

entering into conversation with them, and from time to time assisting them in diminishing the rotundity of their wine-skins: a traveller must never refuse to put the wine-skin to his mouth; to refuse this offered courtesy, is looked upon as a serious affront. It requires some practice, however, to use the skin without wasting the wine, and deluging the bosom: and nothing but habit can teach this art.

This singular labyrinth continued about two leagues, when we reached a small village, called Parillena, in the neighbourhood of which I observed many hovels excavated in the clay banks—the wretched retreats of the miserably poor. It did not surprise me to see no fewer than five records of murder in this neighbourhood. Between this village and Guadix, parts of the country are under tillage; and I saw some ploughs at work, and several persons sowing in the fields, although it was Sunday; but I never observed that, in the South of Spain, any distinction is made between Sundays and other days. It is not as in France, a day of recrea-

tion; every one plies his trade as usual. In the towns, all the shops are thronged; and in the country, those who wish to be industrious are industrious still.

Guadix, which is situated within half a league of the Sierra Nevada, is approached through a fine avenue of trees; and the land on both sides is rich, and subjected to irrigation from the small stream of the same name. We reached the town, or city I believe, about sun-set, and halted at the best posada the place afforded; but it boasted no provisions, and being unwilling to draw too constantly upon my stores, I walked into the market, and purchased a rabbit for four reals (eight pence), which, stewed with potatoes, afforded me a comfortable supper. During the night, I was awoke by sounds of quarrelling under the windows, and upon rising and looking out, I saw a man lying upon the ground, and several persons collected about him. Next morning, I learned that the man had been stabbed in an affray by his brother-in-law, after having been engaged in playing cards. Guadix is famous for its midnight frays; and it is here, those murderous knives are made,

which are in general use throughout all the south of Spain. This is the only manufacture of Guadix, the inhabitants generally being employed in agriculture. This city is a bishop's see; it has a cathedral, four churches, and seven convents; and contains between five and six thousand inhabitants.

Next day, I left Guadix before sun-rise; the morning was fine, but rather chilly. All the clay banks in the neighbourhood of Guadix, are excavated into human habitations: the first league from the town, I counted one hundred and sixty of these miserable hovels; and some of their inmates, who looked from the outlets, exhibited the very acmé of wretchedness.

After leaving Guadix, we entered a vast open plain, traversed by deep ravines, and almost wholly abandoned to the Esparto rush: here and there, I noticed some feeble attempts at cultivation; and some flocks of sheep were feeding upon the lower acclivities of the Sierra, which bounded the plain on the right. The venta, fourteen miles distant from Guadix, was the first house we saw;

and we therefore cease to wonder at the neglected state of a plain in which there are no human habitations. The venta at which we stopped furnished chocolate, and bread, and good wine; and with my ham and butter-jar, I feasted luxuriously. I noticed an improvement in the construction of the interior of this venta: there was a circular stone bench round the place where the fire is made upon the floor, large enough for a dozen persons; and it was indeed occupied by nearly as many when we entered it; for there was the old man and his wife, the son of the old couple and his wife, three children, and two great dogs. Two very suspicious looking men were standing, apparently about to leave the venta; but when I arrived, they sat down again; and one of them put a number of questions to me, as to where I had come from, where I was going, and if I had no companions. I had already received a hint from the honest muleteer, not to answer questions of that kind; and I pretended not to understand him. The muleteer, to whom he immediately afterwards put the same questions, told him that I had left Guadix an

hour sooner than my companions; and that before we arrived at Baza, we expected to be overtaken by four of my countrymen.

After leaving this venta, we continued constantly ascending, and soon reached a very elevated and exposed plain, bounded by snowy mountains; the cold was intense. I had never felt a more cutting wind in England; and unless by quick walking, and even running, I found it impossible to keep myself warm. Suddenly the plain terminates in an abrupt descent, almost a precipice, and Baza was seen at the foot, with a fertile plain stretching before it, and mingled with groves and gardens. The transition from this region of snow, to the sheltered valley of Baza, was luxury; and to my great surprise, I found myself soon established for the night in an excellent posada, kept by a Frenchman, who I need scarcely say, provided a supper that did not disgrace his country.

Baza was once a place of consequence and wealth; rich lead and copper mines abound in the neighbourhood, and were formerly worked with profit; but they are now closed,

and will remain closed, until a new order of things begets a spirit of enterprise. The inhabitants are entirely occupied by agriculture, which, in this valley, is assisted by irrigation; and is sufficient for the wants of the people. Baza is said to contain fifteen thousand inhabitants: it is certain that it contains many churches, and five convents,—one of these, St. Hieronimo, possessing an income of eight hundred thousand reals (8,000*l.* sterling), meant for the support of the seven monks who inhabit it.

The market-place of Baza is adorned by nine columns, being the nine iron cannon, by the aid of which, Ferdinand and Isabella took the city from the Moors. Upon one of them, is the following inscription:—*Estos tiros son los que los Reyes Dom Ferdinando y Dona Isabella ganaron esta Ciudad sobre los Mauros, anno 1489, en el dia de Sancta Barbara Patrona de esta Ciudad.*—“It was with these cannon, that Ferdinand and Isabella took this city from the Moors, in the year 1489, on the festival of St. Barbara, the patroness of this city.”

From Baza, which we left as usual about

sunrise, to Cullar de Baza, the country is wholly without interest; we ascended an inclined plain, bounded by snowy mountains on both sides, and almost wholly left to the hand of nature. The situation of Cullar de Baza is pleasing: it stands upon the side of a deep ravine, almost wide enough to be called a valley, which is cultivated to the utmost possible extent; and doubtless, when spring clothes with its own fresh livery, this little valley, Cullar de Baza will appear not only pleasingly, but beautifully situated. This valley, a mile long, and about a quarter of a mile broad, is the sole resource of the inhabitants.

In the neighbourhood of this town, the excavation of the earth, to form dwellings, is carried to a greater extent than in any place that I had yet seen; these present a very singular appearance in travelling below the gypsum rocks that environ the town: they are formed in galleries, one above another, and are entered by steps cut in the face of the bank. I noticed several crosses before entering, and after leaving Cullar de Baza; and it is worthy of remark, that these are

more numerous in the neighbourhood of the small towns, than in the more solitary places. From this town, to Chirivel, we passed over a high and very desolate country, producing nothing but the Esparto rush, and aromatic plants: upon the highest part of the ridge, Vertientes, and another small village, are situated; there, some few fields are seen under tillage, and stunted ilex is scattered over the neighbouring acclivities. At Vertientes, the muleteer mistook his path, and we were under the necessity of several times asking directions: this, is always to incur risk. It was already dusk, and no road could be more solitary than that between this village and Chirivel; the population seemed miserably poor, and many of them had seen the unprotected vehicle pass, and knew its destination. As we went forward, I noticed several fires in hollows not far distant from the road, shewing the night camp of some houseless wanderers; and I was somewhat startled when looking keenly along the road, lighted by a glorious full moon that had risen in the east, I descried the figures of two men, about two hundred

yards behind us. The old muleteer seemed not quite at his ease, when I told him what I had seen, and he urged on his mule. I had little doubt that we were followed by some of the persons who had seen us pass through Vertientes; and taking from my purse of twenty dollars, a part of its contents, I slipped them, and two ounces of gold, into my boot, and put in my waistcoat pocket, a purse with only twelve dollars, which I thought sufficient for two peasants of Vertientes, although so paltry a booty might be despised by the band of Don José. Just at this time, something dark appeared before us, and presently a train of some ten or twelve mules, and three men approached. We stopped to ask them how far we were distant from Chirivel—and while the question was put and answered, I kept my eye upon the men behind, who stood still in the middle of the road. I had now less doubt than ever, of their intentions, and mentioned the ground of my increased suspicions to the muleteer, who was so persuaded of their truth, that he proposed to the men whom we had met, that one should go forward with the mules to

Vertientes, and that the other two, should return with us to Chirivel, which was only about half a league distant. It is generally indifferent to a Spaniard where he passes the night; and this proposal, seconded by the promise of a few pecetas from me, secured us this seasonable addition to our party. After we set forward, the men behind followed us a little way, probably to ascertain our numbers; they then stood still; and in another quarter of an hour, they were no longer visible.

The posada at Chirivel was almost as bad as the venta at Hueter; but being nearly independent of the larder of the posada, I both drank tea and supped comfortably, with that miserable substitute for a sea-coal fire—a brasero—under the table; but I had no talisman against the fleas, and was overjoyed to find myself free from their assaults, and on the road next morning.

From Chirivel, the only road is the bed of a river, in which we travelled three leagues, till we reached Velez el Rubio. The banks of the stream, then almost dried up, are in many places precipitous; so that I had been

truly told in Granada, that in wet weather it is impossible to travel to Murcia. The situation of Velez el Rubio is picturesque: a ruined castle looks down upon it, and the environs are tolerably well wooded; this improvement in the appearance of the country, continues only about a league and a half beyond the town, when every trace of cultivation is entirely lost; and a range of the most desolate hills I ever travelled through, stretches to the east; these are the hills that divide Granada from Murcia. The pass through them is twenty-two miles long; and the whole of this distance there is not a single human dwelling. It is not by a road, nor even by a path, but by the bed of a torrent that these mountains are traversed; and this bed, for the first eight miles, is not six feet wide, and is strewn with enormous rocks, which force the traveller to be a pedestrian. During the whole day, after entering these mountains, we met only one person; this was a Capuchin friar, driving his ass before him, laden with two large jars of oil, the gift of the good Catholics of Lorca, where he had been, to beg this luxury for the use of his

convent at Velez el Rubio. Since there are no houses among these hills, it can scarcely be expected that there should be any cultivation; I did not see one rood of cultivated land, nor a single flock of any kind, not even a few goats. But this country, desolate as it is, has some charms of its own. Rosemary, sweet marjorum, thyme, lavender, and a thousand odoriferous and sweet smelling plants, fill the air with their fragrance, and by so pleasingly addressing one of the senses, withdraw the attention of another from the spectacle of barrenness. After ascending in the bed of one torrent two leagues, we reached the summit of the ridge, and then entered the channel of another stream, in which we descended three leagues to Puerto, our rendezvous for the night. Approaching this place, I observed several little boys herding goats, with only a shirt on, and that shirt a very ragged one. This, on the warm shores of Andalusia, or in the plain of Murcia, would excite little compassion; but here, scarcely out of the region of the Sierra Nevada, it was pitiable to see these shivering little creatures, the children no doubt of

those wretched persons whose hovels I saw excavated in the bank of the river.

In the posada at Puerto, I found very civil people, but nothing to eat. They made me a blazing fire of rosemary and the husks of Indian corn—another of the many uses to which this valuable plant is put—they shewed me a good mattress, and the luxury of a bedstead, and they found a peasant to accompany me to the market to buy something for supper. A fowl was procured without difficulty; and this, stewed with rice, and followed by some excellent wine, might have pleased a more fastidious taste than mine. I had also the luxury of the prickly pear; I bought three dozen for 2*d.*, and found them delicious.

We left Puerto half an hour before sunrise: a rapid descent was carrying us from the regions of cold, into the sunny vale of Lorca, and the transition was equally striking and agreeable. It was now the 2d day of December, but the air was like that of a June morning in England; and as the mist rose from the lower grounds, and disclosed the vale of Lorca, smiling beneath the rays of the

new risen sun, the earth, as well as the air; seemed to own the dominion of summer. As we descended into the vale, the change from the high lands, both in the temperature of the air, and in the appearance of every thing around, became more striking: the fields were covered with wheat, fresh and green; olives, and other trees had regained their natural height; and aloes were again seen by the way side. The whole of the vale of Lorca is under cultivation: to the traveller who arrives by way of the snowy Sierra, it appears a paradise; and the situation of Lorca, close under the mountains that bound it on the left, and the fine old castle hanging over it, add greatly to the beauty of the picture.

The best posada in Lorca I found worse than might have been expected in a city containing twenty-five thousand inhabitants; and it was so dirty,—certainly not a common fault in the posadas—that I breakfasted in the yard. It chanced to be market-day at Lorca; and immediately after I had breakfasted, I strolled through the town, and into the market-place. Here I found many things new to me; for, as I have observed before,

the provinces of Spain differ greatly from each other in dress, usages, &c. All the women wore a large square white woollen shawl, thrown over the head like a mantilla; the men were seen with short white drawers, untied at the knees, and reaching about two inches lower; they had no stockings; upon their feet were sandals, made of rope; and in place of the smart Spanish hat, they wore tapering black caps, fitting close to the head, with a small rim turned up all round: others, from the higher countries, were enveloped in blankets, generally of gaudy colours,—some of them nearly approaching to tartan. All sorts of things were exposed for sale: I saw an immense quantity of dried and shell fruits; cloths and calicos of Catalunian manufactory; shoes, especially rope sandals; quantities of the Esparto rush, and baskets made of it; beads, rosaries, images, and trinkets; and, in short, every thing that one either eats, or wears in the province of Murcia. In a street in the neighbourhood of the market-place, the pig market was held. I never saw a finer shew; for nowhere in the world, is the pig to be found in so great perfection as in

Spain—fed, as it is, in the woods, upon the illex nut. I asked the price of an enormous animal, weighing one hundred and eighty-five lbs., and found it to be two hundred and forty reals (about 2*l.* 8*s.*); for a sucking-pig, they asked fourteen reals. In Lorca, there is little beef; mutton sells at twelve quartos; a fowl costs 1*s.* 8*d.*, a hare 10*d.*, bread 1½*d.* per lb. The price of labour in the vale of Lorca, is five reals, nearly 1*s.*

I walked into the cathedral, but saw nothing worthy of notice, except proofs of the liberality of the Archbishop of Carthage, who has published so great a number of indulgences, that the Catholics of Lorca and other places in his diocese, may pray themselves out of purgatory before they get into it. I saw one indulgence of forty days for every paternoster, and an ave, said before the shrine of St. Francis; and another of forty days for an ave, and a paternoster, said to St. Jago, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Domingo, and St. Nicholas: but I saw nobody taking advantage of these indulgences. The cathedral contains some tolerable pictures by pupils of Murillo.

I left Lorca about mid-day, passing through a very spacious paseo, surrounded by gardens; and after fording the river Gudalentin, and traversing a long suburb, the road skirted the range of hills which bounds the vale on the left; and about a league distant from Lorca, we began to ascend, leaving the vale and fertility behind, and passing through an uncultivated and unpeopled tract of land, to the village of Totana. Here I was again greeted with the sight of orange trees, the first I had seen since leaving Granada; and magnificent aloes and prickly pear, shewed what the land is susceptible of. But the village seemed very miserable; great part of it was in ruins, and most of the children I saw, were clothed—if clothed it can be called—in ragged shirts. Yet, this miserable village supports a convent of monks, of the order of St. Jago. I saw one of their number walking in the neighbourhood of the village, and might have pitied his forlorn situation, but that I knew the minds of most friars to be devoid of those feelings which would render a lot like his, intolerable to a man of refined and cultivated understanding.

In this wretched place the price of labour is only two reals, less than *5d.* Beef is rarely seen, but when brought to market, it is sold at only five quartos per lb., about $1\frac{1}{2}d.$; mutton sells at eight and nine quartos; and pork at twelve; but the pork is excellent.

After dinner, two village musicians introduced themselves: one played the violin, the other the guitar; and thinking it a pity that no use should be made of the music, I invited all the inmates of the posada to my *sala* to have a dance; and excellently well they danced their fandango—snapping their fingers as a substitute for the castanet, and displaying a grace in their movements and limbs, that would surprise the audience in any of our minor theatres.

Next morning, I left this place with the intention of dining in Murcia. We travelled along an execrable road, but through a country susceptible of the finest cultivation, though totally uncultivated, to the little village of Pedrilla; where at an enormously large posada we stopped to refresh the mule and take chocolate; and immediately after leaving Pedrilla, I descried at a distance the tower

of the cathedral of Murcia. Yet for three leagues the country continued wild, and but very partially under cultivation; and then, at about a league from Murcia, we entered its celebrated vale. I was delighted and surprised with the prospect before me: a wide avenue, bordered by trees, stretched four miles, terminating in the two lofty towers of one of the churches. On both sides of this avenue, as far as the eye could reach, it rested upon a carpet of that perfect green that is produced by irrigation,—but there was variety too,—for the shades of the green were different; there was the green of the young wheat, that in a thick crop had reached the height of eight or ten inches; and the still brighter green of the flax; and the green of the many beds of the various vegetables for the market of Murcia; and over all the vale, fig-trees and mulberries were thickly strewn; luxuriant groves of blood-coloured oranges speckled the fields; and stately palms here and there lifted up their broad canopy. It was altogether a most captivating prospect, and realized more than any thing I had ever

yet seen,—the idea of a continued garden and eternal summer. The scene was animated too; for many country people, with their short white trowsers, crimson girdles, and Montera caps, were crossing the fields, returning from labour. Many carts, waggons, carriages, and horsemen, filled the road; and every hundred yards, or less, we passed a neat cottage, half hid in its own little orangery. All this was very different from what I had been led to believe. I expected to have found nothing but silence and poverty in the neighbourhood of Murcia; and in place of these, the approach to it more resembled the neighbourhood of a large and flourishing city, than any thing that I had yet seen in Spain.

At the entrance to the city the custom-house officers, of course stopped the tartana, and I was prepared with the usual bribe of a peceta to save myself from the inconvenience of a search: but here the officers were more ambitious, they would take nothing less than half a dollar; and rather than submit to this imposition, I allowed my portmanteau to be tumbled inside out, and thus saved my pe-

ceta. I arrived at the Fonda de las Diligencias at five o'clock, much pleased that my purse of twenty dollars might now be applied to some better purpose than to fill the pockets of banditti.

The interior of Murcia surprised me as much as the approach to it. I found clean pleasant streets, like those of Seville, and a population not remarkable for poverty and rags. The best commentary upon this assertion, is the fact, that I was not accosted by a beggar during the three days I spent in Murcia. Like Seville too, the convent gardens often skirt the streets, and the walls are overtopped by the heavily laden orange trees, and by the branchy palm. In walking towards the cathedral, I chanced to follow a friar carrying an image of St. Anthony, which the children crowded to kiss; and some of the lower orders to whom he held it, also bestowed upon it this mark of attention.

The cathedral is not equal to many in Spain, but it is fine nevertheless:—the architecture is mixed,—there is much fine marble, and several of the Gothic chapels are worthy of a visit, from the excellence of the workman-

ship found in them. There are no pictures in the cathedral; and the riches in which it formerly abounded were almost all carried off by the French. But the chief object of attraction is the tower, which is ten feet higher than that of Seville; and like it, is ascended by inclined planes. The prospect from the summit at once lays open the character and extent of the celebrated vale. It is about sixteen miles long, and eight wide, and is bounded on both sides by mountain ranges. The whole of this expanse is one sheet of variegated green, thickly dotted with mulberry trees, and sprinkled with clumps of palms, and copses of orange trees. The whole of the vale is divided into fields, separated from each other by small embankments about eighteen inches high, to assist the process of irrigation, and by rows of mulberry trees or shrubs of some sort, which give to the landscape a lighter effect than that which is produced by the dark thorn hedges of England. Towards the east, four leagues distant, where the vale contracts into the narrow opening through which Alicante lies, I could distinguish the spires of Ori-

huela. An isolated rock, crowned by a Moorish castle, and a village beneath it, called Monte Agudo, and another village charmingly situated under the mountains, called Algesarez, were agreeable features in the landscape; while the cottages and houses thickly strewn on the plain, gave life and animation to it.

Walking towards the paseo by the river side, I observed a fine marble column erected in the Plaza Real; and upon inquiring its history, I learned that it was to be surmounted by a statue of King Ferdinand. Farther on, I passed an hospital begun seven years ago, but still unfinished; and still farther, I reached a fine aqueduct for conveying a stream across the deep bed of the river Segura, to water the vale. This promenade would be very delightful, were it not that in order to reach it, it is necessary to pass through the lowest quarter of the city, where the poorest and worst population are congregated. I was told that the corregidor executes well the duties of his office, and that crime is rare in Murcia. In returning from the paseo, I visited the Dominican Convent,

without finding in it much to attract my notice; excepting an indulgence of two hundred and eighty days, granted to all who assist in the ceremony attending the procession of St. Rosario.

In another walk, I visited a chapel where are presented in wood, many passages in the life of Christ,—among others, the last supper; the figures are well executed, and the attitudes natural. Seeing the table covered with a cloth, I asked the reason of this; and was told,—that a magnificent supper is always served on Holy Thursday, and that after standing on the table forty-eight hours, it is removed, and given to the poor; so that at times, even the most absurd superstitions may be productive of good. Returning from the posada, I passed through the market, where I helped myself to a handful of fresh dates, and astonished the vendor with the princely recompense of a halfpenny! The following are the prices of provisions in Murcia. Beef, per pound of 16 ounces, twelve quartos; mutton, eleven quartos; veal, ten; pork, fourteen. Were it not for a heavy duty upon the provisions entering the city,

these prices would be at least one-half lower. A fowl costs 1s. 8d.; a chicken, five reals; a turkey, a dollar; a duck, 10d.; a hare, 10d. or 1s.; a rabbit, three reals. Bread of the finest quality is ten quartos per pound, and of an inferior quality, eight quartos. Good wine is about nine quartos per bottle. The price of labour is from four to five reals. A female servant receives a dollar per month; a man, a dollar and a half, or two dollars.

While at Murcia, I visited the manufactory of saltpetre, this, and all other manufactories of the same article, are farmed by government to a company. The company is bound to furnish the article at six dollars the arroba, (25lbs.). At present, they make but 1200 arrobas yearly; but formerly, they manufactured as much as 10,000. There were 70,000 arrobas in the magazine when I visited it. The trade has lately been thrown open; but I was informed that few have availed themselves of the permission to enter it. I did not visit the gunpowder manufactory, which is about a league distant from Murcia. It is bound to furnish government with 10,000 arrobas every two months, but

there is at present so large a stock on hand, that it only produces 32,000 arrobas yearly.

The silk manufactories of Murcia, were once so extensive, as to employ 16,000 hands; at present, scarcely 400 are required. In Murcia, all the silk is prepared by hand labour, and cannot, therefore, enter the market with the Valencia silk, which is for the most part, produced by machinery. The only other manufacture of Murcia, is a coarse cloth, which, to a certain extent, is sure of a market. The city lives almost entirely by agriculture; but the prosperity of the agriculturist, here as in Granada, has greatly decreased since the loss of the colonies has created a necessity for the imposition of new burthens upon land. The land in the vale of Murcia produces two crops yearly: wheat and lentils, wheat and maize, or wheat and beans; and may be computed to return about five per cent.

CHAPTER XIX.

JOURNEY FROM MURCIA TO ALICANT—ALICANT; AND JOURNEY FROM ALICANT TO SAN FELIPE AND VALENCIA.

Winter in England and in Spain; Journey from Murcia; Orihuela and its Huerta; Inhabitants, and Superstition; a Muleteer's Story; La Granja, and effects of the Earthquake of 1829; Elche, and its Forest of Palms; Commerce; the Date; arrival at Alicant; magnificent Houses; Situation of Alicant; the Feast of the Patron Saint; peculiarity in Alicant Society; Political Restrictions on Society; the Trade and Exports of Alicant; Barilla, the Huerta; an extraordinary Law-suit; Dangerous Road to San Felipe; Montforte, Novilda, and Elda; the Feast of the Concepcion Purissima; Sax, and Villena; Rencontre with Moorish Physicians; Fuente de Higuera; Soldiers' Opinions; charming Scenes; the Algarrobo; arrival at San Felipe; magnificent Moorish Remains; Relics of Moorish Customs; Journey to Valencia; Conversation with a Dominican Friar; the Plain of Valencia; Spring and Autumn in Spain; arrival at Valencia.

IF I were anxious to impress any one with a favourable idea of Spanish scenery, I would carry him from Murcia to Alicant, by Ori-

huela; for the beauty and the novelty of the views upon this route, absolutely beggar description. It is here particularly, where we learn to understand the singular charm of palm-tree groves; and I was informed by a gentleman, who before travelling this road had visited those spots in both Africa and in Asia where the date is most abundant, that he had nowhere found it in so great perfection as between Murcia and Alicant.

There is a diligence upon this road, which makes the transit in ten hours; but I preferred hiring a tartana, and employing two days on the journey. I accordingly left Murcia about sunrise, journeying along the left bank of the river Segura; and while I sat in the tartana, with all its curtains withdrawn, feeling the air so mild that I was even forced to throw aside my cloak, though it was little more than day-break, I transported myself in imagination to my native land, and its December fogs, and frosts and snows. How different was a Spanish December! Here, was no hazy atmosphere,—no raw, damp winds,—no rain, or sleet, or snow, or cloudy sky. I never saw a June

or July morning in England finer than this. The sun rose into a cloudless heaven; not a speck was visible from horizon to horizon: it was the calm of a summer morning, and the softness of summer air; and when I turned to the bright green livery in which the earth was arrayed, it seemed as if Spring had borrowed for a day the graces of a riper season.

About a league from Murcia we passed under the rock and Moorish castle I had seen from the tower of the cathedral, and gradually ascending among the outer ridges of the mountains, and winding through some sweet secluded valleys, the towers of Orihuela appeared over a little promontory; and about eleven o'clock I reached the posada to breakfast.

Orihuela is famous upon many accounts. It is famous for the extreme beauty of its situation, and the unrivalled fertility of its *huerta*: it is famous for the undue number of its churches and convents: it is famous for its superstition, and it is famous for its demoralization. The three last are consequent upon each other. Even the vale of Murcia

yields in beauty and fertility to the Huerta of Orihuela; because the latter is more abundantly supplied with water. I thought the greenness of the vale of Murcia could not be exceeded; but I was mistaken. I found the Huerta of Orihuela greener still: and the greater variety in the trees with which it is thickly strewn, give to it another claim of preference; for, mingled with the mulberry, the orange, and the fig, are seen the cypress, the silver elm, and the pomegranate; and there too, the palm, in place of lifting at wide intervals one solitary crown, seems to have found its element; and, rising in clusters, lends novelty as well as beauty to the enchanting scene.

As for the number of churches and convents in Orihuela, its superstition, and demoralization, I can speak only of the first; but it is highly probable, that where priests and friars so much abound, superstition and bigotry should abound also. I walked into the parish church of St. Augusta; and found a most unusual concourse of persons at prayer; there was not a saint around the church who had not found several worshippers; and I noticed