

face, gazed on her some moments, as if he would penetrate her very soul; and Leila, recovering her courage in the pause, by degrees, met his eyes, unquailing—her pure and ingenuous brow raised to his, and sadness, but not guilt, speaking from every line of that lovely face.

“Thou dost not tremble,” said Almamen, at length, breaking the silence,—“and I have erred. Thou art not the criminal I deemed thee. Come to my arms!”

“Alas!” said Leila, obeying the instinct, and casting herself upon that rugged bosom,—“I will dare, at least, not to disavow my God. Father! by that dread anathema which is on our race, which has made us homeless and powerless—outcasts and strangers in the land; by the persecution and anguish we have known, teach thy lordly heart that we are rightly punished, for the persecution and the anguish we doomed to Him, whose footstep hallowed our native earth! **FIRST, IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD, DID THE STERN HEBREWS INFLICT UPON MANKIND THE AWFUL CRIME OF PERSECUTION FOR OPINION'S SAKE.** The seed we sowed hath brought forth the Dead Sea fruit upon which we feed. I asked for resignation and for hope: I looked upon yonder cross, and I found both. Harden not thy heart; listen to thy child; wise though thou be, and weak though her woman spirit, listen to me.”



J. Herbert.

C. Rollé.

Donativo de Sr. Cónde de  
Rouines á la Biblioteca  
de la Alhambra. 1900

*The Cross.*

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“ Be dumb ! ” cried Almamen, in such a voice as might have come from the charnel, so ghostly and deathly sounded its hollow tone ; then, recoiling some steps, he placed both his hands upon his temples, and muttered, “ mad, mad ! yes, yes,—this is but a delirium—and I am tempted with a devil ! Oh, my child ! ” he resumed, in a voice that became, on the sudden, inexpressibly tender and imploring,—“ I have been sorely tried ; and I dreamt a feverish dream of passion and revenge. Be thine the lips, and thine the soothing hand, that shall wake me from it. Let us fly for ever from these hated lands ; let us leave to these miserable infidels their bloody contest, careless which shall fall. To a soil on which the iron heel does not clang, to an air where man’s orisons rise, in solitude, to the Great Jehovah, let us hasten our wearied steps. Come ! while the castle yet sleeps, let us forth unseen—the father and the child. We will hold sweet commune by the way. And, hark ye, Leila,” he added, in a low and abrupt whisper, “ talk not to me of yonder symbol ; for thy God is a jealous God, and hath no likeness in the graven image.”

Had he been less exhausted by long travail and racking thoughts, far different, perhaps, would have been the language of a man so stern. But circumstance impresses the hardest substance ; and despite

his native intellect, and affected superiority over others, no one, perhaps, was more human, in his fitful moods, — his weakness and his strength, his passion and his purpose, — than that strange man, who had dared, in his dark studies, and arrogant self-will, to aspire beyond humanity.

That was, indeed, a perilous moment for the young convert. The unexpected softness of her father utterly subdued her; nor was she yet sufficiently possessed of that all-denying zeal of the Catholic enthusiast, to which every human tie, and earthlier duty, has been often sacrificed, on the shrine of a rapt and metaphysical piety. Whatever her opinions, her new creed, her secret desire of the cloister — fed, as it was, by the sublime, though fallacious notion, that in her conversion, her sacrifice, the crimes of her race might be expiated, in the eyes of Him whose death had been the great atonement of a world; whatever such higher thoughts and sentiments, they gave way, at that moment, to the irresistible impulse of household nature and of filial duty. Should she desert her father, and could that desertion be a virtue? her heart put and answered both questions in a breath. She approached Almamen, placed her hand in his, and said, steadily and calmly, “Father, wheresoever thou goest, I will wend with thee.”

But Heaven ordained to each another destiny than

might have been theirs, had the dictates of that impulse been fulfilled.

Ere Almamen could reply, a trumpet sounded clear and loud at the gate.

“Hark!” he said, griping his dagger, and starting back to a sense of the dangers round him. “They come — my pursuers and my murderers! but these limbs are sacred from the rack.”

Even that sound of ominous danger was almost a relief to Leila: “I will go,” she said, “and learn what the blast betokens; remain here — be cautious — I will return.”

Several minutes, however, elapsed, before Leila reappeared: she was accompanied by Donna Inez, whose paleness and agitation betokened her alarm. A courier had arrived at the gate to announce the approach of the queen, who, with a considerable force, was on her way to join Ferdinand, then, in the usual rapidity of his movements, before one of the Moorish towns that had revolted from his allegiance. It was impossible for Almamen to remain in safety in the castle; and the only hope of escape was departing immediately and in disguise.

“I have,” she said, “a trusty and faithful servant with me in the castle, to whom I can, without anxiety, confide the charge of your safety: and even if suspected by the way, my name, and the companionship

of my servant, will remove all obstacles; it is not a long journey hence to Guadix, which has already revolted to the Moors: there, till the armies of Ferdinand surround the walls, your refuge may be secure."

Almamen remained for some moments plunged in a gloomy silence. But, at length, he signified his assent to the plan proposed, and Donna Inez hastened to give the directions to his intended guide.

"Leila," said the Hebrew, when left alone with his daughter, "think not that it is for mine own safety that I stoop to this flight from thee. No: but never till thou wert lost to me, by mine own rash confidence in another, did I know how dear to my heart was the last scion of my race, the sole memorial left to me of thy mother's love. Regaining thee once more, a new and a soft existence opens upon my eyes; and the earth seems to change, as by a sudden revolution, from winter into spring. For thy sake I consent to use all the means that man's intellect can devise, for preservation from my foes. Meanwhile, here will rest my soul; to this spot, within one week from this period—no matter through what danger I pass—I shall return: then I shall claim thy promise. I will arrange all things for our flight, and no stone shall harm thy footstep by the way. The Lord of Israel be with thee, my daughter, and strengthen thy heart! But," he

added, tearing himself from her embrace, as he heard steps ascending to the chamber, "deem not that, in this most fond and fatherly affection, I forget what is due to me and thee. Think not that my love is only the brute and insensate feeling of the progenitor to the offspring: I love thee for thy mother's sake—I love thee for thine own—I love thee yet more for the sake of Israel. If thou perish, if thou art lost to us, thou, the last daughter of the house of Issachar, then the haughtiest family of God's great people is extinct."

Here Inez appeared at the door, but withdrew, at the impatient and lordly gesture of Almamen, who, without further heed of the interruption, resumed:

"I look to thee, and thy seed, for the regeneration which I once trusted, fool that I was, mine own day might see effected. Let this pass. Thou art under the roof of the Nazarene. I will not believe that the arts we have resisted against fire and sword can prevail with thee. But, if I err, awful will be the penalty! Could I once know that thou hadst forsaken thy ancestral creed, though warrior and priest stood by thee, though thousands and ten thousands were by thy right hand, this steel should save the race of Issachar from dishonour. Beware! Thou weepst; but, child, I warn, not threaten. God be with thee!"

He wrung the cold hand of his child, turned to the door, and, after such disguise as the brief time allowed

him could afford, quitted the castle with his Spanish guide, who, accustomed to the benevolence of his mistress, obeyed her injunction without wonder, though not without suspicion.

The third part of an hour had scarcely elapsed, and the sun was yet on the mountain-tops, when Isabel arrived.

She came to announce that the outbreaks of the Moorish towns in the vicinity rendered the half fortified castle of her friend no longer a secure abode; and she honoured the Spanish lady with a command to accompany her, with her female suite, to the camp of Ferdinand.

Leila received the intelligence with a kind of stupor. Her interview with her father, the strong and fearful contests of emotion which that interview occasioned, left her senses faint and dizzy; and, when she found herself, by the twilight star, once more with the train of Isabel, the only feeling that stirred actively through her stunned and bewildered mind, was, that the hand of Providence conducted her from a temptation that, the Reader of all hearts knew, the daughter and the woman would have been too feeble to resist.

On the fifth day from his departure, Almamen returned—to find the castle deserted, and his daughter gone.



CHAPTER V.

IN THE FERMENT OF GREAT EVENTS THE DREGS RISE.

THE Israelites did not limit their struggles to the dark conspiracy to which allusion has been made. In some of the Moorish towns that revolted from Ferdinand, they renounced the neutrality they had hitherto maintained between Christian and Moslem. Whether it was that they were inflamed by the fearful and wholesale barbarities enforced by Ferdinand and the Inquisition against their tribe; or whether they were stirred up by one of their own order, in whom was recognised the head of their most sacred family; or whether, as is most probable, both causes combined—certain it is, that they manifested a feeling that was thoroughly unknown to the ordinary habits and policy of that peaceable people. They bore great treasure to the public stock—they demanded arms, and, under their own leaders, were admitted, though with much jealousy and precaution, into the troops of the arrogant and disdainful Moslems.

In this conjunction of hostile planets, Ferdinand had recourse to his favourite policy of wile and stratagem. Turning against the Jews the very treaty Almamen had once sought to obtain in their favour, he caused it to be circulated, privately, that the Jews, anxious to purchase their peace with him, had promised to betray the Moorish towns, and Granada itself, into his hands. The paper, which Ferdinand himself had signed in his interview with Almamen, and of which, on the capture of the Hebrew, he had taken care to repossess himself, he gave to a spy, whom he sent, disguised as a Jew, into one of the revolted cities.

Private intelligence reached the Moorish ring-leader of the arrival of this envoy. He was seized, and the document found on his person. The form of the words drawn up by Almamen (who had carefully omitted mention of his own name—whether that which he assumed, or that which, by birth, he should have borne) merely conveyed the compact, that if, by a Jew, within two weeks from the date therein specified, Granada was delivered to the Christian king, the Jews should enjoy certain immunities and rights.

The discovery of this document filled the Moors of the city to which the spy had been sent with a fury that no words can describe. Always distrusting their allies, they now imagined they perceived the

sole reason of their sudden enthusiasm, of their demand for arms. The mob rose: the principal Jews were seized and massacred without trial; some by the wrath of the multitude, some by the slower tortures of the magistrate. Messengers were sent to the different revolted towns, and, above all, to Granada itself, to put the Moslems on their guard against these unhappy enemies of either party. At once covetous and ferocious, the Moors rivalled the Inquisition in their cruelty, and Ferdinand in their extortion.

It was the dark fate of Almamen, as of most premature and heated liberators of the enslaved, to double the terrors and the evils he had sought to cure. The warning arrived at Granada at a time in which the vizier, Jussuf, had received the commands of his royal master, still at the siege of Salobrëna, to use every exertion to fill the wasting treasuries. Fearful of new exactions against the Moors, the vizier hailed, as a message from Heaven, so just a pretext for a new and sweeping impost on the Jews. The spendthrift violence of the mob was restrained, because it was headed by the authorities, who were wisely anxious that the state should have no rival in the plunder it required; and the work of confiscation and robbery was carried on with a majestic and calm regularity, which redounded no less to the

credit of Jussufthan it contributed to the coffers of the king.

It was late, one evening, when Ximen was making his usual round through the chambers of Almamen's house. As he glanced around at the various articles of wealth and luxury, he, ever and anon, burst into a low fitful chuckle, rubbed his lean hands, and mumbled out,—“ If my master should die! if my master should die!”

While thus engaged, he heard a confused and distant shout; and, listening attentively, he distinguished a cry, grown of late sufficiently familiar, of, “ Live, Jussuf the just! — perish the traitor Jews!”

“ Ah!” said Ximen, as the whole character of his face changed; “ some new robbery upon our race! And this is thy work, son of Issachar! Madman that thou wert, to be wiser than thy sires, and seek to dupe the idolaters in the council-chamber and the camp — their field, their vantage-ground; as the bazaar and the market-place are ours. None suspect that the potent santón is the traitor Jew; but I know it! I could give thee to the bow-string — and, if thou wert dead, all thy goods and gold, even to the mule at the manger, would be old Ximen's.”

He paused at that thought, shut his eyes, and smiled at the prospect his fancy conjured up; and, completing his survey, retired to his own chamber,

which opened, by a small door, upon one of the back courts. He had scarcely reached the room, when he heard a low tap at the outer door; and, when it was thrice repeated, he knew that it was one of his Jewish brethren. For Ximen—as years, isolation, and avarice gnawed away whatever of virtue once put forth some meagre fruit from a heart naturally bare and rocky—still preserved one human feeling towards his countrymen. It was the bond which unites all the persecuted: and Ximen loved them, because he could not envy their happiness. The power—the knowledge—the lofty, though wild designs of his master, stung and humbled him: he secretly hated, because he could not compassionate or condemn him. But the bowed frame, and slavish voice, and timid nerves of his crushed brotherhood, presented to the old man the likeness of things that could not exult over him. Debased, and aged, and solitary as he was, he felt a kind of wintry warmth in the thought that even *he* had the power to protect!

He thus maintained an intercourse with his fellow Israelites; and often, in their dangers, had afforded them a refuge in the numerous vaults and passages, the ruins of which may still be descried beneath the mouldering foundations of that mysterious mansion. And, as the house was generally supposed the property of an absent emir, and had been especially recom-

mended to the care of the cadis by Boabdil, who alone of the Moors knew it as one of the dwelling-places of the santon, whose ostensible residence was in apartments allotted to him within the palace,—it was, perhaps, the sole place within Granada which afforded an unsuspected and secure refuge to the hunted Israelites.

When Ximen recognised the wonted signal of his brethren, he crawled to the door; and, after the precaution of a Hebrew watchword, replied to in the same tongue, he gave admittance to the tall and stooping frame of the rich Elias.

“Worthy and excellent master!” said Ximen, after again securing the entrance; “what can bring the honoured and wealthy Elias to the chamber of the poor hireling?”

“My friend,” answered the Jew; “call me not wealthy, nor honoured. For years I have dwelt within the city, safe and respected, even by the Moslem; verily and because I have purchased, with jewels and treasure, the protection of the king and the great men. But now, alas! in the sudden wrath of the heathen—ever imagining vain things—I have been summoned into the presence of their chief rabbi, and only escaped the torture, by a sum that ten years of labour and the sweat of my brow cannot replace. Ximen! the bitterest thought of all is, that the frenzy

of one of our own tribe has brought this desolation upon Israel."

"My lord speaks riddles," said Ximen, with well-feigned astonishment in his glassy eyes.

"Why dost thou wind and turn, good Ximen?" said the Jew, shaking his head; "thou knowest well what my words drive at. Thy master is the pretended Almamen; and that recreant Israelite (if Israelite, indeed, still be one who hath forsaken the customs and the forms of his forefathers) is he who hath stirred up the Jews of Cordova and Guadix, and whose folly hath brought upon us these dread things. Holy Abraham! this Jew hath cost me more than fifty Nazarenes and a hundred Moors."

Ximen remained silent; and, the tongue of Elias being loosed by the recollection of his sad loss, the latter continued: "At the first, when the son of Issachar reappeared, and became a counsellor in the king's court, I indeed, who had led him, then a child, to the synagogue—for old Issachar was to me dear as a brother—recognised him by his eyes and voice: but I exulted in his craft and concealment; I believed he would work mighty things for his poor brethren, and would obtain, for his father's friend, the supplying of the king's wives and concubines with raiment and cloth of price. But years have passed: he hath not lightened our burthens; and, by the madness that hath of

late come over him, heading the heathen armies, and drawing our brethren into danger and death, he hath deserved the curse of the synagogue, and the wrath of our whole race. I find, from our brethren who escaped the Inquisition by the surrender of their substance, that his unskilful and frantic schemes were the main pretext for the sufferings of the righteous under the Nazarene; and, again, the same schemes bring on us the same oppression from the Moor. Accursed be he, and may his name perish!"

Ximen sighed, but remained silent, conjecturing to what end the Jew would bring his invectives. He was not long in suspense. After a pause, Elias recommenced, in an altered and more careless tone, "He is rich, this son of Issachar—wondrous rich."

"He has treasures scattered over half the cities of Africa and the Orient," said Ximen.

"Thou seest, then, my friend, that thy master hath doomed me to a heavy loss. I possess his secret; I could give him up to the king's wrath; I could bring him to the death. But I am just and meek: let him pay my forfeiture, and I will forego mine anger."

"Thou dost not know him," said Ximen, alarmed at the thought of a repayment, which might grievously diminish his own heritage of Almamen's effects in Granada.

"But if I threaten him with exposure?"



"Thou wouldst feed the fishes of the Darro," interrupted Ximen. "Nay, even now, if Almamen learn that thou knowest his birth and race, tremble! for thy days in the land will be numbered."

"Verily," exclaimed the Jew, in great alarm, "then have I fallen into the snare; for these lips revealed to him that knowledge."

"Then is the righteous Elias a lost man, within ten days from that in which Almamen returns to Granada. I know my master: he is a dread man, and blood is to him as water."

"Let the wicked be consumed!" cried Elias, furiously, stamping his foot, while fire flashed from his dark eyes; for the instinct of self-preservation made him fierce. "Not from me, however," he added, more calmly, "will come his danger. Know that there be more than a hundred Jews in this city, who have sworn his death; Jews who, flying hither from Cordova, have seen their parents murdered and their substance seized, and who behold, in the son of Issachar, the cause of the murder and the spoil. They have detected the impostor, and a hundred knives are whetting even now for his blood: let him look to it. Ximen, I have spoken to thee as the foolish speak; thou mayst betray me to thy lord; but, from what I have learned of thee from our brethren, I have poured

my heart into thy bosom without fear. Wilt thou betray Israel, or assist us to smite the traitor?"

Ximen mused a moment, and his meditation conjured up the treasures of his master. He stretched forth his right hand to Elias; and, when the Israelites parted, they were friends.



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## CHAPTER VI.

BOABDIL'S RETURN — THE REAPPEARANCE OF  
FERDINAND BEFORE GRANADA.

THE third morning from this interview, a rumour reached Granada that Boabdil had been repulsed in his assault on the citadel of Salobrëna with a severe loss; that Hernando del Pulgar had succeeded in conducting to its relief a considerable force; and that the army of Ferdinand was on its march against the Moorish king. In the midst of the excitement occasioned by these reports, a courier arrived to confirm their truth, and to announce the return of Boabdil.

At night-fall, the king, preceding his army, entered the city, and hastened to bury himself in the Alhambra. As he passed, dejectedly, into the women's apartments, his stern mother met him.

"My son," she said, bitterly, "dost thou return, and not a conqueror?"

Before Boabdil could reply, a light and rapid step sped through the glittering arcades; and, weeping with

joy, and breaking all the oriental restraints, Amine fell upon his bosom. "My beloved! my king! light of mine eyes! thou hast returned. Welcome—for thou art safe."

The different form of these several salutations struck Boabdil forcibly. "Thou seest, my mother," said he, "how great the contrast between those who love us from affection, and those who love us from pride. In adversity, God keep me, O my mother, from thy tongue!"

"But I love thee from pride, too," murmured Amine; "and for that reason is thine adversity dear to me, for it takes thee from the world to make thee more mine own: and I am proud of the afflictions that my hero shares with his slave."

"Lights there and the banquet!" cried the king, turning from his haughty mother; "we will feast and be merry while we may. My adored Amine, kiss me!"

Proud, melancholy, and sensitive, as he was, in that hour of reverse Boabdil felt no grief: such balm has Love for our sorrows, when its wings are borrowed from the dove! And although the laws of the eastern life, confined to the narrow walls of a harem the sphere of Amine's gentle influence; although, even in romance, THE NATURAL compels us to portray her vivid and rich colours only in a faint and hasty sketch; yet still are left to the outline the loveliest and the noblest features

of the sex—the spirit to arouse us to exertion, the softness to console us in our fall!

While Boabdil and the body of the army remained in the city, Muza, with a chosen detachment of the horse, scoured the country to visit the newly acquired cities, and sustain their courage.

From this charge he was recalled by the army of Ferdinand, which once more poured down into the Vega, completely devastated its harvests, and then swept back to consummate the conquests of the revolted towns. To this irruption succeeded an interval of peace—the calm before the storm. From every part of Spain, the most chivalric and resolute of the Moors, taking advantage of the pause in the contest, flocked to Granada; and that city became the focus of all that paganism in Europe possessed of brave and determined spirits.

At length, Ferdinand, completing his conquests, and having refilled his treasury, mustered the whole force of his dominions—forty thousand foot and ten thousand horse; and once more, and for the last time, appeared before the walls of Granada. A solemn and prophetic determination filled both besiegers and besieged: each felt that the crowning crisis was at hand.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE CONFLAGRATION — THE MAJESTY OF AN INDIVIDUAL  
PASSION IN THE MIDST OF HOSTILE THOUSANDS.

It was the eve of a great and general assault upon Granada, deliberately planned by the chiefs of the Christian army. The Spanish camp (the most gorgeous Christendom had ever known) gradually grew calm and hushed. The shades deepened—the stars burned forth more serene and clear. Bright, in that azure air, streamed the silken tents of the court, blazoned with heraldic devices, and crowned by gaudy banners, which, filled by a brisk and murmuring wind from the mountains, flaunted gaily on their gilded staves. In the centre of the camp rose the pavilion of the queen—a palace in itself. Lances made its columns; brocade and painted arras, its walls; and the space covered by its numerous compartments, would have contained the halls and outworks of an ordinary castle. The pomp of that camp realised the wildest dreams of Gothic, coupled with Oriental, splen-

dour; something worthy of a Tasso to have imagined, or a Beckford to create. Nor was the exceeding costliness of the more courtly tents lessened in effect by those of the soldiery in the outskirts, many of which were built from boughs, still retaining their leaves—salvage and picturesque huts;—as if, realising old legends, wild men of the woods had taken up the cross, and followed the Christian warriors against the swarthy followers of Termagaunt and Mahound. There, then, extended that mighty camp in profound repose, as the midnight threw deeper and longer shadows over the sward from the tented avenues and canvas streets. It was at that hour, that Isabel, in the most private recess of her pavilion, was employed in prayer for the safety of the king, and the issue of the Sacred War. Kneeling before the altar of that warlike oratory, her spirit became rapt and absorbed from earth in the intensity of her devotions; and in the whole camp (save the sentries), the eyes of that pious queen were, perhaps, the only ones unclosed. All was profoundly still; her guards, her attendants, were gone to rest; and the tread of the sentinel, without that immense pavilion, was not heard through the silken walls.

It was then that Isabel suddenly felt a strong grasp upon her shoulder, as she still knelt by the altar. A faint shriek burst from her lips; she turned, and

the broad curved knife of an eastern warrior gleamed close before her eyes.

“Hush! utter a cry, breathe but more loudly than thy wont, and, queen though thou art, in the centre of swarming thousands, thou diest!”

Such were the words that reached the ear of the royal Castilian, whispered by a man of stern and commanding, though haggard aspect.

“What is thy purpose? wouldst thou murder me?” said the queen, trembling, perhaps for the first time, before a mortal presence.

“Fear not; thy life is safe, if thou strivest not to elude or to deceive me. Our time is short—answer me. I am Almamen, the Hebrew. Where is the hostage rendered to thy hands? I claim my child. She is with thee—I know it. In what corner of thy camp?”

“Rude stranger!” said Isabel, recovering somewhat from her alarm,—“thy daughter is removed, I trust, for ever, from thine impious reach. She is not within the camp.”

“Lie not, Queen of Castile,” said Almamen, raising his knife; “for days and weeks I have tracked thy steps, followed thy march, haunted even thy slumbers, though men of mail stood as guards around them; and I know that my daughter has been with thee. Think not I brave this danger without resolves the



most fierce and dread. Answer me! where is my child?"

"Many days since," said Isabel, awed, despite herself, by her strange position,—“thy daughter left the camp for the house of God. It was her own desire. The Saviour hath received her into his fold.”

Had a thousand lances pierced his heart, the vigour and energy of life could scarce more suddenly have deserted Almamen. The rigid muscles of his countenance relaxed at once, from resolve and menace, into unutterable horror; anguish, and despair. He recoiled several steps; his knees trembled violently; he seemed stunned by a death-blow. Isabel, the boldest and haughtiest of her sex, seized that moment of reprieve; she sprung forward, darted through the draperies into the apartments occupied by her train, and, in a moment, the pavilion resounded with her cries for aid. The sentinels were aroused; retainers sprang from their pillows; they heard the cause of the alarm; they made to the spot; when, ere they reached its partition of silk, a vivid and startling blaze burst forth upon them. The tent was on fire. The materials fed the flame like magic. Some of the guards had yet the courage to dash forward; but the smoke and the glare drove them back, blinded and dizzy. Isabel herself had scarcely time for escape, so rapid was the conflagration. Alarmed for her husband, she rushed

to his tent—to find him already awakened by the noise, and issuing from its entrance, his drawn sword in his hand. The wind, which had a few minutes before but curled the triumphant banners, now circulated the destroying flame. It spread from tent to tent, almost as a flash of lightning that shoots along close-neighbouring clouds. The camp was in one blaze, ere any man could even dream of checking the conflagration.

Not waiting to hear the confused tale of his royal consort, Ferdinand, exclaiming, “The Moors have done this—they will be on us!” ordered the drums to beat and the trumpets to sound, and hastened in person, wrapped merely in his long mantle, to alarm his chiefs. While that well-disciplined and veteran army, fearing every moment the rally of the foe, endeavoured rapidly to form themselves into some kind of order, the flame continued to spread till the whole heavens presented an illumination, the intense and dazzling splendour of which even a Dante might be unable to describe. By its light, cuirass and helmet glowed, as in the furnace, and the armed men seemed rather like life-like and lurid meteors than human forms. The city of Granada was brought near to them by the intensity of the glow; and, as a detachment of cavalry spurred from the camp to meet the anticipated surprise of the Paynims, they saw, upon the

walls and roofs of Granada, the Moslems clustering, and their spears gleaming. But, equally amazed with the Christians, and equally suspicious of craft and design, the Moors did not issue from their gates. Meanwhile the conflagration, as rapid to die as to begin, grew fitful and feeble; and the night seemed to fall with a melancholy darkness over the ruin of that silken city.

Ferdinand summoned his council. He had now perceived it was no ambush of the Moors. The account of Isabel, which, at last, he comprehended; the strange and almost miraculous manner in which Almamen had baffled his guards, and penetrated to the royal tent, might have aroused his Gothic superstition, while it relieved his more earthly apprehensions, if he had not remembered the singular, but far from supernatural, dexterity with which eastern warriors, and even robbers, continued, then as now, to elude the most vigilant precautions, and baffle the most wakeful guards: and it was evident, that the fire which burned the camp of an army, had been kindled merely to gratify the revenge, or favour the escape, of an individual. Shaking, therefore, from his kingly spirit the thrill of superstitious awe that the greatness of the disaster, when associated with the name of a sorcerer, at first occasioned, he resolved to make advantage out

of misfortune itself. The excitement, the wrath of the troops, produced the temper most fit for action.

“And God,” said the King of Spain to his knights and chiefs, as they assembled round him, “has, in this conflagration, announced to the warriors of the cross, that henceforth their camp shall be the palaces of Granada! Wo to the Moslem with to-morrow’s sun!”

Arms clanged, and swords leaped from their sheaths, as the Christian knights echoed the anathema—“**WO TO THE MOSLEM!**”



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END OF BOOK IV.

**BOOK V.**

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**JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA**

## CHAPTER I.

## THE GREAT BATTLE.

THE day slowly dawned upon that awful night; and the Moors, still upon the battlements of Granada, beheld the whole army of Ferdinand on its march towards their walls. At a distance lay the wrecks of the blackened and smouldering camp; while before them, gaudy and glittering pennons waving, and trumpets sounding, came the exultant legions of the foe. The Moors could scarcely believe their senses. Fondly anticipating the retreat of the Christians, after so signal a disaster, the gay and dazzling spectacle of their march to the assault filled them with consternation and alarm.

While yet wondering and inactive, the trumpet of Boabdil was heard behind; and they beheld the Moorish king, at the head of his guards, emerging down the avenues that led to the gate. The sight restored and exhilarated the gazers; and, when Boabdil halted in the space before the portals, the shout of twenty thousand

warriors rolled ominously to the ears of the advancing Christians.

“Men of Granada!” said Boabdil, as soon as the deep and breathless silence had succeeded to that martial acclamation,—“the advance of the enemy is to their destruction! In the fire of last night, the hand of Allah wrote their doom. Let us forth, each and all! We will leave our homes unguarded—our hearts shall be their wall! True, that our numbers are thinned by famine and by slaughter, but enough of us are yet left for the redemption of Granada. Nor are the dead departed from us: the dead fight with us—their souls animate our own! He who has lost a brother, becomes twice a man. On this battle we will set all—Liberty or chains! empire or exile! victory or death! Forward!”

He spoke, and gave the rein to his barb. It bounded forward, and cleared the gloomy arch of the portals, and Boabdil el Chico was the first Moor who issued from Granada, to that last and eventful field. Out, then, poured, as a river that rushes from caverns into day, the burnished and serried files of the Moorish cavalry. Muza came the last, closing the array. Upon his dark and stern countenance there spoke not the ardent enthusiasm of the sanguine king. It was locked and rigid; and the anxieties of the last dismal weeks had thinned his

cheeks, and ploughed deep lines around the firm lips and iron jaw which bespoke the obstinate and unconquerable resolution of his character.

As Muza now spurred forward, and, riding along the wheeling ranks, marshalled them in order, arose the acclamation of female voices; and the warriors, who looked back at the sound, saw that their women—their wives and daughters, their mothers and their beloved, (released from their seclusion, by a policy which bespoke the desperation of the cause)—were gazing at them, with outstretched arms, from the battlements and towers. The Moors felt that they were now to fight for their hearths and altars in the presence of those who, if they failed, became slaves and harlots; and each Moslem felt his heart harden like the steel of his own sabre.

While the cavalry formed themselves into regular squadrons, and the tramp of the foemen came more near and near, the Moorish infantry, in miscellaneous, eager, and undisciplined bands, poured out, until, spreading wide and deep below the walls, Boabdil's charger was seen, rapidly careering amongst them, as, in short but distinct directions, or fiery adjuration, he sought at once to regulate their movements, and confirm their hot but capricious valour.

Meanwhile, the Christians had abruptly halted; and the politic Ferdinand resolved not to incur the



full brunt of a whole population, in the first flush of their enthusiasm and despair. He summoned to his side Hernando del Pulgar, and bade him, with a troop of the most adventurous and practised horsemen, advance towards the Moorish cavalry, and endeavour to draw the fiery valour of Muza away from the main army. Then, splitting up his force into several sections, he dismissed each to different stations; some to storm the adjacent towers, others to fire the surrounding gardens and orchards: so that the action might consist rather of many battles than of one, and the Moors might lose the concentration and union, which made, at present, their most formidable strength.

Thus, while the Mussulmans were waiting, in order, for the attack, they suddenly beheld the main body of the Christians dispersing; and, while yet in surprise and perplexed, they saw the fires breaking out from their delicious gardens, to the right and left of the walls, and heard the boom of the Christian artillery against the scattered bulwarks that guarded the approaches of that city.

At that moment, a cloud of dust rolled rapidly towards the post occupied in the van by Muza; and the shock of the Christian knights, in their mighty mail, broke upon the centre of the prince's squadron.

Higher, by several inches, than the plumage of

his companions, waved the crest of the gigantic Del Pulgar; and, as Moor after Moor went down before his headlong lance, his voice, sounding deep and sepulchral through his visor, shouted out—"Death to the infidel!"

The rapid and dexterous horsemen of Granada were not, however, discomfited by this fierce assault: opening their ranks with extraordinary celerity, they suffered the charge to pass, comparatively harmless, through their centre; and then, closing in one long and bristling line, cut off the knights from retreat. The Christians wheeled round, and charged again upon their foe.

"Where art thou, O Moslem dog! that wouldst play the lion?—Where art thou, Muza Ben Abil Gazan?"

"Before thee, Christian!" cried a stern and clear voice; and, from amongst the helmets of his people, gleamed the dazzling turban of the Moor.

Hernando checked his steed, gazed a moment at his foe, turned back, for greater impetus to his charge, and, in a moment more, the bravest warriors of the two armies met, lance to lance.

The round shield of Muza received the Christian's weapon; his own spear shivered, harmless, upon the breast of the giant. He drew his sword, whirled it rapidly over his head, and, for some minutes, the

eyes of the bystanders could scarcely mark the marvellous rapidity with which strokes were given and parried, by those redoubted swordsmen.

At length, Hernando, anxious to bring to bear his superior strength, spurred close to Muza ; and leaving his sword pendant by a thong to his wrist, seized the shield of Muza in his formidable grasp, and plucked it away, with a force that the Moor vainly endeavoured to resist : Muza, therefore, suddenly released his hold ; and, ere the Spaniard recovered his balance (which was lost by the success of his own strength, put forth to the utmost), he dashed upon him the hoofs of his black charger, and, with a short but heavy mace, which he caught up from the saddle-bow, dealt Hernando so thundering a blow upon the helmet, that the giant fell to the ground, stunned and senseless.

To dismount, to repossess himself of his shield, to resume his sabre, to put one knee to the breast of his fallen foe, was the work of a moment ; and then had Don Hernando del Pulgar been sped, without priest or surgeon, but that, alarmed by the peril of their most valiant comrade, twenty knights spurred at once to the rescue, and the points of twenty lances kept the Lion of Granada from his prey. Thither, with similar speed, rushed the Moorish champions ; and the fight became close and deadly round the body of the still unconscious Christian. Not an instant of leisure to unlace the helmet

of Hernando, by removing which, alone, the Moorish blade could find a mortal place, was permitted to Muza; and, what with the spears and trampling hoofs around him, the situation of the Paynim was more dangerous than that of the Christian. Meanwhile, Hernando recovered his dizzy senses; and, made aware of his state, watched his occasion, and suddenly shook off the knee of the Moor. With another effort he was on his feet: and the two champions stood confronting each other, neither very eager to renew the combat. But on foot, Muza, daring and rash as he was, could not but recognise his disadvantage against the enormous strength and impenetrable armour of the Christian; he drew back, whistled to his barb, that, piercing the ranks of the horsemen, was by his side on the instant, remounted, and was in the midst of the foe, almost ere the slower Spaniard was conscious of his disappearance.

But Hernando was not delivered from his enemy. Clearing a space around him, as three knights, mortally wounded, fell beneath his sabre, Muza now drew from behind his shoulder his short Arabian bow; and shaft after shaft came rattling upon the mail of the dismounted Christian with so marvellous a celerity, that, encumbered as he was with his heavy accoutrements, he was unable either to escape from the spot, or ward off that arrowy rain; and felt that nothing but

chance, or our Lady, could prevent the death which one such arrow would occasion, if it should find the opening of the visor, or the joints of the hauberk.

“Mother of mercy!” groaned the knight, perplexed and enraged, “let not thy servant be shot down like a hart, by this cowardly warfare; but, if I must fall, be it with mine enemy, grappling hand to hand.”

While yet muttering this short invocation, the war-cry of Spain was heard hard by, and the gallant company of Villena was seen scouring across the plain, to the succour of their comrades. The deadly attention of Muza was distracted from individual foes, however eminent; he wheeled round, re-collected his men, and, in a serried charge, met the new enemy in midway.

While the contest thus fared in that part of the field, the scheme of Ferdinand had succeeded so far as to break up the battle into detached sections. Far and near, plain, grove, garden, tower, presented each the scene of obstinate and determined conflict. Boabdil, at the head of his chosen guard, the flower of the haughtier tribe of nobles, who were jealous of the fame and blood of the tribe of Muza, and, followed also by his gigantic Ethiopians, exposed his person to every peril, with the desperate valour of a man who feels his own stake is greatest in the field. As he most distrusted the infantry, so, amongst the infantry he chiefly bestowed

his presence; and, wherever he appeared, he sufficed, for the moment, to turn the changes of the engagement. At length, at mid-day, Ponce de Leon led against the largest detachment of the Moorish foot a strong and numerous battalion of the best disciplined and veteran soldiery of Spain. He had succeeded in winning a fortress, from which his artillery could play with effect; and the troops he led were composed, partly of men flushed with recent triumph, and partly of a fresh reserve, now first brought into the field. A comely and a breathless spectacle it was, to behold this Christian squadron emerging from a blazing copse, which they fired on their march; the red light gleaming on their complete armour, as, in steady and solemn order, they swept on to the swaying and clamorous ranks of the Moorish infantry. Boabdil learned the danger from his scouts; and, hastily quitting a tower, from which he had, for awhile, repulsed a hostile legion, he threw himself into the midst of the battalions, menaced by the skilful Ponce de Leon. Almost at the same moment, the wild and ominous apparition of Almamen, long absent from the eyes of the Moors, appeared in the same quarter, so suddenly and unexpectedly, that none knew whence he had emerged; the sacred standard in his left hand — his sabre, bared and dripping gore, in his right — his face exposed, and its powerful features working with an excitement that

seemed inspired : his abrupt presence breathed a new soul into the Moors.

“ They come ! they come ! ” he shrieked aloud. “ The God of the East hath delivered the Goth into your hands ! ”

From rank to rank — from line to line — sped the santon ; and, as the mystic banner gleamed before the soldiery, each closed his eyes, and muttered an amen to his adjurations.

And now, to the cry of Spain and St. Iago, came trampling down the relentless charge of the Christian war. At the same instant, from the fortress lately taken by Ponce de Leon, the artillery opened upon the Moors, and did deadly havoc. The Moslems wavered a moment, when before them gleamed the white banner of Almamen ; and they beheld him rushing, alone and on foot, amidst the foe. Taught to believe the war itself depended on the preservation of the enchanted banner, the Paynims could not see it thus rashly adventured without anxiety and shame : they rallied, advanced firmly, and Boabdil himself, with waving cimiter and fierce exclamations, dashed impetuously, at the head of his guards and Ethiopians, into the affray. The battle became obstinate and bloody. Thrice the white banner disappeared amidst the closing ranks ; and thrice, like a moon from the clouds, it shone forth again — the light and guide of the Pagan power.

The day ripened ; and the hills already cast lengthening shadows over the blazing groves and the still Darro, whose waters, in every creek where the tide was arrested, ran red with blood, when Ferdinand, collecting his whole reserve, descended from the eminence on which hitherto he had posted himself. With him moved three thousand foot and a thousand horse, fresh in their vigour, and panting for a share in that glorious day. The king himself, who, though constitutionally fearless, from motives of policy rarely perilled his person, save on imminent occasions, was resolved not to be outdone by Boabdil ; and, armed *cap-à-pie* in mail, so wrought with gold that it seemed nearly all of that costly metal, with his snow-white plumage waving above a small diadem that surmounted his lofty helm, he seemed a fit leader to that armament of heroes. Behind him flaunted the great gonfalon of Spain, and trump and cymbal heralded his approach. The Count de Tendilla rode by his side.

“ Señor,” said Ferdinand, “ the infidels fight hard ; but they are in the snare—we are about to close the nets upon them. But what cavalcade is this ? ”

The group that thus drew the king’s attention consisted of six squires, bearing on a martial litter, composed of shields, the stalwart form of Hernando del Pulgar.

“ Ah, the dogs ! ” cried the king, as he recognised



the pale features of the darling of the army,—“ have they murdered the bravest knight that ever fought for Christendom?”

“ Not that, your majesty,” quoth he of the Exploits, faintly; “ but I am sorely stricken.”

“ It must have been more than man who struck thee down,” said the king.

“ It was the mace of Muza Ben Abil Gazan, an please you, sire,” said one of the squires; “ but it came on the good knight unawares, and long after his own arm had seemingly driven away the Pagan.”

“ We will avenge thee well,” said the king, setting his teeth: “ let our own leeches tend thy wounds. Forward, sir knights! St. Iago de Spain!”

The battle had now gathered to a vortex; Muza and his cavalry had joined Boabdil and the Moorish foot. On the other hand, Villena had been re-inforced by detachments, that, in almost every other quarter of the field, had routed the foe. The Moors had been driven back, though inch by inch; they were now in the broad space before the very walls of the city, which were still crowded with the pale and anxious faces of the aged and the women: and, at every pause in the artillery, the voices that spake of HOME were borne by that lurid air to the ears of the infidels. The shout that ran through the Christian force, as Ferdinand now joined it, struck like a death-knell upon

the last hope of Boabdil. But the blood of his fierce ancestry burned in his veins, and the cheering voice of Almamen, whom nothing daunted, inspired him with a kind of superstitious frenzy.

“ King against king—so be it! let Allah decide between us,” cried the Moorish monarch. “ Bind up this wound—’tis well! A steed for the santon! Now, my prophet and my friend, mount by the side of thy king—let us, at least, fall together. Lelilies! lelilies!”

Throughout the brave Christian ranks went a thrill of reluctant admiration, as they beheld the Paynim king, conspicuous by his fair beard and the jewels of his harness, lead the scanty guard yet left to him once more into the thickest of their lines. Simultaneously, Muza and his zegrís made their fiery charge; and the Moorish infantry, excited by the example of their leaders, followed with unslackened and dogged zeal. The Christians gave way,—they were beaten back: Ferdinand spurred forward; and, ere either party were well aware of it, both kings met in the same *melee*: all order and discipline, for the moment, lost, general and monarch were, as common soldiers, fighting hand to hand. It was then that Ferdinand, after bearing down before his lance Naim Reduon, second only to Muza in the songs of Granada, beheld opposed to him a strange form, that seemed to that royal Christian rather fiend than man: his raven hair and

beard, clotted with blood, hung like snakes about a countenance, whose features, naturally formed to give expression to the darkest passions, were distorted with the madness of despairing rage. Wounded in many places, the blood dabbled his mail; while, over his head, he waved the banner wrought with mystic characters, which Ferdinand had already been taught to believe the workmanship of demons.

“Now, perjured king of the Nazarenes!” shouted this formidable champion, “we meet at last!—no longer host and guest, monarch and dervise, but man to man! I am Almamen! Die!”

He spoke; and his sword descended so fiercely on that anointed head, that Ferdinand bent to his saddle-bow. But the king quickly recovered his seat, and gallantly met the encounter; it was one that might have tasked to the utmost the prowess of his bravest knight. Passions which, in their number, their nature, and their excess, animated no other champion on either side, gave to the arm of Almamen, the Israelite, a preternatural strength; his blows fell like rain upon the harness of the king: and the fiery eyes, the gleaming banner, of the mysterious sorcerer, who had eluded the tortures of his Inquisition,—who had walked unscathed through the midst of his army,—whose single hand had consumed the encampment of a host, filled the

stout heart of the king with a belief that he encountered no earthly foe. Fortunately, perhaps, for Ferdinand and Spain, the contest did not last long. Twenty horsemen spurred into the *melee* to the rescue of the plumed diadem: Tendilla arrived the first; with a stroke of his two-handed sword the white banner was cleft from its staff, and fell to the earth. At that sight, the Moors around broke forth in a wild and despairing cry: that cry spread from rank to rank, from horse to foot; the Moorish infantry, sorely pressed on all sides, no sooner learned the disaster than they turned to fly: the rout was as fatal as it was sudden. The Christian reserve, just brought into the field, poured down upon them with a simultaneous charge. Boabdil, too much engaged to be the first to learn the downfall of the sacred insignia, suddenly saw himself almost alone, with his diminished Ethiopians and a handful of his cavaliers.

“Yield thee, Boabdil el Chico!” cried Tendilla from his rear, “or thou canst not be saved.”

“By the Prophet, never!” exclaimed the king: and he dashed his barb against the wall of spears behind him; and, with but a score or so of his guard, cut his way through the ranks, that were not unwilling, perhaps, to spare so brave a foe. As he cleared the Spanish battalions, the unfortunate monarch checked his horse for a moment, and gazed along the plain:

he beheld his army flying in all directions, save in that single spot where yet glittered the turban of Muza Ben Abil Gazan. As he gazed, he heard the panting nostrils of the chargers behind, and saw the levelled spears of a company despatched to take him, alive or dead, by the command of Ferdinand: he laid the reins upon his horse's neck and galloped into the city—three lances quivered against the portals as he disappeared through the shadows of the arch. But while Muza remained, all was not yet lost: he perceived the flight of the infantry and the king, and with his followers galloped across the plain; he came in time to encounter and slay, to a man, the pursuers of Boabdil,—he then threw himself before the flying Moors:

“Do ye fly in the sight of your wives and daughters? would ye not rather they beheld ye die?”

A thousand voices answered him,—“The banner is in the hands of the infidel—all is lost!” They swept by him, and stopped not till they gained the gates.

“Accursed be these spells!” cried Muza. “Were our country our only charm, *that* never would have been lost!”

But still a small and devoted remnant of the Moorish cavaliers remained to shed a last glory over defeat itself. With Muza, their soul and centre, they fought every atom of ground: it was, as the chronicler expresses it, as if they grasped the soil with their arms.

Twice they charged into the midst of the foe: the slaughter they made doubled their own number; but, gathering on and closing in, squadron upon squadron, came the whole Christian army,—they were encompassed, wearied out, beaten back, as by an ocean. Like wild beasts, driven, at length, to their lair, they retreated with their faces to the foe; and when Muza came, the last,—his cimeter shivered to the hilt,—he had scarcely breath to command the gates to be closed and the portcullis lowered, ere he fell from his charger in a sudden and deadly swoon, caused less by his exhaustion than his agony and shame. So ended the last battle fought for the Monarchy of Granada!



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

JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

## CHAPTER II.

## THE NOVICE.

It was in one of the cells of a convent, renowned for the piety of its inmates, and the wholesome austerity of its laws, that a young novice sat alone. The narrow casement was placed so high in the cold gray wall as to forbid to the tenant of the cell the solace of sad, or the distraction of pious, thoughts, which a view of the world without might afford. Lovely, indeed, was the landscape that spread below; but it was barred from those youthful and melancholy eyes: for Nature might tempt to a thousand thoughts, not of a tenor calculated to reconcile the heart to an eternal sacrifice of the sweet human ties. But a faint and partial gleam of sunshine broke through the aperture, and made yet more cheerless the dreary aspect and gloomy appurtenances of the cell. And the young novice seemed to carry on within herself that struggle of emotions, without which there is no victory in the resolves of virtue: sometimes she wept bitterly; but

with a low subdued sorrow, which spoke rather of despondency than passion; sometimes she raised her head from her breast, and smiled as she looked upward, or as her eyes rested on the crucifix and the death's head, that were placed on the rude table by the pallet on which she sate. They were emblems of death here, and life hereafter, which, perhaps, afforded to her the sources of a twofold consolation.

She was yet musing, when a slight tap at the door was heard, and the abbess of the convent appeared.

"Daughter," said she, "I have brought thee the comfort of a sacred visitor. The Queen of Spain, whose pious tenderness is maternally anxious for thy full contentment with thy lot, has sent hither a holy friar, whom she deems more soothing in his counsels than our brother Tomas, whose ardent zeal often terrifies those whom his honest spirit only desires to purify and guide. I will leave him with thee. May the saints bless his ministry!" So saying, the abbess retired from the threshold, making way for a form in the garb of a monk, with the hood drawn over the face. The monk bowed his head meekly, advanced into the cell, closed the door, and seated himself on a stool, which, save the table and the pallet, seemed the sole furniture of the dismal chamber.

"Daughter," said he, after a pause, "it is a rugged and a mournful lot, this renunciation of earth and all



its fair destinies and soft affections, to one not wholly prepared and armed for the sacrifice. Confide in me, my child; I am no dire inquisitor, seeking to distort thy words to thine own peril. I am no bitter and morose ascetic. Beneath these robes still beats a human heart, that can sympathise with human sorrows. Confide in me without fear. Dost thou not dread the fate they would force upon thee? Dost thou not shrink back? Wouldst thou not be free?"

"No," said the poor novice; but the denial came faint and irresolute from her lips.

"Pause," said the friar, growing more earnest in his tone: "pause—there is yet time."

"Nay," said the novice, looking up with some surprise in her countenance; "nay, even were I so weak, escape now is impossible. What hand could unbar the gates of the convent?"

"Mine!" cried the monk, with impetuosity. "Yes, I have that power. In all Spain, but one man can save thee, and I am he."

"You!" faltered the novice, gazing at her strange visitor with mingled astonishment and alarm. "And who are you, that could resist the fiat of that Tomas de Torquemada, before whom, they tell me, even the crowned heads of Castile and Arragon vail low?"

The monk half rose, with an impatient and almost haughty start, at this interrogatory; but, reseating

himself, replied, in a deep and half-whispered voice :  
“ Daughter, listen to me ! It is true, that Isabel of Spain (whom the Mother of Mercy bless ! for merciful to all is her secret heart, if not her outward policy)—it is true that Isabel of Spain, fearful that the path to heaven might be made rougher to thy feet than it well need be, (there was a slight accent of irony in the monk’s voice as he thus spoke), selected a friar of suasive eloquence and gentle manners, to visit thee. He was charged with letters to yon abbess from the queen. Soft though the friar, he was yet a hypocrite. Nay, hear me out ! he loved to worship the rising sun ; and he did not wish always to remain a simple friar, while the church had higher dignities of this earth to bestow. In the Christian camp, daughter, there was one who burned for tidings of thee,—whom thine image haunted—who, stern as thou wert to him, loved thee with a love he knew not of, till thou wert lost to him. Why dost thou tremble, daughter ? listen, yet ! To that lover, for he was one of high birth, came the monk ; to that lover the monk sold his mission. The monk will have a ready tale, that he was way-laid amidst the mountains by armed men, and robbed of his letters to the abbess. The lover took his garb, and he took the letters ; and he hastened hither. Leila ! beloved Leila ! behold him at thy feet !”

The monk raised his cowl ; and, dropping on his

knee beside her, presented to her gaze the features of the Prince of Spain.

“ You ! ” said Leila, averting her countenance, and vainly endeavouring to extricate the hand which he had seized. “ This is indeed cruel. You, the author of so many sufferings—such calumny—such reproach ! ”

“ I will repair all, ” said Don Juan, fervently. “ I alone, I repeat it, have the power to set you free. You are no longer a Jewess ; you are one of our faith ; there is now no bar upon our loves. Imperious though my father, — all dark and dread as is this new POWER which he is rashly erecting in his dominions, the heir of two monarchies is not so poor in influence and in friends, as to be unable to offer the woman of his love an inviolable shelter, alike from priest and despot. Fly with me ! — quit this dreary sepulchre, ere the last stone close over thee for ever ! I have horses, I have guards at hand. This night it can be arranged. This night — oh, bliss ! — thou mayest be rendered up to earth and love ! ”

“ Prince, ” said Leila, who had drawn herself from Juan’s grasp during this address, and who now stood at a little distance, erect and proud, “ you tempt me in vain ; or, rather, you offer me no temptation. I have made my choice ; I abide by it. ”

“ Oh ! bethink thee, ” said the prince, in a voice of real and imploring anguish ; “ bethink thee well of the

consequences of thy refusal. Thou canst not see them yet; thine ardour blinds thee. But, when hour after hour, day after day, year after year, steals on in the appalling monotony of this sanctified prison; when thou shalt see thy youth withering without love—thine age without honour; when thy heart shall grow as stone within thee, beneath the looks of yon icy spectres; when nothing shall vary the aching dulness of wasted life, save a longer fast, or a severer penance: then, then will thy grief be rendered tenfold, by the despairing and remorseful thought, that thine own lips sealed thine own sentence. Thou mayest think," continued Juan, with rapid eagerness, "that my love to thee was, at first, light and dishonouring. Be it so. I own that my youth has passed in idle wooings, and the mockeries of affection. But, for the first time in my life, I feel that *I love*. Thy dark eyes—thy noble beauty—even thy womanly scorn, have fascinated me. I—never yet disdained where I have been a suitor—acknowledge, at last, that there is a triumph in the conquest of a woman's heart. Oh, Leila! do not—do not reject me. You know not how rare and how deep a love you cast away."

The novice was touched: the present language of Don Juan was so different from what it had been before; the earnest love that breathed in his voice—that looked from his eyes, struck a chord in her breast; it reminded

her of her own unconquered, unconquerable love for the lost Muza. For there is that in a woman, that, when she loves one, the honest wooing of another she may reject, but cannot disdain: she feels, by her own heart, the agony his must endure; and, by a kind of egotism, pities the mirror of herself. She was touched, then — touched to tears; but her resolves were not shaken.

“Oh, Leila!” resumed the prince, fondly, mistaking the nature of her emotion, and seeking to pursue the advantage he imagined he had gained; “look at yonder sunbeam, struggling through the loophole of thy cell. Is it not a messenger from the happy world? does it not plead for me? does it not whisper to thee of the green fields, and the laughing vineyards, and all the beautiful prodigality of that earth thou art about to renounce for ever? Dost thou dread my love? Are the forms around thee, ascetic and lifeless, fairer to thine eyes than mine? Dost thou doubt my power to protect thee? I tell thee that the proudest nobles of Spain would flock around my banner, were it necessary to guard thee by force of arms. Yet, speak the word — be mine — and I will fly hence with thee, to climes where the church has not cast out its deadly roots, and, forgetful of crowns and cares, live alone for thee. Ah, speak!”

“My lord,” said Leila, calmly, and rousing herself

to the necessary effort; "I am deeply and sincerely grateful for the interest you express—for the affection you avow. But you deceive yourself. I have pondered well over the alternative I have taken. I do not regret nor repent—much less would I retract it. The earth that you speak of, full of affections and of bliss to others, has no ties, no allurements for me. I desire only peace, repose, and an early death."

"Can it be possible," said the prince, growing pale, "that thou lovest another? Then, indeed, and then only, would my wooing be in vain."

The cheek of the novice grew deeply flushed, but the colour soon subsided: she murmured to herself, "Why should I blush to own it now?" and then spoke aloud: "Prince, I trust I have done with the world; and bitter the pang I feel when you call me back to it. But you merit my candour: I *have* loved another; and in that thought, as in an urn, lie the ashes of all affection. That other is of a different faith. We may never—never meet again below, but it is a solace to pray that we may meet above. That solace, and these cloisters, are dearer to me than all the pomp, all the pleasures, of the world."

The prince sunk down, and, covering his face with his hands, groaned aloud—but made no reply.

"Go, then, Prince of Spain," continued the novice; "son of the noble Isabel, Leila is not unworthy of

her cares. Go, and pursue the great destinies that await you. And if you forgive—if you still cherish a thought of—the poor Jewish maiden, soften, alleviate, mitigate the wretched and desperate doom that awaits the fallen race she has abandoned for thy creed.”

“ Alas, alas !” said the prince, mournfully, “ thee alone, perchance, of all thy race, I could have saved from the bigotry that is fast covering this knightly land, like the rising of an irresistible sea — and thou rejectest me ! Take time, at least, to pause — to consider. Let me see thee again to-morrow.”

“ No, prince, no — not again ! I will keep thy secret only if I see thee no more. If thou persist in a suit that I feel to be that of sin and shame, then, indeed, mine honour —”

“ Hold !” interrupted Juan, with haughty impatience, — “ I torment, I harass you no more. I release you from my importunity. Perhaps already I have stooped too low.” He drew the cowl over his features, and strode sullenly to the door ; but, turning for one last gaze on the form that had so strangely fascinated a heart capable of generous emotions, — the meek and despondent posture of the novice, her tender youth, her gloomy fate, melted his momentary pride and resentment. “ God bless and reconcile thee, poor child !” he said, in a voice choked

with contending passions—and the door closed upon his form.

“ I thank thee, Heaven, that it was not Muza ! ” muttered Leila, breaking from a reverie, in which she seemed to be communing with her own soul ; “ I feel that I could not have resisted *him* . ” With that thought she knelt down, in humble and penitent self-reproach, and prayed for strength.

Ere she had risen from her supplications, her solitude was again invaded by Torquemada, the Dominican.

This strange man, though the author of cruelties at which nature recoils, had some veins of warm and gentle feeling, streaking, as it were, the marble of his hard character ; and when he had thoroughly convinced himself of the pure and earnest zeal of the young convert, he relaxed from the grim sternness he had at first exhibited towards her. He loved to exert the eloquence he possessed in raising her spirit, in reconciling her doubts. He prayed *for* her, and he prayed *beside* her, with passion and with tears.

He stayed long with the novice ; and, when he left her, she was, if not happy, at least contented. Her warmest wish now, was to abridge the period of her noviciate, which, at her desire, the church had already rendered merely a nominal probation. She longed to put irresolution out of her power, and to



enter at once upon the narrow road through the strait gate.

The gentle and modest piety of the young novice touched the sisterhood: she was endeared to all of them. Her conversion was an event that broke the lethargy of their stagnant life. She became an object of general interest, of avowed pride, of kindly compassion; and their kindness to her, who from her cradle had seen little of her own sex, had a great effect towards calming and soothing her mind. But, at night, her dreams brought before her the dark and menacing countenance of her father. Sometimes he seemed to pluck her from the gates of heaven, and to sink with her into the yawning abyss below. Sometimes she saw him with her beside the altar, but imploring her to forswear the Saviour, before whose crucifix she knelt. Occasionally her visions were haunted, also, with Muza — but in less terrible guise. She saw his calm and melancholy eyes fixed upon her; and his voice asked, “Canst thou take a vow that makes it sinful to remember me?”

The night, that usually brings balm and oblivion to the sad, was thus made more dreadful to Leila than the day. Her health grew feebler and feebler, but her mind still was firm. In happier time and circumstance that poor novice would have been a great cha-

racter; but she was one of the countless victims the world knows not of, whose virtues are in silent motives, whose struggles are in the solitary heart.

Of the prince she heard and saw no more. There were times when she fancied, from oblique and obscure hints, that the Dominican had been aware of Don Juan's disguise and visit. But, if so, that knowledge appeared only to increase the gentleness, almost the respect, which Torquemada manifested towards her. Certainly, since that day, from some cause or other, the priest's manner had been softened when he addressed her; and he who seldom had recourse to other arts than those of censure and of menace, often uttered sentiments half of pity and half of praise.

Thus consoled and supported in the day, — thus haunted and terrified by night, but still not repenting her resolve, Leila saw the time glide on to that eventful day when her lips were to pronounce that irrevocable vow which is the epitaph of life. While in this obscure and remote convent progressed the history of an individual, we are summoned back to witness the crowning fate of an expiring dynasty.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE PAUSE BETWEEN DEFEAT AND SURRENDER.

THE unfortunate Boabdil plunged once more amidst the recesses of the Alhambra. Whatever his anguish, or his despondency, none were permitted to share, or even to witness, his emotions. But he especially resisted the admission to his solitude, demanded by his mother, implored by his faithful Amine, and sorrowfully urged by Muza: those most loved, or most respected, were, above all, the persons from whom he most shrunk.

Almamen was heard of no more. It was believed that he had perished in the battle. But he was one of those, who, precisely as they are effective when present, are forgotten in absence. And, in the meanwhile, as the Vega was utterly desolated, and all supplies were cut off, famine, daily made more terrifically severe, diverted the attention of each humbler Moor from the fall of the city to his individual sufferings.

New persecutions fell upon the miserable Jews. Not having taken any share in the conflict (as was to

be expected from men who had no stake in the country which they dwelt in, and whose brethren had been taught so severe a lesson upon the folly of interference), no sentiment of fellowship in danger mitigated the hatred and loathing with which they were held; and as, in their lust of gain, many of them continued, amidst the agony and starvation of the citizens, to sell food at enormous prices, the excitement of the multitude against them—released, by the state of the city, from all restraint and law—made itself felt by the most barbarous excesses. Many of the houses of the Israelites were attacked by the mob, plundered, razed to the ground, and the owners tortured to death, to extort confession of imaginary wealth. Not to sell what was demanded was a crime; to sell it was a crime also. These miserable outcasts fled to whatever secret places the vaults of their houses, or the caverns in the hills within the city, could yet afford them, cursing their fate, and almost longing even for the yoke of the Christian bigots.

Thus passed several days: the defence of the city abandoned to its naked walls and mighty gates. The glaring sun looked down upon closed shops and depopulated streets, save when some ghostly and skeleton band of the famished poor, collected, in a sudden paroxysm of revenge or despair, around the stormed and fired mansion of a detested Israelite.

At length, Boabdil aroused himself from his seclusion; and Muza, to his own surprise, was summoned to the presence of the king. He found Boabdil in one of the most gorgeous halls of his gorgeous palace.

Within the Tower of Comares is a vast chamber, still called the Hall of the Ambassadors. Here it was that Boabdil now held his court. On the glowing walls hung trophies and banners, and here and there an Arabian portrait of some bearded king. By the windows, which overlooked the most lovely banks of the Darro, gathered the santons and alfaquis, a little apart from the main crowd. Beyond, through half-veiling draperies, might be seen the great court of the Alberca, whose peristyles were hung with flowers; while, in the centre, the gigantic basin which gives its name to the court caught the sunlight obliquely, and its waves glittered on the eye from amidst the roses that then clustered over it.

In the audience-hall itself, a canopy, over the royal cushions on which Boabdil reclined, was blazoned with the heraldic insignia of Granada's monarchs. His guards, and his mutes, and his eunuchs, and his courtiers, and his counsellors, and his captains, were ranged in long files on either side the canopy. It seemed the last flicker of the lamp of the Moorish empire, that hollow and unreal pomp! As Muza approached the monarch, he was startled by the change of his coun-

tenance: the young and beautiful Boabdil seemed to have grown suddenly old; his eyes were sunken, his countenance sown with wrinkles, and his voice sounded broken and hollow on the ears of his kinsman.

"Come hither, Muza," said he; "seat thyself beside me, and listen as thou best canst to the tidings we are about to hear."

As Muza placed himself on a cushion, a little below the king, Boabdil motioned to one amongst the crowd.

"Hamet," said he, "thou hast examined the state of the Christian camp: what news dost thou bring?"

"Light of the Faithful," answered the Moor, "it is a camp no longer—it has already become a city. Nine towns of Spain were charged with the task: stone has taken the place of canvass; towers and streets arise like the buildings of a genius; and the misbelieving king hath sworn that this new city shall not be left until Granada sees his standard on its walls."

"Go on," said Boabdil, calmly.

"Traders and men of merchandise flock thither daily; the spot is one bazaar; all that should supply our furnishing country pours its plenty into their mart."

Boabdil motioned to the Moor to withdraw, and an alfaqui advanced in his stead.

"Successor of the Prophet, and darling of the world!" said the reverend man, "the alfaquis and seers of Granada implore thee on their knees to listen to

their voice. They have consulted the Books of Fate; they have implored a sign from the Prophet; and they find that the glory has left thy people and thy crown. The fall of Granada is predestined—God is great!”

“You shall have my answer forthwith,” said Boabdil. “Abdelemic, approach.”

From the crowd came an aged and white-bearded man, the governor of the city.

“Speak, old man,” said the king.

“Oh, Boabdil!” said the veteran, with faltering tones, while the tears rolled down his cheeks; “son of a race of kings and heroes! would that thy servant had fallen dead on thy threshold this day, and that the lips of a Moorish noble had never been polluted by the words that I now utter. Our state is hopeless: our granaries are as the sands of the deserts; there is in them life neither for beast nor man. The war-horse that bore the hero is now consumed for his food; and the population of thy city, with one voice, cry for chains and—bread! I have spoken.”

“Admit the ambassador of Egypt,” said Boabdil, as Abdelemic retired. There was a pause: one of the draperies at the end of the hall was drawn aside; and with the slow and sedate majesty of their tribe and land, paced forth a dark and swarthy train, the envoys of the Egyptian soldan. Six of the band bore costly presents of gems and weapons, and the proces-

sion closed with four veiled slaves, whose beauty had been the boast of the ancient valley of the Nile.

“Sun of Granada and day-star of the faithful!” said the chief of the Egyptians, “my lord, the Soldan of Egypt, delight of the world, and rose-tree of the East, thus answers to the letters of Boabdil. He grieves that he cannot send the succour thou demandest, and, informing himself of the condition of thy territories, he finds that Granada no longer holds a seaport, by which his forces (could he send them,) might find an entrance into Spain. He implores thee to put thy trust in Allah, who will not desert his chosen ones, and lays these gifts, in pledge of amity and love, at the feet of my lord the king.”

“It is a gracious and well-timed offering,” said Boabdil, with a writhing lip; “we thank him.” There was now a long and dead silence, as the ambassadors swept from the hall of audience; when Boabdil suddenly raised his head from his breast, and looked around his hall with a kingly and majestic look: “Let the heralds of Ferdinand of Spain approach.”

A groan involuntarily broke from the breast of Muza: it was echoed by a murmur of abhorrence and despair from the gallant captains who stood around; but to that momentary burst succeeded a breathless silence, as from another drapery, opposite the royal



couch, gleamed the burnished mail of the knights of Spain. Foremost of those haughty visitors, whose iron heels clanked loudly on the tessellated floor, came a noble and stately form, in full armour, save the helmet, and with a mantle of azure velvet, wrought with the silver cross that made the badge of the Christian war. Upon his manly countenance was visible no sign of undue arrogance or exultation; but something of that generous pity which brave men feel for conquered foes, dimmed the lustre of his commanding eye, and softened the wonted sternness of his martial bearing. He and his train approached the king with a profound salutation of respect; and, falling back, motioned to the herald that accompanied him, and whose garb—breast and back—was wrought with the arms of Spain, to deliver himself of his mission.

“To Boabdil!” said the herald, with a loud voice, that filled the whole expanse, and thrilled with various emotions the dumb assembly. “To Boabdil el Chico, king of Granada, Ferdinand of Arragon and Isabel of Castile send royal greeting. They command me to express their hope, that the war is at length concluded; and they offer to the King of Granada such terms of capitulation, as a king, without dishonour, may receive. In the stead of this city, which their Most Christian Majesties will restore to their own dominion, as is just, they offer, O king, princely ter-

ritories in the Alpuxarras mountains to your sway ; holding them by oath of fealty to the Spanish crown. To the people of Granada, their Most Christian Majesties promise full protection of property, life, and faith, under a government by their own magistrates, and according to their own laws ; exemption from tribute for three years ; and taxes thereafter, regulated by the custom and ratio of their present imposts. To such Moors as, discontented with these provisions, would abandon Granada, are promised free passage for themselves and their wealth. In return for these marks of their royal bounty, their Most Christian Majesties summon Granada to surrender (if no succour meanwhile arrive) within seventy days. And these offers are now solemnly recorded in the presence, and through the mission, of the noble and renowned knight, Gonzalvo of Cordova, deputed by their Most Christian Majesties from their new city of Santa Fè."

When the herald had concluded, Boabdil cast his eye over his thronged and splendid court. No glance of fire met his own ; amidst the silent crowd, a resigned content was alone to be perceived : the proposals exceeded the hope of the besieged.

"And," asked Boabdil, with a deep-drawn sigh, "if we reject these offers?"

"Noble prince," said Gonzalvo, earnestly, "ask us not to wound thine ears with the alternative.

Pause, and consider of our offers; and, if thou doubt-est, O brave king! mount the towers of thine Alhambra, survey our legions marshalled beneath thy walls, and turn thine eyes upon a brave people, defeated, not by human valour, but by famine, and the inscrutable will of God."

"Your monarchs shall have our answer, gentle Christian, perchance ere nightfall. And you, Sir knight, who hast delivered a message bitter for kings to hear, receive, at least, our thanks for such bearing as might best mitigate the import. Our vizier will bear to your apartment those tokens of remembrance that are yet left to the monarch of Granada to bestow."

"Muza," resumed the king, as the Spaniards left the presence,—“thou hast heard all. What is the last counsel thou canst give thy sovereign?”

The fierce Moor had with difficulty waited this license to utter such sentiments as death only could banish from that unconquerable heart. He rose, descended from the couch, and, standing a little below the king, and facing the motley throng of all of wise or brave yet left to Granada, thus spoke:—

“Why should we surrender? two hundred thousand inhabitants are yet within our walls; of these, twenty thousand, at least, are Moors, who have hands and swords. Why should we surrender? Fa-

mine presses us, it is true; but hunger, that makes the lion more terrible, shall it make the man more base? Do ye despair? so be it: despair, in the valiant, ought to have an irresistible force. Despair has made cowards brave: shall it sink the brave to cowards? Let us arouse the people; hitherto we have depended too much upon the nobles. Let us collect our whole force, and march upon this new city, while the soldiers of Spain are employed in their new profession of architects and builders. Hear me, O God and Prophet of the Moslem! hear one who never was forsworn! If, Moors of Granada, ye adopt my counsel, I cannot promise ye victory, but I promise ye never to live without it: I promise ye, at least, your independence—for the dead know no chains! Let us die, if we cannot live, so that we may leave, to remotest ages, a glory that shall be more durable than kingdoms. King of Granada! this is the counsel of Muza Ben Abil Gazan."

The prince ceased. But he, whose faintest word had once breathed fire into the dullest, had now poured out his spirit upon frigid and lifeless matter. No man answered—no man moved.

Boabdil alone, clinging to the shadow of hope, turned at last towards the audience.

"Warriors and sages!" he said, "as Muza's counsel is your king's desire, say but the word, and, ere the

hour-glass shed its last sand, the blast of our trumpet shall be ringing through the Vivarrambla."

"O king! fight not against the will of fate—God is great!" replied the chief of the alfaquis.

"Alas!" said Abdelmelic, "if the voice of Muza and your own fall thus coldly upon us, how can ye stir the breadless and heartless multitude?"

"Is such your general thought, and your general will?" said Boabdil.

An universal murmur answered, "Yes!"

"Go then, Abdelmelic," resumed the ill-starred king, "go with you Spaniards to the Christian camp, and bring us back the best terms you can obtain. The crown has passed from the head of El Zogoybi; Fate sets her seal upon my brow. Unfortunate was the commencement of my reign—unfortunate its end. Break up the divan."

The words of Boabdil moved and penetrated an audience, never till then so alive to his gentle qualities, his learned wisdom, and his natural valour. Many flung themselves at his feet, with tears and sighs; and the crowd gathered round, to touch the hem of his robe.

Muza gazed at them in deep disdain, with folded arms and heaving breast.

"Women, not men!" he exclaimed, "ye weep, as if ye had not blood still left to shed! Ye are reconciled to the loss of liberty, because ye are told ye shall

lose nothing else. Fools and dupes! I see, from the spot where my spirit stands above ye, the dark and dismal future to which ye are crawling on your knees: bondage and rapine—the violence of lawless lust—the persecution of hostile faith—your gold wrung from ye by torture—your national name rooted from the soil. Bear this, and remember me! Farewell, Boabdil! you I pity not; for your gardens have yet a poison, and your armouries a sword. Farewell, nobles and santons of Granada! I quit my country while it is yet free.”

Scarcely had he ceased ere he had disappeared from the hall. It was as the parting genius of Granada!

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