

rugged or barren appearance. Here and there, indeed, bare rocks push themselves into notice, but in general the ascent is easy, and the hills are covered to the tops with groves of orange-trees and beautiful green pasturage. Like other Portuguese settlements, this island abounds in religious houses, the founders of many of which do not appear to have been deficient in taste when they pitched upon situations for building. There was one of these in particular that struck me: it stood upon a sort of platform or terrace, about half-way between the sea and the summit of the mountain; above it were hanging woods, whether natural or artificial I cannot say, broken in upon here and there by projecting rocks; and round it were plantations of orange-trees loaded with fruit, and interspersed with myrtles and other odoriferous shrubs. Being greatly pleased with the mansion and the surrounding scenery, I naturally inquired from the pilot (for one had already come off to us) as to its use, and the quality of its owner; and from him I learnt that it was a convent, I forget of what order,—a piece of intelligence which was soon confirmed by the sound of bells distinctly audible as we passed.

In this manner we continued to coast along, being seldom at a greater distance than four or five miles from the land, till we came opposite to a small town called Villa Franca. Here, as the wind threatened to die away, several others and myself agreed to go on shore: a boat was accordingly lowered, and we pushed off from the ship; but the operation of landing did not prove to be altogether so simple as we had expected. An immense reef of rocks, some under water, others barely above it, but none distinguishable till we had almost run against them, opposed our progress; and it was not without considerable difficulty, and the assistance of the country people, who made signals to us from the beach, that we contrived to discover a narrow channel leading up to the strand.

Having at length so far attained our wishes as to tread once more upon firm ground, the next thing to be done was to find out some inn, or house of public entertainment, where we might pass the night, a measure which the increasing darkness rendered necessary. In this, however, we were disappointed, the town of Villa Franca boasting of no such convenience on any scale. But we were not on that account obliged to bivouac; for the