

Friday Evening.

At midnight we heard the arrival of a post from Madrid, who awoke the people of the house by cracking his whip. I cannot say he awoke me, for I, like Polonius, was at supper, not where I eat, but where I was eaten. The ingenious gentleman who communicated his discovery to the public, in the Encyclopædia, that ninety millions of mites' eggs, amount exactly to the size of one pigeon's egg, may, if he please, calculate what quantity of blood was extracted from my body in the course of seven hours; the bed being six feet two and a half, by four feet five, and as populous as possible in that given space.

I have always associated very unpleasant ideas with that of breakfasting by candle light. We were up before five this morning. The two beds were to be packed up, and all our baggage to be replaced in the coach. Our allowance was a small and single cup of chocolate, swallowed standing and in haste. This meal is perhaps in England the most social of the day; and



I could not help remembering the time, when I was sure to meet a cheerful face, a good fire, and the Courier at breakfast. At day-break I quitted the coach. The country was more wild and more beautiful than what we had passed yesterday. In the dingle below us on the right, at the foot of a dark and barren hill, a church stood, on the banks of a winding rivulet. The furze, even at this season, is in blossom. Before us, a little to the left, was a bold and abrupt mountain; in parts, naked precipices of rock; in parts, richly varied with pines, leafless chestnut trees, and oaks that still retained their withered foliage. A stream, foaming along its rocky channel, wound at the base, intercepted from our view where the hill extended its gradual descent, and visible again beyond: a tuft of fir-trees, green even from their roots, grew on the bank. On the summit of the mountain stands a church, through whose tower the light was visible: around us were mountains, their sides covered with dark heath, and their fantastic tops richly varied with light and shade. The country is rude and rocky; the houses all

without chimnies ; and the appearance of the smoke issuing through their roofs, very singular and very beautiful, as it rose slowly, tinged by the rising sun. In about three hours we began the winding ascent of Monte Salgueiro, whose summit had closed the morning prospect. By ascending directly I reached the top long before the mules. There I rested, and looked back on the watch-tower of Coruña, six leagues distant, and the Bay of Biscay. I was not, however, idle while I rested : as a proof, take these lines.

Fatigued and faint, with many a step and slow,
 This lofty mountain's pathless side I climb,
 Whose head, high towering o'er the waste sublime,
 Bounded my distant vision. Far below
 Yon docile beasts plod patient on their way,
 Circling the long ascent. I pause, and now
 On this smooth rock my languid limbs I lay,
 And taste the grateful breeze, and from my brow
 Wipe the big dews of toil. Oh—what a sweep
 Of landscape lies beneath me ! hills on hills,
 And rock-piled plains, and vallies bosom'd deep,
 And Ocean's dim immensity, that fills
 The ample gaze. Yonder is that huge height
 Where stands the holy convent ; and below
 Lies the fair glen, whose broken waters flow
 Making such pleasant murmurs as delight

The lingering traveller's ear. Thus on my road
 Most sweet it is to rest me, and survey
 The goodly prospect of the journey'd way,
 And think of all the pleasures it bestowed;
 Not that the pleasant scenes are past, distrest,
 But looking joyful on to that abode
 Where PEACE and LOVE await me, Oh! most dear!
 Even so when Age's wintry hour shall come
 We shall look back on many a well-spent year,
 Not grieving at the irrevocable doom
 Of mortal man, or sad that the cold tomb
 Must shrine our common relics; but most blest
 In holy hope of our eternal home.

We proceeded two leagues further to Griteru,
 over a country of rocks, mountains, and swamps.
 The Venta* there exceeded all my conceptions
 of possible wretchedness. The kitchen had no
 light but what came through the apertures of
 the roof or the adjoining stable. A wood fire
 was in the middle, and the smoke found its way
 out how it could, of course the rafters and walls
 were covered with soot. The furniture con-
 sisted of two benches and a bed, I forbear to

* I know not the exact difference between the Posadas
 and the Ventas, unless it be that at the former you always
 find beds. We sometimes slept at a Venta, but in general
 they had only accommodations for the day.

say how clean. The inhabitants of the stable were a mule and a cow ; of the kitchen, a miserably meagre cat, a woman, and two pigs, who were as familiar as a young lady's lap dog. I never saw a human being disfigured by such filth and squalidness as the woman ; but she was anxious to accommodate us, and we were pleased by her attempt to please us. We had brought an undrest rump of beef from Coruña, and fried some stakes ourselves, and as you may suppose, after having travelled twenty miles, at the rate of three miles an hour, almost breakfastless, we found the dinner excellent. I even begin to like the wine, so soon does habit reconcile us to any thing. Florida Blanca has erected a very good house at this place, designed for a posada, but nobody will tenant it. The people here live in the same stye with their swine, and seem to have learnt their obstinacy as well as their filth.

After dinner we went to look at an arch that had struck us as we entered the village. The lane that leads to it, seems to have been paved with

stones from the ruins. We were told that the place belonged to the Conde Amiranti, and that the arch had led into the court yard in the time of the Moors. Evidently, however, it was not Moorish. The few fences they have are very unpleasant to the eye; they are made with slate stones about three feet high, placed upright.

The distance from Griteru to Bamonde is two leagues. Half the distance we went by a wretchedly rugged way, for the new road is not completed. It is a great undertaking; a raised terrace with innumerable bridges. We saw many birch trees, and a few hedges of broom. I was reminded of the old personification of Economy, by seeing two boys walk by the carriage barefooted, and carry their shoes. Near Bamonde is some of the most beautiful scenery I ever beheld. There is an old bridge, of four arches, almost covered with ivy, over a broad but shallow stream, that within a few yards makes a little fall, and circles a number of islets covered with heath and broom. Near it was a small coppice of birch, and a fine single

birch tree hung over the bridge, waving its light branches. The hill on the opposite shore rises abruptly, a mass of rock and heath. About two hundred yards behind, on a gentler ascent, stands a church. The churches are simple and striking; they have no tower, but in its place a single wall, ending in a point with a crucifix; in this two bells are hung, each in a little arch, and through these openings the light is seen far off. The sheep on the hills were, as they generally are in this country, black, and therefore did not enliven the landscape, as in England; but this was well supplied by a herd of goats. It was evening when we reached the posada.

I should think Griteru the worst place in Europe, if we were not now at Bamonde. Judge how bad that place must be, where I do not wish you were with me! At none of these houses have they any windows, and if you would exclude the air, you must likewise exclude the light. There are two beds in the room, their high heads sanctified with a crucifix, which M.

observed must certainly be a monumental cross to the memory of the last traveller devoured by the bugs.

The master of the posada here is a crazy old priest, very inquisitive, and equally communicative, who looked into all our books, and brought us his breviary, and showed us that he could still read it. The woman was very anxious to know if they were at war with England. She said how sorry she should be if such a war should take place, because so many good things came from England, and particularly such beautiful muslin. And this woman, so interested lest muslin should be scarce, had scarcely rags enough to cover her.

We have warmed ourselves by dressing our own supper. The kitchen, as usual, receives its light through the stable, and is without a chimney; so you may easily guess the complexion of the timbers and the bacon-faced inhabitants. We were assembled round one of the largest fires you ever saw, with some of the

men of the village in wooden shoes, three or four children, the Mayoral and Zagal, the mad Priest, the hostess, and the pigs, who are always admitted to the fire-side in this country. So totally regardless are they of danger, that there was a large heap of dry furze within six feet of the fire, and when one of the men wanted a little light without, he seized a handful of straw, and carried it blazing through the stable. We supped again on beef-steaks, and manufactured the remainder into soup, to carry on with us. They raise good potatoes and turnips here, and have even promised us milk in the morning. They boiled some wine for us in an iron ladle. Bread is almost as dear as in England.

LETTER IV.*Saturday Evening, Dec. 19.*

We were serenaded all night by the muskitoes and mules. The muskitoes always sound their trumpets when they make an attack. The bells are never taken from the mules, and the stable is always under the bed room. These muleteers are a most unaccommodating race of beings, they made us unload the coach, and load it again at the distance of fifty yards from the posada, through the mire; and when we set off this morning, they drove up to the door. We left some beef intentionally behind us, at Bamonde. The people thought it had been forgotten, and followed us to restore it. We crossed the Minio at Ravade, by a bridge of ten arches, four of which are new. The river here is a clear, deep, tranquil stream, about sixty yards wide. The road is unfinished, and the scenery except at this spot uninteresting.

We reached the city of Lugo at noon : here we are detained, for the old coach already wants repairing. The table on which I write is a large stone, with Mosaic work framed.

Lugo is surrounded by a wall, with circular towers projecting at equal distances. There is a walk on the top, without any fence on either side, in width ten feet, and where the towers project, twenty. Time has destroyed the cement. The ruins are in many parts covered with ivy, and the periwinkle is in blossom round the wall. I saw doors leading from the city *into* the walls, and many wretched hovels are built under them without, mere shells of habitations, made with stones from the ruins, and to which the wall itself serves as the back. One of the round towers projects into the passage of our *posada*, which winds round it. The city itself is a wretched place. Its massy walls whose ruinous state is not visible at a little distance, and the towers of the Cathedral, led me as I approached, to expect something more correspondent to the English idea of a city. The

streets are narrow, dirty, and dark ; the houses high and gloomy, as they lessen the little light the narrowness of the streets allows, by the old wooden lattices of the balconies.

M. went to visit a canon of the Cathedral, with whom he had once travelled to Madrid. He resides in the Bishop's palace, a place not unlike a college, with a quadrangle, round which the priests have their apartments. So little are the ecclesiastics acquainted with the nature of the foreign heresies they detest, that the canon seriously enquired, if we had such a thing as a church in England.

The cathedral presents nothing remarkable. The two towers in the front seem to have been intended to be carried higher ; but they are now roofed with slates in that execrable taste which is so common in Spain, and which I have seen exhibited upon old pigeon-houses in England. The chapel of the Virgin displayed much elegance.

While we were in the cathedral, I observed a woman at confession. Much of the depravity of this people may be attributed to the nature of their religion: they confess their crimes, wipe off the old score by absolution, and set off with light hearts and clear consciences, to begin a new one. A Catholic had robbed his confessor. "Father," said he at confession, "I have stolen some money; will you have it?" "Certainly not," replied the priest: "you must return it to the owner." "But," said he, "I have offered it to the owner, Father, and he will not receive it." "In that case," said the priest, "the money is lawfully yours;" and he gave him absolution. An Irishman confessed he had stolen some chocolate. "And what did you do with it?" asked the confessor. "Father," said he, "I made tea of it."

But a subject so serious, deserves a more serious consideration. It is urged, in favour of this practice, that weak minds may be saved by it, from that despair of salvation, which makes them abandon themselves to the prospect of an

eternity of wretchedness. Yet, surely, it is a bad way to remedy one superstitious opinion by establishing another; and if reason cannot eradicate this belief, neither can superstition; for weak minds always most easily believe what they fear. The evil introduced, too, is worse than that which it is intended to supplant. This belief of reprobation must necessarily be confined to those of gloomy tenets; and among those, to the few who are pre-disposed to it by an habitual gloom of character. But, the opinion of this forgiving power vested in the church, will, among the mob of mankind, destroy the motives to virtue, by eradicating all dread of the consequences of vice. It subjects every individual to that worst slavery of the mind, and establishes an inquisitorial power in the ecclesiastics; who, in proportion as they are esteemed for the supposed sanctity of their profession, will be found less anxious to obtain esteem by deserving it.

But absolution is always granted conditionally, on the performance of certain *duties of atone-*

ment. And what are these *duties of atonement*?
 A Spaniard, of whom I enquired told me,
 “ *many Ave Marias, many Fasts, and many*
Alms.” Remember, that those alms usually
 go to the mendicant friars, or to purchase
 masses for the souls in purgatory; and you will
 see of what service penance is in correcting
 vicious habits. You will hardly believe, that
 the absolving power of the church was main-
 tained, not four years ago, from the pulpit of
 St. Mary’s, at Oxford.

If a man had courage enough to make a con-
 fessor of his dearest friend, without concealing
 or extenuating one act of vice or indiscretion,
 he would probably become virtuous:

“ For if he shame to have his follies known,

“ First he would shame to act ’em.”

B. JONSON.

The resolution of recording in a journal every
 transaction, would operate as a powerful anti-
 dote against vice. From such a record, kept

and examined with minute impartiality, we should learn that most important lesson, to respect ourselves. “ Nothing is to be despised, that tends to guard our purity ; such little precautions preserve the greatest virtues.” So he said, who, with all his faults and all his errors, deserves to be ranked among the wisest of mankind.

The mention of ROUSSEAU naturally now reminds me of his confessions. Biography has been justly esteemed the most useful of literary studies ; and it is hitherto perhaps the most imperfect ; for who can pry into the secret motives of another, and trace the progress of his opinions ? Never was more unwearied industry displayed, than Boswell exerted in compiling the conversations of Johnson. We behold the man, we see his manners, and we hear his opinions ; but we neither witness the growth of his mind, nor enter the recesses of his heart. The slow revolutions of sentiment, and the number of little incidents which all operate on character, can only be traced by the watchful eye of a self-

observer : and yet, it is only from such observations, that we can obtain an accurate knowledge of human nature. This work of Rousseau is therefore inestimable and unique ; for the Journal of Lavater is what any honest Methodist preacher might have written ; and, though displaying great goodness of heart, totally unworthy of the genius, fame, and physiognomy of the author. But Rousseau has said too much, he has dwelt upon his vices with a criminal minuteness, which could not possibly produce a good effect and from which much evil may result. The contemplation of vice should never be rendered familiar to the mind, lest we become reconciled to it as to the deformity of an acquaintance.

The fly

That feeds on dung is coloured thereby.

Herbert.

LETTER V.*Monday, Dec. 21.*

Whatever may be the state of the human mind, the human body has certainly degenerated. We should sink under the weight of the armour our ancestors fought in, and out of one of their large and lofty rooms, I have seen a suite of apartments even spacious for their pigmy descendants. The "sons of little men," have taken possession of the world! I find no chair that has been made since the Restoration high enough for an evening nap: when I sit down to dinner, nine times out of ten I hurt my knees against the table; and I am obliged to contract myself, like one of the long victims of Procrustes, in almost every bed I sleep in! Such were the melancholy reflections of a tall man in a short bed.

The road from Lugo is very bad: in many