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SPAIN IN

1830.

H. D. INGLIS.

VOL.

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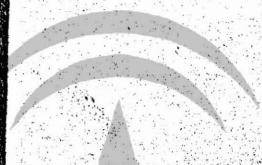
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N.º 19



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

**SPAIN IN 1830.**

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

By the same Author,

In 2 vols., Post 8vo., Price 16s.

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# SPAIN IN 1830.

BY

HENRY D. INGLIS,

AUTHOR OF "SOLITARY WALKS THROUGH MANY LANDS;" "A JOURNEY THROUGH NORWAY," &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLS.

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



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CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

H E N R Y D A V I D,

EARL OF BUCHAN.

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MY DEAR LORD,

SINCE I parted from your Lordship, eight years ago, on the bridge of Namur, changes have happened both to you and to myself. You have become a Lord,—I have become an author. When a man acquires a handle to his name, all the world knows it; but when a man begins to handle his pen, it is a chance whether any one knows it but himself. It is very likely, therefore, that your Lordship may be as ignorant upon this point, as I fear

the rest of the world are ; but it will doubtless surprise your Lordship to be told, that upon you I lay all my sins of authorship.

It was in those daily and delightful strolls on the banks of the Meuse; that you inspired me with the desire of hunting the wild boar in the forest of Ardennes; and when I went to bury myself there,—at the time that your Lordship sought the busier scenes of Paris,—I carried with me that little green writing-desk and its golden key, the gift of the lamented Mrs. Erskine. Figure to yourself, my Lord, my isolated dwelling, with six feet of snow around my doors,—no companion but my great shaggy dog, and my blazing faggots, and the little green writing-desk upon a table by my side,—and your Lordship will admit, that I could not do otherwise than use the golden key and blot my paper.

The dedication of my first book was therefore most certainly due to your Lordship; but besides its own unworthiness, another

reason, applicable to all that I have subsequently written, hindered me from laying at your feet this tribute of affection and respect. I was then younger than I am now, and probably more foolish; and asking the notice of the Public under a fictitious name, your Lordship would have said, "who is this Derwent Conway, who impertinently addresses me, My dear Lord, and subscribes himself my Cousin?" But Spain is a country so associated with romance, that a fictitious name to a book of travels in that country, might almost warrant the conclusion, that the book was altogether a fiction: and so now throwing off this veil which was unmeaningly assumed, I take this earliest opportunity of making your Lordship's acquaintance in the character of an author.

Sweet shades of Ammondell! I remember them well,—that Gothic bridge, that plantation that skirts the river; where, when a boy, "just let loose from school," I used to be met and welcomed by that fine, grey-


headed man, your Lordship's sire,—the elegant, the learned, the witty, the eloquent, the consistent politician, the upright man, the unrequited;—Ay! the unrequited; heaven rest His soul! who remembered not his friends in the day of His prosperity.

It is difficult to tear oneself from the “deep solitudes” and quiet glades of Ammondell; and I know that your Lordship enjoys there the elegancies of life—the delights of rural retirement—and the sweets of literary leisure; but your honourable father had battled with the world, and in the cause of independence and freedom, before he retired to the tranquil shades of the Ammon, and said—

Give me a nook in some secluded spot  
That business shuns, and din approaches not;—  
Some quiet retreat, where I may never know  
Which monarch reigns,—what ministers bestow.

Your Lordship inherits the genius, with the titles of your family; and it were a

noble spectacle to see the Aristocracy of the land stand forth, the champion of Political Liberty, and lending the weight of its influence to the claims of those who have only right and reason on their side. Forgive, my dear Lord, this boldness ; which must only be attributed to the respect and great regard with which I have the honor to subscribe myself,



Your Lordship's affectionate Cousin,

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife

CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

HENRY DAVID INGLIS.

*Barcellona, Jan. 2nd, 1831.*

# CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

---

## CHAPTER I.

---

### BISCAY.

PAGE

Departure from Bayonne, the Bidassoa, and entrance into Spain; Precautions against Robbery; Black Mail, and Anecdote; Charming and novel Scenery; Mail Travelling in Spain: Vittoria; Spanish Bread; Priests; the Spanish Cloak; Women; Arrival of the Infante Don Francis; a National Trait; Spanish Money and Expense of Travelling; Journey through Biscay to Bilbao; Chocolate; the Plain of Vittoria; Passage of the Biscayan Mountains; Durango; a Village Misfortune; Biscayan Recreation; the Muleteer's Song; Bilbao; Traits of Spanish Character; Markets; Biscayan Political and Religious Opinions; State of the Inhabitants, and Mode of Life; Riches of the Corporation of Bilbao; Prices of Provisions; the Campo Santo; the Iglesia de Bigonia and its Superstitions; Trait of Spanish Pride and Generosity; the Convents and their Inmates; the Hospital; curious Customs, and extraordinary scene in a Coffee House; Improvement of Land in Biscay, Climate, Disease, &c.; peculiar Rights and Privileges of Biscay	1
---	---

## CHAPTER II.

## JOURNEY FROM BISCAY TO MADRID.

	PAGE
Waggon Travelling; Scenery; Bills of Fare, and Expenses; Second Visit to Vittoria; Departure for Madrid; the Ebro; Privileges of the Military; Old Castile; Husbandry; Burgos; Beggars; Posadas; Traits of Misery in a Cas- tilian Village; New Castile; Quixotic Adventure; the Somo-Sierra, and Approach to the Capital; Sketches of the Environs, and Arrival in Madrid; Information for Travellers. - - - - -	44

## CHAPTER III.

## MADRID.

Streets and Street Population; Female Dress: the Mantilla, the Fan; Aspect of the Streets of Madrid at different hours; the Siesta; Shops; Good and Bad Smells; State of the Lower Orders; Analysis of the Population; Street Sketches; Sunday in Madrid; the Calle de Alcalá; Con- vents; the Street of the Inquisition; Private Apartments in Madrid; the Prado and its Attractions; Ludicrous Incongruities; Spanish Women, and their Claims; the Fan and its Uses; Portraits; Inconvenient Exaction of Loyalty; the Philosophy of Good Walking; the Retiro; Castilian Skies; the Café Catalina and its Visitors; other Coffee Rooms, and Political Reflections; the Botanical Garden, strange Regulation on entering; the Theatres; Spanish Play Bills; Teatro del Principe; the Cazuela and Intrigue; Spanish Comedy; the Bolero; the Italian Com- pany; Cultivation of Music in Madrid; the Guitar; Vocal Music; Spanish Music - - - - -	65
--	----

## CHAPTER IV.

## MADRID.

	PAGE
The King, Queen, and Royal Family; Personal Appearance of Ferdinand; a Royal <i>Jeu d'esprit</i> ; the King's Confidence in the People, and Examples; Character of the King; a Carlist's Opinion of the King; Favourites,—Calomarde, —Alegon,—Salsedo,—the Duque d'Higar; Rising Influence of the Queen; Habits of the Royal Family; Court Diversions; Rivalry of Don Carlos; the Queen's Accouchement, and Views of Parties; Detection of a Carlist Plot; the Salic Law; Court Society; Persons of Distinction, and Ministerial Tertulias; Habits and Manner of Life of the Middle Classes; a Spanish House, and its Singular Defences; Abstemiousness of the Spaniards; Evening and Morning Visits; Balls and Spanish Dancing; Character of Spanish Hospitality; Spanish Generosity and its Origin; Examples of Ostentation; Morals; Gallantry and Intrigue; the Morals of the Lower Orders; Religious Opinions in the Capital, and Decline of the Priestly Influence; Jesuitical Education; the Influence of the Friars; Causes of the Decline of Priestly Influence, and the Continuance of that of the Friars; Convent Secrets; Curious Exposé at Cadiz; Devotion in Madrid	112

## CHAPTER V.

## MADRID.

The Profession of a Nun; Reflections; Description of the Interior of a Convent; the Monastic Life; Description of a Bull-Fight; Sketches of Spanish Character; a Horse Race	168
---	-----



## CHAPTER VI.

	PAGE.
Memoir of Murillo - - - - -	- 203

## CHAPTER VII.

## MADRID.

The Picture Gallery; the Works of Murillo; the Annunciation; the Virgin Instructed by her Mother; Landscapes; Velasquez and his Works; Meeting of Bacchanalians; the Forges of Vulcan; Espanoletto and his Works; Villavencio; Juanes; Alonzo Cano; Cerezo; Morales; Juanes' Last Supper; the Modern Spanish School; Aparicio; the Famine in Madrid; Italian Gallery; Flemish School; the <i>Sala Reservada</i> ; Statuary; Cabinet of Natural History; <i>Sala Reservada</i> ; the Patrician's Dream; the <i>Desengano de la Vida</i> ; Private Collections; the Duke of Liria's Gallery; Churches and Convents; Church of San Isidro; San Salvador; Santa Maria; San Gines; Santiago; San Antonio de Florida; Convent of Las Salesas; de la Encarnation; the Franciscans; Santa Isabella; Hidden Pictures; San Pasqual; Santa Teresa; the Palace.	- 233
---	-------

## CHAPTER VIII.

Literature; Difficulties to be encountered by Authors; the Book Fair; Digression respecting the Claims of Spain to Gil Blas; Public and Private Literary Societies; Libraries; Obstacles to Improvement, from the State of Society; Female Education; Education for the Liberal Professions; Course of Study for the Bar; Course of Medical Studies; Charitable Institutions; Consumption of Madrid; Prices of Provisions.	- 265
--	-------

## CHAPTER IX.

	PAGE
State of Parties, and Political Prospects. - -	- 293

## CHAPTER X.

## THE ESCURIAL—ST. ILDEFONSO—SEGOVIA.

Journey from Madrid; First View of the Escorial; Philip II.; Situation of the Escorial; the Church; Lucas Jordan; the Relics; the Santa Forma; the Sacristy and its Pictures; a Reverie; the Hall of Recreation; the Library; the Tomb of the Kings; the Manuscript Library; Ignorance and Idleness of the Monks, and Anecdotes; Manner of Life among the Monks; the Palace; Particulars of the Extent and Cost of the Escorial; Pedestrian Journey across the Sierra Guaderrama to Ildefonso; the Palace, Waters, and Garden of La Granja; Road to Segovia; its Remains, and Present Condition; Expensiveness of Royal Honours; Return to Madrid - -	- 328
---	-------

## CHAPTER XI.

## TOLEDO.

Journey from Madrid; Proofs of the backwardness of Spain; Appearance of the Country; Spanish Mule-driving; a Venta; First View of Toledo; Toledo Recreations and Society; Remains of Former Grandeur, and Proofs of Present Decay; Picturesque Views; the Tagus; Intricacy of Toledo; Bigotry and Priestcraft; Reasons for the Prevalence of Religious Bigotry in Toledo; Proofs of Bigotry; Aspect of the Population; the Cathedral and its Riches; Scene in the Cathedral; the Alcazar; Historical Retrospect; Praiseworthy Institutions of the Archbishop Lorenzana; the University; Toledo Sword Manufactory; the Franciscan Convent; Return to Madrid - -	- 305
--	-------

# SPAIN IN 1830.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### BISCAY.

Departure from Bayonne, the Bidassoa, and entrance into Spain; Precautions against Robbery; Black Mail, and Anecdote; Charming and novel Scenery; Mail travelling in Spain; Vittoria; Spanish Bread; Priests; the Spanish Cloak; Women; Arrival of the Infante Don Francis; a National trait; Spanish Money and expense of Travelling; Journey through Biscay to Bilbao; Chocolate; the Plain of Vittoria; Passage of the Biscayan Mountains; Durango; a Village Misfortune; Biscayan Recreation; the Muleteer's Song; Bilbao; Traits of Spanish Character; Markets; Biscayan Political and Religious Opinions; State of the Inhabitants and mode of Life; Riches of the Corporation of Bilbao; Prices of Provisions; the Campo Santo; the Iglesia de Bigonia and its Superstitions; Trait of Spanish Pride and Generosity; the Convents and their Inmates; the Hospital; curious Customs, and extraordinary scene in a Coffee House; Improvement of Land in Biscay, Climate, Diseases, &c.; peculiar Rights and Privileges of Biscay.

I left England in the early part of the spring of 1830, with the intention of visiting Spain; and taking a circuitous route through the Southern parts of France, to Bayonne, I left that city on the 14th of May, by the Madrid Courier, for Vittoria, and in a few hours we crossed the Bidassoa and entered Spain.

It is impossible to enter any foreign country for the first time, without experiencing some mental excitement; and it seems to me, that among all the countries of Europe, Spain is the most calculated to awaken interest and expectation: for even if it were possible to forget all that links the history of Spain with Carthaginian enterprise, and Roman ambition, and Moorish grandeur, the present condition of the country, and the desire of gratifying curiosity, respecting the manners, character, and condition of the Spanish people, would still be sufficient to justify a strong feeling of excitement.

When I had crossed the Bidassoa, I knew that I was in Spain; and every object immediately acquired a new interest. Three several demands for my passport, within the short space of ten minutes, had not the effect of putting me out of humour; I was prepared for inconveniences greater than this, in journeying through a country so little visited as Spain, and had wisely laid in a stock of philosophy to meet them all.

The frontier town of Spain, Irun, lies within half a league of the Bidassoa: it is an insignificant village, no way calculated to create a favourable impression; but it is improper to form any judgment of a country, from the places that lie along its frontier. At Irun, the mail

stops a short time; and before proceeding on its journey, formidable precautions are taken against the possibility of robbery. I saw three carabines, and four cases of pistols, deposited about the coach; and three additional guards, each armed with a long sabre, took their seats behind and in the cabriolet. These preparations naturally create doubts in the mind of the traveller, as to his personal safety: nor are these altogether without foundation: there is undoubtedly some exaggeration on the subject of robbery of the public conveyances in Spain; but it is certain, that the mails are occasionally stopped, especially in the southern parts. It is beneath the dignity of the government, to enter into a treaty with banditti, for the safety of the mails; and as resistance must be made in case of an attack, the traveller by the mail is necessarily placed in a dangerous position; but in the diligence, he runs comparatively little risque. I can state, upon certain information received in Madrid, that every one of the principal Spanish diligences, with the exception of that from Barcellona to Perpignan, pays *Black Mail* to the banditti for their protection. This arrangement was at first attended with some difficulty; and from a gentleman who was present at the interview between the person employed to

negotiate on behalf of the diligences, and the representative of the banditti, I learned a few particulars. The diligences in question were those between Madrid and Seville; and the sum offered for their protection was not objected to; but another difficulty was started: "I have nothing to say against the terms you offer," said the negotiator for the banditti, "and I will at once ensure you against being molested by robbers of consequence; but as for the small fry (*Ladrones de ninguna consideracion*), I cannot be responsible; we respect the engagements entered into by each other; but there is nothing like honour among the petty thieves." The proprietors of the diligences, however, were satisfied with the assurance of protection against the great robbers, and the treaty was concluded; but not long afterwards, one of the coaches was stopped and rifled by the petty thieves: this led to an arrangement which has ever since proved effectual; one of the chiefs accompanies the coach on its journey, and overawes by his name and reputation, the robbers of inferior degree.

Nothing can exceed the beauty of the country between the frontier, and *Tolosa*; the road lies through the most enchanting valleys, green and fertile, beyond any that I had seen in the French

Pyrenees; and there is one feature in the scenery, peculiar to this part of the Biscayan provinces: the sides of the mountains are not covered with forest trees, as in the Pyrenees, nor with fir, as in the Alps, but with fruit trees: the effect of this was striking, and beautiful; chiefly owing to the variety of colour in the different fruits with which every tree was bowed to the ground. As far as the eye could reach up the mountain side, it rested upon a variegated carpet of the many rich and nameless tints that lie upon the finest and mellowest fruits. The abundance of fruit was sufficiently shewn in the little value that seemed to be attached to it; in place of flowers being thrown into the coach by children, as is customary in many parts of France, the early fruits of the season were tossed in at the windows; and the smallest coin was gladly received as a sufficient compensation.

It will probably create some surprise when I say, that in no part of Europe is it possible to travel with so much comfort, or with so great rapidity, as by the Spanish Courier. The coach is more commodious and roomy than an English private carriage; it is well cushioned and seated; the windows are furnished with Venetian blinds, by which the air may be admitted and the sun excluded; and with silk curtains,

by which the sun may be excluded even when the glass windows are closed ; and two passengers only are admitted inside : another is admitted into the cabriolet along with the guards. The coach is drawn by four mules, which are kept at a gallop the whole way, up hill and down hill ; and the road from Bayonne to Madrid, is generally as smooth as the very best roads in England. I ascertained that the rate of travelling exceeded twelve miles an hour. No time is lost in useless stoppages ; the mules are changed with as great expedition as in England ; the traveller must be contented with few meals ; and against the assaults of thirst, the guards are provided with a well filled wine-skin, to which they never apply, without first offering it to the passengers, who are expected to accept the civility.

At Tolosa, an inconsiderable town, we stopped to sup: it was then nearly dark, so that I was unable to see much of it; and, indeed, no more time was allowed than sufficed for the meal. This was the first meal I had taken in Spain, and the first inn I had entered: of the latter, I was scarcely entitled to form an opinion from seeing only one room; but the exaggerated accounts I had heard of the badness and filthiness of the Spanish *posadas*, were



well calculated to put me in good humour with the inn at Tolosa. After the variety and excellence of the French *cuisine*, the supper table seemed a little meagre, but every thing was eatable; the table was cleanly and neatly set out, and the servants were active and attentive. In most of the Spanish *posadas* in the north of Spain, where Malaga is prized, a glass of it is presented to the traveller after every meal.

When morning dawned, I found myself still travelling through a mountainous country, but less fertile than that which lies nearer the frontier. In ascending the mountains that bound the plain in which Vittoria is situated, the usual rapidity of our travelling was interrupted; here, the mules were changed for oxen, which are used throughout Spain, for every kind of laborious work: we are accustomed to associate with oxen, remarkable slowness of movement; and presuming upon this, and upon the steepness of the ascent, I left the carriage, in the intention of walking to the summit; but contrary to my expectation, I found myself unable to keep pace with the oxen, and had great difficulty in regaining my place.

In approaching Vittoria, the country became less interesting; at the highest part of the ascent, the oxen were again changed for mules,

and we descended into the plain at a rapid pace, and soon after entered Vittoria, after passing a number of prisoners, chained together, working on the roads; and several long trains of mules.

I had been warned of the strictness of the custom-house at Vittoria, especially in the search for books; but this, like much of the information I had received before entering Spain, proved an exaggeration. I never passed a custom-house with so slight a scrutiny; not one book was opened, and the whole examination did not occupy five minutes.

I had been recommended to go to the "*Parador*," which has the reputation of being the best hotel in Spain; I found, however, that the whole house was engaged for the reception of the Infante Don Francis, and his suite, who were expected the same morning from Bilbao; but accommodation was provided for me in the house adjoining, where I was immediately presented with the usual Spanish *refresco*, a cup of chocolate, and the most excellent bread in Europe. In this, I found that report had for once spoken the truth: I have no where tasted bread that will compare with that of Spain; and this remark applies to the whole country, and not only to the cities and towns, but even to the

villages: in the little village of *St. Lorenzo*, in the midst of the *Sierra Guadarrama*, I found bread equal to any that can be purchased in Madrid or Seville.

Vittoria being the first Spanish town that I had seen by daylight, I quickly finished my *refresco*, that I might walk into the streets. The first thing that attracted my attention, as being characteristic of Spain, was, the great number of priests, and members of different religious orders; and, at the same time, it was impossible to avoid remarking the difference in the appearance of the Spanish clergy, and the clergy of most of the other Catholic countries, especially of France. I saw no poor looking, half starved priests, in thread-bare garments, and looks of humility; all were well clothed, and seemingly well fed; they were not ashamed to hold up their heads, and appeared, as the French say, *à leur aise*.

The next thing that struck me as being remarkable, was the Spanish cloak. It was about noon, on a summer day, and the sun was out; and yet, every second or third person was muffled up in his ample cloak; these persons were, however, chiefly of the inferior ranks; and I could not help suspecting, that the cloak covered many an infirmity, and perhaps with some,

stood in stead of an under garment: even the school-boys had their cloaks thrown over their shoulders; and there appeared something very ludicrous in the spectacle of boys at play, encumbered with these useless appendages. I remarked that brown was the universal colour of the cloak among the lower ranks; blue, or black, among the upper classes.

In the appearance of the women, I noticed nothing very remarkable. The Spanish national dress is scarcely seen so far north—the lower orders wore their hair plaited, and descending behind, to the waist; and but few of the ladies were to be seen with the Spanish mantilla. I am not entitled to say a single word respecting the personal appearance of the Spanish women, from a cursory glance at the streets of Vittoria; upon this subject my expectations were highly excited,—but I reserve my judgment upon so interesting a matter, until I have seen the Capital.

In returning to the hotel, that I might see the arrival of the Infant from my window, I stopped for a moment in the bread market,—the display was tempting and beautiful; loaves of all shapes and dimensions, and as white as un-kneaded flour, were piled along the street,—but I was obliged to hasten towards my apartment by a flourish of trumpets, announcing the ap-

proach of the Infante,—and in a few minutes more his advanced guard entered the street. I can scarcely expect to be credited, when I say that the Infant, Don Francis, the brother of the King of Spain, arrived in a diligence,—yet such is the fact. He, his consort, and his family, occupied one diligence, and his suite occupied another,—the first drawn by seven mules,—the second, by six. The royal party was received with respect by a considerable concourse of people, and with the military honours usually paid to persons in so exalted a station.

In the afternoon, I made a second tour of the town;—I walked into three or four of the churches, but found no fair devotees before any of the altars; only two or three poor old women were at their devotions. I was particularly amused with a spectacle that presented itself in the *Plaza*—a square, by the by, little inferior to the *Place Vendome* in Paris: between two and three hundred girls, from eight to thirteen or fourteen years of age, were assembled in the middle of the area, dancing with each other, to the music of a fife and a drum, played by a musician whom they had hired to contribute his aid to their favourite pastime: the dances were slow, and conducted with the utmost gravity; every one seemed to consider herself engaged in an im-

portant affair, and among the two or three hundred countenances, there was scarcely a smile to be seen.

The neighbourhood of the hotel continued to be the point of attraction to the inhabitants of Vittoria all the evening; an Infante is a rarity in the provincial towns of Spain, and the citizens testified their sense of the honour of a visit, by assembling in the street opposite to the hotel, and by hanging cloths and mattings of various colours from the windows: a mark of respect, which in Spain is always considered due to royal, or religious processions. Deputations of the principal inhabitants also arrived,—among others, one of Capuchin friars; and to my great annoyance, a band of indifferent music continued to entertain the Infante till after midnight.

There was nothing to detain me long in Vittoria, and I hired a cabriolet and two mules, to carry me to Bilbao, the capital of Biscay; the distance is eleven leagues of the country, or something more than fifty English miles, and for this I paid 200 reals; and as I may probably have frequent occasion to mention the expense of travelling, and the value of different articles, the following few explanations will be found of use. Generally speaking, every thing in Spain

is calculated by reals, from the price of a ticket to the bull-fight, up to the State expenditure. The value of a real is nearly  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ ,—so that four reals are equal to a French franc, or  $10d.$  English; all accounts in reals may therefore be easily understood by dividing by four. But in small values, the calculation is made in quartos, eight and a half of which are equal to a real, or  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$  In stating prices, I shall always make use of these two denominations of money, so that the reader may at once be able to substitute English value.

From Bayonne, into Biscay, the nearest road is not by Vittoria, but along the sea shore by St. Sebastian; but the muleteers considering the coast road unsafe, from the chances of robbery, I was obliged to take the more circuitous line by Vittoria, which I left about five in the morning, after the usual *refresco*. Chocolate in Spain, is very different from chocolate in England: it is served in a very small cup, about the size of the old India china coffee cup; it is about the consistence of thick cream, and is highly spiced with cinnamon: the traveller in Spain who dislikes chocolate, will often find himself exposed to great inconvenience.

Leaving Vittoria, I entered upon the extensive plain in which it is situated, and proceeded

along a good road, and at a pleasant pace; towards the mountains. The plain of Vittoria is entirely a corn country, and, at this early season, harvest had already begun: the soil is naturally bad and scanty; but the proverbial industry of the Biscayans forces from it an unwilling crop. From Vittoria to the entrance of the mountains, is about three leagues; I passed through two or three small villages, and at another, somewhat larger, just on the limits of the plain, we stopped to water the mules: it was Sunday morning; there was a fine display of vegetables and fruit in the market-place, and several hundred villagers and peasants were assembled, waiting the summons to go to mass. I walked round the market-place, and observed with pleasure, not unmixed with surprise, that every individual was clean and well dressed. I was not accosted by a single beggar.

Immediately upon leaving this village, I entered the mountains—a delightful change from a wide treeless plain. About a league from the entrance, at the end of a winding valley, and just before beginning a steep ascent, I noticed a house where guards were to be hired; the muleteer asked me whether I chose to have any, but being at that time rather an unbeliever in the frequency of robbery, and liking the ex-



pression of the muleteer's countenance, I replied in the negative, and we passed on.

The passage of the Biscayan mountains by this road, affords some very magnificent prospects; the lower parts of the mountains are covered with oak and Spanish chestnut, and the summits rise to the height of at least 5000 feet, in the form of numerous fantastic pinnacles of a reddish colour; the road is constructed upon the most scientific principle, reaching the summit by a zigzag, and very easy ascent, and is as broad and as smooth as the best roads in any other country. The descent towards the north-west is much greater than the ascent from Vitoria, proving the great elevation of the province of *Alava* above that of *Biscay Proper*; the provinces both of *Alava*, and of *Guipuscoa*, are called Biscayan provinces, but Biscay Proper is confined to the country lying to the north of the mountains, and bounded by the sea.

We stopped at *Durango*, the first town after descending the mountains, to dine, and rest the mules during the hottest part of the day. I was equally pleased and surprised with the excellence of the *posada* at Durango; the most scrupulous cleanliness was visible in every thing; the dinner was unobjectionable; and I remarked a refinement to which the best French

inns are strangers—the knives and forks were changed with every plate. I learned from the *Señorita* who waited at table, that a sad misfortune had that day befallen the village; the bishop to whose diocese it belonged, had journeyed from Navarre to pay his respects to the Infante at *Bilbao*; on his return he had stopped at *Durango*, as it was improper to travel on Sunday, and after condescending to preach a sermon in the village church, he had reproved the levity of the people, and forbade that there should be any dancing in the village that evening; but the girl added, that she would go to another village, half a league distant, to which the injunction did not extend: this trifling trait, added to another which I shall just now record, first led me to suspect, that the influence of the priesthood was on the decline, in Biscay at least. The landlord, having discovered that I was English, asked me how many priests we might have in England in a town such as *Durango*? I replied, that we might have one or two; “*O Dios*,” said he, “we have here more than forty!”

After dinner, we continued our journey towards *Bilbao*. Leaving the town, I remarked on passing the church, that the market was held under the portico, and in the environs I noticed

a few specimens of Biscayan enjoyment; groups of men were lying, and sitting under the trees, playing at cards; and women were seen here and there, seated on the grass, singing, and playing the tamborine. The road to Bilbao continued excellent, and lay through a fine fertile valley, bearing luxuriant crops of Indian corn, diversified by meadows, and wood, which also covered the sides of the neighbouring hills. I saw no carriage on the road but my own; carts, and long trains of mules, occasionally passed, and the only travellers I saw, were two gentlemen mounted on mules, accompanied by four guards on foot, each provided with a carbine.

All the way from Vittoria, the muleteer who drove the carriage, sung a remarkably beautiful, but somewhat monotonous air. I was greatly pleased with the muleteer's song, and was anxious that I should not forget it; but I afterwards found that I need not have been apprehensive of this: every where throughout Castile I heard the same air, and in Madrid, nothing else was sung by the lower orders. I was anxious to purchase it, and applied at one of the music-shops, but they told me they dared not sell it; it was forbidden by the government.

The air was old Arragonese, but it was revived to new words, in a little comedy that somehow slipped through the censorship a few months before, and related how a certain friar knew too well the road into a certain convent.

As the road approaches Bilbao, the mountains that inclose the valley increase in height, make a curve, and run directly into the Bay of Biscay; and Bilbao is situated in their bosom: it is this that gives to Bilbao its peculiar character. Mountains generally diminish in height as they approach the sea; but here, this rule is reversed, and Bilbao possesses the singularity of being a sea-port, and of yet being all but surrounded by lofty mountains. Owing to this, nothing can be more striking and novel than the view of the city where it is first seen from the bridge that crosses the small river about a mile before entering it. I was obliged to leave the carriage at the entrance to the town, and walk to the posada; for it is the rule that no wheeled carriages of any kind are allowed to drive through the streets of Bilbao. This regulation has arisen from a praiseworthy desire to preserve the purity of the water, which is conveyed in a stone tunnel under the streets; all goods are therefore carried through the town either in panniers, on mules, or in sledges,

which are provided with a contrivance by which they constantly moisten their path with water.

Walking through the streets, to the *posada de St. Nicola*, the only good inn in Bilbao, and one of the very best in the Peninsula, I was attracted by two curious exhibitions, one of them very forcibly reminding me that I was in Spain: two well-dressed peasants danced before me the whole length of a long street while another walked behind, playing a sort of trumpet; and in the open space before the principal fountain, some boys were amusing themselves with the representation of a bull-fight; one boy was mounted on another's back, the undermost representing the horse of the *picador*, the other was armed with a long pole, while a third on foot, his head covered with a basket in which he had fixed two horns, imitated the motions and bellowing of the bull; several others with handkerchiefs, represented the *torredores*, throwing them in the bull's face. The bull-fights at Bilbao had newly concluded; the Infante had been treated with eight exhibitions, in which thirty-two bulls were killed. This is the highest mark of respect that Spanish authorities can shew to a visitor, and the greater the number

of bulls that are sacrificed, the greater of course is the compliment.

I remained in Bilbao a fortnight, which I found amply sufficient to see all that merited attention, and to inform myself respecting some of the peculiarities of the province of Biscay. I have already spoken of the situation of Bilbao, as striking and beautiful, but the town itself is not remarkable for its beauty or cleanliness; the smells are most offensive; and lying as it does in so deep a basin among the mountains, which even shut it out from the sea, I can scarcely think Bilbao a healthy city. But by the side of the river, there is a fine promenade all the way to the port, which lies about two miles from the city, and here the inhabitants may catch some of the sea breeze which generally comes up with the tide; a part of this promenade is allotted to the fruit and vegetable market, which I strolled through, the morning after my arrival; there was a most abundant display of every sort of which the season admitted, including an extraordinary quantity of *tomata*,—this is known in the south of France by the name of *pomme d'amour*, and is an important ingredient in Spanish cookery. The bread market is held along with the fruit market, and

I found the bread of Bilbao quite equal to that of the other parts of Spain.

When I looked from my window in the hotel, I found that I was well situated for observing the inhabitants of all classes: opposite, stood the church of St. Nicholas; at one side was a public fountain, and on the other a brass basin—reminding me of Membrino's helmet—indicated a barber's shop. At all hours therefore I might see some going to mass, and others filling their pitchers at the fountain. The Biscayan deserves the character of strength, that has been given to him; and the contrast between the Biscayan, and the Andalusian peasant, who inhabit the two extremes of Spain, is remarkable: the latter, dark, tall, upright, slim, with something of elegance in his appearance; and the look of pride generally visible in his air and countenance, seeming to have some reference to his personal attractions: the Biscayan, broad, athletic, lounging, with something of peculiar roughness in his look and manner; and his expression of blunt independence, having no reference to himself individually, but arising from the knowledge that he is a Biscayan, and as such, the hereditary possessor of peculiar and exclusive rights. Such seemed to me the Biscayan peasant, whether he filled his pitcher

at the fountain, or entered St. Nicholas to mass. As for the women, I do not feel myself obliged to use the same reserve in speaking of them as of the women of Vittoria: because the inhabitants of Biscay being a distinct race, my opinion of them does not compromise the character and claims of Spanish women generally. I saw little beauty in Bilbao, and less elegance; and in the manner of the women I remarked the same bluntness as that which characterizes the men.

But along with Biscayan bluntness, there is much good heartedness and honesty; and a great deal of intelligence; and even the pride of a Biscayan, has given rise to much of the industry and enterprise which in the province of Biscay are so conspicuous in the cultivation of the soil, in the construction of useful works, and in the establishment of praiseworthy institutions. Many of the inhabitants of Biscay in the upper classes have made voyages into other countries, and have returned with diminished prejudices, and increased liberality of sentiment; and the consequence of this has been, that among the educated, and better classes of society, there is little narrowness in political sentiment, and little bigotry in religion. I heard several of the most respectable inhabitants of Bilbao express openly



much dissatisfaction at the political debasement of Spain, and breathe ardent wishes for the diffusion of intellectual and religious light; but they added, what my own knowledge has since fully confirmed, that I should not find in any other part of Spain, the same enlightened views as I had found in Biscay. Among the lower orders in Bilbao, and in Biscay generally, there is still much bigotry both in politics and religion, but more especially in the latter; during the existence of the constitution, the prejudices of the lower ranks made it necessary to affix in large letters over the doors of all the churches, and attested by the existing authorities, these important words, — “The Roman Catholic is the only true religion.”

In Biscay there are not many poor, nor many rich. Formerly, Bilbao contained many wealthy citizens; but the export trade in wool was then flourishing. At that time the clearances were more than double their present number; but ever since the preference of Saxon wool has begun to be shewn in the foreign markets, the trade of Bilbao has declined, and now, not more than between thirty and forty British vessels visit Bilbao in the course of a year. Some few houses in Bilbao have still considerable returns from the fish trade, and one or two, from

the iron export trade; but this has also fallen off, since the demand for Swedish iron has increased. Biscayan iron would still command a preference in the foreign markets, from its superior qualities for finer purposes, if it could enter them at the same price as Swedish iron; but this is impossible, both on account of the expense of fuel for furnaces, and the want of inland navigation. Timber is not scarce in the province of Biscay; but there is an old Biscayan law which tends to keep up its price, enacting that for every tree cut down, six must be planted in its stead; this is often felt to be an inconvenience, and produces scarcity in the midst of plenty. I was informed that two or three houses in Bilbao realize from 2 to 3000*l.* a-year; but I believe I may assert that no one spends 300*l.* It is difficult to spend money in Bilbao: in no part of Spain, least of all in Biscay, is it the custom to live extravagantly or luxuriously. The table of a Biscayan is remarkable for its simplicity and sameness: of whatever rank he may be, he takes his cup of chocolate and bread, followed by a glass of sugar and water, about eight o'clock; he dines about one, and six days out of seven, his dinner consists of broth, and a *puchero*, which is boiled beef, with a small bit of pork, surrounded either by cabbage, or Spanish peas,

(*garbanzos*), and varied occasionally with a sausage; a cup of chocolate again in the afternoon, and for supper, boiled lettuce prepared with vinegar, oil and pepper, finish the repasts of the day. The *menage* at home, therefore, costs but a trifling sum; and neither does the Biscayan spend any thing upon entertaining his friends; not that he is unsocial; he is social according to the custom of his country. During the winter, a circle of six, eight, or ten families form themselves into a society, and agree to visit each other; each chooses a week, and during each week the circle assembles every evening at the same house; they take chocolate before going out, and sup when they return; the entertainment is entirely intellectual; music, cards, and dancing fill up the evening. Upon one occasion only, does the circle eat together: all the money lost and won at cards, is made a purse, and is confided to one of the party; and during the summer it is converted into a dinner in the country, of which all the members of the circle partake.

There are no public amusements in Bilbao, excepting occasional bull fights. Two attempts to establish a theatre have failed; a handsome stone theatre erected some years ago, was burnt down not long after it was erected; and there

was strong reason to believe, that the conflagration was wilful, and that the friars were at the bottom of it: another theatre constructed of wood, was subsequently opened; but after a very short time it was pulled down by order of the public authorities; and this was also generally believed to have been owing to the interference of the friars.

The town of Bilbao is extremely rich. On the occasion of the king's visit a few years ago, the corporation expended no less than two million of reals (20,000*l.*) in feasts, decorations, bull-fights, &c., and to cover these expenses, it was not necessary to lay on any additional impositions. These funds arise from dues upon the entry of all the necessaries of life, whether by land or by sea: beef is entirely a town monopoly; the meat is farmed to butchers at certain prices, and retailed by them, and by this monopoly the Corporation realizes 1500 reals per day. The duties upon wine, soap, and oil, are also considerable, and the dues of port entry upon all articles of subsistence are  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$  per cent. But notwithstanding these dues, living is not expensive. The following are the prices of some articles: beef is 10 quartos, or about  $3d.$ ; mutton,  $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ , but it is generally of an indifferent quality; a lamb costs from  $20d.$  to  $2s.$ ; veal is

about 4*d.* per lb., all of 17 oz. Bread varies in price, according to the quality: the best is 1½*d.* per lb., but the coarsest kinds, and the bread of Indian corn, is not sold by weight. Many kinds of game are both plentiful and cheap: woodcocks are frequently to be had at 10*d.* or 1*s.* per pair. Groceries are also reasonable, and it is a curious fact, that loaf sugar, coming from England, is cheaper than raw sugar, direct from the Havannah: good wine costs a little less than 3*d.* per bottle. The Spanish country wines taste unpleasantly to a stranger, for they have almost all contracted, less or more, a peculiar flavour from the skins in which they are carried. There are two reasons why the Spanish wines are carried in skins: in the wine countries there is little wood to make casks; but the principal reason is, that the cross-roads are not suited for carriages, and that mules can more conveniently carry skins than casks. Throughout Biscay, the wages of labour are from 10*d.* to 1*s.*; and workmen, such as carpenters, masons, &c. receive from 20*d.* to 2*s.* per day.

Among the first days of my residence in Bilbao, I visited the new cemetery, the model of which is worthy of being adopted in other places. This *Campo Santo* has been inclosed in consequence of a quarrel between the Franciscan

Convent and the Chapter of Bilbao, respecting the dues of burial, in a place to which both claimed right; and the Corporation completed the new cemetery, at an expense of not less than 30,000*l*. The gateway is beautiful and chaste, with this appropriate inscription over it:

“ Cada Paso, que vais dando  
 Por la senda de la vida  
 Mas y mas os va acercando  
 Mortales, á la partida,  
 Que en vano estais evitando.”

The design of the *Campo Santo* is this: a square area of about six acres is surrounded by a covered arcade, supported by doric columns; the back of the arcade is an immense wall of brickwork, in which there are four rows of spaces for coffins, the opening one yard square, and six feet and a half long; into this, the coffin is deposited; the spaces which are not occupied are slightly closed up; and a ring in the centre, shews that they are vacant. When a coffin is deposited, the opening is built up with brick and lime, and a stone or marble slab, fitted into it, records the name of the buried. The cemetery is fitted to receive 3000 dead—a great number for so small a space; and the area beyond the arcade, is tastefully laid out as a garden and shrubbery. Besides the inscription I have noted down, there are

several others that struck me as being beautiful and well chosen. The following particularly, over the inner-gate, is striking :—

“ Deten sus pasos inciertos  
 O Caminente! repara,  
 En que esta Puerta separa  
 A Los vivos de los muertos.”

Which may be freely translated :—“ Stop, thoughtless wanderer! and reflect,—this gate separates the dead from the living.”

In returning from the cemetery to the town, I made a long circuit, visiting in my way the *Iglesia de Bigoña*, a church which takes its name from a miraculous image of our Lady of Bigoña, deposited in it, and looked upon with extraordinary veneration by the lower orders in Bilbao. It happened to be a feast day, and a great number of persons were collected in the church, because upon all such days, the curtain that screens the miraculous image is withdrawn for a few moments—an opportunity not to be disregarded by any good Biscayan who desires to ensure the kind offices of the sainted Lady of Bigoña. Before the service began, the officiating priest shewed me the sacristy, and a head of John the Baptist in wood; a very clever performance, by a native artist; and I afterwards

waited in the church long enough to see the curtain withdrawn, and the prostrations of three or four hundred devotees. There is a small foundation left to this church, for a curious purpose. The curate must go to the gate of the church at the commencement of every thunder storm,—say a certain prayer,—and sprinkle the sky with holy water. It appears, however, that the virtue of the water, as well as the water itself, has been sometimes dissipated before reaching the clouds; for the church tower has been twice struck by lightning.

In the course of my walk, I learned a curious fact, illustrating strongly the mixture of pride and generosity which is often found in the Spanish character. The Corporation being desirous of conducting an aqueduct and a road to Bilbao from a mountain about a league distant, applied to the proprietor (a grandee of Spain) to purchase the land through which these were to be carried. He refused to sell it; but said, that if the Corporation would petition him for a grant of the land, he would make them a present of it: they however wanted no favour, and would not condescend to this; but supposing that the proprietor would be prevailed upon to sell, they commenced, and at length nearly finished the work. The grandee, offended at



this insolence, applied to the king for an order to demolish the work, and obtained it ; but just in time to prevent this, the Corporation petitioned the grandee, and the order was not only rescinded, but the grant of the land was completed. The water conveyed in this aqueduct forms a reservoir at the entrance of the town for a useful and rather a novel purpose: by opening a sluice, seven of the lowest streets in the town are inundated ; this is done every week during the summer heats, and is doubtless very useful in carrying away impurities. I walked through one of the lowest of the streets an hour before, and an hour after the purification ; and the difference in smell, freshness, and coolness, was most striking.

Walking either in the streets, or in the neighbourhood of Bilbao, the convents and monasteries are very conspicuous : they are almost all immense piles of building, of little architectural beauty, and are at once distinguished by the strong gratings that cover their windows. In the town there are four monasteries—the Franciscans, the Capuchins, the Augustins, and the Carmelites : the two former of these subsist on charity, which is liberally bestowed, and they in their turn give charity to others. Every day, a great number of poor are fed after the

Franciscan friars have dined, and as they are a hundred and ten in number, the refuse of their dinner must be considerable. I visited the Franciscan convent accompanied by an English lady, and although I found the utmost politeness from the Superior, he was deaf to all my entreaties to permit the lady to enter the sacristy, to see a picture said to be by Raphael. This convent was partly destroyed by the French, and it was under its gateway that several of those military executions took place, which so disgraced the conduct of the French during their occupation of the province of Biscay. In the Carmelite convent, there are only five friars, who want for nothing that money can purchase; they are extremely rich, and possess a charming property not far from Bilbao, called "*el Desierto*;" but which might with greater propriety be called "*el Paradaiso*." Besides these monasteries within the town, there are two at a short distance from it—the Burcena convent of Mercenarios, and the Friars of San Mames, both of the Franciscan order.

The female convents are also numerous; these are, La Conception, a Franciscan order, in which there are 14 nuns; Santa Clara, also Franciscan, in which there are 10 nuns; El Convento de la Encarnacion, where there are 27

nuns; el Convento de la Cruz, containing 12 nuns; Santa Monica, an Augustinian order, with 12 nuns; La Esperanza, containing 12, and La Merced, containing 10. There are altogether about 350 friars and nuns in Bilbao, and about 120 priests. In the province of Biscay, females profess at a very early age; their noviciate generally commences about fifteen, and at the expiration of a year they take the veil. A nun must carry into the convent about 30,000 reals (300*l.*); and to La Merced and Santa Monica, considerably more. I ascertained, from a source of the most authentic kind, that three-fourths of the nuns who take the veil at this early age, die of a decline within four years. The climate, which in Biscay is so prolific in consumption, added to the low and damp situation of some of the convents, may perhaps be admitted to have some influence upon this premature decay; but I should incline to attribute a greater influence to causes more immediately referable to the unhappy and unnatural condition of those who are shut out from the common privileges, hopes, and enjoyments of their kind.

I visited the convent of Santa Monica in company with an old gentleman, an inhabitant of Bilbao, who had known several of the inmates from childhood. We were only per-

mitted to converse through a double grating, which separated the small antechamber where we stood, from the convent burying-ground, where three of the nuns were; two of them seemed to be above thirty, the other was under twenty; my companion, a very jocose old man, jested, and amused them; and they in their turn prated, and laughed immoderately, and appeared to be in excellent spirits; but the sight of an old acquaintance, and the novelty of a visit from an English lady, had probably produced a temporary excitement: while, in the midst of their mirth, they were suddenly sent for by the abbess, who probably thought it wise to turn their thoughts into another channel. It is a pity, I think, that those who have separated themselves from the world, should afterwards be permitted to hold any communication with it; feelings may be stifled, and hopes buried, and time and habit may lead to forgetfulness, and even unconsciousness, of a busier, and it may be, a brighter scene; but recollections are easily awakened, and it is cruel to revive that which must again be buried.

Walking one evening to see the new hospital, which lies on the outskirts of the town, I was surprised at the great number of mules which were entering and leaving Bilbao; the former

laden with wine, soap and oil; the latter with dried cod, which forms the staple of the Bilbao trade, and is an article of diet very extensively used throughout the greater part of Spain. There is a curious regulation respecting the trade of Bilbao with the interior,—no muleteer from Castile can carry away a load from any part of Biscay, unless he has brought a load with him; and this load must consist of something that may be eaten, drank, or burnt: this regulation ensures at all times to the Biscayan market an abundant supply, at a reasonable rate, of all the articles that come from the interior; nor is the regulation thought a hard one by the muleteer; because, although owing to the abundant supply, he is frequently a loser by it, he knows that it would be insecure to carry money so far to the market: it is in fact a remnant of the original commerce of all nations—barter.

I found the hospital well worthy of a visit; it is not yet completed, but is calculated to accommodate 250 patients. When I visited it, there were only 50 patients, whose diseases were consumption and old age. One part of the establishment I greatly approve of; a ward of the building is appropriated for the reception of strangers, or persons of a superior rank in

life, who may be desirous of good advice at a moderate expense, and without occasioning trouble to friends or relations: these pay half a dollar per day, and have all the best hospital attendance united with the comforts of a private house. I can scarcely conceive a more welcome piece of intelligence to an unfortunate stranger, seized with a severe malady in a foreign place, than the existence of an institution like this.

In walking through the wards, I noticed books in the hands of several of the patients; these were chiefly forms of prayer; but seeing one sick man laughing heartily over his studies, I had the curiosity to approach his bed near enough to ascertain that he was engaged with a comedy of *Lopez de Vega*.

Passing along the streets, I frequently met the boys belonging to a charity school, the only one in Bilbao; they were, with few exceptions, very raggedly dressed, and most of them provided with little bells, with which they produced not an inharmonious music: the cause of their ragged dress is easily explained by the want of funds, which arise solely from the trifling imposition of four reals per ton upon every foreign vessel entering the port. The only explanation I was able to get of the ringing of bells is, that

this custom is pleasing to the virgin. There is another sort of music peculiar to Biscay, of the most discordant kind, and which I cannot recollect even now, without unpleasant sensations. This music is produced by the wheels of the carts drawn by oxen: these are solid, without spokes, and a strong wooden screw is made to press upon the axle of the wheel; the consequence of this, is a sound so horribly grating, that the faintest conception of it cannot be conveyed by words. The peasant supposes, that without this noise, the oxen would not go willingly; and if they be once accustomed to it, this may perhaps be true. No carriage being allowed to pass along the streets of Bilbao, they are of course free from this intolerable nuisance; in the town of *Orduña*, also, it is not permitted; but on all the roads of the Basque provinces, and especially in the streets of *Vitoria*, this noise is so unintermitting, that nothing could tempt me to reside in that town.

Every evening while I remained in Bilbao, I spent half an hour in the Swiss Coffee-house—the only one in the town; and one evening, I was much amused by a very curious scene I witnessed there. Four gentlemen were seated at a card-table when I entered the coffee-house, and at first I paid no particular attention to them;

but accidentally resting my eye upon them while sipping my coffee, I was surprised to see one of the players shut one eye, and at the same time thrust his tongue out of his mouth; from him, my eyes wandered to another, who at the same moment squinted with both eyes, and thrust forward his under-lip: I now saw that it was a constant succession of face-making, while all the while the game went on. It is impossible to describe the strange, ludicrous, and hideous faces of the players; I was at first dumb with astonishment, and then convulsed with laughter, and all the while dying with curiosity to know the reason of so grotesque an exhibition. It was a Biscayan game, called *mús*;—answering to each card there is a particular contortion of the face, which interprets its value; and the point of the game consists in the dexterity with which partners are able to convey to each other by grimaces, the state of each other's hand. This is a favourite game in Biscay, but it is said to require a lifetime to become expert in it: I should think it requires also the natural gift of grimace.

There are many charming walks around Bilbao, up the river, and down the river, and among the neighbouring mountains; and in whatever direction one turns, proofs are at



hand; of the enterprising spirit, and great industry of the inhabitants in the improvement of land. Within the last ten years, much waste land has been brought under cultivation: of this waste land, there are two kinds; one, which is the property of the jurisdiction, and which is parcelled out to individuals, the price being fixed by arbitration: the other, which is the property of individuals who possess entailed estates, and cannot dispose of waste land. Some enterprising person offers to cultivate a portion of this land, under the agreement that the produce for a certain period, ten, or twelve years perhaps, is to be the property of the cultivator, and that at the expiration of that term, the cultivator is to rent the land of the proprietor. By these two modes, a great part of the cultivable land of Biscay has been brought under cultivation; and the vine is now extensively grown upon all the surrounding slopes.

The following few particulars respecting the climate, diseases, &c. of Biscay, I obtained from a report drawn up by a few of the principal medical men of the province, at the request of the Royal College of Physicians in London. The medium heat of the thermometer in summer is from 19 to 21 of Reaumur, and in winter from 5 to 7. In summer, the thermometer

scarcely ever rises above 26, and in winter, rarely falls below 0: changes in the temperature are sudden and extraordinary; the mercury having been known to rise and fall from 3° to 4° within a few minutes. The most prevalent winds are S. and N. W.; the S. the most constant in autumn, the N. W. in spring. The finest months are August, September, October, and sometimes November; the spring months are the most unsettled, rains being then almost as frequent as in winter. The summer months are the most salubrious; autumn less so; and winter and spring may be said to be unhealthy. The diseases most common in Biscay are cutaneous diseases; and catarrhs, especially pulmonary, which often terminate in pulmonary phthisis. Inflammations of the pleura, lungs, and bowels,—and rheumatism, are the most numerous after the class of pulmonary diseases; and of all these, the atmospheric changes may be considered the predisposing cause. The province of Biscay abounds in medicinal plants; but excepting a few simples used by the inhabitants, these do not enter into the Spanish pharmacopeia. Amongst these medicinal plants, are *laurus nobilis*, *arbutus unedo*, *rabnus cartarticus*, *erica cantabrica*, *smilax aspera*, *humulus lupulus*, *tormentila erecta*, *poligala amara*,

*digitalis purpurea*, *daphne laureola*, *gentiana lutea*, *anethenus nobilis*. The number of deaths in Bilbao, calculated from the parochial register by an average of five years, amounts to one in forty-six yearly.

The Basque provinces enjoy many separate privileges, of which they are extremely jealous; but Biscay Proper enjoys more privileges than either of the other Basque provinces. I shall mention a few of the most remarkable. Biscay acknowledges no king; the king of Spain is not king, but lord of Biscay. This is but a nominal privilege: but the next is more important. The conscription does not extend to Biscay; in case of invasion only, Biscay is bound to furnish troops, but as soon as the demand upon their services is past, they are entitled to disband themselves. The next is a highly honourable privilege, whatever may be thought of its solid advantage: a Biscayan cannot be hanged, but must be strangled, like a Spanish noble; nor can stripes be inflicted as a punishment. The only difference between hanging and strangling consists in this, that the punishment of strangulation is inflicted while the criminal is seated. The next Biscayan privilege is a privilege annexed to his religion; it is, that no foreigner is entitled to establish himself in

any trade, unless he profess the Roman Catholic religion. The code of laws by which Biscay is governed, is different not only from those of Spain, but also from those of the other Basque provinces: this is no doubt a right, but whether it be a right conveying any advantage is more questionable. I understood that justice in Biscay was badly administered, and that a code of separate laws in no respect increased the chances of the poor in a contest with the rich. Questions arising in Biscay, although decided by the laws of Biscay, are not decided within the province, but are subject to numerous appeals. They originate with the Court of the Corregidor; from which the first appeal is to the Chancery of Valladolid; from this to the Council of Castile; then to the tribunal *de mil ducados*, so called because that sum must be deposited before the appeal can be received; and lastly to the king, under the name of "*appelar de notoria injusticia*." It is evident, that with the power of thus prolonging the term of litigation, and the necessity of a large deposit, the richest litigator must enter upon his lawsuit with very reasonable hopes of success.

Biscay is not obliged to pay any government impositions: the king has no certain revenue from Biscay, but when money is wanted, he