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N° XLIX.

"No kind of literature is so generally attractive as Fiction. Pictures of life and manners, and Stories of adventure, are more eagerly received by the many than graver productions, however important these latter may be. Apuleius is better remembered by his fable of Cupid and Psyche than by his abstruser Platonic writings; and the Decameron of Boccaccio has out-lived the Latin Treatises, and other learned works of that author."

TALES OF THE ALHAMBRA.
BY WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

THE LAST OF THE ABENCERAGES.
TRANSLATED FROM CHATEAUBRIAND.

THE INVolUNTARY PROPHET.
BY HORACE SMITH, ESQ.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, 8. NEW BURLINGTON STREET
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN):
BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH;
J. CUMMING, DUBLIN.

1835.
TALES OF THE ALHAMBRA.

"Yesterday evening, the sun went down as I was traversing a great, dry plain of Old Castile. "Hold," cried the Governor, "what is this you say? Old Castile is some two or three hundred miles from this."

London. Published by Richard Bentley, 1835.
The astrologer, seizing the bridle of the palmyra, smote the earth with his staff, and sank with the Gothic princess, through the centre of the barbican.
TALES

OF THE

ALHAMBRA.

BY

WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"THE SKETCH-BOOK."

REVISED AND CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, 8. NEW BURLINGTON STREET
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN):
BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH;
CUMMING, DUBLIN.
1835.
TO

DAVID WILKIE, ESQ. R.A.

My dear Sir,

You may remember that, in the rambles we once took together about some of the old cities of Spain, particularly Toledo and Seville, we remarked a strong mixture of the Saracenic with the Gothic, remaining from the time of the Moors; and were more than once struck with scenes and incidents in the streets, which reminded us of passages in the "Arabian Nights." You then urged me to write something that should illustrate those peculiarities, "something in the Haroun Alrasched style," that should have a dash of that Arabian spice which pervades every thing in Spain. I call this to your mind to show you that you are, in some degree, responsible for the present work, in which I have given a few "Arabesque" sketches from the life, and tales founded on popular traditions, which were chiefly struck off during a residence in one of the most Morisco-Spanish places in the Peninsula.

I inscribe these pages to you as a memorial of the pleasant scenes we have witnessed together in that land of adventure, and as a testimonial of an esteem for your worth which is only exceeded by admiration of your talents.

Your friend and fellow-traveller,

THE AUTHOR.

May, 1832.
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THE ALHAMBRA.

THE JOURNEY.

In the Spring of 1829, the Author of this Work, whom curiosity had brought into Spain, made a rambling expedition from Seville to Granada in company with a friend, a member of the Russian Embassy at Madrid. Accident had thrown us together from distant regions of the globe, and a similarity of taste led us to wander together among the romantic mountains of Andalusia. Should these pages meet his eye, wherever thrown by the duties of his station, whether mingling in the pageantry of courts, or meditating on the truer glories of nature, may they recall the scenes of our adventurous companionship, and with them the remembrance of one, in whom neither time nor distance will obliterate the remembrance of his gentleness and worth.

And here, before setting forth, let me indulge in a few previous remarks on Spanish scenery and Spanish travelling. Many are apt to picture Spain to their imaginations as a soft southern region, decked out with all the luxuriant charms of voluptuous Italy. On the contrary, though there are exceptions in some of the maritime provinces, yet, for the greater part, it is a stern, melancholy country, with rugged mountains, and long sweeping plains, destitute of trees, and indescribably silent and lonesome, partaking of the savage and solitary character of Africa. What adds to this silence and loneliness, is the absence of singing-birds, a natural consequence of the want of groves and hedges. The vulture and the eagle are seen wheeling about
the mountain-cliffs, and soaring over the plains, and groups of shy bustards stalk about the heaths; but the myriads of smaller birds, which animate the whole face of other countries, are met with in but few provinces in Spain, and in those chiefly among the orchards and gardens which surround the habitations of man.

In the interior provinces the traveller occasionally traverses great tracts cultivated with grain as far as the eye can reach, waving at times with verdure, at other times naked and sunburnt; but he looks round in vain for the hand that has tilled the soil. At length, he perceives some village on a steep hill or rugged crag, with mouldering battlements and ruined watch-tower; a strong-hold, in old times, against civil war, or Moorish inroad; for the custom among the peasantry of congregating together for mutual protection is still kept up in most parts of Spain, in consequence of the maraudings of roving freebooters.

But though a great part of Spain is deficient in the garniture of groves and forests, and the softer charms of ornamental cultivation, yet its scenery is noble in its severity, and in unison with the attributes of its people; and I think that I better understand the proud, hardy, frugal, and abstemious Spaniard, his manly defiance of hardships, and contempt of effeminate indulgences, since I have seen the country he inhabits.

There is something, too, in the sternly simple features of the Spanish landscape, that impresses on the soul a feeling of sublimity. The immense plains of the Castiles and of La Mancha, extending as far as the eye can reach, derive an interest from their very nakedness and immensity, and possess, in some degree, the solemn grandeur of the ocean. In ranging over these boundless wastes, the eye catches sight here and there of a straggling herd of cattle attended by a lonely herdsman, motionless as a statue, with his long slender pike tapering up like a lance into the air; or, beholds a long train of mules slowly moving along the waste like a train of camels in the desert; or, a single herdsman, armed with blunderbuss and stiletto, and prowling over the plain. Thus the country, the habits, the very looks of the people, have something of the Arabian character.
The general insecurity of the country is evinced in the universal use of weapons. The herdsman in the field, the shepherd in the plain, has his musket and his knife. The wealthy villager rarely ventures to the market-town without his trabuco, and, perhaps, a servant on foot with a blunderbuss on his shoulder; and the most petty journey is undertaken with the preparation of a warlike enterprise.

The dangers of the road produce also a mode of travelling, resembling, on a diminutive scale, the caravans of the East. The arrieros, or carriers, congregate in convoys, and set off in large and well-armed trains on appointed days; while additional travellers swell their number, and contribute to their strength. In this primitive way is the commerce of the country carried on. The muleteer is the general medium of traffic, and the legitimate traverser of the land, crossing the peninsula from the Pyrenees and the Asturias to the Alpuxarras, the Serrania de Ronda, and even to the gates of Gibraltar. He lives frugally and hardly: his alforjas of coarse cloth hold his scanty stock of provisions; a leathern bottle, hanging at his saddle-bow, contains wine or water, for a supply across barren mountains and thirsty plains. A mule-cloth spread upon the ground is his bed at night, and his pack-saddle is his pillow. His low, but clean-limbed and sinewy form, betokens strength; his complexion is dark and sunburnt; his eye resolute, but quiet in its expression, except when kindled by sudden emotion; his demeanour is frank, manly, and courteous, and he never passes you without a grave salutation: "Dios guarde a usted?" "Va usted con Dios, caballero!" "God guard you!" "God be with you, cavalier!"

As these men have often their whole fortune at stake upon the burthen of their mules, they have their weapons at hand, slung to their saddles, and ready to be snatched out for desperate defence. But their united numbers render them secure against petty bands of marauders; and the solitary bandolero, armed to the teeth, and mounted on his Andalusian steed, hovers about them, like a pirate about a merchant convoy, without daring to make an assault.

The Spanish muleteer has an inexhaustible stock of
songs and ballads, with which to beguile his incessant way-faring. The airs are rude and simple, consisting of but few inflexions. These he chants forth with a loud voice, and long, drawling cadence, seated sideways on his mule, who seems to listen with infinite gravity, and to keep time with his paces to the tune. The couplets thus chanted, are often old traditional romances about the Moors, or some legend of a saint, or some love-ditty; or, what is still more frequent, some ballad about a bold contrabandista, or hardy bandolero, for the smuggler and the robber are poetical heroes among the common people of Spain. Often, the song of the muleteer is composed at the instant, and relates to some local scene, or some incident of the journey. This talent of singing and improvising is frequent in Spain, and is said to have been inherited from the Moors. There is something wildly pleasing in listening to these ditties among the rude and lonely scenes that they illustrate; accompanied, as they are, by the occasional jingle of the mule-bell.

It has a most picturesque effect also to meet a train of muleteers in some mountain pass. First you hear the bells of the leading mules, breaking, with their simple melody, the stillness of the airy height; or, perhaps, the voice of the muleteer admonishing some tardy or wandering animal, or chanting, at the full stretch of his lungs, some traditional ballad. At length you see the mules slowly winding along the cragged defile, sometimes descending precipitous cliffs, so as to present themselves in full relief against the sky, sometimes toiling up the deep arid chasms below you. As they approach, you descry their gay decorations of worsted tufts, tassels, and saddle-cloths; while, as they pass by, the ever-ready trabuco slung behind the packs and saddles gives a hint of the insecurity of the road.

The ancient kingdom of Granada, into which we were about to penetrate, is one of the most mountainous regions of Spain. Vast sierras, or chains of mountains, destitute of shrub or tree, and mottled with variegated marbles and granites, elevate their sunburnt summits against a deep-blue sky; yet in their rugged bosoms lie engulfed the most
verdant and fertile valleys, where the desert and the garden strive for mastery, and the very rock is, as it were, compelled to yield the fig, the orange, and the citron, and to blossom with the myrtle and the rose.

In the wild passes of these mountains the sight of walled towns and villages, built like eagles' nests among the cliffs, and surrounded by Moorish battlements, or of ruined watch-towers perched on lofty peaks, carries the mind back to the chivalric days of Christian and Moslem warfare, and to the romantic struggle for the conquest of Granada. In traversing these lofty sierras the traveller is often obliged to alight and lead his horse up and down the steep and jagged ascents and descents, resembling the broken steps of a staircase. Sometimes the road winds along dizzy precipices, without parapet to guard him from the gulfs below, and then will plunge down steep, and dark, and dangerous declivities. Sometimes it straggles through rugged barrancos, or ravines, worn by winter torrents, the obscure path of the contrabandista; while, ever and anon, the ominous cross, the monument of robbery and murder, erected on a mound of stones at some lonely part of the road, admonishes the traveller that he is among the haunts of banditti, perhaps at that very moment under the eye of some lurking bandolero. Sometimes, in winding through the narrow valleys, he is startled by a hoarse bellowing, and beholds above him, on some green fold of the mountain side, a herd of fierce Andalusian bulls, destined for the combat of the arena. I have felt, if I may so express it, an agreeable horror in thus contemplating near at hand these terrific animals, clothed with tremendous strength, and ranging their native pastures in untamed wildness, strangers almost to the face of man: they know no one but the solitary herdsman who attends upon them, and even he at times dares not venture to approach them. The low bellowing of these bulls, and their menacing aspect as they look down from their rocky height, give additional wildness to the savage scenery around.

I have been betrayed unconsciously into a longer disquisition than I had intended on the general features of Spanish travelling; but there is a romance about all the
recollections of the Peninsula that is dear to the imagination.

It was on the 1st of May that my companion and myself set forth from Seville on our route to Granada. We had made all due preparations for the nature of our journey, which lay through mountainous regions, where the roads are little better than mere mule paths, and too frequently beset by robbers. The most valuable part of our luggage had been forwarded by the arrieros; we retained merely clothing and necessaries for the journey, and money for the expenses of the road, with a sufficient surplus of the latter to satisfy the expectations of robbers should we be assailed, and to save ourselves from the rough treatment that awaits the too wary and empty-handed traveller. A couple of stout hired steeds were provided for ourselves, and a third for our scanty luggage, and for the conveyance of a sturdy Biscayan lad of about twenty years of age, who was to guide us through the perplexed mazes of the mountain roads, to take care of the horses, to act occasionally as our valet, and at all times as our guard; for he had a formidable trabuco or carbine to defend us from rateros, or solitary footpads, about which weapon he made much vainglorious boast, though, to the discredit of his generalship, I must say that it generally hung un loaded behind his saddle. He was, however, a faithful, cheery, kind-hearted creature, full of saws and proverbs as that miracle of squires the renowned Sancho himself, whose name we bestowed upon him; and, like a true Spaniard, though treated by us with companionable familiarity, he never for a moment, in his utmost hilarity, overstepped the bounds of respectful decorum.

Thus equipped and attended, we set out on our journey with a genuine disposition to be pleased. With such a disposition, what a country is Spain for a traveller, where the most miserable inn is as full of adventure as an enchanted castle, and every meal is in itself an achievement! Let others repine at the lack of turnpike roads and sumptuous hotels, and all the elaborate comforts of a country cultivated into tameness and common-place; but give me the rude mountain scramble, the roving, haphazard way-
faring, the frank, hospitable, though half-wild manners, that impart such a true game flavour to romantic Spain!

Our first evening's entertainment had a relish of the kind. We arrived after sunset at a little town among the hills, after a fatiguing journey over a wide houseless plain, where we had been repeatedly drenched with showers. In the inn were a party of Miqueletes, who were patrolling the country in pursuit of robbers. The appearance of foreigners like ourselves was unusual in this remote town; mine host, with two or three old gossiping comrades in brown cloaks, studied our passports in a corner of the posada, while an alguazil took notes by the dim light of a lamp. The passports were in foreign languages, and perplexed them; but our squire Sancho assisted them in their studies, and magnified our importance with the grandiloquence of a Spaniard. In the meantime the magnificent distribution of a few cigars had won the hearts of all around us; in a little while the whole community seemed put in agitation to make us welcome. The corregidor himself waited upon us, and a great rush-bottomed arm-chair was ostentatiously bolstered into our room by our landlady, for the accommodation of that important personage. The commander of the patrol took supper with us; a lively, talking, laughing Andaluz, who had made a campaign in South America, and recounted his exploits in love and war with much pomp of phrase, vehemence of gesticulation, and mysterious rolling of the eye. He told us that he had a list of all the robbers in the country, and meant to ferret out every mother's son of them; he offered us at the same time some of his soldiers as an escort. "One is enough to protect you, señors; the robbers know me and know my men; the sight of one is enough to spread terror through a whole sierra." We thanked him for his offer, but assured him in his own strain, that, with the protection of our redoubtable squire, Sancho, we were not afraid of all the ladrones of Andalusia.

While we were supping with our Drawcansir friend, we heard the notes of a guitar, and the click of castañets, and presently a chorus of voices singing a popular air. In fact, mine host had gathered together the amateur singers and
THE ALHAMBRA.

musicians, and the rustic belles of the neighbourhood, and on going forth the court-yard of the inn presented a scene of true Spanish festivity. We took our seats with mine host and hostess and the commander of the patrol, under the archway of the court; the guitar passed from hand to hand, but a jovial shoemaker was the Orpheus of the place. He was a pleasant-looking fellow, with huge black whiskers; his sleeves were rolled up to his elbows; he touched the guitar with masterly skill, and sang little amorous ditties with an expressive leer at the women, with whom he was evidently a favourite. He afterwards danced a fandango with a buxom Andalusian damsel, to the great delight of the spectators. But none of the females present could compare with mine host's pretty daughter, Pepita, who had slipped away and made her toilette for the occasion, and had covered her head with roses; and who distinguished herself in a bolero with a handsome young dragoon. We had ordered our host to let wine and refreshment circulate freely among the company; yet, though there was a motley assembly of soldiers, muleteers, and villagers, no one exceeded the bounds of sober enjoyment. The scene was a study for a painter: the picturesque group of dancers, the troopers in their half military dresses, the peasantry wrapped in their brown cloaks; nor must I omit to mention the old meagre alguazil, in a short black cloak, who took no notice of anything going on, but sat in a corner diligently writing by the dim light of a huge copper lamp that might have figured in the days of Don Quixote.

I am not writing a regular narrative, and do not pretend to give the varied events of several days' rambling, over hill and dale, and moor and mountain. We travelled in true contrabandista style, taking every thing rough and smooth as we found it, and mingling with all classes and conditions in a kind of vagabond companionship. It is the true way to travel in Spain. Knowing the scanty larders of the inns, and the naked tracts of country which the traveller has often to traverse, we had taken care on starting to have the alforjas, or saddle-bags of our squire, well stocked with cold provisions, and his bota, or leathern
bottle, which was of portly dimensions, filled to the neck with choice Valdepenas wine. As this was a munition for our campaign more important than even his trabuco, we exhorted him to have an eye to it; and I will do him the justice to say, that his namesake, the trencher-loving Sancho himself, could not excel him as a provident purveyor. Though the alforjas and bota were repeatedly and vigorously assailed throughout the journey, they appeared to have a miraculous property of being never empty; for our vigilant squire took care to sack every thing that remained from our evening repasts at the inns, to supply our next day's luncheon.

What luxurious noontide repasts have we made, on the green sward by the side of a brook or fountain, under a shady tree! and then what delicious siestas on our cloaks, spread out on the herbage!

We paused one day at noon for a repast of the kind. It was in a pleasant little green meadow surrounded by hills covered with olive-trees. Our cloaks were spread on the grass under an elm-tree, by the side of a bubbling rivulet; our horses were tethered where they might crop the herbage; and Sancho produced his alforjas with an air of triumph. They contained the contributions of four days' journeying, but had been signally enriched by the foraging of the previous evening in a plenteous inn at Antequera. Our squire drew forth the heterogeneous contents, one by one, and these seemed to have no end. First came forth a shoulder of roasted kid, very little the worse for wear; then an entire partridge; then a great morsel of salted codfish wrapped in paper; then the residue of a ham; then the half of a pullet, together with several rolls of bread, and a rabble rout of oranges, figs, raisins, and walnuts. His bota also had been recruited with some excellent wine of Malaga. At every fresh apparition from his larder, he would enjoy our ludicrous surprise, throwing himself back on the grass, and shouting with laughter. Nothing pleased the simple-hearted varlet more than to be compared, for his devotion to the trencher, to the renowned squire of Don Quixote. He was well versed in the history of the Don, and, like most of the com-
mon people of Spain, he firmly believed it to be a true history.

"All that, however, happened a long time ago, señor?" said he to me one day, with an inquiring look.

"A very long time," was the reply.

"I dare say more than a thousand years?" still looking dubiously.

"I dare say, not less."

The squire was satisfied.

As we were making the repast above described, and diverting ourselves with the simple drollery of our squire, a solitary beggar approached us, who had almost the look of a pilgrim. He was evidently very old, with a grey beard, and supported himself on a staff, yet age had not bowed him down; he was tall and erect, and had the wreck of a fine form. He wore a round Andalusian hat, a sheep-skin jacket, and leathern breeches, gaiters, and sandals. His dress, though old and patched, was decent, his demeanour manly, and he addressed us with that grave courtesy that is to be remarked in the lowest Spaniard. We were in a favourable mood for such a visitor; and in a freak of capricious charity, gave him some silver, a loaf of fine wheaten bread, and a goblet of our choice wine of Malaga. He received them thankfully, but without any grovelling tribute of gratitude. Tasting the wine, he held it up to the light, with a slight beam of surprise in his eye, then quaffing it off at a draught, "It is many years," said he, "since I have tasted such wine. It is a cordial to an old man's heart." Then, looking at the beautiful wheaten loaf, "bendito sea tal pan!" "blessed be such bread!" So saying, he put it in his wallet. We urged him to eat it on the spot. "No, señores," replied he, "the wine I had to drink or leave; but the bread I must take home to share with my family."

Our man Sancho sought our eye, and reading permission there, gave the old man some of the ample fragments of our repast, on condition, however, that he should sit down and make a meal.

He accordingly took his seat at some little distance from us, and began to eat slowly and with a sobriety and de-
corum that would have become a hidalgo. There was altogether a measured manner and a quiet self-possession about the old man, that made me think he had seen better days: his language, too, though simple, had occasionally something picturesque and almost poetical in the phraseology. I set him down for some broken-down cavalier. I was mistaken; it was nothing but the innate courtesy of a Spaniard, and the poetical turn of thought and language often to be found in the lowest classes of this clear-witted people. For fifty years, he told us, he had been a shepherd, but now he was out of employ, and destitute. "When I was a young man," said he, "nothing could harm or trouble me; I was always well, always gay; but now I am seventy-nine years of age, and a beggar, and my heart begins to fail me."

Still he was not a regular mendicant: it was not until recently that want had driven him to this degradation; and he gave a touching picture of the struggle between hunger and pride, when abject destitution first came upon him. He was returning from Malaga without money; he had not tasted food for some time, and was crossing one of the great plains of Spain, where there were but few habitations. When almost dead with hunger, he applied at the door of a venta or country inn. "Perdon usted por Dios hermano!" ("Excuse us, brother, for God's sake!") was the reply — the usual mode in Spain of refusing a beggar. "I turned away," said he, "with shame greater than my hunger, for my heart was yet too proud. I came to a river with high banks and deep rapid current, and felt tempted to throw myself in: 'What should such an old, worthless, wretched man as I live for?' But when I was on the brink of the current, I thought on the Blessed Virgin, and turned away. I travelled on until I saw a country seat at a little distance from the road, and entered the outer gate of the court-yard. The door was shut, but there were two young señoritas at a window. I approached and begged: — 'Perdon usted por Dios hermano!' — and the window closed. I crept out of the court-yard, but hunger overcame me, and my heart gave way: I thought my hour at hand; so I laid myself down
at the gate, commended myself to the Holy Virgin, and covered my head to die. In a little while afterwards the master of the house came home: seeing me lying at his gate, he uncovered my head, had pity on my grey hairs, took me into his house, and gave me food. So, señores, you see that one should always put confidence in the protection of the Virgin.”

The old man was on his way to his native place, Archidona, which was close by, on the summit of a steep and rugged mountain. He pointed to the ruins of its old Moorish castle: “That castle,” he said, “was inhabited by a Moorish king at the time of the wars of Granada. Queen Isabella invaded it with a great army; but the king looked down from his castle among the clouds, and laughed her to scorn! Upon this the Virgin appeared to the queen, and guided her and her army up a mysterious path in the mountains, which had never before been known. When the Moor saw her coming, he was astonished, and springing with his horse from a precipice, was dashed to pieces! The marks of his horse’s hoofs,” said the old man, “are to be seen in the margin of the rock to this day. And see, señores, yonder is the road by which the queen and her army mounted: you see it like a riband up the mountain side; but the miracle is, that, though it can be seen at a distance, when you come near it disappears!”

The ideal road to which he pointed was undoubtedly a sandy ravine of the mountain, which looked narrow and defined at a distance, but became broad and indistinct on an approach.

As the old man’s heart warmed with wine and wassail, he went on to tell us a story of the buried treasure left under the castle by the Moorish king. His own house was next to the foundations of the castle. The curate and notary dreamed three times of the treasure, and went to work at the place pointed out in their dreams. His own son-in-law heard the sound of their pickaxes and spades at night. What they found nobody knows; they became suddenly rich, but kept their own secret. Thus
the old man had once been next door to fortune, but was doomed never to get under the same roof.

I have remarked, that the stories of treasure buried by the Moors, which prevail throughout Spain, are most current among the poorest people. It is thus, kind Nature consoles with shadows for the lack of substantials. The thirsty man dreams of fountains and running streams; the hungry man of ideal banquets; and the poor man of heaps of hidden gold: nothing certainly is more magnificent than the imagination of a beggar.

The last travelling sketch I shall give, is an evening scene at the little city of Loxa. This was a famous belligerent frontier post in the time of the Moors, and repulsed Ferdinand from its walls. It was the strong-hold of old Aliatan, the father-in-law of Boabdil, when that fiery veteran sallied forth with his son-in-law on their disastrous inroad, that ended in the death of the chieftain and the capture of the monarch. Loxa is widely situated in a broken mountain pass, on the banks of the Genil, among rocks and groves, and meadows and gardens. The people seem still to retain the bold fiery spirit of the olden time. Our inn was suited to the place. It was kept by a young and handsome Andalusian widow, whose trim basquiña of black silk, fringed with bugles, set off the play of a graceful form and round pliant limbs. Her step was firm and elastic; her dark eye was full of fire; and the coquetry of her air, and varied ornaments of her person, showed that she was accustomed to be admired.

She was well matched by a brother, nearly about her own age; they were perfect models of the Andalusian Majo and Maja. He was tall, vigorous, and well-formed, with a clear olive-complexion, a dark beaming eye, and curling chesnut whiskers that met under his chin. He was gallantly dressed in a short green velvet jacket, fitted to his shape, profusely decorated with silver buttons, with a white handkerchief in each pocket. He had breeches of the same, with rows of buttons from the hips to the knees; a pink silk handkerchief round his neck, gathered through a ring, on the bosom of a neatly-plaited shirt; a sash
round the waist to match; bottinas, or spatterdashes, of the finest russet-leather, elegantly worked, and open at the calf to show his stocking; and russet-shoes, setting off a well-shaped foot.

As he was standing at the door, a horseman rode up, and entered into low and earnest conversation with him. He was dressed in similar style, and almost with equal finery; a man about thirty, square-built, with strong Roman features, handsome, though slightly pitted with the smallpox; with a free, bold, and somewhat daring air. His powerful black horse was decorated with tassels and fanciful trappings, and a couple of broad-mouthed blunderbusses hung behind the saddle. He had the air of one of those contrabandistas that I have seen in the mountains of Ronda, and evidently had a good understanding with the brother of mine hostess; nay, if I mistake not, he was a favoured admirer of the widow. In fact, the whole inn and its inmates had something of a contrabandista aspect, and the blunderbuss stood in a corner beside the guitar. The horseman I have mentioned passed his evening in the posada, and sang several bold mountain romances with great spirit. As we were at supper, two poor Asturians put in in distress, begging food and a night's lodging. They had been waylaid by robbers as they came from a fair among the mountains, robbed of a horse, which carried all their stock in trade, stripped of their money and most of their apparel, beaten for having offered resistance, and left almost naked in the road. My companion, with a prompt generosity, natural to him, ordered them a supper and a bed, and gave them a sum of money to help them forward towards their home.

As the evening advanced, the dramatis personæ thickened. A large man, about sixty years of age, of powerful frame, came strolling in, to gossip with mine hostess. He was dressed in the ordinary Andalusian costume, but had a huge sabre tucked under his arm; wore large mustaches, and had something of a lofty swaggering air. Every one seemed to regard him with great deference.

Our man Sancho whispered to us that he was Don
Ventura Rodriguez, the hero and champion of Loxa, famous for his prowess and the strength of his arm. In the time of the French invasion he surprised six troopers who were asleep: he first secured their horses, then attacked them with his sabre, killed some, and took the rest prisoners. For this exploit the king allows him a peseta (the fifth of a duro, or dollar) per day, and has dignified him with the title of Don.

I was amused to notice his swelling language and demeanour. He was evidently a thorough Andalusian, boastful as he was brave. His sabre was always in his hand or under his arm. He carries it always about with him as a child does her doll, calls it his Santa Teresa, and says that when he draws it ("tiembla la terra!") the earth trembles!

I sat until a late hour listening to the varied themes of this motley group, who mingled together with the unreserve of a Spanish posada. We had contrabandista songs, stories of robbers, guerilla exploits, and Moorish legends. The last were from our handsome landlady, who gave a poetical account of the Infiernos, or infernal regions of Loxa—dark caverns, in which subterranean streams and waterfalls make a mysterious sound. The common people say that there are money-coiners shut up there from the time of the Moors; and that the Moorish kings kept their treasures in those caverns.

Were it the purport of this work, I could fill its pages with the incidents and scenes of our rambling expedition; but other themes invite me. Journeying in this manner, we at length emerged from the mountains, and entered upon the beautiful Vega of Granada. Here we took our last midday's repast under a grove of olive-trees, on the borders of a rivulet, with the old Moorish capital in the distance, surmounted by the ruddy towers of the Alhambra; while, far above it, the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada shone like silver. The day was without a cloud, and the heat of the sun tempered by cool breezes from the mountains; after our repast, we spread our cloaks and took our last siesta, lulled by the humming of bees among the flowers, and the notes of ring-doves from the neigh-
bouring olive-trees. When the sultry hours were past, we resumed our journey; and after passing between hedges of aloes and Indian figs, and through a wilderness of gardens, arrived about sunset at the Gates of Granada.

To the traveller imbued with a feeling for the historical and poetical, the Alhambra of Granada is as much an object of veneration, as is the Kaaba, or sacred house of Mecca, to all true Moslem pilgrims. How many legends and traditions, true and fabulous; how many songs and romances, Spanish and Arabian, of love, and war, and chivalry, are associated with this romantic pile! The reader may judge, therefore, of our delight, when, shortly after our arrival in Granada, the Governor of the Alhambra gave us his permission to occupy his vacant apartments in the Moorish palace. My companion was soon summoned away by the duties of his station; but I remained for several months, spell-bound in the old enchanted pile. The following papers are the result of my reveries and researches during that delicious thraldom. If they have the power of imparting any of the witching charms of the place to the imagination of the reader, he will not repine at lingering with me for a season in the legendary halls of the Alhambra.

GOVERNMENT OF THE ALHAMBRA.

The Alhambra is an ancient fortress or castellated palace of the Moorish kings of Granada, where they held dominion over this their boasted terrestrial paradise, and made their last stand for empire in Spain. The palace occupies but a portion of the fortress, the walls of which, studded with towers, stretch irregularly round the whole crest of a lofty hill that overlooks the city, and forms a spur of the Sierra Nevada, or snowy mountain.
In the time of the Moors, the fortress was capable of containing an army of forty thousand men within its precincts, and served occasionally as a strong hold of the sovereigns against their rebellious subjects. After the kingdom had passed into the hands of the Christians, the Alhambra continued a royal demesne, and was occasionally inhabited by the Castilian monarchs. The Emperor Charles V. began a sumptuous palace within its walls, but was deterred from completing it by repeated shocks of earthquakes. The last royal residents were Philip V. and his beautiful queen, Elizabetta of Parma, early in the eighteenth century. Great preparations were made for their reception. The palace and gardens were placed in a state of repair, and a new suite of apartments erected, and decorated by artists brought from Italy. The sojourn of the sovereigns was transient, and after their departure the palace once more became desolate. Still the place was maintained with some military state. The governor held it immediately from the crown, its jurisdiction extended down into the suburbs of the city, and was independent of the Captain General of Granada. A considerable garrison was kept up; the governor had his apartments in the front of the old Moorish palace, and never descended into Granada without some military parade. The fortress, in fact, was a little town of itself, having several streets of houses within its walls, together with a Franciscan convent and a parochial church.

The desertion of the court, however, was a fatal blow to the Alhambra. Its beautiful halls became desolate, and some of them fell to ruin; the gardens were destroyed, and the fountains ceased to play. By degrees the dwellings became filled with a loose and lawless population; contrabandistas, who availed themselves of its independent jurisdiction to carry on a wide and daring course of smuggling, and thieves and rogues of all sorts, who made this their place of refuge from whence they might depredate upon Granada and its vicinity. The strong arm of government at length interfered: the whole community was thoroughly sifted; none were suffered to remain but such as were of honest character, and had legitimate right to a residence; the greater part of the houses were demolished, and a mere
hamlet left, with the parochial church and the Franciscan convent. During the recent troubles in Spain, when Granada was in the hands of the French, the Alhambra was garrisoned by their troops, and the palace was occasionally inhabited by the French commander. With that enlightened taste which has ever distinguished the French nation in their conquests, this monument of Moorish elegance and grandeur was rescued from the absolute ruin and desolation that were overwhelming it. The roofs were repaired, the saloons and galleries protected from the weather, the gardens cultivated, the watercourses restored, the fountains once more made to throw up their sparkling showers; and Spain may thank her invaders for having preserved to her the most beautiful and interesting of her historical monuments.

On the departure of the French, they blew up several towers of the outer wall, and left the fortifications scarcely tenable. Since that time the military importance of the post is at an end. The garrison is a handful of invalid soldiers, whose principal duty is to guard some of the outer towers, which serve occasionally as a prison of state; and the governor, abandoning the lofty hill of the Alhambra, resides in the centre of Granada, for the more convenient despatch of his official duties. I cannot conclude this brief notice of the state of the fortress without bearing testimony to the honourable exertions of its present commander, Don Francisco de Serna, who is tasking all the limited resources at his command to put the palace in a state of repair, and, by his judicious precautions, has for some time arrested its too certain decay. Had his predecessors discharged the duties of their station with equal fidelity, the Alhambra might yet have remained in almost its pristine beauty: were government to second him with means equal to his zeal, this edifice might still be preserved to adorn the land, and to attract the curious and enlightened of every clime for many generations.
INTERIOR OF THE ALHAMBRA.

The Alhambra has been so often and so minutely described by travellers, that a mere sketch will, probably, be sufficient for the reader to refresh his recollection; I will give, therefore, a brief account of our visit to it the morning after our arrival in Granada.

Leaving our posada of La Espada, we traversed the renowned square of the Vivarrambla, once the scene of Moorish jousts and tournaments, now a crowded market-place. From thence we proceeded along the Zacatin, the main street of what, in the time of the Moors, was the Great Bazaar, where the small shops and narrow alleys still retain the Oriental character. Crossing an open place in front of the palace of the captain-general, we ascended a confined and winding street, the name of which reminded us of the chivalric days of Granada. It is called the Calle, or Street of the Gomeres, from a Moorish family famous in chronicle and song. This street led up to a massive gateway of Grecian architecture, built by Charles V., forming the entrance to the domains of the Alhambra.

At the gate were two or three ragged and superannuated soldiers, dozing on a stone bench, the successors of the Zegris and the Abencerrages; while a tall meagre varlet, whose rusty-brown cloak was evidently intended to conceal the ragged state of his nether garments, was lounging in the sunshine and gossiping with an ancient sentinel on duty. He joined us as we entered the gate, and offered his services to show us the fortress.

I have a traveller's dislike to officious ciceroni, and did not altogether like the garb of the applicant.

"You are well acquainted with the place, I presume?"

"Ninguno mas; pues Señor, soy hijo de la Alhambra."

— (Nobody better; in fact, Sir, I am a son of the Alhambra!)

The common Spaniards have certainly a most poetical
way of expressing themselves. "A son of the Alhambra!" the appellation caught me at once; the very tattered garb of my new acquaintance assumed a dignity in my eyes. It was emblematic of the fortunes of the place, and befitted the progeny of a ruin.

I put some farther questions to him, and found that his title was legitimate. His family had lived in the fortress from generation to generation ever since the time of the conquest. His name was Mateo Ximenes. "Then, perhaps," said I, "you may be a descendant from the great Cardinal Ximenes?"—"Dios Sabe! God knows, Señor! It may be so. We are the oldest family in the Alhambra, Christianos Viejos, old Christians, without any taint of Moor or Jew. I know we belong to some great family or other, but I forget whom. My father knows all about it: he has the coat-of-arms hanging up in his cottage, up in the fortress."—There is not any Spaniard, however poor, but has some claim to high pedigree. The first title of this ragged worthy, however, had completely captivated me, so I gladly accepted the services of the "son of the Alhambra."

We now found ourselves in a deep narrow ravine, filled with beautiful groves, with a steep avenue, and various footpaths winding through it bordered with stone seats, and ornamented with fountains. To our left, we beheld the towers of the Alhambra beetling above us; to our right, on the opposite side of the ravine, we were equally dominated by rival towers on a rocky eminence. These, we were told, were the Torres Vermejos, or Vermilion Towers, so called from their ruddy hue. No one knows their origin. They are of a date much anterior to the Alhambra: some suppose them to have been built by the Romans; others, by some wandering colony of Phoenicians. Ascending the steep and shady avenue, we arrived at the foot of a huge square Moorish tower, forming a kind of barbacan, through which passed the main entrance to the fortress. Within the barbacan was another group of veteran invalids, one mounting guard at the portal, while the rest, wrapped in their tattered cloaks, slept on the stone benches. This portal is called the Gate of Justice, from the tribunal held within its porch during the Moslem domination, for the immediate trial of
petty causes: a custom common to the Oriental nations, and occasionally alluded to in the Sacred Scriptures.

The great vestibule, or porch of the gate, is formed by an immense Arabian arch, of the horseshoe form, which springs to half the height of the tower. On the keystone of this arch is engraven a gigantic hand. Within the vestibule, on the keystone of the portal, is sculptured, in like manner, a gigantic key. Those who pretend to some knowledge of Mahometan symbols, affirm that the hand is the emblem of doctrine, and the key of faith; the latter, they add, was emblazoned on the standard of the Moslems when they subdued Andalusia, in opposition to the Christian emblem of the Cross. A different explanation, however, was given by the legitimate son of the Alhambra, and one more in unison with the notions of the common people, who attach something of mystery and magic to every thing Moorish, and have all kind of superstitions connected with this old Moslem fortress.

According to Mateo, it was a tradition handed down from the oldest inhabitants, and which he had from his father and grandfather, that the hand and key were magical devices on which the fate of the Alhambra depended. The Moorish king who built it was a great magician, or, as some believed, had sold himself to the devil, and had laid the whole fortress under a magic spell. By this means it had remained standing for several hundred years, in defiance of storms and earthquakes, while almost all other buildings of the Moors had fallen to ruin, and disappeared. This spell, the tradition went on to say, would last until the hand on the outer arch should reach down and grasp the key, when the whole pile would tumble to pieces, and all the treasures buried beneath it by the Moors would be revealed.

Notwithstanding this ominous prediction, we ventured to pass through the spell-bound gateway, feeling some little assurance against magic art in the protection of the Virgin, a statue of whom we observed above the portal.

After passing through the barbacan, we ascended a narrow lane, winding between walls, and came on an open esplanade within the fortress, called the Plaza de los
Algibes, or Place of the Cisterns, from great reservoirs which undermine it, cut in the living rock by the Moors, for the supply of the fortress. Here, also, is a well of immense depth, furnishing the purest and coldest of water; another monument of the delicate taste of the Moors, who were indefatigable in their exertions to obtain that element in its crystal purity.

In front of this esplanade is the splendid pile commenced by Charles V., intended, it is said, to eclipse the residence of the Moslem kings. With all its grandeur and architectural merit, it appeared to us like an arrogant intrusion; and, passing by it, we entered a simple, unostentatious portal, opening into the interior of the Moorish palace.

The transition was almost magical: it seemed as if we were at once transported into other times, and another realm, and were treading the scenes of Arabian story. We found ourselves in a great court, paved with white marble, and decorated at each end with light Moorish peristyles: it is called the Court of the Alberca. In the centre was an immense basin, or fishpond, a hundred and thirty feet in length by thirty in breadth, stocked with gold fish, and bordered by hedges of roses. At the upper end of this court rose the great Tower of Comares.

From the lower end we passed through a Moorish archway into the renowned Court of Lions. There is no part of the edifice that gives a more complete idea of its original beauty and magnificence than this; for none has suffered so little from the ravages of time. In the centre stands the fountain, famous in song and story. The alabaster basins still shed their diamond drops; and the twelve lions, which support them, cast forth their crystal streams as in the days of Boabdil. The court is laid out in flower-beds, and surrounded by light Arabian arcades of open filigree work, supported by slender pillars of white marble. The architecture, like that of all the other parts of the palace, is characterised by elegance rather than grandeur; bespeaking a delicate and graceful taste, and a disposition to indolent enjoyment. When one looks upon the fairy tracery of the peristyles, and
the apparently fragile fretwork of the walls, it is difficult to believe that so much has survived the wear and tear of centuries, the shocks of earthquakes, the violence of war, and the quiet, though no less baneful, pilferings of the tasteful traveller: it is almost sufficient to excuse the popular tradition, that the whole is protected by a magic charm.

On one side of the court, a portal, richly adorned, opens into a lofty hall, paved with white marble, and called the Hall of the Two Sisters. A cupola, or lantern, admits a tempered light from above, and a free circulation of air. The lower part of the walls is incrusted with beautiful Moorish tiles, on some of which are emblazoned the escutcheons of the Moorish monarchs: the upper part is faced with the fine stucco-work invented at Damascus, consisting of large plates, cast in moulds, and artfully joined, so as to have the appearance of being laboriously sculptured by the hand into light relievos and fanciful Arabesques, intermingled with texts of the Koran, and poetical inscriptions in Arabian and Cufic characters. These decorations of the walls and cupolas are richly gilded, and the interstices pencilled with lapis lazuli, and other brilliant and enduring colours. On each side of the hall are recesses for ottomans and couches. Above an inner porch is a balcony, which communicated with the women's apartment. The latticed 'jalousies' still remain, from whence the dark-eyed beauties of the haram might gaze unseen upon the entertainments of the hall below.

It is impossible to contemplate this once favourite abode of Oriental manners, without feeling the early associations of Arabian romance, and almost expecting to see the white arm of some mysterious princess beckoning from the balcony, or some dark eye sparkling through the lattice. The abode of beauty is here, as if it had been inhabited but yesterday; but where are the Zoraydas and Lindaraxas!

On the opposite side of the Court of Lions, is the Hall of the Abencerrages; so called from the gallant cavaliers of that illustrious line who were here perfidiously massacred. There are some who doubt the whole truth of this
story; but our humble attendant, Mateo, pointed out the very wicket of the portal through which they are said to have been introduced, one by one; and the white marble fountain in the centre of the hall, where they were beheaded. He showed us, also, certain broad ruddy stains in the pavement, traces of their blood, which, according to popular belief, can never be effaced. Finding we listened to him with easy faith, he added, that there was often heard at night, in the Court of Lions, a low, confused sound, resembling the murmuring of a multitude; with now and then a faint tinkling, like the distant clank of chains. These noises are probably produced by the bubbling currents and tinkling falls of water, conducted under the pavement, through pipes and channels, to supply the fountains; but, according to the legend of the son of the Alhambra, they are made by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages, who nightly haunt the scene of their suffering, and invoke the vengeance of Heaven on their destroyer.

From the Court of Lions we retraced our steps through the Court of the Alberca, or Great Fishpool; crossing which, we proceeded to the Tower of Comares, so called from the name of the Arabian architect. It is of massive strength and lofty height, domineering over the rest of the edifice, and overhanging the steep hill-side, which descends abruptly to the banks of the Darro. A Moorish archway admitted us into a vast and lofty hall, which occupies the interior of the tower, and was the grand audience-chamber of the Moslem monarchs, thence called the Hall of Ambassadors. It still bears the traces of past magnificence. The walls are richly stuccoed, and decorated with Arabesques; the vaulted ceiling of cedar-wood, almost lost in obscurity, from its height, still gleams with rich gilding, and the brilliant tints of the Arabian pencil. On three sides of the saloon are deep windows cut through the immense thickness of the walls, the balconies of which look down upon the verdant valley of the Darro, the streets and convents of the Albaycin, and command a prospect of the distant Vega.

I might go on to describe minutely the other delight-
ful apartments of this side of the palace: the tocador, or toilet of the queen, an open belvidere, on the summit of a tower, where the Moorish sultanas enjoyed the pure breezes from the mountain, and the prospect of the surrounding paradise; the secluded little patio, or garden of Lindaraxa, with its alabaster fountain, its thickets of roses and myrtles, of citrons and oranges; the cool halls and grottoes of the baths, where the glare and heat of day are tempered into a soft mysterious light, and a pervading freshness. But I forbear to dwell minutely on those scenes; my object is merely to give the reader a general introduction into an abode, where, if so disposed, he may linger and loiter with me through the remainder of this work, gradually becoming familiar with all its localities.

An abundant supply of water, brought from the mountains by old Moorish aqueducts, circulates throughout the palace, supplying its baths and fishpools, sparkling in jets within its halls, or murmuring in channels along the marble pavements. When it has paid its tribute to the royal pile, and visited its gardens and parterres, it flows down the long avenue leading to the city, tinkling in rills, gushing in fountains, and maintaining a perpetual verdure in those groves that embower and beautify the whole hill of the Alhambra.

Those only who have sojourned in the ardent climates of the South, can appreciate the delights of an abode, combining the breezy coolness of the mountain, with the freshness and verdure of the valley. While the city below pants with the noontide heat, and the parched Vega trembles to the eye, the delicate airs from the Sierra Nevada play through these lofty halls, bringing with them the sweetness of the surrounding gardens. Every thing invites to that indolent repose, the bliss of southern climes; and while the half-shut eye looks out from shaded balconies upon the glittering landscape, the ear is lulled by the rustling of groves, and the murmur of running streams.
THE TOWER OF COMARES.

The reader has had a sketch of the interior of the Alhambra, and may be desirous of a general idea of its vicinity. The morning is serene and lovely; the sun has not gained sufficient power to destroy the freshness of the night; we will mount to the summit of the Tower of Comares, and take a bird's-eye view of Granada and its environs.

Come then, worthy reader and comrade, follow my steps into this vestibule, ornamented with rich tracery, which opens to the Hall of Ambassadors. We will not enter the hall, however, but turn to the left, to this small door, opening in the wall. Have a care! here are steep winding steps and but scanty light; yet up this narrow, obscure, and winding staircase, the proud monarchs of Granada and their queens have often ascended to the battlements of the tower to watch the approach of Christian armies; or to gaze on the battles in the Vega. At length we are on the terraced roof, and may take breath for a moment, while we cast a general eye over the splendid panorama of city and country; of rocky mountain, verdant valley, and fertile plain; of castle, cathedral, Moorish towers, and Gothic domes, crumbling ruins, and blooming groves.

Let us approach the battlements, and cast our eyes immediately below. See, on this side we have the whole plan of the Alhambra laid open to us, and can look down into its courts and gardens. At the foot of the tower is the Court of the Alberca, with its great tank or fishpool, bordered with flowers; and yonder is the Court of Lions, with its famous fountains, and its light Moorish arcades; and in the centre of the pile is the little garden of Lindaraxa, buried in the heart of the building, with its roses and citrons, and shrubbery of emerald green.

That belt of battlements, studded with square towers, straggling round the whole brow of the hill, is the outer
boundary of the fortress. Some of the towers, you may perceive, are in ruins, and their massive fragments are buried among vines, fig-trees, and aloes.

Let us look on this northern side of the tower. It is a giddy height; the very foundations of the tower rise above the groves of the steep hill-side. And see, a long fissure in the massive walls shows that the tower has been rent by some of the earthquakes, which from time to time have thrown Granada into consternation; and which, sooner or later, must reduce this crumbling pile to a mere mass of ruin. The deep, narrow glen below us, which gradually widens as it opens from the mountains, is the valley of the Darro; you see the little river winding its way under embowered terraces, and among orchards and flower-gardens. It is a stream famous in old times for yielding gold, and its sands are still sifted, occasionally, in search of the precious ore. Some of those white pavilions, which here and there gleam from among groves and vineyards, were rustic retreats of the Moors, to enjoy the refreshment of their gardens.

The airy palace, with its tall white towers and long arcades, which breasts yon mountain, among pompous groves and hanging gardens, is the Generalife, a summer palace of the Moorish kings, to which they resorted during the sultry months, to enjoy a still more breezy region than that of the Alhambra. The naked summit of the height above it, where you behold some shapeless ruins, is the Silla del Moro, or Seat of the Moor; so called, from having been a retreat of the unfortunate Boabdil, during the time of an insurrection, where he seated himself, and looked down mournfully upon his rebellious city.

A murmuring sound of water now and then rises from the valley. It is from the aqueduct of yon Moorish mill, nearly at the foot of the hill. The avenue of trees beyond is the Alameda, along the bank of the Darro, a favourite resort in evenings, and a rendezvous of lovers in the summer nights, when the guitar may be heard at a late hour from the benches along its walks. At present, there are but a few loitering monks to be seen there, and a group of water-carriers from the fountain of Avellanos.
You start! 'tis nothing but a hawk that we have frightened from his nest. This old tower is a complete breeding-place for vagrant birds; the swallow and martlet abound in every chink and cranny, and circle about it the whole day long; while at night, when all other birds have gone to rest, the moping owl comes out of its lurking-place, and utters its boding cry from the battlements. See how the hawk we have dislodged sweeps away below us, skimming over the tops of the trees, and sailing up to the ruins above the Generalife!

Let us leave this side of the tower, and turn our eyes to the west. Here you behold, in the distance, a range of mountains bounding the Vega, the ancient barrier between Moslem Granada and the land of the Christians. Among their heights you may still discern warrior towns, whose grey walls and battlements seem of a piece with the rocks on which they are built; while here and there is a solitary Atalaya, or watch-tower, mounted on some lofty point, and looking down, as it were, from the sky into the valleys on either side. It was down the defiles of these mountains, by the pass of Lope, that the Christian armies descended into the Vega. It was round the base of yon grey and naked mountain, almost insulated from the rest, and stretching its bold rocky promontory into the bosom of the plain, that the invading squadrons would come bursting into view, with flaunting banners, and the clangour of drums and trumpets. How changed is the scene! Instead of the glittering line of mailed warriors, we behold the patient train of the toilful muleteer, slowly moving along the skirts of the mountain. Behind that promontory, is the eventful bridge of Pinos, renowned for many a bloody strife between Moors and Christians; but still more renowned as being the place where Columbus was overtaken and called back by the messenger of Queen Isabella, just as he was departing in despair, to carry his project of discovery to the court of France.

Behold another place famous in the history of the discoverer. Yon line of walls and towers, gleaming in the morning sun, in the very centre of the Vega, is the city of Santa Fe, built by the Catholic sovereigns during the siege
of Granada, after a conflagration had destroyed their camp. It was to these walls that Columbus was called back by the heroic queen; and within them the treaty was concluded, that led to the discovery of the Western World.

Here, towards the south, the eye revels on the luxuriant beauties of the Vega; a blooming wilderness of grove and garden, and teeming orchard, with the Xenel winding through it in silver links, and feeding innumerable rills, conducted through ancient Moorish channels, which maintain the landscape in perpetual verdure. Here are the beloved bowers and gardens and rural retreats, for which the Moors fought with such desperate valour. The very farmhouses and hovels which are now inhabited by boors, retain traces of Arabesques and other tasteful decorations, which show them to have been elegant residences in the days of the Moslems.

Beyond the embowered region of the Vega, you behold to the south a line of arid hills, down which a long train of mules is slowly moving. It was from the summit of one of those hills that the unfortunate Boabdil cast back his last look upon Granada, and gave vent to the agony of his soul. It is the spot famous in song and story, "The last sigh of the Moor."

Now raise your eyes to the snowy summit of yon pile of mountains, shining like a white summer cloud in the blue sky. It is the Sierra Nevada, the pride and delight of Granada; the source of her cooling breezes and perpetual verdure, of her gushing fountains and perennial streams. It is this glorious pile of mountains that gives to Granada that combination of delights so rare in a southern city: the fresh vegetation and temperate airs of a northern climate, with the vivifying ardour of a tropical sun, and the cloudless azure of a southern sky. It is this aërial treasury of snow, which, melting in proportion to the increase of the summer heat, sends down rivulets and streams through every glen and gorge of the Alpuxarras, diffusing emerald verdure and fertility throughout a chain of happy and sequestered valleys.

Those mountains may well be called the glory of Granada. They dominate the whole extent of Andalusia,
and may be seen from its most distant parts. The muleteer hails them, as he views their frosty peaks from the sultry level of the plain; and the Spanish mariner on the deck of his bark, far, far off on the bosom of the blue Mediterranean, watches them with a pensive eye, thinks of delightful Granada, and chants, in a low voice, some old romance about the Moors.

But enough; the sun is high above the mountains, and is pouring his full fervour upon our heads. Already the terraced roof of the tower is hot beneath our feet: let us abandon it, and descend and refresh ourselves under the arcades by the fountain of the Lions.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MOSLEM DOMINATION IN SPAIN.

One of my favourite resorts is the balcony of the central window of the Hall of Ambassadors, in the lofty tower of Comares. I have just been seated there, enjoying the close of a long brilliant day. The sun, as he sank behind the purple mountains of Alhama, sent a stream of effulgence up the valley of the Darro, that spread a melancholy pomp over the ruddy towers of the Alhambra; while the Vega, covered with a slight sultry vapour that caught the setting ray, seemed spread out in the distance like a golden sea. Not a breath of air disturbed the stillness of the hour; and though the faint sound of music and merriment now and then arose from the gardens of the Darro, it but rendered more impressive the monumental silence of the pile which overshadowed me. It was one of those hours and scenes in which memory asserts an almost magical power; and, like the evening sun beaming on these mouldering towers, sends back her retrospective rays to light up the glories of the past.

As I sat watching the effect of the declining daylight upon this Moorish pile, I was led into a consideration of
the light, elegant, and voluptuous character, prevalent throughout its internal architecture; and to contrast it with the grand but gloomy solemnity of the Gothic edifices, reared by the Spanish conquerors. The very architecture thus bespeaks the opposite and irreconcilable natures of the two warlike people who so long battled here for the mastery of the peninsula. By degrees, I fell into a course of musing upon the singular fortunes of the Arabian or Moresco-Spaniards, whose whole existence is as a tale that is told, and certainly forms one of the most anomalous, yet splendid, episodes in history. Potent and durable as was their dominion, we scarcely know how to call them. They were a nation without a legitimate country or a name. A remote wave of the great Arabian inundation, cast upon the shores of Europe, they seemed to have all the impetus of the first rush of the torrent. Their career of conquest, from the rock of Gibraltar to the cliffs of the Pyrenees, was as rapid and brilliant as the Moslem victories of Syria and Egypt. Nay, had they not been checked on the plains of Tours, all France, all Europe, might have been overrun with the same facility as the empires of the East, and the crescent might at this day have glittered on the fanes of Paris and of London.

Repelled within the limits of the Pyrenees, the mixed hordes of Asia and Africa, that formed this great eruption, gave up the Moslem principle of conquest, and sought to establish in Spain a peaceful and permanent dominion. As conquerors, their heroism was only equalled by their moderation: and in both, for a time, they excelled the nations with whom they contended. Severed from their native homes, they loved the land given them as they supposed by Allah, and strove to embellish it with every thing that could administer to the happiness of man. Laying the foundations of their power in a system of wise and equitable laws, diligently cultivating the arts and sciences, and promoting agriculture, manufactures, and commerce; they gradually formed an empire unrivalled for its prosperity by any of the empires of Christendom; and diligently drawing round them the graces and refinements that marked the Arabian empire in the East, at the time of
its greatest civilisation, they diffused the light of Oriental knowledge through the western regions of benighted Europe.

The cities of Arabian Spain became the resort of Christian artisans, to instruct themselves in the useful arts. The Universities of Toledo, Cordova, Seville, and Granada, were sought by the pale student from other lands, to acquaint himself with the sciences of the Arabs, and the treasured lore of antiquity; the lovers of the gay sciences resorted to Cordova and Granada, to imbibe the poetry and music of the East; and the steel-clad warriors of the North hastened thither to accomplish themselves in the graceful exercises and courteous usages of chivalry.

If the Moslem monuments in Spain, if the mosque of Cordova, the alcazar of Seville, and the Alhambra of Granada, still bear inscriptions fondly boasting of the power and permanency of their dominion; can the boast be derided as arrogant and vain? Generation after generation, century after century, had passed away, and still they maintained possession of the land. A period had elapsed longer than that which has passed since England was subjugated by the Norman Conqueror, and the descendants of Musa and Taric might as little anticipate being driven into exile across the same straits, traversed by their triumphant ancestors, as the descendants of Rollo and William, and their veteran peers, may dream of being driven back to the shores of Normandy.

With all this, however, the Moslem empire in Spain was but a brilliant exotic, that took no permanent root in the soil it embellished. Severed from all their neighbours in the West, by impassable barriers of faith and manners, and separated by seas and deserts from their kindred of the East, they were an isolated people. Their whole existence was a prolonged, though gallant and chivalric struggle, for a foothold in a usurped land.

They were the outposts and frontiers of Islamism. The peninsula was the great battle-ground where the Gothic conquerors of the North and the Moslem conquerors of the East met and strove for mastery; and the fiery courage of the Arab was at length subdued by the obstinate and persevering valour of the Goth.
Never was the annihilation of a people more complete than that of the Moresco-Spaniards. Where are they? Ask the shores of Barbary, and its desert places. The exiled remnant of their once powerful empire disappeared among the barbarians of Africa, and ceased to be a nation. They have not even left a distinct name behind them, though for nearly eight centuries they were a distinct people. The home of their adoption, and of their occupation for ages, refuses to acknowledge them, except as invaders and usurpers. A few broken monuments are all that remain to bear witness to their power and dominion, as solitary rocks, left far in the interior, bear testimony to the extent of some vast inundation. Such is the Alhambra. A Moslem pile, in the midst of a Christian land; an Oriental palace amidst the Gothic edifices of the West; an elegant memento of a brave, intelligent, and graceful people, who conquered, ruled, and passed away.

THE HOUSEHOLD.

It is time that I give some idea of my domestic arrangements in this singular residence. The Royal Palace of the Alhambra is entrusted to the care of a good old maiden dame, called Doña Antonia Molina; but who, according to Spanish custom, goes by the more neighbourly appellation of Tia Antonia (Aunt Antonia). She maintains the Moorish halls and gardens in order, and shows them to strangers; in consideration of which she is allowed all the perquisites received from visitors, and all the produce of the gardens, excepting, that she is expected to pay an occasional tribute of fruits and flowers to the governor. Her residence is in a corner of the palace; and her family consists of a nephew and niece, the children of two different brothers. The nephew, Manuel Molina, is a young man of sterling worth, and Spanish gravity. He has served in the armies both in Spain and the West Indies; but is now studying medicine, in hopes of one day or
other becoming physician to the fortress, a post worth at least a hundred and forty dollars a year. As to the niece, she is a plump little black-eyed Andalusian damsul, named Dolores; but who, from her bright looks and cheerful disposition, merits a merrier name. She is the declared heiress of all her aunt's possessions, consisting of certain ruinous tenements in the fortress, yielding a revenue of about one hundred and fifty dollars. I had not been long in the Alhambra, before I discovered that a quiet courtship was going on between the discreet Manuel and his bright-eyed cousin, and that nothing was wanting to enable them to join their hands and expectations, but that he should receive his doctor's diploma, and purchase a dispensation from the Pope, on account of their consanguinity.

With the good Dame Antonia I have made a treaty, according to which, she furnishes me with board and lodging; while the merry-hearted little Dolores keeps my apartment in order, and officiates as handmaid at meal-times. I have also at my command a tall, stuttering, yellow-haired lad, named Pêpe, who works in the gardens, and would fain have acted as valet; but in this he was forestalled by Mateo Ximenes, "the son of the Alhambra!" This alert and officious wight has managed, somehow or other, to stick by me ever since I first encountered him at the outer gate of the fortress, and to weave himself into all my plans, until he has fairly appointed and installed himself my valet, cicerone, guide, guard, and historiographic squire; and I have been obliged to improve the state of his wardrobe, that he may not disgrace his various functions; so that he has cast his old brown mantle, as a snake does his skin, and now appears about the fortress with a smart Andalusian hat and jacket, to his infinite satisfaction, and the great astonishment of his comrades. The chief fault of honest Mateo is an over anxiety to be useful. Conscious of having foisted himself into my employ, and that my simple and quiet habits render his situation a sinecure, he is at his wit's ends to devise modes of making himself important to my welfare. I am, in a manner, the victim of his officiousness; I cannot put my foot over the threshold of the palace, to
stroll about the fortress, but he is at my elbow, to explain every thing I see; and if I venture to ramble among the surrounding hills, he insists upon attending me as a guard, though I vehemently suspect he would be more apt to trust to the length of his legs than the strength of his arms, in case of attack. After all, however, the poor fellow is at times an amusing companion; he is simple-minded, and of infinite good humour, with the loquacity and gossip of a village barber, and knows all the small-talk of the place and its environs; but what he chiefly values himself on, is his stock of local information, having the most marvellous stories to relate of every tower, and vault, and gateway of the fortress, in all of which he places the most implicit faith.

Most of these he has derived, according to his own account, from his grandfather, a little legendary tailor, who lived to the age of nearly a hundred years, during which he made but two migrations beyond the precincts of the fortress. His shop, for the greater part of a century, was the resort of a knot of venerable gossips, where they would pass half the night talking about old times, and the wonderful events and hidden secrets of the place. The whole living, moving, thinking, and acting of this historical little tailor, had thus been bounded by the walls of the Alhambra; within them he had been born; within them he lived, breathed, and had his being; within them he died, and was buried. Fortunately for posterity, his traditionary lore died not with him. The authentic Mateo, when an urchin, used to be an attentive listener to the narratives of his grandfather, and of the gossip group assembled round the shop-board; and is thus possessed of a stock of valuable knowledge concerning the Alhambra, not to be found in books, and well worthy the attention of every curious traveller.

Such are the personages that contribute to my domestic comforts in the Alhambra; and I question whether any of the potentates, Moslem or Christian, who have preceded me in the palace, have been waited upon with greater fidelity, or enjoyed a serener sway.

When I rise in the morning, Pépe, the stuttering lad
from the gardens, brings me a tribute of fresh-culled flowers, which are afterwards arranged in vases by the skilful hand of Dolores, who takes a female pride in the decorations of my chamber. My meals are made wherever caprice dictates; sometimes in one of the Moorish halls, sometimes under the arcades of the Court of Lions, surrounded by flowers and fountains: and, when I walk out, I am conducted by the assiduous Mateo to the most romantic retreats of the mountains, and delicious haunts of the adjacent valleys, not one of which but is the scene of some wonderful tale.

Though fond of passing the greater part of my day alone, yet I occasionally repair in the evenings to the little domestic circle of Doña Antonia. This is generally held in an old Moorish chamber, that serves for kitchen as well as hall, a rude fireplace having been made in one corner, the smoke from which has discoloured the walls, and almost obliterated the ancient Arabesques. A window, with a balcony overhanging the valley of the Darro, lets in the cool evening breeze; and here I take my frugal supper of fruit and milk, and mingle with the conversation of the family. There is a natural talent, or mother wit, as it is called, about the Spaniards, which renders them intellectual and agreeable companions, whatever may be their condition in life, or however imperfect may have been their education: add to this, they are never vulgar; nature has endowed them with an inherent dignity of spirit. The good Tia Antonia is a woman of strong and intelligent, though uncultivated, mind; and the bright-eyed Dolores, though she has read but three or four books in the whole course of her life, has an engaging mixture of naïveté and good sense, and often surprises me by the pungency of her artless sallies. Sometimes the nephew entertains us by reading some old comedy of Calderon or Lope de Vega, to which he is evidently prompted by a desire to improve, as well as amuse his cousin Dolores; though, to his great mortification, the little damsel generally falls asleep before the first act is completed. Sometimes Tia Antonia has a little levee of humble friends and dependents; the inhabitants of the adjacent hamlet, or
the wives of the invalid soldiers. These look up to her with great deference, as the custodian of the palace, and pay their court to her by bringing the news of the place, or the rumours that may have straggled up from Granada. In listening to these evening gossipings I have picked up many curious facts, illustrative of the manners of the people, and the peculiarities of the neighbourhood.

These are simple details of simple pleasures: it is the nature of the place alone that gives them interest and importance. I tread haunted ground, and am surrounded by romantic associations. From earliest boyhood, when, on the banks of the Hudson, I first pored over the pages of an old Spanish story about the wars of Granada, that city has ever been a subject of my waking dreams; and often have I trod in fancy the romantic halls of the Alhambra. Behold, for once, a day-dream realised! yet I can scarce credit my senses, or believe that I do indeed inhabit the palace of Boabdil, and look down from its balconies upon chivalric Granada. As I loiter through these Oriental chambers, and hear the murmur of fountains, and the song of the nightingale; as I inhale the odour of the rose, and feel the influence of the balmy climate; I am almost tempted to fancy myself in the paradise of Mahomet, and that the plump little Dolores is one of the bright-eyed houris, destined to administer to the happiness of true believers.

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THE TRUANT.

Since noting the foregoing pages, we have had a scene of petty tribulation in the Alhambra, which has thrown a cloud over the sunny countenance of Dolores. This little damsel has a female passion for pets of all kinds, and from the superabundant kindness of her disposition, one of the ruined courts of the Alhambra is thronged with her favourites. A stately peacock and his hen seem to hold regal sway here, over pompous turkeys, querulous guinea-
fowls, and a rabble rout of common cocks and hens. The great delight of Dolores, however, has for some time past been centred in a youthful pair of pigeons, who have lately entered into the holy state of wedlock, and who have even supplanted a tortoiseshell cat and kittens in her affections.

As a tenement for them wherein to commence housekeeping, she had fitted up a small chamber adjacent to the kitchen, the window of which looked into one of the quiet Moorish courts. Here they lived in happy ignorance of any world beyond the court and its sunny roofs. Never had they aspired to soar above the battlements, or to mount to the summit of the towers. Their virtuous union was at length crowned by two spotless and milk-white eggs, to the great joy of their cherishing little mistress. Nothing could be more praiseworthy than the conduct of the young married folks on this interesting occasion. They took turns to sit upon the nest until the eggs were hatched, and while their callow progeny required warmth and shelter; while one thus stayed at home, the other foraged abroad for food, and brought home abundant supplies.

This scene of conjugal felicity has suddenly met with a reverse. Early this morning, as Dolores was feeding the male pigeon, she took a fancy to give him a peep at the great world. Opening a window, therefore, which looks down upon the valley of the Darro, she launched him at once beyond the walls of the Alhambra. For the first time in his life the astonished bird had to try the full vigour of his wings. He swept down into the valley, and then rising upwards with a surge, soared almost to the clouds. Never before had he risen to such a height, or experienced such delight in flying; and, like a young spendthrift just come to his estate, he seemed giddy with excess of liberty, and with the boundless field of action suddenly opened to him. For the whole day he has been circling about in capricious flights, from tower to tower, and tree to tree. Every attempt has been vain to lure him back by scattering grain upon the roofs; he seems to have lost all thought of home, of his tender helpmate and his callow young. To add to the anxiety of Dolores, he
has been joined by two *palomas ladrones*, or robber pigeons, whose instinct it is to entice wandering pigeons to their own dovecotes. The fugitive, like many other thoughtless youths on their first launching upon the world, seems quite fascinated with these knowing, but graceless companions, who have undertaken to show him life, and introduce him to society. He has been soaring with them over all the roofs and steeples of Granada. A thunder-storm has passed over the city, but he has not sought his home; night has closed in, and still he comes not. To deepen the pathos of the affair, the female pigeon, after remaining several hours on the nest, without being relieved, at length went forth to seek her recreant mate; but stayed away so long that the young ones perished for want of the warmth and shelter of the parent bosom. At a late hour in the evening, word was brought to Dolores, that the truant bird had been seen upon the towers of the Generalife. Now it happens that the Administrador of that ancient palace has likewise a dovecote, among the inmates of which are said to be two or three of these inveigling birds, the terror of all neighbouring pigeon-fanciers. Dolores immediately concluded, that the two feathered sharers who had been seen with her fugitive, were these bloods of the Generalife. A council of war was forthwith held in the chamber of Tia Antonia. The Generalife is a distinct jurisdiction from the Alhambra, and of course some punctilio, if not jealousy, exists between their custodians. It was determined, therefore, to send Pépe, the stuttering lad of the gardens, as ambassador to the Administrador, requesting, that if such fugitive should be found in his dominions, he might be given up as a subject of the Alhambra. Pépe departed accordingly, on his diplomatic expedition, through the moonlight groves and avenues, but returned in an hour with the afflicting intelligence that no such bird was to be found in the dovecote of the Generalife. The Administrador, however, pledged his sovereign word that if such vagrant should appear there, even at midnight, he should instantly be arrested, and sent back prisoner to his little black-eyed mistress.

Thus stands the melancholy affair, which has occasioned
much distress throughout the palace, and has sent the inconsolable Dolores to a sleepless pillow.

"Sorrow endureth for a night," says the proverb, "but joy cometh in the morning." The first object that met my eyes, on leaving my room this morning, was Dolores, with the truant pigeon in her hands, and her eyes sparkling with joy. He had appeared at an early hour on the battlements, hovering shyly about from roof to roof, but at length entered the window, and surrendered himself prisoner. He gained little credit, however, by his return; for the ravenous manner in which he devoured the food set before him, showed that, like the prodigal son, he had been driven home by sheer famine. Dolores upbraided him for his faithless conduct, calling him all manner of vagrant names (though, woman like, she fondled him at the same time to her bosom, and covered him with kisses). I observed, however, that she had taken care to clip his wings to prevent all future soarings; a precaution, which I mention, for the benefit of all those who have truant lovers or wandering husbands. More than one valuable moral might be drawn from the story of Dolores and her pigeon.

THE AUTHOR'S CHAMBER.

On taking up my abode in the Alhambra, one end of a suite of empty chambers of modern architecture, intended for the residence of the governor, was fitted up for my reception. It was in front of the palace, looking forth upon the esplanade; the further end communicated with a cluster of little chambers, partly Moorish, partly modern, inhabited by Tia Antonia and her family; these terminated in the large room, already mentioned, which serves the good old dame for parlour, kitchen, and hall of audience. From these gloomy apartments, a narrow blind corridor, and a dark winding staircase, led down an angle of the tower of Comares; groping along which, and opening a small door at the bottom, you were suddenly dazzled
by emerging into the brilliant antechamber of the Hall of Ambassadors, with the fountain of the Court of the Alberca sparkling before you.

I was dissatisfied with being lodged in a modern and frontier apartment of the palace, and longed to ensconce myself in the very heart of the building. As I was rambling one day about the Moorish halls, I found in a remote gallery, a door which I had not before noticed, communicating apparently with an extensive apartment, locked up from the public. Here then was a mystery; here was the haunted wing of the castle. I procured the key, however, without difficulty; the door opened to a range of vacant chambers of European architecture, though built over a Moorish arcade, along the little garden of Lindaraxa. There were two lofty rooms, the ceilings of which, broken in many places, were of deep panel-work of cedar, richly and skilfully carved with fruits and flowers, intermingled with grotesque masks. The walls had evidently, in ancient times, been hung with damask, but were now naked, and scrawled over with the insignificant names of aspiring travellers; the windows, which were dismantled and open to wind and weather, looked into the garden of Lindaraxa, and the orange and citron trees flung their branches into the chamber. Beyond these rooms were two saloons, less lofty, looking also into the garden. In the compartments of the panelled ceilings, were baskets of fruit and garlands of flowers, painted by no mean hand, and in tolerable preservation. The walls had also been painted in fresco in the Italian style, but the paintings were nearly obliterated: the windows were in the same shattered state as in the other chambers. This fanciful suite of rooms terminated in an open gallery with balustrades, which ran at right angles along another side of the garden. The whole apartment had a delicacy and elegance in its decorations, and there was something so choice and sequestered in its situation, along this retired little garden, that it awakened an interest in its history. I found, on inquiry, that it was an apartment fitted up by Italian artists in the early part of the last century, at the time when Philip V. and the beautiful Elizabetta of Parma
were expected at the Alhambra; and was destined for the Queen and the ladies of her train. One of the loftiest chambers had been her sleeping-room; and a narrow staircase leading from it, though now walled up, opened to the delightful belvidere, originally a mirador of the Moorish Sultanas, but fitted up as a boudoir for the fair Elizabetta, and which still retains the name of the tocador, or toilet, of the Queen. The sleeping-room I have mentioned, commanded from one window a prospect of the Generalife and its embowered terraces: under another window played the alabaster fountain of the garden of Lindaraxa. That garden carried my thoughts still further back to the period of another reign of beauty; to the days of the Moorish Sultanas.

"How beauteous is this garden!" says an Arabic inscription, "where the flowers of the earth vie with the stars of heaven! What can compare with the vase of yon alabaster fountain, filled with crystal water? Nothing but the moon in her fulness, shining in the midst of an unclouded sky!"

Centuries had elapsed, yet how much of this scene of apparently fragile beauty remained. The garden of Lindaraxa was still adorned with flowers; the fountain still presented its crystal mirror; it is true, the alabaster had lost its whiteness, and the basin beneath, overrun with weeds, had become the nestling-place of the lizard; but there was something in the very decay that enhanced the interest of the scene, speaking as it did of that mutability which is the irrevocable lot of man and all his works. The desolation, too, of these chambers, once the abode of the proud and elegant Elizabetta, had a more touching charm for me than if I had beheld them in their pristine splendour, glittering with the pageantry of a court. I determined at once to take up my quarters in this apartment.

My determination excited great surprise in the family, who could not imagine any rational inducement for the choice of so solitary, remote, and forlorn apartment. The good Tia Antonia considered it highly dangerous; the neighbourhood, she said, was infested by vagrants; the caverns of the adjacent hills swarmed with gipsies; the
palace was ruinous, and easy to be entered in many parts; and the rumour of a stranger quartered alone in one of the ruined apartments, out of the hearing of the rest of the inhabitants, might tempt unwelcome visiters in the night, especially as foreigners are always supposed to be well stocked with money. Dolores represented the frightful loneliness of the place, nothing but bats and owls flitting about; then there were a fox and a wild cat, that kept about the vaults and roamed about at night.

I was not to be diverted from my humour; so calling in the assistance of a carpenter, and the ever officious Mateo Ximenes, the doors and windows were soon placed in a state of tolerable security. With all these precautions, I must confess the first night I passed in these quarters was inexpressibly dreary. I was escorted by the whole family to my chamber; and their taking leave of me, and returning along the waste antechambers and echoing galleries, reminded me of those hobgoblin stories, where the hero is left to accomplish the adventure of an enchanted house.

Even the thoughts of the fair Elizabetta, and the beauties of her court, who had once graced these chambers, now, by a perversion of fancy, added to the gloom. Here was the scene of their transient gaiety and loveliness; here were the very traces of their elegance and enjoyment. But what and where were they? Dust and ashes! tenants of the tomb! phantoms of the memory!

A vague and indescribable awe was creeping over me. I would fain have ascribed it to the thoughts of robbers awakened by the evening's conversation, but I felt that it was something more unreal and absurd. In a word, the long-buried impressions of the nursery were reviving, and asserting their power over my imaginations. Every thing began to be affected by the working of my mind. The whispering of the wind among the citron trees beneath my window had something sinister. I cast my eyes into the garden of Lindaraxa; the groves presented a gulf of shadows; the thickets, indistinct and ghastly shapes. I was glad to close the window, but my chamber itself became infected. A bat had found its way in, and flitted
about my head and athwart my solitary lamp; the grotesque faces carved in the cedar ceiling seemed to mope and mow at me.

Rousing myself, and half smiling at this temporary weakness, I resolved to brave it; and, taking lamp in hand, sallied forth to make a tour of the ancient palace. Notwithstanding every mental exertion, the task was a severe one. The rays of my lamp extended to but a limited distance around me; I walked as it were in a mere halo of light, and all beyond was thick darkness. The vaulted corridors were as caverns; the vaults of the halls were lost in gloom; what unseen foe might not be lurking before or behind me! My own shadow playing about the walls and the echoes of my own footsteps disturbed me.

In this excited state, as I was traversing the great Hall of Ambassadors, there were added real sounds to these conjectural fancies. Low moans and indistinct ejaculations seemed to rise as it were beneath my feet; I paused and listened. They then appeared to resound from without the tower. Sometimes they resembled the howlings of an animal; at others they were stifled shrieks, mingled with articulate ravings. The thrilling effect of these sounds in that still hour and singular place, destroyed all inclination to continue my lonely perambulation. I returned to my chamber with more alacrity than I had sallied forth, and drew my breath more freely when once more within its walls and the door bolted behind me. When I awoke in the morning with the sun shining in at my window, and lighting up every part of the building with his cheerful and truth-telling beams, I could scarcely recall the shadows and fancies conjured up by the gloom of the preceding night, or believe that the scenes around me, so naked and apparent, could have been clothed with such imaginary horrors.

Still, the dismal howlings and ejaculations I had heard were not ideal; but they were soon accounted for by my handmaid Dolores; being the ravings of a poor maniac, a brother of her aunt, who was subject to violent paroxysms, during which he was confined in a vaulted room beneath the Hall of Ambassadors.
THE ALHAMBRA BY MOONLIGHT.

I have given a picture of my apartment on my first taking possession of it; a few evenings have produced a thorough change in the scene and in my feelings. The moon, which then was invisible, has gradually gained upon the night, and now rolls in full splendour above the towers, pouring a flood of tempered light into every court and hall. The garden beneath my window is gently lighted up; the orange and citron trees are tipped with silver; the fountain sparkles in the moonbeams, and even the blush of the rose is faintly visible.

I have sat for hours at my window, inhaling the sweetness of the garden, and musing on the chequered fortunes of those whose history is dimly shadowed out in the elegant memorials around. Sometimes I have issued forth at midnight, when every thing was quiet, and have wandered over the whole building. Who can do justice to a moonlight night in such a climate and in such a place? The temperature of an Andalusian midnight in summer is perfectly ethereal. We seem lifted up into a purer atmosphere; there is a serenity of soul, a buoyancy of spirits, an elasticity of frame, that renders mere existence enjoyment. The effect of moonlight, too, on the Alhambra, has something like enchantment. Every rent and chasm of time, every mouldering tint and weather-stain disappears; the marble resumes its original whiteness; the long colonnades brighten in the moonbeams; the halls are illuminated with a softened radiance, until the whole edifice reminds one of the enchanted palace of an Arabian tale.

At such a time I have ascended to the little pavilion called the Queen's To let, to enjoy its varied and extensive prospect. To the right, the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada would gleam like silver clouds against the darker firmament, and all the outlines of the mountain would be softened, yet delicately defined. My delight, however,
would be to lean over the parapet of the tocador, and gaze down upon Granada, spread out like a map below me; all buried in deep repose, and its white palaces and convents sleeping, as it were, in the moonshine.

Sometimes I would hear the faint sounds of castañets from some party of dancers lingering in the Alameda; at other times I have heard the dubious tones of a guitar, and the notes of a single voice rising from some solitary street, and have pictured to myself some youthful cavalier serenading his lady's window; a gallant custom of former days, but now sadly on the decline, except in the remote towns and villages of Spain. Such are the scenes that have detained me for many an hour loitering about the courts and balconies of the castle, enjoying that mixture of reverie and sensation which steal away existence in a southern climate, and it has been almost morning before I have retired to my bed, and been lulled to sleep by the falling waters of the fountain of Lindaraxa.

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INHABITANTS OF THE ALHAMBRA.

I have often observed that the more proudly a mansion has been tenanted in the day of its prosperity, the humbler are its inhabitants in the day of its decline, and that the palace of the king commonly ends in being the nestling-place of the beggar.

The Alhambra is in a rapid state of similar transition. Whenever a tower falls to decay, it is seized upon by some tatterdemalion family, who become joint tenants, with the bats and owls, of its gilded halls; and hang their rags, those standards of poverty, out of its windows and loopholes.

I have amused myself with remarking some of the motley characters that have thus usurped the ancient abode of Royalty, and who seem as if placed here to give a farcical termination to the drama of human pride. One of these even bears the mockery of a regal title. It is a little old
woman named Maria Antonia Sabonea, but who goes by the appellation of la Reyna Cuquina, or the Cockle-queen. She is small enough to be a fairy, and a fairy she may be for aught I can find out, for no one seems to know her origin. Her habitation is in a kind of closet under the outer staircase of the palace, and she sits in the cool stone corridor, plying her needle and singing from morning till night, with a ready joke for every one that passes; for though one of the poorest, she is one of the merriest little women breathing. Her great merit is a gift for storytelling, having, I verily believe, as many stories at her command, as the inexhaustible Scheherezade of the thousand and one nights. Some of these I have heard her relate in the evening tertulias of Dame Antonia, at which she is occasionally a humble attendant.

That there must be some fairy gift about this mysterious little old woman, would appear from her extraordinary luck, since, notwithstanding her being very little, very ugly, and very poor, she has had, according to her own account, five husbands and a half, reckoning as a half one, a young dragoon who died during courtship. A rival personage to this little fairy queen, is a portly old fellow with a bottle nose, who goes about in a rusty garb with a cocked hat of oil-skin and a red cockade. He is one of the legitimate sons of the Alhambra, and has lived here all his life, filling various offices, such as deputy alguazil, sexton of the parochial church, and marker of a fives' court established at the foot of one of the towers. He is as poor as a rat, but as proud as he is ragged, boasting of his descent from the illustrious house of Aguilar, from which sprang Gonsalvo of Cordova, the grand captain. Nay, he actually bears the name of Alonzo de Aguilar, so renowned in the history of the conquest; though the graceless wags of the fortress have given him the title of el Padre Santo, or the Holy Father, the usual appellation of the Pope, which I had thought too sacred in the eyes of true Catholics to be thus ludicrously applied. It is a whimsical caprice of fortune to present, in the grotesque person of this tatterdemalion, a namesake and descendant of the proud Alonzo de Aguilar, the mirror of Andalusian chivalry, leading an almost mendicant existence.
about this once haughty fortress, which his ancestor aided to reduce; yet such might have been the lot of the descendants of Agamemnon and Achilles, had they lingered about the ruins of Troy!

Of this motley community, I find the family of my gossipping 'squire, Mateo Ximenes, to form, from their numbers at least, a very important part. His boast of being a son of the Alhambra is not unfounded. His family has inhabited the fortress ever since the time of the Conquest, handing down a hereditary poverty from father to son; not one of them having ever been known to be worth a maravedi. His father, by trade a riband-weaver, and who succeeded the historical tailor as the head of the family, is now near seventy years of age, and lives in a hovel of reeds and plaster, built by his own hands just above the iron gate. The furniture consists of a crazy bed, a table, and two or three chairs; a wooden chest, containing his clothes and the archives of his family; that is to say, a few papers concerning old lawsuits, which he cannot read: but the pride of his hovel is a blazon of the arms of the family, brilliantly coloured, and suspended in a frame against the wall; clearly demonstrating by its quarterings the various noble houses with which this poverty-stricken brood claim affinity.

As to Mateo himself, he has done his utmost to perpetuate his line, having a wife and a numerous progeny, who inhabit an almost dismantled hovel in the hamlet. How they manage to subsist, he only who sees into all mysteries can tell; the subsistence of a Spanish family of the kind is always a riddle to me; yet they do subsist, and, what is more, appear to enjoy their existence. The wife takes her holiday stroll in the Paseo of Granada, with a child in her arms and half a dozen at her heels; and the eldest daughter, now verging into womanhood, dresses her hair with flowers, and dances gaily to the castañets.

There are two classes of people to whom life seems one long holiday—the very rich, and the very poor; one because they need do nothing, the other because they have nothing to do; but there are none who understand the art of doing nothing and living upon nothing, better than the poor
classes of Spain. Climate does one half, and temperament the rest. Give a Spaniard the shade in summer, and the sun in winter; a little bread, garlick, oil, and garbances, an old brown cloak and a guitar, and let the world roll on as it pleases. Talk of poverty! with him it has no disgrace. It sits upon him with a grandiose style, like his ragged cloak. He is a hidalgo, even when in rags.

The “sons of the Alhambra” are an eminent illustration of this practical philosophy. As the Moors imagined that the celestial paradise hung over this favoured spot, so I am inclined at times to fancy, that a gleam of the golden age still lingers about the ragged community. They possess nothing, they do nothing, they care for nothing. Yet, though apparently idle all the week, they are as observant of all holy days and saints’ days as the most laborious artisan. They attend all fetes and dancings in Granada and its vicinity, light bonfires on the hills on St. John’s eve, and have lately danced away the moonlight nights on the harvest home of a small field within the precincts of the fortress, which yielded a few bushels of wheat.

Before concluding these remarks, I must mention one of the amusements of the place which has particularly struck me. I had repeatedly observed a long lean fellow perched on the top of one of the towers, manoeuvring two or three fishing-rods, as though he were angling for the stars. I was for some time perplexed by the evolutions of this aërial fisherman, and my perplexity increased on observing others employed in like manner on different parts of the battlements and bastions; it was not until I consulted Mateo Ximenes, that I solved the mystery.

It seems that the pure and airy situation of this fortress has rendered it, like the castle of Macbeth, a prolific breeding-place for swallows and martlets, who sport about its towers in myriads, with the holyday glee of urchins just let loose from school. To entrap these birds in their giddy circlings, with hooks baited with flies, is one of the favourite amusements of the ragged “sons of the Alhambra,” who, with the good-for-nothing ingenuity of arrant idlers, have thus invented the art of angling in the sky!
THE COURT OF LIONS.

The peculiar charm of this old dreamy palace, is its power of calling up vague reveries and picturings of the past, and thus clothing naked realities with the illusions of the memory and the imagination. As I delight to walk in these "vain shadows," I am prone to seek those parts of the Alhambra which are most favourable to this phantasmagoria of the mind; and none are more so than the Court of Lions, and its surrounding halls. Here the hand of time has fallen the lightest, and the traces of Moorish elegance and splendour exist in almost their original brilliancy. Earthquakes have shaken the foundations of this pile, and rent its rudest towers; yet see! not one of those slender columns has been displaced, not an arch of that light and fragile colonnade has given way, and all the fairy fretwork of these domes, apparently as unsubstantial as the crystal fabrics of a morning's frost, yet exist after the lapse of centuries, almost as fresh as if from the hand of the Moslem artist. I write in the midst of these mementos of the past, in the fresh hour of early morning, in the fated Hall of the Abencerrages. The blood-stained fountain, the legendary monument of their massacre, is before me; the lofty jet almost casts its dew upon my paper. How difficult to reconcile the ancient tale of violence and blood with the gentle and peaceful scene around! Every thing here appears calculated to inspire kind and happy feelings, for every thing is delicate and beautiful. The very light falls tenderly from above, through the lantern of a dome tinted and wrought as if by fairy hands. Through the ample and fretted arch of the portal I behold the Court of Lions, with brilliant sunshine gleaming along its colonnades, and sparkling in its fountains. The lively swallow dives into the Court, and then, surging upwards, darts away twittering over the roofs; the busy bee toils humming among the flower-beds, and painted butterflies
hover from plant to plant, and flutter up and sport with each other in the sunny air. It needs but a slight exertion of the fancy to picture some pensive beauty of the harem, loitering in these secluded haunts of Oriental luxury.

He, however, who would behold this scene under an aspect more in unison with its fortunes, let him come when the shadows of evening temper the brightness of the Court, and throw a gloom into the surrounding halls. Then nothing can be more serenely melancholy, or more in harmony with the tale of departed grandeur.

At such times I am apt to seek the Hall of Justice, whose deep shadowy arcades extend across the upper end of the Court. Here was performed, in presence of Ferdinand and Isabella, and their triumphant Court, the pompous ceremonial of high mass, on taking possession of the Alhambra. The very cross is still to be seen upon the wall, where the altar was erected, and where officiated the Grand Cardinal of Spain, and others of the highest religious dignitaries of the land. I picture to myself the scene when this place was filled with the conquering host, that mixture of mitred prelate and shaven monk, and steel-clad knight and silken courtier; when crosses and crosiers, and religious standards, were mingled with proud armorial ensigns and the banners of the haughty chiefs of Spain, and flaunted in triumph through these Moslem halls. I picture to myself Columbus, the future discoverer of a world, taking his modest stand in a remote corner, the humble and neglected spectator of the pageant. I see in imagination the Catholic sovereigns prostrating themselves before the altar, and pouring forth thanks for their victory; while the vaults resounded with sacred minstrelsy, and the deep-toned Te Deum.

The transient illusion is over — the pageant melts from the fancy — monarch, priest, and warrior, return into oblivion, with the poor Moslems over whom they exulted. The hall of their triumph is waste and desolate. The bat flits about its twilight vault, and the owl hoots from the neighbouring tower of Comares.

On entering the Court of the Lions, a few evenings since, I was startled at beholding a turbaned Moor quietly
seated near the fountain. It seemed, for a moment, as if one of the superstitions of the place were realised, and some ancient inhabitant of the Alhambra had broken the spell of centuries, and become visible. He proved, however, to be a mere ordinary mortal; a native of Tetuan in Barbary, who had a shop in the Zacatin of Granada, where he sold rhubarb, trinkets, and perfumes. As he spoke Spanish fluently, I was enabled to hold conversation with him, and found him shrewd and intelligent. He told me that he came up the hill occasionally in the summer, to pass a part of the day in the Alhambra, which reminded him of the old palaces in Barbary, being built and adorned in similar style, though with more magnificence.

As we walked about the palace, he pointed out several of the Arabic inscriptions, as possessing much poetic beauty.

Ah, señor, said he, when the Moors held Granada, they were a gayer people than they are nowadays. They thought only of love, of music, and poetry. They made stanzas upon every occasion, and set them all to music. He who could make the best verses, and she who had the most tuneful voice, might be sure of favour and preferment. In those days, if any one asked for bread, the reply was, make me a couplet; and the poorest beggar, if he begged in rhyme, would often be rewarded with a piece of gold.

"And is the popular feeling for poetry," said I, "entirely lost among you?"

"By no means, señor, the people of Barbary, even those of the lower classes, still make couplets, and good ones too, as in the olden time; but talent is not rewarded as it was then; the rich prefer the jingle of their gold to the sound of poetry or music."

As he was talking, his eye caught one of the inscriptions that foretold perpetuity to the power and glory of the Moslem monarchs, the masters of this pile. He shook his head, and shrugged his shoulders, as he interpreted it. "Such might have been the case," said he; "the Moslems might still have been reigning in the Alhambra, had not Boabdil been a traitor, and given up his capital to the
Christians. The Spanish monarchs would never have been able to conquer it by open force."

I endeavoured to vindicate the memory of the unlucky Boabdil from this aspersion, and to show that the dissensions which led to the downfall of the Moorish throne originated in the cruelty of his tiger-hearted father; but the Moor would admit of no palliation.

"Muley Hassan," said he, "might have been cruel; but he was brave, vigilant, and patriotic. Had he been properly seconded, Granada would still have been ours; but his son Boabdil thwarted his plans, crippled his power, sowed treason in his palace, and dissension in his camp. May the curse of God light upon him for his treachery!"

With these words the Moor left the Alhambra.

The indignation of my turbaned companion agrees with an anecdote related by a friend, who, in the course of a tour in Barbary, had an interview with the Pacha of Tetuan. The Moorish governor was particular in his inquiries about the soil, and especially concerning the favoured regions of Andalusia, the delights of Granada, and the remains of its royal palace. The replies awakened all those fond recollections, so deeply cherished by the Moors, of the power and splendour of their ancient empire in Spain. Turning to his Moslem attendants, the Pacha stroked his beard, and broke forth in passionate lamentations, that such a sceptre should have fallen from the sway of true believers. He consoled himself, however, with the persuasion, that the power and prosperity of the Spanish nation were on the decline; that a time would come when the Moors would conquer their rightful domains; and that the day was, perhaps, not far distant, when Mahommedan worship would again be offered up in the Mosque of Cordova, and a Mahommedan prince sit on his throne in the Alhambra.

Such is the general aspiration and belief among the Moors of Barbary; who consider Spain, and especially Andalusia, their rightful heritage, of which they have been despoiled by treachery and violence. These ideas are fostered and perpetuated by the descendants of the exiled Moors of Granada, scattered among the cities of Barbary. Several of these reside in Tetuan, preserving their ancient
names, such as Paez and Medina, and refraining from intermarriage with any families who cannot claim the same high origin. Their vaunted lineage is regarded with a degree of popular deference, rarely shown in Mahommedan communities to any hereditary distinction, except in the royal line.

These families, it is said, continue to sigh after the terrestrial paradise of their ancestors, and to put up prayers in their mosques on Fridays, imploring Allah to hasten the time when Granada shall be restored to the faithful: an event to which they look forward as fondly and confidently as did the Christian crusaders to the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. Nay, it is added, that some of them retain the ancient maps and deeds of the estates and gardens of their ancestors at Granada, and even the keys of the houses; holding them as evidences of their hereditary claims, to be produced at the anticipated day of restoration.

The Court of the Lions has also its share of supernatural legends. I have already mentioned the belief in the murmuring of voices and clanking of chains, made at night by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages. Mateo Ximenes, a few evenings since, at one of the gatherings in Dame Antonia’s apartment, related a fact which happened within the knowledge of his grandfather, the legendary tailor.

There was an invalid soldier, who had charge of the Alhambra to show it to strangers. As he was one evening, about twilight, passing through the Court of Lions, he heard footsteps in the hall of the Abencerrages. Supposing some visitors to be lingering there, he advanced to attend upon them, when to his astonishment he beheld four Moors richly dressed, with gilded cuirasses and scimitars, and poniards glittering with precious stones. They were walking to and fro, with solemn pace; but paused and beckoned to him. The old soldier, however, took to flight, and could never afterwards be prevailed upon to enter the Alhambra. Thus it is that men sometimes turn their backs upon fortune; for it is the firm opinion of Mateo, that the Moors intended to reveal the place where their treasures lay buried. A successor to the invalid soldier was more knowing: he came to the Alhambra poor; but at the end of a year went
off to Malaga, bought houses, set up a carriage, and still lives there one of the richest as well as oldest men of the place; all which, Mateo sagely surmises, was in consequence of his finding out the golden secret of these phantom Moors.

BOABDIL EL CHICO.

My conversation with the Moor in the Court of Lions set me to musing on the singular fate of Boabdil. Never was surname more applicable than that bestowed upon him by his subjects, of "el Zogoybi," or "the unlucky." His misfortunes began almost in his cradle. In his tender youth, he was imprisoned and menaced with death by an inhuman father, and only escaped through a mother's stratagem; in after-years, his life was embittered and repeatedly endangered, by the hostilities of a usurping uncle; his reign was distracted by external invasions and internal feuds: he was alternately the foe, the prisoner, the friend, and always the dupe, of Ferdinand, until conquered and de- throned by the mingled craft and force of that perfidious monarch. An exile from his native land, he took refuge with one of the princes of Africa, and fell obscurely in battle, fighting in the cause of a stranger. His misfortunes ceased not with his death. If Boabdil cherished a desire to leave an honourable name on the historic page, how cruelly has he been defrauded of his hopes! Who is there that has turned the least attention to the romantic history of the Moorish domination in Spain, without kindling with indignation at the alleged atrocities of Boabdil? Who has not been touched with the woes of his lovely and gentle queen, subjected by him to a trial of life and death, on a false charge of infidelity? Who has not been shocked by his alleged murder of his sister and her two children, in a transport of passion? Who has not felt his blood boil at the inhuman massacre of the gallant Abencerrages, thirty-six of whom, it is affirmed, he ordered to be beheaded in the Court of
Lions? All these charges have been reiterated in various forms; they have passed into ballads, dramas, and romances, until they have taken too thorough possession of the public mind to be eradicated. There is not a foreigner of education that visits the Alhambra, but asks for the fountain where the Abencerrages were beheaded; and gazes with horror at the grated gallery where the Queen is said to have been confined; not a peasant of the Vega or the Sierra, but sings the story in rude couplets, to the accompaniment of his guitar, while his hearers learn to execrate the very name of Boabdil.

Never, however, was name more foully and unjustly slandered. I have examined all the authentic chronicles and letters written by Spanish authors, contemporary with Boabdil; some of whom were in the confidence of the catholic sovereigns, and actually present in the camp throughout the war. I have examined all the Arabian authorities I could get access to, through the medium of translation, and can find nothing to justify these dark and hateful accusations. The whole of these tales may be traced to a work commonly called "The Civil Wars of Granada," containing a pretended history of the feuds of the Zegries and Abencerrages, during the last struggle of the Moorish empire. This work appeared originally in Spanish, and professed to be translated from the Arabic by one Gines Perez de Hita, an inhabitant of Murcia. It has since passed into various languages, and Florian has taken from it much of the fable of his Gonsalvo of Cordova; it has thus, in a great measure, usurped the authority of real history, and is currently believed by the people, and especially the peasantry, of Granada. The whole of it, however, is a mass of fiction, mingled with a few disfigured truths, which give it an air of veracity. It bears internal evidence of its falsity; the manners and customs of the Moors being extravagantly misrepresented in it, and scenes depicted, totally incompatible with their habits and their faith, and which never could have been recorded by a Mahometan writer.

I confess there seems to me something almost criminal in the wilful perversions of this work: great latitude is undoubtedly to be allowed to romantic fiction; but there are
limits which it must not pass, and the names of the distinguished dead, which belong to history, are no more to be calumniated than those of the illustrious living. One would have thought, too, that the unfortunate Boabdil had suffered enough for his justifiable hostility to the Spaniards, by being stripped of his kingdom, without having his name thus wantonly traduced, and rendered a by-word and a theme of infamy in his native land, and in the very mansion of his fathers!

It is not intended hereby to affirm that the transactions imputed to Boabdil are totally without historic foundation; but, as far as they can be traced, they appear to have been the acts of his father, Aben Hassan, who is represented, by both Christian and Arabian chroniclers, as being of a cruel and ferocious nature. It was he who put to death the cavaliers of the illustrious line of the Abencerrages, upon suspicion of their being engaged in a conspiracy to dispossess him of his throne.

The story of the accusation of the Queen of Boabdil, and of her confinement in one of the towers, may also be traced to an incident in the life of his tiger-hearted father. Aben Hassan, in his advanced age, married a beautiful Christian captive of noble descent, who took the Moorish appellation of Zorayda, by whom he had two sons. She was of an ambitious spirit, and anxious that her children should succeed to the crown. For this purpose she worked upon the suspicious temper of the king; inflaming him with jealousies of his children by his other wives and concubines, whom she accused of plotting against his throne and life. Some of them were slain by the ferocious father. Ayxa la Horra, the virtuous mother of Boabdil, who had once been the cherished favourite of the tyrant, became likewise the object of his suspicion. He confined her and her son in the tower of Comares, and would have sacrificed Boabdil to his fury, but that his mother lowered him from the tower, in the night, by means of the scarfs of herself and her attendants, and thus enabled him to escape to Guadix.

Such is the only shadow of a foundation that I can find for the story of the accused and captive queen; and in
this it appears that Boabdil was the persecuted, instead of
the persecutor.

Throughout the whole of his brief, turbulent, and dis-
astrous reign, Boabdil gives evidence of a mild and amiable
character. He, in the first instance, won the hearts of the
people by his affable and gracious manners; he was always
placable, and never inflicted any severity of punishment
upon those who occasionally rebelled against him. He
was personally brave, but he wanted moral courage; and,
in times of difficulty and perplexity, was wavering and
irresolute. This feebleness of spirit hastened his downfal,
while it deprived him of that heroic grace which would
have given a grandeur and dignity to his fate, and rendered
him worthy of closing the splendid drama of the Moslem
domination in Spain.

MEMENTOS OF BOABDIL.

While my mind was still warm with the subject of the
unfortunate Boabdil, I set forth to trace the mementos con-
ected with his story, which yet exist in this scene of his
sovereignty and his misfortunes. In the picture-gallery
of the palace of the Generalife hangs his portrait. The
face is mild, handsome, and somewhat melancholy, with a
fair complexion and yellow hair; if it be a true represent-
ation of the man, he may have been wavering and uncer-
tain, but there is nothing of cruelty or unkindness in his
aspect.

I next visited the dungeon where he was confined in his
youthful days, when his cruel father meditated his destruc-
tion. It is a vaulted room in the tower of Comares, under
the Hall of Ambassadors: a similar room, separated by a
narrow passage, was the prison of his mother, the virtuous
Ayxa la Horra. The walls are of prodigious thickness,
and the small windows secured by iron bars. A narrow
stone gallery, with a low parapet, extends round three sides
of the tower, just below the windows, but at a considerable height from the ground. From this gallery, it is presumed the queen lowered her son with the scarfs of herself and her female attendants, during the darkness of night, to the hill-side, at the foot of which waited a domestic with a fleet steed to bear the prince to the mountains.

As I paced this gallery, my imagination pictured the anxious queen leaning over the parapet, and listening, with the throbblings of a mother's heart, to the last echoes of the horse's hoofs, as her son scoured along the narrow valley of the Darro.

My next search was for the gate by which Boabdil departed from the Alhambra when about to surrender his capital. With the melancholy caprice of a broken spirit, he requested of the catholic monarchs, that no one afterwards might be permitted to pass through this gate. His prayer, according to ancient chronicles, was complied with, through the sympathy of Isabella, and the gate walled up. For some time I inquired in vain for such a portal; at length, my humble attendant, Mateo, learned among the old residents of the fortress, that a ruinous gateway still existed, by which, according to tradition, the Moorish king had left the fortress, but which had never been open within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

He conducted me to the spot. The gateway is in the centre of what was once an immense tower, called la Torre do los Siete Suelos, or, the Tower of Seven Floors. It is a place famous, in the superstitious stories of the neighbourhood, for being the scene of strange apparitions and Moorish enchantments.

This once redoubtable tower is now a mere wreck, having been blown up with gunpowder by the French, when they abandoned the fortress. Great masses of the wall lie scattered about, buried in the luxuriant herbage, or overshadowed by vines and fig-trees. The arch of the gateway, though rent by the shock, still remains; but the last wish of poor Boabdil has again, though unintentionally, been fulfilled, for the portal has been closed up by loose stones gathered from the ruins, and remains impassable.

Following up the route of the Moslem monarch, as it
remains on record, I crossed on horseback the hill of Los Martyros, keeping along the garden of the convent of the same name, and thence down a rugged ravine, beset by thickets of aloes and Indian figs, and lined by caves and hovels swarming with gypsies. It was the road taken by Boabdil, to avoid passing through the city. The descent was so steep and broken, that I was obliged to dismount and lead my horse.

Emerging from the ravine, and passing by the Puerta de los Molinos (the gate of the mills), I issued forth upon the public promenade called the Prado, and, pursuing the course of the Xenil, arrived at a small Moorish mosque, now converted into the chapel or hermitage of San Sebastian. A tablet on the wall relates that on this spot Boabdil surrendered the keys of Granada to the Castilian sovereigns. From thence I rode slowly across the Vega to a village where the family and household of the unhappy king awaited him; for he had sent them forward on the preceding night from the Alhambra, that his mother and wife might not participate in his personal humiliation, or be exposed to the gaze of the conquerors. Following on in the route of the melancholy band of royal exiles, I arrived at the foot of a chain of barren and dreary heights, forming the skirt of the Alpuxarra mountains. From the summit of one of these the unfortunate Boabdil took his last look at Granada: it bears a name expressive of his sorrows, La Cuesta de las Lagrimas (the hill of tears). Beyond it, a sandy road winds across a rugged cheerless waste, doubly dismal to the unhappy monarch, as it led to exile.

I spurred my horse to the summit of a rock, where Boabdil uttered his last sorrowful exclamation, as he turned his eyes from taking their farewell gaze: it is still denominated el ultimo suspiro del Moro (the last sigh of the Moor). Who can wonder at his anguish at being expelled from such a kingdom and such an abode? With the Alhambra he seemed to be yielding up all the honours of his line, and all the glories and delights of life.

It was here, too, that his affliction was embittered by the reproach of his mother Ayxa, who had so often assisted him in times of peril, and had vainly sought to instil into
him her own resolute spirit. "You do well," said she, "to weep as a woman over what you could not defend as a man,"—a speech that savours more of the pride of the princess than the tenderness of the mother.

When this anecdote was related to Charles V. by Bishop Guevara, the emperor joined in the expression of scorn at the weakness of the wavering Boabdil. "Had I been he, or he been I," said the haughty potentate, "I would rather have made this Alhambra my sepulchre than have lived without a kingdom in the Alpuxarra."

How easy it is for those in power and prosperity to preach heroism to the vanquished! how little can they understand that life itself may rise in value with the unfortunate, when nought but life remains!

THE BALCONY.

In the Hall of Ambassadors, at the central window there is a balcony, of which I have already made mention: it projects like a cage from the face of the tower, high in mid-air above the tops of the trees that grow on the steep hillside. It serves me as a kind of observatory, where I often take my seat to consider not merely the heaven above, but the earth beneath. Besides the magnificent prospect which it commands of mountain, valley, and vega, there is a busy little scene of human life laid open to inspection immediately below. At the foot of the hill is an alameda, or public walk, which, though not so fashionable as the more modern and splendid paseo of the Xenil, still boasts a varied and picturesque concourse. Hither resort the small gentry of the suburbs, together with priests and friars, who walk for appetite and digestion, majos and majas, the beaux and belles of the lower classes, in their Andalusian dresses, swaggering contrabandistas, and sometimes half-muffled and mysterious loungers of the higher ranks, on some secret assignation.
It is a moving picture of Spanish life and character, which I delight to study; and, as the naturalist has his microscope to aid him in his investigations, so I have a small pocket telescope which brings the countenances of the motley groups so close as almost, at times, to make me think I can divine their conversation by the play and expression of their features. I am thus, in a manner, an invisible observer, and, without quitting my solitude, can throw myself in an instant into the midst of society,—a rare advantage to one of somewhat shy and quiet habits, and who, like myself, is fond of observing the drama of life without becoming an actor in the scene.

There is a considerable suburb lying below the Alhambra, filling the narrow gorge of the valley, and extending up the opposite hill of the Albaycin. Many of the houses are built in the Moorish style, round patios, or courts, cooled by fountains, and open to the sky; and as the inhabitants pass much of their time in these courts, and on the terraced roofs, during the summer season, it follows that many a glance at their domestic life may be obtained by an aerial spectator like myself, who can look down on them from the clouds.

I enjoy, in some degree, the advantages of the student in the famous old Spanish story, who beheld all Madrid unroofed for his inspection; and my gossiping Squire Mateo Ximenes officiates occasionally as my Asmodeus, to give me anecdotes of the different mansions and their inhabitants.

I prefer, however, to form conjectural histories for myself, and thus can sit for hours weaving from casual incidents and indications that pass under my eye, the whole tissue of schemes, intrigues, and occupations of the busy mortals below. There is scarce a pretty face, or a striking figure, that I daily see, about which I have not thus gradually framed a dramatic story, though some of my characters will occasionally act in direct opposition to the part assigned them, and disconcert my whole drama. A few days since, as I was reconnoitring with my glass the streets of the Albaycin, I beheld the procession of a novice about to take the veil; and remarked several circumstances
that excited the strongest sympathy in the fate of the youthful being thus about to be consigned to a living tomb. I ascertained to my satisfaction that she was beautiful; and, by the paleness of her cheek, that she was a victim, rather than a votary. She was arrayed in bridal garments, and decked with a chaplet of white flowers, but her heart evidently revolted at this mockery of a spiritual union, and yearned after its earthly loves. A tall stern-looking man walked near her in the procession; it was of course the tyrannical father, who, from some bigoted or sordid motive, had compelled this sacrifice. Amidst the crowd was a dark handsome youth, in Andalusian garb, who seemed to fix on her an eye of agony. It was, doubtless, the secret lover from whom she was for ever to be separated. My indignation rose as I noted the malignant expression painted on the countenances of the attendant monks and friars. The procession arrived at the chapel of the convent; the sun gleamed for the last time upon the chaplet of the poor novice, as she crossed the fatal threshold, and disappeared within the building. The throng poured in with cowl, and cross, and minstrelsy; the lover paused for a moment at the door. I could divine the tumult of his feelings; but he mastered them, and entered. There was a long interval — I pictured to myself the scene passing within; the poor novice despoiled of her transient finery, and clothed in the conventual garb, the bridal chaplet taken from her brow; and her beautiful head shorn of its long silken tresses: I heard her murmur the irrevocable vow. I saw her extended on her bier; the death-pall was spread over her, and the funeral service that proclaimed her dead to the world performed; her sighs were drowned in the deep tones of the organ, and the plaintive requiem of the nuns; the father looked on, unmoved, without a tear. The lover — no — my imagination refused to portray the anguish of the lover — there the picture remained a blank.

After a time the throng again poured forth, and dispersed various ways, to enjoy the light of the sun, and mingle with the stirring scenes of life; but the victim, with her bridal chaplet, was no longer there. The door
of the convent closed that severed her from the world for ever.

I saw the father and the lover issue forth; they were in earnest conversation. The latter was vehement in his gesticulations; I expected some violent termination to my drama; but an angle of a building interfered and closed the scene. My eye has since frequently been turned to that convent with painful interest. I remarked late at night a solitary light twinkling from a remote lattice of one of its towers. "There," said I, "the unhappy nun sits weeping in her cell, while, perhaps, her lover paces the street below in unavailing anguish."

The officious Mateo interrupted my meditations, and destroyed in an instant the cobweb tissue of my fancy. With his usual zeal he had gathered facts concerning the scene, that put my fictions all to flight. The heroine of my romance was neither young nor handsome; she had no lover; she had entered the convent of her own free will, as a respectable asylum, and was one of the most cheerful residents within its walls.

It was some little while before I could forgive the wrong done me by the nun in being thus happy in her cell, in contradiction to all the rules of romance: I diverted my spleen, however, by watching, for a day or two, the pretty coquetries of a dark-eyed brunette, who, from the covert of a balcony shrouded with flowering shrubs and a silken awning, was carrying on a mysterious correspondence with a handsome, dark, well-whiskered cavalier, who was frequently in the street beneath her window. Sometimes I saw him at an early hour, stealing forth wrapped to the eyes in a mantle. Sometimes he loitered at a corner, in various disguises, apparently waiting for a private signal to slip into the house. Then there was the tinkling of a guitar at night, and a lantern shifted from place to place in the balcony. I imagined another intrigue like that of Almaviva, but was again disconcerted in all my suppositions, by being informed that the supposed lover was the husband of the lady, and a noted contrabandista; and that all his mysterious signs and movements had doubtless some smuggling scheme in view.
I occasionally amuse myself with noting from this balcony the gradual changes that come over the scenes below, according to the different stages of the day.

Scarce has the grey dawn streaked the sky, and the earliest cock crowed from the cottages of the hill-side, when the suburbs give sign of reviving animation; for the fresh hours of dawning are precious in the summer season in a sultry climate. All are anxious to get the start of the sun, in the business of the day. The muleteer drives forth his loaded train for the journey; the traveller slings his carbine behind his saddle, and mounts his steed at the gate of the hostel; the brown peasant urges his loitering beasts, laden with panniers of sunny fruit and fresh dewy vegetables; for already the thrifty housewives are hastening to the market.

The sun is up and sparkles along the valley, tipping the transparent foliage of the groves. The matin bells resound melodiously through the pure bright air, announcing the hour of devotion. The muleteer halts his burthened animals before the chapel, thrusts his staff through his belt behind, and enters with hat in hand, smoothing his coal-black hair, to hear a mass, and put up a prayer for a prosperous wayfaring across the sierra. And now steals forth on fairy foot the gentle señora, in trim basquina, with restless fan in hand, and dark eye flashing from beneath the gracefully folded mantilla: she seeks some well-frequented church to offer up her morning orisons; but the nicely adjusted dress, the dainty shoe, and cobweb stocking, the raven tresses, exquisitely braided, the fresh plucked rose, that gleams among them like a gem, show that earth divides with heaven the empire of her thoughts. Keep an eye upon her, careful mother, or virgin aunt, or vigilant duenna, whichever you be, that walk behind.

As the morning advances, the din of labour augments on every side; the streets are thronged with man, and steed, and beast of burthen, and there is a hum and murmur, like the surges of the ocean. As the sun ascends to his meridian the hum and bustle gradually decline; at the height of noon there is a pause. The panting city sinks into lassitude, and for several hours there is a general re-
pose. The windows are closed, the curtains drawn, the inhabitants retired into the coolest recesses of their mansions; the full-fed monk snores in his dormitory; the brawny porter lies stretched on the pavement beside his burthen; the peasant and the labourer sleep beneath the trees of the Alameda, lulled by the sultry chirping of the locust. The streets are deserted, except by the water-carrier, who refreshes the ear by proclaiming the merits of his sparkling beverage, "colder than the mountain snow."

As the sun declines, there is again a gradual reviving, and when the vesper bell rings out his sinking knell, all nature seems to rejoice that the tyrant of the day has fallen. Now begins the bustle of enjoyment, when the citizens pour forth to breathe the evening air, and revel away the brief twilight in the walks and gardens of the Darro and the Xenil.

As night closes, the capricious scene assumes new features. Light after light gradually twinkles forth: here a taper from a balconyed window; there a votive lamp before the image of a saint. Thus, by degrees, the city emerges from the pervading gloom, and sparkles with scattered lights, like the starry firmament. Now break forth from court and garden, and street and lane, the tinkling of innumerable guitars, and the clicking of castanets; blending, at this lofty height, in a faint but general concert. "Enjoy the moment," is the creed of the gay and amorous Andalusian; and at no time does he practise it more zealously than in the balmy nights of summer, wooing his mistress with the dance, the love ditty, and the passionate serenade.

I was one evening seated in the balcony, enjoying the light breeze that came rustling along the side of the hill, among the tree tops, when my humble historiographer Mateo, who was at my elbow, pointed out a spacious house, in an obscure street of the Albaycin, about which he related, as nearly as I can recollect, the following anecdote.
"There was once upon a time a poor mason, or bricklayer, in Granada, who kept all the saints' days and holydays, and Saint Monday into the bargain, and yet, with all his devotion, he grew poorer and poorer, and could scarcely earn bread for his numerous family. One night he was roused from his first sleep by a knocking at his door. He opened it, and beheld before him a tall, meagre, cadaverous-looking priest.

"Hark ye, honest friend!" said the stranger; 'I have observed that you are a good Christian, and one to be trusted; will you undertake a job this very night?'

"With all my heart, Señor Padre, on condition that I am paid accordingly.'

"That you shall be; but you must suffer yourself to be blindfolded.'

"To this the mason made no objection; so being hoodwinked, he was led by the priest through various rough lanes and winding passages, until they stopped before the portal of a house. The priest then applied a key, turned a creaking lock, and opened what sounded like a ponderous door. They entered, the door was closed and bolted, and the mason was conducted through an echoing corridor, and a spacious hall, to an interior part of the building. Here the bandage was removed from his eyes, and he found himself in a patio, or court, dimly lighted by a single lamp. In the centre was the dry basin of an old Moorish fountain, under which the priest requested him to form a small vault, bricks and mortar being at hand for the purpose. He accordingly worked all night, but without finishing the job. Just before day-break, the priest put a piece of gold into his hand, and having again blindfolded him, conducted him back to his dwelling.

"Are you willing,' said he, 'to return and complete your work?'

"Gladly, Señor Padre, provided I am so well paid.'
"'Well, then, to-morrow at midnight I will call again.'

'He did so, and the vault was completed.

'Now,' said the priest, 'you must help me to bring forth the bodies that are to be buried in this vault.'

'The poor mason's hair rose on his head at these words: he followed the priest, with trembling steps, into a retired chamber of the mansion, expecting to behold some ghastly spectacle of death, but was relieved on perceiving three or four portly jars standing in one corner. They were evidently full of money, and it was with great labour that he and the priest carried them forth and consigned them to their tomb. The vault was then closed, the pavement replaced, and all traces of the work obliterated. The mason was again hoodwinked, and led forth by a route different from that by which he had come. After they had wandered for a long time through a perplexed maze of lanes and alleys, they halted. The priest then put two pieces of gold into his hand: 'Wait here,' said he, 'until you hear the cathedral bell toll for matins. If you presume to uncover your eyes before that time, evil will befall you:' so saying, he departed. The mason waited faithfully, amusing himself by weighing the gold pieces in his hand, and clinking them against each other. The moment the cathedral bell rang its matin peal, he uncovered his eyes, and found himself on the banks of the Xenil, from whence he made the best of his way home, and revelled with his family for a whole fortnight on the profits of his two nights' work; after which he was as poor as ever.

He continued to work a little, and pray a good deal, and keep saints'-days and holydays, from year to year, while his family grew up as gaunt and ragged as a crew of gypsies. As he was seated one evening at the door of his hovel, he was accosted by a rich old curmudgeon, who was noted for owning many houses, and being a griping landlord. The man of money eyed him for a moment from beneath a pair of anxious shagged eyebrows.

'"'I am told, friend, that you are very poor.'

'"'There is no denying the fact, Señor — it speaks for itself.'
"'I presume then, that you will be glad of a job, and will work cheap.'

"'As cheap, my master, as any mason in Granada.'

"'That's what I want. I have an old house fallen into decay, that costs me more money than it is worth to keep it in repair, for nobody will live in it; so I must contrive to patch it up and keep it together at as small expense as possible.'

"The mason was accordingly conducted to a large deserted house, that seemed going to ruin. Passing through several empty halls and chambers, he entered an inner court, where his eye was caught by an old Moorish fountain. He paused for a moment, for a dreaming recollection of the place came over him.

"'Pray,' said he, 'who occupied this house formerly?'

"'A pest upon him!' cried the landlord, 'it was an old miserly priest, who cared for nobody but himself. He was said to be immensely rich, and, having no relations, it was thought he would leave all his treasures to the church. He died suddenly, and the priests and friars thronged to take possession of his wealth; but nothing could they find but a few ducats in a leathern purse. The worst luck has fallen on me, for, since his death, the old fellow continues to occupy my house without paying rent, and there's no taking the law of a dead man. The people pretend to hear the clinking of gold all night in the chamber where the old priest slept, as if he were counting over his money, and sometimes a groaning and moaning about the court. Whether true or false, these stories have brought a bad name on my house, and not a tenant will remain in it.'

"'Enough,' said the mason sturdily: 'let me live in your house rent-free until some better tenant present, and I will engage to put it in repair, and to quiet the troubled spirit that disturbs it. I am a good Christian and a poor man, and am not to be daunted by the devil himself, even though he should come in the shape of a big bag of money!'

"The offer of the honest mason was gladly accepted; he moved with his family into the house, and fulfilled all his engagements. By little and little he restored it to its former state; the clinking of gold was no more heard at
night in the chamber of the defunct priest, but began to be heard by day in the pocket of the living mason. In a word, he increased rapidly in wealth, to the admiration of all his neighbours, and became one of the richest men in Granada: he gave large sums to the church, by way, no doubt, of satisfying his conscience, and never revealed the secret of the vault until on his death-bed to his son and heir."

A RAMBLE AMONG THE HILLS.

I frequently amuse myself towards the close of the day, when the heat has subsided, with taking long rambles about the neighbouring hills and the deep umbrageous valleys, accompanied by my historiographic Squire Mateo, to whose passion for gossiping I on such occasions give the most unbounded licence; and there is scarce a rock, or ruin, or broken fountain, or lonely glen, about which he has not some marvellous story; or, above all, some golden legend; for never was poor devil so munificent in dispensing hidden treasures.

A few evenings since, we took a long stroll of the kind, in the course of which Mateo was more than usually communicative. It was towards sunset that we sallied forth from the Great Gate of Justice, and ascending an alley of trees, Mateo paused under a clump of fig and pomegranate trees, at the foot of a huge ruined tower, called the Tower of the Seven Floors (de los Siete Suelos). Here, pointing to a low archway in the foundation of the tower, he informed me of a monstrous sprite, or hobgoblin, said to infest this tower ever since the time of the Moors, and to guard the treasures of a Moslem king. Sometimes it issues forth in the dead of the night, and scour the avenues of the Alhambra, and the streets of Granada, in the shape of a headless horse, pursued by six dogs with terrible yells and howlings.
A RAMBLE AMONG THE HILLS.

"But have you ever met with it yourself, Mateo, in any of your rambles?" demanded I.

"No, Señor, God be thanked! but my grandfather, the tailor, knew several persons that had seen it, for it went about much oftener in his time than at present; sometimes in one shape, sometimes in another. Everybody in Granada has heard of the Belludo, for the old women and the nurses frighten the children with it when they cry. Some say it is the spirit of a cruel Moorish king, who killed his six sons and buried them in these vaults, and that they hunt him at nights in revenge."

I forbear to dwell upon the marvellous details given by the simple-minded Mateo about this redoubtable phantom, which has, in fact, been time out of mind a favourite theme of nursery tales and popular tradition in Granada, and of which honourable mention is made by an ancient and learned historian and topographer of the place. I would only observe, that through this tower was the gateway by which the unfortunate Boabdil issued forth to surrender his capital.

Leaving this eventful pile, we continued our course, skirting the fruitful orchards of the Generalife, in which two or three nightingales were pouring forth a rich strain of melody. Behind these orchards we passed a number of Moorish tanks, with a door cut into the rocky bosom of the hill, but closed up. These tanks, Mateo informed me, were favourite bathing-places of himself and his comrades in boyhood, until frightened away by a story of a hideous Moor, who used to issue forth from the door in the rock to entrap unwary bathers.

Leaving these haunted tanks behind us, we pursued our ramble up a solitary mule-path that wound among the hills, and soon found ourselves amidst wild and melancholy mountains, destitute of trees, and here and there tinted with scanty verdure. Every thing within sight was severe and sterile, and it was scarcely possible to realise the idea that but a short distance behind us was the Generalife, with its blooming orchards and terraced gardens, and that we were in the vicinity of delicious Granada, that city of groves and fountains. But such is the nature of Spain —
wild and stern the moment it escapes from cultivation; the desert and the garden are ever side by side.

The narrow defile up which we were passing is called, according to Mateo, *el Barranco de la tinaja*, or, the ravine of the jar, because a jar full of Moorish gold was found here in old times. The brain of poor Mateo is continually running upon these golden legends.

"But what is the meaning of the cross I see yonder upon a heap of stones, in that narrow part of the ravine?"

"Oh, that's nothing—a muleteer was murdered there some years since."

"So then, Mateo, you have robbers and murderers even at the gates of the Alhambra?"

"Not at present, Senor; that was formerly, when there used to be many loose fellows about the fortress; but they've all been weeded out. Not but that the gypsies who live in caves in the hill-sides, just out of the fortress, are many of them fit for anything; but we have had no murder about here for a long time past. The man who murdered the muleteer was hanged in the fortress."

Our path continued up the barranco, with a bold, rugged height to our left, called the "Silla del Moro," or, chair of the Moor, from the tradition already alluded to, that the unfortunate Boabdil fled thither during a popular insurrection, and remained all day seated on the rocky summit, looking mournfully down on his factious city.

We at length arrived on the highest part of the promontory above Granada, called the mountain of the sun. The evening was approaching; the setting sun just gilded the loftiest heights. Here and there a solitary shepherd might be descried driving his flock down the declivities, to be folded for the night; or a muleteer and his lagging animals, threading some mountain path, to arrive at the city gates before nightfall.

Presently the deep tones of the cathedral bell came swelling up the defiles, proclaiming the hour of "oracion" or prayer. The note was responded to from the belfry of every church, and from the sweet bells of the convents among the mountains. The shepherd paused on the fold of the hill, the muleteer in the midst of the road; each
took off his hat and remained motionless for a time, murmuring his evening prayer. There is always something pleasingly solemn in this custom, by which, at a melodious signal, every human being throughout the land unites at the same moment in a tribute of thanks to God for the mercies of the day. It spreads a transient sanctity over the land, and the sight of the sun, sinking in all his glory, adds not a little to the solemnity of the scene.

In the present instance the effect was heightened by the wild and lonely nature of the place. We were on the naked and broken summit of the haunted mountain of the sun, where ruined tanks and cisterns, and the mouldering foundations of extensive buildings, spoke of former populousness, but where all was now silent and desolate.

As we were wandering among these traces of old times, Mateo pointed out to me a circular pit, that seemed to penetrate deep into the bosom of the mountain. It was evidently a deep well, dug by the indefatigable Moors, to obtain their favourite element in its greatest purity. Mateo, however, had a different story, and much more to his humour. This was, according to tradition, an entrance to the subterranean caverns of the mountain, in which Boabdil and his court lay bound in magic spell; and from whence they sallied forth at night, at allotted times, to revisit their ancient abodes.

The deepening twilight, which, in this climate, is of such short duration, admonished us to leave this haunted ground. As we descended the mountain defiles, there was no longer herdsman or muleteer to be seen, nor any thing to be heard but our own footsteps and the lonely chirping of the cricket. The shadows of the valleys grew deeper and deeper, until all was dark around us. The lofty summit of the Sierra Nevada alone retained a lingering gleam of daylight; its snowy peaks glaring against the dark blue firmament, and seeming close to us from the extreme purity of the atmosphere.

"How near the Sierra looks this evening!" said Mateo; "it seems as if you could touch it with your hand; and yet it is many long leagues off." While he was speaking, a star appeared over the snowy summit of the mountain,
the only one yet visible in the heavens, and so pure, so large, so bright and beautiful, as to call forth ejaculations of delight from honest Mateo.

"Que estrella hermosa! que clara y limpia es! — No pueda ser estrella mas brillante!"

(What a beautiful star! how clear and lucid — no star could be more brilliant!)

I have often remarked this sensibility of the common people of Spain to the charms of natural objects. The lustre of a star, the beauty or fragrance of a flower, the crystal purity of a fountain, will inspire them with a kind of poetical delight; and then, what euphonious words their magnificent language affords, with which to give utterance to their transports!

"But what lights are those, Mateo, which I see twinkling along the Sierra Nevada, just below the snowy region, and which might be taken for stars, only that they are ruddy, and against the dark side of the mountain?"

"Those, Señor, are fires, made by the men who gather snow and ice for the supply of Granada. They go up every afternoon with mules and asses, and take turns, some to rest and warm themselves by the fires, while others fill the panniers with ice. They then set off down the mountain, so as to reach the gates of Granada before sunrise. That Sierra Nevada, Señor, is a lump of ice in the middle of Andalusia, to keep it all cool in summer."

It was now completely dark: we were passing through the barranco, where stood the cross of the murdered muleteer; when I beheld a number of lights moving at a distance, and apparently advancing up the ravine. On nearer approach, they proved to be torches borne by a train of uncouth figures arrayed in black: it would have been a procession dreary enough at any time, but was peculiarly so in this wild and solitary place.

Mateo drew near, and told me in a low voice, that it was a funeral train bearing a corpse to the burying-ground among the hills.

As the procession passed by, the lugubrious light of the torches falling on the rugged features and funeral weeds
of the attendants, had the most fantastic effect, but was perfectly ghastly, as it revealed the countenance of the corpse, which, according to the Spanish custom, was borne uncovered on an open bier. I remained for some time gazing after the dreary train as it wound up the dark defile of the mountain. It put me in mind of the old story of a procession of demons bearing the body of a sinner up the crater of Stromboli.

"Ah! Señor," cried Mateo, "I could tell you a story of a procession once seen among these mountains, but then you'd laugh at me, and say it was one of the legacies of my grandfather the tailor."

"By no means, Mateo. There is nothing I relish more than a marvellous tale."

"Well, Señor, it is about one of those very men we have been talking of, who gather snow on the Sierra Nevada."

"You must know, that a great many years since, in my grandfather's time, there was an old fellow, Tio Nicolo by name, who had filled the panniers of his mule with snow and ice, and was returning down the mountain. Being very drowsy, he mounted upon the mule, and soon falling asleep, went with his head nodding and bobbing about from side to side, while his sure-footed old mule stepped along the edge of precipices, and down steep and broken barrancos, just as safe and steady as if it had been on plain ground. At length, Tio Nicolo awoke, and gazed about him, and rubbed his eyes — and, in good truth, he had reason. The moon shone almost as bright as day, and he saw the city below him, as plain as your hand, and shining with its white buildings, like a silver platter in the moonshine; but, Lord! Señor, it was nothing like the city he had left a few hours before! Instead of the cathedral, with its great dome and turrets, and the churches with their spires, and the convents with their pinnacles, all surmounted with the blessed cross, he saw nothing but Moorish mosques, and minarets, and cupolas, all topped off with glittering crescents, such as you see on the Barbary flags. Well, Señor, as you may suppose, Tio Nicolo was mightily puzzled at all this, but while he was gazing down upon the city, a great army came marching up the mountain,
winding along the ravines, sometimes in the moonshine, sometimes in the shade. As it drew nigh, he saw that there were horse and foot all in Moorish armour. Tio Nicolo tried to scramble out of their way, but his old mule stood stock still, and refused to budge, trembling, at the same time, like a leaf— for dumb beasts, Señor, are just as much frightened at such things as human beings. Well, Señor, the hobgoblin army came marching by; there were men that seemed to blow trumpets, and others to beat drums and strike cymbals, yet never a sound did they make; they all moved on without the least noise, just as I have seen painted armies move across the stage in the theatre of Granada, and all looked as pale as death. At last, in the rear of the army, between two black Moorish horsemen, rode the Grand Inquisitor of Granada, on a mule as white as snow. Tio Nicolo wondered to see him in such company, for the Inquisitor was famous for his hatred of Moors, and, indeed, of all kinds of infidels, Jews, and heretics, and used to hunt them out with fire and scourge. However, Tio Nicolo felt himself safe, now that there was a priest of such sanctity at hand. So making the sign of the cross, he called out for his benediction, when, hombre! he received a blow that sent him and his old mule over the edge of a steep bank, down which they rolled, head over heels, to the bottom! Tio Nicolo did not come to his senses until long after sunrise, when he found himself at the bottom of a deep ravine, his mule grazing beside him, and his panniers of snow completely melted. He crawled back to Granada sorely bruised and battered, but was glad to find the city looking as usual, with Christian churches and crosses. When he told the story of his night’s adventure, every one laughed at him; some said he had dreamed it all, as he dozed on his mule; others thought it all a fabrication of his own— but what was strange, Señor, and made people afterwards think more seriously of the matter, was, that the Grand Inquisitor died within the year. I have often heard my grandfather, the tailor, say that there was more meant by that hobgoblin army bearing off the resemblance of the priest, than folks dared to surmise.”
"Then you would insinuate, friend Mateo, that there is a kind of Moorish limbo, or purgatory, in the bowels of these mountains, to which the padre Inquisitor was borne off."

"God forbid, Señor! I know nothing of the matter—I only relate what I heard from my grandfather."

By the time Mateo had finished the tale, which I have more succinctly related, and which was interlarded with many comments, and spun out with minute details, we reached the gate of the Alhambra.

LOCAL TRADITIONS.

The common people of Spain have an Oriental passion for story-telling, and are fond of the marvellous. They will gather round the doors of their cottages in summer evenings, or in the great cavernous chimney corners of the ventas in the winter, and listen with insatiable delight to miraculous legends of saints, perilous adventures of travellers, and daring exploits of robbers and contrabandistas. The wild and solitary character of the country, the imperfect diffusion of knowledge, the scarceness of general topics of conversation, and the romantic adventurous life that every one leads in a land where travelling is yet in its primitive state, all contribute to cherish this love of oral narration, and to produce a strong infusion of the extravagant and incredible. There is no theme; however, more prevalent and popular than that of treasures buried by the Moors; it pervades the whole country. In traversing the wild sierras, the scenes of ancient foray and exploit, you cannot see a Moorish atalaya, or watch-tower, perched among the cliffs, or beetling above its rock-built village, but your muleteer, on being closely questioned, will suspend the smoking of his cigarillo to tell some tale of Moslem gold buried beneath its foundations; nor is there a ruined
alcazar in a city but has its golden tradition, handed down from generation to generation among the poor people of the neighbourhood.

These, like most popular fictions, have sprung from some scanty ground-work of fact. During the wars between Moor and Christian which distracted this country for centuries, towns and castles were liable frequently and suddenly to change owners, and the inhabitants, during sieges and assaults, were fain to bury their money and jewels in the earth, or hide them in vaults and wells, as is often done at the present day in the despotic and bellicose countries of the East. At the time of the expulsion of the Moors also many of them concealed their most precious effects, hoping that their exile would be but temporary, and that they would be enabled to return and retrieve their treasures at some future day. It is certain that from time to time hoards of gold and silver coin have been accidentally dug up, after a lapse of centuries, from among the ruins of Moorish fortresses and habitations; and it requires but a few facts of the kind to give birth to a thousand fictions.

The stories thus originating have generally something of an oriental tinge, and are marked with that mixture of the Arabic and the Gothic which seems to me to characterise every thing in Spain, and especially in its southern provinces. The hidden wealth is always laid under magic spell, and secured by charm and talisman. Sometimes it is guarded by uncouth monsters or fiery dragons, sometimes by enchanted Moors, who sit by it in armour, with drawn swords, but motionless as statues, maintaining a sleepless watch for ages.

The Alhambra, of course, from the peculiar circumstances of its history, is a stronghold for popular fictions of the kind; and various relics dug up from time to time, have contributed to strengthen them. At one time an earthen vessel was found containing Moorish coins and the skeleton of a cock, which, according to the opinion of certain shrewd inspectors, must have been buried alive. At another time a vessel was dug up containing a great scarabæus or beetle of baked clay, covered with Arabic inscrip-
tions, which was pronounced a prodigious amulet of occult virtues. In this way the wits of the ragged brood who inhabit the Alhambra have been set wool-gathering, until there is not a hall, or tower, or vault, of the old fortress that has not been made the scene of some marvellous tradition. Having, I trust, in the preceding papers made the reader in some degree familiar with the localities of the Alhambra, I shall now launch out more largely into the wonderful legends connected with it, and which I have diligently wrought into shape and form, from various legendary scraps and hints picked up in the course of my perambulations; in the same manner that an antiquary works out a regular historical document from a few scattered letters of an almost defaced inscription.

If any thing in these legends should shock the faith of the over-scrupulous reader, he must remember the nature of the place, and make due allowances. He must not expect here the same laws of probability that govern commonplace scenes and every-day life; he must remember that he treads the halls of an enchanted palace, and that all is "haunted ground."

THE HOUSE OF THE WEATHERCOCK.

On the brow of the lofty hill of the Albaycin, the highest part of the city of Granada, stand the remains of what was once a royal palace, founded shortly after the conquest of Spain by the Arabs. It is now converted into a manufactory, and has fallen into such obscurity, that it cost me much trouble to find it, notwithstanding that I had the assistance of the sagacious and all-knowing Mateo Ximenes. This edifice still bears the name by which it has been known for centuries, namely, "La Casa del Gallo de Viento," i. e. The House of the Weathercock. It was so called from a bronze figure of a warrior on horseback, armed with shield and spear, erected on one of
its turrets, and turning with every wind; bearing an Arabic motto, which, translated into Spanish, was as follows:

"Dice el sabio Aben Habuz;
Que así se defiende el Andaluz.

"In this way, says Aben Habuz the wise,
The Andalusian his foe defies."

This Aben Habuz, according to Moorish chronicles, was a captain in the invading army of Taric, and was left by him as alcayde of Granada. He is supposed to have intended this warlike effigy as a perpetual memorial to the Moslem inhabitants that, surrounded as they were by foes, their safety depended upon being always on their guard, and ready for the field.

Traditions, however, give a different account of this Aben Habuz and his palace, and affirm that his bronze horseman was originally a talisman of great virtue, though, in after-ages, it lost its magic properties, and degenerated into a mere weathercock.

The following are the traditions alluded to.

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LEGEND OF THE ARABIAN ASTROLOGER.

In old times, many hundred years ago, there was a Moorish king named Aben Habuz, who reigned over the kingdom of Granada. He was a retired conqueror, that is to say, one who having in his more youthful days led a life of constant foray and depredation, now that he was grown feeble and superannuated, "languished for repose," and desired nothing more than to live at peace with all the world, to husband his laurels, and to enjoy in quiet the possessions he had wrested from his neighbours.

It so happened, however, that this most reasonable and pacific old monarch had young rivals to deal with; princes full of his early passion for fame and fighting, and who
were disposed to call him to account for the scores he had run up with their fathers. Certain distant districts of his own territories, also, which during the days of his vigour he had treated with a high hand, were prone, now that he languished for repose, to rise in rebellion and threaten to invest him in his capital. Thus he had foes on every side, and as Granada is surrounded by wild and craggy mountains, which hide the approach of an enemy, the unfortunate Aben Habuz was kept in a constant state of vigilance and alarm, not knowing in what quarter hostilities might break out.

It was in vain that he built watch-towers on the mountains, and stationed guards at every pass, with orders to make fires by night and smoke by day, on the approach of an enemy. His alert foes, baffling every precaution, would break out of some unthought-of defile, ravage his lands beneath his very nose, and then make off with prisoners and booty to the mountains. Was ever peaceful and retired conqueror in a more uncomfortable predicament?

While Aben Habuz was harassed by these perplexities and molestations, an ancient Arabian physician arrived at his court. His grey beard descended to his girdle, and he had every mark of extreme age, yet he had travelled almost the whole way from Egypt on foot, with no other aid than a staff, marked with hieroglyphics. His fame had preceded him. His name was Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb; he was said to have lived ever since the days of Mahomet, and to be the son of Abu Ajeeb, the last of the companions of the Prophet. He had, when a child, followed the conquering army of Amru into Egypt, where he had remained many years studying the dark sciences, and particularly magic, among the Egyptian priests.

It was, moreover, said that he had found out the secret of prolonging life, by means of which he had arrived to the great age of upwards of two centuries, though, as he did not discover the secret until well stricken in years, he could only perpetuate his grey hairs and wrinkles.

This wonderful old man was honourably entertained by the king; who, like most superannuated monarchs, began
to take physicians into great favour. He would have assigned him an apartment in his palace, but the astrologer preferred a cave in the side of the hill which rises above the city of Granada, being the same on which the Alhambra has since been built. He caused the cave to be enlarged, so as to form a spacious and lofty hall, with a circular hole at the top, through which, as through a well, he could see the heavens and behold the stars, even at midday. The walls of this hall were covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics, with cabalistic symbols, and with the figures of the stars in their signs. This hall he furnished with many implements, fabricated under his directions by cunning artificers of Granada, but the occult properties of which were known only to himself.

In a little while the sage Ibrahim became the bosom counsellor of the king, who applied to him for advice in every emergency. Aben Habuz was once inveighing against the injustice of his neighbours, and bewailing the restless vigilance he had to observe, to guard himself against their invasions: when he had finished, the astrologer remained silent for a moment, and then replied, "Know, O king, that when I was in Egypt I beheld a great marvel devised by a pagan priestess of old. On a mountain, above the city of Borsa, and overlooking the great valley of the Nile, was a figure of a ram, and above it a figure of a cock, both of molten brass, and turning upon a pivot. Whenever the country was threatened with invasion, the ram would turn in the direction of the enemy, and the cock would crow; upon this the inhabitants of the city knew of the danger, and of the quarter from which it was approaching, and could take timely means to guard against it."

"God is great!" exclaimed the pacific Aben Habuz, "what a treasure would be such a ram to keep an eye upon these mountains around me, and then such a cock, to crow in time of danger! Allah Akbar! how securely I might sleep in my palace with such sentinels on the top!"

The astrologer waited until the ecstasies of the king had subsided, and then proceeded.

"After the victorious Amru (may he rest in peace!)
had finished his conquest of Egypt, I remained among the ancient priests of the land, studying the rites and ceremonies of their idolatrous faith, and seeking to make myself master of the hidden knowledge for which they are renowned. I was one day seated on the banks of the Nile, conversing with an ancient priest, when he pointed to the mighty pyramids which rose like mountains out of the neighbouring desert. 'All that we can teach thee,' said he, 'is nothing to the knowledge locked up in those mighty piles. In the centre of the central pyramid is a sepulchral chamber, in which is enclosed the mummy of the high priest, who aided in rearing that stupendous pile; and with him is buried a wondrous book of knowledge, containing all the secrets of magic and art. This book was given to Adam after his fall, and was handed down from generation to generation to King Solomon the wise, and by its aid he built the temple of Jerusalem. How it came into the possession of the builder of the pyramids, is known to Him alone who knows all things.'

"When I heard these words of the Egyptian priest, my heart burned to get possession of that book. I could command the services of many of the soldiers of our conquering army, and of a number of the native Egyptians: with these I set to work, and pierced the solid mass of the pyramid, until, after great toil, I came upon one of its interior and hidden passages. Following this up, and threading a fearful labyrinth, I penetrated into the very heart of the pyramid, even to the sepulchral chamber, where the mummy of the high priest had lain for ages. I broke through the outer cases of the mummy, unfolded its many wrappers and bandages, and, at length, found the precious volume on its bosom. I seized it with a trembling hand, and groped my way out of the pyramid, leaving the mummy in its dark and silent sepulchre, there to await the final day of resurrection and judgment."

"Son of Abu Ajeeb," exclaimed Aben Habuz, "thou hast been a great traveller, and seen marvellous things; but of what avail to me is the secret of the pyramid, and the volume of knowledge of the wise Solomon?"
“This it is, O king! by the study of that book I am instructed in all magic arts, and can command the assistance of genii to accomplish my plans. The mystery of the talisman of Borsa is therefore familiar to me, and such a talisman can I make; nay, one of greater virtues.”

“O wise son of Abu Ajeeb,” cried Aben Habuz, “better were such a talisman than all the watch-towers on the hills, and sentinels upon the borders. Give me such a safeguard, and the riches of my treasury are at thy command.”

The astrologer immediately set to work to gratify the wishes of the monarch. He caused a great tower to be erected upon the top of the royal palace, which stood on the brow of the hill of the Albaycin. The tower was built of stones brought from Egypt, and taken, it is said, from one of the pyramids. In the upper part of the tower was a circular hall, with windows looking toward every point of the compass, and before each window was a table, on which was arranged, as on a chess-board, a mimic army of horse and foot, with the effigy of the potentate that ruled in that direction, all carved of wood. To each of these tables there was a small lance, no bigger than a bodkin, on which were engraved certain Chaldaic characters. This hall was kept constantly closed, by a gate of brass, with a great lock of steel, the key of which was in possession of the king.

On the top of the tower was a bronze figure of a Moorish horseman, fixed on a pivot, with a shield on one arm, and his lance elevated perpendicularly. The face of this horseman was towards the city, as if keeping guard over it; but if any foe were at hand, the figure would turn in that direction, and would level the lance as if for action.

When this talisman was finished, Aben Habuz was all impatient to try its virtues; and longed as ardently for an invasion, as he had ever sighed after repose. His desire was soon gratified. Tidings were brought, early one morning, by the sentinel appointed to watch the tower, that the face of the bronze horseman was turned towards the mountains of Elvira, and that his lance pointed directly against the pass of Lope.
"Let the drums and trumpets sound to arms, and all Granada be put on the alert," said Aben Habuz.

"O king," said the astrologer, "let not your city be disquieted, nor your warriors called to arms; we need no aid of force to deliver you from your enemies. Dismiss your attendants, and let us proceed alone to the secret hall of the tower."

The ancient Aben Habuz mounted the staircase of the tower, leaning on the arm of the still more ancient Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb. They unlocked the brazen door, and entered. The window that looked towards the pass of Lope was open. "In this direction," said the astrologer, "lies the danger; approach, O king, and behold the mystery of the table."

King Aben Habuz approached the seeming chess-board, on which were arranged the small wooden effigies, when, to his surprise, he perceived that they were all in motion. The horses pranced and curveted, the warriors brandished their weapons, and there was a faint sound of drums and trumpets, and the clang of arms, and neighing of steeds; but all no louder, nor more distinct, than the hum of the bee, or the summer-fly, in the drowsy ear of him who lies at noontide in the shade.

"Behold, O king," said the astrologer, "a proof that thy enemies are even now in the field. They must be advancing through yonder mountains, by the passes of Lope. Would you produce a panic and confusion amongst them, and cause them to retreat without loss of life, strike these effigies with the butt-end of this magic lance; but would you cause bloody feud and carnage among them, strike with the point."

A livid streak passed across the countenance of the pacific Aben Habuz; he seized the mimic lance with trembling eagerness, and tottered towards the table: his grey beard wagged with chuckling exultation: "Son of Abu Ajeeb," exclaimed he, "I think we will have a little blood!"

So saying, he thrust the magic lance into some of the pigmy effigies, and belaboured others with the butt-end, upon which the former fell as dead upon the board and
the rest turning upon each other began, pell-mell, a chance-medley fight.

It was with difficulty the astrologer could stay the hand of the most pacific of monarchs, and prevent him from absolutely exterminating his foes; at length he prevailed upon him to leave the tower, and to send out scouts to the mountains by the pass of Lope.

They returned with the intelligence, that a Christian army had advanced through the heart of the sierra, almost within sight of Granada, where a dissension had broken out among them; they had turned their weapons against each other, and after much slaughter, had retreated over the border.

Aben Habuz was transported with joy on thus proving the efficacy of the talisman. "At length," said he, "I shall lead a life of tranquillity, and have all my enemies in my power. O wise son of Abu Ajeeb, what can I bestow on thee in reward for such a blessing?"

"The wants of an old man and a philosopher, O king, are few and simple; grant me but the means of fitting up my cave as a suitable hermitage, and I am content."

"How noble is the moderation of the truly wise!" exclaimed Aben Habuz, secretly pleased at the cheapness of the recompense. He summoned his treasurer, and bade him dispense whatever sums might be required by Ibrahim to complete and furnish his hermitage.

The astrologer now gave orders to have various chambers hewn out of the solid rock, so as to form ranges of apartments connected with his astrological hall; these he caused to be furnished with luxurious ottomans and divans, and the walls to be hung with the richest silks of Damascus. "I am an old man," said he, "and can no longer rest my bones on stone couches; and these damp walls require covering."

He had baths, too, constructed, and provided with all kinds of perfumes and aromatic oils. "For a bath," said he, "is necessary to counteract the rigidity of age, and to restore freshness and suppleness to the frame withered by study."

He caused the apartments to be hung with innumerable
silver and crystal lamps, which he filled with a fragrant oil, prepared according to a receipt discovered by him in the tombs of Egypt. This oil was perpetual in its nature, and diffused a soft radiance like the tempered light of day. "The light of the sun," said he, "is too garish and violent for the eyes of an old man, and the light of the lamp is more congenial to the studies of a philosopher."

The treasurer of king Aben Habuz groaned at the sums daily demanded to fit up this hermitage, and he carried his complaints to the King. The royal word, however, was given; Aben Habuz shrugged his shoulders: "We must have patience," said he; "this old man has taken his idea of a philosophic retreat from the interior of the pyramids, and of the vast ruins of Egypt; but all things have an end, and so will the furnishing of his cavern."

The king was in the right; the hermitage was at length complete, and formed a sumptuous subterranean palace. "I am now content," said Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb to the treasurer; "I will shut myself up in my cell, and devote my time to study. I desire nothing more, nothing, except a trifling solace, to amuse me at the intervals of mental labour."

"O wise Ibrahim, ask what thou wilt; I am bound to furnish all that is necessary for thy solitude."

"I would fain have, then, a few dancing women," said the philosopher.

"Dancing women!" echoed the treasurer with surprise.

"Dancing women," replied the sage gravely; "a few will suffice, for I am an old man, and a philosopher, of simple habits, and easily satisfied. Let them, however, be young, and fair to look upon; for the sight of youth and beauty is refreshing to old age."

While the philosophic Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb passed his time thus sagely in his hermitage, the pacific Aben Habuz carried on furious campaigns in effigy in his tower. It was a glorious thing for an old man, like himself, of quiet habits, to have war made easy, and to be enabled to amuse himself in his chamber by brushing away whole armies like so many swarms of flies.
For a time he rioted in the indulgence of his humours, and even taunted and insulted his neighbours, to induce them to make incursions; but by degrees they grew wary from repeated disasters, until no one ventured to invade his territories. For many months the bronze horseman remained on the peace establishment, with his lance elevated in the air, and the worthy old monarch began to repine at the want of his accustomed sport, and to grow peevish at his monotonous tranquillity.

At length, one day, the talismanic horseman veered suddenly round, and lowering his lance, made a dead point towards the mountains of Guadix. Aben Habuz hastened to his tower, but the magic table in that direction remained quiet; not a single warrior was in motion. Perplexed at the circumstance, he sent forth a troop of horse to scour the mountains and reconnoitre. They returned after three days' absence.

"We have searched every mountain pass," said they, "but not a helm or spear was stirring. All that we have found in the course of our foray, was a Christian damsel of surpassing beauty, sleeping at noon-tide beside a fountain, whom we have brought away captive."

"A damsel of surpassing beauty!" exclaimed Aben Habuz, his eyes gleaming with animation: "let her be conducted into my presence."

The beautiful damsel was accordingly conducted into his presence. She was arrayed with all the luxury of ornament that had prevailed among the Gothic Spaniards at the time of the Arabian conquest. Pearls of dazzling whiteness were entwined with her raven tresses; and jewels sparkled on her forehead, rivalling the lustre of her eyes. Around her neck was a golden chain, to which was suspended a silver lyre, which hung by her side.

The flashes of her dark refulgent eye were like sparks of fire on the withered, yet combustible, heart of Aben Habuz; the swimming voluptuousness of her gait made his senses reel. "Fairest of women," cried he, with rapture, "who and what art thou?"

"The daughter of one of the Gothic princes, who but lately ruled over this land. The armies of my father have
been destroyed, as if by magic, among these mountains; he has been driven into exile, and his daughter is a captive."

"Beware, O king!" whispered Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb, "this may be one of those northern sorceresses of whom we have heard, who assume the most seductive forms to beguile the unwary. Methinks I read witchcraft in her eye, and sorcery in every movement. Doubtless this is the enemy pointed out by the talisman."

"Son of Abu Ajeeb," replied the king, "thou art a wise man, I grant, a conjuror for aught I know; but thou art little versed in the ways of woman. In that knowledge will I yield to no man; no, not to the wise Solomon himself, notwithstanding the number of his wives and concubines. As to this damsels, I see no harm in her; she is fair to look upon, and finds favour in my eyes."

"Hearken, O king!" replied the astrologer. "I have given thee many victories by means of my talisman, but have never shared any of the spoil. Give me then this stray captive, to solace me in my solitude with her silver lyre. If she be indeed a sorceress, I have counter-spells that set her charms at defiance."

"What! more women!" cried Aben Habuz. "Hast thou not already dancing women enough to solace thee?"

"Dancing women have I, it is true, but no singing women. I would fain have a little minstrelsy to refresh my mind when weary with the toils of study."

"A truce with thy hermit cravings," said the king, impatiently. "This damsels have I marked for my own. I see much comfort in her; even such comfort as David, the father of Solomon the wise, found in the society of Abishag the Shunamite."

Further solicitations and remonstrances of the astrologer only provoked a more peremptory reply from the monarch, and they parted in high displeasure. The sage shut himself up in his hermitage to brood over his disappointment; ere he departed, however, he gave the king one more warning to beware of his dangerous captive. But where is the old man in love that will listen to counsel? Aben
Habuz resigned himself to the full sway of his passion. His only study was how to render himself amiable in the eyes of the Gothic beauty. He had not youth to recommend him, it is true, but then he had riches; and when a lover is old, he is generally generous. The Zacatin of Granada was ransacked for the most precious merchandise of the East: silks, jewels, precious gems, exquisite perfumes, all that Asia and Africa yielded of rich and rare, were lavished upon the princess. All kinds of spectacles and festivities were devised for her entertainment; minstrelsy, dancing, tournaments, bull-fights: Granada, for a time, was a scene of perpetual pageant. The Gothic princess regarded all this splendour with the air of one accustomed to magnificence. She received every thing as a homage due to her rank, or rather to her beauty, for beauty is more lofty in its exactions even than rank. Nay, she seemed to take a secret pleasure in exciting the monarch to expenses that made his treasury shrink; and then treating his extravagant generosity as a mere matter of course. With all his assiduity and munificence, also, the venerable lover could not flatter himself that he had made any impression on her heart. She never frowned on him, it is true, but then she never smiled. Whenever he began to plead his passion, she struck her silver lyre. There was a mystic charm in the sound. In an instant the monarch began to nod; a drowsiness stole over him, and he gradually sank into a sleep, from which he awoke wonderfully refreshed, but perfectly cooled for the time of his passion. This was very baffling to his suit; but then these slumbers were accompanied by agreeable dreams, that completely enthralled the senses of the drowsy lover; so he continued to dream on, while all Granada scoffed at his infatuation, and groaned at the treasures lavished for a song.

At length a danger burst on the head of Aben Habuz, against which his talisman yielded him no warning. An insurrection broke out in his very capital: his palace was surrounded by an armed rabble, who menaced his life and the life of his Christian paramour. A spark of his ancient warlike spirit was awakened in the breast of the monarch. At the head of a handful of his guards he sallied forth,
put the rebels to flight, and crushed the insurrection in the bud.

When quiet was again restored, he sought the astrologer, who still remained shut up in his hermitage, chewing the bitter cud of resentment.

Aben Habuz approached him with a conciliatory tone. "O wise son Abu Ajeeb," said he, "well didst thou predict dangers to me from this captive beauty: tell me then, thou who art so quick at foreseeing peril, what I should do to avert it."

"Put from thee the infidel damsel who is the cause."

"Sooner would I part with my kingdom," cried Aben Habuz.

"Thou art in danger of losing both," replied the astrologer.

"Be not harsh and angry, O most profound of philosophers; consider the double distress of a monarch and a lover, and devise some means of protecting me from the evils by which I am menaced. I care not for grandeur, I care not for power, I languish only for repose; would that I had some quiet retreat, where I might take refuge from the world, and all its cares, and pomps, and troubles, and devote the remainder of my days to tranquillity and love."

The astrologer regarded him for a moment, from under his bushy eyebrows.

"And what wouldst thou give, if I could provide thee such a retreat?"

"Thou shouldst name thy own reward, and whatever it might be, if within the scope of my power, as my soul liveth, it should be thine."

"Thou hast heard, O king, of the garden of Irem, one of the prodigies of Arabia the happy."

"I have heard of that garden; it is recorded in the Koran, even in the chapter entitled 'The Dawn of Day.' I have, moreover, heard marvellous things related of it by pilgrims who had been to Mecca; but I considered them wild fables, such as travellers are wont to tell who have visited remote countries."

"Discredit not, O king, the tales of travellers," rejoined the astrologer gravely, "for they contain precious rarities
of knowledge brought from the ends of the earth. As to the palace and garden of Irem, what is generally told of them is true; I have seen them with mine own eyes—listen to my adventure; for it has a bearing upon the object of your request.

"In my younger days, when a mere Arab of the desert, I tended my father's camels. In traversing the Desert of Aden, one of them strayed from the rest, and was lost. I searched after it for several days, but in vain, until, wearied and faint, I laid myself down one noontide, and slept under a palm-tree by the side of a scanty well. When I awoke, I found myself at the gate of a city. I entered, and beheld noble streets, and squares, and market-places; but all were silent, and without an inhabitant. I wandered on until I came to a sumptuous palace with a garden, adorned with fountains and fish-ponds, and groves and flowers, and orchards laden with delicious fruit; but still no one was to be seen. Upon which, appalled at this loneliness, I hastened to depart; and, after issuing forth at the gate of the city, I turned to look upon the place, but it was no longer to be seen, nothing but the silent desert extended before my eyes.

"In the neighbourhood I met with an aged dervise, learned in the traditions and secrets of the land, and related to him what had befallen me. This, said he, is the farfamed garden of Irem, one of the wonders of the desert. It only appears at times to some wanderer like thyself, gladdening him with the sight of towers and palaces, and garden walls overhung with richly-laden fruit-trees, and then vanishes, leaving nothing but a lonely desert. And this is the story of it. In old times, when this country was inhabited by the Addites, King Sheddad, the son of Ad, the great-grandson of Noah, founded here a splendid city. When it was finished, and he saw its grandeur, his heart was puffed up with pride and arrogance, and he determined to build a royal palace, with gardens that should rival all that was related in the Koran of the celestial paradise. But the curse of Heaven fell upon him for his presumption. He and his subjects were swept from the earth, and his splendid city, and palace, and gardens, were laid
under a perpetual spell, that hides them from the human sight, excepting that they are seen at intervals, by way of keeping his sin in perpetual remembrance.

"This story, O king, and the wonders I had seen, ever dwelt in my mind; and in after-years, when I had been in Egypt, and was possessed of the book of knowledge of Solomon the wise, I determined to return and revisit the garden of Irem. I did so, and found it revealed to my instructed sight. I took possession of the palace of Sheddad, and passed several days in his mock paradise. The genii who watch over the place were obedient to my magic power, and revealed to me the spells by which the whole garden had been, as it were, conjured into existence, and by which it was rendered invisible. Such a palace and garden, O king, can I make for thee, even here, on the mountain above thy city. Do I not know all the secret spells? and am I not in possession of the book of knowledge of Solomon the wise?"

"O wise son of Abu Ajeeb!" exclaimed Aben Habuz, trembling with eagerness, "thou art a traveller indeed, and hast seen and learned marvellous things! Contrive me such a paradise, and ask any reward, even to the half of my kingdom."

"Alas!" replied the other, "thou knowest I am an old man, and a philosopher, and easily satisfied; all the reward I ask is the first beast of burthen, with its load, that shall enter the magic portal of the palace."

The monarch gladly agreed to so moderate a stipulation, and the astrologer began his work. On the summit of the hill, immediately above his subterranean hermitage, he caused a great gateway or barbican to be erected, opening through the centre of a strong tower.

There was an outer vestibule or porch, with a lofty arch, and within it a portal secured by massive gates. On the key-stone of the portal the astrologer, with his own hand, wrought the figure of a huge key; and on the key-stone of the outer arch of the vestibule, which was loftier than that of the portal, he carved a gigantic hand. These were potent talismans, over which he repeated many sentences in an unknown tongue.
When this gateway was finished, he shut himself up for two days in his astrological hall, engaged in secret incantations; on the third he ascended the hill, and passed the whole day on its summit. At a late hour of the night he came down, and presented himself before Aben Habuz. "At length, O king," said he, "my labour is accomplished. On the summit of the hill stands one of the most delectable palaces that ever the head of man devised, or the heart of man desired. It contains sumptuous halls and galleries, delicious gardens, cool fountains, and fragrant baths; in a word, the whole mountain is converted into a paradise. Like the garden of Irem, it is protected by a mighty charm, which hides it from the view and search of mortals, excepting such as possess the secret of its talismans."

"Enough!" cried Aben Habuz, joyfully, "to-morrow morning with the first light we will ascend and take possession." The happy monarch slept but little that night. Scarcely had the rays of the sun begun to play about the snowy summit of the Sierra Nevada, when he mounted his steed, and, accompanied only by a few chosen attendants, ascended a steep and narrow road leading up the hill. Beside him, on a white palfrey, rode the Gothic princess, her whole dress sparkling with jewels, while round her neck was suspended her silver lyre. The astrologer walked on the other side of the king, assisting his steps with his hieroglyphic staff, for he never mounted steed of any kind.

Aben Habuz looked to see the towers of the palace brightening above him, and the embowered terraces of its gardens stretching along the heights; but as yet nothing of the kind was to be described. "That is the mystery and safeguard of the place," said the astrologer; "nothing can be discerned until you have passed the spell-bound gateway, and been put in possession of the place."

As they approached the gateway, the astrologer paused, and pointed out to the king the mystic hand and key carved upon the portal and the arch. "These," said he, "are the talismans which guard the entrance to this paradise. Until yonder hand shall reach down and seize that key, neither mortal power nor magic artifice can prevail against the lord of this mountain."
While Aben Habuz was gazing with open mouth, and silent wonder, at these mystic talismans, the palfrey of the princess proceeded, and bore her in at the portal, to the very centre of the barbican.

"Behold," cried the astrologer, "my promised reward; the first animal with its burthen that should enter the magic gateway."

Aben Habuz smiled at what he considered a pleasantry of the ancient man; but when he found him to be in earnest, his grey beard trembled with indignation.

"Son of Abu Ajeeb," said he, sternly, "what equivocation is this? Thou knowest the meaning of my promise: the first beast of burthen, with its load, that should enter this portal. Take the strongest mule in my stables, load it with the most precious things of my treasury, and it is thine; but dare not raise thy thoughts to her who is the delight of my heart."

"What need I of wealth," cried the astrologer, scornfully; "have I not the book of knowledge of Solomon the wise, and through it the command of the secret treasures of the earth? The princess is mine by right; thy royal word is pledged; I claim her as my own."

The princess looked down haughtily from her palfrey, and a light smile of scorn curled her rosy lip at this dispute between two grey-beards for the possession of youth and beauty. The wrath of the monarch got the better of his discretion. "Base son of the desert," cried he, "thou may'st be master of many arts, but know me for thy master, and presume not to juggle with thy king."

"My master!" echoed the astrologer, "my king! The monarch of a mole-hill to claim sway over him who possesses the talismans of Solomon! Farewell, Aben Habuz; reign over thy petty kingdom, and revel in thy paradise of fools; for me, I will laugh at thee in my philosophic retirement."

So saying, he seized the bridle of the palfrey, smote the earth with his staff, and sank with the Gothic princess through the centre of the barbican. The earth closed over them, and no trace remained of the opening by which they had descended.
Aben Habuz was struck dumb for a time with astonishment. Recovering himself, he ordered a thousand workmen to dig, with pickaxe and spade, into the ground where the astrologer had disappeared. They dug and dug, but in vain; the flinty bosom of the hill resisted their implements; or if they did penetrate a little way, the earth filled in again as fast as they threw it out. Aben Habuz sought the mouth of the cavern at the foot of the hill, leading to the subterranean palace of the astrologer; but it was nowhere to be found. Where once had been an entrance, was now a solid surface of primeval rock. With the disappearance of Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb, ceased the benefit of his talismans. The bronze horseman remained fixed, with his face turned toward the hill, and his spear pointed to the spot where the astrologer had descended, as if there still lurked the deadliest foe of Aben Habuz.

From time to time the sound of music, and the tones of a female voice, could be faintly heard from the bosom of the hill; and a peasant one day brought word to the king, that in the preceding night he had found a fissure in the rock, by which he had crept in, until he looked down into a subterranean hall, in which sat the astrologer, on a magnificent divan, slumbering and nodding to the silver lyre of the princess, which seemed to hold a magic sway over his senses.

Aben Habuz sought the fissure in the rock, but it was again closed. He renewed the attempt to unearth his rival, but all in vain. The spell of the hand and key was too potent to be counteracted by human power. As to the summit of the mountain, the site of the promised palace and garden, it remained a naked waste; either the boasted elysium was hidden from sight by enchantment, or was a mere fable of the astrologer. The world charitably supposed the latter, and some used to call the place "The King's Folly;" while others named it "The Fool's Paradise."

Too add to the chagrin of Aben Habuz, the neighbours whom he had defied and taunted, and cut up at his leisure while master of the talismanic horseman, finding him no longer protected by magic spell, made inroads into his territories from all sides, and the remainder of the life of the most pacific of monarchs was a tissue of turmoils.
At length Aben Habuz died, and was buried. Ages have since rolled away. The Alhambra has been built on the eventful mountain, and in some measure realises the fabled delights of the garden of Irem. The spell-bound gateway still exists entire, protected no doubt by the mystic hand and key, and now forms the Gate of Justice, the grand entrance to the fortress. Under that gateway, it is said, the old astrologer remains in his subterranean hall, nodding on his divan, lulled by the silver lyre of the princess.

The old invalid sentinels who mount guard at the gate hear the strains occasionally in the summer nights; and, yielding to their soporific power, doze quietly at their posts. Nay, so drowsy an influence pervades the place, that even those who watch by day may generally be seen nodding on the stone benches of the barbican, or sleeping under the neighbouring trees; so that, in fact, it is the drowsiest military post in all Christendom. All this, say the ancient legends, will endure from age to age. The princess will remain captive to the astrologer; and the astrologer, bound up in magic slumber by the princess, until the last day, unless the mystic hand shall grasp the fated key, and dispel the whole charm of this enchanted mountain.

THE TOWER OF LAS INFANTAS.

In an evening's stroll up a narrow glen, overshadowed by fig-trees, pomegranates, and myrtles, that divides the lands of the fortress from those of the Generalife, I was struck with the romantic appearance of a Moorish tower in the outer wall of the Alhambra, that rose high above the tree-tops, and caught the ruddy rays of the setting sun. A solitary window at a great height commanded a view of the glen; and as I was regarding it, a young female looked out, with her head adorned with flowers. She was evidently superior to the usual class of people that inhabit the old towers of the
fortress; and this sudden and picturesque glimpse of her reminded me of the descriptions of captive beauties in fairy tales. These fanciful associations of my mind were increased on being informed by my attendant Mateo, that this was the Tower of the Princesses, (La Torre de las Infantas,) so called, from having been, according to tradition, the residence of the daughters of the Moorish kings. I have since visited the tower. It is not generally shown to strangers, though well worthy attention; for the interior is equal, for beauty of architecture and delicacy of ornament, to any part of the palace. The elegance of the central hall, with its marble fountain, its lofty arches, and richly fretted dome; the arabesques and stucco work of the small but well-proportioned chambers, though injured by time and neglect, all accord with the story of its being anciently the abode of royal beauty.

The little old fairy queen who lives under the staircase of the Alhambra, and frequents the evening tertulias of Dame Antonia, tells some fanciful traditions about three Moorish princesses, who were once shut up in this tower by their father, a tyrant king of Granada, and were only permitted to ride out at night about the hills, when no one was permitted to come in their way under pain of death. They still, according to her account, may be seen occasionally when the moon is in the full, riding in lonely places along the mountain side, on palfreys richly caparisoned and sparkling with jewels, but they vanish on being spoken to.

But before I relate anything further respecting these princesses, the reader may be anxious to know something about the fair inhabitant of the tower with her head dressed with flowers, who looked out from the lofty window. She proved to be the newly-married spouse of the worthy adjutant of invalids; who, though well stricken in years, had had the courage to take to his bosom a young and buxom Andalusian damsels. May the good old cavalier be happy in his choice, and find the Tower of the Princesses a more secure residence for female beauty than it seems to have proved in the time of the Moslems, if we may believe the following legend!
LEGEND OF THE THREE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESSES.

In old times there reigned a Moorish king in Granada, whose name was Mohamed, to which his subjects added the appellation of El Haygari, or "The Left-handed." Some say he was so called on account of his being really more expert with his sinister than his dexter hand; others because he was prone to take every thing by the wrong end, or, in other words, to mar wherever he meddled. Certain it is, either through misfortune or mismanagement, he was continually in trouble: thrice was he driven from his throne, and, on one occasion, barely escaped to Africa with his life, in the disguise of a fisherman. Still he was as brave as he was blundering; and though left-handed, wielded his scimitar to such purpose, that he each time re-established himself upon his throne by dint of hard fighting. Instead, however, of learning wisdom from adversity, he hardened his neck, and stiffened his left arm in wilfulness. The evils of a public nature which he thus brought upon himself and his kingdom, may be learned by those who will delve into the Arabian annals of Granada; the present legend deals but with his domestic policy.

As this Mohamed was one day riding forth with a train of his courtiers, by the foot of the mountain of Elvira, he met a band of horsemen returning from a foray into the land of the Christians. They were conducting a long string of mules laden with spoil, and many captives of both sexes, among whom the monarch was struck with the appearance of a beautiful damsel, richly attired, who sat weeping on a low palfrey, and heeded not the consoling words of a duenna who rode beside her.

The monarch was struck with her beauty, and, on inquiring of the captain of the troop, found that she was the daughter of the alcayde of a frontier fortress, that had been surprised and sacked in the course of the foray.
Mohamed claimed her as his royal share of the booty, and had her conveyed to his harem in the Alhambra. There every thing was devised to soothe her melancholy; and the monarch, more and more enamoured, sought to make her his queen. The Spanish maid at first repulsed his addresses—he was an infidel—he was the open foe of her country—what was worse, he was stricken in years!

The monarch, finding his assiduities of no avail, determined to enlist in his favour the duenna, who had been captured with the lady. She was an Andalusian by birth, whose Christian name is forgotten, being mentioned in Moorish legends by no other appellation than that of the discreet Kadiga—and discreet, in truth, she was, as her whole history makes evident. No sooner had the Moorish king held a little private conversation with her, than she saw at once the cogency of his reasoning, and undertook his cause with her young mistress.

"Go to, now!" cried she, "what is there in all this to weep and wail about? Is it not better to be mistress of this beautiful palace, with all its gardens and fountains, than to be shut up within your father's old frontier tower? As to this Mohamed being an infidel, what is that to the purpose? You marry him, not his religion: and if he is waxing a little old, the sooner will you be a widow, and mistress of yourself; at any rate, you are in his power, and must either be a queen or a slave. When in the hands of a robber, it is better to sell one's merchandise for a fair price, than to have it taken by main force."

The arguments of the discreet Kadiga prevailed. The Spanish lady dried her tears, and became the spouse of Mohamed the Left-handed; she even conformed, in appearance, to the faith of her royal husband; and her discreet duenna immediately became a zealous convert to the Moslem doctrines; it was then the latter received the Arabian name of Kadiga, and was permitted to remain in the confidential employ of her mistress.

In due process of time the Moorish king was made the proud and happy father of three lovely daughters, all born at a birth: he could have wished they had been sons, but consoled himself with the idea that three daughters at a
birth were pretty well for a man somewhat stricken in years, and left-handed!

As usual with all Moslem monarchs, he summoned his astrologers on this happy event. They cast the nativities of the three princesses, and shook their heads. "Daughters, O king!" said they, "are always precarious property; but these will most need your watchfulness when they arrive at a marriageable age: at that time gather them under your wings, and trust them to no other guardianship."

Mohamed the Left-handed was acknowledged to be a wise king by his courtiers, and was certainly so considered by himself. The prediction of the astrologers caused him but little disquiet, trusting to his ingenuity to guard his daughters and outwit the fates.

The threefold birth was the last matrimonial trophy of the monarch; his queen bore him no more children, and died within a few years, bequeathing her infant daughters to his love, and to the fidelity of the discreet Kadiga.

Many years had yet to elapse before the princesses would arrive at that period of danger—the marriageable age. "It is good, however, to be cautious in time," said the shrewd monarch; so he determined to have them reared in the royal castle of Salobreña. This was a sumptuous palace, incrusted, as it were, in a powerful Moorish fortress on the summit of a hill that overlooks the Mediterranean Sea. It was a royal retreat, in which the Moslem monarchs shut up such of their relations as might endanger their safety, allowing them all kinds of luxuries and amusements, in the midst of which they passed their lives in voluptuous indolence.

Here the princesses remained, immured from the world, but surrounded by enjoyments, and attended by female slaves who anticipated their wishes. They had delightful gardens for their recreation, filled with the rarest fruits and flowers, with aromatic groves and perfumed baths. On three sides the castle looked down upon a rich valley, enamelled with all kinds of culture, and bounded by the lofty Alpujarra mountains; on the other side it overlooked the broad sunny sea.

In this delicious abode, in a propitious climate, and under a cloudless sky, the three princesses grew up into
wondrous beauty; but, though all reared alike, they gave early tokens of diversity of character. Their names were Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda; and such was their order of seniority, for there had been precisely three minutes between their births.

Zayda, the eldest, was of an intrepid spirit, and took the lead of her sisters in every thing, as she had done in entering first into the world. She was curious and inquisitive, and fond of getting at the bottom of things.

Zorayda had a great feeling for beauty, which was the reason, no doubt, of her delighting to regard her own image in a mirror or a fountain, and of her fondness for flowers, and jewels, and other tasteful ornaments.

As to Zorahayda, the youngest, she was soft and timid, and extremely sensitive, with a vast deal of disposable tenderness, as was evident from her number of pet-flowers, and pet-birds, and pet-animals, all of which she cherished with the fondest care. Her amusements, too, were of a gentle nature, and mixed up with musing and reverie. She would sit for hours in a balcony, gazing on the sparkling stars of a summer's night; or on the sea when lit up by the moon; and at such times, the song of a fisherman, faintly heard from the beach, or the notes of a Moorish flute from some gliding bark, sufficed to elevate her feelings into ecstasy. The least uproar of the elements, however, filled her with dismay; and a clap of thunder was enough to throw her into a swoon.

Years rolled on smoothly and serenely; the discreet Kadiga, to whom the princesses were confided, was faithful to her trust, and attended them with unremitting care.

The castle of Salobreña, as has been said, was built upon a hill on the sea-coast. One of the exterior walls straggled down the profile of the hill, until it reached a jutting rock overhanging the sea, with a narrow sandy beach at its foot, laved by the rippling billows. A small watch-tower on this rock had been fitted up as a pavilion, with latticed windows to admit the sea breeze. Here the princesses used to pass the sultry hours of mid-day.

The curious Zayda was one day seated at one of the windows of the pavilion, as her sisters, reclining on otto-
mans, were taking the siesta, or noontide slumber. Her attention had been attracted to a galley which came coasting along with measured strokes of the oar. As it drew near, she observed that it was filled with armed men. The galley anchored at the foot of the tower: a number of Moorish soldiers landed on the narrow beach, conducting several Christian prisoners. The curious Zayda awakened her sisters, and all three peeped cautiously through the close jalousies of the lattice, which screened them from sight. Among the prisoners were three Spanish cavaliers, richly dressed. They were in the flower of youth, and of noble presence; and the lofty manner in which they carried themselves, though loaded with chains and surrounded with enemies, bespoke the grandeur of their souls. The princesses gazed with intense and breathless interest. Cooped up as they had been in this castle among female attendants, seeing nothing of the male sex but black slaves or the rude fishermen of the sea-coast, it is not to be wondered at that the appearance of three gallant cavaliers, in the pride of youth and manly beauty, should produce some commotion in their bosom.

"Did ever nobler being tread the earth than that cavalier in crimson?" cried Zayda, the eldest of the sisters. "See how proudly he bears himself, as though all around him were his slaves!"

"But notice that one in green!" exclaimed Zorayda. "What grace! what elegance! what spirit!"

The gentle Zorahayda said nothing, but she secretly gave preference to the cavalier in green.

The princesses remained gazing until the prisoners were out of sight; then heaving longdrawn sighs, they turned round, looked at each other for a moment, and sat down, musing and pensive, on their ottomans.

The discreet Kadiga found them in this situation; they related to her what they had seen, and even the withered heart of the duenna was warmed. "Poor youths!" exclaimed she, "I'll warrant their captivity makes many a fair and high-born lady's heart ache in their native land! Ah, my children, you have little idea of the life these cavaliers lead in their own country. Such prankling at tourna-
ments! such devotion to the ladies! such courting and serenading!"

The curiosity of Zayda was fully aroused; she was in-satiable in her inquiries, and drew from the duenna the most animated pictures of the scenes of her youthful days and native land. The beautiful Zorayda bridled up, and slily regarded herself in a mirror, when the theme turned upon the charms of the Spanish ladies; while Zorahayda suppressed a struggling sigh at the mention of moonlight serenades.

Every day the curious Zayda renewed her inquiries, and every day the sage duenna repeated her stories, which were listened to with profound interest, though with frequent sighs, by her gentle auditors. The discreet old woman at length awakened to the mischief she might be doing. She had been accustomed to think of the princesses only as children; but they had imperceptibly ripened beneath her eye, and now bloomed before her three lovely damsels of the marriageable age. It is time, thought the duenna, to give notice to the king.

Mohamed the Left-handed was seated one morning on a divan in one of the cool halls of the Alhambra, when a slave arrived from the fortress of Salobreña, with a message from the sage Kadiga, congratulating him on the anniversary of his daughters' birth-day. The slave at the same time presented a delicate little basket decorated with flowers, within which, on a couch of vine and fig-leaves, lay a peach, an apricot, and a nectarine, with their bloom and down and dewy sweetness upon them, and all in the early stage of tempting ripeness. The monarch was versed in the Oriental language of fruits and flowers, and readily divined the meaning of this emblematical offering.

"So," said he, "the critical period pointed out by the astrologers is arrived: my daughters are at a marriageable age. What is to be done? They are shut up from the eyes of men; they are under the eyes of the discreet Kadiga—all very good,—but still they are not under my own eye, as was prescribed by the astrologers: I must gather them under my wing, and trust to no other guardianship."
So saying, he ordered that a tower of the Alhambra should be prepared for their reception, and departed at the head of his guards for the fortress of Salobreña, to conduct them home in person.

About three years had elapsed since Mohamed had beheld his daughters, and he could scarcely credit his eyes at the wonderful change which that small space of time had made in their appearance. During the interval, they had passed that wondrous boundary line in female life which separates the crude, unformed, and thoughtless girl from the blooming, blushing, meditative woman. It is like passing from the flat, bleak, uninteresting plains of La Mancha to the voluptuous valleys and swelling hills of Andalusia.

Zayda was tall and finely-formed, with a lofty demeanour and a penetrating eye. She entered with a stately and decided step, and made a profound reverence to Mohamed, treating him more as her sovereign than her father. Zorayda was of the middle height, with an alluring look and swimming gait, and a sparkling beauty, heightened by the assistance of the toilette. She approached her father with a smile, kissed his hand, and saluted him with several stanzas from a popular Arabian poet, with which the monarch was delighted. Zorahayda was shy and timid, smaller than her sisters, and with a beauty of that tender beseeching kind which looks for fondness and protection. She was little fitted to command, like her elder sister, or to dazzle like the second, but was rather formed to creep to the bosom of manly affection, to nestle within it, and be content. She drew near her father with a timid and almost faltering step, and would have taken his hand to kiss, but on looking up into his face, and seeing it beaming with a paternal smile, the tenderness of her nature broke forth, and she threw herself upon his neck.

Mohamed the Left-handed surveyed his blooming daughters with mingled pride and perplexity; for while he exulted in their charms, he bethought himself of the prediction of the astrologers. "Three daughters! three daughters!" muttered he repeatedly to himself, "and all of a marriageable age! Here's tempting Hesperian fruit, that requires a dragon watch!"
He prepared for his return to Granada, by sending heralds before him, commanding every one to keep out of the road by which he was to pass, and that all doors and windows should be closed at the approach of the princesses. This done he set forth, escorted by a troop of black horsemen of hideous aspect, and clad in shining armour.

The princesses rode beside the king, closely veiled, on beautiful white palfreys, with velvet caparisons, embroidered with gold, and sweeping the ground; the bits and stirrups were of gold, and the silken bridles adorned with pearls and precious stones. The palfreys were covered with little silver bells, that made the most musical tinkling as they ambled gently along. Woe to the unlucky wight, however, who lingered in the way when he heard the tinkling of these bells!—the guards were ordered to cut him down without mercy.

The cavalcade was drawing near to Granada, when it overtook, on the banks of the river Xenil, a small body of Moorish soldiers with a convoy of prisoners. It was too late for the soldiers to get out of the way, so they threw themselves on their faces on the earth, ordering their captives to do the like. Among the prisoners were the three identical cavaliers whom the princesses had seen from the pavilion. They either did not understand, or were too haughty to obey the order, and remained standing and gazing upon the cavalcade as it approached.

The ire of the monarch was kindled at this flagrant defiance of his orders. Drawing his scymitar, and pressing forward, he was about to deal a left-handed blow, that would have been fatal to, at least, one of the gazers, when the princesses crowded round him, and implored mercy for the prisoners; even the timid Zorahayda forgot her shyness, and became eloquent in their behalf. Mohamed paused, with uplifted scymitar, when the captain of the guard threw himself at his feet. "Let not your majesty," said he, "do a deed that may cause great scandal throughout the kingdom. These are three brave and noble Spanish knights, who have been taken in battle, fighting like lions; they are of high birth, and may bring great ransoms."—"Enough!" said the king; "I will spare
their lives, but punish their audacity: let them be taken to the Vermilion Towers and put to hard labour."

Mohamed was making one of his usual left-handed blunders. In the tumult and agitation of this blustering scene, the veils of the three princesses had been thrown back, and the radiance of their beauty revealed; and in prolonging the parley, the king had given that beauty time to have its full effect. In those days people fell in love much more suddenly than at present, as all ancient stories make manifest: it is not a matter of wonder, therefore, that the hearts of the three cavaliers were completely captured; especially as gratitude was added to their admiration: it is a little singular, however, though no less certain, that each of them was enraptured with a several beauty. As to the princesses, they were more than ever struck with the noble demeanour of the captives, and cherished in their breasts all that they had heard of their valour and noble lineage.

The cavalcade resumed its march; the three princesses rode pensively along on their tinkling palfreys, now and then stealing a glance behind in search of the Christian captives, and the latter were conducted to their allotted prison in the Vermilion Towers.

The residence provided for the princesses was one of the most dainty that fancy could devise. It was in a tower somewhat apart from the main palace of the Alhambra, though connected with it by the wall that encircled the whole summit of the hill. On one side it looked into the interior of the fortress, and had, at its foot, a small garden filled with the rarest flowers. On the other side it overlooked a deep embowered ravine that separated the grounds of the Alhambra from those of the Generalife. The interior of the tower was divided into small fairy apartments, beautifully ornamented in the light Arabian style, surrounding a lofty hall, the vaulted roof of which rose almost to the summit of the tower. The walls and ceiling of the hall were adorned with arabesque and fretwork, sparkling with gold and with brilliant penciling. In the centre of the marble pavement was an alabaster fountain, set round with aromatic shrubs and flowers, and
throwing up a jet of water that cooled the whole edifice, and had a lulling sound. Round the hall were suspended cages of gold and silver wire, containing singing-birds of the finest plumage or sweetest note.

The princesses had been represented as always cheerful when in the Castle of Salobreña; the king had expected to see them enraptured with the Alhambra. To his surprise, however, they began to pine, and grow melancholy, and dissatisfied with every thing around them. The flowers yielded them no fragrance, the song of the nightingale disturbed their night's rest, and they were out of all patience with the alabaster fountain with its eternal drop-drop and splash-splash, from morning till night, and from night till morning.

The king, who was somewhat of a testy, tyrannical disposition, took this at first in high dudgeon; but he reflected that his daughters had arrived at an age when the female mind expands and its desires augment. "They are no longer children," said he to himself; "they are women grown, and require suitable objects to interest them." He put in requisition, therefore, all the dress-makers, and the jewellers, and the artificers in gold and silver throughout the Zacatin of Granada, and the princesses were overwhelmed with robes of silk, and of tissue, and of brocade, and Cashmere shawls, and necklaces of pearls and diamonds, and rings, and bracelets, and anklets, and all manner of precious things.

All, however, was of no avail; the princesses continued pale and languid in the midst of their finery, and looked like three blighted rose-buds drooping from one stalk. The king was at his wits' end. He had in general a laudable confidence in his own judgment, and never took advice. The whims and caprices of three marriageable damsels, however, are sufficient, said he, to puzzle the shrewdest head. So, for once in his life, he called in the aid of counsel.

The person to whom he applied was the experienced duenna.

"Kadiga," said the king, "I know you to be one of the most discreet women in the whole world, as well as
one of the most trustworthy; for these reasons, I have always continued you about the persons of my daughters. Fathers cannot be too wary in whom they repose such confidence; I now wish you to find out the secret malady that is preying upon the princesses, and to devise some means of restoring them to health and cheerfulness."

Kadiga promised implicit obedience. In fact, she knew more of the malady of the princesses than they did themselves. Shutting herself up with them, however, she endeavoured to insinuate herself into their confidence.

"My dear children, what is the reason you are so dismal and downcast, in so beautiful a place, where you have every thing that heart can wish?"

The princesses looked vacantly round the apartment, and sighed.

"What more, then, would you have? Shall I get you the wonderful parrot that talks all languages, and is the delight of Granada?"

"Odious!" exclaimed the Princess Zayda. "A horrid, screaming bird, that chatters words without ideas: one must be without brains to tolerate such a pest."

"Shall I send for a monkey from the rock of Gibraltar, to divert you with his antics?"

"A monkey! faugh!" cried Zorayda; "the detestable mimic of man. I hate the nauseous animal."

"What say you to the famous black singer, Casem, from the royal harem in Morocco. They say he has a voice as fine as a woman's."

"I am terrified at the sight of these black slaves," said the delicate Zorahayda; "besides, I have lost all relish for music."

"Ah! my child, you would not say so," replied the old woman, slily, "had you heard the music I heard last evening, from the three Spanish cavaliers, whom we met on our journey. But, bless me, children! what is the matter that you blush so, and are in such a flutter?"

"Nothing, nothing, good mother; pray proceed."

"Well; as I was passing by the Vermilion Towers last evening, I saw the three cavaliers resting after their day's labour. One was playing on the guitar, so gracefully, and
the others sung by turns; and they did it in such style, that the very guards seemed like statues, or men enchanted. Allah forgive me! I could not help being moved at hearing the songs of my native country. And then to see three such noble and handsome youths in chains and slavery!"

Here the kind-hearted old woman could not restrain her tears.

"Perhaps, mother, you could manage to procure us a sight of these cavaliers," said Zayda.

"I think," said Zorayda, "a little music would be quite reviving."

The timid Zorahayda said nothing, but threw her arms round the neck of Kadiga.

"Mercy on me!" exclaimed the discreet old woman: "what are you talking of, my children? Your father would be the death of us all if he heard of such a thing. To be sure, these cavaliers are evidently well-bred, and high-minded youths; but what of that? they are the enemies of our faith, and you must not even think of them but with abhorrence."

There is an admirable intrepidity in the female will, particularly when about the marriageable age, which is not to be deterred by dangers and prohibitions. The princesses hung round their old duenna, and coaxed, and entreated, and declared that a refusal would break their hearts.

What could she do? She was certainly the most discreet old woman in the whole world, and one of the most faithful servants to the king; but was she to see three beautiful princesses break their hearts for the mere tinkling of a guitar? Besides, though she had been so long among the Moors, and changed her faith in imitation of her mistress, like a trusty follower, yet she was a Spaniard born, and had the lingerings of Christianity in her heart. So she set about to contrive how the wish of the princesses might be gratified.

The Christian captives, confined in the Vermilion Towers, were under the charge of a big-whiskered, broad-shouldered renegado, called Hussein Baba, who was reputed to have a most itching palm. She went to him privately, and slipping a broad piece of gold into his hand,
"Hussein Baba," said she; "my mistresses, the three princesses, who are shut up in the tower, and in sad want of amusement, have heard of the musical talents of the three Spanish cavaliers, and are desirous of hearing a specimen of their skill. I am sure you are too kind-hearted to refuse them so innocent a gratification."

"What! and to have my head set grinning over the gate of my own tower! for that would be the reward, if the king should discover it."

"No danger of anything of the kind; the affair may be managed so that the whim of the princesses may be gratified, and their father be never the wiser. You know the deep ravine outside of the walls that passes immediately below the tower. Put the three Christians to work there, and at the intervals of their labour, let them play and sing, as if for their own recreation. In this way the princesses will be able to hear them from the windows of the tower, and you may be sure of their paying well for your compliance."

As the good old woman concluded her harangue, she kindly pressed the rough hand of the renegado, and left within it another piece of gold.

Her eloquence was irresistible. The very next day the three cavaliers were put to work in the ravine. During the noontide heat, when their fellow labourers were sleeping in the shade, and the guard nodding drowsily at his post, they seated themselves among the herbage at the foot of the tower, and sang a Spanish roundelay to the accompaniment of the guitar.

The glen was deep, the tower was high, but their voices rose distinctly in the stillness of the summer noon. The princesses listened from their balcony; they had been taught the Spanish language by their duenna, and were moved by the tenderness of the song. The discreet Kadiga, on the contrary, was terribly shocked. "Allah preserve us!" cried she, "they are singing a love ditty, addressed to yourselves. Did ever mortal hear of such audacity? I will run to the slave master, and have them soundly bastinadoed."

hat! bastinado such gallant cavaliers, and for
singing so charmingly!" The three beautiful princesses were filled with horror at the idea. With all her virtuous indignation, the good old woman was of a placable nature, and easily appeased. Besides, the music seemed to have a beneficial effect upon her young mistresses. A rosy bloom had already come to their cheeks, and their eyes began to sparkle. She made no further objection, therefore, to the amorous ditty of the cavaliers.

When it was finished, the princesses remained silent for a time; at length Zorayda took up a lute, and with a sweet, though faint and trembling voice, warbled a little Arabian air, the burthen of which was, "The rose is concealed among her leaves, but she listens with delight to the song of the nightingale."

From this time forward the cavaliers worked almost daily in the ravine. The considerate Hussein Baba became more and more indulgent, and daily more prone to sleep at his post. For some time a vague intercourse was kept up by popular songs and romances, which, in some measure, responded to each other, and breathed the feelings of the parties. By degrees, the princesses showed themselves at the balcony, when they could do so without being perceived by the guards. They conversed with the cavaliers also, by means of flowers, with the symbolical language of which they were mutually acquainted: the difficulties of their intercourse added to its charms, and strengthened the passion they had so singularly conceived; for love delights to struggle with difficulties, and thrives the most hardly on the scantiest soil.

The change effected in the looks and spirits of the princesses by this secret intercourse, surprised and gratified the left-handed king; but no one was more elated than the discreet Kadiga, who considered it all owing to her able management.

At length there was an interruption in this telegraphic correspondence: for several days the cavaliers ceased to make their appearance in the glen. The three beautiful princesses looked out from the tower in vain. In vain they stretched their swan-like necks from the balcony; in vain they sang like captive nightingales in their cage:
nothing was to be seen of their Christian lovers; not a note responded from the groves. The discreet Kadiga sallied forth in quest of intelligence, and soon returned with a face full of trouble. "Ah, my children!" cried she, "I saw what all this would come to, but you would have your way; you may now hang up your lutes on the willows. The Spanish cavaliers are now ransomed by their families; they are down in Granada, and preparing to return to their native country."

The three beautiful princesses were in despair at the tidings. The fair Zayda was indignant at the slight put upon them, in thus being deserted without a parting word. Zorayda wrung her hands and cried, and looked in the glass, and wiped away her tears and cried afresh. The gentle Zorahayda leaned over the balcony and wept in silence, and her tears fell drop by drop among the flowers of the bank where the faithless cavaliers had so often been seated.

The discreet Kadiga did all in her power to soothe their sorrow. "Take comfort, my children," said she, "this is nothing when you are used to it. This is the way of the world. Ah! when you are as old as I am, you will know how to value these men. I'll warrant, these cavaliers have their loves among the Spanish beauties of Cordova and Seville, and will soon be serenading under their balconies, and thinking no more of the Moorish beauties in the Alhambra. Take comfort, therefore, my children, and drive them from your hearts."

The comforting words of the discreet Kadiga only redoubled the distress of the three princesses, and for two days they continued inconsolable. On the morning of the third, the good old woman entered their apartment, all ruffling with indignation.

"Who would have believed such insolence in mortal man!" exclaimed she, as soon as she could find words to express herself; "but I am rightly served for having connived at this deception of your worthy father. Never talk more to me of your Spanish cavaliers."

"Why, what has happened, good Kadiga?" exclaimed the princesses in breathless anxiety.
"What has happened! — treason has happened; or what is almost as bad, treason has been proposed, and to me, the most faithful of subjects, the trustiest of duennas! Yes, my children, the Spanish cavaliers have dared to tamper with me, that I should persuade you to fly with them to Cordova, and become their wives!"

Here the excellent old woman covered her face with her hands, and gave way to a violent burst of grief and indignation. The three beautiful princesses turned pale and red, pale and red, and trembled, and looked down, and cast shy looks at each other, but said nothing. Meanwhile the old woman sat rocking backward and forward in violent agitation, and now and then breaking out into exclamations, "That ever I should live to be so insulted! — I, the most faithful of servants!"

At length the oldest princess, who had most spirit, and always took the lead, approached her, and laying her hand upon her shoulder, "Well, mother," said she, "supposing we were willing to fly with these Christian cavaliers — is such a thing possible?"

The good old woman paused suddenly in her grief, and looking up, "Possible!" echoed she; "to be sure it is possible. Have not the cavaliers already bribed Hussein Baba, the renegade captain of the guard, and arranged the whole plan? But, then, to think of deceiving your father! your father, who has placed such confidence in me!"

Here the worthy woman gave way to a fresh burst of grief, and began again to rock backward and forward, and to wring her hands.

"But our father has never placed any confidence in us," said the eldest princess, "but has trusted to bolts and bars, and treated us as captives."

"Why, that is true enough," replied the old woman, again pausing in her grief; "he has indeed treated you most unreasonably, keeping you shut up here, to waste your bloom in a moping old tower, like roses left to wither in a flower-jar. But, then, to fly from your native land!"

"And is not the land we fly to the native land of our mother, where we shall live in freedom? And shall we
not each have a youthful husband in exchange for a severe old father?"

"Why, that again is all very true; and your father, I must confess, is rather tyrannical: but, what then," relapsing into her grief, "would you leave me behind to bear the brunt of his vengeance?"

"By no means, my good Kadiga; cannot you fly with us?"

"Very true, my child; and, to tell the truth, when I talked the matter over with Hussein Baba, he promised to take care of me, if I would accompany you in your flight: but, then, bethink you, my children, are you willing to renounce the faith of your father?"

"The Christian faith was the original faith of our mother," said the eldest princess; "I am ready to embrace it, and so, I am sure, are my sisters."

"Right again!" exclaimed the old woman, brightening up; "it was the original faith of your mother, and bitterly did she lament, on her death-bed, that she had renounced it. I promised her then to take care of your souls, and I rejoice to see that they are now in a fair way to be saved. Yes, my children, I, too, was born a Christian, and have remained a Christian in my heart, and am resolved to return to the faith. I have talked on the subject with Hussein Baba, who is a Spaniard by birth, and comes from a place not far from my native town. He is equally anxious to see his own country, and to be reconciled to the church; and the cavaliers have promised, that, if we are disposed to become man and wife, on returning to our native land, they will provide for us handsomely."

In a word, it appeared that this extremely discreet and provident old woman had consulted with the cavaliers and the renegado, and had concerted the whole plan of escape. The eldest princess immediately assented to it; and her example, as usual, determined the conduct of her sisters. It is true, the youngest hesitated, for she was gentle and timid of soul, and there was a struggle in her bosom between filial feeling and youthful passion: the latter, however, as usual, gained the victory, and with
silent tears, and stifled sighs, she prepared herself for flight.

The rugged hill, on which the Alhambra is built, was, in old times, perforated with subterranean passages, cut through the rock, and leading from the fortress to various parts of the city, and to distant sally-ports on the banks of the Darro and the Xenil. They had been constructed at different times by the Moorish kings, as means of escape from sudden insurrections, or of secretly issuing forth on private enterprises. Many of them are now entirely lost, while others remain, partly choked up with rubbish, and partly walled up; monuments of the jealous precautions and warlike stratagems of the Moorish government. By one of these passages, Hussein Baba had undertaken to conduct the princesses to a sally-port beyond the walls of the city, where the cavaliers were to be ready with fleet steeds, to bear the whole party over the borders.

The appointed night arrived: the tower of the princesses had been locked up as usual, and the Alhambra was buried in deep sleep. Towards midnight, the discreet Kadiga listened from the balcony of a window that looked into the garden. Hussein Baba, the renegado, was already below, and gave the appointed signal. The duenna fastened the end of a ladder of ropes to the balcony, lowered it into the garden, and descended. The two eldest princesses followed her with beating hearts; but when it came to the turn of the youngest princess, Zorahayda, she hesitated and trembled. Several times she ventured a delicate little foot upon the ladder, and as often drew it back, while her poor little heart fluttered more and more the longer she delayed. She cast a wistful look back into the silken chamber; she had lived in it, to be sure, like a bird in a cage; but within it she was secure: who could tell what dangers might beset her, should she flutter forth into the wide world! Now she bethought her of her gallant Christian lover, and her little foot was instantly upon the ladder; and anon she thought of her father, and shrank back. But fruitless is the attempt to describe the conflict in the bosom of one so young and tender, and loving, but so timid, and so ignorant of the world.
In vain her sisters implored, the duenna scolded, and the renegado blasphemed beneath the balcony; the gentle little Moorish maid stood doubting and wavering on the verge of elopement; tempted by the sweetness of the sin, but terrified at its perils.

Every moment increased the danger of discovery. A distant tramp was heard. "The patrols are walking the rounds," cried the renegado: "if we linger, we perish. Princess, descend instantly, or we leave you."

Zorahayda was for a moment in fearful agitation; then loosening the ladder of ropes, with desperate resolution, she flung it from the balcony.

"It is decided!" cried she; "flight is now out of my power! Allah guide and bless ye, my dear sisters!"

The two eldest princesses were shocked at the thoughts of leaving her behind, and would fain have lingered, but the patrol was advancing; the renegado was furious, and they were hurried away to the subterranean passage. They groped their way through a fearful labyrinth, cut through the heart of the mountain, and succeeded in reaching, undiscovered, an iron gate that opened outside of the walls. The Spanish cavaliers were waiting to receive them, disguised as Moorish soldiers of the guard commanded by the renegado.

The lover of Zorahayda was frantic, when he learned that she had refused to leave the tower; but there was no time to waste in lamentations. The two princesses were placed behind their lovers, the discreet Kadiga mounted behind the renegado, and all set off at a round pace in the direction of the pass of Lope, which leads through the mountains towards Cordova.

They had not proceeded far when they heard the noise of drums and trumpets from the battlements of the Alhambra.

"Our flight is discovered," said the renegado.

"We have fleet steeds, the night is dark, and we may distance all pursuit," replied the cavaliers.

They put spurs to their horses, and scoured across the Vega. They attained the foot of the mountain of Elvira, which stretches like a promontory into the plain. The
renegade paused and listened. "As yet," said he, "there is no one on our traces; we shall make good our escape to the mountains." While he spoke, a bale fire sprang up in a light blaze on the top of the watch-tower of the Alhambra.

"Confusion!" cried the renegade, "that fire will put all the guards of the passes on the alert. Away! away! Spur like mad,—there is no time to be lost."

Away they dashed—the clattering of their horses' hoofs echoed from rock to rock, as they swept along the road that skirts the rocky mountain of Elvira. As they galloped on, they beheld that the bale fire of the Alhambra was answered in every direction; light after light blazed the atalayas, or watch-towers of the mountains.

"Forward! forward!" cried the renegade, with many an oath, "to the bridge,—to the bridge, before the alarm has reached there!"

They doubled the promontory of the mountains, and arrived in sight of the famous Puente del Pinos, that crosses a rushing stream, often dyed with Christian and Moslem blood. To their confusion, the tower on the bridge blazed with lights and glittered with armed men. The renegade pulled up his steed, rose in his stirrups, and looked about him for a moment; then beckoning to the cavaliers, he struck off from the road, skirted the river for some distance, and dashed into its waters. The cavaliers called upon the princesses to cling to them, and did the same. They were borne for some distance down the rapid current, the surges roared round them, but the beautiful princesses clung to their Christian knights, and never uttered a complaint. The cavaliers attained the opposite bank in safety, and were conducted by the renegade, by rude and unfrequented paths, and wild barrancos, through the heart of the mountains, so as to avoid all the regular passes. In a word, they succeeded in reaching the ancient city of Cordova; where their restoration to their country and friends was celebrated with great rejoicings, for they were of the noblest families. The beautiful princesses were forthwith received into the bosom of the church, and, after
being in all due form made regular Christians, were rendered happy wives.

In our hurry to make good the escape of the princesses across the river, and up the mountains, we forgot to mention the fate of the discreet Kadiga. She had clung like a cat to Hussein Baba in the scamper across the Vega, screaming at every bound, and drawing many an oath from the whiskered renegade; but when he prepared to plunge his steed into the river, her terror knew no bounds. "Grasp me not so tightly," cried Hussein Baba; hold on by my belt and fear nothing." She held firmly with both hands by the leathern belt that girded the broad-backed renegade; but when he halted with the cavaliers to take breath on the mountain summit, the duenna was no longer to be seen.

"What has become of Kadiga?" cried the princesses in alarm.

"Allah alone knows!" replied the renegade; "my belt came loose when in the midst of the river, and Kadiga was swept with it down the stream. The will of Allah be done! but it was an embroidered belt, and of great price."

There was no time to waste in idle regrets; yet bitterly did the princesses bewail the loss of their discreet counsellor. That excellent old woman, however, did not lose more than half of her nine lives in the stream: a fisherman, who was drawing his nets some distance down the stream, brought her to land, and was not a little astonished at his miraculous draught. What further became of the discreet Kadiga, the legend does not mention; certain it is that she evinced her discretion in never venturing within the reach of Mohamed the left-handed.

Almost as little is known of the conduct of that sagacious monarch when he discovered the escape of his daughters, and the deceit practised upon him by the most faithful of servants. It was the only instance in which he had called in the aid of counsel, and he was never afterwards known to be guilty of a similar weakness. He took good care, however, to guard his remaining daughter, who had no disposition to elope: it is thought, indeed, that she
secretly repented having remained behind: now and then she was seen leaning on the battlements of the tower, and looking mournfully towards the mountains in the direction of Cordova, and sometimes the notes of her lute were heard accompanying plaintive ditties, in which she was said to lament the loss of her sisters and her lover, and to bewail her solitary life. She died young, and, according to popular rumour, was buried in a vault beneath the tower, and her untimely fate has given rise to more than one traditional fable.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.
It is now nearly three months since I took up my abode in the Alhambra, during which time the progress of the season has wrought many changes. When I first arrived, everything was in the freshness of May; the foliage of the trees was still tender and transparent; the pomegranate had not yet shed its brilliant crimson blossoms; the orchards of the Xenil and the Darro were in full bloom; the rocks were hung with wild flowers, and Granada seemed completely surrounded by a wilderness of roses, among which innumerable nightingales sang, not merely in the night, but all day long.

The advance of summer has withered the rose and silenced the nightingale, and the distant country begins to look parched and sunburnt: though a perennial verdure reigns immediately round the city, and in the deep narrow valleys at the foot of the snow-capped mountains.

The Alhambra possesses retreats graduated to the heat of the weather, among which the most peculiar is the almost subterranean apartment of the baths. This still retains its ancient oriental character, though stamped with the touching traces of decline. At the entrance, opening into a small court formerly adorned with flowers, is a hall, moderate in size, but light and graceful in architecture. It is overlooked by a small gallery supported by marble pillars and moresco arches. An alabaster fountain in the centre of the pavement still throws up a jet of water to cool the place. On each side are deep alcoves with raised platforms, where the bathers, after their ablutions, reclined on cushions, soothed to voluptuous repose by the fragrance
of the perfumed air and the notes of soft music from the gallery. Beyond this hall are the interior chambers, still more private and retired, where no light is admitted but through small apertures in the vaulted ceilings. Here was the sanctum sanctorum of female privacy, where the beauties of the harem indulged in the luxury of the baths. A soft mysterious light reigns through the place, the broken baths are still there, and traces of ancient elegance. The prevailing silence and obscurity have made this a favourite resort of bats, who nestle during the day in the dark nooks and corners, and on being disturbed, flit mysteriously about the twilight chambers, heightening, in an indescribable degree, their air of desertion and decay.

In this cool and elegant, though dilapidated retreat, which has the freshness and seclusion of a grotto, I have of late passed the sultry hours of the day, emerging towards sunset; and bathing, or rather swimming, at night in the great reservoir of the main court. In this way I have been enabled in a measure to counteract the relaxing and enervating influence of the climate.

My dream of absolute sovereignty, however, is at an end. I was roused from it lately by the report of fire-arms; which reverberated among the towers as if the castle had been taken by surprise. On sallying forth, I found an old cavalier, with a number of domestics, in possession of the hall of ambassadors. He was an ancient count, who had come up from his palace in Granada to pass a short time in the Alhambra for the benefit of purer air; and who, being a veteran and inveterate sportsman, was endeavouring to get an appetite for his breakfast by shooting at swallows from the balconies. It was a harmless amusement, for though, by the alertness of his attendants in loading his pieces, he was enabled to keep up a brisk fire, I could not accuse him of the death of a single swallow. Nay, the birds themselves seemed to enjoy the sport, and to deride his want of skill, skimming in circles close to the balconies, and twittering as they darted by.

The arrival of this old gentleman has in some manner changed the aspect of affairs, but has likewise afforded matter for agreeable speculation. We have tacitly shared
the empire between us, like the last kings of Granada, excepting that we maintain a most amicable alliance. He reigns absolute over the court of the Lions and its adjacent halls, while I maintain peaceful possession of the regions of the baths and the little garden of Lindaraja. We take our meals together under the arcades of the court, where the fountains cool the air, and bubbling rills run along the channels of the marble pavement.

In the evening a domestic circle gathers about the worthy old cavalier. The countess comes up from the city, with a favourite daughter about sixteen years of age. Then there are the official dependants of the count, his chaplain, lawyer, his secretary, his steward, and other officers and agents of his extensive possessions. Thus he holds a kind of domestic court, where every person seeks to contribute to his amusement without sacrificing his own pleasure or self-respect. In fact, whatever may be said of Spanish pride, it certainly does not enter into social or domestic life. Among no people are the relations between kindred more cordial, or between superior and dependant more frank and genial; in these respects there still remains, in the provincial life of Spain, much of the vaunted simplicity of the olden times.

The most interesting member of this family group, however, is the daughter of the count, the charming though almost infantine little Carmen. Her form has not yet attained its maturity, but has already the exquisite symmetry and pliant grace so prevalent in this country. Her blue eyes, fair complexion, and light hair, are unusual in Andalusia, and give a mildness and gentleness to her demeanour, in contrast to the usual fire of Spanish beauty, but in perfect unison with the guileless and confiding innocence of her manners. She has, however, all the innate aptness and versatility of her fascinating countrywomen, and sings, dances, and plays the guitar and other instruments, to admiration.

A few days after taking up his residence in the Alhambra, the count gave a domestic fête on his saint's day, assembling round him the members of his family and household, while several old servants came from his distant
possessions to pay their reverence to him, and partake of the good cheer. This patriarchal spirit, which characterised the Spanish nobility in the days of their opulence, has declined with their fortunes; but some who, like the count, still retain their ancient family possessions, keep up a little of the ancient system, and have their estates overrun and almost eaten up by generations of idle retainers. According to this magnificent old Spanish system, in which the national pride and generosity bore equal parts, a superannuated servant was never turned off, but became a charge for the rest of his days; nay, his children and his children's children, and often their relatives, to the right and left, became gradually entailed upon the family. Hence the huge palaces of the Spanish nobility, which have such an air of empty ostentation from the greatness of their size compared with the mediocrity and scantiness of their furniture, were absolutely required, in the golden days of Spain, by the patriarchal habits of their possessors. They were little better than vast barracks for the hereditary generations of hangers-on, that batten at the expense of a Spanish noble. The worthy old count, who has estates in various parts of the kingdom, assures me that some of them barely feed the hordes of dependants nestled upon them; who consider themselves entitled to be maintained upon the place rent-free, because their forefathers have been so for generations.

The domestic fête of the count broke in upon the usual still life of the Alhambra; music and laughter resounded through its late silent halls; there were groups of the guests amusing themselves about the galleries and gardens, and officious servants from town hurrying through the courts, bearing viands to the ancient kitchen, which was again alive with the tread of cooks and scullions, and blazed with unwonted fires.

The feast, for a Spanish set dinner is literally a feast, was laid in the beautiful Moresco hall called "La Sala de las dos Hermanas," (the saloon of the two sisters,) the table groaned with abundance, and a joyous conviviality prevailed round the board; for though the Spaniards are generally an abstemious people, they are complete revellers
at a banquet. For my own part, there was something peculiarly interesting in thus sitting at a feast in the royal halls of the Alhambra, given by the representative of one of its most renowned conquerors; for the venerable count, though unwarlike himself, is the lineal descendant and representative of the "Great Captain," the illustrious Gonsalvo of Cordova, whose sword he guards in the archives of his palace at Granada.

The banquet ended, the company adjourned to the hall of ambassadors. Here every one contributed to the general amusement by exerting some peculiar talent; singing, improvising, telling wonderful tales, or dancing to that all-pervading talisman of Spanish pleasure, the guitar.

The life and charm of the whole assemblage, however, was the gifted little Carmen. She took her part in two or three scenes from Spanish comedies, exhibiting a charming dramatic talent; she gave imitations of the popular Italian singers with singular and whimsical felicity, and a rare quality of voice; she imitated the dialects, dances, and ballads of the gipsies and the neighbouring peasantry, but did every thing with a facility, a neatness, a grace, and an all-pervading prettiness, that were perfectly fascinating.

The great charm of her performances, however, was their being free from all pretension, or ambition of display. She seemed unconscious of the extent of her own talents, and, in fact, is accustomed only to exert them casually, like a child, for the amusement of the domestic circle. Her observation and tact must be remarkably quick, for her life is passed in the bosom of her family, and she can only have had casual and transient glances at the various characters and traits brought out *impromptu* in moments of domestic hilarity like the one in question. It is pleasing to see the fondness and admiration with which every one of the household regards her: she is never spoken of, even by the domestics, by any other appellation than that of La Niña, "the child," an appellation which, thus applied, has something peculiarly kind and endearing in the Spanish language.
Never shall I think of the Alhambra without remembering the lovely little Carmen sporting in happy and innocent girlhood in its marble halls, dancing to the sound of the Moorish castañets, or mingling the silver warbling of her voice with the music of the fountains.

On this festive occasion several curious and amusing legends and traditions were told; many of which have escaped my memory; but out of those that most struck me, I will endeavour to shape forth some entertainment for the reader.

LEGEND OF PRINCE AHMED AL KAMEL; OR, THE PILGRIM OF LOVE.

There was once a Moorish king of Granada, who had but one son, whom he named Ahmed, to which his courtiers added the surname of Al Kamel, or the perfect, from the indubitable signs of super-excellence which they perceived in him in his very infancy. The astrologers countenanced them in their foresight, predicting every thing in his favour that could make a perfect prince and a prosperous sovereign. One cloud only rested upon his destiny, and even that was of a roseate hue; he would be of an amorous temperament, and run great perils from the tender passion. If, however, he could be kept from the allurements of love until of mature age, these dangers would be averted, and his life thereafter be one uninterrupted course of felicity.

To prevent all danger of the kind, the king wisely determined to rear the prince in a seclusion where he should never see a female face, nor hear even the name of love. For this purpose he built a beautiful palace on the brow of the hill above the Alhambra, in the midst of delightful gardens, but surrounded by lofty walls, being, in fact, the same palace known at the present day by the name of the Generalife. In this palace the youthful prince was shut
up, and entrusted to the guardianship and instruction of Eben Bonabben, one of the wisest and dryest of Arabian sages, who had passed the greatest part of his life in Egypt, studying hieroglyphics, and making researches among the tombs and pyramids, and who saw more charms in an Egyptian mummy, than in the most tempting of living beauties. The sage was ordered to instruct the prince in all kinds of knowledge but one — he was to be kept utterly ignorant of love. "Use every precaution for the purpose you may think proper," said the king, "but remember, O Eben Bonabben, if my son learns aught of forbidden knowledge while under your care, your head shall answer for it." A withered smile came over the dry visage of the wise Bonabben at the menace. "Let your majesty's heart be as easy about your son, as mine is about my head: am I a man likely to give lessons in the idle passion?"

Under the vigilant care of the philosopher, the prince grew up, in the seclusion of the palace and its gardens. He had black slaves to attend upon him,—hideous mutes, who knew nothing of love, or if they did, had not words to communicate it. His mental endowments were the peculiar care of Eben Bonabben, who sought to initiate him into the abstruse lore of Egypt, but in this the prince made little progress, and it was soon evident that he had no turn for philosophy.

He was, however, amazingly ductile for a youthful prince, ready to follow any advice, and always guided by the last counsellor. He suppressed his yawns, and listened patiently to the long and learned discourses of Eben Bonabben, from which he imbibed a smattering of various kinds of knowledge, and thus happily attained his twentieth year, a miracle of princely wisdom — but totally ignorant of love.

About this time, however, a change came over the conduct of the prince. He completely abandoned his studies, and took to strolling about the gardens, and musing by the side of the fountains. He had been taught a little music among his various accomplishments; it now engrossed a great part of his time, and a turn for poetry became apparent. The sage Eben Bonabben took the alarm, and en-
deavoured to work these idle humours out of him by a severe course of algebra—but the prince turned from it with distaste. "I cannot endure algebra," said he; "it is an abomination to me. I want something that speaks more to the heart."

The sage Eben Bonabben shook his dry head at the words. "Here is an end to philosophy," thought he. "The prince has discovered he has a heart!" He now kept anxious watch upon his pupil, and saw that the latent tenderness of his nature was in activity, and only wanted an object. He wandered about the gardens of the Generalife in an intoxication of feelings of which he knew not the cause. Sometimes he would sit plunged in a delicious reverie; then he would seize his lute and draw from it the most touching notes; and then throw it aside, and break forth into sighs and ejaculations.

By degrees this loving disposition began to extend to inanimate objects; he had his favourite flowers, which he cherished with tender assiduity; then he became attached to various trees, and there was one in particular of a graceful form and drooping foliage, on which he lavished his amorous devotion, carving his name on its bark, hanging garlands on its branches, and singing couplets in its praise, to the accompaniment of his lute.

Eben Bonabben was alarmed at this excited state of his pupil. He saw him on the very brink of forbidden knowledge—the least hint might reveal to him the fatal secret. Trembling for the safety of the prince and the security of his own head, he hastened to draw him from the seductions of the garden, and shut him up in the highest tower of the Generalife. It contained beautiful apartments, and commanded an almost boundless prospect, but was elevated far above that atmosphere of sweets and those witching bowers so dangerous to the feelings of the too susceptible Ahmed.

What was to be done, however, to reconcile him to this restraint, and to beguile the tedious hours? He had exhausted almost all kinds of agreeable knowledge; and algebra was not to be mentioned. Fortunately Eben Bonabben had been instructed, when in Egypt, in the language of birds, by a Jewish Rabbin, who had received it
in lineal transmission from Solomon the wise, who had been taught it by the Queen of Sheba. At the very mention of such a study, the eyes of the prince sparkled with animation, and he applied himself to it with such avidity, that he soon became as great an adept as his master.

The tower of the Generalife was no longer a solitude; he had companions at hand with whom he could converse. The first acquaintance he formed was with a hawk, who built his nest in a crevice of the lofty battlements, from whence he soared far and wide in quest of prey. The prince, however, found little to like or esteem in him. He was a mere pirate of the air, swaggering and boastful, whose talk was all about rapine, and carnage, and desperate exploits.

His next acquaintance was an owl, a mighty wise-looking bird, with a huge head and staring eyes, who sat blinking and goggling all day in a hole in the wall, but roamed forth at night. He had great pretensions to wisdom, talked something of astrology and the moon, and hinted at the dark sciences; but he was grievously given to metaphysics, and the prince found his prosings even more ponderous than those of the sage Eben Bonabben.

Then there was a bat, that hung all day by his heels in the dark corner of a vault, but sallied out in a slip-shod style at twilight. He, however, had but twilight ideas on all subjects, derided things of which he had taken but an imperfect view, and seemed to take delight in nothing.

Besides these there was a swallow, with whom the prince was at first much taken. He was a smart talker, but restless, bustling, and for ever on the wing; seldom remaining long enough for any continued conversation. He turned out in the end to be a mere smatterer, who did but skim over the surface of things, pretending to know every thing, but knowing nothing thoroughly.

These were the only feathered associates with whom the prince had any opportunity of exercising his newly-acquired language; the tower was too high for any other birds to frequent it. He soon grew weary of his new acquaintances, whose conversation spoke so little to the head, and nothing to the heart; and gradually relapsed into his
loneliness. A winter passed away, spring opened with all its bloom and verdure, and breathing sweetness, and the happy time arrived for birds to pair and build their nests. Suddenly, as it were, a universal burst of song and melody broke forth from the groves and gardens of the Generalife, and reached the prince in the solitude of his tower. From every side he heard the same universal theme — love — love — love — chanted forth and responded to in every variety of note and tone. The prince listened in silence and perplexity. "What can be this love," thought he, "of which the world seems so full, and of which I know nothing?" He applied for information to his friend the hawk. The ruffian bird answered in a tone of scorn: "You must apply," said he, "to the vulgar peaceable birds of earth who are made for the prey of us princes of the air. My trade is war, and fighting my delight. I am a warrior, and know nothing of this thing called love."

The prince turned from him with disgust, and sought the owl in his retreat. "This is a bird," said he, "of peaceful habits, and may be able to solve my question." So he asked the owl to tell him what was this love about which all the birds in the groves below were singing.

Upon this, the owl put on a look of offended dignity. "My nights," said he, "are taken up in study and research, and my days in ruminating in my cell upon all that I have learnt. As to these singing birds of whom you talk, I never listen to them — I despise them and their themes. Allah be praised, I cannot sing; I am a philosopher, and know nothing of this thing called love."

The prince now repaired to the vault, where his friend the bat was hanging by the heels, and propounded the same question. The bat wrinkled up his nose into a most snappish expression. "Why do you disturb me in my morning's nap with such an idle question?" said he peevishly. "I only fly by twilight, when all birds are asleep, and never trouble myself with their concerns. I am neither bird nor beast, and I thank Heaven for it. I have found out the villany of the whole of them, and hate them one and all. In a word, I am a misanthrope — and know nothing of this thing called love."
As a last resort, the prince now sought the swallow, and stopped him just as he was circling about the summit of the tower. The swallow, as usual, was in a prodigious hurry, and had scarce time to make a reply. "Upon my word," said he, "I have so much public business to attend to, and so many pursuits to follow, that I have had no time to think on the subject. I have every day a thousand visits to pay, a thousand affairs of importance to examine into, that leave me not a moment of leisure for these little sing-song matters. In a word, I am a citizen of the world — I know nothing of this thing called love." So saying, the swallow dived into the valley, and was out of sight in a moment.

The prince remained disappointed and perplexed, but with his curiosity still more piqued by the difficulty of gratifying it. While in this mood, his ancient guardian entered the tower. The prince advanced eagerly to meet him. "O Eben Bonabben," cried he, "thou hast revealed to me much of the wisdom of the earth; but there is one thing of which I remain in utter ignorance, and would fain be informed."

"My prince has but to make the inquiry, and every thing within the limited range of his servant's intellect is at his command."

"Tell me then, O most profound of sages, what is the nature of this thing called love?"

Eben Bonabben was struck as with a thunderbolt. He trembled and turned pale, and felt as if his head sat but loosely on his shoulders.

"What could suggest such a question to my prince — where could he have learnt so idle a word?"

The prince led him to the window of the tower. "Listen, O Eben Bonabben," said he. The sage listened. The nightingale sat in a thicket below the tower, singing to his paramour the rose; from every blossomed spray and tufted grove arose a strain of melody; and love — love — love — was still the unvarying strain.

"Allah Akbar! God is great!" exclaimed the wise Bonabben. "Who shall pretend to keep this secret from
the heart of man, when even the birds of the air conspire
to betray it?"

Then turning to Ahmed — "O my prince," cried he,
"shut thine ears to these seductive strains. Close thy
mind against this dangerous knowledge. Know that this
love is the cause of half the ills of wretched mortality. It
is this which produces bitterness and strife between bre-
thren and friends; which causes treacherous murder and
desolating war. Care and sorrow, weary days and sleep-
less nights, are its attendants. It withers the bloom and
blights the joys of youth, and brings on the ills and griefs
of premature old age. Allah preserve thee, my prince, in
total ignorance of this thing called love!"

The sage Eben Bonabben hastily retired, leaving the
prince plunged in still deeper perplexity. It was in vain
he attempted to dismiss the subject from his mind; it still
continued uppermost in his thoughts, and teased and ex-
hausted him with vain conjectures. Surely, said he to
himself, as he listened to the tuneful strains of the birds,
there is no sorrow in those notes; every thing seems ten-
derness and joy. If love be a cause of such wretchedness
and strife, why are not these birds drooping in solitude, or
tearing each other in pieces, instead of fluttering cheer-
fully about the groves, or sporting with each other among
flowers?

He lay one morning on his couch meditating on this in-
explicable matter. The window of his chamber was open,
to admit the soft morning breeze which came laden with
the perfume of orange blossoms from the valley of the
Darro. The voice of the nightingale was faintly heard,
still chanting the wonted theme. As the prince was lis-
tening and sighing, there was a sudden rushing noise in
the air; a beautiful dove pursued by a hawk, darted in at
the window, and fell panting on the floor; while the pur-
suer, balked of his prey, soared off to the mountains.

The prince took up the gasping bird, smoothed its
feathers, and nestled it in his bosom. When he had
soothed it by his caresses, he put it in a golden cage, and
offered it, with his own hands, the whitest and finest of
wheat and the purest of water. The bird, however, re-
fused food, and sat drooping and pining, and uttering piteous moans.

"What aileth thee?" said Ahmed. "Hast thou not every thing thy heart can wish?"

"Alas, no!" replied the dove; "am I not separated from the partner of my heart, and that, too, in the happy spring-time, the very season of love!"

"Of love!" echoed Ahmed; "I pray thee, my pretty bird, canst thou then tell me what is love?"

"Too well can I, my prince. It is the torment of one, the felicity of two, the strife and enmity of three. It is a charm which draws two beings together, and unites them by delicious sympathies, making it happiness to be with each other, but misery to be apart. Is there no being to whom you are drawn by these ties of tender affection?"

"I like my old teacher Eben Bonabben better than any other being; but he is often tedious, and I occasionally feel myself happier without his society."

"That is not the sympathy I mean. I speak of love, the great mystery and principle of life: the intoxicating revel of youth; the sober delight of age. Look forth, my prince, and behold how at this blest season all nature is full of love. Every created being has its mate; the most insignificant bird sings to its paramour; the very beetle woos its lady-beetle in the dust, and yon butterflies, which you see fluttering high above the tower and toying in the air, are happy in each other's loves. Alas, my prince! hast thou spent so many of the precious days of youth without knowing any thing of love? Is there no gentle being of another sex — no beautiful princess or lovely damsel, who has ensnared your heart, and filled your bosom with a soft tumult of pleasing pains and tender wishes?"

"I begin to understand," said the prince, sighing; "such a tumult I have more than once experienced, without knowing the cause; — and where should I seek for an object, such as you describe, in this dismal solitude?"

A little further conversation ensued, and the first amatory lesson of the prince was complete.

"Alas!" said he, "if love be indeed such a delight, and its interruption such a misery, Allah forbid that I
should mar the joy of any of its votaries." He opened the cage, took out the dove, and having fondly kissed it, carried it to the window. "Go, happy bird," said he, "rejoice with the partner of thy heart in the days of youth and spring-time. Why should I make thee a fellow-prisoner in this dreary tower, where love can never enter?"

The dove flapped its wings in rapture, gave one vault into the air, and then swooped downward on whistling wings to the blooming bowers of the Darro.

The prince followed him with his eyes, and then gave way to bitter repining. The singing of the birds, which once delighted him, now added to his bitterness. Love! love! love! Alas, poor youth! he now understood the strain.

His eyes flashed fire when next he beheld the sage Bonabben. "Why hast thou kept me in this abject ignorance?" cried he. "Why has the great mystery and principle of life been withheld from me, in which I find the meanest insect is so learned? Behold all nature is in a revel of delight. Every created being rejoices with its mate. This — this is the love about which I have sought instruction. Why am I alone debarred its enjoyment? Why has so much of my youth been wasted without a knowledge of its raptures?"

The sage Bonabben saw that all further reserve was useless; for the prince had acquired the dangerous and forbidden knowledge. He revealed to him, therefore, the predictions of the astrologers, and the precautions that had been taken in his education to avert the threatened evils. "And now, my prince," added he, "my life is in your hands. Let the king your father discover that you have learned the passion of love while under my guardianship, and my head must answer for it."

The prince was as reasonable as most young men of his age, and easily listened to the remonstrances of his tutor, since nothing pleaded against them. Besides, he really was attached to Eben Bonabben, and being as yet but theoretically acquainted with the passion of love, he
consented to confine the knowledge of it to his own bosom, rather than endanger the head of the philosopher.

His discretion was doomed, however, to be put to still further proofs. A few mornings afterwards, as he was ruminating on the battlements of the tower, the dove which had been released by him came hovering in the air, and alighted fearlessly upon his shoulder.

The prince fondled it to his heart. "Happy bird," said he, "who can fly, as it were, with the wings of the morning to the uttermost parts of the earth. Where hast thou been since we parted?"

"In a far country, my prince, from whence I bring you tidings in reward for my liberty. In the wild compass of my flight, which extends over plain and mountain, as I was soaring in the air, I beheld below me a delightful garden, with all kinds of fruits and flowers. It was in a green meadow, on the banks of a wandering stream; and in the centre of the garden was a stately palace. I alighted in one of the bowers to repose after my weary flight. On the green bank below me was a youthful princess, in the very sweetness and bloom of her years. She was surrounded by female attendants, young like herself, who decked her with garlands and coronets of flowers; but no flower of field or garden could compare with her for loveliness. Here, however, she bloomed in secret, for the garden was surrounded by high walls, and no mortal man was permitted to enter. When I beheld this beauteous maid, thus young and innocent, and unspotted by the world, I thought, here is the being formed by Heaven to inspire my prince with love."

The description was a spark of fire to the combustible heart of Ahmed; all the latent amorousness of his temperament had at once found an object, and he conceived an immeasurable passion for the princess. He wrote a letter, couched in the most impassioned language, breathing his fervent devotion, but bewailing the unhappy thraldom of his person, which prevented him from seeking her out and throwing himself at her feet. He added couplets of the most tender and moving eloquence, for he was a poet.
by nature and inspired by love. He addressed his letter "To the unknown beauty, from the captive Prince Ahmed;" then perfuming it with musk and roses, he gave it to the dove.

"Away, trustiest of messengers!" said he. "Fly over mountain and valley and river and plain; rest not in bower, nor set foot on earth, until thou hast given this letter to the mistress of my heart."

The dove soared high in air, and taking his course, darted away in one undeviating direction. The prince followed him with his eye until he was a mere speck on a cloud, and gradually disappeared behind a mountain.

Day after day he watched for the return of the messenger of love, but he watched in vain. He began to accuse him of forgetfulness, when towards sunset one evening the faithful bird fluttered into his apartment, and falling at his feet, expired. The arrow of some wanton archer had pierced his breast, yet he had struggled with the lingerings of life to execute his mission. As the prince bent with grief over this gentle martyr to fidelity, he beheld a chain of pearls round his neck, attached to which, beneath his wing, was a small enamelled picture. It represented a lovely princess in the very flower of her years. It was doubtless the unknown beauty of the garden; but who and where was she — how had she received his letter, and was this picture sent as a token of her approval of his passion? Unfortunately the death of the faithful dove left everything in mystery and doubt.

The prince gazed on the picture till his eyes swam with tears. He pressed it to his lips and to his heart; he sat for hours contemplating it almost in an agony of tenderness. "Beautiful image!" said he, "alas, thou art but an image! Yet thy dewy eyes beam tenderly upon me; those rosy lips look as though they would speak encouragement: vain fancies! Have they not looked the same on some more happy rival? But where in this wide world shall I hope to find the original? Who knows what mountains, what realms may separate us — what adverse chances may intervene? Perhaps, now, even now, lovers may be crowding around her, while I sit here a prisoner
in a tower, wasting my time in adoration of a painted shadow."

The resolution of Prince Ahmed was taken. "I will fly from this palace," said he, "which has become an odious prison, and, a pilgrim of love, will seek this unknown princess throughout the world." To escape from the tower in the day, when every one was awake, might be a difficult matter; but at night the palace was slightly guarded; for no one apprehended any attempt of the kind from the prince, who had always been so passive in his captivity. How was he to guide himself, however, in his darkling flight, being ignorant of the country? He be-thought him of the owl, who was accustomed to roam at night, and must know every bye lane and secret pass. Seeking him in his hermitage, he questioned him touching his knowledge of the land. Upon this the owl put on a mighty self-important look. "You must know, O prince," said he, "that we owls are of a very ancient and extensive family, though rather fallen to decay, and possess ruinous castles and palaces in all parts of Spain. There is scarcely a tower of the mountains, or a fortress of the plains, or an old citadel of a city, but has some brother, or uncle, or cousin quartered in it; and in going the rounds to visit this my numerous kindred, I have pryed into every nook and corner, and made myself acquainted with every secret of the land." The prince was overjoyed to find the owl so deeply versed in topography, and now informed him, in confidence, of his tender passion and his intended elopement, urging him to be his companion and counsellor.

"Go to!" said the owl with a look of displeasure, "am I a bird to engage in a love affair? I, whose whole time is devoted to meditation and the moon?"

"Be not offended, most solemn owl," replied the prince; "abstract thyself for a time from meditation and the moon, and aid me in my flight, and thou shalt have whatever heart can wish."

"I have that already," said the owl: "a few mice are sufficient for my frugal table, and this hole in the wall is spacious enough for my studies; and what more does a philosopher like myself desire?"
“Bethink thee, most wise owl, that while moping in thy cell and gazing at the moon, all thy talents are lost to the world. I shall one day be a sovereign prince, and may advance thee to some post of honour and dignity.”

The owl, though a philosopher and above the ordinary wants of life, was not above ambition; so he was finally prevailed on to elope with the prince, and be his guide and mentor in his pilgrimage.

The plans of a lover are promptly executed. The prince collected all his jewels, and concealed them about his person as travelling funds. That very night he lowered himself by his scarf from a balcony of the tower, clambered over the outer walls of the Generalife, and, guided by the owl, made good his escape before morning to the mountains.

He now held a council with his mentor as to his future course.

“Might I advise,” said the owl, “I would recommend you to repair to Seville. You must know, that many years since I was on a visit to an uncle, an owl of great dignity and power, who lived in a ruined wing of the alcazar of that place. In my hoverings at night over the city I frequently remarked a light burning in a lonely tower. At length I alighted on the battlements, and found it to proceed from the lamp of an Arabian magician: he was surrounded by his magic books, and on his shoulder was perched his familiar, an ancient raven who had come with him from Egypt. I am acquainted with that raven, and owe to him a great part of the knowledge I possess. The magician is since dead, but the raven still inhabits the tower, for these birds are of wonderful long life. I would advise you, O prince, to seek that raven, for he is a soothsayer and a conjuror, and deals in the black art, for which all ravens, and especially those of Egypt, are renowned.”

The prince was struck with the wisdom of this advice, and accordingly bent his course towards Seville. He travelled only in the night, to accommodate his companion, and lay by during the day in some dark cavern or mouldering watch-tower, for the owl knew every hiding hole of the kind, and had a most antiquarian taste for ruins.
At length one morning at day-break they reached the city of Seville, where the owl, who hated the glare and bustle of crowded streets, halted without the gate and took up his quarters in a hollow tree.

The prince entered the gate, and readily found the magic tower, which rose above the houses of the city, as a palm tree rises above the shrubs of the desert; it was, in fact, the same tower that is standing at the present day, and known as the Giralda, the famous Moorish tower of Seville.

The prince ascended by a great winding staircase to the summit of the tower, where he found the cabalistic raven, an old, mysterious, grey-headed bird, ragged in feather, with a film over one eye that gave him the glare of a spectre. He was perched on one leg, with his head turned on one side, poring, with his remaining eye, on a diagram described on the pavement.

The prince approached him with the awe and reverence naturally inspired by his venerable appearance and supernatural wisdom. "Pardon me, most ancient and darkly wise raven," exclaimed he, "if for a moment I interrupt those studies which are the wonder of the world. You behold before you a votary of love, who would fain seek your counsel how to obtain the object of his passion."

"In other words," said the raven with a significant look, "you seek to try my skill in palmistry. Come, show me your hand, and let me decipher the mysterious lines of fortune."

"Excuse me," said the prince, "I come not to pry into the decrees of fate, which are hidden by Allah from the eyes of mortals: I am a pilgrim of love, and seek but to find a clue to the object of my pilgrimage."

"And can you be at any loss for an object in amorous Andalusia?" said the old raven, leering upon him with his single eye; "above all, can you be at a loss in wanton Seville, where black-eyed damsels dance the zambra under every orange grove?"

The prince blushed, and was somewhat shocked at hearing an old bird, with one foot in the grave, talk thus loosely. "Believe me," said he gravely, "I am on none
such light and vagrant errand as thou dost insinuate. The black-eyed damsels of Andalusia who dance among the orange groves of the Guadalquiver are as nought to me. I seek one unknown but immaculate beauty, the original of this picture; and I beseech thee, most potent raven, if it be within the scope of thy knowledge or the reach of thy art, inform me where she may be found.”

The grey-headed raven was rebuked by the gravity of the prince.

“What know I,” replied he drily, “of youth and beauty? my visits are to the old and withered, not the fresh and fair: the harbinger of fate am I; who croak bodings of death from the chimney top, and flap my wings at the sick man’s window. You must seek elsewhere for tidings of your unknown beauty.”

“And where can I seek, if not among the sons of wisdom, versed in the book of destiny? Know that I am a royal prince, fated by the stars, and sent on a mysterious enterprise, on which may hang the destiny of empires.”

When the raven heard that it was a matter of vast moment, in which the stars took interest, he changed his tone and manner, and listened with profound attention to the story of the prince. When it was concluded, he replied, “Touching this princess, I can give thee no information of myself, for my flight is not among gardens, or around ladies’ bowers; but hie thee to Cordova, seek the palm tree of the great Abderahman, which stands in the court of the principal mosque: at the foot of it thou wilt find a great traveller, who has visited all countries and courts, and been a favourite with queens and princesses. He will give thee tidings of the object of thy search.”

“Many thanks for this precious information,” said the prince. “Farewell, most venerable conjuror.”

“Farewell, pilgrim of love,” said the raven drily, and again fell pondering on the diagram.

The prince sallied forth from Seville, sought his fellow-traveller the owl, who was still dozing in the hollow tree, and set off for Cordova.

He approached it along hanging gardens, and orange
and citron groves, overlooking the fair valley of the Guadalquiver. When arrived at its gates the owl flew up to a dark hole in the wall, and the prince proceeded in quest of the palm tree planted in days of yore by the Great Abderahman. It stood in the midst of the great court of the mosque, towering from amidst orange and cypress trees. Dervises and faquirs were seated in groups under the cloisters of the court, and many of the faithful were performing their ablutions at the fountains before entering the mosque.

At the foot of the palm tree was a crowd listening to the words of one who appeared to be talking with great volubility. "This," said the prince to himself, "must be the great traveller who is to give me tidings of the unknown princess." He mingled in the crowd, but was astonished to perceive that they were all listening to a parrot, who with his bright green coat, pragmatical eye, and consequential top-knot, had the air of a bird on excellent terms with himself.

"How is this," said the prince to one of the bystanders, "that so many grave persons can be delighted with the garrulity of a chattering bird?"

"You know not whom you speak of," said the other; "this parrot is a descendant of the famous parrot of Persia, renowned for his story-telling talent. He has all the learning of the East at the tip of his tongue, and can quote poetry as fast as he can talk. He has visited various foreign courts, and where he has been considered an oracle of erudition. He has been a universal favourite also with the fair sex, who have a vast admiration for erudite parrots that can quote poetry."

"Enough," said the prince; "I will have some private talk with this distinguished traveller."

He sought a private interview, and expounded the nature of his errand. He had scarcely mentioned it when the parrot burst into a fit of dry rickety laughter that absolutely brought tears in his eyes. "Excuse my merriment," said he, "but the mere mention of love always sets me laughing."
The prince was shocked at this ill-timed mirth. "Is not love," said he, "the great mystery of nature, the secret principle of life, the universal bond of sympathy?"

"A fig's end!" cried the parrot, interrupting him; "pr'ythee where hast thou learnt this sentimental jargon? trust me, love is quite out of vogue; one never hears of it in the company of wits and people of refinement."

The prince sighed as he recalled the different language of his friend the dove. But this parrot, thought he, has lived about the court, he affects the wit and the fine gentleman, he knows nothing of the thing called love. Unwilling to provoke any more ridicule of the sentiment which filled his heart, he now directed his inquiries to the immediate purport of his visit.

"Tell me," said he, "most accomplished parrot, thou who hast every where been admitted to the secret bowers of beauty, hast thou in the course of thy travels met with the original of this portrait?"

The parrot took the picture in his claw, turned his head from side to side, and examined it curiously with either eye. "Upon my honour," said he, "a very pretty face; very pretty; but then one sees so many pretty women in one's travels that one can hardly — but hold — bless me! now I look at it again — sure enough this is the Princess Aldegonda: how could I forget one that is so prodigious a favourite with me?"

"The Princess Aldegonda!" echoed the prince, "and where is she to be found?"

"Softly, softly," said the parrot, "easier to be found than gained. She is the only daughter of the Christian king who reigns at Toledo, and is shut up from the world until her seventeenth birth-day, on account of some prediction of those meddlesome fellows the astrologers. You'll not get a sight of her — no mortal man can see her. I was admitted to her presence to entertain her, and I assure you, on the word of a parrot who has seen the world, I have conversed with much sillier princesses in my time."

"A word in confidence, my dear parrot," said the prince; "I am heir to a kingdom, and shall one day sit upon a throne. I see that you are a bird of parts, and
understand the world. Help me to gain possession of this princess, and I will advance you to some distinguished place about court."

"With all my heart," said the parrot; "but let it be a sinecure if possible, for we wits have a great dislike to labour."

Arrangements were promptly made; the prince sallied forth from Cordova through the same gate by which he had entered; called the owl down from the hole in the wall, introduced him to his new travelling companion as a brother savant, and away they set off on their journey.

They travelled much more slowly than accorded with the impatience of the prince, but the parrot was accustomed to high life, and did not like to be disturbed early in the morning. The owl on the other hand was for sleeping at mid-day, and lost a great deal of time by his long siestas. His antiquarian taste also was in the way; for he insisted on pausing and inspecting every ruin, and had long legendary tales to tell about every old tower and castle in the country. The prince had supposed that he and the parrot, being both birds of learning, would delight in each other's society, but never had he been more mistaken. They were eternally bickering. The one was a wit, the other a philosopher. The parrot quoted poetry, was critical on new readings, and eloquent on small points of erudition; the owl treated all such knowledge as trifling, and relished nothing but metaphysics. Then the parrot would sing songs and repeat bon-mots, and crack jokes upon his solemn neighbour, and laugh outrageously at his own wit; all which proceedings the owl considered as a grievous invasion of his dignity, and would scowl, and sulk, and swell, and be silent for a whole day together.

The prince heeded not the wranglings of his companions, being wrapped up in the dreams of his own fancy and the contemplation of the portrait of the beautiful princess. In this way they journeyed through the stern passes of the Sierra Morena, across the sunburnt plains of La Mancha and Castile, and along the banks of the "Golden Tagus," which winds its wizard mazes over one half of Spain and Portugal. At length they came in sight of a strong city
with walls and towers built on a rocky promontory, round the foot of which the Tagus circled with brawling violence.

"Behold," exclaimed the owl, "the ancient and renowned city of Toledo; a city famous for its antiquities. Behold those venerable domes and towers, hoary with time and clothed with legendary grandeur, in which so many of my ancestors have meditated."

"Pish!" cried the parrot, interrupting his solemn antiquarian rapture, "what have we to do with antiquities, and legends, and your ancestry? Behold what is more to the purpose—behold the abode of youth and beauty—behold at length, O prince, the abode of your long-sought princess."

The prince looked in the direction indicated by the parrot, and beheld, in a delightful green meadow on the banks of the Tagus, a stately palace rising from amidst the bowers of a delicious garden. It was just such a place as had been described by the dove as the residence of the original of the picture. He gazed at it with a throbbing heart. "Perhaps at this moment," thought he, "the beautiful princess is sporting beneath those shady bowers, or pacing with delicate step those stately terraces, or repose beneath those lofty roofs!" As he looked more narrowly he perceived that the walls of the garden were of great height, so as to defy access, while numbers of armed guards patrolled around them.

The prince turned to the parrot. "O most accomplished of birds," said he, "thou hast the gift of human speech. Hie thee to yon garden; seek the idol of my soul, and tell her that prince Ahmed, a pilgrim of love, and guided by the stars, has arrived in quest of her on the flowery banks of the Tagus."

The parrot, proud of his embassy, flew away to the garden, mounted above its lofty walls, and after soaring for a time over the lawns and groves, alighted on the balcony of a pavilion that overhung the river. Here, looking in at the casement, he beheld the princess reclining on a couch, with her eyes fixed on a paper, while tears gently stole after each other down her pallid cheek.

Pluming his wings for a moment, adjusting his bright
green coat, and elevating his top-knot, the parrot perched himself beside her with a gallant air: then assuming a tenderness of tone, "Dry thy tears, most beautiful of princesses," said he, "I come to bring solace to thy heart."

The princess was startled on hearing a voice, but turning and seeing nothing but a little green-coated bird bobbing and bowing before her; "Alas! what solace canst thou yield," said she, "seeing thou art but a parrot?"

The parrot was nettled at the question. "I have consoled many beautiful ladies in my time," said he; "but let that pass. At present I come ambassador from a royal prince. Know that Ahmed, the prince of Granada, has arrived in quest of thee, and is encamped even now on the flowery banks of the Tagus."

The eyes of the beautiful princess sparkled at these words even brighter than the diamonds in her coronet. "O sweetest of parrots," cried she, "joyful indeed are thy tidings, for I was faint and weary, and sick almost unto death with doubt of the constancy of Ahmed. Hie thee back, and tell him that the words of his letter are engraven in my heart, and his poetry has been the food of my soul. Tell him, however, that he must prepare to prove his love by force of arms; to-morrow is my seventeenth birthday, when the king my father holds a great tournament; several princes are to enter the lists, and my hand is to be the prize of the victor."

The parrot again took wing, and rustling through the groves, flew back to where the prince awaited his return. The rapture of Ahmed on finding the original of his adored portrait, and finding her kind and true, can only be conceived by those favoured mortals who have had the good fortune to realise day-dreams and turn a shadow into substance: still there was one thing that alloyed his transport — this impending tournament. In fact, the banks of the Tagus were already glittering with arms, and resounding with trumpets of the various knights, who, with proud retinues, were prancing on towards Toledo to attend the ceremonial. The same star that had controlled the destiny of the prince, had governed that of the princess, and until
her seventeenth birthday she had been shut up from the world, to guard her from the tender passion. The fame of her charms, however, had been enhanced rather than obsurred by this seclusion. Several powerful princes had contended for her alliance; and her father, who was a king of wondrous shrewdness, to avoid making enemies by showing partiality, had referred them to the arbitrement of arms. Among the rival candidates were several renowned for strength and prowess. What a predicament for the unfortunate Ahmed, unprovided as he was with weapons, and unskilled in the exercises of chivalry! "Luckless prince that I am!" said he, "to have been brought up in seclusion under the eye of a philosopher! Of what avail are algebra and philosophy in affairs of love? Alas, Eben Bonabben! why hast thou neglected to instruct me in the management of arms?" Upon this the owl broke silence, preluding his harangue with a pious ejaculation, for he was a devout Mussulman.

"Allah Akbar! God is great!" exclaimed he; "in his hands are all secret things—he alone governs the destiny of princes! Know, O prince, that this land is full of mysteries, hidden from all but those who, like myself, can grope after knowledge in the dark. Know that in the neighbouring mountains there is a cave, and in that cave there is an iron table, and on that table there lies a suit of magic armour, and beside that table there stands a spell-bound steed, which have been shut up there for many generations."

The prince stared with wonder, while the owl, blinking his huge round eyes, and erecting his horns, proceeded.

"Many years since, I accompanied my father to these parts on a tour of his estates, and we sojourned in that cave; and thus became I acquainted with the mystery. It is a tradition in our family which I have heard from my grandfather, when I was yet but a very little owlet, that this armour belonged to a Moorish magician, who took refuge in this cavern when Toledo was captured by the Christians, and died here, leaving his steed and weapons under a mystic spell, never to be used but by a Moslem, and by him only from sunrise to mid-day. In
that interval, whoever uses them will overthrow every opponent."

"Enough: let us seek this cave!" exclaimed Ahmed.

Guided by his legendary mentor, the prince found the cavern, which was in one of the wildest recesses of those rocky cliffs which rise around Toledo; none but the mousing eye of an owl or an antiquary could have discovered the entrance to it. A sepulchral lamp of everlasting oil shed a solemn light through the place. On an iron table in the centre of the cavern lay the magic armour, against it leaned the lance, and beside it stood an Arabian steed, caparisoned for the field, but motionless as a statue. The armour was bright and unsullied as it had gleamed in days of old; the steed in as good a condition as if just from the pasture; and when Ahmed laid his hand upon his neck, he pawed the ground and gave a loud neigh of joy that shook the walls of the cavern. Thus amply provided with "horse to ride and weapon to wear," the prince determined to defy the field in the impending tourney.

The eventful morning arrived. The lists for the combat were prepared in the Vega, or plain, just below the cliff-built walls of Toledo, where stages and galleries were erected for the spectators, covered with rich tapestry, and sheltered from the sun by silken awnings. All the beauties of the land were assembled in those galleries, while below pranced plumed knights with their pages and esquires, among whom figured conspicuously the princes who were to contend in the tourney. All the beauties of the land, however, were eclipsed when the princess Aldegonda appeared in the royal pavilion, and for the first time broke forth upon the gaze of an admiring world. A murmur of wonder ran through the crowd at her transcendent loveliness; and the princes who were candidates for her hand, merely on the faith of her reported charms, now felt tenfold ardour for the conflict.

The princess, however, had a troubled look. The colour came and went from her cheek, and her eye wandered with a restless and unsatisfied expression over the plumed throng of knights. The trumpets were about
sounding for the encounter, when the herald announced the arrival of a stranger knight; and Ahmed rode into the field. A steeled helmet studded with gems rose above his turban; his cuirass was embossed with gold; his scimitar and dagger were of the workmanship of Fez, and flamed with precious stones. A round shield was at his shoulder, and in his hand he bore the lance of charmed virtue. The caparison of his Arabian steed was richly embroidered and swept the ground, and the proud animal pranced and snuffed the air, and neighed with joy at once more beholding the array of arms. The lofty and graceful demeanour of the prince struck every eye, and when his appellation was announced, "The Pilgrim of Love," a universal flutter and agitation prevailed among the fair dames in the galleries.

When Ahmed presented himself at the lists, however, they were closed against him: none but princes, he was told, were admitted to the contest. He declared his name and rank. Still worse— he was a Moslem, and could not engage in a tourney where the hand of a Christian princess was the prize.

The rival princes surrounded him with haughty and menacing aspects; and one of insolent demeanour and herculean frame sneered at his light and youthful form, and scoffed at his amorous appellation. The ire of the prince was roused. He defied his rival to the encounter. They took distance, wheeled, and charged; and at the first touch of the magic lance, the brawny scoffer was tilted from his saddle. Here the prince would have paused, but, alas! he had to deal with a demoniac horse and armour—once in action nothing could control them. The Arabian steed charged into the thickest of the throng; the lance overturned every thing that presented; the gentle prince was carried pell-mell about the field, strewing it with high and low, gentle and simple, and grieving at his own involuntary exploits. The king stormed and raged at this outrage on his subjects and his guests. He ordered out all his guards—they were unhorsed as fast as they came up. The king threw off his robes, grasped buckler and lance, and rode forth to awe the stranger with the presence of
majesty itself. Alas! majesty fared no better than the vulgar—the steed and lance were no respecters of persons; to the dismay of Ahmed, he was borne full tilt against the king, and in a moment the royal heels were in the air, and the crown was rolling in the dust.

At this moment the sun reached the meridian; the magic spell resumed its power; the Arabian steed scoured across the plain, leaped the barrier, plunged into the Tagus, swam its raging current, bore the prince breathless and amazed to the cavern, and resumed his station like a statue, beside the iron table. The prince dismounted right gladly, and replaced the armour, to abide the further decrees of fate. Then seating himself in the cavern, he ruminated on the desperate state to which this demoniac steed and armour had reduced him. Never should he dare to show his face at Toledo after inflicting such disgrace upon its chivalry, and such an outrage on its king. What, too, would the princess think of so rude and riotous an achievement? Full of anxiety, he sent forth his winged messengers to gather tidings. The parrot resorted to all the public places and crowded resorts of the city, and soon returned with a world of gossip. All Toledo was in consternation. The princess had been borne off senseless to the palace; the tournament had ended in confusion; every one was talking of the sudden apparition, prodigious exploits, and strange disappearance of the Moslem knight. Some pronounced him a Moorish magician; others thought him a demon who had assumed a human shape, while others related traditions of enchanted warriors hidden in the caves of the mountains, and thought it might be one of these, who had made a sudden irruption from his den. All agreed that no mere ordinary mortal could have wrought such wonders, or unhorsed such accomplished and stalwart Christian warriors.

The owl flew forth at night, and hovered about the dusky city, perching on the roofs and chimneys. He then wheeled his flight up to the royal palace, which stood on the rocky summit of Toledo, and went prowling about its terraces and battlements, eaves-dropping at every cranny, and glaring in with his big goggling eyes at every window
where there was a light, so as to throw two or three maids of honour into fits. It was not until the grey dawn began to peer above the mountains, that he returned from his mousing expedition, and related to the prince what he had seen.

"As I was prying about one of the loftiest towers of the palace," said he, "I beheld through a casement a beautiful princess. She was reclining on a couch, with attendants and physicians around her, but she would none of their ministry and relief. When they retired, I beheld her draw forth a letter from her bosom, and read and kiss it, and give way to loud lamentations; at which, philosopher as I am, I could not but be greatly moved."

The tender heart of Ahmed was distressed at these tidings. "Too true were thy words, O sage Eben Bonabben," cried he; "care and sorrow, and sleepless nights, are the lot of lovers. Allah preserve the princess from the blighting influence of this thing called love!"

Further intelligence from Toledo corroborated the report of the owl. The city was a prey to uneasiness and alarm. The princess was conveyed to the highest tower of the palace, every avenue to which was strongly guarded. In the mean time a devouring melancholy had seized upon her, of which no one could divine the cause—she refused food, and turned a deaf ear to every consolation. The most skilful physicians had essayed their art in vain; it was thought some magic spell had been practised upon her, and the king made proclamation, declaring that whoever should effect her cure should receive the richest jewel in the royal treasury.

When the owl, who was dozing in a corner, heard of this proclamation, he rolled his large eyes, and looked more mysterious than ever.

"Allah Akbar!" exclaimed he, "happy the man that shall effect that cure, should he but know what to choose from the royal treasury."

"What mean you, most reverend owl?" said Ahmed.

"Hearken, O prince, to what I shall relate. We owls, you must know, are a learned body, and much given to dark and dusty research. During my late prowling at
night about the domes and turrets of Toledo, I discovered a college of antiquarian owls, who hold their meetings in a great vaulted tower where the royal treasury is deposited. Here they were discussing the forms and inscriptions and designs of ancient gems and jewels, and of golden and silver vessels, heaped up in the treasury, the fashion of every country and age; but mostly they were interested about certain relics and talismans that have remained in the treasury since the time of Roderick the Goth. Among these was a box of sandal wood, secured by bands of steel of Oriental workmanship, and inscribed with mystic characters known only to the learned few. This box and its inscription had occupied the college for several sessions, and had caused much long and grave dispute. At the time of my visit a very ancient owl, who had recently arrived from Egypt, was seated on the lid of the box, lecturing upon the inscription, and he proved from it that the coffer contained the silken carpet of the throne of Solomon the wise; which doubtless had been brought to Toledo by the Jews who took refuge there after the downfall of Jerusalem."

When the owl had concluded his antiquarian harangue, the prince remained for a time absorbed in thought. "I have heard," said he, "from the sage Eben Bonabben, of the wonderful properties of that talisman, which disappeared at the fall of Jerusalem, and was supposed to be lost to mankind. Doubtless it remains a sealed mystery to the Christians of Toledo. If I can get possession of that carpet my fortune is secure."

The next day the prince laid aside his rich attire, and arrayed himself in the simple garb of an Arab of the desert. He dyed his complexion to a tawny hue, and no one could have recognised in him the splendid warrior who had caused such admiration and dismay at the tournament. With staff in hand, and scrip by his side, and a small pastoral reed, he repaired to Toledo, and presenting himself at the gate of the royal palace, announced himself as a candidate for the reward offered for the cure of the princess. The guards would have driven him away with blows. "What can a vagrant Arab like thyself pretend to do,"
said they, "in a case where the most learned of the land have failed?" The king, however, overheard the tumult, and ordered the Arab to be brought into his presence.

"Most potent king," said Ahmed, "you behold before you a Bedouin Arab, the greater part of whose life has been passed in the solitudes of the desert. These solitudes, it is well known, are the haunts of demons and evil spirits, who beset us poor shepherds in our lonely watchings, enter into and possess our flocks and herds, and sometimes render even the patient camel furious; against these our counter-charm is music; and we have legendary airs handed down from generation to generation, that we chant and pipe, to cast forth these evil spirits. I am of a gifted line, and possess this power in its fullest force. If it be any evil influence of the kind that holds a spell over thy daughter, I pledge my head to free her from its sway."

The king, who was a man of understanding, and knew the wonderful secrets possessed by the Arabs, was inspired with hope by the confident language of the prince. He conducted him immediately to the lofty tower, secured by several doors, in the summit of which was the chamber of the princess. The windows opened upon a terrace with balustrades, commanding a view over Toledo and all the surrounding country. The windows were darkened, for the princess lay within, a prey to a devouring grief that refused all alleviation.

The prince seated himself on the terrace and performed several wild Arabian airs on his pastoral pipe, which he had learnt from his attendants in the Generalife at Granada. The princess continued insensible, and the doctors who were present shook their heads, and smiled with incredulity and contempt: at length the prince laid aside the reed, and, to a simple melody, chanted the amatory verses of the letter which had declared his passion.

The princess recognised the strain—a fluttering joy stole to her heart; she raised her head and listened; tears rushed to her eyes, and streamed down her cheeks; her bosom rose and fell with a tumult of emotions. She would have asked for the minstrel to be brought into her presence, but maiden coyness held her silent. The king read her
wishes, and at his command Ahmed was conducted into the chamber. The lovers were discreet: they but exchanged glances, yet those glances spoke volumes. Never was triumph of music more complete. The rose had returned to the soft cheek of the princess, the freshness to her lip, and the dewy light to her languishing eyes.

All the physicians present stared at each other with astonishment. The king regarded the Arab minstrel with admiration mixed with awe. "Wonderful youth!" exclaimed he, "thou shalt henceforth be the first physician of my court, and no other prescription will I take but thy melody. For the present receive thy reward, the most precious jewel in my treasury."

"O king," replied Ahmed, "I care not for silver or gold, or precious stones. One relique hast thou in thy treasury, handed down from the Moslems who once owned Toledo — a box of sandal wood containing a silken carpet: give me that box, and I am content."

All present were surprised at the moderation of the Arab; and still more when the box of sandal wood was brought and the carpet drawn forth. It was of fine green silk, covered with Hebrew and Chaldaic characters. The court physicians looked at each other, and shrugged their shoulders, and smiled at the simplicity of this new practitioner, who could be content with so paltry a fee.

"This carpet," said the prince, "once covered the throne of Solomon the wise; it is worthy of being placed beneath the feet of beauty."

So saying, he spread it on the terrace beneath an ottoman that had been brought forth for the princess; then seating himself at her feet —

"Who," said he, "shall counteract what is written in the book of fate? Behold the prediction of the astrologers verified. Know, O king, that your daughter and I have long loved each other in secret. Behold in me the Pilgrim of Love!"

These words were scarcely from his lips, when the carpet rose in the air, bearing off the prince and princess. The king and the physicians gazed after it with open mouths and straining eyes until it became a little speck on
the white bosom of a cloud, and then disappeared in the blue vault of heaven.

The king in a rage summoned his treasurer. "How is this," said he, "that thou hast suffered an infidel to get possession of such a talisman?"

"Alas, sir, we knew not its nature, nor could we decipher the inscription of the box. If it be indeed the carpet of the throne of the wise Solomon, it is possessed of magic power, and can transport its owner from place to place through the air."

The king assembled a mighty army, and set off for Granada in pursuit of the fugitives. His march was long and toilsome. Encamping in the Vega, he sent a herald to demand restitution of his daughter. The king himself came forth with all his court to meet him. In the king he beheld the real minstrel, for Ahmed had succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, and the beautiful Aldegonda was his sultana.

The Christian king was easily pacified when he found that his daughter was suffered to continue in her faith; not that he was particularly pious; but religion is always a point of pride and etiquette with princes. Instead of bloody battles, there was a succession of feasts and rejoicings, after which the king returned well pleased to Toledo, and the youthful couple continued to reign as happily as wisely in the Alhambra.

It is proper to add, that the owl and the parrot had severally followed the prince by easy stages to Granada; the former travelling by night, and stopping at the various hereditary possessions of his family; the latter figuring in gay circles of every town and city on his route.

Ahmed gratefully requited the services which they had rendered on his pilgrimage. He appointed the owl his prime minister, the parrot his master of ceremonies. It is needless to say, that never was a realm more sagely administered, or a court conducted with more exact punctilio.
Just within the fortress of the Alhambra, in front of the royal palace, is a broad open esplanade, called the Place or Square of the Cisterns, (la Plaza de los Algiebes,) so called from being undermined by reservoirs of water, hidden from sight, and which have existed from the time of the Moors. At one corner of this esplanade is a Moorish well, cut through the living rock to a great depth, the water of which is cold as ice and clear as crystal. The wells made by the Moors are always in repute, for it is well known what pains they took to penetrate to the purest and sweetest springs and fountains. The one of which we now speak is famous throughout Granada, insomuch that the water carriers, some bearing great water jars on their shoulders, others driving asses before them laden with earthen vessels, are ascending and descending the steep woody avenues of the Alhambra, from early dawn until a late hour of the night.

Fountains and wells, ever since the scriptural days, have been noted gossiping places in hot climates, and at the well in question there is a kind of perpetual club kept up during the live-long day, by the invalids, old women, and other curious do-nothing folk of the fortress, who sit here on the stone benches, under an awning spread over the well to shelter the toll-gatherer from the sun, and dawdle over the gossip of the fortress, and question every water carrier that arrives about the news of the city, and make long comments on every thing they hear and see. Not an hour of the day but loitering housewives and idle maid-servants may be seen, lingering with pitcher on head or in hand, to hear the last of the endless tattle of these worthies.

Among the water carriers who once resorted to this well, there was a sturdy, strong-backed, bandy-legged
little fellow, named Pedro Gil, but called Peregil for shortness. Being a water carrier, he was a Gallego, or native of Gallicia, of course. Nature seems to have formed races of men, as she has of animals, for different kinds of drudgery. In France the shoe-blacks are all Savoyards, the porters of hotels all Swiss, and in the days of hoops and hair powder in England, no man could give the regular swing to a sedan-chair but a bog-trotting Irishman. So in Spain, the carriers of water and bearers of burtens are all sturdy little natives of Gallicia. No man says, "Get me a porter," but, "Call a Gallego."

To return from this digression, Peregil the Gallego had begun business with merely a great earthen jar, which he carried upon his shoulder; by degrees he rose in the world, and was enabled to purchase an assistant of a corresponding class of animals, being a stout shaggy-haired donkey. On each side of this his long-eared aid-de-camp, in a kind of pannier, were slung his water-jars, covered with fig leaves to protect them from the sun. There was not a more industrious water carrier in all Granada, nor one more merry withal. The streets rang with his cheerful voice as he trudged after his donkey, singing forth the usual summer note that resounds through the Spanish towns: — "Quien quiere agua — agua mas fria que la nieve?" — "Who wants water — water colder than snow? Who wants water from the well of the Alhambra, cold as ice and clear as crystal?" When he served a customer with a sparkling glass, it was always with a pleasant word that caused a smile; and if, perchance, it was a comely dame or dimpling damsels, it was always with a sly leer and a compliment to her beauty that was irresistible. Thus Peregil the Gallego was noted throughout all Granada for being one of the civilest, pleasantest, and happiest of mortals. Yet it is not he who sings loudest and jokes most that has the lightest heart. Under all this air of merriment, honest Peregil had his cares and troubles. He had a large family of ragged children to support, who were hungry and clamorous as a nest of young swallows, and beset him with their outcries for food whenever he came home of an evening. He had
a helpmate, too, who was any thing but a help to him. She had been a village beauty before marriage, noted for her skill at dancing the bolero and rattling the castañets; and she still retained her early propensities, spending the hard earnings of honest Peregil in frippery, and laying the very donkey under requisition for junketing parties into the country on Sundays, and saints' days, and those innumerable holydays, which are rather more numerous in Spain than the days of the week. With all this she was a little of a slattern, something more of a lie-a-bed, and, above all, a gossip of the first water; neglecting house, household, and every thing else, to loiter slip-shod in the houses of her gossip neighbours.

He, however, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, accommodates the yoke of matrimony to the submissive neck. Peregil bore all the heavy dispensations of wife and children with as meek a spirit as his donkey bore the water-jars; and, however he might shake his ears in private, never ventured to question the household virtues of his slattern spouse.

He loved his children, too, even as an owl loves its owlets, seeing in them his own image multiplied and perpetuated; for they were a sturdy, long-backed, bandy-legged little brood. The great pleasure of honest Peregil was, whenever he could afford himself a scanty holyday, and had a handful of maravedis to spare, to take the whole litter forth with him, some in his arms, some tugging at his skirts, and some trudging at his heels, and to treat them to a gambol among the orchards of the Vega, while his wife was dancing with her holyday friends in the Angosturas of the Darro.

It was a late hour one summer night, and most of the water carriers had desisted from their toils. The day had been uncommonly sultry; the night was one of those delicious moonlights, which tempt the inhabitants of those southern climes to indemnify themselves for the heat and inaction of the day, by lingering in the open air, and enjoying its tempered sweetness, until after midnight. Customers for water were therefore still abroad. Peregil, like a considerate pains-taking little father, thought of his
hungry children. "One more journey to the well," said he to himself, "to earn a Sunday's puchero for the little ones." So saying, he trudged manfully up the steep avenue of the Alhambra, singing as he went, and now and then bestowing a hearty thwack with a cudgel on the flanks of his donkey, either by way of cadence to the song, or refreshment to the animal; for dry blows serve in lieu of provender in Spain for all beasts of burthen.

When arrived at the well, he found it deserted by every one except a solitary stranger in Moorish garb, seated on the stone bench in the moonlight. Peregil paused at first and regarded him with surprise, not unmixed with awe, but the Moor feebly beckoned him to approach. "I am faint and ill," said he; "aid me to return to the city, and I will pay thee double what thou couldst gain by thy jars of water."

The honest heart of the little water carrier was touched with compassion at the appeal of the stranger. "God forbid," said he, "that I should ask fee or reward for doing a common act of humanity." He accordingly helped the Moor on his donkey, and set off slowly for Granada, the poor Moslem being so weak that it was necessary to hold him on the animal to keep him from falling to the earth.

When they entered the city, the water carrier demanded whither he should conduct him. "Alas!" said the Moor faintly, "I have neither home nor habitation; I am a stranger in the land. Suffer me to lay my head this night beneath thy roof, and thou shalt be amply repaid."

Honest Peregil thus saw himself unexpectedly saddled with an infidel guest, but he was too humane to refuse a night's shelter to a fellow-being in so forlorn a plight, so he conducted the Moor to his dwelling. The children, who had sallied forth open-mouthed as usual on hearing the tramp of the donkey, ran back with affright, when they beheld the turbaned stranger, and hid themselves behind their mother. The latter stepped forth intrepidly, like a ruffling hen before her brood when a vagrant dog approaches.

"What infidel companion," cried she, "is this you
have brought home at this late hour, to draw upon us the eyes of the Inquisition?"

"Be quiet, wife," replied the Gallego; "here is a poor sick stranger, without friend or home; wouldst thou turn him forth to perish in the streets?"

The wife would still have remonstrated, for although she lived in a hovel, she was a furious stickler for the credit of her house; the little water carrier, however, for once was stiff-necked, and refused to bend beneath the yoke. He assisted the poor Moslem to alight, and spread a mat and a sheep-skin for him, on the ground, in the coolest part of the house; being the only kind of bed that his poverty afforded.

In a little while the Moor was seized with violent convulsions, which defied all the ministering skill of the simple water carrier. The eye of the poor patient acknowledged his kindness. During an interval of his fits he called him to his side, and addressing him in a low voice, "My end," said he, "I fear is at hand. If I die I bequeath you this box as a reward for your charity;" so saying, he opened his albornoz, or cloak, and showed a small box of sandal wood, strapped round his body. "God grant, my friend," replied the worthy little Gallego, "that you may live many years to enjoy your treasure, whatever it may be." The Moor shook his head; he laid his hand upon the box, and would have said something more concerning it; but his convulsions returned with increased violence, and in a little while he expired.

The water carrier's wife was now as one distracted. "This comes," said she, "of your foolish good nature, always running into scrapes to oblige others. What will become of us when this corpse is found in our house? We shall be sent to prison as murderers; and if we escape with our lives, shall be ruined by notaries and alguazils."

Poor Peregil was in equal tribulation, and almost repented himself of having done a good deed. At length a thought struck him. "It is not yet day," said he; "I can convey the dead body out of the city, and bury it in the sands on the banks of the Xenil. No one saw the
Moor enter our dwelling, and no one will know any thing of his death.”

So said, so done. The wife aided him; they rolled the body of the unfortunate Moslem in the mat on which he had expired, laid it across the ass, and Peregil set out with it for the banks of the river.

As ill luck would have it, there lived opposite to the water carrier a barber named Pedrillo Pedrugo, one of the most prying, tattling, and mischief-making of his gossip tribe. He was a weasle-faced, spider-legged varlet, supple and insinuating; the famous barber of Seville could not surpass him for his universal knowledge of the affairs of others, and he had no more power of retention than a sieve. It was said that he slept but with one eye at a time, and kept one ear uncovered, so that, even in his sleep, he might see and hear all that was going on. Certain it is, he was a sort of scandalous chronicle for the quidnuncs of Granada, and had more customers than all the rest of his fraternity.

This meddlesome barber heard Peregil arrive at an unusual hour at night, and the exclamations of his wife and children. His head was instantly popped out of a little window which served him as a look-out, and he saw his neighbour assist a man in Moorish garb into his dwelling. This was so strange an occurrence, that Pedrillo Pedrugo slept not a wink that night. Every five minutes he was at his loophole, watching the lights that gleamed through the chinks of his neighbour’s door, and before daylight he beheld Peregil sally forth with his donkey unusually laden.

The inquisitive barber was in a fidget; he slipped on his clothes, and, stealing forth silently, followed the water carrier at a distance, until he saw him dig a hole in the sandy bank of the Xenil, and bury something that had the appearance of a dead body.

The barber hied him home, and fidgeted about his shop, setting every thing upside down, until sunrise. He then took a basin under his arm, and sallied forth to the house of his daily customer the alcalde.

The alcalde was just risen. Pedrillo Pedrugo seated him in a chair, threw a napkin round his neck, put a basin
of hot water under his chin, and began to mollify his beard with his fingers.

"Strange doings!" said Pedrugo, who played barber and newsmonger at the same time — "Strange doings! Robbery, and murder, and burial, all in one night!"

"Hey!—how!—what is that you say?" cried the alcalde.

"I say," replied the barber, rubbing a piece of soap over the nose and mouth of the dignitary, for a Spanish barber disdains to employ a brush — "I say that Peregil the Gallego has robbed and murdered a Moorish Mussulman, and buried him this blessed night. Maldita sea la noche — accursed be the night for the same?"

"But how do you know all this?" demanded the alcalde.

"Be patient, Señor, and you shall hear all about it," replied Pedrillo, taking him by the nose and sliding a razor over his cheek. He then recounted all that he had seen, going through both operations at the same time, shaving his beard, washing his chin, and wiping him dry with a dirty napkin, while he was robbing, murdering, and burying the Moslem.

Now it so happened that this alcalde was one of the most overbearing, and at the same time most griping and corrupt curmudgeons in all Granada. It could not be denied, however, that he set a high value upon justice, for he sold it at its weight in gold. He presumed the case in point to be one of murder and robbery; doubtless there must be rich spoil; how was it to be secured into the legitimate hands of the law? for as to merely entrapping the delinquent — that would be feeding the gallows; but entrapping the booty — that would be enriching the judge, and such, according to his creed, was the great end of justice. So thinking, he summoned to his presence his trustiest alguazil—a gaunt, hungry-looking varlet, clad, according to the custom of his order, in the ancient Spanish garb, a broad black beaver turned up at the sides; a quaint ruff; a small black cloak dangling from his shoulders; rusty black under-clothes that set off his spare wiry frame, while in his hand he bore a slender white wand, the dreaded insignia of his office. Such was the legal bloodhound of the
ancient Spanish breed, that he put upon the traces of the unlucky water carrier, and such was his speed and certainty, that he was upon the haunches of poor Perigil before he had returned to his dwelling, and brought both him and his donkey before the dispenser of justice.

The alcalde bent upon him one of his most terrific frowns. "Hark ye, culprit!" roared he, in a voice that made the knees of the little Gallego smite together—"hark ye, culprit! there is no need of denying thy guilt; every thing is known to me. A gallows is the proper reward for the crime thou hast committed, but I am merciful, and readily listen to reason. The man that has been murdered in thy house was a Moor, an infidel, the enemy of our faith. It was doubtless in a fit of religious zeal that thou hast slain him. I will be indulgent, therefore; render up the property of which thou hast robbed him, and we will hush the matter up."

The poor water carrier called upon all the saints to witness his innocence; alas! not one of them appeared; and if they had, the alcalde would have disbelieved the whole calendar. The water carrier related the whole story of the dying Moor with the straight-forward simplicity of truth, but it was all in vain. "Wilt thou persist in saying," demanded the judge, "that this Moslem had neither gold nor jewels, which were the object of thy cupidity?"

"As I hope to be saved, your worship," replied the water carrier, "he had nothing but a small box of sandal wood, which he bequeathed to me in reward for my services."

"A box of sandal wood! a box of sandal wood!" exclaimed the alcalde, his eyes sparkling at the idea of precious jewels. "And where is this box? where have you concealed it?"

"An' it please your grace," replied the water carrier, "it is in one of the panniers of my mule, and heartily at the service of your worship."

He had hardly spoken the words, when the keen algua-zil darted off, and re appeared in an instant with the mysterious box of sandal wood. The alcalde opened it with an eager and trembling hand; all pressed forward to gaze
upon the treasures it was expected to contain; when, to their disappointment, nothing appeared within but a parchment scroll, covered with Arabic characters, and an end of a waxen taper.

When there is nothing to be gained by the conviction of a prisoner, justice, even in Spain, is apt to be impartial. The alcalde having recovered from his disappointment, and found that there was really no booty in the case, now listened dispassionately to the explanation of the water carrier, which was corroborated by the testimony of his wife. Being convinced, therefore, of his innocence, he discharged him from arrest; nay more, he permitted him to carry off the Moor's legacy, the box of sandal wood and its contents, as the well-merited reward of his humanity; but he retained his donkey in payment of cost and charges.

Behold the unfortunate little Gallego reduced once more to the necessity of being his own water carrier, and trudging up to the well of the Alhambra with a great earthen jar upon his shoulder.

As he toiled up the hill in the heat of a summer noon, his usual good humour forsook him. "Dog of an alcalde!" would he cry, "to rob a poor man of the means of his subsistence, of the best friend he had in the world!" And then, at the remembrance of the beloved companion of his labours, all the kindness of his nature would break forth. "Ah, donkey of my heart!" would he exclaim, resting his burthen on a stone, and wiping the sweat from his brow — "ah, donkey of my heart! I warrant me thou thinkest of thy old master! I warrant me thou missest the water-jars, poor beast!"

To add to his afflictions, his wife received him, on his return home, with whimperings and repinings; she had clearly the vantage ground of him, having warned him not to commit the egregious act of hospitality that had brought on him all these misfortunes; and, like a knowing woman, she took every occasion to throw her superior sagacity in his teeth. If ever her children lacked food, or needed a new garment, she could answer with a sneer — "Go to your father — he is heir to king Chico of the Alhambra; ask him to help you out of the Moor's strong-box."
THE ALHAMBRA.

Was ever poor mortal so soundly punished for having done a good action? The unlucky Peregil was grieved in flesh and spirit, but still he bore meekly with the railings of his spouse. At length, one evening, when, after a hot day's toil, she taunted him in the usual manner, he lost all patience. He did not venture to retort upon her, but his eye rested upon the box of sandal wood, which lay on a shelf with lid half open, as if laughing in mockery at his vexation. Seizing it up, he dashed it with indignation to the floor:—"Unlucky was the day that I ever set eyes on thee," he cried, "or sheltered thy master beneath my roof!"

As the box struck the floor, the lid flew wide open, and the parchment scroll rolled forth. Peregil sat regarding the scroll for some time in moody silence. At length rallying his ideas—"Who knows," thought he, "but this writing may be of some importance, as the Moor seems to have guarded it with such care?" Picking it up therefore, he put it in his bosom, and the next morning, as he was crying water through the streets, he stopped at the shop of a Moor, a native of Tangiers, who sold trinkets and perfumery in the Zacatin, and asked him to explain the contents.

The Moor read the scroll attentively, then stroked his beard and smiled. "This manuscript," said he, "is a form of incantation for the recovery of hidden treasure, that is under the power of enchantment. It is said to have such virtue, that the strongest bolts and bars, nay, the adamantine rock itself will yield before it!"

"Bah!" cried the little Gallego, "what is all that to me? I am no enchanter, and know nothing of buried treasure." So saying, he shouldered his water-jar, left the scroll in the hands of the Moor, and trudged forward on his daily rounds.

That evening, however, as he rested himself about twilight at the well of the Alhambra, he found a number of gossips assembled at the place, and their conversation, as is not unusual at that shadowy hour, turned upon old tales and traditions of a supernatural nature. Being all poor as rats, they dwelt with peculiar fondness upon the popular
theme of enchanted riches left by the Moors in various parts of the Alhambra. Above all, they concurred in the belief that there were great treasures buried deep in the earth under the tower of the seven floors.

These stories made an unusual impression on the mind of honest Peregil, and they sank deeper and deeper into his thoughts as he returned alone down the darkling avenues. "If, after all, there should be treasure hid beneath that tower — and if the scroll I left with the Moor should enable me to get at it!" In the sudden ecstasy of the thought he had well nigh let fall his water-jar.

That night he tumbled and tossed, and could scarcely get a wink of sleep for the thoughts that were bewildering his brain. Bright and early, he repaired to the shop of the Moor, and told him all that was passing in his mind. "You can read Arabic," said he; "suppose we go together to the tower, and try the effect of the charm; if it fails we are no worse off than before, but if it succeeds we will share equally all the treasure we may discover."

"Hold," replied the Moslem; "this writing is not sufficient of itself; it must be read at midnight, by the light of a taper singularly compounded and prepared, the ingredients of which are not within my reach. Without such taper the scroll is of no avail."

"Say no more!" cried the little Gallego, "I have such a taper at hand, and will bring it here in a moment." So saying, he hastened home, and soon returned with the end of yellow wax taper that he had found in the box of sandal wood.

The Moor felt it and smelt to it. "Here are rare and costly perfumes," said he, "combined with this yellow wax. This is the kind of taper specified in the scroll. While this burns, the strongest walls and most secret caverns will remain open. Woe to him, however, who lingers within until it be extinguished. He will remain enchanted with the treasure."

It was now agreed between them to try the charm that very night. At a late hour, therefore, when nothing was stirring but bats and owls, they ascended the woody hill of the Alhambra, and approached that awful tower, shrouded
by trees and rendered formidable by so many traditionary tales. By the light of a lantern, they groped their way through bushes, and over fallen stones, to the door of a vault beneath the tower. With fear and trembling they descended a flight of steps cut into the rock. It led to an empty chamber damp and drear, from which another flight of steps led to a deeper vault. In this way they descended four several flights, leading into as many vaults one below the other, but the floor of the fourth was solid; and though, according to tradition, there remained three vaults still below, it was said to be impossible to penetrate further, the residue being shut up by strong enchantment. The air of this vault was damp and chilly, and had an earthy smell, and the light scarce cast forth any rays. They paused here for a time in breathless suspense, until they faintly heard the clock of the watch-tower strike midnight; upon this they lit the waxen taper, which diffused an odour of myrrh and frankincense and storax.

The Moor began to read in a hurried voice. He had scarce finished when there was a noise as of subterraneous thunder. The earth shook, and the floor yawing open, disclosed a flight of steps. Trembling with awe they descended, and by the light of the lantern found themselves in another vault, covered with Arabic inscriptions. In the centre stood a great chest, secured with seven bands of steel, at each end of which sat an enchanted Moor in armour, but motionless as a statue, being controlled by the power of the incantation. Before the chest were several jars filled with gold and silver and precious stones. In the largest of these they thrust their arms up to the elbow, and at every dip hauled forth handfuls of broad yellow pieces of Moorish gold, or bracelets and ornaments of the same precious metal, while occasionally a necklace of oriental pearl would stick to their fingers. Still they trembled and breathed short while cramming their pockets with the spoils; and cast many a fearful glance at the two enchanted Moors, who sat grim and motionless, glaring upon them with unwinking eyes. At length, struck with a sudden panic at some fancied noise, they both rushed up the staircase, tumbled over one another into the upper apartment,
overturned and extinguished the waxen taper, and the pavement again closed with a thundering sound.

Filled with dismay, they did not pause until they had groped their way out of the tower, and beheld the stars shining through the trees. Then seating themselves upon the grass, they divided the spoil, determining to content themselves for the present with this mere skimming of the jars, but to return on some future night and drain them to the bottom. To make sure of each other's good faith, also, they divided the talismans between them, one retaining the scroll and the other the taper; this done, they set off with light hearts and well-lined pockets for Granada.

As they wended their way down the hill, the shrewd Moor whispered a word of counsel in the ear of the simple little water carrier.

"Friend Peregil," said he, "all this affair must be kept a profound secret until we have secured the treasure and conveyed it out of harm's way. If a whisper of it gets to the ear of the alcalde we are undone!"

"Certainly," replied the Gallego, "nothing can be more true."

"Friend Peregil," said the Moor, "you are a discreet man, and I make no doubt can keep a secret: but you have a wife."

"She shall not know a word of it," replied the little water carrier sturdily.

"Enough," said the Moor, "I depend upon thy discretion and thy promise."

Never was promise more positive and sincere; but, alas! what man can keep a secret from his wife? Certainly not such a one as Peregil the water carrier, who was one of the most loving and tractable of husbands. On his return home, he found his wife moping in a corner. "Mighty well," cried she as he entered, "you've come at last; after rambling about until this hour of the night. I wonder you have not brought home another Moor as a house-mate."

Then bursting into tears, she began to wring her hands and smite her breast: "Unhappy woman that I am!" exclaimed she, "what will become of me? My house stripped and plundered by lawyers and alguazils; and my
husband a do-no-good, that no longer brings home bread for his family, but goes rambling about day and night, with infidel Moors! O my children! my children! what will become of us? we shall all have to beg in the streets!"

Honest Peregil was so moved by the distress of his spouse, that he could not help whimpering also. His heart was as full as his pocket, and not to be restrained. Thrusting his hand into the latter he hauled forth three or four broad gold pieces, and slipped them into her bosom. The poor woman stared with astonishment, and could not understand the meaning of this golden shower. Before she could recover her surprise, the little Gallego drew forth a chain of gold and dangled it before her, capering with exultation, his mouth distended from ear to ear.

"Holy Virgin protect us!" exclaimed the wife. "What hast thou been doing, Peregil? surely thou hast not been committing murder and robbery!"

The idea scarce entered the brain of the poor woman, than it became a certainty with her. She saw a prison and a gallows in the distance, and a little bandy-legged Gallego hanging pendant from it; and overcome by the horrors conjured up by her imagination, fell into violent hysterics.

What could the poor man do? He had no other means of pacifying his wife and dispelling the phantoms of her fancy than by relating the whole story of his good fortune. This, however, he did not do until he had exacted from her the most solemn promise to keep it a profound secret from every living being.

To describe her joy would be impossible. She flung her arms round the neck of her husband, and almost strangled him with her caresses. "Now, wife," exclaimed the little man with honest exultation, "what say you now to the Moor's legacy? Henceforth never abuse me for helping a fellow-creature in distress."

The honest Gallego retired to his sheep-skin mat, and slept as soundly as if on a bed of down. Not so his wife; she emptied the whole contents of his pockets upon the mat, and sat all night counting gold pieces of Arabic coin, trying on necklaces and earrings, and fancying the figure
she should one day make when permitted to enjoy her riches.

On the following morning the honest Gallego took a broad golden coin, and repaired with it to a jeweller's shop in the Zacatin to offer it for sale, pretending to have found it among the ruins of the Alhambra. The jeweller saw that it had an Arabic inscription, and was of the purest gold; he offered, however, but a third of its value, with which the water carrier was perfectly content.

Peregil now brought new clothes for his little flock, and all kinds of toys, together with ample provisions for a hearty meal, and returning to his dwelling, set all his children dancing around him, while he capered in the midst, the happiest of fathers.

The wife of the water carrier kept her promise of secrecy with surprising strictness. For a whole day and a half she went about with a look of mystery and a heart swelling almost to bursting, yet she held her peace, though surrounded by her gossips. It is true, she could not help giving herself a few airs, apologised for her ragged dress, and talked of ordering a new basquina all trimmed with gold lace and bugles, and a new lace mantilla. She threw out hints of her husband's intention of leaving off his trade of water carrying, as it did not altogether agree with his health. In fact, she thought they should all retire to the country for the summer, that the children might have the benefit of the mountain air, for there was no living in the city in this sultry season.

The neighbours stared at each other, and thought the poor woman had lost her wits; and her airs and graces and elegant pretensions were the theme of universal scoffing and merriment among her friends, the moment her back was turned.

If she restrained herself abroad, however, she indemnified herself at home, and putting a string of rich oriental pearls round her neck, Moorish bracelets on her arms, and an aigrette of diamonds on her head, sailed backwards and forwards in her slattern rags about the room, now and then stopping to admire herself in a broken mirror. Nay, in the impulse of her simple vanity, she could not resist, on
one occasion, showing herself at the window to enjoy the
effect of her finery on the passers-by.

As the fates would have it, Pedrillo Pedrugo, the
meddlesome barber, was at this moment sitting idly in his
shop on the opposite side of the street, when his ever-
watchful eye caught the sparkle of a diamond. In an
instant he was at his loop-hole reconnoitring the slattern
spouse of the water carrier, decorated with the splendour of
an eastern bride. No sooner had he taken an accurate
inventory of her ornaments, than he posted off with all
speed to the alcalde. In a little while the hungry
alguazil was again on the scent, and before the day was
over the unfortunate Peregil was again dragged into the
presence of the judge.

"How is this, villain!" cried the alcalde in a furious
voice. "You told me that the infidel who died in your
house left nothing behind but an empty coffer, and now I
hear of your wife flaunting in her rags decked out with
pearls and diamonds. Wretch that thou art! prepare to
render up the spoils of thy miserable victim, and to swing
on the gallows that is already tired of waiting for thee."

The terrified water carrier fell on his knees, and made a
full relation of the marvellous manner in which he had
gained his wealth. The alcalde, the alguazil, and the in-
quisitive barber listened with greedy ears to this Arabian
tale of enchanted treasure. The alguazil was despatched
to bring the Moor who had assisted in the incantation. The
Moslem entered half frightened out of his wits at finding
himself in the hands of the harpies of the law. When he
beheld the water carrier standing with sheepish looks and
downcast countenance, he comprehended the whole matter.
"Miserable animal," said he, as he passed near him, "did
I not warn thee against babbling to thy wife?"

The story of the Moor coincided exactly with that of his
colleague; but the alcalde affected to be slow of belief, and
threw out menaces of imprisonment and rigorous investiga-
tion.

"Softly, good Señor Alcalde," said the Mussulman, who
by this time had recovered his usual shrewdness and self-
possession. "Let us not mar Fortune's favours in the
scramble for them. Nobody knows anything of this matter but ourselves — let us keep the secret. There is wealth enough in the cave to enrich us all. Promise a fair division, and all shall be produced — refuse, and the cave shall remain for ever closed.”

The alcalde consulted apart with the alguazil. The latter was an old fox in his profession. “Promise anything,” said he, “until you get possession of the treasure. You may then seize upon the whole, and if he and his accomplice dare to murmur, threaten them with the faggot and the stake as infidels and sorcerers.”

The alcalde relished the advice. Smoothing his brow and turning to the Moor, “This is a strange story,” said he, “and may be true, but I must have ocular proof of it. This very night you must repeat the incantation in my presence. If there be really such treasure, we will share it amicably between us, and say nothing further of the matter; if ye have deceived me, expect no mercy at my hands. In the mean time you must remain in custody.”

The Moor and the water carrier cheerfully agreed to these conditions, satisfied that the event would prove the truth of their words.

Towards midnight the alcalde sallied forth secretly, attended by the alguazil and the meddlesome barber, all strongly armed. They conducted the Moor and the water carrier as prisoners, and were provided with the stout donkey of the latter to bear off the expected treasure. They arrived at the tower without being observed, and tying the donkey to a fig tree, descended into the fourth vault of the tower.

The scroll was produced, the yellow waxen taper lighted, and the Moor read the form of incantation. The earth trembled as before, and the pavement opened with a thundering sound, disclosing the narrow flight of steps. The alcalde, the alguazil, and the barber were struck aghast, and could not summon courage to descend. The Moor and the water carrier entered the lower vault, and found the two Moors seated as before, silent and motionless. They removed two of the great jars, filled with golden coin and precious stones. The water carrier bore
them up one by one upon his shoulders, but though a strong-backed little man, and accustomed to carry burthens, he staggered beneath their weight, and found, when slung on each side of his donkey, they were as much as the animal could bear.

"Let us be content for the present," said the Moor; "here is as much treasure as we can carry off without being perceived, and enough to make us all wealthy to our heart’s desire."

"Is there more treasure remaining behind?" demanded the alcalde.

"The greatest prize of all," said the Moor; "a huge coffer bound with bands of steel, and filled with pearls and precious stones."

"Let us have up the coffer by all means," cried the grasping alcalde.

"I will descend for no more," said the Moor doggedly; "enough is enough for a reasonable man — more is superfluous."

"And I," said the water carrier, "will bring up no further burthen to break the back of my poor donkey."

Finding commands, threats, and entreaties equally vain, the alcalde turned to his two adherents. "Aid me," said he, "to bring up the coffer, and its contents shall be divided between us." So saying he descended the steps, followed with trembling reluctance by the alguazil and the barber.

No sooner did the Moor behold them fairly earthed than he extinguished the yellow taper; the pavement closed with its usual crash, and the three worthies remained buried in its womb.

He then hastened up the different flights of steps, nor stopped until in the open air. The little water carrier followed him as fast as his short legs would permit.

"What hast thou done?" cried Peregil, as soon as he could recover breath. "The alcalde and the other two are shut up in the vault."

"It is the will of Allah!" said the Moor devoutly.

"And will you not release them?" demanded the Gallego.
"Allah forbid!" replied the Moor, smoothing his beard. "It is written in the book of fate that they shall remain enchanted until some future adventurer arrive to break the charm. The will of God be done!" So saying, he hurled the end of the waxen taper far among the gloomy thickets of the glen.

There was now no remedy; so the Moor and the water carrier proceeded with the richly laden donkey toward the city, nor could honest Peregil refrain from hugging and kissing his long-eared fellow labourer, thus restored to him from the clutches of the law; and, in fact, it is doubtful which gave the simple-hearted little man most joy at the moment,—the gaining of the treasure, or the recovery of the donkey.

The two partners in good luck divided their spoil amicably and fairly, except that the Moor, who had a little taste for trinketry, made out to get into his heap the most of the pearls and precious stones and other baubles, but then he always gave the water carrier in lieu magnificent jewels of massy gold, of five times the size, with which the latter was heartily content. They took care not to linger within reach of accidents, but made off to enjoy their wealth undisturbed in other countries. The Moor returned to Africa, to his native city of Tetuan, and the Gallego with his wife, his children, and his donkey, made the best of his way to Portugal. Here, under the admonition and tuition of his wife, he became a personage of some consequence, for she made the worthy little man array his long body and short legs in doublet and hose, with a feather in his hat and a sword by his side, and laying aside his familiar appellation of Peregil, assume the more sonorous title of Don Pedro Gil: his progeny grew up a thriving and merry-hearted, though short and bandy-legged generation, while Señora Gil, befringed, belaced, and betasselled from her head to her heels, with glittering rings on every finger, became a model of slattern fashion and finery.

As to the alcalde and his adjuncts, they remained shut up under the great tower of the seven floors, and there they remain spell-bound at the present day. Whenever there shall be a lack in Spain of pimping barbers, sharking
alguaizils, and corrupt alcaldes, they may be sought after; but if they have to wait until such time for their deliverance, there is danger of their enchantment enduring until doomsday.

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LEGEND OF THE ROSE OF THE ALHAMBRA, ETC.

For some time after the surrender of Granada by the Moors that delightful city was a frequent and favourite residence of the Spanish sovereigns, until they were frightened away by successive shocks of earthquakes, which toppled down various houses, and made the old Moslem towers rock to their foundation.

Many, many years then rolled away, during which Granada was rarely honoured by a royal guest. The palaces of the nobility remained silent and shut up; and the Alhambra, like a slighted beauty, sat in mournful desolation among her neglected gardens. The tower of the Infantas, once the residence of the three beautiful Moorish princesses, partook of the general desolation, and the spider spun her web athwart the gilded vault, and bats and owls nestled in those chambers that had been graced by the presence of Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda. The neglect of this tower may partly have been owing to some superstitious notions of the neighbours. It was rumoured that the spirit of the youthful Zorahayda, who had perished in that tower, was often seen by moonlight seated beside the fountain in the hall, or moaning about the battlements, and that the notes of her silver lute would be heard at midnight by wayfarers passing along the glen.

At length the city of Granada was once more welcomed by the royal presence. All the world knows that Philip V. was the first Bourbon that swayed the Spanish sceptre. All the world knows that he married, in second nuptials,
Elizabetta, or Isabella, (for they are the same,) the beautiful Princess of Parma; and all the world knows that by this chain of contingencies a French prince and an Italian princess were seated together on the Spanish throne. For the reception of this illustrious pair the Alhambra was repaired and fitted up with all possible expedition. The arrival of the court changed the whole aspect of the lately deserted palace. The clangour of drum and trumpet, the tramp of steed about the avenues and outer court, the glitter of arms and display of banners about barbican and battlement, recalled the ancient and warlike glories of the fortress. A softer spirit however reigned within the royal palace. There was the rustling of robes, and the cautious tread and murmuring voice of reverential courtiers about the antechambers; a loitering of pages and maids of honour about the gardens, and the sound of music stealing from open casements.

Among those who attended in the train of the monarchs was a favourite page of the queen, named Ruyz de Alarcon. To say that he was a favourite page of the queen was at once to speak his eulogium, for every one in the suite of the stately Elizabetta was chosen for grace, and beauty, and accomplishments. He was just turned of eighteen, light and lithe of form, and graceful as a young Antinous. To the queen he was all deference and respect, yet he was at heart a roguish stripling, petted and spoiled by the ladies about the court, and experienced in the ways of women far beyond his years.

This loitering page was one morning rambling about the groves of the Generalife, which overlook the grounds of the Alhambra. He had taken with him for his amusement a favourite gerfalcon of the queen. In the course of his rambles seeing a bird rising from a thicket, he unhooded the hawk and let him fly. The falcon towered high in the air, made a swoop at his quarry, but missing it, soared away regardless of the calls of the page. The latter followed the truant bird with his eye, in its capricious flight, until he saw it alight upon the battlements of a remote and lonely tower, in the outer wall of the Alhambra, built on the edge of a ravine that separated the
royal fortress from the grounds of the Generalife. It was in fact the "Tower of the Princesses."

The page descended into the ravine and approached the tower, but it had no entrance from the glen, and its lofty height rendered any attempt to scale it fruitless. Seeking one of the gates of the fortress, therefore, he made a wide circuit to that side of the tower facing within the walls.

A small garden, enclosed by a trellis-work of reeds overhung with myrtle, lay before the tower. Opening a wicket the page passed between beds of flowers and thickets of roses to the door. It was closed and bolted. A crevice in the door gave him a peep into the interior. There was a small Moorish hall with fretted walls, light marble columns, and an alabaster fountain surrounded with flowers. In the centre hung a gilt cage containing a singing bird; beneath it, on a chair, lay a tortoiseshell cat among reels of silk and other articles of female labour, and a guitar decorated with ribands leaned against the fountain.

Ruyz de Alarcon was struck with these traces of female taste and elegance in a lonely, and, as he had supposed, deserted tower. They reminded him of the tales of enchanted halls current in the Alhambra; and the tortoiseshell cat might be some spell-bound princess.

He knocked gently at the door. A beautiful face peeped out from a little window above, but was instantly withdrawn. He waited, expecting that the door would be opened, but he waited in vain; no footstep was to be heard within — all was silent. Had his senses deceived him, or was this beautiful apparition the fairy of the tower? He knocked again, and more loudly. After a little while the beaming face once more peeped forth; it was that of a blooming damsel of fifteen.

The page immediately doffed his plumed bonnet, and entreated, in the most courteous accents, to be permitted to ascend the tower in pursuit of his falcon.

"I dare not open the door, Señor," replied the little damsel, blushing, "my aunt has forbidden it."

"I do beseech you, fair maid — it is the favourite
falcon of the queen: I dare not return to the palace without it."

"Are you then one of the cavaliers of the court?"

"I am, fair maid; but I shall lose the queen's favour and my place, if I lose this hawk."

"Santa Maria! It is against you cavaliers of the court my aunt has charged me especially to bar the door."

"Against wicked cavaliers, doubtless, but I am none of these, but a simple harmless page, who will be ruined and undone if you deny me this small request."

The heart of the little damsels was touched by the distress of the page. It was a thousand pities he should be ruined for the want of so trifling a boon. Surely, too, he could not be one of those dangerous beings whom her aunt had described as a species of cannibal, ever on the prowl to make prey of thoughtless damsels; he was gentle and modest, and stood so entreatingly with cap in hand, and looked so charming.

The sly page saw that the garrison began to waver, and redoubled his entreaties in such moving terms that it was not in the nature of mortal maiden to deny him; so the blushing little warden of the tower descended and opened the door with a trembling hand, and if the page had been charmed by a mere glimpse of her countenance from the window, he was ravished by the full-length portrait now revealed to him.

Her Andalusian bodice and trim basquiña set off the round but delicate symmetry of her form, which was as yet scarce verging into womanhood. Her glossy hair was parted on her forehead with scrupulous exactness, and decorated with a fresh plucked rose, according to the universal custom of the country. It is true her complexion was tinged by the ardour of a southern sun, but it served to give richness to the mantling bloom of her cheek, and to heighten the lustre of her melting eyes.

Ruyz de Alarcon beheld all this with a single glance, for it became him not to tarry; he merely murmured his acknowledgments, and then bounded lightly up the spiral staircase in quest of his falcon.

He soon returned with the truant bird upon his fist.
The damsel, in the mean time, had seated herself by the fountain in the hall, and was winding silk; but in her agitation she let fall the reel upon the pavement. The page sprang and picked it up, then dropping gracefully on one knee, presented it to her; but, seizing the hand extended to receive it, imprinted on it a kiss more fervent and devout than he had ever imprinted on the fair hand of his sovereign.

"Ave Maria, Señor!" exclaimed the damsel, blushing still deeper with confusion and surprise, for never before had she received such a salutation.

The modest page made a thousand apologies, assuring her it was the way, at court, of expressing the most profound homage and respect.

Her anger, if anger she felt, was easily pacified, but her agitation and embarrassment continued, and she sat blushing deeper and deeper, with her eyes cast down upon her work, entangling the silk which she attempted to wind.

The cunning page saw the confusion in the opposite camp, and would fain have profited by it, but the fine speeches he would have uttered died upon his lips, his attempts at gallantry were awkward and ineffectual, and to his surprise, the adroit page, who had figured with such grace and effrontery among the most knowing and experienced ladies of the court, found himself awed and abashed in the presence of a simple damsel of fifteen.

In fact, the artless maiden, in her own modesty and innocence, had guardians more effectual than the bolts and bars prescribed by her vigilant aunt. Still, where is the female bosom proof against the first whisperings of love? The little damsel, with all her artlessness, instinctively comprehended all that the faltering tongue of the page failed to express, and her heart was fluttered at beholding, for the first time, a lover at her feet— and such a lover!

The diffidence of the page, though genuine, was short-lived, and he was recovering his usual ease and confidence, when a shrill voice was heard at a distance.

"My aunt is returning from mass!" cried the damsel in affright: "I pray you, Señor, depart."
"Not until you grant me that rose from your hair as a remembrance."

She hastily untwisted the rose from her raven locks.

"Take it," cried she, agitated and blushing, "but pray begone."

The page took the rose, and at the same time covered with kisses the fair hand that gave it. Then, placing the flower in his bonnet, and taking the falcon upon his fist, he bounded off through the garden, bearing away with him the heart of the gentle Jacinta.

When the vigilant aunt arrived at the tower, she remarked the agitation of her niece, and an air of confusion in the hall; but a word of explanation sufficed. "A ger-falcon had pursued his prey into the hall."

"Mercy on us! to think of a falcon flying into the tower. Did ever one hear of so saucy a hawk? Why, the very bird in the cage is not safe!"

The vigilant Fredegonda was one of the most wary of ancient spinsters. She had a becoming terror and distrust of what she denominated "the opposite sex," which had gradually increased through a long life of celibacy. Not that the good lady had ever suffered from their wiles, nature having set up a safeguard in her face that forbade all trespass upon her premises; but ladies who have least cause to fear for themselves, are most ready to keep a watch over their more tempting neighbours.

The niece was the orphan of an officer who had fallen in the wars. She had been educated in a convent, and had recently been transferred from her sacred asylum to the immediate guardianship of her aunt, under whose overshadowing care she vegetated in obscurity, like an opening rose blooming beneath a briar. Nor indeed is this comparison entirely accidental; for, to tell the truth, her fresh and dawning beauty had caught the public eye, even in her seclusion, and, with that poetical turn common to the people of Andalusia, the peasantry of the neighbourhood had given her the appellation of "the Rose of the Alhambra."

The wary aunt continued to keep a faithful watch over
her tempting little niece as long as the court continued at Granada, and flattered herself that her vigilance had been successful. It is true, the good lady was now and then discomposed by the tinkling of guitars and chanting of low ditties from the moonlit groves beneath the tower; but she would exhort her niece to shut her ears against such idle minstrelsy, assuring her that it was one of the arts of the opposite sex, by which simple maids were often lured to their undoing. Alas! what chance with a simple maid has a dry lecture against a moonlight serenade?

At length King Philip cut short his sojourn at Granada, and suddenly departed with all his train. The vigilant Fredegonda watched the royal pageant as it issued forth from the gate of justice, and descended the great avenue leading to the city. When the last banner disappeared from her sight, she returned exulting to her tower, for all her cares were over. To her surprise, a light Arabian steed pawed the ground at the wicket-gate of the garden: to her horror, she saw through the thickets of roses a youth, in gaily embroidered dress, at the feet of her niece. At the sound of her footsteps he gave a tender adieu, bounded lightly over the barrier of reeds and myrtles, sprang upon his horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

The tender Jacinta, in the agony of her grief, lost all thought of her aunt's displeasure. Throwing herself into her arms, she broke forth into sobs and tears.

"Ay de mi!" cried she; "he's gone! — he's gone! he's gone! and I shall never see him more!"

"Gone! — who is gone? — what youth is that I saw at your feet?"

"A queen's page, aunt, who came to bid me farewell."

"A queen's page, child!" echoed the vigilant Fredegonda faintly; "and when did you become acquainted with a queen's page?"

"The morning that the ger-falcon came into the tower. It was the queen's ger-falcon, and he came in pursuit of it."

"Ah, silly, silly girl! know that there are no ger-falcons half so dangerous as these young prankling pages, and it
is precisely such simple birds as thee that they pounce upon."

The aunt was at first indignant at learning that, in despite of her boasted vigilance, a tender intercourse had been carried on by the youthful lovers, almost beneath her eye; but when she found that her simple-hearted niece, though thus exposed, without the protection of bolt or bar, to all the machinations of the opposite sex, had come forth unsinged from the fiery ordeal, she consoled herself with the persuasion that it was owing to the chaste and cautious maxims in which she had, as it were, steeped her to the very lips.

While the aunt laid this soothing unction to her pride, the niece treasured up the oft repeated vows of fidelity of the page. But what is the love of restless, roving man? A vagrant stream, that dallies for a time with each flower upon its bank, then passes on, and leaves them all in tears.

Days, weeks, months elapsed, and nothing more was heard of the page. The pomegranate ripened, the vine yielded up its fruit, the autumnal rains descended in torrents from the mountains; the Sierra Nevada became covered with a snowy mantle, and wintry blasts howled through the halls of the Alhambra—still he came not. The winter passed away. Again the genial spring burst forth with song and blossom and balmy zephyr; the snows melted from the mountains, until none remained but on the lofty summit of Nevada, glistening through the sultry summer air. Still nothing was heard of the forgetful page.

In the mean time, the poor little Jacinta grew pale and thoughtful. Her former occupations and amusements were abandoned, her silk lay entangled, her guitar unstrung, her flowers were neglected, the notes of her bird unheeded, and her eyes, once so bright, were dimmed with secret weeping. If any solitude could be devised to foster the passion of a love-lorn damsel, it would be such a place as the Alhambra, where every thing seems disposed to produce tender and romantic reveries. It is a very paradise
for lovers: how hard then to be alone in such a paradise — and not merely alone, but forsaken!

"Alas, silly child!" would the staid and immaculate Fredegonda say, when she found her niece in one of her desponding moods — "did I not warn thee against the wiles and deceptions of these men? What couldst thou expect, too, from one of a haughty and aspiring family — thou an orphan, the descendant of a fallen and impoverished line? Be assured, if the youth were true, his father, who is one of the proudest nobles about the court, would prohibit his union with one so humble and portionless as thou. Pluck up thy resolution, therefore, and drive these idle notions from thy mind."

The words of the immaculate Fredegonda only served to increase the melancholy of her niece, but she sought to indulge it in private. At a late hour one midsummer night, after her aunt had retired to rest, she remained alone in the hall of the tower, seated beside the alabaster fountain. It was here that the faithless page had first knelt and kissed her hand; it was here that he had often vowed eternal fidelity. The poor little damsel's heart was overladen with sad and tender recollections, her tears began to flow, and slowly fell drop by drop into the fountain. By degrees the crystal water became agitated, and — bubble — bubble — bubble — boiled up and was tossed about, until a female figure, richly clad in Moorish robes, slowly rose to view.

Jacinta was so frightened that she fled from the hall, and did not venture to return. The next morning she related what she had seen to her aunt, but the good lady treated it as a fantasy of her troubled mind, or supposed she had fallen asleep and dreamt beside the fountain.

"Thou hast been thinking of the story of the three Moorish princesses that once inhabited this tower," continued she, "and it has entered into thy dreams."

"What story, aunt? I know nothing of it."

"Thou hast certainly heard of the three princesses, Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda, who were confined in this tower by the king their father, and agreed to fly with three Christian cavaliers. The two first accomplished
their escape, but the third failed in her resolution, and, it is said, died in this tower."

"I now recollect to have heard of it," said Jacinta, "and to have wept over the fate of the gentle Zorahayda."

"Thou mayest well weep over her fate," continued the aunt, "for the lover of Zorahayda was thy ancestor. He long bemoaned his Moorish love, but time cured him of his grief, and he married a Spanish lady, from whom thou art descended." Jacinta ruminated upon these words. "That what I have seen is no fantasy of the brain," said she to herself, "I am confident. If indeed it be the spirit of the gentle Zorahayda, which I have heard lingers about this tower, of what should I be afraid? I'll watch by the fountain to-night—perhaps the visit will be repeated."

Towards midnight, when every thing was quiet, she again took her seat in the hall. As the bell in the distant watch-tower of the Alhambra struck the midnight hour, the fountain was again agitated; and bubble—bubble—bubble—it tossed about the waters until the Moorish female again rose to view. She was young and beautiful; her dress was rich with jewels, and in her hand she held a silver lute. Jacinta trembled and was faint, but was reassured by the soft and plaintive voice of the apparition, and the sweet expression of her pale melancholy countenance.

"Daughter of mortality," said she, "what aileth thee? Why do thy tears trouble my fountain, and thy sighs and plaints disturb the quiet watches of the night?"

"I weep because of the faithlessness of man, and I bemoan my solitary and forsaken state."

Take comfort; thy sorrows may yet have an end. Thou beholdest a Moorish princess, who, like thee, was unhappy in her love. A Christian knight, thy ancestor, won my heart, and would have borne me to his native land and to the bosom of his church. I was a convert in my heart, but I lacked courage equal to my faith, and lingered till too late. For this the evil genii are permitted to have power over me, and I remain enchanted in this
tower until some pure Christian will deign to break the magic spell. Wilt thou undertake the task?"

"I will," replied the damsel trembling.

"Come hither, then, and fear not; dip thy hand in the fountain, sprinkle the water over me, and baptize me after the manner of thy faith; so shall the enchantment be dispelled, and my troubled spirit have repose."

The damsel advanced with faltering steps, dipped her hand in the fountain, collected water in the palm, and sprinkled it over the pale face of the phantom.

The latter smiled with ineffable benignity. She dropped her silver lute at the feet of Jacinta, crossed her white arms upon her bosom and melted from sight, so that it seemed merely as if a shower of dew-drops had fallen into the fountain.

Jacinta retired from the hall filled with awe and wonder. She scarcely closed her eyes that night, but when she awoke at daybreak out of a troubled slumber, the whole appeared to her like a distempered dream. On descending into the hall, however, the truth of the vision was established; for, beside the fountain, she beheld the silver lute glittering in the morning sunshine.

She hastened to her aunt, to relate all that had befallen her, and called her to behold the lute as a testimonial of the reality of her story. If the good lady had any lingering doubts, they were removed when Jacinta touched the instrument, for she drew forth such ravishing tones as to thaw even the frigid bosom of the immaculate Fredegonda, that region of eternal winter, into a genial flow. Nothing but supernatural melody could have produced such an effect. The extraordinary power of the lute became every day more and more apparent. The wayfarer passing by the tower was detained, and, as it were, spell bound, in breathless ecstasy. The very birds gathered in the neighbouring trees, and, hushing their own strains, listened in charmed silence.

Rumour soon spread the news abroad. The inhabitants of Granada thronged to the Alhambra to catch a few notes of the transcendent music that floated about the tower of Las Infantas.
The lovely little minstrel was at length drawn forth from her retreat. The rich and powerful of the land contended who should entertain and do honour to her; or rather, who should secure the charms of her lute to draw fashionable throngs to their saloons. Wherever she went her vigilant aunt kept a dragon watch at her elbow, awing the throngs of impassioned admirers, who hung in raptures on her strains. The report of her wonderful powers spread from city to city. Malaga, Seville, Cordova, all became successively mad on the theme; nothing was talked of throughout Andalusia but the beautiful minstrel of the Alhambra. How could it be otherwise among a people so musical and gallant as the Andalusians, when the lute was magical in its powers, and the minstrel inspired by love?

While all Andalusia was thus music mad, a different mood prevailed at the court of Spain. Philip V., as is well known, was a miserable hyponchondriac, and subject to all kinds of fancies. Sometimes he would keep to his bed for weeks together, groaning under imaginary complaints. At other times he would insist upon abdicating his throne, to the great annoyance of his royal spouse, who had a strong relish for the splendours of a court, and the glories of a crown, and guided the sceptre of her imbecile lord with an expert and steady hand.

Nothing was found to be so efficacious in dispelling the royal megrims as the powers of music; the queen took care, therefore, to have the best performers, both vocal and instrumental, at hand, and retained the famous Italian singer, Farinelli, about the court as a kind of royal physician.

At the moment we treat of, however, a freak had come over the mind of this sapient and illustrious Bourbon that surpassed all former vagaries. After a long spell of imaginary illness, which set all the strains of Farinelli, and the consultations of a whole orchestra of court fiddlers at defiance, the monarch fairly, in idea, gave up the ghost, and considered himself absolutely dead.

This would have been harmless enough, and even convenient both to his queen and courtiers, had he been content to remain in the quietude befitting a dead man; but
to their annoyance he insisted upon having the funeral ceremonies performed over him, and, to their inexpressible perplexity, began to grow impatient, and to revile bitterly at them for negligence and disrespect, in leaving him unburied. What was to be done? To disobey the king's positive commands was monstrous in the eyes of the obsequious courtiers of a punctilious court—but to obey him and bury him alive would be downright regicide!

In the midst of this fearful dilemma a rumour reached the court, of the female minstrel who was turning the brains of all Andalusia. The queen despatched missions in all haste to summon her to St. Ildefonso, where the court at that time resided.

Within a few days, as the queen with her maids of honour was walking in those stately gardens intended, with their avenues and terraces and fountains, to eclipse the glories of Versailles, the far-famed minstrel was conducted into her presence. The imperial Elizabetta gazed with surprise at the youthful and unpretending appearance of the little being that had set the world madding. She was in her picturesque Andalusian dress, her silver lute was in her hand, and she stood with modest and downcast eyes, but with a simplicity and freshness of beauty that still bespoke her "the Rose of the Alhambra."

As usual she was accompanied by the ever vigilant Fredegonda, who gave the whole history of her parentage and descent to the inquiring queen. If the stately Elizabetta had been interested by the appearance of Jacinta, she was still more pleased when she learnt that she was of a meritorious though impoverished line, and that her father had bravely fallen in the service of the crown. "If thy powers equal their renown," said she, "and thou canst cast forth this evil spirit that possesses thy sovereign, thy fortunes shall henceforth be my care, and honours and wealth attend thee."

Impatient to make trial of her skill, she led the way at once to the apartment of the moody monarch.

Jacinta followed with downcast eyes through files of guards and crowds of courtiers. They arrived at length at a great chamber hung with black. The windows were
closed to exclude the light of day: a number of yellow wax tapers in silver sconces diffused a lugubrious light, and dimly revealed the figures of mutes in mourning dresses, and courtiers who glided about with noiseless step and woe-begone visage. On the midst of a funeral bed or bier, his hands folded on his breast, and the tip of his nose just visible, lay extended this would-be-buried monarch.

The queen entered the chamber in silence, and pointing to a footstool in an obscure corner, beckoned to Jacinta to sit down and commence.

At first she touched her lute with a faltering hand, but gathering confidence and animation as she proceeded, drew forth such soft aërial harmony, that all present could scarce believe it mortal. As to the monarch, who had already considered himself in the world of spirits, he set it down for some angelic melody or the music of the spheres. By degrees the theme was varied, and the voice of the minstrel accompanied the instrument. She poured forth one of the legendary ballads treating of the ancient glories of the Alhambra and the achievements of the Moors. Her whole soul entered into the theme, for with the recollections of the Alhambra was associated the story of her love. The funeral chamber resounded with the animating strain. It entered into the gloomy heart of the monarch. He raised his head and gazed around: he sat up on his couch, his eye began to kindle— at length, leaping upon the floor, he called for sword and buckler.

The triumph of music, or rather of the enchanted lute, was complete; the demon of melancholy was cast forth; and, as it were, a dead man brought to life. The windows of the apartment were thrown open; the glorious effulgence of Spanish sunshine burst into the late lugubrious chamber; all eyes sought the lovely enchantress,— but the lute had fallen from her hand, she had sunk upon the earth, and the next moment was clasped to the bosom of Ruyz de Alarcon.

The nuptials of the happy couple were shortly after celebrated with great splendour;— but hold— I hear the reader ask, how did Ruyz de Alarcon account for his long neglect? O that was all owing to the opposition of a
proud pragmatical old father: besides, young people, who really like one another, soon come to an amicable understanding, and bury all past grievances when once they meet.

But how was the proud pragmatical old father reconciled to the match?

O his scruples were easily overcome by a word or two from the queen, especially as dignities and rewards were showered upon the blooming favourite of royalty. Besides the lute of Jacinta, you know, possessed a magic power, and could control the most stubborn head and hardest breast.

And what came of the enchanted lute?

O that is the most curious matter of all, and plainly proves the truth of all this story. That lute remained for some time in the family, but was purloined and carried off, as was supposed, by the great singer, Farinelli, in pure jealousy. At his death it passed into other hands in Italy, who were ignorant of its mystic powers, and melting down the silver, transferred the strings to an old Cremona fiddle. The strings still retain something of their magic virtues. A word in the reader’s ear, but let it go no further — that fiddle is now bewitching the whole world — it is the fiddle of Paganini!

THE VETERAN.

Among the curious acquaintances I have made in my rambles about the fortress, is a brave and battered old colonel of invalids, who is nestled like a hawk in one of the Moorish towers. His history, which he is fond of telling, is a tissue of those adventures, mishaps, and vicissitudes that render the life of almost every Spaniard of note as varied and whimsical as the pages of Gil Blas.

He was in America at twelve years of age, and reckons
among the most signal and fortunate events of his life, his
having seen General Washington. Since then he has taken
a part in all the wars of his country; he can speak expe-
rimentally of most of the prisons and dungeons of the Pe-
ninsula; has been lamed of one leg, crippled in his hands,
and so cut up and carbonadoed that he is a kind of walking
monument of the troubles of Spain, on which there is a
scar for every battle and broil, as every year of captivity
was notched upon the tree of Robinson Crusoe. The great-
est misfortune of the brave old cavalier, however, appears
to have been his having commanded at Malaga during a
time of peril and confusion, and been made a general by
the inhabitants, to protect them from the invasion of the
French. This has entailed upon him a number of just
claims upon government, that I fear will employ him until
his dying day in writing and printing petitions and memo-
rials, to the great disquiet of his mind, exhaustion of his
purse, and penance of his friends; not one of whom can
visit him without having to listen to a mortal document of
half an hour in length, and to carry away half a dozen
pamphlets in his pocket. This, however, is the case
throughout Spain; every where you meet with some worthy
wight brooding in a corner, and nursing up some pet griev-
ance and cherished wrong. Beside, a Spaniard who has a
lawsuit, or a claim upon government, may be considered
as furnished with employment for the remainder of his life.

I visited the veteran in his quarters in the upper part of
the Torre del Vino, or Wine Tower. His room was small
but snug, and commanded a beautiful view of the Vega. It
was arranged with a soldier's precision. Three muskets and
a brace of pistols, all bright and shining, were suspended
against the wall with a sabre and a cane, hanging side by
side, and above them, two cocked hats, one for parade, and
one for ordinary use. A small shelf containing some half
dozens of books, formed his library, one of which, a little old
mouldy volume of philosophical maxims, was his favourite
reading. This he thumbed and pondered over day by day;
applying every maxim to his own particular case, provided
it had a little tinge of wholesome bitterness, and treated of
the injustice of the world.
Yet he is social and kind-hearted, and, provided he can be diverted from his wrongs and his philosophy, is an entertaining companion. I like these old weather-beaten sons of fortune, and enjoy their rough campaigning anecdotes. In the course of my visit to the one in question, I learnt some curious facts about an old military commander of the fortress, who seems to have resembled him in some respects, and to have had similar fortunes in the wars. These particulars have been augmented by inquiries among some of the old inhabitants of the place, particularly the father of Mateo Ximenes, of whose traditional stories the worthy I am about to introduce to the reader is a favourite hero.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE NOTARY.

In former times there ruled, as governor of the Alhambra, a doughty old cavalier, who, from having lost one arm in the wars, was commonly known by the name of el Gobernador Manco, or "the one-armed governor." He, in fact, prided himself upon being an old soldier, wore his moustachios curled up to his eyes, a pair of campaigning boots, and a toledo as long as a spit, with his pocket handkerchief in the basket hilt.

He was, moreover, exceedingly proud and punctilious, and tenacious of all his privileges and dignities. Under his sway the immunities of the Alhambra, as a royal residence and domain, were rigidly exacted. No one was permitted to enter the fortress with fire-arms, or even with a sword or staff, unless he were of a certain rank; and every horseman was obliged to dismount at the gate, and lead his horse by the bridle. Now as the hill of the Alhambra rises from the very midst of the city of Granada, being, as it were, an excrescence of the capital, it must at all times be somewhat irksome to the captain general, who commands the province, to have thus an imperium in imperio, a petty
independent post in the very centre of his domains. It was rendered the more galling, in the present instance, from the irritable jealousy of the old governor, that took fire on the least question of authority and jurisdiction, and from the loose vagrant character of the people that had gradually nestled themselves within the fortress, as in a sanctuary, and from thence carried on a system of roguery and depredation at the expense of the honest inhabitants of the city.

Thus there was a perpetual feud and heart-burning between the captain general and the governor, the more virulent on the part of the latter, inasmuch as the smallest of two neighbouring potentates is always the most captious about his dignity. The stately palace of the captain-general stood in the Plaza Nueva, immediately at the foot of the hill of the Alhambra, and here was always a bustle and parade of guards and domestics, and city functionaries. A beetling bastion of the fortress overlooked the palace and public square in front of it; and on this bastion the old governor would occasionally strut backwards and forwards, with his toledo girded by his side, keeping a wary eye down upon his rival, like a hawk reconnoitring his quarry from his nest in a dry tree.

Whenever he descended into the city it was in grand parade, on horseback, surrounded by his guards, or in his state coach, an ancient and unwieldy Spanish edifice of carved timber and gilt leather, drawn by eight mules, with running footmen, outriders, and lackeys, on which occasions he flattered himself he impressed every beholder with awe and admiration as vicegerent of the king, though the wits of Granada, particularly those who loitered about the palace of the captain general, were apt to sneer at his petty parade, and in allusion to the vagrant character of his subjects, to greet him with the appellation of "the king of the beggars." One of the most fruitful sources of dispute between these two doughty rivals was the right claimed by the governor to have all things passed free of duty through the city, that were intended for the use of himself or his garrison. By degrees this privilege had given rise to extensive smuggling. A nest of contrabandistas took up their
abode in the hovels of the fortress, and the numerous caves in its vicinity, and drove a thriving business under the con-
nivance of the soldiers of the garrison.

The vigilance of the captain general was aroused. He consulted his legal adviser and factotum, a shrewd meddle-
some escribano, or notary, who rejoiced in an opportunity of perplexing the old potentate of the Alhambra, and in-
volving him in a maze of legal subtilties. He advised the captain general to insist upon the right of examining every convoy passing through the gates of his city, and he penned a long letter for him in vindication of the right. Governor Manco was a straightforward cut and thrust old soldier, who hated an escribano worse than the devil, and this one in particular worse than all other escribanos.

"What!" said he, curling up his mustachios fiercely, "does the captain general set his man of the pen to prac-
tise confusions upon me? I'll let him see that an old soldier is not to be baffled by schoolcraft."

He seized his pen, and scrawled a short letter, in a crab-
bed hand, in which, without deigning to enter into argu-
ment, he insisted on the right of transit free of search, and denounced vengeance on any custom-house officer who should lay his unhallowed hand on any convoy protected by the flag of the Alhambra. While this question was agitated between the two pragmatical potentates, it so hap-
pened, that a mule, laden with supplies for the fortress, arrived one day at the gate of Xenil, by which it was to traverse a suburb of the city on its way to the Alhambra. The convoy was headed by a testy old corporal, who had long served under the governor, and was a man after his own heart; as rusty and staunch as an old toledo blade. As they approached the gate of the city the corporal placed the banner of the Alhambra on the packsaddle of the mule, and, drawing himself up to a perfect perpendicular, advanced with his head dressed to the front, but with the wary side glance of a cur passing through hostile ground, and ready for a snap and a snarl.

"Who goes there?" said the sentinel at the gate.

"Soldier of the Alhambra," said the corporal, without turning his head.
"What have you in charge?"
"Provisions for the garrison."
"Proceed."

The corporal marched straight forward, followed by the convoy, but had not advanced many paces before a posse of custom-house officers rushed out of a small toll-house.

"Hallo, there!" cried the leader. "Muleteer, halt, and open those packages."

The corporal wheeled round, and drew himself up in battle array. "Respect the flag of the Alhambra," said he; "these things are for the governor."

"A figo for the governor, and a figo for his flag. Muleteer, halt, I say."

"Stop the convoy at your peril!" cried the corporal, cocking his musket: "Muleteer, proceed."

The muleteer gave his beast a hearty thwack; the custom-house officer sprang forward and seized the halter; whereupon the corporal levelled his piece and shot him dead.

The street was immediately in an uproar. The old corporal was seized, and after undergoing sundry kicks, and cuffs, and cudgelings, which are generally given impromptu by the mob in Spain, as a foretaste of the after penalties of the law, he was loaded with irons, and conducted to the city prison; while his comrades were permitted to proceed with the convoy, after it had been well rummaged, to the Alhambra.

The old governor was in a towering passion when he heard of this insult to his flag and capture of his corporal. For a time he stormed about the Moorish halls, and vapoured about the bastions, and looked down fire and sword upon the palace of the captain general. Having vented the first ebulition of his wrath, he despatched a message, demanding the surrender of the corporal, as to him alone belonged the right of sitting in judgment on the offences of those under his command. The captain general, aided by the pen of the delighted escribano, replied at great length, arguing that as the offence had been committed within the walls of his city, and against one of his civil officers, it was clearly within his proper jurisdiction. The governor re-
joined by a repetition of his demand; the captain general gave a surrejoinder of still greater length and legal acumen; the governor became hotter and more peremptory in his demands, and the captain general cooler and more copious in his replies; until the old lion-hearted soldier absolutely roared with fury at being thus entangled in the meshes of legal controversy.

While the subtile escribano was thus amusing himself at the expense of the governor, he was conducting the trial of the corporal, who, mewed up in a narrow dungeon of the prison, had merely a small grated window at which to show his iron-bound visage, and receive the consolations of his friends.

A mountain of written testimony was diligently heaped up, according to Spanish form, by the indefatigable escribano; the corporal was completely overwhelmed by it. He was convicted of murder, and sentenced to be hanged.

It was in vain the governor sent down remonstrance and menace from the Alhambra. The fatal day was at hand, and the corporal was put in capilla, that is to say, in the chapel of the prison, as is always done with culprits the day before execution, that they may meditate on their approaching end, and repent them of their sins.

Seeing things drawing to an extremity, the old governor determined to attend to the affair in person. For this purpose he ordered out his carriage of state, and, surrounded by his guards, rumbled down the avenue of the Alhambra into the city. Driving to the house of the escribano, he summoned him to the portal.

The eye of the old governor gleamed like a coal at beholding the smirking man of the law advancing with an air of exultation.

"What is this I hear," cried he, "that you are about to put to death one of my soldiers?"

"All according to law—all in strict form of justice," said the self-sufficient escribano, chuckling, and rubbing his hands. "I can show your excellency the written testimony in the case."

"Fetch it hither," said the governor. The escribano bustled into his office, delighted with having another op-
portunity of displaying his ingenuity at the expense of the hard-headed veteran.

He returned with a satchel full of papers, and began to read a long deposition with professional volubility. By this time a crowd had collected, listening with out-stretched necks and gaping mouths.

"Prythee, man, get into the carriage, out of this pestilent throng, that I may the better hear thee," said the governor.

The escribano entered the carriage, when, in a twinkling, the door was closed, the coachman smacked his whip — mules, carriage, guards, and all dashed off at a thundering rate, leaving the crowd in gaping wonderment; nor did the governor pause until he had lodged his prey in one of the strongest dungeons of the Alhambra.

He then sent down a flag of truce in military style, proposing a cartel or exchange of prisoners — the corporal for the notary. The pride of the captain-general was piqued; he returned a contemptuous refusal, and forthwith caused a gallows, tall and strong, to be erected in the centre of the Plaza Nueva for the execution of the corporal.

"Oho! is that the game?" said Governor Manco. He gave orders, and immediately a gibbet was reared on the verge of the great beetling bastion that overlooked the Plaza. "Now," said he in a message to the captain general; "hang my soldier when you please; but at the same time that he is swung off in the square, look up to see your escribano dangling against the sky."

The captain general was inflexible; troops were paraded in the square; the drums beat, the bell tolled. An immense multitude of amateurs gathered together to behold the execution. On the other hand, the governor paraded his garrison on the bastion, and tolled the funeral dirge of the notary from the Torre de la Campana, or Tower of the Bell.

The notary's wife pressed through the crowd with a whole progeny of little embryo escribanos at her heels, and throwing herself at the feet of the captain general, implored him not to sacrifice the life of her husband, and the welfare of herself and her numerous little ones, to a
point of pride; "for you know the old governor too well," said she, "to doubt that he will put his threat in execution, if you hang the soldier."

The captain general was overpowered by her tears and lamentations, and the clamours of her callow brood. The corporal was sent up to the Alhambra, under a guard, in his gallows' garb, like a hooded friar, but with head erect and a face of iron. The escribano was demanded in exchange, according to the cartel. The once bustling and self-sufficient man of the law was drawn forth from his dungeon more dead than alive. All his flippancy and conceit had evaporated; his hair, it is said, had nearly turned grey with affright, and he had a downcast, dogged look, as if he still felt the halter round his neck.

The old governor stuck his one arm a-kimbo, and for a moment surveyed him with an iron smile. "Henceforth, my friend," said he, "moderate your zeal in hurrying others to the gallows; be not too certain of your safety, even though you should have the law on your side; and above all, take care how you play off your schoolcraft another time upon an old soldier."

GOVERNOR MANCO AND THE SOLDIER.

When Governor Manco, or "the one-armed," kept up a show of military state in the Alhambra, he became nettled at the reproaches continually cast upon his fortress, of being a nestling place of rogues and contrabandistas. On a sudden, the old potentate determined on reform, and setting vigorously to work, ejected whole nests of vagabonds out of the fortress and the gipsy caves with which the surrounding hills are honeycombed. He sent out soldiers also, to patrol the avenues and footpaths, with orders to take up all suspicious persons.

One bright summer morning, a patrol, consisting of the testy old corporal who had distinguished himself in the
affair of the notary, a trumpeter and two privates, was seated under the garden wall of the Generalife, beside the road which leads down from the mountain of the sun, when they heard the tramp of a horse, and a male voice singing in rough, though not unmusical tones, an old Castilian campaigning song.

Presently they beheld a sturdy sun-burnt fellow, clad in the ragged garb of a foot soldier leading a powerful Arabian horse, caparisoned in the ancient Moresco fashion. Astonished at the sight of a strange soldier descending, steed in hand, from that solitary mountain, the corporal stepped forth and challenged him.

"Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"Who and what are you?"

"A poor soldier just from the wars, with a cracked crown and empty purse for a reward."

By this time they were enabled to view him more narrowly. He had a black patch across his forehead, which, with a grizzled beard, added to a certain dare-devil cast of countenance, while a slight squint threw into the whole an occasional gleam of roguish good-humour.

Having answered the questions of the patrol, the soldier seemed to consider himself entitled to make others in return. "May I ask," said he, "what city is that which I see at the foot of the hill?"

"What city!" cried the trumpeter; "come, that's too bad. Here's a fellow lurking about the mountain of the sun, and demands the name of the great city of Granada!"

"Granada! Madre di Dios! can it be possible?"

"Perhaps not!" rejoined the trumpeter; "and perhaps you have no idea that yonder are the towers of the Alhambra."

"Son of a trumpet," replied the stranger, "do not trifle with me; if this be indeed the Alhambra, I have some strange matters to reveal to the governor."

"You will have an opportunity," said the corporal, "for we mean to take you before him." By this time the trumpeter had seized the bridle of the steed, the two pri
vates had each secured an arm of the soldier, the corporal put himself in front, gave the word, "Forward—march!" and away they marched for the Alhambra.

The sight of a ragged foot soldier and a fine Arabian horse, brought in captive by the patrol, attracted the attention of all the idlers of the fortress, and of those gossip groups that generally assemble about wells and fountains at early dawn. The wheel of the cistern paused in its rotations, and the slipshod servant-maid stood gaping, with pitcher in hand, as the corporal passed by with his prize. A motley train gradually gathered in the rear of the escort.

Knowing nods and winks and conjectures passed from one to another. "It is a deserter," said one; "A contrabandista," said another; "A bandalero," said a third; — until it was affirmed that a captain of a desperate band of robbers had been captured by the prowess of the corporal and his patrol. "Well, well," said the old crones, one to another, "captain or not, let him get out of the grasp of old Governor Manco if he can, though he is but one-handed."

Governor Manco was seated in one of the inner halls of the Alhambra, taking his morning's cup of chocolate in company with his confessor, a fat Franciscan friar, from the neighbouring convent. A demure, dark-eyed damsel of Malaga, the daughter of his housekeeper, was attending upon him. The world hinted that the damsel, who, with all her demureness, was a sly buxom baggage, had found out a soft spot in the iron heart of the old governor, and held complete control over him. But let that pass — the domestic affairs of these mighty potentates of the earth should not be too narrowly scrutinised.

When word was brought that a suspicious stranger had been taken lurking about the fortress, and was actually in the outer court, in durance of the corporal, waiting the pleasure of his excellency, the pride and stateliness of office swelled the bosom of the governor. Giving back his chocolate cup into the hands of the demure damsel, he called for his basket-hilted sword, girded it to his side, twirled up his mustachios, took his seat in a large high-
backed chair, assumed a bitter and forbidding aspect, and ordered the prisoner into his presence. The soldier was brought in, still closely pinioned by his captors, and guarded by the corporal. He maintained, however, a resolute self-confident air, and returned the sharp, scrutinising look of the governor with an easy squint, which by no means pleased the punctilious old potentate.

"Well, culprit," said the governor, after he had regarded him for a moment in silence, "what have you to say for yourself — who are you?"

"A soldier, just from the wars, who has brought away nothing but scars and bruises."

"A soldier — humph — a foot soldier by your garb. I understand you have a fine Arabian horse. I presume you brought him too from the wars, beside your scars and bruises."

"May it please your excellency, I have something strange to tell about that horse. Indeed I have one of the most wonderful things to relate. Something too that concerns the security of this fortress, indeed of all Granada. But it is a matter to be imparted only to your private ear, or in presence of such only as are in your confidence.

The governor considered for a moment, and then directed the corporal and his men to withdraw, but to post themselves outside of the door, and be ready at a call. "This holy friar," said he, "is my confessor, you may say anything in his presence — and this damsel," nodding towards the handmaid, who had loitered with an air of great curiosity, "this damsel is of great secrecy and discretion, and to be trusted with any thing."

The soldier gave a glance between a squint and a leer at the demure handmaid. "I am perfectly willing," said he, "that the damsel should remain."

When all the rest had withdrawn, the soldier commenced his story. He was a fluent, smooth-tongued varlet, and had a command of language above his apparent rank.

"May it please your excellency," said he, "I am, as I before observed, a soldier, and have seen some hard service, but my term of enlistment being expired, I was discharged,
not long since, from the army of Valladolid, and set out on foot for my native village in Andalusia. Yesterday evening the sun went down as I was traversing a great dry plain of Old Castile.

"Hold," cried the governor, "what is this you say? Old Castile is some two or three hundred miles from this."

"Even so," replied the soldier coolly. "I told your excellency I had strange things to relate; but not more strange than true; as your excellency will find, if you will deign me a patient hearing."

"Proceed, culprit," said the governor, twirling up his mustachios.

"As the sun went down," continued the soldier, "I cast my eyes about in search of some quarters for the night; but, far as my sight could reach, there were no signs of habitation. I saw that I should have to make my bed on the naked plain, with my knapsack for a pillow; but your excellency is an old soldier, and knows that to one who has been in the wars such a night's lodging is no great hardship."

The governor nodded assent, as he drew his pocket handkerchief out of the basket hilt, to drive away a fly that buzzed about his nose.

"Well, to make a long story short," continued the soldier, "I trudged forward for several miles until I came to a bridge over a deep ravine, through which ran a little thread of water, almost dried up by the summer heat. At one end of the bridge was a Moorish tower, the upper end all in ruins, but a vault in the foundation quite entire. Here, thinks I, is a good place to make a halt; so I went down to the stream, took a hearty drink, for the water was pure and sweet, and I was parched with thirst; then opening my wallet, I took out an onion and a few crusts, which were all my provisions, and seating myself on a stone on the margin of the stream, began to make my supper; intending afterwards to quarter myself for the night in the vault of the tower; and capital quarters they would have been for a campaigner just from the wars, as your excellency, who is an old soldier, may suppose."

"I have put up gladly with worse in my time," said the
governor, returning his pocket handkerchief into the hilt of his sword.

"While I was quietly crunching my crust," pursued the soldier, "I heard something stir within the vault; I listened—it was the tramp of a horse. By and bye, a man came forth from a door in the foundation of the tower, close by the water's edge, leading a powerful horse by the bridle. I could not well make out what he was by the starlight. It had a suspicious look to be lurking among the ruins of a tower, in that wild solitary place. He might be a mere wayfarer, like myself; he might be a contrabandista; he might be a bandalero; what of that? thank heaven and my poverty, I had nothing to lose; so I sat still and crunched my crusts.

"He led his horse to the water, close by where I was sitting, so that I had a fair opportunity of reconnoitring him. To my surprise he was dressed in a Moorish garb, with a cuirass of steel, and a polished skull-cap that I distinguished by the reflection of the stars upon it. His horse, too, was harnessed in the Moresco fashion, with great shovel stirrups. He led him, as I said, to the side of the stream, into which the animal plunged his head almost to the eyes, and drank until I thought he would have burst.

"'Comrade,' said I, 'your steed drinks well; it's a good sign when a horse plunges his muzzle bravely into the water.'

"'He may well drink,' said the stranger, speaking with a Moorish accent, 'it is a good year since he had his last draught.'

"'By Santiago,' said I, 'that beats even the camels that I have seen in Africa. But come, you seem to be something of a soldier, will you sit down and take part of a soldier's fare?' In fact I felt the want of a companion in this lonely place, and was willing to put up with an infidel. Besides, as your excellency well knows, a soldier is never very particular about the faith of his company, and soldiers of all countries are comrades on peaceable ground.'

The governor again nodded assent.

"Well, as I was saying, I invited him to share my supper, such as it was, for I could not do less in common
hospitality. 'I have no time to pause for meat or drink,' said he, 'I have a long journey to make before morning.'

"'In which direction?' said I.

"'Andalusia,' said he.

"'Exactly my route,' said I; 'so, as you won't stop and eat with me, perhaps you will let me mount and ride with you. I see your horse is of a powerful frame, I'll warrant he'll carry double.'

"'Agreed,' said the trooper; and it would not have been civil and soldier-like to refuse, especially as I had offered to share my supper with him. So up he mounted, and up I mounted behind him.

"'Hold fast,' said he, 'my steed goes like the wind.'

"'Never fear me,' said I, and so off we set.

"From a walk the horse soon passed to a trot, from a trot to a gallop, and from a gallop to a harum scarum scamper. It seemed as if rocks, trees, houses, every thing, flew hurry scurry behind us.

"'What town is this?' said I.

"'Segovia,' said he; and before the word was out of his mouth, the towers of Segovia were out of sight. We swept up the Guadarama mountains, and down by the Escorial; and we skirted the walls of Madrid, and we scoured away across the plains of La Mancha. In this way we went up hill and down dale, by towers and cities, all buried in deep sleep, and across mountains, and plains, and rivers, just glimmering in the starlight.

"To make a long story short, and not to fatigue your excellency, the trooper suddenly pulled up on the side of a mountain. "'Here we are,'" said he, "'at the end of our journey.' I looked about, but could see no signs of habitation; nothing but the mouth of a cavern. While I looked I saw multitudes of people in Moorish dresses, some on horseback, some on foot, arriving as if borne by the wind from all points of the compass, and hurrying into the mouth of the cavern, like bees into a hive. Before I could ask a question, the trooper struck his long Moorish spurs into the horse's flanks and dashed in with the throng. We passed along a steep winding way, that descended into the very bowels of the mountain. As we pushed on, a
light began to glimmer up by little and little, like the first glimmerings of day, but what caused it I could not discern. It grew stronger and stronger, and enabled me to see every thing around. I now noticed, as we passed along, great caverns, opening to the right and left, like halls in an arsenal. In some there were shields, and helmets, and cuirasses, and lances, and scimitars, hanging against the walls; in others there were great heaps of warlike munitions, and camp equipage lying upon the ground.

"It would have done your excellency’s heart good, being an old soldier, to have seen such grand provision for war. Then, in other caverns, there were long rows of horsemen armed to the teeth, with lances raised and banners unfurled all ready for the field; but they all sat motionless in their saddles like so many statues. In other halls were warriors sleeping on the ground beside their horses, and foot-soldiers in groups ready to fall into the ranks. All were in old-fashioned Moorish dresses and armour.

"Well, your excellency, to cut a long story short, we at length entered an immense cavern, or I may say palace, of grotto work, the walls of which seemed to be veined with gold and silver, and to sparkle with diamonds and sapphires and all kinds of precious stones. At the upper end sat a Moorish king on a golden throne, with his nobles on each side, and a guard of African blacks with drawn scimitars. All the crowd that continued to flock in, and amounted to thousands and thousands, passed one by one before his throne, each paying homage as he passed. Some of the multitude were dressed in magnificent robes, without stain or blemish, and sparkling with jewels; others in burnished and enamelled armour; while others were in mouldered and mildewed garments, and in armour all battered and dented and covered with rust.

"I had hitherto held my tongue, for your excellency well knows, it is not for a soldier to ask many questions when on duty, but I could keep silent no longer.

"'Pr’ythee, comrade,’ said I, ‘what is the meaning of all this?’

"'This,’ said the trooper, ‘is a great and fearful mys-
tery. Know, O Christian, that you see before you the court and army of Boabdil the last king of Granada.'

"'What is this you tell me?' cried I. 'Boabdil and his court were exiled from the land hundreds of years ago, and all died in Africa.'

"'So it is recorded in your lying chronicles,' replied the Moor: 'but know that Boabdil and the warriors who made the last struggle for Granada were all shut up in the mountain by powerful enchantment. As for the king and army that marched forth from Granada at the time of the surrender, they were a mere phantom train, of spirits and demons permitted to assume those shapes to deceive the Christian sovereigns. And furthermore let me tell you, friend, that all Spain is a country under the power of enchantment. There is not a mountain cave, not a lonely watch-tower in the plains, nor ruined castle on the hills, but has some spell-bound warriors sleeping from age to age within its vaults, until the sins are expiated for which Allah permitted the dominion to pass for a time out of the hands of the faithful. Once every year, on the eve of St. John, they are released from enchantment, from sunset to sunrise, and permitted to repair here to pay homage to their sovereign: and the crowds which you beheld swarming into the cavern are Moslem warriors from their haunts in all parts of Spain. For my own part, you saw the ruined tower of the bridge in Old Castile, where I have now wintered and summered for many hundred years, and where I must be back again by daybreak. As to the battalions of horse and foot which you beheld draw up in array in the neighbouring caverns, they are the spell-bound warriors of Granada. It is written in the book of fate, that when the enchantment is broken, Boabdil will descend from the mountain at the head of this army, resume his throne in the Alhambra and his sway of Granada, and gathering together the enchanted warriors, from all parts of Spain, will reconquer the peninsula and restore it to Moslem rule.'

"'And when shall this happen?' said I.

"'Allah alone knows: we had hoped the day of deliverance was at hand; but there reigns at present a
vigilant governor in the Alhambra, a stanch old soldier, well known as Governor Manco. While such a warrior holds command of the very outpost, and stands ready to check the first irruption from the mountain, I fear Boabdil and his soldiery must be content to rest upon their arms.'"

Here the governor raised himself somewhat perpendicularly, adjusted his sword, and twirled up his mustachios.

"To make a long story short, and not to fatigue your excellency, the trooper, having given me this account, dismounted from his steed.

"'Tarry here,' said he, 'and guard my steed while I go and bow the knee to Boabdil.' So saying, he strode away among the throng that pressed forward to the throne.

"'What's to be done?' thought I, 'when thus left to myself; shall I wait here until this infidel returns to whisk me off on his goblin steed, the Lord knows where; or shall I make the most of my time and beat a retreat from this hobgoblin community?' A soldier's mind is soon made up, as your excellency well knows. As to the horse, he belonged to an avowed enemy of the faith and the realm, and was a fair prize according to the rules of war. So hoisting myself from the crupper into the saddle, I turned the reins, struck the Moorish stirrups into the sides of the steed, and put him to make the best of his way out of the passage by which he had entered. As we scoured by the halls where the Moslem horsemen sat in motionless battalions, I thought I heard the clang of armour and a hollow murmur of voices. I gave the steed another taste of the stirrups and doubled my speed. There was now a sound behind me like a rushing blast; I heard the clatter of a thousand hoofs: a countless throng overtook me. I was borne along in the press, and hurled forth from the mouth of the cavern, while thousands of shadowy forms were swept off in every direction by the four winds of heaven.

"In the whirl and confusion of the scene I was thrown senseless to the earth. When I came to myself I was lying on the brow of a hill with the Arabian steed standing beside me; for, in falling, my arm had slipt within the
bridle, which, I presume, prevented his whisking off to Old Castile.

"Your excellency may easily judge of my surprise on looking round, to behold hedges of aloes and Indian figs and other proofs of a southern climate, and to see a great city below me with towers, and palaces, and a grand cathedral.

"I descended the hill cautiously, leading my steed, for I was afraid to mount him again, lest he should play me some slippery trick. As I descended I met with your patrol, who let me into the secret that it was Granada that lay before me; and that I was actually under the walls of the Alhambra, the fortress of the redoubted Governor Manco, the terror of all enchanted Moslems. When I heard this, I determined at once to seek your excellency, to inform you of all that I had seen, and to warn you of the perils that surround and undermine you, that you may take measures in time to guard your fortress, and the kingdom itself, from this intestine army that lurks in the very bowels of the land."

"And pr'ythee, friend, you who are a veteran campaigner, and have seen so much service," said the governor, "how would you advise me to proceed, in order to prevent this evil?"

"It is not for a humble private of the ranks," said the soldier modestly, "to pretend to instruct a commander of your excellency's sagacity, but it appears to me that your excellency might cause all the caves and entrances in the mountain to be walled up with solid mason work, so that Boabdil and his army might be completely corked up in their subterranean habitation. If the good father too," added the soldier reverently bowing to the friar, and devoutly crossing himself, "would consecrate the barricadoes with his blessing, and put up a few crosses and reliques and images of saints, I think they might withstand all the power of infidel enchantments."

"They doubtless would be of great avail," said the friar.

The governor now placed his arm a-kimbo with his hand resting on the hilt of his toledo, fixed his eye upon the
soldier, and gently wagging his head from one side to the other,

"So, friend," said he, "then you really suppose I am to be gulled with this cock-and-bull story about enchanted mountains and enchanted Moors? Hark ye, culprit!—no another word. An old soldier you may be, but you'll find you have an older soldier to deal with, and one not easily outgeneralled. Ho! guards there! put this fellow in irons."

The demure handmaid would have put in a word in favour of the prisoner, but the governor silenced her with a look.

As they were pinioning the soldier, one of the guards felt something of bulk in his pocket, and drawing it forth, found a long leathern purse that appeared to be well filled. Holding it by one corner, he turned out the contents upon the table before the governor, and never did freebooter's bag make more gorgeous delivery. Out tumbled rings, and jewels, and rosaries of pearls, and sparkling diamond crosses, and a profusion of ancient golden coin, some of which fell jingling to the floor, and rolled away to the uttermost parts of the chamber.

For a time the functions of justice were suspended; there was an universal scramble after the glittering fugitives. The governor alone, who was imbued with true Spanish pride, maintained his stately decorum, though his eye betrayed a little anxiety until the last coin and jewel were restored to the sack.

The friar was not so calm; his whole face glowed like a furnace, and his eyes twinkled and flashed at sight of the rosaries and crosses.

"Sacrilegious wretch that thou art!" exclaimed he; "what church or sanctuary hast thou been plundering of these sacred relics?"

"Neither one nor the other, holy father. If they be sacrilegious spoils, they must have been taken in times long past, by the infidel trooper I have mentioned. I was just going to tell his excellency when he interrupted me, that, on taking possession of the trooper's horse, I unhooked a leathern sack which hung at the saddle-bow, and
which I presume contained the plunder of his campaignings in days of old, when the Moors overran the country."

"Mighty well; at present you will make up your mind to take up your quarters in a chamber of the vermilion tower, which, though not under a magic spell, will hold you as safe as any cave of your enchanted Moors."

"Your excellency will do as you think proper," said the prisoner coolly. "I shall be thankful to your excellency for any accommodation in the fortress. A soldier who has been in the wars, as your excellency well knows, is not particular about his lodgings: provided I have a snug dungeon and regular rations, I shall manage to make myself comfortable. I would only entreat that while your excellency is so careful about me, you would have an eye to your fortress, and think on the hint I dropped about stopping up the entrances to the mountain."

Here ended the scene. The prisoner was conducted to a strong dungeon in the vermilion tower, the Arabian steed was led to his excellency's stable, and the trooper's sack was deposited in his excellency's strong box. To the latter, it is true, the friar made some demur, questioning whether the sacred relics, which were evidently sacrilegious spoils, should not be placed in custody of the church; but as the governor was peremptory on the subject, and was absolute lord in the Alhambra, the friar discreetly dropped the discussion, but determined to convey intelligence of the fact to the church dignitaries in Granada.

To explain these prompt and rigid measures on the part of old Governor Manco, it is proper to observe, that about this time the Alpuxarra mountains in the neighbourhood of Granada were terribly infested by a gang of robbers, under the command of a daring chief, named Manuel Borasco, who were accustomed to prowl about the country, and even to enter the city in various disguises, to gain intelligence of the departure of convoys of merchandise, or travellers with well-lined purses, whom they took care to waylay in distant and solitary passes of their road. These repeated and daring outrages had awakened the attention of government, and the commanders of the various posts
had received instructions to be on the alert, and to take up all suspicious stragglers. Governor Manco was particularly zealous in consequence of the various stigmas that had been cast upon his fortress, and he now doubted not that he had entrapped some formidable desperado of this gang.

In the mean time the story took wind, and became the talk, not merely of the fortress, but of the whole city of Granada. It was said that the noted robber Manuel Borasco, the terror of the Alpuxarras, had fallen into the clutches of old Governor Manco, and been cooped up by him in a dungeon of the vermilion tower; and every one who had been robbed by him flocked to recognise the marauder. The vermilion towers, as is well known, stand apart from the Alhambra on a sister hill, separated from the main fortress by the ravine down which passes the main avenue. There were no outer walls, but a sentinel patrolled before the tower. The window of the chamber in which the soldier was confined was strongly grated, and looked upon a small esplanade. Here the good folks of Granada repaired to gaze at him, as they would at a laughing hyena, grinning through the cage of a menagerie. Nobody, however, recognised him for Manuel Borasco; for that terrible robber was noted for a ferocious physiognomy, and had by no means the good-humoured squint of the prisoner. Visitors came not merely from the city, but from all parts of the country; but nobody knew him, and there began to be doubts in the minds of the common people whether there might not be some truth in his story. That Boabdil and his army were shut up in the mountain, was an old tradition which many of the ancient inhabitants had heard from their fathers. Numbers went up to the mountain of the sun, or rather of St. Elena, in search of the cave mentioned by the soldier; and saw and peeped into the deep dark pit, descending, no one knows how far, into the mountain, and which remains there to this day—the fabled entrance to the subterranean abode of Boabdil.

By degrees the soldier became popular with the common people. A freebooter of the mountains is by no means the
opprobrious character in Spain that a robber is in any other country: on the contrary, he is a kind of chivalrous personage in the eyes of the lower classes. There is always a disposition, also, to cavil at the conduct of those in command; and many began to murmur at the high-handed measures of old Governor Manco, and to look upon the prisoner in the light of a martyr.

The soldier, moreover, was a merry, waggish fellow, that had a joke for every one who came near his window, and a soft speech for every female. He had procured an old guitar also, and would sit by his window and sing ballads and love ditties, to the delight of the women of the neighbourhood, who would assemble on the esplanade in the evenings and dance boleros to his music. Having trimmed off his rough beard, his sunburnt face found favour in the eyes of the fair; and the demure handmaid of the governor declared that his squint was perfectly irresistible. This kind-hearted damsel had, from the first, evinced a deep sympathy in his fortunes, and having in vain tried to mollify the governor, had set to work privately to mitigate the rigour of his dispensations. Every day she brought the prisoner some crumbs of comfort which had fallen from the governor’s table, or been abstracted from his larder, together with, now and then, a consoling bottle of choice Val de Peñas, or rich Malaga.

While this petty treason was going on, in the very centre of the old governor’s citadel, a storm of open war was brewing up among his external foes. The circumstance of a bag of gold and jewels having been found upon the person of the supposed robber had been reported, with many exaggerations, in Granada. A question of territorial jurisdiction was immediately started by the governor’s inveterate rival, the captain general. He insisted that the prisoner had been captured without the precincts of the Alhambra, and within the rules of his authority. He demanded his body therefore, and the spolia opima taken with him. Due information having been carried likewise by the friar to the grand Inquisitor of the crosses and rosaries, and other reliques contained in the bag, he claimed the culprit as having been guilty of sacrilege, and insisted
that his plunder was due to the church, and his body to
the next auto da fe. The feuds ran high, the governor
was furious, and swore, rather than surrender his captive,
he would hang him up within the Alhambra, as a spy
captured within the purlieus of the fortress.

The captain general threatened to send a body of sol-
diers to transfer the prisoner from the vermilion tower to
the city. The grand Inquisitor was equally bent upon
despatching a number of the familiars of the Holy Office.
Word was brought late at night to the governor of these
machinations. “Let them come,” said he, “they’ll find
me beforehand with them; he must rise bright and early
who would take in an old soldier.” He accordingly issued
orders to have the prisoner removed at daybreak, to the
donjon keep within the walls of the Alhambra. “And
d’ye hear, child,” said he to his demure handmaid, “tap
at my door, and wake me before cock-crowing, that I may
see to the matter myself.”

The day dawned, the cock crowed, but nobody tapped
at the door of the governor. The sun rose high above the
mountain tops, and glittered in at his casement, ere the
governor was wakened from his morning dreams by his
veteran corporal, who stood before him with terror stamped
upon his iron visage.

“He’s off! he’s gone!” cried the corporal, gasping for
breath.

“Who’s off—who’s gone?”

“The soldier—the robber—the devil, for aught I
know; his dungeon is empty, but the door locked,—no one
knows how he has escaped out of it.”

“Who saw him last?”

“Your handmaid, she brought him his supper.”

“Let her be called instantly.”

Here was new matter of confusion. The chamber of
the demure damsel was likewise empty, her bed had not
been slept in; she had doubtless gone off with the culprit,
as she had appeared, for some days past, to have frequent
conversations with him.

This was wounding the old governor in a tender part;
but he had scarce time to wince at it, when new misfor-
tunes broke upon his view. On going into his cabinet he found his strong box open, the leather purse of the trooper abstracted, and with it, a couple of corpulent bags of doubloons.

But how, and which way, had the fugitives escaped? An old peasant who lived in a cottage by the road-side, leading up into the Sierras, declared that he had heard the tramp of a powerful steed just before daybreak, passing up into the mountains. He had looked out at his casement, and could just distinguish a horseman, with a female seated before him.

"Search the stables!" cried Governor Manco. The stables were searched; all the horses were in their stalls, excepting the Arabian steed. In his place was a stout cudgel tied to the manger, and on it a label bearing these words, "A gift to Governor Manco, from an Old Soldier."

LEGEND OF THE TWO DISCREET STATUES.

There lived once in a waste apartment of the Alhambra a merry little fellow, named Lope Sanchez, who worked in the gardens, and was as brisk and blithe as a grasshopper, singing all day long. He was the life and soul of the fortress; when his work was over, he would sit on one of the stone benches of the esplanade, and strum his guitar, and sing long ditties about the Cid, and Bernardo del Carpio, and Fernando del Pulgar, and other Spanish heroes, for the amusement of the old soldiers of the fortress, or would strike up a merrier tune, and set the girls dancing boleros and fandangos.

Like most little men, Lope Sanchez had a strapping buxom dame for a wife, who could almost have put him in her pocket; but he lacked the usual poor man's lot — in-
stead of ten children he had but one. This was a little
black-eyed girl about twelve years of age, named Sanchica,
who was as merry as himself, and the delight of his heart.
She played about him as he worked in the gardens, danced
to his guitar as he sat in the shade, and ran as wild as a
young fawn about the groves and alleys and ruined halls of
the Alhambra.

It was now the eve of the blessed St. John, and the
holiday-loving gossips of the Alhambra, men, women, and
children, went up at night to the mountain of the sun,
which rises above the Generalife, to keep their midsummer
vigil on its level summit. It was a bright moonlight
and all the mountains were grey and silvery, and the city,
with its domes and spires, lay in shadows below, and the
Vega was like a fairy land, with haunted streams gleaming
among its dusky groves. On the highest part of the
mountain they lit up a bonfire, according to an old custom
of the country handed down from the Moors. The in-
habitants of the surrounding country were keeping a
similar vigil, and bonfires, here and there in the Vega,
and along the folds of the mountains, blazed up palely in
the moonlight.

The evening was gaily passed in dancing to the guitar
of Lope Sanchez, who was never so joyous as when on a
holiday revel of the kind. While the dance was going on,
the little Sanchica with some of her playmates sported
among the ruins of an old Moorish fort that crowns the
mountain, when, in gathering pebbles in the fosse, she
found a small hand curiously carved of jet, the fingers
closed, and the thumb firmly clasped upon them. Over-
joyed with her good fortune, she ran to her mother with
her prize. It immediately became a subject of sage specu-
lation, and was eyed by some with superstitious distrust.
"Throw it away," said one; "it's Moorish—depend
upon it there's mischief and witchcraft in it." "By no
means," said another; "you may sell it for something to
the jewellers of the Zacatin." In the midst of this dis-
cussion an old tawny soldier drew near, who had served in
Africa, and was as swarthy as a Moor. He examined the
hand with a knowing look. "I have seen things of this

kind," said he, "among the Moors of Barbary. It is a
great virtue to guard against the evil eye, and all kinds of
spells and enchantments. I give you joy, friend Lope;
this bodes good luck to your child."

Upon hearing this, the wife of Lope Sanchez tied the
little hand of jet to a riband, and hung it round the neck
of her daughter.

The sight of this talisman called up all the favourite
superstitions about the Moors. The dance was neglected,
and they sat in groups on the ground, telling old legendary
tales, handed down from their ancestors. Some of their
stories turned upon the wonders of the very mountain upon
which they were seated, which is a famous hobgoblin re-
gion. One ancient crone gave a long account of the sub-
terranean palace in the bowels of that mountain where
Boabdil and all his Moslem court are said to remain
enchanted. " Among yonder ruins," said she, pointing to
some crumbling walls and mounds of earth on a distant
part of the mountain, "there is a deep black pit that goes
down, down into the very heart of the mountain. For all
the money in Granada I would not look down into it. Once
upon a time a poor man of the Alhambra, who tended goats
upon this mountain, scrambled down into that pit after a
kid that had fallen in. He came out again all wild and
staring, and told such things of what he had seen, that
every one thought his brain was turned. He raved for a
day or two about the hobgoblin Moors that had pursued
him in the cavern, and could hardly be persuaded to drive
his goats up again to the mountain. He did so at last,
but, poor man, he never came down again. The neigh-
bours found his goats browsing about the Moorish ruins,
and his hat and mantle lying near the mouth of the pit,
but he was never more heard of."

The little Sanchica listened with breathless attention to
this story. She was of a curious nature, and felt imme-
diately a great hankering to peep into this dangerous pit.
Stealing away from her companions, she sought the distant
ruins, and after groping for some time among them came
to a small hollow, or basin, near the brow of the moun-
tain, where it swept steeply down into the valley of the
Darro. In the centre of this basin yawned the mouth of the pit. Sanchica ventured to the verge, and peeped in. All was black as pitch, and gave an idea of immeasurable depth. Her blood ran cold; she drew back, then peeped again, then would have run away, then took another peep—the very horror of the thing was delightful to her. At length she rolled a large stone, and pushed it over the brink. For some time it fell in silence; then struck some rocky projection with a violent crash, then rebounded from side to side, rumbling and tumbling, with a noise like thunder, then made a final splash into water, far, far below—and all was again silent.

The silence, however, did not long continue. It seemed as if something had been awakened within this dreary abyss. A murmuring sound gradually rose out of the pit like the hum and buzz of a beehive. It grew louder and louder; there was the confusion of voices as of a distant multitude, together with the faint din of arms, clash of cymbals, and clangour of trumpets, as if some army were marshalling for battle in the very bowels of the mountain.

The child drew off with silent awe, and hastened back to the place where she had left her parents and their companions. All were gone. The bonfire was expiring, and its last wreath of smoke curling up in the moonshine. The distant fires that had blazed along the mountains and in the Vega were all extinguished, and every thing seemed to have sunk to repose. Sanchica called her parents and some of her companions by name, but received no reply. She ran down the side of the mountain, and by the gardens of the Generalife, until she arrived in the alley of trees leading to the Alhambra, when she seated herself on a bench of a woody recess to recover breath. The bell from the watch-tower of the Alhambra tolled midnight. There was a deep tranquillity, as if all nature slept; excepting the low tinkling sound of an unseen stream that ran under the covert of the bushes. The breathing sweetness of the atmosphere was lulling her to sleep, when her eye was caught by something glittering at a distance; and to her surprise she beheld a long cavalcade of Moorish warriors pouring down the mountain side, and along the leafy
avenues. Some were armed with lances and shields; others with scimitars and battle-axes, and with polished cuirasses that flashed in the moonbeams. Their horses pranced proudly, and champed upon their bits, but their tramp caused no more sound than if they had been shod with felt; and the riders were all as pale as death. Among them rode a beautiful lady with a crowned head and long golden locks entwined with pearls. The housings of her palfry were of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold, and swept the earth; but she rode all disconsolate, with eyes ever fixed upon the ground.

Then succeeded a train of courtiers, magnificently arrayed in robes and turbans of divers colours, and amidst them, on a cream-coloured charger, rode King Boabdil el Chico, in a royal mantle, covered with jewels, and a crown sparkling with diamonds. The little Sanchica knew him by his yellow beard, and his resemblance to his portrait, which she had often seen in the picture gallery of the Generalife. She gazed in wonder and admiration at this royal pageant, as it passed glistening among the trees; but though she knew these monarchs, and courtiers, and warriors, so pale and silent, were out of the common course of nature, and things of magic and enchantment, yet she looked on with a bold heart, such courage did she derive from the mystic talisman of the hand, which was suspended about her neck.

The cavalcade having passed by, she rose and followed. It continued on to the great gate of justice, which stood wide open; the old invalid sentinels on duty lay on the stone benches of the barbican, buried in profound and apparently charmed sleep, and the phantom pageant swept noiselessly by them with flaunting banner and triumphant state. Sanchica would have followed; but to her surprise she beheld an opening in the earth, within the barbican, leading down beneath the foundations of the tower. She entered for a little distance, and was encouraged to proceed by finding steps rudely hewn in the rock, and a vaulted passage here and there lit up by a silver lamp, which, while it gave light, diffused likewise a grateful fragrance. Venturing on, she came at last to a great hall, wrought out of the heart of the mountain, magnificently furnished
in the Moorish style, and lighted up by silver and crystal lamps. Here, on an ottoman, sat an old man in Moorish dress, with a long white beard, nodding and dozing, with a staff in his hand, which seemed ever to be slipping from his grasp; while at a little distance sat a beautiful lady, in ancient Spanish dress, with a coronet all sparkling with diamonds, and her hair entwined with pearls, who was softly playing on a silver lyre. The little Sanchica now recollected a story she had heard among the old people of the Alhambra, concerning a Gothic princess confined in the centre of the mountain by an old Arabian magician, whom she kept bound up in magic sleep by the power of music.

The lady paused with surprise at seeing a mortal in that enchanted hall. "Is it the eve of the blessed St. John?" said she.

"It is," replied Sanchica.

"Then for one night the magic charm is suspended. Come hither, child, and fear not. I am a Christian like thyself, though bound here by enchantment. Touch my fetters with the talisman that hangs about thy neck, and for this night I shall be free."

So saying, she opened her robes and displayed a broad golden band round her waist, and a golden chain that fastened her to the ground. The child hesitated not to apply the little band of jet to the golden band, and immediately the chain fell to the earth. At the sound the old man woke and began to rub his eyes; but the lady ran her fingers over the chords of the lyre, and again he fell into a slumber, and began to nod, and his staff to falter in his hand. "Now," said the lady, "touch his staff with the talismanic hand of jet." The child did so, and it fell from his grasp, and he sunk in a deep sleep on the ottoman. The lady gently laid the silver lyre on the ottoman, leaning it against the head of the sleeping magician; then touching the chords until they vibrated in his ear—"O potent spirit of harmony," said she, "continue thus to hold his senses in thraldom till the return of day. Now follow me, my child," continued she, "and thou shalt behold the Alhambra as it was in the days of its glory, for
"Thou hast a magic talisman that reveals all enchantments." Sanchica followed the lady in silence. They passed up through the entrance of the cavern into the barbican of the gate of justice, and thence to the Plaza de los Alcibes, or esplanade within the fortress. This was all filled with Moorish soldiery, horse and foot, marshalled in squadrons, with banners displayed. There were royal guards also at the portal, and rows of African blacks with drawn scimitars. No one spake a word, and Sanchica passed on fearlessly after her conductor. Her astonishment increased on entering the royal palace, in which she had been reared. The broad moonshine lit up all the halls, and courts, and gardens, almost as brightly as if it were day, but revealed a far different scene from that to which she was accustomed. The walls of the apartments were no longer stained and rent by time. Instead of cobwebs, they were now hung with rich silks of Damascus, and the gildings and arabesque paintings were restored to their original brilliancy and freshness. The halls, instead of being naked and unfurnished, were set out with divans and ottomans of the rarest stuffs, embroidered with pearls, and studded with precious gems; and all the fountains in the courts and gardens were playing.

The kitchens were again in full operation; cooks were busy preparing shadowy dishes, and roasting and boiling the phantoms of pullets and partridges; servants were hurrying to and fro with silver dishes heaped up with dainties, and arranging a delicious banquet. The Court of Lions was thronged with guards, and courtiers, and alfaquis, as in the old times of the Moors; and at the upper end, in the saloon of judgment, sat Boabdil on his throne, surrounded by his court, and swaying a shadowy sceptre for the night. Notwithstanding all this throng and seeming bustle, not a voice nor a footstep was to be heard; nothing interrupted the midnight silence but the splashing of the fountains. The little Sanchica followed her conductress in mute amazement about the palace, until they came to a portal opening to the vaulted passages beneath the great tower of Comares. On each side of the portal sat the figure of a nymph, wrought out of alabaster. Their heads were turned aside,
LEGEND OF THE TWO DISCREET STATUES.

and their regards fixed upon the same spot within the vault. The enchanted lady paused, and beckoned the child to her. "Here," said she, "is a great secret, which I will reveal to thee in reward for thy faith and courage. These discreet statues watch over a treasure hidden in old times by a Moorish king. Tell thy father to search the spot on which their eyes are fixed, and he will find what will make him richer than any man in Granada. Thy innocent hands alone, however, gifted as thou art also with the talisman, can remove the treasure. Bid thy father use it discreetly, and devote a part of it to the performance of daily masses for my deliverance from this unholy enchantment."

When the lady had spoken these words, she led the child onward to the little garden of Lindaraxa, which is hard by the vault of the statues. The moon trembled upon the waters of the solitary fountain in the centre of the garden, and shed a tender light upon the orange and citron trees. The beautiful lady plucked a branch of myrtle, and wreathed it round the head of the child. "Let this be a memento," said she, "of what I have revealed to thee, and a testimonial of its truth. My hour is come — I must return to the enchanted hall; follow me not, lest evil befal thee — farewell. Remember what I have said, and have masses performed for my deliverance." So saying, the lady entered a dark passage leading beneath the tower of Comares, and was no longer seen.

The faint crowing of a cock was now heard from the cottages below the Alhambra, in the valley of the Darro, and a pale streak of light began to appear above the eastern mountains. A slight wind arose, there was a sound like the rustling of dry leaves through the courts and corridors, and door after door shut to with a jarring sound.

Sanchica returned to the scenes she had so lately beheld thronged with the shadowy multitude, but Boabdil and his phantom court were gone. The moon shone into empty halls and galleries stripped of their transient splendour, stained and dilapidated by time, and hung with cobwebs. The bat flitted about in the uncertain light, and the frog croaked from the fish-pond.
Sanchica now made the best of her way to a remote staircase that led up to the humble apartment occupied by her family. The door as usual was open, for Lope Sanchez was too poor to need bolt or bar; she crept quietly to her pallet, and, putting the myrtle wreath beneath her pillow, soon fell asleep.

In the morning she related all that had befallen her to her father. Lope Sanchez, however, treated the whole as a mere dream, and laughed at the child for her credulity. He went forth to his customary labours in the garden, but had not been there long when his little daughter came running to him almost breathless. "Father! father!" cried she, "behold the myrtle wreath which the Moorish lady bound round my head."

Lope Sanchez gazed with astonishment, for the stalk of the myrtle was of pure gold, and every leaf was a sparkling emerald! Being not much accustomed to precious stones, he was ignorant of the real value of the wreath, but he saw enough to convince him that it was something more substantial than the stuff that dreams are generally made of, and that at any rate the child had dreamt to some purpose. His first care was to enjoin the most absolute secrecy upon his daughter; in this respect, however, he was secure, for she had discretion far beyond her years or sex. He then repaired to the vault, where stood the statues of the two alabaster nymphs. He remarked that their heads were turned from the portal, and that the regards of each were fixed upon the same point in the interior of the building. Lope Sanchez could not but admire this most discreet contrivance for guarding a secret. He drew a line from the eyes of the statues to the point of regard, made a private mark on the wall, and then retired.

All day, however, the mind of Lope Sanchez was distracted with a thousand cares. He could not help hovering within distant view of the two statues, and became nervous from the dread that the golden secret might be discovered. Every footstep that approached the place made him tremble. He would have given anything could he but have turned the heads of the statues, forgetting that they had
looked precisely in the same direction for some hundreds of years, without any person being the wiser.

"A plague upon them," he would say to himself, "they'll betray all; did ever mortal hear of such a mode of guarding a secret?" Then on hearing any one advance, he would steal off, as though his very lurking near the place would awaken suspicions. Then he would return cautiously, and peep from a distance to see if every thing was secure; but the sight of the statues would again call forth his indignation. "Aye, there they stand," would he say, "always looking, and looking, and looking, just where they should not. Confound them! they are just like all their sex; if they have not tongues to tattle with, they'll be sure to do it with their eyes."

At length, to his relief, the long anxious day drew to a close. The sound of footsteps was no longer heard in the echoing halls of the Alhambra; the last stranger passed the threshold, the great portal was barred and bolted, and the bat and the frog, and the hooting owl gradually resumed their nightly vocations in the deserted palace.

Lope Sanchez waited, however, until the night was far advanced before he ventured with his little daughter to the hall of the two nymphs. He found them looking as knowingly and mysteriously as ever at the secret place of deposit. "By your leaves, gentle ladies," thought Lope Sanchez, as he passed between them, "I will relieve you from this charge, that must have set so heavy in your minds for the last two or three centuries." He accordingly went to work at the part of the wall which he had marked, and in a little while laid open a concealed recess, in which stood two great jars of porcelain. He attempted to draw them forth, but they were immovable, until touched by the innocent hand of his little daughter. With her aid he dislodged them from their niche, and found, to his great joy, that they were filled with pieces of Moorish gold, mingled with jewels and precious stones. Before daylight he managed to convey them to his chamber, and left the two guardian statues with their eyes still fixed on the vacant wall.

Lope Sanchez had thus on a sudden become a rich man;
but riches, as usual, brought a world of cares to which he had hitherto been a stranger. How was he to convey away his wealth with safety? How was he even to enter upon the enjoyment of it without awakening suspicion? Now, too, for the first time in his life the dread of robbers entered into his mind. He looked with terror at the insecurity of his habitation, and went to work to barricado the doors and windows; yet after all his precautions he could not sleep soundly. His usual gaiety was at an end, he had no longer a joke or a song for his neighbours, and, in short, became the most miserable animal in the Alhambra. His old comrades remarked this alteration; pitied him heartily, and began to desert him; thinking he must be falling into want, and in danger of looking to them for assistance. Little did they suspect that his only calamity was riches.

The wife of Lope Sanchez shared his anxiety, but then she had ghostly comfort. We ought before this to have mentioned that Lope, being rather a light'inconsiderate little man, his wife was accustomed, in all grave matters, to seek the counsel and ministry of her confessor, Fray Simon, a sturdy broad-shouldered, blue-bearded, bullet-headed friar of the neighbouring convent of San Francisco, who was in fact the spiritual comforter of half the good wives of the neighbourhood. He was moreover in great esteem among divers sisterhoods of nuns; who requited him for his ghostly services by frequent presents of those little dainties and knick-knacks manufactured in convents, such as delicate confections, sweet biscuits, and bottles of spiced cordials, found to be marvellous restoratives after fasts and vigils.

Fray Simon thrived in the exercise of his functions. His oily skin glistened in the sunshine as he toiled up the hill of the Alhambra on a sultry day. Yet notwithstanding his sleek condition, the knotted rope round his waist showed the austerity of his self-discipline; the multitude doffed their caps to him as a mirror of piety, and even the dogs scented the odour of sanctity that exhaled from his garments, and howled from their kennels as he passed.

Such was Fray Simon, the spiritual counsellor of the comely wife of Lope Sanchez; and as the father confessor
is the domestic confidant of woman in humble life in Spain, he was soon made acquainted, in great secrecy, with the story of the hidden treasure.

The friar opened eyes and mouth and crossed himself a dozen times at the news. After a moment's pause, "Daughter of my soul!" said he, "know that thy husband has committed a double sin — a sin against both state and church! The treasure he hath thus seized upon for himself, being found in the royal domains, belongs of course to the crown; but being infidel wealth, rescued as it were from the very fangs of Satan, should be devoted to the church. Still, however, the matter may be accommodated. Bring hither the myrtle wreath."

When the good father beheld it, his eyes twinkled more than ever with admiration of the size and beauty of the emeralds. "This," said he, "being the first-fruits of this discovery, should be dedicated to pious purposes. I will hang it up as a votive offering before the image of San Francisco in our chapel, and will earnestly pray to him, this very night, that your husband be permitted to remain in quiet possession of your wealth."

The good dame was delighted to make her peace with heaven at so cheap a rate, and the friar, putting the wreath under his mantle, departed with saintly steps toward his convent.

When Lope Sanchez came home, his wife told him what had passed. He was excessively provoked, for he lacked his wife's devotion, and had for some time groaned in secret at the domestic visitations of the friar. "Woman," said he, "what hast thou done? thou hast put every thing at hazard by thy tattling."

"What!" cried the good woman, "would you forbid my disburdening my conscience to my confessor?"

"No, wife! confess as many of your own sins as you please; but as to this money-digging, it is a sin of my own, and my conscience is very easy under the weight of it."

There was no use, however, in complaining; the secret was told, and, like water spilled on the sand, was not
again to be gathered. Their only chance was, that the friar would be discreet.

“The next day, while Lope Sanchez was abroad, there was a humble knocking at the door, and Fray Simon entered with meek and demure countenance.”

“Daughter,” said he, “I have prayed earnestly to San Francisco, and he has heard my prayer. In the dead of the night the saint appeared to me in a dream, but with a frowning aspect. ‘Why,’ said he, ‘dost thou pray to me to dispense with this treasure of the Gentiles, when thou seest the poverty of my chapel? Go to the house of Lope Sanchez, crave in my name a portion of the Moorish gold, to furnish two candlesticks for the main altar, and let him possess the residue in peace.’ ”

When the good woman heard of this vision, she crossed herself with awe, and going to the secret place where Lope had hid the treasure, she filled a great leathern purse with pieces of Moorish gold, and gave it to the friar. The pious monk bestowed upon her, in return, benedictions enough, if paid by Heaven, to enrich her race to the latest posterity; then slipping the purse into the sleeve of his habit, he folded his hands upon his breast, and departed with an air of humble thankfulness.

When Lope Sanchez heard of this second donation to the church, he had well nigh lost his senses. “Unfortunate man,” cried he, “what will become of me? I shall be robbed by piecemeal; I shall be ruined and brought to beggary!”

It was with the utmost difficulty that his wife could pacify him, by reminding him of the countless wealth that yet remained, and how considerate it was for San Francisco to rest contented with so very small a portion.

Unluckily, Fray Simon had a number of poor relations to be provided for, not to mention some half-dozen sturdy bullet-headed orphan children, and destitute foundlings that he had taken under his care. He repeated his visits, therefore, from day to day, with solicitations on behalf of Saint Dominick, Saint Andrew, Saint James, until poor Lope was driven to despair, and found that, unless he got out of the reach of this holy friar, he should have to make
peace offerings to every saint in the calendar. He determined, therefore, to pack up his remaining wealth, beat a secret retreat in the night, and make off to another part of the kingdom.

Full of his project, he bought a stout mule for the purpose, and tethered it in a gloomy vault underneath the tower of the seven floors; the very place from whence the Belludo, or goblin horse, is said to issue forth at midnight, and scour the streets of Granada, pursued by a pack of hell-hounds. Lope Sanchez had little faith in the story, but availed himself of the dread occasioned by it, knowing that no one would be likely to pry into the subterranean stable of the phantom steed. He sent off his family in the course of the day, with orders to wait for him at a distant village of the Vega. As the night advanced, he conveyed his treasure to the vault under the tower, and having loaded his mule, he led it forth, and cautiously descended the dusky avenue.

Honest Lope had taken his measures with the utmost secrecy, imparting them to no one but the faithful wife of his bosom. By some miraculous revelation, however, they became known to Fray Simon. The zealous friar beheld these infidel treasures on the point of slipping for ever out of his grasp, and determined to have one more dash at them for the benefit of the church and San Francisco. Accordingly, when the bells had rung for animas, and all the Alhambra was quiet, he stole out of his convent, and, descending through the gate of justice, concealed himself among the thickets of roses and laurels that border the great avenue. Here he remained, counting the quarters of hours as they were sounded on the bell of the watch tower, and listening to the dreary hootings of owls, and the distant barking of dogs from the gypsy caverns.

At length he heard the tramp of hoofs, and, through the gloom of the overshadowing trees, imperfectly beheld a steed descending the avenue. The sturdy friar chuckled at the idea of the knowing turn he was about to serve honest Lope.

Tucking up the skirts of his habit, and wriggling like a
cat watching a mouse, he waited until his prey was directly before him, when darting forth from his leafy covert, and putting one hand on the shoulder and the other on the crupper, he made a vault that would not have disgraced the most experienced master of equitation, and alighted well-forked astride the steed. "A ha!" said the sturdy friar, "we shall now see who best understands the game." He had scarce uttered the words when the mule began to kick, and rear, and plunge, and then set off full speed down the hill. The friar attempted to check him, but in vain. He bounded from rock to rock, and bush to bush; the friar's habit was torn to ribands and fluttered in the wind, his shaven poll received many a hard knock from the branches of the trees, and many a scratch from the brambles. To add to his terror and distress, he found a pack of seven hounds in full cry at his heels, and perceived too late, that he was actually mounted upon the terrible Belludo!

Away then they went, according to the ancient phrase, "pull devil, pull friar," down the great avenue, across the Plaza Nueva, along the Zacatin, around the Vivarrambla—never did huntsman and hound make a more furious run, or more infernal uproar. In vain did the friar invoke every saint in the calendar, and the holy virgin into the bargain; every time he mentioned a name of the kind it was like a fresh application of the spur, and made the Belludo bound as high as a house. Through the remainder of the night was the unlucky Fray Simon carried hither and thither, and whither he would not, until every bone in his body ached, and he suffered a loss of leather too grievous to be mentioned. At length the crowing of a cock gave the signal of returning day. At the sound the goblin steed wheeled about, and galloped back for his tower. Again he scoured the Vivarrambla, the Zacatin, the Plaza Nueva, and the avenue of fountains, the seven dogs yelling, and barking, and leaping up, and snapping at the heels of the terrified friar. The first streak of day had just appeared as they reached the tower; here the goblin steed kicked up his heels, sent the friar a somerset through the air, plunged into the dark vault followed by
the infernal pack, and a profound silence succeeded to the late deafening clamour.

Was ever so diabolical a trick played off upon a holy friar? A peasant going to his labours at early dawn found the unfortunate Fray Simon lying under a fig-tree at the foot of the tower, but so bruised and bedevilled that he could neither speak nor move. He was conveyed with all care and tenderness to his cell, and the story went that he had been waylaid and maltreated by robbers. A day or two elapsed before he recovered the use of his limbs; he consoled himself, in the mean time, with the thoughts, that though the mule with the treasure had escaped him, he had previously had some rare pickings at the infidel spoils. His first care on being able to use his limbs, was to search beneath his pallet, where he had secreted the myrtle wreath and the leathern pouches of gold extracted from the piety of dame Sanchez. What was his dismay at finding the wreath, in effect, but a withered branch of myrtle, and the leathern pouches filled with sand and gravel!

Fray Simon, with all his chagrin, had the discretion to hold his tongue; for to betray the secret might draw on him the ridicule of the public, and the punishment of his superior: it was not until many years afterwards, on his death-bed, that he revealed to his confessor his nocturnal ride on the Belludo.

Nothing was heard of Lope Sanchez for a long time after his disappearance from the Alhambra. His memory was always cherished as that of a merry companion, though it was feared, from the care and melancholy observed in his conduct shortly before his mysterious departure, that poverty and distress had driven him to some extremity. Some years afterwards one of his old companions, an invalid soldier, being at Malaga, was knocked down and nearly run over by a coach and six. The carriage stopped; an old gentleman magnificently dressed, with a bag wig and sword, stepped out to assist the poor invalid. What was the astonishment of the latter to behold in this grand cavalier his old friend Lope Sanchez,
who was actually celebrating the marriage of his daughter Sanchica with one of the first grandees in the land.

The carriage contained the bridal party. There was dame Sanchez, now grown as round as a barrel, and dressed out with feathers and jewels, and necklaces of pearls, and necklaces of diamonds, and rings on every finger, and altogether a finery of apparel that had not been seen since the days of Queen Sheba. The little Sanchica had now grown to be a woman, and for grace and beauty might have been mistaken for a duchess, if not a princess outright. The bridegroom sat beside her—rather a withered, spindle-shanked little man, but this only proved him to be of the true blue blood, a legitimate Spanish grandee being rarely above three cubits in stature. The match had been of the mother's making.

Riches had not spoiled the heart of honest Lope. He kept his old comrade with him for several days; feasted him like a king, took him to plays and bull-fights, and at length sent him away rejoicing, with a big bag of money for himself, and another to be distributed among his ancient messmates of the Alhambra.

Lope always gave out that a rich brother had died in America and left him heir to a copper mine; but the shrewd gossips of the Alhambra insist that his wealth was all derived from his having discovered the secret guarded by the two marble nymphs of the Alhambra. It is remarked that these very discreet statues continue, even unto the present day, with their eyes fixed most significantly on the same part of the wall; which leads many to suppose there is still some hidden treasure remaining there well worthy the attention of the enterprising traveller. Though others, and particularly all female visitors, regard them with great complacency as lasting monuments of the fact that women can keep a secret.
MUHAMED ABU ALHAMAR, THE FOUNDER OF THE ALHAMBRA.

HAVING dealt so freely in the marvellous legends of the Alhambra, I feel as if bound to give the reader a few facts concerning its sober history, or rather the history of those magnificent princes, its founder and finisher, to whom the world is indebted for so beautiful and romantic an oriental monument. To obtain these facts, I descended from this region of fancy and fable, where every thing is liable to take an imaginative tint, and carried my researches among the dusty tomes of the old Jesuits' library in the university. This once boasted repository of erudition is now a mere shadow of its former self, having been stripped of its manuscripts and rarest works by the French, when masters of Granada. Still it contains, among many ponderous tomes of polemics of the Jesuit fathers, several curious tracts of Spanish literature; and, above all, a number of those antiquated, dusty, parchment-bound chronicles, for which I have a peculiar veneration.

In this old library I have passed many delightful hours of quiet, undisturbed literary foraging, for the keys of the doors and book-cases were kindly entrusted to me, and I was left alone to rummage at my leisure—a rare indulgence in these sanctuaries of learning, which too often tantalise the thirsty student with the sight of sealed fountains of knowledge.

In the course of these visits I gleaned the following particulars concerning the historical characters in question.

The Moors of Granada regarded the Alhambra as a miracle of art, and had a tradition that the king who founded it dealt in magic, or, at least, was versed in alchemy, by means whereof he procured the immense sums of gold expended in its erection. A brief view of his reign will show the real secret of his wealth.

The name of this monarch, as inscribed on the walls of
some of the apartments, was Abu Abd’allah (i. e. the father of Abdallah), but he is commonly known in Moorish history as Muhamed Abu Alahmar (or Mahomed, son of Alahmar), or simply, Abu Alahmar, for the sake of brevity.

He was born in Arjona, in the year of the Hegira 591, of the Christian era 1195, of the noble family of the Beni Nasar, or children of Nasar; and no expense was spared by his parents to fit him for the high station to which the opulence and dignity of his family entitled him. The Saracens of Spain were greatly advanced in civilisation, every principal city was a seat of learning and the arts, so that it was easy to command the most enlightened instructors for a youth of rank and fortune. Abu Alahmar, when he arrived at manly years, was appointed alcayde or governor of Arjona and Jaen, and gained great popularity by his benignity and justice. Some years afterwards, on the death of Abou Hud, the Moorish power in Spain was broken into factions, and many places declared for Muhamed Abu Alahmar. Being of a sanguine spirit, and lofty ambition, he seized upon the occasion, made a circuit through the country, and was everywhere received with acclamations. It was in the year 1238, that he entered Granada amidst the enthusiastic shouts of the multitude. He was proclaimed king with every demonstration of joy, and soon became the head of the Moslems in Spain, being the first of the illustrious line of Beni Nasar that had sat upon the throne. His reign was such as to render him a blessing to his subjects. He gave the command of his various cities to such as had distinguished themselves by valour and prudence, and who seemed most acceptable to the people. He organised a vigilant police, and established rigid rules for the administration of justice. The poor and the distressed always found ready admission to his presence, and he attended personally to their assistance and redress. He erected hospitals for the blind, the aged, and infirm, and all those incapable of labour, and visited them frequently; not on set days with pomp and form, so as to give time for every thing to be put in order, and every abuse concealed, but suddenly and unexpectedly, informing himself, by actual observation and close inquiry, of the
treatment of the sick, and the conduct of those appointed to administer to their relief. He founded schools and colleges, which he visited in the same manner, inspecting personally the instruction of the youth. He established butcheries and public ovens, that the people might be furnished with wholesome provisions at just and regular prices. He introduced abundant streams of water into the city, erecting baths and fountains, and constructing aqueducts and canals to irrigate and fertilise the Vega. By these means prosperity and abundance prevailed in this beautiful city, its gates were thronged with commerce, and its warehouses filled with luxuries and merchandise of every clime and country.

While Muhamed Abu Alahmar was ruling his fair domains thus wisely and prosperously, he was suddenly menaced by the horrors of war. The Christians at that time, profiting by the dismemberment of the Moslem power, were rapidly regaining their ancient territories. James the Conqueror had subjected all Valencia, and Ferdinand the Saint was carrying his victorious arms into Andalusia. The latter invested the city of Jaen, and swore not to raise his camp until he had gained possession of the place. Muhamed Abu Alahmar was conscious of the insufficiency of his means to carry on a war with the potent sovereign of Castile. Taking a sudden resolution, therefore, he repaired privately to the Christian camp, and made his unexpected appearance in the presence of King Ferdinand. “In me,” said he, “you behold Muhamed, King of Granada; I confide in your good faith, and put myself under your protection. Take all I possess, and receive me as your vassal.” So saying, he knelt and kissed the king's hand in token of submission.

King Ferdinand was touched by this instance of confiding faith, and determined not to be outdone in generosity. He raised his late rival from the earth, and embraced him as a friend, nor would he accept the wealth he offered, but received him as a vassal, leaving him sovereign of his dominions, on condition of paying a yearly tribute, attending the Cortes as one of the nobles of the empire,
and serving him in war with a certain number of horse-
men.

It was not long after this that Muhamed was called upon,
for his military services, to aid King Ferdinand in his
famous siege of Seville. The Moorish king salied forth
with five hundred chosen horsemen of Granada, than
whom none in the world knew better how to manage the
steed or wield the lance. It was a melancholy and humili-
ating service, however, for they had to draw the sword
against their brethren of the faith.

Muhamed gained a melancholy distinction by his
prowess in this renowned conquest, but more true honour
by the humanity which he prevailed upon Ferdinand to
introduce into the usages of war. When, in 1248, the
famous city of Seville surrendered to the Castilian monarch,
Muhamed returned sad and full of care to his dominions.
He saw the gathering ills that menaced the Moslem cause;
and uttered an ejaculation often used by him in moments
of anxiety and trouble—"How straightened and wretched
would be our life, if our hope were not so spacious and
extensive!"

"Que angoste y miserable seria nuestra vida, sino fuera
tan dilatada y espaciosa nuestra esperanza!"

When the melancholy conqueror approached his beloved
Granada, the people thronged forth to see him with im-
patient joy; for they loved him as a benefactor. They
had erected arches of triumph in honour of his martial
exploits, and wherever he passed he was hailed with accla-
mations as El Ghalib, or the conqueror. Muhamed shook
his head when he heard the appellation. "Wa la ghaliib
ila Alá!" exclaimed he. (There is no conqueror but
God!) From that time forward he adopted this exclama-
tion as a motto. He inscribed it on an oblique band
across his escutcheon, and it continued to be the motto of
his descendants.

Muhamed had purchased peace by submission to the
Christian yoke; but he knew that where the elements
were so discordant, and the motives for hostility so deep
and ancient, it could not be secure or permanent. Acting
therefore upon an old maxim, "Arm thyself in peace, and
clothe thyself in summer,” he improved the present interval of tranquillity by fortifying his dominions and replenishing his arsenals, and by promoting those useful arts which give wealth and real power to an empire. He gave premiums and privileges to the best artisans; improved the breed of horses and other domestic animals; encouraged husbandry; and increased the natural fertility of the soil twofold by his protection, making the lovely valleys of his kingdom to bloom like gardens. He fostered also the growth and fabrication of silk, until the looms of Granada surpassed even those of Syria in the fineness and beauty of their productions. He moreover caused the mines of gold and silver and other metals, found in the mountainous regions of his dominions, to be diligently worked, and was the first king of Granada who struck money of gold and silver with his name, taking great care that the coins should be skilfully executed.

It was about this time, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, and just after his return from the siege of Seville, that he commenced the splendid palace of the Alhambra; superintending the building of it in person; mingling frequently among the artists and workmen, and directing their labours.

Though thus magnificent in his works and great in his enterprises, he was simple in his person and moderate in his enjoyments. His dress was not merely void of splendour, but so plain as not to distinguish him from his subjects. His harem boasted but few beauties, and these he visited but seldom, though they were entertained with great magnificence. His wives were daughters of the principal nobles, and were treated by him as friends and rational companions. What is more, he managed to make them live as friends with one another. He passed much of his time in his gardens; especially in those of the Alhambra, which he had stored with the rarest plants and the most beautiful and aromatic flowers. Here he delighted himself in reading histories, or in causing them to be read and related to him, and sometimes, in intervals of leisure, employed himself in the instruction of his three sons, for whom he had provided the most learned and virtuous masters.
As he had frankly and voluntarily offered himself a tributary vassal to Ferdinand, so he always remained loyal to his word, giving him repeated proofs of fidelity and attachment. When that renowned monarch died in Seville in 1254, Muhamed Abu Alahmar sent ambassadors to condole with his successor Alfonzo X., and with them a gallant train of a hundred Moorish cavaliers of distinguished rank, who were to attend, each bearing a lighted taper, round the royal bier, during the funeral ceremonies. This grand testimonial of respect was repeated by the Moslem monarch during the remainder of his life on each anniversary of the death of King Fernando el Santo, when the hundred Moorish knights repaired from Granada to Seville, and took their stations with lighted tapers in the centre of the sumptuous cathedral round the cenotaph of the illustrious deceased.

Muhamed Abu Alahmar retained his faculties and vigour to an advanced age. In his seventy-ninth year he took the field on horseback, accompanied by the flower of his chivalry, to resist an invasion of his territories. As the army sallied forth from Granada, one of the principal adalides, or guides, who rode in the advance, accidentally broke his lance against the arch of the gate. The councillors of the king, alarmed by this circumstance, which was considered an evil omen, entreated him to return. Their supplications were in vain. The king persisted, and at noontide the omen, say the Moorish chroniclers, was fatally fulfilled. Muhamed was suddenly struck with illness, and had nearly fallen from his horse. He was placed on a litter, and borne back towards Granada; but his illness increased to such a degree that they were obliged to pitch his tent in the Vega. His physicians were filled with consternation, not knowing what remedy to prescribe. In a few hours he died, vomiting blood and in violent convulsions. The Castilian prince Don Philip, brother of Alfonzo X., was by his side when he expired. His body was embalmed, enclosed in a silver coffin, and buried in the Alhambra, in a sepulchre of precious marble, amidst the unfeigned lamentations of his subjects, who bewailed him as a parent.
Such was the enlightened patriot prince who founded the Alhambra, whose name remains emblazoned among its most delicate and graceful ornaments, and whose memory is calculated to inspire the loftiest associations in those who tread these fading scenes of his magnificence and glory. Though his undertakings were vast, and his expenditure immense, yet his treasury was always full; and this seeming contradiction gave rise to the story that he was versed in magic art, and possessed of the secret for transmuting baser metals into gold. Those who have attended to his domestic policy, as here set forth, will easily understand the natural magic and simple alchemy which made his ample treasury to overflow.

YUSEF ABUL HAGIG, THE FINISHER OF THE ALHAMBRA.

Beneath the governor's apartment in the Alhambra is the royal mosque, where the Moorish monarchs performed their private devotions. Though consecrated as a Catholic chapel, it still bears traces of its Moslem origin; the Saracen columns with their gilded capitals, and the latticed gallery for the females of the Harem, may yet be seen, and the escutcheons of the Moorish kings are mingled on the walls with those of the Castilian sovereigns.

In this consecrated place perished the illustrious Yusef Abul Hagig, the high-minded prince who completed the Alhambra, and who, for his virtues and endowments, deserves almost equal renown with its magnanimous founder. It is with pleasure I draw forth, from the obscurity in which it has too long remained, the name of another of those princes of a departed and almost forgotten race, who reigned in elegance and splendour in Andalusia, when all Europe was in comparative barbarism.
THE ALHAMBRA.

Yusef Abul Hagig (or, as it is sometimes written, Haxis,) ascended the throne of Granada in the year 1333, and his personal appearance and mental qualities were such as to win all hearts, and to awaken anticipations of a beneficent and prosperous reign. He was of a noble presence, and great bodily strength, united to manly beauty; his complexion was exceeding fair; and, according to the Arabian chroniclers, he heightened the gravity and majesty of his appearance by suffering his beard to grow to a dignified length, and dyeing it black. He had an excellent memory, well stored with science and erudition; he was of a lively genius, and accounted the best poet of his time; and his manners were gentle, affable, and urbane. Yusef possessed the courage common to all generous spirits, but his genius was more cultivated for peace than war; and though obliged to take up arms repeatedly in his time, he was generally unfortunate. He carried the benignity of his nature into warfare, prohibiting all wanton cruelty, and enjoining mercy and protection towards women and children, the aged and infirm, and all friars and persons of holy and recluse life. Among other ill-starred enterprises, he undertook a great campaign in conjunction with the King of Morocco, against the Kings of Castile and Portugal, but was defeated in the memorable battle of Salado; a disastrous reverse, which had nearly proved a deathblow to the Moslem power in Spain.

Yusef obtained a long truce after this defeat, during which time he devoted himself to the instruction of his people, and the improvement of their morals and manners. For this purpose he established schools in all the villages, with simple and uniform systems of education; he obliged every hamlet of more than twelve houses to have a mosque, and prohibited various abuses and indecorums that had been introduced into the ceremonies of religion, and the festivals and public amusements of the people. He attended vigilantly to the police of the city, establishing nocturnal guards and patrols, and superintending all municipal concerns. His attention was also directed towards finishing the great architectural works commenced by his predecessors, and erecting others on his own plans. The
Alhambra, which had been founded by the good Abu Alahmar, was now completed. Yusef constructed the beautiful gate of justice, forming the grand entrance to the fortress, which he finished in 1348. He likewise adorned many of the courts and halls of the palace, as may be seen by the inscriptions on the walls, in which his name repeatedly occurs. He built also the noble Alcazar or citadel of Malaga, now unfortunately a mere mass of crumbling ruins, but which most probably exhibited in its interior similar elegance and magnificence with the Alhambra.

The genius of a sovereign stamps a character upon his time. The nobles of Granada, imitating the elegant and graceful taste of Yusef, soon filled the city of Granada with magnificent palaces; the halls of which were paved with mosaic, the walls and ceilings wrought in fretwork, and delicately gilded and painted with azure, vermilion, and other brilliant colours, or minutely inlaid with cedar and other precious woods; specimens of which have survived, in all their lustre, the lapse of several centuries. Many of the houses had fountains which threw up jets of water to refresh and cool the air. They had lofty towers also of wood or stone, curiously carved and ornamented, and covered with plates of metal that glittered in the sun. Such was the refined and delicate taste in architecture that prevailed among this elegant people: insomuch that, to use the beautiful simile of an Arabian writer, "Granada, in the days of Yusef, was as a silver vase, filled with emeralds and jacynths."

One anecdote will be sufficient to show the magnanimity of this generous prince. The long truce which had succeeded the battle of Salado was at an end, and every effort of Yusef to renew it was in vain. His deadly foe, Alfonzo XI. of Castile, took the field with great force, and laid siege to Gibraltar. Yusef reluctantly took up arms, and sent troops to the relief of the place; when, in the midst of his anxiety, he received tidings that his dreaded foe had suddenly fallen a victim to the plague. Instead of manifesting exultation on the occasion, Yusef called to mind the great qualities of the deceased, and was
touched with a noble sorrow. "Alas!" cried he, "the world has lost one of its most excellent princes; a sovereign who knew how to honour merit, whether in friend or foe!"

The Spanish chroniclers themselves bear witness to this magnanimity. According to their accounts, the Moorish cavaliers partook of the sentiment of their king, and put on mourning for the death of Alfonzo. Even those of Gibraltar, who had been so closely invested, when they knew that the hostile monarch lay dead in his camp, determined among themselves that no hostile movement should be made against the Christians. The day on which the camp was broken up, and the army departed bearing the corpse of Alfonzo, the Moors issued in multitudes from Gibraltar, and stood mute and melancholy, watching the mournful pageant. The same reverence for the deceased was observed by all the Moorish commanders on the frontiers, who suffered the funeral train to pass in safety, bearing the corpse of the Christian sovereign from Gibraltar to Seville.*

Yusef did not long survive the enemy he had so generously deplored. In the year 1354, as he was one day praying in the royal mosque of the Alhambra, a maniac rushed suddenly from behind and plunged a dagger in his side. The cries of the king brought his guards and courtiers to his assistance. They found him weltering in his blood, and in convulsions. He was borne to the royal apartments, but expired almost immediately. The murderer was cut to pieces, and his limbs burnt in public to gratify the fury of the populace.

The body of the king was interred in a superb sepulchre of white marble; a long epitaph in letters of gold upon an azure ground recorded his virtues. "Here lies a king and martyr, of an illustrious line, gentle, learned, and virtuous; renowned for the graces of his person and his manners, whose clemency, piety, and benevolence were

* "Y los moros que estaban en la villa y Castillo de Gibraltar despues que sopieron que el Rey Don Alonzo era muerto, ordenaron entresi que ninguno non fuese osado de fazer ningun movimento contra los Christianos, ni mover pelear contra ellos, estovieron todos quedos y dezian entre ellos qui aquel dia muriera un noble rey y Gran principe del mundo."
extolled throughout the kingdom of Granada. He was a great prince; an illustrious captain; a sharp sword of the Moslems; a valiant standard-bearer among the most potent monarchs,” &c.

The mosque still remains which once resounded with the dying cries of Yusef, but the monument which recorded his virtues has long since disappeared. His name, however, remains inscribed among the ornaments of the Alhambra, and will be perpetuated in connection with this renowned pile, which it was his pride and delight to beautify.

THE END.
THE LAST
OF
THE ABENCERAGES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
CHATEAUBRIAND,

BY ISABEL HILL.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, 8. NEW BURLINGTON STREET
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN):
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J. CUMMING, DUBLIN.
1835.
THE DISAPPEARANCE
OF THE TUSCANS.

A NEW EDITION.

REVISED AND ENLARGED.

BY

ERNEST GARDINER

1870.

[Note: The image appears to be a page from a book or historical text, but the text content is not entirely legible due to the quality of the image.]
PREFACE.

The Adventures of the Last Abencerage have been written nearly twenty years; the portrait therein drawn of the Spaniards sufficiently explains why this tale could not be printed under the Imperial government. The resistance of the Spaniards to Buonaparte — of a disarmed people against the conqueror who had vanquished the best soldiers of Europe — excited, at that time, the enthusiasm of all hearts capable of being touched by great self-devotion and noble sacrifices. The ruins of Saragossa were still smoking; and the censorship would have silenced a strain in which it must have detected a veiled interest in recent victims. A description of ancient European manners, and references to the glories of other days, to the court of one among our most splendid monarchs, could not have proved agreeable to those who began to repent having so often allowed me to speak of the old monarchy and religion of our sires. The dead, whom I constantly invoked, forced too many thoughts upon the living.

We frequently see, in pictures, some deformed person introduced, to contrast and set off the beauty of others. In this story I have sought to represent three men of equally elevated character, yet not out of nature; but each preserving, with the passions of his country, its manners, and even its prejudices. My
female figure I designed in the same taste. It is but just that the imaginary world, while we are transported thither, should indemnify us for what we find in the world of reality.

It will readily be perceived that this tale is the work of a man who has felt the pangs of exile, and whose whole heart is with his country.

I took my views on the spot, I may say, of Granada, the Alhambra, and the mosque, now transformed into a church. The accounts of them are but additions to this passage in the Itinéraire:

"From Cadiz I proceeded to Cordova. I admired the mosque, now become the cathedral of that city. I explored the ancient Betica, which poets had designated as the home of happiness. I went up as far as Andujar, and retraced my steps in order to view Granada. The Alhambra appeared worthy to be ranked even with the temples of Greece. The valley of Granada is delicious, and much resembles that of Sparta: one may conceive how deeply the Moors must have regretted such a land."

Frequent allusions are made in this tale to the History of the Zegris and the Abencerages, which history is so well known that it would be superfluous for me to give a summary of it here. My work, besides, contains sufficient details to render its text intelligible.
THE LAST

OF

THE ABENCERAGES.

When Boabdil, the last king of Granada, was forced to abandon the realm of his fathers, he paused on the summit of Mount Padul. From this elevated situation was visible the sea, on which the unfortunate monarch was about to embark for Africa; he perceived, also, Granada itself, Vega, and Xenil, on whose shores rose the tents of Ferdinand and Isabella. At the sight of this lovely land, and of the cypress trees, which still, here and there, indicated the tombs of the Musulman, Boabdil shed tears. The sultana Ayxia, his mother, who (as well as the grandees, formerly composing his court) accompanied him in his banishment, exclaimed, "Yes; now bewail, like a woman, the kingdom thou knew'st not how to defend, as a man!"

They descended the mountain, and Granada disappeared for ever from their eyes.

The Spanish Moors, who shared the fate of their sovereign, dispersed themselves over Africa. The tribes of Zegris and Gomeles settled in the kingdom of Fez, whence they derived their origin. The Vaneñas and Alabés fixed on the coast, from Orano to Algiers; while the Abencerages were established in the vicinity of Tunis, and, within sight of the ruins of Carthage, formed a colony distinguished from the African Moors by the refinement of their manners and the mildness of their laws.

These families bore to their new country a vivid recol-
lection of their native home. The paradise of Granada lived for ever in their memories; mothers repeated its name even to babes at the breast, lulling them to sleep with Zegril and Abencerage ballads. Every fifth day they prayed in the mosque, with faces turned towards Granada, and implored Alla to give back his elect that region of delights. Vainly did the plains of the Lotophagi offer the exiles their fruits, their streams, verdant pastures, and resplendent sunshine. Far from the vermillion towers of the palace they had quitted, no fruit was grateful, no fountain limpid, no turf refreshing, no beams worthy of their gaze. If any one pointed out to some banished man the fields of Bagrada, he only hung his head, and sighed, "Granada!"

The Abencerages, above all, preserved the most tender and faithful remembrance of their country. With heavy regret had they left the theatre of their glory, the shores they had so oft bade echo to their battle cry — "Honour and love!" Unable to couch a lance in the desert, or resume the helmet in a community of labourers, they devoted themselves to the study of simples; a profession estimated by the Arabs as equal to that of arms. This race of warriors, formerly famed for inflicting wounds, were now occupied in healing them; thus retaining somewhat of their original genius; for true knights frequently dressed, with their own hands, the gashes of the foes they had subdued. The hut of this family, whose homes were lately palaces, was not in the hamlet, filled by their fellow exiles, at the foot of Mount Mamelife, but built among the very ruins of Carthage, on the sea-shore, where St. Louis died amid flames, and where now stands a Mahometan hermitage.

On the walls of this cabin were suspended shields of lion-skin, which bore impressed, upon an azure field, the figures of two savages demolishing a city with their clubs; near which was written, "C'est peu de chose*;" the arms and device of the Abencerages. Lances, adorned with pennons of blue and white, alburnoses, and shirts of

* "It is but a trifle." No translation can do adequate justice to the original motto; I therefore leave it unspoiled. — Transl.
slashed satin, were ranged around, and shone from the midst of scimitars and poniards. Still were beheld, hung at intervals, gauntlets, briddles enriched with precious stones, large silver stirrups, long swords, whose scabbards had been brodered by the fingers of princesses, and golden spurs, with which the Yseults, the Genevras, and the Orianas had, in other days, invested their gallant knights.

On tables beneath these trophies of glory were placed those of peaceful life. Plants culled from the brow of Atlas, or in the desert of Zara; some even brought from the plains of Granada. The former, gifted to console physical sufferings, the latter extended their influence to those of the soul. The Abencerages estimated most highly those which tended to calm their vain regrets, and dissipate the idle illusions of hope, for ever springing, but to decay. Unfortunately these herbs had contrasted virtues; and oft did the perfume of a flower from their own land act as poison for the noble exiles.

Twenty-four years had rolled by since the capture of Granada. In this brief period, fourteen Abencerages had perished, under the effects of a strange clime, by the chances of a wandering life, above all through grief, which secretly undermines the strength of man. One only scion constituted the whole hope of this famed house. Aben-Hamet bore the name of that Abencerage who was accused, by the Zegris, of having seduced the sultana Alfaïma. The youth united the beauty, valour, and courtesy of his ancestors, with that softened splendour, that slight expression of sadness, which is bestowed by nobly supported misfortune. He was but two and twenty when he lost his father, and resolved on a pilgrimage to the land of his sires, to satisfy the yearnings of his heart, and to accomplish a design which he carefully concealed from his mother.

He embarked from the port of Tunis; a favourable wind carried him to Carthagena, where he landed, and took the road to Granada, announcing himself as an Arab physician, who came to gather herbs among the rocks of Sierra Nevada.

A pacific mule bore him slowly through the scenes
where, of yore, the Abencerages coursed upon warlike steeds. A guide walked before him, leading two other mules, decked with little bells, and tufts of divers-coloured wool. Aben-Hamet crossed the vast heaths and palm woods of Murcia. From the age of these palms he judged that they must have been planted by his ancestors; and his heart was pierced with regret. There rose a tower whence a sentinel was wont to watch, during the war of the Moors against the Christians; here appeared a ruin, whose architecture proclaimed its Moorish origin, a fresh theme of grief for the Abencerage. He alighted, and, under the pretext of searching for plants, concealed himself a moment among these wrecks, and gave a free course to his tears: he then resumed his route, musing to the sound of the cattle's bells, and the monotonous chant of the muleteer; who never suspended his long ballad but to encourage his beasts, by calling them "beautiful," and "brave;" or to chide them as "obstinate," and "lazy."

Flocks of sheep, which a shepherd led like an army through the tawny wastes, and a few lonely travellers, far from lending life to the road, served but to make it seem more sad and desolate. These wayfarers all wore swords, and they were wrapped in cloaks, and large flapped hats half concealed their faces. They saluted Aben-Hamet as they passed; but he could distinguish no words in their noble greeting, save the name of God, and the titles My Lord, or Sir Knight. In the evening, at the Venta, or inn, the Abencerage seated himself among strangers, without being importuned by indiscreet curiosity. They neither spoke to him nor questioned him; his turban, his robes, his arms, excited no emotion. Since Alla had decreed that the Moors should lose their beloved country, he could not avoid esteeming its grave conquerors.

Far more lively feelings awaited him at the termination of his pilgrimage. Granada is built at the foot of Sierra Nevada, on two lofty hills, which separate a deep valley. The houses, situated on the declivities, in the base of the vale, gave the city the air and form of a half-open pomegranate, whence its name is derived. Two rivers bathe the foot of the hill, the Xenil and the Darro; one of
which rolls in golden spangles, the other o'er silvery sand. They unite and meander together through the centre of a charming plain, called the Vega. This plain, which commands Granada, is covered with vines, pomegranate, fig, mulberry, and orange trees; it is surrounded by mountains of the most admirable forms and hues. An enchanting sky, a pure and delicate air, breathes into the soul a secret langour, against which even the passing voyager can hardly defend himself. He feels that, in this region, the tender passions would quickly have stifled the heroic, if true love did not always aspire to be the comrade of glory.

When Aben-Hamet discovered the tops of the first houses in Granada, his heart beat with such violence that he was obliged to check his mule. He crossed his arms upon his breast, and, with eyes rivetted to that sacred city, remained immovable. The guide paused; and, as all exalted sentiments are easily comprehended by a Spaniard, he seemed melted, guessing that the Moor beheld his ancient home. The Abencerage at last broke silence:

"Guide," he exclaimed, "be happy! Veil not the truth from me; for peace reigned o'er the tides on the day of thy nativity, and the moon was entering her crescent. What towers are those that shine like stars through a green forest?"

"That is the Alhambra," answered the guide.

"And the other castle, on the other hill?" asked Aben-Hamet.

"Is the Generalife," returned the Spaniard; "and has a garden planted with myrtles, where, they say, the Abencerage was surprised with the sultana Alfaïma. Further on you see the Albaïzyn, and nearer to us the vermilion towers."

Each of these words pierced the heart of Aben-Hamet. It is so hard to have recourse to strangers that we may know the monuments of our fathers, and to hear the lips of indifference relate the history of our family, our friends. The guide put an end to these reflections by adding,—

"But forward, senhor Moor! let us on. It is God's will; take courage. Is not Francis the First this very day a prisoner in our Madrid? It is the will of God."
He doffed his hat, made a great sign of the cross, and flogged his mules. The Abencerage, spurring his own, uttered, "It was written."*

They descended towards Granada; passed near the great ash-tree, celebrated for the combat between Muça and the Grand Master of Calatrava, in the reign of Boabdil; proceeded along the Alameida, and entered the city by the gate of Elvira; ascended the Rambla, and soon arrived at a spot surrounded on all sides by houses of Moorish architecture. A khan, or inn, was here open for the African Moors, who assembled in great numbers to purchase the silk of Vega. To this khan the guide conducted Aben-Hamet.

The Abencerage was too agitated to enjoy any repose in this new habitation. His country filled his heart; and, unable to resist these tumultuous sentiments, he went forth, at the dead of night, to wander in the streets of Granada; he endeavoured, with hands and eyes, to recognise some of the monuments which the aged had so oft described. Perhaps the towering edifice which he could partly discern through the gloom was, of old, the dwelling of his race; perhaps it was on this now lonely spot they held the festivals which raised the glory of Granada to the skies. There might have passed the troops of steeds, in housings of superb brocade; yonder might have shone forth the galleys, freighted with arms and flowers; or the dragons who sent forth fire, and concealed within them the illustrious warriors who loved these ingenious inventions of pleasure and of gallantry.

But, alas! instead of the sound of trumpets, or the song of love, a profound silence reigned around. This voiceless city had changed its inhabitants; the victors rested upon the couches of the vanquished.

"They sleep, then, these proud Spaniards!" cried the young Moor, indignantly, "'neath the roofs from which they have banished mine ancestry. And I, an Abencerage, I watch unknown, solitary, forsaken, at the palace gate of my sires!"

* This expression is incessantly used by a Musulman; he applies it to most of the events in life.
Aben-Hamet then reflected on human destiny, the vicissitudes of fortune, the fall of empires, on that of Granada itself, surprised by its enemies in the midst of pleasures; its flowery garlands suddenly turned to chains. He seemed to see the citizens abandoning their hearths, in robes of state, like guests, who, encumbered by array, are driven from the banquet-hall by conflagration. All these images pressed to the heart of the Moor; filled with repinings, he longed to execute the project which had brought him to Granada. Day stole upon him; he had lost his way, and discovered that he was far from the khan, in a scattered outskirt of the city. All was slumber; nothing disturbed the quiet of the streets, their doors and windows were closed; only the voice of chanticleer recalled the poor to care and labour.

After having strayed long, without power to find his right path, Aben-Hamet heard the opening of a door, and beheld come from it a young female, attired almost like those Gothic queens sculptured on the tombs of our ancient abbeys. Her black bodice, ornamented with jet, closely embraced her elegant figure; her short and narrow coats betrayed a fine ankle, and a charming foot; a Mantillio, black as the dress, was thrown over her head; with her left hand she held it crossed and closed, like a nun's veil, beneath her chin; so that nothing could be seen of her countenance, save its full eyes and roseate mouth: a duenna walked by her side; a page carried before her a book of devotion; two liveried servants followed the fair unknown at some distance. She was evidently called to matins by the bell of a neighbouring monastery.

Aben-Hamet imagined that he gazed on the angel Israfil, or the youngest of the houri. The Spanish maid regarded, with no less surprise, the turban, robe, and arms which embellished his noble person. Recovering from her first astonishment, she signed for the stranger to approach, with a grace and freedom peculiar to the women of her country.

"Senhor Moor," she said, "you appear newly arrived in Granada; have you lost your way?"

"Sultana of Flowers!" replied Aben-Hamet; "delight
to the eyes of man! O Christian slave, more beauteous
than the virgins of Georgia! thou hast guessed it. I am
here a stranger, lost amidst these palaces. I know not
how to regain the Moorish khan. Mahomet touch thy heart,
and requite thy hospitality!"

"The Moors are renowned for gallantry," remarked
the young Spaniard, with the sweetest smile; "but I am
neither sultana nor slave; nor content with being com-
mended to Mahomet: follow me, Sir Knight, I will recon-
duct you to your destination." She stepped lightly before the
Abencerage, led him to the door of his abode, pointed it
out to him, passed behind a palace, and disappeared.

On what then depends our peace in this life? His
country no longer reigned alone, and wholly, o'er the soul
of Aben-Hamet. Granada had ceased to be for him a
widowed desert; it was dearer than ever to his heart;
but a new spell decked its ruins; and, with the memory
of his fathers, another charm was blended. Aben-Hamet
discovered the cemetery where the ashes of his line re-
posed; but, even while prostrated in prayer, and bathed
in filial tears, he thought that the young Spaniard might
sometimes pass over these graves, and no longer considered
his ancestors' misfortunes unqualified. Vainly did he
strive to occupy his mind solely with the object of his
pilgrimage; vainly did he roam over the hills of Darro
and of Xenil, to gather flowers at the dawn of day. The
only flower he now wished to meet was this lovely
Christian. What fruitless efforts made he again to find
the palace of his enchantress! how oft did he seek the paths
by which his divine guide had conducted him! how oft did
he believe he recognised the sound of that bell — the crow-
ing of the very cock he had heard so near her dwelling.
Deceived by similar sounds, he would follow them; but the
magic palace arose not before his eyes. Often, too, the uni-
form costume of the ladies lent him a moment's hope:
from afar, all these fair Christians resembled the mistress
of his heart; but, on a nearer view, not one possessed her
beauty or her grace. Aben-Hamet, at last, explored the
churches; he even ventured to the tomb of Ferdinand and
Isabella, the greatest sacrifice he had ever made to love.
One day he gathered herbs in the Vale of Darro. The southern hill bore on its flowery slope the walls of the Alhambra, and the gardens of the Generalife. The northern acclivity was decorated by the Albaïzyn, by smiling orchards, and numerous peopled grottoes. At the western extremity of the valley he saw the steeples of Granada, loftily grouped above surrounding oaks and cypresses. At the end, towards the east, his eye met convents, hermitages, and some relics of old Illiberia, built on the points of the rocks. In the distance were the summits of Sierra Nevada. The Darro flowed in the midst of the valley, and presented, along its course, refreshing mills, roaring cascades, the broken arches of a Roman aqueduct, and the remains of a bridge erected in the time of the Moors. Aben-Hamet was no longer either happy or miserable enough to appreciate the luxury of solitude. He wandered, abstracted and indifferent, beside these enchanting shores; rambling chance directed, he followed an avenue of trees, which circled the side of the Albaïzyn; a villa, embedded in a thicket of oranges, met his sight. On approaching nearer, he heard the sound of a guitar, and of a voice. Between the tones and the looks of a woman there are associations which never deceived a man possessed by love.

"It is my hour!" cried Aben-Hamet: he listened; his heart palpitated; at the name of the Abencerages, twice repeated, it beat still more rapidly. The unknown sung a Castilian romance, which retraced the history of the Abencerages and the Zegris.

Aben-Hamet could not resist his emotion: he dashed through a hedge of myrtles, and fell in the midst of a fair young bevy, who fled shrieking from the spot. The Spanish girl who had just sung, and still held the guitar, exclaimed,

"'Tis the Moorish senhor!" and recalled her companions.

"Favourite of the Genii!" said the Abencerage, "I have sought thee as the Arab seeks a spring in the fervour of noon. I have heard the sounds of thy guitar, as thou didst celebrate the heroes of my country. I recognised
thee by the music of thine accents; and I bring to thy feet the heart of Aben-Hamet."

"And I," returned the Donna, "thinking of you, repeated the romance of the Abencerages. Since I saw you, I have pictured to myself those knightly Moors as resembling you."

A slight blush rose to her forehead as she spoke. Aben-Hamet felt ready to throw himself at the feet of the young Christian; some vestige of prudence restrained him; he feared that his name, too famed in Granada, would cause the governor anxiety. The Moorish war was scarcely terminated, and the presence of an Abencerage, at that moment, might justly inspire the Spaniards with dread. It was not that Aben-Hamet could be dismayed by danger; but he trembled at the idea of being constrained to withdraw himself, for ever, from the beauty he adored.

Donna Blanca, or Bianca, descended from a family who derived their origin from Cid of Bivar, and from Chi-méne (or Ximena), the child of Count Gomez de Gormaz. The posterity of fair Valencia's conqueror, by the ingratitude of the Castilian court, fell into extreme poverty; and, for many ages, was even believed extinct, so obscure had the line become. But towards the time of Granada's fall, one last surviving Bivar, the grandsire of Bianca, made himself known, more even by the renown of his valour than by his hereditary titles.

After the expulsion of the infidels, Ferdinand endowed the descendant of the Cid with the possessions of several Moorish families, and created him Duke de Santa Fé. The new duke fixed his abode in Granada, and died, while still young, leaving an only son, already married, Don Roderick, father of Bianca. Donna Thérésa de Xéres, his wife, bore a son, who received the name of Roderick, like all his forefathers, but who was called Don Carlos, to distinguish him from his father. The great events passing before his eyes, even in his tenderest youth, the perils to which he was so early exposed, served but to render more grave and rigid a character naturally tending towards austerity. Don Carlos was hardly fourteen when he followed Cortez to Mexico; he supported all the
hazards, and witnessed all the horrors of that wondrous adventure; he lent his aid to cause the fall of its last king, in a world till then unknown. Three years after that catastrophe Don Carlos was again in Europe, at the battle of Pavia; as if but to behold courageous honour, though crowned, subdued by the strife of fortune. The aspect of the new hemisphere, long voyages o'er an ocean hitherto uncrossed, the spectacle of such revolutions and reverses of fate, had forcibly affected the religious and melancholy imagination of Don Carlos. He entered the chivalrous order of Calatrava, and, renouncing marriage, in spite of the prayers of Don Roderick, devoted his inheritance to his only sister. Bianca de Bivar, much her brother's junior, was the idol of her father; she had lost her mother, and entered her eighteenth year, when Aben-Hamet appeared in Granada. All was temptation about this fascinating woman. Her voice was entralling, her dancing lighter than Zephyr. Sometimes she loved to guide a chariot, like Armida; sometimes to fly on the fleetest Andalusian steed, like those charming sylphs who appeared to Tristan and to Galaor in the woods. Athens would have taken her for Aspasia, and Paris for Diana de Poitiers, who had just begun to shine in its court; but, with the attractions of a French woman, Bianca united the passions of a Spaniard, and her natural coquetry abated not the force, the firmness, the elevation of her sentiments.

At the cries of her young friends, on Aben-Hamet's abrupt appearance, Don Roderick had rushed to them.

"My father," said Bianca, "this is the Moorish knight of whom I have told you. He heard me sing, recognised me, and entered the garden to thank me for having directed him when he missed his way."

The Duke de Santa Fé received the Abencerage with the grave and simple politeness of his nation, among whom is never found the servile air, the turn of phrase which speaks subjected intellect and degraded souls. The language of grandee and peasant is the same; salutations, compliments, habits, customs, all are alike. In proportion as the generous confidence of this people towards strangers is un-
bounded, their vengeance is terrible if that trust be betrayed.

With heroic courage, and patience 'neath every test, incapable of yielding to ill-fortune, the Spaniard must either subdue it, or fall crushed by its weight. He has but little of what is called wit; but exalted passions supply the place of this light, which emanates from an abundance of ingenious thoughts. A Spaniard who passes the day without speaking, who has seen nothing, nor cared to see, who has read nothing, nothing studied, nothing compared, will find, in the greatness of his own resolution, all the resources needful for the moment of adversity.

It was Don Roderick's birthday, and Bianca gave her father a little fête, called a tertulia, in this pleasant retreat. The Duke de Santa Fé invited Aben-Hamet to sit among the young beauties, who amused themselves with his foreign turban, and robes. They brought velvet cushions that he might recline in Moorish ease. They questioned him respecting his country and adventures: he replied with spirit and gaiety, in pure Castilian; and might have been deemed a Spaniard, had he not, nearly always, substituted thou and thee for you. These words, from his lips, sounded so softly for Bianca, that she could not avoid feeling a degree of envy when he addressed them to her guests. Numerous domestics appeared, bearing chocolate, fruits, pastry, and little Malaga sugared loaves, white as snow, light and porous as sponge. After this refresco, Bianca was entreated to perform one of the characteristic dances, in which she transcended the most expert gitanas. She could not but concede to the petitions of her friends. Aben-Hamet had remained silent, but his supplicating looks spoke for him.

Bianca chose the Zambra, an expressive dance, which the Spaniards had borrowed from the Moors. One of the damsels played its wild air on the guitar. The daughter of Don Roderick removed her veil, and fastened to her white hands a pair of ebony castanets. Her black locks fell curling o'er her alabaster throat, her lips and eyes smiled in concert; her complexion was animated by the emotions of her heart. Suddenly she clashed the castanets,
beat time thrice, struck up the Zambra song, and, mingling her voice with the notes of the guitar, darted forward like lightning. How varied her steps! how elegant her attitudes! Now she vivaciously raised her arms, now let them gently fall. Sometimes she fled as if inebriate with delight; sometimes retreated, as though oppressed with sorrow. She turned her head, seemed beckoning some invisible being, and modestly offered her blushing cheek, as to a bridegroom's kiss; then shrunk away half ashamed; returned gloweringly reassured, marched with a noble, almost a warlike tread, then bounded with fresh spirit o'er the turf.

The harmony of her gestures and song with the tones of the guitar was perfect. Her slightly veiled voice had that kind of accent which stirs the passions to the depths of the soul. Spanish music, composed of sighs, of lively movements, sad chorus-burdens, and airs abruptly suspended, offers a singular mixture of gaiety and melancholy. This music, that dance, irretrievably decided the destiny of the last Abencerage. They would have sufficed to disturb a heart more sound than his.

In the evening the party returned to Granada by the Vale of Darro. Don Roderick, caught by the high and polished manners of Aben-Hamet, would not permit him to depart till he had promised to come frequently, and amuse Bianca with the wondrous recitals of the East. The Moor, to the fulfilment of his hopes, accepted this invitation; and, from that time, regularly returned to the palace where breathed the fair whom he loved beyond the light of day. Bianca was too soon involved in a deeply rooted passion, even by the very impossibility in which she believed as to its existence. To love an infidel, a Moor, an unknown, appeared to her so strange, so unnatural, that she took no precautions against the fever already gliding into her veins. But, as soon as she recognised its symptoms, she embraced her doom like a true Spaniard. The perils, the distresses she foresaw, could not scare her from the precipice's edge, nor effect any long deliberations in her heart. She said to herself, "Let but Aben-Hamet
become a Christian, and love me, I will follow him to the end of the world!"

The Abencerage, on his part, felt the full force of a resistless passion. He now lived but for Bianca. He thought no more of the scheme which had led him to Granada. It was easy for him to obtain the intelligence he came to seek; but all interests, save those of his love, had faded from his eyes. He even shunned the truth, lest it should make any change in his fate. He asked nothing, would hear nothing, he only thought, "May Bianca become a Mahometan, and love me, I will devote to her service my latest sigh!"

Aben-Hamet and Bianca, thus fixed in their resolutions, awaited but the moment which should discover their sentiments. They were then enjoying the loveliest days of the year.

"You have not yet been through the Alhambra," said the daughter of Santa Fé to the Abencerage. "If I may judge from some words which have escaped you, your family is originally of Granada. Perhaps you would be pleased to visit the palace of your ancient kings. This evening I will be your guide."

Aben-Hamet swore by the prophet, that never could any excursion be so acceptable to him.

The appointed hour arrived; the child of Don Roderick mounted a white mule, accustomed to climb the rocks like a kid. Aben-Hamet accompanied the radiant maid on an Andalusian horse, equipped after the manner of the Turks. In their rapid course the young Moor's purple robe fluttered behind him, the wind waved the aigrette with which his turban was surmounted, and his crooked sabre rung against the high saddle. The people, struck with his graces, cried as they saw him pass, "There is the infidel prince, whom Donna Bianca is converting."

At first the pilgrims followed a long street, still bearing the name of an illustrious Moorish family. This street bordered on the exterior enclosure of the Alhambra. They then crossed the elm wood, arrived at the fountain, and soon found themselves before the inner court of Boabdil's
palace. In a wall, flanked with towers and surmounted by battlements, opened an entrance called the Gate of Judgment; passing through this first portal, they advanced by a narrow path, which wound among high walls and half-ruined houses. This road led them to the Alhajas, near which Charles V. had a palace erected. From thence, turning to the north, they paused in a deserted court, at the foot of an unornamented wall, dilapidated by time; Aben-Hamet, leaping lightly to the earth, offered his hand for Bianca to dismount from her mule. Their attendants tapped at a door, whose threshold was o'ergrown with grass; it opened, and at once disclosed all the secret recesses of the Alhambra.

The regret of patriotism, mingled with the illusions of love, seized on the heart of the last Abencerage. Mute and motionless, he sent looks of astonishment through this home of the Genii. He believed himself transported to the entrance of some palace, such as one finds described in the Arabian Tales. Light galleries, canals of white marble, bordered by flowering citrons and orange trees, fountains, lonely courts, every where met his eye; and, through long porticoed arches, he perceived other labyrinths, new enchantments. A sky of the brightest azure was visible between the columns which supported a succession of gothic arches. The walls were covered with arabesques, imitating those eastern stuffs which, in the ennui of a harem, are capriciously embroidered by the female slaves. A spirit at once voluptuous, religious, and warlike, seemed to breathe through this magnificent edifice, this cloister of love, this mysterious asylum, where the Moorish kings tasted all the pleasures, and forgot all the duties of life.

After some instants of silent amaze, the lovers entered this abode of vanished power and past felicity. They went first round the Hall of the Mesucar, amid the perfume of flowers and the freshness of streams. They then penetrated into the Court of Lions. Aben-Hamet's emotions increased at every step.

"Didst thou not fill my soul with rapture," he said, "with what grief should I find myself obliged to ask thee
— a Spaniard — the history of these scenes, which were formed to serve as the retreat of happiness, and me."

Aben-Hamet observed the name of Boabdil formed in mosaics.

"Oh my king!" he cried, "what has been thy fate? Where shall I find thee, in thy deserted Alhambra?"

Tears of fidelity and loyal honour suffused the eyes of the young Moor.

"Your ancient masters," said Bianca, "or rather the kings of your fathers, were ungrateful!"

"What of that?" resumed the Abencerage: "they have been unfortunate!"

As he uttered these words, Bianca led him into a small chamber, which seemed the very sanctuary of Love's temple. Nothing could equal the elegance of this haven; the arched ceiling, painted entirely in blue and gold, and composed of arabesque open work, let in the light, as through a tissue of flowers. A fountain played in the centre, and its waters, falling in dewy spray, were received by a conch of alabaster.

"Aben-Hamet," said the daughter of Santa Fé, "look well at this fountain — it received the disfigured heads of the Abencerages. You may still see, on the marble, a stain from the blood of the wretched beings sacrificed by Boabdil to his suspicions. It is thus in your country that they punish the seducers of credulous women."

But Aben-Hamet no longer heard Bianca; he had prostrated himself, and reverently kissed the blood of his ancestors. Rising, however, he exclaimed,

"Oh, Bianca! I swear, by the blood of these knights, to love thee with the truth and constancy of an Abencerage!"

"You do love me, then?" cried Bianca, clasping her fair hands, and raising her eyes to heaven: "but do you remember that you are an infidel, a Moor, an enemy? and that I am a Christian and a Spaniard?"

"Holy Prophet!" said Aben-Hamet, "be witness to my vows!"

Bianca interrupted him.

"What faith do you expect me to give the vows of a persecutor of my God? How know you whether I love
you? What has emboldened you to address me in such language?"

Aben-Hamet replied in consternation, "It is true that I am but thy slave. Thou hast not chosen me for thy knight."

"Moor," said Bianca, "away with artifice! Thou hast seen by my looks that I love thee; my madness for thee is extreme. Be a Christian, and nothing shall prevent my being thine. But, if the daughter of the Duke de Santa Fé dares speak to thee thus frankly, thou mayest judge, by that very act, that she knows how to vanquish herself; and that never shall any right be exerted o'er her by a foe to Christianity!"

Aben-Hamet, in a transport of passion, seized the hands of Bianca, pressed them against his turban, then to his heart, crying,

"Alla is powerful, and Aben-Hamet is happy! Oh, Mahomet! teach this Christian thy law, and nought shall ——"

"Thou blasphemest!" broke in Bianca. "Let us hence!"

She leaned on the arm of the Moor, and approached the Fount of the Twelve Lions, which gives its name to one of the Alhambra's courts.

"Stranger," said the simple Spaniard, "when I look on thy turban, thy robe, thine arms, and think upon our love, I fancy I behold the shade of that gallant Abencerage who paced this abandoned walk with the hapless Alfaïma. Explain to me the Arab inscription engraved on the marble of this fountain!"

Aben-Hamet read these words: "The lovely princess, covered with pearls, walked in her garden, and so marvellously enhanced its beauty —— "*

The rest was effaced.

"For thee was this inscription made!" cried Aben-Hamet. "Beloved Sultana! these palaces were ne'er so brilliant in their youth as now in their decay. Listen to the sound of those fountains, as the moss impedes their waters; look at the gardens, peeping through these half-fallen arcades; contemplate the day-star, setting beyond those porticoes. How sweet to roam in such a scene with

* This inscription exists, with some others. It is useless to repeat that I wrote my account of the Alhambra on the spot.
THE LAST OF THE ABENCERAGES.

thee! Thy words imbalm these solitudes, like nuptial roses. With what transport do I recognise in thy language some accents of my native tongue! The mere rustle of thy garb against these marbles thrills me. The air is only perfumed by having touched thy locks. Thou shinest amid these ruins like the fair Genius of my country. But dares Aben-Hamet hope to fix thine affections? What is he beside thee? He has explored the mountains with his father, he knows all the plants of the Desert. Alas! there is not one which can heal the wound thou hast dealt him. He bears arms indeed, yet he is not a knight.

I was wont to say, 'The wave of the sea that sleeps sheltered in the crevice of the rock is tranquil and silent, while all in the great ocean may be roaring and tumultuous. Aben-Hamet, such be thy life! quiet, peaceful, unknown, in a forgotten corner of the earth, while the court of the Sultan is distracted by storms.' I used to say this, young Christian! but thou hast proved to me that tempests may trouble even the drop of water in the crevice of the rock!"

Bianca listened with ecstasy to language so new, the oriental style of which so well seemed to suit the fairy region she now roved with her lover. From all sides fond thoughts assailed her heart; she felt her limbs tremble, and was obliged to hang more heavily on the arm of her companion. Aben-Hamet supported the sweet burden, repeating, as he went,

"Oh, wherefore am I not a glorious Abencerage?"

"You would please me less, were you so," sighed Bianca; "for then I should be tortured with more anxieties. Remain in obscurity, and live for me! Too often a famed knight forgets love in renown."

"Thou wouldst have no such danger to fear," ardently responded Aben-Hamet.

"How well couldst thou love me, then, if thou wert an Abencerage?" demanded the descendant of Ximena.

"More than glory," replied Aben-Hamet, "but less than honour."

The sun had sunk beneath the horizon during this lovers' walk. They had seen the whole of the Alhambra. What recollections had the Moor amassed there! Through
yonder apertures a sultana had inhaled the incense of burning perfumes; in that retired apartment she had arrayed herself in all the gorgeous apparel of the East; and it was Bianca, that worshipped beauty, who related these details to her idolised and handsome young lover.

The rising moon shed a doubtful light on the abandoned sanctuaries and deserted porches of the Alhambra. Its silver rays traced on the turf of the gardens, and against the sides of the halls, a lace-work of aerial architecture; the vaulted roofs, the quivering shadows of jetting founts, and those of the shrubs that waved in the breeze. A nightingale warbled from a cypress, which shot through the roof of a ruined mosque, and echo repeated her plaints. Aben-Hamet by the moonbeams graved Bianca's name, in Arab character, on the marble of the Sisters' Hall, that the traveller in this palace of mysteries might find one mystery the more to divine.

"These spots are distracting!" cried Bianca; "let us leave them. The destiny of my life is fixed for ever. Remember my words: Moor, I am thy hopeless love; or, Christian, I am thy happy wife!"

"Christian," retorted Aben-Hamet, "I am thy wretched slave! — Mahometan, I were thine exultant husband!"

The noble pair quitted this dangerous palace. Bianca's passion augmented day by day. That of Aben-Hamet increased with equal violence. He was so proud of being loved for himself, and owing to no second cause the attachment he inspired, that he would not reveal the secret of his birth to the heiress of the Duke de Santa Fé; but anticipated the refined pleasure of confessing his illustrious name on the day she should consent to give him her hand. He was, however, suddenly recalled to Tunis, and presented himself before Bianca to inform her of the cause. "Sultana," he sighed, "my mother, seized with a fatal malady, desires to bless me ere she quits this life, and bids me close her eyes. Wilt thou preserve thy love for me?"

"Thou leav'st me," cried Bianca, turning pale: "shall I never see thee more?"

"Come," answered Aben-Hamet, "I will exact an oath
from thee, and give thee one, which death alone can break. Follow me!"

He led her to a cemetery, formerly that of the Moors, where yet were scattered the low pillars on which turbans had been carved, but the Spaniards had since substituted the cross.

"Bianca," he said, "here rest the ashes of my sires; by them I swear to love thee till the Angel of Death calls me to the judgment-seat of Alla. I promise never to give another this heart, but to wed thee as soon as thou receivest the holy light of the prophet. Each year, at this season, will I revisit Granada, to ascertain if thou hast kept thy faith to me, and if thou wilt renounce thine errors."

"And I," wept forth Bianca, "shall every year expect thee; to my last gasp will I be true to the faith I have sworn thee, and will accept thee as my lord whene'er the Christian's God, far more powerful than thy mistress, hath touched thy unbelieving heart."

Aben-Hamet set forth — the winds wafted him to the coast of Africa. His parent had just expired — he wept, and embraced her bier. Months rolled by. Sometimes wandering amid the ruins of Carthage, sometimes seated on the tomb of St. Louis, the exiled Abencerage invoked the day which should restore him to Granada. At length it rose: he embarked, and bade the vessel's prow be turned towards Malaga. With what transports of joy and fear did he perceive the first headlands of Spain. Did Bianca await him on those shores? did she still remember the poor Arab who had incessantly adored her 'neath the palm-trees of his desert?

The daughter of Santa Fé was not unfaithful to her vows. She had besought her father to take her to Malaga. From the mountain tops of this uninhabited coast her eyes pursued the flying sails of distant ships. During the tempest she gazed affrighted on the sea, uplifted by the gale. She loved to lose herself in clouds, expose herself to danger, and feel bathed by the same waves, dashed against by the same whirlwind that menaced the life of Aben-Hamet. When she saw the plaintive sea-mew skim
the water with its long drooping wing, she charged it with all those messages of love, all those wild protestations, which burst from hearts consumed by passion. One day, as strolling on the beach, she beheld a long bark, whose raised prow, bending mast, and latine sail, announced the tasteful genius of the Moors. Bianca hastened to the port, and soon saw the barbaric vessel enter, making the water foam around, from the rapidity of its course. A Moor, superbly attired, stood at its prow. Behind him two black slaves held the rein of an Arab horse, whose smoking nostrils and scattered mane proclaimed at once his fiery nature and the terrors he felt at the rush of the waves. The bark lowered its sails, touched the mole—the Moor leaped on shore; it rung with the clash of his arms. The slaves led forth the courser, spotted like a pard, who neighed and reared with joy at finding himself again on land. Other slaves gently let down a basket, in which a gazelle reposed on palm leaves. Its fragile limbs were tied, and folded under it, lest they should be broken by the rocking of the vessel; it wore a collar of aloe seeds, and, on a plate of gold which clasped the ends, was en- graved, in Arabic, a name, and a talisman.

Bianca recognised Aben-Hamet; but not daring to betray herself before crowds, she retired, sending Dorothea, one of her women, to apprise the Abencerage that she expected him at the Moorish palace.

Aben-Hamet now presented to the governor his firman, written in letters of azure on costly vellum, and enclosed in a silken case. Dorothea drew near, and led the happy Abencerage to the feet of Bianca. What rapture to find each other faithful, to meet after so long an absence! What fresh professions of eternal constancy did they exchange!

The black slaves led forward the Numidian steed, who, in lieu of saddle, had on his back but a lion-skin, fastened with a purple girth. They also brought the gazelle. "Sultana," said Aben-Hamet, "here is one of my country's kids, almost as agile as thyself!"

Bianca with her own hands loosed the bonds of the pretty creature, who seemed by his melting looks to thank her care.
During Aben-Hamet's absence, the daughter of Santa Fé had studied Arabic, and read with tearful eyes her own name on the gazelle's collar. The liberated animal could scarcely support itself on its so lately imprisoned feet; it lay down, leaning its head against its mistress' knee, who fed it with freshly gathered dates, smoothing its soft skin, which retained an odour from the rose and aloe woods of Tunis.

The Abencerage, the Duke de Santa Fé, and his daughter, started together for Granada. The days of our joyous pair passed like those of the preceding year. The same walks, the same regret at sight of the country, the same love, or rather love for ever increasing, for ever mutual; but the same attachment also to the creeds of their sires. "Be a Christian!" sighed Bianca: "Be a Mahometan!" said Hamet; and once again they parted, without yielding to the passion which drew them towards each other.

Aben-Hamet reappeared on the third year, like one of those migratory birds whom love in spring restores to our climes.

He did not now find Bianca on the strand; but a letter from his adored apprised the faithful Arab of the Duke de Santa Fé's departure for Madrid, and the arrival of Don Carlos at Granada, accompanied by a French captive, his friend. The Moor's heart, as he read this letter, was oppressed by the most gloomy presentiments. The mountains appeared to him fearfully lone, and he often turned back his regards towards the sea which he had crossed.

Bianca, in her father's absence, could not quit a beloved brother, who was ready to despoil himself of his possessions for her sake, one whom she now beheld after a separation of seven years. Don Carlos had all the courage and pride of his nation. Fierce as the conquerors of the New World amongst whom he had first borne arms, pious as the Spanish knights who subjugated the Moors, he cherished in his breast that hate of the infidels which he inherited with the blood of the Cid.

Thomas de Lautrec was of the noble house de Foix, the beauty of whose daughters and the valour of whose sons descended as an hereditary gift. He was younger brother
to the Countess de Foix, and to the brave unfortunate Odet, lord of Lautrec. At the age of eighteen he had been dubbed a knight by Bayard, in the retreat which cost the life of that chevalier "without fear and without reproach." Some time afterwards Lautrec was wounded, and made prisoner, in defending his chivalrous king, who had seen 'all lost save honour.'

Don Carlos de Bivar, witnessing the brave deeds of the young Frenchman, had watched o'er his wounds, and soon established between them one of those heroic friendships which are founded on esteem and virtue.

Francis I. had returned to his kingdom; but Charles V. retained all the other prisoners. Lautrec had the honour of sharing the captivity of his sovereign, and of laying at his feet in prison. Remaining in Spain after the departure of that monarch, he had been sent on his parole to Don Carlos, who had just brought him to Granada.

When Aben-Hamet re-entered the presence of his love, he suffered a pang till then unknown. At her feet sat a youth who gazed on her in silent ecstasy. He wore a doublet and hose of buff, girt by a belt, from which hung a sword ornamented with fleurs de lis. A silk mantle was thrown over his shoulders; on his head was a narrow-brimmed hat, shaded by a plume; a lace ruff fell back on his chest, and left his throat uncovered. Moustaches, black as ebony, gave to his naturally mild countenance a manly and warlike air. On the large boots which fell in folds about his feet were the golden spurs that marked him as a knight.

At some distance stood another, leaning on the iron cross handle of his long sword; he was clad like his companion, but looked older. His austere yet ardently impassioned aspect inspired respect and fear. The red cross of Calatrava was embroidered on his doublet, with this device, "For that, and for my king!"

An involuntary cry burst from the lips of Bianca as she beheld Aben-Hamet.

"Sirs," she said, "here is the infidel of whom I have spoken to ye; tremble lest he should prove victorious! Such were the Abencerages, surpassed by none in loyalty, in courage, or in love."
Don Carlos advanced to Aben-Hamet. "Senhor Moor," he began, "my father and sister have apprised me of your name. They believe you sprung from a brave and noble stock; you yourself are distinguished for courtesy. My master, Charles, will soon carry his wars into Tunis. I trust we may meet in the field of honour."

Aben-Hamet lay his hand on his breast, and seated himself on the floor, without reply, keeping his eyes fixed on Bianca and Lautrec; who, with national curiosity, admired the splendid robe, glittering arms, and personal beauty of the Moor. Bianca did not appear in the least degree embarrassed; her whole soul was in her eyes. The sincere Spaniard strove not to hide the secret of her heart. After some moments of silence, Aben-Hamet rose, bent before the daughter of Don Roderick, and retired. Astonished at his demeanour, and at Bianca's looks, Lautrec also took leave, with a suspicion soon exchanged for certainty.

Don Carlos alone remained with his sister.

"Bianca," he said, "explain yourself! Whence sprung your agitation at sight of that stranger?"

"My brother," answered Bianca, "I love Aben-Hamet; and, if he will become a Christian, my hand shall be his."

"How!" exclaimed Don Carlos, "you love Aben-Hamet? A daughter of the Bivars love a Moor, an infidel, an enemy, whom we have driven from these halls?"

"Don Carlos," replied Bianca, "I love Aben-Hamet: he loves me. For three years he has renounced me rather than renounce the religion of his sires. Nobility of soul, chivalrous honour, dwell in his breast. With my last breath I shall adore him."

Don Carlos was capable of appreciating the generous resolution of Aben-Hamet, though he deplored his unbelieving blindness.

"Unfortunate Bianca!" he cried, "whither will this love lead thee? I had hoped that my friend Lautrec would have become my brother."

"You deceived yourself," returned Bianca; "I cannot love him. For my sentiments towards Aben-Hamet I am accountable to no one. Keep thy knightly oaths
as I have kept those of love. Know only, as thy solace, that Bianca will never be the bride of an infidel!"

"Our race then will be lost to the world!" sighed Don Carlos.

"It is for thee to revive it," said his sister; "or why wish for heirs who might degenerate from thy virtue? Don Carlos, I feel that we are the last of our race. We are too remote from the common order of mortals for our line to flourish after us. The Cid was our ancestor: he will be our posterity."

Don Carlos fled to the Abencerage.

"Moor," he cried, "renounce my sister, or accept my challenge!"

"Are you charged by your sister," asked the Moor, "to demand a restoration of her vows to me?"

"No," replied Don Carlos, "she loves thee more than ever, yet ——"

"Ah! worthy to be her brother," interrupted Aben-Hamet; "I must preserve my honour with thy kindred. Blest Aben-Hamet! happy hour! I feared Bianca fickle with the French knight."

"To thy misfortune, she is not so," retorted Don Carlos vehemently; "but for thee Lautrec were my brother. Satisfy me for the tears thou hast cost us all."

"I would gladly do so," rejoined Aben-Hamet; "but, though born of a race which, perhaps, hath contended with thine, I am not a knight, nor know I of any one here who will confer on me an order empowering thee to measure swords with me, and not degrade thy rank."

Caught by the Moor's remark, Don Carlos gazed on him in a mood 'twixt rage and admiration; then suddenly exclaimed,—

"'Tis I who will arm thee as knight, for thou deserveth to be one!"

Aben-Hamet bent his knee before Don Carlos, who dubbed him, by striking his shoulder thrice with the flat of his sword, and then bestowed on him the very weapon with which the Abencerage was about, perhaps, to pierce the Spaniard's heart. Such was honour of old!

Both threw themselves on their steeds, left the walls of
Granada, and hurried to the Pine Fountain. Duels between Moors and Christians had long rendered it celebrated. It was there that Malek Alabés fought with Ponce de Leon, and there the Grand Master of Calatrava slew the gallant Abay-ados. The broken armour of this Moorish knight was still seen suspended to the branches of the pine. Don Carlos, pointing to his tomb, said to Aben-Hamet, "Imitate that brave infidel; receive from my hand baptism and death!"

"Death, perchance," replied the Abencerage, "but glory to Alla and his prophet!"

They instantly took the field, and rushed on each other with fury, armed but by their swords. Aben-Hamet was less expert in combats than Don Carlos; but the superiority of his arms, tempered at Damascus, and the activity of his barb, gave him, nevertheless, advantages over his adversary. He spurred his courser in Moorish wise, and, with his large sharp-edged stirrup, cut the right leg of Don Carlos' horse below the knee. The wounded animal fell, and his rider, thus dismounted, ran towards Aben-Hamet with uplifted sword. Aben-Hamet sprung to the ground, and intrepidly received him. He parried the blows of the Spaniard, whose weapon broke against the Damascus blade. Thus doubly cheated by fortune, Don Carlos shed tears of rage, and shouted to his opponent,—

"Strike, Moor, strike! Don Carlos, though disarmed, defies thee, and all thine unbelieving race!"

"Thou mightest have killed me," replied the Abencerage, "but I never intended thee the least hurt. I wished but to prove that I was worthy of being thy brother, and thus forbid thee to despise me."

At this instant they perceived a cloud of dust; Lautrec and Bianca, on two jennets of Fez, arrived swiftly as light at the Pine Fountain, and beheld the suspended encounter.

"I am subdued," said Don Carlos; "this knight has given me my life. Lautrec, I trust you may prove more fortunate than myself."

"My wounds," answered Lautrec graciously, "permit me to refuse doing battle with this courteous knight: I will not," he added, blushing, "hear the cause of your
quarrel, nor penetrate a secret which might carry death to my heart. My absence shall soon restore peace among ye, unless Bianca commands me to remain at her feet."

"Sir Knight," said Bianca, "you will stay with my brother, and regard me as your sister. All hearts here below must suffer some grief. Learn of us to support the woes of life."

She wished each of the three knights to give the others his hand; but all refused.

"I hate Aben-Hamet," cried Don Carlos.
"I envy him," sighed Lautrec.
"I," said the Abencerage, "esteem Don Carlos, and sympathise with Lautrec, but I cannot love them."

"Let us see," concluded Bianca; "friendship, sooner or later, will always follow esteem. Let the ill-fated event which brought us hither be for ever unknown in Granada."

From this moment Aben-Hamet became a thousand times dearer than before to the daughter of the Duke de Santa Fé. Love is fond of valour. The Abencerage was brave: Don Carlos owed him his life.

By Bianca's suggestion he abstained, for some days, from the palace, to let the indignation of her brother subside. A fund of sweet and bitter thoughts filled the soul of the Abencerage. On one side, the assurance of being loved with so much fidelity and ardour was a source of inexhaustible delight; on the other, the certainty that he never could be blest till he abjured the creed of his fathers weighed down his courage. Already years had passed without bringing balm to his woes: was he thus to see wasted the remains of his life?

Plunged in an abyss of the most serious and tender reflections, he one evening heard the vespers bell, and determined to enter the temple of Bianca's God, that he might crave direction from the Ruler of all Nature.

Arrived at an antique mosque, converted into a church by the faithful, Aben-Hamet, his heart a prey to religious melancholy, entered the fane once sacred to his God, his country. Prayers had just concluded; there was no longer any one visible. A hallowed gloom reigned amid the
multitude of pillars, which looked like the trunks of trees in a regularly planted forest. The airy Morisco architecture was wedded to the heavier Gothic; and, without losing any thing of its elegance, had acquired a gravity more suited to meditation. A few lamps faintly lit the depths of the arches; but, by the glare of several wax tapers, still shone the altar of the sanctuary, sparkling with gold and jewels. The Spaniards concentrate all their pride, and despoil themselves of all their wealth, to deck with it the objects of their worship; and the image of the living God, set amid veils of lace, crowns of pearls, and heaps of rubies, is adored by a population almost half naked.

No seats are seen on the vast pavement; the marble, which covers the coffins of the dead, suffices both high and low, who there prostrate themselves before the Lord. Aben-Hamet advanced slowly along the deserted aisles, which echoed but to his tread. His mind was divided between recollections which this ancient edifice of Moorish religion recalled, and the sentiments to which Christianity gave birth. Dimly perceptible, at the foot of a column, knelt a figure which, at first, he thought a statue on some tomb. He drew near, and distinguished a young knight, his forehead reverently bowed, his hands crossed on his breast; he stirred not at the footsteps of the Moor; no exterior sign of life could interrupt his profound devotion. His sword lay on the ground before him, his plumed cap on the marble at his side; he looked as if fixed in this attitude by the effect of enchantment. It was Lautrec.

"Ah!" mused the Abencerage, "this interesting young Frenchman is imploring some signal grace. This warrior, already celebrated by his courage, here pours forth his heart before the King of Heaven, like the humblest and most obscure of mortals. Let me too pray to the God of knighthood and of glory!"

Aben-Hamet was about to throw himself on the marble, when he perceived, 'neath some plaster, nearly rubbed off, the Arab characters of a verse from the Koran. Conscience resumed her sway; he hasted to quit the place in
which he had thought of becoming unfaithful to his religion and his country.

The cemetery which surrounded this ancient mosque was a kind of garden, planted with orange-trees, cypresses, and palms, and watered by two fountains; a cloister was hard by. Aben-Hamet, in passing beneath one of its porches, beheld a woman just entering the church. Though she was veiled, he recognised the daughter of Santa Fé, and, detaining her, said,

"Goest thou to seek Lautrec in yonder temple?"

"Leave these low jealousies," returned Bianca: "if I no longer loved thee, I would say so. I should scorn to deceive thee. I came hither to pray for thee. Thou only art now the object of my vows. I forget my own soul for thine. Thou shouldst either have forborne to intoxicate me with the poison of thy love, or thou shouldst consent to serve the God I serve. Thou hast afflicted my whole family. My brother hates thee, my father is overwhelmed with grief because I refuse to select a husband. Mark'st thou not that my health decreases? See this last asylum! 'tis haunted ground — soon shall I repose here, if thou dost not quickly receive my faith at the Christian altar. The struggles I endure are by degrees undermining my life. The passion thou inspirest will not long sustain my frail existence. Think, oh Moor! to speak thine own language, that the flame which illuminates the torch is also that which consumes it."

Bianca entered the church, and left Aben-Hamet desolate by her parting words. The combat was over — the Abencerage vanquished; he was ready to disclaim the errors of his creed; he had resisted sufficiently. The fear of seeing Bianca die triumphed o'er every other feeling in his heart.

"After all," he pondered, "the Christian's God may be the true one. He is surely the God of noble souls, since he is that of Bianca, of Don Carlos, and of Lautrec."

With this thought Aben-Hamet impatiently awaited the next day to disclose his resolution to Bianca, and exchange a life of tears for one of rapture. He could not visit the palace of the Duke de Santa Fé till evening,
when he learnt that Bianca had gone with her brother to the Generalife, where Lautrec gave an entertainment. Aben-Hamet, agitated by fresh doubts, instantly followed his mistress. Lautrec blushed as he met him. Don Carlos received the Moor with a coldness, beneath which lurked sincere esteem. Lautrec ordered the choicest fruits of Spain and Africa to be served in a saloon called the Knights' hall. Round this chamber were hung portraits of princes and knights who had conquered the Moors: Pelagius, the Cid, Gonsalvo de Cordova, and others. The sword of Granada's last king was placed beneath these pictures. Aben-Hamet, restraining his mortification in his own breast, merely said, with a lion-like air, as he gazed, "We know not how to paint!"

The generous Lautrec, seeing Aben-Hamet's eyes turn, in spite of himself, towards the sword of Boabdil, said, "Sir Moor! had I foreseen that my fête would be honoured by your presence, I would not have received you here. Swords may be lost every day. I have seen the most valiant of kings give up his to a successful enemy."

"Ah!" cried the Moor, covering his face in his robe, "one might lose it like Francis, but not like Boabdil!"

Night came — torches were brought — conversation changed its course: they besought Don Carlos to relate the discovery of Mexico. He spoke of this unknown world with the pompous eloquence natural to a Spaniard. He told the misfortunes of Montezuma, described the manners of America, the prodigies of Castilian bravery, even the cruelties of his countrymen appeared to him deserving neither blame nor praise. These recitals enchanted Aben-Hamet, whose passion for marvellous histories betrayed his Arab birth. In his turn he depicted the Ottoman empire, newly seated on the ruins of Constantinople, not without expressing a regret for the original empire of Mahomet, those happy days when the Commander of the Believers beheld shining round him Zobeide, the Flower of Beauty, Force des Cœurs, Tourmente, and that generous Ganem, made a slave by love!

Lautrec dilated on the gallant court of Francis, the arts reviving in scenes of barbarism, the honour and loyalty of
olden times, united with the polished manners of a civilised age; the Gothic towers adorned with Grecian architecture; the Athenian elegance which now so improved the rich attire of the Gallic ladies.

After these discourses, Lautrec, anxious to amuse the divinity of this fête, took a guitar, and sung a romance which he had composed to an air heard among the mountains of his own land.*

How sweet is thy remembrance,
Fair scene that joy'd mine infant glance!
Sister, how beautese were our days
In France!
Oh, my loved land! be thou my praise
Always.

Rememb'rest thou our mother's worth,
When, seated by her cottage hearth,
She held us fondly to her breast
In mirth?
And we her silver locks carest,
Both blest!

Sister, dost thou remember yet
The castle by our river wet?
Dost thou the old Morisco tower
Regret?
Whose brazen voice spoke with such power
Morn's hour?

Rememb'rest thou that tranquil lake
The swallow would his mirror make?
The reeds that bowed so as the air
Would wake?
The setting sun reflected there
So fair?

Ah! who my Helen will restore?
My hill, my giant oak once more?
Their memory bids me other days
Deplore.
Oh, my loved land! be thou my praise
Always.

Lautrec, as he ended, dashed from his lids a tear, forced to his eyes by the image of his charming land. The engaging prisoner's regret found sympathy in the breast of Aben-Hamet, who, like himself, bewailed the loss of his country. Solicited, in his turn, to take the

* This romance is already well known to the public. I wrote the words to an air from the hills of Auvergne, remarkable for its sweetness and simplicity.

[It is not easy to give at once the meaning and the metre of a French song in English. My version, however, goes tolerably to the tune, which I have once heard. — Transt.]
guitar, he excused himself, saying that he knew but one ballad, which might not prove welcome to Christian auditors.

"If it tells of infidels lamenting our victories," said Don Carlos disdainfully, "you may sing; tears are permitted to the vanquished."

"Yes," added Bianca, "our sires, when subjected to the Moors, bequeathed us many of their laments."

Aben-Hamet then sung a ballad he had learnt from a poet of the Abencerage tribe.

The king Don Juan,
One day forth to ride,
Beheld Spain's Granada,
And suddenly cried,
"Darling of cities!
My heart is thine!
I give thee my hand,
I'll wed thee, thou 'rt mine.

Cordova and Seville
As gifts will I bring;
Rich vestments and pearls,
Destined bride of a king!"
Granada replied:
"King of Leon, my fate,
Is link'd with the Moor's —
Granada's his mate.

Keep thy gifts! I have vestures,
And costlier ones:
For rich is my zone,
And beauteous my sons!"
Thus said she, thus lied she,
Wrong not to be borne!
For a Christian accursed
Granada's forswn.

Oh! ne'er shall the camel
To his forefathers' tomb
Bear the chief of Medina;
Eclipsed is his doom!
To a Christian accursed
Our realm must submit;
He lords o'er our birthright,
'Twas writ! It was writ!

Our lovely Alhambra,
Great Alla's fane, yields,
Sweet city of fountains,
And emerald fields!
The Abencerages
To Christians submit;
Their home is usurped,—
It was written; 't was writ!"*

* Travelling through a mountainous district, between Algesiras and Cadiz, I stopped at a Venta, in the midst of a wood. I found there only a boy, about fourteen or fifteen, and a girl nearly the same age, who sat by the fire, making rush mats. They sung a romance the words of which I could not compre-
These natural complainings affected even the haughty Don Carlos, in spite of their imprecations against the Christians. He would gladly have been spared singing himself, but, in courtesy to Lautrec, he felt obliged to grant his request. Aben-Hamet handed the guitar to the brother of Bianca, who thus celebrated the exploits of his illustrious ancestor.

Armed to depart for Afric’s hostile shore,
Roderick the Cid, with ardent valour fired,
Touched his guitar for her he deigned adore,
And sung this lay which Honour’s self inspired:
“Ximena says — ‘Go forth and brave the Moor;
Return victorious, and thy guerdon claim!
For then shall I of Roderick’s truth be sure,
When he hath made Love bow to Honour’s name.’

“Give, give me, then, my helmet and my spear,
I’ll prove that Roderick’s heart obeys thy laws,
In battle be my name a sound of fear,
And be my cry, ‘For Love’s and Honour’s cause!’
In Andalusia’s vale shall Christians grey
Thy Roderick’s deeds their theme of rapture make —
‘He courted death,’ exultant let them say,
‘For God, his King, his Love, and Honour’s sake!’”*  

Don Carlos had looked so proudly while his sonorous voice chanted these words, that he might have been taken for the Cid himself. The Abencerage turned pale at that name, though Lautrec participated in the warlike enthusiasm of his friend.

hend, but the air was simple and pretty. The weather was horrible. I remained two hours there. My young host and hostess so frequently repeated their strain that I easily learnt its tune, on which I composed the Romance of the Abencerages. Perhaps there might have been some mention of Aben-Hamet in the song of my two little Spaniards. The Dialogue between Granada and the King of Leon is imitated from an old Spanish ballad.  

[It does not appear that the music of the little poem in question has ever been published. It is utterly unknown to me, or I would lay my accents with lyrical precision.—Transl.]  

* Every one knows the air called “Les Folies d’Espagne.” It was either without any words, or with none expressing the grave, devout, and chivalrous character which I have endeavoured to give in this romance. The verses have been circulated without my intention, and eminent composers have honoured me by embellishing it with their music; but, as I had written it for the above-named air, some of its lines become absolutely unmeaning if it be not sung according to my original design: —

“Mon noble chant vainqueur
D’Espagne, un jour, deviendra la Folic.”

In fact, the three ballads here introduced have no merit, unless they are sung to the old and truly national airs, although they assist in bringing about the story’s catastrophe.  

[As “every one” of this tale’s English readers may not know the air called “Les Folies d’Espagne” (I do not, unfortunately), I have presumed to omit the stanza to which the Author alludes; but have otherwise copied his gallant song as closely as possible. — Transl.]  

T 3
"The Cid," cried Aben-Hamet, "that knight who was called by Christians the Flower of Battle, among us was named the Cruel. Had his generosity equalled his valour——"

"His generosity," eagerly interrupted Don Carlos, "even surpassed his courage; none but Moors dare calumniate the hero to whom my family owes birth."

"What sayest thou?" cried Aben-Hamet, springing from the seat on which he had half reclined; "Do'st thou count the Cid among thy forefathers?"

"His blood flows in my veins," replied Don Carlos. "I feel myself his descendant, by the hate which burns in my heart against the enemies of my God."

"Ye are then," said Aben-Hamet, gazing on Bianca, "of those Bivars who, after the conquest of Granada, invaded the hearths of the hapless Abencerages, and slew an aged knight of that name as he sought to defend his father's tomb."

"Moor!" exclaimed Don Carlos, inflamed with rage, "know that I brook not questions. If I now possess the spoil of these Abencerages, my ancestors acquired it at the cost of their blood, and owed it to their swords."

"One word more," said Aben-Hamet, with increasing emotion. "We knew not in our exile that these Bivars now bore the title of Santa Fé; that ignorance has misled me."

"It was on the very Bivar who vanquished the Abencerages that the title of Santa Fé was conferred, by the Catholic King Ferdinand," exclaimed Don Carlos.

Aben-Hamet's head sunk on his breast; he remained standing amid the astonished group. Torrents of tears rushed from his eyes, and fell on the poniard in his belt.

"Pardon me," he said, "I know 'tis not for men to weep; henceforth my tears shall flow unseen, though much remains for me to bemoan. Hear me! Bianca, my love for thee is like the burning wind of Arabia. I was subdued. I could no longer live without thee. Yester even the sight of this young warrior's prayer, thy words in the cemetery, persuaded me to acknowledge thy God, and pledge thee my wedded faith."
An expression of joy from Bianca, and of surprise from Don Carlos, interrupted Aben-Hamet. Lautrec hid his face in his hands. The Moor guessed his thought, but, with a despairing smile and gesture, continued—

"Sir Knight, fear not!—But thou, Bianca, mourn for the last Abencerage."

The startled trio, raising their hands to heaven, repeated in dismay,

"The last Abencerage!"

Silence then reigned among these hearts, agitated by hope, fear, love, hate, wonder, and jealousy.

Bianca fell on her knees, crying,

"God of mercy, thou justifiest my choice! I could love none but the descendant of heroes."

"Sister," said the irritated Don Carlos, "remember that you are in the presence of Lautrec."

"Don Carlos," said Aben-Hamet, "suspend thy displeasure; it is for me to restore your peace:"—then addressing Bianca, who had again sunk on a seat, he continued, "Houri of heaven! genie of love and beauty! Aben-Hamet is thy slave to his latest sigh: but learn the full extent of his miseries. The aged man sacrificed by thy grandsire, while protecting his home, was the father of my father. Hear too a secret which I have hitherto concealed from thee, or rather thou hast made me forget it: when first I visited this unhappy land, my chief design was to seek some son of the Bivars, and make him account to me for the blood his race had shed."

"Well?" said Bianca, the grandeur of her soul restraining the accents of selfish sorrow, "what is thy resolution?"

"The only one worthy of thee," answered Aben-Hamet; "to restore thy vows, to satisfy, by mine eternal absence and death, the duties which we both owe to the hostility of our families, our countries, and our Gods. If ever my image be effaced from thy heart—if time, which destroys all things, should bear from thy memory the recollection of thine Abencerage—this French knight—thou owest the sacrifice to thy brother."
Lautrec rose impetuously, and threw himself into the arms of the Moor, crying,

"No, Aben-Hamet, think not to excel me in generosity. I am a Frenchman, knighted by Bayard. I have shed my blood for my king. I must be, like my sponsor and my prince, 'without fear or reproach.' If thou wilt stay with us, I beseech Don Carlos to give thee his sister's hand: if thou quittest Granada, never shall an allusion to my love disturb thy mistress. Thou shalt not bear with thee to exile the cruel idea that Lautrec, insensible to thy virtues, seeks to profit by thy misfortunes."

The young knight pressed the Moor to his heart, with all the warmth and vivacity of his nation.

"Sirs," said Don Carlos, "I expected no less from your high birth. Aben-Hamet, by what sign am I to recognise you as the last Abencerage?"

"By my conduct," replied the Moor.

"I admire it," added the Spaniard; "but, ere I explain myself, give me some proof of your descent."

Aben-Hamet drew from his breast the hereditary ring, which he wore suspended by a chain of gold.

At the sight of this Don Carlos extended his hand to the unhappy Abencerage.

"Sir Knight," he said, "I acknowledge you as a man of integrity, the true son of Kings. You honour me by your designs on my family. I accept the combat you came privately to seek. If I am vanquished, all my wealth, formerly that of your house, shall be faithfully restored to you. If you renounce the fight, accept my offer, become a Christian, and receive the hand of my sister, which Lautrec has demanded for you."

The temptation was great; but not beyond the strength of Aben-Hamet. Though Love, with all his power, pleaded in that heart, it could not contemplate, without dread, the idea of an union between the descendant of the persecutors and that of their victims. He thought he beheld the shade of his grandsire rising from the tomb, to forbid an alliance so sacrilegious. Pierced with despair, he cried, "Ah! must I meet such sublime souls, such generous dispositions, only the more to feel how much I
lose. Let Bianca decide! let her say what I ought to do, that I may be more worthy of her love!"

"Return to the Desert," pronounced Bianca, and fainted. Aben-Hamet threw himself to the earth. He adored Bianca even more than heaven, and departed without a word. The same night he set forth for Malaga, and embarked in a vessel which touched at Oran; near that place he found encamped the caravan which, every third year, left Morocco, crossed Africa to Egypt, and, at Yemen, joined the Caravan of Mecca. Aben-Hamet ranked himself among the pilgrims.

Bianca, whose sorrow at first threatened her existence, revived. Lautrec, faithful to his pledge, withdrew. Each year, the sad daughter of Santa Fé wandered o'er the hills of Malaga, at the season in which her lover was wont to return; she sat upon the rocks, gazed o'er the sea, with its far off sails, and then returned to Granada; passing the rest of her time amid the ruins of the Alhambra. She complained not, wept not, nor ever spoke of Aben-Hamet: a stranger might have deemed her happy. She alone remained of her kindred. Don Roderick died of grief. Don Carlos fell in a duel; but supported by his brother in arms, Lautrec. The destiny of Aben-Hamet was never known.

As the traveller leaves Tunis, by the gate leading to the ruins of Carthage, he sees a burial ground; beneath a palm, in a retired nook, I was shown a tomb which they called the grave of the last Abencerage. It is in no way remarkable. The sepulchral stone is quite plain; but, according to Moorish custom, they have dug in its centre a slight hollow: the rain drops are collected by this funeral-chalice, and, in that burning clime, serve to refresh the birds of heaven.

THE END.
THE

IN Voluntary Prophet;

A Tale of the Early Ages.

By the Author of

"Brambletye House," "ZillaH," \\
&c.

"This not alone has shone on ages past, 
But lights the present." Pope.

London:

Richard Bentley, 8. New Burlington Street 
(Successor to Henry Colburn): 
Bell and Bradfute, Edinburgh; 
J. Cumming, Dublin. 
1835.
THE INVOLUNTARY PROPHET;
A TALE OF THE EARLY AGES.

CHAPTER I.

Oh! how pleasant and piquant is the power of an Author, and how doth it lift its ecstatic possessor, when inspired by the divine afflatus of composition, above the cares and control of this dull plodding earth! Ubiquitous and almost omnipotent, he, he alone can realise the fantastical wish of the Amorist who called upon the Gods to annihilate both space and time, and make two lovers happy. "The world is all before him where to choose," and what earthly autocrat so potent as the writer, whose dominions are uncircumscribed, who may range even beyond the limits of reality, and who possesses a plenary power of life and death within the whole extent of his illimitable jurisdiction? After all, however, the Promethean figures that he creates will remain inanimate, unless the reader can vivify them with fire stolen from the heaven of his own imagination. Both parties must contribute to the vitality, or the efforts of the most vigorous fictionists will be abortive. Avaunt! then, all ye phlegmatic and matter-of-fact souls, dull slaves to the visible and the tangible, who are content to browse upon the ignorant present, and to remain tethered to your corporeal teguments; but hither come, ye nimble, quick-witted, and apprehensive spirits, who can escape from the body as a bird from its cage, and
when ye disspread your wings, can roam at will over the wilds of space, and track the backward stream of time through all its dark meanderings.

Most benign and imaginative reader! I perceive by my auctorial intuition that thou art of this latter class; therefore do I cheerfully touch thy shoulder with my enchanted pen, and lo! thy disembodied spirit, thrown back into the first century, is whisking with me through the charmed air, athwart the heaving billows of the English channel, and over the hills and valleys of Gaul, in the direction of Italy. Be not alarmed; thy fellow traveller is not an Asmodean demon; thou art not riding upon a witch's broomstick, nor poised upon the waxen pinions of Icarus, nor bestriding the enchanted horse of Prince Firouz Schah; but securely floating upon the buoyant wings of imagination, which can transport thee to the uttermost bounds of the earth without fatigue or danger. Soh! we have cleft the air "swifter than arrow from a Tartar’s bow," and see! how the unalterable bounty of Nature scatters her favours not less lavishly in the first century than in the nineteenth "o'er the vine-cover'd hills and gay valleys of France." They diminish—they melt together—they fade away from our sight;—already have we left that pleasant region behind us; fleet as a sunbeam do we pierce the air, whose glassy transparency and genial warmth give assurance that we are approaching the summer shores of Italy. Behold! that gleaming mirror beneath us of the purest and deepest blue is the Mediterranean Sea; on our left is the mountainous island of Corsica; opposite to it are the plains and woods of Sardinia; and before us I can distinguish the mouth of the river Tiber, and the busy port of Ostia. Let us repress our wings, and drop nearer to the earth, for our present flight is almost ended. What say you, my aerial companion?—you would fain speak, but the rapidity of our motion has taken away your breath. I can divine your thoughts. You are weary, and would feel the ground once more. Not yet—not yet. Keep your pinions outstretched, and this western breeze will soon float us forward to our destined point. There! said I not sooth?—Already may we discern, by the dazzling
splendour and the deafening noise, that we are approaching
the "opes strepitumque Romae." Yes, there, outstretched
upon her seven hills, is the mighty mistress of the world,
the heart of the universe, the imperial city, whose inhabit-
ants are counted by millions, and whose encircling walls
enclose a whole province. Heavens! what a magnificent
and apparently interminable succession of temples, baths,
triumphal arches, porticoes, aqueducts, columns, theatres,
hippodromes, gardens, gates, palaces, and mansions! and
how fair and resplendent appears that vast portion of the
city which has been lately rebuilt after the great fire! Let
us fold our wings and descend to earth,—here to the west-
ward in the Trans-tiberine region. It is pleasant to feel
our feet upon terra firma, and yet, after having had the
wide unobstructed sky to ourselves, it is somewhat irksome
to be shouldered and impeded at every step by this con-
fused assemblage of passengers, while we are half deafened
by the rumbling of an unbroken string of carts, carriages,
vehicles of every description, the hoarse voices of the
chairmen, and all the Babel cries of the innumerable hawk-
ers and vendors.

Here we are at the Palatine Bridge; but when we shall
be able to pass it I know not, unless we again dispread our
wings; for no one dares take precedence of these sacred
oxen, all branded with an arrow, attended by the priests,
and destined for sacrifice at the Temple of Apollo. Be-
hind them, too, I see a train of caravans, the roaring and
howling of whose inmates announce that they are wild
beasts for the supply of the amphitheatres; and, in front
of us, I behold one of the rich Roman knights going out
in procession to his country house, followed by a little
army of slaves, freedmen, clients, and retainers, the latter
of whom mean to accompany him as far as the Janiculan
gate. Now, now! let us dart across behind the oxen.
There! we are fairly over, and can make our way into the
very heart of the city, as fast as the thick and increasing
stream of passengers will allow us. That crowded street
leads to the Forum; this building on our right is the
Temple of Fortune; to our left is the street Agrippa,
leading to the great baths; yonder is the Theatre of Mar-
cellus, and the Temple of Janus; and here we are at the Palatine Mount, which we must ascend slowly, in spite of your eagerness, for the goun'd nation, as you may perceive, are a grave and dignified people, and affect a manly composedness in all their gestures and proceedings. Now that we have gained the summit, you will leave unnoticed all the other glories of the city, in order that you may rivet your eyes upon this stupendous and magnificent enclosure, stretching from the hill on which we stand, for more than a mile in breadth, to the Esquiline Mount, and entirely surrounded by a spacious portico, supported by three rows of columns, and embellished with a profusion of sculpture and statuary. It is the newly-built palace of Nero, called the Golden House. Within the spacious grounds, which contain every variety of wood and water, hill and dale, interspersed with temples, pleasure-houses, and baths supplied with sea and mineral waters, are ploughed lands, meadows, fish-ponds, and preserves for wild beasts and game.

Come! shall we pass through the enclosure, and take a peep at the interior buildings? Remember, we are invisible; and, instead of fearing the challenge of those Praetorian soldiers stationed at the guard-house, we may boldly make our way through the very midst of them. Said I not sooth?—Here we are in the gardens, the marble statues of which are on every side finely relieved by a luxuriant background of trees and rare plants. Is not the palace a most glorious structure? Nay, do not draw back. Those fierce-looking body-guards of the emperor will not arrest our progress; they are not even conscious of our presence. See! we are in the vestibule: yonder colossus in the centre, one hundred and twenty feet in height, representing Nero himself, is the work of Zenodorus the statuary. Let us pass onward and ascend the great staircase, in spite of the gigantic German body-guards, and the crowd of servants stationed at its foot. Here we are in one of the dining-rooms wainscoted with ivory, the panels of which, turning upon pins, form moving pictures. This second apartment, which is circular, and perhaps the finest of the whole, represents the heavens, and imitates, by its rotatory motion,
that of the celestial bodies. Pass we on to yonder smaller and plainer chamber, secured with double doors and another guard, in spite of which impediments we have made our way within it. Seated near a table, on which musical instruments are placed, and having a strong box upon the floor beside him, you behold a man about thirty-two years of age, with a large stomach and little legs, his small eyes enveloped in fat, his thick throat and chin joined together. Pallid and bloodless, his complexion and skin have the appearance of pork; the upward turn of his chin indicates cruelty, while his fair hair, slight legs, and the somewhat handsome form of his features, convey an expression of effeminacy. A little behind him, leaning on a crutch-headed stick, and casting at her companion a scowl of malignant defiance, stands a toothless withered hag, whose countenance, distorted by every hateful passion, is like a map of Pandemonium. That man is the Emperor Nero; the beldame is Locusta, the celebrated poisoner, whose murderous art has been put in frequent requisition by her present associate. And now, gentle reader, having thus formally introduced you to the personages with whom I commence my tale, I shall relieve you from the trouble of further colloquy, and pursue my narrative without interruption.

"Rebellious hag!" cried the Emperor fiercely, "do you dare to refuse? I command you to obey me."

"I am willing to poison the whole senate at the approaching banquet, should such be your wish," replied Locusta, and her malignant eye seemed to express a fiendish delight at the very thought; "but against the life of Festus I will never practise, and where he is concerned, I tell you once more, Cæsar — nay, you may frown as you please — that I will not obey you." She uttered the negative in a loud, almost in an insulting voice, and struck her stick sharply upon the ground, as if to confirm the inflexibility of her resolution.

"Does the wrinkled beldame doat?" said Nero, leaning back in his chair, and surveying his companion with unfeigned astonishment, while he passed his hands over the strings of a lute laid upon his lap; "or has she become
conscientious, and frightened at the fable of the Fates and Furies? How now, Locusta! you never boggled at a murder before, and what is there in the name of Festus, to scare you from the exercise of your noble calling?"

"When I was once in the street Janus, beset by the populace, who would have stoned me to death for the crimes I had committed at your suggestion, Festus gave me refuge in his house, and saved my life, and I then swore by Hecate that I would for ever stand his friend."

"Hear her! hear her!" cried the Emperor, with a sneering laugh, "Locusta, the wholesale poisoner, has become devout and tender-hearted, and fears to break an oath, vowed to the infernal goddess of magic and enchantments!"

"Be my crimes what they may, this shall not be added to them."

"By Apollo! my preceptor, Seneca, never uttered a finer thought; but if your gratitude is so lively, most moral murderess, methinks you might recollect the estate that I bestowed upon you in Campania."

"Bestowed upon me! Did I not earn it, ay, and grievously too, by the poisoning of Marcus Silanus and Claudius, at the instance of Agrippina; of your brother Britannicus, by your own special order; of your bosom friend Burrhus; of Doryphorus and Pallas, your freedmen; and of so many others, that I cannot even recall their names? Gratitude, indeed! you have only paid me, and poorly enough too, for making you what you are,—although, I must confess, you have given me one thing to which I was not entitled."

"What may that be, hag?" inquired Nero with a look of some surprise.

"A blow!" cried Locusta, holding up her shrivelled forefinger in a menacing attitude. "Yes, Cæsar, you were man enough to strike me, because the first poison I administered to Britannicus failed of its effect. For this I am grateful; this I promise you never to forget."

"Traitress! hold your envenomed tongue. You forget at least that I can now do without you. In this box are abundant specimens of all the deadly compounds you
have ever concocted. I have made you instruct pupils in
your art, who may prove equally skilful and more docile
than yourself; what therefore should hinder me, now that
you are no longer necessary to me, from giving you over to
the punishment you have so richly merited?"

"Caesar! I defy your menaces!" croaked Locusta, re-
coiling to a corner of the apartment. "What! is it you
who forget that I am a sorceress and enchantress, as well
as a poisoner?" Fixing her sharp evil eye upon the
Emperor, she drew a painted wand from beneath her cloak,
and holding it extended towards his face, began to mutter
incantations that chimed upon the words "Dis, Erebus,
and Nox."

Nero, who was at once impious and superstitious, felt a
profound alarm at this proceeding. His bloodless face as-
sumed a still more wan expression; a cold perspiration
started from his forehead, and the tyrant, whose very name
inspired terror throughout the whole extent of the earth,
trembled at the menaces of a decrepit old woman. Starting
hastily from his chair, he seized a small image representing
a girl, which had been presented to him as a charmed
preservative against plots, and which he honoured as his
supreme divinity, constantly offering to it three sacrifices a
day. This he held up before him, like a shield, and re-
seating himself, exclaimed with a forced air of complacency:
"Come, come, Locusta, I spoke but in jest; we must not
quarrel. You and I are such old friends."

"That I may well suspect you of wishing to deprive
me of life;—it is thus that you have served all your oldest
and best friends."

"Be pacified, good mother of all wickedness. Festus
shall be spared; but all the others that I have named must
perish, and your reward shall be proportioned to this ac-
ceptable service."

"I ask you, Caesar, but to spare Festus: for the others
the funeral supper may already be prepared."

"Good! good! Oh! that the most deadly of your drugs
were forced down the throat of the accursed rebel Galba,
who threatens to deprive me of my empire. Tell me,
Locusta, if I gave a public banquet to the whole Senate,
could you not contrive to poison them all,—all, the whole nest of traitors at once? We will talk of it—this must be done; but for the present away, away! and let those perish quickly whose names I have given to you.”

“Cæsar! I obey. Farewell!”

“And thyself, audacious hag!” cried Nero, as soon as the double doors were closed behind Locusta, “shalt perish, before thou canst complete thy enchantments and incantations. The insurrection spreads; all Gaul and several of the other provinces have declared for Galba, and he has numerous confederates within the walls of Rome. I have been too humane—too sparing; I will be quick and sweeping in my revenge. All the governors of provinces and generals of my armies shall be put to death as joint conspirators: I will send orders to the islands to massacre all that are in exile; every family in Rome, of Gaulish extraction, shall be exterminated; the whole of Gaul shall be given up to plunder; the entire Senate shall be poisoned; and, after setting fire to the city in twenty quarters at once, I will turn loose all the wild beasts of the amphitheatres, to prevent the people from extinguishing the conflagration. Yes. The whole world shall feel what it is to rebel against Nero, the best emperor, and the finest musician that ever lived.”

He walked up and down the room two or three times, meditating these and other schemes of still more atrocious vengeance, when his eye fell upon the little statue, and imagining that it might have preserved him from the incantations of Locusta, he replaced it in the shrine from which it had been taken, and proceeded to offer it sacrifice, with every mark of profound and grateful reverence. This ceremony concluded, he played two or three tunes upon the fiddle, to the accompaniment of his own voice, which apparently suggested to him the triumphs he had lately achieved in the Grecian games; for he went to an inner apartment, where were hung the eighteen hundred crowns he had won, with pompous inscriptions, recording the nature of the contest, as well as the names of the games, and of the adversaries he had vanquished. “Ha!” he exclaimed, with a smile of vainglorious ecstasy, “there they are!
and does the rebellious, the besotted old Galba think to conquer the man who has won all these? By the Temple of Apollo! the traitor must be mad. Has he forgotten how recently I entered Rome in triumph, when the Senate, knights, and people rent the air with shouts of 'Long live the victor of the Olympic and Pythian games! Long live the Emperor! Nero is a second Hercules! Nero is a second Apollo! He alone, since the commencement of time, has deserved this glory. Celestial voice! happy they who hear you!' Was not the whole city upon that glorious occasion illuminated, and adorned with wreaths and garlands? The streets were strewed with powdered saffron, incense fumed at every corner, sacrifices were offered to me as to a god; and as I passed along, my triumphal car was loaded to overflow with the flowers, garlands, birds, and pastry, cast upon me by the delighted millions of Rome."

Putting the Olympic crown of wild olive upon his head, and taking the Pythian crown of laurel in his hand, he strutted fantastically about the room, indulging in the most puerile and empty bragadocions to persuade himself that he was a second Apollo, a real immortal, and thus to banish the mortal fears awakened by the formidable insurrection of Galba. To confirm him in this desiderated oblivion, he sent for his mimes, singers, and minions, and the rest of the evening was passed in frivolous and childish games, idle gasconades, and gross debauchery, only suspended when he paused to meditate some new project of cruelty and vengeance.

Thus, like Belshazzar, did he carouse even at the moment when his empire was rapidly passing away from him. The Praetorians, retiring to their camp, had proclaimed Galba Emperor; and Nero, awaking about midnight, was astonished to find he had no guards. Jumping out of bed, he hurried with a few of his freedmen and slaves to the houses of his friends, in order to consult them. Every door was shut, nobody would answer him; and, on his return to his palace, he found that the officers of his bedchamber had decamped, after plundering the apartment, and carrying off his box of poison. Driven to despair, he thought for a moment of throwing himself headlong into the
Tiber; but Phaon, one of his freedmen, proposing to conceal him in a small house that he possessed, about four miles from Rome, Nero accepted his offer, and without awaiting to put sandals upon his feet, and only equipped in a tunic, he wrapped himself up in a brown-coloured cloak, covered his head, held a handkerchief to his face, mounted on horseback, and rode away with only four attendants.

CHAPTER II.

One of those who accompanied the Emperor in his flight was a Jew, named Aaron, of Gibeon. Though thus called from the place of his birth, his residence had been at Jerusalem, where he had carried on the business of a dealer in drugs and perfumes, deriving profit from supplying the Temple with the latter commodities, as well as from his being occasionally engaged, on the festivals and great ceremonies, to play upon the psaltery, of which he was a perfect master. In an insurrection of his countrymen he had encouraged them by singing some of the Maccabean war-hymns to the accompaniment of this instrument, in which rebellious occupation he was taken prisoner by the Romans, who would immediately have put him to death, as an incendiary and disturber of the public peace, but for the interference of one of their officers. Struck by the sound and appearance of the psaltery, which he had never before seen, the Roman conceived that his prisoner might prove an acceptable present to Nero, who was not only passionately addicted to music of all sorts, but ever ready to bestow liberal rewards on those who could stimulate his jaded senses by the excitement of a new pleasure. Being ordered home with despatches, the officer carried his captive with him to Rome. Nor was he disappointed in his expectations; for Nero, smitten with the instrument, and pleased with the strange garb and appearance of the bearded performer, gave a large recompense to the soldier who brought him to the pa-
lace, and received the Jew among the number of his musical slaves. He even condescended to take lessons of him; and his instructor, who was by no means deficient in the cunning of his nation, and had besides received a friendly hint on the subject, took good care to be very soon surpassed by his pupil. With the subtlety of the Hebrews, Aaron possessed also his full share of their religious patriotism; and being not less weary of the perpetual taunts and insults to which he was exposed in the palace, than anxious to return to Jerusalem, where he had left a wife and daughter, to both of whom he was tenderly attached, he humbly implored Nero to set him free, observing with artful flattery, that as he was now completely eclipsed in his own profession, there could be no reason for retaining him as a musician.

"You desire freedom, and who are so free as the dead?" asked Nero, quoting the line of a play in which he had often publicly acted. The petitioner slunk from his presence abashed, for he knew that the Emperor had conferred this unwelcome species of freedom on many of his mimes and parasites when they ceased to amuse him, or presumed to solicit their manumission; and he dreaded a similar fate for himself, should he ever renew his application.

Rendered half desperate by incessantly thinking of his wife and child, and of his beloved country, just then about to enter into a formal war with the Roman power, the Jew had nearly resolved to attempt his escape from the palace at all risks, when, at the moment of Nero's flight, accident made him acquainted with his design; and he offered to accompany him, not, as it may well be supposed, from any attachment to the tyrant, but in the hope that he would take him with him to Egypt, whither he talked of retiring, and whence, as he flattered himself, he might easily find his way to Jerusalem. Nero, humbled, terrified, and willing to accept any services that were offered to him in the present extremity of his fate, granted his request, only binding him to inviolable secrecy; and the fugitives, muffling themselves up in their cloaks, trembling with apprehension, and dreading an enemy in every being they encountered, stole out of Rome by the least frequented route they could select.
A hole having been made in the wall of Phaon's house at Ostia, in order that the entrance of the party might not be discovered, the Emperor crawled through; and, in a room belonging to one of the slaves, laid himself down to rest on an old mattress covered with a ragged quilt. As he still complained of hunger and thirst, they brought him some brown bread, which he refused, and only drank a little warm water; after which, worn out with his exertions, and with the want of repose on the preceding night, he at length fell asleep.

His dreams had probably presented him some pleasant images connected with his sanguinary projects; for he awoke with a smiling countenance, exclaiming—"Is it done, Locusta?—are they all dead—the whole Senate?" but as a glance showed him the miserable bed on which he lay, his countenance suddenly fell, his real situation rushed upon his memory, and he struck his hands sharply together, crying out, "I am lost!—I am lost! there is an end of Nero!" Inquiring eagerly of Aaron, who sat by his bedside, whether any fresh news had been received from Rome, he was informed that one of Phaon's servants had just arrived, bringing with him the decree of the Senate against the ex-Emperor.

"The ex-Emperor!" cried Nero, starting up in his bed, while a momentary fierceness passed over his features; but their dejected expression almost instantly returned, and he continued, with a mournful voice—"Where is the man?—let him be introduced—let me see their decree. Oh! that I had poisoned them all beforehand!"

Phaon's servant, on entering the apartment, fell on his knee, with the customary salutation of, "Hail! Caesar!" when the Emperor, impatiently muttering, "Not Caesar, not Emperor, but Claudius Domitius Nero, and soon to be a heap of ashes!" snatched the decree from his hand, and ran over it with starting eyes. Scarcely had he finished its perusal, when the soldiers sent to arrest him beset his hiding-place, and the tyrant finally committed suicide, under circumstances of puerile procrastination and irresolution, which must be too well known to the reader to require recapitulation. After his death, the companions
of his flight quitted the cottage and dispersed themselves, according to the impulse of their several hopes and fears.

Leaving the others to their fate, it is our purpose to follow the fortunes of Aaron the Jew, who being conscious that, as a palace-slave, he was still the property of Nero's successor, whoever he might be, resolved at all events not to return to Rome, but to endeavour to make his way back to Judæa. Although he had secured a purse of gold before he quitted the palace, which would so far facilitate his project, he was aware that it was by no means of easy accomplishment. His servile dress might be thrown aside, and by assuming the freedman's cap of liberty, he might escape interrogation or detention; but religious scruples forbade him to cut off his beard, and there was no small danger in travelling as one of the Jews, whom the Pagans often identified with the Christians. In the ruthless and horrible persecution to which the latter had been subjected after the burning of Rome, of which they were falsely accused, many Hebrews had perished, the Romans not always stopping to discriminate between Judean Christians and unconverted Jews. To avoid this peril, and yet preserve his cherished beard, Aaron provided a loose robe and staff, and gave himself out for an Egyptian philosopher, returning to his own country. In this garb he made his way to Ostia, well knowing that the sooner he got on board ship, the greater would be his chance of safety and escape; but while he was inquiring for a vessel, he heard an officer make proclamation, in the name of the new Emperor, warning all deserters and runaway slaves to return to their posts, and offering rewards to those who should discover and apprehend them. Imagining that every eye was turned towards himself, and that the public informers, always a numerous and dreaded body, would be rendered doubly vigilant by the promised recompense, he retreated from the populous town of Ostia, and, concealing himself for some time in the vicinity, only ventured forth in the dusk of the evening to purchase provisions, and seek for a ship bound to Syria or any part of the East.

Two days after this occurrence, he was fortunate enough to procure a passage on board a vessel bound for Cythnos,
one of the islands of the Ægean Sea, laden chiefly with sculptures and ornaments destined for a temple of Neptune, newly erected upon the island, and having on board several priests of the marine deity, who were to officiate in his new fane, and who had been to Rome to solicit contributions. Although sincerely attached to his faith, which indeed constituted the patriotism as well as the religion of the Jews, Aaron was not zealous enough to run the risk of being thrown overboard by inveighing against the superstitious practices of his fellow-passengers. Sacrifice was offered every day before a figure of Neptune, enshrined on the deck, and his protection was duly invoked by the priests and crew, most of whom were Greeks; notwithstanding which assiduous homage of his votaries, the deity treated them but scurvily. One dark night, they ran against a large ship coming from Egypt with an enormous obelisk of granite intended to adorn the palace of Nero, when their vessel received so much damage in the shock, that they were obliged to put into port to repair. Subsequently she sprang a leak, which compelled them again to run for the nearest harbour, where they were detained some time; and when they at length approached Cythnos, displayed the sacred flag of Neptune, and expected that every boat belonging to the island would gather round with music and hymns, to escort them triumphantly to the quay, and proceed thence in grand procession to the temple of their patron deity, they were not a little startled at finding themselves surrounded with galleys of war, crowded with a medley of wild, ferocious-looking men, who scrambled on board with arms in their hand, and most unceremoniously took possession of the vessel in the name of the Emperor Nero, before whom they summoned the priests, crew, and passengers to make their immediate appearance, asserting that he was at that moment honouring the Island with his august presence.

Detestable as he was and every way worthy of execration, the deceased tyrant had numerous partisans so zealous to honour his memory that some of them for several years decked his tomb with flowers, while others covertly replaced his statue in the Tribunal for harangues, and published edicts in his name, as if he were soon to re-
appear, and revenge himself on his enemies. Nor need we wonder at this infatuation, if we recollect that his frequent largesses and general relaxation of discipline must naturally have gained him the soldiers' hearts; while the licentious entertainments in which he had taken part, and his open encouragement of every vice, were equally calculated to attach to him the lovers of pleasure, and all the haters of moral restraint. In the general corruption of manners then prevailing, these would form a numerous class, all eager to propagate the report that their imperial patron was still living; a rumour to which the Christians, smarting under the cruelties he had inflicted, lent themselves by indulging the notion that he still remained in the flesh, and was reserved to be the Antichrist.

Encouraged by the prevalence of this strange report, as well as by the disorders that intervened between the death of the tyrant, and the establishment of his successor, an obscure but audacious freedman, who resembled the deceased Emperor in figure and musical talent, and wanted not the courage that might support his imposture, started up in Pontus, and gave himself out for Nero. The Roman empire had always been infested with gangs of runaway slaves, gladiators, deserters, and malefactors, ready to enrol themselves under any commander who could lead them on to plunder. By the most magnificent promises—for he had nothing else to bestow—the counterfeit Nero drew to his standard a pretty numerous band of these desperadoes and marauders, with whom he embarked; and being thrown by a storm upon the Island Cythnos, assumed in form the name of Claudius Domitius Nero, and caused himself to be proclaimed Caesar and Emperor. Having succeeded in enlisting some soldiers who were returning from the East upon furlough, he acted most unequivocally up to his assumed character; putting to death those who refused to acknowledge him; committing acts of piracy upon the Ægean sea; and devoting the plunder thus acquired to the purchase of arms and the equipment of his heterogeneous band.

A detachment of these insurgents having taken possession of the vessel in which Aaron was sailing on her arrival at Cythnos, overhauled the cargo, without much
respect for its sacred character and destination, and hurried the crew and passengers before the soi-disant Emperor. They found him seated upon an extempore throne in the atrium of a handsome house, with eagles, lictors, fasces, and all the mingled symbols of military and civil authority displayed ostentatiously before him, while he was surrounded by a motley assemblage of as ferocious-looking freebooters as ever cut a throat; a few completely armed, some half equipped, and the rest brandishing such substitutes for weapons as they had been able to convert upon the spur of the occasion. Aaron observed that this extravagant impostor affected to imitate his prototype not only in his voice, and vulgar familiarity of manner, but even in his musical mania, and his fantastical freaks of tyranny. Since his arrival in the island, indeed, he had been endeavouring to establish his authenticity by several capricious acts of cruelty, ordering one man to be scourged to death for omitting his titles of Caesar and Emperor; another to be beheaded for accidentally treading upon his toe; a third to be poisoned for sending him up an unpalatable dish at dinner; and others to suffer capital punishment for delinquencies equally trivial. When he sat in judgment—for he decided every thing himself—he occasionally suspended the proceedings to play a tune upon the fiddle, picking his teeth afterwards, and yawning, and pronouncing the fatal sentence of "I, Lictor, Expedi cruces," with such a drawling unconcern, that many who had previously doubted his identity, were induced to change their opinion, believing that none but the genuine and veritable Nero would presume to exercise his imperial functions with so careless and consummate an atrocity. The priests of Neptune, after being stripped of the pious offerings they brought with them from Rome, were dismissed to their temple, which he had already plundered; with the assurance, however, that the whole should be faithfully refunded when he was re-established in plenary authority as Emperor. The crew, being all able-bodied men, were impressed into his service; and there now only remained to dispose of Aaron, who in answer to the interrogatories put to him, and in reliance upon the ignorance
of his examinant, boldly declared himself to be an Egyptian philosopher, who had been travelling for instruction and amusement, and was now returning to his own country.

"I see the cloak and the beard," said the upstart Emperor; "but I do not yet see the philosopher. What may the word mean, pr'ythee?"

"Caesar is pleased to jest," replied Aaron, making the act of homage; "he is doubtless well aware that a philosopher, if he deserves the name, is a lover of wisdom."

"And pray, good lover of wisdom, how much can you pay me for your ransom, if I suffer you to pursue your journey to the land of priests and crocodiles?"

"I need not remind the Emperor that philosophers are always poor."

"Then you are fools, not lovers of wisdom. What avails your musty lore, unless it can gratify your wishes, elevate you above your fellow men, enable you to trample them beneath your feet, and make you a sort of god upon earth?"

"I was not aware that even wealth could effect all this."

"But all that I have said, ay, and more too, can be accomplished by this," cried the sham Caesar, suddenly drawing his sword; "nay, start not — I will spare your throat for the present; I will not even snip your beard — yes, this shining bit of steel is your only true philosophy, for it can enable its possessor to make Fortune herself his slave, and cut his way. — Lictors! guards! seize me yonder fellow standing on the bench; he has not only presumed to make himself taller than Caesar, but has squinted at me twice. The third time might be ominous, so take him out, and whip me off his head.—Away!" The unfortunate squinter was hurried out of the room, and his head struck from his shoulders before he had time to expostulate against the sentence; while the bystanders, instead of being shocked at this act of atrocity, saw in it nothing but an additional proof that its author could be no other than the indisputable Nero, to some of whose playful enormities it certainly bore a striking resemblance. "Where was I?" drawled the impostor, again turning towards Aaron. "I was observing that the philosopher who knows how to
wield a sword may carve his own fortune, and cut his way to a throne, which, I take it, is somewhat better worth than the idle war of words, and the empty sophisms that you dignify with the name of wisdom. Pr'ythe what canst do, thou bearded goat? Canst fight, or blow a trumpet, or fabricate arms, or perform any thing that may assist me to equip my brave soldiers?"

Aaron answered in the negative, hoping that by making himself out to be unserviceable he should receive his dismissal.

"Why then, good lover of wisdom, and sapient doer of nothing, thou art an ass, and a useless consumer of victuals," resumed his interrogator; "and as such shalt be put to death forthwith, unless thy philosophy can give thee as many noddles as Cerberus. Let this bearded fellow's head — stay — thou may'st perchance procure ransom. I give thee five days for that purpose, and if the gold be not then forthcoming, thou shalt assuredly share the fate of the squinter. I have said. — Away with him to prison! Bring me my lute, and let supper be served instantly."

So saying, the mock Emperor descended from his throne, and withdrew with some of his chosen compotators to the eating apartment, while Aaron, cast into a dark and unwholesome dungeon, had leisure to reflect on the strange fate which, just as he had escaped from the clutches of one Nero, threw him into the fangs of another still more ferocious and ruthless. In the eyes of the latter, as he had just witnessed, human life appeared to be a matter of utter insignificance; so that if the remnant of gold which he had concealed about his person did not procure a remission of the sentence, there could be no doubt whatever that at the end of five days he would be sacrificed to the freaks of this sanguinary impostor. His wife, his daughter, his beloved Jerusalem, and the store of shekels and maccabees which he had buried in the cellar of his house in the Holy City, mournfully haunted his imagination, and he saw no hope, in whatever direction he turned his thoughts, except the vague possibility that before the end of five days some accident might happen to the truculent pretender, and thus prevent the execution of his purpose.
Even this chance, feeble as it was, was soon utterly destroyed. Aaron had been indiscreet enough to mention that he had seen the dead body of Nero, in the hearing of one of the sailors, who, either out of some grudge he had conceived against the Jew, or more probably in the expectation of reward from the mock Emperor, related to him what he had heard.

"Ha! hath he seen Nero's dead body?" exclaimed the latter; "then, by the beard of Jupiter! and by the temple of Apollo! I will see his, and thus shall we be quits. Let a gibbet be erected thirty feet high, and give the lying knave notice that he shall dangle upon it at noon to-morrow."

At this unexpected announcement, Aaron was reduced to despair, nor could he even compose his thoughts, so as to be enabled to meet his fate with becoming fortitude; for the noise of erecting the scaffolding and gibbet immediately in front of his dungeon completely bewildered his brain; every stroke of the hammer sounding as if the iron fell upon his heart, and brought with it a new death as often as it was repeated. At length the workmen ceased, and in the silence of the night, only broken by such loose watch and ward as these undisciplined insurgents thought necessary to maintain, the wretched prisoner had leisure to ponder uninterrupted—for sleep was out of the question—upon the dismal prospect of thus ignominiously ending his days on a public scaffold, in a foreign land. In such meditations the night was wearing miserably away, and he was expecting the dawning of the last sun that should ever shine upon him, when a distant and confused noise fell upon his ear, to which, at first, he paid little attention, deeming it might be some disturbance among the lawless bands into whose power he had fallen. Presently, however, it became louder and more distinct; it drew nearer, shouts were heard, and he caught the hoarse and hurried cry of "Treason! treason! to arms! to arms!" quickly followed by the fierce clashing of swords, the yells of enraged combatants, and all the clamour and clangour of a desperate conflict; sometimes rolling away to a little distance, and again seeming to gather around the very doors
of his prison. More than once he could recognise the voice of the usurper, braced in this emergency to a loud and animated pitch, encouraging his men to fight for the Emperor Nero, to whom they had sworn allegiance, and promising the most extravagant rewards if they proved triumphant. These evidences of an obstinately fought battle were prolonged, until a great shout seemed to declare that one side or the other had achieved a victory, and the sounds of fury and fighting gradually died away.

It was now broad daylight, when the suspense and anxiety of Aaron became so intolerable, that he cried out with all his force, and beat violently against the door of his dungeon, which was at length opened, and to his inexpressible relief, he found himself surrounded by regular Roman soldiers. Scattered arms and accoutrements covered the ground; the bodies of the conquered rebels, who had fought with the courage of despair, were thickly strewed over the field of battle, and as Aaron passed along he recognised that of the self-styled Nero, scored with wounds, the ferocious expression of his eyes and features, which not even death could tame, attesting the audacity of character that had prompted him to the enterprise in which he perished. The reprieved prisoner, half wild with joy at witnessing this destruction of the banditti and their leader, was carried before the Roman general, Calpurnius Asprenas, who informed him, that having been appointed Governor of Galatia and Pamphylia, he was sailing thither with some galleys, and a detachment of soldiers for the Eastern army, when they cast anchor off the Island of Cythnos, and having learned the proceedings and pretensions of the supposititious Nero, he had resolved to crush his enterprise by a coup de main. For this purpose he landed his troops in the night, and unexpectedly attacking the insurgents, had gained a complete, though by no means an uncontested, victory. Politely expressing his satisfaction at having been the means of rescuing Aaron from the tragical doom with which he had been threatened, the General then informed him that he was at liberty to quit the island whenever he chose; a permission of which, after the most fervent expressions of gratitude, he lost no time
in availing himself. On the very next morning he was fortunate enough to procure a passage on board a merchant-vessel bound for Joppa; and as he sailed away from the unlucky shore of Cythnos, and cast his eyes upon the lofty gibbet that had been intended for his execution, at the foot of which the wretch who had condemned him was now lying lifeless, he could hardly persuade himself that the whole adventure was not a fearful dream, and knew not how to be sufficiently thankful to Heaven for having thus suddenly snatched him from the jaws of death, and put before him the immediate and delightful prospect of once more embracing his wife and daughter, once more beholding the pride and glory of the earth, the Holy City of Jerusalem!

CHAPTER III.

Aaron's somewhat sluggish feelings were not easily aroused, except through the direct medium of his senses, although, when thus awakened, they were not deficient in vehemence, especially where his religion or his native country was concerned. Upon these subjects, indeed, he was, like almost every other Jew, easily incited to enthusiasm. It was this susceptibility which, having prompted him to join a sortie of his fellow-countrymen as a volunteer musician, had occasioned his being taken prisoner and sent to Rome, and which now filled his bosom with mingled sensations of delight and sorrow as he stepped ashore at Joppa, and once more set his foot upon the sacred soil of Palestine. So predominant was the former feeling when he jumped upon the strand with a loud cry of "Hosanna! praised be the God of Israel!" that he snatched up a handful of the sand, kissed it, and pressed it to his heart in a devout ecstasy; but this momentary joy was succeeded by the most mournful impressions as he advanced towards the town, or rather towards the ruins that marked its former site,—for since his last visit Joppa had been completely
sacked and destroyed. Its local advantages, however, as the nearest seaport to Jerusalem, soon attracting mercantile and other settlers to the place, it was once more rising from its ashes at the period of Aaron's arrival.

By his inquiries of the new inhabitants, he learned that many of the towns and citadels of Judæa had been taken by the Romans; that Vespasian was gone up with a mighty force to invest Jerusalem, and that the whole country of Palestine was, according to the report of travellers, a miserable scene of disorder, rapine, and warfare. Grieved at this intelligence, Aaron began to apprehend that, although he was within forty miles of the Holy City, it might not be so easy to reach it, and to embrace his wife and daughter, as he had at first flattered himself; and he resolved, for his better protection, to retain his costume of a travelling philosopher. From their known poverty, persons of this stamp were generally allowed to pass unmolested; while the smattering of medical knowledge which many of them possessed, and the skill in divination of which they were all suspected by the ignorant, secured for them a portion of respect which few other wayfarers could boast. He departed from Joppa, therefore, without altering his garb; and having first visited the splendid tomb of the Maccabees in the vicinity of the city, which had escaped the devastations of war and faction, and where he sighed over the vanity of human hopes, as he beheld the vacant niches destined to receive the successors of that illustrious family, which had already become extinct, he proceeded with a heavy heart in the direction of Bethshemeth. Every step as he advanced increased his dejection; for the deserted fields, disfigured by a rank overgrowth of weeds and brambles that threatened soon to re-convert the country to a desert,—the ruined and abandoned villages,—and the corrupting dead bodies left unburied by the road-side, attested in all directions the frightful ravages of civil and foreign war. Even where a population of any sort was to be found, it only led him to regret the solitude he had left behind; bands of robbers, deserters, and outlaws overran the country, visiting with rapine and murder those who had escaped the previous miseries of war.
Environed with such perils, it can hardly be supposed that our traveller, in spite of his philosopher’s garb, could altogether escape annoyance. More than once he was stopped and rigorously searched; but his few remaining pieces of gold were so effectually concealed that they baffled detection, and he was dismissed upon his way, sometimes with abuse, sometimes with blows, deeming himself fortunate that no more serious violence was ever inflicted upon him. A marked contrast was afforded, when, in the midst of this lawlessness and anarchy, he reached any of the Roman stations, in the vicinity of which guards and sentinels being planted at stated distances, and a system of signals established, all was order and security for the peaceful wayfarers; though they scrupled not to inflict the last extremities of military law upon the armed insurgents, whom they considered and treated as irreclaimable rebels. Aaron now knew too well the might and indomitable obstinacy of the Romans not to be aware that the Jews were committing themselves to an utterly hopeless contest; a conviction that gathered strength as he had additional opportunities for observing the miserable disunion and distractions of his own nation. And yet when he gained the summit of an ascent, and in the bright crystal atmosphere of an autumnal morning saw outstretched before him the Holy City with all its glories, crowning a precipitous rocky eminence, belted round with green hills, every spot of which was hallowed by a thousand religious and patriotic associations, his heart leaped in his bosom, and he became instantly transported with a proud and pious enthusiasm. Uttering a loud cry of joy, and clapping his hands together, he fell upon his knees, exclaiming with an impassioned energy, “Hosanna! hail to thee, Shelomith! my peace, my happiness! Hail to thee, Salem! Hail to thee, Zion, the dwelling-place of the Lord; the chosen mountain of Jehovah; the Holy City, the queen of the whole earth!—I see the impregnable walls and bulwarks; above them soars the glorious Temple with its white marble and golden plates, glittering in the sun like a mountain of snow on which the stars have descended;—yonder are the lofty towers and the stately
palace of Herod, and the fortress of Antonia, and the columns of the Maccabees;— behold! the sacred banner of the Lord floats triumphantly above the gilded roof of the Temple; and lo! from the midst of its unseen courts a pillar of smoke rising from the altar of burnt offerings, and climbing majestically up to heaven, gives me pleasant assurance that even in this hour of siege and peril the priests of the Lord do not neglect the daily offices of our religion. Glory to Solyma! Glory to the God of Israel — Hallelu-jah!"

For some minutes his eye wandered over and individualised all the prominent objects and buildings, resting ultimately upon that quarter that contained the humble dwelling within which he had left his beloved wife and daughter, upon whom his thoughts fixed themselves with a tenderness that increased as he once more contemplated the houses among which they resided. He lost himself in conjecturing which room of the dwelling they at that moment occupied; what were their immediate employments; and as he again fancied himself at home, his thoughts found a leisure moment for descending to the cellar, and to the buried pot of shekels and maccabees.

Starting from this domestic and pecuniary reverie, his eye fell upon the Mount of Olives and the encircling heights of Jerusalem, several of them bristling with a fortified encampment, which he instantly discovered to be Roman. At this dismal prospect the temporary exaltation of his mind rapidly subsided, and he continued, in a desponding tone, "Alas! for the Holy City! she is even now a prisoner — the toils of the Roman are round about her — she is in the lion's den — and unless she have the miraculous deliverance of Daniel, she must fall a prey to the universal spoiler. Oh, wretched Jerusalem!" This ejaculation was frequently repeated as he drew nearer, and marked, with a heavy heart, the desolation that had completely altered the features of the whole surrounding territory. What he had left a green and smiling paradise, was now converted into a dismal desert; the delicious gardens, the shady groves, the picturesque pleasure-houses, perched amid bowers and arbours, had all disappeared;
not a cottage, or tree, or even a single shrub, was left standing; all was ruin and destruction; the beauty and glory of the scenery being so utterly defaced, that he could scarcely recognise the spots even of his most familiar resort. To the sadness occasioned by this prospect was now added a misgiving as to the possibility of his making his way into the city; for he saw that the walls were closely invested upon every side, and could scarcely bear to reflect upon the possible fate of his family, left without his protection, either if the city should be taken by assault, or if, by the prolongation of the siege, the horrors of famine should be superadded to the other calamities of war.

In the midst of these gloomy forebodings, he was challenged by the sentinels of one of the Roman outposts, made prisoner, and carried before a centurion, who, upon interrogating him, observed that he spoke with a foreign accent, and expressing a suspicion that he was a disguised Jew, and perhaps a spy, suggested the propriety of his being examined by Josephus. "I heard at Joppa," said Aaron, "that Josephus, the son of Matthias, had joined the Romans; and if it be him of whom you speak, I would gladly have speech of him, for I knew him at Rome."

"Whose son he may be I know not," said the Centurion; "but I speak of Josephus the Jew, before whom we have orders to carry all suspicious characters."

Aaron was accordingly conducted towards the camp as a prisoner. On his reaching the tent, and being conducted into the presence of his countryman, he found him writing at a table, probably collecting materials for his great work, the History of the Jews, which he subsequently published at Rome. Dismissing the soldiers, Josephus saluted Aaron, whom he immediately recognised, and listened to the detail of his adventures since he left Rome; at the conclusion of which he justified his own defection from the Jewish cause, by contending that God himself had obviously abandoned it; maintaining that the writings of their own prophets foretold the destruction of Jerusalem about the present time; and inferring that Heaven had left the Jews, and gone over to the Romans,
from many circumstances, and more particularly from the fact that the waters of Siloam, which had been latterly dried up whenever the Jews could come at them, flowed so plentifully since the fountain had been in possession of the Romans, as even to supply their horses and cattle, besides their whole camp. Within the walls of the doomed city, he stated the war of the factions among themselves to be so inveterate, and the sufferings of the whole population so horrible, that the final surrender could not be much longer delayed; warning Aaron, that if he joined himself to their numbers, he could only expect to perish miserably, as multitudes had already done in the defence of the place, or at its capture to be made a slave for life, and see his family condemned to the same fate.

Admitting the force of these arguments, Aaron consented, should he get admission into the city, and find its plight as desperate as it had been represented, to seize the first opportunity of escaping from it with his wife and daughter; on the faith of which assurance, Josephus told him that the Jews, according to the information of a deserter, meditated a sally on the coming night, adding, that as they would doubtless be driven back as usual, Aaron might join the fugitives in their retreat, and, under cover of the night, pass through the gates with them.

Previously, however, to the execution of this project, Josephus requested his friend would accompany him, and communicate to Vespasian the particulars of Nero’s death, as well as the freaks and ultimate fate of the impostor of Cythnos. They found the General and his son Titus in a spacious but unadorned and meanly furnished tent, both of them covered with dust and perspiration from a skirmish, in which they had been personally engaged with a band of Idumeans who had attacked one of the Roman convoys, and just sitting down, with a single attendant, to a meal that even a common soldier would hardly have deemed luxurious. They listened with great interest to Aaron’s relation, at the conclusion of which the General said: “If you deem yourself-unlucky to have fallen into the clutches of two Nero’s, you are at least fortunate to have escaped from both; nor have I less reason to be grateful to the
blind goddess, for when I accompanied the late tyrant into Greece, and fell asleep while he recited one of his poetical compositions, every body gave me up for lost."

"And have not I, too, reason to be thankful for still wearing a head?" asked Josephus, addressing himself to the General, "when, even in the lifetime of the terrible Nero, I predicted that you would one day become emperor,—a prophecy which I now repeat with greater confidence than ever."*

"Tush! no more of this!" cried Vespasian, "these are dangerous and foolish vaticinations. I have not forgotten that I was once a horse-doctor, and I cannot believe that I shall ever come to wear the purple."

"Nor can I, my father!" cried Titus warmly, "if the licentious Praetorian cohorts are to dispose of the empire, and to sell it, as they have done, to Galba. But if the highest virtue is to achieve the greatest dignity; if the purple should ever be bestowed upon pre-eminence in valour, wisdom, and merit, who so likely to attain it as Vespasian?"

"To judge by this flattery, one would think I had already won it. A truce to such discourse, my son, and recollect that it is a poor compliment to the Roman people to deem me worthy of becoming their emperor, simply because I have done my duty."

"Even in that you are ten thousand times more worthy than any they have had since Augustus Caesar," said Josephus. "Oh! how different from these lazy and luxurious Praetorians, who presume to give masters to the world, is the brave army now encamped around us! And oh! what a contrast to the effeminate tyrants whom they

* Many others, led by the probability of the occurrence, had ventured a similar prophecy. "The event," says the philosophical Tacitus, "made us all very wise. After seeing Vespasian's elevation, we soon concluded it foretold by heaven by various presages." Even the Jewish prophecies, that the chief deliverer of nations should arise in Judea, were applied to Vespasian. M. Bossuet is indignant that Josephus the historian, a worshipper and priest of the true God, should have sanctioned this perversion of the Scriptures "Blind, blind indeed," he exclaims, "so to give away the hopes of Jacob and of Judah to strangers, by seeking the son of Abraham and of David in Vespasian, and ascribing to an idolatrous prince the title of him whose light was to convert the Gentiles from idolatry." Though Vespasian might affect to speak slightly of divination, he was a strict believer in it, even consulting a Jewish oracle upon Mount Carmel.
set up is offered by our General, who, with all the simplicity of the republican times, shares the hardships of his hardy legions, and mainly upholds that mighty empire, which is thus shamelessly and unlawfully played for by a set of debauched gamblers at Rome."

Josephus, who was diffuse of speech, and loved to hear himself talk, would have continued in this strain, but that Vespasian, reminding him these were no fit topics for soldiers to discuss, arose from table, and quitted the tent, to give orders to his army.

Aaron, on the night of the conversation we have recorded, betook himself to a tomb in the rocks, nearly opposite to the Gate of Ephraim, whence the projected sally was to be made; where he threw aside his robe and staff, and resumed his ordinary Jewish dress. Here he had not long remained, when he heard his countrymen crossing the narrow bridge over the Cedron, close to his hiding-place, betraying their progress by their confused cries for order and silence. He knew that the Romans were lying in ambush at a little distance, wishing to decoy their enemies as far as possible from the walls; and his conscience suddenly upbraiding him that, as he was in possession of this fact, it was treason towards his townsmen not to apprise them of the trap into which they were about to fall, he sallied forth, and informed the leaders of the party that their intended attack had been betrayed by a deserter. Instead of meeting the thanks he expected for this information, he was assailed with every opprobrious epithet, and angry exclamations of "Down with him! he is himself a spy, a deserter, and a Simonite! Strike the villain down!" This abuse was accompanied by several lances, which luckily whizzed past him without injury; but he received so severe a blow from a stone, that he found some difficulty in making his way back to the tomb, where he remained till the party had all passed. A pause ensued, but the tumultuous cries of the enraged Jews, and the furious clang and clash of battle, soon told him that they had fallen into the snare, in spite of which they still fought with their usual desperation. Single fugitives, however, presently began to hurry past him on their return, followed
by disordered parties, calling to the guard to open the
gates, one of which bands he closely followed, and passing
with them through the gate, quickly found himself once
more within the walls of Jerusalem.

His heart thrilled with exultation at having thus far
happily accomplished his object; and such was his habitual
reverence for the Holy City, that he could not refrain
from falling on his knees, thanking Heaven for his return,
and even kissing the very walls of the house beside which
he was kneeling. Fleeting, indeed, was this fervour and
self-gratulation; for roving bands of the opposed factions,
scouring the streets and striking at every passenger they
met, obliged him to provide for his personal safety, and to
defer for the present all thought of proceeding to his own
house. When the morning dawned, and the streets be-
came more quiet, he ventured forth from beneath the
portico of Helena's palace, where he had taken shelter,
and learnt with grief and dismay that Josephus's state-
ment was correct, and that the war within the walls was
still more furious and implacable than that which reigned
without.

In order to obtain admission into the upper town, where
his residence was situated, he was obliged to cross the
bridge thrown over the ravine at the back of the Temple,
and to declare himself of the faction of John of Gischala:
when the gate was opened, his name and address were
taken down, and he was suffered to pass.

With a throbbing heart he approached his own dwelling,
laid his hand upon the sacred inscription of the door-post,
pronounced the usual prayer, and knocked at the door,
which, after a considerable delay, and some previous
scrutiny from a window above, was opened by a lame
servant, named Zachary, who had lived many years with
him as an assistant in his trade. "Eli!" exclaimed the
old man, starting back in utter amazement, "it is Aaron,
my long lost master! Hosanna! Glory be to the Lord!
Mariamne! Mariamne! come forth, come forth, for Heaven
has sent back to us your long lost father! Oh, Aaron, my
master Aaron! how happy am I to see you once more!"

At these exclamations, the door of an inner apartment
was hastily thrown open, when the Jew's daughter, uttering a wild scream of joy as she beheld him, rushed forward, and sank speechless into his arms. This was a moment of ineffable tenderness and ecstasy that none but a parent can know, and the tears rolled down the father's cheeks and trickled upon his beard, as he enfolded his only child to his thrilling heart. Parental pride rendered his delight still more exquisite when he found leisure from his caresses to notice how much she had improved in personal appearance during his absence. Her large soft eyes of hazel, her redundant tresses of jetty black, her clear olive complexion, enriched with a peachy bloom, her timid bashful air, and her graceful form, combined, as Aaron fondly thought, every charm that could adorn a Jewish maiden in the vernal efflorescence of her beauty. He had already inquired for his wife Rebecca without receiving any reply; and as he now noticed for the first time that Mariamne was in mourning, he repeated the question with a misgiving soul. The silence and the fast-flowing tears of the daughter, together with the downcast looks and the deep sigh of Zachary, revealing to him the whole truth, he struck his hands together, exclaiming, "I see it all—I see it all! My faithful Rebecca is dead, the wife of my bosom is no more!"

When the first agitation of this affecting meeting had subsided, Zachary ventured to communicate to his master the tragic mode of Rebecca's death. A flaming Zealot, one of the faction of John of Gischala, becoming enamoured of Mariamne, had pretended to pay his addresses to her; but the mother, having discovered that he was already married, refused him admittance to the house when he next presented himself, and warmly upbraided him, from one of the open windows, for his treacherous designs upon her daughter. Stung to sudden rage by this exposure, the villain drew an arrow and shot her to the heart,—an act of atrocity that entailed a quick retribution, for he was himself killed on the following night, in a street encounter with some of the Simonites. Zachary drew a frightful picture of the state of the city, where there was no law, and no power to punish crime, however outrageous and
abominable; so that to preserve Mariamne, whose youth and beauty would have inevitably exposed her to the unbridled licentiousness of the Zealots and others, he had given out that she was dead, and had concealed her in a secret apartment at the back of the house, where she had remained a prisoner for many weeks past. Such, he added, was the prevailing effeminacy and luxury, even in the midst of general sickness, approaching famine, and incessant war, both within and without the city, that he had sold at advanced prices all the perfumes in the warehouse (for Aaron carried on the business of a druggist and perfumer), and had buried the money. More than once had the premises been ransacked by some of the marauding parties; but as they had discovered nothing worth carrying off, and imagined a lame and infirm old man to be the sole occupant of the house, they had not latterly molested him.

Bestowing the most fervent thanks upon Zachary for his prudence and fidelity, which he assured him should be abundantly rewarded, Aaron proceeded to make inquiry concerning his relatives and kinsmen, many of whom, he learned, had perished in the progress of the war, while some, having joined themselves to the adverse faction, were no longer to be encountered, except as enemies, and at the point of the sword. Almost overwhelmed with such a mass of dismal intelligence, the Jew retired to Mariamne's apartment, endeavouring, during the remainder of the day, to solace himself in some degree with the society of his beloved child. In the midst of so many causes of sorrow, he did not fail, however, when the other inmates of his house had withdrawn to rest, to proceed to the cellar and search for his buried gold, which he carefully counted over, and found, to his no small consolation, that not a single piece was missing. Aaron, it must be confessed, was a lover of money; but, in extenuation of his indulging this propensity at such a moment of public and domestic affliction, it must be remembered, that he not only reckoned upon this treasure for facilitating the escape which he already meditated, but as a means of ransom, should he be taken by an enemy, or of future support if he should be enabled to get clear away.
On the following morning he sallied forth to visit some of his surviving relatives, and obtain farther information of the state of the city: on which errand he had scarcely turned the corner of the street, when he heard himself called by name, and looking round beheld a strange figure, at once foppish and pharisaical, odoriferous with perfumes, mincing and effeminate in his gait, his hair and beard fantastic-ally curled and anointed, his face painted and rouged, and his hand, which had been carefully blanched with cosmetics and was richly decorated with rings, so placed beneath the descending points of his glossy black beard, as to display to the greatest advantage its own whiteness, and the brilli-ancy of its jewels. Notwithstanding this unmanly foppery of appearance, the creature wore a sanctimonious downcast look, uttering pious adjurations and scraps of prayer with a soft, affected, lisping voice, while ever and anon he applied a pouncet-box of myrrh and cassia to his nostrils, so that Aaron could not for a moment suspect that he was accosted by his kinsman Reuben, whom he had left, on his last departure from Jerusalem, a plain, homely, industrious, and swarthly brazier. No sooner had the latter made him-self known, than Aaron, starting back in amazement, inquired the cause of this marvellous transformation; and was told he should be fully satisfied if he would accompany his kinsman to his house, which was only in the next street. Thither he accordingly betook himself, and observed with increasing surprise that, although small, it was furnished with the luxury worthy of a Sybarite. Some pomegranate water cooled with snow was set before them, and the servants having withdrawn, Reuben proceeded to unfold the mystery, by declaring that he had joined the faction of the Zealots, and had attained some eminence among them, earnestly advising Aaron to unite himself to their party, and share their good fortune. Being freed in this confidential colloquy from the necessity of any hypocritical observances, Reuben now unblushingly avowed that nothing farther was required to constitute a Zealot than a profession of implicit faith in certain tenets and traditions, and an ostentation of ceremonial holiness; confessing that as the faction was paramount, and utterly irresponsible to any power, they
indulged themselves with perfect impunity in every description of pillage and bloodshed, and having the wealth of the city at their command, were enabled to wallow in whatever abomination was dictated by their unbridled passions.

Horrified as he was at this discourse, the prudent Aaron, reflecting upon the power and audacity of the Zealots, and not forgetting the fate of his unhappy wife, concealed his disgust, and even promised to take into consideration the proposal that had been made to him for an alliance with these miscreants. Nothing, however, could be farther from his thoughts; and a circumstance that occurred on the same morning completed his abhorrence of the whole faction, and his resolution to fly from Jerusalem with the least possible delay. As he walked towards the upper battlements, in company with Reuben, they proceeded for some little distance behind a female, whose hand his kinsman appeared to notice with a particular attention. Quickening his pace as she turned into an unfrequented street, Reuben overtook her, stabbed her to the heart with a dagger which he snatched from beneath his garment, and as she fell groaning to the ground, plucked from her finger a sparkling ring, which he very composedly put upon his own hand, and then returning leisurely to Aaron, offered him his arm that they might continue their walk together.

"Eli Elohim!" ejaculated the latter, utterly aghast; "What mean you by this unprovoked and horrid murder?"

"My good friend," lisped Reuben, applying the poun-
cet-box to his nose, "you may now see the advantage of being a Zealot. Some of our faction will not scruple to stab a female for a plain gold ring, or even for the chance of what they can find; but I swear to you, by the horns of the altar, that I would not have poniarded this worthy old lady had I not ascertained that her ring was of real diamond. Behold! saw you ever a prettier bauble? It is of the first water. Nay, look not thus piteous and petrified. My victim, as you may perceive, has crawled to a spot whence she can obtain a view of the Temple, in order that she may turn upon it her dying eyes. These
devotees require no other solace in death, and she ought, therefore, to thank me for having stabbed her where her last whim can be so easily indulged."

Fired with an irrepressible indignation at this monstrous atrocity, and still more at the levity with which it was treated, Aaron passionately inveighed against his kinsman as a heartless and diabolical assassin, and, bursting away from him, hurried back to his own house, in profound consternation and disgust. "Mariamne, my child, my child!" he exclaimed, as he pressed her to his bosom, "we must fly from this doomed and polluted den of wickedness, ten times deeper sunk in abomination than those execrable cities that the Lord overwhelmed with fire. He hath abandoned Jerusalem, and smitten its inhabitants with a judicial madness. Their reason is benighted, their hearts are hardened, they are given over to their evil passions, and Zion has become an arena where thousands of maniacs, like so many infuriated wild beasts, only seek to tear one another to pieces. Let us fly, let us fly, and seek a Zoar in the desert."

Fearful that Reuben the Zealot might wreak a speedy and sweeping vengeance for the abusive epithets that had been heaped upon him, Aaron was eager to seize the first possible opportunity of quitting the city,—a project which was by no means easy to be accomplished; but every hazard appearing preferable to a longer residence, he made immediate preparations for his flight, even though he could not decide upon the mode or time of attempting it. To secure his daughter, as far as possible, against the insults to which all females, especially the young and beautiful, were exposed, both from Jews and Romans, he disguised her in boy's clothes, and rolled up her hair beneath a wide-flapped hat, such as was usually worn by young choristers, intending that they should take their instruments with them, and assume the character of wandering musicians. He dug up his buried gold, concealing it about his person in the most effectual manner he could devise, and provided himself with a long rope, understanding that several of the inhabitants had recently got away by letting themselves down from the walls, under favour of the darkness.
The night that followed the completion of these arrangements being, from its dense obscurity, well adapted for the execution of his enterprise, he determined no longer to delay it. As he was afraid to make a confidant, even of his trusty servant Zachary, he waited till he was asleep, when he placed a letter upon his bed, informing him that, in reward of his fidelity, he left him half the gold which, during his absence, had been taken in exchange for the perfumes, and, proceeding to his daughter's apartment, helped to array her in her disguise; after which he coiled the rope around his arm, and passed stealthily forth with Mariamne, each having a musical instrument slung over the shoulder. Choosing the most unfrequented streets, they hurried silently onward towards the southern wall, all being hushed, and apparently buried in deep sleep in the narrow lanes through which they passed, though a confused sound of tumult and conflict, in some remote quarter of the city, occasionally fell upon their ears. Few passengers were abroad, and those whom they saw, being apparently as anxious as themselves to escape observation, they advanced, unmolested and unchallenged, to the bulwarks in the immediate vicinity of the Potter's Gate. In this part the walls were negligently guarded, their height being deemed a sufficient defence: but Mariamne's quick ear caught the sound of footsteps marching along the platform, and they both crouched down, till the sentinels, for such they were, had passed out of hearing, when they ventured up to the parapet. After feeling about for some little time—for nothing could be seen—Aaron discovered one of the rings used for securing the machines and arbalestis occasionally planted on the walls, to which he fastened his rope, having previously knotted it, to facilitate their descent. Though the height from the ground, at this point, was very considerable, he assured Mariamne that it was but trifling, and, as the darkness both favoured the deception, and prevented her being giddy, she unhesitatingly followed her father, and accomplished, with but little difficulty or trepidation, a hazardous feat, which, in the day-time, she would hardly have ventured to attempt. "Hosanna! praised be the Lord!" whispered Aaron in
his daughter's ear, as she reached the ground. "We are in the valley of Hinnom, and have thus far escaped in safety; but the greater danger remains, for we have yet to elude the Romans. Be silent, my child, nor let your footsteps be heard, if you can help it. Leave me to reply, should we be challenged; for I know the Roman tongue, and will desire to be conducted to our countryman Josephus, who has promised me his protection. Fortunate, however, will it be, if we can escape these Pagan sentinels altogether, some of whom have scrupled not to kill such fugitives as ourselves, for the sake of plundering them. Jehovah be our guide! Give me your arm, my child; this way, this way."

CHAPTER IV.

"Alas! my dearest Mariamne!" continued Aaron, still speaking in a whisper, "who would have ever thought that I should steal thus privily out of Jerusalem (for I will no longer term it the Holy City), and feel as happy as if I had escaped from a lion's den, or even from the horrors of Tophet? Do not tremble, my child, for you have two fathers to guard and watch over you: him, upon whose arm you are leaning, and another, all powerful to save, whose dwelling is in the heavens, and who can lead your footsteps in safety, even through this pitchy darkness, and the enemies that surround us on every side. Yonder faint gleam of light must be the pond of Solomon, and we should now have nearly reached the ruins of the Royal Baths, whence there are two roads; one winding by the Pigeon-house, to Mount Aceldama; the other leading behind the King's gardens, and the tomb of Absalom, across the Valley of Jehoshaphat, to Mount Olivet. The former, if we be not intercepted——" Aaron broke off suddenly; for an arrow whizzed past them, and the hoarse voice of the Roman sentinel, who had launched this
uncourteous messenger before he challenged them, was now heard, demanding who passed. At this moment they had reached the entrance of the ruins, into which Aaron and his daughter silently crept, and laid themselves down upon the ground, where they heard footsteps passing and repassing close to them, and caught the sound of several voices hailing and calling to one another. But, after a while, these alarming noises died away, and the fugitives, anxious not to lose the benefit of the darkness, again ventured from their hiding-place, and, bearing a little to the right, soon found the road leading to Mount Aceldama, which Aaron decided on selecting, believing it to be less strictly patroled by the enemy. Neither of the fugitives now spoke a word, not even in a whisper, and both carried their shoes in their hand, that their footfall might be inaudible; in which manner they advanced as rapidly as the darkness would permit, frequently appalled by the near sound of enemies, but without being intercepted, or a second time challenged, until they had the supreme satisfaction of finding that they had passed through the line of Roman piquets, and had gained the rugged summit of Mount Aceldama. "Blessed be Jehovah!" devoutly exclaimed Aaron. "Here, upon the summit of the Mount, should be the little pleasure-house of my friend Jabesh the potter, where we have often sat together, diverting ourselves with music, and gazing upon the beautiful prospect before us. What means this pale gleam of light? Surely it cannot yet be the dawn of day. See! it reveals to us the pleasant pavilion I spoke of: but alas! the overhanging trees that shaded and adorned it are all cut down, doubtless to make military engines for the besieging army. You are faint, my child; your footsteps falter: let us enter this once delightful, but now desolate, alcove, and rest ourselves awhile."

They did so accordingly; and, upon turning their eyes towards Jerusalem, discovered that the gleaming light they had noticed proceeded from a fire in the lower city. The distant sound of tumult which had reached their ears as they quitted their home, had been occasioned by a fierce conflict of the two factions in the neighbourhood of an
ancient fortified building, called Hezekiah’s House, into which one of the parties was ultimately driven, when their opponents, unable to dislodge them from that stronghold, and maddened by the animosity that then brutalised the population of Jerusalem, set fire to the structure. At first, the progress of the flames, restrained by the solidity of the building, was slow; but soon bursting through the impediment of the roof, they pierced the black sky with a lofty pyramid of fire, that threw a fierce and baleful glare upon the whole city, and the surrounding heights. Dismal, and yet magnificent, was the sight; to behold the fair and stately Temple, whose stupendous proportions gave it pre-eminence over every other object, illuminated by the blaze, which painted, with a red and angry light, Fort Antonia, Herod’s Palace, the Maccabee Columns, the Hippodrome of Agrippa, and all the public and private buildings of the city, rising amphitheatrically above one another as far as Mount Zion; while a pale and ghastly gleam, revealing the entrances of the Tombs in the rocky Valley of Jehoshaphat, threw a wan, glimmering lustre even upon the Roman camp upon the summit of Mount Olivet. Upon this latter spot, as well as upon the opposite Mount of Gihon, arms were seen flashing, soldiers forming, and engines moving downward, as if the enemy meant to take advantage of this moment of terror and distraction for making an attack upon the walls. While the entire city, with its temple, towers, battlements, and pillars, together with the sepulchres, valleys, and camp-crowned heights that encircled, and the sky that immediately overhung it, were thus conspicuous in the flame-coloured light, an enshrouding darkness closed around the whole scene at a little distance, like a black wall; imparting to it a still more unnatural and terrible appearance.

If, however, it could have been divested of its painful associations, there was so much frightful grandeur in the spectacle, that Aaron would not have turned away from its contemplation, had not Mariamne perceived that several of the wretched creatures enclosed in the burning house had ascended to the topmost parapet of a tower that remained unconsumed, and were leaping down from
that dizzy height, in the desperate hope of crushing some of their assailants while they destroyed themselves. At this appalling sight she groaned aloud, shut her eyes, and seizing her father's arm, exclaimed with a faltering voice and a palpitating heart, "Oh! let us pursue our flight, and descend into the opposite valley, where we may lose sight of all these horrors; for the sickness of the soul is worse than the fatigue of the body, and I feel that I shall faint if I am still to gaze on this appalling scene!"

"Let us speed away, then, my child, nor cast a look behind us. Lean upon me; and when you can no longer proceed, we will rest ourselves, under the best shelter we can find, until the morning breaks."

Marianne's agitation and fatigue not allowing her to continue her flight beyond the next valley into which they descended, her father led her to a goatherd's empty cabin, by the side of a little brook, where she might obtain rest at all events, and perhaps a little repose, while he mounted guard at the open entrance; for the door had been carried off. Exhausted by her long night march, she soon fell asleep; nor did she awake until the sun had long arisen over the mountains beyond Herodium, and gilded with its sloping beams the rivulet by the side of which she had been slumbering. Her dreams had presented to her burning cities, infuriated combatants, and all the cries and clamour of battle, so that she could hardly trust the evidence of her senses when, upon awaking in that strange place, she found herself in a green and silent valley, with no living objects near her, except her father, a goatherd at a little distance, and his straggling flock browsing around him; while not a sound disturbed the perfect stillness of the scene, except the gurgling of the water, and the occasional bleating of a goat. "Oh, my dear father!" cried Marianne, looking up to heaven in a grateful ecstasy, "how refreshing to the soul — how lovely — how delightful is this peace and tranquillity of nature, after we have so lately witnessed the mutual hatred and the frantic fury of our fellow-creatures! Dear to my heart as the Holy City has hitherto been, and deeply as I reverence
the Temple and its hallowed precincts, methinks I could henceforth be well content to pass my life in some such calm and delicious valley as this."

"It is still a pleasant and a placid spot, my child, but it has lost much of its beauty; for when last I visited it, the slopes were embellished with citrons and figs, and the heights crowned with mulberry, olive, and palm trees, of which nothing now remains but here and there a disfiguring stump. The vines, you see, are neglected and run wild, and yonder goats are browsing upon them, as if they were of no more value than the common herbage of the plain."

By this time the goatherd had approached, when Aaron pointed out to him the mischief his flock were doing; but the man urging that the vineyard had been abandoned by its owner, as not worth cultivating in the present disturbed state of the country, and that the Romans would assuredly gather whatever grapes it might spontaneously produce, observed that there could be no harm in fattening his goats with the leaves, and thus revenging himself upon the Pagans, one of whose foraging parties had already stolen a portion of his flock. His sons, he said, were stationed on the heights above to apprise him by a signal should an enemy appear, in which event he always drove his goats to some of the ravines and caves of the surrounding rocks, every glen and mountain pass being perfectly familiar to him, and thus contrived to save them. Aaron, not knowing when he might obtain a supply, had brought with him some provisions in a wallet, which, with the addition of a horn of goat's milk furnished by their companion, enabled the fugitives to recruit themselves with a comfortable breakfast. The banks of the brook were fringed with wild hyacinths, lilies, and tulips, which the bounteous hand of Nature still scattered around, regardless whether they were to be plucked by Jew or Pagan, friend or foe; and as Mariamne gazed upon their beauty, inhaled their odour, and listened to the lulling sound of the waters, and the cooing of the doves that still frequented the valley, though their sheltering trees had disappeared, her heart felt the soothing influence of the place, and she
almost forgot that she was a houseless wanderer in a land of violence and confusion.

From the information of the goatherd, they learned that the country to the north and east was infested with roving bands of wild Idumæans and fanatical peasants, from the distant provinces, and the borders of the Wilderness, who came up under pretext of succouring Jerusalem, but rather, if he might judge by their predatory habits, in the hope of participating in its plunder. To these were added troops of border Arabs, incited by the prospect of pillaging the Roman convoys, armed vagabonds from Cælo-Syria, banded vintagers, and oilpressers, thrown out of employment, and other lawless freebooters. This was disheartening intelligence to Aaron, who, having a kinsman at Jericho, had intended to betake himself thither; and as he reflected upon the dangers to which such a journey, short as it was, might expose his daughter in spite of her disguise, to say nothing of the risk incurred by his concealed shekels and maccabees, he almost regretted that he had not surrendered himself in the first instance to the Roman sentinels, and thus obtained access to his friend Josephus, who might have ensured him protection, whithersoever he went.

While they were conversing with the goatherd, a whistling sound was heard in the air, and an arrow passing over their heads, fell on the opposite slope of the valley, when the goatherd starting suddenly up exclaimed, "Eli! there is the signal arrow! It is from my son Malachi on the height of Gilead. Some enemy approaches. Away! away!"

With these words he collected his flock, and drove them hastily before him towards the rocky hills that shut in the narrow valley on the south-east. Aaron followed without delay, anxious to ensconce himself and his daughter in whatever hiding-place was chosen for the flock; and Mariamne, recruited by sleep and the refreshment she had taken, was fortunately enabled to keep up with her companions in their rapid flight. Scarcely had they hurried through an opening in the crags, when several horsemen appeared on the crest of the opposite ascent; and the shrill
sound of a trumpet, shivering over the startled valley, was sharply echoed from rock to rock, until it died away in distant bleatings, and all was again silent.

Huddled up, together with the goats, in a natural cavern, Aaron and his daughter awaited the return of the goatherd, who had stolen out to reconnoitre, but presently reappeared with the intelligence that the horsemen, having summoned by trumpet some stragglers who were lingering behind, had continued their route westward, and were already out of sight. "Had they discovered my flock, they would presently have dashed down into the valley, and I might chance to have been paid with an arrow or a lance, for the kids of which they eased me. If these straggling freebooters penetrate in this direction, where so little is now to be found, you may judge how numerous they must be in the fertile Toparchy of Jericho. However, they have seldom roamed of late so far as the Valley of Vines, and still farther east I believe the country to be quite clear of them."

Trusting to this information, Aaron resolved to avoid the high roads, to make a considerable detour to the east, and, if possible, find his way to Abila, where the Roman supplies and provisions, floated down the river Jordan from Scythopolis, were generally unladen, and forwarded under strong escorts to Jericho and Jerusalem. With one of these convoys he might travel to the former city, which being garrisoned by the Romans, would afford him a secure asylum, where, in the society of his kinsman, himself and his daughter might await the course of events, and the tranquillisation of Palestine. They found no reason to regret this determination as they travelled onward; for although the country became more stony and sterile, it seemed to be free from banditti of any sort, and its few inhabitants, mostly shepherds or vine-growers, had not deserted their cottages. Gathering around the travellers, they eagerly demanded news about the siege of Jerusalem, in which all seemed to be deeply interested, hospitably affording shelter and a portion of their rustic fare in return for the ballad of the brave Maccabee brothers, the triumph of Gideon over the Midianites, the battle of David with
Goliath the giant, and other national songs which Aaron and his daughter sang to the accompaniment of their instruments. The former sometimes solicited two or three gerahs in addition, which he deposited in his girdle, observing to Mariamne that this trifling booty, confirming the notion of their poverty, might perchance induce a robber to forego any farther search. Plausible as this pretext may appear, we cannot positively assert that it constituted his sole motive; for the smallest coin possessed attraction in the eyes of Aaron, who was in the habit of quoting a thrifty truism, equivalent to our English saying, that "a penny saved is a penny got."

In this manner they pursued their way without molestation or adventure, in the direction of Abila, till, on the approach of the second evening, taking, by mistake, an eastward path instead of the northern one, which they ought to have followed, they found themselves bewildered among dark and frowning rocks, whose angular projections, sometimes impending over the narrow ravine, along which they were painfully toiling, were gradually denuded of vegetation, and at length in their naked blight and sterility seemed to frown upon them menacingly, as if to bar their progress, or to warn them that they were proceeding at their peril. Every thing around had been burned and scorched by an unrelenting sun, the light calcined dust thrown up by their feet penetrated into their eyes and nostrils, the hot, sickly air became intolerably oppressive, and no object was to be seen, but bare rocks interspersed with patches of sand, of which the surface was so level, that they looked like pools of yellow water.

Not only was Mariamne exhausted with fatigue, but her heart was saddened with the fearful dreariness of the scene, and there was a melancholy misgiving in the expression of her soft hazel eye, as she bent it upon her companion, exclaiming, "Surely, surely, dearest father, we must have mistaken our way; for we have long lost all traces of a footpath, and this dreary wilderness can never lead us, as we were told, to the pleasant village of Ramah-Succoth, where we were to pass the night."

"Indeed, my child, I fear we must have wandered from
the right track; but I know not how to recover it; these rocky ravines, intersecting one another in all directions, form a perfect maze, and prevent all possibility of retracing our steps, so that we must even continue our course till we emerge from the defiles; when, if we have sufficient daylight left, we may perchance obtain a view of some village in the open country."

In this hope he pressed forward, urging Mariamne to exert her strength to the utmost; but the craggy wilds becoming still more forlorn and desolate, presented their jagged outlines and chaotic masses in what appeared to be an interminable succession. Through their abrupt openings the setting sun cast, every now and then, a fierce suffocating ray, lighting up the opposite acclivities and a portion of the glowing ravine with an almost crimson flash, that imparted an additional obscurity to the sombre shades on either side. Still our travellers held on in their course, wearily indeed, but without any increase of despondence: for Aaron cheered his daughter with the remark, that even if they were obliged to pass the night in some of the cavernous openings which they had observed, they would have nothing to fear, either from robbers or wild animals; since the deep, total silence of that dreary desert led him to infer that it was alike unvisited by man or beast, or even by the tenants of the air. As the sun rapidly declined, crowning with a diadem of fire the summit of the loftier ridges, our travellers sought shelter in a narrow chasm, arched over at top, intending to compose themselves to sleep, as best they might, and at all events to remain there till the morning. The intense darkness that instantly succeeded the disappearance of the sun, and the profound silence that reigned around them, were favourable to repose; but Mariamne's anxious fears lest they might become inextricably entangled in that dismal solitude, and so perish for want of sustenance, kept her awake, and she conversed eagerly with her father to dissipate the oppressive weight of the silent, forlorn wilderness that surrounded her.

While they were thus discoursing, the moon rose above the rock in which they were ensconced, throwing such bright lights and deep shades upon the fantastic crags
before them, that their confused masses seemed to be alternately compounded of ivory and ebony, or rather to resemble the lighted billows of the ocean. Aaron, still cherishing a notion that they would emerge from this mountain pass upon the neighbourhood of Ramah-Succoth, asked his daughter whether she felt sufficiently strengthened by the rest she had taken to resume their journey; and, upon her answering in the affirmative, they quitted the chasm, and advanced in the same direction as before, Mariamne shrinking from the sound of her own voice, as if it were irreverent to break the deep solemn silence of night and nature. Soon, however, she noticed with satisfaction that they began to descend, and that the rocks gradually diminished in height, whence she concluded that they would shortly come upon the open country. This they did even sooner than they expected, suddenly finding themselves upon a rugged slope that shelved down to a vast mass of waters, dimly gleaming with a sickly yellow lustre, and shut into their dungeon by wild haggard precipices on every side. "Shield and protect us, O Jehovah Tsebaioth!" ejaculated Aaron, stopping short, and arresting his daughter by the arm, "I know where we are now, and we must, indeed, have wandered far to the eastward; for lo! my child, the waters before us are the dread Lake Asphaltitis, the spot upon which once stood the five accursed cities of the Canaanites that were destroyed with fire: and see! — behold — mark you not yonder pale column, sending its dreary shadow down to the water's edge? It is the Pillar of Salt, into which Lot's wife was turned for her disobedience!" *

Although this frightful lake was within a trifling distance of Jerusalem, it was rarely visited by any of the Israelites, not only on account of its desolate and revolting character, but from the fear-fraught associations connected with it. It was considered sinister and ominous, almost profane, to intrude wantonly upon a spot which Heaven had smitten with such a terrible vengeance, and, cursing it with irremediable sterility, had condemned it to everlasting

* Speaking of this miraculous column, Josephus says, "I have seen it myself, and it remains to this day." — Jewish Antiq. book i.
execration and solitude. Participating fully in this general feeling, the hearts of the travellers thrilled with fear and awe as they gazed upon the Dead Sea, wearing a ghastly hue in the wan light of the moon, and lying, as it were, in a sepulchre of rocks, with the silence and loneliness of death all round about it. Not a breath of air was felt; not a wave rippled; the whole mass looked like molten copper; not a blade of grass grew upon the shore, or upon the rocks; no object moved—no sound was heard. Something terrific hung over the spot, as if Nature, in this scene of desolation, had suffered a violent and dreadful death, and presented to the spectator her ghastly corpse. Even the moonlight assumed a sickly tone; the rocks took hideous and appalling shapes; and the spectral column of salt, with all its dread reminiscences, completed the portentous and withering solemnity of the scene. For a while Aaron and his daughter remained immoveable, grasping one another, and gazing before them with a mingled reverence and fear which, almost suspending their breath, became still more intense when dark masses of bituminous matter, somewhat resembling human bodies, slowly upheaved themselves from the waters, and exploded with a noise resembling dismal groans. So startling and mysterious was the aspect of these apparitions, so appalling the unearthly sound they emitted, that Mariamne, in an agitated whisper, entreated her father to return immediately amid the rocks. To this proposal he willingly acceded, observing that they might pass the night in some such sheltered nook as that to which they had previously betaken themselves; and that, as he now knew the bearings of the country, he had no doubt they would be easily enabled to find Ramah-Succoth in the morning.

A recess, tolerably well adapted to their purpose, was soon discovered; and the wayworn travellers, having first committed themselves to the protection of Heaven, at length sank to sleep. Mariamne's slumbers, however, were disturbed by a hideous dream, suggested doubtless by the scene she had so lately witnessed. She imagined herself to be standing once more upon the borders of the Dead Sea, at the bottom of which, so transparent were the waters,
she could plainly distinguish the five submerged cities, their towers, temples, palaces, and dwelling-houses, all seathed and blackened by the avenging fire that fell from Heaven. From the ruined portals of these buildings, spectres and skeletons, wearing the garb of kings, priests, nobles, and others, came forth in ghastly procession, and, floating upward to the surface of the waters, groaned with sepulchral voices a prayer to Heaven, imploring a remission of the pangs they were still suffering. To Mariamne's fancy this scene did not present itself at moonlight, but in the face of day. The sun, however, appeared to throw over the lake and its encircling rocks a dull baleful glare as of an eclipse; all nature seemed to stand aghast and horror-stricken; the groans of the phantom figures poured into her ear, and fell upon her heart with a harrowing loudness; and, as she turned her eyes aside towards the margin of the sea, the pillar of salt heaving and rocking, as if slowly animated with life, gradually assumed a distorted human form, upstretched its petitioning arms to the sky, and uttered a shriek of anguish that seemed to pierce, as if with a sharp instrument, the very nerve of the sleeper's ear.

The cry of terror with which Mariamne instantly responded to this fearful creation of her dream, awoke both herself and her father, to whom she related the cause of her agitation, still trembling vehemently, and clinging to him for protection. Some time elapsed before she could again compose herself; but she at length sank into sleep, and her slumbers remained unbroken till the morning.

CHAPTER V.

With the first beams of the rising sun our bewildered travellers were afoot, and pressing eagerly forward in a north-easterly direction; for as they had exhausted their little store of provisions, and began to suffer both from
hunger and thirst, they feared they might still perish, if they could not speedily extricate themselves from the parched and sterile labyrinth that environed them. With an anxiety proportioned to the urgency of their need, did they search in every direction for a pool or spring; but it was not until the afternoon that they discovered a little natural cistern at the foot of a rock, formed by the dripping water that oozed from a cleft in its side, and which the shade of the crag had kept so cool, that as the weary and heated wayfarers knelt beside the brink, and quaffed the refreshing element, it seemed to them the most acceptable and delicious beverage they had ever tasted. Recreated in body, and encouraged in mind, they now pursued their way with fresh ardour; nor was it long before they noticed a manifest improvement in the character of the scenery. The diminishing rocks exhibited here and there patches of vegetation, shrubs and plants again began to clothe the ground; they crossed a narrow ravine dotted with wild fig-trees, and at length, through an opening in the defile, saw that they were immediately about to emerge upon an open and fertile country, which Aaron instantly recognised as part of the Toparchy of Jericho, though he feared that they must have wandered far away from the village of Ramah-Succoth.

While they were congratulating each other on the prospect of a speedy deliverance, and indulging the hope that they should soon join their kinsman at Jericho, where they might at length enjoy security under the protection of the Romans, they heard the lowing of a camel, and, on gazing in the direction of the sound, beheld a straggling band of wild-looking armed men, accompanied by camels, asses, and cattle, winding down an opposite declivity that led to the gorge along which they themselves were passing. Well knowing the lawless character and predatory habits of such rovers, Aaron would have willingly avoided them; but he saw that he had been noticed by the leaders of the party, and not wishing to betray any appearance of mistrust, he desired Mariamne to prepare her instrument, and accompany him in a tune that might support their character of wandering musicians, when he advanced with a great show,
though little feeling of confidence, towards the foot of the declivity. Had he not thought too much of the perils incurred by his disguised daughter and concealed gold, to be in any frame of mind for admiring the picturesque, he could hardly have failed to be struck with the appearance of the band as they descended the rocky heights down a precipitous slope, along which they were obliged to pick their way with great caution; the bright hues of their garments, as they flaunted and fluttered in the breeze, making the naked crags look as gay as if they had been embroidered with wild flowers. Although, upon a nearer approach, the greater part of this motley crew were found to be in rags, their tatters, which were of the gaudiest colours, in combination with their spears, bows and arrows, their fragments of rude armour, the marked swarthy physiognomies of the dusty, sunburnt assemblage, and the train of asses, cattle, and ragged camels that followed them, laden with women and plunder, imparted to the whole a singularly pictorial appearance, puzzling at first their present spectators to determine whether they were a troop of banditti, or a tribe of wandering Idumæans seeking some new allotment.

Gathering around the musicians, the foremost of the party began eagerly to question them; but neither Aaron nor his daughter could comprehend a syllable of the barbarous tongue addressed to them. They continued their strain, therefore, without intermission; and as music, the universal language, needs not, fortunately, the aid of an interpreter to communicate its unrestricted delights, the marauders,—for such in sooth they were,—helping some of their females to dismount from the asses and camels, struck up an animated but somewhat disorderly dance, adapted to the merry strain that the minstrels were playing. The timid Mariamne, frightened by the gaunt figures of the half-clothed men, whose fierce looks not even their present pastime could subdue, and recoiling from the over-bold gestures of the female dancers, plied her instrument with downcast eyes and a nervous vehemence; while her father assumed a cheerful aspect, and made a show of enjoying the sport, trusting, at all events, to be suffered to pass
unmolested when they had completed their dance, and not without hope that some of these reckless freebooters, who generally scattered their plunder as freely as they seized it, might toss him a prize of some sort in return for his tune.

In the midst of this scene the captain or commander, who brought up the rear of the straggling party, emerged from the rocks, mounted on a handsome camel, which was decked with showy housings, a necklace of beads, and a profusion of coloured bells at its ears. He was an elderly man, whose grave phlegmatic look and adust complexion set off to advantage the fairer features of the wife or mistress that sat behind him—a young bright-eyed girl, of an arch and vivacious expression, evidently anxious to jump from her seat and join the dancers, though she feared to take such a liberty without the permission of her lord. Her head, however, and indeed her whole body, involuntarily swayed to and fro in accordance with the music, jingling, as it moved, the little coins profusely appended to her dark locks, and the various trinkets with which her figure was bedizened. Her male companion gazed upon the dancers with a calm and even good-tempered look, but in perfect silence, until they paused to take breath, when he addressed Aaron in broken Hebrew, complimenting him on his performance, and expressing his conviction that such expert musicians would never be allowed to pass unrewarded, but must have reaped a good harvest, especially as the crop they gathered was independent of wind, weather, and war. Thrown off his guard by the sordid hope of obtaining a handsome recompence, Aaron incautiously replied that this conjecture was not altogether unfounded; as few were so ungenerous as not to bestow upon him a demishekel of silver, while he had earned upon more than one occasion a golden maccabee.

"I guessed as much," said the bandit with a tranquil smile: "for myself, I possess neither shekels nor maccabees; but, as I am a general collector of coins, I would fain ease you of some of these Hebrew curiosities. What ho! you panting fellows, that have been dancing till you are half melted, toss me up this vagabond's girdle, and
search his person, that I may see what his music has been worth in these unmusical times."

The parties to whom this order was addressed set about their commission with such alacrity, that the Hebrew's girdle was twitched off in a moment, and thrown up to their commander on the camel, who proceeded to scrutinise its contents, without altering a muscle of his face, or testifying the smallest emotion of any sort. Nor had its owner betrayed any very vehement disinclination to part with it, knowing its contents to be of trifling value, and hoping that his quiet surrender of this small booty might save him from further search; an expectation, however, in which he proved to be grievously mistaken.

"Examine his garments closely," said the chieftain to his men; "for I find here neither the silver shekels nor the golden maccabees of which our good friend made mention, and he looks too much like an honest man to be capable of deceiving me."

Our musician having now fallen into the hands of riflers who, where plunder was concerned, were not very liable to be baffled in the exercise of their functions, soon saw that his cherished treasure, in spite of the art with which he had concealed it, stood not the smallest chance of eluding detection. This being like a wound in the very apple of his eye, he was rendered so desperate by the anticipated loss of his hoard, that he resisted, struggled, and finally knocked down one of the men who had just placed his hand upon the prize. If he trusted to the hitherto placid demeanour of the chieftain for his overlooking this act of audacity, he quickly rued his error; for the apparently phlegmatic old man, suddenly exploding into fire and fury, like a flash of gunpowder, leaped from his camel with inflamed features, plucked a dagger from his belt, and struck instantly at Aaron, though with so hasty an aim that it only wounded him in the shoulder. Again had he raised his weapon to inflict a more deadly blow, when Mariamne, frightened out of her timidity, uttered a loud shriek, clung to his uplifted arm, and, having all her energies braced to an unusual vigour by the imminent peril of her father, held the assailant fast, in spite of his utmost efforts to
disengage himself. At the instant that, exhausted by her struggles, she was on the point of relaxing her convulsive grasp, a horn was sounded from one of the heights that overhung the gorge, making the air shudder with a blast so loud and dread, that even the supine camels and inert asses started, and pointed their ears in the direction of the sound. Thither also did the infuriated bandit and his crew instinctively turn their eyes, when they beheld upon the crest of an adjacent eminence a bearded figure, of commanding height, brandishing a long wand in his right hand, which he pointed at them, while he called out to them at the same time, in a voice of thunder, to forbear from violence and bloodshed.

"It is the Prophet Hadad!" said the chieftain, with an abashed and awe-stricken look: "if I disobey him, the spell of an evil genius will be upon us and upon our cattle, and we shall share no plunder for many moons. Forward, soldiers!—march! This vagabond at my foot has tasted my dagger pretty nearly to its hilt; and, should he live to encounter me again, I will settle finally with him for daring to resist me. On! on! and quickly; for the Prophet is pointing his rod at the sky, and may bring down the thunder if we still remain in his sight." So saying, he impatiently motioned his band forward, and urging his camel at the same time, the whole party hurried into the rocky defile, and presently disappeared.

From the violence of the blow he had received, Aaron had fallen to the ground, where he remained unable to rise; while Mariamne, whose struggles had been succeeded by a temporary dereliction of her powers, lay panting by his side, half insensible, and utterly unable to assist him. Staunching his wound as well as he could with the skirt of his garment, the Hebrew propped himself up against a crag, and gazing mournfully around, almost gave himself up for lost when he considered the forlorn nature of his situation. So suddenly had he been brought into his present perilous predicament, that the change almost confused his senses. But a brief space had elapsed since himself and his daughter had been pacing along a voiceless solitude: merry strains of music, boisterous laughter, and the
jocund dance had succeeded; all had evanished away like a vision, and he was now left alone in the silent craggy wilderness, bleeding from a wound which might perhaps prove mortal, his daughter extended powerless upon the ground, and little chance of their obtaining help or succour. Even if he could raise his voice to implore it, there was no one to hear him; Mariamne was not in a condition to seek for aid; they might both perish long before any passenger would present himself in those unfrequented wastes. With a feeble voice he pronounced the name of his child, but she spake not — moved not; and the disconsolate parent, fearing that she might have received some fatal wound or injury in the scuffle with the bandit, groaned aloud, shut his eyes, and abandoned himself for some minutes to all the bitterness of despair.

From this stupor of grief and exhaustion he was aroused by hearing the sound of footsteps, when a ray of hope electrified his heart; and, gazing eagerly upward, he saw approaching him the same bearded figure whose menacing gestures and stentorian voice had scared the bandit from his fell purpose, even when his dagger had been uplifted to strike. In the present crisis of the Hebrew's fate, any human visitant would have been hailed as a sort of guardian angel: a feeling which the stranger who now stood before him was calculated to awaken, notwithstanding the strangeness of his attire. Although his proportions were not so large as they had first shown when he crowned the projecting crest of the opposite eminence, his figure was of superior height. In spite of his beard, it was manifest that he was in the very prime and vigour of manhood; his comely features expressed intelligence and benignity, saddened, however, by an evident touch of melancholy. On his head he wore the tall conical cap of black lambs' wool, which the Persians, asserting it to have been introduced among them by the first Cyrus, retain unaltered to the present day: a large ram's-horn was suspended from his neck; flowing robes invested his limbs; in his hand he carried a long wand, painted over with mysterious figures and devices.

"Hosanna! you are welcome, stranger," murmured
Aaron,—"even as was the voice from Heaven to Hagar and Ishmael when they were perishing in the desert. Help, oh help me! or I shall bleed to death! and, for the love of Heaven! afford some quick succour to my daughter, who lies fainting beside me."

"Your daughter! your son, you would say, if you mean this poor youth extended upon the ground," replied the stranger, speaking the Hebrew tongue with the fluency of a native. "Your apprehensions are disturbed by pain or terror. See, the boy is already reviving, he seems to be unhurt. Peace be with you! be of good cheer, my friend— and let me examine your wound, which may not be so dangerous as you fear." With these words he proceeded to remove Aaron's garment, not without some wincing and repugnance on the part of the latter, who no sooner saw succour at hand, than, beginning once more to tremble for the gold which he had concealed under his arm, he made the pain of his wound a pretext for uncovering it himself. "The villain's weapon has passed through your shoulder in a sloping direction," said the stranger, "so that you will have little to apprehend if we can staunch the bleeding, which I hope to effect without difficulty; for I am neither unpractised nor unskilled in the treatment of wounds." Detaching his own girdle, he wound it tightly round Aaron's shoulder in the form of a bandage, which completely answered its purpose, and had scarcely been accomplished, when Mariamne reviving, and gazing up with a bewildered looked exclaimed,

"Oh, my dear father! where am I? methought I saw you wounded: was it a dream? Oh, no, no, no! for your garments are stained with blood; Heaven shield and protect you from farther harm! Alas! I am sick and faint, and every thing swims before mine eyes."

She would have relapsed into insensibility, but that the stranger, drawing a cordial from the folds of his robe, poured some of it down her throat; and as her weakness proceeded from inanition, not less than from agitation, its restorative effects were almost immediate, enabling her quickly to recover her speech, and to express renewed and eager alarm for her father's safety.
"Dismiss your fears, my good youth," said the stranger; "your parent will do well; his wound bleeds no more, and with the aid of this cordial, which has proved so beneficial to yourself, I doubt not that he will be able to walk to my hermitage in the rocks, which is not far distant, and where, though I can offer but rude accommodation, I can promise you rest, sustenance, and safety, till you are enabled to pursue your journey."

So far was the stranger from having overrated the effects of his restorative, that Aaron, shortly after having swallowed a portion of it, declared himself strong enough to proceed, provided he could have the assistance of his companion's arm. This was readily tendered, his daughter supported him on the other side, and thus they slowly proceeded; the wounded man talking at intervals with his conductor, whose figure and demeanour, not less than the character of Prophet assigned to him by the bandit, and the instant mysterious influence he had exercised over so fierce a desperado, filled him with an undefined reverence and wonder. Though Mariamne had not yet sufficiently recovered her self-possession to mingle in the conversation, her thoughts were not less actively employed than those of her parent, upon their recent adventure, and the singular appearance and deportment of their deliverer. Much sooner than they had expected they came to the extremity of the defile, where it opened upon, and commanded an extensive view of, the level country, the surpassing beauty of which not even the devastations of war had been able to disfigure. On the right of them they could distinguish the gleaming waters of the Jordan, its course revealed by the verdure that enlivened, and the palms and cedars that shaded its banks: before them at a distance were seen the white walls and lofty towers of Jericho; and the trees not having been cut down for warlike machines, as in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, the whole intermediate space, though much of it had been suffered to run wild, presented the appearance of a rich continuous garden. So fertile was the soil of this happy plain, that the palms and other trees yielded fruit of a superior size and flavour; the genuine balsam, so rare elsewhere, was here found in abun-
dance; nard, frankincense, myrrh, the most precious drugs, and the finest flowers sprang spontaneously from the soil; many of the plants yielded vegetable honey, while that which was supplied by the bees was more copious and exquisite than in any other district of Judæa. Springs and fountains were abundant, and the water drawn from them before sunrise had always been celebrated for its salutiferous coolness. As our travellers skirted the rock, a refreshing breeze wafted towards them such pleasant though faint music of birds and bees, together with such balsamic odours, that even the wounded Aaron, and the previously exhausted Mariamne, feeling the invigorating influence of the air, walked forward with diminished difficulty.

“We have not far to go—and here are some of my household come to welcome you,” said the stranger, as two large dogs ran bounding and barking towards him. “These are my friends, true, honest, cordial friends, whose services, neither springing from the hope of reward nor the fear of punishment, constitute the sole disinterested attachment that is to be found in this hollow and deceitful world. Their fidelity, you will perhaps tell me, is but a blind instinct; and that, whatever be their merits, they are but irrational brutes. So much the better. What is our boasted reason but an ignis fatuus that betrays us into quagmires and pitfalls? when, if we had grovelled onward in the dark, there was at least a chance of our stumbling upon the right path? It seems to have been given to us for its abuse rather than its use: and the former is so much more mischievous than the latter is beneficial; the best things, when perverted, become so much the worst, that what was perhaps intended for a blessing becomes our direst curse. Reason! it is the very bane of human enjoyment. When are we happy? When it is drowned in wine or madness; happier still when it is quenched in sleep; happiest of all when it is extinguished in death.”

The speaker uttered a deep sigh; but Aaron made no answer to his lugubrious effusion, being more anxious to obtain rest, sustenance, and farther succour for himself and his child, than to enter upon such speculations. “Oh! my companions and playfellows by day,” resumed the
stranger, addressing and fondling the dogs as they leaped joyfully around him, "my watchmen and guards by night, ever ready to lay down your lives in my defence, and unalterable by all the mutabilities of fortune, I am alike secured against your adulation, should I again taste prosperity, and relieved from all fear of your treachery and desertion, even were my adversity become ten times more sharp and desolate than it is at present. Of what human being, selecting the rarest and worthiest of his race, could I justly say as much? Oh! who would give his heart to perfidious woman? Oh! who would form a friendship with selfish and faithless man, when he might bestow his affections upon creatures so much superior as these honest, intelligent, and incorruptible dogs? You will excuse me, travellers, if my discourse appear little complimentary to yourselves, and even to our common nature; but I should have used still harsher terms had I spoken of my fellow-creatures as I have found them. Doubt not, however, my good offices, because I show little reverence, though more than they deserve, for my own species. I would treat my brethren — I feel humiliated in calling them such — rather according to my conviction of what they ought to be, than to my experience of what they are; and the very shame of sharing their heartless vices, will, I hope, ever preserve me from committing them."

The look of the speaker was in accordance with the sentiment he uttered, for it bore a somewhat haughty and bitter expression, which he retained for some minutes as he went forwards in silence, apparently communing with sad and indignant thoughts, until they reached the foot of a rugged lofty crag, when he turned to his companions, exclaiming —

"Now, my friends, you must put forth your remaining strength; the worst part of our task remains to be accomplished; for my hermitage, or rather my eagle's nest, is of difficult access, and we must continue to climb until we reach it. Lean upon me, for I know where to get the securest footing; and mine, moreover, is a strength that is not soon exhausted. Follow in our steps, good youth, but
beware that you slip not, for a fall here might incapacitate you from ever rising."

Thus supported, and occasionally stopping to take breath, Aaron, though not without efforts that occasioned his wound to bleed afresh, at length gained the summit, followed by Mariamne, when, upon turning an angle of the rock, they beheld, facing towards the east, a natural grotto, or rather a succession of arched openings in the rock, some of which penetrated so deeply that their extremities were lost in darkness. To the no small surprise of the travellers, they observed in front of these recesses a lawn, bordered with plantations, sloping down to a terrace on the edge of a precipice that overhung the plain, of which it commanded a magnificent view, including the windings of the river Jordan amid groves and thickets, the mountains beyond it, and the rocks among which it was lost on its approach to the Dead Sea. Upon the lawn, as well as upon the crags above the grotto, were scattered goats, several of which ran bleating up to their master, and appeared to be upon a not less familiar and friendly footing with him than his dogs; while doves, thickly perched above and within the arches, imparted, by their cooing sounds of welcome, a pleasant character of peace and home to the recesses of the rock.

"Here is my abode," said the stranger, ushering them into the largest cavern; "it possesses few of the comforts and none of the luxuries of life, unless I may include, as the greatest of all luxuries, safety and independence, which my poverty secures to me. I have disarmed as well as I could the cupidity, violence, and evil passions of my fellow-creatures, by offering to them no temptation. To be rich is to be at open war with mankind, and to be the slave of fear. Your beggar alone is independent; he may live in peace, and feel himself to be the master of the world—for he who wants nothing possesses every thing. Diogenes was greater than Alexander, for he wanted no new world to conquer. Look at the wild Arab; is he not more free, more virtuous, more happy, than the degraded victim of what is falsely termed civilisation?"

Thus speaking, he passed on into the darkness of the
grotto, whither Aaron and Mariamne followed, groping their way with some hesitation, until they reached an interior and larger cavern, lighted by a fissure that opened to the surface of the rock. Around this vault rude seats had been scooped, the centre being thrown by nature into the semblance of a table, which was presently covered with an inviting collection of fruits and honey, to which was added water that had never seen the sun, pure as crystal, and of an exquisite coolness. Our half-famished wayfarers needed no second invitation to partake of this welcome repast; at the conclusion of which their host again examined Aaron's wounded shoulder, dressed it afresh, and applied to it a balsam which produced an almost immediate effect in allaying the pain.

"I told you that I was no inexpert practitioner in the healing art," said the stranger; "I am the Æsculapius of the whole surrounding district, and as such I prescribe that you should swallow a composing syrup of my own prescription, and immediately retire to rest, which the pain of your wound will not then, I trust, prevent you from obtaining; nor will your son, if I may judge from his jaded looks, be sorry to enjoy once more the great restorative of nature. Fatigue must minister to your sleep, not the luxuries of your dormitory; it will be humble and rude enough, but it is the best I have to offer."

With these words he conducted them to an interior cell, small and dark, but perfectly dry, and thickly strewn with mingled wool and leaves, when, having poured out a modicum of syrup into a shell, and handed it to his guests, he pronounced the Hebrew benediction, "Hosanna! peace be with you!" and withdrew.

In spite of their fatigue, the Hebrews whispered together for some time on the nature of their adventure, and the probable character of their host, until Mariamne became overpowered by sleep. Notwithstanding the assurances he had received to the contrary, the pain of her father's wound kept him awake for a tedious space; but he at length sank to repose, and his slumbers, influenced by the opiate he had taken, were deep and heavy. Awakened at an early hour of the following morning by a loud noise,
they both started up, when, to their no small surprise, they beheld the stranger removing a barricade of boards, with which he had apparently fastened them into their cell.

"I make no apology for having thus imprisoned you," he said in a sharp and altered tone of voice, "since I did it to preserve you from your own evil passions. There is such a zest in ingratitude, the temptation of injuring a benefactor is so irresistible, that I knew not whether you could withstand it. Had ye been wild beasts, I could have trusted you; but ye are human beings, and must obey the ferocious impulses of your nature. Come forth; eat, drink, depart from me in safety, and though I have, at least for the present, prevented you from harming your preserver, you have the consolation of knowing that I cannot hinder you from hating me. And, sooth to say, perhaps you ought to do so; for have I not prolonged for you the misery of life?"

Nothing could exceed the astonishment of the Hebrews at this singular address, especially as they noticed, upon coming into the light, that the speaker's countenance, having lost much of its previous expression, had become clouded with a stern suspicious air. Mariamne was abashed and silent; but Aaron indignantly repelled the imputations levelled against them, declaring that they were incapable of returning evil for good, that they felt and should ever cherish a proper sense of the inappreciable service bestowed upon them, but that, since they had become objects of jealousy and suspicion, they would instantly withdraw, however unfitted he felt himself for travelling, rather than occasion a moment's uneasiness to their benefactor.

"Unfit for travelling!" said the stranger, his splenetic mood relaxing no less suddenly than it had been engendered, as he fixed his eye upon Aaron's arm, which hung helpless by his side, "I forgot to inquire concerning your wound."

"It pains me severely; I cannot move my arm in any direction; I am even weaker than I was yesterday; and, notwithstanding my loss of blood, I fear that I shall have to struggle with an angry fever."

"Indeed, I fear so too," exclaimed the stranger, after
having felt his pulse; "I like not these symptoms," he continued in a milder tone, while his countenance softened into a compassionate expression; "you are in no plight to travel, and you must not yet quit your asylum. Future ingratitude on your part cannot excuse the want of present charity on mine. You may not deserve my good offices: be it so; they are due to myself, though they may not be merited by you."

Nettled as he was by this sarcastic kindness, Aaron, feeling how much he depended upon his host, made no reply, but suffered himself to be conducted to the larger grotto, where they breakfasted upon herbs, fruits, and goat's milk; after which, the stranger applied to his wounded guest such remedies as his case seemed to require, told him that he was obliged to go down into the plain to adjust a dispute between two hostile tribes, desired him to consider himself his inmate until he should be perfectly recovered; and descending the lawn in front of the Hermitage, let himself down into the plain by means of a rope, fastened to the edge of the precipice.

CHAPTER VI.

Well might the stranger say that he liked not the symptoms of Aaron's fever, for it quickly assumed a malignant form; and when, by the skill and attentions of his host, and the affectionate sedulity of his daughter, who was indefatigable in nursing him, he appeared sufficiently recovered to prosecute his journey, two successive relapses again laying him prostrate on the bed of sickness, compelled him to remain an inmate of the Hermitage. During this protracted residence, although our Hebrews became necessarily more intimate with their host, neither of them could make any progress in fathoming his real character; which, indeed, appeared to present a compound of inconsistencies. Moody and splenetic when the bitter-
ness of his spirit predominated, he would pour forth the most cynical invectives upon the whole human race; and if Aaron’s amended health seemed to allow his safe departure, he would bid him begone, not always without some rude taunt and sarcasm, anticipating his ingratitude, and defying his treachery. Yet, when he marked the pale attenuated features of the convalescent, as he prepared to obey this stern mandate, and noticed the anxiety and alarm of Mariamne, lest her parent’s strength should prove unequal to the fatigues of travel, he would suddenly relent, apologise for his harsh expressions, and entreat them to continue his guests. Even in his more gentle moods, however, he could not always refrain from sneering at the ordinary motives of human action.

“You are blessed, indeed,” he exclaimed to Aaron, “in possessing such a son as Micah (the name assumed by the disguised Mariamne). How fair and sweet a youth he is! and so expert as a musician, that when he enraptures the echoes around my cell with his voice and instrument, I can almost fancy him to be a second youthful David, playing to amuse the melancholy Saul. What grace, too, in all his movements! how winning his soft looks and bland demeanour! how exemplary his filial devotion! Once more, I say you are blessed in such a son, or rather blessed in your poverty, which has prevented the development of his inherent vices. It has been said that the weeping of an heir is laughter under a mask. Your son knows that he shall never be an heir; that your death will leave him poor, friendless, desolate; hence his deep interest in your recovery, which is but selfishness, under the mask of filial piety. Rich or poor, this is all that parents can expect from their children. Alas for human nature! when even its seeming virtues, like cankered fruit, however fair and specious to the eye, contain nothing within them but rottenness and corruption.”

Aaron, deeming it hopeless to refute the uncharitable conclusions of so determined a misanthrope, but at the same time anxious to sound him, observed that from his allusion to a living satirist, and from his perfect command
of the Latin language, he concluded that his host had had the honour to be a Roman.

"The honour!" cried the stranger, with a look of ineffable scorn; "rather say the disgrace, the ignominy, the infamy! What are they, these degenerate Romans, who, in their detestable lust of universal domination, call themselves the masters of the world, but the slaves of the world's refuse, carrying their rapacity and blood-stained tyranny to the uttermost bounds of the earth, only that they may grovel at home, in chains and fetters, beneath the foot of some mad, mean, miscreant Caesar, whom they worship more abjectly the more he tramples upon them, and spills their blood; and who, in return, justly despises and hates the cringing reptiles, the more loudly they hail him as a god? Base, execrable people! Scaling the temple of Fame, only that they may throw themselves down from its summit; the greater the height they have attained, the deeper and the more irrecoverable is their fall. They are at once the ministers and the victims of Heaven's vengeance, inflicting misery and degradation upon others, and entailing it a hundred fold upon themselves. A Roman! the name, or at least the character, is extinct. It expired with Brutus, Cassius, and Cato."

"My son then was right," said Aaron, inquiringly, "when he maintained that you must be a Hebrew by birth; since it is impossible to discern in your pronunciation even so slight a provincialism as that which occasioned the slaughter of the ancient Ephraimites."

"I am a man!" cried the stranger indignantly—"let that suffice you—for it is disgrace sufficient. What! do not your own cheeks burn with shame when ye avow yourselves Hebrews? God has abandoned the people whom he chose, and has sunk them below the level of the fiercest and filthiest brutes; nay, almost to the deepest abyss of human nature itself. For their high priests they have selected the basest of the rabble; for their rulers, monsters and madmen; for their Deity, their own lusts and frantic passions. Verily, they are fit rivals of the Romans; and Heaven inflicts a just and double judgment,
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when it makes these two execrable belligerents the destroyers of each other. Oh what a blessing to the world, could they accomplish a mutual extermination! Are you offended at this denouncement of your nation? — You deserve it. Why would you insidiously attempt to worm my secret from my bosom? Can you not receive my favours, and betray me, without knowing who or what I am? And will not your perfidy and ingratitude be the more pleasant for being blind and gratuitous?"

Offensive as was the nature of these wayward and spleenful ebullitions, Aaron, attributing them to a morbid state of mind, arising probably from disappointment, would not irritate his host by expostulation or rejoinder; and cautioned Mariamne to observe a similar forbearance. "Unless I am much mistaken," he said, "this man's misanthropy, although it may seem to have received the sanction of his judgment and experience, has not yet made a convert of his heart. We saw no traces of it when he interfered to save our lives; nor is it visible when my sickness or your distress make any appeal to his feelings: yet at times, appearing to think himself the dupe of his own benevolence, he treats us with contumely and suspicion; and every night does he still secure us in our cell, as if we meditated a nocturnal attack upon the life of our benefactor. My returning strength will, I trust, soon enable me to relieve him from these injurious misgivings; and, in the mean time, we must submit to his strange humours, for we owe him much."

"Much, my dear father! we owe him every thing. Is he not the preserver of your precious life? Heartily do I concur with you in the belief that our host is by no means a confirmed and irreclaimable misanthrope; for he who can suffer his dogs and goats to lay their paws upon his bosom and to lick his cheek, while the doves perch upon his head and shoulders, must surely be found to love his fellow-creatures, however he may be alienated from them by some temporary disgust."

Mariamne was in the right; for notwithstanding the indignant apostrophes which the stranger occasionally levelled against his inmates, and the suspicious precautions
to which he still subjected them, his heart, even in spite of himself, gradually relented; and although his moods continued to be capricious, every day, almost every hour, increased the complacency of his feelings, especially towards the supposed Micah, whose youth, gentleness, grace, and filial devotion, awakened in him a deep and tender interest.

In vain did he endeavour to steel himself against this new sympathy, by depreciating the real motives of the party who had excited it. His better convictions refuted these ungenerous insinuations, and Micah’s virtues only won upon him the more forcibly from the recoiling sense of his own injustice. He had seen him risk his life to save his father’s; he had witnessed the duteous and affectionate zeal with which he watched over the life he had preserved, when it became again endangered by sickness; he had marked the mild, diffident, timid character of the youth who had evinced such boldness in defending his parent; and he whispered to himself, “This cannot be hypocrisy — this cannot be imposture.”

As Micah supplied a link in the broken chain of his feelings, that again connected him, however slightly, with mankind, his bosom vibrated with emotions to which it had long been a stranger; and the cynic, though he still retained an unabated scorn and dislike of his species in general, involuntarily imbibed such a warm attachment for his young guest, that he could not contemplate the prospect of his departure, and of a return to the solitude of his sequestered hermitage, without deep heaviness of heart.

“Call me not stranger,” he said one morning to his guests as they sat with him on the lawn; “we are no longer strangers to one another. Call me Hadad, but not the Prophet Hadad, as I am usually termed; for although cogent reasons, which may perhaps extenuate the presumption, have induced me to acknowledge this appellation, when bestowed upon me by the wild rovers or barbarian tribes that hover around my hermitage, Heaven forbid that I should profanely arrogate it from Hebrews, whose faith it is my pride to profess, and who well know
that since the days of Malachi the voice of genuine prophecy has been dumb. Woe to Jerusalem, that she has not heeded its denunciations! I have placed this seat upon the eastward extremity of my lawn, because I would not even look in the direction of the doomed City; because I would forget its inhabitants, their crimes, and the withering vengeance that is speeding to overwhelm them; because, in contemplating the beauties of nature, my heart expands with pleasantness; and in the society of hills, rocks, and valleys, of groves, and waters, and the glorious sky, I hold communion with Heaven, and feel not the want of human fellowship."

He was silent, and appeared for some time to be lost in a profound reverie, which his auditors attempted not to interrupt; for when the splenetic fit was on him he was touchy and froward, and prone to misconstrue whatever was addressed to him, at least by Aaron, though he would listen with apparent pleasure to every thing that the supposed Micah uttered, and never perverted it into cause of offence. Quitting their seat, the Hebrews accompanied their host to the terrace, whence he was preparing to let himself down into the plain, when he found something attached to the farther extremity of the rope. "A contribution from some of my tributaries," he exclaimed, as he drew up a basket laden with fruits, vegetables, and honey: "they have observed that I have guests, and have considerably enlarged their offerings, which I should hold to be generous and kind, did I not know their motives for propitiating my favour. Ha! what is this? a piece of gold, and Roman money, too! Fools! fools! how often have I forbidden this! What! do they take me for a robber, or would they have me tempt the robbers to my cell?"

Again he paused for some time in silent meditation, when, turning to his companions, he resumed, "How sweet it is to contemplate the undeviating and inexhaustible bounty of the universal mother—Earth! how she clothes herself with every variety of beauty and splendour to delight our eyes; how she perfumes herself with rich odours to give us pleasure; how she spreads before
us with her thousand hands a luxurious banquet of corn, oil, and wine, and milk and honey, and luscious fruits, that recreate the eye not less than the palate; how each succeeding generation, like a new-born infant, is nursed and fondled, and supplied with sustenance from her maternal and ever-teeming bosom! If this be pleasant to behold, how heart-withering is it to reflect that all these beneficent provisions have been marred, frustrated, destroyed, by one contaminating product, the curse of which has been sufficient to neutralise, nay, to annihilate all her blessings!"

"What poison can nature have produced," asked Aaron, "so deadly and so all-pervading as your words would intimate?"

"Gold!" shouted Hadad, extending the Roman coin towards his companion; "this is the serpent, the devil, whose temptations have poisoned the moral paradise, and rendered the second fall of man ten thousand times more deep and dreadful than the first! This is the firebrand which, inflaming our evil passions, until it makes a hell within our bosom, sets man against man, and nation against nation, in endless and remorseless war, drowning the flowers of earth in the blood of her children. This is the universal venom whose touch can corrupt honour, patriotism, chastity, and convert every virtue into its opposite vice. Robbery, violence, murder, parricide, sacrilege, war,—what are they but the daily crimes that gold commands its slaves to perpetrate? This fiend, or rather legion of fiends, has degraded earth into a Pandemonium, and this devil have we made our master-deity. In the days of Jeroboam, only ten of the tribes would bend the knee before the golden calf; but in these times of abomination, Jew, Gentile, all, even to the uttermost limits of the earth, bow down to the same omnipotent idol. Gold!" continued the speaker, glancing at the coin with a look of scorn and aversion, "and with the impress of Nero upon its surface! Eli! was it not sufficiently hateful and revolting without this Gorgon head? Nero stamped upon gold! It is the epitome of all vice, wretchedness, oppression, and degradation! Away! thou hideous symbol of
moral and political tyranny! Away! thou double curse! Away, ye twin devils!"

With these words he hurled the money indignantly from his hand, seized the rope, let himself down over the precipice, and, striding hastily along the plain, was presently lost in a thicket of olive-trees.

"Never yet have I seen him in such a chafing mood," said Aaron to his daughter; "surely this must have been a temporary madness, or he would not have thrown away precious gold, and pronounced it to be poison. It was a Roman solidus; I followed it with mine eyes, and I marked where it fell, by the stump of yonder mulberry tree. My wounded arm will not allow me to descend and search for it, but you are young and active; the descent is nothing compared with the precipitous walls of Jerusalem, whence you let yourself down so cleverly; and your quick eyes would soon enable you to recover the money, which, in sooth, it were a pity should be thus lost."

Mariamne objected that it would be impossible to find it amid the thick underwood, adding, that they had promised their host never to quit the hermitage during his absence; and then, immediately turning the subject, she exclaimed, with sparkling eyes, and an unusual animation, "Said I not, dearest father, that Hadad, spite of the mystery with which he would surround himself, is a Hebrew? Did you not hear him avow his participation in our holy faith? He may justly denounce our nation, fallen and degraded as it is, but he did not deny his connection with it; and though there be a foreign air about his beautiful and majestic countenance, it bears the traces of our national lineaments; and I would pledge my life that he has some affinity with the children of Abraham. He is our countryman; Hadad is one of the chosen people; and what Jew would not be proud of such a compatriot?"

"Little does it boot us to know whether he be such or not," replied Aaron, surprised at the enthusiasm of his usually reserved and placid daughter: "had he been a Pagan, he would not have been the less entitled to our gratitude; and that is all we can bestow upon him."
In this assertion the parent was unconsciously in error; for Mariamne already felt towards their guest, although as yet she scarcely knew the nature of her sensations, something more than gratitude. Young, inexperienced, timid, and retaining little other recollection of Jerusalem, where she had latterly been a close prisoner, than as an arena of incessant strife, bloodshed, and outrage, the tranquil sequestration and security, together with the pastoral character of the hermitage, the beautiful view it commanded, the dogs, the goats, the doves, and the garden, to all of which she had already become attached, appealed to a heart yearning for calmness and seclusion, and appeared to present a combination of every thing that rendered life desirable; especially when she considered the wide-spread and desolating warfare that raged around this little ark of peace. Gentle and retiring as she was, Mariamne was susceptible; and her attachment to the place involuntarily extended itself to its proprietor. Through all the occasional austerity and repulsiveness of his sentiments and demeanour, she thought she could discern traces of a better nature; while his softened deportment towards herself prompted her first to conciliate, and then to reciprocate the regard that she had so manifestly excited. But, like the rest of her nation, she was warmly attached to her religion; she knew that a broad impassable line separated the Jews from the Pagans, and she would have silenced the whisperings of her bosom the moment they revealed the secret of her yet undeveloped affection, had she known that Hadad was an alien to the true faith. Hence, her undisguised delight when he had avowed himself a follower of the Hebrew creed. It seemed to sanction her nascent partiality; and she had already, with the promptitude of latent love, reflected that, although Hadad made an open profession of poverty, he never wanted the necessaries of life; while he enjoyed, in the inexplicable respect and homage shown to him, both by the natives and by the wandering tribes of barbarians, an enviable security, to which the great and the rich were utter strangers. Luxuries beyond these he could not indeed boast, but with superfluities she could well dispense; and what maiden,
in the dawning of a first attachment, ever desiderated any felicity more supreme, any wealth more soul-sufficing, than that of love in a rural solitude? At all events, it was a thousand times better, so at least thought Mariamne, to find a safe home in such an asylum as the Hermitage, than to wander about a disturbed province in the assumed character of a musician, depending ultimately upon the uncertain protection of the Romans, and the precarious friendship of a kinsman at Jericho, with whom they had had little intercourse for many years.

During the residence of the Hebrews on the rock, they had observed that Hadad exercised a paramount influence over wild and lawless rovers, Arabs, Idumæans, and others, who rarely held themselves amenable to any human authority; while they had more than once seen a Roman centurion in deep consultation with him: but as he affected great mystery upon such occasions, it was impossible to guess the nature of their visits. These people always brought offerings with them: sometimes a live kid or goat; more generally, however, fruit, vegetables, milk, and honey; always exhibiting a marked reverence in their deportment, as if they were holding converse with a superior being. Generally, Hadad went down to them in the plain; but, now and then, those who came to consult him were allowed to climb up the terrace, by means of the rope, and to meet him on the lawn.

Such was the case one day with a party of warriors, who, by the quality of their arms, and the barbaric showiness of their trappings, seemed to be chieftains of some neighbouring tribes, and, by their gesticulations, to be appealing to Hadad to decide a difference between them. The Hebrews had been instructed to keep themselves aloof when visitants appeared. Aaron, accordingly, had betaken himself to the back of the rock overlooking the ravine by which they had first ascended; but Mariamne, prompted either by a feminine curiosity, or, more probably, by a desire to gaze upon the object of her secret attachment, concealed herself behind one of the crags on the lawn, whence she could obtain a peep of the assemblage, though not near enough to catch their discourse — which, indeed,
would have been unintelligible to her, could she have heard it. While thus occupied, she observed a slight motion among the bushes on one side of the lawn, which she at first thought to proceed from some browsing goat; but, as she gazed more attentively upon the spot, she discerned a human being crawling stealthily forward, so as to approach Hadad's back. By a momentary glimpse of his face, he appeared to be an old, sunburnt, furrowed man, but with a fell, malignant expression, that instantly prompted her to distrust his designs; a misgiving which was converted into certainty when, in his next movement, she caught the gleaming of a poniard, and saw him fix his eyes upon Hadad with a grin of rancour and revenge. Discarding every other consideration, in the thought of Hadad's instant danger, she rushed down the lawn, to apprise him of his peril; and reached the spot where he stood, just as the assassin leaped from the bush, like a tiger springing upon its prey. In the shock of their encountering bodies Mariamne was dashed violently to the ground, receiving a slight wound in the throat from the brandished weapon; while the more vigorous assailant, though baffled in his first onset, again prepared to dart with unabated ferocity upon the object of his malice. But Hadad, not less rapid than himself, and by this time fully aware of his purpose, caught his uplifted hand, wrenched the dagger from his grasp, and, snatching up the writhing wretch in his herculean arms, while he exclaimed, "Villain, villain! this shall be your last attempt!" ran with him to the highest part of the rock, and hurled him over the precipice.

So rapidly had all this occurred, that Hadad scarcely knew by whom the murderous aim of his assailant had been detected and frustrated; but when, on his return to the lawn, he saw the still prostrate Mariamne endeavouring to raise herself from the ground, while he perceived blood trickling down her garments, he passionately ejaculated, "Ha! my brave though gentle Micah! is it to thee, dear youth, that I am indebted for my safety? Heaven grant that the miscreant have not seriously harmed thee!
But there is blood upon thy tunic; I must examine thy wound, and give thee instant succour." So saying, he caught up the unresisting sufferer, ran with her to the grotto, laid her down in the shade of the entrance, and hastily plucked the clothes from her neck, in order to inspect the wound. The caul in which Mariamne had confined her hair having fallen off in the rude encounter with the assassin, her dark tresses now flowed down upon her shoulders in disordered luxuriance; while, as Hadad gazed upon her fair and partially uncovered bosom, heaving in agitation, he started back in amazement, ejaculating — "Eli! what means this disguise? It is a lovely maiden, and not a youth!"

At this moment the bewildered Mariamne recovered her recollection; and had no sooner perceived her situation, than, with downcast eyes and deep blushes, she again huddled the tunic over her shoulder, murmuring that she was better, and had received no other injury than a slight scratch in the throat. As she spoke her father entered, when Hadad briefly imparted to him the recent occurrence, revealed the discovery he had accidentally made, and demanded an explanation. This was readily furnished by the Hebrew, who disclosed his daughter's real name, and apologised for the innocent deception they had practised upon him, adding, that they would relieve him from any embarrassment it might occasion, by taking their departure on the following morning.

"Thoughtless and unfeeling that I am!" cried Hadad, "to be listening to these trivial matters, when I should be succouring our poor Micah — I mean, your dear Mariamne, whose wound, though it be but a scratch, must not be neglected." Hastening to procure some lint, and a bandage, he applied them to her throat, during which process the blushing patient remained silent; her bosom thrilling with undefined sensations, as she noticed the tenderness with which he treated her, and observed that his hands trembled from the very apprehension of giving her pain. As soon as this office was performed, he left her, in order to dismiss the wild warriors who remained upon the lawn, forgetting, for a while, their mutual differ-
ences, in amazement at the strange scene of which they had been the spectators.

Pursuant to his promise, Aaron prepared, early on the following morning, to quit the hermitage; a measure, however, to which Hadad would not by any means yield his assent, observing, that Mariamne, after so much agitation, could hardly be in a fit state for travelling; and adding, that as some of the armed followers of his yesterday's visitors were still hovering about the vicinity, it might not be safe to venture forth until the road had been closely reconnoitred. To effect this object Aaron went down into the plain, promising not to advance far from the rock; and, while he was thus occupied, Hadad betook himself to his patient, not only to examine her wound, but to request information respecting her first discovery of the assassin, with the particulars of which he was but imperfectly acquainted. In the candour of artless innocence, she made an unreserved confession of all that she had done and felt upon the occasion.

"But what prompted you," inquired Hadad, "to watch my proceedings, when I had requested you to keep aloof?"

"Indeed I know not," replied the confused girl. "I feel that it was wrong, and I fear you will be offended; but latterly I have thought of you all day, dreamt of you by night, and never felt happy unless I could keep you in my sight, for which purpose only, and not from an idle curiosity to gaze upon your visitants, I concealed myself behind the crag, where I saw the assassin crawling forward to attack you."

"And how came you to know that I was the object of his enmity, when any of my companions might have been his intended victim?"

"To this possibility I never for a moment adverted; I thought of, cared for, nobody but you."

"Kind, generous girl! And did you not consider your own danger in throwing yourself between me and so fierce a desperado?"

"I had no time for consideration; but, if I had, I could not have commanded my feelings, which, methinks,
would prompt me gladly to risk my own life a thousand times over in the defence of yours."

"Dearest Mariamne! have you ever weighed the nature of these feelings? Be not offended — for I am deeply interested in the question—if I ask you whether they may not proceed from love?"

"I thought they sprang from gratitude, because you were my father's preserver," faltered Mariamne, blushing more deeply than ever; "but, if it be as you say, indeed, indeed, I was not aware of it, and I hope you will pardon me. You know we are to quit the hermitage this morning: I beseech you to grant me your forgiveness before I depart; you will soon forget me when I am gone."

"Never, never!" cried Hadad, transported, by the touching simplicity of this declaration, out of all his austerity — "Never can I forget you, or need you ever quit me, if you can receive such an anchorite as myself for your husband, and give up the strife and danger of a warring world, for the pleasures of love and peace in this humble but delightful seclusion. Say, dearest Mariamne, can you make this sacrifice?"

With the winning ingenuousness of perfect innocence, the agitated girl declared, in broken accents, that, so far from considering it a sacrifice, it would make her supremely happy to quit a world of which she always lived in terror, and devote the remainder of her days to Hadad and the hermitage.

"Thus, then, do I seal the contract of our affiance," cried the impassioned anchorite, impressing a kiss upon her lips; "nor will your father, as I trust, refuse to sanction our betrothal, when he shall have heard my history."

Sudden as it was, Hadad's feelings had not been altogether surprised into this engagement. During the night he had reflected much upon the singular union of gentleness and courage in the character of Mariamne. Timid and diffident as was her ordinary demeanour, he had twice seen her risk her life, once to preserve her father's, once to save his own.

"Alas!" whispered the recluse to himself, "this it is to live among lawless tribes and in times of violence, when
human life is reckoned as nothing, and the hand and the
dagger are ever ready to second the fierce impulses of the
heart. In such a world of turbulence and perfidy, how
sweet would it be to possess a guardian angel like Mariamne,
unobtrusive when her services were not required, bold in
the moment of danger, watchful at all times. Women in
general are false, fickle, worthless: but Mariamne is an
exception, and my hatred of the sex only heightens my
admiration of the individual who is free from their vices."

As he recalled the manifest pleasure which, under the
sanction of her disguise, she had ever taken in his society,
he could not avoid suspecting that her recent act of de-
votedness had been indeed prompted by something warmer
than friendship or gratitude: and it both soothed and flat-
tered him to think that, in his present state of poverty and
solitude, he should have become the object of so disinterested
an attachment. His bosom melted at the thought; and the
tide of human love rushing back into its ancient channel,
with a vehemence proportioned to that which had wrested
it from its natural course, had prepared him for the tender
scene with Mariamne which we have just recorded.

Great indeed was Aaron's astonishment when, upon his
return, he was apprised of this sudden and unexpected
contract. "I ask you not to confirm it," said Hadad,
"until you shall have heard the outlines of my history,
when both you, and my dear Mariamne, in spite of the
pledge she has given, shall be free to receive or to reject my
offer, as you shall think fit. Let us sit down in the shady
entrance of the grotto, where we may be fanned by the fresh
air, and I will recite to you the few but melancholy events
of my life." In compliance with this request, the Hebrews
placed themselves on either side of their host, who thus
began his relation.
"You were both partly right and partly in error," said Hadad, "when you respectively maintained that I was of Roman and of Hebrew origin; for my father was of Campania in Italy, my mother of Jerusalem. Her first husband, a Jewish merchant, whom she accompanied in his travels, died in Italy, leaving his young and beautiful widow scarcely provided with the means of returning to her own country. Captivated by her charms, Caius Lucius, one of the municipal Decurions of the city in which she then resided, made her an offer of his hand; and the widow, either induced by the forlorn state in which she had been left, or won by the attractions and wealth of her suitor, forgot the peremptory law of Moses that prohibited her union with a Pagan, and became his wife. Resolved to make what atonement she could for this deviation from our statutes, she took especial care that I, the sole issue of her marriage, should be secretly, though strictly, trained in the Jewish faith, to which she herself had always inflexibly adhered, notwithstanding the solitary transgression of her second nuptials. Thus did I grow up to manhood, bearing the name and discharging the public duties of a Roman, cherishing the faith and inheriting many of the national predilections of a Hebrew. Both my parents expired within a few months of each other, leaving me, at the age of four-and-twenty, in possession of a handsome patrimonial estate, consisting of houses in one of the principal cities of Campania, and extensive vineyards in its immediate vicinity. When I was sufficiently recovered from the effects of this double bereavement to venture into society, I was congratulated as one of the most fortunate young men in the whole province, thus to have obtained unfettered possession of my estate at the most appropriate age for enjoying it: my society was eagerly courted by those who are ever ready to pay interested homage to wealth — that is to say,
by nine tenths of my fellow-citizens; and I was unanimously elected, notwithstanding my youth, to the office of municipal Decurion, which had been held by my father. That I was exhilarated by this tide of prosperity — that I was flattered by the courtesies lavished upon me — that I looked with smiles upon so smiling a world, and fondly anticipated from it many years of unclouded happiness, I will not deny; but I would fain hope that I was not puffed up with pride or arrogance at this early accession to civic distinction and independent fortune. Not naturally vainglorious — not solicitous of public honours — more prone to study than to pleasure — I was constitutionally disposed to place my happiness in domestic enjoyments, and the charms of love and friendship; and never had any man higher prospects of felicity in these especial objects. I had become enamoured of Drusilla, the daughter of a neighbour, whose charms, even though I was ever an ardent admirer of beauty, seemed, in my too partial estimate, to constitute her least attraction. She returned my affection; and the day of our marriage was fixed. Nor was I, to all appearance, less blessed in the choice of a friend. Julius Milo had been my schoolfellow; from the days of boyhood our intimacy had never been interrupted; our tastes, habits, pursuits, were all similar; I had promoted his advancement in life, and in various ways had conferred important benefits upon him.

"Thus did I seem to stand upon the very pinnacle of fortune,— thus was I on the point of realising the fondest aspirations of my heart; the present was all sunshine and serenity, and hope, deceitful hope, threw a still brighter and more fascinating glory upon the future. Now mark how suddenly this enchanting prospect was blasted; how cruelly the uplifted cup of happiness was dashed from my lips; by what a complication of heartlessness, villainy, and ingratitude I was overwhelmed and ruined! While I was making preparations for my approaching nuptials, I received a legal notice announcing that a namesake and relative of my late father, denying the legitimacy of my birth, maintained himself to be the proper heir, and claimed the estate to which I had succeeded. Knowing the utter falsehood
of this impudent assertion, I was at first disposed to treat it with scorn and ridicule; but the man of law, whom I thought it prudent to consult, reminding me that the justice of my cause, in the general corruption of the Roman courts, was by no means a security for its success, advised me to lose no time in collecting evidence, and to hasten to Rome, where the trial was to be decided. I did so, bearing with me such clear, convincing, irrefragable proofs, that I enjoyed beforehand the prospect of defeating and punishing the fraudulent claimant, and of returning in triumph to receive the hand of Drusilla, and the felicitations of my friend Milo."

Hitherto Hadad had spoken in a calm subdued voice, as if determined to check the ebullitions of his indignant spirit; but at this period of his narrative, smitten with an ungovernable rage at the recollection of his wrongs, he started from his seat, clenched his hands, and burst into a paroxysm of misanthropy, stigmatising the whole human race, and venting especial maledictions upon the heads of Drusilla and Milo. As soon as he could collect himself, he apologised to his auditors for this outbursting of passion, again seated himself between them, and resumed his narrative.

"Listen to me, my friends; endure my choleric ebullitions till you learn their cause, and you will not wonder at their vehemence. Even now I can scarcely bear to reflect upon the hideous baseness of which I was made the victim, and must hurry over the revolting details. The judge who was to try my cause was bribed by my opponent; Milo, the perfidious Milo — my friend Milo, seduced by the promise of sharing in the plunder, should his testimony enable the wrongful claimant to rob me of my patrimony, became an evidence against me, falsely deposing that he had often heard my father confess my illegitimacy; by which complication of fraud, venality, and perjury, I lost my cause, and suddenly found myself alone in the world, stripped of my property, astounded, deserted, friendless. 'No, not friendless,' I exclaimed, when I recovered the energies of my mind; for I had at first been so stunned by the blow as to be incapable of writing or even thinking. 'Drusilla, my dear Drusilla, more precious than all the gifts of Fortune, and
too honourable to participate in her fickleness — she at least remains to me; her relations are men of substance, they will assist me to institute a new suit, to reverse this iniquitous decision, to recover my ravished patrimony.

A new ray of hope-springing up in my bosom at this suggestion, I was on the point of setting off for Campania, when I received a letter from Drusilla, stating, that as she concluded from my silence, as well as from my protracted residence at Rome, and the altered state of my circumstances, that I had entirely abandoned all thought of the once projected union, she had that day, with the concurrence of her friends, given her hand to Lucius Milo.

This was not bitterness enough. On the same day came a missive from my fellow-citizens, apprising me that, as the Decurions were about to give a public spectacle to the people, the expense of which might be inconvenient in the present reverse of my fortunes, they had done me the favour to supersede me, and to nominate Lucius Milo to my office! You will think, perhaps, that, as I had been so deeply affected by the loss of my suit, these complicated and still more stinging calamities, the bare recollection of which now fires me with an almost ungovernable wrath, must have utterly overwhelmed me at the period of their occurrence. Quite the reverse; they rather braced me to the endurance of my wrongs, by calling in to my support pride, hatred, scorn, the hope of revenge. Indignation gave me fortitude; I thought of nothing but picking up the fragments of my shattered fortune, and hurling them back in the face of fate. Honour, faith, love, friendship, public and private virtue, appeared to me such utter chimeras, and the world itself such a sink of depravity, ingratitude, and corruption, that I burst into a bitter laugh as I read these epistles, despised myself for having expected any other treatment than what I had experienced; and from that moment the milk of human kindness that was within me having been turned into gall, I began to view my species with unutterable loathing, and to distrust every thing that wore the semblance of goodness.

"The thirst of vengeance, however, prompting me to
make one more effort for the recovery of my patrimony, I
drew up a statement of my case, appended to it copies
of my documents—nay, I even procured proofs of the
bribery whereof I had been made the victim, laid the whole
before the Emperor Nero, and demanded justice. Justice
from Nero! Duped and gulled as I had been, how could
I again trust to human nature, and, above all, to a being
cursed with the possession of despotism, which seldom fails
to make man a devil? My successful opponent, then
rioting at Rome in the plunder of my fortune, had formed
an intimacy with a creature and minion of Nero, named
Sporus, with whose infamous character none that have been
at Rome can remain unacquainted."

"I have frequently seen him," said Aaron, "when I
was an inmate of the palace. The wretch accompanied
the Emperor in his flight, and has by this time, I trust,
shared his fate."

"The justice of my case," resumed Hadad, "being as
nothing compared with the influence of this miscreant,
Nero not only confirmed the iniquitous sentence of my
judge, but, at the instance of my opponent, who wished to
be finally relieved from me and my claim, was actually
persuaded by Sporus to sign a warrant for my seizure and
execution, upon some pretext so frivolous that I have even
forgotten its nature. Mere accident made me acquainted
with this atrocious design; and the hatred of my oppres-
sors, rather than the love of life, prompting me to defeat
their conspiracy, I mounted a fleet horse, galloped to the
sea-shore, and was fortunate enough to find a vessel bound
for Alexandria, on board which I procured a passage, and
arrived in Egypt without accident. It is the boast of the
Romans that their empire extends over the whole civilised
earth, and in that empty vaunt do they often find their
curse; for he who once becomes an object of imperial ven-
geance has no hope of escape. He may fly to the ocean
on one side, to the uttermost bounds of the earth on the
other, but he is still a prisoner; for the world is only a
large dungeon, of which Cæsar is the gaoler. I recalled
what Cicero said to the exiled Marcellus—"Wherever you
are, remember that you are equally in the power of the
conqueror." But I would not meanly despair — I would not surrender while there was yet a possibility of escape; and I reflected, moreover, that I was too unimportant an exile to be actively pursued. I had my choice of plunging into the desert and the wilderness, or of herding with remote barbarians. The former being more in accordance with my misanthropical feelings, I traversed the wilds of Mount Caucasus, roamed over the Syrian solitudes, and hovered upon the outskirts of the great Arabian desert, into which I would have penetrated but from the fear of perishing for want. Having learned the language of the Idumæans, I resolved upon making an excursion into their inhospitable country,—a hazardous enterprise, which threatened at first to cost me my life, and terminated by converting me into an involuntary prophet. Seized by a wandering party of their horsemen, I was carried off as a prisoner to their principal town, where a council of their warriors, having conceived the notion that I was a spy employed by one of the neighbouring tribes with whom they were at war, decided that I should be offered up as a sacrifice to a huge mis-shapen idol, erected in the midst of the temple, or rather the great barn, in which their deliberations were held. My protestations were vain: I was to be slaughtered at midnight; and, in the mean time, I was committed to the prison which joined the temple.

"With this forlorn prospect before me, my meditations, as you may well suppose, were gloomy enough; but as night drew on, accompanied by a furious storm, I resolved not to lose my life without making an effort, however desperate, at escape. The door was well secured and guarded on the outside; the aperture by which light was admitted was too small to allow a passage for my body: but I perceived a rude species of trap-door in the roof; and having succeeded in climbing up to the window, I availed myself of the great muscular strength I had always possessed to force open the trap,—the noise I made in this process being rendered inaudible by the fury of the wind, and an opportune peal of thunder. On gaining this upper apartment, which I did without difficulty, I beheld a large sycamore chest in its centre, covered with strange charac-
ters. Thinking it might afford me a place of momentary concealment in case of quick pursuit, I opened it, when I found that it contained the robes, the Persian cap, and the great ram’s horn, that I now wear, together with this mystic wand. In this disguise, of which I immediately perceived the advantage, I lost no time in arraying myself; and, having completed my investiture, I began instantly to break a way for my escape through the roof, which, being of thatch, soon yielded to my efforts. It was now dark night, but by the flashes of lightning I could ascertain that the building upon which I stood afforded no means of reaching the ground without the chance of breaking my bones, and the certainty of alarming the guard. Before me, however, extended another spacious roof of thatch, which, although rather higher than my present position, was bounded at its farther extremity by a tall tree, the boughs of which would afford me an easy descent, while the darkness of the tempestuous night, and the disguise I had assumed, would favour my final escape after I had once reached the ground.

"Upon the roof, therefore, I clambered, and had crawled more than half over it, animated with the most lively hopes of deliverance, when my weight proving too great for the time-weakened materials beneath me, they gave way, and I was precipitated to the ground in the very midst of the temple, where the priests and warriors surrounding the grim idol, to which I was to be offered up, were making preparations for the sacrifice. The masses of soft thatch that I carried with me had so far broken my fall, that, although grievously bruised, I was not disabled; and as I raised myself slowly out of the rubbish, particles of which had extinguished all the torches of the temple, my hands encountered a chair, into which I threw myself, and being utterly incapacitated for any farther exertions, I resolved to abandon myself unresistingly to my fate. Scarcely had I done so, when several attendants ran in with fresh torches; and at the same moment flashes of lightning, followed by a stunning peal of thunder, threw an effulgent blaze through the whole interior of the building. Never shall I forget the scene then revealed to me,
nor my own feelings as I sat in harrowing suspense, awaiting my doom. The glary horror cast upon the grim idol, which seemed to tremble in the shivering light; the ghastly hue imparted to the terror-stricken countenances of the barbarians, as in various attitudes of amazement they bent their staring eyes upon me; the preparations for the sacrifice, and the gleaming hatchet that lay upon the altar, constituted, indeed, an appalling spectacle; but even in that moment the thought that I was a Roman, little reason as I had to be proud of such a distinction, made me draw myself up in my seat, and view my intended destroyers with a resolute air. For a few moments there was a dead, breathless silence; presently one of the priests cried out, "It is Hadad the prophet!" and anon the whole building rang with vociferous shouts of "Hadad the prophet! Hail to Hadad the prophet! he promised upon his death-bed to return to us,—and lo! Heaven hath sent him down from the sky upon the wings of the thunder and the lightning!" At these outcries, many of the barbarians danced about in ecstasies of joy, while others fell prostrate before me, or welcomed me back, with every demonstration of reverence and delight.

"The seer, by whose name I was addressed, and to whose office I was thus compulorily elected, having expired many years before, with a dying promise that he would return at no distant period to resume his functions, they had religiously preserved his robes and rod in the sycamore chest. My accidental investiture in these paraphernalia, and the mode of my tumbling into the temple in the midst of thunder and lightning, might have persuaded a less superstitious people that I was in reality the character I represented; nor could I probably have undeceived them, had I even wished to peril my life by making the attempt. Behold, therefore, the death-devoted victim suddenly transformed into an Involuntary Prophet, exercising a higher influence through all the surrounding district than many of the native chieftains.

"As the world is constituted, every one must be victor or victim, master or slave. Am I to blame for choosing the former lot, when it was thus thrust upon my accept-
ance? As I had seen lying oracles and juggling priests perverting the credulity of the public to purposes of mutual hatred and destruction, and fattening on the spoil extorted from their duped votaries, it struck me that I might wield the same powerful engine in the cause of peace, humanity, and civilisation. A strange aim, you will say, for such a misanthrope as myself; but it was some consolation to me, some softening of my angry spirit, to feel that I had obtained a supremacy over my fellow-creatures, even though I despised them; to know that I was duping, deceiving, hoodwinking them, even though I cheated them into comparative happiness, and an abandonment of their barbarous vices. I repeat that I despised mankind, and on that very account I determined that my own actions should be the reverse of what I beheld in others. For their good opinion I cared not an obolus, but I would not forfeit my own; and thus I wrought works of love in a spirit of pride and hatred.

"A Roman detachment had fallen into the hands of the Arabs. I procured their lives to be spared, negotiated their ransom, and inculcated upon both parties a future forbearance from cruelty in the usages of war. A Roman centurion was commissioned to thank me for my good offices. Astonished at my command of his language, and still more at my knowledge of recent occurrences in Rome, he set me down for an unquestionable seer and wizard, and spread my fame among his superstitious countrymen; who come occasionally to consult me with not less faith and reverence than the wild rovers of the Desert. I am an impostor, I confess it; but perhaps not an useless, certainly not a sordid one, only exacting that the sanctuary of my hermitage shall be respected, that the means of subsistence shall be supplied me, and that I shall receive implicit obedience whenever I interfere for the prevention of strife and bloodshed, or even when I blow my ram's horn, which I have acquired the art of doing with a widespreading effect that to these simple people appears supernatural."

"To that potent instrument is my dear father indebted for his life," said Mariamne; "and I wonder not that the
natives should be astounded at its voice of thunder. My heart has sometimes thrilled to hear the broken shivering sound of the silver trumpets, blowing up an alarum from the courts of the Temple of Jerusalem; but methinks there is something still more awful in the peal of your ram's horn, which seems to make the very rocks tremble as they rebellow to its roar. There is still a portion of your history which you have not yet explained, and yet it is one in which I am more deeply interested than in all the rest. You have told us nothing of the assassin who attempted your life."

"I had indeed quite forgotten the miscreant. Previously to my arrival, he had exercised in these districts the calling of an astrologer and fortune-teller, and had obtained an influence which he abused to the most mischievous and sordid purposes. My superior fame as a prophet having occasioned his oracle to be neglected, he vowed vengeance against me; and once before raised his hand to destroy me, when his murderous aim was prevented and forgiven. He brought his fate upon himself. I saw his countrymen this morning bearing off his dead body; thus am I freed from the only enemy that I had to fear. And now that I have related my history, what say you, Aaron, what say you, dearest Mariamne, are you willing to ratify the contract that you have made with the misanthrope and anchorite, with Caius Lucius the proscribed Roman, with Hadad the reputed prophet, but who disclaims the title in the presence of Hebrews professing the same holy faith as himself?"

Though Mariamne was confused and silent, her looks betrayed how willingly she would confirm their affiance; while Aaron, whose cupidity was inflamed by the reflection that his host, though temporarily dispossessed, was still the rightful proprietor of a handsome estate in Campania; and who, moreover, considered that he could not do better, in the existing distraction of the country, than to bestow his daughter upon him, even should he retain his present prophetical character, yielded a ready assent to their marriage. Furnished with a passport from Hadad, he went down to Jericho to procure a Levite, with two of his own
kinsmen for witnesses, with whom he returned in safety to the hermitage, where the nuptials were solemnised with such conformity to the Hebrew ordinances as the peculiar circumstances of the parties would allow. Having thus satisfactorily disposed of his daughter, Aaron, who was devoted to trade and thrift, and wished not to be an incumbrance on his son-in-law, avowed his intention of embarking the little hoard of money which he had so carefully preserved, in drugs, and of travelling to the different marts where these commodities were bought and sold. Taking, therefore, an affectionate farewell of Hadad and Mariamne, whom he promised to visit as opportunity should occur, he set off for Jericho, accompanied by the kinsmen whom he had brought up with him to be present at the marriage.

Not for a single moment did Mariamne, isolated as she was, ever find any thing gloomy or irksome in the tranquil sequestration of her abode. Her pliable character, easily adapting itself to circumstances, fitted her for seclusion; while her love for Hadad seemed daily to increase as her own gentle virtues, and the pleasures he found in conjugal happiness, gradually weaned him from his cynical asperity, disposing him to give others better credit for good qualities as his own resumed their former influence over his bosom. Nor was there any lack of those pastoral occupations in which Mariamne found especial pleasure. Her goats, to which sheep were now added, the doves, the dogs, the garden, furnished her with constant employment; while she derived amusement from watching the various characters and objects of the votaries who came to consult her husband, or who betook themselves to the rock, as to a sanctuary respected by the wildest barbarians. Aaron did not forget his promise, but presented himself after the lapse of a few months, bringing them news of a world of which they knew and desired to know nothing, their whole happiness being centred within the narrow precincts of the hermitage.

Thus flew the months, little varied, though always rapid in their flight, until in process of time Mariamne became the mother of two children, a son and daughter, the only addition that seemed wanting to complete her felicity. To her maternal duties, the most delightful and the most ab-
sorbing of any, she devoted herself with her whole gentle and affectionate heart; loving Hadad still more tenderly because he was the father of her children; doting still more fondly upon the children, because they already disclosed the cherished lineaments of their father. Upon Hadad, too, his offspring wrought a healing and humanising effect. He could not bear to think altogether ill of that nature in which they were participants, and which revealed itself in them with an innocence so perfectly guileless, an affection so pure and disinterested, a simplicity so delightful, so heavenly, so utterly irresistible. It was impossible that such artless unsophisticated beings could grow up to become perfidious, crafty, selfish, unprincipled hypocrites. No; the children of Mariamne would form an exception, like herself, to the general depravity. There might be others equally blameless and untainted; the world, perhaps, was not so black as he had painted it, but, far from having any wish to revisit it, he only dreaded lest its moral infection should approach sufficiently near to contaminate his own pure and happy circle.

Six or seven years had thus sped away, when one morning Aaron was recognised approaching the hermitage on a fleet horse, which he was urging eagerly forward. Knowing his aversion to any unnecessary expense, Mariamne was alarmed at the sight, fearing that he must be the bearer of some painfully momentous intelligence to justify the mode of its conveyance: an apprehension, however, which was speedily dissipated, when her father, in a manifest intoxication of joy, rushed towards her, snapping his fingers, shouting out vociferous congratulations, and embracing both herself and Hadad, with every demonstration of delight. As soon as he had recovered his breath and could speak collectedly, he prefaced his intelligence by declaring that it was nothing more than what he had always anticipated, always relied on; and then proceeded to state, that, having been carried by his mercantile pursuits into Campania, curiosity had led him to the former residence of his son-in-law, when he learnt that the fraudulent usurper of his estates had just expired in great remorse of conscience, having previously made a formal declaration of his villany
before the proper authorities, and directed by his will that the whole property, with the additional purchases he had made, should be restored to Caius Lucius, the rightful owner, should he be yet living, or to his legal heirs, should he be no more.

"Are you stunned, are you stupified?" cried Aaron, when he had finished his relation. "Are you struck dumb, that you neither of you speak a word, nor betray the least emotion at this exhilarating, this glorious news?"

"To me it is neither exhilarating nor glorious," said Hadad calmly: "what can we derive from this tardy restoration of my patrimony?"

"What can you derive from it?—houses, lands, horses, slaves, power, homage, pleasures of every kind."

"And what are all these to bestow upon us?"

"Happiness, to be sure!"

"Then we may save ourselves a long and useless journey, for that we already possess."

"Oh, my dear father!" said Mariamne, "if you did but know how happy I am in the society of Hadad and my children—how it would grieve me to quit this peaceful hermitage, to part from my little flock, my goats, my doves, and the beautiful flowers and shrubs that I have planted and reared with my own hand, all of which I consider as a part of my family."

"Child! you are mad, stark staring mad!" cried Aaron, pettishly, and then turning to his son-in-law, he continued, "I have not yet named the greatest of all luxuries which this change of fortune may confer—the pleasure of being revenged upon the sordid Drusilla, and the perjured Julius Milo."

"I might have held it to be such some years ago; but, thank Heaven, I have outlived the desire of vengeance! Upon me, indeed, they have conferred a blessing, however unintentionally, while upon themselves they have entailed a curse of conscience, to the punishment of which I may safely leave them."

"I forgot to mention," said Aaron, "that all the outlawries and proscriptions of Nero have been long since reversed, so that you may return to Italy, or even to Rome,
with perfect safety. But I give you up! I give you up! If you neither love fortune, who is your best friend, nor hate Drusilla and Milo, who are your worst enemies, it is quite useless to talk to you."

Intoxicated, however, with the long-cherished hope of having for his son-in-law a man of wealth and distinction, the persevering Hebrew would not by any means abandon his design. Taking his daughter apart, he represented to her that her removal to Campania was not a question of preference, but of prudence and duty. What was to become of her should Hadad die, and leave her alone and unprotected in that savage solitude? How would she dispose of her children, even should her husband live? Would she marry her daughter to a barbarian of the Desert? would she train up her son to be a freebooter? could she hope, or even wish, that he should succeed to his father’s questionable office? Of these and similar arguments Mariamne could not deny the validity; whatever presented itself to her mind as a duty to her children, she was disposed implicitly to adopt; nor was Aaron altogether unsuccessful in awaking in his daughter certain aspirations for the luxuries and distinctions which fortune was tendering to her acceptance—aspirations which, however they may remain dormant under the influence of circumstances, are seldom eradicated from any bosom, whether male or female.

Won by these solicitations and impulses, she acceded to her father’s wishes, and used her all-powerful influence to obtain her husband’s consent to their removal. Admitting the many motives that urged him to compliance, against which his individual predilections ought to have little weight, he at length assented to her wishes; declaring, however, with a sigh of deep regret, that he never expected to find in the possession of fortune, or the splendour and society of cities, that happiness which he had enjoyed in the retirement of his hermitage. His consent being once given, or rather wrung from him by considerations for the interests of his children, no time was lost in making preparations for their departure. Their faithful dogs they determined to take with them; their sheep and goats they distributed among the neighbouring tribes; but when Mariamne, whose feelings had
been latterly absorbed in the bustle of her removal, went round the narrow territory in which she had passed such calm and blissful years—when she came to take a last farewell of the doves, and the flowers, and the shrubs, and the various cherished objects with which she had been so long familiar, her heart swelled, the tears burst from her eyes, and she descended the rock, sobbing too bitterly to be able to reply to her children as they anxiously inquired the cause of her distress. Aaron, who was in high spirits, reproached her for her weakness, diverted the attention of the young folks, and chattered for the whole party. Hadad, supporting his wife upon his arm, walked onward in the silence of deep thought, until he turned to take a last, lingering view of the rock, when he exclaimed in mournful accents, "Though I have not the guilt of disobedience upon my conscience, I question whether Adam, when he was ejected from paradise, felt deeper regret than I do at quitting my peaceful hermitage!"

CHAPTER VIII.

The country being now in a tranquil state, Hadad, who had always cherished in his bosom an anxious yearning to see Jerusalem, suggested that they should visit it before they bent their course to the sea-coast. Its glories, as he well knew, had all passed away, its noblest monuments had been overturned and laid prostrate in the dust, but its locality remained unaltered, its precincts had lost none of their hallowed and sublime associations, and, as a follower of the Hebrew faith, he could not bear to leave Palestine without a pilgrimage to the spot where the Holy City had once stood. At the pronunciation of the last words the whole party were thrilled with sad emotions. Aaron, penurious and worldly as he usually was, eagerly seconded the proposition, observing that he should not regret the additional expense for the melancholy satisfac-
tion of once more gazing upon the hill of Zion, where he had passed so many years; and upon the scenes where all the great events and stupendous miracles of their religion had received their accomplishment. To the performance of this devout, though mournful, duty Mariamne was not less zealously inclined than her companions; and in that direction accordingly they first bent their course.

One should have possessed the profound soul-cherished reverence of an ancient Hebrew for the proudly termed "City of God," the magnificent, the peerless, the pride and glory of the universe;—one should have grown up from infancy with the feeling that it was spiritualised and raised out of its materiality by its having been for many ages the residence of Deity itself, in the form of the symbols that hovered over the mercy-seat of the Sanctuary, and gave forth the oracles of Heaven in an articulate and audible voice,—in order to judge of the mingled enthusiasm and distress of mind with which our travellers, recalling the terrific events of which it had been the scene, not long after Aaron and Mariamne had made their escape from its walls, once more approached the confines of Jerusalem. "From the summit of the hill we are now ascending," said the former, "we shall command the whole City and the Valley of Jehoshaphat. What a wilderness are these precincts, once so pleasant with gardens, intermingled with groves of palm, mulberry, and cedar! They were dismantled, indeed, when last I traversed them, but not so waste and desolate as they now are; not so haggard and utterly sterile. They were then ravaged by war, but they now show like a long untrodden desert." While he was lamenting these evidences of total depopulation, they gained the top of the ascent, when he uttered an involuntary cry, and remained for some seconds petrified and speechless. "Eli!" he at length ejaculated, as the tears trickled down upon his beard, "what a horrible and awful sight! There is the hill of Moriah,—but where is the stately Temple, that other hill of marble and gold that crowned its summit? Where are the numerous courts and enclosures of that seemingly impregnable citadel,—where is the Holy of Holies, where the
great and magnificent galleries that ran round the whole stupendous fabric? Where are the lofty walls and towers, and stately palaces, and innumerable houses? Where is the City of God? Gone, gone, gone! All ashes, rubbish, dust! Oh, Mariamne, my child, is not this a fearful and a withering sight? I had heard that the ploughshare had been passed over the ground where the Temple of the Lord once stood, but I would not believe it. Lo! not a stone of it is left standing! Now, indeed, do I feel that the God of Israel has deserted his people. The Holy City is swept away from the face of the earth. Lo! the abiding place of the Lord, and of his angels, saints, and prophets, hath disappeared; and methinks I should hardly be more astounded were the sun and moon and stars to fall from heaven and become extinct!"

Mariamne's heart throbbed; she could scarcely see the dismal prospect before her for the fast-flowing tears that dimmed her eyes; and, after having remained for some time silent, she looked up to Heaven, ejaculating, in the words of the Psalm, "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy Temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a heap of stones."

"Three lofty structures still remain standing," said Hadad, who, though deeply affected, was naturally less overcome than his companions, never having seen Jerusalem in its high and palmy state of glory.

"They are the towers built by Herod," said Aaron. "Titus ordered that those massive fortresses should be left undemolished as evidences of his victory." The Hebrew and his daughter stood for some time weeping and bursting into fresh ejaculations of woe and amazement as they contemplated the harrowing prospect before them; while Hadad bent his eyes upon the scene of desolation, silently reflecting upon the nothingness of man and his works, since the accumulated labour of ages, together with almost a whole people, once the chosen nation of the Lord, could thus be swept from the face of the earth in a comparative moment.

With lingering feet and heavy hearts they at length moved forward towards the site of the city; but so utter
had been the destruction, nothing at first presenting itself to the eye but confused masses of rubbish, that even Aaron, conversant as he had once been with all the localities, could scarcely now distinguish a single one. The fountain Siloam, and the brook Cedron, and the features of nature, indeed, remained unaltered, as if to mock the comparative evanescency of man's most glorious structures; but he could scarcely determine with certainty where any of the more celebrated buildings, except the Temple, once reared their stately heads. "Here, however, must have stood the Potter's Gate, from the vicinity of which we made our escape," he said to Mariamne; "and in this direction must have been the prison, and Monobuzac's Palace, and the House of Lebanon wood; and across this ravine, now nearly filled with ruins, we must pass to the hill of Moriah, once crowned with the wonder of the world, the glorious Temple." Upon climbing, not without difficulty from the broken nature of the ground, to the site of the sacred edifice, they found numerous pilgrims and devotees of both sexes, some singing together with great energy the 79th Psalm, others passionately kissing the earth, beating their bosoms, weeping, sobbing, invoking curses upon the heathen, and appealing to Heaven in paroxysms of uncontrollable grief and religious ecstacy: a spectacle of misery and enthusiasm which the visitants could not contemplate without fresh and profound emotion. "In this direction stood the Beautiful Gate," said Aaron, when he had recovered sufficient self-possession to resume his duties as a guide: "and here must have been the Golden Window, looking towards the north apartments; and yonder ran the great outer gallery, where the six thousand fugitives were burnt to death; and here, where we are now standing, within the Court of the Priests, must have been the altar;—and this way," continued the Hebrew, hesitating to advance, and dropping his voice to a reverential whisper, "was the Sanctuary leading into the Holy of Holies."

Low broken stones having been set up to designate the boundaries of the latter enclosure, the pious pilgrims had refrained from treading within its hallowed precincts. Our travellers gazed upon the space within which had been
treasured the most sacred symbols of the Hebrews, the ark and the mercy-seat, whence the Divine Majesty, sitting between the cherubim, had given his oracles to Moses and the High Priests; and upon this spot, so especially sanctified to the imaginations of a whole devout people during such a long lapse of ages, they now saw weeds growing in the midst of ashes and rubbish! Turning away from the withering spectacle with feelings of indignant grief and humiliation which it would be impossible to describe, they proceeded, at Aaron's suggestion, to the upper town, where a far different scene awaited them. It is much easier to destroy the strongest city than to eradicate a religious principle rooted in the heart's core of a whole community. Numerous Jews, flocking from remote parts of Palestine to the consecrated soil of Jerusalem, were busily employed in rebuilding the houses, availing themselves of the materials furnished by the ruins of the former city, which were abundantly scattered in the ravines and valleys. These new habitations increased so rapidly, that, at a subsequent period, Adrian, the reigning emperor, settled a Roman colony there, to hold the inhabitants in check; and giving to the city the name of Ælia Capitolina, erected a temple to Jupiter on the identical spot where that of the true God had formerly stood. Maddened at this profanation, the indomitable spirit of the Jews once more displayed itself in a desperate insurrection, the result of which was their almost total extermination, and the final demolition of Jerusalem as a Jewish habitation, no Hebrew being allowed even to come within sight of it, except on one day in the year, which was the anniversary of its destruction.*

* At a later period, St. Jerome, an eyewitness of what he states, gives the following animated but unfeeling description of one of these anniversary visits:

"The treacherous husbandmen (alluding to the parable in the Gospel), after having slain the servants and likewise the Son of God, are forbidden to enter Jerusalem except upon the day of sadness and lamentation. They must even pay for the liberty of weeping over the ruins of their city; and, as formerly they purchased with money the blood of Christ, they are now obliged to pay for their own tears, which they must not shed without a price. On the anniversary of the day when Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by the Romans, multitudes are seen, men and women, loaded with years and covered with rags, who, in their persons and attire, bear evident marks of the wrath of God. Whilst the cross upon which our Lord suffered shines upon Mount Calvary, and the church erected upon the tomb whence he arose from the dead is radiant in its glory, and the standard of the cross planted upon Mount Olivet glitters in the sun, this people, as undeserving of compassion as they are
Aaron's feelings were not so totally engrossed by the evidences of national calamity surrounding him on every side, as to forget altogether his individual concerns. After much toilful search, little warranted by the object, he guided his companions to the spot where, as he conjectured, his dwelling-house had formerly stood, merely that he might vaunt his prudence in having dug up his buried treasure, and made his escape with Mariamne before the worst horrors of the siege, and the capture of the city, had yet received their consummation. Of old Zachary, his faithful servant, he spoke with regret, not doubting that he had perished in the slaughter; expressing, at the same time, a great desire to know whether he had buried the money he left in his hands, and whether there would be any possibility of recovering it.

Having wandered for some time amid the blackened ruins, and visited every spot in the neighbourhood that derived interest from religious or historical associations, our travellers turned away from the doomed hills whereon had stood, for so many ages, the stately city of Jerusalem, and pursued their course with heavy hearts in the direction of the sea. Aaron, who, from the desolation he had just been contemplating, looked forward with additional pleasure to the splendour, happiness, and security that he anticipated in Italy, was the first to recover his spirits; but Hadad remained plunged in sad and silent reveries; while Mariamne, overwhelmed and almost stupified by the horror of what she had seen, could not reply, or even listen, to her father's loquacity. It was some consolation, however, to both, that the country appeared to be in a much more tranquil, and even a less desolate state than when they had last traversed it; a circumstance from which they were led to hope that they should reach the shores of the Mediterranean without incurring any danger. In this expectation no disappointment occurred: their voyage being not less fortunate than their journey, they landed in due time at

wretched, bewail the ruin of their Temple. While the tears are yet upon their cheeks, their hair dishevelled, and their arms livid with self-inflicted blows, comes a soldier who demands money of them if they would have the liberty of weeping any longer.
Neapolis, where Hadad, at the suggestion of his father-in-law, dropped the name he had lately borne, and resumed his patronymic of Caius Lucius, by which we shall henceforward distinguish him. Rather dejected than elated at the prospect of the approaching change in his fortunes, and of a return to the hollow, heartless courtesies of civilised life, Lucius already felt his old misanthropy, though in a much less acrimonious form, beginning to steal upon his mind; and having an invincible repugnance to the official forms and communications that might be necessary to put him in possession of his villa and estates, he willingly deputed the management of the whole affair to Aaron.

Most cheerfully did that active agent undertake the commission, bustling about with a zeal and pomposity proportioned to his sense of the object to be attained. Leaving his companions at the port where they had landed, he went forward to the birthplace of Lucius, which was at an easy distance, to demand restoration of the estates, and to make whatever preliminary arrangements might be necessary to give éclat to his triumphal entrance into the town, and his re-occupation of the paternal villa; for such it might be termed, being situated without the walls, and provided with many of the luxuries of a country house. After an absence of three days, he returned with the joyful intelligence that no opposition whatever was made to the claim; that all the tenants of the houses and vineyards which constituted the estate were anxious to recognise Lucius as their landlord and proprietor; and that his townsmen were unanimous in the wish to make reparation for their former illiberality, by giving him the most cordial and distinguished reception in their power. To this information he added, that when the perjury and ingratitude of Julius Milo had been made public by the dying declaration of the usurper, both himself and his wife Drusilla had been hooted from the town with every mark of ignominy, nor did any one know what had since become of them; and he concluded his budget of good news with fresh congratulations and embraces, which, however, did not seem to exhilarate his son-in-law. "I have experienced," said the latter, shaking his head distrustfully,
"how much value is to be attached to the sordid goodwill of my fellow-townsmen, — what confidence I ought to place in the smiles of fortune, — and I will not again be made the dupe of either. Acceding to your wishes, those of my dear Mariamne, and the interests of our children, I am, nevertheless, ready to resume my patrimony, and again to occupy that rank in society to which I am entitled by my birth."

Mariamne did not share this philosophic indifference; becoming gradually imbued with her father's notions as to the paramount importance of wealth and distinction; and sanctifying this feeling by an impression that it was her bounden duty to secure the advantages of fortune for her children, she was not a little elated at the prospect of the new and more exalted sphere of life upon which she was about to enter. Averse from all display, Lucius would have resumed possession of his villa and patrimony in the quietest and most unostentatious manner possible; but this neither accorded with the nascent ambition of Mariamne, nor with the pride of the bustle-loving Aaron, who, not being chary of expense when another was to bear its burden, and himself and daughter to participate in the state and homage it might excite, not only engaged a handsome equipage to convey them to the town, but apprised the municipality beforehand of the intended hour of their arrival. Their entrance, therefore, was something like a petty triumph, all Lucius's tenants coming out to meet and congratulate him, followed by half the inhabitants of the place, who welcomed the new-comers with every demonstration of joy; and scarcely had Lucius reached his villa, when a deputation presented themselves, requesting permission to replace upon the list of their municipal Decurions the name of the "much-injured" Caius Lucius. Disgusted rather than flattered at the sordid timeserving spirit that had dictated the offer, he thus dryly, and, as some thought, cynically declined it. "That I have been much injured, my fellow-citizens, no one knows better than yourselves; but as the dispossession from my estate afforded no valid plea for your depriving me of the office, the recovery of my rights gives me no claim to be restored
to it. If you require a Decurion who is secure against the corruption of judges, or the perjury and ingratitude of his dearest friends, you must search elsewhere; for I doubt whether you will find him in all Campania." Though the applicants felt the rebuke, they persisted in pressing their point; but as the recusant remained immovable, they were fain to retire without accomplishing their purpose.

Scarcely more gracious was his reception of others who pressed forward with interested felicitations, or thought to ingratiate themselves by lavishing abuse upon Milo, Drusilla, and the deceased usurper of the estate. Their calculating courtesies were detected and despised; their attempted flatteries were repressed with a stern frown; not even their most insidious and wheedling artifices could deceive him: they only served partially to revive that misanthropical spirit which, under the mellowing operation of time and the soothing influence of domestic happiness, had for some years past been gradually softening down. In the general corruption of manners, it might have been difficult for him to find a spirit so manly, philosophical, and upright as his own; and he had no wish, like Diogenes, to light a lantern and go about the town searching for an honest man. Long accustomed to seclusion, and revolting from the companionship of neighbours, all of whom seemed to be actuated by the same abject, grovelling selfishness, he gladly betook himself to his favourite study of astronomy, and to the enlargement and decoration of his library. Even the superintendence of his estate, and the control of his household affairs, soon became so irksome to him, that he willingly resigned the former to the care of Aaron, the latter to the absolute disposal of Mariamne.

Than Aaron he could not well have selected a better or more competent steward; but to invest the inexperienced Mariamne with the unstinted command of money, and the sole direction of a large establishment, was an indiscreet and unfortunate measure. Suddenly acquired riches, especially when their possessor has been educated in poverty, have generally proved a dangerous gift; nor was Mariamne qualified by her disposition, amiable as it was, to offer any exception to the rule. Stability of character she did not
possess. As her ductile mind easily received the form stamped upon it by surrounding circumstances, it was no inconsistency that the same individual who at the hermitage had been diffident, unassuming, and humble, should, when suddenly transported into the totally different sphere she now occupied, where she was exposed to all the seductions of fortune and the blandishments of flattery, gradually become vain, confident, and haughty. Like many others of stronger mental temperament than herself, she could bear adversity much better than prosperity. The sycophants and parasites who had been instantly discomfited when they presumed to assail Lucius, found little difficulty in gaining the ear, and perverting the judgment, of his flexible wife; nor can we wonder that when she saw the profound and wide-spread homage her wealth and station procured her, she should attach a proportionate importance to their possession. Her flatterers, affecting to be rapturous admirers of the foreign style of her beauty, so much superior to that of the Romans, piqued her ambition, by giving her the palm over all her rivals, not only in personal charms, but in the fashion of her dress, as well as the taste and splendour of her entertainments. To justify this adulation, not less than to mortify the hostile belles, some of whom kept aloof, and spoke slightingly of her as a Jewess and a barbarian, Mariamne, with a spirit worthy of a better cause, defied their illiberal and unsocial spirit, and, if she could not conciliate, was resolved at least to eclipse them. Her duty to her children had been adduced as an argument for taking possession of the estate; and her duty to her husband was now urged as a pretext for exhibiting all the splendour that so productive an estate warranted her in assuming. As the wife of Caius Lucius, she was determined to assert her dignity, to show these proud Roman dames that she would take her rank with the best of them. Not that she valued such distinctions herself, but she would not suffer the honour of her husband to be compromised.

Her vanity and ambition being sanctioned, as she imagined, by so laudable a motive, she plunged boldly into expense, imported the newest fashions from Rome, outvied every competitor in the magnificence of her attire, surpassed
all opponents in the variety and costliness of her entertain-
ments; outflashed all others by the superior brilliancy of
her diamonds at the public shows and spectacles, where she
always selected the most conspicuous place. Artists were
brought from the capital to paint and decorate the walls of
her apartments, to build larger and more sumptuous baths,
to tessellate her floors in the last improved style; festive
wreaths were almost daily suspended over the doorway;
every room resounded with the revelry of dancers, singers,
musicians, and buffoons. From a spirit of nationality,
Aaron had not been sorry to excite mortification and envy
in those who had presumed to twit himself and his
daughter with being barbarians; but he at length took
alarm at the expenses of her triumph, and counselled her
on the subject. The once submissive and acquiescent
Mariamne, however, had now become self-willed. She
would not be deficient, she said, in filial respect; but she
added, with a look and tone of hauteur, that she must be
the mistress of her own house; that she must uphold her
husband’s dignity; and she proceeded to issue orders for a
still more magnificent entertainment than any she had yet
given.

Disturbed in his studies by the confusion of his house,
and the uncongenial sounds of festive riot, Lucius had more
than once expostulated with his wife, warning her that the
sycophants who prompted and benefited by her profusion
were but as the swallows, who came to feather their nests
beneath her roof, during the sunshine and summer of her
prosperity, but who would fly away with the first wintry
cloud, leaving nothing but dirt and rubbish behind them.
Sanguine and inexperienced, Mariamne would not think so
harshly of her friends, vindicating their attachment, and
defending her enlarged hospitality by the same plea that
she had urged to her father. The husband ridiculed this
pretext, upbraiding his wife with the change in her character,
and her inability to bear the smiles of Fortune so well as
she had endured her frowns. Tears and protestations were
the usual reply to this rebuke, but the conduct that had
called it forth underwent no change. Disappointed and
chagrined, Lucius renewed his complaints in an increasing
tone of asperity, which was met by the reproach that he no longer loved her as he used to do, or he would not interfere with recreations so innocent in themselves, and so consistent with the rank she now occupied in society. A diminution of mutual affection was the natural consequence of these altercations, and occasional estrangements ensued. Lucius confined himself to his study, or made excursions to a small farm that he possessed at the foot of Mount Lactantius, some miles from the town. Mariamne, as her domestic happiness decreased, sought solace in dissipation, and in the pride of giving more numerous and splendid parties than any of her rivals.

Such were the motives that prompted her to make the grand gala, to which we have alluded, more conspicuously magnificent than any of its predecessors. All the inhabitants of the better class were invited without distinction,—friends that they might share her triumph, enemies that they might envy it; no cost or contrivance being spared to justify both feelings, and to prove that the Jewess and the barbarian, as she had been tauntingly termed, could eclipse the proudest of the Roman dames. Not only were the best musicians and singers engaged, but Indian jugglers, buffoons, and dancing-girls were put in requisition to vary the amusements; a little pantomime was prepared, for which a temporary stage had been erected; and a lottery, consisting entirely of prizes, some of considerable value, others designedly insignificant to provoke a laugh, was to wind up the festivities of the day. At an early hour of the morning all was bustle and preparation. Numerous slaves and servants, crowned with chaplets, were busily employed spreading Tyrian carpets, hanging Persian arras and silken draperies upon the walls and windows of the principal saloon, scattering saffron-water and other odoriferous perfumes, suspending wreaths, distributing flowers, bringing in snow from a vault in the garden to cool the wine, shutting out the sun, and preparing large fans to ventilate the guests; for it was the latter end of August, and the weather was unusually sultry.

The master of the mansion, offended at this glaring opposition to his expressed wishes, took no art in the pro-
ceedings, and even declined to appear, confining himself to his study. His displeasure was unheeded, and his assistance was not required. Fired at the thought of the triumph she was about to achieve, Mariamne was everywhere, superintending, ordering, and altering, until she had seen every preparation completed, when she attired herself with the utmost magnificence, and seating herself in her vestibule, awaited with a beating heart the arrival of her guests. Wreathed with flowers, and decked in all their gala finery, her visitants soon poured in, spreading themselves through the apartments, admiring, wondering, ridiculing, and abusing, according to their respective feelings. In the hearing of Mariamne, however, there was but one tone— that of unbounded admiration and flattery. With affected ecstasy, some lauded the splendour of the atrium or vestibule, in the centre of which a fountain diffused a refreshing coolness; others praised the paintings and rare devices on the walls, the beautifully tesselated floors and mosaic figures, the gorgeous preparations for the banquet; every thing, in short, obtained the most zealous eulogies in the hearing of the hostess, although many of her flatterers took an ample revenge when her back was turned. Whatever might be the feelings of individuals, their countenances told no tales, and the festival presented a gay, glittering, joyous scene, that extorted admiration even from the envious. As the throng increased, some betook themselves to alcoves and recesses to play dice; the ladies who had white and delicate hands had recourse to the game of morra*; many strolled into the garden at the back of the house, some walked in the ambulatory: but the greatest number was collected on a raised terrace with seats and summer-houses, which commanded a delightful view over the rich and fertile plain of Pompeii, enlivened with towns and villas, among which wound the meandering river Sarnus; the prospect being bounded on the left by the distant islands and gleaming waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea; on the right by the deep blue hills of Nola and Nocera, whence the river might be traced; and in front by Mount Vesuvius, at that time overshedaded

* Guessing at the number of fingers mutually raised up; a game still played by the lower orders in Italy.
with groves, luxuriant orchards, and vineyards, and so far from inspiring any terror—for it was unknown as an active volcano—that the poets had imagined it to be an Elysium of pleasure, and the favourite resort of the rural deities.

On the terrace had presently assembled the mass of the company from all quarters, attracted by a vast and singular cloud ascending into the atmosphere from the summit of the mountain, in some places dark and spotted, in others vividly bright. Upon this strange object all eyes were presently fixed with a deep interest, but without any feeling of alarm, watching it as it majestically climbed higher, and higher, and higher still, until it had attained an immense elevation, when it spread out horizontally, in form like the branches of a pine. At this juncture a violent shock of an earthquake was felt; the tiles from the top of Lucius’s house were shaken down into the paved court with a loud crash; and the Pompeians, whose city had been nearly destroyed by a similar calamity not many years ago, becoming instantly sensible of their danger, were seized with a frenzy of terror. Ere yet they could rush from the terrace, from the garden, from the apartments of Lucius’s villa, without knowing whither they should fly, the enormous cloud they had been watching burst with a stunning and astounding explosion, precipitating over the whole country an uninterrupted torrent of hot cinders and pumice stones, mixed with black and broken pieces of burning rock and boiling mud, which veiling the light of the sun, completed the horror of the scene by a mid-day darkness. Throughout the villa of Lucius, and indeed the whole town of Pompeii, all was confusion, flight, and an agony of terror; the shrieks of women, the cries and clamour of men, and the wailful lowing and howling of maddened cattle, being mingled with the repeated explosions of the mountain, as it vomited forth its burning bowels into the air.

At the first alarm, Mariamne, exhausted and unnerved by her previous exertions, sank fainting upon the terrace; her children, whom she had fantastically dressed up for the festive party, ran screaming to seek their father; the guests, not one of whom offered the smallest assistance to their helpless hostess, hurried to their own homes, except
a few who took refuge in the cellars of the villa as the only place of immediate safety; the slaves, as usual upon all occasions of consternation and confusion, betook themselves to pillage, bursting tumultuously into the gorgeous banquet-room, devouring the viands and precious wines, and then decamping with the plate. Starting from his study at the first shock of the earthquake, Lucius ran into the garden, and meeting his terrified children, was by them conducted to their still senseless mother, whom he took up in his arms, and carried into one of the wooden summer-houses, being afraid to convey her to the main building, lest its roof should be endangered by new shocks of the earthquake. Desiring his children to remain there, he hurried to procure restoratives from the villa, assailed, both in going and returning, by the falling masses of volcanic matter, as well as by the noxious exhalations they emitted. He returned, however, in safety, and by proper applications soon succeeded in reviving Mariamne, although so confused by the uncertain recollection of what had occurred, and scared by the terrific noises of the mountain, and the clatter of the falling materials on the wooden covering of the summer-house, as to be quite stupidified and bewildered, and only able to utter incoherent ejaculations. Distressed and awe-stricken at this great convulsion of nature, but still firm and collected in the midst of it, Lucius thought only of preserving the lives of his family,—an object which seemed most likely to be attained, should the eruption continue and the concussions be renewed, by removing them to the sea-shore, and getting them on board ship. The dire commotion of the elements might, however, subside as rapidly as it had burst forth, in which case it would be better to remain at the villa, than expose his family to the dangers of a removal. Aaron, whom Lucius had at length found, after shouting out his name for a considerable time, concurring in this opinion, they remained watching the awful phenomena before and around them until night came on, when a momentary pause gave reason to hope that the worst throes of nature were over. Suddenly, however, broad refulgent expanses of fire burst from every part of Vesuvius, and shining with re-
doubled splendour through the darkness, glared over a scene now accompanied by the horrors of a continued earthquake, which, shaking the edifices from their foundations, and precipitating their roofs upon the heads of the affrighted beings who had sought shelter beneath them, threatened universal desolation.

As a part of the villa and its supporting columns fell to the earth with a frightful crash, burying in its ruins all that remained unpillaged of the magnificent banquet, Lucius thanked Heaven that he had taken refuge in the wooden summer-house, which, though it rocked violently to and fro, did not fall to pieces. Instant flight seeming now to be the only chance of safety, he committed Mariamne and her children to the care of Aaron, and hurried to the offices, which still remained standing, for the purpose of procuring a carriage to convey them away. From his numerous slaves and servants, even if he could have found them, no obedience was to be expected at such a moment of panic and universal insubordination; but the powerful and undismayed Lucius needed little extraneous assistance when his own resolute energies were once called forth. Blindfolding two of his stoutest mules, to prevent their being startled by the incessant flashes, he harnessed them to a carriage,—which he had previously dragged, by incredible exertions, over a mound of rubbish,—when he returned for his wife and children, encouraging them by the collected firmness of his demeanour, while he exhibited so much tenderness, forethought, and solicitude for their safety, that the now conscious Mariamne felt a pang at her heart as she recollected how often she had latterly accused him of being cynical and morose, and upbraided him with a diminution of his love. Binding his robe, which he tore for the purpose, around their heads as a protection against the falling stones and cinders, he escorted them to the carriage, placed them within it, and desired Aaron to follow, declaring that he himself would be their driver.

"I cannot leave the villa," cried Aaron, "without my money. All that I am worth in the world is secured in an iron box beneath the stairs of my bed-room. I will
run for it—those apartments remain uninjured—and will return to you immediately."

"Madman!" exclaimed Lucius indignantly, "what is a bag of dross at such a moment as this?"

"Ten times more precious than ever. Are we not all utterly ruined? and may I not be reduced to beg my bread unless I can secure this treasure?"

"I will not endanger lives more dear to me than my own, for an object so sordid and contemptible."

"And I value not my life without the means of living. Risk nothing, however, on my account. Drive on—drive on, and I will overtake you before you reach the end of the road of Tombs." With these words Aaron ran towards the house, spite of the entreaties of Mariamne and the reproaches of her husband, who left him, as he said, to his own obstinacy and avarice, and urged forward his mules, already restrained with the utmost difficulty, from the heat of the cinders accumulated around their legs. At the end of the road of Tombs Lucius stopped, calling loudly and repeatedly upon Aaron; but his voice, powerful as it was, was drowned in the universal uproar. Ashes and rubbish, mixed with hot liquid mud, fell around them in such quantities, that a little delay would have imbedded and glued them to the ground; and all farther deliberation was quickly prevented by the mules themselves, who, wounded and maddened by the pumice-stones, became unmanageable, and plunged wildly forward.

In the open country, where they had anticipated greater safety, spectacles of terror and misery burst upon them with hideous aggravation. Numerous fugitives, covering their heads with pillows, or whatever defence they could snatch up, ran about wildly and with piteous outcries. Many were lying dead, either killed by the fall of heavy stones, or poisoned by noxious exhalations; others, thrown down by the rocking of the earth, and unable to arise, were imploring that aid which all needed and none could afford. The concussions became so violent that the carriages, agitated to and fro, could scarcely be kept upright, even when propped with stones; the intense darkness was
rendered more appalling by the fitful glare of torches, or the transient blaze of lightning that revealed new sights of misery, new objects of terror; while the horror of the whole scene was consummated by incessant and tremendous explosions from the volcano, resembling peals of the loudest thunder, accompanied with a continued hoarse bellowing, and rushing noises, as of the sea in a violent storm. The disturbed imaginations of the fugitives, adding chimerical dangers to those that were real, conjured up before them huge giants and terrific spectres, stalking about with menacing gestures through the gleaming darkness. No wonder that the wretched Pompeians, as they witnessed this universal convulsion of Nature, imagined that Earth was returning to her primæval chaos; that the last day was come, and that gods and men, and the world itself, were about to be involved in one universal ruin. To our Hebrews it recalled the recorded destruction of the cities of abomination; and Mariamne and her children would almost have abandoned every hope of escape, especially when they saw the numbers perishing around them, but for the sustaining fortitude and presence of mind of Lucius, who upheld their sinking courage, and pledged himself either to effect their deliverance, or to perish with them.

Resolutely did he press forward towards the beach, imagining, as did multitudes of others, that the sea would afford certain means of retreat; but the boisterous agitation of that element, occasioned by the convulsive heaving of the earth, precluded all possibility of escape, and only increased the danger by accumulating the people in dense masses. A cloud of thick smoke, bringing with it a shower of fine ashes and the most noxious exhalations, rolled like a torrent among the miserable fugitives, who, in their consternation, crushed and trampled down one another, as they pressed forward without an object, amid darkness and desolation, some invoking death with outstretched hands to deliver them from such insupportable anguish. This was by far the greatest danger our Hebrews had to encounter, though their whole flight was a succession of continued life-perils. More than once was Lucius in danger of suffocation from the
smoke*, of being overwhelmed with the volcanic matter, or borne down by the blind and maddened crowd; but his mules were fortunately young and vigorous, and after incredible exertions, and a hundred hairbreadth escapes, he at length succeeded in disentangling his carriage from the throng, turned the mules' heads towards the East, and was eventually fortunate enough to reach his little farm at the foot of Mount Lactantius, himself covered with bruises, but without any serious injury, while his wife and children had only suffered from the effects of terror and exhaustion. Mariamne's mind, however, remained sunk in such an utter prostration, that she could scarcely utter a word. When she caught a view of her pale and haggard features in a mirror, and surveyed her magnificent gala-dress all soiled and torn, and the blaze of her diamonds quenched in dirt and ashes, a deep sense of humiliation sent a pang to her heart; a conviction of her own folly, vanity, and arrogance, and of the worthlessness of her pretended friends, filled her with a sharp remorse; and as she sank upon her knees, endeavouring to return thanks to Heaven that herself and her family had thus far been spared in the general calamity, she penitently murmured—"Richly have I merited that the dust and ashes, wherewith I am now covered, should for ever be my portion; in sackcloth—in sackcloth, not in these gorgeous trappings, should I be clad:"—and as she spake she tore away her gauds and jewels, dashed them upon the ground in a passion of repentant grief, and then pouring forth her thanks for the signal and undeserved mercy she had experienced, made the most solemn vows of future amendment.

Fortunate, indeed, might Lucius be deemed in thus having reached a place of comparative security, while the mass of the Pompeians remained for three days and nights exposed to all the anguish of suspense—all the fury of the still raging volcano. Many were stifled by the mephitic vapour; others, spent with the toil of forcing their way through deep and almost impassable roads, sank down to rise no more; some died from terror and inanition. On

* It proved fatal, as is well known, to the elder Pliny, on the beach at Stabia.
the fourth morning the darkness began gradually to clear away, the real day appeared, the sun shining with a wan, ghastly light, as in an eclipse: but all nature, to the weakened eyes, seem changed; for towns and fields had disappeared under one expanse of white ashes, or were doubtfully marked here and there, like the more prominent objects after an Alpine fall of snow.

It was Lucius's first care, as soon as he could venture forth with safety, to seek the missing Aaron, whose probable fate had inspired the most lively alarms, both in himself and Mariamne. For this purpose he returned to Pompeii, contemplating the still smoking ruins with a withering of heart almost as intense as that which he had felt in surveying the desolation of the once stately Jerusalem: but, alas! the road of the Tombs where he was to have met his father-in-law was no longer distinguishable; and of his own handsome villa nothing remained but a few columns, more than half buried in ashes, and in the rubbish of the pediment and roof which they had once supported. From his fellow-townsmen whom he found upon the spot, endeavouring to individualise their habitations, and glean something from the wrecks, he could gather no tidings of Aaron, but was himself beset with inquiries respecting the guests at his wife's grand entertainment, many of whom were missing. He could furnish no information whatever. They were never heard of after; neither the bodies of these individuals nor that of Aaron could be found, though a most diligent search was made for them.*

So utterly devoid of selfishness was the mind of Lucius, so completely was it engrossed in regret for the probable

* At Pompeii, in the year 1775, a suburban villa was excavated, at the entrance to which, from the road of the Tombs, was found the skeleton of an individual holding a purse containing many coins and medals, and a key. In a subterranean passage of the same building amid large earthen wine vases, ranged in order against the walls, were discovered twenty-three other skeletons, with ear-rings, bracelets, and various ornaments, the bones of the fingers of some still adhering to trifling articles they had wished to preserve. It is presumed they died from suffocation, since the volcanic powder was so fine that the forms of their persons and apparel remained impressed on the indurated matter. The mould of the bosom of one is yet shown in the Museum of Naples. Whether the first skeleton be that of Aaron with his treasure, and the key of his iron box; and the latter-mentioned remains, those of Mariamne's gaily attired guests who took refuge in the cellar, we leave to the conjectures of our readers.
fate of Aaron, and commiseration for the sufferers whom he had seen deploring the loss of relatives or the destitution of property, that his own altered circumstances did not occur to him until after his return to the farm. His houses were laid prostrate, his vineyards were covered with ashes, his whole estate was a mass of rubbish, not worth an obolus. But he was too much of a philosopher to grieve for the privation of that, the possession of which had afforded him so little pleasure; and he had subsequent reason to congratulate himself that, if he had lost a fortune, he had at least found a wife. From that moment Mariamne became an altered and amended woman. A belief in the special judgments of Heaven springs less perhaps from the piety than from the vanity of individuals, who imagine themselves of sufficient importance in the eyes of the Deity to justify a deviation from the ordinary course of nature. From this weakness Mariamne was not free. She could not divest herself of the impression that the loss of her father, and the deprivation of the fortune she had abused, were intended as judicial punishments for her pride, extravagance, and ostentation: an idea which, however it might be founded in error, was productive of the most salutary effects. Shaking off the intoxication produced by her sudden accession to wealth, she became once more what she had been at the hermitage in Judæa, meek, lowly, simple-minded, devoted to her children, to her household duties, but, above all, anxious, by her submissive and affectionate demeanour to her husband, to make some atonement for that temporary interruption to their conjugal attachment and happiness of which she had been the cause; a happiness, however, which flowed over the remainder of their lives with the greater fulness from the momentary stoppage of its current. Nor did his change of circumstances prove less beneficial to Lucius than to his wife. Annoyed by the uncongenial splendour and gaiety of his villa, disgusted with the sordid flatteries of his wife's "flies and shadows,"—for so he termed her sycophants and parasites,—his misanthropical humour had been rapidly recovering its ascendancy over his mind; while in the retirement of his present life, in the occupations of his
little farm, in his studies, in the education of his children, in the society and affection of the reformed Mariamne, he regained that equanimity which had blessed the latter years of his abode at the hermitage; and though he would still occasionally indulge in cynical remarks upon his fellow-creatures, there was nothing acrimonious in his heart, nothing uncharitable in his actions. "We should both have been ultimately spoilt," would he often say to his wife, "had we retained our estate. Twice has its deprivation restored me to happiness. Thank Heaven! it is now gone for ever! Our example, as well as our precepts, dearest Mariamne, will inculcate upon our children this most useful and most true of all lessons,—that prosperity, misused, is generally our heaviest curse; while adversity, improved, not less frequently becomes our greatest blessing!"

THE END.
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