

when he sees mothers abetting their boys and girls in their aversion to strangers, and fortifying them in their barbarous brutality ?

Thus far have I already push'd my observations on the low part of the people within this town. I am willing to believe that the higher sort are quite the reverse, and that they know politeness and humanity full as well as the higher sort of all other European nations, though I have not forgot the stupid haughtiness and forbidding look of the two gentlemen and the friar in the box at the Amphitheatre. But whatever I may believe, don't you begin to think that Portugal is rather too much in the neighbourhood of Africa ?

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L E T T E R X X V .

Good nuns. A scheme for rendering girls still more amiable. Heroism of a young Lady.

Lisbon, Sept. 8. 1760.

THIS morning I made a visit to one of those many religious houses that are maintained in several parts of this kingdom at the King's expence. It is call'd *the English Nunnery*, because no girl is admitted in it but what is born a subject of England. Any such girl, either left destitute in this country by parents unsuccessful in trade, or willing to come from the British Isles to devote herself in this country to chastity and confinement, may make sure of a livelihood in that Nunnery; and the veil once taken, she needs not to fear the approaches of real want as long as her soul and body will keep each other company.

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The number of the nuns there amounts to little more than twenty, and it is the chief anxiety of this little community to keep the number full, that the Government may not, in case of too many vacancies, take upon itself to fill them with Portuguese maidens, which the English women apprehend would create separate interests, and cause such feuds and parties amongst them, as they have hitherto been strangers to ever since the first foundation.

Animated by this rare species of terror, the poor things set their brains upon the utmost stretch whenever death deprives their community of a member, and all efforts are unanimously made towards the raising of a recruit. With this distant view, you cannot conceive how prettily they flatter all their visitors, especially those of their own sex! They keep besides a large epistolary correspondence with their friends and acquaintance
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in *England* and *Ireland*, by which means they have not failed as yet to obtain the desired supply.

Whoever can speak English, no matter whether Catholic or Protestant, has a kind of right to visit them at any time of the day; and all their visitors are used by them with such an endearing kindness, that their parlatory is in a manner never empty from morning till night. The poor things are liberal to every body of chocolate, cakes, and sweet-meats, and will take much pains with their needles or otherwise to enlarge the number of those visitors, and allure them to frequent calls.

Nuns in all countries are soft and obliging speakers; but these are certainly the softest and most obliging that ever fell in my way. Never was I told in a year so many pretty and tender words as this morning in half an hour. On my apprising them of my country, they expatiated on the immense goodness of Car-

dinal *Acciaïoli* and the gentlemen of his court, who did them the honour of seeing them often. No nation, in their opinion, is so good as the Italian, none so witty, and none so wise. In short, not a syllable issued out at their lips but what was dictated by modesty and meekness, humility and benevolence; and I will positively see them as often as I can while I stay here, because it is impossible not to be pleased with their converse, though one is perfectly conscious that they make it a study to treat every body with this gentleness of language and blandishment of manners. They certainly give you no reason for harbouring the least suspicion to their disadvantage, and their virtue is to all appearance without the least alloy: but were they in reality quite different from what they appear (which I am thoroughly persuaded is not the case), still the strong appearance of their innocence and goodness is irresistibly attracting, and the holy simplicity of

their behaviour can never fail of making a friend of every man who is once introduced to their acquaintance, though ever so much aware of their flattery.

The King, as I said, allows them such a sum as enables them to find themselves in victuals, linen, and raiment. Thus they are freed from the anxiety of procuring the chief necessaries of life. Yet life, even by recluse women, cannot be passed very comfortably with mere necessaries, and some addition is wanting to keep it from stagnating. Those minute superfluities, which the French call *douceurs*, so indispensibly required to render existence supportable, are left intirely to their industry; and these they procure partly by work and partly by making trifling presents, which are often return'd with liberality. These are the two means by which they furnish themselves with that chocolate so plentifully distributed at their parlatory to their incessant visitors, and with those other petty things

that alleviate the natural hardness of their condition. Some of them have small pensions paid them by their relations and friends, and whatever is got by one, is kindly shared by the whole sisterhood.

As the reputation of this little community was never sullied in the least ever since their establishment (and I am told that this is not quite the case with the Portuguese nunneries) is it not astonishing that no Portuguese parent ever thinks of sending his daughter amongst them as a boarder and by way of giving her a true maidenly education? A daughter thus placed would amongst other advantages have that of learning a foreign language very well worth learning; and nothing contributes so much to enlarge the sphere of our ideas, and to render a young woman amiable, as the knowledge of languages. Yet, few are the Portuguese, as I am told, who care for such an ornament in their daughters, or even
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in themselves, excepting those of the highest quality; and they have besides a particular antipathy to the language of England, as the notion prevails amongst them, that there is no book in that language but what is against religion; nor does their inquisition allow of the importation of any for fear of heresy: and it was not without contest and bribery that I saved the few in my trunk from confiscation at the custom-house.

The visiting of the *English Nunnery* has brought a scheme into my mind which I shall cherish long, and put in execution as soon as I can. Let me but be rich enough, and I will have four Nunneries in *Turin*, and endow them with a revenue equal to the maintenance of twenty nuns in each. One of them shall be filled with Florentine women, one of French, one of Spanish, and one of English.

I will take it for granted that when my Nunneries are erected, endowed, and



filled with proper inhabitants, my countrymen will have sense enough to send their little girls to them for education; and by a residence of about two years in each Nunnery, all the girls in *Piedmont* will be able to speak four languages, besides their own; which will certainly render them upon the whole the most lovely set of maidens in Europe.

But as I am not for turning pretty girls into nuns, I intend to make it the fundamental law of my Nunneries, that none of the nuns shall be young and handsome. It will probably not prove very difficult to procure out of each respective country one score of elderly maids or widows to fill them at first, and to keep successively the number quite complete; nor do I intend to subject them to the austere rule of keeping always within doors. They shall have a number of holidays to walk or ride out with their pupils, and be allowed all sorts of diversions becoming a set of exemplary matrons.

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This scheme I am confident you will think quite patriotick, and well worth taking place any where. But setting it aside until a properer time, let me tell you a story of *Lady Hill* (the present Abbess of the *English Nunnery*) which really deserves to be saved from oblivion.

This Lady took the veil there, because, like the rest of her sifterhood, (as I suppose) her circumstances did not permit a more agreeable choice: but soon after having made profession, a good estate in *Ireland* was vacated by a relation that died intestate, and of course devolved upon her by right of consanguinity.

To get the estate without going to *Ireland* herself, was thought difficult and subject to much delay. Her Abbess therefore represented her case to the Patriarch, who alone could dispense with her vow of constant confinement; and the Patriarch (not a rigid bigot it seems) upon a simple promise of return gave her leave to secularize her dress and depart.

She did so ; arrived in *Ireland* ; produced her title ; took possession ; and found herself at once in a condition to live in ease and even splendour in her native country.

The temptation of staying where one is, you will allow to be nearly irresistible in such a case, especially when you are additionally told, that she was not yet three and twenty, and handsome enough. However, if she was tempted, she was tempted in vain, for she sold the estate as speedily as she could, and, faithful to her vow and promise, hasten'd back to the Nunnery with the money, which she laid out in such a manner as to contribute much to the ease and convenience of her beloved community.

This was done by a woman ! This superiority to worldly pleasure, and this fidelity to an onerous engagement, was found in a female breast ! Would any friar in similar circumstances have behaved so nobly and have returned to his
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less heavy fetters after so lucky an escape? This question I will not answer for the honour of my own sex. I will only conclude the story of Lady *Hill*, with telling you that her companions, struck with admiration as well as gratitude, chose her immediately for their superior, and never after ceased to pay her the veneration so undoubtedly due to her unshaken virtue.



L E T T E R XXVI.

Italian Capuchins. Odd fibres.

Lisbon, Sept. 9, 1760.

I Need not tell you that the crown of Portugal is possess'd of several ultramarine countries, the inhabitants of which are far from being all christians; and that all possible endeavours have been used for these two or three last centuries, to bring them all within the pale of the church, partly by most detestable acts of violence, as historians tell us, and partly by

by the more lawful means of sending friars amongst them to preach them out of their ignorance and errors.

Amongst those friars, the capuchins have long enjoy'd the reputation of being the most zealous and most successful converters. But as their order was never established in this kingdom, the predecessors of his present Majesty thought fit to procure a number of them from those countries where they are established, and especially from France and Italy, where indeed there are enough to spare.

I suppose it was no very difficult matter for the first King of Portugal who thought of this scheme, to put it in execution, and to obtain from the Pope and their General the permission of importing as many capuchins here as were wanting. The design once formed, numbers of them came over in an uninterrupted succession; and as it was necessary for them all to learn this language before they were waded over to their respective missions, they were

were for a time, on their arrival here, scatter'd about the convents of the Franciscans, who are in reality little less than capuchins themselves, as the difference in their respective institutions chiefly consists in wearing a beard or no beard.

However, to lodge the Capuchins with people who shaved their chins, and somewhat jealous of their superior reputation for sanctity, was found productive of several inconveniencies. Therefore the late King came to the resolution of building two new convents in this capital, one for the French and the other for the Italian Capuchins, that each of the two bodies might live quite according to its own peculiar rules, depend on its own immediate superiors, and be by them directed to the acquisition of those means that would fit each friar for his speedy and distant pete-grination.

On hearing of these two convents and their inhabitants I was presently kindled by the desire of seeing a number of my country-

countrymen collected together in one of them; and to satisfy that desire I sent *Batiste* yesterday to the *Father Guardian* of the Italians to beg of him, if it was not inconsistent with their practices, as I supposed it was not, to give me a dinner any day he pleased at their common table, together with the permission of spending a whole afternoon in the company of his community.

My request was immediately granted, and the good *Guardian* pitch'd upon to-day, that I might be the sooner gratify'd.

Accordingly this morning at ten o'clock, I went thither with the box of my chaise pretty well furnished with French bottles, as by way of return to their civility I thought of forcing them for once to some extraordinary jollity by means of such liquors as I know they taste but seldom.

The *Guardian* I found ready to receive me at the gate. He welcom'd me with infinite goodness, and seem'd perfectly pleased

pleased with so flattering a visit, as he termed it. In a moment I had the whole brotherhood about me, which consists of about fifteen or sixteen, all middle-aged, all healthy, and all very chearful. I must own that I was quite delighted to shake so many Italian hands, and to hear my native language uttered at once by so many mouths. They took me directly to the church where a *Pater* and *Ave* was soon said; then we visited the convent quite through, from the kitchen up to the library.

The convent stands upon an eminence on that end of the town which is furthest from the sea, and commands a prospect not much inferior to that of the Dominicans of *Almada* on the opposite side of the river.

The habitations of the capuchins in Italy are in general narrow, poor, and unadorned: but this is quite otherwise, as the King who erected it, spared no expence to render it acceptable to the strangers

gers he invited over. Their church is a noble one, and richly ornamented, their dormitories and refectory are spacious and high-roofed, and their cells might as well be called very good rooms. The ceiling of their library does not want stuccos, nor their shelves carvings; and the most precious *Brasil*-woods have been lavished in it as well as all about the convent.

As to the books in that library, there is not as yet the tenth part of what it might contain; and you may easily imagine that the greatest part of them are such, as can never pretend to the honour of admittance amongst those of the witty philosophers of the age. Some Latin Fathers simply bound make the first figure in the place: then many School-divines and Casuists, with a considerable number of Asceticks, and several collections of Italian and Portuguese sermons. Amongst which *Segueri* and *Vieyra* hold the first rank. A small shelf is filled up with manuscripts, chiefly catechisms and prayers

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in several Indian and African languages; with some imperfect Grammars and Dictionaries, or rather Nomenclators of those same languages, compiled by former missionaries and deposited there for their successors to initiate themselves in them before they set out for those remote countries to which they are to go after a residence in Portugal of a few months.

Having spent full two hours in that library, the bell called us to the refectory. As we entered it, the friars placed themselves in two rows, one facing the other, and recited a long Latin grace with a sonorous tone of voice, those of one row answering alternately to those of the other with an edifying solemnity of devotion.

We now sat to a table that runs along the upper part of the place, and is made in the form of a greek Π . They placed me into the place of honour; that is, the middle point, the *Guardian* on my right, the *Vicar* on the left, and the rest on each side, except the youngest of them all, who

who mounted a small pulpit and began to read a Latin compliment composed that very morning in commendation of some body present. That compliment I was obliged to swallow up to the last syllable, in spite of my several attempts to interrupt the perusal, and repeated intreaties that they would not make so prodigious a stranger of their own countryman. It was that arrant rogue *Batiste* who furnished the orator with his theme, as I immediately gueſs'd; and he was listening all the while at the door, heartily laughing at the diſcompoſure and confuſion of his old maſter; for which I gave him a good box on the ear while he was felicitating himſelf with old *Kelly* for his pretty contrivance on our return home.

Silence being diſpenſed by the *Guardian* out of favour to me, we all fell to our victuals with a brisk appetite, and though I had been very explicit in my meſſage of yeſterday about the treatment I expected, yet Father Cook thought proper

proper for once to depart from his daily method, and gave us as many Italian and Portuguese ragoos as he could possibly manufacture. We were elevated to high mirth during the whole dinner. Jokes were crack'd by dozens, no matter whether witty or dull, and the bottles went round and round with as much briskness as if the *Guardian* and *Vicar* had been in Asia. They forced even a song out of me in a language of which none of them knew a single word. The banquet lasted an hour longer than it would have done if I had not been there, and ended with another Latin grace.

This great business being over, they took me to the garden, the circumference of which is near half a mile, perfectly well kept, and full of the choicest fruits. It lies on a sloping ground, and on the highest side of it there is a pretty large pond inhabited by a sort of fishes not to be found in any other place, as they believe. The creatures, as far as I could see,

are about two spans long, and half as large, with a prominent bunch upon their backs, and not good to eat like other fishes. But what will surprize you to hear, they are of a nature so gay, that they prove quite astonishing. *Fishes, fishes*, cried the Guardian, *come to your dinner, come, come.* The fishes started up, sprang and tumbled about the water, seized the many pieces of bread that he threw to them, and then retired out of sight. The pleasantness of such a scene is not to be conceived. I begg'd that some of the company would preach them a sermon, hoping they would come out again and behave quite as well as those of the Adriatick upon a certain occasion. The Fathers took the joke, and smiled, and wondered I had not forgot my pretty Italian stories in my long absence from my native country.

We then play'd at bowls under the grape-bowers, and, above all, chatted incessantly. But what took my fancy most, was a translation of one of the
Cantos

Cantos of the *Jerusalem delivered* in the *Genoese* dialect which one of the Fathers read to the company. This, he said, was a juvenile composition of his ; and I thought it excellent in its kind. They are all subjects of the republic of *Genoa*, and have been successively so for many years, as a medley of them, formed at first out of the several Italian states, was judged inconvenient soon after their introduction in Portugal.

Towards evening I took my leave with a million of thanks for their kindness and good treatment ; went to the coffee-house, as usual ; then came home and scribbled thus far : and now I have nothing further to tell, but that to-morrow I will begin a journey to *Mafra*, *Cintra*, and some other places.



L E T T E R XXVII.

*A short excursion. Sad accommodations.
Thanks to Aurora.*

Cintra, Sept. 11, 1768.

THOSE who have never gone twenty miles from home, are apt to fancy that travelling is a very pretty thing. But let him who holds this opinion, come to travel about Portugal, and I will submit to eat thistles if he does not stagger in his notions about travelling.

I have now been two days out of *Lisbon*, because I suffered myself to be seduced by the desire of seeing *Mafra* and *Cintra*. But I pay dear for my folly, as I have undergone more misery during these two days than ever fell to the share of any man during two centuries. The expression sounds odd: but you know that extreme pain makes people mad.

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The deplorable account of these two days hardships and torments is now conveyed to you by means of this letter from a room on the ground-floor of a house half-ruined, that goes in this country under the appellation of an inn, and would be thought in any other a rendezvous for witches.

The furniture of this room consists of three things. An ill-hewn bit of a fir-plank, which by means of three crooked sticks has obtained the name of stool; a tottering old table as smooth as a rasp; and a piece of coarse and dirty canvas stretch'd wide upon the dusty floor made of broken bricks: and this is the best bed that this inn could afford. Ye unfortunate bones that crack'd so many times last night upon the stony couch at *Mafra!* how shall I save you from breaking by and by when extended upon these uneven bricks, where I must lay myself for weariness!

But let me begin the sad chronicle from yesterday morning and bring it orderly down to this woeful evening: and while I take a pinch of snuff to quicken my narration, take yourselves a cordial that your hearts may not fail you while you read it.

Yesterday morning therefore, a little before seven, I got into my chaise, attended by old *Kelly* on horseback, and set out for *Maфра*: but my brown mules went along with so senatorial a pace, that it was past twelve when we reached a village called *Cabeza*, about twelve miles distant from *Lisbon*.

At the inn of *Cabeza* we stopped with a mind to get a dinner, if there was any to be got. A smiling little fellow showed me to a room, which would be a tolerable lodging for a Gypsey or a Jew, was it not that it admits too much light through the chinks of the cieling or roof, and that the floor is not

not near so well paved as the great road.

It presently occur'd that the smiling little fellow had mistaken *Kelly* and me for the mules, and the mules for us: therefore I stepp'd to see how they were accommodated; and indeed I found that they had been received in an apartment much larger and cleaner than ours: however I did not think proper to change places, because, if our room had a perforated roof, theirs had no roof at all.

We should have had neither dinner that could be eaten, nor wine that could be drank, if *Kelly* had not desired his wife at all events to put something better than straw in the box of the chaise; and the good woman had dropp'd into it a pigeon-pye, a roasted turkey, and a Barbary-tongue, together with half a dozen bottles of the best wine. By means of such provender we baffled the design of the *Cabeza* host, who wanted to poison us with stinking lard and with a fowl that

my negro found quite as tender as the tail of an old alligator. The finiling rogue! Beware of fellows that smile for ever!

At night we reached *Mafra*, about eight miles distant from *Cabeza*. The whole country from *Lisbon* to *Mafra* (very few spots excepted) may very well dispute the praise of sterility with any desert in *Nubia*.

The supper that was offered us there, was not a bit inferior to the dinner at *Cabeza*. But our turkey had yet lost no more than a wing and a leg, and of the pigeon-pye two good thirds were still in store.

But when the hour came to go to bed, what eloquence could ever express the misery I was to undergo! I was led into a room, whose cieling was open from space to space. In that room there was a bed which, though not quite so wide as *America*, had still several wild nations
scat-

scattered all about, all painted black, and all as nimble as any Indians.

I will leave it for you to guess whether I could shut my eyes a moment during the whole night amidst so many enemies! Lucid Aurora! I humbly thank thee for thy early coming to call me out of that bed. Whatever flesh and blood I have still left, I will henceforwards acknowledge as thy gift; and thy gift likewise was that appetite which permitted me to eat half a melon for my breakfast.

After breakfast I paid my visit to the Royal Convent, the description of which you shall have to-morrow, if ever I get up alive from this piece of canvas, on which I am going to lay myself through mere impossibility of keeping my body in a fitting posture.

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L E T T E R XXVIII.

*Promontorium Lunæ. Holes, and Holes,
and Holes again. An odd evening walk.
A chearful dinner. Coins dropp'd to a
Mary Magdalen for a very good reason.*

Cintra, Sept. 12. 1760.

I Have had the good luck to secure such a bed for to-night, and pass'd the day besides with so perfect a satisfaction, that the dirty canvas and uneven bricks are already forgotten. And so goes this fickle world! A perpetual shifting from good to evil, and from evil to good.

And now the natural order of things seems to require a description of the Royal Convent: but what I have seen to-day presses a great deal more upon my fancy, and my impatience of imparting to you a share of the pleasure I have received myself to-day, makes me invert the laws of narration without any great hesitation.

This

This morning early I quitted this place along with my trusty *Kelly*. Leaving the mules and the horse at the inn, each of us got astride upon a jack-ass; and so we went up a high and steep mountain to see a convent of *Jeronimites* which is on the summit of it.

That convent could formerly contain near a dozen of inhabitants; yet at present there are but four or five, because a part of it has been demolished by the earthquake. What is left of it consists of five or six rooms supported by a portico that encloses a court-yard. This yard is paved chequer-wise with white and blue tiles of earthen ware, and so disposed as to collect all the rain-water into a cistern under it. The walls of the portico are likewise incrusted with such parti-colour'd tiles.

From the windows an extensive prospect is commanded, as that summit is near a mile higher than the level of the sea. The eye runs freely over an immense tract

tract of country, too much of it quite barren.

The middle parts of the hill seem composed of numberless broken rocks, some as big as houses. Yet between rock and rock the Fathers have cultivated several small bits of ground, which furnish their little community with more pulse and herbage than they want. It is pity that no fruit-tree will grow there, because of the sharp air and chilling mists: so that whatever fruit they have, is fetched every day from *Cintra* with their other provisions, and carried up to them upon asses of their own. But besides herbs and pulse they cultivate Turkey-corn, with which they make savoury cakes for themselves and visitors, and feed poultry with the overplus.

To the summit of that mountain there is no access but by the path we went. Every other side consists of cliffs upon cliffs, inaccessible even to goats.

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As the church and the convent were originally built in a most solid manner, the earthquake had not strength enough to demolish them intirely, though it was felt as violent there as in any other part of Portugal: nor did any of the friars perish, though the whole mountain was horribly shaken. The church stands on the very spot that was formerly occupied by a Roman temple dedicated to the Moon, which had given the name of *Promontorium Lunæ* to the hill. This scrap of erudition I got from one of the friars.

We stay'd there about two hours; then came down afoot, our jack-asses driven before us by the Negro. About mid-mountain I hired a guide to show us the way to another hill near two leagues from this. The fellow took us about and about through a pathless country, partly covered with loose pieces of rocks, partly heathy, and partly sandy. Yet from space to space we met with numbers of
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fir and cork-trees, with some small oaks and a few other plants, that contribute to render several parts of it romantically beautiful.

The place we were going to, stands on the summit of another mountain no less high than the supposed *Promontorium Lunæ*, called by the Portuguese *Cabo de Roca*, and by the English *the Rock of Lisbon*. I hope you have not forgot that Rock, and the pleasure it gave me when I saw it for the first time. It was the *Cork-Convent* on its summit I wanted to visit, and we reached it with some difficulty, as we went to it by a cross-road extremely rugged and steep, and over several precipices that demanded much attention both from us and from our asses.

The *Cork-Convent* is properly a hermitage ; and you have but one path to it under a kind of arch irregularly cut through a piece of rock by the hand of nature. That arch is about two hundred steps

steps below the hermitage, and all other parts near that summit are perfectly pathless and not to be clamber'd.

Near that arch we left our asses in the custody of our guide, and ascended the rest of the mountain a-foot. And here, ye Muses nine, I invoke your assistance! Help me to an adequate description of the oddest, wildest, most romantic, and most pleasing place that ever I was in!

The hermits had discover'd us from a-far; therefore we found them ready to receive us. We bow'd, shook hands, and seem'd as pleas'd as if we had long been most intimate friends. The Father Superiour ask'd us whether we had dined, and being answer'd in the negative, dispatched one of his Friars to make something ready as fast as possible. He then took us to see the place which begins with a flat irregular area about forty yards square.

The area is fronted by a huge rock variously perforated; and its various perfora-

forations, caverns, or holes form the hermitage. The church of it is a hole; the sacristy a hole; the confession-room a hole; the kitchen a hole; the dormitory a hole; the refectory a hole; every cell a hole; and the doors and windows of all these holes are still nothing else but so many other holes. But so narrow are those which form the doors of the cells, that should a man grow hydropic while in one of them, he never would be able to come out of it; and the cells themselves are so small, that no tall friar when in his bed has room enough to extend his legs. Yet in them they lie at night upon straw-bags, after having taken the precaution to shut what they call their doors and windows with small planks.

Not one hole in the whole place deserves the epithet of spacious. The largest is that which they term *the Kitchen*. A French cook would be angry at the prostitution of so noble a word, but the friars are not so scrupulous. The smoke
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of that kitchen is carried out by a cylindrical perforation over the fire-place.

Dame Nature indeed was in a merry mood when she took it into her fancy to form so whimsical a place. You cannot conceive what little help she received from art to fit it for its present inhabitants. The earthquake shook it to and fro, and, they say, with inconceivable violence. Yet that violence proved vain, and I do not wonder at it. The demolition of the hermitage cannot be effected but by the fall of the mountain.

What adds to the singularity of this natural edifice is, that every part in it is covered with cork; the walls, floors, and all. And this is the reason why the English sailors call it *the Cork-Convent*. That cork prevents the bad effects of the dampness which would otherwise be very inconvenient, as many parts of its walls are cover'd with a thin moss, and the water distils through the pores of the rock in very small drops.



From the hermitage they descend by a range of irregular steps to a piece of water and to their several spots of garden. Not far from that water there is another hole, in which one of their predecessors had the patience to live the last twenty years of his life, without ever quitting it day or night. At least you are told so by an inscription over that hole, absurdly supported by the testimony of the friars themselves, who were all born near two centuries after, according to the inscription, which I wish fairly destroy'd and the hole filled up for their own sake, as the place has no need of a lye to induce people to visit it. No human being could ever live in that hole for several reasons that I will forbear to tell.

I said that there is a piece of water on that eminence, which fertilizes several spots. The friars are all gardeners and have vegetables of various sorts in great abundance, but no fruit. The many
steps

steps by which they descend to that water, they term humourously their *evening walk*; and, abating the inconvenience of the steps, it is really a pleasant walk, shaded with many trees and bushes.

After having visited the whole hermitage we went to dinner. In the midst of that hole that is called the Refectory, a stone serves them for a table whenever the rain forces them to eat their victuals under shelter. But to-day, as the weather was very fine, we chose to dine in the area. Being a meagre day we had an ample dish of salt-fish most favourily dress'd after the manner of the country with garlick and *pimenta*, a large fallad, and Dutch cheese with pears, apples, grapes, and figs, ten times more than we could eat, good bread, and excellent wine. During dinner the hermits kept us in chat with the greatest good humour; told us of the many English gentlemen and ladies that visit them, and help'd us to our glasses very briskly. The wine

was good, and we could not help drinking the English Ladies.

These hermits are of the Franciscan order; therefore will touch no money: but there is a *Mary Magdalen* painted over a kind of altar in the church; and to *Mary Magdalen* you drop a coin sily. It would not otherwise be in the power of this little community to furnish their numerous visitors with meat and drink, and entertain besides a good number of poor people who visit the place, partly out of devotion and partly to get a meal. They admit ladies to visit the hermitage when they are in company with gentlemen; otherwise not: and as to women of low rank, they are not allowed to ascend beyond the Arch mentioned before, except on some festival days.

About an hour after dinner we took our leave and went back to our asses who had leisurely cropp'd the thistles about, while our guide and the Negro feasted merrily upon herrings, cheese, and fruit,

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convey'd to them with a sufficient quantity of bread and wine by one of the fathers.

And now I may truly say that I have seen the strangest solitude that ever was inhabited by men, amidst the most pleasing assemblage of craggs, rocks, trees, and bushes that can possibly be fancied; the whole commanding a most wide and amazing prospect, as from thence you discover a vast tract of the ocean with many of the castles and habitations at the mouth of the *Tagus*, the tops of the Royal Convent of *Mafra*, several villages and hamlets; with many single cottages scatter'd over a long chain of uneven mountains, some of which are perfectly rocky and barren; some shaded with oaks, fir-trees, and cork-trees; and some cover'd with vines, olive-trees, and lemon or orange-groves, besides numberless other plants of every kind and generation.