

years. I made the like observation at the promenades; and especially at a concert given by a Jew virtuoso, where every thing I beheld displayed such excessive luxury, such a boundless passion for pleasure, and such a striking egotism, that the spectator could not avoid making the most painful reflections on the slow progress of philosophy in an age so proud of its enlightened reason. Among their wives and their mistresses a crowd of upstarts were pointed out to me, many of whom, before the revolution, were among the lowest classes. It may be said, that, in all revolutions, nothing but forms change, while in fact things ever remain the same.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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

## LETTER IX.

*Gascons; their Character and Language.—Bordeaux Wine; its Classes and Prices.—Present Stagnation of Trade.—Speculations in Privateers.—The Exchange.—Character of the Merchants and Inhabitants in general.*

Bordeaux, May 1797.

NOTWITHSTANDING the exaggeration that has prevailed relative to the Gascons, there is some foundation for what has been said of them; for they always speak in hyperboles, and with the like figure ever appreciate their own merit: they are continually talking of themselves, and must always be as it were upon the stage to feel at their ease: they know every thing, have seen every thing, and have almost been present at the creation of the world: they tell lies without knowing it, brag without intending it, are continually contradicting you without ill-will, and offend without design: their character chiefly consists in a ridiculous vanity, and an unaffected proneness to romancing.

Every one is acquainted with the Gascon pronunciation: its principal defects consist of too strong an aspiration of the *j*, the change of *b* into *v*, and too strong an accent on the *e* ouvert: but many people are ignorant, that the Germans of  
Upper

Upper Saxony, and the Spaniards, are not exempt from the same defects; and that the pretended Gasconisms are also in part Germanisms, or Hispanisms.

The chief branch of the commerce of Bordeaux consists of wine, for where can a man go but he meets with claret? I doubt not therefore you will be glad to learn something on that subject.

The wines properly of Bordeaux are distinguished from those of which that town is only an emporium, and which are there shipped for foreign parts. Those grown at Bordeaux are distinguished into *vins de graves*, and *vins de la palud*, according to the soil that produces them; the former being sandy, the latter marshy. The wines sent to Bordeaux are either country wines (*vins du pays*) from four leagues above Bordeaux, or from upper *Guyenne*; or those from *Catalonia* in Spain, which are sent from thence to Certe in Languedoc, and thence by the grand canal and other navigable rivers to Bordeaux.

Among the wines properly of Bordeaux itself those of *Médoc* are highly esteemed, and the best quality is that of La Fite. Among the French wines sent to Bordeaux, the most esteemed are the white wines of *Langan*, and the red of *Castres*; and among those of Spain the wines of Nataro.

As to colour and price, the red *vins de graves* are from fifty to a hundred ecus per cask; the

white wines of *Langan*, *Prignas*, *Barsac*, and *Sauternes*, are from one hundred and ninety-five to two hundred and ten francs; the white and red wines of *Pedenfac*, from thirty-four to thirty-eight; and the white and red of *Castres*, from forty to fifty francs.

In no part have men refined to so high a degree of perfection as at Bordeaux on the art of cultivating the vine; in no part perhaps could they create so great a variety of sorts with equal economy; and it requires a laborious application of many years to become acquainted with these secrets, or to know how successfully to employ in practice a long series of expensive experiments. Of all the claret drunk out of France very little is pure and genuine; the greater part being adulterated with various drugs, or mixed with other wines. This last species of adulteration is perhaps the most innocent, and is even sometimes necessary to enable the wine to bear a voyage. There is also a kind of wine called *vins cuits* boiled previous to their fermentation, which keeps them always mellow. There are also *vins de passe*, or raisin wines made without a press by an infusion of dried raisins, which is afterwards left to ferment.

The exportation of wines amounts on an average to 150,000 barrels a year. It has considerably diminished since the commerce of the north and of the United Provinces has ceased. There is also much brandy exported, of which the common  
fort

fort is one degree and a half, and the best, which is called spirit of brandy, was far as thirteen degrees.

The general stagnation and destruction of the trade of Bordeaux has obliged the merchants to enter into other speculations, especially that of privateers, which is the most general. There are at this time no less than twenty-one privateers belonging to Bordeaux alone; and several of the proprietors have already made fortunes by rich portuguese and english prizes coming from the Brazils and the East and West Indies. Yesterday, for instance, the *Intrépide* brought in an english brig, the cargo of which is valued at a million and a half French; and six large portuguese ships were shown me on the river with crews of one hundred and twenty men and twelve guns, which were boarded and taken by small privateers with only eighty men and four guns.

Meanwhile complaints are constantly heard on all sides of the decline of commerce and the absence of specie. The superb sugar-houses, which owing to the good quality of the water here produced excellent sugar, and which on account of the facility of shipping it was so much in demand in the north, are now quite dead for want of sugar to work. The great numbers of manufacturers in glass, china, cloth, hardware, chintzes, &c. having no longer a market in the colonies,

are on the point of total ruin. The wine, brandy, and vinegar trades, have suffered in consequence of the war, and the artificers who lived by them are in the most extreme indigence. Every one complains; and none but carpenters, ship-builders, and rope-makers, now find employment, in consequence of the frequent fitting out of privateers. I acquired most of this intelligence at the exchange: but, when I mention an exchange, do not figure to yourself such exchanges as those of Holland: that of Bordeaux is small, filthy, and is a kind of miniature of the palais-royal. In like manner, the square formerly called place-royale in front of the exchange, and situated on the river, appears too circumscribed and too mean for a city like Bordeaux, which contains 100,000 inhabitants.

The rich merchants here are reputed to be much given to luxury and intrigue; they are also charged with want of good faith and with extravagance; but I dare not decide on these reproaches, or on those of avarice and bad morals; reproaches which it would be unjust to render general. Among the exceptions, which I have a pleasure in making, I would place in the first class the worthy Berquin, author of so many works for children, and who was born at Bordeaux.

## LETTER X.

*Departure from Bordeaux.—Society on the Road.—Landes, or Heaths.—Stilts.—Inns, partly Spanish.*

Bayonne, May 1797.

I AM at length at the foot of the Pyrenees, only four leagues from the frontiers of Spain, where every thing announces the neighbourhood of that interesting country.

I was desirous of coming hither by the diligence (which costs seventy francs, and arrives in three days), but I was offered for fifty francs a corner of a returned carriage. On traversing the suburb of St. Jean, the fine houses and gardens with which it abounds afforded a smiling and a charming prospect. For two leagues afterwards the country is perfectly well cultivated, affording the finest landscape the eye can behold. We passed before the country-house of the ci-devant bishop of Bordeaux, where the statues in the garden were mutilated, the windows and window-shutters broken, and the balconies torn in pieces. The road presently became sandy, the beautiful plantations on both sides changed to barren heaths, and we entered upon the well-known *landes* of Bordeaux.

One of my fellow travellers was a little middle-aged man from Biscay, who had served, when young, on board a ship belonging to the colonies : he had afterwards been several voyages to Guinea, and a great number to St. Domingo. At length he was employed at the port of Brest, and was now returning to his family, to pass the remainder of his life in peaceful retirement. He seemed a very worthy man, was full of witty sallies, enjoyed an unruffled serenity of temper, and, notwithstanding his Gasconism, possessed a great fund of useful and valuable knowledge. With him was his niece, a beautiful creole, thirteen years old, full of wit and accomplishments ; she sang charmingly, and, by the attractive fire of her black eyes, appeared to have entirely taken leave of infancy.

My other companion was also a seaman, and a Basque, or Biscayan. He was tall, well made, in the prime of life, and was going to Bayonne to take the command of a vessel that had just been fitted out as a privateer. Having recently received his share of a considerable prize, he had plenty of money, and every now and then gave us a taste of his stock of Medoc wine, which was excellent.

I have passed the last five days in this pleasant and agreeable party, without experiencing a moment's ennui. Every one had so many adventures to communicate, and one story led to so many others, that the conversation never ceased,  
except



except when Mademoiselle Jeannette now and then sang a song; and I endeavoured to contribute my share to this interesting conversation.

I could not give you a better idea of our route, than by comparing it with the country of Lunenburg; with this only difference, that here we found a greater quantity of heath. During the last ten leagues we saw long rows of osiers and firs, we only met with a village every three or four leagues, and the cultivation was much superior to what the marshy soil seemed to promise. Everybody here walks on stilts; and in that manner the shepherds and peasants attend their flocks, which we met with every now and then. As they are accustomed from an early age to this contrivance, they use it as though it were a natural elongation of the leg, and advance with astonishing rapidity: many of them dance, turn round with ease, and even pick up the money thrown them, without quitting their stilts. The appearance of these gigantic figures, especially in young girls, has a very singular and comical effect.

In all the inns we entered, and which were tolerably clean, I observed an approximation to the manners and customs of Spain: we were asked, for instance, whether we chose to have our dinners dressed with oil or butter, and whether we preferred coffee or chocolate: a very common dish here is giblets stewed in their own gravy.

## LETTER XI.

*The Pyrenees.—Caps used in Biscay.—Suburbs of Bayonne.—  
First Appearance of that Town.—Its Situation.—Les Allées  
Marines, or the Promenade along the Quays.—Charming En-  
viron of Bayonne.*

Bayonne, May, 1797.

DURING the two last days we had already begun to perceive part of the Pyrenees, and could perfectly distinguish their snow-clad summits; but three leagues from Bayonne they displayed themselves in all their magnificence.

The cultivation grew better, the road began by degrees to ascend, and country-houses and gardens increased in number, when, all on a sudden, we perceived from the brow of a hill the town of Bayonne at the foot of the mountains, whose azure masses seemed to be within a league of us. The crowd of villages and plantations, the view of the town and of the river, which was partly covered with ships, and the majesty of the scenery gave us the greatest pleasure.

We were accosted by a beautiful peasant returning with some vegetables from a garden; she wore that bewitching coiffure, which has been adopted first at Paris, and since in Germany, and which

which so advantageously adorns our country-women. It consists of a cambric handkerchief, of which two corners are attached behind and hang down, while the two others are tied in a rose on the forehead. The biscayan women, who are very well made, are so skilful in varying the form of their handkerchieves, and their light straw hats adorned with ribands harmonize so well with them, that I could almost prefer this coeiffure to all others.

The road soon descended, and we presently entered the suburb of Saint Esprit, which is separated from the town by the river Adour. Every thing has here a Spanish air, the houses are adorned with balconies, on which cloths are spread, the shops have open windows, and the artificers are seen within singing as they work. We meet women everywhere riding on asses, or with baskets on their heads, loaded mules, or sledges drawn by oxen. Even the accents of the Basque language, to which I am not yet accustomed, and the noise of the tambourins to which young girls are seen dancing, add to the attractive novelty and gaiety of the scene.

The bridge having been broken down, we were obliged to pass the river in the ferry. A crowd of spectators had assembled on the bank, and seemed to vie with our boatmen in the noise they made. Not that our carriage had any extraordinary appearance,

pearance, or that the passage was dangerous, but, because it was a custom and a kind of natural instinct with these people to make a great noise.

Some travellers have spoken of the beauty of Bayonne; but I am sorry I cannot agree with them. Every thing considered, the town appears to me insignificant and rather filthy, and though it has some fine streets, several tolerably fine edifices, and a great square, all these ornaments are defaced by a theatre and a corps de garde in ruins.

Bayonne stands a league from the sea, at the confluence of two rivers, one of which, called the Nève, divides the town in two parts, which communicate by a bridge. In one of these divisions we arrived by the Porte de France, from which we beheld the Nève precipitating itself into the Adour. The latter separates the town from the suburb, and, after uniting with the Nève, forms an excellent harbour, the superb quay of which is used as a promenade.

A double row of tufted elms affords here a cool delightful shade. To the right, above the river, is seen the country above the town, with the Adour meandering through it, a part of the suburb, the high citadel built upon a mountain, in form of a terrace, the dock-yards, and some plantations. To the left, between the rows of trees on the glacis, appears the country below the river with its  
rich

rich views crowned by the Pyrenees. If the view were not obstructed by a great sand-hill forming a vast projection, the ocean would be visible from the point of the quay in all its grandeur and magnificence. The tumultuous animation of the port, the perfumes of the neighbouring meadows, and the pure elastic sea air, render this promenade extremely pleasant at all hours of the day, but evening adds new charms and encreasing interest to the scene.

This quay, which the inhabitants call *les Allées marines*, is not the only promenade. The walks of trees that encompass the glacis to the very banks of the Nève, the meadows that carpet these charming valleys, in short, the whole country interspersed with gardens, vineyards, and country-houses, give a great variety to the prospect, nor is there any point of view where the eye does not behold the town and its rivers, the summits of the Pyrenees, or the sea.

## LETTER XII.

*Trade of Bayonne.—Exports and Imports.—Privateering.—A Description of the various Qualities of Chocolate, how made, and the characteristics of its goodness.*

Bayonne, May, 1797.

I AM now able to give you some information relative to the commerce of Bayonne. The chief trade arises out of its relation with Spain, to the ports of which it sends principally the following commodities: the woollen cloths of Languedoc, the silks of Lyons, Tours, and Avignon, cottons and chintzes of Rouen and St. Malo, hats and ribbons, silk stockings, gold and silver laces, watches, and steel-ware. In exchange for these are received wool, wine, oil, and Spanish American goods, especially dying woods, dollars, and ingots.

To the north of Europe, and particularly to the Hans-Towns, Bayonne exports wines, and among others, the *vin blanc d'Anglet*, and the *vin rouge du Cap Breton*, (the former of which is made to the right, and the latter to the left of the Adour) liquorice, raisiné, (grape conserve; or gelly,) chocolate, &c. and, in return, are received various northern merchandizes, of which the principal article is cheese: besides which a very brisk coasting trade

is carried on with all the ports of France. The ships of Rouen, Nantes, Saint Malo, Bordeaux, &c. also bring hither the products of their commerce, to be forwarded into Spain, and in exchange they receive the merchandize of that country, for which Bayonne is as it were an emporium.

Since the present decline of trade, the merchants of Bayonne have employed a great part of their capitals in fitting out privateers, nine of which are now in service, and prove very successful. Last month they took a large English ship bound from Liverpool to Oporto, with a cargo of bacallao and manufactured goods. These have been smuggled into Bilboa, where such articles are in great demand, and have produced an enormous profit. The Biscayans are indeed excellent seamen; the discovery made by them of Newfoundland, and their navigation toward Davis's Streights, are undoubted facts, for most of the ports in those countries bear Basque names.

A considerable branch of the trade of Bayonne consists in chocolate, of which a great quantity is sold not only in France but throughout the north. Having had an opportunity of obtaining some information on this subject, you will not, perhaps, find the following particulars wholly uninteresting:

The goodness of chocolate depends, in the first instance, on that of the cacao; from which it is made,  
and

and which is chiefly of the three following kinds, or qualities; that from the Caraccas, that from Guayaquil, and that from the West Indies, particularly St. Domingo, Martinique, Curaçao, &c. Caraccas cacao is extremely dear, even during peace, and, in the most favourable years, is never sold for less than three francs a pound. To make chocolate therefore the cacao of the Caraccas and that of Guayaquil are mixed together. Two thirds of the former with one-third of the latter produce the first quality; two-thirds of Guayaquil with one-third of West India cacao produce the second; and the West India cacao alone the third.

The goodness of chocolate depends, in the second place, on the care bestowed on roasting the cacao, on the proper proportions of the cacao, sugar, and various aromatics employed, and on the attention bestowed in working it, in order to produce a more perfect mixture of the ingredients.

The characteristics of a good and unadulterated chocolate, are, a deep flesh colour, a firm, fine, and shining grain or texture, with little white rays, an aromatic smell, a facility of melting in the mouth, with a sensation of coolness, the producing no gluten in cooling, and the having an oily cream at top.

[In England, if chocolate is perfectly prepared, no oil appears in solution, perhaps, because our  
double



double cylinder is well calculated for exact trituration.]

The general characters of bad and adulterated chocolate are, a black pitchy colour, an insipid taste of syrup, a farinacious unequal coarse grain, a burnt smell while preparing for the table, a glutinous moisture, the melting watery, and a fat mixed sediment.

Chocolate is adulterated in various ways; by an unequal mixture of the various kinds of cacao, as for instance, a fourth of Caraccas, a fourth of Guayaquil, and a half West India, for the first quality, instead of two-thirds of Caraccas, and one-third Guayaquil: but even the most honest makers of chocolate find themselves compelled to adulterate, whenever, the price of good cacao having risen considerably, the public will not give higher prices than usual for chocolate.

The baneful and most blameworthy adulterations are, the expressing the cacao oil, in order to sell the butter of cacao to the apothecaries and surgeons, substituting animal fat, and roasting the cacao to excess, to deprive it of this foreign taste; the mixing it with rice, flour, potatoes, honey, syrup, &c. A pound of Caraccas chocolate costs, even here, near three livres; you may therefore easily imagine of what quality these mixtures must be in Germany; chocolate must also be prepared

pared in a proper manner, in order to retain all its strength, and a good flavour. The rule is, one cup of water to two ounces of chocolate. It is suffered to melt gently over the fire, and is poured out as soon as it begins to rise, after which it is heated a few minutes longer, in the cup, on the hot cinders.

[For heat suddenly applied both coagulates it and separates the oil.]



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

## LETTER XIII.

*Fête in honour of Peace.—The Game called Ballon.—A Bull-Fight.—Character of the Inhabitants of Bayonne.—Arrangements for a Journey in Spain.*

Bayonne, May, 1797.

YESTERDAY all Bayonne was in a tumult, celebrating a fête on account of the preliminaries signed at Leoben with the Emperor. The procession consisted, as usual, of bands of music, young people of both sexes, the public functionaries, the gardes nationales, &c. It was a very singular appearance to behold a triumphal car formed of green lattice work, covered with pine-branches and red cloth, in which Mars, Apollo, Ceres, and Victory, sat very sociably together, and it must certainly be ignorance or want of civism in me, to consider these ceremonies as ridiculous and mean. The fête concluded with fire-works at night, which proved, indeed, its principal ornament.

Last Sunday, for the first time, I saw the game called ballon, or air-ball, of leather, filled with air by a machine, which is a favourite exercise with the Bayonneſe and the Baſques in general. The lightneſs, agility, intereſt, and attention, beſtowed on it, ſtruck me forcibly, and the

E

numerous

numerous crowd of spectators seemed 'by their enthusiastic acclamations to excite to the utmost the ambition of the players.

But the bull-fight, which had newly been introduced before the Porte d'Espagne, was frequented with still greater ardour. As the Spaniards of the neighbouring country often come to Bayonne, either on commercial business or for an excursion of pleasure, some enterprising persons, in order to attract them thither still oftener, have engaged a Spanish *toreador* or bull-fighter, and established that species of diversion. The novelty of this spectacle attracted all Bayonne; but many connoisseurs, who were enabled to judge of the performance by comparison, thought it execrable: for it consisted merely of two bulls quite tame, who were cruelly tormented during some hours by a few *banderilleros* throwing darts wrapped in paper, or charged with gunpowder, and their dogs.

The Bayonnese are generally considered as the very Gascons of the Gascons themselves, and their exaggerations relative to the pre-eminence of their little town are insufferably ridiculous. They are accused also of being cunning and artful toward strangers. If a general inference could be drawn from particular examples, I should be at no loss for instances. On enquiring for a conveyance to Bilboa a voiturier was recommended to me, who, for three days journey to that city, did not scruple

to ask me twenty piaftres, though he would not employ more than one mule, and while I was remonstrating againft the unreasonablenefs of the demand, feveral very well-dreffed perfons came up and voluntarily took part with the voiturier, and faid the price was very moderate. Fortunately I was previously informed of the contrary. I therefore broke off my negociation and took other meafures.

Hearing of a bifcayan vefiel that was trading to Bilboa, and which was to fail about the end of the week, (a coafter, called here a *chaffemarée*,) I waited on the captain, a fine young man of a tractable difpofition, and was asked no more than five piaftres for myfelf and baggage; and though this, as I afterwards learned, was two high, twenty franks being the common price, we immediately agreed, and we fail to-morrow.

## LETTER XIV.

*The Port of Bayonne. — Its dangerous Bar. — Occupations. — Fears.*

Boucault near Bayonne, at the mouth of the Adour,  
May, 1797.

I HOPED to have dated this letter from Spain, but those hopes are literally fled away; for the wind has changed to the southward.

The day before yesterday the captain had me called at four in the morning, but, with all the haste I could make, I was too late, and was obliged to pursue him in a boat. The river affords a very grand prospect, for there the eye commands a view of Bayonne with its mountains and environs, which form an amphitheatre, and a scene of beauty more easy to admire than to describe.

The wind however shifted on a sudden to the southward, and caused an insupportable heat. The whole atmosphere seemed on fire, the water of the river tepid, the shade of the sails which were extended over us afforded but little shelter, and, seeing but little hopes of a change, I came on shore, and took refuge at the inn.

Two days have already elapsed in waiting, and though the wind is a little more easterly, the bar gives

gives us little hope. We have gone several times as far as the pilot's light-house, at the point of the dyke, but the roaring of the waves is dreadful, and their sound like thunder, especially during the night. We must however have patience. The captain tells me he has sometimes staid here twenty days; we shall be very lucky if we escape with the loss of a week.

Notwithstanding the labour that has been bestowed on the construction of these two fine dykes, built for the benefit of the trade of Bayonne, this dangerous bar is almost an insurmountable obstacle; and they say five or six vessels are wrecked there almost every year. We saw, upon the Downs, the remains of a vessel that had been wrecked there last month.

Near us lie two Dutch ships with Russian colours, and three Danes, bound for Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Bremen. All the captains, and by turns the sailors, come on shore daily to see the bar and take refreshments at the inn. The Dutch bring their wives and children. My Biscayan captain plays every day with his people at nine-pins, and the winnings are spent in drink, of which they partake in common.

To remain at a sea-port waiting for a fair wind is a state of extreme irksomeness. My only resource is a small wood behind the house, where I

go to read my Spanish books. Our host is, at once, a pilot and a fisherman, but he is out all day, which is a great mortification to me, as it deprives me of his interesting conversation, which I can only enjoy at night.

It is now the fifth day, and the bar does not appear more tranquil. The captain is gone to the town to procure fresh provisions, and every one looks forward till the day after to-morrow, when the moon will enter her first quarter, at which time the sea begins to grow calm. I may however be obliged to stay another fortnight. What a loss of time! But I throw down my pen; for one should never write in a bad humour.



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

JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA



## LETTER XV.

*Departure.—View of the Coast.—San Sebastian.—Contrary Winds.—Guetaria.—First Impressions.—A Biscayan Hofstels.—Singular Beds.—Arrieros.—Christian Souls.—A Surgeon's Library.*

Guetaria, Biscay, June, 1797.

THE night before last we went, as usual, to the pilot's light-house, when the bar appeared more practicable, and the captain began to form some hopes. In short, we got out to sea the next day at noon. The vessel was towed by two large boats on the other side of the river. We were the last that performed this manœuvre, and I had observed the five others at my leisure; but however frightful the shocks received by the head and stern of the ship may appear, they are but little felt by those on board. The other vessels failed to the northward, and we remained alone. A coasting voyage, however, can scarcely be reckoned going to sea.

As our distance increased, the blue sides of the Pyrenees displayed themselves in all their majesty. In the distance a ridge of mountains stretched along in confused irregular masses toward the sea, and terminated in a steep declivity of rocks covered with farms and cultivation. Behind us the verdant

dant coast of Gascony gradually disappeared, and, in front, we saw the reflected light of distant sails.

We had an east wind, which, though faint, was favourable, and soon got us to the citadel of San Sebastian, situated on a promontory. The sun was setting, the shades of the rocks were lengthening, and a delightful coolness rose from the surface of the sea. The points of the Pyrenees shone with a golden light, and a deeper hue adorned the surface of the waves. We cast anchor under the guns of San Sebastian. The night was mild and serene, the heavens spangled with stars, and the sea in perfect calm.

The morning, however, proved as stormy as the night had been tranquil. The air was full of dark clouds, the wind began to blow strong from the south-west, the sea grew heavy, and we found it very difficult to beat up against wind and currents. The captain determined however, to keep out at sea, and we manœuvred as well as we could.

In the afternoon the wind grew so boisterous as to lay the ship down, and we shipped several seas; we determined therefore to haul our wind close, and make the first port we could, which happened to be Guetaria, where we arrived at seven in the evening, and a boat being sent off to us brought us to a small dyke, where we dropped anchor.

This

This village refounded with tambourines, in the balconies toward the sea were women in veils, and the boats in which we crossed the bay were full of young girls singularly dressed, and whose hair floated in long brown tresses. The appearance of a crowd of monks in large black cloaks and covered with immense round hats walking on the dyke, the dress of our pilots, their culottes adorned with ribbons and black velvet, their red waistcoats, and *redecillas* or hair nets, in a word a total change in every appearance, and innumerable sensations, which I cannot describe, apprized me I was in Spain.

The captain proposed to take me to an inn, to which I consented. Having landed, we passed through an arch-way without gates into a small square, where the people were dancing the fandango, though it was now so dark I could scarcely see, and my guide recommended me to an old woman, whom we found in a smoky kitchen, whither I entered with a firm resolution to accommodate myself to whatever I should find.

In the province of Biscay it is well known that the ancient Cantabrian language is preserved, and the Castillano or Spanish, is spoken very little or very ill; so that it was with the greatest difficulty that my landlady and myself could make ourselves understood. However, I had no sooner answered her first enquiry, whether I was a Christian, by  
which

which is meant a catholic, in the affirmative, than she was so pleased with me, that she brought me a stone-bottle of delicious wine and a large loaf of bread made of flour and maize in equal quantities, but of a very pleasant taste. She had nothing else to offer, except a dozen fried fardines or sprats with which I was obliged to be contented,

When I retired to rest, I found no other bed than a paillassé of maize leaves, laid on vine twigs, and two blankets; and, soon after, four muleteers (*arrieros*) came in and occupied the two other beds. One of them spoke French tolerably well, was extremely pleased to find I was a *christiano*, and I could not refuse tasting his wine.

Next morning I found, in the kitchen, a woman younger than the former, but scarcely at all handsome. This was the old woman's daughter, and mistress of the house. She spoke Castillano with tolerable purity, and knew so well how to ask me questions, that my monosyllabic answers sufficed to inform her of the object of my journey. "Señor," said she, "la grazia de Dios acompañará a vm. España es el mejor pays del mundo. Las almas christianas se alegrarán de ver a un hermano, y le ayudarán a vm. en todas sus empresas." The grace of God, Sir, will accompany you. Spain is the best country in the world. The souls of Christians will rejoice in seeing a brother, and will aid you in all your undertakings.

She

She then led me into the sala or great room, which was tolerably neat. Meanwhile her husband returned, and addressed me in bad French. Besides being an inn-keeper, he was the surgeon of this small place, and, in the last war with France, had learned a little French of the soldiers who had been quartered in his house. I looked over his books, among which I found translations of Dr. Buchan's Domestic Medicine, and of Tissot's Avis au Peuple, a Complete Treatise on Surgery, a Treatise on the Materia Medica, and a Dissertation on Midwifery. All this convinced me of the progress of knowledge in Spain, which I observed with pleasure.

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

JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

## LETTER XVI.

*Guetaria:—Its Situation and Appearance.—An Indiano.—A Mountainous Country.—Grand Scenery.*

Guetaria, June 1797.

YOU here receive a more minute description of Guetaria than you will find in the most elaborate treatises on Geography; for, to avoid ennui, I have been employing these three days past in making myself fully acquainted with the place.

The town of Guetaria, which contains near three hundred inhabitants, stands at the foot of a mountain encompassing a small bay. A high pyramidal rock rises opposite to it, being separated by the sea, but communicating with it by a narrow dyke four hundred feet long. On the right and highest side is a vast recess; on the left, which is much lower, are a multitude of cascades formed by the sea, which rolls its waves among the granite pebbles. When the wind blows strong from the southward, the sea rises to a prodigious height, and falls on the other side in an extremely fine spray. On a projection beyond the rock is built a platform, where some of the pilots are always on guard, immediately to put off to such vessels as wish to enter the port.

The

The dyke leads directly to the foot of a great rock that commands the village; it then makes an elbow toward the right, and forms a third basin, in which lie the fishing-smacks. The three other sides are defended, either by the rock, or by a causeway laid on a reef of small inferior rocks. At the end of the dyke toward the beach are a battery and a corps de garde for the defence of the bay.

To the summit of the rock is near an hour's walk, constantly winding through fields and brambles: but though from below the points seem impassable, yet it contains a chapel, and a hermitage, but which at present is uninhabited. The view of the sea it affords is immense, and the spectator shudders on looking down at the abyss, while the steep and shining sides of the rock are continually lashed by the foaming waves.

Gueteria has only one well-built house, belonging to an Indiano; that is, a man who has made a fortune in America. He may have about a thousand dollars per annum, but his countrymen believe him possessed of millions. I became acquainted with him, and found him affable and well informed. As he has no heirs, he spends his money, and does a great deal of good. He has made, for instance, at the foot of the mountain, a very fine well, and has a scheme of forming a new road to communicate with some of the adjacent parts.

parts. He is generally carried in a sedan by two young girls; but his only enjoyment seems to consist in smoking the finest Havannah tobacco, and he had a stock of above two hundred pounds of cigars. His house is the only one, not even excepting those of the ecclesiastics, that has glass windows, iron balconies, drinking glasses, arm chairs, or pewter plates.

The mountain, at the foot of which this place stands, is cultivated in a superior manner. What a charming prospect! As the spectator gradually ascends, and the reef of rocks that surround the bay unfold themselves, till he reaches the summit, he views the vast extent of ocean before him, and the steep shores that on either side lose themselves among the clouds: the eye ranges over a long ridge of mountains covered with flowers and interspersed with trees; here it beholds the bay covered with fishing-smacks; there, the town and gardens; and, farther on, the mountain itself. What a rich scene! what luxury of vegetation! everywhere fields, bushes, vineyards, chestnut-trees, and myrtles, and on all sides fountains and cascades. In short, 'tis a scene at once magnificent and wild; and the ocean, on which the eye looks down with astonishment, gives it additional charms.



## LETTER XVII.

*The Mafs.—Ecclesiastics.—Latin Eloquence.—Sardine Fishery.—  
Departure.*

Guetaria, June 1797.

WE have been hoping in vain for a fair wind, of which as yet there is not the least appearance: the captain however goes on shore daily to fill his bota, or leathern bottle, and to hear mafs; and at first I thought it right also to go to church, to avoid offending my shipmates.

Indeed, every man being educated in one sect or another, why should we not waive our own habits and customs, to procure the good-will of our neighbours; for after all, it is here mere matter of custom, and I consider every custom, in matters of religion, as an affair of police.

But would you imagine, that in this little place there are no less than ten ecclesiastics. Two of these once addressed me in Latin: "Bona terra est Hispania," said one; "Tellus optimus et divitissimus," added the other: "Non moriebimur per famem," resumed the first; "habemus seges et vineas, campos et boves, castaneas et multas pomas." Thus the conversation went on in this barbarous Latino-Hispanic style; our friend L.

would

would have been highly amused to hear them. These ecclesiastics meet every evening regularly at a public house, where they muster round a large dish of sardines, and a pitcher of still more capacious magnitude, in which they drown all the cares of their holy office.

These sardines, or *sardiñas*, supply the inhabitants not only with a cheap kind of food, but also a profitable article of trade; and the fishery is considerable in June, July, and August. Three or four boats jointly extend a large net, with which they form a circle, and then wait several hours at anchor: when they perceive by their floats that the net is full, they draw it in, and the quantity they catch is immense. The usual price is about a halfpenny a dozen. A considerable quantity are salted for winter; and when salted, or smoked, they sell for about three farthings the dozen. This fish is of the same species with the *bretling*, caught on the coasts of Holstein; and not the same as is sold in Germany under the name of sardine, which is the anchovy of the French, and is caught in the Mediterranean.

On board the *San Josef*.

The wind has suddenly become fair. A sea-voyage is an exact image of human life. As we proposed to set sail at day-break, I came on board last night. My bill amounted only to two piastres for six days, and my host and hostess took an affectionate

fectionate leave of me. Our sailors, together with the captain, feasted themselves at the public house the evening before our departure, and it was near one in the morning when we got on board. The full moon illumined the sea and mountains, the shadow of the vessel trembled on the bosom of the deep, and to the eastward the light-house of San Sebastian cast a glare over the dark shade of the coast.

Before sun-rise we were out of the bay. The wind was fair, the sea calm, and we had nothing to fear but English privateers: but as the coast was in shade, we kept under the land, hoping thereby to escape notice.

Toward noon we hailed a fishing-smack, and exchanged a bottle of French brandy for a large dish of sardines; but having no gridiron, we dressed them on wooden sticks, and ate them with a keen appetite.

The greater part of the coast is skirted with high and shining rocks, interspersed here and there with a few bushes of myrtle; and from time to time the openings between the mountains presented us with charming views up the country, or of a beautiful and interesting shore. At length night came on, and we dropped anchor.

## LETTER XVIII.

*Bay of Bilboa.—Its first Appearance.—Portogaleta.—Charming Banks of the River of Bilboa.—Olavijaja.—Approach to Bilboa.—Casa de Antonio.*

Bilboa, June 1797.

WHEN I awoke this morning, I was much pleased to see our Bilboa pilot again. He had come off the evening before with a vessel, and had cast anchor near us during the night. A smart breeze filled our sails, and we soon made the promontory of Machicaco, though not without fears of falling into the clutches of some privateer that might be lying in ambush; but our good fortune did not forsake us. The flags we saw along this coast were Spanish. We doubled the cape without difficulty, and at length landed in the bay of Bilboa.

Imagine to yourself a mountain on the right covered with verdure, along which runs a village of white houses, interspersed with fields and orchards; on the left a low flat rocky shore clothed with bushes, and in the distance a ridge of mountains that rear their menacing brows toward heaven, and you will have an idea of the first appearance of the bay of Bilboa.

But

But on approaching nearer, other objects begin to unfold. On the right we perceived the village of Portogalete with its church upon a height; on the left a small hamlet concealed amid vineyards and clumps of trees, and in front a multitude of vessels ready to sail. We passed the bar in safety, and the tide carried us rapidly up the river.

I could not give you a better idea of its charming banks than by comparing them with the views upon the lake of Waldstetten in Switzerland, excepting that the river being narrower than the lake, its frequent windings give its views a more interesting variety. Thus we are surprised by a sudden view of the convent of San Nicolas upon the summit of a mountain with its shaded terraces, at the foot of it a whole fleet of ships riding at anchor, and beyond it a chapel, a cluster of houses embosomed in foliage and surrounded by fields and vineyards. The whole country has a general character that brought Switzerland strongly to my mind.

As we approached the port itself, half an hour before we arrived at Bilbao, the river, which is rather small, became narrower and narrower. The right bank is skirted with steep rocks, and is adorned with a superb quay; on the other are fertile fields, which pursue the acclivity of high mountains. We passed along a triple row of vessels, and cast anchor safely off a harbour called Olavijaja.

Accustomed to the broad rivers of the north of Germany, you would be surprized to find on this narrow and tranquil stream all the advantages of navigation unaccompanied by any of the inconveniencies of that dangerous element. Whenever I contemplate these banks, so near to each other, and so gay and smiling, these mountains covered with verdure, and these rich fields, I fancy myself beholding in miniature the environs of the Garonne, which I have lately quitted.

I agreed to travel on foot together with our captain the remainder of our way to the town, which as yet we could not see. Our road followed the bank of the river, and was adorned with country-houses and gardens. We soon came in sight of the towers of Bilboa, still having the river close to us, walked through a magnificent avenue of trees, passed a convent and some other houses, and then found we were in the midst of Bilboa. I doubt whether the environs of any other maritime town afford more picturesque or more romantic views. We passed along the broad quay, which was lined with ships, and entered an inn called Casa de Antonio.

Every object around me here has something very singular in its appearance, and their forms are quite original and foreign. The rooms are covered with floor-cloth representing bull-fights, the seats mean, old-fashioned, and extremely low, the floors are  
brick,

brick, and the walls full of faints and crucifixes:

But I must lay down my pen; for I hear the bells of the nunnery opposite my inn and beyond the river ringing for vespers, and the people are crowding into the sala.



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

## LETTER XIX.

*Situation of Bilboa.—Ridges of Mountains.—The River and its Sand-banks.—Architecture.—Population.*

Bilboa, July 1797.

BILBOA is situated in a valley close to the river Ybeyzabal (which in the basque language signifies the narrow river), about three hours' way from the sea. Above the town the valley is so narrow, that the royal or high road (camino real) has been cut through one of the neighbouring mountains. This same valley grows narrower still above Bilboa, which stands in a more spacious angle, and forms a triangle. In this basin, as it may be called, the town is continually exposed in autumn and winter to sudden and violent showers, but on the other hand it is sheltered from the north wind, and enjoys all the advantages of a fine alpine country.

Imagine to yourself two ranges of mountains, one opposite to the other, terminating in gentle hills, and forming below a narrow valley almost entirely filled by the river. These mountains, like all the neighbouring country, are interspersed with fields and houses, embellished with the greatest variety of plantations, vineyards, chestnut and apple trees,



trees, vegetables, maize, &c. Nothing can equal the riches and magnificence displayed by Nature on every side. These two ranges of mountains advance almost in a straight line to the coast, where they open, and the river widening confounds its waters with the ocean.

A few leagues above the town the river scarcely appears more than a large brook, though at the commencement of the valley it turns several mills. But soon its banks again approximate, and the stream rolls with a roaring noise over the rocks. Near Bilboa it is so low that most carriages pass through it; but near the first bridge its bed widens, a few paces lower it bears small ships, and a little farther ships of 300 tons burthen.

It is said that at most a century ago larger vessels came up to the town, but a sand-bank in the middle of the stream has since increased so much, that it cannot now be passed with the highest tide. Indeed at low water the river is confined to so narrow a bed, that two boats can scarcely go abreast. The consulate of Bilboa is now taking into consideration a plan proposed by an Irishman to remove this sand-bank; and it is very desirable this plan may be adopted, as it would be extremely advantageous to the trade of the town, at least in point of convenience.

The town of Bilboa, as I have said, is situated on the right bank of the river in a recess of the valley. Two bridges, the first of which is of wood, and consists of a single arch, join it with another quarter on the left bank. The upper part is antique and unpleasant, the streets narrow, and the houses rather high, but ill built. All the streets of this part end in the great square, along one side of which the river flows. In this square, excepting the town-house, which is adorned with gilt balconies of good workmanship, there is not a single edifice deserving notice: but the lower part of the town is new, and contains three fine broad streets, all ending at the *arenal* or promenade along the bank of the river. The houses are all built of freestone, some of them magnificent, and there is a very fine row of houses built a few years ago behind the *arenal*. This part is separated from the promenade by a circus used for the game of ballon (*juego de pelota*), a game to which the inhabitants are extremely partial, and on which they are very fond of betting. From thence the spectator has a grand view of the river, the valley, and the mountains.

As to the population, Bilboa seems at first sight scarcely able to contain 8000 inhabitants; but they are so crowded and heaped together, that they amount to 13,000; and the houses, which are

are four and five stories high, are so fully inhabited even to the roofs, that a very small apartment with an alcove lets for fifty piastres a-year; add to which that a spanish family generally occupy much less space than a family of Germans. Thus you will easily conceive how many individuals a house may contain. Building however goes on every day, because the war compels the rich capitalists so to employ their money. Perhaps also the upper part of the town may one day be improved and embellished, the appearance of which is more cheerful because it is on a declivity and forms a kind of terrace.

In the old town the houses are built mostly of wood, in the new of brick. The former are destitute of art or convenience, but in the latter we find a prodigious improvement of taste. In lieu of the heavy balconies of wood, they are of iron, and very neatly manufactured; and in lieu of the wooden shutters and small round panes of glass used in the old houses, we find large panes and venetian blinds. The only thing, that astonishes, and disgusts foreigners, is the finding certain conveniences placed in the kitchen and close to the chimney.

## LETTER XX.

*Promenades at Bilboa.—The Arenal.—The Road to Olavijaja.—The Road through Albia over the River.—Ranges of Mountains to the right and left.—Promenades above the Town.*

Bilboa, July 1797.

LET us now begin our walks round Bilboa. The burning solano or east wind has given place to a cooling zephyr, and a refreshing sea-breeze has reanimated the creation.

We will first pay a visit to the arenal, as it is called. Four rows of elms and linden trees form its fine tufted walks; on the right is a magnificent church with two towers, on the left the river, the banks of which are well cultivated, and the back-ground is formed by the mountains. Going on by the Augustin monastery, and passing a second avenue of trees, the eye beholds without obstruction a grand prospect comprehending the whole course of the river and the two chains of mountains I have already spoken of.

Thus we arrive at Olavijaja, where we take a view of the magnificent group of mountains which seem to unite behind Bilboa, and which present to the eye all the pomp of luxuriant fertility. To return along the other side we cross a ferry:  
After

After the tumult of the port we have just quitted, we enjoy with so much more pleasure the solitude of the convent of Franciscans shaded by enormous chefnut-trees.

Here we behold a magnificent prospect. On all sides are hills clothed with verdure, vineyards, cheerful and peaceful dwellings. The innumerable windings of the road exhibit the greatest variety of prospects, labourers cultivating the earth with their iron spades and singing as they work, women occupied on the banks of the brooks and rivulets, while at a distance we hear the tinkling of bells calling the inhabitants of the cloistered cell to vespers. Thus we proceeded as far as the village of Albia, which is opposite to Olavijaja.

Yesterday I conducted you along the banks of the river: we will now take a range among the mountains. You remember no doubt the wild romantic regions of the Alps, their numerous springs and fountains, sometimes limpid, sometimes foaming amid the moss-grown rocks, the picturesque shrubberies and plantations that overlook the abysses, and the blue mountains that form the happy retreats of our beloved Helvetians: here you would find the same landscapes, the same romantic scenery.

We have proceeded half way, and are now close to the capuchin monastery. The mist that covered

covered the valley already begins to disperse, and we breathe a purer air; the valley unfolds beneath our feet, but the objects still appear too near us, and the horizon too much circumscribed. We go from height to height, and after an hour's climbing, arrive at length at the summit of the mountain.

Here stand two signal-staves for vessels; for which reason this point is called *Punta de las Banderas*, or simply *Las Banderas*: for when a ship enters the bay a red flag is hoisted, and when they sail out a white one; if a ship is wrecked on the coast, a black one; and when privateers appear in sight, white and red. This point being the highest, and visible from the principal streets of Bilboa, these news spread instantly.

Wherever I turn my eyes, what majestic scenery! what an astonishing variety of enchanting objects! These awful mountains, this fertile vale interspersed with peaceful dwellings, this rivulet that meanders softly beneath the shade, that harbour with a forest of shipping, and the boundless ocean rolling along in all the majesty of its silver light! This country equals the most ravishing prospects in Switzerland, and is perhaps superior to it on account of its vicinity to the sea. As we descend the mountain, we enjoy quite a different prospect, and a total change of scenery. On leaving the capuchin monastery, we find a very convenient

convenient flight of steps cut in the rock by a biscayan gentleman for the accommodation of his confraternity.

The paths on the left side of the mountain are no less convenient and easy, than those on the opposite side are painful and difficult. Apparently attention has here been paid to the wants of the hamlets and fishermen who supply Bilboa with fish. The road is broad, well paved, and in many places has a strong resemblance to those of the lesser Saint-Bernard. At one of the most beautiful points of view we perceived the lower mountains, the town, and in the bottom the river with its cultivated banks. As we were nearer to the port, we clearly distinguished the ships, but an immense rock obstructed our view of the sea.

The prospect, though of a different character, is not less beautiful on the mountains that command the town, and from which the eye takes in the whole of the valley. Along the bank of the river and on the side of the mountains are two promenades, at one of which, called *Los Canos*, there are such beautiful prospects and so commodious a pavement, that it is one of the pleasantest walks I have seen. The promenade called *Passeó de los Agostinos* on the declivity of the mountains to the eastward, combines novelty and beauty in its prospects. But why talk of so many different promenades. The environs of Bilboa form but one.

## LETTER XXI.

*Corpus Christi, or Holy Thursday.—The Procession.—Grotesque Figures.—Angels or Angels.—Bull-Fight.—Aficionados.—Dogs.—Embolado.*

Bilboa, July 1797.

I AM now to give you a description of some festivals, that were celebrated soon after my arrival here.

The first was the *Corpus Domini* or Holy Thursday, one of the principal roman catholic festivals, built on one of the most important dogmas of that religion, and at the same time the most lucrative for the clergy. It is this popular religious fête that gives date to the most important civil transactions and the principal domestic events. It also gives occasion, or affords a pretext, for a multitude of public and private amusements, and for that reason, as well as for many others, is in high veneration with the peculiar protégées of Saint Anthony, I mean the taylor.

On the eve of this day all the church towers were illuminated, large fires were lighted on all the mountains, and from two in the morning all the bells were in motion. At six the streets were full of people crowding round the altars, which



were richly decorated, and the balconies were loaded with spectators; but the procession did not begin till near ten o'clock.

Four gigantic figures, two men and two women, dressed up in a ridiculous manner, began the march. They had long periwigs made of flax, and coiffures of red oiled cloth, ancient dresses, such as copes and other strange and grotesque habiliments. They had snuff-boxes as large as a plate, and fans an ell long. They pretended to be about to embrace the spectators in the balconies, which they almost reached, and at the corner of every street danced a very pretty fandango. "But how," you will ask, "could all this be contrived?" Nothing more easy. The figures, except the head and arms, are mere machines dressed up, beneath which are men who give them motion.

After these came a band of music and a multitude of angelos, or little boys and girls, mostly in rich dresses, with long pasteboard wings covered with satin. It is a fashion for good families thus to dress up their children for this procession.

The superstition and the vanity of parents are alike deeply concerned, and make every one rival his neighbour, and endeavour if possible to surpass him. The children are loaded with jewels, and their heads are shaded by a tower of hair, in order to have long tresses floating between their wings,

wings. They are covered with every possible decoration, careffes are lavished on them, their pockets filled with sweetmeats, and every one beholds them with a sort of respect, which the little creatures seem to command by their proud and magisterial air.

After these came the various confraternities with their respective saints, mostly in wood, and tolerably well sculptured. They were dressed in velvet or silk, and crowned with flowers. A second band of music and clouds of incense announced the VENERABLE, that is the host, and a crowd of men and women dressed in gala closed the procession.

If the morning was consecrated to devotion, the afternoon was appropriated to the *corrida* or bull-fight. This species of popular festival will be the more interesting to you, as it is but little known in Germany. The expectation excited by this amusement, the preparation of the scene of action, and the arrival of the bulls had thrown all Bilboa into a ferment; nor was any thing spoken of but the corpus domini and the bull-fight, and the great and little children alike thought of nothing but the approaching combat, and amused themselves with jousting at artificial bulls. During the last three days the bulls were led about the town in grand procession amid the acclamations of the populace, and at night in particular the square was filled with an innumerable crowd of people.

At