

been attempted on any important scale, either to improve these advantages, or to amend the defects; so that travelling is worse in Portugal than in any other European country.

SECT. VI.—Civil and Social State.

The population of Portugal, according to the last census, which was taken in 1798, amounts to 3,683,000; calculating at the somewhat high estimate of five to a family. According to more probable estimates it now amounts to 3,530,000. Upon a surface of 38,800 square miles, this gives a density of about ninety-one to the square mile, which is remarkable, as exceeding that of Spain nearly in the proportion of three to two. The exemption from the *mesta*, and the high cultivation of the province of Entre Douro e Minho, appear to be the redeeming circumstances in her case.

No nation, as to character, owes less to the opinion of the world, than the Portuguese. They are described as indolent, dissembling, cowardly, destitute of public spirit, and at the same time fierce and deeply revengeful. In Spain it is said, strip a Spaniard of his virtues, and he becomes a good Portuguese. From a late minute inspection, however, the peasantry

325



Portuguese Peasantry.

(fig. 325.) have been pronounced to be a fine people; and, on repeated occasions during the late war, they displayed energies not unworthy of their ancestors, in an age when their glory resounded throughout both hemispheres. Almost all, however, that floats on the surface is base and degenerate. There cannot be a doubt that this may be greatly ascribed to priestcraft, to the stupefying influence of a sluggish and tyrannical government, and to the general corruption which has pervaded all the branches of administration.

The established and exclusive religion is the Catholic, in its extreme and most degrading excess;

and the body of the people are almost entirely under the thralldom of the priesthood. The burning of Jews continued till within the last half-century. The physiognomy of a large proportion of the people shows their descent from this hated race, whose tenets many, it is prob-

326



Friar and Nun.

able, still cherish in secret. There are, in Portugal, about 550 religious houses, of which 150 are nunneries* (fig. 326.). The number of two archbishops and thirteen bishops is not so disproportionate.

The literature of Portugal, during the period of its glory, was by no means contemptible. The genius and fate of Camoens spread his name throughout Europe, and entitled him to rank among the few modern epic poets. By the students of Portuguese literature, however, San Miranda and Antonio Ferreyra are reckoned scarcely second to him; and Rodriguez Lobo held the nation long enchanted by the sweetness of his pastorals. At the same time Di Barros, Castaneda, and Faria y Sousa,

recorded, in magnificent though somewhat inflated historical narrative, the mighty exploits of their countrymen in the African and Indian seas. The subjection to Spain gradually divested Portuguese literature of its manly and energetic character. The muse of history was silent; poetry assumed the form only of the sonnet, and Gongora infected it wholly with a strain of false and meretricious ornament. The house of Braganza for some time did little for knowledge; but in the beginning of the last century, the Conde de Ericeyra introduced the French literature, and founded a royal academy. In the course of the century, Barros Pereyra, Antonio da Lima, Manuel da Costa, a Brazilian, Correa Garças, and Paulino Cabral, a bishop, made not unsuccessful efforts to revive the ancient Portuguese poetry, and to introduce that of Italy. Portugal has two universities. That of Coimbra, founded at Lisbon in 1290, was transferred to Coimbra in 1308. It enjoys some celebrity, is divided into eighteen colleges, and is still attended by several hundred students; but the course of study is of that obsolete description which prevailed during the middle ages. A smaller university was founded at Evora in 1578.

For the minor particulars of amusement, dress, food, &c., reference may be made to Spain, as Portugal has no peculiarities that are more than provincial.

SECT. VII.—Local Geography.

Portugal is divided into the following six provinces, several of which, like those of Spain, in reference to events in their past history, are sometimes called kingdoms:—

* [The religious houses, monasteries, and nunneries, were suppressed in 1834.—AM. ED.]