

Spaniards Love the Promenade

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is another in a series of dispatches to The Eccentric from Donald Dennis and his wife, Margaret, as they make a seven-month trip around the world. Dennis teaches art at Bloomfield Hills High School; his wife is a visiting teacher in the same school system. The following letter was written from Spain.

One of the virtues of Spain and the Iberian peninsula is the favorable weather that it has to offer the year around.

Even though there are seasonal changes in temperature, the dry climate is conducive to outdoor living, and the Spanish homes, villages and other cities are built with this in mind.

MADRID IS blessed with a series of parks or plazas, situated in the center of the city. Seville is the city of trees with a large portion of its area divided into public parks; and Barcelona boasts many wide tree-lined boulevards that invariably lead into a fountain or park area.

Common to all of these cities—and even typical of the small towns—are the promenades. These are generally sidewalk areas that are situated in the middle of the widest boulevards and are built solely for the pedestrian.

WALKING SEEMS to be the favorite pastime of the Spaniard and an evening stroll has become a ritual.

On Sundays these promenades are usually packed with the townspeople who are there as a family group. In the case of the younger generation they use this area as a place for meeting the opposite sex. In any case, this parade is extremely colorful and is not unlike the Easter Parade on Fifth Avenue.

OUTDOOR STALLS or miniature markets are common sights along the promenades and parks and add greatly to the local color. A walk down the street can quickly take on the air of a summer fair with all of the hucksters that go with it.



FOUNTAINS, PARKS and promenades stroll and relax, contributing much to the are a prominent feature of the Spanish city. unhurried pace of Spanish life. They provide people of all ages a place to

On one side there may be a pet salesman with a cart full of birds and small animals. Further down the street one might encounter several florist's stalls with all sorts of floral arrangements for sale.

THE LOVE for beautiful shrubs and flowers is a heritage from the Moorish culture in Spain.

The Moorish rulers were so impressed with having flowing water and springs that at every chance they displayed a green thumb. The Alhambra gardens of Granada are the best examples of their handiwork remaining in Spain today.

THE CORNERS of all the boulevards and parks are anchored with

large news stands and bookstalls displaying the latest in reading materials from all over the world. The evidence that we saw, especially in Barcelona and Madrid, leads us to believe that the Spaniard is the best periodical reader in the world.

Scatter an abundance of park benches and lottery ticket salesmen through this area, and you have a basic picture of the promenade.

MOST OF the parks are centrally located like the hub of a giant wheel. Here in this hub you may find a well-designed area, laid out around a fountain or series of fountains and executed in either ceramic or beds of flowers or both.

Quite often a statue of someone worthy of note or a symbolic figure is conveniently placed giving the pigeons a place to roost. Often, too, especially in Seville, the plazas are dotted with outdoor cafes, where for a five-cent cup of coffee or a 15-cent bottle of wine, you may sit undisturbed and watch the passing parade for as long as you like.

THERE NEVER seems to be any hurry in Spain, and this change of pace makes it an ideal country for relaxing.

True enough, Spain is moving forward and modernizing at a rapid rate, but the provincial atmosphere and the old traditions are sacred to most Spaniards and will be a long time in changing.

How About the People Who Are Half-Artist?

By RUTH VOGT
Special Writer

A recent article describing what an artist is like—how he thinks and reacts to people, places, beauty and things in general—has to be rated "A-plus."

However, for fun, let's unravel here what occurs to a person's existence in case he's only a "half 'n half." That is, what if right from about the age of five he has the sneaky feeling within him that in his perfectly outward normality he possesses a big slice of something different?

AT FIVE, he isn't aware that this "thing" is creative, artistic or of any worth; he only knows that it causes him a lot of trouble even at that early age. (It causes the parents anguish too, not to speak of brothers and sisters and playmates. Sometimes even teachers are thrown by it.)

BUT WITH a good healthy half of him perking away along normal lines most of the days, he sails through childhood and into adolescence, college and adulthood, without letting too many signs show

that his make-up is sort of split right down the middle. All through these stages of development he has a strong urge to "be like others" and to conform on every occasion. "Hold it. Be careful here. Watch your words, they might not be understood. Lock those thoughts tightly and don't let them escape," is the formula he usually follows until he reaches sedate adulthood.

WHEN MARRIAGE becomes his way of life this half-normal-and-half-artist creature labors under the awful illusion that this state will, absolutely, kill any leftover tendency to submit to "artiness."

"With a husband, house and children, plus community and world affairs to become engaged in, my worse half of me will be smothered once and for all," the female version of this creature innocently figures as soon as the wedding ring is placed securely on her left hand.

SAD TO RELATE, but marriage does not do the trick. In fact, it unfolds life fuller than anything she ever experienced

before; this 'half and half' person discovers the portion she wanted buried (for good) begins to burst out all over the place. With a man, a house and children absorbing her hands and thoughts, those very artistic trends she has always tried to throttle and disown have a hey-day.

"COME ON. When are you going to let us out from inside? We're tired of being ignored. Can't you use us in your everyday existence just a little bit? Not too many are around, just a few neighbors, friends and grocery clerks, and they won't mind if you give us breathing space to grow," small voices begin to chant.

She answers back something to the effect that "if they don't try to take over completely, causing her to bungle things, they can creep out once in a while."

So they do. In a million different ways! In meals. In cleaning. In just pure living.

AND THE five-year-old who was bewildered over this split gradually, after a few decades, is able to put both halves together to make a pattern that is, at last, understood. Those are the half 'n half ones.

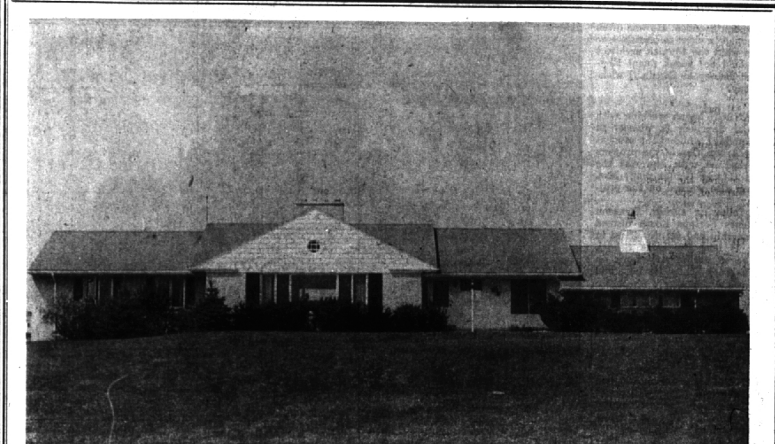
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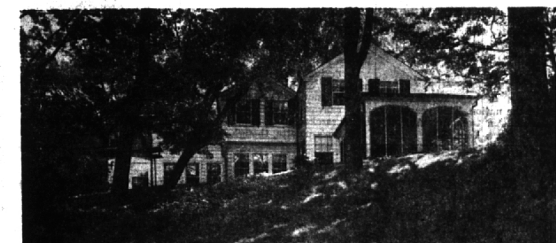


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