

and presented us with artificial flowers, and then retiring, made way for the old and the ugly, who requested a little money for the good of our souls and their bodies. To solicitations thus expressed it was impossible to turn a deaf ear, and the consequence was, that we soon discovered it to be quite as expensive an amusement to flirt with a nun, as with any other belle in London or elsewhere.

Besides the churches and convents, amounting in all to not fewer than nine, there is a fort erected for the protection of the harbour, which we likewise endeavoured to see, but were prevented by the sentinel at the gate, who refused us admittance. The disappointment, however, was not great, as it was easy to perceive, from its outward appearance, that the fort could possess few points worthy of observation; and, indeed, we attributed the reluctance evinced in admitting strangers to its utter uselessness as a place of defence.

To describe all this occupies but a small portion of time; but to see it was the laborious employment of an entire day. Wearied out at length with my exertions, and not feeling much rewarded, at least for the latter part of my trouble, I returned in the evening to the hotel, where, as the ships were still at anchor, taking on board water and fresh provisions, I ventured to spend the night.

Having thus discovered that there was little in the works of art, and a great deal in those of nature, throughout St. Michael's, to interest the traveller, a friend and myself determined to set off next morning on a visit to the volcano. With this design we ordered asses, for asses are the only animals for hire, to be in readiness by daybreak; and finding them in waiting at the time appointed, we took a guide with us and pushed forward in the direction of the dark smoke. The mountain with its crater being distinctly visible from Ponto del Gada, we took it for granted that the distance between the two places could not exceed twelve or fourteen miles; but, on inquiring of our guide, we learned that the nearest road would carry us at least twenty-seven miles from the town. This was at once a startling and unpleasant piece of intelligence, affecting our arrangements in no trifling degree. To proceed was dangerous, because, mounted as we were, to go and return in one day was impossible; and, if we remained so far from the shipping during the night, the fleet might sail