough as far as it impugned metempsychosis: We
have been wretched and miserable enough in this life, they
said, why should we live again?

I translated certain portions of scripture into their
dialect which I frequently read to them, especially
the parable of Lazarus and the Prodigal son,
and told them that the latter had been as wretched

as themselves and both had suffered as much or more, but
that the sufferings of the former who always looked forward
to a blessed resurrection were recompensed by admission
in the life to come to the society of Abraham and the Patriarchs
and that the latter, when he repented of his sins, was
forgiven, and received into as much favour as the
just son. They listened with admiration, but alas not
of the truths the eternal truths I was telling them, but to
find that their broken jargon could be written and
read: the only words of doubt by the heavenly doctrine
which I was obtaining and ~~what~~ ^{rather} was rather of the negative
kind, were the following from the mouth of a woman:
Brother: you tell us strange things, though perhaps you
do not lie; a month since I would never have
believed these tales than that this day I should see
one who could write Rommans.

Two or three days after my arrival I was again visited
by the host of the withered arm, who I found was
generally termed Facio which is the diminutive of Francisco,
he was accompanied by his wife, a rather good looking young
woman with sharp intellectual features, and who appears
in every respect to be what her husband says

represented her on the former visit; she was very
poorly clad and notwithstanding the extreme sharpness
of the weather carried no mantle to protect herself
from ^{the} inclemency of the season: herraven black
hair depended behind as far I guess as her hips, &
another gypsy came with them, but not the old fellow
whom I had before seen: This was a man about
forty five years in a tunic of sheep-skin
with a high crown and auburn hair, his complexion
was dark as pepper and his eyes were full of
sublime fire. ~~He exhibited~~ ^{in his appearance} a goodly compound
of gypsy and ~~Manit~~.

Frao. Lacha chibese ^{to} uncle Udael: May God grant
you good days, brother! This is my wife, and this is
my wife's father.

Myself. I am glad to see them. What are their names,
Frao Maria and Antonio. Their other name is Lopy.

Myself. Have they no gypsy names?

Frao. They have no other names than these.

Myself. Then in this respect the Gitanos of Spain
are unlike those of my country: every family there
has two names, one by which they are known.

to the Business, and another which they use amongst
themselves, and which is only known to themselves.
Antonio. Give me your hand brother. I should
have come to see you before, but I have been to
Elvengas in search of a horse. What I have
heard of you has filled me with much desire to
know you, and I now see that you can tell me
many things which I am ignorant of. I am Zimale
by the four sides. I love our blood, and I
hate that of the Business; had I my will I would
wash my face every day in the blood of the Business
for the Business you made only to be to be you
to be slaughtered, but I love the Caloni and
love by hear of things of the Caloni, especially
from those of foreign lands, for the Caloni of
foreign lands, know more than we of Spain,
and more resemble our fathers of old.

Thyself. Have you ever met before with Caloni
who were not Spaniards.

Antonio. I will tell you brother! I served as
a soldier in the war of the Independence against the French.
It is true that ~~war~~ is not the proper occupation of a
war

Myself. Why so?

Antonio, I will tell you: The King has introduced the
Law of the Cádiz, and his first direction amongst us, there
was at home when the house of every Synodal, however
rich, was open to his brother though he came to them
makes, and it was then the custom to boast of the "errata"
It is no longer so now: though ^{rich} men are rich keep
apart from the rest, will not speak in Calo and
will have no dealings but with the Business: there
not a false brother in this part, the only rich man
among us, the owner, the Bailiow, he is married
to a Basconia, and he would fain appear as a Bascon:
Tell me one thing, has he been to see you? The white-
blood - I know he has not, he was afraid to see
you, for he knew that by Gypsy law he
was bound to take you to his house, and feed
you whilst you remained, like a prisoner, like
a brother of the Cádiz as I believe you are, even
though he took the last Gray from ^{an oval}.
Why have come to see you brother? have they
not been such as Tracy and his wife, wretched
without a house or at best one filled with

cold and poverty; so that you have had to stay at
at a *porada*, at a measure of the *Benjues*, and moreover
what charge the labor given you, may you have had
residing here, nothing is more better than
this rubbish, which is all I can offer you - This
Melizana de los Benjues.

Here he produces a pomgranate from the
pocket of his *zapatera*, and flung it on the
table with such force that the fruit burst,
and the red grains were scattered over the floor. *

The Indians of *Extremadura* call themselves in general
Chai or *Chabos* and say that their original country
was *Chai* or *Egypt*. I frequently asked them what
reason they could give for calling themselves ^{as they are} and
whether they could remember the name of any
places in ~~the~~ their supposed father land, but I soon
found that like their brethren in other parts of the
world they were unable to give any rational account
of themselves and possessed no recollection of the
places where their forefathers had wandered; their
language however is a considerable talent

solves the riddle the bulk of which being Hindu
pointed out India as the birth place of their race
whilst the number of Persian, Slavonian and
modern Greek words with which it is chequered
spoke plainly as to the countries through which
these singular people had wandered before they
arrived in Spain. They said that they believed
themselves to be Egyptians, because their fathers
before them believed so, who must know much
better than themselves; they were fond of talking
of Egypt and its former greatness though it
was evident that they knew nothing further of
the country and its history than what they derive
from spurious Biblical legends current amongst
the Spaniards; ^{and} from such materials could
they have concocted the following account of the
manner of their expulsion from their native
land.

a There was a great king in Egypt and his
name was Pharaoh, he had numerous ^{armies}
with which he made war on all countries, and
conquered them all; and when he had conquered

At the word he became sad and sorrowful, for he
delighted in war he no longer knew on what to employ
himself; at last he bethought him of making war
on God; so he sent a defiance to God, daring
him to send down from the sky with his angels and
contend with Pharaoh and his armies, but God said
I will measure my strength with that of a man -
but God was wroth against Pharaoh and resolved
to punish him; and he opened a hole in the
side of an enormous mountain; and he raised
a mighty wind, and drove before it Pharaoh and
his armies to that hole; and the abyss
received them and the mountain closed upon
them; but whosoever goes to that mountain
on the night of Sam's fall, can hear Pharaoh
and his armies crying and yelling therein. And
it came to pass that when Pharaoh and his
armies had disappeared, all the kings and the
nations which had become subject to Egypt,
revolted against Egypt, which having lost
her king and her armies was left utterly
without defence, and they made war

against her and persecuted against her, and
took her people and drove them forth,
superioring them over all the world,
so that now say the Chai, our horses drink the
waters of the Guadiana - *Apilyela gras Chai*
La pane Loualee.

The steeds of the Egyptians drink the waters
of the Guadiana

The region of Chal was our dear native soil
Where in fulness of pleasure we lived without toil
Till dispers'd through all lands 'twas our fortune to be
Apilyela gras Chai la pane Loualee.

Our steeds, Guadiana, drink now drink of thee
Once Kings came from far to kneel down at our gate,
And princes rejoiced on our meanness to wait
Now now who so mean but would scorn our degree
Apilyela gras Chai la pane Loualee.

Now the Madribel saw from his throne in the cloys
That our steeds they were foolish, our hearts they were proud

And in anger he bade us his presence to flee -
Apilyda gras Chai la pance boucalee.

Our horses should drink of no river but one -
It sparkles through Chal'neath the smile of the sun -
But they taste of all streams save that only, and see
Apilyda gras Chai la pance boucalee.

