



*Preparing for immediate publication, in two volumes, demy 8vo., with
numerous characteristic Illustrations,*

WILD SPORTS OF THE PYRENEES.

BY THE HON. JAMES ERSKINE MURRAY.

A SUMMER
IN
THE PYRÉNÉES.

BY THE
HON. JAMES ERSKINE MURRAY.

SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE are few people who are not aware that The Pyrénées are that chain of mountains which separate France from Spain, extending from the Bay of Biscay on the west, to the Mediterranean on the east; but there are a great many who know little more regarding them than the mere circumstance of their geographical position.

Situated at a great distance from the fashionable route which English tourists almost undeviatingly pursue upon the Continent, the Pyrénées are seldom visited, except by those who care less for going where *every one* goes than for going where *every body* does *not* go; particularly when



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the neglected spot has all that can interest to recommend it to notice. But such stragglers from the high road to Germany, to Switzerland, and to Italy, are not numerous; and, of the small number who do, somehow or other, find their way to the Pyrénées, scarcely any of them ever acquire a better knowledge of these mountains, their scenery, and their inhabitants, than can be gleaned by visiting the most frequented watering places, almost all of which are contained within the limits of a single department. Of a range of mountains so extensive as the Pyrénées, where the natural features of one district,—it might almost be said, of one valley,—the language which its inhabitants speak, and their manners and customs,—are essentially different from another, it is physically impossible, from an acquaintance with any one particular part, to form an estimation of the character of the whole.

Aware of this circumstance, and profiting by the opportunity which a residence in the South of France conferred upon him, the Author of the following chapters left Pau (in Bearn) towards the middle of the summer of 1835, with the intention of traversing on foot the Pyrenean

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mountains from one extremity to the other. With this view, he travelled *en diligence* by Toulouse and Perpignan to the eastern limits of these mountains; and then, threading his way along their chain, deviating to the right hand, or to the left, as fancy, or more interesting scenes induced him, he fulfilled his intention, and acquired that knowledge of Pyrenean scenery, and Pyrenean peasantry, which personal observation could alone bestow, as there were no English, and,—with the exception of those of the French geological writers,—there were no French works which treated of this subject.

The wilds of the Pyrenean districts, partly from their having been latterly so seldom free from domestic warfare, and partly from the circumstance to which he has alluded, had either hitherto been untrodden by strangers, or, if the foot of any but a native had disturbed their solitudes, the remembrance of it, as far as the author and the public were concerned, had died away with its echo.

In conclusion, the author of these volumes cannot entertain the thought, that they are worthy to fill up the blank which, upon the library shelf



dedicated to works descriptive of European manners and scenery, is, by the present desideratum of a work upon the Pyrénées, left vacant: they are a simple narrative of pedestrian excursions among those mountains, undertaken for amusement, and not with a view to *book-making*; and their only claim upon the notice of the public—that of novelty.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN the present Edition of this Work, some minor errors contained in the former are corrected. These arose from the Author's distance from the place of publication, and the consequent difficulty of revising the press.

The circumstance of a Second Edition of the "*SUMMER IN THE PYRENEES*" being required within so very short a period from the issue of the first, renders it scarcely necessary for the Author to announce that its favourable reception insures the appearance of the promised chapters on the Basque Country, and Wild Sports and Adventures in its Mountains, whose fate depended upon that of their predecessors.

He is deeply sensible how much of his success he owes to the kind consideration of his critics, whose unanimous and cordial encouragement will, in his approaching rambles, stimulate him to increased exertion in endeavouring to make the wild and magnificent districts in which he has passed so many happy months, yet more familiar to his countrymen.

ABERDONA, *by Alloa*,
May, 1837,



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TOULOUSE has much to recommend it to the notice of the stranger. In antiquity it ranks above all other towns of France, the era of its foundation being lost in the lapse of ages. As Tolosa, it was the most flourishing and magnificent city of the south in the earliest period of Roman dominion in Gaul, its armies for a long time



baffling their legions. It was the capital of the Tectosagi, a Celtic nation who ravaged Greece in the time of Brennus, two hundred and eighty years before the Christian era; according to Ausonius, it was taken from the Tectosagi by Servilius Cœpius, in the year of Rome, 648. The Visigoth kings afterwards fixed their residence there. At the commencement of the sixth century, Clovis, having defeated Alaric, took possession of Toulouse. The Merovingian princes and Charlemagne retained it till the ninth century, and from that period until the time when Philip the Bold united Languedoc to the crown, it was governed by counts, many of whom are renowned for the prominent part they acted in the history of the period during which they held their sway over the province which gave them their title.

Like other great cities and states of former times, the days of its glory have long passed away, and it has dwindled into comparative insignificance, a third rate city of the empire. But although shorn of its former splendour, still its ancient buildings, its antique palaces, and its banquet halls, "though deserted," are the faithful memorials of its greatness, and of the wealth and

power which it contained. In Toulouse, the antiquarian will find a valuable store of Roman remains in architecture and sculpture, which the industry and honourable pride of the inhabitants have rescued from the ravages of time, and deposited in a place of safety. The poet may there dream over the lays of the Troubadours, and pay his homage at the shrine of one of the earliest promoters of his art, Clemence Isaure, the patroness of the Floral games, yearly festivals to which all the minstrels of the south flocked, to compete for the Golden Violet, the reward of the successful poet. In the Salle de la Capitale is now preserved the statue in white marble of Clemence, which stood formerly over her tomb, in the church de la Daurade; and below it is a copy of the inscription in Provençal, which adorned her sepulchre. Besides being the patroness of the art of poetry, she was herself one of the most celebrated minstrels of the age, and many of her poetic effusions are preserved in a collection reprinted at Toulouse.

Recent events have also bestowed upon Toulouse an additional interest, and few will visit that city without strolling over the battle field of



the 12th of April, 1814. Toulouse has been, and still is, the capital of the arts in the south of France; and the energy and talents of some of its natives, has prevented it from falling into that decay which most towns, indebted greatly for their prosperity to their being the seat of royalty, have, by its abandonment, been subject to. Of all the projects which have been attempted to retain Toulouse among the flourishing cities of France, and secure to her commercial prosperity, none have been more successful than the construction of the great Canal du Midi, forming a communication between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. It was commenced in 1681, from the plans and under the direction of the Baron de Bonrepos. It passes by Villefranche, Castelnaudry, Carcasone, Beziers, and Villeneuve, and finally opens into the Lake of Thau, near the Mediterranean, a little above Ayde. The length of the Canal from the Mediterranean to the Garonne, is sixty-two leagues; its breadth at the surface, is sixty-two, and the general depth of the water about six feet. In many places, this canal is hollowed out of the rock; the highest point between the two seas is at Naurouse, near Castelnaudry, where a basin

has been formed twelve hundred feet long, and nine hundred broad. In order to keep it constantly filled, the immense reservoir of St. Ferreol has been constructed. Its figure is triangular, enclosed by two mountains, and by an immense dike, which forms its base, and through which an aqueduct passes, to supply the basin of Naurouse. Few pieces of masonry surpass the dike of St. Ferreol in extent and solidity; its length is two thousand five hundred and twenty feet, and its height one hundred and fifty. By means of this work of art, the corn of Upper Languedoc is conveyed to the southern departments, and the merchandise of foreign countries brought to Toulouse. A packet-boat goes the whole length of the canal, and affords travellers the means of a pleasant and economical excursion.

Anxious to commence my wanderings among the mountains, I did not remain long in Toulouse. I visited the museum of Roman antiquities, which are beautifully arranged. It contains some very fine specimens scarcely to be met with elsewhere. An hour was well spent in the foundry for cannon; but the object which interested me most was the Chateau d'Eau, an ingenious construction



to supply the city with water. Situated as Toulouse is in a plain, the difficulty of acquiring a sufficient quantity of water to supply the wants of the inhabitants was very great. To obviate the necessity and expense of carting it daily from the river, an ingenious watchmaker of the town constructed the *Chateau d' Eau*. It is a round tower, to the right of the bridge on entering the town from the east. Two large wheels, within this building, are driven by the river, and work an immense pump, which forces a great body of water to the upper story of the tower. There the water passes into the filtering boxes which surround the room, and thence into the numerous pipes, which, passing along the bridge, convey the water in abundance to all parts of the city. The usefulness and luxury of this simple invention, in a southern town, may be imagined. From the summit of this tower there is a fine and extensive view over the surrounding country. You look upon the sunny plains of Languedoc and Gascony, can trace the windings of the Garonne, and admire the picturesque but distant chain of the Pyrénées.

The Hotel de Ville, the Cathedral, which has a singular appearance, the fountains and several

other objects, are worthy of notice. The Theatre is situated in the Place; it has been lately built, and although not large, is a handsome and elegant building. The Place is encircled by cafés, and handsome shops, and at night, when the vacant space in the centre is filled with innumerable booths, for the disposal of every species of merchandise, and the whole square one blaze of light, the effect is at once novel and beautiful. From the balcony of the theatre, I looked down upon this curious scene. It seemed as if the whole inhabitants of Toulouse had assembled there, either to wander among the mazes of the stalls, or to idle away the evening beneath the coloured verandahs of the cafés, in smoking their cigar or pipe, sipping their lemonade, and remarking upon the passers by. This was the first time I had beheld the natives of a southern clime luxuriating under the influence of a genial temperature, and I enjoyed the spectacle exceedingly.

At the Hotel de l' Europe, I met with a facetious old gentleman, who had served under Napoleon in his Italian campaign, and who volunteered to conduct me over the battle-field of Toulouse. From wounds received in Italy, he had been obliged to retire from the army, when



he settled in his native town, and was present "en amateur" in the fight of the 12th of April, 1814.

I could not have had a better guide, or a more impartial narration of the events of that day. From his having no duties to perform, he was at liberty to go where he pleased, and become an eye-witness of the movements in all parts of the field. Soult, after the battle of Orthes, retreated to Toulouse as expeditiously as possible, taking the line of road by St. Gaudens. Wellington, on the other hand, followed his enemy slowly, and took the longer route by Auch. The consequence was, that Soult had not only time to take up one of the strongest positions in the country, but to entrench and fortify it. He encircled the rising ground, immediately to the east of the town, with strong redoubts and trenches; he had his left protected by the town and the canal; in his front the ground sloped down to the plain, and at the bottom of the declivity, and along the front of his position, run a narrow but deep and muddy river; while the ground rising to his right enabled him to plant redoubts still higher, thus protecting as well as commanding his position, should it be carried by assault.

Although more than twenty years had elapsed since our gallant soldiers drove the enemy from this strong position, and the plough had passed year after year over the field of battle, the embankments and trenches remain undestroyed, and like the Roman hill forts of my own land, may exist for centuries to come. My conductor pointed out to me in the distance, in front of Soult's position, the chateau from which the Duke of Wellington surveyed the field; he described to me the manner in which the British advanced to the attack, distinguishing the points against which the Spaniards and Portuguese, and the Sans Culottes, the "regiments d' Ecosse," were opposed.

The first impression which was made upon this strong position, was the eastern redoubt being carried by the Sans Culottes. It seems, that, according to the account given me, Soult had placed in defence of this redoubt, an officer with whom he had had some difference, to whom he imputed some blame, and whose impatience to remove the stigma cast upon him, cost him his life, and the loss of the post he was ordered to defend. Wellington had ordered a Scottish



brigade to attack this point, which, with some difficulty, crossed the river in its front, and advanced against it. The French officer, commanding the redoubt, burning with eagerness to retrieve his character, and favoured by the situation of the ground, rashly, and against his orders, quitted his position, and led his men against the Scottish brigade. The French had all the advantage of the higher ground, and the struggle was fierce, but decisive. The French were driven back, and endeavoured to regain their redoubt, which they did; but it was in company with the Scottish regiments, who entered pell-mell along with them, and finally drove them from it.

My conductor's admiration of my countrymen was great, and it would be difficult to say, whether he was most eloquent in extolling their intrepidity, or in execrating the folly of the commandant, which led to the disaster. The Spaniards and Portuguese advanced against the left of the position. They behaved gallantly, and fought bravely; and would, but for an unforeseen circumstance, have been more successful than they were. Between the canal and the strong redoubt upon the left, a country road which led into the plain

had been cut through the bank immediately in front of the redoubt, forming an enormous and almost impassable trench. To the columns advancing against the redoubt, this obstacle was imperceptible; and it was not until the foremost of their ranks, advancing up the slope, and within a few yards, as they thought, of the low breastworks of the redoubt, found this yawning chasm in front of them. In attempting to cross it, they were mown down by hundreds, their bodies forming the means of passage to those who followed. When the dead were collected, nearly 4000 Spanish and Portuguese were found within this narrow way, so confined, that they might have been buried en masse in the trench whose existence had destroyed them.*

The most important part of the position gained, the defeat of the French was the certain consequence, and Soult was again driven from his strong-hold.

I was delighted by the manner in which my companion spoke of the conduct of the British

* The Spaniards have an erroneous belief that Wellington sacrificed their countrymen at Toulouse.



troops, while quartered in Toulouse, and the adjoining district; it was highly complimentary, and tallied with what I had heard in other provinces, and of which I shall hereafter have occasion to speak. The short sketch which he gave me of the battle of Toulouse, may or may not be correct, but such as it is, I have given it, as nearly as possible, in his own words. I remember an observation which he made when talking of the merits of the Duke of Wellington as a commander. "He is a great general," said he, "mais il est toujours trop long à faire son affaire;" at the same time instancing the circumstance of the Duke's permitting such a length of time to elapse between the battle of Orthes and his appearance before Toulouse, as to enable Soult to remedy his losses, and establish himself in comparative security there. "If," said he, "Wellington had followed up his success at Orthes, he might have destroyed the retreating French army before it reached Toulouse; or, at all events, prevented their entrenching themselves as they did, and throwing another cast in the game they were playing." I merely replied, that we had an old proverb in our country, that

it was better to do a thing slowly and surely, than quickly and imperfectly, and perhaps the Duke of Wellington had not hitherto found that *maxim* a bad one.

From the battle-field we went to the prefecture, where I wished to have my passport examined. I thought it sufficient to have it countersigned for Perpignan, instead of stating were I intended going, and obtaining a more general passport. The inconvenience and loss of time which this oversight occasioned me, will appear very shortly.

In the hall of the prefecture, I found several Spanish Capuchin monks, than whom, I never beheld finer specimens of the human race; indeed I never met with one of their brethren, who was not remarkable for his appearance. The monkish establishments in Spain were already breaking up, and many of their numbers found it safer to cross the frontier, than remain in their own country. Among the number were these Capuchins; and if manly beauty and dignity of bearing could interest in their favour, they were certainly entitled to it.

Few English make Toulouse their place of residence. The climate is not favourable—wet



and cold during winter, and scorchingly hot in summer. There is, besides, great difficulty in obtaining any thing like a comfortable house; and being so seldom sought after, the inhabitants do not make any preparations for the reception of strangers; and a house "to let furnished," is consequently considered a novelty.

I left Toulouse for Perpignan in the coupé of the diligence. In the neighbourhood of Toulouse the country is rich, but flat and uninteresting, affording little either to amuse or attract the notice of the traveller.

It was evening when I left Toulouse; and, as I had the whole of the coupé to myself, I indulged in the thought of spending a comfortable night. I was soon however joined by a gendarme, who said he was only going as far as the next village. He did *go*, but it was only because he was relieved by another who took his place; and from him who was rather too open and talkative a person for his profession, I learnt that there was a quantity of government money in the diligence, upon which occasions it is accompanied by a gendarme. These gentlemen police are not only respectable from their character—being

generally picked men from the line—but, their showy uniform and fine horses, give them the appearance of the finest troops in France. They are scarcely ever employed on service unconnected with the police; although I believe Napoleon did, on some occasions, make them do duty as soldiers of the army. Their pay is about £80 a year, and out of this they have to find their uniforms and horses. They are not shifted from place to place as the army, but established in the districts of which they are natives, or with which they are, at least well acquainted; by this means rendering it very difficult indeed for any one to escape from their surveillance.

When we arrived at Carcassone, the few hours of partial darkness had been succeeded by the morning light. We remained here a short time, during which I walked through the town. Carcassone has the character of being one of the most curious and best preserved Gothic cities of France. Cæsar notices it in his commentaries, as being a city of the Roman province. It underwent many vicissitudes of fortune, successively governed by the Romans, the Visigoths, the Saracens, and united to France by Pepin le Bref.

Simon de Montfort also waved his bloody sword over Carcassone; and established the inquisition there. In the church of St. Naraise is his tomb, covered by a slab of red marble, without sculpture or inscription. There is a popular tradition, that the treasures of the Visigoth kings are hid in this city; which treasures were the rich spoils taken from the temple of Jerusalem and the palace of Solomon, and transported to Rome, and which were pillaged by Alaric the first, when he took the imperial city. The inhabitants have often searched the wells of Carcassone upon the strength of this tradition.

Here my gendarme companion left me, and a lady, the wife of an officer quartered at Perpignan, took his place. From Carcassone to Limoux, the road skirts the river Aude, through a country of the same description as that which I had hitherto passed. At Limoux,—famous for its sparkling wine, the champagne of the south,—we stopped to breakfast. It is a small, but prettily situated town; the outer ridges of the Pyrénées rise immediately behind it, covered with wood, and the vines which produce its delicious wine. We found it almost impossible



Waters at Limoux.



to eat our breakfast, from the enormous quantity of the common fly which annoyed us. They were in myriads, swarming on the plates and dishes like bees when they are hiving; one of the waiters of the inn literally did nothing else than wage an ineffectual war against them. It seemed as if the whole flies of the department had assembled to do honour to the provisions of our host, for I did not observe any quantities of them elsewhere.

Near the town, on a little hill beside the Aude, is the chapel of Notre Dame de Limoux, famed for the miracles which have been wrought in it. Pilgrims and devotees flock to it from all quarters. In the centre of the edifice is a well; the water of which, they say, has the property of curing all kinds of diseases. The following inscription is written over it, "Omnis qui bibit hanc aquam, si fidem addit salvus erit;" which the wags of the country have underlined with, "Croyez cela, et buvez de l'eau."

The road continues to skirt the river, winding among the low hills, the outposts of the range of the Corbieres. The vines are not trained here as in other parts of the south; but are stunted and



inelegant, seldom exceeding eighteen inches in height.

Half way between Limoux and Quilan, we passed the village of Alet, noted for its mineral waters, and the beauty of its situation. Embosomed in vineyards and orchards, in a nook of its narrow valley, and sequestered from the surrounding districts, it is a perfect paradise in appearance. It is one of those rich and fertile spots which the religious fathers of olden times had selected for their resting-place. The fathers have now passed away, but the extensive and magnificent remains of their church, and other buildings, are evidence that it was at one period a place of no small importance. Some of the columns, which are still standing, and a few of the doorways and Gothic windows in good preservation, are remarkably beautiful.

Quilan is a considerable village, encircled by barren and stony hills. After quitting it, the road begins rapidly to ascend the ridge of the Corbieres, which divide the department of the Aude from Roussillon. The road is well executed, traversing the sides of the hills, and crossing and re-crossing the river many times,

evidently having been a work of care and labour. The country, although it cannot be said to be mountainous, is poor and miserable in the extreme, the soil producing almost nothing. Although August had commenced, the crops were not yet taken in, and so wretched were they, that the children were pulling the corn with their hands. The hills of grey-stone had scarcely any verdure upon them, the box and juniper, the least delicate of plants, deserting them. Upon reaching the summit of the ridge, the road winds through a labyrinth of stony mounds, not a leaf or plant of any kind to be seen; it seems as if some tremendous waterspout had created this scene of desolation, and washed the whole soil into the plains.

My companion, the lady who was going to join her husband at Perpignan,—born in the plains of the north, had never seen hills or mountains in her life before; and, as some of her friends in Perpignan had been kind enough to apprise her of the dangerous nature of the descent into Roussillon, she had, ever since we left Quilan, been incessantly talking about it;



and, as she approached it, she became exceedingly alarmed and terrified.

The summit of the ridge is quitted by a narrow passage, the entrance to which has, in other times, been guarded by a fort built upon the rocks beside it; and, from this spot, the traveller can look down upon the plains of Roussillon, and distinguish the road corkscrewing down the mountain into the valley many thousand feet below. Few roads, even in the higher Pyrénées, are more rapid in their descent than this, and none of them narrower, or worse defended, without any parapet, and hanging like a shelf on the mountain side. Having passed the old fort, and put the drag chains upon the wheels, the conductor set off full gallop down the descent. The lady screamed; but, with the noise of the diligence, and the rain which fell in torrents, no one could hear her but myself. She shut her eyes, seized hold of me, and, fortunately for herself, fainted. The rocks were almost over our heads; and, when we were going down at this rate, an immense block, of perhaps twenty or thirty tons weight, detached from its resting-



The Diligence.

Vol. I.

London, John Macrae, 1837.

place by the rains of the preceding night, came over the mountain side, and, dashing upon the narrow road a few hundred yards in advance of us, carried one half of it into the valley. Here was a pretty situation to be placed in—a fainting lady in my arms, with the knowledge that a few seconds would decide whether we were to pass the breach which had been made, or accompany the rock in its descent. To pull up was impossible; the rate at which we were going, and the impetus given to the carriage, totally precluded it, even had there been harness for the horses to hold back with, which there was not. As we approached, a cry of horror came from those in the *banquette*,* who could see the danger, and I thanked God that the lady was insensible to it. What, if any of the leaders swerved from the path; what, if the conductor had not a steady head, and still steadier hand—were thoughts of the moment. I threw the lady upon the seat; and, climbing through the window of the coupé to the side of the driver, urged him to keep the heads of the leaders well to the rock; so that

* The upper part of a diligence.



they (if it was yet possible to pass) might not see the danger, and start from it. Most fortunately, he was a steady fellow; he did as he was desired; and we galloped over the remaining shelf, barely broad enough for the wheels to run upon: and, turning round, I could see an additional portion of the road roll down the precipice, from the shock which the diligence had given it. The danger was seen and passed in the tenth part of the time which I have taken to narrate it; and we arrived in safety at the bottom.

I have seldom found myself in a situation of greater danger; no exertion of my own could here avail in extricating me, which, when I could employ, I have always found effectual in stunning the unpleasant feelings upon such occasions. At the bottom of the descent is the village of Caudies, where the lady was soon revived, and the driver had the assembled villagers round him, listening to his story, which lost nothing by being told by a Frenchman; but, in this case, there could be no *embroidery*—it was not possible to make the danger greater, short of our having actually rolled into the abyss. I suggested the propriety of sending over the

ridge, to give warning on the other side of the accident, and of the impossibility of crossing; and a party set off for the purpose.

The country from Caudies to Perpignan is barren and desolate; the valley bounded by low hills, grey from their base to their summits. There are here and there patches of vines; but their diminutive height, and sickly appearance, do not render its aspect more agreeable. Here, for the first time, I beheld the olive-tree. They resemble a species of willow so strongly, that at first I took them for it; but to find willows in such a parched and burnt-up land was too extraordinary a phenomenon to permit the impression to last. They were stunted and bent double by the prevailing wind; so that vines, olives, rocks, and soil, combined in forming a most unhealthy-looking scene. A barren heath is not an agreeable-looking sight; but sterility, accompanied by the yellow and sickly tinge with which a burning sun decorates it, is far more unpleasing. I am confident, that, had Dr. Johnson, previous to having visited the Moor of Rannoch, passed this spot, his doleful account of the moor would have been softened by his recollections of this valley.



Struggling over infamously bad roads, and passing through several fortified looking villages, the red sandstone of whose buildings was crumbling to pieces; it was not until late that we crossed the bridges over the Tet, and were admitted within the many barriers which protect the town of Perpignan. The diligence was driven into what had been an ancient church, and the door closed the moment that we entered, to prevent any of us leaving it before delivering up our passports to the gendarmes, who are always, in every town of France, waiting the arrival of the diligences.

CHAPTER II.

Perpignan—Appearance of the Town—A Fête Day—Peculiar Dances—Citadel—The Canigou—Passport—Elne—Collioure—Port Vendre—The Mediterranean—Wine of Roussillon—Folly of my Countrymen abroad—Sail round the Bay—Fête at Collioure—Costumes—Language—Threatened Detention—Kind-hearted Landlord.

THE early history of Roussillon,—insulated from France by the mountains of the Corbieres, and from Spain by the Pyrénées,—is very obscure, little being known regarding it until Hannibal crossed the Pyrénées. A century after that period, the Romans, having become masters of the countries on the coast of the Mediterranean, incorporated Roussillon with their other possessions. About the fifth century, the Romans



were succeeded by the Visigoths, who held this province for three centuries, and introduced their laws and customs; until the Saracens, having vanquished Roderic, broke into it in 719, and committed all kinds of excesses. A short period afterwards, Pepin, in his turn, drove out the Saracens, and united Roussillon to France. Then succeeded the dominion of the counts. These counts were originally only the viceroys of the kings of France; but they subsequently assumed the sovereignty, and became hereditary. Roussillon had sometimes its particular counts, and sometimes the kings of Arragon governed it under that title; but, until Louis IX., the kings of France were always considered as its suzerains. By the treaty of Corbeil, in 1258, Louis IX. renounced this fief in favour of James I., king of Arragon; who, upon this concession, withdrew his pretensions to a part of Languedoc. After the death of James, and the division of his states among his children, Roussillon was governed by the kings of Majorca. During the bloody war in the fourteenth century, between the kings of Majorca and Arragon, the latter acquired possession of it, and retained it for

half a century, being generally the appanage of the eldest son.

John II., attacked by the Navarese and Catalans, begged assistance from Louis XI. of France, who sent him seven hundred lances, and three hundred thousand ecus of gold; which the King of Arragon was to repay when the war was terminated. John was not, however, able to fulfil his obligation, and gave Roussillon as security for the debt. The Roussillonese revolted, and twice Louis XI. laid siege to Perpignan, and, on the second occasion he took it, after a nine months' resistance. Charles VIII., engrossed with the idea of his expedition to Naples, restored this province to the king of Arragon; and Ferdinand II., becoming king of Spain by his marriage with Isabella, Roussillon fell under the Spanish dominion. It ought, however, by its position, to belong to France; and, accordingly, Louis XIII. endeavoured to recover it; and, eventually sending an army under the command of the great Condé, that general gained several battles, and taking many of the strong places, succeeded in reducing Perpignan. These conquests facilitated an accommodation; and the



treaty of the Pyrénées secured to France the disputed provinces. Since 1659, Roussillon has formed an integral part of that kingdom.

Perpignan, like most other towns built more with a view to security than to the accommodation of its inhabitants, is as dirty and confined as it can possibly be, offering no inducement to prolong the traveller's stay beyond the time necessary to have his passport examined. After having satisfied my appetite, which had not suffered from the events of the day, I rambled over the town, and could have fancied myself on the Spanish side of the mountains. The excessively narrow streets, with their balconies, from which the inhabitants were conversing with their opposite neighbours; and, above all, the little bands of musicians, who were serenading under the windows, betrayed their ancient connexion with Spain, and their adherence to some of its customs.

I had been desired, by the gendarme who took my passport when I arrived, to call the next morning at the Bureau de Police, and receive it. I went there, but could hear nothing regarding it, and was bid to go to the Passport Office in the Prefecture, which I did, but found it shut, and

was desired to call again at one, when it would be open.

While at breakfast in the public room of the hotel, several musicians entered the room, accompanied by one or two men carrying enormous cakes, one of which was set on the table; and a neighbour, understanding the custom, sent round a plate for a collection; which was given them. They then played several airs, and, taking up their cake, departed. It was a fête day, I forget in honour of what saint, and the inhabitants were all decked out in their holiday suits, singing and dancing in all the Places, where, in circles formed by branches and evergreens, difficult to procure at Perpignan, they perform their various and extraordinary dances.

The Roussillonese, from their long intimacy with Spain, have had a Spanish tinge given to their manners. This, apparent in the towns, is much more so in the country; where the predilection for the amusements of the Peninsula is so great, that the labourer will quit his work, the shopkeeper his boutique, the husbandman leave his land untilld; and travel leagues to witness a bull-fight, or other spectacle. They are passion-



ately fond of dancing. Some of the figures of their dances are very peculiar and original. The men generally open the dance by a "contrepas," the measure of which declares its Greek origin. The women then follow, who, mingling with the men, alternately cross and turn each other round; the measure then changes, its sudden stops indicating to the men, that they must raise their partners with a bound, and place them upon their hand as upon a seat. It requires both activity and strength to accomplish this; and the strongest often fail from want of address. One of the figures, called "Lo Salt," is performed by four men, and four women, dancing in a circle. At a particular moment, the four cavaliers, passing their hands under the arms of the ladies, simultaneously exalt them in the air, thus forming a pyramid, of which the crest is the caps of the women.

These dances are executed to music which at first sounds somewhat strange. The flageolet, the tambourine, two oboés, the borassa, and the bagpipe, which I was surprised to find here, form an orchestra more agreeable than, from the motley character of the instruments, might have been

expected. The citadel is large; and the French government, considering it of great consequence as a military position, have expended enormous sums upon its fortifications. It commands a fine view over Roussillon, and of the mountains which, excepting upon the side of the Mediterranean, encircle it. The Pyrénées, dividing it from Spain, rise abruptly, but to no great height from the ocean; but gradually increasing in majesty, stretch to the westward as far as the eye can reach. The highest peak in the distance is the Canigoû, long thought the highest of the Pyrenean range, which honour it unjustly acquired from the great apparent altitude which its insulated situation gave it; when its measurement was taken, it was found to be three hundred and thirty toises beneath the Maladetta, or Mont Perdu, and inferior to many other summits of the Pyrénées. I do not, however, wonder at its having held an honour among the ancients, to which it was not entitled, rising, as it does, from the plain, and springing at once to the height of one thousand four hundred and thirty toises, it is a magnificent and imposing object. At some distance at sea, and when the lower hills which



surround it are invisible, its bold and majestic appearance must be still more striking.

The citadel, from its situation, is a place of considerable strength; the country around it being low and flat, it cannot be commanded.

The cathedral or church of St. John is a very antique structure, displaying the Spanish taste in its gorgeous gildings and massy ornaments. In it is the tomb of the first archbishop of Perpignan. The Gothic inscription upon two pillars, states, that in the year 1324, the epoch of its foundation, the first stone was laid by Sanchez, king of Arragon, and the second by Edward prince of England; this must have been the Black Prince, when on a visit to his ally, the king of Arragon. Perpignan, like Calais, Valentia, and other towns, can boast of its brave bourgeois. Jean Blanca, a citizen of Perpignan, was governor of that town, when Louis the eleventh besieged it in 1475; his only son having been taken prisoner in a sortie, the besiegers sent a message to Blanca, to the effect, that, if he persisted in his defence, and would not open the gates, his son should be put to death. The courageous governor replied, "That the ties of

blood and paternal affection would never for one moment interfere with his duty to God, his king, and his country." This heroic answer decided the fate of his son, who was then put to death in the sight of his father.

According to appointment, I presented myself at the Bureau des Passports, and was told by the officer to call again at four o'clock. This was very provoking, as I wished to leave this dirty hot town as soon as possible. I inquired of him why there was not a fixed hour for the delivery of passports? Upon which he asked me if I thought they (the clerks of the Bureau) had nothing to do but to attend to the wants of travellers? I retorted, and pointing to the sign over the door, told him "That to attend to the wants of travellers was the very purpose for which he was placed there; that he was the servant of the public, was paid by the public, and therefore ought, at least, to be civil to them." Upon this the official became most obsequious, apologized for my being detained, which, had it not been a fête-day, should not have taken place. Had the fellow given this reason at first, I should not have been annoyed, which I was, less on my own



account, than upon that of a young German, who was in the same predicament, with whom I had made acquaintance the preceding evening; and who, having arrived at Perpignan at the same time as myself, intended to have gone to Barcelona, upon urgent business, the following day. Relying upon having my passport countersigned at some of the frontier towns, I asked for, and obtained it, rather than wait until the Prefet chose to return to town. This detention, disagreeable at the time, was afterwards, however, a matter of congratulation to my companion, who, had he gone to Barcelona, would have arrived there just in time to witness the massacres which took place in August 1835.

Hiring a cabriolet to take me to Port Vendre, I left Perpignan.

Near the mouth of the Tet, is the tower called the *Tor di Castel Rossello*, marking the site of the *Ruscino* of the Romans, from which the province derives its name. All the villages and farmhouses are built upon knolls, and surrounded by walls, a necessary protection in a border country, subject to the frequent inroads of enemies. The soil, excepting in the immediate

vicinity of the rivers (of which, fortunately for the inhabitants, there are three which flow from the mountains), is arid and barren.

About three leagues from Perpignan, is the village of *Elne*, a place of very great antiquity; nothing now remains of its former grandeur but its massy and buttressed church. It was first called *Illiberis*, and is supposed to have been of Phenician origin, and at the period when *Hannibal* crossed the mountains, was opulent and flourishing. It was afterwards destroyed; *Constantine* rebuilt it, and bestowed upon it the name of his mother, *Helen*, which it has since then retained. Within the church is the tomb of the Emperor *Constans*, murdered by the orders of *Magnentius*. Its archbishopric, the most ancient in *Roussillon*, was transferred to Perpignan, in 1634. Upon the outside of the building, are many gothic inscriptions of different dates—most probably epitaphs. Crossing the river *Tech*, and leaving the little town of *Argelès* upon the right, the road draws nearer to the sea, the very sight of which made me feel the mid-day sun less oppressive. Every where the country people were assembled dancing and singing. At *Collioure*,

or Colliouvre, as the peasants call it, a small town close to Port Vendre, they were most energetic in celebrating the day. The open *Place* in front of the harbour, was crowded with dancers, who were, at the time I passed, performing the dance called "Lo Salt," and at a distance, seeing the women every now and then elevated above the crowd, had a curious effect.

Two or three bays are here formed by the Alberes, as the low range of the Pyrénées which drop into the Mediterranean are called, and in one of them is Collioure, in another, Port Vendre. The heights around Collioure are covered with fortifications, and at the mouth of its harbour is a small island, upon which is built a picturesque little chapel.

Half an hour's drive along the cliffs, from Collioure, brought me to Port Vendre,* which derives its name from a temple which the Romans had erected here to the Venus of the Pyrénées, and in which the mariners were wont to deposit offerings. It had, like many of the other towns of its province, fallen into decay, and its harbour

* The greater portion of the French troops destined for Algiers are embarked at Port Vendre.



Peasants of Collioure

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became choked up; but its importance being acknowledged, the French government set about clearing it out; and Marshal de Mailly, governor of the province, by his great exertions, succeeded in effecting an entrance for frigates in 1780. In commemoration of this event, a marble column, one hundred feet high, has been erected in the little *Place* at the upper end of the harbour.

Having made myself acquainted with the landlord of the best inn of the village, ordered supper, and secured a bed, I went down to the beach to have a swim in the waters of the Mediterranean. The very name of this sea conveys the idea of all that is lovely and attractive; so much romance and poetry have been lavished in extolling its beauties—its sunny skies, and its verdant banks, covered with orange trees and myrtles. But at Port Vendre, and, indeed, all along the coast of Languedoc, the imaginative traveller will find himself sadly disappointed. Excepting where the buttresses of the Pyrénées dip into it, and relieve its monotony, the French coast of the Mediterranean presents a succession of lagoons, marshes, and low sandy hills, until it nears the Italian frontier, when its character becomes changed, and it is the Mediterranean he had sup-



posed it to be. Notwithstanding the disappointment of the imagination, I could not help feeling a sensation of pleasure and satisfaction in dipping into it.

The harbour is formed by a small bay, the entrance to which is, by the surrounding hills, narrowed to a small strait, thus making one of the most completely sheltered stations to be found anywhere. Here, as at Collioure, are innumerable forts, partly to guard the shipping, partly the frontier. One larger than the others, called Fort St. Elme, is perched upon a peak of the highest summit in the vicinity, and commands all the others. The most extreme point of Roussillon, stretching into the Mediterranean, is the Cap de Bearn, which would be a more appropriate name upon the western limits of the Pyrénées; it is to the south of Port Vendre, and beyond, a couple of miles distant from it, is Baniols, the last French village upon the frontier, from which there is a pass into Catalonia. I walked on board one of the largest vessels in the harbour, the Captain of which, I found, had been in the service of an acquaintance at Bordeaux. I accordingly invited him to sup with me; I also made the landlord—a quaint old fellow—join us. They pressed me

not to leave Port Vendre next day, but to sail round with them to Collioure, and join in the ceremonies of the fête, which I found was to be of three days duration. I agreed to the proposal. The wine of Roussillon is sweet, but pleasant; and the landlord, being a considerable proprietor, had, of course, a store of it; he produced the oldest and the best he had, and we did ample justice to his cellar. I ought to mention, that when I paid my bill, the old gentleman would not permit me to pay for more than one half of the wine drunk, the other half, he insisted, was his own share. I attributed this to the behaviour of an English lady and gentleman, who, some how or other, had found their way to this place, had resided in his house, and of whom he spoke highly. This, although a trifling matter in itself, shows that a traveller, leaving a good name behind him in any place, may serve those of his countrymen who follow him. Would that my countrymen would study this a little more than they do! They squander their money liberally enough, but that is all. They seldom conciliate the natives by affability, or pay sufficient regard to their habits and feelings, to render themselves esteemed



and regretted when they quit the place in which they have been sojourning. During the Peninsular war, the British were respected by the Spanish on account of their honesty; but they were not loved. Quite the contrary. Without his money to pay for what he wanted, the English soldier could not procure an article—and why? Simply because they did not, in some measure, accommodate themselves to the manners and customs of the people among whom they were; the French did so, and they were fed and entertained, and generally never paid a sous.

Having breakfasted the following morning with the captain, on board his vessel, we got into his boat, and pulled out of the harbour for Collioure. One of the solemnities of the day was a pilgrimage, made by all the inhabitants of the district, to the little chapel which I have mentioned. The scene when we turned the headland, and looked into the bay of Collioure, was animated and beautiful. Many boatfuls of the gaily-dressed devotees were passing and repassing between the shore and the chapel; and the rock upon which it is built is clustered with them, waiting their turn of admission. We went immediately to the



Pyrenean Haymakers.

Vol. 2.

London, John Macrone, 1837.

chapel. Every one had an offering of some kind or other to bestow. Some had tapers, and others had bouquets of flowers; we alone had come empty-handed. We had, however, a few silver pieces for the Tronc des pauvres. Having visited the chapel, we pulled ashore, and joined the dancers on the beach.

The costume of the women resembles that of the Spanish females along the frontier. Their head-dress is composed of a long white handkerchief folded double upon the head, one corner of it hanging down behind, the other two tied under the chin, and a bow of black ribbons placed in the centre of the forehead; a tightly laced bodice, and short petticoat, ample in its folds, displays their well-formed limbs and parti-coloured stockings. In bad weather, they have also the capulet—an article between a hood and a short cloak—which, when they are not using it, is folded in a square and laid upon the head. This is generally made of white woollen stuff, bound with black velvet. The men wear a bonnet of red cloth trimmed with velvet, and so long, that its end dangles between their shoulders. This bonnet is the most distinguishing feature of the Cata-



lan's dress. A short vest, with a sash round his waist, loose flowing pantaloons, and shoes, or more generally spartillas (sandals made of hemp), complete it.

Their language, which now-a-days is called the *patois* of the country, is remarkable for its antiquity. It is one of those ancient idioms known under the various denominations of vulgar Roman, broken Latin, provincial or Provençal, the Limousin, or the Catalan. Traces of their language are to be found in the poetry of the Salian rhymes, many words of which, although long since rejected in the Latin, have been preserved in the Catalan. It may, therefore, be supposed to be a child of Greece, prior to the period when Democritus grammaticised the Latin language.

Upon my return to Port Vendre, I told my landlord that I had left Perpignan without having my passport countersigned for the towns upon the frontier, but that I supposed that I could have it done at the Mairie here. He said that he would have it done. The Maire, however, was not at home, and the schoolmaster (his deputy) was a surly fellow, and would not comply; and insinuated that he should feel obliged to send me

back next morning to Perpignan escorted by a gendarme. This was rather awkward, as I had no wish to revisit that town so soon again. I went to him and expostulated, but it was of no avail; and he bowed me out with: "You must go back to Perpignan to-morrow morning, Sir."

"He shall find himself mistaken," said my host, when we were out of the official's hearing. "You shall go on your journey unmolested, and I will provide the means. The Maire will not arrive until late, and his deputy will have to consult him before arresting you. Now, as he is no very early riser, you shall take my pony, and, accompanied by Francisco, be off and away long before any orders have been given concerning you; and, should they come here to look for you, I shall be ready with some excuse or other, to account for your absence."

I agreed—quite willing to cheat the schoolmaster. So, after determining upon the route we were to take, I went to bed, to prepare for a start by day-light, and a long journey on the morrow.



CHAPTER III.

Escape—Appearance of the Country—Spanish guide, Francisco—
Gallant conduct of an English Frigate—Bolou—Anecdote of
Guerilla warfare—Cork-tree forests—Fortress of Bellegarde—
Civility of its Governor—View into Spain—Foresight of
Francisco.

I WAS awoke before day light the next morning by my host, and told that Francisco and the pony were waiting in the court-yard, and that I should lose no time in being off. In a very few minutes I was ready to start, and bade adieu to my kind-hearted landlord; and, mounted upon his pony, with Francisco trotting along side, left the village—taking care to make as little noise as possible as we passed the schoolmaster's house. All, however, was quiet within; the shutters

were closed, and its master, perhaps, dreaming over the little bit of business which he had to transact in the morning.

I intended to have gone on to Bolou, and remained there for the night; but, as we had commenced our journey so very early, I had some hopes of being able to visit Bellegarde in the evening. The road to Bolou strikes off from that to Perpignan near Argèlles, and is a sandy track, passable only by horses and foot passengers. On either side were fields of untrained vines, stretching as far as the eye could distinguish; the fruit of which the thirsty traveller was welcome to partake of, without interruption of any kind; no surly master or barking dog to disturb the passing peasant as he sat himself down beside the choicest branches, and, taking out his loaf, commenced his simple breakfast.

Having little to interest me in this sandy desert, I entered into conversation with my companion. Francisco was a Spaniard from the province of Catalonia, had been a guerilla during the war of independence, and, at the peace, finding no employment at home, had come to Perpignan in search of it. From Perpignan he came to Port



Vendre, and entered into the service of his present master, with whom he had been several years. He was a tall and very powerful man, about forty-five years of age; and, although somewhat of a bulky appearance, had lost nothing of his youthful activity. His countenance did not characterize him as being very intelligent; and upon first acquaintance, I set him down as being something of a fool, but I was never more mistaken in my life. It was not until I examined his physiognomy more particularly than I had done, that beneath an expression of apparent simplicity, I could detect a stronger, though less visible one, of thought and determination. I do not think I should have succeeded in drawing him into conversation, and obtaining some history of his past life, had it not been, that very soon getting tired of my pony, and preferring walking, I insisted upon Francisco mounting him. This little attention, and a few pulls at my wine-skin, made us as good friends as possible. Besides many anecdotes of his warfare in the mountains, he related to me the account of an event of which he was an eye-witness, at Port Vendre, in the year 1812.

An English frigate of unequal force had attacked a French frigate, not more than a couple of miles from the harbour of Port Vendre. The fight continued for some time, during which the whole population of the place had assembled on the adjoining heights, to witness the capture and bringing in of the English ship. "Elle est prise! elle est prise!" was shouted along the cliffs, as each successive shot was fired by the French frigate—when, to their astonishment and disappointment, the Frenchman, finding the work too hard for him, and fearful of being taken, put about, and stood into the harbour, followed by the English frigate, until the batteries on the heights warned her of her danger. She then stood out to sea, went down to some of our stations on the Spanish coast (Francisco could not tell me which), had her damages repaired, and, in the course of a very short time, returned to Port Vendre. The French frigate was then in perfect safety, under protection of the batteries; and, although challenged by the English vessel to come out and renew the fight, she could not be prevailed upon to do so, notwithstanding her superiority. Having told me this anecdote, he inquired if the



people at Port Vendre had not mentioned it to me. I said they had not.

"I thought not," said he, "they felt so confident of their countrymen gaining the victory, that they like not to think, far less to talk upon the subject; and, in all probability, had you lived a year in the village, you would not have heard a word concerning it."

After four or five hours' walking, we arrived at Bolou, an old town upon the Tech. The ground in its neighbourhood being irrigated, it wore rather a more pleasing aspect than is in general to be seen in the province. The great road from Perpignan into Spain passes close to it. Just before entering the town, we were accosted by a gendarme, who, fortunately for me, was an acquaintance of Francisco's. I at once presented my passport, which he looked at for an instant, and returned to me, saying it was all right. As I intended remaining some time in the village, and did not wish to be interrogated by others who might not read my passport so favourably, I thought it better not to lose sight of this gentleman, but carried him along with me to the inn to partake of my breakfast.

At Bolou, I found the same scenes of dancing and singing as elsewhere. Having breakfasted, we walked into the *Place*, to look at the dancers, and I had been standing some time in the crowd which surrounded them, when some one tapped me on the shoulder, and, upon turning round, I found that it was a little gentleman, who stated that he was the Maire of the town, and wished to see my "papier," as the peasants in general designate a passport. This was rather an awkward rencontre, but, upon the instant, my friend the gendarme, who had been talking to some one, came up, and told the Maire that he had examined my passport, and that it was perfectly correct; upon which the Maire bowed, bade me good morning, and walked away. I returned to the Auberge, and Francisco, having finished his breakfast, and the pony his corn, we set out for Bellegarde.

Bolou is situated at the entrance to the valley formed by the Alberes, and the sterile ridges which shoot out from the Canigoû: it is also opposite to the narrow valley through which winds the road into Spain. Half a mile from Bolou, this road begins to ascend the Alberes, and is broad and handsome, so that carriages of



all kinds can pass it. It alternately ascends and descends, winding round the successive ridges, in order to render the ascent as gradual as possible.

At one of the turns in the road, Francisco made me halt until he related to me a scene which took place there, and in which he performed an active part. During the period of the Guerilla warfare upon the frontier, he belonged to a party stationed in the neighbouring mountains. They had received orders to obtain possession, at all hazards, of certain dispatches which one of Napoleon's couriers was carrying into France. To entrap him upon the Spanish side of the mountains was impossible, from the strong guard which accompanied him. Accordingly, the daring plan of descending into the French territory, and capturing him after the greater part of his escort had left him at Bellegarde, was decided upon. Thirteen Spaniards stole from the mountains with this intention, and placed themselves in ambuscade by the side of the road. Francisco took me to the exact spot where his comrades and himself had lain concealed. It was in the heart of a knot of low shrubs, which skirted the oppo-

site side of the brook to that upon which run the road, and certainly within five and thirty or forty yards of it. They had established themselves here upon a Thursday morning, having every reason to believe that the courier would pass in the course of the day. Many an anxious look did they cast towards the fort, within reach of whose guns they might almost be said to be concealed; and soldiers and peasants passed along the road, unconscious of their enemies being so near them. The evening arrived, but the courier had not made his appearance. So confident had they been that he would come, that they had neither encumbered themselves with food, nor with cloaks to roll round them at night. In their little council of war, it was debated whether they should go back, or remain until the following day. It was decided, that they should remain exposed to hunger and the weather; but it is not easy to damp a Spaniard's courage when he has once determined on exerting it. The forenoon of the following day passed, and the courier had not yet come, and they had begun to despair of gaining their object, when a troop of gendarmes was seen trotting



down the mountain side. Their flints examined, and their muskets newly primed, the Guerillas waited their approach. Their plan was to allow the escort to come perfectly close, and then, firing a volley among them, to rush in upon them afterwards. Down came the troop of gendarmes, seventeen in number, the courier riding in the centre, singing and laughing, and little imagining the reception which, in a few moments, they would receive from their hidden enemies, whom they had not the remotest idea would venture so far into the French territory. The Guerillas allowing the troop to approach so close to them that a child might have been sure of its aim at the distance, when they poured in their volley, and ten of the escort left their saddles. Bewildered, the remainder did not know what to do—whether to advance or retreat. They hesitated for an instant, and then galloped off for the fort. The volley from the Guerillas had not, however, secured the courier, but the momentary pause ere they took to flight, had sealed his fate. One of the Guerillas (the best shot of the party, one whose aim never failed) had reserved his fire for the courier, should he not be brought down by

his comrades. One solitary shot ran among the rocks before the echoes of the previous ones had died away, and the courier and his dispatches were in the hands of the desperate mountaineers, who gained their fastnesses unmolested.

During the recital of this daring act, Francisco stood upon the spot from which he fired; and, as his eye sparkled and he clenched his staff and pointed to the spot of death, he was no longer the silent, simple-looking garçon of the Hotel de Commerce.*

In ancient times, there have been several fortified places in this little valley, the remains of which are to be seen upon every eminence remarkable for its natural strength; and, from a line of these old castles extending across the valley, I suspect that at one period the boundary between the two countries was close to them, and not where it at present is, on the very summit of the ridge.

Half way up the ascent, and to the left of the road, are the ruins of what at one period, was

* The truth of this story was afterwards corroborated by an old douanier, whom I met upon my return from Bellegarde.



the strong castle of L'Ecluse, which, in former times, was the chief of the many towers and forts of the surrounding district. Bellegarde was then merely an outpost to defend the passage of L'Ecluse. Near it is the spot where Pompey erected the famous trophy on which his statue was placed. An inscription upon this monument stated, that this general had reduced to submission eight hundred and seventy-six towns between the Alps and the extremity of Spain. Twenty-three years afterwards, Cæsar erected by the side of this trophy a stone altar of great size; but both these monuments have been destroyed.

In 1764, two blocks of marble, intended to denote the boundaries of France and Spain, were placed by the order of the sovereigns of these kingdoms on the same spot; but which were thrown down in the wars of the revolution. The banks on either side of the valley are covered with the cork tree, forests of which extend into the mountains, their immense trunks, most of them stripped of their bark, have a strange and ghastly appearance.

About mid-day we reached Bellegarde. Its village is merely a range of houses which line

either side of the road as it tops the ridge, one half of them looking into Spain, the other into France. Here there is a guard stationed, with orders that no one shall be allowed to pass unless he is authorized by the Maire of the village. Not being aware of this punctilio, and wishing to take a look down the road into Spain, I passed the sentinel without noticing him. I had not advanced a few yards, when I was called to stop, and turning round, found the guard with his musket at the "ready;" this was quite sufficient warning not to proceed.

The port of Bellegarde is perched upon a conical hill which rises in the centre of the two high ridges, which, running into France, forms the little valley which I had ascended; its situation is much higher than the village. From originally being a mere watch-tower, Louis the Fourteenth transformed it into a regular fort upon the modern system, and it has at different later periods been enlarged and improved. In 1694, it was taken by the Spaniards, who added some fortifications. Marshal Schomberg retook it in the July of the following year.

I wished very much to examine the interior of



the fort, but I had great doubts of my being permitted to do so. A circuitous path, which winds many times round the hill upon which it is built, leads to the fort from the village. I inquired of the sentinel at the drawbridge, if I should be allowed to enter it. He answered, that he thought not, but that I might send one of the soldiers who were standing near, to ask the governor. Accordingly I sent my compliments to the commandant, and requested permission to enter the fortress. The messenger returned, saying, the governor would be glad to see me. Francisco remained talking to the soldiers at the gate, and I followed my conductor.

I found the commandant, an ancien capitaine du genie, engaged in playing *ecarté* with his wife. He received me courteously, and put one or two leading questions to discover my object in coming to Bellegarde. He also inquired if I was going into Spain; if I was acquainted with engineering, and what route I intended following; all which queries having answered satisfactorily, and convinced him that amusement alone was the object I had in view, he not only gave me permission to examine the fort, and sent

his own servant along with me, but invited me to dinner, which invitation, however, I was obliged to decline, in consequence of the length of the journey I had still to perform that evening.

There is usually a garrison of six or seven hundred men in the fort, in time of peace; during war it is increased to four or five times that amount. The works are extensive, solid, and, so far as the situation will permit, may be well defended. But unfortunately it is commanded by some of the Spanish heights in the neighbourhood, particularly by one upon the left of the village. I pointed out this circumstance to my conductor, who had lived in the place for twenty years; and he told me that upon the last occasion that this fortress was taken by the Spaniards, all the mischief was done from the height to which I pointed. I then remarked an eminence at a considerable distance to the right of the fort, upon which a battery might have been placed, which could command the height alluded to; on this I was informed, that it has been resolved to erect a battery, the works of which have been already traced out, and are soon to be commenced. In the bastion which faces Spain, and from which



there is a fine view over all the country, as far as the strong fortifications of Figueras, is the tomb of General Dugommier, who was killed Nov. 18th, 1794, at the Black Mountain, by a shell, as he was preparing to attack the Spanish army.

Francisco, whom I had left at the entrance very soon joined us, and I could observe the attention and care with which he scrutinized every part of the building. When we had gone over the whole of the works, I thanked the commandant for his civility, and we set out on our return to Bolou. I told Francisco, I had observed the great interest he seemed to take in viewing the interior of the fort, and asked him his reasons for so doing. He said, "I am not so old yet, sir, but that I may have to find my way into that building by some other way than the gate." He told me, also, that the soldiers murmured at my being allowed to enter the fort, supposing that my intention was to take a plan of it, which might be available to the English on some future occasion.

I regretted very much having to part with Francisco, who on his part was anxious to accompany me, and would have been of considerable service from his knowledge of Catalan,

of which I did not understand a syllable; but his duties obliged him to return to Port Vendre. As it was getting late when we arrived at Bolou, I remained there all night, contented with an indifferent supper, and a worse than indifferent bed, but hunger and fatigue are never very fastidious.



CHAPTER IV.

Spanish character by a Spaniard—Parting with Francisco—Catalan guide—Valley of the Tech—Shepherds and their Flocks—Ceret—Pyrenean Rivers in flood—Difficulty in making myself understood—Interpreter—His knowledge of Ossian's Poems—Fort les Bains—Arles—Iron Forges—Spanish Carlists—Ascent of the Canigou—Mules not more sure-footed than Horses—Causes of the high price of Iron in France—Splendid View from the Summit of the Canigou—Descent—Valmania—Wandering Tailor—Village of Estoher—Country Doctor—Prades—Interview with its Prefet—His defeat.

At an early hour the following morning, I was awakened by Francisco, who came to bid me "good-bye." Before quitting me, he gave me voluntarily some information regarding the character of his countrymen. He said, "You will, in all probability, be soon among my countrymen; if not in

Spain, you may still meet with them in the mountains, and may chance to have to apply to them either for food or shelter. Do not believe what is said as to their being a savage and revengeful people; their enemies belie them. When injured, they do indeed seldom forget it, but they as seldom forget an act of kindness; and if, from mistake, they have committed an act of injustice, they will ever afterwards endeavour, by every means in their power, to efface it. Trust them, and you will find them worthy of your confidence; use them kindly, and they will, as I would wish to do now, follow you anywhere."

Since I heard Francisco repeat this little episode, I have seen something of Spanish character, and heard more; but I have never had reason to doubt the truth of what he said. I asked him why he did not leave France and return home. "Many times," said he, "has the same question been asked of me; but hitherto I have never told why I toiled at Port Vendre, in preference to going home, and leading an inactive life. I remain here, because I have an aged father and mother, and a sister helpless from her birth in my native village, who, but for the pittance which I



can send across to them by the muledrivers, would have 'ni pain, ni vin.' " Having said this, he darted out of the room, evidently to prevent my supposing that he had told his simple tale to obtain a few additional francs. Upon descending, I found that Francisco had gone, not, however, without procuring for me a guide to accompany me to Arles. He was a Catalan, and could not speak half-a-dozen words of French.

The valley of the Tech presents a far more pleasing and agreeable aspect, than the plains of Roussillon. Its alluvial soil, irrigated with the waters of the river, is rich and verdant. Meadows and pasturages are to be seen, and other trees than the sickly olive, are scattered around. This change of scene, and the prospect of being on the morrow among the mountains, breathing their fresh air, climbing their summits, and wandering among their valleys, exhilarated and delighted me. Flocks of sheep and goats were among the half-enclosed fields, and their keepers were everywhere milking the latter to provide for their breakfast. These shepherds never leave their flocks, but continue with them night and day. They have a simple mode of defending

themselves from the scorching rays of the noon-day sun, and the damps or rains of the night. A wattling of willow boughs, about eight feet square, is thatched with straw, and made so light, that they can easily transport it along with them from place to place. This original umbrella affords shade from the broiling heat; and at night, underneath it, rolled in his blanket, whilst the flock is protected by his dog, the shepherd sleeps soundly.

Ceret, where we halted to breakfast, is merely a village, built where the Alberés sink into the plain. Close to it, the Tech is spanned by a bridge of one arch, remarkable for its width and height, though of comparatively recent construction, and is thrown, from one rock to the other, over the broad and dark bed which the river forms beneath it. Its banks are here rugged and steep, bearing marks of the devastation which the river, swollen by the melting of the snow in the mountains, bears along its course. It is not during the winter that the rivers which derive their waters from the highest Pyrénées, are to be seen in all their glory of flood and foam; on the contrary, it is generally when the fine weather of



an early spring, and the heats of a southern sun prevail, that the stranger in the country is astonished to observe the Tech, the Garrone, the Adour, or other rivers of the mountains, while not a cloud is to be seen, and "all nature wears the mantle of repose," rolling through the plains, overflowing their banks, and deluging the country. It is difficult to decide which is the most sublime sight—which portrays most vividly the irresistible and overwhelming power of a river in flood, whether when it is seen raging, and tossing, and thundering over the rocks, and through the narrow gorges of the mountains, sweeping the huge pines of the forest along with it, and foaming in wrath at the obstacles which impede its destructive course—or when, bursting into the plain, no longer fettered and restrained by the bulwarks of its birthplace, it recks its vengeance on the surrounding districts.

I found it no easy matter in an Auberge, where none of the inmates spoke any language but their native Catalan, to make them understand what I wished to have for breakfast. I was, however, soon relieved from my dilemma by the entrance

of a young lad, who, understanding French, interpreted for me. My new acquaintance had been loitering upon the bridge when I passed, and, recognizing me as a stranger, supposed that I must have come to Ceret upon business connected with the iron forges in its vicinity. To this supposition I was indebted for his acquaintance; and, as his father was a proprietor of one of the forges, he followed me to inquire if I wished to purchase iron. I found him an amusing and intelligent little fellow, and acquired some information from him, as to the paths across the Canigou, which I afterwards found very useful to me. Some how or other, he had become possessed of a French translation of Ossian's poems, of which he was greatly enamoured; and discovering that I came from the

"Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,"

he talked in raptures of Fingal, Morven, and the northern heroes. I could not help thinking how delighted the "Celtic Society" would have been to have heard this little mountaineer of Roussillon



recite, with energy, whole passages from the poetry of their native bard. From him I learnt of the insurrection in Barcelona, and that the whole Spanish frontier was now in a state of civil warfare.

As it was no great distance to Arles, and as I looked forward to having a lengthy journey on the following day, I walked leisurely up the valley, accompanied by my little friend, descanting upon the quantity and quality of iron produced from the forges of Roussillon.

Half-way between Ceret and Arles, upon a conical hill, resembling that which forms the site of Bellegarde, is the small fortification called Fort-les-Bains. It is composed of four bastions, and commands the road below; and, like other strongholds upon this frontier, was constructed by Vauban. Beneath it, is a village of the same name, distinguished for its mineral waters. It was known to the Romans (as indeed were almost the whole of the mineral sources in the Pyrénées), and over one of its springs is a vaulted roof, said to have been built by them: perhaps it may not; but, at all events, it is of very great antiquity. The valley towards Arles becomes narrower, but

increases in fertility and beauty; the vines clustering upon the banks and heights, the Indian corn or maize flourishing in the fields.

Some of the most considerable forges at Roussillon are situated at Arles, rendering it a place of some commerce. Like most other places of the Pyrénées and France, which derive their importance from forced trade in iron, it will, most probably, ere long feel the temporary miseries which a repeal of the iniquitous, and, to the inhabitants of France, most unjust, law, which imposes so high a rate of duty on foreign iron, as to compel them to purchase a dear and bad article, simply because it is made at home.

In the auberge to which I went, I found a Spanish Carlist who had escaped the slaughter of his party at Barcelona, and, travelling along the mountains, had arrived here the preceding night. He was a man of rank and large property, but so hurried had been his flight, and so difficult had he found it to elude pursuit, that he had not an article with him but the clothes which he wore, torn and soiled with his journey. He spoke of his misfortunes with



comparative indifference, and seemed most annoyed at the state of his apparel, being obliged to go before the Maire for a passport. I had no spare clothes to offer him, but, as I thought he would be more comfortable with a clean shirt, I asked him to accept one. He thanked me, and said, that a clean shirt would only—by contrasting with the state of his other habiliments—make his appearance more miserable, and that, as he would reach Perpignan in the course of a few hours, where he could supply himself with money or any other thing he wanted, it was scarcely necessary to make any alteration. In the course of the afternoon and succeeding night, several more Carlists crossed the mountains and arrived in Arles, some of them in a much worse condition than the grandee to whom I had offered a shirt.

As I intended to ascend the Canigoû, should the weather of the following day be favourable, my first object in Arles was to secure a good guide, and with the assistance of my friend from Ceret, I had little difficulty in obtaining one. It was arranged that we should leave Arles by day-break, and after the ascent of the Canigoû, sleep

at the forge of Valmania, in the little valley of Lentilla. The few travellers who have ascended the Canigoû, have generally slept either at Corsavi, a village upon the Arles side of the mountain, and from which the ascent is tedious; or, crossing to Valmania, mounted from the other side. The latter is the shortest and easiest to accomplish, as it is necessary, when starting from Corsavi, to turn the flank of the mountain, in order to ascend it, which is not the case upon the side towards Valmania. The ascent from Arles had not hitherto been attempted; the road being so much longer than from either Corsavi or Valmania; but being somewhat of a pedestrian, I did not fear the undertaking.

There is a path into Spain by the Prat de Mollo, the last French village at the source of the Tech. It was, however, now impassable to the mule-drivers, and others engaged in traffic across the frontier, who were bitterly cursing the civil war, which now raged along it, putting a stop to every kind of commerce. The French suffered equally with the Spaniards by this war, and all along the whole line of the Pyrénées, I heard nothing but lamentation at the want of employ-



ment and inconvenience which the disturbed state of the Spanish frontier occasioned.

We left Arles at five the next morning, in company with a troop of muleteers belonging to the forges, who every day cross to the mines upon the Valmania side of the Canigoû, for the mineral smelted at Arles. There was a string of mules, in number about fifty, decked in housings and trappings of all colours. The path by which we left the village, and indeed all the way across the flank of the Canigoû, admits of only single file; the consequence of which is, that, when met by loaded mules returning from the mines, accidents sometimes happen from the difficulty of passing each other—some of them not unfrequently rolling over the steeps. I had always had considerable doubts of the mule being fully entitled to the high character generally bestowed upon it for steadiness and security of footing among the mountains, and saw no reason why the horse should not be equally so. I was here and afterwards convinced that my suspicions were well founded, and that the mule possessed not the safety imputed to it. Frequent stumbles, and an examination of the knees of the troop, were evidence

not to be contradicted; and the curious circumstance was elucidated, that five horses, which had carried mineral as long as most of the mules had done, were perfectly sound. The only reason which can be given for the mule having acquired the character which it has, is, that it is much more frequently used among the mountains, on account of its being more able to endure hunger and fatigue. The horse is as safe to ride among rocks and precipices, if bred among them; and I would far rather trust my neck to them than to the generality of mules I have seen. With the bridle upon the neck of one of these ponies, and allowing him to take his own time (which a mule always does, whether his rider wishes or not), I have descended some steeps which would require to be seen in order to judge of the animal's merits.

The mules employed in transporting the ore from the mines to the forges, are furnished each with a pair of panniers, in which they can only convey a very small quantity, as it is none of the purest, and it thus requires many mules' loads to produce a small weight of iron. Could they smelt the ore at the mines, an enormous saving might be effected; but in this case the charcoal



must be conveyed from such a distance to them as to render the expense nearly equal to that of bringing the ironstone to Arles. All the forges in the Pyrénées are similarly situated. The ore has to be brought to them for some leagues in one direction, the fuel for some leagues in another, and in no instance have I seen them united, consequently rendering the price of iron very high, almost prohibiting the country from making use of it even in their most necessary articles.

This accounts for the rude nature of the agricultural implements in France. The high price of iron prevents their adopting the more improved methods of cultivating the soil; and until their shortsighted and interested government repeal the obnoxious duties on foreign iron, both the agricultural and manufacturing interests of the country—from the impossibility of obtaining an article the most necessary for their prosperity at any thing short of a ruinous price—must continue to remain stationary, while other countries, aware of the benefit of a liberal commercial law, prosper and precede it.

The guide who accompanied me understood

little French; but he was so very intelligent, that we could easily, when we did not understand each other's language, communicate by signs. For the first five hours we kept company with the muleteers, who relieved my guide from the burden of my valise, and undertook to convey it to Valmania. The ascent was along one of the ridges which branch from the Canigoû; and when we gained its crest near the old watch-tower of Batères, we were at the bottom of another ridge, which led to the base of the higher summits of the Canigoû. At this old tower, from which we could look down upon the valleys of the Tech and Tet, we sat down to eat the breakfast which we had brought with us.

Passing along the crest of this ridge we skirted the side of the mountain, until we had arrived at the place most easy of ascent. Hoary-looking pines of great size dotted the sides of the narrow gorges and steeps, where the hatchet of the charbonniers could not reach them. Among the rocks were numerous plants of the rhododendron; and wherever there was a patch of soil, the white and purple anemone abounded.

Leaving the region of woods and plants, and



scrambling for three or four hours up the steeps and along precipices, and over snow-wreaths, we gained the summit of the Canigoû. The few strangers who have ascended the Canigoû, have almost always been disappointed in the view which can be obtained from it. Bad weather has wholly or partially obscured the country; sometimes the mists hanging on the French, sometimes on the Spanish, side of the mountain, but generally either upon one or the other. Most fortunately upon this occasion, the fates had proved more propitious, and permitted me from the crest of the Canigoû to look down upon a scene finer by far than I had ever beheld, and perhaps ever shall do again. The atmosphere was clear and free from haze, and not a speck of cloud could be discerned within the horizon. So favoured, I saw, stretched beneath me, the whole plains of Rousillon; and beyond them, the low coast of Languedoc, where it fringes the Mediterranean. Perpignan and its citadel seemed almost within cannon-shot, and washed by the waves of the sea, in reality several miles beyond it. Then there was the long line of the Alberès, each valley of whose bosom I could look into, and distinguish

their torrents like silvery threads winding through them. To the south-east of the Alberès lay the provinces of Spain, fruitful in all the miseries of civil discord, and upon whose plains, within the limits of my vision, even now were enacting scenes of butchery and slaughter. More directly south rose the mountain-ranges of Catalonia, peak upon peak appearing in the distance with all their host of inferior summits scattered around them. Turning to the east, I could survey all the numberless little valleys which border the Tet. Ille, Prades, and other towns chequered the plain; and the chain of mountains which divide Rousillon from Ariège and the department of the Aude, closed in this magnificent panorama upon the west and north.

To imagine the grandeur and sublimity of this bird's-eye view of a prospect which my powers of description would in vain attempt to portray, the reader must suppose himself standing upon a pinnacle from nine to ten thousand feet above the surrounding district, with comparatively few intervening objects to limit a horizon of from thirty to sixty miles. He must then, with all the advantages of the finest weather, enhanced by the



bright sky and pure atmosphere of the south, suppose himself from his aerial height looking down upon this great extent of country, its villages and houses appearing no larger than molehills, its greatest rivers dwindled into streams, and enclosures of every kind being imperceptible; the whole plain resembling one vast garden, its trees becoming shrubs, its great fields of vines distinguishable merely by the tinge of verdure which they give to the landscape. He can then, by turning round, vary the prospect to one of "woods, and wilds, and solitary places," trace the range of the Pyrénées as far as his eye can reach, even to the Maladetta and Mont Perdu, and again look upon no small portion of the land of dark eyes and darker deeds.

Having indulged in the contemplation of this scene, until my sight ached with straining to take in the more distant objects, and it was time to begin the descent; I was obliged to quit a scene whose "like I ne'er may look upon again." Its glory has, however, been so strongly impressed upon my memory, that in imagination I can at will recall its features. The descent upon Valmania is in some places so difficult and dangerous

as to deter many an *aspirant*, who would otherwise essay to reach the summit of the Canigoû, and who, in order to palliate their faint-heartedness, have propagated many a wild and incredible tale of its (to them) insurmountable precipices and yawning gulfs; but no one with a tolerable pair of legs, good lungs, and not altogether unaccustomed to mountain-climbing, ought to be discouraged from making the attempt. Should he succeed, he will find himself amply repaid for his toil and fatigue.

Excepting at those places where it was necessary to use a little caution, we descended at a sharp trot, and arrived at Valmania before three o'clock. We came down on the side of the ravine opposite to where the most considerable mines of iron ore were working. These mines surround the Canigoû, and are all nearly at the same height, at the junction of the granite and the limestone. Valmania consists of a few houses occupied by the miners, and others connected with the forges. It is a wild and solitary place, and near it are the ruins of what has been in other times a considerable castle. It was one of the few places of the kind in the Pyrénées which

came up to the idea I had in my boyhood formed of them from the never-to-be-forgotten *Mysteries of Udolpho*. I do not suppose that the authoress ever could have seen this castle of Valmania, but it would be difficult to find a place more suited to the lawless purposes of a feudal chief than a stronghold in this savage and secluded little valley. The old watch-tower of Batères, situated some thousand feet above Valmania, and appertaining to its lord, could give him timely warning of the approach of either friends or foes.

We went to the little auberge, which accorded well with the poverty and misery of the place. It consisted of one large room, and a smaller one within it; the outer serving as kitchen, and for all the purposes of an auberge; the inner, as a sleeping apartment for the whole family. I found the family at dinner, which consisted of vegetable soup, bread, and wine; and I made myself perfectly at home by sitting down at the table, and helping myself to some of the soup; which had, however, such a seasoning of garlic that I could not partake of it. One of the party, observing me put aside my plate, addressed me in French; which I had never thought of using,



Peasants of Valmania.

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as I supposed myself among people who only spoke Catalan. This individual, however, like myself, was not a native, but had come hither on business, namely, to patch the old, and make the new garments of the inhabitants of the valley, should any of them be so extravagant as to indulge in such a luxury. So I found here the old custom prevalent in the remote parts of my own country, even at the present day; where the periodical arrival of Snip, the tailor, is looked forward to with no small anxiety in many a little hamlet. By the assistance of the tailor I procured some fresh eggs, which I soon cooked for myself. Here, for the first time, I drank wine out of the curiously-shaped bottle, chiefly in use among the Spaniards. It is made very flat and round, with a long neck, and still longer, but very narrow, spout. Glasses are not in general use, and therefore every one drinks from the bottle; there is more delicacy, however, displayed than in our old English way of using silver cups and porter pots, as they never, by any chance, apply the spout to the mouth, but, holding it at arm's length, send the liquor, like a jet from a fountain, down the throat. I did as I



saw others do, but found there was more science required than I was aware of; for, not having made the neck and funnel of the bottle describe the proper angle, I discharged the contents in my bosom. I made particular inquiries whether any "Anglais" had found his way to this spot, but could not ascertain that any had.

From Valmania to Prades, the chief town of the valley of the Tet, I was told that it was five hours' walk; but, as the evening was fine, I resolved, if possible, to find my way there. But, on sending through the village, neither mule nor animal of any kind was to be procured, nor a guide to accompany me. I did not, however, relish sleeping "en famille," with all the inmates of the house, and proposed to the Catalan (whom I had only engaged to come to Valmania) to proceed with me to Prades; who, after starting some difficulties as to the length of the day's journey, fatigue, &c., agreed to go with me; and we lost no time in setting off. The walk down the little valley of Lentilla, among the hills which lie between Valmania and Prades, is in many places beautiful and picturesque.

In passing through the little village of Estoher,

I was accosted by the "medicin" of the place, who very politely asked me to enter his house, and take some refreshment. I was nothing loath to obtain some fresh wine, as the skin we had brought with us was now empty, and we had still some miles to travel. Our conversation was upon the all-engrossing theme at that period, the cholera, a case of which the little doctor was most anxious to see; more, I suspected, for the honour of having to report it to the medical board at Paris, with his sage remarks appended thereto, than for the purpose of acquiring additional medical experience.

In the course of an hour we were upon the great road from Perpignan to Prades. The valley of the Tet, which commences at Vinca, a town five or six miles below Prades, is even more fertile than that of the Tech at Arles. Maize, buckwheat, and hemp are the staple products; and vineyards and orchards abound, where the finest peaches of the south are raised, and exported to Toulouse and other great cities.

It was nearly dark when I got into Prades, and found my way to its best hotel, as may be supposed somewhat fatigued with a mountain



walk of almost fifteen hours. Prades is the second place in the department, and a sous-prefecture; so I inquired of the landlord if he thought I could have my passport countersigned that evening, as I wished to proceed early next morning. He advised me to call upon the Prefet, and try if he would oblige me. I did so, and found the magistrate in his gown and slippers, little expecting a visit upon business at so late an hour. I handed him my passport, and requested him to "viser" it for Ax or Foix, passing through the republic of Andorre. He soon discovered its irregularity, and asked me how it came that I had not had it examined at Perpignan. I said, that the same reason which brought me to him at so late an hour was the cause of this want of form. I was anxious to leave Perpignan; and, its Prefet being from home, I did not wait his return. He said, that he was sorry for it, but that it was quite contrary to the rules to sign an irregular passport, particularly as he had received orders to be strict in examining any English who were proceeding towards the frontier with a view of joining Don Carlos; and therefore I should be obliged to

return to Perpignan. I said that this would be very hard, and hoped that he would not put me to such inconvenience. He then, among other questions, asked me, where I had come from that morning. I told him that I had slept the preceding night at Arles, and had crossed the mountains to Prades, visiting the summit of the Canigoû upon the way. Upon my telling him this, he folded up my passport, and delivered it to me, saying, "Sir, it is impossible that any person but a mountaineer could have come from Arles, far less have been at the top of the Canigoû. Take your passport, Sir. Good evening." I insisted that what I said to him was true; but it would not do. "It is impossible—it is impossible!" was his answer.

The passport that I held in my hand was one which I had received at Bordeaux, eleven months before; from which town it was "visé" for Pan, and *Les eaux thermales des Pyrénées*. I never observed this until twisting it in my hand, irritated at the unbelief of the Prefet; when the thought struck me, that my passport must be good for almost any place in the Pyrénées, which abounded with "les eaux thermales." The tables



were now turned ; for I pointed to the words, and said, that since he would neither sign my passport, nor believe what I said, that I should proceed next day with my passport as it was, there being many mineral sources in the district I wished to pass through, and to which I could go, if I chose. At the same time, as I did not wish to leave him while he imagined that I had not made the day's journey which I said I had done, I would request of him to send one of his servants to the hotel for the Catalan who had come along with me, and he might question him as to its truth.

He complied ; and, as good fortune would have it, the guide was well known to him, and the fact which he doubted was at once established. Then came civility in abundance ; my passport was signed as I wished it ; and I returned to the hotel. I engaged the landlord's horse and servant to accompany me upon the morrow as far as the Tour de Carol (if we could accomplish the distance), and was very soon after asleep, in a more comfortable bed than I could have found had I remained at Valmania.

CHAPTER V.

Pedestrianism—Environs of Prades—Family d'Aria—Villefranche—Character of its Fortifications—Virnet, and its mineral Springs—Appearance of the Valley—Olette—Detachment of French Soldiers—Village and Fastness of Mont Louis—Descent into the Valley of the Cerdagne—Arrival at the Tour de Carol—Luxuries of its Auberge—Battle between the Carlists and Christinos—Advised not to visit Andorre—Best mode of choosing Guides—Novel Night-quarters—Departure for Andorre—Arrival of the British Legion in Spain, and its influence upon English Travellers in the Frontiers—Opinion of their probable Success—Character of our Party—Towers of Charlemagne—Inhabitants of the Valley—Their Industry—Favourite Springs of the Mountaineers—Intelligence of the Carlists—Their Depredations on the Shepherds—Pass their Fire of the preceding Night—Enter Andorre—Discovery of the Marauders—Preparations for a Fight—Advance and Retreat of the Carlists—Wild Scenery—Covey of Partridges—Andorrian Piscator—Arrival at the Forge of Escaldos.

MOUNTED upon the landlord's horse, I left



Prades "au point de jour" the next morning. Fond as I am of walking, I have never been able to reconcile myself to pedestrianism upon the great roads, and have always availed myself of the most expeditious mode of travelling when I have been obliged to follow them, quitting them whenever my destination permitted me. The pedestrian has many great advantages over every other traveller, not only in seeing the country through which he passes, but in becoming better acquainted with the manners and customs of their people. Among hills, and mountains, and valleys, he is the most independent, and I think, most enviable being in existence; he throws care of every kind to the winds, and nothing comes amiss to him—nothing annoys him but bad weather; and even then he can console himself with

"Fighting his battles o'er again,"

or chalking out upon his map his future route, by no means the most unpleasant occupation of a traveller. There is one essential, however, which is necessary for all travellers to carry about

with them, but particularly the pedestrian, and unpossessed of which, I would most strenuously advise him to remain at home; it is a cheerful and contented mind under all circumstances. Bad dinners, indifferent beds, fatiguing journeys, and surly landlords, must never discompose him; never be felt as more than the expected annoyances incidental to the character he has assumed, and giving additional zest to the many real pleasures which no one but the pedestrian traveller can fully estimate and enjoy.

In the environs of Prades, the banks to the right and left of the Tet are spotted with villages, and clustered with old chateaux. Among those upon the right is the hamlet of the Ria, which either took its name from, or gave it to a family renowned in history. From the family of *da Ria* are descended the Counts of Barcelona, whose posterity have given kings and queens to Arragon, Navarre, Castile, Portugal, Majorca, Naples, Sicily, and France. Thus the greater part of the reigning sovereigns of Europe, can trace their descent from the original proprietor of the little village of Ria.

The valley begins to contract soon after leaving



Prades, and at Villefranche there is little more space than suffices for the river and the two narrow streets which compose the town. Villefranche has the honour of being one of the first towns fortified by Vauban, and it does no great credit to his early genius. It was a strange thought to construct a fortress in the hollow of a narrow gorge, where the enemy out of reach of its guns, could, from the heights above, pour their volleys into every window of the place. It was founded in 1105, by Raymond, Count of Conflens and the Cerdagne, and has several times been in the hands of the Spaniards.

In a little valley leading to the Canigoû, and through which, from Villefranche, there is a tolerable road, is Virnet, the most noted mineral watering-place in this part of the South; it is the Bagnères of Roussillon and Languedoc; and during the season, which lasts from June to September, there are a considerable number of strangers in the village. The botanist will find almost the whole of the Pyrenean plants in its vicinity, and the Canigoû and its inferiors afford no small field to the mineralogist. But with these advantages and its pretty situation, its

walks and gardens, it cannot compete with many other mineral sources in the Pyrénées, where all its merits are possessed in an equal degree, besides the luxury of a cooler temperature, for those who are in delicate health; and more magnificent scenery in their neighbourhood, for those who visit the Pyrénées with other intentions than to quaff their unpalatable waters, or stew themselves in their sudatories.

From Villefranche, the Tet is inclosed by arid and sterile heights, destitute of wood and cultivation; many parts of their sides, lashed by the rains, and swept over by the mountain torrents, have been stripped of their covering of grass or brushwood, and rendered far more unpleasant to look upon than rocks and precipices. I breakfasted at Ollete, the next village in the valley, built after the most approved Spanish architecture—the streets as narrow and dirty as they could well be. I left Ollete in company with a detachment of French soldiers “en route” for Mont Louis, and escorting a long train of mules bearing baggage and necessities for its garrison. The road, soon after leaving Ollete, turns an elbow of the ridge; and ascending, it



becomes, where this elbow nearly touches the precipice on the opposite side of the river, a pass of uncommon beauty, and, as a place of defence, of great strength. Accordingly it has been fortified by the ancient lords of the valley, who have built upon it several strong gateways and buttresses, and the descent is by a flight of steps cut in the rock.

The detachment of soldiers and mules were in advance of me; and, as they marched through the many windings of this key of the valley, their arms and accoutrements glittering with the sunbeams, and the surrounding and overhanging cliffs echoing to the mirth and hilarity which reigned among them, gave a character of life and animation to the scene exceedingly picturesque.

Passing the detachment, which, encumbered with its baggage, was proceeding slower than the distance we had to travel before night would permit us to do, we soon afterwards passed through the upper and uninteresting part of this valley, and entered upon the extensive plain or table-land which surrounds the fortress of Mont Louis. This vast plateau bears a striking resemblance to many of the upland districts of Scotland. It is divided

into farms of considerable extent, with well-built slated houses; the fields partially inclosed by grey stone walls, and abounding with irrigated meadows. The hills which border it are of no great height, and the pines and shrubs which cover them add greatly to the Scottish appearance of the place. The auberge was comfortable and clean, and I was fully recompensed for my indifferent breakfast by an excellent dinner, chiefly composed of game. The citadel of Mont Louis is built upon a conical hill, at some distance from the village, and is large and well fortified. It was built by Louis the Fourteenth, and fortified by Vauban to defend this passage into Spain, one of the most frequent and easiest in the district. I did not envy the garrisons shut up in such places as Bellegarde and Fort-le-bains, but here I should have had no objections to pass some weeks in a clean and comfortable inn, where I could enjoy myself either as a sportsman or a naturalist. There is a path into Ariege by Les Angles from Mont Louis.

Half an hour's walk from the village of Mont Louis brought us to the point from which the road descends the Col de Perche into the valley



of the Cerdagne. The Cerdagne, at least the French part of it, is erroneously called a valley, for it consists of a large and extensive basin into which many lateral valleys open; and there are several small rivers which cross it, and afterwards unite with the Seyre, which has its source in one of these valleys. From this point of the Col de Perche, the whole of the French Cerdagne can be looked over, with its boundaries of Spanish towns and villages; so completely is it situated upon the Spanish side of the mountain, that in many places the boundary line is a mere ditch or rivulet.

We shortened the journey by quitting the road and descending some ravines, awkward enough places for a horse to step over; but the animal we had neither flinched from them nor lost his footing—I suppose that he knew better than to try the effects of the fall he would have had. St. Pierre was the first village we arrived at, and from it we walked through well-cultivated fields of rich and productive soil until we came to Saillagousse, the largest town in the French Cerdagne. It is situated upon a rising ground overhanging the Seyre, which, swelled by the many tributaries it

has already received, is even here a considerable river, and looked very like a good trout stream. It has the remains of some old buildings which seemed of very ancient architecture and great size.

Between Saillagousse and the Tour de Carol, where I intended my day's journey to end, I had to cross one or two of the small ridges which shut out the French part of the Cerdagne from the valley of the Carol. I found a cordon of French soldiers along the frontier, and had more than once to produce my passport before I was allowed to proceed. About seven o'clock we arrived at the Tour de Carol, drenched by some heavy thunder showers which had fallen since we passed Saillagousse. As usual, the first person I met on entering the village was a gendarme, who took me to the best auberge in the place. Bad was the best; the host of it was the butcher of the village, and the under part of it being used in the way of business, the upper part in hot weather could not be very agreeable. There was however, always one consolation, and that was, that I should not starve. While changing my wet clothes, the landlord, a lad of nineteen, made



his appearance, and asked what I would have for my supper; adding, that I had only to order what I wished, and he could give it me, having, he said, killed both sheep and oxen upon the previous day. "The valley is filled with soldiers," said he, "and as I supply them with meat, I have always a great stock in hand." What an hotel for a gourmand! What a pity for such creatures that in England it is not fashionable to unite the sciences of ox-killing and inn-keeping!

While supping, the gendarme who had carried off my passport to the superior officers in the village, returned with it. He was a civil and obliging person, and gave me information as to the state of the district. From him I learnt, that had I arrived in the village the preceding day, I might have mounted to the top of the low ridge in front of the auberge, the summit of which is the boundary line between the two countries, and looking into the valley below, been witness to a battle between the Carlists and Christinos; and he believed, that at Puycerda, and in its vicinity, they were now fighting. Regarding Andorre he could not give me any authentic accounts; but he knew that no one thought of going there in the present state of the

war, when it was not probable that either of the Spanish parties would respect the neutrality of the little republic. I mentioned my anxious desire to visit Andorre, and my determination to attempt it, if I could get some men of the Carol to accompany me who could be depended upon, and who were well acquainted with the country, upon which he offered to go and make inquiries as to the practicability of procuring guides.

He returned in a short time, accompanied by his officer, and the Maire of the village, whose earnest advice was, not to think of visiting Andorre, particularly, as that afternoon, reports had come down the valley, that parties of the Carlists had been seen upon the French marches with Andorre. I had, however, come to the Tour de Carol for the express purpose of exploring the (to me) most interesting valleys of the Pyrénées, where, almost unknown to the world, had existed a republic since the days of Charlemagne; so I at once determined that nothing short of positive danger should deter me from visiting them, and my friends, when they found that I could not be dissuaded, very kindly set



about making themselves useful to me in many ways.

I should always recommend the traveller, when he is in a district with which he is unacquainted, and wishes to procure guides, or to acquire information which may be of consequence to him on his journey, to apply to some of the authorities of the place,—the Maire, for instance, a magistrate with which every French village is provided. He will find that, by acting in this manner, he will neither be cheated nor imposed upon, which the idle and interested of every country, through which he passes, are both willing and ready to attempt; he has, besides, the great advantage of obtaining the best guides, and the most authentic information; and, above all, he will entail upon the authorities who aided him, a responsibility which, should the guides provided by them not make their appearance, will insure inquiries being instituted concerning him. Upon this occasion, when there was some necessity for being particular as to the character of those who were to accompany me, I obtained, through the civility of the Maire, individuals whom I afterwards found

were not only intimately acquainted with the country, but men whom I could have trusted on any emergency,

It was arranged, that I should take four men of the valley along with me, and that we should travel prepared for whatever might happen; to avoid the Carlists when their numbers rendered it advisable to do so, or to meet any small parties which might be out among the mountains. We knew that they were badly armed, and were not, but when in numbers, to be dreaded; so that our party was quite large enough for the occasion. Every thing being thus satisfactorily adjusted, my obliging friends, with many wishes for an agreeable journey, bade me good-night. The room I supped in was, I found, to be my sleeping apartment, and not only mine, but that of the landlord, his wife, and her two sisters. Matters were here, however, better arranged than they would have been at Valmania, where, had I remained, I should have been obliged to repose, "en famille," with the whole establishment, the idiot old woman of a domestic included. The family chamber at Carol was, although, indeed, somewhat after a patriarchal fashion, a very different sort of place. It



was a large room, with windows to the front and back; and in each of the sides were two recesses sufficiently large to contain a bed, and chair to put one's clothes upon; in front of each of these four recesses hung down a piece of cloth, the dimensions of which, in comparison to the size of the aperture which they were meant to inclose, indicated either that the tapissier had sadly miscalculated in fitting them, or that they had woefully shrunk in the last washing. The family party retired to rest in the eastern recesses of the chamber, I (I suppose from having to be early on foot in the morning) in the western. This juxtaposition to my host's household, who during the first ten minutes I was in bed, and before the fatigues of the day had rendered me insensible to outward impressions, indulged themselves in nasal conversations, did not disturb my repose; for when I awoke in the morning, I found that they were all up, and my breakfast got ready for me.

In many parts of the Pyrénées which are never visited but by those whose business of some kind or other leads them into their wilds, the appearance of a stranger, but especially of one who has no other object in view but amusement, is suffi-

cient to throw a whole village into commotion. So it was at Carol; and, although soon after daylight, when we left the village, its inhabitants were assembled to see us off, and to bid their friends good-bye.

The leader of our little band was a considerable proprietor in the valley, who was well known to the Andorrians, with whom he was in the habit of transacting business of various kinds, —legal or illegal is of no consequence to the reader,—and was as intimately acquainted with each nook of their country as he was with his own valley. A better guide I could not have had; his character among the Andorrians ensured us a good reception from them, while his knowledge of their country would enable us to elude the Carlists, should we find them in the district.

I ought to mention, that the English auxiliaries had just at this period arrived in the North of Spain; and that, therefore, all safety to those of their countrymen travelling in the northern provinces of that kingdom had vanished, from the moment that they set foot in the Spanish soil. The partisans of Don Carlos were not confined to the mere districts in which Zumalacarregui and



his battalions were fighting for him, they were scattered all over the country, in some places not so numerous as in others; but every where were to be found in sufficient numbers to revenge upon the solitary traveller what they styled the unjust, the tyrannical, and, by the majority of the Spanish people, uncalled for interference of his countrymen in their national quarrel. Even those of the Queen's party whom I met with at various times, did not show themselves so grateful on the occasion as might have been expected; indeed, so apparently indifferent were they as to what became of the British Legion, that its probable situation made me fear that my countrymen would be treated as I was myself, from an act of interference in the village of Nay (in Bearn): I was one day passing through its market-place, when I saw a man beating his wife, as I thought, most barbarously; so much so, that—advocate as I am for allowing all domestic quarrels to be settled by the parties themselves—I could not help interfering upon this occasion. Accordingly, I laid hold of the husband; and, taking his stick from him, reproached him for his cowardice in striking a woman; but, as usual, the third party

had the worst of it. The passion of both the husband and wife was turned upon me, and the reward of my mistaken kindness was a jug of dirty water thrown about me by the woman, and not a few "sacres" sent after me by the man, as I walked away, satisfied that this case of seeming barbarity ought not to have seduced me from the observation of the golden rule by which every witness to domestic broils should be guided—non-interference. Whether my countrymen in the north of Spain may be treated eventually by the Christinos and Carlists in this ungrateful manner, I cannot altogether take upon me to say; but, they may rest assured, that, bravely as they may conduct themselves in a cause which has for its object the establishment of liberty of person and of conscience in one of the finest countries of Europe, where at present there is neither; and, successful though they may prove, their best reward will be their own satisfaction, and the encomiums of Europe upon their gallantry. From the Spaniards, liberated or not, they will receive—few thanks, and less pay.

Etienne, the leader of our party, was accompanied by his son and two nephews: all three,



fine active young men, chasseurs of the izard and bear from their infancy, and possessing no slight knowledge of the means by which the cunning and vigilance of the most perfect douanier could be evaded and laughed at. The morning was fine, and we set out in high spirits, equipped as if for the chase. At Courbassil, a little village a couple of miles beyond the Tour de Carol, we were stopped by a sentinel posted at the bridge, until the officer of the outpost had examined our baggage to discover whether we were not carrying powder over the frontier; only a small quantity is allowed to each peasant; but we had no more with us than what was in our flasks, so we were not detained. This was the last outpost upon this side of the valley.

Higher up the valley than Courbassil, we came to the old chateau from which the valley takes its name—the Tour de Carol. It is curiously situated. The valley is not broad, and the mountains which inclose it, particularly upon the northern and highest side, are excessively rugged and precipitous; the castle has been built upon an immense and isolated block of granite, which may have been supposed to have detached itself

from the shattered looking mountain above it, and rolled into the centre of the valley. Some walls, and two high towers, are the remains of it, and are held in great respect by the inhabitants of the district, who would not take away a stone of it, even to prevent their own house from falling. I could not help contrasting this veneration for an ancient time-worn pile with the destroying propensities of some proprietors of my own country, who, to effect a paltry saving in some new building, or *march dyke*, have pulled down and carried off the materials which composed fabrics of historical interest, or sacred to the district from traditionary lore.

The towers of Carol are supposed to have been built by the Moors, who were masters of the valley until Charlemagne drove them out of it; and in commemoration of the victory which he had gained over them, his name was given to the Moorish castle, as well as to the whole valley. No wonder that the peasants venerate a pile which even bears the name of their great deliverer, and would deem as sacrilegious any hand that touched it, but that of time.

Every thing in the valley of Carol, notwith-



standing its proximity to Spain, is essentially French; its inhabitants, in their manners, their dress, their language, and their nationality, might have been a hundred miles within the frontier. Small as it is, there is more industry in it than in almost any other of the Pyrénées. In winter, when agricultural and other pursuits are put a stop to, the men are engaged in the manufacture of thread; the women, in knitting stockings, of which there are many thousand pairs annually exported to different parts of France. The wool made use of is Spanish; and, previous to the civil war, which has destroyed every thing of the kind, this valley was the entrepôt of an extensive commerce carried on between the two countries.

The valley, soon after passing the towers of Charlemagne, becomes a perfect chaos of rocks, among which winds the path and river, until the latter divides into two branches. Upon the streams, which come from the mountains on the right, are the two villages of Porta and Porte, near the path which is used as a communication practicable both for horses and pedestrians with the Ariège. Had I been going to Ax or Foix, I

should have taken that route. The path into Andorre follows the stream to the left, and leads into an upper valley, which, although wild, is very pleasing. Its bosom is one long narrow meadow, studded with rocks, overgrown with ivy and wild flowers. It is one of the many mountain-gardens which I have unexpectedly stumbled upon in the Pyrénées, in situations where they never would be looked for, or supposed to exist. Near the centre of it, and in front of the enormous and curiously-shaped perpendicular wall of rock, called Peryfourche, where there was an excellent spring of water, we sat down to eat our breakfast. The appearance of the Peryforke may be imagined from the name it bears; it is, in all respects, excepting that of dimensions, the counterpart of the Pic du Midi of Pau.

Every spring of good water among the mountains, is known to the shepherds and chasseurs, and they invariably resort to their favourite wells when they make their repasts; and hungry although they sometimes are, I have often seen them carry a piece of bread or meat untouched for several miles, rather than eat it before they reached their usual fountain; and then sitting



down, and pulling out their clasped-knife, eat their dinner; and this they do when they frequently make no more use of the water than to rinse the glass (if they have one) from which they drink their wine. The traveller can indulge in one great luxury by means of these fountains; he has nothing more to do than to sink his bottle or wineskin in their waters for a few minutes, and he can drink its contents as well iced and cooled as ever the most experienced butler gave him his champagne or hock in England.

At the upper end of this valley we heard some one call to us from the mountain side, whom Etienne recognized as one of the shepherds who had charge of the flocks belonging to the vallies. At certain seasons of the year, the flocks belonging to the communes are driven to the highest pastures, and tended by two or three individuals who never leave their flocks, and are seldom seen, except by the chasseurs, until the rains or storms drive them lower down. They live upon milk, and cheese which they make themselves, and once a fortnight some of their friends in the valley bring them their bread.

Etienne, when he saw the shepherds, not alone,

but with the flocks so far from the pastures where they ought to have been, immediately said, that as there was no appearance of bad weather, some extraordinary circumstance must have driven them down; accordingly, when we joined them, they told us that they had, the previous night, been roused from their hut by a party of Carlists, who took from them all their cheese and provisions, and had threatened to shoot them; and that being afraid of another visit, they had at daylight collected their flocks together, and come down from the higher pastures. This party of Carlists had, therefore, been upon the French territory, and considerably within it; and from the circumstance of the Ariege district being almost to a man French Carlists, and the shepherds stating that the party had packages with them, I concluded that they had been across the frontier to obtain ammunition from some of their French allies.

Etienne advised the shepherds to return to their pastures, after having procured bread from the villages, as he was of opinion they would not be annoyed by the Carlists again, who, from their



conduct upon the French territory, which had hitherto been respected by both parties, he suspected must have been "mauvais sujets," who had taken advantage of the disturbed state of the country to do mischief for mischief's sake, and "not real Carlists belonging to the neighbouring districts." We found the number of the marauding party to consist of eleven, very indifferently armed, so that we would have no reason to avoid a meeting with them, which it was not unlikely we should have, as they would most probably have rested after leaving the shepherds, either about the head of the valley in which we were, or in the next, which, belonging to Andorre, was neutral ground.

At the very crest of the ridge, and where a step to one side or the other would have been either into France or Andorre, we found the remains of a fire still smouldering, which must evidently have been lit by the party we had heard of; they must have carried their wood a considerable distance to burn it in this spot in security, for there are neither trees nor shrubs near it. They certainly had not been gone half an hour, or the

fire would have been extinguished; so we kept together, as we crossed the frontier into Andorre, and looked about for the party in advance of us.

This valley of Andorre is encircled by rocky mountains, and is one of the high pastures belonging to it, and frequented only for a short period of the year, by the flocks. Excepting alongside of the stream, there is little pasture; it debouches into the Spanish valley of Paillas, which runs across it, and presents its mountains covered with dark forests. There is not even a shrub in the Andorre valley large enough to conceal a dog, so that, excepting some masses of rock scattered about, there was nothing to prevent our taking in at a glance every object it contained; we were, therefore surprised upon not seeing the party, who could be but a short distance from us.

We had descended into the valley, and skirting its stream for about one half its length, had begun to ascend the opposite mountains, when Etienne discovered the party which we were on the look out for. They were at a considerable distance from us; and no one but a chasseur of izards could have discerned them passing in the shade



of the summits of the ridge we had quitted. The shepherds had either in their fear miscounted their numbers, or they had been joined by others, for there were now thirteen of them together. We halted to observe them; at first they took no notice of us (although we must have been in their sight ever since we had descended into the valley), seemingly satisfied that the shade of the dark mass above them prevented their being seen; at last, however, when they saw that they had been discovered, they stopped to consider what they should do. We did the same; Etienne was of opinion, that we should instantly proceed, and put the hill side between us and them, which, from the start which we should have had, would, even in competition with Spanish *spartilleas*, have been by no means a very difficult task. His son was, however, of a different opinion; he thought that we should remain where we were, and take our chance of their coming down to us. As they had baggage, attacking us was not worth their while, unless they supposed us to be something better than peasants, and besides, our apparent indifference as to whether they came on or not, would most probably have the effect of deterring

them from doing so. I was of the same opinion, and it was determined that we should remain.

Presently, ten of the party above us, leaving their bundles with the remainder, began to descend the mountain. Etienne again proposed that we should start; but he was overruled. The only precautions which we took, were to separate a little from each other, and sit down; so that, should we be fired at, they would, at least, have to pick out their shots, and have less chance of hitting us; while we could have the advantage of a more deliberate aim. Down the fellows came. The affair wore a business-like aspect; and my companions new primed their muskets. I had no less than two brace of pistols with me; for one of the gendarmes at Carol, finding I had only a pair of pocket articles, insisted upon my taking a pair of his, which could be returned to him with the guides; so I was sufficiently well provided; and the staff I carried, looked, I have no doubt, very like a musket at a distance.

When they came nearer us, we could see that only six of them had muskets, the others had, probably, no weapons but their knives; which a



Spaniard never, by any chance, is without, and which he knows well how to use. We were not to fire until they had either done so, or given such unequivocal signs of their hostility that there could be no doubt of their intentions. They never stopped until they reached the little plain which lay between us and the mountain-side, down which they had come, and were about two hundred yards distant, when they halted to observe us more particularly. They consulted for a few minutes; those who had no muskets evidently disliked to come on, and endeavouring to persuade the others not to do so; which advice they, at last, allowed themselves to be guided by; more particularly when they found, upon a nearer inspection, that the booty they were likely to find upon a few peasants, would hardly repay the risk they would expose themselves to in acquiring it; so they wheeled about, and leisurely retraced their steps up the mountain. As we were not pressed for time, we remained where we were until they joined their comrades, and proceeded on their journey. Our honour being perfectly satisfied when we saw them re-commence their march; it was the signal

for us to do the same; and, among the turnings and windings of the ascent, we soon lost sight of the Carlists.

In the upper parts of this mountain, which is called Mont Melons,—and, excepting a small part, appertains to Andorre,—are some of the most savage scenes which can be imagined. There are three lakes, which are inclosed with perpendicular walls of rock, nearly two thousand feet high, their summits shattered and broken into all sorts of fantastic shapes.

This species of rock is often found in the Pyrénées, reaching to an enormous height, and forming a ridge or wall, terminating in so acute an angle, that I have frequently, in order to reach a good post when out izard shooting, or to obtain a view of some particular place, had to cross a ridge so narrow, that I could look down the most terrific slopes of bare rock on both sides of me, and could only do so in safety by crawling upon my hands and knees, or, bestriding the acute summit, lift myself along it.

The walls which inclosed these lakes shot up even more slender and perpendicular than usual; and hence the appearance of ruin which they



presented. The storms of ages had torn and rent them into a thousand peaks and forms. I could have supposed, that the giant of the mountain, laughing at the structures of human hands, had, in derision, carved out his own ideas of architecture upon the walls of his lonely bath. These lakes were, indeed, three "gloomy Glendaloughs ;"* not a tree, or shrub, or vestige of vegetation to be discovered near them ; the very lichen seemed to shun the huge masses of rock,—the debris of the mountain,—that lay piled above each other in this wilderness, where reigned solitude the most profound, and silence, unbroken even by the dashing of a waterfall, or the rippling of a stream.

From this spot of ruin and desolation, we turned the flank of the mountain, and entered a little valley which belonged to Spain, the mountains which inclosed it belonging to Andorre. We could not, however, without making a considerable circuit, avoid going through it. Descending into this valley, we sprung a covey of

* Name of a lake in the mountains of Wexford, whose loneliness is the theme of one of Moore's melodies.

partridges, and my walking-staff came instinctively to my shoulder ; the birds, little accustomed to the sight of human beings, did not take a long flight, and were marked down a few hundred yards off. I could not resist having a shot at them, especially as I found that there were some of the party who had small shot with them. Carlists were therefore, for the time, forgotten ; and I drew the balls from two of the muskets, and, charging them with shot, followed the covey. I was able to spring the two old birds, both of which I shot, but the covey would not rise. After searching and beating about, we discovered several of them following the plan of the ostrich when he is hard pressed, with their heads poked into holes in the ground, or under stones : they were the grey-legged partridge, and were by no means unacceptable, considering the bad fare we were, in all probability, to partake of in Andorre.

Having crossed this little patch of Spanish soil, and another ridge of Andorre, we were at the head of one of the three large valleys which, with their dependent lateral ones, their gorges and ravines, constitute the territory of Andorre.



The stream which runs through this valley of Escaldos, is famous for the quantity and quality of its trouts.

The first native of Andorre whom we met with was a piscator upon this river, and it was with no small interest that I walked towards this freeman of the mountains. I accosted him in French, with the usual "What sport?"—but a shake of his head intimated that he did not understand me. Etienne spoke to him in Catalan, the language in use among these people, and asked him the same question; when he pulled off,—not his basket, but—his bonnet; and from its long bag emptied out about a score of fine-looking trouts.

His ideas, his thoughts, and his hopes were evidently of the most simple nature; so were his clothes, so was his fishing-tackle; every thing about him was *in keeping*. He was about the middle-size, well-made, and athletic; his features were good, and his countenance did not want expression; while his head might have served as a model to the phrenologist, of every thing that was great and good.

* * * * *

But this is no place for a philosophical digression upon the uncultivated rudiments of understanding which this Andorrian piscator possessed; and who, although he might, perchance, be—

"Some mute, inglorious Milton"—

was after all, perhaps, happier within his limited sphere of intellectual enjoyments than thousands of the savans whose knowledge and fame have "set the world on fire." He was a labourer in the forge of Escaldos, and had been sent out by the manager to take him some trouts for supper. He would not partake of any of the food which we had with us; it was Friday, and a piece of bread was all that I could get him to accept.

This valley, one of the largest of Andorre, I found to consist of a succession of basins, formed by the mountains alternately closing and receding from each other. The basin in which is situated the forge of Escaldos, is almost shut out from those above and below it, the mountains closing at its extremities, and the river tumbling over a beautiful cascade, both at its entrance into it, and at its exit. We soon arrived at the forge of Escaldos, where we had resolved to remain during the night.



CHAPTER VI.

An Andorrian Forge—Exquisite Scenery of the Valley—Infancy of the Arts in Andorre—Village of Escaldos, and its Appearance—Anxiety of the Inhabitants regarding the Movements of the Carlists, and the Cause—Independence of the Republicans—Invited to Dine with the Maire—Interior of the Houses—Appearance of the Women—A Republican Assembly, and patriotic Speech—Dinner at the Mairie—An Andorrian Ball—The Consequences of a Stumble.

THE establishment at Escaldos consisted of the shed in which was the forge, and one or two other buildings, in which the master and his labourers resided; it belongs to the commune of Andorre, and is managed by a Spaniard from Urgel. The forge was à la Catalan, and of the simplest and most rude construction; every thing about it seemed coeval with the epoch when the

properties of the mineral were first discovered. How the workmen of the Carron, or other great iron-works, would have stared had they seen the apparatus which wrought the iron at Escaldos! There was a very powerful fall of water, sufficient to have driven a hammer ten times the size of the one used, and to have made all the iron which they turned out of the forge in six months, in the course of a week; but it was wasted, and thrown away, upon a wheel not very much larger or more powerful than some which I have seen employed at home to churn with. The axle was an unshapen pine, rude as it was felled upon the mountain, and into which short pieces of plank were stuck, as into the wheel of a child's windmill. From the character of this, the *moving* power, the simple nature of the interior may be supposed. The mineral is not found in the commune, but brought from the mountains at the head of the valley of Carol, so that it has to be carried nearly a day's journey to the forge; the charcoal is procured in the vicinity. The quantity of iron made with such apparatus was necessarily very small, enough to cover the expenses, and afford a livelihood to a certain number of the



inhabitants of the valley; and, as they did not seek for wealth, it was sufficient. The master was very complaisant, and, with his trouts and our partridges, we fared luxuriously. He volunteered me a share of his bed, the only thing of the kind in the place, but I preferred sleeping upon a bundle of skins upon the floor to accepting his offer. A considerable quantity of hides were brought into France from Spain by this valley. The Spaniards who came to take the wrought iron bringing the hides to the forge, the mules which brought the ore from Carol carrying them into France. Even when I was there, there was a considerable stock as it were in bond.

The bundles of skins did not form quite so pleasant a couch as if it had been composed of heath or rushes; but, nevertheless, it answered the purpose remarkably well; for I slept soundly until the forge-hammer, beating within a few feet of my head, awoke me. A pedestrian's toilet does not, in general, occupy very much time, especially when all the minutiae for performing it are fifty miles distant. So it was with me upon this, and many other occasions; but, with a clear mountain-stream in which to bathe and refresh

myself, I should have been discontented indeed, not to have been satisfied. A well-arranged dressing-room, and its numerous comforts, I confess, is a great and almost indispensable luxury; but what an enjoyment would be added, were they all so situated that their owners could, during the hot days of summer, and after having got through that most disagreeable of all disagreeable operations—shaving, throw down his instrument of torture, and plunging himself in the cool waters of a shady pool, forget its miseries!

We were soon upon our way down the valley, which became more and more beautiful and interesting every step that we advanced. The succession of basins to which I have alluded were passed through, having latterly acquired all the additional charms which their forests of pines conferred upon them; but the mountain-gates which inclosed these basins became gradually wider and wider, until they receded altogether; and, standing upon the edge of the first of a series of falls and rapids, which, in a more civilized part of the world, would have been visited by thousands, I saw stretched beneath me the most considerable of the valleys of Andorre; and, at



its extremity, the rich alluvial basin, containing the largest and most populous villages of the republic. The mountains upon each side of it were clothed with wood, from their base almost to their summits, the more delicate species of trees affecting the lower and sheltered situations, while the fir and the pine, spreading their giant arms and green boughs to the blast, reigned in undisputed possession of the loftier regions. The woods upon both sides ran down to the river's edge; and, from where I stood, so completely surrounded the many hamlets and cottages which were embosomed among them, that their situations were most frequently discovered by the smoke which curled above the trees. Here and there, on either side, was to be seen an open space among the forests, where the yellow of the grain contrasted strongly with the sombre hue of the pine. These spots were generally little shelves, valuable from the quantity and richness of the soil which the rains had deposited upon them. There the trees had been cleared away, the rude hut erected, and a family's wants provided for. The Andorrians might well be envied the possession of this valley, and its appurte-

nances; it was not very large, but it was a gem rich in all the elements of the most perfect scenery. On its richer soils waved the yellow grain, and flourished the tobacco-plant; its rivers had their cataracts, and their thousand rapids; while its noble mountains, rearing their bald heads and rocky summits six thousand feet above the villages on its bosom, could boast their dark forests which spread around them, and creeping up their heights, where they struggled with the colds and storms, as if to shelter the soil which gave them birth.

The cottages, or rather huts, in which the peasantry live, are of the most original and simple construction. They are built either of stone or wood, but bearing very little in their appearance to denote that the mason or the carpenter had been employed in raising them. There was one circumstance connected with these buildings which displayed, more than any other, the infancy of the arts among the Andorrians; all the huts are covered with slates, of which there is no lack among the neighbouring mountains; but so little have the people profited by



their ability to make iron, that the slates of their houses are laid upon the rafters, and kept in their places by heavy pieces of stone being placed over them. It is only in the superior houses that nails are employed in fastening on the slates; so that the roofs of the houses, in general, present rather a singular appearance, as if an avalanche from the mountain had rained a quantity of debris upon them. The Andorrrians, for centuries, have been forgers of iron, very large quantities of which they yearly supply to their Spanish neighbours; and yet they have so little benefited by the staple production of their country as not even to possess a few nails.

Around, or in the vicinity of the cottages, there is invariably a patch of the best soil devoted to the culture of the tobacco-plant; for here there are no such restrictions against its growth as in France, and each peasant can comfort himself in the winter with his pipe or his cigars. So rapid is the descent into the plain, that when I turned upon the little wooden-bridge, and looked up the valley towards the Forge which I had lately left, the torrent, where it could be seen among the

openings of the woods which overhung it, seemed as if it shot from the extreme heights to the bridge in one continued fall.

About three hours from the time we left the forge, we reached Escaldos, the first of the villages which are situated in the basin of Andorre. It was, without exception, the very dirtiest village in which I had ever been, consisting of, perhaps, a hundred houses as irregularly built, and as irregularly jumbled together, as the most ardent admirer of the picturesque in architecture could desire; they were generally of two stories; the mules, cattle, goats, and firewood occupying the under one, while the family were quartered in the upper. The lanes or passages between the houses were so narrow, that from the balcony which each building was dignified with, it would have been no difficult matter for a family to have visited their opposite neighbours without troubling themselves with descending into the street. Through a labyrinth of these dingy and odoriferous lanes, we found our way to the best posada of the place, the comforts of which were quite compatible with the character of the village. As usual, the under



story was allotted to the bestial portion of the establishment, and any chance guests of the same fraternity; a winding wooden stair in the far corner of this stable, cow-shed, piggery, hen-house, wine-cellar, &c., &c., into which there came no streak of light but that which was admitted by the door, conducted to the upper regions of this house of entertainment. The second story was divided into sections; one of which served the joint purposes of kitchen and coffee-room, the other as a sleeping apartment for the guests.

We had not breakfasted, and our morning's walk had by no means blunted our appetite. The coarse brown bread of the country, eggs, and chocolate, were the provisions which the hostess could give us; such as they were, there was no scarcity, and we could not say that we fared indifferently. There are no vineyards in Andorre, consequently the wine, which the peasants are seldom without, is brought either from Spain or France in small barrels or skins, by the mule-teers who bring the mineral to the forges, or who come for the iron when made.

The villagers were in great anxiety as to the

proceedings of the Carlists, and we were very soon surrounded by numbers, and interrogated upon the subject. Excepting the party whom we had seen upon the mountains, we could give them no information, but we learnt from them a circumstance which perfectly accounted for the perturbation in which they were. It appeared that four Carlist officers had taken refuge in Urdino, one of the villages of the republic, where, from the neutrality of Andorre, they ought to have been perfectly safe. The Christinos had, however, disregarded the neutrality of the republic, broke into the village, and murdered the Carlist officers. The consequence of this act of brutality upon the part of the Christinos, was to cause the Carlists to revenge themselves upon the Andorrans, who, they said, ought to have protected their officers, and not suffered the Christinos to offer such an insult to their territory. Accordingly, a strong party of Carlists had, the preceding day, burnt one of the upper villages belonging to Andorre, and carried off whatever they could take along with them. Thus, between the two parties, the Andorrans were rather awkwardly situated. This burning of their village



had, however, roused the independent spirit of the republicans, and they were adopting means to repel and punish any future aggressions.

Amongst those who came to make inquiries at us, was the Maire of the village, an honest miller, and a friend of Etienne's, who insisted that we should come, and eat what dinner his "pauvre cabane" could afford us. Etienne and I promised that we would come to the Maire at three o'clock—a very fashionable hour for Escaldos, but there was public business to be transacted to-day, and private comfort being as nought compared with the public weal, the Maire must needs postpone his dinner hour two hours later than usual, in order to preside at an assembly of the community, where the precautionary measures which it had been judged necessary to adopt, were to be communicated to the inhabitants. Of course, I resolved to be present at this republican congress, and in order to do so, and afterwards dine with the Maire, I gave up my intention of quitting Escaldos that night. As the meeting was not to take place immediately, and Etienne wished to call upon some of his acquaintances in the village, I accompanied him, and had thus an opportunity

of visiting some twenty families in it. I found the interior of all the houses arranged in the same manner, and all equally filthy. The women were in general handsome, and, indeed, many of them but wanted the scrubbing-brush and soap to have rendered them beautiful. They are perfectly Spanish in appearance, and in general have the same coquettishness of manner peculiar to the Spanish peasant women, and are equally fond of a little flirtation and admiration; and their husbands and swains can frown as darkly and fiercely upon the attentions of a stranger as the Spaniards; but in Andorre the knife is not in such frequent use as in Spain, and the stranger may make a civil speech, or pay a pretty compliment to the Andorrian women, without much danger of having his gallantry repaid by an unexpected stab from the murderous weapon which a Spaniard is never without. The furniture of the houses consisted of one or two rude pine tables and stools, which from smoke and dirt had become so dark in colour as to resemble ebony, a few plates, a copper pan, and a few wooden spoons. The beds of the family were in niches in the sides of the apartment, and in gentility and



luxury corresponded with the other articles of the establishment. The interior of an Irish cabin—brats, pigs, poultry, jackass, and all, was infinitely preferable to the most cleanly of the houses which I visited in Escaldos.

By the time that Etienne and I had made our calls in the village, it was the hour of assembling at the Maire's. The council-hall upon this occasion, was the barn or granary attached to the mill, and was quite large enough to contain the greater part of the male population of the village. Business had commenced before we arrived, and the room was almost filled, but we found that our friend, the Maire, had not forgotten us, for he had reserved a couple of stools, out of the few which surrounded a little table at which he presided, for our especial use. Although this was not a regular council of the republic, at which the Syndic would have presided, it was still a curious and original assemblage of free-born and independent men; and novel and interesting from its being the first republican assembly I had ever been present at. Upon a three-legged stool sat the president, a strong, well-built, and energetic looking personage; to all appearance, by no

means ill-adapted to be the chief of such a group as surrounded him. There might be about eighty individuals present; the younger part of whom stood in groups, while the elders were seated upon the sacks and skins which were scattered around.

The Maire had already furnished the assembly with the details of the incursions of both the Spanish parties; and impressed upon the meeting the urgent necessity of preserving the independence of the republic, by adopting measures calculated to secure to it the respect to which it was entitled, and repel and punish the violation of their territories. He then called their attention to the means which were requisite to effect this object. They were—that the law requiring each member of the community to have in his possession a musket, and a certain quantity of powder and shot, should be rigidly attended to: that a certain proportion of the inhabitants should remain constantly in the villages, for their protection, while the remainder were engaged in, or absent upon, their various employments: that all possible means should be taken for the purpose of obtaining the earliest information of the vicinity



of their enemies: and that, for this purpose, all the peasants living in the upper valleys, and the shepherds with the cattle upon the mountains, should receive instructions to bring immediate intelligence to the various communes, of the approach of strangers: and that, upon the receipt of such intelligence, every man, who was not disabled by age or illness, should assemble in the villages, and act according to the advice of the appointed authorities. This was the sum total of the Andorrian Militia regulations; and every man of the republic being interested in its safety, they were sure of being adhered to.

The Maire, having delivered these instructions to the assembly, intimated, that if any individual had aught to say, any precautions to recommend, that he would be most happy to hear them.

Upon this, one of the elders of the assembly stepped forward to the table, and with much eloquence and apparent feeling, harangued the meeting. Excepting where certain words which I knew, conveyed to me the meaning of a few sentences, I could not understand, nor sufficiently appreciate, the merits of the orator and patriot; but the substance of his speech, as Etienne after-

wards told me, was to the effect, that he was confident that every man among them would enthusiastically respond to the call which their country's danger had induced its magistrates to make upon them; and that, from whatever quarter it was threatened, and by whatever numbers, that those men who had been born in Andorre, who were descended from sires who by their noble conduct had acquired, and by their bravery had defended, the rights and freedom which were now the boast of their country, would not permit their inheritance to be destroyed, but, unblemished and unspotted bequeath it to their children. He also stated, that he, and others present, could recollect the period, and a long period it was, when they were even in greater danger than at present; when there was far more cause to dread the subversion of their government, and its degradation into a province of one of those powerful countries which were then at war with each other. That Andorre had, even then, preserved its independence, and repelled the aggressions which had been committed upon it; and that surely now, when they had only to protect themselves against the inroads of one of



the neighbouring nations, they could have no fear as to their ability to defend themselves. The patriot's address was received with all the applause which it merited, and the meeting broke up, without, as in England, having voted its thanks to the president, "for his able conduct in the chair."

From the council-hall, or barn, Etienne, myself, and the old gentleman, whose "voice was still for war," adjourned, with the Maire, to the sanctuary of his dining-room, kitchen, or bedroom, where we found the Lady Mayoress, her daughters, and sons, awaiting our presence. The apartment was, certainly, superior to any which I had entered in the village, for it contained chairs instead of stools; one of which had, actually, arms to it. The bed recesses had pieces of drapery hanging down before them; and there was a greater abundance of dishes. But, what at once gave dignity and character to the house, and, independent of all other considerations, would have fully justified the villagers of Escaldos in their choice of a Maire, was his being the owner of half a dozen pewter spoons, and a full dozen of knives and forks,—steel or iron, it does

not signify which,—with bone handles. No wonder the Mayoress was proud of them; they were the only articles of the kind in the village.

Dinner was soon announced by the hissing of the soup, as it was emptied into the wooden tureen, which was placed upon the centre of the long, narrow pine-table, which was covered with a clean, but greyish white table-cloth. There seemed to be no great ceremony as to the particular places which the guests were to occupy, so I resigned to Etienne what would, at home, have been the place of honour, and seated myself where I had most chance of making myself understood, between a couple of the Maire's daughters. I did this upon principle; for I have invariably found, that the females of any country whose language I either spoke indifferently, or hardly understood, were far more apt and intelligent in comprehending what I wished to say, than the men.

A spoon and a plate were set before each individual; and, all being seated, the Maire pulled the tureen towards him, helped himself, and pushed it round; the next person did the same; and so on. Then followed a large brown loaf, from which each person cut a pound, or more, of



bread. The soup was composed of vegetables and bread; and a piece of pork, which afterwards made its appearance, had been boiled in it. The soup was removed, and fowls, fish, and the piece of pork, succeeded. This constituted our dinner, and only wanted the few elegancies of civilized life, to have made it worthy of the table of the Lady Mayoress of any country town in France or England.

We drank our wine out of the odd-shaped bottles which I had first essayed the use of at Valmania; but I had now, from practice, become sufficiently expert as to be able to measure the distance from the "cup to the lip," and to describe the proper angle with the neck and spout of the bottle, so as to save myself from a recurrence of the mishap which followed my first attempt, and thus baulked my fair (dark, I should say) neighbours of the laugh which they would otherwise have raised at my expense, and which their compressed lips and smiling eyes plainly told me they were preparing for when I took the decanter in my hand. Having satisfied my thirst, I set it down upon the table, with an action and look explanatory of my satisfaction at having cheated some of the company of a laugh

at my awkwardness. Why should not Andorrian ladies have thought me equally as vulgar and ignorant of the common usages of civilized life, by my inability to handle their decanters, as my polished friends at home would have esteemed me had they seen me cut fish with a knife, or eat curry with any other instrument than a spoon? Lord Chesterfield himself might have been convicted of ill-breeding at the table of the Maire of Escaldos.

Anxious to see as much as possible of the manners and customs of the Andorrians, I made Etienne inquire as to the possibility of our assembling the villagers to a dance in the evening. The Maire sanctioned the proposal; the hall of state was to be the rendezvous, and the youngsters of the party started off to spread the news through the village, more welcome in their character than would have been the "fiery cross"* which in the morning they were told to be prepared for.

Shortly after seven the whole dancing popula-

* In Scotland, in ancient times, the clans and inhabitants of the various glens and districts were summoned to attend upon



tion of the place were assembled in the council-hall, barn, or ball-room, dressed in their holiday suits; and I could observe that some of the ladies whose acquaintance I had formed in the morning, had evidently been laving their dark countenances in the stream, and justified the supposition, that there was more necessity for soap and water than for "Rowland's Kalydor," to purify their complexions. There was no scarcity of musicians, where almost every lad could jingle the strings of the guitar, or beat time with the triangle. The Andorrian dances are almost the same as those of the Arragonese, and other Spanish peasantry; but the women do not trip it so lightly as the Spanish women, and the men have not that ease and elegance displayed by the Spaniard in the performance of his native dances. The Andorrian dances, however, are not by any means deficient in spirit and activity, set after set succeeding each other without one moment's cessation; the instruments were only laid down by those who

their chiefs when in danger, by means of the Fiery Cross; a wooden cross half burnt, which the messengers sent to warn the people, carried along with them.

were going to dance, to be taken up by those who had finished; and so on it continued for several hours, both ladies and gentlemen occasionally invigorating themselves with a pull from the strange decanters; which, as patron of the ball, I took care to have well filled. About eleven Etienne and I retired, leaving the party in full glee, the Maire presiding over the remainder of the cask of wine, and encouraging the dancers with his voice as he beat time with his fists upon the barrel.

The night was exceedingly dark, and if we had not taken the precaution of stealing one of the lamps away from the ball-room, we might have experienced more difficulty in groping our way to our hotel, through the winding lanes of Escaldos, than in crossing the mountains to Carol; at least so said Etienne, as he tumbled over a heap of something or other, which, however soft to fall upon, did not render him a more agreeable companion; fortunately I was carrying the light, otherwise I should have perhaps had a sunset also; but no further mischief befel us until we reached the door of the posada, when, in stepping over the cross-bar at the bottom, I



stumbled, and let fall the light, I mentioned, that the staircase which led to the upper story, was situated in one corner of this stable, but there was both difficulty and danger to be encountered before arriving at it. It was a place where in daylight it was most necessary to pick one's steps with care: of course this could not be done in the dark, and the danger to be encountered was from the mules, who of all animals dislike being disturbed during night by strangers. Etienne went first, but he had hardly proceeded a couple of yards within the door, when a snort from one of the mules, accompanied by a lash out with its heels, made him retreat. Mules, like other obstinate animals of whatever genus, become better friends by bullying than coaxing, so Etienne, accustomed to their ways, did not spare the former, and keeping as close to the wall as possible, we reached the staircase in safety. We were in hopes that we should have been able to find another lamp in the room above, but the whole of the family had either retired to rest, or were still at the ball; the fire was out, and we were in perfect darkness. We had told the hostess, that we should occupy the spare apartment, and accord-

ingly we opened the door of it, with the intention of sleeping as we best could, upon the beds, if we could find them, or failing in our attempts to do that, to lie down upon the floor. Our intentions were, however, frustrated; for when we opened the door, such harmonious sounds proceeded from all parts of the chamber, that some dozen, at least, of intruders must have taken possession of our quarters. Alas! there was no bell to ring, no waiter to call up, and in true John Bull style indignantly order him to turn the sleeping gentlemen out. Here "might was right," and had Etienne and I tried the experiment, we would, in all probability, have been treated as intruders ourselves, and as such found a reception which might have proved somewhat more dangerous and fatal than the kicks from the mules below, had we received one from each of them. We thought, with the old adage, that it was best to "let sleeping dogs lie;" so we shut the door, and in revenge only drew the bolt upon them. Etienne laid himself down upon one of the benches in the kitchen; but, as I did not altogether relish the atmosphere of the apartment, composed of the exhalations arising from



the refuse of the frying-pan, the well-picked bones which were strewed about, the upsetting of the wine decanters, and various other pot-house effluvia, and as it was a fine night, I carried one of the three-legged stools into the balcony at the window, and placing it in one corner, so as to make myself as comfortable as I could, I was soon afterwards sound asleep.

CHAPTER III.

Prudence of the preceding Night illustrated—A Scottish Answer to a searching Question—Departure of the Contrabandiers—Admonition of the Maire—An Andorrian Souvenir—Valley d'Arensal—Valley d'Urdino—The Croesus of the Republic—Village of Urdino—Murder of Four Christino Officers—The largest Forge in Andorre—Extreme Poverty of the Villagers—Passage of the Mountains—Valley of Embalire—Fine Crops—Curious Church—Thunder Storm—Saldeou—An Andorrian Proprietor—Past and Present History of their Republic.

I SLEPT as soundly as I could have hoped to have done in the interior of the house, and only awoke when Etienne came to tell me, that the gentlemen who had taken possession of our apartment were endeavouring to get out. The bolt was of too slight a nature to have long resisted the violent shakings which they were bestowing



upon the door, otherwise we should have kept them shut up for some time; so I told him to let them out. Etienne demanded what was the cause of all the noise they were making (as if he did not know any thing about it); and, upon their answering that they were shut in, he withdrew the bar, and out marched four Spanish muleteers; Carlists, Christinos, or Contrabandiers,—one or other of them; or, perhaps, all, as the occasion might suit them; but, from their appearance, perfectly capable of enacting any of the characters; and, swearing vengeance upon the “cursed hogs” who had shut them up. One fellow in particular brandished his clasped knife, and “grinned a ghastly smile” as he showed how deep he would drive it into the body of the object of his revenge. Etienne, rather annoyed at the anger of the party, insinuated that the bolt might have slipped accidentally, and thus, probably, no one had fastened it. But, as I was aware that this excuse would not, upon an examination of the latch, be likely to “go down,” and observing a well-filled decanter upon the table, I took it up, and drinking “success to their discovery of the rascals who had played

them the trick,” took a draught of it, and handed it round. Understanding French, they all drank in their turns, and the row at once subsided.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding the uproar, not one of the household had made their appearance, so I proposed that Etienne should beat up the quarters of the hostess, have our breakfast prepared, and that the Spaniards should partake of it along with us. I had not decided which route I should take to reach Ax in Arriege; but the conversation which I had with these Spaniards, at once determined me. Without seeming to be inquisitive, I discovered that they were on their way to the same place, and that their route lay through the Valley d’Embalire by Canillo. Now, although I wished to visit Canillo, one of the largest of the villages of Andorre, still as we should have, most probably, to sleep, either in some cabin or shed, or, perhaps, under a tree, I had no desire to do so in company with my new acquaintances, even although they had been of less doubtful characters than they seemed to be. Accordingly, when they questioned me as to my proceedings, I affected an indifference as to my movements—“I might go one way; I



might go another ; in short I was perfectly undecided." Thus, after breakfast, we parted very good friends ; they, without the slightest knowledge as to our plans, whilst we knew as much of theirs as we wished.

After they were gone, I consulted with Etienne regarding our proceedings, and the propriety of choosing a route different from that taken by the Spaniards. Escaldos is situated at the extremity of the basin of Andorre, the Val d' Embalire debouches into the valley which I had passed through the preceding day, about a mile above the village ; the Val d' Arenal debouches into the basin a little below it. Through both of these valleys there is a path, which, through the mountains at the head of the valley, leads into Arriege. We chose the path through the Val d' Arenal by Urdino, the more circuitous of the two, but that was of little consequence to us. En passant, we called upon the Maire, to bid him good bye, and found him, notwithstanding his jollity of the preceding night, already out of bed, and superintending the turnings of his mill wheel. He wished us to have remained another day with him, and to have had another dance,

but this would not have suited our arrangements, and we declined. We told him the trick we had played off upon the Spaniards, and he expressed great satisfaction that we had not accompanied them over the mountains, "For," said the Maire, "I know the party very well, they are the most daring contrabandiers upon the frontier ; they know the passes through the mountains too well ever to be entrapped by the douaniers ; we have reason to suppose that they were of the party who burnt our village the other day, and they are such desperadoes, that they would think no more of murdering me, were it for their interest to do so, than they would to shoot my dog. I know contrabandiers with whom I would trust all I possess, and who would not injure any one, except in the way of their profession ; but as for the 'mauvais sujets' who passed my door just now, I would be well pleased were it the last time they did so." I thanked him for his kindness, and we parted.

The only shop in the village was kept by a Frenchman ; it was a sort of general warehouse ; provisions, hardware, and silks adorned its various shelves. I could not resist the temptation which



its gay window presented, to carry off some souvenir of Escaldos, so I stepped into the shop to make a choice, but this was no easy matter. Monsieur asked me what I wished to purchase, I told him that I did not know exactly what I wanted, but that I wished to have something that could be easily carried, as I was going into France. Monsieur gave an interpretation to my speech which I had not the slightest intention of conveying, for, thinking what I said was a hint to give me some contraband articles of easy carriage, he instantly retreated to his back shop, and presently returned bearing a large package of Barcelona handkerchiefs and shawls. Such articles were, however, better suited to my purpose than salt meat, pots and pans, jugs and decanters, and having tumbled them about in a style which would not have evinced any want of fashionable nonchalance upon the part of a portion of my country-women whose daily occupation it is to derange the packages which the shopkeepers of the metropolis have spent so many hours of the preceding night in arranging, I bargained for and bought one of the particoloured shawls. Spanish silks are not admitted into France, but Etienne said, that

we should have no difficulty with the douaniers, so I gave it in charge to him. Crossing the bridge over the little river, the scenery at whose source and along whose banks had given me such delight the preceding day, we skirted along the north side of the basin by a narrow path among woods of the walnut and wild apple trees.

The entrance to the Val d' Arensal from the basin of Andorre, is by one of those beautiful and magnificent gorges so frequently met with in the Pyrénées. Those who are acquainted with the path from Luz to Gavarnie may form an idea of it. The defile of Urdino is as narrow, the mountains, which darken and frown over it, as steep, and as draped with brushwood, while the torrent rages as furiously as it thunders through its narrow channel, and the scenery altogether bears a strong resemblance to that in the vicinity of the Pas d' Echelle in the valley of Gavarnie.

Near the entrance to the defile, upon a little mound, is a curious old sculptured cross, so antique that I could neither decipher the carving nor the inscriptions; and in a nook where the path winds round one of the jutting out rocks in the



gorge, there is a small chapel, the greater part of which has been hewn out of the rock, and is greatly resorted to by the inhabitants. About a couple of miles beyond the chapel the scenery of the path is unexpectedly changed; the gorge is quitted for a valley, wide and open, containing meadows, pastures, and corn fields. The mountains which inclose it are wooded and cultivated, and hamlets and villages with their church bell-fries overtopping them, are distinguished upon their sides. Etienne pointed out to me a village upon the mountain side, where the finest walnuts either in France or Spain (he said) were produced; whether or not this is the case I cannot tell, but I can bear testimony to the beauty of the situation of the village, and the magnificence of the walnut-trees which surrounded it.

There are two of the most considerable forges of Andorre in this district. One takes the name of the valley; the other is called Urdino, and is situated in a lateral valley of the same name which opens into the Val d' Arenal. The forge in the Val d' Arenal is the property of one individual, as is that of Urdino. Had I wished to have crossed the frontier in the direction of

Aussat and Vicdessos, I would have traced the Val d' Arenal to its source, and entered the Arriege by the Port d' Aussat, but as I preferred the route by the Port de Framiquel, and the Hospitalet to Ax, it was necessary to quit the Val d' Arenal, and striking into the Val d' Urdino, to cross the mountains which separated it from the Val d' Embalire, and tracing that valley to its source, pass the ridge which separated it from the source of the valley of Ax. By adopting this route I should have an opportunity of visiting all the valleys and villages of Andorre. We, therefore, quitted the Val d' Arenal, and entered that of Urdino. This is one of the richest and most fertile of the lesser valleys of Andorre; and the greater part of it, including the forge, belongs to one proprietor, who consequently is the wealthiest individual of the republic. I inquired of an Andorrian, what might be the amount of yearly income enjoyed by this great man; and the answer, which I received in French, conveyed most perfectly the benefit which a person unacquainted with the luxuries of life, supposed the possession of a large income conferred on its possessor: "Il a quatre vingt francs



a manger chaque jour." This would give an income of a thousand a year, or perhaps one fifth of the whole revenue of Andorre. I endeavoured to ascertain how this individual came to acquire such large possessions, but I could not discover any thing farther than that his family had held them for a long period.

Urdino is a considerable village, the inhabitants of which having little property of their own, necessarily depend upon the "great man" of the place for employment. The forge employs, for six months of the year, a great proportion; the remainder are engaged in cultivating the land, or tending the flocks. Urdino was the village in which the four Carlist officers had been murdered by a party of the Christinos three days before I reached it. They had, however, confined themselves to the slaughter of the officers, and had done no injury to the inhabitants of the place.

The forge is very much larger than the others of Andorre; and, although the machinery connected with it is but of very simple construction, still, the great advantage of capital is apparent in all its arrangements. Most of the other forges in

the mountains are stopped working as soon as the weather, breaking up, prevents the mules bringing the mineral over the mountains, or the charcoal from the forests; but, at Urdino, there is always a large supply of both ore and charcoal, far beyond what is necessary for the immediate consumption; so that, when all the forges of the country are at a stand, the forge of Urdino is giving employment to many individuals, and is profitable to its proprietor. Having examined the interior of the forge, we went into the posada of the village, to replenish our wine-skins before ascending the mountains. The price of the wine amounted to two francs and a half, and I handed the hostess a five franc piece in payment. She had, however, no change to give me; and she went out to borrow it from her neighbours. She was some time in returning; and, upon Etienne's interrogating her concerning the cause of the delay, it appeared that it arose from the difficulty of collecting the two francs and half in the village; and it had been only after borrowing a few sous from many different individuals that the sum was made up. From this great scarcity of money, I inferred that the "great man" paid his



labourers in "kind." The house in which the gentleman lived, was a large, square, and ugly-looking building in one of the dirty lanes of the village; and I could not help being astonished, that the owner of so many beautiful sites for a *place* as this valley offered, should have preferred being surrounded by the dirty hovels of the village. One cause of his living in the village might arise from the great difficulty which, in many winters, he would have experienced in reaching his forge, by reason of the snow storms, even although he resided but a very short distance from it.

If I had come into Andorre by the route by which I was quitting it, I should have brought an introductory letter to this wealthy Andorrian from some of his friends at Ax, which would have been of great service to me in enabling me to become better acquainted with the customs and traditions of the country. Should I ever revisit Andorre, I shall not forget to do so; meantime, should any of my readers think of going thither, I should earnestly recommend them to carry along with them an introduction to the Proprietor of Urdino. To those who do not relish sleeping in

the open air, or living upon chocolate and eggs, it will insure a bed and a greater choice of provisions.

The mountains in the vicinity of Urdino produce a sufficient quantity of charcoal to supply the forge; but the mineral, as at Escaldos and other places, is brought from the mountains of Carol; a distance which it takes the mules eight or ten hours to perform. The ascent of the Col d'Urdino is very steep; and, for a long way up the mountains, we scrambled through forests of fir and pine. I observed here, as in the more civilized parts of the French Pyrénées, the great havoc and waste which the ignorant charbonniers and woodcutters make in cutting down the wood. Their implements are, in general, of such a simple nature, that they can only cut through a certain thickness; consequently of all the trees which exceed in diameter the powers of the workmen, are cut over at a certain distance from the ground, and the best and soundest part of the tree left to decay. In the mountains of Eaux Chandes, and the Basque country, I have seen the finest timber ruined in this manner, where there could be no excuse for such negligence, as the forests were



government property, and the wood applied to public purposes: and the French government could not plead their poverty as a reason why they could not supply their workmen with the few tools which were requisite for them. The trunks of the largest trees are not so easily converted into charcoal as the lesser ones; the Andorrian charbonnier, therefore, when he wants to destroy a large tree for the sake of its branches, and cannot cut it down, sets fire to the trunk, and consuming the support, the branches are obtained. The scene which an oak forest presents, when it has been cut down for the sake of the bark, with its blanched trunks and boughs scattered around,—and which some author has compared to a field of battle after the slain have been stripped of their clothing,—is a melancholy object, and can only be equalled by the desolate appearance of a wood which has been destroyed by fire. In the French Pyrénées, so careless were the inhabitants of preserving their forests, that it was by no means an uncommon circumstance for a peasant, when he wanted a pair of sabots, to cut down a couple of trees, and carve a shoe out of each. Government has latterly, however, paid more

attention to the forests, and been more careful of their preservation; but, both government and people are still very, very far from possessing any practical knowledge of arboriculture; or, if they do, it is never applied.

From Urdino to Canillo, the pedestrian will find it a toilsome stage; but the beauty and aspect of the mountains will encourage him on his journey. We spent several hours in crossing the ridge of mountains which separate those two villages. The mountains upon the Canillo side of the ridge are covered with the finest pasture, as beautiful as that upon the Ochills;* and the valley of Embolire at their feet produces as fine crops of grain as I ever beheld. The barley, especially, was of a nature to delight the heart of the most capricious farmer. In straw, size of the grain, quality and quantity, it far excelled the best British barley, and I regretted most exceedingly, the loss of a sample which I intended to have brought home.

The village of Canillo is of the same dirty character as the others of Andorre. The Syndic, or chief magistrate of the Republic, is a native of

* A range of mountains in the vale of the Devon, in Clackmananshire.



it. It has a curious old church, which is worth examining, from the simple and truly original character of the structure. I could have supposed some guilty sinner, ignorant of the first rules of masonry, had been condemned to expiate his sins by building a holy edifice; and that the church of Canillo had been the production of his unpractised hands. I did not inquire to what saint the edifice had been dedicated; but I am afraid that many of the holy fathers of the calendar, who have had some of the finest specimens of architecture in the world dedicated to them, would have been ashamed to have had this building associated with their memory.

There was nothing to induce me to remain in Canillo; so we proceeded along the banks of the river which runs through it, with the intention of sleeping at the Hospitalet, the first French village across the frontier; this could only be accomplished by our walking during part of the night. About four o'clock, we arrived at Saldeon, an Andorrian hamlet of this valley. We had not reached the shelter which this place afforded us, ere a thunderstorm, which we had hoped would have passed along the higher range of the mountains, burst over our heads, and the rain de-

scended in torrents. Many a wistful look did I cast towards the head of the valley during the first hour of the rain, in the hopes of its clearing away, and permit us to resume our journey. But it showed no symptoms of abating its violence; and, as an hour or two was of consequence to us, it soon became so late as to banish all thoughts of our quitting our present shelter, even were the storm to cease: so we set about foraging for provisions, and discovering where and how we were to pass the night.

The hamlet of Saldeon consists of two or three miserable hovels, that in which we had taken refuge being the best of the number. The proprietor was from home; but his wife, and an idiot old woman, who was taking charge of the youngest of ten children, were the inmates of the cabin. It consisted of one apartment, divided into two or three sections by rough wooden boarding, in the largest of which we crouched over the embers of a fire, in order to dry our clothes, partially wet by the shower which had been the prelude to the storm which now raged without. We soon procured more wood, and made the fire blaze so high as to overcome the



light which was admitted through a single pane of glass; and, hanging our coats as near the chimney as possible, it was not long before they were thoroughly dried. We could not expect to fare sumptuously in such quarters; indeed, I was almost afraid to ask the lady of the house if she could give us any thing to eat, as I was afraid that she would have answered in the negative; but where is the cabin, however poor its owners may be, which cannot boast its couple or two of fowls? The hovel at Saldeon had its *domestic* fowls, and, fortunately for us, there was no scarcity of eggs in the house. The bread was so sour as to be scarcely eatable; but, by boiling several eggs and a quantity of the bread together, I made a kind of soup which a hungry traveller could relish sufficiently well. Etienne and the other guides followed my example; and we dined and supped, satisfied, at least, that we might have fared worse.

While eating our meal, another stormstaid traveller entered the cabin. He was an Andorrian, and proprietor of some quantity of land in one of the communes. I offered him a share of the soup which I had cooked, which he very

thankfully accepted; and, throwing off his capote, or cloak, took a seat near me. He had received a better education than most of his countrymen, and could speak French perfectly. The circumstance of meeting with such an Andorrian I considered as very fortunate; and was, at once, reconciled and indifferent to the storm, and thought not of the comfortable quarters which, but for it, I should have had at the Hospitalet. I had now an opportunity which had not hitherto presented itself of acquiring a perfect knowledge of the constitution and character of the people among whom I was; and I lost no time in profiting by it. Question after question I put to my neighbour; and he was most civil and kind in giving me the information which I wished to procure. I shall here give an account of the little Republic of Andorre, compiled from the information which this native gave me, and from other authentic sources.

The Republic of Andorre, situated upon the southern side of the Pyrénées, and beyond the natural frontier of France, ought, from its physical position, to belong to Spain. It is, however, considered as a neutral and independent province,



although it is to a certain extent connected with both countries; to Spain by its religious, to France, by its civil government. The history of this little country presents a phenomenon well worthy the attention and study of the naturalist and the politician. It affords the almost solitary instance of a people, few in number, and, in comparison with their powerful neighbours, almost incapable of defence, having preserved during twelve centuries their independence and their institutions uninjured by the many revolutions which have so frequently convulsed the two great kingdoms which surround it. The contented and unambitious minds of its inhabitants, with their seclusion from the world, and indifference to or ignorance of the political intrigues and commotions which have overthrown and subverted its many states, has for such a length of time secured to them, as the feudatory republic of France, more real and substantial liberty, than was ever enjoyed under the purest of the Italian republics.

Andorre is composed of three mountain vallies; of the basin formed by the union of those vallies, and its embouchure, which stretches towards the Spanish Urgel. Its valleys are the wildest and

most picturesque in the Pyrénées, and the mountains, with their immense peaks, which inclose it, amongst the highest, and most inaccessible. Its length from north to south may be six and thirty miles; from east to west, thirty. It is bounded on the north by Arriege; on the south by the district of Urgel; on the west by the valley of Paillas; and on the east by that of Carol. It contains six communes; Andorre, the chief town, Canillo, Enchamp, La Massane, Urdino, Saint Julien, and above thirty villages or hamlets.

The government is composed of a council of twenty-four; each commune electing four members, who are chosen for life. The council elect a Syndic, who convokes the assemblies, and takes the charge of public affairs. He enjoys great authority, and when the assemblies are not sitting, he has the complete government of the community.

It is to Charlemagne that Andorre owes its independence. In 790, that prince having marched against the Moors of Spain, and defeated them in the neighbouring valley of Carol, the Andorrians (following the tradition of the country, the only, but in a state like this the



best authority to rely upon), rendered themselves so useful to the French army, supplying them with provisions, and taking care of their wounded, that the emperor, to recompense them for their kindness, made them independent of the neighbouring princes, delivered them from the Moors, and permitted them to be governed by their own laws. After him, Louis le Debonnaire, whom the Andorrans style the pious, having driven the Moors across the Ebro, ceded to Lisebus, the Bishop of Urgel, a part of the rights over Andorre which Charlemagne had reserved to himself and his successors. It was in virtue of this grant that the bishop of Urgel acquired a right to a part of the tithes of the six parishes, and still exercises a spiritual jurisdiction over the country. This is the only manner in which it has any dependence upon Spain.

Afterwards the Counts of Foix exercised in Andorre the rights of the crown of France, in the name of their sovereign, but more frequently upon their own account. Since Henry the Fourth, the kings of France have maintained their rights according to the usages established by the Counts of Foix. In 1793, these rights, being considered

as feudal, were abandoned, and Andorre was for a time completely separated from France; but notwithstanding this temporary independence, the Andorrans continued to preserve their attachment to that country. The inhabitants courageously resisted the violation of their territory by the Spaniards, and furnished to the French armies, during the late war, both guides and assistance of every kind. At the same time they anxiously solicited the establishment of the ancient order of things, and Napoleon yielded to their wish by a decree of the 20th of March, 1806. By this decree Andorre continued to be a republic connected with France; its Viguiers, or criminal judge, being a Frenchman chosen from the department of Arriège; and paying an annual sum of 960 francs, for which he was to enjoy the privilege of receiving various articles of commerce free of duty from France. Thus, excepting as regards the spiritual jurisdiction of the Bishop of Urgel, which after all cannot be said to interfere with its independence any more than the Pope's ecclesiastical authority over Catholic countries can with theirs, Andorre is altogether independent of Spain; and as regards France, the annual



payment it makes to that country is only in lieu of certain privileges which it enjoys from it, while there being so little crime in Andorre, the appointment of the French judge has been more with a view to deter criminals of that country from taking refuge in the neutral province, than for the punishment of its natives. Andorre may therefore be justly considered as the oldest free republic in existence. The population is from seven to eight thousand, quite great enough for the resources of the country. The Andorrians are all of the church of Rome, and very religious. The members of their clergy are in general natives, and they, and the more wealthy of the inhabitants, receive their education at Toulouse or Barcelona. Each curé, in addition to his pastoral duties, has the charge of a school, where the poor are instructed gratuitously, but this does not give him much extra trouble, few of the peasants thinking it at all necessary to send their children to school to acquire what, in their land of shepherds and labourers, they imagine can be of little consequence to them in their future lives; this erroneous impression is the cause why few of the natives have more learning than is sufficient

to enable them to read and write, and the great majority are in total ignorance of even these first principles.

The Andorrians are simple and severe in their manners, and the vices and corruptions of cities have not hitherto found their way into their valleys, still, in comparison with the rest of the world, the abode of virtue and content. The inhabitants live as their forefathers lived a thousand years before them, and the little they know concerning the luxuries, the arts, and the civilization of other countries, inspiring them rather with fear than envy. Their wealth consists in the number of sheep or cattle they possess, or the share they may have in the iron forges, only a very few of their number being the proprietors of any extent of land beyond the little garden which surrounds their cottage. Each family acknowledges a chief, who succeeds by right of primogeniture. These chiefs, or eldest sons, choose their wives from families of equal consideration with their own, reprobating mes-alliances, and looking little to fortune, which besides is always very small upon both sides. The eldest sons have, even during the lives of their parents, a certain



status, being considered as the representatives of their ancestors; they never leave the paternal roof until they marry, and if they marry an heiress they join her name to their own; and unless married, they are not admitted to a charge of public affairs.

When there are only daughters in a family, the eldest, who is an heiress, and succeeds as an eldest son would do, is always married to a cadet of another, who adopts her name, and is domiciliated in her family; and by this arrangement, the principal Andorrian houses have continued for centuries without any change in their fortunes, *ni plus riche—ni plus pauvre*. They are married by their priests, after having had their bans, as in Scotland, proclaimed in their parish church for three successive Sundays. The poorest of the inhabitants are in Andorre not so badly off as in other countries, their wants are few and easily supplied, the opulent families taking care of those who are not; and they in gratitude, honour and respect their benefactors.

The Andorrians are in general strong and well proportioned; the greater part of the diseases proceeding from the moral affections are unknown,

as well as those from vice and corruption. The costume of the men is simply composed of the coarse brown cloth made from the wool of their own sheep; it resembles that worn by the peasants of Bigorre, with this difference, that the Andorrians wear the flowing red cap of the Catalans: the women dress exactly as the Catalan women do; they are not admitted to any of the assemblies where public affairs are considered; nay, so little has the wisdom of the sage Andorrians coincided with that of the British parliament, expressed upon a late occasion, that the ladies are not even allowed to assist at the masses which are performed upon the reception of the bishop, or the judge. Crime of every kind is very rare, and the punishments awarded to culprits are, although mild, sufficiently effectual. There are no law-suits relative to paternal successions; and should disputes of any kind arise, they are at once referred to the Syndic, whose decision is never controverted. All the males are liable to serve as militia, should they be required, and every head of a family is obliged to have in his possession at all times a musket and a certain quantity of powder and balls.



Commerce of every kind is free in Andorre, but as its industry is only employed in the manufacture of the most indispensable articles, and these are of the most indifferent nature; it has little to exchange for the produce of other countries, excepting its iron, the whole of which is sold to Spain, the high duties prohibiting its entrance into France. The republic is not without its arms, which are those of Bearn, quartered with those of Foix.

CHAPTER VIII.

Unlooked for and unwelcome Arrival—Council of War—An Adventure—Departure from Saldeon—Carlist Robbery—Passage over the Mountains—Arriege—Mines of the Pyrénées—Wild Flowers—A tedious Law-suit—Village of the Hospitalet—A young Bride—Conversation with a Merchant of Carol—Specimen of French Legislation—Commercial Policy of Great Britain and France.

THE storm continued to rage with unabated violence, drowning with its noise the squalling of the children, and the low unpleasant wailing of the idiot old woman, who had kept up a constant croaking and chattering to herself ever since we had entered the hovel, evidently dissatisfied with the intrusion. The children soon fell asleep; but the dismal croaking of the old



woman continuing after the fury of the storm had passed, I could not think of sleeping within ear-shot of it; so I resolved to seek some out-house in which to lie down. I proposed this to Etienne, who went out to look if there was such a place to be found. He had hardly gone, when the door was opened, and our old acquaintances—the gentlemen who had taken possession of our apartment at Escaldos,—entered. We thought that these Spaniards would have remained at Canillo; their appearance here was, therefore, very unexpected, as well as unwelcome. They were equally surprised at seeing me; for they imagined that I had gone down towards Urgel, and would hardly believe that we had crossed the mountains from Urdino when I told them I had done so. They had evidently some pressing business on hand, otherwise, they would never have quitted Canillo, and braved the storm to reach Saldeon; so I felt confident that we should experience no annoyance from them, which, had they attempted, might have delayed, or altogether prevented their accomplishing their intentions. The party had considerably increased in numbers, for there were now nine of them, and

they talked as if they expected some others to arrive.

When Etienne returned, he was astonished to find the cabin completely filled; but, when he observed who were talking to me, he looked any thing but satisfied; and I could observe the gradual sinking of his under jaw as he counted their numbers. We were, certainly, in a somewhat awkward situation, supposing that the Spanish party had any evil intentions regarding us, if,—as I sometimes feared they would, from some questions which they asked,—they should take me for one of the agents of the Spanish parties who were fighting. They might then suppose that I was worth robbing; and, of course, robbing, with such fellows, implied murdering; which, from their numbers, had they determined upon treating us in this manner, they had every prospect of succeeding in. But there was no use in supposing what, most probably, they had never thought about; and, even had there been cause for any suspicion, a seeming indifference to their presence was the best way of getting through the affair. So, when Etienne came to tell me that there was a large loft nearly filled



with hay, and sacks of wool, in which we could sleep, and pinched my shoulder while he was doing so, the meaning of which I fully comprehended, I lengthened his countenance still more by bursting out a laughing. I then told the Spaniards, that, as they were wet, and we were sleepy, that we should relinquish to them our places at the fire, and return to the hay-loft, which, I was told, was very large; and where, if they were inclined, after warming themselves, to sleep, I believed there would be room for all of us. The Andorrian was already fast asleep in one corner of the cabin; so we left him there, and, taking a lamp with us, adjourned to the hay-loft. It was very spacious, and, although half-filled with hay and woolsacks, there was still more than sufficient space, for a larger party than we and the Spaniards together would have formed, to have been as restless as we chose in our sleep, and yet not have incommoded each other with our kicking.

As soon as we were assembled together in the loft, a sort of whispering consultation was held upon the necessity of our being prepared in the event of the Spaniards making any attempt upon

us. Etienne did not know what to make of them, he did not like what our friend of Escaldos had told us regarding them, but he agreed with me in thinking that they had certainly some affair of moment which they were in haste to execute, and which might prevent their thinking of any thing else; but at all events it was better to be prepared for the worst, so we took our places in one corner of the loft, where we could not be surrounded, and where we could most easily defend ourselves.

We soon made a bed of hay in our corner, and with our arms beside us, and four of our number sleeping while the fifth watched, we were as safe as our situation could permit of our being. I did not fall as soon asleep as the others, among whom was the first watch, who had at last yielded unwittingly to the fatigue of the day's journey and closed his eyes, and the lamp was still burning in a niche in the wall, when the door of the loft opened, and the Spaniard who had been most enraged at being locked up at Escaldos, made his appearance. He seemed surprised when he observed the light, but the snoring of my friends was evidence of their being



asleep, and he stepped towards us. He was only one, there was no use in disturbing the sleeping party, so I merely laid my hand upon one of my pistols, and watched his proceedings. I was in the shade of the lamp, so that he could not see me distinctly, or discern whether I was asleep or not, but he seemed anxious not to disturb us, for he trode as gently as possible, and stopped several times before he reached our corner. Each sleeping man had his musket alongside of him, and I could observe the rascal knit his brows as he saw the position which we had taken; he stood within a few feet of us for a few seconds, and then turning round, stole away as gently as he had approached us. I thought it was now time to rouse Etienne, which I did, and told him what had taken place, and he instantly roused the others; we did not, however, make any noise, or alter our position, but determined to remain awake for some time, and by snoring in turn, lead the Spaniards, should they return, to believe that we were still asleep. A couple of hours passed over, and they came not, so I told Etienne, that I did not think that we should see them again, more particularly as the fellow who

came to reconnoitre did not carry off the lamp with him, which, had there been any mischief to take place, it would have been better for them to be without.

Etienne, therefore, volunteered to watch, and I and the others dropped asleep. Whether Etienne fell asleep or not, I do not know, but daylight was shining brightly into the loft when he awoke us. We found the landlady of the cabin, the old idiot woman, and the children all stirring, and we learnt that the Spaniards had departed about midnight, immediately after the storm had subsided. I could now understand what the rascal was in search of, who paid us the visit during the night previous to their leaving the cabin. He evidently came for the purpose of carrying away any articles belonging to us which he could have laid his hands upon without disturbing us, but our position, and the light from the lamp, had disappointed him; this attempt of his had therefore been a private speculation of his own, with which the party had had no concern. It was fortunate for us, that he had not endeavoured to lay his hands upon any thing belonging to us, as I should have shot him, and we should then have



had the whole party upon us. Before quitting Saldeou, and following upon the track of the Spaniards, who, if they had not stopped by the way, were already in Arriege; we partook of a second edition of the soup which we had cooked the preceding night.

The ascent of the frontier line of mountains commences a short distance from Saldeou, and until the first summits have been passed, there are no particularly interesting features in the landscape. At the source of the Val d'Embalire we passed the last Andorrian hamlet in the district, whose inhabitants had been robbed and plundered a few days before by the Carlists. It seemed that a party of these marauders had come down upon the village during the night, and calling up the inhabitants, had made them deliver up to them whatever provisions, powder, and other articles could be easily carried off. The poor people regretted exceedingly the loss of all the cheeses which they had been providing as a store for the winter.

From a spot near the Port de Framiquel, Etienne pointed out to me the situation of the iron mines of Carol. I ascertained from him,

that every inhabitant of the commune is at liberty to search for mineral, and dispose of it as he pleases, but that no one who is not a native can do so. Hence the difficulty which some speculators, who have supposed that large fortunes were to be made by working the mines of silver or copper in the Pyrénées, have experienced in making an agreement with the inhabitants of the commune in which the minerals were situated, quarrels frequently ensuing, and obliging the enterprising individual, after having embarked large sums of money in the undertaking, to relinquish the project.

Upon the Arriege side of the Port de Framiquel, and at the base of the immense perpendicular mountain which partly separates that department from Andorre, is the lake which is the source of the river Arriege. The Andorrian possessions skirt one side of this stream, as far as the village of the Hospitalet, and are the best pasture districts appertaining to the republic. The mountains upon the opposite side belong to Arriege and Carol, and the path from the valley of Carol into Arriege, enters by the Port de Puymorin, or



as it is sometimes styled, the Port d'Hospitalet.

We kept upon the Andorrian side of the valley, and numerous as are the spots where the choicest wild flowers may be gathered in these Pyrénées, I never beheld such quantities of them any where, as I did here. Their profusion was such, and their various tints and colours so beautiful, that in stepping among them I almost felt that I was committing sacrilege; I could venture to say, that a larger and more exquisitely beautiful natural flower terrace than that between the Port de Framiquel and the Hospitalet does not exist.

Before arriving at the village of the Hospitalet, there is a fine natural meadow, containing, perhaps, forty acres, and surrounded by a stone wall. Etienne directed my attention to the spot, and told me that for upwards of fifty years this meadow had been the subject of litigation between the Andorrans and the neighbouring French communes, and that it was only a few months since the suit had been decided in favour of the republic. The value of the meadow might be about 3000 francs.

A company of soldiers were quartered in the

frontier village, and the sentinel on guard at the entrance demanded my passport; I gave it to him, but, not being able to read it, he called a comrade from the guardhouse; the new comer was as illiterate as the other, and it was actually the sixth individual of the party on duty who examined my passport who could read it; whether the sixth really could read or not, I could not positively say, but at all events he looked as if he could, and returned it to me, telling me that I might proceed.

The appearance and comforts of the little auberge at the Hospitalet, contrasted with those of the posadas of Andorre, were transformed into luxuries of no mean order, and were most acceptable and grateful to the senses. I do not think I ever felt so hungry in my life, as I did when I entered this auberge, and scented the well dressed viands which were preparing for the dejeuner of the officers of the detachment who were lodged in the house; and when the smart-looking pretty waiting girl, dressed in the costume of the department, asked me what I should wish to have for breakfast, I only desired her to let me have



whatever she could give me as soon as possible, and plenty of it, for I had just come from Andorre, where I had been for some days. Thanks to the military for having taken up their quarters in the auberge, as their doing so insured good "entertainment" to the traveller, and a quarter of an hour had not elapsed before I was seated at a table with half a dozen dishes before me, the contents of which, for cooking and excellence, would not have thrown discredit either upon the "Burlington" or "Long's."

"Ah, monsieur," said the waiting girl, "you have been in a poor country, where there is nothing to eat or drink, and where no one goes but the miners or the contrabandiers, where there are not such pretty girls as you will see in our country, and where there are not any gay soldiers to laugh and dance with."

"But the country is beautiful, although the people are somewhat savage," said I.

"Yes," said she, "but our country is beautiful also, yet it would not be habitable were there no inducements to stay in it but to look at its woods, and mountains, and vines; no, no, I love it well

enough, but were there no such merry meetings as we have to enliven us, were there no civil strangers coming to visit us, why it would not be bearable."

"And the military, you would not like them to leave the valley," said I.

"They are the best creatures in the world," said she.

"Gay, civil, and obliging," said I.

"They are always either dancing or singing, and I always find them ready to carry my pitchers from the stream, or relieve me from my basket when I go to Ax," said she.

"And you are going to be a soldier's wife," said I.

"If monsieur will stay here for another week, he will be able to judge for himself," said she.

Etienne entered, accompanied by a superior looking individual, whom he introduced to me as a cousin of his who was on his way to Bordeaux. When paying my bill, I again asked mademoiselle if she was about to marry a soldier, and she acknowledged that upon the ensuing Friday she was to be united to the handsome corporal of the detachment, whom she pointed out to me among a group of soldiers who were standing near the



window. I wished her joy and much happiness, and as she was the daughter of the aubergist, and heiress of his property, I advised her to procure her husband's discharge, and remain in her native village.

Etienne was to accompany me to Ax, but there was no use in taking the rest of the party, so they set out on their return to Carol; and Etienne, his cousin (who wished me to mount his horse), and myself, proceeded down the valley. This cousin of Etienne's was one of the most considerable merchants in the district of Carol, and I acquired from him considerable information regarding its industry and commerce. I mentioned that the inhabitants of the valley of Carol employed themselves during the winter in making stockings. This manufacture has existed for many generations in the valley, and has greatly conduced to the comfort and welfare of its inhabitants. There are upwards of thirty thousand dozen of pairs exported annually, and the demand for them is constantly on the increase. They are sent to Bordeaux, Toulouse, and all parts of France. The wool made use of is Spanish, and the stockings vary in price from

ten to forty sous a pair, and are all knitted. My companion bought up all those which were intended for the Bordeaux market, and was upon his way there to obtain orders. I asked him if, supposing the valley could produce double the amount of pairs which it did, he thought they could find sale for them, and he told me that ten times the number produced could be disposed of to advantage; that all the peasantry throughout the interior were glad to obtain them, and that at the fair of Bordeaux alone, he could sell to the amount of the present supply. Why, then, did they not establish the manufacturing of the stockings by machinery?

"Because we are not permitted to build a manufactory. Government will not allow the inhabitants within a certain distance of the frontier to erect machinery for commercial purposes; and although the southern districts have complained of this great hardship, over and over again, to the Chamber of Deputies, by means of their representatives, whom they have latterly elected solely upon condition that they should exert their influence to obtain for them the removal of this grievance, they have never yet been



able to succeed in their endeavours; and we are obliged to go on in our old way, when, by having justice bestowed upon us, our districts would become the most flourishing in France."

He attributed the continuance of this oppressive and impolitic law to the "partiality of the government shown to the northern districts—they send a greater number of deputies to the Chamber; and they legislate for the South as it suits their convenience. There is no such oppressive tax upon industry on the Northern frontier; on the contrary, every encouragement is held out to its inhabitants; but here, in the South, our commercial spirit and enterprise is cramped and checked by laws of the most arbitrary as well as impolitic nature. From the great advantages which we possess, by our situation, enabling us to employ the most expensive machinery, so great is the water power which we could call into requisition; and our vicinity to the market where we procure the raw material, we could afford to sell our produce much cheaper than we can at present do; and we could give constant employment to a much greater number of our countrymen. And this injustice is not confined to our

particular district, or to the article which we manufacture; but the whole frontier is included in the law which prohibits the erection of machinery, and thus the commercial exertions of the inhabitants of a country some hundred leagues in length, and ten broad, are paralyzed. But the people of the South of France are beginning to be sensible of the injustice that is done them by the government, and will eventually force an acknowledgment of their rights."

This is but a solitary instance of the internal mis-government of France, particularly as regards her commercial laws, many of which are of the greatest detriment to her interests, and must ever prevent her becoming a great commercial nation. Were the commercial laws of France revised, and placed upon the footing which, for the good of the nation, they ought to be, there could be no limits set to the prosperity which would reign throughout the interior, and which, at present, is confined to a few maritime towns and districts. And were Great Britain, at the same time, studying its true interest in preference to harbouring a foolish and altogether unfounded feeling of jealousy against France, to act in the same spirit,



so as to render the advantages which both the countries would acquire from a more liberal commercial intercourse reciprocal, she would find a mart for her commodities of ten times more value to her than half her colonies and possessions. France produces some articles which Great Britain naturally cannot do; or unattended with great expense. Great Britain, on the other hand, can never fear competition with her manufactories from France; that country does not naturally possess the materials for constituting it a *cheap* manufacturing country, which Great Britain enjoys to an unlimited extent. It is, therefore, most ardently to be hoped, that the present good understanding which subsists between the two countries may continue; that such useful and profitable changes in the laws which regulate their commercial intercourse, may take place as is absolutely necessary for their mutual welfare: and we may rest assured, that, when such alterations have been effected, the peace and happiness of Europe will be more securely established by that act than by all the treaties which have ever been signed; it will then be based upon the surest of all foundations—mutual interest.

Whenever the feeling has grown up in France and England, that they are mutually dependent upon each other, that their best interests render it necessary that such should be the case, all jealousy and rivalry between them must subside; friendship (interested although it may be at first) will take their place, and all the world will be benefited by it.

From the Hospitalet to the village of Merens, the valley is narrow and uninteresting, hemmed in by stony-looking mountains; it afterwards narrows so as to become a mere defile; until, passing through a gorge where there is just sufficient room for the river and the road, it at once expands, and Ax, and the hills which surround it are beheld.

I found Ax both a larger and more civilized place than I expected; and, in the principal hotel of the place (I forgot what name it bore), most comfortable apartments and good living are to be obtained. Here, having settled with my worthy friend Etienne, whom I had found a most trustworthy, intelligent, and obliging companion, we parted, mutually pleased, I believe, with each other, and trusting that, upon some future occa-



sion, we should have another, and a longer, wandering among the mountains.

I can look back with many pleasing recollections, upon the days and weeks which I have spent in the society of the guides, chasseurs, and contrabandiers of the Pyrénées; for, all of them,—with one or two exceptions, and these were in districts where intercourse with the world has blunted their native sense of honour and good feeling,—have, like Etienne, left traces of their fidelity and trustworthiness upon my memory.

CHAPTER IX.

Ax—Mont St. Barthelemy—French Carlists—French Police System
—Compliment paid by a French Author to the Populace of
Edinburgh—Valley of the Arriege—Old Castle—Caverns—Ta-
rascon—Mistake of a Gendarme—Mode of training the Vines—
Early History of Arriege—Counts of Foix—Town and Castle of
Foix—Old Jailer—Strength of the Castle—Interior of the
Church—Fugitives from the Cholera.

THE minor articles conducive to the comforts of civilized life are not sufficiently estimated until we have been deprived of their use; and they who would fully appreciate the invaluable properties of the substance called soap; the great advantage of having clean towels over having none at all; the comforts of clean sheets; nay,



the very sight of a piece of pure linen :—must go and sojourn for a few days in Andorre.

Ax is very prettily situated at the junction of three considerable streams ; the Arriege, whose source I had seen below the Port de Framiquel ; the Arriege, from the valley d'Orlu ; and the Ode, from the valley of the same name. It lies, therefore, in a sort of basin, formed by the union of those valleys. The hills in its immediate neighbourhood are neither high nor steep, permitting of cultivation being carried far up their sides, as in the valleys of Luz, Argeles, and others. Ax is not one of the fashionable watering-places of the Pyrénées ; and the strangers who resort to it during the summer months are chiefly composed of those who hope to receive benefit from its medicinal waters, which, in their various properties, are inferior to none in the mountains.

The reason why Ax has not become a place of much more consequence than it is, and to which the picturesque scenery in its vicinity, the beautiful rides and walks which surround it, its mineral baths and springs, and its easy access, entitle it ; is altogether owing to the want of spirit and enterprise among its inhabitants, dis-

played in the almost total disregard which they evince in providing for the accommodation of its visitors. Excepting the hotel in which I resided, and which, in size and comforts, is not second to even those of Bagnères, there is scarcely a habitable *apartment* in the village. Government have an establishment at Ax for the benefit of military invalids, and it has been improving the baths latterly ; but, unless the people of the village do something themselves, there will never be very great attractions at Ax for that class of visitors who frequent the Pyrénées for pleasure and amusement, as well as in the pursuit of health. Ax is, however, well worth visiting, and the traveller may fix upon it as a centre from which he can make many pleasant excursions. From it he can visit Andorre ; he can cross the mountains by Querigut to Perpignan, by no means an uninteresting path ; he can gain the summit of Mount St. Barthelemy, and he can explore the recesses of many beautiful lateral valleys.

The view from the summit of Mount St. Barthelemy, which is also called the Pic de Taube, is very extensive, and diversified with villages,



rivers, woods, and mountain-peaks. It is about twelve hundred toises in height, and abutting into the low countries, the line of the mountains upon the east and west of it can be traced to a great distance. To the west, the bold and ragged outline of the Andorrian frontier, the Mont Calm, the lofty and peculiarly shaped Mont Vallier, the glaciers of the Maladetta, the innumerable summits of the mountains in the vicinity of the valleys of Aulus, of Castillon, of Luchon; and, last, and most distant of the whole, the Pic du Midi of Bigorre, are within the horizon. To the east, the mountains of the valleys of Aude and Carol, those at the source of the Tet, the masses of Mont Louis, and the majestic Canigou, are the most imposing features. Mont St. Barthelemy, similarly situated to the Pic du Midi de Bigorre, possesses the same qualifications which constitute the former one of the finest "points de vue" in the Pyrénées.

The inhabitants of Arriege are chiefly attached to the Ex-royal Family; and, therefore, more inclined to be of service to Don Carlos. To prevent them, as much as possible, from rendering him assistance, the French government had

adopted very strict police regulations; and, as if they could not safely trust the local authorities, they had sent down an extraordinary inspector of police from Paris. This officer, or agent, wore no uniform, not any insignia, by which he might be distinguished; and his business was to be a spy upon every one, natives and strangers. I had been but a few hours in Ax, until he had been informed of the arrival of a stranger; and he made his appearance, perfectly informed of where I had come from, and what had been my proceedings; all of which he had extracted from Etienne, who had not the slightest suspicion of his profession.

The police system of France may be necessary for the internal regulation and order of that kingdom, but it is, nevertheless, very tyrannical in its character. Instead of being "the terror of evil-doers," and the protection and safety to the respectable portion of the community, its rigours press equally upon all. The same means which are resorted to for the detection of the guilty, the laws which prevent their quitting the district in which they may be residing without permission of the civil authorities, are enforced against the



honest, the best known, and most respectable bourgeois; the most noted merchant, the most influential landed proprietor, have to submit, have to pass through the same ordeal as the thief and the blackguard. Liberty and equality have been war-cries to our French neighbours; but, hitherto, the liberty which they have acquired has been confined to the mere act of substituting one government for another; their equality, to the position which every inhabitant of the country occupies under their police system. The veriest rascal that ever breathed can, in France, say to the highest citizen in it, "You cannot leave any town without submitting to the same formula which I must do. Here we are on a par; your character is of no use to you; you cannot leave this place without obtaining legal permission to do so; and you cannot travel any great distance without frequently reporting yourself to the police officer of the district. Thus you and I are, in regard to *liberty*, upon an *equality*!"

I recollect the remarks of a French author* upon this subject. He was present in Edinburgh

* M. Amedée Pichot.

during the visit of George IV. to that city; and he thus compares the manner in which order is kept in the two countries:—

"Le roi de la Grande Bretagne est reçu dans sa capitale d'Ecosse par des sujets respectueux, mais non serviles; avec les acclamations de la loyauté, mais non avec celle d'un lâche avilissement. Sur le continent, nous ne pouvons avoir de fêtes sans gendarmes, et ces agens d'une police plus oppressive que protectrice, nous font trop souvent payer cher l'ordre qu'ils maintiennent, par de brutales reprimandes prodiguées à l'empressement et à l'enthousiasme. Ici, les constables sont réellement une magistrature de paix; ils sont les amis, les parens des citoyens; ils sont citoyens eux-mêmes, et non les salariés d'une petite tyrannie subalterne. Grâce aux conquêtes de l'empereur, nous avons vu de belles fêtes militaires; mais alors les soldats seuls pouvaient se dire *chez eux* dans nos cités: il fallait les voir de loin ou s'exposer à leurs insolentes bourrades. Ici, point de ces haies de menaçantes baïonnettes, rideau formidable tiré entre le prince et ses sujets accourus sur son passage; seulement, à de longues distances, quelques cavaliers servent à



marquer aux spectateurs la limite qu'ils ne franchiront pas."

This is no slight compliment paid, by a French author, to my countrymen; and I think that I may return him one to which he is justly entitled. It is with regard to the politeness and civility which the very poorest of the French peasantry display when they meet each other; no matter how shabby their dress and appearance may be, they invariably in the South, and almost generally in the North, salute each other by taking off their hats or bonnets, and always address each other with the words, "Sir," or "Madame;" in fact, the politesse of the French peasantry is on a par with, perhaps superior to, that of our middle classes.

Ax has seen more busy and stirring times than most of the frontier towns. Previous to the present Spanish war, commercial intercourse, to a very great extent, subsisted between Arriege and Spain, carried on by means of the many different ports by which access can be had into either country. This great source of prosperity to the district has, however, been destroyed, occasioning much inconvenience and poverty to the

inhabitants. During the war of independence, Mina, and his formidable Guerillas, were wont to visit Ax; not for the purpose of drinking its waters, or enjoying its baths, but to levy contributions; and, throughout the continuance of that war, Spaniards of all parties made Ax their place of refuge; and the present war has drawn thither a number of the clergy, and other individuals, holding political tenets at variance with those of the most powerful party in the several districts from which they come. Thus, both Carlists and Christinos were in Ax when I was there.

That part of the valley of Arriege between Ax and Tarascon, I thought not unlike some Highland valleys which I have seen, particularly where its mountains are covered with heath, and dotted with patches of cultivation. The grain which we call buck-wheat, and which in the South is called blé noir, is the staple product of the department; when in flower, its appearance is beautiful, greatly resembling "None-so-pretty." The valley is very populous, filled with villages and hamlets, and the remains of what have been, in other times, very fine old chateaux. One, in particular, is remarkable for its lofty and com-



manding situation. It is called Lordat. It has been built upon the peak of a high and isolated mountain, abrupt and difficult of approach; its rocky heights seemingly more adapted for the eyrie of the eagle than for the abode of men. The pomp and pride of feudal power has, however, contended successfully against natural obstacles, and have perched among the clouds the old chateau of Lordat. The ruins of its old towers and walls are very extensive, bespeaking the wealth and consequence of its owners; who might, so long as they had provisions, resist with impunity, and defy, every effort to disturb them in their nest. The ancient barons of Lordat have now passed away, and with them the glory and grandeur of their house. Their descendants are still barons of Lordat, and are contented, from their comparatively humble chateau of Vebre, in the bosom of the valley, to look upon the abode of their ancestors with feelings of reverence and awe, satisfied that, as it was proper for their ancestors, great and powerful as they were, to live in an *exalted station*, so it suits them, in their political decay, to inhabit a humble one.

Near the village of Les Cabanes, the waters

which flow through the valley d'Aston, and have their source among the high mountains to the west of Andorre, join the Arriege, which latter valley, unlike most, which generally widen as they lengthen into the plain, becomes here narrow and contracted, bounded on both sides by immense walls of lime-stone rock, which abound in numerous caverns and grottos, remarkable for their dimensions, and the beauty of the stalactites which they contain. Behind the mineral establishment of Ussat, are some of the most extensive of those natural galleries. Ussat is almost close to Tarascon; it is upon the east bank of the river, and consists of two very excellent hotels, which, embosomed in woods at some distance from the road, with the river flowing past within a few yards of them, and the tall rocks mantling above them, present as agreeable and inviting an aspect as the proprietors of the place could desire.

In one of the caverns in the rocks opposite to Ussat have been found a great quantity of human bones, mingled with those of bears, and other animals; which is not, however, a very difficult circumstance to account for, as those caves have, undoubtedly, at some period or other, been inha-



bited, as dwellings, by the peasantry, in the same manner as those in the free-stone rocks on the banks of the Loire, and other places, where thousands of the labouring population are, at this moment, residing. In a warm climate, these houses in the rocks are far more comfortable than those built in the open air; they preserve a more equal temperature, in summer they are not too hot, and in winter they are much warmer. Chimneys are pierced through the rock in every direction; and it is a curious sight to see the smoke, bursting as if it were through the solid rock, where the situation of the cabins would, but for that circumstance, remain undiscovered; or, in other places, to observe a long line of windows, with their sashes and glass, in the face of a high wall of rock. Sometimes, when care has not been taken in scooping out these dwellings, the roof gives way, and the families are for ever buried in the mass which falls upon them. Some years ago, a marriage-party had assembled in one of those dwellings, and, with music and dancing, were spending the evening in the greatest hilarity. The happy bridegroom had gone to the door to bid a friend who was leaving the party good-bye,

when the roof came down upon those who were in the interior of the dwelling, and all of them perished in the midst of their joy and mirth, the bridegroom alone escaping the untimely fate of his wife and relations.

Tarascon was one of the four principal towns of the ancient county of Foix, and is situated in a sort of amphitheatre, formed by the junction of many lateral vallies, the most important of which is that of Vicdessos, famous for its forges, and the iron mines of its mountains; its Gave* flows through Tarascon, dividing it into two sections, and spanned by a new and very handsome bridge of three arches.

At Tarascon, I was exceedingly amused with a mistake committed by a gendarme, who had demanded my passport. After having examined it, he returned it to me, satisfied that it was perfectly regular. "You are from Ecosse?" said he.

"Yes;" answered I.

"And, pray, in what part of France is Ecosse situated?" inquired the officer of peace.

"In the north;" said I.

* The word is generic, signifying a mountain stream.



"Oh, yes!" said he—"Now I recollect perfectly well; we passed through it on our way to join the army in Flanders."

The valley of Arriege, between Tarascon and Foix, assumes a more quiet and gentle character; mountains and sterile rocks giving place to hills whose slopes are productive in grain, and whose warmer and more sheltered nooks are clothed with vineyards. The manner in which the vines are planted and trained is peculiar. In all the corn fields the stones which would otherwise encumber the soil, are gathered in heaps of various forms and sizes; among these heaps of stones the vines are planted and trained over them on poles or espaliers; the effect of this arrangement is beautiful, and the corn fields may be taken for a garden, the knots of vines for its parterres. I left the mountains to visit Foix, because I was most anxious to see a place whose ancient barons had entwined their names so gloriously in the history of their country; in early times, by their power and grandeur as feudal princes, in later times as statesmen and warriors.

The department of Arriege contains nearly the

whole of the ancient county of Foix; it is bounded on the north by the departments of the Haute Garone and the Aude; on the east by the Aude and Roussillon; on the south by Roussillon, Andorre, and Spain; and on the west by the Haute Garone.

The county of Foix, as this department was anciently styled, was governed by counts, who derived their title from its name. The Counts of Foix were descended from the Counts of Carcassonne. The first of the family whose name and deeds are renowned in history, was Raymond Roger, who succeeded his father in 1188. His first feats of arms were performed in Syria, where he fought by the side of Philip Augustus. Upon his return, he found the Counts of Comminges and of Urgel dividing his territories between them; he attacked them, and at first gained over them many victories; but in a decisive battle which he lost, and where he was completely routed, he was taken prisoner. Raymond Roger, along with his brother, remained in captivity for four years, and it was only through the kind intercessions of the King of Arragon, and by making great pecuniary sacrifices, that they regained their liberty. The court of Rome had



about the period of their liberation, kindled that spirit of fanaticism on the continent which led to the crusade against the Albigeois in Guienne and Gascony, headed by the ferocious Simon de Montfort.

De Montfort, aware of the friendship which existed between Raymond Roger, of Foix, and the Count of Toulouse, the intended victim of the crusade, entered the county of Foix, ravaged it after his usual manner, and took the son of Raymond as an hostage, whom he detained until he had passed the ordeal of the inquisition. Raymond, faithful to his friend, the Count of Toulouse, took arms in his defence, and his first exploit was the defeating of a large reinforcement of Germans, who were on their way to join the crusaders, then besieging Lavaur. The Count of Toulouse, defeated on various occasions, at last was obliged to take refuge in his capital, and here Raymond, true in adversity as well as in prosperity, joined him, and by the vigorous and intrepid sallies which he made upon the besiegers, at last constrained them to raise the siege. Again, when the capital of the Count of Toulouse was besieged by the same party, Raymond of Foix came again to the rescue, and again

delivered it. His last military honours were gained in the assault of the castle of Mirepoix, during a severe winter, where he died, honoured and regretted by his compatriots. His chivalric generosity had endeared him both to his people and to the neighbouring states; and if he has been flattered, it was by the voice of gratitude.

There is one anecdote connected with the history of Raymond Roger, of Foix, which, if true, would considerably detract from the magnanimous character which history has accorded to him. It is related, that Raymond, the Count of Toulouse, had for some cause or other conceived a great hatred to his brother Baudouin, and upon a false accusation, had delivered him over to the secret tribunal in order to gratify his malignity. The judges were mean enough to condemn the unfortunate victim of fraternal cruelty to death, and it is said, that Raymond Roger assisted in carrying the infamous sentence into execution; the victim was hanged over a walnut-tree, by the hands of the two Counts. But this story is so very much at variance with the general character of Raymond Roger, that it is almost impossible to believe it.

The fidelity of Raymond Roger, and afterwards



that of his son Roger Bernard, to the Count of Toulouse, was repaid by the latter deserting Roger Bernard, when under the displeasure of the French king, taking arms against him, and actually bargaining for a part of his heritage.

Roger Bernard the third, had married the daughter of the prince of Bearn, and upon the death of her father, he acquired the sovereignty of that kingdom; his succession, at first disputed by the Counts of Armagnac, was eventually secured to his family, whose history from that period is that of the Princes of Bearn.

The town of Foix is situated upon the eastern bank of the Arriege, close to the river, which is here a broad and beautiful stream. It is not in any way remarkable in appearance, and would pass unnoticed by the stranger, were it not for the picturesque and interesting towers which frown over it. It is situated in a sort of triangle formed by the hills separating in three directions, forming the three valleys, through which wind the roads to Toulouse, to Bagnères, and to Ax.

The chateau is built upon a very high and isolated mass of rock, which some convulsion of nature may have detached from the mountain to the south of it, forming the pivot, as it were, of

the three valleys which branch from its base. It thus from its situation commands a most extensive prospect over the surrounding country, and from this advantageous position, as well as the rock upon which it is built being perfectly inaccessible upon all sides, except where a narrow path corkscrews (if it may be permitted to use such a term) up the steep ascent, it must, at a very early period, have been chosen for a military position. It is, therefore, impossible to tell at what period the foundations of this remarkable fortress were laid, but certain it is, that in the eleventh century it was one of the strongest of the many strongholds in the south of France. Afterwards, when it had passed into the possession of the Counts of Carcassonne, whose descendents, as Counts of Foix, made it the seat of their government, its walls resisted many a fierce assault, and its owners in their eagle's nest bid defiance to the most powerful enemies.

In 1210 the blood-thirsty and exterminating Simon de Montfort led his crusading army to the siege of Foix, but his efforts were fruitless, and he was repulsed with much loss and dis-



honour. In 1272 the Count of Foix, emboldened by the strength and advantageous situation of his castle, in which he had shut himself up, bid defiance to the King of France, Philip the Bold, against whom he had revolted. Philip, full of indignation, and breathing vengeance, laid siege to the chateau with a great army, determined to carry the place, whatever it might cost him. The resistance was so long and so obstinate, that Philip, despairing of taking it, as a last resource, endeavoured, by undermining, to throw down the enormous rock upon which the castle stands. This, at a period antecedent to the invention of gunpowder, was a somewhat arduous undertaking, nevertheless the king commenced the operation, and detached, by manual labour alone, immense blocks of the rock, until the Count, actually afraid that Philippe would succeed in destroying the castle, submitted to his liege lord.

In the fourteenth century the castle was occupied sometimes by the Catholics, sometimes by their opponents, and the scene of many a hard fought battle lies within cannon-shot of its walls.

It was not without regret that I found the ancient recollections of the place were henceforth to be associated with those of a modern prison, destroying the imaginative reviews which the very name of Gaston Phœbus' chateau was sufficient to conjure up, of the gay and gallant troubadours who were wont to make the old walls of Foix echo to their lays of "Ladye's love" or tales of chivalry; and that the "captive's wailing voice" was now to resound among those spacious Gothic arches where festive mirth and revelry had reigned for so many centuries. I had been but a very short time in Foix before I was on my way to visit this remarkable old feudal chateau. It has undergone a sad reverse of fortune; its ancient palace halls and princely chambers, no longer the abode of regal power and lordly pomp, have, in these civilized times, been converted into cells for all sorts of offenders against the laws. Debtors, thieves, and murderers now walk "its banquet-halls deserted," and clink their chains where "beauty's feet had pressed the marble floors," and the great and mighty (although perhaps not less guilty) of



former days, had revelled in their power and state.

It is not difficult to gain admission into the chateau, particularly if the old concierge, who had charge of it when I visited it, is still there. In that case, my countrymen have only to name their country, and it will be a passport to the kindness of the old man. He was one of the few remaining heroes whose bravery had been baffled before the walls of Acre. He had witnessed most of Napoleon's victories and defeats, had been a prisoner of war in England, and there contracted his friendship for the people of that country; and he was now, in his old age, the jailer commandant of the castle of Foix. The old man and his family were at dinner when I came to ask his permission to explore the building, and I was much surprised by his rising up and shaking hands with me, and inquiring after my health since he had met me. Upon inquiry, I found, that he thought he had recognized in me another countryman, whom he had met with fishing at Pamiers. But the old gentleman was, however, notwithstanding the mistake, very glad

to see me, invited me to partake of his dinner, and upon my declining told his son to take me over the whole of the chateau, and show me all that was worth looking at.

The most ancient of the three embattled towers which rise far above the modern buildings which surround them, was erected in 1362, by Gaston Phœbus, "*ce modele des heros du 14^{ieme} siecle, toujours grand, genereux, et ami de sa patrie;*" it is a handsome specimen of Gothic architecture, one hundred and thirty-six French feet in height, and founded upon the highest part of the rock. It is in perfect preservation, so much so as to be the strongest and best part of the building; in different stories are apartments for the prisoners, and its summit forms a terrace, where the prisoners are permitted to walk, and from which a most superb bird's-eye view of the surrounding country is obtained. The other towers are more modern, but there are many inferior remains of the ancient fortifications, which have been abandoned, and destroyed by the ravages of time, or have had their materials employed in the erection of the modern buildings.

I have hardly ever seen a more impregnable



fortress than the chateau of Foix must have been when the only means of gaining it were by scaling its perpendicular rocks, and lofty walls, or a situation more fitly adapted for all the purposes of barbarous warfare. My conductor pointed out to me a curious mass of rock which is almost detached from the side of that which supports the castle, resting upon a very small and narrow pedestal, so small as to appear as if one kick would send it among the houses of the town far beneath it, but which defies the orages of summer and the blasts of the winter. It is called the rock of Foix, and there is some tradition, the fulfilment of which is dependent on its fall.

From the chateau I proceeded to the prefecture, in order to have my passport countersigned. The town has been built with regard to the protection afforded it by its vicinity to the chateau. Its streets and houses are, therefore, huddled together as close under its walls as possible. The Prefect was rather particular in his interrogations, before signing my passport, and expressed considerable astonishment at my preferring the long and difficult route to Bagnères de Luchon

by the mountains, to the carriage-road by St. Giron.

I walked into a fine old church, in which are two exceedingly good modern paintings by a person of the name of Racques; one represents Jesus restoring sight to the blind; the other, the draught of fishes. I have never met with any scriptural paintings which have pleased me more than these; there is a deficiency in the colouring, but the countenances of the group are beautifully executed. The expression of astonishment, thankfulness, and reverence depicted in that of him who has just received his sight, is perfect, while that of the old man behind him, who with outstretched arms is bending forward to receive his sight from our Saviour is equally so; the beautifully mild and expressive countenance of Jesus, and the astonished looks of his disciples at the performance of the miracle, do great credit to the artist: the draught of fishes is of the same character. Having gratified my curiosity at Foix, I returned to Tarascon in the diligence. I had for my fellow travellers, two Frenchmen, who had left Marseilles on account of the cholera. It has been said, that fear predisposes its victims



to an attack of cholera; now, I am sure, if such was really the case, that these two gentlemen who were going to Ax must have died that same night, for I never, in the whole course of my life, saw two individuals so imbued with fear and terror as they seemed to be. While conversing upon the subject of their disquiet, I happened to mention that I had been in the neighbourhood of Drogheda when so many of its inhabitants were carried off by the cholera, upon which they immediately supposed that I could give them some sovereign specific against its attacks, and begged me to tell them what was the best measure of precaution to adopt. I told them that there were various opinions upon the subject, and different methods by which it was supposed the disease could be warded off. One method was that which numbers of the Irish during the prevalence of the cholera in their country had adopted; it was never to be sober while the cholera remained in the district; so long as they were intoxicated there was no fear of them, but if they once forgot to be drunk, then the disease was sure to seize upon them. The Frenchmen did not seem to relish this precautionary method which I offered to

their notice; so I gave them another which met with more success. It was to refrain from eating salads to breakfast, or drinking the indifferent wines of the country, and never by any chance to taste the unripe fruits daily presented to them to the inns, but to give up their French habits and tastes, and live, à la John Bull, upon solids.



CHAPTER X.

Valley of Vicdessos—Castle of Miglos—Its striking resemblance to Castle Campbell—Mines of Raincié—Privileges of the Miners—Cause of the high price of Iron—Auzat—Valley of the Salix—Contrabandiers of the Pyrénées—Port d'Aulus—Mont Calm—Domestic Unhappiness of my Guide—Mountain Scenery—Beautiful Valley of Aulus—Fountain of Nanpounts—Rencontre with a Countryman—Short Beds—Village of Erce—Pyrénean Peasants' knowledge of the World—Feuds—Hunting Quarters—Dogs can "love at first sight."

My route now lay through the valley of Vicdessos, and across the mountains which separate it from that of Aulus. As I was anxious to make a considerable day's work, I quitted Tarascon at a very early hour.

The valley of Vicdessos is narrow and confined,

hemmed in by mountains of limestone rock, in many places bare, steep, and inaccessible. The sides of the stream are rich and productive, producing fine crops of Indian corn or maize, and buckwheat. The fields are irrigated, and frequently inclosed by hedges; and as we approach the district of the iron mines, the numerous comfortable looking houses belonging to the different proprietors or managers of the various forges, surrounded by their gardens and vineyards, combine in rendering the valley of Vicdessos pleasing and agreeable.

There are the remains of several feudal strongholds in this valley, many of them in picturesque and beautiful situations: indeed the bold barons of the county of Foix seem to have known well how to choose a site for their dwellings, and through the whole line of the Pyrénées there is no district which furnishes such incontrovertible evidence of the feudal power of the ancient lords of the south of France as the department of Arriege. May not this circumstance in some measure account for the almost universal veneration of its inhabitants for "things as they were," and their attachment to the exiled family!



The appearance of some of the old castles in this valley gave me much pleasure. Those who have admired the dark ruin and beautiful situation of Castle Campbell, in the valley of the Devon, and may chance to visit the valley of Vicdessos, will recognize in the ruins of the chateau of Miglos, a most striking resemblance. The same features of hill, and wood, and deep ravine, nay, even the very form of the ruins, are the same in each, and Miglos wants but a pretty village, such as Dollar, to frown upon, to become a Castle Campbell. Many and many a time did I turn upon my way, that I might have another look at this spot, which awakened recollections of other times and distant scenes. From one spot in particular where I halted to take a last look at this chateau, the two places were so very much alike, that I am confident that if any of the old Barons of Argyle had by some magic been transported from the Ochills, and stood upon the spot which I did, and been made to gaze in the same direction, was asked what object they saw, they would have unhesitatingly declared, that they recognized their own Castle Campbell.

This is one of the most busy valleys of the

Pyrénées; the largest iron forges in the south are situated in it, giving labour and employment to thousands, and presenting a scene of bustle and activity. Before arriving at Vicdessos, I observed the narrow path which leads to the mines of Raincié, in the mountain, some 4000 feet above the road, and down which a long cavalcade of mules loaded with mineral were descending. These mines are the most productive of the Pyrénées; they furnish annually above 300,000 quintals of ore, which is distributed among forty forges, many of them situated at a very considerable distance from the mines.

There are two mines in the mountains of Raincié, which, at a great depth, communicate with each other. Two hundred men are employed in each mine, who are under the direction of four commissaires, paid by the government, to whom the mines appertain. The labourers work seven hours a day, and notwithstanding the fatigue and danger which they undergo, their wages are not more than one franc, seventy centimes, or about fifteen pence a day. The descent into the mines is difficult and tedious, but not more so than into many of the various mines in Great Britain. The



entrance is through a long muddy gallery which opens into an immense excavation, which has, in the course of ages, been formed by the enormous quantities of ore which have been extracted from it. A winding path among the debris in the bottom of this subterranean hall, and another suspended half-way up its sides, formed by planks supported upon iron bars driven into its walls, conduct to the entrance of the narrow, slippery, and winding corridors which lead to the spots where the mineral is dug out. These paths are in many places difficult and dangerous, and the poor overloaded miner has not unfrequently, carrying his lamp in his mouth, to crawl over such spots upon his hands and knees. The miners of Raincié are, like their brethren in other places, subject to frequent danger from the closing up of the passages by the falling in of their walls and roofs. In the year 1821, seventy miners were inclosed in this manner. The quantity of matter which choked up the gallery was so great, that it was at first thought impossible to extricate them, and the whole valley was a scene of weeping and wailing; but the energy and perseverance of their friends and relatives, aroused by the near pros-

pect of the death of those dear to them, and animated by the courage of M. Vergnies, the Maire of Vicdessos, who never quitted the workmen, the unhappy wretches, who had given themselves up for lost, were extricated from their living tomb.

Man has been doomed to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; so it is with all of us, but nevertheless, how very different is the condition of one class of our fellow-creatures compared with that of others! During the outcry raised by those who were interested in the continuance of the West India slaves in a state of bondage, it was urged as an argument, that the condition of the slaves was much more comfortable than that of British labourers in general; but how infinitely preferable the condition of both to that of the miner doomed in some places by law, in others by nature, to gain his bread by the sweat of his brow, in the bowels of the earth, amid darkness and impurity of air, aware that danger and death surround him on all sides, that each stroke of his pickaxe may perchance be hastening his own destruction; and who seldom participates in the enjoyment—undenied even to the meanest



of God's creatures, breathing the pure air of heaven.

These mines of Raincié have been wrought for more than six centuries; and, from the quantity of mineral which the mountain contains, there can be no limits set to its supply. Roger Bernard, of Foix, confirmed, in 1273, the right which the inhabitants of the valley claimed, to be the sole workers of these mines, and subsequent charters have renewed to them the privilege; but it is only used by the inhabitants of the nearest villages, those of Sem, Gonlier, and Olbier. The ore is sufficiently productive; but, notwithstanding this, and the cheapness of labour, the iron, when manufactured, is very dear. This is partly owing to the imperfect nature of the machinery employed; which is, however, at Vicdessos, very superior to that in most of the Pyrénéan iron foundries; but, more particularly, to the great expense of fuel. There are few, almost no forests, in the vicinity of the forges, consequently, the charcoal has to be transported for immense distances, sometimes fifty miles, of land carriage; thus rendering the material produced, rather an article of luxury than a useful

commodity. But I do not despair of seeing all the forges of the Pyrénées cease working, which they must do, the moment the French government cease to consider private gain as commensurate with the public prosperity.

Vicdessos is a prettily-situated and well-built little town, upon the right bank of the river which bears its name, and in the centre of a fertile basin, into which numerous valleys and ravines open in all directions. Some of its mountains are wild and Alpine, partially wooded, and affording some good pasturages; others are sterile and rocky. The auberge in which I breakfasted was excessively clean, and the eatables produced excellent; but, no wonder, for the landlord,—a most civil and obliging personage,—was both an old soldier and a gentleman. He procured me an excellent guide, and we proceeded up the valley of the Saleix.

The entrance of this valley is narrowed by an isolated monticule, upon which are the ruins of some old fortifications, which the tradition of the country tells us are the remains of a Roman fortress. To the south of the monticule, is the village of Auzat, whose inhabitants are chiefly



composed of miners, labourers in the forges, and the most noted smugglers in the Pyrénées. The contrabandiers of the Alps, and of Switzerland, are principally engaged in the smuggling of articles of a very portable nature, such as jewels, watches, laces, &c.; those of the Pyrénées have much harder work to perform, and double the danger and risk to undergo. Tobacco and wool are the somewhat ponderous articles which they have to carry; and, as they cannot elude the douaniers with such loads, as those can who have merely a few watches and chains to incommode their flight, they are consequently obliged to choose more dangerous paths, more stormy weather, and more circuitous routes, in pursuing "their calling" than the Alpine contrabandier, whose life is one of comparative comfort, when compared with that of the Pyrenean.

In "thunder, lightning, and in rain," when the elements are warring in such fearful mood as to drive the very beasts of the forest to seek for safety and for shelter, then it is that the contrabandier of the Pyrénées is reaping the harvest of his profession; he is then, perhaps, the only living creature who exults among the wilds of



Miguelets.

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the mountains ; and, if he ever utters a prayer, or tells his beads, it is when all nature is raging round him ; and its purport, that the storm may not subside. In such times, the contrabandier knows well, that the douanier will not cross his path ; and that, should he pass in safety those places where, on account of the terrible force of the wind, it is a proverb among the mountaineers, " that there the father never waits for his son, nor the son for his father," his hardships and his dangers will be well repaid him. The contrabandiers of the Pyrénées are sometimes French, sometimes Spanish ; but the most daring and hardy of all, are a race born in Spain,* but whose fathers have been French. Both countries are alike subject to the audacity of this class, who, armed to the teeth, never hesitate at shooting the douaniers when they think that the urgency of the occasion requires it. The douaniers, aware of the desperate character of the men with whom they have to deal, are, not unfrequently, obliged to overlook the delinquencies of these contrabandiers.

Upon one occasion a contrabandier of this

* Generally known by the name of Miguelets.



lawless description was resting in a solitary auberge, and, as usual, completely armed, and, indifferent to the presence of the other inmates of the place, was clearing his pipe with the point of his long poignard; having finished the operation, he turned the weapon several times round, regarding it with much complacency before returning it again to his pocket, seeming well pleased with the good service which it might upon trying occasions have rendered him, when a gendarme who was present, observing the action, immediately placed his hand upon the pocket of the contrabandier, telling him, that he could not be allowed to enter the French territory armed.

"Ha!" said the contrabandier—"Is it not permitted to cut our tobacco and our bread?"

"Certainly;" replied the gendarme,—“but you have more *there* than is necessary to cut your tobacco and your bread.”

"Yes;" replied the other, with a significant look—"but the wolves, and the dogs, it is necessary that we should defend ourselves against them."

The contrabandier uttered this with such apparent carelessness, but, at the same time,

hauteur, that the gendarme, more accustomed to ask for passports than for poignards, thought it most prudent not to insist. The costumes of the contrabandiers vary in the different districts of the Pyrénées; but it is always of a light and simple description, suited to the character of the wearer.

The valley of Saleix is not remarkable for its beauty, but for the splendid mountain scenery in its vicinity. We sat down to rest and refresh ourselves near the Port d'Aulus; and from this spot I could distinguish all the summits to the north and south of Mount St. Barthelemy, but those in my more immediate neighbourhood deserve particular regard. To the south of the monticule upon which rests the old Roman fort, rises a mountain far higher, but resembling the other in form and shape; to the south of this rises another mountain of like form, but of far greater height, and beyond this last rises the magnificent Mont Calm, to the height of 1620 toises. The Mont Calm is remarkable, not only by reason of its appearance and majestic height, but on account of its formation; it, and the summits near it, the



Pic d'Estats and the Punta de Medacourbe, are composed of what M. du Mege classes under the term "terrain de transition," and are among the loftiest of their kind in the Pyrénées.

In the valley of Saleix, I observed the best crops of potatoes I had seen in France, where potatoes are not cultivated to any great extent, and do not form an essential article of food.

My guide, a very active and intelligent young fellow, amused me excessively by the relation of his domestic arrangements. It seemed that he had the misfortune to marry a woman about ten years older than himself, and that the difference in the ages of the pair had (as is usual in such cases) been the source of much discomfort and annoyance.

"I work hard," said he, "the whole day, but I must account for every farthing which I gain to the old woman; I am never allowed to spend a sous with my companions, or in buying powder for the chasse; and I dare not look at, much less speak to, any of the girls of the village, because if the old woman saw me do so, or heard of it from any one, she would do nothing but

scold for days, so that what with her stinginess and her jealousy, I am the most unhappy man in all our valley."

"And why do you not leave her?" inquired I.

"Oh! I have often been advised to do so, and M. Merry (the person who recommended him to me), who has been very kind to me, and who is acquainted with all the circumstances, has offered to take me into his service should I do so; but the old woman has two children by me, and I cannot think of leaving them, so that I am forced to submit to all the indignities and misery which she occasions me." The poor fellow, like all others who fall into the same predicament, was to be pitied, but not comforted.

From the summit of the Port, another magnificent range of summits present themselves; they are those which extend from the Pic de Bonrepaux, to that promontory of the high central range of the Pyrénées, the Tuc de Mauberge, and includes the high mountains at the source of the valley of Sallat, and around the Port d'Aulus. But among a host of peaks, the double peak of



Mount Vallier appears preeminent in height, and unrivalled in grandeur.

The beautiful and riant basin of Aulus is the commencement of the valley d'Ercé, and one of the most exquisite spots in these mountains; it is an amphitheatre within whose circle the richest cultivation is diversified with mounds and knolls, which, rising apart from each other, are covered with different species of trees, or with verdure. The stream, which is formed by the junction of torrents from the valleys Garbel and Arce, meanders in tortuous windings among the rising grounds, giving life and animation to the scene. The mountains or walls of the amphitheatre display the richest pasturages, and irrigated meadows, in some places fringing the most *escarpè* rocks, elsewhere, the mountain side is broken into numerous little dells embowered with wood, or into gorges where the mountain-torrent is seen dashing down in all its beauty. Clumps of trees, as if they had been planted to complete the effect of this delightful scene, are sprinkled through the bosom of the valley, or hang upon the steeps in all directions, the intermediate spaces spangled

with wild flowers, and the ivy and wild rose clustering upon the rocks and shelves. There is here no dull uniformity to shock the admirer of natural beauty, or stiff parterres or formal avenues; the trees are neither pruned so as to resemble maypoles, nor deformed by cutting over: nature has been the only artist consulted in its formation, and rarely has she produced a more lovely gem of natural beauty.

To the left of the descent from the Port d'Aulus into this cradle of the picturesque, is the narrow and sombre valley of Garbel, which contains a mine of lead and silver, extending to a great distance under the mountain, and which has been wrought at various periods, and by different speculators, but from its having been so frequently abandoned; I suspect that it is one of those mines of lead and silver which, by their tantalizing character, have oftener conduced to the ruin of those who speculated upon their produce, than to their profit—at one time yielding an enormous return, while at others, the workmen are fruitlessly employed for months. This mine of Garbel must have been known and wrought at a very early period, and during the troublesome



times of feudal warfare; in the vicinity of the mine a strong fortification has been erected, evidently to guard its riches from depredations, and to protect the workmen. Following the tradition of the country, this old ruin, called Castelminier, was built by the Romans when they wrought this mine, to protect the miners and their village, and destroyed by the Moors. Several antique tools, and a curious figure in bronze have been found in the neighbourhood, and are in the possession of a proprietor of the valley.

The village of Aulus is not in character with the beautiful scenery which surrounds it: it is a long narrow line of houses, most of them poor and dirty in the extreme, with the exception of those which belong to the proprietors of the forge and baths. The mineral springs of Aulus have only lately been discovered, and I believe their properties are not generally known; but if they were only half as efficacious in curing the diseases of the body, as the pleasant and agreeable environs are calculated to efface those of the mind, the baths of Aulus ought in truth to become the most frequented in the Pyrénées. The

approach to them through the valley d'Ercé, is the most safe and easy of any of the routes which lead to the watering places in the mountains, and with very little difficulty might be rendered practicable for carriages, which even now can come up the valley of the Sallat by an excellent road to Oust or Siex.

I have seldom sauntered along a path which disclosed so much loveliness as that which follows the river-side down the valley d'Ercé, and I do not think I ever saw so pure and transparent a stream; the minnows and the trouts in its deepest pools were as visible as if they had been swimming in a crystal basin. A rushing, rumbling noise proceeding from the bank upon the right of the path, betrayed the vicinity of the fountain of Nanpounts. Like other similar torrents, it gushes in a large volume of water from a mountain of primitive limestone, and the natives believe that is the outlet of the waters of the Etang de Lherz, situated a couple of miles upon the other side of the mountain. In mountains of such formation, distance is no argument against this supposition; and there are many places in the Pyrénées where such streams can be traced a



great way through the caverns in the mountains of primitive limestone.

I did not intend to remain in the village of Aulus, but to have walked down the valley to Oust or Siex, but a very unforeseen but most welcome rencontre altered my intention. At a short distance from the fountain of Nanpounts, I met a traveller whom I felt confident I had seen *somewhere* before, but when or where I could not at the moment recollect. We thus passed each other, but I had only proceeded a few paces ere I resolved to satisfy myself of the identity of the stranger; and accordingly I sent back my guide to inquire of the stranger's guide if his master was English. Having learnt that he was, I made no hesitation in introducing myself to a countryman in a place so far from home, and where two individuals of the same nation were so unlikely to meet.

My countryman I discovered to be the Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, whom I had often seen, although, until then, I had not had the good fortune to become acquainted with him. We were soon seated on the bank together, the Professor giving

me information regarding some of the routes I intended pursuing, and through which he had passed, and which I afterwards found of much service to me, and I in return mentioned to him those through which I had wandered. The Professor intended to remain all night at Aulus, I on the contrary had several hours walking before me; but the time had passed so pleasantly, that our conversation by the river-side had been of some duration, when my guide, hinting as to the distance which we had to go, I shook hands with the Professor, and we pursued our different paths. But very short consideration was sufficient to convince me how much preferable it would be to return to Aulus, and enjoy the society of a countryman, than to proceed alone to Siex. It is not often that such an agreeable rencontre takes place in such wilds; in the present instance, particularly acceptable to me from the high talents and amiable character of the individual whom I had the happiness to meet. I therefore gave orders, to the right about face, and in a very short time we overtook the Professor. I told him my intention of accompanying him back to Aulus, and he agreed with me in thinking that the



arrangement was an exceedingly good one. In the principal house of the village, we found a couple of beds which we were told we could have, and having ordered dinner, we strolled out until it was prepared for us. There is a forge at Aulus which is worked only a few months during the year, as the mineral has to be brought across the mountains from the mines of Rancié, and the charcoal all the way from St. Girons, and this in bad weather or in winter cannot be accomplished. To the forge we directed our steps; the Professor had not, I believe, seen a forge upon the Catalan principle before, and I was anxious to have him explain part of the mystery connected with its operations which I did not altogether understand, and which he most obligingly did.

From the forge we sauntered to the summit of one of the beautifully-wooded knolls in the centre of the basin; where we remained enjoying the coolness of its shady groves, until we thought that the old woman at the auberge would be expecting our return.

Although we had secured a couple of beds, yet we occupied the same apartment; and, although indifferently well lodged, I suspect that I

was much more fortunate and comfortable than my friend. The beds were clean, and of the same length, suiting me perfectly well; but, as the Professor happens to be somewhat more than *rather* tall, it followed, as a matter of course, that the bed in which I had sufficient room to stretch myself was nearly half a yard too short for him. Nothing is more difficult, I may say, impossible, than to arrange one's-self satisfactorily in a bed which is too short; I have always found it so, and have invariably been troubled with a nervous twitching of the limbs, and a particular desire to stretch my legs out, whenever I have discovered that I could not do so; however, the Professor, accustomed to meet with such inconveniencies, was much more contented than I should have been under such circumstances. Next morning, after breakfast, we proceeded on our different routes; and I left Aulus, accompanied by the proprietor of the establishment in which we had passed the night, the baths, and the forge.

The valley becomes narrower towards the village of Ercé; it is no longer interspersed with woody knolls and shady groves, and the forests hang more formally upon the mountain-sides, but



it is yet rich in that picturesque beauty which a profusion of nature's most admired features can bestow upon it; and, although the basin of Aulus is certainly the most delightful portion of it, still the long avenue which leads into it from the valley of the Sallat, forms a charming and suitable approach to the little paradise it contains.

Each valley of the Pyrénées is, to the natives of it, a little world in itself; and their traditionary history, and early associations, are limited by the mountains which inclose it; beyond which, the greater part of them never pass, but spend their lives within the circle of their own commune. Some restless and discontented spirits there may be among them, who, like Rasselas, imagining that all is harmony and happiness beyond the boundaries of their valley, leave it to make their "choice of life," to seek employment and riches elsewhere; but, generally, a short and unsatisfactory pursuit of the object of their search, convinces them, that their habits and their ignorance have not formed them for mixing in the world, and buffeting with its storms; and they return to their birth-place, satisfied, that the simple com-

petence which it provides for all its children is more secure; and its still simpler enjoyments afford to them more substantial happiness than can be acquired by mixing with a world whose ways they do not understand, and whose subtleties are to them a riddle which they cannot solve. Such "prodigal sons," upon their return, become, from the knowledge of the world which they may have gained within a few leagues of their own valley, the oracles of the hamlet; and continue so, until some aspirant, his ambition roused by the oft-repeated tale, whose marvels increase in proportion as their novelty has worn off, follows the course of his predecessor; and, like him, returns to act his part in exciting, or imposing upon, the credulity of his community.

Quarrels and feuds are not unfrequent between the inhabitants of neighbouring valleys; and they can retain their animosity, and exercise their vengeance upon each other, as signally as ever was displayed in the annals of our Highland clans. An instance of this occurred a short time ago in the valley d'Erce.

The property of the woods and pasturages of Fouillets, one of the upper valleys of the district,



have been, for a long period, the subject of litigation; and, of course, in such a state of society, the origin of much hatred between the inhabitants of Aulus and those of Ercé. It seems, that a native of the former commune, a man much esteemed, and the father of a family, had, as usual, gone up to the forests to procure fire-wood. Night came on, and he did not return. No one could imagine what had become of him. The whole commune assembled, and, with lights and torches, set off to the mountains. The night was spent in an unavailing search for him. The shepherds of Laspeires, natives of Ercé, when interrogated regarding him, declared that they had not seen him, although they had been all the day preceding in the vicinity of the place where he must have been cutting wood; but, upon the following day, between their cabin and Casiarens, his body was discovered in a hole, half covered over with stones, and horribly disfigured with wounds. He had been beat to death by the spades of eight men of Ercé. The victim of this feud was not more obnoxious to the inhabitants of Ercé than others of his valley, but the general hatred subsisting between the parties led

them to commit the horrid act. The murderers were tried for the crime, found guilty, and they are now in the galleys. By the commission of this crime, the breach between the parties has been so widened that they seldom or never have the slightest intercourse, although living within a couple of miles of each other. When they meet, they pass each other in silence, and without the most simple act of recognition, so common among utter strangers.

I regretted that it was not possible for me to remain a few days at Aulus, and hunt the bear among the deep and solitary ravines of the central ridge, where that lord of the Pyrénéan forest is more frequently to be encountered than in most other districts of the mountains. I would strongly recommend those who are fond of this sport to make Aulus, or St. Lizier, at the *source* of the Sallat, their head-quarters for a week or two; and, if they can be successful any where in the Pyrénées, they will be successful there. The bear is now become scarce in the Pyrénées; but what of that?—there is the more glory in killing him.

My companion was possessed of a very fine



dog, of the species common on the Spanish frontier, which had paid me great attention ever since I had been rather civil to him at dinner the preceding day. The dog was now accompanying his master to his residence in the village of Oust; where we parted company, I taking the road to Seix. At the village of Oust, prettily situated at the junction of the waters of Ercé and Sallat, we enter the little plain of Seix, inclosed on all sides (except where the river Sallat has found an exit for itself) by mountains of a tamer aspect than those which border the waters of Ercé.

It was here, when it was the custom to search for gold dust in the beds of some of the Pyrénéan torrents, that the greatest quantity was collected. The sands between Seix and St. Sermin were the most productive, and that found in the stream of the Nert the most esteemed. Notwithstanding this evidence of the existence of the precious metal somewhere about the source, or in the course of these streams, no mines have been discovered which could be profitably worked.

When crossing the bridge at the entrance to the village of Seix, the dog which I have mentioned as belonging to the inn-keeper of Aulus,

came up to me. He had left his master at Oust, and followed on my trail; and he appeared so glad at having overtaken me, that I allowed him to follow me to the other village, that he might have a share of my breakfast, be taken care of, and returned to his owner.



CHAPTER XI.

Destruction of the Pyrénéan Forests—Aneecdote of a Dog—Change of Weather—Retreat from the Mountains—Valley of the Sallat—Fly Fishing—Valley of the Castillionaise—St. Girons—The Garonne—St. Martory—Chateau de Montespan—St. Gaudens—Valley of Luchon—St. Bertrand—Industry of the Peasantry—Basin of Luchon—Pretty Blanchiseuses—Another Aneecdote of a Dog—Town of Luchon—Mineral Springs—Table d'Hôte—Recommendation to Travellers—Scenery around Luchon—Val de Lys—Ports of Estaous and Viel—Superstition of the Shepherds—Lakes of the Seculejo and Espingo—Glaciers of the Port d'Oo—Wild Flowers—Famous Punch.

I BREAKFASTED in company with the government inspector of the forests. He seemed perfectly aware of the shameful system of spoliation and destruction pursued among the forests of the Pyrénées, which has been prevalent for so many

years, and which, if not checked, will, at no distant period, leave those mountains as destitute of wood as the greater part of our Scottish hills and mountains were previous to the praiseworthy and patriotic exertions of their proprietors to repair the damages occasioned by the folly or carelessness of their ancestors. I mentioned to the inspector the advice which a canny Scottish laird gave to his son—"Be aye planting a tree, Jock; it will grow when ye are sleeping." And I told him, I thought the advice would be equally applicable to his government.

During breakfast, a young man entered, who stated, that he had been sent by the master of the dog to bring him back to Oust; unless I chose to retain him at the price which he had mentioned to me as that which he wished to obtain for him. Aware, that, in the event of any diligence travelling, he would be rather an inconvenient addition to my baggage, I told the lad to take him away; and as he was unwilling to quit his quarters, I threatened him with a caning, which had the effect of making him accompany the messenger.

A quarter of an hour had not, however, elapsed



from the departure of the man, ere the dog was again underneath the breakfast table; and, a short time afterwards, the lad returned, puffing and blowing, and declaring that he could not get the animal to follow him. We now tied a cord round his neck; and I bade my guide go along with the lad, and help him a part of the way home. Accordingly, the two set forth; and, wishing to put an end to the dog's friendship for me, I performed the unwilling piece of cruelty of striking him.

But all would not do; the animal proceeded quietly as far as the bridge; when, turning upon the guide, who was leading him, he nearly tore his coat off, and, regaining his liberty, came scampering into the auberge, dragging his cord along with him. I had witnessed this last exhibition from the window of the house: there could be, therefore, no doubt of the animal's affection for me, so I at once paid the price of him to the lad, and determined to take him along with me.

Hitherto I had, from the commencement of my expedition among the mountains, been so fortunate as to have had a continued track of the very finest weather—each morning came but to usher

in a day, if possible, more delicious than the preceding one. But, at Aulus, Mr. Forbes informed me, that in the Hautes Pyrénées, the weather had been very uncertain and rainy. So I thought that, most probably, in quitting Arriege, I should leave the fine weather behind me. So it really happened; for the clouds, which had looked very threatening ever since I had entered the valley of the Sallat, began to discharge their contents previous to my leaving Seix. I waited for an hour or two, in hopes that the clouds would blow over; but there was no appearance of this taking place. I had been too long accustomed to the aspect which the high and low Pyrénées present, when there is a probability of the bad weather continuing, not to foresee, upon this occasion, the little chance of fair weather for some days, at least. This being the case, I had to consider what I ought to do, and in what direction to bend my steps. My intention was, to have explored the valleys of the Castillionaise, mounted to the summit of Mont Vallier, and crossed by the Tuc de Maubermé to Bagnères de Luchon. The bad weather blew this intention to the winds; so that I was obliged, either to remain at Seix for the



arrival of more propitious weather, or proceed down the valley of Sallat to St. Giron, and thence by the diligence to Luchon. Most people are acquainted with the miseries of a country inn in rainy weather; and, as I had no inclination to become a passive spectator of the enjoyment of the web-footed tribes in the puddle, or to have to compassionate the crest-fallen cock, or the soiled and drooping plumage of his seraglio, I bade my guide strap on my knapsack. We left Seix in the rain, and proceeded down the valley; where, either at St. Girons, or at St. Martory, I would, most probably, find a diligence which would carry me to Luchon.

The river escapes from the little plain of Seix, through a dark and narrow gorge. Near which, placed upon the last peak of the chain of Uston, is the Chateau de Mirabel; its "donjon keep" is in good preservation, and overtops the surrounding woods to a great height. The road follows the course of the river, which, twisting among the many hills which form, as it were, the bulwarks, or connecting links between the mountains and the low country,—all of which so strongly resemble each other in shape and character as to

be rather monotonous,—must be, if its appearance did not greatly deceive me, a good trouting stream; its banks are unincumbered with wood, it is neither too rapid nor too still, and its waters are not so clear as the streams in the vicinity of the mountains in general are; while the excellent trouts produced at breakfast bear witness to its contents: but I am afraid that it, like most of the rivers in the south of France, is spoilt for fly-fishing by the frequent intrusion of the net. There seems to be no restriction against the use of this unfair mode of piscatory warfare in the Pyrénéan departments; the net is the universal engine of destruction in use; and, consequently, those streams which, but for the system pursued, could not be otherwise than full of fish, can scarcely boast of a few minnows. Greater care is taken of some of the larger rivers; upon the Garonne, for instance, where the fishings are either let, or permission from the Government is required, before a line can be cast into it. I think that the use of the net might, with advantage to the peasant, be prohibited; for I have often heard them complain of the scarcity of fish in their streams, caused by its depredations, and



I have no doubt, that were it so, the result would be that the peasant, taking to the rod and fly, would, in a very short time, have as great a contempt for the "fillet" as old Isaac Walton himself. A few miles from Seix, I passed the entrance to the pretty and fertile valley in which Massat, surrounded by its iron mines and forges, is situated. It is one of the largest and most populous iron manufacturing towns in the Pyrénées.

Near St. Girons, the valley of the Castillionaise unites with that of the Sallat, and the country assumes the delightful character which a rich and productive soil, broken into gentle swells and undulations, covered with orchards and vineyards, with copses and hamlets, can bestow upon it. St. Girons is situated at the junction of the Lezard with the Sallat, in the middle of a country teeming with plenty, and is an industrious and thriving little town.

I arrived in St. Girons just in time to secure the coupé of the diligence for my dog and myself, change my wet clothes for dry, and leave the place for St. Martory. The dog followed me into the vehicle as if he had been quite accus-

tomed to travelling, laid himself down underneath the seat, and did not display that inquisitive propensity which untravelled dogs generally have, to stare out of the windows.

At a short distance from St. Girons, upon the east bank of the river, and built upon a noble platform which overhangs it, is the ancient archiepiscopal town of St. Lizier. It was, at one period, the capital of the district, and the whole of the adjacent country belonged to it; it is now shorn of its ancient rights and grandeur, dwindled into insignificance, and has nought to recommend it to the attention of the traveller, but the beauty of its site, and the admirable view which it commands of the mountains. Beyond St. Lizier, the valley increases in width and beauty, until it becomes an extensive plain, interspersed with wooded hillocks, or grassy slopes, and watered by the various tributary streams which flow into the Sallat.

The old chateau of Prat marks the limits of the department of Arriege. We then enter the department of the Haute Garonne, and from the neighbourhood of the little town of Sallies, we have the first peep of that noble river, which,



from its source among the Spanish mountains, at the head of the Valley d'Arran, until it reaches the Atlantic, after a course of a hundred and forty leagues, presents along its banks so many scenes of savage wildness, sublimity, and grandeur, ere it forsakes the Pyrénées; when, as if suiting its character to the districts through which it flows, it no longer dashes along in all the uncontrolled turbulence of a mountain-river, but gently and silently steals through the sunny plains, and laves the vine-clad hills of Guienne and Gascony. At St. Martory, I left the diligence, which proceeded to Toulouse; and waited for that which, at a very early hour next morning, passed through the place, on its way from Toulouse to Luchon.

St. Martory, like most of the towns in the district which extends from Narbonne by Toulouse, along the outports of the Pyrénées, boasts of its Roman origin, and has furnished its quota of antique busts and bas-reliefs to the collection of the academy of Toulouse. I was fortunate in procuring places in the diligence from Toulouse, and, by day-break, Cæsar and I were en route for Bagneres de Luchon.

Upon an isolated monticule, within a short

distance of St. Gauden, and upon the right bank of the river, are the ruins of the Chateau de Montespan, almost hid among the wood which surrounds them. It was in this chateau, so distant from Paris, that the husband of the artful woman who had undermined the influence of the beautiful and gentle La Vallière, lived in seclusion and retirement; whilst the haughty favourite exulted in the success of her guilty ambition, and ruled over the most depraved court which ever existed.

Nothing can be more agreeable than the appearance of the country between St. Martory and the entrance to the valley of Luchon. It is, perhaps, the most beautiful plain which the Garonne waters in its course, the most fertile and productive, and containing the most delightful sites any where to be met with. There is no monotony in its features, for its surface is diversified by myriads of the most lovely wooded or verdant knolls, as various in their forms as in their numbers, and crowned with the ruins of ancient castles, or the prosperous villages of the district.

St. Gaudens is said to have derived its name



from one of the worthies who, in 470, fell a sacrifice to the bigotry of the fierce, valiant Euric, the champion of Arianism; less illustrious than his son Alaric, who put an end to the persecutions which his father had so signally encouraged, but who perished young and regretted by the hand of Clovis, upon the fatal field of Vonglé.

At La Broquere, we again encountered the Garonne, which we had quitted at St. Gaudens. This river, after in vain endeavouring to follow the course, which, from its source until its junction with the Neste, it seems as if it had been intent upon pursuing, turns suddenly to the east. When it unites with that stream, near Montrejeau, and flows towards Toulouse; where, as if regretting its deviation from its original intention, it returns to the west, which it follows for the remainder of its course.

The valley of Luchon may be divided into three sections, all different in their characters. The first, that from Montrejeau to Cierp, is open, rich, and highly cultivated. The second, that from Cierp to Luchon, is more confined; the mountains which skirt it become lofty; and the traveller perceives, that every step which he

advances, is conveying him into scenes more picturesque than those which he has passed through, and increasing in boldness and grandeur; the summits of the high central range are to be seen peering into the clouds, and, if he has that love of the wilds which I have, he will again exult in the near prospect of exploring their recesses. The third part of the valley, that from Luchon to Venasque, is a series of gorges, ravines, pastures, and woods, until the snowy range from which the Pique derives its source, separates the two countries.

As the diligence mounted slowly the steep ascents in which the road through the valley of Luchon abounds, I walked alongside of a lady and gentleman who had, for the first time in their lives, visited the Pyrénées. I was greatly amused with their remarks upon the appearance of the valley. The plains of Languedoc had hitherto been the objects of their contemplation, the corn-fields and the vineyards, the sluggish river and the fishponds, formed the scenery with which all their ideas of the picturesque were associated. The mountain, with its tapestry of wood; the enormous rocks which overhung the



road, threatening to annihilate them by their fall; the river, pent up within its narrow course, and foaming with wrath at its detention; the thundering cascade; and the villages perched among the heights, where their roads seemed but a pathway of a span's breadth—were, to my companions, features as strange and wonderful as they were novel and delightful.

One of the most remarkable places in this valley,—or, rather, at the entrance to this valley,—is St. Bertrand, which is built upon a conical height upon the right bank of the river. This town, and its ancient cathedral, merit highly the traveller's notice. But, as my visit to it was upon another occasion, I shall, for the present, defer giving an account of it.

There are two considerable valleys which open into that of Luchon. The valley of Barousse is that which stretches away to the south-east of St. Bertrand, and through which flows the little river of Ourse. It is one of the most populous, but least interesting, lateral valleys of the district. There are considerable forests in it, and marble quarries; but, from its isolated situation, or, rather, from the circumstance that it lies be-

tween the two general routes from Luchon to Bagnères de Bigorre, it is hardly ever visited by strangers, and has even been overlooked by the best geologists of the Pyrénées, although it possesses some formations which ought to have drawn their attention.

The other great valley which opens into that of Luchon does so in the vicinity of the village of Cierp. It is sometimes styled the valley of the Garonne, but, more frequently, the valley d'Arran, and there is scarcely another valley in the Pyrénées which can boast of so much beauty, or which will afford so much pleasure to those who may explore its solitudes.

From Cierp to Luchon the valley is lovely and delightful; irrigated pastures, corn-fields, and hamlets embowered in wood, hang upon the mountain-steeps. Industry, waging war with the obstacles which oppose her progress, has conquered them; and here, as elsewhere among these mountains, she has bordered their bases with a fringe of green and gold; the yellow corn, waving wherever sufficient soil could be scraped together to cover the seed, or the peasant find footing secure enough to enable him to hoe it.



The village, or rather town, of Luchon,—for it is one of the largest watering-places in the Pyrénées,—is situated in an amphitheatre formed by the junction of several of the smaller diverging valleys with that which bears its name. The basin is of considerable extent, inclosing some of the most luxuriant prairies any where to be seen, and the mountains rising from it are of very considerable elevation, some of them attaining a height of eight or nine hundred toises, studded with villages and hamlets, many of which, such as Juset and Montauban, are most picturesquely situated.

The diligence drove into the court-yard of the Hotel de France, and was instantly surrounded by a variety of claimants upon the notice of the victims of their persecution. One set of half-clad, dirty-looking fellows, beat up recruits for the respective inns at which they officiated as *decrotteurs*, and shoved their half French, half-English, hotel cards into your hands, if you would take them, or into your pocket if you refused. Another most importunate class insisted upon conducting you to the best lodgings in the place, where each window was said to pos-

sess the most charming and enchanting view; but which, in all probability, looked into a courtyard, or upon the bustling *Place*. Such tormentors *could* be shaken off; but there was a third class, of most insinuating manners, and prepossessing appearance, which it was not such an easy matter to turn aside from, or to address with the usual “*Allez vous en.*” These were the smartly-dressed, sprightly-looking peasant-girls, who wished to know if Monsieur would employ them in washing his linens. Undoubtedly, many will find this a most trying situation to be placed in, especially those who have a general wish to oblige the whole sex; and, still more disagreeable will it be to those who would not, for the world, be the unhappy cause of strife or contention, among a host of pretty mountaineers; and, as I happened to be one of those who would avoid this cruelty, I acted the part of the most consummate politician, accepted the services of every fair *blanchisseuse* who tendered them, pleased all, and created no jealousy; but, perfectly uncertain in what quarter of the town I should take up my quarters, of course I could not tell them where to find “Monsieur’s linens.”



In the court-yard of the hotel, I found a friend waiting for me whom I had expected to meet; and we set out together to look for lodgings. Unwilling to take my dog through the various houses which, in our search, we might visit, I tied him up in the stable and left him. We walked over a considerable part of the town, and at last arrived at the apartments which my friend occupied, and where I resolved also to establish myself.

We had been gone from the hotel for, perhaps, an hour, when there was a violent scraping at the door of the room in which we were; and, upon opening it, my dog, in an ecstasy of delight, bounded in. He had ate through the cord by which I had attached him to the manger of the stable, tracked me over the town, and through all the places in which I had been, until, arriving at the house in which he found me, he had waited until the street door was opened, and had then discovered me in one of its most distant apartments. This displayed some stretch of sagacity and instinct upon the part of an animal which was only sixteen months old, and had never been in Luchon, or, indeed, in any town, in its life

before. Since then, he and I have travelled not a few hundred leagues together, and time has not failed to increase our mutual affection.*

Luchon is, without exception, one of the most agreeable watering places in the Pyrénées, its advantages over many of its rivals in fame and beauty are great. From its size, you are not thrown into such immediate contact with the infirm in health, nor elbowed by the more disagreeable frequenters of these places, the unfortunate and miserable creatures who stray thither for the purpose of killing—neither izards nor bears, but to them a still more deadly enemy—time; and who may be seen spurring the overwrought ponies of the place, along its walks and avenues, or “Lazy Lawrence” like, dozing over a stile, inwardly cursing such vulgar sights as mountains, woods, and rivers are, when compared with the enjoyments of the Palais Royal of the

* Cæsar has now become a useful member of his master's family; does duty as pony to his children, acts the part of the most excellent watch-dog in guarding his property; and belies the statement, that the Pyrenean dogs lose their natural vivacity and qualities, and degenerate in character, when taken from their native mountains.



metropolis, the Allées de Tourny of Bordeaux, or the ramparts of Toulouse.

In the height of the season, which is from June until the end of September, there are frequently above a thousand strangers in the little town, where the accommodation is equal to that of its rivals, and certainly not more expensive. The greater part of its visitors are those whom the summer heats have driven from Toulouse, and the southern districts, and consist of all those whose circumstances will permit them to leave home, and enjoy the coolness of the mountain air.

The baths are extensive and well arranged. The warm springs have been long known and celebrated for their medicinal properties, and are taken both internally and externally. They are said to be efficacious in chronic rheumatisms, paralysis, catarrh, and various other disorders; when drank, they are taken either pure or mixed with milk; there are also sudatories attached to the establishment, which are heated by the waters of the warm springs which flow through them. In these stew-pots the air is so hot and suffocatingly thick, that these vapour baths are

not in general favour, and those persons who do use them, cannot remain in them above a quarter of an hour.

The springs are some distance from the baths, and are brought underground to them; they emit a smell resembling musty eggs, their taste is flat, and the action of the air, heat, and light decomposes the waters, and renders them of a milky appearance, affording a most convincing proof, that if any benefit is expected to be derived from their use, they ought to be taken at the spot where they issue from the rock, and that even conveying them in covered tanks or pipes must deteriorate their qualities. Handsome baths, and elegant fountains may tend to overcome the repugnance to the use of the waters, but they ought not, as is too frequently the case, to be erected in situations chosen more with a view to adorn the town, than to preserve the intrinsic characters of the waters. The Latin inscriptions which abound, attest that the waters were known and used by the Romans.

The restaurants of Luchon are superior to any in the Pyrénées, and the tables d'hôte are more fully attended. Their charges are not more than



sixty or seventy francs a month, and for that sum they provide a *dejeuner à la fourchette*, and dinner, both equally well supplied. Single travellers, and those who either from habit or indifference can eat their dinners without being disgusted by the greedy, guzzling system which too frequently pervades a French *table d'hôte*, cannot do better than resort to these places; and if they will permit me, I will here beg leave to recommend to their special attention the Hotel de Commerce; and as my simple recommendation and testimony to the excellence of its "cuisine," may not be sufficient to entice strangers to bestow upon it their "*custom*," I cannot do better than allow the worthy Maitre d'Hotel to become his own trumpeter, by presenting a fac simile of his hotel card, which at once determined us to give him our patronage, and which no doubt will lead all other Englishmen to follow our example.

Hotel de Commerce.

BAGNERES DE LUCHON.

Perret, of Paris, head Cook to Lord Beverly for several years has, the honour to, inform the English that his Hotel has been in général been, patronized by their, nation, and he assures them that no exertion shall be wanting on, his part to merit, a, continuance of the reputation his Establishment, has for its cleanliness and wholesomeness, and he respect fully solicits the patronage of the English visitors.

Luchon may be fixed upon as a central point, from which excursions may be made to the summit of some of the most magnificent mountains, and into many of the most interesting valleys of the Pyrénées. I remained at Luchon several days, and intruded upon the solitude of many of its dusky forests and wild fastnesses, enchanted with some, and delighted with all. The less



interesting of these expeditions I shall pass over, and confine my narrative to those which pleased me most. I was now no longer a solitary traveller, no longer a pedestrian, for my rambles in this neighbourhood were taken in the company of two friends, pleasant, sociable, and amusing, who had no aversion to walking, on the contrary they preferred it, but they were in the unfortunate predicament of possessing a spirit which was willing but a body which was weak. One of our first excursions was to the Val de Lys, which from its proximity to Luchon, and the possibility of its being reached on horseback, is the most frequent resort of the idlers and convalescents of the watering place. The path which leads to the Lys, passes by the foot of the monticule, upon the summit of which are the remains of the Castel Vieil, which in olden times had been built to defend the entrance to the valley of Luchon, by the Ports of the Portillon and Venasque, and whose decayed walls and crumbling ramparts, were, during the late war, deemed worthy of being crowned with cannon. The invalids of Luchon, those who are not able to take the longer journey to the Val de Lys, flock

here in numbers, where if a charming view of the basin of Luchon and the dark woods and mountains of the Birbe, and invigorating air, can conduce to the recovery of health, they may enjoy them to their hearts' content. After an hour's slow marching along the banks of the river, the wood so inclosing the path as completely to exclude the rays of the sun, and render it a delightful promenade in the extreme heats of summer, we entered a very narrow and precipitous defile, within which is the little valley of the Lys. It is the valley of Aulus upon a smaller scale: Aulus is the portrait, Lys the miniature, and both are equally worthy of admiration; all the beauties of Aulus are drawn together and concentrated within the high mountain which incloses this Arcadia of Luchon. Flowers of every description deck its verdant meadows, and tinge the masses of dark rock which have rolled from the mountains into it. Single trees of great age and size, are, park like, scattered through its little plain, while its limits are fringed with wood, and bounded by the mountain steeps, and wherever there is sufficient slope to retain as



much soil as will afford nourishment to a tree, a bush, or a wild flower, the nakedness of the dark walls are hidden under the most exquisite variety of foliage. The sycamore, the beech, the oak, the lime, the elder, the dwarf elm, the ash, the hawthorn, the hazel, the maple, the lilac, the service tree, and a profusion of lilies, from which the valley derives its name, blended together, cover the slopes, and creep along the cliffs, the trees decreasing in size as they approach the colder regions, where the dark pine of hardier growth has no rivals of the forest, but in solitary grandeur reigns among their wilds. The beauty of this little valley is greatly enhanced by the numerous torrents, which, born among the glaciers of the Carbioux, form a circle of cascades round it; in some places, shooting over its perpendicular walls, the volume of water ere it has reached the valley, has become a sheet of thin spray, brilliant in colour when the rays of the sun strike upon it, and noiseless in its fall; in others, the stream, hopping as it were from shelf to shelf, now dashes over a ledge of rock in sounding turbulence, now disappears among the foliage of the

trees or bushes, until, issuing again with collected force, it springs from the crest of some lower platform into the valley.

The Ports d'Estaous and Viel, at the extreme source of the Val de Lys, are reached after surmounting the barriers which inclose it, by passing the little lake of Estaous, and through the Alpine scenes of glaciers and sterile mountains bordering the deep ravines which lead to the summits of the central ridge. The Port de Viel, although difficult and dangerous, and impassable for the greater part of the season, is yet at times the path which the adventurous contrabandier makes choice of, to elude the vigilance of the douaniers, with his mules laden with wool. The simple minded mountaineers, who tend their flocks for a few weeks of the season in the neighbourhood of the Carbioux, are impressed with the idea, that quantities of gold and silver are inclosed within its glaciers; they have frequently attempted to search for these hidden treasures, and have upon more than one occasion perished in the attempt. These peasants, when unsuccessful in attaining any of the objects of their hopes or



wishes, and when they soliloquize over their disappointments, never ascribe their lot to the wisdom or justice of the Almighty, but unmercifully lay the whole of their bad luck to the shameful and unwarranted interference of the devil.

Another of the many objects of curiosity and mountain grandeur in the vicinity of Luchon, are the lakes of Seculejo and Espingo. The route to these lakes is through the valley of Larboust, passing the little chapel of St. Aventin, whose traditionary history, and the marvellous powers of the saint whose name it bears, are said to be very extraordinary. They were told me by one of the guides, but it so happened, that during the time he was relating the wonders to me, I was so intent upon watching the issue of a fierce battle in the air between a vulture and an eagle, a sight that is rarely seen, and admiring the evolutions of the birds, and the tactics they displayed in the contest, that the miracles of St. Aventin have either escaped my memory, or at most left but a dreamy impression behind.

At the village of Oo, the path strikes into the

small pastoral valley of Lasto, and follows the course of its stream until it reaches its limits, where a wall of delabré looking rock, with a considerable body of water tumbling over it, incloses it. This, apparently at first, insurmountable obstacle for equestrians, is passed without difficulty, by clambering up the channels of various little rivulets, and winding among the ledges, where the most difficult parts of the path have been formed by the inhabitants of the commune, who exact a toll upon every person who visits the lakes. By means of this passage, another little valley or rather ravine is arrived at, through which the waters from the lakes brawl in noisy turbulence among the fallen blocks of granite which impede their course. A circular mass of dark mountains hem in the upper part of this ravine, and in the hollow at their base is the Seculejo. The lake is what in England would be called a mountain tarn, but a wild and savage spot.

Inclosed on all sides, excepting where its waters find an egress by precipices, whose dark walls and high summits exclude the sun and



light, it is a scene of silence and solitude, a lonely and secluded place, its stillness only broken by the rushing noise of the cataract (which from a height of nearly one thousand feet falls into the lake), the whooping of the eagle, or the scream of the vulture, as they sweep across its waters, or, alas! for the harmony of the scene! the noisy laughter of the gay monde from Luchon. The commune of the Oo have built a hut upon the banks of the lake, and here the toll is collected from those who visit it; a piece of imposition which has no parallel among the Pyrénées, and at variance with the general conduct of the French, who justly pride themselves upon the freedom of admission in their country, to all places of interest. The platform from which the cascade falls, can only be reached on foot by a steep path, called the Escala; from this platform a narrow gorge leads to the foot of another tier of rock, above which are the two small lakes of the Espingo. The vicinity of these lakes is still more savage and dreary than the Seculejo; the central ridge towers above them where the two ports of Portillon and Oo are separated by the Montarque, and at the base of

this mountain is the lake called Selh de la Baque, one of the few lakes in the Pyrénées which are always covered with ice. Here commence the glaciers, which extend from the port d'Oo to the Crabioules, and cover a surface nearly equal to those of the Maladetta.

By the Port d'Oo it is possible to cross the frontier to the Spanish village of Venasque, and to one habituated to the mountains, it is a fatiguing, but not impossible day's journey from Luchon, it is not, however, a path frequented by chasseurs or contrabandiers, much less used as a means of transit betwixt the two countries. The environs of the lake d'Espingo, the icy Baque, the Port d'Oo, the little lake de Neré, the gorge of Esquierry, and the Seculejo, abound in the most beautiful and rare plants of the Pyrénées, the gorge d'Esquierry in particular, which has been styled the Flore des Pyrénées.

Before leaving the borders of the Seculejo upon the day which we visited it, the rain came down in torrents, and we were thoroughly drenched and shivering with cold before we reached Luchon; but the repast which M. Perret bestowed upon us after our arrival consoled us



for our ducking, and the bowl of exquisite punch which Meg Merrillies (as we styled the huge raw-boned, naked-armed barmaid) brought enveloped in flames to our lodgings afterwards, *breathed* defiance to both colds and rheumatisms.

CHAPTER XII.

Expedition to the Port of Venasque—Hospital of Luchon—Douaniers—French Intervention in the Spanish Quarrel, and its Consequences—Magnificence of the Port of Venasque—Extraordinary appearance of the Mist—The Maladetta—Avalanches—Loss of a Guide—Hints to those who would climb the Maladetta—Famous Trou de Toro—Ports de Picade and Pomerou—Spanish Valley of the Artique Telline—Anxiety of the Christino Shepherds—Ouil de Goneou—Source of the Garonne—Quantity of Timber—Valley d'Arran—Disagreeable Situation—Village of Bososte—Terror of the Peasantry—Spanish Old Woman—Misceries of Civil War.

THE aspect of the morning being rather unpropitious, we delayed setting out upon our expedition to the Port de Venasque until the forenoon; the clouds then began to clear away, and we lost not a moment in taking advantage of



the favourable but uncertain weather. A two hours' ride along the banks of the Pique brought us to the Hospital of Luchon. This building is what in Scotland would be called a shealing, one half of which is devoted to the accommodation of travellers, the other used as the permanent residence of a strong party of douaniers, who are stationed here to prevent smuggling upon a district of the frontier upon which it is next to impossible to do so effectually. The Ports by which the contrabandiers can pass from one country to another are nearly as numerous as there are douaniers to guard them; and, as these officers dare not attempt to cross the path of the contrabandiers, unless when secure of establishing their authority by force, which they can only do when several of them are in company, it follows that more than one half of the ports are always unguarded.

Great complaints have been made against the French government on account of the quantities of stores which have been conveyed to the partisans of Don Carlos, through the Pyrénées; and the authorities of that country have even been accused of conniving at the infraction of the law.

There never has been cause for such complaints; and such insinuations are most unfounded. Every one who has visited the wilds of the Pyrénées must be perfectly sensible of the impossibility of completely preventing smuggling upon the frontiers of the two countries. The whole troops of France could not, supposing they were stationed along the frontier of Spain, be an adequate security. Hundreds of the paths among these mountains are known only to the natives, or to those engaged in the illegal traffic. Soldiers and douaniers may be posted in the valleys and outlets; but they cannot be quartered upon the mountains and among the precipices. They may keep a tolerable sharp look out so long as daylight permits them to see about them; but, when night comes, and the contrabandiers are at their work, the soldiers and douaniers must return to their quarters in the valleys. They might as well search for a needle in a hay-stack, and with as much probability of their finding it, as endeavour to hunt the smugglers of the Pyrénées in the dark: and the utmost that the French government can, under such circumstances, and using the greatest possible vigilance, be expected to



accomplish, must be merely to increase the dangers of his trade, by throwing a few additional obstacles in the way of the contrabandier; but, not diminishing its profits, the inducements to smuggle are still the same as before, and increased difficulties can be overcome by increased exertion. Don Carlos *must* receive supplies from France; and, so long as he has money to pay for them, he will continue to do so. The additional restrictions of the French government, and the vigilance of their douaniers, may indeed raise the price of his necessities, and thus occasion his resources to disappear the sooner; but, so long as he can afford to pay the contrabandiers of the Pyrénées, they will work for him, and supply his wants; nay more, if they have faith in his success, they will, and can, give him credit.

There is another cause which greatly favours Don Carlos in drawing supplies from France; it is, the universal discontent which prevails throughout the whole of the French frontier departments, induced by the stagnation of the commerce which they carried on with Spain. In many districts, the Spanish wool was bought in great quantities, manufactured into cloth in France, and re-sold in

Spain. Thousands of mules, not only those bred by the peasants in the Pyrenean districts, but from Poitou, and other central departments, were annually exported into Spain. These, as well as many other sources of profit to the French inhabitant, are now, by reason of the present war, drained up; but, as those individuals thrown out of employment cannot live on air, numbers of them are reduced to earn their bread illegally, who, previous to the disturbed state of the adjacent provinces, were honest and industrious members of the community.

Some of the precautionary measures adopted by their government have also given great annoyance and offence, particularly to one class of the French peasantry, those who were chasseurs, either from delighting in the sport, or with a view to profit. The cause of this annoyance was a late order issued by the government, prohibiting the sale of a single ounce of powder in the Pyrenean departments, unless the buyer produced a permit, written upon stamped paper, and signed both by the Maire and the Prefet, authorizing him to purchase it. Even when possessed of this order, the chasseur could not purchase more



than half a pound at one time; so that he was obliged to come down from the mountains, lose his time, the fine weather, and his sport, to buy another half pound of powder. This harsh measure nearly drove the mountaineers into rebellion; many of whom complained, that, since all the commerce upon the frontier had already been destroyed, and with it the means of subsistence, that it was hard that they should be almost prohibited from gaining a livelihood by the only honest means which was left to them, the chase; and the poor fellows have expressed more gratitude when I have given them the contents of my powder-flask, than if I had given them ten times its value in money. When I wished to purchase a quantity of powder, I applied to a few friends, who, having all petitioned the authorities for permission to purchase the permitted half-pound, and received the necessary orders, I carried the whole, sometimes a dozen, to the gun-maker, and could then buy as many half-pounds of powder.

It must, therefore, be apparent, that the French government have endeavoured to prevent Don Carlos from drawing supplies from their territory, by adopting the most severe measures by which

they could hope to effect their object; and have done so, by the sacrifice of the commerce of the Pyrenean departments, and causing poverty and dissatisfaction among their inhabitants.

The hospital of Luchon has been most judiciously placed, so as to command a view of the gorges which lead, the one upon the left of the building to the Port de Picade, the other in front of it to the Port de Venasque; and down either of which all those legally employed in the traffic between the two countries must pass. This advantageous position is a source of great comfort to the douaniers, an old one of whom I espied upon our arrival, at the door of the house, with his spy-glass at his eye, watching the entrance to the defile.

Towards the head of the gorge we overtook a string of mules laden with bread, destined for the Spanish garrison in the Port of Venasque, should it not have the bad fortune to meet a few hungry Carlists in its way there. The ascent was neither difficult nor tedious, until we reached the upper part of the gorge; where at a short distance from the circular wall of rock which incloses it, it would require an expert eye to discover any pathway



sufficiently broad for the mules and horses to tread upon. But here, as elsewhere, where man finds it his interest to overcome such obstacles, he has succeeded. The path crossing to the left bank of the ravine, is, with the usual facilities which the water channels afford, aided by built ledges in those places where it skirts the edge of the rock, carried in a zigzag direction to the platform above the gorge, everywhere steep and fatiguing for the horses, but safe and practicable to the most timorously disposed person. To those who cannot walk, to be able to ride to the Port of Venasque must be a great luxury; to me it was quite the contrary. The hired ponies of the watering places are not always mountain-bred; in which case, the rider is too much occupied in taking care of the animal under him, whose blunders might give him an ugly fall, to enjoy the scenery among which he is scrambling. I, therefore, very soon dismounted, and left my horse to take care of himself, satisfied that he could not wander from the narrow path, and that should he loiter, he would be driven on by the rest of the party, who were some distance behind me.

When we left the Hospital, heavy clouds of mist hung upon all the high summits, and more particularly upon those in the vicinity of the Port; but, as it is frequently the case that this appearance is confined to particular regions, above which the atmosphere again becomes clear and pure, we did not on that account delay proceeding. Having accomplished the ascent of the first staircase from the valley, the path leads over a series of low summits, which lie between it and the last, whose landing-place is the Port. The mists were here so very intense, that my hopes of getting above them, or of their clearing away, began to decline. Fortunately, the wind freshened; and then, although we did not see all that was to be seen in this part of the ascent, still we were more than recompensed by having that which we did see exhibited to us in a peculiar manner, which had a strange but splendid effect. The mist, broken by the wind, came sweeping over our heads, sometimes enveloping us in darkness, sometimes exposing the blue sky, and a part of the mountains. Section after section of the bald and towering masses which rose above the path were displayed to us one after another,



as if the whole had been a sight too great for us to look upon. Sometimes the clouds opened, and the snows, sparkling in the sunbeams, were before us; at others, an enormous peak of the mountain would shoot its dark head through the mist, and, without visible support, seem as if it were about to fall upon us. Again, when we imagined ourselves hemmed in on all sides by the mountains, and within a few feet of their rugged sides, a passing breeze would disclose the dark waters of the lakes hundreds of feet beneath us.

Thus the effect of light and darkness, of sunshine and of mist, working upon materials of such grandeur as those near the Port of Venasque, was a sight well worthy of admiration, and one which is rarely to be seen. A considerable quantity of snow had fallen during the preceding day; but, from the number of peasants who pass this Port, it seldom happens, excepting in the severe weather of winter, that the path is blocked up. Each muleteer carries along with him a pick-axe and wooden shovel, with which he very soon cuts a way for himself through the snow wreaths, and this being repeated by those who follow, the snow has seldom time to accumulate.

Several lakes are situated in the hollows among the various summits which border the path; but, from seeing them in the imperfect manner in which I did, I can form no estimate of their extent. They cannot, however, be very large, mere reservoirs for the waters of the snow wreaths, which, undeserving of the name of glaciers, yet remain all the year round protected from the sun and wind in the deep ravines and gorges.

Another staircase, similar to the last, but, if possible, still steeper, and rendered slippery by the melting snow, is ascended before arriving at the base of the high ridge of rock in which is the Port of Venasque. The Port is formed by a narrow slit in this wall of rock, so narrow and confined, that it almost would have been possible to have supposed it the work of man if a glance at the immense height of the rocks through which it leads did not convince us that nature alone had opened up the passage.

Excepting the intervals of light which the gusts of wind, by dispersing the mists, had bestowed upon us, we had hitherto, comparatively speaking, been shrouded in darkness, particularly for the ten minutes preceding our arrival at the



Port; my astonishment may therefore be imagined when, the instant that I stepped beyond the limits of the Port, I stood in the purest atmosphere—not a particle of mist, not even a cloud, was perceptible. The phenomenon was curious, and its interest greatly heightened, from the situation in which it took place. The mist, rolling up the valley through which we had passed, was, the moment that it could be said to reach the Spanish frontier,—the moment it encircled the edges of the high ridges which separated the countries, thrown back, as it were, indignantly, by a counter current from the Spanish side. The conflicting currents of air, seemingly of equal strength, and unable to overcome each other, carried the mist perpendicularly from the summits of the ridge; and filling up the crevices and fissures in its uneven surface, formed a wall many thousand feet above it, of dark and (from the appearance of solidity which its massive and perpendicular character bestowed upon it) apparently impenetrable matter.

We were glad, indeed, to find the view from the Port so unobstructed. The Maladetta,—in Spanish, The cursed mountain,—the highest of

the Pyrénées, and the most difficult of ascent, rose immediately in front of us, separated from the ridge upon which we stood by a small circular valley, of no great extent. From the Port of Venasque, the Maladetta assumes the appearance of a sugar-loaf, lying at a considerable angle. It is robed in glaciers, excepting near its crest, where the black and craggy rocks which form its highest peaks rise above the snows. The aspect of the Maladetta from the French frontier, especially when seen from the Port of Venasque, which, from its great height, considerably detracts from the grandeur of the opposite mountain, rather disappointed me. I had seen so many of the great summits of the Pyrénées, so imposing and magnificent in their character, that I could not help picturing in my mind's eye, the Maladetta, the queen of the range from sea to sea, excelling them all in appearance as she does in height. The Maladetta does not do this; still although she does not stand forth in that dignity and majesty with which, as the loftiest of them all, I had supposed her to be invested, the knowledge of her superiority and height, and the immensity of the glacier which enshrouds the



whole of the northern side of the mountain, are quite sufficient to strike the beholder with admiration; and the view from the Port of Venasque, of the Maladetta, with her silver mantle, the wild valley at her feet, and the ramparts of gigantic precipices which nearly encircle it, the de l'Essera, and the mountains of Catalonia and Arragon, must ever rank high among the most sublime scenery of these mountains.

I regret exceedingly, that I did not see the Maladetta from the Spanish side of the mountain; upon that quarter, it is comparatively free from snow or glacier; and from which, if I might hazard an opinion from what I did see, I should think that its appearance must be far more striking than from the French side. It is there almost insulated from the high summits, which, upon the northern side, crowd around it; and has the full benefit arising from want of rivals. The highest of the summits of the Maladetta,—the pic de Nethou, 1671 toises above the level of the ocean, has never yet been surmounted, notwithstanding that many naturalists have made the attempt; and several of the guides and chas-seurs having been lost among the crevices of the

glaciers, no individual has latterly been courageous enough to lead the way.

Formerly, there used to be a shealing near the foot of the Maladetta, but the avalanches being frequent in its neighbourhood, the inmates had for safety removed their lonely dwelling a little further down the mountain to avoid them. A very few months had, however, elapsed, since the removal had been effected, before the new building, with all its inhabitants, was destroyed. An avalanche had broken away from a quarter of the mountain where such catastrophes were unlooked for, and passing over the hut, entombed within it five women and three children. The father of the family was absent when the dreadful accident took place; upon his return from Venasque, he was the first to become aware of the horrid event; nothing remained to mark where his home had stood, but the fatal mass of snow underneath which all that was dear to him was buried; “ne comptant plus sur la terre.” Our guide pointed out to us the part of the glacier where, a few years preceding, a relation of his had perished in one of its crevices.

Two young mining engineers, M. M. Edouard



Blavier, of Paris, and Edouard de Belly, of Strasbourg, left Luchon upon the tenth of August, 1824, accompanied by Barran (the unfortunate guide who perished) and his son, with the intention of ascending the Maladetta. About six o'clock in the evening, they arrived at the Plaine des Etangs, where they spent the night in a Spanish cabin; most probably that which has since been overwhelmed by the avalanche. At five the next morning, they commenced the ascent with Barran alone, his son being left at the cabin, in charge of the horses. By eight o'clock, they had gained the edge of the glacier, where they breakfasted behind a large piece of rock, to secure themselves against injury from the stones which were continually rolling down the mountain. Barran spoke with confidence of being able to overcome the dangers of the apertures in the snow. Having passed the morain, they put on their crampers, and entered upon the glacier—at some places presenting a surface of ice, in others covered with a coating of soft snow, they sunk above the ankle. They met with no obstacles to arrest their progress, until they arrived within a short distance of the upper edge of the glacier,

where an immense crevice in the ice lay right across their path, into which they gazed with affright by means of holding each other's arms. They could not cross this gulf, so they searched to the left, where the snow had formed an arch over it, for a place secure enough to sustain their weight; but one of the young gentlemen, having sunk his baton to its full length, informed Barran of the circumstance, who advanced still further to the left, and sounded with his own. The snow appeared to him of sufficient solidity to bear his weight; so he placed one foot upon it, and carried the other in advance of it, as far as he could stretch out, believing in this manner to leave the crevice between his legs. The abyss was directly beneath him, and the moment that he endeavoured to make a second step, the snow gave way with the pressure, and poor Barran was engulfed, uttering while he went down the agonizing cries of—"Great God! I am sinking! I am lost! I am drowning!" Destitute of any means whereby to render assistance to the perishing guide, one of the witnesses of this terrible scene set off as fast as he could to the cabin where Barran's son had been left, to



bring him, and a piece of cord which they had left there.

The same wailing cries were repeated for the space of two minutes; but there was no hope of saving the poor fellow. These two minutes elapsed, and the last exclamations of Barran—"I am sinking"—gurgled through the snows. The miserable witness to this closing scene called in vain upon Barran; he never answered. The horrified young man could no longer remain where he was, and went off to rejoin his companion. They mounted again, with Barran's son and the cord, to the spot where his father was entombed; and they again called upon him, but in vain—the voice of his son could not rouse him.

Persuaded that he was dead, they descended the mountain; and, worn out with fatigue and grief, they reached the cabin at half-past ten at night, where they lost no time in sending information of the catastrophe to Barran's other sons; who, at five in the morning, arrived from Luchon with men and cords. Conducted by their younger brother, they ascended the Maladetta, to attempt, if possible, to recover the body of their

unhappy parent. The three brothers arrived at the fissure; when they were convinced of the death of their father, who did not respond to their cries, and of the impossibility of extricating his corpse, which was sunk in the water with which the bottom of the cavity was filled.

Ever since this melancholy event, the guides of Luchon have disliked the idea of ascending the Maladetta; and no one has made the attempt from the French side. It was my intention to have endeavoured to reach the summit of this mountain; but I was deterred by the lateness of the season, and more particularly by the recent fall of snow, by which a slight covering would have been spread over the rents and fissures of the glaciers, and their dangers rendered infinitely greater. After a track of fine weather, and in the best season, which would be about the middle of August, I am satisfied, that, with proper precautions, the horrors of the Maladetta might, with no great difficulty, be overcome. It is not known that any human being has ever trod upon the summit of the Maladetta; and, although it may be a foolish ambition to be the first to do so, and the honour not worth the trouble and risk



which might gain it, still there must be considerable pleasure experienced on finding oneself in a situation which has never been that of another, independent of any scientific knowledge which might be acquired upon the occasion. If I have another opportunity, I shall endeavour to ascend the Maladetta: meanwhile, should any adventurous individual attempt before me, I would here offer a few hints for his guidance.

First of all, I would make sure of having good guides. The greater number of those at Luchon will not do; they are too much accustomed to keep to a beaten track to be the best fitted to trace out a new one, when there can be no guidance to them but that experience which a habitude to untrodden paths can alone bestow upon them. I should, however, pick out two or three of the best of them, and provided with a good coil of rope, and provisions for some days, leave Luchon for the Spanish village of Venasque; I should there procure three of the most noted chasseurs who are in the habit of following the izard among the snows of the Maladetta, and with our party increased in number to six or more, I should rest during the night at the foot of

the mountain. By daylight the following morning I should commence the ascent, and as soon as we arrived within the boundaries of the glaciers, I should arrange the party in the following order: the most experienced guides or chasseurs should take the lead, having first passed a twist of the rope round his waist, for I would not have him leaving me, as poor Barran did; the rest of the party should follow in line, a few paces distant from each other, and all secured to the rope. By this simple expedient the dangers of the glaciers would in a great measure be avoided, and should any of our numbers sink in the snow, he could instantly be extricated by those who were either before or behind him. That the whole party should go down together, is a very improbable circumstance, as the fissures and rents in the snow or ice are seldom of great width, and marching in a line a few paces distant from each other, we would cover sufficient space to secure a firm footing for at least some of our number, who could then render assistance to the others, and in this manner, I think I should be able to reach the summit of the Maladetta.

The southern sides of the Pyrénéan mountains



are in general more steep and rugged than the northern, but as the southern has the great advantage of being almost entirely free from snow at one period of the summer, I should, therefore, ascend the Maladetta from the Spanish side of the mountain, and not, as has always hitherto been the case, by crossing the immense glacier on the French frontier. The ascent of Mont Perdu, which is only a few feet lower than the Maladetta, and many others of the highest of these mountains can only be accomplished from their southern sides.

Upon a shelf of the rock to the right of the entrance to the port of Venasque,* there is a small cross of iron, and by scrambling still higher up the rock above it, a better and more extensive view of the valley de l'Essera and the mountains of Arragon.

From the Port of Venasque we descended into the basin beneath, and crossing it, mounted to the Port de Pomerou, the entrance into the Spanish valley of Artique Telline. This Port is situated where the frontier ridge forms an angle

* Sometimes styled Benasque.

with that which extends towards the Toro, at the base of which mountain, and in the basin which these two ridges and the Maladetta almost encircle, is the famous Trou de Toro, an immense gulph into which the accumulated waters of the surrounding glaciers precipitate themselves. It is affirmed, that the waters which disappear in the Trou de Toro follow a subterranean course until they again burst forth in the valley of Artique Telline. I see no reason to disbelieve this statement; the mountains which separate the Trou de Toro from the Trou de Geneou, where a volume of water of similar quantity to that which is lost in the Trou de Toro issues, are composed of limestone, which invariably abound in great cavities. If those two volumes of water are actually the same, then the principal source of the Garonne, by a singular accident, is derived from the glaciers of the Maladetta, which is situated in Spain, and separated from France by a very high ridge of mountains.

The Port de Picade, which leads to the Hospital of Venasque, which we had passed in the morning, is almost close to that of the Pomerou, and as we were undecided whether to return to Luchon by it, or in spite of the want of passports,



and the proximity of the Carlists, to visit the valley d'Aran, we chose the vicinity of a fine spring of water situated between the two Ports, as the spot where we should eat our provisions for the day, and in assembled conclave deliberate upon the important subject. The latter route was unanimously agreed upon. The invigorating air of the mountains, the excellence of the viands which Meg Merrilies had carefully provided for us, washed down by the best wine of old Perret's cellar, had elevated the spirits of some of our party (no doubt previously well strung up by the grandeur of the scenery) to a pitch which would have taken a greater host than that which Don Carlos commanded, to have subdued.

"Wi' tipenny we fear nae evil,
Wi' usquebae—we'd face the deevil!"

For myself, one look into Port de Picade was sufficient to deter me from going that way. There the mist had thickened so as to present an appearance almost as disagreeable to wade through, as would one of the Brunnens of Nassau.

Having finished our dinner and our consultation, we proceeded down the ravine leading into the valley of Artique Telline. The descent was very rugged and steep, and difficult for the horses. One of our party, following my example, was descending on foot, when he stumbled, and spraining his ancle very severely, was obliged to mount again. At the bottom of the ravine, we found a number of Spanish shepherds, who in momentary expectations of a visit from the Carlists, had driven down their flocks from the mountains, and for security were about to proceed nearer home. The poor fellows were in great anxiety, and they inquired if we could give them any intelligence regarding the motions of their enemies, the Carlists, for the inhabitants of the valley d'Aran being almost to a man Christinos, they knew well the fate which awaited them when the Carlists should break into their beautiful valley.

This ravine is one of the three, which, uniting near the spot where the waters lost in the Trou de Toro again make their appearance from the valley of the Artique Telline. Soon after leaving the shepherds, we entered the forest which extends



over the whole of the Artique Telline and its dependent valleys. The situation of the great fountain of the *Ouil*, or Trou de Geneou, is exquisitely beautiful. The forests of ages cover the slopes and heights around the *Ouil*, and darken the sides of the three upper valleys which unite a little way beneath it. The woodman's axe has not yet been heard to ring among these impenetrable woods, and the trees in size and magnificence are equal to any in the Pyrénées. The path by which we were descending through the forest made a bend nearly opposite to the fountain, and an opening in the woods gave us a full view of it. The stream that issues from it is by far the most considerable of all the sources of the same nature which exists in these mountains; it becomes at once a considerable river, and at its junction with the streams from the Ports de Pomerou and Vielle, the largest timber can be floated down it. The waters of the Maladetta dart forth from their subterranean canal with the force and velocity which their rapid descent of some thousand feet may be supposed to have inspired them; and as if astonished at the changed character of the scene from that in which they

were born, they break in unbridled fury over the precipices and steeps, form many cataracts, and dashing among the rocks below, water the adjoining woods with the clouds of spray they create. Unfortunately, we were, from the length of the ride to Bososte, where we intended to pass the night, and the lateness of the hour, most reluctantly obliged to quit a spot which offered so many inducements to a prolonged stay.

The valley of the Artique Tellique is completely pastoral, the banks of its river abounding in the richest meadows, bordered by its great forests, upon which, towards its extremity, the great demand for timber by their French neighbours, is causing the natives to make fearful inroads, fearful, because no prudent measures are adopted to keep up the supply; and the mountains which are once stripped of their woods, have no chance of regaining their former beauty and value, but remain in all the ugliness of an ill cut and decayed forest. The quantity of timber which is yearly floating down the Garonne, from this, and the adjacent districts of the valley d'Aran, must be immense; some idea may be formed of it from the fact, that the river for many miles below the



Hermitage of the Artique was, when we passed along its banks, so encumbered with timber, that though there was sufficient depth of water to float the trees, large as they were, it yet was insufficient to transport the quantity which at so many various points are thrown into it, and the logs had become so wedged together, that it would have been possible to have descended the stream upon the raft formed by them. The trees are felled far up the mountains, and drawn by manual labour down to the water's edge, where, if the stream be already blocked up by the quantity of wood thrown into it, many labourers are set to work at the place where the stoppage has commenced, and by means of separating the logs where they have been jammed together, and huddled one above another, they again shoot away with the stream, jostling and bruising each other on their route, until they are taken out of the river at the dépôt, and carted to the saw-mills of Fos and St. Beat, where they are cut into planks, and sent to Toulouse, Marseilles, and other ports.

A very heavy shower came on before we had quitted the Artique Telline, and drove us for

shelter into one of the granaries by the way-side, where we did not remain very long, for the clouds had descended too low to allow us to hope for a change of weather, and our friend who had sprained his ankle, was complaining bitterly of the pain which he was suffering.

The entrance to the valley d'Aran, has in olden times been defended by the Castel Leon, famous in story, built upon some heights on the right bank of the river, and deriving its name from some fancied resemblance which they have to the lord of the forest.

It was now getting late and dark, and we were riding over one of the most broken and uneven paths which can be imagined, exposed to torrents of rain, from which we had nothing to protect us but the thin linen blouzes generally worn by the peasants and by travellers in the summer, so that we were soon as wet as if we had been dragged through the river; the night too had become very cold, so that altogether our situation had become rather an unpleasant one, and would have made no bad caricature of a party of pleasure. Could we have got smartly along the road we should have laughed at such trifles, but our horses were



jaded—perfectly “done up,” and stumbling over the inequalities of the road, plainly demonstrated that it would be better to allow them to proceed leisurely than have our necks broken among the rocks, or have the remaining spark of that ardour which flamed so brightly upon the mountains, extinguished by a roll into the river. To add to our miseries, the sprained ankle of our friend had now become so swollen with exertion, and so much more painful, that it was impossible for him to put his horse out of a walk. Thus wet, cold, and hungry, we crawled along, and about three hours after darkness had overtaken us we reached Bososte. Well aware of the scene of confusion in which we should find the village, I had taken the precautionary measure of sending forward one of the guides, to prepare at least a good fire at which to warm our shivering persons, for, as to procuring beds, I had great doubts of our seeing such luxuries. Near the entrance to the village, we found our avant courier waiting for us, who hearing the clattering of our horses’ hoofs, hailed us in the darkness, and conducted us through the purlieus of the place to the posada.

We were shown up stairs into a large chamber,

lit up with a fire corresponding in size to its dimensions, and blazing most cheerfully. As we had expected, we found the inmates of the house, as well as the whole inhabitants of the village, in a state of great anxiety and distress, in hourly expectation of the Carlists breaking into the valley; the inhabitants of which, as I have already mentioned, being to a man in the interest of the Queen, they had little to hope from their clemency, and every thing to fear from the “no quarter” warfare of their enemies.

The young men of the valley were out in the mountains opposing the Carlists, but from the accounts brought in, had been outnumbered, and forced to retire, and all those who were not actually engaged in the defence of the district, were busily employed in depositing their worldly goods in places of safety, or transporting them to the village of Fos, upon the French frontier, to which the greater part of the inhabitants intended emigrating on the morrow. The inmates of the posada, whose relations were among those who were fighting, conscious that in the event of their defeat, the burning brand would be applied to their dwellings, determined to leave nothing but



its walls to the vengeance of the Carlists, had already dismantled their abode of its furniture. Fortunately for us, there still remained three mattresses which were not to be sent off until the following morning, and these we immediately arranged on the floor, as near to the fire as possible. Our lame friend was the first object of attention; the pain from his ankle was so intense, that he could not put his foot to the ground, *nor* even move it without suffering torture. He was laid upon one of the mattresses, and consigned to the care of the old grandmother of the family, who had evinced great sympathy for him since our arrival. This old woman was the most sorrow-stricken looking creature I ever beheld; care, anxiety, and grief had laid such hold upon her, that she seemed imbued with life merely that her limbs might be kept in motion. Her sympathy for our friend was expressed by the immediate kindness with which she commenced dressing his ankle, and administering to his comfort, which she did in perfect silence, without uttering a word. Having bathed the inflamed limb with decoctions which she thought would reduce the swelling, she bound it up with a roll

of cotton ligature which one of her sons, who was standing by (a fine looking young fellow who had just arrived from the mountains, where he had been engaged with the Carlists) drew from his breast, and which had been intended for his own or his comrades' necessities. Although the poor creature spoke not, yet many a deep sigh, during her work of charity, told that her old heart was nigh bursting with grief; and when I chanced to express my admiration of her son's appearance, she shook her head mournfully, too clearly demonstrating her fear that his manly form might soon be lost to her.

The most perfect stillness reigned throughout the house, it seemed as if death had already entered it; the very children forgot their playful bustle, and crowded around their mother, and every inmate trod as if the creaking of a shoe would have been an outrage.

We obtained a plentiful supply of what provisions the people had, and so kind were they, that the son brought us, from some hidden store, a bottle of the most delicious wine I ever tasted. "It is," said he, "so old that we do not know its age, but we value it very highly, and it is only



given as a restorative to those who are in delicate health."

Long after my companions were enjoying the repose which their tedious journey required, I remained in conversation with the old woman's son, whom I had persuaded to partake of our supper. He told me that the Carlists, incensed at the inhabitants of the valley d'Aran from their declaration in favour of the Queen, were fast approaching to take vengeance upon them. He had already been fighting in Catalonia against them, but had little hope that they should be able to prevent their entrance into his native valley. "When they do come," said he, "we shall then have our houses and our property burnt and destroyed, and they among us who may be taken, will have few minutes left them to repeat their 'Aves.'"^{*} Many of his comrades and relations had perished in the conflicts which had taken place, and the scenes of massacre and butchery which he related as having witnessed, were absolutely horrifying.

^{*} Soon after our departure, the enemy broke into this beautiful valley; upon whose inhabitants, and their property, even more than the wonted savage ferocity of the Carlists was wreaked.

"The wife," said he, "of my most intimate friend, is at present under our roof; her husband was shot a few days ago by the Carlists, and she is still ignorant of the circumstance. She and her little girl, her only child, were sent here for safety, and her husband, who with others had been endeavouring to make head against the enemy, was taken prisoner near his own house, instantly strapped to a tree and shot. We have not dared to tell her all this, and she believes that he has been taken prisoner; but as the Carlists have quitted the district where her home is situated, she leaves this to-morrow to return to it, which she will find in ashes, and become acquainted with her husband's death." While he was telling me this tale of sorrow, the object of it, a young woman apparently not more than twenty years of age, passed through the room; leading her little girl; one of the many thousand unfortunates whose happiness has been blasted by this horrid war.



CHAPTER XIII.

Departure from Bososte—Emigration of the Peasantry—Return into France—Scene with the French Douaniers—St. Beat—Pyrenean marbles—Interesting Town and Cathedral of St. Bertrand—Antiquities—History of St. Bertrand—Cause of its Destruction—Merovingian treachery—Interior of the Cathedral—Curious Paintings—More curious Relics—Incivility of the Priest—Famous Grotto—Lose our way—Village of St. Laurent—Night's Quarters—Flight from them—La Barthe—Its Comforts—Capvern—Castle of Mauvoisin—Abbey of L'Escaleu.

WE slept most comfortably upon our mattresses, undisturbed by the Carlists, or any other intruders until morning, when our guides, anxious for departure awoke us. The good old woman's kindness had been of considerable service to her patient; her prescriptions had greatly alleviated

the pain which he suffered from his ankle, and her son recommending the use of *spardilles* instead of shoes, he was quite able to resume his journey. Grateful for the extreme kindness which these poor people had shown to us, even in the midst of their own distress, we mounted our horses, and parted from them with that sorrow which a knowledge of the calamities which were soon to fall upon them occasioned.

“Bella” are ever “horrida bella,” let the causes which have given rise to them be what they will; whether in defence of our rights, real or supposed, whether to repel foreign aggression or domestic insurrection; still the results are the same. Circumstances may palliate, nay, even excuse an appeal to arms, but the pitying eye of humanity will not, while it gazes upon the harrowing scene of a battle field, seek to divine the causes which have led man to rob his fellow-creature of that animating spirit which he could not give him, or having once taken, return to him, but will regard the effects of warfare—call it ancient or modern, barbarous or civilized—with the same conscious sentiment—that *there* man has usurped a power which does not and cannot belong to



him. Some wars are more miserable in their relations than others; but that war in which father is arrayed against son, and brother against brother in deadly strife, and shedding each other's blood without remorse or pity, can find no parallel. Such in character is the war now raging in the north of Spain, and such the unnatural crimes which the uncurbed ambition of the members of *one single* family can spread over a nation.*

As we passed through the village, we found the greater part of its inhabitants assembled at the residence of the governor of the district; those who were soldiers, waiting for their orders; those who were emigrating to Fos, for their passports. Conspicuous in appearance among the former, was the son of the old woman of the *posada*, who recognizing his friends of the preceding evening, came forward and shook hands

* Heningsen, in his "Campaign with Zumalacarregui," mentions an affecting anecdote connected with the civil war; I allude to the capture and execution of the commandant of the fortified church of Villafranca. The prisoner's father Ximenes, was the devoted partisan of Don Carlos, "and he saw his eldest and once best beloved son, about to suffer death with the consciousness that he had done his part to bring him to so bitter a punishment."

with us; he was in high spirits, and about to set out with a reinforcement to his party in the mountains, and as I am confident that he would be "foremost in the fight," it would be almost hopeless to expect that he is now alive.

A little stream which flows into the Garonne a few miles below Bososte, is the boundary between the two countries; and at the bridge which crosses it, called the Pont du Roi, the advanced guard of the French troops on the frontier is posted. The guard was composed of the sentry, who challenged us, and three or four soldiers who were sleeping upon the grassy knoll beside him. He challenged us, but made no difficulty in allowing us to enter the French territory, although coming from Spain, and without passports. We did not, however, get off so easily at Fos, where the douaniers demanded our passports, and upon our declaring that we had none, plainly told us that we must return into Spain, from which no individual would be permitted to enter France, who could not produce a passport. This intimation placed us in a somewhat disagreeable situation. To be obliged to return to Bososte to bare walls and empty cupboards, was



bad enough in all conscience, but to be forced to steal or to fight our way through the Carlist parties, who ere this, might be in the passes at the head of the valley, was doubly annoying.

We expostulated with the green-coated gentlemen, declared that we had left Luchon the preceding day, appealed to our guides for the truth of our story, but we could not satisfy them; "how were they to be certain of the fact?" I could not help laughing when one of the officers made this remark, for it brought to my recollection the predicament in which a gentleman riding out in the vicinity of Edinburgh, found himself. He had paid at one of the turnpike gates, a ticket from which enables the possessor to pass through all the other gates within a certain district, and carefully, as he imagined, deposited the little passport in his pocket. Arrived at another gate, the keeper demanded his ticket, and the gentleman, pulling up, and putting his hand in his pocket, searched it right and left, diving into every corner of it, but the inch square piece of paper was nowhere to be found. It had flown away, or perhaps in using his pocket-handkerchief it had been blown away; but sure

it was, the thing was lost. The gentleman protested that he had paid at such and such a gate, and obtained a ticket; but no, the keeper was not satisfied. The money was of no consequence, but the gentleman was indignant that his word should be doubted; so convinced of the decisive nature of the appeal he was about to make, he raised himself in his stirrups, and staring in the keeper's face said, "Have the kindness, my friend, to look into my countenance, and tell me if you think it the physiognomy of one who, for the paltry sum of two-pence, would tell you a lie?" The keeper did as he was desired, and stretching out his hand, answered, "I'll thank you for two-pence."

The douaniers seemed to put the same reliance upon our assertions, that we had only left Luchon the preceding day, as the gatekeeper that this gentleman had lost his ticket. The affair began to look serious, and the possibility that we should be turned back, very great. The spot where the altercation took place, was at the entrance to the village of Fos, almost the first house of which is one of "entertainment." Fortunately its sign-board caught my eye, and I immediately pro-



posed that we should, instead of standing in the heat upon the road, walk into the auberge, and there consider the matter coolly, which a draught of the host's *best* would probably enable us to do, and at all events, if we had to return, it would be quite as well to part good friends. The proposition was acceded to, and the contents of the host's best cask was put in requisition; the cooling effects were wonderful; an universal cheerfulness prevailed, the circumstance of our detention was forgotten, or the worthy officers had too much politeness to recollect it, but certain it was that we left them to finish the last *litre* bottle of wine, bade them goodbye, remounted our horses, and proceeded down the valley to St. Beat.

The situation of this little town is very picturesque. The portion of the valley d'Aran between Fos and St. Beat, spacious and extremely beautiful and riante, is here almost closed in by the mountains which on each side flank the town. St. Beat has been built in the narrow gorge, where there is scarcely sufficient width for the river and a narrow street of houses, which on either side line the banks; and in many places

the space is so confined, that the under part of the precipices have been scooped out, and houses built under them. In olden times the Spanish possessions in this valley comprised the town and castle of St. Beat, the crumbling walls of which crown an isolated mass of rock situated in the centre of the defile, and completely guarding the entrance to it.

It is a curious circumstance, that both the two great nations which are separated from each other by the Pyrénées, should each of them possess, as it were, a key which admitted them to the territories of their neighbour, through the otherwise impassible districts of these mountains. Thus France possesses nearly one half of the Cerdagne, which lies altogether upon the Spanish side of the Pyrénées, and in the severe weather of winter is almost cut off from the resources of the country of which it forms a portion, but the possession of which, in ancient warfare, gave the French great facilities in invading the finest of the Spanish provinces: Spain, again, by means of the valley d'Aran, could at any time pour its troops through the strongest and most defensible of all the Pyrenean fastnesses. It seems strange



that the commissioners who settled the boundaries between the two countries, did not take this coincidence into consideration, and propose that an exchange should have taken place. The advantages of the concession would have been mutual.

In the vicinity of St. Beat, there are some of the purest statuary marble quarries in the Pyrénées, great blocks of which are transported to all parts of the kingdom. The marbles of these mountains,—at an early period in much estimation, and of which the greater part of the most ancient and exquisitely carved altars of the country are executed,—had fallen into disuse; succeeded by the more rare, but scarcely more beautiful, Italian marbles. This taste for foreign marbles had caused those of the Pyrénées to be almost forgotten; but, latterly, as the French have taken a greater interest in their mountainous departments, their marbles have again become popular. Great expense is incurred in working the quarries; and many *marbrieres* have been established. Those at Bagnerès de Bigorre are well worth visiting; and there specimens of the various marbles found in the Pyrénées can be procured.

The defile of St. Beat opens into the wide plain which forms a portion of the valley of Luchon, and in which the Garonne unites with the Pique. We crossed to the left bank of the river, for the purpose of visiting the remarkable old town and cathedral of St. Bertrand; which, of the many interesting places in the Pyrénées, is perhaps the most deserving of notice, not only by reason of the great beauty of its situation, but from its great antiquity, and the numerous historical incidents connected with it.

Soon after the murder of the high-minded and disinterested Sertorius, the various tribes of which his army had been composed, were defeated and driven out of Spain by the victorious troops of Pompey. That general, preferring the humane expedient of colonizing the scattered bands beyond the Pyrénées, to the barbarous, but more usual system, of extermination, collected them together, and selected the site of the modern St. Bertrand, as that upon which they should build a city, to which he gave the name of Lugdunum. This city was founded sixty-nine years after Christ, and was divided into two parts; the upper occupying the situation of the



present St. Bertrand, the lower, extending around the base of the high monticule upon which it is built. This city became the capital of the *Convenæ* (the designation given to the people who had built it, and the inhabitants of the surrounding country), and continued to increase in size and importance, until the end of the sixth century, when it was entirely destroyed by Gontran, King of Burgundy.

The circumstances attending the destruction of Lugdunum, and the story of the unhappy individual who was the cause of it, form a melancholy illustration of the treachery and cruelty which desolated France during the period of the Merovingian dynasties.

Gondovald, the son of Chlotaire the First, was the hero of the tragedy. His mother, from her imprudent conduct, was discarded by Chlotaire; and her child persecuted by his own father, because the boy's uncle, Childebert, King of Paris, having no family, had adopted him as his heir. This arrangement destroying Chlotaire's ambitious hopes of succeeding his brother in the sovereignty of Paris, Gondovald was at last disowned by him, degraded from his rank as a Merovingian prince,

by having his flowing hair, the prerogative of his birth, cut off, and imprisoned at Cologne. Escaping from Cologne, he fled into Italy, where he was kindly received, and protected by Narses for several years. After Narses' death, he went to Constantinople; where he was received with marked distinction by the Emperor Justinian. The succeeding emperors, Tiberius and Maurice, were equally kind to Gondovald, acknowledging and treating him as the son of a king. During the period of his residence at the court of the emperors, the most profound hatred subsisted between his brothers Chilperic and Gontran, arising from the division of the provinces which, in right, ought to have belonged to Gondovald.

The princes of the kingdom of Austrasia, afraid that their kingdom would become united with that of Burgundy, or Paris, resolved to recall Gondovald from his exile, and to aid him in the recovery of his dominions; as illegitimacy was, in those days, no barrier to the throne, it was sufficient that he was of the blood of Clovis. They accordingly sent ambassadors to Constantinople; who, after much persuasion, prevailed upon Gondovald to enter upon the enterprize.



Plentifully supplied with treasure by the Greek emperor,* he embarked along with the ambassadors, and arrived at Marseilles. Gondovald was there joined by several powerful auxiliaries, and his cause wore every aspect of success. The chief of the ambassadors, however, proved faithless to him, seduced his supporters, and, robbing him of his treasures, fled into Burgundy. Gondovald, however, still prosecuted the enterprize in which he was engaged; and, after having experienced varieties of fortune, after having conquered the countries around Angoulême, Perigeux, Bordeaux, and Toulouse, and taken their capitals, he again became a victim to treachery.

The King of Burgundy corrupted his Australian allies, who withdrew themselves from Gondovald's interests, and left him with a far inferior army to contend against that which his brother had sent against him. He was obliged to retreat along the banks of the Garonne, by Agen, until

* In return for this assistance, it was agreed, upon the part of Gondovald, that the coinage of his kingdom should be in the name of the emperor—thus acknowledging him as superior.

he reached Lugdunum. That city, strong in its natural position, upon an isolated summit, and well-fortified, was chosen by him as the scene of his last struggle, for the object the attainment of which had brought him into France. He had still a force under his command quite sufficient to garrison the town, with provisions for several years; and he could not want for water, as there was a fountain within the walls which never failed.

Thus situated, Gondovald might have defied the hosts of Burgundy, and forced them to raise the siege; but he was fated a third time to suffer by the treachery of his allies. The most daring assaults of the besiegers were, for a long time, repelled; and they were driven back with disgrace and slaughter. But the Burgundian gold effected that which its swords could not do. The Duke Bladaste was gained over; who, taking advantage of the confusion occasioned by the rejoicings for the victory which the garrison had gained over the enemy, set fire to the archiepiscopal palace, and escaped to the besieger's camp.

The attack upon the town was renewed next



morning; the efforts of the enemy were redoubled; every stratagem was put in requisition, but without success, and Gondoald was again victorious. The fidelity of Mummole, Governor of Avignon, and the Bishops of Gap and Waddon, his remaining supporters, was not proof against the offers of the besiegers; and they conspired to deliver Gondoald into the hands of his enemies. And to effect their purpose, they endeavoured to persuade him that his brother Gontran would yet receive him kindly, and forget what had passed between them. They said to him—

“Tu sais quelle fidélité nous t’avons gardée; écoute maintenant notre conseil: tu a souvent demandé d’être conduit à ton frère; le temps est venu. Nous avons parlé à des serviteurs de Gontran; ils disent que leur roi ne veut point ta perte, parce qu’il n’est resté que peu de rejetons de sa race. Sors donc de la ville; tu ne rencontreras point de perils.” Gondoald comprit leur pensée—“Qui m’a tiré de ma retraite?” leur demanda-t-il. “De qui aije écouté les conseils? Par qui voulais-je régner? C’est en vous, après Dieu, que j’avoies mis mon

esperance. Si vous m’avez trompé, Dieu vous en demandera compte, et son jugement sera contre vous.” “Notre bouche,” répondit Mummole, “n’a point proféré le mensonge. Viens, les hommes de Gontran t’attendent. Sois sans crainte; quitte cependant ce baudrier d’or dont la vue les offenserait.”

Simple-minded to the last, or aware that he could not defend the place should Mummole and the Bishops desert him, he yielded to their entreaties to accompany them to the camp of the besiegers. They had scarcely left the city when he was met by his traitor friend, Gontran Boson, the chief of the ambassadors who had brought him from Constantinople, and Ollon, Count of Bourges, who, aware of what was passing within the walls, had come to receive him. Gondoald now perceived that he was a prisoner; and raising his hands to heaven, “Juge des hommes,” s’écria-t-il, “toi qui n’es que justice et que vérité, sois maintenant l’appui de ma cause, et venge-moi des traîtres qui m’ont vendu à mes oppresseurs.”

Having uttered these words, he descended the hill; the path is very steep and rapid: and,



when we had arrived at a considerable distance from the gate, Ollon, who followed him, taking advantage of his position, struck Gondoald to the earth, and then endeavoured to stab him with his lance, which the excellence of the cuirass prevented. Gondoald recovered himself, and, sword in hand, endeavoured to regain the town; but the villain Boson, as if to consummate his wickedness, hurled a stone at him, which, striking Gondoald upon the forehead, stunned him. The soldiers then surrounded and murdered him. After having heaped all sorts of indignities upon his body, they tied his feet with cords, and (Achilles like) dragged it with derision round the camp, until satisfied with their brutality, they left the body unburied.

After Gondoald's death, his betrayers carried the treasures out of the town, and the Burgundians entered upon the following day, and sacked and burned it. Not a living thing remained within its walls, and not an edifice was left standing.

Five hundred years elapsed from the period when Lugdunum was destroyed by the soldiers of Burgundy, before it was again inhabited.

Towards the end of the eleventh century, the holy father St. Bertrand, who, from being originally a poor monk of the hermitage of Capadour, among the gorges of the Tourmalet, had, by his piety and sanctity, and the performance of many miracles, acquired great power and authority in the district, chose the site of the ancient Lugdunum as that upon which he should erect the famous cathedral which now bears his name. Devotees flocked to St. Bertrand from all quarters; pilgrimages were made to its shrine from all countries; and, during the superstition of centuries, its altars were as popular, and the relics of its founder as venerated, as those of any other saint in the calendar.

St. Bertrand is, as I have already mentioned, situated upon a remarkable circular hill, which stretches from the higher summits which lie behind it into the plain. Upon this hill, the site of the upper and strongest part of the antique Lugdunum, is the present town; and, at its base, and all through the flat country which extends from it towards the Garonne, are the remains of the city destroyed by Gontran's army. Every field abounds in these ruins, and if an



estimate of the size of the ancient city may be formed from a view of these evidences, it must have been of great size and extent. A circuitous road winds round the hill to the entrance to St. Bertrand, which is defended by strong walls, and massy gates.

We proceeded at once to the most interesting object in the place, its large and towering cathedral. While admiring the front of the cathedral, we were accosted by an individual who addressed us with, "How do you do, *sáars*?" whom we afterwards discovered to be a half-idiot old soldier, who during his campaigning had picked up the above stock of English, which now served him as an introduction to persons of that nation who might visit the place.

Escorted by this half crazy being, whose remarks upon the various ornaments of the building added not a little to our amusement, if not instruction, we examined the interior of the cathedral. Its aisles are very fine, and the carving of the wood-work which surrounds the choir and the canons' stalls, remarkably well-executed. There are several good paintings; among the number, a series which are intended

to represent the occasions upon which the miracles attributed to Saint Bertrand were wrought.* There is one picture behind the altar in which St. Bertrand is represented as preaching upon a hill side to a few devotees, while the holy father's mule, which has been tied to a tree, is having its tail cut off by some unconverted sinner. This picture, in the estimation of our conductor, was the chef d'œuvre of the collection; and he expatiated at great length upon its character and execution.

After having satisfied our curiosity in the cathedral, we were about to quit it, when we were told that the greatest curiosities which it contained were yet to be shown to us. These curiosities were relics of St. Bertrand, held in profound veneration by the people of the district, and consisted of certain portions of the holy father's wearing apparel. Of course, we expressed much anxiety to look upon such sacred articles; and our conductor knocked at the door of the sacristy, to request the father who had

* The character of the paintings of this series is similar to that of those which, in the cathedral of Carlisle, represent the temptations of St. Anthony.



charge of the precious garments, to exhibit them to us. The priest came to the door; and, to our great disappointment, rather snappishly replied, that he was engaged in confessing, and could not show them to us. Now, I had good reason to know that the holy father was not saying what was the case, but put us off with this excuse because he did not wish to show the things to us. The truth was, that my dog had followed me into the church, and fatigued, had very unceremoniously laid himself down upon the matted steps of the altar. The priest, whom I had seen passing through the church, had discovered the intruder; and, at the same time, hearing our suppressed laughter, while contemplating the strange picture behind it, he had determined that such irreligious heretics should not profane the relics of his patron saint by looking upon them; or, perhaps, strongly suspecting that our irreverential eyes might discover in the holy vestments the small clothes of some worthy Friar Tuck, esteemed it safer not to test the strength of our faith.

About a couple of miles to the north of St. Bertrand, is the magnificent grotto of St. Bertrand in the centre of the wooded hill which forms the

promontory between the Nesle and the Garonne. We procured guides and candles at a cottage in the vicinity, and visited it. The entrance is no larger than a fox's earth, and so very narrow that we were obliged to crawl on our hands and knees for several yards, after which it widened so as to permit of our standing upright, and a few paces brought us into one of the finest and most extensive subterranean caverns I ever beheld. The stalactites were beautiful, and the columns and arches formed by them of great size. It seemed as if the whole heart of the mountain had been scooped out, and the interior divided into enormous halls, communicating with each other by Gothic looking doors and passages. Our dozen candles but faintly illuminated the immense caverns through which we passed, and to which there appeared no limits. How long we might have wandered in this grotto, without meeting with any barrier to our progress, it would be impossible to tell, but we walked forward in a tolerably straight direction for at least half an hour, and then we only returned because our time and candles were shortening. All limestone caverns present much the same appearances, but this of



St. Bertrand is upon a grander scale, and more prolific in the varieties of the forms and shapes which its petrifications and stalactites assume, than any other which I have visited.

Although it was early when we left Bososte, still we had loitered so much upon our way, that it was nearly dark when we emerged from our subterranean expedition. We were undecided where to pass the night; whether to go a little out of our way, and make sure of comfortable quarters at Montrejeau, or, keeping the route to Bagnères until we reached La Barthe, remain there. None of us had passed this way before, so it was left to the guides to decide; and the most noisy, but least useful of them, a native of Bagnères de Bigorre, affecting to know the district best, persuaded us to turn towards La Barthe.

The evenings of the south, mild, cool, and, after the intolerable heats of the day, pleasant and agreeable though they are, are yet destitute of one charm which renders the summer evenings of the north so exquisitely delightful. The Southerners scarcely know what twilight is; if they do, it is but in name, for with them the sun

sets as if he had been performing a toilsome task which he rejoiced at having completed, and having done so, he vanishes as it were without regret, leaving them in darkness. How far otherwise does he leave us in Britain! *there* his is no *sudden death*, but he sets as if in sorrow at parting; the lamp of his glory is not extinguished at once, but its expiring rays wax fainter so gradually and imperceptibly, that at last they may almost be mistaken for the herald streaks of his reappearance.

Upon this occasion the sudden darkness was doubly unwelcome; the guides mistook the path, and became so bewildered among the lanes and fields and woods, that by the hour when we should have reached La Barthe, we found ourselves still wandering upon the banks of the Nesle. It was then too late to think of proceeding farther, even although our horses could have carried us, which they could not; we, therefore, sought the nearest village, and arrived at St. Laurent.

None of the party were acquainted with the localities of this large and dirty village, so that it was a matter of conjecture as to which of its



narrow lanes led to an auberge. Its inhabitants were all in bed, and when we knocked at their doors to gain information, the only response was the barking of the dogs. As a last resource we separated, and taking different directions dived into the purlieus of the place, trusting that chance would lead some of us to where we would be "taken in." In this manner we explored the lanes, until one of the party having succeeded in finding an auberge, came to tell the others of his success. I remember meeting with this individual, who experienced as great difficulty in finding his way back to the auberge as he had in originally discovering it; and we should have passed it, if some others of the party, who had also discovered the house, had not shouted at their success.

The owner of the auberge having no accommodation in his own house, transferred us to that of his brother in law adjoining, a most unprepossessing looking building. In passing through the court yard, a Pyrenean dog flew upon my friend Cæsar, but after a single round finding that he had "caught a Tartar," he wisely withdrew, and allowed us to enter. When the fight commenced

I was about to call my dog off, but the owner of the other prevented me, observing that it would be much better that the animals should become acquainted with each other's strength at first, than have them quarreling and growling the whole night. What he said was perfectly true, for the combatants, as if mutually respecting each other, evinced in their conduct while they were together, the most dignified forbearance.

Supper was cooked at the auberge and brought to us, and our astonishment may be conjectured when we found a capital turkey set before us. As to beds, there were but two in the house, and one of them was in a chamber where some of the family had died a few days before, and it was thought we should not relish sleeping there. Upon examination, however, it turned out that this chamber had two beds in it, and as both of them could not have been occupied by the individual in question, we had no objection to make use of that which had not, and the guides taking possession of the hayloft, we slept soundly enough, considering the character of our quarters.

Daylight the next morning disclosed the



beauties of the place into which we had strayed, and they were certainly of a class nearly corresponding to those of the Andorrian village of Escaldos. To pull on our clothes and be off was really a matter of necessity, and we were not long in accomplishing it.

Half an hour's canter along the banks of the Nesle brought us to La Barthe, whose auberge, as remarkable for its comfort and cleanliness as the house in which we had passed the night had been for the opposite qualities, caused us doubly to regret the bad fortune of the preceding evening. To add to the satisfaction which the sight of this cheerful-looking little inn gave us, we found such a breakfast preparing in the cuisine as would have delighted the most fastidious taste. A couple of gorgeous ducks, and a prime little round of veal were revolving slowly and sadly upon the spit, as they received the finishing decorations from the hands of as tidy a looking Phillis as ever spoilt her beauty in the heated atmosphere of a kitchen. Had the good people been expecting us for weeks, they could not have entertained us better than they did, or provided more liberally for our craving appetites.

Should any of my readers ever pass through La Barthe, he may feel certain of being well received at the house I speak of, obtaining an excellent breakfast or dinner, and a bed whose comforts would tempt even an unwearied traveller to sleep. I know neither the name of the people nor the designation of the inn, but I can mention one landmark by which it will be easily discovered, which has stood for many centuries, and will last longer than the auberge or its inhabitants; it is the ancient square tower at the east end of the village; the auberge is situated upon the opposite side of the road immediately in front of it.

We crossed the moor which lies between La Barthe and Capvern (famous for its mineral waters), and there gained the great road from Toulouse to Bagnères de Bigorre. About a couple of miles from Capvern, and close to the road, is the celebrated old castle of Mauvosin. Its situation upon the extremity of the ridge which drops into the valley of the Arros, is grand and imposing; and the amazing solidity of the structure, its immense size, and the courage displayed by its garrison in 1373, who held it for the English to whom the country of Bigorre at



that period appertained, against the elite of France commanded by the Duke of Anjou, combine to render it an object of interest to the English traveller. Before the invention of gunpowder, it must have been almost impregnable, and only to be reduced by famine, or by cutting off the springs which supplied the garrison with water. It was by means of the latter expedient that the Duke of Anjou forced its garrison to surrender; but even then they only did so upon condition of being allowed to go where they liked, and to take what property they chose along with them.

The building is in form of a square; the walls of great height, without a single window or aperture, and appearing a mass of solid masonry strengthened by huge buttresses. The entrance is by the eastern side, from the second story of the building, and has been reached by means of a half moon arch thrown from the platform in front of the castle to the doorway. This arch has now fallen away, and, as there is no other loophole but the doorway, it is impossible to get into the interior of the building, excepting by means of a ladder of considerable length. I endeavoured to procure one at the village, but could not; and was thus pre-

vented from examining the interior, which I exceedingly regretted.

Beneath the castle, and at a short distance from it, are the ruins of the Abbey of L'Escaledieu, secluded in a nook of the valley, and embowered among its overhanging woods. The road passing by the abbey, winds over the hills which separate its little valley from that of the Adour, in which is Bagnères de Bigorre, the cleanliest, the freshest (from its mountain air, and the streams which flow through its streets), and for two months in the year, the gayest little town in France.



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