

taken here are rank poison; the water of the island is bad, and what most families drink comes from Port Saint Mary.

The usual afternoon amusements in winter are, a faunter on the Alameda, and the theatres. The Spanish play, which exhibits but a poor set of actors, begins about four; the Italian opera, not much better provided, about seven; and the French house opens rather earlier, and ends sooner, by which means the company may partake of great part of each of the entertainments in the same evening. The last-mentioned theatre is upon a very grand footing, supported by the voluntary subscriptions of the French merchants settled here. As the out-goings exceed the profits, they begin to be sick of so heavy a load, and it is likely their stage will be given up, upon the expiration of the term for which the factory entered into engagements with the actors.

L E T T E R XXIX.

Gibraltar, March 9, 1776.

THE end of the carnival at Cadiz differed very little from the beginning; no public balls or masquerades being allowed; the only marks of the festivity of shrove-tide, were the pailfulls of water which the women in the balconies poured upon the men in flouched hats and cloaks that passed within their reach. There were, however, many assemblies and balls of a lower class, where the fandango was danced *a la ley*, that is, in all the perfection it is capable of. Among the gipsies there is another dance, called the *Manguindoy*, so lascivious and indecent, that it is prohibited under severe penalties; the tune is quite simple, little more than a constant return of the same set of notes; this, as well as the fandango, is said to have been imported from the Havannah, being both of negro breed. I have been told, that upon the coast of Africa they exhibit a variety of strange dances, pretty similar to these. Whatever may have been the birth-place of the fandango, it is now so thoroughly naturalized in Spain, that every Spaniard may be said to be born with it in his head and heels; I have

I have seen a child of three years of age dance it to the mother's singing, with steps and turns scarce to be credited in an infant of that age. Towards the close of the great balls given heretofore in the theatre, when all the company appeared drooping with fatigue and overpowered with sleep, it was a constant trick of the fiddlers to strike up the fandango. In an instant, as if roused from the slumbers of enchantment by the magic touch of a fairy's wand, every body started up, and the whole house resounded with the uproar of clapping of hands, footing, jumping, and snapping of fingers.

As I have mentioned the gitanos, or gipsies, who swarm in this province more than in any other part of the realm, I think it a proper place to note down some particulars relative to this singular sept, who have kept themselves separate from the rest of mankind ever since their first appearance recorded in history. Their origin remains a problem, not to be satisfactorily solved, and I doubt whether the gitanos themselves have any secret tradition that might lead to a discovery of what they really were in the beginning, or from what country they came. The received opinion sets them down for Egyptians, and makes them out to be the descendants of those vagabond votaries of Isis, who appeared to have exercised in ancient Rome pretty much the same profession as that followed by the present gipsies, viz. fortune-

fortune-telling, strolling up and down, and pilfering. Few of them employ themselves in works of husbandry or handicraft; indeed the Spaniards would not work with them. Except a small number that follow the trade of blacksmiths or vintners, most of the men are makers of little iron rings, and other trifles, rather to prevent their being laid hold of as vagrants than really as a means of subsistence. Several of them travel about as carriers and pedlars, but none enlist as soldiers or sailors, or bind themselves as servants. Though they conform to the Roman catholic mode of worship, they are looked upon in the light of unbelievers; but I never could meet with any body that pretended to say what their private faith and religion might be: all the gipsies I have conversed with, assured me of their sound catholicism; and I have seen the medal of Nuestra Señora del Carmel sewed on the sleeves of several of their women. They seldom venture upon any crimes that might endanger their lives; petty-larceny is the utmost extent of their roguery. Their men are tall, well built, and swarthy, with a bad scowling eye, and a kind of favourite lock of hair left to grow down before their ears, which rather increases the gloominess of their features: their women are nimble, and supple-jointed; when young, they are generally handsome, with very fine black eyes; when old, they become the worst-favoured

voured hags in nature. Their ears and necks are loaded with trinkets and baubles, and most of them wear a large patch on each temple. Both sexes are remarkably expert at dancing, and sing the wild seguidillas with a peculiar turn of humour or tenderness, according to the subject. The present king had thoughts of banishing the whole race out of his dominions; but I believe the project is dropt, as the gipsies are rather an useles than a mischievous people. Their abode in the country, or their expulsion, seems a matter of little consequence, for the loss would not be severely felt, except in the apparent diminution of population; as they are of little or no service in the state, neither cultivating its lands, forwarding its manufactures and commerce, conveying its productions to foreign parts, or fighting its battles. Perhaps they render themselves necessary to the amusement of the common people, out of whose simplicity they work themselves a maintenance.

The weather being tolerably settled, we set out on horseback from Cadiz, about a fortnight ago, taking with us our beds and provisions, a precaution of great consequence in this journey. We left Cadiz in the afternoon, travelling along the sandy isthmus to the Isla, a town of a single street, that leads down to the bridge and redoubt of Suaço, where we got once more upon the main land. Soon after we struck off the great Xeres road,

road, into a flat marshy country, intersected by numberless drains and ponds for making salt, of which we saw many large heaps. This commodity is made with so little trouble, and sold to so small an advantage, that the makers don't think it worth their while to set up sheds, or build magazines, but prefer running the risk of losing half of it by the wet. Passing through a great mill, across many bridges and creeks, and through a very fine wood of pines, we arrived by moonlight at Chiclana, the Clapham or Hampstead of the merchants of Cadiz. It is a large well-built town, upon a navigable river, that winds through the low lands into the bay. After Easter, all is mirth and jollity here, for it is then crowded with families that retire hither to divert themselves, and to rub off the dull rust of Lent. The houses are exact copies of those of Cadiz, and the streets very near as offensive to the smell; but the environs are charming, and beautifully rural.

The next morning we were out very early, expecting a long laborious ride. After a troublesome ascent up some greasy hills, we passed through a noble pine wood, into an immense expanse of heath-land, speckled with an incredible variety of flowers, most of them unknown to me in their natural uncultivated state. I here saw a great many of the small red and yellow tulip, which, I am told, is the only species indigenous
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in Europe, and many beautiful kinds of the orchis, some representing bees and flies so naturally as to deceive at first sight.

On our right we left Conil, once famous for its tunny-fishery, which of late has dwindled away to nothing. We had afterwards an hilly corn country to pass, where the peasants, at work weeding the fields, amused themselves with giving us a volley of abuse, which to us was utterly unintelligible, but was no doubt very witty, as every speech the orator of the crew made raised loud peals of laughter in his companions. Their mirth was a little disturbed by a piece of humour of our Catalans, who, setting their sharp three-cornered hats up perpendicular on their heads, in imitation of horns, and sticking out their fingers, began to whistle with might and main. The Andalusians did not seem to relish the joke, and after some silence, set a scolding at us in a very angry tone of voice, which lasted as long as we were within hearing.

From these bare heights, we descended into a narrow vale, which almost encompasses the mountain that the town of Vegel stands upon. Seven picturesque aqueducts, or rather divisions of one, convey a fine supply of water from the hills to seven mills belonging to the Duke of Medina Sidonia. Each mill is placed at a considerable distance below the other, the seventh stands

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quite in the level at the bottom. Nothing can be prettier than these terraces, and little falls of water. Round each dwelling is a sweet orange-grove. The hedges along the steep sides of the road are thick set with laurestinus, now in flower, and many other handsome plants. The lowest part of the valley is a delightful spot, full of orchards and gardens, refreshed by innumerable streams of clear water running through the meadows into a deep river, which falls into the sea a few miles below.

We intended to have dined at the foot of the mountain of Vegel, but the hovel, called an inn, was so intolerably nasty, and the appearance of the sky seemed so much to threaten us with a dark, rainy evening, that we determined to pass by, and content ourselves with eating a morsel on horseback, as we jogged on. We crossed the river on an ancient Roman bridge, plain and solid, and then mounted a very steep sandy bank, on the top of which I found a ledge of mouldering rocks, full of *ostracites* and *pectinites*, some in a hard natural state, others so soft as to crumble to dust under the finger. The road lay afterwards through a forest of cork-trees, and the latter part of the day along a wet open pasture country. After being thirteen hours on horseback, with a drizzling rain upon us half the time, we were glad to stop at *Los Cortijos* about eight at night.

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Here had formerly been a venta, but all we could find was the cabin of a retailer of tobacco. This miserable dwelling consisted of one room, not well enough thatched to prevent the rain from beating through, and yet too close to let out the smoke of a few sticks burning in the middle of the house. The landlord, his wife, and children, occupied one end of the habitation, and abandoned the remainder to us, who were seven in number, squeezed into the space of a few feet square. The smoke grew so powerful, and the company so streighted for room, that after supper I retired across a kind of yard, to a manger in the stable, where I lay down, wrapped up in my cloak, upon the straw, and got a very comfortable nap till day-break, when we proceeded on our journey.

We travelled through a large tract of wet pastures, full of herds of cattle, with here and there a wretched hut for the herdsmen. After a long dreary ride over the hills that encircle these plains, we entered the woodlands, where we found the roads so wet and stony, that our baggage-mules were more than once laid fast. This forest extends many miles, during which we saw but one house; and that being white, and placed at the head of a lawn, environed with hanging woods, made a most romantic appearance. The prospects in these wildernesses are delightful, and we should have

found the ride through them charming, had our attention been less engaged by the continual apprehensions we were under of our horses falling in the deep broken roads. High mountains, and bold rocky cliffs, hang on every side over the groves; the timber trees are oak and cork, the underwood, shrubs of numberless kinds, growing with the greatest vigour and luxuriancy; such as the laurustinus, arbutus, brooms, citifus, forb, mastic-tree, privet, phylirea, cistus, oleander, pomegranate, bay, laurel, myrtle, butcher's broom, wild pear, heath at least fifteen feet high, &c. but the most remarkable is the rhododendron ponticum, with large purple flowers; it grows by the edge of the torrents that tumble down through the woods, and is a plant of singular beauty.

Upon leaving the thickets, we had a fine view of the rock of Gibraltar and the coast of Africa, a very grand marine scene. We then came to a rich vale of cornland, and a pretty meandering river, which we crossed twice near *Los Barios*, a small hamlet. From thence we found all the country marshy by the side of the bay of Gibraltar, or bare and hilly near San Roque, a large village on the top of a hill, overlooking the whole bay. Here the Spanish governor of the lines resides.

The next day we waited upon Don Joachim de Mendoza, the governor, who gave us the necessary passports.

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By his persuasion, we deposited what cash we had in the hands of his secretary, as it is forbidden to take above a crown apiece out of the Spanish territory. This proved a very superfluous caution, for we passed unsearched through the lines, and might have carried out of the Spanish bounds as much gold as we pleased. The lines are a fortification, that runs across the isthmus which separates Gibraltar from the continent. A regiment of infantry, several batteries, and a fort at each end, defend this barrier of the Spanish monarchy. It is about half an hour's ride from the land-gate of the English garrison.

The most extraordinary fortrefs and mountain, from which I date my letter, have been so often described by particular histories, prints, and drawings, that I shall not take up your leisure with needless repetitions. The views published by Major Macé are exact, and convey a very good idea of the four different faces of the mountain. Since the time of their publication, general Boyd has compleated the roads up the hill in every necessary direction: a carriage may now go up to the signal-house, which before seemed a place where none but goats could climb up to.

The hospitality of the governor, officers, and inhabitants; the bustle, military music, and parade; the fine appearance of the troops; the variety of tongues spoken

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and of dresses worn here, are themes I could enlarge upon for whole pages. After so long a journey through the still wastes and silent stupid towns of Spain, where every thing bears the marks of languor and indolence, we were at first quite flurried and confounded with the hurry in the garrison, the perpetual noise of cannon, and the reports of the soldiers going through their firing exercise. In the first nights we were startled with the frequent passing of the parole, which runs like a train of fire round the line of fortifications. It seemed strange to hear our native language spoken in the streets, to read it under the signs, and to meet so many English faces. I should have forgotten how far I was from home, had I not been reminded of the latitude by the brilliant clearness of the deep blue sky, and the sight of the African mountains, whose snowy tops, and even the objects at their feet, are very distinctly seen by the naked eye. You may discern all the buildings in Ceuta, and even in Tangier the houses may be distinguished in a clear day. We indulged the honest pride of Englishmen, in admiring the tall, handsome figures, and spirited, martial presence of the soldiers, and in drawing very comfortable parallels between them and the dirty melancholy dwarfs we had seen mounting guard in the Spanish garrisons.

We are now waiting for a fair wind to carry us over
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