Diversión en el Campo

The midsummer heat lay waste to the streets of Alqueria. Too hot for even the slightest exertion, too hot to think, but relief was at hand. Today was the annual 'Diversión en el Campo'. The day when the people of the village move down to the banks of the Río Verde where a vast picnic takes place. Impromptu games for the children and the young at heart bring undignified scampering amidst gales of laughter. Adolescent boys engage in feats of strength designed to impress the young ladies of the village. They looked on with admiration tempered with coyness, a feat in which Spanish girls are so well trained.

It would indeed to be an idyllic day. Idyllic, if this was anywhere else but Alqueria. The reality was barrio rivalry and the disgusting green slime of the Río Verde.

Pilar del Redondorodillas, the bakery owner undertook to make the filled bocadillos. Having a job lot of La Mancha cheese which was well past its sell-by-date she made 2,500 foul smelling rolls. The hog roast had to be abandoned as the pig outwitted its pursuers and now resides happily on the high sierra free to live a life of religious fulfilment. Horacio Stranglardeganso, landlord of the Bar La Casa Devante took exception to the beer being imported. He withheld access to his cold room with the result that the beer was lukewarm and exploded when opened. All in all it was a miserable affair.

The trestle-tables carrying their forlorn fare sat unhappily by the banks of the Río Verde. The foul stench from the stagnant green water added nothing to the desirability of the repast. The plain vinyl covered tables of the Hill People stood in contrast to the elegant tables of the Newcomers, silver plated and cut glass gobleted. This show of opulence was in keeping with those who regard themselves as privileged. They needed to prove their superiority at every opportunity with absurd shows of pomposity. This display of arrogance was wasted on the Hill People who began

hurling insults at their supposed superiors. This soon became the most enjoyable part of the day.

Manuela, who had disappeared into the undergrowth with several of the fitter lads wasn't there to control her followers. Soon the insults were followed by something more tangible as a fusillade of Manchego filled buns found their mark. The Newcomers joined in the fun as surplus flour based products and empty beer bottles filled the air.

It was in some way reassuring that the old barrio rivalries had been restored and Alqueria could once more settle into a routine of insults, sabotage and dispute.

The weary villagers returned home to find every house in every street ransacked and looted.