

At each end of the square an amphitheatre was erected, and the whole inclosed with high palifades. The benches and balconies on either side bent under the weight of the spectators; the church steeples, the roofs of the houses, the neighbouring bridge, the buildings beyond the river, even the hills and franciscan convent upon the height, were all full of people, and in the square itself was a crowd of *aficionados* or amateurs, who came there to be active in striking the bulls, but so as to escape in case of need by leaping over the palifades.

In speaking of this diversion we must observe a distinction between the *corridas de toros* and the *corridas de novillos*: the former are the great bull-fight properly so called, in which the combatants are on horseback, and the bulls must be killed; descriptions of which everywhere abound. There are also engravings published in twelve plates of various sizes, representing the twelve principal scenes of a bull-fight. These are taken from nature, and express the minutest details. There is a copy of them in small in the last (german) edition of Bourgoanne's travels. The *corridas de novillos* are combats of young heifers, in which the beast only receives slight wounds, and is irritated and provoked into fury. But to return to my description.

The square was covered with sand, and the place where the bulls were kept was by the side of one of
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the amphitheatres. It was open at top, and each bull had a separate stall. Here several aficionados mounted on the planks and irritated the bulls to make them furious. At length the corregidor or mayor gave the signal, when a serjeant dressed in white opened this inclosure, and had scarcely leaped out of the way before the bull furiously rushed into the arena.

Several men on foot expected him with banderillas or darts, but he ran impetuously toward the four sides of the square seeking a way out. In the middle of the crowd, who held out pikes, hay-forks, sticks, and parasols, the aficionados were distinguishable, emulating each other, and striving who first should place his hat or his cloak on the horns of the beast, or strike him. But one could scarcely avoid laughing at the agility and ridiculous postures with which they scrambled over the balustrades as soon as the bull seemed seriously to aim at them. But the banderillas were soon infinitely multiplied, and in a short time the bull had no retreat; he was covered with them, and flew away several times, roaring and shedding torrents of blood. The spectators desirous of varying their amusement, now cried on all sides for the dogs (los perros! los perros!) and at length a great bull-dog was let loose at him.

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A new combat now commenced, in which the different instinct of the two animals was apparent, the one endeavouring to conquer by art, the other by force. The dog always attacked his enemy sideways, and turned off at every motion of the bull, who always kept his horns ready to toss him in the air, which he frequently did. If the dog avoided the blow, and at length succeeded in seizing the bull, the latter dragged him along in fury, and struggled to trample him under foot or dash him in pieces against the inclosure. Another dog was then set at him, and he remained without defence. He still dragged the dogs indeed along, but the latter kept their hold, and continued to hang by his ears.

To separate them, eight very strong men advanced into the arena, seized the bull by the tail to deprive him of the use of his strength, then took him by the hindfeet, threw him down, and pinched him in a tender part. Thus he lay quite faint and lifeless, and the dogs immediately quitted their hold. A few minutes after the bull rose again, roaring, trembling, and seeming again to seek the enemy. At this moment some cows were sent into the area, and he followed them very readily into the stalls. Another bull was then turned out, and the same scene renewed six or seven times successively. During the fight no music was heard, except that a few beats of the drum announced

from time to time a change of scene. During the intervals the spectators took their refreshments (*merienda*). They showed their impatience by shaking in concert their handkerchieves in the air, and applauded any masterly address (*golpos excellentes*) by acclamations of *bien ! bien !*

Surely nothing but early habit and education can attach the Spaniards to this cruel diversion, nothing but a mistaken ambition, a want of cultivation, and the ignorance of man's true pleasures, can nourish this barbarous and inhuman passion, and we ought to blush for mankind, when we behold our brethren making a festival of such atrocity.

At night I was witness to a very comic scene. The square was illuminated with faggots of fir and some barrels covered with whale oil in the middle, and the place was crowded with people, when all on a sudden a young bull was let loose among them with his horns tipped with leather (*embolado*) ; and the fires, the crowd, and the music, so terrified him, that he rushed among the spectators and threw them down by dozens. At length a cloak was thrown over him, rockets and squibs were fastened on him, and this pleasantry, which at first appeared likely to prove serious, contributed to the diversion of the people.

LETTER XXII.

Political Constitution and Privileges of the Province of Biscay.—Pride of the Inhabitants.—Municipal Administration of the Town.—The Alcalde and Corregidor.—Municipal Taxes.—Police.—Singular Law.—Prisons.—Law against Ingratitude.

Bilboa, Aug. 1797.

THE province of Biscay is well known to be a province not properly dependent on, but only under the protection of the Spanish crown. It is indeed a kind of political anomaly to see a small republic thus united to such a monarchy as Spain. But however unlimited may be the power of the kings of Spain in their other provinces, it is a truth, that in Biscay they have only the shadow of domination. Here are neither garrisons, custom-houses, stamps, nor excise (fifa); in short, of all the royal taxes, they know none but the *donativo* or gratuitous donation. Biscay is governed by itself and receives by mere condescension a corregidor and a commissary of marine; but does not permit any order of the Spanish government to be executed without the sanction of that of the province. It cannot however be denied, that the privileges of the province and the pretensions of the crown are

very often in opposition, and that the former do not always seem to prove victorious.

All the inhabitants of Biscay call themselves *hidalgos* or gentlemen. It is only in Biscay, say they, that the antient cantabrian nobility has been preserved without mixture of moorish or foreign blood, and they add, that the king himself does not approach to the nobility of a Biscayan. The lowest labourer and the greatest lord of the province are in this respect perfectly equal, but the provincial government is in the hands of the latter, and is annually renewed by the majority of the parishes.

As to the municipal administration of the town, they proceed annually after christmas to the election of eight *regidores*, in whom the right of voting of the inhabitants is each time vested. These *regidores* choose their assessors, these choose the *alcaldes* and other functionaries, who choose the *consulado* or tribunal of commerce. All these offices are discharged gratis; but the *regidores* and *alcaldes* enjoy some advantages in consequence of wine leases, which subject the former each time to a considerable tax. The *alcalde* gains still more by law-suits; for it has now become a custom to fee the judge. It must be observed however, that pleadings before the *alcaldes* are oral, as they are in writing before the *regidores*, the former being civil, and the latter criminal judges. At Bilboa the decisions of the latter are in all cases without appeal,
except

except to the superior tribunals of Valladolid and Madrid.

In the town there are no taxes except a very small land-tax and a voluntary contribution to the hospital. There is not the least excise or custom-house duty. Bilboa is even almost without gates, being always open to every traveller. The passage over the bridge alone is shut every night with an iron grating, but of which the bars are so wide, that it is easy to pass through!

The police is not entirely neglected. There is a code of regulations on that subject, which every alcalde publishes in the same order, at least once a year. Among these some concern weights and measures, the cleansing the streets, the safety of flower pots in balconies, &c. One of the most ancient and the most respected prohibits the use of carriages, which indeed could not be employed on account of the narrowness of the streets. Thus every foreign carriage that arrives is obliged to remain without the town, where none but sledges are admitted.

Among the new regulations of the alcaldes some are very singular. For instance an old alcalde who was a widower ordered that immediately after the *angelus*-bell in the evening no woman should appear with a man in the streets, under pain of imprisonment, and during the first week at least

thirty were arrested; but persons of distinction finding they were too particularly included in this prohibition, the law fell into disuse,

I shall take this opportunity of saying something on the subject of the prisons, which are situated without the town on a very fine spot near the sea shore. Most of the prisoners are on the first floor, where they enjoy wholesome air, together with a prospect of the country and of the high-road. The jailer does not forget that his prisoners are hidalgos, and the passengers give them plenty of alms. The only cause of regret is that no distinction is made between persons confined for debt and criminals; but great crimes are so uncommon in Biscay, that not a single instance is remembered during the last six and forty years.

I must tell you of a phenomenon in legislation here, namely that among the ancient laws is one against ungrateful children or wards, by which they are condemned to pay certain pecuniary fines for the use of their benefactors. But it is so difficult to investigate these hear-say tales, that I dare not affirm it as a fact.

LETTER XXIII.

Simple Manners and general Character of the Biscayans.—Amusements of Bilboa.—Romerias.—Tertullas.—Coffee-Houses.—Wine-Houses.—Concerts of Amateurs.—Women.

Bilboa, Aug. 1797.

SIMPLICITY is no less conspicuous in the manners than in the political constitution of Biscay, and if I were to describe the province in one word, I should say that Biscay is the Spanish Alps inhabited by Grisons. The Biscayners have the same hatred for innovation, the same sturdiness, the same love of their country and of liberty, and the same uprightness of character, but like their climate they have more fire and more vivacity.

We must not then expect to find at Bilboa (however rich the town may be) the same amusements as in other parts. There is no theatre, no library, &c.; promenades, romerías or public balls, and tertullas (pronounced tertulias) or evening conversation parties, are the only resources the place affords.

Of the promenades the inhabitants are passionately fond, and the ladies strive who shall appear there with the greatest brilliancy. At first the appearance of so many people in black veils seems rather

rather dull, but the eye is soon accustomed to it, and the wearers only seem the more amiable.

I must now tell you of the romerias. The Biscayans have a national dance, which concludes nearly like the fandango, and which is accompanied by a singular species of music with small tambourines and little flutes. A string of young women taking each other by the hand follow the leader in a straight line, who from time to time turns back and foots it to the rest. There is a kind of nobility and grace in all her motions. The rest only file off carelessly behind her.

On the other hand, the young men led in like manner by a corypheus form another row, who by degrees approach the women who advance before them, when suddenly the music changes to a quicker measure, and each of the young men being opposite to a lady, they begin a fandango, of which the rapid gesticulations have a singular effect difficult to be described. These meetings take place in summer almost every Sunday and feast day, sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, and are called romerias.

A romeria is a festival for all Bilboa, and there are almost as many spectators as dancers; for the passion for that amusement is universal. The scene is generally beneath some tufted shade near some house of entertainment, but as there are always more women than men, the former often dance together

gether, which does not prevent their enjoying the amusement extremely. But their chief pleasure consists in archly running against people, especially those who are not dancing, crying out with a loud laugh *toma la culada*, and the falls this occasions are sometimes very laughable. This pleasantry becomes more frequent about dusk, before the place is illuminated with barrels covered with whale oil. The music costs nothing, these expenses, which are very small, being defrayed by the monasteries, religious confraternities, rich individuals, or the town. There are even endowments expressly for that purpose.

We will now speak of the *tertullas*, which have however been described by other travellers, and which are the same at Bilboa as elsewhere. The women appear there in fashionable coloured dresses in which they cannot go out except in the evening. Strangers easily find admittance in consequence of their letters of introduction, but whether through pride or ignorance, they receive there no personal attentions. Accustomed to good society in France and Germany they feel in some measure insulated and awkward in these companies, where a mere local conversation prevails, and every thing they see fills them with disgust or ennui. In fact Bilboa has all the defects of small towns, and these are by no means inconsiderable in the small towns of Spain,

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As to public amusements, there are none except a few coffee-houses and public houses, and a foreigner is surprised at not finding more in so important a commercial town. One of these coffee-houses near the arenal is kept by a Swedo-German of Wismar, who has married a Dutch woman and turned catholic. As he also furnishes dinners, and his wife knows a little of all the languages, most of the captains of ships meet there. In the entresuelo [or small story between the ground floor and principal rooms], and which are here used as warehouses, are very indifferent billiard tables, with which people are forced to content themselves. The other coffee-houses are still worse. A Frenchman intends to set up one more convenient at the other end of the arenal.

Along the quays and road leading to Olavijaja are wine houses very much frequented by sailors and captains of ships. Their reputation is somewhat ambiguous, but the coarse mirth that prevails there gives great variety and animation to this promenade.

Of late a concert of amateurs has been formed, for which the place is principally indebted to the bohemian merchants established here. It is generally they, who together with their domestics compose the town band of Bilboa with the assistance of two german trumpeters paid by the public. These gentlemen have also collections of music, with

which they furnish the churches ; for the inhabitants of Bohemia, as is well known, are almost born musical. Their attendants constitute the chief ornament of the feasts of the *consulado* (*dias de campo*), and they fascinate all Bilboa with the marches they play as they return at night by water in barges magnificently illuminated.

So much for the amusements of Bilboa. Those who wish for books or newspapers may find some in Spanish at the bookstalls, where are also sold leaden pencils and sealing-wax. In all the great foreign houses however are found the best French newspapers and some good libraries.

I shall conclude with a few words relative to the women. In my opinion they combine the dignity of the Spanish with the beauty of the English. Their fresh complexions, their black and sparkling eyes, their fine hair, their *embonpoint*, the harmony of their persons, the vivacity of their conversation, all charm and fascinate every stranger that beholds them. If the men understood the art of forming them; if their abilities were developed by a more general cultivation, if an excessive reserve, a little stiffness, and a pride that borders on rudeness, did not countervail their other amiable qualities, their charms would be irresistible and their power unbounded. In the inferior classes they are strong and laborious, and are employed as porters

porters to carry very heavy burdens. In general throughout all conditions the manners of this people are, according to credible witnesses, the purest of all Spain.



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CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

LETTER XXIV.

Commerce of Bilbao.—Exports.—Wool.—Chestnuts, &c.—Manner of shipping them.—Imports.—Internal Commerce.—Tiendas.—Smuggling.—Foreign Trade.—Bohemian Houses.—Difficulties in obtaining Permission to establish Houses of Trade.—Hatred toward the French.—Emigrant French Priests.—The Basque Language.

Bilboa, Sept. 1797.

OF all the northern coast of Spain Bilbao is undeniably the most important port; yet its articles of exportation are very few, consisting only of wool, chestnuts, iron, and oil.

Merchants purchase wool by means of their agents in the inland provinces; and send it to England, France, and Holland. These cargoes consist annually of 50 or 60,000 bags, the value of which amounts to 5,000,000 of piastres. You would imagine this article has suffered during the war, but the contrary is the fact. The consumption of cloth has increased, and the commissions from foreign parts have been more considerable.

During the time of the embarkation of this article, which is generally in the last months of summer, the streets and the arenal are full of bags of wool, and the river and port crowded with boats loaded with them. In these boats, which are called

called *lanches gabarras* or long boats, the goods are conveyed on board, and each bag is pressed by a machine upon deck, that the vessel may hold its proper loading.

You will easily imagine, that in conveying so great a quantity of bags, much wool must fall by the way : yet no one dares pick it up, because it is prohibited under pain of excommunication to touch the wool belonging to foreigners. However, I never observed that any one takes any care of it, and thus no doubt it becomes an absolute loss to the proprietors. How easy would it be to employ in this way the poor children which here abound, and how much more economical, if in lieu of being totally lost it were spun into yarn!

Chestnuts are another article of exportation, and grow in profusion throughout the province, especially in the part called Castro. They are brought to Bilboa by the peasants in the beginning of November, and the price is regulated by the abundance of the harvest. It is generally about a piastre the fanega or sac of twenty-five pounds. All the roads are at that time covered with little carts drawn by oxen, and loaded with this article. The merchants inform their correspondents of the day on which they intend to ship them, and the carts discharge them into boats a little above the town. A great number of persons are then employed in weighing and picking them. As those which are too ripe are
liable

liable to become mouldy and to spoil the others, they belong of right to the poor. A considerable quantity is also stolen; but the great abundance of the article prevents any attention being paid to these trifling losses. The profit however of a merchant who has received commissions for this commodity is very uncertain. The insurance on chestnuts, like every article of trade that is liable to spoil, is restricted by many clauses not applicable to other goods; and if the passage is long, and the bad weather prevents opening the port-holes to ventilate the goods or drying them in the sun upon deck from time to time, half the cargo and frequently the whole is spoiled before it arrives. The greater part of these shipments go to London, Bristol, Amsterdam, Bremen, and Hamburg.

Two other productions, but the exportation of which is only made to the ports of Spain itself, are iron and oil. The iron of Biscay is very fit for the forge on account of its malleability, and large cargoes are shipped to Coruña, Ferrol, and Cadiz. The ore that contains this iron comes from the celebrated mines of Sommorostro, and is sent by water to Bilboa. It is landed above the town, and from thence is sent to the smelting-houses. The director of these mines is a German. A part of the oil of the neighbouring parts of Castile is exported in small boats to the nearest ports, as for instance Plazencia, Ribadeo, &c.

The imports of Bilboa are very important, and include all the productions of the north. The principal articles are wheat, flax, hemp, timber, british, french, and german manufactures, bacallao, cheefe, whale oil, &c. &c. Old and New Castile and the north of Aragon are supplied from Bilboa with the greater part of these articles. The consumption of bacallao is so great, that the Danes, who carry on that branch of trade since the war with England, namely about the end of the year 1796, have received from Bilboa in exchange above a million of piastres, although the norwegian fish is far inferior to that of Newfoundland.

From what has been said you will perceive, that Bilboa carries on a very important inland trade, and on some days as many as forty mules set off to fetch these articles. Thus too is all Bilboa full of warehouse (tiendas), and as very little is sold retail and that very dear, the price is always kept up very high. You will easily imagine how the price of any goods must be raised, that pass from the hands of the merchants to the retailers, and from them to the hucksters. Only to mention flax, of which as you know a Riga shipping-quintal or 400 pounds make 342 pounds of Biscay weight, a ship-quintal Thifenhausen sells at Riga on the average at 25 albert-dollars, and at Bilboa for 65 piastres. The albert-dollar is worth 21 reals of vellon or one-twentieth more than a dollar. What an enormous profit!

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Add to this the profits of smuggling. At Bilboa all imports pay only one per cent.; but on passing the frontiers of the neighbouring provinces they pay the customary high duties. Some articles are absolutely prohibited, as tobacco, muslins, &c.; yet the merchants of Bilboa send whole chests of these manufactures, bales of tobacco for smoking and for snuff, &c. to their inland correspondents, and bribe or deceive the custom-house officers. The muleteers bring in great quantities of watches and jewels, and the monks smuggle long rolls of tobacco under their cloaks or in their sleeves.

Of the foreign merchants the Germans are the most numerous. These are chiefly dealers in bohemian glassware, who by degrees procure stocks of other goods, and at length deal in all sorts of articles. Such houses of trade are found all over Spain, and they receive the greater part of the goods that arrive from Nuremberg, Augsburg, Reinscheid, Heilbronn, &c. by the way of Amsterdam and Hamburg. These merchants formerly carried on more business than at present: for since Spain has also established similar manufactories, and the number of bohemian houses has increased, it is said this lucrative business has considerably diminished.

Many difficulties, however, attend the establishment of a foreign house of trade at Bilboa. To obtain permission to settle here the applicant must

give proof of his nobility, that is, he must show by incontestable documents, that there never has been a jew in his family. These proofs are sometimes strengthened by a few solid piastres, and it often depends on the consulado or tribunal of commerce to admit or reject the demand; for at Bilboa no foreign consuls are recognized; but in case of shipwreck this tribunal performs the office, which is very expensive to the concerned. Thus the interests of commercial men, avarice, or private pique, have always an opportunity to intrigue. This takes place principally with regard to french houses, toward whom more rigour is used than with Germans, because the latter are deemed a more noble nation; by which they mean of purer extraction. Hence there are only three french houses, who only trade on commission and experience innumerable difficulties.

The Biscayans have in general a kind of national hatred for the French, which since the late events has increased among this unenlightened people even to horror, and the very name of Frenchman has become almost a proscription or a stigma of infamy, which the populace accompany with stones. Heretics as they are, the English are preferred. A great number of them however have in consequence of the war procured american passports.

To this hatred indeed toward the French some exceptions are admitted in favour of emigrant and refractory

refractory priests, who have been received with great generosity and philanthropy. But as their brethren would not permit them to perform mass in the town, they have spread over the neighbourhood by thousands. Portugalete, Santa-Urfa, &c. are full of them. The number of french refugees in Spain are computed at 22,000. Besides the revenue they derive from their masses (about sixpence each) they employ themselves in handicraft trades, practise physic, teach languages, serve the rich canons, and adopt every means of supporting their wretched existence.

Previous to the 5th of September 1797, a period which robbed them of every hope of returning home, they arrived in crowds at Bilboa. A great number had already passed the frontiers, and thousands had embarked and were on the point of sailing, when that fatal catastrophe took place. Whatever be any man's sect, he can scarcely refuse his compassion to these unfortunate victims of terror, who having abandoned the asylum they had just found in Spain, and having exhausted their last resources to re-enter their native country, were again exposed to indigence and to the dangers of a wandering fugitive life.

I shall conclude this letter by some observations relative to the language of Biscay, called Basquenze or lengua bascongada.

According to the best works on this subject it seems to be proved, that this is the ancient language of the Cantabri, which has been here preserved pure and unmixed. Larramedi and Hervas assert, that it does not resemble any known language either in its sounds, significations, or phraseologies. Both these writers were ex-jesuits, the one being a native of Biscay, the other of Galicia. Larramedi wrote a basco-hispano-latin dictionary and a grammar, which have become very scarce. Hervas is a celebrated philologer now at Rome. I shall have occasion to say more of this writer when I speak of the literature of Spain.

In common usage this language has been obliged to adopt french and spanish words to express new ideas in civil life; but with these additions it still continues to be the only language of the majority of the Biscayans, who learn very little or no *castellano*; nor is it entirely left off by people of condition. It seems full of consonants, and notwithstanding its accent, which is somewhat fingering, it is not destitute of roughness. It is said to be rich in poetical expressions, and to have a great suppleness, but well-informed people accuse it of prolixity and obscurity in its phrases and idioms.

* * * In addition to the above remarks, the following have been procured from the brother of the cele-

celebrated Monf. de Humboldt, who is alfo himfelf well known in Germany as the author of an excellent work. He is lately returned from a tour in Spain full of interefing information, and having compared all that has been written on the basque language by the learned men of that country as well French as Spanifh, he intends fpeedily to publifh the refult of his very ufeul researches. Meanwhile he has communicated the following ideas:

“ The language of Bifcay deferves the particular attention of philologifts, though it has hitherto been too much neglected. Yet on even fuperficially running over the vocabulary of that language, it appears that, fetting afide the nouns which were unknown at the firft civilization of that country, and which have been fucceffively borrowed from the Romans, the French, and the Spanifh, the Basque has a very great number of words peculiarly its own, and all of which have a character truly original both as to their origin and formation. This primitive language, which is underived, not to fay unftolen like moft of thofe now fpoken in the fouth of Europe, from the Latin, feems however to have, in common with the Latin, German, and even the Greek, a great number of radical words, which might ferve as guides to etymologifts, and afford them light in their researches into this ancient and primitive language, from which perhaps have fprung moft modern tongues, and of which it ftill preserves

some valuable remains. Even those who would be alarmed at the dryness of so irksome a pursuit would find a pleasure in observing the manner in which the Biscayans compose the signs of their ideas; that people scarcely employing any but complex signs to express ideas which all other languages represent by simple signs, such as sun, moon, &c. It would be an object of infinite curiosity to a philosopher to observe and pursue the analogy, according to which the Biscayans combine certain ideas, so as to form new signs and express their perceptions; and there would doubtless thence arise many very useful observations on the originality and mode of viewing objects exercised by that ingenious people. Nor is the theory of the basque language destitute of utility as to the history of languages in general, their peculiar differences, and their formation. Not to mention several other singularities peculiar to this language, it seems in some measure to hold a middle place between those which like the *galibies* of Guyana are absolutely destitute of inflexions, expressing all the modifications of ideas by different words, and the most cultivated languages, wherein the final syllables are so intimately combined with the fundamental sound, that they no longer appear compound, but simple radical sounds, and wherein we no longer distinguish how that which was originally a compound can have become a mere modification
of

of inflexion. But hitherto the Biscayans who have written on their language have known very little of other languages, and have had no other object in view, but to enable their readers to read, speak, and write the Basque, although the grammar of father Larramede affords a little more of theory, which it even carries to excess. We have not however a single dictionary that gives a general view of the families of words, nor is there as yet more than an hispano-biscayan vocabulary with the basque words in alphabetical order after the Spanish. The foreign writers that have spoken of this language in my opinion only give a very incomplete idea of it. What they have least of all attended to, is the enabling their readers to judge for themselves. They go on building system upon system, and are pleased to derive the Basque sometimes from the eastern languages, sometimes from the celtic, but they give us very few ideas on its composition, not to mention that the examples they have adduced, on which to found their chimeras, are frequently selected with equal partiality and unskilfulness; and they waste their time in particular on useless disputes relative to the affinity or difference of the Basque from the Bas-breton. Mons. Latour d'Auvergne, in his "Origines gauloises," considers their difference as demonstrated; and as he was himself a Bas-breton by birth, and lived a long time among the Basques, his opinion is entitled to the

the more respect. However before we pronounce definitively on the diversity of these two languages, we ought to examine them much more profoundly as to their radical words, which this author, though otherwise of high merit, does not seem to have done. After all it would be much better, that a writer should leave these doubtful points aside, and merely furnish philologists with a detailed synopsis of the language, endeavouring to develop its system and grammar or lexicon as far as our imperfect data permit, and clearly to distinguish the radical words from their derivatives, in order to produce a double dictionary according to the biscayan alphabet and according to that of some other language. Thus might all the families of words be collected into a single point of view, and the reader comprehend the entire mass of the ideas of that nation hitherto abandoned to itself. Nor can he without such an investigation properly estimate the language or draw inferences regarding it. Such an attempt might be considered as a preliminary step to the general history of languages, so much to be desired, and to a universal grammar. For this purpose the principal works to be consulted are,

“ 1. Diccionario trilingue del Castellano, Bascuence y Latin, su autor el padre Manuel Larramede de la compañía de Jesus. En San-Sebastian, 1745, fol. 2 vol.

“ 2. El

“ 2. El imposible vencido ; arte de la lengua Bafcongada, fu autor — Larramedi. En Salamanca, 1729, 8 vol.

“ 3. Gramatica Efcuaraz eta Froncefez—Um Harrit. Bayonan, 1741, 6 vol. To this grammar is added a small and very imperfect vocabulary, bafque and french, and the contrary.

“ Among the printed books in the bafque language one of the moft interesting is

“ Les proverbes Bafques, recueillis par le S^r d'Ochenart ; alfo Les Poéfies Bafques, by the fame author. Paris 1657, 9 vol.”



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JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

LETTER XXV.

*Provisions — Sardines, Chestnuts, Fruits, Wines. — Climate. —
Maladies. — Physicians.*

Bilboa, Sept. 1797.

WE read in many geographical works, that Bilboa is the cheapest place to live at in all Spain: and yet it is one of the dearest. Of this its numerous population collected together in a very small space, the great afflux of foreigners, and an abundant circulation of specie, seem to be the principal causes.

Hence the fardines, of which the fishery is very considerable, ought to be esteemed one of the greatest benefits Nature has conferred on the poorer inhabitants. The women-dealers from Portogalete and Santa-Urfa regularly supply those places, and are contented with six or seven quartos per dozen, which is very moderate in comparison with other provisions. Were any attention bestowed on encouraging the fishery, there would doubtless arise an advantageous increase in this article. The attempts that have been made to procure another kind of fish resembling cod have been crowned with the most flattering success.

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This was the more desirable, as two other species of fish formerly taken here in great quantities have much diminished during the last thirty years, namely *sibiones* (sepia) or cuttle-fish, and *anguilas* or *angullas*. The latter are only taken in winter, at which time they come up the stream and approach the shore. In colour and shape this fish resemble fine vermicelli; they are strung by hundreds, and sent to Madrid in large bottles. They are said to be a favourite dish of the queen.

In winter chestnuts afford another resource; for independently of exportation great quantities are kept, and even at retail prices sell for no more than a quarto or a farthing the dozen. During this season the poor live on maize-bread, chestnuts, or salt cod, often in a state of decay. There is however a profusion of fruits, especially apples, of which cyder is sometimes made. Some vallies also produce small four oranges, and a bitter kind is imported by sea from the coast of Portugal.

The vine is much cultivated here, but the wine is far inferior to those of Navarre and Castile. It is a kind of light beverage of a reddish colour, and which the inhabitants call *chacoli*. It serves rather to cool than strengthen the body: the women in general drink this liquor, but the men

men mix it with stronger wines. It is to be lamented that agriculture has here made so little progress, and that consequently nothing is done to improve this wine.

The air of Bilboa and throughout Biscay is excellent, and such as may be expected in a mountainous country so near the sea. The general character of the climate is an extremely mild temperature. The heats of summer are moderated by continual sea-breezes, except when for a few days the solano or south-east wind oppresses the inhabitants. The winters are extremely mild, and rather rainy, but fine days pretty frequently occur. The trees are rarely deprived of all their leaves, and the verdure begins to re-appear toward the end of January.

It is true however that these soft winters frequently produce epidemic putrid fevers, which perhaps are also caused by the food and intemperance of the inhabitants. This too is the time of year when the small-pox makes the greater ravages, as the physicians are profoundly ignorant, and administer their cooling medicines to all constitutions, strong or weak, without distinction. This class of men seems scarcely to have taken leave of those barbarous ages, when the first rudiments of regimen in this respect were unknown. Would you believe that here are physicians, who in chronic

chronic rheumatism administer nothing but an ointment of storax, and that in certain cutaneous diseases, which you will easily guess at, they only apply goulard or plasters impregnated with mercury?



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

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

LETTER XXVI.

Departure from Bilboa.—Miravalles.—Description of a Posada.—Scenery.—Reminiscences of Chamouny.—Orduna.—La Peña.—A stormy Night.—A Venta.—Change in the Appearance of the Country and Inhabitants.—Costumes.—Villa-nueva.—Sierra de Union.—Wild Appearance of the Mountains and Rocks.—Inn near Burgos.—A French Ecclesiastic and a Pilgrim.—Burgos.

Burgos, Oct. 1797.

THE scene has entirely changed these five days past, and I am now in the midst of Old Castile. Soon after quitting Bilboa I was surrounded by mountains, but a vast number of loaded mules and a long train of carts drawn by oxen gave animation to the scene; though it is true that at first the creaking of these carriages was extremely disagreeable, it not being the custom here to grease the wheels.

First day.—We did not set off till four in the afternoon, and continued travelling after sun-set. The air was delicious. We were lighted by distant forges, and the measured sound of the hammers mingled with the tedious tinkling of the mule-bells. These bells (*zumbones*) are of copper and cylindric, two feet long and six inches in diameter, and being hung to the neck of the mule at the end
of

of the train, show whether they proceed quick or slow. In this manner we arrived at length at Miravalles, a large village among the mountains, near the river, and near three leagues from Bilboa.

The whole *posada* or inn was full of muleteers (*arrieros*) coming from Castile, so that those who followed scarcely found any room. They soon assembled round a large fire, where a crowd of people began to dress their suppers. The tables were covered with plates and jugs, and the different groups crowded close to each other; here two individuals playing the devil's tattoo on their pitchers, there a great newsmonger just arrived as he said from *Bayona de Francia*; next to him a guitar-player and some young women toying with their sweethearts, and beyond them some drunkards quarrelling. Add to these the squeaking voice of the landlady calling out and reckoning up her accounts, the confused voices of the guests calling for wine, the eloquence of the landlord endeavouring to sell a donkey, a tambouriner playing for the young people to dance, the noise of the mules separated from the kitchen merely by a thin partition, the barking of dogs mingling with the general uproar, and you will have an idea of this noisy scene, which became interesting through its variety and singularity.

Our beds however were excellent, and the bed-chamber covered with mats (*esteras*). When I awoke the next morning I was agreeably surpris'd to find the scenery around me perfectly similar to that of our delicious valley of Chamouny; the same form of rocks, the same kind of huts, and the same mixture of fields and plantations. Like that, a torrent is seen rolling from the summit of the mountain, nor were even the peaks of Mont-blanc wanting to embellish the scene; masses of silvery clouds rolled from peak to peak, and completed the beautiful illusion.

Second day.—Our conductor having slept but little the preceding night rose very late, so that we did not set off till ten o'clock. We passed through several villages, always along a delicious well-cultivated valley, from which we perceived the smiling prospect of the distant mountains. We arrived about two o'clock at the small town of Orduña at the extremity of the valley, and surrounded on that side with fine rows of trees. This place deserves some attention on account of its antiquity and the superb architecture of its custom-house.

We had given our conductor permission to go for half an hour to his house, which he said was only a musket-shot from the road, but he returned so late that we could not set off till five o'clock.

His

His excuse for delaying was rather comic: "Mi muger es joven, y jamas podemos acabar con el rosario." "My wife is young, and we can never finish the rosary." It was therefore already growing dusk, the sky was full of clouds that promised rain, and the Peña was covered with a thick fog. It was quite night when we arrived at the foot of the mountain, the wind rose, and a gentle rain began to fall. But we had scarcely been an hour on the road when both the wind and rain became heavier. The rain turned to snow, and the wind becoming boisterous drove a deluge of withered leaves in our faces. It was now so dark that we could not see our conductor; but I perceived that the road was a constant zig-zag, as was natural in ascending so steep an acclivity.

Our mules soon discovered the traces of another requa or string of mules; for six or eight and sometimes more are tied to each other by their halters. They had left Orduña an hour before us, and ours now quickened their pace. When we reached them, we found the muleteer under great embarrassment, two of his mules having fallen. This rendered it necessary to unload them before they could get up, and he could not load them again without assistance. Our arrival, which he did not expect so soon, immediately relieved him from his difficulty. He therefore obliged us, with an air of generosity quite in the Spanish style, to taste

taste of his large bota. Both parties were glad to find company, and thus we continued our march.

But the higher we climbed the heavier the storm grew. It began to hail, the wind became a hurricane, and unfortunately we had it in our faces. The mules could scarcely keep on their feet, mine fell twice, and the darkness was dreadful. We were then at the top of the Peña; we had three hours road to go down it, and no one could distinguish the voice of his neighbour. Indeed a general silence prevailed; for it was equally impossible to hear and to see each other.

Our muleteer, who was on foot, quite excited my compassion, and yet, as it was physically impossible for me to console him, my pity was useless. Fearing he should lose his pay, he was inconsolable, and every moment begged us a thousand pardons. It is true he was the cause of our delay, but yet he was the person most severely punished for it. As for me I felt it a duty to pacify him; for woe to him who increases the pains and misfortunes of his fellow-creatures. I set him therefore at his ease, and a few friendly words made him insensible to all the evils of the wind and the storm.

At length we began to descend, and in proportion as we approached the valley the storm abated. We could only go however step by step; and it

was midnight when we arrived at the *venta* situated at the foot of the mountain. Here we were very kindly received, and had reason to be contented with our sleeping place.

Third day.—The valley now widened more and more, and in the afternoon, having passed through a fine country interspersed with villages, we arrived after an hour's riding at Osma, where we found the frontier custom-house of the province of Alava. The officers were satisfied with feeling our pockets and bid the muleteer ask us for drink money (*para echar un trago*), which we had already prepared to give them.

Here the cultivation began to decline, the country to spread, and the costumes and countenances to assume a more foreign air. The climate too became rougher, the villages were a mere heap of huts built with earth often full of holes. The churches however were always large and magnificent, nor was there any scarcity of convents. The fields were mostly uncultivated, and as far as the eye could extend, we perceived neither tree nor shrub; in lieu of mules we frequently met small asses called *borricos*, scarcely any oxen, but a great quantity of black swine and excellent flocks of sheep. Our sleeping places became less clean, and the bread as well as the water bad; but the wine was better and cheaper.

We soon perceived men in broad felt hats, long brown cloaks, with their feet wrapped up in rags, and knotted sticks in their hands; in lieu of the coloured petticoats and the elegant corsets of the Biscayans we saw nothing but dingy-yellow gowns, and the beautiful tresses I have described were exchanged for short hair standing up covered with felt caps, and over that a black veil. The countenances we saw appeared longer, the features less beautiful, but their eyes were more brilliant and more animated. The ease and gaiety of the Biscayans had disappeared, nothing was seen but indigence and serious sorrowful countenances, though the language seemed purer, and the accent more sonorous. We crossed the Ebro, and passed the night at a poor town, of which the name I believe was Villa-nueva.

Fourth day.—The road this day was tolerably smooth, but we only saw desert heaths, and an arid calcareous soil. However after travelling some hours the valley grew narrower, and we entered among a chain of rocks, which we had long seen before us. It formed a part of the sierra de union. We passed it in the narrowest part, leaving it on our left, which very much shortened our road. The gigantic forms of these naked and awful rocks reminded me of those which skirt the ice-lakes of Montpanvert in the Alps of Faucigny. Never
should

Should I have expected to have seen them renewed in the midst of Spain. Here every thing wears the aspect of the most hideous sterility. We passed a defile, where enormous rocks were heaped together over our heads with dreadful sublimity, and on the most elevated point was an hermitage. At length amid these heaped-up rocks we arrived at a monastery of capuchins, where the industrious monks have formed a chearful garden amid the inhospitable wilds, and have even brought thither a rivulet to water their plantations. What an enchanting appearance amid a desert country, and contrasted by so many wild and rudely magnificent objects!

After dinner we re-entered on the plain, which is surrounded by hills crowned with olives. We found the road indeed very animated, for it was full of monks and women travelling upon mules, carts drawn by oxen, and numerous troops of borricos. Our way traversed a vast extent of uncultivated heaths, that might easily have been converted into fertile fields, till at length we arrived at a farm half a league from Burgos, where we determined to pass the night on account of the excellent forage it affords. On entering the kitchen our attention was attracted by two persons who sat by the fire-side. One was a tall thin man with a very flat face and his hair in curls, the other was fat, had a noble and intelligent appearance, was dressed as a pilgrim,

with a crucifix hung to his neck, a chaplet for a girdle, and almost bald. The first had something of meanness and of pride in his air, as may often be observed in ill-educated people who would give themselves airs, he had his hat on, and puffed the smoke of his pipe to a great distance with much gravity and spitting proudly upon the coals. The other was uncovered, and, crouching in a distant corner of the chimney, was modestly eating a morsel of dry bread, to which he added a small pitcher of wine that was brought him. I soon recognized the former by his questions and pronunciation to be a french ecclesiastic, and perceived the other to be a man of rank, whose head was turned by devotion.

The french priest at first offered to retire, taking us republican merchants; but being undeceived by our muleteer, he addressed us in French. According to him the allied powers must speedily enter France and cut to pieces at least 8,000,000 of republicans in order to restore the emigrant priests to their benefices. It is really shocking to observe to what extremes egotism and the rage of party will carry the passions of mankind. One would almost imagine cruelty were essential to our existence, or a natural instinct that bursts forth as soon as occasion and circumstance give it an opportunity to expand.

This

This morning we arrived at Burgos, and we shall not leave it till after dinner; but as you will find an account of every thing it contains worthy of notice in books of travels, I shall be silent on that head. If a man wishes however to become acquainted with the inhabitants of Old Castile, he must observe them at Burgos; for no where can he find so many ill dressed people or so many beggars in the streets. Hence notwithstanding its extent, the place has a dull and inanimate appearance. The royal hospital is reckoned very rich; I have been told that on Good Friday alone it distributes to the poor as much as 1500 dresden bushels of wheat in small loaves. The other churches as well as the monasteries distribute the like largesses, and thereby afford daily encouragement to idleness and beggary. It should seem that all the institutions which do not pursue the spirit of the age become pernicious. Burgos is on all sides so much exposed to the north wind, that the greatest summer heats are always moderate, but on the other hand the winters are the more severe. Indeed we have now an autumnal air, which reminds me of Germany, and our distance from the temperate sea coast becomes daily more and more sensible.

LETTER XXVII.

Road to Lerma.—A Mule falls sick.—Exorcisms and Holy Water.—Road to Aranda.—A Girl without Arms.—Aranda.—Dragoons.—Scene at an Inn.—The Mass.—Bossequillas.—Picture of Misery.—Venta of San Lorenzo.—Road over the Somosierra.—Noble Gorda.—Buytrago.—A Catalonian Inn.—San-Agostin.—Difference of New and Old Castile.—Road to San-Sebastian.—First View of Madrid.—Approach to Madrid.—Description of the People seen on the Road.—Custom-House Officers.

Madrid, October 1797.

BEFORE I speak of this capital, I must tell you how I came here.

Fifth day.—The camino real (royal or high road) that brought us so commodiously to Burgos terminating suddenly on our approach to that city, we entered upon a rugged stony mountainous path, and presently perceived Burgos at a distance below us. The soil appeared ill cultivated, though here and there we saw some wood and a few vineyards. We met tolerably fine flocks of sheep, but throughout our day's journey of six Spanish leagues we saw no habitations except two ventas for changing horses.

Toward evening we beheld from a height the small town of Lerma very near a river and surrounded with trees. From the right side a belt of wood

wood extended to the left, and we saw the mountains of Guadarrama gilded by the rays of the departing sun. We found the inn extremely dirty, but our beds were in a tolerably clean apartment. They brought us bread and wine equally bad, and a few sausages stuffed with pepper. All the women wear brown petticoats trimmed with broad green furbelows, black stockings, and red stays. Throughout the town there is not a single pane of glass, except in the church and parsonage.

The next morning, when on the point of setting off, it appeared that my mule had not eaten and was sick. Immediately there was a long consultation among all the arrieros that were about to load their beasts, and most of them were of opinion we must give him rest; but the whole day passed without his recovering. He was washed with hot wine, a dose of physic administered, and a plaster applied; but all without effect. What could be the reason of all this? Nothing more simple; the animal was bewitched.

To break the charm therefore a quantity of images of saints of all kinds, chaplets, and a large tub of holy water were brought, the animal was dragged under a gateway, his head placed toward the church, he was loaded with images and rosaries, while a toothless old woman muttering a whole litany of ave-marias attempted to exorcise him

him, and they concluded by inundating him with holy water from head to foot. Four hours after the animal began to eat, and the next day was perfectly well. You will easily imagine, that without rashly despising this sacred bath I might at least, according to the religion I was brought up in, admit some doubts. It therefore appeared to me from certain symptoms that the mule had a stranguery, and that since cold is useful in that disorder, the water that was thrown over him might possibly accelerate his cure.

Sixth day.—Between Lerma and Aranda, which terminated this day's journey, being a distance of six spanish leagues and a half, we traversed a fine plain partly planted with vines. At noon we stopped at a wine-house, where we found a girl without arms, who turned the spit with her feet and made wooden spoons. After dinner we met a crowd of arrieros, who, as they went along, amused themselves by striving who should throw stones farthest, as they had before been disputing who should drink most. The environs of Aranda are cultivated in a superior style. We entered that town by a fine avenue of poplars. It is a considerable place, and now belongs to the Prince of Peace. The posada was full of dragoons who had been there some days. The people of the house and the muleteers treated them with great respect, and never addressed them but as *Señores soldados*
or

or gentlemen soldiers, though they are usually called simply *militar*. Their conversation principally turned upon the campaign they had been making in Rouffillon. It was an amusement to hear their rodomontades, as for instance, "Do you see this fabre? it has spitted at least half a dozen Frenchmen." This was one of the most moderate.

After supper they danced the fandango before the door, and the sound of the tambourin drew together a crowd of young women. Meanwhile a number of spectators got on the top of the chest in which was kept the barley for the mules (for in Spain little or no oats are grown), in consequence of which the top was forced in. Upon this the landlady was so enraged that she sallied forth with a firebrand in her hand against the offenders. At length she was appeased, but in all my life I never heard such a volley of threats and of abuse.

The next day being a holiday, it was necessary to hear mass at the franciscan monastery. The church was loaded with magnificent ornaments, but it exhaled an insupportable cadaverous smell. The women knelt on sheep-skins, and wore white veils over their grey gowns; the men were dressed neater than at other places, many had hats, and we saw very few ragged cloaks. This showed some degree of affluence, and I learned that Aranda boasts some tanneries and several woollen manufactories.

Seventh

Seventh day.—The nearer we came to the mountains, the worse the weather proved. At night we felt a very piercing cold, and yet at noon the heat of the sun was insupportable. This day did not afford us any pleasing or interesting scenery, the road was bad and incommodious, and the two villages we passed dull and miserable, particularly Bossequillas where we slept.

As we entered the kitchen, which in Spain is the place of general assemblage, we saw nothing but objects of misery. Near the fire stood a truckle-bed, where on a stratum of maize-leaves lay two children with the small-pox covered with a sheep-skin; on the other side was a woman who had recently lain-in, whose child had also the small-pox, and another child who was recovering from the same disorder which had deprived it of one eye. The father, who was preparing the dinner with the assistance of his youngest daughter, had dislocated his arm, and to complete all, there seemed the most extreme indigence and an absolute want of provisions and of resources. Thus there was no comfort or cleanliness to be expected in this hospital of invalids, where the patients had no other food but a decoction of mallows and a little oxymel.

Our unfortunate landlord did all he could with one arm. His good-nature and civility did not relax for a moment, and he seemed to have an elevation

elevation of mind, that interested me in a singular manner in his favor.

Eighth day.—The next morning we saw before us to the northward the mountains of Guadarrama with their snowclad summits; and after three hours and a half riding we arrived at the foot of that chain at an inn called Venta de San-Lorenzo, where the snow lay a foot deep. It was toward the south, but the sun had very little power, and every thing was covered with icicles. This part of the Guadarrama mountains is called la Somo-fierra.

The higher we ascended, the more piercing was the cold, and the road was almost entirely covered with snow. The frozen sides of these inaccessible rocks, precipices skirted with pines, fields of dazzling snow, and the solemn silence of the scene, all recalled the Alps to my mind, especially the neighbourhood of Saint Gothard. At length after two hours and a half we arrived at the steep village of Noble Gorda, which stands on the peak of the mountain, and where during nine months in the year a Siberian winter prevails. The inhabitants carry on some trade, and among other articles deal in swine and wood, by which they procure a subsistence.

The road that leads to Somosierra is one of the most magnificent in all Spain. It was begun by Ferdinand VI. and finished under Charles III. We descended

descended pretty rapidly, found the air below sensibly milder, and after two full hours arrived at the small town of Buytrago, which by its ancient towers and walls is easily perceived to have been a fortress.

The pleasure of having overcome difficulties and the exercise of our own powers constitutes one of the delights of travelling, especially in a mountainous country, where the nature of the country is continually renewing this gratification. Full of such sentiments we entered the posada, which we were agreeably surprised to find was kept by Catalonians, who had brought thither the industry, cleanliness, and gaiety of their countrymen. Their physiognomy, their complexion, their costume, and their furniture, all bore testimony in their favor.

Among a crowd of travellers, that arrived from Madrid, was a surgeon who had just passed his examination, and, having been admitted, was going to take possession of a business in a small town. He was a young man, had studied according to the *new plan*, and seemed to have particularly formed his ideas from the writings of our Plenck. I parted from him with regret the next morning, having conceived a great deal of esteem for him.

Ninth day.—Our road, which was six Spanish leagues, traversed well cultivated fields, and passed through some villages as far as San-Agostin, which was our last sleeping place before we arrived at Madrid.

Madrid. It was impossible not to perceive, we were now in New Castile and approached the metropolis. We found more cleanliness and affluence, the furniture and accommodations improved, the language and manners of the inhabitants showed more cultivation, the provisions were better, and nothing was talked of but the last news from Madrid. We set off the next morning about five o'clock to complete the remaining six short leagues of our journey.

Tenth day.—I found the road worse and more uneven than I expected, and we were obliged to pass many very steep hills. The scenery however was that of perfect cultivation, and the distance crowned with forests. Thus we arrived at San Sebastian, three leagues from Madrid, and had there a kind of foretaste of the capital in well-built houses and lofty latticed windows. Here for the first time the dinner was served by portions, and french rolls and liqueur-wines (*vinos generosos*) could be had.

We were still almost two leagues from Madrid, when from a height we perceived that city with its innumerable towers. The nearer we approached, the more did the various objects unfold and the new palace in particular appeared in view. The whole country was well cultivated, and the new corn was springing up in all its glory. We entered
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upon a very fine road, which at every step became more interesting and more animated.

Here we saw a multitude of women going to market on small donkeys with their blue petticoats turned over their heads like veils, the men in black jackets without sleeves, with green nets round their heads and brown cloaks, were riding two by two on one mule; dragoons making their horses prance, one-horse-chaises full of women, officers in post chaises, long trains of mules loaded with baggage, and troops of unloaded borricos crossed each other in all directions. Yet neither avenues of trees, nor gardens, nor suburbs, announced the neighbourhood of Madrid. Every thing except a tolerable large farm is absolute nakedness around this metropolis.

When we arrived at the post of Fuencarral, the name of which is written over the gate in a square of porcelain, we were obliged to stop to be examined, which is done with great rigour, especially as to snuff. Before our turn came we saw above thirty panniers inspected, which is done in a very singular manner. The custom-house officers, being furnished with a long bar of iron channelled out and rubbed with grease, pass it in every direction into the panniers, where, if it meets with snuff, some will adhere to the grease. We were dispatched more quickly, because we had had our portmanteaus