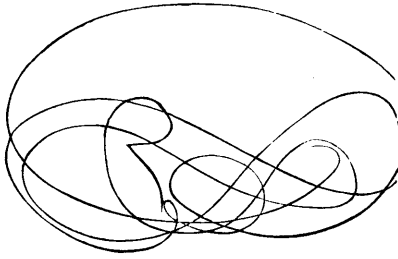


mule-train with arms and ammunition across the French frontier—a common incident at that time, notwithstanding the fact that France had recognised the Spanish republic. When we succeeded in finding the agent we met with every civility, and our passports were forthcoming almost immediately. They were curiosities in their way. The coat-of-arms which surmounted the printed matter was as large as the top of a liqueur-glass, and the design was a most complicated one. It consisted of a huge crown, Maltese crosses, castles, lions, armour, floral wreaths, stars and stripes, billiard balls, and something that would have passed muster for a spread eagle, an “expiring frog,” or a snipe on a piece of toast. There was no signature to



THE RUBRICA.

the document, but in one corner was a *rubrica*, an intricate flourish not unlike an Oriental sign-manual. The Spaniards have a custom of affixing these rubricas to their signatures, and in many cases—more especially with high military authorities—the rubrica alone is used. Subsequent experience proved to us that this sign-manual was more efficacious than a signature would have been, as many Carlists whom we met—in several instances commissioned officers—could not read.

We learned that since the Carlists had threatened an attack upon the town of Irun, the terminus of the railway running from France to Spain had been at the pretty little village of Hendaye, situated immediately on the French bank of the river Bidassoa, which is here the line of demarcation

between the two countries. We reached this village on the afternoon of the fourth day after leaving Paris, and as we wished to learn something of the country we intended visiting before entering it, we resolved to pass the night at the little *fonda* (inn).

A few minutes' walk took us to the summit of the hill at the foot of which the depot is situated, and then a magnificent view lay extended before us. From the Bay of Biscay on our right to our extreme left stretched a crescent-shaped mountain-wall comprising the Guadaloupe, Arala and Basses Pyrenean ranges, the Three Crowns towering high above the other mountains, and presenting a further contrast in the absence of verdure on its summit.

Suddenly, whilst contemplating—I may almost say inhaling—the beauties of the scene, we were startled by the boom of a cannon, which awakened a hundred echoes in the surrounding hills, as if a salvo of artillery had been discharged instead of the one solitary shell which had been fired by the republicans in Fort Mendivil at the monastery. The missile, falling short, exploded harmlessly in the brushwood at the foot of the hill. Several more shells were fired, but with a similar result. Our landlord informed us in the evening that during the course of more than a year the republicans had been trying to hit the monastery, and had not once succeeded. Many of the shells fell short, but occasionally one would pass over the building. The conclusion was irresistible that the house was protected from injury by its patron saint, and the garrison were prepared to affirm that on several occasions it had disappeared beneath the ground when a shot was fired, and reappeared as soon as the danger was over.

Our host and his family were thoroughly Carlist in their sympathies, and gave us much useful information. They advised us to take but little money with us, as the discriminations