

guide was ignorant of the road, I joined company with them; we crossed the river above Cantoria, about a league below Purchena, and ascending a mountain tract arrived at Macael, a village celebrated from the time of the Moors for its quarries of statuary marble. I sent for the *maestre de canteras*, or quarry master, and ascertaining I had not time to see the quarries that evening, I determined to sleep at Purchena and return in the morning. Nothing could exceed the kindness of these people, who are extremely poor, with a mine capable of enriching the whole district, which is now perfectly useless and unprofitable. They pressed me so much to stay with them, that I had great difficulty to get away. There was no *posada*, but they said neither men nor mules should want for anything. Their difficulties were increased by a new and arbitrary tax lately laid on by the *Corregidor* of Baza, under whose jurisdiction they are, of a dollar *per fanega* on all seed corn sown, and levied in the mode usual in Spain previously to its being put into the ground; a dreadful and ruinous tax, especially in a part of the country where the crops of corn give a very uncertain return, in addition to the other heavy charges; but they had no remedy and were obliged to submit. The village is in a *barranco*, or ravine, with a beautiful stream of water, of which no use was made, and they had not the slightest idea of saw or polishing mills for the marble. I fixed with the *maestre* to meet him in the morning, and went to Purchena, which I was anxious to see. It is about a league distant. On entering the town I inquired of an old woman if there was a *posada*? "Si señor, hay una, nueva, hermosa." It had a most inviting appearance, but the interior turned out to be a mere shell, all the back part being unfinished, and the only habitable room was occupied by a commercial traveller. I arranged to sleep in the open space at the entrance, and inquired what was to be had for supper;

was there mutton? "Hush! habra." "Wine?" which is celebrated. "Tambien habra, pero no diga v. nada." The meaning of this was, that there was a monopoly of these articles in the place, most probably by the Ayuntamiento, and that the articles sold publicly were dear and bad, and must be procured in other quarters. As I was retiring to rest, an *alguazil* came to say the *Alcalde* wished to see me. He was a gentleman, the place being of some consequence. He asked me a few questions very politely, which he was quite justified in doing, as the times were very critical, and I was out of the direct route, and in a place very seldom visited. I explained my object, and he said "Pero que necessita v. en la Peninsula?" but what brings you to the Peninsula? I answered that I had permission from my own government and from that of Spain to travel, which I supposed sufficient. He instantly gave me the passport, which was already signed; saying "vaya v. con Dios." Purchena, which possesses great historical interest, from its being the residence of the *Re Chico* after the surrender of Granada, is situated at the foot of the Sierra de Filabres, the eastern shoulder of the Sierra Nevada. The ruined castle occupies a lofty cliff at the back, and below it is the junction of two branches of the Almanzora. The country is beautiful, but is now almost entirely divested of trees. The town, which contained seven thousand houses in the time of the Moors, has now barely four hundred. The situation is of great importance, as it commands the whole vale of the Almanzora and the sea at the south, an easy communication with Baza and with Lorca by Cuevas, as well as two lines of road to Almeria and the mines of the Sierra de Filabres. In the course of the evening, a variety of characters assembled from the village. I endeavoured to get information about the route for the next day, intending to cross direct from

the quarries of Macael to Almeria. The maps were of no use. No two accounts agreed. No one knew more than the road they always frequented, which was a line higher up the Sierra ; and represented the other as impracticable, or full of robbers : they could not agree in the distance within several leagues, and I had to follow my own plan and trust to the chance of finding a line in the direction I had planned. In the morning I returned to Macael, taking Antonio Vicarro, the *maestre de Canteras*, and a guide to put me in the route to Almeria. The quarries are a league above the village, and there is a scrap of pine forest which afforded a most agreeable contrast to the arid regions I had traversed for several days. The principal bed of marble is near the summit of the forest, and is entirely disengaged. There were seven beautiful blocks, apparently intended for bas reliefs, about seven feet in length, ready to be sent to London; the first foreign order, I believe, they had ever received. Another immense block was quite ready to be detached, but the only other order they had, was for a blue and white pavement in small squares, for a convent of nuns at Murcia. I inquired why they did not make a mill to assist in the working? "no hay genio," there is no will. The chief defect is the want of a road. They transport the blocks with vast labour to the bed of the Almanzora, and then to a place on the beach near Vera, where they are embarked. The easiest and best direction is by Atal and Tabernas to Almeria. The whole line is an inclined plane, and the *maestre* assured me, he could make it fit for transport for eighty thousand *reals*, about eight hundred pounds. The block alluded to is the fellow to one moved at the end of the last century, before the troubles of Spain commenced, which forms the magnificent tomb or monument of the archbishop in the chapel of St. Miguel, in the cathedral of

Granada. It is about twelve feet high, in one solid block, apparently without a flaw. It was moved at an enormous expense, the journey to the river, which is only two leagues, occupying three weeks, and that to Baza as much. The father of the *maestre* had assisted in the operation, which is handed carefully down in the history of the place. A great quantity of marble of inferior quality has been at various times taken from these quarries up to the period in question. The magnificent blocks, that give the name to the hall of the two sisters at the Alhambra, which are twelve or thirteen feet in length, and all the white marble in it, was brought from hence. The views from the upper part of this forest are very fine. The vast *delta* of the Almanzora resembles a Libyan desert, the course of the river being marked by a narrow strip of dark green. The country between the river and the mountains east of it, is worn by the torrents into innumerable hillocks, and gives that appearance which caused Bowles, who first visited this region, to compare it to the agitated waves of a stormy sea. This mountain belongs to the commune, who have the exclusive right of working it, but they have no capital, nor means of extending their operations. After leaving the forest, I descended by an open country to Atal, so pronounced by the people, but written in the maps Tahal. It is a stout, well-built village, with a small Moorish keep or feudal castle at the upper end, which is surrounded by a low turretted basement, and a ditch. The name is probably from the watch or look-out, and it may have been the possession of a chief who figured by that name in the insurrection of the *Moriscos*. At some distance below is a small plain, at the extremity of which stands Tabernas, a decayed place of great consequence in the wars of the Moors. It has a ruined castle of considerable size and strength, upon an eminence, and completely commanding a defile

leading to the great river of Almeria. The next day I descended by a deep gravelly bed or water way, with lofty walls on each side, and with scarcely any cultivation, until we joined the main trunk or river of Almeria. The scene then changed, and a completely African country succeeded. Palms, orange and lemon trees, flat roofs to the small houses, and a physiognomy as completely Moorish as the opposite coast could exhibit, mark this part of the *Tierra caliente*.* After following the wide bed of the river for some distance, I crossed a small range of hills and arrived at Almeria. Soon after my arrival, the people of the *fonda*, who were of great respectability, told me that a well known character, a police spy, had been prowling about and making inquiries and observations about my passport, no doubt with a view to extort money. I paid no attention to this, but went to call on the Governor, who was ill and living out of town, and on the Vice Consul, who was absent. I was drawing on the rocks at the back of the town, when a soldier came and begged I would accompany him to the guard-house. The officer, who could not comprehend the difference between military drawing and sketching a landscape, referred me to the Colonel, who was with many other officers; he instantly dismissed the complaint. I rode out to Cape de Gatt, to look at the geology, when a soldier requested I would go to a post on the beach. The sergeant commanding examined my passport, and did not detain me an instant, but privately sent off an express to the town to mention the circumstance. In the evening the Vice Consul, who had arrived, called on me, and said he had received notice from the authorities that I might expect a visit from them. Accordingly, the aid-de-camp of the Governor and the police spy came, with the

* For the explanation of this term, see Introduction to the Natural History.

Vice Consul, and in due form requested to see my papers. They took my portfolio and note-book, and we went to the Governor, who was living in a country-house outside : when we came to the door, the spy gave a private signal, and it was immediately opened. He received me with the greatest civility ; he took my pocket book, and saying he presumed it contained my notes, gave it to me unopened ; the sketches he examined with the interest of an amateur, and then returned them, saying "this complaint was made to me, and I was obliged to notice it, but I am extremely sorry it has happened ; it is my desire to give every assistance and show every attention to officers of any country allied with the king of Spain, who may visit this place. Had I known of your being here, I would have sent an aid-de-camp to show you every thing in the place." The miserable animal to whom I owed this adventure, whose appearance was as filthy and disgusting as his occupation, was present, but it was his last performance, and he was driven out of the place, of which he had long been the pest and detestation, a few days afterwards. The reason of the severity of the military duty was, that Torrijos had arrived at Gibraltar, and was daily expected to make a descent on the place. The town is a mere shadow of its ancient state in the time of the Arabs. The houses are small and low, but neat and clean. The Moorish walls are almost entire. The Alcazaba, or citadel, was of great size and strength, having three interior lines. The upper part is of the time of Charles the Fifth ; having been built subsequently to the capture. The character of the lower class of inhabitants is completely Moorish : some of their houses, which have flat roofs and only one story, have two or three rooms without windows, opening into each other and merely separated by curtains, the inside, or sleeping apartments, looking

into a small inclosed yard, where are the cooking utensils and stoves, as in Barbary. The women may be seen, in some of the smaller houses, in loose robes covering them entirely from head to foot ; and a light tinge of yellow completes this Moorish character. In the cottages, where I frequently accosted them, making different excuses for doing so, I found them invariably civil, but shy and retiring. Some of their voices are the sweetest in the world. The Moorish character, which this part of the country preserves with perhaps as great purity as any other part of Andalusia, is owing, in all probability, as well to the climate, which has permitted the African usages to be retained, as to the little violence which accompanied the capture of this important place. It surrendered without resistance, and escaped the horrors which awaited the inhabitants of those who defended their altars. In other respects, the same consequences have resulted, the ruin of commerce and of agriculture, and the reduction of the population to a fraction of what it formerly was. Some of the better families are of pure Moorish descent. Almeria is, to use the expression, a polished place, like all the cities of the south, where the elements have not been disturbed by some local cause, and the "trato" is very agreeable. * It is a kind of secondary capital, and, if it were not for the utter decay of the whole country, would be of great consequence. The plain to the East, which is terminated by the Cape de Gatt, and is now little more than a desert, might be cultivated. The bay commands the coast communication both ways : a carriage road leads to Granada by Guadix, and communicates with

* The word *trato* is in common use, in this sense, and is too comprehensive to admit of translation. It means the manners and deportment of either individuals, or of cities, or even countries. The verb is also used, and "no le he tratado" is constantly said, meaning, I have not had dealings with him personally.

the whole of the mountain passes of the eastern end of the Sierra Nevada, comprising many mining districts.

I hired mules, and set out for Adra. When we had proceeded some distance, I suspected we were following a line too far from the coast, and on inquiring of a peasant, found it to be so : my guide was ignorant of the road, and was too idle and conceited to inquire. The informant put us on a road which conducted, by some smelting mills, through a defile, into the Campo de Dalías, an elevated flat near the seashore, quite uncultivated, with only a few small lead mills scattered over it. Some *algibes*, or cisterns, of the Moors are yet remaining ; but with *pantanos*, or tanks, it might be made a garden. At the western end the hills close on the coast, leaving a small marshy district, at the termination of which, on a sandy strip, in a truly African climate, stands Adra. A stream flows near it, the delta of which forms sugar grounds. The place has assumed some consequence of late, from its being the port and chief smelting place for the lead of the Sierra de Gador. There is an extensive establishment intended to embrace the whole lead business, of pipes, sheets, &c., the use of which is as yet unknown in Spain. I went to Berja, by the course of the stream, ascending through narrow gorges. The dreadful destruction of the floods, of which mention will be made hereafter, extended to this part. A most industrious and respectable Frenchman had established a water-mill, where he gained a subsistence by smelting the refuse ores and scoriæ of the richer establishments : his whole savings were vested in charcoal, the entire mass of which was swept away, and the mill narrowly escaped. Berja is a beautiful place, in a *hoya*, or small basin, surrounded by lofty mountains, and being well watered, and at a moderate elevation, is a healthy and thriving place. It is the intermediary station of the innumerable mules and asses

employed in transporting provisions and supplies to the Sierra and carrying the ore to Adra. In the morning I ascended the Sierra de Gador, which resembles a new colony. It is a high and perfectly bare limestone ridge, on which were huddled, in the rudest manner, eight thousand men. The habitations are of stone, with the least possible quantity of wood; and the roofs covered with a sort of cement. The proprietors and managers were lodged scarcely any better than the men; their stores and provisions being annexed. Not a woman or an animal of the canine species is permitted to reside on the mountain, doubtless from motives of economy, as the provisions are furnished to the men at discretion: and they informed me the consumption, especially of the new comers, was enormous. Their diet is at present confined to bread and potatoes, not even salt fish being supplied, owing to the exorbitant duty upon it; a practical specimen of the commercial system of Spain. These mines are so dry, that water to drink is wanting, and, being brought from a great distance, is a very expensive article. After the shafts are sunk and the mine discovered, the labour is merely mechanical, ropes and baskets of spart, and rude wooden winches being the sole apparatus. As the deposit is very large, it is hopeless to contend against them as to prices. The road is so bad, that only mules could ascend or descend it, although the most trifling expense would make it excellent. In addition to their provisions, the men are paid from five reals, about a shilling a day, to two, in proportion to their classes. There is a police establishment on the mountain. The managers and proprietors, both here and at Adra, treated me with the frank kindness and unreserved freedom of communication universal in Spain.* I returned to Adra,

* See the Chapter on Mines.

and took mules to proceed to Granada, by the route of Cadiar and Lanjaron. We passed the Hoya of Berja, and crossing a ridge, descended into a deep and picturesque valley, the rocks of which were of the richest and most varied hues. At the upper end, in a very narrow defile, a monk presented himself, of most unusual appearance. He was a man of forty, short and very stout; he wore the habit of the Capuchin order, excepting that the cloth was of superior fineness. Long gaiters covered his brawny legs to the knees, of the same material. His beard, and what was visible of his skin, were of a cleanness and neatness quite extraordinary, and his whole appearance corresponded; he was riding a superb mule, richly caparisoned, with an attendant on foot: a turn-out fit for a grandee of Spain. I saluted him, and passing on, was casting my eye back to examine such an unexpected apparition, when I heard behind me a long and most emphatic "car-ra-jo!" "There is no one so fat and sleek as these monks!" This most useful expletive, to which no one but a native can give the real effect, and amongst them, no one like a southern, came from the Alpujarreñian throat of a young man who had followed us from a village, and, having spoken with the guide, was pressing forward to join company. The monk was just such a specimen as Rabelais would have delighted in, or might have figured in the Canterbury pilgrimage, a fit mate for the "rump fed ronion," who must have "muncht and muncht and muncht" before he got into his present keeping. Who he was, my companion was ignorant, and I never ascertained, but he might be heard of between Cadiar and Berja. In the evening I arrived at Cadiar, which I was desirous of seeing, as it may be considered the capital of the Alpujarras, and was the scene of the last attempt of the Moors to recover their independence. It is beautifully situated in a romantic valley, but is a dirty

and ill-built place. The *posada* was wretched, and a roaring noise, kept all night outside by a party who were keeping watch for fires, prevented my getting any rest. In the morning I proceeded towards Lanjaron, descending by the bed of a torrent, which in all this district forms the road. The effects of the dreadful inundation which had taken place a few weeks before, were too visible in the route of the previous evening and of the morning. In September, the autumnal rains were of unusual force, and after continuing unintermittingly for several hours, produced a flood, which swept these vallies with resistless violence. Every thing exposed to its ravages was carried away. The mills were destroyed, the *acequias*, or channels of irrigation, which had existed since the time of the Moors, were injured or rendered unserviceable. The soil is so scanty, that the corn patches and gardens are chiefly the reclaimed beds of the torrents, which were confined to the middle by heaps of stones and rows of poplars and other trees. These trees were cut and jagged off for miles in length, and levelled as if cut by a scythe, the larger stones frequently remaining on the spot, after effecting the mischief. Had it been repeated or continued, as vast masses of sand and gravel accompanied it, the formation of *lignite* might have been exhibited in these fallen and prostrate trees. The quantity of transported materials was quite extraordinary. The whole upper part of the valley seemed to have been in motion. It was a deluge, or debacle in miniature. It must be observed, however, that the inclination of the upper vallies is very great. Lower down, the fragments became smaller, and it gradually ceased as we approached the sea and the angle of the descent was diminished, and the beds of the river became more extended. This phenomenon, of which the effects are to be traced upwards, as the inclination of the vallies increases, may be caused by the force

of the water moving the smaller particles of sand and other materials, whose weight is added to the projecting force of the element in its descent, until they move larger fragments, and so on progressively. These vallies are yet in their ruined state, a proof of the industry of their former inhabitants. The vines are planted amongst the crumbling schist, and afford an excellent wine, where it seems impossible anything should grow. Mulberries, olive, orange, and lemon trees, with patches of corn, are grown wherever they can be watered, and not the smallest portion of ground is lost. I was warned that the disastrous state of the country, owing to the inundation, and the discharge about to take place of many miners from the Sierra de Gador, would render the roads insecure. We had, however, no *novedad*, to use the Spanish expression, but several groupes, who were not ready for a coup de main, cast a wistful eye at the baggage. A few days after, a gentleman I was acquainted with, lost a large sum of money and his horses and baggage on a part of this very road, near the Venta de Torbiscon, having met a party of no less than seventeen as he was proceeding to Adra. We crossed a high puerto, or pass, which is on a peninsula or isthmus of the great river of Orgiva. On the summit was a character in a hut of palm branches, meant to shelter him from the sun. He was a *Realista* of most ill-favoured appearance, and stationed there to look out for robbers. Laying down his musket, he came to the road, and asked not for *Aguardiente*, but *Limosna para el Guarda*. With the exception of leaving his musket, he was exactly the robber of Gil Blas. From this *puerto* I descended to the great river, and paying a toll for a bridge not yet made or thought of, ascended to the Campo de Orgiva, one of the loveliest tracts in these mountains. It is a slope of great beauty, terminating at the river which washes the foot, and

is surrounded by lofty ranges on all sides. The olive trees are of immense size, and as celebrated amongst this Moorish race, as were those of Athens among the Greeks. The village, or town, is a rich and substantial place, well built, with beautiful grounds and gardens. From this, a league of ascent conducted me to a summit, from which opens the first view of Lanjaron. It is a long straggling village, on a slope which runs rapidly up to the Sierra Nevada, the eternal snow of which is seen through openings in the distance. The base on which the village stands is covered with the richest vegetation, and it is embosomed amid the mulberry, chestnut, ilex and the olive, with the lemon, orange and palm. The vines are trained on trees, as in Italy. The slope terminates abruptly below in a deep *barranco*, or ravine, of which the opposite side rises like a colossal wall: a detached peak is crowned by a ruined castle. In the valley below are mills like those of Italy. Far to the south, over a ridge, called "par excellence" the Sierra de los Moros, is seen the Mediterranean. To the West are open lofty ranges, forming landscapes of the most classic form. Such is the situation of this beautiful place, which is the glory of the Sierra de Nevada, and may vie for picturesque beauty with any in Europe. It is much resorted to in summer on account of the mineral springs, one of which is a very strong saline aperient, and of great reputed efficacy for debility and indigestion. The climate is so mild, notwithstanding its elevation, owing to the protection of the mountain at the back, that the trees escaped uninjured in the dreadful winter of 1829—30, which was so fatal throughout the South of Spain.* The next day I started for Granada, and crossing a ridge, entered the open defile which separates the mass of the Sierra Nevada from

* For the marble of this place, see the Chapter on that head.

the lofty lands of Alhama and the Sierra de Tejada, and forms the communication of the Moorish capital with the coast. In loveliness it cannot be excelled. It is a grove of olives, with palm, orange and lemon trees, fruit gardens and buildings like those of the Poussins. The open space amidst this charming scenery affords magnificent back grounds of the opposite mountains, and are in the truest style of the grand landscape. Durcal, called by these semi-Arabs Urcal, as they never pronounce the D, has abundant sources of the finest water bursting from the rocks. There are deep *barrancos*, or ravines, to vary these interesting views. At Padul, which was a marshy plain, but has been drained, this scenery terminates. Above it, commences the bleak and dreary waste which bounds the Vega, from the highest summit of which Boabdil heaved his last sigh to the white and glittering walls of Granada.



P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER III.

Sierra de Segura.

Having ascertained that the Sierra de Segura, a lofty and wild range of mountains, in which the Guadiana, the Segura, and the Guadalquivir take their rise, and flow to fertilize the various regions of la Mancha, Murcia, and Andalusia, contained the principal forests in the south of Spain, I left Granada for the purpose of visiting it, with two horses and an armed guide, who was strongly recommended to me, being in the habit of carrying money to the mines, and similar commissions. I obtained some letters of recommendation, but the information I could procure respecting the district was very scanty, the only sources being the timber merchants who occasionally visit it to purchase the building materials of Granada, which are chiefly supplied from thence.* I slept the first day at Guadix. After ascending by a long range of continued rise for more than a league, and crossing a defile, the road winds along under the shoulder of the Sierra Nevada, where are the remains of a noble forest of oak; not a tree is now standing. We dined at a venta in a beautiful vale, and after traversing an uninteresting tract, the latter part of which shoots out like a promontory, entered the curious defiles which lead to Guadix, of which information will be given in the geological

* For some information on the subject of these forests, by which my attention was called to them, I was indebted to the Padre Muñoz of St. Augustino, at Cordova, Regius Professor of Botany there.

abstract. The sandy rock is hollowed into various Troglo-dyte habitations, but the district is almost uncultivated.

At a short distance from Guadix we again entered a country similar to that of the preceding day, having the bold and striking range of the Sierra de Baza, a detached portion of the Sierra de Segura, on the right. After passing an upland table with wild and bleak views, we descended to Baza. It was late in the autumn, and a caravan which travels from Valencia to Granada was on its way. It sets out immediately after the gathering of the rice, which is exchanged for leather, trapping for mules, hemp, images of clay, and a variety of small articles of domestic manufacture. The journey and other operations occupy about six weeks. The road was covered with lines of the fine white asses of Valencia, carrying sacks of rice, and many passengers who availed themselves of the opportunity to travel. These animals were all males, as they are considered of superior strength and vigour to the females, which remain at home for domestic work. They travel at a good pace, with a light and cheerful step, occasionally tumbling over the rocks, and recovering their feet with great coolness and agility. At Baza I lodged in a spacious new *posada*; there were successive arrivals to the number of two hundred animals, which were all lodged under the same roof, and the host informed me he could accommodate a still greater number. The entrance, which comprises the kitchen, and the place of loading, unloading, and the sleeping benches, of the *arrieros*, and others of the same rank, is proportionably large. As the asses successively arrived, they were quickly discharged and passed to the stables, which are in the rear, communicating by doors, and the packs arranged symmetrically in rows, ready to load in the morning; each *mayoral*, or leader, looking carefully to his own charge; the *mozos*, of which there was one to every four or five animals, attending them.

The whole party slept either on stone benches, or on the ground, spreading their *mantas*.* Above this vestibule are the rooms appropriated to passengers: I was shown into a spacious one, without an atom of furniture, or any thing but the walls. A clean and excellent bed on trestles, however, soon made its appearance, with the necessary furniture, and a good supper was produced, after I had sent to the *Plaza* and purchased every article for it. When the asses were arranged and fed, and their leaders had made their frugal meal of salt fish and oil, guitars and castanets came forth, and they kept it up until a late hour, regardless of the day's fatigue, or of that which was to follow. Every thing passed off quietly, but I observed the host, who was a grave and sedate personage, paced constantly back and forwards amongst them, taking no part in the enjoyment, being evidently ready to interfere; as amongst the Valencians, who are armed, and beyond all the Spaniards "jealous and quick in quarrel," deadly frays sometimes break out in an instant. Baza, which figured so much in the time of the Moors, is now a miserable place, the inhabitants subsisting by the traffic of the road which passes through it, and on the produce of its vineyards and olive grounds. Like so many other places, it would appear incredible what a change has taken place since the conquest; scarcely a trace of its description at that time being discernible. I waited on the corregidor, to whom I had a letter, and who is a personage of great consequence in this district. I found his daughters in this remote place playing Rossini, with whose works they were quite conversant. I should have very much preferred hearing some air of Moorish origin. He informed me, that as far as his jurisdiction extended, the country was safe, but that beyond,

* A kind of coarse saddle-cloth. □

there were *rateros*.^{*} However, as both myself and guide were armed, I was under no apprehension of an attack from that description of robbers. I turned to the north, and crossing a dreary tract of African aspect, passed the Guadiana, as called by the people; a beautiful stream which collects the waters of the eastern part of the Sierra de Segura. When the country is surveyed, it will probably be found to be the true source of the Guadalquivir. Another branch is at present considered to be so, which rises to the west in the Sierra de Cazorla. Above this river we ascended a high *plateau*, at the extremity of which is Pozo de Alcon, where I slept. On the way we met two men with a small ass laden with corn, which they were carrying to Baza, from a place nearly sixty miles distant. On the scanty profits of this small cargo, with a return probably of wine, they had to maintain themselves and the animal during this long journey. These wandering habits are the delight of the semi-Arab population of the south. After making the necessary arrangements for the night, I strolled out to an eminence above the village, to enjoy a view, of which there are few parallels. I stood on an upland terrace, backed by the Sierra de Segura. On the right, the eye descended through *barrancos*, or ravines, and was lost amidst the summits of the secondary range, which is the prolongation of that Sierra to Jaen, and extends, by Loxa Antequera, Ronda and Gibraltar, into Africa. To the south is a vast horizon formed of the low Hoya of Baza, which a small angle prevents the eye from topping and descrying the distant Mediterranean. The Sierra de Baza and various isolated masses of mountain are seen protruding through the wide and Libyan waste which extends to the Sierra de Filabres. To the west, in majestic

* See the Chapter on Robbers.

grandeur, the Sierra Nevada terminates the view, rising above the great plain of Guadix. Although the base is two thousand feet above the level of the sea, the splendid mass towers above all the subordinate objects in regal majesty, like "the monarch of mountains." The sun was setting "in glory," his rays tinging the eternal snow, and resting on a deep mass of blue, completing the effect of a landscape, which to the geographer, the geologist, the painter, or admirer of nature, could not be excelled. I slept at the house of a worthy man, to whom I had a letter of recommendation, who would not permit me to remain at the *posada*, and undertook to procure me a guide to the Sierra. Although we were at the foot of it, it was impossible to obtain any accurate information. No one in the village knew more than the immediate district. They could not agree within some leagues as to the distance of Orcera, which was the point I meant to reach, and I could not come to any decision, from their accounts, whether I should be able to reach a place of shelter for the night, or have to pass it in the forest. My host was as ignorant as the rest, although he knew perfectly well, in this secluded corner, what was going on in every part of Europe. The man he intended to accompany me, was unfortunately absent, and a substitute was found in a gaunt Lismahago figure, an old soldier, who, as it turned out, had no earthly qualification for the office of guide, but honesty and the most imperturbable good humour, with a power of going equal to a horse. At dawn of day we set out, and soon entered the forest, skirting and repeatedly crossing a clear and lovely stream, which, with the deep shade of the pines, gave a sylvan beauty to the scene, contrasting with the African aridity of the country from Granada. The mountains are about the scale of the smaller Appenines, with great beauty of form, and are clothed with pine to the summit. The

lower part of the valley is partially cultivated. About the middle of the day I arrived at a district of *cortijos*, or farming establishments, with grounds broken and varied with evergreen and deciduous oaks and other trees and shrubs. The road now divided, and I had the option of turning to the left, and descending on Cazorla, a village at the foot of the Sierra, and by which name this part of it is known, or of pushing on for Orcera, with the doubtful prospect of reaching the Casas de Carrascas, the only chance of shelter for the night. I had obtained the great object of my visit, which was to see what the upper zone of these forests was composed of; but as the weather was fine, I determined to proceed, and examine the higher parts of the Sierra. After passing a beautiful defile, the stream diminished; the country rose; the trees decreased in size; and we gradually obtained a higher elevation. The weather now exhibited symptoms of change, a strong south wind arose, and the clouds began to drive; giving unequivocal signs of alteration. At the summit of the pass we met a shepherd, to whom the guide spoke aside, never acquainting me that his knowledge of the country was quite at an end. We passed a ridge and began to descend. A thick fog formed, and the night began to close. We still followed the track, until I saw too clearly we were wrong. However, the man with a dogged obstinacy persisted he was right, until at nightfall we came to an *aguadero*, or watering place for cattle, when the road terminated. He still insisted it was the right direction, and in the hopes of hitting the road, I followed his suggestion. We were soon irretrievably entangled amongst rocks and precipices, and the fog and drizzle increasing, there was no alternative but to stop. We were unfortunately on the weather side of the Sierra, which was nearly bare in that part.

However, I selected the best tree, and we prepared to

bivouac, making a fire with the decayed branches. As soon as the fire was lighted, the guide, whose ignorance and obstinacy was the cause of our being in this situation, extended himself, and was in a minute fast asleep, merely remarking to the other, that he was sorry on account of the cavallero. To themselves it appeared a matter of perfect indifference. They consoled themselves with the observation that on such a night it would be impossible to see the road on the king's highway. We picketed the horses near the fire, and kept the arms in readiness, as I was not without apprehension of the wolves, which abound here and might be induced to attack them. We had abundance of provisions, but my guide had neglected to fill the *bota** at Pozo d'Alcon, according to orders, a circumstance to those people of no importance, although their appetites in eating are voracious. After an uncomfortable night, morning appeared, and at daybreak we moved, and regained the road we had left; but it was soon clear that it was merely the communication with some corn patches, and that we were entering the deepest defiles of the forest. We heard a shepherd's voice, and on joining him ascertained that we were quite wrong, and had left the road two leagues. I engaged him to accompany us, and we retraced this distance, coming to the point where the man had, as it turned out, told the guide to keep to the right; instead of which, we had gone to the left. We now found the road, and passing some noble forest scenery, at midday came to the Fuente de Segura, the source of that river, which rises in a small marshy bottom. Near it is a *cortijo*, and a little further, two miserable hamlets adjoining each other in a small *barranco*, called the Pontones. The inhabitants were very civil, but their appearance wretched in

* Wine skin.

the extreme, the children running about naked, and their skins black and dirty, like young Indians. It was so uninviting that I went on to the Casas de Carrascas, another hamlet, at a short distance, which was much better. There was no *posada*, but we were received at a clean and respectable house, the custom being in this remote district to admit a stranger in any house where he may present himself. The host asked no questions, according to the Spanish etiquette, but he could not disguise his surprise at seeing us. We found a delicious skin of the wine of Baza, and having plenty of provisions soon forgot the discomfort of the night. The views from this village were extremely extensive, over forest glade in every direction. Below, the Segura found its way through a small gorge of white limestone to the warm vallies of Murcia; and on the other side, bolder features marked the descent of the streams to Andalusia and the Guadalquivir. I engaged a fresh guide to Orcera, intending to discharge the other, but he begged so hard to be allowed to accompany, as he said, from "friendship," in which he was joined by my own attendant, that I was forced to give way, and we set out. We passed along a very narrow ridge, which parts the streams of the Segura and Guadalquivir, and saw many groupes of noble pines, which the barbarity of the peasants had destroyed by firing them during the summer, leaving the lifeless trunks standing; a practice as common here as useless and destructive. We soon came to a pass, which by a rapid and precipitous descent led to the bed of a torrent, one of the principal feeders of the northern branch of the Guadalquivir. The scene was beautiful, the pines in groupes threw the deepest shade, from which we were constantly emerging, and a brilliant night succeeded. The glittering stars, the lights on the opposite mountain of Segura de la Sierra, the watch-fires in the *cortijos*, placed

under the rocks, recalled the splendid night and the camp fires of Ilion. The silence was only broken by the incessant barking of the sheep dogs, whose vigilance alone saved the flocks from depredation. The distance was inconsiderable, but the ignorance of the guides, for the last merely knew the road down the pass, and confessed that he had never been beyond it, and the difficulty of the road, which was badly marked, detained us considerably. At last we reached a deep ravine, above which rose the church and houses of Orcera. We were now completely at a stand, there was no trace of passage, save a carriage road made for transporting timber, which was known to take a wide circuit. None of the guides knew the way into the place, which was like an enchanted castle. The soldier had been quartered in the village a few months before, but he was as ignorant as the rest; nor could I, with a great deal of practice in making out roads, discern where the communication was. Some urchins were catching birds with a lantern on the other side, but they were intent on their occupation, and the noise of the water prevented their hearing us. At length we espied a gap in a garden hedge, and crossing it, passed through the *rambla*, or torrent, into a narrow cleft covered with evergreens, which led like a gallery up to the village. Every one had retired to rest, save a drowsy guard in the *plaza*, and we had great difficulty in finding admittance to a miserable *posada*. In the morning I arose early, and walked back to look at the country we had passed in the dark. I afterwards went in search of the authorities. My first visit was to the military commandant. I found an elderly, corpulent person, in an old uniform, a martyr to various complaints, of which gout and asthma were the most apparent. His secretary was the very counterpart of him, but rather less infirm. The object was to obtain his signature to my passport,

instead of that of the civil authorities, which I knew would be attended with trouble and delay. On leaving Granada, it had been countersigned by the Captain general, on purpose to avoid the inquiries of the *alcaldes* in these places. This extraordinary looking personage received me very civilly, and after entering into a history upon some other subject, a practice universal in the south, where they consider it rude to enter at once upon business, a custom of Eastern origin, and at times of most inconvenient usage, but like all the usages derived from thence, founded on the truest politeness, he proceeded to examine the passport. He pretended to carry on the conversation, another perfectly Oriental habit, but was in reality abstracted, and debating within himself whether he should take the responsibility or not. At last a quiver came over his features, and he said, "I cannot sign the passport; you must go to the *Alcalde*." I therefore proceeded to his house, which was of one story, the light being admitted by the door. I found a fat *Punch* in a peasant's dress, with a variety of other persons, some sitting on the clay floor, and others on low stools, supping with spoons out of a bowl, a mess of potatoes, which vegetable is in extensive use in the South of Spain. He was extremely polite, and desired me to go to the *escribano* in his name, and tell him to sign the passport. I repaired to the house of this functionary, who was much better lodged, but he was absent. I then called on a person to whom I was recommended, and whilst I was with him, the *Alcalde* came in, having thrown an old *capa* over his shoulders. He was attended by a young jackanapes, who appeared to be a relation, and who was unable to read, but was evidently inclined to make mischief, and was amusing himself at the expense of the old man. They were surprised to see me there, but soon entered in a low voice upon the subject of the visit, which was the

extraordinary occurrence of a stranger arriving in the place. After a time, as the Alcalde could make nothing out, my presence and letter of introduction obliging the host to be silent, he proposed to me to visit the superior authorities of the government establishment. To this I gladly assented, and the first I went to instantly set the matter right. There were two of them, naval officers, and gentlemen, as I found all the Spanish officers of the navy to be. Their manners afforded a curious contrast with those of the rude set around them. He offered me chocolate, and to the Alcalde, with admirable tact, produced a bottle for his morning whet, which contained a liquor of a greenish colour intended for the mountaineers, but which from its extreme strength the worthy man was unable to finish a glass of, although politeness made him reluctant to leave it. The junior of these officers was a man of literary habits and great information. He was at Trafalgar, which he spoke of with the simple and noble candour, characteristic and probably peculiar to this people, with feelings of admiration for the talent and courage by which it was achieved, and with a sensation, not uncommon amongst them, of a certain pride, at having witnessed that mighty scene, when the sentiments of defeat and disaster have passed away, and the passions of the time have yielded to other feelings. The affair of the passport being arranged, the officers offering to take the charge on themselves, we proceeded to the house of the *escribano*, whose duty it was to sign it. He was extremely civil, and said if I had called him up at any time in the night, he would have found me a billet. He was evidently in awe of his superior, and although the passport was perfectly correct, with the cunning of his craft, he conned it over with the view of picking a hole if possible, but only found a defect in the want of a number, a quibble easily refuted. He then pro-

ceeded to sign, but in a mode thoroughly distinguishing the class of persons he belonged to. * As there had never been a stranger in the place before, and it was, as they observed, a new thing, his object was to throw the responsibility on the naval officer, whilst he dared not openly refuse the office himself. He managed this scene with consummate skill and complete success; the shuffling manner in which he pretended to be doing himself what he was forcing on the other, being exactly contrasted with the simple and noble demeanour of the superior. This scene is detailed, as it shows the economy of a remote Spanish village. The only character wanting was the *cura*, or priest, whom I never saw, although there was a huge church. It was too small to afford a doctor, who, in the larger places, figures as one of the heads.

The village is a dependency of Segura de la Sierra, which is a league distant, on the summit of a ridge, and if it had not been for the civility of my brother officers, I might have been detained by consultations and cavils of various kinds for some hours. The establishment of this place is for the purpose of supplying Cadiz with timber from the Sierra, which is brought here, and, at a short distance below, floated down the Guadalquivir. There were formerly sumptuous buildings for the residences of the officers, which are now in ruins, having been burnt in the war of independence; the strength of the situation of the village having induced resistance to be made to the French.

The forest is about twenty Spanish leagues in length, by fifteen in breadth (eighty miles by sixty), and still contains a great deal of noble timber; but large quantities have been granted to individuals for the purpose of sale, and the

* The *escribano*, or notary, is a public officer, and is appointed to every place, however small.

peasants constantly burn whole districts, which are converted into unprofitable waste, as the burning climate prevents any herbage growing but where it is protected. The upper parts of the forest are nearly bare, a few junipers and hollies being almost the only underwood, and the side to Murcia, or that of the sun, appeared to be perfectly so. On the north it is different. The precipitous gorges shelter the soil from the burning heat, and it is covered with a luxuriant vegetation. Game of all kinds abounds, and wolves are so numerous, owing to the suspension of the grants of government for their destruction, that the flocks can scarcely be preserved. However, this evil is under a course of remedy. A few years ago, the *maestranza*, or nobility, of Granada had a grand *battue*, and destroyed a great number of animals. An account of the pines will be found in the abstract of forests.

I was very much pressed to remain, but the lateness of the season, and the work I had before me, prevented my doing so, and I set out for Linares by way of Ubeda and Baeza. Descending from the village, I entered a lovely country, covered with *lentiscus* and the usual plants of the warmer parts of Andalusia. The soil is red loam, and is very rich. At a short distance below, we passed a narrow defile of the Guadalimar, the northern branch of the Guadalquivir, with a curious bridge and a Moorish castle. The landscapes are quite in the style of Poussin, the village and castle of Segura de la Sierra terminating the view in every direction. I slept at Veas, a large ill-built place, in a narrow but fertile valley on a stream which falls into the Guadalimar. In the course of the evening the landlord told me that a *caballero* of the place would, with my permission, pay me a visit. He was a respectable and intelligent Biscayan, who had established a tannery on a superior principle in this sequestered place, and gladly

availed himself of the opportunity to see a stranger in a spot so little frequented. He sent me a dessert, and pressed me very much to spend the next day with him, which I was obliged to decline.

I proceeded in the morning through a broken country, and soon reached the tract called the Lomo de Ubeda, passing through Villanueva del Arzobispo and Villa Carrillo, poor and decaying places in a rich and fertile country, chiefly of oil and corn, with spacious *cortijos*, or farm houses. It rained heavily, and the state of the roads, and the manœuvring of my *mozo*, who was predetermined to sleep at Torre de Ubeda, a village a league short of the city, obliged me to stop there in a miserable *posada*. The country was full of *rateros*, and the Biscayner told me he was afraid to stir from home, but *Castro* * had been in the village the day before, and carried off several loose characters. Ubeda and Baeza are two ancient places, a league distant from each other, on the summit of the Lomo, between the two main streams of the Guadalquivir. The country is one of the most fertile in Andalusia; well watered, a strong loam, producing corn, oil and wine, cattle and horses, in abundance. The towns are decaying, and the appearance of the people is wretched and poor beyond measure, as is invariably the case in the agricultural districts, which seems to increase in the ratio of their fertility. Like true Andaluzes, however, their cheerfulness never leaves them. They rallied us on the appearance of our cattle, which the Sierra and the day before had considerably jaded, asking us to change with their fat beasts, much to my amusement, but not at all to that of the *mozo*, who was extremely sensible to ridicule, and who felt the meriment was at his expense.

* See Chapter on Robbers.

The rain of the preceding day had put every plough and mule in requisition to get the seed into the ground; I could not find an animal to hire, intending to discharge my *mozo* for his obstinacy the preceding day; but he was fined on his return to Granada. The people who were working in the fields, invited us to join their rustic meal, seated on the road side, as we passed along, the usual practice in Spain. After crossing the Guadalimar, I arrived at Linares, a large well-built place of modern date, but very dirty, which is now reviving, from the resumption of the works of the celebrated mines of lead and copper. These mines were known from the earliest antiquity. Some of the shafts are Roman and Moorish. They are in the hands of companies, and are working to advantage. There is but little water, and as yet only the most simple machinery is used. Scarcely any foreigners were employed in these mines. The people as usual were civil in the highest degree. Some *rateros* had robbed a party the night before, but the *realistas* were gone in pursuit of them.

I passed the following day there, and then crossed an open and uninteresting country, but of great fertility, watered by the two great branches of the Guadalquivir, to Jaen, which is a miserable place, with a magnificent cathedral, of which mention will be made under the head of architecture. The Moorish castle, of great strength, but now in ruins, stands on a height above the town.

The following day I set out for Granada, and travelled along a road excelled by none in Europe, being nearly finished, and intended to form the communication of that capital with Madrid. There were as yet no *posadas*, or even *ventas*, and only two bad villages near the midway, but they are to be built. The country is beautiful, a limpid and abundant stream watering a vale in features resembling those of Wales. The Portillo de Arenas, a small defile,

celebrated in Moorish warfare, is passed near Campillo, and after crossing a high range, we descended to the Vega of Granada.

The season was far advanced on my return from the Sierra de Segura, and after the observations on the geology of the vicinity were completed, the autumnal rains, which both years I was there set in about the 25th November, put a stop to further operations. These rains are extremely heavy and constant, and the climate damp and thick at that period.

As soon as the weather permitted, I set out for Malaga, by Motril and the coast, in order to see the sugar and cotton country, which lies in the Tierra Caliente, on the south side of the Sierra Nevada. I slept the first day at Lanjaron, which is out of the direct road, to enjoy once more the views of that beautiful place. From thence a broken road leads to the bed of the great river of Orgiva, which we entered a little below the *Campo* of the same name. In the rainy season it is a rapid and dangerous river. There was now a large body of water in the wide bed which we crossed very frequently. The bottom is firm and sound gravel, otherwise it would be insecure for the horses. The guides ascertain the depth and practicability of fording with great ease, by throwing in a stone and observing the noise of the splash. After descending in this manner a considerable distance, we ascended a narrow road, and soon entered the little *huerta* of Velasillo. It forms a plateau or table, elevated like a terrace above the bed of the river of Orgiva, which is covered with gardens and white flat-roofed houses, mixed with orange and lemon trees. A copious stream, clear as crystal, is conducted through the grounds, and after dispensing fertility amongst them, is precipitated over

the terrace, in the manner of the cascabelle at Tivoli. On a broken height at the back is a Moorish keep or feudal castle, of the shape of an irregular polygon. Above, in perspective, towering over the lower chain, is seen the Piz de Veleta, one of the highest peaks of the Sierra Nevada. From this sequestered spot, which is one of the most beautiful places in this region, the more so from its situation in the midst of barren mountains, a carriage road has been made to Motril, which is part of a plan to complete the communication between that place and Granada.

Motril is a small town, with some activity in trade and contraband. It is at a moderate distance from the sea, on a plain covered with plantations of sugar and cotton. The *chirimoya* is common, growing in the open air. I tasted the fruit, which was scarcely ripe, but it was well flavoured, something resembling the guava. They said the season was unfavourable, and that they were inferior to the usual produce. The trees were in perfect health.

An important branch of agriculture has lately been tried here with complete success; the production of rice of a kind brought from Puerto Rico, which is called *arroz secano*, from its growing on dry ground like corn, and not requiring to be laid under water, which causes the fertile lands susceptible of this lucrative culture at Valencia and other parts of the south of Europe to be converted into abodes of pestilence and death. The specimen I saw grown here appeared perfect, and several species, to the number of no less than fourteen, from the Philippine Islands, were in the course of trial. Should they answer, the benefit to this country, especially Valencia, will be immense. Coffee has been tried, but unsuccessfully, and it is hardly to be regretted that experiments should have

failed, so seductive in appearance, but the produce of which could not be expected to withstand competition with the tropical climates, and most probably would have caused the expenditure of time and capital to little purpose. The cotton grows well, and is reputed to be of excellent quality, but they complain of the autumnal winds being injurious to the crops when they are just ripe; this I could readily credit, for the morning I left the place, a gale came suddenly down from the Sierra with a violence it was difficult to withstand. The horses could scarcely keep their legs in passing the exposed parts of the road, and to be able to sketch, I was obliged to creep into a hole in a rock. The sky was perfectly clear, and gave none of the usual signs of a tempest, and in a few hours it ceased.

The *vega*, or plain, of Motril, is a flat which has been formed by the transported materials brought down by the river of Orgiva, the mouth of which is to the west. At a league distant is Salobreña, a bold headland, with a ruined castle on the summit, the only remains of the palaces and hanging gardens of the Moors, of whom it was one of the celebrated retreats. There is a small *vega*, principally planted with sugar canes; all around is desert. Almuñecar is the next place, which is a small neat town on a beautiful bay, with a territory of sugar canes. There is a large establishment lately set up, by a public spirited and enterprising company of Germans at Malaga, with a view of improving the manufacture of sugar and rum, by the introduction of English machinery in place of the rude apparatus of the old Spanish *ingenios*. A sample of rum I tasted was certainly equal to that of the West Indies, and sugar which, by the old method, had an unpleasing appearance, but was abundantly saccharine, will no doubt be equally good. West of this there is a wild tract of uncul-

tivated waste, where I passed a body of men employed in grubbing up aromatic shrubs, the only substitute these mountains now afford for better fuel to heat the furnaces. The forests, which once clothed them to the water's edge, have long since vanished, and this is now their only produce. These men remain out for several days together, sleeping in the open air. Their provisions are sent them, and I am told, in this laborious life, where they are left entirely to themselves, they do ample justice to their employers.

An open plain, backed by moderately elevated hills, with the sea in front, succeeds this unproductive waste. Nerja is the principal village of this plain, where grow the largest canes I saw in the Tierra Caliente. Torrox, and other spots on the road to Velez, contain sugar plantations, which are, in fact, at every stream, and wherever a supply of water allows the copious irrigation indispensable during the burning heats of summer. Velez, which has a beautiful territory around it, is the western termination of this curious culture, which commences at Adra. The soil of the fertile *vega* of Velez is red marle, differing from that of the various spots enumerated above, where it is chiefly *detritus*, forming a black and friable soil. I heard the annual produce of the whole coast estimated, by a competent judge, at twenty thousand quintals, about nine hundred and forty tons English weight. The gains have been enormous in these plantations, but are now much reduced. I found it impossible to collect information to enable me to form a true idea of their real value, or returns made to the grower, owing to the great fluctuations in value; but it appears, that if the demand and price were steady, they could sell on a par with the colonial produce. The more valuable parts of them are subject to the title of the arch-

bishop of Granada, but it is collected with great moderation and lenity. They complained much of the times, and many people talked of changing the cultivation ; but it is difficult to judge how far these complaints were grounded, or whether they were, as is probable, only their quota to the universal agricultural distress of the country.

At Velez I was shown a plantation of cacao plants, which some speculator had tried. They were struggling for existence, which the winter would probably terminate. An open piece of ground, exposed to the burning rays of an almost ever shining sun, had been selected to make this experiment, with a plant which I have understood requires shade and moisture. The *batata*, or sweet potatoe, is extensively cultivated in the neighbourhood of Malaga. The are fully equal or superior to those of the West Indies, and are sent to various parts of the country, where they are roasted and eaten with the dessert.

Another branch, which promises one day to be of great value to this part of the coast, is the cochineal insect. The facility of producing it has been proved most satisfactorily, and the quality is excellent. Some I saw at Cadiz was considered equal to the best from America. The difficulty at present is the price, as they say it cannot be brought to pay the expense. That must, however, diminish with practice. Another complaint is the tithe, which on a production of such instrinsic value, is a serious and probably insurmountable evil, and will operate to retard the progress of the cultivation, unless some means be taken to prevent it. The coast of Malaga seems particularly suited to it. There are abundance of warm and sheltered spots now unproductive, that merely require the addition of common walls to break the wind, which is prejudicial to the insects. The *caetus opuntia* grows naturally, and they cannot urge

the argument brought against the increase of the mulberry tree, that water is wanted. A garden has been formed near Malaga, with a view to the trial of the culture of exotic plants, which it is to be hoped may excite the industry which is so lamentably deficient in this beautiful province.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER IV.

By the north Coast from Bilbao to Gijon and Oviedo, Leon, Valladolid, and Burgos.

IN the autumn of 1831, I went from Bilbao to Santander, having hired mules, the road between these important towns being impracticable for any other mode of conveyance. My guide was a Biscayan, by name Claudio Padura, a perfect model of his class, the exact counterpart of which is to be found in no other country but Spain. I retained him long after his engagement was expired, and found his services, fidelity, and attention on many occasions invaluable. Like some others who are occasionally met with, especially in the northern provinces, he was often confidentially employed on business requiring not only the greatest intelligence and integrity, but tact and management far superior to what might be expected from persons in that station of life. As soon as you leave the free provinces, of which the boundary is at a short distance from Bilbao, and enter Castile, cultivation may be said to cease; being confined to a few spots. We passed near Santoña, a detached mountain on the shore, almost isolated, which was converted by the French into a strong position, and figures in the history of the late war. We crossed the bay to Santander, the road round it being circuitous, and seldom used, when the weather permits the passage of boats. The people of the free provinces alone seem aware of the pro-

priety of building bridges over the torrents, which are even of more importance than the roads; and the instant you quit their territory, the difference is perceived. This route is intersected by streams and estuaries, at each of which is a miserable custom-house guard, to the number of no less than seven, in as many leagues; who severally demand a fee to avoid unloading the mules, which they may require to be done. Their formula "In the name of the king, I request to see this baggage," is the plain Spanish for a *peseta*. On no other occasion do you hear his Majesty's name pronounced by his numerous officers.

Santander is a thriving town, with some new *manzanas*, or stacks of building, but without public edifices, or works of art of any kind. It is perhaps the only place in Spain of similar magnitude, where no artist, in any department, has left a memorial of his skill, and the name is not seen in the minute lists of Cean Bermudez. It is the chief seaport of old Castile, and it seems to be the object of the government, to make it the principal mart to supply Madrid. It enjoys the privilege of trading with the colonies, for which the situation is on the whole more favourable than that of the ports on the Mediterranean; and although inferior to Coruña as a seaport, it has the advantage of possessing intercourse with the capital, and a vast internal communication. The exportation of wool is shared at present with Bilbao, but when the roads are completed, it will have the superiority over that port from its greater proximity to the merino districts.

A new and important branch of trade has lately been opened, the exportation of the wheat of Castile, which is ground and exported to Cuba, large mills having been erected in the mountains for the purpose. It is protected by duties, otherwise it could not withstand the competition of that of North America, and they admit that it cakes, and

does not keep or bear the transporting so well as the flour of the United States. This may be caused by some defect in the manufacture, or management in the packing, as certainly the wheat of Castile has apparently all the qualities necessary for the purpose. The millstones are brought from Briones on the Ebro, and are, I believe, of inferior quality to those of the south of Spain.* There are iron mines in the mountains, and the government had a considerable foundry which is now let. The *Astillero*, or building establishment of the marine, where, I was told, the Santissima Trinidad was built, and some other ships of the line, is now unemployed. The forests of this chain supplied the last building materials of native growth for the navy of Spain. The elevated range which separates this part of the coast from the central plain is called the *Montaña de Santander*, more frequently abbreviated to *La Montaña*. The inhabitants are generally known by the name of *moutañeses*. They are a robust and vigorous race, of sterling character, and famed for their industry and fidelity. A valley, enclosed in a wintry region, amidst the highest summits, I have been informed, is the residence of a peculiar clan, which from time immemorial has had the privilege of furnishing a small body, somewhat in the style of the cent Suisses formerly at Paris, but civilly employed, which have the charge of a confidential office near the royal person.

* When the Spanish wheat was first introduced to the English market, a difficulty was found in grinding it, from the extreme hardness of the grain. They naturally inquired for the stones, and some of those of Briones had been sent for trial. They are, I believe, grits, no doubt of the red sandstone. In the south, two sorts are used; one a homogeneous conglomerate of the secondary limestone in angular unrolled fragments, the other, which I understand to be the best, is brought from beds near Medina Sidonia. I never saw these stones, but believe them, from the description I heard, to be also sandstone grits.

The canal of Castile, when finished, will reach a point within fifteen leagues of this place, leaving a portage which may be shortened by using the creeks at the upper end of the bay. The road to Burgos was opened in 1832, and regular diligences now circulate in communication with those of Madrid. There is a noble bay, with anchorage for a fleet, and a small but secure harbour. It is also intended to be made a watering place; but, in most respects, it is inferior for that purpose to St. Sebastian, and the place is less bustling and animated. They are a cheerful and sociable people. Subscription balls were about to commence for the season; an amusement common in the sea-ports, where there is more activity than in the towns of the interior.

The road to Gijon is execrable, and the communication constantly interrupted by wide ferries of estuaries, some of them dangerous, and always causing delay to the traveller. The villages are poor, and houses ill-built; you pass through narrow lanes, with dung laid out to be trodden down by the mules and animals passing, in the style of the wilder parts of Cornwall. In places there are verdant meadows, and the traveller has the rare fortune in the Peninsula, of traversing short distances on the finest turf, and seeing hay-makers at work.

The first day I slept at a miserable place on an estuary, with the sounding title of San Vicente de la Barquera. There was nothing to eat but the provisions we had brought, and the lower part of the house had such an uninviting appearance, that I preferred sleeping in a loft, in which their crop of Indian corn had just been deposited.

The next day we entered Asturias. It was my intention to reach Riba de Cella that day, but my guide said it was impracticable, and our departure was deferred so long, that night overtook us, and we were obliged to stop at a

hamlet where there was no *posada*, and with difficulty I obtained a bad lodging in a private house. Riba de Cella is the best place on the route. It is situated in a deep indenture at the mouth of a river surrounded by mountains, forming magnificent scenery, in the style of Salvator. The third day, being unable to reach Gijon, we turned out of the direct road to the left, and slept at Villaviciosa, where there is an excellent inn. This a tolerable place, with a mild climate, in a valley celebrated for its fertility. From thence, after ascending a rugged range, commanding most extensive views, we arrived after mid-day at Gijon.

The country, in this route from Bilbao to Gijon, is exceeded in natural beauty and fertility by few in Europe. The character is exactly opposite to that of the other side of the Peninsula, where all is aridity, and only the plants are seen which thrive under the burning rays of a cloudless sun, save where nurtured and forced by man. Here all is natural and almost eternal verdure. You travel amid arbutus, the bay or *laurus nobilis* which forms large trees and grows amongst their dunghills, the alaternus, phillyrea, holly, fern, and ulex or furz abound, and the ivy, which is rare in the interior. The common *ilëx*, which is only seen in this part of Spain, occurs in places, and the beautiful *menziezia daboeci*, Irish heath, is seen in prodigious quantities. The chestnut and the common oaks and hazle are the natural growth of the soil; walnuts, apple and pear orchards are attached to every house. The orange and even the lemon grow luxuriantly, but I believe their fruit is not brought to perfection. A hedge of cactus surrounded the garden of some amateur, who had probably lived in Andalusia or Valencia. The coast is generally bold and rocky, the cliffs supporting elevated table lands; but the scenery is occasionally varied by descending to flat and sandy beaches. Numerous streams of the clearest water,

abounding in trout and other fish, flow from the mountains.

This beautiful country is one of the poorest in Spain, although the people are far from wanting in industry. Their houses are badly built; they are the worst clothed, and the most uncleanly in their persons in the whole kingdom; they are generally ill-favoured and rugged in features. The inimitable sketch of Maritornes is a perfect resemblance of some of the lower classes. In no instance did Cervantes show his knowledge of his own country more than in summing up the description by making her an Asturian. I saw some individuals, of both sexes, of a caste quite peculiar, and differing from these or any other I observed in Spain. The features of these were very fine, especially the nose, which was aquiline, the eyes of the finest blue, and the hair yellow. They are most assuredly remains of the Visigoths, and resemble the inhabitants of some parts of Switzerland, who are known to derive their descent from the Goths, but are of a lighter and more elegant make than the heavy races of the Alps.

This country differs from most parts of Spain; the people living in hamlets and detached houses, which are thickly planted and covered with trees, in the manner of those in Devon. This circumstance, and the easy defence, and annoyance of an enemy, made the holding of it by the French nearly impossible, and they only remained a few months. We passed by a place where a fair was holding, and in a narrow way a number of peasants were assembled with long and light poles. As we approached, they drew up in a double line, with their poles shouldered, as in the act of preventing our passage, but without speaking or making any gesticulation. I passed on, when they all lowered their implements as if to knock down the guide, who was behind, recovering their arms just as they reached

him. This was meant as a friendly greeting to an old acquaintance, and an amicable parley immediately ensued. Indian corn seems to be the only grain cultivated in any quantity; the wheat and barley are brought from Castile. No wine is made in the country, and the common drink of the people is a bad cider. Attached to each house is a magazine, or small building of wood, exactly a miniature of the common Swiss cottages, the size bearing a perfect proportion to the parent building, and mounted on pyramidal stones, in the same manner as stacks are placed in some parts of England to prevent vermin climbing up. In these are kept their stores and provisions. I observed many of them by the road side unlocked, bearing silent testimony to the honesty of this rude people.

The inhabitants of the towns, especially on the sea coast, are better dressed, and have a more healthy appearance than those in the country. The women at Gijon and Oviedo are as dark as the Andaluzas, a proof that the climate has little to do with complexion. In this country neither the extremes of heat or cold are felt, save in the highest mountains. I was informed at Gijon that the thermometer in winter was seldom under 60° of Fahrenheit, which the growth of the ever-greens would confirm. The orange and lemon trees had been cut by the dreadful winter of 1829-30, but they were nearly recovered from the calamity shared in common with many parts of the Tierra caliente.

Gijon resembles Tenby on a larger scale, and is far more beautiful. A jutting headland projects in the middle of a vast sandy beach stretched out on either side, forming extensive bays. On the flat, inside the promontory, is built the town, the flanks extending to both beaches. On the western side is a small close mole made at a great expense; on the east the bay is open; on the west at a

league distance it terminates in the mural precipices of Cape Torres, nearly parallel to which, far to the north, is seen the dusky line of cape Peñas, one of the northern capes of the Peninsula, which, except in colour, may be compared to Flamborough head. To the south, low rising grounds intercept the view of the great features of the country, but a short ride conducts the traveller to views of the Alpine barrier of the centre of Asturias, the scene of the exploits of Pelayo, when these mountains were the last refuge against the Moslems. His sanctuary of Covadonga is amidst this chain to the south-east.

Gijon was the property of one of the great families of Spain, who held the sovereignty until a recent period, when it was obtained by the government. It is of little use at present to any one, as the trade is nearly extinct, being almost confined to the shipping of nuts for England in the autumn, and a small quantity of coal, which the present laws are calculated to impede rather than encourage. The harbour is confined, but there is an excellent situation for making a larger one, were it required, on the opposite side of the western bay. It is the principal port of Asturias, and the vicinity and easy communication with Oviedo, the coal mines, and the roads now open to the interior of old Castile may cause a revival of its commerce. It contains no buildings of note or any objects of art excepting some statues of Hernandez and Borja. The traffic of the country is carried on almost exclusively by carts drawn by small and ill-bred bullocks, through roads no other animal could travel upon. The deep and narrow vallies resound with the creaking noise of the revolving axles, so common in the Peninsula.

There is a carriage road by the plain, from Gijon to Oviedo, but I crossed the country to see the coal mines, which are nearly equidistant from both places. The road

is execrable, over chains of hills commanding the most magnificent views, resembling the north of Devon, but on an infinitely greater scale.

We passed by La Pola, a large village in an upland vale, where there is a beautiful fragment of architecture in the style of Bramante; a palace which had been commenced in the best time, and then left unfinished, a strange contrast with all around it. After crossing a high ridge, we descended to the river Nalon, in the vale of which is the small village of Sangreo. We had been travelling for some time over the rich coal field of Asturias, but no notice was given of such a district; not a particle of smoke, no carriage road, much less rail-ways. We met *cargas* on mules proceeding to Gijon over roads hardly practicable for an unladen animal, and where in places I was glad to dismount. Groves of chestnuts and the most luxuriant vegetation cover the seams which come to the surface in the precipitous hills that bound the deep valley of the Nalon. Amid these groves were seen a few men, who pierced a short distance into a seam with perpendicular walls on each side, working the mineral as long as it served their purpose, and then seeking another vein. No machinery of any kind is used or required. The workmen are the proprietors and sell the product to the muleteers; who carry it to Gijon and dispose of it to the merchants. The communication is so bad, that although the distance to Gijon is only five leagues, the laden mules were unable to effect it in one day. These people are extremely poor. They are without capital, and as government have no right of interference by the present laws, and no capitalist can be found to embark in it, the mines are almost useless. The price on the spot is six *quartos*, about two-pence, per mule load of eight to ten *arrobos*, or one *peseta*, about ten-pence half-penny, for the loading of a car drawn by two oxen.

The Nalon, which waters this district, is a clear and beautiful stream running in a wide and gravelly bed, about the size of the north Tyne at its junction with the southern branch. It abounds in trout, although every method is in daily use to destroy them. There is no good bridge, and the miners are at present confined to one bank, the river being impassable in the freshes, which are of frequent occurrence in this watery region. The lower part of the valley is well cultivated, and the country, in natural beauty, cannot be surpassed. The government once speculated in these mines, and I was informed that large sums were laid out in the useless task of attempting to make the Nalon navigable, only serving, like so many other undertakings, to enrich the administrators.

I proceeded to Oviedo through a very beautiful country. The capital of Asturias is surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains, bearing a resemblance to some situations on the German side of the Alps, and amid equally verdant scenery. It is a tolerable town, with some bustle and activity in the market. Fresh butter is sold in abundance, being preserved in skins like sausages, and is now sent to Castile, and to other parts of the drier country. The cathedral is of inferior size to some others, but is one of the most beautiful in Spain.* It contains no works of art of importance, excepting some sculpture of Hernandez. In the church of St. Francisco is a curious specimen of ancient superstition now rarely met with. The noble family of Valdecarriana have their burying place in the church, and stipulate, on giving the monks some *fanegas* of wheat annually on a certain day, that during mass they shall have the privilege of introducing a bullock, to remain during the ceremony. The good fathers were unable to resist the

* See the Chapter on Architecture for the description.

temptation of the wheat of Castile, but on their part, the saving condition is annexed, that the Cross shall not be carried in front of the procession. The contract is written in large letters on the wall of the chapel. I proceeded to Leon by a royal carriage road, the northern part of which was made some years since. The country is magnificent, but the villages poor and ill-built. Campomanes, which is the principal, has a new and tolerable *posada*, where I found excellent red trout, and a delicious wine, like Grave, from Castile. Pajares is a poor and miserable place near the summit of the *puerto*, or pass, which bears its name. The elevation is considerable, the region is wild and wintry, and the communications are often interrupted by the snow. The descent on the southern side is by a new line of road, nearly finished, which cannot be surpassed for design and execution. The only defect is in the upper stratum of stones not being broken sufficiently small. As we descended, the country changed its appearance, and the dry and parched aspect of Castile, with its cloudless sun, succeeded the fogs, verdure, and luxuriant vegetation we had left in Asturias.

To Leon from Pajares are ten long leagues without a *posada*, at least a decent one. We fed the mules in a *corral*, where was shade for the riders, and a little wine, but nothing else could be procured. There are, through this wild route, many hamlets and places of refuge intended for travellers, but they are now untenanted and useless. There were many *arrieros* and *margottos*, a variety of them, travelling with oil, wine, and wheat, to supply the Asturians. Some were from the Sierra de Gata, on the opposite side of Old Castile; others had journeyed from Estremadura; and some even from Andalusia, leading the wandering life so congenial to the habits of the Spanish peasantry. They were in general of the inferior description of muleteers. I

looked in vain for some of the strings of fat mules of Arevalo, with their splendid trappings, described by Cervantes. The misery of the times bears heavily upon both men and animals. The places they rest in are far inferior to those in the southern districts, although the climate is ruder, and warmth and shelter much more requisite. The state of the roads had not yet permitted the establishment of diligences, and the communications were kept up, for the richer class of travellers, by carriages which go from Oviedo to Madrid occasionally, in the manner of the Italian vetturini. A conveyance had just started for the purpose of carrying fresh fish from Gijon to Madrid, by relays of mules, in opposition to a similar enterprise at Bilbao. From the nature of their cargo, the preservation of which depended on the rapidity of the transport, they traversed the country night and day, at a pace quite incredible. Accidents constantly occurred in consequence, and one of them arrived at a place where I was, in a disastrous condition. My attendant, from Bilbao, who was a perfect master of every branch of business connected with mules and carriages, was sent for to direct the refitting, which the party was quite unequal to. He informed me, that the *mayoral* to whom the important charge had been entrusted, and on whom every thing depended, had been taken out of some kitchen at Madrid, and had never left the city before. Other circumstances were related on the road, of the bad management of this scheme, on which I understood some *intendente* of a southern province was spending a portion of his gains. It was impossible this speculation should answer, and in a few months a failure took place; followed by that of the rival company, which had much better prospects of success. Leon is a decayed and miserable place, without commerce of any kind, and is chiefly supported by the chapter and other religious establishments. The cathedral,

the architecture of which will be described in its place, is deservedly celebrated, and is one of the finest specimens of the pure Gothic. The windows are almost entirely of painted glass, some of which is extremely beautiful, but it contains neither sculpture nor painting of value, and is disfigured by a barbarous modern introduction, called the *transparente*.* There is a spacious palace belonging to a noble family, who have possessions in the neighbourhood. It is apparently of the sixteenth century, but was never finished, owing to an injunction of the Court. I crossed the plain of Leon to Benevente. The town is extensive, but a miserable and ill-built place. The castle occupies a promontory at the extremity of it, washed on one side by a beautiful stream, a branch of the Esla, and the other bounded by the plain. On the town side is an open esplanade. The castle, which is now a complete ruin, was composed of several styles of architecture. The Moorish is visible in a window near the entrance, but the interior of that part of the building is completely destroyed, and it is impossible now to know the details of it. The walls form a sort of double body or inclosure of vast solidity, with a corridor, wide enough for a carriage, running through great part of it, above which were the principal rooms of the old part of the castle. The inner area was open, and formed a sort of oval, all the offices and other buildings being disposed around it. The great staircase, now in ruins, must have been magnificent. The part furthest from the entrance is the most modern, and was apparently intended for the occasional residence of the family, the principal rooms having *miradors* or galleries for look out. From the solidity with which this division was built, the shell remains entire, but the inside is

* See Churriguera, in the Chapter on Architecture.

completely demolished. Over the great gateway is a noble tower, of the Norman Style, yet entire. The military entrance was by a narrow ascending road, under the wall on the side opposite the river, outside of which was a small detached rampart for the purpose of covering and defending it. It was also completely commanded from the body of the castle. The whole formed a compact mass of great strength and solidity. It was certainly capable of defence, but there appears nothing to justify the wanton and nearly complete destruction of private property in the barbarous manner this noble remain of ancient times has experienced. So entire is the destruction of the interior, that it is with difficulty the plan can be made out. Fragments of marble statues are lying about, and there are abundant proofs that no expense had been spared in decorating this building, which was probably the finest feudal remain in Spain. In scale, and in some other respects, it bears some resemblance to Ragland, but it has this striking difference from our feudal castles, that there is no detached keep, or inner entrenchment of any kind, all the defence being from the outside. From the manner in which the late war was carried on, it is not improbable that this wanton havock was committed, as much to revenge the uncompromising and determined opposition made, by the noble family to which it belongs, to the invasion of Bonaparte, as for the mere military reasons which could be given to excuse it. Like many acts of the same description, the trouble taken to destroy works, which in other countries would have been left unnoticed, is an involuntary homage rendered to the Spanish people.

Benevente is the central point of communication and of the administration of couriers of all the north-west of Spain, and, when the roads are completed to Galicia and Asturias, will become of much greater consequence. I

took the road to Valladolid, dining the first day at Villalpando, a large village, where a fragment of an antique relief of white was encrusted in a mud wall. We slept at Rio Seco, a well built place, with two noble churches, The Parroquia contains excellent sculpture of Juni and Jordano. A branch of the canal of Castile is to communicate with it, and will be of vast utility for exporting the produce of the plains around. The next day I proceeded to Valladolid. We crossed an open country, without passing through a village or a hamlet, or even by a *venta* for five leagues, the few which are seen being out of the direct line of the route. The country from Leon to Valladolid is amongst the most unpleasing to the eye in the whole of Spain; vast open plains, with miserable mud-built villages, form a monotony unrelieved by an agreeable object. The land is good in the greater part of it, and produces corn of all kinds, and excellent wine. All around these villages are tracts, now waste, which would grow the finest timber of every sort, whilst the miserable fires are made of straw smouldering under earth, and other substances to retain the scanty heat. There is an almost total want of better fuel to resist the piercing cold of winter, which is extremely severe. Between these towns the road is through ploughed fields the greater part of the way, and in winter, when flooded, it is nearly impracticable. Materials are wanting, and the construction of solid roads through the plain is an enterprise the financiers have hitherto stood aghast at, from the vast expense it would entail. There would appear to be reasons for making the communication through Valladolid, but at present, a line a little shorter to the west, by Tordesillas, which passes by no place of consequence, is considered the high road of Galicia and Asturias, and is that frequented by both couriers and travellers.

Valladolid is, of all the more modern towns in Spain, that from which the traveller would experience the greatest disappointment. It has long been hastening to decay, and the ruthless hand of war has borne more heavily on it than on any other. It had the misfortune to be selected as a place of arms, and the review of sixty thousand men by Napoleon, in person, which I had heard them boast of having taken place, was a sad presage of its inevitable fate. Every thing had been converted into military establishments. In many places the inscriptions of their various uses have not yet been effaced, and some convents, which had been cleared, have never been reoccupied. The treasures of painting it once contained have entirely disappeared, and neither public nor private collection exists. Of sculpture, however, there is still an ample store, and the works of Berruguete, Becerra, Jordan, Juni, Aguiles, and Hernandez will repay the examination of their decaying churches. There is little good architecture besides the cathedral, which is unfinished, and the noble Gothic church of the Benedictines, with its adjuncts,* but the *plaza mayor* and the *campo*, a vast open space near the entrance from Madrid, which they are now laying out for public walks in the style of beauty and taste of all similar works in Spain, distinguish the capital of old Castile. There are amongst the houses some fragments of the better times of architecture, when the Roman style was the subject of imitation. The chief support of this ruined place is the *Audiencia* or Chancery court, of which the processes compel the residence of great numbers of individuals from all parts of its extensive jurisdiction. I have been informed that the mixture of characters, thus thrown together, give a free and liberal tone to the society, unlike what might be expected from

* See the description of both these churches under the head of Architecture.

the grave character of the old Castilians. In their manners the people have the polish of an ancient capital, and the purest accent and idiom, like the Italian of Siena, is spoken by every class.

I visited Fuen Saldaña, a large village at a long league distance from the city. It contains a curious Moorish castle, the body forming a parallelogram of great height, with circular towers at the angles, and in the centre of the longer sides. It is nearly perfect, and in front is an advanced line, of lower elevation, also flanked by towers in a similar manner. It is now uninhabited, and occupied as a corn magazine. In a small convent of nuns, are three celebrated pictures of Rubens. The principal is the altar-piece, and is amongst the finest of his works. It is a large picture representing the Assumption of the Virgin with angels, treated in a great and masterly style, in which he has almost left the Flemish forms, and seems to have attempted to rival the Bolognese school. The design is accordingly pure and chaste, but full of fire and animation, and the colouring magnificent. The other pictures are collaterals, or flanking pieces, representing St. Antonio with the child, and St. Francis receiving the stigmata, in a beautiful landscape, which is injured. The great picture was carried to France, and restored in 1815. Unfortunately, the sisterhood are too poor to be able to take the requisite care of this splendid work, which is perishing in a damp and secluded situation, where it is seldom visited, and the interference of government is required to save it from the inevitable destruction which is awaiting it, if allowed to remain.

The road to Burgos is magnificent, and you travel at a rate not to be disdained in England. The cathedral is described under the head of architecture, and the sculpture

under the head of Becerra, Haya, and others. In a private chapel is a Magdalene, one of the very finest specimens of Leonardo da Vinci, and in another chapel, is a magnificent design of M. Angelo, coloured by Sebastian del Piombo. In a dark part of the church, is a picture, I think the Madonna, which appeared to me of Andrea del Sarto, original or copy. The convents are ruined, and the place decaying; but some branches of woollen manufacture are in force, the best *mantas* in Spain being made here. From Valladolid I took the diligence to Madrid. The bridge over the Duero had been broken down by a flood. It was nearly ready, and I was assured the work had been done, owing to the increased activity of the administration of the roads, in a space of time incredible to those acquainted with the old system; one of the many proofs that the people only require energy on the part of those who direct them. I made an excursion from Olmedo to La Mejorada, a celebrated convent of Geronimos, monks of St. Jerome, to see some sculpture of Berruguete. The buildings are extensive, but by no means on a scale of magnificence or good taste, and are now hastening to decay. A few of the dronish inhabitants only remain. Every thing of value, excepting the sculpture, which is mentioned in its place, is gone. The road from Valladolid to Madrid is the worst of all the royal roads in Spain, whilst that from the former place to Burgos is the best. The consequence is, the administration plead the excuse and have the worst appointed *tiros** in the whole country. The journey is protracted to an unusual and unnecessary length. In this case we narrowly escaped having a three days' journey to perform a distance of little more than thirty leagues, owing to

* Teams of mules, consisting of seven or eight, which form the relays.

the bridge being broken ; but a proposal was made by the *mayoral* that we should start at midnight from Olmedo, so as to arrive at Madrid the same night. This was readily arranged; the mixed company in these conveyances being far more polite and ready to accommodate each other, than those in general found in similar circumstances in other countries.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER V.

From Madrid to Cuenca and Guadalaxara by the Alcarria.

I visited the Sierra de Cuenca in June, 1832, in order to complete some geological observations and to ascertain its relations with the Sierra de Segura, the connexion of its forests with those of that district, and to examine the works of several artists in the cathedral.

I had sent for the same mules and attendant which had accompanied me from Bilbao in the preceding autumn, the additional expense being more than compensated by knowing my *mozo*, and avoiding the trouble of hiring fresh animals at different places, and the inconvenience of bad saddles. We left Madrid by the Puerto de Atocha, passing under the walls of the Retiro. After crossing the Jarama, near its junction with the Manzanares, where are a part of the works of the unfinished canal, intended to connect the capital with the Tagus, the country improves; and at Arganda, which is on an eminence at a short distance from the united streams, it is comparatively pretty, being formed of olive grounds, vineyards, and corn lands. Perales, where I slept, is a small village in a deep and fertile valley. The whole of this country produces excellent red wine. Villarejo, the next place in the route, is a large village in a fine open country, with a castle in rude imitation of the beautiful Moorish one of Fuen Saldaña, near Valladolid.* After this is a

* See the Chapter on the North Coast.

dreary tract without a tree to Fuente Dueña del Tajo, a miserable village with the remains of a strong castle of the time subsequent to the Moors. It was nearly ruined in the war of independence. The situation is on a rising ground, at a short distance from a bridge of the Tagus, which was lately swept away by the united effects of a flood and rafts of timber descending from the Sierra de Cuenca. We crossed in a ferryboat, and traversed a dismal country to Tarancon, a large but ill-built and miserable place without a good *posada*. The soil is good, and it produces oil and excellent wine and corn. The situation is most advantageous, being the central point of all the southern roads. That from Madrid is the horse or short road to Valencia, and will finally be the communication between that city and the Metropolis, being several leagues shorter than that by Albaceta and Almanza. It is accordingly followed by the *arrieros* and *galeras*, but the latter are at present, on account of the roads, obliged to make a long detour by Aranjuez, and sometimes Ocaña. It is also the communication with Cuenca, and with the western part of the Alcarria. A new and magnificent road conducts from this to Cuenca, and is intended to be part of the great line of Valencia. The villages are poor, and the population scanty, on the whole route. At a few miles distance, the scenery changes, the road passes a defile in a bold range of hills, and verdure relieves the eye. The country, as you rise in elevation, assumes a northern aspect. Tracts of marsh or bog occupy the flats, and are drained with science and effect. There are no inns, but I slept at a *parador*, established at the public expense, which serves at the same time as a toll-house. It was quite full, owing to the *ordinario* or *galera* of Cuenca having arrived, and the unusual accident on this road of a carriage, in which was an old general with his wife, repairing to take the command at

Cuenca, with an escort of cavalry; but the master gave me up his room, with a clean and excellent bed. This road is planted in most places with trees, and there are station houses at intervals, a plan which ought to be universal, but is very rare in Spain.

Above this place, which is near the village of La Horcajada, the country becomes more mountainous, and the pine and oak begin to appear. An imperceptible rise conducts to a high *puerto*, which divides the waters flowing respectively to the Mediterranean and the Ocean. In descending to the Xucar, open woodlands and corn patches succeed. After passing a defile, through which the river flows, an avenue of young trees borders the road to the city of Cuenca. You enter it by a bridge, designed like a Roman work, but unfortunately the materials the most easy to work have been selected, and the stone is now considerably decomposed. The best *posada* is on the ascent to the city, and is a vast and solid building, the lower part forming a magnificent stable on arches, above which at different elevations are the rooms. This, and several other buildings, with a noble approach to the upper part of the city, were made by one of the bishops. The buildings were by law his property, but were bequeathed to the public. So small is the intercourse with Madrid, that after trying several channels, I found it impossible to procure a single letter of recommendation. The Spaniards unanimously declared it to be the *Ultima Thule*, and were amused at the idea of any one going there. The *Pinares* of Cuenca are proverbial expressions to signify wild and rude country. I waited on the *Corregidor*, who received me, as I found the Spanish authorities invariably do, with great politeness, and then proceeded with the objects of my journey. The city of the Moors occupied a narrow and precipitous ridge, with magnificent precipices on each side, forming deep

barrancos, in which the Xucar and Huecar flow, meeting at the lower part of the town. The upper part contains the cathedral and a small esplanade or *plaza*, which is the only level spot. The houses are built on the edge of precipices, with falls of many hundred feet at the back. A bold and magnificent bridge for horses, connects the back of the cathedral with a convent on the opposite side of the Huecar, which was built by an individual of the church. At the foot of the old town, an extensive suburb spreads out into the plain, which is decaying, and suffered severely in the war of independence. It contains solid and excellent edifices; but the finest, which was a palace of some noble family now resident at Murcia, was entirely ruined. The cathedral is a magazine of art of all kinds, from the best to the very worst, and will be mentioned under the various heads of architecture, sculpture, and painting.* There was a splendid collection of plate, of which some part remains; but the finest piece, which was invaluable, being the work of the Becerrils, who were natives of the place, was carried off in the war. The chapter-house, and other offices, are in a corresponding style of opulence. The see is one of the richest in Spain, and the clergy proportionably numerous. The architecture of the city is principally modern, but there are some excellent specimens of the best time, with sculpture and painting on the fronts. It was formerly the residence of the Mendozas, and many other noble families, who are extinct, or have emigrated. It has produced many eminent individuals, but has now dwindled to a place of *clerigos*, depending for its existence on the ecclesiastical bodies.

* The principal sculptors who figure in this interesting repository of art, are Berruguete and Xamete, and the works of Yañez are the most valuable paintings. Becerril, the Platero, and Arenas, a rejero, or iron gate maker, also contributed to adorn this edifice, of which the architecture is extremely curious. See also the Chapter on that head.

The ravines, through which the streams flow, that bound the city on each side, are laid out in walks and roads, and the rocks are covered with ivy. Above the town both widen out, and resemble in miniature the magnificent scenery at the foot of Mount Perdu. The vale of the Xucar, were it planted, would be equalled by few places in Europe for picturesque beauty.

At about half a league higher up, near the bed of the river, are some copious springs, called the Fuentes del Re, where it is said, Alonzo and his army encamped during the siege, when the city was captured from the Moors. The king and part of his army may have done so, but those entrusted with the active part of the operations must have been nearer the scene of action. Above this, the Xucar, a clear and noble stream, waters an open country, after it has issued from the defiles of the forest where the principal feeders are. The head streams rise to the east, on an open elevated table, the common source of it, and the Tagus and Guadalaviar, which waters the eastern part of the kingdom of Valencia. Having obtained information by questioning the people respecting the forests, I made an excursion to the Val de Cabras, where I found the principal objects of my journey; the timber that supplies Madrid. A considerable fall had lately taken place to the east.*

The territory of Cuenca, which is a high and wintry region, produced in its better days vast quantities of wool, with abundance of corn and honey. The woollen manufactures are mentioned by Cervantes, and flourished in his time. It is too cold for the olive or vine, but abundance of both oil and wine are furnished from the neighbouring districts of the Alcarria and Valencia. From the situation,

* A report of the trees which clothe this interesting district will be found under its respective head.

it is admirably calculated for a place of commerce, and may probably recover when the roads are completed; which will throw it nearly into the direct line between Valencia and Madrid. By the present mode of fortifying, of occupying heights by detached works, it might, if required, be converted into a place of war at no great expense.

Having obtained the object of my journey, I set out for Guadalaxara. There are two roads from Cuenca to Priego, a principal point of my journey; one by the Sierra, the other, which is longer, by the plain. Very fortunately for the geology, I chose the last. At a short distance, I turned out of the great Madrid road to the right, and, after passing some miserable villages in a fertile but badly cultivated country, resembling the wilder part of the Welsh borders, I came to Cañaveras, a large place in a valley of the Alcarria. The road was covered with wandering beggars and gypsies, and a party of the latter tribe were in prison, having been caught stealing a sheep and feasting upon it near the town. The distance from Cañaveras to Priego is two leagues, over an upland and partly wooded country, abounding with game. After arriving at Priego, which is beautifully situated on a commanding eminence over the little river Escobas, where it issues from the Sierra, and abounds with trout, I went to see a convent, in a wild, sequestered and truly monastic situation, in a deep gorge, amid precipices clothed with pines, called the *Desierto*. The *posada* at Priego had a good exterior; but on entering, the scene changed; the part appropriated to strangers was the anti-stable, with which it communicated, and at the farther end was the fire, the whole black and dirty in the extreme. There were two rooms above, but they declared no beds were to be had, and only by perseverance this difficulty was at last overcome. There was