

every kind of vegetable. He is now in his eighty-third year, a man of a spare, neat make, active, and fond of exercise, of a fair complexion, and engaging countenance. He rises betimes, walks several hours a day, superintends his workmen, and, though he sees but little company, takes the greatest care to have every thing that is excellent in its kind served up at his table, where his behaviour is as easy and chearful as if he were only thirty years of age; not the smallest grain of ministerial reserve or affectation: he is free and communicative in his conversation, which he renders infinitely agreeable, by seasoning it with a variety of lively anecdotes of events and persons, which so long a life of public employment has furnished him with in great abundance. He is fond of talking, but acquits himself so well of the task, that the most loquacious must listen with patience and pleasure to his discourse, always heightened with mirth and good-humour. Courts and ministers he treats with the ridicule they, for the most part, deserve. A man who has passed so many years behind the curtain, must often reflect with contempt on the futile, absurd springs, that set in motion the grand political machine. It was with the greatest regret that we took leave of this most amiable statesman¹³,

¹³ Mr. Wall died in the beginning of 1778.

and pursued our journey to Loja, a large town on the Xenil, where we got in just in time to escape a most terrible storm of thunder and lightning, followed by a very heavy shower.

The next morning we saw all the mountains covered with snow. This storm soaked so deep into the fat, greasy soil, that it was not without very extraordinary efforts that our mules dragged us up the steep hills. The country between Loxa and this place is very hilly, except an extensive plain in this neighbourhood. We passed through some very fine woods of evergreen oak.

Antequera is a large straggling town, at the extremity of the plain, situated on several hillocks in a nook of the mountains.

On the 5th instant we hired a guide, and set out on horseback for Malaga, by the mountain road, which is a ride of about seven leagues, whereas it requires a couple of days to go round in a carriage. At a short league from Antequera we came to the foot of the Escaruela, an almost perpendicular rocky mountain, which we ascended by a very dangerous winding path. A fellow employed to keep the mule-track in repair, lives in a hut half way up, and sells brandy to travellers, who very often stand in great need of a cordial in this cold region of the air. Having gained the summit, we traversed a plain encircled by shaggy rocks, and

and then rode for some hours up and down a chain of high wild mountains. We then descended gradually to lower hills in cultivation. The vines are planted in rows, without props: the intervals are ploughed with oxen once a year, and the shoots pruned, which is almost all the dressing they require. These are the outskirts of the high-country vineyards, which produce the wine we drink in England by the name of Mountain.

We next got down to still lower land, where we found the almond-trees white with blossoms, and the hedges full of periwinkle, myrtle, marigold, oleander, cistus, honeysuckles, and many other flowers in full blow. We dined upon some cold meat, at the door of a venta, in the shade, for the sun was too powerful to sit in. An itinerant beggar made no difficulty, though it was Friday, of partaking of what we could spare from our repast; and in return for our kindness, rolled up a little minced tobacco in a piece of white paper, put it in his mouth, to try if the roll was properly constructed, and then presented it, ready lighted, to my friend S. T. as the most polite acknowledgment he could make.

After dinner, we jogged on over hills and dales, along very narrow paths, to the playa or plain of Malaga, at which city we arrived about four o'clock; and

and here met our miquelet, whom we had dispatched from Granada across the mountains with a letter. He had passed a severe night in the Sierra during the great storm, and was very near being imprisoned on his arrival, for being the bearer of a letter, which nobody is allowed to carry in Spain without leave from the post-office.

Malaga stands in the very corner of the plain, which is quite bare of wood, except the little that grows about the country-houses; the naked craggy mountains hang over the shore, and scarce leave room for the city. A Moorish castle, on the sharp point of a rock, commands every part of it. This situation renders Malaga most insufferably hot for eight months in the year. I was assured it was hardly possible to breathe in it in summer. The port and road seem safe enough, but will be much improved, when the new mole is carried out its full intended length into the sea. The solid manner in which it is built, by rolling large masses of rock into the water, to form a foundation for the wall of the pier, insures an almost eternal duration to the work, but at the same time makes it difficult to compute the number of years it will require to complete the undertaking. The sea has lost ground here, on account of the sand hurried down from the mountains by a neighbouring river, and accumulated annually along the shore.

shore. The Darfena, or docks where the Moors kept their gallies, are still remaining on the wharf, and now serve as warehouses. The streets are narrow: some squares are of a good size; but I do not recollect any very remarkable building, except the cathedral, which is indeed a stupendous pile, begun by Philip II. while married to Mary queen of England. Their united arms are still to be seen over the door. Two gentlemen, who said they had measured both churches, assured me this cathedral was as large as that of St. Paul's in London; but I am not convinced of the exactness of their measurement. The church of Malaga may be as wide, but I cannot think it near as long. No doubt a Protestant church appears larger within than a Roman Catholic one of the same dimensions, as the latter is incumbered with pictures, tapestry, altars, &c. The outside of this edifice is crowded with columns and embellishments. The two belfreys are already of a prodigious height, and an order or two more are yet to be added. Its interior appearance is pleasing and majestic.

The bishop's palace, in the same square, loaded with frivolous ornaments, is a large building, but looks insignificant so near the other. Its prelate enjoys an income of £. 16,000 sterling.

General O'Connor, an old Irish officer, is governor of
this

this province, and resides at Malaga. Brute beasts are his delight, and all his apartments are stuffed with bears, dogs, cats, and monkies, to the great terror and annoyance of his visitors.

There are about fourteen foreign houses settled in trade at Malaga, who export five thousand butts of wine a year, of which the average price is from ten to thirty pounds a butt. Till within the last fifteen years, the quantity sent off was ten thousand butts; but, as no difference is made in England, in the duties, between old and new wine, the exporter grew careless in the quality of the wine sent, and the demand for it fell one half. The grapes, of which the choicest raisins are made, (a capital branch of commerce here) are half cut off the stem, and left four days to dry and candy in the sun. If pressed, they would make a rich white wine. The raisins dried upon the coast of Valencia are of an inferior quality, being dipped in a lye of lees of wine and ashes.

Yesterday I took a long walk into the Vega, and after enjoying the sight and perfumes of the orange-groves near every villa, was very much surprized to perceive in a farmer's yard a large bush of yellow roses in full beauty. This exceeded all idea I before had of the warmth of the climate, and earliness of its spring. In the evening we assisted at a very bad Italian

lian opera. In the middle of a song, all the actors and audience dropped upon their knees at the sound of a sacring bell, which let them know that the host was passing by. In a few minutes the singer resumed his amorous ditty.

We returned this afternoon from Malaga by the same road. The great variety of flowers blown since we had passed, made the mountain ride very agreeable, till we were overtaken by a storm of wind and rain that has not yet abated any of its violence.

Between Malaga and Gibraltar are twelve sugar-mills, where they have wrought time out of mind. The tradition is, that the sugar-cane was first brought into Spain by the Arabs.

Being now upon the point of taking leave of this eastern coast of Spain, which we have seldom lost sight of for these three months, it might be proper to introduce some general remarks upon the inhabitants and country; but I really have not presumption enough to attempt it, as I am conscious that the disposition of a people, their habitual character, customs, and manners, are not to be learnt without a long stay among them, and without becoming in some sort a messmate and familiar acquaintance of theirs. With all due respect for the Spanish nation, I don't wish to sacrifice the time such a study would require, as I apprehend I should.

should not be very amply rewarded for my pains. The peasantry seems very poor, and frugal in their diet: bread steeped in oil, and occasionally seasoned with vinegar, is the common food of the country-people from Barcelona to Malaga.

L E T T E R X X V I I .

Puerto Santa Maria, January 13, 1776.

ON the 9th instant, on leaving Antequera, we were stoppt by a river much swelled by the late rain, and lost a great many hours in seeking a road to the distant bridge. This was a real disaster to us, as, by retarding us half a day, it broke the chain of our stages, and laid us under the disagreeable necessity of stopping each ensuing night at a very bad inn, the good ones being placed at our dining distances. From Antequera to Pedrera the country is champaign and pleasant; some large lakes appearing between us and the mountains, and now and then some forest-land and olive-plantations, serving to enliven the prospect.

About Offuna, a large stinking town, we observed a
great

great many crosses set up along the road-side, to mark the places, as we were informed, where murders had been committed: but I very much doubt that piece of intelligence. Before we came into Spain, we had been so much alarmed by all we had heard of the number of banditti in the kingdom, and the danger of passing from one province to another, that we thought we could not take too many precautions, and accordingly made ample provisions of arms and ammunition; but having seldom heard any mention of robbers since we came into the country, our apprehensions have insensibly worn off, and we walk unarmed along the roads, about the villages, and in the bye-paths, without the least fear, or indeed reason to fear. In Catalonia and Valencia, where a regular police is established for apprehending thieves and preventing robberies, travellers go without arms; further south, I have observed that no horseman, muleteer, or ass-driver, is without his gun or sabre slung at the pommel of his saddle. Whether this implies any real danger, or only an ancient custom, I cannot pretend to determine. Whatever risks a single passenger may be supposed to run in a cross road, and unfrequented waste, I am very certain that a caravan like ours need be under no apprehensions of attack.

At Offuna we found we were come to the country of

large white hats, few of the men wearing any other. The environs of the town are handsome; gentle eminences covered with young corn, and large olive-yards on the declivities.

On the 11th, a beautiful park-like country, where the swells are covered with forests of pines and cork-trees, or rows of olive-trees. The intermediate vallies in pasture, full of herds of brood mares feeding at large. That afternoon we came to a flat heath of rushes and palmetos, where we saw great flights of vultures, storks, and plover. We passed the night in a most infamous *posada* at Molares; the place so wretched as to afford no wine. No innkeeper is allowed to sell liquor, and the wine-houses are generally near the inn; but in this miserable hamlet there was no such thing.

On the 12th, boundless heaths and arable grounds; on the former innumerable herds of cattle; on the latter we saw no less than twenty-four ploughs at work in the same field, each drawn by a pair of oxen. We had now fairly entered the rich plains of Andalusia, where we found the roads cruelly spoiled by the wet weather, and our wheels almost buried in the stiff clay. At Alcanterilla is a bridge of two arches, over a deep runner, guarded by an old Moorish tower at each end. The lower part of the bridge is Roman, as it is very easy to discern by the regular rustic cut of the stones,

stones, and the words AVGVST....PONTEM, the remains of an inscription, between the arches. A little beyond a place called Cabecas we met the first travelling coach we had seen on the road since we left Barcelona.

Farm-houses are dispersed about this country, as they are with us in England. The harvest is gotten in by the Galliegos, that travel from Galicia to assist those provinces, where the inhabitants are too lazy or too few in number to gather the riches which Nature, almost unsolicited, throws before them with profusion. The excessive badness of the highway obliged us to drive through the lands, which in their year of fallow run up into the thickest and strongest crops of French honey-suckle I ever beheld. Were this province properly peopled there would be no bounds to its produce, for the soil is inexhaustible, so eminently rich, that through all this luxuriancy of vegetation the wheels penetrated many inches into the loam. To balance these advantages, it must be confessed that the crops in Andalusia are very precarious, for if a sudden glare of sunshine succeeds too rapidly to a morning fog, the whole country is blighted.

We passed by the lake of Lebrixa, a handsome piece of water, surrounded by sloping grounds, and regular plantations of olive-trees.

Xeres

Xeres is a large town, with winding streets, and horrible kennels of black stagnated water; as the wheel broke the crust upon them, there arose an almost suffocating stench. The hills about the town are pretty, and the views towards Cadiz very pleasing. Some poets have placed the Elyfian fields in this neighbourhood, and pretended that the Guadalete was Lethe or the river of oblivion. If so, they had never seen the place, or it has undergone strange alterations since their days; for this paradise is now an immense marshy flat, through which a narrow river, much resembling those in the Lincolnshire fens, winds its course to the sea: not a stick of wood to be seen near it. We are to pass this Lethe to-morrow, and, lest the influence should operate upon me, I think it advisable to end my letter with assuring you, while I yet remember the ties and friendship of this upper world, that I am your's affectionately.

Cadiz, January 14.

Our carriages were sent off this morning, seven leagues round, by the bridge of Suaço, which joins the island of Leon to the main land of Spain; and we hired a bark, and fell down the Guadalete. Port St. Mary's is a long town, pleasantly situated on the river side. The bar at the mouth of the river is often very dangerous;