There was a curious practice attending the commerce of Brazil, by which I have been deceived in this and other towns; but which now prevails less extensively than in years past. A genteel looking man, with an air of importance, enters a Store, and after taking pains to ascertain the lowest prices, if he affect to be a purchaser, or to get the highest if he appear as a seller, sometimes concludes very considerable bargains. But it often turns out that this showy merchant had not the least thought of fulfilling his engagement, and there are no means of compelling him to do so; he has obtained his end, which is either to gratify his vanity, or to obtain information of the value of goods, which he elsewhere turns to account.

If, instead of business, amusing occupation and pleasant society had been our object, we should have had little reason to complain of St. Pedro. Its neighbourhood afforded ample scope for riding, walking, and field-sports. The people, in general, seemed to be disposed to gaiety, were harmonious among themselves, and friendly to strangers. At the house of the Vicar was always found within that which made us forget its comfortless exterior. He was a man of some zeal, and more goodness of heart; regarded as the father, though not revered as the saint of his district. Under his roof there was a constant evening lounge for the Heretics as well as the Catholics, in which lively conversation was occasionally varied by cards and dancing. Some of the inferior Clergy, whom we met with, appeared to be respectable men; but if their services were really enforced by their example, they were insufficient to prevent a great laxity of morals.

The British, as is perhaps too common with them wherever they meet out of their own country, sought and found their chief pleasure in each other's society. There was only one established house of our country in St. Pedro, and the occasional British residents were not numerous. Several persons, giving themselves out to be our countrymen, passed through the town, under the pretence of seeking for lands. But that they were not what they pretended to be, and had other objects than those which they avowed, is evident from their hiding themselves from

us. One of these adventurers was discovered, by his commission and uniform, both of which fell into hands for which they were not designed, to be a Major in the French service. What was wanting in our numbers we endeavoured to make up in sociability; and circumstances, in other respects unpleasant, were favourable to such a purpose. Those of us who were most occupied had not business enough to fill up half our time, and some appeared to have nothing to do. As there was neither inn nor coffee-house in the place, and as the public billiard tables were places of crowded resort, and too frequently the scenes of noisy broils, we established a sort of English mess-room, and lived much together.

Domestic life is here little cheered by what we account commodious and well furnished apartments. I hired a house, equal to most in the place; it consisted of a ground-floor only, had a Sala, or sitting-room towards the street, enlightened by one window, without glass or lattice, and which, when the shutters were open, completely exposed the room and all that passed within it. Behind was an alcove for sleeping, and an unfloored kitchen in a penthouse. For this mansion I paid a rent of twelve Patacas, about twenty shillings per month.

My agreement obliged me to allow room for a large iron-bound chest, with two locks, belonging to the proprietor of the house, an officer absent on duty. The chest was soon removed from the Sala, and converted into a bedstead for my servant. A few days after, the person of whom I hired the house looking in, and not seeing it in its usual place, inquired what was become of it. On being led to its new station, he anxiously asked how it had been removed; and when he learned that it had been by dragging, of which the boarded floor bore evident marks, he lifted up his hands in consternation, and departed without uttering another word, leaving me in no small wonder what the mysterious coffer might contain. My suspense did not last long; he quickly returned with the keys, opened the chest, and, to his manifest relief, found the treasure uninjured. This consisted of a tureen and ladle of yellow earthenware, some dishes, plates, cups and saucers, and, I believe, a tea-pot of the same material. I could not restrain a laugh, but he treated the affair

most seriously, dilating on the vast value of the pottery. Never did the richest service of Porcelain elicit from a fine lady more regard than these English platters drew from the old gentleman. And he was as much in the right as the lady could have been, our ideas of wealth and splendour depending almost entirely on circumstances. Here was, probably, the only dinner and tea equipage of the kind in the country ; and I had, not long before, seen a yellow pint basin sold for a dollar, and a small yellow tea-pot for two.

For the temporary use to which my house was destined I had little occasion to go beyond the common custom of the country in the article of furniture. In the sitting-room were a few chairs, with seats and backs of embossed leather, which folded up into a small compass, and were convenient for carriage, and an useful table of dark coloured wood, supported by four curved legs, each pair being joined together in the middle of the curve. I had not the small ordinary looking-glass, which, in most of the houses, adorns one side of the room, nor the Oratory, supported by two candles, which is usually placed on the other. In the furniture of the Alcove I was more of a conformist ; this sleeping apartment, if so it may be called, generally containing a bedstead, sometimes richly carved, having laths instead of sacking, and contrived, like the chairs, for occupying little room, in case of removal. The bed is a bag of coarse cotton-cloth, filled with wool or flocks ; the bolster and pillows the same, stuffed so hard as to give them the form and something like the consistency of a garden-roller. The sheets are of cotton, beautifully bleached, and,—at least, in the opinion of the contrivers,—handsomely flounced ; the pillow-cases made to fit close, and drawn at each end with a blue or pink ribbon. I do not know that there is either fire-place or chimney in any of the kitchens of St. Pedro, which, in common, answers exactly to the account given of my own. In one of the corners there is a sort of divan, made of plank, and raised about six inches above the earthen floor, which forms the bed-place of the domestics, both male and female, each wrapping him or herself in a couple of yards of blue baize, to keep off the mosquitoes. For the same purpose wood fires are

burned by night, in the kitchen, and sweet scented herbs in the alcoves.

Gentlemen wore cotton-shirts, neatly made with open work and lace at the breast, and the collar sprucely tied with a black ribbon. Their coats resembled our surtouts, in some cases adorned with loops and tassels, in others with large silver buttons; the waistcoats were made of calico, generally printed in a large running pattern; the trowsers of white cotton-cloth. In the house, when perfectly at ease, the coat was often exchanged for a calico jacket, and the feet thrust into slippers. Elderly men, when dressed, wore large buckles; the younger, departing from the state of their fathers, used shoe-strings. On few occasions, and by few people, even of the highest rank, were stockings of any kind worn; and no one went out, on occasions of ceremony, without a cocked hat and a dirk. If about to travel, they put on pantaloons of white cotton-cloth, and drew over them long boots, fastened below the knee with a strap and buckle. In the country, and passing from one place to another, they wore broad-brimmed hats, made of plaited straw, or the leaf of the Palm, and a woollen or cotton Poncho, a garment made of one large piece, with a hole in the middle, through which the head is thrust, and falling loosely before, behind, and over the arms. The Poncho, if made of cloth, is frequently trimmed all round with velveteen, and lined with baize of some gay colour; if of cotton, it is ornamented with a border of various colours, woven with the piece, and is of South American manufacture. Ordinary working-people, such as sailors, boat-men, guides, and the lower order of farmers and peasantry, wear woollen jackets, with quarter dollars for buttons, in such number and order as means may allow or fancy dictate. I never saw here the poorest white peasant, who, besides these ornaments of the jacket, did not carry about him a silver fork and spoon. This practice makes them more cleanly in their habits of eating than their Northern brethren; and one good habit usually introduces others.

Ladies appear in public in the Mantilha, a square piece of silk, bordered with broad lace, which is fastened on the head, and falls over

the back and shoulders; they wear stockings and showy coloured shoes; their head-dress is Portuguese, adorned with flowers, and sometimes, in the evening, with fire-flies. Females of the second class wear, out of their houses, a sort of great coat, called a Capota, made of cassimere, and gaudily trimmed with plush. Female slaves have only the Baéta, a square cloth or baize, often decorated with a hair-list; their hair bound with a piece of red binding, or a Bandana handkerchief; their feet invariably bare.

In this part of the continent there is more than the common proportion of pretty young women and girls; the elder are frank and chatty; none of them go much abroad, though less restrained than in the capital and its neighbourhood, more regarded as companions and friends, and more freely admitted into society. There appeared among them affectionate sisters and wives, and in their houses a much higher degree of domestic and social happiness than I had before witnessed in the country.

Marriages were rare at St. Pedro, compared with the population, though the town and province enjoyed, in this respect, some privileges not common to the colony. In other parts, if not here also, when Brazil was decisively considered as a Portuguese dependency, it was necessary to obtain from Lisbon a licence for the solemnization of marriage. If the swain made any pretences to wealth or distinction, it was not unusual for him to go thither to seek it, with voluminous testimonials of his birth, baptism, residence, and means. In the gay circles of the capital he not unfrequently found another charmer, or perhaps, on his return, had to lament a new instance of human instability, his fair one having forsaken him. So did state policy unite with other causes to impair social virtue and domestic comfort.

Indeed here, as in Rio de Janeiro, moral principles seemed to have little influence; there was the same want of fidelity, honour, and confidence. Religion frightened some into uprightness, and a strict police restrained and compelled greater numbers. The country, too, was pastoral, and uninfected with the mania of mining. Yet if it possessed a

few moral advantages, the great influx of strangers, and the frequent changes in society, were peculiarly hostile to its feeble virtue. All the vigour of the Governor was insufficient to prevent the mischief occasioned in this way; though, by the interposition of his authority, he sometimes rendered the abode of unprincipled adventurers in the town, as uncomfortable to themselves, as it was irksome to the well-disposed.

Believing that the character and government of this Gentleman were generally held in that estimation, which we Englishmen thought their due, I was surprised to find him the object of one of those furious Philippics, which the Catholic Clergy frequently pronounce from the pulpit, during Lent. On the preceding Sunday, which was very hot, a number of young men quenched their thirst in the Church, out of a marenga, an earthen vessel like a tea-kettle. Being myself thirsty, and accustomed to receive civilities from some of them, I sent a boy to request a draught of the water, which was refused me. The Preacher of the following Sunday had ascertained that the vessel contained, not water, but spirits; his anger was justly roused against the delinquents, and he chastised them with much animation and eloquence. All appeared to feel the propriety of his censures, until towards the close of his address, he turned to the Chief Magistrate, and in direct terms accused him of giving countenance to gross immorality, of treachery to God, through a want of zeal to defend his holy services, and to punish those who dared to profane them. So sacred is the pulpit in the eyes of many of the Clergy, that they esteem themselves licensed to utter in it whatever their bigotry, caprice, or disappointment may prompt, even in the hearing of Kings, whose conduct may have excited their displeasure.

In this brief delineation of Manners and Character, an example of holy zeal may, not inappropriately, be followed by one of singular tolerance. I used occasionally to enter this Church by a small side door, near the altar, and to hold myself so far back as to be only a spectator of the religious rites. On the evening of Good Friday, I had entered the

same way, but, attracted by the ardour of the Preacher, or the singularity of the ceremonies, had insensibly gone into the Church farther than usual. I quickly perceived myself an object of notice, and saw a smile on the countenances of some of my acquaintance; when, looking round, I was shocked to observe just behind me, the half-concealed representation of the body of Jesus Christ, lying in an open coffin. My position would, in many places, have been construed into contempt for the rites then performing, and exposed me to great danger; here it was considered as the pardonable mistake of a heretic, arising from such ignorance as rendered him an object of pity. When the funeral obsequies were performed, half a dozen Priests carried the body, in its receptacle, through the streets, followed by all the principal people of the town, a whole regiment of soldiers, with their arms reversed, and military music. In England, the procession might have passed for the funeral of an officer of rank; except for the exhibition of a picture, and the presence of a few boys with wings stuck on their shoulders, in the character of angels.

Another anecdote will be allowed to mark great benevolence, though, according to our conceptions, not well directed. It was mentioned, on another occasion, that the Mate of a British vessel was apprehended and confined for some time, at St. Pedro, previous to his being transmitted for trial to the Admiral's station at Rio de Janeiro. Here he became an object of general commiseration, because the property was almost all recovered; and the people, never thinking of the nature of a crime, but merely of the extent of a loss, regarded the offence as a slight one, and its punishment as severe. They even supposed that, were the whole sum restored, no farther notice should be taken of the affair. Under such impressions, a Gentleman of the town privately offered double the deficiency, if the culprit might be set at liberty. The officers too, under whose custody he was placed, entered into a subscription, to bribe the prosecutor to what they accounted mercy; and it became afterward known, that failing in this purpose, they were much inclined to suffer him to escape, and were restrained only by the recol-

lection, that they would themselves want bread when their commissions were forfeited. This was not an affected display of wealth in one case, nor of kind-heartedness in the other. All seemed truly to regret that an Englishman should be so disgraced; and their disappointment can hardly be conceived, when they received thanks for their good-will towards our country, with an assurance that our laws did not admit of a prisoner's liberation without a trial. On his entrance into Rio, however, he was permitted to escape.

A community, it is often observed, is no less exhibited in its Sports than its serious modes of thinking and acting. Soon after our arrival Lent was announced; the three first days of this season are always devoted to frolic, among the Brazilians. At the Intrudo,—for so these days are called,—they cast hollow balls of various coloured wax, about the size and shape of an orange, fill them with water, and pelt each other, until the combatants are generally well wetted. It has been surmised, that this was originally one of the singular modes by which the Priests communicated the water of baptism to persons indisposed to receive it, and thus entrapped them into the Kingdom of Heaven. However this might be, another practical witticism, greatly in request at the same season, could hardly have any religious origin. Flour is wrapped up in cones made of paper, and in a moment, when the poor Negro is off his guard, he is whitened all over. So fond are the people of these and similar diversions, that they freely say—" At the Intrudo we become simpletons."

On the first day of these sports, the British were proceeding together on horseback to the house of a Spaniard, about five miles from the town, and took a back way in hopes of avoiding the wetting, to which all were alike exposed. We had not, however, made much progress, when we were assailed with a shower of balls, which dispersed us in every direction. Being better mounted than some of my companions, I pushed forward, and looking back, saw one of our number unhorsed, and very roughly handled; deserving his fate, I must confess, by suffering his anger to kindle, and returning for the watery balls very improper missiles.

When our party was again collected, I once more proceeded a little in advance, and thereby escaped many single shots; but had no sooner reached the Church than I was attacked from behind its corner, with several well-aimed balls, one of which almost disabled my bridle hand. I made off with all speed, mounted the sand-hill, and from thence contemplated the conflict between my friends and the fair Amazons, who had lain in wait; for the Governor's daughters had planted themselves in a well-supplied ambush, in expectation of our passing. The contest, while it wetted, imparted to us a share of the good humour with which it was maintained by our opponents; and even our unfortunate companion escaped from the sullen cloud, which had spread over his mind.

The party at the Farm consisted of the master of the house, his wife, two sons, and two daughters, five or six English visitors, the German Doctor, and his pretty, wicked wife, who ere long destroyed him by poison. The host had no small resemblance in figure, to our Henry the Eighth: his face was covered with carbuncles, his features proportioned to his frame, his eyes large and fierce, and his brow wonderfully compressed, and capable of an extraordinary expansion. Hence the movements of his mind were singularly discernible, and from these appearances, as well as his deep and harsh tones, and his boisterous action, we judged him to be ferocious and cruel; though he could smile, and in his cheerful moments, had a playfulness of manner, which ill-accorded with his other qualities. We were not surprised to find that he had filled a higher rank in society; and of him I could believe the story often repeated of singular characters, or of men in singularly obscure circumstances, that he had been obliged by the commission of murder to fly to some distant hiding place. Yet was this tiger held in a soft bondage; his wife, a careful manager of the family, appeared to receive and return his warmest affection and confidence. She told us that he had once been addicted to gambling, at which period they were always poor; but that now he was reformed, had purchased the farm on

which they lived, and was never without money in the drawer. Returning into the house with one or two of the guests from an attendance on the horses, he caught her last words, opened his repository with great self-complacency, and displayed a considerable quantity of doubloons, proclaiming himself a fool, for having formerly squandered so many away. The children were all grown up, and with seemingly more of their mother's temperament than of his, heard his noise without alarm, and were little terrified by his fury. Some young men, who had come in the afternoon, to enjoy the Intrudo with his family, incautiously offended him, and he seized an axe, with which he seemed on the point of dashing out the brains of one of them; yet this occasioned no interruption of their gambols, but only made them careful to keep out of the reach of his arm.

However the peculiarities of this man may render him unfit to be produced as a specimen of the Peasants in the neighbourhood of St. Pedro, a description of his house may serve as a picture of the habitations of the lower order of Farmers, not in this Province alone, but in the whole space from the Paraná to the Ocean. It was constructed of a frame-work of wood, to which upright studs were fastened by pegs, or twigs of a plant here called Sipo, which grows in abundance over the whole country, bears twisting well, and firmly binds together the constituent parts of a building. Between these studs other twigs are interwoven, and the spaces filled up with well-tempered clay, dashed in and pressed and smoothed by the hand alone. The walls are rough; but in general, made somewhat more seemly by whitewashing. The thatch is of a coarse flaggy grass, the floors of earth, and the apartments without chimneys. In Brazil, the door made of plank forms the legal distinction between a house and a resting place,—a permanent and a temporary abode; the latter sometimes having a door made of straw twisted round sticks, or of a hide stretched over a slight piece of frame work. Such doors are common in the newly-acquired Provinces, but not in Rio Grandé. The lodging-rooms of the house in question were on the ground floor, divided from the other apartments by the same kind of wall as is described before, but of a slighter texture. The