

other Portuguese towns, composed of mean cottages, unpaved, and extremely dirty. There is, however, an air of elegance given to the town, particularly when looked at from a distance, by the intermixture of orange-groves among the houses; the largest of these, wherever they happen to stand, being, in general, surrounded by extensive gardens, all of which are abundantly stocked with that graceful and odoriferous plant. Add to this the number of towers and spires with which its numerous churches and convents are supplied, and the first aspect of the whole may be conceived to be extremely striking and imposing.

As soon as we had taken a hurried survey of the streets, the next object of attention was the religious houses. In these there was but little to admire, the architecture being of the plainest kind, and even the chapels as much wanting in ornament as can be imagined. There were, indeed, in most of them some trifling attempts at carved work and gilding upon the roof, a little stained glass, neither rich nor ancient, in the windows, and a few tawdry pictures suspended above the altars; but the general appearance was decidedly that of buildings which did not even aim at beauty or grandeur. The monks we found a good-natured, obliging set of men, very willing to give us any information in their power; by one of whom we were fortunate enough to be conducted through a convent of Augustine friars. Into their mode of living it is not to be supposed that we could obtain much insight. It seemed, however, to be less indolent than that of some convents which we had visited in the old country, and approached proportionably nearer to a college life among ourselves; though it must be admitted that the fellows and undergraduates of Oxford and Cambridge have a better notion of both comfort and elegance than the Augustine friars of St. Michael's. Of the nuns we of course saw nothing, excepting through the grates. We found them full of curiosity, and eager to know as much as they could learn of the world from which they were excluded; but quite as fond of flirting as any set of young ladies at a boarding-school. It was amusing to observe their mode of begging, for all the nuns in this part of the world are licensed beggars. The younger and fairer members of the sisterhood came to the grate first; chatted, sung,