

rough and unpleasant; on the fifth morning, however, the wind became favourable, and we arrived in sight of Cape Finisterre.

The coast of Galicia presented a wild and desolate prospect; a long tract of stone mountains, one rising above another, not a tree or bush upon their barren sides; and the waves breaking upon their base with such prodigious violence as to be visible many leagues distant. The sun shone over the land and half hiding it by the morning mists, gave a transitory beauty. If the eye cannot be filled by an object of vaster sublimity than the boundless ocean, when beheld from shore, neither can it ever dwell on a more delightful prospect than that of land, dimly discovered from the sea and gradually growing distinct. We passed by the little island, seven leagues from Coruña, and one of our fellow passengers who knew the country observed, on pointing it out to us, that it was only inhabited by *bares* and *rabbits*. A Swede, (who had a little before obliged me with a lecture on the pronounciation of the English language) made a

curious blunder in his reply : “ As for de vimmin,” said he, “ dey may be very good—but de robbers I should not like at all.”

We dropt anchor in the harbour at one o'clock, as hungry as Englishmen may be supposed to be after five days imprisonment in a Spanish Packet, and with that eagerness to be on shore, which no one can imagine who has never been at sea. We were not, however, permitted to land, till we had received a visit from the Custom-house Officers. To receive these men in office, it was necessary that Señor Don Raimundo Aruspini should pulchrify his person : after this metamorphosis took place, we were obliged to wait, while these unmerciful visitors drank the Captain's porter, bottle after bottle, as fast as he could supply them ; and though their official business did not occupy five minutes, it was five o'clock in the evening before we were suffered to depart, and even then we were obliged to leave our baggage behind us.

Other places attract the eye of a traveller, but Coruña takes his attention by the nose. My head, still giddy from the motion of the ship is confused by the multiplicity of novel objects, —the dress of the people—the projecting roofs and balconies of the houses—the filth of the streets, so strange and so disgusting to an Englishman : but, what is most strange, is to hear a language which conveys to me only the melancholy reflection, that I am in a land of strangers.

We are at the Navio (*the Ship*) a POSADA kept by an Italian. Forgive me for using the Spanish name, that I may not commit blasphemy against all English pot-houses. Our dinner was a fowl fried in oil, and served up in an attitude not unlike that of a frog, taken suddenly with a fit of the cramp. With this we had an omelet of eggs and garlic, fried in the same execrable oil ; for execrable it is in this land of olives, as the fruit is suffered to grow rancid before the juice is expressed. Our only drink was wine, not the *vino generoso* with

which Spain supplies us in England, but the meagre beverage which the labourers in the vineyard reserve for themselves.

You must perceive that I write at such opportunities as can be caught from my companions, for the room we sit in serves likewise for the bed-chamber. It is now Monday morning. Oh, the misery of the night! I have been so *flead*, that a painter would find me an excellent subject for the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew. Jacob's pillow of stone was a down cushion, compared to that which bruised my head last night; and my bed had all possible varieties of hill and vale, in whose recesses the fleas lay safe; for otherwise I should inevitably have broken their bones by rolling over them. Our apartment is indeed furnished with windows; and he who takes the trouble to examine, may convince himself that they have once been glazed. The night air is very cold, and I have only one solitary blanket, but it is a very pretty one, with red and yellow stripes. Add to this catalogue of comforts, that the cats were saying

soft things in most vile Spanish ; and you may judge what refreshment I have received from sleep.

At breakfast they brought us our tea on a plate by way of cannister, and some butter of the country, which did little credit to the dairies of Galicia. This however was followed by some excellent chocolate, and I soon established a plenum in my system.

The monuments of Spanish jealousy still remain in the old houses ; and the balconies of them are fronted with a lattice more thickly barred than ever was hencoop in England. But jealousy is out of fashion at present ; and they tell me, an almost universal depravity of manners has succeeded. The men are a Jew-looking race ; the little boys wear the monkey appendage of a tail ; and I see infants with more feathers than a fantastic fine lady would wear at a ball. The women soon appear old, and then every feature settles into symmetry of ugliness. If ever Opie paints another witch, he

ought to visit Coruña. All ideas that you can form by the help of blear eyes, mahogany complexion, and shrivelled parchment, must fall infinitely short of the life.

The custom-house officers were very troublesome. They kept one of our companions five hours, unrolled every shirt, and handed a new coat round the room, that every body might look at the buttons! We brought with us a round of salted beef undressed, a cheese, and a pot of butter for our journey; and they entered these in their books, and made us pay duty for them, as though we were merchants arrived with a cargo of provisions. I had been obliged to call on the Consul in my sea-dress. If we had either of us regarded forms, this would have been very unpleasant: but I, as you well know, care little for these extraneous things, and Major Jardine is a man who attended more to the nature of my opinions, than the quality of my coat.

The carts here remind me of the ancient



war-chariots, and the men stand in them as they drive. They are drawn by two oxen, and the wheels make a most melancholy and detestable discord. The Governor of this town once ordered that they should be kept well oiled to prevent this; but the drivers presented a petition against it, stating, that the oxen liked the sound, and would not draw without it; and therefore the order was revoked. These carts are small, and I often see two oxen drawing what might be conveyed in an English wheelbarrow.

A low wall is built all along the water-side, to prevent smuggling, and a number of little forts are erected about the adjoining coast for the same purpose. This town is admirably paved; but its filth is astonishing, when, with so little trouble, it might be kept clean. In order to keep the balconies dry, the water spouts project very far; there are no vents left in the wall, and the water and the filth lie in the middle of the streets, till the sun dries, and the wind sweeps them. The market-place is very good,

and its fountain ornamented with a squab-faced figure of Fame. The fountains are well contrived; the spouts are placed so high that no person can either dirt or deface them, and they therefore fill their vessels by the medium of a long tube, shaped like a tobacco-pipe.

I apply to the language; it is very easy, and with a little assistance I can understand their poetry. This, you will say, is beginning at the wrong end: but remember, that I am obliged to attend to prose in conversation, and that "the cat will always after kind." Or, if you like a more classical allusion, you know by what artifice Achilles was discovered at the court of Lycomedes.

Tuesday Evening, Dec. 15.

LETTER II.

Tuesday Night.

I am just returned from the Spanish Comedy. The Theatre is painted with a muddy light blue, and a dirty yellow, without gilding, or any kind of ornament. The boxes are engaged by the season: and subscribers only, with their friends, admitted to them, paying a pesetta* each. In the pit are the men, each seated as in a great armed chair; the lower class stand behind these seats: above are the women, for

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- * 4 maravedis make 1 quarto.
 $8\frac{1}{2}$ quartos — 1 real.
 4 reales — 1 pesetta.
 5 pesettas — 1 dollar, or pesso duro, value
 4s. 6d.

In small sums they reckon by reales, in large ones, by dollars or doubloons. The doubloon is an imaginary coin, value three dollars.

the sexes are separated, and so strictly, that an officer was broke at Madrid, for intruding into the female places. The boxes, of course, hold family parties. The centre box, over the entrance of the pit, is appointed for the magistrates, covered in the front with red stuff, and ornamented with the royal arms. The motto is a curious one; "*Silencio y no fumar.*" "Silence and no smoaking." The Comedy, of course, was very dull to one who could not understand it. I was told that it contained some wit, and more obscenity; but the only comprehensible joke to me, was "Ah!" said in a loud voice by one man, and "Oh!" replied equally loud by another, to the great amusement of the audience. To this succeeded a Comic Opera; the characters were represented by the most ill-looking man and woman I ever saw. My Swedish friend's island of *hares and rabbits* could not have a fitter king and queen. The man's dress was a thread-bare brown coat lined with silk, that had once been white, and dirty corduroy waistcoat and breeches; his beard was black, and his neckcloth and shoes dirty:—but his

face ! Jack-ketch might sell the reversion of his fee for him, and be in no danger of defrauding the purchaser. A soldier was the other character, in old black velveret breeches ; with a pair of gaters reaching above the knee, that appeared to have been made out of some blacksmith's old leathern apron. A farce followed, and the hemp-stretch man again made his appearance, having blacked one of his eyes to look blind. M. observed that he looked better with one eye than with two, and we agreed, that the loss of his head would be an addition to his beauty. The prompter stands in the middle of the stage, about half-way above it, before a little tin skreen, not unlike a man in a cheese-toaster. He read the whole play with the actors, in a tone of voice equally loud ; and when one of the performers added a little of his own wit, he was so provoked as to abuse him aloud, and shake the book at him. Another prompter made his appearance to the Opera, unshaved, and dirty beyond description : they both used as much action as the actors. The scene that falls between the acts would disgrace a puppet-

show at an English fair ; on one side is a hill, in size and shape like a sugar-loaf, with a temple on the summit, exactly like a watch-box ; on the other Parnassus, with Pegasus striking the top in his flight, and so giving a source to the waters of Helicon ; but such is the proportion of the horse to the mountain, that you would imagine him to be only taking a flying leap over a large ant-hill, and think he would destroy the whole œconomy of the state, by kicking it to pieces. Between the hills lay a city ; and in the air sits a duck-legged Minerva, surrounded by flabby Cupids. I could see the hair-dressing behind the scenes : a child was suffered to play on the stage, and amuse himself by sitting on the scene, and swinging backward and forward, so as to endanger setting it on fire. Five chandeliers were lighted by only twenty candles. To represent night, they turned up two rough planks, about eight inches broad, before the stage lamps ; and the musicians, whenever they retired, blew out their tallow candles. But the most singular thing, is their mode of drawing up the curtain. A

man climbs up to the roof, catches hold of a rope, and then jumps down; the weight of his body raising the curtain, and that of the curtain breaking his fall. I did not see one actor with a clean pair of shoes. The women wore in their hair a tortoise-shell comb to part it; the back of which is concave, and so large as to resemble the front of a small bonnet. This would not have been inelegant, if their hair had been clean and without powder, or even appeared decent with it. I must now to supper. When a man must diet on what is disagreeable, it is some consolation to reflect that it is wholesome; and this is the case with the wine: but the bread here is half-gravel, owing to the soft nature of their grind-stones. Instead of tea, a man ought to drink Adams's solvent with his breakfast.

Wednesday.

I met one of the actors this morning, equipped, as though he had just made his descent in full dress from the gibbet. The

common apparel of the women is a black stuff cloak, that covers the head, and reaches about half way down the back : some wear it of white muslin ; but black is the most common colour, and to me a very disagreeable one, as connecting the idea of dirt. The men dress in different ways ; and where there is this variety, no person is remarked as singular. I walked about in my sea-suit, without being taken notice of. There is, however, a very extraordinary race of men, distinguished by a leathern jacket, in its form not unlike the ancient cuirass, the Maragatos, or carriers. These people never intermarry with the other Spaniards, but form a separate race : they cut their hair close to the head, and sometimes leave it in tufts like flowers. Their countenances express honesty, and their character corresponds to their physiognomy ; for a Maragato was never known to defraud, or even to lose any thing committed to his care.

The churches here exhibit some curious specimens of Moorish architecture ; but as this is

a fortified town, it is not safe to be seen with a pencil. A poor emigrant priest last year, walking just without the town gates, turned round to look at the prospect. He was observed, taken up on suspicion of a design to take plans of the fortifications, and actually sent away!

I had a delightful walk this morning with the Consul, among the rude scenery of Galicia:— little green lanes, between stony banks, and wild and rocky mountains; and although I saw neither meadows, or hedges, or trees, I was too much occupied with the new and the sublime, to regret the beautiful. There were four stone crosses in one of the lanes. I had heard of these monuments of murder, and therefore suspected what they were. Yet I felt a sudden gloom, at reading upon one of them, “Here died Lorenzo of Betanzos.”

About a mile from the town, I observed a stone building on an eminence, of a singular construction. “Do you not know what it is?” said Major J. I hesitated. “If I were not in

Spain, I should have thought it a wind-mill, on the plan of that at Battersea." "You are right," replied he: "this is the only one that has yet been attempted on the peninsula, and it does not succeed. Erijaldi, who owns it, is an ingenious, enterprising man; but, instead of improving by his failure, his countrymen will be deterred by it from attempting to succeed. Marco, another inhabitant of this town, has ventured on a bolder undertaking, and hitherto with better fortune; he has established a linen manufactory, unpatronized and unassisted."

Our walk extended to the highest point of the hills about a league from Coruña. The view from hence commands the town, now seen situated on a peninsula; the harbour, the water winding into the country, and the opposite shore of Ferrol, with the hills towards Cape Ortegál; to the right, the same barren and rocky ridge of hills continues; to the left, the Bay of Biscay, and the light-house, or Tower of Hercules. The inscription near this building

is roofed, to preserve it from the weather ; but they take the opportunity of sheltering cattle under the same roof, and their filth renders the inscription illegible. The tradition* is, that

* The whole tale is in the Troy Boke, Book II. Chap. 22. entitled " How Hercules founded the city of Corogne upon the tomb of Gerion."

— "When it was day, Hercules issued out of his galley, and beholding the Port, it seemed to him that a city would stand well there ; and then he said, that forthwith he would make one there, and concluded to begin it. He sent to all places, where he knew any people were thereabouts, and gave to each man knowledge that he was minded to make a City there, and the first person that would come to put hand thereto, should have the government thereof. This thing was known in Galicia. Many came thither, but a woman named Corogne was the first that came ; and therefore Hercules gave unto her the ruling thereof, and named it Corogne, in remembrance of the victory that he had there. Upon the body of Gerion he founded a tower, and by his art composed a lamp, burning continually day and night, without putting of any thing thereto, which burned afterwards the space of three hundred years. Moreover, upon the pinnacle or top of the tower, he made an image of copper, looking into the sea, and gave him in his hand a looking-glass having such virtue, that if it happened that any man of war on the sea came to harm the city suddenly, their army and their coming should appear in the said looking-glass ; and that dured unto the time of Nebuchadonozar, who being adver-