

bribery, I should think it difficult to commit a theft.

One of these gardens was formerly called Lindaraxa; and as an example of the extravagant, I shall quote the inscription which refers to this garden. "The beauty and the excellence that are in me, proceed from Mahomed. His goodness surpasses that of beings that have passed, and that are to come. Among five stars, three turn pale beside his superior brightness; my master gives lightness to the murkiest atmosphere: the stars sicken with love of him; and to them, he communicates the perfume of plants, and the sweet odour of virtues. Their business is to enlighten the firmament, else would they dart from their places, and seek his presence. By his command, stones are firmly rooted: it is his power that communicates to them their delicate workmanship; and by his will, do they remain firm. The marble softens at his voice; and the light of his eyes scatters darkness. Where is there a garden like unto this? its verdure and its fragrance excel all others; and its freshness is diffused far around!"

I must not omit to make mention of the Hall of the Abencerrages, so called from an historical fact with which it is connected, and which is probably known to the reader. It was in the year 1491, when Abdali was king, that two great families, the Gomels and the Legris, conspired the ruin of the Abencerrages, the greatest of the Moorish families. To effect this, they invented a tale, by which they fixed dishonour upon the queen, and connected it with Albin Hamet, the chief of the family. The king in his fury, resolved to extirpate the family; and they were sent for to the Alhambra, one by one, and the moment they entered, each was beheaded beside an alabaster vase, which yet stands in the hall, and which is said to have overflowed with their blood. Thirty-five of the family fell victims; but the rest being warned by a page who escaped, they raised the city in their cause, penetrated the palace, and slew many of the Gomels and the Legris, who there defended the king, who took refuge in a neighbouring mosque. The conquest of Granada speedily followed this event.

No description can convey to the reader any just idea of the Alhambra of Granada; nor is it merely the courts, and halls, and fountains, that excite the interest of the traveller: with every one of these, there is some historic and romantic association; and he that would fully enjoy the hours, or days, spent among these splendid tokens of the Moorish empire, must prepare himself by a perusal of that delightful work, "the Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada." He will there find a thousand stirring, romantic, or affecting pictures, peopling the Alhambra with recollections—interesting, as human passions and human affections can make them; and if they be not as vivid as they are interesting, the fault will be in himself, and not in the writer, who with so graphic a pen has sketched the scenes from which they are drawn. I spent the morning of several days wandering over the Alhambra, and found no diminution in the interest awakened by these majestic remains. I did not forget to visit the postern gate through which Boabdil el Chico went forth to surrender his empire, and which he requested might be closed up,

that no one might enter or pass out by the same gate. Accident has now sealed the request of the Moorish king, for the entrance is closed up with stones.*

The finest point of view in the neighbourhood of Granada, is not from the Alhambra; because the view must be imperfect, unless the Alhambra be itself one of the features. The chapel of St. Michael, upon the opposite height, is the spot to be attained; and to this little excursion, I devoted a morning. The hill upon which the chapel stands, is one labyrinth of aloes and Indian fig, which form an impenetrable thicket, unless where the zig-zag path is cut; and of so sturdy a growth are these, that the prospect towards the city and the Vega is entirely shut out. But this mount is curious and interesting on another account: every ten or twelve yards,

* The existence of this gateway, and the story connected with it, are perhaps known to few, but were identified in the researches made to verify this history. The gateway is at the bottom of a great tower, at some distance from the main body of the Alhambra. The tower had been rent and ruined by gunpowder, at the time when the fortress was evacuated by the French. Great masses lie around, half covered by vines and fig trees.—*Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada.*

you pass the exit of a narrow path cut through the aloes, and leading, a few yards forward, to the door, or rather the mouth of a hovel, excavated in the face of the hill. These habitations are tenanted by the very lowest of the population, as may well be believed; and I counted a hundred and forty of them. I requested permission to enter one, at the door of which, a young woman in rags, sat spinning flax; she told me that her husband was out with his gun seeking rabbits, and the only other inmate of the hovel, was a child, asleep upon a mattress on the ground. I saw no furniture, excepting two stools and this mattress, and the light found its way in, and the smoke its way out, at the entrance, to which there was no door; but the woman said, that before winter, they meant to supply this want; and that they also intended to construct a chimney, or, at least, a hole by which the smoke might escape. I noticed that some of the other hovels had chimneys, but I saw no one with a door. I was not sorry, when, after many times losing my way in this labyrinth, set upon by fierce hungry dogs, and meeting many suspicious-

looking persons, I gained the summit of the mount, and an open space where I could see around me. The view was superb: in front stood the old Moorish town—on the left, lay the ravine of the Daro—and beyond it, the whole range of the Alhambra, with its towers, and walls, and arches, and pillars, and the rocky ridge upon which it stands, beautifully shaded and coloured by the woods, over which late autumn had thrown his rich and nameless tints: still higher, stood the Xeneralife; and above this range, the dark defiles and snowy summits of the Sierra, towered into the serene skies. The view was of a different character, looking towards the west: Stretching from the foot of the Alhambra, lay the city, with its many spires and towers, and all its groves and gardens; and still farther, was spread out the rich and fertile Vega, traversed by its winding rivers, and losing itself in the hazy distance. Not wishing to run the risk of losing myself again in the labyrinth of prickly pear, or to encounter the dogs—some of which owed me a grudge, for having threatened them with a stone—I succeeded in finding another road

back to the city. | In this walk, I could not but observe the remarkable changes of temperature to which Granada is subject.—Walking up the sunny side of the mount, I many times blessed the friendly shade of the prickly pear, and the enormous leaves of the aloe; so scorching was the sun; and yet, under the wall, on the shaded side of the mount, the hoar frost was lying; and this same evening, I found it so cold in the hotel, that I drank tea, and received some visitors in bed.

The second night I slept in Granada, I was awoke about midnight by an extraordinary confusion of sounds: bells from the seventy or eighty convents and churches, rung out an alarm; sometimes in discordant chorus, sometimes one ceasing, and another commencing—sometimes, after a moment of perfect silence, all again breaking into a general peal—trumpets, distant and near, filled up the intervals, or pierced shrilly through the crash of bells—and mingled with these sounds, were heard the roll of drums, the hurrying of footsteps, and the howling of dogs. Naturally supposing that all this must indicate

something, I hastily dressed, and putting on my hat, hurried down stairs; but the master of the *fonda* stopped me at the door, telling me he could upon no account allow me to go out; the cause of the disturbance, he said, was a fire, and it would be extremely imprudent for a stranger to trust himself in the streets. Recollecting Malaga, I did not contend the point with him, but contented myself with looking from the window of my apartment. The noise still continued, and the fire not being speedily got under by human efforts, stronger measures were resorted to: the sound of bells and trumpets was exchanged for the song of monks. I heard the monotonous hum from several quarters; lights in long lines were seen approaching; and soon one procession, and then another, headed by a silver virgin, or a wooden saint, crossed the Plaza; and all the while, the streets were paraded by single friars, each tinkling a little bell, and crying aloud "Holy Mary! Blessed Virgin! save this city!" This proved effectual, for the fire was subdued before morning. I need scarcely add, that before these processions

issue from the convents, a hint has been received, that the fire will speedily be got under,—and who can be surprised that the brethren of St. Francis, or St. Dominick, should seize so excellent an opportunity of publishing a miracle?

Among the objects most worthy of notice in Granada, the cathedral must not be passed over. I was already almost surfeited with marbles and gilding, and paid little attention to these; but there are some other things deserving of observation. Among them, the most remarkable and the most beautiful, are the Sarcophagi of Ferdinand and Isabella, the conquerors of Granada: which are of white marble,—sculptured with great taste and delicacy. The sword and sceptre of these illustrious personages, are preserved in the sacristy. I observed a curious notice affixed to every conspicuous part of the walls, forbidding any man to speak to a woman within the cathedral under the pain of excommunication, and the penalty of two ducats, to be given to holy purposes; thus-making good spring out of evil. There were formerly some good pictures in the cathedral,

but they did not escape the rapacity of the French.

The convents of Granada are not distinguished for their pictures; but the admirer of fine marbles will find nothing in the Escorial equal to the marbles that adorn some of the convents of this city. I visited four of the convents—the Dominicans, the Hieronomites, Juan de Dios, and the Carthusians. The Dominican convent is remarkable as the depository of a piece of marble found in the Sierra Nevada, upon which is distinctly represented the flight into Egypt; or at all events, a pictorial resemblance of the objects which are generally selected by the painter to illustrate this piece of history: the marble is in so elevated a situation, that suspecting some deception, I obtained a ladder, and examined it closely; but I found that the friar had not deceived me. Juan de Dios contains, besides much fine marble and innumerable relics, the real body of John of God. The urn was formerly placed within a dome of pure silver, supported by silver pillars, but the French carried off these, and a wooden temple has been substituted: it is somewhat curious that

the French should have respected the saint so much as to leave the silver urn in which his body is contained. Judging however, by the order which he has instituted, the memory of John of God is entitled to veneration. The monks of this order do not spend their lives in sloth, but devote them to the succour of the wretched: there is always an hospital attached to a convent of this order. The Carthusian convent of Granada is one of the most splendid, and one of the richest in Spain: its revenues are immense; and being inhabited by only eleven monks, who live on fish and fruits, the convent treasury must be well stored. The marbles of this convent are beyond price; and all the doors and the panels round the sacristy are mosaic of mother-of-pearl, ivory, ebony, and tortoise-shell. They have some pictures, said to be from the hand of Murillo; but this I disbelieve.

It is said, that formerly five thousand poor were fed daily in Granada by the archbishop and by the convents: at present, however, only four of the convents supply the needy; but the archbishop gives all that

he can spare. His revenues, which formerly amounted to one hundred thousand dollars, do not now exceed forty thousand. I went one morning to the archepiscopal residence, to obtain an order to see a country-house belonging to this dignitary; but he was in bed, unwell; and while the majordomo was sent for, I entered at one of the doors opening from the yard, and found myself in the kitchen. Four dishes were preparing for his lordship's breakfast;—a white soup, a stew of pigeons, pig's feet, and stewed cellery—which, with dessert and wine, was a tolerable breakfast for a sick archbishop.

Among the letters which I carried with me to Granada, one was addressed to General O'Lowlor, Lieutenant-Governor of the province, and Commissioner for the Duke of Wellington, in the management of his Grace's estates in this neighbourhood. From Gen. O'Lowlor I obtained accurate information respecting the state of agriculture in the Vega of Granada, as well as regarding the property of the Duke of Wellington; and I have great pleasure in recording my acknowledg-

ments to this gentleman, for the many kind and polite attentions which I received from him.

The following is the usual rotation of crops in the Vega of Granada. After the land has been fully manured, hemp is put in; and two, or sometimes three crops of wheat, according to the nature of the land, are taken in the same year: a crop of flax, and a crop of Indian corn follow the next year, and beans and Indian corn are taken the third year. For this last crop the land is half manured; and then it is fully manured for the hemp, to begin the next rotation. The hemp is considered necessary to prepare the land for wheat, which otherwise would come up too strong after the manure. This is the rotation on land which is subjected to the process of irrigation.

Agriculture, in the best parts of Spain, is not in a flourishing condition; agricultural produce of every kind, the value of land and rents, have all fallen. Ten years ago, land in the Vega of Granada was worth from fifty to a hundred dollars per acre: at present, it does not average above six-

teen. Wheat sold, ten years ago, at three dollars the *fanega*; now, it does not average, year by year, more than one dollar and a half. Rents are of course fallen in proportion; and low as rents are, they are difficult to be recovered. Upon the lands which are not capable of being irrigated, the crops are extremely precarious; and where a money-rent is required, it is next to impossible to find a cultivator for the land. As a remedy for this, proprietors of high lands are contented to receive a certain proportion of the crop—generally a fifth; and upon land subject to irrigation, a tenant is willing to pay one fourth part of the produce. Land, generally, in the Vega of Granada, returns four per cent., taxes paid; but a considerable quantity returns as much as six per cent. The return from land under tillage, is greater than that from meadow land.

The estates belonging to the Duke of Wellington, lie in the lower part of the Vega, about two leagues from Granada; and all the land is capable of irrigation. His Grace's estates return about fifteen thousand dollars per annum; his rents are paid in grain—a

fixed quantity, not a proportion of the crop; a plan beginning to be pretty universally followed by other land-owners. The Duke has three hundred tenants, from which it appears that very small farms are held in the Vega of Granada; for if the whole rental be divided by three hundred, the average rent of the possessions will be but fifty dollars each. The tenants upon the Duke's estate are thriving; they pay no taxes; and these estates are exempt from many of the heavy burthens thrown upon land. A composition of six per cent. is accepted from the Duke of Wellington, in lieu of all demands.

Before the loss of the colonies, taxation was light; the revenue being mainly supported through them. This loss was a severe and irrecoverable blow; and whether by the burthens which it has thrown upon land,—by drying up the former sources of revenue,—or by the extinction of the best and only sure market for Spanish manufactures, it is a blow felt throughout every department of Spanish industry. Before the loss of the colonies, there was in Granada an extensive

manufactory of ribbons, which found in South America a wide, ready, and exclusive market,—no fewer than two thousand hands were employed in it; but since that event, it has entirely fallen. Many persons who were in that trade, and were accounted the richest in the city, have become bankrupts; others have closed their concerns, and turned their attention to agriculture; and hundreds of the artizans are in a state of perfect destitution, supported only by charity or thieving: to so great an extent has theft been carried, that in one night, while I was in Granada, twenty-six persons were arrested in the act. The export trade in oil has also suffered severely from the loss of the colonies: before that event, it fetched from eighty to one hundred dollars the arroba; and now, it cannot command more than from twenty to twenty-six dollars. The export wine trade from the southern provinces, has suffered the least: the imposition of import-duties has, of course, somewhat limited the demand, by increasing the price in America; but in articles of taste, such as wine, or any thing that is the exclusive produce or manufacture

of a mother country, the separation of colonies but slightly affects the market: the colonists have acquired a taste for such produce, and they will continue to give a preference to it, notwithstanding a political separation.

I will venture to say, that no city in Europe can boast of promenades so delightful as those of Granada. Besides the many romantic walks in the neighbourhood of the city—to the hill of martyrs; to St. Michael's mount, and to the nearer ridges of the Sierra; there are two professed alamedas: one, along the banks of the Xenil; the other, by the margin of the Daro: the former is within the city, and is the most frequented; the other is a path above the Daro, which flows through a deep and finely wooded ravine. Nothing in Switzerland excels the romantic and striking scenery of the valley of the Daro,—for along with the picturesque views within the valley, magnificent glimpses of the glorious Alhambra, and the gorgeous city, are frequently caught beyond it.

The appearance of the population of Gra-

nada) differs little from that of the population of Malaga; there is nearly an equal quantity of beggary and idleness; but it occurred to me, that among the lower orders, there was more rudeness than in any of the other cities of the south: strangers are more stared at than elsewhere; and it is rarely that one passes a group of idlers, that a gibe and a laugh do not follow. This may perhaps be accounted for, from the greater rarity of strangers in Granada than in Cadiz, Seville, or Malaga. One morning, my walk conducted me through the market-place, which is not appropriated to edibles only, but which contains all kinds of goods, exposed in stalls: it is in fact, a general bazaar. The central part is occupied by meat, fruit, and vegetables; and round the sides, the other goods are exposed. At one end, under a range of sheds, all kinds of trades are carried on. I remarked an extraordinary shew of vegetables and fruits, especially dried fruits; but among all the articles exposed for sale, nothing appeared to be so much in demand as hot potatoes; the supply of which was constantly kept up by a regular apparatus of

fire, water, and a steamer. This seemed a favourite breakfast, for scores were sitting upon the ground enjoying it; a little boy, to whom I gave a trifle for shewing me a barber's shop, immediately upon receiving his quartos, sat down upon the ground with his purchase of potatoes, apparently highly delighted with the treat. I noticed a Franciscan, perambulating the stalls with an image of Christ under his arm, and those who gave him any thing were permitted to kiss the image,—a favour that seemed to procure him ample supplies. I inquired the prices of some articles in the market, and found them to differ little from the prices of Malaga: eggs were a halfpenny a-piece, in place of a penny, as in Malaga; bread was somewhat cheaper, and all kinds of game extremely low in price.

The manner of life in Granada differs little from that of Malaga; only that being inland, and having less communication with strangers, Spanish usages are more unmixed. Every one takes chocolate, and goes to mass in the morning. Every lady dresses, and seats herself upon her couch with her fan in her hand, her basket at her feet, and her embroidery

before her, waiting the arrival of visitors; every one dines *a la cuisine Esp  nole*,—eats melon and pomegranate, and takes a siesta,—and every one goes to the paseo in the evening. When I was at Granada, a Neopolitan company gave operas every second night. The prima donna, Se  ora Cresoti, would have done honour to any opera in Europe,—but she was only indifferently supported. It is a curious fact, however, that several of the provincial towns of Spain—poverty-stricken Spain! should be able to support an Italian opera; and that in England, London alone, and with difficulty, supports an indifferent company. This can only be accounted for from the absence of musical taste in England; for there is not a country town to which the expense could be any barrier. What salaries are paid to the singers in Malaga and Granada, I have no access to know; but where a whole box may be engaged for 7s., and the price of the pit is only 10d., these cannot be very extravagant.

The origin of Granada is hidden in the obscurity of antiquity. It is said to have been founded nearly three thousand years

before the Christian era; it is at all events certain, that during the time of the Romans, Granada was a place of some importance: but the name of the founder, as well as the precise date of the foundation, are altogether matter of conjecture.



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

CHAPTER XVIII.

JOURNEY FROM GRANADA TO MURCIA.—MURCIA.

The best mode of travelling this Road; Precautions necessary; the Village of Huétor, and its Venta; Aspect of the Country; an Encounter; Diezma; singular Scenery; Guadix; Journey from Guadix; excessive Cold; Baza, and its Valley; Cullar de Baza; excavated Dwellings; a probable intention of Robbery; Chirivel; Desolate Country on the confines of Murcia; Puerto; the Vale of Lorca, Dress of the Murcian Peasantry; Lorca Market; the Cathedral, and Liberality of the Archbishop of Carthagena; Totana; a Dance; Approach to Murcia, and extraordinary beauty of its Vale; Murcia, its Streets and Population; Magnificent View from the summit of the Cathedral Tower; Paseos and Environs; a ridiculous Observance; Prices of Provisions; Manufacture of Salt-Petre; Silk Manufacture; Agriculture.

I had always looked upon this, as the journey in which I might expect to find the most privations, and that most abounded in hazard; and the little information I was able to receive at Granada, tended rather to confirm

than to dissipate these anticipations. It is, indeed, surprising how very little information I was able to obtain at Granada: there is no commerce between Granada and Murcia; the communication between the southern provinces, and Valencia, and Catalonia, is entirely carried on by sea; and the few persons who pass from Granada to the east, generally take shipping at Malaga, for Valencia. Every one was agreed, however, that the road was execrable, and totally impassable after rain; that the accommodations upon the road were as bad as they could be; and that the probabilities of robbery outweighed the chances of escape. The few persons who had travelled that road, had invariably taken an escort; and this I was told, I could by no means dispense with. I resolved, however, to be guided by the opinion of General O'Lowlor; and, acting upon his advice, I engaged a *tartana*, a small covered cart with one mule, and a muleteer, recommended by him as an honest man. An honest muleteer is the principal security of a traveller; for I am convinced from what I have subsequently heard, that an escort is

totally useless, unless it be composed of soldiers; and, in a long journey, the expense of a sufficient escort will amount to as much as one runs the risk of losing by being robbed; because no traveller in Spain ever carries an overflowing purse. The best mode is, to pay the muleteer a part, before setting out, and the remainder at the end of the journey, which can, of course, be managed by carrying a letter of credit; and the traveller ought to carry in his pocket only what may suffice for his personal expenses, with as much more added, as will satisfy banditti, in case of being attacked by them; for otherwise, the traveller is exposed to violence. If one chooses to hire four soldiers, the risk of robbery is entirely at an end; but this, in a journey to Murcia from Granada, would cost thirty-five dollars; exceeding by at least fifteen dollars, the amount of the purse which it is necessary to have in readiness, in case of meeting with robbers. An escort of peasantry is totally useless. Many instances have occurred, in which travellers have been betrayed by their escort; and I could hear of no instance in which the escort had

stood to defend the traveller; but, indeed, it is better that they should run away, as resistance would only endanger his life. Resistance is a thing that no traveller in certain parts of Spain should ever dream of: before setting out, he must make up his mind to the probability of being robbed, and provide accordingly; not by hiring an escort, or by loading his pistols; but, by putting about twenty dollars into a separate purse, to buy civility in case of need; and by obtaining a letter of credit upon the next town.

The distance between Granada and Murcia is not very accurately measured; but it is computed to be about forty-seven leagues, which is nearly two hundred miles. For this journey, I agreed to pay the muleteer twenty-five dollars; which I thought a reasonable demand for a journey of thirteen days. I did not intend to make much use of the tartana, excepting for carrying my portmanteau, and a basket of provisions; the mule walks the whole of the way; and the daily journey averaging only about thirty-two

miles, it would be no difficult matter to keep pace with it.

I left Granada at three o'clock, P.M., in order that we might arrive the same night at a village called Huetor; from which an easy journey would carry us to Guadix the night following. By any other arrangement, we should have been obliged to rest every night at a solitary venta. We no sooner got clear of Granada, than we were enclosed among the mountains; and in a wild, uncultivated country, overrun with the Esparto rush,—the Sierra Nevada lying on our right, and a range of other, and somewhat lower, mountains on our left. The road alternately descended into deep narrow valleys, and climbed the heights that separated them; but, upon the whole, we gradually got into a higher country; and it was dusk long before we reached Huetor. I noticed several fires blazing in remote spots of the ravines; and one of these we passed so near, that I was able to distinguish several persons around it: the muleteer told me that these persons were migratory peasantry, who avoided the ventas from

economy; or, perhaps, houseless persons, who lived by the produce of their gun. About half a mile before reaching Hueter, we passed a chapel erected in a very dreary spot; a lamp burned before an image of the virgin, and the light, shining upon the road, shewed me a monumental cross standing by the way-side. Soon after, we reached the village and its venta.

This venta was a bad specimen of the accommodation I was likely to find on the road. Although only four leagues from Granada, I should have been obliged to go supperless to bed, unless for the provision I had wisely made against such an event. I superintended the boiling of some water, infused my tea, got my bread and little jar of Dutch butter from my basket, and cut into a most delicious ham, which had been presented to me, and prepared at Granada. Sugar was the only thing I had forgotten; but this the good people of the venta undertook to supply from the village; and it was soon brought, in four separate papers, wrapped up like powders received from an apothecary. Having made a comfortable meal, I next went in

search of a bed, and succeeded in finding a mattress, which I laid upon six chairs; and, covering myself with my cloak—of course, without undressing—I slept tolerably well till roused by the muleteer, although the wind and rain beat in at the open window half the night. When I went in search of the tartana, I found no fewer than sixty-nine mules in the venta, some ready to set out, and others standing in their places—the muleteers sleeping beside them: all these were going to Granada, laden with the Esparto rush, which is extensively manufactured into baskets.

After the night's rain, the morning was hazy; but it gradually cleared away, and fine weather succeeded. On the outskirts of the village, I noticed these words inscribed upon a house in large letters, *Viva el Rey absoluto*, "Long live the absolute King:"—and soon after, in a little hollow, I passed a cross which recorded a murder, committed there five months before, upon a traveller who had been so rash as to offer resistance to banditti. When we left the village behind us, we left the road behind us also: it was now no longer a road, but only a track of the rudest

kind, winding among the ridges of the Sierra; the ground was entirely without cultivation. Mingled with the Esparto rush, lavender, sweet marjorum and thyme, covered the lower part of the mountains; which, higher up, were bare and stony; and the snowy peaks of the Sierra Nevada, bounded the horizon. At a wild and desolate spot, where enormous rocks were strewn around—a secure and admirable retreat for thieves—we suddenly came upon two men seated in a hollow of the rocks, armed with guns, and with pistols stuck in their girdles; and when I saw them leave their places, and hasten down the rock towards us, I began to think of feeling for the purse of twenty dollars. They, however, adopted a different mode of supplying their needs,—thinking it safer to ask for money, as guards of the road, than as robbers. I gave them a dollar betwixt them, with which they appeared to be contented; and, giving me in return, “*Muchas gracias,*” and the parting salutation, “*Vaya V^a. con la Virgen,*” they scrambled up among the rocks. The salutation differs in different provinces: before reaching Granada, it had always been

“Go with God!” now, it was, “Go with the Virgin.” From this spot, the road continued to wind among the mountains, amid the same wild and desolate scenery, till we arrived at Diezma, a small village, with a venta attached to it. Here I again found my ham useful, and, with some eggs and chocolate, I had no reason to complain of my breakfast. The venta, however, seemed very miserable: they had to send into the village for the small quantity of bread I required, and for a little wine. But there was an excuse for the neglected state of this venta; the husband of its mistress had been stabbed in a quarrel only the day before, and had been buried that morning.

After leaving Diezma, we entered a very singular looking country; it was covered with monticules, and pyramids of clay, sand, and gravel, from thirty to a hundred feet high, forming a perfect labyrinth, through which the road tortuously wound. This forenoon we had nothing to fear from robbers, for our party was numerous, consisting of about fifty mules and ten or twelve muleteers. I walked all the way along with the muleteers,