

sea. The chief dependence of Oporto is its trade with England, which remains unimpaired amid the general diminution of that with America. There are about thirty English houses regularly settled here, besides a number of merchants who pay frequent visits to the place. The exportation of port wine, however, on which its trade rests, is generally cramped by the absurd policy of placing it entirely in the hands of an exclusive company,\* who have adopted the pernicious practice of diluting the produce of the best vineyards with wine of those of an inferior quality, by which the character of the genuine port grievously suffers.

Braga, farther north, ranks as the capital of the province; and, though now far outstripped by Oporto, is of much more ancient fame. Under the Romans it was the metropolis of an extensive district, and its former greatness is still attested by numerous antiquities. It has made a distinguished figure in the ecclesiastical history of Portugal, and is the see of an archbishop, who is primate of the kingdom. Braga is a handsome town; well built, well paved, the streets spacious and clean. There is some industry, particularly a manufacture of small beaver hats, which supplies a great part of the kingdom. The adjacent country is hilly, but populous and pleasant. Valença is a small town, agreeably situated on the Minho, which separates it from Galicia.

Tras os Montes, or the province beyond the mountains, is of great extent, occupying the whole interior of Portugal north of the Douro. The Cantabrian chain, after traversing Asturias and Galicia, throws out branches which not only separate the territory from the rest of Portugal, but cover almost its whole surface. They leave only deep valleys, through which considerable rivers, too rapid however to be navigable, pour down into the Douro. It is much inferior to Entre Douro e Minho, both in populousness and cultivation; yet a considerable quantity of the port wine produced grows on the sides of its hills. The inhabitants are a race of active, hardy, and brave mountaineers. They rose in great force against the French, and have since somewhat less happily distinguished themselves by the ardour with which they fought in the cause of absolute power, and in resistance to every form of constitutional government.

The towns are small, and not regularly fortified; though, from the nature of the country, they form defensible military positions. Braganza is a city of ancient note, and gave the title of Duke to the first nobleman in the kingdom, even before he was raised to the throne, by the appellation of John IV. The kings of Portugal still retain the title of Dukes of Braganza. Chaves, the *Aquæ Flavie* of the Romans, still exhibits two baths and a magnificent bridge constructed by that people. Chaves gives the title of Marquis to a family, one of whom was the most active opponent of the French during their invasion; while another has lately been at the head of the anti-constitutional army, of which the head-quarters were always in Tras os Montes.

\* [The Oporto wine company, which enjoyed this monopoly, was abolished in 1834.—*Am. Ed.*]