

sea, that it can be crossed in wheel-carriages. The traveller who would cross it at any of the intermediate passes must either, staff in hand, perform the journey on foot, or else avail himself of the services of the muleteer. What the camel caravan is to the desert, the mule-train—one of the links which connect the present with the distant past—is to the mountain passes of Spain. These same passes are also the scene of the exploits of the adventurous Spanish smugglers. Where hardly a human foot dare pass these bold outlaws will convey the contraband tobacco and cognac dear to the Spanish taste.



MULE TRAIN IN THE PYRENEES.

The claim of this country to a pretty high antiquity rests upon historical evidence too strong to require the questionable support of either myth or fable. It was well known to the Phœnicians at least a thousand years before the Christian era. And the Basque language, if the results of philological investigation in that field can be relied on, would seem to connect that remnant of the ancient Iberian race with a still more remote antiquity. It is said to have no words for cutting instruments which have not their roots from words signifying stone or rock, all words implying the use of metals being borrowed from other and more modern languages. This fact would seem to identify the aboriginal inhabitants of the Peninsula with pre-historic times. But how much of their blood has descended to the present race of Spaniards it is hard to say, in view of the many conquests to which Spain has been subjected, and the different races by which it has been ruled from time to time. From its position at the south-western angle of Europe, and the most westerly of Mediterranean lands, beyond which lay only the impassable ocean, it must, as one observes, have early become a very eddy of nations where all the tribes and nations which have successively held command of the Mediterranean must necessarily have halted, over which and in which all invaders that have crossed the Pyrenees from Northern Europe, or have passed the Straits of Gibraltar, must have surged in almost ceaseless conflict.