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E S C U A L D U N A C .

Basque Peasant Tales

by

Mayi Elissague.

Transl. Oswald Allen

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E X E X X T X T

To the Lord and Lady of the Manor of Mocanech Pertal, near the Farmstead of Mouchiou Gourri and the Frontiers of Spaih.

This translation of Basque peasant tales is affectionately offered by the translator, with many apologies for its bad typing, in memory of a happy visit to the Villa Napolitaine, St. Jean de Luz during September 1930.

It was then that he saw the first steps taken to realise a plan that had long been dear to the hearts of those to whom these lines are addressed: and it was the writer's good fortune to be associated in a small way with the finding of HANDKERCHIEF CORNER.

May Escualdunac - or this translation, if thought worthy - find its place on the bookshelves of the dream house when built, so that those who may

may be privileged to visit it and the Basques for the first time may learn a little of the manner and rugged worth of the people amongst whom their host and hostesshave chosen to dwell.

Edward Allen.

London,

Christmas Day 1930.

ESCUALDUNAC.

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1. The Inheritance .

THE INHERITANCE .

"Ah! gaizoa! what good games of pelota we had in those far-off days! They were good days but how long ago it all seems." Thus observed the Abbé Barnatéguy in his gruff but genial tones, as he dipped one hand into his snuff box, taking out his immense blue and yellow handkerchief with the other, to blow his nose vigorously.

"Yes, they were a long time ago," agreed Don Joaquin Alzate, who was standing close to the window, gazing attentively into the street, "All the same," he continued, "I find it hard to believe that I have ever been away, so many things have hardly changed since then. The houses haven't altered, nor the village stores with the red and green sweets, the toffee and pelota balls in the window. And isn't that dog now asleep in the doorway of the bakery our old friend Captain who used to frighten us so when we were youngsters? I've hardly been back two days and yet every time the church bells ring, when I see the earth shimmering under the radiant sun and the blue mountains around us, I seem never to have left the place."

"Yes," Barnatéguy," he went on, "those two lads now playing pelota might be you and me, and the cattle driver now crossing the square my poor old father."

Don Joaquin, having thus delivered himself, sat down with a sigh, casting a glance, as he did so, over the worn curtains and heavy furniture of the room, the high-backed chairs, old clock, oil

lamps, and the pot of geraniums on the window-sill. "Yes, thirty years have gone by, thirty long years of exile," he added softly, as he drew two puffs of his puro (Mexican pipe).

"Do you regret it?" asked the Abbé, a trifle mischievously.

"Valgame Dios, certainly not! I've had a very good time over there, my friend. By 'good' I don't mean idle, let me say, as is proved by the substantial fortune I've brought back. For those who are enterprising and strong Mexico is the King of Countries."

"Still, we shouldn't forget our own land." said the Abbé, as he helped himself to another pinch of snuff.

"Forget it! "Quite the reverse!" rang out the Mexican's pleasant musical tones. "Over there, one is really proud of being Eskualdun-Fededun (a Basque and a good Christian). Over there, one really appreciates the beauty of our traditions and the strength of our ancient race."

"No. I can never sufficiently express my joy on seeing Ithurigorry again and at being able to make the acquaintance of my nephews. That reminds me," added Don Joaquin looking at his watch, "the young people won't be much longer before they are here. So, before we all sit down to dinner, tell me, Barnatéguy, something of my young relations of whom I know so little."

"They are good lads," observed the Abbé seriously, "especially your brother's boys, Mattin and Jean-Pierre of Halzadiko-borda. They live at home with their mother and get on well together, doing a little bit of smuggling now-and-again. The third lad,

Inacio d'Arbelainea, your sister Pascaline's son, is not quite such a good fellow, being a bit too fond of gay company. Still, he's only twenty-three and youth will have its day!"

"That's what my sister Chaadin says. She leads a very retired life in this little house but she sees a lot of what goes on outside and knows which of her nephews go to Mass regularly and which of them go on the spree!" "Dear old Chaadin," continued Don Joaquin, as he saw the Abbé smile,"how glad she was to see me back again! But I think our guests are here." Footsteps were heard approaching and hearty voices greeted Andre† Chaadin.

"Come along, children," cried Don Joaquin, rising quickly. His bronzed face paled with emotion as he embraced in turn each of his nephews, drawing them to him with one arm and patting them gently on the back with his free hand.

The young men felt a little awkward under this Mexican form of embrace and the first meeting was thus a little embarrassing to natures so little prone to effusion as the Basques'. It was not long, however, before the friendliness of Don Joaquin and the smiling good humour of Abbé Barnatéguy put them at their ease. Then Aunt Chaadin appeared with the soup and made her brother and his guests take their places at table before she herself went back to the kitchen. In vain did Don Joaquin try to keep her at the table: almost upset by the idea, the old lady energetically refused.

Conversation became most cordial as the meal progressed. Don Joaquin never ceased to ask questions about Halzadiko-borda, the countryside, the crops, his old friends, and to listen to

(† Aunt)

the replies of his nephews, watching then carefully all the time with his sparkling, dark eyes.

Mattin of Halzadiko-borda, the eldest of the three, was thirty years of age. Broad-shouldered, ruddy-complexioned and keenly observant, he contributed to the conversation the cautious remarks of a countryman who knows the value of every word and is not given to speaking at random or disclosing his whole mind on any subject. He was the only one of the three nephews to be married and had one little daughter.

His brother, Jean-Pierre, was a taller, thinner man, with a bronzed, stern face, a prominent nose, and a rather severe but straightforward expression. He sat stiffly on his chair, and his few, brief utterances were to reply to questions addressed to him.

Inacio d'Arbelainea was in striking contrast to his cousins. Of jovial countenance, he was soon on good terms with everybody, being an easy conversationalist and having an attractive personality

Although he at once took a liking to each of the three young men, the uncle was most pleased with Inacio. But the Abbé Barnatéguy's favourite was Mattin, whose cautious outlook appealed to him.

Conversation turned to Mexico and, once on this subject, there was no risk of its flagging. With an amusing want of logic, Don Joaquin, who in Mexico had never ceased to think of the Basque Country with emotion and regret, now that he had come back home could speak of nothing but his fondness for the land across the seas.

With a far-away look and a tremor of the lip that his iron-grey moustache could not hide, he took pleasure in describing that fabulous country wherein he had struggled so well and his youth had been spent in search of a home, friends, a career and so many wonderful adventures.

It was not until coffee and cognac had taken the place of the dish of toasted cheese on the table that Don Joaquin decided to tell his nephews why he had invited them to come to see him and what his intentions were in regard to each of them.

"I am not like one of those American uncles," he began, "who waits until he is dead to make other people happy. You are my heirs but you mustn't wait until you are old men for what is coming to you. I hope to live a good many years longer and I want to be a greatly beloved, petted and pampered Osaba, not an old man for whose death everyone is eagerly waiting. Hence I have made up my mind to hand over to you now what I might have left you later."

"Oh uncle!" Mattin interrupted.

Don Joaquin silenced him with a smile and went on.

" I will not hide from you the fact that the money which I intend to give you now forms only a part of my fortune. Every cent of it was made too laboriously for me to part with it all quite so readily as that, but this you should know: none of you will now have any claim on the balance of my money and I reserve to myself the right to dispose of it in whatever way I please. Will you be satisfied if I give each of you one hundred thousand francs?"

"Osaba," repeated Mattin softly, blushing scarlet.

Jean Pierre said nothing but turned a questioning glance on his uncle who, by this time, was as much moved as his nephews. The old man drew three cheques from his pocket. "Here is your money, my children," he said. "You may spend it as you like, without restrictions. Let me, however, remind you of one thing. The money came to me as a result of honest toil and I feel sure that none of you will disgrace it." Don Joaquin then changed the conversation.

At the close of the meal the young peasants took their leave. Ignacio expressed his heartfelt thanks to his uncle in well-chosen phrases. Jean Pierre could only grasp his uncle heartily by the hand, so heartily that the old man's fingers ached for some time after. As for Mattin, tears of joy came to his eyes and when at last he let go of his uncle's hand, he began to shake hands with the Abbé.

The rays of the setting sun fell in orange stripes across the plane trees as, standing side by side at the window, Don Joaquin and his friend watched the three men disappear into the mauve shadows of the distance. "What I did not tell them," remarked the 'American' to his friend, "is that my fortune will never pass out of the family and that one or other of them is destined to inherit the money. We shall see in the course of time the use each nephew makes of his cheque and thus discover which is most worthy. What is your opinion, Barnatéguy?"

The Abbé, not wishing to commit himself, shook his head but his glance followed Mattin who, with easy footsteps, was taking

he road to Halzadiko-borda. Gaizo! (Glory be!)" he said softly, Mattin is going straight home with the good news."

II.

"Hallo! Mattin, how much are you staking?"

Mattin of Halzadiko-borda turned round and smiled broadly at the Abbé Barnatéguy, shaking his head. "Nothing at all, Jaun Erretora (M. le Curé)," he replied. "The father of a family mustn't risk his money in betting."

"Well! Well! No doubt you are right," agreed the good priest, patting the young man on the shoulder and taking a seat besides him to watch the game.

The sun streamed in through the great windows of the hall through which could be seen the bright green of a meadow and the cluster of red roofs of the village. Merciless and dazzling its burning rays pierced the heavy atmosphere, blue and acrid with the smoke of cigarettes. The rafters rang with laughter and shouts and the noise of arguments and challenges. From the gallery the faces of the clean-shaved spectators looked down on the pelota players. Farmworkers, bourgeois, afficionados, tratularis,- all alike had the same tense expression under their little berets.

It was seldom that market days saw such a match as had been arranged between the two champions of Saint Pée, Jean Baptiste and Manech, and Laurench l'Espeletar and Jean-Pierre of Halzadico-borda. The pride of having in their midst four such players was thus added to the never-failing pleasure which the good folk of Ithurrigorri derived from watching a game of pelota. Through the length and breadth of Labourd the champions' strength, skill,

agility and keen play were justly celebrated. But while the two Sempertars (men of Saint Pée) were playing their usual swift and agile game, never failing to hit the ball, Laurench was nervous and made frequent misses. He had not removed his beret and after each miss he thrust it further back over his thick head of hair. In an effort to save the game his partner, ~~Laurench~~ Jean Pierre, darted all over the place, heaping the strongest invective on Laurench by way of encouragement. The shouts of supporters resounded on every side.

"Emak hor!(Play-up)! Jean-Pierre."

"Ederki!(Bravo!) Jean Baptiste."

Those who had money on the game were now almost in tears. The youngsters in the crowd were now yelling at the top of their voices, the loose boards on which the spectators sat creaked, and the heat was suffocating.

The Abbé Barnatéguy, wiping the perspiration from his face with a snuff-stained handkerchief, positively shook with excitement. His earnest hope was that Jean Pierre might win. He knew that that the young man, notwithstanding his serious demeanour, was a heavy gambler. If only his play could save the situation!.

But this was not to be. Laurench grew more and more clumsy and got so angry with himself that in despair he threw off his beret and tore his hair. Their side lost.

A terrific din thereupon ensued. The spectators crowded down the creaking staircase leading from the gallery to the street and broke up into little groups as they made their way in the dazzling sunlight along the dusty roads.

"Are you going back to the Presbytery, Jaun-Erretora?" asked the faithful Mattin of the good abbé as the two left the building together?

"No, friend. I am going to see old Magnagna, who is ill."

"I'll come with you then, as I want to tell you something."

Mattin did not speak again until they had gone some distance and had come to a deserted road where they could not be overheard. "I wanted to let you know that I'm leaving here." he resumed.

"You surely are not going to leave us?"

"Yes, I am. I intend to move to Bordeaux."

Bordeaux! The Abbé Barnatéguy looked at Mattin with astonishment.

" I have bought a little hotel there, quite a modest little place," Mattin explained. "It has a good clientèle, however, chiefly amongst Basques," he went on. "But you must not think that I am going from here without a good many regrets."

"I, too, shall be sorry to lose one of my best parishioners" observed the abbé in grieved tones.

Mattin sighed deeply but was soon in the thick of a very detailed account of the purchase of his hotel. When Uncle Joaquin had given him the money, he and his wife had given much thought of how to make the best use of it. They must work hard for the benefit of their little Dominica and any other little brothers or sisters she might have. Mattin's sister-in-law had told them that the Hotel de Californie - that was its name - was for sale. The price had seemed reasonable and, after all,

Bordeaux was not very far away. Moreover, it would be much easier to educate their little girl in a big city..Further, Jean Pierre would soon be gettingmarried and with two establishments at Halzadiko-borda, there would certainly be disagreements. So Mattin had thought it better to sell his share of the farm to his brother.

These excellent reasons, combined with Mattin's obvious eagerness, succeeded in ~~convincing~~ convincing the Abbé. He shook hands with the peasant and wished him luck. When Mattin had left him, he let his prayer-book remain in his pocket and allowed his thoughts to turn to the widely differing tastes of Don Joaquin's three nephews. Inacio had been away for a fortnight in Spain, where he had let it be generally known before departing that he intended to enjoy himself. Always careless, reflected the abbé. As for Jean Pierre, the Abbé Barnatéguy sighed as he thought of him. As he had left the Trinquet (Pelota) the good priest had noticed the young pelota player surrounded by a noisy group. With his coat thrown over his shoulders and a red and yellow handkerchief knotted round his throat, his face scarlet-red, he was paying out his losings. The Abbé had heard the rustle of banknotes in Jean Pierre's brown fingers. Poor money, so painfully toiled for by Don Joaquin! What would the new owner of Halzadiko-borda do with it?

What would Don Joaquin himself have to say? Some weeks ago the 'American' had left to take a cure and was then going to travel for some time. Many months must pass before he was due back at Ithurrigorry.

And Andre Chaadin (Aunt Chaadin), what was she doing amid

all these comings and goings? The Abbé still remembered her anxious, frightened face the day she had left. For Don Joaquin would not agree that they should separate. In vain she had pleaded her age and settled habits. Through her protests her real wishes and secret curiosity had been detected, and though she had started on her travels with many lamentations and ostensibly by force, in her heart of hearts she was delighted to be going. The Abbé was looking forward to hearing her impressions and also to asking Don Joaquin to which of his nephews he had decided to leave the money.

His natural kindness of heart and charitable disposition made him shake his head sadly as his thoughts fell upon Inacio and Jean Pierre. Then, forcing himself to expel from his mind the idle reflections which were obsessing him and concentrating his gaze upon the beautiful landscape, whose warm colours seemed almost to come to life in the brilliant sunshine, M. l'abbé Barnatéguy opened his breviary.

"There goes the American from Halzadico-borda". Don Joaquin often heard this comment made in undertones as he crossed the square of Ithurrigorry, cane in hand and beret pushed well back over his grey hair. He smiled to himself whenever he heard it as it gave him pleasure to be referred to to as belonging to the old farm, far more than to be known as Don Joaquin Alzate. Poor little farmhouse, so dear to his heart! What would happen to it now that Jean Pierre owned it?

Don Joaquin confessed to himself that he had been very sorry when the careful and industrious Mattin had gone to

to Bordeaux: under his care the family estate would not have been likely to come to any harm.

Since his return the 'American' had asked Abbé Barnatéguy many questions about Jean Pierre but, as in Mattin's case, the Abbé had hesitated to express any definite opinion. "He does a lot of smuggling but he's such a good fellow," was all that he could be made to say.

On this particular morning Don Joaquin was hastening to Halzadiko-borda. How beautiful and dignified the red and white house looked, despite its age, in the shelter of the great elms that had given the farm its name. Accompanied by his sister-in-law, Chanetta, who was alone in the house at the time, Don Joaquin went through the place from end to end, through the smoky kitchen to the stable and the hay-loft. His desire was to see the old place once again as he had known it in his boyhood, before Jean Pierre made any alterations.

Chanetta shook her head at the mention of alterations. "Jean Pierre won't want to do any," she said, "though Heaven knows, the stable ought to be enlarged and a new bread oven put in!"

"Your uncle and I have been thinking that you will be doing up the place a bit now, Jean Pierre," she told her son as he came in.

"Our ancestors found it satisfactory as it is, Mother. If it did for them it should for us," he replied. Don Joaquin, even if he had wished to do so, would not have known how to meet an argument so convincing to every true Basque. "Besides," Jean Pierre continued, hanging his head, "I shall shortly be increasing my expenditure. I wanted to tell you, uncle, that

I'm getting married."

"Valgame Dios! and who is the happy woman"? asked his delighted uncle.

"Anicha, the shoemaker's daughter.... We have long been fond of each other," he added shyly.

Jean Pierre as the new proprietor took his uncle round the place. His manner was agreeable, if somewhat reserved, and Don Joaquin felt that, hidden under his nephew's description of the state of the land and the potatoes and the vine which he was about to train, there was a real if clumsily expressed gratitude. The old gentleman was greatly pleased with his discovery and as he retraced his footsteps to Ithurrigorry he turned back more than once to look across the meadows, over the daisies swaying in the South wind, at the vine-clad slopes. There, working with his men, stood Jean Pierre in a red gerrico (belt) with a bunch of yellow osiers strung over his shoulder. How often had Don Joaquin seen his father working thus?

III.

"Well, Don Inacio, how do you like your new life?"

"Very much indeed, Uncle. San Sebastien is a delightful town. I've got several little affairs and some good friends here, and can never forget that I owe everything to you."

Making no reply, Don Joaquin began to peel an orange. Each time he noticed Ignacio's long hair, smart town clothes, his rather too conspicuous cuff-links, - every time the young man spoke in the very superior tones he now affected, the older man thought of the young peasant of scarcely a year ago. It seemed to him

that Inacio, the man about town, was infinitely more vulgar than Inacio, the peasant, the close-cropped, collarless young man in a tiny beret whom he had once known.

Inacio, however, was very clearly not of this opinion. Sprawling in a chair and holding a cigar between his fingers, he was very obviously enjoying the luxury of his surroundings and the fragrant fruits and choice wines. Staring all the time at his neighbours he talked Spanish volubly and with affectation. "You will excuse me, Uncle," he said at the close of the meal, "if I do not spend the evening with you but I have an important business engagement..."

"No te molestes hijo! (Don't apologise, my son!) replied Don Joaquin. As soon as the young man had left him, he went to the window to look out. The orange coloured lights of the Concha and the dark clumps of tamaris lay spread out before him. The casino below was bright with illuminations. The waves dashed against the breakwater and snatches of conversation mingled with bursts of laughter. Don Joaquin watched his nephew go out of the hotel and move away with a song on his lips. A business engagement at this time of the night seemed odd and yet Inacio was hurrying along like a man pressed for time. Don Joaquin followed him with his eyes and saw him enter .... the Casino.

A ship's syren sounded above the dashing of the waves and to the American its monotonous note sounded infinitely sad.

"Have we arrived, Joaquin?"

Andre Chaadin awoke with a start as the train drew in to Ba

Bordeaux station. She no longer feared a journey. In fact, she was delighted with the idea of spending a few days with Mattin and his family and making the acquaintance of the new baby, a dear little girl to whom her brother was to stand godfather.

Don Joaquin, finding it difficult to get over his deception at San Sebastien, was only to glad to seek consolation in a visit to a good fellow like Mattin. As he helped Chaadin to get down from the compartment he was looking in vain through the crowd for his nephew's round face and beret when he heard his sister exclaim, "Gaizoa, here is Mattin!"

Don Joaquin turned round and stood speechless before a typical bourgeois in a bowler hat and overcoat. Mattin! Was this really Mattin? Yes, but a Mattin transformed by a close-cut, dark brown moustache, a fat, vulgar red-faced townsman, a complete caricature of the peasant of former days. The old, affectionate smile was still there, however, and he seemed delighted to see his uncle and aunt again. He hurried them out of the station into a cab and Don Joaquin soon forgot the first impression of unpleasantness that the meeting had given him. As they drove away he listened attentively to his nephew's talk of his children and to the mysterious references to business. Oh, Mattin was undoubtedly a good fellow!

A crowded street. A large grey building displaying an enormous resplendent sign bearing HOTEL DE CALIFORNIE ET DES BASQUES in massive gold lettering. People in a long room in which the glare of electric lights fell upon a table decorated with cunningly

folded serviettes.

It was not long before Andre Chaadin was at the bed side of her niece, affectionately dandling the new baby, while she related volubly the little incidents of the life of her village. "How far off it all seems, Matanta!" the niece remarked, barely listening to her aunt, and then changed the conversation to a narration of the brilliant start which she and her husband had made as hotel keepers.

Don Joaquin, as he read the newspapers in the tiny lounge of the hotel, nevertheless felt homesick and vaguely ill at ease. In this stuffy hotel it did not seem to him that he was in his nephew's home. He watched a trifle pensively his nephew's preoccupation with his client's requirements. The sound of a child's footsteps outside interrupted his thoughts and a dear little mite appeared along the corridor.

"Dominica, nor naiz ni?"(Who am I?)

The delighted uncle held out his arms to the child but his most dulcet tones made no impression on her. The little girl looked at him with astonished, wide-open eyes and Mattin's voice was heard in the distance saying in execrable French that the child had forgotten Basque.

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A week went by and Don Joaquin and his sister were still at Bordeaux. Andre Chaadin had no complaint to make on this account but the 'American' had grown as sad as he was when he had got back from San Sebastien. He was homesick for his sister's quiet little house and may even have missed Halzadiko-borda

The difficulty was to find an excuse for leaving. His hephew and niece would be genuinely sorry to see him go, particularly Mattin, who retained his old, affectionate deferential ways.

All the same, Uncle Joaquin, who was an acute observer, felt that Mattin had changed a little. Who would have suspected in a simple farmlabourer the organising capacity and tactful courtesy of a successful hotel-keeper? What a worker hewas, too!

On the Sunday, as Don Joaquin was starting out to Mass, he met his nephww on thej stairs. "Are you coming with me, Mattin," he enquired.

"Impossible, Uncle. There's no time off in my trade. Sunday is a working day just like the rest of the week. I've got far too much to do. I must see to the marketing, settle prices, superintend everything. And since little Jacqueline arrived - her mother thought that she should have a less countrified name than her sister's - we've increased our responsibilities."

Andre Chaadin kept on repeating that Mattin was a good father and that his wife was charming and surely Jean Pierre ought to have been able to find someone better than a cobbler's daughter. One day Don Joaquin was listening to his sister's lamentations as he phffed a cloud of blue smoke from his puro when the door opened and Dominica peeped in with a mischievous smile, holding out a letter for her uncle.

It was a letter from the Abbé Barnatéguy. A smuggling incident had created a stir in the district, he wrote. Abiena's son had been caught red-handed with some barrels of brandy but his companion (whose name he had refused to disclose) had got away. "I have heard

heard that your nephew Jean Pierre is under grave suspicion. He is a very daring young man. You ought to advise him to be more careful, especially as ... "

Without staying to read any further Uncle Joaquin rose. "Get the luggage ready, Chaadin, we must leave this evening," he ordered.

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Don Joaquin's arrival in the darkness at Halzadiko-borda was announced by the furious barking of Captain and Bichou. Chanetta stood anxiously at the door, trying to discern by the light of a flickering candle who the belated visitor might be.

"Tou, Joaquin? What has happened?"

Noticing his sister's evident anxiety Don Joaquin realised how strange a visit at ten o'clock at night on the very evening he arrived home must seem, and he tried to find some pretext for it. "Oh!," he explained, "it was such a fine night that I thought I'd take a walk and come and have a talk with Jean Pierre."

Chanetta shook her head. "Jean Pierre has gone to court Anicha," she rejoined. "Besides," she added with embarrassment, "he gets home very late nowadays. Sometimes he doesn't get back till morning."

Her brother passed his hand over his forehead. "Tell him, Chanetta," he said, "that I must see him early to-morrow morning."

The moon rose in the heavens, piercing the clouds with its luminous silvery beams and throwing the black mountains into sharp relief. Don Joaquin wended his way home in great anxiety, seeing a customs officer lurking in the shadow of every hedge.'.

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"Cre-e-e-e-do in unum Deum."

The Abbé Barnatéguy's solemn tones had not stopped when the full-throated men's voices and the high notes of the boys took up the response "Patrem omnipotentem" at a pitch so high that they were forced to descend a note or two, then finding themselves too low down in the scale, to raise their pitch again.

Neither the uncertainty of the harmony nor the pious gaiety of the sunlit church, heavy with incense, served to relieve Don Joaquin of his fit of depression. He sat there, in a corner of the gallery, with his head in his hands, mingling his sighs with his prayers and frequently consulting his watch.

Seven minutes past ten. Ten past ten. A quarter past ten and Jean Pierre had not arrived. Terrible visions passed before his uncle's anxious eyes. He saw the customs men taking aim with their rifles, an escape in the darkness, carabineros at the frontier, and he suddenly realised how very dear to him was his rough, taciturn nephew, Jean Pierre.

A floorboard in the gallery creaked under a footstep as Jean Pierre approached. Without a trace of excitement in his manner he hung up his beret and, stepping over a bench, knelt on his handkerchief by Don Joaquin's side.

"When did you get back?" whispered his uncle , who tried not to reveal his anxiety to this calm peasant.

"Not till a few minutes ago. I only left myself time to change my clothes. But we must not neglect God and our religious duties even if we are a bit tired." And smiling, he joined in with

the others: "Et resurrexit tertia die."

Don Joaquin, too, recited the Creed. His 'Mexican' voice swelled the fervent chanting of the choir which rose to the rafters of the church to greet the fat-faced cherubs holding aloft their azure scrolls. But something still prevented him from following the service. He could still see a big red-faced man saying to him: "Go to Mass with you, Uncle? Impossible."

The Mass was over and the boys scrambled noisily down the staircase from the Church gallery. Under the scowling gaze of a customs man sitting in the inn across the road, Don Joaquin drew his nephew on one side, to give him some good advice.

Jean Pierre listened with a smile, like a man sure of himself, but by degrees his attention wandered. Following his glance Don Joaquin noticed a dark young woman waiting under the plane trees. "Valgame Dios! I'm keeping you from your sweetheart," he apologised. "Just one word, though. How much money have you lost.?"

"Fifteen thousand francs."

"Well! let me give it to you as a wedding present!"

IV.

The pretty ceremony at the Church, the merry Ameketako*, the wedding banquet, the fandangos danced to the intoxicating strains of the accordions - Don Joaquin had these pleasant recollections in his mind as he discussed with the Abbé Barnatéguy Anita's marriage with Jean Pierre which had taken place on the previous day.

*A preliminary wedding feast at 11 o'clock.

"And now little Anicha is proud and happy at Halzadiko-borda" he exclaimed. "I am delighted with the marriage, which will assure Jean Pierre's happiness."

"Yes," agreed the Abbé, "Anicha is really a very charming and nice young woman."

For a moment there was silence. Then Don Joaquin stirred himself in his armchair, crossed his legs, and lit a cigar. "My dear Barnatéguy," he remarked, "I have now been home a year. The time has come for me to make up my mind to which of my three nephews I shall leave my fortune. Which do you advise?"

In great perplexity the good priest played with his snuff-box. Finally he said that it was very difficult for him to give any advice on such a delicate question.

"At any rate," continued Don Joaquin, "you don't recommend me to leave my money to Inacio?"

"No, I don't," agreed the abbé sadly. "It is bad enough that he should have had your hundred thousand francs. The gift has utterly changed him."

"Oh. no! That hasn't changed him," expostulated Don Joaquin. "Do you suppose that it's my money that has made him careless and extravagant and given him his taste for pleasure. No! these unhappy instints were his already but they did not reveal themselv until Inancio had an opportunity of doing no work. Ah! Barnatéguy, what a terrible power money enjoys, with its ability to reveal our hidden natures. It requires the strongest disposition to resist this power."

"Still, you've had the satisfaction of discovering two strong-minded fellows, Jean Pierre and Mattin, Gazoa!,"remarked the Abbe.

"I was waiting for that." rejoinedDon Joaquin. "In order not to upset anyone you would like me to divide my fortune into two equal parts, wouldn't you? Well! I don't mean to do so. It's going to one man only, and that man won't be Mattin! "

The Abbé jumped up in surprise. "Not Mattin?" "But he seems to me to be a real good sort, a hard worker, of settled habits and with the highest sense of honour."

"Valgame Dios!" swore Don Joaquin. "Mattin's a good fellow right enough and I realise that his reasons for going to Bordeaux were very different from those which took Inacio to San Sebastien. Nevertheless he has been misled by his affection for his children. Dominica and Jacqueline - the Abbé sighed as he heard the last name - would have been far happier leading an independent life in the country that in the sad, foggy city to which he has transplanted them. Mattin has misunderstood his true duty, which was to continue the line of etcheco-jaun (master-farmers) of Halzadiko-borda and to bring up his children with respect for those traditions which are the beauty of our unchanging race.

"Jean Pierre,on the other hand,is a simple and primitive man. He has not even thought of making any change in his manner of life. He still tills his land with his own hands as his fathers did before him. The money which I gave him has in no wise changed him: he is neither proudernor more ambitious than he used to be.

Perhaps he is a little more daring in his smuggling expeditions and in his bets, but in this he shows himself a good Euskarien (Basque) and neither of us can reproach him for such faults, Barnatéguy, seeing that we both of us share them with him!

"Yes," the old man want on, " that shy, rough, wild, taciturn Jean Pierre is far more deserving of my fortune than Mattin. Mattin, with his moustache, is getting greedy and obsequious. His children don't know Basque and can't speak French properly. And, Barnatéguy, listen to this! Mattin no longer goes to Mass!

The Abbé was too overcome with grief to reply. Don Joaquin's voice grew husky as he continued. "I have no children of my own. Think how dearly I shall love Jean Pierre's, who, like myself, will belong to Halzadiko-borda."

While the Abbé, still overcome with emotion, dipped his trembling fingers into his snuffbox, Don Joaquin drew a chair to his desk and, taking a sheet of paper, wrote with a firm hand:

" I give and bequeath to my nephew Jean Pierre Alzate of Halzadiko-borda all my goods and possessions comprising my estate at Tamaulipas in the State of Mexico of the same name, my ranch at Sauceda with all the cattle and stock, and all my shares of which he will find a list in my safe at the Société Générale.

" I recommend him to make good use of this fortune which I amassed by hard work, and above all, to bring up his children in his own image, as true Basques.

2.. The Trip To Paris .

THE TRIP TO PARIS.

"Except for our souls", Miguel of Bisarbiena was wont to remark, "the animals fare better than we do. Just think of it, the cattle now go to market in a motor lorry, while I have never been in a train all my life!"

"You know quite well that that's entirely your own fault", rejoined his wife tartly. "I could never get you to go with me to Bayonne or to Lourdes."

"But, Frantcha, how can we both be away from home together?"

"A fine lot you stay at home when I'm away. The reason you won't accompany me is that you like to go off to the tavern to waste your time at muss. You even prefer a game of cards to a trip to Paris."

At this point of the discussion, which never varied, Miguel suddenly remembered some urgent task and prudently disappeared. Only when he was some way from the house did he allow his temper to get the better of him. How dared Frantcha reproach him for being devoted to that one distraction of his life, a game of cards? What! Couldn't a poor labourer who slaved all day forget his week's toil when Sunday came round ? Couldn't he amuse himself with a pack of cards which would give him a chance of showing his skill and ingenuity? Must he, to please his wife, leave off going to the tavern and hear no more the joyous bursts of laughter and the hearty songs that greeted him there? Really, soliloquised Miguel, that shrewish Frantcha was blessed with too good

good a husband! She deserved an idle, good-for-nothing fellow who didn't arrive home until the hour when he, Miguel, was setting out for his day's work.

What really vexed Miguel most in his wife's recriminations was her frequent taunt that he liked his game of cards better than a visit to Paris. Better than anyone else Frantcha knew that the deepest regret of her husband's life was that he had had to refuse to go with his brother Pancho when the latter had wished for his company to the Metropolis on returning from America.

Miguel had never forgotten that year. He could still hear the steady drip, drip of the rain which, day after day, had prevented any work out of doors. Seeing that there was nothing for his brother to do, Pancho, with great insistence, had persuaded Miguel to spend a week with him in Paris. But on the morning they had arranged to start, the Sun had, most mischievously, deigned to smile on them. With maize to be sown and the vine to tend Miguel had felt that he must remain behind on the farm.

On the following day, of course, the sun withdrew once more behind the clouds. Throughout the Basque countryside it rained continuously while Pancho was away and, since then, that missed opportunity had been the burden of Miguel's lamentations.

His wife's taunting revived his sorrow and wounded him to the quick. To silence her, he would always remark on these occasions, "How I wish Pancho would come back, so that we might go to Paris together!" He expressed this wish so often that in the end he persuaded himself, but not Frantcha, of its tryth!

Imagine his immense joy and sense of triumph when one fine day ancho turned up at Bisarbienea and that very evening, repeated his nvitation! "On this occasion, Miguel," he added, you must really ome to Paris with me. This time you must not let your plans be uined by the sun's caprice".

Frantcha speedily reproved her imprudent brother-in-law for speaking so lightly of 'God's eye', as many of the peasants term the sun. Judge of her stupefaction when she heard Miguel himself arranging to start in the following week! With anxious devotion she attended to her husband's needs and made him three new shirts, as if he were about to cross the seas to America.

Sunday came and the two brothers climbed aboard the coach to take the train at Bayonne. As the old vehicle lumbered along Miguel, in his delight at setting out for such unknown splendour, had no eyes for the modest villages or the smiling faces of the mountains in the roseate morning light.

The hours passed sadly for Frantcha, without her dear Miguel to henpeck. Evening came and she was frightened to see Pancho, alone, enter the kitchen of Bisarbienea.

"Don't be alarmed!" he called out cheerfully. "I'll tell you what has happened. At Bayonne I met the friend whom I was going to Paris to see and, ma foi, there was no reason for me to go on. But as it would have been silly to stop Miguel this time, I handed him over to Mattin of Hasparren. Matten was going to Paris and agreed to show him his way about there."

Presumably, even without Pancho, Miguel enjoyed his visit to Paris, for days went by without any sign of him. At the end of a fortnight when Frantcha was thoroughly upset and fearing the worst, Miguel suddenly appeared. At once he enquired about the crops, grumbled over the work done during his absence, and asked so many questions that there was no time to answer them. Later, when Frantcha tried to glean some details of his trip to Paris, Miguel was less talkative.

"It's not a patch on our village", was his uniform reply to the questions showered upon him by his wife, the children, M. le Curé, the shoemaker, foresters, peasant farmers and metayers. As may be supposed, the whole village was very pleased with this observation. A new pride and joy came to those who had questioned Miguel, when they went back to their young corn or their fields of rich brown earth, newly turned by the plough, or worked in their little gardens, bright with wisteria and roses, or trod the meadows whose tall grass bent to the caress of the south wind. To think that the great Paris itself could not compare with this strip of Basque countryside!

Pancho, on the other hand, could not understand his brother's reticence and was puzzled by Miguel's silent mirth whenever his adventure was mentioned. One day, seeing him working alone in the garden, Pancho went up to him with a determination to put him through a stiff cross-examination.

"What was it that you liked in Paris. Miguel?"

"Oh, everything!"

"Was your hotel comfortable?"

"Excellent. I met there several Basques. One of the Etcheverrys from Espelette, two 'Americans' from . . . "

"What was the name of the hotel?" interrupted Pancho.

"I don't remember".

"What street was it in?"

"Ma foi, I don't remember that either! Mattin took me there."

"Did Mattin spend much time with you?"

"Oh, no! He had his own business to attend to".

"So you were alone, then?"

"No, oh no! there were some others - a very good fellow called Duhalde, and Etcheverry, who told me . . . "

"Did you often go out together?"

"Occasionally, yes. One of the 'Americans' said that he knew you, Pancho.

"Gizona (man)! You can tell me another time about the 'Americans'. I want to know how you spent your time."

Miguel could stand it no more and dropped his spade. "Listen, Pancho, I'll tell you the whole truth", he replied rather reluctantly. "Near the hotel there is a nice little café. I did not get any further than that. We spent our days there playing muss!" And while Pancho remained speechless with surprise, Miguel leant towards him and, with a wink of his eye, observed drily -

"It was a good trip. I won four thousand francs."

THE RETURN .

' Ah! how easily things go wrong!
A word misplaced or a sigh too long.
Then comes a mist or a blinding rain
And the world is never the same again.'

Time did nothing to deaden the remorse felt by Chemartin of Mariantonen-berda whenever he thought of his quarrel with Yoset of Berreluzea.

When, with head erect and crossed arms, he came down from the Church Gallery to the Altar "to seek God's Holy Presence" there, the memory of that ugly dispute chafed and smarted like a burn. On market days, too, when over a game of cards the talk turned on friends who had gone to America, Chemartin, usually so gay and talkative, became silent whenever Yoset was named. For Yoset, to Chemartin's abiding sorrow, had left the district a few days after the fight, before Chemartin, all bruised and discoloured from the thrashing he had received, had dared to appear out of doors.

Yoset had fought hard and so had Chemartin. But the latter had to admit that, though he had lost because he was the weaker, he had deserved what he got. What demon had led him to slander Yoset? What had possessed him at that pelota match when Yoset had missed the ball once or twice, to accuse him of having sold himself to the other side?

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Yoset, white with anger, had refused to go on playing, whereupon

the onlookers hooted and jeered and were soon taking sides. Backers and players exchanged the foulest insults. The ground was soon deserted, the insults continuing as they crossed the open space to a corner of the meadow beyond.

"Are you a man?" Yoset had asked, as he strode up to Chemartin with clenched fists.

"You were bought, you lost intentionally," Chemartin had repeated.

A blow from Yoset had prevented him from continuing. Brought home, half-conscious, to Mariantonen-borda, it was only in the quiet of his room that, under his mother's sorrowing gaze, he had confessed to her the falseness of the accusation.

He knew too well how false it was. Was there in the whole village a more honest and conscientious lad than Yoset? Did not he, Chemartin, look upon him as his best friend? How many games of pelota they had played together? How many profitable smuggling expeditions had they not made together across the frontier? What joyous songs they had sung in chorus on fête-nights. Here they were, the closest of friends, and Chemartin had stupidly, nay shamefully, destroyed their happy associations!

He would have liked to know what they thought of him down in the village. No doubt that he was drunk or from sudden avarice had regretted the bet of 3 duros that he had on Yoset, which the latter had seemed about to lose for him.

He could never admit that the one and only explanation was a sudden access of hate that had come to him when he saw Yoset kissing Dominica, just before the game began. She was the girl who looked

after the Pelota Court, Dominica, whom Chemartin had admired for so long and who had given him nothing but meaningless words or scornful looks. . .

Still, after a whole week's reflection and turning over and over again the cause and consequences of the quarrel, Chemartin had been thoroughly ashamed of himself and realisedthat he could find no possible pretext for not going to Yoset and offering his apologies.

Perhaps if Yoset had remained in the village Chemartin could have relied upon the lapse of time to efface the unhappy memory of the dispute but, as he knew, Yoset was shortly leaving for America.

A speedy reconciliation was therefore necessary. Although it was hard on Chemartin to have to eat humble pie, this would be better thanthe regrets which held him prisoner. So one hight, when the approaching darkness hid his steps, he reached Berroluzea. Buthneither in the stables, to which he crept through a back gate, nor in the clover fields, where a farm hand was finishing he day's work, could Chemartin find Yoset.

Next day, Sunday, at Mass, the anxious Chemartin sought in vain or his adversary amonst the worshippers kneeling on their folded handkerchiefs in the Gallery. As he left the Church a friend told him, rather slyly, that Yoset had advanced his departure and had gone to one of his sisters at Bordeaux three days earlier.

This news came as a shock to Chemartin. Although he gave no sign of his grief, he waa nonetheless upset. Poor Yoset would take into exile the memory of a totally unmerited insult. He

would remain abroad for a long time, perhaps for ever, and when he thought of Chemartin it would be with anger and revenge in his heart. The quarrel would be a perpetual stain on Chemartin's character. When everybody else had forgotten the quarrel, he would still brood over it with a remorse that nothing could remove.

One day, however, - a market day just like old times - a cattle dealer from Espelette, while trying to sell a cow to Chemartin, mentioned that the 'American' from Berroluzea was returning.

Yoset coming home! Yoset! So violently excited was Chemartin on hearing this news that for the moment his head swam. He quickly recovered, however, to engage in keen bargaining for the cow but he was so overcome with joy that his wife had to wait up for long into the night for his return to the farm.. She was astonished to see him so cheerful. He greeted her with a smile and was soon whistling like a young man.

At the inn, where he had remained late, some of the old cronies had teased him about Yoset's return but Chemartin had only laughed at their remarks.

The thought that he would now be able to make amends gave him unbounded joy. It would be a handsome reparation, too, Chemartin promised himself, for Yoset would certainly come back to the place as poor as he had left it. Chemartin would help him, would find him a job. Already the thought of the meeting made him happy and, in anticipation, he enjoyed the pleasure he would derive from going up to Yoset with outstretched hand for a prolonged bortxeco (clasp) and offering him those apologies which were his due.

September came, and under the golden rays of the autumnal

sun the mountains grew into immense blue ramparts behind the purple foot-hills. One Sunday, as Chemartin was leaving the Church gallery, he heard the miller whisper that the 'American' of Berroluzea was amongst them. 'The American of Berroluzea!' Which was his friend Yoset? Would he recognise him?

No, the slender Yoset of former times was not there. But under the tinting plane trees, standing against a gleaming limousine, surrounded by villagers, there was a stout man in a dark suit relieved by a heavy gold watch-chain.

"That's Yoset," said the miller, who had followed Chemartin out of the church. It appeared that after a long struggle Yoset had had an unexpected stroke of luck and had made millions.

Millions. Yoset was a millionaire.

Chemartin watched him from afar. This well-dressed, quiet, smiling, self-possessed man was Yoset of the Belota Court, Yoset, the memory of whom had obsessed Chemartin for so long. Was this the Yoset with whom he had for so long looked forward to make it up?

Surely this rich American would no longer feel any ill will for a poor working farmer like Chemartin? He shook hands with him as with the other villagers who welcomed him back.

Chemartin knew quite well the men who had gathered round Yoset. They included mutual friends but there were others who had formerly taken no interest in Yoset and would not now have been there if he had come back without means.

Supposing, behaving like such people, Chemartin had

had gone up to the 'American' and had said: "Yoset, I have always been sorry that I insulted you, let us forget the sad past", who would have believed that his apology was solely due to remorse? Everyone, including Yoset himself, would have thought Chemartin a contemptible toady who shamelessly abased himself in order to befriend of a rich man. No, Chemartin could apologise only to a Yoset as poor as in days gone by. He could not ask forgiveness of this prosperous, influential personage.

As the villagers dispersed, Chemartin noticed that Yoset was watching him. The smile on the latter's face made Chemartin feel that the spectators, too, had remembered the quarrel and the fight and that they were watching, with ill-natured amusement, to see what would happen.

"Well, Chemartin." said one of them approaching him, "It seems that our Yoset has made a big fortune"

"Surely that doen't surprise you," replied Chemartin with a shrug of the shoulders. Then, impelled by an irresistible pride and regardless of the fact that, instead of the apology he had been preparing for more than twenty-five years, he was repeating and adding to his original insult, Chemartin spat out, as he strode contemptuously past Yoset -

"No doubt, he made his money abroad in the same way as he would have lost his game here, had I not intervened at a certain pelota match."

THE POOR RELATION .

"WHO would think that the poor fellow has rich relations? Isn't it a shame that they don't look after him?"

Everybody made some such remark on seeing the old labourer Ganichon bent under the weight of an enormous sack, or wearily driving his spade into the earth, or sharpening his scythe. And everytime he heard it Mendizabal, his wealthy cousin of Espelette, grew more

As a matter of fact this miserable old man was a disgrace to him, although, seeing that for years he had begged Ganichon to let him help him, the blame could hardly be laid at his door.

"My friend," Mendizabal had often said to him, "your place is under my roof. Come and live with us. I find it very hard to see you toiling thus." But Ganichon was a stubborn fellow and never failed to reply that so long as he was able to earn his daily bread, he would never depend on others.

As a result of Ganichon's refusals, Mendizabal lost all sympathy for him, sullen rage filling his heart every time he saw his cousin working on the road.

You should have seen the speed of the Mendizabal's car as it whizzed past Ganichon! A hand raised quickly in salute: that was all. The cousin whose poverty-stricken looks so worried them, was quickly hidden in a cloud of dust.

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As for Ganichon, he just stood still in the middle of the

road, with a rake or a fork over his shoulder and a chahato (goatskin) slung over his old shirt, which sulphate of copper had stained blue and was spotted purple in places from new wine. As the car disappeared in the distance, he laughed bitterly until his prominent chin and wrinkled cheeks shook with malice at the thought of the humiliation which their common relationship brought upon the proud Mendizabals.

Pride! That was the over-ruling vice of the entire Mendizabal family, rich and poor alike.

It was from pride, and that alone, that generous help had been offered to Ganichon: and, for the same reason, the offer had been spurned.

Without doubt the struggle would have gone on much longer, with the same results, had not the unfortunate Ganichon fallen and broken his leg one night when he went out in the dark to drive off the badgers with a tin can from the maze fields at Baratzaldea.

Directly he heard of it Mendizabal hastened to the hospital where the injured man had been taken, and two days later removed his cousin to his home.

Ganichon, who was weak and in great pain, was furious that he could no longer work but saw that he must submit to the change without being too ungracious about it. In the end his heart was softened by the very sincere kindness with which his relations treated him. Indeed, as his leg mended, he began to enjoy his unaccustomed life of ease. He delighted in certain little amenities, such as coffee after his meals - a

treat which formerly he had allowed himself only on fêtedays. He liked, too, to take a nap on a soft bed instead of in the shade of a haystack on the hard ground, with his beret over his face.

Soon he ate the bread of others without any bitterness, though he never regretted his former independance, the recollection of which still amused him.

Mendizabal, for his part, positively exulted. Whenever he met a friend, he brought the conversation round to Ganichon and told everybody with great good humour: "My cousin is now living with us, you know. We make a great fuss of him and pamper him; he doesn't have to work now!"

If Ganichon could have heard this! But Mendizabal had the sense not to make such remarks at home and, indeed, he went to a lot of trouble to make his touchy cousin as comfortable as possible.

The summer went by peacefully, then autumn. The two cousins went out a good deal but each his own way. Winter brought them together again.

The weather was cold and grey and dull. It grew dark early and the evenings seemed long when the North wind whistled through the leafless branches outside and the rain beat ceaselessly against the window-panes.

One night, seeing Ganichon as unoccupied as himself, Mendizabal, with the idea of giving him pleasure, proposed a game of muss. Thereafter game succeeded game. After supper

each night, no sooner was the table cleared than the pack of cards and the dry beans for counters were produced and the two excited men sat down to play.

From the outset Mendizabal observed the phenomenal luck of his cousin. Ganichon played with cold and calculating cunning and endless audacity. Mendizabal, on the other hand, quickly grew discouraged and, losing his nerve, inevitably got beaten. With his invariable defeats he soon lost his temper. After a few games he would rise from the table, very dissatisfied with himself, and for the rest of evening sink into a morose and sulky silence, interrupted only by the impatient turning-over of newspapers he had already read.

Ganichon, for his part, would be puffed with pride and suck his pipe with noisy satisfaction.

When the time came for going to bed, the two men would barely speak to each other, though by next morning they had made it up and were ready to resume their game. However, aft er two months of unending and repeated annoyance, Madame Mendizabal became alarmed. She gently chided her husband to keep his temper more under control and her cousin to be a little less provoking. If only he would agree to lose now and again, just once in a way! she suggested.

The two stubborn men disregarded her wise advice. Both quarrels and play went on until one day Mendizabal, in a fit of rage, banged his fist on the table, threw away his cards, and strode away, swearing abominably,

Ganichon didn't move but Mme. Mendizabal, as she picked

up the cards, decreed that the two men should not play together again.

They never played again but the evenings were no happier. Ganichon thought it astonishing that Mendizabal should regard himself as entitled to win more often than his opponent, while Mendizabal considered that Ganichon should have shown himself more obliging to this Amphitryon. Forgetting charity or gratitude, the two men cordially detested each other by now.

July came, and Mendizabal got ready for his annual cure at Vichy. "I'm leaving to-morrow," he said to Ganichon one day.

"So am I," replied Ganichon, to his amazement.

"You must be out of your mind," cried the indignant Mendizabal. "Why do you want to leave us?"

"I am now well enough not to wish to be an expense to you any longer."

Neither entreaties nor threats could move Ganichon. Next day, when Mendizabal, frantic with rage, was getting into the train, his cousin was rescuing from the corner of the barn his old scythe, the hone, the two spades and the tattered sack he put over his head when it rained. Then he left the house.

Mendizabal's cure was utterly ruined by the thought of his relation's departure. He grieved deeply that he had been so unwilling to submit to be beaten every time they played muss together. "He would have stayed if it hadn't been for those wretched cards," he reflected bitterly. Above all, it upset him to think that, once again, he would meet Ganichon

as he drove about the country, looking as shabby as he used to do. Would his neighbours begin again to think of him as a Croesus who neglected his poor relations, and waste their pity upon 'poor' Ganichon, compelled to revert to earning his living, notwithstanding his bad leg?

When Mendizabal got back from Vichy and drove along the Basque roads, he seemed to recognise in every labourer or cattle driver he met his cousin Ganichon, staring at him in a living reproach. But it was not until some fifteen days later that he actually came across him, sitting under the shade of a dusty hedge, while the heat shimmered from the sun-baked road.

With a deep sigh Mendizabal stopped his car. Ganichon came limping towards him. They shook hands.

"Well, how goes it?" asked Mendizabal cheerfully.

"Oh, I'm all right, even if my appearance doesn't suggest it," replied the other not less cheerfully.

"What! don't you regret leaving my house?"

"Not very much, for I can now play muss every evening."

Mendizabal kept calm in spite of this provocative reply as he asked his cousin how he liked working in such hot weather.

"I don't work any more now," remarked Ganichon complacently.

"You don't work! Then how do you get your living?" stammered Mendizabal incredulously.

Ganichon looked at him for a moment in silence. Then, anticipating with keen enjoyment the humiliation which Mendizabal would go through in attempting to induce him to return to his home, when he heard the reply to his question, he remarked

GUANES' JUDGMENT .

If ever in the length and breadth of the Labourd there was a wise and discerning peasant, that man was most clearly Guanès of Mendihaldea. If he were asked about the cultivation of a vine, the customary formalities when a metayer* left, how to divide a herd or an estate, or merely whether the time had come to sow a particular crop, it was all the same: the reply invariably bore witness to the profound wisdom and prudence that comes with a long and busy life.

If farmcraft and the mysteries of old customs had no secrets for him, that keen observer of mankind, Guanès, was even more profound in his knowledge of humanity. None could discern their faults so well, nor appreciate better a man's qualities or analyse his character. He might occasionally be slow to make up his mind but at other times the most trifling incident would enable him to form an unerring opinion. So, throughout the country, when a man was needed, all, from M. le Curé to the humblest bordaris (metayer), came to Guanès, whether for a new sacristan, a farm servant or someone to trim a vine.

As may be supposed, there were no such metayers elsewhere as were to be found on the property of which Guanès was régisseur. To be fair, it must be admitted that now and again some treasure of a man whom he had selected turned out to be lazy or given to strong drink, whereupon the owner grew annoyed. But everyone knew - and Guanès made no secret of it - that even the nicest

* a tenant farmer who pays his rent in produce and services.