

LETTER XIII.

Monday, Jan. 18.

At Truxillo we once more saw English plates ; but we could procure no kind of provision there, not even an egg—the Court had demolished all. The common earthen pitchers are better turned, and apparently of better materials than any I have seen in England. The town formed a fine object as we looked back upon it ; the ruins of many outworks are visible ; the ground is rocky, and broom grows among the stones luxuriantly in blossom. It soon became swampy, and presented to the eye as drear a prospect as the roads in Cornwall. We passed by the mountain of Santa Cruz, which we had seen yesterday ten leagues distant from the Puerto de Mireveti. It is the boldest mass I ever saw of abrupt rocks interspersed with cultivated spots and olive yards ; at the bottom is a village with a convent.

As we entered the village Puerto de Santa Cruz, where we dined, the people came round us to know if we were the Cavaliers come to pay the King's debts. Here we bought a very favourite, and indeed a very excellent dish of the Spaniards; it is lean pork highly seasoned with garlic, and steeped in red wine. The entrance to the inclosures here is by a doorway in the wall covered with a large stone and half filled up with stones. So fond are these people of ornaments that an old woman here who would make Sycorax lovely by comparison, is decorated with ear-rings and a necklace.

The storks* build their nests on almost all the

* Saavedra has chosen this for his 25th emblem. "The stork (he says) defends her nest by building it upon the tower of a church, and her young are secured by the holiness of the place. The Prince who shall build his monarchy upon the triangular stone of the church, will establish it firm and secure." He exults in the piety of the Kings of Spain, who have founded more than seventy thousand churches in that kingdom; for King James I. of Arragon alone built a thousand, all dedicated to the immaculate Virgin Mary, for which he was rewarded in his life with the conquests that he made, and the victories

churches. This bird is held sacred here, and no Spaniard will molest it. It is pleasant to find one prejudice on the side of humanity!

If the King of Spain have one solitary spark of sense or humanity, he must be seriously grieved to behold the wretched state of his dominions. Fancy cannot conceive a more delightful climate. Here is wine to gladden the heart of man, corn to support him, and oil to make him of a cheerful countenance. When the Moors possessed Estremadura this whole province was like a well-cultivated garden; at present the population, as given by Ponz, is only one hundred thousand inhabitants, though the province is two hundred miles in length, and a hundred and sixty wide. As a cause for this melancholy depopulation he says, that the pestilence of

that he gained, fighting thirty-three battles, and being victorious in all. These edifices were religious colonies, not less powerful than armies with their spiritual weapons, for artillery makes not so great a breach as prayer.

Idea de un Principe & Politico Christiana; representada en cien empresas, por Don *Diego de Saavedra Faxardo*.

1348 destroyed two-thirds of the people of Spain, in consequence vast tracts of land were left uncultivated, and thus a slovenly and Tartar-like system of pasturage* was introduced. This extravagant system is still pursued on account of its effect, real or supposed, in rendering the wool fine. Count Florida Blanca has in one of his publications ably shown the

* “ By laying of lands used in tilth to pasture, six maine inconveniences do daily increase. 1. Idleness, which is the ground and beginning of all mischiefs. 2. Depopulation and decay of townes; for where in some townes two hundred persons were occupied, and lived by their lawful labours, by converting of tillage into pasture, there have beene maintained but two or three heardsmen; and where men have been accounted sheepe of God's pasture, now become sheepe men of these pastures. 3. Husbandry, which is one of the greatest commodities of the realme, is decayed. 4. Churches are destroyed, and the service of God neglected by diminution of church livings, as by decay of tythes, &c. 5. Injury and wrong is done to patrons and God's ministers. And 6. the defence of the land against forraine enemies is enfeeble and impaired, the bodies of husbandmen being more strong and able, and patient of cold, heat and hunger, than of any other.

The two consequents that follow of these inconveniencies, are, first, the displeasure of Almighty God, and secondly, the subversion of the polity and good government of the realm. *Coke.*

folly of producing wool at such expence for foreign manufactories, instead of the coarser kind fit for their own.

We travel leagues without seeing a village, and when we find one, it consists of such sties as are fit only for the pig part of the family. As for the towns it is not possible to give an Englishman ideas of their extreme poverty and wretchedness. You may conceive the state of the kingdom by this circumstance, we have now travelled six hundred miles without ever seeing one new house or one single one.

It is the policy of the Court here and in Portugal, to lead the nobility into expences, and thus, by making them needy, to render them dependant on the Crown for places and pensions. Thus is this order of men, an order seldom too zealous in the cause of reformation, completely secured. The clergy* are the

* Autant que le pouvoir du Clergé est dangereux dans une Republique, autant est-il convenable dans une Monarchie ; sur tout dans celles qui vont au Despotisme. On en seroient l'Espagne & le Portugal depuis la perte de leurs

sworn enemies of all innovation : they among them who believe what they profess must be narrow-minded bigots, and they who profess what they do not believe must be bad men ; the one cannot instruct, and the other will not. They must be vicious because they are condemned to celibacy, for it is criminal in

Loix, sans ce pouvoir que arrête seul la Puissance arbitraire ?
barriere toujours bonne lorsqu'il n'y en a point d'autre : car comme le Despotisme cause a la nature humaine des maux effroyables, le mal même qui le limite est un bien.

Montesquieu.

This is not true. On the contrary, it is the power of the Clergy that has occasioned the most atrocious cruelties, and the most impolitic measures in Spain and Portugal, and which still continues to keep them enslaved. The expulsion of the Moriscoes, and the proscription of the Jews originated in the influence of the Priesthood. To the effects of the Inquisition the worst parts of their national character may be traced. " By this tribunal (says Robinson) a visible change was wrought in the temper of the people, and reserve, distrust, and jealousy became the distinguishing characteristics of a Spaniard. It perpetuated and confirmed the reign of ignorance and superstition. It inflamed the rage of religious bigotry, and by the cruel spectacles to which, in the execution of its decrees, it familiarized the people, it nourished in them that ferocious spirit, which, in the Netherlands and America they manifested by deeds that have fixed an everlasting reproach on the Spanish character." *Ecclesiastical Researches.*

them to indulge human affections, and if they do not indulge them, all the milk of human kindness in their hearts will turn sour. Where is Reformation to begin? All ranks are abandoned here, because all ranks are ignorant. But before every man can be virtuous and happy, the Tree of Knowledge must grow in every man's garden.

“I laugh at systems (says our friend P. H.) when I consider how long the pulpit has existed to teach duty, and the gallows to enforce it, and then see the enormous mass of wickedness which the one never glances at and the other cannot punish;” and the wisest way is to laugh at them: it is folly to grieve for what we cannot amend, and as for amending the world, Society is an Ass that will kick the man who attempts to ease it of its burthen.

Tuesday 19.

We slept at Miajadas last night; the King has a palace there, and we visited the ruins of a castle and of a noble church. The town is

three leagues from the Puerto de Santa Cruz, The first part over a barren and stony country, then thinly planted with prickly oaks, and corn growing between the trees, now of the most grateful verdure. About half way is a bridge over a little rivulet; at the one end is an ascent of above an hundred yards by a raised road; at the other so abrupt a turn as literally to form a right angle; so excellently are things contrived in Spain: had the bridge been built about a quarter of a mile higher up, the ascent and turn might have been avoided, and the road shortened. The country about Miajadas is uncultivated, and from the hill above the town we looked over a large and swampy plain bounded by mountains. Here as usual we were entertained with complaints of the Court. The girl told us that the King's train had broken five glasses there in one evening. "And did they pay for them?" "Pay for them! the cursed gang! not a maravedi."—The room we were in was arched like a cellar, and we descended two steps to enter it: it was so damp that I concluded any vermin that had acci-

dentally dropt there must have caught cold and died of an asthma. I was lamentably mistaken.

We have been seven hours travelling twenty miles this morning, over a rich but uncultivated country. We past only a solitary post-house, by which we saw the first orange trees, and in the wood adjoining saw for the first time myrtle. We have suffered to-day for Manuel's un-governable appetite ; our hashed hare was swinging under the calessa, ready to be warmed for dinner ; we could procure no cork to stop the pitcher it was in, and had therefore cut a small loaf of bread to answer the purpose. On the road Manuel eat the cork, and when the dinner hour arrived, we found the splashing of the road had spoilt our stew, at least for English palates, for Manuel has no prejudices of this kind. We dined at San Pedro, a poor and miserable village : the room was roofed with canes, and the glasses hung on a cane slit at proper distances, and suspended in the room. The hostess there had just made some puffs, and begged me to eat one with so much real

civility, that had they been the vilest composition of Spanish filth, I could not have refused; it was only paste seasoned with anis. She has a daughter about twelve years of age, a beautiful girl with a placid and melancholy countenance that seems to deserve a better fate.

We went one league over a thinly wooded track, and then leaving the village of Truxillano on the right, proceeded one league farther over an open and cultivated country to Merida. About two hundred yards before the town is an aqueduct; we passed under it, and immediately under another arch of an ancient ruin. What we could see of the town by moonlight made us regret our so late arrival. The King is at Badajos, only nine leagues distant. His retinue have not yet left Merida, and we were very fortunate in getting a room here, wretched as it is.

I wish some sudden business would recall the King immediately to Madrid, that he might find what kind of roads his subjects were

obliged to travel, every bone in his body would ache before he got half way. They were levelled for his journey, and every person obliged to whitewash the front of his house, that his Majesty might witness the cleanliness of his subjects.

The cultivation of this country is very slovenly. They leave the broom standing, and sow corn round it.

We had a woodcock for supper, which we trussed ourselves. This did not satisfy the old woman of the house; to our utter disappointment she brought up the poor bird sprawling, told us we had forgot to cut off the rump and draw it, and then poked her finger in to shew us how clean the inside was.

During his Majesty's stay at Merida he killed innumerable partridges, six wolves, and a wild cat.

Wednesday 20.

We crossed the Guadiana by a very long bridge;* there is a castle on the bank, and the ruins of some works in a little island. The

* I transcribe the inscription on the bridge from Ponz. "Tecum sum, et flumina non operient te. Isaiaë XLIII. Deo mundi Architecto sapientis. et Christo Jesus restauratori efficaciss. ac Pontifici æterno, tuæq. Eulalia Virgo, & Martyr sanctissima tutelæ, Emerita Augus. Pontem a vetustate et fluminis injuriis, labe, fæditate, diruptionibus vindicatum, et in pristinum splendorem ampliatis operibus restitutum, dicat commendat. Ex autoritate et providentia Philippi III. Hispaniar. Regis Catholici, piissimi atque invictiss. D. N. Clementiss. Joann. Thomas Fabarius Vc. e militia sacra S. Jacobi. Commendatarius Huelmi præfecit, Emerita opus curavit, probavit. an MDCX e pecunia collata ab urbibus oppidisque intra lapidem C. C.

On the left side of the tablet :

Por mandado y comision de la Magestad Catolica de D. Phelipe III. Rey de Espana y de las Indias, N. S. D. Juan Thomas Fabaro Comendador de Huelamo de la orden de Santiago y Gobernador de Merida reparo con acrecentamiento de firmeza y hermosura esta puente, que estaba en la mayor parte arruinada, y rota por su antiguedad y por les crecientes del rio, ano de MDCX. Hizose esta obra a costa de la ciudad de Merida, y contribucion de las demas ciudades y lugares que estan dentro de cincuenta leguas.

Ponz says the marble cannot be believed, for it is easily

road for three leagues lay over an uninteresting plain, though fertile and well-peopled. We then kept under a range of hills for another league, and beheld the river watering the plain till we ascended to this miserable village Lobon: a small ruin, on a broken and rocky hill, and the church situate among olive trees, were the only buildings visible as we approached. Here I was curious enough to measure the chairs and the tables, which have for some days been equally low. The back of the chair is two feet eight, the height of the table two feet one.

The Marquis de Conquista passed us on the

seen that not a sixth part of the bridge was repaired.

Merida, Emerita Augusta, was once the capital of Lusitania, and a Metropolitan city. It was built by Augustus as a colony for the soldiers who had served him well against the Cantabrians, Asturians, and Lusitanians. A. U. C. 726. AC. 28. St. Enlalia, a child of twelve years of age, the pupil of Donatus, a Priest, was martyred here in company with St. Julian and six men, by Calpurnián, Lieutenant of Dacien. Prudentius has celebrated her, and given a long and lively picture of her torments in a hymn.

road, escorting the Camarressa of the Queen to the Court, a beautiful woman who had been detained by indisposition at his seat near Truxillo. Two men rode by the coach singing to her as she went along. This made the road cheerful and agreeable, but alas! we suffered for it at night!

Descended from Lobon we skirted the plain for two leagues to Talaveruela, a large and miserable place. Here the Marquis had pre-occupied the house, and we could only procure a most deplorable room, with a hole above the roof to admit light as if up a chimney. It was long before we could procure chairs or table. Here we dressed ourselves to pass the Courts and Custom-houses to morrow, and a most curious scene did our dressing-room exhibit: it was not possible to procure a looking-glass to shave by! They spread beds for us on mats upon the floor. The roof was of cane, and the rats running over it in the night shook down the dirt on our heads. I lay awake the whole night killing the muskitoes as they settled on my face, while the in-

habitants of the bed entertained themselves so merrily at my expence, that Sangrado himself would have been satisfied with the bleeding I underwent.

We travelled two leagues over a flat and unpleasant country, which, Colmenarsays, is sometimes so infested by grasshoppers that the King is obliged to send a body of men to burn them. Badajos, the frontier town, then appeared at the distance of a league, with its fort ; and three leagues beyond, the Portuguese town of Elvas, and fort La Lippe. A regiment of cavalry is encamped under the walls : the men indeed are in tents, but the horses have no shelter ; and the rains are daily expected. At every gate of the fortifications we were examined, and delay to us was not only unpleasant but dangerous, lest the calessa should be embargoed. We drove to the Custom-house, and if ever I were to write a mock heroic descent to the infernal regions, I would not forget to make the adventurer pass through one of these agreeable establishments. There is a heavy and oppressive duty laid on

money here ; a traveller will of course carry as little Spanish gold into Portugal as possible, for it is of no use to him on the road, and he will lose thirty per cent. by the exchange ; even the necessary expences are not allowed. The town is full of horses and carriages, for which there is no shelter. We drove through the town immediately, and left the place by a very fine bridge over the Guadiana.

About a league beyond runs a rivulet that separates the two kingdoms. The royal tent of Portugal is pitched on the bank, and a wooden bridge built for the meeting exactly where carriages used to ford the stream. But vulgar wheels must not profane the bridge which shall be trod by the hoofs of their sacred Majesties horses ! and we were obliged to pass the water where it was so deep as to wet our baggage.

Here all was gaiety, and glad to have escaped from Spain, we partook of the gaiety of the scene. Booths were erected : the courtiers passing from one town to the other, and crowds

from both thronging to see the royal tent. Yet even here when the two Courts are about to meet on such very uncommon terms of friendship, the national prejudices are evident. Manuel bought some oranges for us, he was within ten yards of Spain, and you may conceive his astonishment when they abused him for being a Spaniard.

Our hurry at Badajoz allowed us no time to dine: here we fell to our brawn and bread and cheese, with the comfortable feeling of being near home. My uncle entered into conversation with a Portugueze officer who wished himself a general that he might have the pleasure of giving no quarter to the French: "Cruel dogs, said he, to make war upon the Church! Look at this bridge, he cried, each nation built half, but I need not tell you which half the Portugueze built: they do every thing well! so strong, so durable! it will last for ever! As for the Spanish part (and he lifted up his eyebrows as he spoke) the first rain will sweep it away*!" The

*. And in reality the first rains swept away both parts.