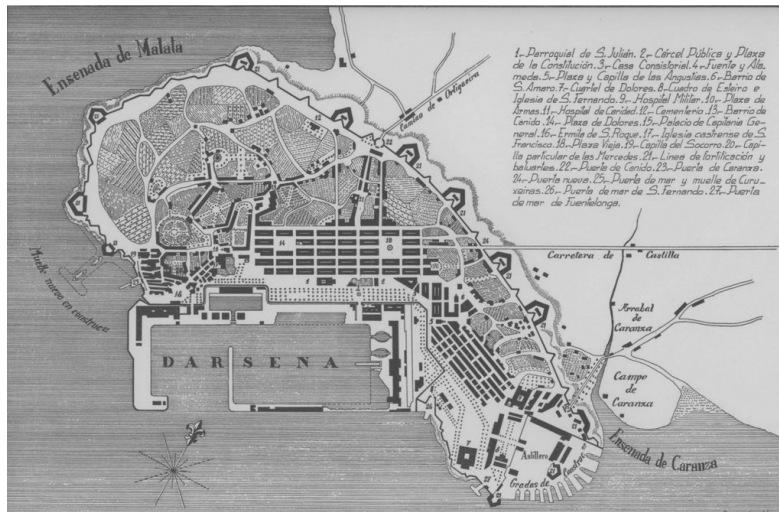


CHAPTER 31

Coruna - Crossing the Bay - Ferrol - The Dockyard - Where are we now? - Greek Ambassador - Lantern-light - The Ravine - Viveiro - Evening - Marsh and Quagmire - Fair Words and Fair Money - The Leathern Girth - Eyes of Lynx - The Knavish Guide.



31.1 Ferrol in 1859

From Corcuvion I returned to Saint James¹ and Coruna, and now began to make preparation for directing my course to the Asturias. In the first place I parted with my Andalusian horse, which I considered unfit for the long and mountainous journey I was about to undertake; his constitution having become much debilitated from his Gallegan travels. Owing to horses being exceedingly scarce at Coruna, I had no difficulty in disposing of him at a far higher price than he originally cost me.² A young and wealthy merchant of Coruna, who was a national guardsman, became enamoured of his glossy skin and long mane and tail. For my own part, I was glad to part with him for more reasons than one; he was both vicious and savage, and was continually getting me into scrapes in the stables of the posadas where we slept or baited. An old Castilian peasant,

¹ There are no indications what road Borrow took. Seeing, however, that he had vowed not to pass by the *choza* again, and that he somehow knew of the town of Muros (mentioned in chapter 29 above), it is possible that he followed the coastal road south, and from there moved west to Santiago. This somewhat longer road must have taken him two days travelling as well. As for the chronology, the first reliable date we possess is 15 September 1837, when he writes his employers from Coruña saying that ‘about ten days have elapsed since my return to Corunna’, i.e. more or less 5 September.

² According to his expense accounts, Borrow had bought the animal in Madrid for 2,100 *reales*, and received 3,000 *reales* for him in Coruña [Missler, *Daring Game*, 166 & 168; Darlow, 251].

whose pony he had maltreated, once said to me, "Sir Cavalier, if you have any love or respect for yourself, get rid I beseech you of that beast, who is capable of proving the ruin of a kingdom."³ So I left him behind at Coruna, where I subsequently learned that he became glandered and died. Peace to his memory!

[From: letter of 15 September 1837 to Brandram from Coruña, in: Darlow 249f.]

About one hundred Testaments have been disposed of at Saint James of Compostella⁴, and there is at present a steady regular demand for them there which inspires my heart with gratitude to the Almighty. Shortly previous to my journey to Saint James, I despatched fifty copies to Lugo, where the Lord vouchsafed me good success on a former occasion; this second supply being almost exhausted, I have sent more. Only fifty-eight copies have hitherto been sold at Corunna, for its inhabitants are far too much engrossed by party politics to entertain much relish for heavenly manna. I pray every night and morning that their eyes may be opened to their eternal welfare. Having now arranged matters in Galicia, as well as circumstances will permit, I am about to quit this province, directing my course to Oviedo in the Asturias.

[Chapter 31 continued]

From Coruna I crossed the bay to Ferrol, whilst Antonio with our remaining horse followed by land, a rather toilsome and circuitous journey, although the distance by water is scarcely three leagues.⁵ I was very sea-sick during the passage, and lay almost senseless at the bottom of the small launch in which I had embarked, and which was crowded with people. The wind was adverse, and the water rough. We could make no sail, but were impelled along by the oars of five or six stout mariners, who sang all the while Gallegan ditties. Suddenly the sea appeared to have become quite smooth, and my sickness at once deserted me. I rose upon my feet and looked around. We were in one of the strangest places imaginable. A long and narrow passage overhung on either side by a stupendous barrier of black and threatening rocks. The line of the coast was here divided by a natural cleft, yet so straight and regular that it seemed not the work of chance but design. The water was dark and sullen, and of immense depth. This passage, which is about a mile in length, is the entrance to a broad basin, at whose farther extremity stands the town of Ferrol.

³ Borrow described this incident, which may have taken place before he entered Galicia, to his employers in his letter from Coruña of 20 July 1837 [Darlow, 226], where he adds, however: 'But he is a gallant creature who seldom tires, and he has borne me too far to permit me to think of parting with him.' By September he had obviously changed his mind.

⁴ This description is deliberately vague. 'Disposed of' suggests that these copies were sold, something which Borrow clearly wished his employers to believe. But in reality, it meant only that 100 copies were given to Rey Romero in franchise, as we learn from the calculations based on later accounts. Rey Romero sold some 98 copies in total between the time of Borrow's visit and the final prohibition of the book in May 1838. [See Missler, 'Rey Romero's Testaments', in: *GBB* 28, 22-35; Missler, *Daring Game*, 48ff.]

⁵ By water the distance is 18 km, or nearly 3.25 leagues. But by land it was 9.5 leagues, more than 50 km [Ford, *HB* 979].



31.2 The Church of San Xulian

Sadness came upon me as soon as I entered this place. Grass was growing in the streets, and misery and distress stared me in the face on every side. Ferrol is the grand naval arsenal of Spain, and has shared in the ruin of the once splendid Spanish navy: it is no longer thronged with those thousand shipwrights who prepared for sea the tremendous three-deckers and long frigates, the greater part of which were destroyed at Trafalgar. Only a few ill-paid and half-starved workmen still linger about, scarcely sufficient to repair any guarda costa which may put in dismantled by the fire of some English smuggling schooner from Gibraltar.⁶ Half the inhabitants of Ferrol beg their bread; and amongst these, as it is said, are not unfrequently found retired naval officers, many of them maimed or otherwise wounded, who are left to pine in indigence; their pensions or salaries having been allowed to run three or four years in arrear, owing to the exigencies

⁶ Carnarvon [chapter 4] already observed this desolation of the dockyards in 1827, and the description given by Ford [*HB*, 980] in 1845 is still one of sad, ruined glory. Only after the 1840s some effort was made to revive Ferrol's dockyards. By 1895, however, Burke [footnote to 451] praised Ferrol as 'a flourishing and remarkably clean town of over 23,000 inhabitants, with an arsenal not only magnificent in its construction, but filled with every modern appliance, employing daily some 4000 skilled workmen, whose club (*el liceo de los artesanos*) might serve as a model for similar institutions in more "advanced" countries.' During the Franco era the town received special favours, since the *Caudillo* was born here. Nowadays, however, sadness once again overwhelms the traveller, who meets a desolate town of ruinous, empty houses, only enhanced by new motorways and monstrous new highrise buildings, its industry kept up mainly by state subsidies.

of the times⁷. A crowd of importunate beggars followed me to the posada, and even attempted to penetrate to the apartment to which I was conducted⁸. "Who are you?" said I to a woman who flung herself at my feet, and who bore in her countenance evident marks of former gentility. "A widow, sir," she replied, in very good French; "a widow of a brave officer, once admiral of this port." The misery and degradation of modern Spain are nowhere so strikingly manifested as at Ferrol.

Yet even here there is still much to admire. Notwithstanding its present state of desolation, it contains some good streets, and abounds with handsome houses. The alameda is planted with nearly a thousand elms, of which almost all are magnificent trees, and the poor Ferrolese, with the genuine spirit of localism so prevalent in Spain, boast that their town contains a better public walk than Madrid, of whose prado, when they compare the two, they speak in terms of unmitigated contempt. At one end of this alameda stands the church, the only one in Ferrol.⁹ To this church I repaired the day after my arrival, which was Sunday.¹⁰ I found it quite insufficient to contain the number of worshippers who, chiefly from the country, not only crowded the interior, but, bare-headed, were upon their knees before the door to a considerable distance down the walk.

Parallel with the alameda extends the wall of the naval arsenal and dock. I spent several hours in walking about these places, to visit which it is necessary to procure a written permission from the captain-general of Ferrol. They filled me with astonishment. I have seen the royal dockyards of Russia and England, but for grandeur of design and costliness of execution, they cannot for a moment compare with these wonderful monuments of the bygone naval pomp of Spain. I shall not attempt to describe them, but content myself with observing, that the oblong basin, which is surrounded with a granite mole, is capacious enough to permit a hundred first-rates to lie conveniently in ordinary:

⁷ That, and the complete lack of efficiency of the liberal regime, which had promised to pay military pensions old and new (to the invalids, widows and orphans of the Carlist Civil War) from the proceeds of the *Desamortizacion*. Due to corruption and waste, those proceeds were reduced to a trifle; the war-effort gobbled up what little money there was; and because of the chronic defaulting on its debts, the Spanish state was unable to secure new international loans. All over Spain, the weak, the sick and the disadvantaged paid the price of this lamentable political performance.

⁸ Robertson [Tour, 71]: 'Perhaps the *Posada de San Felipe* (...) later referred to by Henry O'Shea as being tolerable'. (O'Shea was Borrow's Madrid banker and the author of a later guide book to Spain.) Ford [HB 979] gives this as the only posada worthy of the name in Ferrol.

⁹ The church in question is the so-called '*Concatedral*' San Xulian, not of course the only one, but indeed the greatest of the Ferrol churches. The looks of this once splendid *Alameda* have now been thoroughly spoiled by a vast, four-lane inner-city motorway that curls around it, while a large part in front of San Xulian has been sacrificed to functional architecture such as a market place and a bus station.

¹⁰ Since Borrow writes, in his letter from Oviedo of 29 September 1837 [Darlow, 251] that 'a day or two after the date of my last letter [i.e. 15 September – ed.] I quitted Corunna', and arrived in Ferrol in a single day, he must have crossed the bay on Saturday 16 September, and visited this church on Sunday the 17th.

but instead of such a force, I saw only a sixty-gun frigate and two brigs lying in this basin, and to this inconsiderable number of vessels is the present war marine of Spain reduced.



31.3 View of the Ferrol arsenal

I waited for the arrival of Antonio two or three days at Ferrol, and still he came not: late one evening, however, as I was looking down the street, I perceived him advancing, leading our only horse by the bridle. He informed me that, at about three leagues from Coruna, the heat of the weather and the flies had so distressed the animal that it had fallen down in a kind of fit, from which it had been only relieved by copious bleeding, on which account he had been compelled to halt for a day upon the road. The horse was evidently in a very feeble state; and had a strange rattling in its throat, which alarmed me it first. I however administered some remedies, and in a few days deemed him sufficiently recovered to proceed.

We accordingly started from Ferrol; having first hired a pony for myself, and a guide who was to attend us as far as Rivadeo, twenty leagues from Ferrol, and on the confines of the Asturias. The day at first was fine, but ere we reached Novales¹¹, a distance of three leagues, the sky became overcast, and a mist descended, accompanied by a drizzling rain. The country through which we passed was very picturesque. At about two in the afternoon we could descry through the mist the small fishing town of Santa Marta on our left, with its beautiful bay.¹² Travelling along the summit of a line of hills, we presently entered a chestnut forest, which appeared to be without limit: the rain still descended, and kept up a ceaseless pattering among the broad green leaves. "This is the commencement of the autumnal rains," said the guide. "Many is the wetting that you will get, my masters, before you reach Oviedo." "Have you ever been as far as Oviedo?" I demanded. "No," he replied, "and once only to Rivadeo, the place to which I am now conducting you, and I tell you frankly that we shall soon be in wildernesses where the way is hard to find, especially at night, and amidst rain and waters. I wish I were fairly

¹¹ Today's Puente Noval, over the Rio Mera [Robertson, *Tour*, 71].

¹² Santa Marta is the present town of Ortiguiera, known in earlier times and on earlier maps as 'Santa Marta de Ortiguiera', which also lends its name to the bay Borrow sees here.

back to Ferrol, for I like not this route, which is the worst in Galicia, in more respects than one; but where my master's pony goes, there must I go too; such is the life of us guides." I shrugged my shoulders at this intelligence, which was by no means cheering, but made no answer. At length, about nightfall, we emerged from the forest, and presently descended into a deep valley at the foot of lofty hills.

"Where are we now?" I demanded of the guide, as we crossed a rude bridge at the bottom of the valley, down which a rivulet swollen by the rain foamed and roared. "In the valley of Coisa doiro,"¹³ he replied; "and it is my advice that we stay here for the night, and do not venture among those hills, through which lies the path to Viveiro; for as soon as we get there, adios! I shall be bewildered, which will prove the destruction of us all." "Is there a village nigh?" "Yes, the village is right before us, and we shall be there in a moment." We soon reached the village, which stood amongst some tall trees at the entrance of a pass which led up amongst the hills¹⁴. Antonio dismounted and entered two or three of the cabins, but presently came to me, saying, "We cannot stay here, mon maitre, without being devoured by vermin; we had better be amongst the hills than in this place; there is neither fire nor light in these cabins, and the rain is streaming through the roofs." The guide, however, refused to proceed: "I could scarcely find my way amongst those hills by daylight," he cried, surlily, "much less at night, midst storm and *bretima*." We procured some wine and maize bread from one of the cottages. Whilst we were partaking of these, Antonio said, "Mon maitre, the best thing we can do in our present situation, is to hire some fellow of this village to conduct us through the hills to Viveiro. There are no beds in this place, and if we lie down in the litter in our damp clothes we shall catch a tertian of Galicia¹⁵. Our present guide is of no service, we must therefore find another to do his duty." Without waiting for a reply, he flung down the crust of *broa* which he was munching and disappeared. I subsequently learned that he went to the cottage of the *alcalde*, and demanded, in the Queen's name, a guide for the Greek ambassador, who was benighted on his way to the Asturias. In about ten minutes I again saw him, attended by the local functionary, who, to my surprise, made me a profound bow, and stood bareheaded in the rain. "His excellency," shouted Antonio, "is in need of a guide to Viveiro. People of our description are not compelled to pay for any service which they may require; however, as his excellency has bowels of compassion, he is willing to give three *pesetas* to any competent person who will accompany him to Viveiro, and as much bread and wine as he can eat and drink on his arrival." "His excellency shall be served," said the *alcalde*; "however, as the way is long and the path is bad, and there is much *bretima* amongst the hills, it appears to me that, besides the bread and wine, his excellency can do no less than offer four *pesetas* to the guide who may be willing to accompany him to Viveiro; and I know no one better than my own son-in-law, Juanito." "Content, señor *alcalde*," I replied; "produce the guide, and the extra *peseta* shall be forthcoming in due season."¹⁶

¹³ I.e. 5 km east of Ortiguiera, near the village of Couzadoira. The river would be the Baleo, the mountains ahead the Sierra Faladoira, a.k.a. Sierra de Coriscada. [Robertson, *Tour*, 71f.]

¹⁴ Most probably San Cristovo de Couzadoiro itself. An old map from 1816 shows a road that leads straight east from here, up into and over the mountain range.

¹⁵ Burke [footnote to 455]: 'Tertian ague, or intermittent three-day fever.'

¹⁶ 1 *peseta* was the daily wage of an unskilled worker. To a peasant, 4 *pesetas* was a fortune.

Soon appeared Juanito with a lantern in his hand. We instantly set forward. The two guides began conversing in Gallegan. "Mon maitre," said Antonio, "this new scoundrel is asking the old one what he thinks we have got in our portmanteaus." Then, without awaiting my answer, he shouted, "Pistols, ye barbarians! Pistols, as ye shall learn to your cost, if you do not cease speaking in that gibberish and converse in Castilian." The Gallegans were silent, and presently the first guide dropped behind, whilst the other with the lantern moved before. "Keep in the rear," said Antonio to the former, "and at a distance: know one thing moreover, that I can see behind as well as before. Mon maitre," said he to me, "I don't suppose these fellows will attempt to do us any harm, more especially as they do not know each other; it is well, however, to separate them, for this is a time and place which might tempt any one to commit robbery and murder too."

The rain still continued to fall uninterruptedly, the path was rugged and precipitous, and the night was so dark that we could only see indistinctly the hills which surrounded us. Once or twice our guide seemed to have lost his way: he stopped, muttered to himself, raised his lantern on high, and would then walk slowly and hesitatingly forward. In this manner we proceeded for three or four hours, when I asked the guide how far we were from Viveiro. "I do not know exactly where we are, your worship," he replied, "though I believe we are in the route. We can scarcely, however, be less than two mad leagues from Viveiro." "Then we shall not arrive there before morning," interrupted Antonio, "for a mad league of Galicia means at least two of Castile; and perhaps we are doomed never to arrive there, if the way thither leads down this precipice."¹⁷ As he spoke, the guide seemed to descend into the bowels of the earth. "Stop," said I, "where are you going?" "To Viveiro, Senhor," replied the fellow; "this is the way to Viveiro, there is no other; I now know where we are." The light of the lantern shone upon the dark red features of the guide, who had turned round to reply, as he stood some yards down the side of a dingle or ravine overgrown with thick trees, beneath whose leafy branches a frightfully steep path descended. I dismounted from the pony, and delivering the bridle to the other guide, said, "Here is your master's horse, if you please you may load him down that abyss, but as for myself I wash my hands of the matter." The fellow, without a word of reply, vaulted into the saddle, and with *A VAMOS, PERICO*¹⁸! to the pony, impelled the creature to the descent. "Come, Senhor," said he with the lantern, "there is no time to be lost, my light will be presently extinguished, and this is the worst bit in the whole road." I thought it very probable that he was about to lead us to some den of cut-throats, where we might be sacrificed; but taking courage, I seized our own horse by the bridle, and followed the fellow down the ravine amidst rocks and brambles. The descent lasted nearly ten minutes, and ere we had entirely accomplished it, the light in the lantern went out, and we remained in nearly total darkness.

¹⁷ As the crow flies the distance between Couzadoiro and Viveiro is some 20 km (about 4 'leagues'). But horses, guides and phoney Greek Ambassadors do not fly, so the way will have been at least twice that length climbing over nocturnal mountains. What a 'mad league' is remains to be discovered.

¹⁸ Literally, Perico means 'little parrot' [Burke, Glossary]. It is, however, also a rare variation of Pedro (via the old form Pere) as in Perico Delgado (i.e. Pedro Delgado Robledo), a famous Spanish cyclist, or Perico Sambeat, an accomplished jazz saxophonist. Since few sane people will call their pony after a parakeet, the quadruplet's baptismal name was probably Pedro.

Encouraged, however, by the guide, who assured us there was no danger, we at length reached the bottom of the ravine; here we encountered a rill of water, through which we were compelled to wade as high as the knee¹⁹. In the midst of the water I looked up and caught a glimpse of the heavens through the branches of the trees, which all around clothed the shelving sides of the ravine and completely embowered the channel of the stream: to a place more strange and replete with gloom and horror no benighted traveller ever found his way. After a short pause we commenced scaling the opposite bank, which we did not find so steep as the other, and a few minutes' exertion brought us to the top.

Shortly afterwards the rain abated, and the moon arising cast a dim light through the watery mists; the way had become less precipitous, and in about two hours we descended to the shore of an extensive creek, along which we proceeded till we reached a spot where many boats and barges lay with their keels upward upon the sand. Presently we beheld before us the walls of Viveiro, upon which the moon was shedding its sickly lustre. We entered by a lofty and seemingly ruinous archway, and the guide conducted us at once to the posada.

Every person in Viveiro appeared to be buried in profound slumber; not so much as a dog saluted us with his bark. After much knocking we were admitted into the posada, a large and dilapidated edifice. We had scarcely housed ourselves and horses when the rain began to fall with yet more violence than before, attended with much thunder and lightning. Antonio and I, exhausted with fatigue, betook ourselves to flock beds in a ruinous chamber, into which the rain penetrated through many a cranny, whilst the guides ate bread and drank wine till the morning.

When I arose I was gladdened by the sight of a fine day. Antonio forthwith prepared a savoury breakfast of stewed fowl, of which we stood in much need after the ten league journey of the preceding day over the ways which I have attempted to describe. I then walked out to view the town, which consists of little more than one long street, on the side of a steep mountain thickly clad with forests and fruit trees. At about ten we continued our journey, accompanied by our first guide, the other having returned to Coisa doiro some hours previously.

Our route throughout this day was almost constantly within sight of the shores of the Cantabrian sea, whose windings we followed. The country was barren, and in many parts covered with huge stones: cultivated spots, however, were to be seen, where vines were growing. We met with but few human habitations. We however journeyed on cheerfully, for the sun was once more shining in full brightness, gilding the wild moors, and shining upon the waters of the distant sea, which lay in unruffled calmness.

At evening fall we were in the neighbourhood of the shore, with a range of wood-covered hills on our right. Our guide led us towards a creek bordered by a marsh, but he soon stopped and declared that he did not know whither he was conducting us.

¹⁹ Probably the Rio Sor, a rather considerable stream [Robertson, *Tour*, 72].

"Mon maitre," said Antonio, "let us be our own guides; it is, as you see, of no use to depend upon this fellow, whose whole science consists in leading people into quagmires."

We therefore turned aside and proceeded along the marsh for a considerable distance, till we reached a narrow path which led us into a thick wood, where we soon became completely bewildered. On a sudden, after wandering about a considerable time, we heard the noise of water, and presently the clack of a wheel. Following the sound, we arrived at a low stone mill, built over a brook; here we stopped and shouted, but no answer was returned. "The place is deserted," said Antonio; "here, however, is a path, which, if we follow it, will doubtless lead us to some human habitation." So we went along the path, which, in about ten minutes, brought us to the door of a cabin, in which we saw lights. Antonio dismounted and opened the door: "Is there any one here who can conduct us to Rivadeo?" he demanded.

"Senhor," answered a voice, "Rivadeo is more than five leagues from here, and, moreover, there is a river to cross!"

"Then to the next village," continued Antonio.

"I am a vecino of the next village, which is on the way to Rivadeo," said another voice, "and I will lead you thither, if you will give me fair words, and, what is better, fair money."

A man now came forth, holding in his hand a large stick. He strode sturdily before us, and in less than half an hour led us out of the wood. In another half hour he brought us to a group of cabins situated near the sea; he pointed to one of these, and having received a peseta, bade us farewell.

The people of the cottage willingly consented to receive us for the night: it was much more cleanly and commodious than the wretched huts of the Gallegan peasantry in general. The ground floor consisted of a keeping room and stable, whilst above was a long loft, in which were some neat and comfortable flock beds. I observed several masts and sails of boats. The family consisted of two brothers with their wives and families; one was a fisherman, but the other, who appeared to be the principal person, informed me that he had resided for many years in service at Madrid, and having amassed a small sum, he had at length returned to his native village, where he had purchased some land which he farmed. All the family used the Castilian language in their common discourse, and on inquiry I learned that the Gallegan was not much spoken in that neighbourhood. I have forgotten the name of this village, which is situated on the estuary of the Foz, which rolls down from Mondoñedo.²⁰ In the morning we crossed this estuary in a large boat with our horses, and about noon arrived at Rivadeo.

²⁰ Nowadays, in any case, the village itself is simply called 'Foz' (i.e. 'Rivermouth'), while the river that rolls down from Mondoñedo figures on the map as the Rio Masma. Its estuary is known as the Ria de Foz [Robertson, *Tour*, 72].

"Now, your worship," said the guide who had accompanied us from Ferrol, "I have brought you as far as I bargained, and a hard journey it has been; I therefore hope you will suffer Perico and myself to remain here to-night at your expense, and to-morrow we will go back; at present we are both sorely tired."



31.4 A view of Ribadeo in 1910

"I never mounted a better pony than Perico," said I, "and never met with a worse guide than yourself. You appear to be perfectly ignorant of the country, and have done nothing but bring us into difficulties. You may, however, stay here for the night, as you say you are tired, and to-morrow you may return to Ferrol, where I counsel you to adopt some other trade." This was said at the door of the posada of Rivadeo.

"Shall I lead the horses to a stable?" said the fellow.

"As you please," said I.

Antonio looked after him for a moment, as he was leading the animals away, and then shaking his head followed slowly after. In about a quarter of an hour he returned, laden with the furniture of our own horse, and with a smile upon his countenance: "Mon maitre," said he, "I have throughout the journey had a bad opinion of this fellow, and now I have detected him: his motive in requesting permission to stay, was a desire to purloin something from us. He was very officious in the stable about our horse, and I now miss the new leathern girth which secured the saddle, and which I observed him looking at frequently on the road. He has by this time doubtless hid it somewhere; we are quite secure of him, however, for he has not yet received the hire for the pony, nor the gratuity for himself."

The guide returned just as he had concluded speaking. Dishonesty is always suspicious. The fellow cast a glance upon us, and probably beholding in our countenances something which he did not like, he suddenly said, "Give me the horse-hire and my own propina, for Perico and I wish to be off instantly."

"How is this?" said I; "I thought you and Perico were both fatigued, and wished to rest here for the night; you have soon recovered from your weariness."

"I have thought over the matter," said the fellow, "and my master will be angry if I loiter here: pay us, therefore, and let us go."

"Certainly," said I, "if you wish it. Is the horse furniture all right?"

"Quite so," said he; "I delivered it all to your servant."

"It is all here," said Antonio, "with the exception of the leathern girth."

"I have not got it," said the guide.

"Of course not," said I. "Let us proceed to the stable, we shall perhaps find it there."

To the stable we went, which we searched through: no girth, however, was forthcoming. "He has got it buckled round his middle beneath his pantaloons, mon maitre," said Antonio, whose eyes were moving about like those of a lynx²¹; "I saw the protuberance as he stooped down. However, let us take no notice: he is here surrounded by his countrymen, who, if we were to seize him, might perhaps take his part. As I said before, he is in our power, as we have not paid him."

The fellow now began to talk in Gallegan to the by-standers (several persons having collected), wishing the Denho to take him if he knew anything of the missing property. Nobody, however, seemed inclined to take his part; and those who listened, only shrugged their shoulders. We returned to the portal of the posada, the fellow following us, clamouring for the horse-hire and propina. We made him no answer, and at length he went away, threatening to apply to the justicia; in about ten minutes, however, he came running back with the girth in his hand: "I have just found it," said he, "in the street: your servant dropped it."

I took the leather and proceeded very deliberately to count out the sum to which the horse-hire amounted, and having delivered it to him in the presence of witnesses, I said, "During the whole journey you have been of no service to us whatever; nevertheless, you have fared like ourselves, and have had all you could desire to eat and drink. I intended, on your leaving us, to present you, moreover, with a propina of two dollars²²; but since, notwithstanding our kind treatment, you endeavoured to pillage us, I will not give you a cuarto: go, therefore, about your business."

²¹ Both in ancient Greece and in Spain, the lynx was said to be able to look through solid matter.

²² I.e. 40 *reales*, a great sum for any working man (compare footnote 16 above).

All the audience expressed their satisfaction at this sentence, and told him that he had been rightly served, and that he was a disgrace to Galicia. Two or three women crossed themselves, and asked him if he was not afraid that the Denho, whom he had invoked, would take him away. At last, a respectable-looking man said to him: "Are you not ashamed to have attempted to rob two innocent strangers?"

"Strangers!" roared the fellow, who was by this time foaming with rage; "Innocent strangers, carracho! they know more of Spain and Galicia too than the whole of us. Oh, Denho, that servant is no man but a wizard, a nuveiro. - Where is Perico?"

He mounted Perico, and proceeded forthwith to another posada. The tale, however, of his dishonesty had gone before him, and no person would house him; whereupon he returned on his steps, and seeing me looking out of the window of the house, he gave a savage shout, and shaking his fist at me, galloped out of the town, the people pursuing him with hootings and revilings.²³

²³ Very little of all this was dramatized. In his letter of 29 September 1837 to Brandram from Oviedo [Darlow, 251], Borrow summarized the trip as follows: 'At Ferrol I hired a horse and guide as far as Ribadeo, a distance of twenty leagues, and somewhat less than half the way to Oviedo. This journey was a terrible one; during the greatest part of it we had to toil up and down mountain gorges and ravines, to force our way through bushes and thickets, and to wade rivulets and torrents swollen by the rain, which descended continually; our guide proved perfectly ignorant of the country, and we had to bribe various peasants to accompany us, though we incurred great risk by so doing of being conducted to some den of thieves, and stripped and murdered.'