success, the day being everything we could wish, without a particle of cloud, or fog. It is a very easy excursion, as we made it, riding within a short distance of the summit, 9553 feet above the sea, though it is certainly man's indolence, rather than nature's intention, that urges any quadruped, except a goat or an izzard (the chamois of the Pyrenees), over such ground. I felt a good deal ashamed of doing so, but finally justified myself with the consideration, that, for so brief a space as we were going to spend among the mountains, it was hardly worth while to get into walking-trim.

After passing the Cabin, where people spend the night before going up to see the sunrise, the path becomes a mere ledge, not more than a yard wide, cut out of the side of the mountain, which, out of a lake of most uncomfortable look, and untold depth, rises a sheer precipice of about 2000 feet, unfenced throughout its whole extent by the least protection of rail, or wall, as even a rampart of adamant could not withstand the irresistible rush of the avalanches, which, at certain seasons of the year, sweep continually over those bleak slopes. There are many places in the ascent, where riding is by no means safe or pleasant, for a single false step would very

soon plunge you into the Lac d'Oncet, and a tablet erected at a turn of the path, to record the marvellous escape of a German tourist, reminds you, if you are not already aware of the circumstance, that even Pyrenean horses have their moments of weakness, and should not be too implicitly trusted. How the poor creatures ever managed to carry us up that tremendous steep I cannot imagine, though we fully appreciated their services long before we reached the summit, where the view that suddenly burst upon us repaid ten thousandfold our modicum of toil.

The whole range of the Pyrenees, from east to west, lay spread out before us like a raised map, giving us in half an hour a far clearer idea of the region, than a month's course of Murray. The view was perfection. The nearer ranges with their graceful slopes, here olive-green with herbage, there, russet with fern (a special ornament of the Pyrenees), crowned with a rampart of broken rocks (over one of which we espied two eagles on the wing), stood out sharp as steel, the whole landscape being suffused with an exquisite tinge of mellow colouring; while at a greater distance, the monarchs of the range, Vigne-male, Mount Perdu, and Maladetta, the

two latter being in Spain, towered above all in unapproached supereminence. On the side of France, sleeping in chequered sunshine, an unbroken plain stretched out, dotted with many a town and village. Had the heat of the day been less glowing, we should have seen Toulouse. We now commanded a cloudless view of the precipices that hem in the Cirque de Gavarnie, the summit of which the fog had concealed from us as we stood under them yesterday, and the Breche de Roland lifted itself against the clear blue sky, a clean workman-like cut, that did the Paladin's arm, and Durandel's temper, equal credit.

The descent was a tedious affair, and it was dark ere we reached Luz, with the feeling of having enjoyed a most charming day, which had thoroughly satisfied all my Pyrenean aspirations.

Before leaving, we went to see the old church of the Templars, a most interesting building, not so well known, apparently, as it deserves to be from its ecclesiological value; and having spent Sunday at Pau, we returned to Bayonne on Monday evening, October 3, being welcomed with much kindness by the attentive host and good-natured people of the Hôtel de St. Martin.

## CHAPTER III.

WE had fully intended setting out for Madrid next day, but so many preparations were necessary before venturing into so unfurnished a country as Spain, that we were compelled to spend another night at Bayonne. Many were the inquiries we made respecting inns, and the various circumstances of our route, from the landlord, who had been as far as Madrid. He gave us anything but a cheerful report, and evidently regarded our expedition into that hungry land, as a melancholy proof of the ingrained perversity of human nature, which, not content with the comforts of his good hotel, must needs wander forth from a soil where dinners are an indigenous production, and go among a people destitute of the most elementary principles of cooking. His *amour propre*, and patriotic feelings were alike wounded, and he conscientiously warned us, that we must not expect *to dine*,

(at least in the French sense of the term), anywhere between his house and Madrid, while his good-nature prompted him to serve us such a dinner (being his own chef), on the eve of our departure, as would fully acquit him of all complicity, in case we starved on the road.

On referring to my note-book, I find certain entries, which indicate a determination on our part, not to perish at any rate without a struggle. Among these, two hams (an article for which Bayonne is celebrated), a frying-pan, and a Rochefort cheese (this last comestible being a condescension to my national weakness, as a Welshman), form the most conspicuous items. I remember, besides, that a pound of tea, with more than one packet of flea-powder, were purchased at a very good chemist's shop in one of the back streets, while at the landlord's suggestion, several bottles of his best Bordeaux were added to our stores. All this preparation, not only occupied our time, but served to calm down the apprehensions, which the prospect of starvation had not unnaturally excited, and we now began to consider ourselves justified in looking forward, with some degree of hopefulness, to seeing home and friends once more.

Our acquaintance with Spanish being of the

most limited description, it became necessary to find some interpreting medium between the natives and ourselves, and as no courier happened to be available at the moment, in spite of every exertion on the part of Captain Graham, the British Consul at Bayonne, an amphibious being, named Pierre Cambour, whose ostensible means of subsistence oscillated between the river and the road, he being sometimes a fisherman, sometimes a sort of *quasi-courier*, was engaged in that capacity, having frequently made the journey to Madrid, in the service of our Queen's messengers.

Although our passport had been regularly signed at the Embassy in London, we found it must be viséd at Bayonne, before we should be allowed to enter the dominions of Queen Isabella, a requirement that was quite incomprehensible, until we had been to the office of the Spanish Consul. For in reply to Lord Portarlington's inquiry, how it came to pass, that a passport bearing the signature of an ambassador was not sufficient to admit us into the country represented by him, contrary to general practice on the Continent, that functionary retorted with some asperity, "Oh! but you must pay me three francs, nevertheless," a reply which seemed to

strike the key-note of our experiences of the national character, and confirmed with ludicrous exactness the great Duke's observation, "The first thing the Spaniards invariably want is money."

It threatened to be a more serious business than we had ever contemplated, to take the old Coquette over the frontier, the only method of avoiding the heavy duty levied on all carriages entering Spain, being either the deposit of a considerable sum, £30 or £40, at the Custom House, to be refunded on the return of the carriage, or an equivalent arrangement, which Captain Graham most kindly undertook for Lord Portarlington, by becoming himself responsible for the amount.

The weather being still excessively hot, and oppressive, it was such a refreshment, when all our preparations had been completed, to spend half an hour in the cathedral, which, internally is most interesting, and well worthy a more careful examination, than we were able to give it. We were not, then, aware that its cloisters are some of the finest in France, or we should certainly have contrived to catch a glimpse of them. In returning to the Hotel, we went to see our friend the Postmaster, who was highly gratified to find, that the carriage he had supplied

for our expedition to the Pyrenees had given every satisfaction, and, with his wonted animation and emphasis, accompanied by much smiting of his bosom, he assured us he was *un homme de confiance*, in whom no one would ever find cause for disappointment, an assurance which the event perfectly verified in our own case.

The landlord told us a touching story of a poor woman of Bayonne, who had died two years before. In one of the numerous engagements, that took place in the neighbourhood, during the Duke's advance across the French frontier, an English officer was dangerously wounded, and carried into the town, where, after the lapse of some months, he died. He had been nursed to the last by a young woman of the place, and from the time of his death in 1814 to 1857, when her own decease occurred, she never omitted going daily to his grave in the Cimitière Anglais, (a spot some little distance from the town, where the remains of many British soldiers are interred), to pray, according to the Roman Catholic practice, for the repose of his soul. For a considerable time she was afflicted with insanity, but that made no difference; the poor faithful creature still made her daily pilgrimage, and continued the loving custom down to the very end of her days.

"There are families in this country [England] of both the great historical parties, that in persecution of their houses, the murder & proscription of some of their most illustrious members, found judges as unjust & relentless in an open jury of their own countrymen, as we [the Jews] did in the conclaves of Madrid & Seville". Coningsby Book IV chap. XIII p. 174

## CHAPTER IV.

OCTOBER 5th.—A very agreeable change of temperature took place during the night, and a fresh breeze from the Bay of Biscay breathed new life into our limbs, after the enervating heats of the last fortnight, when the thermometer had rarely stood below 85° in the shade. A few showers too, had fallen, laying the dust opportunely for our journey into one of the driest, and dustiest countries in Europe. When at length, after an infinity of contrivance, and stuffing, the Coquette had absorbed her miscellaneous cargo, the whole household turned out to see us off, and we parted from those kind-hearted people, with as many adieux and benedictions, as would have served for a voyage round the globe.

Bidart, St. Jean de Luz, Urugne, were quickly passed, and before noon we had crossed the Bidassoa, and entered Spain. The moment we

touched Queen Isabella's territory, a sentry stopped us, who, by the antique cut of his uniform, might have fought at Culloden; his nether man being encased in black overalls, of precisely the same pattern as those, in which our countrymen used to fight the French, in the days of General Ligonier, and the Marquis of Granby.

Below the bridge, in the middle of the river, lies the celebrated Isle des Faisans, the most deplorable-looking strip of mud ever honoured with so imaginative a title. Yet that insignificant patch of dirt, being neutral ground between France and Spain, has been the stage on which important events have been acted, leaving their "form and pressure" on the general history of Europe. Here it was, that in 1463, Louis XI. had an interview with Enrique IV. Here again, in 1615, the two kingdoms exchanged brides, Isabella, daughter of Henri Quatre, going into Spain, to be the wife of Philip IV., while his sister, Anne of Austria, found her husband in Louis XIII. Forty-five years later, the same spot witnessed another interview of high import, when Cardinal Mazarin, and the Spanish Minister, Don Louis de Haro, brought the long wars between France and Spain,

to a close by the treaty of the Bidassoa, and the marriage between Louis XIV. and his first cousin, Maria Theresa; an event which in time led to the occupation of the Spanish throne by the Bourbon Philip V.

A melancholy interest attaches to this last occasion, as it is supposed to have caused the death of Velasquez, who, in his capacity of Aposentador Mayor to Philip IV., had to fit up the royal pavilion, erected on the Isle des Faisans. His death, which took place on the 7th of August, 1660, only a few days after his return to Madrid, was caused, some say, by a fever, others, by excessive fatigue; his broken-hearted wife following him to the grave before the end of another week.

This slight *excursus* into the domain of Spanish history, having given time to the authorities to investigate the contents of our passport, that indispensable document is restored to us. We are once more in motion, and soon find ourselves drawn up on a hill-side, in front of the Custom House at Irun. As there happened to be no diligence, or any other carriage under examination at the moment, our business was speedily despatched, the officials being very civil and expeditious, exhibiting withal far more consideration for the interior arrangement of portmanteaux, and dressing-cases, than is common to

their class. With a fresh team, we were again on the road, skirting two sides of the harbour of Passages, a lake of salt water, more landlocked than even Lulworth cove, and opening to the sea by an outlet, which would hardly admit the *Great Eastern*. Crossing the Urumea, which more than once has been dyed with English blood, and passing under a drawbridge, we entered the Plaza of San Sebastian, a most uninviting, dirty-looking place, with a fishy population, addicted to contemplative, do-nothing habits.

The scenery now became highly picturesque, and we passed through a succession of pastoral valleys, green as emerald, in their bright autumnal herbage, and watered by such tempting trout-streams, that meandered between swelling hills, over which copse-wood of oak, chestnut, and hazel, spread their umbrageous mantle; while animated nature was abundantly represented by long files of magnificent mules (many of them being fully sixteen hands high), six to a cart, drivers with bright sashes, and swart unwashed visages, and many other accessories of the road. After the dusty highways of France, it was quite a pleasure to be travelling through a country, where rain had recently fallen, while the novelty of finding ourselves actually in Spain, clear of

frontier difficulties, and douaniers, imparted a peculiar enjoyment to this day's journey.

Our resting-place for the night was Tolosa, where we arrived in good time, about five, putting up at an inn near the bridge, Parador Nuevo, which, according to the Spanish fashion, had its entrance side by side with the stable, the latter occupying the ground-floor, while we had to mount to the third story, which contains the best rooms. This being our first experience of a Spanish inn, we were agreeably surprised to find matters more promising, than we could have anticipated, everything looking clean and comfortable, the stuffy closeness of the rooms being soon remedied by a general opening of windows.

Tolosa, in spite of its being the principal town of the province Giupuscoa, is a poky, dingy little town, dismally situated in a deep valley, frowned upon by two mountains, Ernio and Loaza, and the rain, which soon after our arrival poured down in torrents, did not improve its appearance. The neighbourhood seems well cultivated and fertile, the whole breadth of the market-place being studded with piles of enormous vegetables; among which, red-pepper-pods, gourds, melons, and black grapes, looked quite attractive.

We just glanced into the principal church,

a spacious classical building, lighted up by a single lamp, which gave it a solemn mysterious air in the deepening twilight. At the door lay the tiniest mendicant I ever saw, a pale-faced, sickly child, stretched out upon the cold flags of the porch, with a pair of diminutive crutches at his side, his countenance wearing a singularly touching expression, such as I have sometimes noticed in a corbel-head, or quaint old mask, in church and cloister.

To-day we had our first taste of Spanish cookery, and fared much better than we had anticipated; the various dishes, that composed our dinner, being perfectly free from garlic, oil, saffron, and other abominations, native to the Peninsula. The principal dish was, as usual, the puchero or stew, and its chief ingredients, bacon, beef, fowl, according to the state of the larder, which were cooked in one mess with chick-peas, cabbages, carrots, gourd, long-peppers, a sausage or two being thrown in by way of make-weight. Spanish soup bears a greater resemblance to what the Dorsetshire peasant calls tea-kettle broth (that is, boiling water poured upon slices of bread, and then flavoured with a lump of butter, and the usual seasoning), than any other compound I have ever eaten, the tureen being

nearly choked up by layers of bread, over which floats a very thin liquid, dotted here, and there with islets of grease. It possesses, however, the negative recommendation of being perfectly unobjectionable, and if it fails to excite your appetite, it fails equally to offend your taste, which is more than can be said for those dreadful chick-peas, *garbanzos*, the universal vegetable of the Peninsula. They are about the size of horse-beans, and quite as unappetizing to human beings, not "to the manner born," being about as hard, flavourless, and indigestible as bullets. It was after a meal composed chiefly of this esculent, that a Frenchman compared himself, while jolted along in the diligence, to a child's drum filled with peas, as his dinner rattled up and down his half-empty stomach.

All one's ideas of order and precedence are upset by the courses of a Spanish dinner, and when you have partaken of several kinds of meat, two or three dishes of fish suddenly make their appearance, which at an earlier moment would have received a hearty welcome.

Pork, in its various phases, bacon, ham, and sausage, is the meat *par excellence* of Spain, occupying the same elevated position in the department of gastronomy, as English beef, Welsh

mutton, and Irish potatoes. Judging from the Continent generally, an Englishman is apt to fancy that a rasher is a delicacy confined to the British Isles, but, before he has been long in Spain, he will discover the truth of Ford's statement, "The pork of Spain has always been unequalled in flavour. The bacon is fat and well-flavoured; the sausages delicious, and the hams transcendently superlative, to use the very expression of Diodorus Siculus, a man of great taste, learning, and judgment. Of all the things of Spain, no one need feel ashamed to plead guilty to a predilection and preference for the pig." For ourselves, I can only add, that this worthy animal, whose merits are never acknowledged, until he is dead, has laid us under the profoundest obligations; but for him, we should unquestionably have been starved, when we advanced further into the country, while riding through the aromatic solitudes of Estramadura, and the mountain valleys of romantic Andalusia.

The Spaniards are great people for sweets, *dulces*, and a pot of preserved green-gages, and other fruits in the north, and in the south, a mould of quince jelly seems to form an indispensable complement to the dinner-table.

We had excellent beds at Tolosa, perfectly

free from those little creatures that murder sleep; and this, though quite contrary to our expectations, and the ideas generally afloat respecting Spanish inns, was our almost universal experience in all parts of the country, from Bayonne to Gibraltar.

A railway is in course of construction between Madrid and Irun, portions of it in this neighbourhood being considerably advanced; and this morning, as I was dressing, the whole populace was in a state of excitement at the sight of a locomotive, which passed through the town drawn by a team of twenty-four oxen, and attended by all the idle boys and girls of the place, uttering cries of childish delight and astonishment.

The population of this neighbourhood has nothing Spanish in its physiognomy or expression; indeed, I could pick out of a Dorsetshire village many more effective representatives of the Don, than we saw anywhere from Irun to Vittoria. Guipuscoa is one of the three Basque provinces, and its inhabitants still exhibit that comparative fairness of complexion, which they have inherited from some sea-king, who once upon a time made a descent, and then a permanent settlement, upon these coasts. They do not exactly shine in costume, and their hats exceed

in general dilapidation any worn by the *boys* of Tipperary, whom they further resemble in the use of brogues made of skins, and tied with thongs, which, if they let in the mud and water of this rainy district, possess at any rate the compensating advantage of letting them out again.

The Basques appear to be the butts of the Peninsula, and many are the jokes made at their expense, on account of their pride, language, and pronunciation. As they are the descendants of the oldest occupiers of Spain, untainted by any intermixture of Moorish blood, every man, however poor, considers himself a gentleman. They are said to entertain a notion that Adam spoke Basque, which language, having been imported into Spain by Tubal-Cain (a theory, that satisfactorily accounts for the unrivalled excellence of Spanish metal-work), long before the confusion of tongues at Babel, has continued in use ever since; though how their chronology disposes of the Flood, an intervening event of some importance, is not stated. Its pronunciation seems to be more difficult than even the Welsh, and it is an oft-quoted Andalusian joke, that the Basques write Solomon, and pronounce it Nebuchadnezzar!