

In this extremity no other alternative seemed to remain, than to attempt to regain the route from which they had departed. As all other considerations were now subordinate to those of personal safety, it was agreed to abandon the spoil acquired at so much hazard, which greatly retarded their movements. As they painfully retraced their steps, the darkness of the night was partially dispelled by numerous fires, which blazed along the hill-tops, and which showed the figures of their enemies flitting to and fro like so many spectres. It seemed, says Bernaldez, as if ten thousand torches were glancing along the mountains. At length, the whole body, faint with fatigue and hunger, reached the borders of a little stream, which flowed through a valley, whose avenues, as well as the rugged heights by which it was commanded, were already occupied by the enemy, who poured down mingled volleys of shot, stones, and arrows on the heads of the Christians. The compact mass presented by the latter afforded a sure mark to the artillery of the Moors; while they, from their scattered position, as well as from the defences afforded by the nature of the ground, were exposed to little annoyance in return. In addition to lighter missiles, the Moors occasionally dislodged large fragments of rock, which, rolling with tremendous violence down the declivities of the hills, spread frightful desolation through the Christian ranks.²⁶

²⁶ Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, Hist. d'Afrique et d'Espagne, tom. MS., cap. 60. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, ubi supra. — Cardonne, iii. pp. 264-267.

PART
I.

They re-
solve to
force a
passage.

The dismay occasioned by these scenes, occurring amidst the darkness of night, and heightened by the shrill war-cries of the Moors, which rose around them on every quarter, seems to have completely bewildered the Spaniards, even their leaders. It was the misfortune of the expedition, that there was but little concert between the several commanders, or, at least, that there was no one so preëminent above the rest as to assume authority at this awful moment. So far, it would seem, from attempting escape, they continued in their perilous position, uncertain what course to take, until midnight; when at length, after having seen their best and bravest followers fall thick around them, they determined at all hazards to force a passage across the sierra in the face of the enemy. "Better lose our lives," said the grand master of St. James, addressing his men, "in cutting a way through the foe, than be butchered without resistance, like cattle in the shambles."²⁷

The marquis of Cadiz, guided by a trusty adalid, and accompanied by sixty or seventy lances, was fortunate enough to gain a circuitous route less vigilantly guarded by the enemy, whose attention was drawn to the movements of the main body of the Castilian army. By means of this path, the marquis with his little band succeeded, after a painful march, in which his good steed sunk under him oppressed with wounds and fatigue, in reaching a

²⁷ Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, p. 206. — Rades y Andrada, Las Tres Ordenes, fol. 71, 72

valley at some distance from the scene of action, where he determined to wait the coming up of his friends, who he confidently expected would follow on his track.²⁸

But the grand master and his associates, missing this track in the darkness of the night, or perhaps preferring another, breasted the sierra in a part where it proved extremely difficult of ascent. At every step the loosened earth gave way under the pressure of the foot, and, the infantry endeavouring to support themselves by clinging to the tails and manes of the horses, the jaded animals, borne down with the weight, rolled headlong with their riders on the ranks below, or were precipitated down the sides of the numerous ravines. The Moors, all the while, avoiding a close encounter, contented themselves with discharging on the heads of their opponents an unintermitted shower of missiles of every description.²⁹

Difficulties
of the as-
cent.

It was not until the following morning, that the Castilians, having surmounted the crest of the eminence, began the descent into the opposite valley, which they had the mortification to observe was commanded on every point by their vigilant adversary, who seemed now in their eyes to possess the powers of ubiquity. As the light broke upon the troops, it revealed the whole extent of their

Dreadful
slaughter.

²⁸ Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, loc. cit. — Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 60.

²⁹ Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, p. 206.

Mr. Irving, in his "Conquest of

Granada," states that the scene of the greatest slaughter in this rout is still known to the inhabitants of the Axarquia by the name of *La Cuesta de la Matanza*, or "The Hill of the Massacre."

PART
I.

melancholy condition. How different from the magnificent array which, but two days previous, marched forth with such high and confident hopes from the gates of Antequera! their ranks thinned, their bright arms defaced and broken, their banners rent in pieces, or lost, — as had been that of St. James, together with its gallant *alferez*, Diego Becerra, in the terrible passage of the preceding night, — their countenances aghast with terror, fatigue, and famine. Despair now was in every eye, all subordination was at an end. No one, says Pulgar, heeded any longer the call of the trumpet, or the wave of the banner. Each sought only his own safety, without regard to his comrade. Some threw away their arms; hoping by this means to facilitate their escape, while in fact it only left them more defenceless against the shafts of their enemies. Some, oppressed with fatigue and terror, fell down and died without so much as receiving a wound. The panic was such, that, in more than one instance, two or three Moorish soldiers were known to capture thrice their own number of Spaniards. Some, losing their way, strayed back to Malaga and were made prisoners by females of the city, who overtook them in the fields. Others escaped to Alhama or other distant places, after wandering seven or eight days among the mountains, sustaining life on such wild herbs and berries as they could find, and lying close during the day. A greater number succeeded in reaching Antequera, and, among these, most of the leaders of the expedition. The grand master of St. James, the adelantado Henriquez,

and Don Alonso de Aguilar effected their escape by scaling so perilous a part of the sierra that their pursuers cared not to follow. The count de Cifuentes was less fortunate.³⁰ That nobleman's division was said to have suffered more severely than any other. On the morning after the bloody passage of the mountain, he found himself suddenly cut off from his followers, and surrounded by six Moorish cavaliers, against whom he was defending himself with desperate courage, when their leader, Reduan Benegas, struck with the inequality of the combat, broke in, exclaiming, "Hold, this is unworthy of good knights." The assailants sunk back abashed by the rebuke, and left the count to their commander. A close encounter then took place between the two chiefs; but the strength of the Spaniard was no longer equal to his spirit, and, after a brief resistance, he was forced to surrender to his generous enemy.³¹

The marquis of Cadiz had better fortune. After waiting till dawn for the coming up of his friends, he concluded that they had extricated themselves by a different route. He resolved to provide for his own safety and that of his followers, and, being

Marquis of
Cadiz es-
capes.

³⁰ Oviedo, who devotes one of his dialogues to this nobleman, says of him, "Fue una de las buenas lanzas de nuestra España en su tiempo; y muy sabio y prudente caballero. Hallose en grandes cargos y negocios de paz y de guerra." *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 36.

³¹ Conde, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom. iii. p. 218. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. fol. 321. — Car-

bajal, *Anales*, MS., año 1483. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, ubi supra. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap. 60. — Cardonne, *Hist. d'Afrique et d'Espagne*, tom. iii. pp. 266, 267. — The count, according to Oviedo, remained a long while a prisoner in Granada, until he was ransomed by the payment of several thousand doblas of gold. *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 36.

PART
I.

supplied with a fresh horse, accomplished his escape, after traversing the wildest passages of the Axarquía for the distance of four leagues, and got into Antequera with but little interruption from the enemy. But, although he secured his personal safety, the misfortunes of the day fell heavily on his house; for two of his brothers were cut down by his side, and a third brother, with a nephew, fell into the hands of the enemy.³²

Losses of the
Christians.

The amount of slain in the two days' actions, is admitted by the Spanish writers to have exceeded eight hundred, with double that number of prisoners. The Moorish force is said to have been small, and its loss comparatively trifling. The numerical estimates of the Spanish historians, as usual, appear extremely loose; and the narrative of their enemies is too meagre in this portion of their annals, to allow any opportunity of verification. There is no reason, however, to believe them in any degree exaggerated.

The best blood of Andalusia was shed on this occasion. Among the slain, Bernaldez reckons two hundred and fifty, and Pulgar four hundred persons of quality, with thirty commanders of the military fraternity of St. James. There was scarcely a family in the south, but had to mourn the loss of some one of its members by death or captivity; and the distress was not a little aggravated by the uncertainty which hung over the fate of the absent,

³² Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap. 60. — Marmol says that three brothers and two nephews

of the marquis, whose names he gives, were all slain. *Rebelión de Moriscos*, lib. 1, cap. 12.

as to whether they had fallen in the field, or were still wandering in the wilderness, or were pining away existence in the dungeons of Malaga and Granada.³³

CHAPTER
X.

Some imputed the failure of the expedition to treachery in the adalides, some to want of concert among the commanders. The worthy Curate of Los Palacios concludes his narrative of the disaster in the following manner. "The number of the Moors was small, who inflicted this grievous defeat on the Christians. It was, indeed, clearly miraculous, and we may discern in it the special interposition of Providence, justly offended with the greater part of those that engaged in the expedition; who, instead of confessing, partaking the sacrament, and making their testaments, as becomes good Christians, and men that are to bear arms in defence of the Holy Catholic Faith, acknowledged that they did not bring with them suitable dispositions, but, with little regard to God's service, were influenced by covetousness and love of ungodly gain."³⁴

³³ Zuñiga, *Annales de Sevilla*, fol. 395. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., ubi supra. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, p. 206. — Oviedo, *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 36. — Marmol, *Rebellion de Moriscos*, lib. 1, cap. 12.

³⁴ *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap. 60.

Pulgar has devoted a large space to the unfortunate expedition to the Axarquia. His intimacy with the principal persons of the court, enabled him, no doubt, to verify most of the particulars which he records. The Curate

of Los Palacios, from the proximity of his residence to the theatre of action, may be supposed also to have had ample means for obtaining the requisite information. Yet their several accounts, although not strictly contradictory, it is not always easy to reconcile with one another. The narratives of complex military operations are not likely to be simplified under the hands of monkish bookmen. I have endeavoured to make out a connected tissue from a comparison of the Moslem with the Castilian authorities. But here the

PART
I.

meagreness of the Moslem annals compels us to lament the premature death of Conde. It can hardly be expected, indeed, that the Moors should have dwelt with much amplification on this humiliating period. But there can be little doubt, that far more copious memorials of theirs than any now

published, exist in the Spanish libraries; and it were much to be wished that some oriental scholar would supply Conde's deficiency, by exploring these authentic records of what may be deemed, as far as Christian Spain is concerned, the most glorious portion of her history.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER XI.

WAR OF GRANADA.—GENERAL VIEW OF THE POLICY PURSUED
IN THE CONDUCT OF THIS WAR.

1483 — 1487.

Defeat and Capture of Abdallah. — Policy of the Sovereigns. — Large
Trains of Artillery. — Description of the Pieces. — Stupendous
Roads. — Isabella's Care of the Troops. — Her Perseverance. —
Discipline of the Army. — Swiss Mercenaries. — English Lord
Scales. — Magnificence of the Nobles. — Isabella visits the Camp.
— Ceremonies on the Occupation of a City.

THE young monarch, Abu Abdallah, was probably the only person in Granada, who did not receive with unmingled satisfaction the tidings of the rout in the Axarquía. He beheld with secret uneasiness the laurels thus acquired by the old king his father, or rather by his ambitious uncle El Zagal, whose name now resounded from every quarter as the successful champion of the Moslems. He saw the necessity of some dazzling enterprise, if he would maintain an ascendancy even over the faction which had seated him on the throne. He accordingly projected an excursion, which, instead of terminating in a mere border foray, should lead to the achievement of some permanent conquest.

He found no difficulty, while the spirits of his people were roused, in raising a force of nine thou-

CHAPTER
XI.

Abdallah
marches a-
gainst the
Christians.

PART
I.

sand foot, and seven hundred horse, the flower of Granada's chivalry. He strengthened his army still further by the presence of Ali Atar, the defender of Loja, the veteran of a hundred battles, whose military prowess had raised him from the common file up to the highest post in the army; and whose plebeian blood had been permitted to mingle with that of royalty, by the marriage of his daughter with the young king Abdallah.

Ill omens.

With this gallant array, the Moorish monarch sallied forth from Granada. As he led the way through the avenue which still bears the name of the gate of Elvira,¹ the point of his lance came in contact with the arch, and was broken. This sinister omen was followed by another more alarming. A fox, which crossed the path of the army, was seen to run through the ranks, and, notwithstanding the showers of missiles discharged at him, to make his escape unhurt. Abdallah's counsellors would have persuaded him to abandon, or at least postpone, an enterprise of such ill augury. But the king, less superstitious, or from the obstinacy with which feeble minds, when once resolved, frequently persist in their projects, rejected their advice, and pressed forward on his march.²

1 "Por esa puerta de Elvira
sale muy gran cabalgada:
cuánto del *hidalgo moro*,
cuánto de la yegua baya.

* * * * *
"Cuánta pluma y gentileza,
cuánto capellar de grana,
cuánto bayo borceguí,
cuánto raso que se esmalta,

"Cuánto de espuela de oro,
cuánta estribera de plata!
Toda es gente valerosa,
y esperta para batalla.

"En medio de todos ellos
va el rey Chico de Granada,
mirando las damas moras
de las torres del Alhambra.

"La reina mora su madre
de esta manera le habla:
'Alá te guarde, mi hijo,
Mahoma vaya en tu guarda.'"

Hyta, Guerras de Granada,
tom. i. p. 232.

² Conde, Dominacion de los